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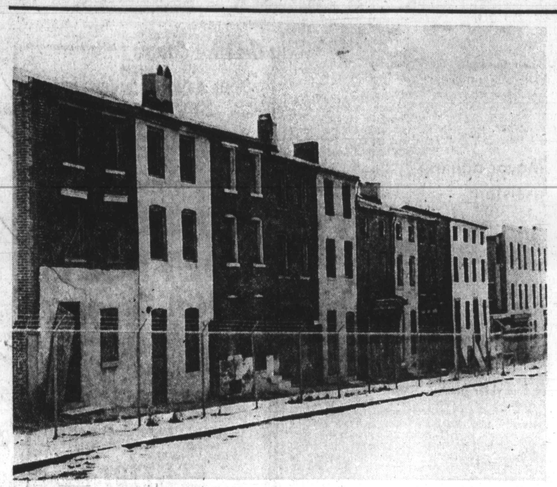
BLACK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 1979

A special supplement
Section 2

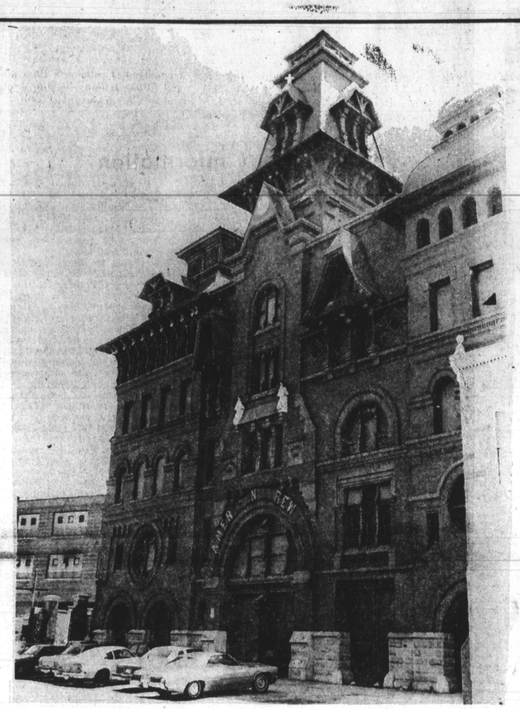
WE ARE NOW IN OUR 87TH YEAR
Baltimore Afro-American
BALTIMORE, MD. AUGUST 4, 1979 PAGE 15

Eastside, Westside community projects bringing $, jobs to central Baltimore



AFRO photos by Mark Gail

RENOVATION — The Eastside Community Corporation is currently rehabilitating 288 vacant homes on Central Avenue from Madison Avenue to Eager Street. When completed, the houses will be sold to area residents at low interest mortgage loan rates.



USING VACANT BUILDINGS — The Eastside Community Corporation is converting the old American Brewery into a multi-purpose facility which will house apartments, restaurants, businesses and a cultural arts center. The structure is located in the 1700 block of Gay St., across from the corporation's office.

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

Several community leaders have stated that the key to black economic development is the revitalization and strengthening of inner city communities.

Critical areas that have too-long been neglected are now the focus of attention and concern.

However, that interest is being initiated from within the black community by those who no longer want to remain in the shadows while urban development occurs in the downtown areas of this city.

With the emergence over the last few years of neighborhood associations and community corporations throughout the city, economic development projects are being planned and administered by blacks who are obtaining their own financing.

On the city's Eastside the Eastside Community Corporation is spearheading several development projects that will not only create pride in the neighborhood but generate money in the community.

Located in the offices once used by the American Brewery Company in the 1700 block Gay Street, the corporation has plans underway for a retail shopping center.

The center, a $1.5 million dollar project, will encompass 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of which 15,000 square feet will be used by a major local supermarket.

The remaining 25,000 square feet will be divided among eight to nine commercial businesses which the corporation's director for economic development, Dan Ritchie, says will be mostly black.

Ritchie added that wherever possible, minority contractors and sub-contractors would be used to work on the center that will be bordered by Ashland Avenue, Bond, Caroline and Eager Streets.

Construction of the shopping complex is scheduled to begin in the fall with the possibility of groundbreaking happening within the next 45 to 60 days. Completion is expected in early spring with most stores open for business by April.

A very much needed service in the area is housing and the organization has secured almost 288 houses that will either be renovated or torn down and rebuilt.

These houses which Ritchie reports will come with a low interest rate of seven and a half percent will be available to residents of the neighborhood who will be given first consideration.

"What's happening is not an accident," said Ritchie. "More and more of this is happening in the inner city.

"People are coming back to the core of the city, and we hope to add to that precedent."

"We need smaller shopping centers within the community where people don't have transportation but need access to services such as food, medicine and clothing."

By the end of August, the Eastside Community Corporation will open its family health facility at Ensor and Eager Streets and will service more than 14,000 people already enrolled in its pre-paid health care plan.

What more, the corporation has further plans for the American Brewery which will be used as a multi-purpose facility including housing, businesses, cultural facilities, restaurants and offices.

The architecturally dramatic old building with its German carnival architectural design is listed on the National Register as an historic landmark.

The Eastside Community Corporation was originally formed when the city decided to abandon the old Dunbar High School. Interested community residents, along with several elected officials including City Council vice-president Clarence "Du" Burns who headed the group, successfully carried out plans that turned the school into one of the most dynamic educational and multi-cultural centers in the country.

This unified effort continued and became what is now known as the Eastside Community Corporation which provides such services as youth programs, counseling, drug and dental plans, family planning and Manpower Resources.

These efforts are being mirrored in West Baltimore where communities are also getting "a breath of life."

A privately financed unique venture in the Walbrook JUNCTION SECTION OF TOWN WILL SEE A RETAIL SHOPPING CENTER NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION JUST ACROSS FROM Walbrook Senior High at Clifton Avenue and Edgewood Street, completed in the winter of this year.

This complex, Walbrook Plaza, is a total private investment headed by Dr. John T. Chissell and Dr. Shirley R. Clinton.

The 47,000 square feet complex will house 16 to 17 businesses and should be completed by December.

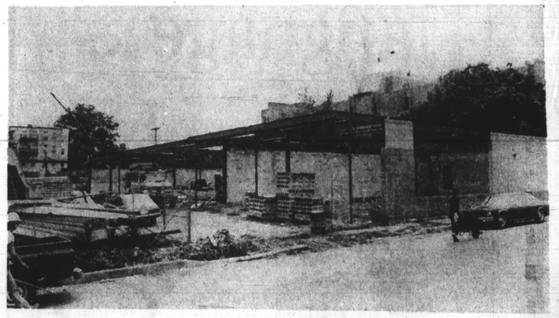
"We are aiming for as much black business as possible," states Dr. Chissell. "And we hope to have black management."

(Continued on Page 17)

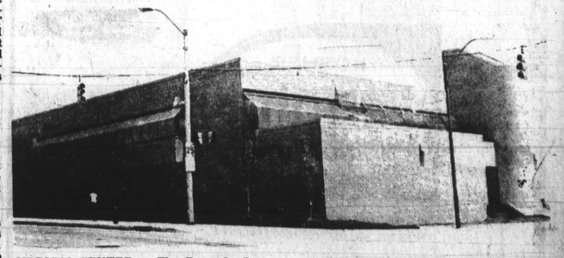
Dr. John Chissell

Dr. Shirley Clinton

City Council Vice President Clarence "Du" Burns



NEW SHOPPING AREA — Walbrook Plaza, under construction at Walbrook Junction, will contain a supermarket and a fast food restaurant. Target completion date for this privately financed operation is December 1979.



MEDICAL CENTER — The Eastside Community Corporation's Medical Center, Eager and Ensor Sts., is scheduled to open its doors at the end of August. The facility will offer pre-paid medical plans to community residents.