



# CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

The Honorable Emily Keller

Mayor

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August 31, 2021

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Maryland Historical Trust  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

**RE: REHABILITATION OF THE EARLES/HOLY BUILDING  
72-78 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, HAGERSTOWN, MD**

Dear Ms. Hughes:

This letter is to offer the City of Hagerstown's support for the rehabilitation of the Earles Building at 72-78 West Washington Street in Hagerstown, Maryland. We are more than pleased to endorse the proposed plan to restore and rehabilitate the currently vacant historic building for to accommodate new residential housing units and ground floor commercial space.

The historic Earles Building, (more widely known locally as the Holly Building) is situated within the main commercial core of downtown Hagerstown, Maryland. Completed in 1926, the seven-story commercial building was designed by Hagerstown architect Amos J. Klinkhart. The construction of the Earles Building occurred during an intense period of growth in downtown Hagerstown, characterized by increased density in the central business district and the erection of new high-rise commercial buildings. The building's presence at the heart of the Hagerstown Commercial Core Historic District, in the prominent W. Washington Street Corridor, is representative of this era of historic growth.

From its completion in 1926, a succession of department store and discount retail chains operated out of the building's large ground-floor commercial spaces. These tenants included the F. & W. Grand Company, Edwards (1934-1938), Earles (1939-1948), and Holly Shops (1948-c.1960). The second through seventh floors were leased out as office space. Its early history included tenants such as wholesale lumber dealers W.A. Smith and Company, various investment firms, the Washington County Board of Education, and a music studio. During Prohibition, the Hagerstown headquarters of the Prohibition Department was located in the building, beginning in 1931.



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The building formed part of a flourishing commercial district in downtown Hagerstown, and its large retail and smaller commercial tenants contributed to the City's economic vitality during the early- to mid-twentieth century. The Earles Building, with its tile and plate-glass storefront, aluminum marquee, and electric signage, was indicative of the broader trend towards modernization that permeated throughout "Main Street" retail districts during the 1920s and 1930s. The building has changed hands several times in recent years, selling in 1979, 1984, and 2001. Most recently, it housed Manny's Home & Design Center, a furniture retailer.

Vacant this year, the overall intent of the project is to rehabilitate the existing vacant building into an apartment building with a commercial space on the ground floor. The physical building will be retained, and the historic commercial and urban character of the Earles Building will be preserved as it exists today. The program of the project largely focuses on the residential scope of work. The intent is to provide modern, high-end, apartment units to attract residents from the outer suburbs of Hagerstown to relocate downtown. Ultimately, the aim is to reinvigorate both the downtown housing market of the City and be a precedent for future development, as well as be a catalyst for future local retail and commercial growth.

Sincerely,

**THE CITY OF HAGERSTOWN**



Emily Keller  
Mayor

*c: Hagerstown City Council*

*Scott Nicewarner, City Administrator*

*Jill Frick, Director of Community & Economic Development*

*Kathy Maher, Director of Planning & Code Administration*

*Mike Fitzgerald, Gideon Properties*