FHR-8-300 (11-78)

B-2296

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
Received
Date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Baltimore General Dispensary

and or common

2. Location

street & number 500 West Fayette Street ___ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ___ vicinity of congressional district Third

state Maryland code 24 county Baltimore City code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	X work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name George and Evangelos Drakos

street & number 518 South Oldham Street

city, town Baltimore ___ vicinity of state Maryland 21224

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Records Office, Room 601

street & number Baltimore City Courthouse

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1979 ___ federal ___ state ___ county X local

depository for survey records Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	X unaltered	X original site
___ good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Baltimore General Dispensary Building stands at the northwest corner of Paca and Fayette Streets. The Paca Street facade is three bays wide and two stories high with running bond red brick foundation and building walls and a water table. The foundation wall is punctuated by three boarded over windows to either side of the entrance. These windows have brick lintels.

The entrance is centered in the middle bay and surmounts three concrete steps and a concrete stoop. Stone pilasters flank either side of the door. A modestly carved stone pediment is supported by heavy curved brackets and features egg and dart molding. The pediment intersects a tripartite flat transom. The three bays are defined by four brick pilasters.

The first story facades of the outer bays are each punctuated by tripartite windows composed of three double-hung windows with one-over-one light sash separated by wood mullions. The window sills are a simple design of stone and brick. All three second story windows are identical to the first story windows. The first and second story windows are divided by a series of wood panels painted red. A simple cornice surmounts a stone entablature reading: 1801 BALTIMORE GENERAL DISPENSARY 1911. A shallow brick parapet wall surmounts the cornice. The exterior of the building has been recently c[illegible]ned and repointed.

The Fayette Street facade is one bay wide and two stories high with the same building materials used in the Paca Street facade. The window treatment in this facade is identical to that punctuating the outer bays of the Paca Street facade. Steps lead to a basement entrance. The foundation walls are punctuated by two windows and a basement door.

The interior of the building features a single large room on the first floor and five office rooms on the second level. Approximately five steps flank either side of the main entrance leading to the first floor level. The most distinctive feature of the first floor is a double set of dog-leg stairs centered along the rear wall. The first floor was originally separated into two compartments for white and black patients, with the dispensary in the middle between the stairs. The five rooms on the second floor are arranged in a "U" shape around the central hall. Paneled dors face the hall and are surmounted by transoms. Above the stairway on the second floor is a long skylight. Two stairways lead to the basement, which features a coal bin under the main entrance doors. The basement walls are brick.

The trim of the interior of the building consists of simple wooden strips at the window sill level of the first floor as well as along the stairs, and surrounding the doorways on the second floor. The trim is quite plain with little ornamentation.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	X other (specify) Medicine
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1911 **Builder/Architect** George N. Mackenzie III

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Baltimore General Dispensary building is the only surviving building designed for Baltimore's oldest charity. Its design reflects its use by a prominent social institution and is, as well, an interesting mixture of neoclassical and commercial styles.

The Baltimore General Dispensary was formed in 1801 to provide medical and health care services for Baltimore's poor. It is the oldest institution of this kind in Maryland. By 1892 fifteen dispensaries existed in Baltimore, many of which were affiliated with hospitals. The second dispensary was not established until 1826, twenty-five years after the Baltimore General Dispensary was founded. The Dispensary remains in existence today in the form of a foundation which grants money largely to hospitals for medicine in their out-patient departments.

Considered a model of its kind for its era, this building featured a large dispensary center on the first floor, separated for black and white patients. The rooms for surgical and medical aid on the second floor gave the poor, a measure of privacy rarely available to charity patients.

The fine neoclassical details on the exterior distinguish this rather small building as a place of importance in the city. It is modest in scale, reflecting its service to Baltimore's poor, yet its neoclassical styling relates to the Dispensary's long-standing position as a well-known institution.

HISTORY

Constructed in 1911, the Dispensary building features neo-classical details such as the entranceway and entablature although the large windows are reminiscent of commercial style buildings of its era. The architect of the building was George Norburry Mackenzie III. He was probably related to Thomas Mackenzie, who was on the board of the General Dispensary, as well as the building committee. LIttle else is known about the architect. Johnowan, Inc. was the general contractor. The building was completed at a cost of $11, 782 and was opened on February 15, 1912.

The building is important from an architectural perspective as a strong visual anchor on the corner of a major Baltimore intersection. It is stylistically harmonious with the Engine House at 106-108 N. Paca Street and other nearby structures. The building is adjacent to the city's old retail district and the University of Maryland at Baltimore. Around the corner from the Baltimore General Dispensary is the Westminster Church and Burial Ground, including Edgar Allan Poe's grave. Historic Lexington Market is a block to the north.

When the Baltimore General Dispensary was formed in 1801, the city had a population of 26,000. The Dispensary is considered the city's oldest charity. Its founders include such important Baltimoreans as Robert McKim, Elisha and Jesse Tyson, and John Stricker

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SIGNIFICANCE, continued

Dr. John Crawford has also been said to be one of the founders. In February 1801, two doctors were selected to furnish medicine and attendance for Baltimore'spoor and for Fell's Point. The first case of the dispensary dates from April 1, 1801. In its first year 300 patients were treated.

In the ensuing years, 950,310 patients were treated and 1,569,311 prescriptions provided. Forty-three of Baltimore's most prominent doctors served the Dispensary staff as consulting physicians. Members of the board included men of such caliber as Enoch Pratt, Bishop John Carroll, and Phillip Thomas, president of the B & O Railroad.

The first home of the Dispensary was 127 Baltimore Street (Baltimore at Grant Street). It moved a number of times through its history. The Dispensary was housed at 651 W. Lexington Street (part of Pascault Row) for 19 years. The General Dispensary Building at Paca and Fayette was the Dispensary's last home. It stayed at that site for 46 years.

In 1807 the Dispensary petitioned the Maryland General Assembly to become a chartered institution. It was the third incorporated institution in the State of Maryland. The Equitable Fire Insurance Company and the Bank of Baltimore were incorporated prior to the Dispensary. Chapter 110 of the Acts of 1807 states:

> Whereas a Dispensary has been established in the City of Baltimore, for the purpose of affording medical aid to the indigent poor of that City and its precincts, which has been supported for several years past by the voluntary contributions of a number of charitable personas, and has been extensively beneficial in its effects in relieving the poor from sickness and preserving the health of the City, under the direction of Managers appointed by the contributors to said institution; and whereas this General Assembly are desirous to encourage permanence to an institution of such public utility; Be it ennacted. . . ."

The institution raised money from a number of sources, including state lottery, concerts and donations. Fines imposed by the sheriff's office on persons keeping "houses of ill-fame" were appropriated to the General Dispensary. In the early 20th century, the City of Baltimore contracted with theDispensary for the care of some patients. In 1822 the City granted the institution free of use of a building on Holliday Street.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

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SIGNIFICANCE, continued

Although the Dispensary's main role was to provide health care service to the poor, over the years its role became larger in scope. In the early 19th century it began to care for children in orphanages. The Dispensary played an important role in vaccinating Baltimoreans against contagious diseases. (1,437 vaccinations were given in 1822.) Some records indicate medical care was given to lost children. In 1852 The Wilson Fund was created in order to supply food, clothing, and necessities of life for the poor and indigent sick. The Dispensary understood that malnutrition was a serious problem of the poor. In the winter of 1902-03, coal was handed out to the poor to prevent sickness using Wilson fund monies. There are also accounts of a case of diptheria sent to the Dispensary in the late 1800s because the city had no hospital for contagious diseases.

The Dispensary prided itself on the fact that it treated all poor persons in need of medical care. Dr. Baxley, appothecary for the dispensary for a number of years, stated

> "The General Dispensary endeavors to alleviate the sufferings of such of the sick as misfortune or improvidence have rendered to its care whether Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic of Jew".

Thomas Mackenzie, president of the Board in 1926, stated, "Every dollar that comes into our hands from that source (the City) or gifts, or elsewhere, to pay the expenses of our work, goes for the benefit of the sick poor of this City and State, irrespective of race, color or creed".

In the 1950s, the usefulness of the Dispensary began declingin as free clinics, welfare, and hospitals duplicated their services. In 1959 it was decided to sell the Dispensary building and establish a foundation which would grant money to the city and hospitals for the free distribution of medicine at out-patient clinics. The Baltimore General Dispensary foundation was created in 1960.

The Dispensary building stood vacant for a few years; however, the new owners of the building are proposing to renovate it and reuse it as a restaurant. The exterior of the building has been cleaned. Much of the interior will also be repaired. Important features such as the stairs will be repaired and used as part of the restaurant design.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Baxely, C. Herbert, ed. A History of the Baltimore General Dispensary. Baltimore: Baltimore General Dispensary Foundation, 1963.

The Oldest Charity in Baltimore, 1886.

One Hundred Years of History of the Baltimore General Dispensary. Baltimore: A. Hoen & Co.,190

"Baltimore General Dispensary," Baltimore News, April 23, 1928. SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .0357 acre (lot size 25'6" x 61'2")

Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	360040	435070	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Known as Lot 1 in Block 617 of Baltimore City Tax Records; located on the northwest corner of Paca and Fayette Streets. Fronting on W.Fayette St. 25'6" and on N.Paca St. 61'2".

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Fred Shoken, Planning Assistant

organization Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation date 1979

street & number 100 N. Holliday Street telephone (301)396-4866

city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J R Little 1-2-80

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

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

date

eper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES, Continued

"Baltimore's Oldest Charity," Baltimore Sun, June 6, 1937.

"One Man Staff Carries on at General Dispensary," Evening Sun, December 8, 1950.

All Minute Books, Record Books, and other papers of the Baltimore General are housed at the Medical and Chirugical Faculty in Baltimore.

Baltimore East Quadrangle

N

Baltimore General Dispensary

UTM Reference:

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17'30"

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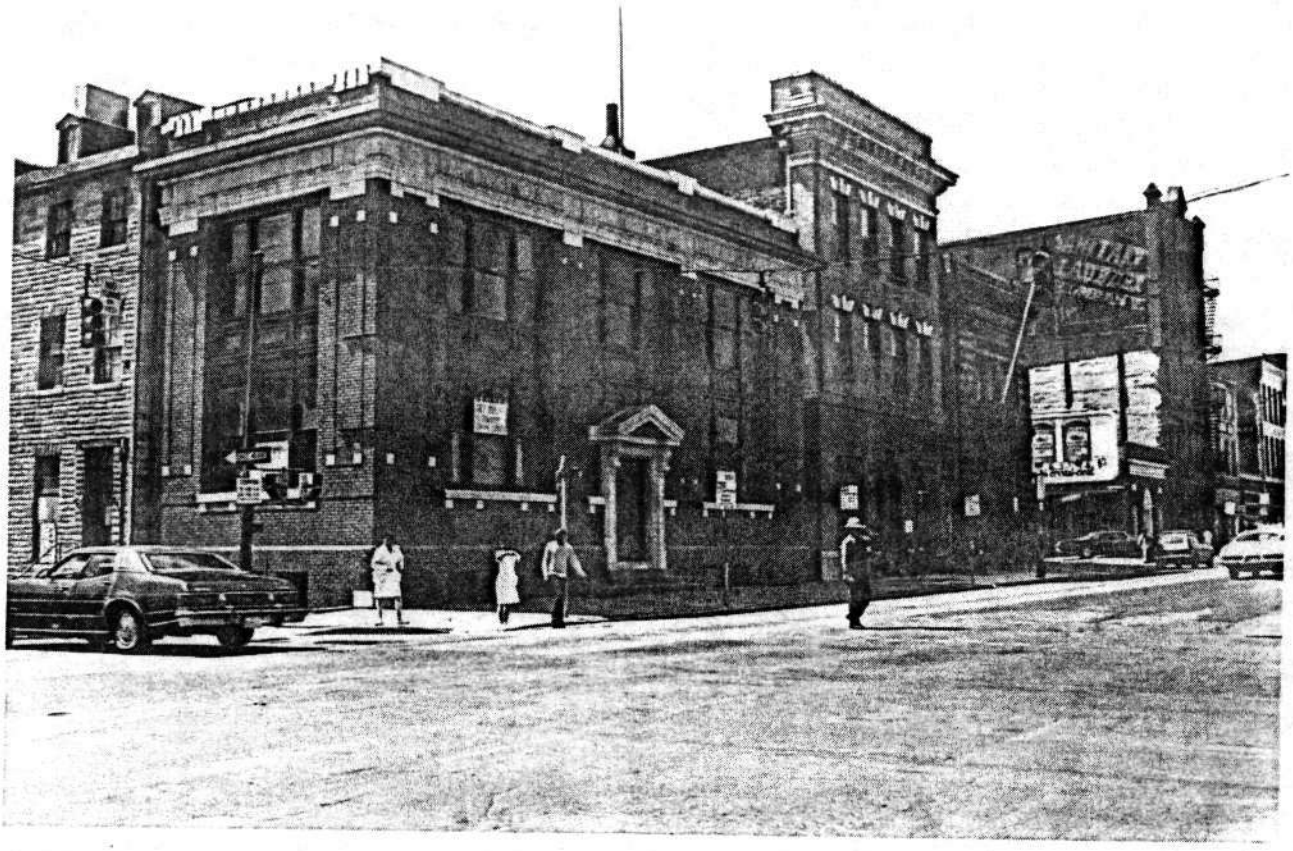

Baltimore General Dispensary
(B)