

Apartments planned near Hollywood & Highland

Champion Real Estate pays \$20 million for several parcels of land, saying it will build a \$100-million apartment and retail development there.

By Roger Vincent, Los Angeles Times

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A Los Angeles developer is planning to build a \$100-million apartment and retail development near the Hollywood & Highland entertainment complex.

Champion Real Estate Co. paid \$20 million for a 2.76-acre collection of parcels, some of which will be redeveloped, President Robert Champion said Thursday. The property was purchased out of receivership.

Champion Real Estate's Hollywood project, which has not been designed, would take at least a year to be approved by city officials and an additional two years to build, Champion said. By 2013, he predicted, there should be demand for new apartments.

"We think that will be perfect timing for the market," he said. Potential renters would be "people geared toward the entertainment industry who want to live in Hollywood and like an urban lifestyle."

Champion Real Estate acquired 17 parcels — most of the property — roughly bounded by Highland, Selma, Hawthorn and Las Palmas avenues. The real estate includes three small office buildings, two apartment buildings, a restaurant building and three parking lots, said receiver Taylor B. Grant, who handled the sale.

Panavision occupies one of the office buildings and recently renewed its lease. Champion intends to raze the two vacant low-rise apartment buildings on Selma.

There were 19 offers on the property, according to Grant's Newport Beach-based Real Estate Receiverships. The property had an assessed value of \$34 million.

Champion said his company paid about 60% of what the last owners did. Those investors, headed by Connecticut-based Commonfund, intended to build a hotel but never started development.

"A hotel made sense in 2006 but not in 2011," Champion said.

Champion Real Estate specializes in mixed-use developments in urban neighborhoods. Past projects include the Burbank Collection in Glendale, the Pasadena Collection in Pasadena and Gaslamp CitySquare in downtown San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter.