



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**August 5, 2010**

**REQUEST:** Multiple Structures on a Single Lot / 5700, 5806, and 5808 Park Heights Avenue

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONER(S):** The Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore

**OWNER:** The Petitioner

### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The subject properties are located in the northwestern portion of Baltimore City, in a predominantly residential area of single-family detached homes and some institutional uses. 5700 Park Heights Avenue is located on the northwest corner of the intersection with Manhattan Avenue. This property measures approximately 970' along Park Heights Avenue by 310' at its northern lot line and contains approximately 7.045 acres, and is currently improved with two multi-story office and multi-purpose buildings, one the Jewish Community Center and the other the JCC Social Services building. 5806 Park Heights Avenue is located north of 5700 Park Heights Avenue, which it adjoins, and measures approximately 60' by 310'. 5808 Park Heights Avenue is located north of 5806 Park Heights Avenue, which it adjoins, and measures approximately 50' by 161'. These two latter properties are each improved with a two-story detached building formerly used as a single-family residence. This site is zoned R-5 and is located within the Northwest Community Planning Forum Plan area.

#### General Area:

The northern Park Heights Avenue area is one in which single-family residential and related religious and service institutional uses predominate. Much of the housing is post-World War II suburban type construction. Along Park Heights Avenue, an important thoroughfare, there are also some mid-rise and garden apartment buildings which allow the area to offer a range of housing choices to residents. There is no commercial development in this area.

### **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue, the two detached residential buildings proposed for consolidation with 5700 Park Heights Avenue. The Planning Commission approved more than one structure on a

residential lot for the Jewish Community Center at 5750 Park Heights Avenue (now consolidated with 5700 Park Heights Avenue) at its regular meeting on November 20, 2003.

### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This action is consistent with the City of Baltimore's Master Plan, LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, with respect to creating Area Master Plans in a targeted manner (LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods; Objective 4: Target Neighborhood Planning to Leverage Investment; Strategy 1: Create Area Master Plans in a targeted manner; Return on Investment: Positive neighborhood change through targeted planning). This action would constitute one step in implementing the Area Master Plan known as the Northwest Community Planning Forum Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan.

### **ANALYSIS**

The primary property, 5700 Park Heights Avenue, is already developed with two multi-story institutional buildings housing the various activities and programs of The Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore ("The Associated"), and supporting parking lots which provide more spaces than required for the existing institutional uses. The two former houses, located at 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue, have been vacated by their former owners and are readily convertible to office uses without exterior alterations. To minimize the visual effect of their conversion from residential to institutional use, The Associated and the Glen Neighborhood Improvement Association have completed an agreement which calls for preservation of the residential appearance of the two buildings on their street-fronts. This agreement acts to implement one of the Housing Recommendations of the Northwest Community Planning Forum Master Plan, to preserve Park Heights Avenue as an "Urban Boulevard". As part of this agreement, The Associated has agreed to locate the pedestrian walkway connecting each building with their 5700 Park Heights property and its parking lot, which will serve the clients of the institutional uses which will occupy the buildings, at the rear of 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue in order to minimize visual impact on the upper Park Heights Avenue streetscape. The existing rear yards of 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue thus would not have to be paved to provide parking for staff or visitors to those buildings.

The Glen Neighborhood Improvement Association supported the zoning appeal made by The Associated for approval of use of 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue as multi-purpose neighborhood centers. At the public hearing of this appeal (BMZ2010-234) on July 20, 2010, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals heard no opposition to the appeal, and voted to approve both the proposed consolidation of Block 4429D, Lot 12/13 (itself already consolidated with Block 4429E, Lot 11/13) known as 5700 Park Heights Avenue, with Block 4429D, Lot 11 known as 5806 Park Heights Avenue and with Block 4429D, Lot 10 known as 5808 Park Heights Avenue, and the use of 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue as multi-purpose neighborhood centers, subject to approval by the Planning Commission of multiple structures on a single lot.

Under the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, "no more than 1 principal detached structure may be located on: (i) any residential lot ...." (§3-301.a). "Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the Zoning Administrator must approve construction of more than one principal detached structure or other free-standing structure on a residential lot ... if, in a specific case:

(1) the development otherwise would conform to the requirements of this article; and (2) the Planning Commission approves the design of the development.” (§3-301.b). In this case, more than one structure is proposed for this site, as it would become one lot after consolidation of what are now three lots, and so Planning Commission approval is required for this development. Therefore, the petitioner has submitted to the Planning Commission for its consideration the following plans required for design review:

- A site plan, showing the lots proposed for consolidation and the proposed pedestrian walkway behind the two existing structures on 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue;
- A landscape plan, approved as part of the site plan for the prior construction of the 300-space parking lot now on 5700 Park Heights Avenue, stamped by Planning staff as approved March 30, 2009. (The parking lot at 5700 Park Heights Avenue had been approved with comments by the Site Plan Review Committee at its March 18, 2009 meeting.)

No new construction is being proposed in connection with this request, other than building a walkway behind the two houses at 5806 and 5808 Park Heights Avenue in order to provide a pedestrian route from the existing parking lot at 5700 Park Heights Avenue. Planning staff have reviewed and approved these plans after finding them to be compliant with the Baltimore City Zoning Code and landscape standards.

Planning staff notified the Glen Neighborhood Improvement Association, CHAI (Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc.), and Councilwoman Rochelle “Rikki” Spector of the 5<sup>th</sup> City Council District, of this hearing.

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