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Adaptive reuse project goes up in Harlem

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Aufgang Architects has broken ground on a historic preservation and adaptive re-use project that comprises a 27-story, 210-room glass-façade Marriott hotel above the historic Victoria Theater built in 1917 on West 125th Street in Manhattan's Harlem



Source Aufgang Architects

A rendering of the new Marriot Hotel and residential tower built above the site of the historic Victoria Theater on West 125th Street in Harlem designed by Aufgang Architects

neighborhood. The site also includes a 25 story residential tower with 192 rental units, half of which will be affordable, 25,000 square feet of retail space and a 25,000 square foot cultural center. The project is expected to be completed in the second half of 2019. Additional details, including costs, couldn't be ascertained.

"The project is two doors down from the Apollo Theater, and will be the first world-class high-rise hotel in Harlem," said **Ariel Aufgang**, principal of Aufgang. "The state awarded the project in 2007, and it took years to put it together. The hotel component was critical – mixed-

use projects are the best way to address community-wide interests."

The design will include office and performance space for non-profit and community organizations, where the **Apollo Foundation** will be the anchor tenant. "In Central Harlem, there are no really large ballrooms or convention centers associated with a hotel– this will be a game changer for Harlem," continued Aufgang. "Previously, large business, social and political events could not find big enough venues."

The project will include renovating the original four-story terra cotta façade and Victoria Theater lobby, noted Aufgang. “We couldn’t keep the auditorium itself because it was in such severe disrepair – trees were growing through the roof,” he added. “In the 1980s it was made into a movie theater – in the spirit of the old theater, the new hotel building will feature two smaller flexible theaters for performances and other events.”

The restoration of the historic Victoria Theater entrance and lobby enhances the value of the project by both investing in a historic asset and incorporating sustainable design to preserve the building, noted Aufgang. “Re-using parts of the old building saves energy resources, material and labor costs,” he added. “The Victoria lobby’s original grand staircase and beautiful mosaics on the ceilings and floor are also being restored. That has intrinsic value – you can’t make new history.”