

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #23-0447 / LANDMARK LIST: EXTERIORS – 3110 ELM AVENUE		

DATE:

January 3, 2024

TO

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

At its regular meeting of December 21, 2023, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #23-0447, for the purpose of designating 3110 Elm Avenue (Block 3504B, Lot 006), as an historical landmark: exterior.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #23-0447 and adopted the following resolutions, with seven members being present (seven in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #23-0447 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. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
 The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
 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, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

December 21, 2023

REQUEST: City Council Bill #23-0447/ Landmark List: Exteriors – 3110 Elm Avenue:
For the purpose of designating 3110 Elm Avenue (Block 3504B, Lot 006) as an historical landmark: exterior.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Lauren Schiszik

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmember Ramos

OWNER: Richard H. Wimbrough Jr.

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This brick industrial building is located on a lot that is 200 wide by 143 feet deep. It has three street-fronting primary elevations, with the primary façade facing east on the 3100 block of Elm Avenue, and the other elevations facing Falls Cliff Road to the west and 32nd Street to the north. These three elevations are detailed with brickwork, cast concrete, and limestone; the south elevation, facing a one-story mid-century industrial building, is a secondary elevation that is simpler in design. The building has a rectangular footprint with frontage on Elm Avenue, Falls Cliff Road, and 32nd Street. The east elevation fronting Elm Avenue is two stories tall, and the west elevation fronting Falls Cliff Road is three stories tall. The Elm Avenue and Falls Cliff Road façades are seven bays wide; the north elevation of the building, facing 32nd Street, is twelve bays wide. The brick on all elevations is a highly fired red brick, laid in a common bond. The corners of the building feature an entrance bay that is flanked by slightly projecting pilasters that rise to the full height of the building, topped with a raised decorative parapet. All window openings have limestone sills and soldier course bond lintels. The large bays are filled with industrial steel windows of various sizes; all of the extant windows are original.

Attached to the south elevation, there is a two-story tall brick ell located at the center bay of that elevation. This ell extends to the south property line. It has loading docks facing both Elm Avenue and Falls Cliff Road, which are accessible from paved driveways. The ell housed the boiler room, and still has a large brick chimney that rises an additional 40' above the roof of the building, and is visible from many blocks away, due to the topography of the immediate vicinity.

General Area: This parcel is located in the southwestern portion of the Hampden neighborhood, overlooking the Jones Falls river valley. The Mount Vernon Mill Company owned this property and the immediately surrounding blocks until various points in the early 20th century. On the east

side of Elm Avenue, the development pattern is residential, dominated by two-story 1920s brick rowhouses with front porches overlooking front yards. The Florence Crittenton Home, a Baltimore City Landmark and Maryland Historical Trust easement property, is located immediately east of 3110 Elm Ave. The property has a historic 19th-century stone mansion house with a 1920s dormitory addition at the center of the property, which was originally the home of the owner of the Mount Vernon Mills. Between 2018 and 2020, three-story brick rowhouses were constructed to the west and north of the mansion house, fronting Elm Avenue and 32nd Street. These rowhouses were approved by both CHAP and the Maryland Historical Trust and stylistically drew on the neighborhood's architectural context. The rowhouses on Elm Avenue were designed to reflect the industrial architectural details of this building at 3110 Elm Ave. On the west side of Elm Avenue, the buildings are one- to three-story brick or concrete industrial buildings that are largely utilitarian in design. 3001 Elm Avenue was originally an outbuilding constructed in the late 19th century to serve the mansion house, the rest of the buildings on the 3100 and 3200 blocks of Elm Avenue and Falls Cliff Road were constructed between 1930 and 1956. The former Noxzema factory on Falls Cliff Road was recently converted to housing and artist studio space and is now called the Fox Building.

HISTORY

The brick industrial building constructed in 1930 for John H. Ferguson in Hampden is an excellent example of the post-WWI industrial development in the residential neighborhoods of Baltimore City. This development pattern became a strong economic force and character-defining element in many neighborhoods of the city. The property represents the industrial diversification in Hampden when many of the long-standing industries were becoming obsolete, showing how Hampden reinvented itself from a 19th-century industrial mill village to an industrial city neighborhood in the 20th century. This property is an excellent example of 1920s and 1930s industrial architecture in Baltimore City, utilizing modern building materials and engineering practices to accommodate 20th-century machinery. The building is largely unchanged from 1930 and retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historic association.

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

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically PLAY Goal 1: Strengthen Stewardship of Historical and Cultural Resources; and LIVE Objective 4: Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore's Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

Background: Councilmember Ramos initiated a potential landmark designation request in September 2022, and formally requested the designation in November 2022. This was in response to a development proposal for the parcel. The potential landmark designation hearing was postponed several times this year at the request of Councilmember Ramos and/or the owner's legal counsel due to negotiations with a potential buyer of the property.

This property was designated as a Potential Baltimore City Landmark by CHAP in September 2023, at the request of Councilmember Ramos. This is an immediate but temporary protection for historically significant properties. This designation received dozens of letters of support from surrounding residents.

This is the second public hearing for this property as part of the Baltimore City Landmark designation process. The first hearing was the December 12, 2023 hearing of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), during which the Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation because it meets criteria 1 and 3 of CHAP's criteria for designation. The Commission recommended approval of the landmark designation.

Equity Analysis

1. Short- or long-term impact on surrounding community: The designation of this structure as a Baltimore City Landmark will have a physical impact on the surrounding community, as this designation generally results in the preservation of significant historic sites in perpetuity.
2. Impact on Baltimore's existing patterns of inequity: The designation of this property as a Baltimore City Landmark will ensure a public process with opportunity for citizen's input regarding proposed changes to the building.
3. Has the community been meaningfully engaged: Community members – especially those in the immediate vicinity of this property – have been engaged for over a year regarding the possibility of landmark designation by Planning staff by both community planner Marie McSweeney Anderson and historic preservation planner Lauren Schiszik through multiple meetings, phone calls, and email communications.
4. How are residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes being authentically included in the planning of the proposed policy or project: This designation will ensure that any major proposed alterations to this property, including major additions, significant alterations, or proposed partial or full demolition, would require a public hearing in front of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP). This hearing would offer an opportunity for public testimony and input into any design proposal. There is currently no requirement for public input regarding proposed alterations to this structure.
5. Impact on Internal Operations: The designation of this property as a Baltimore City Landmark will result in historic preservation staff completing design review for all proposed exterior work. This may include advisory discussion sessions prior to the submission of applications, and the reviews themselves may entail public consideration by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, depending on the magnitude of proposed alterations. The CHAP review would replace UDAAP review in the case of a major redevelopment.

Community Notification: Hampden Community Council, South Hampden Neighbors, Audubon Maryland, and close to 30 individual neighbors were notified of this hearing. Additionally, the property has been posted in accordance with Planning Commission guidelines.



Chris Ryer