

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR 	CITY of BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #22-0284 / SARAH ANN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT		

TO

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: October 14, 2022

At its regular meeting of October 13, 2022, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #22-0284, for the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Sarah Ann Street Historic District.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #22-0284 and adopted the following resolutions, with eight members being present (eight in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #22-0284 be **approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Natasha Mehu, Mayor's Office  
Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
Mr. Ethan Cohen, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Mr. Matthew Stegman, City Council President's Office  
Ms. Nikki Thompson, City Council President's Office  
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC  
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
Mr. Liam Davis, DOT  
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services



*Brandon M. Scott*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Sean D. Davis, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Chris Ryer*  
Director

**October 13, 2022**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #22-0284 Sarah Ann Street Historic District: For the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Sarah Ann Street Historic District.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Stacy Montgomery

**PETITIONER:** Councilmember Bullock

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: Situated in the northwest section of the Poppleton neighborhood, this group of houses demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of construction in the 1870s. The Sarah Ann Street alley houses, represent an increasingly rare building type in Baltimore and other older East Coast cities. Alley houses represent a small-scale house type built on narrow, small streets that paralleled or bisected wider streets with middle class houses. Alley houses provided housing for Baltimore's working-class residents. They are simplified versions of larger rowhouses ornamented with various architectural styles. Today, the majority of alley houses built in Baltimore (and in other East Coast cities) have been demolished, making Sarah Ann Street a rare survivor in Baltimore and on the East Coast. Alley houses are integral to the historic fabric of Baltimore's rowhouse neighborhoods, helping to define the intimate, human scale of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Baltimore. In the Poppleton neighborhood, the houses on Sarah Ann Street are the last block of alley houses standing.

The properties within the proposed district also provide a significant representation of the under-documented history of Black homeownership and residency in Baltimore in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The houses on North Carrollton Street, constructed in the early 1870s, have been in African American ownership since 1928. The Sarah Ann Street alley houses, built in the same time period, provided affordable housing for African-Americans after the Civil War. Together this grouping of historic homes serve as important resources on African American history in West Baltimore.

General Area: The boundary of the proposed local historic district includes the two houses and their lots on North Carrollton Street (319-321) and the alley houses and their lots for 1102-1124 Sarah Ann Street. This includes thirteen intact houses and two lots where demolition occurred more than twenty years ago. Thus, this will include an intact alley house row and the

remaining portion of a three-story row. These thirteen houses include a rare surviving group of alley houses and homes associated with African American life in Baltimore.

## **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this City Council Bill; however, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) supported City Council Bill #22-0284 on October 13, 2022. CHAP also held two previous hearings with unanimous support for the designation prior to the October 13<sup>th</sup> vote.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The historic district falls within the boundaries of the 2007 Poppleton Urban Renewal Plan. The plan calls for the rehabilitation of the properties along Sarah Ann Street. The designation will also provide access to historic tax credits to support the rehabilitation of the historic buildings within the proposed district.

## **ANALYSIS**

The historic district designation process was first called for in a 2007 Memorandum of Agreement between Baltimore City HCD, MD DHCD, CHAP, Poppleton Development I LLC, and the Maryland Historical Trust. In June of 2021, members of the Southwest Partnership (SWP) historic preservation committee, Sonia Eaddy, executive director of SWP Tony Scott, Councilman John Bullock, and Dr. Nicole King attended a walkthrough of Poppleton with CHAP director Eric Holcomb to discuss historic properties. In the summer and fall of 2021, the history and significance of the neighborhood was shared through a variety of publications. At the same time, CHAP began the public outreach process for the proposed historic district designation, meeting with neighbors and surveying property owners (Baltimore HCD was the sole property owner) and renters (the Eaddy family). In 2022 CHAP staff prepared the district designation report.

On April 12, 2022, the CHAP Commission heard the Historic District Designation Hearing I for the proposed Sarah Ann Historic District, which only included the grouping of alley houses on Sarah Ann Street. After substantial testimony (both written and at the hearing) the commission requested that the staff explore the revision of the historic district boundaries to include 319-321 North Carrollton Street. On July 18, 2022 Mayor Scott announced that 319-321 North Carrollton Street would be returned to the Eaddy family, not sold to the development team as initially planned. At the same time, the Mayor announced that the houses on Sarah Ann Street would be sold to Black Women Build to be rehabbed.

On August 9, 2022, the CHAP Commission reheard the Historic District Designation Hearing I for the proposed Sarah Ann Historic District with 319-321 North Carrollton Street included within the historic district boundaries. At that hearing, the CHAP Commission determined that: the proposed designation of Sarah Ann Street as a local historic district meets CHAP Criteria for Evaluation 1 and 3, that the proposed boundaries are supported by findings of fact, that the outreach to property owners and property owner responses are sufficient, and directed CHAP staff to prepare a full and proper study with findings of fact for presentation at Designation Hearing Two.

At the September 13, 2022 CHAP Commission hearing, the CHAP commission approved the staff recommendation of approval of the determination that the proposed designation of Sarah Ann Street as a local historic district meets the requirements of *Baltimore City Historic Preservation Rules and Regulations*' Designation of Districts and Landmarks. The designation includes a full and proper study with findings of fact that the proposed district and boundaries comply with requirements of Local Government Certification under the National Historic Preservation Act, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Registration*, and CHAP's own criteria for designation.

At the October 11, 2022 CHAP Hearing, the CHAP commission voted to recommend approval of City Council Bill #22-0284 on the consent agenda.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

Notification: The Poppleton Now Community Association, Baltimore Heritage, Inc., the Baltimore National Heritage Area, and Preservation Maryland have been notified of this action.



**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**