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January 7, 2019

Mr. Chris Payne, Chair  
Oak Park Historic Preservation Commission  
Oak Park Village Hall  
123 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302

*RE: Historic Landmark Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for 644  
Madison St (Essex Foley Family LLLP): Preliminary determination of eligibility  
for the Hill Motor Sales Company (1924/1927) in response to landmark  
nomination submitted December 28, 2018 by Frank Lipo and Frank Heitzman.*

Dear Mr. Payne and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission,

We understand the Commission will review a landmark nomination for 644 Madison Street, the former Foley-Rice Cadillac Dealership, on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Landmarks Illinois included this unprotected, historic building on its Chicagoland Watch List in 2007 when it was listed for sale and has continued to advocate for its landmark designation and adaptive use as part of a redevelopment.

Built in 1923, this distinctive commercial property was originally built as a Packard dealership (Hill Motor Sales Co.) and was the last auto dealership on Oak Park's "Motor Row." It was designed by noted architect E.E. Roberts with his son Elmer, who became a partner in his father's firm in 1924. It was identified in 2006 in a Madison Street Architectural Survey as a potential Oak Park Historic Landmark and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Madison Street survey was done as part of the Madison Street Corridor Plan, which stated that significant buildings should receive a higher level of scrutiny when redevelopment is proposed.

Unfortunately, while some development proposals for this site received by the village did propose reuse of the building, the current proposed development calls for demolition. We commend Mr. Heitzman and Mr. Lipo for officially bringing forth this landmark nomination, as we are aware the

Commission has annually deferred the matter of considering landmark eligibility for Foley-Rice at the request of the village and the owner since 2007. It is now time to recognize this building for its architectural significance and its adaptability within a new development. The State Historic Preservation Office's determination of its eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places would enable a developer to utilize federal historic tax credits for a qualified rehabilitation and reuse. Local landmark designation would further provide to a developer the opportunity to utilize the Class L property tax incentive as part of an adaptive use project.

We urge the Commission to accept this landmark nomination and schedule a public hearing so that the Foley-Rice may finally have a proper evaluation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lisa DiChiera  
Director of Advocacy

Cc:

Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director

Craig Failor, Village Planner

Susan Trexler, Urban Planner Historic Preservation

Paul Stephanides, Village Attorney

Anthony Rubano, State Historic Preservation Office