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Inn at the Presidio due to open in April

Stacy Finz, Chronicle Staff Writer
Friday, January 6, 2012

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Susana Bates / Special to The Chronicle

Built in 1904, the three-story Colonial Revival on the main post was stripped to its studs and had to be seismically retrofitted and updated. The project took more than a year.

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The Presidio Trust, the board that oversees the Army post-turned-national park, has repurposed Pershing Hall, previously the quarters for single officers, into the Inn at the Presidio. Waterford Hotels & Inns Inc. of San Mateo will operate the 22-room hotel.

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recreation facilities, including a golf course, bowling alley, YMCA and indoor rock-climbing studio.

"The big picture is that the hotel makes the park more accessible to the public and that it plays a synergistic role with our weddings and events programs," he said.

Parties in the Presidio are expected to gross \$1.1 million this year

...at the Presidio are expected to gross \$1.1 million this year.

According to a congressional mandate, the park must be financially self-sufficient by 2013 - meaning this is the last year the historic landmark district will receive federal funding.

To save the former military base from being sold to private investors in the early 1990s, a trust was formed and a promise made to the U.S. government that as a national park it would stand on its own.

Bagley said the trust is expected to hit its mark and then some this year.

Operating costs are estimated to reach \$62 million, which includes everything from road and open space maintenance to keeping up 1,200 residential units plus commercial buildings. Meanwhile, he projects the Presidio will make \$77 million, mostly from companies that lease office space in the park. Any gain will go right back into the Presidio, he said.

Although many of the profit-raising ventures in the park raised eyebrows from historians and elicited controversy from Bay Area residents hoping to preserve the sprawling Army post as a significant piece of San Francisco's past, the inn was greeted by enthusiasm from the same critics. The fact that the trust would use and rehabilitate an antique boarding house was seen as a boon.

Matt Stiker, of the San Francisco Travel Association, said the small inn is bound to attract attention to the city. A family who visits to tour an urban national park, he added, "brings a different audience to the city that we might not have otherwise had before."

Stiker said that surveys conducted by the travel industry indicate that 98.2 percent of San Francisco visitors want to return.

"They're like vocal evangelists for the city," he said.

And when they come back, they just may bring an entire convention.

"Unlike a lot of cities, San Francisco has good crossover between our leisure travelers and business travelers," Stiker said.

Sixteen million people visit San Francisco a year. In 2011, that translated to \$8.5 billion in revenues, he said.

Terry Haney, general manager for the Inn at the Presidio, said he expects the hotel to attract families. All but five of the inn's rooms are suites, whose rates generally range from \$300 to \$350, with a few at \$195. With convertible sofas and working fireplaces, they can easily accommodate four people - and their dogs. The inn is pet-friendly, Haney said.

"Before, the closest accommodations to the park were on Lombard Street, about three-quarters of a mile away," he said. "Now the local tenants will have a place to put up visitors and there will be accommodations to support the more than 200 wedding receptions thrown in the park a year. We're the last hotel before the Golden Gate Bridge."

Weekends starting this summer are already almost all booked.

E-mail Stacy Finz at sfinz@sfnchronicle.com.

This article appeared on page **D - 1** of the San Francisco Chronicle

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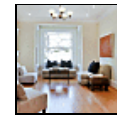
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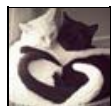


k_sera 11:53 AM on January 6, 2012

Many National Parks have lodging in historic buildings. I try to stay in them whenever possible. As an example, the Ahwahnee starts at \$475, \$1100 for suites, so this seems almost reasonable...

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nekoneko 8:50 AM on January 6, 2012

Decades ago, when the Presidio was still a military base, my dad spent a long time as an inpatient in Letterman Hospital on the base. I used to come up to visit him regularly, and he would arrange for me to stay as a guest in the visiting female officers' quarters. It cost \$5 per night and included free parking.

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folgers 6:52 AM on January 6, 2012

\$300 to \$350 per night seems family unfriendly, although being on Federal land, you are exempt from the City's horrendous hotel tax.

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