

**NATIONAL  
TRUST  
FOR  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION®**

**Richard Moe**  
PRESIDENT

May 21, 2009

The Honorable Sheila Dixon  
Mayor  
City of Baltimore  
City Hall, Room 250  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Mayor Dixon:

I am writing today to express the National Trust for Historic Preservation's concerns regarding the current redevelopment proposal for the "Superblock" in the West Side of downtown Baltimore.

In 1999, the National Trust listed Baltimore's West Side among *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places*. Since then, the National Trust and our allies in Maryland have commended you and your partners for developing a model preservation-based revitalization plan for the West Side, based on the City of Baltimore's 2001 Memorandum of Agreement with the Maryland Historical Trust - one of our nation's most effective State Historic Preservation Offices.

The Memorandum of Agreement has guided the successful redevelopment of the Hippodrome Theater, the Congress, the Hecht Company building, the Stewarts Building, and the Bank of America Centerpoint project - all excellent examples of historic preservation projects that have significantly advanced Baltimore's economic development goals. For our part, the National Trust continues to actively promote the West Side's revitalization, through both advocacy and investment. To date, we have provided \$9 million in rehabilitation financing through the National Trust Community Investment Corporation, our for-profit subsidiary.

As you know, the Superblock contains over a dozen buildings, many of which are historically significant and are specified for preservation under the Memorandum of Agreement. This unusually well-preserved historic area is a significant cultural and economic asset for downtown Baltimore. Historic rehabilitation tax credit programs that have helped many projects on the West Side can also be effective in the Superblock. Demolition of this unique streetscape would be a great loss for the city, and a step backwards in the progress that you have made possible.

Mayor Sheila Dixon  
May 21, 2009  
Page 2

Baltimore has distinguished itself as a national leader in the preservation and adaptive use of historic buildings as an engine for community revitalization. The careful preservation of the Superblock is critical to the West Side's future, and we strongly encourage the City of Baltimore to remain committed to the letter and the spirit of the Memorandum of Agreement as you promote new and sustainable economic growth there for the benefit of Baltimore.

With warmest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Moe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

Richard Moe

RM:nz

cc: The Honorable William Cole, Baltimore City Council  
Mr. Rodney Little, Director, Maryland Historical Trust  
Mr. M. J. Brodie, President, Baltimore Development Corporation  
Ms. Kathleen Kotarba, Director, CHAP  
Mr. Ron Krietner, Co-Chair, West Side Project Area Committee  
Ms. Kathy Robertson, Co-Chair, West Side Project Area Committee  
Mr. Tyler Gearhart, Executive Director, Preservation Maryland  
Mr. Johns Hopkins, Executive Director, Baltimore Heritage, Inc.