



RESTORED: Four Muizenberg beachfront houses designed by Sir Herbert Baker have been linked to create the St Leger Retirement Hotel.

# New lease on life for classic homes

Four Sir Herbert Baker houses in Muizenberg have been linked to create a 'retirement hotel'

RIGHT on the Muizenberg beachfront four adjoining Sir Herbert Baker houses have been linked to create the St Leger Retirement Hotel.

The developers and trustees, Carey-Ann and Dealtry Pickford, are huge fans of Baker, and their own home is the converted former stables at Chart Farm in Wynberg, which were also designed by this renowned architect.

The Pickfords explain that the four Muizenberg houses – Sandhills, Rokeby, Crawford Lea and Swanbourne – were built in about 1900 and cover an entire city block opposite the beachfront.

Sir Herbert occupied Sandhills, the house on the corner of Beach Road and Baker Street, and his bedroom is still virtually as it was when he lived there. Crawford Lea was bought by Albert Victor Lindbergh, the founder of CNA and the Sunday Times, who married Gladys St Leger, the granddaughter of Frederick York St Leger, founder of the Cape Times.

The Joan St Leger Lindbergh Arts Foundation was created by their daughter, Joan

Lindbergh, whose dream was to have a centre of musical and artistic excellence. In 1995, she bought Sandhills and consolidated the block of Baker houses into an architectural unity.

The renovation of these buildings into the St Leger Retirement Hotel makes a reality of her vision to create a striking façade to grace the beachfront.

The Pickfords say they have worked closely with the SA Heritage Resources Agency (Sahra) to ensure that all restoration and construction work is in line with its requirements.

The St Leger Retirement Hotel will consist of 25 life rights apartments developed in three phases. The first and second phases have been completed and a number of residents have already moved into their new homes.

The third phase is now under way and is due to be completed by the end of the year. This phase consists of seven apartments, ranging in price from R690 000 to R1.95 million, as well as a conservatory and a frail care centre.

The serviced apartments all have custom-built kitchenettes and en-suite bathrooms with emergency call buttons connected to a 24-hour nurses' station.

Units range in size from 18m<sup>2</sup> to 70m<sup>2</sup> and many have views of False Bay and the surrounding mountains.

Residents furnish their units to their own tastes and needs, and apartments bought now in the third phase can also be designed to the owners' requirements.

Communal areas include four sitting rooms, a card room, a well-stocked library, a conservatory, sunny and protected indoor and outdoor seating areas, and a dining room that serves meals and refreshments to residents and their guests as well as the general public.

Facilities include 24-hour care, if needed, which is administered in the residents' own apartments or in the private frail care section.

The monthly levies cover water and electricity, twice-weekly servicing of the units, healthcare, security, lunch and supper daily, morning and afternoon tea and coffee, assis-

tance with bathing and dressing if needed, and a host of other services.

The Pickfords say the St Leger will particularly please people who enjoy the arts. The Joan St Leger Lindbergh Arts Foundation is a tenant at the hotel.

The charitable trust is committed to artistic and cultural activities and regularly stages art exhibitions and hosts music concerts at the hotel.

"We've found that people reaching retirement are invariably worried about levies and the cost of living we believe it's important to offer peace of mind. The St Leger Trust has developed a sophisticated and sound financial model that allows residents to be cushioned from the impact of cost of living increases – as opposed to having to withstand the full impact if they were in their own homes. The levy is not-for-profit and completely transparent, and the Levy Stabilisation Fund (LSF) ensures that escalating living costs can be met by the residents," they say.

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ROOM WITH A VIEW: Baker's bedroom at Sandhills has been virtually unchanged since he lived there.