

From: [Tom Richardson](#)
To: [Gale, Mia](#)
Cc: [Michele Richardson](#)
Subject: Montgomery Building
Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2013 7:40:48 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Members of the Historic District Commission,

I am writing to support the Montgomery building site plan that is currently before you for review. I believe the plan as submitted would fulfill a need for more Downtown housing, would revitalize a key block of 4th Avenue and would be in scale with other nearby buildings..

Our family business has been located in Downtown Ann Arbor since 1974. We currently employ 17 people at our corporate headquarters at 111 N. Main. As a title insurer and closing agent, we are very aware of the high demand for Downtown, non-student housing . The proposed renovation would provide housing on a block that is key to maintaining the vitality of Downtown. The proposed housing is needed-and will allow the upgrading of ground floor commercial space that is badly needed if 4th is to become a major commercial street once again.

My father started work on 4th in the old Allene Hotel, later moving to the former Ann Arbor Federal Savings headquarters in the 100 block of north 4th. I remember watching the razing of the Allene and the construction of the Ann Arbor Inn. I walked from the old "Y" to my fathers office nearly every day after swim practice. 4th was a major Downtown street, with the Masonic Temple, Benz insurance and the Pretzel Bell along my walk. Bimbo's was just around the corner on Washington.

I also remember the decline of 4th with the adult bookstores, massage parlor and streetwalkers; the razing of the Masonic Temple for the Federal Building and the closing of both Bimbo's and the Pretzel Bell. 4th has improved in recent years, but it has not returned to its' former major role in downtown commerce. The Montgomery building renovation would be a major improvement-replacing a pedestrian/utilitarian building with attractive retail space. This would allow for more of the cute, non-chain retail shops that make Downtown Ann Arbor so vibrant (La Belle Maison,; Rock, Paper, Scissors; Agatha's; Vault of Midnight, etc.

I also believe the proposed height would be in scale. The Ypsi-Arbor Building was the 2nd tallest Building Downtown at 8 stories for many years; the old Pretzel Bell Building has height/mass along the scale of the Montgomery building, and the 4th Ave. parking structure and Ann Arbor Inn are far larger. This block, in the center of the Downtown would not be harmed by a mid-block building of the proposed height.

I strongly urge the HDC to approve this project, as it will be of great benefit to the excitement and energy of Downtown by adding housing and upgrading retail space on a key retail street.

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