



The original main entrance to the Hotel Syracuse, on the East Onondaga Street side of the building, features a marquee with ornate ironwork, circa 1930. (Onondaga Historical Association)

A nod to the past

Developer plans to tear down pedestrian bridge, restore the original entrance to Hotel Syracuse

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The Hotel Syracuse pedestrian bridge over East Onondaga Street would be torn down and the historic hotel's original entrance restored under a planned \$57 million renovation.

The pedestrian bridge was built in 1983 to connect the hotel to the 15-story Symphony Tower, the hotel's newer section.

Before the bridge's construction, the East Onondaga Street entrance was the hotel's main entrance and featured a marquee with the hotel's name. Just inside the entrance, a staircase brings visitors to the middle of the hotel's grand lobby and facing the reception desk.

After the bridge was constructed, the main entrance to the hotel shifted to South Warren Street, which still has a marquee. That entrance brings visitors to the southern side of the grand lobby.

Developer Ed Riley said his plan is to remove the pedestrian bridge and put a marquee back over the entrance. Symphony Tower may be redeveloped separately from the Hotel Syracuse, so there is no longer a need for the connector, he said.

"We think it's a grander entrance, and it's the traditional grand entrance," Riley said.

The hotel has been closed since 2004, and city and county officials are eager to see it reopened. The Syracuse Industrial Development Agency voted last week to acquire the hotel from its current owner, GML Syracuse LLC, either through a negotiated purchase or, more likely,



Guests unload luggage at the South Warren Street entrance to the Hotel Syracuse in the 1940s. The hotel still had its original, ornate marquee over the entrance. (Onondaga Historical Association)



Here is how the South Warren Street entrance to the Hotel Syracuse appears today. The marquee over the entrance is bigger and less ornate than the original. (Rick Moriarty / rmoriarty@syracuse.com)

through an eminent domain action. The agency would then lease it to Riley, who said he would reopen it as a 261-room convention center hotel with a national hotel brand affiliation.

The ground-floor doorway on East Onondaga Street remains, but it is under the bridge, gets little sunlight

and is generally unattractive. "When the bridge went up, it created that feeling that you were under (Interstate) 81," said Dennis Connors, curator of history for the Onondaga Historical Association.

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