

Chamberlin Hotel Story – Daily Press, Hampton, Va.

REMAKING HISTORY FAMED FORT MONROE LANDMARK SOLD FOR \$4.2 MILLION; [Final Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

OPC Hampton LLC, a small group of investors, bought the [John Chamberlin] from Old Point Comfort Hotel, owned by Orlando, Fla.- based Pelican Properties. OPC Hampton signed a 50-year lease with the Army Corps of Engineers, clearing the way for the Chapter 11 bankruptcy court to approve the transfer of ownership of the Chamberlin, effective today.

Long-time residents remember the Chamberlin as a place of opulence for high-ranking military officials, lavish parties or weddings near the water. But over the years, the Chamberlin has fallen into decline, and most recently it almost landed on the auction block until its owners filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, saving it.

Staff photo (color) by BUDDY NORRIS; [Bob Lippard], director of senior living for Drucker and Falk, represents one of the groups involved in a major makeover for the Chamberlin Hotel, ending months of uncertainty about the historic building's future. Photos (b&w) A look back: Construction began in 1887 for the first Chamberlin Hotel. Chamberlin Hotel Map (b&w) Daily Press Location of Chamberlin Hotel

Full Text (752 words)

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The Chamberlin Hotel again gets a new life, this time as a military retirement community.

The Chamberlin Hotel, known in its early days as a place of opulence for military dignitaries on Fort Monroe, has found a new life, new owners and a new purpose.

After 20 months of uncertainty that included bankruptcy proceedings, negotiations with the Army over a 50-year lease and legislation to change the use of the landmark hotel to a military retirement community -- the hotel has been sold for \$4.2 million.

OPC Hampton LLC, a small group of investors, bought the Chamberlin from Old Point Comfort Hotel, owned by Orlando, Fla.- based Pelican Properties. OPC Hampton signed a 50-year lease with the Army Corps of Engineers, clearing the way for the Chapter 11 bankruptcy court to approve the transfer of ownership of the Chamberlin, effective today.

The project is billed as a historic renovation under the supervision of the Virginia Division of Historic Resources.

"This is not a plain vanilla retirement community," said Bob Lippard, director of the senior living division for Drucker & Falk in Raleigh, N.C., the company that will manage the project.

"This is an exceptional retirement community that may attract those from the generation who could remember the Chamberlin in its prime.

"We think it will attract a lot of military who served in the area at the time."

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The current project includes 170 units of independent living apartments, 35 assisted living units and the restoration of the hotel, which includes tearing out the 283 hotel rooms and building senior apartments.

It also includes renovating common areas for meeting rooms, spas, retail, dining venues, a fitness and wellness area and indoor pool.

New construction will consist of a three-level parking deck with 396 parking spaces.

A six-story tower with assisted living facilities and apartments, which Sentara Healthcare will manage, will sit on top of the parking deck.

Projected rents for the 2007 opening range from \$3,300 a month for a one-bedroom apartment to \$4,500 for the largest apartments with the best views.

Robert A. Mills, a principal with Commonwealth Architects in Richmond, an architectural firm that specializes in the restoration of historic buildings, says that almost every aspect of the hotel will be renovated, costing \$25 million.

"This is ideal for residential use," Mills says. "but because of the historical value, there are some areas we can't touch -- like the corridors, the elevator shafts and a lot of the exterior." *

EVOLUTION OF THE CHAMBERLIN

1887 -- Construction on the first Chamberlin begins, taking nine years to complete. Founder John Chamberlin dies shortly after its opening, with \$85 to his name.

March 7, 1920 -- The Chamberlin burns. It is rebuilt by 1929.

1979 -- Vernon Stuart buys the hotel for a reported \$95,000. A renovation is plagued by financial woes and code violations.

1997 -- James Barggren of Mount Dora, Fla., buys the hotel for \$3 million. He starts a \$3 million renovation but never finishes.

November 1998 -- Orlando, Fla.-based Pelican Properties, operating as Old Point Comfort Hotel LLC, buys the property for \$5.35 million, aiming to franchise and renovate it.

After Sept. 11, 2001 -- Sales drop more than 70 percent because access to Fort Monroe is limited.

June 2003 -- The Chamberlin is saved from the auction block as Old Point Comfort Hotel files for bankruptcy.

Summer 2003 -- Newport News-based Drucker & Falk begins to evaluate the Chamberlin as a

site for a retirement community.

2004 -- Drucker & Falk obtains legislation from the state of Virginia that allows for a new use of the hotel.

November 2004 -- Drucker & Falk signs a land lease with the Army and closes on the hotel.

Summer 2005 -- Construction is scheduled to begin. *

[Illustration]

Staff photo (color) by BUDDY NORRIS; Caption: Bob Lippard, director of senior living for Drucker and Falk, represents one of the groups involved in a major makeover for the Chamberlin Hotel, ending months of uncertainty about the historic building's future. Photos (b&w) A look back: Construction began in 1887 for the first Chamberlin Hotel. Chamberlin Hotel Map (b&w) Daily Press Location of Chamberlin Hotel

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Companies: Army Corps of Engineers (NAICS: 928110, Sic:9700) , Drucker & Falk LLC (NAICS: 233110, 531110)

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