

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4760

1. Name

Historic 203 - 257 South Durham Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 203 - 257 South Durham Street
city, town Baltimore
state & zip code Maryland 21231 county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name
street & number telephone
city, town state & zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title
date federal state county local
depository for survey records
city, town state & zip code

7. Description

Condition		Check One	Check One
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved:
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move: _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This group of twenty-three two-bay-wide, two-story brick houses were built individually or in small groups and most have the low-pitched gable roofs typical of the small alley houses built in Baltimore in the 1850s, often along especially narrow secondary alley streets running perpendicularly off the main "alley" street. In many cases, alley houses such as these are still occupied by working class families and many are still covered with the formstone put on in the 1950s or 1960s. 249 S. Durham St. is an early two-and-a-half story, one-room deep, brick house with a steep gable roof and single dormer window typical of the 1790s and early 1800s. A number of the houses have been upgraded by the additional of an Italianate or a Renaissance-Revival sheet metal cornice and most have been covered with stucco or formstone.

The houses are two stories in height, are 12', 12'6", or 14' wide and occupy lots ranging in depth from 48' to 67'. Each two-room deep house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The pitch of the gable roof is especially low, a characteristic of this particular type of two-story, gable-roofed alley house. The houses are constructed in common bond, but most of the facades are now covered with either formstone or stucco. Originally each house had a simple brick corbelled cornice, but many are now obscured by the stucco and formstone. Chimneys are located in the middle of the front and rear rooms and each house also has a chimney at the rear end of the kitchen addition.

Many of the original door and window openings have been completely obscured by the stucco and formstone coverings but the few that remain visible have either splayed brick or segmentally arched brick lintels and wood or brick sills. All windows are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. No original doors survive and the row shows a mix of replacement door styles, all surmounted by a single light transom. The houses sit on low basements, lit by a single-light transom. The entrances are reached by two, three, or four concrete or brick steps. Many pairs of houses have either an arched or flat sallyport, so as to reach the backyard.

The houses are basically two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace. The one-story rear addition served as the kitchen, with its own cooking fireplace.

8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify		
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1850 - 1860

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

These houses are significant as being representative of a surviving group of extremely modest two-story, gable-roofed houses built in Fells Point in the 1850s to serve as inexpensive housing for the influx of newly arrived immigrant families seeking work in harbor-related activities or in the first small factories being built at this time. Most of these houses were held as rental property and most were located along narrow alley streets, or, as is the case here, along even narrower courts. In terms of design, the houses are basically the descendants of earlier Federal-style working class housing built in the early decades of the century, but without the usual dormer story of such houses. Because there is no dormer story the roof slope is much less steep in these later versions of the style. The houses are quite tiny, with two small rooms on each floor and a centrally located, tightly winding, narrow staircase.

The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the period. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and northeast of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide two-or three-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell for \$1,200 to \$1,500; small street houses for \$600 - \$900. Occasionally, the builder retained ownership of his small street houses to provide income for himself as rental properties or sold them to other investors. In this way people of varying means could afford to live in the same block. If they couldn't afford the approximately \$750 purchase price of the small street houses, then they *could* afford the \$8 or so a month it would cost to rent one, while they saved to be able to buy their own home later.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

date

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

telephone

city, town Baltimore

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotate Maryland, Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

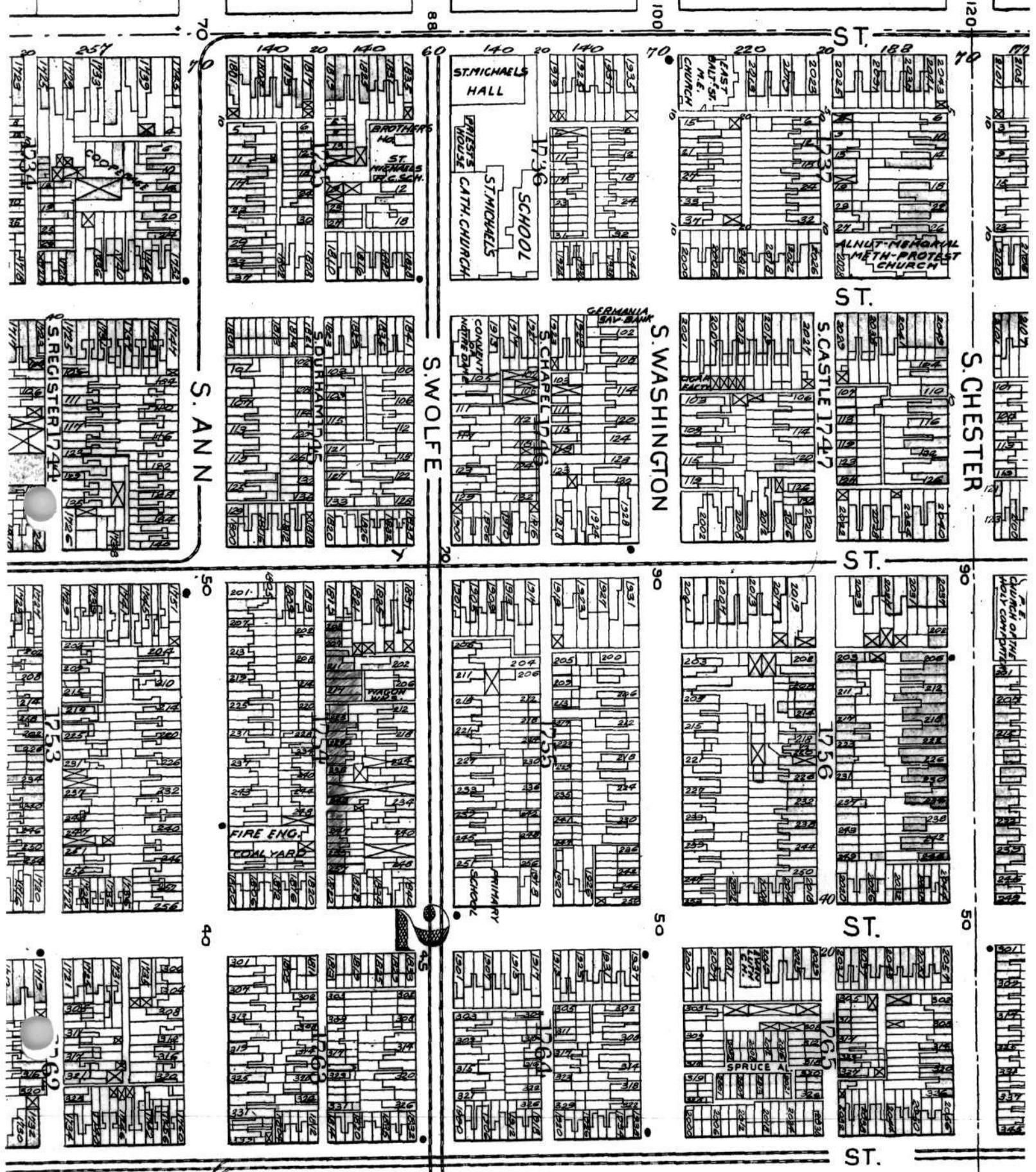
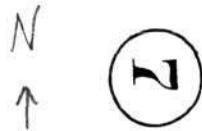
100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

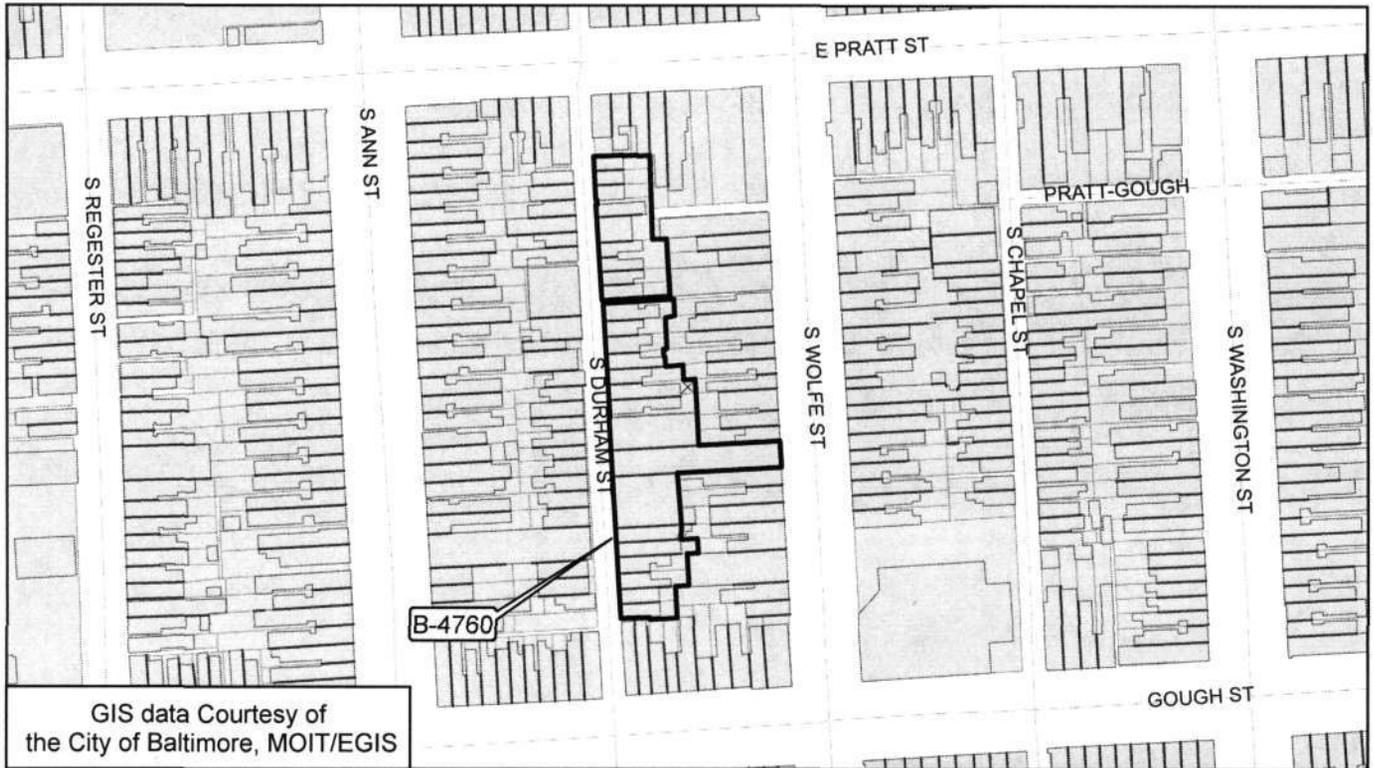
B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St
BALTO MD

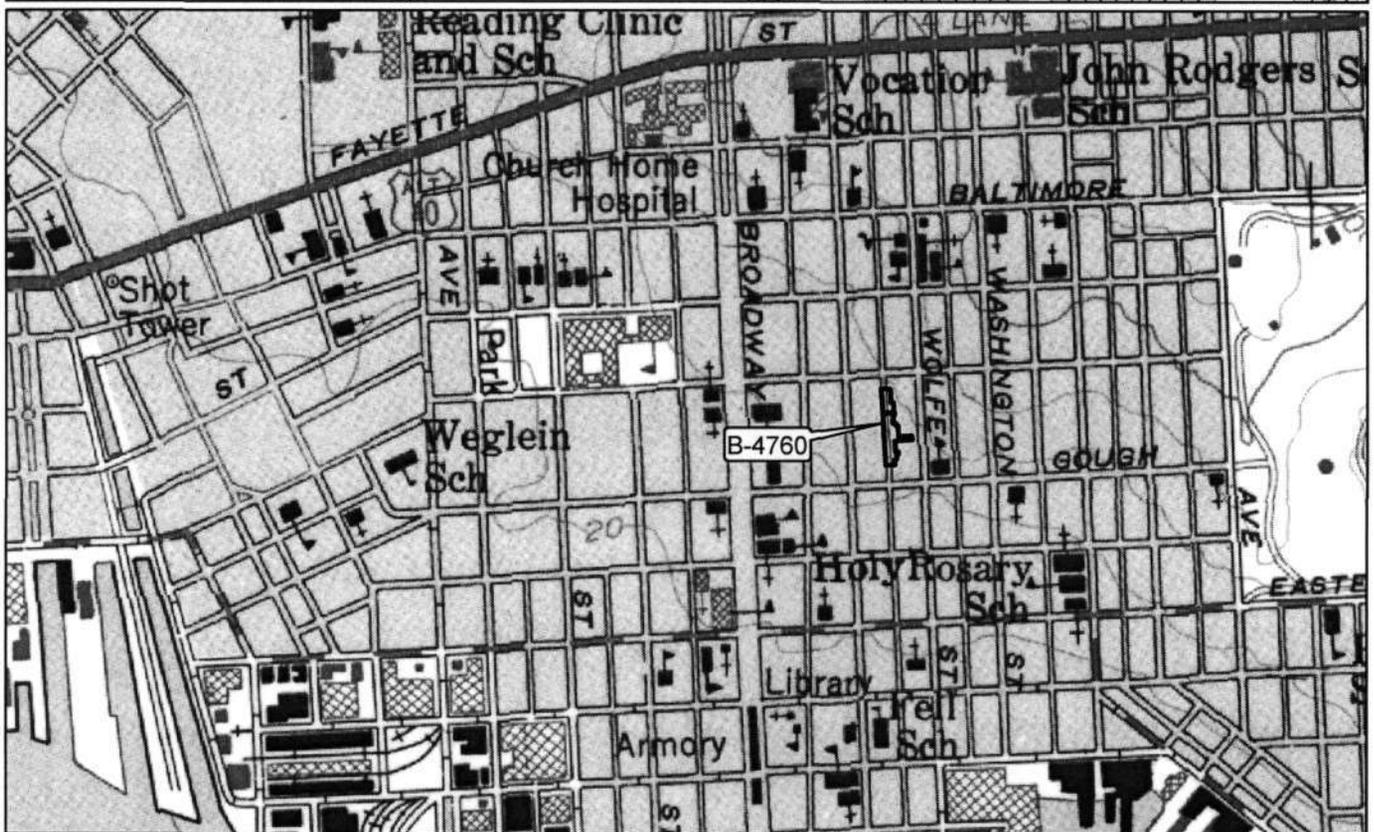
1906 City Atlas



B-4760
203-257 S. Durham Street
Block 1754, Lots 111-138
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.



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





221 S. Durham

B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St.

BALTO: MD

C. Belfrage

11/97

1/6

MD 5470

100

0073399 0211 N N N 22



PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO LOITERING
NO TRESPASSING
MANNING
HARRIS & SONS
20

227

227

223 S. Durham

B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

11/97

2/6

1083399 0211 N N N 22

180



225-227 S. Durham

B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St.

BACTO. MD

C. Belgrave

11/97

3/6

1093399 0211 N N N 22

180



BEWARE
OF DOG

249 S. Durham

I-4760

203-257 S. Durham St

BALTO. MD

C. Bellone

11/97

4/6

110399 0211 N N N 22

180



251-253 S. Durham

B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St.

BACTO. MD

C. Belmore

11/97

5/6

1113399 0211 N N N 22

101



255-257 S. Durham

B-4760

203-257 S. Durham St.

BALTO. MD

C. Beljone

11/97

6/6

1123399 0211 N H N 22

100