

The Nines aims to be LEED silver

Hotel with sustainable features was designed as an 'eco-luxury' model for others to follow



BY SAM BENNETT

The Nines, a 331-room hotel in the old Meier & Frank building, is targeting a LEED silver rating and aiming to be an "eco-luxury" model for sustainable hotel design.

There are only 10 other hotels in the world that have LEED certification, according to Gary Golla of SERA Architects. "The Nines combines luxury guest experiences with energy savings," said Golla. "We enhance their experience with sustainable features."

The Nines, which opens next month, will occupy nine floors atop the five-floor downtown Macy's, with its entrance on Southwest Morrison between Fifth and Sixth avenues. SERA Architects is the shell designer and the architect of record and worked with KPFF Consulting Engineers. ForrestPerkins is the interior designer.

One of the most dramatic changes to the full-block building is the six-floor atrium just behind the front desk on the eighth floor.

The atrium stretches to the 14th floor and features a restaurant called Urban Farmer, billed as a modern American steakhouse. The atrium will also have two large glass-cube areas that break up the large floor area and will give guests places to lounge.

Carving the core of the old building to create the atrium was necessary to give each guest room a view of either downtown or the atrium, Golla said. He said 24 million pounds of building material was removed and recycled during the building's renovation.

The Nines will save 500,000 gallons a year by using dual flush toilets and low-flow faucets. In addition, the hotel will draw 100 percent renewable energy, including wind-power and carbon offsets.

Golla said the interior designer, Cliff Tuttle of ForrestPerkins, selected low-emitting adhesives, sealants, paints and carpets to better air quality. The project will also earn LEED points for reusing the Meier & Frank building and maintaining 75 percent of the building's shell. Golla said the Meier & Frank building was built in three stages, in 1905, 1915 and 1930.

Also at the atrium level will be the Library at the Nines, a wood-paneled room with a pool table, and another private dining area with wainscoting from the former Georgian Room in the old Meier & Frank building.

"Throughout the project, significant historic and architectural elements were preserved, refurbished and incorporated in the renovation design such as historic windows, terra cotta mansard roof with porthole windows and the Georgian Room," said Ken Geist, executive vice president for development at Sage Hospitality, the owner, developer and manager of the Nines.

Fred Kleisner, general manager of the hotel, said it was designed to create a "modern nostalgic atmosphere, with casual sophistication." The hotel has come with its own scent, developed by a specialist in Bend, which Kleisner said will be "refreshing and light."

"We're trying to take an indigenous perspective and be Portland-centric," he said, referring to keeping the character of the original building and using references to Oregon wherever possible. There are two meeting rooms near the ballroom named the "Meier" and "Frank" boardrooms.

As the designer, Golla said his firm was given more leverage because the Nines needed to be an original. "There was not a series of strict brand standards," he said. "As the designer, we were able to do a lot."