

May 21, 2020

Gene Spektor
Senior Vice President Sales and New Business Development
Marelli
3900 Automation Avenue #1788
Auburn Hills, MI 48326



Dear Mr. Spektor:

I hope this letter finds you well. I am the president of the Michigan chapter of Docomomo_US, the national division of an international nonprofit dedicated to documenting and conserving Modernist architecture and design. We celebrate and advocate for Michigan's rich heritage of Modern design, continuing the work begun by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office's *Michigan Modern* project, which brought Michigan's Modern design legacy to a national and international audience.

Our chapter recently learned that you have leased the former Federal Mogul Building in Southfield to relocate your North American Headquarters. We congratulate you on choosing to place your headquarters in Southfield, which has one the state's most significant concentrations of Mid-Century Modern architecture. Southfield has a long history of welcoming large corporate headquarters to the city, and I am sure that your employees will find it to be a welcome move.

We were also pleased to learn that you have chosen to revitalize a vacant historic building, and in particular such an iconic example of Modern design as the Federal Mogul Building. Federal Mogul was one of many corporations to relocate to Southfield in the 1960s and 1970s, but the Federal Mogul building is perhaps the most distinctive. The design by Giffels and Rossetti Architects, an important architectural firm of the period, won several awards, including an AIA Michigan Honorable Mention and an AIA Detroit Award of Merit. It was particularly distinguished by the glazed curtain wall floors enclosed in a modular pre-cast concrete frame, balanced over a recessed curtain wall, making the building appear as if it was floating above the landscape. This was enhanced by its visibility from the nearby Northwestern Highway and the Lodge and Reuther Freeways.

Our chapter was concerned, however, to learn of your planned redesign of the Federal Mogul Building. We of course recognize that the stewardship of historic buildings requires sensitive upgrades to ensure their viability for continued use. However, we also know from long experience that altering a building's purpose does not mean that the features that define the character of a significant building must be lost. The rendering that was recently presented at a Southfield City Council meeting appears to strip away the very features that make this such an iconic example of Mid-Century Modern design, replacing it with a generic glass wall façade.

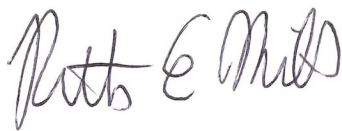
On behalf of our chapter, I urge you to reconsider your planned redesign. You have chosen a landmark historic building that represents a unique sense of place. Other corporations in the metropolitan Detroit area, and indeed around the country, have embraced the historic character of their buildings and used this to create a rewarding narrative around choosing a Mid-Century Modern icon as their headquarters.

Consider such buildings as One Woodward (originally the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company Building) and the Chase Tower in downtown Detroit, both icons of Mid-Century Modern design that Bedrock has successfully adapted for contemporary use while preserving their historic exterior features. General Motors Company has similarly preserved the character of the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit and the Technical Center in Warren without altering what makes them icons of Modernist design.

We would also note that Federal tax credits are available for projects that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties. In my professional capacity as an architectural historian working for a design firm that specializes in historic preservation, I have shepherded dozens of projects through this process, and can assure you that it is entirely possible to create a high-class facility that meets your company's needs while retaining the character-defining features of the building. I know that your architect, HED, is experienced in this process and would be happy to assist you.

Buildings like Federal Mogul are part of what makes Southfield such an attractive place for businesses and residents alike. We hope you agree with us that this character is worth preserving.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Ruth E. Mills". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ruth" being the most prominent.

Ruth E. Mills
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