

## Neglected downtown landmark could become a hotel

By Eric Pryne  
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One of downtown Seattle's most-neglected historic buildings could become a boutique hotel.

Ariel Development of Seattle has signed a contract to buy the 7-story, 108-year-old Eitel Building at Second Avenue and Pike Street, Shimon Mizrahi, one of Ariel's owners, said Thursday.

The sale is expected to close by the end of the year, he said. After that, converting the mostly empty office building into an 80-room hotel would take 12 to 18 months, he added.

The Eitel Building's location, a block from the Pike Place Market and close to downtown's retail center, is ideal for a hotel, Mizrahi said.

Ariel, led by Mizrahi and Herzl Hazan, has been involved in several Seattle hotel projects, including the Courtyard by Marriott at the renovated Alaska Building and the new Hyatt Place Hotel & Towers on Denny Way near Seattle Center.

The Eitel Building has been owned since 1975 by Richard Nimmer, of Seattle. While the ground floor is rented to retail tenants, the upper floors have been vacant for decades.

The building was designated a historic landmark in 2006.

Nimmer made several unsuccessful attempts to redevelop, either by demolishing the building or adding more floors to it, and engaged in a long battle with historic-preservation advocates.

He put the building up for sale last fall, asking \$4.85 million. Nimmer declined to comment Thursday.

Historic Seattle, a preservation group, led the push for landmark designation for the Eitel Building. Eugenia Woo, the nonprofit's director of preservation services, said she's delighted with Ariel's proposal.

"It's exactly what we were hoping for that location," she said. "It needs to be cleaned up, but it's a really nice building."

Ariel plans to preserve the building's exterior, Mizrahi said. It's too soon to say what the renovation will cost, he added, or who Ariel's partners in the project might be.

A hotel operator has not yet been signed, he said.

The building is named for brothers David and Fred Eitel, the developers who built it in 1904.

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