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Redevelopment of 'hammer and nail' building in Midtown would create apartments, retail

By [Kirk Pinho](#)

The 50-year-old building in Midtown that is perhaps best known for the illuminated hammer-and-nail action atop its 12 stories is expected to be turned into 72 apartment units and 2,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space rebranded as **The Plaza** by the middle of next year.

Detroit-based developer **The Roxbury Group** plans to redevelop the vacant 130,000-square-foot **Professional Plaza** medical office building at 3800 Woodward Ave. at Selden Street into 50 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedroom and two three-bedroom apartments in a \$20 million project that is expected to begin this spring.

David Di Rita, principal of Roxbury Group, said unit sizes have not yet been determined.

"We are continuing to model (rental rates) based on Midtown pricing, which has been somewhat lagging behind downtown. I still see these as being more affordable than a David Whitney (unit)."

The **David Whitney Building**, which Roxbury redeveloped, opened late last year following a \$94.5 million renovation into 108 apartments, the 136-room **Aloft Detroit** hotel and **Grand Cirque Brasserie**, the building's signature restaurant. Units lease for \$1,050 and up for a one-bedroom, \$2,500 and up for a two-bedroom and \$3,150 and up for a three-bedroom, according to its website.

Di Rita said the neon hammer-and-nail feature atop The Plaza building — a nod to the carpenters union that was headquartered there — will be removed. "We'll find a good home for it, just not on the building," he said.

Exterior renovations will include a new glass façade, restoration of the masonry and improvement of the grounds surrounding the building, which was built in 1965.

The retail and residential space are expected to come online at the same time.

Roxbury Group is under contract to buy the building from **Midtown Project LLC**,

Quinn Evans Architects Inc.



Planned renovations to the exterior of the Professional Plaza building at 3800 Woodward Ave. include a new glass façade, restoration of the masonry and improvement of the grounds. A \$68 million building to the south is under construction for Wayne State University Physician's Group.



CoStar Group Inc.

Plans call for redeveloping the 50-year-old Professional Plaza medical office building at 3800 Woodward Ave. into apartments and retail. The signature hammer-and-nail feature would be removed.

Di Rita said. That entity is registered to Gary Novara, of counsel for **Novara Tesija PLLC** in Southfield. The proposed purchase price was not disclosed.

Financing comes from **Capital Impact Partners**, which has an office in Detroit, and **Invest Detroit**, and Roxbury is working with the **Michigan Economic Development Corp.** on other possible funding, according to a news release. Di Rita declined to say how much is coming from Capital Impact and Invest Detroit, or how much the building is under contract for due to a confidentiality agreement.

Quinn Evans Architects Inc., which has offices in Detroit and Ann Arbor, will be the architecture firm and historic consultant on the project and Detroit-based **Walbridge Aldinger Co.** will be the construction manager.

The building sits next to the site of the \$68 million building under construction for **Wayne State University Physician's Group** at 3750 Woodward. The group broke ground on the 153,000-square-foot building, which will have clinical and medical space, in September.

Cleveland-based **The Ferchill Group**, developers of the **Westin Book Cadillac Detroit** hotel, is developing that building, which is expected to open next year. Ferchill Group had planned to demolish the Professional Plaza building for parking for the WSUPG building, but those plans were scrapped.

It's yet another significant project for Roxbury Group, which along with the David Whitney at 1 Park Ave. developed the former **Globe Trading Co.** building along the Detroit River and **The Auburn** apartment building. The Globe building was redeveloped for the **Michigan Department of Natural Resources** in a \$12.8 million project that turned it into a 43,000-square-foot outdoor activity center.

The Auburn has 58 units and retail space created in a \$12.3 million redevelopment at the corner of Cass Avenue and Canfield Street in Midtown.

Kirk Pinho: (313) 446-0412, kpinho@crain.com. Twitter: @kirkinhoCDB