

Industry News

Languishing Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans to Get Boost

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The Charles W. Moore Center for the Study of Place is reporting that plans are being developed to restore the Piazza d'Italia in downtown New Orleans. Completed in 1978, the Plaza gained notoriety as a symbol of late Post Modernism and is one Moore's best-known and influential works. At the time, it was slated to be a gathering place for the New Orleans Italian community.

However, soon after the city of New Orleans designated the Piazza and the surrounding urban area as an historic site, a planned hotel—also designed by Moore—and other development projects ceased to continue. As a result, the “Plaza languished and fell into what Moore lamented was a ‘perfectly Roman state of decline,’” according to the center.

Now, after other attempts to develop and renovate the locale have failed, the future looks brighter for the Piazza d'Italia. Plans for a 700-room Westin Hotel project on the city block surrounding the Plaza are being finalized with the City of New Orleans Planning Commission. The Piazza will be incorporated and maintained as a public pedestrian thoroughfare and gathering place between the two towers of the upcoming hotel, confirmed Ed Horan, a New Orleans city planner. One tower will be built on vacant city land, and the other will be converted from an existing office building, he said.

The developer is working with a design team that includes

Sizeler Architects, Hewitt and Washington Architects, and Lyons & Hudson Architects, all of New Orleans. The Moore Center reports that Ronald Filson, FAIA, and Allen Eskey, AIA, two of the original collaborators with Moore, will serve as independent consultants. A final ordinance is pending from the city council. ■



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