

CAPSULE SUMMARY
THE WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland
B-4595

The building at 2327 North Charles Street was erected in circa 1875 as a single-family dwelling. Designed by owner/architect William H. Allen, the Italianate style building was sold in 1892 to John K. Cowen, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and United States Congressman. Cowen renovated the brick building between 1897 and 1906, constructing a grand stair hall and rear ell additions, as well as introducing Victorian-period interior detailing. In 1910, the building was purchased by Goucher College to serve as the president's residence, and was eventually converted into a dormitory. The William H. Allen House survives as an excellent example of an urban townhouse, reflecting transitional styles of the late 19th century, and is one of the oldest extant buildings erected prior to the annexation of the area in 1888 to Baltimore City.

The freestanding brick structure is three-stories in height with a flat roof ornamented by a bracketed cornice. The rectangular form of the circa 1875 structure is largely intact with elaborate architectural detailing dating from 1897-1906. The lavish interior, dating mostly from 1897-1906, includes corbel-arched openings, elaborately molded cornices, marble mantels with ornate mirrors, and paneled pocket doors. The first floor of the side-passage plan features a rectangular-shaped front parlor, a grand stair hall, and smaller rear parlors divided by sliding pocket doors.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. B-4595

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1. Name of Property

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historic name William H. Allen House; John K. Cowen House;
Mardal Hall at Goucher College

common/other name Melchor Nursing Home

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2. Location

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street & number 2327 North Charles St. not for publication

city or town Baltimore vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510

zip code 21218

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

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4. National Park Service Certification N/A

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing		Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes Name of Listing Old Goucher College Historic
No District (Expanded)

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
Education Education-Related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Health Care Sub: Sanitarium

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick: Five-Course American Bond

roof Flat: Not Visible

walls Brick: Five-Course American Bond

other Brick: All Stretcher Bond

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance circa 1875-1892

1892-1906

1910-1944

Significant Dates ca. 1875

1897-1906

1910

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

John K. Cowen

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder William H. Allen

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Baltimore County and City Land Records. Baltimore City Courthouse and Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress, 1774-1989, Washington, DC: United States General Printing Office, 1989.

Black, Catharine F. (MHT), "Old Goucher College Historic District National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form." April 1974.

Bromley, George W., *The City Atlas of Baltimore, Maryland*, Philadelphia, PA: 1896 and 1906.

General Property Tax Books, Second District, RG 4, S.1, #152, 1834. Baltimore City Archives, Baltimore, Maryland.

Principe, Lawrence M., Ph.D. and Sheryl H. Bernardo (South Charles Village Partnership, Inc.), "Old Goucher College Historic District (Expanded), National Register of Historic Places Registration Form." March 1994.

Polk, R.L. and Company, *The Baltimore City Directory*, Baltimore, MD: R.L. Polk, 1871-1900.

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property .248 Acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The William H. Allen House at 2327 North Charles Street is located on Block 3820, Lot 13 on the southeast corner of the intersection of North Charles and 24th (formerly Sumwalt) streets.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The building has been historically associated with Block 3820, Lot 13 since its construction in circa 1875.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Laura V. Trieschmann, Architectural Historian
organization Traceries date January 8, 1996
street & number 5420 Western Avenue telephone 301/656-5283
city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815
=====

12. Property Owner
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name Harry E. Gilbert, Jr; C. Gordon Gilbert; Mary L. Leonard
street & number 3401 Tremont Plaza telephone _____
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21202
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The building located at 2327 North Charles Street was constructed in circa 1875 as a modest single-family dwelling by owner/architect William H. Allen. Italianate in style, the building was significantly altered between 1897 and 1906 by the construction of a stair addition, rear ell, and Victorian-period interior detailing. The freestanding brick structure is three-stories in height with a flat roof that is ornamented by a bracketed cornice. The form of the circa 1875 structure is largely intact with elaborate architectural detailing from 1897-1906.

SITE

The building is located at 2327 North Charles Street on the southeast corner of North Charles and 24th (formerly Sumwalt) streets. The freestanding structure covers all of Lot 13 of Block 3820. Historically a landscaped rose garden for the property, Lot 12 serves as a parking lot. Portions of the original cast-iron metal fence are extant along Lot 12, extending south from the corner of the building.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE

As originally constructed in circa 1875, the brick building at 2327 North Charles Street was rectangular in form with a side-passage plan. The Italianate-style single-family dwelling was designed by owner/architect William H. Allen. Evidence on the interior documents the original location of the main quarter-flight stair at the eastern end of the side entry hall. Many of the parlors and bedrooms are ornamented with circa 1870 marble mantels.

ALTERATIONS

Between 1897 and 1906, the building was significantly altered by the construction of a brick three-story stair addition and rear ell. At the same time, the western section of the south elevation was clad in an all stretcher brick veneer in an effort to camouflage the alteration. Interior alterations include the removal of the quarter-flight stair and the erection of a grand double-L stair. Additionally, late Victorian detailing, such as casings, cornices, paneled pocket doors, and elaborate mantels with mirrored overmantels, were introduced. By 1915 a three-story frame porch was erected on the north elevation of the rear ell. The open porch was enclosed by the middle part of the 20th century.

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PRESENT APPEARANCE

The three-story building, designed in the Italianate style of architecture, is constructed of brick laid in all stretcher bond. Rectangular in plan, the building is set upon a five-course American bond brick foundation. The raised base of the structure, which is laid in all stretcher bond, is clad on the facade with limestone. Sheathed in pressed brick, the facade is divided into three bays with a side-passage entry. The six bay wide side elevations extend to the east and have been articulated on the north elevation with bay windows and a three-story stair addition on the south elevation. Although removed at the roof, two interior end chimneys are located on the north elevation. Two interior brick chimneys project from the center of the building.

The raised facade of the building, fronting west on North Charles Street, is clad in pressed brick laid in all stretcher bond with a limestone clad base and watertable. The base is pierced by two square window openings ornamented with cast-iron metal grates. While the wood surrounds are extant, only part of a window remains intact. The first story of the symmetrical facade, accessed by six marble steps with metal railings, contained two elongated window openings and a side-passage entry. Located in the southern bay, the segmental-arched entry is ornamented by a molded limestone surround. The wide opening has been filled by a replacement glass door and transom, edged in metal. The segmental-arched window openings have 1/1 wood sash with limestone sills, large single beaded surrounds, and splayed jack-arched lintels.

The second and third stories of the facade contain three segmentally arched openings filled with 1/1 windows, each adorned with limestone sills and splayed jack-arched lintels. The original wood windows have all been replaced with metal windows, except the northern-most opening of the third story. Original single beaded surrounds are visible on the openings in the northern-most bay of both the second and third stories. The roofline of the building is marked by a corbelled brick frieze that is crowned by a massive cornice. Adorned with scrolled and fluted brackets with acanthus bases, the bed molding is finished with dentils. The overhanging cornice, returning on both the north and south side elevations, has an ogee-molded cap.

The unaltered north side elevation extends six bays to the east along 24th Street. The elevation is adorned by two one-story bay windows flanking a centrally placed, three-story canted bay window.

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The raised base of the elevation, clad in all stretcher bond, has a projecting watertable with a molded brick cap. The basement level of the western-most bay window contains the original coal chute, covered by a flush metal door. The canted bay contains a double opening at the basement level filled with single light windows. The one-story bay at the eastern end of the elevation is flanked at the basement level by segmental-arched window openings capped by jack-arched lintels. The windows have been removed and the openings infilled.

The first story of both of the one-story bay windows contain narrow, semi-circular arched 1/1 windows flanking a standard segmental-arched 1/1 window. Centrally placed, the canted bay is pierced on the first story by narrow paired segmentally arched 1/1 windows flanked by single segmentally arched 1/1 windows. The first story of the main block of the building is marked by a single segmentally arched 1/1 window, located between the canted bay and the eastern-most bay window. The openings of the second and third stories are symmetrically arranged and filled with 1/1 and 2/2 windows. All of the openings on the north side elevation are adorned with limestone sills, single beaded surrounds, and jack-arched lintels. The roofline is crowned with a corbelled brick stringcourse and an ogee-molded cornice with dentil moldings.

The north side elevation currently extends east along the north elevation of the rear brick addition to include a three-story porch that was enclosed in the mid-20th century. Constructed of wood frame, the porch has a flat roof and is clad in weatherboard. The asymmetrically placed openings are filled with flush wood doors and 6/6 windows. Accessible by an exterior wood stair, the porch was originally finished with Doric columns and posts, square balusters, and a boxed ogee cornice.

One bay of the east rear elevation of the main block of the building is exposed, although slightly obscured by the exterior stair of the porch. The first story opening has been infilled, while the upper stories each contain a single 2/2 segmental-arched window opening. All openings are adorned with limestone sills, single beaded surrounds, and jack-arched lintels.

The two-bay wide east elevation of the rear addition is constructed of brick laid in five-course American bond. The first story has a segmentally arched, elongated window with a limestone sill and jack-arched lintel. The opening has been infilled with wood and a metal louvered ventilator. A single entry opening, found in the

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northern bay, is filled with a flush replacement door and an infilled transom with a metal louvered ventilator. Similar to the window opening, the entry is segmentally arched with a jack-arched lintel. The upper stories are identically marked by a segmentally arched window opening with a limestone sill and jack-arched lintel, and a smaller window opening with a brick sill and soldier-coursed lintel. The openings on the second story have 2/2 windows, while the third story has 1/1 replacement windows. The roofline of the rear addition is finished with brick corbeling and a narrow ogee cornice.

The south side elevation of the main block has been largely obscured by additions and alterations. Presently, the western section of the elevation is clad in a brick veneer laid in all stretcher bond and contains no openings; thus, blending the stair addition with the original block of the building. The three-bay wide stair addition is pierced on the south elevation with three stepped windows on both the second and third stories. The windows on the second story have 1/1 diamond lights with florentine figure glass, while the third story has 1/1 single lights with florentine figure glass. The two-bay wide west elevation of the addition has two 1/1 window openings that are slightly stepped on the upper stories. The east elevation has a single entry with a transom on the first story that is accessible by a wooden stair covered by a shed roof. Both the second and third stories have elongated 1/1 windows. A window opening located between the first and second stories has altered to a single entry for the second story porch. All of the openings have limestone sills, large single beaded surrounds, and jack-arched lintels. Identical to the main block of the building, all three elevations of the stair addition are finished at the roofline with corbelled bricks and an ogee-molded cornice.

A one-story, one-bay deep brick addition extends east from the first story of the stair addition. Three-bays wide, the addition has a flat roof and is constructed of brick laid in five-course American bond. The wall is pierced by three one-light casement windows with limestone sills, single beaded surrounds, and jack-arched lintels. Raised above the flat roof of the addition is a second story porch enclosed with square balusters and metal screens. Accessible from the second floor of the stair addition, the porch has a corrugated metal shed roof. The third story of the main block, visible above the porch, is perforated by a single window opening that has been infilled with brick at the bottom. The upper portion of the sash contains a fixed two-light window

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with a jack-arched lintel. An enclosed hollow newel stair of metal was erected on the south side elevation of the main block, between the porch and rear 1897-1906 addition. The three-story stair is enclosed with corrugated metal sheets and has a sloped roof.

The south elevation of the rear addition, constructed of five-course American bond brick, is three bays wide and projects from the southeast corner of the main block. The first story has two segmentally arched window openings and an infilled single entry opening. The western bay has an elongated 1/1 window with a wood infilled upper sash and the window opening in the central bay has been entirely infilled with wood. Identical in detail, the upper stories each have two segmentally arched window openings. The western bays have 1/1 replacement windows with metal surrounds and the eastern bays have the original 2/2 windows with single beaded surrounds. All of the openings have limestone sills and splayed jack-arched lintels. Continuous from the east elevation, the roofline of the rear addition is marked on the south side by brick corbeling and a narrow ogee cornice.

INTERIOR

The interior of the building dates from the 1897-1906 date of alteration. Exhibiting the American Victorian style, the interior includes corbel arched openings, elaborately molded cornices, marble mantels with ornate mirrors, and paneled pocket doors. The first floor of the side-passage plan features a rectangular-shaped front parlor, a grand stair hall, and smaller rear parlors divided by sliding pocket doors. The ceiling rises thirteen feet on the first floor, twelve feet on the second floor, and eleven feet on the third floor.

Originally a recessed vestibule, the main entry opening has been enclosed by a wide glass door edged with metal. The side walls of the vestibule are finished with a plain dado topped by a field adorned with recessed vertical panels trimmed with bolection molding. The dropped acoustical tile ceiling is edged with a contemporary fret motif that partially obscures an original single light transom. A brass mail box with three doorbells and speaking tube is located on the north wall.

The main entry hall is accessed by three marble steps with metal rails. Evidence of a single door is found on the interior casings and marble sill. Installed in 1977, the floor of the entry hall is

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marbleized plastic tile edged with wood strips. The eight-inch high baseboard has a bolection base molding and quarter-round base shoe. The plaster walls are ornamented with horizontal paneled wainscot capped by an elaborately molded chair rail. The plaster ceiling is edged with a heavy boxed cornice with top molding, bottom molding, and picture molding. Metal picture hooks have been placed just below the molding. The entry hall is separated from the stair hall by a semi-circular arch detailed with paneled sides, ogee molded edges, and supporting consoles. The plaster consoles are adorned with egg-and-dart motifs, acanthus leaves, bead-and-reel motifs, and leaves. The entry openings of the hall are trimmed with molded pilaster casings that include backband trim and a large single bead. The openings are filled with the original double wood doors with six vertical panels and transoms with two vertical panels. The original brass hardware, which includes hollow knob with beading and square plates, is extant.

The wide side hall, which extends to the rear of the building, is articulated by a massive chimney breast ornamented with an elaborate wood mantel. Surrounding the marble face, the mantel is detailed with acanthus and leaves, tongue-and-groove motifs, and honeysuckle. The overmantel is adorned with large rectangular mirror trimmed by Corinthian pilasters, a recessed frieze edged in a tongue-and-groove motif, acanthus and fret motifs, and ogee molding. The shelf projects eight inches over the marble hearth.

Originally opening onto the grand stair hall, the section of the side hall that contains the chimney breast was bisected by an interior wall that enclosed the stair for fire code reasons. A symmetrically placed single window on the west wall of the stair addition is partially obscured by the contemporary interior wall, which is pierced by a wide metal fire door. Despite this, the stair hall maintains the 1897-1906 boxed cornice with top molding, bottom molding, and picture molding. As in the entry hall, the plaster walls of the stair hall are ornamented with horizontal paneled wainscot capped by an elaborately molded chair rail.

The stately double-L stair, dating from 1897-1906, has cascading circle-end starting steps, two spiral balusters per tread, and a molded rail with a gooseneck and half-cylinder crook. The massive wooden newel post is octagonal and is ornamented with bead-and-reel motifs, water leaf-and-dart motifs, and acanthus leaves. Standing approximately five feet high, the newel post is capped by a round ball circumscribed with beading. The treads of the stair, finished with round nosing, are covered with linoleum tiles and vinyl. The

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open carriage stringer is adorned with molded panels. The wall stringer is similarly ornamented with vertical panels and a molded chair rail that is partially obscured by the contemporary wall rail. Above the chair rail, between the floors of the building, are three stepped windows. The openings have multi-beaded casings and paneled sills. Between the first and second floors, the window openings are filled with 1/1 diamond lights with florentine figure glass, while those located between the second and third floor have 1/1 single lights with florentine figure glass. Access to the basement is located under the main carriage of the double-L stair, enclosed by a vertical paneled wall.

The front parlor is located in the northwest corner of the first floor. When the two sets of sliding pocket doors are opened, the parlor extends to the east to include a large portion of the first floor. The floor is covered with linoleum tiles edged with the original twelve inch high molded baseboards. The elongated openings are trimmed with a multi-beaded casings, paneled folding blinds, and recessed panels below the sill. Two projecting chimney breasts are located on the north wall flanking the one-story bay window. Identical in design, the marble mantels have semi-circular arched openings with scrolled shields. The faces of the mantels, which are typical of the 1870s, are adorned with baseblocks, recessed panels, rosette medallions with leaves and fruit, and reeded edges. Monumental mirrors extend from the shelf of the mantel to the picture molding at the ceiling. The mirrors are edged by wood surrounds with acanthus leaves, shields, and reeding motifs. A full-length pier-glass mirror with the same design is located between the two window openings on the west wall. Narrower than the casings found throughout the front parlor, the main door opening to the hall has molded pilaster casings that include backband trim and a large single bead. Similar to the window casings, the pocket doors located on the east wall of the parlor are trimmed with multi-beaded casings. The double-wide pocket doors have recessed vertical panels and rosettes. The ceiling of the parlor is detailed with a plaster cornice that matches the entry hall cornice.

The rear portion of the first floor consists of three smaller parlors accessible from the side hall. Beyond the stair hall, the side hall displays signs of the original quarter-flight stair to the upper floors. This portion of the hall lacks much of its original detailing, although two of the entry doors are trimmed in the original multi-beaded casings. The original floors of the hall and the three small parlors are covered with linoleum tiles, and

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the original ceiling is obscured by dropped acoustical tiles. The dumb-waiter, which opens on all floors, is located on the south wall of the hall.

Connected to the front parlor by sliding pocket doors, the central parlor is square in plan and opens onto the canted bay window. The chimney breast, located on the south wall, is flanked by two identically detailed entry doors. Typical of circa 1870 design, the marble mantel is ornamented with recessed panels, a shield-shaped keystone, and baseblocks. The three-centre arched opening exposes the stuccoed fireback. The mirrored overmantel and the boxed cornice on the ceiling are like those found in the front parlor. The window and door openings are trimmed in multi-beaded casings with backbands and a large single bead. The remaining two parlors are similarly ornamented with multi-beaded casings, bolection capped baseboards, and boxed cornices.

The second and third floors originally opened onto the double-L stair; however, an interior drywall partition has been installed for fire code reasons. The partition creates a side hall on each floor, similar to the side-passage plan of the first floor. Additional alterations include the division of the west room on both the second and third floor, creating two smaller rooms. Retaining a great deal of detailing from the 1897-1906 period of alteration, the second and third floors have multi-beaded casings with backbanding and baseblocks, molded eight inch high baseboards, and boxed cornices. Many of the rooms are ornamented with marble mantels, typical of circa 1870 design. The mantels have semi-circular arched openings, ornately carved keystones, and paneled faces. Massive mirrored overmantels are located above all of the mantels.

The side hall of the second floor is adorned with an ornate wood mantel, typical of the 1890s. The mantel has projecting Tuscan pilasters, scrolled acanthus brackets, two torus-molded shelves, egg-and-dart molding, and a mirrored overmantel. The segmentally arched opening is trimmed in metal, and the hearth is made of a single marble slab.

The 1897-1906 rear ell addition contains detailing identical to that found throughout the circa 1875 main block of the building. The entry openings along the side hall have segmentally arched and square surrounds with baseblocks and backbanding. The window openings have square-edged casings and projecting sills. The floors throughout are covered with linoleum tiles edged with molded

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eight inch high baseboards. The enclosed porch at the northeast corner has little detailing, save the engaged Doric columns that support the wood frame structure.

The full basement extends the length and width of the building, including the stair addition and the rear ell that date from 1897-1906. The space consists of a side hall and four rooms, two of which are divided by partition walls of beaded wood board to create storage units. Entered from the stair addition, the main block of the basement is accessed through a semi-circular arched brick opening with a two-course rowlock header lintel. Disturbance in the brickwork indicates the opening originally served as a basement window and was converted into an entry when the stair addition was constructed in 1897-1906. The floor is composed of poured concrete and narrow wood boards running the depth of the building. The walls are five-course American bond brick, covered in sections by stucco. The finished plaster ceiling is largely obscured by pipes for the mechanical systems. Evidence of the original 1875-1877 quarter-flight stair is found on a section of the north wall.

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The building at 2327 North Charles Street was erected in circa 1875 as a single-family dwelling.¹ Designed by owner/architect William H. Allen, the Italianate style building was sold in 1892 to John K. Cowen, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and United States Congressman. Cowen renovated the brick building, constructing a grand stair hall and rear ell additions, as well as introducing Victorian-period interior detailing. In 1910, the building was purchased by Goucher College to serve as the president's residence and was eventually converted into a dormitory. The William H. Allen House survives as an excellent example of an urban townhouse, reflecting transitional styles of the late 19th century, and is one of the oldest extant buildings erected prior to the annexation of the area in 1888 to Baltimore City.

SITE HISTORY

The property on which the William H. Allen House stands was originally part of Charles Carroll's Huntington estate. Carroll, a direct descendent of Charles Carroll of Carrollton who signed the Declaration of Independence, sold part of the estate in June 1844 to Frederick Sumwalt. A wealthy landholder in his own right, Sumwalt transferred the property in 1846 to a trust that was administered by Edward Greene. By 1849, after the death of Sumwalt, the estate was referred to the Chancery Court. Margaret Sumwalt, the widow of Frederick, sued Greene in an effort to gain control of the vast landholding. The court ordered that trustee Greene subdivide and sell the improved property. Although the court records indicated that the property was improved, there is not documentation to show the number, type, location of the resource(s).

PROPERTY HISTORY

In July 1849, Edward Greene conveyed two parcels of ground at the southeast corner of North Charles and Sumwalt (now known as 24th) streets to Henry and Harriet Shirk. The Shirks, residing on

¹ Secondary sources state that the building was constructed in 1892 for a cost of \$70,000 by John K. Cowen; however, historic maps, deeds of conveyance, and city directories all indicate that the building existed as early as 1875 as the home of architect/builder William H. Allen. Cowen, who purchased the "improved lot" in 1892, resided at this address in 1891 as a tenant. Map research shows that between 1897 and 1906, Cowen significantly altered the building, introducing much of the detailing extant presently.

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Maryland Avenue north of North Avenue, retained ownership of the two parcels for twenty-two years. By 1850, Henry Shirk had purchased a total of fifty acres of land, extending west from Charles Street, at the cost of \$360 per acre.

Shirk sold the unimproved parcel at the corner of North Charles and 24th streets to Charles W. Geekie as early as 1867; however, the sale was not fully completed until 1871. The city directory for 1871 shows that Geekie owned a restaurant at 123 West Baltimore Street and lived at 14 Maryland Avenue. The two parcels on North Charles Street were sold in 1872 by Geekie to Walter and Valerie Crook. Walter Crook, Jr. worked in the upholstery and curtain material business at 22 West Baltimore Street, while residing at 172 McCulloh Street. Within seventeen days, Crook conveyed the unimproved land to Andrew G. and May H. Agnew for \$3,500. Living in New York State, the Agnews continued to own the land until 1875, when it was sold to William H. Allen for \$2875.

Around 1875, after the construction of a solid bridge leading north out of Baltimore over the Jones Falls, development in the area began in earnest, and by 1881, the land was selling at the astounding rate of \$45,000 per acre.² In 1876, fewer than fifty structures stood in the area. As late as 1883, when Lovely Lane Church on St. Paul Street was under construction, the pastor Dr. John Goucher was jibed for building "a cathedral in a cornfield."³

Subsequent growth of the area proceeded at an unparalleled rate. By the Acts of 1888, this area was annexed to the City of Baltimore. The population of the area doubled between 1870 and 1880, and again between 1880 and 1890. In contrast to other parts of the city also incorporated in 1888, the area located along North Charles Street was developed with ornately designed buildings. Additionally, while incorporated areas to the west were growing as residential suburbs, the Old Goucher College area developed as an actual extension of the City of Baltimore, incorporating not only residential but commercial and institutional structures. Even before the annexation in 1888, the area was described as the "richest and most popular" district of Baltimore County, and it was claimed that no city could boast newly developing regions "finer

² Lawrence M Principe, Ph.D. and Sheryl H. Bernardo, "Old Goucher College Historic District (Expanded) National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," (March 1994), Section 8, Page 9.

³ Ibid.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

Section 8 Page 3

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

=====
than those around Charles Street."⁴

BUILDING HISTORY

Prior to purchasing the property on North Charles Street, William H. and Angelica P. Allen lived at 265 E. Baltimore Street. According to the city directory, Allen was an architect and builder with an office on Lexington Street. The property at 2327 North Charles Street appears for the first time in the directory as the residence of William H. Allen in 1875; thus, indicating that, upon receipt of the land, Allen designed and constructed the main block of the present building. Within two years, Allen sold the building for \$10,000 to John Gibson, who immediately leased it back to Allen for 99 years for \$700 annually. The lease was transferred the same day to Allen's wife Angelica P.H. Allen. By 1882, Priscilla C. Gibson, the widow of John Gibson, transferred ownership of the property to Angelica Allen.

According to the city directory, the Allens lived in the three-story brick dwelling at 2327 North Charles Street for fifteen years. In 1892, the building and adjoining gardens were sold to John K. Cowen. John Kissig Cowen, born in 1844 in Holmes County, Ohio, was a graduate of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor Law School. After working as the prosecuting attorney for Holmes County, Cowen relocated to Baltimore in 1875 to serve as counsel of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. By 1876, Cowen was the general counsel for the railroad company, a post he held until 1896.⁵ The city directory shows that Cowen lived at 2327 North Charles Street by 1891, although he did not purchase the property until the following year. Between 1897 and 1906, Cowen significantly altered the single-family dwelling by erecting an addition on the south elevation which contained a grand double-L stair, and a three-story rear ell addition on the southeast corner. Additional detailing was introduced on the interior of the building, including mirrored overmantels, elaborately carved wood mantels, ornate window and door casings, wainscot and chair rails, and heavy boxed cornices.

In 1895 John Cowen was elected as a Democrat to the Fifty-Fourth

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress, 1774-1989*, (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1989), p. 843.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

Section 8 Page 4

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

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Congress. Not seeking re-election, he served only one term in Congress. Simultaneously, Cowen was serving as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. Cowen resigned as president in 1901 after a physical breakdown brought on by stress. He died in 1904 in Chicago and is buried in Ohio.⁶

The area surrounding the building at 2327 North Charles Street contained over 800 buildings by 1896, and was largely complete. Almost all of the buildings constructed prior to 1876 had been razed by 1894 and replaced with new, denser, and more coherent construction.⁷ The William H. Allen House, however, survived this second development phase, although it had been significantly enlarged and altered.

John Cowen bequeathed the dwelling at 2327 North Charles Street to his wife Helen Angelina Woods and daughter Sara Cowen. Helen transferred her one-half interest to Sara in 1906. Sara Cowen and her husband Charles Monson, Jr. lived in the dwelling until March 1910, when it was sold to Eugene Allen Noble, president of Goucher College, and his wife Lillian O. Noble.

Located on a lot measuring 75' by 184'3", the property was transferred by the Nobles, within a month of purchasing it, to Goucher College, which was located on the same block. The 1915 Sanborn map shows the structure being used as a dwelling. By 1916, the building had been converted into a girls dormitory, known as Mardal Hall.⁸

Originally known as the Woman's College of Baltimore City, Goucher College was founded in 1884 as a tribute to the centennial of the Lovely Lane Church. Accordingly, lands and funds were donated to construct appropriate buildings for the college along St. Paul Street, and the college opened in September 1888. The first building was Goucher Hall (1886, 222 St. Paul Street), designed by Charles Carson. Additionally, Stanford White designed Bennett Hall (1888-9 and 1895, 16 E. 23rd Street) and Catherine Hooper Hall (1893, 2401 St. Paul Street). The Woman's College of Baltimore City, renamed Goucher College in 1910 after the pastor of the

⁶ Ibid, p. 843; *The Baltimore Sun*, "Mourn Mr. Cowen," April 27, 1904.

⁷ Principe and Bernardo, Section 8, Page 10.

⁸ Named by the student body from Norse mythology, Mardal was the goddess Froya.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

Section 8 Page 5

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

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Lovely Lane Church, Dr. John Goucher, eventually spread to include fourteen buildings that had been originally erected as single dwellings. The college adapted the buildings for various functions, including faculty residences, dormitories, classrooms, and administrative offices.

Down-sizing the number of buildings they owned in order to relocate, Goucher College sold Mardal Hall in 1944 to Foster T. Fenton. By the 1950s, the college relocated to Towson, Maryland, although they retained several buildings in the area. While the use of the imposing structure at 2327 North Charles Street during this period of ownership has not been fully determined, it has been documented that Fenton continued to own the building until 1947, when it was sold to Ruth L. Gilbert. The sale also included the three-story brick building at 2323 North Charles Street (razed sometime after 1951).

As the current owners, the Gilbert family has retained ownership for almost fifty years. Under their ownership the building's use has been altered several times. The updated 1951 Sanborn maps shows that the building was used as a trade school. Presently, the three-story Italianate building operates as a nursing home, known as the Melchor Nursing Home.

In 1978, the Old Goucher College Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district, which included the Allen House at 2327 North Charles Street, included twenty-three buildings extending from 23rd to 24th streets and from Maryland Avenue to Calvert Street. In March 1994, the Old Goucher College Historic District was expanded to include the neighborhood that grew alongside the college. This was due to the significant development of the neighborhood prior to and during the development and growth of the college itself. The period of significance begins with the construction of the first extant building in the area to the start of World War II, when the general character of Baltimore began to change visually and culturally with the growth of the suburbs.⁹ The William H. Allen House at 2327 North Charles Street, erected in circa 1875, stands as one of the oldest extant buildings from the early development of the area prior to annexation in 1888.

⁹ Principe and Bernardo, Section 8, Pages 1 and 17.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

William H. Allen House

name of property

Baltimore, Maryland

county and state

=====

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and
Community Planning
Social/Education/Cultural

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function (s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
EDUCATION/Education-Related
HEALTH/Sanitarium

Known Design Source: William H. Allen, architect/builder/owner

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

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Chain of Title for 2327 North Charles Street:

June 12, 1844: Charles Carroll to Frederick Sumwalt
Part of land called "Huntington"

August 21, 1846: Frederick Sumwalt to Edward Green, as
trustee
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber AWB 370 Folio 515

July 20, 1849: Edward Green, Trustee appointed by
Chancery Court, to Henry and Harriet
Shirk
Edward Green versus Margaret Sumwalt
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber AWB 417 Folio 147

March 29, 1871: Henry and Harriet Shirk to Charles W.
Geekie
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber EHA 70 Folio 27

January 3, 1872: Charles W. Geekie to Walter Crook
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber EHA 72 Folio 347

January 20, 1872: Walter and Valerie Crook, Jr. to Andrew
G. and May H. Agnew of New York State
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber EHA 73 Folio 411

June 28, 1875: Andrew G. and May H. Agnew of New York
State to William H. Allen
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber JB 93 Folio 54

January 5, 1877: William H. Allen to John Gibson
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber JB 99 Folio 83

January 5, 1877: John Gibson leased to William H. Allen
99 year lease
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber JB 99 Folio 85

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

January 5, 1877: William H. Allen assign to Angelica P. Allen
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber JB 99 Folio 87

January 5, 1882: Priscilla C. Gibson to Angelica P.H. Allen
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber WMI 127 Folio 249

October 31, 1892: Angelica P.H. Allen to John K. Cowen
Land Records of Baltimore County,
Liber JB 1417 Folio 338

1904: John K. Cowen bequeathed to Helen A.W. Cowen and daughter Sara Cowen

June 28, 1906: Helen A.W. Cowen transferred one-half interest to Sara Cowen
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber RO 2251 Folio 414

June 1, 1909: Sara Cowen Monson and Charles Monson, Jr. to The Auxiliary Realty Company of Baltimore City
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber SCL 2504 Folio 139

June 1, 1909: The Auxiliary Realty Company of Baltimore City to Sara Cowen Monson and Charles Monson, Jr.
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber SCL 2504 Folio 140

March 2, 1910: Sara C. and Charles Monson, Jr. to Eugene Allen Noble and Lillian O. Noble
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber SCL 2563 Folio 263

April 29, 1910: Eugene Allen Noble and Lillian O. Noble to Goucher College
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber SCL 2576 Folio 365

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. B-4595

William H. Allen House
name of property
Baltimore, Maryland
county and state

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October 22, 1944:

Goucher College to Foster T. Fenton
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber MLP 6654 Folio 335

April 21, 1947:

Foster T. and Francis C. Fenton to Ruth
L. Gilbert
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber MLP 7125 Folio 302

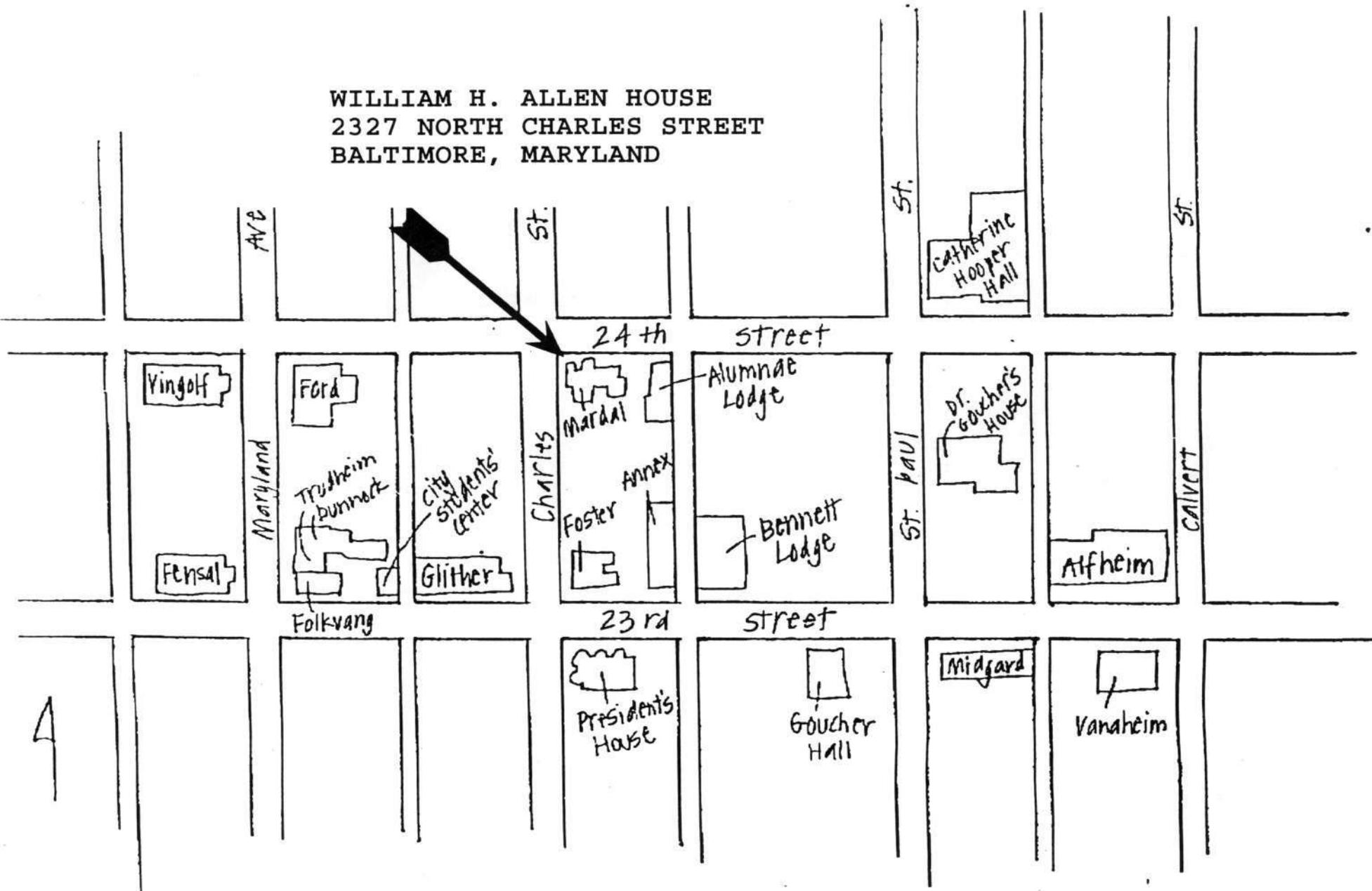
October 1, 1983:

Harry E. Gilbert, Jr. and C. Gordon
Gilbert, as personal representatives for
the estate of Ruth L. Gilbert, deceased,
to Harry E. Gilbert, Jr. of Worchester
County, MD; C. Gordon Gilbert of
Baltimore County; and Mary Louise Leonard
Transfer as indicated in the will of Ruth
L. Gilbert: Will Docket 52 Folio 62
Land Records of Baltimore City,
Liber SEB 136 Folio 357

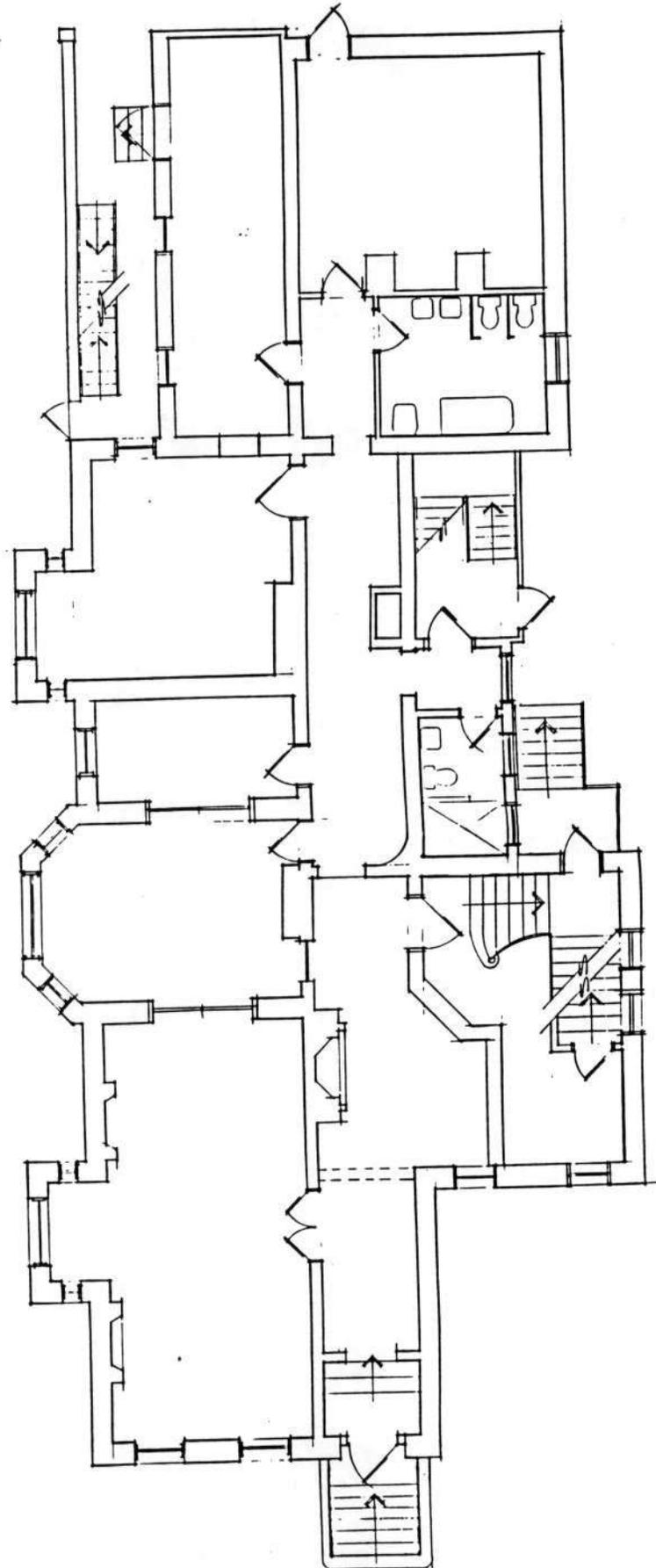
OLD GOUCHER COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT
Baltimore City
Maryland

SKETCH MAP
not to scale
pmj 12/75

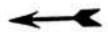
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 NORTH CHARLES STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND



B-4595

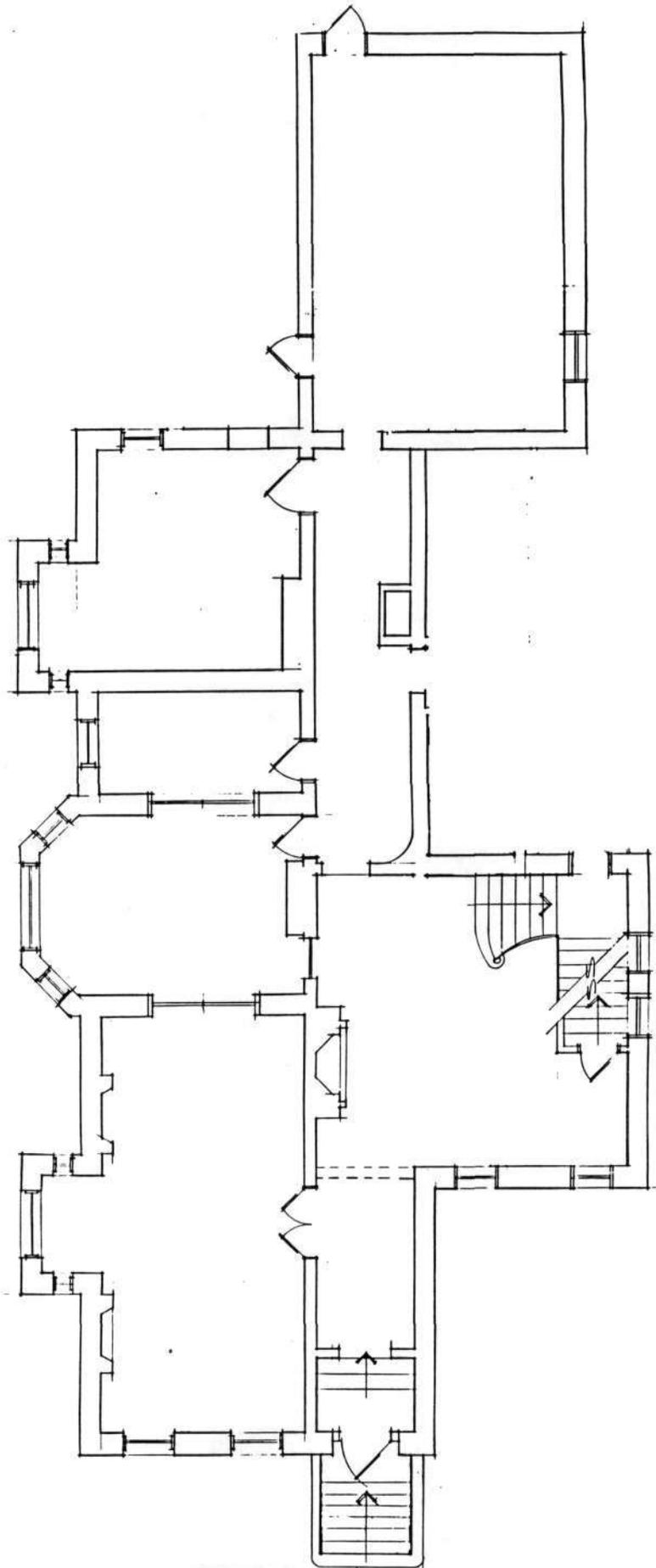


FIRST FLOOR PLAN



WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 NORTH CHARLES STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

B-4595



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

CONJECTURAL FLOOR PLAN OF 1897-1906 ALTERATIONS



WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 NORTH CHARLES STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

B-4595

John K. Cowen House (William H. Allen House, Melchor Nursing Home, Mardal Hall at Goucher College)

2327 N. Charles Street

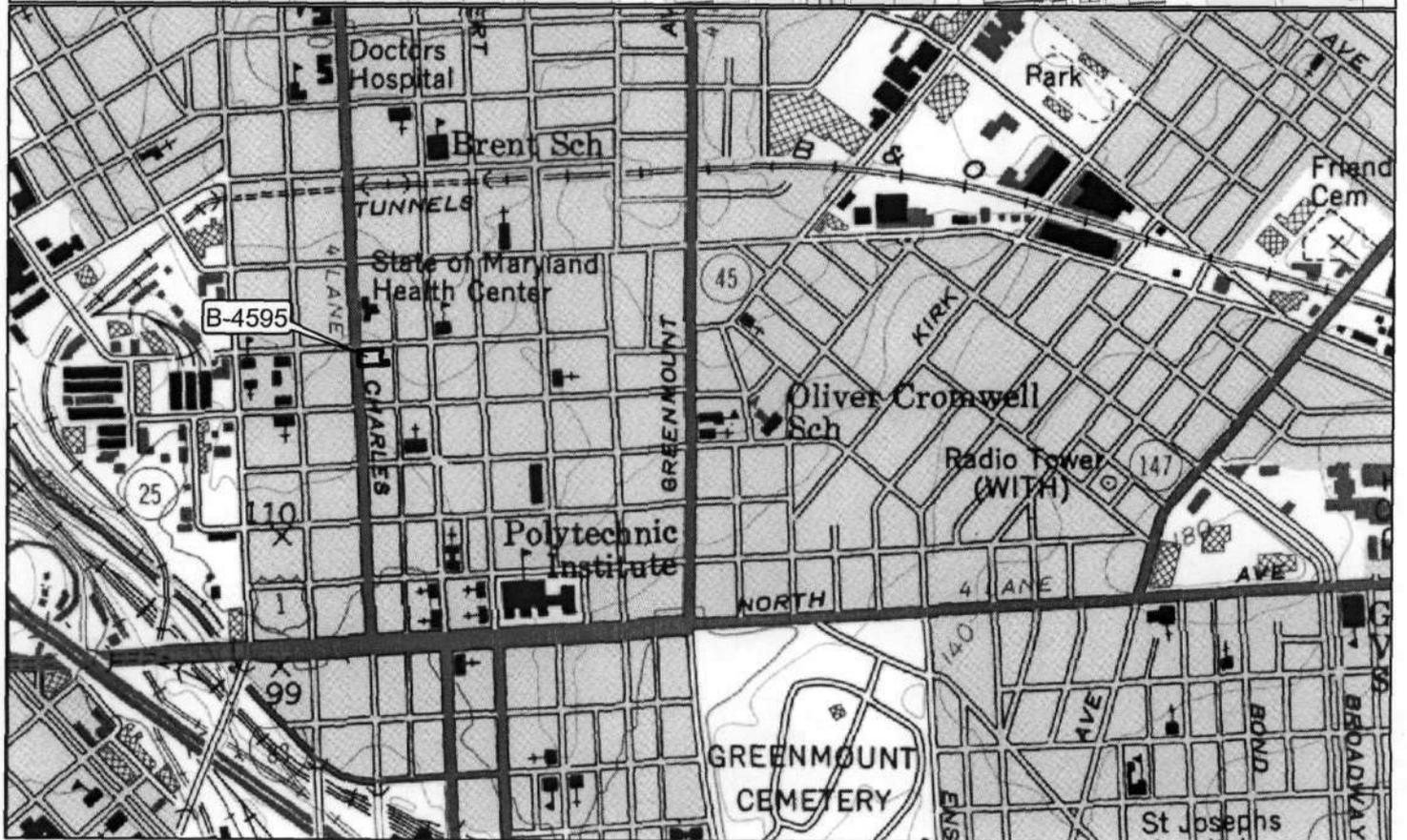
Block 3820 Lot 012

Baltimore City

Baltimore East Quad.



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





~~B-4549~~ B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST.

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

FACADE, LOOKING EAST

1 OF 19



B-4549 B-4595
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 N. CHARLES ST.
BALTIMORE, MD
TRACERIES
1/1996
MARYLAND SHPO
NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING SE
2 OF 19



B-4549 B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

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MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING SW

3 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

DETAIL, NE CORNER OF PORCH,

LOOKING WEST

4 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

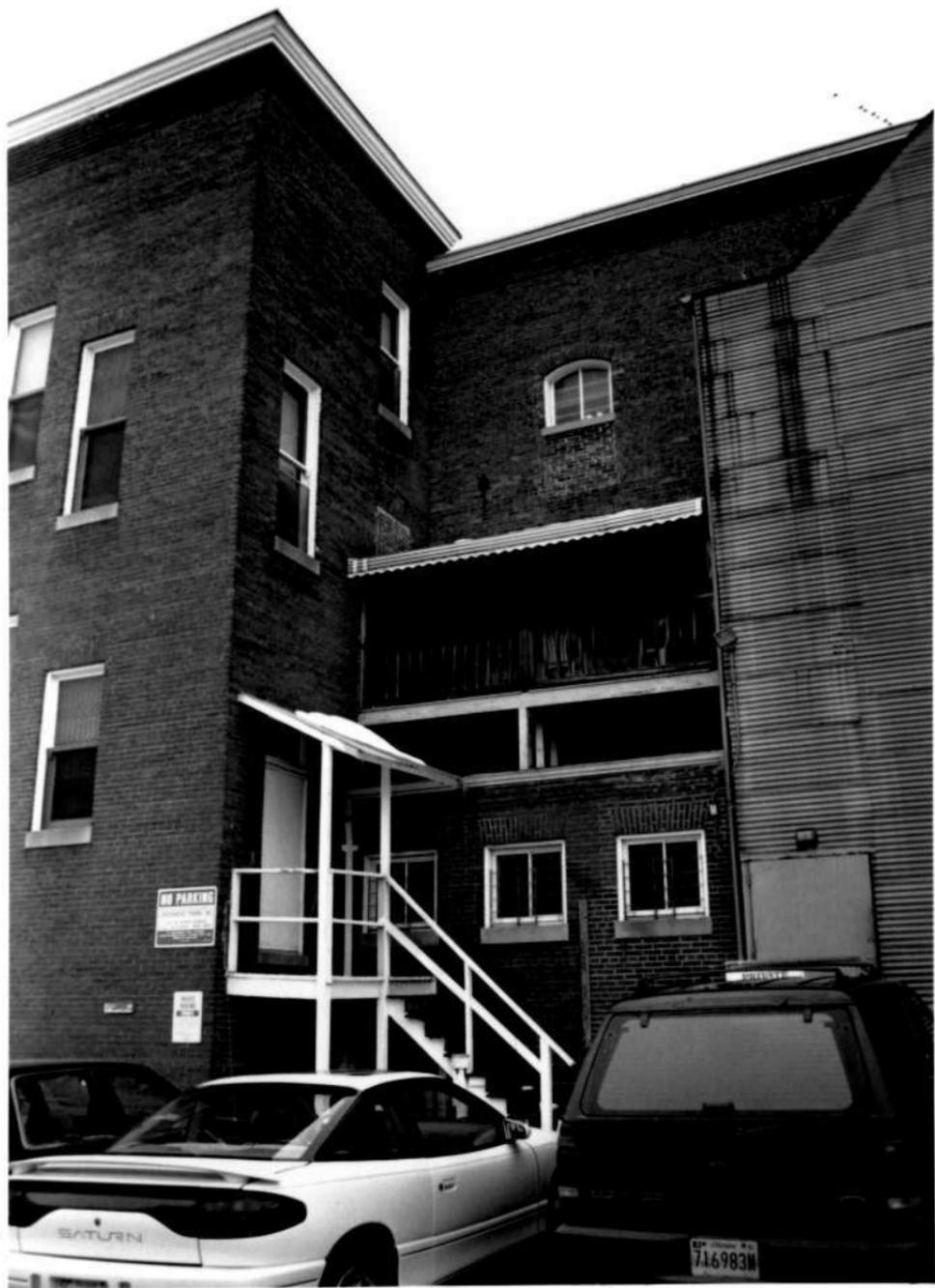
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MARYLAND SHPO

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5 OF 19



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B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST.

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

4/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

DETAIL, SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING
NORTH

6 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

7 OF 19



~~B-4549~~ B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

4/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

ENTRY HALL, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING
WEST

8 OF 19



B-4549 B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST.

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

SIDE-PASSAGE HALL, FIRST FLOOR,

LOOKING EAST

9 OF 19



~~B-4549~~ B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

MANTEL, SIDE-PASSAGE HALL, FIRST
FLOOR, LOOKING NORTH

10 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

FRONT PARLOR, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING

NW

11 OF 19



B-4595
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 N. CHARLES ST.
BALTIMORE, MD
TRACERIES

4/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

POCKET DOORS, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING
EAST

12 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST.

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

PARLOR, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING SOUTH

13 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

STAIR ADDITION, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING
SOUTH

14 OF 19



B-4595
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 N. CHARLES ST
BALTIMORE, MD
TRACERIES

1/1996
MARYLAND SHPO
STAIR ADDITION, SECOND FLOOR,
LOOKING SOUTH

15 OF 19



B-4595
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 N. CHARLES ST
BALTIMORE, MD
TRALERIES

✓1996
MARYLAND SHPO
MANTEL, SECOND FLOOR SIDE HALL,
LOOKING NORTH

16 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

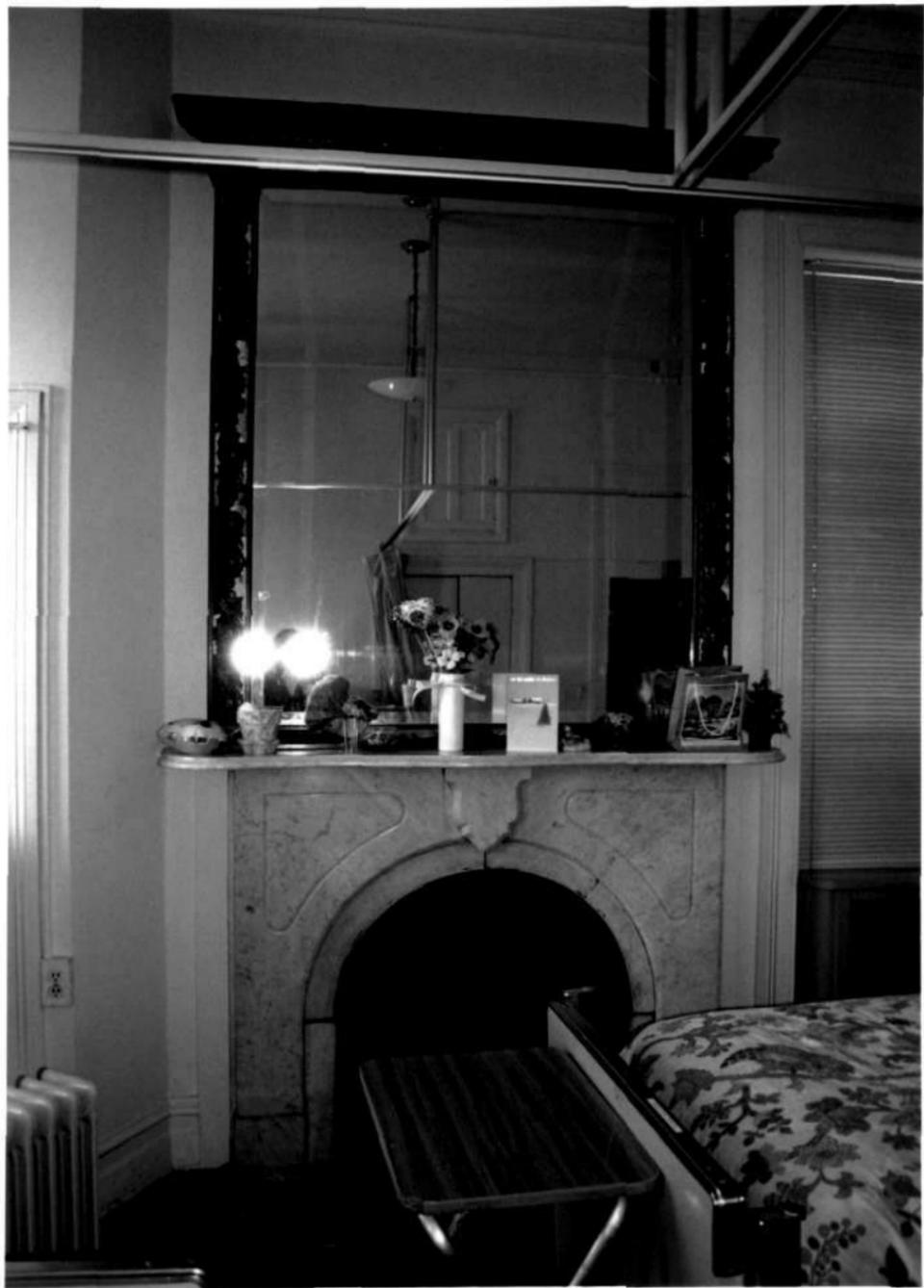
TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

FRONT ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, LOOKING NORTH

17 OF 19



B-4595
WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE
2327 N. CHARLES ST
BALTIMORE, MD
TRALERIES

1/1996
MARYLAND SHPO
SECOND FLOOR, LOOKING SOUTH

18 OF 19



B-4595

WILLIAM H. ALLEN HOUSE

2327 N. CHARLES ST

BALTIMORE, MD

TRACERIES

1/1996

MARYLAND SHPO

THIRD FLOOR, LOOKING SOUTH

19 OF 19