

March 14, 2005

Christopher Ilitch
Little Caesars Enterprises, Inc.
2211 Woodward Ave.
Detroit, MI 48201

Christopher:

Like everyone in Detroit, we respect the Ilitches for keeping their headquarters in the city and restoring the Fox Theatre.

We have one deep-seeded reservation with a plan you are currently pursuing, however. Historic, old buildings in Detroit like the Madison and Lenox should be saved and rehabilitated, not torn down.

Cityscape Detroit is a non-profit group that advocates for improving the quality of life of Detroit's residents through good architecture, urban design, urban planning, and historic preservation. Our membership is composed of urban planners, architects, students of urban planning, and concerned residents. The group's Web site is www.cityscapedetroit.org

Buildings built 80 or 100 years ago have a character to them which is irreplaceable. The brickwork, stonework and terra cotta give them a beautiful, solid presence that is too expensive to be reproduced in this day and age. They are historic and remind people of the history that has taken place at a location. Some of those buildings have been rehabilitated in Detroit ([Lofts@Woodward](#) Center, Merchants Row, Kales Bldg., Gem Theatre, etc.) and are a great asset. The other vacant buildings downtown should not be torn down in preparation for the Super Bowl. They should be sold to developers who will rehabilitate them or solidly boarded up, maybe cleaned off, and then mothballed until the market strengthens. Tearing them down for another vacant lot is a poor idea and short-sighted. From a purely financial perspective, there is the cost of demolition, the lost historic tax credits and federal subsidies which are like free construction money, and, with a rehab, the building structure is already built and it is cheaper than building a new building from scratch. Large banners or advertisements can be draped over vacant buildings when people are here for the Super Bowl.

Please cease trying to get a demolition permit for the Madison and Lenox buildings, rehabilitate the vacant buildings that you own in the city, or sell them to developers who will rehabilitate them. This will make Detroit great for all of us.

The officers of Cityscape Detroit,

Andrew Koper

Dave Knapp

Chris Garland

Rhonda Anderson

Elena Fracassa

Steve Bush

Jason Friedman

Cc: Preservation Wayne, Historic District Commission