



The Durant's grand opening represents a positive symbol for Flint

Published: Friday, September 24, 2010, 6:16 PM Updated: Friday, September 24, 2010, 6:23 PM



Sarah Schuch | The Flint Journal



Tyler Sutherland | The Flint Journal

People mill around the lobby of the newly opened Durant before touring the building.

FLINT, Michigan — The Durant was a symbol of the past but now can be a symbol of the future, developers said Friday.

After sitting vacant for 37 years, Friday marked the grand opening of the former hotel at 607 E. Second Ave.

“For 37 years it was the symbol of failure of the auto industry and Flint,” said Dan Kildee, co-founder and president of the Center for Community Progress. “Now it’s the symbol of what we think can happen with perseverance.”

Built in 1920, the hotel was named in honor of William C. Durant, the principal founder of General Motors. It sat empty for nearly four decades after closing in 1973.

The Genesee County Land Bank acquired the building in 2005 and work began in 2008 transform the landmark into a place that could be used for business and residential purposes.

The newly renovated lobby and ballroom are intended as gifts to the community, said Kildee.

The ballroom still has the original gray and white checkered floor, said Kildee, adding the result of the project has been beyond his wildest dreams.

“It looked like the Titanic without the water,” Kildee said. “I get goosebumps just thinking about this building.”

Brad Mikus, 33, moved into the Durant on Sept. 1 and said he loves the historical aspect to the building.

"I walked past here all the time and you walk in here and it's inspiring," he said. "I'm glad they didn't knock it down."



Tyler Sutherland | The Flint Journal

People tour the apartments of the Durant building.

Mikus, who decided to go back to school for accounting, said the location of the building keeps him close to school but also involved in downtown.

The view from his window is one of the greatest benefits, which allows him to see straight down Saginaw Street.

When Mikus thinks back about the history of the building, he said he wonders who else had visited the former Durant Hotel.

U.S. Congressman Dale Kildee, D-Flint, remembers taking his parents to the old Durant Hotel for their 25th wedding anniversary.

"It's not just another building but an important part of Flint's history," he said. "This can be a symbol of the greatness of the past and the greatness of the future."

Kildee was among the couple hundred people who turned out for Friday afternoon's opening ceremony at the Durant.

The eight-story building has 93 modern apartments with high ceilings, wide spaces, stainless steel appliances and dark wood cabinets. Rent ranges from \$475 to \$960 a month.

The \$30 million project was funded through federal and state tax breaks, Brownfield financing, and a Charles Stewart Mott Foundation grant as well as investment from Lansing-based developers Karp & Associates and Prater Development.

© 2010 MLive.com. All rights reserved.