

B-35

Baltimore City Courthouse, (Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse)

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 06-22-2016

AREA: Financial District

MAGI NO.: 040035361

Address: 100 North Calvert Street

Current Name: Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse

Block: 625 Lot: 1

Lot size: 242' x 284'

Height: 6 stories

Materials: Granite & Marble

Condition: Good

Owner: City of Baltimore

Use: Courthouse

Accessible: Yes

Designation: BCL

Liber/Folio: Many



Historic Name: Baltimore City Courthouse

Date: 1896-1900

Architect/Builder: Wyatt & Nolting/John Gill & Son and D. W. Thomas

Style (if appropriate): Renaissance Revival

Description:

This block long rusticated marble courthouse on a granite base is four stories high on the exterior, but the interior has six floor levels. Although there are entrances on all sides, the thirteen bay wide Calvert and Saint Paul Street facades are the primary entrances with the main entrance on Calvert Street. The long Fayette and Lexington Street side elevations are 21 bays wide. The site of the building slopes sharply up to the west, therefore the first floor is below ground level at Saint Paul Street. Each main facade features three bronze entrance doors. The second floor has arched openings. The central section of the Calvert and Saint Paul Street facades are slightly recessed and feature a colossal loggia of fluted Ionic columns on the third and fourth floors. The projecting corners of the building are decorated by balconies and bulls eye windows. The side elevations feature central entrances that project slightly with engaged fluted columns over the balconies and restrained pilasters flanking the central entrance sections. An elaborate cornice with consoles, dentils, egg and dart molding and lions heads is surmounted by a balustrade that completes the exterior of the building. The interior of the building features many significant spaces with marble walls and columns, mahogany woodwork, murals, barrel-vaulted ceilings, and mosaic floor tiles. Among the most significant spaces are the former Supreme Bench courtroom with a domed ceiling, the Old Orphan's Court with parquet floors and fine woodwork, and the Bar Library.

Significance:

Area: Architecture, History

Level: Local

The Baltimore City Courthouse was the result of a nation-wide architectural competition that received entries from such notable architects as Daniel H. Burnham and Carrere and Hastings. The winner of the competition was the local firm of Wyatt and Nolting. The Baltimore City Courthouse may be the finest public building in Baltimore City. It has magnificent interior spaces and an excellent Renaissance Revival exterior. The eight columns of the Calvert Street loggia are the largest in the world made from a single block of marble, measuring over 31 feet tall. The interior murals of LaFarge, Blashfield and others are important works of early twentieth century art. Sadly, some of the grandeur of the building was lost during a renovation of the 1950s that added new elevators, filled former courtyards and destroyed stained glass skylights. Despite the alterations, much of the significant interior remains, retaining the integrity of the original design. In 1985, the building was re-dedicated and named in honor of Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr., a noted Civil Rights leader.

Sources: Baltimore City Archives (drawings); Monograph on the opening of the Baltimore City Courthouse, 1900.

Surveyor and Date: Fred B. Shoken, July 1985.

Description Continued Page 1
General Description:

The front, Calvert Street facade of the Baltimore City Courthouse is dominated by a thirty-one foot high loggia above the second floor level. The central seven bays corresponding to the width of the loggia are slightly recessed. The first floor level is made of rusticated granite. Windows with grills punctuate the granite walls and the central entrance is located above a flight of steps. Three heavily decorated bronze doors with lion head and circular motifs are surrounded by quoins and surmounted by large lion heads above each door. Above the entrance is a massive marble balcony with balustrades supported by large consoles with acanthus leaf designs. A heavily molded string course separates the granite base from the marble upper floors. The new name for the building, The Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse, is inscribed into the fascia of this string course at the corners of the facade. The rusticated marble walls of the second floor are punctuated by arched windows. The three windows over the entrance are highlighted with console keystones. A decorative band of egg and dart molding and labyrinth fretwork separates the rusticated second floor level from the smooth marble facade and loggia of the upper floors.

The loggia features immense fluted Ionic columns with guilloche molding at the base and volutes and palmettes at the capitals. A balustrade is located between the columns. The marble walls are recessed behind the colonnade and punctuated by windows on the third floor, third floor mezzanine level and fourth floor. The third floor features french windows with transoms. They are protected by decorative iron railings. The windows of the third floor mezzanine and fourth floor are square in shape with decorative surrounds. The loggia features a coffered ceiling decorated by egg and dart molding. The projecting corner of the front facade which flanks the loggia is decorated by three windows on the third floor, third floor mezzanine and fourth floor. Above a heavy balcony with balustrades supported by acanthus leave consoles is a pedimented french window featuring end brackets. It is flanked by smaller pivoting windows. Three round windows are located above these windows defining the mezzanine level. The central window is highlighted by a console keystone. Square windows with decorative surrounds complete the corner fourth floor level. Above a series of refined molding and a blank frieze, is an elaborate cornice featuring dentils, egg and dart molding, consoles, patera and lions head decorations. A marble balustrade above the cornice completes the facade.

The Saint Paul Street facade is similar to the main, Calvert Street elevation, however, the first floor is below ground level, because of the slope of the land along the building's side elevations. A heavy balustrade protects the light well in front of the first floor. Three arched central entrances lead into the second floor level. They are decorated with console keystone featuring palmette designs. The entrance doors are protected by bronze grills displaying the Baltimore City seal. The colonade spanning the central section of the third and fourth floors does not feature the highly articulate loggia of the Calvert Street facade.

The long side elevations at Fayette and Lexington Streets are virtually identical except for a large, arched vehicular entrance to the basement, which is located to the east of the side entrance on Lexington Street. The side elevations feature slightly projecting three bay wide central entrance sections. The double bronze door entrance is decorated with an ornate marble surround featuring a bracketed pediment with acoterial, patera and a marble impression of a grill. A circular window with a console keystone surmounts the pediment of

Description Continued Page 2

the side entrance. Arched windows flank the circular window. The third and fourth floors are dominated by a small colonnade of four fluted Ionic capitals. Three french windows with transoms on the third floor are decorated with bracketed pediments. They are surmounted by three circular windows on the mezzanine level. Square windows punctuate the fourth floor walls. The six bay wide building sections which flank the projecting entrance section, are decorated with restrained pilasters that span the third and fourth floors. The third floor windows between the pilasters have circular pediments. They are surmounted by square windows on the upper levels. The corners of the side elevations are identical to the front facade corners. A balustrade surrounds the receding first floor level, west of the entrance.

The interior of the building was modernized in the 1950s, extending the second and third floor mezzanines into complete floors, therefore, the interior now contains six floor levels. A modernized central elevator lobby was created and the light courts were filled with additional office space. Despite these alterations, the interior retains some major spaces and many original details.

The basic floor plan of the building is defined by a rectangular hall running along the offices at the perimeter of the building and a central hall that divides the building in half running between the Fayette and Lexington Street entrances. Vaulted ceilings, solid mahogany panelled doors, marble walls and bronze light fixtures are located at the stairways and corridors throughout the building. Although the walls and ceilings of many of the courtrooms have been covered with acoustical tile, much of the detailing at the judges benches and jury boxes are intact. The courthouse is a virtual art gallery of sculpture, paintings and wall murals.

Among the most important rooms in the building are the major lobbies, Supreme Bench, Law Library and Orphans Court. The Calvert Street lobby features vaulted ceilings with two side stairways leading to a two story high Criminal Court lobby on the second floor. The lobby is decorated with large smooth Ionic columns, wall murals, and a coffered ceiling. The painted wall murals display the settlement of St. Marys and the burning of the Peggy Stewart. The art glass domes which lit the stairways that flank the lobby have been covered and virtually destroyed.

Another major lobby space with mosaic tile floors, wall murals and classical detailing is located at the main Saint Paul Street entrance. Wall murals of "Great Law Givers" and displays on Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. decorate this lobby.

Two important rooms are located on the sixth floor: the Supreme Bench Courtroom and Bar Library. The former Supreme Bench Courtroom features an immense coffered dome ceiling. The names of famous judges are carved into the frieze surrounding the dome. The room is appointed with smooth, Ionic marble columns and polished marble wall surfaces. The Bar Library retains stained glass windows and barrel vaulted ceilings.

The former Orphans Court on the second features parquet floors and ornate wall and ceiling decorations. A mural of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown is located behind the judges bench. This restored room has been converted into a small museum.

Baltimore City Courthouse (B-0035)
Baltimore (City), Maryland

Significance Continued Page 1
History and Support:

The Baltimore City Courthouse takes up the entire block bounded by Calvert, Fayette, Saint Paul and Lexington Streets. This site has long been important in Baltimore history, primarily as a governmental center for Baltimore. Baltimore's first courthouse was built in the middle of Monument Square in 1768. It was replaced in 1806 by a new courthouse that stood at the northeast corner of this block. In 1836, the Baltimore City and County Records Office, an Egyptian Revival design by Robert Carey Long, Jr. was built at the northwest corner of the block. The southwest corner was occupied by the Old Masonic Temple, designed by Maximilian Godefroy in 1814. It became Baltimore's Federal Courthouse in 1822. The Gilmor House, an important hotel also fronted on the Battle Monument, on this block.

When Baltimore decided to build a new courthouse, it launched a nation-wide architectural competition. Entries were received from such notable architects as Daniel H. Burnham, Carrere and Hastings and Bruce Price, but Professor Ware of Columbia University judged the design of the local firm of Wyatt and Nolting to be the best design. This firm was selected as the architect for Baltimore's new Courthouse.

The firm of Wyatt and Nolting was established in 1887. J. B. Noel Wyatt had previously established a partnership with Joseph Evans Sperry and designed the Mercantile Trust Company and Belvidere Terrace with Sperry. William G. Nolting had practiced in Richmond and Washington. Besides the Baltimore City Courthouse, the firm of Wyatt and Nolting have designed many notable Baltimore buildings, including: Roland Park Shopping Center, Keyser and Garrett Buildings and the old Patterson Park High School.

Their design for the Courthouse was a lavish Renaissance Revival structure. The most imposing exterior feature is the immense loggia on Calvert Street. The eight monolithic columns are over thirty feet high, the largest in the world to be made from a single block of marble. Other outstanding exterior features include the bronze entrance doors and protective grills, lion head decorations at the Calvert Street entrance, the statue of Cecil Calvert and the classical moldings and details. The Beaver Dam marble and Woodstock granite of the exterior create a dignified and inspiring appearance.

Perhaps more significant than the exterior of the building, is the excellent interior design. Although the interior was altered in the 1950s in a manner that has detracted from its original appearance, much of the interior decorations and major spaces have survived relatively intact. The richness of materials, classical decorations and colorful artwork is the finest for any public building in Baltimore.

Many important artists designed the murals which decorate the interior of the building. Charles Yates Turner, a Baltimore native and director of the Maryland Institute of Art, painted the "Settlement of St. Marys" and the "Burning of the Peggy Stewart." Edwin Howland Blashfield, who was president of the National Academy of Design and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, painted "Religious Tolleration" and "Washington Surrendering his Commission." John LaFarge, a great painter and notable writer, executed the "Lawgivers." Jean Paul Laurens, a famous French muralist, painted "The Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown." These murals not only represent great works of art, but display notable historical scenes in this public building. The Municipal Art Society of

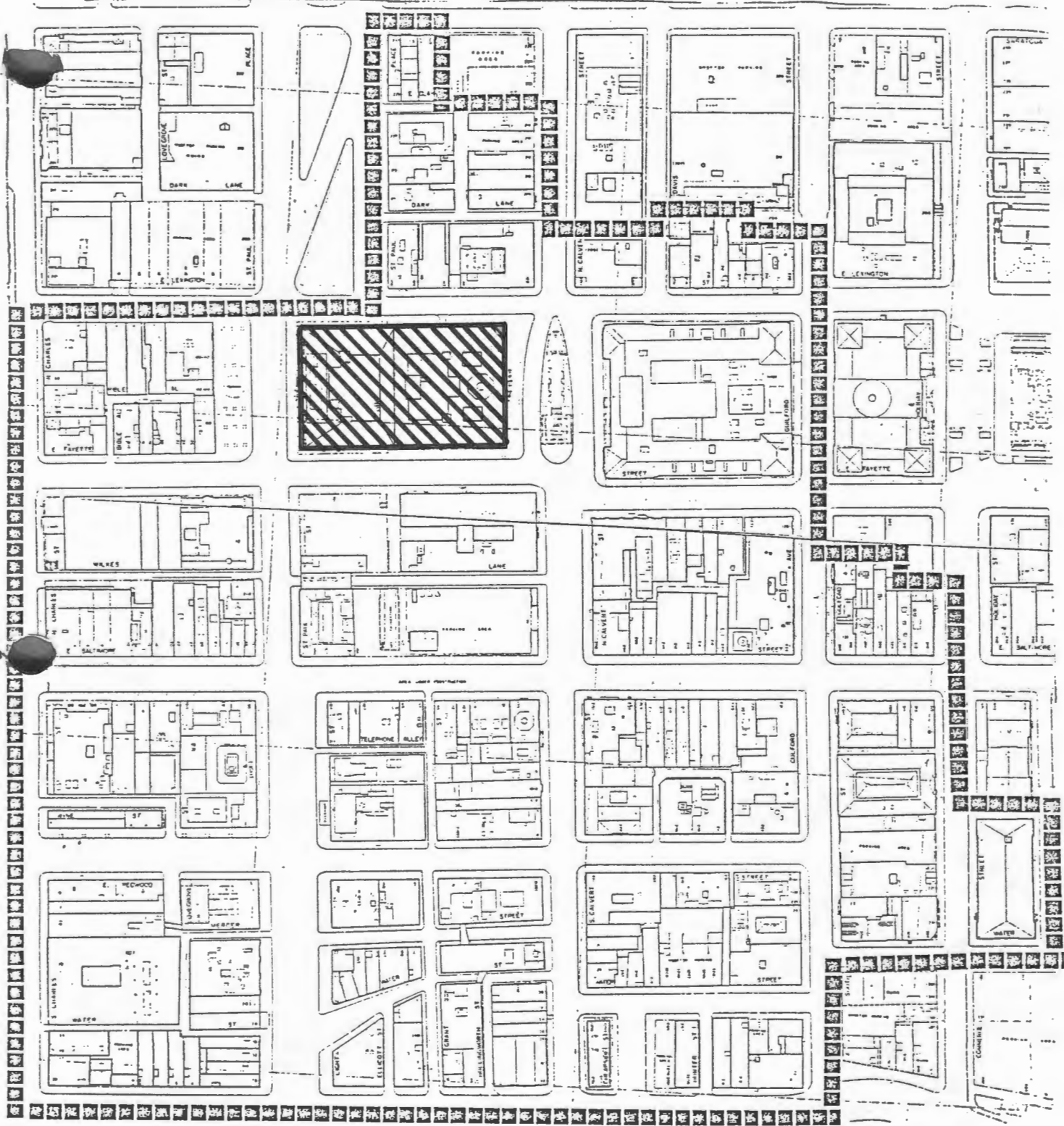
Baltimore City Courthouse (B-0035)
Baltimore (City), Maryland

Significance Continued Page 2

Baltimore donated \$5,000 to the City on the condition that the City spend another \$10,000 on the murals. This was one of the first instances of a private and public effort to promote art in Baltimore's public buildings.

Although the Courthouse has been treated poorly for many years, some recent preservation activities have begun to return the building back to its original splendor. A museum for the courthouse has been installed in the old Orphans Court, restoring this space and displaying historical artifacts relating to the building. The Saint Paul Street lobby has been refurbished and the bronze exterior entrance grills on Saint Paul Street have been cleaned. Interior marble walls have been cleaned and the stairways have been painted. There is, however, a great need for similar restoration activities throughout the building, and the current administrative judge of the Courthouse has started a program to rehabilitate this public treasure.

Earlier this year, the Baltimore City Courthouse was re-dedicated and named in honor of Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. The courthouse is the most important structure to be named for a noted black leader in Baltimore. Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. was an important Civil Rights leader. He was an advisor to many United States Presidents and was called the country's "101st Senator." He was the most prominent member of the Mitchell family, which has given Baltimore many important black political leaders.



Baltimore Financial District Survey
 Baltimore (City), Maryland

B-3335

Baltimore City Courthouse
 100 North Calvert Street

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Baltimore City Courthouse

and/or common Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse

2. Location

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street ___ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ___ vicinity of congressional district 3rd

state Maryland county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Mayor and City Council of Baltimore c/o Judge Caplan, Administrative Judge

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street telephone no.:

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21202

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Courthouse West, Rm. 610 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

7. Description

Survey No. B-0035

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.

Summary:

This block long rusticated marble courthouse on a granite base is four stories high on the exterior, but the interior has six floor levels. Although there are entrances on all sides, the thirteen bay wide Calvert and Saint Paul Street facades are the primary entrances with the main entrance on Calvert Street. The long Fayette and Lexington Street side elevations are 21 bays wide. The site of the building slopes sharply up to the west, therefore the first floor is below ground level at Saint Paul Street. Each main facade features three bronze entrance doors. The second floor has arched openings. The central section of the Calvert and Saint Paul Street facades are slightly recessed and feature a colossal loggia of fluted Ionic columns on the third and fourth floors. The projecting corners of the building are decorated by balconies and bulls eye windows. The side elevations feature central entrances that project slightly with engaged fluted columns over the balconies and restrained pilasters flanking the central entrance sections. An elaborate cornice with consoles, dentils, egg and dart molding and lions heads is surmounted by a balustrade that completes the exterior of the building. The interior of the building features many significant spaces with marble walls and columns, mahogany woodwork, murals, barrel-vaulted ceilings, and mosaic tile floors. Among the most significant spaces are the former Supreme Bench courtroom with a domed ceiling, the Old Orphan's Court with parquet floors and fine woodwork, and the Bar Library.

(continue, please)

8. Significance

Survey No. B-0035

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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

Summary:

The Baltimore City Courthouse was the result of a nation-wide architectural competition that received entries from such notable architects as Daniel H. Burnham and Carrere and Hastings. The winner of the competition was the local firm of Wyatt and Nolting. The Baltimore City Courthouse may be the finest public building in Baltimore City. It has magnificent interior spaces and an excellent Renaissance Revival exterior. The eight columns of the Calvert Street loggia are the largest in the world made from a single block of marble, measuring over 31 feet tall. The interior murals of LaFarge, Blashfield and others are important works of early twentieth century art. Sadly, some of the grandeur of the building was lost during a renovation of the 1950s that added new elevators, filled former courtyards and destroyed stained glass skylights. Despite the alterations, much of the significant interior remains, retaining the integrity of the original design. In 1985, the building was re-dedicated and named in honor of Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr., a noted Civil Rights leader.

(continue, please)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-0035

Baltimore City Archives (Drawings)Monograph on the Opening of the Baltimore City Courthouse, 1900

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.577Quadrangle name Baltimore East

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting NorthingB

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Zone Easting NorthingC

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Verbal boundary description and justification

A 242'x284' lot bounded by Fayette, Lexington, St. Paul and Calvert Streets, known as block 625, lot 1.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

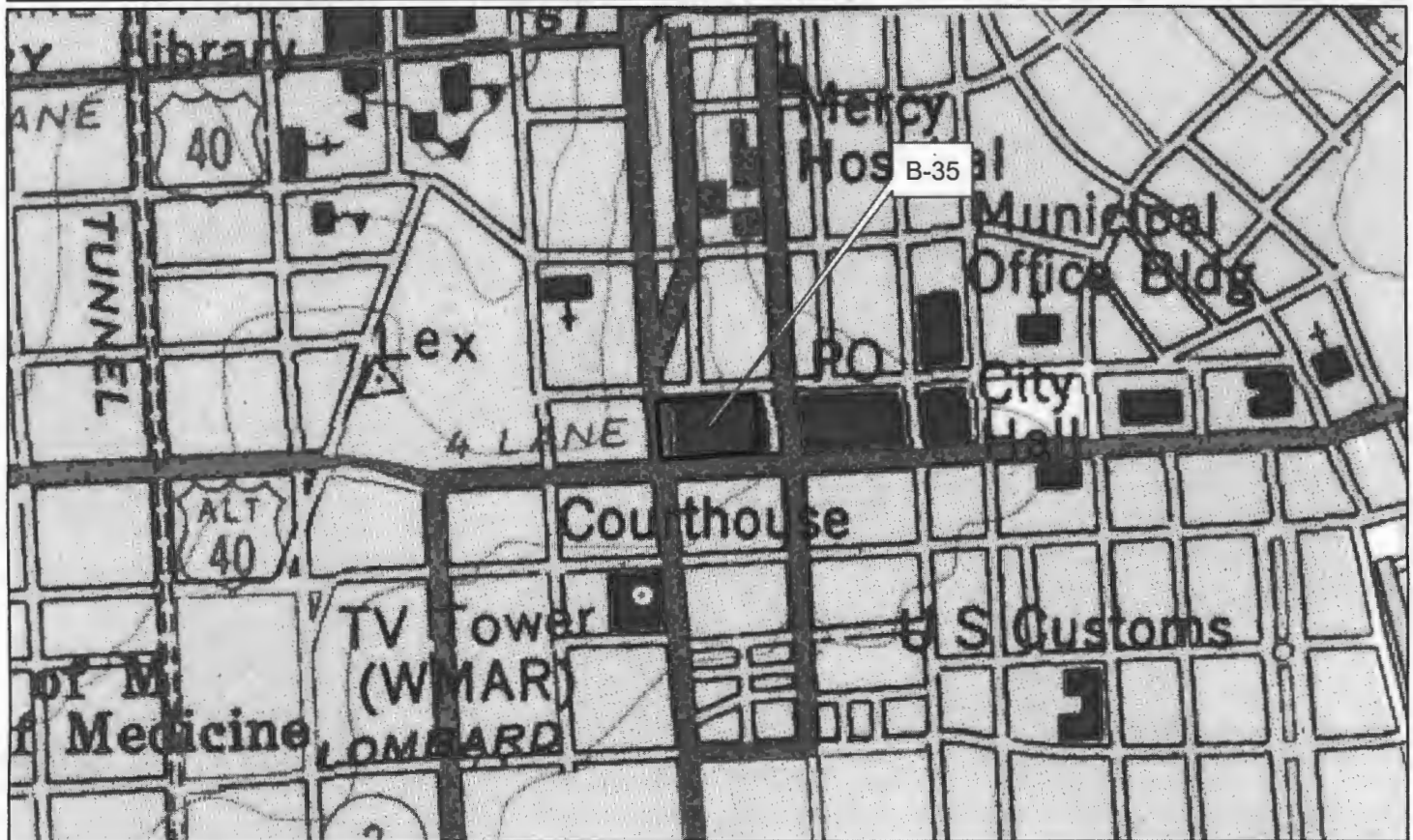
name/title Fred B. Shoken, Historic Preservation Analystorganization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. (CHAP) date July 1985street & number Rm. 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard St. telephone (301) 396-4866city or town Baltimore state Maryland

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 individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

B-35
Baltimore City Courthouse (Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse)
100 N. Calvert Street
Block 0624 Lot 001
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





B-QQ35

Baltimore City Courthouse
100 N. Calvert Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
South elevation



B-0035

Baltimore City Courthouse
100 N. Calvert Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
West elevation



B-0035

Baltimore City Courthouse
100 N. Calvert Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
East elevation



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Baltimore City Courthouse
100 North Calvert Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Fred Shoken
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
East elevation