

B-4037

Maryland National Bank, (The Nationsbank Building)

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 07-05-2011

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Baltimore Trust Company

and/or common Maryland National Bank

2. Location

street & number 10 Light Street ___ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county

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 checked="" 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 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 (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Society of the United States Quitable Life Assurance (Md. National Bank)

street & number P.O. Box 987, MS 030401 telephone no.:

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber MLP 9705-

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 12

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title CHAP/GOUCHER COLLEGE

date 1984 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland

7. Description

Survey No. B-4037

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

This immense, highly ornamental brick and limestone structure is located at 10 Light Street between Baltimore and Redwood Streets. The building is thirty-four stories, measuring 500 feet high, 192 feet in length and 112 feet in width. The exterior of the building has a strong vertical emphasis and is most richly decorated at the roof line while its dignified base has more refined ornamentation. The building has a limestone base with four story high arched entrances and bronze decorated storefronts on the first floor. The building features medallions relating to Baltimore history and commerce and a recessed or stepped back tower portion above the twentieth story. The center of the back elevation is recessed on the upper stories creating a "U" - shaped floor plan. Above the twenty-fourth story, the building features large arches, lion heads, embattlements, geometric ornamentation and a copper mansard roof. In addition, the building also features highly ornamented buttresses, turrets, eagles and gargoyles. The main interior banking space has polished marble columns, a polychrome ceiling and a marble floor with mosaic tile inserts. On the mezzanine level there are large painted murals and state flags decorating the sides of the banking room. The bank still has the old wrought iron teller cages from fifty-five years ago.

The Indiana, limestone base of the Maryland National Bank extends around the first four stories of the building. Above the base, the brick building walls of the north and south facades are six bays wide and extend up to the twentieth story, while the main, Light Street facade measures eleven bays wide and is thirty-four stories high at the center, but only twenty stories high at the corners. At the twentieth floor the tower portion of the building commences. It is approximately five bays wide and is recessed on all sides except along Light Street. The twentieth floor roofline below the recessed tower portion juts upward in an irregular manner, creating a jagged roofline. The tower of the building tapers upwards for another fourteen floors and is capped with a steep mansard roof.

The main front facade, on Light Street, features a four story high arched entrance and a bronze decorated storefront on the first floor. The large archways on the main entrance are decorated with medallions relating to Baltimore history and commerce. The figures carved on the archway represent various themes of culture such as medicine, textiles, shipping, manufacturing, printing, railroads, the first telegraph, the Baltimore Fire and the writing of the Star Spangled Banner. Other medallions feature representations of the hourglass, beehive and wheat sheaves, the symbols of thrift, industry and prosperity, respectively. There are two double revolving doors at the entrance with two gargoyles and the base of the building is surmounted by a heavy corbelled cornice near the fifth floor. Four large flag poles with decorative brackets are located at the cornice above the entrance. Between the corbels of the cornice are a row of small narrow arched windows, grouped in threes, running

(continue, please)

8. Significance

Survey No.

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SUMMARY

The Maryland National Bank building is both an architectural and visual landmark along Baltimore's skyline. It is Baltimore's only recessed or set back style skyscraper and the most highly ornamented building in downtown Baltimore with an exuberance of Art Deco style detailing. The Maryland National Bank building has the most unusual roof line in the Financial District and was the tallest building of its era. The decorations at the base of the structure are not only ornamental, but relate to Baltimore history. The banking space of the building is among the largest in Baltimore and is the most finely decorated in the city. The building has a rich architectural and artistic legacy and represents the finest workmanship for Baltimore artisans, craftsman, artists, bricklayers and architects. The building was first called the Baltimore Trust Company, then later it was called the Mathieson and O'Sullivan Building, before it was occupied by Maryland National Bank. It is in excellent condition and has faced little alterations.

GENERAL HISTORY AND SUPPORT

This outstanding landmark was built by the Baltimore Trust Company in 1928. The Baltimore Trust and Guarantee Company merged in 1910. The building for the International Trust Company was built in 1901 and stood on the site of this building. Designed by Parker and Thomas, it survived the Baltimore Fire, but was torn down to make way for this immense skyscraper.

Plans for executing a new Baltimore Trust Building were begun in 1928. Yet shortly after it opened, the Baltimore Trust Company went bankrupt and remained as a white elephant for several years afterwards. In 1940, the Baltimore Trust Company was purchased by the general manager of a rubber company. Raymond J. Funkhousner, renaming it the O'Sullivan Building. Due to a lack of success for Funkhousner in 1949, the building was sold to the Fidelity Baltimore National Bank and the Mathieson Chemical Company and the building was named the Mathieson Building. Then in 1960, Mathieson sold the building to the Equitable Life Insurance Company and in 1962, the Fidelity Baltimore National Bank bought the building and named the structure the Maryland National Bank.

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Maryland National Bank
Description Summary, cont'd.

Page 2 of Section 7

along the entire width of the front elevation. The north and south elevations on Baltimore and Redwood Streets respectively both contain the same details as the front elevation except the south elevation has a similar archway filled with windows instead of an entrance. The entrance on Baltimore Street is the main entrance into the bank, whereas the Light Street entrance is the main entrance to the upper floor offices. This entrance is slightly lower than the Baltimore Street entrance because Light Street slopes down to the south. The north side of the west elevation abuts the four story high Roy Rogers building at Baltimore Street, and the south side of this elevation borders a small portion of Wine Alley.

Rising above the base is the main brick building shaft. The top of the brick shaft, some twenty stories above street level, is decorated on all sides with large arches, lion heads, embattlements and geometric ornamentation. The recessed tower of the building rises above the outer walls and climaxes in a copper mansard roof. The roof area is highly ornamented with buttresses, turrets, eagles, gargoyles and a wide variety of decoration. The eighteen foot tall "MN" sign at the roof was added in 1971 as a means to predict weather changes by the changes in color.

The main interior banking space is 195 feet long and its decor suggests an Italianate, Renaissance influence with the presence of a multicolored, marble, mosaic floor, intricately carved, semi-circular arches, split coffered beamed ceilings and pseudo-doric capitals surmounting the fluted marble columns. The lower floor of the room contains the black, wrought iron teller cages and state flags decorate the sides of the banking room. Today the Maryland National Bank still basically maintains its original 1930 appearance on the exterior as well as within the main banking spaces. It is in excellent condition.

The Maryland National Bank was built by two firms, Robert E. Lee Taylor and David Kirkpatrick Ester Fisher Jr. formed the firm of Taylor and Fisher and Howard May and Wilson Leveing Smith formed Smith and May. R.E. Lee Taylor (1882-1952) was born in Norfolk, Va., where he practiced architecture from 1906-1917. He received his early education at Norfolk Academy and also attended University of Virginia and later received a B.S. degree from M.I.T. in 1904. He first joined the firm of Parker, Thomas & Rice in Baltimore and later formed the firm of Taylor & Fisher in 1927.

David Fisher Jr. (1892-1978) received his undergraduate degree from Princeton in 1913 and a graduate degree from M.I.T. in 1916. After World War I he joined the firm of Parker, Thomas and Rice in Baltimore and later became a partner in 1924. His later firm, Taylor & Fisher, designed the Federal Reserve Bank, The Baltimore Trust Building and Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Building.

Wilson Leveing Smith (1878-1931) of Smith and May went to Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University in addition to studying in Europe. Smith also joined the firm of Parker, Thomas and Rice and later left them to form the firm of Smith and May.

Howard May (1879-1941) was born in Baltimore and received his early education in the Baltimore Public Schools. He then studied architecture under the French architect and instructor in Baltimore, M. Chequier. May was first employed by Parker, Thomas & Rice and in 1913 he joined in partnership with Wilson Smith. The firm of Smith and May designed Gwynn's Falls Junior High School, McDonogh School and several Baltimore County School and University of Maryland Buildings. In addition, they also designed alterations for Union Trust Company, Maryland Trust Company and the Mercantile Trust Building.

The Maryland National Bank is the most highly ornamented building in downtown Baltimore with an exuberance of Art Deco style detail. It features an abundance of details such as bronze storefronts, medallions relating to Baltimore History, large arches, lion heads, embattlements, geometric ornamentation and a copper mansard roof. In addition, the building also features highly ornamented buttresses, turrets, eagles and gargoyles. The Maryland National Bank is the only recessed or set back style skyscraper with one of the most unique rooflines in Baltimore. When the building was built it was the tallest building of its era and today serves as a landmark in the Baltimore skyline. The interior banking space is among the largest and most finely decorated in Baltimore. The main interior banking space features marble columns, a polychrome ceiling and a marble floor with mosaic tile inserts. In addition, there are large murals, state flags around the sides and the beautifully preserved old wrought iron teller cages still remain.

This grandiose building is one of the most attractive skyscrapers lining the skyline of Baltimore and it houses one of the largest banks in the state of Maryland. The Maryland National Bank is one of the most important landmarks in the city and it represented, in its era, the beginning of a new architecturally modern, 20th century city. The building serves as a major contribution to the historical character of the Financial District on Baltimore.

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Page 9, continued

Bibliographical References

The Best Known Business Address in Baltimore, Baltimore, Baltimore 1930.
Research done by Allison E. Letzer, Goucher Student , refer to CHAP files.

AREA: Financial District

MAGI NO.: 0440375812

Address: 10 Light Street

Current Name: Maryland National Bank

Block: 643 Lot: 5/12

Lot size: 112 x 195

Height: 34 stories

Materials: Brick and stone

Condition: Excellent

Owner: Soc. of U.S. Equit. Life Assur.

Use: Bank, offices

Accessible: Yes

Designation: None

Liber/Folio: MLP 9705-12



Historic Name: Baltimore Trust Company

Date: 1929

Architect/Builder: Taylor & Fisher, Smith & May

Style (if appropriate):

Description:

This immense, highly ornamental brick and limestone structure is located at 10 Light Street between Baltimore and Redwood Streets. The exterior of the building has a strong vertical emphasis and is most richly decorated at the roof line while its dignified base has more refined ornamentation. The building has a limestone base with four story high arched entrances and bronze decorated storefronts on the first floor. The main entrance to the building is on Light Street with a direct entrance to the banking space on Baltimore Street. The large archways are decorated with medallions relating to Baltimore history and commerce and are surmounted by a decorative cornice and frieze. Rising above the base is the main brick building shaft which steps back in accordance with zoning ordinances of the time: The top of the brick shaft, some twenty stories above street level, is decorated with large arches, lions heads, embattlements, and geometric ornamentation. The recessed tower of the building rises above the outer walls and climaxes in a copper mansard roof. It is also highly ornamented with buttresses, turrets, eagles, gargoyles and a wide variety of decoration. The "MN" sign at the roof was added in 1971. The main banking space of the building is 195 feet long and is decorated with polished marble columns, a polychrome ceiling and a marble floor with mosaic tile inserts. A mezzanine level with large painted murals of Baltimore and Maryland from 1630 to 1930 surrounds the banking space and surmounts the wrought iron tellers cages and the state flags decorating the sides of the banking room.

Significance:

Area: Architecture

Level: Local

The Maryland National Bank Building is Baltimore's only recessed or set-back style skyscraper. It is the most highly ornamented building in downtown Baltimore with an exuberance of Art Deco style detailing. It has the most unusual roof line in the Financial District and was the tallest building of its era. The decorations at the base of the structure are not only ornamental, but relate to Baltimore history. One medallion symbolizes the Baltimore Fire and shows the former bank building which stood on this site and survived the fire. The banking space of the building is among the largest in Baltimore and is the most finely decorated in the City. The building has a rich architectural and artistic legacy and represents the finest workmanship for Baltimore artisans, craftsman, artists, bricklayers and architects. It is both an architectural and visual landmark along Baltimore's skyline. The Building was completed in 1930 for the Baltimore Trust Company. It was later called the Mathieson and O'Sullivan Building, before it was occupied by Maryland National Bank. It is in excellent condition and has faced little alteration.

Sources:

Surveyor and Date: Fred B. Shoken, March 1985.

Survey No. B-4037

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Baltimore Trust Company

and/or common Maryland National Bank

2. Location

street & number Corner of East Baltimore, Light and Redwood not for publication
Sts.city, town Baltimore vicinity of congressional district Third

state Maryland county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: Bank

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Maryland National Bank

street & number 10 Light Street telephone no.: 244-5000

city, town Baltimore, Maryland state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610 folio

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. B-4037

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

8. Significance

Survey No. B-4637

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 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 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 _____ **Builder/Architect** Taylor & Fisher and Smith & May:
 check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D Two firms associated throughout
 and/or in the execution of the work.
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
 Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Significance

Its monumental size, unique style of architecture and grandiose appearance mark the Maryland National Bank as one of the most attractive skyscrapers lining the city of Baltimore. With respect to its architectural history, the building was considered at one time Baltimore's first major example of the latest development of American skyscrapers.¹ Not only do its eclectic blends of architectural elements contribute to the building's architectural significance, but also it represents a conglomeration of different styles and periods through which the architects became inspired. Adding to the significance of the structure is its location. The historic site on which the bank lies was also a center for some of the most important events in American history. The Fountain Inn, one of the famous taverns of early America, located adjacent to the present location of the bank, became a meeting place during the War of 1812.²

History and Support

The Maryland National Bank at Baltimore, Redwood and Light Sts. stands on the grounds which for years has marked the center of Baltimore's business and financial life.³ In spite of its dating only fifty-five years, the Maryland National Bank has a history of different ownerships as the result of numerous consolidations and mergers. These occurred as the result of bankruptcy or trades through joint ventures.

In 1889, the Baltimore Trust & Guarantee Co. was founded as a local city bank. It was located on the same site where the bank stands today.⁴ However, scorched by flames and discolored

by smoke caused by the 1904 Fire, the Old Trust Building was among several torn down to make way for the execution of the monumental thirty-four story structure.⁵ Through a consolidation with the International Trust Co. the Baltimore Trust Co. was established in April 1910.

Plans for executing the building were begun in 1928; the splinter of land, together with other parcels adjoining it to the west and south, were eventually sold together, and the late Waldo Newcomer erected thereon the big building in which he took so much pride.⁶ Apparently, there was a temporary location as described by an interviewer: "When we got a first floor set up on the south side of the Baltimore-Light St. corner, we moved the bank offices, vaults, safety deposit boxes and all other supplies to the new floor space, then removed the small building and dug and poured foundations on Baltimore Street side."⁷ Actual construction of the building began in 1928. There was a fifteen month contract period, the deadline being December 9, 1929.⁸ At the end of the fifteen month construction period, the style of the building portrayed a quality of construction new and different from anything else around Baltimore at the time.⁹

In 1931, however, the Baltimore Trust Company went bust and remained for several years thereafter as a white elephant, until purchased in 1940 by the general manager of a rubber company, Raymond J. Funkhousner, renaming it the O'Sullivan Building.¹⁰ There was not much success for Funkhousner with the building and in 1949 the Fidelity Baltimore National Bank and the Mathieson Chemical Company jointly acquired the

skyscraper and named it the Mathieson Building.¹¹ Prior to 1960's Mathieson sold the Building to Equitable Life Insurance Company, still under the name of 'Mathieson'; however, in 1962, the Fidelity Baltimore purchased it and named the structure the Maryland National Bank.¹² The name has not been changed ever since. The addition of the 18-ft. tall-mn-sign atop its roof was added in the late 60's and was used as a means to predict weather changes by the changes in color.¹³

Listing the Maryland National Bank in the National Register of Historic Places will recognize the importance of this structure as an architectural monument and the genius, patience and dedication it undertook to erect it. Despite some of the minor alterations it has undergone during the past years, such as the addition of window box air conditioning unit installations, the bank is an important architectural skyscraper reminding the viewer of the prestigious and quality of construction executed in the city of Baltimore.

Maryland National Bank
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Footnotes

- 1 "I Remember: Building our First Skyscraper" Sunday Sun Magazine, January, 1958.
- 2 "Baltimore Trust Building Site Historic" The Baltimore Sun.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 "New Banking Quarters Open Today", Baltimore Trust Company, December, 1929.
- 5 "Old Trust Building Survived 1904 Fire" The Baltimore Sun.
- 6 Baltimore News Post, January 4, 1940.
- 7 "I Remember Building our First Skyscraper" Sunday Sun Magazine, January, 1958.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 "Salute to a Landmark: The Maryland National Bank Building", Evening Sun Magazine, August 29 1979.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 John M. McClintock, "Weather Beacons Will Flash on Tallest Building in Town", The Baltimore Sun, February 17, 1971.
- 14 "I Remember: Building our First Skyscraper", Sunday Sun Magazine, January 1958.
- 15 "Salute to A Landmark: The Maryland National Bank Building", Sunday Sun Magazine, January, 1958.
- 16 Baltimore Trust Co., Sunday Sun, December 5, 1929.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 "Weather Beacons will Flash on Tallest Building in Town", The Baltimore Sun, February 17, 1971.
- 19 "Baltimore Trust Building Wins Architectural Medal for 1929" Baltimore Evening Sun, January 2, 1930.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 "Board Room Rich in Art Treatment", The Baltimore Sun.

(cont.)

²²Federal Agencies Crowd into "Little Washington", Evening Sun,
September 30, 1942.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

Bibliography

Series of Paper clippings from the The Baltimore Sun, Evening
Sun Magazine.

Saylor, Henry H. Dictionary of Architecture. John Wiley & Sons:
New York, 1952.

Description

The four sided, 500 ft. structure of the Maryland National Bank building stands on the corners of Baltimore, Redwood and Light Streets. Its most outstanding characteristic is that of its architectural style, which was new and different from anything else around Baltimore at the time.¹⁴ Such was its popularity and acclamation at the time that the Architectural Medal of 1929 was awarded to the President of the company, then known as the Baltimore Trust Co. The structure features a massive, bold masonry base surmounted by twenty story brick shaft tapered, buttressed and ending in a classical mansard roof. Fifty-five years later, the structure still maintains its original appearance and is in very good condition.

The building's exterior, huge, Indiana, limestone blocks used for the base of the building, is surmounted by a heavy corbelled cornice near the fifth floor and encloses the four main banking floors.¹⁵ Rising several hundred feet above is a plain, brick shaft with a powerful vertical line formed by the piers, composing the largest section of the building; it rises to the stoned carved, richly ornamented 20th lower cresting.¹⁶ Located above this are a rich capping of arches and winged buttress caps topped by a steep, ribbed roof of copper and gold.¹⁷ Surmounted on the uppermost part of the thirty-four story building are the weather beacons-~~mn~~-which indicate the upcoming weather forecast.¹⁸

The conglomeration of the different allegorical symbols carved on the entrance archways and upper floors of the building portray a combination of primitive and modern art and the different schools of sculpture through which the architects became inspired: Mayan, Etruscan and Mesopotamian.¹⁹

The decor suggests a combination of primitive and modern art styles with representations of the 'Tree of Life', the gargoyles, lions and eagles. The figure carved on the Light Street archway represent various themes of culture such as medicine, textiles, shipping manufacturing, the first telegraph, building, the Baltimore Fire, the Writing of the Star-Spangled Banner, printing and railroads; all of these alternated by representations of the hourglass, beehive, sheaf of wheat-symbols of thrift, industry and prosperity respectively.²⁰

The Main Banking Room, one of the largest individual banking rooms in the world(200ft*80ft*50ft) is the most lavishly decorated of the interiors of the bank. This decor suggests an Italianate, Renaissance influence with the presence of a multi-colored, marbled, mosaic floor, intricately carved, semi-circular arches, split coffered beamed ceilings and pseudo-doric capitals surmounting the fluted marble columns.

The lower floor of the room has been given entirely to the teller's cubicles or 'cages' which are constructed in a "black-lace" wrought iron; while the officer's room is located in the mezzanine section above where large painted murals, designed by R.M. McGill MacKall, provided the decor for the surrounding walls.

Adding to the extravagance of the interior decor of the building is the famous "Board Room". The rough cast walls of stucco, the stoned door trims, leaded glassed tracery windows, polychromed decorated beamed ceilings and the touches of colored tiles and tapestry, suggest a Florentine influence of architectural and decorative features applied to this unusual room.²¹

The structure is in relatively original condition. The installation of window box air conditioning units in 1961 and the 'slicing away' of a section of the 34 ft. foundation during the construction of the Charles' St. Subway, caused for certain alterations pertaining to the original condition of the building.

With respect to the original condition of the bank's interior, there has also been a certain degree of alteration performed on the structure. More than fifteen percent of the building is now occupied by Federal Government agencies.²² At one time, the entire 20th floor was formerly occupied by the Swank Chesapeake Club; it is now owned by the state administrative offices of the OPA, Office of Price Administration.²³ What was once the club's paneled dining room is now filled with rows of business-like desks of the rationing divisions of the OPA.²⁴

The alterations performed on the building discussed previously may have had a slight effect on the building's historical integrity; however it does not disrupt its architectural integrity for which the building plays a significant role.



H D

B-4637

ST.

REDWOOD

BALTIMORE

FAYETTE

LEXINGTON

WINE ST

ST. AUL

ST.



MERCER

ST.

CALVER

WATER

ST.

ST.

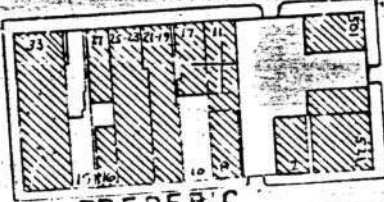
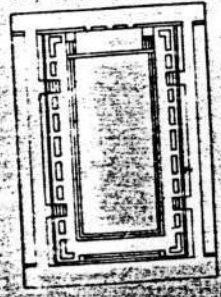
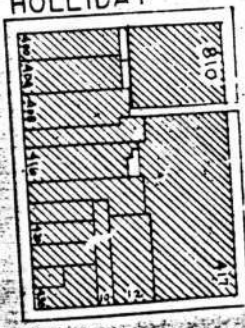
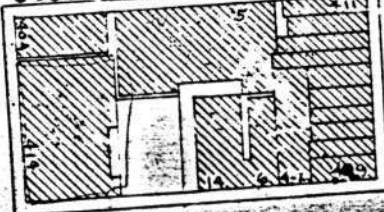
DAVIS

WATER

ST.

HOLLIDAY

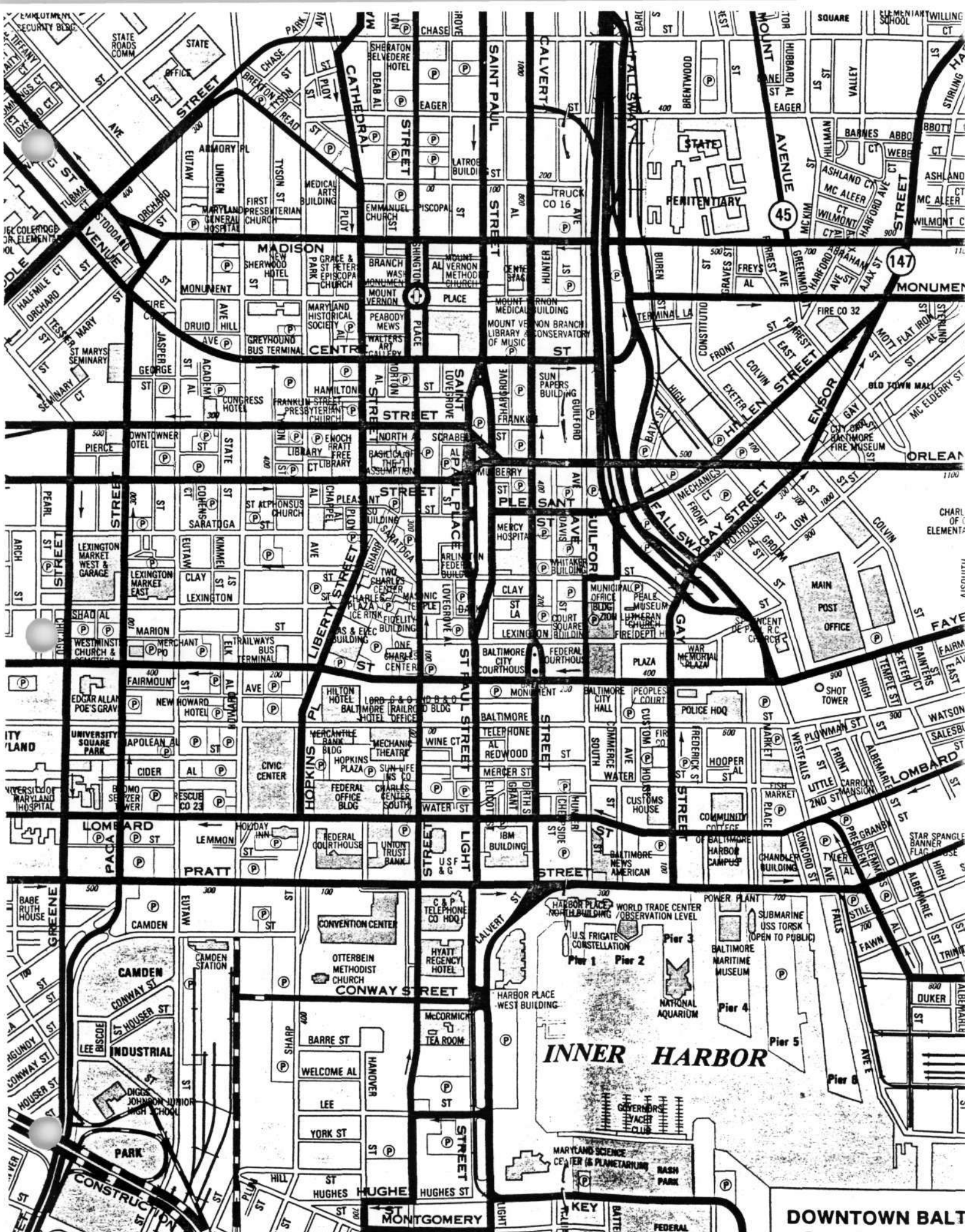
CUSTOM HOUSE AVE



FREDERIC

ST.

S



DOWNTOWN BALT

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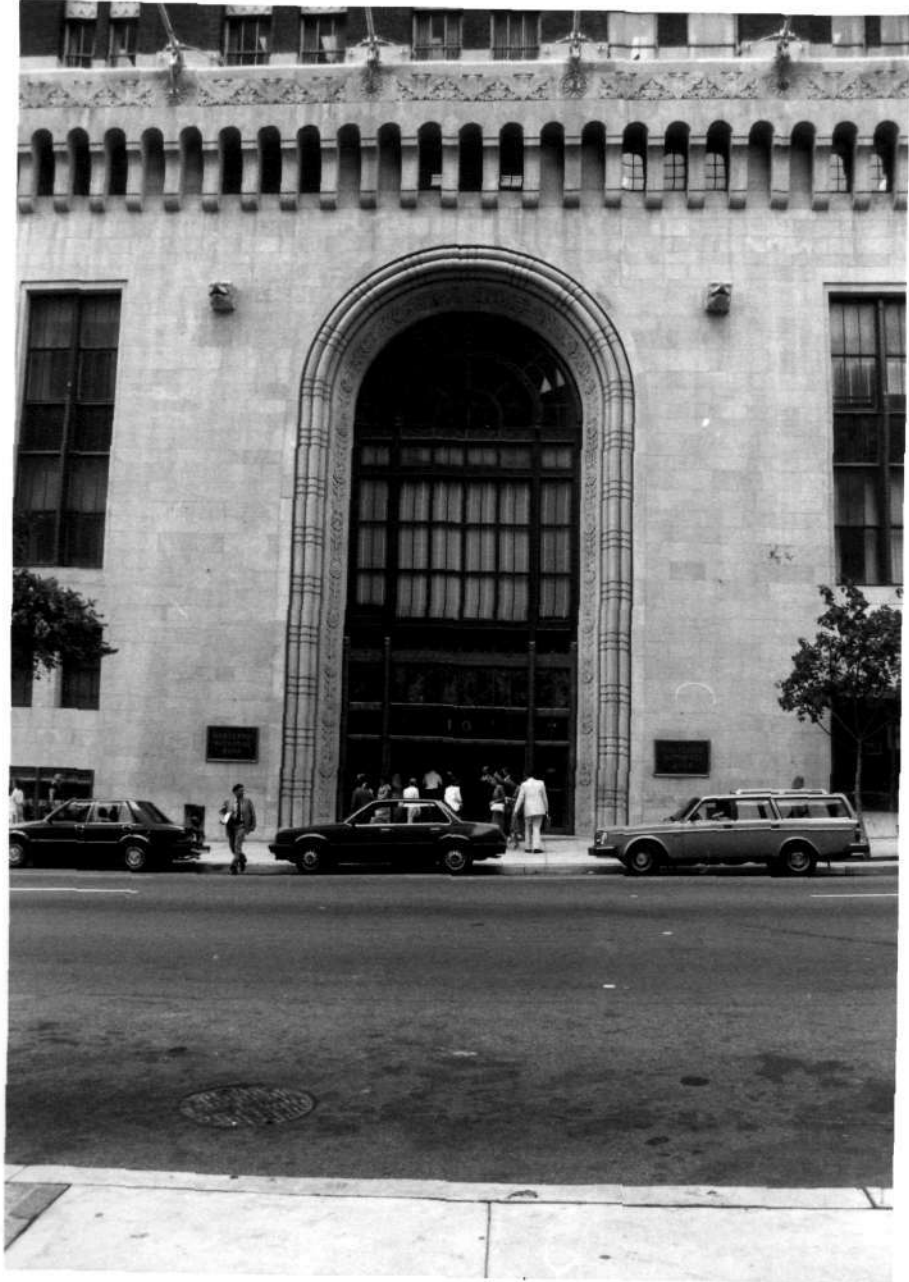
B-4037

Baltimore Trust Company
10 Light Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Fred Shoken
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
East elevation



B-4037

Baltimore Trust Company
10 Light Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail of east elevation



B-4037

Baltimore Trust Company
10 Light Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
Date: July 1985
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail east entrance