

Lansing is a place where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In 1996, when faced with losing General Motors, Lansing collaborated with GM and made the impossible possible becoming the only city in the United States to have two new auto plants. A former Eastern High School teacher David Hollister led that effort as Mayor.

I am Bill Castanier, president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing. I represent the Coalition to Save Eastern High School and Promote Mental Health which was formed to save a portion of the School-a small portion.

In June we were elated when UM released plans to build a mental health facility, but also gob smacked by the news that Lansing Eastern High School/ would be torn down.

After months of discussion, UM recently ended all negotiations with the ultimatum that Eastern would be torn down and began plans to save architectural artifacts for display.

When UM Student Union was deteriorating tearing it down wasn't considered. The structure built in 1919 and designed by the noted University of Michigan graduates and Chicago Architects Irving and Allen Pond was restored in 2020 at a cost of \$86.2 million.

However, in Lansing the University of Michigan has said they will tear down Lansing Eastern High School, another important Pond and Pond designed structure.

The Pond brothers were leaders in the arts and crafts style of public architecture and in addition to the Lansing Eastern High School they designed the MSU Union, and ironically, an early version of Sparrow Hospital.

Additionally, UM has told us they would construct the facility elsewhere if the community didn't accept their plan. This threat effectively shut down the robust discussion about saving historic structures.

Preservation is more than about sentimentality-it's about economics and a sense of place. An article in Sunday's New York Times on the resurgence of Detroit cited the importance of historic restoration in the city by highlighting the Illitch family, Dan Gilbert and William Clay Ford. We are asking that UM join those visionaries by saving a portion of Eastern High School for its legacy in Lansing.