



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## News Release

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### **RENOVATED HISTORICAL 99-YEAR-OLD DOWNTOWN HOTEL SANDFORD REDEDICATED TO PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR SENIORS**

*Purchased by the San Diego Housing Commission and rehabilitated in partnership with Civic San Diego, Hotel Sandford provides 129 units that will remain affordable for 99 years*

**SAN DIEGO, CA**—Nearly a century after it was built for tourists in anticipation of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, the historical downtown [Hotel Sandford](#) was rededicated today after the completion of renovations to preserve affordable housing for seniors such as 83-year-old Joseph McGuire.

“In this building, we have a very good delicatessen downstairs, where I drink coffee every morning,” McGuire, a retired civil engineer who worked for 10 years for the County of San Diego, said today at the rededication of Hotel Sandford, which includes retail space. “We can get haircuts at the barber college. We’re very close to the trolley. We have a variety of foods that are close by, and we have microwaves in the basement. The people who live here really like each other. We get along well. We thank you very much for this building.”

Hotel Sandford was purchased by the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) and rehabilitated in partnership with Civic San Diego. The property, located at 1301-1333 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in downtown San Diego, includes first-floor retail space occupied by four commercial tenants: BB’s Deli, Associated Barber College of San Diego, P5 Academy (martial arts), and Bartending College.

“When you get the San Diego Housing Commission and Civic San Diego together in a room, something is going to happen,” Interim Mayor Todd Gloria said. “And it’s going to be something really good. I appreciate that collaboration.”

Hotel Sandford consists of 129 affordable housing units. Seventy-seven units at Hotel Sandford are affordable to low-income seniors who earn up to 60 percent of San Diego’s area median income, or \$33,900 a year for one person. Fifty-two units are affordable to seniors who earn up to 50 percent of the area median income, or \$28,250 a year for one person.

“This hotel has been in existence 99 years this year, and we are now ensuring that it will be affordable for the next 99 years as well,” SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry said. “Rededication is entirely appropriate for the second chapter in the history of this hotel.”

The City of San Diego’s Historical Resources Board designated Hotel Sandford as a local historical landmark on December 2, 1987.

As a tourist destination in 1914, Hotel Sandford was described in its original brochure as having “elegantly furnished” rooms with “superb views” of the bay and Point Loma in the distance.

Hotel Sandford was remodeled in 1989 when it became affordable housing for seniors. When SDHC acquired Hotel Sandford in 2010, it had not been renovated since 1989.

SDHC contracted with Heritage Architecture & Planning to oversee the design and construction of the rehabilitation, which was completed on April 19, 2013.

Renovations at Hotel Sandford included:

- Refurbished antique furniture in the two library rooms and the lobby;
- Reinstalling a fire place mantel from the original hotel in one of the first-floor library rooms;
- Adding a new computer room to the first floor;
- Modernizing the kitchen in the basement with new cabinets, new countertops and new microwaves;
- Returning the building to its original beige and green color scheme;
- Restoring the historical arched wood windows on the fourth floor and the historical festoon lighting;
- Replicating the historical wood storefront at the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrance; and
- Replacing the sidewalk in front of Hotel Sandford.

“This is an example of what a great city can do to preserve our past and protect some of those who have a need for low-cost housing,” SDHC Chairman of the Board Gary Gramling said.

SDHC has invested approximately \$5.85 million toward the acquisition and rehabilitation of Hotel Sandford, and Civic San Diego provided an additional \$5.85 million.

“I think we’ve probably proved that you can spend about \$12 million on the rehab of a building and really go a long way with that,” said John Collum, Senior Project Manager at Civic San Diego. “This was a very affordable way to provide affordable housing.”

SDHC’s funds came from its finance plan that followed a September 10, 2007, landmark agreement between SDHC and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD transferred ownership of 1,366 public housing units to SDHC.

SDHC leveraged the equity from the former public housing units to create 810 additional affordable housing units in the City of San Diego through public-private partnerships and direct acquisitions. One of SDHC’s direct purchases was Hotel Sandford.

The rehabilitation of the property was overseen by SDHC’s Real Estate Division.

The renovation of Hotel Sandford also has earned two historical preservation awards—one from the Save Our Heritage Organisation and one from the City of San Diego [Historical Resources Board](#).

For more information about SDHC’s affordable housing programs, visit [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org).

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