

Multi-Family, Mixed-Use Development Brings New Life to Grand Rapids

# Studio Park



## Reimagining the heart of downtown Grand Rapids' entertainment district

JD Loeks, a member of the Loeks family who owns Celebration Cinema, was approached by every mayor serving Grand Rapids over the past 20 years with a request to bring a movie theater to downtown.

However, bringing a theater downtown is not an easy task. Loeks had to convince the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to approve the project and agree to sell the land to build on. He also had to enlist community support for the vision. As plans progressed, JD Loeks formed a partnership with Grand Rapids development expert, Jeff Olsen, to create Olsen Loeks Development, LLC. The two collaborated on the overall vision and approach, and finally received the "go ahead" from the DDA Board in February of 2018 to build a nine-screen movie theater, a parking ramp, a 105,000 square foot office building, a 154-room canopy hotel, and two residential apartment buildings with retail space and public-access community space.

**studiopark** After securing the land, Olsen Loeks Development researched and interviewed the area's top construction management firms by way of a formal bid process.

*"Because of how diverse and sophisticated this development project was, we knew we would need significant bandwidth and resources from the construction community, which is why we chose to hire several contractors for the job; each contractor was selected based on their area of expertise."*

*~Jeff Olsen, Partner, Olsen Loeks Development, LLC*

Chosen for their reputation and depth of experience, First Companies was hired to provide pre-construction and construction management services for the two dueling, five-story, mixed-use buildings, along with the outdoor piazza that would become the "heart" of the development.



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*Each apartment includes modern, high-end features that align with the vision and design of the Studio Park development.*

The vision was to create a modern, accessible space infused with charm and character reflective of the city's industrial roots. From the brick pavers, built-in benches and exterior elevation selections, to the exposed brick walls, aluminum-framed awning-style windows, sliding barn doors and modern finishes in each apartment, every component was selected to tell a story and create an experience.

First Companies was invited to participate in the design process early on, and because of this, was able to identify alternatives to save time and money and improve the end-results. These included: decreasing the overall steel tonnage, reducing the thickness of the floor framing by proposing an alternative product with better insulation and more space for the tenants, and proposing an alternative water-heating solution for the apartments that cut the heating unit's footprint in half.

After the plans and designs were finalized and subcontractors selected, the teams met to determine the precise sequencing

of events to avoid worksite conflicts. Construction downtown presents many challenges, including working in confined spaces, where product deliveries and subcontractor work must be carefully timed. Having worked in urban settings before, First Companies leveraged their experience to develop a detailed construction plan and schedule.

Given the size and complexity of the project, another challenge Studio Park posed was the selection of two contractors to simultaneously complete separate portions of the project. First Companies was tasked with constructing two mixed-use buildings and the piazza, while another contractor was chosen to complete the movie theater and parking garage, both of which are attached to the mixed-use buildings. Weekly – and at times, daily – communication was required to ensure the timely delivery of a high-quality, unified end-product.

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*"It's uncommon to find multiple contractors effectively working on the same project at one time, let alone a project of this complexity. Yet there was a very clear passion for the vision of Studio Park that unified the teams and drove them to prioritize the project over their individual best interests."*

In the end, First Companies successfully delivered 106 market-rate apartments and nearly 20,000 square feet of commercial/retail space in the form of two, five-story, mixed-use, podium style buildings, along with a beautifully landscaped outdoor piazza.

The studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments offer sprawling floor plans with panoramic views of the piazza and downtown area. High-end finishes, such as modern cabinets, granite countertops, and stainless-steel appliances align with the project's vision of creating a modern space where people want to gather.

The piazza is the unifying hub of Studio Park, tying everything together in an inviting space that

can be used year-round. The space includes artificial grass, an outdoor movie screen and fireplaces, comfortable seating and beautiful landscaping, designed to host a range of activities and entertainment. For safety, the space includes snowmelt sidewalks on all sides with brick pavers that add character and interest.

*"The apartments were designed to be simple, clean, and efficient - everything you need and nothing that you don't."  
~J.D. Loeks*

Unique to Studio Park was the installation of an underground Triton Storm Water Detention system – a first of its kind in the world! This system processes the storm water run-off from the development and serves as the storm water detention system for the entire city block. Also unique is that all four sides of the building are brick. Typically, buildings have a distinct front and back which is made clear through various architectural components. Because Studio Park can be entered on all four sides, the space, essentially, has four "front doors" and no "back" which means each façade had to be treated with architectural priority. In this case it was done in the form of brick.



*Left: Floor-to-ceiling glass on the top floor corner suites offer breathtaking views of Downtown Grand Rapids.*

*Center: A sleek, frosted glass, sliding 'barn' door provides space efficiency and privacy to this spacious bedroom.*

*Right: Studio Park's apartments offer sprawling floor plans with modern cabinets, granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and floor-to-ceiling glass doors.*



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*“On a scale of 1 to 10, my experience working with First Companies was a 12. I had very high expectations that First Companies consistently met. Our project manager was incredibly transparent, proactive and a clear communicator. Turnover of this project fell during an incredibly busy season within the trade contractor community. First Companies was able to turn over our first building on schedule which gave us the ability to begin leasing apartments. This was only possible because of the team’s diligent planning and sequencing. Not only that, but the company is highly regarded within the trade contractor community, which is critical. First Companies’ leadership resulted in a consistent and strong experience from start to finish.”*

*“This development has exceeded expectations in terms of response from the public. People love this space, as do tenants. Families will come here to eat, and while they’re waiting for food, kids can kick off their shoes, run around downtown, and just be kids.” ~JD Loeks, Partner, Olsen Loeks Development LLC*



*Triton Stormwater Solution’s new, revolutionary vault system is installed for the first time beneath this piazza.*



*Where possible, floors two through four feature modern, private patios offering a more immersive experience for the residents and their visitors.*



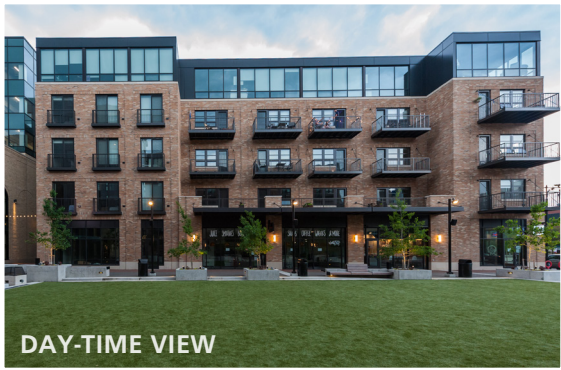
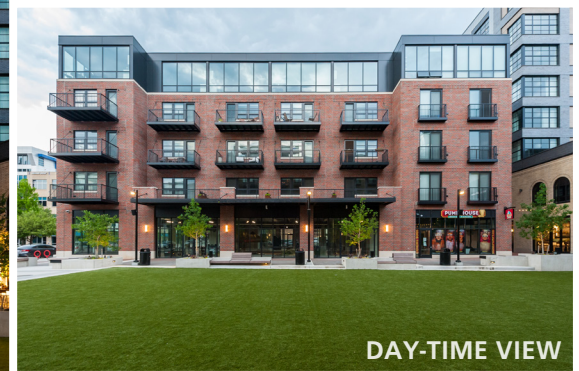
*An outdoor piazza unifies the development and includes artificial grass, an outdoor movie screen, fireplaces, snowmelt sidewalks, comfortable seating and beautiful landscaping.*

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*These two flanking, five-story, mixed-use buildings have added 106 market-rate apartments and over 20,000 square feet of retail space to downtown Grand Rapids. Residents enjoy luxurious living without having to leave the heart of the city's entertainment district, making this a highly sought-after home for many.*

## PROGRESS PHOTOS:



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