

The Kitschy Silver Sands Motel Sells After Years-Long Battle

Low-cost hotel with 1950s charm could become the next North Fork luxury hangout

TRD Staff | April 16, 2022

A 1950s-era motel on Long Island's North Fork that has been seemingly frozen in time has changed ownership after a 12-year battle over control of its beachfront property.

Newsday reported that the Silver Sands Motel and Cottages in Greenport, whose inviting neon sign and kitschy drive-up rooms have miraculously retained their nuclear-age charm, was sold on Wednesday for an unspecified price that, according to a local real estate agent was the "No. 1 commercial transaction on the North Fork."

"It is like no other piece of real estate on the North Fork," Judi Desiderio, CEO of Town & Country Real Estate in East Hampton, told the newspaper. "It is a piece of history ... it's an amazing property."



Located along a private beach at the end of a long wooded road on Peconic Bay, the 30-acre motel property was cobbled together over the years through the acquisition of land and cottages from neighbors, according to Jean Burden, whose parents opened the motel.

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Burden and her son Terry Keefe have shared ownership of the property with Silver Sands Holdings, which purchased an interest in the hotel last year from Darline Duffy, the widow of Burden's brother who died in 2019, according to the report.

Duffy told the New York Post in May of 2021 that she was happy with the deal, but Keefe claimed the new investors were pressuring him to transform the property into a high-priced luxury resort, something he didn't intend to do.

"We never charged more than \$200 for a night," Keefe told the Post while pointing out that other Greenport hotels charge double that rate. "This is old North Fork. People come to the waterfront property to relax and go to the beach."

Shortly after the exchange, the Silver Sands Holdings filed a lawsuit against Burden and Keefe alleging they had mismanaged the motel's finances, according to the report. Keefe responded in court papers that the allegations were "completely fabricated."

The motel property, which also includes 15 acres of wetlands, has been used for numerous fashion and movie shoots and as a nostalgic retreat for some locals.

But with new ownership, that could change — Silver Sands Holdings has said it will spend millions upgrading the property — and the motel could become the latest old-school inn on Long Island to be given a Ralph Lauren-style makeover.

In recent years, the Sound View Hotel, also in Greenport, has gotten extensive investments and renovations dating back about five years; the Pridwin Hotel and Cottages on Shelter Island got an influx of cash last year to convert the East End hotel into a full-service luxury resort with enlarged guest rooms, a modernized lobby, a spa and fitness center and a 100-seat restaurant and lounge; and a private equity group bought Greenport Village's Menhaden Hotel for \$8.3 million from a mom-and-pop team last August.