Cauliflower Power

REAL ESTATE

LANDLORD CONSIDERATIONS

As a former real estate broker, Scott Gerber is pretty savvy when it comes to selecting buildings for the 10 restaurants in the portfolio of his New York City–based The Gerber Group, nine of which are in hotels.

First, if the site has had several failed restaurants in it previously, he’s not interested because there’s a stigma to the location, he says. But there’s an advantage in going into a space that a single restaurant has previously occupied: It typically has a lot of the infrastructure he needs. Most important with the building is the condition it’s in and the ease of making any changes, he says.

The landlord is also of vital importance. It’s important to research that person’s reputation and how easy he is to work with. “Inevitably, something comes up that we haven’t thought of that’s not outlined in the lease,” Gerber says. “So having a good relationship can make that easier.” If a restaurant was previously in the location, ask its operators about working with the landlord.

“Make sure the negotiation is a good deal for both sides and only a little bit painful for either of you,” Gerber adds. “If I’ve made it too painful for the landlord, then when I have to ask for something that’s not in the lease, he’s going to stick it to me.”

Above all, Dec says, one of the most important things to consider in site selection is making sure it fits the brand, and that it’s not about a landlord’s deal or city’s attraction.

“You should never compromise who you are, what your brand identity is, or what your needs are,” he says.