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Raleigh's Empire Properties buys another historic building downtown

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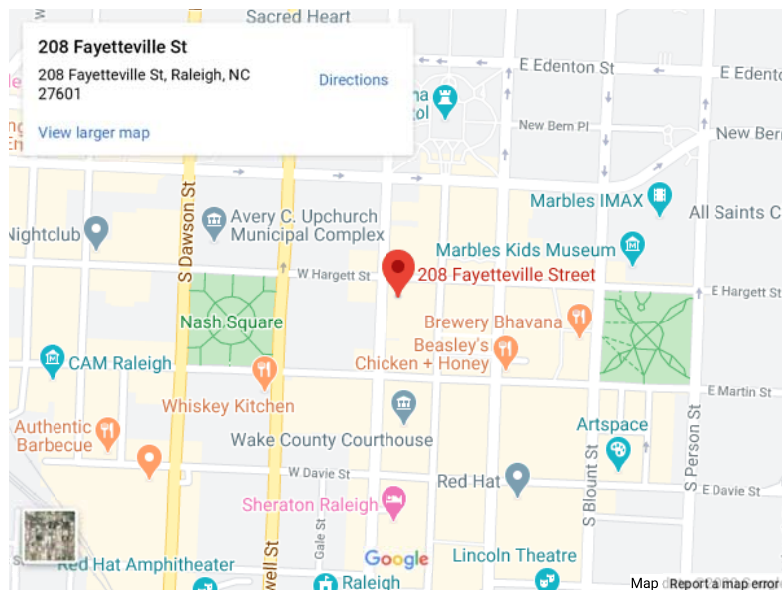
A Raleigh real estate company has bought another historic property downtown as it expands its holdings on a recently rezoned city block.

Longtime real estate investor Greg Hatem's Empire Properties this week closed on the purchase of the historic Efir's Department Store building on Fayetteville Street, where a recent rezoning allows for up to 40 stories of development on the city block.

Empire Properties paid \$4.2 million for the property through a subsidiary, E. Fudd Empire LLC.



C/O GREENSPONINVEST OF MARCUS & MILLICHAP
The office building at 208 Fayetteville St. in downtown Raleigh was formerly the home of the N.C. State Bar.



Built in 1935, the Efir's Department Store property is situated on 0.17 acres at 208 Fayetteville St. The seller, O2 Fitness founder Michael Olander Jr.'s real estate company MDO Holdings company, bought the property in 2017 for \$3.75 million.

Empire Properties representatives were not immediately available for comment.

For more than three decades, the property was the home of the North Carolina State Bar before the organization relocated to a larger headquarters at the corner of Blount and Edenton streets in 2013.

In November, 208 Fayetteville St. was one of many properties on that block that the city rezoned to allow for development up to 40 stories. Of the other affected properties, Empire [bought the Boylan-Pearce Department Store at 216 Fayetteville St. last summer](#); the Odd Fellows building at 19 W Hargett St.; and the Carolina Trust Building at 230 Fayetteville St.

The other seven buildings included in the rezoning:

Briggs Hardware Store at 220 Fayetteville St. (Built in 1874);
Superba Motion Picture Theater/Eckerd Drug Store at 222 Fayetteville St. (1920);
Lewis-Woodard Building at 224 Fayetteville St. (1920);
Lumsden-Boone Building at 226 Fayetteville St. (1920);
Mahler Building at 228 Fayetteville St. (1920); and
McLellan's Five and Dime Annex at 14 W. Martin St. (1920)

Just days after the rezoning went through, Empire [bought the Kimbrell's Furniture building at 210 Fayetteville St.](#) The building is not included in the rezoning.

The rezoning request stipulates that the existing building facades facing Fayetteville Street will be “preserved and maintained, including during and after future construction and development of the properties.” But details about any potential development plans have not been publicly revealed.

Mack Paul Morningstar Law represented the property owners. After the meeting, Paul said that because many of the properties are so small, any redevelopment would likely require owners to work together or for a developer to acquire several adjoining lots on the block.

The property owners worked with the Central Citizens Advisory Council and Raleigh Historic Development Commission to outline protections for the properties. Most of the buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Five of the buildings – Briggs, Odd Fellows, the Lumsden-Boone Building, the Carolina Trust Building and the Mahler Building – are also afforded added protections as officially designated local landmarks.

The oldest among the buildings is the Briggs Building at 220 Fayetteville St., which was built in 1874. At four stories tall, it was the tallest in the city at the time it was completed.

Caleb Harshberger

Staff Writer

Triangle Business Journal

