

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B- 4768

### 1. Name

Historic 711- 721 South Durham Street  
and / common

### 2. Location

street & number 711- 721 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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.

The east side of the 700 block of S. Durham St. is comprised of three different pairs of two-story, two-bay-wide brick rowhouses, dating from the 1820s or 1830s to the 1870s or 1880s. This particular row is also quite typical of the ways in which the older rowhouses in Baltimore have been "improved" over the years, with either formstone or a sensitive restoration, reflecting the different tastes of different owners.

711 – 713 S. Durham St. are a pair of Italianate-style houses with shed roofs. The facades have been covered with formstone and the cornice covered with aluminum siding, so no original details are visible. 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 pairs. The houses are 13' wide and occupy lots 48' deep. There are chimneys located near the front and rear portions of the house. The window openings are filled with replacement 1/1 sash and both doors are modern replacements, set beneath a single-light transom. The houses sit on low basements, each entrance being reached by two brick or concrete steps.

715 – 717 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.

**Continuation sheet**

The houses are 13'6" wide, and occupy lots 48' deep. Each house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. An arched sallyport runs between the two houses, providing service access to the rear yards on these back-to-back city lots. The facades have been covered with formstone so no original details are visible. The low-pitched gable roof has a corbelled brick cornice, but it is hidden beneath the formstone covering. A double chimney located at the peak of the gable roof serves both the front and rear rooms. Each house also has a chimney at the rear of the kitchen addition. Door and window openings probably had segmentally-arched brick lintels with plain tympanums, and wood sills. The window openings are filled with 1/1 replacement sash. Doorways have single-light transoms and replacement doors. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached by two brick steps.

719 – 721 S. Durham St. are a pair of 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 period c. 1800 - 1820. The houses are two-and-a-half stories in height, only 9'7" wide and occupy lots 49'3" deep. The houses are constructed in running bond and were originally painted, but 719 has been covered with aluminum siding. The pitched gable roofs are covered with modern asphalt shingles overtop the original cedar shakes. A simple corbelled brick cornice runs across the façade.

The door and window openings have segmentally arched brick lintels on the first floor and flat wood lintels on the second floor. The sills are now brick. 719 has 1/1 replacement sash; 721 has 4/4 sash, possibly original to the house. Doorways have no transoms and modern, six-panel doors. The houses sit on low basements, the entrances being reached by a single concrete or marble step.

At 715 – 717 and 719 – 721 S. Durham St. 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. There are two bedrooms on the second floor of the main part of the house, each with a fireplace. The third floor attic rooms have low sloping ceilings, with a maximum ceiling height of about seven feet at the peak of the gable sloping down to about four feet at the front and rear of the house. 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. 1820 - 1875

**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 700 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 Italianate-style houses were built c. 1875 to accommodate the growing labor force centered around the Fells Point waterfront and its growing businesses, like oyster and fruit packing companies.

The houses are especially significant as being located in the oldest part of Fells Point, only a few blocks from the water, and represent an integral part of the history of this National Register district. Slated for demolition in the 1960s as part of the planned East-West highway connection existing segments of I-95 to the north and south of the city, these houses were saved by local preservation activists who created the Fells Point National Register District in 1969.

## 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

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date

telephone

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 Annotated 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-4768  
711-721 S. Durham Street  
Block 1846 Lots 056-061  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad.





711-713 S. Durham  
FPL

B-4768

711-723 S. Durham #4

BACTO .MO

C. Beljane

12/97

MINAPO

1/3

112384 0211 M H H A D 3



715-717 S Durham  
FPG

B-4768

711-723 S. Durham H.

BACTO. MD

C. Behrens

12/97

2/3

111384 0211 N.H. 482



719

719-721 S Durham  
FDG

B-4768  
711-723 S Durham St.  
BALTO. MD.  
C. Behlman  
12/97  
3/3

1101584 0211 N 9 9 8 1