



Developer Randy Settenbrino, who has added three floors to 100 Orchard St., inset, for his "boutique" hotel. *Michael Datikash*

A Hotel For The Old Hood

The apartments at 100 Orchard St., a tenement when the Lower East Side was the once the teeming home of New York City's immigrants, have been empty for at least a half-century. When the Jews and other greenies moved out, headed for more-affluent areas, no one moved in. They left their gas stoves and bed frames behind to get moldy.

Come this spring, 100 Orchard St. will have inhabitants again.

Guests in the Blue Moon Hotel.

Randy Settenbrino, a developer who grew up in Brooklyn but attended yeshiva on the Lower East Side, will open the hotel, the neighborhood's first, complete with a kosher bakery and kosher take-out restaurant, and an automatic Shabbat elevator.

"The area," which still has a sizable Jewish population and attracts frequent guests for Shabbat, "needs a hotel ... something that is not generic, that has character," Settenbrino says.

By character, he means the traditional fare that will be served in the restaurant and the big bands music that will be played for customers. And the restored outer walls and cornices.

"The façade will look as it did 100 years ago," Settenbrino says. "I tried to keep the soul of the building as intact as possible."

Behind the scenes, he's installed a new electrical system, new plumbing and heating in

the building, which was built in 1879 and renovated in 1892.

"This week the sinks and toilets are coming." Then the doors and period locks. "They're installing the elevators. We're finishing off the sprinkler system." The last step will be the "decorations" — furniture and draperies, etc.

"I'm pushing for March" to open the doors, Settenbrino says. "I want to open with a klezmer band."

He calls his investment of "millions" of dollars in the building — across the street from the recently expanded Tenement Museum — a sign of faith in the area, which has experienced a mild Jewish renaissance in the last generation. "I have no doubt that it will have as much significance in the future as it did in the past."

The hotel is named for his great-grandfather, who helped build the famed Half Moon Hotel in Coney Island a century ago.

With three added floors, the "boutique hotel" will have 22 rooms, all laid out in the style of the original tenement rooms.

Settenbrino's added an elevator, dedicated telephone lines for computer users, and cable TV.

The view from the rooms hasn't changed. From the front, you see Orchard Street. "In the back of the building," Settenbrino says, "you can reach out and touch the Williamsburg Bridge."

Steve Lipman