

Shipping container boutique hotel planned for Haughville neighborhood

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The Bold Suite is depicted in this preview image provided by Tiny Urban Escapes, a boutique hotel set for construction this year at 2214 W. Michigan St.

An Indianapolis company is building a boutique hotel using repurposed shipping containers to accommodate guests seeking unusual experiences in the heart of the city.

A groundbreaking for Tiny Urban Escapes took place Friday at 2214 W. Michigan St., presently a vacant lot within two blocks of the

intersection of Michigan Street and Belmont Avenue and the Haughville branch of the Indianapolis Public Library.

Mayor Joe Hogsett attended the event, where Tiny Urban Escapes owner Robin Staten outlined four private hotel suites arranged in a courtyard format. The suites are named The Heiress, The Bold, The Eclectic and The Naturalist.

The modular suites will feature one wall of glass, and guest amenities include a pillow menu, private chef experiences and on-demand concierge services.

The Tiny Urban Escapes website touts the hotel's proximity to Eagle Creek Park as well as to Downtown attractions.

Staten, who previously worked in IUPUI's department of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, started working on the Tiny Urban Escapes concept in 2016.

Larry Williams, president of the Indy Black Chamber of Commerce, told Friday's audience that Staten represents a success story of perseverance in securing funding and a site for her business.

"We need for the city and the state to use her as an example so we can get more money for Black businesses and women-owned businesses," Williams said.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation Indianapolis is lending \$280,000 to the project for predevelopment and construction. The LISC financing is made possible with support from the Lilly Endowment for credit enhancement for economic development projects with a focus on investments in Black-owned businesses located in disinvested neighborhoods.



Robin Staten, owner of Tiny Urban Escapes. (IBJ photo by David Lindquist)

Staten said she selected shipping containers for the hotel because of ease-to-market, sustainability and eco-friendliness.

“Shipping containers are growing in popularity right now,” Staten said. “We’re seeing projects pop up around the city, and I’m just fortunate enough to be on the forefront of that innovation.”

Staten said travelers have grown tired of cookie-cutter hotels and are shifting toward new and more intimate places to stay.

Priced at \$179 for a one-night stay, the suites will be 20-foot high-cube containers. A fifth building on site, billed as Scene, will be a 40-foot high-cube container used for dining and events.

Construction is expected to wrap up by late summer.

Staten said she hopes to open an additional Tiny Urban Escapes location in Indianapolis as well as sites in other Midwestern cities.