



Courtyard by Marriott—Portland City Center Nears Opening Date

by Glen Hasek
04/23/2009



PORTLAND, ORE.—What was once a vacant bank building in downtown Portland will open in May as the Courtyard by Marriott—Portland City Center. The 256-room hotel was built to earn LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The structure, which has been given a new shell, three new floors and brand new mechanical systems, is expected to be the first LEED Gold hotel in the Pacific Northwest. Certification is expected this fall. Green hotels are becoming the norm in Portland. The Avalon Hotel & Spa announced its LEED certification last summer, The Nines hotel is expected to be certified LEED Silver this summer, and five hotels in the area are Green Seal certified.

The Courtyard by Marriott—Portland City Center was designed by SERA Architects, constructed by Hoffman Construction, is owned by JER Portland Hotel LLC, and managed by Sage Hospitality. As part of the renovation, an adjacent building was rebuilt and added to the hotel. The complex includes meeting and convention space, ballroom, fitness center, and a restaurant called “The Original—A Dinerant.”

According to Gary Golla, an associate and architect with Portland, Ore.-based SERA Architects, the construction cost premium to build the hotel to the LEED Gold standard was just 1.2 percent. Factoring in state and local incentives, the premium was reduced to just 0.25 percent. The water and energy cost savings will cover that small premium in just 18 months. After 10 years, the property will have saved more than \$600,000 in operating costs.

Emphasis on Renewable Energy

SERA Architects designed the property to use 28 percent less energy than a property of comparable size. According to Mike Castro, general manager of the hotel, much of the savings will come through efficient air handling systems and heat pumps in guestrooms and meeting spaces. By maximizing the use of natural light, lighting-related energy costs will also be minimized. All light fixtures will use compact fluorescent bulbs. Working with local energy providers, the hotel will draw 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, including wind and hydro.

Water consumption will be reduced by 26 percent mainly through the use of dual flush toilets. More than 75 percent of the waste produced during the construction process was recycled and reused. To further reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill, recycling containers will be positioned in each guestroom and on each floor. Kitchen grease will be recycled into biodiesel fuel and food waste from the restaurant will be composted.

To ensure healthy indoor air quality, the hotel will be 100 percent nonsmoking and housekeepers will use green cleaning products. Non-PVC wall covering, low VOC paints and low urea-formaldehyde casework in the guestrooms will further contribute to a healthy indoor environment for both guests and employees.

Local Artists Contribute Pieces

From a design perspective, the new Marriott property has blended as many local features as possible. According to Lisa Zangerle, director of interior design for SERA Architects, all of the artwork in the hotel was created by local artists. Guestroom and hallway murals depict Oregon landmarks and there are paintings and sculptures in each guestroom and in the lobby area. Each guestroom features an original ceramic piece by graduates of the Oregon College of Art and Craft. Custom-designed carpeting in the property incorporates a river motif. Local nature themes are also reflected in fabrics and wall coverings.



Coming in September 2009, Portland's Green Max Line will stop directly in front of the hotel, making it easy for guests to access downtown Portland, the Oregon Convention Center and Portland State University by public transportation. There will also be bicycle storage and changing rooms for employees.

The property's general manager, Castro, says the hotel plans to pursue Green Seal certification after the hotel is open. The Courtyard by Marriott—Portland City Center will also work together with other hotels and the local CVB to attract green meetings business. Castro says the hotel has already booked \$500,000 in business.

"Any time you open a hotel there is a bit of anxiety," Castro says. "Personally, I am very excited about it. We have a very strong brand. This hotel will be the only select-service hotel in downtown Portland. People have been very receptive so far."

Go to the Courtyard by Marriott—Portland City Center.

Glenn Hasek can be reached at editor@greenlodgingnews.com.

*This article first appeared on the Green Lodging News website,
www.greenlodgingnews.com
Copyright 2009. All rights reserved.*