

From: [Ron Dankert](#)
To: [Thacher, Jill](#)
Cc: [Gale, Mia](#)
Subject: 212 S. Fourth Ave. proposed addition and renovation ("212")
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2013 2:59:01 PM

Greetings,

I am writing in preliminary support of the proposed addition to the Subject building.

I am a business and property owner or co-owner at 204/206 & 208 E. Washington Street, in the immediate neighborhood of the Subject building. Our business is "Swisher Commercial" real estate company, which has been at 208 E. Washington since the 1960's, and is where I personally have worked daily since about 1979.

I have also leased and managed for several years the "Washington Square Building" at 202 E. Washington, corner of South Fourth Avenue. Washington Square is a 1920's era seven-story high-rise professional office building, and is a visually exceptional architectural asset to downtown Ann Arbor. (My two-story office property at 204/206 E. Washington adjoins Washington Square on E. Washington St.).

Swisher Commercial over many years has also leased and managed the high-rise First National Building at S. Main and E. Washington, as well as the 301 E. Liberty office building (corner of S. Fifth Avenue). Many other downtown properties have been actively marketed through our firm over many years. Also, we have on two recent occasions submitted leasing and management proposals for the 212 S. Fourth Avenue building, and know it, and its "bones", reasonably well.

I consider the Subject property to be almost in my immediate yard, and it is my strong personal belief that this long mismanaged property now has a chance to be brought back into the mainstream of activity downtown. My sense of the significance of 212 is that, with its frontage and depth (to the alley) "footprint", it can and should be the anchor property for the street. I have today taken a photo of the site, and sketched in the proposed three additional floors just to see how the project might relate to the adjacent properties and the street. There is no question that the impact on Fourth Avenue would be substantial, and I do applaud the HDC's concern about its scale. However, simply in terms of height, this project would end up being 'among good company' of other, taller buildings in the neighborhood. I don't believe it would detract from the adjacent, older structures, and I'm sure JBM architects wouldn't allow that to occur anyway. I also don't think the contiguous buildings of more historic architecture would likely ever be made taller due to their smaller, narrower footprints, and much less substantial construction.

The views from the Washington Square building, and the other taller buildings nearby, have always included an unending series of unattractive roof tops, in most directions. I would welcome a project such as is proposed now, with its high percentage of new residential use, and expect that the result would allow 212 to become perhaps the 'heart' of the neighborhood that it should be.

Regards,

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