MAYOR AND COUNCIL AGENDA

NO. 9 DEPT.: Community Planning and Development Services DATE PREPARED: 1/31/06
STAFF CONTACT: Judy Christensen, Planner III FOR MEETING OF: 2/6/06

SUBJECT: Authorization to file a Map Amendment application on behalf of the Mayor and Council to rezone 50 Monroe Place from TC-4 (Town Center-Four Zone) to the TC-4 HD (Town Center-Four Historic District Zone.)

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council consider the recommendation of the Historic District Commission of November 17, 2005, as adopted on January 19, 2006 and provide direction to staff.

DISCUSSION: The building, known as the IBM Building, is 46 years old and was evaluated by staff and the HDC using the National Register Criterion D (Exceptional Significance and Importance of buildings less than 50 years old) using the Rockville 1950s Commercial Downtown Context.

At its criteria review after the public hearing, the HDC found that 50 Monroe Place meets the National Register for Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation A, (Criterion B is not applicable to this site) C, and D (g) for designation as a local single site historic district as follows:

Criterion A: **Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.** Specifically, 50 Monroe Place is significant as the:

1 Largest office building constructed in Rockville up to 1959.
2 First home of IBM, a major federal contractor, in the area.
3 First Rockville location for large national and international corporations at that time.
4 Rockville's first office building in the "modern" style, an international Bauhaus style.
5 Signaled Rockville's emergence as a major center of post-war development, research, and technology and its entry into the larger Washington, DC metropolitan area.
6 Only structure left of its age, type and quality reflecting this period of Rockville's transformation from a rural County Seat to an urban city.
7 Last building with frontage on the preserved remnant (Monroe Park) of historic E. Montgomery Ave.

Criterion C: Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction is the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The building at 50 Monroe qualified in the following ways:

Exceptional design in its unusual use of porcelain panels and glass curtain wall on three sides.
2 First and best example of International Bauhaus style architecture in Rockville.
3 Most sophisticated and daring building of the office buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959
4 Designed by a significant local architect, Stanley Arthur.

Criterion D: Have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory. (g.) A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

1 For the findings stated above, the Commission found the structure to be of exceptional local importance.

The Commission found the building to be substantially unaltered on the exterior and the public view of the most significant façade, the front façade, preserved in the view from Monroe Street through James Monroe Park, the last remnant of historic East Montgomery Avenue.

For the foregoing reasons, the Commission recommends 50 Monroe Place as eligible for designation as a single-site Historic District. Staff's findings reported to the Commission was that the building did not meet the test for exceptional importance necessary in a property less that 50 years old.

If the Mayor and Council adopt the HDC's recommendation, the Mayor and Council should authorize staff to file a Map Amendment, which the Planning Commission will review and return a recommendation to the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council will hold an advertised public hearing, hear testimony, and weigh all aspects of the proposal including reuse potential, financial considerations and master plan compliance, and make the final determination.

PREPARED BY: Judith A. Christensen
Judith A. Christensen, Planner III

APPROVED BY: R. James Wasilak **DATE:** 2-1-06
R. James Wasilak, AICP, Chief of Planning

APPROVED BY: Arthur D. Chambers **DATE:** 2/1/06
Arthur D. Chambers, AICP, Director

APPROVED BY: Scott Ullery **DATE:** 2/1/06
Scott Ullery, City Manager

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS:

A. Revised MHT Form
B. HDC Minutes of November 17, 2005
C. Adopted Recommendation Finding 50 Monroe Place Eligible for Designation as a Historic Site January 19, 2006.

Attachment A

Inventory No.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Revision # 2 11-2005

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic IBM Building

other 50 Monroe

2. Location

street and number 50 Monroe Place not for publication

city, town Rockville ___ vicinity

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Alexander Guss et al., C/O Ronald Cohen, C/O Ronald Cohen Mgmt

street and number 2701 Tower Oaks Blvd. #200 telephone

city, town Rockville state MD zip code 20852

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Judicial Center liber 29975 folio 776

city, town Rockville tax map GR32 tax parcel P401 tax ID number 00144444

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

Contributing Resource in National Register District
Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
__X__ Other: Peerless Rockville, Peerless Places

6. Classification

Category
_____district
__x__building(s)
_____structure
_____site
_____object

Ownership
_____public
__x__private
_____both

Current Function
_____agriculture
X commerce/trade
_____defense
_____domestic
_____education
_____funerary
_____government
_____health care
_____industry
_____landscape
_____recreation/culture
_____religion
_____social
_____transportation
_____work in progress
_____unknown
__X__vacant/not in use
_____other:

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No.

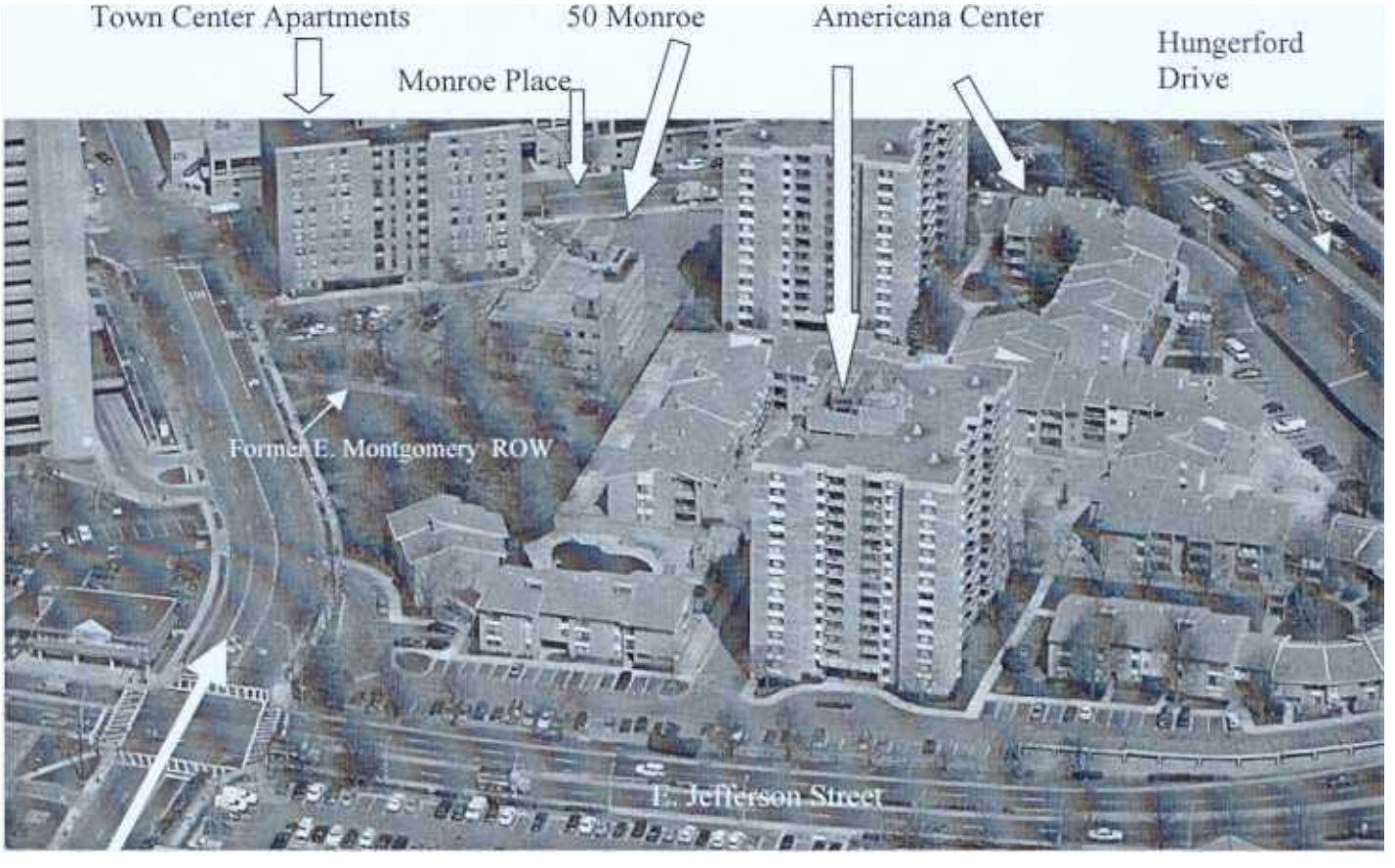
Condition

___ excellent ___ deteriorated
___ good ___ ruins
X fair ___ altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Summary:

50 Monroe is a four-story office building constructed in 1958-59 by Otho Barkley, a Bethesda builder. One of Rockville's first and most distinctive modernist buildings, it was designed by Bethesda architect Stanley H. Arthur and incorporates key characteristics and design elements of Bauhaus-style commercial architecture. It is popularly called the "IBM Building" after its first and best-known tenant. Although the environmental setting and orientation have changed dramatically since 1959, the building itself is substantially unaltered and is the last vestige of Rockville's historic main street, East Montgomery Avenue, as it developed from the 1820s through the 1960s.



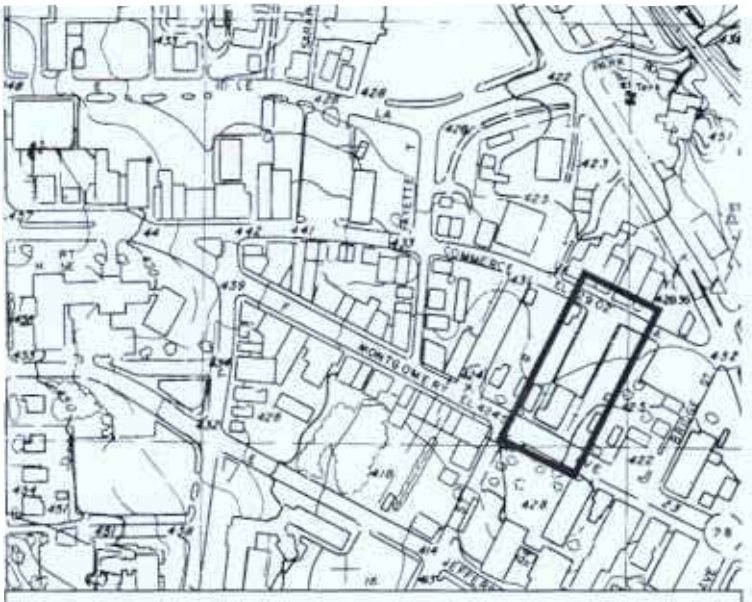
Monroe Street

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M

Name 50 Monroe Place
Continuation Sheet
Number 7 Page 1

Significance statement:



Rockville before Urban Renewal 1961

When 50 Monroe Place was completed in 1959, (See map to the left and photo below) its address was 326 East Montgomery Avenue and it was situated on a principal thoroughfare through Rockville's central business district. The rear (north) entrance, including a parking lot, was bounded by Commerce Lane. Photographs of the period indicate an additional parking lot on the eastern portion of the site, sidewalks and parking meters to the south, open space to the west, and traffic moving along East Montgomery Avenue to the south. Yellow window panels presented a lively façade to the main street.(1) According to 1959 news articles, the building had 28,000 square feet of office space, making it the largest private office building in Rockville. It also featured a basement, a 1500-pound Otis elevator, and separate entrances on East Montgomery Avenue and Commerce Lane.(2) The building is constructed of reinforced concrete and is covered by brick masonry and curtain walls. It was constructed at a cost of $500,000.(3)

Description:

Stanley Arthur's design appears to have been inspired by the Bauhaus movement, whose principal facility at Dessau, Germany (1925-1926) it evokes in massing, rectilinear style, and architectural elements.

Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, Architect (1926)

326 E. Montgomery Avenue, Stanley Arthur, Architect. (1963) City of Rockville photo.

The first story is comprised of a full rectangular block, with 2nd, 3rd, and 4th stories in an L-shaped or "set back" configuration, forming an inner court on the northwest corner. Large sections of window walls with yellow porcelain panels cover portions of the west, east, and south facades.

South (front) facade 2004- Peerless Rockville photo

North (rear) facade 2004 – Peerless Rockville photo

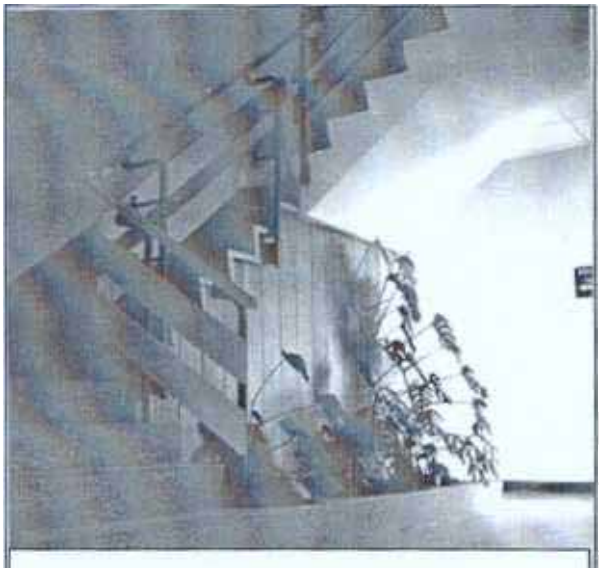
The rear (north) facade is constructed of brick, laid in common bond, and illuminated by pairs of 3-part windows, corresponding to each floor, with fixed center panes and projected window panels surrounded by steel/aluminum frames. Alternating with this window placement are smaller 2-part windows that illuminate an interior stairwell above the rear entrance. The brick section of the ell wall overlooking the inner court has pairs of 3-part windows that correspond to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors. Large brick sections alternate with three-story window walls that are supported by concrete panels running across the length of the first story.

South (front) entrance- City of Rockville photo 2005

The principal façade features a deep portico along the main entrance to the south, leading into a reception area and first-floor offices. (4) Secondary entrances on the north and east facades are sheltered by flat brushed steel/aluminum canopies measuring approximately 5 to 6 feet long by 1 foot wide. The roof, supported by steel trusses, is flat; brick panels rise approximately 1 foot above the window wall sections and an elevator tower with projected windows punctuates the roofline profile. A square section of brick wall rises approximately 5 feet above the mid-section of the rear elevation marking the interior stair tower and entryway. A thin band of white concrete runs atop the length of the building's brick sections.

East entrance- City of Rockville photo 2005

The window walls are the building's most distinctive architectural motif. They consist of alternating bands of yellow porcelain enamel panels and 3-part windows encased in a aluminum grid. The yellow panels decrease in width from the 4th to the 2nd stories; the window units are of uniform size. The window wall on the east façade has 16 horizontal panels, and the west façade has 14. The south façade has 16, with an additional 2 panels wrapped around the southeast corner above the principal entryway. This ingenious equation combines balance and asymmetry, visual interest and architectural commensurability - hallmarks of Bauhaus design.



Interior staircase - Stanley Arthur's portfolio (undated photo)

A photograph from Stanley Arthur's portfolio (left) shows the details of an interior stairway: terrazzo flooring, steel railings, mahogany paneling, a built-in floor planter, and smoothly finished walls and surfaces. A 1959 *Sentinel* news article reported that the building was equipped with air-conditioning and was designed with movable interior partitions to accommodate office suites of varying configurations. Two retail stores were initially planned for the first floor, but this presumably changed when IBM leased the property in 1959. (5)

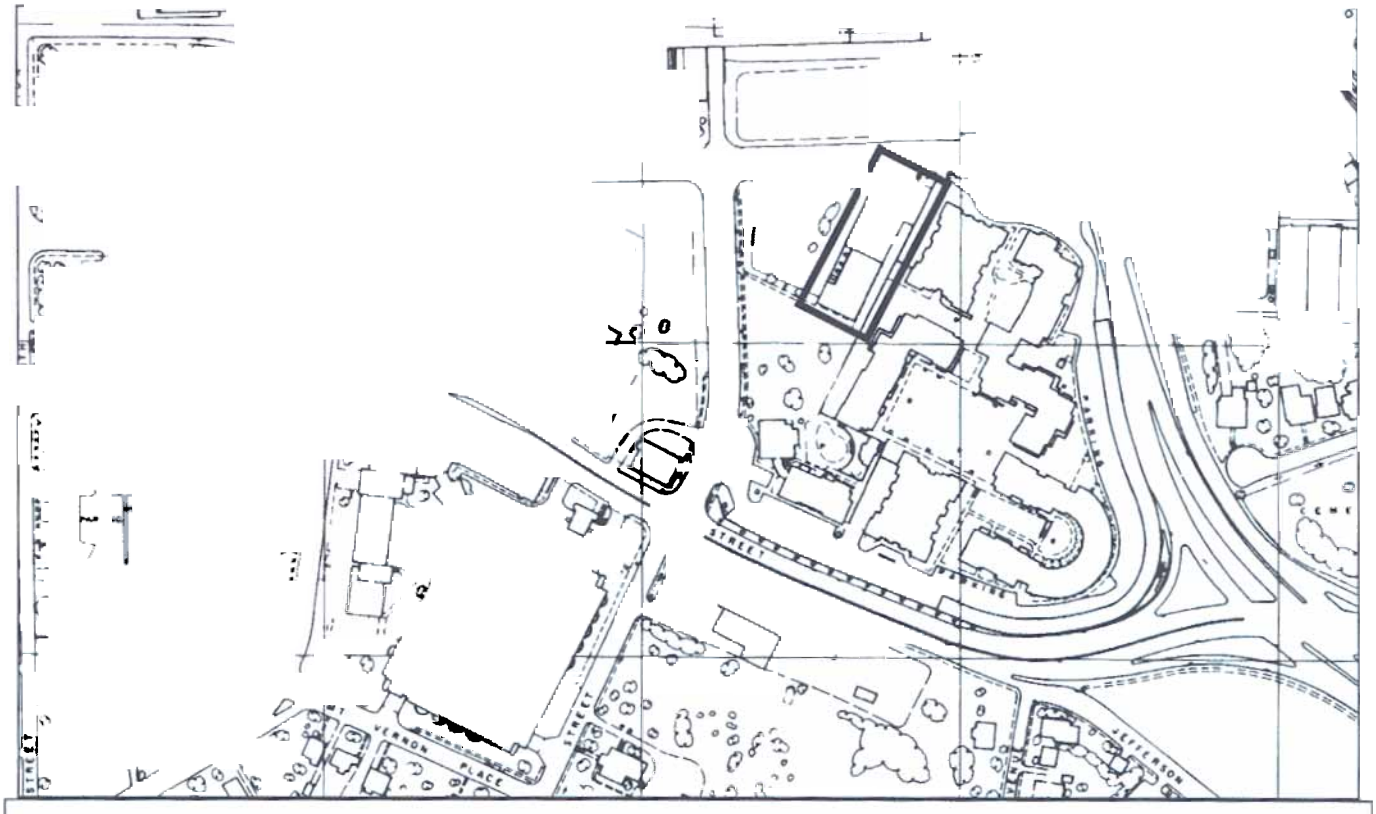
The site has been drastically altered in the intervening decades, beginning with the realignment of street patterns during urban renewal of the 1960s and subsequent hi-rise construction on adjacent parcels throughout the 1970s. (6) As a result, the building lost its frontage on East Montgomery Avenue, and its address -along with the principal entrance - was changed to 50 Monroe Street. Following the demolition of Rockville Mall in 1993, the City took approximately 3800 square feet of the rear parking lot when it created Monroe Place. (7) IBM occupied the building until the early 1970s, a few years after construction of its Gaithersburg facility. Following a succession of tenants, the building has been vacant since 1995.

Apart from a decade of neglect and deterioration, 50 Monroe appears to be substantially unaltered although its site has been severely compromised. According to legal records, the current lot size is 19,528 square feet. (8) The principal (south) façade overlooks the rear portion of James Monroe Park, leaving it hidden from public view and vulnerable to vandalism and crime. This façade is boarded up and defaced with graffiti. Due to adjacent hi-rise development, significant portions of the building are below grade and are separated from adjoining properties by cast iron fencing. Although obscured by the scale of more recent construction, 50 Monroe is the last vestige of Rockville's historic main street, East Montgomery Avenue, as it developed from the 1820s to the 1960s.

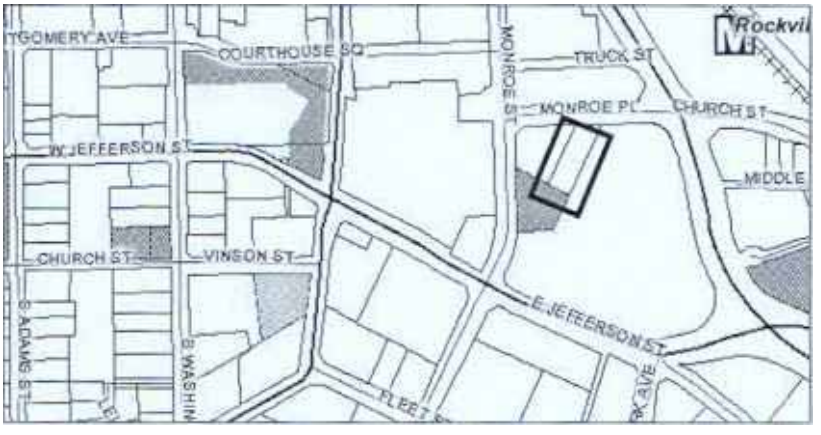
Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M

Name 50 Monroe Place
Continuation Sheet
Number 7 Page 4



Planametric Map of Part of City of Rockville 1972: Allen&Koenig, Land Planners & Surveyors. This map shows the Courthouse area before the new Judicial Center was constructed.



2005 configuration of downtown Rockville. Monroe Street is now through to Middle Lane. The 1972 dogleg Monroe Street to Hungerford Drive has been renamed Monroe Place.

The IBM site is outlined in blue on both maps.

8. Significance

Inventory No.

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
__ 1800-1899	__ architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	__ politics/government
x 1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/ recreation	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	X commerce		__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	__ social history
	__ community planning	__ exploration/ settlement	__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation		__ military	X other: Local history

Specific dates 1959 Architect/Builder Stanley H. Arthur/ Otho Barkley

Construction dates 1958- 59

Evaluation for:

National Register _Maryland Register _not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Statement of Significance

50 Monroe Place, one of Rockville's first modernist office buildings, is an architecturally distinctive and historically significant property of the City's recent past. Designed by Stanley H. Arthur, a prolific and respected architect, 50 Monroe was completed in 1959, a banner year for commercial architecture in Rockville. It was widely recognized for its commercial significance and Bauhaus-inspired design. Named for its first tenant, the IBM Building signaled Rockville's emergence as a major center of post-war development, research, and technology. Dwarfed by more recent hi-rise construction, it remains an icon of Rockville's evolving architectural landscape.

Front (south) façade – photo from Stanley Arthur's portfolio (undated)

History and Support

Despite its deteriorated condition, 50 Monroe has considerable historical, cultural, and architectural significance for the City of Rockville, the seat of Montgomery County government. It characterized an era of critical transformation and development, it brought elite modernist architecture to Rockville's commercial landscape, and it connected Rockville to a prestigious network of scientific and research communities. Initially dubbed the Barkley Building after its builder, Otho Barkley, it soon became known as the IBM Building, a name that persists nearly five decades later. (9)

Situated prominently on East Montgomery Avenue – Rockville's historic main street – the IBM Building underscored the City's rapid transformation from small town to a major center of development, commerce, and space-age research technology. It was, architecturally, the most sophisticated and daring of five new office buildings of 1959, a banner year for commercial architecture in Rockville that followed more than a decade of unprecedented population growth, the modernization of City government, and the development of a modern infrastructure and essential services. (10) This, combined with geographic proximity to the federal government in Washington, made Rockville an attractive place to live and work.

IBM's decision to decentralize its operations from New York to Washington and locate its new Federal Systems Division in Rockville received widespread coverage in the local and regional press, and it was highlighted in a feature article on "Rockville's Business Boom" in the Washington *Evening Star*. (11) Charles Benton, Jr., president of IBM's Federal Systems Division, cited months of planning that preceded the company's decision, which involved the relocation of more than 100 employees and their families. Benton noted that IBM chose Montgomery County and Rockville because "the living conditions, education and cultural facilities [are] the best anywhere." (12) IBM leased the property until the early 1970s.

IBM's Rockville division was one in an expanding network of electronic and defense operations systems throughout the Washington metropolitan area and beyond. Like the technologies IBM was developing, the new building on East Montgomery Avenue was sleek, modern, and state of the art. Its bold geometry, innovative use of vibrant color, and subtle mathematical harmonies celebrated modern industry, technology, and materials. (13) And like the Bauhaus movement that inspired its design, the IBM Building was a workshop for generating the concepts and technologies that were to shape and inform a new era of data management, specialized communications, and space-age defense. Comparatively small in scale by today's standards, its architectural significance was underscored in the mid-1960s, when it was identified as one of only 10 conservation properties in Rockville's Mid-City urban renewal project. (14)

Architect Stanley H. Arthur (1912-1999), was a native of Louisville, Kentucky and a 1937 graduate of the University of Illinois. He served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II and practiced architecture in Louisville and Cleveland before coming to the Washington area in the late 1940s. (15) In 1951, Arthur established his own firm in Bethesda, Maryland, which by the mid-1960s, employed 3 architects and supporting staff, associates in Mechanical, Structural, and Civil Engineering, a landscape architect, and consultants in acoustics, lighting, interior design, art, and sculpture. (16)

A prolific and versatile architect, Arthur designed numerous buildings throughout the Washington area, principally in Montgomery County. His clients included commercial and office developers, non-profit organizations, churches, and government agencies, including the Montgomery County Board of Education, for whom he designed more than 60 educational facilities (Travilah Elementary School, 1960; Winston Churchill High School, 1966). (17) In addition to the Davis Memorial Library (1967), Arthur completed a number of noteworthy office buildings in Bethesda and Chevy Chase, some of which are still in use and relatively unaltered. These include the Vaughn Building (1956), Chevy Chase Medical Building (1959) and the Bethesda Medical Building (1955), an imposing 6-story office block on Wisconsin Avenue.

Arthur's work was featured in The Washington Post, including a 1962 article praising his striking modernist design for Calvary Lutheran Church in Silver Spring. (18)

The Barkley/IBM Building introduced Arthur's work to Rockville, where he designed 6 major projects between 1959 and 1971. Shortly after the IBM Building opened in 1959, Mayor Alexander J. Greene and the City Council hired Arthur to design the Rockville Civic Auditorium, following a dispute with Washington architect Chloethiel Woodard Smith whose design proposal they had rejected as too costly and inappropriate for a suburban community. (19) Additional commissions in Rockville included the Rockville Unitarian Church (1964), Southlawn Middle School (1969) [today Maryvale Elementary School], Thomas S. Wootton High School (1970), and the Rockville Regional Library (1971).

An active professional, Arthur served on the Maryland Architectural Registration Board (1963-1977), and he was a founder and president of the Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland American Institute of Architects (1960-1961). Following his retirement in 1978, Stanley Arthur exhibited and won prizes for his watercolor paintings, a pastime of his early career. (20) He died in 1999, leaving an impressive legacy of architectural achievement and professionalism.

Stanley Arthur was expert in the modernist idiom, which he subtly adapted to a variety of architectural uses and contexts. His school buildings, typically 1 or 2-stories, support bold horizontal rooflines and deep sheltering pavilions that define spatial relationships to site. Office buildings, composed of crisp geometric blocks, evoke the scale and character of their time. Calvary Lutheran Church, adjacent to the Beltway in Silver Spring, features a striking 78-foot chancel that forms a steep 25-degree angle, a combination that Arthur described as a "blend of the Gothic and the contemporary." (21) His 1971 design for the Rockville Regional Library (scheduled for demolition in 2006) is a skilful synthesis of International Style architecture and an ingenious site plan. Although we are just beginning to research and document Stanley Arthur's impressive body of work, he clearly contributed much to the history and diversity of Rockville's and Montgomery County's modern architectural character.

Notes

1 Vacant since the mid-1990s, the building is not accessible to the public or available for in-depth measurement, research, or documentation. This description is based on the Rockville's Recent Past survey of modern architecture (1914-1984) conducted by Peerless Rockville in 2004 and 2005. In addition to a 1963 Appraisal Report commissioned by the City of Rockville for the Mid-City Urban Renewal Project and recent windshield surveys of the property, this MHT form draws upon interviews, photographs, legal records, maps, news articles, and related sources. See: William H. Throckmorton, M.A.I, *Appraisal Report, Mid-City Urban Renewal Area, Rockville, Maryland, Commissioned by the City of Rockville, Maryland for Project No. Md. R-16, 326 East Montgomery Avenue*. October 15, 1963. [Peerless Rockville Collection]

2. *Appraisal Report* (1993), p. 4; Steed Evans, "Construction Boom Under Way in City," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, January 15, 1959, B:2; "New Office Buildings Pace City's Growth," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, March 12, 1959, B:9; "Building May Be Ready By April 30," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, March 26, 1959, B:2.
3. *Appraisal Report* (1963), p. 4; "Rockville Office Building Under Construction," *The Washington Post*, June 28, 1958, C:12; "New Office Buildings ..." *Sentinel*, March 12, 1959, B:9.
4. A news article notes that two "stores" were planned originally for the first floor. *Sentinel*, March 12, 1959, B:9.
5. Ibid.
6. Adjacent properties include: the Americana Centre, 1972; 51 Monroe Place, 1976; Town Center Apartments, 1978; the Executive Office Building and Judicial Center, 1981.
7. Ed Duffy, Community Development Program Manager, City of Rockville, Interview, November 3, 2004.
8. Records of the Maryland Department of Taxation and Assessments.
9. "Many Homes Built Along Busy Artery: Barkley Bros. Develop Residences Near Connecticut Avenue," *The Washington Post*, April 16, 1939, R:1; "O.C. Barkley Dies," *The Washington Post*, September 19, 1962, B:4.
10. In addition to new apartment buildings, housing projects, and a 100-unit motor hotel on North Washington Street, the *Sentinel* reported on the status of new office construction in or near Town Center. These projects included: the Barkley (later IBM) Building on East Montgomery Avenue; the Brown Building on East Jefferson; a "Colonial" building at 22 West Jefferson, the Abby Building at East Montgomery and Perry Street; and plans for an office building next to the Villa Theater on Commerce Lane. *Sentinel*, March 12, 1959, B:12.
11. Steed Evans, "Construction Boom Under Way in City," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, January 15, 1959, B:2; "New Office Plan Bared," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, January 22, 1959, A:1.
12. Charles L. Hoffman, "Rockville Enjoys Business Boom As Population Soars, Taxes Decline," *The* [Washington] *Evening Star*, November 9, 1959, A:1. See also: "IBM Cites Reasons for Coming Here," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, March 17, 1960, A:7; "IBM Plans to Move Key Facility Here," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, May 28, 1959, A:1; "First of IBM Aides Here," [Montgomery County, MD] *Sentinel*, September 24, 1959, A:3. An ad placed by IBM in the *1960-61 Montgomery County Handbook* states the Montgomery County "furnishes an ideal place ... for conducting our business and for providing our employees with a good place to live and raise their families." Montgomery County, Maryland Chamber of Commerce, *1960-61 Montgomery County Handbook*, p. 42. [Peerless Rockville Collection].
13. According to Leah Barnett, a former IBM employee in Rockville, Maryland, IBM adopted the use of bold primary colors in the 1960s for its architecture, textbooks, and corporate materials. Ms. Barnett notes that vibrant, saturated colors were an IBM 'hallmark." Leah Barnett, Telephone interviews of October 2005.
14. In addition to the IBM Building, conservation properties included the Red Brick Courthouse (1891), the Grey Courthouse (1931), Farmer's Banking and Trust (1931), the Brown Building (1959), 30 Courthouse Square/Schlosser Building (1962), the Firehouse (1929), the Woolworth Building

(1950's), the Kelly-Smith Building; and the Oxley Building. The last four were later razed. Eileen S. McGuckian, *Rockville: Portrait of a City* (Franklin, Tennessee: Hillsboro Press, 2001), p. 180.

15. *Stanley H. Arthur, Architect, A.I.A.* Undated professional portfolio. [Courtesy: Mary T. Arthur]; "Stanley Arthur Jr. Dies; Designed Area Buildings," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 1999, B:5; "Arthur, Stanley Houghton, A.I.A. 37," A.I.A. biographical entry [Courtesy: American Institute of Architects Archives].
16. Stanley Arthur, Undated portfolio.
17. "Bethesda's Busily Building Toward a Big Real Estate Future," *The Washington Post*, October 11, 1953, R:1; "Ocean Beach Housing Outlook," *The Washington Post*, September 5, 1954, R:2; "New Office Building for Bethesda," *The Washington Post*, July 17, 1955, G:1; "Bethesda Building Planned," *The Washington Post*, March 11, 1956, G:5; 'New Maryland School," *The Washington Post*, March 16, 1957, B:2; "Chevy Chase Medical Building," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1959, C:10; "New Home for Army Times," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 1955, G:18; "A Chancel Reaching Up to God," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1962, D:1; "Ground-Breaking for Unitarian Church," *The Washington Post*, January 4, 1964, C:10.
18. "A Chancel Reaching Up to God," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1962, D:1.
19. Alexander J. Greene, former Rockville Mayor, Interview of June 3, 2005.
20. "Arthur, Stanley Houghton," A.I.A. biographical entry; George M. Thompson, Assistant Chief, Building Technology Division, National Bureau of Standards. Letter of recommendation submitted on behalf of Stanley Arthur to the Maryland Board of Examiners and Registrars of Architects, April 7, 1949 [Peerless Rockville Collection].
21. "Chancel," Post, April 21, 1962.

9. Major Bibliographical References Inventory No.

City of Rockville Utility Service Records through 1984, Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation records, Montgomery County Plat records, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Rockville MD for 1949 and 1960, Montgomery County MD Sentinel and Washington Post and Washington Evening Star newspapers. City of Rockville Maps. Interview with Ed Duffy, Community Development Program Manager, City of Rockville. Interviews with former Rockville Mayor Alexander J. Greene, June 3, 2005, and Leah Barnett, October 2005. William M. Throckmorton, M.A.I., Appraisal Report, Mid-City Urban Renewal Area, Rockville, Maryland, Project No. Md.R-16, October 15, 1963. Photographs from City of Rockville and Stanley Arthur Professional Portfolio.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 19,528 square feet
Acreage of historical setting
Quadrangle name Quadrangle scale

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tax Map GR32, P401, Montgomery Avenue, Rockville.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Teresa B. Lachin, Peerless Rockville		
organization	Peerless Rockville	date	October 12, 2005
street & number	29 Courthouse Sq. / P.O. Box 4262	telephone	301-762-0096
city or town	Rockville	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Submitted: December 15, 2005
Approved: January 19, 2006

CITY OF ROCKVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES

Thursday, November 17, 2005
Meeting No. 11-2005
Rockville City Hall

Internet information: www.rockvillemd.gov/government/commissions/hdc/2005/hdcagenda.html

PRESENT
Max van Balgooy, Chair
Andrea Hartranft Con Hitchcock
Craig Moloney Anita Neal Powell

Staff present: Judy Christensen and Cindy Kebba, Preservation Planners; Sondra Block, Assistant City Attorney.

I. WORKSESSION: The worksession included an agenda review and update.

The business meeting was convened at 7:30 P.M. Chairman van Balgooy opened the meeting and introduced the Commissioners.

II. COMMITTEE / ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Peerless Rockville – Executive Director Eileen McGuckian said the first Underground Railroad tour of 13 sites on November 6 was completely sold out and delightful. It will be repeated in the spring. On November 30, at 7:30 p.m., Peerless will hold a planning session on 2006 public education programs. The theme is Rockville's Recent Past. All are invited to contribute. The Annual New Year's Day Brunch will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Glenview Mansion. Rockville themed holiday gifts are available for purchase at Peerless Rockville in the Red Brick Courthouse. Nominations for Peerless Rockville Awards for historic preservation to be presented in May 2006 are due March 1, 2006. For more information on projects and activities see: www.peerlessrockville.org.

B. Lincoln Park Historic Foundation – President Anita Powell reported that the third Annual African American Preservation Conference was held in Easton, MD on October 19 through the 22nd. Offers to host the October 2006 conference were received from three sites, but the location has not been set. The LPHS participated in the Maryland Emancipation Day on November 5 in Baltimore. LPHS will hold a Christmas and Kwanzaa celebration at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church on December 17. Last year 450 people attended, including 200 children. The Lincoln Park Historic Foundation was present to provide testimony on the Lincoln Park Plan and Conservation Plan at the Planning Commission public hearing on November 16. For more information on LPHF activities see: www.aapc@md.org.

C. Comments- Historic District Commissioners/ Staff
(a) Historic District Commission: Commissioner Moloney reported that he had attended a Green Buildings conference in Atlanta and learned a lot about environmentally sustainable buildings and reuse and recycled materials.
(b) Staff: Planner Judy Christensen announced that Planner Shelby Spillers had accepted a job with the State of North Carolina. Staff will miss her considerable expertise and contributions. She finished the Cemetery Guidelines, successfully nominated Rockville sites to the National Underground Railroad (UGRR) site and worked on the UGRR tour book. She also did the survey work in Lincoln Park and Twinbrook.

III. EVALUATION FOR HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL OR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A. **50 Monroe Street**
Owner: Lawrence Guss et al, Ronald Cohen Management Co.
Address: 50 Monroe - IBM Building, built 1958-1959 and one of 9 urban renewal conservation buildings preserved in the City Center in the 1960s.
Application: DEM2006-00064 (Application for Demolition)

Planner Christensen identified the location of the building and noted that its original frontage was on East Montgomery Avenue before the Mid-City Urban Renewal Project. The reconfiguration of streets during urban renewal resulted in the building's current frontage on a public park. She said that the stylistic source is International, inspired by architect Walter Gropius' Bauhaus movement. The IBM Building was designed by Bethesda-based architect Stanley Arthur. Ms. Christensen showed photographs of each façade of the building, east and south entrance features, and some interior pictures. She also showed a 1959 photo of the building from the architect's portfolio. Ms. Christensen read a listing of all of the records entered into public hearing record to date, including correspondence from citizens.

Ms. Christensen stated that staff did not find that the building met the test of exceptional significance necessary for a property less than 50 years of age. However, staff would likely find that it met the significance criteria if it were over the 50-year mark. Ms. Christensen stated that the building had all of its windows removed recently and put into storage but it is believed that they can be re-installed. Much of the building's interior has been altered but the HDC does not have jurisdiction over building interiors. The site is severely compromised as it now only offers a public view of the less impressive vernacular north (rear) façade. The rear façade does not have the strings of window courses and yellow porcelain enamel panels that once made the building stylistically interesting and are hallmarks of Bauhaus design.

Ms. Christensen noted that, since the last public hearing, she had changed the staff recommendation on the architectural significance of the building to Not Exceptional rather than Low Significance because of the added criterion required for buildings less than 50 years of age. She said that the building is a late 1950s interpretation of its style in Rockville and locally innovative in its use of colored exterior panels and window strings on the façade. If it were more than 50 years old it would have met the architectural/design criteria in that it was a stylistic forerunner of mid-20th century architecture in Rockville. Stanley Arthur would not be considered a master as compared to Gropius and other modern

masters who changed stylistic trends in the 20th century. He was, however, a respected, versatile and prolific architect who could be found significant locally as a designer of schools, institutions and offices that contributed to the built environment in the mid-century.

Staff also changed its opinion on the building's historical/cultural significance from Low Significance to Not Exceptional, as the significance criteria for buildings less than 50 years old requires. The IBM Building was spared demolition during the urban renewal period because it was one of several buildings that were not within the footprint of the new mall and did not require demolition for that project. The IBM Building was new and in good condition at the time so it did not meet the standards for compensation. It is the last building to preserve frontage on the former East Montgomery Avenue, but the public view has been greatly reduced and the most distinctive features of the building are no longer visible from the public right-of-way.

Commissioner Hitchcock asked if something could be considered exceptional if it were not a prototype and Ms. Christensen replied that it could. Commissioner van Balgooy asked it if met the criteria of possessing high artistic values and Ms. Christensen responded that it was not exceptional. Mr. van Balgooy asked about the architectural styles of two other commercial buildings mentioned in an urban renewal era list included in the earlier briefing materials. Ms Christensen said that both of the buildings had been demolished and she was not able to find pictures of them that would indicate their styles.

Commissioner Hartranft asked it there was anything occurring in Rockville during the 1956-1959 period that would have any effect on what might have been built in one year versus three years later. This question was later addressed by Eileen McGuckian of Peerless Rockville.

Barbara Sears, attorney with Linowes and Blocher, represented the property owner. Ms. Sears referred to questions raised by the commissioners at the September meeting, including whether or not the building was a speculative building or built specifically for IBM. The applicant's representative hired the firm EHT Traceries, Inc. to assist with additional research. Ms. Sears said that they also had some discussions with Peerless Rockville on ideas for commemorating the building within a redevelopment project. Ms. Sears introduced Laura Hughes, a senior Architectural Historian and Director of Research and Preservation at EHT Traceries, Inc. Her role was to provide a more complete context of 1950s-1960s office buildings as requested by the commissioners at the previous meeting.

Ms. Hughes said that she was guided by National Register Bulletin #22 in Traceries' research which explains that buildings less than 50 years of age must meet the additional criterion of being exceptional. The research included a sampling of buildings, newspaper articles, and a windshield survey in Montgomery County to find buildings similar to 50 Monroe Place. This research led to the conclusion that 50 Monroe Street is one of many buildings in the county that were designed by respected modernist architects. It is not unique in having its structural skin exposed or in its use of porcelain enamel panels. Traceries found numerous other examples of buildings from the era with a similar appearance. This style was embraced by corporate America in the 1950s and it became a common new face for commercial buildings.

Stanley Arthur was one of many prolific and respected architects of the time, along with Chloethiel Woodard Smith and others. Traceries spoke with people who had been employed by his firm and found that Stanley Arthur had worked in Louisville and Cleveland before coming to the Washington

DC metropolitan area. He had designed a variety of building types, including bus terminals that used the enamel panel design element.

Traceries also looked at other IBM buildings throughout the country. They found that 50 Monroe Place was a speculative building and that it was leased by IBM just prior to construction completion. The current facility in Gaithersburg eventually became the company's true metropolitan area headquarters. Prior to completion of the Gaithersburg headquarters, IBM housed its employees in numerous Montgomery County locations.

As a comparison, Traceries described the 1966 DC public library that is the only building in DC designed by Mies van der Rohe and is currently under consideration now for historic designation. Ms. Hughes compared it to 50 Monroe in meeting the test of exceptional significance and felt that the former met the test as being the only example of a master architect and the latter did not meet the test.

Commissioner Hartranft asked how many buildings in the Traceries survey were in Rockville. Ms. Hughes replied that they had not concentrated on Rockville because City staff and Peerless Rockville were focusing primarily on Rockville buildings. Commissioner Moloney asked which of Stanley Arthur's buildings were most representative of his work. Ms. Hughes said that his school designs probably were most representative because they showed some of his design innovation, although many of them have been altered. Commissioner van Balgooy asked if all of Traceries' survey examples have porcelain enamel panels and glass curtain walls and whether that combination was common. Ms. Hughes responded that all of the examples had the glass curtain walls, but not all combined glass with porcelain enamel panels. She said that there are examples showing use of porcelain enamel panels from 1952-52 and several from 1956. Commissioner van Balgooy asked why Traceries had used the rear of the building (the view that people now see) in their photographs. Ms. Hughes answered that the photos accurately indicate that the most important features of the building are not readily visible from public view.

Ms. Sears concluded the applicant's presentation by supporting the staff recommendation that the building not be recommended for historic designation, as it does not meet the criteria of exceptional significance. She offered to have one of their consultants present ideas for commemorating the building, possibly by retaining a portion of it. Commissioner Moloney said that his request at the last meeting was to present ideas for adaptive reuse of the existing building rather than ideas for commemorating the building. The HDC stated that they were still in the process of evaluating the building and would not hear ideas for commemoration at this time.

Eileen McGuckian, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville, provided more context for Rockville in the 1950s. She said that the 1950s was a decade of rebuilding. The economy was good and there was energy coming back to the homefront, citing the interstate highways system and other major post-war projects. The federal government was expanding and veterans were returning home, creating a need for more houses, schools and services. Montgomery County reaped many of the benefits because of its proximity to the federal government's home base in DC. Rockville's population increased by 238% during the 1950s and the land area increased through annexation. Rockville was an attractive location because of its easy access to DC provided by the Rockville Pike and Veirs Mill Road corridors, and later I-270. The eastern part of the City developed more quickly. Construction of the Rockville Bypass in 1951 had the effect of closing Baltimore Road off from the western half of the City. Residential development on the west side (Woodley Gardens, New Mark Commons, etc.) was stimulated by the construction of I-270. Industry moved from railroad areas to more outlying areas and federal agencies,

such as NIST, relocated to the I-270 corridor. The City's commercial area, which encompassed the location of 50 Monroe Street, was concentrated on Commerce Lane and Montgomery Avenue. This area was a mixture of Victorian houses, smaller buildings, reused barns and some 1920-1940s commercial buildings. During the 1950s, there were still several family-owned stores with residential apartments above them, eateries for the increasing number of lunchtime patrons, and several car dealerships. Modern shopping centers appeared in the late 1950s and 1960s. Congressional Plaza was established in 1959. These shopping centers took away from retail establishments in the downtown area and urban renewal soon followed. A survey of all properties in a 47-acre area was done prior to urban renewal and Peerless has obtained some of the appraisals and photographs from that era. Period newspaper photos of East Montgomery Avenue around 1960 and a 1930s postcard of North Perry Street were presented. Ms. McGuckian identified the additional urban renewal conservation buildings on Perry Street: the Oxley Building, the Kelly-Smith Building and the Rockville Firehouse in the 1930 postcard and the Abby Building and East Montgomery Avenue landmarks in the reproduced newspaper photos.

Ms. McGuckian addressed Commissioner Hartranft's earlier question about significant events that may have occurred between the mid- and late 1950s that might have influenced architecture. She said that there was really nothing unusual during that time period that set things apart, but rather that the entire decade was a period of strong growth and expansion.

Dr. Terry Lachin, Peerless Rockville, discussed Stanley Arthur's career and work. She agreed with earlier statements that Mr. Arthur was a prolific and versatile architect. She said he designed a variety of buildings in the metropolitan area, primarily in Bethesda and Chevy Chase. His work in Rockville was during the 1959-1971 time period. Dr. Lachin showed other examples of Stanley Arthur's buildings, including the Bethesda Medical Building (1955) which has a similar scale to 50 Monroe; the Vaughn Building in Bethesda (1956) which has similar yellow porcelain enamel panels as those on 50 Monroe.

Dr. Lachin said that Stanley Arthur was born in 1912 in Louisville, Ky. and received a bachelor's degree in architecture at the University of Illinois. After working in Louisville and Cleveland, he opened his own firm in Bethesda in 1951. His work was diverse and included residences in Ocean City, schools, country clubs, Safeway supermarkets, Greyhound bus terminals and parking garages. Dr. Lachin stated that 50 Monroe Street was Mr. Arthur's most architecturally daring building and it was the largest office building in Rockville at the time.

Stanley Arthur was commissioned by the Mayor and Council of Rockville to design the Rockville Civic Auditorium in 1960, which has since been substantially altered. In 1964, he designed the campus style facility for the Unitarian Church. In 1969, he designed Maryvale Elementary School (formerly Southlawn Elementary) that is largely unchanged. Mr. Arthur designed Wootton High School in 1970. It recently underwent a major renovation. In 1971, he was the architect for the Rockville Regional Library. He retired in 1978.

Commissioner van Balgooy said that the election of 1954 transformed the City and that there was, in fact, a significant difference between 1949 Rockville and 1959 Rockville. He added that there were several large buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959, along with the IBM Building. He said that the 1950s did appear to present a watershed time period for the City.

Dr. Lachin agreed that the construction of the IBM Building did signal the connection of Rockville to a larger and more sophisticated world. The City had a newfound connection to the international world through its IBM corporate connection. In that same year, the courthouse got a new wing and it was a banner year of commercial architecture. The Georgian Revival building at 22 West Jefferson, the Abbey Building on North Perry Street, and the Brown Building were all built in 1959. The IBM Building was the most sophisticated of all the buildings that were built that year.

Commissioner Moloney asked Dr. Lachin for her opinion about which of Stanley Arthur's works were his best examples. She replied that Maryvale Elementary School, the Rockville Library (mostly because of its complex siting) and the Bethesda Medical Building were his best works in Montgomery County.

After hearing from all who wished to speak, Chair van Balgooy closed the public testimony portion of the meeting.

Commissioner Hartranft quoted from the Maryland Historical Trust form to show that 50 Monroe Place does have cultural significance, in that it reflected corporate America at the time and that the building signaled that Rockville was part of the larger Washington, DC metropolitan area. She disagreed with earlier statements that the visual interest of the building is out of public view. She said that it is easy to see the front of the building from the park which is itself a remnant of East Montgomery Avenue. Commissioner Hartranft said that she did not believe that the fact that the building is slightly less than 50 years old should prevent it from being found significant because there were no major architectural shifts in the City during the three-year period from 1956-1959. Ms. Christensen stated that her recommendation was based on the National Register criteria that provided examples of exceptional importance such as Graceland in Memphis.

Eileen McGuckian noted that the Peerless Rockville Board did not find the building at 50 Monroe Place met the criteria of exceptional significance for a site less than 50 years old.

Seeing no other citizens wanting to testify, Chairman van Balgooy offered the last word to the owner's representative, Barbara Sears. Ms. Sears said that she hoped the HDC would agree with the staff and Traceries conclusions that the building is not of exceptional significance and importance to Rockville.

Chairman van Balgooy closed the record of the public hearing portion of the record. He noted that the time was now near 10 p.m. and asked the commission if it wanted to continue or defer its decision to the next meeting. The commission wanted to continue the official business and postpone the discussion items. Chairman van Balgooy then asked the HDC to go through the list of criteria and state if the building could be an exceptional example.

After a great deal of discussion on the issue of local versus national exceptional importance, the HDC found that a site could be found to be exceptionally significant or important locally and was not required to be exceptional on a national level. The commission found that it exemplified the cultural economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and Rockville as a definitive point signaling the break between Rockville as a traditional rural County Seat and Rockville as an urban city that reflected international style.

In addition, under architectural and design significance, the building was found to embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction in its exceptional and unusual use

of the glass and porcelain panel curtain wall on three sides, that it was the most sophisticated building in Rockville to that date, exhibiting an international style and attracting a forward-looking, high technology international firm in IBM. As for its integrity, the building was found to be substantially unaltered but the original site and setting had changed. The site was found to be locally significant.

Commissioner Hartranft said that although Peerless did not support the designation, the language in Dr. Lachin's history used superlatives to describe the building, stating that it was the last building on East Montgomery Avenue, and stating that it signaled that Rockville had become a part of the D.C. metropolitan area, and was no longer a small suburban town.

Commissioner Moloney said the building characterized a period of critical transformation in Rockville Commissioner Powell concurred with both commissioners.

Commissioner Hartranft also noted that she disagreed that the building was not visible to the public, it can be seen both from Monroe Park and from Monroe Street and it is correctly stated to be the last remnant of East Montgomery Avenue. She cited passages from the MHT history that of the five modern buildings constructed in 1959 in Rockville, this one was the most "architecturally daring" and "sophisticated."

Chairman van Balgooy noted that exceptional was often put in terms of "first, last, best, or only." He said the building was the first example in Rockville of this international style and the only one left of this period of transformation of its quality. He also noted that it was exceptional in design as most structures shown of this type had only the front glazed with panels and glass while this one had three facades. It was also the largest office building constructed in Rockville up to 1959. He concurred that it met the test for exceptional.

Commissioner Hitchcock concurred

> **MOTION**: Commissioner Hartranft moved, seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock, to find the building at 50 Monroe Place eligible for designation as exceptional to the history and architecture of Rockville and recommend it to the Mayor and Council as eligible for historic designation. [*The HDC directed staff to prepare a draft of the motion that includes the findings for final approval at the December 15, 2005 meeting.*]
>
> **VOTE**: 5-0

IV. RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Planner Christensen stated that the Lincoln Park Conservation Plan had been presented to the Commission in October 2005 and they had received copies of the draft plan. She asked for comments or a recommendation to the Mayor and Council.

> **MOTION:** Commissioner Moloney moved, seconded by Commissioner Hartranft, to favorably recommend the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation Plan to the Mayor and Council.
> **VOTE:** 3-0-2 (Abstained: Powell, Hitchcock)

V. DISCUSSION/UPDATES – Deferred

VI. MINUTES

- Meeting No. 10-2005, October 15, 2005

MOTION: Commissioner Moloney moved, seconded by Commissioner Hartranft to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2005 HDC meeting.

VOTE: 3-0-2 (Abstained: Powell, Hitchcock)

VIII. ADJOURN: The HDC adjourned at 10:35 pm

Respectfully submitted, Judy Christensen and Cindy Kebba

City of Rockville
Historic District Commission
Recommendation of Historic Designation

Re: Eligibility of 50 Monroe Place for designation as a single site Historic District.

Background and Site Description

An application for a permit to demolish the four-story structure located at 50 Monroe Place in Rockville, Maryland prompted a referral to this Commission for consideration of the eligibility of the site for designation as a single site Historic District. The role of this Commission in the historic designation process is advisory only and is limited to determining whether or not to recommend to the Mayor and Council that the site meets the adopted criteria to be so designated

The facts concerning the site and building are not in dispute. Both the property owner and staff concur that the four-story office building was constructed in 1959 by Otho Barkley Construction Company as 326 East Montgomery Avenue from a design by architect Stanley H. Arthur. Named for its first tenant, IBM, the building is acknowledged to have a stylistic prototype in Walter Gropius' 1925 Bauhaus building in Dessau, Germany and is one of several commercial buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959. It was located within the Mid City Urban Renewal District, but was labeled as a conservation building and not demolished during that project. The fact that it was an Urban Renewal conservation building led to the investigation of the building by City preservation staff as potentially having significance to the City of Rockville, even though less than 50 years of age.

Evidence of Record

A public hearing on the matter was held on September 22, 2005. Staff presented a memo on the National Register criteria for evaluating significance of buildings less than 50 years old, which requires that the subject site be found to have exceptional importance and significance to the locality, state, or nation. Staff gave a presentation on the building and the development changes around it that have occurred since 1959, resulting in the abandonment of East Montgomery Avenue and its subsequent dedication as a public park, the loss of street frontage and parking spaces, and the creation of Monroe Place which offered access to the building via the rear parking lot. Staff's opinion was that the building exterior was largely intact and in original condition, but that the site and frontage had changed, altering the structure's environmental setting and presenting the least significant façade to public view. Staff concluded that the site was of low historical and architectural significance and did not find that it was the site of an exceptional historical event or the work of a master, or a prototypical architectural style. Therefore, staff did not recommend it as meeting the criteria for designation as a single site historic district.

Barbara Sears, Esq. attorney for the owner, Lawrence Guss et al, represented by Ronald Cohen Management Company, concurred with the staff report and recommendation. Richard Cohen, speaking for the owners, said that the building was not usable in its present condition. He said

that the owners had protested the taking of parking spaces and abandonment of the street frontage during the Mid City Urban Renewal but did not prevail.

Eileen McGuckian, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville and Dr. Teresa Lachin, Program Director of Peerless Rockville presented the history of the building and architect, which were studied as part of Peerless Rockville's Recent Past Survey. Peerless concluded that the four-story office building was the City's most innovative of its time and was an example of Rockville's emergence as a major center of post-WWII development. Ms. McGuckian agreed with staff that the building's environmental setting and orientation have been drastically changed and concurred with staff's recommendation that it is not eligible for designation as a single site. She stated that the Executive Board of Peerless Rockville did not support designation of the building.

After some discussion, the HDC determined that more information was needed on the stylistic precedent of this building in Rockville and the professional achievements and stature of Stanley Arthur. The Commission also requested more information on the Urban Renewal conservation buildings, Rockville's 1950s context, i.e., the stylistic types of buildings present and under construction in the downtown area at that time, and any remaining buildings in the town center built before 1960. The hearing was continued to the October 20 meeting. At the request of the owner, the hearing was further continued to the Commission's November 17 meeting to allow the owner's consultant to testify.

When the public hearing resumed on November 17, 2005, Preservation Planner Judy Christensen noted that the staff had changed its recommendation on the historical and architectural significance of the building from "Low Significance" to "Not Exceptional" to reflect the criterion required for evaluating buildings less than 50 years of age. She said that the building is a late 1950s interpretation of the International Bauhaus style in Rockville and locally innovative in its use of colored exterior panels and window strings on the façade. If the building were more than 50 years old it would have met the architectural and design criteria for historic designation in that it was a stylistic forerunner of mid-20th century architecture in Rockville. In staff's opinion, Stanley Arthur would not be considered a master as compared to Gropius and other modern masters who changed stylistic trends in the 20th century. Arthur was, however, a respected, versatile and prolific architect who could be found significant locally as a designer of schools, institutions and offices that contributed to the County and City's building environment in the mid-Twentieth Century.

Ms Christensen stated that Ed Duffy, who had been involved in the City's Urban Renewal Project, had explained that 50 Monroe was spared during the urban renewal period because it was one of several buildings that were not within the footprint of the new mall and did not require demolition for that project. The building was new and in good condition at the time and did not meet the standards for compensation. She reiterated that although it is the last building to preserve frontage on the former East Montgomery Avenue, the public view has been greatly reduced and the most distinctive features of the building are no longer visible from the public right-of-way.

Commissioner Hitchcock asked if something could be considered exceptional if it was not a prototype and Ms. Christensen replied that it could. Chairman van Balgooy asked if the site met the criteria of possessing high artistic values and Ms. Christensen responded that it was not exceptional in her opinion. Commissioner Hartranft asked it there was anything occurring in Rockville during the 1956-1959 period that would have any effect on what might have been built in one year versus three years later. This question was later addressed by Eileen McGuckian of Peerless Rockville, who stated that nothing occurred during the three years that would provide a chronological marker.

Ms. Sears stated that the owners had contracted with the architectural history and preservation planning consulting firm of EHT Traceries, Inc. to provide more information on the connection with IBM and to provide a more complete survey of 1950s-1960s office buildings in the Washington Metropolitan area, as requested by the HDC at the September meeting. Laura Hughes, a senior Architectural Historian and Director of Research and Preservation at EHT Traceries, Inc. provided photographs and a report and discussed her findings and conclusion that 50 Monroe Place is one of many buildings in Montgomery County that were designed by respected modernist architects. She found that 50 Monroe is not unique in having its structural skin exposed or in its use of porcelain enamel panels. Traceries found numerous other examples of buildings from the era with a similar appearance. This style was embraced by corporate America in the 1950s and it became a common new face for commercial buildings.

On Stanley Arthur, Ms. Hughes said that he was one of many prolific and respected architects of the time, along with Chloethiel Woodard Smith and others. Traceries found that Stanley Arthur had worked in Louisville and Cleveland before coming to the Washington DC metropolitan area. He had designed a variety of building types, including bus terminals that used the porcelain enamel panel design element.

Traceries also found that 50 Monroe Place was a speculative building and that it was leased by IBM just prior to construction completion. The current facility in Gaithersburg eventually became the company's metropolitan area headquarters. Prior to completion of the Gaithersburg headquarters, IBM housed its employees in numerous Montgomery County locations. Ms. Hughes compared 50 Monroe Place to the current effort to designate the 1966 Martin Luther King Library in DC designed by Mies van der Rohe in meeting the test of exceptional significance. She felt that the library met the test as being the only example of a master architect in D.C., whereas 50 Monroe Place did not.

In response to Commissioner Moloney's question on which of Stanley Arthur's buildings were most representative of his work, Ms. Hughes said that his school designs probably were most representative because they showed some his design innovation. Chairman van Balgooy asked if all of Traceries' survey examples have porcelain enamel panels and glass curtain walls and whether that combination was common. Ms. Hughes responded that all of the examples had the glass curtain walls, but not all combined glass with porcelain enamel panels. She said that there are examples showing use of porcelain enamel panels from 1952-53 and several from 1956. The Commission later observed that none of the examples were in Rockville prior to 1959. Chairman van Balgooy asked why Traceries had used the rear of the building in their

photographs. Ms. Hughes answered that the photos accurately indicate that the most important features of the building are not readily visible from public view.

Ms. Sears concluded the property owner's presentation by supporting the staff recommendation that the building not be recommended for historic designation, as it does not meet the criteria of exceptional significance.

Eileen McGuckian, Executive Director of Peerless Rockville, provided a more detailed context illustrated with period photographs of Rockville in the 1950s. She said that the 1950s was a decade of rebuilding. The economy was good and there was energy coming back to the home front, citing the interstate highways system and other major post-war projects. The federal government was expanding and veterans were returning home, creating a need for more houses, schools and services. Rockville's population increased by 238% during the 1950s and the land area increased through annexation. This expansion and subsequent needs precipitated a change in Rockville's local government as well. The construction of I-270 attracted federal agencies, such as NIST and other research and industrial uses to the I-270 corridor. The City's commercial area, which encompassed the location of 50 Monroe Place, was concentrated on Commerce Lane and Montgomery Avenue. This area was a mixture of Victorian houses, smaller buildings, reused barns and some 1920-1940s commercial buildings. During the 1950s, there were still several family-owned stores with residential apartments above them, eateries for the increasing number of lunchtime patrons, and several car dealerships. Modern shopping centers appeared in the late 1950s and 1960s. These shopping centers took away from retail establishments in the downtown area and urban renewal soon followed. Ms. McGuckian addressed Commissioner Hartranft's earlier question about significant events that may have occurred between the mid- and late 1950s that might have influenced architecture. She said that there was really nothing unusual during that time period that set things apart, but rather that the entire decade was a period of strong growth and expansion.

Dr. Teresa Lachin of Peerless Rockville agreed with earlier statements that Mr. Arthur was a prolific and versatile architect. His work in Rockville was during the 1959-1971 time period. Dr. Lachin showed other examples of Stanley Arthur's buildings, including the Bethesda Medical Building (1955) that has a similar scale to 50 Monroe and the Vaughn Building in Bethesda (1956) that has similar yellow porcelain enamel panels. Of his work in Rockville, Dr. Lachin stated that 50 Monroe Street was Mr. Arthur's most architecturally daring building and it was the largest office building in Rockville at the time. He also designed the Rockville Civic Auditorium in 1960, the 1964 campus-style facility for the Unitarian Church and the 1969 Maryvale Elementary School as well as Wootton High School in 1970. In 1971, he was the architect for the Rockville Regional Library. He retired in 1978.

Chairman van Balgooy opined that the election of 1954 transformed the City and that there was, in fact, a significant difference shown between 1949 Rockville and 1959 Rockville. He added that there were several large buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959, along with the IBM Building, and that the 1950s did appear to present a watershed time period for the City.

Dr. Lachin agreed that the construction of the IBM Building did signal the connection of Rockville to a larger and more sophisticated world. The City had a newfound connection to the

international world through its IBM corporate connection. In that same year, the courthouse got a new wing and it was a banner year for commercial architecture. The Georgian Revival building at 22 West Jefferson, the Abbey Building on North Perry Street, and the Brown Building were all built in 1959. The IBM Building was the most sophisticated of all the buildings that were built that year.

Commissioner Moloney asked Dr. Lachin for her opinion about which of Stanley Arthur's works were his best examples. She replied that Maryvale Elementary School, the Rockville Library for its complex siting, and the Bethesda Medical Building were his best works in Montgomery County in her opinion.

Barbara Sears stated that she hoped the HDC would agree with the staff and Traceries conclusions that the building is not of exceptional significance and importance to Rockville.

In addition to the above testimony a number of exhibits were entered into the public record, including, but not limited to various planning staff reports dated September 9, 2005, September 12, 2005, October 17, 2005, and November 9, 2005; Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) Form on 50 Monroe Place (Revision #1 and #2); U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years; and a report and images from EHT Traceries, Inc. titled "Context Study for The Barkley Building- 50 Monroe Place, Rockville, Maryland."

Chairman van Balgooy closed the public testimony portion of the meeting.

Discussion and Motion

The commissioners engaged in an extensive discussion of the issues and the record before them. Notwithstanding the contrary opinions of City staff, Peerless Rockville, and the property owner and EHT Traceries, Inc., the commissioners expressed their respective opinions that the site is of exceptional local significance in one or more of the evaluated categories. On a motion made by Commissioner Hartranft and seconded by Commissioner Hitchcock, the Commission voted 5-0 to find the building at 50 Monroe Place eligible for single site designation, finding it of exceptional importance to the history and architecture of Rockville, and voting to recommend it to the Mayor and Council as eligible for historic designation. The Commission further directed that staff draft, for the Commission's approval, a written recommendation setting for the findings and conclusions of the Commission supporting its recommendation. Those findings and conclusions are set forth below.

Findings and Conclusions

The Commission has considered the testimony and evidence placed in the record and disagrees with the opinions and conclusions drawn by City preservation staff, Peerless Rockville, the property owner, and EHT Traceries. The Commission has determined that under the applicable National Register Criteria for Evaluation Guidelines prepared by the National Park Service, a site can be found to be exceptionally significant or important locally, even if not exceptional on a national level.

The Commission has also determined that it is appropriate to evaluate the "exceptional" criteria in terms of "first, last, best, or only," and finds that 50 Monroe Place satisfies this criteria in several respects.

The Commission finds, based on the revised MHT Forms and testimony of Ms. McGuckian and Dr. Lachin, that the structure at 50 Monroe Place was the largest office building constructed in Rockville up to 1959 and, as the first home of IBM in the area, it was the first evidence of interest in a Rockville location for large national and international corporations at that time. It was Rockville's first modernist office building and was widely recognized for its commercial significance and Bauhaus-inspired design. It signaled Rockville's emergence as a major center of post-war development, research, and technology and its entry into the larger Washington, DC metropolitan area. It is the only structure left of its age, type and quality reflecting this period of Rockville's transformation from a traditional rural County Seat to an urban city that reflected international style.

The Commission further finds that the building is exceptional in design in its unusual use of porcelain panels and glass curtain wall on three sides. From the photos and research provided by Traceries, it appears that this unusual design distinguishes it from most structures of this architectural style at this period in the metropolitan area that had only the front façade glazed with panels and glass. With its bold geometry, innovative use of vibrant color, and subtle mathematical harmonies, it was the most sophisticated and daring building of the five new office buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959, exhibiting an international style and attracting a forward-looking, high technology international firm, the IBM Corporation. It was designed by a significant local architect, Stanley Arthur. Based on the information provided by EHT Traceries, the Commission concluded that there does not appear to be a better example of International Bauhaus-inspired architecture in Rockville, if not in Montgomery County. It cited from the MHT Form prepared by Dr. Lachin: "Dwarfed by more recent hi-rise construction, it remains an icon of Rockville's evolving architectural landscape."

As for its integrity, the Commission finds the building to be substantially unaltered. The windows have been removed but stored. Although the original site and setting has changed as a result of urban renewal, the public has a view of the front and most significant façade of the building via James Monroe Park, which is the last remnant of East Montgomery Avenue. The structure remains the last building with frontage on what was historic East Montgomery Avenue.

Based on the foregoing, the Commission concludes that 50 Monroe Place meets the National Register for Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation A, C, and D (g) for designation as a local single site historic district:

Criterion A: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history:

1. Largest office building constructed in Rockville up to 1959.
2. First home of IBM, a major federal contractor, in the area.
3. First evidence of interest in a Rockville location for large national and international corporations at that time.
4. Rockville's first office building in the "modern" style, an international Bauhaus style.

5. Signaled Rockville's emergence as a major center of post-war development, research, and technology and its entry into the larger Washington, DC metropolitan area.
6. Only structure left of its age, type and quality reflecting this period of Rockville's transformation from a traditional rural County Seat to an urban city.
7. Last building with frontage on the preserved remnant (James Monroe Park) of historic East Montgomery Avenue.

Criterion C: embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, are the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

1. Exceptional in design in its unusual use of porcelain panels and glass curtain wall on three sides rather than just the front facade
2. First and best example of International Bauhaus style architecture in Rockville
3. Most sophisticated and daring building of the five new office buildings constructed in Rockville in 1959
4. Designed by a significant local architect, Stanley Arthur

Criterion D: That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory. **(g.)** A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

1. For the findings stated above, the Commission found the structure to be of exceptional local importance.

Integrity: The Commission found the building to be substantially unaltered on the exterior and the public view of the most significant façade, the front façade, preserved in the view from Monroe Street through James Monroe Park, the last remnant of historic East Montgomery Avenue.

For the foregoing reasons, the Commission recommends 50 Monroe Place as eligible for designation as a single-site Historic District.