

May 4, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

202201129

From: John Curp, Interim City Manager

Subject: Emergency Ordinance – Local Historic Landmark designation – 15 W. 6th Street

Transmitted is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

DESIGNATING the Terrace Plaza Hotel located at 15 West 6th Street in the Central Business District as a local historic landmark.

Summary

On February 14, 2022, a complete Local Historic Landmark designation application was received from the Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA) requesting a Local Historic Landmark designation for the former Terrace Plaza Hotel located at 15 West 6th Street. On March 28, 2022, the Historic Conservation Board (HCB) reviewed the proposed designation and voted five to one in favor of the designation. Afterward, the City Planning Commission, at a Special Meeting on April 22, 2022, voted five to one to recommend denial of this Emergency Ordinance for Local Historic Landmark designation of 15 W. 6th Street.

Staff finds that, based on the attributes and architectural integrity, the building is architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive and defining elements of modernist architecture, and thus it qualifies for Local Historic Landmark status.

Nonetheless, consideration of the proposed Local Historic Designation of this building presents a conundrum. It is undoubtedly a significant historic resource in light of its distinctive architecture. It is a goal of the City to see this building preserved, revitalized, and brought back into productive use. It is also important to the City not only as a building, but as a critical structure on W. 6th Street between Vine Street and Race Street, an area that connects the Entertainment district and the Convention district. However, having the ability to create new window openings along the brick elevation on W. 6th Street and enlarging and replacing windows in the tower are crucial to the redevelopment of this property. It would be a challenge to make adaptive reuse of this vacant and blighted building without creating more windows which bring in more natural light and views of the city. Further challenging, if the building is designated using the guidelines as proposed, there is concern that such revitalization would be significantly delayed or denied, causing the building to fall into further disrepair.

Therefore, due to the overwhelming desire of the City to retain and revitalize the structure, the City Planning Commission has recommended against Local Historic Landmark designation. In light of this recommendation, the City Administration recommends that the item be indefinitely postponed.

cc: Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director, Department of City Planning and Engagement