



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**January 15, 2015**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #14-0447/Baltimore City Landmark List – Public Interior - City Hall Rotunda, 100 North Holliday St.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Lauren E. Schiszik

**PETITIONER:** Hon. Bill Henry

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The designation site is located within Baltimore City Hall at 100 N. Holliday Street. The exterior of City Hall was designated as the first Baltimore City Landmark in 1971. The Public Interior designation under consideration includes the architectural elements that are located in the circular Rotunda space from the first floor to the crown of the interior dome.

General Area: 100 N. Holliday Street is located in downtown Baltimore. The area is composed of a variety of municipal and commercial structures. The site is bounded by Lexington Street to the north, Fayette Street to the south, Holliday Street and War Memorial Plaza to the east, and Guilford Avenue to the west.

#### **HISTORY**

There are no previous Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The proposal is also consistent with the City of Baltimore's Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: PLAY Goal 1: Strengthen Stewardship of Historical and Cultural Resources; LIVE Objective 4: Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore's Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods.

#### **ANALYSIS**

This is the second public hearing for this structure as part the Baltimore City Landmark Designation process. The first hearing occurred when the CHAP Commission reviewed and recommended approval of Landmark designation for the City Hall Rotunda on December 9, 2014. CHAP's staff report is attached to this staff report.

When it was constructed, the rotunda of City Hall was considered the most striking feature of a very impressive building. The large circular space rises 119 feet to a dome capped with stained glass, comprised of ornately carved marble floors, walls, and balusters, richly colored scagliola, and detailed plasterwork and metal work. The rotunda represents the finest example of interior municipal architecture and artistry in Baltimore, completed by Baltimore artisans, and restored a century later by Baltimore artisans. The rotunda has served as an important civic space for Baltimore for almost 140 years, serving a variety of public municipal functions.

This Landmark Designation has been reviewed by the CHAP Commission and does not impede any planning initiatives.

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation found that the public interior elements stated above City Hall Rotunda meets CHAP Landmark designation criteria for the following standards:

- B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:
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.

Staff has notified of this action: Mayor and City Council, City Hall Curator, Baltimore AIA Chapter, Baltimore Heritage, Baltimore City Historical Society, Baltimore National Heritage Area, Preservation Maryland, and the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**