



March 9th, 2021

Detroit Historic District Commission
Coleman A. Young Municipal Building
2 Woodward Ave #808, Detroit, MI 48226

Re: Opposition to the demolition of the Downtown Storage Building at 1551 Church St. Detroit, MI 48216

Dear Detroit Historic District Commission Members,

My name is Daisuke Hughes. I am the owner of Astro Coffee at 2124 Michigan Ave in Corktown, and a 13-year resident of the neighborhood at the corner of Leverette and 11th (1806 Leverette), just one block from the demolition site.

I would like to express strong opposition to the demolition of this nearly 130 year-old, and continuously operated building, at the corner of Church and 11th. While a business owner myself, I greatly understand the parameters at play in this development. Specifically, the requirements by the City for a certain number of parking spaces allocated to such development. However, considering that this is an historic building in an historic district, it would be responsible to look at things from this perspective first, rather than at buckling to the needs of a developer who stands to greatly profit off of the neighborhood we have all collectively built and preserved. As most of you know, the only reason anyone is interested in developing, and subsequently profiting off of our neighborhood, is because of the vibrance that the community has maintained and built. This vibrancy has come at the tireless work of dedicated home owners, and a robust local community of business owners who all took the painstaking effort and task of restoring ever single building that boasts an operating business. Theses businesses include,

Detroit Institute of Bagels, PJ's Lager House, Brooklyn St Local, Nemo's, Ottawa Via, Brightly Twisted, George Gregory, Munoz Realty, Good Stuff Corktown, Michigan and Trumbull Pizza, UFO Factory, Mama Coo's, Folk, The Bearded Lady, Mink, Lady of the House, Hello Records, Batch Brewery, Mudgies, El Dorado, Bucharest Grill, Bobcat Bonnies, Ford, Lucky's Detroit, Detroit Barber Co., Ima, Gold Cash Gold, O'Connor Real Estate, Astro Coffee, LJ's Lounge, Sugar House, Slow's BBQ, Takoi, Two James Distillery, Cork and Gabel, Motor City Wine, Metropolis Cycles, Black the Salon, High Bias Recordings, Mercury Bar, Detroit Bus Company, Izzy's Art Gallery, and hopefully a few more on the way. I name these specific businesses because it becomes clear when you put pen to paper that indeed WE, collectively built exactly what Hunter Pasteur and other developers are interested in. A solid residential and commercial corridor, with untapped potential.

It is my understanding that this Community Benefits Ordinance was created for this very purpose. For residents and local business owners to have a say in how development unfolds in our community. Allow me to also take this time to mention that Corktown is Detroit's Oldest Neighborhood. That is our identity, slogan, and this message reads prominently on cast iron street signs throughout the neighborhood. Furthermore, we are an historic district. Setting the precedent that knocking these structures down is okay so long as there is a big development actually puts our designation as a neighborhood at risk. If we continue to knock down these structures, we stand to continue to compromise this designation moving into the future. This designation effects our local taxes in this neighborhood. Losing our identity/designation has a direct negative effect on all home and property owners in the neighborhood.

To be clear, I am not anti-development. I would simply ask that we set the precedent now, for further issues that are certain to arise down the road. We only have two 19th Century commercial buildings left in Corktown proper. The other at 1350 Michigan Ave. Considering we only have two left, it would strongly suggest the importance of what little we have remaining. Furthermore, we would like the developers to consider raising the height of their proposed parking garage to say 4 stories, as an example, in exchange for saving the historic Red Arrow Pop Building (aka Downtown Storage). Would such a compromise satisfy all parties? I hope so, because we are not anti-development, nor are we trying to stop the greater scope of work the developers are trying to accomplish. We simply want our heritage, identity, and collective life work to be considered and preserved. If they do wish to construct a taller garage in exchange

for saving the building, a community land trust would consider buying the Storage building off of them for preservation and development, should that be necessary and/or helpful.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and I hope you greatly consider its contents and requests.

Much appreciation,

Daisuke Hughes

Astro Coffee - Owner

2124 Michigan Ave.

Detroit, MI 48216