

Reviving the Hotel Alder

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Architect D.C. Lewis designed the Hotel Alder as a business-oriented hotel with all the modern amenities of the time, such as a telephone in every room. Built in downtown Portland at Fourth Avenue and SW Alder by W.L. Morgan, the hotel opened in 1911, featuring commercial space on the ground level and 125 guest rooms on three upper floors. Half the rooms faced the street, and two light wells provided sunlight and ventilation for the interior rooms.

As downtown Portland grew and changed, the city center shifted to the west and south, leaving the Hotel Alder to deteriorate in a declining area of town.

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The restored mezzanine of the Alder Hotel.

Development Funding Sources:
Low Income Tax Credit Program



The Hotel Alder at street level. The previous owner retains control of the commercial space on the ground floor.

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Today, the hotel sits in the middle of an exciting rejuvenation of northeast downtown Portland, where many buildings of historic significance and commercial viability flourish once more.

The new owners, Central City Concern, restored the exterior, the lobby, the mezzanine and three residential floors. They were able to resurrect a large measure of the Hotel's original character, and the quality of that restoration allowed the Hotel Alder to retain its listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Repairing the building's structural systems was a challenge. Builders uncovered fire damage and other inadequacies that made the building unsafe to occupy, and particularly susceptible to major damage in the event of an earthquake. Substantial framing and foundation upgrades became an integral part of their work.

The hotel rooms were converted into fixed-rent housing for 99 single residents with incomes between zero and 40 percent of the area's median. Government special-needs programs supplement rent for 41 of the apartments. All rooms were wired for phone and Internet, with shared kitchen and laundry facilities.

In its new role the Hotel Alder now gives people, who otherwise might not have a place to live, safe and well appointed housing in downtown Portland.

Oregon Housing and Community Services is the state housing finance agency, providing financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality, affordable housing for lower income Oregonians. The agency also administers federal and state antipoverty, homeless and energy assistance community service programs.

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