

CAPSULE SUMMARY

B-5248

Enoch Pratt Library, Branch No. 15

1443 Gorsuch Avenue

Baltimore, Maryland

1911

Private

The Enoch Pratt Library, Branch No. 15 at 1443 Gorsuch Avenue was constructed in 1911 in the Classical Revival style from the architectural designs of Archer and Allen. Constructed with funding from Andrew Carnegie, who continued the generosity of Enoch Pratt, the building was one of twenty free library branches that played an essential role in expanding the system's influence throughout the city, enabling them to reach new areas of population by bringing the libraries into developing neighborhoods. The architecturally significant building served the growing neighborhood of Homestead and the surrounding area until shifts in the socio-economic demographics of the area and city budgeting issues forced its closure in May 1971. The city sold the building in 1982; it is currently undergoing renovation for use as a church.

The two-story, Classical Revival-style library was constructed to serve the neighborhood of Homestead. The library's simple rectangular footprint has an original one-story ell projecting from the center of the south (rear) elevation. The all-stretcher-bond brick building is set on an ashlar cut, irregular-coursed stone foundation that is exposed only on the east elevation because of the slope of the site. The walls feature a continuous limestone water table, brick soldier lintel course, molded limestone belt course, and Doric brick pilasters visually supporting a molded limestone entablature. The flat-top hipped roof is clad with square-butt slate shingles and features a molded limestone boxed cornice with a dentilated frieze. The ell is similarly treated with a half-hipped roof with flat deck. An exterior brick corbeled chimney pierces the south slope of the hipped roof of the main block. The main entry to the building is accessed via a concrete stair set on a solid brick-clad foundation with a concrete cap.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. B-5248

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 15

other

2. Location

street and number 1443 Gorsuch Avenue __ not for publication

city, town Baltimore __ vicinity

county

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name First Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ Inc.

street and number 2431-49 Franford Avenue telephone

city, town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19125

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber 11425 folio 410

city, town Baltimore tax map 9 tax parcel BK 4111/LOT 10 tax ID number 09164111010

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
 Recorded by HABS/HAER
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
 Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	1	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense <input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic <input type="checkbox"/> social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	1	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry <input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
			0	

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

The two-story, Classical Revival-style library at 1443 Gorsuch Avenue was constructed in 1911 to serve the neighborhood of Homestead. Designed by Archer and Allen, the library's simple rectangular footprint has an original one-story ell projecting from the center of the south (rear) elevation. The all-stretcher-bond brick building is set on an ashlar cut, irregular-coursed stone foundation that is exposed only on the east elevation because of the slope of the site. The walls feature a continuous limestone water table, brick soldier lintel course, molded limestone belt course, and Doric brick pilasters visually supporting a molded limestone entablature. The flat-top hipped roof is clad with square-butt slate shingles and features a molded limestone boxed cornice with a dentilated frieze. The ell is similarly treated with a half-hipped roof with flat deck. An exterior brick corbeled chimney pierces the south slope of the hipped roof of the main block. The main entry to the building is accessed via a concrete stair set on a solid brick-clad foundation with a concrete cap.

The *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* document no alterations to the library building since its construction. The 1914-1915 *Sanborn Map* noted the building's overall height at twenty feet, the construction of twelve-inch thick walls, and slate-clad roofs on the main block and addition. Heat was provided by a furnace and the lights were electric. The 1928-1936 *Sanborn Map* documents a brick wall orientated from north-south dividing the basement, a concrete basement floor, and steam heat. The pouring of the concrete floor and other interior alterations were the result of excessive water infiltration that afflicted the building until a 1921 renovation.¹ By 1951, *Sanborn Maps* record the replacement of the rear one-story ell's slate roof with asphalt shingles. Since that time, most recent alterations to the building include the removal, replacement, and infill of windows, and the pouring of concrete parking pads flanking the main entry's terrace, thus removing the landscape front yard.

Setting

Located at the corner of Gorsuch and Kirk Avenues on a slightly elevated lot that is sloping, the library is set forty feet back from Gorsuch Avenue. A ten-foot sidewalk separates the northern extent of the property from the road; the building is accessed via a concrete stair and terrace flanked by a concrete retaining wall with square plinths at the corners. Due to the sloping of the lot (west-to-east), the stair's four risers are partially obscured on its western end by the sidewalk. Taking the site into account, this design is original. Two pipe handrails were added to the stair at an unknown date. The stair leads to the library's terrace, which features large square concrete pavers. The terrace is flanked to the east and west by concrete. Setback approximately ten feet from Kirk Avenue, the east elevation directly abuts the concrete sidewalk. Stone retaining walls with concrete caps edge the eastern end of the lot; the walls adjoin and replicate the building's exposed six-foot, ashlar cut, irregular-coursed, stone foundation. An alley is located to the south of the property. Flanking the ell is an overgrown lawn to the east and a concrete patio to the west. On the southern border of the property, a

¹ For more information see volumes 1911-1921 of *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarians to the Board of Trustees*.

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matching stone retaining wall edges its eastern extent and adjoins a concrete curb. The western edge of the lot features a matching stone retaining wall and is separated from the building's western elevation by a narrow concrete walkway.

Exterior Description

The library building, reflecting the Classical Revival style, stands two stories on a raised basement. The rectangular structure is veneered in all-stretcher-bond bricks with an ashlar cut, irregular-coursed stone foundation exposed on the northeast and northwest elevations due to the slope of the site. The basement story is finished with an all-stretcher-bond brick veneer. The stepped stone base at this level reads like a plinth, on which the building has been placed. The limestone water table, finished with a fillet profile, is edged along the bottom with soldier bricks. The deeply recessed basement openings have limestone sills and have recently been infilled with 36 glass blocks, replacing paired double-hung sash. A single-leaf entry opening is located to the west of the main stair to the first story. The opening holds a replacement flush door of metal within a molded wood surround. The soldier bricks at the base of the water table act as a jack-arched lintel. Concrete steps lacking a rail provide access to the below-grade entry. The primary façade, extending three structural bays, presents a central entry and double-hung window openings. The three bays are marked by Doric pilasters of brick set on limestone plinths that rest upon the building's limestone water table. The pilasters are recessed at the center, creating shadowed depth along the façade. The two end bays are each pierced by paired double-hung openings framed and divided by Doric brick pilasters. Finished with square-edged plinths and ogee-molded capitals, the pilasters are set upon continuous ogee-molded limestone sills that read as string courses. They visually support a plain limestone architrave. Brick has been molded to create paneled spandrels below the continuous sills. Each opening has a limestone sill, rowlock brick surrounds, and jack-arched lintel of soldier bricks. The present sash appears to be metal with pressboard covering the openings from the interior; the paired 1/1 double-hung sash with fixed one-light transoms were recently removed.

The central entry bay presents a *piano nobile*, with a straight-flight of concrete steps. Set on a carriage enclosed by brick at the sides, the stringer is framed by a concrete base that also acts as the coping for the brick. Squared plinths act as landing balusters. Metal pipe rails have been added to provide additional support. The water table doubles as a sill for the double-leaf entry opening, which presently holds wood-frame doors with elongated fixed windows covered by metal security wire. The classically inspired entry surround is limestone, with ogee back banding and an interior cavetto molding edged by ogee molding. This creates a sunken panel onto which roundels have been symmetrically placed. The wood surround of the opening is square edged with fillet pilaster casing around the door and transom. The transom holds a leaded stain-glass

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fixed light with square and triangular shapes. Set directly above the opening is a limestone panel with ogee back banding that matches that of the main entry surround. The panel holds iron lettering reading, "BRANCH NO. 15." Flanking the entry, at the same height as the paired windows in the end bays, are narrow double-hung openings. These are similarly finished with Doric brick pilasters set on square-edged plinths with ogee-molded capitals. The pilasters rest upon the continuous ogee-molded limestone string course, which is interrupted only by the larger pilasters creating the structural bays. They visually support a plain limestone architrave. Brick has been molded to create paneled spandrels below the continuous sills. Each opening has a limestone sill, rowlock brick surrounds, and jack-arched lintel of soldier bricks. The present sash appears to be metal with pressboard covering the openings from the interior; the single 1/1 double-hung sash with fixed one-light transom was recently removed.

The entablature of the building, which wraps around each elevation, extends up from the architraves visually supported by pilasters. The limestone architrave of the entablature is stepped with a narrow ogee-molded cap. The frieze is exposed brick laid in all-stretcher-bond. The bed molding has an ogee-molded profile, set below a denticulated string course. The overhanging limestone cornice has a boxed based and ogee cap. Iron, which has oxidized, surrounds the building at the top of the entablature, acting as the crown of the cornice. It is ornamented with roundels and fillet molding. Directly over the central entry bay, covering the architrave and frieze of the building's entablature is a limestone sign. It is framed by a raised surround with back banding. Stepped modillions with ogee caps, set upon two of the pilasters, support the sign. It reads "ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY."

The northeast elevation is one structural bay wide. The exposed foundation, reinforced with ashlar cut, irregular-coursed stone, abuts the limestone plinth that encircles the building; the plinth reads as the water table because the foundation level of this elevation is exposed. An elongated, very tall, entry opening pierces the foundation and basement level at the center of the elevation. The opening presently holds a single-leaf commercial-style door with side light and fixed transom. The glass, which is set in metal frames, has been covered with black paper. The classically inspired frame is limestone with back banding and stepped casing. The opening extends beyond the plinth and soldier brick course, terminating at the cap of the water table—which reads as a string course on this elevation. The flanking window openings on the basement level lack surrounds, but sit on a limestone sill that aligns with the plinth. The paired double-hung sash has been replaced with 36 glass blocks. The soldier-brick course under the water table acts as a jack-arched lintel. The corners of the building are marked by Doric brick pilasters with limestone bases and capitals. The band of five openings is dressed similarly to the façade openings with a continuous string course on which the brick pilasters sit. The openings presently have sash that appears to be metal with pressboard covering from the interior; the single 1/1 double-hung sash with fixed one-light transom was recently removed. Sunken panels

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create the spandrels under each opening, which is finished with a limestone sill, rowlock brick surrounds, and jack-arched lintel of soldier bricks.

The northwest elevation, heavily obscured by mature trees, closely mimics that of the southeast elevation on the upper story. The exposed basement level has five window openings, each filled with glass blocks. The two outer bays are larger, holding 36 glass blocks, while those in the inner bays have 15 glass blocks.

Continuing the classically inspired designs of the primary facades fronting Gorsuch and Kirk Avenues, the rear of the building along the vehicular alley is three structural bays wide. The center bay houses the one-story projection, which is an original feature to the design. This elevation is similar designed with a limestone plinth over the ashlar-clad foundation, limestone water table, glass block basement windows, and limestone entablature. The end bays, framed by Doric pilasters resting on the water table, hold paired window openings with brick pilasters that create the surrounds and mullion. Again, the openings have metal frames and have been infilled from the interior with pressboard. The brick interior chimney rises from the southern slope of the roof, directly over the projection. The stack of the chimney has been reconstructed, a detail evident from the differing brick color and simple corbeled cap.

The projection in the center bay has a half-hipped roof covered in square-butt slate tiles. The roof extends from just below the overhanging cornice encircling the main block. The projection is similarly finished with an ogee-molded boxed cornice that overhangs and has a metal architrave over the crown. It is ornamented with roundels and fillet molding. The bed molding has a cavetto profile. Like the main block, the all-stretcher-bond brick projection has an ashlar-clad foundation, limestone water table that extends from the plinth of the main structure, and smooth limestone string course. The string course is edged along with base with a course of soldier bricks. Foundation openings have been infilled with concrete blocks on the southeast elevation, which is completely below grade. A rectangular opening at the center of the basement level of this same elevation has been infilled with brick. The narrow openings on the basement level of the northwest and southeast elevations have 15 glass blocks, with sills of limestone created by the water table. The first story of the projection, on the northwest side, has two narrow openings infilled with glass blocks. The opening in the southernmost bay sits on the string course, while the opening in the northernmost bay is set a half-story higher. Both openings have jack-arched lintels of brick. Three narrow openings symmetrically and equally spaced pierce the northeast elevation of the projection. These openings retain the original 1/1 wood sash with limestone sills and jack-arched soldier lintels. The southeast elevation holds a paired window, retaining its original 1/1 wood sash, taenea-molded mullion and ogee-molded surrounds. Like the other openings, this centrally placed opening has a limestone sill and jack-arched lintel of soldier bricks.

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Interior Description

EHT Tracerics attempted to contact the owners of Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 15, in order to conduct an interior survey of the building, but had no success. Communication efforts included telephone calls to the church phone number and several site visits during the course of our documentation effort for the church. Our final effort occurred on August 21, 2013, when Tracerics attempted to access the interior of the building, but the building was unattended and closed.

Integrity

The library, although no longer serving as such, retains a high degree of integrity to support its architectural and historical significance. The building was intentionally placed within the developing Homestead neighborhood, serving residents of the immediate and surrounding areas. The neighborhood has remained residential, preserving the library's integrity of setting and location. The integrity of design and workmanship remains sufficiently intact as the form, massing, fenestration, and stylistic detailing have not been altered since the building's completion in 1911. The window and doors have been replaced, altering the fenestration pattern created by the paired double-hung sash that originally filled the openings. However, the window openings on the upper story presently do not have sash but have been boarded up from the interior. The basement windows have glass blocks, which does compromise integrity of design and materials. The design of the building was intentional, to reflect its use as a branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. The original signage that states its use and association are architecturally part of the design and have not been removed. Although no longer serving the community as a library, but rather being renovated for use as a church, the building retains integrity of feeling and association.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1911; 1982

Architect/Builder Archer and Allen

Construction dates 1911

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Enoch Pratt Library, Branch No. 15 at 1443 Gorsuch Avenue was constructed in 1911 in the Classical Revival style from the architectural designs of Archer and Allen. Constructed with funding from Andrew Carnegie, who continued the generosity of Enoch Pratt, the building was one of twenty free library branches that played an essential role in expanding the system's influence throughout the city, enabling them to reach new areas of population by bringing the libraries into developing neighborhoods. The architecturally significant building served the growing neighborhood of Homestead and the surrounding area until shifts in the socio-economic demographics of the area and city budgeting issues forced its closure in May 1971. The city sold the building in 1982; it is currently undergoing renovation for use as a church.

Historic Context

Homestead

Robert Gorsuch and his syndicate including John Fox, Edward Jackson, and John W. Van Hook desired to establish Baltimore's first middle-class suburban neighborhood. Named "Homestead" in honor of the old family estate, the 1850 subdivision was one-and-three-quarter miles from Baltimore City's courthouse and a quarter-mile north of the city's limits. The plat consisted of over 1000, 16x90 foot lots, fronting 50 foot streets and 20 foot alleys.²

Homestead struggled to grow due to poor financial planning and a lack of reliable transportation to Baltimore City.³ An omnibus (urban stage coach), however, offered limited access to the neighborhood.⁴ In 1870, the

² Baltimore County Circuit Court, "Plan of the Buildings Lots of the Homestead," Plat Book JWS 2, Folio 88, Maryland State Archives, MSA C2136, <http://www.plato.mdarchives.state.md.us> (accessed June 12, 2012); Baltimore City Circuit Court, "Plan of the Building Lots of the Homestead," Plat Book RHB, Folio 2412, Maryland State Archives, MSA 2828-5046, <http://www.plato.mdarchives.state.md.us> (accessed June 12, 2012).

³ William Stump, "Man in the Street: Gorsuch," *The Baltimore Sun*, May 27, 1951, <http://www.proquest.com>.

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Baltimore and the Halls Spring Passenger Railway was incorporated and constructed a horse-drawn line "from the City Hall and North street, via Fayette, Aisquith and Madison streets and Central avenue to Harford road, where connection was made with another car for Homestead and Halls Springs."⁵ The electrification of the streetcar coupled with affordable and improved transportation increased the desirability of the village.⁶ Homestead remained the only suburban community laid out in northeast Baltimore in the nineteenth century.⁷

Baltimore City's 1888 annexation of the surrounding western and northern sections of Baltimore County, however, increased the properties' value as the city became responsible for improvements to the local infrastructure. The new tax structure for land located within the annexation stimulated development and investment leading to a construction boom in the first-quarter of the twentieth century.⁸ The neighborhood's desirability was further increased when the city purchased Clifton Park, located directly east of Homestead.⁹ As evident on *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, in order to maximize profitability, large lot owners and developers filled the neighborhood with brick row houses.¹⁰ As a result, Homestead contained an eclectic architectural landscape of circa 1850-1890 wood-frame or brick free-standing dwellings and circa 1890-1930 brick row houses. The neighborhood featured all the amenities and services a middle-class family sought.

⁴ *The Baltimore Sun*, "Classified Advertisement," March 29, 1854, <http://www.proquest.com>.

⁵ Clayton Colman Hall, *Baltimore: Its History and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1912), 548.

⁶ For more information, G.M. Hopkins, *City Atlas of Baltimore Maryland and Environs* (Philadelphia: F. Bourquin, 1876), 64, <http://www.baltimorecityhistory.net>; Winfield W. Thompson, C.E., *Plats of the Twenty First and Twenty Second Wards of Baltimore City*, <http://www.baltimorecityhistory.net>; John Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 890.

⁷ Eric L. Holcomb, *The City as Suburb: A History of Northeast Baltimore Since 1660* (Chicago: The Center for American Places, 2008), 95.

⁸ For more information regarding the annexation's tax structure, Sherry Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 219.

⁹ Olson, 217.

¹⁰ By 1921, the fire limitation code outlawing brick construction still did not include Homestead; however, the prevalence, affordability, and standardization of brick row house construction within the city led to its use within the neighborhood. For more information, City of Baltimore, *Ordinances and Resolutions of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore Passed at the Annual Session, 1920-1921* (Baltimore: Kings Brother City Printer, 1921), 303.

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Enoch Pratt Library

In 1882, Enoch Pratt gifted \$1.15 million to the city of Baltimore for the construction of a central library and four branches, all supported by an endowment.¹¹ Pratt desired to establish a free circulating library for individuals of all races and social classes.¹² The libraries functioned as a reference collection to students, professionals, and any individual who wished to further his or her education. Lending books further enabled the library's collection to enter the homes of the surrounding residents. The Enoch Pratt Library Branches played an essential role in expanding the system's influence throughout the city, enabling them to reach new areas of population by bringing the libraries into developing neighborhoods. In addition, the public library is an important component of a successful community, providing a location for public meetings and events, social gatherings, and lectures.¹³

Andrew Carnegie further expanded the development of Baltimore City's library branches. On November 25, 1906, he gifted a half-million dollars for the construction of twenty new branches. The terms of the gift stipulated that the City Council maintain the building at a cost of no less than ten per cent of the cost of the building themselves.¹⁴ The contribution allowed the library to expand into new communities. The 1910 Annual Report for the Enoch Pratt Library stated:

In no other year since 1886 had we opened more than one library building, so that the opening of three such buildings in one year was a matter of such note. All of these building were erected with the money given by Andrew Carnegie. Another such building had been opened in 1909, and the fifth [Branch No. 15] of the twenty for which he have half a million dollars will be opening in 1911. These building, costing from twenty to thirty thousand dollars, are well equipped, and it is believed that they are constructed according to the best method of building libraries.¹⁵

¹¹ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911* (Baltimore: City of Baltimore, 1912), 8.

¹² *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911*, 8.

¹³ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911*, 64.

¹⁴ *The Baltimore Sun*, "GIFT FOR LIBRARY: Andrew Carnegie Gives Half A Million To Carry On Enoch Pratt's Work," Nov 25, 1906, <http://www.proquest.com>.

¹⁵ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1910* (Baltimore: City of Baltimore, 1911), 3.

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Branch No. 15

Baltimore City acquired the site for Branch No. 15 on December 01, 1908. Robert Stanley Carswell, in consultation with Lockhart Scott Carswell, his uncle, donated the lot located at the southwest corner of Kirk (then Taylor) and Gorsuch Avenues to Baltimore City in memory of Robert S. Carswell, his father.¹⁶ Carswell had offered the city a site for one of the Carnegie-funded Enoch Pratt Branch Libraries, but died on April 24, 1907 before completing the conveyance.¹⁷

Robert S. and Lockhart Carswell were the sons of John Scott and Harriet von Carswell, nee Ripper.¹⁸ John S. was born in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, on January 8, 1807. At twenty years old, Carswell immigrated to Canada, where he worked in the turpentine trade, making important discoveries in its application with distilleries.¹⁹ The Carswells moved to Baltimore circa 1849 and purchased a single-family dwelling at 1442 Gorsuch Avenue, in Homestead Village in 1857.²⁰ John S. Carswell established and operated a lamp and oil manufacturer and kerosene distillery.²¹

Robert S. Carswell, born in 1842, received his early education in Baltimore public schools. Following his father's profession, Carswell worked in the oil business and acquired extensive holdings in Pennsylvania. He sold his interests to John D. Rockefeller and returned to Baltimore, residing at the dwelling at 1416 Gorsuch Avenue (no longer extant). In Baltimore, Carswell founded the Rising Sun Refining Company and later became president of the American Lighting Company. Robert S. and Isabel Carswell were married in 1867; two years later, Robert Stanley was born. Carswell remained a very active member of the community, assisting in the establishment of the Homestead Improvement Association and serving on its board of directors.²² The organization, along with the Men's Social Union of Homestead, passed resolutions stating "the absolute need of a free library for our section and requesting that a branch library be placed in Homestead."²³ Robert Stanley honored his father's wishes by donating the lot for the purpose of establishing a new library in Homestead

¹⁶ Baltimore City Superior Court, "R. Stanley Carswell Trustee to City Council of Baltimore," Liber 2467 Folio 92, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed June 14, 2012).

¹⁷ *The Baltimore Sun*, "Robert S. Carswell," April 26, 1907, <http://www.proquest.com>.

¹⁸ *The Baltimore Sun*, "John S. Carswell," February 19, 1889, <http://www.proquest.com>.

¹⁹ *The Baltimore Sun*, "John S. Carswell."

²⁰ John S. Carswell paid \$700 for McDonald's lots when the average unimproved lot sold for \$50 to \$150. Baltimore County Circuit Court, "Maria McDonald to John S. Carswell," Liber HMF 17, Folio 505, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed June 13, 2012).

²¹ John W. Woods, *Woods' Baltimore City Directory* (Baltimore: John W. Woods, 1865-1866), 72.

²² *The Baltimore Sun*, "Homestead Improvement Association," March 7, 1892, <http://www.proquest.com>.

²³ *The Baltimore Sun*, "New Library Needed," April 16, 1907, <http://www.proquest.com>.

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Village. The deed stipulated that if construction had not started by 1912, the land would revert to the donors.²⁴

The Enoch Pratt Library's Board of Trustees selected Archer and Allen as the architects for Branch No. 15 and Walter E. Burham as the contractor.²⁵ George Archer was born in Harford County, Maryland, on March 7, 1848. He attended Princeton University, then the College of New Jersey at Princeton, and graduated in 1870. According to the Baltimore Architecture Foundation, "He and J.B. Noel Wyatt were the first two Baltimore architects to receive American [Master's] degrees, both in 1873." After graduation, he worked in Baltimore for George A. Frederick until 1875 when he opened his own practice. He designed multiple churches including, the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Churchville, and the First Presbyterian Church, the Abbot Chapel, and the Friends Gospel Mission in Baltimore. A few of Archer's office and residential designs in Baltimore include the Denny & Mitchell Building, the Graham-Hughes House, and the Breesee House.²⁶ He assisted in the implementation of Cabot & Chandler's plans for Johns Hopkins Hospital, eventually becoming chief consulting architect at Johns Hopkins University.²⁷ He partnered with Raymond P. Archer in 1904, creating Archer and Allen.²⁸ Archer died on January 6, 1920.²⁹ Raymond P. Allen, born in 1873, worked for Archer prior to becoming partner and continued practicing architecture for fifteen years after Archer's death.³⁰

L. Scott Carswell broke ground for the building on December 22, 1910 and it was dedicated on December 9, 1911.³¹ Reverend John S. German of Homestead Methodist Episcopal Church and Reverend Charles Edwin Perkins of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church spoke at the opening ceremony.³² Within one month, 235 individuals registered for library cards at Branch No. 15.³³ Dr. Edward H. Hume presented the library's first lecture, "The Chinese, a Book Loving People."³⁴ An article in the *Baltimore Sun* stated:

²⁴ Baltimore City Superior Court, "R. Stanley Carswell Trustee to City Council of Baltimore," Liber 2467 Folio 92, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed June 14, 2012).

²⁵ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1910*, 80.

²⁶ Irma Walker and James T. Wollon, "George Archer," <http://baltimorearchitecture.org/biographies/george-archer/> (accessed June 14, 2012).

²⁷ *The Baltimore Sun*, "Obituary: George Archer," January 8, 1920, <http://www.proquest.com>.

²⁸ Irma Walker and James T. Wollon, "George Archer," <http://baltimorearchitecture.org/biographies/george-archer/> (accessed June 14, 2012).

²⁹ *The Baltimore Sun*, "Obituary: George Archer."

³⁰ *The Baltimore Sun*, "And To Study Bath Architecture. Mr. Raymond P. Allen Going on Trip to Baths," October 07, 1903, <http://www.proquest.com>.

³¹ *The Baltimore Sun*, "Breaks Ground for Library," December 22, 1910, <http://www.proquest.com>.

³² *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911*, 64.

³³ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911*, 16.

³⁴ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1911*, 67.

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The building is of brick, with stone trimmings, and contains, besides the library proper, a large auditorium. Steam heat and electric lights have been installed.³⁵

In 1912, Branch No. 15 registered an additional 288 individuals, contained 3,937 books, and lent 15,179 books. The *Annual Report* stated:

The first year of this Library's work has been completed and it has made itself a permanent place in the life of Homestead.... The terraces in front of the Library were extremely attractive during the spring and summer. Flower beds and a very satisfactory lawn, considering that it was the first season after grass was sown, made the surroundings of the building very attractive. Considerable difficulty was found in keeping the basement free from water after rains, and the architect and contractor gave a great deal of attention to remedying the unsatisfactory condition. In the latter part of the year the walls were frescoed.

Patronage continued to increase in the first half of the twentieth century as neighborhoods continued to be built within walking distance of the library.³⁶ Minor improvements and alterations continued in the 1910s and 1920s. In 1915, water damage continued to affect the basement. In an effort to correct the problem, cement pavement was laid immediately in front of the building, thereby reducing the amount of green space.³⁷ The solution, however, failed to correct the problem. The 1921 Annual Report stated:

Finally, the floor and the heating pipes became so decayed and corroded by this dampness that we determined to make a thorough investigation of the matter. It was found, upon excavating, that, whenever there were rains, the drainage produced what might be called a wet weather spring under the front steps, that water from which could find outlet only along the north wall. After consultation with Archer and Allen, the Architects of the building, a contract was entered into for a thorough drainage of the north side of the building. The work was very expensive, costing over one thousand dollars (\$1000); but the result is so satisfactory that we are glad the work was done.³⁸

³⁵ *The Baltimore Sun*, "New Library Is Opened: Pratt Branch at Gorsuch Ave.," December 10, 1911, <http://www.proquest.com>.

³⁶ For more information, Eric Holcomb, *The City as Suburb: A History of Northeast Baltimore Since 1660* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008).

³⁷ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1915* (Baltimore: City of Baltimore, 1916), 81-82.

³⁸ *The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees for the Year 1921* (Baltimore: City of Baltimore, 1922), 60.

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Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 15
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Other improvements include the paving of the alley (1917), an iron fence on the rear of the lot (1921), the covering of the library floor with linoleum (1922), the replacement of the decaying wood basement flooring with concrete (1922), and the laying of a cement floor in the lecture hall (1924).³⁹

In the 1950s and 1960s, the socio-economic demographics of the Homestead shifted due to a number of factors. The automobile culture removed commercial interests from the main streets as residents traveled to strip malls for shopping. Also, Homestead's proximity to Baltimore City, the infill of empty lots with brick row houses, and the development of new suburbs led to the area's complete urbanization. Moreover, racist and predatory practices by realtors and developers further accelerated the flight of middle class residents. At this time, African-American Baltimoreans faced a scarce supply of housing due to the results of urban renewal, highway construction projects, and racism. Urban renewal efforts displaced more than seventy-five thousand people. Coupled with new developments reserved only for Caucasians, dishonest real estate brokers engaged in blockbusting. The real estate developers stirred fear in white neighborhoods by claiming real estate prices were about to plummet due to changing demographics. As a result, the realtors were able to purchase the houses at low prices. They then sold the dwellings to African Americans willing to pay higher prices since they had very limited options for home ownership.⁴⁰ The developers who benefited from such tactics often stepped away from the community, having made minimal investments towards its improvement. Businesses were further impacted by the 1968 riots and the lack of subsequent investment by the city. Coupled with Baltimore City's budget issues, Branch No. 15 was closed on May 10, 1971 due to a lack of funding after opening the new Waverly Branch one mile to the northwest near Johns Hopkins University.⁴¹

The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore conveyed the building to Research Associates in 1982.⁴² Research Associates, founded in 1982, is an organization committed to promoting progressive activism in greater Baltimore. The foundation had purchased and renovated the Enoch Pratt Library in order to establish the Progressive Action Center. The center served as the headquarters for numerous groups, including the Workers Action Press, the Alternative Press Center, Democratic Socialists of America, and Baltimore Action for Justice in the Americas.⁴³ During their ownership, Research Associates Foundation made few alterations to the

³⁹ See *Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City: Annual Reports of the Librarian to the Board of Trustees*.

⁴⁰ George Lipsitz, *How Racism takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 103.

⁴¹ James Dilts, "Mayor Hears Library Closing Protested," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 30, 1971, <http://www.proquest.com>.

⁴² Baltimore City Superior Court, "Mayor and City Council of Baltimore (Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City) to Research Associates," Liber 4244, Folio 0298, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed June 14, 2012).

⁴³ Research Associates Foundation, "History," <http://www.rafbaltimore.org/content/history> (accessed June 14, 2012).

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exterior of the building based on photographs. The organization moved to a new location and sold the building to First Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in 2009.⁴⁴

The building is currently vacant as First Church of our Lord Jesus Christ has not yet occupied the space. The church, however, made numerous alterations to both the building and site. On the main block, all the paired 1/1 basement windows were replaced with glass block. The first story's paired 1/1 window sashes with fixed single-light transoms were removed; black paint pressboard encloses the space from the interior of the building. Alterations to the site include the covering of the manicured lawns flanking the main entry's stair with concrete.

⁴⁴ Land Records of Baltimore City Circuit Court, "Research Associates Foundation, Inc. to First Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc.," Liber 11425, Folio 410, <http://www.mdlandrec.net> (accessed June 14, 2012).

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Annual Reports of the Enoch Pratt Library

Baltimore Sun

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .13
Acreage of historical setting .13
Quadrangle name Baltimore East

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The former library at 1443 Gorsuch Avenue is bound by Gorsuch Avenue to the north, Kirk Avenue to the east, an alley to the south, and residential dwellings to the west. The property is located in Ward 09, Section 16, Block 4111, Lot 010 of Baltimore City. The building is set on a .13 acre lot. The library building has been historically associated with this lot since its construction in 1911.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Robyn Chrabascz, Historic Preservation Officer		
organization	EHT Traceries, Inc. for Baltimore City DHCD	date	September 25, 2013
street & number	417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 301	telephone	443-984-1871
city or town	Baltimore	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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 individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 15
Continuation Sheet

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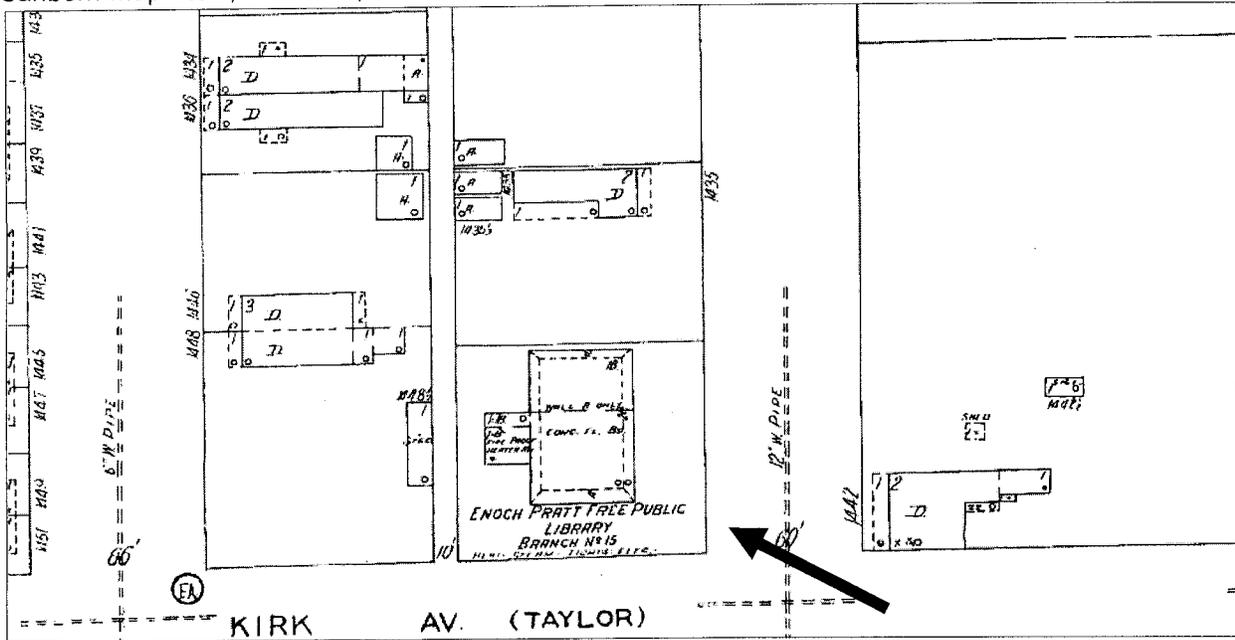
December 1, 1908	R. Stanley Carswell Trustee to City Council of Baltimore Baltimore City Superior Court Liber 2467 Folio 92
October 22, 1982:	Mayor and City Council of Baltimore (Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City) to Research Associates Baltimore City Superior Court Liber 4244 Folio 0298 (Mortgage) Research Associates to Mayor and City Council of Baltimore Amount: \$48,000 Baltimore City Superior Court Liber 4244 Folio 301
September 14, 1993:	Research Associates to Research Associates Foundation, Inc. Land Records of Baltimore City Circuit Court Liber 3939 Folio 96
February 23, 2009:	Research Associates Foundation, Inc. to First Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Inc. Land Records of Baltimore City Circuit Court Liber 11425 Folio 410



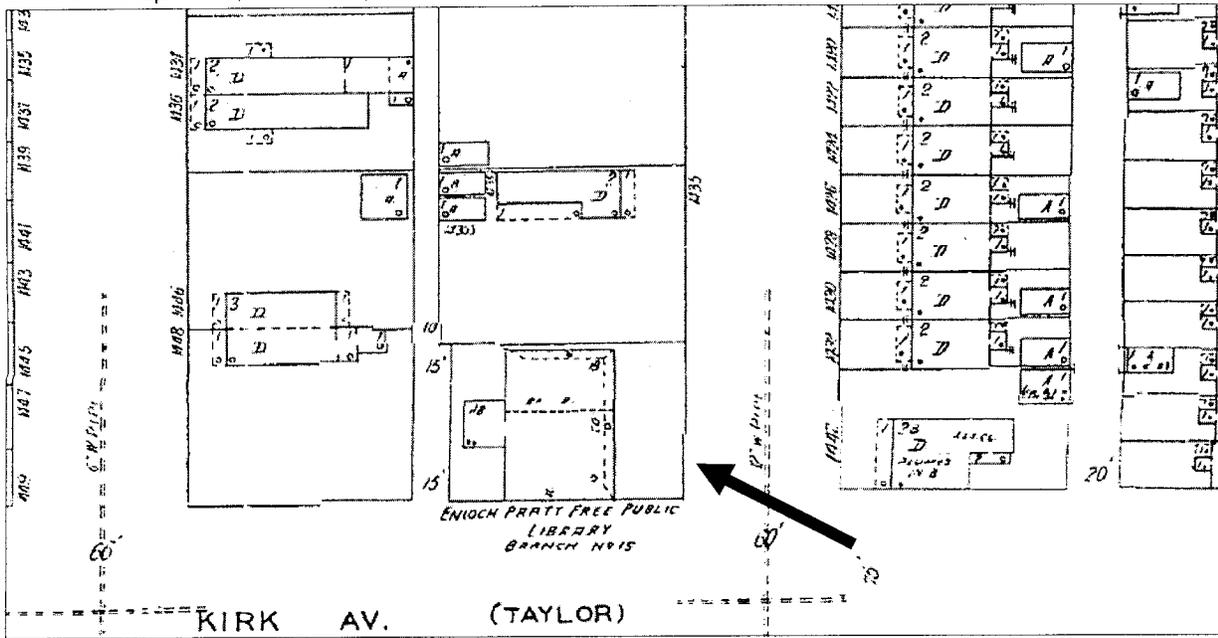
1443 Gorsuch Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218-3669
City of Baltimore
Baltimore East, USGS Topographic Map, 1953, Revised 1974
EHT Tracerics, Inc., 2012

B-5248

Enoch Pratt Free Library Branch No. 15
1443 Gorsuch Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218
Sanborn Map 1928, Volume 7, Sheet 730



Sanborn Map 1953, Volume 7, Sheet 730





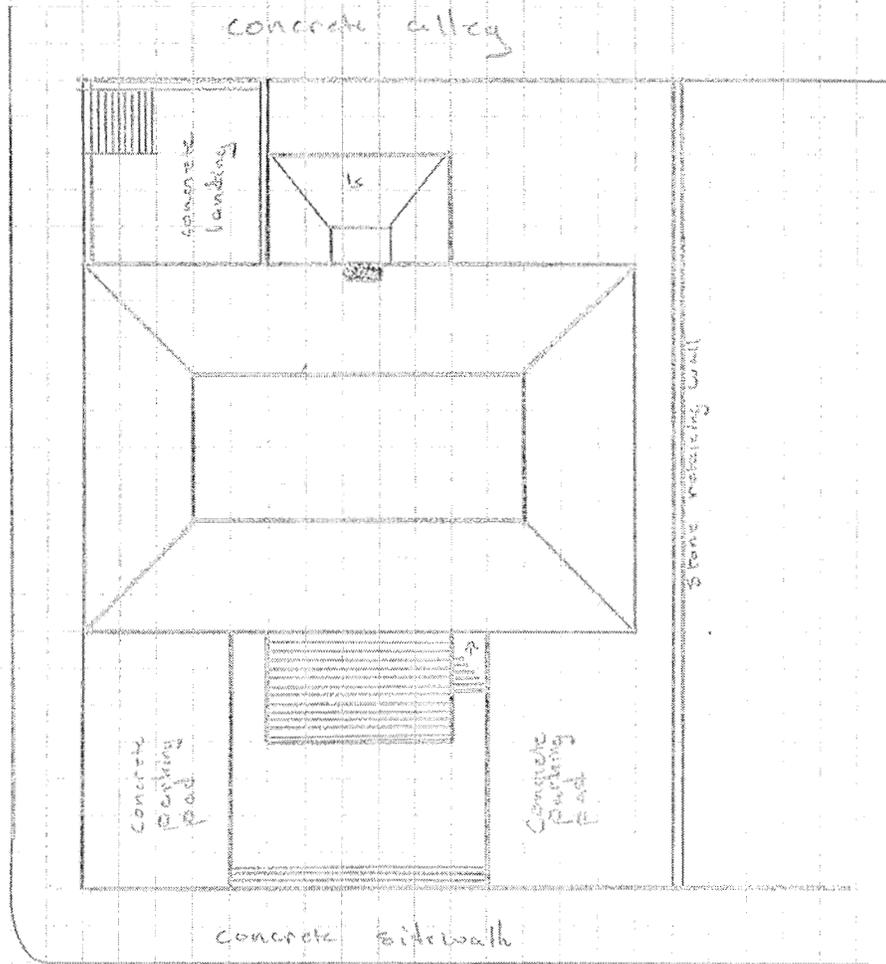
Coldstream Homes

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Branch No. 15
B-5248
1443 Gorsuch Avenue
Coldstream Homestead Montebello, Baltimore City
Map Courtesy of Baltimore City GIS
Prepared by EHT Tracerics, 2012



Adams
Park

Kirk Avenue



Garsuch Avenue



Date 5/8/2012

Not to Scale

I.D. # B-5248

Name/Address Enoch Pratt Free Library / 1143 Garsuch Avenue

**Enoch Pratt Library, Branch No. 15
B-5248**

Photographer: EHT Tracerics

Date: May 10, 2012

1.	1443 Gorsuch Avenue	B-5248_2012-05-10_01.tif	Façade, looking south
2.	1443 Gorsuch Avenue	B-5248_2012-05-10_02.tif	Façade and east elevation, looking southwest
3.	1443 Gorsuch Avenue	B-5248_2012-05-10_03.tif	East and south (rear) elevations, looking north



B-5248

ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY,
BRANCH NO. 15

1443 GORSUCH AVENUE

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

5/2012

MDSHPO

FACADE, LOOKING SOUTH

*1 OF 3



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ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY,
BRANCH NO. 15

1443 GORSUCH AVENUE

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

5/2012

MD SHPO

FACADE & EAST ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTH WEST

* 20F3



B-5248

ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY
BRANCH NO. 15

1443 GORSUCH AVENUE

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

EHT TRACES

5/2012

MDSHP0

EAST & SOUTH (REAR) ELEVATIONS,
LOOKING NORTH

*3 OF 3