

B-36

## United States Custom House, (U.S. Custom House, Baltimore City Customs House)

### **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](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

***Last Updated: 03-10-2011***

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

Type all entries - complete applicable sections

Maryland  
COUNTY  
Baltimore City  
FOR NP USE ONLY  
ENTRY DATE FEB 15 1974

1. NAME  
United States Custom House

2. LOCATION  
STREET AND NUMBER  
40 South Gay Street  
CITY OR TOWN  
Baltimore  
STATE  
Maryland  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
2nd Congressional District  
CODE  
24  
Baltimore City  
CODE  
005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial
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4. AGENCY  
General Services Administration - Public Buildings Service  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (If applicable)  
CITY OR TOWN  
Washington  
STREET AND NUMBER  
18th & F Streets, N. W.  
STATE  
D. C.  
CODE  
11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Baltimore City Courthouse  
STREET AND NUMBER  
200 St. Paul Street  
CITY OR TOWN  
Baltimore  
STATE  
Maryland  
CODE  
24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
TITLE OF SURVEY  
None  
DATE OF SURVEY  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
STREET AND NUMBER  
CITY OR TOWN  
STATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Maryland  
COUNTY: Baltimore  
CITY: Baltimore  
ENTRY NUMBER: FEB 15 1974

DESCRIPTION  
CONDITION

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT

The United States Custom House is a three-story building running west 13-bay east thick exterior elevations are three-story building a full entablature as a podium floor and low the main floor piano nobile of the floor balustrades supported with windows, which are rusticated of both details. Although it is in fact wings whose variations. The million that occupies floor, the pavestories to end relatively high bays each. The measurement west wall of the main lobby exterior is ornate in the intricate much care was fronting the and projects grade, the Baroque design doors are flanked by minor entrance any alteration

The interior has had its structural changes in the lobby (the was. Broad marble floor is The walls are p

Received from N.R. 10-8-81



Full Description of Building (Name, Address, City, State, Zip)  
 Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Surveyed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Original Site: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Baltimore is free-standing on a site bounded by Water Street and a parking lot to the north and south elevations. The very high, but the structural system also utilizes a low base course, the three principal levels of ground floor carrying a of unfluted Roman Ionic order supporting a balustrade. Visually, the ground floor acts as a balustrade and conceal an attic or windows are heavily barred. Those of the main floor are composed than the others, suggesting a flat roof with actual variation in the height of the main floor windows are fronted by a balustrade also. Console balustrade triangular pediments crown the main floor windows. The corners of the building exterior is a restrained version precedent with certain Mannerist appears from three sides to be rectangular, a courtyard flanked by north and south identical in design with the other elevations, the west, or rear, elevation is the pavilion. Above a rusticated basement, or ground floor (the Call Room) rises the height of two full stories within. The hip roof is copper-sheathed and has five bays, the end walls having three bays as archades without any columnar order. The roof is 97'6" x 64'6", and it is attached to the building by a ligature containing the passage from the main floor to the upper floor, thus being, in effect, free-standing. The exterior is decorated with shells and grotesque masks carved in the window spandrels with great skill. As the rear elevation as with those of the entrance on Gay Street is centered on the main floor. The sill is eight steps above the ground level. The lintels bearing iron lamp standards of the 18th-century ship's stern lanterns. The exterior is headed by Roman Doric capitals ornamented with iron grille-work. There are no windows on the rear Streets. The exterior has not undergone any significance.

alteration: the originally open lobby is now enclosed. No other major alterations except for the loss of fine spatial effect (fourth floor), the building is much as it was when the entrance to the main floor lobby. The design of the compass design below the former well. The marble at the entrance. The staircases,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## B. SIGNIFICANCE

PLEASE CHECK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE

☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE (If Applicable and Known) 1903-1907

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal ☐ Education ☐ Political ☐ Urban Planning  
☐ Prehistoric ☐ Engineering ☐ Religion/Philosophy  
☐ Historic ☐ Industry ☐ Science  
☐ Agriculture ☐ Invention ☐ Sculpture  
☒ Architecture ☐ Landscape ☐ Social/Museum  
☒ Art ☐ Architecture ☐ Literature  
☒ Commerce ☐ Literature ☐ Theater  
☐ Communications ☐ Military ☐ Transportation  
☐ Conservation ☐ Music

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States Custom House in Baltimore is an exceptionally distinguished example of Beaux-Arts architecture, that is, a style which reflected the basic tenets of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, the model for the development and direction of architectural schools throughout the United States in the 19th and early 20th century. The Beaux-Arts manner emphasizes a highly ordered, formal plan, axial symmetry, monumentality and classicistic (Roman and Renaissance) spatial relationships and details. Noteworthy for its handsome design, suave proportions, superb workmanship, and famous ceiling painting, the Baltimore Custom House was built from 1903 through late 1907 from plans by Hornblower and Marshall, a Washington, D. C. firm composed of Joseph C. Hornblower (1848-1908) and John Rush Marshall (1851-1927). Hornblower matriculated from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1871. Both men were Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. The Custom House is not only a particularly refined and subtle restrained design, it is also a fine exemplar of the integral blending of art and architecture that flourished briefly in America around the turn of the century. The Call Room ceiling by Francis Davis Millet (1846-1912) is generally acknowledged to be the masterpiece of that important American artist. Millet's decorative program for the Call Room represents not only an aesthetic success of major significance in the history of American mural painting but also a carefully researched and accurately depicted visual history of the Evolution of Navigation. Ironically, Millet, who passionately loved ships, perished in the Titanic disaster in 1912. The Custom House is unaltered, except for the enclosure of the majestic staircases and lobby well, and magnificently illustrates the finest workmanship and building materials of its era. It stands on the site of Latrobe's earlier Custom House and withstood the ravages of the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904. It was designated Historic by Commission of Customs Miles J. Ambrose on January 18, 1972. From December 2, 1907 until 1953 it served as the Custom House. Since that time Selective Service personnel have occupied the building.



B-36



Form 10-200a  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Baltimore City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 13 1974	

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

now enclosed, are marble and have fine ornamental iron railings capped with brass. They rise around open wells in three runs to each floor. Lateral corridors run north and south from the lobby area and give access to offices. The upper floors are similar in plan. The attic (fifth) floor houses mechanical equipment and storage areas. The office floors have marble floors and dadoes with plaster walls and ceilings with plaster cornices.

Opposite the entrance and entered from the lobby is the great glory of the interior, the Call Room. This lofty chamber has lost its original grille-topped marble counters and is now lighted by a suspended grid of fluorescent fixtures that makes the ceiling hard to view, but it is otherwise unaltered. The walls are articulated by paired Roman Ionic pilasters supporting an entablature with paneled frieze. Above the entablature is a deep paneled cove effecting the transition from the outer perimeter to the central ceiling panel measuring 63' x 30'. The main ceiling bears a painting titled "Entering Harbour." The panels of the cove and frieze, and five lunettes on the east wall, together with the border of the central ceiling panel contain paintings depicting the evolution of navigation. The main ceiling panel shows a fleet of ten sailing vessels - ships (including a whaler), barks, a barkentine, a brig, and a schooner entering harbor on a hazy day. The series of panels and lunettes shows about 125 historic vessels ranging in size from a gondola to a North Atlantic Liner and in period from ancient Egypt to the then latest marvel of marine architecture and engineering, the turbine-driven R.M.S. Mauretania of 1907 (accompanied by Mr. J.P. Morgan's yacht, Corsair). These paintings are generally acknowledged to constitute the masterpiece of the noted American artist Francis D. Millet, one of the principal muralists of his day.



8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clayton Colver

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND DETERMINING RECORD	
CORNER	DATE
NE	Degree North
SE	"
SW	"
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE	
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES	

STATE
STATE
STATE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE
John D. Milne
BUSINESS ADDRESS
National Heri
STREET AND NUMBER
P. O. Box 1
CITY OR TOWN

Chadds Ford

12. CERTIFICATION OF

State Liaison Officer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> None
State Liaison

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby certify that the State Liaison Officer has been designated and that the property is of national significance.

<input type="checkbox"/> Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National
Historic Site
Liaison Officer

STATE	MARYLAND
COUNTY	CLAYTON
CITY	BALTIMORE
ZIP CODE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
226-1-5-874	

all iron railings capped with  
ns to each door. lateral  
ed and give access to offices.  
c fifth floor houses mach-  
floors have marble floors and  
ster cornices.

is the great glory of the  
is lost its original grille-  
suspended grid of fluorescent  
it is otherwise unaltered.  
pilasters supporting an en-  
lature is a deep paneled cone  
er to the central ceiling  
ars a painting titled "Entering  
and five lunettes on the east  
eiling panel contain paintings  
a ceiling panel shows a fleet  
flot, barks, a barkentine, a  
day. The series of panels and  
ng in size from a gondola to a  
Egypt to the then latest  
the turbine-driven R.M.S.  
gan's yacht, Corsair). These  
ute the masterpiece of the  
the principal muralists of

# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Clayton Colmer Hall, Baltimore, Its History and Its People, 1912

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
COORDINATE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		N LATITUDE		N LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39	17	17	76	36	33			
NE									
SE									
SW									

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:	DATE:
John D. Milner, AIA, Executive Director	22 June 1973
BUSINESS ADDRESS:	
National Heritage Corporation	
STREET AND NUMBER:	PHONE:
P. O. Box 167	215-459-8710
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE
Chadds Ford	Pennsylvania 19317
	CODE
	37

## 12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

<p>State Liaison Officer recommendation:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><i>Delandis Ridout</i></p> <p>State Liaison Officer Signature</p> <p>In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifi- ing that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Re- view Board and to evaluate its significance. The recom- mended level of significance is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> State</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Local</p> <p><i>RR</i> 10/24/73</p> <p>For the State Liaison Officer</p> <p>10/24/73</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><i>AK</i></p> <p>Director, Office of Architecture and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date: 5/15/74</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><i>Deputy Secretary</i></p> <p>Deputy Secretary</p> <p>Date: 5/15/74</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B-36

*Very significant  
built 1907*

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland  
COUNTY: Baltimore City  
B-36  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
United States Custom House  
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Same

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
40 South Gay Street  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
3rd Congressional District  
STATE: Maryland CODE 24 COUNTY: Baltimore City CODE 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. AGENCY

General Services Administration - Public Buildings Service  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
CITY OR TOWN: Washington  
STREET AND NUMBER: 18th & F Streets, N. W.  
STATE: D. C. CODE 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Baltimore City Courthouse  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
200 St. Paul Street  
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore  
STATE: Maryland CODE 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None  
DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: FOR NPS USE ONLY



## 7. DESCRIPTION

B-36

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The United States Custom House in Baltimore is free-standing on a site bounded by South Gay Street, East Lombard Street, Water Street and a parking lot running west to Commerce Street. It is a granite structure measuring 252'8" (13-bay east front) by 139'6" (7-bay north and south elevations). The very thick exterior walls are bearing members, but the structural system also utilizes steel frame construction. Above a low base course, the three principal elevations are composed of a rusticated basement or ground floor carrying a three-story high engaged colonnade of unfluted Roman Ionic order supporting a full entablature crowned by a balustrade. Visually, the ground floor acts as a podium for the order. The entablature and balustrade conceal an attic floor and low roof. The ground-floor windows are heavily barred. Those of the main floor are more elaborately composed than the others, suggesting a piano nobile, although there is little if any actual variation in the height of the floors above the ground floor. The main floor windows are fronted by balustrades having square balusters, as does the roof balustrade also. Console-supported alternating segmental and triangular pediments crown the main floor windows, which are headed by Mannerist panels. The corners of the building are rusticated. The stylistic treatment of the exterior is a restrained version of 16th century Italian Renaissance precedent with certain Mannerist details. Although the Custom House appears from three sides to be rectangular, it is in fact U-shaped, having a rear courtyard flanked by north and south wings whose three-bay west ends are identical in design with the other elevations. The remarkable feature of the west, or rear, elevation is the pavilion that occupies most of the court. Above a rusticated basement, or ground floor, the pavilion (which houses the Call Room) rises the height of two full stories to enclose the lofty chamber within. The hip roof is copper-sheathed relatively high. The west wall has five bays, the end walls having three bays each. These walls are designed as archades without any columnar order. The measurements of the pavilion are 97'6" x 64'6", and it is attached to the west wall of the main block only by a ligature containing the passage from the main lobby to the Call Room, thus being, in effect, free-standing. The exterior is ornamented by sea monsters, shells and grotesque masks carved in the intractable granite of the window spandrels with great skill. As much care was taken with the design of the rear elevation as with those fronting the streets. The main (front) entrance on Gay Street is centered and projects slightly from the facade plane. The sill is eight steps above grade, the steps being flanked by plinths bearing iron lamp standards of Baroque design with lamps resembling 18th-century ship's stern lanterns. The doors are flanked by paneled pilasters headed by Roman Doric capitals ornamented by masques. The doors themselves have iron grille-work. There are minor entrances on Lombard and Water Streets. The exterior has not undergone any alterations or modifications of any significance.

The interior has suffered one major alteration: the originally open lobby has had its well floored over and its staircases enclosed. No other major structural changes have occurred. Except for the loss of fine spatial effect in the lobby (the well rose to the fourth floor), the building is much as it was. Broad marble steps lead from the entrance to the main floor lobby. The marble floor is inlaid with a brass compass design below the former well. The walls are paneled with variegated marble at the entrance. The staircases,

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Baltimore City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

now enclosed, are marble and have fine ornamental iron railings capped with brass. They rise around open wells in three runs to each floor. Lateral corridors run north and south from the lobby area and give access to offices. The upper floors are similar in plan. The attic (fifth) floor houses mechanical equipment and storage areas. The office floors have marble floors and dados with plaster walls and ceilings with plaster cornices.

Opposite the entrance and entered from the lobby is the great glory of the interior, the Call Room. This lofty chamber has lost its original grille-topped marble counters and is now lighted by a suspended grid of fluorescent fixtures that makes the ceiling hard to view, but it is otherwise unaltered. The walls are articulated by paired Roman Ionic pilasters supporting an entablature with paneled frieze. Above the entablature is a deep paneled cove effecting the transition from the outer perimeter to the central ceiling panel measuring 63' x 30'. The main ceiling bears a painting titled "Entering Harbour." The panels of the cove and frieze, and five lunettes on the east wall, together with the border of the central ceiling panel contain paintings depicting the evolution of navigation. The main ceiling panel shows a fleet of ten sailing vessels - ships (including a whaler), barks, a barkentine, a brig, and a schooner entering harbor on a hazy day. The series of panels and lunettes shows about 125 historic vessels ranging in size from a gondola to a North Atlantic Liner and in period from ancient Egypt to the then latest marvel of marine architecture and engineering, the turbine-driven R.M.S. Mauretania of 1907, (accompanied by Mr. J.P. Morgan's yacht, Corsair). These paintings are generally acknowledged to constitute the masterpiece of the noted American artist Francis D. Millet, one of the principal muralists of his day.

# 8. SIGNIFICANCE

B-36

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian

☐ 16th Century

☐ 18th Century

☒ 20th Century

☐ 15th Century

☐ 17th Century

☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1903-1907

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal

☐ Education

☐ Political

☐ Urban Planning

☐ Prehistoric

☐ Engineering

☐ Religion/Philosophy

☐ Other (Specify)

☐ Historic

☐ Industry

☐ Science

☒ Agriculture

☐ Invention

☐ Sculpture

☒ Architecture

☐ Landscape

☐ Social/Humanitarian

☒ Art

☐ Architecture

☐ Theater

☒ Commerce

☐ Literature

☐ Transportation

☐ Communications

☐ Military

☐ Theater

☐ Conservation

☐ Music

☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United States Custom House in Baltimore is an exceptionally distinguished example of Beaux-Arts architecture, that is, a style which reflected the basic tenets of the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, the model for the development and direction of architectural schools throughout the United States in the 19th and early 20th century. The Beaux Arts manner emphasizes a highly ordered, formal plan, axial symmetry, monumentality and classicistic (Roman and Renaissance) spatial relationships and details. Noteworthy for its handsome design, suave proportions, superb workmanship, and famous ceiling painting, the Baltimore Custom House was built from 1903 through late 1907 from plans by Hornblower and Marshall, a Washington, D. C. firm composed of Joseph C. Hornblower (1848-1908) and John Rush Marshall (1851-1927). Hornblower matriculated from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1871. Both men were Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. The Custom House is not only a particularly refined and subtly restrained design, it is also a fine exemplar of the integral blending of art and architecture that flourished briefly in America around the turn of the century. The Call Room ceiling by Francis Davis Millet (1846-1912) is generally acknowledged to be the masterpiece of that important American artist. Millet's decorative program for the Call Room represents not only an aesthetic success of major significance in the history of American mural painting but also a carefully researched and accurately depicted visual history of the Evolution of Navigation. Ironically, Millet, who passionately loved ships, perished in the Titanic disaster in 1912. The Custom House is unaltered, except for the enclosure of the majestic staircases and lobby well, and magnificently illustrates the finest workmanship and building materials of its era. It stands on the site of Latrobe's earlier Custom House and withstood the ravages of the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904. It was designated Historic by Commissioner of Customs Myles J. Ambrose on January 18, 1972. From December 2, 1907 until 1953 it served as the Custom House. Since that time Selective Service personnel have occupied the building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

R-36

Clayton Colmar Hall, Baltimore, Its History and Its People, 1912

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

BALTIMORE CAT

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		N	LATITUDE	W LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39	17	17
NE	° ' "	° ' "		76	36	33
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: John D. Milner, AIA, Executive Director		DATE: 22 June 1973
BUSINESS ADDRESS: National Heritage Corporation		
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 167		PHONE: 215-459-8710
CITY OR TOWN: Chadds Ford	STATE Pennsylvania 19317	CODE 37

## 12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ None

State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is ☐ National ☐ State ☐ Local

Federal Representative Signature

Date

Title

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



