

Elvis Presley Enterprises details biggest expansion since Graceland opened

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As work on the \$92 million Guest House at Graceland enters its final stages, eyes have turned across the street from Graceland toward what will soon become **the 200,000-square-foot “Elvis: Past, Present & Future” entertainment complex**, expected to open in spring 2017.

The complex, which, according to [Elvis Presley Enterprises](#), is the “largest and most significant expansion since opening to the public in 1982,” will cost **around \$45 million to develop and will be five times larger than the existing visitors center on the Graceland campus.**



“Elvis: Past Present & Future will enable our visitors to live a day in the life of Elvis Presley. Whether you’ve been to Graceland multiple times or have yet to make the trip, we know that you will be entertained, educated and inspired like never before, here at the world’s greatest music landmark,” said [Joel Weinshanker](#), managing partner of Graceland Holdings LLC.

The cornerstone of the complex will be “Elvis: The Entertainer,” a 20,000-square-foot museum celebrating Elvis Presley’s music, movie and live touring career. It will include hundreds of artifacts from the Graceland Archives, from his early days in Tupelo, through his first recording session in Memphis, rise to fame, Hollywood career, service in the U.S. Army, life at Graceland, the Las Vegas years and more. “Elvis: The Entertainer” will be the largest and most comprehensive Elvis museum in the world.

The complex will also include a **new Elvis Presley Automobile Museum** that will showcase more than 20 automobiles and motorized vehicles, including Elvis' iconic Pink Cadillac, and it will feature a 200-seat theater space showcasing Elvis movie clips focused on cars and racing.

A **20,000-square-foot “Graceland Soundstage”** will feature live music performances, movie screenings and premieres and video productions, with theater seating for up to 2,000 people, as well as the flexibility to use for private events, corporate meetings, conferences and trade show exhibitions.

“Discovery” exhibit spaces will showcase aspects of Elvis' life, career and interests in greater depth, from the music genres that influenced Elvis from his earliest days — rhythm & blues, Southern gospel, country — to today's music artists who continue to be influenced by Elvis and his body of work. Graceland will also partner with iconic brands to present immersive, experiential exhibits and pop culture attractions to enhance the visitor experience throughout the complex.

The complex will include an exhibit focusing on [Sam Phillips](#), as well. In addition to working with Elvis, Phillips is credited for discovering several artists at Memphis Recording Service/Sun Records, including Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis.

But, in the immediate future, the **Guest House at Graceland will be the focal point of the Graceland expansion when it opens Oct. 27.**

[Keith Hess](#), vice president and managing director of The Guest House, said the opening weekend has already sold out, and bookings as far out as Elvis Week 2017 are going well.

Hess said **between 15-18 people have been hired so far out of the 140 jobs the hotel will create.** A recently completed two-day job fair and job website have netted more than 3,000 applications.

The 450-room Guest House at Graceland will include a 110-seat sports bar that will boast 10 50-inch televisions, as well as a still-under-development signature cheeseburger. It will also include a 464-seat theater that can host movie screenings and live events.

The rooms will boast four-star elements, including a 122-nozzle, double shower head (one overhead and another on the wall) and Elvis-branded toiletries including custom-made shower gel and lotions.

[Greg Hnedak](#), founder and CEO of DreamCatcher Hotels, said a lot of the features in the hotel are similar to what the company has designed in its hotels over the last few years, but they added a “hipper feel of what Elvis would have wanted.”

“We know people will take the toiletries, so why not make it into something you’d want to collect?” Hnedak said. “The architecture was about being similar to the mansion — not copying it, but speaking the same language. Priscilla [Presley] gave us some input, but there was a concern to not go too much over-Elvis.”

Hess said the finished product will be “top-notch” and attractive to non-Elvis fans who enjoy staying in four-star-caliber hotels.

“We’re going after meetings and conventions,” Hess said. “The fans will love it, but you don’t have to be an Elvis fan to stay here.”