



ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

June 21, 2007

Mr. Con Hitchcock, Chairman
Historic District Commission
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Hitchcock:

Montgomery County hereby expresses its objection to the proposed designation of the former Rockville Library building at 99 Maryland Avenue as a single-site historic district. We do not agree that the structure is either architecturally or culturally significant to the County or its communities.

The structure at 99 Maryland Avenue was completed in September 1971, fewer than 36 years ago. The "International Style" of the structure was decades old at the time of this building's design and construction, and is similar to any number of public buildings, including schools, that were being designed and constructed at the time. It was not designed by a master, and it does not provide a superior example of the architect's body of work. Ninety-nine Maryland Avenue was not the first building operated as a free public library in the City, nor was it the first location of a County system library in the City. The structure's sole claim to significance seems to be the fact that it stood at the same location for its 35+ year life span.

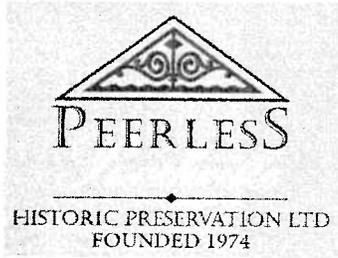
The County continues to be a strong supporter and partner in the ongoing redevelopment of the Rockville Town Center. We do not, however, believe that preservation of the old Rockville Library will contribute to that effort. Thank you for considering these comments as you deliberate this issue.

Sincerely,

Marilyn J. Praisner
President
Montgomery County Council

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MP:IL:swr



July 12, 2007

Mayor and Council of Rockville
111 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: 1971 Rockville Library Historic District nomination

This letter supplements Peerless Rockville's nomination of the 1971 Rockville Library and responds to issues raised by the Historic District Commission regarding the June 21 letter submitted by the County Executive and County Council President (copy of letter enclosed).

1. Significance of property: Dedicated in 1971, 99 Maryland Avenue was Rockville's first purpose-built library, the culmination of a century-long odyssey to provide a permanent building in Rockville for library services. Designed also to house County administrative headquarters, it was a flagship facility and an emblem of Rockville's postwar emergence as a major suburban center. In a town where City and County institutions often interconnect, the Rockville Library was a first for both entities.
2. The Library is an established and familiar feature of Rockville's civic streetscape and an enduring venue for the community's intellectual, social, and cultural activities, as Peerless's MHT inventory form amply documents. As a Rockville resident commented at the June 21 HDC meeting, the Library has been "a touchstone for the community" for more than a generation of residents, scholars, and students.
3. Claims that "the Library does not provide a superior example of the architect's body of work" are incorrect and unsubstantiated. Peerless' research into Stanley H. Arthur's career, which includes interviews with former colleagues and family members, indicates that the 1971 Library was one of his best-designed projects and an outstanding example of site-related design.
4. Rockville joined the County library system in 1957, having negotiated successfully for both a central library in the downtown area and a future branch in Twinbrook – an arrangement that met the challenges of the City's unprecedented population growth and demands for institutional services and facilities while recognizing its maturing communal and municipal identity.
5. The International Style was popularized in America during the postwar era, making its way from major urban centers to the burgeoning suburbs. Its continuing use is evident in numerous commercial and institutional buildings throughout Rockville and the surrounding area. The National Register has determined that there is sufficient scholarly documentation of the International Style to justify historic designations. The 1971 Rockville Library is a community landmark and an outstanding example of modernist architecture in Rockville in addition to being the only County library designed in the International Style.
6. The Rockville Library is unaltered, intact, in good condition, and eminently suitable for adaptive use. It meets multiple criteria for historic designation and is a significant property of Rockville's "recent past." As the recent designation of Mies van der Rohe's 1972 Martin Luther King Library in Washington, D.C. demonstrates, the age of a building is less relevant than its historical, cultural, and architectural significance.


Eileen S. McGuckian
Executive Director

Respectfully submitted,


Teresa B. Lachin
Programs

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

July 12, 2007

Hon. Larry Giammo, Mayor
City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Routed To:

Council
 City Clerk
 City Manager

City Attorney
 Council Support Specialist
 Other Mary Lou Berry
Ant Chambers
Jim Wasulak
Jeff Winstel
Robin Ziek

C. Tock Parrish

Dear Mayor Giammo:

Montgomery County continues to oppose the proposed designation of the former Rockville Library building at 99 Maryland Avenue as a single-site historic district. Our objection to the designation was conveyed to the Historic District Commission in a letter dated and delivered June 21, 2007.

We do not agree that the structure is either architecturally or culturally significant to the County or its communities. The following facts argue against its designation:

- It was completed in September 1971, fewer than 36 years ago.
- It was not designed by a master, nor does it provide a superior example of the architect's body of work.
- It was not the first building operated as a free public library in the City, nor was it the first location of a County system library in the City.

The County continues to be a strong supporter and partner in the ongoing redevelopment of the Rockville Town Center and vicinity. We do not, however, believe that preservation of the old Rockville Library will contribute to that effort. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,


Marilyn J. Praister
President
Montgomery County Council


Isiah Leggett
County Executive

MP:IL:swr



Maryland Department of Planning
Maryland Historical Trust

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Richard Eberhart H.
Secretary

Matthew J. Power
Deputy Secretary

July 12, 2007

Thomas Genetti
Maryland Department of General Services
301 W. Preston Street, Room 1400
Baltimore, MD 21201-2305

Re: Rockville District Court Building
191 East Jefferson Street; Montgomery County
Review for Effects on Historic Properties

Dear Mr. Genetti:

Thank you for contacting the Maryland Historical Trust about the proposed Rockville District Court Building. We have carefully reviewed the project to determine how it might affect properties eligible for listing in the Maryland Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places. We are writing now, pursuant to Sections 5A-325 and 5A-326 of the Maryland State Finance and Procurement Article, to provide our opinion that the proposed building will not adversely affect any historic properties.

The project site is currently occupied by a former Rockville Library building (M: 26-47). While the 1971 library may be illustrative of its particular architectural style and representative of the work of an identified architect, it is less than 50 years old and does not meet the test for "exceptional importance" required by National Register Criteria Consideration G. The building is therefore not "historic" for the purpose of state and federal preservation law. The proposed courthouse will not directly affect any historic properties.

The project site is adjacent to the Montgomery County Courthouse Historic District (M: 26-11), which is listed in the National Register. The district is significant for its association with the history of Montgomery County and for illustrating architecture that is characteristic of late nineteenth and early twentieth century social and design trends. From many points inside the district looking out, a considerable amount of non-historic construction is visible now and was visible at the time of the district's 1986 National Register designation. Because of these existing intrusions and the general nature of the district, the proposed courthouse building will not diminish any of the characteristics that make the district eligible for listing in state and national registers.

Thank you for providing us this opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or we may be of assistance, please contact Jonathan Sager at jsager@mdp.state.md.us or 410-514-7636.

Sincerely,

J. Rodney Little
Director \ State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust

JRL : JES
200702280

CC: Joel Oleinik (Office of the MD Attorney General)
Jeffrey Winstel (City of Rockville)
Richard S. Ladson, AIA (DMJM Design)



City of Rockville

MEMORANDUM

FAX MEMO

July 20, 2007

TO: Mr. Joel O'Leinik, Assistant Attorney General, Maryland Attorney General's Office

FROM: Jeffrey Winstel, AICP, City of Rockville *JW*

SUBJECT: June 21, 2007 Historic District Commission meeting minutes

PAGES: Cover plus 7

Attached per your request please find the approved minutes from the City of Rockville Historic District Commission meeting, June 21, 2007. If you have any questions regarding this material or need additional information, please contact me at 240-314-8232.