



CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Detroit and Southeast Michigan's premier business news and information website

May 27, 2011 1:32 PM

New hotel plan emerges for the David Whitney building

By [Daniel Duggan](#)

A new downtown hotel is planned as part of a mixed-use development for the historic David Whitney building.

The 19-story building will be split between apartments and hotel rooms.

It was purchased in March by **Whitney Partners LLC**, an evenly-split joint venture between Detroit-based developer **The Roxbury Group** and Farmington Hills-based hotel investment firm **Trans Inns Management Inc.**

Trans Inns executives say that despite the negative image of Detroit hotels, there is demand for a boutique hotel.

"In the first quarter, the revenue performance is up 25 percent in the city," said Mike Damitio, senior vice president of acquisitions for Trans Inns. "A unique offering, aimed at Gen-X, Gen-Y people in a true, historic, downtown building, would do well."

He said that hotels that are recent historic renovations, such as the **Westin Book Cadillac** and the **DoubleTree Fort Shelby**, have been doing well financially. The David Whitney hotel would be modeled after those.

There are negotiations with "a couple" national hotel operators for the 108-room hotel, said Dan Vosotas, president and CEO of Trans Inns, which operates a portfolio of 21 hotels in 13 states, most of which are owned by the company.

"We have a couple brands that are excited and want to be there," Vosotas said.

Making this hotel different would be the fact that it will be in a historically renovated building, keeping its charm as an older building. He said it will not have a modern-looking interior like the Book Cadillac, but instead will keep the original features.

"Unlike a lot of the buildings in Detroit, this one hasn't been destroyed inside," Vosotas said. "There has been enough security to keep it preserved. So, we'll be able to keep a lot of the original marble."

The building was purchased in March for \$3.3 million, said James Van Dyke, Roxbury's vice president of development.

He said the project still needs to be fully financed before construction would start. If construction started in 2012, the \$80 million project would be complete by 2013.

"We hope to get this financed by the end of the year," Van Dyke said.

The building, located at 1553 Woodward Ave., is across the street from the Broderick Tower, which is in the process

of being renovated to become an apartment building.

© 2014 Crain Communications Inc.
Use of editorial content without permission is strictly prohibited. All rights Reserved
www.craindetroit.com