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From Future New York

## Harlem's Future Tallest Building Finally Gets Out of the Ground; See New Images

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By **Ondel Hylton** - Monday, April 2, 2018

The curtain is finally rising on the long-planned redevelopment of Harlem's Victoria Theater. A recent visit to the construction site at **233 West 125th Street**, which partially touches the Apollo Theater, reveals that the 28-story endeavor has reached street level. The \$200 million project is being led forward by the **Lam Group**, **Exact Capital**, and **Danforth Development Partners**. The **Empire State Development Corporation (ESD)** is also helping fund the venture.



Planned are 191 rental apartments of which 50% will be offered at "affordable" rents to middle- and low-income households, a 210-key Renaissance Marriott Hotel, 30,000 square feet of retail, 25,000 square feet earmarked for art and cultural institutions, and a 90-vehicle garage.



Google Earth aerial (CityRealty)

The program distribution is somewhat unusual for a NYC high-rise in that the tower's T-shaped floorplate will be shared by both hotel suites and apartments. The rentals lie along the top of "T" fronting 126th Street, while the hotel portion kicks out towards 125th. The two uses will function like separate buildings and have dedicated elevators and amenities according to [DOB filings](#).

Previous reports announced that the cultural component will have two black box theaters: a 199-seat [Classical Theater of Harlem](#) and a 99-seat theater for the [Harlem Arts Alliance](#). There will also be office space for local nonprofits such as the [Jazzmobile](#), [Harlem Arts Alliance](#) and [Apollo Theatre Foundation](#). The cultural spaces will occupy portions

of the first through fourth floors. Also, incidental to the hotel use, will be a ballroom and dining area on the fifth floor.



via NYC DOB

The building will stand approximately 340 feet tall to the top of its mechanical bulkheads, making it the tallest building in Central Harlem. Aufgang Architects is the designer and drew up a distinct façade for the tower's separate wings. The hotel will be clad in a sheer glass façade that will loom behind the preserved façade of the old theater building. The residential portion will be dressed in masonry and sport neat rows of picture windows — consistent with Harlem's overall vernacular. The three-story 125th Street façade adorned with Ionic columns and terra-cotta rosettes have been salvaged and will be adaptively reused as part of a new entryway. Several other historic components will be reconstructed inside the new tower.



Restored facade of the Victoria Theater and new foyer (Aufgang)

"The Victoria is a Harlem icon, historically providing opportunity and entertainment," said

Steven Williams, Danforth's Founder and Managing Partner. "We are going to add a new chapter by creating a destination address on 125th Street."

Once Harlem's largest and most elegant theater, the 2,394-seat Victoria was designed in 1917 by Thomas W. Lamb, who built dozens of Loew's theaters around the world and several Broadway venues. Built as a vaudeville house, the Victoria later became a first-run movie theater. The theater's grand size made it difficult to rent out and is often attributed to its demise. The state took over the building in 1977



and it was then carved into five smaller theaters that, according to the New York Times, offered movies, plays, lectures and musical performances. See photos of the old Loew's Victoria Theater here and here.



Historic photos of the Loew's Victoria Theater via Dayton in Manhattan

The theater building languished unused since 1997 and in fall 2004 the ESD and Harlem Community Development Corporation (HCDC)

issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the site's redevelopment where Danforth Development was selected from seven proposals in 2007.

To address gentrification concerns, HCDC/ESD wanted to ensure Harlem residents are given key roles in the construction and development of the hotel and entertainment complex. Previous reports have pegged the project to create 700 construction-related jobs as well as 373 permanent positions. Harlem-based Danforth Development was awarded the contract just before the financial crisis hit, making it difficult to find financial backers and resulting in another round of delays. With the Lam Group and Exact Capital coming



Hotel guestroom

onboard, the project's groundbreaking took place in early 2017. Construction is expected to wrap up in late 2019.



Lobby bar



Hotel lobby space



Loving the new facade on Jimmy Jazz by the way - puts those soulless glass retail boxes to shame



Salvaged facade of the Victoria



Construction at street level as of late March 2018 (CityRealty)



As the tallest in Harlem, apartments and hotel suites will have sweeping views of the neighborhood, Central Park, and skyline.