GRAND RAPIDS, MI – City planners have given Mel Trotter Ministries permission to tear down a former night club it acquired last year at 243 Commerce Avenue SW.

The building in the Heartside neighborhood will be demolished by Brookstone Capital, which plans to use the site as a temporary staging area while it builds a $15 million, 7-story mixed-used apartment building next door at 240 Ionia Avenue SW.

The City Planning Commission approved the demolition last week after Mel Trotter and Brookstone Capital officials said the poor soil conditions underneath the building would pose a hazard during construction of the apartment building.

The building was built in 1989 by the Crispus Attucks American Legion Post, an organization that was organized in the mid-1930s and mainly served black veterans. It was built after a previous structure was destroyed by fire.

In 2007, the post was converted into a New Orleans-style restaurant and night club called River City Slims. The name was changed to The French Quarter in 2009 and closed in 2011.

When Mel Trotter Ministries bought the building for $450,000 one year ago, they said they were motivated by a desire to remove a bar that had served as a stumbling block to some of their clientele who were recovering from drug and alcohol-related dependencies.

Mel Trotter officials told city planners they eventually want to build a 4-story residential building on the site. But that project is still in the fund-raising stages and will not be ready for groundbreaking for at least two years.

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