

O.H.P. Mathias F. Thomas Babylon House

53 Pennsylvania Avenue

Built in the last quarter of the 19th century, number 53 Pennsylvania Avenue is one of the most splendidly evocative houses from that era in the City. Moreover, very little of the L shaped house seems to be altered from that time. The house basically consists of two perpendicular pieces, the principal one measuring 5 bays by 2 below a mansard roof, the L measuring about the same below a gabled roof. Superbly precise is the only way to describe 53 Pennsylvania Avenue. In detail, in overall appearance, in continuity of appearance, and in achieving what it sets out to, the house has few equals in the City of this type building. Further, everything is beautifully maintained; the quoins (a rare feature here) are crisp, the decorative iron work on the porch is also sharp, the rounded dormer windows pure and white, in the various plaques on the house are well painted. (The fan in the central dormer window and the insurance plaque on the ground floor.) Parenthetically, the house sets up an interesting dialogue with a house on the opposite edge of town, 295 East Main Street. Both buildings are of similar dimensions, and detail (differing in window treatment and in a few other ways), but both possessing the same essential flavor.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

O.H.P. Mathias, F. Thomas Babylon House

AND/OR COMMON

Schaeffer House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

53 Pennsylvania Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Carroll

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Frederick L. Plunkert

Telephone #: 848-7484

STREET & NUMBER

53 Pennsylvania Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

Liber #: 607

Folio #: 535

STREET & NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in the last quarter of the 19th century, number 53 Pennsylvania Avenue is one of the most splendidly evocative houses from that era in the City. Moreover, very little of the L shaped house seems to be altered from that time. The house basically consists of two perpendicular pieces, the principal one measuring 5 bays by 2 below a mansard roof, the L measuring about the same below a gabled roof.

The main facade presents a very axial appearance, an appearance created by central ground floor door, second story three sided oriel window, and a double windowed round hooded dormer in the roof. The entrance door is fairly simply enframed and consists of a panelled lower half and a glass over upper half. The central window has one glass and aluminum storm door on each of its three exposed doors, a recessed panel below each window. Above the rounded double windows each have 1/1 panes flush around it by pilasters and sawed trim. A dark colored fan is applied to the dormer window above the two round arched windows within it.

The two halves of the building which flank this central axis are identical to each other; the first two floors have 4/1 windows with painted stone sills and three course gauged flat arches between black louvered shutters.

The principal facade edges are interestingly defined by 3 course quoining. The ground floor door and one window to either side is sheltered by a square tiered porch. A row of spindels runs the top of the columns, with very fine cast iron work about the top of this porch's flat roof. The mansard roof in each section is pierced by a single hooded dormer similar to that in the center but half the size. A fine denticulated cornice wraps itself around the entire front section hugging the mansard roof, and wrapping itself about the oriel window. The sides of this front section are also identical to each other, and are similar to those on the main facade: a corbel-capped chimney rises gradually from the mansard roof dividing the facade in half. The street side of these facades has one 4/1 window on the first and second floor and a small hooded dormer window above, while the rest of the facade is blind. The L, is sheathed in brick to the alley but has aluminumed siding on its other tow sides, has three 4/1 windows towards the alley on the brick side, a 4 light attic window within the gable to the rear above a modern casement window, and three 4/1 windows on the second floor within the L above a shed roofed porch. The central-hall double-parlor plan may be correctly deduced from the exterior facade.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

ERIOD		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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1880 **BUILDER/ARCHITECT**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Superbly precise is the only way to describe 53 Pennsylvania Avenue. In detail, in overall appearance, in continuity of appearance, and in achieving what it sets out to, the house has few equals in the City of this type building. Further, everything is beautifully maintained; the quoins (a rare feature here) are crisp, the decorative iron work on the porch is also sharp, the rounded dormer windows pure and white, in the various plaques on the house are well painted. (The fan in the central dormer window and the insurance plaque on the ground floor.) Parenthetically, the house sets up an interesting dialogue with a house on the opposite edge of town, 295 East Main Street. Both buildings are of similar dimensions, and detail (differing in window treatment and in a few other ways), but both possessing the same essential flavor.

The heirs of Polly Shriver (whose husband, Francis, had owned much of the land in this area), sold this lot to Oliver H. P. Mathias for \$400 on September 21, 1807 (Carroll County Deed Book 34, Page 540). Twenty years later on April 4, 1885 Mathias sold the place to F. Thomas Babylon for \$2500 (62/248). The price of this transaction and the appearance of the house, and the 1876 City plat, would indicate that the house was probably built by 1885. Interestingly, the 1881 City Directory lists Thomas Babylon as living at 53 Pennsylvania Avenue, four years before he actually took title.

Babylon lived there for only 10 years before he sold the house to Ferdinand D. Schaeffer for \$2550 on April Fools Day 1895 (80/482). The house stayed in the Schaeffer family until 1975 when F. David Schaeffer, and others, representatives of Nora Schaeffer sold the place to the present owner on October 31 of that year.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being a lot containing 7,140 sq. ft. and located on the southwest side of Pennsylvania Avenue about 100 yds. above "The Forks" in Westminster.

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

STATE _____ COUNTY _____

STATE _____ COUNTY _____

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

August, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Westminster

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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

48%



CARR-492

OHP MATHIAS F. THOMAS BARBULON HOUSE
53 PENNSYLVANIA AVE
WESTMINSTER.

4877

F-14



CARR-492



CARR-49Z