



December 7, 2020

Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee,  
City of Milwaukee Common Council

**RE: Forest Home Library Historic Designation File # 200865**

To Chairman Perez and members of the Committee,

Docomomo US, an international organization dedicated to the DOcumentation and COnservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods, of the MOdern MOvement, strongly supports the historic designation of the Forest Home Library and is additionally against its proposed demolition.

This letter of support follows previous letters from our Chicago/Midwest chapter sent on October 30, and November 27, 2020. Our opinion is further supported by national and local peers, community members, and the City's own Historic Preservation Commission whose members showed unanimous support for its designation.

The building is distinct of its time and of its function, being *the most significant* library in the post-WWII cultural and historic heritage of the Milwaukee Public Library system. It is a strikingly well-preserved example of Modern design that is well suited for preservation and adaptive reuse and was the design of a nationally recognized and significant local architect. It is too significant of a building to be rendered unvaluable and unadaptable. Creative design and preservation go hand in hand. Designers, communities, and developers work collaboratively, consolidating, rehabilitating, and adding to the old; preservation architects are often devising creative ways to conserve, and there are several examples of modern buildings of this era, including branch libraries, that have been preserved and reused as such.

Urban neighborhoods should have the right to have historic buildings and places of cultural value, including those of the modern movement, just like they deserve other services. Distinctive buildings like Forest Home Library are building blocks to the character and image of these urban communities and can be a powerful tool for economics as well as their identity. The threat for losing buildings such as the library extends further as the Milwaukee metropolitan region lacks prime and protected examples of modern architecture. This is a truly threatened asset in Milwaukee's cultural inventory. We urge the Council to uphold historic designation for the Forest Home Library following the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Commission and other supporters who understand the value of the library.

Sincerely,

**Craig Brandt, AIA, AFAAR**

*Chapter Vice-Chair*

*Chair, Advocacy Committee*

*Docomomo US/Chicago-Midwest*

**Gunny Harboe, FAIA**

*Director, Docomomo US*

*Past President, ICOMOS ISC20C*