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April 2, 2013

City of Ann Arbor  
Planning & Development Services  
Planning Division  
301 East Huron Street  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8647

Re: 1.0 Acre site located at 3945 South State Street  
Proposal for two retail buildings totaling 8,531 sq.ft.

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed project under consideration before you tonight. By way of background, I am a real estate investor and property owner in numerous developments, including one in proximity to the proposed site. My property consists of a 5.75 acre parcel of commercial land adjacent to the Speedway Station located on the corner of State & Ellsworth. I possess site plan approval for a 15,750 sq.ft. upscale retail center and an outlot of up to 5,000 sq.ft. for commercial use from Pittsfield Township. Furthermore, in 2004 I completed the Corner House Lofts/Buffalo Wild Wings project and recently renovated the former Goldman Building where both Sava Restaurant and U of M Graham Institute are tenants. Both of these projects are on State Street, near the heart of the U of M central campus.

Due to my continued year-long efforts back in 2009, I was able to convince Speedway to acquire from my entity the extra land necessary to expand their gas station & C-store operation which previously existed an antiquated Total gas station, which was always difficult to gain access to because of the multiple curb cuts and only two pump stations to service its customers. The building was very dilapidated, poorly maintained and designed, and quite frankly a real eyesore, especially considering that this intersection is one of the main gateways into the Pittsfield Township community.

Having said that, we recognized over fourteen years ago the potential of this intersection and began our journey to acquire the parcels and the approvals necessary to fulfill our vision and confirm our instincts regarding what "uses" were potentially "needed" for this location. The reason I am writing this letter is because I wanted to express my feelings that I was a little disappointed on both how the Tim Horton's was laid-out and the absence of any masonry (brick or block) whatsoever on the building. The building faces only one direction, due east, when in my opinion it should have been

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designed parallel to the road so those travelling eastbound or sitting at the intersection of State & Ellsworth heading north to I-94 and waiting for the light to change are not staring at the back side (rear) of the building. In one man's opinion, the City of Ann Arbor and the Township of Pittsfield residents deserve the same upscale design as Tim Horton's has built in other communities.

My partners and I have many years of experience in land development and real estate construction, and our group has gone before many municipal or township boards seeking land development approvals. I have a very pro-business and pro-development outlook; so I am not trying to block the proposed new project. I am trying, however, to call everyone's attention to the importance of design and materials, and promote serious consideration of aesthetics as part of the Commission's deliberations on this new project.

Incidentally, I am not in any way trying to blame or criticize anyone and I hope that no one will be offended by my comments, because that is not my intention at all. I just want to suggest that we raise the bar reasonably in order to promote smart and reasonably cost-effective designs that encompass aesthetic materials that will (for the long-term) be attractive and pleasing to the eye. They say the age of a building is irrelevant because in the end, beauty transcends time.

In other words, the great buildings of the past are timeless.

Very truly yours,



HOWARD M. FREHSÉE