

437892604

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Washington D.C. 20240

MAGI # 0437892604

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION
APPLICATION—PART 1

Instructions: Applicant should read the instructions carefully before completing application. No certification may be made unless a completed application form has been received. Use typewriter or print clearly in dark ink to complete the application form. If additional space is needed to complete Part 1, use the reverse side or a separate plain sheet of paper clearly indicating the owner's name and mailing address. Part 1 of this application may be completed and sent to the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer at anytime during the year.

PART 1 EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Name of property: 815 Park Avenue

Address of property: 815 Park Avenue

City: Baltimore County: State: MD Zip Code: 21202

Name of historic district in which property is located: Mt. Vernon Historic District

Check here if request is for:

- certification (structure contributes to significance of the district)
- decertification (structure does not contribute to significance of the district)
- easement qualification (for donation of easement on structure or land for conservation purposes).

2. Description of Physical Appearance:
(see instructions for map and photograph requirements-use reverse side if necessary)

See attached sheet.

3. Statement of Significance:
(use reverse side if necessary)

See attached sheet.

Date of construction (if known) 1891 Original site Moved Date of alterations (if known): c. 1930

4. Name and Mailing Address of Owner:

Name: Park East Limited Partnership c/o William Meyers, II

Street: 108 Water Street

City: Baltimore State: MD Zip Code: 21202

Telephone number (during day): Area Code (301) 752-7848

I hereby attest that the information I have provided is to the best of my knowledge, correct, and that I am owner of the property described above

Signature: [Signature] Date: Dec 29, 1982

Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number: [Redacted]

For office use only

The structure described above is included within the boundaries of a Registered Historic District and contributes does not contribute to the character of the district

The structure appears does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6) and will likely will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with the Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60).

The structure is located in a district which appears does not appear to meet National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 60.6) and will likely will not be nominated to the National Register in accord with Department of the Interior procedures (36 CFR 60).

appears does not appear to contribute to the character of said district or will likely will not be recommended for certification as substantially meeting National Register criteria.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
State Historic Preservation Officer

Name/address of Property: 815 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21202

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Name/address of Owner: Park East Limited Partnership c/o William Meyers, II

108 Water Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

Telephone: (301)752-7848

Prepared by: Barbara Hoff, Dalsemer, Catzen & Associates, Inc.

121 Water Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Telephone: (301)837-3691

DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

815 Park Avenue is a Romanesque Revival, masonry townhouse which is five bays wide and three and a half stories high. It has a gable roof, square plan, and a facade constructed of red sandstone and pressed brick in running bond. The house is raised above the basement level.

The first floor level has red sandstone openings and quoins with brick infill. There is a central doorway flanked by large, segmentally arched window openings. The entrance has a straight run stair with a portico having paired columns with Byzantine style cushion capitals. Above it, there is a stone and wrought iron balustrade. The doorway is round arched with arabesque carvings in the stone surround and in the stone transom bar. A delicate, wrought iron grille covers the transom light. The window openings contain paired, one over one, wood, double hung windows with a single, stained glass transom and a single wrought iron window box.

A molded beltcourse divides the first story from the second story. On the second story, each of the bays contains a window with a flat arch, except for the central bay. Here, there is a round arched opening framed with raised headers and stone carvings. The windows are wood, single light, double hung with wood bullnose frames. Another beltcourse divides this floor from the third floor.

This level has round arched openings with the central three linked in an arcade. Paired, engaged colonettes support the arches. Above these openings there is a boxed cornice with modillions.

The roof has a tile surface and shed roof dormers over all but the end bays. There is an inside end chimney adjacent to both the south and north walls.

The rear of the building is constructed of common bond brick. The southernmost bay is recessed far into the building, while the two adjacent bays project out slightly, and join the northern bays via a curved wall. The window openings have been relocated over time, probably when the building was converted into offices in the 1930's. Except for the first floor southernmost window all have rowlock sills, flat arches, wood bullnose frames, and one over one wood, double hung sashes. The first floor exception is a wood, tripartite window with narrow, one over one windows flanking a central, one over one window. The two northernmost bays have a brick and wood oriel on the basement and first floor levels, and a metal fire escape extends down the two projected bays. There is a doorway in the north wall of the recessed bay.

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DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The interior plan consists of a central hall and four rooms arranged around a central, open well, three run staircase. Some of the walls and doors were re-arranged when the building was converted to office use. Interior finishes consist of plaster walls and ceilings and wood floors. Most of the floors now have a linoleum covering, while dropped ceilings were installed in the 1930's over almost all of the original ceilings.

Details consist of paneled wood doors, notably the entrance doors having a diamond pattern. All openings have wood architrave surrounds and some of them have paneled soffits and reveals. Delicate plasterwork with floral and arabesque patterns exist in the entry and stair wainscotting, the cornices, and the first floor, southwest room. The entry also exhibits a mosaic tile floor. The stair has a paneled case, molded balusters and an octagonal newel post with carved, Romanesque style motifs.

The general condition of the interior is good; although some damage exists due to the aging of the materials. In general, the integrity is well preserved, with the only alterations resulting from the initial office conversion. The rehabilitation will preserve the plan and, restore the architecturally distinctive features.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION APPLICATION--PART I

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

815 Park Avenue is an integral component of the Mt. Vernon Historic District because of its age, architectural integrity and its history. The building was constructed in 1891 as an elegant residence for a prominent lawyer. 815 Park Avenue retains its architectural quality and contributes to the character of the Mt. Vernon District.

The Mount Vernon Historic District is both a Baltimore City District and, in part, a National Register Historic Landmark District. Mount Vernon was the first Historic District in Baltimore City, designated in 1964 and expanded five times to the current boundaries, which have been certified by the Department of the Interior for purposes of the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives. The ordinance creating the Mount Vernon Historic District also established the Baltimore City Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation to oversee all changes within the District and to recommend other areas and buildings in the City for historic designation. The Historic District and the Commission were outgrowths of the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Plan, one of the City's earliest efforts to incorporate preservation and renovation of existing structures with new development. The current Historic District now encompasses two Urban Renewal Areas: Mount Vernon and Midtown-Belvedere.

The Mount Vernon Historic District grew from the early 19th century through the early 20th century and retains structures -- residential, commercial, and religious -- from that time. The area was Baltimore's most fashionable neighborhood and as such includes some of the finest architecture in the City, built for wealthy residents, congregations, and institutions, and designed by architects of local and national renown. The greater portion of the district was once the estate of John Eager Howard, revolutionary war patriot and statesman. His mansion, Belvedere, was located at what is now the 1000 block of North Calvert Street. The centerpiece of the district is the Washington Monument and Mount Vernon Place. The monument is the first formal monument erected to commemorate George Washington and is one of the finest examples of monumental architecture in the country. It was erected from 1815 to 1829 and designed by Robert Mills, one of the first American born and trained architects in the country. The development of the squares known as Mount Vernon Place and Washington Place, dates from the 1830's, when the land was subdivided by Howard's heirs, who then built some of the first houses. prior to the construction of the monument and the development of the squares, brick working class houses were built on Tyson Street, Read Street, and North Howard Street, the earliest dating from 1810. These buildings still exist; some are residences and others have been converted to antique shops. The houses on Hamilton Street date from 1820 and were designed by Robert Cary Long Sr. the architect of the Peale Museum and Davidge Hall.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area which is now the Historic District continued to develop. Baltimore's prominent and wealthy residents moved north to the rural area because the land around the harbor was rapidly becoming industrialized and because the City was flooded with immigrants, who flocked to Baltimore to work in the newly established industries. Construction continued to take place in the 1880's and 1890's after the Howard estate had been developed, completing the construction in the district.

Architecturally, Mount Vernon displays a complete range of 19th century building styles: Greek Revival, early and late Renaissance Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Victorian Gothic, Chateau, Beaux-Arts, Colonial Revival, Art Deco, and combinations and vernacular interpretation of these styles.

Many of the elegant townhouses and all of the churches, apartments, and hotels were designed by eminent local and national architects including; Stanford White, William A. Delano, John Russell Pope, Edmund G. Lind, Francis E. Baldwin and Josias Pennington, J.B. Noel Wyatt, J. Crawford Neilson, John Rudolph Niernsee, Joseph Evans Sperry, Nathan G. Starkweather, Jackson Gott, J.A. Wilson, Charles E. Cassell, Thomas Dixon and Charles Carson, J. Harleston Parker, Douglas H. Thomas, Edward H. Glidden, and noted contemporary architects including Edward Durrell Stone, James R. Grieves Associates and the firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson, and Abbott.

Among the prominent families who engaged these architects and lived in the area were the philanthropists George Peabody, Enoch Pratt, and William and Henry Walters, who founded the Peabody Conservatory of Music, The Enoch Pratt Library and the Walters Art Gallery, all of which are located in or on the border of the Mount Vernon District; the Winans family who developed railroad systems in this country and in Russia; several Johns Hopkins Hospital physicists and chemists, including Henry August Rowland and Ira Remsen; William Pinkney White, a Governor of the State, and Mayor of the City; and the Warfields, Pattersons, McKims, and Sissons, among others.

815 Park Avenue contributes to the architectural significance of the of the district first by possessing the quality and scale of design found throughout the district. This building is an impressive brownstone and brick Romanesque Revival townhouse which displays ornate craftsmanship in stone, metal, plaster, and glass. A volumous structure, it is three and a half stories high and five bays wide. Secondly, its setback from the street and cornice height are the same as the adjacent buildings, and therefore the house continues the streetscape. Thirdly, because the exterior integrity of the building is unimpaired, the house retains the character and feeling of the district.

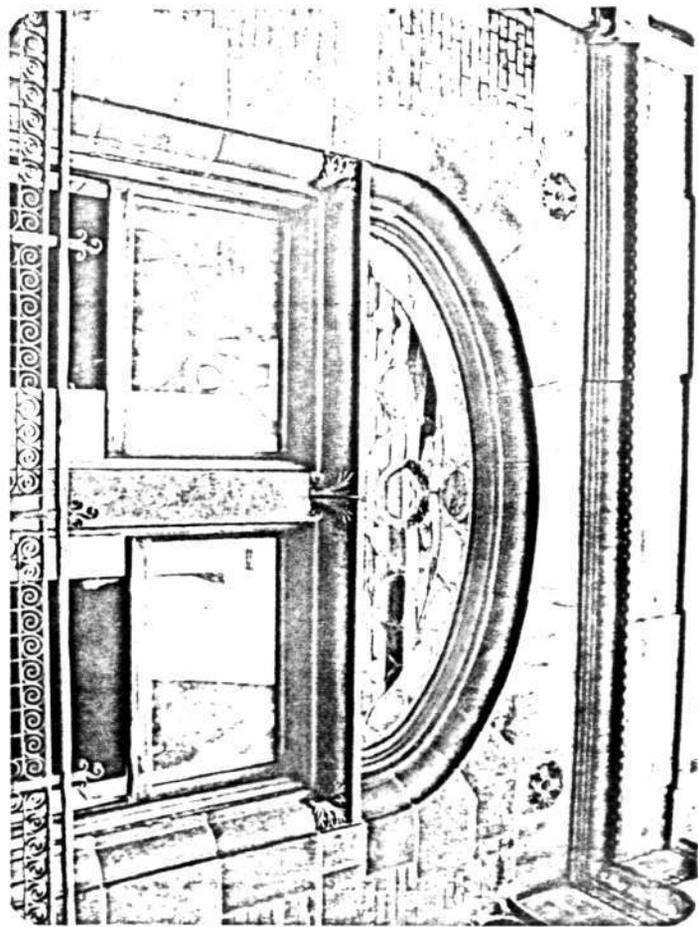
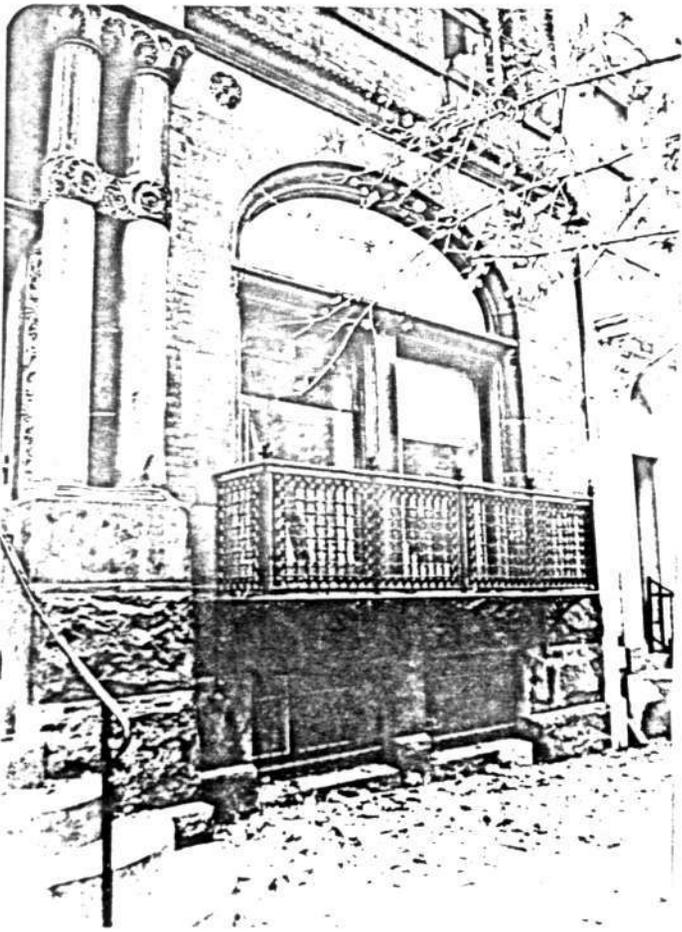
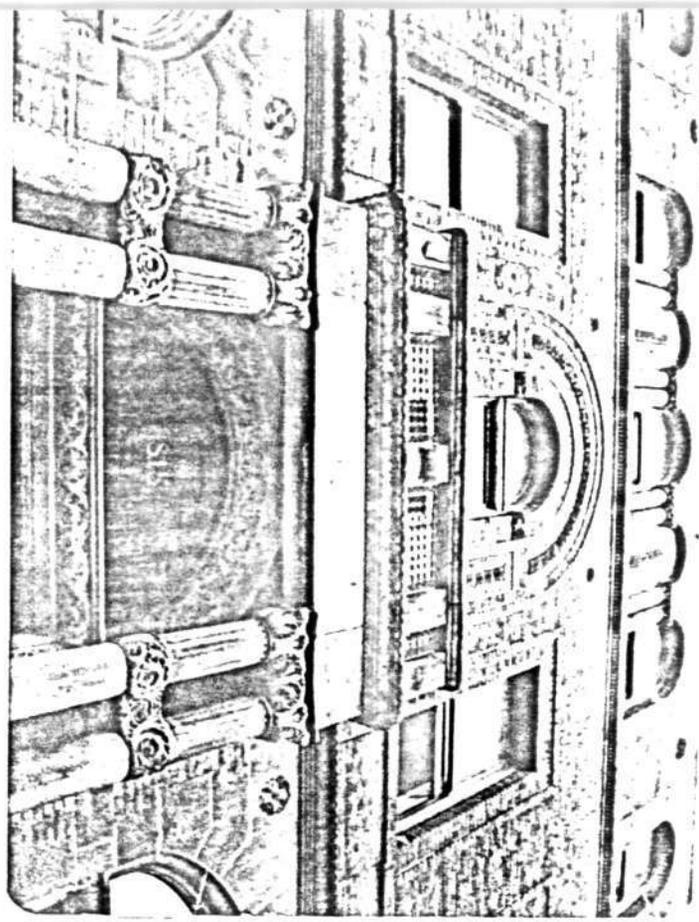
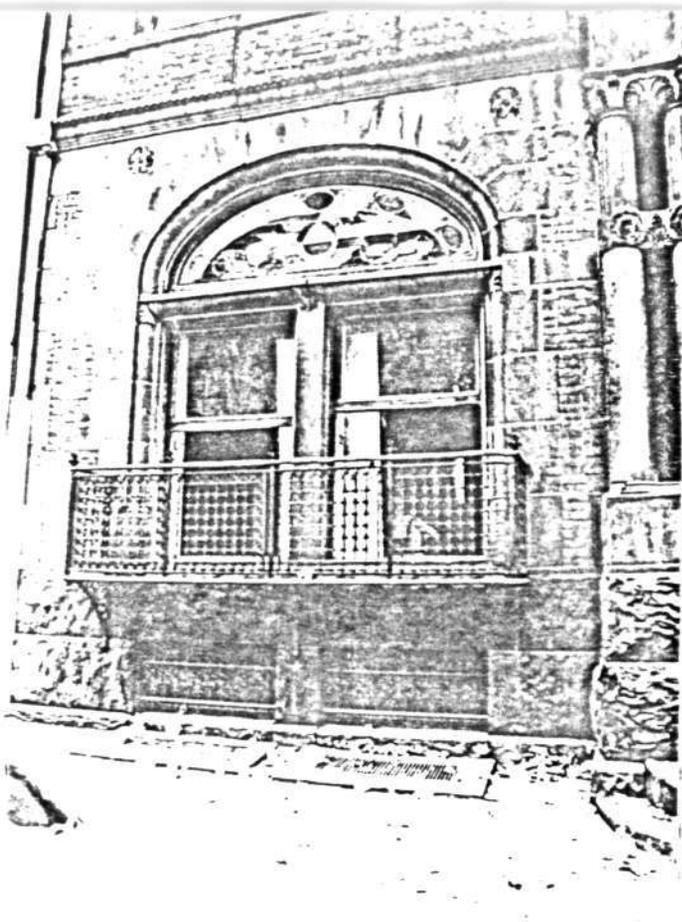
The house relates to the district historically because it was built for a wealthy professional, as were the great majority of the district homes. A previous house did exist on the site; it was built on the site of 817 Park Avenue in 1874 for widow Jane Nicholas. The site of 815 Park Avenue remained vacant until 1891, when Thomas B. Gresham, a lawyer built his house on the lots of both 815 and 817.

Name/address of Property: 815 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21202B-3789STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Gresham was born in 1844 in Athens, Georgia. After service in the Confederate Army, he studied law at the University of Virginia, and then began his legal practice in Macon, Georgia, where he was reportedly very successful. In 1887 he moved to Baltimore and for a time continued to practice law. Eventually he became so involved with corporate, religious, and charitable institutions, that he gave up his law practice for those pursuits.

He lived on Park Avenue for several years before actually purchasing the site for his house in December of 1890. Construction of the house began shortly thereafter: the building permit was issued in January of 1891. The actual designer of the house is unknown, but the late Wilbur Hunter, former director of the Peale Museum and an authority on the history and architecture of Baltimore, credits the building as a work of J. Appleton Wilson, who designed several houses in the district.

The building remained a residence until conversion into offices in the 1930's. The integrity of the building remains unimpaired except for alterations resulting from the office conversions. The architect's features will be preserved and restored as part of the rehabilitation program.



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815 Park Avenue
Block 0515, Lot 007
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.

