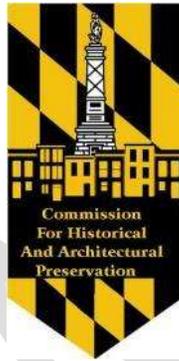


**Baltimore City
Commission for Historical and
Architectural Preservation**



**St. Peter's Cemetery
Landmark Designation Report**

2310 Laurens Street and 1301 Moreland Avenue



Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation

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BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



TIM KEANE
Director

Significance Summary

Established in 1851 on the outskirts of Baltimore City, St. Peter's Cemetery became a burial site for Catholics across Baltimore for over a century. While it served various congregations, the cemetery was most closely associated with St. Peter the Apostle (white), the church that established the cemetery, and St. Peter Claver (Black). Of the primary social and religious institutions connected to St. Peter's Cemetery, only two are currently Baltimore City Landmarks; two others have been demolished. Over the course of its history, St. Peter's cemetery intersected with important local and national issues, events, and figures. It illustrates key aspects of nineteenth-century cemetery design, the politics of racial segregation in ecclesiastical and social institutions, and social activism in the Catholic church.

Development of St. Peter's Cemetery

During the colonial era, the land upon which St. Peter's was established first belonged to Edward Parish. According to *The Sun*, Parish came from England in the mid-seventeenth century and purchased two large adjacent tracts of land, one of which became named Parish's Fear; it was on this tract that the cemetery was constructed. In 1714, Parish's son constructed a mansion on the estate, which was subsequently sold to John McClelland.¹

When St. Peter's Cemetery opened in September 1851, it was located in Baltimore County and the surrounding region was still very rural. The cemetery itself was over 22 acres in size, located on higher ground than the surrounding area. Over fifteen years after the first burial took place, the Sachse Map illustrates the rolling hills and general absence of structures in the area. Aside from the Calverton Mansion (ca 1815), which had become Baltimore County's second almshouse, and the mill village of Calverton Heights along the east side of the Gwynns Falls, the area was sparsely populated. In 1866, the Calverton estate was divided and sold. A.S. Abell, the founder of the *Baltimore Sun*, purchased sections of the estate from 1866-1879 although he died before developing it. The area north of Abell's estate, west of Bentalou Street and south of the train tracks of the Western Maryland Railroad was colloquially known as Goose Hill. According to one recollection, the only structure on this gently sloping hill to the south of the cemetery in the mid-1880s was a wooden shack surrounded by a wooden fence enclosing a herd of goats.²

While the surrounding area did not experience much development in the late nineteenth century, the cemetery itself did. Several of the existing gravestones on the southern section bear dates from the 1880s and 1890s. One significant burial occurred in 1898 when the founder of the cemetery and longtime priest of St. Peter the Apostle Church in southwest Baltimore, Monsignor Edward McColgan, was buried in his family's plot. Like many of the first-generation families buried on site, McColgan and his family emigrated from Ireland.

A year after McColgan's death, *The Sun* reported that Rev. William A. Reardon, the new Pastor of St. Peter's, planned to renovate the cemetery in order to make it "one of the most attractive in or around Baltimore." This was two months after a vandal desecrated the cemetery, breaking several tombstones in the process. The improvements involved roadway repairs and new graveled walkways. The vault on site was to be replastered and repainted with the iron fence repaired as well.³

St. Peter's Cemetery continued to host Catholic burials through the 1960s. In addition to Rev. McColgan, several priests from St. Peter the Apostle Church were buried there. The cemetery also included burials of congregants from other Catholic churches, notably three historically Black Catholic churches: St. Peter Claver, St. Gregory, and St. Francis Xavier. Black congregants were primarily buried in a segregated section located in the northwest portion of the cemetery. One of the only Black graves known to be placed outside of that section is that of Henry Jakes, a famous caterer in Baltimore who died in 1881, and his son. The cemetery also included burials from St. Martin, another church that primarily served Irish and German Catholics that formed out of St. Peter the Apostle.⁴

In addition to churches, the cemetery was also the burial ground for girls who died while in the care of the House of the Good Shepherd. In Baltimore, there were two such facilities: one for white teenagers and women that opened in 1864 and another for Black girls and women run by the Magdalene Sisters that opened in 1892. According to a historical sketch of the cemetery from 1938, St. Peter's was the burial site for the Magdalene sisters as well.

The cemetery continued to host burials from various Catholic churches and institutions through the first several decades of the 20th century. In the early 1940s alone, the cemetery hosted an estimated average of sixty funerals a year. While it remained a well-used burial site, a major problem that would lead to the cemetery's decline was that the sale of lots did not include provisions for perpetual care.⁵ Although the total number of burials is unknown, it is likely in the thousands, based on the age of the cemetery, the number of congregations buried here, the number of headstones, and the results from aerial photography and LiDAR detection (Light Detection and Ranging) remote sensing technology that show highly disturbed soils across the entirety of the cemetery (Figs 7-12).

Social History

Although St. Peter's Cemetery accepted burials from several churches, the two main parishes it was associated with were St. Peter the Apostle, which established and owned the cemetery, and St. Peter Claver, both of which are designated as Baltimore City Landmarks. Because of its historical association with these parishes, it is inextricably tied to the historical significance of the two congregations.

St. Peter the Apostle

With its opening in 1844, St. Peter the Apostle became the first Catholic church in Southwest Baltimore, and was known as the "Mother Church of the West".⁶ Congregants had been worshipping in a temporary chapel located on the same site since the year prior, but with some irregularity as they had only been able to meet every fifth Sunday.⁷ The location and denomination of the church were significant as they illustrated larger regional patterns in labor and immigration history. With its close proximity to the neighborhoods surrounding the Mount Clare Shops, St. Peter's was intended to serve the local community, most of which consisted of Irish Catholic immigrant workers for the B&O Railroad. The church was constructed during the peak of Irish immigration to Baltimore in the 1840s, when famine pushed them from their homes, and the job opportunities created by the B&O's western expansion enticed them to Baltimore.⁸ As more parishioners moved in, the church expanded in 1849 and again in 1868.⁹

The Irish roots of the church remain visible in the headstones of St. Peter's Cemetery, with many from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries bearing Irish surnames. According to one account in the *Sun*, most of the early burials were Irish B&O employees who either worked as clerks or as track maintenance workers, and their families.¹⁰ While St. Peter the Apostle primarily served Irish Catholics, it did not completely exclude others. As with other nineteenth-century churches, it also served a small Black population, albeit in segregated seating in the back on either side of the choir gallery.

The neighborhoods surrounding St. Peter the Apostle became established working-class immigrant enclaves, which changed with new waves of immigrants, particularly those from southern and eastern Europe. In fact, the only ethnic groups cited in the church's census report from the fall of 1930 were Lithuanian (301 families in total with 106 parishioners born in Lithuania) and Italian (76 families in total with 52 parishioners born in Italy). Although it is not confirmed, it is highly likely that the burials in St. Peter's Cemetery during this era reflect this larger demographic shift among Baltimore's ethnic populations. St. Peter the Apostle closed in 2008 due to the decrease in parishioners and their inability to afford the annual and deferred maintenance of the complex.¹¹

St. Peter Claver

As with white ethnic/immigrant communities, Black Baltimoreans formed their own social and cultural institutions, notably churches. The first parish created specifically for Black Catholics in Baltimore was St. Francis Xavier on Baltimore's east side, established in 1863. Administered by Josephites, a Catholic Order of priests that focused on ministering to Black Catholics, St. Francis Xavier was the center of Black Catholicism in the city. However, the lack of Catholic parishes to serve the growing Black population became more acute by the later years of the nineteenth century. By 1888, an estimated 35,000 Black Catholics were living in Baltimore. Those who could not travel to St. Francis Xavier were subject to worshipping in segregated areas in white churches. The demand for more Black churches led the Josephites to found St. Peter Claver on the city's west side in 1888—the third Black Catholic church in the city.¹²

As a primary burial location for congregants of St. Peter Claver, the cemetery is closely connected to the social history of this church as well. Along with serving the spiritual needs of Black Catholics in West Baltimore, St. Peter Claver was at the forefront of civil rights activism in the city dating to the nineteenth century. In 1894, delegates of the Congress of Colored Catholics and the Convention of St. Peter Claver's Catholic Union met in the hall of the Church. The convention resulted in a series of petitions including demands that the Church end racial discrimination and segregated seating at Catholic churches, that Black men be allowed to hold leadership positions in Catholic institutions, and that federal action be taken to end lynching. They specifically called out discrimination in Catholic institutions by observing the following:

Colored children are not permitted to attend parochial schools; colored people are not admitted to Catholic hospitals; colored girls are not admitted to convents; colored people are forced to sit in the rear in galleries or special places set aside in Catholic churches.¹³

Congregants continued their activism in 1932 by hosting the Negro Trade Week Exposition, which culminated in a performance of children from the parish school highlighting Black accomplishments in music, poetry, adventure, literature, and science.¹⁴

Even the white priests at St. Peter Claver supported civil rights activism, which further tied the church and its congregants to the heart of the civil rights movement in Baltimore. Father Cassery, who became Pastor of the church in 1948, had been a founding member of the New Orleans chapter of the Urban League. He continued his activism in Baltimore and worked to have Black men hired as taxi and bus drivers as well as firefighters. At the same time, Sister Ivana, the principal of the parish school, along with other Franciscan Sisters consistently pushed Archbishop Keough to hire their graduates in Catholic schools within the diocese. His successor, Thomas O’Conner continued in this vein by speaking out against segregation, pushing the Archdiocesan Holy Name Society to end racist practices, and wrote numerous letters to the editor in Baltimore newspapers in favor of social justice issues. In 1960, Father Henry J. Offer became pastor of the church and was also a strong activist for civil rights. Under his tenure, priests and parishioners picketed the segregated Gwynn Oak Amusement Park and participated in the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.¹⁵

After 137 years serving West Baltimore, St. Peter Claver, along with four other historic and predominantly Black parishes in West Baltimore, was merged into St. Bernardine in Edmondson Village as part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore’s Seek The City to Come initiative.¹⁶ St. Peter Claver is still open for Sunday worship under the initiative.

Houses of the Good Shepherd

In addition to the congregants of St. Peter the Apostle and St. Peter Claver, St. Peter’s Cemetery also hosted burials of individuals from institutions connected to those churches, namely the two Houses of the Good Shepherd.¹⁷ Neither of these institutions exist today, and the buildings that housed them were demolished. Pastor McColgan of St. Peter the Apostle was responsible for establishing the first House of the Good Shepherd, which was located on Mount Street between Hollins and Lombard Streets, where Steuart Hill Elementary School building located today. According to an assessment of the program in 1941, the home began in 1864, run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, with the mission “to afford a refuge for females who have had the misfortune to lead an evil life and wish to abandon their vicious course and reform.” It accepted “delinquent white girls twelve years to eighteen years of age,” and would take in women over 18 if they came voluntarily. At the time of the assessment, seventy percent of the girls were Catholic, with many from Italian or Polish families, which again reflected the demographics of the neighborhoods surrounding St. Peter the Apostle.¹⁸

The House of the Good Shepherd for Colored Girls opened on September 29, 1892 on the former grounds of the Calverton estate at the southeast corner of the intersection of Franklin Street and Calverton Road. Similar to the white institution, this one was also founded by a priest: Father Welbers of St. Peter Claver. Run by the Magdalene Sisters, the home was supported entirely by the work of the residents and donations prior to receiving city support in 1903. According to a study from 1942, the ages of the residents ranged from 11 to 20 years with a majority between the ages of 13 to 16. The enrichment opportunities here paled in comparison to those offered at the institution for white girls and, as the author notes, none of the extracurriculars found in

parochial schools were offered to the girls in this facility. Infirmity care was inadequate as the infirmary only had one bed.¹⁹ Billie Holliday, the most famous of the former residents, detailed her own troubled experiences in the institution in her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*.

Philip Berrigan

Perhaps the most famous of the parish's priests, who was buried on the grounds of St. Peter's in 2002, was Philip Berrigan. Born in 1923, Berrigan served in WWII; his time in basic training in Augusta, Georgia exposed him to the horrors of racial injustice and the inequality within the segregated military. His interest in civil rights and ministry in Black communities specifically led him to join the Josephites. After being ordained, Berrigan spent seven years teaching at St. Augustine High School, a Black boys' school in New Orleans. While there, he became active in the civil rights movement, specifically working with the Urban League. In 1961, Berrigan and another priest attempted to join the CORE efforts to desegregate public facilities in transportation hubs, in his case the airport of Jackson Mississippi, but the bishop in the area forbade it.

In addition to supporting civil rights, Berrigan took a staunchly anti-war position during the Vietnam War from the outset—when only a small leftwing minority actively protested the war. His antiwar activity in the staunchly conservative area of Newburgh, NY (where he went after New Orleans) led to his transfer to St. Peter Claver in the summer of 1965. While at St. Peter's, Berrigan began a program of neighborhood revitalization, enlisting young seminarians to help paint and repair homes in the community, and encouraged the formation of block clubs to put pressure on local absentee landlords.²⁰

It was his antiwar activism, however, that made Berrigan a household name. While at St. Peter Claver, he led a protest at the Baltimore Customs House on October 17, 1967, pouring red liquid that included activists' own blood and duck blood, according to some accounts. In 1968, he, along with his brother Daniel Berrigan and seven others known as the Catonsville Nine, took hundreds of draft files from the location of the Draft Board in Catonsville and burned them in the parking lot with homemade napalm. Berrigan served 38 months in prison for his role in the antiwar protests.²¹ However, this was far from the end of Berrigan's activism. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he continued to protest war and especially nuclear arms; all told, Berrigan spent eleven years in prison for his antiwar protests.

In 1973, Berrigan married Elizabeth McAlister, a former nun, who was equally as active in antiwar protests. Although Berrigan had not officially left the priesthood (he would do so in 1980), the church had excommunicated both of them. However, they remained committed to their faith and together formed the Jonah House, "a faith-based community rooted in "anti-war social justice" in their Reservoir Hill home. In 1996, the collective moved to St. Peter's Cemetery where they built a new house and became caretakers for the grounds.²² This house joined the only other building on the property, the historic cemetery caretaker's house. At some point during this period, a shed was also constructed opposite the driveway entrance. The house and shed do not contribute to the historic designation at this time.

The Social and Physical Landscape

As a cemetery created by St. Peter the Apostle Church—a church that historically ministered to working-class immigrants—St. Peter’s illustrates how larger patterns of cemeteries and burials applied to the industrial city of Baltimore during the second half of the nineteenth century. When writing about working-class immigrant cemeteries in Chicago, historian Michael K. Rosenow argues that city residents “projected notions about order, progress, and dignity through their cemetery policies, the monuments they erected, and the policies that dictated who could be buried where...Other booming industrial cities negotiated similar tensions,” including Baltimore.²³

During the later decades of the nineteenth century, during what was known as the second industrial revolution, steam power made mass production possible, but the newly mechanized work became more grueling and more dangerous. Workplace hazards coupled with the fact that workers were working anywhere from 10- to 14-hour days (and sometimes 16-hour days) for poor wages, led workers to become increasingly concerned with how their fellow workers and their families were treated in death. Rosenow explains, “Workers began to think more carefully about ensuring the dignity of a deceased worker due, in part, to the dehumanizing effects of industrialization.”²⁴ Indeed, many of the visible gravestones from the 1870s through the early twentieth century are expensive stone masonry, mostly marble and later granite, bearing names and ornamentation through carvings and statues.

In addition to the hardship of beginning new lives in a different country, immigrants faced many hostilities from native-born whites during the nineteenth century. In the 1850s, the anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic Know-Nothing movement had made a strong foothold in Baltimore politics. As such, immigrant Catholic communities focused on building their own institutions, both because they were rejected from those of native-born white communities and because of the need to create safe spaces that would provide refuge from “degrading treatment and negative stereotypes,” according to Rosenow. Furthermore, many nineteenth-century Roman Catholic cemeteries developed specifically from ethnic pride or because congregants sought to have a cemetery close to their parish or neighborhood.²⁵

St. Peter’s Cemetery was formed on the outskirts of the city but also at some distance from the parish of St. Peter the Apostle. St. Peter’s Cemetery began as something of an anomaly among the established nineteenth-century urban working-class Catholic cemeteries in terms of its size and location. Other Catholic cemeteries were located within the boundaries of the city proper and were much smaller. The establishment of the 22-acre St. Peter’s Cemetery marked a shift in practice for the Catholic Church in Baltimore, as all of the later Catholic cemeteries followed the precedent set by St. Peter’s of larger acreage farther out from the City. These other Catholic cemeteries include New Cathedral (est. 1871), Most Holy Redeemer (est. 1882), St. Stanislaus (est. 1885), Holy Rosary in Baltimore County (est. 1889) and Holy Cross (German) in Anne Arundel County (est. 1891). In the twentieth century, the remains in older Catholic cemeteries in downtown Baltimore were reinterred in some of these larger Catholic Cemeteries.²⁶

Many cemeteries in the early-to-mid nineteenth century exhibited a naturalistic landscape, born from the rural cemetery movement, as exemplified by Greenmount Cemetery. Instead, St. Peter’s

Cemetery illustrated the “lawn-park” design that became increasingly popular during the Gilded Age. Natural elements like trees and other plantings were far less common, replaced by “sculpted memorials,” namely obelisks. The cemetery features wide linear roads and paths, with a primary loop intersected by secondary roads and paths. The cemetery also illustrates the tendency of ethnic Catholic cemeteries to position individual gravestones in tight line formations.²⁷ The cemetery also is divided into different sections; while it is unclear whether different congregations were allocated different sections of the cemetery, one stark division is the segregation of the Black Catholic burials in the northwestern portion of the cemetery. A modest two-story caretaker’s house, simple in style, is located on the northern portion of the cemetery. It was likely built in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. It was common for cemeteries to have a caretaker, much as City parks of the era had caretaker homes.

The cemetery continued to accept burials through the mid-twentieth century, but problems with maintenance became apparent as early as the first decades of the twentieth century, perhaps because plots were sold without the inclusion of perpetual care. In 1920, noticing the decline of the grounds, Rev. Monsignor James A. Smyth of St. Peter’s held a meeting to discuss how to improve the cemetery. After that meeting, a committee formed to oversee the cemetery, and lot holders agreed to pay yearly assessments. By 1942, Rev. John Carroll Moore, the pastor of St. Peter’s and the President of the Cemetery Board, sought to conduct further improvements. The Board’s office was located in the caretaker’s house, which is the only building that is a contributing resource to the landmark.²⁸

As the financial stability of St. Peter the Apostle began to decline during the mid-twentieth century from the loss of congregants that accompanied urban middle- and working-class flight of two post-WWII era, the cemetery became an outright burden. A draft report of a study of the proposed east-west highway in 1967 described the congregation as primarily poor ethnic whites. In addition to the cost of supporting the aging building, the author notes the fact that “the parish must support its century-old cemetery in another part of the city, at a sizable loss.” That author recommended both closing the parish and transferring the cemetery’s responsibility to the Archdiocese.²⁹

The cemetery’s downward trend continued for the next fifteen years. Burials appear to have stopped, or significantly slowed, by the late 1960s. In 1981, the church hired a contractor to clean the grounds, but the neglect was too great. By 1984, the cemetery effectively looked abandoned. Several burials had lost their identification as fallen headstones were piled in separate locations. Spurred by the state of the cemetery, John Shaughnessy initiated an interracial effort to restore the cemetery after the Archdiocese said that it did not have the funds to do so. Because of a significant decline in its congregation, St. Peter the Apostle did not have the resources to maintain the cemetery either. This clean-up effort centered on Irish groups like the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Emerald Owl Club, and the Irish Caucus. Spurred by his interest in his own Irish heritage, former Catholic priest Vincent Quayle, who ran the St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, also became involved.³⁰

Out of this effort, a cemetery restoration fund was created in the 1980s. In 1996, the fund hired the Jonah House group to serve as caretakers, an arrangement approved by the Archdiocese of

Baltimore. The members were able to clear a third of the cemetery by the early 2000s, but in 2023 they stopped receiving funding to maintain the cemetery.

Into this void of care stepped Ms. Jennifer Johnson. A descendant of family members buried on site, she began efforts to restore the cemetery in 2023. By the end of 2024, through her organization, Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery, four sections of the cemetery have been cleared with the aid of incarcerated workers in the Prince Program, beginning with the historically segregated section for Black burials.³¹

Land Encroachment

St. Peter's Cemetery has suffered from a lack of continual maintenance dating back to the early decades of the twentieth century, but this was not the only alteration to the cemetery.

Historically, the cemetery was over 22 acres; today, between the two parcels included in this designation, the cemetery is 16.2 acres. At two points during the twentieth century, the boundaries of the cemetery shrunk as sections of the cemetery were sold to developers. In recent years, the northwestern edges of the cemetery have been utilized by adjacent industries, which has further eroded the footprint of the cemetery.

The first instance of land loss came in 1925 when the Board of Managers of St. Peter's Cemetery, with Reverend James Smyth of St. Peter the Apostle acting as president, sold a portion of the northwestern edge of the cemetery to George W. Schoenhals—a major developer in this section of West Baltimore—who constructed two blocks of daylight rowhouses in the 1200 and 1300 blocks of N. Bentalou Street (fig. 7). The 1300 block was built on property that previously part of the cemetery. Today, these blocks are adjacent to the cemetery, and the historical entrance to the cemetery is accessible through the alley between the two blocks.

At some point in the ensuing decades, St. Peter's Cemetery came under the purview of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. In 1968, the Archdiocese sold 3.5 acres of land in the south and southwestern sections to Henry J. Knott, a private developer, who constructed an apartment complex there. The agreement included the option to buy an additional 1.5 acres. The Warwick Arms Apartments, a lower-income development consisting of 164 units, was constructed on the original parcel. The developer did purchase the additional 1.5 acres on which an additional 64 units of housing were constructed. Historical aerial photography indicates that headstones were located in the southeastern portion of the cemetery in 1964 (Fig. 8) before the development in that area, but that image is not definitive. It is also possible that if graves were located in the area sold for development, the human remains were moved and reinterred prior to the development of the apartment complex.

In 1972, Archbishop Lawrence Cardinal Shehan had the cemetery as a whole appraised, and the appraiser concluded that it would be far more financially lucrative to sell the whole property to the Warwick Arms LLC. The law firm representing the Archdiocese, Gallagher, Evelius, and Jones, planned to introduce a bill that would enable the Church to sell St. Peter's Cemetery along with another Catholic cemetery, St. Vincent's, "under specific conditions." In a letter from December 8, 1972, the law firm proposed the following actions under the proposed law:

[W]e are hopeful we could advertise the sale of the cemetery periodically over a year, requesting that persons who wish the remains of their relatives to be buried in individual graves should make such a request specifically; and the remains of those whose relatives did not respond shall be buried in a smaller individual section, akin to a common grave, without transporting their monuments.³²

St. Peter's Cemetery is not included in the list of cemeteries the Archdiocese has sold, and the continued existence of the cemetery demonstrates that the full sale of the cemetery was not executed.

Based on aerial photography, it also appears that a portion of the northwestern section of St. Peter's Cemetery has been taken over more recently by adjacent industrial operations, and that those operations are now occurring partially in the segregated section for Black Catholics.

In spite of the loss of six acres of the southern and eastern portions of the cemetery to encroaching development, the cemetery retains sufficient physical integrity, with character-defining features of the cemetery landscape intact.

Proposed Contributing Resources to the Designation

As a landscape that has faced alterations over time, this designation covers the architectural and landscape design features of a religious burial site that has the potential to remain open to active burials. Because of the nuances of this designation, CHAP staff have developed a clear outline of which features should be included and excluded in the designation.

Built Environment

Features under CHAP review

1. CHAP will review exterior alterations, additions, and demolitions to the gate house, the only historical building on the property.
2. CHAP will review construction plans and locations for all new buildings and structures. CHAP designation will not impede new burial sites so long as they do not obstruct historical sites and resources.

Features not under CHAP review

1. CHAP will not review minor alterations to or demolition of existing non-historic structures including:
 - a. Jonah House building
 - b. Sheds and outbuildings

Landscape

Features under CHAP review

CHAP will review alterations to the landscape including alterations to/repositioning of existing features and installation of new features, including:

- Grave markers, monumental sculptures
- Pathways
- Fencing

- Lighting
- Grading of soil that results in a change of topography of more than 12 inches
- Excavation larger than 5 square feet and deeper than 12 inches, due to archaeological potential
- Removal of healthy mature trees
- Removal of second-growth trees on grave sites

Application of Landmark Designation Criteria

The property meets CHAP Landmark Designation Standards:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction

Established in 1851 on the outskirts of Baltimore City, St. Peter's Cemetery became a burial site for Catholics across Baltimore for over a century. While it served various congregations, the cemetery was most closely associated with St. Peter the Apostle (white), the church that established the cemetery, and St. Peter Claver (Black). Of the primary social and religious institutions connected to St. Peter's Cemetery, only two are currently Baltimore City Landmarks; two others have been demolished. Over the course of its history, St. Peter's cemetery intersected with important local and national issues, events, and figures. It illustrates key aspects of nineteenth-century cemetery design, the politics of racial segregation in ecclesiastical and social institutions, and social activism in the Catholic church.

MAPS AND IMAGES

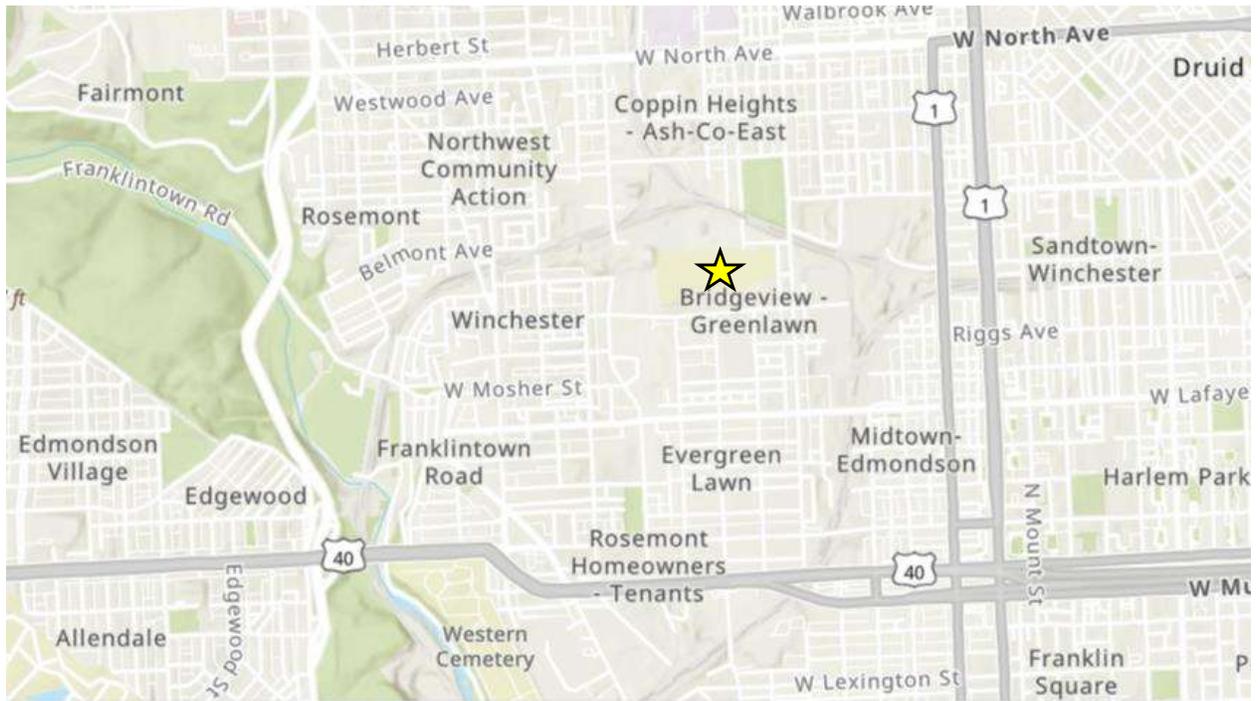


Fig. 1: Contextual map illustrating the location of St. Peter's Cemetery in West Baltimore. Site marked with a star.



Fig 2: Map illustrating location and contemporary boundaries of St. Peter's Cemetery. Note that the Jonah House and gatehouse are on a separate parcel. Both properties contributing to the designation are outlined in dark red.



Fig. 3: Illustration of the area of Baltimore where the cemetery was constructed, although it is not visible in this image. The site of the Old Hebrew Orphanage is visible in the lower left corner, half a mile southwest of the cemetery site (Sachse & Co's Bird's Eye View of the City of Baltimore 1869, Digital Maryland).



Fig. 4: 1877 map indicating major property owners and St. Peter's Cemetery (Hopkins, G. M. Third District Historical Atlas, Baltimore County (1877), Johns Hopkins University Library)

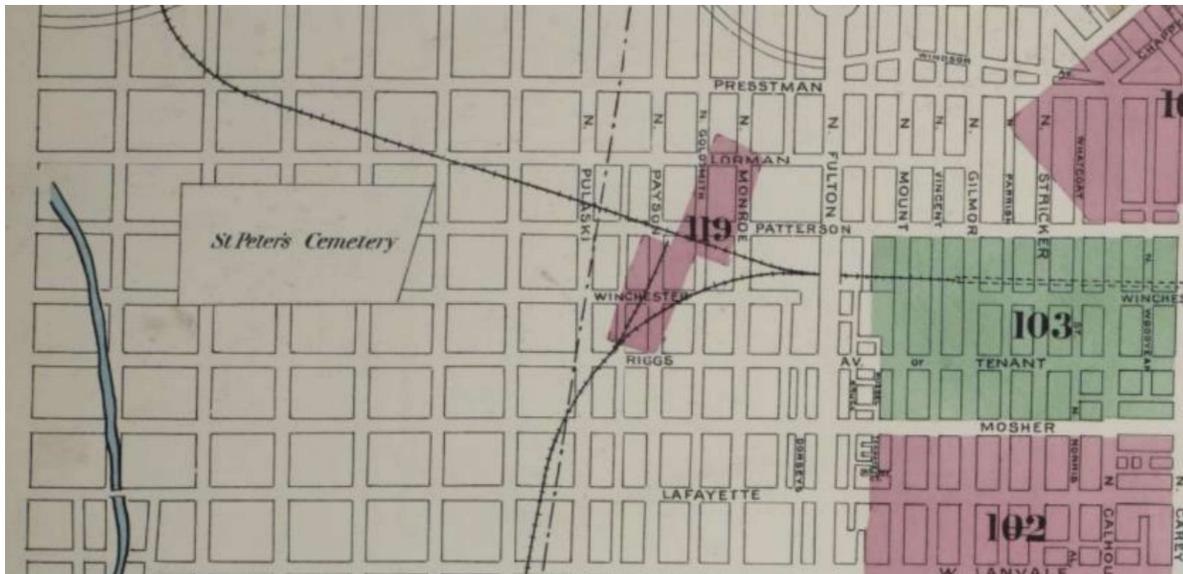


Fig. 5: 1890 Sanborn map illustrating lack of development in area surrounding St. Peter's Cemetery (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 3 (1890).



Fig. 6: First illustration of the caretaker's house at St. Peter's in Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1914) but the structure itself is most likely from the nineteenth century (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 3 (1914).



Fig. 7: Aerial image of St. Peter's Cemetery from 1927 illustrating the lack of vegetation and expansive lawn-park cemetery design. This image also indicates that the northeastern tip of the cemetery was carved out to develop the rowhomes along the western side of Bentalou Street. (Aerial Photographic Map of Baltimore and Metropolitan District of Baltimore County, Baltimore Chesapeake Aircraft Co. (1927), Johns Hopkins University Library).



Fig. 8: 1964 aerial image showing the condition of the cemetery in 1964, just a few years before the sale of the southern portion of the cemetery to a private developer to build the Warwick Arms Apartments (Baltimore City Department of Planning (1964), Johns Hopkins University Library).



Fig. 9: Aerial image of St. Peter's Cemetery from 1972 after the construction of Warwick Arms Apartments and adjacent properties on former cemetery grounds (Baltimore City Department of Planning (1972), Johns Hopkins University Library).



Fig. 10: Contemporary aerial image of St. Peter's Cemetery illustrating the state of vegetation covering the grounds and the additional industrial incursion on the northwestern edge (Google Maps, 2025).

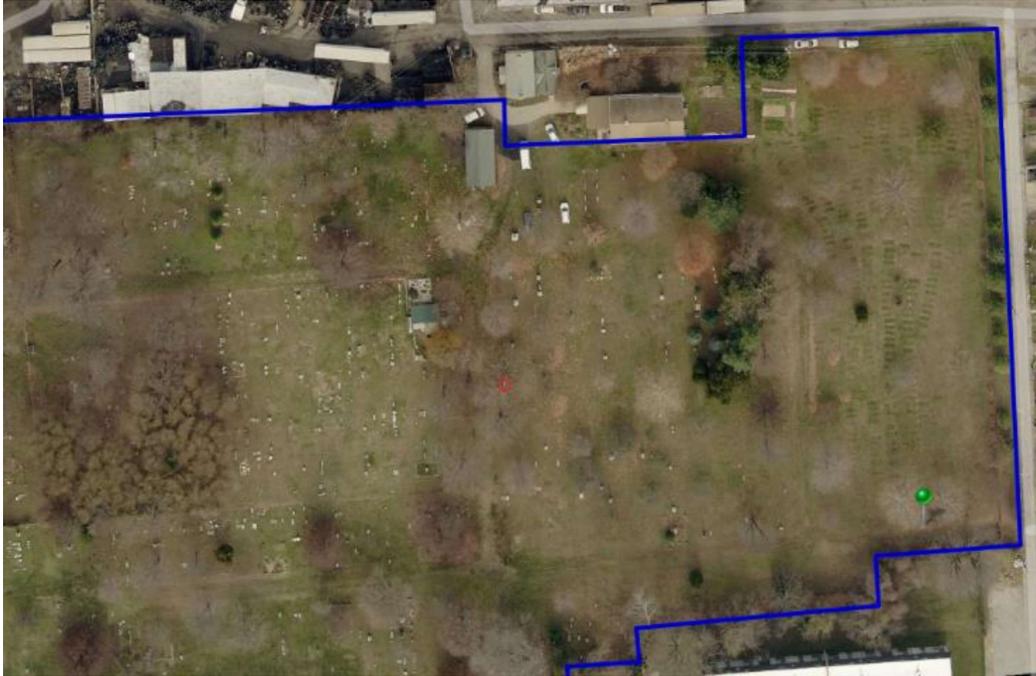


Figure 11: Detailed aerial view of St. Peter's Cemetery. Note the line of grassy depressions illustrating the tight line formation of burials, even those that lack markers including headstones, in the northeastern section (CONNECTExplorer, 12/13/2015)



Figure 12: LiDAR topographical map of St. Peter's Cemetery illustrating the density of burials along with the formation of burial plots. Note the tight line formation of the individual burials, the pathways throughout the cemetery, and the linear dirt mound along the southern border.



Figs 13-15: Examples illustrating the memorial design of nineteenth and early twentieth-century grave sites.



Fig. 16: The headstone and memorial for Henry Jakes and son.



Fig. 17: A family grave site illustrating the grave arrangement common in nineteenth-century Catholic immigrant cemeteries.



Fig. 18: The grave site and headstone for Philip Berrigan.



Fig. 19-21: Images of damaged grave sites on the southern portion of the property, near the Rosemont Gardens Apartments.



Fig. 22: Caretaker's house (contributing)



Fig. 22: Jonah House ca. 1996 (non-contributing)

¹ Emily Emerson Lantz, "Suburban Baltimore: Picturesque and Enterprising Walbrook--Early Historical Associations and Homes--some of the Prominent Residents," *The Sun* (Oct 15, 1905).

² Eli Pousson, "Edmondson Avenue Historic District" National Register Nomination Form, Maryland Historical Trust (2010), 2-3.

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