

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

1. Name

historic Douglass Place (Preferred)
and/or common 516-524 South Dallas Street

2. Location

street & number 516-524 South Dallas Street N/A not for publication
city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of congressional district Third
state Maryland code 24 county Independent city code 510

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet #1
street & number
city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of the Circuit Court - Baltimore City
street & number Room #600 Courthouse West - Calvert and Fayette Streets
city, town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1983 federal state county local
depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle
city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

B-3694

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Douglass Place
Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 4

Page 1

OWNERS OF PROPERTY

Mr. and Mrs. Manning Moore
516 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Mr. Ron Zimmerman
c/o Von L. Corporation
1234 Light Street (518 South Dallas Street)
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Mr. and Mrs. Gregory V. Stanley
520 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231 (301) 732-4039

Mr. and Mrs. John Smolinski
522 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

Mr. and Mrs. Paul D. Brylske
524 South Dallas Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21231 (301) 327-7026

7. Description

E-3694

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Douglass Place is a group of five late-19th-century brick rowhouses located at 516-524 South Dallas Street in the Fell's Point area of Baltimore, Maryland. The buildings are typical of "alley houses" of the period in Baltimore, two narrow bays wide, two stories high over a basement, with shed roofs. Italianate influence is reflected in their segmental-arched window and door openings, and in the simple molded sheet metal cornices which crown the buildings. A white marble plaque above the first story of #520 bears the legend "Douglass Place", referring to the group's association with Frederick Douglass, who constructed the buildings about 1892 as rental housing for poor blacks.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Douglass Place is a group of five brick rowhouses located at 516-524 South Dallas Street in the Fell's Point area of Baltimore, Maryland. The houses, constructed about 1892, are Italianate-influenced "alley houses" typical of the period in Baltimore. Fronting directly on the sidewalk, they stand two narrow bays wide and two stories tall above a basement. The five houses share an identical fenestration pattern, with the right bay of the first story holding a transomed entrance, reached by a flight of several steps; a double-hung window, originally holding 1/1 sash, occupies the left bay. On the second story, two somewhat lower sash windows are aligned directly above the first-floor openings. A basement window appears at sidewalk level in the left bay. All openings have segmental-arched heads. The buildings share a common cornice line, embellished with a simple molded sheet metal cornice. The buildings have shed roofs. Number 522 is clad in multicolored Formstone, but the common-bond brick construction is visible in the remaining buildings in the group (although #518 has been painted). A white marble plaque above the first story of #520, the central building in the group, bears the legend "Douglass Place." Six-over-six sash windows have been installed at #520, while the other buildings retain their original 1/1 sash. Number 520 retains a colored-glass transom over the entrance.

The first-floor plan comprises three rooms. The entrance opens directly into the living room, which measures approximately 10' x 11'; the dining room, of equal size, lies beyond. A narrow rear extension holds the kitchen and winder stair to the second story. Each first-floor room is served by a stove flue. Decorative trim is simple architrave molding with bull's-eye corner blocks of the period. Some rooms retain pressed-tin ceilings.

8. Significance

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| Period | 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates ca. 1892

Builder/Architect

unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criterion: B

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Douglass Place is significant for its association with Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), famed abolitionist, editor, and statesman. Douglass constructed the five buildings in 1892 as rental housing for poor blacks in the Fells Point area of Baltimore. It is the only known property in the city with this association. The property embodies Douglass' connection with the Fells Point neighborhood, where he had resided from the 1820's to 1838; the site upon which the houses stand was the location of the Dallas Street Station Methodist Episcopal Church, which Douglass had attended while living in the area.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Once owned by Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), famed abolitionist, newspaper editor and statesman of the nineteenth century, these houses, 516 thru 524 South Dallas Street are significant for that association. Evidence indicates Douglass purchased the property in January of 1892 for sentimental reasons. Originally the site of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Dallas Street Station, constructed in 1773, Douglass' attachment to the Dallas Street property is understandable. Douglass attended the meeting house while he lived in Fells Point as a house servant, on and off, from the 1820's to 1838. While quite young, from within the walls of this church, Douglass received encouragement to believe he had a future to be of use in bettering the conditions of blacks. It was this encouragement which proved to be the foundation for his later career and crusade.

Subsequent to the civil war, the black congregation abandoned the church for worship at another location. "The ancient and deserted church was after its abandonment debased to an assembly hall, in which cake walks were held and entertainment given"¹ Douglass, now late in his life, continued to show interest in Fells Point, the place of so many memories during his youth. Douglass purchased the Dallas Street property in 1892 for the amount of eighteen hundred dollars, razed it and "built housing to replace some of the miserable shacks in which Fells Point blacks had lived on Strawberry Alley, now renamed Dallas Street."² The housing project proved not to be a paying proposition. During the economic slump following the panic of 1893, Douglass' Baltimore agent sent him a check for the sum of fifty dollars in rentals but added, because of the stringency of the times, it was hard to collect money here.... Two of the houses were vacant.³

While Douglass was known for his connection with reforms involving blacks, he was always concerned for the betterment of the lot of mankind. In this regard, he was an early supporter of the women's rights movement in this

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Douglass Place
Continuation sheet Baltimore (city), Maryland Item number 7 and 10 Page 2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

country. These buildings as a whole constitute one of the oldest, most important structures connected with the black history of Baltimore.

Footnotes

- ¹William M. Marine, Historical Sketches; 130th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Episcopal Church (n.p.: h.p., March 9, 1902), n. pag.
- ²Dickson Preston, Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 170.
- ³Preston, p. 170.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property comprises only the city lots upon which the resources stand. The surrounding area is characterized by dense urban development with buildings of similar scale, materials, and period; however, the five houses which comprise Douglass Place are distinguished from their surroundings by their construction as a unified group identical in form and detailing, and by their specific historical association with Frederick Douglass.

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Continuation sheet Douglass Place
Baltimore (city), Maryland Item number 9 Page 3

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Deed, Liber J.B. 1378, Folio 99-100, January 20, 1892, Land Records of Baltimore City

Handy, James A. Scraps of African Methodist Episcopal History (n.p.: n.p.).

Indianapolis Freeman, January 2, 1892; January 30, 1882.

Marine, William I. Historical Sketches; 130th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Church (n.p.: n.p., March 9, 1902).

Preston, Dickson. Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Wood, Grace. "175th Anniversary of East Baltimore Station Methodist Church," Baltimore Sun, November 14, 1948.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Baltimore East, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet #2

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

| | | | | |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|

| | | | | |
|-------|--|------|--------|------|
| state | | code | county | code |
|-------|--|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kerry L. Stanley and Leroy Graham

organization _____ date March 23, 1983

street & number 520 South Dallas Street telephone (301) 732-4039 or 244-0822

city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21231

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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. Little* 8-10-83

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date _____

For HCRS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

