

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 #21-0158 / LANDMARK LIST - TRUCK HOUSE NO. 5 (OLIVER COMMUNITY FIREHOUSE)		

TO

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

DATE: January 14, 2022

At its regular meeting of January 13, 2022, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #21-0158, for the purpose of designating the Truck House No. 5 (Oliver Community Firehouse), 1220 E. Oliver St., 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 #21-0158 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, and recommends that City Council Bill #21-0158 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  
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. Kathleen Byrne, 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

January 13, 2022

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #21-0158/ Landmark List – Truck House No. 5 (Oliver Community Firehouse)

For the purpose of designating the Truck House No. 5 (Oliver Community Firehouse), 1220 East Oliver Street, as an historical landmark: exterior.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Tyriq Charleus

**PETITIONER:** Councilman Robert Stokes

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

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

Site Conditions: 1220 East Oliver Street is located on the northeast corner of the intersection with Harford Avenue. The property contains approximately 5,670 square feet of land, and is currently improved with a two-story building that was used as Truck House No. 5.

General Area: This property is located in the Oliver community, which is predominantly residential in character with the majority of housing stock comprised of townhomes. There are commercial and institutional uses along major corridors as well as scattered through the community.

#### **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site. The landmark designation was approved by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) on December 14, 2021.

#### **ANALYSIS**

Background: Truck House No. 5 is a highly ornamental Renaissance Revival fire station built in 1905 and constructed by prominent contractor Frederick Decker and Sons. The design is credited to the City Inspector of Buildings, Edward D. Preston. The structure is an excellent example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century fire stations as well as an example of Renaissance Revival architecture.

The building is also associated with Baltimore City Fire Department history, especially the history of Truck Company No. 5, which was established in 1887 and is still serving the community (from another location). This structure was one of the last fire houses constructed for horse drawn fire trucks.

In a letter to CHAP staff, George Collins, President of the African American Fire Fighters Historical Society, explained that “The African American Fire Fighters Historical Society’s mission is to collect, preserve and disseminate historical data, and information relating to the contributions made by fire fighters of color, and others who have made a contribution to such history; to be used for the purpose of education, fire prevention and mentoring. AAFFHS is a 501C (3) Charitable Organization, whose current efforts are to transform the 20-year abandoned, 115-year-old firehouse in East Baltimore’s Oliver Community known as Truck Company #5; into The International Black Fire Fighters Museum & Safety Education Center (IBFFM). The IBFFM will be the only free standing, independently owned institution dedicated to history made by fire fighters of African descent in the world.” Preserving and maintaining a historical institutional building within the neighborhood will strengthen the neighborhood’s built and social environment. The historical fire engine was located and is for sale in a lot in New Jersey. Having the headquarters functional, would allow for the acquisition of materials including, but not limited to the Engine that was previously housed at 1220 E. Oliver St., bringing materials back into the community for Baltimore to experience. The cultural history that would be provided to residents and the preservation of its structure would increase the value of the City of Baltimore.

Equity:

- Impact: In the short-term, a vacant building within the community will no longer detract from the neighborhood and the development would increase property value in the area. In the long-term this structure will serve the community as a cultural center for years to come, providing information on Baltimore’s history, and African American history.
  - Allowing for the preservation of this structure will allow for the neighborhood to receive a new development in the neighborhood allowing for more investments to come within the area. Historically, many buildings went vacant in African American communities without plans for their restoration. Allowing this development will deter demolition of African American and Baltimorean history. 1220 E. Oliver St will retain the information of the past that was often lost during abandonments during social change, within the City of Baltimore.
- Engagement:
    - The community is being represented by Councilman Robert Stokes.
    - AAFFHS President, George Collins approached residents of the Oliver neighborhood, Ms. Janetta Gilmore, who is also a board member and Tru Jefferson who remembers visiting the firehouse from the ages of 7 to 16.

Notification: City of Baltimore Councilman Robert Stokes & AAFFHS President George Collins have been notified of this action.

  
**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**