



March 9th, 2021

Corktown Historical Society's response: Michigan & Church Development (Michigan Ave, Church Street Townhomes & Parking Structure (The Downtown Self Storage).

The Corktown Historical Society members hosted the Hunter Pasteur development team on Monday March 8<sup>th</sup> at a joint March meeting (Corktown Historical and East End Corktown Block Club). The team introduced themselves to our members and developer Randy Wortheimer provided a plan/vision for three projects, two within historic neighborhood boundaries (Townhomes & Parking structure).

The consensus of the Corktown Historical Society was an overwhelming **NO** to the proposed demolition of the historic (built 1894) brick building on Church Street to be turned into 400+ parking lot structure. We have lost hundreds of buildings in Corktown over the last 100+ years to short sighted needs for parking. Many of the members of the Corktown Historical Society were shocked that the developer would want to demolish a structure when they express the importance of being in Corktown as a historic neighborhood.

The original building permit was issued March 9, 1894, and originally operated as a sawmill for John Whitaker & Company. A permit for an addition was issued March 15, 1916. The pre-1921 address was 51-55 Church. The building eventually become The Red Arrow Pop Company building seen in this photograph from 1976.



Before Corktown was known for Baseball, it was known for its large lumber yard that existed at the site of Old Tiger Stadium. The John Whitaker & Company Sawmill is one of the last remaining historic buildings that still stands tied to this important moment in Detroit's history.

We are positive and appreciative of the apartment building design plan that matches with the look and feel of the Godfrey Hotel plan. The developers shared a design that was stated to be influenced on the community's concerns and suggestions. Corktown has historically always been a diverse mixture of architectural styles, materials, business and residential. We appreciate the transparency of their design process and how the final concept evolved based on the study of old and new Corktown buildings. We would encourage more thought be in the look of the Townhomes to match some of the design element shapes (every historic home on the block has a strong use of peaked roofs).



Overall, the Corktown Historical Society would like to provide our **rejection** of the proposed demolition of the 1894 John Whitaker & Company Sawmill building. We feel passionate there's options for this parking structure that can coexist with the historic building.

We're anxious to learn more about other parking structure solutions. In the past year we've been positive to learn how receptive the developers have been to ensure the communities input on their projects and hope they will continue this during the next phases of the project.

Thank you,  
Blake Almstead  
President  
Corktown Historical Society

\*Current line of sight views and architectural detail images of the 1894 John Whitaker & Company Sawmill building reference images are attached below and on the following pages...



1894 John Whitaker & Company Sawmill building reference images:



South East view from the Proposed Townhomes.



South view looking down 10<sup>th</sup> street from Michigan Ave. \*The proposed building would remove this historic Michigan Avenue view and replace with a modern parking structure staircase.



1894 John Whitaker & Company Sawmill building reference images:



Detail view of historic ornamental cornice brickwork.



Detail view of historic ornamental brickwork and period appropriate six-over-six windows.



Detail view of the original 1894 stone foundation.



1894 John Whitaker & Company Sawmill building reference images:



East view facing the 10<sup>th</sup> street side of the building. \*Note the left section of building is from 1894, where the back portion of the building is from the 1916 addition.



North East view facing on the 10<sup>th</sup> street side of the building. \*Note portion of the building is from the 1916 addition.