

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4763

1. Name

Historic 401 - 431 South Durham Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 401 - 431 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	X occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
X building(s)	X 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	X 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	X 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.

The east side of the 400 block of S. Durham St. is composed of three different groupings of two-story, two-bay-wide brick houses dating from the 1830s to the early 1900s. All but one of the houses has been covered with formstone and many have had their original cornices removed.

403 – 411 S. Durham St. are two-and-a-half story brick houses with gable roofs and dormer windows, typical of the small groups of two-and-a-half story, Federal-style houses built in Baltimore in the 1820s and 1830s. This particular group is also quite typical of the ways in which the older rowhouses in Baltimore have been “improved” over the years, reflecting the different tastes of different owners.

The houses are two-and-a-half stories in height, 12’6” and 11’10” wide, and occupy lots 70’ deep. Each house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The houses are probably constructed in running bond, but have been covered with formstone. The pitched gable roofs are covered with modern asphalt shingles overtop the original cedar shakes. A simple corbelled brick cornice runs across the façade. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof is shared by each pair of houses and serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition. Door and window openings are probably surmounted by flat wood lintels but the formstone obscures all original details. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have single-light transoms and a variety of replacement door types. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached by two concrete steps.

The houses are 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. There are two bedrooms on the second floor of the main part of the house, each with a fireplace, and a single room in the dormer story.

413 – 417 S. Durham St. is a group of three houses, two of which have sheet metal Renaissance Revival style cornices and one of which has no remaining cornice. The cornices date to c. 1900 – 1905, but they may have been applied to an earlier house. The facades are covered in formstone, which obscures all original details. An arched Sallyport runs back between the center of every two houses. The houses are 12’ and 11’6” wide and occupy lots 70’ deep.

Continuation Sheet

The cornice on 413-415 consists of a crown molding set above a cove molding, the whole framed by two end brackets decorated with grooves. The arched cap of the brackets, decorated with a rosette, rises slightly above the roofline. It appears that door and window openings had segmental arches and brick sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash.

419 – 425 S. Durham St. seem to have been a group of late Italianate-style houses built in the late 1880s, judging by 419, which retains its original brick façade and cornice. The remaining three houses are covered with formstone and the cornice has been removed. 419 is 14'6" wide and contains a sallyport as part of the house. The other three houses are only 10' wide and all occupy lots 60' deep. The wooden cornice consists of a crown molding supported by three long brackets, decorated with grooves, that connect to a lower molding strip. The frieze area, which also serves as ventilation for the attic, is decorated with a pattern of arrow-like shapes, created with a jig saw. Door and window openings have splayed brick lintels and wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 and 6/6 replacement sash. No original doors remain. The houses sit on low basements, lit by a single-light sash. Each entrance is reached by two, three, or four brick, concrete, or metal steps.

427 – 429 S. Durham St. are a pair of two-bay-wide, two-story-and-attic brick houses, typical of a popular type of Baltimore rowhouse built in the late 1840s and 1850s to serve the city's growing working class population. The lower-pitched gable roof allowed for a more spacious upper story, which now could be lit by small rectangular windows at both the front and rear of the house, instead of the earlier dormer windows. Despite its practical nature, this new feature had its roots in a stylistic change in Baltimore's fashionable housing, the small "attic" windows being an important part of the façade design of much larger town mansions being built in the new Greek Revival style. The houses are 15' wide and occupy lots 60' deep. Because early house lots in Baltimore were laid out back to back, without rear service alleys, the only entrance to the backyard is through the sallyport located in the center of the pair. The low-pitched gable roof had a simple corbelled brick cornice. Door and window openings probably had segmentally arched brick lintels and wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. The houses sit on low basements, each entrance being reached by a single concrete step.

431 S. Durham has a Renaissance Revival style sheet metal cornice that consists of a crown molding set above a cove molding and framed by two end brackets with ball finials that project well above the roofline. The house is 12' wide and occupies a 60' deep lots. The cornice dates to c. 1900 – 1905 but it may have been added to an earlier house. Door and window openings probably had segmentally arched brick lintels and wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. This house, too, sits on a low basement with the entrance being reached by a single concrete step.

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. 1820 - 1900

Builder/Architect

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

The group of houses on the east side of the 400 block of S. Durham St. is significant in that it contains a group of houses dating to the period of Fells Point's importance as a maritime center in the first part of the nineteenth century, and also contains later, up-to-date infill houses dating from the later nineteenth century. It is also significant as representing a healthy city neighborhood that has been inhabited by people taking care of their homes for over one-hundred-and-seventy-five years, and like many neighborhoods of this type, most of the houses were covered with formstone in the 1950s and 1960s.

The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods. 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-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 \$700 - \$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 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.

The two-and-a-half story houses were built at a time when Fells Point was already an important ship building center for the growing town of Baltimore. Early occupants included people involved in the maritime trades, small-scale craftsmen, and laborers who made their homes in the smaller scale and more affordable housing located on the small "alley" streets of Fells Point. Until about 1850 Durham Street was known as Happy Alley and its occupants were racially mixed. The two-story-and-attic houses were built in the 1840s and 1850s to accommodate the growing labor force centered around the Baltimore waterfront. Although showing stylistic influences from Greek Revival style buildings constructed in Baltimore in the 1830s and 1840s (in the proportions of the attic windows, the chaste exterior details, and the double parlor floor plan), the outstanding feature of these houses is their extreme simplicity of design and detailing. They are practical adaptations of a current mode of building, designed to meet the need for efficient, low-cost housing for a growing working class community.

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-4763
401-431 S. Durham Street
Block 1772 Lots 092-078
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





(403-411)

411 Durham

FPL

B-4763

403-433 S. Durham St.

SACRO, MD

C. Jeffman

12/97

MD SAPO

1/6

136384 0213 M R N 4 31



413-417 Durham

FP6

B-4763

403-433 S. Durham St.

3A170.140

C. Belgrave

12/97

80 [35]384 021 2/6



419-425 Durham

FPL

B-4763

403-433 S Durham St.

BALTO, MD

C. Beljonne

12/97

3/6

1341384 0211 1000000



419

419 Durham

FD6

B-4763

419 S. Durham St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

12/37

4/16

133384 0211 NOV 19 40



427-429 Durham

FD6

B-4763

403-433 S. Durham St

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

12/97

5/6

132384 0211 4 4 4 2



431

431

431 Dunbar

FDG

B-4763

403-433 S. Durham St.

BALTO. MD

C. Berghouse

12/97

4/6

140
E31384 0211 2004 20