

First Congregational United Church of Christ
945 G Street NW
Washington, DC

Mr. Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Chief Librarian/Executive Director
MLK Library
9th and G. St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Rich,

We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you last month and get to know you, Meaghan, and Jean a bit better. We value you, our neighbor and partner, in strengthening the quality of life for all who visit us on G Street between 10th and 9th. We are also excited about the renovation of the Library and want to help during your time of transition in any way that we can.

As promised, we are following up our conversation with a summary of our concerns about the June 13, 2014 draft MLK Concept Design so that you can share it with both Mecanoo and Martinez + Johnson Architecture as well as Jeff Bonvecchio, Project Manager:

MLK Garage entry – On p. 17, Option 2 suggests accessing the MLK garage through the Church parking garage. This plan is not feasible since our organ chamber extends down into the garage beginning at the end of the ramp and cannot be relocated. Any further construction activity in this area would harm this delicate instrument.

Bike Kiosk – On p. 29, a bicycle kiosk shed is proposed in the pocket park abutting our building. While we are committed to a public purpose in this space, we feel that it is very important that it continue to be an open space without an additional permanent structure such as the proposed kiosk.

We would like to work with the Library on a treatment for this outdoor space that would create a clear view from 9th St. through the MLK Plaza and ending at the handsome gray wall and light box of the church. To do this would require cutting the yellow wall back to the fence that closes off the alley and perhaps placing a significant piece of sculpture related to Dr. King and his legacy facing east with the gray brick wall of the Church as the backdrop. This could tie the open space under the Library with the pocket park as one visually seamless space. Perhaps we could collaborate on a grant application for a permanent piece of artwork to tie these two spaces together as one grand public plaza.

Opening the Alley – On p. 28, there is proposal to open the alley connecting G St. to G Place. At the outset of our Church redevelopment, we went to considerable time and expense to close the alley that had become a haven for drug activity, loitering, sleeping and trash. The city

concluded and the back end of the alley beyond the fence is now owned half by the Library, and half by Jamestown Properties and the Church. It has provided an excellent off-street loading area for our building and has cleared up a lot of haphazard onsite parking from both the Library and the Church that had previously been a problem for both institutions. We would oppose reopening the alley.

Addition to top of MLK - As we indicated in the meeting, we sought to be very sensitive to the context of our new building relative to our neighbors, particularly MLK Library. Thus, we cut away the top of the building so that MLK was more visible and adopted a minimalist design. It is our hope that any addition to the building will follow the expansion design Mies van der Rohe foresaw and continue the current floor pattern upward rather than departing significantly from his intention as the current proposed diagonal addition does.

As the design process proceeds, we hope you contact us to discuss any ideas relating to our mutual interests in advance of making those design ideas public. You can call Sid at the Church – 628-4317 or Meg at 202-546-4536 since she is serving as a public representative on the Advisory Panel.

Again, we are so pleased that the Library is our neighbor and look forward to joint undertakings in the future.

Sincerely yours,
Sidney D. Fowler, Senior Minister
Susie Hayward, Moderator
Meg Maguire, Site Development Chairperson