I’ve read and reread the Editorial Board’s Our View “When it comes to historical preservation, what do we value?”. The line “Given all of that, why is the 4th Avenue Theatre headed for a renovation that will drastically change the look and feel of the building and the block it sits on?” is incorrect. The Editorial Board seems to suggest the Theatre is being renovated—it is not—it is being demolished. All the other buildings on the block are being demolished except the old Woolworth Building (which Peach doesn’t own) and the Key Bank Building which is actually being renovated.

The Board’s statement that “…no one who wants it to remain a theater has been willing or able to rally an effort to preserve it…” is incorrect. There are many that have tried to save it over the years including Robert Gottstein, Friends of the Fourth, May the Fourth Be With You and more. The problem is the lack of priorities by the State and City. Less than a block away stands the “Taj Mahawker” Legislative Information Office (now MOA Police office) which was infused with many millions of dollars on a boondoggle from the State. When the corruption was revealed, the legislature scuttled off to Mid-Town to inhabit the old Wells Fargo Building. Through my House campaign against the perpetrator of the fiasco, and Jim Gottstein’s lawsuits against the State eventually revealed the corruption. I didn’t win against the incumbent (who hasn’t run for office again -that’s a win!), but Jim did win against the State!

The statement “Moreover, decades of sparse maintenance meant keeping the then-60-year-old building in usable shape going forward would have required a substantial ongoing commitment of resources.” is incorrect. First, the past owner maintained the building, Peach Investment did not. The building is 75 years old this year being completed in 1947 after construction began before WWII in 1941 so add another 6 years and it’s 81.

As for the sentence “There was never a plan for the 4th Avenue Theatre that cleared that bar...” please reread my Editorial on the page opposite yours that gave a very concise and detailed plan for a Multi-Cultural Multi-Arts Facility that our Historic Preservation Team was working on right up until the final piece of the financing puzzle was lost when one of the main funding sources backed out of its’ commitment to provide a substantial amount of the funding in 2007.

The Board’s bowing and scraping to Peach and their other properties, such as the terrible brutalist abomination that is 188 Northern Lights, their lack of any compassion as to what they are doing to the surrounding areas (blockage of light in a sub-arctic environment!) with the Key Bank Building which they’ve sunk a reported 40 million plus into, and no mention of the hole that is the old demolished mid-town hotel! This is not the same optimism that Cap Lathrop had when he had the 4th Avenue Theatre built—it is exploitation of our community for the almighty buck!

The Board’s continued acquiescence to Peach is further exemplified in the final paragraph “Although it’s tempting to write off Peach Investments’ plans for the block as garish or insufficiently deferential to the theater’s history…”. Why yes that is true in what they’ve shown us in a rendered perspective of the giant alien bug consuming the fake façade and fake sign and this horrible creation is garish and is insufficiently deferential to the theater’s history and the city’s history by totally destroying our historic center!

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