


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	STREET CLOSING / CLOSING OF A 10 FOOT AND 16 FOOT ALLEY IN THE VICINITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE AND PRESSTMAN STREET – BLOCK 320		

TO Ms. Corren Johnson, Director
 Department of Transportation
 417 East Fayette Street, Benton Building 5th Floor

DATE: September 6, 2023

This is to inform you that on August 31, 2023, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the closing of a ten-foot and a sixteen-foot alley in Block 320. A copy of the staff report is attached. The purpose of this closure is to create a single lot for redevelopment of a community center.

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. Marcia Collins, DPW
 Mr. David Framm, DOT
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

August 31, 2023

REQUEST: Alley Closings/ Closing of a 10-Foot and 16-Foot Alley in Block 320 (1900 Block of Brunt Street)

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt findings and Approve

STAFF: Renata Southard

PETITIONER: The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

OWNER: Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: These two alleys are located in the block bounded by the 1900 block of Pennsylvania Avenue on the west, Presstman Street on the north, Brunt Street on the east, and Robert Street on the south.

General Area: These alleys are in a block that is located in the northern portion of the Upton neighborhood, that has a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. The Shake & Bake Family Fun Center is located three blocks to the southeast on Pennsylvania Avenue.

HISTORY

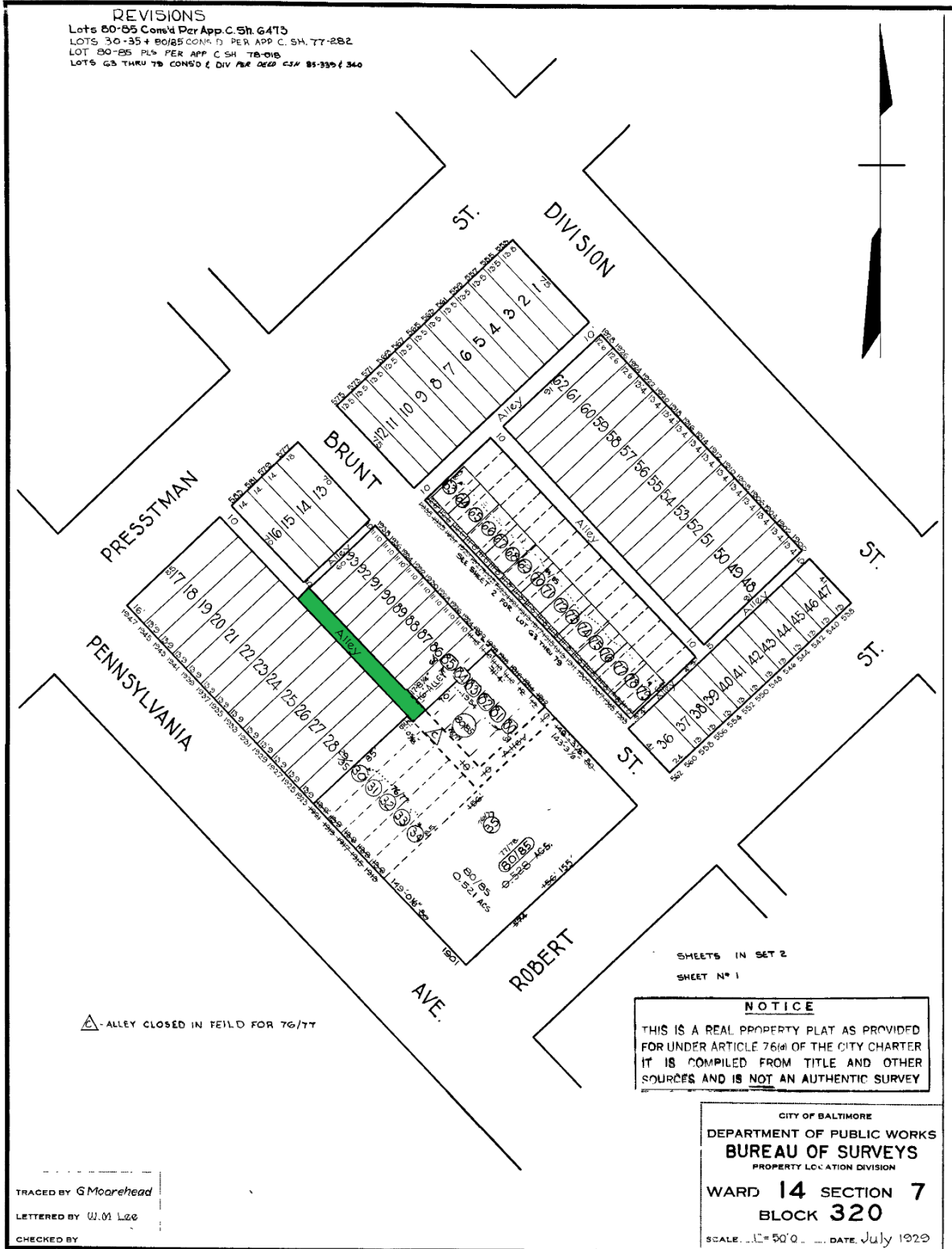
There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

ANALYSIS

Background: These alley closures will assist in the creation of a singular parcel for the future development of The Sanaa Center, a proposed arts and cultural institution within the Black Arts District. The proposed building will be located over the portions of the alleys proposed for closure.

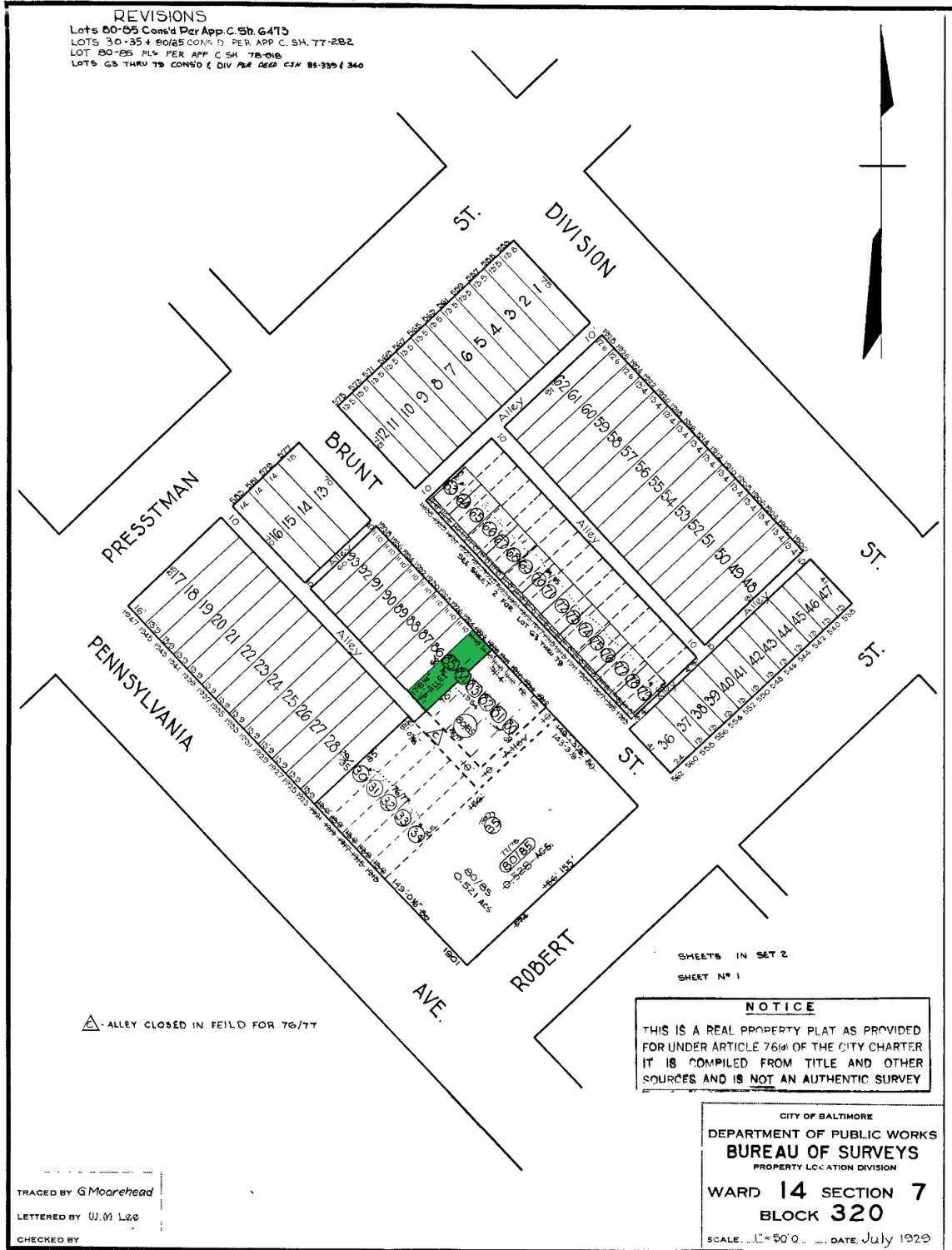
Alley Closures: These closures are referred to the Planning Commission for review since the street and alley network of the City falls under the master planning authority of the Planning Commission. In this case, all of the properties surrounding these alleys are owned by the Mayor and City Council. For that reason, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that these alleys are no longer needed for any public purpose, and that they can be closed and sold. The portions of the alleys to be closed are shown in the block plat below.

Exhibit "A"



Alley Closings/ Closing of a 10-Foot and 16-Foot Alley in Block 320 (1900 Block of Brunt Street)

Exhibit "B"



Alley Closings/ Closing of a 10-Foot and 16-Foot Alley in Block 320 (1900 Block of Brunt Street)

Equity:

- Impact:
 - *How might the proposal impact the surrounding community in the short or long term?* As noted, these alley closures will assist in the creation of a singular parcel for the future development of The Sanaa Center, a proposed arts and cultural institution within the Black Arts District. The Black Arts District was established to recognize the significance of West Baltimore as a place of great importance in African American music, art, and culture within the City. The closing of two alleys to accommodate the plans for the Sanaa Center are in direct alignment with the mission of the Black Arts District. The Sanaa Center “will be a local economic and cultural engine that will empower Black creatives, strengthen the Historic Pennsylvania Avenue business corridor, generate new jobs, and bolster the arts ecosystem both in Baltimore and in the DMV,” according to the project website. Planning anticipates minimal impact to traffic, and improved utilization of the parcels (which are currently vacant) along the 1900 block of Pennsylvania Avenue due to the alley closings.
 - *How would this proposal impact existing patterns of inequity that persist in Baltimore?* West Baltimore has been historically and systematically disinvested, beginning with patterns established by the Home Owners Loan Corporation maps - or “redlining” - more than 80 years ago. The Sanaa Center, located in the Upton neighborhood of West Baltimore, is looking to reinvest in West Baltimore with a \$10 million development project (with \$7.2 million in capital currently raised). While the alley closing is a small portion of the project, these parcels are important to the overall project vision to reinvest in West Baltimore.

- Engagement:
 - *Has the community been meaningfully engaged in discussing this proposal?* The project team has met with the community regarding the alley closure for the new Sanaa Center, including the Black Arts and Entertainment District, Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street, and the Upton Community.
 - *How are residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes being authentically included in the planning of the proposed policy or project?* In general, community participation in the Black Arts District has been robust, and this project is a part of the overall goal of the District.

- Internal Operations:
 - *This may include staff commentary regarding impact on staff time or resources devoted to a project.* This project and report have had minimal impact on staff time and resources.

Notification: The Upton Planning Committee, the Black Arts District, and the Intersection of Change, have been notified of this action.



Chris Ryer
Director