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## Seniors to get riverfront digs

### Cosmopolitan Club to have amenities of five-star hotel

By John Rebchook, Rocky Mountain News

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Louisville-based Balfour Senior Living plans to build a \$110 million building for active seniors in downtown Denver's Riverfront Park, in the Central Platte Valley.

Construction of the luxury 264-suite, seven-story, age-restricted Cosmopolitan Club building next to the historic Moffat Train Depot at 15th and Little Raven streets is scheduled to start in February.

Monthly rents in the club, one of the few age-restricted developments in the country in a downtown, are expected to range from about \$3,500 to \$8,000 a month. The club also will charge a one-time entry fee of \$10,000.

"The Cosmopolitan Club will have all of the amenities of a five-star hotel," said Michael Schonbrun, CEO and founder of the 10-year-old Balfour.

"In today's day and age, people over 60 are very active and want to be part of the buzz and energy of the city," said Schonbrun, a lawyer by training, who was president of National Jewish Hospital from 1981 to 1991 and worked for former Gov. Dick Lamm after coming to Colorado in 1974.

The Cosmopolitan Club will be a welcome addition to Denver, said Tami Door, president and CEO of the Downtown Denver Partnership.

"We want to ensure that we have a great diversity of people living downtown," she said. "That is very important for the vibrancy of downtown."

Door said she suspects that many people living there will want to participate in downtown as mentors and volunteers.

Charlie Woolley, head of the St. Charles Town Co., has put his planned 37-story senior high-rise at 14th and Stout streets on hold, saying he has too many projects on his plate.

But he said there's room for both the Cosmopolitan Club and his development, which he hopes to resurrect next year.

"Our site is very different from their site, but I like their location very much, too," Woolley said. "They're going to do great. These urban locations for seniors are more appealing, as far as activities and lifestyles, than ones in the suburbs."

Harry Frampton, CEO of East West Partners, the developer of Riverfront Park, is a small investor in Balfour and may invest in the Cosmopolitan Club.

Frampton first pitched the site to Schonbrun when they bought the property from Trillium Corp. in the 1990s.

"I think this is really pretty cool," Frampton said. "Balfour has been successful financially, but even more important, it builds communities that are just wonderful places for people to go to when they age."

The land was initially sold to Archstone-Smith, the Arapahoe County-based apartment real estate investment trust, but the -REIT decided to sell most of its Denver portfolio to concentrate on other parts of the country.

Schonbrun will renovate the depot and use it as the "great room" for the development.

The long-vacant 100-year-old building was partly destroyed by a fire in 1995.

Balfour may also open the 1,200-square-foot depot for an occasional public forum or event, although the retirement community also will have a separate building for that function, Schonbrun said.

When completed in 2008, the 369,000-square-foot Cosmopolitan Club building will include 214 independent-living rental apartments, ranging in size from 600 square feet to 1,900 square feet; a European-style piazza with a garden; and four dining areas, including a bistro/pub and a gourmet-style restaurant. It also will sport a rooftop garden, a library, a billiard room, a movie theater, a performance hall, a business center, a card room, a hair and beauty salon, and an arts and crafts room.



The Cosmopolitan Club, depicted in an artist's rendering.

The amenities don't stop there - a high-end spa is also planned.

There will be around-the-clock concierge service and 130 underground parking spaces, although Schonbrun said he suspects that most residents will find they don't need a car. They will have private town cars to ferry them to Cherry Creek, sporting events, shopping, golf and other events.

The club will be designed by a New York firm, Robert A.M. Stern Architects. Stern is dean of the Yale School of Architecture.

His firm has designed a luxury condo at 15 Central Park West, next to the Time-Warner building, in New York; a new Ritz-Carlton hotel/condominium project in Dallas; and Aspen Highlands Village. Stern, working in Denver for the first time, will be joined by Denver-based Klipp Architecture.

The interior designer, Carleton Varney, CEO of New York City-based Dorothy Draper Inc., is perhaps even better-known than Stern, at least in New York City.

Varney, known for his use of color and contrasts, has been the interior designer for such properties as the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, New York's Waldorf Towers and Plaza and the Grand Hotel of Mackinac Island, in Michigan.

He even has his own brand of coffee.

"We went to the theater with him in New York, and you can't walk two feet in New York without somebody stopping him," Schonbrun said. "He told me he is at a stage in his life where he only works on projects that he thinks will be fun and special."

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