

PAUL D. CORDERMAN
Legislative District 2
Washington County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business and Administration

Pensions



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 416
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3903 · 301-858-3903
800-492-7122 Ext. 3903
Paul.Corderman@senate.state.md.us

District Office
5 Public Square, Suite 210
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
240-313-3929

August 31, 2021

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes
State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

Re: Rehabilitation of the Earles/Holy Building at 72-78 W. Washington in Hagerstown, MD

Dear Ms. Hughes:

This letter is to offer my strong support for the rehabilitation of the Earles Building at 72-78 W. Washington Street in Hagerstown, MD. I am more than pleased to endorse the proposed plan to restore and rehabilitate the currently vacant historic building to accommodate new residential housing units and ground floor commercial space.

The historic Earles Building, (more widely known locally as the Holly Building), at 72-78 W. Washington Street, is situated within the main commercial core of downtown Hagerstown, Maryland. Completed in 1926, the seven-story commercial building was designed by Hagerstown architect Amos J. Klinkhart. The construction of the Earles Building occurred during an intense period of growth in downtown Hagerstown, characterized by increased density in the central business district and the erection of new high-rise commercial buildings. The building's presence at the heart of the Hagerstown Commercial Core Historic District, in the prominent W. Washington Street Corridor, is representative of this era of historic growth.

From its completion in 1926, a succession of department store and discount retail chains operated out of the building's large ground-floor commercial spaces. These tenants included the F. & W. Grand Company, Edwards (1934-1938), Earles (1939-1948), and Holly Shops (1948-c.1960). The second through seventh floors were leased out as office space. Its early history included tenants such as wholesale lumber dealers W.A. Smith and Company, various investment firms, the Washington County Board of Education, and a music studio. During Prohibition, the Hagerstown headquarters of the Prohibition Department was located in the building, beginning in 1931.

The building formed part of a flourishing commercial district in downtown Hagerstown, and its large retail and smaller commercial tenants contributed to the city's economic vitality during the early-to-mid twentieth century. The Earles Building, with its tile and plate-glass storefront, aluminum marquee, and electric signage, was indicative of the broader trend towards

modernization that permeated throughout “Main Street” retail districts during the 1920s and 1930s. The building has changed hands several times in recent years, selling in 1979, 1984, and 2001. Most recently, it housed Manny’s Home & Design Center, a furniture retailer.

The overall intent of the project is to rehabilitate the existing vacant building into an apartment building with a commercial space on the ground floor. The physical building will be retained, and the historic commercial and urban character of the Earles Building will be preserved as it exists today. This project largely focuses on the residential scope of work. The intent is to provide modern, high-end, apartment units to attract residents from the outer suburbs of Hagerstown to relocate downtown. Ultimately, the aim is to reinvigorate the downtown housing market of the city, be a precedent for future development, and be a catalyst for future local retail and commercial growth. Please contact our office should you have further questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Corderman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Senator Paul D. Corderman