



## STATE OF MICHIGAN

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNORMICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICEGARY HEIDEL  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 14, 2012

JOHN P HANIFAN  
CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF CHELSEA  
305 S MAIN, SUITE 100  
CHELSEA MI 48118RE: ER12-21 Former Longworth Building Complex Redevelopment, Demolition of Daniels  
Showroom 118 N. Main, 102 Jackson Street and 110 Jackson Street, Chelsea,  
Washtenaw County (DDA)

Dear Mr. Hanifan:

We received your July 31 letter regarding the above-cited project on August 3. Thank you for submitting this information in accordance with the provisions of Section 29(2) of Michigan's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Act, PA 197 of 1975 (MCL 125.1651- 1681).

Based on the information provided to this office, and the Chelsea DDA's intent to demolish the building known as the Daniels Showroom within the Longworth Building Complex, we conclude that this action will adversely affect this property, which contributes to the Chelsea Commercial Historic District, and will negatively impact the overall character of this historic district, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) cannot support nor justify the demolition of this historic resource at this time. We have reviewed prior redevelopment proposals for the complex (note our letter to Peter Flintoft dated June 4, 2012) and we commend the DDA for taking this initiative despite its failed outcome. However, based on our experience with rehabilitation projects throughout the state, we believe the DDA could engage in further efforts to redevelop the Longworth Building Complex and to avoid demolition of the Daniels Showroom. We offer the following recommendations to continue to pursue a path of rehabilitation:

1. There is currently a connector between the Longworth Building and the former stable to the east. While these buildings individually are contributing buildings to the complex, the connector is not. The connector appears to be significantly deteriorated and its removal may make the properties more attractive for redevelopment.
2. Given the current development climate in Michigan, we strongly recommend that you break the redevelopment into smaller parts. Finding a developer willing to tackle all three buildings may prove more difficult than finding three developers willing to take on individual buildings.
3. There are a variety of redevelopment tools available at the state level. When promoting the redevelopment of these buildings, either individually or as a group, interested parties should be informed of the following:
  - The properties are located in a National Register listed historic district and therefore developers may have access to the Federal Historic Tax Credits.

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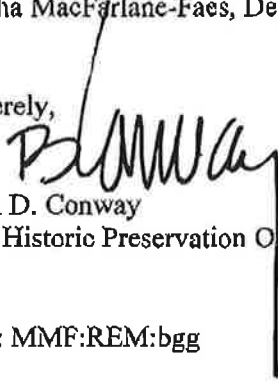
- Because the properties are located in Chelsea's traditional downtown, Community Revitalization Program (CRP) funding through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) may be available to support the redevelopment.
  - If housing is considered as a component of the overall development, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Rental Rehabilitation program may be a resource to help fund affordable downtown living opportunities.
4. If the demolition were to occur, the proposed rendering of the west elevation of the Longworth Complex submitted to this office is not appropriate for a historic rehabilitation. This building appears to have been originally designed to front on Jackson Street. Creating an elaborate new "front" on the west end of the building essentially reinvents a building that was never there and creates a false and misleading sense of historical development. The rehabilitation of this side of the building should be based on available historical physical and photographic documentation.

In previous and current projects, such as the reuse of the former Post Office, Chelsea has embraced its historic resources. The success that downtown Chelsea continues to enjoy is based in large part on the sense of place created by the thoughtful rehabilitation of the existing building stock. We therefore encourage the DDA to continue promoting all of the downtown historic resources as opportunities for growth. We request that the proposed demolition plan be abandoned and that, if possible, the DDA allocate those demolition funds as an incentive to a new developer in support of the rehabilitation and reuse of the site.

We would be pleased to facilitate an onsite meeting between the city, the DDA, MEDC, MSHDA and the SHPO to discuss strategies and resources that might be available to promote the rehabilitation of these buildings.

If you have questions regarding this review or would like to discuss the project further please contact Martha MacFarlane-Faes, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, at (517) 335-2720 or .

Sincerely,

  
Brian D. Conway  
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC: MMF:REM:bgg

Copy: Peter Flintoft, Chelsea DDA