



ARGYLE HOTEL IS LOCATED AT MEETING AND HASELL STREETS
Site Is To Be Cleared For Future, Unspecified Use (Staff Photo.)

Argyle Hotel Here To Be Razed Soon

By TOM PERRY

News and Courier Staff Writer
Charleston's Argyle Hotel, a landmark at the corner of Meeting and Hasell Streets for better than half a century, will be razed and its property developed for future, unspecified use, it was revealed yesterday.

Thirty-day notices to vacate the hotel premises have been mailed to the seven business and religious organizations that rent space in the building. The notices are dated Aug. 1, indicating that the organizations must vacate the property before the end of the month.

Razing of buildings on the hotel property but separate from the hotel building itself will begin "within a week or 10 days," a hotel spokesman said. No specific date has been set for start of razing of the hotel building.

Mrs. Hollis A. Ayers, owner of the property, told The News and Courier yesterday that "the hotel will be demolished and the property developed," but would not specify for what purpose. "I will make a full statement for the public later," she said.

One businessman whose office is located in the hotel told reporters yesterday that the decision to raze the hotel had caught the lessors "completely by surprise." He characterized many of the business concerns as "very much up in the air" because of the decision, adding that many had given no thought to relocating prior to the decision.

The seven organizations located in the hotel include the Christian Science Reading Room, McFadden's Watch Shop, Hillman's Yarn Shop, Primrose Dress Shop, Eugene's Hair Stylist, Liger Barber Shop and Wing Lee Laundry.

The notices to vacate, signed by Mrs. Ayers, read:

"This is 30-day notice as provided by law for possession by me of the premises you now occupy at (applicable address)."

The hotel, which stands on property that has been used as a hotel site for well over a century, was built in 1900 on the remains of the old St. Charles Hotel by a Scotsman named John

Wilson. He gave the hotel its name in honor of the Scottish city of Argyle and was insistent at the time that the hostelry be known simply as "The Argyle." Over the years, however, the building gained its present name. Wilson had purchased the property after fire had badly damaged the St. Charles and within about six months had the hotel ready to accommodate the crowds that flocked to Charleston for the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition of 1900.

The St. Charles' predecessor hotel at the Meeting Street address was the Pavilion, a hotel of considerable fame during its day. Legend relates that Edgar Allan Poe visited there on weekends while he wrote his famous story, "The Gold Bug." The St. Charles succeeded the Pavilion on the site in 1885.

The 90-room hotel was purchased in 1934 by Charles E. Rausch, former state highway inspector and father of Mrs. Ayers, for a reported price of \$10,000. Mr. Rausch died in 1951 and the property passed to his daughter.

A Meeting Street Landmark To Go

A familiar Meeting St. landmark will vanish from the Charleston scene with the razing of the Argyle Hotel.

The passing of this hostelry will be sentimentally regretted by many Charlestonians, but the structure does not hold a place in the list of historic and architectural treasures whose preservation is of so much concern to the community.

The Argyle Hotel, at the corner of Meeting and Haseli Sts., was built in 1900. It has accommodated great numbers of guests in its

57 years, but it is not an old building as "old" signifies in Charleston. The site, however, has long been devoted to hotel purposes. For a number of years the Pavilion, a hostelry well known in its time, had occupied it. It was replaced by the St. Charles, which fell a victim to fire. It was then that the Argyle was built.

It is reported that a motel may be built on the Argyle site. If so, that corner will continue in its traditional role, adapting itself, however to the automotive age that has revolutionized traveling.

Evening Post, Aug. 9, 1958

80-Unit Motel To Be Built On Argyle Hotel Site

A motor hotel costing nearly \$1 million will be constructed on the former site of the Argyle Hotel, at Meeting and Hasell Streets, according to Mrs. Hollis A. Ayers, owner of the property.

Construction of the 80-unit motel will begin this month, Mrs. Ayers said today. An opening date of February has been set.

J. E. Morton, Inc. of Aiken has been awarded the general contract. The firm recently built the Tremont Motel in Columbia.

Architect for the new building is Augustus E. Constantine.

ADDITIONAL property on Wentworth Street has been acquired by Mrs. Ayers for use as a driveway and a service entrance. The property is located between Robertson's Cafeteria and Kerrison's Parkway and adjoins the original hotel site.

The U - shaped brick building will face on Meeting Street and will be two stories high.

An underground parking lot will have ramp entrances on Meeting and Wentworth Streets.

An 18 by 38 - foot swimming pool will be in front of the motel and will be screened by wrought iron and grillwork.

AN ELEVATED center terrace will cover the parking area and will give the effect of a garden when viewed from the rooms. Cars also will be parked under the first floor.

Separate terraces will be located at each ground floor room.

Each room will have also a balcony and will be furnished with a television set.

The dining area will be on the first floor as will the snack bar.

The building will be decorated according to conventional Charleston style and will be of fireproof

construction. Grillwork will adorn the front of the building, Mrs. Ayers said.

MRS. AYERS said of the \$1,000,000-project, "We are trying to give Charleston something distinctive in design by combining the luxury of modern appointments with traditional Charleston architecture, which will make it unique along the entire Atlantic Seaboard."

Financial arrangements were completed by Robert L. Fripp, Charleston realtor.

The Argyle Hotel which was formerly located on the property, was razed last fall. The hotel was built before 1800 and had served as a hotel and office building since that time.

On The Inside

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS spend summer planning for next year's work. Page 1-B.

RETIRING METHODIST minister to celebrate 100th birthday. Page 1-B.

BEN VARN piles up points in Round-Robin tennis tournament. See Sports Page.

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