

Renaissance Marriott coming to St. Augustine

Construction of 89-room downtown hotel is planned to begin in April.

By Scott Salier
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An 89-room hotel is coming to the San Marco area of downtown St. Augustine.

Hotel operator Kanti Patel plans to open the Renaissance Marriott Hotel at 28 San Marco Ave. between West Castillo Drive and Grove Avenue in fall 2019.

He anticipates that construction will start in April.

San Marco Hotel Inc., led by Patel, paid about \$7.43 million for five parcels to assemble the 1.73-acre site, according to the St. Johns County Property Appraiser.

The five parcels contain the St. Augustine Information Center, the Best Western Spanish Quarter Inn, Barnacle Bill's restaurant and a gravel parking lot.

Patel said those structures will be demolished.

He said he started working toward the project in 2006, twice seeking approval from the St. Augustine Planning and Zoning Board as a planned unit development and the St. Augustine Historical Architectural Review Board for a certificate of appropriateness.

The first time took eight months and the second time to change the parking area took six months. Initially most of the parking was underground, which he changed to partially underground with the remainder on the surface.

Patel said he delayed the project because of the recession.

The proposed hotel will be a three-story, 79,000-square-foot building with 159 parking spaces — 72 below the hotel and 87 on the surface.

The hotel will include a restaurant and bar with 50 to 60 seats. Patel anticipates between 40 and 50 employees. Greenwood Hospitality Group will manage the property.

The architect for the Victorian-style building is Gerald Dixon of Dixon and Associates Architects LC.

Patel estimated the design boosted the construction cost by about half. He declined to provide the estimated investment cost.

The civil engineer is Matthews Design Group Inc. and the contractor will be Omega Construction Inc.

Patel's group, Jalaram Hotels Inc., owns several St. Augustine-area hotels including Hampton Inn St. Augustine-Historic District, Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Best Western Seaside Inn St. Augustine Beach, Best Western Bayfront Inn and the Hilton St. Augustine Historic Bayfront and four hotels in Jacksonville.

Patel also plans to build Hilton Garden Inn and Marriott SpringHill & Suites in St. Augustine.