


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 #23-0386 / LANDMARK LIST EXTERIORS - HOME OF THE FRIENDLESS		

DATE:

July 24, 2023

TO

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

At its regular meeting of July 20, 2023, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #23-0386, for the purpose of designating the Home of the Friendless, 1313 Druid Hill Avenue, as an historical landmark: exterior; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #23-0386 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 #23-0386 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. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
Mr. Ethan Cohen, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
Ms. Rebecca Witt, 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, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

July 20, 2023

REQUEST: City Council Bill #23-0386/ Landmark List: Exteriors – Home of the Friendless:
For the purpose of designating the Home of the Friendless, 1313 Druid Hill Avenue, as an historical landmark: exterior; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Lauren Schiszik

INTRODUCED BY: Councilmember Costello

OWNER: Mayor and City Council

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The Home of the Friendless is a freestanding brick structure that is three bays wide, 3 bays deep, and was historically five stories with a mansard roof. Over the past few decades, it has suffered from vacancy, structural damage, and general deterioration and is in poor condition. DHCD is currently stabilizing the building. Historically five stories tall, the mansard roof is currently removed, so it is only 4 stories tall. It was designed in the Second Empire style and was constructed in 1870. The front façade is ornate with brick detailing. The first floor of the façade is styled with decorative brick banding, capped with an intermediate wood cornice that is in poor condition and some portions of which are missing. The corners of the building feature decorative brick quoining that wraps around to the side elevations. The central bay is detailed with projecting brick quoining on either side of the bay. The first-floor central bay is the entrance to the building, with paired wooden doors and sidelights accessed from 3 stone steps. The upper stories of the main bay feature two arched window openings topped with ornate brick hoods with molded brick detailing. The two flanking bays hold paired window openings with brick jack arch lintels and stone sills. All of the windows on the façade are missing or the openings are covered with plywood, but historically held 4/4 light wood windows. The cornice, frieze, mansard roof, and pedimented dormers are removed, and the roof is capped with wood framing and roofing membrane. Most windows are missing. The rear elevation is five bays wide and originally had wooden porches and exterior stairs; these were recently removed. However, the ghosting of the stairs and columns remain on the building. There is an eight-foot tall brick wall that encloses the majority of the property surrounding the building, with metal gates on either side of the building to access the side yards. The opening of the brick wall at the rear has been widened and is closed off with a chain link fence.

General Area: This parcel is located in the 1300 block of Druid Hill Avenue in the Marble Hill neighborhood, towards the middle of the block. West Lanvale Street is the nearest cross street, located to the southeast. The Henry Highland Garnet Park is adjacent to this parcel, and comprises the majority of this odd-number side of the block. The park is located on the site of the original Home of Friendless Vagrant Girls and an associated hospital, which were demolished in the late twentieth century. There are several three-story rowhouses on the other side of the Home of the Friendless. Across the street are three-story brick rowhouses and the commanding stone church that is home to Bethel A.M.E. Church. The Upton’s Marble Hill local historic district encompasses the properties on the opposite side of the street.

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The designation request came from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which seeks to designate the structure as a Baltimore City Landmark following its \$2.3 million stabilization of the property. The property is subject to the Upton Master Plan, adopted in 2005. This property is not subject to an Urban Renewal Plan.

The preservation of the building – and the regulatory review of any work proposed by a future owner – will support the goals of the Upton Master Plan. The request also conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically PLAY Goal 1: Strengthen Stewardship of Historical and Cultural Resources; and LIVE Objective 4: Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore’s Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

Background: The Home of the Friendless, built in 1870, played an important role in social services in West Baltimore through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was built as a residential institution for orphaned and abandoned white boys, a corollary to the adjacent Home of Friendless Vagrant Girls (now demolished). It was part of a three-building complex that housed between 100-200 children per year. It served as an orphanage until 1931, when the institution moved to the suburbs in northern Baltimore City. From the late 1930s into the early 1960s, the Health Department ran the Druid Health Center in this building, which was the first public health center for Black citizens in the City. The Home of the Friendless is the sole surviving structure from the original complex. While the mansard roof and rear porch are currently missing, the building is stabilized and still conveys its architectural value and significance as a Second Empire-style institutional structure.

The building has been owned by the City of Baltimore since 1938, and has been vacant since 1992. DHCD sold the property for development in 2017, but the property was foreclosed on and the building was purchased back by the Mayor and City Council in 2018. In 2021, while the property was part of a new DHCD Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the cornice fell from the roof onto Druid Hill Avenue during a storm. At that time, the Housing Commissioner ceased the RFP until

the building could be stabilized. In 2022, DHCD began undertaking a \$2.3 million stabilization of the building, sourced from federal, state, and local funds. The stabilization is slated to be completed between late Summer and late Fall 2023. In February 2023, the development division of DHCD requested that Councilmember Costello introduce a landmark designation bill. The goal is to designate the property as a Baltimore City Landmark before selling it to a private owner. Following the stabilization of the property, it will again be listed for sale through the Request for Proposals process.

This is the second public hearing for this property as part of the Baltimore City Landmark designation process. The first hearing was the June 13, 2022 hearing of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), during which the Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation because it meets criteria 1 and 3 of CHAP's criteria for designation. The Commission recommended approval of the landmark designation.

Equity Analysis

1. Short- or long-term impact on surrounding community: The designation of this structure as a Baltimore City Landmark will have a physical impact on the surrounding community, as landmark designation typically results in the preservation of significant historic sites in perpetuity. The designation of this property as a Baltimore City Landmark also offers a significant impact to the community in that it legally codifies the value that the community places on this building.
2. Impact on Baltimore's existing patterns of inequity: The designation of this property as a Baltimore City Landmark will ensure that there is a public process with opportunity for citizen's input regarding proposed changes to the building.
3. Has the community been meaningfully engaged: DHCD engaged the community to seek support for the designation prior to the introduction of the City Council Bill. The Marble Hill Improvement Association has been notified of this application as well as this hearing through email communication as well as via postings on the property, and staff participated in a community meeting to address any questions or concerns about the landmark designation. How are residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes being authentically included in the planning of the proposed policy or project: Upton's Marble Hill is a community that has been historically excluded from planning processes. This designation will ensure that any major proposed alterations to this property, including major additions, significant alterations, or proposed demolition, would require a public hearing in front of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP). This hearing would offer an opportunity for public testimony and thus input into any design proposal. There is currently no requirement for public input regarding proposed alterations to this structure.
4. Impact on Internal Operations: As the property is a historic city-owned structure, staff has already been consulted regarding the stabilization work currently underway. The designation of this property as a Baltimore City Landmark will result in historic preservation staff devoting time and effort to design review for all proposed exterior work. This may include advisory discussion sessions prior to the submission of applications, and the reviews themselves may entail public consideration by the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, depending on the magnitude of proposed alterations.

Community Notification: Baltimore Heritage Inc., Baltimore National Heritage Area, Madison Park Improvement Association, Marble Hill Improvement Association, and No Boundaries Coalition were notified of this hearing. Additionally, the property has been posted in accordance with Planning Commission guidelines.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Ryer', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Ryer
Director