720 NORTH BROADWAY
(Rowhouse)
Baltimore
Baltimore ~~County~~ City
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1031

HABS
MD
4-BALT,
208-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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720 NORTH BROADWAY
(Rowhouse)

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Location: 720 North Broadway, Baltimore,
Baltimore ~~County~~ City, Maryland.
USGS Baltimore East, Maryland Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
18.4350440.0362960

Significance: One of a block of brick rowhouses in the 700 block of North Broadway, 720 N. Broadway is a greatly altered example of Baltimore urban vernacular brick rowhouse construction during the immediate post-Civil War period.

Description: This building is located on the west side of North Broadway, a major north-south boulevard in east Baltimore. Measuring approximately 15' by 58', the three-story, two bay rowhouse has brick foundations and walls laid in common bond. The structural system comprises a frame interior support of 5" joists and two tie-rods spanning the masonry bearing walls. There are three brick chimneys, two located on the south party wall adjoining 718 N. Broadway and one atop the rear portion of the house. Like the two buildings adjacent, 716 and 718, the entryway is arched; original doors and surrounds are missing at 720. All primary facade windows have arched lintels. There is one eight-foot window opening without window on the first floor, while some sash remains on the second and third floors. The facade is capped with a bracketed wood cornice, shared with 722, and the roof is flat and tar-covered.

The original plan of 720 North Broadway, which featured a dining room, parlor, and reception hall, is no longer intact. On the first floor, the house has a wood vestibule door and a hall entrance to apartments on the south side. Few original decorative features are present in the structure. On the third floor, there is a fireplace with mantel and register grill.

History: Deed research indicates that 720 N. Broadway was built ca. 1870-1875. More precise dating of the structure has been hindered by lack of surviving Baltimore City building permits and tax records of the late nineteenth century. The house is not shown on the 1869 Sachse birdseye view but does appear in the 1887 Bromley Atlas as a brick rowhouse with a long rear ell, occupying a lot of 15 feet by 78.6 feet. The ell, extending for over half the entire length of the structure, created a narrow open area between this property and the rear of 718 North Broadway.

The 1890 Sanborn map indicates the house as a three-story brick rowhouse with the long ell of two stories. The three-story front section as well as the ell possessed chimneys. One interior doorway led to the ell section of the house. The building's Broadway facade was topped with a wood cornice. The basic form of 720 N. Broadway greatly resembled that of its north neighbor 722,

although that end house also had a second, small rear two-story section as well as a side porch facing north to the service alley.

By 1902, 720 N. Broadway likewise had a second, small two-story area at the rear end of its ell section. Between 1902 and 1914, a second interior wall with one doorway was added to run the width of the ell just to the rear of the three-story front part of the house. Another chimney was added to serve the new rooms created, making a total of four chimneys. This alteration is also recorded in the post-1914 sources, which show no further changes to the structure, although the number of chimneys was reduced to three subsequent to 1914.

Construction of 720 N. Broadway reflected several larger patterns in the nineteenth century northeastward expansion of Baltimore City. Governed by the orderly requirements of Thomas Poppleton's 1822 street grid of Baltimore, yet strongly influenced by the continual need for immigrant housing, the Broadway rowhouse neighborhood which includes the 700 block of North Broadway developed in response to many geographic and economic pressures. Among these, a local factor of considerable historic importance has been the presence of one or more major hospitals in the area since the late 1700s. In particular, the Johns Hopkins Hospital, located in the 600 block of North Broadway since its opening in 1889, has had a key impact on the growth and building usage of the neighborhood.

Although Fell's Point, the southern terminus of Broadway, was a major deep water port between 1750 and 1800, the Broadway region north of current Fayette Street was largely beyond the reach of early mercantile activity at "The Point." Warner and Hanna's 1801 Plan of the City and Environs of Baltimore depicts only the then newly-built "hospital for the care of the homeless sick and the insane" on Loudenschlager Hill, in the vicinity of present Monument Street and Broadway. The Old Joppa or Philadelphia Road crossed this area as well, but did not change its predominantly rural character.

Between 1820 and the Civil War, Baltimore's rigorous adherence to the Poppleton Street plan defined much of the character of urbanization in the North Broadway region. Without regard for topography, the Poppleton plan laid out a grid of 350-foot long blocks with service alleys. The street grid preceded actual housing construction in the 700 block North Broadway by several decades. City maps of the pre-Civil War era show few residential structures north of Pitt Street (modern Fayette) along either side of Broadway. Beyond Pitt and Broadway, antebellum development centered in the Madison Square vicinity after that square's opening in 1853, but generally did not yet extend east of Bond Street. Key streets, however, were already in place. Its boulevard width a legacy of earlier use as a Fell's Point ropewalk, Broadway was opened and paved from Baltimore Street to Gay Street between 1851 and 1854. Monument

Street ran eastward from the city center as early as 1830 and, by 1863, was under repair in the North Broadway area. Madison Street was in its present location by 1860.

As immigrant workers and their families arrived in Baltimore in ever-increasing numbers during the 1850-1880 period, neighborhoods bordering Broadway saw extension of city services, construction of public buildings, and speculative erection of entire blocks of rowhouses. In 1854, the Accommodation Line of horse-drawn omnibuses began running from Fell's Point up Broadway to Gay Street. Public or community-oriented structures in the vicinity of 700 N. Broadway included the Broadway Methodist Protestant Church at the northeast corner of Monument and Broadway (1860), the Hebrew Hospital fronting Ann and Monument Streets (1866-1868; precursor to Sinai Hospital), and the Episcopal Church of Our Savior at the northwest corner of Broadway and McElderry (1869-1871). By 1876, the system of "Broadway Parks" along the center of that street were extended up to North Avenue (then the legal northern limit of Baltimore City) and landscaped with flowers, trees, and fountains. In 1888, Enoch Pratt Free Library opened its Branch No. 5 at Broadway and Miller Street (the 800 block North Broadway). A year later, displacing the Methodist cemetery and several dwellings, the seventeen original buildings of Johns Hopkins Hospital opened on the site bounded by Broadway, Monument, Wolfe, and Jefferson Streets.

The ethnic diversity of the North Broadway neighborhood was reflected by 1890 in construction of the Bohemian Hall at Barnes and Broadway (1000 block) and the new brick First Baptist Church southwest of the hospital (built 1880 to house the oldest black Baptist congregation in Maryland). The twentieth century saw Johns Hopkins attain a dominant position in the community, building Hampton House for nurses (1926-1927), a series of apartment houses and units (1950s-1960s) and the Kennedy Institute (1962-1964) in the surrounding vicinity of the 700 block of Broadway. As early as 1904, residents in the 700-730 block responded economically to Hopkins' influence by opening drug stores for patients and boardinghouses for medical students and doctors. Jane Tydings at 726 N. Broadway pioneered in the latter enterprise and became a major real-life model for Augusta Tucker's best-selling 1939 novel Miss Susie Slagle's.

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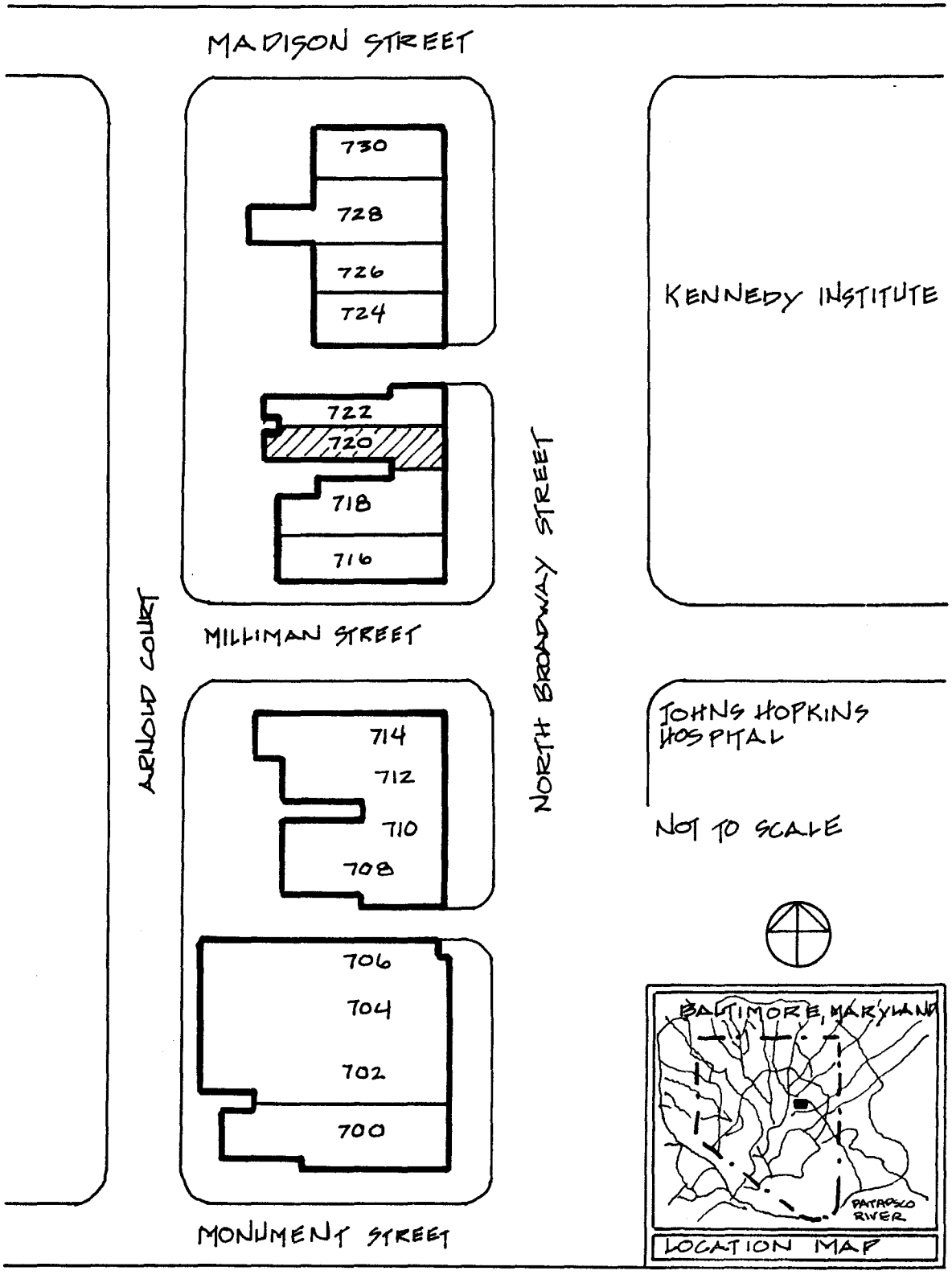
May 14, 1991


MADISON STREET
730
728
726
724
722
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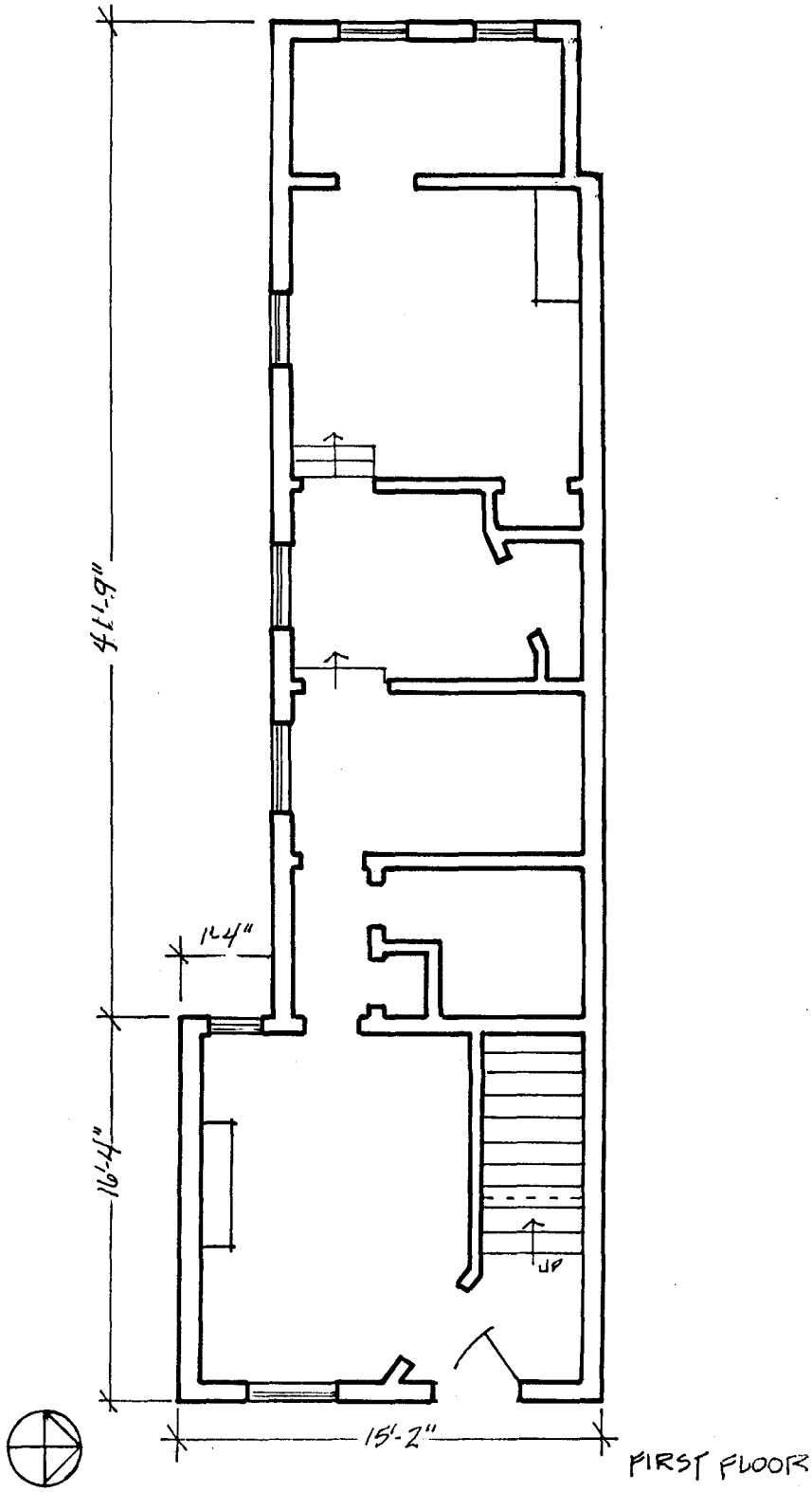
718
716
MILLIMAN STREET
ARNOLD COURT
NORTH BROADWAY STREET
714
712
710
708
706
704
702
700
MONUMENT STREET
KENNEDY INSTITUTE
JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL
NOT TO SCALE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
PATAPSCO RIVER
LOCATION MAP



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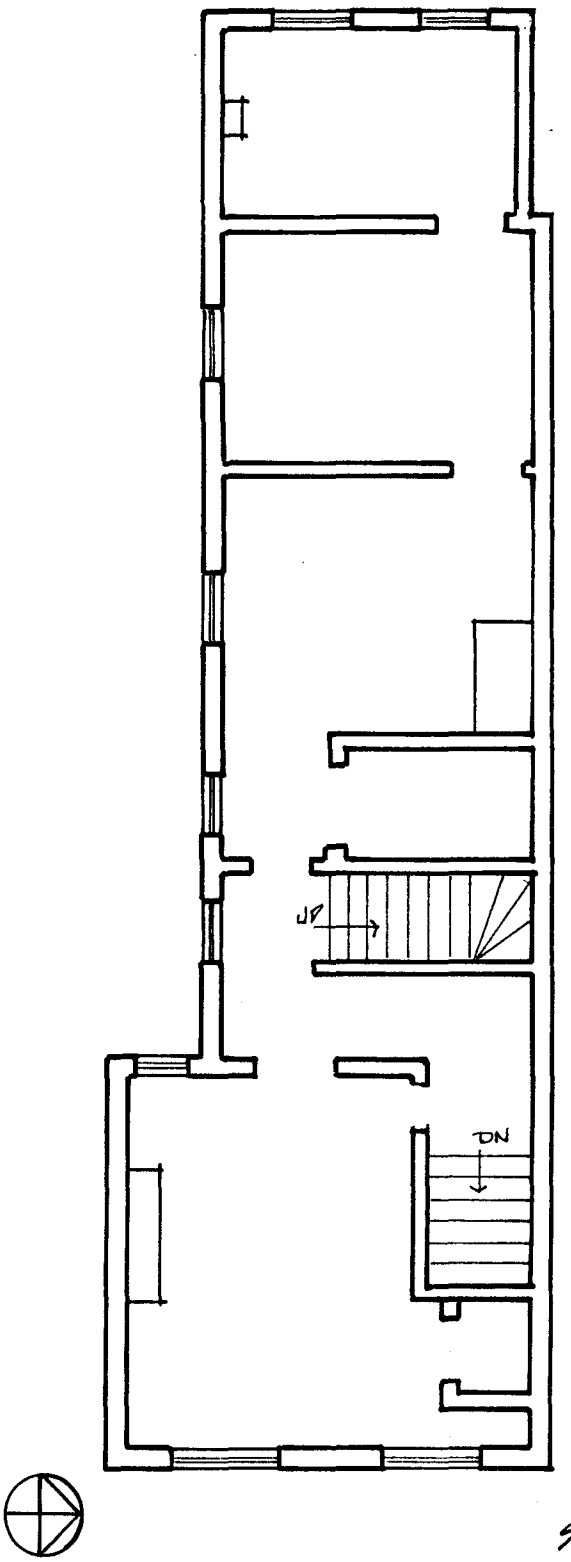

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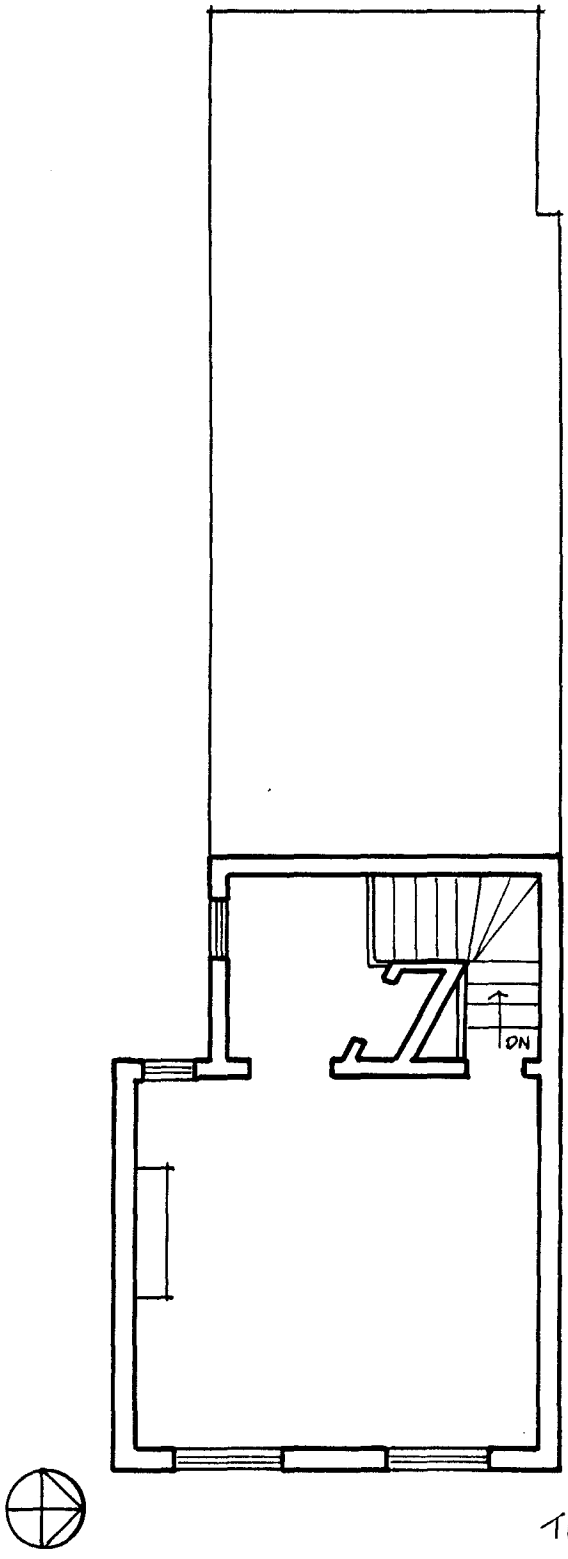

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