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Developer brings more condos to town

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By **DOUG HENZE**
Of The Daily Oakland Press

Another upscale condominium project is headed for downtown Birmingham - this one through a conversion of the 22-year-old Birmingham Place apartments.

Bloomfield Hills-based Pomeroy Reinhart Stration Development recently purchased the building at 401 to 411 S. Old Woodward Ave., which also has retail and office space. The acquisition, from a partnership controlled by Birmingham Place developer Paul H. Johnson Inc., was completed Feb. 20 and the renovation is expected to begin within 45 days.

Broder & Sachse Real Estate Services Inc., of Farmington Hills, will partner with PRS Development on the project, which is south of Brown Street

Condos, which range from slightly less than 600 square feet to 3,000 square feet, will sell from the \$200,000 to \$1 million range.

"For about the same price as a vintage Birmingham bungalow on the outskirts of town, potential buyers can purchase a prestigious luxury residence at Birmingham Place, right in the heart of downtown Birmingham," said Jerry Reinhart, chief executive officer of PRS Development. "We expect a lot of interest in these premier condominiums and have already had several inquiries."

Reinhart said he was unsure how much his company would invest in the renovation.

Birmingham Place has 159 units and 15 floor plans, with studios and one-, two-, and three-bedroom residences

Current Birmingham Place residents are being offered the first option to purchase their apartments.



Renovations are planned at the Birmingham Place building to convert the building's apartments to upscale condominiums -The Daily Oakland Press / TIM THOMPSON

Upgrades to the residences will include:

n an interior makeover with crown molding, granite, and French doors;

n modernization of the building facade and walkways;

n remodeling the lobby from a single-story space with an 8-foot ceiling to a two-story lobby with a 20-foot ceiling;

n refurbishing of fourth-floor garden spaces and the 10th floor rooftop terrace.

PRS Redevelopment also is adding concierge, valet parking and door-to-door cleaning service

Birmingham-based Christopher Enright Architects, P.C. is designing the redevelopment

"The focus of the improvements for Birmingham Place is to create a visually intriguing, unifying theme, remove dated stylistic elements, work with existing proportions and integrate a solution that is more timeless," said architect Christopher Enright

Birmingham Place was built in 1982 as a mixed-use property. The building has 100,000 square feet of retail and office space and has tenants including corporate turnaround firm Conway MacKenzie & Dunleavy, Avalon Salon and Spa, Antonio Bridal and Photofast of Birmingham



Enclosed parking in the basement, first and second levels accommodates 433 vehicles.

Birmingham Place is the latest condo project in the city's downtown. Recent developments include The Willits, 250 Martin on the Park, 400 Hamilton and The Dakota on Booth Park

"In general, there's continual interest in people living in or near downtown Birmingham," said John Heiney, executive director of the Downtown Birmingham Principal Shopping District. "That's partly because of the lifestyle the downtown offers, with the shopping and entertainment. It always would benefit the merchants to have people coming in the downtown."

It is unclear whether the condo conversion will add more shoppers to the downtown district, since the number of units won't change with the conversion, but the upscale condos are likely to bring in higher-income residents

PRS Development has developed, renovated or expanded several million square feet of commercial space and more than 600 condo units in southeast Michigan and elsewhere, including the Townsend Hotel and Holiday Inn Express in Birmingham.

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