

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

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	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Mount Vernon Place Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Mount Vernon Place Historic District

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mount Vernon Place and Washington Place

CITY OR TOWN:
Baltimore

STATE: Maryland CODE: COUNTY: Baltimore CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Baltimore

STREET AND NUMBER:
Baltimore City Hall

CITY OR TOWN: Baltimore STATE: Maryland CODE:

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 STATE: Maryland CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Baltimore

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DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The dominant feature of the Mount Vernon Place Historic District is the Washington Monument by Robert Mills which was constructed between 1815 and 1829. As built, the monument is much simpler than the prize-winning design. Basically the monument is a monumental Doric column and capital placed on a high square pedestal and topped with a 15-foot high standing statue of George Washington. The monument is constructed of marble quarried in neighboring Baltimore county. The contractors were the firm of Towson and Steuart. The Monument is 165 feet high to the top of the column. The original design called for applied bronze ornament to the column shaft, and "trophy" sculpture for the top of the pedestal. These refinements were never carried out. However, during the decade of the 1830's the handsome Mills circular cast iron fence, with paired gate posts resembling Roman fasces, was completed and the bronze lettering was applied to the four elevations of the pedestal. This lettering forms the following inscription:

To George Washington by the State of Maryland
 Born 22 February 1732
 Died 14 December 1799
 Commander in Chief of the American
 Army 15 June 1775
 Commissioned Resigned at Annapolis
 23 December 1783
 Trenton, 26 December 1776
 Yorktown, 19 October 1781
 President of the United States
 4 March 1789
 Retired to Mount Vernon
 4 March 1797

The monument has four entrance doors, one on each face. The monument is entered from the south door and there is an open corridor on all four sides surrounding the base of the shaft. From the north corridor a doorway leads to the narrow circular stone stairway that leads to the roof of the pedestal and to the top of the column shaft.

The four rectangular parks that radiate for one city block to the north, south, east, and west of the monument to form open space in the shape of a Greek cross. The east-west axis, Mount Vernon Place, is 200 feet wide and 744 feet long; the north-south axis, Washington Place, is 150 feet wide and 744 feet long. Originally these rectangles were merely open grass. About 1850 they were fenced in and lined with trees, then in 1880's the fences were removed and the parkes were redesigned as sculpture gardens to receive various works of art including five bronzes by Antoine-Louis Baryé. In 1916 they were relandscaped to their present appearance by the firm of Carrère and Hastings.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The area known commonly as "Mount Vernon Place" in Baltimore, Maryland, is composed of four rectangular parks, East and West Mount Vernon Place and North and South Washington Place. These garden-parks, and the houses that line them, form the setting for the Washington Monument designed by Robert Mills and completed in 1829. This 165-foot Doric column, on a rectangular base, is surmounted by a 15-foot high standing statue of George Washington by Enrico Causici. This is the first major monument in the country built to honor the first president, and is one of the finest examples of monumental architecture in the United States. It is based on the precedent of the great triumphal columns of Roman antiquity and also perhaps on the more recent monument to the victims of the Great London Fire by Wren or the Napoleon column in the Place Vendome in Paris. Viewed from a distance and in the context of its symbolic function, this vigorous monument is a singularly appropriate memorial to the man who came to be regarded as the father of his country.

Mount Vernon Place is one of the first examples in the United States of deliberate city planning to create a dramatic setting for an existing monument. The success of the scheme, laid out in 1831, is shown by the exceptionally high quality of the architecture that was erected around the four squares. Most notable buildings are the Thomas-Jencks House built in 1851 in the late Greek Revival style by Niernsee and Nielson; the Jacobs house built in 1884 by Stanford White and enlarged in 1902 by John Russell Pope; the Peabody Institute built from 1859 to 1866 by E.G. Lind in the Italianate style; and the Walters Art Gallery built from 1905 to 1909 in the Italian Renaissance Revival style by Delano and Aldrich. The Washington Monument by Robert Mills is most certainly an example of American architecture of the first importance and it became the focus and the reason for one of the best conceived and executed city planning projects ever carried out in 19th-century America.

History

From the time of the death of George Washington in 1799, there were numerous efforts to honor him all across the growing country. However the first successful proposal to erect a major monument to him did not take form until 1810 when the General Assembly of Maryland authorized a lottery to raise \$100,000 to build a monument to him. A Board of Managers was appointed to oversee the project and a site was chosen on Calvert Street on the site of the old Courthouse. French émigre architect Maximilien Godefroy

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, 19th and 20th Centuries, (Baltimore 1963), 80; Fiske Kimball, American Architecture, (Indianapolis, 1928), 225; Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans, (New York, 1955), 86; Richard H. Howland and Eleanor P. Spencer, The Architecture of Baltimore, (Baltimore, 1953), 51, 52, 75; Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr. and Charles H. Elam, Century of Baltimore Architecture, (Baltimore, 1957), plates 6 through 12; Helen Pierce Gallagher, Robert Mills, (New York, 1935), 104-109.

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 TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
W. Brown Morton III

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, OAHP, National Park Service. DATE: 7/28/71

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE	Maryland	
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FOR NPS USE ONLY		
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Mount Vernon Place Historic District
(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Significance

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prepared several proposals for the monument in 1810 but none of them were accepted. The Board published a notice in 1813 of an architectural competition with a prize of \$500 for the winning entry. Entries survive from Godefroy, Joseph-Jaques Remeé, Robert Mills, and an anonymous entry thought to be that of B.H. Latrobe.

The prize was awarded to Robert Mills, then working in Charleston, South Carolina. His winning project called for a 140-foot Doric column rising from a rectangular base with an open vault under it. A sculpture group of Washington being driven in a chariot pulled by four horses was planned for the top of the column.

In competitions of this nature, the prize winning design often turns out to cost too much and so the finished product is somewhat simplified. In the case of the Washington Monument this was true. First of all the site was changed in 1814 from Calvert Street to a new site north of the city on axis with Charles Street extended. This site was donated by Colonel John Eager Howard from a portion of his estate, Belvidere. This marked the beginning of what is now Mount Vernon Place.

The monument was commenced in the spring of 1815 and by 1824 the base, column and capital were completed. By this time the monument had already exceeded the available funding by \$13,000. In 1826 the sculptor Enrico Causici of Verona, Italy, was engaged to make a 15 foot high stone statue of a standing Washington holding a scroll of his military commission. The statue was finished in November 1829 and lifted into place atop the 165 foot shaft. During the next decade the bronze inscriptions on the base were put up, the landscaping and fencing completed. However the proposed "trophy" sculpture groups for the four corners of the base were never realized.

In 1829 Charles Howard completed an imposing Greek revival house at the northeast corner of the monument. In 1831, the Howard family executors were granted permission to create the four, one block long, rectangular parks leading away from the monument. Those east and west along Monument Street were named Mount Vernon Place. Those north and south on the axis of Charles Street were named Washington Place. The resulting cross shaped park with the monument in the center has become known familiarly in its entirety as Mount Vernon Place.

From its inception this place became a fashionable and sought-after residential district. The Howard executors deliberately created a sensitively scaled setting for the Washington Monument and at the same time created the finest urban development project in the city.

Mount Vernon Place reached the zenith of its development in the last half of the 19th century. Great private houses such as the Thomas-Jencks House by Niernsee and Nielson, the Jacobs House by Stanford White and John

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Mount Vernon Place Historic District

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8. Significance

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Russell Pope shared the square with the Peabody Institute designed and built by E. G. Lind from 1859 to 1866. In 1905 the great art collector Henry Walters built the Walters Art Gallery, designed by Delano and Aldrich on South Washington Place. Since the first world war Mount Vernon Place has undergone a steady transformation from being a neighborhood of large single family town houses for the wealthy to its present condition where the same buildings for the most part are divided into apartments or serve as clubs or offices.

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STATE	
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(Number all entries)

Mount Vernon Place Historic District property description:

Property bounded on the south by Hamilton Street; on the west by the alley between Cathedral Street and Park Avenue; in the north by Read Street to the east end of Lot 31, following the eastern edge of Lots 31, 30, 29, 28, and 27 the northern edge of Lots 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8 (all Block 517), crossing St. Paul Place to northern edge of Lot 21, Block 518; and on the east by Gore Alley.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Mount Vernon Place Historic District, Baltimore, Maryland

The area commonly known as "Mount Vernon Place" in Baltimore, Maryland, is composed of four rectangular parks, East and West Mount Vernon Place and North and South Washington Place. These garden-parks, and the houses that line them, form the setting for the Washington Monument designed by Robert Mills and completed in 1829. This 165-foot Doric column, on a rectangular base, is surmounted by a 15-foot high standing statue of George Washington by Enrico Causici. This is the first major monument in the country built to honor the first President, and is one of the finest examples of monumental architecture in the United States. It is based on the precedent of the great triumphal columns of Roman antiquity and also on the more recent monuments such as the Napoleon column in the Place Vendome in Paris. Viewed from a distance and in the context of its symbolic function, this vigorous monument is a singularly appropriate memorial to the man who came to be regarded as the father of his country.

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* * * * *

NSHSB: 12-9-71
W B M

WASHINGTON MONUMENT, MARYLAND

Location: Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, Baltimore County

Ownership: City of Baltimore, Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin

Significance

A public - spirited group of Baltimoreans initiated the movement that led to the erection early in the nineteenth century of a gigantic column in memory of George Washington, the first notable civic monument in the United States. In doing so, they also provided the city with a nickname of long popularity, "The Monumental City."

Baltimore led the Nation in formally honoring Washington by means of a handsome monument. Congress, shortly following the general's death in 1799, had debated a proposal to erect a memorial, but nothing came out of that discussion. Then, in 1809, and just before the tenth anniversary of Washington's death, hundreds of Baltimoreans signed a petition to the State legislature that requested permission to use a lottery to raise money for a Washington monument. The legislature approved of the petition and passed the necessary legislation on January 6, 1810. Under the act, a Board of Managers, comprised of 23 leading Baltimoreans, was created and authorized to supervise the monument's construction. Robert Gilmore, Jr., dominated the Board for years and spurred the project as best he could. As a result of the State's approval, the first lottery was held in 1813, and it was followed by five more. All told, the Board raised \$113,000 by the lotteries, a sum that fell far short of what the monument finally cost.

ASIDE FROM RAISING MONEY FOR THE MONUMENT, THE BOARD OF MANAGERS, MOST important task concerned the selection of a design. The Board, at first, approached in 1810 a French-émigré architect living in Baltimore, Maximilian Godefroy. He produced at least five different designs, none of which apparently entranced the Board. Not until 1813 did the Board return to this matter. On February 15, 1813, it voted to offer a prize of \$500 for the best plan that could be implemented for not over \$100,000. A newspaper advertisement appeared in March about the competition. It invited Europeans to enter, but the notice expressed a clear preference for an American design.

The competition inspired four entrants, one of whom received the prize. Robert Mills, after having induced the Board to extend the closing date from January 1, to January 12, 1814, won the premium on May 2, 1814. In submitting his concept, Mills, perhaps having noted the Board's hope for an American design, testified to his Americanness and expressed the hope that the country would not have to turn" ... to foreign genius and to foreign hands ..." to honor Washington.

The man who won the competition now ranks as a major American architect. Born on August 12, 1781, and dying on March 13, 1855, he, along with William Strickland, made the Greek Revival the most popular architectural style in the years before the Civil War. And he has two Washington Monuments to his credit, he also being the designer of the striking shaft in the District of Columbia.

Mills' Baltimore monument underwent great change between its inception and completion. It is true that the Doric column remained central to the design from beginning to end, Mills having selected it because "... it offered 'solidity and simplicity of character' so emblematic of George Washington."¹ But the original plan negated the idea of "solidity and simplicity" by covering the column with a mass of ornate decoration and six exterior galleries. And a brass statue of Washington as a Roman chief was to surmount the column. Washington in Roman guise never appeared on top of the column and most of the exterior ornamentation, plus the galleries, disappeared in time from the plans because of the great cost of just erecting the column. Nevertheless, posterity benefited, for the completed dignified monument was much more likely to inspire the viewer than the garish original.

Once a design had been accepted, the Board spurred its implementation. The monument had originally been planned to occupy the old courthouse square in present-day downtown Baltimore, but had to be given a new site when it was decided to erect the Battle Monument there. Colonel John Eager Howard provided a new home for the monument by presenting to the city a plot of ground that then stood at the head of Charles Street. Thus at twelve noon on July 4, 1815, the Board of Managers and some 30,000 people assembled on that hill to lay the monument's cornerstone. The ceremony opened with a 39-gun salute, saw the Masons lay the stone, and ended with a 100-gun salute.

¹ J. Jefferson Miller, II, unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 1962, 39.

Shortly after the echo of the last salute had died away, the construction of the monument began. Mills, responsible for all aspects of the project, attended to the multifarious duties of his job. By December 20, 1815, he had completed one of his most important tasks, the signing of the main contractors to do the marble work. Mills himself visited the various local quarries in order to check on the stone to be used, the first blocks of marble being laid on May 1, 1816. By the end of 1816, the base had been largely completed. About two and a half years later, less than half of the project had been completed. But over \$96,000 had been spent and only \$523.11 remained available from the proceeds of the first three lotteries. Three additional lotteries enabled work to continue, and by 1825 the finished column had already become a Baltimore landmark. In 1826, Enrica Causici won the competition for the statue of Washington to top the monument. Three years later, the statue was emplaced on the column's top.

Despite Mills' exhortations for the addition of certain embellishments on the base, the Washington Monument has changed little since its namesake's statue was put in place. The monument consists of a 50-foot square base that is twenty feet high and a column, which with its entablature, is 165 feet and 4 inches high. The memorial's whole height is 176.5 feet. Inside the column, a circular stairway of 228 steps leads to the top. The setting for the monument was enhanced in 1831, when the Howard family presented to the city land for four small rectangular parks radiating from the four sides of the column's base.

Present Condition of the Site

Today, the monument is in excellent condition and is well maintained.

In a bucolic setting when constructed, the Washington Monument now dominates one of the Nation's handsomest urban districts, Mt. Vernon Place. The land donated by the Howard family in 1831 has been transformed into four attractive parks, one extending from each of the four sides of the monument's base. Charles Street, which runs north and south, now flows around the column which towers over numerous attractive structures in and around Mt. Vernon Place.

Both Charles Street and an iron fence encircle the base of the column. The handsome fence is broken by a gate before each of the doors in the four sides of the base. Above each of those doors, in bronze letters, is the inscription, "TO GEORGE WASHINGTON BY THE STATE OF MARYLAND;" and flanking each door are inscriptions that note the highpoints of the general's career. All of the preceding embellishments were added during the 1830's.

Of the four entrances to the base, only the south doorway is currently used. Just inside that entry is a bust of Washington by Giuseppi Gerracchi. Small, vaulted rooms on the west, north, and east serve as a Historical Information Center for the City of Baltimore and contain exhibits concerning the construction of the monument, the life of Washington, and the history of the City of Baltimore. In the north room is the entrance to the stairway that leads to the top of the column.

The Washington Monument is open daily from 10 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., except on Christmas and New Year's Day.

References: D.A.B.; H. M. Pierce Gallagher, Robert Mills, Architect of the Washington Monument; 1781-1855 (New York, 1935); Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (Philadelphia, 1964); Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1964); J. Jefferson Miller, II, Baltimore's Washington Monument, unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Delaware, March, 1962; --, "The Design for the Washington Monument in Baltimore," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXIII (Mar., 1964), 19-28; Hamilton Owens, Baltimore on the Chesapeake (New York, 1941). "Robert Mills and the Washington Monument in Baltimore," Maryland Historical Magazine, XXXIV (June 1939), 144-60, and XXXIV (June, 1940), 178-189.