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Letter to the Editor, St. Louis Post Dispatch

This past week I saw “The Monuments Men” movie. I agree with many reviews that is an “OK” film that does not live up to the true story of architects, curators and sculptors joining the U.S. Army to save world art, buildings and culture.

America is a young country relative to most. Our paintings, our buildings and our sculptures may not be relics, but they nonetheless tell the American story of how we have lived, grown and worked. Our built environment reflects what we value, what we believe and who we are. What this not-so-great movie does, however, is tell a great story about respecting our heritage and our civilization.

Currently under threat of possible demolition is the St. Louis County Lewis and Clark Library in Moline Acres, a remarkable mid-century building designed by Frederick Dunn, a design fellow of The American Institute of Architects. It features stained-glass windows by the renowned Emil Frei Studio of St. Louis, depicting explorers Lewis and Clark and their guide, Sacagawea. Last year, AIA St. Louis honored the building with its Distinguished Building Award and its members oppose demolition of this handsome library.

In the 1960s, the St. Louis County Library Board made a sound decision to give us an elegant and modern library. We ask the current St. Louis County Library Board to honor their predecessors’ wisdom. Renovate and expand. But above all, respect our heritage rather than send yet another piece of who we are to a landfill.

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