



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Harry Spikes, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

August 9, 2022

REQUEST: Sarah Ann Historic District Designation Hearing One

RECOMMENDATION: Approval - request that staff prepare a full and proper study with findings of fact for presentation at the Sarah Ann Street local historic district designation hearing two.

APPLICANT: Poppleton Neighborhood Association

STAFF: Eric Holcomb, Stacy Montgomery

SUMMARY: During the first hearing for the proposed Sarah Ann Street local historic district, the Commission will determine the following:

- the proposed Sarah Ann Street historic district meets CHAP Criteria for Evaluation 1 and 3;
- the proposed boundaries are supported by findings of fact; and
- outreach to property owners and property owner responses are sufficient.

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Summary Description

Situated near the northwest section of the Poppleton Neighborhood, the proposed Sarah Ann Street Historic District includes a block of alley houses comprises eleven brick houses on the north side of the 1100 block of Sarah Ann Street and two rowhouses on the east side of the 300 block of North Carrollton Street. The Poppleton neighborhood is bounded by West Mulberry Street to the north, West Baltimore Street to the south, Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard to the east, and North Carey Street to the west. The southeast side of the neighborhood is densely packed with residential, commercial, and medical facilities, while the Norwest section of the district is home to number of churches and a few remaining rowhouses and a substantial amount of vacant land.

Sarah Ann Street Alley Houses

Sarah Ann Street, historically known as Harmony Street, is home to an intact row of alley houses. Ten of these houses are two stories high, two bays wide (12'-9"), and two rooms deep. The house at 1102 Sarah Ann Street (end structure of the east side of the block), is three stories high.

Built in ca. 1870 as a row of twelve houses (1102-24) have slanting flat roofs of the then popular Italianate-style rowhouse, simple wooden cornices (currently covered by tarpaper) set above a slightly projecting brick frieze decorated with brick modillions. This cornice imitates the style of the more elaborate cornices of three-story early Italianate-style rowhouses, which have wooden cornices, framed by scroll-sawn end brackets, that have friezes decorated with scroll-sawn modillions.

These alley houses have simple flat wood door and window lintels and sills and may originally have had 2/2 sash windows. No original sash remains and most of the windows now have replacement 1/1 sash windows. Each doorway has a narrow transom, probably originally with two lights as seen today at 1110 Sarah Ann Street.

Each house is only two rooms deep with the stairs located along the western wall of each house, directly behind the doorway. The stairs rise in a single flight from the first-floor rear room to the second-floor front room. There is no entry hall area; the door opens directly into the narrow front room. On the rear facades a small square window is now located on the second floor above the backdoor. This opening undoubtedly dates to when indoor plumbing was added to the houses and now lights the bathroom.

North Carrollton Street Houses

The houses at 319-321 N Carrollton Street are two three-story brick rowhouses with simple dentilled brick cornices, and a tall painted stone base and marble steps. They each have decorative brick door surrounds and arched brick header lintels. 319 N. Carrollton Street retains the historic window height with a stone sill, while the windows at 321 N. Carrollton Street have been shortened and have brick header sills. The two houses are the last remaining of 8 rowhouses that spanned from 317 to 331 N Carrollton Street and were constructed in the early 1870s by George Mallonée.ⁱ The two remaining rowhouses are bookended by concrete block walks with brick caps beside the façade. The historic wood cornices were removed between 1950 and 1970.

Summary Significance

Situated in the northwest section of the Poppleton neighborhood, this group of houses demonstrates distinctive characteristics of construction in the 1870s. The Sarah Ann Street alley houses, represent an increasingly rare building type in Baltimore and other older East Coast cities. Alley houses represent a small-scale house type built on narrow, small streets that paralleled or bisected wider streets with middle class houses. Alley houses provided housing for Baltimore's working-class residents. They are simplified versions of larger rowhouses ornamented with various architectural styles. Today, the majority of alley houses built in Baltimore (and in other East Coast cities) have been demolished, making Sarah Ann Street a rare survivor in Baltimore and on the East Coast. Alley houses are integral to the historic fabric of Baltimore's rowhouse neighborhoods, helping to define the intimate, human scale of 19th Century Baltimore. In the Poppleton neighborhood, these houses are the sole survivors of an intact grouping of alley houses.

This properties within the proposed district also provide a significant representation of the under documented history of Black homeownership and residency in Baltimore in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries. The houses on North Carrollton Street, constructed in the early 1870s, have been in African-American ownership since 1928. The Sarah Ann Street alley houses, built in the same time period, provided affordable housing for African Americans and other working-class residents in the period right after the Civil War. Together this grouping of historic homes offers important resources on African-American history in West Baltimore.

APPLICATION OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS:

Staff applied the Criteria for Evaluation in Section 2.2 Criteria for Designating Districts and Landmarks of CHAP *Rules and Regulations*:

Criteria for Evaluation

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 history or prehistory.

Analysis

Staff determined that the proposed Sarah Ann Street Historic District is eligible for local historic district designation under Criteria for Evaluation 1 and 3.

Criterion 1: The proposed Sarah Ann Street Historic District is significant under Criterion 1 because it represents the housing and home ownership of African-Americans over a period from the 1870s to 1970. Sarah Ann Street Historic District represents unique African American resources.

Criterion 3: The proposed Sarah Ann Street Historic District is significant under Criterion 3 for representing a unique and intact building type known as alley houses, a rare survivor of Baltimore's 19th Century working-class houses.

CHRONOLOGY OF OUTREACH FOR DESIGNATION PROCESS:

On January 30, 2007 Baltimore City HCD, MD DHCD, CHAP, Poppleton Development I LLC. And the Maryland Historical Trust entered into an Memorandum of Agreement in which one stipulation was for CHAP "shall actively pursue local historic district designation for the Sarah Ann Street Houses." CHAP staff met with the community association, but did not find any support for the local district designation.

In **2020**, Sonia Eaddy president of Poppleton Now neighborhood association began working with the Historic Preservation Committee of the Southwest Partnership and UMBC faculty/students to research historic properties in Poppleton endangered due to redevelopment. See UMBC's *A Place Called Poppleton* project for examples of early research from the spring and fall 2021 courses: <https://baltimoretraces.umbc.edu/poppleton/>

On **June 24, 2021**, Southwest Partnership (SWP) executive director Tony Scott sent two letters from the SWP Historic Preservation Committee and approved by the full SWP board to various City agencies, including CHAP, requesting a moratorium on demolitions in Poppleton and requesting the **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** with Maryland Historical Trust et. al. regarding preservation as part of the Poppleton Housing Initiative Project (November 2007 and extended November 21, 2016) be honored. (These letters were approved at the March and June SWP board meetings.)

On **June 25, 2021**, members of the SWP historic preservation committee, Sonia Eaddy, executive director of SWP Tony Scott, Councilman John Bullock, and Dr. Nicole King attended a walkthrough of Poppleton with CHAP director Eric Holcomb to discuss historic properties.

On **July 10, 2021** Organize Poppleton hosted a *Save Our Block* celebration and rally at the Sarah Ann Street park. This issue has been covered by various media, such as the [Baltimore Brew](#) and the [Baltimore Sun](#). The *Save Our Block* in Poppleton Baltimore [Change.org petition](#) has 4,343 signatures to date.

On **Monday, July 12, 2021** Baltimore City [demolished the Boss Kelly house](#) (1106 Saratoga Street) which was listed in the LDDA to be preserved, rehabilitated, and offered for homeownership.

On **July 15, 2021** Baltimore Heritage releases the [Five Minute Histories: Sarah Ann Street Alley Houses](#) video calling on the City to preserve the Sarah Ann Street alley houses.

On **July 29, 2021** Rose Wagner's article [Alley houses, now an 'endangered species,' were once the core of working-class Baltimore](#) is published in the *Baltimore Sun* on the history and significance of preserving Baltimore's remaining alley houses.

On **August 3, 2021** Dr. King emails Eric Holcomb to request that CHAP work with residents and preservationists on moving the CHAP local history district to the next stage of the process.

Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 6:30pm: Early research on the CHAP local history was presented to the community at a small event (due to rain) of a dozen people at the Sarah Ann Street park.

Thursday, August 19, 2021 the CHAP local history district research was presented to the newly elected officers and board of directors for Poppleton Now neighborhood association.

Thursday, August 26, 2021 the initial research on the CHAP local history district was presented at a public meeting held in the Sarah Ann Street park where around 40 community members attended. We handed out the student-produced zines and shared the Baltimore Heritage 5-minute history video. CHAP director Eric Holcomb answered questions and Councilman Dr. John Bullock (CHAP board member) spoke and offered his public support for the CHAP local history district. Local politicians, SWP board, developer Dan Bythewood and supporters Paulette Carroll and Liberty Henderson were all invited.

Friday, October 29, 2021 research on the proposed CHAP local historic district, Black Homeownership in Old Poppleton, was presented by Dr. Nicole King for the Baltimore Architecture Foundation (BAF) and Baltimore Heritage [Virtual Histories Series](#) focusing on Baltimore architecture, preservation and history as part of Doors Open Baltimore.

Saturday, December 10, 2021 the Save Our Block zine and research on the CHAP local history district was presented to everyone who attended a walkthrough of Poppleton with the Deputy Mayor Ted Carter and Housing Commissioner Alice Kennedy organized by Poppleton Now and Organize Poppleton.

April 12, 2022 CHAP Commission hears Historic District Designation Hearing I for the proposed Sarah Ann Historic District, which only included the grouping of alley houses on Sarah Ann Street. After substantial testimony (both written and at the hearing) the commission requested that the staff explore the revision of the historic district boundaries to include 319-321 North Carrollton Street.

July 18, 2022 Mayor Scott announced that 319-321 North Carrollton Street would be returned to the Eaddy family, not sold to the development team as initially planned. At the same time, the Mayor announced that the houses on Sarah Ann Street would be sold to Black Women Build to be rehabbed.

BOUNDARY ANALYSIS AND JUSTIFICATION:

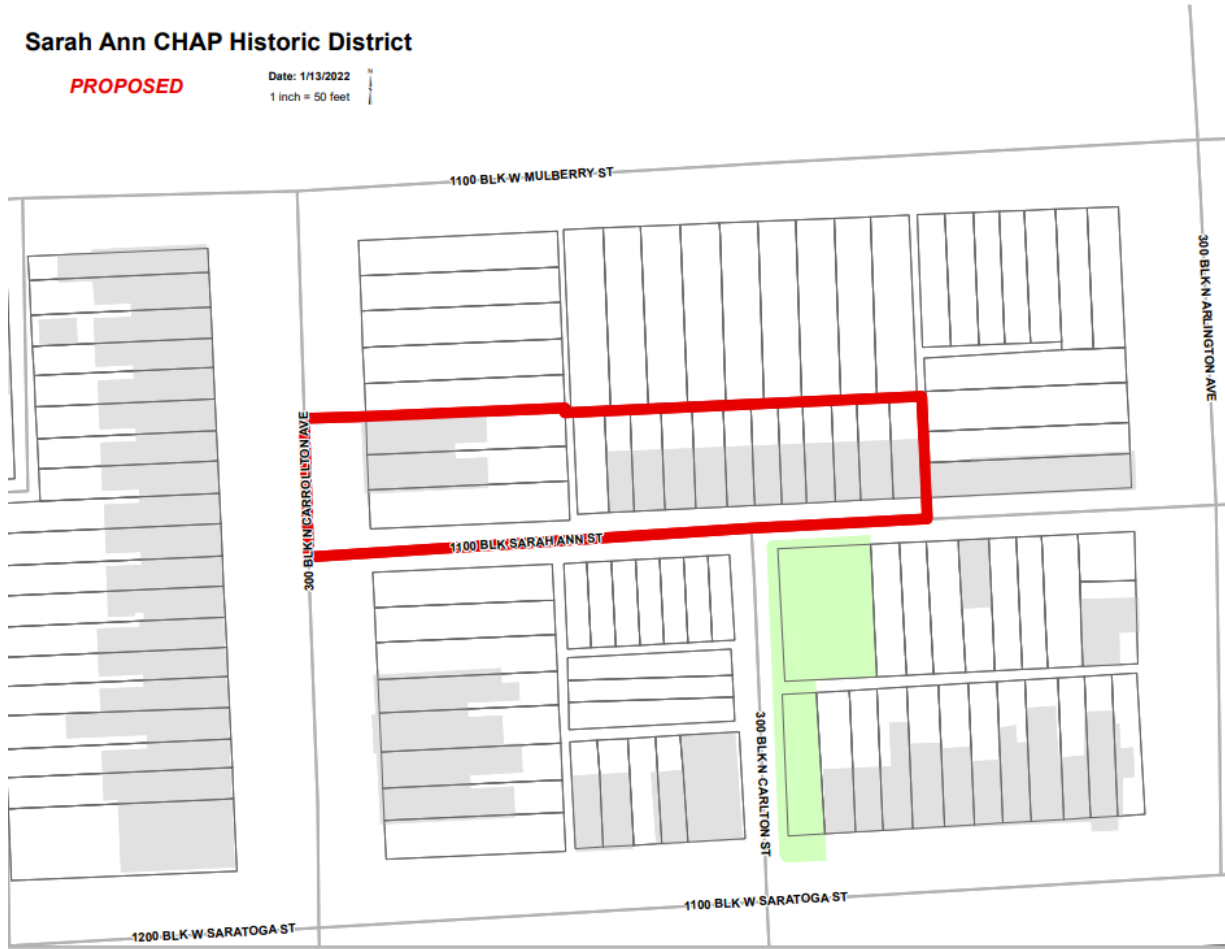
The boundary of the proposed local historic district includes the two houses and their lots on North Carrollton Street (319-321) and the alley houses and their lots for 1102-1124 Sarah Ann Street. This includes thirteen intact houses and two lots where demolition occurred more than twenty years ago. Thus, this will include an intact alley house row and the remaining portion of a three-story row. These thirteen houses include a rare surviving group of alley houses and homes associated with African American life in Baltimore.

The boundary includes all of the resources that support criteria one and three of CHAP's criteria for historic district designation. Therefore, the boundaries conform to the requirements for Local Government Certification under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C., Chapter 1A, Subchapter II); and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Registration.

Sarah Ann CHAP Historic District

PROPOSED

Date: 1/13/2022
1 inch = 50 feet



PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY:

All property owners within the boundaries of the proposed district received notices with information about the designation process along with the proposed district boundaries. Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development currently owns all 13 properties (11 houses and two lots). Baltimore DHCD supports this designation. CHAP also notified interested parties about the August hearing.

Posting:

STAFF ANALYSIS:

In accordance with CHAP *Rules and Regulations* regarding the designations of districts and landmarks, staff worked with the Poppleton Neighborhood Association and Sarah Ann Street stakeholders and identify the potential boundaries of the local historic district, applied the CHAP Criteria for Evaluation, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification

and Registration, and confirmed the compliance of the proposed designation with the requirements for Local Government Certification under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Staff determined that the proposed district meets the requirements for local district designation as established by the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval because Sarah Ann Street proposed local historic district meets CHAP Criteria for Evaluation 1 and 3; the proposed boundaries are supported by findings of fact; and outreach to property owners and property owner responses are sufficient. Request that staff prepare a full and proper study with findings of fact for presentation at Designation Hearing Two.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. L. Holcomb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eric Holcomb
Director

Photographic Array:



Figure 1: 1124 (vacant lot) through 1102 Sarah Ann Street. These buildings are currently owned and maintained by HCD.



Figure 2: 1118-1102 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 3: 1102-1122 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 4: Rear facades of 1110-1122 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 5: 1116 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 6: 1122-1116 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 7: 1124 (vacant lot) - 1118 Sarah Ann Street



Figure 8: 1102-1118 Sarah Ann Street rear facades.



Figure 9: 319-321 North Carrollton Street



Figure 10: 319-321 North Carrollton Street.

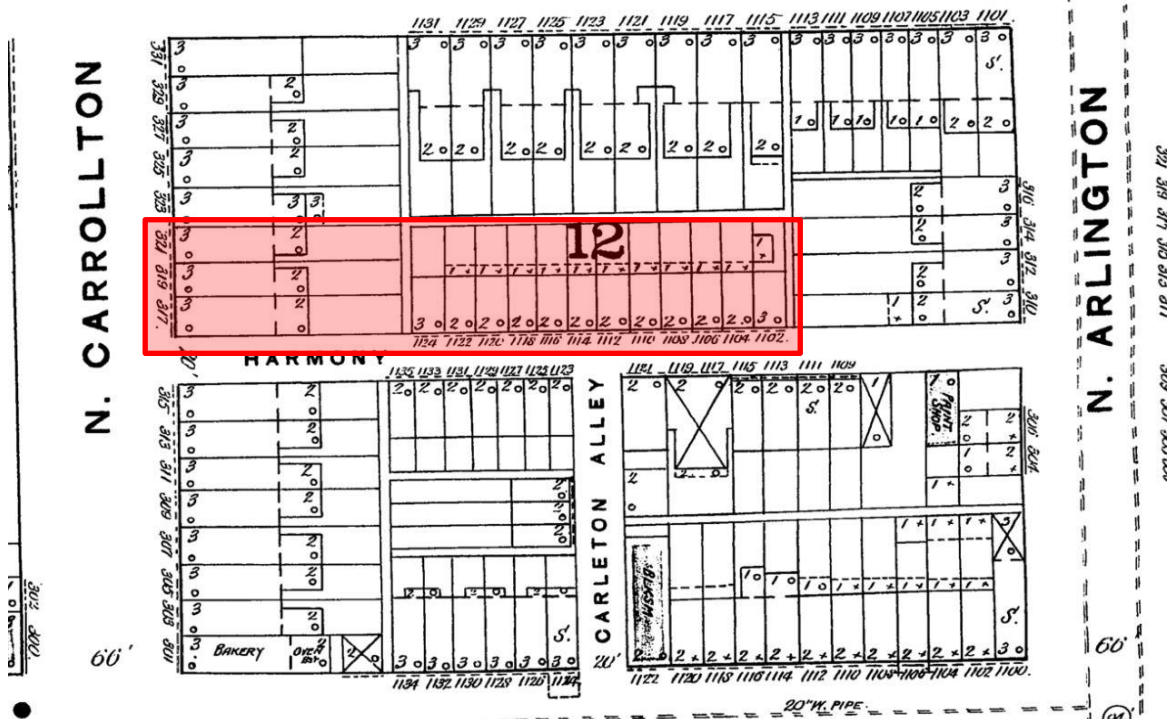


Figure 11: 1890 Sanborn Map with proposed district outlined in red.

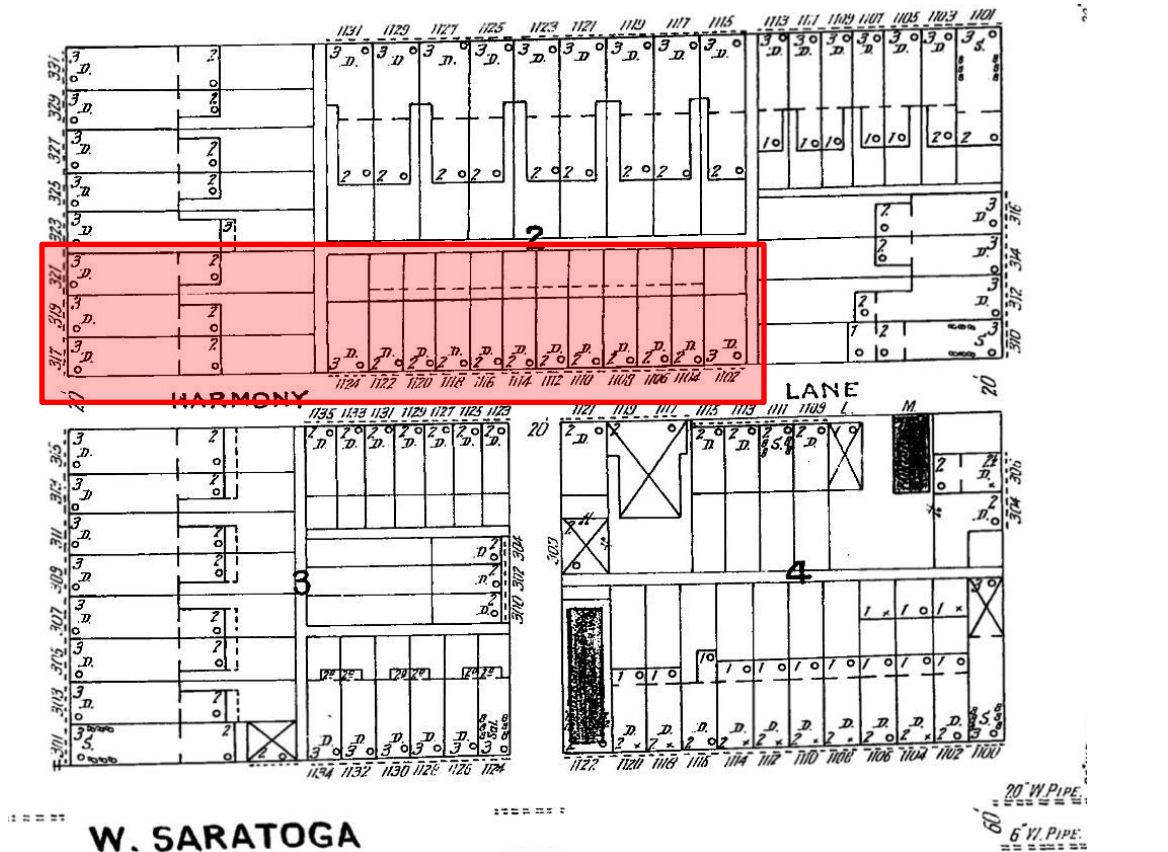


Figure 12: 1902 Sanborn Map with proposed district outlined in red.

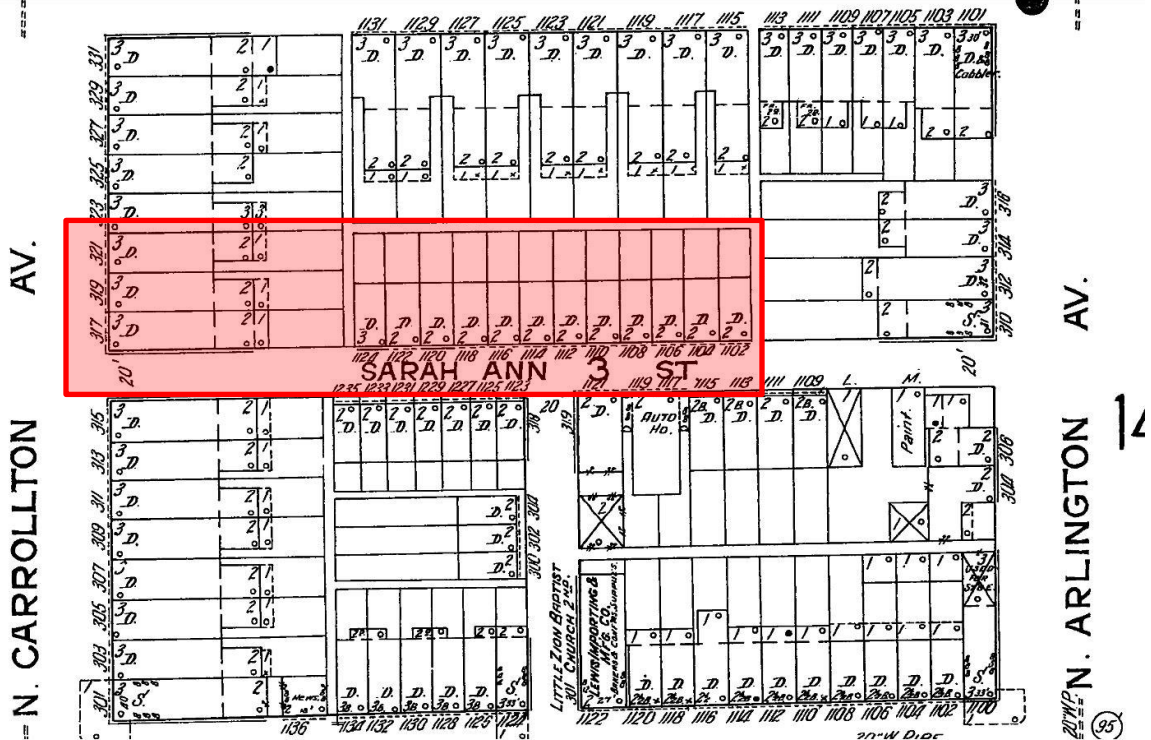


Figure 13: 1914-1915 Sanborn Map with proposed district outlined in red.

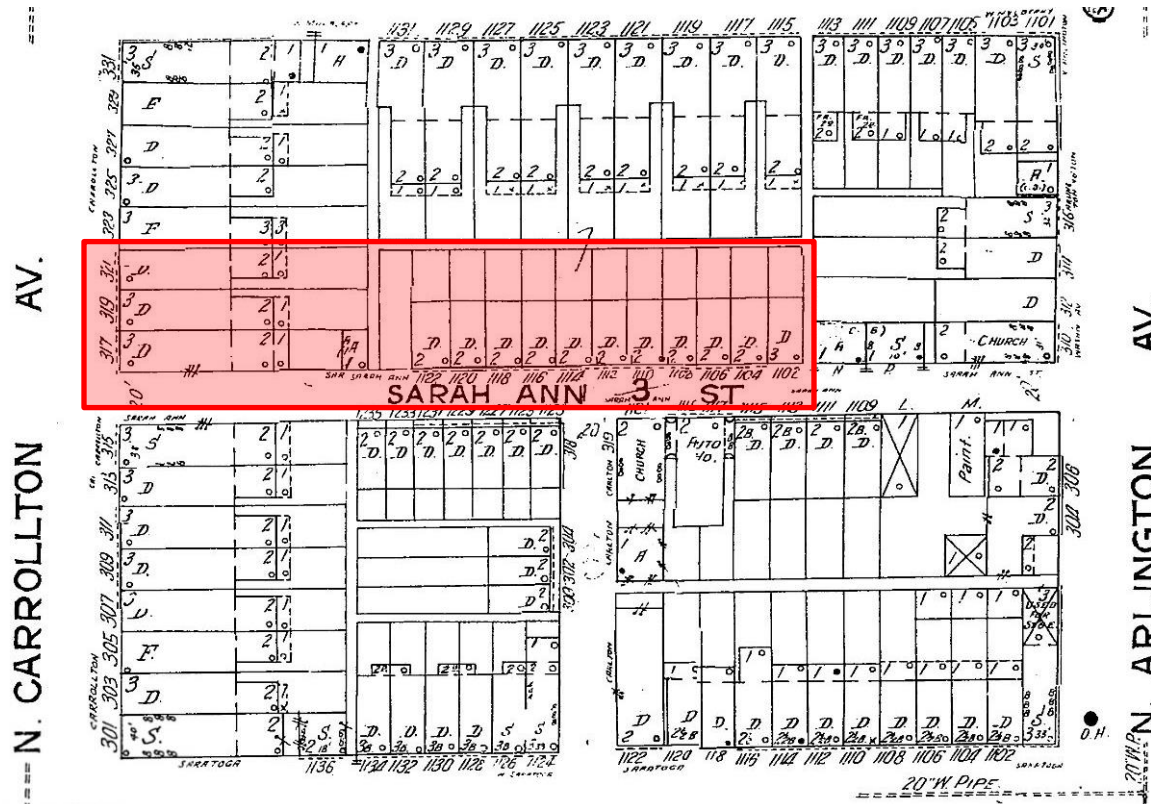


Figure 14: 1914-1951 Sanborn Map with proposed district outlined in red.



Figure 15: 2022 Aerial view from the south with proposed district outlined in red.



Figure 16: 2022 Aerial view from the west with proposed district outlined in red.



Figure 17: 2022 Aerial view from the north with proposed district outlined in red.



Figure 18: 2022 Aerial view from the south with proposed district outlined in red.

ⁱ Krimmel, Dean. 319 N Carrollton Street – Timeline. Submitted to CHAP via email, 7/21/21.