

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 #20-0502/ WOODBERRY HISTORIC DISTRICT		

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

DATE: March 27, 2020

At its regular meeting of March 26, 2020, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #20-0502, for the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Woodberry Historic District; providing for Planned Unit Development review by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached agenda, summary and previous staff report that recommended approval of the Historic Landmark. Thus, the Planning Commission recommended approval of City Council Bill #20-0502 and adopted the following resolution eight members being present (six in favor).

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #20-0502 be passed 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: Mr. Nicholas Blendy, Mayor's Office
- Mr. Matthew Stegman, Mayor's Office
- Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
- The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
- Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
- Mr. Derek Baumgardner, 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
- Mr. Dominic McAlily, Council Services



Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Chris Ryer
Director*

March 26, 2020

REQUEST: City Council Bill #20-0502 Woodberry Historic District (Seventh District): For the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Woodberry Historic District; providing for Planned Unit Development review by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Walter W. Gallas, AICP

INTRODUCED BY: Council President on behalf of the Administration

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: Situated immediately west of the Jones Falls, and abutting the northern boundary of Druid Hill Park, the Woodberry district preserves and adapts aspects of its industrial heritage and continues to maintain the physical integrity of the mill village and company town it once was. It is established on topography that rises from the Jones Falls Valley, which was a major center of commerce for the state. The street plan reflects its development over 175 years—irregular near the channel of the falls at its eastern edge, while more planned and grid-like in the northwest quadrant.

The neighborhood’s relative isolation, on a rise with limited connections to the larger city, and its situation among large swaths of parkland, contribute to its village-like character. Clipper Road, along the east side, is the neighborhood’s oldest, running along former railroad lines which now serve the regional light rail system. Located to the east of the tracks, adjacent to the Jones Falls, a line of large industrial buildings run north to south, forming the eastern-most boundary of the district, dominated at the south end by Meadow Mill, with its distinctive tower. The residential sections of the district contain houses with front and back yards. Alleys and a few remaining footpaths add to the circulation possibilities. In 1951, the 41st Street viaduct was completed, increasing access to and from the district. While it is a part of the landscape today, the viaduct slices down into the early 19th century part of the district between two of the oldest stone duplexes in Woodberry. East-west circulation within the district is provided by Rockrose Avenue, Girard Avenue, and Clipper Park Road. Druid Park Drive is the only street that carries traffic in and out of the district on the west side.

The residential architecture of the proposed historic district includes early and mid-19th century stone and masonry millworkers’ duplex residences, late 19th century rowhouses and free-standing masonry and frame residences, and rowhouses built in the years before and after World Wars I and II. One early 19th century mansion house, albeit much altered, survives as part of a

nursing home. The center of the district is dominated by the remnants of the huge Poole & Hunt Foundry and Machine Works, some of which dates to the 1850s. Portions of the former factory have been adapted for commercial and residential uses incorporating new construction. In addition, townhouses built in the 2010s line Clipper Park Road. The southern section of the former Poole & Hunt land has been filled in with a 21st century residential development of modernist design nestled against the backdrop of wooded Druid Hill Park. In the southeast corner of the district, Brick Hill is its own tiny enclave of three streets and five blocks of company-built workers' duplexes. The two dozen historic houses create a setting that remarkably has changed very little since the mid-19th century. In the southwest corner of the district, the former William E. Hooper and Sons Hooperwood mill buildings are significant anchors. The district has two historic religious structures.

General Area: The proposed boundaries of the Woodberry local historic district are generally: the Jones Falls on the east; the southern edges of Meadow Mill and Brick Hill and northern edge of Druid Hill Park on the south; the rear property lines of houses on the west side of Malden Avenue; and Rockrose Avenue on the north, including groups of contributing rowhouses on the north side of Rockrose near Hooper Avenue and including the northernmost property on Clipper Road, the supervisor's house, and the factory/warehouse just north of the W. 41st Street viaduct (See map below).

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this City Council ordinance; however, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) supported Council Bill #20-0502 in a unanimous vote on March 10, 2020. CHAP also held two hearings prior to its March 10, 2020, unanimous vote.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The designation of the Woodberry neighborhood as a local historic district supports and enhances a climate of neighborhood preservation, stabilization, and reinvestment already present. The area is recognized as an enclave that is at once away from the city and a part of the city. The City's goal to make vibrant neighborhoods is being realized in Woodberry. Its designation as a local historic district will assure continued preservation of its large-scale industrial architecture and maintenance of its pedestrian friendly residential character.

Beginning in 2003, the Planning Department and City Council, in order to support the recognized development potential of the Clipper Mill Industrial Park, undertook a series of actions including subdivision, re-zoning, creation of a special taxing district, and the creation of the Clipper Milled Planned United Development (PUD). This planning guided—and continues to guide—the construction of new multi-family buildings and townhouses, as well as the conversion of surviving industrial buildings into residential and commercial uses. Most recently, the Urban Design and Architectural Advisory Panel (UDAAP) approved a design for the redevelopment of the Tractor Building, a 1916 former machine shop within the Clipper Mill PUD.

ANALYSIS

The March 10, 2020, vote of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation giving final approval for the designation of the Woodberry local historic district was the culmination of CHAP and community efforts that had been attempted twice before, but were successful this time. The Woodberry Community Association (WCA) initiated this most recent attempt after unexpected demolitions in May 2019 of two stone houses on Clipper Road. An open community meeting was held and WCA formed a historic preservation committee. On May 30, 2019, WCA sent a letter to Mayor Young formally requesting local historic district designation. In June, with receipt of the letter confirmed by the mayor's office, numerous events followed—a series of open community meetings and outreach events with CHAP staff, a survey mailing to the property owners within the proposed district as mandated by CHAP regulations, and outreach by WCA in-person, by mail, and via social media encouraging questions and urging completion of the survey.

On October 8, 2019, in accordance with CHAP *Rules and Regulations*, Woodberry Local Historic District Designation Hearing One was held. After hearing the staff report and hearing public testimony, the Commission unanimously requested that staff prepare a “full and proper study with findings of fact” to support the designation (See CHAP Staff Report, October 8, 2019). On December 10, 2019, CHAP held Woodberry Local Historic District Hearing Two. The Commission, having heard the staff report and hearing testimony from the community, voted unanimously to approve the report, to recommend local district designation and to approve the boundaries of the district. CHAP determined that the neighborhood meets three of CHAP's criteria for designation: 1) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the patterns of Baltimore history; 2) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past; and 3) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

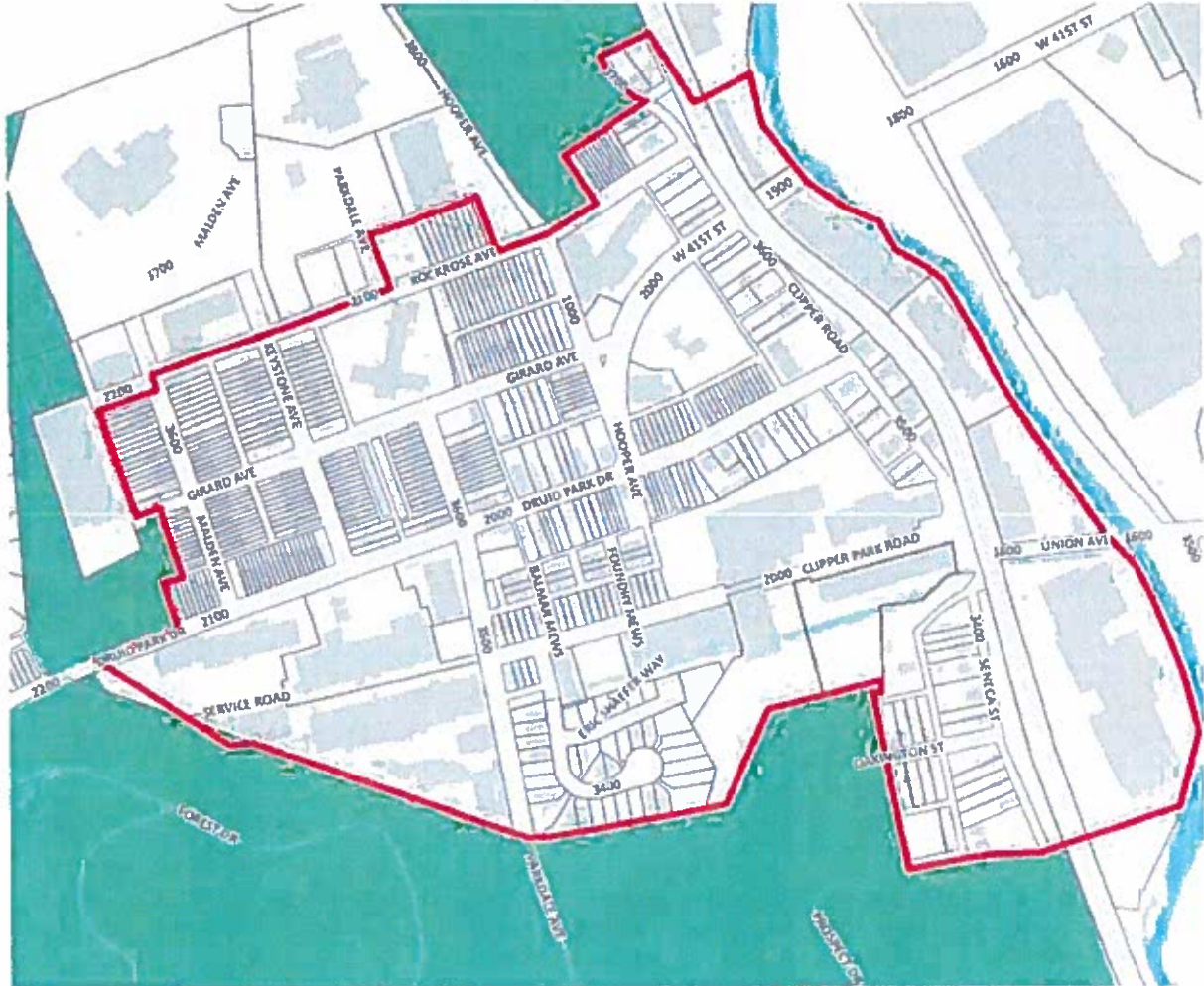
Three National Register-listed districts and one National Register-listed structure are contained within the proposed Woodberry local historic district: Poole & Hunt Company Buildings (1973, 2003); Londontown Manufacturing Company, Inc./Meadow Mill (1973); Brick Hill (1988); and Woodberry (2003).

For any new projects in the existing PUD in the Woodberry Historic District, CHAP would review and approve the plans, honoring any previously approved height and massing guidelines. Amendments to the PUD and designs that are revised after previously receiving Final Design Approval would also be subject to CHAP approval. This is similar to what was established for existing PUDs in designation of the Fells Point Historic District (See CHAP Staff Report, December 10, 2019).

Notification: The Woodberry Community Association, Baltimore Heritage, and the Baltimore National Heritage Area have been notified of this action.



Chris Ryer
Director



PROPOSED WOODBERRY LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT