

**The Commission for Historical and  
Architectural Preservation**

**Landmark Designation Report  
September 10, 2013**



**Enoch Pratt House**

201 W. Monument Street  
Baltimore, Maryland



COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

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(The content of this report is adapted from Barbara K. Weeks, W. Peter Pearre, and Kenneth M. Short, "Historical Structure Report: Enoch Pratt House" (unpublished manuscript, Maryland Historical Society, n.d.)

## **Significance Summary**

The Enoch Pratt House was the home of one of Baltimore's most influential philanthropists. It was constructed for Enoch and Maria Louisa Pratt in 1846-1847 and was their home until 1911. Enoch Pratt was a prominent businessman and philanthropist. His generosity led to the founding of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the expansion of the Moses Sheppard Asylum (now the Sheppard Pratt Hospital), and other important institutions. The Pratt House was a fine example of a Greek Revival style home, later upgraded to the fashions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with an expansion and addition of a mansard roof by prominent architect Edmund G. Lind. Today, it is one of only three five-bay free-standing 1830s-1840s homes left in the city. Since 1919, the Pratt House has been home to the Maryland Historical Society, the state's oldest continuously operating cultural institution. This building is significant for its associations with Enoch Pratt, the Maryland Historical Society, and its architecture.

## **Property History**

In 1846, Enoch Pratt and his wife, Maria Louisa, purchased two undeveloped lots on the 200 block of W. Monument Street from Charles Eaton for \$12,000. Located at the intersection of W. Monument and Park Ave, the lots had been part of the original land grant sold to George Eager in 1688 by Lord Baltimore. By the mid-1840s, the area known as Mount Vernon was the most exclusive and fashionable neighborhood in the city. Mount Vernon Place was fully developed, and the nearby blocks were primed for development with gas and water systems and paved streets.

The Pratts constructed a substantial five bay, two and a half story tall side gabled Greek Revival style house, which was begun in 1846 and completed in 1847. The architect and builder of the Pratt House are unknown, but there were several talented architects in Baltimore that could have designed the structure. No images of the home prior to 1868 exist. The Baltimore Equitable Society Insurance policy issued for the property was for a "two-story with attic brick dwelling house, 50 feet by 54 feet" and a "two story brick stable, 24 feet by 46 feet."

The Greek Revival style was very fashionable in the United States in the early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The style came late to Baltimore, and was not adopted as widely as other styles. According to the late Robert Alexander, this was due largely to the popularity of the Federal style, and the influence of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, even after his death. Therefore, there were very few full-blown Greek Revival townhomes in Baltimore. The Pratt House was one of these. Although there are no images of the Pratt House during its first twenty years, it was similar in style to several other Greek Revival homes in Mount Vernon, particularly George C. Morton's home at 107 W. Monument Street, which is still extant. Morton's home was one of the earliest homes constructed in Mount Vernon, c. 1836-1837. In plan, the Pratt House is a mirror image of the Morton House. Today, the Pratt House, George C. Morton House, and 505 Park Avenue may be the only five-bay free-standing houses of the 1830s and 1840s surviving in Baltimore today.

The Pratt House was a very impressive when it was completed. A visitor to the city, while walking up Park Avenue in this fashionable part of town, was so impressed with the newly-constructed Pratt House that he wrote about it in the November 6, 1847 issue of the *Aristocratic Monitor*, "Seeing a superb building crowning the corner, I hastened up...I was all anxiety to know what Prince was to reside here. Ah! Ah! I see the marble portico which was intended for Mathew St. Clair Clark's palace in Washington." The marble portico was designed at a marble works in Baltimore for the Matthew St. Clair Clarke House on Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C., constructed ca. 1836. The St. Clair Clarke House was never completed, and ten years later, Enoch Pratt purchased the portico from the Baltimore marble yard and installed it onto his house.

In 1868, the Pratts hired architect Edmund G. Lind to enlarge and update their house, bringing their 20 year-old house up to the latest architectural standard. Lind raised the two and a half story structure to a full three stories and added a fourth floor under a new mansard roof. Enoch and Maria Pratt did not have children, and likely did not need the extra 2,500 square feet that was added to their already sizable house. This addition of a third story and mansard roof was a clear statement about the Pratt's high social and economic standing.

Mansard roofs were very fashionable in Baltimore in the late 1860s. In 1868 and 1869, many new buildings were constructed with mansards, and existing buildings, like the Pratt House, had mansards added. It is posited that many of these homes were influenced by the mansard roof of Baltimore City Hall. Architect George Frederick designed City Hall in 1862, but construction on City Hall did not begin until 1867. George Frederick had been a protégé of Edmund G. Lind in the firm Lind & Murdock, and so it is likely that Frederick learned about mansards from Lind, who added the mansard to the Pratt's home in 1868. Edmund George Lind was a prominent English-born American architect who was based in Baltimore. Besides his many projects in this city, he also worked on projects in the South, Midwest, and in Latin America. His most famous work is the Peabody Institute on Mount Vernon Square, which is a Baltimore City Landmark.

Enoch Pratt lived in the house until his death in 1896, and his wife Maria lived in the house with her two sisters until her death in 1911. Her sisters died shortly thereafter, and the property - as part of the entire estate - was passed to the Trustees of the Sheppard Asylum, as required in the terms of Enoch Pratt's will. This gift also required that the institution include Pratt's name. The Trustees of the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Asylum determined that they had no use for the property and the cost of upkeep would be too great. The house was on the market for four years before it was sold.

In November 1916, Mary Washington Keyser purchased the house and grounds for the Maryland Historical Society, to serve as its permanent home. This gift was a memorial to her late husband H. Irvine Keyer, a long-time member of the Maryland Historical Society. Mrs. Keyser also had a fireproof annex constructed on the site of the stable. Named the Keyser Memorial Building, the annex housed the library and picture gallery. This building is connected to the Pratt House, but it is not part of the Landmark

Designation. Under Mrs. Keyser's direction, the Pratt House underwent some alterations to accommodate the Maryland Historical Society. The changes included the removal of two second-story bay windows on the east elevation, and replacement with double-hung sash windows that matched the windows both above and below. The Maryland Historical Society moved to 201 W. Monument Street in 1919.

The Maryland Historical Society has thrived and today owns the entire square block. Numerous additions have been made to the property. In the 1960s, an addition was made on the west side of the Pratt House, which created a new opening into the Pratt House from the rest of the Maryland Historical Society complex. Today, the Pratt House is no longer used for museum functions, but the Maryland Historical Society is interested in renovating the building to utilize it as meeting and event space.

The property is a contributing property to the local Mount Vernon CHAP district. The Enoch Pratt House is also under easement with the Maryland Historical Trust. The boundaries of this designation only include the Enoch Pratt House itself. The remainder of the property is still under CHAP purview as part of the Mount Vernon CHAP District.

### **Contextual History**

#### *Enoch Pratt (1808-1896)*

Enoch Pratt was born in 1808 in North Middleborough, Massachusetts, the second of eight children to Isaac and Naomi Pratt. Isaac Pratt had a wholesale hardware business as well as a iron nail factory. Enoch Pratt worked as a clerk in a Boston wholesale hardware store for eight years before moving to Baltimore and establishing his own wholesale hardware business. Many New Englanders relocated to Baltimore in the 1830s to take advantage of the prominent transportation hub.

Pratt was in a circle of highly intelligent and civic-minded millionaires in nineteenth-century Baltimore that included Johns Hopkins, George Peabody, George Pendleton Kennedy, William Walters, John Work Garrett, Elisha Riggs, Peter Cooper, and Robert Gilmore. This group greatly contributed to the city and nation. Pratt was very involved in civic life, and is best remembered for his significant philanthropic role.

Pratt was an abolitionist, and supported freedom and education for African Americans. He was one of a prominent group of Union sympathizers in Baltimore during the Civil War. He supplied government army contracts during the war, aiding the Union while also gaining financial profit. He also invested "a considerable part of his personal fortune" in United States government bonds, indirectly supporting the Union cause.

Pratt had a number of business interests, including banking and transportation. He was the first president of the Safe Deposit Company of Baltimore, which was the second safe-deposit company in the country. He was a director of the Savings Bank of Baltimore, the third savings bank established in the country, and also served as a director and later president of the Farmers' and Planters' Bank. For over twenty-five years, he served as a director of the Board of Trade, and helped establish the Baltimore Clearing House, which

he also served as president. He was a director and vice president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad Company for many years, and was a director of three smaller southern railroads. He was an investor, director, and president of the Maryland Steamboat Company.

Enoch Pratt served in a public office on the Municipal Finance Commission under three Mayors, where he helped shape the financial policy of the city. He was an active member of the First Unitarian Church, serving as a deacon and trustee for over forty years. He served as a trustee and treasurer of the Peabody Institute for forty years. Pratt was also a patron of the arts.

Pratt was recognized as one of the leading philanthropists in the city of Baltimore even during his lifetime. He lived a frugal life, spending the majority of his vast fortune on philanthropy. At the opening of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in 1886, Judge William George Brown referred to Enoch Pratt as “a man not designated as a ‘railroad king’ or ‘merchant prince’—simply Enoch Pratt—and yet, like George Peabody, one who has earned a distinction far worthier and more enduring than any title—the rare distinction of having in his lifetime devoted a large portion of his fortune to the promotion of the happiness and welfare of his fellow-citizens.”<sup>1</sup>

He is best remembered for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, which he established in 1886. Andrew Carnegie, who was the greatest benefactor of public libraries across the country, stated that “Mr. Pratt was my pioneer.”<sup>2</sup> Pratt was inspired by the free library in Edinburgh that he visited in 1855, and likely was aware of the Boston Public Library, the first free municipal public library in the country. There were a number of libraries in Baltimore available through churches, fraternal organizations, and the Peabody Institute. However, the majority of these institutions were not accessible to the general public, as many required religious affiliation or paid membership. Enoch Pratt gave \$1.1 million dollars to the city in 1883 for establishing and constructing the Enoch Pratt Free Library and its four original branches. This free circulating library was open to all races and classes. It is an institution that has served millions of citizens in the city and across the state, and a legacy that is arguably even stronger today, with programming and resources to meet the wide variety of interests and needs of citizens.

Pratt’s philanthropic efforts were not confined within the city limits. He founded Cheltenham, the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children on property that he owned in Prince George’s County. Similar to Baltimore’s House of Refuge for white children, he created this institution out of his concern for the welfare of Baltimore’s homeless and “friendless” African American children. Cheltenham provided agricultural and academic training to children between the ages of seven and twenty. Several of Pratt’s farm workers at his country estate, Tivoli, learned their skills in agriculture at Cheltenham. Pratt also gave generously to the Sheppard Asylum, and after his death, his estate was given to the institution, provided that its name was changed to the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Asylum. He also gave money to institutions and churches in his home state of Massachusetts, including the creation of an endowment for the Pratt Free School.

### *Maryland Historical Society*

(The Maryland Historical Society's history is published on their website and is included in full in this section.)

Founded in 1844, the Maryland Historical Society (MdHS) is the state's oldest continuously operating cultural institution. In keeping with the founders' commitment to preserve the remnants of Maryland's past, MdHS remains the premier institution for state history. With over 350,000 objects and seven million books and documents, this institution now serves upward of 100,000 people through its museum, library, press, and educational programs.

#### A Brief History

In January 1844, the founders gathered in the Maryland Colonization Society rooms of the Baltimore City post office, selected John Spear Smith as their first president, appointed officers, and formed committees to draft a constitution, write a membership circular, and find a suitable meeting place. They proposed collecting the "remnants of the state's history" and preserving their heritage through research, writing, and publications. By the end of the first year, there were 150 members. The society's undeniable early success inspired plans for a permanent home. They had already outgrown the post office rooms and increasing numbers of donated documents and artifacts overflowed the fireproof safe at the Franklin Street Bank. The new committee planned a grand home for Baltimore's new cultural institution, including space for an art gallery. One of America's foremost architects, Robert Carey Long, designed the Athenaeum, a four-story "Italian palazzo" building with, most important for the preservation-minded historical society, fireproof closets.

Membership and donations increased during the 1850s after the society settled in the Athenaeum. Visitors patronized art exhibitions in high numbers, the collection of paintings and statuary grew, and donations came from a variety of people including Baltimore philanthropist, George Peabody, who funded an index of Maryland records in the London Public Record Office and in 1867 established the society's first publications fund. Additionally, the MdHS continued its work protecting state history and late in the nineteenth century the state transferred government records into their care.

The leaders of MdHS grew confident and secure during the remainder of the century. The collections provided researchers with the material needed to tell more of Maryland's history. Published papers and documents sold and exchanged across the country took the story far beyond its borders. Additionally, the society's leaders had met their self-proclaimed obligation to educate the public through exhibits of fine art.

An era of great change for the nation's historical societies came with the turn of the century. Education of the general public, and of school children, became part of the mission in many historical societies and women gained full membership. Among the first female members of the Maryland Historical Society were Annie Leakin Sioussat and Lucy Harwood Harrison, both of whom spent decades volunteering their time and services. In 1906 the MdHS launched the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, a quarterly

journal featuring the best new work on Maryland history. This venerable publication is now in its 105th consecutive year.

The organization moved to its current home at 201 West Monument Street in 1919. The former residence of Baltimore philanthropist Enoch Pratt, with a state-of-the-art fireproof addition, came as a gift from Mary Washington Keyser, whose husband, H. Irvine Keyser, had been an active member of the society for forty-three years. The new space allowed for more displays and positioned the society as the logical caretaker of Maryland treasures. Many researchers looked for evidence that connected them to the colony's founding families or Revolutionary War veterans in order to claim membership in societies such as the Society of the Ark and the Dove or the Sons, or Daughters, of the American Revolution.

In addition to their ongoing mission to preserve and publish Maryland's history, the leaders of the society took responsibility for recent history. As their predecessors had done after the Civil War, society leaders stood at the forefront of collecting "the relics" of the recent Great War. In 1920, the state legislature formed a committee of three that included former governor and historical society president Edwin Warfield. This group comprised the Historical Division of the state's War Records Commission and served as the "official organ" of the federal government in collecting and compiling the military records of those Marylanders who served in World War I. The society initiated a similar agreement during World War II. Additionally, education ranked as a high priority, and the post-war MdHS reached out to the city's public schools with teacher workshops and tours.

Educational activities were only part of MdHS programming. The society began expanding the Monument Street facility in 1953 and added the Thomas and Hugg building in 1968, named for benefactors William and John Thomas. The rooms included a modern wing with exhibition space, an auditorium with audio-visual equipment, work rooms, storage space, and "to supplement the present Confederate Room-a Civil War Union Room." In 1981, the society added the France-Merrick Wing to the Thomas and Hugg Building, "a tribute to the Trustees of the Jacob and Annita France Foundation and Robert G. Merrick."

Perhaps no other object in the holdings of the Maryland Historical Society attracts more visitors than the original manuscript of Francis Scott Key's Star-Spangled Banner. In 1953, Mrs. Thomas C. Jenkins purchased the document from the Walters Art Gallery for \$26,400, the same price the gallery had paid for it in 1933 at a New York auction. Jenkins provided additional funding for its display in a carved marble niche. She had previously donated Key family portraits and a room for their display. One hundred forty years after Key penned his famous verse, state and local dignitaries gathered to rededicate this American icon on September 14, 1954.

The growing diversity of Maryland's population prompted a dramatic shift in the study of American history. Politics, wars, and the lives of notable men gave way to research and fascination with previously neglected fields such as women's history, black history, and



ethnic histories. With ethnic studies now a major feature of American historical study, local genealogical societies sprang up across the country as researchers devoted their energies and careers to uncovering their pasts.

At the MdHS, the numbers of people searching for their own family's histories increased dramatically. The library's renowned collections of church and parish records, ship passenger lists, manuscripts, and the meticulously copied indexes to early wills and land tracts gave researchers missing pieces of their genealogical puzzles. Indefatigable librarians and volunteers assisted both the novice and professional family historian. Members of the Maryland Genealogical Society, local patriotic societies, and numerous organizations, continue the tradition. In 1994, the society celebrated its 150th anniversary in traditional style.

A newly renovated and expanded Maryland Historical Society opened in November 2003, amidst much fanfare and publicity. The facility now includes the Beard Pavilion and the Carey Center for Maryland Life which features nearly 30,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space for museum and library exhibitions, and new storage space for museum collections. The MdHS also serves more than 80,000 school students and teachers annually, both on-site and across the state, making use of the outstanding MdHS collections to teach future generations Maryland's rich place in the nation's past. The renovated library, now the H. Furlong Baldwin Library, includes more than double its previous space and is equipped with wireless technology. Today's researchers work in a well-lit and spacious room with access to society holdings as well as internet access to collections around the world.

In keeping with the founders' passion for telling Maryland's story, the society's leadership, staff, and volunteers carry out today's mission, securing the institution's respected place among contemporary cultural organizations. As it has for the past 164 years, the Maryland Historical Society remains the premier institution for Maryland history.

## **Architectural Description**

The Pratt House is a five-bay three-story and mansard roof brick house located at the southwest corner of W. Monument Street and Park Avenue. Its façade faces north. It has a raised basement with a limestone veneer, with 3/3 double-hung sash windows with iron bars topped with spear points in front of the windows in all five bays. The brick is laid in a running bond, with thin mortar joints. The first floor features a central recessed doorway with a one bay one story marble portico with four fluted Ionic columns. The portico has eight marble steps that lead to the sidewalk. The windows on the first floor are 6/9 double hung sash windows with limestone sills and lintels with antefixes, with iron balustrades. The second and third story windows have five 6/6 double-hung sash windows with limestone sills and the same lintels as the first floor. The bricks on the third story are a slightly darker color than the rest of the brick on the building, as it was added in 1868. The cornice has wooden scroll brackets with dentils, below which is a bipartite architrave. The mansard roof is clad with slate in both square butt and fish scale

courses. There are three pedimented dormers with 2/2 sash windows, flanked by paneled pilasters. The corners of the mansard have metal roll roofing and the top of the mansard roof has cast-iron roof cresting.

The west elevation is two bays wide, with a five to one common bond. The basement, first, second, and third floors have 4/4 double-hung sash windows in the two centered bays. The windows all have limestone sills and brick jack arch lintels. The cornice, dormer windows, and roof all match the façade. This elevation features two interior brick chimneys with decorative paneling, which pierce the roof above the cornice. The 1964 Thomas & Hugg building of the Maryland Historical Society abuts the southwest corner at the basement and first floor, and it is not included in this designation. The east elevation is similar to the west elevation, except for a few alterations. The first floor has a closed blind in a recess, with limestone sills and brick jack arches in the two bays. Some of the basement windows are also altered. On the south elevation, the basement and three west bays of the first floor are covered by the Keyser building addition. The brick is laid in a five to one common bond. The fenestration is similar to the main façade, except that the central bays are located between the floors. The window between the first and second stories is a tripartite window with stained glass and the window between the second and third stories is a double hung window with leaded and stained glass.

## **Staff Recommendations**

The property meets CHAP Landmark Designation 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;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past
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.

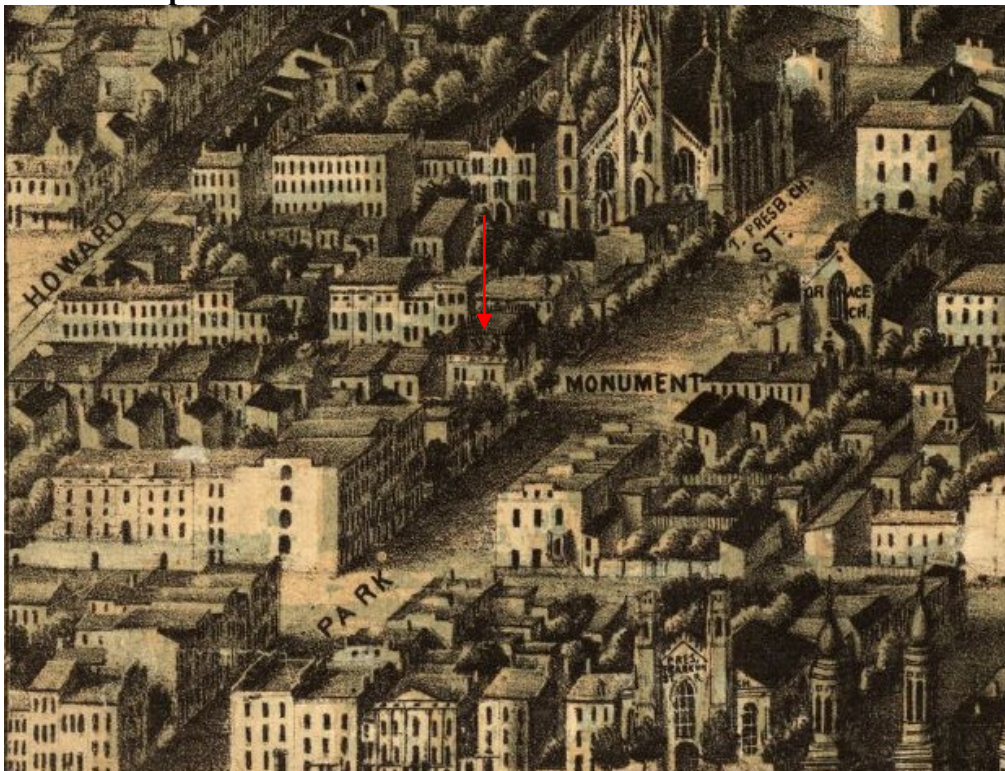
The Enoch Pratt House was the home of one of Baltimore's most influential philanthropists. It was constructed for Enoch and Maria Louisa Pratt in 1846-1847 and was their home until 1911. Enoch Pratt was a prominent businessman and philanthropist. His generosity led to the founding of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, the expansion of the Moses Sheppard Asylum (now the Sheppard Pratt Hospital), and other important institutions. The Pratt House was a fine example of a Greek Revival style home, later upgraded to the fashions of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with an expansion and addition of a mansard roof by prominent architect Edmund G. Lind. Today, it is one of only three five-bay free-standing 1830s-1840s homes left in the city. Since 1919, the Pratt House has been home to the Maryland Historical Society, the state's oldest continuously operating cultural institution. This building is significant for its associations with Enoch Pratt, the Maryland Historical Society, and its architecture.

## **Locator Map**

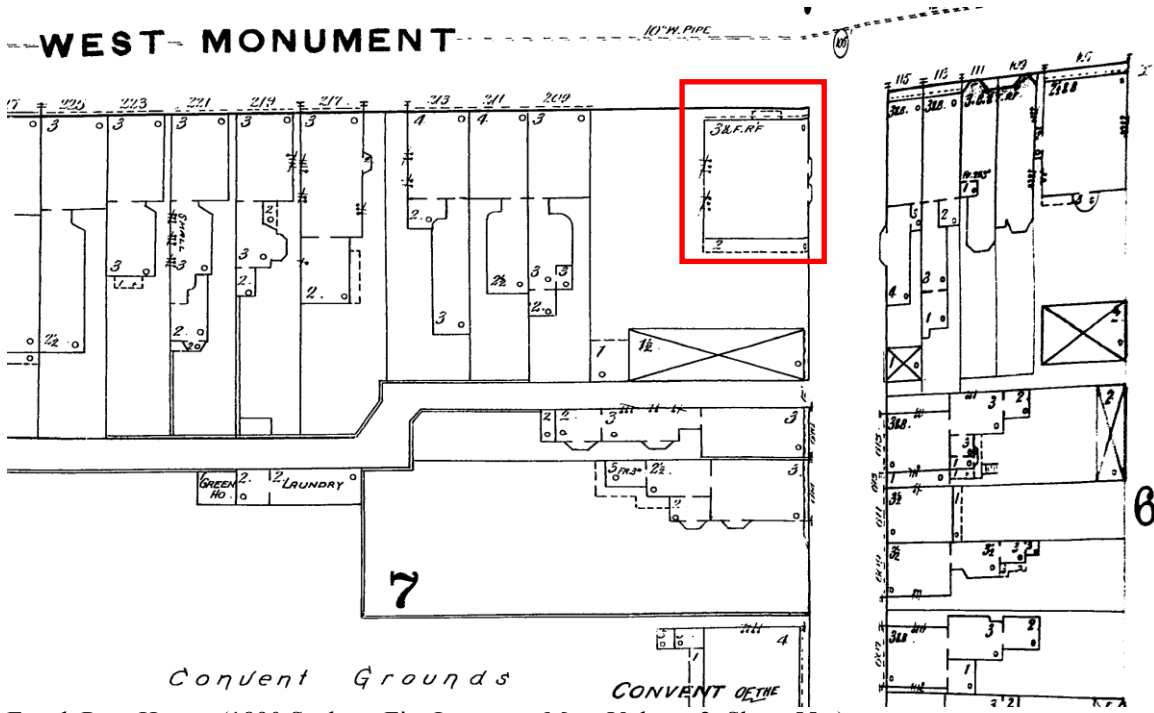


The boundaries of this designation are the exterior walls of the Enoch Pratt House.

### Historic Maps



Map depicting the Pratt House from the south. In *E. Sachse, & Co.'s bird's eye view of the city of Baltimore, 1869* (Baltimore, 1870). Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C.



Enoch Pratt House. (1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Volume 2, Sheet 55a.)

### Historical Images



Enoch Pratt.



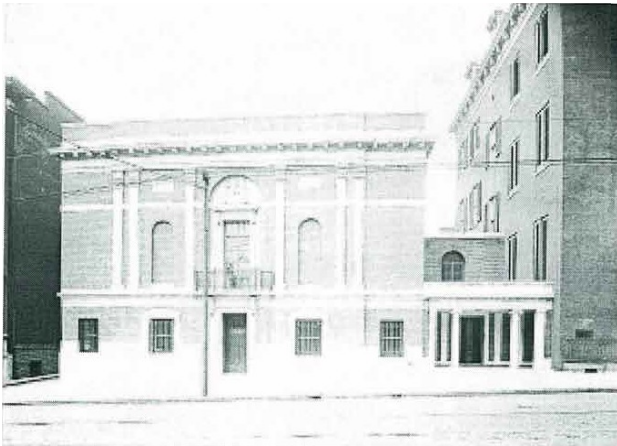
Enoch Pratt House, unknown photographer, ca. 1916. (Z6.1184.PP11, MdHS)



Enoch Pratt House, unknown photographer, ca. 1926, Vertical File, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society Library.



Enoch Pratt House, unknown photographer, ca. 1920s, Vertical File, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society Library.



Enoch Pratt House and Keyser Memorial Building, unknown photographer, ca. 1926. (Z6.1185.PP11 MdHS)

### Current Photos



George C. Morton House, 107 W. Monument Street; an extant five-bay free-standing Greek Revival home one block from the Enoch Pratt House. When the Pratt House was first constructed, it was similar in form to this building, and even retains a floor plan that is a mirror-image of this house.



View of the north façade and east elevation.



The marble portico on the façade.



View of the rear (south) and east elevations.



Detail photo of cornice, mansard roof, dormers, and roof cresting.



Plaque mounted on the façade, announcing that this property was a gift to the Maryland Historical Society in memory of H. Irvine Keyser.



Plaques on the façade of the building, describing the significance of the Maryland Historical Society and the Enoch Pratt House.

<sup>1</sup> "All Honor to Him" *Sun*, January 5, 1886; quoted in Barbara K. Weeks, W. Peter Pearre, and Kenneth M. Short, "Historical Structure Report: Enoch Pratt House" (unpublished manuscript, Maryland Historical Society, n.d.)

<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Hart, *Enoch Pratt: The Story of a Plain Man* (Baltimore: Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1935), m pp. 66-67; quoted in Barbara K. Weeks, W. Peter Pearre, and Kenneth M. Short, "Historical Structure Report: Enoch Pratt House" (unpublished manuscript, Maryland Historical Society, n.d.)