

# Memorandum

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To: Al Giglio, City of Rochester DES

From: Thomas Detrie, PE

Date: September 27, 2016

Re: PIN 4755.55 Dewey Ave / Driving Park Ave  
Intersection Realignment: Areaway Summary  
Report

This memorandum summarizes the areaway investigations completed as part of the City of Rochester's Dewey Ave / Driving Park Ave Intersection Realignment project by the design team (Bergmann Associates (BA) and Ravi Engineering and Land Surveying (Ravi)).

Buildings immediately adjacent to the highway boundary, with faces adjacent to the sidewalk, were investigated for the presence of areaways or extensions of the basement under the existing sidewalk / beyond the face of the building. Areaways are common in older urban neighborhoods and were commonly used to access the basement from the street for various material deliveries including coal.

Detailed design began in the summer of 2014. BA completed the first round of areaway investigations on July 30, 2014. Project representatives visited each building within the project limits and requested access to the basement to review it for areaways or extensions. Access was obtained to the following buildings. No areaways were discovered under the existing sidewalk at these locations.

- 828-830 Dewey Avenue / Sharp Edgez
- 337-339 Driving Park Avenue / Southern Meats & Deli and Naughty by Nature
- 822-824 Dewey Avenue / Rochester Seafood
- 321-331 Driving Park Avenue / Boost Mobile, Variety Wireless, and LA Nails

Coal chutes were identified in the alleys between Southern Meats & Deli and Total Information Inc., as well as Boost Mobile and Rochester Seafood.

No access was obtained to the following properties at that time:

- 343 Driving Park Avenue / Total Information Inc.
- 858-862 Dewey Avenue

Subsequently, BA attempted to make contact with representatives of these two remaining properties. On October 20, 2015, access was obtained to the basement of 858-862 Dewey Avenue. No areaways under the existing sidewalk were discovered. As of that time, only 343 Driving Park Avenue / Total Information Inc. remained to be examined.

## **343 Driving Park Avenue / Total Information Inc.:**

Several attempts to contact the owner of 343 Driving Park Avenue / Total Information Inc. were made during the fall of 2015. Phone numbers and an email address listed on the door of the building and provided as part of the preliminary design public outreach activities were initially used, however it turned out that all these services were disconnected. With help of the City of Rochester and the project's right-of-way specialists at R K Hite & Company, BA obtained active contact information in December 2015.



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John Perry Smith  
Mailing address - 123 East Avenue / Greenwood Books  
(585) 330-7568 cell  
(585) 325-2050 store

On December 28, 2015, BA discussed accessing the basement of 343 Driving Avenue with Mr. Smith. The following information was obtained:

- 343 Driving Park Avenue is vacant. The basement is flooded with 6 to 8 inches of water. All electric and gas have been turned off.
- Total Information, Inc., is headed toward Chapter 7 bankruptcy (eluded to this, not confirmed).
- There is an existing areaway / vault / coal chute under the sidewalk on the north side of the building.

BA was not able to inspect the basement / vault at that time due to the existing condition of the property, including water in the basement, for various health and safety concerns. BA made contact with Mr. Smith approximately every three months thereafter to check in on the status of the basement (3/21/2016, 7/12/2016, 8/30/2016). Over the period from December 2015 to August 2016 there was no change in the status of the building or basement and no inspection could take place.

## Field Investigations:

After discussions with the City of Rochester Department of Environmental Services, Street Design Division, BA and Ravi completed alternative investigations to determine the extent of the areaway at 343 Driving Park Avenue.

On September 6, 2016, Ravi completed a ground penetrating radar (GPR) investigation of the sidewalk (face of building to curb) along the north side of 343 Driving Park Avenue. This survey used radar pulses to detect subsurface objects, varying materials, and voids beneath the surface. No detectable differences were noted beneath the sidewalk that would provide evidence of an areaway. See **Exhibit 1** for more information.

Subsequent to the GPR survey, two additional field visits were made on September 14 and 23, 2016 to a manhole cover on the north side of 343 Driving Park Avenue that was marked as *ABANDONED* on the original survey. The manhole cover was removed and an areaway was identified under the existing sidewalk in front of 343 Driving Park Avenue.

The access manhole is only 1'-5" diameter, restricting access to the areaway from the sidewalk. Therefore, only measurements, visual observations, and photographs could be collected from the sidewalk surface. The areaway extends for approximately 7' in front of the face of the building and runs horizontally for approximately 12'-8". The inside of the front wall is located 3' from the face of existing curb. There is a full-height opening to the basement of 343 Driving Park Avenue. It is approximately 7' wide. The total depth of the areaway from the existing sidewalk surface is 8'-2". The ~12" thick top slab appears to be reinforced (exposed rebar was observed) and supported by a combination of steel plates, a concrete beam, and a timber beam with three support posts. Measurements indicate that the



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building facade lies in front of the basement wall / back wall of the areaway by approximately 1'. This measurement is approximate given the lack of basement access.

See **Exhibit 2** for photos from our initial investigation and **Exhibit 3** for detailed sketches of the areaway of 343 Driving Park Avenue.

## **Recommendation:**

The condition of the top slab and details of its structural support are unknown due to the lack of suitable access. Additionally, the manhole cover is a thin piece of corroded sheet steel. The roof slab structural capacity is unknown, making the areaway a safety concern for the traveling public (pedestrian and vehicular). The areaway at 343 Driving Park Avenue should be abandoned by removing the existing top slab, constructing a block wall to close up the basement, and backfilling the areaway beneath the sidewalk.

