

ISTAR FINANCIAL INC  
Form S-3  
May 11, 2005

[QuickLinks](#) -- Click here to rapidly navigate through this document

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 11, 2005

Registration No. 333-

---

**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**  
Washington, D.C. 20549

---

**FORM S-3**  
**REGISTRATION STATEMENT**  
**UNDER**  
**THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933**

---

**iSTAR FINANCIAL INC.**

(Exact name of Registrants as specified in its charter)

**Maryland**  
(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)

**95-6881527**  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

---

**1114 Avenue of the Americas, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**New York, New York 10036**  
**(212) 930-9400**

(Address, including zip code, and telephone number,  
including area code, of registrant's principal executive offices)

---

**Jay Sugarman**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**iStar Financial Inc.**  
**1114 Avenue of Americas, 27<sup>th</sup> Floor**  
**New York, New York 10036**  
**(212) 930-9400**

(Name, address, including zip code, and telephone number,  
including area code, of agent for service)

---

*Copies to:*  
**Kathleen L. Werner, Esq.**  
**Clifford Chance US LLP**  
**31 West 52<sup>nd</sup> Street**  
**New York, New York 10019**  
**(212) 878-8000**

**Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public:** From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement.

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box:

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. o

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. o

If delivery of the prospectus is expected to be made pursuant to Rule 434, please check the following box. o

### CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of each class of securities to be registered	Amount to be registered	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(3)	Amount of Registration Fee(4)
Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Depositary Shares, Debt Securities, Warrants(1)	(2)	\$5,000,000,000	\$588,500

- (1) Includes shares of common stock, which may be issued upon conversion of the preferred stock or debt securities, or exercise of the warrants, which are being registered.
- (2) Not applicable, as provided in General Instruction II.D to Form S-3.
- (3) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee.
- (4) Pursuant to Rule 429 of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the prospectus contained in this Registration Statement also relates to the Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Depositary Shares, Debt Securities and Warrants of the registrant previously registered under an effective Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File Number 333-109599) of which \$150,000,000 is being carried forward. The filing fee associated with the securities being carried forward from the earlier Registration Statement was \$17,655. That amount was paid upon the filing of the earlier Registration Statement.

**The Registrant hereby amends this Registration Statement on such date or dates as may be necessary to delay its effective date until the Registrant shall file a further amendment which specifically states that this Registration Statement shall thereafter become effective in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 or until this Registration Statement shall become effective on such date as the Commission, acting pursuant to said Section 8(a), may determine.**

**The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. No person may sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and is not soliciting an offer to buy securities in any state where an offer or sale is not permitted.**

**Subject to Completion, Dated May 11, 2005**

**PROSPECTUS**

**ISTAR FINANCIAL INC.**

**Common Stock  
Preferred Stock  
Depositary Shares  
Debt Securities  
and  
Warrants**

---

We may from time to time offer our common stock, preferred stock (which we may issue in one or more series), depositary shares representing shares of preferred stock, debt securities (which we may issue in one or more series) or warrants entitling the holders to purchase common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities, at an aggregate initial offering price which will not exceed \$5,000,000,000. We will determine when we sell securities, the amounts of securities we will sell and the prices and other terms on which we will sell them. We may sell securities to or through underwriters, through agents or directly to purchasers.

We will describe in a prospectus supplement, which we will deliver with this prospectus, the terms of particular securities which we offer in the future. We may describe the terms of those securities in a term sheet which will precede the prospectus supplement.

In each prospectus supplement we will include the following information:

The names of the underwriters or agents, if any, through which we will sell the securities.

The proposed amount of securities, if any, which the underwriters will purchase.

The compensation, if any, of those underwriters or agents.

The initial public offering price of the securities.

Information about securities exchanges, electronic communications networks or automated quotation systems on which the securities will be listed or traded.

Any other material information about the offering and sale of the securities.

**NEITHER THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION NOR ANY STATE SECURITIES COMMISSION HAS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED OF THESE SECURITIES OR DETERMINED THAT THIS PROSPECTUS IS TRUTHFUL OR COMPLETE. ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE CONTRARY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.**

*An investment in these securities entails certain material risks and uncertainties that should be considered. See "Risk Factors" on page 2 of this prospectus.*

May , 2005

---

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS	1
FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS	1
ISTAR FINANCIAL INC.	2
RISK FACTORS	2
RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS AND EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES	9
USE OF PROCEEDS	9
DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES	10
DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS	12
DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK AND PREFERRED STOCK	13
DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES	18
CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES	19
PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION	36
LEGAL MATTERS	37
EXPERTS	37
INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE	38
INFORMATION WE FILE	38

## ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a shelf registration statement. Under this shelf registration statement, we may sell any combination of common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares representing shares of preferred stock, debt securities or warrants entitling the holders to purchase common stock, preferred stock, depositary shares or debt securities in one or more offerings for total proceeds of up to \$5,000,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities we may offer. Each time we sell securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement that will contain specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may add, update or change information contained in this prospectus. Before you buy any of our securities, it is important for you to consider the information contained in this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described under the heading "Incorporation of Certain Documents By Reference."

## FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

We make statements in this prospectus and the documents we incorporate by reference that are considered "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, which are usually identified by the use of words such as "will," "anticipates," "believes," "estimates," "expects," "projects," "plans," "intends," "should" or similar expressions. We intend those forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Reform Act of 1995 and are including this statement for purposes of complying with these safe harbor provisions. These forward-looking statements reflect our current views about our plans, strategies and prospects, which are based on the information currently available to us and on assumptions we have made. Although we believe that our plans, intentions and expectations as reflected in or suggested by those forward-looking statements are reasonable, we can give no assurance that the plans, intentions or expectations will be achieved. We have listed below and have discussed elsewhere in this prospectus some important risks, uncertainties and contingencies which could cause our actual results, performances or achievements to be materially different from the forward-looking statements we make in this prospectus. These risks, uncertainties and contingencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. The success or failure of our efforts to implement our current business strategy.
2. Economic conditions generally and in the commercial finance and real estate markets specifically.
3. The performance and financial condition of borrowers and corporate customers.
4. The actions of our competitors and our ability to respond to those actions.
5. The cost of our capital, which depends in part on our asset quality, the nature of our relationships with our lenders and other capital providers, our business prospects and outlook, our credit rating and general market conditions.
6. Changes in governmental regulations, tax rates and similar matters.
7. Legislative and regulatory changes (including changes to laws governing the taxation of real estate investment trusts ("REITs")).
8. Other factors discussed under the heading "Risk Factors" or which may be discussed in a prospectus supplement.

We assume no obligation to update publicly any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. In evaluating forward-looking statements, you should consider these risks and uncertainties, together with the other risks described from time to time in our reports and documents filed with the SEC, and you should not place undue reliance on those statements.

**ISTAR FINANCIAL INC.**

We are the leading publicly-traded finance company focused on the commercial real estate industry. We provide custom-tailored financing to high-end private and corporate owners of real estate, including senior and junior mortgage debt, senior and mezzanine corporate capital and corporate net lease financing. Our objective is to generate consistent and attractive returns on our invested capital by providing innovative and value-added financing solutions to our customers. We are taxed as a REIT.

Our principal executive offices are located at 1114 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10036, and our telephone number is (212) 930-9400. Our website is [www.istarfinancial.com](http://www.istarfinancial.com). The information on our website is not considered part of this prospectus. Our five primary regional offices are located in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Hartford and San Francisco. iStar Asset Services, our loan servicing subsidiary, is located in Hartford, and iStar Real Estate Services, our corporate facilities management division, is headquartered in Atlanta.

**RISK FACTORS**

*This section describes material risks of purchasing our securities. You should carefully consider these risks, in addition to the other information contained in this prospectus or incorporated in this prospectus by reference, before purchasing any of the securities offered by this prospectus. In connection with the forward-looking statements that appear in this prospectus, you should carefully review the factors discussed below and the cautionary statements referred to in "Forward-Looking Statements."*

**We Are Subject to Risks Relating to Our Lending Business.**

*We may suffer a loss if a borrower defaults on a non-recourse loan or on a loan that is not secured by underlying real estate.*

In the event of a default by a borrower on a non-recourse loan, we will only have recourse to the real estate assets collateralizing the loan. For this purpose, we consider loans made to special purpose entities formed solely for the purpose of holding and financing particular assets to be non-recourse loans. If the underlying asset value is below the loan amount, we will suffer a loss. Conversely, we sometimes make loan investments that are unsecured or are secured by equity interests in the borrowing entities. These loans are subject to the risk that other lenders may be directly secured by the real estate assets of the borrower. In the event of a default, those collateralized lenders would have priority over us with respect to the proceeds of a sale of the underlying real estate.

In the cases described above, we may lack control over the underlying asset collateralizing our loan or the underlying assets of the borrower prior to a default, and, as a result, their value may be reduced by acts or omissions by owners or managers of the assets. As of March 31, 2005, 88.8% of our loans were non-recourse, based upon the gross carrying value of our loan assets, and 12.1% of our total investments, based on gross carrying value, consisted of loans that are unsecured or secured by equity interests in the borrowing entity.

*We may suffer a loss in the event of a default or bankruptcy of a borrower, particularly in cases where the borrower has incurred debt that is senior to our loan.*

If a borrower defaults on our loan but does not have sufficient assets to satisfy our loan, we may suffer a loss of principal or interest. In the event of a borrower bankruptcy, we may not have full recourse to the assets of the borrower, or the assets of the borrower may not be sufficient to satisfy our loan. In addition, certain of our loans are subordinate to other debt of the borrower. If a borrower defaults on our loan or on debt senior to our loan, or in the event of a borrower bankruptcy, our loan will be satisfied only after the senior debt. Where debt senior to our loans exists, the presence of intercreditor arrangements may limit our ability to amend our loan documents, assign our loans, accept prepayments, exercise our remedies (through "standstill" periods) and control decisions made in bankruptcy proceedings relating to borrowers. Bankruptcy and borrower litigation can significantly increase the time needed for us to acquire underlying collateral in the event of a default, during which

time the collateral may decline in value. In addition, there are significant costs and delays associated with the foreclosure process.

*We are subject to the risk that provisions of our loan agreements may be unenforceable.*

Our rights and obligations with respect to our loans are governed by written loan agreements and related documentation. It is possible that a court could determine that one or more provisions of a loan agreement are unenforceable, such as a loan prepayment provision or the provisions governing our security interest in the underlying collateral. If this were to happen with respect to a material asset or group of assets, we could be adversely affected.

*We are subject to the risks associated with loan participations, such as less than full control rights.*

Some of our assets are participating interests in loans in which we share the rights, obligations and benefits of the loan with other participating lenders. We may need the consent of these parties to exercise our rights under such loans, including rights with respect to amendment of loan documentation, enforcement proceedings in the event of a default and the institution of, and control over, foreclosure proceedings. Similarly, a majority of the participants may be able to take actions to which we object but to which we will be bound if our participation interest represents a minority interest. We may be adversely affected by this lack of full control.

**We Are Subject to Risks Relating to Our Corporate Tenant Lease Business.**

*Lease expirations, lease defaults and lease terminations may adversely affect our revenue.*

Lease expirations, lease defaults and lease terminations may result in reduced revenues if the lease payments received from replacement corporate tenants are less than the lease payments received from the expiring, defaulting or terminating corporate tenants. In addition, lease defaults by one or more significant corporate tenants, lease terminations by corporate tenants following events of casualty or takings by eminent domain, or the failure of corporate tenants under expiring leases to elect to renew their leases, could cause us to experience long periods with no revenue from a facility and to incur substantial capital expenditures in order to obtain replacement corporate tenants.

As of March 31, 2005, 13.2% of our annualized revenues for the quarter ended March 31, 2005 were derived from our five largest corporate tenant customers. As of March 31, 2005, the percentage of our revenues (based on total revenues for the quarter ended March 31, 2005, annualized) that are subject to expiring leases during each year from 2005 through 2009 is as follows:

2005	0.3%
2006	3.1%
2007	1.9%
2008	1.3%
2009	1.1%

*We may need to make significant capital improvements to our corporate facilities in order to remain competitive.*

Our corporate facilities may face competition from newer, more updated facilities. In order to remain competitive, we may need to make significant capital improvements to our existing corporate facilities. In addition, in the event we need to re-lease a corporate facility, we may need to make significant tenant improvements, including conversions of single tenant buildings to multi-tenant buildings. The costs of these improvements could adversely affect our financial performance.

*Our ownership interests in corporate facilities are illiquid, hindering our ability to mitigate a loss.*

Since our ownership interests in corporate facilities are illiquid, we may lack the necessary flexibility to vary our investment strategy promptly to respond to changes in market conditions. In

addition, if we have to foreclose on an asset or if we desire to sell it in an effort to recover or mitigate a loss, we may be unable to do so at all, or only at a discount.

**We Are Subject to Risks Relating to Our Asset Concentration.**

As of March 31, 2005, the average size of our lending investments was \$29.1 million and the average size of our leasing investments was \$28.7 million. No single investment represents more than 4.0% of our annualized revenues for the fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2005. While our asset base is diversified by product line, asset type, obligor, property type and geographic location, it is possible that if we suffer losses on a portion of our larger assets, our financial performance could be adversely impacted.

**Recent Strategic Investments Involve Risks.**

We have recently announced strategic investments in complementary businesses and expect that we may announce additional investments from time to time in the future. Strategic investments may involve the incurrence of additional debt and contingent liabilities. In addition, we may incur expenses from these investments, or they may require substantial investments of additional capital, before they begin generating anticipated returns. Strategic transactions involve risks, including:

Difficulties in assimilating the operations, products, technology, information systems and personnel of the acquired business;

Diverting management's attention from other business concerns;

Difficulties in maintaining uniform standards, controls, procedures and policies;

Entering markets in which we have limited prior experience; and

Losing key employees or customers of the acquired business.

These factors could adversely affect our results of operations, liquidity or stock price.

**Because We Must Distribute a Portion of Our Income, We Will Continue to Need Additional Debt and/or Equity Capital to Grow.**

We generally must distribute at least 90% of our net taxable income to our stockholders to maintain our REIT status. As a result, those earnings will not be available to fund investment activities. We have historically funded our investments by borrowing from financial institutions and raising capital in the public and private capital markets. We expect to continue to fund our investments this way. If we fail to obtain funds from these sources, it could limit our ability to grow, which could have a material adverse effect on the value of our common stock. Our taxable income has historically been lower than the cash flow generated by our business activities, primarily because our taxable income is reduced by non-cash expenses, such as depreciation and amortization. As a result, our dividend payout ratio as a percentage of free cash flow has generally been lower than our payout ratio as a percentage of net taxable income.

**Our Growth Is Dependent on Leverage, Which May Create Other Risks.**

Our success is dependent, in part, upon our ability to grow our assets through the use of leverage. Our ability to obtain the leverage necessary for execution of our business plan will ultimately depend upon our ability to maintain interest coverage ratios meeting market underwriting standards that will vary according to lenders' assessments of our creditworthiness and the terms of the borrowings. As of March 31, 2005, our debt-to-book equity plus accumulated depreciation and loan loss reserves ratio was 1.9x and our total debt obligations outstanding were approximately \$5.3 billion. Our charter does not limit the amount of indebtedness which we may incur. Our Board of Directors has overall responsibility for our financing strategy. Stockholder approval is not required for changes to our financing strategy. If our Board of Directors decided to increase our leverage, it could lead to reduced or negative cash flow and reduced liquidity.



## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

The percentage of leverage used will vary depending on our estimate of the stability of iStar Financial's cash flow. To the extent that changes in market conditions cause the cost of such financing to increase relative to the income that can be derived from the assets originated, we may reduce the amount of our leverage.

Leverage creates an opportunity for increased net income, but at the same time creates risks. For example, leveraging magnifies changes in our net worth. We will incur leverage only when there is an expectation that it will enhance returns, although there can be no assurance that our use of leverage will prove to be beneficial. Moreover, there can be no assurance that we will be able to meet our debt service obligations and, to the extent that we cannot, we risk the loss of some or all of our assets or a financial loss if we are required to liquidate assets at a commercially inopportune time.

We and our subsidiaries are parties to agreements and debt instruments that restrict future indebtedness and the payment of dividends, including indirect restrictions (through, for example, covenants requiring the maintenance of specified levels of net worth and earnings to debt service ratios) and direct restrictions. As a result, in the event of a deterioration in our financial condition, these agreements or debt instruments could restrict our ability to pay dividends. Moreover, if we fail to pay dividends as required by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended ("Internal Revenue Code") whether as a result of restrictive covenants in our debt instruments or otherwise, we may lose our qualification as a REIT. For more information regarding the consequences of loss of REIT qualification, please read the risk factor entitled "We May Be Subject to Adverse Consequences if We Fail to Qualify as a REIT."

### **We Utilize Interest Rate Hedging Arrangements Which May Adversely Affect Our Borrowing Cost and Expose Us to Other Risks.**

We have variable rate lending assets and variable rate debt obligations. These assets and liabilities create a natural hedge against changes in variable interest rates. This means that as interest rates increase, we earn more on our variable rate lending assets and pay more on our variable rate debt obligations and, conversely, as interest rates decrease, we earn less on our variable rate lending assets and pay less on our variable rate debt obligations. When our variable rate debt obligations exceed our variable rate lending assets, we utilize derivative instruments to limit the impact of changing interest rates on our net income. We do not use derivative instruments to hedge assets or for speculative purposes. The derivative instruments we use are typically in the form of interest rate swaps and interest rate caps. Interest rate swaps effectively change variable rate debt obligations to fixed rate debt obligations. Interest rate caps effectively limit the maximum interest rate on variable rate debt obligations.

The primary risks from our use of derivative instruments is the risk that a counterparty to a hedging arrangement could default on its obligation and the risk that we may have to pay certain costs, such as transaction fees or breakage costs, if a hedging arrangement is terminated by us. As a matter of policy, we enter into hedging arrangements with counterparties that are large, creditworthy financial institutions typically rated at least "A/A2" by Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service, respectively. Our hedging strategy is monitored by our Audit Committee on behalf of our Board of Directors and may be changed by the Board of Directors without stockholder approval.

Developing an effective strategy for dealing with movements in interest rates is complex and no strategy can completely insulate us from risks associated with such fluctuations. There can be no assurance that our hedging activities will have the desired beneficial impact on our results of operations or financial condition.

### **We Face a Risk of Liability Under Environmental Laws.**

Under various U.S. federal, state and local environmental laws, ordinances and regulations, a current or previous owner of real estate (including, in certain circumstances, a secured lender that

succeeds to ownership or control of a property) may become liable for the costs of removal or remediation of certain hazardous or toxic substances at, on, under or in its property. Those laws typically impose cleanup responsibility and liability without regard to whether the owner or control party knew of or was responsible for the release or presence of such hazardous or toxic substances. The costs of investigation, remediation or removal of those substances may be substantial. The owner or control party of a site may be subject to common law claims by third parties based on damages and costs resulting from environmental contamination emanating from a site. Certain environmental laws also impose liability in connection with the handling of or exposure to asbestos-containing materials, pursuant to which third parties may seek recovery from owners of real properties for personal injuries associated with asbestos-containing materials. Absent succeeding to ownership or control of real property, a secured lender is not likely to be subject to any of these forms of environmental liability.

**Certain Provisions in Our Charter May Inhibit a Change in Control.**

Generally, to maintain our qualification as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code, not more than 50% in value of our outstanding shares of stock may be owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals at any time during the last half of our taxable year. The Internal Revenue Code defines "individuals" for purposes of the requirement described in the preceding sentence to include some types of entities. Under our charter, no person may own more than 9.8% of our outstanding shares of stock, with some exceptions. The restrictions on transferability and ownership may delay, deter or prevent a change in control or other transaction that might involve a premium price or otherwise be in the best interest of the securityholders.

Our charter authorizes our Board of Directors:

1. To cause us to issue additional authorized but unissued shares of common or preferred stock.
2. To classify or reclassify, in one or more series, any of our unissued preferred shares.
3. To set the preferences, rights and other terms of any classified or reclassified securities that we issue.

**Adverse Changes in General Economic Conditions Can Adversely Affect Our Business.**

Our success is dependent upon the general economic conditions in the geographic areas in which a substantial number of our investments are located. Adverse changes in national economic conditions or in the economic conditions of the regions in which we conduct substantial business likely would have an adverse effect on real estate values and, accordingly, our business.

**We May Be Subject to Adverse Consequences If We Fail to Qualify as a REIT.**

We intend to operate so as to qualify as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes. We have received an opinion of our legal counsel, Clifford Chance US LLP, that, based on the assumptions and representations described in "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences," our existing legal organization and our actual and proposed method of operation, enable us to satisfy the requirements for qualification as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code. Investors should be aware, however, that opinions of counsel are not binding on the Internal Revenue Service or any court. The opinion only represents the view of our counsel based on their review and analysis of existing law, some aspects of which include no controlling precedents. Furthermore, both the validity of the opinion and our qualification as a REIT will depend on our continuing ability to meet various requirements concerning, among other things, the ownership of our outstanding stock, the nature of our assets, the sources of our income and the amount of our distributions to our stockholders. See "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences Taxation of iStar Financial General."

If we were to fail to qualify as a REIT for any taxable year, we would not be allowed a deduction for distributions to our stockholders in computing our taxable income and we would be subject to

U.S. federal income tax, including any applicable minimum tax, on our taxable income with respect to any such taxable year at regular corporate rates. Unless entitled to relief under certain Internal Revenue Code provisions, we also would be disqualified from treatment as a REIT for the four subsequent taxable years following the year during which qualification was lost. As a result, cash available for distribution would be reduced for each of the years involved. Furthermore, it is possible that future economic, market, legal, tax or other considerations may cause the Board of Directors to revoke our REIT election. See "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences."

**To Qualify as a REIT, We May Be Forced to Borrow Funds During Unfavorable Market Conditions.**

To qualify as a REIT, we generally must distribute to our stockholders at least 90% of our net income each year, excluding net capital gains, and we will be subject to regular U.S. federal corporate income taxes to the extent that we distribute less than 100% of our net taxable income each year. In addition, we will be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the amount, if any, by which distributions paid by us in any calendar year are less than the sum of 85% of our ordinary income, 95% of our capital gain net income and 100% of our undistributed income from prior years. In order to qualify as a REIT and avoid the payment of income and excise taxes, we may need to borrow funds on a short-term, or possibly long-term, basis to meet the REIT distribution requirements even if the prevailing market conditions are not favorable for these borrowings. These borrowing needs could result from, among other things, a difference in timing between the actual receipt of cash and inclusion of income for U.S. federal income tax purposes, the effect of non-deductible capital expenditures, the creation of reserves or required debt or amortization payments.

**Dividends Payable by REITs Do Not Qualify for Reduced Tax Rates.**

The maximum U.S. federal income tax rate for dividends payable by domestic corporations to individual U.S. stockholders (as such term is defined under "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences" below) is 15% through 2008. Dividends payable by REITs, however, are generally not eligible for the reduced rates. As a result, the more favorable rates applicable to regular corporate dividends could cause stockholders who are individuals to perceive investments in REITs to be relatively less attractive than investments in the stocks of non-REIT corporations that pay dividends, which could adversely affect the value of the stock of REITs, including our common stock.

**Possible Legislative or Other Actions Affecting REITs Could Adversely Affect Our Stockholders.**

The rules dealing with U.S. federal income taxation are constantly under review by persons involved in the legislative process and by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Treasury Department. Changes to tax laws (which changes may have retroactive application) could adversely affect our stockholders or us. It cannot be predicted whether, when, in what forms, or with what effective dates, the tax laws applicable to our stockholders or us will be changed.

**We Will Pay Some Taxes.**

Even if we qualify as a REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes, we will be required to pay some U.S. federal, state, local, and foreign taxes on our income and property. In addition, our "taxable REIT subsidiaries" are fully taxable corporations, and there are limitations on the ability of taxable REIT subsidiaries to make interest payments to affiliated REITs. In addition, we will be subject to a 100% penalty tax to the extent economic arrangements among our tenants, our taxable REIT subsidiary and us are not comparable to similar arrangements among unrelated parties. We will also be subject to a 100% tax to the extent we derive income from the sale of assets to customers in the ordinary course of business. To the extent that we or our taxable REIT subsidiary are required to pay U.S. federal, state, local or foreign taxes, we will have less cash available for distribution to stockholders.

**Certain Financing Activities May Subject Us to U.S. Federal Income Tax and Increase the Tax Liability of Our Stockholders.**

Although we do not intend to invest a material portion of our assets in real estate mortgage investment conduits, or "REMICs," certain taxable income produced by REMIC residual interests may cause our stockholders to suffer adverse tax consequences. In addition, we have entered into certain financing transactions which are treated as taxable mortgage pools, and with respect to which we are treated as owning residual interests.

Although the law on the matter is unclear, we might be taxable at the highest corporate income tax rate on a portion of the income arising from a taxable mortgage pool that is allocable to the percentage of our shares held by "disqualified organizations," which are generally certain cooperatives, governmental entities and tax-exempt organizations that are exempt from unrelated business taxable income. We believe that disqualified organizations own our shares. Because this tax would be imposed on us, all of our investors, including investors that are not disqualified organizations, would bear a portion of the tax cost associated with the classification of us or a portion of our assets as a taxable mortgage pool. In addition, if we realize "excess inclusion income" and allocate it to stockholders, this income cannot be offset by net operating losses of our stockholders. In addition, if the stockholder is a tax-exempt entity and not a disqualified organization, then the excess inclusion income would be fully taxable as unrelated business taxable income under Section 512 of the Internal Revenue Code. If the stockholder is a foreign person, it would be subject to U.S. federal income tax withholding on the excess inclusion income and would not be able to reduce such withholding tax pursuant to any otherwise applicable income tax treaty. See "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences Effect of Subsidiary Entities Taxable Mortgage Pools," and " Excess Inclusion Income."

**Our Board of Directors May Change Certain of Our Policies Without Stockholder Approval.**

Our charter provides that our primary purpose is to invest in a diversified portfolio of debt and debt-like interests in real estate and real estate related assets, although it does not set forth specific percentages of the types of investments we may make. Our Board of Directors determines our investment policies, as well as our financing and conflicts of interest policies. Although the Board of Directors has no present intention to do so, it can amend, revise or eliminate these policies at any time and from time to time at its discretion without a vote of the stockholders. A change in these policies could adversely affect our financial condition or results of operations or the market price of our common stock.

**A Portion of The Dividends We Distribute May Be Deemed a Return of Capital For U.S. Federal Income Tax Purposes.**

The amount of dividends we distribute to our common stockholders in a given quarter may not correspond to our taxable income for such quarter. Consequently, a portion of the dividends we distribute may be deemed a return of capital for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and will not be taxable but will reduce stockholders' basis in its common stock. For the year ended December 31, 2004, the percentage of our dividend payments made to common stockholders that was treated as a return of capital was 41.2%.

**Quarterly Results May Fluctuate and May Not Be Indicative of Future Quarterly Performance.**

Our quarterly operating results could fluctuate; therefore, you should not rely on past quarterly results to be indicative of our performance in future quarters. Factors that could cause quarterly operating results to fluctuate include, among others, variations in our investment origination volume, variations in the timing of prepayments, the degree to which we encounter competition in our markets and general economic conditions.

**RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND  
PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS AND EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES**

	Three Months Ended March 31,	Years Ended December 31,				
	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends(1)	1.8x	1.5x(2)	2.0x	1.7x	1.8x	1.7x
Ratio of earnings to fixed charges(1)	2.0x	1.8x(2)	2.4x	2.1x	2.2x	2.1x

- (1) For the purposes of calculating the ratio of earnings to fixed charges, "earnings" consist of income from continuing operations before adjustment for minority interest in consolidated subsidiaries, or income or loss from equity investees, income taxes and cumulative effect of change in accounting principle plus "fixed charges" and certain other adjustments. "Fixed charges" consist of interest incurred on all indebtedness (including amortization of original issue discount) and the implied interest component of our rent obligations in the years presented.
- (2) Includes the effect of chief executive officer, chief financial officer and ACRE Partners compensation charges of \$106.9 million, 8.75% Senior Notes due 2008 redemption charge of \$11.5 million and, for the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred dividends, preferred stock redemption charge of \$9.0 million. Excluding these charges, the ratio of earnings to combined fixed charges and preferred stock dividends and the ratio of earnings to fixed changes would have been 2.0x and 2.3x respectively.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

Except as may be set forth in a particular prospectus supplement, we will add the net proceeds from sales of securities to our general corporate funds, which we may use to repay indebtedness, for new investments, or for other general corporate purposes.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

We will issue the debt securities under an indenture dated as of February 5, 2001 with US Bank Trust National Association, as trustee, which we may supplement from time to time. The following paragraphs describe the provisions of the indenture. We have filed the indenture as an exhibit to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part and you may inspect it at the office of the trustee.

### General

The debt securities will be our direct, unsecured obligations and may be either senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities. The indenture does not limit the principal amount of debt securities that we may issue. We may issue debt securities in one or more series. A supplemental indenture will set forth specific terms of each series of debt securities. There will be prospectus supplements relating to particular series of debt securities. Each prospectus supplement will describe:

The title of the debt securities and whether the debt securities are senior or subordinated debt securities.

Any limit upon the aggregate principal amount of a series of debt securities which we may issue.

The date or dates on which principal of the debt securities will be payable and the amount of principal which will be payable.

The rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) at which the debt securities will bear interest, if any, as well as the dates from which interest will accrue, the dates on which interest will be payable, the persons to whom interest will be payable, if other than the registered holders on the record date, and the record date for the interest payable on any payment date.

The currency or currencies in which principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, will be paid.

The place or places where principal, premium, if any, and interest, if any, on the debt securities will be payable and where debt securities which are in registered form can be presented for registration of transfer or exchange.

Any provisions regarding our right to prepay debt securities or of holders to require us to prepay debt securities.

The right, if any, of holders of the debt securities to convert them into common stock or other securities, including any provisions intended to prevent dilution of the conversion rights.

Any provisions requiring or permitting us to make payments to a sinking fund which will be used to redeem debt securities or a purchase fund which will be used to purchase debt securities.

Any index or formula used to determine the required payments of principal, premium, if any, or interest, if any.

The percentage of the principal amount of the debt securities which is payable if maturity of the debt securities is accelerated because of a default.

Any special or modified events of default or covenants with respect to the debt securities.

Any other material terms of the debt securities.

Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

The indenture does not contain any restrictions on the payment of dividends or the repurchase of our securities or any financial covenants. However, supplemental indentures relating to particular series of debt securities may contain provisions of that type.

We may issue debt securities at a discount from their stated principal amount. A prospectus supplement may describe U.S. federal income tax considerations and other special considerations applicable to a debt security issued with original issue discount.

If the principal of, premium, if any, or interest with regard to any series of debt securities is payable in a foreign currency, we will describe in the prospectus supplement relating to those debt securities any restrictions on currency conversions, tax considerations or other material restrictions with respect to that issue of debt securities.

#### **Form of Debt Securities**

We may issue debt securities in certificated or uncertificated form, in registered form with or without coupons or in bearer form with coupons, if applicable.

We may issue debt securities of a series in the form of one or more global certificates evidencing all or a portion of the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities of that series. We may deposit the global certificates with depositories, and the certificates may be subject to restrictions upon transfer or upon exchange for debt securities in individually certificated form.

#### **Events of Default and Remedies**

An event of default with respect to each series of debt securities will include:

Our default in payment of the principal of or premium, if any, on any debt securities of any series beyond any applicable grace period.

Our default for 30 days or a period specified in a supplemental indenture, which may be no period, in payment of any installment of interest due with regard to debt securities of any series.

Our default for 60 days after notice in the observance or performance of any other covenants in the indenture.

Certain events involving our bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization.

Supplemental indentures relating to particular series of debt securities may include other events of default.

The indenture provides that the trustee may withhold notice to the holders of any series of debt securities of any default (except a default in payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, if any) if the trustee considers it in the interest of the holders of the series to do so.

The indenture provides that if any event of default has occurred and is continuing, the trustee or the holders of not less than 25% in principal amount of a series of debt securities then outstanding may declare the principal of and accrued interest, if any, on that series of debt securities to be due and payable immediately. However, if we cure all defaults (except the failure to pay principal, premium or interest which became due solely because of the acceleration) and certain other conditions are met, that declaration may be annulled and past defaults may be waived by the holders of a majority in principal amount of the applicable series of debt securities.

The holders of a majority of the outstanding principal amount of a series of debt securities will have the right to direct the time, method and place of conducting proceedings for any remedy available to the trustee, subject to certain limitations specified in the indenture.

A prospectus supplement will describe any additional or different events of default which apply to any series of debt securities.



### **Modification of the Indenture**

We and the trustee may:

Without the consent of holders of debt securities, modify the indenture to cure errors or clarify ambiguities.

With the consent of the holders of not less than a majority in principal amount of the debt securities which are outstanding under the indenture, modify the indenture or the rights of the holders of the debt securities generally.

With the consent of the holders of not less than a majority in outstanding principal amount of any series of debt securities, modify any supplemental indenture relating solely to that series of debt securities or the rights of the holders of that series of debt securities.

However, we may not:

Extend the fixed maturity of any debt securities, reduce the rate or extend the time for payment of interest, if any, on any debt securities, reduce the principal amount of any debt securities or the premium, if any, on any debt securities, impair or affect the right of a holder to institute suit for the payment of principal, premium, if any, or interest, if any, with regard to any debt securities, change the currency in which any debt securities are payable or impair the right, if any, to convert any debt securities into common stock or any of our other securities, without the consent of each holder of debt securities who will be affected.

Reduce the percentage of holders of debt securities required to consent to an amendment, supplement or waiver, without the consent of the holders of all the then outstanding debt securities or outstanding debt securities of the series which will be affected.

### **Mergers and Other Transactions**

We may not consolidate with or merge into any other entity, or transfer or lease our properties and assets substantially as an entirety to another person, unless: (1) the entity formed by the consolidation or into which we are merged, or which acquires or leases our properties and assets substantially as an entirety, assumes by a supplemental indenture all our obligations with regard to outstanding debt securities and our other covenants under the indenture; and (2) with regard to each series of debt securities, immediately after giving effect to the transaction, no event of default, with respect to that series of debt securities, and no event which would become an event of default, will have occurred and be continuing.

### **Governing Law**

The indenture, each supplemental indenture, and the debt securities issued under them will be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of New York.

### **DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS**

Each issue of warrants will be the subject of a warrant agreement which will contain the terms of the warrants. We will distribute a prospectus supplement with regard to each issue of warrants. Each prospectus supplement will describe, as to the warrants to which it relates:

The securities which may be purchased by exercising the warrants (which may be common stock, preferred stock, debt securities, depositary shares or units consisting of two or more of those types of securities).

Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

The exercise price of the warrants (which may be wholly or partly payable in cash or wholly or partly payable with other types of consideration).

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

The period during which the warrants may be exercised.

Any provision adjusting the securities which may be purchased on exercise of the warrants and the exercise price of the warrants in order to prevent dilution or otherwise.

The place or places where warrants can be presented for exercise or for registration of transfer or exchange.

Any other material terms of the warrants.

### DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK AND PREFERRED STOCK

Our authorized capital stock consists of 200,000,000 shares of common stock, \$0.001 par value, 45,000 shares of High Performance Common Stock and 30,000,000 shares of preferred stock, \$0.001 par value, of which 4,600,000 shares are designated 8.000% Series D Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value, 9,000,000 shares are designated 7.875% Series E Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value, 4,600,000 shares are designated 7.800% Series F Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value, 3,200,000 shares are designated 7.650% Series G Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value and 5,000,000 shares are designated 7.500% Series I Cumulative Redeemable Preferred Stock, \$0.001 par value. At March 31, 2005, 111,494,219 shares of common stock, 41,438 shares of High Performance Common Stock, 4,000,000 shares of Series D preferred stock, 5,600,000 shares of Series E preferred Stock, 4,000,000 shares of Series F preferred stock, 3,200,000 shares of Series G preferred stock and 5,000,000 shares of our Series I preferred stock were outstanding. We previously had authorized and issued series of preferred stock designated Series A, B, C, and H preferred stock; however, we have retired each of those series, which makes the shares available for re-issuance and re-designation.

#### Common Stock

Holders of common stock will be entitled to receive distributions on common stock if, as and when the Board of Directors authorizes and declares distributions. However, rights to distributions may be subordinated to the rights of holders of preferred stock, when preferred stock is issued and outstanding. In the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, each outstanding share of common stock will entitle its holder to a proportionate share of the assets that remain after we pay our liabilities and any preferential distributions owed to preferred stockholders.

Holders of the common stock are entitled to one vote for each share on all matters submitted to a stockholder vote. Holders of the Series D preferred stock are entitled to 0.25 of a vote for each share on all matters submitted to a stockholder vote. They will vote with the common stock as a single class. There is no cumulative voting in the election of directors.

Holders of shares of common stock have no preference, conversion, sinking fund, redemption, appraisal or exchange rights or any preemptive rights to subscribe for any of our securities. All shares of common stock have equal dividend, distribution, liquidation and other rights.

We may be dissolved if the Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of the entire Board of Directors, declares the dissolution advisable and directs that the proposed dissolution be submitted for consideration at either an annual or special meeting of stockholders. Dissolution will occur once it is approved by the affirmative vote of a majority of stockholders entitled to cast votes on the matter.

Our charter grants the Board of Directors the power to authorize the issuance of additional authorized but unissued shares of common stock and preferred stock. The Board of Directors may also classify or reclassify unissued shares of common stock or preferred stock and authorize their issuance.

Our charter also provides that, to the extent permitted by the General Corporate Law of Maryland, the Board of Directors may, without any action by the stockholders, amend our charter from time to time to increase or decrease the aggregate number of shares of stock or the number of shares of stock of any class or series that we have authority to issue.

We believe that these powers of the Board of Directors provide increased flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs which might arise. Although the Board of Directors does not intend to do so at the present time, it could authorize the issuance of a class or series that could delay, defer or prevent a change of control or other transaction that might involve a premium price for the common stock or otherwise be in the best interest of the stockholders.

### **High Performance Unit Program**

In May 2002 and June 2003, the Company's stockholders initially approved two iStar Financial High Performance Unit Programs. The programs, as more fully described in the Company's annual proxy statements dated April 8, 2002, April 21, 2003, April 27, 2004 and April 25, 2005 are performance-based employee, director and officer compensation plans that only have material value to the participants if the Company provides superior returns to its stockholders. The programs entitle the employee, director and officer participants to receive cash distributions in the nature of common stock dividends if the total rate of return on the Company's Common Stock (share price appreciation plus dividends) exceeds certain performance levels.

Initially, there were three plans within the employee program: the 2002 plan, the 2003 plan, and the 2004 plan. Each plan has 5,000 shares of High Performance Common Stock associated with it. Each share of High Performance Common Stock carries 0.25 votes per share.

For these three plans, the Company's performance is measured over a one-, two-, or three-year valuation period, beginning on January 1, 2002 and ending on December 31, 2002, December 31, 2003 and December 31, 2004, respectively. The end of the valuation period (i.e., the "valuation date") will be accelerated if there is a change in control of the Company. The High Performance Common Stock has a nominal value unless the total rate of stockholder return for the relevant valuation period exceeds the greater of: (1) 10.00%, 20.00%, or 30.00% for the 2002 plan, the 2003 plan and the 2004 plan, respectively; and (2) a weighted industry index total rate of return consisting of equal weightings of the Russell 1000 Financial Index and the Morgan Stanley REIT Index for the relevant period.

If the total rate of return on the Company's Common Stock exceeds the threshold performance levels for a particular plan, then distributions will be paid on the shares of High Performance Common Stock related to that plan in the same amounts and at the same times as distributions are paid on a number of shares of the Company's Common Stock equal to the following: 7.50% of the Company's excess total rate of return (over the higher of the two threshold performance levels) multiplied by the weighted average market value of the Company's common equity capitalization during the measurement period, all as divided by the average closing price of a share of the Company's Common Stock for the 20 trading days immediately preceding the applicable valuation date.

If the total rate of return on the Company's Common Stock does not exceed the threshold performance levels for a particular plan, then the shares of High Performance Common Stock related to that plan will have only nominal value. In this event, each of the 5,000 shares will be entitled to dividends equal to 0.01 times the dividend paid on a share of Common Stock, if and when dividends are declared on the common stock.

Regardless of how much the Company's total rate of return exceeds the threshold performance levels, the dilutive impact to the Company's stockholders resulting from distributions on High Performance Common Stock in each plan is limited to 1.00% of the number of shares of the Company's Common Stock outstanding, on a fully diluted basis, on the valuation date for each plan.

A new 2005 plan was then established with a three-year period ending December 31, 2005. Awards under the 2005 plan were approved on January 14, 2003. The 2005 plan also has 5,000 shares of High Performance Common Stock with an aggregate initial purchase price of \$573,000. The provisions of the 2005 plan are substantially the same as the prior plans. A 2006 plan and 2007 plan were established in 2004 with substantially similar terms to the 2005 plan.

The iStar Financial Executive and Director High Performance Unit Program was established in 2003. This plan is substantially similar to the employee plans. There are two plans within the Executive and Director HPU Program, the 2005 plan and the 2006 plan. Each plan has 5,000 shares associated with it. Each share will carry 0.25 votes and pay dividends equal to 0.01 times the dividend paid on a share of our common stock, if and when dividends are declared on our common stock. The valuation date of the 2005 plan is December 31, 2005 and the valuation date of the 2006 plan is December 31, 2006. The valuation dates will be accelerated if there is a change of control of the Company. Prior to the valuation dates, the High Performance Common Stock will have little intrinsic value. Stockholders have been asked to consider and vote upon a proposal to expand the iStar Financial Executive and Director High Performance Unit Program by approving a 2007 Plan, a 2008 Plan and a 2009 Plan in this year's proxy statement.

The shares will continue to have only the nominal value described above unless, on the applicable valuation date, the three-year total rate of return (dividends plus share price appreciation) on a share of our common stock exceeds the greater of: (1) 30.00%, and (2) a weighted industry index total rate of return consisting of equal weightings of the Russell 1000 Financial Index and the Morgan Stanley REIT Index for the three-year period. If the total rate of return on the common stock exceeds the threshold performance levels for a particular plan, then distributions are paid in the same manner as they are in the employee programs.

The Executive and Director HPU Plans differ from the employee plans regarding dilution. The dilutive impact to our stockholders resulting from distributions on High Performance Common Stock in each plan under the Executive and Director HPU Plans will be limited to 0.50% of the number of shares of our common stock outstanding, on a fully diluted basis, on the valuation date for each plan, unlike the 1.00% limit in the employee plans.

#### **Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer**

To maintain our REIT qualification under the Internal Revenue Code, no group of five or fewer individuals can own, actually or constructively, more than 50% in value of our issued and outstanding stock at any time during the last half of a taxable year. Additionally, at least 100 persons must beneficially own our stock (the "5/50 Test") during at least 335 days of a taxable year. To assist us in meeting these tests, our charter provides that no person other than persons who were our stockholders as of November 3, 1999 or persons exempted by our Board of Directors may beneficially or constructively own more than 9.8% of the number or value of our capital stock (the "Ownership Limit").

Each person who is a beneficial or constructive owner of shares of stock and each person, including the stockholder of record, who is holding shares of stock for a beneficial or constructive owner must provide us in writing any information with respect to direct, indirect and constructive ownership of shares of stock as the Board of Directors deems reasonably necessary to comply with the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code applicable to a REIT, to determine our qualification as a REIT, to comply with the requirements of any taxing authority or governmental agency or to determine any such compliance.

Any issuance or transfer of shares of our stock that would result in (1) a violation of the 5/50 Test, (2) our stock being beneficially owned by fewer than 100 persons (determined without reference to any rules of attribution), or (3) our otherwise failing to qualify as a REIT, shall be void and the intended

transferee shall acquire no rights in such shares of our stock. Shares of our stock issued or transferred that would cause any stockholder (a "Prohibited Owner") to own more than the Ownership Limit or otherwise cause us to fail to qualify as a REIT will constitute shares of excess stock. All excess stock will be automatically transferred, without action by the Prohibited Owner, to a trust for the exclusive benefit of one or more charitable beneficiaries that we select, and the Prohibited Owner will not acquire any rights in the shares of excess stock. Such automatic transfer shall be deemed to be effective as of the close of business on the day prior to the date of the transfer causing a violation. If the transfer to the trust would not be effective for any reason to prevent a stockholder from owning more than the Ownership Limit or otherwise cause us to fail to qualify as a REIT, then the transfer of that number of shares necessary to cause such ownership or failure will be void and the intended transferee shall acquire no rights in such shares of our stock. The trustee of the trust shall be appointed by us and must be independent of us and the Prohibited Owner. The Prohibited Owner shall have no right to receive dividends or other distributions with respect to, or be entitled to vote, any excess stock held in the trust. Any dividend or other distribution paid prior to the discovery by us that excess stock has been transferred to the trust must be paid by the recipient of the dividend or distribution to the trustee upon demand for the benefit of the charitable beneficiaries, and any dividend or other distribution authorized but unpaid shall be paid when due to the trust. The trust shall have all dividend and voting rights with respect to the shares of excess stock held in the trust, which rights shall be exercised for the exclusive benefit of the charitable beneficiary. Any dividend or distribution so paid to the trust shall be held in trust for the charitable beneficiary.

Within 60 days after the latest of (i) the date of the transfer which resulted in such transfer to the charitable trust and (ii) the date the Board of Directors determines in good faith that a transfer resulting in the transfer to the charitable trust has occurred, the trustee will sell the excess stock held in the trust to a person, designated by the trustee, whose ownership of the shares will not violate the ownership limitations set forth in our charter. Upon such sale, any interest of the charitable beneficiary in the excess stock sold shall terminate and the trustee shall distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the Prohibited Owner and to the charitable beneficiary as follows. The Prohibited Owner shall receive the lesser of (a) the price paid by the Prohibited Owner for the excess stock (or, in the case of a devise, gift or other transaction in which no value was given for such shares held by the charitable trust, the Market Price (as defined in our charter) at the time of such devise, gift or other transaction), and (b) the price per share received by the trustee from the sale or other disposition of the excess stock held in the trust. Any net sale proceeds in excess of the amount payable to the Prohibited Owner shall be paid immediately to the charitable beneficiary. Shares of our stock held by the charitable trust shall be deemed to have been offered for sale to us, or our designee, at a price per share equal to the lesser of (i) the price per share in the transaction that created such shares held by the trust (or, in the case of a devise, gift or other transaction in which no value was given for such shares held by the trust, the Market Price at the time of such devise, gift or other transaction) and (ii) the Market Price of the shares of our stock to which such shares held by the trust relates on the date we, or our designee, accepts such offer (the "Redemption Price"). We shall have the right to accept such offer until the trustee has sold the shares of our stock held in the charitable trust. Upon such a sale, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares of stock sold shall terminate and the trustee shall distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the purported record transferee of such shares. If any of the foregoing restrictions on transfer of our shares held by the trust are determined to be void or invalid, then the purported record transferee of such shares may be deemed, at our option, to have acted as our agent in acquiring such shares and to hold such shares on our behalf.

These restrictions on ownership and transfer will not apply to our stock if the Board of Directors determines that it is no longer in our best interests to qualify as a REIT.

These restrictions on ownership and transfer could delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change of control of us that might involve a premium price for shares of our stock or otherwise be in the best interest of our stockholders.

### **Preferred Stock**

We may issue preferred stock in series with any rights and preferences which may be authorized by our board of directors. We will distribute a prospectus supplement with regard to each series of preferred stock. Each prospectus supplement will describe, as to the preferred stock to which it relates:

The title of the series.

Any limit upon the number of shares of the series which may be issued.

The preference, if any, to which holders of the series will be entitled upon our liquidation.

The date or dates on which we will be required or permitted to redeem shares of the series.

The terms, if any, on which we or holders of the series will have the option to cause shares of the series to be redeemed.

The voting rights of the holders of the preferred stock.

The dividends, if any, which will be payable with regard to the series (which may be fixed dividends or participating dividends and may be cumulative or non-cumulative).

The right, if any, of holders of the series to convert them into another class of our stock or securities, including provisions intended to prevent dilution of those conversion rights.

Any provisions by which we will be required or permitted to make payments to a sinking fund which will be used to redeem shares of the series or a purchase fund which will be used to purchase shares of the series.

Any other material terms of the series.

Holders of shares of preferred stock will not have preemptive rights.

### **Transfer Agent and Registrar**

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock and preferred stock is Equiserve Trust Company, N.A.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

We may issue depositary receipts representing interests in shares of particular series of preferred stock which are called depositary shares. We will deposit the preferred stock of a series which is the subject of depositary shares with a depositary, which will hold that preferred stock for the benefit of the holders of the depositary shares, in accordance with a deposit agreement between the depositary and us. The holders of depositary shares will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate, including dividend, voting, conversion, redemption and liquidation rights, to the extent of their interests in that preferred stock.

While the deposit agreement relating to a particular series of preferred stock may have provisions applicable solely to that series of preferred stock, all deposit agreements relating to preferred stock we issue will include the following provisions:

**Dividends and Other Distributions.** Each time we pay a cash dividend or make any other type of cash distribution with regard to preferred stock of a series, the depositary will distribute to the holder of record of each depositary share relating to that series of preferred stock an amount equal to the dividend or other distribution per depositary share the depositary receives. If there is a distribution of property other than cash, the depositary either will distribute the property to the holders of depositary shares in proportion to the depositary shares held by each of them, or the depositary will, if we approve, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds to the holders of the depositary shares in proportion to the depositary shares held by them.

**Withdrawal of Preferred Stock.** A holder of depositary shares will be entitled to receive, upon surrender of depositary receipts representing depositary shares, the number of whole or fractional shares of the applicable series of preferred stock, and any money or other property, to which the depositary shares relate.

**Redemption of Depositary Shares.** Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by a depositary, the depositary will be required to redeem, on the same redemption date, depositary shares constituting, in total, the number of shares of preferred stock held by the depositary which we redeem, subject to the depositary's receiving the redemption price of those shares of preferred stock. If fewer than all the depositary shares relating to a series are to be redeemed, the depositary shares to be redeemed will be selected by lot or by another method we determine to be equitable.

**Voting.** Any time we send a notice of meeting or other materials relating to a meeting to the holders of a series of preferred stock to which depositary shares relate, we will provide the depositary with sufficient copies of those materials so they can be sent to all holders of record of the applicable depositary shares, and the depositary will send those materials to the holders of record of the depositary shares on the record date for the meeting. The depositary will solicit voting instructions from holders of depositary shares and will vote or not vote the preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate in accordance with those instructions.

**Liquidation Preference.** Upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up, the holder of each depositary share will be entitled to what the holder of the depositary share would have received if the holder had owned the number of shares (or fraction of a share) of preferred stock which is represented by the depositary share.

**Conversion.** If shares of a series of preferred stock are convertible into common stock or other of our securities or property, holders of depositary shares relating to that series of preferred stock will, if they surrender depositary receipts representing depositary shares and appropriate instructions to convert them, receive the shares of common stock or other securities or property into which the number of shares (or fractions of shares) of preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate could at the time be converted.

**Amendment and Termination of a Deposit Agreement.** We and the depositary may amend a deposit agreement, except that an amendment which materially and adversely affects the rights of



holders of depositary shares, or would be materially and adversely inconsistent with the rights granted to the holders of the preferred stock to which they relate, must be approved by holders of at least two-thirds of the outstanding depositary shares. No amendment will impair the right of a holder of depositary shares to surrender the depositary receipts evidencing those depositary shares and receive the preferred stock to which they relate, except as required to comply with law. We may terminate a deposit agreement with the consent of holders of a majority of the depositary shares to which it relates. Upon termination of a deposit agreement, the depositary will make the whole or fractional shares of preferred stock to which the depositary shares issued under the deposit agreement relate available to the holders of those depositary shares. A deposit agreement will automatically terminate if:

All outstanding depositary shares to which it relates have been redeemed or converted.

The depositary has made a final distribution to the holders of the depositary shares issued under the deposit agreement upon our liquidation, dissolution or winding up.

**Miscellaneous.** There will be provisions: (1) requiring the depositary to forward to holders of record of depositary shares any reports or communications from us which the depositary receives with respect to the preferred stock to which the depositary shares relate; (2) regarding compensation of the depositary; (3) regarding resignation of the depositary; (4) limiting our liability and the liability of the depositary under the deposit agreement (usually to failure to act in good faith, gross negligence or willful misconduct); and (5) indemnifying the depositary against certain possible liabilities.

#### **CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES**

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES RELEVANT TO AN INVESTOR IN ISTAR FINANCIAL AND OUR QUALIFICATION AS A REIT. THIS SUMMARY IS BASED ON CURRENT LAW. YOUR TAX CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO AN INVESTMENT IN ISTAR FINANCIAL MAY VARY DEPENDING ON YOUR PARTICULAR SITUATION AND THIS DISCUSSION DOES NOT PURPORT TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF TAXATION THAT MAY BE RELEVANT TO A HOLDER OF OUR SECURITIES IN LIGHT OF HIS OR HER PERSONAL INVESTMENT OR TAX CIRCUMSTANCES, OR TO HOLDERS OF OUR SECURITIES SUBJECT TO SPECIAL TREATMENT UNDER THE U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX LAWS, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT DISCUSSED UNDER THE HEADINGS " TAXATION OF TAX-EXEMPT STOCKHOLDERS" AND " TAXATION OF NON-U.S. STOCKHOLDERS." INVESTORS SUBJECT TO SPECIAL TREATMENT INCLUDE, WITHOUT LIMITATION, INSURANCE COMPANIES, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, BROKER-DEALERS, TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS, INVESTORS HOLDING SECURITIES AS PART OF A CONVERSION TRANSACTION, OR A HEDGE OR HEDGING TRANSACTION OR AS A POSITION IN A STRADDLE FOR TAX PURPOSES, FOREIGN CORPORATIONS OR PARTNERSHIPS, AND PERSONS WHO ARE NOT CITIZENS OR RESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES. IN ADDITION, THE SUMMARY BELOW DOES NOT CONSIDER THE EFFECT OF ANY FOREIGN, STATE, LOCAL OR OTHER TAX LAWS THAT MAY BE APPLICABLE TO YOU AS A HOLDER OF OUR SECURITIES.

This discussion is based on the Internal Revenue Code, current, temporary and proposed Treasury regulations promulgated under the Internal Revenue Code, the legislative history of the Internal Revenue Code, current administrative interpretations and practices of the Internal Revenue Service, and court decisions, all as of the date of this prospectus. The administrative interpretations and practices of the Internal Revenue Service upon which this summary is based include its practices and policies as expressed in private letter rulings which are not binding on the Internal Revenue Service, except with respect to the taxpayers who requested and received such rulings. Future legislation, Treasury regulations, administrative interpretations and practices, and court decisions may affect the tax consequences contained in this summary, possibly on a retroactive basis. We have not requested, and do not plan to request, any rulings from the Internal Revenue Service concerning our tax treatment or the tax consequences contained in this summary, and the statements in this prospectus are not binding

on the Internal Revenue Service or a court. Thus, we can provide no assurance that the tax consequences contained in this summary will not be challenged by the Internal Revenue Service or sustained by a court if so challenged.

YOU ARE URGED TO CONSULT YOUR TAX ADVISOR REGARDING THE SPECIFIC TAX CONSEQUENCES TO YOU OF: (1) THE ACQUISITION, OWNERSHIP AND SALE OR OTHER DISPOSITION OF OUR SECURITIES, INCLUDING THE U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, FOREIGN AND OTHER TAX CONSEQUENCES; (2) OUR ELECTION TO BE TAXED AS A REIT FOR U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES; AND (3) POTENTIAL CHANGES IN APPLICABLE TAX LAWS.

#### **Taxation of iStar Financial General**

We have elected to be taxed as a REIT under Sections 856 through 860 of the Internal Revenues Code, commencing with our taxable year ended December 31, 1998. We believe that we have been organized and have operated in a manner which allows us to qualify for taxation as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code and we intend to continue to be organized and to operate in this manner. Our qualification and taxation as a REIT, however, depend upon our ability to meet, through actual annual operating results, asset requirements, distribution levels, diversity of stock ownership, and the various other requirements imposed under the Internal Revenue Code. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that we have operated or will continue to operate in a manner so as to qualify or remain qualified as a REIT. See " Failure to Qualify."

In the opinion of Clifford Chance US LLP, commencing with our taxable year ended December 31, 1998, iStar Financial was organized and has operated in conformity with the requirements for qualification as a REIT, and its present and proposed method of operation, as represented by iStar Financial, will enable it to meet the requirements for qualification as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code. It must be emphasized that this opinion is based and conditioned upon certain assumptions and representations made by us as to factual matters (including our representations concerning our income and properties and the past, present, and future conduct of our business operations as set forth in this prospectus and one or more factual certificates provided by our officers). The opinion is expressed as of its date and Clifford Chance US LLP has no obligation to advise of any subsequent change in the matters stated, represented or assumed or any subsequent change in the applicable law. Moreover, such qualification and taxation as a REIT depends upon our ability to meet, through actual annual operating results, distribution levels and diversity of stock ownership, the various requirements imposed under the Internal Revenue Code as discussed below, the results of which will not be reviewed by Clifford Chance US LLP. Accordingly, no assurance can be given that the actual results of our operation for any one taxable year will satisfy such requirements. See " Failure to Qualify." An opinion of counsel is not binding on the Internal Revenue Service, and no assurance can be given that the Internal Revenue Service will not challenge our qualification as a REIT.

The sections of the Internal Revenue Code that relate to the qualification and taxation of REITs are highly technical and complex. The following describes the material aspects of the sections of the Internal Revenue Code that govern the U.S. federal income tax treatment of a REIT and its stockholders. This summary is qualified in its entirety by the applicable Internal Revenue Code provisions, rules and regulations promulgated under the Internal Revenue Code, and administrative and judicial interpretations of the Internal Revenue Code.

Provided we qualify for taxation as a REIT, we generally will not be subject to U.S. federal corporate income tax on our net income that is currently distributed to our stockholders. This treatment substantially eliminates the "double taxation" that generally results from an investment in a corporation. Double taxation means taxation once at the corporate level when income is earned and once again at the stockholder level when such income is distributed. For tax years through 2008, stockholders who are individual U.S. stockholders (as defined below) are generally taxed on corporate dividends at a maximum rate of 15% (the same as long-term capital gains), thereby substantially

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

reducing, though not completely eliminating, the double taxation that has historically applied to corporate dividends. With limited exceptions, however, dividends received from us or other entities that are taxed as REITs will continue to be taxed at rates applicable to ordinary income, which will be as high as 35% through 2010.

Even if we qualify for taxation as a REIT, however, we will be subject to U.S. federal income taxation as follows:

We will be required to pay tax at regular corporate rates on any undistributed REIT taxable income, including undistributed net capital gains.

We may be subject to the "alternative minimum tax" on items of tax preference, if any.

If we have: (1) net income from the sale or other disposition of "foreclosure property" which is held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business; or (2) other nonqualifying income from foreclosure property, we will be required to pay tax at the highest corporate rate on this income. In general, foreclosure property is property acquired through foreclosure after a default on a loan secured by the property or on a lease of the property.

We will be required to pay a 100% tax on any net income from prohibited transactions. In general, prohibited transactions are sales or other taxable dispositions of property, other than foreclosure property, held for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business.

If we fail to satisfy the 75% or 95% gross income tests, as described below, but have, nevertheless, maintained our qualification as a REIT, we will be subject to a tax equal to the gross income attributable to the greater of either (a) the amount by which 75% of our gross income exceeds the amount qualifying under the 75% test for the taxable year or (b) the amount by which 90% of our gross income exceeds the amount of our income qualifying under the 95% test for the taxable year multiplied in either case by a fraction intended to reflect our profitability.

If we fail to satisfy any of the REIT asset tests, as described below, by larger than a *de minimis* amount, but our failure is due to reasonable cause and we nonetheless maintain our REIT qualification because of specified cure provisions, we will be required to pay a tax equal to the greater of \$50,000 or 35% of the net income generated by the nonqualifying assets during the period in which we failed to satisfy the asset tests.

If we fail to satisfy any provision of the Internal Revenue Code that would result in our failure to qualify as a REIT (other than a gross income or asset test requirement) and that violation is due to reasonable cause, we may retain our REIT qualification, but we will be required to pay a penalty of \$50,000 for each such failure.

We will generally be subject to tax on the portion of any excess inclusion income derived from an investment in residual interests in REMICs to the extent our shares are held by specified tax-exempt organizations not subject to tax on unrelated business taxable income. Although the law is unclear, similar rules may apply if we own an equity interest in a taxable mortgage pool. To the extent that we own a REMIC residual interest or a taxable mortgage pool through a TRS, we will not be subject to this tax. For a discussion of "excess inclusion income," see "Certain U.S. Federal Income Tax Consequences Effect of Subsidiary Entities Taxable Mortgage Pools" and " Excess Inclusion Income."

We will be required to pay a 4% excise tax on the amount by which our annual distributions to our stockholders is less than the sum of: (1) 85% of our ordinary income for the year; (2) 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for the year; and (3) any undistributed taxable income from prior periods.

If we acquire an asset from a corporation which is or has been a C corporation in a transaction in which the basis of the asset in our hands is determined by reference to the basis of the asset in the hands of the C corporation, and we subsequently recognize gain on the disposition of the asset within the ten-year period beginning on the date on which we acquired the

asset, then we

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

would be required to pay tax at the highest regular corporate tax rate on this gain to the extent: (1) the fair market value of the asset; exceeds (2) our adjusted tax basis in the asset, in each case, determined as of the date on which we acquired the asset. The results described in this paragraph assume that no election will be made under Treasury regulation Section 1.337(d)-7 for the C corporation to be subject to an immediate tax when the asset is acquired.

We will be subject to a 100% tax on any "redetermined rents," "redetermined deductions" or "excess interest." In general, redetermined rents are rents from real property that are overstated as a result of services furnished by a "taxable REIT subsidiary" of our company to any of our tenants. Redetermined deductions and excess interest represent amounts that are deducted by our taxable REIT subsidiary for amounts paid to us that are in excess of the amounts that would have been deducted based on arm's length negotiations.

In addition, our subsidiaries and we may be subject to a variety of taxes other than U.S. federal income tax, including payroll taxes and state, local, and foreign income, franchise property and other taxes. We could also be subject to tax in situations and on transactions not presently contemplated.

### Requirements for Qualification as a REIT

#### General

The Internal Revenue Code defines a REIT as a corporation, trust or association:

- (1) that is managed by one or more trustees or directors;
- (2) that issues transferable shares or transferable certificates to its owners;
- (3) that would be taxable as a regular corporation, but for its election to be taxed as a REIT;
- (4) that is not a financial institution or an insurance company under the Internal Revenue Code;
- (5) that is owned by 100 or more persons;
- (6) not more than 50% in value of the outstanding stock of which is owned, actually or constructively, by five or fewer individuals, as defined in the Internal Revenue Code to include certain entities, during the last half of each year; and
- (7) that meets other tests, described below, regarding the nature of its income and assets, and the amount of its distributions.

The Internal Revenue Code provides that conditions (1) to (4) must be met during the entire year and that condition (5) must be met during at least 335 days of a year of twelve months, or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year. Conditions (5) and (6) do not apply to the first taxable year for which an election is made to be taxed as a REIT.

We believe that we currently satisfy conditions (1) through (7) above. In addition, our Charter provides for restrictions regarding ownership and transfer of our stock. These restrictions are intended to assist us in satisfying the share ownership requirements described in (5) and (6) above. These restrictions, however, may not ensure that we will, in all cases, be able to satisfy the share ownership requirements described in (5) and (6) above. If we fail to satisfy these share ownership requirements, our status as a REIT would terminate. If, however, we comply with the rules contained in applicable Treasury regulations that require us to determine the actual ownership of our shares and we do not know, or would not have known through the exercise of reasonable diligence, that we failed to meet the requirement described in condition (6) above, we would not be disqualified as a REIT.

In addition, a corporation may not qualify as a REIT unless its taxable year is the calendar year. We have and will continue to have a calendar taxable year.

**Effect of Subsidiary Entities**

***Ownership of a Partnership Interest***

In the case of a REIT that is a partner in a partnership, Treasury regulations provide that the REIT is deemed to own its proportionate share of the partnership's assets and to earn its

proportionate share of the partnership's gross income based on its *pro rata* share of capital interests in the partnership for purposes of the REIT asset and gross income tests described below. In addition, the assets and gross income of the partnership generally are deemed to retain the same character in the hands of the REIT. For purposes of the 10% value test only, however, the determination of a REIT's interest in partnership assets will be based on the REIT's proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership, excluding certain securities described in the Internal Revenue Code. Thus, our proportionate share of the assets and income of partnerships in which we own an equity interest are treated as our assets and items of income for purposes of applying the REIT asset and gross income requirements described below. Consequently, to the extent that we directly or indirectly hold a preferred or other equity interest in a partnership, the partnership's assets and operations may affect our ability to qualify as a REIT, even though we may have no control, or only limited influence, over the partnership. A summary of certain rules governing the U.S. federal income taxation of partnerships and their partners is provided below in " Tax Aspects of Investments in Partnerships."

***Qualified REIT Subsidiaries.***

A "qualified REIT subsidiary" is a corporation, all of the stock of which is owned by a REIT. Under the Internal Revenue Code, a qualified REIT subsidiary is not treated as a separate corporation from the REIT. Rather, all of the assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit of the qualified REIT subsidiary are treated as the assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit of the REIT for purposes of the REIT income and asset tests described below.

***Taxable REIT Subsidiaries.***

A "taxable REIT subsidiary" is a corporation which, together with a REIT that owns an interest in such corporation, makes an election to be treated as a taxable REIT subsidiary. A taxable REIT subsidiary may earn income that would be nonqualifying income if earned directly by a REIT and is generally subject to full corporate level tax. A REIT may own up to 100% of the stock of a taxable REIT subsidiary.

Certain restrictions imposed on taxable REIT subsidiaries are intended to ensure that such entities will be subject to appropriate levels of U.S. federal income taxation. First, if a taxable REIT subsidiary has a debt to equity ratio as of the close of the taxable year exceeding 1.5 to 1, it may not deduct interest payments made in any year to an affiliated REIT to the extent that such payments exceed, generally, 50% of the taxable REIT subsidiary's adjusted taxable income for that year (although the taxable REIT subsidiary may carry forward to, and deduct in, a succeeding year the disallowed interest amount if the 50% test is satisfied in that year). In addition, if a taxable REIT subsidiary pays interest, rent or another amount to a REIT that exceeds the amount that would be paid to an unrelated party in an arm's length transaction, the REIT generally will be subject to an excise tax equal to 100% of such excess.

***Taxable Mortgage Pools***

An entity, or a portion of an entity, may be classified as a taxable mortgage pool under the Internal Revenue Code if:

substantially all of its assets consist of debt obligations or interests in debt obligations;

more than 50% of those debt obligations are real estate mortgage loans or interests in real estate mortgage loans as of specified testing dates;

the entity has issued debt obligations that have two or more maturities; and

the payments required to be made by the entity on its debt obligations "bear a relationship" to the payments to be received by the entity on the debt obligations that it holds as assets.

Under Treasury regulations, if less than 80% of the assets of an entity (or a portion of an entity) consist of debt obligations, these debt obligations are considered not to comprise "substantially all" of its assets, and therefore the entity would not be treated as a taxable mortgage pool.





## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

A taxable mortgage pool generally is treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes. However, special rules apply to a REIT, a portion of a REIT, or a qualified REIT subsidiary that is a taxable mortgage pool. If a REIT owns directly, or indirectly through one or more qualified REIT subsidiaries or other entities that are disregarded as a separate entity for U.S. federal income tax purposes, 100% of the equity interests in the taxable mortgage pool, the taxable mortgage pool will be a qualified REIT subsidiary and, therefore, ignored as an entity separate from the REIT for U.S. federal income tax purposes and would not generally affect the tax qualification of the REIT. Rather, the consequences of the taxable mortgage pool classification would generally, except as described below, be limited to the REIT's stockholders. See " Excess Inclusion Income."

If we own less than 100% of the ownership interests in a subsidiary that is a taxable mortgage pool, the foregoing rules would not apply. Rather, the subsidiary would be treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes, and would potentially be subject to corporate income tax. In addition, this characterization would alter our REIT income and asset test calculations and could adversely affect our compliance with those requirements. We do not expect that we would form any subsidiary in which we own some, but less than all, of the ownership interests that would become a taxable mortgage pool, and we intend to monitor the structure of any taxable mortgage pools in which we have an interest to ensure that they will not adversely affect our qualification as a REIT.

### Income Tests

We must meet two annual gross income requirements to qualify as a REIT. First, each year we must derive at least 75% of our gross income, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, from investments relating to real property or mortgages on real property, including "rents from real property" and mortgage interest, or from specified temporary investments. Second, each year we must derive at least 95% of our gross income, excluding gross income from prohibited transactions, from investments meeting the 75% test described above, or from dividends, interest and gain from the sale or disposition of stock or securities. For these purposes, the term "interest" generally does not include any interest of which the amount received depends on the income or profits of any person. An amount will generally not be excluded from the term "interest," however, if such amount is based on a fixed percentage of gross receipts or sales.

Any amount includable in gross income by us with respect to a regular or residual interest in a REMIC is generally treated as interest on an obligation secured by a mortgage on real property for purposes of the 75% gross income test. If, however, less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC consist of real estate assets, we will be treated as receiving directly our proportionate share of the income of the REMIC, which would generally include non-qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. In addition, if we receive interest income with respect to a mortgage loan that is secured by both real property and other property and the principal amount of the loan exceeds the fair market value of the real property on the date we made the mortgage loan, interest income on the loan will be apportioned between the real property and the other property, which apportionment would cause us to recognize income that is not qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test.

We may make loans that have shared appreciation provisions. To the extent interest on a loan is based on the cash proceeds from the sale or value of property, income attributable to such provision would be treated as gain from the sale of the secured property, which generally should qualify for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests.

Lease income we receive will qualify as "rents from real property" only if the following conditions are met:

The amount of lease income may not be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. "Rents from real property" may, however, include lease income based on a fixed percentage of receipts or sales. Some of the leases we have entered into provide for participation or similar rights in the net cash flow of the leasee in the excess of a threshold amount. Any amount received or accrued that is attributable to any such participation or similar

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

rights would cause all rents received or accrued by us with respect to such lease to fail to qualify as "rents from real property." We have not received or accrued and do not expect to receive or accrue any amount attributable to any participation or similar rights with respect to these leases which, together with other nonqualifying income (for purposes of the 75% or 95% gross income tests) received or accrued during the same taxable year, would have caused or would cause us to violate the 75% or 95% gross income test for that taxable year.

Lease income received from a tenant will not qualify as "rents from real property" if iStar Financial, or an actual or constructive owner of 10% or more of iStar Financial, actually or constructively owns 10% or more of such tenant.

Lease income attributable to personal property leased in connection with a lease of real property does not exceed 15% of the total lease income received under the lease.

We generally may not render services to tenants of the property, other than through an independent contractor from whom we derive no revenue. We may, however, provide services that are "usually or customarily rendered" in connection with the rental of space for occupancy only and are not otherwise considered "rendered to the occupant" of the property. In addition, we may provide a *de minimis* amount of non-customary services. Finally, we may provide certain non-customary services to tenants through a taxable REIT subsidiary.

We intend to maintain our REIT status by carefully monitoring any potential nonqualifying income for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests discussed above. If we fail to satisfy one or both of the 75% or 95% gross income tests for any year, we may still qualify as a REIT if we are entitled to relief under the Internal Revenue Code. Generally, we may be entitled to relief if:

our failure to meet the gross income tests was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect;

we attach a schedule of the sources of our income to our U.S. federal income tax return; and

any incorrect information on the schedule was not due to fraud with the intent to evade tax.

Beginning with our 2005 tax year, if we fail to satisfy one or both of the 75% or 95% gross income tests for any year, we may still qualify as a REIT if our failure to meet these tests was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect and, following the identification of such failure, we set forth a description of each item of our gross income that satisfies the gross income tests in a schedule for the taxable year filed in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Treasury.

It is not possible to state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to rely on these relief provisions. If these relief provisions do not apply to a particular set of circumstances, we would not qualify as a REIT. As discussed above in "Taxation of iStar Financial General," even if these relief provisions apply, and we retain our status as a REIT, a tax would be imposed with respect to our income that does not meet the gross income tests. We may not always be able to maintain compliance with the gross income tests for REIT qualification despite periodically monitoring our income.

### ***Foreclosure Property***

Net income realized by us from foreclosure property would generally be subject to tax at the maximum U.S. federal corporate tax rate (currently 35%). Foreclosure property means real property and related personal property that: (1) is acquired by us through foreclosure following a default on a lease of such property or a default on indebtedness owed to us that is secured by the property; and (2) for which we make an election to treat the property as foreclosure property.

### ***Prohibited Transaction Income***

Any gain realized by us on the sale of any property, other than foreclosure property, held as inventory or otherwise held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business will be prohibited transaction income, and subject to a 100% penalty tax. Prohibited transaction income may also adversely affect our ability to satisfy the gross income tests for qualification as a REIT. Whether



property is held as inventory or primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business depends on all the facts and circumstances surrounding the particular transaction. While the Internal Revenue Code provides standards which, if met, would not result in prohibited transaction income, we may not be able to meet these standards in all circumstances.

### ***Hedging Transactions***

We may enter into hedging transactions with respect to one or more of our assets or liabilities. Our hedging transactions could take a variety of forms, including interest rate swaps or cap agreements, options, futures contracts, forward rate agreements, or similar financial instruments. Except to the extent provided by Treasury regulations, any income from a hedging transaction to manage risk of interest rate or price changes or currency fluctuations with respect to borrowings made or to be made, or ordinary obligations incurred or to be incurred by us to acquire or own real estate assets, which is clearly identified as such before the close of the day on which it was acquired, originated or entered into, including gain from the disposition of such a transaction, will not constitute gross income for purposes of the 95% gross income test (but generally will constitute non-qualifying gross income for purposes of the 75% income test). To the extent we enter into other types of hedging transactions, the income from those transactions is likely to be treated as non-qualifying income for purposes of both the 75% and 95% gross income tests. We intend to structure any hedging transactions in a manner that does not jeopardize our ability to qualify as a REIT.

### **Excess Inclusion Income**

If we are deemed to have issued debt obligations having two or more maturities, the payments on which correspond to payments on mortgage loans owned by us, such arrangement may be treated as a taxable mortgage pool for U.S. federal income tax purposes. If all or a portion of our company is considered a taxable mortgage pool, our status as a REIT generally should not be impaired; however, a portion of our taxable income may be characterized as "excess inclusion income" and allocated to our stockholders. In addition, if we acquire any residual interest in a REMIC, a portion of our income derived from such residual interest may also be characterized as excess inclusion income. Any excess inclusion income:

could not be offset by net operating losses of a stockholder;

would be subject to tax as "unrelated business taxable income" to a tax-exempt stockholder;

would be subject to the application of U.S. federal income tax withholding (without reduction pursuant to any otherwise applicable income tax treaty) with respect to amounts allocable to Non-U.S. stockholders (as defined below); and

would be taxable (at the highest corporate tax rate) to us, rather than our stockholders, to the extent allocable to our stock held by disqualified organizations (generally, tax-exempt entities not subject to unrelated business income tax, including governmental organizations).

### **Asset Tests**

At the close of each quarter of each of our taxable years, we must satisfy four tests relating to the nature and diversification of our assets. First, at least 75% of the value of our total assets must be real estate assets, cash, cash items and government securities. For purposes of this test, real estate assets include real estate mortgages, real property, interests in other REITs and stock or debt instruments held for one year or less that are purchased with the proceeds of a stock offering or a long-term public debt offering. In addition, any regular or residual interests we hold in a REMIC are generally treated as a real estate asset for purposes of the asset tests described above. If, however, less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC consist of real estate assets, we will be treated as holding our proportionate share of the assets of the REMIC, which generally would include assets both qualifying and not qualifying as real estate assets. Second, not more than 25% of our total assets may be represented by securities, other than those securities includable in the 75% asset class. Third, of the investments included in the

25% asset class and, except for investments in REITs, qualified REIT subsidiaries and taxable REIT subsidiaries, the value of any one issuer's securities that we hold may not exceed 5% of the value of our total assets, and we may not own more than 10% of the total vote or value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer. Fourth, not more than 20% of the value of our total assets may be represented by securities in one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries.

The 5% and 10% asset tests do not apply to securities of taxable REIT subsidiaries, qualified REIT subsidiaries or securities that are "real estate assets" for purposes of the 75% gross asset test described above. The 10% value test does not apply to certain "straight debt" and other excluded securities, as described in the Internal Revenue Code including, but not limited to, any loan to an individual or estate, any obligation to pay rents from real property and any security issued by a REIT. In addition, (a) a REIT's interest as a partner in a partnership is not considered a security for purposes of applying the 10% value test to securities issued by the partnership, (b) any debt instrument issued by a partnership (other than straight debt or another excluded security) will not be considered a security issued by the partnership if at least 75% of the partnership's gross income is derived from sources that would qualify for the 75% REIT gross income test, and (c) any debt instrument issued by a partnership (other than straight debt or another excluded security) will not be considered a security issued by the partnership to the extent of the REIT's interest as a partner in the partnership.

For purposes of the 10% value test, "straight debt" means a written unconditional promise to pay on demand on a specified date a sum certain in money if (i) the debt is not convertible, directly or indirectly, into stock, (ii) the interest rate and interest payment dates are not contingent on profits, the borrower's discretion, or similar factors other than certain contingencies relating to the timing and amount of principal and interest payments, as described in the Internal Revenue Code and (iii) in the case of an issuer which is a corporation or a partnership, securities that otherwise would be considered straight debt will not be so considered if we, and any of our "controlled taxable REIT subsidiaries" as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, hold any securities of the corporate or partnership issuer which: (a) are not straight debt or other excluded securities (prior to the application of this rule), and (b) have an aggregate value greater than 1% of the issuer's outstanding securities (including, for the purposes of a partnership issuer, our interest as a partner in the partnership).

We expect that any real property and temporary investments that we acquire will generally be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test, except to the extent that less than 95% of the assets of a REMIC in which we own an interest consists of "real estate assets." Mortgage loans will generally be qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test to the extent that the principal balance of each mortgage loan does not exceed the value of the associated real property.

The asset tests must be satisfied not only on the last day of the calendar quarter in which we acquire securities in the applicable issuer, but also on the last day of the calendar quarter in which we increase our ownership of securities of such issuer. After initially meeting the asset tests at the close of any quarter, we will not lose our status as a REIT for failure to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a later quarter solely by reason of changes in asset values. If we fail to satisfy an asset test because we acquire securities or other property during a quarter, we can cure this failure by disposing of sufficient non-qualifying assets within 30 days after the close of the quarter. If we fail the 5% asset test or the 10% asset test at the end of any quarter, and the such failure is not cured within 30 days thereafter, we may dispose of sufficient assets (generally, within six months after the last day of the quarter in which our identification of the failure to satisfy those asset tests occurred) to cure the violation, provided that the non-permitted assets do not exceed the lesser of 1% of our assets at the end of the relevant quarter or \$10,000,000. If we fail any of the other asset tests, or our failure of the 5% and 10% asset tests is in excess of this amount, as long as the failure was due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect, we are permitted to avoid disqualification as a REIT, after the thirty day cure period, by taking steps, including the disposition of sufficient assets to meet the asset tests (generally within six months after the last day of the quarter in which our identification of the failure to satisfy the REIT asset test

occurred), and paying a tax equal to the greater of \$50,000 or 35% of the net income generated by the nonqualifying assets during the period in which we failed to satisfy the relevant asset test.

We believe that our holdings of securities and other assets will comply with the foregoing REIT asset test requirements, and we intend to monitor our compliance with such tests on an ongoing basis. However, the values of some of our assets may not be precisely valued, and values are subject to change in the future. Furthermore, the proper classification of an instrument as debt or equity for U.S. federal income tax purposes may be uncertain in some circumstances, which could affect the application of the REIT asset tests. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that the Internal Revenue Service will not contend that our assets do not meet the requirements of the REIT asset tests.

### **Annual Distribution Requirements**

To qualify as a REIT, we are required to distribute dividends, other than capital gain dividends, to our stockholders in an amount at least equal to the sum of: (1) 90% of our "REIT taxable income"; and (2) 90% of our after tax net income, if any, from foreclosure property; minus (3) the excess of the sum of certain items of non-cash income over 5% of our "REIT taxable income". In general, "REIT taxable income" means taxable ordinary income without regard to the dividends paid deduction.

We are required to distribute income in the taxable year in which it is earned, or in the following taxable year if such dividend distributions are declared in October, November or December of the taxable year, payable to stockholders of record on a specified date during such period and paid during January of the following year. Such distributions are treated as paid by us and received by our stockholders on December 31 of the year in which they are declared. In addition, at our election, a distribution for a taxable year may be declared before we timely file our tax return and paid on or before our first regular dividend payment following such declaration, provided such payment is made during the twelve-month period following the close of our taxable year. These distributions are taxable to holders of common stock in the year in which paid, even though these distributions relate to our prior year for purposes of our 90% distribution requirement. To the extent that we do not distribute all of our net capital gain or distribute at least 90%, but less than 100% of our "REIT taxable income," we will be subject to tax at regular corporate tax rates.

From time to time we may not have sufficient cash or other liquid assets to meet the above distribution requirements due to timing differences between the actual receipt of cash and payment of expenses, and the inclusion of income and deduction of expenses in arriving at our taxable income. If these timing differences occur, in order to meet the REIT distribution requirements, we may need to arrange for short-term, or possibly long-term, borrowings, or to pay dividends in the form of taxable stock dividends.

Under certain circumstances, we may be able to rectify a failure to meet a distribution requirement for a year by paying "deficiency dividends" to our stockholders in a later year, which may be included in our deduction for dividends paid for the earlier year. Thus, we may be able to avoid being subject to tax on amounts distributed as deficiency dividends. We will be required, however, to pay interest based upon the amount of any deduction claimed for deficiency dividends. In addition, we will be subject to a 4% excise tax on the excess of the required distribution over the amounts actually distributed if we should fail to distribute each year at least the sum of 85% of our ordinary income for the year, 95% of our capital gain income for the year, and any undistributed taxable income from prior periods.

### **Recordkeeping Requirements**

We are required to maintain records and request on an annual basis information from specified stockholders. These requirements are designed to assist us in determining the actual ownership of our outstanding stock and maintaining our qualifications as a REIT.

### **Failure to Qualify**

In the event we violate a provision of the Internal Revenue Code that would result in our failure to qualify as a REIT, specified relief provisions will be available to us to avoid such disqualification if (1) the violation is due to reasonable cause, (2) we pay a penalty of \$50,000 for each failure to satisfy the provision and (3) the violation does not include a violation of the gross income or asset tests described above (for which other specified relief provisions are available). This cure provision reduces the instances that could lead to our disqualification as a REIT for violations due to reasonable cause.

If we fail to qualify for taxation as a REIT in any taxable year, and the relief provisions of the Internal Revenue Code do not apply, we will be subject to tax, including any applicable alternative minimum tax, and possibly increased state and local taxes, on our taxable income at regular corporate rates. Such taxation would reduce the cash available for distribution by us to our stockholders. Distributions to our stockholders in any year in which we fail to qualify as a REIT will not be deductible by us and we will not be required to distribute any amounts to our stockholders. In this situation, to the extent of current and accumulated earnings and profits, and, subject to limitations of the Internal Revenue Code, distributions to our stockholders through 2008 will generally be taxable to stockholders who are individual U.S. stockholders at a maximum rate of 15%, and dividends received by our corporate U.S. stockholders may be eligible for the dividends received deduction. Unless entitled to relief under specific statutory provisions, we would also be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which we lost our qualification. It is not possible to state whether in all circumstances we would be entitled to statutory relief.

### **Tax Aspects of Investments in Partnerships**

#### ***General***

We may hold investments through entities that are classified as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In general, partnerships are "pass-through" entities that are not subject to U.S. federal income tax. Rather, partners are allocated their proportionate shares of the items of income, gain, loss, deduction and credit of a partnership, and are subject to tax on such items without regard to whether the partners receive a distribution from the partnership. We will include in our income our proportionate share of these partnership items for purposes of the various REIT gross income tests, based on our capital interest in such partnership, and we will include our share of partnership items in our computation of our taxable income. Moreover, for purposes of the REIT asset tests, we will include our proportionate share of assets held by subsidiary partnerships (other than for purposes of the 10% value test, for which the determination of our interest in partnership assets will be based on our proportionate interest in any securities issued by the partnership, excluding for these purposes, certain excluded securities as described in the Internal Revenue Code). See " Effect of Subsidiary Entities Ownership of a Partnership Interest" above. Consequently, to the extent that we hold an equity interest in a partnership, the partnership's assets and operations may affect our ability to qualify as a REIT, even though we may have no control, or only limited influence, over the partnership.

#### ***Entity Classification***

The investment by us in partnerships involves special tax considerations, including the possibility of a challenge by the Internal Revenue Service of the status of any of our subsidiary partnerships as a partnership, as opposed to an association taxable as a corporation, for U.S. federal income tax purposes. If any of these entities were treated as an association for U.S. federal income tax purposes, it would be taxable as a corporation and, therefore, would be subject to an entity-level tax on its net income. In such a situation, the character of our assets and items of our gross income would change and could preclude us from satisfying the REIT asset tests (particularly the tests generally preventing a REIT from owning more than 10% of the voting securities, or more than 10% of the value of the securities, of a corporation) or the gross income tests as discussed in " Requirements for Qualification as a REIT Asset Tests" and " Income Tests" above, and in turn could prevent us from qualifying as

a REIT. See " Requirements for Qualification as a REIT Failure to Qualify," below, for a discussion of the effect of our failure to meet these tests for a taxable year. In addition, any change in the status of any of our subsidiary partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes might be treated as a taxable event, in which case we could have taxable income that is subject to the REIT distribution requirements without receiving any cash.

#### ***Allocations with Respect to Partnership Properties***

Under the Internal Revenue Code and the Treasury regulations, income, gain, loss and deduction attributable to appreciated or depreciated property that is contributed to a partnership in exchange for an interest in the partnership must be allocated for tax purposes in a manner such that the contributing partner is charged with, or benefits from, the unrealized gain or unrealized loss associated with the property at the time of the contribution. The amount of the unrealized gain or unrealized loss is generally equal to the difference between the fair market value of the contributed property and the adjusted tax basis of such property at the time of the contribution (a "book-tax difference"). Such allocations are solely for U.S. federal income tax purposes and do not affect the partnership's capital accounts or the other economic or legal arrangements among the partners.

To the extent that any of our subsidiary partnerships acquire appreciated (or depreciated) properties by way of capital contributions, allocations would need to be made in a manner consistent with these requirements. As a result, we could be allocated greater or lesser amounts of depreciation and taxable income in respect of such contributed properties than would have been the case if all of the partnership's assets had been acquired in exchange for cash at their agreed upon fair market value.

#### **Taxation of Taxable U.S. Stockholders**

When we use the term "U.S. stockholder," we mean a beneficial owner of shares of our stock who is, for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

a citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation, or other entity treated as a corporation for U.S. federal income tax purposes created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or of any state thereof or in the District of Columbia, unless Treasury regulations provide otherwise;

an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

a trust (a) whose administration is subject to the primary supervision of a United States court and which has one or more United States persons who have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (b) in existence on August 20, 1996, and treated as a United States person prior to such date, that has elected to continue to be treated as a United States person.

If a partnership holds shares of our stock, the tax treatment of a partner in the partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and the activities of the partnership. If you are a partner of a partnership holding shares of our stock, you should consult your tax advisor regarding the consequences of the ownership and disposition of shares of our stock.

#### **Distributions Generally**

Distributions out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits, other than capital gain dividends will generally be taxable to our U.S. stockholders as ordinary income. For this purpose, our earnings and profits will be allocated first to our outstanding preferred shares, and then to our outstanding common shares. Provided we qualify as a REIT, our dividends will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction generally available to U.S. stockholders that are corporations.

Dividends received from REITs are generally not eligible to be taxed at the preferential qualified dividend income rates applicable to individual U.S. stockholders who receive dividends from taxable C corporations. An exception applies, however, and individual U.S. stockholders are taxed at such rates





on dividends designated by and received from REITs, to the extent that the dividends are attributable to (i) "REIT taxable income" that the REIT previously retained in the prior year, and on which it was subject to corporate level tax, (ii) dividends received by the REIT from taxable domestic C corporations (including taxable REIT subsidiaries) and certain foreign corporations or (iii) income from sales of appreciated property acquired from C corporations in carryover basis transactions that has been subject to tax at the REIT level.

To the extent that we make distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, these distributions will be treated as a tax-free return of capital to each U.S. stockholder, and will reduce the adjusted tax basis which each U.S. stockholder has in its shares of stock by the amount of the distribution, but not below zero. Return of capital distributions in excess of a U.S. stockholder's adjusted tax basis in its shares will be taxable as capital gain, provided that the shares have been held as capital assets, and will be taxable as long-term capital gain if the shares have been held for more than one year.

Dividends we declare in October, November, or December of any year and pay to a stockholder of record on a specified date in any of those months will be treated as both paid by us and received by the stockholder on December 31 of that year, provided we pay the dividend in January of the following year. Stockholders may not include in their own income tax returns any of our net operating losses or capital losses.

#### ***Capital Gain Distributions***

Distributions designated as net capital gain dividends will be taxable to U.S. stockholders as capital gain income. Such capital gain income will be taxable to U.S. stockholders at a maximum rate of 15% (through 2008) in the case of U.S. stockholders who are individuals and 35% for corporations. Capital gains attributable to the sale of depreciable real property held for more than 12 months are subject to a 25% maximum U.S. federal income tax rate for U.S. stockholders to the extent of previously claimed depreciation deductions. U.S. stockholders that are corporations may be required to treat up to 20% of certain capital gain dividends as ordinary income.

#### ***Retention of Net Capital Gains***

We may elect to retain, rather than distribute as a capital gain dividend, our net capital gains. If we make this election, we would pay tax on such retained capital gains. In such a case, our stockholders would generally:

include their proportionate share of our undistributed net capital gains in their taxable income;

receive a credit for their proportionate share of the tax paid by us; and

increase the adjusted basis of their stock by the difference between the amount of their capital gain and their share of the tax paid by us.

#### ***Passive Activity Losses and Investment Interest Limitations***

Distributions we make and gain arising from the sale or exchange by a U.S. stockholder of our shares will not be treated as passive activity income. As a result, U.S. stockholders will not be able to apply any "passive losses" against income or gain relating to our stock. Distributions we make, to the extent they do not constitute a return of capital, generally will be treated as investment income for purposes of computing the investment interest limitation but the foregoing rule will not apply to distributions representing dividends to the extent such amounts are taxed at the preferential rates as discussed below unless the U.S. stockholders elect to be taxed on such amounts at a higher rate.

#### ***Dispositions of Stock***

If you are a U.S. stockholder and you sell or dispose of your shares of stock, you will recognize gain or loss for U.S. federal income tax purposes in an amount equal to the difference between the amount of cash and the fair market value of any property you receive on the sale or other disposition

and your adjusted tax basis in the shares of stock. In general, capital gains recognized by individuals and other non-corporate U.S. stockholders upon the sale or disposition of shares of our stock will be subject to a maximum U.S. federal income tax rate of 15% for taxable years through 2008, if the shares are held for more than 12 months, and will be taxed at ordinary income rates (of up to 35% through 2010) if the shares are held for 12 months or less. Gains recognized by U.S. stockholders that are corporations are subject to U.S. federal income tax at a maximum rate of 35%, whether or not classified as long-term capital gains. Capital losses recognized by a U.S. stockholder upon the disposition of our common stock are generally available only to offset capital gain income of the U.S. stockholder but not ordinary income (except in the case of individuals, who may offset up to \$3,000 of ordinary income each year). In addition, if you are a U.S. stockholder and you recognize loss upon the sale or other disposition of stock that you have held for six months or less, the loss you recognize will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent you received distributions from us which were required to be treated as long-term capital gains.

If a U.S. stockholder recognizes a loss upon a subsequent disposition of shares of our common stock in an amount that exceeds a prescribed threshold, it is possible that the provisions of recently adopted Treasury regulations involving "reportable transactions" could apply, with a resulting requirement to separately disclose the loss generating transaction to the Internal Revenue Service. While these regulations are directed towards "tax shelters," they are broadly written, and apply to transactions that would not typically be considered tax shelters. In addition, legislative proposals have been introduced in Congress, that, if enacted, would impose significant penalties for failure to comply with these requirements. You should consult your tax advisor concerning any possible disclosure obligation with respect to the receipt or disposition of shares of our common stock, or transactions that might be undertaken directly or indirectly by us. Moreover, you should be aware that we and other participants in transactions involving us (including their advisors) might be subject to disclosure or other requirements pursuant to these regulations.

#### ***Backup Withholding***

We report to our U.S. stockholders and the Internal Revenue Service the amount of dividends paid during each calendar year, and the amount of any tax withheld. Under the backup withholding rules, a stockholder may be subject to backup withholding with respect to dividends paid unless the holder is a corporation or comes within other exempt categories and, when required, demonstrates this fact, or provides a taxpayer identification number or social security number, certifies as to no loss of exemption from backup withholding, and otherwise complies with applicable requirements of the backup withholding rules. A U.S. stockholder that does not provide us with his correct taxpayer identification number or social security number may also be subject to penalties imposed by the Internal Revenue Service. Backup withholding is not an additional tax. Any amount paid as backup withholding will be creditable against the stockholder's income tax liability. In addition, we may be required to withhold a portion of capital gain distributions to any stockholders who fail to certify their non-foreign status.

**Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders**

Except as provided below, the Internal Revenue Service has ruled that amounts distributed as dividends by a REIT do not constitute unrelated business taxable income when received by a tax-exempt entity, provided that the shares of the REIT are not otherwise used in an unrelated trade or business. Based on that ruling, provided that a tax-exempt stockholder has not held its shares as "debt financed property" within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code (i.e., where the acquisition or holding of the property is financed through a borrowing by the tax exempt stockholder), the shares are not otherwise used in a unrelated trade or business, and we do not hold an asset that gives rise to "excess inclusion income" (see " Taxable Mortgage Pools" and " Excess Inclusion Income") dividend income on our stock and income from the sale of our stock should not be unrelated business taxable income to a tax-exempt stockholder. We expect to engage in transactions that would result in a portion of our dividend income being considered "excess inclusion income," and accordingly, it is likely that a portion of our dividends received by a tax-exempt stockholder could give rise to unrelated businesses taxable income (See" Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders; Excess Inclusion Income").

For tax-exempt stockholders which are social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts, and qualified group legal services plans exempt from U.S. federal income taxation under Sections 501(c)(7), (c)(9), (c)(17) and (c)(20) of the Internal Revenue Code, respectively, income from an investment in our shares will constitute unrelated business taxable income unless the organization is able to claim properly a deduction for amounts set aside or placed in reserve for certain purposes so as to offset the income generated by its investment in our shares. These prospective investors should consult their tax advisors concerning these "set aside" and reserve requirements.

Notwithstanding the above, however, a portion of the dividends paid by a "pension-held REIT" may be treated as unrelated business taxable income as to any pension trust which:

is described in Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code;

is tax-exempt under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

holds more than 10%, by value, of the interests in the REIT.

Tax-exempt pension funds that are described in Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code are referred to below as "qualified trusts." A REIT is a "pension held REIT" if:

it would not have qualified as a REIT but for the fact that Section 856(h)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code provides that stock owned by a qualified trust is treated, for purposes of the 5/50 rule, as owned by the beneficiaries of the trust, rather than by the trust itself; and

either at least one qualified trust holds more than 25%, by value, of the interests in the REIT, or one or more qualified trusts, each of which owns more than 10%, by value, of the interests in the REIT, holds in the aggregate more than 50%, by value, of the interests in the REIT.

The percentage of any REIT dividend treated as unrelated business taxable income is equal to the ratio of:

the unrelated business taxable income earned by the REIT, treating the REIT as if it were a qualified trust and therefore subject to tax on unrelated business taxable income, to

the total gross income of the REIT.

*A de minimis* exception applies where the percentage is less than 5% for any year. As a result of the limitations on the transfer and ownership of stock contained in our Charter, we do not expect to be classified as a "pension-held REIT."



***Excess Inclusion Income:***

A portion of our net income attributable to assets financed through our STARS<sup>(SM)</sup> program (and, therefore, a portion of the dividends payable by us) may be treated as excess inclusion income from a residual interest in a taxable mortgage pool, which may constitute unrelated business taxable income to a tax-exempt stockholder. (See " Annual Distribution Requirements; Excess Inclusion Income".) Although we have no plan to enter into additional transactions which generate excess inclusion income, it is possible that we may do so. Prospective stockholders should consult their tax advisor regarding the U.S. federal income tax consequences to them of incurring excess inclusion income.

**Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders**

The rules governing U.S. federal income taxation of beneficial owners of our stock that are not U.S. stockholders ("Non-U.S. stockholders") are complex and no attempt will be made herein to provide more than a summary of such rules.

**PROSPECTIVE NON-U.S. STOCKHOLDERS SHOULD CONSULT THEIR TAX ADVISOR TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN, U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL INCOME TAX LAWS WITH REGARD TO AN INVESTMENT IN OUR SECURITIES AND OF OUR ELECTION TO BE TAXED AS A REIT INCLUDING ANY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

Distributions to Non-U.S. stockholders that are not attributable to gain from sales or exchanges by us of U.S. real property interests and are not designated by us as capital gain dividends or retained capital gains will be treated as dividends of ordinary income to the extent that they are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. Such distributions will generally be subject to a withholding tax equal to 30% of the distribution unless an applicable tax treaty reduces or eliminates that tax. However, if income from an investment in our stock is treated as effectively connected with the Non-U.S. stockholder's conduct of a U.S. trade or business, the Non-U.S. stockholder generally will be subject to U.S. federal income tax at graduated rates, in the same manner as U.S. stockholders are taxed with respect to such distributions (and also may be subject to the 30% branch profits tax in the case of a Non-U.S. stockholder that is a corporation). We expect to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on the gross amount of any distributions made to a Non-U.S. stockholder unless: (1) a lower treaty rate applies and any required form, such as IRS Form W-8BEN, evidencing eligibility for that reduced rate is filed by the Non-U.S. stockholder with us; or (2) the Non-U.S. stockholder files an IRS Form W-8ECI with us claiming that the distribution is effectively connected income.

Any portion of the dividends paid to Non-U.S. stockholders that is treated as excess inclusion income from a REMIC or a taxable mortgage pool will, pursuant to regulations to be issued by the U.S. Treasury Department, not be eligible for exemption from the 30% withholding tax or a reduced treaty rate. In addition, if Treasury regulations are issued allocating our excess inclusion income from non-REMICs among our stockholders, some percentage of our dividends would not be eligible for exemption from the 30% withholding tax or a reduced treaty withholding tax rate in the hands of Non-U.S. stockholders.

Distributions in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits will not be taxable to a stockholder to the extent that such distributions do not exceed the adjusted basis of the stockholder's stock, but rather will reduce the adjusted basis of such shares. To the extent that distributions in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits exceed the adjusted basis of a Non-U.S. stockholder's stock, such distributions will give rise to tax liability if the Non-U.S. stockholder would otherwise be subject to tax on any gain from the sale or disposition of its stock, as described below. Because it generally cannot be determined at the time a distribution is made whether or not such distribution will be in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits, the entire amount of any distribution normally will be subject to withholding at the same rate as a dividend. However, amounts so withheld are refundable to the extent it is subsequently determined that such distribution was, in fact, in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits. We are also required to withhold 10% of any

distribution in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits. Consequently, although we intend to withhold at a rate of 30% on the entire amount of any distribution, to the extent that we do not do so, any portion of a distribution not subject to withholding at a rate of 30% will be subject to withholding at a rate of 10%.

For any year in which we qualify as a REIT, distributions that are attributable to gain from sales or exchanges of a U.S. real property interest, which includes certain interests in U.S. real property, but generally does not include mortgage loans, will be taxed to a Non-U.S. stockholder under the provisions of the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act of 1980 ("FIRPTA"). We hold both assets that constitute U.S. real property interests and assets that do not. To the extent our assets do not constitute U.S. real property interests, distributions by us from the sales of such assets will not be subject to tax under the FIRPTA rules. Under FIRPTA, distributions attributable to gain from sales of U.S. real property interests are taxed to a Non-U.S. stockholder as if such gain were effectively connected with a U.S. business. Non-U.S. stockholders thus would be taxed at the normal capital gain rates applicable to U.S. stockholders (subject to applicable alternative minimum tax and a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals). Distributions subject to FIRPTA also may be subject to the 30% branch profits tax in the hands of a Non-U.S. stockholder that is a corporation. However, the 35% withholding tax will not apply to any capital gain dividend with respect to any class of our stock which is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States if the non-U.S. stockholder did not own more than 5% of such class of stock at any time during the taxable year. Instead, any capital gain dividend will be treated as a distribution subject to the rules discussed above under "Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders." Also, the branch profits tax will not apply to such a distribution.

Gain recognized by a Non-U.S. stockholder upon a sale of our stock generally will not be taxed under FIRPTA if we are a "domestically controlled REIT," which is a REIT in which at all times during a specified testing period less than 50% in value of the stock was held directly or indirectly by Non-U.S. persons. Although we currently believe that we are a domestically controlled REIT, because our stock is publicly traded, no assurance can be given that we are or will remain a domestically controlled REIT. Even if we do not qualify as a domestically controlled REIT, an alternative exemption to tax under FIRPTA might be available if either (a) we are not (and have not been for the five year period prior to the sale) a U.S. real property holding corporation (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code and applicable Treasury Regulations to generally include a corporation, 50% or more of the assets of which consist of U.S. real property interests) or (b) the selling Non-U.S. stockholder owns, actually or constructively, 5% or less of our stock throughout a specified testing period and our shares are regularly traded (as defined in applicable Treasury Regulations) on an established securities market. If we did not qualify as a domestically controlled REIT and a Non-U.S. stockholder does not qualify for the above exception, amounts realized by such Non-U.S. stockholder upon a sale of our stock generally would be subject to withholding under FIRPTA at a rate of 10%.

Gain not subject to FIRPTA will be taxable to a Non-U.S. stockholder if: (1) the Non-U.S. stockholder's investment in the stock is effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business, in which case the Non-U.S. stockholder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. stockholders with respect to such gain; or (2) the Non-U.S. stockholder is a nonresident alien individual who was present in the U.S. for 183 days or more during the taxable year and other conditions are met, in which case the nonresident alien individual will be subject to a 30% tax on the individual's capital gains. If the gain on the sale of the stock were to be subject to taxation under FIRPTA, the Non-U.S. stockholder would be subject to the same treatment as U.S. stockholders with respect to such gain (subject to applicable alternative minimum tax, a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals, and the possible application of the 30% branch profits tax in the case of Non-U.S. corporations).

### **State, Local and Foreign Taxation**

We may be required to pay state, local and foreign taxes in various state, local and foreign jurisdictions, including those in which we transact business or make investments, and our stockholders may be required to pay state, local and foreign taxes in various state, local and foreign jurisdictions, including those in which they reside. Our state, local and foreign tax treatment may not conform to the U.S. federal income tax consequences summarized above. In addition, your state, local and foreign tax treatment may not conform to the U.S. federal income tax consequences summarized above. Consequently, you should consult your tax advisor regarding the effect of state, local and foreign tax laws on an investment in our securities.

### **Possible Legislative or Other Actions Affecting REITs**

The rules dealing with U.S. federal income taxation are constantly under review by persons involved in the legislative process and by the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Treasury Department. Changes to the tax law, which may have retroactive application, could adversely affect us and our investors. It cannot be predicted whether, when, in what forms, or with what effective dates, the tax law applicable to us or our investors will be changed.

## **PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

We may sell the securities offered by this prospectus to one or more underwriters for public offering and sale by them or we may sell the securities to investors directly or through agents. Any underwriter or agent involved in the offer and sale of the securities will be named in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Underwriters may offer and sell the securities at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed, related to the prevailing market prices at the time of sale or at negotiated prices. We also may, from time to time, authorize underwriters acting as agents to offer and sell the securities to purchasers upon the terms and conditions set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. In connection with the sale of securities, underwriters may be deemed to have received compensation from us in the form of underwriting discounts or commissions and may also receive commissions from purchasers of securities for whom they may act as agent. Underwriters may sell securities to or through dealers, and the dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agent.

Securities may also be sold in one or more of the following transactions: (a) block transactions (which may involve crosses) in which a broker-dealer may sell all or a portion of the securities as agent but may position and resell all or a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction; (b) purchases by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by the broker-dealer for its own account pursuant to a prospectus supplement; (c) a special offering, an exchange distribution or a secondary distribution in accordance with applicable New York Stock Exchange or other stock exchange rules; (d) ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which a broker-dealer solicits purchasers; (e) sales "at the market" to or through a market maker or into an existing trading market, on an exchange or otherwise, for shares; and (f) sales in other ways not involving market makers or established trading markets, including direct sales to purchasers. Broker-dealers may also receive compensation from purchasers of these securities which is not expected to exceed that customary in the types of transactions involved.

Any underwriting compensation paid by us to underwriters or agents in connection with the offering of securities, and any discounts, concessions or commissions allowed by underwriters to participating dealers, will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement. Underwriters, dealers and agents participating in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters, and any discounts and commissions received by them and any profit realized by them on resale of the securities may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions, under the Securities Act of 1933, as



amended. Underwriters, dealers and agents may be entitled, under agreements entered into with us and our operating partnership, to indemnification against and contribution toward civil liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

Any securities issued hereunder (other than common stock) will be new issues of securities with no established trading market. Any underwriters or agents to or through whom such securities are sold by us or the operating partnership for public offering and sale may make a market in such securities, but such underwriters or agents will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. We cannot assure you as to the liquidity of the trading market for any such securities.

In connection with the offering of the securities described in this prospectus and an accompanying prospectus supplement, certain underwriters and selling group members and their respective affiliates, may engage in transactions that stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the security being offered. These transactions may include stabilization transactions effected in accordance with Rule 104 of Regulation M promulgated by the SEC pursuant to which these persons may bid for or purchase securities for the purpose of stabilizing their market price.

The underwriters in an offering of these securities may also create a "short position" for their account by selling more equity securities or a larger principal amount of debt securities in connection with the offering than they are committed to purchase from us. In that case, the underwriters could cover all or a portion of the short position by either purchasing the securities in the open market following completion of the offering or by exercising any over-allotment option granted to them by us. In addition, the managing underwriter may impose "penalty bids" under contractual arrangements with other underwriters, which means that they can reclaim from an underwriter (or any selling group member participating in the offering) for the account of the other underwriters, the selling concession for the securities that is distributed in the offering but subsequently purchased for the account of the underwriters in the open market. Any of the transactions described in this paragraph or comparable transactions that are described in any accompanying prospectus supplement may result in the maintenance of the price of our securities at a level above that which might otherwise prevail in the open market. None of the transactions described in this paragraph or in an accompanying prospectus supplement are required to be taken by any underwriters and, if they are undertaken, may be discontinued at any time.

Any underwriters and their affiliates may be customers of, engage in transactions with and perform services for us and the operating partnership and its subsidiaries in the ordinary course of business.

#### **LEGAL MATTERS**

Clifford Chance US LLP, 31 West 52nd Street, New York, New York 10019, will pass upon the validity of the securities we are offering by this prospectus. If the validity of any securities is also passed upon by counsel for the underwriters of an offering of those securities, that counsel will be named in the prospectus supplement relating to that offering. Clifford Chance US LLP will rely upon the opinion of Venable LLP with respect to certain matters of Maryland law.

#### **EXPERTS**

The financial statements and management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting (which is included in Management's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting) incorporated in this Registration Statement by reference to the Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, an independent registered public accounting firm, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

**INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE**

We are incorporating by reference in this prospectus the following documents which we have previously filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the File Number 1-10150:

- (1) Annual Report on Form 10-K for fiscal year ended December 31, 2004.
- (2) Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2005.
- (3) Definitive Proxy Statement dated April 25, 2005.
- (4) iStar Financial Inc.'s Current Reports on Form 8-K dated January 20, 2005, February 10, 2005, February 14, 2005, February 23, 2005, March 1, 2005, March 3, 2005, March 30, 2005, April 7, 2005 and April 14, 2005.
- (5) The description of the shares of common stock contained in the Registration Statement on Form 8-A on October 5, 1999.

Whenever after the date of this prospectus we file reports or documents under Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, those reports and documents will be deemed to be part of this prospectus from the time they are filed. If anything in a report or document we file after the date of this prospectus changes anything in it, this prospectus will be deemed to be changed by that subsequently filed report or document beginning on the date the report or document is filed.

We will provide to each person to whom a copy of this prospectus is delivered a copy of any or all of the information that has been incorporated by reference in this prospectus, but not delivered with this prospectus. We will provide this information at no cost to the requestor upon written or oral request addressed to iStar Financial Inc., 1114 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10036, attention: Investor Relations Department (Telephone: (212) 930-9400).

**INFORMATION WE FILE**

We file annual, quarterly and current reports, proxy statements and other materials with the SEC. The public may read and copy any materials we file with the SEC at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. The public may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC maintains an Internet site that contains reports, proxy and information statements and other information regarding issuers (including us) that file electronically with the SEC. The address of that site is <http://www.sec.gov>.

Reports, proxy statements and other information we file also can be inspected at the offices of the New York Stock Exchange, 20 Broad Street, New York, New York 10005.

**PART II****Item 14. Other Expenses Of Issuance And Distribution.**

The following table sets forth the estimated expenses in connection with the distribution by the Participating Securityholders of the shares registered hereby, all of which the Company will pay:

SEC registration fee	\$ 588,500
Legal fees and expenses(1)	15,000
Accounting fees and expenses(1)	10,000
Trustees' fees and expenses(1)	10,000
Miscellaneous	10,000
	<hr/>
Total	\$ 633,500

- (1) Does not include expenses of preparing prospectus supplements and other expenses relating to offerings of particular securities.

**Item 15. Indemnification Of Officers And Directors.**

As permitted by the General Corporation Law of the State of Maryland ("MGCL"), our Amended and Restated Charter ("Charter") provides that an officer, director, employee or agent of our company is entitled to be indemnified for the expenses, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him by reason of any action, suit or proceeding brought against him by virtue of his acting as such officer, director, employee or agent, provided he acted in good faith or in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of our company and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful, except that in any action or suit by or in the right of our company that person shall be indemnified only for the expenses actually and reasonably incurred by him and, if that person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct, he shall not be indemnified unless and only to the extent that a court of appropriate jurisdiction shall determine that such indemnification is fair and reasonable.

**Item 16. Exhibits**

- 4.1 Form of Indenture, dated as of February 5, 2001, between the Company and US Bank Trust National Association, (as successor to State Street Bank and Trust Company, N.A.), incorporated by reference from Registration Statement No. 333-55396.
- 5 Opinion of Clifford Chance US LLP as to legality.
- 8 Opinion of Clifford Chance US LLP as to tax matters.
- 12 Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Earnings to Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends.
- 23.1 Consent of Clifford Chance US LLP (included in Exhibit 5).
- 23.2 Consent of Clifford Chance US LLP (included in Exhibit 8).
- 23.3 Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.
- 25 Statement of Eligibility and Qualification on Form T-1 of Trustee under the Indenture, incorporated by reference from Registration Statement 333-83646.

**Item 17. Undertakings.**

(1)

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

(a)

To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement: (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933; (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of shares offered (if the total dollar value of shares offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the SEC pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective registration statement; and (iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in the registration statement; provided, however, that the undertakings set forth in paragraphs (1)(i) and (1)(ii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the SEC by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Shares Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement.

(b)

That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the shares offered therein, and the offering of such shares at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c)

To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the shares being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(d)

The undersigned registrant hereby further undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the registrant's annual reports pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act of 1934 (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement will be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the shares offered therein, and the offering of such shares at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(2)

The undersigned registrant further undertakes that:

(a)

For purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of this registration statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in a form of prospectus filed by the registrants pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) or 497(h) under the Shares Act shall be deemed to be part of this registration statement as of the time it was declared effective.

(b)

For the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the shares offered therein, and the offering of such shares at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

## Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes to file an application for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the trustee to act under subsection (a) of Section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the Commission under Section 305(b)(2) of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of iStar Financial pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, iStar Financial has been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by iStar Financial of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of iStar Financial in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, iStar Financial will, unless in the opinion of counsel for iStar Financial the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this registration statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the city of New York, State of New York, on May 11, 2005.

iSTAR FINANCIAL INC.

By: /s/ JAY SUGARMAN

Name: Jay Sugarman  
 Title: Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

**POWER OF ATTORNEY**

KNOW THAT ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below hereby constitutes and appoints Jay Sugarman and Catherine D. Rice (each with full power to act alone), his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact and agent with full power of substitution, in the name and on behalf of the undersigned, to do any and all acts and things and to execute any and all instruments which said attorney and agent, may deem necessary or advisable to enable iStar Financial Inc. (the "Registrant") to comply with the Securities Act of 1933, and with the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and any rules, regulations and requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission in respect thereof in connection with this Registration Statement and any and all amendments thereto or reports that the Registrant is required to file pursuant to the requirements of federal or state shares laws or any rules and regulations thereunder. The authority granted under this Power of Attorney shall include, but not be limited to, the power and authority to sign the name of the undersigned in the capacity or capacities set forth below to a Registration Statement on Form S-3 to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, to any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to that Registration Statement in respect of the same, and to any and all instruments filed as a part of or in connection with that Registration Statement; and each of the undersigned hereby ratifies and confirms all that the attorney-in-fact and agent, shall lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this amendment has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

Name	Title	Date
/s/ JAY SUGARMAN	Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer (principal executive officer)	May 11, 2005
Jay Sugarman		
/s/ CATHERINE D. RICE	Chief Financial Officer (principal financial and accounting officer)	May 11, 2005
Catherine D. Rice		
/s/ WILLIS ANDERSEN, JR.	Director	May 11, 2005
Willis Andersen, Jr.		
/s/ ROBERT W. HOLMAN, JR.	Director	May 11, 2005
Robert W. Holman, Jr.		
/s/ ROBIN JOSEPHS	Director	May 11, 2005
Robin Josephs		



Edgar Filing: ISTAR FINANCIAL INC - Form S-3

/s/ JOHN G. MCDONALD

---

Director

May 11, 2005

John G. McDonald

/s/ GEORGE R. PUSKAR

---

Director

May 11, 2005

George R. Puskar

/s/ JEFFREY A. WEBER

---

Director

May 11, 2005

Jeffrey A. Weber

\*/s/ JAY SUGARMAN

---

May 11, 2005

Jay Sugarman,  
Attorney-in-Fact

II-5

---



**EXHIBIT INDEX**

- 4.1 Form of Indenture, dated as of February 5, 2001, between the Company and US Bank National Trust Association (as successor to State Street Bank and Trust Company, N.A.), incorporated by reference from Registration Statement No. 333-55396.
- 5 Opinion of Clifford Chance US LLP as to legality.
- 8 Opinion of Clifford Chance US LLP as to tax matters.
- 12 Ratios of Earnings to Fixed Charges and Earnings to Fixed Charges and Preferred Stock Dividends.
- 23.1 Consent of Clifford Chance US LLP (included in Exhibit 5).
- 23.2 Consent of Clifford Chance US LLP (included in Exhibit 8).
- 23.3 Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.
- 25 Statement of Eligibility and Qualification on Form T-1 of Trustee under the Indenture, incorporated by reference from Registration Statement No. 333-83646.

QuickLinks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

iSTAR FINANCIAL INC.

RISK FACTORS

RATIOS OF EARNINGS TO COMBINED FIXED CHARGES AND PREFERRED STOCK DIVIDENDS AND EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

USE OF PROCEEDS

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK AND PREFERRED STOCK

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

CERTAIN U.S. FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

LEGAL MATTERS

EXPERTS

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

INFORMATION WE FILE

PART II

SIGNATURES

POWER OF ATTORNEY

EXHIBIT INDEX