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toward building a new society on the vacant lots of the old . . .

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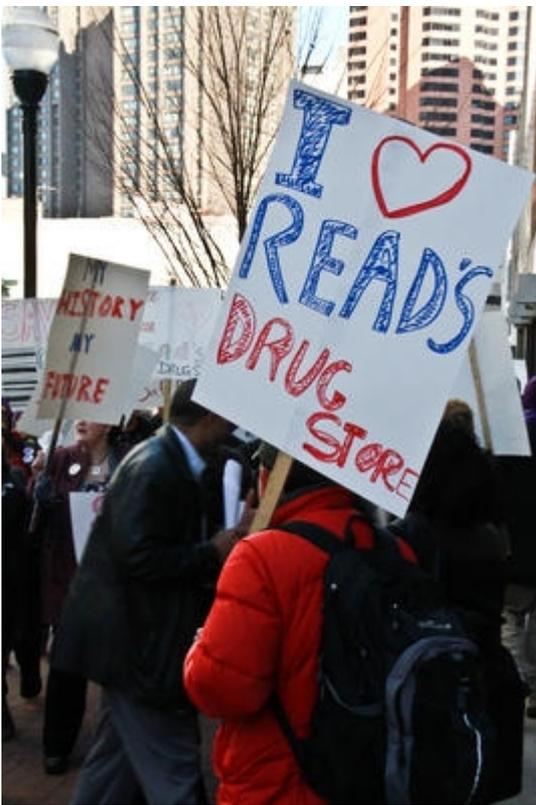
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Saving Read's Drug Store - Civil Rights Legacy

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Civil rights, labor and community activists held a picket and rally today demanding for the preservation of the historic Read's Drug Store building located at Lexington and Howard streets in Downtown Baltimore.

It was at this site that In January of 1955 eight African American students of Baltimore's Morgan State University held an in promptu sit-in at the lunch counter, demanding that African Americans be served. This action, occurring five years before the famous Greensboro sit-ins of 1960, successfully led to the de-segregation of the entire Read's Drug Store chain.

The now vacant building is slated to be demolished to make way for a \$150 million development plan. Dubbed the super block, this plan devised by developers and city officials seeks to 'revitalize' the surrounding west-side neighborhood of mostly small independent businesses.

Audio [2]

However activists see no reason why the plan cannot include preserving a site that they argue was fundamental to the civil rights movement.

Eli Pousson of [Baltimore Heritage](#) [3] explains: "We think that the city can do better, that in order for the west side to be a revitalized neighborhood it needs to retain more of it's historic assests."

Dr. Helena Hicks, one of the eight students who participated in the sit-in, stated, "Why do you throw away anything that is uestful?...Why do you want to throw away your history? This city continues to have a huge African American population. Why would you throw away the history of African American people, especially when it is related to something we did that *started* the Civil Rights Movement."

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[2] http://ia600403.us.archive.org/5/items/SavingReadsDrugstore_600/SavingReadsDrugstore.mp3

[3] <http://www.baltimoreheritage.org/>