

13 January 2003

Detroit Historic District Commission  
Planning and Development Department  
65 Cadillac Sq. – Suite 1300  
Detroit, MI 48226

RE: Proposed Demolition of Madison-Lenox Hotel  
Madison Harmonie Historic District

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Cityscape Detroit strongly urges the Historic District Commission to deny the Demolition Permit for the Madison-Lenox Hotel. The Madison-Lenox buildings are an extremely important part of the Madison Harmonie Local Historic District, created in 1988. The loss of these structures would have an extremely detrimental affect upon the integrity of this historic district.

As far as Cityscape Detroit is aware, several developers have been directed to the property owners with an interest to redevelop the complex, and their efforts have been rebuffed. This clearly demonstrates that the building does continue to have economic value and thus, the owners cannot argue they have a financial hardship. Without the financial hardship question addressed by the Illitch organization, they should not be allowed to demolish this structure. The building still has economic value, and the permit should be denied. Additionally, the owners have not acted in good faith with this body over the last several years, including not marketing the building as required. According to Detroit's own ordinance, both marketing and financial hardship hurdles must be satisfied prior to allowing a structure to be demolished.

Due to the high level of demolition in this district, it may no longer continue to fulfill state requirements for an intact local historic district if the demolition is allowed to proceed. This action may require the district to be delisted by the State of Michigan. The State and Federal Tax Credits for the remaining structures in the historic district would no longer be available, and this would cast in jeopardy the potential redevelopment of several structures in the historic district due to the loss of historic preservation tax credit equity.

Cityscape Detroit not only advocates for historic preservation, but it also encourages for quality urban design and architecture. The structure's loss would greatly impact the urban character of Harmonie Park by removing a significant character defining complex that encloses the space in the district.

New buildings on the site would not have the detailing that the existing structure has. A perfect example of the urban quality of old versus new can be seen at the south end of the historic district where a new hotel was recently completed. The hotel does not have the fenestration and texture that old buildings have. Though the petitioner states that it is only for a temporary parking lot, how many parking lots have been built upon in downtown Detroit in the last twenty years?

Cityscape Detroit urges the Historic District Commission to deny the request, force action to be taken on the Demolition by Neglect order, and advocate for the petitioner to negotiate in good faith with potential developers/partners. Please uphold the ordinances of the City of Detroit in denying this petition.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur F. Mullen  
President