



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Leslie Miles  
Chair

March 30, 2011

Francoise Carrier, Chair  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Historic Preservation Commission Evaluation and Recommendation:  
Silver Spring Baptist Church, 830-832 Wayne Avenue, Silver Spring (Resource #36/61)

Dear Ms. Carrier:

On March 23, 2011, the Historic Preservation Commission evaluated the Silver Spring Baptist Church for addition to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* and/or inclusion in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The resource is located at 830-832 Wayne Avenue, in the Silver Spring CBD. The Silver Spring Historical Society nominated this resource for historic designation and submitted a completed Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties form. Under the HPC's approved Executive Regulations, the Historic Preservation Commission must review submitted nominations and forward a recommendation to the Planning Board.

The resource, known historically as the Silver Spring Baptist Church and now as the First Baptist Church of Silver Spring, consists of a complex of buildings that includes a 1925 parsonage that was remodeled and expanded in 1931 to its current Colonial Revival appearance with a rear sanctuary auditorium addition, and a 1956 modernist sanctuary at the Fenton Street corner.

The HPC carefully considered testimony and material submitted for the record. At the conclusion of its worksession, the Commission voted 6-2 to recommend the resource be neither added to the *Locational Atlas* nor designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. In its deliberations, the HPC evaluated whether the resource met the designation criteria identified in the nomination materials, making the following findings:

**1a. The historic resource has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation.**

The congregation's needs continue to evolve and so the church does not meet the cultural characteristics of the area. The congregation can't be separated from its building.



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**1d. The historic resource exemplifies the cultural, economic social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities.**

The resource evolved and changed over time and does not represent any one period. The 1926 parsonage was substantially modified in 1931. The sanctuary dates from 30 years later.

**2a. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.**

As a whole, the resource does not represent a distinctive type, and the elements lack cohesion. Buildings are designed in architectural styles of Colonial Revival, and Mid-Century Modern with Art Deco influence. The original parsonage has been modified greatly.

**2b. The historic resource represents the work of a master.**

The HPC agreed with the staff recommendation that the resource does not meet this criterion, finding that while Ronald Senseman was an accomplished and prolific architect, the record did not but substantiate that this was the work of a master.

**2e. The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

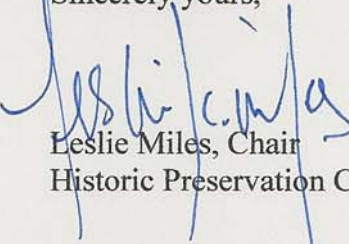
The resource does not possess a singular physical characteristic or landscape. Historically this crossroad location at Wayne Avenue and Fenton Streets was an important Silver Spring civic node which included the Silver Spring Armory. The intersection has been irreversibly changed by surrounding development that has irreversibly changed this once prominent location.

Having found that the Silver Spring Baptist Church (Resource #36/61) fails to meet any of the criteria for designation in section 24A-3 of the County Code, the Historic Preservation Commission recommends that this resource not be identified in the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites or added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

The Commission received testimony regarding certain key visual features of the Wayne Avenue facade, including the modernist bell tower. Although the HPC does not find this resource eligible for historic designation, perhaps it would possible for these features to be incorporated into future development of this property.

Materials considered by the HPC, including the research form, consultant's report, and public submittals are available at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic). Should you have questions, you may contact Clare Lise Kelly, Research & Designation Coordinator, Historic Preservation, at 301-563-3402.

Sincerely yours,



Leslie Miles, Chair  
Historic Preservation Commission

cc: Marcie Stickle and George French, Silver Spring Historical Society  
Scott Wallace, Linowes and Blocher LLP