


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #17-0008 / BALTIMORE CITY LANDMARK LIST: EXTERIORS - GEORGE W. KING/ABRAHAM BRISCOE/BETHEL COMMUNITY HOUSE		

TO

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

DATE: February 24, 2017

The Department of Planning has been asked to review City Council Bill #17-0008, for the purpose of designating the George W. King/Abraham Briscoe/Bethel Community House, 1232 Druid Hill Avenue, as an historical landmark: exterior.

The original bill CCB#16-0698 died at the end of the last legislative session. It was originally heard and approved by the Planning Commission on August 24, 2016.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached previous staff report which recommended approval of landmark designation and is in support of the new City Council Bill #17-0008 and adopted the following resolution, 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 #17-0008 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

Attachment

- cc: Mr. Pete Hammen, Chief Operating Officer
Mr. Jim Smith, Chief of Strategic Alliances
Ms. Karen Stokes, Mayor's Office
Mr. Colin Tarbert, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD
Mr. Patrick Fleming, DOT
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

August 25, 2016

REQUEST: City Council Bill # 16-06986 - Designate as a Baltimore City Landmark: exterior: George W. King/Abraham Briscoe House - 1232 Druid Hill Ave.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with proposed amendment

STAFF: Lauren Schiszik

PETITIONER: Councilman Eric Costello

OWNER: Bethel A.M.E. Church

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: 1232 Druid Hill Ave. is a three bay wide, three story tall, brick Italianate rowhouse. It is largely rectangular in plan, 20 feet wide, by 80 feet deep. The first floor entrance is located on the right bay, and features a large carved stone arched surround capped with an ornamental keystone, paneled double doors with a transom, and marble steps. The first floor is located above a stone water table, and the raised basement is also faced with stone. All of the window openings feature stone sills and jack arch lintels. The building also features a decorative Italianate cornice. The north elevation of the building is a party wall, now exposed due to the demolition of 1234 Druid Hill Ave. The rear of the property features a three story brick ell, and a small rear yard.

General Area: The property is located on the southwest side of Druid Hill Avenue near the intersection with Lanvale St. in the Upton's Marble Hill neighborhood. The property is located just outside of the Upton's Marble Hill local historic district. The district is primarily residential, but also contains historic churches, schools, and community buildings. The houses are traditional, marble-stepped brick rowhouses, exhibiting either Queen Anne or Italianate influence.

Upton's Marble Hill Historic District is important as one of Baltimore's earliest African-American middle class neighborhoods and for its well-preserved architectural detail. The lengthy list of historically prominent residents includes Harry S. Cummings, Sr., one of the first two blacks admitted to the University of Maryland Law School (1887), and the first black Baltimore City Councilman, T. Willis Lansey, who founded the Ideal Federal Savings and Loan (1920). Others were Henry Hall, a prominent engineer and educator, John Murphy, Sr., founder of the Afro-American newspaper, and Violet Hill White, Baltimore's first black female police officer.

HISTORY

There are no previous Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

- The property was condemned by the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development on August 23, 2008. Condemnation is a determination that a property is unsafe, and this determination allows the City to require that the property owner maintain the property, or the City can take steps to take ownership of the property.
- On September 21, 2015, applications were made for the demolition of both 1232 and 1234 Druid Hill Ave. The final demolition permit for 1234 Druid Hill Ave. was issued on October 16, 2015, and the building was demolished over the course of the next several weeks. The permit for 1232 Druid Hill Ave. was not paid for or picked up, and thus was not officially issued by DHCD.
- The request to consider the designation of 1232 Druid Hill Ave. on the Potential Landmark List was submitted in November 2015 by Baltimore Heritage, Inc.
- At the January 12, 2016 hearing, the Commission listed this property on the Commission's Preliminary Landmarks List.
- At the April 12, 2016 hearing, the Commission considered the demolition of the rear ell, as submitted by the owner, Bethel A.M.E. Church. The Commission approved the demolition of the rear ell by hand, finding that it was structurally unsound. The Commission as required that the owner submit a plan to stabilize the rest of the structure.
- On June 20, 2016, City Council Bill # 16-0698 was introduced by Councilman Eric T. Costello, Sharon Green Middleton, and Mary Pat Clarke to designate this building as a Baltimore City Landmark.
- On August 9, 2016, the CHAP Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposal is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: PLAY Goal 1: Strengthen Stewardship of Historical and Cultural Resources; LIVE Objective 4: Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore's Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

This is the second public hearing for this structure as part of the Baltimore City Landmark designation process. The first hearing occurred when the CHAP Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation on August 9, 2016. CHAP's landmark report is attached to this staff report.

The CHAP Commission found that based upon the historical context and architectural design of the George W. King/Abraham Briscoe House, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation found that it meets CHAP Landmark designation criteria for the following standards:

B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion
City Council Bill # 16-06986 - Designate as a Baltimore City Landmark: exterior: George W. King/Abraham Briscoe House - 1232 Druid Hill Ave. 2

thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history;
3. Embodies 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.

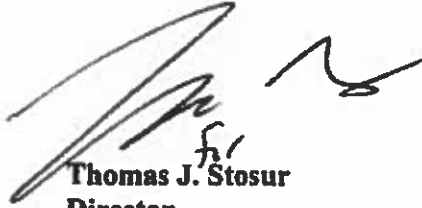
The property is significant under Criterion 2 for its association with George W. King. King was a prominent printer that lived at this property from 1883 until his death in 1898. This was his final home, purchased at the end of his career, and is the only structure associated with Mr. King that survives today. King was the founder of the Kings Brother printers, a prominent Baltimore firm that was active from the 1850s-1950s, serving as the official printer for Baltimore City government and the State of Maryland for many years. King also served as a Councilman for Ward 7, and was very active in a variety of other business and municipal activities, including organizing a Typographical Union.

Following King's death in 1898, his family rented out 1232 Druid Hill Avenue to Abraham Briscoe, an African American wagon driver, and his family. The history of this house during the early-mid 20th century is significant under Criterion 1, for its association with the broad patterns of Baltimore history. It is representative of the racial transition of this neighborhood, and efforts of African Americans both before and during the Great Migration to seek opportunities in the city of Baltimore, and utilize their homes for civic activism and civil rights. The home, through those living in it, was host to fundraising activities for fraternal organizations, mutual beneficial societies and youth programs, as well as social clubs and literary societies. These fundraising activities were often run by women, like the Misses Briscoe's lawn party hosted at 1232 Druid Hill Ave. These organizations were crucial in the African American community. Neither government nor society offered them economic or social nets, while also actively limiting their civil rights and opportunities. Therefore, these organizations were a lifeline. While churches, schools, and social organizations have been designated as landmarks for the role that they have played in Baltimore's civil rights activism of the early-mid 20th century, no designation has recognized the important roles that these individual homes played, where activism also occurred. In the late 1920s - 1930s, the first floor apartment of the building was the office of Mount Zion cemetery. In 1931, 1232 Druid Hill Avenue was also the office for Bishop A. L. Gaines, presiding Bishop of the Second Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Church. The property has been owned by Bethel A.M.E. Church since 1981. From 1981 to the time of condemnation in 2008, the building was used for a variety of purposes by the church, according to the Church's Council, Leronia Josey. These uses included: the Bethel Credit Union, Bethel Fuel Co-op, Bethel Food Co-op, Bethel Bookstore, GED and pre-GED preparation classes, and church group meetings such as the Golden Agers, Youth (YPD), Teen Parenting Activities, and Bethel Boot Camp (new members classes).

This Landmark Designation has been reviewed by the CHAP Commission and is consistent with planning initiatives. At the request of the owner, staff recommends an amendment to the name of the designation to recognize the contributions of Bethel A.M.E. Church at this site. The proposed amended name is "George W. King/Abraham Briscoe/ Bethel Community House"

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS

Notification of this hearing has been provided to the owner and posted on the property. The following entities were notified about the consideration of this item: Councilman Costello, Marble Hill Community Association, Inc., Upton Planning Committee, Upton's Marble Hill Architectural Review Committee, Baltimore Heritage, Inc., Baltimore National Heritage Area, and Preservation Maryland.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director