

11 May 2004

Detroit Historic District Commission
Planning and Development Department
65 Cadillac Sq. – Suite 1300
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Proposed Demolition of Statler Hotel
Grand Circus Park National and Local Historic District

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Cityscape Detroit strongly urges the Historic District Commission to deny the Demolition Permit by the City of Detroit for the Statler Hotel. The Statler Hotel is an extremely important part of the Grand Circus Park Historic District. The loss of this significant structure would have an extremely detrimental affect upon the visual integrity of this historic downtown district.

The City of Detroit has not actively demonstrated that the Statler Hotel is economically infeasible to redevelop. Without the financial hardship question addressed by the City administration, the permit must be denied. In addition, the City has not publicly marketed the Statler Hotel in good faith for over one year. According to Detroit's own ordinance, both marketing and financial hardship hurdles must be satisfied prior to the issuance of a Demolition Permit.

Infeasibility of redeveloping the structure will be a major point of the City's effort to obtain a demolition permit. Until the property is offered -- with seven million dollars as a subsidy, equal to a conservative demolition estimate -- for sale, a clear decision regarding the structure's fate cannot be made. Once demolished, the seven million cannot be recouped by any means while a seven million dollar subsidy into a project can be regained once the building has been redeveloped. Not only are the demolition expenses lost with the Statler demolition, but the approximately \$16 million in State and Federal historic tax credits created by a redeveloped structure are also lost.

Cityscape Detroit not only advocates for historic preservation, but it also encourages for quality urban design and architecture. The structure's loss would greatly impact the urban character of Grand Circus Park by removing a significant character defining building that encloses the park's space. With the structure gone, the park loses a hard edge that makes the park an enclosed urban "room". Directly adjacent to the building is the Tuller Hotel site, which has been vacant for over a decade. As evidenced by this site, once a historic building is lost, it cannot be replaced, and in Detroit, few new buildings replace older structures while many older buildings are now being restored. The City should mothball the site until the downtown market turns and makes it feasible. Case in point is Brush Park; the vacant hulks are now being redeveloped!

Cityscape Detroit urges the Historic District Commission to deny the request and advocate for the City to negotiate in good faith with potential developers/partners. Preparations for Super Bowl XL should lead us towards a dynamic livable city, not one with more vacant lots!

Sincerely yours,

Arthur F. Mullen
President