



**National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters,  
900 Spring Street, Silver Spring**

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**Description**

Request to list the National Sand & Gravel Association (NSGA) and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters, 900 Spring Street, in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

**Staff Recommendation**

List the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters, 900 Spring Street, in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

**Summary**

The Silver Spring Historical Society submitted a Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form and requested evaluation of the NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters, 900 Spring Street, for potential listing and protection from the pending demolition in May 2019. The NRMCA (the current property owner) applied for a demolition permit on June 17, 2019. The approval of the demolition permit is pending the review of this request. Historic Preservation staff reviewed existing documentation, conducted additional research on the history of the NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters, and drafted the Designation Report. Staff found that the subject property satisfies two criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) held a joint worksession and public hearing on September 25, 2019. The HPC heard: 1) a presentation from historic preservation staff, 2) testimony from the property owner and its representatives; and 3) public testimony from interested members of the public. After deliberation, the HPC found that the subject property satisfied two designation criteria as outlined in the Designation Report and unanimously recommended that the Planning Board list the NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. In addition, the HPC concurred with the proposed environmental setting that included only the lots associated with the building.

## **Public Outreach**

The Historic Preservation staff provided notification for the HPC public hearing to the property owner, the adjacent property owners, and interested parties. At the HPC public hearing on September 25, 2019, all individual or organizations that provided public testimony (other than the property owners and their representatives who oppose any level of designation) supported listing the building in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites*. These organizations include: Docomomo US/DC (regional organization dedicated to increasing public awareness, appreciation, and protection of Modern architecture in the Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland), Montgomery Preservation Inc., Art Deco Society of Washington, D.C., Silver Spring Historical Society, and Peerless Rockville.

## **Designation Criteria**

As noted in Section J of the Designation Report, staff finds that the subject property satisfies two criteria as listed in §24A-3 of the Montgomery County Code:

### **2.A Architectural and design significance. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters embodies the distinctive qualities of Brutalism and corporate architecture. John H. Sullivan's (the architect) two-story commercial building utilized raw concrete, a cantilevered second story, connection of interior and exterior space, and exposed aggregate panels to emphasize sculptural qualities, mass, and solidity. The interplay between the solid-to-void relationship on the retaining wall, first story, and second story establish a repetitive visual pattern typical of Brutalism. The headquarters' form and color serve as the primary design features from a distance as the poured raw concrete is softened by the tan hues of the exposed aggregate panels. Upon approaching the building, however, the composition and richness of the exposed aggregate panels comes to focus. The panels consisting of Lilesville white quartz aggregate has a natural diversity of textures that adds visual interest.

The iconic headquarters reflects the vocabulary of corporate architecture. Sullivan utilized the building products associated with the organizations in the design of the building. The building showcased the forward-thinking design potential and uses for ready mixed concrete, sand, and gravel championed by the organizations. The ready mixed poured concrete and the exposed Lilesville white quartz aggregate in the panels aptly represented the interests of both associations. Overall, the Brutalist-influenced style presented a forward-thinking/future orientated corporate identity augmented by utilizing materials reflecting the overall corporate mission.

### **2.E Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters is one of the premier examples of Brutalist and corporate-influenced architecture in Montgomery County. The building fully utilizes its site at the corner of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive and has become a community landmark due to its impressive monumental design applied to a small-scaled office building. In addition, the building's sculptural qualities and use of color and texture have garnered greater appreciation from the populace in comparison to contemporaneous Brutalist architecture.



Figure 2: The map shows the overall property owned by the NRMCA outlined in black. The hatched area consists of the proposed environmental setting.

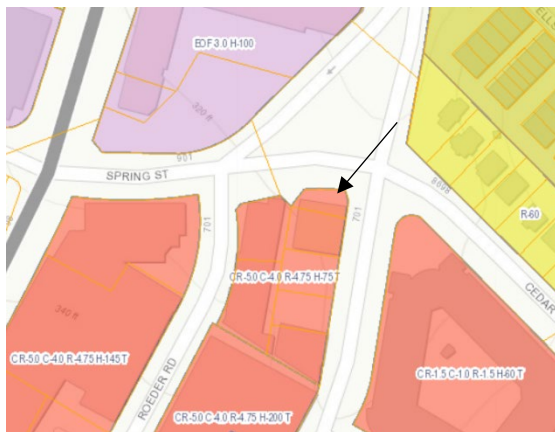


Figure 2: The map shows the existing zoning. The arrow points to the location of the NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters.

## Land Use and Zoning

The National Sand & Gravel Association (NSGA) and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters is located at 900 Spring Street at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive, and within the Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan (approved and adopted in February 2000). The subject lots within the environmental setting are zoned CR-5.0, C-4.0, R-4.75, H-75T and are 7,483 sq. ft. per SDAT. Outside of the proposed environmental setting, the three lots to the south (also owned by the NRMCA) have the same zoning and consists of 16,052 sq. ft. per SDAT. In total, the five lots comprise 23,535 sq. ft.<sup>1</sup>

The adjacent properties have the following zoning:

- Block to the south is CR-5.0, C-4.0, R-4.75, H-200T.
- Block to the west fronting Roeder Road has CR-5.0, C-4.0, R-4.75, H-145T.
- Block to the east across Ellsworth Drive is CR-1.5C, C-1, R-1.5, and H-60T.
- Block to the north across Spring Street is EOF-3.0, H-100.
- Block to the northeast at the opposite corner of the intersection is single family residential, R-60.

Historic preservation does not prohibit uses allowed under existing zoning nor would it prohibit the continued use of this space. There are no site plans or other development schemes that have been submitted to the

Planning Department for consideration at this time. The NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters could be resold as viable office space for a future tenant with a *Locational Atlas* designation.

## Historic Preservation and Redevelopment Schemes

To address the owner's concern that historic preservation would prohibit or deny any viable use of the site, staff has prepared the following models for the Planning Board that illustrate historic preservation and redevelopment are not incompatible. Historic preservation can take many different forms, ranging from full building to partial building preservation, and adaptive reuse to uses beyond office space are possible. As depicted in the illustrative model, listing the subject building on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* would permit the property owner to incorporate the building into a larger scheme. In this example, significant portions of the subject building along Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive are

<sup>1</sup> In 2000, the Sector Plan rezoned all the NRMCA parcels to encourage market feasibility from CBD-1 to CBD-2 with a height limit of 60 feet, allowing the height to exceed 60 feet up to a maximum height of 75 feet with Planning Board approval based on compatibility with surrounding structures. The CBD zones became defunct with the 2014 Zoning Ordinance revision. M-NCPPC, *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2000), 43.

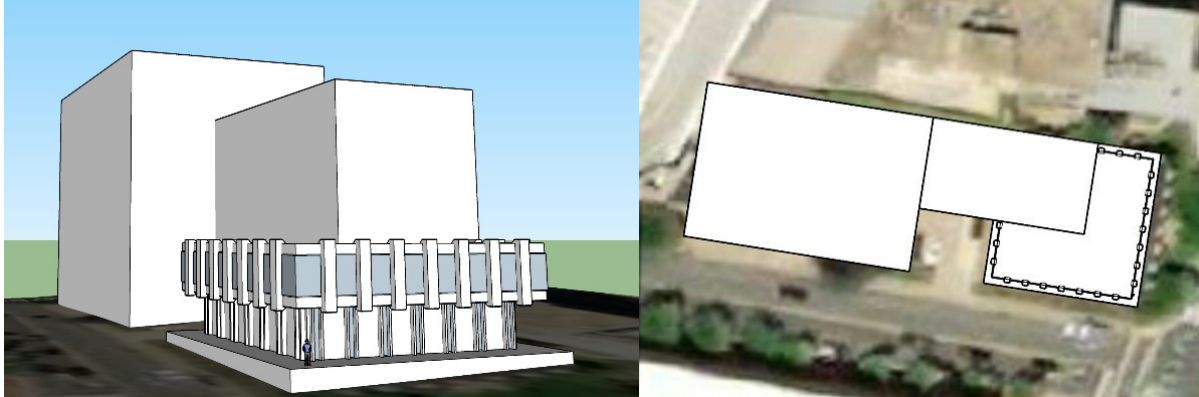


Figure 3: Illustrative model showing partial building preservation as part of a hypothetical redevelopment scheme.

preserved, while a 75' tower partially demolishes the southwest corner of the building and connects to a 100' tower on the southern part of NRCA's site. This type of preservation still allows for the historic building to express its massing, form, and design, but provides the property owner with greater latitude. While this model doesn't consider many factors, it demonstrates that historic preservation would not prohibit a viable redevelopment scenario.

The height could be increased even further for the southernmost portion of a redevelopment scheme as the adjacent building to the southwest measures approximately 200' in height. So long as the average height across the redevelopment averages 75', a taller tower on the south, juxtaposed with the preserved 900 Spring Street building at the northern end of the site, could be constructed in conformance with the Zoning Ordinance while allowing for preservation as part of a height averaging redevelopment scenario. As part of an optional method of development, through the Sketch Plan and Site Plan process, the preservation of the building would allow the applicant to request public benefits points for retained buildings. The retention of the headquarters could provide a sense of identity to the project, connect to the history of Silver Spring, and add to the rich architectural diversity in this area of the county.

### Historic Preservation and Sector Plan Guidance

Historic Preservation of NSGA and NRMC Headquarters comports with the Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan guidance. The subject building is in the "Core" revitalization area of the CBD. The land use and zoning recommendations for the plan focuses the densest development in the Core to create a varied and active center, with housing, office, and retail development in a pedestrian-friendly environment.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Sector Plan recognizes that:

Historic buildings stand out on the urban landscape; they look different and they resonate with meaning, recalling memories and experiences. Silver Spring's historic buildings are also good urban neighbors. They are well designed, oriented to the street and pedestrian, because they were built at a human scale.<sup>3</sup>

Preservation of the headquarters satisfies the general recommendation that the area's historic buildings contribute "to downtown's aesthetic character, and can have significant economic return as unique structures are rehabilitated for new uses."<sup>4</sup> Second, the listing of the building in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* still would allow the applicants to fully utilize the site as shown in the illustrative

<sup>2</sup> M-NCPPC, *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2000), 36.

<sup>3</sup> M-NCPPC, *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2000), 135.

<sup>4</sup> M-NCPPC, *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2000), 27.



models. Third, partial building preservation would benefit any potential redevelopment's transition to the surrounding single-family residential and townhouses to the northeast.

There are many sites listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* as well as in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* in the Silver Spring CBD. Buildings that were reviewed by the Historic Preservation Office or Historic Preservation Commission as part of redevelopment are shown in **bold**.


<u>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</u>	<u>Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites</u>
<b>Silver Theatre and Shopping Center</b> <b>8500 Colesville Road</b>	<b>Silver Spring CBD Historic District</b>
<b>Tastee Diner</b> <b>8676 Georgia Avenue</b>	<b>National Association of Dryers and Cleaners Institute</b> <b>8021 Georgia Avenue</b>
Montgomery Arms Apartments 8627 Fenton and 8700 Colesville Road	<b>Canada Dry Bottling Plant</b> <b>1201 East-West Highway</b>
Silver Spring Train Station 8100 Georgia Avenue	Spring Garden Apartments 8001 Eastern Avenue
Silver Spring Post Office 8412 Georgia Avenue	Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department 8131 Georgia Avenue
Falkland Apartments 16 <sup>th</sup> Street and East-West Highway	North Washington Shopping Center 7900 Georgia Avenue
Jesup Blair House, Jesup Blair Local Park	
NE DC/MC Boundary Stone	
Acorn Park and the Silver Spring 8060 Newell Street	

Table 1: Properties listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation or the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites.

As shown in Table 1, historic preservation has been an integral part of numerous redevelopment scenarios. The NRMCA and NSGA Headquarters provides another opportunity to realize the beneficial pairing of historic preservation and new construction in our built environment.

### Next Steps

If approved for listing by the Planning Board, next steps could be to conduct any additional research required, collaborate with the property owners on design guidelines, and bring the item through the multi-step public process to designate the property on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Staff recommends that if listed on the *Locational Atlas*, that the Planning Board direct staff to study further scenarios to allow for building preservation as part of a redevelopment of the property.



**NATIONAL SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION AND NATIONAL  
READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS  
900 SPRING STREET  
SILVER SPRING, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD 20910**

**LOCATIONAL ATLAS DESIGNATION FORM  
SEPTEMBER 2019**

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Maryland – National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Montgomery County Department of Planning  
Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites Designation Form

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

Historic Name: Headquarters for the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association  
Current Name: National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties #: M:36-96

**2. LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

Address Number and Street: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring  
County, State, Zip: Montgomery County, Maryland, 20910

**3. TYPE OF PROPERTY**

A. Ownership of Property

☒ Private  
☐ Public  
☐ Local  
☐ State  
☐ Federal

B. Category of Property

☒ Private  
☐ Public  
☐ Local  
☐ State  
☐ Federal

C. Number of Resources within the Property

Contributing		Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Structures	<input type="checkbox"/>	Structures
<input type="checkbox"/> Objects	<input type="checkbox"/>	Objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	Archaeological Sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total

D. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places: The property has not been evaluated for the National Register of Historic Places.



#### 4. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic Function(s): COMMERCE/TRADE: Organizational

Current Function(s): VACANT/NOT IN USE

#### 5. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

**Site Description:** The National Sand & Gravel Association (NSGA) and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters is located at 900 Spring Street at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. The property consists of four lots comprising .41 acres (17,683 square feet) with a topography that slopes downwards from the southwest to the northeast. The property is bound by: Spring Street to the north; a three-story office building at 719-721 Ellsworth Drive to the south; Ellsworth Drive to the east; and a six-story office building at 700 Roeder Drive to the west (App. 1, Fig. 1 and App. 2, Fig. 3). A concrete sidewalk abuts Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive and wraps the northern and eastern extents of the property.

The building is set on a raised concrete platform and terrace defined by a retaining wall composed of alternating smooth and exposed aggregate concrete retaining walls on the three primary elevations (north, south, and east). On the west elevation, the retaining wall consists of a poured concrete wall with no exposed aggregate panels. The simplicity of the western retaining wall is likely due to the reduced visibility of this portion of the building in relation to the property line and present six-story office building 700 Roeder Road. The width of the terrace is approximately 10' on the primary elevations and 5' on the west elevation.

The façade (north elevation) of the headquarters addresses Spring Street. The raised platform is setback approximately 28' from the public right-of-way; a manicured lawn with two trees and shrubbery separates the façade from the public sidewalk. The centrally located wide concrete walkway and stair pierces the lawn and retaining wall to access the terrace and front entrance of the building.

The east elevation of the building fronts Ellsworth Drive. The raised platform is setback approximately 11' from the public rights-of-way; a narrow-manicured lawn and shrubbery separates the elevation from the public sidewalk. There is no direct access to the building on the eastern edge of the property.

The south elevation of the headquarters abuts a 20-car concrete parking lot. The parking lot is primarily delineated by the following: 1) a chain link fence on the east; 2) a poured concrete retaining wall topped with a metal fence (eastern extent) and a narrow lawn (western extent) to the south; and 3) a decorative retaining wall of smooth and exposed aggregate panels matching the design of the raised platform and a manicured lawn to the west. The chain link fence along Ellsworth Drive is setback approximately 10' from the sidewalk. The landscaped area consists of a manicured lawn, trees, and shrubbery.

The west elevation of the headquarters faces a six-story office building. Landscape elements on this side of the property are limited to a six-foot tall wood privacy fence abutting the concrete retaining wall on the northern half of the building. A chain link fence attached to the southern end of the building prohibits access from the parking lot to this side of the property.

**Architectural Description (App. 3, Fig. 1-11):** The NSGA and the NRMCA constructed the Brutalist-influenced headquarters in 1964. The associations hired local architect John H. (Jack) Sullivan to design a building that reflected their mission and corporate image. His expressive two-

story, reinforced concrete building with a flat roof showcases the various forms, textures, and geometric potential for the products heralded by the associations.

The square building rests on a raised concrete platform that creates a sense of monumentality with a temple-like affect. The design features a lighter first story with larger windows connecting interior and exterior spaces and a heavier cantilevered second story providing a sense of weight and massiveness. Sullivan further augments the building with a repetitive visual pattern of solid and voided spaces, smooth and exposed aggregate concrete surfaces, projected and recessed elements, and differentiation of color from the concrete. From a distance, the building's overall form and color serve as the primary design features, but the various textures of the concrete come to the forefront upon closer examination. All the smooth concrete surfaces are a raw gray concrete, while the exposed Lilesville white quartz aggregate concrete panels (produced by Earley Studios) infuse a lighter color. Sullivan's juxtaposition of colors and textures transmit a sense of individuality and he deftly adapts the vocabulary of commercial architecture to this neighborhood-scaled office building.

On the first story, each elevation consists of six repetitious and evenly-spaced bays. The bays, consisting of full-height windows or double-leaf doors, are framed by smooth concrete pilasters.<sup>1</sup> Separating the bays are narrower exposed aggregate concrete panels that provide a textural juxtaposition. The cantilevered second story inverts the solid and void pattern established on the first story. Seven narrower bays consist of deeply recessed metal-framed windows set within projecting rectangular smooth concrete frames. The concrete frames extend beyond the plane of the cantilever overhang and roof forming a crenellated effect. Separating the bays are wider exposed aggregate concrete panels that correspond to the height of the windows.

Entry to the building is limited to the façade (north elevation) on Spring Street and the south (rear) elevation accessing the parking lot. On the façade, the entry doors consist of double-leaf, metal-framed glass doors with single-light transom in the center two bays. On the south elevation, there is a non-historic, single-leaf, steel door with full-height side-lights and transom on the third bay from the western extent of the building.

The manipulation of solid to void, alternation of smooth concrete to exposed aggregate, and the use of projecting elements is continued on the retaining walls of the raised platform. The smooth concrete sections project beyond the face of the exposed aggregate sections of the wall matching the repetitious pattern established by the building.

### Interior

Historic Preservation staff did not access the interior of the headquarters.

## **6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **A. Applicable Designation Criteria as described in Chapter 24: Historic Resources Preservation, Section 24A-3, Montgomery County Ordinance:**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters meets two of the nine designation criteria as described in Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance. See Section J of this report for a detailed description.

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<sup>1</sup> Staff will verify the design and type of the windows pending future investigations, but the first and second story windows appear to be operable from the public rights-of-way.

**B. Statement of Significance:**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters represents the confluence of Brutalist-influenced design principles and corporate architecture. John H. Sullivan, the architect of the building, captured the main tenets of Brutalism to create a sculptural form that expressed monumentality by emphasizing the headquarters' mass and form. These qualities are augmented with the building's cantilevered second story, repetitious pattern of solid and voided spaces, and siting on a raised concrete platform imbuing a temple-like affect. Sullivan deviated from modernist design with the inclusion of applied exposed aggregate panels adhered to the raw concrete massing, which function as ornament. The panels, however, seamlessly represented the corporate mission of the building's occupants as it leveraged concrete and gravel to project a visual identity and branding. Furthermore, Sullivan's use of exposed aggregate panels embraced variation and individual expression to achieve a unique blend of textures and colors that produced a look of warmth and elegance often lacking from contemporaneous modernist buildings. All the design elements allowed for a relatively small neighborhood office building to achieve successfully the monumentality associated with Brutalism and corporate architecture. The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters is one of the premier examples of mid-twentieth century modernist architecture in Silver Spring and Montgomery County.

**C. Period of Significance:** 1964

**D. Significant Dates:** 1964 (completion of the building); ca. 1999 (departure of NSGA); and 2019 (departure of NRMCA)

**E. Significant Persons:** John H. (Jack) Sullivan

**F. Areas of Significance:** Architecture

**G. Architect/Builder:** John H. (Jack) Sullivan/Victor Beauchamp

**H. Narrative:**

***Historic Context: Silver Spring as a Commercial and Office Center***

Following the Great Depression, Silver Spring experienced fast-paced growth anchored by the construction of the Silver Spring Shopping Center (1938), a planned neighborhood shopping center that focused on the needs of an automobile-orientated middle-class. The area benefited from a strategic location between two urban centers, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, and a commercial zoning and public parking plan established by M-NCPPC. The county owned and operated parking lots for an estimated 2,000 cars. By the 1940s, planners touted Silver Spring as the second largest community in the state with a population of 70,000. Silver Spring transformed from a bedroom community to a major commercial location with proposals for office buildings and hotel.<sup>2</sup>

While retail development stalled due to the construction of nearby suburban shopping centers and changing consumer habits in the late-1950s, Silver Spring's businesses district experienced substantial growth the following decade. Multistory office buildings, hotels, and apartments

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<sup>2</sup> For more information regarding the history of Silver Spring see the following resources: Richard Longstreth, "Silver Spring: Georgia Avenue, Colesville Road, and the Creation of an Alternative "Downtown" for Metropolitan Washington, D.C.," in *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 247-258; Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern* (Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 2015), 32-35.

complexes were constructed on the fringes of the original district transforming the area into a regional employment center.<sup>3</sup> Between 1963 and 1966, the following office buildings included: 1) 8701 Georgia Avenue; 2) 1400 Spring Street; 3) The World Building, 8121 Georgia Avenue; 4) 8555 16<sup>th</sup> Street; and 5) 8720-8730 Georgia Avenue.<sup>4</sup> The planning and construction of the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters between 1962 and 1964 corresponds to the burgeoning office and business district.

***Historic Context: National Sand & Gravel Association, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, and Construction of the Headquarters***

The National Sand and Gravel Producers Association first organized in Chicago in 1911.<sup>5</sup> Renamed the National Sand and Gravel Producers in 1917, the association strived to promote the importance of the industry:

The National Association of Sand & Gravel Producers would show to your honorable body that the members of the industry which it represents are engaged in a business, the products of which enter the very foundation and existence of a large majority of the Nation's activities that make for the welfare, comfort, and happiness of the whole people.<sup>6</sup>

The National Secretary E. Guy Sutton sent out a membership recruitment letter stating that:

The success of any modern industry is measured by the effectiveness of its particular organization. The sand and gravel producers have been slow in establishing a national association representing their industry. As a consequence, they are not prepared to meet the unprecedented situations constantly arising.<sup>7</sup>

The organization quickly became a leading voice in the field, published a monthly bulletin, and changed its name to the National Sand and Gravel Association (NSGA) in 1923. The association located its headquarters at the Munsey Building, Washington, D.C.<sup>8</sup> The goals of the organization expanded to the following : 1) promote and extend the use of the products of the industry; 2) provide an organization for cooperation and coordination of members with those of other trade organizations and governmental agencies; 3) establish and maintain the highest standard of business practices, customs, and usages; and 4) protect the interests of the industry.<sup>9</sup>

In the late 1920s, the NSGA recognized the burgeoning ready mixed concrete industry. Ready mixed concrete refers to concrete (mixture of cement, water, and aggregates) that is batched for delivery from a central plant. The association discussed creating a separate organization to address the

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, *The Silver Spring CBD* (Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 1993), 5.

<sup>4</sup> The dates of construction are from the real property data information available from Montgomery County Atlas, <http://www.mcatlas.org>.

<sup>5</sup> "Sand and Gravel Men Organize," *Rock Products* 11 no. 6 (December 22, 1911): 26-30.

<sup>6</sup> National Research Council, *Handbook of Scientific and Technical Societies and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1937), 165; E. Guy Sutton, "Sand and Gravel Producers Fight for Justice," *National Sand and Gravel Bulletin* 1, no. 7-8, May-June 1920, 7-9.

<sup>7</sup> "Sand and Gravel Association Plans," *Rock Products and Building Materials* 20 (August 15, 1917): 23.

<sup>8</sup> The Munsey Building, on E Street, N.W., between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> streets, was built in 1905 and demolished in 1982.

<sup>9</sup> National Sand and Gravel Association, "The National's Constitution," *National Sand and Gravel Bulletin* 3 (1922): 44.

concerns of that industry at its annual convention in 1929. The following year, the NSGA voted to organize the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) to “protect the welfare and best interest of those engaged in the production and sale of ready mixed concrete.”<sup>10</sup> The new association shared office space with the NSGA at the Munsey Building.

In addition to advocacy, the NRMCA dedicated time to concrete engineering and research. The organization jointly operated a laboratory with the NSGA, which moved from Washington, D.C. to the University of Maryland in 1938.<sup>11</sup> The Joint Research Laboratory conducted experiments pertinent to industry issues, particularly those dealing with standardization of specifications and test methods.<sup>12</sup>

The organizations remained in Washington, D.C., until the early 1960s when the NSGA and NRMCA decided to build a new headquarters at 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. The associations granted authority to purchase the property in February 1962 and approved the construction of a new headquarters at its joint board of directors meeting the following October. The board had hired local architect John H. Sullivan, Jr., and approved initial renderings of the subject building.<sup>13</sup> In 1963, the associations awarded Victor R. Beauchamp Associates, Washington, D.C., the \$282,119 contract to construct the office building.<sup>14</sup> The *Washington Post* and the *Evening Star* published renderings of the building and noted its “showcase” and “novel” design (App. 4, Fig. 1 and 3).<sup>15</sup>

The NSGA and NRMCA’s new headquarters opened in 1964. The associations also shared the office space with the Truck Mixers Manufacturers Bureau, the Concrete Plan Manufacturers Bureau, and the National Industrial Sand Association. The building was described as follows:

The two-story building contains slightly more than 14,000 sq. ft of floor space, and is located on about 17,000 sq. ft. of land. Practically all elements of the building were constructed of ready mixed concrete, including the exterior wall panels with exposed Lilesville white quartz gravel.<sup>16</sup>

The Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (founded in 1955) bestowed First Award to the new headquarters building (App. 4, Fig. 4). The report of the jury stated the following:

The jury found the design consistent throughout, praising the careful detaining of the interior as well as exterior. They commented on the attractiveness of the lobby, its relationship to the exterior and found the interior spaces, in general, well handled. ...they

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<sup>10</sup> National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, “Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story,” <http://www.nrmca.org> (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, “Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story,” <http://www.nrmca.org> (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Sherman F. Booth, *Standardization Activities in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), 155.

<sup>13</sup> “NSGA-NRMCA will build new building,” *Rock Products: Devoted to the Production and Sale of Rock and Clay Products* 65 (1962): 78-79; Walter Trauffer, “NSGA Directors Meeting at Colorado Springs,” *Pit and Quarry* (December 1962): 86-88.

<sup>14</sup> “General Contract Awarded for NSGA-NRMCA Building in Silver Spring, MD,” *Pit & Quarry* (July 1963): 23.

<sup>15</sup> “New Silver Spring Associations Building,” *Washington Post*, June 6, 1963, Proquest; “Novel Design for Building,” *Evening Star*, June 7, 1963, NewsBank.

<sup>16</sup> “New National Headquarters of NSGA-NRMCA Shared by 3 Related Associations,” *Pit & Quarry* (October 1964): 287.



found it consistent in material and quality which dignified it in a simple manner and created a bold corporate expression. From a distance, the form is the expression and on approach more detail form comes to attention — total foresighted architecture.

In 1987, the NSGA voted to rename the organization to National Aggregates Association. Thirteen years later, the National Aggregates Association removed itself from 900 Spring Street after it merged with the National Stone Association to form the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association.<sup>17</sup> The NRMCA remained at the 900 Spring Street for 55 years, but relocation of the association's headquarters to Alexandria, Virginia, is projected to occur in 2019.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Historic Context: Modernism and Brutalism***

Modern architecture is a movement classified by an emphasis on form, honesty in function and materials, the rational use of space, and simplicity of design in lieu of historical ornamentation. The movement incorporates several individual styles (International Style, Brutalism, Expressionism, and New Formalism) that express modern ideals by different means.

Brutalism is a broad label applied in the field of architecture referring either to: 1) “New Brutalism,” associated with post World War II British architecture; and 2) the global use of modernism rendered in raw concrete. The etymology of Brutalism is from the French word “*beton brute*” translated as raw concrete. Le Corbusier, a pioneer of Modern architecture, used the term “*beton brute*” to describe the material of the *Unite d'Habitation* (App. 5, Fig. 1), built in 1952, at Marseilles, France. Corbusier's designs inspired British architects Alison and Peter Smithson (who were married).<sup>19</sup>

The Smithsons, responding to the political and social climate associated with decimated post-war Britain, establishment of a welfare state, and challenges of reconstruction, focused on the simplest of ideas, human needs.<sup>20</sup> The architects strove to reveal the structure and materials of buildings, highlighting the characteristics of their unfinished state as exhibited in the Hunstanton School, Norfolk, England (finished in 1954).<sup>21</sup> In 1955, architecture critic Reyner Banham espoused the qualities of this approach in his article “The New Brutalism.” He described the style as: 1) formal legibility of the plan; 2) clear exhibition of structure; and 3) valuation of materials for their inherent qualities “as found.”<sup>22</sup> These ideas set the baseline for Brutalism, but other countries lacked the underlying ideological ideas and issues within Britain. As stated by architectural writer, historian, and curator Owen Hopkins:

Although the theoretical roots of the New Brutalism were decidedly British, even English, rough sculptural buildings of raw concrete rose all over the world during the 1960s and 1970s. ... raw concrete became a global language. Though emerging from different contexts and theoretical viewpoints, these various manifestations of Brutalism shared an

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<sup>17</sup> Mark S. Kuhar and Josephine Smith, “Rock through the Ages: 1896-2016,” <http://www.rockproducts.com> (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Lincoln Property Company, “Norther Virginia Quarterly Market Report, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2019,” <http://www.lpcwashingtondc.com> (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Owen Hopkins, *Architectural Styles: A Visual Guide* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2014), 182-185.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Sennott, *Encyclopedia of Twentieth Century Architecture* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2004), 180-182.

<sup>21</sup> Owen Hopkins, *Architectural Styles: A Visual Guide* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2014), 182-185.

<sup>22</sup> Reyner Banham, “New Brutalism,” *Architectural Review* (December 1955): 354-361; Architect's Journal, “Reyner Banham from “The New Brutalism” 1955,” <http://www.senactal.wordpress.com> (accessed June 26, 2019).

ambition to reinvent modernism, to create an architecture that was hard-edged – literally and conceptually – that was radical and often confrontational.<sup>23</sup>

American Architects focused on Brutalism’s innovation of technology and form and as a means of expressing monumentality that eluded the overused International Style.<sup>24</sup> Brutalism is defined by:

- Use of exposed concrete (often revealing the texture of the wooden forms used for the casting);
- Emphasis on sculptural qualities, mass, and solidity;
- A weight and massiveness that separates it from other flat-roof buildings;
- Recessed windows and doors that function as voids in solid walls rather than the “skin” of the building;
- Broad expansive surfaces; and
- Repetitive patterns.<sup>25</sup>

In the United States, prominent examples of Brutalist buildings include Paul Rudolph’s Art and Architecture Building at Yale University and Kallman, McKinnell, and Knowles’ Boston City Hall (App. 5, Fig. 2-3). The works of such architectural masters inspired local architects to adopt the form. As noted by architectural historian Clare Lise Kelly in *Montgomery Modern*, Montgomery County retains several Brutalist-influenced buildings including but not limited to: National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters, 900 Spring Street; Bushey Drive School, 4010 Randolph Road (App. 6, Fig. 1); 831 University Boulevard (App. 6, Fig. 2); and Wiscom Building, 7550 Wisconsin Avenue (App. 6, Fig. 3).<sup>26</sup>

### ***Historic Context: Corporate Architecture***

Corporations and organizations often leverage architectural design to project elements of their goals, vision, and products. As stated in *Understanding Architecture*, “...buildings not only have an existence in reality, they also have a metaphorical existence. They express meaning and give certain messages...”<sup>27</sup> Corporate architecture can visually communicate identity, supplement branding and marketing, express an organizational message, and create a presence in the built environment.<sup>28</sup> Brutalism allowed architects to create “carried, complex and bespoke forms” for corporate sites including office headquarters.<sup>29</sup>

At the subject property, John H. Sullivan approached the project for the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association with the intention of creating an iconic corporate headquarters. The design suggests that he applied the tenets of Brutalist architectural principles but augmented the building by highlighting the organizations’ mission in its visual

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<sup>23</sup> Owen Hopkins, “Dezeen Guide to Brutalist Architecture,” <http://www.dezeen.com> (accessed June 27, 2019).

<sup>24</sup> Joan Ockman, “The School of Brutalism: From Great Britain to Boston (and beyond),” in *Heroic Concrete Architecture and the New Boston* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2015), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to Styles* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1969), 275-279; Doug Gasek and Summer Rickman, “Alaska Architectural Style Guide,” <http://www.cityofsitka.com> (accessed June 27, 2019).

<sup>26</sup> Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern* (Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 2015), 166-166; Clare Lise Kelly, “Heroic Architecture: A New Look at Brutalism,” <http://www.montgomeryplanning.org> (accessed June 27, 2019).

<sup>27</sup> Hazel Conway and Rowan Roenisch, *Understanding Architecture: An Introduction to Architecture and Architectural History* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 22.

<sup>28</sup> Angela Bargenda, “Corporate Architecture as a Branding Tool: A European Case Study in the Finance Sector,” in *Managing Corporate Communication: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (London: Springer Nature Limited, 2019), 339-340.

<sup>29</sup> John Grindrod, *How to Love Brutalism* (London: Batsford, 2018), 87.

expression. The building directly showcases the forward-thinking design potential and uses for ready mixed concrete, sand, and gravel championed by the organizations and reflects the overall corporate mission to the visitor. The two-story building consisted of ready mixed poured concrete and faced with exterior wall panels consisting of exposed Lilesville white quartz aggregate.

### ***Historic Context: John H. Sullivan, Architect***

Born on June 20, 1925, John Henry Sullivan, Jr., was the son of John Henry Sullivan, Sr., Esq., and Cosma Angela Domenica (nee Tangorra) Sullivan. Cosma Sullivan worked for the Social Security Administration.<sup>30</sup> The couple lived and raised their family at 4400 Stanford Street, Chevy Chase, Montgomery County, Maryland.<sup>31</sup> After completing high school, John H. Sullivan, Jr., enlisted in the army and served for the duration of World War II. According to David Almy (his later business partner), Sullivan served at the Battle of Hürtgen and suffered a severe case of trench foot.<sup>32</sup>

After the War, Sullivan graduated from Catholic University with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1950 and married Joan Marie Mattare.<sup>33</sup> In Washington, D.C. and its suburbs, Catholic University served as the local training ground for architects. While not considered one of the premier schools for modernism, the school trained numerous graduates who practiced modernist principles in the area including: Edwin F. Ball, Jack C. Cohen, James F. Hilleary, Donald Steele Johnson, Ronald Sensemen, and John Henry Sullivan, Jr.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1948 and 1955, Sullivan trained as a draftsman for Wilson & Denton. In 1955 and 1956, he served as a designer for Fon J. Montgomery and F. Leonard Slagel, respectively. The following year, he opened his own firm, Sullivan and Associates, in Rockville, Montgomery County. During this period, notable architectural works included the: 1) Elwood P. Smith Center, Montgomery County, MD (1959); 2) Church, Convent, and School for St. Matthias the Apostle, Prince George's County (1961); 3) John H. Sullivan House, 9210 Farnsworth Court, Montgomery County; 4) Aspen Hill Library, Montgomery County (1967); 5) City of Rockville Municipal Building, Montgomery County (1968); 6) Compress Inc. Headquarters, Montgomery County (1969); 7) St. Nicholas Church, Prince George's County (1969); 8) Humble Care Car Center, Rockville (1970) (App. 7, Fig.1-3).<sup>35</sup> Other Montgomery County projects included the Hewlett-Packard Company Eastern Sales Region Office, Covenant United Methodist Church, and a number of schools, banks, and offices. Sullivan would continue to work in the region until the 2000s.

In *Rockville's Recent Past*, Teresa B. Lachin stated the following regarding the architectural works of Sullivan:

In his architectural design, Mr. Sullivan demonstrates a mastery of modernism that is characterized by solid geometric forms, clearly delineated structural elements, and crisp

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<sup>30</sup> "John Henry Sullivan," 1920 United States Federal Census, Ancestry; "John Henry Sullivan," 1930 United States Federal Census, Ancestry; "John Henry Sullivan," 1940 United States Federal Census, Ancestry;

<sup>31</sup> U.S City Directories indicate that the family lived at 3001 Porter Street, NW, before moving to 4400 Stanford Street in 1930. *Washington, District of Columbia, City Directory, 1822-1955* (1929): 761, Ancestry.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with David Almy, June 6, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Catholic University, *The Nineteen-Fifty Cardinal* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1950), Catholic University Digital Collections.

<sup>34</sup> Dr. Isabelle Gournay and Dr. Mary Corbin Sies, "The Modern Movement in Maryland," 2002, <http://www.mahdc.org> (accessed June 28, 2019).

<sup>35</sup> John F. Gane, *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1970), 894.

linear planes. He excels in the use of brick materials to create surface texture and provide visual focus and articulation.<sup>36</sup>

David Almy, one of Sullivan's business partners, prepared the architectural drawings for the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters (App. 4, Fig. 2). After serving in the United States Navy, Almy first attended the University of Maryland in 1961 and transferred to Howard University's School of Architecture in 1963. Sullivan employed Almy while he attended school.<sup>37</sup> The partners would establish the firm of Sullivan and Almy.

### ***Historic Context: Early Studio***

John Joseph Earley, the son of James Farrington and Mary Kelly Earley, was born in New York City on December 12, 1881, shortly after his parents emigrated from Ireland. James Earley, a stone-carver and artist, opened a stone and carving business in Washington, D.C., in 1890. John Early inherited his father's business in 1906 and patented a process for producing precast exposed aggregate ("mosaic") concrete panels created at the studio and assembled on site. The process stripped the concrete to expose the brilliantly colored aggregate particles, creating an effect similar to impressionist or pointillist painting. His panels and associated structural system led to the widespread use of pre-cast architectural concrete as a major exterior cladding material seen in curtain-wall buildings nationwide.<sup>38</sup>

Early worked on several prominent architectural resources including the: 1) Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C.; 2) Bahá'í House of Worship, Illinois; 3) Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Washington, D.C.; 4) Department of Justice (concrete mosaic ceilings), Washington, D.C., and 5) Polychrome Houses, Montgomery County, Maryland.<sup>39</sup> The American Concrete Institute and the American Institute of Architects recognized Early for his contributions to the advancement of concrete.<sup>40</sup>

Earley died in 1945, but his studio remained active until 1973. John H. Sullivan recognized that exposed aggregate concrete panels would best represent both the NSGA and NRMCA. Sullivan likely directed Victor Beauchamp, the project contractor, to hire Early Studios to produce the precast panels. According to David Almy, Sullivan and Associates and Early Studios collaborated on at least two other projects, but none were as successful as the Headquarters for the NSGA and NRMCA.<sup>41</sup> The subject building is another example of the successful use of Earley Studio's exposed aggregate concrete panels in Montgomery County.

**I. Areas Exempt from Designation:** The parking lot to the rear of the building is exempt from designation and not included within the environmental setting.

### **J. Designation Criteria:**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters meets Designation Criteria 2.A and 2.E as listed in Section 24A-3 of the Montgomery County Ordinance.

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<sup>36</sup> Teresa B. Lachin, *Rockville's Recent Past* (Rockville, Maryland: Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation Ltd., 2012), 58-59.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with David Almy, June 6, 2019.

<sup>38</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "Polychrome Historic District," Silver Spring, Maryland, M:32-5.

<sup>39</sup> The Polychrome Houses are designated in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

<sup>40</sup> Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern* (Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 2015), 182.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with David Almy, June 6, 2019.

**2.A Architectural and design significance. The historic resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters embodies the distinctive qualities of Brutalism and corporate architecture. Sullivan's (the architect) two-story concrete building utilized raw concrete, cantilevered second story, connection of interior and exterior space, and exposed aggregate panels to emphasize sculptural qualities, mass, and solidity. The interplay between the solid-to-void relationship on the retaining wall, first story, and second story establish a repetitive visual pattern typical of Brutalism. The headquarters' form and color serve as the primary design features from a distance as the poured raw concrete is softened by the tan hues of the exposed aggregate panels. Upon approaching the building, however, the composition and richness of the exposed aggregate panels comes to focus. The panels consisting of Lilesville white quartz aggregate has a natural diversity of textures that adds visual interest.

The iconic headquarters reflects the vocabulary of corporate architecture. Sullivan utilized the building products associated with the organizations in the design of the building. The building showcased the forward-thinking design potential and uses for ready mixed concrete, sand, and gravel championed by the organizations. The ready mixed poured concrete and the exposed Lilesville white quartz aggregate in the panels aptly represented the interests of both associations. Overall, the Brutalist-influenced style presented a forward-thinking/future orientated corporate identity augmented by utilizing materials reflecting the overall corporate mission.

**2.E Architectural and design significance. The historic resource represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.**

NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters is one of the premier examples of Brutalist and corporate-influenced architecture in Montgomery County. The building fully utilizes its site at the corner of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive and has become a community landmark due to its impressive monumental design applied to a small-scaled office building. In addition, the building's sculptural qualities and use of color and texture have garnered greater appreciation from the populace in comparison to contemporaneous Brutalist architecture.

**K. Conclusion:**

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters retains integrity to express its period of significance. The building has integrity of location and setting. The headquarters remains in its original location in Silver Spring, Maryland. While surrounding parking areas or office building have been infilled or redeveloped, the building continues to be sited on the periphery of a commercial and office district. The headquarters has integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Minimal alterations have occurred to the building as it continues to represent Brutalist and corporate architecture. All elements of the style, form, plan, space, and materials remain intact. In addition, the exposed aggregate panels continue to express the technological practices and aesthetic workmanship associated with Early Studios. The headquarters has integrity of association and feeling. The building evokes its period of construction with its rendering of modernist design principles in raw concrete. While the NRMCA has moved its headquarters to a different location within the past year, the building and its materials continues to express the occupation of the resource by associations with concrete and gravel. Therefore, the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters meets the applicable designation criteria.



## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**Property Land Area:** 7,483 square feet  
**Account Number:** 00973734, 00973745  
**District:** 13

**Environmental Setting Description:** The NRMCA Headquarters is located at 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland. The proposed site to be listed in the *Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites* consists of the entirety of the building and 7,482 square-foot property identified as Account Number 00973734 and 00973745, District 13, and as shown on the accompanying map (App. 1, Fig. 1). The property is in Block 3, Lots 7 (part of) and 8, Spring Village.

**Environmental Setting Justification:** The proposed environmental setting consists of the lots with the subject building.

## 8. PROPERTY OWNERS

Name: National Ready Mixed Concrete Association  
Address: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland 2091

## 9. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: John Liebertz, Montgomery County Planning Department, Historic Preservation Specialist  
Date: September 2019

## 10. MAJOR SOURCES CONSULTED

Ancestry.com [numerous].

Banham, Reyner. "New Brutalism." *Architectural Review* (December 1955): 354-361.

Bargenda, Angela. "Corporate Architecture as a Branding Tool: A European Case Study in the Finance Sector," in *Managing Corporate Communication: A Cross-Cultural Approach*. London: Springer Nature Limited, 2019.

*Evening Star* [numerous].

Hopkins, Owen. *Architectural Styles: A Visual Guide*. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2014.

Hopkins, Owen. "Dezeen Guide to Brutalist Architecture," <http://www.dezeen.com>.

Grindrod, John. *How to Love Brutalism*. London: Batsford, 2018.

Interview with David Almy, June 2019.

Jane C. Sween Research Library and Special Collections, Montgomery History.

Kelly, Clare Lise. *Montgomery Modern*. Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 2015.

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission. *The Silver Spring CBD*. Silver Spring, Maryland: M-NCPPC, 1993.

Montgomery County Land Records, <http://www.mdlandrec.net>.

National Ready Mixed Concrete Association. "Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story."  
<http://www.nrmca.org>.

Pasnik, Mark, et al. *Heroic Concrete Architecture and the New Boston*. New York: Monacelli Press, 2015.

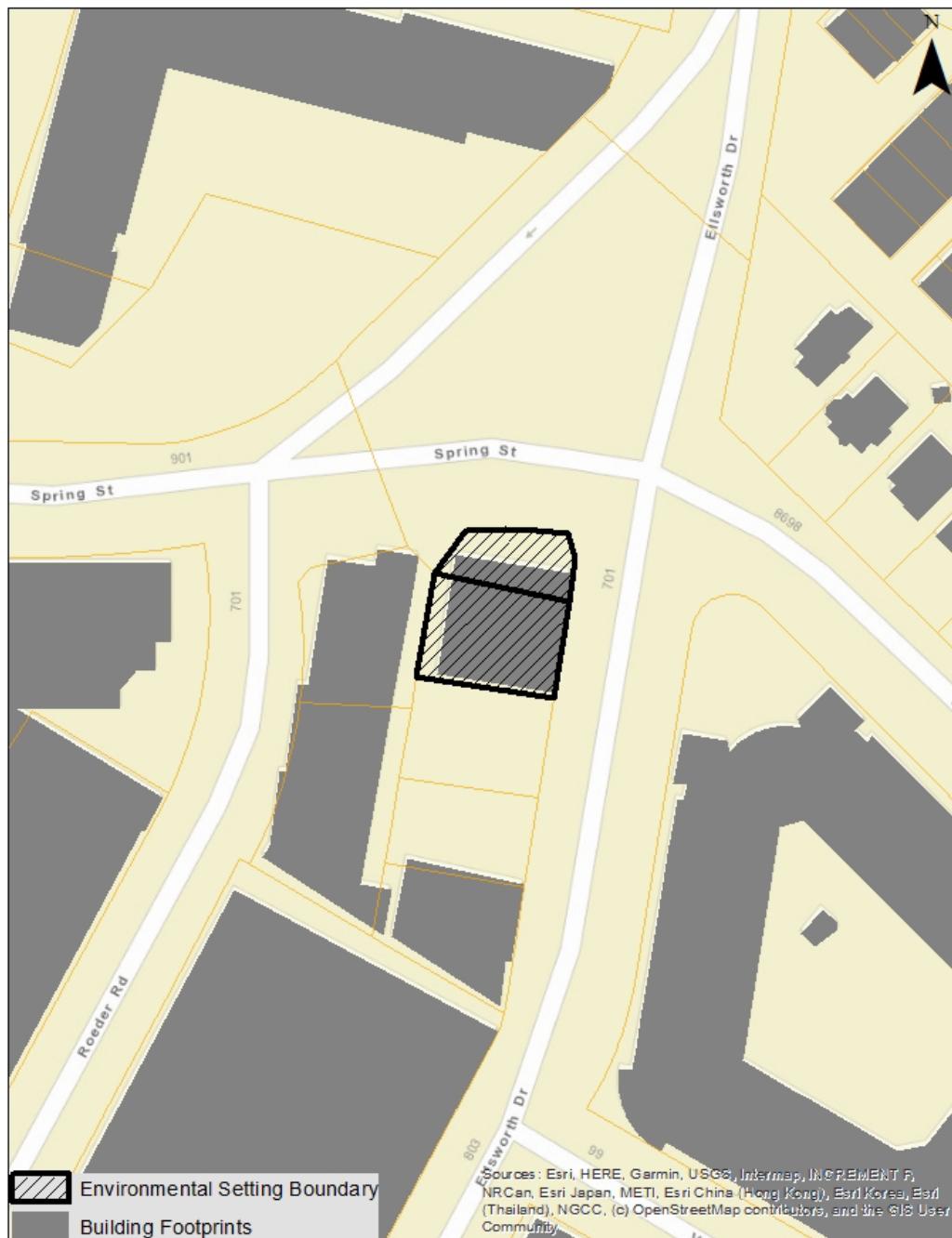
*Pit and Quarry* [numerous].

*Rock Products* [numerous].

*Washington Post* [numerous].

**APPENDIX ONE:**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING/GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Figure 1: Environmental Setting, 900 Spring Street



**APPENDIX TWO:**  
**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS**



Figure 1: 1951 Aerial Photograph



Figure 1: The aerial photograph shows the residential character of this area of Silver Spring in the 1950s and the section of Spring Street between Roeder Road and Ellsworth Drive prior to construction. Maps indicate the road is built contemporaneous with the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters. In addition, one of the large parking lots operated by the County is located to the southeast of the building.

Figure 2: 1979 Aerial Photograph

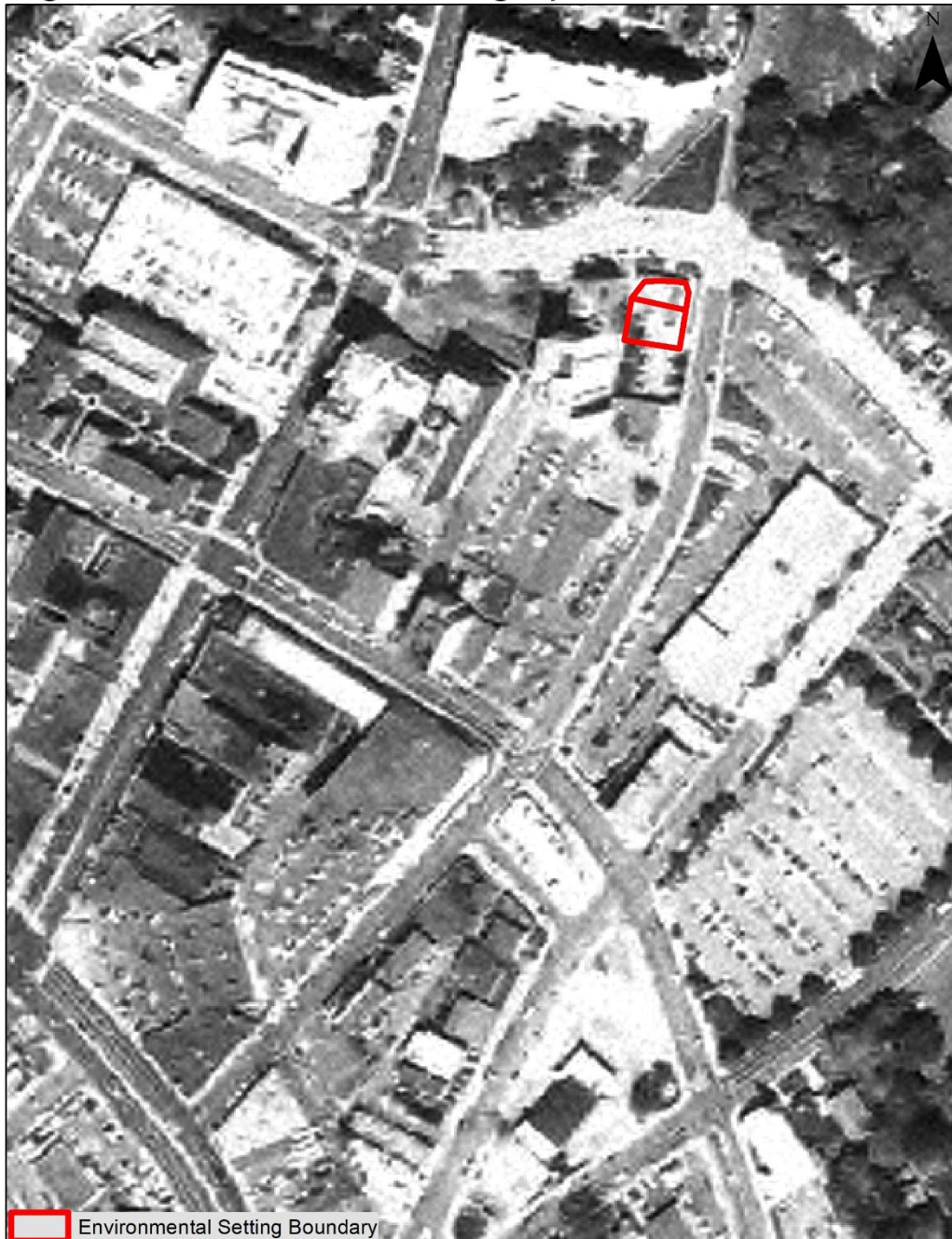


Figure 2: The aerial photograph shows the construction of Spring Street and general development of the Silver Spring area.



Figure 3: 2017 Aerial Photograph



Figure 3: The aerial photograph shows the present day setting of the subject property.

**APPENDIX THREE:**  
**EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF 900 SPRING STREET**

**\*Photographs taken by Jerry McCoy, Silver Spring Historical Society, Spring 2019**



Figure 1: View of the façade (north elevation) looking south from Spring Street.



Figure 2: View of the north (façade) and east elevations looking southwest from the northeastern corner of the intersection of Ellsworth Drive and Cedar Street.





Figure 3: View of the south (rear) and east elevations looking northwest from Ellsworth Drive.



Figure 4: View of the south (rear) elevation looking north from the parking lot.



Figure 5: View of the north (façade) and west elevations looking southeast from Spring Street.



Figure 6: Detailed view of the second-story windows and exposed aggregate panels.





Figure 7: Detailed view of the terrace on the east elevation.



Figure 8: Detailed view of the northeast corner of the headquarters.





Figure 9: Detailed view of second-story windows and exposed aggregate panel.



Figure 10: Detailed view of the front entrance (north elevation).



Figure 11: Detailed view of the monument sign.

**APPENDIX FOUR:**  
**HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF 900 SPRING STREET**

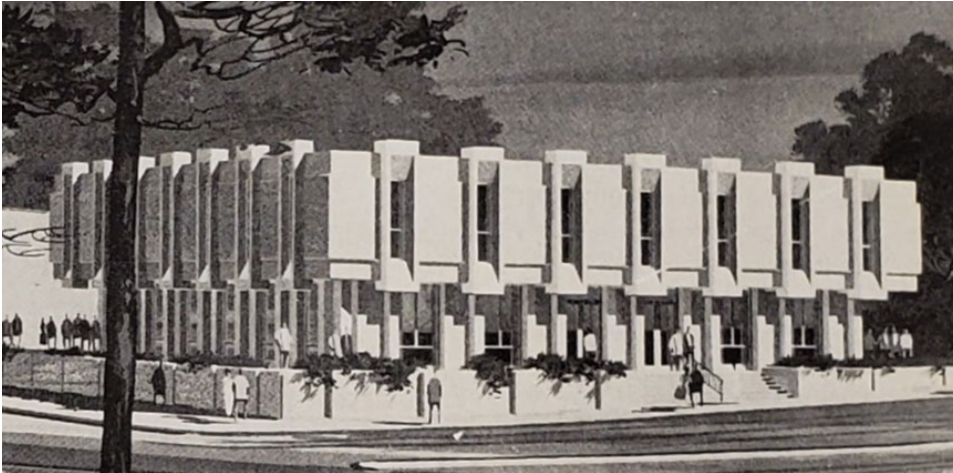


Figure 1: Architectural rendering of 900 Spring Street, 1963.  
Source: *Pit and Quarry*, July 1963.



Figure 2: Architectural rendering of 900 Spring Street, 1963.  
Source: David Almy.



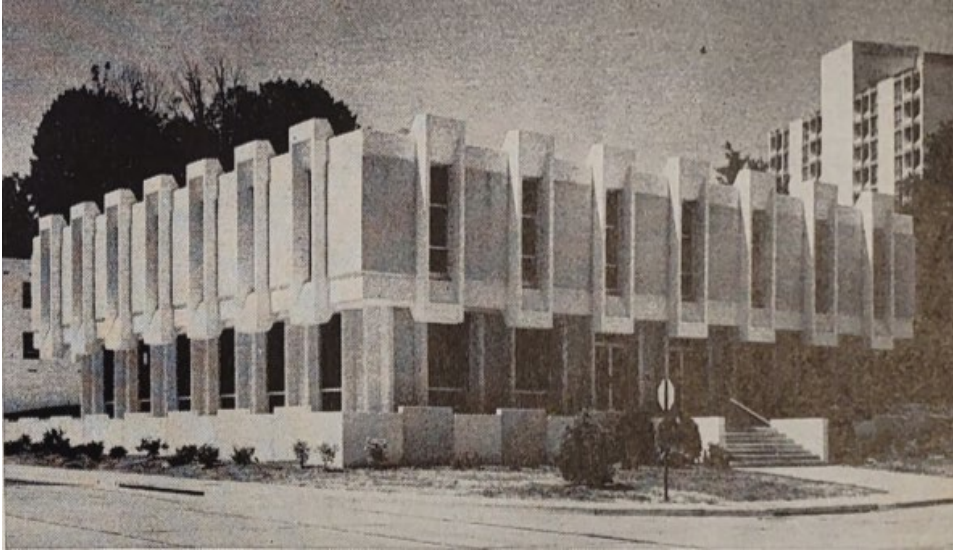


Figure 3: View of the north and east elevations, 900 Spring Street, 1964.  
Source: *Pit and Quarry*, October 1964.



Figure 4: View of the east elevation, 900 Spring Street, 1964.  
Source: *Potomac Valley Architect*, October 1964.

**APPENDIX FIVE:**  
**EXAMPLES OF BRUTALISM**



Figure 1: Unite d'Habitation (Marseille, France) designed by Le Corbusier, 1952.



Figure 2: The Yale Art and Architecture Building (New Haven, Connecticut) designed by Paul Rudolph, 1963.





Figure 3: The Boston City Hall designed by McKinnell & Knowles (architects) and constructed between 1963 and 1968.



Figure 4: Part of Federal Office Building 5, Washington, D.C., constructed between 1965 and 1969.



**APPENDIX SIX:**  
**EXAMPLES OF BRUTALISM IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY**



Figure 1: Bushey Drive School, 4010 Randolph Road, designed by Deigert and Yerkes (architect) in 1961.



Figure 2: University Boulevard Medical Plaza, 831 University Boulevard East, built in 1965.



Figure 3: Before and after of Wiscom Building, 7550 Wisconsin Avenue, built in 1964.

**APPENDIX SEVEN:**  
**ARCHITECTURAL WORKS OF JOHN H. SULLIVAN**





Figure 1: Church, Convent, and School for St. Matthias the Apostle, Prince George's County, built in 1961.



Figure 2: Aspen Hill Library, 4407 Aspen Hill Road, built in 1967.



Figure 3: Hewlett-Packard Company Eastern Sales Region Office built in 1974.

**APPENDIX EIGHT:**  
**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM**

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters
other	NRCMA Headquarters/National Sand & Gravel Association Headquarters

### 2. Location

street and number	900 Spring St.	___	not for publication
city, town	Silver Spring, Md. 20910	___	vicinity
county	Montgomery County		

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

name	NRMCA		
street and number	900 Spring St.	telephone	
city, town	Silver Spring	state	MD
		zip code	20910

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	liber	16645	folio	359
city, town	Silver Spring, Md.	tax map	tax parcel	tax ID number

### 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  
\_\_\_ Other: Designation Nomination Research

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
___ district	___ public	___ agriculture	Contributing
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u>X</u> private	___ landscape	Noncontributing
___ structure	___ both	<u>X</u> commerce/trade	___ 1
___ site		___ defense	___ buildings
___ object		___ domestic	___ sites
		___ education	___ structures
		___ funerary	___ objects
		___ government	___ Total
		___ health care	
		<u>X</u> industry	
		___ other:	

**Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory**

\_\_\_\_\_



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## 7. Description

Inventory No.

---

### Condition

☒ excellent      ☐ deteriorated  
☐ good            ☐ ruins  
☐ fair              ☐ altered

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

See attached.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 1

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The NRMCA Headquarter Building, 900 Spring Street, in Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland, has a prominent location on the edge of the downtown business district, at the corner of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive. The main entrance is on the north façade, opening on Spring Street. A secondary façade and vehicular access to parking lot is on the east façade at Ellsworth Drive.

The building is a two-story reinforced concrete structure clad with concrete panels. Cantilevered over the first story, the upper level has recessed windows framed in oversize vertical concrete rectangles that visually serve as wall dormers. Wall surface between windows are enlivened by concrete aggregate panels. The overall effect gives the appearance of an exaggerated mansard roof with wall dormers.

Upper and lower levels have symmetrical placement of windows regulated with vertical recessed elements. The design alternates windows with solid panels, establishing a visual pattern that characterizes the building.

Smooth concrete walls exhibit the natural state of raw concrete, while aggregate panels add texture with a pebbled finish. The panels are attributed to Earley Studios, founded by John J. Earley, pioneer in exposed aggregate panels. A Washington area craftsman and designer, Earley perfected the technique of concrete aggregate panels in the 1930s. This type of concrete construction technique, using densely packed aggregate with a minimal amount of cement, was later known as the MoSai process.

A concrete wall with alternating recessed panels defines the perimeter of the deck which wraps around north and east facades. Architect's rendering depicts plantings atop the perimeter wall. Early photographs indicated plantings were instead placed in the ground at the base of the wall.

The NRMCA Headquarters Building has a high level of architectural integrity. Typical of concrete buildings from the mid-century era, the building exhibits streaking and staining characteristic of the material as it ages. This natural weathering is a patina that contributes to the building's character.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No.

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

**Specific dates** 1964

**Architect/Builder** Architect John Henry Sullivan Jr/  
Craftsman John Joseph Earley/Victor R. Beauchamp, Builder

**Construction dates** 1964

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.)

See attached.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 1

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### Historical Significance – Summary Statement

The Headquarters Building for the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, at 900 Spring Street, has architectural and design significance, meeting Criteria 2A of the Preservation Ordinance, Chap 21A: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. This award-winning building, built in 1964, was designed to highlight the natural character of concrete, thus serving as a promotion for the company and its material. The Headquarters Building has architectural significance as a well-preserved, late example of concrete aggregate panel construction of the Earley Studio and is an outstanding example of mid-century modern Brutalist design of the 1960s. The design was hailed by the architecture community as an exciting showplace with dramatic beauty. John Joseph Earley, renowned pioneer in concrete technology, established the studio which operated until 1973. The building at 900 Spring Street has served as the headquarters of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations for 55 years. The design of NRMCA building was recognized with a first-place award from the American Institute of Architects (Potomac Valley chapter).<sup>1</sup>

### Narrative History and Context

Montgomery County was an ideal location for a headquarters building in the postwar era. Bordering on the Washington, DC, line, the area had an abundance of available land, and a strategic location between Washington and Baltimore. Federal agencies, trade organizations and commercial enterprises established major facilities in Montgomery County in the postwar era.

Silver Spring was a major commercial center by the early 1960s. M-NCPPC had established a major commercial zoning and public parking plan for the community. Historian Richard Longstreth found that the scale of the parking program, which comprised a network of county owned and operated parking lots for 2,000 cars, was the most ambitious plan implemented in a suburban area before the mid-1950s. The parking plan was likely “the linchpin that triggered Silver Spring’s meteoric rise as a major commercial center” in the postwar years.<sup>2</sup>

The Hecht Company of Washington, DC, founded in 1895, built its first branch store in Silver Spring in 1947. One of the first postwar branch department stores in the nation, the Silver Spring Hecht Company store became the largest East Coast department store outside a central shopping district. The Hecht’s Store represents the decentralization of downtown department stores to the suburban market in the postwar era and the beginning of Silver Spring as a destination and regional business center.

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<sup>1</sup>The property is owned by National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, Deed 16645:359.

<sup>2</sup> Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2015) p34.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

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When constructed, 900 Spring Street housed headquarters for both the National Sand and Gravel Association, and the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association. The National Ready Mixed Concrete Association was founded in 1930 in Pittsburgh, by members of the National Sand and Gravel Association. While ready Mixed concrete had been in use in the 1910s, a demand built in the 1920s, leading to need for an organization to address the industry and challenges of the material. The two agencies shared space at 1411 K Street NW before the headquarters building was constructed.<sup>3</sup>

With its proximity to the nation's capital and abundance of land, Montgomery County was a prime location for corporate and organizational headquarters in the postwar era of expansion. From Choice Hotels International (originally Quality Courts, Inc.) to Martin Marietta, companies chose down-county communities of Bethesda and Silver Spring to locate their headquarters facilities.

The NRMCA Headquarters Building was designed by architect John H. Sullivan, Jr with concrete panels fabricated in the Earley Studio. A Washington area craftsman and designer, John Joseph Earley perfected the technique of concrete aggregate panels in the 1930s. This type of concrete construction technique, using densely packed aggregate with a minimal amount of cement, was called the Mo-Sai process.<sup>4</sup>

The Headquarters Building was hailed by the architecture community as an exciting showplace with "dramatic beauty."<sup>5</sup> The project received a first-place design award from the American Institute of Architects Potomac Valley chapter. The national concrete organization chose a show-stopping design of concrete finishing for the headquarters building. Located at 900 Spring Street in downtown Silver Spring, the building has retained its original use, as home of National Ready Mixed Concrete Association.

The design of the NRMCA Headquarters Building comes from a modernist movement known as Brutalism, intended to celebrate the raw nature of concrete. The term Brutalism comes from the work of pioneering modernist Le Corbusier and his use of *béton brut*, or raw concrete. The name was anglicized as Brutalism, a term which has acquired negative connotations. More recently, the style has been dubbed Heroic architecture, a term which recognizes the honest expression and monumental nature of the buildings.<sup>6</sup>

A mission of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations at its new headquarters was to establish a concrete plant certification system to assure high standards in concrete production facilities. According to a corporate history:

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<sup>3</sup>"Celebrating NRMCA's Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story," in *Concrete in Focus*, Spring 2005.

<sup>4</sup>List of Works, John J. Earley and the Earley Studio, Society of Architectural Historians, Latrobe Chapter, 2001 Symposium. Source cited: Earley Studio, Inc. brochure, "Pre-cast Architectural Concrete", undated.

<sup>5</sup>*Potomac Valley Architect*, Dec 1964. *Washington Post*, June 6, 1963.

<sup>6</sup>Montgomeryplanning.org, *The Third Place*, "Heroic Architecture: a new look at Brutalism." Clare Lise Kelly, November 18, 2016. <http://montgomeryplanning.org/blog-design/2016/11/heroic-architecture-a-new-look-at-brutalism/>

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

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The NRMCA Checklist for Ready Mixed Concrete Production Facilities was approved at the annual Board of Directors meeting in 1965 and the program began in 1966. It was initially only open to NRMCA members, although in later years it was expanded to include nonmembers as well. The certification program has evolved over time and gained respect from industry producers and inspectors alike and continues to be offered by NRMCA. The association also began giving exams during the Short Course and developed a personnel certification plan.<sup>7</sup>

The National Sand and Gravel Association founded a research laboratory in Washington DC in 1926. With support of the NRMCA, the lab moved to the University of Maryland in 1938, where it remains today. The lab has been recognized as a leader in the field of concrete technology. The ready Mixed concrete industry expanded dramatically during World War II, contributing enormously to the war effort.

John Joseph Earley (1881-1945) was a pioneering craftsman who innovated durable concrete construction and created polychrome techniques. His studio continued to operate until 1973.

The Earley Studio was first established by James Farrington Earley, a fourth-generation Irish stone carver. The elder Earley immigrated to New York City with his wife Mary Kelly, in 1881, the same year as the birth of their son, John Joseph. The family moved to Washington, DC in 1890. While a student at St. John's College (1894-1899), John apprenticed as a stone carver at his father's studio in Rosslyn, Virginia. After the death of his father in 1906, Earley took over operation of the Earley Studio, with partner Basil Gordon Taylor, longtime associate and mentor.<sup>8</sup>

Under direction of John Joseph Earley and Basil Taylor, the Earley studio took a new direction, moving from stone carving to focus on plaster and stucco craftsmanship. An early project was the remodeling of the White House interior, for President Theodore Roosevelt. Earley's first well known commission was Meridian Hill Park, starting in 1915, where the studio developed a method for producing exposed aggregate concrete.<sup>9</sup>

The partners studied issues of deficiencies in Portland cement stuccos in this era, which were leading to corrosion and cracking. The Earley Studio worked with the National Bureau of Standards and Commerce (now National Institute of Standards and Technology) to test stuccoed panels for durability. This work was the underpinning for Earley's later innovations in durable concrete.

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<sup>7</sup>"Celebrating NRMCA's Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story," in *Concrete in Focus*, Summer 2005.

<sup>8</sup>Frederick W. Cron, *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful: A Biography of John Joseph Earley*, Ft. Collins, CO: Centennial Publications, 1977.

<sup>9</sup>Jenna Cellini, "The Development of Precast Exposed Aggregate Concrete Cladding: The Legacy of John J. Earley and the Implications for Preservation Philosophy" Historic Preservation thesis. University of Pennsylvania, 2008.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

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John Joseph Earley pioneered the concept of prefabricated concrete panel construction. Earley is credited as the individual responsible for “developing exposed concrete as both a decorative architectural feature and a technically refined manufactured building material.”<sup>10</sup>

The American Institute of Architects recognized Earley for his original work for color and decoration in concrete construction. The American Concrete Institute awarded him the Henry C. Turner Gold Medal for innovations in concrete as an architectural medium.

Earley later served as President of the American Concrete Institute. The ACI is an international trade association, founded in 1905 as the National Association of Cement Users.

Earley’s nascent projects in prefabricated concrete panel construction were located in Montgomery County: Polychrome Houses (1934-35), Navy Model Basin at Carderock, and the Naval Medical Center (1942), in Bethesda. Meridian Hill Park, in Washington, DC, had been the first project to test Earley’s concrete design.

Polychrome Houses (1934-35), a collection of five modernist houses with brilliant exterior polychrome walls. a polychrome mosaic technique which infused color and pattern into concrete panels. Responding to the need for affordable housing in the Depression era, he and Taylor created a simple structural system for precast housing so an average builder could erect dwellings with an A-frame and a chain joist. Given the success of this project, Earley patented this construction technique in 1936.

In 1940, Earley patented the process of producing precast exposed aggregate concrete paneling. The Navy Model Basin at Carderock, which uses decorative mosaic panels. The Naval Medical Center (1942) tested the durability and permanence of Earley’s architectural concrete. The design of the Naval Medical Center was pivotal in the development of cast-in-place concrete walls. This type of concrete construction technique, using densely packed aggregate with a minimal amount of cement, today known as the MoSai process, and was later used on modern landmarks throughout the country including the 1963 Pan Am Building in New York.<sup>11</sup>

The NRMCA Headquarters Building thus represents the development of Earley’s product from a hand-crafted material in the 1910s, to a mass-produced building component iconic of the 1960s and 1970s. The NRMCA Headquarters Building is significant as a well-preserved, late example of aggregated concrete construction by the Earley Studio. As stated by historian Jenna Cellini:

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<sup>10</sup>Cellini.

<sup>11</sup>Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979* (Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2015) p25.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

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The increasing interest of Earley's plastic mosaics led the company to relocate to a larger facility in Manassas, VA, in 1962. The operations continued to expand, and the Studio grew in both reputation and physical footprint. The company was the leader of precast concrete paneling until the Studio went out of business in 1973.

Assessing the impact of the Earley Studio, Cellini states, "Although the concrete community refined their techniques in terms of standardization, the precast exposed aggregate panels were and still are made in an almost identical manner to the original Earley Process."<sup>12</sup>

The Headquarters Building was designed by John H. Sullivan, Jr. Victor R. Beauchamp was the builder, and Horatio Allison Associates was construction engineer. Beauchamp's construction projects include the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial (1954) in Arlington, Virginia.

Architect John H. Sullivan Jr., AIA (1925–2014) was a prominent Washington area architect. A native of Washington, DC he established his firm, Sullivan and Associates in 1957. Earning a BArch from Catholic University in 1950, Sullivan trained as draftsman for A. Hamilton Wilson and Wilson & Denton before becoming a designer with Fon J. Montgomery and then F. Leonard Slagle. In addition to the headquarters building for the National Sand & Gravel and Ready Mixed Concrete Associations (1964), Sullivan's work included the Aspen Hill Library (1967), the City of Rockville Municipal Building (1968), and the Compress Inc. headquarters building in Rockville (1968). Sullivan also designed branch banks in Rockville, including the M&T Bank at 51 W. Edmonston Drive (1964).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Cellini, pp92 and 97.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p194.



## Inventory No.

## 10. Geographical Data

Quadrangle scale:

### 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Marcie Stickle, George French, Clare Lise Kelly		
organization	Silver Spring Historical Society	date	May 2, 2019
street & number		telephone	301-585-3817
city or town	Silver Spring	state	MD 20912

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-697-9591

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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### Bibliography

Jenna Cellini, "The Development of Precast Exposed Aggregate Concrete Cladding: The Legacy of John J. Earley and the Implications for Preservation Philosophy" Historic Preservation thesis. University of Pennsylvania, 2008. [https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1099&context=hp\\_theses](https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1099&context=hp_theses)

Frederick W. Cron, *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful: A Biography of John Joseph Earley*, Ft. Collins, CO: Centennial Publications, 1977.

Gournay, Isabelle (Symposium Chair), Society of Architectural Historians, Latrobe Chapter, "List of Works, John J. Earley and the Earley Studio", 2001 Symposium. Source cited for NRMCA Headquarters Building: Earley Studio, Inc., undated brochure, "Pre-cast Architectural Concrete".

Clare Lise Kelly, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979*, Silver Spring, MD: M-NCPPC, 2015.

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Mark Pasnik and Chris Grimley, *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston*, 2015.

*Potomac Valley Architect*, Dec 1964. Archives of the American Institute of Architects, Potomac Valley Chapter.

Theodore H. M. Prudon, *Preservation of Modern Architecture*, 2008.

Ruth Ellen Rasche (Ed), "Celebrating NRMCA's Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story," in *Concrete in Focus*, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, Spring 2005.  
<https://www.nrmca.org/news/connections/>

The Evening Star, Archives.

The Washington Post, Archives.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

Illustrations

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FIGURE 1: North façade, from Spring Street, NRMCA Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. Carol Highsmith, photographer, 2014.



FIGURE 2: East façade, from Ellsworth Drive. NRMCA Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. Carol Highsmith, photographer, 2014.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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FIGURE 3: Northeast Corner. NRMCA Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. Clare Lise Kelly, photographer, 2013.



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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FIGURE 5: Tax map showing 900 Spring Street (red dot).

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Continuation Sheet

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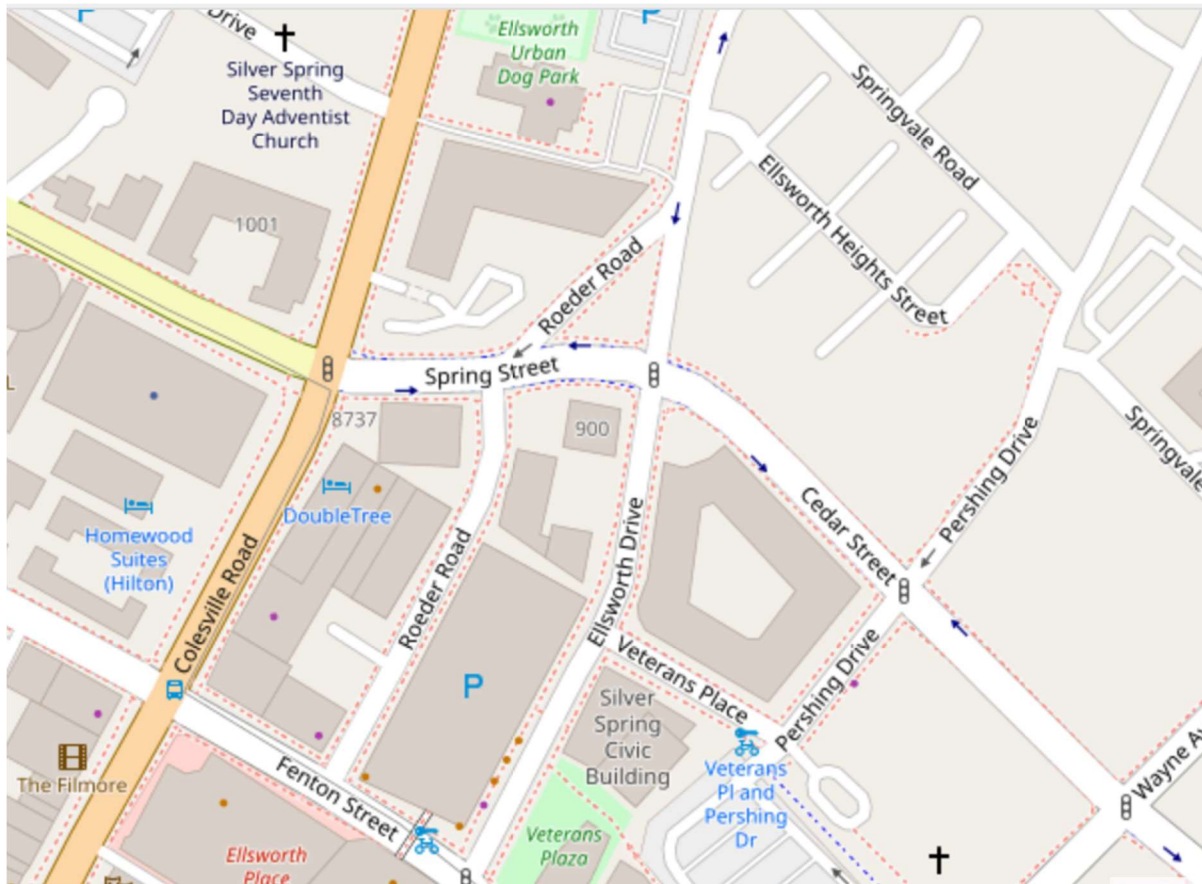


FIGURE 6: Map showing building outlines, vicinity of 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations Headquarters  
**Continuation Sheet**

Illustrations

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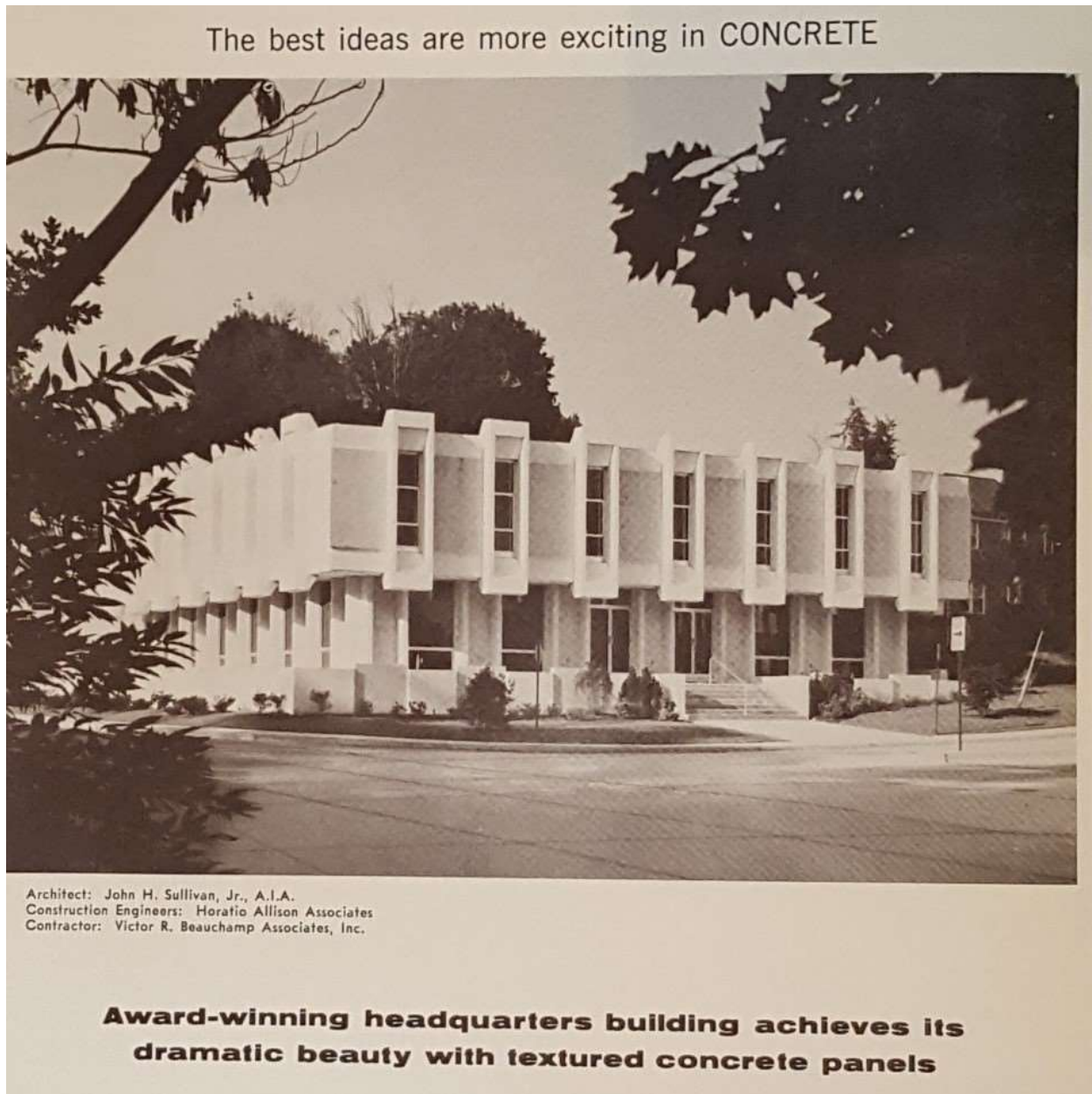


FIGURE 7: NRMCA Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. *Potomac Valley Architect*, Dec 1964. Collection of American Institute of Architects, Potomac Valley Chapter.



# Maryland Historical Trust

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FIGURE 8: Architect's rendering, NRMCA Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. *Washington Post*, June 6, 1963.

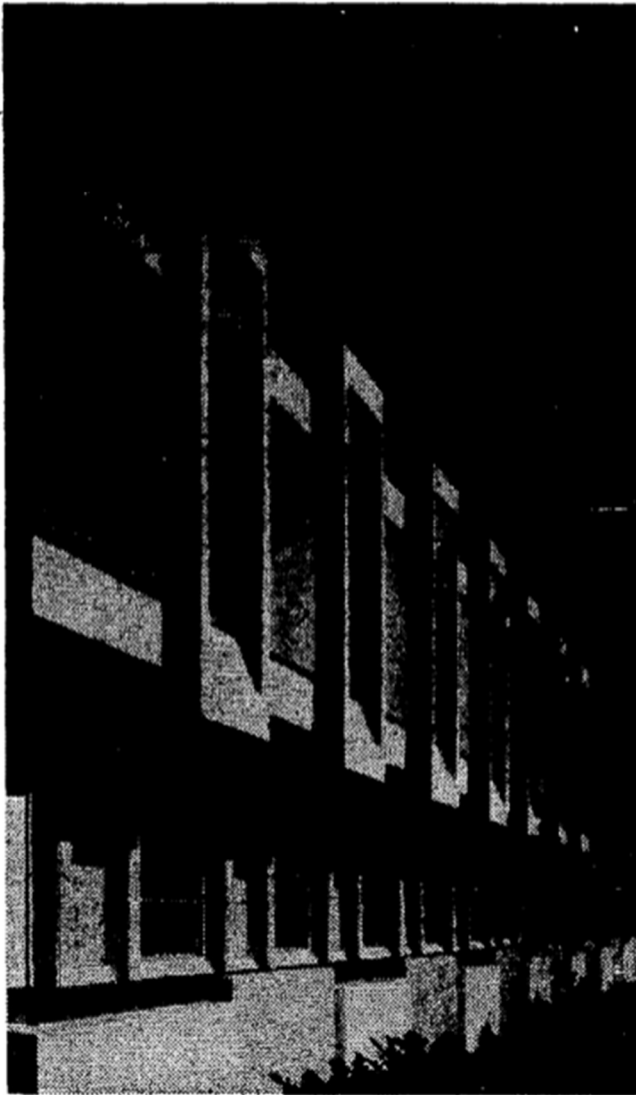
# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations Headquarters  
Continuation Sheet

Illustrations

## Top Design Awards



**A Silver Spring headquarters building won a first place award for John Henry Sullivan.**

A contemporary style summer home in Riva, Md., near Annapolis has won the top award in the fifth biennial competition of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Hugh Newell Jacobsen, whose design was judged best in the competition, received the award along with three other first place winners and five award of merit winners at a banquet Wednesday night.

Architects winning other first place awards were Harold Lionel Esten for a home in Brookeville, Md.; John Henry Sullivan for a headquarters building in Silver Spring, and Cooper & Auerbach for an office building in Washington.

Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon won two awards of merit—one for the Wheaton Youth Center, and the other for homes at the Carderock Springs community.

Other awards of merit winners were Faulkner, Kingsbury & Stenhouse for the Holy Cross Hospital of Silver Spring; Cohen, Haft & Associates for the Munson Hill Towers apartments in Fairfax County, and Deigert and Yerkes & Associates for the National Arboretum Headquarters Building.

Judges for the competition were Karel Yasko, assistant commissioner of design and construction for the General Services Administration; Frank Taliaferro, a Baltimore

See AWARDS, Page F-7

FIGURE 9: Star, December 4, 1964, pages F-1, F-7.

Sullivan's award was for the headquarters building of the National Sand and Gravel Association and the National Ready Mix Concrete Association at 900 Spring St., Silver Spring. Victor R. Beauchamp Associates, Inc., erected the building.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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**Continuation Sheet**

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FIGURE 10: Image of NRMCA Headquarters Building, 2005. Source: "Celebrating NRMCA's Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story," in *Concrete in Focus*, Summer 2005.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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FIGURE 11: Polychrome Historic District (1934-35), Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland.  
Photographer: Constance Terry.

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Name National Ready Mixed Concrete Associations Headquarters  
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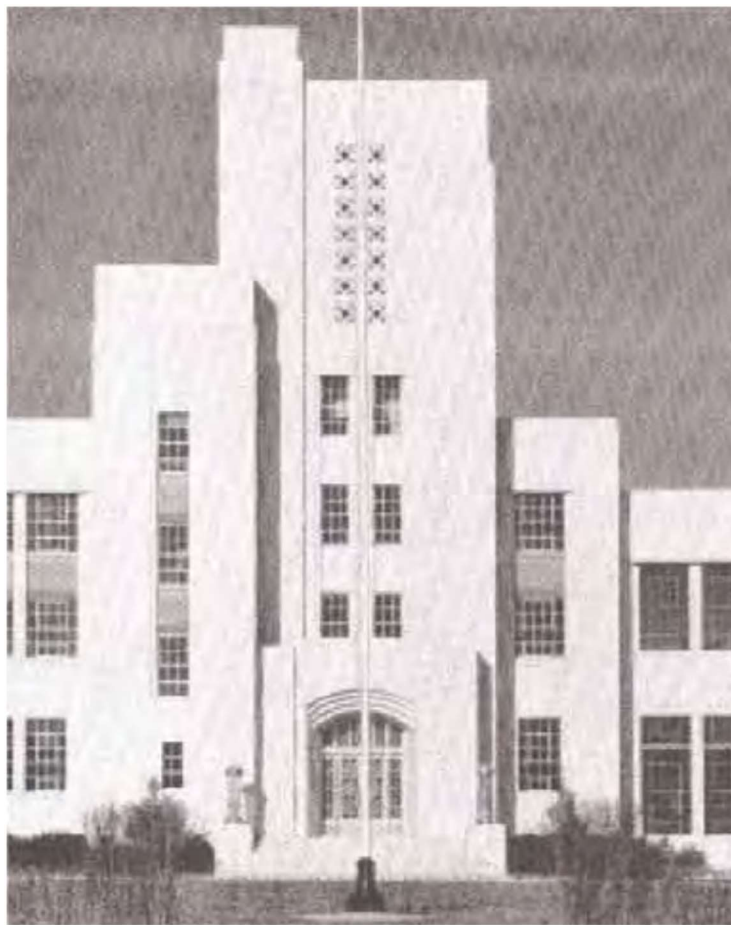


FIGURE 12: Administration Building for Naval Model Basin, Carderock, Bethesda, MD (1938).

Source: Jenna Cellini, "The Development of Precast Exposed Aggregate Concrete Cladding: The Legacy of John J. Earley and the Implications for Preservation Philosophy" 2008. From original at PCI Archives in S. Freedman's "History of Exposed Aggregate (MoSai) Architectural Precast Concrete."



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FIGURE 13: Naval Hospital Tower Building, 1942. Precast exposed aggregate concrete panels designed by John J. Earley. Paul Philippe Cret, architect. Carol Highsmith, photographer, 2014.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Members of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association in the year of its founding, 1930.  
Source: Celebrating NRMCA's Decades of Dedication: The NRMCA Story," in *Concrete in Focus*,  
Spring 2005.



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September 18, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Chair Heiler:

Our firm represents the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (“NRMCA” or “Property Owner”) in connection with the property located at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring, Maryland (the “Property”). NRMCA is opposed to any historic designation for the Property or existing office building (the “Building”) located thereon. In advance of the September 25, 2019 Historic Preservation Commission hearing, we are submitting the following materials:

1. A letter from NRMCA expressing their opposition to any historic designation of the Building, along with an explanation of the hardship that such a designation would impose on the organization; and
2. A report prepared by Architectural Historian, Anne H. Adams that provides a thorough analysis of the Building and discussion as to why the Building does not warrant historic designation on the Locational Atlas or Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

We currently anticipate having four individuals or so to testify at the September 25, 2019, hearing. We would like to request additional time for their testimony, given the Property Owner’s substantial interest in this matter. We ask that the Commission grant the Property Owner, and their consultants/experts, approximately 25 to 30 minutes for testimony.

We appreciate your consideration of the submitted materials and our request for additional time.

Sincerely,



Steven A. Robins



Elizabeth C. Rogers



September 16, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
Historic Preservation Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Chairman Anderson and Chairman Heiler,

On behalf of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (“NRMCA”), we are submitting this letter to express our strong opposition to any historic designation for the property or existing office building located at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring, Maryland (the “Property”).

By way of background, the Property has served as NRMCA’s offices since the building was constructed in the early 1960’s. It also served as the offices of the National Sand and Gravel Association/National Aggregates Association (“NSGA/NAA”) until 1998. The fact that the building is constructed of concrete and aggregate panels is only appropriate for organizations that served as advocates for the ready mixed concrete and sand and gravel industries. Importantly however, the building has never functioned as the “public face” of either organization or served as a promotional piece. Industry members seldom visit or conduct business on the Property.

While NRMCA has been located in Silver Spring for a number of years, it is now time for the organization to relocate to a newer facility, which happens to be located in Northern Virginia. In preparation for this move, NRMCA first began marketing the Property to potential buyers in 2016. NRMCA's sale of the Property has been complicated by the sluggish office market in Montgomery County, as well as the residential moratorium in place from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, as a result of the inadequate capacity at the Northwood High School. These factors significantly narrowed the potential pool of interested candidates.

Despite these challenges, NRMCA finally was able to attract an interested buyer, who put the Property under contract earlier this year. NRMCA's contract purchaser is a leader in the

senior housing industry and plans on redeveloping the Property with a senior housing facility (a use that is not impacted by the recent residential moratorium or challenging office market). As part of their due diligence, the contract purchaser met with Staff in April to discuss their conceptual redevelopment plans. While Staff generally was supportive of the use and plans for the Property, much to everyone's surprise, in this meeting, Staff indicated that there was discussion regarding the possible historic designation of the Property. This was the first NRMCA had ever heard of an interest in designating the existing office building as historic (on the Locational Atlas).

NRMCA is strongly opposed to any such historic designation. The building holds no significance to NRMCA as an artifact or symbol of the Association or the industry. The building is only office space to us. The same is true for the NSGA/NAA, which sold their equity in the building and moved to a new location many years ago. If there was an attachment to the building, or if it held a special place in our history, NRMCA would not have embarked on its move to a new location (which necessarily involves the sale and redevelopment of the building). Additionally, we concur with the assessment of our Architectural Historian, Anne H. Adams, as outlined in her report (submitted separately); NRMCA feels strongly that the existing building does not meet the criteria necessary for historic designation. Furthermore, any historic designation of the Property will have substantial, adverse financial implications on NRMCA. NRMCA's contract purchaser confirmed that they will not redevelop the Property if they are required to retain all or even a portion of the building. This scenario is completely infeasible. As such, any historic designation will cause the existing contract purchaser to pull-out of the deal. And, as previously alluded to, finding another interested buyer presents its own set of challenges, even without a historic designation, given the current office market, uncertainty of future school capacity (given the "conditional" status of Northwood High School), and complexities of compact infill redevelopment. Historic designation of the Property as part of the Locational Atlas would only further complicate the matter, as it would place a tremendous cloud on the Property.

Finally, while the facts alone related to the building and the legal criteria in Chapter 24A support a denial of any request to designate the Property as historic, we would think that it is entirely appropriate for the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Board to seriously consider the financial hardship and practical difficulties that any such designation would create for NRMCA. We feel that our position on this matter is sound and fair. We would ask that as you consider this matter, you give deference to this position. The contract purchaser of the Property will provide a use that is sorely needed in Silver Spring and compatible with the surrounding urban area.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and asked that you decline the Silver Spring Historical Society's request to place the Property on the Locational Atlas.

Sincerely,



Michael Philipps  
President, NRMCA

**ANALYSIS OF 900 SPRING STREET, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND**

Prepared by:

Anne H. Adams  
Architectural Historian

A. Adams & Co.  
4800 Hampden Lane  
Suite 200  
Bethesda, MD 20814

September 18, 2014

This assessment of 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD (Building, 900 Spring Street) was undertaken at the request of the Building's owner, the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA). The purpose of this assessment was to fully understand the Building and to evaluate it against the criteria for designation set forth in Chapter 24A Historic Resources Preservation of the Montgomery County Code (Ch. 24A). As part of this effort, I reviewed the Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form (Inventory Form) prepared for 900 Spring Street, undertook research on John H. Sullivan, Jr. and the Earley Studio, interviewed NRMCA members, and looked at numerous buildings relevant to this effort. After careful consideration, it is my professional opinion that the Building does not meet the criteria set forth in Chapter 24A and thus cannot be designated as a historic resource in the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan for Historic Preservation (Master Plan) subject to Chapter 24A. The Building does not rise to the level of significance necessary to justify such listing and the resulting imposition of regulatory control over the Building.

Historic preservation is an important land use tool and it is in the public interest to identify and protect important buildings, sites, and districts from our past. I believe in historic preservation. I also believe that we must be very careful to avoid the misuse of preservation and the imposition of historic preservation regulation on buildings that do not rise to the level of significance to legitimately warrant such regulation. Preservation laws aim to identify and protect of our historic resources, be they significant on the national, state, or local level. Preservation laws can protect architecturally and historically significant features of our built environment and help people understand how places developed and our collective past. The retention of historic resources, particularly historic districts, helps retain the sense of a particular place and can foster a sense of community and pride of community.

Whether preservation generates economic benefits is hotly debated. It is certainly true that historic buildings may be eligible for rehabilitation grants and that certified rehabilitations of certified historic structures may generate tax benefits for the owner. On the other hand, historic designation can have significant adverse economic impacts on a property owner, particularly when a designation effort occurs at the proverbial eleventh hour. This is not to say that economic impacts should be a criterion by which to evaluate whether a building or site should be officially recognized as a historic resource. And it is not to say that eleventh hour designations cannot occur. Rather, it is to say that historic resource status must not be granted lightly and that buildings subjected to preservation regulations must be well and truly important.

As an Architectural Historian working professionally in the field of historic preservation for over forty years, and long since qualified as an expert in architectural history and historic preservation by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Board, I have had occasion to evaluate hundreds of buildings for their eligibility for landmark designation and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places. I have studied buildings of many types and ages. Most relevant to my understanding and consideration of the Building are two important Mid-Century buildings, the 1965 Washington Hilton, by master architect William B. Tabler, who literally wrote the book on mid-century hotel design, and the 1969 Modern Gothic National Presbyterian Church by Harold E. Wagoner, perhaps the most important Protestant ecclesiastical architect working in the middle decades of the twentieth century. I prepared, on behalf of the owners of those buildings, applications for their designation and listing in the Washington, DC Inventory of Historic Sites. These buildings are landmarks for their Mid-Century architectural significance and as important buildings designed by significant mid-century

architects (the fact that Ronald Reagan was shot at the Washington Hilton was not considered part of the hotel's significance).

After careful study and consideration, it is my professional opinion that 900 Spring Street is not sufficiently important to qualify for listing in the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan under Ch. 24A. This opinion is based on my years working in the field, my general knowledge, including about John J. Earley and the Earley Studio, research on the Building and its architect, and an evaluation of the architectural character and quality of the Building. The following provides information relevant to a critical evaluation of whether the Building meets the designation criteria set forth in Ch. 24A.

#### Office Building at 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD

The office building at 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD was built and owned by the NRMCA and the National Sand and Gravel Association (NSGA), organizations deeply involved in the American concrete industry. The NRMCA was founded in 1930. The NSGA evolved from the National Sand and Gravel Producers Association in 1916. As that organization evolved, its name changed numerous times. In this report I will refer to it only as the NSGA. Both NRMCA and NSGA conducted research and testing relevant to their products, educated their members, and promoted their products and segment of the concrete industry.

The NRMCA was founded in Pittsburgh, PA in 1930. Ready mixed concrete had been in use since 1913 but it was not until the NRMCA was formed that those who produced, sold, and used ready mixed concrete were united for their common good. In the early years, NRMCA dealt primarily with internal issues faced by the ready mixed industry, such as production techniques, delivery of their product, and sales and the promotion of ready mixed concrete as a building material. The NRMCA moved its offices to Washington, DC in the 1930s.

The NRMCA became active in government relations during the Depression. It fought legal battles related to the place of ready mixed concrete in the concrete industry at large and federal labor laws affecting the sale of ready mixed concrete across state lines. The NRMCA served as the leading advocate for the ready mixed concrete industry. It worked with the American Society for Testing and Materials on the formulation and adoption in 1933 of the first standards for ready mixed concrete. One of the NRMCA's primary focuses was and remains the education of its members and other users of ready mixed concrete. It developed and sponsored what is known as the Short Course in Concrete Aggregates in 1946; this course continues to this day. With its members and state organizations, the NRMCA organized and sponsored conventions, expositions, and meetings designed to educate its members and non-members alike about all aspects of the ready mixed concrete industry. These conventions, expositions, and meetings have never been held at the NRMCA's offices, which serve only as administrative space. Rather, these activities moved around the country and were most often held in the mid-west, in cities such as Cleveland, St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit; the NRMCA staff went and continue to go out to meet its members, members did and do not come to Silver Spring to interact with the NRMCA staff.

The passage of the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act in the early 1970s lead to the NRMCA's efforts to mediate between the federal government and the ready mixed concrete industry. These efforts led to the creation of CONCRETEPAC to support and protect the ready mixed concrete industry's interests in Congress. This bi-partisan committee was



formed to help pro-industry candidates get elected. In the 1990s, the NRMCA joined with other concrete associations to jointly further their lobbying efforts. In 2000, the newly-formed Concrete Alliance, which included both contractors and paving companies, worked to develop new markets. The industry's new focus on environmental and safety issues led to further joint industry-government efforts and agreements.

The NSGA emerged in 1916 from the National Sand and Gravel Producers Association, which was founded in 1911. The NSGA was the leading national voice and advocate for the aggregates industry and its activities over the years were similar to those of the NRMCA. The two organizations jointly established and funded a research and testing laboratory in 1926. Originally located in Washington, DC, the lab was relocated to the University of Maryland College Park campus in 1938. In 1973 the lab moved to 5600 Branchville Road, College Park, MD, to land donated for that purpose by NRMCA member Alfred H. Smith. It remains operational today. NSGA sold its 50% interest in the lab to NRMCA in 2006.

In the early 1960s, the NRMCA and the NSGA again joined forces to acquire land for and construct a new building to house their collective offices. In 1962 they purchased from John L. Smith, Jr., and others, three vacant residential lots at the southwest corner of Spring Street and Ellsworth Avenue in Silver Spring. At that time, the site was surrounded largely by single family houses and scattered buildings with large parking lots. The site was and remains just off the beaten track, at the outer edge of the downtown Silver Spring commercial area. NRMCA and NSGA hired local architect John H. Sullivan, Jr. to design their new building. The administrative offices of both organizations were located in the Building; other organization functions occurred at other locations. In 1998, the NSGA sold its 50% interest in the Building to the NRMCA and moved to a new location, a move indicative of the NSGA's lack of attachment to the Building.

#### John H. Sullivan, Jr. - Architect

John Henry Sullivan, Jr. (1925-2014) was born in Washington, DC and lived in Montgomery County, MD from 1928 until his death. After graduating from Georgetown Prep in 1942 he joined the United States Army and served for the duration of World War II. After the war, Sullivan attended the Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Engineering (CU), graduating with a B. Arch in 1950. He trained as a draftsman with A. Hamilton Wilson (1948-53) and Wilson & Denton (1953-55), and was a designer with Fon J. Montgomery and F. Leonard Slagle before opening his own firm, Sullivan & Associates, in Rockville in 1957. He would later move his office to Bethesda. Sullivan was licensed in MD, VA, and DC and joined the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1955. He was a member of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA, which emerged in 1955 from the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of the AIA. Over the years Sullivan's firm operated as: Sullivan & Associates; Sullivan, Clark, Almy and Savage; Sullivan, Almy and Savage; and Sullivan and Almy. Sullivan was a member of the Montgomery County Sign Review Board from October 29, 1968 to March 15, 1970.

Sullivan's design aesthetic was modernist. On page 59 of *Rockville's Recent Past*, author Teresa B. Lachin notes that Sullivan's work is generally characterized by "solid geometric forms, clearly delineated structural elements, and crisp linear planes." In the short film *A Pairs of Jacks*, about John Sullivan and fellow CU graduate Jack Samperton, produced in 2009 by Rockville 11 and the City of Rockville, Sullivan stated that he tried to produce buildings that were "simple, plain, and effective and reasonable in cost."

He certainly met the first three goals with many of his buildings; I have no knowledge relating to their cost.

Sullivan's buildings were largely commercial but he also designed churches, recreation centers, a library, and a relatively small number of houses, including his own and one for Mr. and Mrs. Alvin E. Kraus, both in Potomac, and apartment buildings. Some of his buildings, such as the original and expressive Aspen Hill Library (4407 Aspen Hill Road, Aspen Hill, 1967), with its six interconnected modules capped with hip roofs with chimney-like tops (see attached image 1.) and the A-frame St. Matthias Church (9475 Annapolis Road, Lanham, 1960) (see attached image 2.) exhibited strong Mid-Century characteristics. He designed a number of buildings, such as the DANAC Corridor Building on Shady Grove Road near 70-S (advertised as being six minutes from the Capital Beltway) (see attached image 3.) and a building he referred to as the Lingenfelter Street 70 Building (see attached image 4.), that were handsome and successful examples of Brutalism, albeit executed in brick rather than concrete. Their visual strength was created by simple massing and straightforward detailing, including recessed windows.

A large number of Sullivan's buildings were, however, simply generic commercial buildings, as seen in his designs for: gas stations; small branch banks; the old VOB Datsun Used Car salesroom; and the Colony Shop (see attached image 5.), a store with a shake fake mansard roof, that oft-misused feature of too many buildings from the period (including another Sullivan building, designed for DANAC and occupied by the US Public Health Service) (see attached image 6.). It is possible that some of Sullivan's more architecturally-interesting designs, such as those for a proposed recreation shelter with an exuberant Flying V roof, for the City of Rockville (see attached image 7.), a pair of apartment buildings at the Markwood Tract for Arthur Bowie and James Gibbons, and the proposed Rockville Car Bath, with a Googie-inspired sign, for Henry Dietle, Esq. were never constructed.

Sullivan's other buildings included: the Elwood P. Smith Center (601 Harrington Road, Rockville, 1959), originally distinctive but now altered beyond its Mid-Century design; the County Federal Savings and Loan building (30 East Montgomery Street, Rockville, 1962); the Mead Building (4930 Del Ray Avenue, Bethesda, 1963) (see attached image 8.) with its white glazed brick façade; the Tenley Building (medical offices at 901 Rockville Pike Rockville, 1964) with its facades of contrasting bricks (see attached image 9.), the Rockville Municipal Swim Center (355 Martin's Lane, Rockville, 1968); and a Humble Car Care Center (1970). Sullivan also designed: an apartment building for Brawner Suburban Investment Company in Kensington, MD; a number of churches and related buildings, including St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church in Rockville and the St. Mary Star of the Sea school and convent (30 Mattingly Avenue, East, Indian Head, MD); additions to Chevy Chase Elementary School (4015 Rosemary Street, Chevy Chase) and Rock Terrace High School (390 Martin's Lane, Rockville); and a number of small branch banks for clients such as the Bank of Bethesda, Citizens Bank of Maryland, and the First National Bank of Southern Maryland. The TD Bank at 51 West Edmonston Drive (at Rockville Pike), Rockville, 1964 (see attached images 10. And 11.) was originally designed for the First National Bank of Maryland. Its design is similar to his other branch banks, many of which were also on Rockville Pike.

Sullivan was a competent architect whose designs spanned the range of quality and interest. He was not, however, a master architect. His work did not exhibit the design excellence or level of innovation that generally characterizes the work of a master architect, any number of whom worked in Montgomery County in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Nationally known master architects such as Pietro Belluschi (Cedar Lane Unitarian Church, with Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, 1953-58), Voorhees, Walker, Smith, & Smith (Atomic Energy Commission, 19901 Germantown Road, Clarksburg, 1957), and Vincent Kling (GEICO Headquarters, 5260 Western

Avenue, Chevy Chase, 1959) designed important and distinctive Mid-Century buildings in the County. Their talent and exceptional buildings transformed the appearance of large parts of the County and influenced their chosen field.

Regionally-important firms such as Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon and Charles Goodman Associates designed Mid-Century Modern residential developments (Potomac Overlook and Carderock Springs by the former and Hammond Hill, Hammond Wood, and Rock Creek Woods by the latter) that defined large swaths of the County and influenced the design of houses and residential subdivisions throughout the region. Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon also designed important non-residential buildings, such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Administration Building (Building 31) on the NIH campus (1960-62), with its exuberant zig-zag roof, and the Wheaton Youth Center (11711 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, 1963), both exceptional Mid-Century designs. Diegert and Yerkes designed the houses in Tulip Hill, the Bushey Drive Elementary School (4010 Randolph Road, Wheaton, 1961) (see attached image 12.) and the Primary Day School (7300 River Road, Bethesda, 1955), all expressive Mid-Century designs. Ronald Senseman designed a number of post-war schools, including the Sligo Adventist Elementary School (8300 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, 1964), which also has an exuberant Mid-Century zigzag roof.

All of these architects were Fellows of the AIA, which speaks to their design abilities and the esteem in which they were held by their peers, and which contributes to their status as master architects. Their individual talent and widely-recognized design expertise influenced their chosen field and development in and appearance of the area. This is, of course, not to say that all buildings by master architects are great or even good, or that buildings by non-master architects cannot be good or even exceptional. There are certainly talented and respected architects who are not Fellows, and not all Fellows are exceptional designers. However, FAIA status generally denotes architects of a level of significance not attained by most architects. Sullivan, like the majority of architects, was not elected to Fellowship in the AIA.

### 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring

900 Spring Street was designed by John H. Sullivan, Jr. for the NRMCA and NSGA (see attached images 13. and 14.) It stands at the corner of Spring Street and Ellsworth Drive. Construction began in the early 1960s and was completed in 1964. The Building served as offices for its builders; no research or testing work occurred in the Building and no membership meetings were held in the Building. The Building is Mid-Century by construction date, like any building constructed in the approximately 35-40 years after World War II. Although the Building's design lacks key aspects of Brutalism, that style is the best architectural context within which to evaluate its architectural expression.

The two-story concrete building sits on a raised plinth (see attached images 13. and 14.) The concrete on the Building includes both smooth finished concrete and exposed aggregate concrete made with large, irregularly shaped, and irregularly distributed aggregate throughout (see attached image 15.) Steps lead up to pair of double-leaf front doors that lead to the same interior space; the entrance sequence is unusual and somewhat awkward. A single solid door at the back of the Building leads to an adjacent parking lot, which is accessed from Ellsworth Drive. The doors and windows throughout the Building are aluminum. A narrow concrete terrace runs around the Building. A low wall of alternating differently finished concrete panels of two different heights encloses the terrace (see attached image 16.) The retaining wall around the parking lot consists of the same two types of panels but of one consistent height.

The first floor of the Building is characterized by large fixed windows with an operable panel across the bottom of the glass. The narrow space between the windows is filled with exposed aggregate panels. At the second floor, which projects beyond the first, the fenestration occurs above the narrow concrete panels of the first floor. Wide exposed aggregate panels fill the spaces between the narrow vertical windows, which are divided horizontally into three sections, with fixed panels above and below an operable center section. The projecting window surrounds extend above the roofline and below the line of the second floor. The windows are not recessed. Rather, their surrounds project from the face of the Building.

The Building hardly seems the type of building Sullivan tried to design. Nor does it compare positively to his well-conceived and executed Brutalist buildings. The complicated, multi-layer skin — the exposed aggregate panels are layered on parts of the primary face, as are the projecting window surrounds — lacks clarity (see attached image 17.), something not typical of Brutalist design. The window surrounds extend significantly from both surfaces and create an illusion that the windows are recessed. Such an illusion is not characteristic of Brutalism. In reality, the windows are shallowly set in the first floor wall and set in the second floor slightly more. The multiplicity of depths and planes create visual confusion and lacks the visual strength accompanied with Brutalist buildings.

Significant staining on the concrete, which is not typical of Mid-Century concrete buildings, detracts from the appearance of the Building. Multiple pieces of mechanical equipment on the roof add visual clutter to the already-busy appearance of the Building.

It certainly makes sense that the NRMCA and the NSGA would want to build their new building of concrete. However, one would expect the concrete to be of superior quality; it could hardly serve to promote concrete and the organizations if it were not. Curiously, an unfortunately notable and obvious aspect of the Building is the poor quality of the exposed aggregate panels of the wall surfaces. The workmanship and quality of that concrete is surprising, given the builders and occupants of the structure. This reinforces the NRMCA's statement that the Building was not designed or constructed to serve as a showcase for its builders or the possibilities of concrete. Indeed, there were companies, such as the Earley Studio, capable of producing extremely fine exposed aggregate panels that were not employed in the construction of 900 Spring Street.

Sullivan designed several other office buildings, including the Lingenfelter Street 70 building and Washington Shade and Awning, that feature key aspects of Brutalism missing from the Building. Their designs are simple and clear. Their massing is simple and clear and creates the impression of strength. Their fenestration is deeply recessed. The designs of these buildings are successful and are perhaps more refined and better executed versions of what Sullivan may have been attempting at 900 Spring Street.

#### John J. Earley and Earley Studio

John Joseph Earley (1881-1945) is known as the man who made concrete beautiful. His experimentation and artistic and technical abilities resulted in his invention of gap-graded exposed aggregate architectural concrete of exceptional quality and remarkable visual character. The small (about ¼" and smaller) dense, uniform, and evenly and tightly spaced aggregate produced exposed aggregate concrete of remarkable distinction and beauty. Earley developed polychrome concrete mosaics and was a pioneer

in prefabricated concrete construction. He created a market for Earley Process architectural concrete and contributed to the design and construction of some of the most remarkable structures built in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. Earley was a man of rare artistic and technical ability. After his death, the Earley Studio continued in operation, under Basil Taylor until 1952 and then others. Basil's son, Vernon Taylor, was in charge when the Studio closed in 1973.

The Earley Studio was established by James F. Earley, a fourth-generation Irish stonecarver. James Earley and his wife immigrated to New York in 1881, the same year John J. Earley was born. Nine years later, the Earley family moved to Washington, DC and the elder Earley established a stone carving studio in Rosslyn, VA. John attended St. John's College from 1894-1899 and, at 17, apprenticed to his father as a stone carver. When James Earley died in 1906 he left the Earley Studio to John with the request that Basil Taylor, the long-time foreman, remain at the studio.

In 1907, John Earley moved his company to the new studio and offices he built at 2131 G Street, NW, Washington, DC. John Earley and Basil Taylor then took the business in a new direction, focusing on plaster and stucco installation, rather than stone carving. The Earley Studio operated there until 1936, at which time the operation moved back to Rosslyn because the District of Columbia refused to grant Earley a permit to build a large crushing plant in the middle of Foggy Bottom, in what was then still a largely residential area.

In the early twentieth century stucco was considered an inferior material for the exterior of buildings because the deficiencies of Portland cement frequently led to cracks and failure of the stucco. Testing in 1911 by the Bureau of Standards sought to develop a new cement mixture that was less vulnerable to water penetration and subsequent failure. The Earley Studio participated in that testing and that work became the underpinnings of Earley's later innovations.

In 1916, the Earley Studio was commissioned to construct the walls, stairs, and reflecting basins at Meridian Hill Park. After extensive testing and experimentation Earley learned to choose aggregate that would impart a particular color to the concrete, in that case a warm golden brown, and developed a system of grading the size of the aggregate to produce concrete of a uniform appearance. This was the beginning to the exceptional concrete work for which John J. Earley and the Earley Studio are known. The Earley Studio went on to produce the concrete for: the Baha'i Temple of Light in Wilmette, IL; the replica of the Parthenon in Nashville, TN; the Polychrome Houses in Silver Spring, MD (see attached images 18. - 21.), and in Washington, DC, the interior of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart, the ceiling of the Department of Justice building, work at the National Zoo, and the decorative panels at Porter and Lockie's mosque at 2551 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.

Earley joined the American Concrete Institute (ACI) in 1917. The ACI was and is a technical society dedicated to improving the design and manufacture of concrete products and structures. Earley was active in the organization for many years and regularly delivered papers about his work and discoveries. He served as a committee Chairman and was a Director for six years, twice being elected Vice-President. He was elected President in 1938, the first craftsman and a fabricator of concrete to hold that office; he brought a perspective to the office different from the scientists and engineers who had preceded him.. Earley also served as a Director of the ACI for four years after his presidency. In August, 1943 Earley was elected to honor membership, the ACI's highest honor. Other honors included the ACI's Henry C. Turner Gold Medal for outstanding achievement in developing concrete as an architectural medium. He also received, in 1936, an AIA award for craftsmanship.

Before John Earley died in 1945, he sold Earley Studio to Basil Taylor. Basil ran the Studio until 1952. His son, Vernon, was running the Studio when it closed in 1973. Throughout this time the Earley Studio continued to produce exceptional architectural concrete, mostly in the form of flat panels. The work of the Earley Studio was easily recognizable for its uniformity of aggregate and exceptional color and quality, as can be seen at the North Chevy Chase Christian Church (8814 Kensington Parkway, Chevy Chase, 1961), designed by John Samperton (see attached images 23. and 24.). The North Bethesda Junior High School (8935 Broadmoor Drive, Bethesda, 1955) and the National Geographic Building (100 Edison Park Drive, Gaithersburg, 1967) also featured the work of Earley Studio. However, as important as John Earley and the Earley Studio were, they are not relevant to the Building or its consideration as a historic resource.

In recent years the ACI and the DC Preservation League have conducted tours of Earley Studio buildings, the former in 2014 and the latter in 2016. Interestingly, although the ACI tour included the Polychrome Houses in Silver Spring it did not include the nearby Building, as one might have expected had the Building featured work by the Earley Studio.

### Mid-Century Development and Design in Montgomery County

The post-World War II years were boom years in Montgomery County and across the United States. Building materials were again available and the mid-century construction transformed the County. Meeting the pent-up demand for houses, schools, shopping centers, office buildings, and roads to access them transformed the County. New building types, such as suburban branches of “downtown” stores, particularly department stores, mid and high-rise office buildings, and shopping centers amid seas of parking appeared. The optimism and exuberance of 1950s and 60s was expressed in the design of everything from buildings to cars, light fixtures, and even clothes. Modern, sometimes futuristic designs competed with and often won out over the continuation of the more traditional pre-war approach to design. The upzoning of the 1964 Wedges and Corridors plan, planning efforts to further develop the business/commercial area of Silver Spring, and construction of I-270, completed in 1957, and the Beltway, completed in 1964, led to the transformation of the County from primarily rural to primarily suburban.

The proximity to the federal government and the industries and institutions in Montgomery County attracted a highly educated population that leaned toward the liberal end of the political spectrum. That liberal, progressive mindset tended to be open to modern design, including for their houses. Modernism in residential design is a topic in and of itself and not particularly relevant to the consideration of 900 Spring Street. More relevant are the expressions of modernism in non-residential buildings, particularly office and other commercial buildings.

Four architectural styles - the International Style, Formalism, Expressionism, and Brutalism – emerged as dominant architectural styles in the post-war Modern era. Other Mid-Century architectural expressions included the exuberant, often futuristic 1950s and 60s Googie designs of small scale commercial buildings and A-frames for vacation homes, churches, and restaurants. Modern forms and styles were developed for single-family houses and duplexes. Mid-Century Modern styles generally fell out of favor by the end of the 1970s.

The style most relevant to consideration of the Building and this report is Brutalism, an architectural style that originated in Europe after World War II. It takes its name from the French term “*beton brut*”,



for unfinished concrete and a term used by Swiss architect Le Corbusier for unfinished, rough, sometimes raw concrete used on the exterior of usually large-scale buildings. In the United States, Brutalism became a favored style for academic and government buildings, concrete construction being relatively easy, fast, and inexpensive. Brutalist buildings were typically large and large-scale and featured crisp geometric forms and clearly delineated masses and elements. They often appeared heavy and massive; the impression created was one of strength. Brutalist buildings were most frequently concrete but were also constructed of brick or a combination of concrete and brick. Doorways were often recessed and located within entry plazas and windows were very often recessed from the face of the building.

The facades of Brutalist buildings were usually regular and symmetrical, often created by the repeated use of modular elements to form a single overall pattern, as can be seen at Marcel Breuer's 1968 Department of Housing and Urban Affairs building at 451 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, and 1977 Department of Health and Human Services building at 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC. The 1970s Harry Weese-designed stations for the Washington area Metro system are excellent examples of Mid-Century Brutalism, as is the Montgomery County Judicial Center at 50 Maryland Avenue (see attached image 25.) and the County Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, both in Rockville and dating from 1981. All these concrete buildings are large and large-scale. The design of all but the Judicial Center feature regular and repeated design modules. All are excellent examples of Brutalism. Examples of significant smaller and smaller-scale Brutalist buildings include the 1969 Sunderland Building at 1320 19<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC, designed by Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon, and the medical office building at 831 East University Boulevard, Takoma Park, from 1965. (See attached image 26.) Both these buildings are have regular but asymmetrical facades and are refined, rather elegant examples of a style not known for elegance. In this they differ from 900 Spring Street.

A comparison of 831 East University Boulevard and the Building is useful in evaluating the Building. Both buildings feature smooth finished and exposed aggregate concrete. However, the exposed aggregate at the East University Boulevard building is much finer and of higher quality than the exposed aggregate on the Building (see attached images 27. and 28.). The overall design of the East University Boulevard building is clearer, cleaner, and more straightforward than the cluttered design of the Building. The windows in the East University Boulevard building are actually recessed from the face of the building. The East University Boulevard building features the full range of Brutalist stylistic elements and it conveys a clear sense of strength. The Building lacks essential elements of Brutalism.

The County Judicial Center is perhaps the most monumental Brutalist building in the County. Its sheer size and unrelieved expanses of concrete create an imposing presence on the street and in the area. Other good examples of Brutalism include the Bushey Drive School, 831 East University Boulevard, and Boucher-Meyers' 1970 Montgomery Center, 8630 Fenton Street, Silver Spring.

Brutalist buildings also can be irregular and asymmetrical, as seen at the Lauinger Library on the Georgetown University campus (John Carl Warnecke, 1970) and at the Canadian Embassy at 501 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (Arthur Erickson, 1989), both in Washington, DC. These buildings feature a complex collection of forms and spaces and a design approach very different from the Building. Accordingly, this variation of Brutalism is not relevant to a discussion and evaluation of 900 Spring Street.

Compared to architecturally good and significant Brutalist buildings, 900 Spring Street falls short. It does not exhibit the clarity of design and form that is characteristic of good examples of Brutalism. It does

not feature truly recessed windows that are a primary characteristic of Brutalist buildings. The different types of concrete and the layered planes and forms of the Building create complicated elevations that lack the visual strength of good Brutalist buildings. Furthermore, the two stories of the Building are overwhelmed by its complicated design and appearance.

#### Evaluation of the Inventory Form

Like this report, the Inventory Form includes extensive information about John J. Earley, the Earley Studio, and buildings for which the Earley Studio actually did produce concrete. Unlike this report, the Inventory Form makes the claim that the Building is significant as a “well-preserved, late example of aggregate concrete construction by the Earley Studio.” However, the exposed aggregate panels are not well made and they do not look anything like Earley Studio exposed aggregate concrete. The Inventory Form states the Building was designed to highlight the natural character of concrete and serve to promote the company (presumably the NRMCA) and the material. However, the poor quality of the exposed aggregate concrete, that NSGA sold its share of the Building and moved elsewhere, and the NRMCA’s statements to the contrary all suggest that was not the case. The Inventory Form states that 900 Spring Street has “a prominent location on the edge of the downtown business district” of Silver Spring. In actuality, the Building stands at the outer edge of the business district in an ill-defined streetscape. Its location was not and is still not prominent or important. The Building is small and has surprisingly little presence on Spring Street; it is actually easy to drive past it driving out of the business district on Spring Street.

The smooth concrete sections of the building do not exhibit the “natural state of raw concrete”. Rather, that concrete is highly finished to a smooth, fine-grained uniform surface. While the exposed aggregate panels “add texture” to the Building, the aggregate is large, rough, irregular gravel that does not create the fine pebbled texture of quality exposed aggregate concrete. The exposed aggregate panels are certainly not consistent with the quality and uniformity of Earley Process concrete and cannot correctly be attributed to the Earley Studio. The extensive text in the Inventory Form on Joseph Earley and the Earley Studio discuss things that are not relevant to the Building.

The poor quality of the exposed aggregate panels seriously undermines the architectural character, quality, and any potential importance of the Building, which cannot reasonably be presumed to have been designed to promote concrete as a building material or the organizations that constructed and owned the Building. This observation has been confirmed by the NRMCA. Furthermore, it is not typical or characteristic of concrete buildings from the mid-century era to exhibit streaking and staining. Indeed, the streaking and staining on the Building creates an unwelcome patina and does not contribute positively to the Building’s character.

#### Evaluation of the Building Under Criteria Set Forth in Chapter 24A and Conclusion

Chapter 24A provides for the identification, designation, regulation, and protection of structures of historical, archaeological, or cultural value to the County. Chapter 24A sets forth criteria by which to evaluate buildings and determine if they are worthy of designation as historic resources such that they can justifiably be subjected to protection and regulation because of listing in either the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In addition to these criteria, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Planning Board must also critically evaluate whether a building is actually

significant, significance being the most basic requirement for recognition and designation of a building as a historic resource. Landmarks must be important, significant, not simply examples of something. After all, all buildings are examples of something, all buildings exemplify something, if only themselves. However, not all buildings are significant and thus worthy of protection.

In considering building for designation as historic resource, the HPC and the Planning Board must consider whether a building meets the following criteria:

- (1) Historical and cultural significance, including whether the [potential] resource:
  - a. Has character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the county, state, or nation;
  - b. Is the site of a significant historic event;
  - c. Is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society; or
  - d. Exemplifies the cultural economic, social, political or historic heritage of the county and its communities.

The Building is not historically or culturally significant. While the Building is part of the development and heritage of the County, as is any extant building, it is not an *important* part of the development or heritage of the County. No significant event took place at the Building. It did not pave the way for anything and it had no impact or effect on anything, including how its immediate environment, Silver Spring generally, or the County developed. Its preservation is not critical to the understanding of the County's past.

Rather, the Building is an ordinary office building that has housed the offices of two, and since 1998 only one, of the hundreds of associations located in Montgomery County. Both the NRMCA and the NSGA certainly contributed to the development and success of parts of the concrete industry. However, the activities for which they were known — research and testing and educational efforts — did not occur at the Building and consequently made no contribution to the heritage or development of the County.

The Building is part of the County's built environment, just as are all extant buildings. That, in and of itself, does not make a building important. Likewise, buildings exemplify themselves, which does not make all buildings important. Like most buildings, this Building does not exemplify the cultural economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities in any significant way. It was built at a time when the County was being developed at an astonishing pace. Its construction was neither noteworthy nor influential. The Building provided office space for organizations that conducted their important work elsewhere. The organizations were not involved with the social or political development in the County and cannot be deemed important in those spheres. The Building simply does not rise to the level of significance to qualify or justify regulatory control under Ch. 24A.

- (2) Architectural and design significance. The [potential] historic resources:
  - a. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
  - b. Represents the work of a master;
  - c. Possesses high artistic values;
  - d. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
  - e. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape.

To be considered a historic resource for architectural and design significance a building must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction in an important way and beyond what all buildings do, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. 900 Spring Street does not do any of these things, and certainly not to the level of significance that must be required for the recognition of a historic resource. The Building is an office building but not an important office building. The design of the Building does not exhibit the characteristics of a good, much less significant Brutalist building. As stated above, the Building lacks, among other things, the clarity of design and massing and the visual strength that is characteristic of good Brutalist buildings. The Building's height and its overly complex design conspire to diminish any impression of strength the concrete might otherwise have created. Several of Sullivan's other buildings are much more successful Brutalist designs, exhibiting the clarity of design and massing so fundamental to Brutalist buildings. Those buildings even have recessed windows, another prominent characteristic of the Brutalist aesthetic.

Although of concrete construction, the most prominent concrete on the Building, the exposed aggregate panels, is poor quality and certainly not characteristic of the natural character or strength that material possesses. The poor quality of the exposed aggregate panels significantly diminishes the overall architectural character and quality of the Building to the extent that it cannot be said to possess high artistic value. This is curious, indeed, given that the Building was constructed by organizations involved in the concrete industry. The NRMCA helped promote, very successfully, the use of ready mixed concrete as a building material, particularly in the post-World War II decades. The NSGA represented entities that created the aggregate that went into the making of concrete, including exposed aggregate concrete. The exposed aggregate concrete panels at the Building should have been of particular importance to the NSGA. Their poor quality strongly suggests that the Building was not intended to be somehow symbolic of either organization or a showcase for the concrete industry or the resident organizations.

The Building does not represent the work of a master architect. John H. Sullivan was a competent commercial architect, much of whose work was fairly generic mid-twentieth design. He was capable of good design, as seen at the Aspen Hill Library, which seems new, fresh, and successful to this day. Mostly, however, Sullivan's work was simple and cost effective, as was important to him (and likely also his clients). That the Building is different from much of Sullivan's work does not imbue it with significance. He was not recognized for significant contributions to his chosen field during his lifetime and his extant buildings do not support his recognition as a master in his field.

The Earley Studio clearly qualifies as a master in the production of exposed aggregate concrete. However, I do not believe the exposed aggregate concrete on the Building was produced by the Earley Studio or by the Earley Process. John J. Earley was an inventor, artist, and pioneer in the world of exposed aggregate concrete and numerous examples of his work and the work of the Earley Studio after his death in 1945 are found throughout the area. Earley Process concrete is, first and foremost, characterized by fairly small, uniform, and evenly spaced aggregate. The exposed aggregate panels on the Building exhibit none of the quality or characteristics for which the Earley Studio was famous. More likely, those exposed aggregate panels were produced by a member of the NRMCA with no knowledge or understanding of the Earley Process. Even if it could somehow be proved that the exposed aggregate panels were produced by the Earley Studio, their poor quality should eliminate the possibility that they confer any significance to the Building; if those panels were produced by the Earley Studio they are surely the worst exposed aggregate concrete the Earley Studio ever produced.

The Building stands at an unremarkable location in Silver Spring, away from the main commercial area of downtown Silver Spring and somewhat lost in the streetscape. Its original context was mixed and its current context is predominantly residential and includes single-family houses and large apartment buildings.

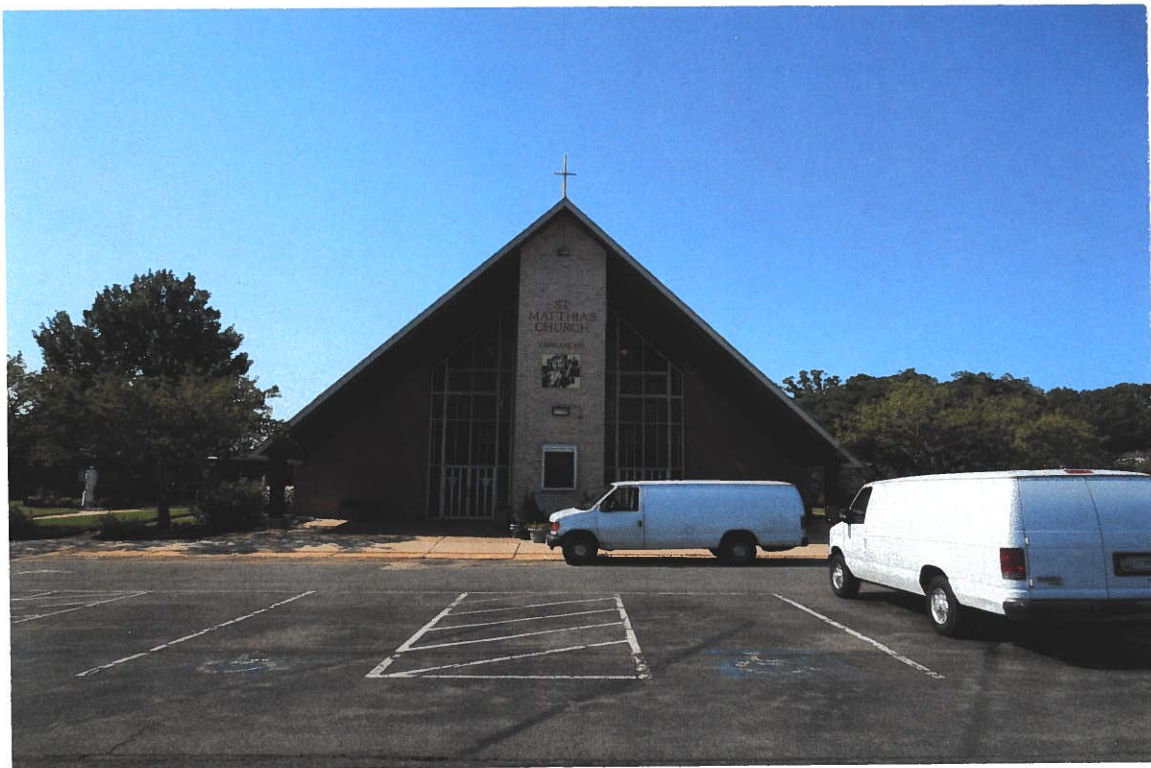
It is true that the Building is visually different for the buildings around it. However, that in and of itself is not sufficient to qualify it as a historic resource. A historic resource on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan and subject to the regulatory controls of Ch. 24A must be first and foremost important; simply existing is not sufficient.

In “A Pair of Jacks” John Sullivan and fellow architect John Samperton talk at length about the extraordinary changes that occurred in Rockville and the rest of Montgomery County after World War II. They talk about buildings going up everywhere there was vacant land and roads connecting formerly unconnected places. They talk about ongoing change and the fact that nothing, including buildings, is permanent. Interestingly, John Sullivan, recognizing the nature and necessity of change, says “Very rarely does anything remain the same, especially a building.” And “I mean let’s face it. Maybe we [Sullivan and Samperton] think our work is so damn good that it should stay but that’s not true.” That statement is worth serious consideration.

Based on my professional experience and the reasons discussed above, I believe the Building does not possess the significance necessary to qualify for listing on the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan as a historic resource under Ch. 24A. Nor does it meet any of the criteria set forth in Ch. 24A for such listing. Consequently, there is no basis or justification for listing the Building in the Locational Atlas or the Master Plan and the resulting imposition of regulatory control under Ch. 24A.



1. Aspen Hill Library – 4407 Aspen Hill Road, Aspen Hill, MD, John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1967  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



2. St. Matthias Church – 9475 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD  
 Courtesy of the Historic Preservation Division of the Prince George's County  
 Planning Department, M-NCPPC, September 15, 2019





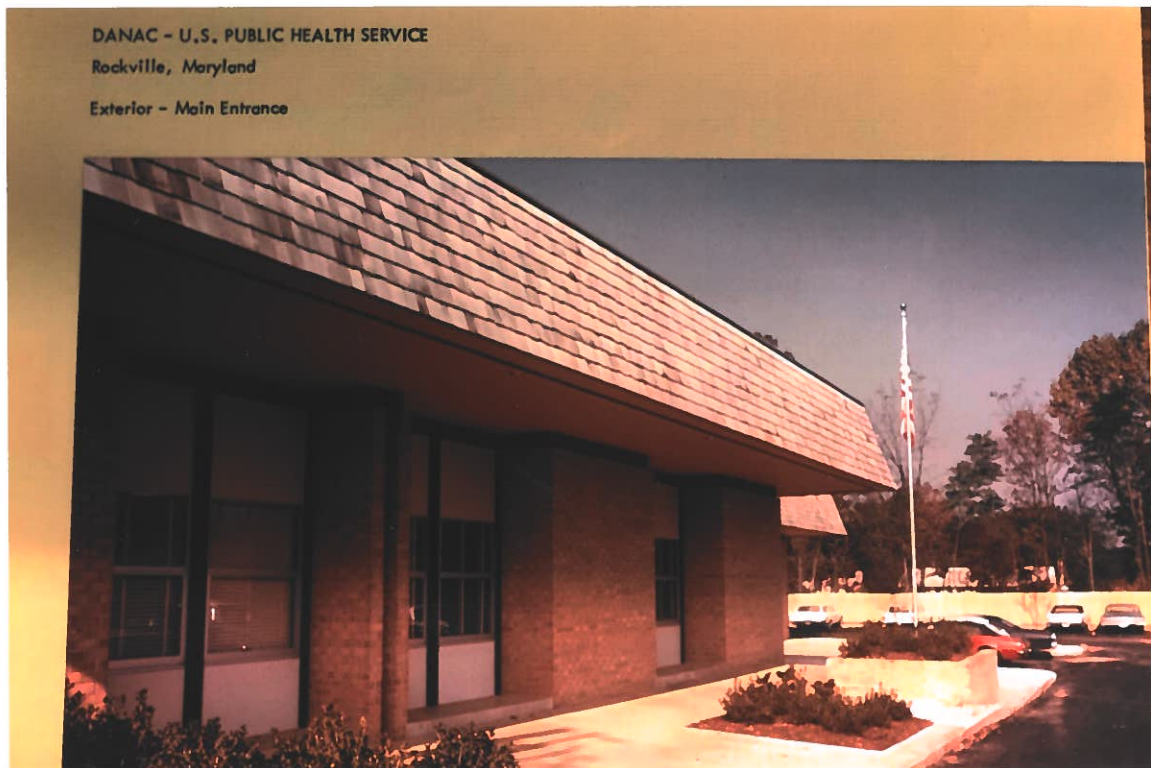
3. DANAC Corridor Building – Shady Grove Road near 70-S, John H. Sullivan, Jr.  
 Rendering in collection and courtesy of Peerless Rockville



4. Lingenfelter Street 70 Building – John H. Sullivan, Jr.  
 Photograph by John H. Sullivan, Jr., in collection and courtesy of Peerless Rockville

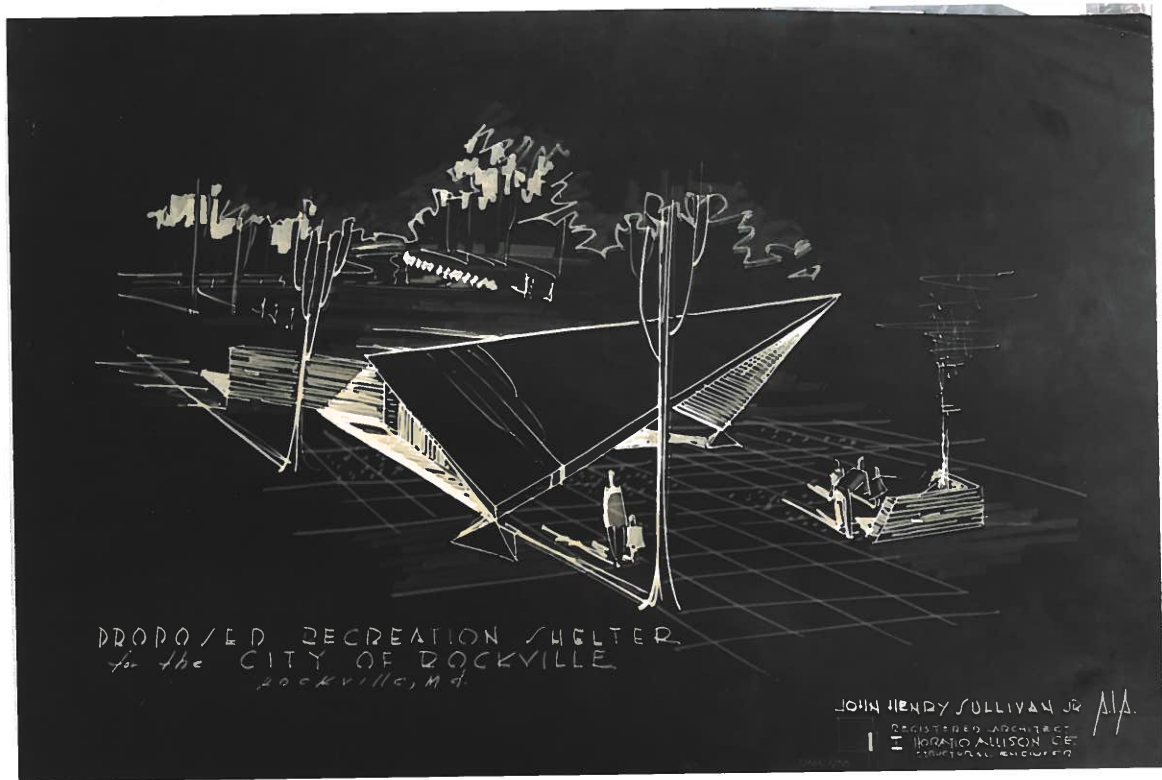


5. Colony Shop – John H. Sullivan, Jr.  
Photograph by John H. Sullivan, Jr. in the collection and courtesy of Peerless Rockville



6. DANAC – US Public Health Service, Rockville, MD, John H. Sullivan, Jr.  
Photograph by John H. Sullivan, Jr. in the collection and courtesy of Peerless Rockville





7. Proposed Recreation Shelter for the City of Rockville  
Design and rendering by John H. Sullivan, Jr., in the collection and courtesy of Peerless Rockville



8. Mead Building, 4930 Del Ray Avenue, Bethesda, MD, John H. Sullivan, 1963  
Photo by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



9. Tenley Building, 901 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD - John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
 Parking Lot Elevation  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



10. TD Bank, 51 West Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD, John H. Sullivan, 1964  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019





11. TD Bank and Tenley Building Building, Rockville Pike and West Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD  
 John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September 14, 2019



12. Bushy Drive Elementary School – 4010 Randolph Road, Wheaton, MD, Diegert & Yerkes, 1961  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019





13. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD – John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September 14, 2019



14. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD – John h. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
 Ellsworth Drive elevation  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September 14, 2019



15. 900 Sprig Street, Silver Spring, MD – John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
detail of exposed aggregate concrete on first floor  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, August, 2019





16. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD – John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
Detail of terrace wall panels  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, August, 2019



17. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD – John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
Detail of façade showing smooth and exposed aggregate concrete  
Photograph, Anne H. Adams, August, 2019





18. Polychrome House, 9901 Sutherland Road, Silver Spring, MD – John J. Earley, 1934-35  
Front door  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



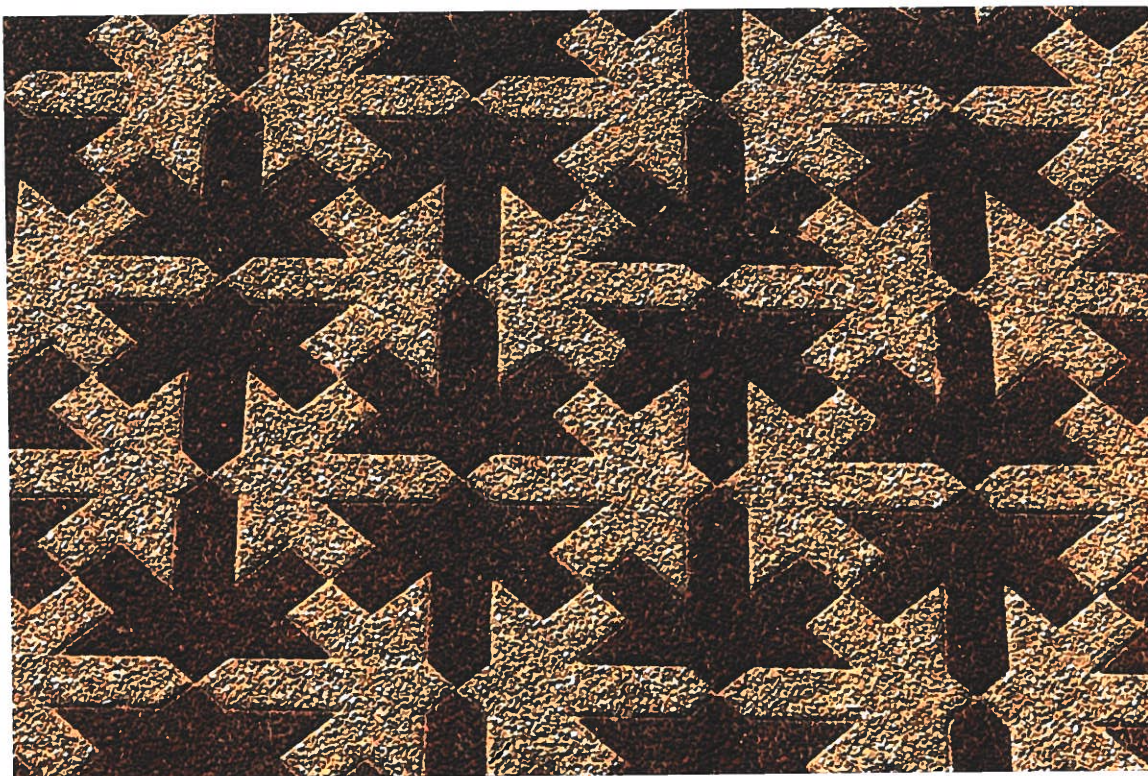


19. Polychrome House, 9901 Sutherland Road, Silver Spring, MD – John J. Earley, 1934-35  
Detail at front door  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019





21. Polychrome House, 9901 Sutherland Drive, Silver Spring, MD – John J. Earley, 1934-35  
Rear facade  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019

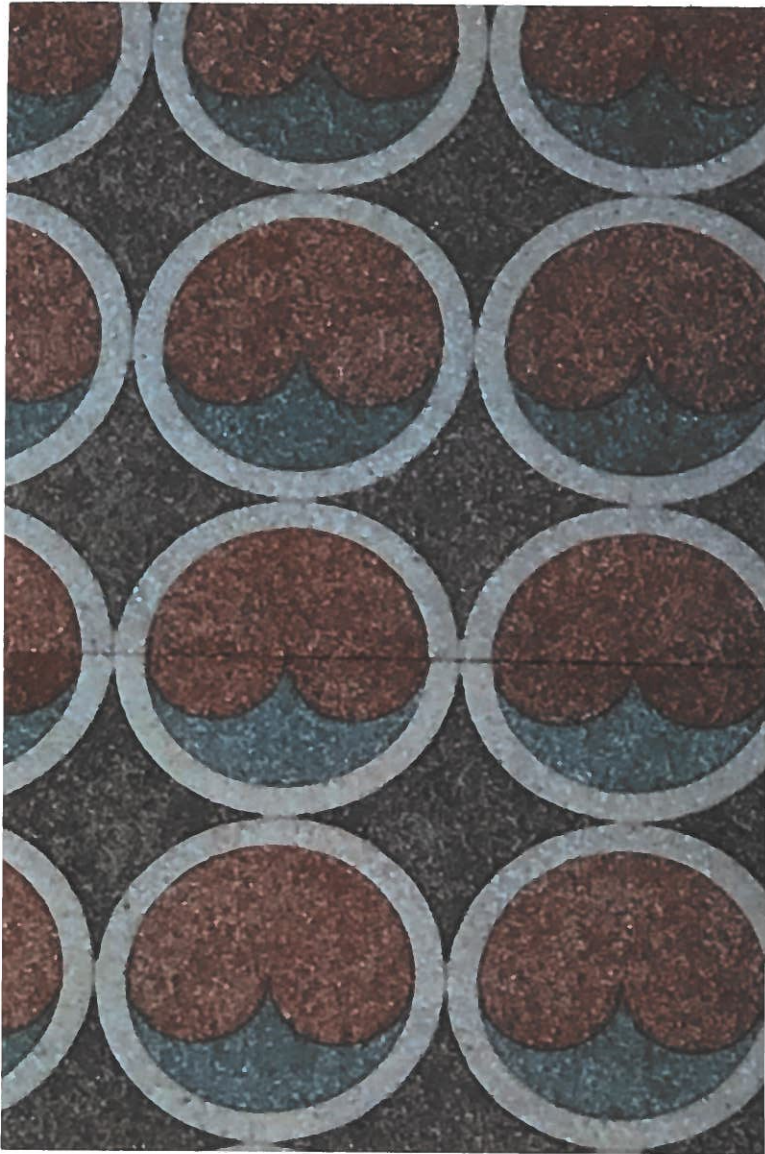


22. Polychrome House, 9901 Sutherland Road, Silver Spring, MD – John J. Earley, 1934-35  
Detail at rear façade  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019





23. North Chevy Chase Christian Church – 8814 Kensington Parkway, Chevy Chase, MD, John Samperton, 1961  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



24. Chevy Chase Christian Church – 8814 Kensington Parkway, Chevy Chase, MD, John Samperton, 1961

Earley Studio panels on front façade

Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September, 2019



25. Montgomery County Judicial Center, 50 Montgomery Avenue, Rockville, MD, 1981  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, August, 2019



26. 831 East University Boulevard, Takoma Park, MD, 1965  
 Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September 2019





27. 831 East University Boulevard, Takoma Park, MD 1965  
Detail of smooth and exposed aggregate concrete  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, September 2019



28. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD – John H. Sullivan, Jr., 1964  
Detail of smooth and exposed aggregate concrete  
Photograph by Anne H. Adams, August, 2019



THE ARMBRUSTER COMPANY, INC.

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**Assessment of Architectural Concrete**

**900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, MD**

September 24, 2019 Page 1 of 6

The office building at 900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, Maryland does not have architectural concrete produced by the Earley Studio and is not an example of Earley Process Concrete associated with John J. Earley, Earley Studio, the Mo-Sai Institute or their licensees.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike all Earley Process Concrete, the 900 Spring Street building's architectural concrete does not have gap-graded, exposed aggregate concrete with crushed stones closely packed into a dense surface pattern that is regular and unvarying. The Spring Street building does not have crushed quartz, granite, glass or ceramic aggregate that is required for Earley Process Concrete. 900 Spring Street was not constructed with the consistent, high quality of workmanship evidenced in uniform concrete placement, even exposure of the stones, and well-defined edges that distinguish all Earley Process Concrete.<sup>2 3</sup>

As an expert in the works and processes of John J. Earley and Earley Studio, if the 900 Spring Street building was a relevant example of Earley Process Concrete, I would have been aware of it.

I have personally examined the architectural concrete on the 900 Spring Street building and reviewed the architectural plans, specifications and construction documents in the records of the National Ready Mix Concrete Association who has occupied the building since 1964.

The following pages of descriptions and photographs illustrate how the 900 Spring Street building fails to meet the fundamental definition of Earley Process Concrete.



Robert F. Armbruster  
President  
The Armbruster Company, Inc.



**900 Spring Street Building<sup>4</sup>**

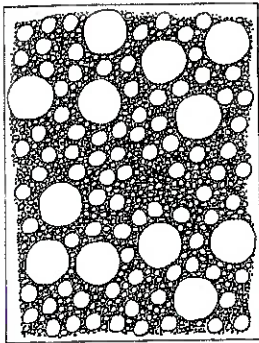
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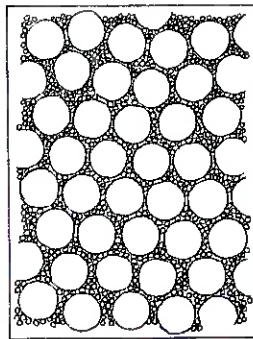
### Assessment of Architectural Concrete 900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, MD

September 24, 2019 Page 2 of 6

Earley Process Concrete is distinguished by gap-graded, exposed aggregate of quartz, granite or other impervious stones and sand of the same stone material. The aggregate was crushed and screened into a step graded or gap-graded sizes with no intermediate size stones between the large pebbles and the sand. Even the sand is screened to a uniform size. The pebbles and sand are proportioned in the concrete so that the pebbles are closely packed in the finished surface.



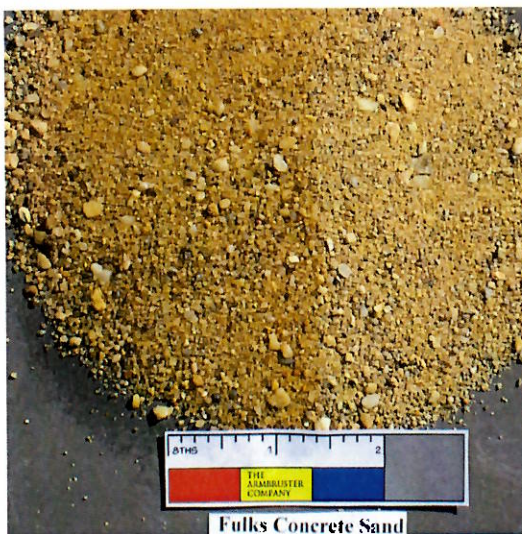
Ordinary, uniformly graded concrete aggregate similar to 900 Spring Street.<sup>5</sup>



Earley Process Concrete: Gap-graded aggregate of two sizes — pebbles and sand.



Earley Process pebbles screened to one size



Ordinary concrete sand similar to 900 Spring Street



Earley Process Concrete sand screened to one size



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### Assessment of Architectural Concrete 900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, MD

September 24, 2019 Page 3 of 6



#### Earley Process Concrete

Closely packed pebbles of one size, uniformly distributed and packed tightly throughout the surface. The exposure of the stones is accurate, even and consistent, creating a regular pattern.

The concrete contains only a small amount of sand. The sand grains are all one size.

Earley Process Concrete aggregate is always crushed quartz, granite, glass, ceramic or other hard, impervious rock.



#### 900 Spring Street

Stones of many sizes are irregularly distributed across the surface. The finished appearance has no consistent pattern.

The stones are glacial till or river gravel that has not been crushed. The sand is ordinary concrete sand with grains of all sizes.

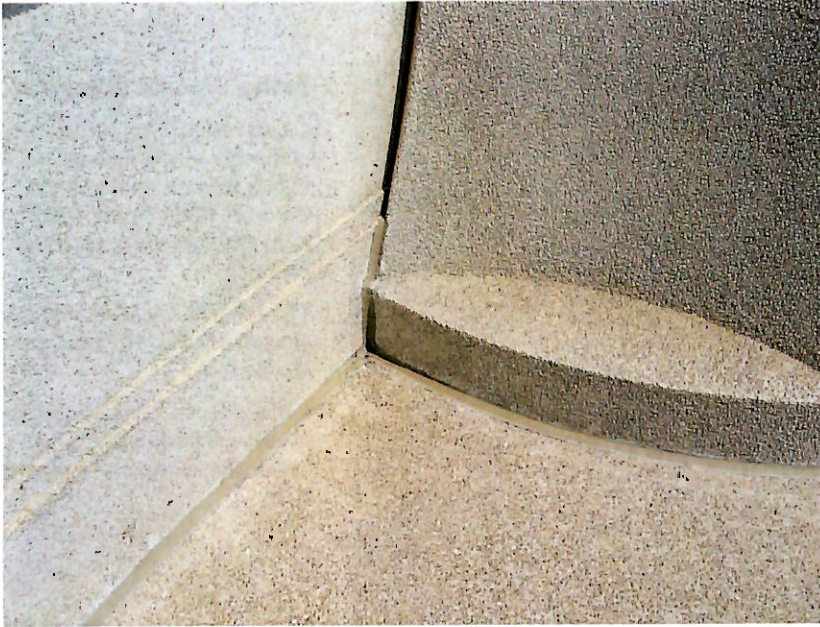


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### Assessment of Architectural Concrete 900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, MD

September 24, 2019 Page 4 of 6



#### Earley Process Concrete

Pebbles are uniformly distributed and evenly exposed across all surfaces. There is no variation between the sequential, lifts of concrete mixtures placed as the walls were built.



#### 900 Spring Street

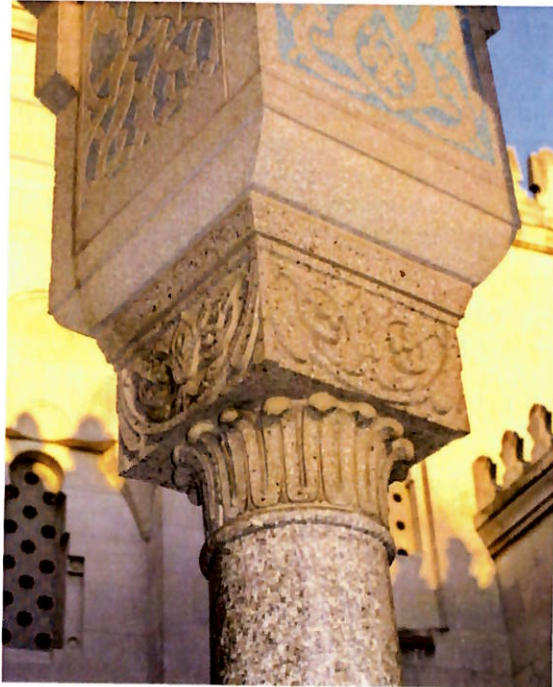
The density and size of pebbles changes across the surface and between the sequential, vertical lifts of concrete mixtures placed as the wall was built. The appearance is mottled and irregular.

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**Assessment of Architectural Concrete**  
**900 Spring Street, Silver Springs, MD**

September 24, 2019 Page 5 of 6



**Earley Process Concrete**

Edges and corners are crisp and sharply defined.



**900 Spring Street**

The precast concrete component in the top of the photograph exhibits poorly defined edges and corners.

The precast concrete component in the bottom of the photograph does not have the stones exposed in the surface and has well defined edges.



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**Assessment of Architectural Concrete**  
**900 Spring Street**, Silver Springs, MD

September 24, 2019 Page 6 of 6

Notes

1. In 1938 Earley Studio began licensing its process to other architectural concrete manufacturers. John J. Earley trained these manufacturers in all the requirements, procedures and techniques necessary to produce Earley Process Concrete. This evolved into the Mo-Sai Institute whose members continued to produce Earley Process Concrete into the 1980s. Earley Studio and twenty Mo-Sai Institute manufacturers were producing Earley Process Concrete when the 900 Spring Street building was constructed. See:
  - a. Cron, Frederick W., *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful: A Biography of John Joseph Earley*. Centennial Publications, Ft. Collins, CO, 1977;
  - b. Freedman, Sidney, "History of Exposed Aggregate (Mo-Sai) Architectural Precast Concrete," *PCI Journal*, May-June 2004 and
  - c. "Mo-Sai Institute: Precasting's Elite," *Concrete Products Magazine*, Chicago, Illinois, March 1965.
2. Earley Studio and the Mo-Sai Institute never revealed the exact sizes of their pebbles and sand but they did publish specifications and some internal policy documents of Earley Studio have been located. See the attached, primary source documents provided from the collection of The Armbruster Company:
  - d. rca (Adams, Richard), "tests for Michigan consolidated gas company," *earley studio incorporated corporate policy*, Manassas, Virginia, July 22, 1965, original in National Baha'i Archives, Wilmette, Illinois;
  - e. Earley Process Corporation, "New Walls for Modern Homes," Washington, D.C., 1934; and
  - f. Mo-Sai Institute, "Specifications H1," *Design Details*, 1971.
3. John J. Earley described the Earley Process Concrete materials and procedures in thirteen papers that he presented at conferences of the American Concrete Institute. These papers are published in the *Journal of the American Concrete Institute*. Many others have published papers and articles describing Earley Process Concrete and its distinguishing features. See:

Armbruster, Robert, "Bibliography related to John J. Earley," [http://www.armbrusterco.com/Armbruster\\_Company/John\\_J\\_Earley\\_Bibliography.html](http://www.armbrusterco.com/Armbruster_Company/John_J_Earley_Bibliography.html), May 13, 2019
4. Photos of 900 Spring Street building courtesy of Andi Adams, A. Adams & Co. Bethesda, MD.
5. Diagrams from Cron, Frederick W., *The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful: A Biography of John Joseph Earley*, p. 10.



Interior ornamental concrete with Earley Studio sample. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. September 24, 2019. The Armbruster Company.





Exterior concrete with Earley Studio sample. 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland. September 24, 2019. The Armbruster Company.



**Robert F. Armbruster**

Internationally recognized expert in the restoration of historic architectural concrete, exposed aggregate concrete and mosaic concrete artworks.

Retired from full time services but provides consulting for exceptional projects. The Armbruster Company's project management services and production studio are no longer available.

Provided investigation, materials development, engineering and training for historic concrete restoration and for architectural concrete in new works. The Armbruster Company's concrete studio designed and produced select projects in mosaic concrete, sculpture and architectural concrete.

Bob is a leading authority on John J. Earley, the father of beautiful architectural concrete, and the work of Earley Studio. We created designs, materials and methods to restore Earley's historic architecture, mosaic artwork, sculpture and fountains.

Bob restored exceptional concrete for thirty years. For forty-three years Bob directed the planning, design and construction of complex restoration projects as the principal engineer and Program Manager.

Retired Professional Engineer in Maryland, Illinois, Ohio, North Carolina and Michigan.

University of Michigan, BS Civil Engineering  
University of Detroit, BA Design and Architecture

Professional author, speaker and instructor.

Maintained memberships in:

**American Concrete Institute (ACI)**

*Past Chairman, ACI Committee 124: Aesthetics of Concrete*

*Past Member, Concrete Research Council*

**International Concrete Repair Institute (ICRI)**

**Perservation Trades Network (PTN)** founding member

**Precast Concrete Institute (PCI)**

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**Robert F. Armbruster**

### **Earley Studio Projects**

**Baha'i House of Worship, Wilmette, IL**

Program Manager of design and construction for 28 year, phased restoration of building and gardens. Designed and directed the production of 7,700 pieces of new precast concrete matching Earley Process concrete. Established continuous care program and Temple Conservation Library.

**Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C.**

Created specifications, samples and construction procedures for restoration of the Earley's concrete that the National Park Service will use for current and future projects. Located replacement aggregates and matched 26 different architectural concretes in the park. Trained craftsmen.

**Parthenon, Nashville, TN**

Conditions assessment of pediment statues, demolition, modeling and new molds for 68 components.

**Thomas Edison Memorial Tower, Edison, NJ**

Conditions assessment, specifications, locate aggregates, samples and training of craftsmen.

**U.S. Marine Corps Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial), Arlington, VA**

Conditions assessment, specifications, locate aggregates, samples and training of craftsmen for rehabilitation of monumental plaza and reviewing stand.

**WWII and Korean War Battle Maps, Memorial to Pacific Battles, Punchbowl, Honolulu, Oahu, HI**

Conditions assessment and restoration of polychrome mosaic concrete murals of glass and ceramics. American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC).

**New, Vietnam War Memorial Battle Maps, Memorial to Pacific Battles, Punchbowl, Honolulu, Oahu, HI**

Designed and produced polychrome mosaic murals matching Earley Studio's historic battle maps. ABMC.

**Navy Memorial to the Battle of Midway, Midway Atoll, Central Pacific**

Designed and produced polychrome mosaic concrete murals matching Earley Studio's historic mosaics. World Heritage Site. ABMC.

### **Additional Notable Projects**

**Shrine of the Bab, Haifa, Israel**

Condition survey and assessment, programs for restoration and conservation. World Heritage Site.

**Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC**

Investigation and engineering for the restoration of main entrance esplanade and Library Terrace, for waterproofing of the below grade hallways, and for restoration of the Italian Garden's reflecting pools.

**Eychaner-Lee House, Chicago, IL**

Specifications, mockup and training of craftsmen for restoration and cleaning of architectural concrete in the first Tadao Ando building in North America.

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**Robert F. Armbruster**

**Awards**

- Preservation Project of the Year** Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration  
*Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois*
- Concrete Repair Project of the Year** Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration  
*International Concrete Repair Institute*
- First Place Award for the Advancement of Construction Technology in Renovation**  
*Construction Specifications Institute* Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration  
*McGraw-Hill's Construction Information Group*
- Most Significant Architectural Concrete Repair Project, 1990-1995**  
*Concrete Repair Digest* Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration
- Award of Merit, Structural Engineering** Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration  
*Structural Engineers Association of Illinois*
- Award of Merit, Historic Concrete** United States Marine Corps Memorial Rehabilitation  
*International Concrete Repair Institute*
- Award of Merit, Historic concrete** Bahá'í House of Worship Terrace, Stairs and Gardens Restoration  
*International Concrete Repair Institute*
- Award of Excellence, Longevity of Concrete Repairs** Bahá'í House of Worship Restoration  
*International Concrete Repair Institute*
- Preservation Honor Award** Vietnam War Memorial, U.S. National Cemetery of the Pacific  
*Historic Hawaii Foundation*



## Papers

**"John J. Earley's Mosaic Concrete Art"**

*Concrete International*, v41 n3, March 2019, pp. 27-35.

**"Secrets of John J. Earley's Mosaic Concrete on the Baha'i Temple"**

Presented at "Celebrating 100 Years of the Work by John Joseph Earley and the Earley Studio" Symposium, ACI Fall Convention, Washington, D.C., Oct 27, 2014.

**"John Earley's Mosaic Concrete Artwork — Saints and Battle Maps"**

Presented at "Celebrating 100 Years of the Work by John Joseph Earley and the Earley Studio" Symposium, ACI Fall Convention, Washington, D.C., Oct 28, 2014.

**"John J. Earley's Mosaic Concrete"**

Anne E. Weber, Paul E. Gaudette and Robert F. Armbruster  
*Concrete International*, v33 n10, October 1, 2011.

**"Conservation of Concrete Heritage, The Baha'i House of Worship"**

*Construcao Magazine*, Portugal, July/August, 2011.

**"Conservation of Concrete Heritage, the Experience of the United States"**

Presented at UNESCO International Conference on World Heritage of Portuguese Origin, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal, October 25, 2010.

**"Earley Studio's Innovations Create a New Architectural Material"**

Presented at "John Joseph Earley: Expanding the Art and Science of Concrete" Symposium, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, March 31, 2001.

**"Weathering of Architectural Concrete on the Baha'i House of Worship"**

Presented at the American Concrete Institute Fall Convention, Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 9, 1993.

**"Restoring Brilliant Ornamentation"**

*DOCOMOMO Preservation Technology Dossier 2: The Fair Face of Concrete: Conservation and Repair of Exposed Concrete*. 1997.

**"The Baha'i House of Worship Restoration"**

Robert F. Armbruster and Jack Stecich  
*International Concrete Repair Bulletin*, September/October 1993.

## Videos

**"John Earley's Mosaic Art — Saints, Dinosaurs, and Battleships"**

American Concrete Institute, May 1, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tlps0NhL\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tlps0NhL_g)

**"Secrets of John J. Earley's Mosaic Concrete on the Baha'i Temple"**

American Concrete Institute, February 26, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buMySF2mHyE>

**"Creating a New Vietnam War Memorial Matching Earley Studio's Mosaic Concrete"**

American Concrete Institute, March 31, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-17bylHSuw>

## THE ARMBRUSTER COMPANY

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**ANNE H. ADAMS**

Architectural Historian

A.Adams & Co.  
4800 Hampden Lane  
Suite 200  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
202 577-7978

[Andi.Adams@AdamsAHHP.com](mailto:Andi.Adams@AdamsAHHP.com)

**Employment**

4/19 to Present	A.Adams & Co. Architectural Historian
4/10 to 3/19	Goulston & Storrs, PC Architectural Historian
8/00 to 3/10	Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, LLP Architectural Historian
5/84 to 8/00	Wilkes Artis, Chartered Architectural Historian
10/77 to 5/84	District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office Architectural Historian on staff of the State Historic Preservation Office, the Joint Committee on Landmarks and its successor board, the Historic Preservation Review Board
2/77 to 10/77	Don't Tear It Down (now the DC Preservation League) Architectural Historian and Administrative Assistant
9/74 to 8/76	University of Maryland Department of Art History Teaching Assistant

**Qualified as Expert Witness in Architectural History and Historic Preservation Before:**

District of Columbia:  
Board of Zoning Adjustment  
Historic Preservation Review Board

Joint Committee on Landmarks  
Mayor's Agent for Historic Preservation  
Zoning Commission

Florida:

Fort Lauderdale:  
City Commission  
Historic Preservation Board  
Miami Historic & Environmental Preservation Board

Maryland:

Annapolis Historic Preservation Commission  
Howard County Historic Preservation Commission  
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Montgomery County:  
Board of Appeals and Review  
County Council  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Prince George's County:  
County Council  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Rockville Historic District Commission

Virginia:

Alexandria Board of Architectural Review  
Arlington County Board of Architectural Review  
Fairfax County Board of Architectural Review

United States Tax Court

**Partial List - Washington, DC Landmarks and Historic Districts for which Designation Applications and/or National Register of Historic Places Nominations have been Prepared**

Alumni House – George Washington University  
Atlas Theater  
Concordia German Evangelical Church and Rectory  
Corcoran Hall – George Washington University  
Downtown Historic District  
Euclid Apartments  
Dupont Circle Historic District  
Fifteenth Street Financial Historic District  
Lisner Auditorium – George Washington University  
Luzon Apartments  
National Metropolitan Bank Building  
National Presbyterian Church

Northumberland Apartments  
Park Road, NW – south side of 1600 Block  
Park Road, NW – south side of 1800 Block  
President's Offices – George Washington University  
Schneider Triangle  
Seventh Street, NW – east side of 1000 Block  
Sixteenth Street Historic District  
Stockton Hall – George Washington University  
Strong Residence Hall – George Washington University  
Van Ness Mausoleum  
Washington Hilton Hotel  
Woodhull House – George Washington University

**Partial List of Buildings and Vacant Land Evaluated for Historic Significance; Opposed Designation, Designation Not Granted**

Baker House – 1767 Lanier Place, NW, DC  
Beachfront Hotel – 2220 North Atlantic Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Circle Theater – 2100 Block of Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, DC  
Governor Shepherd Apartments – 2121 Virginia Avenue, NW, DC  
4300 Block of Harrison Street, NW – DC  
Non-contributing Dormitory at Marjorie Webster Junior College – 1630-1640 Kalmia Road, NW, DC  
Park Lane Apartments – 2025 H Street, NW, DC  
Vacant land adjacent to Alban Towers, 3700 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, DC  
Vacant land adjacent to 3900 Connecticut Avenue, NW, DC  
Vacant land adjacent to Temple of Scottish Rite – 1733 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, DC  
Western Presbyterian Church – 2300 H Street, NW, DC

**Partial List of Certified Rehabilitations Approved for Federal 20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

1747 Columbia Road, NW, DC  
21 Federal Street, Nantucket, MA  
901 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, DC  
1644-66 Park Road, NW, DC  
1731 Willard Street, NW, DC  
Alperstein's Furniture Store, 1015 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, DC  
Atlas Theater and Shops, 1313-1331 H Street, NE, DC  
Buckingham Apartments, Arlington, VA  
Hard Rock Café, 999 E Street, NW, DC  
Manhattan Laundry, 1326-46 Florida Avenue, NW, DC  
Mann's Potato Chip Factory, 1042-54 29<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, DC  
Miller Furniture Company Store, Pennsylvania Avenue at D Street, SE, DC



Roosevelt Apartments, 2101 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, DC  
Thomas Simm Lee Houses, 3001-3003 M Street, NW, DC  
Wardman Row, 1416-40 R Street, NW, DC

**Partial List of Projects Reviewed Under Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act, Including Drafting of Memoranda of Agreement and Programmatic Agreements**

MCI Arena, downtown Washington, DC

New Convention Center, downtown Washington, DC

Military Housing Privatization Projects – review triggered by long-term leases to private housing providers; drafted Programmatic Agreements that established criteria and processes for review of projects affecting historic resources for term of leases:

- Arlington Service Center, Arlington, VA
- Marine Corps Base Quantico, Quantico, VA (work also reviewed by National Capital Planning Commission)
- Naval Air Station, Patuxent, VA
- Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, CA
- Naval Base, Ventura, CA
- Naval Complex, Hampton Roads, VA
- Naval District Washington (includes National Naval Medical Center, Chesapeake Bay Detachment, and Naval Support Facility Thurmont)
- Naval Support Activity Washington (includes Old Naval Observatory, Naval Security Station, Bellevue Navy Housing)
- Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren, VA
- Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian Head, MD
- Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, CA
- United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD
- Washington Navy Yard, DC (work also reviewed by US Commission of Fine Arts and National Capital Planning Commission)

Tivoli Square, 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Road, NW, DC

**Partial List of Washington, DC Projects Approved Pursuant to Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act**

2001 Massachusetts Avenue, NW – three-story addition to two-story contributing building in Massachusetts Avenue Historic District

4800 Block of Massachusetts Avenue, NW – new building on site of landmark Spring Valley Shopping Center

9<sup>th</sup> and M Streets, NW and Blagdon Alley, NW – construction of two new buildings and bridge over Blagdon Alley connecting same, Blagdon Alley Historic District

208, 214, and 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE and 420-430 Third Street, NE – alterations to existing contributing buildings in Capitol Hill Historic District and construction of new below-grade parking structure and six new rowhouses

700 Constitution Avenue, NE – rehabilitation of former hospital and addition thereto for conversion of contributing building in Capitol Hill Historic District to residential use

2033 G Street, NW and 2141 I Street, NW – construction of museum addition to two landmark buildings in George Washington/West End Historic District

2119-21 H Street, NW and 2124 I Street, NW – construction of new dormitory incorporating portions of three existing apartment buildings on George Washington University campus

Washington Hilton Hotel – construction of large residential addition in east courtyard of landmark hotel

Square 499 – 6<sup>th</sup> Street, SW between M and K Streets, SE – rehabilitation of 1962 I.M. Pei Marina View Towers and construction of two new apartment towers on site

Shoreham Building – 800 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW – restoration of facades and significant interior spaces of contributing building in historic district in conjunction with new construction

Square 347 – redevelopment of western half of square bounded by 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, E, and F Streets, NW, including restoration, reconstruction, and relocation of facades of contributing buildings in historic district

National Cathedral School Athletic Facility – 3500 Woodley Road, NW – construction of below-Grade athletic facility with above-grade entry pavilion within National Cathedral Close

1500 Block of 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW – construction of four single-family houses on site of landmark Bowie-Sevier House in Georgetown Historic District

#### **Partial List of Washington, DC Projects Approved by the US Commission of Fine Arts**

Underwood House, 1687 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, NW – rehabilitation and rear addition

Shoemaker Home – 2701 Military Road, NW – rehabilitation and additions

Knollwood – 6200 Oregon Avenue, NW – large addition and site work

Tregaron – construction of new house on site of landmark

Alexander Ray House – 1925 F Street, NW – exterior restoration, rear addition, construction of new garage at landmark house

227 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE – restoration of façade and addition of third floor to contributing building in Capitol Hill Historic District

Tingly House, Washington Navy Yard – exterior rehabilitation of house and two historic outbuildings

### **Teaching**

Goucher College – Graduate Historic Preservation Certificate Program, co-taught Historic Preservation Law course, spring 2009

### **Education**

Graduate: University of Maryland, College Park, MA in Art History, with concentration in American Architecture, 1976

Thesis title: An Examination of the Life and Work of Frederick Bennett Pyle, Washington Architect

College: University of Rochester, Rochester, NY  
BA with Honors, 1974, Major, Art History  
Elizabeth M. Anderson Award for Excellence in Art History

Secondary: Laurel School, Shaker Heights, OH, 1970

### **Memberships and Positions**

#### **Memberships**

Lambda Alpha International – George Washington Chapter  
Center for Palladian Studies in America  
DC Preservation League  
National Building Museum  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Society for Commercial Archaeology

## Positions

Chevy Chase Village Historic Preservation Committee – 1995-97

Chevy Chase Village Local Advisory Panel – 1998-99

Decatur House Council, National Trust for Historic Preservation – 1995-2002

Chair, Collections and Acquisitions Committee; Buildings and Grounds  
Committee; Finance Committee

DC Preservation League – Advisory Committee for two grant projects funded by  
National Park Service through DC State Historic Preservation Office –  
1984-87

Washington Chapter, American Institute of Architects – Historic Resources Committee  
1984-2001, Development Committee, 1987-89



September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair

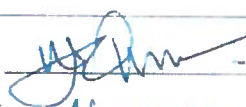
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
Historic Preservation Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

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Sincerely,

Name:  - Harvey Johnson

Title/Year: Chairman - 2004/2005

September 23, 2019

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Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair

And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
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Sincerely,

  
Name: HENRY R. BATTEN

Title/Year: Past Chairman, 2009-2010

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
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Sincerely,

  
Name: John P. Anderson

Title/Year: Chairman 2010

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
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Sincerely,



Name: William F. Childs

Title/Year: Chairman 2013



# THE L. SUZIO CONCRETE COMPANY

975 WESTFIELD ROAD PO BOX 748  
MERIDEN, CONNECTICUT 06450-0748

TEL 203-237-8421  
FAX 203-238-9177

WWW.SUZIOYORKHILL.COM

September 23, 2019

## BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
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Sincerely,



Name: H.E. SUZIO

Title/Year: 2014-2015

September 23, 2019

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And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

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Sincerely,

  
Name: Michael F. Philipps Title/Year: Current President, NRMCA



September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

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In over twenty years of active NRMCA engagement, including chairing several committees, serving on the Executive Committee, and progressing through the officer chairs, I have been to the headquarter office less than five times."

Sincerely,

Scott W. Parson  
President, CRH Americas Materials West Division

NRMCA Chair, 2017-2018

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair

And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
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Sincerely,

Thomas H Baird, III \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Thomas H Baird, III \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Year: NRMCA Chairman, 1997 \_\_\_\_\_





Allen Hamblen • President & CEO  
email: ahamblen@calportland.com

September 24, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair

And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
Historic Preservation Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Allen Hamblen', is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature.

Name: Allen Hamblen

Chairman of NRMCA 2015

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

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Sincerely,

*Ted Chandler*

---

Name: Ted Chandler

Title/Year: Chairman 2016

**From:** Flynn Group <[flynnngroup@aol.com](mailto:flynnngroup@aol.com)>  
**Date:** September 24, 2019 at 1:53:52 PM AKDT  
**To:** Michael Philipps <[mphilipps@nrmca.org](mailto:mphilipps@nrmca.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: NRMCA Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD

Michael,

I am traveling at the present time and unable to personally sign a hard copy draft of your document in the short time requested.

However, I concur with the opinions expressed and am in agreement with it's factual narrative, as personally understood by me, during the entire time of all my many years of serving on either the NAA and/or the NRMCA Board of Directors over the several decades prior to my retirement from the industry in 2012. Please communicate my thoughts to the interested parties involved in the decision. Thanks.

Thomas L. Flynn  
Past Chairman (2000)  
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association. (NRMCA)

Past Director,  
National Aggregate Association (NAA)

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
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8787 Georgia Avenue  
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Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

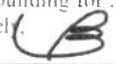
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Sincerely,

  
Name: Peter Brewin  
Title Year: Chairman 2006

1

3420506.1

92407101



September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair

And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

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Historic Preservation Commission  
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Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Chairman Anderson and Madame Chair Heiler,

We understand that there has been discussion regarding the historical significance of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association's ("NRMCA") previous headquarters located at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring, MD (the "Building"). As a past Chairman/Chairwoman of the Board and/or past and existing President of NRMCA, we would like to weigh in on this matter. We can affirmatively state that during our time with the organization there was no intention for the Building to serve as a promotional piece for NRMCA or as an icon for the organization. The Building did not function as a public face of the organization and public meetings were not held at the Building. The Building was designed to provide office space for NRMCA's Staff (and at the time of construction, also for the National Sand and Gravel Association's ("NSGA") Staff). The Building was constructed with not only ready mixed concrete and exposed aggregate concrete (as might be expected), but also with precast concrete (which was and is not a representative product of our Associations' members). The decisions made regarding construction materials and techniques had to do with practical, financial, and logical considerations more than anything else. Throughout our collective years with NRMCA, since construction of the Building in the early 1960's through the present, there has been absolutely no discussion that this Building should be preserved or attributed any significance other than as an office building for NRMCA (and NSGA).

Sincerely,

Name:

*Elizabeth A Twoshy*

Title/Year:

*Chairman 2007*

September 23, 2019

**BY MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair  
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board  
Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Ms. Sandra Heiler, Chair  
And Members of the Historic Preservation Commission  
Historic Preservation Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3670

Re: 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Chairman Anderson and Madame Chair Heiler,

We understand that there has been discussion regarding the historical significance of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association's ("NRMCA") previous headquarters located at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring, MD (the "Building"). As a past Chairman/Chairwoman of the Board and/or past and existing President of NRMCA, we would like to weigh in on this matter. We can affirmatively state that during our time with the organization there was no intention for the Building to serve as a promotional piece for NRMCA or as an icon for the organization. The Building did not function as a public face of the organization and public meetings were not held at the Building. The Building was designed to provide office space for NRMCA's Staff (and at the time of construction, also for the National Sand and Gravel Association's ("NSGA") Staff). The Building was constructed with not only ready mixed concrete and exposed aggregate concrete (as might be expected), but also with precast concrete (which was and is not a representative product of our Associations' members). The decisions made regarding construction materials and techniques had to do with practical, financial, and logical considerations more than anything else. Throughout our collective years with NRMCA, since construction of the Building in the early 1960's through the present, there has been absolutely no discussion that this Building should be preserved or attributed any significance other than as an office building for NRMCA (and NSGA).

Sincerely,



Name: RODNEY GROGAN

Title/Year: CHAIRMAN NRMCA / 2018-2019  
PRESIDENT, MMC MATERIALS, INC.

24 September 2019

Sandra Heiler, Historic Preservation Commission Chair  
c/o the Historic Preservation Program  
Montgomery County Planning Department  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters  
900 Spring Street  
Silver Spring, Montgomery County, MD 20910



**Docomomo DC**  
2121 Ward Place, NW  
Fourth Floor  
Washington, DC 20036

[docomomo-dc.org](http://docomomo-dc.org)

Dear Ms. Heiler:

Docomomo DC is the Washington metro area chapter of Docomomo, which stands for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings of the Modern Movement. Our organization is dedicated to preserving modern architecture and to raising awareness about its role in the development of our cities and our landscapes. As the chapter's Vice President, I am writing to express Docomomo DC's support for the designation of the National Sand & Gravel Association (NSGA) and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters as a historic site within the Maryland-Washington Regional District's master plan for historic preservation and opposition to its demolition. The building is a strong example of brutalist architecture that merges mid-century modern corporate design with regional craftsmanship and building technology. These three themes are all cast (excuse the pun) in its concrete form.

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters is an outstanding example of brutalist architecture in the county and region. "Brutalism" takes its name from the French "*beton brut*" or "unfinished concrete." The building's exposed aggregate texture, bold form, and cantilevered structure reflect the material properties of concrete and, in doing so, epitomize the brutalist style. In 2017, Docomomo DC's annual Tour Day event focused on brutalism. Through a tour of brutalist architecture, we argued that, while it is style everyone loves to hate, brutalism marks an important period in the history of design and in the architectural legacy of Washington, DC and the region. Recent demolitions of brutalist buildings in Washington, DC and Maryland have shown that now is the time to reevaluate and celebrate this architecture. The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters is an excellent example of brutalism in Montgomery County that should, too, be reevaluated and celebrated.

Concrete was not just the form, but also the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters' reason for being. The NCRMA was organized to "protect the welfare and best interest of those engaged in the production and sale of ready mixed concrete." To quote Clare Kelly, a former Docomomo DC board member, in her book *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979* "the exuberant design of the building is a three-dimensional advertisement for the business." In turn, the building represents not only the architectural style of the day but also the corporate culture of mid-century Silver Spring.

Lastly, the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters reflects the art of Washington, DC craftsman John Earley and his studio. In the early twentieth century, John Earley developed unique and innovated ways to work with concrete, exposing its aggregate to reveal deep color and texture. His work is found throughout Washington and Maryland including in the walls, balusters, and fountains at Meridian Hill Park and in the bold mosaic on the Scottish Rite Temple on Sixteenth Street. His studio was hired to produce the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters precast panels, using their exposed aggregate technique.

The NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters and its concrete form embodies brutalism, an architectural style deployed around the globe, in service of national associations and expressed through a regionally developed concrete technique. For these and other reasons outlined in the staff report, Docomomo DC believes the NSGA and NRMCA Headquarters should be designated, protected, and celebrated.

Thank you for your consideration of Docomomo DC's comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucy Moore".

Lucy Moore, AIA, LEED AP BD+C  
Vice President, Docomomo DC



## **ALMY ARCHITECTS**

11006 Kenilworth Avenue

Garrett Park, MD 20896-0123

(301) 949-7813 • Fax: (301) 949-6574

E-MAIL dave@almyarch.com

I was a draftsman at the firm of Sullivan and Associate and a student at Maryland University prior to attending and earning a Bachelor of Architecture from Howard University in 1968. While working as an architectural draftsman at Sullivan and Associates I worked extensively on the drawings for the Headquarters Building for The National Sand and Gravel Association and The Ready Mix Concrete Association located at the corner of Spring Street and Edmonston Drive in Silver Spring Maryland.

Jack Sullivan took great care in trying to create a design that made use of Ready Mix Concrete and Sand and Gravel, and in doing so, created a striking building that is unique in the fact that it truly exhibits the unique use of the product of the client.

The use of the precast panels that contain the windows around the second floor and the use of exposed gravel walls gives this building a unique ability to express the beauty of the product of the client.

Jack Sullivan also was the architect and designer of several other significant building such as churches, schools, bank, and the Montgomery County Public Library in Aspen Hill, which I consider to be an excellent example of Jack's design.

In addition to excellent buildings, Jack also inspired a unique collection of young Architects who have created other fine buildings that grace the Metropolitan area. George Hartman of Hartman -Cox, Tom Clark of TCA Associates, Don Savage and Wayne Smith, who designed several outstanding buildings for DNC Architects, Jim Emr of SEI Associates, and dare I say Dave Almy who continues to design a number of County and community swimming pools.

We unfortunately, in my opinion, find ourselves at a time where land costs are so high that it seems that economics dictates that we are tearing down many buildings to make way for taller, and in many cases, cookie cutter buildings that seem to look like the computers that generated them.

I think therefore it would be wise to stop and consider the uniqueness of the Sand and Gravel Building and give serious thought to saving it as a unique example of design and the work of Jack Sullivan. Therefore I enthusiastically support the Historic Preservation Staff's recommendation before you this evening to place Jack Sullivan's NRMCA Building on the County's Location Atlas and Index Historic Sites

Thank you for your consideration.

  
David Almy, Almy Architects



**From:** [Steve Knight](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Historic](#)  
**Subject:** Locational Atlas Listing - 900 Spring Street - NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 24, 2019 12:49:52 PM

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Dear Historic Preservation Commission and HPC Staff,

The Art Deco Society of Washington is writing to support the Staff's recommendation to list the National Sand & Gravel Association (NSGA) and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters, 900 Spring Street, in the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites.

The Art Deco Society of Washington is a regional organization with a membership focused on celebrating and preserving many aspects of the twentieth century, including the period's art, antiques, cultural arts and architecture. At the core of our multi-faceted mission is a strong interest in preservation and we have had several successful local and regional efforts in this regard, including:

- Landmark designation and successful adaptive reuse of the Greyhound Bus Station on NY Avenue in DC.
- Landmark designation and adaptive reuse of the Silver Theater and Shopping Center in Silver Spring, MD, now the home of the American Film Institute and Cultural Center.
- Landmark designation of and design oversight for the successful adaptive reuse of the Hecht Company Warehouse on New York Avenue in Ivy City.

In addition to being president of the Art Deco Society, I am also a Principal and practicing architect with David M. Schwarz Architects, a high-profile architecture and planning firm based in Washington. I am also a 20-year resident of Silver Spring, MD.

900 Spring Street is of interest because it is a well-preserved example of mid-century modern architecture, a period of design that, like Art Deco was some thirty years ago, is often under-appreciated and ignored, although its buildings are now approaching or well beyond 50 years of age. Furthermore, this building is a well-executed example of Brutalism, a particular style of mid-twentieth century modern architecture that can often appear at first glance to be cold and unapproachable. This building, however, is an elegant two-story building that achieves something rarely found in Brutalism: its low-rise stature, quality of materials and sensitively handled details convey a fine grain scale and make it much more approachable than most of the larger examples of the style. As such, it is worthy of retention as a high-quality example.

The building and its prominent corner siting help to tell the tale of Silver Spring's development during the latter half of the twentieth century. To take this important initial step to save it will help generations to come to understand and appreciate this important chapter in the community's growth and evolution.

Listing 900 Spring Street on the Atlas would serve as a catalyst for a wonderful adaptive reuse opportunity that could be a win-win for the property's future development and the community. Imagine the possibility of retaining the structure and incorporating it into an added building with development that could rise behind it to the west. The result would allow the building to play a

valuable part in new development, perhaps serving as an entrance and providing communal functions as part of a new office or residential development on the balance of the property while serving a valuable preservation role for Silver Spring.

Mid-century modern architecture is, whether we like it or not, the next frontier of preservation. While some may consider preservation in Silver Spring “done” with the handful of landmarked pre-WW II downtown commercial structures and a few others that speak to the area’s agrarian roots, these efforts must continue to capture the community’s continuing evolution. 900 Spring Street can and should be listed to help ensure that future chapters of Silver Spring’s story will be told.

Thank you for your consideration,

Steve Knight, President  
The Art Deco Society of Washington

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Envisionary Jack Sullivan, AIA, Tribute/Statement by Kate Sullivan, Daughter  
Historic Preservation Commission, 9/25/19

After serving his country during WWII, Jack attended Catholic University (CU) under the GI Bill. To further enhance his architectural training while at CU, Jack worked full-time under the tutelage of Hamm Wilson, a Rockville architect. Jack was a stellar student and graduated with honors from the School of Architecture in 1950, which propelled him into a successful career as an architect, spanning some 50 years of private practice.

He is, in my humble opinion, an architectural genius. His passion and incredible talent are apparent in the many award-winning office buildings, churches, schools, recreation centers, and private homes he designed throughout the Washington, DC vicinity. Through his enthusiasm, wisdom, creativity, and devotion to the field, Jack inspired young and old architects alike.

Jack was a gifted artist, not simply confined to architecture, but included areas such as: interior spacing, professional photography, drawing, cartooning, and music. He excelled in photography and was never far from his beloved cameras. My father taught me how to see ... he taught me about crepuscular lighting ... and to always press the seek button (he meant to keep learning ... open your heart and mind! Seek life!).

I will never forget early one morning seeing my Dad laying on the front deck adjacent to the gardens of his Potomac home. I was on my way to Walt Whitman High School and was running late, when he asked me to stop and take a look through the camera positioned on a tripod with a macro lens. The camera was focused on a Lily with morning dew. He asked me why kids took drugs ... and stated "look through this lens, this is my drug." When I got down on my knees to peer through the lens I too was mesmerized by the beauty that was captured in the early morning light.

At that moment I realized that I had experienced the privilege of seeing the world through the eyes of an artist. Dad had the natural ability to open the eyes of all he encountered.

Another "Jack" moment took place while I was attending the University of Maryland in the early 1980's. I had asked my father to provide a tour of his AIA award winning home and a lecture to my architectural classmates. Following the lecture he gave each student a small Japanese Red Maple, one of his favorite specimens, and he then defied each one to nurture and sculpt the sapling into a work of art!

**Jack loved life ... his creativity ... his love of the arts in all its forms, the effect of his inspiration on others, his incredible legacy will provide future architects with a challenge. The buildings he envisioned and designed are built with exceptional quality and he often created new and innovative structures that will stand the testament of time. It is all in the details, he would often say, and his structures are works of art!**

A strong individualist, Jack designed innovative buildings such as his award-winning Brutalist/Heroic 900 Spring St., The National Ready Mix Concrete Association Building, partnering with John Joseph Earley's Studio, "The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful," and noted Builder Victor R. Beauchamp, lauded for building the U.S. Iwo Jima Memorial.

With change abounding all around us, it is tantamount that we pause for a moment to ensure that we, as a society, learn and appreciate what came before, as this becomes the foundation of our history.

**It is my greatest hope that Jack's dynamic, joyful spirit is carried forward through his structures so that current and future generations will enjoy, appreciate, and especially experience, the architectural excellence that Jack is known for.**

Jack was rock, and was one of a kind!

Kate Sullivan, 5684 Kipling Parkway, Unit 102, Arvada, CO 80002



Eileen McGuckian, president of Montgomery Preservation, the nonprofit that aims to preserve historic buildings and landscapes in our County. You likely know MPI's annual Preservation Awards; nominations for 2019 are due next month.

In the 1980s MPI assisted the newly created HPC to evaluate sites identified in the *Locational Atlas* against criteria for placement on the new Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The *Atlas* was the accomplishment of Park Historian Michael Dwyer, who gathered information to publish a usable listing hundreds of areas and sites potentially worthy of designation. In those years, Mike and I estimated it would take 2-5 years to evaluate all those listings, and then we'd double our timing again. Here we are tonight to use the *Locational Atlas* as the stepping stone to evaluating areas and sites.

It didn't take long to recognize that the *Atlas* had its limitations. Not only were some older properties missing but, at the more recent end, whole groupings of architectural styles and construction methods were undocumented. After another HPC commissioner and I took Planning Board Chair Norm Christeller to lunch at the Bethesda Tastee Diner, studies were done of early 20<sup>th</sup> century building types. The HPC began to evaluate newer structures, as communities demanded and the Planning Board and County Council scheduled them with Geographic Master Plans.

*Montgomery Modern* and *Rockville's Recent Past* were ground-breaking. Begun more than a decade ago, both projects covered mid-20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, context, and development trends. Publications by Teresa Lachin in 2012 for *Peerless Rockville* and Clare Kelly for Montgomery Planning in 2015 opened eyes

to the evolution of design, to the designers, and to the built environment that sprang up, mostly down-County.

Your task is to identify and protect the best of Montgomery County's history and architecture. **Brutalism** is not everyone's favorite, but it is an acknowledged, legitimate style with a definite place here. You have before you this evening a fine example of Brutalism, created by a respected architect, and in step with Montgomery's reputation for 20<sup>th</sup> century trend-setting. From the MIHP form, you can judge that 900 Spring Street is one of the very best structures from this era.

For its headquarters, National Sand and Gravel Association chose a monumental design and a master designer that would express the importance of the industry, the locality in which to build, and the bold architecture of the time.

**John Henry Sullivan** is the architectural master here. Sullivan designed a succession of civic and corporate buildings in a period when we were growing by leaps and bounds. Here he articulated Brutalism through monumental mass, adding design elements to produce an elegant building that truly represented the concrete industry. Little wonder DC newspapers heralded the iconic design and Potomac Valley Chapter of the AIA presented an award for this bold Modernist architecture that looked great from a distance as well as close up.

The connection with **John Joseph Earley** is icing on this already delicious cake. He is best known for inventing a technique called polychrome, architectural or mosaic concrete. We are fortunate to have the 5 Polychrome houses on Colesville Road listed in the Master Plan and National Register. Earley died in 1945 but his genius enhanced this building, as ornamental concrete for 900 Spring Street was created by his studio.

There are only a few examples of Brutalist architecture in Montgomery County. 900 Spring may well be the best of them. I'm sure the owners have mixed feelings about leaving their headquarters after 55 years, but hope they will agree this fine building is worthy of preservation and re-use. Silver Spring was often the proving grounds for new architecture but, alas, this community has been under incredible pressure for decades and cannot continue to lose good buildings and streetscapes.

In conclusion, MPI supports the solid research reflected in the MIHP form, the context information in *Montgomery Modern*, and the excellent testimony of Silver Spring Historical Society. MPI supports inclusion of this property on the *Locational Atlas of Historic Sites*, as recommended by Historic Preservation Staff.

**MONTGOMERY**  
**PRESERVATION**

Post Office Box 4661  
Rockville, MD 20849-4661

Web: [www.montgomerypreservation.org](http://www.montgomerypreservation.org)  
Email: [mpi@montgomerypreservation.org](mailto:mpi@montgomerypreservation.org)

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

**From:** [Deborah Chalfie](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Historic](#)  
**Subject:** Locational Atlas Designation for 900 Spring Street  
**Date:** Monday, September 23, 2019 6:25:51 PM

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Dear Historic Preservation Commission and HPC Staff:

I have lived in the down-county area of Montgomery County for about 40 years -- the first 25 years in Silver Spring, and the last 15 years in northern Takoma Park just adjacent to the Silver Spring line. Unfortunately, I cannot attend the Commission's hearing on Wednesday night, but **I am writing in support of the proposed Locational Atlas designation for the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready-Mix Association Headquarters (Sand & Gravel building) at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring.**

The Sand & Gravel building is a distinguished example of "brutalist" architecture. Its distinctive concrete panels and frames -- with their varying colors/tones, texture, depth, and shapes -- coupled with the building's smaller scale (compared to other brutalist office buildings), makes a visually interesting and important contribution to downtown Silver Spring's architecture.

The building also makes an historically significant contribution to our downtown. The building an excellent (and apparently AIA award-winning) example of the architecture of its era. Also, according to a recent article by Clare Lise Kelly,\* the building's concrete panels are attributed to the studios of local artisan John Joseph Earley, a pioneer in architectural concrete. Earley also fabricated the colorful, decorative panels used in the polychrome houses in my former Four Corners neighborhood and other buildings in Montgomery County, as well as in important buildings in the DC area such as National Airport and the Department of Justice.

I appreciate and am active in efforts to preserve Art Deco and modern architecture, and I believe it is important to preserve diverse architectural styles that represent different approaches, styles, materials, and eras. Few of us want to live in a community monolith of tall, looming high-rises and office buildings. Rather than demolishing the Sand & Gravel building, it should be preserved and reused, with new development scaled and built around it.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Chalfie  
511 Albany Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

\* Clare Lise Kelly, "Heroic Architecture: a new look at Brutalism," *The Third Place* (Montgomery Planning Dept. Blog, Nov. 18, 2016), at <http://montgomeryplanning.org/blog-design/2016/11/heroic-architecture-a-new-look-at-brutalism/>.



**900 Spring St. NSGA/NRMCA Headquarters Building Nomination  
To Be Added to Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites  
Testimony by Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society; HPC, 9/25/19**

SSHS enthusiastically supports the nomination of the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters Building, 900 Spring Street, to be added to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*, and enthusiastically supports the HP Staff Report.

"NRMCA headquarters [bldg] is one of the premier examples of Brutalist and corporate influenced architecture in Mo Co." HP Staff Report, P. 2, 9/18/2019.

"...NRMCA Headquarters is one of the premier examples of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century modernist architecture in Silver Spring and Mo Co." HP Nomination P.4, 9/2019.

**"Total foresighted architecture." AIA Potomac Valley Chapter Award Jury lauds NRMCA Headquarters' exterior and interior in 1964! HP Nomination, Pp. 6-7, 9/2019.**

"NSGA & NRMCA Headquarters at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring represents the expressive form that modern architecture was taking in the early 1960s. The exuberant design of the building [Brutalist/Heroic] is a three-dimensional advertisement for the business. In this case, the building material itself is advertising the company, just as the concrete walls represent the concrete associations headquartered here. The building also represents the Earley Studio, established by John J. Earley, a pioneer in precast concrete. **The project received a [First Place] design award from the AIA-Potomac Valley Chapter in 1964. . . .**" [Montgomery Modern," 2015, P. 167, by Clare Kelly].

**900 Spring uniquely showcases, synergizes, the innovative talents, ingenuity, of noted Washington area architect John Henry Sullivan, Jr.; Pioneer Craftsman/Inventor John Joseph Earley Jr., "The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful"! [Frederick W. Cron, 1977], his long-lived, lauded Studio, 1906-1973, and Builder Victor R. Beauchamp, U.S. Iwo Jima Memorial Builder 1954! Earley's Studio also proudly notes Iwo Jima Memorial as one of its works: <https://tclf.org/landscapes/us-marine-corps-war-memorial>**

This convergence yields a unique structure, none other like it in Downtown Silver Spring, adjacent to, or in all of Mo Co. A textured, cantilevered, **human-scale**, rhythmic, robust, crenellated concrete sculpture; ebullient on the landscape.

Press-coverage Photos express anticipatory excitement at building's culmination on the landscape! [WP/ES.] **John Henry Sullivan notes 900 Spring St. as one of his Principal Works, AIA Directory, 1970. Sullivan graduated Cum Laude in Architecture from Catholic University 1950. Sullivan's "joie de vivre" and innovative nature shine through his dynamic, rhythmic, robust, geometric structure, finished on all sides.**

**A veranda surrounds the bldg. Light-filled within! Touts interior terrazzo-floored rotunda/vestibule, a vaulted ceiling, graceful dramatic wide central terrazzo staircase leading up, then angling onto glass and terrazzo balconies on either side. An amber-colored terrazzo panel appears to grace the top of the staircase. Contrasting interplay of exterior and interior is delightful.**

Earley pioneered the concept of prefabricated concrete panel construction.  
Earley & his Studio have 2 patents:

1936, Earley & Taylor created a simple structural system for precast houses so structures could be erected with an A-frame and a chain joist. 900 Spring was constructed, 1964, in a parallel fashion: Earley's panels were lifted up by cranes!

1940, Earley patented the process of producing precast exposed aggregate concrete paneling; this type of concrete construction technique, using densely packed aggregate with a minimal amount of cement, known as the MoSai process, later was used throughout the country.

**Earley served as first “Craftsman” President and Vice President of The American Concrete Institute; awarded the Henry C. Turner Gold Medal for innovations in concrete as an architectural medium.  
[SSHS Nomination, #8, P. 4]**

This human-scale building, with distinctive “personality,” is a perfect candidate for myriad adaptive reuses, resonating with a “sense of place.”

**SSHS & MPI, working together with developers, owners, and with HP Staff, have achieved 2 Success Stories, 1946 Canada Dry Bottling Plant, The Silverton, & 1927 National Dry Cleaning Institute, The Heritage!**

**The National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Building is Ready-Made to Welcome You Again, to Continue to Serve You through myriad adaptive reuses. Of versatile concrete, enduring, innovative, conveying a Sense of Place, 900 Spring is built to last, built to live!**

**Legacy, Tapestry, Texture, converging ingenuity of Sullivan, Earley, Beauchamp, & NRMCA lives on!**

**900 Spring St. meets Criteria 2(a) & 2(e):**

**(2) Architectural and design significance. The historic resource meets 2 a, e:**

**a. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;**

**e. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its physical characteristic or landscape.**

Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society Advocacy Chair, [marcipro@aol.com](mailto:marcipro@aol.com), 301-585-3817  
8515 Greenwood Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20912

I enthusiastically support the nomination of the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA) Headquarters Building, at 900 Spring Street, to be added to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. This building has architectural significance as an outstanding example of a Brutalist design building. In addition, the Headquarters Building is in a landmark location at a prominent site in downtown Silver Spring, which adds to its significance.

We have lost many examples of Brutalist buildings in recent years through demolition or alteration. The Wiscom Building, cited in the staff report (p8), has now been disfigured with the substitution of a glass skin replacing the original concrete panels, shown on p46. The NRMCA Headquarters building is a rare example in the county of an outstanding Brutalist building retaining a high level of integrity.

I also support the proposal to designate the NRMCA Headquarters Building on the *Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, and to develop design guidelines for this resource. I believe the building would also merit listing in the National Register for Historic Places.

I regret that I will be out of town next week and unable to attend the public hearing. Please add my comments to the public record.

Best

Clare Lise Kelly

Author, *Montgomery Modern* (M-NCPPC, 2015) and *Places from the Past* (MHT/M-NCPPC, 2011)

Retired, M-NCPPC Historic Preservation Master Planner

**From:** [MCP-Historic](#)  
**To:** [Ballo, Rebecca](#); [Liebertz, John](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Hearing - Sept 25 - " Sand & Gravel" Building - 900 Spring Street  
**Date:** Friday, September 13, 2019 4:40:38 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)

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**From:** David Lefever <flyingpiglane@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 13, 2019 4:10 PM  
**To:** MCP-Historic <MCP-Historic@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Hearing - Sept 25 - " Sand & Gravel" Building - 900 Spring Street

Greetings,

I am a former resident of Silver Spring, and a current Montgomery County neighbor.

I support the Locational Atlas designation for the National Sand & Gravel Association and National Ready-Mix Association Headquarters at 900 Spring Street in Silver Spring.

The building is a striking and elegantly understated example of Brutalism (a label that connotes more negativism than deserved).

The building, in contrast to taller buildings with larger footprints, has potential to complement adjacent development.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Lefever  
7106 Beechwood Drive  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
(301) 656-2523

--

David Lefever  
7106 Beechwood Drive | Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**From:** [Linda B. Lyons](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Historic](#)  
**Subject:** Locational Atlas Designation for 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 18, 2019 5:06:41 PM

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September 18, 2019

TO: Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission

FR: Linda & Jonathan Lyons, 3922 Oliver Street, Chevy Chase

RE: Locational Atlas Designation for the National Sand & Gravel Assoc. and  
National Ready-Mix Association Headquarters, 900 Spring Street, Silver Spring

We support placement of this building on our county's Locational Atlas. We believe that this Brutalist building with concrete panels attributed to the Earley Studio is a worthy example of the diversity of building types that were constructed in Silver Spring in the Mid-Century period of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

We understand that an application for a demolition permit has been made by the building owner, who is seeking to develop the building site, its rear parking lot and the adjacent brick office building into a residential development. However, it would appear that the parking lot and adjacent building could be enough area to develop a hi rise residential building, incorporating the Sand & Gravel Building as an adaptively reused space for the residents of the new building. We think that this would be a worthwhile solution.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Linda & Jonathan Lyons  
3922 Oliver Street, Chevy Chase



Sept. 25, 2019

Good Evening. I am Teresa Lachin, an architectural historian and a former employee and current volunteer with Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation. In 2012, I wrote a book on mid-century architecture in Rockville, Maryland and in the process I met and interviewed architect John S. Sullivan as well as several other mid-century architects who were then retired from practice. Mr. Sullivan, whom I came to know as “Jack,” was then in his mid-80s but still dynamic and full of energetic enthusiasm for his former profession and his love of designing buildings.

A native of Washington, D.C. and a Montgomery County resident since 1928, Jack Sullivan served in the Army in World War II and subsequently graduated with honors from the Catholic University School of Architecture and Engineering in 1950. His early career was launched during the mid-1950s when he opened an architectural practice in Rockville where he subsequently practiced until the mid-1970s before moving on to Bethesda. According to Jack, this was “a busy creative time” for him and his growing staff – and the beginning of a long successful and prolific career. Office and commercial buildings, car dealerships, private custom-built homes, churches and schools, public buildings, and myriad of drive-through banks to serve the burgeoning mobility of a growing and prosperous middle-class suburban population. Jack’s other specialties

included space planning and interior design, custom graphics, signage, and landscaping. He was also a skilled photographer and generously contributed many of his photographs, drawings and renderings, and other papers and documents to Peerless Rockville archives.

In architectural design, Jack Sullivan demonstrated mid-century modernism that is characterized by solid geometric form, delineated structural elements, and crisp linear planes. He excelled in the use of brick materials to create surface texture. His design for NRMCA Headquarters Building at 900 Spring Street is an outstanding example of “Brutalist” design - an audacious and daring architectural style that demonstrated Sullivan’s ability to adapt the prevailing elite architectural movements to the scale and economies on the local level.

Some of Jack’s other outstanding projects include the Elwood P. Smith Recreation Center (1959) in Rockville; the County Federal Savings and Loan Building (1962) near today’s Rockville Town Center – built during urban renewal; the award-winning Humble Car Care Center on Hungerford Road (1970 and demolished during mid-1980s during Metro construction.

Lastly, an undated portrait of Jack Sullivan taken by his wife Joan Sullivan during a trip to Boston, Massachusetts. Joan captured this wonderful image of her husband while he was looking at Boston City Hall, completed in 1968 – nearly four years after his work on the 900 Spring Street was completed.

In 2009, Peerless Rockville collaborated with the City of Rockville Channel 11 to produce a documentary video, “A Pair of Jacks,” featuring interviews and photographs with Jack Sullivan and his lifelong friend John S. “Jack” Samperton – also a Washignton area architect. The two Jacks reminisced about their lives and their careers and the video a major award and is still rebroadcast from time to time on Rockville 11.