

# *The Manzana de Gómez in Old Havana*

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Manzana de Gómez or Gómez Block, is a 20th-century structure in Havana, and it was the first shopping mall in Cuba. It is 5 stories tall. It was built by José Gómez-Mena Vila. The 1910 landmark was the first European-style shopping arcade in the country.

The original mall occupied an entire city block at the beginning of the 20th century and it was completely for commercial use with two inner diagonal streets that cross the building that integrated the pedestrian circulation with the outer fabric.

The Manzana de Gómez eventually lost its retail base and later served as a consulate and at one time an embassy. Still one of Havana's most intriguing landmarks, the Manzana de Gómez, is being renovated and converted to a 246-room 5-Star luxury hotel. The property will be developed and managed by the Swiss company, Kempinski, who signed the letter of intent in early 2014. The new hotel is expected to be completed and operational during 2016. The Geneva-based hot'elier has a strong presence in Germany with the chain expanding into Eastern Europe, the Middle

East, China and Africa.

The new hotel will be Kempinski's first in the Caribbean and is a joint venture with Gaviota S.A. The existing structure is bounded by Neptuno, San Rafael, Zulueta and Monserrate streets in Old Havana, immediately east of Paseo de Marti and across from the Parque Central.



**Radio Habana Cuba**