



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR  
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESERVATION**

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

**STAFF REPORT**



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**August 9, 2016**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill # 15-0510 - Designate as a Baltimore City Landmark: John Ruhrah Elementary Middle School (School #228), 701 Rapolla St.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Lauren Schiszik

**PETITIONER(S):** Councilman Kames Kraft

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council

**SUMMARY:** Designate this property on the Baltimore City Landmark List.

**SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT**

General Area: The school is located on a city block in the Greektown neighborhood. The property is bound by Foster Avenue to the north, Tolna Street to the east, Fait Avenue to the south, and Rapolla Street to the east. This portion of Greektown is somewhat physically isolated as it is only accessible to the western portion of Greektown via bridges that run across below-grade I-895. Located to the south of this community is I-95, to the east is an industrial complex, and the northern boundary is Eastern Ave. The school building and its ancillary portable classrooms are surrounded by playfields. The streets surrounding the school are comprised of simple two story brick rowhouses.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: The building is comprised of a three-story brick "I" building and two brick additions. The main block of the building features a central projecting bay that features a stone loggia entrance with arches, Ionian columns, and balustrade. The top of the projecting central bay has a decorative stone parapet featuring a coat of arms. The building has other decorative Classical features such as a stone watertable, dentilled and arched belt courses, and decorative brickwork consisting of banding, latticework, and window surrounds comprised of darker brick. The north elevation of the building has a one story portico entrance. The southern portion of the main building has the 1936 addition, which is a sensitive two-story brick addition that is smaller in scale and is architecturally similar to the main block, but is less ornate in its design. There is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century two story brick addition on the rear of the 1936 addition that has no fenestration pattern. While the school retains a high degree of integrity, there have been a few alterations. The most visible alteration is the infill of many window bays with brick – however, this infill does not detract from the overall sense of

cohesion or balanced fenestration. This school is an excellent example of a Classical Revival school structure and retains architectural integrity.

**BACKGROUND**

- On March 30, 2015, City Council Bill # 15-0510 was introduced by Councilman James Kraft to designate this building as a Baltimore City Landmark.

**PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

Designate this property on the Baltimore City Landmark List.

**ANALYSIS**

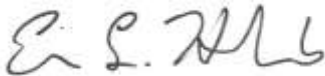
CHAP staff has reviewed the landmark designation report and has determined that the property is eligible for designation as a landmark under Criteria 1 and 3.

The school is significant for its architecture and for its role in Baltimore City history. The school was constructed in 1930 in the Greektown neighborhood and was originally known as PS #228. It was designed by Herbert G. Jory, a Baltimore architect who was a member of the AIA and who designed many institutional building in Baltimore, including schools and hospitals. The school is an excellent example of the Classical Revival institutional style that was popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Following the 1935 death of Dr. John Ruhrah an internationally recognized Baltimore pediatrician who served on the School Board during the 1930s, the school was named for Ruhrah. The school has been an important community site in the Greektown neighborhood for many decades, serving generations of the Greek community and new immigrants.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

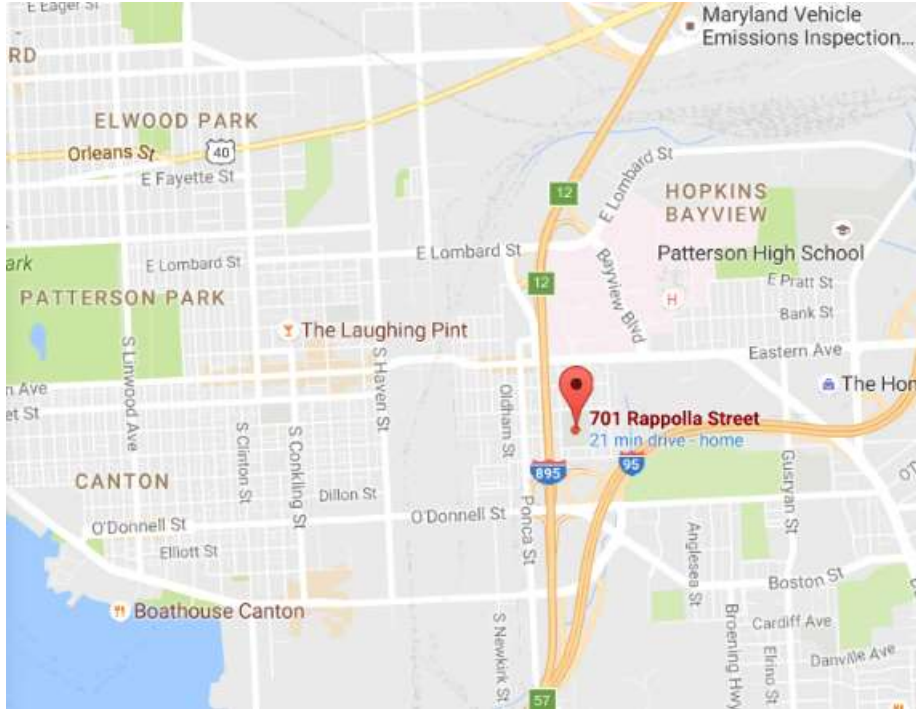
The property is not located within a CHAP district; therefore, comments from an Architectural Review Committee are not applicable. However, CHAP did inform Baltimore City Public Schools.

**Staff recommends a finding of approval for designation of this property on the Baltimore City Landmark List because it meets criteria 1 and 3 of CHAP’s criteria for designation.**



**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

## MAP AND IMAGES



Map 1: Google map of the property.

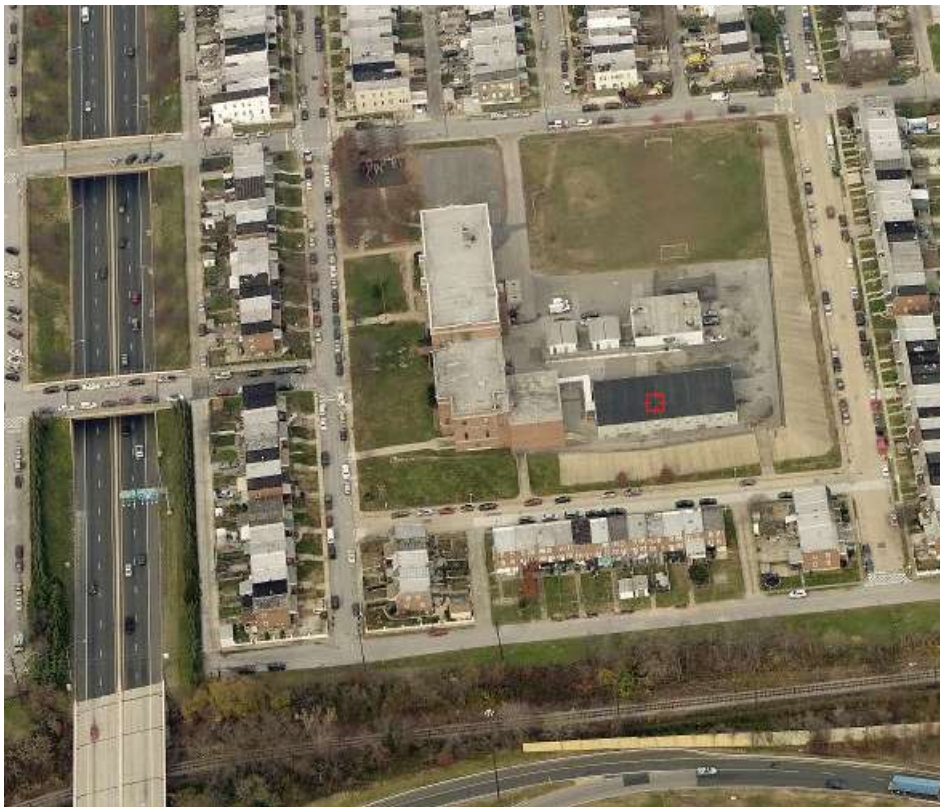


Image 1- Aerial view of site, view from south.



*Image 2 - Aerial view of site, view from west.*



*Image 3 – Façade of property.*