

SPR STAFF REPORT: 03-12-2025 MEETING

PREPARED BY: G. LANDSBERG

SITE PLAN REVIEW (SPR) PER SECTION 50-3-204

ADDRESS: 439-453 SELDEN

HISTORIC DISTRICT: ADJACENT TO AND PARTIALLY WITHIN WILLIS-SELDEN HD

PROPERTY OWNER: INNOVO DETROIT RAINER

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 02-28-2025

SITE PLAN REVIEW SCOPE: ERECT NEW MULTI-STORY BUILDING ON VACANT/PARKING LOT ADJACENT AND CONNECTED TO 439 SELDEN

SITE PLAN REVIEW: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As detailed in the attached documents and drawings, the site plan review submission depicts the proposed construction of a new, five-story residential building with commercial space on the first floor, in a contemporary design, immediately adjacent to 439 Selden (which parcel is in the district). The new building would connect at the side to the existing building within the historic district.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: STAFF ANALYSIS

- Per guidance from the Law Department, the Commission is required to be involved “as part of the site plan review team” per Section 50-3-204 of the City Code for projects *within, adjacent to, across an alley, across a public or private street, or across a railroad right-of-way from a City historic district*. This report and review addresses only the Commission’s role under Site Plan Review procedures as codified in the Zoning Ordinance, or Chapter 50 of the 2019 Detroit City Code.
- The Commission’s specific site plan review role is to review, assess, and report on the “demonstrable effects” of proposed projects on historic districts. This includes evaluating potential impacts on the historical, architectural, and cultural significance of the historic district. The Commission is advised to refrain from assessing effects outside of its area of expertise.
- The Commission’s function during Site Plan Review is purely advisory, and like the similar review function for city-supported projects outlined in Section 21-2-5, cannot delay or obstruct the site plan review process.
- In summary, the Commission’s role in site plan review is to provide expert historic preservation input and recommendations. The Commission’s findings may be used by other city departments or reviewers to inform their consideration of the project’s overall impact on the vicinity and to guide future development decisions.
- For information, a portion of the proposed new building connecting to 439 Selden appears to be within the district. Such scope would be separately subject to review for a Certificate of Appropriateness under Section 21-2-78 of the City Code, and docketed separately upon receipt for a future meeting. A separate staff report and recommendation will be prepared for that application, if/when received by staff.
- It is staff’s opinion that the proposed project’s site plan is aligned with the historical, architectural and cultural significance of the district. The erection of a dense and compatible new mid-rise building on a vacant infill site is a positive outcome consistent with the goals and priorities of historic preservation planning, and thus should be viewed as having a beneficial effect on the district.

SITE PLAN REVIEW: RECOMMENDATION

Per Chapter 50, ‘Zoning’, Article III, ‘Review and Approval Procedures’, Division 5, ‘Site Plan Review’, Section 50-3-204, Historic District Commission

Staff recommends that the Commission find that the proposed work has an effect on the historic district, and that effect is likely to be beneficial.