



*Brandon M. Scott*  
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR  
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESERVATION**

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

**STAFF REPORT**



*Chris Ryer*  
Director

April 13, 2021

**REQUEST:** 100 W. Franklin Street/502 Cathedral Street – New Psalmist Baptist Church and Parsonage (Baltimore City Landmark): Construct third story rear addition

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of height, scale, and massing, with final details to be reviewed and approved at staff level. Staff recommends that the applicant revise the fenestration and the cladding on the addition to better meet the design guidelines.

**STAFF:** Lauren Schiszik

**APPLICANT:** Martin JW Marren (Architect)

**OWNER:** Ministry of Good Shepherds LLC

**SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT**

The New Psalmist Baptist Church was originally the Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, which was organized in 1844 by members from the First Presbyterian Church who felt that a new congregation was warranted because of the rapidly growing City. Designed by Robert Cary Long, Jr. in 1847 in the Tudor-Gothic style, it was one of the first major buildings in Baltimore to break from the Neoclassical mode. The church is one of a small group of American churches with a double tower and a center gable. The tracery in the stained glass windows is entirely cast in iron that was locally produced. Ten years after the church was constructed, a parsonage, designed by R. Snowden Andrews, was constructed on the lot directly north of the church, facing Cathedral Street. The gabled, Victorian-Gothic structure was designed to complement the church.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: This property is located in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood, and is bound by W. Franklin Street to the south, Cathedral Street to the east, and W. Hamilton Street. The church faces south towards the Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library system. The parsonage is located behind the church and faces east towards Cathedral Street, and side elevation of the parsonage faces Hamilton Street. On the adjacent parcel to the west is a senior housing high rise apartment building.

**BACKGROUND**

- New Psalmist Baptist Church and Parsonage was designated as a Baltimore City Landmark in 1982.
- The only recent project reviewed by staff has been an application to reconstruct the cornice on the parsonage that was removed without permits or CHAP approval by the prior owner in 2009. That action was subject to a Housing violation that was been in

Housing Court for over a decade. CHAP staff approved the reconstruction of the cornice in October 2020. The reconstruction of the cornice is part of the larger scope of work submitted for the parsonage project, which consists of exterior rehabilitation (repainting, restoring windows, removing fire escapes, infilling non-historic door opening, etc.) and creation of two basement window egresses on the north elevation, all of which will be reviewed and approved at staff level because this work fully meets CHAP guidelines.

- A proposal to subdivide the parsonage from the church, creating two separate parcels, will be considered by the Planning Commission at its April 22, 2021 hearing. Both parcels will retain their status as Baltimore City Landmarks.

## **PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

The applicant proposes to construct a third floor rear addition on the rear ell of the parsonage to create additional living space on the third floor. It will match the footprint of the second floor. The applicant also proposes to raise the rear portion of the parsonage's shallow side-gabled roof to create a taller living space in the rear half of the fourth floor. It will also feature a ribbon dormer at the rear wall with paired windows and two doors that exit onto a roof deck built on the third story addition.

The proposed alterations are being considered under the Baltimore City Historic Preservation Design Guidelines *Chapter 1: Design Guidelines for Building Exteriors*, Section 1.8 Roofing and Gutters, 1.18 Alterations and Additions and *Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings*, Section 2.5.1 Doors and Windows and Section 2.5.2 Materials and Details.

### **Conformity to Guidelines**

#### Section 1.8.8 Dormers

- On secondary elevations, design new dormers to a scale that preserves the dominant form of the original roof.
  - This proposal slightly raises the rear portion of the shallow roof gable and raises the rear wall of the fourth floor of the parsonage by approximately a foot to make the space more habitable. This will create a slight ribbon dormer on the rear with paired windows and two rear doors to access the communal deck.

#### Section 1.8.9 Roof Decks

- New roof decks must not be visible from the opposite side of the street of any primary elevation. Locate roof decks at the rear of a building whenever possible to minimize visibility.
  - The roof deck will be located on top of the third floor rear ell of the parsonage, and will not be highly visible from Cathedral Street.
- Use compatible materials, such as wood and metal, to construct roof decks.
  - The proposal meets this guideline.
- Minimize the appearance of railings, balusters and decking as much as possible.

- The applicant proposed to use glass and metal railings behind a parapet wall, although the railings will be visible behind the parapet wall. Staff suggests that the applicant explore raising the height of the parapet wall or inset the railings further in from the parapet wall so that they will not be visible from the street.

Section 1.17 Alterations and Additions:

- Retain historic character defining features when planning alterations and additions to a historic building.
  - The proposal meets this guideline.
- Design alterations and additions to be compatible and sympathetic to the character of the historic building.
  - The height, scale, and massing of the addition meets this guideline; the fenestration and proposed cladding does not fully comply with the guideline.
- Design additions to be compatible with the existing historic structure in massing, height, form, and scale. Place additions on a secondary elevation.
  - The proposal meets the guideline.
- An addition may be contemporary in design, or it may replicate the historic character of the main building. Where an addition replicates the historic character of the main building, create subtle differences to clearly distinguish it as a later structure.
  - The addition is contemporary in design and will not be mistaken for a historic addition.
- Avoid incompatible architectural features in new additions, such as bay windows, when they are inconsistent with the character of the historic building.
  - The proposal doesn't include incompatible architectural features.

Section 2.5.1 Doors and Windows:

- Design doors and windows to be compatible with the placement, scale, type, and operation of doors and window and their openings in surrounding buildings.
  - The windows on the addition don't fully comply with this guideline; while they are compatible in scale with the existing windows, staff recommends aligning the windows with the extant window openings on the second floor. The windows in the new addition do not match the details on the rest of the windows on the building, though they don't necessarily need to because this addition is intended to be a modern contrast from the rest of the building.

Section 2.5.2 Materials:

- Choose building materials that are compatible with the color, size, texture, scale, and quality of building materials used in surrounding buildings. Where a particular material is dominant within an area, utilize that material in the new design.
  - The applicant proposes to clad the addition with a horizontal metal siding, which has no precedence for use on an addition for a locally designated historic

property, nor in the immediate surrounding area, in which buildings are overwhelmingly brick.

- Cover and finish exterior walls with quality materials that are compatible with surrounding buildings. Traditional materials existing within the historic district, such as wood, brick, and stone, are preferred.
  - The proposed horizontal metal siding does not comply with this guideline.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

This property is not located within a CHAP district; therefore, comments from an Architectural Review Committee are not applicable. However, the surrounding community associations and organizations were notified of this project and hearing: Mount Vernon Belvedere Association, Market Center Association, Downtown Partnership, and the Bromo Arts and Entertainment District.

### **ANALYSIS**

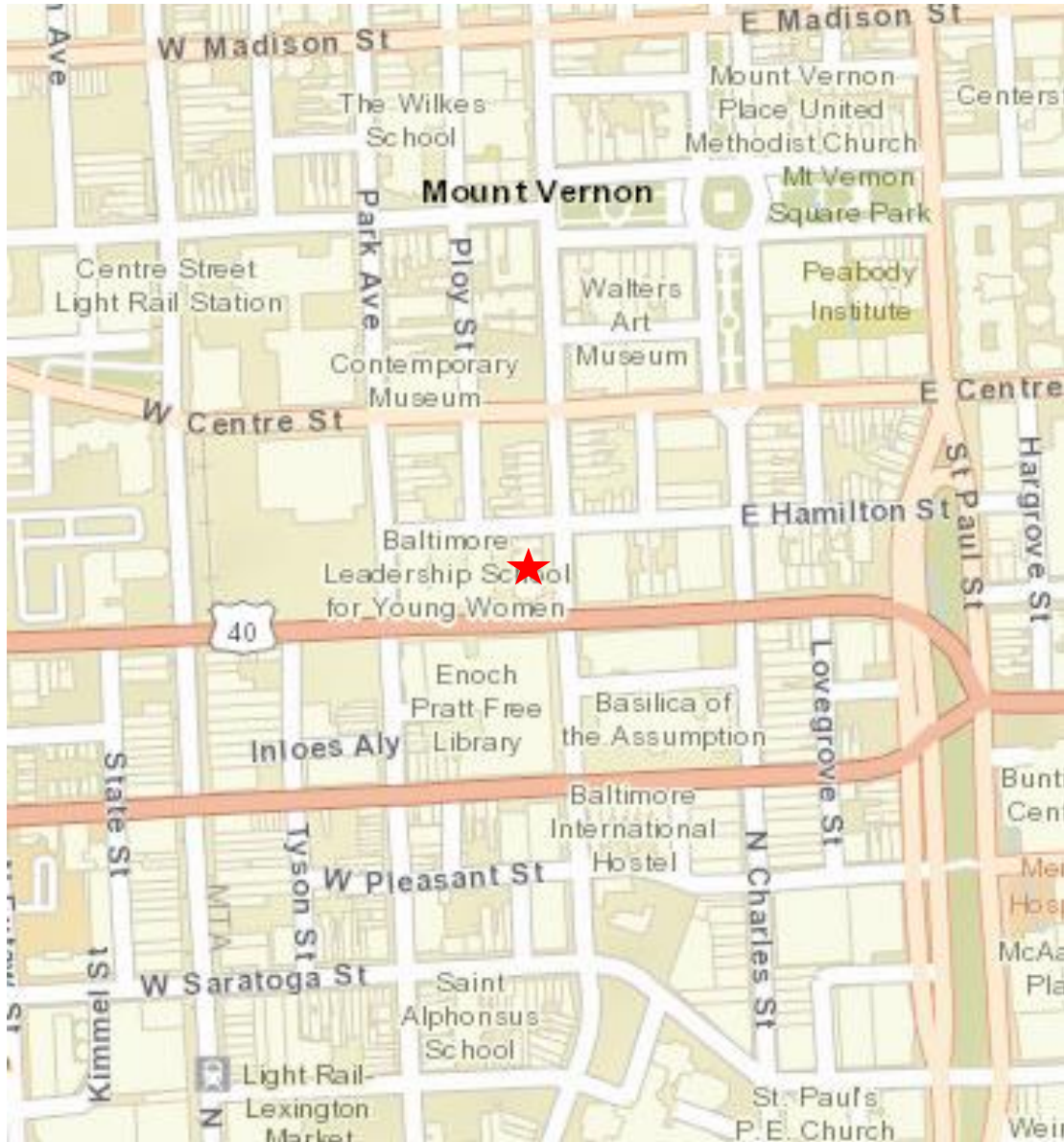
CHAP staff has reviewed the submission and finds that the proposal meets CHAP guidelines for height, scale, and massing. Details such as the metal horizontal siding and the fenestration of the windows on the addition, and the visibility of the rooftop deck railings don't fully meet the guidelines and staff recommends that these details be revised to better comply with the guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of height, scale, and massing of the addition, with final details to be reviewed and approved at staff level. Staff recommends that the applicant revise the fenestration and the cladding on the addition to better meet the design guidelines.**



**Eric Holcomb**  
Executive Director

## MAPS AND IMAGES



Map 1: Location of New Psalmist Baptist Church, 100 W. Franklin St., marked with red star.



Map 2: Detailed location map of the New Psalmist Baptist Church, with the property outlined in red.





*Image 1: Façade of parsonage, facing east on Cathedral Street. (4/7/2021)*





*Image 2: Oblique view of the east and north elevations of the parsonage. (4/7/2021)*



*Image 3: Oblique view of the east and north elevations of the parsonage. (4/7/2021)*

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*Image 4: View of the north elevation of the parsonage, facing W. Hamilton Street; image provided by applicant.*



*Image 5: Oblique view of the east and north elevations of the parsonage. (4/7/2021)*