



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 21, 2013

REQUEST: City Council Bill #13-0188/Baltimore City Landmark List – Brinks Building

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Kenneth Hranicky

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

OWNER: SON OF QUITPLAS, LLC

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 231 N. Holliday Street, the Brinks Building, is located one building in at the southeast corner of E. Saratoga and Holliday Streets. The property is improved with a three-story brick building constructed in 1915. The lot dimensions are approximately 53 feet by 97 ½ feet. The area is zoned B-5-2 (central commercial district).

General Area: 231 N. Holliday Street is located in the Downtown neighborhood. The area is characterized by commercial, office, and residential uses.

HISTORY

- Ordinance #01-170, approved on May 25, 2001, established the Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan.
- Amendment No.1, dated July 10, 2006 approved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore by Ordinance No. 06-348, dated November 8, 2006.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This action is consistent with the Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan, specifically, 1. To remove blighting influences or uses or development otherwise in substantial non-compliance with the provisions of the Renewal Plan. 2. To direct public and private development in a manner that is harmonious and complementary with the existing built environment by requiring all plans for new development, exterior rehabilitation, or demolition be reviewed and publicly approved as consistent with the Renewal Plan. 3. To recognize the cultural and architectural value of the buildings in the Project Area and encourage adaptive reuse, particularly Notable Properties and Special Districts and buildings that contribute to the character of designated local and National Register historic districts. To establish a positive image for the entire Central Business District, encourage private investment, and increase the tax base, employment, and residential

opportunities.

The proposal is also consistent with the City of Baltimore's 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

This is the second public hearing for this structure as part the Baltimore City Landmark Designation process. The first hearing occurred when CHAP Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation for 231 N. Holliday on March 12, 2013. CHAP's staff report is attached to this staff report.

Planning Staff's analysis focuses on the impacts of landmark designation on the property's development potential. 231 N. Holliday Street is located in the regulated floodplain. The height of the regulated floodplain is 8 feet above the floor on the first floor. New development or substantial improvement would require that the structure meet floodplain development requirements. Residential structures would have to have their first floor effectively 10 feet above the sidewalk. Businesses would be required to build a fortress like structure to withstand the forces from floodwaters. The cost of construction to meet these requirements are cost prohibitive and one reason this property has been under-utilized. The floodplain development code does allow the granting of variances to buildings that are landmarked. The owner wishes to pursue this designation to allow renovation of the building for recording studios and other ancillary office space. These uses are consistent with neighboring uses and with the Central Business District URP.

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation found that 231 N. Holliday Street meets CHAP Landmark Designation for the following standard:

- B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion 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 represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Staff has notified the following of this action: Central Business District Coalition, Central District Police-Community Relations Council, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc. Eastern District Police-Community Relations Council, Historic Jonestown Business Association Jonestown Planning Council, Inc., Southeast Community Development Corporation-(SCDC), Southeastern District Police Community Relations Council and Councilman William Cole IV, 11th District.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director