

Preserving Rockville's Heritage

February 27, 2015

Dear President George L. Leventhal and Honorable County Councilmembers:

Today we write to you on behalf of Peerless Rockville, an active nonprofit, community-based organization founded in 1974 to preserve buildings, objects and information important to Rockville's heritage and character. We are deeply concerned about the possible renovations to the Grey Courthouse and the Red Brick Courthouse, and the potential demolition of the 1961 wing of the Grey Courthouse fronting South Washington Street that may occur with the proposed relocation of the County Council. These buildings have high integrity, are well constructed and designed, and are familiar and established features of the local landscape.

Peerless Rockville strongly urges the County Council to carefully consider any and all proposed changes to these treasured Montgomery County and Rockville landmarks, both of which are in designated City of Rockville and National Register Historic Districts. These buildings are an integral part of Montgomery County's heritage and architectural character, and are deeply valued by the Rockville community. While Peerless Rockville is supportive of creative adaptive reuse of historic buildings, the County's sudden renovation plans require careful consideration of the ramifications of changes to the character of Courthouse Square. As the County Seat for over 250 years, these buildings represent the history of County government and are a vital part of the City of Rockville's identity. When taken as a group, the 1891 Red Brick Courthouse, the 1931 Grey Courthouse and the 1961 modernist Courthouse addition eloquently represent the legal system in Montgomery County and more than a half a century of profound changes in American architectural styles.

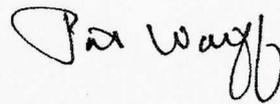
Peerless Rockville calls on the County Council to reconvene the Multi-Government Rockville Core Implementation Coordinating Committee and work closely and cooperatively with the City of Rockville to determine the future of these landmark buildings, preserving their historic character in the process. The integrity of the exterior of the courthouses, the ceremonial courtrooms, and the historic setting of these buildings must be at the forefront of all decision-making.

As tenants of almost thirty years, Peerless Rockville has repeatedly acted to protect the Courthouse Square Historic District and ensured public access to the Red Brick Courthouse, serving as a resource for Rockville and Montgomery County residents interested in Rockville heritage. Together with Friends of the Red Brick Courthouse, Peerless Rockville raised private and public funds to restore the 1891 courtroom to its original appearance. The Courthouse Square Historic District is Rockville heritage, in Rockville's modern town center, and a part of Montgomery County's past, present, and future. We ask that the County Council remain cognizant of this, and ensure the protection and intact preservation of these historic buildings.

Sincerely,



Nancy Pickard
Executive Director



Pat Wolff
President

cc: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor, City of Rockville
The Honorable Beryl L. Feinberg, Councilmember, City of Rockville
The Honorable Tom Moore, Councilmember, City of Rockville
The Honorable Virginia D. Onley, Councilmember, City of Rockville
The Honorable Julie Palakovich Carr, Councilmember, City of Rockville
The Rockville City Planning Commission
The Rockville City Historic District Commission