

VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC.

Form S-3ASR

June 30, 2011

Table of Contents

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on June 30, 2011

Registration No. 333-

**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

**FORM S-3**  
**REGISTRATION STATEMENT**

*UNDER*

*THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933*

**VeriFone Systems, Inc.**

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

**Delaware**  
(State or Other Jurisdiction of

**04-3692546**  
(I.R.S. Employer

Edgar Filing: VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC. - Form S-3ASR

Incorporation or Organization)

Identification Number)

**2099 Gateway Place, Suite 600**

**San Jose, California 95110**

**(408) 232-7800**

(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Registrant's Principal Executive Offices)

**Albert Y. Liu**

**Senior Vice President and General Counsel**

**VeriFone Systems, Inc.**

**2099 Gateway Place, Suite 600**

**San Jose, California 95110**

**(408) 232-7800**

(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number, Including Area Code, of Agent for Service)

*Copies to:*

**Scott D. Miller**

**Sarah P. Payne**

**Sullivan & Cromwell LLP**

**1870 Embarcadero Road**

**Palo Alto, California 94303**

**(650) 461-5600**

**APPROXIMATE DATE OF COMMENCEMENT OF PROPOSED SALE TO THE PUBLIC:** From time to time after the Registration Statement becomes effective.

## Edgar Filing: VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC. - Form S-3ASR

If the only securities being registered on this Form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box.

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, check the following box.

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering.

If this Form is a registration statement pursuant to General Instruction I.D. or a post-effective amendment thereto that shall become effective upon filing with the Commission pursuant to Rule 462(e) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

If this Form is a post-effective amendment to a registration statement filed pursuant to General Instruction I.D. filed to register additional securities or additional classes of securities pursuant to Rule 413(b) under the Securities Act, check the following box.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large Accelerated filer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/> (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)	Smaller reporting company <input type="checkbox"/>

### CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered(1)	Proposed Maximum Offering Price per Share(2)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(2)	Amount of Registration Fee
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share	1,138,872	\$41.50	\$47,263,188.00	\$5,487.26

- (1) Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act, the shares being registered hereunder include such indeterminate number of shares of common stock as may be issuable with respect to the shares being registered hereunder as a result of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions.
- (2) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee in accordance with Rule 457 under the Securities Act. The price per share and aggregate offering price are based on the average of the high and low prices of the registrant's common stock on June 27, 2011, as reported on the New York Stock Exchange.

Table of Contents

# VeriFone Systems, Inc.

**1,138,872 Shares**

**Common Stock**

This prospectus relates to the resale of up to 1,138,872 shares of our common stock by the selling stockholders listed in the section entitled **Selling Stockholders** beginning on page 38 of this prospectus. The shares of common stock offered under this prospectus were issued pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement, dated as of May 24, 2011, by and among VeriFone Singapore Pte. Limited, Business Connexion Group Limited, or BCX, the trustees for the time being of the Fairway Trust, or the Fairway Trust, the trustees for the time being of the Greg Leal Trust, or the Greg Leal Trust, and Destiny Electronic Commerce (Proprietary) Limited, or DEC. We will not receive any of the proceeds from these shares. We are paying all expenses of registration incurred in connection with this offering.

The selling stockholders may sell the shares of common stock described in this prospectus in a number of different ways and at varying prices. We provide more information about how the selling stockholders may sell their shares of common stock in the section entitled **Plan of Distribution** on page 40 and in any supplements to this prospectus. We will not be paying any underwriting discounts or commissions in this offering.

Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol **PAY**. On June 29, 2011, the last reported sale price of our common stock was \$44.86 per share.

**Investing in our common stock involves risks and uncertainties. You should review carefully the risks and uncertainties described under the heading Risk Factors beginning on page 4 of this prospectus and the other documents that are incorporated in this prospectus by reference.**

**Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.**

**This prospectus is dated June 30, 2011.**

**Table of Contents**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
<u>ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS</u>	1
<u>FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS</u>	1
<u>PROSPECTUS SUMMARY</u>	2
<u>RISK FACTORS</u>	4
<u>UNAUDITED PRO FORMA CONDENSED COMBINED FINANCIAL INFORMATION</u>	27
<u>USE OF PROCEEDS</u>	37
<u>SELLING STOCKHOLDERS</u>	38
<u>PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION</u>	40
<u>VALIDITY OF THE SECURITIES</u>	42
<u>EXPERTS</u>	42
<u>WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION</u>	42
<u>INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY REFERENCE</u>	43
<u>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF HYPERCOM CORPORATION</u>	44

**Table of Contents**

**ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS**

You should rely only on the information contained or incorporated by reference in this prospectus, and on the information contained in any prospectus supplements. We have not, and the selling stockholders have not, authorized anyone to provide you with information different from that contained in this prospectus or such supplements. The selling stockholders are offering to sell, and seeking offers to buy, shares of our common stock only in jurisdictions where it is lawful to do so. The information in this prospectus is accurate only as of the date of this prospectus, and the information in any prospectus supplement is accurate only as of the date of such supplement, regardless of the time of delivery of this prospectus or any such supplement or any sale of our common stock.

**FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS**

This prospectus, any supplements to this prospectus and other documents that are and will be incorporated into this prospectus contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. These statements relate to future events or the future financial performance of VeriFone. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by terminology such as may, should, expect, plan, intend, anticipate, believe, estimate, predict, potential, or continue, the negative of such terms, or comparable terminology.

Actual events or results may differ materially. In evaluating these statements, you should specifically consider various factors, including the risks discussed under the heading Risk Factors below and in documents incorporated herein by reference, including our consolidated financial statements, related notes and other financial information appearing in our other filings and documents incorporated herein by reference, and the other cautionary statements made in this prospectus. These factors may cause our actual results to differ materially from any forward-looking statement.

Although we believe that the expectations reflected in the forward-looking statements are reasonable, we cannot guarantee future results, events, levels of activity, performance, or achievements. Moreover, neither we nor any other person assumes responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the forward-looking statements.

These statements relate to future events or our future financial performance, and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties, and other factors that may cause actual results, levels of activity, performance, or achievements to be materially different from any future results, levels of activity, performance, or achievements expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements. These risks and other factors include those discussed under the heading Risk Factors below and in documents incorporated herein by reference, including our consolidated financial statements, related notes and other financial information appearing in our other filings and documents incorporated herein by reference, and elsewhere in this prospectus. We are under no duty to update any of the forward-looking statements after the date of this prospectus to conform such statements to actual results or to changes in expectations.

**Table of Contents**

**PROSPECTUS SUMMARY**

*This summary highlights information contained elsewhere or incorporated by reference into this prospectus. Because it is a summary, it does not contain all of the information that you should consider before investing in our securities. You should read this entire prospectus and any supplements to this prospectus carefully, including the section entitled "Risk Factors" and the documents that we incorporate by reference into this prospectus or any such supplements, before making an investment decision.*

**VeriFone Systems, Inc.**

VeriFone is a global leader in secure electronic payment solutions. VeriFone provides expertise, solutions, and services that add value to the point of sale with merchant-operated, consumer-facing, and self-service payment systems for the financial, retail, hospitality, petroleum, transportation, government, and healthcare vertical markets. Since 1981, VeriFone has designed and marketed system solutions that facilitate the long-term shift toward electronic payment transactions and away from cash and checks. VeriFone's principal executive offices are located at 2099 Gateway Place, Suite 600, San Jose, California 95110, and its telephone number is (408) 232-7800. Unless otherwise specified or unless the context requires otherwise, all references in this prospectus to VeriFone, we, us, our or similar references mean VeriFone Systems, Inc. and its consolidated subsidiaries.

VeriFone, Inc., our principal operating subsidiary, was incorporated in 1981. Shortly afterward, we introduced the first check verification and credit authorization device ever utilized by merchants in a commercial setting. In 1984, we introduced the first mass market electronic payment system intended to replace manual credit card authorization devices for small merchants. VeriFone, Inc. became a publicly traded company in 1990 and was acquired by Hewlett-Packard Company, or HP, in 1997. HP operated VeriFone, Inc. as a division until July 2001, when it sold VeriFone, Inc. to Gores Technology Group, LLC, a privately held acquisition and investment management firm, in a transaction led by our Chief Executive Officer, Douglas G. Bergeron. In July 2002, Mr. Bergeron and certain investment funds affiliated with GTCR Golder Rauner, LLC, or GTCR, a private equity firm, led a recapitalization in which VeriFone Systems, Inc. was organized as a holding company for VeriFone, Inc., and GTCR-affiliated funds became our majority stockholders. We completed our initial public offering on May 4, 2005. In June 2009, the GTCR-affiliated funds ceased to be beneficial owners of 5% or more of our outstanding common stock.

On November 1, 2006, we acquired Lipman Electronic Engineering Ltd., or Lipman. Prior to the acquisition, Lipman, a provider of electronic payment systems headquartered in Israel, developed, manufactured and marketed a variety of handheld, wireless and landline POS terminals, electronic cash registers, retail ATM units, PIN pads and smart card readers, as well as integrated PIN and smart card solutions.

In November 2010, we announced that we had entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Hypercom Corporation, or Hypercom, in a merger that, subject to regulatory approvals, is anticipated to close in the second half of 2011. Hypercom is a global payment technology provider that delivers high security, end-to-end electronic payment products, software solutions, and services.

**Table of Contents**

**The Offering**

On June 30, 2011, our subsidiary VeriFone Singapore Pte. Limited completed the acquisition of the outstanding securities of DEC, a company registered under the laws of the Republic of South Africa, pursuant to the terms of a Share Purchase Agreement dated as of May 24, 2011. Pursuant to the terms of the Share Purchase Agreement with the selling stockholders, we are required to file a registration statement covering the resale of the shares of our common stock following the closing of the acquisition. This registration statement registers for resale the 1,138,872 shares of common stock issued in the DEC acquisition. Each of the shares that may be offered by any selling stockholder named in this prospectus or any supplement to this prospectus was issued by us to the selling stockholder in connection with our acquisition of DEC.

Common stock to be offered by selling stockholders

1,138,872 shares

Use of proceeds

We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of any shares of our common stock offered by this prospectus. See Selling Stockholders.



---

**Table of Contents**

**RISK FACTORS**

*Investing in our common stock involves risks and uncertainties. You should review carefully the risks and uncertainties described below and under similar headings in each prospectus supplement and the other documents that are incorporated in this prospectus by reference, including in our most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K and the other information contained in this prospectus, as updated by our subsequent filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, or the Exchange Act.*

**Risks Related to Our Business**

The risks set forth below may adversely affect our business, financial condition, and operating results. In addition to the risks set forth below and the factors affecting specific business operations identified with the description of these operations elsewhere in this report, there may also be risks of which we are currently not aware, or that we currently regard as immaterial based on the information available to us, that later prove to be material.

*There are numerous risks associated with our recent entry into an agreement with Hypercom.*

On November 17, 2010, we announced that we had entered into an agreement to acquire Hypercom in a transaction in which the outstanding shares of Hypercom common stock would be exchanged for VeriFone common stock.

There are numerous risks associated with our having entered into this agreement, including the following:

*Regulatory agencies must approve the merger and could impose conditions on, delay, or refuse to approve the merger.* We are subject to the securities and antitrust laws of the United States and the antitrust laws of any other jurisdiction in which the merger is subject to review. We may be unable to obtain in the anticipated timeframe, or at all, the regulatory approvals required to complete the merger. On May 12, 2011, the United States Department of Justice (the DOJ) filed a civil antitrust lawsuit against VeriFone, Hypercom and Ingenico S.A. (Ingenico) to enjoin our planned acquisition of Hypercom and the April 1, 2011 Stock and Asset Purchase Agreement pursuant to which Hypercom would have sold certain assets and liabilities of its U.S. payment terminal business to Ingenico. Effective May 19, 2011, we have terminated the April 1, 2011 Stock and Asset Purchase Agreement and we and Hypercom entered into an agreement with the DOJ to suspend the civil antitrust lawsuit filed against the parties by the DOJ, in order to explore various options for the planned divestiture of Hypercom's U.S. business, including the possibility of a divestiture to an alternative buyer. For example, the DOJ may seek regulatory concessions, which may include compliance with material restrictions or conditions related to the divestiture of portions of our or Hypercom's business, as conditions for granting approval of the merger. These actions may have a material adverse effect on us or a material adverse effect on the combined business. Under the merger agreement, we and Hypercom have both agreed to use reasonable best efforts to complete the merger, including to gain clearance from antitrust and competition authorities and to obtain other required regulatory approvals. Under the merger agreement, our reasonable best efforts include a requirement by us to dispose of businesses or assets that produced up to \$124 million in revenues for us, Hypercom, and our respective subsidiaries during the 2009 fiscal year if such disposition is reasonably necessary to gain clearance from antitrust and competition authorities. VeriFone intends that Hypercom's U.S. and Spain businesses will be divested in connection with the merger. The divestiture of the U.S. business, and to a lesser extent the Spain business, or any other actions that may be required to obtain regulatory approval for the transaction, which may include divestitures of other portions of Hypercom's business, may have a material adverse effect on us or a material adverse effect on the combined businesses. In addition, subject to certain conditions, if the merger agreement is terminated for reasons relating to certain antitrust or competition law matters, VeriFone may be obligated to pay Hypercom a fee equal to \$28.4 million (or \$30.4 million if VeriFone elects to extend the termination date and the termination occurs after August 31, 2011).

## Table of Contents

*Any delay in completing the merger may reduce or eliminate the benefits expected.* In addition to the required regulatory approvals, the merger is subject to a number of other conditions beyond our control that may prevent, delay, or otherwise materially adversely affect its completion. We cannot predict whether or when these other conditions will be satisfied. Further, the requirements for obtaining the required clearances and approvals could delay the completion of the merger for a significant period of time or prevent it from occurring. Any delay in completing the merger could cause the combined company not to realize some or all of the synergies that are expected to be achieved if the merger is successfully completed within its expected timeframe.

*Although we expect that the merger will result in benefits to the combined company, those benefits may not occur because of integration and other challenges.* We and Hypercom have operated and, until the merger is completed, will continue to operate, independently. Achieving the expected benefits of the merger will depend in part on the successful integration of our and Hypercom's technology, operations, and personnel in a timely and efficient manner. We cannot assure you, however, that the integration will be completed as quickly as expected or that the merger will achieve the expected benefits, and delays in completing the merger will exacerbate these risks. The challenges involved in this integration include:

incorporating Hypercom's technology and products into our next generation of products;

integrating Hypercom's products into VeriFone's business because we do not currently sell Hypercom products and our sales personnel have no experience selling Hypercom's products;

coordinating research and development activities to enhance introduction of new products, services, and technologies;

inability to migrate both companies to a common enterprise resource planning information system to integrate all operations, sales, accounting, and administrative activities for the combined company in a timely and cost effective way;

integrating Hypercom's international operations with those of VeriFone;

coordinating the efforts of the Hypercom sales organization with our sales organization;

demonstrating to Hypercom customers that the merger will not result in adverse changes in client service standards or product support;

integrating Hypercom's and our information technology systems and resources;

integrating the supply chain of both companies while ensuring that products continue to be manufactured and delivered on a timely basis, with superior quality to customers and at a cost acceptable to us;

persuading the employees in various jurisdictions that the two companies' business cultures are compatible, maintaining employee morale, and retaining key employees;

any unforeseen expenses or delays associated with the transaction; and

## Edgar Filing: VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC. - Form S-3ASR

timely release of products to market.

The integration of the two companies will be international in scope, complex, time-consuming, and expensive, and may disrupt our business or result in the loss of customers or key employees or the diversion of the attention of management. Some of Hypercom's suppliers, distributors, customers, and licensors are VeriFone's competitors or work with VeriFone's competitors and may terminate their business relationships with Hypercom as

-5-

## **Table of Contents**

a result of the merger. In addition, the integration process may strain the combined company's financial and managerial controls and reporting systems and procedures. This may result in the diversion of management and financial resources from the combined company's core business objectives. There can be no assurance that we will successfully integrate our businesses or that the combined company will realize any of the anticipated benefits of the merger.

Costs associated with the merger are difficult to estimate, may be higher than expected, and may harm the financial results of the combined company. We will incur substantial direct transaction costs associated with the merger, and additional costs associated with consolidation and integration of operations. If the total costs of the merger exceed estimates or the benefits of the merger do not exceed the total costs of the merger, our financial results could be adversely affected.

***We intend to pursue additional acquisitions and strategic investments, which will involve numerous risks. We may not be able to address these risks without substantial expense, delay or other operational or financial problems.***

We expect to seek to acquire or make investments in related businesses, technologies, or products in the future. Acquisitions or investments, such as our planned acquisition of Hypercom, involve various risks, such as:

the difficulty of integrating the technologies, operations, and personnel of the acquired business, technology or product;

the potential disruption of our ongoing business, including the diversion of management attention to issues related to integration and administration, particularly given the number, size and varying scope of our recent acquisitions;

in the case of foreign acquisitions, the need to integrate operations across different cultures and languages and to address the particular economic, currency, political, and regulatory risks associated with specific countries;

the possible inability to obtain the desired financial and strategic benefits from the acquisition or investment;

the loss of all or part of our investment;

loss of customers;

the need to integrate each company's accounting, management, information, human resource and other administrative systems to permit effective management, and the lack of control if such integration is delayed or not implemented;

the need to implement controls, procedures and policies appropriate for a larger public company at companies that prior to acquisition had lacked such controls, procedures and policies;

the risk that increasing complexity inherent in operating a larger business may impact the effectiveness of our internal controls and adversely affect our financial reporting processes;

assumption of unanticipated liabilities and the incurrence of unforeseen expenditures;

the loss of key employees of an acquired business; and

the possibility of our entering markets in which we have limited prior experience.

## **Table of Contents**

Future acquisitions and investments could also result in substantial cash expenditures, potentially dilutive issuances of our equity securities and incurrence of additional debt, contingent liabilities and amortization expenses related to other intangible assets that could adversely affect our business, operating results, and financial condition. Moreover, we may not realize the anticipated benefits of any or all of our acquisitions, or may not realize them in the timeframe expected. We will depend on the retention and performance of existing management and employees of acquired businesses for the day-to-day management and future operating results of these businesses.

*We have experienced rapid growth in our operations, and if we cannot adequately manage our growth, our results of operations will suffer.*

We have experienced rapid growth in our operations in certain periods, both organically and from acquisitions. We cannot be sure that we have made adequate allowances for the costs and risks associated with our expansion, or that our systems, procedures, and managerial controls will be adequate to support the rapid expansion in our operations. Any delay in implementing, or transitioning to, new or enhanced systems, procedures, or controls to accommodate the requirements of our business and operations and to effectively and efficiently integrate acquired operations may adversely affect our ability to meet customer requirements, manage our product inventory, and record and report financial and management information on a timely and accurate basis. If we are unable to successfully manage expansion, our results of operations may be adversely affected.

*Our internal processes and control over financial reporting have in prior periods been deemed inadequate.*

As described under Item 9A. Controls and Procedures in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended October 31, 2010, we have remedied the material weakness in control activities related to income taxes. This material weakness and other material weaknesses in our internal control over financial reporting contributed to our need to restate previously reported interim financial information for each of the first three quarters of our fiscal year ended October 31, 2007, and to the delays in the filing of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for fiscal year 2007. We also were unable to file our quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for our fiscal quarters ended January 31, 2008 and April 30, 2008 on a timely basis. We have implemented a number of additional and enhanced processes and controls to improve our internal control over financial reporting.

Although we have implemented improved controls that have remedied these material weaknesses, these controls may not be sufficient to detect or prevent errors in financial reporting in future periods and will require continued enhancement to accommodate our growth in operations both organically and from acquisitions. We have devoted additional resources to our financial control and reporting requirements, including hiring additional qualified employees in these areas. We may hire additional employees and may also engage additional consultants in these and other key areas. Competition for qualified financial control and accounting professionals in the geographic areas in which we operate is intense and there can be no assurance that we will be able to hire and retain these individuals.

*A majority of our net revenues is generated outside of the United States and we intend to continue to expand our operations internationally including through acquisitions and strategic partnerships. Our results of operations could suffer if we are unable to manage our international expansion and operations effectively.*

During the six months ended April 30, 2011, approximately 60.1% of our net revenues were generated outside of the United States. During the twelve months ended October 31, 2010, approximately 60.0% of our net revenues were generated outside of the United States. We expect our percentage of net revenues generated outside of the United States to increase over time. In particular we expect our planned acquisition of Hypercom would significantly increase our business in Africa, Europe and Asia. Part of our strategy is to expand our penetration in existing foreign markets and to enter new foreign markets and in particular to enter new emerging markets where we

**Table of Contents**

expect to see growth in electronic payments. Our ability to penetrate some international markets may be limited due to different technical standards, protocols or product requirements. Expansion of our international business will require significant management attention and financial resources. Our international net revenues will depend on our continued success in the following areas:

securing commercial relationships to help establish or increase our presence in new and existing international markets;

hiring and training personnel capable of marketing, installing and integrating our solutions, supporting customers, and effectively managing operations in foreign countries;

localizing our solutions to meet local requirements and to target the specific needs and preferences of foreign customers, which may differ from our traditional customer base in the markets we currently serve;

building our brand name and awareness of our services among foreign customers in new and existing international markets; and

implementing new systems, procedures, and controls to monitor our operations in new international markets.

In addition, we are subject to risks and costs associated with operating in foreign countries, including:

multiple, changing, and often inconsistent enforcement of laws and regulations;

satisfying local regulatory or industry imposed requirements, including security or other certification requirements;

competition from existing market participants, including strong local competitors, that may have a longer history in and greater familiarity with the international markets we enter;

tariffs and trade barriers;

laws and business practices that may favor local competitors;

restrictions on the repatriation of funds, foreign currency exchange restrictions, and currency exchange rate fluctuations;

extended payment terms and the ability to collect accounts receivable;

different and/or more stringent labor laws and practices such as the use of workers' councils and labor unions;

different and more stringent data protection, privacy and other laws;

Edgar Filing: VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC. - Form S-3ASR

economic and political instability in certain foreign countries;

imposition of limitations on conversion of foreign currencies into U.S. dollars or remittance of dividends and other payments by foreign subsidiaries;

changes in a specific country's or region's political or economic conditions; and



---

**Table of Contents**

greater difficulty in safeguarding intellectual property in areas such as China, India, Russia, and Latin America. Many of these factors typically become more prevalent during periods of economic stress or disruptive events such as military or terrorist actions. The persistence or occurrence of weakened global economic conditions in one or more regions where we do business may exacerbate certain of these risks. For example, we are subject to foreign currency risk and economic and political instability which can lead to significant and unpredictable volatility in currency rates, including significant currency devaluations, which may negatively impact our revenues, gross margins, results of operations and financial position. Although we engage in some hedging of our foreign currency exposures, we do not hedge all such exposures and our hedging arrangements may not always be effective. In addition, compliance with foreign and U.S. laws and regulations that are applicable to our international operations is complex and may increase our cost of doing business in international jurisdictions and our international operations could expose us to fines and penalties if we fail to comply with these regulations. These laws and regulations include import and export requirements, exchange control regulations, U.S. laws such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and local laws prohibiting corrupt payments to governmental officials, such as the UK Bribery Act. Although we have implemented policies, procedures and training designed to ensure compliance with these laws, there can be no assurance that our employees, contractors, and agents will not take actions in violation of our policies, particularly as we expand our operations through organic growth and acquisitions. For example, two of our Brazilian subsidiaries that were acquired as a part of the Lipman acquisition have been notified of a number of assessments regarding Brazilian customs penalties that relate to alleged infractions in the importation of goods as well as certain tax assessments and penalties. Defending such assessments can be costly and divert management time. Any such violations could subject us to civil or criminal penalties, including the imposition of substantial fines and interest or prohibitions on our ability to offer our products and services to one or more countries, and could also materially damage our reputation, our brand, our international expansion efforts, our business, and negatively impact our operating results. In addition, if we fail to address the challenges and risks associated with international expansion and acquisition strategy, we may encounter difficulties implementing our strategy, which could impede our growth or harm our operating results.

***Macroeconomic conditions and economic volatility could materially adversely affect our business and results of operations.***

Our operations and performance depend significantly on worldwide economic conditions. For example, the significant slowdown and volatility in the U.S. and international economy and financial markets which began in the latter half of 2008 resulted in reduced demand for our products, which in turn adversely impacted our revenues, business, financial condition and results of operations. In particular, the slowdown and volatility in the global markets resulted in softer demand in the financial and retail sectors, pricing pressures and more conservative purchasing decisions by customers, including a tendency toward lower-priced products and lower volume of purchases during the economic downturn. In some countries where we do business the weakened economy resulted in economic instability which had negative effects, including a decrease in purchasing power due to currency devaluations.

While a number of markets globally have shown signs of improvement and we have experienced sequential growth in revenues and earnings and stronger demand in recent quarters, certain markets such as parts of southern Europe continue to experience weakened or uncertain economic conditions and some of our customers, suppliers and partners may continue to be negatively impacted by the global slowdown. We cannot predict whether such improvements or growth will continue and any future decline or volatility in global conditions could negatively impact our business, operating results and financial condition. Further, political unrest or terrorist actions in other parts of the world may negatively impact global economic conditions, including corporate spending and liquidity of capital markets. Continued volatility in market conditions make it difficult to forecast earnings and if we fail to meet

## **Table of Contents**

our financial guidance or the expectations of investment analysts or investors in any period, the market price of our common stock could decline.

***We depend on a limited number of customers, including distributors and resellers, for a large percentage of our System Solutions sales. If we do not effectively manage our relationships with them, our net revenues and operating results will suffer.***

A significant percentage of our net revenues are attributable to a limited number of customers, including distributors and independent sales organizations ( ISOs ). For the six months ended April 30, 2011, our ten largest customers accounted for approximately 25% of our net revenues. For the twelve months ended October 31, 2010, our ten largest customers accounted for approximately 27% of our net revenues. Although no individual customer accounted for more than 10% of net revenues, in the six months ended April 30, 2011 three customers accounted for approximately 13% of our net revenues for that period and in the twelve months ended October 31, 2010, three customers accounted for approximately 15% of our net revenues for that period. If any of our large customers significantly reduces or delays purchases from us or if we are required to sell products to them at reduced prices or on other terms less favorable to us, our revenues and income could be materially adversely affected.

We sell a significant portion of our solutions through third-party resellers such as independent distributors, ISOs, value-added resellers, and payment processors. We depend on their active marketing and sales efforts. These resellers also provide after-sales support and related services to end user customers. When we introduce new applications and solutions, these resellers also provide critical support for developing and supporting the custom software applications to run on our various electronic payment systems and, internationally, in obtaining requisite certifications in the markets in which they are active. Accordingly, the pace at which we are able to introduce new solutions in markets in which these resellers are active depends on the resources they dedicate to these tasks. Moreover, our arrangements with these resellers typically do not prevent them from selling products of other companies, including our competitors, and such resellers may elect to market our competitors products and services in preference to our system solutions. If one or more of our major resellers terminates or otherwise adversely changes its relationship with us, we may be unsuccessful in replacing such relationship. The loss of one of our major resellers could impair our ability to sell our solutions and result in lower revenues and income. It could also be time-consuming and expensive to replicate, either directly or through other resellers, the certifications and the custom applications owned by these resellers.

In addition, orders from our distributors and resellers depend on their sales volumes and inventory management decisions. In response to the global economic downturn a number of distributors and resellers experienced weakened demand and slower sales, which in turn had resulted in declines in order volume and deferrals of orders for our products. Declines or deferral of orders could materially adversely affect our revenues, operating results and cash flows.

***Our solutions may have defects or experience field failures that could delay sales, harm our brand, increase costs and result in product recalls and additional warranty expense.***

We offer complex solutions that are susceptible to undetected hardware and software errors or failures. Solutions may experience failures when first introduced, as new versions are released, or at any time during their lifecycle. Field failure may result from usage with third-party issued payment cards, for example, if such usage generates excess electrostatic discharge. Defects may also arise from third-party components that we incorporate into our products, such as hardware modules, chipsets or battery cells. Any product recalls as a result of errors or failures could result in the loss of or delays in market acceptance of our solutions, adversely affect our business and reputation and increase our product costs which could negatively impact our margins, profitability and results of operations. Any significant returns or warranty claims for any of our products could result in significant additional costs to us and could adversely affect our results of operations. Our customers may also run third-party software

## **Table of Contents**

applications on our electronic payment systems. Errors in third-party applications could adversely affect the performance of our solutions.

The existence of defects and delays in correcting them could result in negative consequences, including the following: harm to our brand; delays in shipping system solutions; loss of market acceptance for our system solutions; additional warranty expenses; diversion of resources from product development; and loss of credibility with distributors, customers and partners. Identifying and correcting defects can be time consuming, costly and in some circumstances extremely difficult. Software errors may take several months to correct, and hardware defects may take even longer to correct.

***Security is vital to our customers and end users and therefore breaches in the security of our solutions could adversely affect our reputation and results of operations.***

Protection against fraud is of key importance to the purchasers and end users of our solutions. We incorporate security features, such as encryption software and secure hardware, into our solutions to protect against fraud in electronic payment transactions and to ensure the privacy and integrity of consumer data. Our solutions may be vulnerable to breaches in security due to defects in the security mechanisms, the operating system and applications, or the hardware platform. Security vulnerabilities could jeopardize the security of information transmitted or stored using our solutions. We also provide our customers with repair, encryption key loading and helpdesk services, and have in the past and may in the future also experience security breaches or fraudulent activities related to unauthorized access to sensitive customer information. If the security of our solutions is compromised, our reputation and marketplace acceptance of our solutions will be adversely affected, which would cause our business to suffer, and we may become subject to damages claims.

***We are party to a number of lawsuits and we may be named in additional litigation, all of which are likely to require significant management time and attention and expenses and may result in unfavorable outcomes that could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations.***

We are currently a party in several litigation proceedings. For example, in connection with the restatement of our historical interim financial statements during fiscal year 2007, a number of securities class action complaints were filed against us and certain of our officers, and purported derivative actions have also been filed against certain of our current and former directors and officers.

The amount of time and resources required to resolve these lawsuits is unpredictable, and defending ourselves is likely to divert management's attention from the day-to-day operations of our business, which could adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations. In addition, an unfavorable outcome in such litigation or a decision by us to settle such lawsuits to avoid the distraction and expense of continued litigation even if we deem the claims to be without merit could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations.

Our insurance may not be sufficient to cover our costs for defending these actions or paying any damages in the event of an unfavorable outcome. In addition, we may be obligated to indemnify (and advance legal expenses to) both current and former officers, employees and directors in connection with the securities class action and derivative action matters. We currently hold insurance policies for the benefit of our directors and officers, although our insurance coverage may not be sufficient in some or all of these matters. Furthermore, our insurance carriers may seek to deny coverage in some or all of these matters, in which case we may have to fund the indemnification amounts owed to such directors and officers ourselves.

We are subject to the risk of additional litigation and regulatory proceedings or actions in connection with the restatement of our financial statements. We have responded to inquiries and provided information and documents related to the restatement to the SEC, the U.S. Department of Justice, the New York Stock Exchange,

## **Table of Contents**

and the Chicago Board Options Exchange. We were the subject of a Wells Notice from the SEC stating that the staff of the SEC's Division of Enforcement (the Staff) intends to recommend that the SEC bring a civil injunctive action against us, alleging violations of the federal securities laws arising from the restatement, which we settled in November 2009. Although we have settled this matter with the SEC, additional regulatory inquiries may also be commenced by other U.S. federal, state or foreign regulatory agencies. In addition, we may in the future be subject to additional litigation or other proceedings or actions arising in relation to the restatement of our historical interim financial statements. Litigation and any regulatory proceeding or action, including the recent DOJ antitrust civil lawsuit related to our planned acquisition of Hypercom, may be time consuming, expensive and distracting from the conduct of our business. The adverse resolution of any specific lawsuit or any potential regulatory proceeding or action could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, and results of operations.

These litigation proceedings could result in substantial additional costs and expenses and adversely affect our cash flows, and may adversely affect our business, financial condition, and results of operations. We have in the past incurred and expect to continue to incur significant expenses in connection with these matters. Many members of our senior management team and our Board of Directors have been and will be required to devote a significant amount of time to the litigation related to the restatement. In addition, certain of these individuals are named defendants in the litigation related to the restatement. If our senior management is unable to devote sufficient time in the future developing and pursuing our strategic business initiatives and running ongoing business operations, there may be a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition and results of operations.

***We face litigation and tax assessment risks that could force us to incur substantial defense costs and could result in damages awards against us that would negatively impact our business.***

As described in our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the period ended April 30, 2011, there are a number of pending litigation and tax assessment matters each of which may be time-consuming to resolve, expensive to defend, and disruptive to normal business operations. The outcome of litigation and tax assessments is inherently difficult to predict. An unfavorable resolution of any lawsuit or tax assessment could have a material adverse effect on our business, results of operations and financial condition.

***Our North American and international operations are not equally profitable, which may promote volatility in our earnings and may adversely impact future growth in our earnings.***

Our international sales of System Solutions have tended to carry lower average selling prices and therefore have lower gross margins than our sales in North America. We also face increased downward pressure on prices in international markets such as China where local competition has intensified and in India where we continue to expand our business. As a result, any improvement in our results of operations from our expansion internationally will likely not be as favorable or profitable as an expansion of similar magnitude in the United States and Canada. In addition, we are unable to predict for any future period our proportion of revenues that will result from international sales versus sales in North America. Variations in this proportion from period to period may lead to volatility in our results of operations which, in turn, may depress the trading price of our common stock.

***We have experienced some fiscal quarters in which a significant percentage of the business for the quarter is executed towards the end of the fiscal quarter. This could negatively impact our business and results of operations.***

Revenues recognized in our fiscal quarters can be back-end loaded meaning that during a particular fiscal quarter the timing of orders could be such that a substantial portion of sales orders are received, product is shipped, and revenue is recognized towards the end of the fiscal quarter, for various reasons. The occurrence of such back-end loading could adversely affect our business and results of operations due to a number of factors including the following:

## Table of Contents

the manufacturing processes at our third-party contract manufacturers could become concentrated in a shorter time period. This concentration of manufacturing could increase manufacturing costs, such as costs associated with the expediting of orders, and negatively impact gross margins. The risk of higher levels of obsolete or excess inventory write-offs would also increase if we were to hold higher inventory levels to counteract this effect;

the higher concentration of orders may make it difficult to accurately forecast component requirements and, as a result, we could experience a shortage of the components needed for production, possibly delaying shipments and causing lost orders;

if we are unable to fill orders at the end of a quarter, shipments may be delayed. This could cause us to fail to meet our revenue and operating profit expectations for a particular quarter and could increase the fluctuation of quarterly results if shipments are delayed from one fiscal quarter to the next or orders are cancelled by customers; and

in order to fulfill orders at the end of a quarter, we may be forced to deliver our products using air freight which results in increased distribution costs.

***We are exposed to credit risk with some of our customers and to credit exposures and currency controls in certain markets, which could result in material losses.***

A significant portion of our sales are on an open credit basis, with typical payment terms of up to 60 days in the United States and, because of local customs or conditions, longer in some international markets. In the past, there have been bankruptcies among our customer base. Although credit losses have not been material to date, future losses, if incurred, could harm our business and have a materially adverse effect on our operating results and financial condition. Also, certain customers who are invoiced in U.S. dollars, such as those based in Venezuela, have experienced and may continue to experience difficulties in obtaining U.S. dollar currency due to local currency controls, and therefore may not be able to remit timely payment to us. Additionally, to the degree that the recent turmoil in the credit markets continues to make it more difficult for some customers to obtain financing or access U.S. dollar currency, our customers' ability to pay could be adversely impacted, which in turn could have a material adverse impact on our business, cash flows, operating results and financial condition.

***Fluctuations in currency exchange rates may adversely affect our results of operations.***

A substantial portion of our business consists of sales made to customers outside the United States. A portion of the net revenues we receive from such sales is denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar. Additionally, portions of our cost of net revenues and our other operating expenses are incurred by our International operations and denominated in local currencies. Fluctuations in the value of these net revenues, costs and expenses as measured in U.S. dollars have historically affected our results of operations, and adverse currency exchange rate fluctuations may have a material impact in the future. Further, changes in exchange rates that strengthen the U.S. dollar could increase the price of our products in the local currencies of the foreign markets we serve. This would result in making our products relatively more expensive than products that are denominated in local currencies, leading to a reduction in sales and profitability in those foreign markets. In addition, our balance sheet contains monetary assets and liabilities denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar, such as cash, intercompany balances, trade receivables and payables, and fluctuations in the exchange rates for these currencies could adversely affect our results of operations. We have entered into foreign exchange forward contracts intended to hedge our balance sheet exposure to adverse fluctuations in exchange rates. We have also effectively priced our System Solutions in U.S. dollars in certain countries. Nevertheless, these hedging arrangements may not always be effective, particularly in the event of imprecise forecasts of non-U.S. denominated assets and liabilities. Additionally, our efforts to effectively price products in U.S. dollars may have disadvantages as they may affect demand for our

## Table of Contents

products if the local currency strengthens relative to the U.S. dollar. We could be adversely affected when the U.S. dollar strengthens relative to the local currency between the time of a sale and the time we receive payment, which would be collected in the devalued local currency. Accordingly, if there is an adverse movement in one or more exchange rates, we might suffer significant losses and our results of operations may otherwise be adversely affected. Uncertainty in the global market conditions have resulted in and may continue to cause significant volatility in foreign currency exchange rates which could increase these risks. As our international operations expand, our exposure to these risks also increases. Additionally, hedging programs expose us to risks that could adversely affect our operating results, including the following:

we may be unable to hedge currency risk for some transactions because of a high level of uncertainty or the inability to reasonably estimate our foreign exchange exposures; and

we may be unable to acquire foreign exchange hedging instruments in some of the geographic areas where we do business, or, where these derivatives are available, we may choose not to hedge because of the high cost of the derivatives.

***We depend upon third parties to manufacture our systems and to supply the components necessary to manufacture our products.***

We utilize a limited number of third parties to manufacture our hardware products pursuant to our specifications and rely upon these contract manufacturers to produce and deliver products to our customers on a timely basis and at an acceptable cost or to otherwise meet our product demands. Further, a majority of these third party manufacturing activities are concentrated in China. Disruptions to the business or operations of these contract manufacturers, or to their ability to produce the products we require in accordance with our and our customers' requirements, and particularly disruptions to the manufacturing operations in China including due to geological disruptions such as earthquakes, could significantly affect our ability to fulfill customer demand on a timely basis which could materially harm our revenues and results of operations. We also rely on our contract manufacturer's facility in Israel for certain of our product lines and therefore are subject to the political disruptions or economic instability in that region. Substantially all of our manufacturing is currently handled by our third party contract manufacturers and our dependency on our third party contract manufacturers could exacerbate these risks.

Components such as application specific integrated circuits, or ASICs, microprocessors, wireless modules, modems and printer mechanisms that are necessary to manufacture and assemble our systems are sourced either directly by us or on our behalf by our contract manufacturers from a variety of component suppliers selected by us. Certain of the components are specifically customized for use in our products and are obtained from sole source suppliers on a purchase order basis. In recent periods, we have experienced a tightening in availability of certain semiconductor commodities that are necessary for the manufacture of our products. In addition, we have recently experienced component shortages due to the severe earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011 which together with resulting damage to certain nuclear power plants, has resulted in widespread destruction and economic uncertainty in that region. Although we have to date been able to manage component supply adequate to meet our product demands, we are continuing to monitor the impact of the crisis in Japan on our supply chain and there can be no assurance that our results of operations will not be materially affected by the events in Japan. Any prolonged component shortage as a result of these events could materially adversely affect our business and results of operations. Component shortages could result in increased costs for critical components which could negatively impact our gross margins and profitability. If our suppliers are unable or unwilling to deliver the quantities that we require within the timeframe that we require, including as a result of the crisis in Japan, we would be faced with a shortage of critical components. We also experience from time to time an increase in the lead time for delivery of some of our key components. We may not be able to find alternative sources in a timely manner if suppliers of our key components become unwilling or unable to provide us with adequate supplies of these key components when we need them or if they increase their prices. If we are unable to obtain sufficient key required components, or to

**Table of Contents**

develop alternative sources if and as required in the future, or to replace our component and factory tooling for our products in a timely manner if they are damaged or destroyed, we could experience delays or reductions in product shipments. This could harm our relationships with our customers and cause our revenues to decline. Even if we are able to secure alternative sources or replace our tooling in a timely manner, our costs could increase. Any of these events could adversely affect our results of operations.

*The government tax benefits that our subsidiaries have previously received or currently receive require them to meet several conditions and may be terminated or reduced in the future, which could require us to pay increased taxes or refund tax benefits received in the past.*

**Israel**

Our subsidiary in Israel (formerly Lipman) previously received tax benefits under Israeli law for capital investments that are designated as Approved Enterprises. We received such tax benefits of approximately \$0.4 million during the twelve months ended October 31, 2009. Due to our restructuring and contract manufacturing arrangements entered into during the twelve months ended October 31, 2010 we will no longer meet the requirements necessary to maintain the tax benefit status in Israel. As of November 1, 2009, we have been taxed at the full statutory rate in Israel and no future tax benefit has been recorded. This Israel subsidiary has undistributed earnings of approximately \$181 million, the vast majority of which are attributable to Lipman's historic Approved Enterprise programs. As such, these earnings were not subject to Israeli statutory corporate tax at the time they were generated. Distribution or use of these funds outside Israel would subject us to payment of corporate and withholding taxes. For example, to the extent that these earnings are distributed to the United States in the future, our Israeli subsidiary would be required to pay corporate tax at the rate ordinarily applicable to such earnings, currently between 12.5% and 36.25%, which includes the withholding tax between the United States and Israel. We have accrued approximately \$50 million for taxes associated with potential future distributions of our Israeli subsidiary's approximately \$181 million in earnings.

**Singapore**

Our principal subsidiary in Singapore has received tax benefits under the Singapore Pioneer Tax Holiday provision. We received tax benefits of approximately \$8.3 million during the twelve months ended October 31, 2010 and \$4.1 million during the twelve months ended October 31, 2009. To maintain our eligibility for these benefits, we must meet certain agreed conditions, including maintaining agreed levels of Singapore employees and incurring and documenting total local business spend levels as agreed with the Singapore Economic Development Board. We recently renegotiated the terms and conditions of the Tax Holiday, including an extension of our Tax Holiday through 2012. Although we expect to be able to meet the terms and conditions to maintain our Tax Holiday, if we are not able to achieve or maintain the requirements, each of our current lenders requires us to maintain certain insurance coverage thresholds, and we anticipate that future lenders will have similar requirements. We believe that we have complied with the insurance maintenance requirements under the current governing loan documents and we intend to comply with any such requirements in any future loan documents. However, a lender may disagree, in which case the lender could obtain additional coverage thresholds and seek payment from us, or declare us in default under the loan documents. In the former case, we could spend more for insurance than we otherwise deem reasonable or necessary, or, in the latter case, subject us to a foreclosure on hotels collateralizing one or more loans. In addition, a material casualty to one or more hotels collateralizing loans may result in (i) the insurance company applying to the outstanding loan balance insurance proceeds that otherwise would be available to repair the damage caused by the casualty, which would require us to fund the repairs through other sources, or (ii) the lender foreclosing on the hotels if there is a material loss that is not insured.

**Risks Related to Our Status as a REIT**

*If we do not qualify as a REIT, we will be subject to tax as a regular corporation and face substantial tax liability.*

We operate so as to qualify as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code. However, qualification as a REIT involves the application of highly technical and complex Internal Revenue Code provisions for which only a limited number of judicial or administrative interpretations exist. Even a technical or inadvertent mistake could jeopardize our REIT status. Furthermore, new tax legislation, administrative guidance or court decisions, in each instance potentially with retroactive effect, could make it more difficult or impossible for us to qualify as a REIT. If we fail to qualify as a REIT in any tax year, then:

we would be taxed as a regular domestic corporation, which, among other things, means being unable to deduct distributions to stockholders in computing taxable income and being subject to federal income tax on our taxable income at regular corporate rates;

we would also be subject to federal alternative minimum tax and, possibly, increased state and local taxes;

any resulting tax liability could be substantial and would reduce the amount of cash available for distribution to stockholders; and

unless we were entitled to relief under applicable statutory provisions, we would be disqualified from treatment as a REIT for the subsequent four taxable years following the year during which we lost our qualification, and, thus, our cash available for distribution to stockholders would be reduced for each of the years during which we did not qualify as a REIT.

## Edgar Filing: VERIFONE SYSTEMS, INC. - Form S-3ASR

If we fail to qualify as a REIT, we will not be required to make distributions to stockholders to maintain our tax status. As a result of all of these factors, our failure to qualify as a REIT would impair our ability to raise capital, expand our business and make distributions to our stockholders and would adversely affect the value of our securities.

***Even if we remain qualified as a REIT, we may face other tax liabilities that reduce our cash flow.***

Even if we remain qualified for taxation as a REIT, we may be subject to certain federal, state and local taxes on our income and assets. For example:

We will be required to pay tax on undistributed REIT taxable income.

We may be required to pay the alternative minimum tax on our items of tax preference.



## **Table of Contents**

If we have net income from the disposition of foreclosure property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business or other non-qualifying income from foreclosure property, we must pay tax on that income at the highest corporate rate.

If we sell a property in a prohibited transaction, our gain from the sale would be subject to a 100% penalty tax. A prohibited transaction would be a sale of property, other than a foreclosure property, held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business.

Our taxable REIT subsidiaries, including Ashford TRS Corporation and Ashford TRS VI Corporation, are fully taxable corporations and will be required to pay federal and state taxes on their income.

### ***Complying with REIT requirements may cause us to forego otherwise attractive opportunities.***

To qualify as a REIT for federal income tax purposes, we must continually satisfy tests concerning, among other things, the sources of our income, the nature and diversification of our assets, the amounts we distribute to our stockholders and the ownership of our stock. We may be required to make distributions to stockholders at disadvantageous times or when we do not have funds readily available for distribution. Thus, compliance with the REIT requirements may hinder our ability to operate solely on the basis of maximizing profits.

### ***Complying with REIT requirements may limit our ability to hedge effectively.***

The REIT provisions of the Internal Revenue Code may limit our ability to hedge mortgage securities and related borrowings by requiring us to limit our income in each year from qualified hedges, together with any other income not generated from qualified real estate assets, to no more than 25% of our gross income. In addition, we must limit our aggregate income from nonqualified hedging transactions, from our provision of services and from other non-qualifying sources to no more than 5% of our annual gross income. As a result, we may have to limit our use of advantageous hedging techniques. This could result in greater risks associated with changes in interest rates than we would otherwise want to incur. If we were to violate the 25% or 5% limitations, we may have to pay a penalty tax equal to the amount of income in excess of those limitations, multiplied by a fraction intended to reflect our profitability. If we fail to satisfy the REIT gross income tests, unless our failure was due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, we could lose our REIT status for federal income tax purposes.

### ***Complying with REIT requirements may force us to liquidate otherwise attractive investments.***

To qualify as a REIT, we must also ensure that at the end of each calendar quarter at least 75% of the value of our assets consists of cash, cash items, government securities and qualified REIT real estate assets. The remainder of our investment in securities (other than government securities and qualified real estate assets) generally cannot include more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of any one issuer or more than 10% of the total value of the outstanding securities of any one issuer. In addition, in general, no more than 5% of the value of our assets (other than government securities and qualified real estate assets) can consist of the securities of any one issuer, and no more than 20% of the value of our total securities can be represented by securities of one or more taxable REIT subsidiaries. If we fail to comply with these requirements at the end of any calendar quarter, we must correct such failure within 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter to avoid losing our REIT status and suffering adverse tax consequences. As a result, we may be required to liquidate otherwise attractive investments.

### ***Complying with REIT requirements may force us to borrow to make distributions to stockholders.***

As a REIT, we must distribute at least 90% of our annual taxable income (subject to certain adjustments) to our stockholders. To the extent that we satisfy the distribution requirement, but distribute less than 100% of our taxable income, we will be subject to federal corporate income tax on our undistributed taxable income. In addition, we will be subject to a 4% nondeductible excise tax if the actual amount that we pay out to our stockholders in a calendar year is less than a minimum amount specified under federal tax laws.

From time to time, we may generate taxable income greater than our net income for financial reporting purposes due to, among other things, amortization of capitalized purchase premiums, or our taxable income may be

**Table of Contents**

greater than our cash flow available for distribution to stockholders. If we do not have other funds available in these situations, we could be required to borrow funds, sell investments at disadvantageous prices or find another alternative source of funds to make distributions sufficient to enable us to pay out enough of our taxable income to satisfy the distribution requirement and to avoid corporate income tax and the 4% excise tax in a particular year. These alternatives could increase our costs or reduce our equity.

***We may be subject to adverse legislative or regulatory tax changes that could reduce the market price of our securities.***

At any time, the federal income tax laws governing REITs or the administrative interpretations of those laws may be amended. Any of those new laws or interpretations may take effect retroactively and could adversely affect us or you as a stockholder. On May 28, 2003, the President signed the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, which we refer to as the Jobs and Growth Tax Act. Effective for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2002, the Jobs and Growth Tax Act reduced the maximum rate of tax applicable to individuals on dividend income from regular C corporations from 38.6% to 15.0%. This reduced substantially the so-called double taxation (that is, taxation at both the corporate and stockholder levels) that has generally applied to corporations that are not taxed as REITs. Generally, dividends from REITs will not qualify for the dividend tax reduction. The implementation of the Jobs and Growth Tax Act could cause individual investors to view stocks of non-REIT corporations as more attractive relative to shares of REITs than was the case previously because the dividends paid by non-REIT corporations would be subject to lower tax rates for the individual. We cannot predict whether in fact this will occur or whether, if it occurs, what the impact will be on the value of our securities.

***Your investment in our common stock has various federal, state and local income tax risks that could affect the value of your investment.***

Although the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code relevant to your investment in our securities are generally described in Federal Income Tax Consequences of Our Status as a REIT, we strongly urge you to consult your own tax advisor concerning the effects of federal, state and local income tax law on an investment in our securities, because of the complex nature of the tax rules applicable to REITs and their stockholders.

#### **Risk Factors Related to Our Corporate Structure**

***There are no assurances of our ability to make distributions in the future.***

We intend to continue paying quarterly dividends and to make distributions to our stockholders in amounts such that all or substantially all of our taxable income in each year, subject to certain adjustments, is distributed. This, along with other factors, should enable us to qualify for the tax benefits accorded to a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code. However, our ability to pay dividends may be adversely affected by the risk factors described in this prospectus. All distributions will be made at the discretion of our board of directors and will depend upon our earnings, our financial condition, maintenance of our REIT status and such other factors as our board of directors may deem relevant from time to time. There are no assurances of our ability to pay dividends in the future. In addition, some of our distributions may include a return of capital.

***Failure to maintain an exemption from the Investment Company Act would adversely affect our results of operations.***

We believe that we will conduct our business in a manner that allows us to avoid registration as an investment company under the Investment Company Act of 1940, or the 1940 Act. Under Section 3(c)(5)(C) of the 1940 Act, entities that are primarily engaged in the business of purchasing or otherwise acquiring mortgages and other liens on and interests in real estate are not treated as investment companies. The SEC staff's position generally requires us to maintain at least 55% of our assets directly in qualifying real estate interests to be able to rely on this exemption. To constitute a qualifying real estate interest under this 55% requirement, a real estate interest must meet various criteria. Mortgage securities that do not represent all of the certificates issued with respect to an underlying pool of mortgages may be treated as securities separate from the underlying mortgage loans and, thus, may not qualify for purposes of the 55% requirement. Our ownership of these mortgage securities,

## **Table of Contents**

therefore, is limited by the provisions of the 1940 Act and SEC staff interpretive positions. There are no assurances that efforts to pursue our intended investment program will not be adversely affected by operation of these rules.

***Our charter does not permit ownership in excess of 9.8% of our capital stock, and attempts to acquire our capital stock in excess of the 9.8% limit without approval from our board of directors are void.***

For the purpose of preserving our REIT qualification, our charter prohibits direct or constructive ownership by any person of more than 9.8% of the lesser of the total number or value of the outstanding shares of our common stock or more than 9.8% of the lesser of the total number or value of the outstanding shares of our preferred stock. Our charter's constructive ownership rules are complex and may cause the outstanding stock owned by a group of related individuals or entities to be deemed to be constructively owned by one individual or entity. As a result, the acquisition of less than 9.8% of the outstanding stock by an individual or entity could cause that individual or entity to own constructively in excess of 9.8% of the outstanding stock, and thus be subject to our charter's ownership limit. Any attempt to own or transfer shares of our common or preferred stock in excess of the ownership limit without the consent of the board of directors will be void, and could result in the shares being automatically transferred to a charitable trust.

***Because provisions contained in Maryland law and our charter may have an anti-takeover effect, investors may be prevented from receiving a control premium for their shares.***

Provisions contained in our charter and Maryland general corporation law may have effects that delay, defer or prevent a takeover attempt, which may prevent stockholders from receiving a control premium for their shares. For example, these provisions may defer or prevent tender offers for our common stock or purchases of large blocks of our common stock, thereby limiting the opportunities for our stockholders to receive a premium for their common stock over then-prevailing market prices. These provisions include the following:

*Ownership limit:* The ownership limit in our charter limits related investors, including, among other things, any voting group, from acquiring over 9.8% of our common stock without our permission.

*Classification of preferred stock:* Our charter authorizes our board of directors to issue preferred stock in one or more classes and to establish the preferences and rights of any class of preferred stock issued. These actions can be taken without soliciting stockholder approval. The issuance of preferred stock could have the effect of delaying or preventing someone from taking control of us, even if a change in control were in our stockholders' best interests.

Maryland statutory law provides that an act of a director relating to or affecting an acquisition or a potential acquisition of control of a corporation may not be subject to a higher duty or greater scrutiny than is applied to any other act of a director. Hence, directors of a Maryland corporation are not required to act in takeover situations under the same standards as apply in Delaware and other corporate jurisdictions.

***Offerings of debt securities, which would be senior to our common stock and any preferred stock upon liquidation, or equity securities, which would dilute our existing stockholders and may be senior to our common stock for the purposes of dividend distributions, may adversely affect the market price of our common stock and any preferred stock.***

We have offered preferred stock and may offer debt securities. Additionally, in the future, we may attempt to increase our capital resources by making additional offerings of debt or equity securities, including commercial paper, medium-term notes, senior or subordinated notes and classes of preferred stock or common stock or classes of preferred units. Upon liquidation, holders of our debt securities or preferred units and lenders with respect to other borrowings will receive a distribution of our available assets prior to the holders of shares of preferred stock or common stock, and holders of our debt securities and shares of preferred stock or preferred units and lenders with respect to other borrowings will receive a distribution of our available assets prior to the holders of our common stock. Additional equity offerings may dilute the holdings of our existing stockholders or reduce the market price of our common or preferred stock, or both. Our preferred stock or preferred units, if issued, could have a preference on liquidating distributions or a preference on dividend payments that could limit our ability to make a dividend

## **Table of Contents**

distribution to the holders of our common stock. Because our decision to issue securities in any future offering will depend on market conditions and other factors beyond our control, we cannot predict or estimate the amount, timing or nature of our future offerings. Thus, our stockholders bear the risk of our future offerings reducing the market price of our securities and diluting their securities holdings in us.

### ***Securities eligible for future sale may have adverse effects on the market price of our securities.***

We cannot predict the effect, if any, of future sales of securities, or the availability of securities for future sales, on the market price of our outstanding securities. Sales of substantial amounts of common stock (including up to (i) 11,092,075 shares of common stock which are currently issuable, at our option, in exchange for outstanding units in our operating partnership, (ii) 781,658 shares of common stock which were issued in connection with our initial public offering, (iii) 298,239 shares of common stock which were issued to certain of our directors, executive officers and employees of the company and its affiliates and are now fully vested and unrestricted, (iv) 878,878 restricted shares, issued to certain of our executive officers and employees of the company and its affiliates, which are subject to continued employment by such officer or employee and (v) restricted shares issuable to executive officers only if specified performance criteria are satisfied), or the perception that these sales could occur, may adversely affect prevailing market prices for our securities.

We also may issue from time to time additional securities or units of our operating partnership in connection with the acquisition of properties and we may grant additional demand or piggyback registration rights in connection with these issuances. Sales of substantial amounts of our securities or the perception that these sales could occur may adversely affect the prevailing market price for our securities or may impair our ability to raise capital through a sale of additional debt or equity securities.

### ***We depend on key personnel with long-standing business relationships, the loss of whom could threaten our ability to operate our business successfully.***

Our future success depends, to a significant extent, upon the continued services of our management team. In particular, the lodging industry experience of Messrs. Archie and Montgomery Bennett, Kessler, Brooks, Kimichik and Nunneley and the extent and nature of the relationships they have developed with hotel franchisors, operators and owners and hotel lending and other financial institutions are critically important to the success of our business. We do not maintain key person life insurance on any of our officers. Although these officers currently have employment agreements with us through 2006 (2007 for Mr. Montgomery Bennett), we cannot assure you of the continued employment of all of our officers. The loss of services of one or more members of our corporate management team could harm our business and our prospects.

### ***An increase in market interest rates may have an adverse effect on the market price of our securities.***

One of the factors that investors may consider in deciding whether to buy or sell our securities is our dividend rate as a percentage of our share or unit price, relative to market interest rates. If market interest rates increase, prospective investors may desire a higher dividend or interest rate on our securities or seek securities paying higher dividends or interest. The market price of our securities likely will be based primarily on the earnings and return that we derive from our investments and income with respect to our properties and our related distributions to stockholders, and not from the market value or underlying appraised value of the properties or investments themselves. As a result, interest rate fluctuations and capital market conditions can affect the market price of our securities. For instance, if interest rates rise without an increase in our dividend rate, the market price of our common or preferred stock could decrease because potential investors may require a higher dividend yield on our common or preferred stock as market rates on interest-bearing securities, such as bonds, rise. In addition, rising interest rates would result in increased interest expense on our variable rate debt, thereby adversely affecting cash flow and our ability to service our indebtedness and pay dividends.

***Our major policies, including our policies and practices with respect to investments, financing, growth, debt capitalization, REIT qualification and distributions, are determined by our board of directors. Although we have no present intention to do so, our board of directors may amend or revise these and other policies from time to time without a vote of our stockholders. Accordingly, our stockholders will have limited control over changes in our policies and the changes could harm our business, results of operations and share price.***



**Table of Contents**

Changes in our strategy or investment or leverage policy could expose us to greater credit risk and interest rate risk or could result in a more leveraged balance sheet. We cannot predict the effect any changes to our current operating policies and strategies may have on our business, operating results and stock price. However, the effects may be adverse.

**USE OF PROCEEDS**

We will not receive any of the proceeds from the issuance or resale of the common stock offered by this prospectus; however, we will pay certain registration expenses related to this offering.

**REDEMPTION OF UNITS**

**General**

Each unit holder may, subject to certain limitations and only after certain specified dates, require that our operating partnership redeem all or a portion of the units held by such unit holder for cash, or at the general partner's election, for shares of our common stock (on a one-for-one basis, subject to certain adjustments). The number of shares of common stock which may be redeemed for units is subject to adjustment in the event of stock splits, stock dividends, issuance of certain rights, certain dividends and distributions and similar events.

Each unit holder must notify the general partner of its desire to require the operating partnership to redeem its units by delivering a notice of redemption, in substantially the form attached as an exhibit to the partnership agreement, to the general partner. Such holder shall have the right to receive an amount of cash from the operating partnership equal to the Cash Amount (as defined in the partnership agreement). The operating partnership shall have up to 120 days following exercise of the redemption right to pay the Cash Amount. However, if the general partner elects to acquire such tendered units in exchange for shares of our common stock, the holder shall have no right to cause the operating partnership to redeem the units for cash. Such an acquisition of the units by the general partner should be treated as a sale of the units by the redeeming unit holders to us for federal income tax purposes. See "Tax Consequences of Redemption" below. Upon redemption of the units, the holder's rights to receive distributions with respect to the units will cease (but if such units are redeemed for shares of our common stock, the holder will have rights as our stockholder from the time of its acquisition of the shares of common stock) and such holder will cease to be a limited partner of the operating partnership as to those units redeemed.

If the general partner elects to satisfy any redemption right exercised by a unit holder through issuance of our common stock, the shares of common stock will be delivered as duly authorized, validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable shares, free of any pledge, lien, encumbrance or restriction, other than those provided in our charter and bylaws, the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and relevant state securities or blue sky laws with respect to such shares of common stock. Notwithstanding any delay in such delivery, a holder shall be deemed the owner of such shares of common stock and rights for all purposes, including, without limitation, rights to vote or consent, receive dividends, and exercise rights, as of the redemption date.

**Certain Conditions to Redemption**

Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the redemption rights are subject to certain conditions, including, but not limited to, the following:

In order to protect our status as a REIT, no unit holder shall be entitled to effect a redemption, if such redemption would cause such holder or any other person to violate the provisions of our charter.

No unit holder may effect a redemption for less than 1,000 units, or if such holder holds less than 1,000 units, all of the units held by such holder.

**Table of Contents**

**Registration Rights**

We have filed the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part pursuant to our obligations under a registration rights agreement we entered into in connection with the acquisition of nine of our hotel properties. Under the registration rights agreement, we are obligated to use our reasonable efforts to keep the registration statement continuously effective for a period expiring on the date on which all shares of common stock covered by this prospectus (i) have been disposed of by the recipient pursuant to this registration statement; (ii) have been sold pursuant to Rule 144 under the Securities Act of 1933; (iii) may be sold pursuant to Rule 144 under the Securities Act of 1933 and could be sold in one transaction in accordance with the volume limitations contained in Rule 144(e)(1)(i) under the Securities Act of 1933; or (iv) have been otherwise transferred in a transaction that would constitute a sale under the Securities Act, we have delivered a new certificate or other evidence of ownership for such shares not bearing the Securities Act of 1933 restricted stock legend and such shares may be resold without restriction under the Securities Act.

We have no obligation under these agreements to retain any underwriter to effect the sale of the common stock covered by the registration rights agreement, and the registration statement will not be available for use for an underwritten public offering of such shares.

Pursuant to the registration rights agreement, we agreed to pay all expenses of effecting the registration of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus, other than underwriting fees, discounts and commissions, or any out-of-pocket expenses of the holders of the units or any transfer taxes relating to the registration or sale of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus.

**Tax Consequences of Redemption**

The following discussion summarizes certain federal income tax considerations that may be relevant to a holder who exercises such holder's right to require the redemption of such holder's units. (A holder's right to require the redemption of units is referred to in the remainder of this section as the Redemption Right.) Because the specific tax consequences to a holder exercising such holder's Redemption Right will depend upon the specific circumstances of that holder, each holder considering exercising the Redemption Right is strongly urged to consult such holder's own tax advisor regarding the specific federal, state, local and non-U.S. tax consequences to such holder of the exercise of the Redemption Right in light of such holder's specific circumstances.

**Tax Treatment of Redemption of Units**

To the extent that we assume and perform the redemption obligation, the redemption likely would be treated for tax purposes as a sale of units to us in a fully taxable transaction, although the matter is not free from doubt. In that event, such sale will be fully taxable to the redeeming holder and such redeeming holder will be treated as realizing for tax purposes an amount equal to the value of the common stock received in the exchange plus the amount of partnership nonrecourse liabilities allocable to the redeemed units at the time of the redemption. The determination of the amount of gain or loss in the event of sale treatment is discussed more fully below.

To the extent that we do not elect to assume the obligation to redeem a holder's units, our operating partnership will redeem such units for cash. If the operating partnership redeems units for cash that we contribute to the partnership to effect such redemption, the redemption of those units likely would be treated for tax purposes as a sale of such units to us in a fully taxable transaction, although the matter is not free from doubt. In that event, the redeeming holder would be treated as realizing an amount equal to the sum of the cash received in the exchange plus the amount of partnership nonrecourse liabilities allocable to the redeemed units at the time of the redemption. The determination of the amount of gain or loss in the event of sale treatment is discussed more fully below.

If, instead, the partnership redeems a holder's units for cash that is not contributed by us to effect the redemption, the tax consequences would be the same as described in the previous paragraph, except that if the holder redeems less than all of a holder's units, the holder would not be permitted to recognize any loss occurring on the transaction and would recognize taxable gain only to the extent that the cash, plus the share of partnership

## **Table of Contents**

nonrecourse liabilities allocable to the redeemed units, exceeded the holder's adjusted basis in all of such holder's units immediately before the redemption.

### **Tax Treatment of Disposition of Units by a U.S. Holder Generally**

As used in the remainder of this discussion, the term "U.S. holder" means a beneficial owner of the units that is for United States federal income tax purposes:

a citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation or partnership (including an entity treated as a corporation or partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or of a political subdivision thereof;

an estate whose income is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

any trust if (1) a U.S. court is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of such trust and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (2) it has a valid election in place to be treated as a U.S. person.

Generally, in the case of a partnership that holds units, any partner that would be a U.S. holder if it held units directly is also a U.S. holder. A non-U.S. holder is a holder, including any partner in a partnership that holds our units, that is not a U.S. holder.

If a unit is redeemed from a U.S. holder in a manner that is treated as a sale of the unit, or a U.S. holder otherwise disposes of a unit, the determination of gain or loss from the sale or other disposition will be based on the difference between the amount considered realized for tax purposes and the tax basis in such unit. See "Basis of Units" below. Upon the sale of a unit, the amount realized will be measured by the sum of the cash and fair market value of other property (e.g., common stock) received plus the portion of partnership nonrecourse liabilities allocable to the unit sold. To the extent that the amount of cash or property received plus the allocable share of partnership nonrecourse liabilities exceeds the holder's basis for the unit disposed of, such holder will recognize gain. It is possible that the amount of gain recognized or even the tax liability resulting from such gain could exceed the amount of cash and the value of any other property (e.g., shares of common stock) received upon such disposition.

Except as described below, any gain recognized by a unit holder, other than a dealer in units, upon a redemption of units held for more than one year will generally be treated as capital gain or loss. To the extent, however, that the amount realized upon the sale of a unit attributable to a holder's share of "unrealized receivables" of the partnership (as defined in Section 751 of the Code) exceeds the basis attributable to those assets, such excess will be treated as ordinary income. Unrealized receivables include, to the extent not previously included in partnership income, any rights to payment for services rendered or to be rendered. Unrealized receivables also include amounts that would be subject to recapture as ordinary income, such as depreciation recapture, if the partnership had sold its assets at their fair market value at the time of the transfer of a unit. Each holder is strongly urged to consult such holder's own tax advisor regarding the specific federal, state, local and non-U.S. tax consequences to such holder resulting from a redemption of units.

### **Tax Treatment of Disposition of Units by a Non-U.S. Holder Generally**

If a unit is redeemed by a non-U.S. holder in a manner that is treated as a sale of the unit, or a non-U.S. holder otherwise disposes of a unit, the non-U.S. holder generally will be subject to regular U.S. income tax in the same manner as a taxable U.S. holder to the extent that either (a) the assets held by the partnership constitute either U.S. real property interests within the meaning of the Foreign Investments in Real Property Tax Act of 1980 ( "FIRPTA" ) or (b) the assets are considered to be effectively connected with the partnership's U.S. trade or business. Most of our assets will be U.S. real property interests and some of our remaining assets that are not U.S. real property interests will be considered to be effectively connected with a U.S. trade or business. As a result, a



**Table of Contents**

non-U.S. holder will be subject to regular U.S. income tax in the same manner as a taxable U.S. holder with respect to most, if not all, of the gain recognized on such sale.

Further, the purchaser of the units from a non-U.S. holder (including us in the case of a redemption) will be required to withhold 10% of the amount realized from the sale. As noted previously, the amount realized is equal to the sum of the cash price paid to the seller, the fair market value of other property transferred to the seller (*e.g.*, common stock) and the outstanding amount of any liability assumed by the purchaser or to which the U.S. real property interest is subject immediately before and after the transfer (*e.g.*, the portion of partnership nonrecourse liabilities allocated to the units sold). As a result, we will withhold at least a portion of the cash or common stock that would have been otherwise been paid to the non-U.S. holder upon a redemption by the non-U.S. holder to satisfy this withholding requirement. This withholding requirement does not relieve the non-U.S. holder from filing any U.S. federal income tax return that may have otherwise been required. However, any amounts withheld under these withholding rules will be allowed as a credit against the non-U.S. holder's U.S. federal income tax and may entitle the non-U.S. holder to a refund, provided that the required information is furnished to the Internal Revenue Service. A party redeeming the units may seek a determination from the Internal Revenue Service regarding that party's maximum tax liability that may reduce the amount required to be withheld. A party that desires to seek such a determination should consult such party's own tax advisor.

**Basis of Units**

In general, a holder who received units upon liquidation of a partnership had an initial tax basis in such units ( Initial Basis ) equal to the basis in the liquidated partnership interest at the time of such liquidation. Similarly, in general, a holder who contributed a partnership interest or other property in exchange for units had an Initial Basis in the units equal to the basis in the contributed partnership interest or property. A holder's Initial Basis in units generally is increased by (a) such holder's share of partnership taxable income, (b) increases in such holder's share of liabilities of the partnership and (c) such holder's subsequent contributions. Generally, such holder's Initial Basis in units is decreased (but not below zero) by (i) its share of partnership distributions, (ii) decreases in such holder's share of liabilities of the partnership, (iii) such holder's share of losses of the partnership, and (iv) such holder's share of nondeductible expenditures of the partnership that are not chargeable to capital.

**Potential Application of the Disguised Sale Regulations to a Redemption of Units**

In the case of a limited partner who contributed property to the partnership in exchange for units, there is a possibility that a redemption of units might cause the original transfer of property to the partnership in exchange for units to be treated as a disguised sale of property. The Code and the Treasury regulations thereunder (the Disguised Sale Regulations ) generally provide that, unless one of the prescribed exceptions is applicable, a partner's contribution of property to a partnership and a simultaneous or subsequent transfer of money or other consideration (including the assumption of or taking subject to a liability) from the partnership to the partner will be presumed to be a sale, in whole or in part, of such property by the partner to the partnership. The Disguised Sale Regulations also provide, however, that if two years have passed between the transfer of money or other consideration (for example, common stock) and the contribution of property, the transactions will not be presumed to be a sale unless the facts and circumstances clearly establish that the transfers constitute a sale. If two years have not passed between the transfer of money or other consideration (for example, common stock) and the contribution of property, the transactions will be presumed to be a sale unless the facts and circumstances clearly establish that the transfers do not constitute a sale.

Accordingly, if the partnership redeems a unit, the IRS could contend that the redemption should be treated as a disguised sale because the redeeming unit holder will receive cash or shares of common stock after having contributed property to the partnership. If the IRS took that position successfully, the issuance of the units in exchange for the contributed property could be taxable as a disguised sale under the Disguised Sale Regulations. Each holder should consult with such holder's own tax advisor to determine whether a redemption of units could be subject to the Disguised Sale Regulations.

**Table of Contents****SELLING STOCKHOLDERS**

This prospectus relates to the issuance or resale, from time to time, of up to 333,333 shares of our common stock by the selling stockholders described below.

We may issue up to 333,333 shares of the common stock covered by this prospectus in exchange for units of limited partnership interest in our operating partnership if and to the extent that the holders of the units redeem the units and we elect to issue shares of common stock in exchange for such units. The persons receiving shares of our common stock upon the redemption of units, and their respective pledgees, donees, and other successors in interest, may offer and resell such shares from time to time pursuant to this prospectus.

The following table sets forth certain information with respect to the selling stockholders and their ownership of shares of our common stock as of the date hereof. The registration statement of which this prospectus is a part shall also cover any additional shares of our common stock which become issuable in connection with the shares registered for sale by such registration statement by reason of any stock dividend, stock split, recapitalization or other similar transaction effected without the receipt of consideration which results in an increase in the number of our outstanding shares of common stock. Although the selling stockholders may sell none, some or all of the shares offered hereby, and although there are currently no agreements, arrangements or understandings with respect to the sale of any of such shares, for purposes of the table set forth below, we have assumed that each selling stockholder will sell all of the shares of such stockholder offered by this prospectus.

Selling Stockholder	Number of Shares Owned	Number of Shares	Shares Owned Following the Offering	
	Prior to the Offering <sup>(1)</sup>	Offered Hereby <sup>(2)</sup>	Shares	Percent
Dunn Family Associates, LLP, as sole beneficiary under Land Trust Agreement dated July 16, 1990	60,320	60,320		
Hotel Investment, LLC	12,052	12,052		
Encore Hotels of Bloomington, Inc.	94,425	94,425		
Encore Hotels of Terre Haute, LLC	19,498	19,498		
Encore Residential Hotels of Evansville, LLC	34,994	34,994		
Encore Hotels of Columbus, LLC	37,800	37,800		
Encore Hotels of Horse Cave, LLC	40	40		
Encore Hotels of Princeton II, LLC	110	110		
Dunn Hospitality Group, LLC	74,094	74,094		
	333,333	333,333		

(1) Represents shares of common stock currently owned by the selling stockholder or issuable in exchange for an equal number of currently

redeemable  
units of limited  
partnership  
interest in our  
operating  
partnership  
owned by the  
selling  
stockholder.

- (2) Assumes that all  
units held by the  
selling  
stockholder are  
exchanged for  
shares of  
common stock  
and that all such  
shares of  
common stock  
are being resold  
pursuant to this  
prospectus.

## **DESCRIPTION OF CAPITAL STOCK**

### **General**

We were formed under the laws of the State of Maryland. Rights of our stockholders are governed by the Maryland General Corporation Law, or MGCL, our charter and our bylaws. The following is a summary of the material provisions of our capital stock. Copies of our charter and bylaws are filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. See [Where You Can Find More Information](#).

**Table of Contents**

**Authorized Stock**

Our charter provides that we may issue up to 200 million shares of voting common stock, par value \$.01 per share, and 50 million shares of preferred stock, par value \$.01 per share.

**Common Stock**

All shares of our common stock covered by this prospectus will be duly authorized, fully paid and nonassessable. Subject to the preferential rights of any other class or series of stock and to the provisions of the charter regarding the restrictions on transfer of stock, holders of shares of our common stock are entitled to receive dividends on such stock when, as and if authorized by our board of directors out of funds legally available therefor and declared by us and to share ratably in the assets of our company legally available for distribution to our stockholders in the event of our liquidation, dissolution or winding up after payment of or adequate provision for all known debts and liabilities of our company, including the preferential rights on dissolution of any class or classes of preferred stock.

Subject to the provisions of our charter regarding the restrictions on transfer of stock, each outstanding share of our common stock entitles the holder to one vote on all matters submitted to a vote of stockholders, including the election of directors and, except as provided with respect to any other class or series of stock, the holders of such shares will possess the exclusive voting power. There is no cumulative voting in the election of our board of directors, which means that the holders of a plurality of the outstanding shares of our common stock can elect all of the directors then standing for election and the holders of the remaining shares will not be able to elect any directors.

Holders of shares of our common stock have no preference, conversion, exchange, sinking fund, redemption or appraisal rights and have no preemptive rights to subscribe for any securities of our company. Subject to the provisions of the charter regarding the restrictions on transfer of stock, shares of our common stock will have equal dividend, liquidation and other rights.

Under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation generally cannot dissolve, amend its charter, merge, consolidate, transfer all or substantially all of its assets, engage in a statutory share exchange or engage in similar transactions outside the ordinary course of business unless declared advisable by the board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of stockholders holding at least two-thirds of the shares entitled to vote on the matter unless a lesser percentage (but not less than a majority of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter) is set forth in the corporation's charter. Our charter does not provide for a lesser percentage for these matters. However, Maryland law permits a corporation to transfer all or substantially all of its assets without the approval of the stockholders of the corporation to one or more persons if all of the equity interests of the person or persons are owned, directly or indirectly, by the corporation. Because operating assets may be held by a corporation's subsidiaries, as in our situation, this may mean that a subsidiary of a corporation can transfer all of its assets without a vote of the corporation's stockholders.

Our charter authorizes our board of directors to reclassify any unissued shares of our common stock into other classes or series of classes of stock and to establish the number of shares in each class or series and to set the preferences, conversion and other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications or terms or conditions of redemption for each such class or series.

**Preferred Stock**

Our charter authorizes our board of directors to classify any unissued shares of preferred stock and to reclassify any previously classified but unissued shares of any series. Prior to issuance of shares of each series, our board of directors is required by the MGCL and our charter to set the terms, preferences, conversion or other rights, voting powers, restrictions, limitations as to dividends or other distributions, qualifications and terms or conditions of redemption for each such series. Thus, our board of directors could authorize the issuance of shares of preferred stock with terms and conditions which could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a transaction or a change of control of our company that might involve a premium price for holders of our common stock or otherwise

**Table of Contents**

be in their best interest. As of the date hereof, no shares of preferred stock are outstanding and we have no current plans to issue any preferred stock.

**Power to Issue Additional Shares of Our Common Stock and Preferred Stock**

We believe that the power of our board of directors, without stockholder approval, to issue additional authorized but unissued shares of our common stock or preferred stock and to classify or reclassify unissued shares of our common stock or preferred stock and thereafter to cause us to issue such classified or reclassified shares of stock provides us with flexibility in structuring possible future financings and acquisitions and in meeting other needs which might arise. The additional classes or series, as well as the common stock, will be available for issuance without further action by our stockholders, unless stockholder consent is required by applicable law or the rules of any stock exchange or automated quotation system on which our securities may be listed or traded. Although our board of directors does not intend to do so, it could authorize us to issue a class or series that could, depending upon the terms of the particular class or series, delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change of control of our company that might involve a premium price for our stockholder or otherwise be in their best interest.

**Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer**

In order for us to qualify as a REIT under the Internal Revenue Code or Code, not more than 50% of the value of the outstanding shares of our stock may be owned, actually or constructively, by five or fewer individuals (as defined in the Code to include certain entities) during the last half of a taxable year (other than the first year for which an election to be a REIT has been made by us). In addition, if we, or one or more owners (actually or constructively) of 10% or more of us, actually or constructively owns 10% or more of a tenant of ours (or a tenant of any partnership in which we are a partner), the rent received by us (either directly or through any such partnership) from such tenant will not be qualifying income for purposes of the REIT gross income tests of the Code. Our stock must also be beneficially owned by 100 or more persons during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months or during a proportionate part of a shorter taxable year (other than the first year for which an election to be a REIT has been made by us).

Our charter contains restrictions on the ownership and transfer of our capital stock that are intended to assist us in complying with these requirements and continuing to qualify as a REIT. The relevant sections of our charter provide that, subject to the exceptions described below, no person or persons acting as a group may own, or be deemed to own by virtue of the attribution provisions of the Code, more than (i) 9.8% of the lesser of the number or value of shares of our common stock outstanding or (ii) 9.8% of the lesser of the number or value of the issued and outstanding preferred or other shares of any class or series of our stock. We refer to this restriction as the ownership limit.

The ownership attribution rules under the Code are complex and may cause stock owned actually or constructively by a group of related individuals and/or entities to be owned constructively by one individual or entity. As a result, the acquisition of less than 9.8% of our common stock (or the acquisition of an interest in an entity that owns, actually or constructively, our common stock) by an individual or entity, could, nevertheless cause that individual or entity, or another individual or entity, to own constructively in excess of 9.8% of our outstanding common stock and thereby subject the common stock to the ownership limit.

Our board of directors may, in its sole discretion, waive the ownership limit with respect to one or more stockholders who would not be treated as individuals for purposes of the Code if it determines that such ownership will not cause any individual's beneficial ownership of shares of our capital stock to jeopardize our status as a REIT (for example, by causing any tenant of ours to be considered a related party tenant for purposes of the REIT qualification rules).

As a condition of our waiver, our board of directors may require an opinion of counsel or IRS ruling satisfactory to our board of directors, and/or representations or undertakings from the applicant with respect to preserving our REIT status.

**Table of Contents**

In connection with the waiver of the ownership limit or at any other time, our board of directors may decrease the ownership limit for all other persons and entities; provided, however, that the decreased ownership limit will not be effective for any person or entity whose percentage ownership in our capital stock is in excess of such decreased ownership limit until such time as such person or entity's percentage of our capital stock equals or falls below the decreased ownership limit, but any further acquisition of our capital stock in excess of such percentage ownership of our capital stock will be in violation of the ownership limit. Additionally, the new ownership limit may not allow five or fewer individuals (as defined for purposes of the REIT ownership restrictions under the Code) to beneficially own more than 49.0% of the value of our outstanding capital stock.

Our charter provisions further prohibit:

any person from actually or constructively owning shares of our capital stock that would result in us being closely held under Section 856(h) of the Code or otherwise cause us to fail to qualify as a REIT; and

any person from transferring shares of our capital stock if such transfer would result in shares of our stock being beneficially owned by fewer than 100 persons (determined without reference to any rules of attribution).

Any person who acquires or attempts or intends to acquire beneficial or constructive ownership of shares of our common stock that will or may violate any of the foregoing restrictions on transferability and ownership will be required to give notice immediately to us and provide us with such other information as we may request in order to determine the effect of such transfer on our status as a REIT. The foregoing provisions on transferability and ownership will not apply if our board of directors determines that it is no longer in our best interests to qualify, or to continue to qualify, as a REIT.

Pursuant to our charter, if any purported transfer of our capital stock or any other event would otherwise result in any person violating the ownership limits or the other restrictions in our charter, then any such purported transfer will be void and of no force or effect with respect to the purported transferee or owner (collectively referred to hereinafter as the purported owner) as to that number of shares in excess of the ownership limit (rounded up to the nearest whole share). The number of shares in excess of the ownership limit will be automatically transferred to, and held by, a trust for the exclusive benefit of one or more charitable organizations selected by us. The trustee of the trust will be designated by us and must be unaffiliated with us and with any purported owner. The automatic transfer will be effective as of the close of business on the business day prior to the date of the violative transfer or other event that results in a transfer to the trust. Any dividend or other distribution paid to the purported owner, prior to our discovery that the shares had been automatically transferred to a trust as described above, must be repaid to the trustee upon demand for distribution to the beneficiary of the trust and all dividends and other distributions paid by us with respect to such excess shares prior to the sale by the trustee of such shares shall be paid to the trustee for the beneficiary. If the transfer to the trust as described above is not automatically effective, for any reason, to prevent violation of the applicable ownership limit, then our charter provides that the transfer of the excess shares will be void. Subject to Maryland law, effective as of the date that such excess shares have been transferred to the trust, the trustee shall have the authority (at the trustee's sole discretion and subject to applicable law) (i) to rescind as void any vote cast by a purported owner prior to our discovery that such shares have been transferred to the trust and (ii) to recast such vote in accordance with the desires of the trustee acting for the benefit of the beneficiary of the trust, provided that if we have already taken irreversible action, then the trustee shall not have the authority to rescind and recast such vote.

Shares of our capital stock transferred to the trustee are deemed offered for sale to us, or our designee, at a price per share equal to the lesser of (i) the price paid by the purported owner for the shares (or, if the event which resulted in the transfer to the trust did not involve a purchase of such shares of our capital stock at market price, the market price on the day of the event which resulted in the transfer of such shares of our capital stock to the trust) and (ii) the market price on the date we, or our designee, accepts such offer. We have the right to accept such offer until the trustee has sold the shares of our capital stock held in the trust pursuant to the clauses discussed below. Upon a sale to us, the interest of the charitable beneficiary in the shares sold terminates and the trustee must distribute the net proceeds of the sale to the purported owner and any dividends or other distributions held by the trustee with respect to such capital stock will be paid to the charitable beneficiary.



**Table of Contents**

If we do not buy the shares, the trustee must, within 20 days of receiving notice from us of the transfer of shares to the trust, sell the shares to a person or entity designated by the trustee who could own the shares without violating the ownership limits. After that, the trustee must distribute to the purported owner an amount equal to the lesser of (i) the net price paid by the purported owner for the shares (or, if the event which resulted in the transfer to the trust did not involve a purchase of such shares at market price, the market price on the day of the event which resulted in the transfer of such shares of our capital stock to the trust) and (ii) the net sales proceeds received by the trust for the shares. Any proceeds in excess of the amount distributable to the purported owner will be distributed to the beneficiary.

Our charter also provides that Benefit Plan Investors (as defined in our charter) may not hold, individually or in the aggregate, 25% or more of the value of any class or series of shares of our capital stock to the extent such class or series does not constitute Publicly Offered Securities (as defined in our charter).

All persons who own, directly or by virtue of the attribution provisions of the Code, more than 5% (or such other percentage as provided in the regulations promulgated under the Code) of the lesser of the number or value of the shares of our outstanding capital stock must give written notice to us within 30 days after the end of each calendar year. In addition, each stockholder will, upon demand, be required to disclose to us in writing such information with respect to the direct, indirect and constructive ownership of shares of our stock as our board of directors deems reasonably necessary to comply with the provisions of the Code applicable to a REIT, to comply with the requirements or any taxing authority or governmental agency or to determine any such compliance.

All certificates representing shares of our capital stock bear a legend referring to the restrictions described above.

These ownership limits could delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change of control of our company that might involve a premium price over the then prevailing market price for the holders of some, or a majority, of our outstanding shares of common stock or which such holders might believe to be otherwise in their best interest.

**Transfer Agent and Registrar**

The transfer agent and registrar for our common stock and preferred stock is Equiserve Trust Company, N.A.

**MATERIAL PROVISIONS OF MARYLAND LAW AND OF OUR CHARTER AND BYLAWS**

*The following is a summary of certain provisions of Maryland law and of our charter and bylaws. Copies of our charter and bylaws are filed as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part. See Where You Can Find More Information.*

**The Board of Directors**

Our bylaws provide that the number of directors of our company may be established by our board of directors but may not be fewer than the minimum number permitted under the MGCL nor more than 15. Any vacancy will be filled, at any regular meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose, by a majority of the remaining directors.

Pursuant to our charter, each member of our board of directors will serve one year terms and until their successors are elected and qualified. Holders of shares of our common stock will have no right to cumulative voting in the election of directors. Consequently, at each annual meeting of stockholders at which our board of directors is elected, the holders of a plurality of the shares of our common stock will be able to elect all of the members of our board of directors.



**Table of Contents**

**Business Combinations**

Maryland law prohibits business combinations between a corporation and an interested stockholder or an affiliate of an interested stockholder for five years after the most recent date on which the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder. These business combinations include a merger, consolidation, statutory share exchange, or, in circumstances specified in the statute, certain transfers of assets, certain stock issuances and transfers, liquidation plans and reclassifications involving interested stockholders and their affiliates as asset transfer or issuance or reclassification of equity securities. Maryland law defines an interested stockholder as:

any person who beneficially owns 10% or more of the voting power of our voting stock; or

an affiliate or associate of the corporation who, at any time within the two-year period prior to the date in question, was the beneficial owner of 10% or more of the voting power of the then-outstanding voting stock of the corporation.

A person is not an interested stockholder if the board of directors approves in advance the transaction by which the person otherwise would have become an interested stockholder. However, in approving the transaction, the board of directors may provide that its approval is subject to compliance, at or after the time of approval, with any terms and conditions determined by the board of directors.

After the five year prohibition, any business combination between a corporation and an interested stockholder generally must be recommended by the board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of at least:

80% of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of the then outstanding shares of common stock; and

two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by holders of the common stock other than shares held by the interested stockholder with whom or with whose affiliate the business combination is to be effected or shares held by an affiliate or associate of the interested stockholder.

These super-majority vote requirements do not apply if certain fair price requirements set forth in the MGCL are satisfied.

The statute permits various exemptions from its provisions, including business combinations that are approved by the board of directors before the time that the interested stockholder becomes an interested stockholder.

Our charter includes a provision excluding the corporation from these provisions of the MGCL and, consequently, the five-year prohibition and the super-majority vote requirements will not apply to business combinations between us and any interested stockholder of ours unless we later amend our charter, with stockholder approval, to modify or eliminate this provision. Any such amendment may not be effective until 18 months after the stockholder vote and may not apply to any business combination involving us and an interested stockholder (or affiliate) who became an interested stockholder on or before the date of the vote. We believe that our ownership restrictions will substantially reduce the risk that a stockholder would become an interested stockholder within the meaning of the Maryland business combination statute.

**Control Share Acquisitions**

The MGCL provides that control shares of a Maryland corporation acquired in a control share acquisition have no voting rights except to the extent approved at a special meeting by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter, excluding shares of stock in a corporation in respect of which any of the following persons is entitled to exercise or direct the exercise of the voting power of shares of stock of the corporation in the election of directors: (i) a person who makes or proposes to make a control share acquisition, (ii) an officer of the corporation or (iii) an employee of the corporation who is also a director of the corporation. Control shares are voting shares of stock which, if aggregated with all other such shares of stock previously acquired by the acquiror or in respect of which the acquiror is able to exercise or direct the exercise of voting power

## **Table of Contents**

(except solely by virtue of a revocable proxy), would entitle the acquiror to exercise voting power in electing directors within one of the following ranges of voting power: (i) one-tenth or more but less than one-third, (ii) one-third or more but less than a majority, or (iii) a majority or more of all voting power. Control shares do not include shares the acquiring person is then entitled to vote as a result of having previously obtained stockholder approval. A control share acquisition means the acquisition of control shares, subject to certain exceptions.

A person who has made or proposes to make a control share acquisition, upon satisfaction of certain conditions (including an undertaking to pay expenses), may compel our board of directors to call a special meeting of stockholders to be held within 50 days of demand to consider the voting rights of the shares. If no request for a meeting is made, the corporation may itself present the question at any stockholders meeting.

If voting rights are not approved at the meeting or if the acquiring person does not deliver an acquiring person statement as required by the statute, then, subject to certain conditions and limitations, the corporation may redeem any or all of the control shares (except those for which voting rights have previously been approved) for fair value determined, without regard to the absence of voting rights for the control shares, as of the date of the last control share acquisition by the acquiror or of any meeting of stockholders at which the voting rights of such shares are considered and not approved. If voting rights for control shares are approved at a stockholders meeting and the acquiror becomes entitled to vote a majority of the shares entitled to vote, all other stockholders may exercise appraisal rights. The fair value of the shares as determined for purposes of such appraisal rights may not be less than the highest price per share paid by the acquiror in the control share acquisition.

The control share acquisition statute does not apply (i) to shares acquired in a merger, consolidation or share exchange if the corporation is a party to the transaction or (ii) to acquisitions approved or exempted by the charter or bylaws of the corporation.

Our charter contains a provision exempting from the control share acquisition statute any and all acquisitions by any person of our common stock and, consequently, the applicability of the control share acquisitions unless we later amend our charter, with stockholder approval, to modify or eliminate this provision.

### **Amendment to Our Charter**

Our charter may be amended only if declared advisable by the board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of at least two-thirds of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

### **Dissolution of Our Company**

The dissolution of our company must be declared advisable by the board of directors and approved by the affirmative vote of the holders of not less than two-thirds of all of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

### **Advance Notice of Director Nominations and New Business**

Our bylaws provide that:

with respect to an annual meeting of stockholders, the only business to be considered and the only proposals to be acted upon will be those properly brought before the annual meeting:

- pursuant to our notice of the meeting;
- by, or at the direction of, a majority of our board of directors; or
- by a stockholder who is entitled to vote at the meeting and has complied with the advance notice procedures set forth in our bylaws;

with respect to special meetings of stockholders, only the business specified in our company's notice of meeting may be brought before the meeting of stockholders unless otherwise provided by law; and

**Table of Contents**

nominations of persons for election to our board of directors at any annual or special meeting of stockholders may be made only:

- by, or at the direction of, our board of directors; or
- by a stockholder who is entitled to vote at the meeting and has complied with the advance notice provisions set forth in our bylaws.

**Anti-Takeover Effect of Certain Provisions of Maryland Law and of Our Charter and Bylaws**

The advance notice provisions of our bylaws could delay, defer or prevent a transaction or a change of control of our company that might involve a premium price for holders of our common stock or otherwise be in their best interest. Likewise, if our company's charter were to be amended to avail the corporation of the business combination provisions of the MGCL or to remove or modify the provision in the charter opting out of the control share acquisition provisions of the MGCL, these provisions of the MGCL could have similar anti-takeover effects.

**Indemnification and Limitation of Directors and Officers Liability**

Our charter and the partnership agreement provide for indemnification of our officers and directors against liabilities to the fullest extent permitted by the MGCL, as amended from time to time.

The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify a director or officer who has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she is made a party by reason of his or her service in that capacity. The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that:

an act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and:

- was committed in bad faith; or
  - was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty;
- the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or

in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful.

However, under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation (other than for expenses incurred in a successful defense of such an action) or for a judgment of liability on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received. In addition, the MGCL permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon the corporation's receipt of:

a written affirmation by the director or officer of his good faith belief that he has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation; and

a written undertaking by the director or on the director's behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it is ultimately determined that the director did not meet the standard of conduct.

The MGCL permits a Maryland corporation to include in its charter a provision limiting the liability of its directors and officers to the corporation and its stockholders for money damages except for liability resulting from actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services or active and deliberate dishonesty established by a final judgment as being material to the cause of action. Our charter contains such a provision which eliminates such liability to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law.

**Table of Contents**

Our bylaws obligate us, to the fullest extent permitted by Maryland law in effect from time to time, to indemnify and, without requiring a preliminary determination of the ultimate entitlement to indemnification, pay or reimburse reasonable expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding to:

any present or former director or officer who is made a party to the proceeding by reason of his or her service in that capacity; or

any individual who, while a director or officer of our company and at our request, serves or has served another corporation, real estate investment trust, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or any other enterprise as a director, officer, partner or trustee and who is made a party to the proceeding by reason of his or her service in that capacity.

Our bylaws also obligate us to indemnify and advance expenses to any person who served a predecessor of ours in any of the capacities described in second and third bullet points above and to any employee or agent of our company or a predecessor of our company.

The partnership agreement of our operating partnership provides that we, as general partner, and our officers and directors are indemnified to the fullest extent permitted by law. See Partnership Agreement Exculpation and Indemnification of the General Partner.

Insofar as the foregoing provisions permit indemnification of directors, officers or persons controlling us for liability arising under the Securities Act, we have been informed that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission, this indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is therefore unenforceable.

**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

**Management**

Ashford Hospitality Limited Partnership, our operating partnership, has been organized as a Delaware limited partnership. One of our wholly-owned subsidiaries is the sole general partner of this partnership, and one of our subsidiaries holds limited partnership units in this partnership. The substantial majority of the limited partnership units not owned by our company are owned by certain of our executives, employees and employees of our affiliates. In the future, we may issue additional interests in our operating partnership to third parties.

Pursuant to the partnership agreement of the operating partnership, we, as the sole general partner, generally have full, exclusive and complete responsibility and discretion in the management, operation and control of the partnership, including the ability to cause the partnership to enter into certain major transactions, including acquisitions, developments and dispositions of properties, borrowings and refinancings of existing indebtedness. No limited partner may take part in the operation, management or control of the business of the operating partnership by virtue of being a holder of limited partnership units.

Our subsidiary may not be removed as general partner of the partnership. Upon the bankruptcy or dissolution of the general partner, the general partner shall be deemed to be removed automatically.

The limited partners of our operating partnership have agreed that in the event of a conflict in the fiduciary duties owed (i) by us to our stockholders and (ii) by us, as general partner of the operating partnership, to those limited partners, we may act in the best interests of our stockholders without violating our fiduciary duties to the limited partners of the operating partnership or being liable for any resulting breach of our duties to the limited partners.

**Transferability of Interests**

*General Partner.* The partnership agreement provides that we may not transfer our interest as a general partner (including by sale, disposition, merger or consolidation) except:

## **Table of Contents**

in connection with a merger of the operating partnership, a sale of substantially all of the assets of the operating partnership or other transaction in which the limited partners receive a certain amount of cash, securities or property; or

in connection with a merger of us or the general partner into another entity, if the surviving entity contributes substantially all its assets to the operating partnership and assumes the duties of the general partner under the operating partnership agreement.

*Limited Partner.* The partnership agreement prohibits the sale, assignment, transfer, pledge or disposition of all or any portion of the limited partnership units without our consent, which we may give or withhold in our sole discretion. However, an individual partner may donate his units to his immediate family or a trust wholly owned by his immediate family, without our consent. In addition, the partnerships contributing our initial hotel properties to us in exchange for units in our operating partnership may transfer those units to their partners, without our consent. The partnership agreement contains other restrictions on transfer if, among other things that transfer:

would cause us to fail to comply with the REIT rules under the Internal Revenue Code, or

would cause us to become a publicly-traded partnership under the Internal Revenue Code.

### **Capital Contributions**

The partnership agreement provides that if the partnership requires additional funds at any time in excess of funds available to the partnership from borrowing or capital contributions, we may borrow such funds from a financial institution or other lender and lend such funds to the partnership. Under the partnership agreement, we are obligated to contribute the proceeds of any offering of stock as additional capital to the partnership. The operating partnership is authorized to cause the partnership to issue partnership interests for less than fair market value if we conclude in good faith that such issuance is in both the partnership's and our best interests.

The partnership agreement provides that we may make additional capital contributions, including properties, to the partnership in exchange for additional partnership units. If we contribute additional capital to the partnership and receive additional partnership interests for such capital contribution, our percentage interests will be increased on a proportionate basis based on the amount of such additional capital contributions and the value of the partnership at the time of such contributions. Conversely, the percentage interests of the other limited partners will be decreased on a proportionate basis. In addition, if we contribute additional capital to the partnership and receive additional partnership interests for such capital contribution, the capital accounts of the partners will be adjusted upward or downward to reflect any unrealized gain or loss attributable to our properties as if there were an actual sale of such properties at the fair market value thereof. Limited partners have no preemptive right to make additional capital contributions.

The operating partnership could issue preferred partnership interests in connection with acquisitions of property or otherwise. Any such preferred partnership interests would have priority over common partnership interests with respect to distributions from the partnership, including the partnership interests that our wholly-owned subsidiaries own.

### **Redemption Rights**

Under the partnership agreement, we have granted to each limited partner (other than our subsidiary) the right to redeem their limited partnership units. This right may be exercised at the election of that limited partner by giving us written notice, subject to some limitations. The purchase price for the limited partnership units to be redeemed will equal the fair market value of our common stock. The purchase price for the limited partnership units may be paid in cash, or, in our discretion, by the issuance by us of a number of shares of our common stock equal to the number of limited partnership units with respect to which the rights are being exercised. However, no limited partner will be entitled to exercise its redemption rights to the extent that the issuance of common stock to the redeeming partner would be prohibited under our charter or, if after giving effect to such exercise, would cause any

## **Table of Contents**

person to own, actually or constructively, more than 9.8% of our common stock, unless such ownership limit is waived by us in our sole discretion.

In all cases, however, no limited partner may exercise the redemption right for fewer than 1,000 partnership units or, if a limited partner holds fewer than 1,000 partnership units, all of the partnership units held by such limited partner.

Currently, the aggregate number of shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the redemption rights is 11,092,075, and this prospectus relates to 333,333 such shares. The number of shares of common stock issuable upon exercise of the redemption rights will be adjusted to account for share splits, mergers, consolidations or similar pro rata share transactions.

### **Operations**

The partnership agreement requires the partnership to be operated in a manner that enables us to satisfy the requirements for being classified as a REIT, to minimize any excise tax liability imposed by the Internal Revenue Code and to ensure that the partnership will not be classified as a publicly traded partnership taxable as a corporation under Section 7704 of the Code.

In addition to the administrative and operating costs and expenses incurred by the partnership, the partnership will pay all of our administrative costs and expenses. These expenses will be treated as expenses of the partnership and will generally include:

all expenses relating to our continuity of existence;

all expenses relating to offerings and registration of securities;

all expenses associated with the preparation and filing of any of our periodic reports under federal, state or local laws or regulations;

all expenses associated with our compliance with laws, rules and regulations promulgated by any regulatory body; and

all of our other operating or administrative costs incurred in the ordinary course of its business on behalf of the partnership.

### **Distributions**

The partnership agreement provides that the partnership will make cash distributions in amounts and at such times as determined by us in our sole discretion, to us and other limited partners in accordance with the respective percentage interests of the partners in the partnership.

Upon liquidation of the partnership, after payment of, or adequate provisions for, debts and obligations of the partnership, including any partner loans, any remaining assets of the partnership will be distributed to us and the other limited partners with positive capital accounts in accordance with the respective positive capital account balances of the partners.

### **Allocations**

Profits and losses of the partnership (including depreciation and amortization deductions) for each fiscal year generally are allocated to us and the other limited partners in accordance with the respective percentage interests of the partners in the partnership. All of the foregoing allocations are subject to compliance with the provisions of Internal Revenue Code sections 704(b) and 704(c) and Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder. The partnership will use the traditional method under Internal Revenue Code section 704(c) for allocating items

## **Table of Contents**

with respect to which the fair market value at the time of contribution differs from the adjusted tax basis at the time of contribution for a hotel.

### **Amendments**

Generally, we, as the general partner of the operating partnership, may amend the partnership agreement without the consent of any limited partner to clarify the partnership agreement, to make changes of an inconsequential nature, to reflect the admission, substitution or withdrawal of limited partners, to reflect the issuance of additional partnership interests or if, in the opinion of counsel, necessary or appropriate to satisfy the Code with respect to partnerships or REITs or federal or state securities laws. However, any amendment which alters or changes the distribution or redemption rights of a limited partner (other than a change to reflect the seniority of any distribution or liquidation rights of any preferred units issued in accordance with the partnership agreement), changes the method for allocating profits and losses, imposes any obligation on the limited partners to make additional capital contributions or adversely affects the limited liability of the limited partners requires the consent of holders of 66 2/3% of the limited partnership units, excluding our indirect ownership of limited partnership units. Other amendments require approval of the general partner and holders of 50% of the limited partnership units.

In addition, the operating partnership may be amended, without the consent of any limited partner, in the event that we or any of our subsidiaries engages in a merger or consolidation with another entity and immediately after such transaction the surviving entity contributes to the operating partnership substantially all of the assets of such surviving entity and the surviving entity agrees to assume our subsidiary's obligation as general partner of the partnership. In such case, the surviving entity will amend the operating partnership agreement to arrive at a new method for calculating the amount a limited partner is to receive upon redemption or conversion of a partnership unit (such method to approximate the existing method as much as possible).

### **Exculpation and Indemnification of the General Partner**

The partnership agreement of our operating partnership provides that neither the general partner, nor any of its directors and officers will be liable to the partnership or to any of its partners as a result of errors in judgment or mistakes of fact or law or of any act or omission, if the general partner acted in good faith.

In addition, the partnership agreement requires our operating partnership to indemnify and hold the general partner and its directors, officers and any other person it designates, harmless from and against any and all claims arising from operations of the operating partnership in which any such indemnitee may be involved, or is threatened to be involved, as a party or otherwise, unless it is established that:

the act or omission of the indemnitee was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and was committed in bad faith or was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty,

the indemnitee actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services, or

in the case of any criminal proceeding, the indemnitee had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful.

No indemnitee may subject any partner of our operating partnership to personal liability with respect to this indemnification obligation as this indemnification obligation will be satisfied solely out of the assets of the partnership.

### **Term**

The partnership has a perpetual life, unless dissolved upon:

the general partner's bankruptcy or dissolution or withdrawal (unless the limited partners elect to continue the partnership);

**Table of Contents**

the passage of 90 days after the sale or other disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the partnership;

the redemption of all partnership units (other than those held by us, if any); or

an election by us in our capacity as the sole owner of the general partner.

**Tax Matters**

The general partner is the tax matters partner of the operating partnership. We have the authority to make tax elections under the Internal Revenue Code on behalf of the partnership. The net income or net loss of the operating partnership will generally be allocated to us and the limited partners in accordance with our respective percentage interests in the partnership, subject to compliance with the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

**COMPARISON OF OWNERSHIP OF UNITS AND COMMON STOCK**

Although the nature of an investment in our common stock is similar to an investment in units, there are also differences between ownership of units of limited partnership interest and ownership of our common stock. The information below highlights a number of the significant differences between the partnership and the company relating to, among other things, form of organization, policies and restrictions, management structure, compensation and fees, voting rights, liability of investors, liquidity and federal income tax considerations. These comparisons are intended to assist holders of units in understanding how their investment will be changed if they exchange their units for shares of our common stock.

**THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION IS A SUMMARY AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A COMPLETE DISCUSSION OF THESE MATTERS, AND HOLDERS OF UNITS SHOULD CAREFULLY REVIEW THE BALANCE OF THIS PROSPECTUS, THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT OF WHICH THIS PROSPECTUS IS A PART, THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND OUR CHARTER FOR ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT US.**

**PARTNERSHIP**

**COMPANY**

**Form of Organization and Purposes**

The partnership is organized as a Delaware limited partnership. The partnership's purpose is to conduct any business that may be lawfully conducted by a limited partnership organized pursuant to the Delaware Revised Uniform Limited Partnership Act, provided that such business is to be limited to and conducted in such a manner as to permits us at all times to be qualified as a REIT under the Code unless our board of directors determines to cease to qualify as a REIT. The general partner may cause the partnership to take, or to refrain from taking, any action that, in the good faith belief of the general partner, is necessary or advisable in order (i) to protect the ability of the company to continue to qualify as a REIT, or (ii) to prevent the company from incurring any taxes under Section 857 or Section 4981 of the Code.

We are a Maryland corporation. We have elected to be taxed as a REIT under the Code and intend to maintain our qualification as a REIT. Under our charter, we may engage in any lawful act or activity for which corporation may be organized under the MGCL.



**Table of Contents**

**PARTNERSHIP**

**COMPANY**

**Length of Investment**

The partnership has a perpetual term and intends to continue operations for an indefinite time period.

We have a perpetual term and intend to continue our operations for an indefinite time period.

**Additional Equity**

The partnership is authorized to issue units in exchange for additional capital contributions as determined by the general partner, in its sole discretion. In exchange for such capital contributions, the partnership may issue partnership interests to the general partner, may issue additional units to existing limited partners, and may admit third parties as additional limited partners.

The board of directors may issue, in its discretion, additional equity securities consisting of common stock or preferred stock; provided, that the total number of shares issued does not exceed the authorized number of shares of stock set forth in our charter.

**Borrowing Policies**

The partnership has no restrictions on borrowings, and the general partner has full power and authority to borrow money on behalf of the partnership; provided that the term of any loan from the general partner or any affiliate of the general partner must be substantially equivalent to the terms that could be obtained from a third party on an arm's-length basis.

Neither our charter nor our bylaws impose any restrictions on our ability to incur borrowings. However, our revolving credit and secured term loan facilities contain certain financial covenants and operating covenants, including, among other things, limitations on our ability to incur secured and unsecured debt.

**Other Investment Restrictions**

Other than restrictions precluding investments by the partnership that would adversely affect our qualification as a REIT and restrictions on transactions with affiliates, the partnership agreement does not generally restrict the partnership's authority to enter into certain transactions, including, among others, making investments, lending partnership funds, or reinvesting the partnership's cash flow and net sale or refinancing proceeds.

Neither our charter nor our bylaws impose any restrictions upon the types of investments made by us.

**Management Control**

All management powers over the business and affairs of the partnership are vested in the general partner, and generally no limited partner of the partnership has any right to participate in or exercise control or management

The board of directors has exclusive control over our business and affairs subject only to the restrictions in our charter and bylaws. At each annual meeting of the stockholders, the stockholders elect directors. The policies

power over the business and affairs of the partnership, except as otherwise set forth in the partnership agreement. The general partner may not be removed by the limited partners of the partnership with or without cause.

adopted by the board of directors may be altered or eliminated without a vote of the stockholders. Accordingly, except for their vote in the elections of directors, stockholders have no control over our ordinary business policies.

### **Fiduciary Duties of General Partners and Directors**

Under Delaware law, the general partner of the partnership is accountable to the partnership as a fiduciary and, consequently, is required to exercise

Under the MGCL, the directors must perform their duties in good faith, in a manner that they reasonably believe to be in the best interests of the company and

36

---

**Table of Contents**

**PARTNERSHIP**

good faith and integrity in all of its dealings with respect to partnership affairs. However, under the partnership agreement, the general partner is not liable for monetary damages for losses sustained, liabilities incurred or benefits not derived by partners as a result of errors in judgment or of any act or omission, provided that the general partner has acted in good faith.

**COMPANY**

with the care of an ordinarily prudent person in a like position. Any director who acts in such a manner generally will not be liable to the company for monetary damages arising from his or her activities as a director of the company.

**Management Liability and Indemnification**

As a matter of Delaware law, the general partner has liability for the payment of the obligations and debts of the partnership unless limitations upon such liability are stated in the document or instrument evidencing the obligations. Under the partnership agreement, the partnership has agreed to indemnify the general partner and any director, officer, employee or agent of the partnership or the general partner from and against all losses, claims, damages, liabilities (joint or several), expenses (including legal fees and expenses), judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts arising from any and all claims, demands, actions, suits or proceedings, civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, that relate to the operations of the partnership, unless: (i) the act or omission was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and with was committed in bad faith or was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty; (ii) the party actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or (iii) in the case of any criminal proceeding, the party had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful. The reasonable expenses incurred by an indemnitee may be reimbursed by the partnership in advance of the final disposition of the proceeding upon receipt by the partnership of (i) a written affirmation by the indemnitee of his, her or its good faith belief that the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification has been met and (ii) a written undertaking by or on behalf of the indemnitee to repay the amount if it is determined that the standard of conduct was not met.

Our charter contains a provision which eliminates the liability of our directors and officers to the company and its stockholders to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law. Our bylaws require us, to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law, to indemnify and, without a preliminary determination of the ultimate entitlement to indemnification, pay or reimburse reasonable expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding to (i) any individual who is a present or former director or officer of the company, (ii) any individual who, while a director or officer of the company and at the request of the company, serves or has served another corporation, real estate investment trust, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or any other enterprise as a director, officer, partner or trustee.

**Anti-takeover Provisions**

Except in limited circumstances (see Voting Rights below), the general partner of the partnership has exclusive management power over the business and affairs of the partnership. The general partner may not be removed by the limited partners with or without cause. Except with respect to certain limited partners and after certain specified dates, a limited partner may generally transfer its limited partnership interest only with the approval of the general partner, and the general partner may, in its sole discretion,

Our charter and bylaws contain a number of provisions that may have the effect of delaying or discouraging an unsolicited proposal for the acquisition of the company or the removal of incumbent management. These provisions include, among others: (i) authorized stock that may be issued as preferred stock in the discretion of the board of directors, with superior voting or other rights to the common stock; and (ii) provisions designed to avoid concentration of share ownership in a manner that would jeopardize our status as a REIT

37

---

**Table of Contents**

**PARTNERSHIP**

prevent the admission to the partnership of substituted limited partners.

**COMPANY**

under the Code. The MGCL also contains certain provisions which could have the effect of delaying, deferring or preventing a change in control of the company or other transaction. See Material Provisions of Maryland Law and of Our Charter and Bylaws.

**Voting Rights**

Under the partnership agreement, the limited partners have voting rights in limited circumstances, including as to the election of a new general partner upon the dissolution or withdrawal of the existing general partner and as to certain amendments to the partnership agreement, as described more fully below. Otherwise, all decisions relating to the operation and management of the partnership are made by the general partner.

Our business and affairs are managed under the direction of our board of directors. Each director is to be elected by the stockholders at annual meetings. The MGCL requires that certain major corporate transactions, including most amendments to our charter, may not be consummated without the approval of stockholders as set forth below. All shares of our common stock and all shares of our Series B-1 preferred stock have one vote per share, and our charter permits the board of directors to classify and issue preferred stock in one or more series having voting power which may differ from that of the common stock.

The following is a comparison of the voting rights of the holders of units and our stockholders as they relate to certain major transactions:

**Amendment of the Partnership Agreement or our Charter**

The partnership agreement may be amended by the general partner without the approval of any limited partner if such amendment (i) is for the purpose of clarification or is of an inconsequential nature; (ii) is to reflect the admission, substitution or withdrawal of limited partners or to reflect the issuance of additional partnership interests or to amend the calculation of the Cash Amount and the Conversion Factor (as such terms are defined in the partnership agreement) following a merger or consolidation of the partnership with another entity. Amendments that adversely affect the limited liability of the limited partners, impose on the limited partners any obligation to make additional capital contributions, change the method of allocation of profit and loss or the distribution provisions, seek to impose personal liability on the limited partners or affect the operation of the conversion factor of the redemption right must be approved by limited partners holding more than 66 2/3% of the outstanding units. Any other

Under the MGCL and our charter, amendments to our charter generally must be advised by the board of directors and approved by the holders of at least a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

amendment to the partnership agreement must be approved by the general partner and by limited partners holding a majority in interest of the units.

**Vote Required to Dissolve the Partnership or the Company**

The partnership will be dissolved upon (i) an event of bankruptcy as to the general partner or the dissolution

Under the MGCL and our charter, dissolution of the Company must be advised by the board of directors and  
38

---

**Table of Contents**

**PARTNERSHIP**

or withdrawal of the general partner (unless within 90 days thereafter limited partners holding more than 50% of the units elect to continue the partnership and elect a new general partner), (ii) 90 days following the sale of all or substantially all of the partnership's assets, (iii) the redemption of all units (other than any units held by the general partner or the company), or (iv) the election by the general partner (but only in accordance with and as permitted by applicable law).

**COMPANY**

approved by the holders of at least a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter.

**Vote Required to Sell Assets or Merge**

Under the partnership agreement, the general partner has the full power and authority to effectuate the sale, transfer, exchange or other disposition of any of the partnership's assets or the merger, consolidation, reorganization or other combination of the partnership with or into another entity.

Under the MGCL and our charter, the sale of all or substantially all of our assets, or our merger or consolidation, requires the approval of the board of directors and the holders of at least a majority of the votes entitled to be cast on the matter. No approval is required for the sale of less than all or substantially all of our assets.

**Compensation and Fees**

The general partner does not receive any compensation for its services as general partner of the partnership. The partnership will reimburse the general partner for all expenses incurred relating to the ongoing operation of the partnership.

Our officers and outside directors receive compensation for their services.

**Liability of Investors**

Under the partnership agreement and applicable Delaware law, the liability of the limited partners for the partnership's debts and obligations is generally limited to the amount of their investment in the partnership.

Under Maryland law, stockholders generally are not personally liable for the debts or obligations of the Company.

**Potential Dilution of Rights**

The general partner of the partnership is authorized, in its sole discretion and without limited partner approval, to cause the partnership to issue additional limited partnership interests for any partnership purpose at any time to the limited partners or to other persons (including the general partner).

The board of directors may issue, in its discretion, additional shares of common stock or preferred stock, or securities convertible into shares of its common or preferred stock. The issuance of additional shares of either common stock or preferred stock or other convertible securities may result in the dilution of the interests of the

stockholders.

### **Liquidity**

Except with respect to certain limited partners and after certain specified dates, a limited partner may generally transfer its limited partnership interest only with the approval of the general partner, and the general partner may, in its sole discretion, prevent the admission to the partnership of substituted limited

The shares of common stock issued upon redemption of the units will be freely transferable as registered securities under the Securities Act of 1933. Our common stock is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol AHT. The breadth and strength of this secondary market will depend, among other things, upon the number of shares of common

39

---



**Table of Contents**

**PARTNERSHIP**

**COMPANY**

partners.

stock outstanding, our financial condition, performance and prospects, the market for similar securities issued by REITs, and our dividend yield compared to that of other debt and equity securities.

**Federal Income Taxation**

The partnership itself is not subject to federal income taxes. Instead, each holder of units includes its allocable share of the partnership's taxable income or loss in determining its individual federal income tax liability. The maximum federal income tax rate for individuals under current law is 35%.

We have elected to be taxed as a REIT for federal income tax purposes. A REIT generally is not subject to federal income tax on the income that it distributes to stockholders if it meets the applicable REIT distribution requirements and other requirements for qualification as a REIT. Even a REIT, however, is subject to federal income tax on income that is not distributed and also may be subject to federal income and excise taxes in certain circumstances. The maximum federal income tax rate for corporations under current law is 35%. Stockholders generally will be subject to taxation on dividends (other than designated capital gains dividends and qualified dividend income) at rates applicable to ordinary income, instead of at lower capital gain rates that generally apply to dividends received from a regular C corporation.

Depending on certain facts, a unit holder's allocable share of income and loss from the partnership may be subject to the passive activity limitations. Under the passive activity rules, a unit holder's allocable share of income and loss from the partnership that is considered passive income generally can be offset against a holder's income and loss from other investments that constitute passive activities. Cash distributions from the partnership are generally not taxable to a holder of units except to the extent they exceed such holder's basis in its interest in the partnership (which will include such holder's allocable share of the partnership's nonrecourse debt). See Basis of Units.

Dividends paid by us will be treated as portfolio income and generally cannot be offset with losses from passive activities. Distributions made by us to our taxable domestic stockholders out of current or accumulated earnings and profits (and not designated as capital gain dividends) will be taken into account by them as ordinary income. Distributions that are properly designated by us as capital gain dividends or qualified dividend income may be taxed at long-term capital gain rates, subject to certain exceptions. Distributions (not designated as capital gain dividends) in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits will first be treated as a non-taxable return of capital to the extent of a stockholder's adjusted basis in its stock, with the excess taxed as capital gain (if the stock has been held as a capital asset). See Federal Income Tax Consequences of our Status as a REIT Taxation of Taxable U.S. Stockholders.

Holders of units are required, in some cases, to file state income tax returns and/or pay state income taxes in the states in which the partnership owns property, even if they are not residents of those states.

Stockholders who are individuals generally will not be required to file state income tax returns and/or pay state income taxes outside of their state of residence with respect to our operations and distributions. We may be

required to pay state income taxes in certain states.

**FEDERAL INCOME TAX CONSEQUENCES OF OUR STATUS AS A REIT**

The following discussion is a summary of the material federal income tax considerations that may be relevant to a prospective holder of common stock, and, unless otherwise noted in the following discussion, expresses

40

---

**Table of Contents**

the opinion of Andrews Kurth LLP insofar as it relates to matters of United States federal income tax law and legal conclusions with respect to those matters. The discussion does not address all aspects of taxation that may be relevant to particular stockholders in light of their personal investment or tax circumstances, or to certain types of stockholders that are subject to special treatment under the federal income tax laws, such as insurance companies, financial institutions or broker-dealers, tax-exempt organizations (except to the limited extent discussed in Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders ), of foreign corporations and persons who are not citizens or residents of the United States (except to the limited extent discussed in Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders ).

The statements of law in this discussion and the opinion of Andrews Kurth LLP are based on current provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the Code, existing temporary and final Treasury regulations thereunder, and current administrative rulings and court decisions. No assurance can be given that future legislative, judicial, or administrative actions or decisions, which may be retroactive in effect, will not affect the accuracy of any statements in this prospectus with respect to the transactions entered into or contemplated prior to the effective date of such changes.

On October 22, 2004, President Bush signed into law the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (the Jobs Act ). In general, starting with our 2005 taxable year, the Jobs Act modifies the REIT income tests, asset tests and other requirements for maintaining REIT qualification. In addition, the Jobs Act will affect the treatment of non-U.S. stockholders. The Jobs Act also contains a number of relief provisions that make it easier for REITs to satisfy some of the REIT income and asset tests, while other relief provisions enable REITs to prevent terminations of their REIT status due to inadvertent violations of some of the technical REIT requirements. As with any new legislation, there may be some uncertainties regarding the particular application of the new provisions.

**We urge you to consult your own tax advisor regarding the specific tax consequences to you of ownership of our common stock and of our election to be taxed as a REIT. Specifically, we urge you to consult your own tax advisor regarding the federal, state, local, foreign, and other tax consequences of such ownership and election and regarding potential changes in applicable tax laws.**

#### **Taxation of Our Company**

We are currently taxed as a REIT under the federal income tax laws. We believe that we are organized and operate in such a manner as to qualify for taxation as a REIT under the Code, and we intend to continue to operate in such a manner, but no assurance can be given that we will operate in a manner so as to continue to qualify as a REIT. This section discusses the laws governing the federal income tax treatment of a REIT and its stockholders. These laws are highly technical and complex.

Andrews Kurth LLP has acted as our counsel in connection with the offering. In the opinion of Andrews Kurth LLP, for the taxable years ending December 31, 2003 and December 31, 2004, we qualified to be taxed as a REIT pursuant to sections 856 through 860 of the Code, and our organization and present and proposed method of operation will enable us to continue to meet the requirements for qualification and taxation as a REIT under the Code. Investors should be aware that Andrews Kurth LLP's opinion is based upon customary assumptions, is conditioned upon certain representations made by us as to factual matters, including representations regarding the nature of our properties and the future conduct of our business, and is not binding upon the Internal Revenue Service or any court. In addition, Andrews Kurth LLP's opinion is based on existing federal income tax law governing qualification as a REIT, which is subject to change either prospectively or retroactively. Moreover, our continued qualification and taxation as a REIT depend upon our ability to meet on a continuing basis, through actual annual operating results, certain qualification tests set forth in the federal tax laws. Those qualification tests involve the percentage of income that we earn from specified sources, the percentage of our assets that falls within specified categories, the diversity of our share ownership, and the percentage of our earnings that we distribute. While Andrews Kurth LLP has reviewed those matters in connection with the foregoing opinion, Andrews Kurth LLP will not review our compliance with those tests on a continuing basis. Accordingly, no assurance can be given that the actual results of our operation for any particular taxable year will satisfy such requirements. For a discussion of the tax consequences of our failure to qualify as a REIT, see Failure to Qualify.

If we qualify as a REIT, we generally will not be subject to federal income tax on the taxable income that we distribute to our stockholders. The benefit of that tax treatment is that it avoids the double taxation, or taxation



## **Table of Contents**

at both the corporate and stockholder levels, that generally results from owning stock in a corporation. However, we will be subject to federal tax in the following circumstances:

We will pay federal income tax on taxable income, including net capital gain, that we do not distribute to our stockholders during, or within a specified time period after, the calendar year in which the income is earned.

Under certain circumstances, we may be subject to the alternative minimum tax on items of tax preference.

We will pay income tax at the highest corporate rate on (1) net income from the sale or other disposition of property acquired through foreclosure ( foreclosure property ) that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business and (2) other non-qualifying income from foreclosure property.

We will pay a 100% tax on net income from sales or other dispositions of property, other than foreclosure property, that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business.

If we fail to satisfy the 75% gross income test or the 95% gross income test, as described below under Income Tests, and nonetheless continue to qualify as a REIT because we meet other requirements, we will pay a 100% tax on (1) the gross income attributable to the greater of the amounts by which we fail the 75% and 95% gross income tests, multiplied by (2) a fraction intended to reflect our profitability.

If we fail to distribute during a calendar year at least the sum of (1) 85% of our REIT ordinary income for such year, (2) 95% of our REIT capital gain net income for such year, and (3) any undistributed taxable income from prior periods, we will pay a 4% excise tax on the excess of this required distribution over the amount we actually distributed.

We may elect to retain and pay income tax on our net long-term capital gain. In that case, a U.S. stockholder would be taxed on its proportionate share of our undistributed long-term capital gain (to the extent that a timely designation of such gain is made by us to the stockholder) and would receive a credit or refund for its proportionate share of the tax we paid.

If we acquire any asset from a C corporation, or a corporation that generally is subject to full corporate-level tax, in a merger or other transaction in which we acquire a basis in the asset that is determined by reference to the C corporation's basis in the asset, we will pay tax at the highest regular corporate rate applicable if we recognize gain on the sale or disposition of such asset during the 10-year period after we acquire such asset. The amount of gain on which we will pay tax generally is the lesser of: (1) the amount of gain that we recognize at the time of the sale or disposition; or (2) the amount of gain that we would have recognized if we had sold the asset at the time we acquired the asset.

We will incur a 100% excise tax on transactions with a taxable REIT subsidiary that are not conducted on an arm's-length basis.

After 2004, if we fail to satisfy certain asset tests, described below under - Asset Tests, by more than a de minimis threshold, and nonetheless continue to qualify as a REIT because we meet certain other requirements, we will be subject to a tax of the greater of \$50,000 or at the highest corporate rate on the income generated by the non-qualifying assets.

After 2004, we may be subject to a \$50,000 tax for each such failure if we fail to satisfy certain REIT qualification requirements, other than income tests or asset tests, and such failure is due to reasonable cause and not willful neglect.

## **Requirements for Qualification**

A REIT is a corporation, trust, or association that meets the following requirements:

**Table of Contents**

1. it is managed by one or more trustees or directors;
2. its beneficial ownership is evidenced by transferable shares or by transferable certificates of beneficial interest;
3. it would be taxable as a domestic corporation but for the REIT provisions of the federal income tax laws;
4. it is neither a financial institution nor an insurance company subject to special provisions of the federal income tax laws;
5. at least 100 persons are beneficial owners of its shares or ownership certificates;
6. no more than 50% in value of its outstanding shares or ownership certificates is owned, directly or indirectly, by five or fewer individuals, as defined in the federal income tax laws to include certain entities, during the last half of each taxable year;
7. it elects to be a REIT, or has made such election for a previous taxable year, and satisfies all relevant filing and other administrative requirements established by the Internal Revenue Service that must be met to elect and maintain REIT status;
8. it uses a calendar year for federal income tax purposes and complies with the recordkeeping requirements of the federal income tax laws; and
9. it meets certain other qualification tests, described below, regarding the nature of its income and assets and the amount of its distributions.

We must meet requirements 1 through 4 during our entire taxable year and must meet requirement 5 during at least 335 days of a taxable year of 12 months, or during a proportionate part of a taxable year of less than 12 months. If we comply with all the requirements for ascertaining the ownership of our outstanding shares in a taxable year and have no reason to know that we violated requirement 6, we will be deemed to have satisfied requirement 6 for such taxable year. For purposes of determining share ownership under requirement 6, an individual generally includes a supplemental unemployment compensation benefits plan, a private foundation, or a portion of a trust permanently set aside or used exclusively for charitable purposes. An individual, however, generally does not include a trust that is a qualified employee pension or profit sharing trust under the federal income tax laws, and beneficiaries of such a trust will be treated as holding shares of our common stock in proportion to their actuarial interests in the trust for purposes of requirement 6.

We have issued sufficient common stock with enough diversity of ownership to satisfy requirements 5 and 6 set forth above. In addition, our charter restricts the ownership and transfer of the common stock so that we should continue to satisfy requirements 5 and 6. The provisions of our charter restricting the ownership and transfer of the common stock are described in **Description of Our Capital Stock** **Restrictions on Ownership and Transfer**.

A corporation that is a qualified REIT subsidiary is not treated as a corporation separate from its parent REIT. All assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit of a qualified REIT subsidiary are treated as assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit of the REIT. A qualified REIT subsidiary is a corporation, other than a taxable REIT subsidiary ( TRS ), all of the capital stock of which is owned by the REIT. Thus, in applying the requirements described in this section, any qualified REIT subsidiary that we own will be ignored, and all assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit of that subsidiary will be treated as our assets, liabilities, and items of income, deduction, and credit. Similarly, any wholly owned limited liability company that we own will be disregarded, and all assets, liabilities and items of income, deduction and credit of such limited liability company will be treated as ours.

**Table of Contents**

In the case of a REIT that is a partner in a partnership, in general, the REIT is treated as owning its proportionate share (based on capital interests) of the assets of the partnership and as earning its allocable share of the gross income of the partnership for purposes of the applicable REIT qualification tests. Thus, our proportionate share of the assets, liabilities, and items of income of our operating partnership and of any other partnership, joint venture, or limited liability company that is treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes in which we own or will acquire an interest, directly or indirectly (each, a Partnership and, together, the Partnerships), are treated as our assets and gross income for purposes of applying the various REIT qualification requirements.

Subject to restrictions on the value of TRS securities held by the REIT, a REIT is permitted to own up to 100% of the stock of one or more TRSs. A TRS is a fully taxable corporation. A TRS may not directly or indirectly operate or manage any hotels or health care facilities or provide rights to any brand name under which any hotel or health care facility is operated but is permitted to lease hotels from a related REIT as long as the hotels are operated on behalf of the TRS by an eligible independent contractor. We formed and made a timely election with respect to two TRSs, Ashford TRS Corporation (and each of its corporate subsidiaries) and Ashford TRS VI Corporation. Each of our properties is leased or owned by one of our TRSs. Additionally, we may form or acquire one or more additional TRSs in the future. See Taxable REIT Subsidiaries.

**Income Tests**

We must satisfy two gross income tests annually to maintain our qualification as a REIT. First, at least 75% of our gross income for each taxable year must consist of defined types of income that we derive, directly or indirectly, from investments relating to real property or mortgages on real property or temporary investment income. Qualifying income for purposes of that 75% gross income test generally includes:

rents from real property;

interest on debt secured by mortgages on real property or on interests in real property;

dividends and gain from the sale of shares in other REITs; and

gain from the sale of real estate assets.

Second, in general, at least 95% of our gross income for each taxable year must consist of income that is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, other types of dividends and interest, gain from the sale or disposition of stock or securities, income from certain hedging transactions, or any combination of the foregoing. Note that for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004, if we enter into a transaction in the normal course of business primarily to manage risk of interest rate or price changes or currency fluctuations with respect to borrowings made or to be made to acquire or carry real estate assets and we properly identify the hedges as required by Treasury regulations, the income from the transaction will be excluded from gross income for purposes of the 95% gross income test (but not for purposes of the 75% gross income test). Gross income from our sale of any property that we hold primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of business is excluded from both income tests. The following paragraphs discuss the specific application of the gross income tests to us.

*Rents from Real Property.* Rent that we receive from real property that we own and lease to tenants will qualify as rents from real property, which is qualifying income for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests, only if the following conditions are met:

First, the rent must not be based, in whole or in part, on the income or profits of any person but may be based on a fixed percentage or percentages of gross receipts or gross sales.

Second, neither we nor a direct or indirect owner of 10% or more of our shares of common stock may own, actually or constructively, 10% or more of a tenant other than a TRS from whom we receive rent.



**Table of Contents**

Third, if the rent attributable to personal property leased in connection with a lease of real property exceeds 15% of the total rent received under the lease, then the portion of rent attributable to that personal property will not qualify as rents from real property.

Fourth, we generally must not operate or manage our real property or furnish or render services to our tenants, other than through an independent contractor who is adequately compensated, from whom we do not derive revenue, and who does not, directly or through its stockholders, own more than 35% of our shares of common stock, taking into consideration the applicable ownership attribution rules. However, we need not provide services through an independent contractor, but instead may provide services directly to our tenants, if the services are usually or customarily rendered in the geographic area in connection with the rental of space for occupancy only and are not considered to be provided for the tenants' convenience. In addition, we may provide a minimal amount of non-customary services to the tenants of a property, other than through an independent contractor, as long as our income from the services (valued at not less than 150% of our direct cost of performing such services) does not exceed 1% of our income from the related property. Furthermore, we may own up to 100% of the stock of a TRS which may provide customary and noncustomary services to our tenants without tainting our rental income from the related properties. See Taxable REIT Subsidiaries.

Pursuant to percentage leases, a TRS leases each of our properties not owned by a TRS. The percentage leases provide that a TRS is obligated to pay to the Partnerships (1) a minimum base rent plus percentage rent based on gross revenue and (2) additional charges or other expenses, as defined in the leases. Percentage rent is calculated by multiplying fixed percentages by room revenues for each of the hotels. Both base rent and the thresholds in the percentage rent formulas will be adjusted for inflation.

In order for the base rent, percentage rent, and additional charges to constitute rents from real property, the percentage leases must be respected as true leases for federal income tax purposes and not treated as service contracts, joint ventures, or some other type of arrangement. The determination of whether the percentage leases are true leases depends on an analysis of all the surrounding facts and circumstances. In making such a determination, courts have considered a variety of factors, including the following:

the intent of the parties;

the form of the agreement;

the degree of control over the property that is retained by the property owner, or whether the lessee has substantial control over the operation of the property or is required simply to use its best efforts to perform its obligations under the agreement; and

the extent to which the property owner retains the risk of loss with respect to the property, or whether the lessee bears the risk of increases in operating expenses or the risk of damage to the property or the potential for economic gain or appreciation with respect to the property.

In addition, federal income tax law provides that a contract that purports to be a service contract or a partnership agreement will be treated instead as a lease of property if the contract is properly treated as such, taking into account all relevant factors, including whether or not:

the service recipient is in physical possession of the property;

the service recipient controls the property;

the service recipient has a significant economic or possessory interest in the property, or whether the property's use is likely to be dedicated to the service recipient for a substantial portion of the useful life of the property, the recipient shares the risk that the property will decline in value, the recipient shares in any appreciation in the value of the property, the recipient shares in savings in the property's operating costs, or the recipient bears the risk of damage to or loss of the property;

**Table of Contents**

the service provider bears the risk of substantially diminished receipts or substantially increased expenditures if there is nonperformance under the contract;

the service provider uses the property concurrently to provide significant services to entities unrelated to the service recipient; and

the total contract price substantially exceeds the rental value of the property for the contract period.

Since the determination whether a service contract should be treated as a lease is inherently factual, the presence or absence of any single factor will not be dispositive in every case.

We believe that the percentage leases will be treated as true leases for federal income tax purposes. Such belief is based, in part, on the following facts:

the Partnerships, on the one hand, and a TRS, on the other hand, intend for their relationship to be that of a lessor and lessee, and such relationship is documented by lease agreements;

a TRS has the right to the exclusive possession, use, and quiet enjoyment of the hotels during the term of the percentage leases;

a TRS bears the cost of, and is responsible for, day-to-day maintenance and repair of the hotels and generally dictates how the hotels are operated, maintained, and improved;

a TRS bears all of the costs and expenses of operating the hotels, including the cost of any inventory used in their operation, during the term of the percentage leases, other than real estate;

a TRS benefits from any savings in the costs of operating the hotels during the term of the percentage leases;

a TRS generally has indemnified the Partnerships against all liabilities imposed on the Partnerships during the term of the percentage leases by reason of (1) injury to persons or damage to property occurring at the hotels, (2) the TRS use, management, maintenance, or repair of the hotels, (3) any environmental liability caused by acts or grossly negligent failures to act of the TRS, (4) taxes and assessments in respect of the hotels that are the obligations of the TRS, or (5) any breach of the percentage leases or of any sublease of a hotel by the TRS;

a TRS is obligated to pay substantial fixed rent for the period of use of the hotels;

a TRS stands to incur substantial losses or reap substantial gains depending on how successfully it operates the hotels;

the Partnerships cannot use the hotels concurrently to provide significant services to entities unrelated to a TRS; and

the total contract price under the percentage leases does not substantially exceed the rental value of the hotels for the term of the percentage leases.

Investors should be aware that there are no controlling Treasury regulations, published rulings, or judicial decisions involving leases with terms substantially the same as the percentage leases that discuss whether such leases constitute true leases for federal income tax purposes. If the percentage leases are characterized as service contracts or partnership agreements, rather than as true leases, part or all of the payments that the Partnerships receive from a TRS may not be considered rent or may not otherwise satisfy the various requirements for qualification as rents from real property. In that case, we likely would not be able to satisfy either the 75% or 95% gross income test and, as a result, would lose our REIT status.

## Table of Contents

As described above, in order for the rent received by us to constitute rents from real property, several other requirements must be satisfied. One requirement is that the percentage rent must not be based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. The percentage rent, however, will qualify as rents from real property if it is based on percentages of gross receipts or gross sales and the percentages:

are fixed at the time the percentage leases are entered into;

are not renegotiated during the term of the percentage leases in a manner that has the effect of basing percentage rent on income or profits; and

conform with normal business practice.

More generally, the percentage rent will not qualify as rents from real property if, considering the percentage leases and all the surrounding circumstances, the arrangement does not conform with normal business practice, but is in reality used as a means of basing the percentage rent on income or profits. Since the percentage rent is based on fixed percentages of the gross revenues from the hotels that are established in the percentage leases, and we have represented to Andrews Kurth LLP that the percentages (1) will not be renegotiated during the terms of the percentage leases in a manner that has the effect of basing the percentage rent on income or profits and (2) conform with normal business practice, the percentage rent should not be considered based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. Furthermore, we have represented to Andrews Kurth LLP that, with respect to other hotel properties that we acquire in the future, we will not charge rent for any property that is based in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person, except by reason of being based on a fixed percentage of gross revenues, as described above.

Another requirement for qualification of our rent as rents from real property is that we must not own, actually or constructively, 10% or more of the stock of any corporate lessee or 10% or more of the assets or net profits of any non-corporate lessee (a related party tenant). This rule, however, does not apply to rents for hotels leased to a TRS if an eligible independent contractor operates the hotel for the TRS.

A third requirement for qualification of our rent as rents from real property is that the rent attributable to the personal property leased in connection with the lease of a hotel must not be greater than 15% of the total rent received under the lease. The rent attributable to the personal property contained in a hotel is the amount that bears the same ratio to total rent for the taxable year as the average of the fair market values of the personal property at the beginning and at the end of the taxable year bears to the average of the aggregate fair market values of both the real and personal property contained in the hotel at the beginning and at the end of such taxable year (the personal property ratio). With respect to each hotel, we believe either that the personal property ratio is less than 15% or that any income attributable to excess personal property will not jeopardize our ability to qualify as a REIT. There can be no assurance, however, that the Internal Revenue Service would not challenge our calculation of a personal property ratio or that a court would not uphold such assertion. If such a challenge were successfully asserted, we could fail to satisfy the 95% or 75% gross income test and thus could lose our REIT status.

A fourth requirement for qualification of our rent as rents from real property is that, other than within the 1% de minimis exception described above (*i.e.*, we may provide a minimal amount of non-customary services to the tenants of a property, other than through an independent contractor, as long as our income from the services does not exceed 1% of our income from the related property) and other than through a TRS, we cannot furnish or render noncustomary services to the tenants of our hotels, or manage or operate our hotels, other than through an independent contractor who is adequately compensated and from whom we do not derive or receive any income. Provided that the percentage leases are respected as true leases, we should satisfy that requirement, because the Partnerships will not perform any services other than customary services for a TRS. Furthermore, we have represented that, with respect to other hotel properties that we acquire in the future, we will not perform noncustomary services for a TRS.

If a portion of our rent from a hotel does not qualify as rents from real property because the rent attributable to personal property exceeds 15% of the total rent for a taxable year, the portion of the rent that is attributable to personal property will not be qualifying income for purposes of either the 75% or 95% gross income



**Table of Contents**

test. Thus, if such rent attributable to personal property, plus any other income that is nonqualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, during a taxable year exceeds 5% of our gross income during the year, we could lose our REIT status. If the rent from a particular hotel does not qualify as rents from real property because either (1) the percentage rent is considered based on the income or profits of the related lessee, (2) the lessee is a related party tenant other than a TRS, or (3) we furnish noncustomary services to the tenants of the hotel, or manage or operate the hotel, other than through an eligible independent contractor or a TRS, none of the rent from that hotel would qualify as rents from real property. In that case, we likely would be unable to satisfy either the 75% or 95% gross income test and, as a result, could lose our REIT status. However, in either situation we may still qualify as a REIT if the relief described below under Failure to Satisfy Gross Income Tests is available to us.

In addition to the rent, a lessee is required to pay to the Partnerships certain additional charges. To the extent that such additional charges represent either (1) reimbursements of amounts that the Partnerships are obligated to pay to third parties or (2) penalties for nonpayment or late payment of such amounts, such charges should qualify as rents from real property. However, to the extent that such charges represent interest that is accrued on the late payment of the rent or additional charges, such charges will not qualify as rents from real property, but instead should be treated as interest that qualifies for the 95% gross income test.

**Interest**

The term interest generally does not include any amount received or accrued, directly or indirectly, if the determination of such amount depends in whole or in part on the income or profits of any person. However, an amount received or accrued generally will not be excluded from the term interest solely by reason of being based on a fixed percentage or percentages of receipts or sales. Furthermore, to the extent that interest from a loan that is based on the residual cash proceeds from the sale of the property securing the loan constitutes a shared appreciation provision, income attributable to such participation feature will be treated as gain from the sale of the secured property.

While certain of our existing mezzanine loans are not secured by a direct interest in real property, other of our mezzanine loans are, and future mezzanine loans may be. In Revenue Procedure 2003-65, the Internal Revenue Service established a safe harbor under which interest from loans secured by a first priority security interest in ownership interests in a partnership or limited liability company owning real property will be treated as qualifying income for both the 75% and 95% gross income tests, provided several requirements are satisfied. Although we anticipate that most or all of any mezzanine loans that we make or acquire will qualify for the safe harbor requirements in Revenue Procedure 2003-65, it is possible that we may make or acquire some mezzanine loans that do not qualify for the safe harbor. In those cases, the interest income from the loans will be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test but potentially will not be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test. We will make or acquire mezzanine loans that do not qualify for the safe harbor in Revenue Procedure 2003-65 only to the extent that the interest from those loans, combined with our other nonqualifying income, will not cause us to fail to satisfy the 75% gross income test.

**Prohibited Transactions**

A REIT will incur a 100% tax on the net income derived from any sale or other disposition of property, other than foreclosure property, that the REIT holds primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business. Whether a REIT holds an asset primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business depends on the facts and circumstances in effect from time to time, including those related to a particular asset. We believe that none of the assets owned by the Partnerships is held for sale to customers and that a sale of any such asset would not be in the ordinary course of the owning entity's business. We will attempt to comply with the terms of safe-harbor provisions in the federal income tax laws prescribing when an asset sale will not be characterized as a prohibited transaction. We cannot provide assurance, however, that we can comply with such safe-harbor provisions or that the Partnerships will avoid owning property that may be characterized as property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business.

**Table of Contents**

**Foreclosure Property**

We will be subject to tax at the maximum corporate rate on any income from foreclosure property, other than income that would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, less expenses directly connected with the production of such income. However, gross income from such foreclosure property will qualify for purposes of the 75% and 95% gross income tests. Foreclosure property is any real property, including interests in real property, and any personal property incident to such real property:

that is acquired by a REIT as the result of such REIT having bid in such property at foreclosure, or having otherwise reduced such property to ownership or possession by agreement or process of law, after there was a default or default was imminent on a lease of such property or on an indebtedness that such property secured; and

for which such REIT makes a proper election to treat such property as foreclosure property.

However, a REIT will not be considered to have foreclosed on a property where the REIT takes control of the property as a mortgagee-in-possession and cannot receive any profit or sustain any loss except as a creditor of the mortgagor. Property generally ceases to be foreclosure property with respect to a REIT at the end of the third taxable year following the taxable year in which the REIT acquired such property, or longer if an extension is granted by the Secretary of the Treasury. The foregoing grace period is terminated and foreclosure property ceases to be foreclosure property on the first day:

on which a lease is entered into with respect to such property that, by its terms, will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test or any amount is received or accrued, directly or indirectly, pursuant to a lease entered into on or after such day that will give rise to income that does not qualify for purposes of the 75% gross income test;

on which any construction takes place on such property, other than completion of a building, or any other improvement, where more than 10% of the construction of such building or other improvement was completed before default became imminent; or

which is more than 90 days after the day on which such property was acquired by the REIT and the property is used in a trade or business which is conducted by the REIT, other than through an independent contractor from whom the REIT itself does not derive or receive any income.

As a result of the rules with respect to foreclosure property, if a lessee defaults on its obligations under a percentage lease, we terminate the lessee's leasehold interest, and we are unable to find a replacement lessee for the hotel within 90 days of such foreclosure, gross income from hotel operations conducted by us from such hotel would cease to qualify for the 75% and 95% gross income tests unless we are able to hire an independent contractor to manage and operate the hotel. In such event, we might be unable to satisfy the 75% and 95% gross income tests and, thus, might fail to qualify as a REIT.

**Hedging Transactions**

From time to time, we may enter into hedging transactions with respect to one or more of our assets or liabilities. Our hedging activities may include entering into interest rate swaps, caps, and floors, options to purchase such items, and futures and forward contracts. For taxable years beginning before January 1, 2005, to the extent that we entered into an interest rate swap or cap contract, option, futures contract, forward rate agreement, or any similar financial instrument to hedge our indebtedness incurred to acquire or carry real estate assets, any periodic income or gain from the disposition of such contract should be qualifying income for purposes of the 95% gross income test, but not the 75% gross income test. To the extent that we hedge with other types of financial instruments during such years, or in other situations, it is not entirely clear how the income from those transactions will be treated for purposes of the gross income tests. For taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004, if we enter into a transaction in the normal course of business primarily to manage risk of interest rate or price changes or currency fluctuations with respect to borrowings under or to be made to acquire or carry real estate assets and we properly



**Table of Contents**

identify the transactions as required by Treasury regulations, the income from the transaction and any gain from the disposition of such transaction are excluded from gross income in applying the 95% gross income test but not the 75% gross income test. We intend to structure any hedging transactions in a manner that does not jeopardize our status as a REIT. The REIT income and asset rules may limit our ability to hedge loans or securities acquired as investments.

**Failure to Satisfy Gross Income Tests**

If we fail to satisfy one or both of the gross income tests for any taxable year, we nevertheless may qualify as a REIT for such year if we qualify for relief under certain provisions of the federal income tax laws. Those relief provisions generally will be available if:

our failure to meet such tests is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect;

for years ending before January 1, 2005, we attach a schedule of the sources of our income to our tax return; and any incorrect information on the schedule was not due to fraud with intent to evade tax; and

for years beginning after December 31, 2004, following our identification of the failure to meet one or both gross income tests for a taxable year, a description of each item of our gross income included in the 75% and 95% gross income tests is set forth in a schedule for such taxable year filed as specified by Treasury regulations.

We cannot predict, however, whether in all circumstances we would qualify for the relief provisions. In addition, as discussed above in Taxation of our Company, even if the relief provisions apply, we would incur a 100% tax on the gross income attributable to the greater of the amounts by which we fail the 75% and 95% gross income tests, multiplied by a fraction intended to reflect our profitability.

**Asset Tests**

To maintain our qualification as a REIT, we also must satisfy the following asset tests at the close of each quarter of each taxable year:

First, at least 75% of the value of our total assets must consist of:

- cash or cash items, including certain receivables;
- government securities;
- interests in real property, including leaseholds and options to acquire real property and leaseholds;
- interests in mortgages on real property;
- stock in other REITs; and
- investments in stock or debt instruments during the one-year period following our receipt of new capital that we raise through equity offerings or offerings of debt with at least a five-year term.

Second, of our investments not included in the 75% asset class, the value of our interest in any one issuer's securities may not exceed 5% of the value of our total assets.

Third, we may not own more than 10% of the voting power or value of any one issuer's outstanding securities.



**Table of Contents**

Fourth, no more than 20% of the value of our total assets may consist of the securities of one or more TRSs.

For purposes of the second and third asset tests, the term securities does not include stock in another REIT, equity or debt securities of a qualified REIT subsidiary or TRS, or equity interests in a partnership. The 10% value test does not take into account straight debt issued by an individual, an estate or certain corporations or partnerships.

We believe that our existing mezzanine loans that are secured only by ownership interests in an entity owning real property qualify for the safe harbor in Revenue Procedure 2003-65, pursuant to which mezzanine loans secured by a first priority security interest in ownership interests in a partnership or limited liability company will be treated as qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test. We may make or acquire some mezzanine loans that are secured only by a first priority security interest in ownership interests in a partnership or limited liability company and that do not qualify for the safe harbor in Revenue Procedure 2003-65 relating to the 75% asset test and that do not qualify as straight debt for purposes of the 10% value test. We will make or acquire mezzanine loans that do not qualify for the safe harbor in Revenue Procedure 2003-65 or as straight debt securities only to the extent that such loans will not cause us to fail the asset tests described above.

If we failed to satisfy the asset tests at the end of a calendar quarter prior to January 1, 2005, we would not lose our REIT status if (1) we satisfied the asset tests at the close of the preceding calendar quarter and (2) the discrepancy between the value of our assets and the asset test requirements arose from changes in the market values of our assets and was not wholly or partly caused by the acquisition of one or more non-qualifying assets. If we did not satisfy the condition described in clause (2) of the preceding sentence, we still could avoid disqualification as a REIT by eliminating any discrepancy within 30 days after the close of the calendar quarter in which the discrepancy arose. Beginning in 2005, if we fail to satisfy the 5% or 10% asset tests for a particular quarter and do not correct it within the 30 day period described in the prior sentence, we will not lose our REIT status if the failure is due to the ownership of assets the total value of which does not exceed the lesser of (i) 1% of the total value of our assets at the end of the quarter for which such measurement is done or (ii) \$10,000,000; provided in either case that we either dispose of the assets within 6 months after the last day of the quarter in which we identify the failure (or such other time period prescribed by the Treasury), or otherwise meet the requirements of those rules by the end of such time period. In addition, if we fail to meet any asset test for a particular quarter and the failure exceeds the de minimis threshold described above, we still will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements if: (i) following our identification of the failure, we file a schedule with a description of each asset that caused the failure in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Treasury; (ii) the failure was due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect; (iii) we dispose of the assets within 6 months after the last day of the quarter in which the identification occurred, or such other time period prescribed by the Treasury, or the requirements of the rules are otherwise met within such period; and (iv) we pay a tax on the failure which is the greater of \$50,000 or an amount determined by multiplying the highest rate of income tax for corporations, by the net income generated by the assets for the period beginning on the first date of the failure and ending on the date we have disposed of the assets or otherwise satisfy the requirements.

**Distribution Requirements**

Each taxable year, we must distribute dividends, other than capital gain dividends and deemed distributions of retained capital gain, to our stockholders in an aggregate amount at least equal to:

the sum of (1) 90% of our REIT taxable income, computed without regard to the dividends paid deduction and our net capital gain or loss, and (2) 90% of our after-tax net income, if any, from foreclosure property; minus the sum of certain items of non-cash income.

We must pay such distributions in the taxable year to which they relate, or in the following taxable year if we declare the distribution before we timely file our federal income tax return for such year and pay the distribution on or before the first regular dividend payment date after such declaration. Any dividends declared in the last three

## **Table of Contents**

months of the taxable year, payable to stockholders of record on a specified date during such period, will be treated as paid on December 31 of such year if such dividends are distributed during January of the following year.

We will pay federal income tax on taxable income, including net capital gain, that we do not distribute to our stockholders. Furthermore, if we fail to distribute during a calendar year, or by the end of January following such calendar year in the case of distributions with declaration and record dates falling in the last three months of the calendar year, at least the sum of:

85% of our REIT ordinary income for such year;

95% of our REIT capital gain income for such year; and

any undistributed taxable income from prior periods, we will incur a 4% nondeductible excise tax on the excess of such required distribution over the amounts we actually distributed. We may elect to retain and pay income tax on the net long-term capital gain we receive in a taxable year. See Taxation of Taxable U.S. Stockholders. If we so elect, we will be treated as having distributed any such retained amount for purposes of the 4% excise tax described above. We intend to make timely distributions sufficient to satisfy the annual distribution requirements.

It is possible that, from time to time, we may experience timing differences between (1) the actual receipt of income and actual payment of deductible expenses, and (2) the inclusion of that income and deduction of such expenses in arriving at our REIT taxable income. For example, under some of the percentage leases, the percentage rent is not due until after the end of the calendar quarter. In that case, we still would be required to recognize as income the excess of the percentage rent over the base rent paid by the lessee in the calendar quarter to which such excess relates. In addition, we may not deduct recognized capital losses from our REIT taxable income. Any taxes or penalties paid as a result of our failure to satisfy one or more requirements for REIT qualification, other than the 95% and 75% income tests and the asset tests, are deducted from our REIT taxable income. Further, it is possible that, from time to time, we may be allocated a share of net capital gain attributable to the sale of depreciated property that exceeds our allocable share of cash attributable to that sale. As a result of the foregoing, we may have less cash than is necessary to distribute all of our taxable income and thereby avoid corporate income tax and the excise tax imposed on certain undistributed income. In such a situation, we may need to borrow funds or issue additional common or preferred stock.

Under certain circumstances, we may be able to correct a failure to meet the distribution requirement for a year by paying deficiency dividends to our stockholders in a later year. We may include such deficiency dividends in our deduction for dividends paid for the earlier year. Although we may be able to avoid income tax on amounts distributed as deficiency dividends, we will be required to pay interest to the Internal Revenue Service based upon the amount of any deduction we take for deficiency dividends.

### **Recordkeeping Requirements**

To avoid a monetary penalty, we must request on an annual basis information from our stockholders designed to disclose the actual ownership of our outstanding shares of common stock. We intend to comply with such requirements.

### **Failure to Qualify**

If we were to fail to qualify as a REIT in any taxable year, and no relief provision applied, we would be subject to federal income tax on our taxable income at regular corporate rates and any applicable alternative minimum tax. In calculating our taxable income in a year in which we failed to qualify as a REIT, we would not be able to deduct amounts paid out to stockholders. In fact, we would not be required to distribute any amounts to stockholders in such year. In such event, to the extent of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, all distributions to stockholders would be taxable as regular corporate dividends. Subject to certain limitations of the federal income tax laws, corporate stockholders might be eligible for the dividends received deduction. Unless we

**Table of Contents**

qualified for relief under specific statutory provisions, we also would be disqualified from taxation as a REIT for the four taxable years following the year during which we ceased to qualify as a REIT. We cannot predict whether in all circumstances we would qualify for such statutory relief.

**Taxation of Taxable U.S. Stockholders**

As used herein, the term "U.S. stockholder" means a holder of our common stock that for U.S. federal income tax purposes is:

a citizen or resident of the United States;

a corporation or partnership (including an entity treated as a corporation or partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes) created or organized in or under the laws of the United States or of a political subdivision thereof;

an estate whose income is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or

any trust if (1) a U.S. court is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of such trust and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (2) it has a valid election in place to be treated as a U.S. person.

As long as we qualify as a REIT, (1) a taxable "U.S. stockholder" must take into account distributions that are made out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits and that we do not designate as capital gain dividends or retained long-term capital gain as ordinary income, and (2) a U.S. stockholder will not qualify for the dividends received deduction generally available to corporations. In addition, dividends paid to a U.S. stockholder generally will not qualify for the new 15% tax rate for "qualified dividend income." The Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 reduced the maximum tax rate for non-corporate taxpayers on qualified dividend income from 38.6% to 15% for tax years 2003 through 2008. Without future congressional action, the maximum tax rate on qualified dividend income will move to 35% in 2009 and 39.6% in 2011. Qualified dividend income generally includes most U.S. noncorporate stockholders but does not generally include REIT dividends. As a result, our ordinary REIT dividends will continue to be taxed at the higher tax rate applicable to ordinary income. Currently, the highest marginal individual income tax rate on ordinary income is 35%. However, the 15% tax rate for qualified dividend income will apply to our ordinary REIT dividends, if any, that are (1) attributable to dividends received by us from non-REIT corporations, such as our TRS, and (2) attributable to income upon which we have paid corporate income tax (e.g., to the extent that we distribute less than 100% of our taxable income). In general, to qualify for the reduced tax rate on qualified dividend income, a stockholder must hold our common stock for more than 60 days during the 121-day period beginning on the date that is 60 days before the date on which our common stock becomes ex-dividend.

A U.S. stockholder generally will report distributions that we designate as capital gain dividends as long-term capital gain without regard to the period for which the U.S. stockholder has held our common stock. We generally will designate our capital gain dividends as either 15% or 25% rate distributions. A corporate U.S. stockholder, however, may be required to treat up to 20% of certain capital gain dividends as ordinary income.

We may elect to retain and pay income tax on the net long-term capital gain that we receive in a taxable year. In that case, a U.S. stockholder would be taxed on its proportionate share of our undistributed long-term capital gain, to the extent that we designate such amount in a timely notice to such stockholder. The U.S. stockholder would receive a credit or refund for its proportionate share of the tax we paid. The U.S. stockholder would increase the basis in its common stock by the amount of its proportionate share of our undistributed long-term capital gain, minus its share of the tax we paid.

To the extent that we make a distribution in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits, such distribution will not be taxable to a U.S. stockholder to the extent that it does not exceed the adjusted tax basis of the U.S. stockholder's common stock. Instead, such distribution will reduce the adjusted tax basis of such common stock. To the extent that we make a distribution in excess of both our current and accumulated earnings



## **Table of Contents**

and profits and the U.S. stockholder's adjusted tax basis in its common stock, such stockholder will recognize long-term capital gain, or short-term capital gain if the common stock has been held for one year or less, assuming the common stock is a capital asset in the hands of the U.S. stockholder. In addition, if we declare a distribution in October, November, or December of any year that is payable to a U.S. stockholder of record on a specified date in any such month, such distribution shall be treated as both paid by us and received by the U.S. stockholder on December 31 of such year, provided that we actually pay the distribution during January of the following calendar year.

Stockholders may not include in their individual income tax returns any of our net operating losses or capital losses. Instead, we would carry over such losses for potential offset against our future income generally. Taxable distributions from us and gain from the disposition of our common stock will not be treated as passive activity income, and, therefore, stockholders generally will not be able to apply any passive activity losses, such as losses from certain types of limited partnerships in which the stockholder is a limited partner, against such income. In addition, taxable distributions from us and gain from the disposition of the common stock generally will be treated as investment income for purposes of the investment interest limitations.

We will notify stockholders after the close of our taxable year as to the portions of the distributions attributable to that year that constitute ordinary income, return of capital, and capital gain.

### **Taxation of U.S. Stockholders on the Disposition of Common Stock**

In general, a U.S. stockholder who is not a dealer in securities must treat any gain or loss realized upon a taxable disposition of our common stock as long-term capital gain or loss if the U.S. stockholder has held the common stock for more than one year and otherwise as short-term capital gain or loss. However, a U.S. stockholder must treat any loss upon a sale or exchange of common stock held by such stockholder for six months or less as a long-term capital loss to the extent of any actual or deemed distributions from us that such U.S. stockholder previously has characterized as long-term capital gain. All or a portion of any loss that a U.S. stockholder realizes upon a taxable disposition of the common stock may be disallowed if the U.S. stockholder purchases other common stock within 30 days before or after the disposition.

### **Capital Gains and Losses**

A taxpayer generally must hold a capital asset for more than one year for gain or loss derived from its sale or exchange to be treated as long-term capital gain or loss. The highest marginal individual income tax rate is 35%. The maximum tax rate on long-term capital gain applicable to non-corporate taxpayers is 15% for sales and exchanges of assets held for more than one year. The maximum tax rate on long-term capital gain from the sale or exchange of section 1250 property, or depreciable real property, is 25% to the extent that such gain would have been treated as ordinary income if the property were section 1245 property. With respect to distributions that we designate as capital gain dividends and any retained capital gain that we are deemed to distribute, we generally may designate whether such a distribution is taxable to our non-corporate stockholders at a 15% or 25% rate. Thus, the tax rate differential between capital gain and ordinary income for non-corporate taxpayers may be significant. In addition, the characterization of income as capital gain or ordinary income may affect the deductibility of capital losses. A non-corporate taxpayer may deduct capital losses not offset by capital gains against its ordinary income only up to a maximum annual amount of \$3,000. A non-corporate taxpayer may carry forward unused capital losses indefinitely. A corporate taxpayer must pay tax on its net capital gain at ordinary corporate rates. A corporate taxpayer may deduct capital losses only to the extent of capital gains, with unused losses being carried back three years and forward five years.

### **Information Reporting Requirements and Backup Withholding**

We will report to our stockholders and to the Internal Revenue Service the amount of distributions we pay during each calendar year and the amount of tax we withhold, if any. Under the backup withholding rules, a stockholder may be subject to backup withholding at the rate of 28% with respect to distributions unless such holder:

**Table of Contents**

is a corporation or comes within certain other exempt categories and, when required, demonstrates this fact; or

provides a taxpayer identification number, certifies as to no loss of exemption from backup withholding, and otherwise complies with the applicable requirements of the backup withholding rules.

A stockholder who does not provide us with its correct taxpayer identification number also may be subject to penalties imposed by the Internal Revenue Service. Any amount paid as backup withholding will be creditable against the stockholder's income tax liability. In addition, we may be required to withhold a portion of capital gain distributions to any stockholders who fail to certify their non-foreign status to us. See Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders.

**Taxation of Tax-Exempt Stockholders**

Tax-exempt entities, including qualified employee pension and profit sharing trusts and individual retirement accounts, generally are exempt from federal income taxation. However, they are subject to taxation on their unrelated business taxable income. While many investments in real estate generate unrelated business taxable income, the Internal Revenue Service has issued a published ruling that dividend distributions from a REIT to an exempt employee pension trust do not constitute unrelated business taxable income, provided that the exempt employee pension trust does not otherwise use the shares of the REIT in an unrelated trade or business of the pension trust. Based on that ruling, amounts that we distribute to tax-exempt stockholders generally should not constitute unrelated business taxable income. However, if a tax-exempt stockholder were to finance its acquisition of our common stock with debt, a portion of the income that it receives from us would constitute unrelated business taxable income pursuant to the debt-financed property rules. Furthermore, social clubs, voluntary employee benefit associations, supplemental unemployment benefit trusts, and qualified group legal services plans that are exempt from taxation under special provisions of the federal income tax laws are subject to different unrelated business taxable income rules, which generally will require them to characterize distributions that they receive from us as unrelated business taxable income. Finally, if we are a pension-held REIT, a qualified employee pension or profit sharing trust that owns more than 10% of our shares of common stock is required to treat a percentage of the dividends that it receives from us as unrelated business taxable income. That percentage is equal to the gross income that we derive from an unrelated trade or business, determined as if we were a pension trust, divided by our total gross income for the year in which we pay the dividends. That rule applies to a pension trust holding more than 10% of our shares of common stock only if:

the percentage of our dividends that the tax-exempt trust would be required to treat as unrelated business taxable income is at least 5%;

we qualify as a REIT by reason of the modification of the rule requiring that no more than 50% of our common stock be owned by five or fewer individuals that allows the beneficiaries of the pension trust to be treated as holding our common stock in proportion to their actuarial interests in the pension trust (see Requirements for Qualification above); and

either (1) one pension trust owns more than 25% of the value of our common stock or (2) a group of pension trusts individually holding more than 10% of the value of our common stock collectively owns more than 50% of the value of our common stock.

The ownership and transfer restrictions in our charter reduce the risk that we may become a pension-held REIT.

**Taxation of Non-U.S. Stockholders**

The rules governing U.S. federal income taxation of nonresident alien individuals, foreign corporations, foreign partnerships, and other foreign stockholders (collectively, non-U.S. stockholders) are complex. This section is only a summary of such rules. We urge non-U.S. stockholders to consult their own tax advisors to

**Table of Contents**

determine the impact of federal, state, and local income tax laws on ownership of our common stock, including any reporting requirements.

A non-U.S. stockholder that receives a distribution that is not attributable to gain from our sale or exchange of U.S. real property interests, as defined below, and that we do not designate as a capital gain dividend will recognize ordinary income to the extent that we pay such distribution out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits. A withholding tax equal to 30% of the gross amount of the distribution ordinarily will apply to such distribution unless an applicable tax treaty reduces or eliminates the tax. However, if a distribution is treated as effectively connected with the non-U.S. stockholder's conduct of a U.S. trade or business, the non-U.S. stockholder generally will be subject to federal income tax on the distribution at graduated rates, in the same manner as U.S. stockholders are taxed with respect to such distributions. A non-U.S. stockholder that is a corporation also may be subject to the 30% branch profits tax with respect to the distribution. We plan to withhold U.S. income tax at the rate of 30% on the gross amount of any such distribution paid to a non-U.S. stockholder unless either:

- a lower treaty rate applies and the non-U.S. stockholder files an IRS Form W-8BEN evidencing eligibility for that reduced rate with us; or
- the non-U.S. stockholder files an IRS Form W-8ECI with us claiming that the distribution is effectively connected income.

A non-U.S. stockholder will not incur tax on a distribution in excess of our current and accumulated earnings and profits if the excess portion of such distribution does not exceed the adjusted basis of its common stock. Instead, the excess portion of such distribution will reduce the adjusted basis of such common stock. A non-U.S. stockholder will be subject to tax on a distribution that exceeds both our current and accumulated earnings and profits and the adjusted basis of its common stock, if the non-U.S. stockholder otherwise would be subject to tax on gain from the sale or disposition of its common stock, as described below. Because we generally cannot determine at the time we make a distribution whether or not the distribution will exceed our current and accumulated earnings and profits, we normally will withhold tax on the entire amount of any distribution at the same rate as we would withhold on a dividend. However, a non-U.S. stockholder may obtain a refund of amounts that we withhold if we later determine that a distribution in fact exceeded our current and accumulated earnings and profits.

We must withhold 10% of any distribution that exceeds our current and accumulated earnings and profits. Consequently, although we intend to withhold at a rate of 30% on the entire amount of any distribution, to the extent that we do not do so, we will withhold at a rate of 10% on any portion of a distribution not subject to withholding at a rate of 30%.

For taxable years beginning after December 31, 2004, a non-U.S. stockholder will incur tax on any distribution made by us to the extent attributable to gain from sales or exchanges of U.S. real property interests under special provisions of the federal income tax laws referred to as FIRPTA. The term U.S. real property interests includes certain interests in real property and stock in corporations at least 50% of whose assets consists of interests in real property. Under those rules, a non-U.S. stockholder is taxed on distributions attributable to gain from sales of U.S. real property interests as if such gain were effectively connected with a U.S. business of the non-U.S. stockholder. Any class of stock which is regularly traded on an established securities market located in the United States, such as our common stock, shall not be treated as gain recognized from the sale or exchange of a U.S. real property interest if the non-U.S. stockholder did not own more than 5% of such class of stock at any time during the taxable year within which the distribution is received. The distribution will be treated as an ordinary dividend to the non-U.S. stockholder and taxed as an ordinary dividend that is not a capital gain. A non-U.S. stockholder is not required to file a U.S. federal income tax return by reason of receiving such a distribution, and the branch profits tax no longer applies to such a distribution. However, the distribution will be subject to U.S. federal income tax withholding as an ordinary dividend as described above.

A non-U.S. stockholder generally will not incur tax under FIRPTA with respect to gain realized upon a disposition of our common stock as long as at all times non-U.S. persons hold, directly or indirectly, less than 50% in value of our common stock. We cannot assure you that that test will be met. However, a non-U.S. stockholder that owned, actually or constructively, 5% or less of our common stock at all times during a specified testing period





**Table of Contents**

will not incur tax under FIRPTA with respect to any such gain if the common stock is regularly traded on an established securities market. To the extent that our common stock will be regularly traded on an established securities market, a non-U.S. stockholder will not incur tax under FIRPTA unless it owns more than 5% of our common stock. If the gain on the sale of the common stock were taxed under FIRPTA, a non-U.S. stockholder would be taxed in the same manner as U.S. stockholders with respect to such gain, subject to applicable alternative minimum tax and a special alternative minimum tax in the case of nonresident alien individuals. Furthermore, a non-U.S. stockholder will incur tax on gain not subject to FIRPTA if (1) the gain is effectively connected with the non-U.S. stockholder's U.S. trade or business, in which case the non-U.S. stockholder will be subject to the same treatment as U.S. stockholders with respect to such gain, or (2) the non-U.S. stockholder is a nonresident alien individual who was present in the U.S. for 183 days or more during the taxable year and has a tax home in the United States, in which case the non-U.S. stockholder will incur a 30% tax on his capital gains.

**Other Tax Consequences****Tax Aspects of Our Investments in the Partnerships**

The following discussion summarizes certain federal income tax considerations applicable to our direct or indirect investments in the Partnerships. The discussion does not cover state or local tax laws or any federal tax laws other than income tax laws.

**Classification as Partnerships.** We are entitled to include in our income our distributive share of each Partnership's income and to deduct our distributive share of each Partnership's losses only if such Partnership is classified for federal income tax purposes as a partnership (or an entity that is disregarded for federal income tax purposes if the entity has only one owner or member), rather than as a corporation or an association taxable as a corporation. An organization with at least two owners or members will be classified as a partnership, rather than as a corporation, for federal income tax purposes if it:

- is treated as a partnership under Treasury regulations, effective January 1, 1997, relating to entity classification (the check-the-box regulations); and
- is not a publicly traded partnership.

Under the check-the-box regulations, an unincorporated entity with at least two owners or members may elect to be classified either as an association taxable as a corporation or as a partnership. If such an entity fails to make an election, it generally will be treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes. Each Partnership intends to be classified as a partnership (or an entity that is disregarded for federal income tax purposes if the entity has only one owner or member) for federal income tax purposes, and no Partnership will elect to be treated as an association taxable as a corporation under the check-the-box regulations.

A publicly traded partnership is a partnership whose interests are traded on an established securities market or are readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof. A publicly traded partnership will not, however, be treated as a corporation for any taxable year if 90% or more of the partnership's gross income for such year consists of certain passive-type income, including real property rents (which includes rents that would be qualifying income for purposes of the 75% gross income test, with certain modifications that make it easier for the rents to qualify for the 90% passive income exception), gains from the sale or other disposition of real property, interest, and dividends (the 90% passive income exception).

Treasury regulations (the PTP regulations) provide limited safe harbors from the definition of a publicly traded partnership. Pursuant to one of those safe harbors (the private placement exclusion), interests in a partnership will not be treated as readily tradable on a secondary market or the substantial equivalent thereof if (1) all interests in the partnership were issued in a transaction or transactions that were not required to be registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and (2) the partnership does not have more than 100 partners at any time during the partnership's taxable year. In determining the number of partners in a partnership, a person owning an interest in a partnership, grantor trust, or S corporation that owns an interest in the partnership is treated as a partner in such partnership only if (1) substantially all of the value of the owner's interest in the entity is attributable

**Table of Contents**

to the entity's direct or indirect interest in the partnership and (2) a principal purpose of the use of the entity is to permit the partnership to satisfy the 100-partner limitation. Each Partnership qualifies for the private placement exclusion.

We have not requested, and do not intend to request, a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service that the Partnerships will be classified as partnerships (or disregarded entities, if the entity has only one owner or member) for federal income tax purposes. If for any reason a Partnership were taxable as a corporation, rather than as a partnership or a disregarded entity, for federal income tax purposes, we likely would not be able to qualify as a REIT. See *Federal Income Tax Consequences of Our Status as a REIT* *Income Tests* and *Asset Tests*. In addition, any change in a Partnership's status for tax purposes might be treated as a taxable event, in which case we might incur tax liability without any related cash distribution. See *Federal Income Tax Consequences of Our Status as a REIT* *Distribution Requirements*. Further, items of income and deduction of such Partnership would not pass through to its partners, and its partners would be treated as stockholders for tax purposes. Consequently, such Partnership would be required to pay income tax at corporate rates on its net income, and distributions to its partners would constitute dividends that would not be deductible in computing such Partnership's taxable income.

**Income Taxation of the Partnerships and Their Partners**

***Partners, Not the Partnerships, Subject to Tax.*** A partnership is not a taxable entity for federal income tax purposes. Rather, we are required to take into account our allocable share of each Partnership's income, gains, losses, deductions, and credits for any taxable year of such Partnership ending within or with our taxable year, without regard to whether we have received or will receive any distribution from such Partnership.

***Partnership Allocations.*** Although a partnership agreement generally will determine the allocation of income and losses among partners, such allocations will be disregarded for tax purposes if they do not comply with the provisions of the federal income tax laws governing partnership allocations. If an allocation is not recognized for federal income tax purposes, the item subject to the allocation will be reallocated in accordance with the partners' interests in the partnership, which will be determined by taking into account all of the facts and circumstances relating to the economic arrangement of the partners with respect to such item. Each Partnership's allocations of taxable income, gain, and loss are intended to comply with the requirements of the federal income tax laws governing partnership allocations.

***Tax Allocations With Respect to Contributed Properties.*** Income, gain, loss, and deduction attributable to appreciated or depreciated property that is contributed to a partnership in exchange for an interest in the partnership must be allocated in a manner such that the contributing partner is charged with, or benefits from, respectively, the unrealized gain or unrealized loss associated with the property at the time of the contribution. The amount of such unrealized gain or unrealized loss (built-in gain or built-in loss) is generally equal to the difference between the fair market value of the contributed property at the time of contribution and the adjusted tax basis of such property at the time of contribution (a book-tax difference). Such allocations are solely for federal income tax purposes and do not affect the book capital accounts or other economic or legal arrangements among the partners. The U.S. Treasury Department has issued regulations requiring partnerships to use a reasonable method for allocating items with respect to which there is a book-tax difference and outlining several reasonable allocation methods.

Under our operating partnership's partnership agreement, depreciation or amortization deductions of the operating partnership generally will be allocated among the partners in accordance with their respective interests in the operating partnership, except to the extent that the operating partnership is required under the federal income tax laws governing partnership allocations to use a method for allocating tax depreciation deductions attributable to contributed properties that results in our receiving a disproportionate share of such deductions. In addition, gain or loss on the sale of a property that has been contributed, in whole or in part, to the operating partnership will be specially allocated to the contributing partners to the extent of any built-in gain or loss with respect to such property for federal income tax purposes.

***Basis in Partnership Interest.*** Our adjusted tax basis in our partnership interest in the operating partnership generally is equal to:



**Table of Contents**

the amount of cash and the basis of any other property contributed by us to the operating partnership;

increased by our allocable share of the operating partnership's income and our allocable share of indebtedness of the operating partnership; and

reduced, but not below zero, by our allocable share of the operating partnership's loss and the amount of cash distributed to us, and by constructive distributions resulting from a reduction in our share of indebtedness of the operating partnership.

If the allocation of our distributive share of the operating partnership's loss would reduce the adjusted tax basis of our partnership interest in the operating partnership below zero, the recognition of such loss will be deferred until such time as the recognition of such loss would not reduce our adjusted tax basis below zero. To the extent that the operating partnership's distributions, or any decrease in our share of the indebtedness of the operating partnership, which is considered a constructive cash distribution to the partners, reduce our adjusted tax basis below zero, such distributions will constitute taxable income to us. Such distributions and constructive distributions normally will be characterized as long-term capital gain.

***Depreciation Deductions Available to the Operating Partnership.*** To the extent that the operating partnership acquires its hotels in exchange for cash, its initial basis in such hotels for federal income tax purposes generally was or will be equal to the purchase price paid by the operating partnership. The operating partnership depreciates such depreciable hotel property under either the modified accelerated cost recovery system of depreciation ( MACRS ) or the alternative depreciation system of depreciation ( ADS ). The operating partnership uses MACRS for furnishings and equipment. Under MACRS, the operating partnership generally depreciates such furnishings and equipment over a seven-year recovery period using a 200% declining balance method and a half-year convention. If, however, the operating partnership places more than 40% of its furnishings and equipment in service during the last three months of a taxable year, a mid-quarter depreciation convention must be used for the furnishings and equipment placed in service during that year. The operating partnership uses ADS for buildings and improvements. Under ADS, the operating partnership generally depreciates such buildings and improvements over a 40-year recovery period using a straight-line method and a mid-month convention.

To the extent that the operating partnership acquires hotels in exchange for its units of limited partnership interest, its initial basis in each hotel for federal income tax purposes should be the same as the transferor's basis in that hotel on the date of acquisition. Although the law is not entirely clear, the operating partnership generally depreciates such depreciable property for federal income tax purposes over the same remaining useful lives and under the same methods used by the transferors. The operating partnership's tax depreciation deductions are allocated among the partners in accordance with their respective interests in the operating partnership, except to the extent that the operating partnership is required under the federal income tax laws to use a method for allocating depreciation deductions attributable to the hotels or other contributed properties that results in our receiving a disproportionately large share of such deductions.

**Sale of a Partnership's Property**

Generally, any gain realized by us or a Partnership on the sale of property held for more than one year will be long-term capital gain, except for any portion of such gain that is treated as depreciation or cost recovery recapture. Any gain or loss recognized by a Partnership on the disposition of contributed properties will be allocated first to the partners who contributed such properties to the extent of their built-in gain or loss on those properties for federal income tax purposes. The partners' built-in gain or loss on such contributed properties will equal the difference between the partners' proportionate share of the book value of those properties and the partners' tax basis allocable to those properties at the time of the contribution. Any remaining gain or loss recognized by the Partnership on the disposition of the contributed properties, and any gain or loss recognized by the Partnership on the disposition of the other properties, will be allocated among the partners in accordance with their respective percentage interests in the Partnership.

Our share of any gain realized by a Partnership on the sale of any property held by the Partnership as inventory or other property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of the Partnership's trade or



## **Table of Contents**

business will be treated as income from a prohibited transaction that is subject to a 100% penalty tax. Such prohibited transaction income also may have an adverse effect upon our ability to satisfy the income tests for REIT status. See Federal Income Tax Consequences of Our Status as a REIT – Income Tests. We, however, do not presently intend to acquire or hold or to allow any Partnership to acquire or hold any property that represents inventory or other property held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of our or such Partnership's trade or business.

### **Taxable REIT Subsidiaries**

As described above, we own 100% of the stock of two TRSs, Ashford TRS Corporation and Ashford TRS VI Corporation. A TRS is a fully taxable corporation for which a TRS election is properly made. A TRS may lease hotels from us under certain circumstances, provide services to our tenants, and perform activities unrelated to our tenants, such as third-party management, development, and other independent business activities. A corporation of which a TRS directly or indirectly owns more than 35% of the voting power or value of the stock will automatically be treated as a TRS. Overall, no more than 20% of the value of our assets may consist of securities of one or more TRSs, and no more than 25% of the value of our assets may consist of the securities of TRSs and other assets that are not qualifying assets for purposes of the 75% asset test.

A TRS may not directly or indirectly operate or manage any hotels or health care facilities or provide rights to any brand name under which any hotel or health care facility is operated. However, rents received by us from a TRS pursuant to a hotel lease will qualify as rents from real property as long as the hotel is operated on behalf of the TRS by a person who satisfies the following requirements:

such person is, or is related to a person who is, actively engaged in the trade or business of operating qualified lodging facilities for any person unrelated to us and the TRS;

such person does not own, directly or indirectly, more than 35% of our common stock;

no more than 35% of such person is owned, directly or indirectly, by one or more persons owning 35% or more of our common stock; and

we do not directly or indirectly derive any income from such person.

A qualified lodging facility is a hotel, motel, or other establishment more than one-half of the dwelling units in which are used on a transient basis, unless wagering activities are conducted at or in connection with such facility by any person who is engaged in the business of accepting wagers and who is legally authorized to engage in such business at or in connection with such facility. A qualified lodging facility includes customary amenities and facilities operated as part of, or associated with, the lodging facility as long as such amenities and facilities are customary for other properties of a comparable size and class owned by other unrelated owners.

The TRS rules limit the deductibility of interest paid or accrued by a TRS to us to assure that the TRS is subject to an appropriate level of corporate taxation. Further, the rules impose a 100% excise tax on transactions between a TRS and us or our tenants that are not conducted on an arm's-length basis.

We have formed and made a timely election with respect to Ashford TRS Corporation (and each of its corporate subsidiaries) and Ashford TRS VI Corporation, which lease or own each of our properties. Additionally, we may form or acquire additional TRSs in the future.

### **State and Local Taxes**

We and/or you may be subject to state and local tax in various states and localities, including those states and localities in which we or you transact business, own property, or reside. The state and local tax treatment in such jurisdictions may differ from the federal income tax treatment described above. Consequently, you should consult your own tax advisor regarding the effect of state and local tax laws upon an investment in our common stock.

**Table of Contents**

**PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION**

This prospectus relates to the possible issuance or sale of up to 333,333 shares of our common stock if, and to the extent that, the holders of an equal number of units in our operating partnership submit such units for redemption and we issue shares of common stock in exchange for such redeemed units. We will not receive any proceeds from any issuance of common stock in exchange for the units or from the sale of the common stock by the selling stockholder.

We are registering the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus to permit the selling stockholders, or their pledgees, donees, transferees or other successors in interest, to sell such shares without restriction, in the open market or otherwise. Registration does not, however, necessarily mean that any of the units will be submitted for redemption or that any of the shares of common stock to be issued upon such redemption will be offered or sold by the selling stockholders.

The selling stockholders, or their pledgees, donees, transferees or other successors in interest, may offer and sell the common stock covered by this prospectus in the following manner:

on the New York Stock Exchange or other national exchange or quotation system on which our shares of common stock are listed or traded at the time of sale;

in the over-the-counter market;

in privately negotiated transactions;

in underwritten transactions; or

otherwise, at prices then prevailing or related to the then current market price or at negotiated prices. The offering price of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus and offered from time to time will be determined by the selling stockholders and, at the time of determination, may be higher or lower than the market price of the common stock on the New York Stock Exchange.

The selling stockholders also may resell all or a portion of the common stock covered by this prospectus in open market transactions in reliance upon Rule 144 under the Securities Act of 1933, provided they meet the criteria and conform to the requirements of such rule.

In connection with an underwritten offering, underwriters or agents may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from a selling stockholder or from purchasers of offered shares of common stock for whom they may act as agents, and underwriters may sell offered shares of common stock to or through dealers, and such dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers from whom they may act as agents.

Offered shares of common stock may be sold directly or through broker-dealers acting as principal or agent, or pursuant to a distribution by one or more underwriters on a firm commitment or best-efforts basis. The methods by which common stock may be sold include:

a block trade in which the broker-dealer so engaged will attempt to sell common stock as agent but may position and resell a portion of the block as principal to facilitate the transaction;

purchases by a broker-dealer as principal and resale by such broker-dealer for its own account pursuant to this prospectus;

ordinary brokerage transactions and transactions in which the broker solicits purchases;

an exchange distribution in accordance with the rules of the exchange or quotation system;

**Table of Contents**

privately negotiated transactions; and

underwritten transactions.

The selling stockholders and any underwriters, dealer or agents participating in the distribution of offered common stock may be deemed to be underwriters within the meaning of the Securities Act of 1933. Any profit on the sale of offered shares of common stock by the selling stockholders and any commissions received by any such broker-dealers may be deemed to be underwriting commissions under the Securities Act of 1933.

When a selling shareholder elects to make a particular offer of shares of common stock, a prospectus supplement, if required, will be distributed that identifies any underwriters, dealers or agents and any discounts, commissions and other terms constituting compensation from such selling stockholder and any other required information.

In order to comply with state securities laws, if applicable, offered shares of common stock may be sold only through registered or licensed brokers or dealers. In addition, in certain states, offered shares of common stock may not be sold unless they have been registered or qualified for sale in such state or an exemption from such registration or qualification requirement is available and complied with.

We have agreed to pay all costs and expenses incurred in connection with the registration under the Securities Act of 1933 of the shares of common stock covered by this prospectus, including, but not limited to, all registration and filing fees, printing expenses and fees and disbursements of our legal counsel and accountants. The selling stockholders will pay any brokerage fees and commissions, fees and disbursements of legal counsel for the selling stockholders and stock transfer and other taxes attributable to the sale of shares of common stock covered by this prospectus.

**EXPERTS**

The consolidated and combined financial statements of Ashford Hospitality Trust, Inc. and the predecessor appearing in Ashford Hospitality Trust, Inc.'s Annual Report (Form 10-K) for the year ended December 31, 2004 (including the schedule appearing therein), and Ashford Hospitality Trust, Inc. management's assessment of the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2004 included therein, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their reports thereon, included therein, and incorporated herein by reference. Such consolidated financial statements and management's assessment are incorporated herein by reference in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The historical summaries of revenue and direct operating expenses for the year ended December 31, 2003 of Marriott Residence Inn in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, Sea Turtle Inn in Atlantic Beach, Florida, Sheraton Bucks County Hotel and adjacent office complex in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and SpringHill Suites by Marriott in Baltimore, Maryland, incorporated by reference into this prospectus, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent auditors, as set forth in their reports, which are also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and are included in reliance upon such reports given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The combined historical summary of revenue and direct operating expenses of Hampton Inn in Buford, Georgia, SpringHill Suites by Marriott in Buford, Georgia, Fairfield Inn & Suites in Kennesaw, Georgia and SpringHill Suites by Marriott in Kennesaw, Georgia, incorporated by reference into this prospectus, have been audited by Holland Shipes Vann, P.C., independent auditors, as set forth in their report, which is also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and are included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The combined historical summary of revenue and direct operating expenses of Hampton Inn in Evansville, Indiana, Hampton Inn in Terre Haute, Indiana, Hampton Inn in Horse Cave, Kentucky, Fairfield Inn in Evansville, Indiana, Fairfield Inn in Princeton, Indiana, Courtyard by Marriott in Bloomington, Indiana, Courtyard by Marriott in Columbus, Indiana, Courtyard by Marriott in Louisville, Kentucky, and Residence Inn in Evansville, Indiana,



**Table of Contents**

incorporated by reference into this prospectus, have been audited by Holland Shipes Vann, P.C., independent auditors, as set forth in their report, which is also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and are included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The historical summary of revenue and direct operating expenses of Hyatt Regency Orange County, in Anaheim, California, incorporated by reference into this prospectus, has been audited by Holland Shipes Vann, P.C., independent auditors, as set forth in their report, which is also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and are included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The combined historical summaries of revenue and direct operating expenses of Historic Inns in Annapolis, Maryland, Holiday Inn in Coral Gables, Florida, Inn on the Square in Falmouth, Massachusetts, Crowne Plaza in Key West, Florida, Sheraton in Minnetonka, Minnesota, Radisson in Rockland, Massachusetts, Gull Wing Suites in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, Best Western in Dallas, Texas, Radisson in Ft. Worth, Texas, Crowne Plaza in Los Angeles, California, Radisson Airport in Indianapolis, Indiana, Radisson City Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, Radisson in Milford, Massachusetts, Embassy Suites in Houston, Texas, Nassau Bay Hilton in Nassau Bay, Texas, Hilton in St. Petersburg, Florida, Embassy Suites and Admiralty Office Building in Palm Beach, Florida, Howard Johnson in Commack, New York and Howard Johnson in Westbury, New York, incorporated by reference into this prospectus, have been audited by Berdon LLP, independent auditors, as set forth in their report, which is also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and are included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The balance sheets of RST4 Tenant, LLC as of August 6, 2004, January 2, 2004 and January 3, 2003, and the related statements of operations, cash flows and members' capital for the period January 3, 2004 through August 6, 2004 and the fiscal years ended January 2, 2004 and January 3, 2003, incorporated by reference into this prospectus, have been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, independent registered public accounting firm, as set forth in their report, which is also incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and is included in reliance upon such report given on the authority of such firm as experts in accounting and auditing.

The audited historical financial statements of Crystal City Courtyard by Marriott, the CNL Hotels and the RFS Hotels included in our Current Report on Form 8-K/A, filed on August 30, 2005, have been incorporated by reference into this prospectus in reliance on the reports of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, independent certified public accountants, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

**LEGAL MATTERS**

Certain legal matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for us by Andrews Kurth LLP, Dallas, Texas. In addition, the description of federal income tax consequences contained in the section of the prospectus entitled "Federal Income Tax Consequences of Our Status as a REIT" is based on the opinion of Andrews Kurth LLP. Certain Maryland law matters in connection with this offering will be passed upon for us by Hogan & Hartson L.L.P., Baltimore, Maryland. Andrews Kurth LLP will rely on the opinion of Hogan & Hartson L.L.P., Baltimore, Maryland as to all matters of Maryland law.

**Table of Contents**

**PART II**  
**INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS**

**Item 14. Other Expenses of Issuance and Distribution**

The following table itemizes the expenses incurred by us in connection with the issuance and registration of the securities being registered hereunder. All amounts shown are estimates except the Securities and Exchange Commission registration fee.

SEC Registration Fee	\$ 448
Legal Fees and Expenses (other than Blue Sky)	25,000*
Accounting and Fees and Expenses	10,000*
Miscellaneous	1,552*
 Total	 \$ 37,000

\* Fees are estimates only.

**Item 15. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.**

Our charter and the partnership agreement provide for indemnification of our officers and directors against liabilities to the fullest extent permitted by the MGCL, as amended from time to time.

The MGCL requires a corporation (unless its charter provides otherwise, which our company's charter does not) to indemnify a director or officer who has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she is made a party by reason of his or her service in that capacity. The MGCL permits a corporation to indemnify its present and former directors and officers, among others, against judgments, penalties, fines, settlements and reasonable expenses actually incurred by them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party by reason of their service in those or other capacities unless it is established that:

an act or omission of the director or officer was material to the matter giving rise to the proceeding and:

- was committed in bad faith; or

- was the result of active and deliberate dishonesty;

the director or officer actually received an improper personal benefit in money, property or services; or in the case of any criminal proceeding, the director or officer had reasonable cause to believe that the act or omission was unlawful.

However, under the MGCL, a Maryland corporation may not indemnify for an adverse judgment in a suit by or in the right of the corporation or for a judgment of liability on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received, unless in either case a court orders indemnification and then only for expenses. In addition, the MGCL permits a corporation to advance reasonable expenses to a director or officer upon the corporation's receipt of:

a written affirmation by the director or officer of his good faith belief that he has met the standard of conduct necessary for indemnification by the corporation; and

a written undertaking by the director or on the director's behalf to repay the amount paid or reimbursed by the corporation if it is ultimately determined that the director did not meet the standard of conduct.

**Table of Contents**

The MGCL permits a Maryland corporation to include in its charter a provision limiting the liability of its directors and officers to the corporation and its stockholders for money damages except for liability resulting from actual receipt of an improper benefit or profit in money, property or services or active and deliberate dishonesty established by a final judgment as being material to the cause of action. Our charter contains such a provision which eliminates such liability to the maximum extent permitted by Maryland law.

Our bylaws obligate us, to the fullest extent permitted by Maryland law in effect from time to time, to indemnify and, without requiring a preliminary determination of the ultimate entitlement to indemnification, pay or reimburse reasonable expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding to:

any present or former director or officer who is made a party to the proceeding by reason of his or her service in that capacity; or

any individual who, while a director or officer of our company and at our request, serves or has served another corporation, real estate investment trust, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or any other enterprise as a director, officer, partner or trustee of such corporation, real estate investment trust, partnership,

Our charter and bylaws also permit us to indemnify and advance expenses to any person who served a predecessor of ours in any of the capacities described above and to any employee or agent of our company or a predecessor of our company.

The partnership agreement of our operating partnership provides that we, as general partner, and our officers and directors are indemnified to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Inssofar as the foregoing provisions permit indemnification of directors, officers or persons controlling us for liability arising under the Securities Act, we have been informed that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission, this indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is therefore unenforceable.

**Table of Contents**

**Item 16. Exhibits.**

The following exhibits are filed as part of, or incorporated by reference into, this registration statement on Form S-3:

<b>Exhibit Number</b>	<b>Description of Exhibit</b>
4.1	Articles of Amendment and Restatement of the Charter of the Company (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 of Form S-11 /A, filed on July 31, 2003)
4.2	Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.2 of Form S-11/A, filed on July 31, 2003)
4.3	Amendment No. 1 to Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Company (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.2.2 to the Registrant's Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2003)
4.4	Articles Supplementary classifying 3,000,000 shares of preferred stock as 8.55% Series A Cumulative Preferred Stock (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.4 to the Registrant's Form 8-K, dated September 15, 2004, for the event dated September 21, 2004)
4.5	Articles Supplementary classifying 7,447,865 shares of preferred stock as Series B-1 Cumulative Convertible Redeemable Preferred Stock (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.1 to the Registrant's Form 8-K, dated January 4, 2005, for the event dated December 28, 2004)
4.6	Articles Supplementary classifying 2,285,865 shares of preferred stock as Series B-2 Cumulative Convertible Redeemable Preferred Stock (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 4.2 to the Registrant's Form 8-K, dated January 4, 2005, for the event dated December 28, 2004)
*4.7	Registration Rights Agreement, dated as of September 2, 2004, by and between Ashford Hospitality Trust, Inc. and the Unitholders (as defined therein).
**5.1	Opinion of Hogan & Hartson with respect to the legality of the shares being registered
*8.1	Opinion of Andrews Kurth LLP with respect to tax matters
**23.1	Consent of Hogan & Hartson (included in Exhibit 5.1)
*23.2	Consent of Andrews Kurth (included in Exhibit 8.1)
*23.3	Consent of Ernst & Young LLP
*23.4	Consent of Holland Shipes Vann, P.C.
*23.5	Consent of Berdon LLP
*23.6	Consent of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
*24.1	Power of Attorney (included on signature page)

\* Filed herewith.

\*\* To be filed by  
amendment.

**Item 17. Undertakings.**

(a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this registration statement:

- (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;
- (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the registration statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the registration statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in

II-3

---

**Table of Contents**

volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table in the effective registration statement; and

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the registration statement or any material change to such information in this registration statement; provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(i) and (a)(ii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed by the registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in the registration statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned registrant hereby further undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934) that is incorporated by reference in the registration statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrant pursuant to the provisions described in Item 15 above, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

(d) The undersigned registrant hereby further undertakes that:

(1) For purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933 the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of this registration statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in a form of prospectus filed by the Registrant pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) under the Securities Act of 1933 shall be deemed to be part of this registration statement as of the time it was declared effective.

(2) For the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of the securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

**Table of Contents**

**SIGNATURES**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, the registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that the registrant meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Form S-3 Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Dallas, State of Texas, on this 1<sup>st</sup> day of September, 2005.

ASHFORD HOSPITALITY TRUST, INC.

By: /s/ David Kimichik  
David Kimichik  
Chief Financial Officer

---

**Table of Contents****POWER OF ATTORNEY**

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Montgomery J. Bennett, David A. Brooks and David Kimichik, and each of them, with full power to act without the other, such person's true and lawful attorneys-in-fact and agents, with full power of substitution and resubstitution, for him and in his name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign this Registration Statement, and any and all pre-effective and post-effective amendments thereto as well as any related registration statements (or amendment thereto) filed pursuant to Rule 462(b) promulgated under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with exhibits and schedules thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto said attorneys-in-fact and agents, and each of them, full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing necessary or desirable to be done in and about the premises, as fully to all intents and purposes as he might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorneys-in-fact and agents, or any of them, or their or his substitute or substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
/s/ Archie Bennett, Jr. Archie Bennett, Jr.	Chairman of the Board of Directors	August 31, 2005
/s/ Montgomery J. Bennett Montgomery J. Bennett	Chief Executive Officer, President and Director (Principal Executive Officer)	August 31, 2005
/s/ David Kimichik David Kimichik	Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer)	August 31, 2005
/s/ Mark Nunneley Mark Nunneley	Chief Accounting Officer (Principal Accounting Officer)	August 31, 2005
/s/ Martin L. Edelman Martin L. Edelman	Director	August 31, 2005
/s/ W.D. Minami W.D. Minami	Director	August 31, 2005
/s/ W. Michael Murphy W. Michael Murphy	Director	August 31, 2005
/s/ Philip S. Payne Philip S. Payne	Director	August 31, 2005



/s/ Charles P. Toppino

August 31, 2005

Charles P. Toppino

Director