



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

August 14, 2018

REQUEST: Demolition Hearing II: Determination of Substantial Hardship

ADDRESS: 623 S. Caroline St. (Fells Point Historic District)

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Walter Edward Leon

PETITIONER: Rosenberg, Martin, Greenberg, LLP

OWNER: H & S Bakery

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

The site is located on the western edge of the Fells Point Historic District. Fells Point is significant as one of the original three settlements that merged to form the beginnings of Baltimore City. The area is directly linked to early maritime trade. Besides the significance of Fells Point for its remaining eighteenth century buildings, the community has been a constantly growing and changing urban place. Many of the earliest houses were added on to in the Victorian era creating a unique blend of pre-Revolutionary War and post-Civil War architectural styles and characteristics. Fells Point has been a diverse neighborhood of many ethnic groups each influencing the growth and development of the area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many of the later structures are of architectural significance and are consistent with the waterfront character of Fells Point, even if stylistically different. Recreation Pier is an example of this type of significant structure in Fells Point.

Site Conditions: The property at 623 South Caroline Street is a two-story, late 19th-century warehouse structure built during the period of significance for the Fells Point historic district. Located at the northeast corner of Aliceanna and Caroline streets, the building's façade fronting S. Caroline Street is four bays wide with a main door entrance to one side with three window openings (now boarded-up) on the ground floor and four windows on the second story. The roof edge is completed by a brick corbeled cornice. The Aliceanna Street façade (south elevation) is eight bays wide. The majority of the bays on the first and second floor have arched window openings, but there are two newer cutout openings for garage doors on the first floor. One of the bays on the second floor still retains the carriage style doors and a portion of the support bracket that would have had the original pulley system. The north and east

elevations about the newly constructed facilities for H&S Bakery. The roof is flat with two remain brick chimneys in place.

BACKGROUND

In 2002 and again in 2007, Pee Tee Associates LLP (the owner) applied for a demolition permit.

On August 11, 2015, the Commission reviewed the site for Demolition Hearing 1. The Commission concluded that the structure contributed to the district and denied the request for demolition.

In October 13, 2015, H & S Bakery presented redevelopment plans for the surrounding property to the Commission. The Commission approved these plans in concept with final details to be reviewed and approved by staff. The expansion plans for the bakery did not include the building at 623 S. Caroline Street. Plans for 623 S. Caroline Street were left out of the development plans with the understanding the owners would be rehabilitating the structure after the new expansion was completed. In addition, 623 S. Caroline Street is a separate real estate parcel, never connected to the bakery expansion programmatically or financially. After the construction of the adjacent new warehouse buildings, the engineers for the developer discovered severe deterioration to the exterior and interior of the structure.

In December 12, 2017, an inspector from the Baltimore City Department of Housing condemned the property.

The Demolition Hearing 2 had been postponed from the June 2018 hearing at the request of the applicant while possible alternate purchasers were conducting site and engineering reviews of the site.

PROPOSAL

After assessing the current conditions (see 12/7/2017 report by Morris and Ritchie Associates), the applicant proposes to raze the building because it is in danger of collapse.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

CHAP staff applied the Demolition Procedures of the Rules and Regulations, which are as follows:

DEMOLITION HEARING TWO- DETERMINATION OF SUBSTANTIAL HARDSHIP If a structure is determined to contribute to a local district or meets landmark criteria, staff shall schedule a second public hearing. At this hearing, the Commission will review a completed Application for Authorization to Proceed for demolition. In addition, the applicant must provide the information requested in the Demolition Application Requirements. This additional information is required to determine “whether demolition is necessary to avoid a substantial hardship” and whether denial of a demolition permit would result in “no reasonable beneficial use” of the historic structure. The Commission will also determine whether demolition will constitute a “substantial detriment to the public welfare” and demolition will be “without substantial derogation to the intents and purposes of Article 6 of the Baltimore City Code.” In

making their finding, the Commission may consider the following, among other case specific factors:

1. The historic and architectural value and significance, architectural style, general design, arrangement, texture, material, and color of the structure and the immediate neighborhood;
2. The location and visibility of the structure to be demolished;
3. The structural stability, hazardous conditions, health and public safety issues, and code enforcement history; and
4. Previous Commission actions regarding the structure.

An Authorization to Proceed for demolition may only be issued if a property has been determined non-contributing to a local district or the Commission determines that a demolition of a contributing structure meets the following requirements of the ordinance:

1. The demolition will be without substantial detriment to the public welfare;
2. The demolition will be without substantial derogation from the intents and purposes to the CHAP ordinance; and
3. The denial of a demolition permit will result in substantial hardship to the applicant. At the conclusion of the second hearing, the Commission decides upon the demolition application. If it is determined that all three of these factors have been met, they may approve the demolition.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Fell Point Design Review Committee and the Fells Point Community were notified of this proposal. The Fells Point DRC opposes the demolition of the structure. (Comments attached) and the Preservation Society has provided it's comments regarding the feasibility of re-using the structure.

ANALYSIS

On August 11, 2015, CHAP determined that this structure contributed to the historic character and integrity of the Fells Point local historic district. For this hearing, after reviewing the engineer's report (dated 12/7/17) staff concurs that the building has lost significant integrity.

Since the 2015 hearing, the development team came in with plans for the reuse of the structure. After the construction of the adjacent expanded warehouse buildings the engineers for the developer discovered severe deterioration to the exterior and interior of the structure.

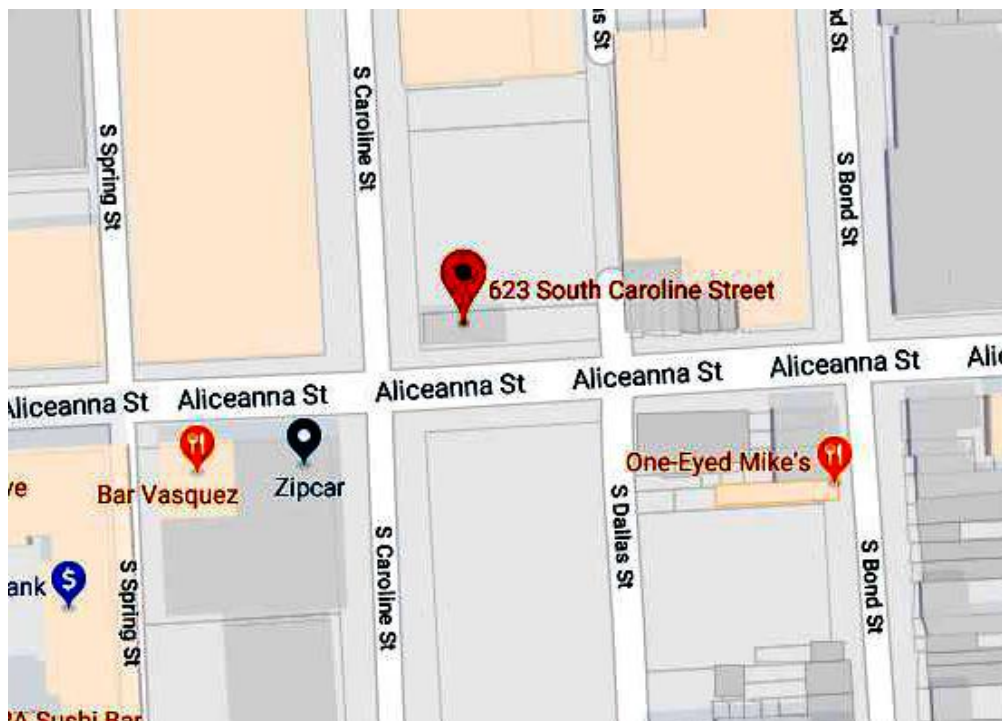
In the due diligence phase on considering to purchase the property from the owners, the Preservation Society independent construction experts also concluded that the structure was infeasible to be rehabilitated for a reasonable cost.

The owners have submitted documentation regarding the feasibility of saving and re-using the structure. The staff agree's with the owners cost estimates of \$400+ per square foot to renovate the structure which lies in Flood Plain would exceed any reasonable rate of return for the property for any user. Additionally, the ground floor up to 8 feet would be unusable space due to the Flood Plain regulations.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

Eric L. Holcomb
Executive Director

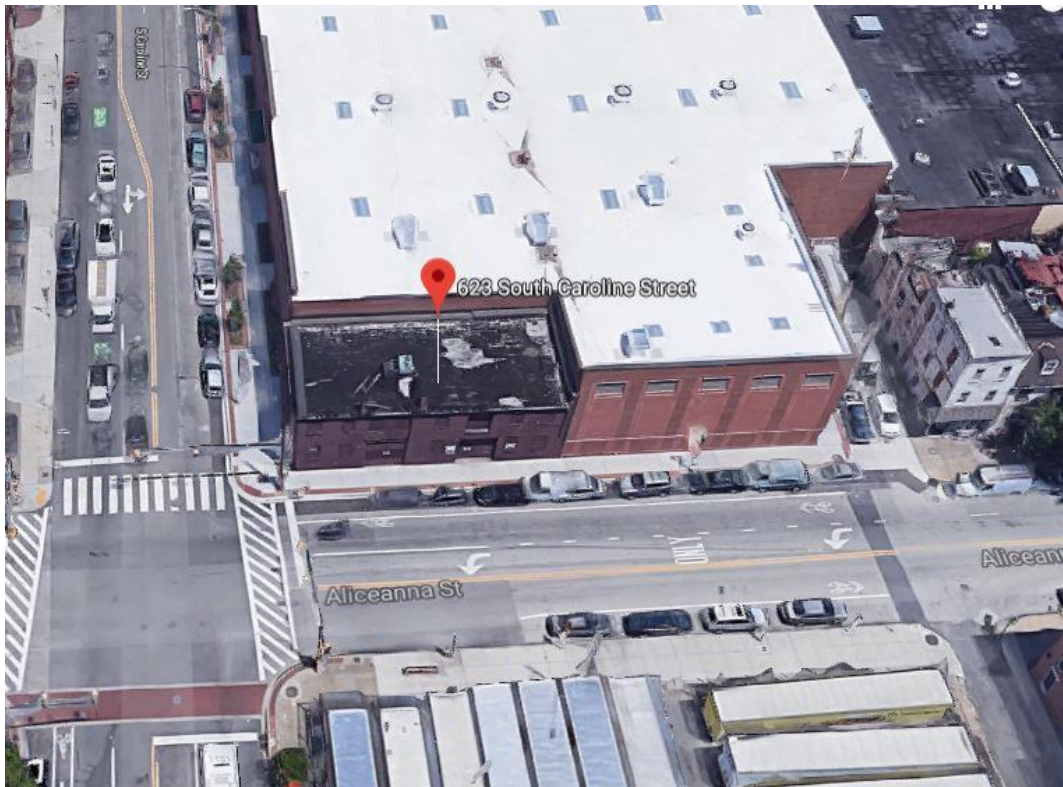
Site Map- Historic District



Site circa 2014



Site Circa 2017



Circa 2014



Circa 2017

