



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

DRAFT STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

March 9, 2021

REQUEST: Designate as a Potential Landmark; and Designate as a Baltimore City Landmark, pursuant to City Council Bill 21-0028

ADDRESS: 2670 Kennedy Avenue

RECOMMENDATION: Approval of designation as a Potential Landmark and as a Baltimore City Landmark

STAFF: Lauren Schiszik

PETITIONER(S): Councilmember Odette Ramos

OWNER: Montpelier/Kennedy Associates Limited Partnership

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Area: The building is located in the Coldstream Homestead Montebello neighborhood, on a 0.26 acre parcel bound by Kennedy Avenue to the southwest, Gorsuch Avenue to the northwest, Tyler Street to the northeast, and an unnamed private alley street to the southeast. The surrounding blocks have a varied building typology with structures from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, as well as some vacant lots where buildings have been demolished. Gorsuch Avenue is a main street in the neighborhood, and thus has institutional buildings located on it, such as churches, a fire station, a former library. Historically, there were more commercial buildings along Gorsuch Avenue. The majority of the properties immediately surrounding the school are residential properties, primarily early-twentieth century rowhouses, but some nineteenth century vernacular frame detached homes as well. There are also a few late twentieth century low-rise multi-family apartments in the immediate vicinity.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: This brick schoolhouse was constructed in two phases in 1882 and 1915. The original 1882 building, a two story cross-gable Gothic Revival style structure featuring large windows, a projecting bay for the main entrance, and a steeply-pitched roof, faced Tyler Street. In 1915, an addition was constructed on the rear of the building, completely switching the orientation of the building towards Kennedy Avenue. The 1915 addition is Colonial Revival in style, yet does an impressive job in utilizing the same scale, similar form, window patterns, and details like water tables and window lintels as the original building. The building was rehabilitated to meet historic preservation standards in the 1980s. Between 2012 and 2014, the windows were replaced with undersized vinyl windows, however, the building as a whole retains its architectural integrity.

BACKGROUND

- Councilmember Ramos has initiated the potential landmark and landmark designation requests for the Clifton School in coordination with the Coldstream Homestead Montebello Community Corporation. Upon receiving the formal request to designate this property as a Potential Landmark, CHAP staff posted the notification on the property and sent a formal notification letter to the property owner on January 15, 2021, as per CHAP's Rules and Regulations.
- Councilmember Ramos introduced the landmark designation bill in City Council on January 25, 2021.

PROPOSAL & PROCEDURES

The proposal is to designate this property as a Potential Landmark and as a Baltimore City Landmark.

The Potential Landmark List provides an immediate but temporary protection for historically significant properties. Notably, the protections of the Potential Landmark List begin as soon as the notice for the CHAP Hearing has been posted, which means that the property is subject to CHAP review immediately after posting. If the property is designated to the Potential Landmark List, the timeframe of the protections are limited:

1. 180 days after the Commission's decision to add the structure to that List, unless, before that date, a proposed ordinance is introduced into the City Council to add the structure to the Landmark List: Exteriors or the Landmark List: Public Interiors, respectively; or
2. If a proposed Landmark ordinance is introduced into the City Council before that 180th day but has not yet been enacted, 18 months from the date of the proposed ordinance's introduction.

If a property is designated to the Landmark List, then it will continue to receive the full protection of the CHAP Ordinance. If the property is not added to the Landmark List it cannot be nominated for the Potential Landmark List or Landmark List until:

3. Two (2) years from the date on which the previous proposal failed or the designation expired, as the case may be;
4. The election and start of a new 4-year term of office for the members of the City Council; or
5. The City Council's passage of a simple resolution requesting or authorizing the Commission to do so.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

For requests to designate properties as either Potential Landmarks or as Baltimore City Landmarks, CHAP staff applies the guidelines for the designation of properties as Baltimore City Landmarks, which considers the quality of significance in Baltimore history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, public interiors,

structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past; or
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; or
4. That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in Baltimore prehistory or history.

Staff has determined that the Clifton School meets two of the four designation criteria:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or
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

The Clifton School is the sole surviving building that tangibly represents the educational experience of students living in the growing suburbs of Baltimore City in the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. Originally constructed in 1882 as a Baltimore County school, it served City students following annexation in 1888. In a relatively unusual decision in 1915, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners opted to retain the schoolhouse and build an addition on it to increase capacity instead of demolishing the schoolhouse. Today, it is the only Baltimore County school still extant in the City and is one of only 6 public school buildings remaining that was constructed prior to 1890. Architecturally, it is representative of two periods of construction, and two different architectural styles that are compatible in materials, scale, and details. This structure was designed by Baltimore architects Frank E. Davis (1882 building), and the firm Smith & May (1915 addition), both well-established and celebrated architects.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The property is not located within a CHAP district; therefore, comments from an Architectural Review Committee are not applicable. However, surrounding community associations, as well as Baltimore Heritage, the Baltimore National Heritage Area, and Preservation Maryland were informed. CHAP has not received any comments at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a finding of approval for designation of this property as a Potential Landmark and as a Baltimore City Landmark, because it meets criteria 1 and 3 of CHAP's criteria for designation.



Eric L. Holcomb
Executive Director

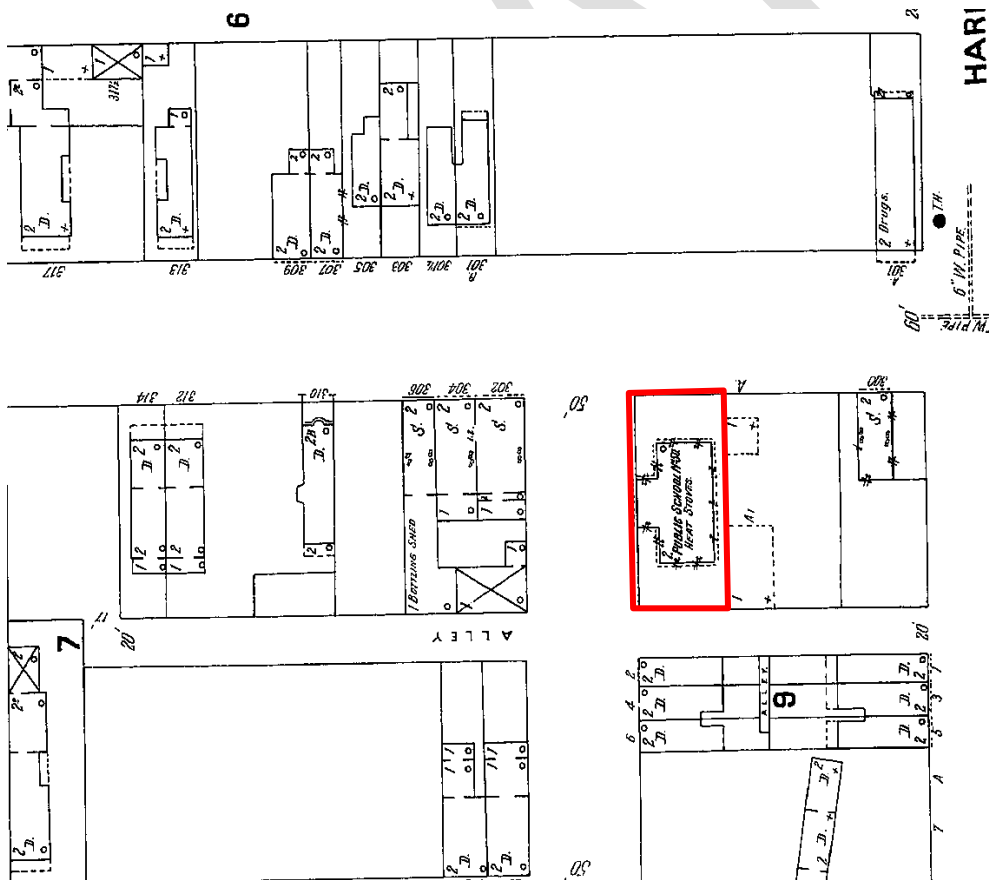
Maps and Photos



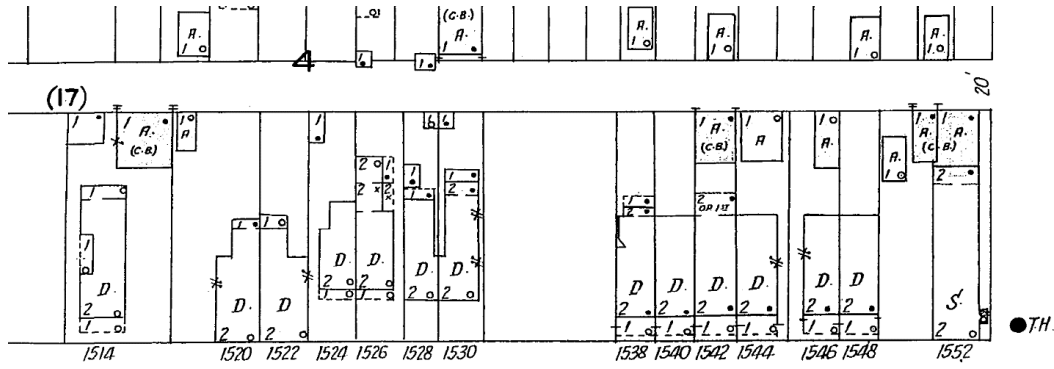
Map 1: Locator Map, 2670 Kennedy Avenue marked with a red star.



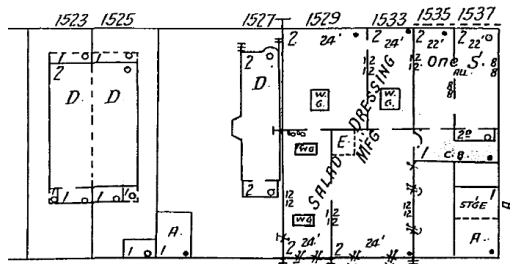
Map 2: Detailed map of 2670 Kennedy Avenue, marked in red.



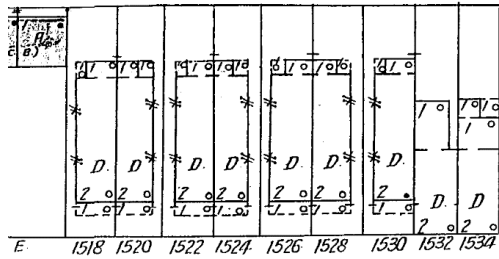
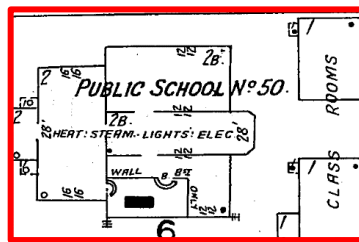
Map 3: 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 3, Page 353), depicting the 1882 building. There are two structures on the adjacent lot that were possibly temporary classrooms.



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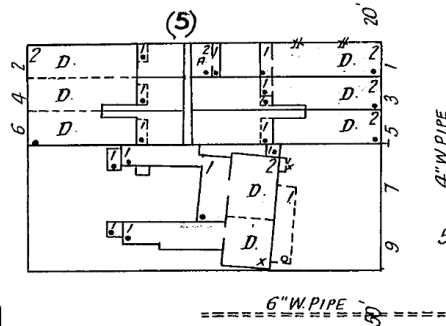


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Map 4: 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Volume 7, Page 719), depicting the 1882 building and the 1915 addition, along with two temporary classroom buildings in the schoolyard.

Photos



Image 1: 2020 Aerial Photo of property, view from North. (Eagleview)



Image 2: 2020 Aerial Photo of property, view from South. (Eagleview)



Image 3: The Gorsuch Avenue and Tyler Street elevations in January 2021.



Image 4: The datestone on the Tyler Street elevation.



Image 5: The Kennedy Avenue elevation in January 2021.



Image 6: The Gorsuch Avenue elevation in January 2021.



Image 7: The alley elevation in January 2021.