The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation -- Staff Report
November 13, 2007

Landmark Designation Report
Terminal Warehouse
320 Guilford Avenue, formerly 211 E. Pleasant Street
Baltimore, MD

Proposed Landmark Designation
Terminal Warehouse (320 Guilford Avenue, formerly 211 E. Pleasant Street)

Staff Recommendation: The Terminal Warehouse qualifies for landmark designation meeting the following standards:***

> #1   dates from a particular period having a significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or culture of the City of Baltimore (the Terminal Warehouse is representative of Baltimore's industrial development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century); and

> #4   is significant of the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, method of construction, or engineering, or is the notable work of a master builder, designer, engineer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age (the Terminal Warehouse is an excellent example of industrial/warehouse design by a noted local architect, Benjamin B. Owens, retaining many interior and exterior design elements including the water tower and wood beam construction); and

> #5   contributes information or historical, cultural, or social importance relating to the heritage of the community (the building was built by an important local company that continues to provide warehousing, trucking and distribution services in the mid-Atlantic region).

*** - CHAP's landmark designation standards were altered in 2009. The Terminal Warehouse meets these current (2012) CHAP Landmark Designation Standards:

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.

The Terminal Warehouse is representative of Baltimore's industrial development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building was built by an important local company that continues to provide warehousing, trucking and distribution services in the mid-Atlantic region. The Terminal Warehouse is an excellent example of industrial/warehouse design by a noted local architect, Benjamin B. Owens, retaining many interior and exterior design elements including the water tower and wood beam construction.

Photo credit: JP , Undated Photo

Status:

The following description and statement of significance is from the National Register Nomination written in 1978:

Description: The six-story Terminal Warehouse Company has a common bond brick exterior accented by a rusticated brownstone foundation and a perimetrical belt course between the first and second floors. The original, northernmost building, of wood beam construction, was built in 1894. In 1912 a steel beam addition was added to the south. The Pleasant Street (north) façade is five bays wide on the first floor, and six bays wide on the remaining floors. The recessed main entrance to the right of the façade contains double wooden doors flanked by glass and wood side panels. It is enclosed by a blind arch, an individual member of the blind arcade in the first floor of the warehouse. The gauged arch forms a tympanum of three glass panels; the company's name is printed upon it. To the right there is a large double-hung sash window in a blind arch flanked by two small double-hung windows; sash in all three windows have 1/1 lights distributing light into interior offices. The second floor exterior has been altered. It is now 12 bays wide and includes five modified industrial windows of coupled 6/6 lights. The central panes open out for ventilation. To the left are three windows with 1/1 lights and to the right are four windows of identical construction. Each of the remaining floors has symmetrical windows in the 12/12 style. Metal shutters flank the windows which are

capped by brick arches. A wrought iron fire escape heightens the visual plan of the Davis Street (west) façade, exemplifying the 19th century interplay between art and technology. Three recessed, segmental-arched windows within blind arcades have double-hung sash with 1/1 lights. Six others to the right have sash with 12/12 lights. Below the fire-escape, in the northernmost bay, is a side entrance capped by a tripartite, glass tympanum. Three of the arches open into the loading area. The Guilford Avenue (east) façade, similar to Davis Street, consists of six ground-floor arches, four of which were enlarged for modern transportation needs. Still discernible are the early railroad tracks leading into the southern loading areas. To their right is a loading entrance, again located within one of the blind arcade arches. The remaining floors are nine bays wide. Each floor contains nine windows of 12/12 lights---six windows in the older building, and three in the 1912 addition, as on the Davis Street façade. The 1912 southern addition is defined by its steel beam construction and the three windows with single-hung sash of 9/9 lights above the track area on its southern façade. The remaining floors have three symmetrical windows with double-hung sash of 9/9 lights.

Significance: The availability of transportation facilities, including canals and railways, played an important part in the commercial development of this block. The Terminal Warehouse built in 1894 illustrates the area's industrial archeological significance. The extension of the Northern Central Railway's Guilford Avenue line correlates property development and transportation as is illustrated by the Terminal Warehouse. Railway lines leading into its 316 Guilford Street side, as well as high interior spaces and wood beam construction, suggest its original function as a warehouse. The Terminal Warehouse remains one of the oldest warehouses in continuous use by the same corporation. It also presently houses the Baltimore City Archives and the Baltimore City Department of Planning. The structure is also significant for its architecture. The "Flour Warehouse," as it was called from its inception, was designed by Benjamin B. Owens, a well known name in Baltimore architecture of the period and a member of the Baltimore Branch of American Institute of Architects. The contractor on the original building was S.H. and J.F. Adams, also well known for construction in this area; on the addition in 1912, the contractor was the Noel Construction Company.

CLASH OVER HISTORIC CITY BUILDING LOOMS ; PROTECTED GUILFORD AVE. WAREHOUSE COULD BE RAZED FOR 60-STORY TOWER IN MIXED-USE PROJECT; [FINAL Edition]

Jill Rosen. **The Sun**. Baltimore, Md.: Jan 2, 2007. pg. 1.A

Setting up what would be downtown Baltimore's third preservation face-off in less than a year, a Washington-area development team is in early talks with the city about building a mixed-use project near the end of the Jones Falls Expressway, including a tower that could rise as high as 60 stories.

To make that happen, the developers would need to raze the **Terminal Warehouse**, an unimposing brick edifice that has stood on the Guilford Avenue site since 1894 - and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1975.

The previous two clashes of development versus preservation were over the 100-year-old Rochambeau apartment building, which the Archdiocese of Baltimore demolished last fall, and several 1820s rowhouses on St. Paul Place, which Mercy Medical Center is fighting to raze. Like them, the **Terminal Warehouse** is on the city's books as protected property with historic relevance.

The archdiocese waited the legally required time for city officials to consider the Rochambeau demolition. But at Mercy's request, City Councilman Keiffer J. Mitchell Jr. sponsored a bill, passed quietly last fall, that had the 1820s homes - some of the oldest downtown - removed from the protected list to expedite the hospital's expansion plans.

"It's very disturbing to hear that yet another notable property [the **Terminal Warehouse**] ... is being threatened," said John Maclay, a past president of Baltimore Heritage. "We did what we were supposed to do. We got [these buildings] on those lists, and it's a shock that [they're] being questioned."

The developers, RWN Development and Bresler & Reiner, have applied for a permit to demolish the warehouse. Because of the building's protected status, the application process requires a one- year waiting period, which began days ago.

The developers - who own almost the entire 300 block of Guilford Avenue - have an ambitious, two-phase plan in mind for the site, which includes the former Hammerjacks nightclub.

First, said John Ginnever, RWN's executive vice president, they would like to demolish the Hammerjacks building and the garage immediately south of it to begin building a nine-story parking garage with retail at the ground level.

Because those buildings aren't protected, the developers need no special permission to move along with that phase of their plan.

If in a year they get permission from Housing Commissioner Paul T. Graziano to raze the **Terminal Warehouse**, now known as Fort Knox Self Storage, that's where they'd like to build the tower that could rise 60 stories.

In September, a Philadelphia developer announced his intentions to build a skyscraper downtown on the site of the former McCormick & Co. spice plant. At 59 stories, it was advertised as having the potential to be Baltimore's tallest.

RWN and its partners haven't decided what exactly they'd like their tower to be - alternatives from apartments to condominiums to a hotel to an assisted-living facility are on the table, Ginnever said, adding that "it depends on where the market leads us." Regardless, there would be more room for retail on the first floor.

"It's hard to find this large of a footprint in the city anymore," the developer said. "We believe we can do a very significant project."

The developers, who also own the Saratoga Court apartments on the south side of the block, plan to refurbish that building, also with ground-floor retail - all in hopes of getting more life on what's a barren stretch of road that fronts the raised highway's desolate underbelly.

"We believe that area is going to liven up in a few years," Ginnever said. "It will be a completely different neighborhood."

Ginnever said his team is fully aware of the controversy surrounding Mercy's rowhouses, which sit just a few blocks west of their Guilford Avenue site, and is trying to be "very sensitive" to preservation issues. They have not ruled out trying to save at least something of the **Terminal Warehouse** facade.

"We're not trying to demolish the building tomorrow," he said. "We're looking at our options, and we're open to all options and ideas for the site."

Acting Planning Director Gary Cole said the plans, though only in the conceptual stage, sound promising.

"With respect to where the city would like to go, of course we want to increase the residential development within downtown Baltimore. The similar could be said with respect to retail," he said. "The real important thing to the city is that there is still a good deal of interest in developing in downtown."

As for the potential demolition of a protected city building, Cole said his staff hasn't "had time to really delve into it at this point."

But, he added, "We will handle it in a manner that, hopefully, is not as contentious as the Mercy hospital site."

Designed by Baltimore architect Benjamin B. Owens, the **Terminal Warehouse's** most distinctive feature is the 30,000-gallon water tower with a turret-like top that caps its roof.

Created as a depot for flour coming by train into Baltimore from the west, in its early years it also was used to store sugar, peas, beans, clover seed, wool and barbed wire, according to the site's National Register application.

It referred to the water tower as "a permanent landmark in the central city."

"The preservation of this block is important," the application read, "not only because of the fine example of a turn of the century warehouse and related industrial technology but also because it is in proximity to architecturally outstanding structures throughout the municipal center."

After a hard-fought battle to save the Rochambeau last fall that went to the state's highest court, Baltimore Heritage and others are now trying to appeal the city's demolition permit for the Mercy rowhouses. A hearing is set for Friday.

Preservationists were dismayed to learn that they could soon be facing another challenge.

"Holy cow," said Johns Hopkins, executive director of Baltimore Heritage. "Here we have yet another notable property in the historic district whose owners intend to tear it down."