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## Elegant Simplicity Boutique Hotel Modera born out of former motor lodge

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Cathy Urell

What are these?

When the Hotel Modera opens in Portland, OR, this summer there will be some evidence of its past life but many new touches designed to give it a warm, welcoming and upscale image. The boutique hotel is being created in a structure that was built in 1962 and originally was a motor lodge.

"Over the years different owners added different touches and the result was an eyesore. There was so much deferred maintenance it was in a state of disrepair," said Alan Battersby, a partner of Posh Ventures, LLC, the firm that purchased the structure for \$13.6 million in 2007.

Battersby and his partners, Desmond Mollendor and Craig Schafer, are investing another \$10 million to transform the property into a 174-room upscale boutique hotel. Holst Architecture and CorsoStaicoff, an interior design firm, were hired to accomplish the task.

"Holst did a fine job with the exterior, removing previous attachments to the building from different owners—the roofline, awnings, signage. They took it back to its original bones. And CorsoStaicoff added warmth within the building" by the use of brown, red and orange tones throughout the interior, Battersby said.

"The whole design concept was to reuse the existing building, simplify it and bring it into the modern era," said Kevin Valk, project manager for Holst Architecture.

With the design, the plan was "to accentuate the mid-century modern origins while simultaneously creating an urban sanctuary," said Denise Corso, principal at CorsoStaicoff.

Noting that the original building's exterior was constructed with CMUs, or concrete masonry units, and had an industrial look, said Valk, "We put stucco over it to make it more friendly and added wood on the ground floor."

Additionally, the ground floor, which had windows above eye level, was opened up to allow more daylight in and a courtyard was created in space that had been a driveway.

"The courtyard is a unique feature," said Valk. The outdoor space has a "living wall" planted with native vegetation in an unusual vertical manner, he noted.

"With the interiors of the hotel, efforts have been made to make sure it doesn't look like a remodel. We want it to look like new construction," said Mollendor, who is general manager of the hotel.

In the lobby "the idea was simplicity with the focus on materials, including Calcutta marble and walnut woods," said Valk.

Valk also noted that throughout the lobby the floor covering is marble except for the area near the front desk where walnut wood covers the floor.

"The lobby and courtyard quietly merge, creating a warm and inviting space," added Corso. "Many of the guestrooms also face the courtyard, extending the connection to the exterior throughout the property. Modern walnut furnishings, supersized abstract colorful photographs of flowers by Portland photographer Connie Morrison and warm tones of brown, red and orange provide a calming environment while subtly acknowledging mid-century modern design."

Guestrooms have contemporary natural walnut furnishings, plush drapes, red glass sliding bathroom doors, crisp white linens and faux fur throws, Corso noted.

The conversion of the former motor lodge into an upscale boutique hotel has been challenging in terms of the budget and schedule, according to Corso. "The budget was

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