

September 8, 2008

City of Ann Arbor  
Planning & Development Services  
Attention: Historic District Commission  
P.O. Box 8647  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

Dear Members of the City of Ann Arbor Historic District Commission:

The Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce is writing to express its concern with recent decisions by the City of Ann Arbor Historic District Commission that it believes are contrary to Commission's duty as set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. These recent decisions needlessly impede vital redevelopment in Ann Arbor's mixed commercial and residential neighborhoods, while doing nothing to further the express purpose of the Ordinance.

As defined in the Ordinance (and the State of Michigan enabling legislation for local historic districts on which it is based), the term "historic preservation" means "the identification, evaluation, establishment, and protection of resources *significant* in history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture" (emphasis added). Under the law, a building does not merit preservation merely because it is old.

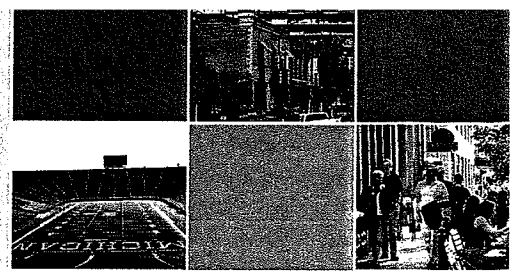
The age of a building is not allowed to be considered in a vacuum. To the contrary, the express purpose of the Ordinance is to consider historic significance to achieve the following collective aesthetic and economic goals: foster civic beauty; promote the use of historic districts for citizens' education, pleasure and welfare; stabilize and improve property values; and strengthen the local economy.

The recent actions by the Commission to preserve structures that are non-functional, dilapidated or in a damaged condition, and that have little, if any, future viable use, are both inconsistent with the requirements and purpose of the law, and adverse to the overall vitality and viability of the Ann Arbor community.

The Chamber supports the comprehensive and balanced purpose of the Ordinance, and believes that the actions of the Commission, if properly carried out in accordance with its charge under the law, will allow resources with true historic significance to be leveraged as catalysts to strengthen the character of the historic district and afford responsible economic redevelopment in our community.

**Together We Profit**

115 West Huron, 3rd Floor • Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104  
Phone: 734.665.4433 • [www.annarborchamber.org](http://www.annarborchamber.org) • Fax: 734.665.4191



As always, the Chamber is here to answer any questions that you may have with regard to this matter.

Sincerely,



Kyle V. Mazurek  
Vice President of Government Affairs

cc: Mayor John Hieftje  
City Council

**Together We Profit**

115 West Huron, 3rd Floor • Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104  
Phone: 734.665.4433 • [www.annarborchamber.org](http://www.annarborchamber.org) • Fax: 734.665.4191