INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: 912-920 Lemmon Street Survey Number: B-2753

Project: Survey of Baltimore's Alley Housing Agency: _____

Site visit by MHT Staff: x no ___ yes Name _____ Date _____

Eligibility recommended x Eligibility **not** recommended ____

Criteria: x A ___B x C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The houses at 912-920 Lemmon Street in Baltimore are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for their architecture, as relatively well-preserved examples of a type of housing which characterized working-class neighborhoods in Baltimore in the 1840s. The houses derive additional significance under Criterion A for their association with the influx of immigrant workers in response to the rapid expansion of the B & O Railroad in the period.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: See Continuation Sheets, attached

Prepared by: Mary Ellen Hayward

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services — Date

NR program concurrence: x yes ___ no ___ not applicable

Peter E. Kurtze — 8/19/97

Reviewer, NR program — Date

JMG

The row of two-story-plus attic houses on the north side of Lemmon St. between Poppleton St. on the east and Amity St. on the west were built between 1845 and 1848 in response to the need to provide housing for the workers needed by the rapidly expanding Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's Mt. Clare car shops. The nation's first railroad offering regularly scheduled passenger service, the B & O was chartered in 1828 by a group of prominent Baltimore businessmen, including Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. By the 1840s the railroad was laying track in Western Maryland in its efforts to reach Cumberland and Ohio beyond. During these years the company actively recruited workers in Ireland, bringing them to Baltimore to work in the car shops and sending them out to Western Maryland to lay track. The formation of the parish of St. Peter's came about in direct response to this influx of Irish Catholic workers to the area, which had begun in the 1830s. Construction of St. Peter the Apostle R. C. Church began in 1843, with the 24-year-old Robert Cary Long as architect.

The houses on Lemmon St. are significant architecturally because they represent some of the earliest rowhouses built in the two-story-plus-attic style that was popular for working class housing in the period c. 1845-1850. This style derived from the very stylish Greek Revival style townhouses built in the Mt. Vernon Place area in the late 1830s (a prime example stands in the unit block of W. Monument St.) This style of house replaced the older, federal-style townhouse and rowhouse, characterized by a steep gable roof and dormer windows, built in Baltimore into the 1830s. The new houses replaced the steep gable roof with a more gently sloping gable, thus allowing for increased space in the attic story. Instead of the dormer window of the federal period houses, these new houses had narrow windows in the attic story to light the upper floor. Greek-inspired forms provided the decorative vocabulary--pedimented doorways supported by Doric or Ionic pilasters; Greek-ordered mantel surrounds; and, in the more elaborate houses, free-standing Greek columns set between the newly fashionable double parlors on the first floor. In 1840 John Hall, a local architect and cabinetmaker, published Modern Designs for Dwelling Houses, a pattern book showing many examples of up-to-the-minute designs for townhouses in the Greek Revival style. In this book, and in the examples along Monument St., one can quickly ascertain that the most stylish of the designs had very narrow attic windows, often covered with wrought iron grillwork. As this style of house began to be adopted by vernacular builders, the earliest examples were built with very narrow attic windows like the high style houses that were their inspiration. As the 1840s progressed the attic windows of the vernacular houses got deeper and deeper, in response to the practical needs of light and air. The Lemmon St. houses are particularly significant because they show the very narrow attic windows of the first phase of translation of this high-style Greek Revival form into the vernacular. Houses of this early character still exist in Barre Circle along McHenry St., but they are seldom seen elsewhere in the city.

The houses on Lemmon St. are 10'3" wide by 24'8" deep. The contain a front and rear room on each floor, separated by a tightly winding stair set along the fireplace wall. Each of the four main rooms has its own fireplace with simple Doric mantels. As was common in rowhouses of the first half of the 19th century, the wide kitchen fireplace is flanked with a set of built-in shelves, taking up the space between the hearth and the rear wall of the house. The houses have full basements with about a 6' ceiling height. The houses are laid in running bond with segmentally-arched window and door lintels and wood sills. In two of the houses evidence remains to suggest that there was also a direct entrance to the basement under the steps at the front of the house, not uncommon for houses of this period. The cornice is of the simplest type: a row of brick dentils set above two rows of stretches and a wooden band, nicely suggests the simplicity of the Greek Revival style. The two houses closely examined, 916 and 918, show a remarkable integrity of interior features. All but one of the original mantels are in place, as is the kitchen shelving and winder stairs. Original blue-tinted whitewashed plaster is clearly visible beneath layers of old wallpaper. In the attic story of 918 the ceiling is missing, clearly exposing original roof framing and the cedar shingles beneath the modern roof. Flooring is original random width pine. The chimney stack has two flues running up its length so as to serve all four fireplaces.

The houses were built by Charles Shipley, a local carpenter who lived at Hollins and Calhoun St. with his business on German St. He accumulated a great deal of wealth and became a large landowner in the area. The earliest residents of the block included : John Holton, an engineer; Martin Mager, a blacksmith; Thomas Medcalfe, a fireman; Andrew Ikener, an oak cooper; Dennis McFaddon, a laborer; Cornelius McLaughlin, a laborer; Henry Allberger, a 912-

fireman; Adrian Budd, a blacksmith; Henry Hines, a tobacconist; George Lavender, a finisher; and Alfred Weeks, a laborer. Thomas McNew, a watchman at the depot of the B & O RR, lived at the Amity St. corner while his brother, Nathan, an engineer, lived on Lemmon St. west of Poppleton in 1850. (This information was compiled by Dean Krimmel from the 1850 Census, the 1849-50 city directory and the 1853-4 directory.)

Survey No. B-2753

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

____	Eastern Shore	(all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
____	Western Shore	(Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
__x__	Piedmont	(Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
____	Western Maryland	(Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

____	Paleo-Indian	10000-7500 B.C.
____	Early Archaic	7500-6000 B.C.
____	Middle Archaic	6000-4000 B.C.
____	Late Archaic	4000-2000 B.C.
____	Early Woodland	2000-500 B.C.
____	Middle Woodland	500 B.C. - A.D. 900
____	Late Woodland/Archaic	A.D. 900-1600
____	Contact and Settlement	A.D. 1570-1750
____	Rural Agrarian Intensification	A.D. 1680-1815
__x__	Agricultural-Industrial Transition	A.D. 1815-1870
____	Industrial/Urban Dominance	A.D. 1870-1930
____	Modern Period	A.D. 1930-Present
____	Unknown Period (___ prehistoric	___ historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

____	Subsistence
____	Settlement
____	Political
____	Demographic
____	Religion
____	Technology
____	Environmental Adaptation

IV. Historic Period Themes:

____	Agriculture
__x__	Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
__x__	Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
____	Government/Law
____	Military
____	Religion
__x__	Social/Educational/Cultural
____	Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Buildings

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): single dwellings

Known Design Source: none

B-2753
MAGI #0427535404

POPPLETON HISTORIC STUDY

Block	Lot	Address
252	85-75	902-922 Lemmon Street

Approximate age

1800-1845 | 1845-1860 | 1865-1880 | 1880-1896 | 1896-on

Rating	Architectural	Condition			
A	Significant-save	good	fair	poor	bad
B	Quality-Indiv./groups-save	good	fair	poor	bad
C	Important to street/groups	good	fair	poor	bad
D	Insignificant/detrimental	good	fair	poor	bad

Notable features:

A pleasant 2½ story series of houses that are being repaired. Could be useful and handsome with arrival of the park.

Environmental context:

Lot (85) at 902 has been cleared and 906 and 922 are vacant. Number 910 has been repaired and 904 is being repaired. (See comments for 928-944 Lemmon Street.)

B-2753
902-922 Lemmon Street
Block 252 Lot 075-085
Baltimore City
Baltimore West Quad.

GIS data Courtesy of
the City of Baltimore, MOIT/EGIS