BRICK DUPLEX

A mid-19th century brick duplex which has been converted into a shop with apartments above. As such it is one of the very few buildings in the heart of Towson still being used for residential purposes. The 1877 Hopkins Atlas of Baltimore County shows only four duplexes in Towson. One of these duplexes is stone, two are frame, and this building on Allegheny Ave, is made of brick.
INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

NAME

HISTORIC: Brick Duplex, 17 Allegheny Ave.
AND/OR COMMON: Amy Miss House, 17 Allegheny Ave.

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 17 Allegheny Avenue
CITY, TOWN: Towson
STATE: Maryland
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Baltimore County
COUNTY: Maryland

CLASSIFICATION

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<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
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<td>X AGRICULTURE</td>
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OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: John B. Hiss
STREET & NUMBER: 17 Allegheny Avenue
CITY, TOWN: Towson
STATE, zip code: Maryland 21204

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE: 3402 County Courts Building
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: 3402 County Courts Building
STREET & NUMBER: 401 Bosley Avenue
CITY, TOWN: Towson
STATE: Maryland

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

_FEDERAL_ STATE _COUNTY_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
This pre-1877 building is located near the center of Towson, Maryland on the south side of Allegheny Avenue. The main body of its T-shaped faces the street on an east-to-west axis. It is two-and-one-half stories, four bays wide, two bays deep, and is flanked by two interior end chimneys. The south (back) extension is of the same height, has an inside end chimney and is two bays wide by two bays deep. A two story wooden porch covers most of the south facade. All exterior walls are made of common bond, red brick with a random placement of glazed brick and one header course for every seven stretcher rows. The building sits on a low stone foundation with no attempt at coursing.

The bable end roof has deep eaves (about fifteen inches wide); its soffit is made up of four to five strips of horizontal boards. On the north facade, there is one central pedimented dormer (an early twentieth century addition typical of Towson). It is decorated with both imbricated and regular square shingles and contains two casement windows of six-over-six lights. In each bay of the first and second floors (except for the north and south facades of the first floor) there is a double hung sash window with six-over-six lights decorated by a flat arch. Flanking each chimney, there are small two-over-two light attic windows.

An early photograph indicates that before the modern addition to the first floor north facade, there existed two front doors in the inner bays. Originally, the house was a duplex, divided north-to-south by a central wall (now partially removed). The same floor pattern was repeated on both sides on all floors. The large living room space of the front room contains a very simple designed fireplace. The rectangular opening is flanked by readed pilasters and a plain molding forms the cornice. (Because of its narrow shaft, it may have served as a flue-chimney.) Extending towards the back of the house, there is a small south wing which may have been the kitchen (no fixtures remain). Its side door which gave access to the back yard has been bricked up.

Throughout the house, the walls and ceilings are of painted plaster, and the doors and windows are trimmed in common molding with an interior bead. Underneath the new flooring, the original floor boards remain intact. Only the east side's central stairway still exists. It is a double-flight.
string stairway enclosed by tongue-and-groove paneling. Leading to the basement is a slender, six-paneled door on which is a metal box and porcelain knob.

Due to alterations, the second floor is only accessible by the west stairs of the exterior two-tiered porch. Its ground level is enclosed with lattice work below tongue-and-groove siding. The second story gallery is railed with simple square balusters and is supported by four slender doric columns. The interior of the west side of the second floor is composed of one small room (above the kitchen wing) and a larger room (over the main structure). A kitchen and a bathroom now take up part of this space.

The top or half floor is also divided equally over the main building, but shares the same attic space over the southern wing. In the attic, the original primary rafters are mitered and rest upon square plates (approximately three to four inches thick). Iron tie-rods set one foot in from the plates were observed on each side of the roof. Cut nails were observed in the purlins and split wood shingles under the modern roofing.

The basement is under the main building only but there are two small storage rooms on the south side. In the center, a thick stone wall runs east-to-west and supports 19" X 3" wooden joists. These joists are vertically sawn while other materials appear to be circularly sawn. On the south-east corner of this building a concrete-block room has been added without disturbing the original walls.
### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

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### SPECIFIC DATES

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This building is one of Towson's earlier structures, built during the town's sudden growth between the 1850's and 1880's. According to a detailed 1898 map of Towson (1), brick construction appears to have been an important building technique of that period. Not only is this building one of the last buildings left from that period in its immediate vicinity, but it is also one of the few 19 century brick residences surviving in Towson. This building (and one other on Allegheny Avenue) was designed and executed as a duplex as seen in a late 19 century photograph (2) and a 1877 map (3). This illustrates the planned attempt of creating a more economic use of space. Recently, alterations have been made to its first floor for commercial purposes; although, despite these changes, much of the house's original fabric remains. It serves as a visual document to the architecture and life style of late 19 century Towson as well as a visual relief and pleasure from the anonymity of its present streetscape.

**Original and Subsequent Owners**

This house is recorded on an 1877 real estate map (4) as having been the property of Mrs. M.A. Shealy. She owned a lot of land around Towson and when she died in 1882, she willed some of it, including this property, to August Loose. When he died in 1891, he willed the house to his wife, Eliza Loose. After her death in 1910, the property then descended to her daughter, Mary C. Loose and to her daughter's husband, William F. Loose. The Looses sold the land in 1925 to Hiram W. Brown and his wife. The property then passed to Mildred G. Leonard who sold it to the present owner, John B. Hiss, in 1960.

**Footnotes:**

1. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland; G.W. Bromley and Co., CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY
Footnotes
1. Philadelphia, 1898
2. The photograph is in the possession of John B. Hiss
3. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland; G.M. Hopkins; Philadelphia, 1877
4. Ibid
Amy Hiss House - Significance

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2. The photograph is in the possession of John B. Hiss
3. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland; G.M. Hopkins; Philadelphia, 1877
4. Ibid
Primary sources at the Baltimore County Court House,
Land Records of Baltimore County

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 42' X 150"

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

See Attachment

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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**FORM PREPARED BY**

WAYNE L. NIELD, II
HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.
December 1977

Jill Storms/ Student Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Historic Towson, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER
120 Allegheny Avenue

CITY OR TOWN
Towson

STATE
Maryland

DATE
TELEPHONE
823-3588

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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438
TITLE SEARCH FOR BRICK DUPLEX, #17 ALLEGANY AVE.

Liber 3673, Folio 470  February 16, 1960
Grantor: Mildred E. Leonard
Grantee: John B. Hiss, Nancy H. Crohin, Laura H. Karl

Liber 615, Folio 173  May 1, 1925
Grantor: Mary C. Loose & William F. Loose
Grantee: Hiram W. Brown & Alverda S. Brown

Will- W.J.P. 16/ 335  February 12, 1912
Eliza Loose
Property given to Mary C. Loose

Will- W.J.S. 11/ 318  January 10, 1899
August Loose
Property given to wife

Liber 129, Folio 231  April 25, 1882
Grantor: Mary E. Shealey
Grantee: Daniel Canneron
BRICK DUPLEX
# 17 ALLEGHENY AVE.
S.W.

W. NIELD
WINTER 77-78
BRICK DUPLEX
# 17 ALLEGHENY AVE.
N.W.

W. NIELD
WINTER 77-78