

B-131  
MHT B-1

Form 10-300  
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland	
COUNTY: Baltimore City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
69-10-19-0010	10/1/69

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Old Roman Catholic Cathedral (Basilica of the Assumption)

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Minor Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
401 Cathedral Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore City

STATE: Maryland      CODE: 19      COUNTY: Baltimore City      CODE: 510

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:  
Trustees of the Roman Catholic Cathedral

STREET AND NUMBER:  
401 Cathedral Street

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore City      STATE: Maryland      CODE: 19

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Land Record Office of the Superior Court of Baltimore City

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 610, Baltimore City Court House

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore City      STATE: Maryland      CODE: 19

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: .98 acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Maryland Register of historic sites and landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: May 1969      Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 1704

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis      STATE: Maryland      CODE: 21404      19

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland  
COUNTY: Baltimore City  
ENTRY NUMBER: DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"...North America's most beautiful church..."<sup>(1)\*</sup>  
 says Nicholas Pevsner, noted architectural historian,  
 and Henry-Russell Hitchcock has called the Basilica of  
 the Assumption, "one of the finest ecclesiastical monu-  
 ments of Romantic classicism."<sup>(2)\*</sup>

The cruciform building is of porphyritic granite,  
 hauled by ox-cart from Ellicott City, Maryland. The  
 portico, composed of ten fluted columns and Ionic pedi-  
 ment, was added in 1863 and covers a large central door,  
 flanked by two smaller doors. On either side of the  
 portico is a bell tower, topped by an onion-shaped dome.  
 The bells within were manufactured in Marseilles, France,  
 as was the clock in the southern tower. (These towers  
 were not part of Latrobe's design.)

Along the building's sides are a series of care-  
 fully placed stained-glass windows, set in recessed  
 arched panels. "A dome on an octagonal drum culminates  
 the church, and one is conscious of a superbly successful  
 handling of the combination of the sphere and the cube."<sup>(3)\*</sup>

\* See #9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

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) 1806 (completed 1863)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phi-		Other (Specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	losophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Architecture</u>	
Agriculture	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Art	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Commerce	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-		_____	
Communications	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Conservation	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The first Roman Catholic Cathedral built in the United States, the Basilica of the Assumption was designed by Benjamin H. Latrobe. Construction was begun in 1806, on a lot acquired from Col. John Eager Howard, and added to from time to time until it was completed in 1863.

In 1789, an Episcopal See had been established in Baltimore and Reverend John Carroll elected the first bishop, with a diocese covering thirteen states. Bishop Carroll ordered the building of the Cathedral and was consecrated Archbishop there in 1808. He is one of seven prelates (including James Cardinal Gibbons) buried in the crypt beneath the archepiscopal throne.

In addition, ten Provincial and three Plenary Councils have been held in the Basilica and thirty bishops have been consecrated there. Because of its unique role in the history of the Church in America, the Cathedral was elevated to the dignity of a minor Basilica by Pope Pius XI in 1937.

The archbishop's residence, which adjoins, was designed and built in 1830 by William L. Small.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Recorders: Romaine S. Somerville, Executive Secretary, and Catharine F. Black, Commission Member; Commission for Historic & Architectural Preservation, 402 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>1</sup>Pevsner, Nikolaus, An Outline of European Architecture (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 441.

<sup>2</sup>Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Architecture, 19th and 20th Centuries (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958), pp. 6.

[see continuation sheet]

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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 ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		N39 17 39.5	W76 36 59.2	
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Mrs. Preston Parish, Keeper of the Maryland Register

ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust      DATE: June 16, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P. O. Box 1704

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis      STATE: Maryland 21404      CODE: 19

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Orlando Ridout IV  
Orlando Ridout IV

Title State Liaison Officer for Maryland

Date June 17, 1969

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date OCT 1 1969

ATTEST:  
William J. [Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

Old Roman Catholic Cathedral  
(Basilica of the Assumption)

#6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Historic American Building Survey

January 1964

Library of Congress

Washington, D. C. Code: 08

#9. REFERENCES

<sup>3</sup>Howland, Richard Hubbard, and Elizabeth Patterson Spencer,  
The Architecture of Baltimore (Baltimore: The Johns  
Hopkins Press, 1953), pp. 47-49.

Rains, Albert, and Laurance G. Henderson, With Heritage So  
Rich (New York: Random House, 1966), Plate 27.

Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Baltimore City and County,  
Maryland (Baltimore: pub. 1881), pp. 530-534.

Land Record Office of the Superior Court of Baltimore City,  
Maryland. Liber: WG 137 Folio: 662.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: Old Roman Catholic Cathedral (Basilica of the Assumption)			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Minor Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed			
<b>2. LOCATION</b> / Virgin Mary			
STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Cathedral Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore City			
STATE: Maryland	CODE 19	COUNTY: Baltimore City	CODE 510
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle Baltimore East (Maryland)			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1953			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Property boundaries where required.</li> <li>2. North arrow.</li> <li>3. Latitude and longitude reference.</li> </ol>			

Old Roman Catholic Cathedral, Baltimore, Md. (MHT) B-131

Army Map Service  
U.S.G.S.  
7.5' Quadrangle  
Baltimore, Md. East  
1:25,000  
1953

**BASILICA OF THE ASSUMPTION**  
LATITUDE 39°17'39.5"  
LONGITUDE 76°36'59.2"



17'30"

520 000  
FEET

39°15'

76°37'30"

910 000 FEET

35'

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Baltimore City	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

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AND/OR HISTORIC: Minor Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Cathedral Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore City			
STATE: Maryland	CODE 19	COUNTY: Baltimore City	CODE 510
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Baltimore, Maryland, Dept. of Planning - Phil Sibley			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1968			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Commission for Historic & Architectural Preservation, 402 City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  Basilica of the Assumption at 401 Cathedral Street, exterior from the northwest.			

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This print went to National Register for their files. There is duplicate at MHT. See our files for similar photo.

