



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

March 1, 2017

Ms. Ronnie L. Warner, Redevelopment Manager
Department of General Services, Montgomery County Government
101 Monroe Street, 9th Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Ms. Warner –

Preservation Maryland supports the adaptive reuse of the former Silver Spring Library Site to meet the open space and community needs of the residents of Silver Spring. I attended the Site Tour on December 15, 2016 you hosted with the Office of Planning and Development and was impressed by the intact architecture and landscape of the Site, along with its potential for reuse.

The library was designed not only by a Maryland-based architect, but a Silver Spring-based architect, Rhees Evans Burket, who would have been most aware of the desires of his own community in designing the Library in the late 1950s. His concept for the Library clearly embodies the concept of modern architect known as *parkitecture* – the careful designing of a building completely of its time, in terms of arrangement and materials, yet that fits within its organic context – a hallmark of the modern architecture movement.

Burket's work has been recognized outside of Maryland. Most recently in 2015 with the honorific listing of his Stratford School in Arlington, Virginia on the National Register of Historic Places by the City's Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development. I mention the date of this nomination with apt awareness that it is often difficult to see architecture of the recent past as worthy of preservation. That said Montgomery County is leading the way in understanding the thoughtful design and environmental impact of the mid-century aesthetic on the growth and landscape of the County. In fact, the Montgomery Modern project is a model project by the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission for all Maryland counties and the national preservation and planning community at large.

We also understand the over two acres of the Library Site to be rare remaining open space in the heart of Silver Spring and as such, there is potential to preserve, and even enhance, that land to be in alignment with the County's broader planning goals.

As a statewide non-profit that protects the history and heritage of Maryland, we see the history of Silver Spring as part of the history of the growth of Maryland especially during the peak of the modern architecture movement. Alongside the Silver Spring Historical Society, Montgomery Preservation, Inc, and the more than 800 signers of the Change.com, we encourage the Office of Planning and Development to explore all viable options and proposals for the adaptive reuse of the Silver Spring Library Site.

Sincerely,

Meagan Baco