



Montgomery Preservation Inc.

Promoting the Preservation, Protection and Enjoyment of Montgomery County's Rich Architectural Heritage and Historic Landscapes

January 15, 2024

via email: history@rockvillemd.gov
City of Rockville Historic District Commission

RE: HDC2024-01146, 4 Courthouse Square Significance

Dear Chair Neal Powell and Commissioners:

Montgomery Preservation Inc. (MPI), the nonprofit grass roots group of Montgomery County preservation organizations and individual members, supports Rockville local designation and inclusion of the Farmer's Banking and Trust building at #4 Courthouse Square to the Montgomery County Courthouses Historic District as a significant and contributing Rockville Historical site.

Rockville's only example of Art Deco architecture has been part of Rockville's historic main street since 1930. It meets most of the criteria for designation as a unique and distinctive structure and a beloved City landmark for over 90 years, and as the location of a Banking corporation chartered in Rockville in 1900. A recommendation of designation to the Mayor and Council will ensure that this unique building remains part of Rockville's streetscape and structural history.

It is amazingly intact. Original Farmers Banking and Trust signs remain on the building and on the vault door. Interior light fixtures, clock, doors, and ceiling panels have retained the historic appearance and the exterior, interior, and entry abound with Art Deco designs. In the 1960s, this structure was considered unique and spared from urban renewal. The bank was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Montgomery County Courthouses Historic District in 1986. Since it is not locally designated, the next owner could dramatically alter the exterior and add or demolish portions of the building.

Staff has determined that it qualifies for Historic Significance under a number of Architectural, Design, Landscape, and Historical Significance criteria. It represents the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of the City. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and is an established visual feature of the neighborhood and City because of its physical characteristics.

The Farmers Banking and Trust Building has stood on this corner since 1930. It is an established visual feature, the most recognizable on the north side of Courthouse Square and a part of Old Rockville. It needs to be designated and protected and gain an owner and use to retain it as a signature landmark that defines Rockville.

Sincerely,

Montgomery Preservation, Inc.
Judith A. Christensen, Secretary