

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4856

### 1. Name

Historic 501 - 523 North Port Street  
and / common

### 2. Location

street & number 501 - 523 North Port Street  
city, town Baltimore  
state & zip code Maryland 21231 county

### 3. Classification

**Category**  
 district  
 building(s)  
 structure  
 site  
 object

**Ownership**  
 public  
 private  
 both  
**Public Acquisition**  
 in process  
 being considered  
 not applicable

**Status**  
 occupied  
 unoccupied  
 work in progress  
**Accessible**  
 yes: restricted  
 yes: unrestricted  
 no

**Present Use**  
 agriculture  
 commercial  
 educational  
 entertainment  
 government  
 industrial  
 military  
 museum  
 park  
 private residence  
 religious  
 scientific  
 transportation  
 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**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check One**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check One**

original site  
 moved:  
date of move: \_\_\_\_\_

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

This row of fourteen two-story, two-bay wide vernacular Renaissance Revival-style brick houses with shed roofs and sheet metal cornices were built c. 1900 – 1905. The houses were originally painted a dark red color, but now all but one have been covered with formstone.

After the use of wood was outlawed for cornices in 1892, sheet metal became the predominant material used. By the early years of the 20th century, the most popular form of sheet metal cornice sported ball finials and often classical motifs like swags pressed into the frieze area. Generally, only main street two story houses had decorated friezes-the builder saved money on his small street versions by eliminating them. Likewise, while the main street houses in this style would have marble basements, stringers, lintels, and steps, builders used no marble at all on their small street versions, painting the basements white instead. Main street houses would have stained glass transoms over both the door and the wide first floor window; on the small streets builders offered stained glass only in the door transom.

The houses are two stories in height, 12' wide (12'8" and 12'9" for the two end units, designed to serve as combination storefront/residences) and occupy lots 70' deep. Each house is three small rooms deep and there is no backbuilding. Each house has a single hooded chimney located near the rear of the house. The houses are built in running bond, which was always painted, but most have been covered with formstone. The shed roof is capped by a continuous sheet metal cornice consisting of a crown molding, decorated with a row of dentils, supported by long end brackets that connect to a lower molding strip and end with a distinct trefoil pattern. The arched cap of the brackets, decorated with a rosette, rises slightly above the roofline.

The door and window openings have segmentally arched brick lintels, with plain tympanums. The sills are brick. All sash are 1/1, the original configuration, but in a nod to fashion, the first floor windows are wider. The doorways had a stained glass transom bearing the house number, a few of which survive. None of the original Arts and Crafts-style doors survive and all doors are modern replacements. The houses sit on fairly high basements lit by a wide, single-light sash. Each front door is reached by four concrete or brick steps.

## 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
<input checked="" 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. 1900 - 1905

**Builder/Architect** Isaac Cooper

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

This group of houses is significant as representing the very last type of small street houses to be built, in the period c. 1905 - 1909, when a new city ordinance outlawed building houses on streets less than 40' wide.

A number of major Baltimore builders developed this area according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the period c. 1880 to 1910. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of two-story 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 - \$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. 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.

In this particular case Cooper sold all of the houses to owner-occupants--mainly German skilled workers on the main streets and Polish laborers and tailors on the small streets

The land originally on which these houses are built belonged to the Patterson family as part of their 18<sup>th</sup> century estate, which also included the land given by the family to the city for Patterson Park. In the early 1900s the Patterson heirs began developing this block by leasing parcels to various builders who constructed modestly-scaled and priced housing for the mainly German immigrant families who were settling near the port-related fledgling industries of Canton. Most of the houses sold to mainly German-American semi-skilled tradesmen and laborers employed in nearby factories, who received mortgages from a variety of local building and loans, many of them sponsored by the German 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

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 Code of 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 property rights.

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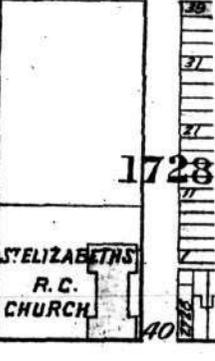
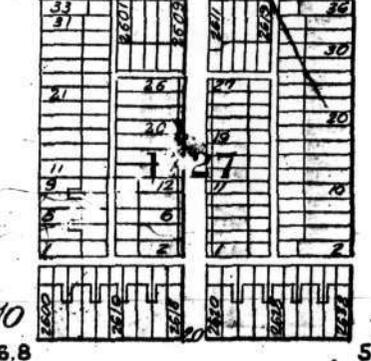
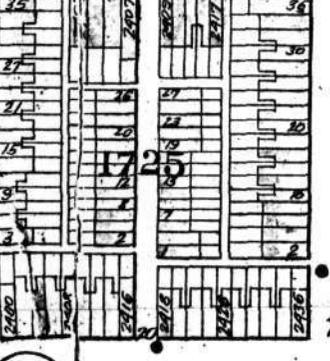
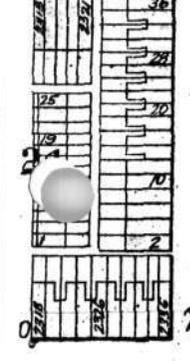
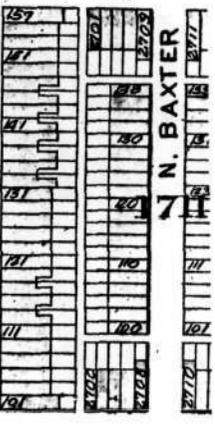
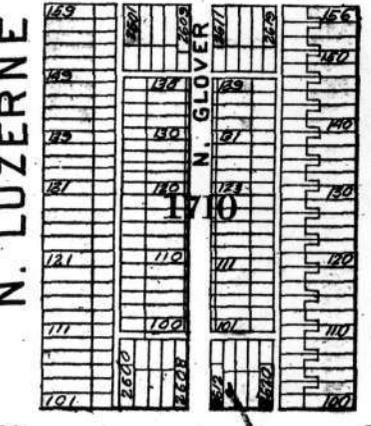
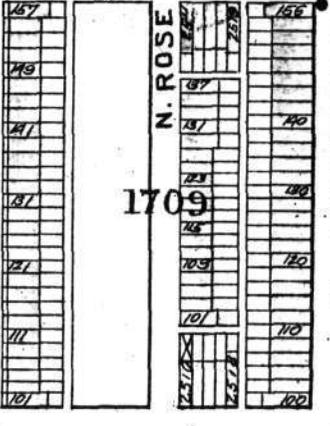
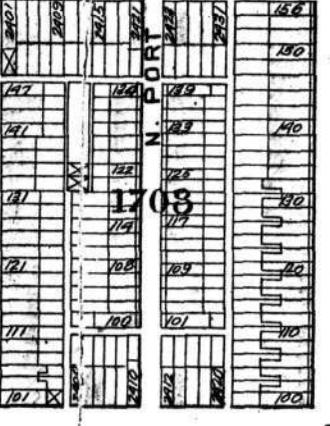
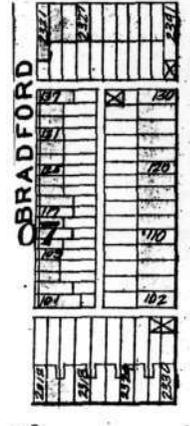
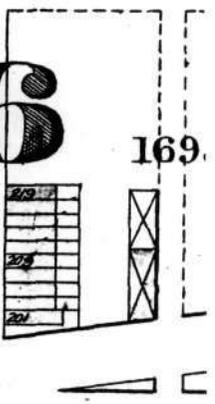
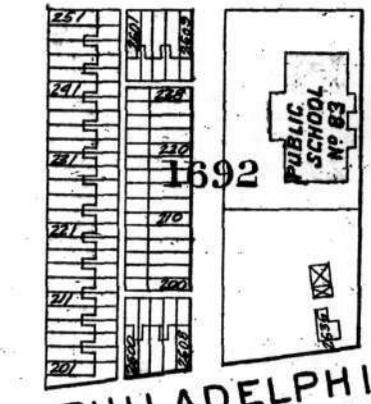
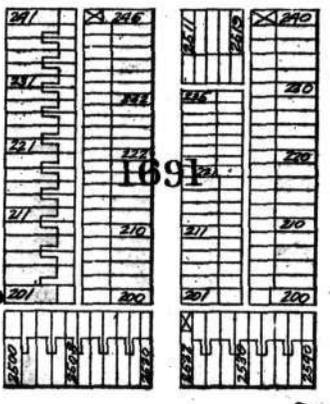
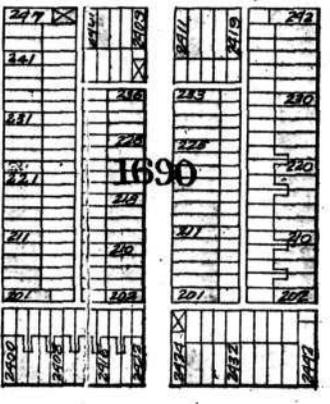
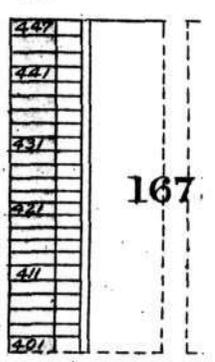
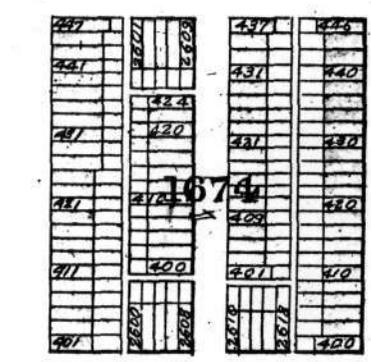
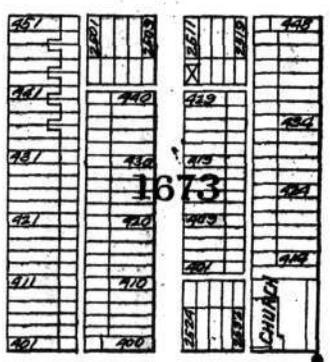
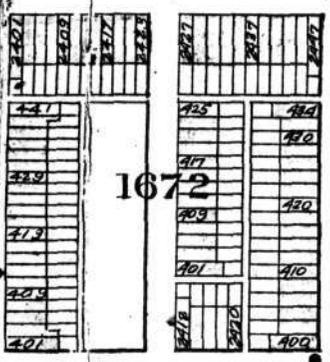
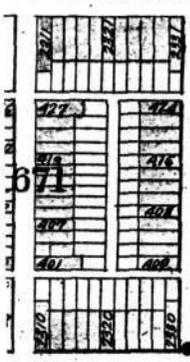
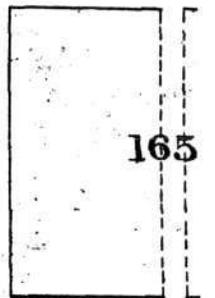
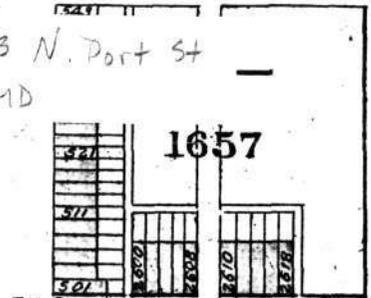
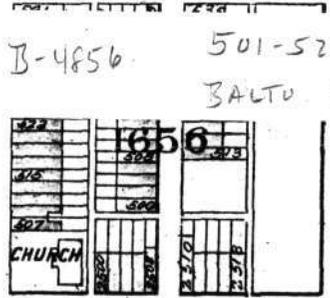
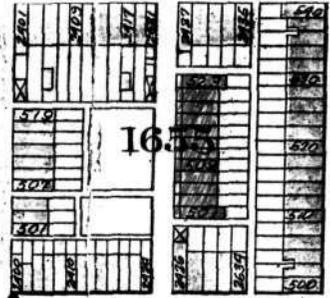
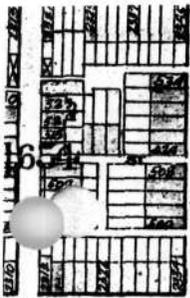
DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

B-4856 501-523 N. Port St  
BALTO MD



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PHILADELPHIA 39.60

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BRADFORD  
MONTFORD

N. MILTON

N. ROSE

N. LUZERNE

N. GLOVER

N. LAKEWOOD

N. BAXTER

ST. ELIZABETH'S  
R.C. CHURCH





B-4856

501-523

N. Port St.

BALTO. MD

M. Hayward

6/00

MD SHPD

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PRIVATE  
PROPERTY  
NO LOITERING  
NO TRESPASSING  
IF LEGAL TRAPPED  
INSIDE CALL 356-6284

517

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B-4856  
515 N. Port St.  
BALTO, MD  
M. Hayward  
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MD SAPO  
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PROFESSIONAL  
REGISTERED  
PAINTERS

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