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Pacific Electric Building

Pacific Electric Lofts Debut

By Bob Howard

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(To read more on the multifamily market, click here.)

LOS ANGELES-ICO Development expects to open its 314-unit Pacific Electric Lofts apartments, a conversion of the 482,000-sf former Pacific Electric Railway Co. building at 610 S. Main St., by the end of this month. The 100-year-old building was once home to the Red Cars that provided public transportation throughout the Los Angeles area.

In a project designed by Killefer Flammang Architects of Santa Monica, the former railway company building has been converted to include a rooftop garden, a pool, a spa, a dog run, a library, fitness and business centers and party rooms. Killefer Flammang has been the architect of some 32 downtown buildings converted to residential use, including the Eastern Columbia and Pegasus Apartments.

The building's apartments range from 600 sf to 3,000 sf in floor plans of one, two and three bedrooms. Three units of the ornate, nine-story Romanesque/ Beaux Arts building are in the ballroom, which was once part of the Jonathan Club when it occupied the top two stories of the building.

Among the biggest challenges in converting the Pacific Electric building, according to Barbara Flammang, a principal of Killefer Flammang, was blending the historic elements such as mahogany doors, marble wainscot and the Moderne 1947 historic lobby with new late 20th century materials. Retrofitting to meet fire/life safety requirements also presented a challenge, she says.

Karin Liljegren, project manager for Killefer Flammang, notes that other challenges included adding new mechanical systems and louvers while respecting the original façade and adding a new floor for parking in what were the train shed and waiting rooms. The development team for the project included Taisei Construction, general contractor; Nabih Youseff, structural engineer; and Interior Design by Inovus.

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