**TO**

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

DATE: September 24, 2010

At its regular meeting of September 2, 2010 the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #10-0586 for the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Sharp-Leadenhall Historic District.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached agenda, summary and previous staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #10-0586 and adopted the following resolution, nine members being present (nine in favor).

> RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #10-0586 be passed by the City Council.

If you have questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso in the Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

TJS/ewt

Attachments

cc: Ms. Kaliope Parthemos, Deputy Mayor
    Ms. Sophie Dagenais, Chief of Staff
    Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office
    The Honorable Bill Henry, City Council Planning Commission Representative
    Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Enforcement
    Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
    Ms. Nikol Nabors-Jackson, DHCD
    Ms. Karen Randle, Council Services
    Ms. Kathleen Kotarba, Chief, CHAP Division
    Mr. Donald Kann, Chairman, CHAP

28-1418-5017

1400-10-53

April 15, 2010

**REQUEST:** <u>Historic District Designation/ Sharp-Leadenhall</u>

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Eric Holcomb

**PETITIONER:** Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP)

**OWNER:** Multiple Property Owners

## SITE/GENERAL AREA

<u>Site Conditions</u>: The potential local historic district is bounded by the centerline of Hanover Street on the east, Cross Street on the south, Leadenhall and Bevan streets on the west and centerline of Henrietta Street on the north (please see map). The zoning is primarily R-7 and R-8 with some areas along Hanover and Cross Streets with B-2-3, B-3-2, and M-2-2.

<u>General Area</u>:

The proposed Sharp-Leadenhall Local Historic District sits in the northwestern section of South Baltimore, an area that comprises five residential neighborhoods – Sharp-Leadenhall, Otterbein, Federal Hill, SBIC, and Riverside neighborhoods - and two industrial sections, Port Covington and Spring Garden Industrial Area. I-395 separates South Baltimore from the Stadium Area, and the Inner Harbor and Middle Branch provide distinct boundaries on the north, east and south. In addition, South Baltimore comprises one local historic district, four national register historic districts, the Federal Hill Main Street, and several local landmarks.

The proposed Sharp Leadenhall Local Historic District is surrounded by Little Montgomery Street National Register District to the north, Solo Gibbs Park and I-395 to the west, Cross Street industrial buildings to the south, and Federal Hill National Register historic district to the east. Sharp-Leadenhall proposed district comprises approximately 130 properties, most of which are two- to three-story vernacular rowhouses built between the 1820s and 1870s. Two historic church structures anchor this neighborhood, one of which is a historic African American church. Several rows of housing are new houses built in the last thirty years. Several more rows have been reconstructed. In addition, there is a noncontributing 7-11 store

on the southwest corner of Hanover and Hamburg streets and a one-story garage-type structure on that sits directly behind and west of the 7-11 building.

## CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The historic district designation conforms to CMP Live/Goal 2/Objective 4 Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore's Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods. The designation was also recommended in the Sharp-Leadenhall Area Master Plan (adopted January 2004). This report recommends to, "complete community process on local historic district designation." The plan gives further guidance:

"CHAP will continue working with residents to determine whether or not there is support for creating a local historic district. If the petition process among property owners is successful, CHAP and the neighborhood can create boundaries for a local historic district."

In addition, the Sharp-Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan identifies the Sharp-Leadenhall Local Historic District Study Area, giving further direction for CHAP staff and the neighborhood association to pursue local historic district designation.

In turn, Sharp Leadenhall is part of South Baltimore which comprises several neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have strong neighborhood associations that have been active for more than 30 years. Nevertheless, they share one, diverse history that is exemplified in the architecture, street patterns, and geography of South Baltimore. Sharp Leadenhall is a fragile portion of South Baltimore, and local designation can help strengthen it and, consequently, strengthen South Baltimore. This designation effort is part of a multi-year effort of CHAP to preserve through local historic district designation the community of South Baltimore.

## ANALYSIS

Sharp Leadenhall meets Baltimore criterion one for designating historic districts and landmarks as a district that is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history. Sharp Leadenhall proposed historic district is associated with 200 years of African American and immigrant history in South Baltimore. By the last decade of the 18th century, the African American neighborhood centered on Sharp Street Methodist Church and the Sharp Street African American School. This community was home to some of America's most important African American intellectuals including Daniel Coker, William Watkins, William Douglass, Hezekiah Grice, Dr. Lewis Wells, and Francis Helen Watkins Harper. During the first half of the 19th century, these men and women of Baltimore were part of the community near Sharp and Pratt streets. Throughout the 19th century this community grew in all directions including southward along the Sharp Street corridor. Otterbein, Little Montgomery Street, and Sharp Leadenhall neighborhoods represent the remnants of this once thriving African American neighborhood. The African American community and the German immigrant community, among others, physically integrated on the streets of South Baltimore. In addition, the district is associated with the 19th century German immigrant population of South Baltimore which helped shape the South Baltimore neighborhoods such as Federal Hill,

South Federal Hill, and Riverside. Sharp-Leadenhall is a significant part of South Baltimore History, which has contributed greatly to African American history in Baltimore.

The historic district designation grew out of the Sharp Leadenhall Area Master Plan process of 2004. Since 2004, staff has engaged the neighborhood numerous times and CHAP has had three public hearings. The CHAP at its November 10, 2009 hearing recommended approval of Sharp Leadenhall as a Baltimore City Local Historic District.

The historic district designation is a three-step process. The first step was CHAP approval. The Planning Commission hearing on historic district designation for Sharp Leadenhall is the second step in historic district designation process. After the Planning Commission renders a decision on the designation, its recommendation will then go to the City Council for introduction by the administration. The third and final step is passage of legislation by the Mayor and City Council designating Sharp Leadenhall as a Baltimore City Local Historic District.

For this hearing, all property owners have been notified by mail, a large sign has been posted in the neighborhood, City Councilmen Edward Reisinger and William Cole, and adjacent neighborhood associations have all been notified.

Gary W. Cole /for T. Stosur

**Thomas J. Stosur,**
**Director**