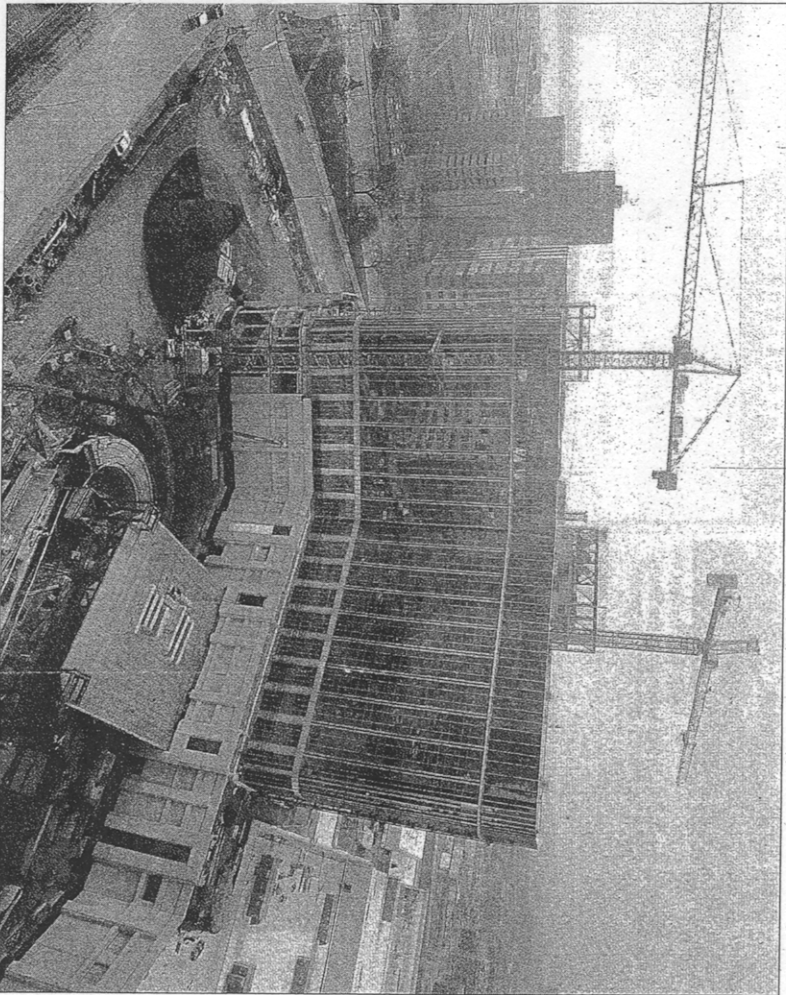


# New casinos take shape

High-rises reflect permanent stake in Detroit economic landscape

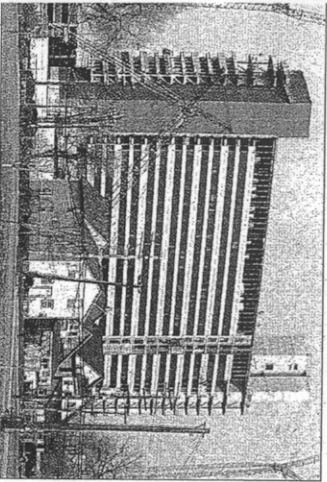
## MGM Grand Detroit Casino



Daniel Meers/The Detroit News

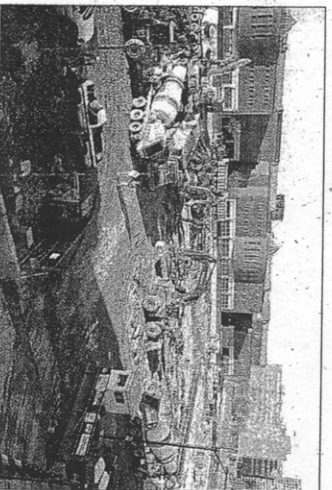
GGM's facility, a \$765 million Vegas palace-style structure, is the only one of the three casinos being built from the ground up.

## MotorCity Casino



Daniel Meers/The Detroit News

## Greektown Casino



David Guranick/The Detroit News

By JOEL J. SMITH  
*The Detroit News*

**DETROIT** — The new 17-story MGM Grand and MotorCity casinos and hotels rising at the edge of downtown are adding sparkle to the city's skyline and offering physical proof that the multimillion-dollar projects are progressing quickly.

After years of operating temporary casinos, both MGM Grand and MotorCity plan to have their permanent facilities and hotel complexes open by late 2007 or early 2008. The city's third casino — Greektown — is months behind schedule.

"These buildings set a trend or standard on what you hopefully can expect when you come to this city," said Larry Alexander, president of the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau. "It says that Detroit is a place that has nightlife, it has glamour and there are plenty of things to do when you get here. These buildings say, this is a pretty neat place to be."

Experts say the flashy new buildings will not detract from Detroit's skyline. In fact, they argue that even MGM's \$765 million art deco-style complex — designated after Las Vegas-style casinos — could be a development catalyst.

"It's like a Vegas palace," said Michael Whitty, a University of Detroit Mercy business professor, of MGM Grand's new casino. "Anything that brightens up the visuals of Detroit is a plus. With the city so gray, we need more lights. How could these new buildings do anything but add a little bit of sparkle like a Christmas tree to Detroit?"

While some might debate whether the new casinos blend in with the city's skyline, Jacob L. Milderok, a national casino consultant from Lansing, said it doesn't matter because Detroit is a hodgepodge of concrete and glass buildings. And whether they're flashy or not doesn't matter. That would be more important in gambling meccas like Las Vegas or Atlantic City.

"Players around here just don't care," he said. "I don't care what the style of the building is as long as I can get their families from the cars in the slot machines and the