

APPLICATION NUMBER 15-111

ADDRESS: 2643 PARK AVENUE

HISTORIC DISTRICT: PARK AVENUE HOTEL HISTORIC DISTRICT

APPLICANT: EMILY PALACIOS (OLYMPIA ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS CENTER LLC)

PROPOSAL

Please see the [attached Historic Designation Advisory Board designation report](#) for an architectural description and historic background of the property.

As per the [submitted document](#), the applicant is seeking to establish the Detroit Events Center (DEC) complex within a four-block land holding that is bounded by Woodward Avenue on the east, Cass Avenue on the west, Henry Street on the south, and Sproat Street to the north. Please see the [attached renderings and plans](#) which indicate that the DEC development shall include the following structures:

- A 20,000-seat arena with ice rink which is sunk 37 feet underground and rises approximately 80 feet above grade
- Two townhouse complexes
- Five, 4-story, mixed-used buildings
- A 465, 800 square foot, multi-story parking garage
- A below-ground practice ice facility

The complex shall also include an underground loading dock area which is accessed via a ramp that extends off Cass Avenue. Specifically, as depicted on the sheets entitled "[Arena Dock](#)," the applicant proposes to establish a 26,930 square foot loading dock area that includes five docks that are large enough to accommodate tractor trailers and two docks which might accommodate tractor trailers with "media spread." The applicant's desired layout of the loading dock area also provides ample room for trucks to turn around/easily maneuver in and out of the space. As depicted on the sheet entitled "[Arena Dock: Dock Comparison](#)," the footprint of the Park Avenue Hotel Historic District/2469 Park Avenue, which currently is located in the southeastern portion of the DEC complex's project area, occupies a large portion of the applicant's desired layout/configuration of the underground loading dock area. This section also indicates that this loading dock would be limited to a footprint of a 14,470 square feet should the Park Avenue Hotel remain. The applicant therefore proposes to demolish the Park Avenue Hotel Historic District/2469 Park Avenue so that they might achieve their desired 26,930 square foot underground loading dock area. As the demolition of a locally-designated building that contributes to an historic district does not meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, the applicant is seeking this body's approval of a Notice to Proceed (NTP) to tear down the Park Avenue Hotel Historic District.

Finally, please note that that any further/future work within the footprint of the [district boundaries](#) must be approved by the Commission *before* the work is undertaken whether or not this body issues a NTP to demolish the building.

APPLICABLE ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

There are not Elements of Design for demolition.

Staff Observations

In support of their proposal for the demolition of the Park Avenue Hotel Historic District, the applicant has submitted the [following report](#), which outlines the development's site selection process, the factors which influenced the final site design, and the complex's current zoning classification. The report also provides a discussion of the NTP conditions that the applicants feel their project meets. [Please see pages 6-9](#) of the submitted report which outlines the applicant's case for the issuance of a NTP. Specifically, as outlined in

Section III of the report, the applicants note that they feel that the Park Avenue Hotel Historic District is a deterrent to a substantial benefit to the community, a hazard to public safety, and represents a financial hardship. The applicant has also submitted **additional information** and a **powerpoint** which further expands behind the DEC's design strategy and the amenities that the development will provide to the surrounding community.

While HDC staff feels that the project in general will benefit the community, she notes that it is outside of staff's purview to opine on or recommend any specific proposal that will result in the issuance of a NTP for the demolition of this resource. However, staff does note that her review of the submittal generated the following questions which, if answered, might more fully clarify the report's conclusion regarding the need to demolish the Park Avenue Hotel:

- The report mentions that it is not feasible to re-purpose the building for offices due to ceiling height and the floor plan, however there is no indication that the ODM team has explored the possibility of using the building for any other uses outside of office or residential.
- In regards to the security concerns, the report doesn't touch upon the possibility of establishing a blast wall at the Park Avenue Hotel's stadium facing elevation and why it is not feasible to do so.
- The submittal does not indicate why the footprint of the loading dock cannot be expanded 12,000 +feet to the east and/or west in order to realize the desired footprint while, at the same time, maintain the historic building. Are there "crucial" uses that will be lost, or if the footprint is shifted to the east and/or west to possibly accommodate the historic building are the uses which would be shifted/moved " location crucial"? Could these uses (trash collection facility, locker rooms, etc) be shifted to some other location within the development site?