

**The Commission for Historical and Architectural  
Preservation - Staff Report  
November 13, 2007**



**Landmark Designation Report  
Mt. Calvary Church  
Baltimore, MD**

The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) has the responsibility of recommending to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore the adoption of ordinances designating districts and landmarks within the limits of the City of Baltimore, having special historical, architectural, educational, cultural, social or community significance, interest, or value as Baltimore City Historic Districts or Landmarks, thereby necessitating their preservation and protection. In making its recommendation, the Commission shall give appropriate consideration to the following standards. In reaching its decision, the Commission shall clearly state which standards have been applied.

A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. dates from a particular period having a significant character, interest, or value, as part of the development, heritage, or culture of the City of Baltimore; or
2. is associated with the life of an outstanding historical person or persons; or
3. is the site of an historic event with a significant effect upon the cultural, political, economic, social, or historic heritage of the City of Baltimore; or
4. is significant of the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, method of construction, or engineering, or is the notable work of a master builder, designer, engineer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or
5. contributes information of historical, cultural, or social importance relating to the heritage of the community; or
6. has yielded, or may be likely to yield, archeological information important in history or prehistory.

### **Staff Recommendation: Approval**

**Mt Calvary Church** meets CHAP's standards for landmark designation one as an excellent example of a religious congregation that has contributed to the development, heritage, and culture of Baltimore City and standard four as a superb example of Gothic style architecture and as a work of prominent architect Robert Carey Long Jr.

### **Building Description:**

Mount Calvary P.E. Church was the last and largest church Long Jr. designed for the Protestant Episcopal community in Maryland. Built of brick the church centers on a square tower set-back into the façade. Gothic arched openings decorated the recessed centers of the tower, which is flanked by long, thin arched openings. The top of the tower is decorated with projecting round arches, an Italianate style motif. Here "a vestibule crosses the front, the interior is an open hall... the hall is set cross wise, parallel to the façade, and emerges on the sides like massive transepts." According to Dr. Stanton "a great many changes have been made in Mount Calvary Church. The chancel

was deepened in 1853, and the spire, which blew down [in 1914], was never replaced.” Stylistically, Dr. Stanton analyses the church as a design following no specific Medieval or 19<sup>th</sup>-century model, but an amalgam of several influences including designs English country parish churches, and German and Italian architectural influences.

### **Summary History**

Mount Calvary Episcopal Church began in 1842 by the efforts of Dr. Wyatt, Rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, who believed that a new parish was needed in this ‘rapidly-growing’ northwestern portion of Baltimore. In 1843 land was donated to the parish for construction of a church. In 1844, Bishop Whittingham laid the cornerstone of the Church, which two years later was consecrated on February 19, 1846. At this consecration Bishop Whittingham remarked, “there are larger, more costly, and more splendid churches in Baltimore, but there is none, in my judgement, so well adapted to make the worshipper feel that he must [be reverent], for he is in the house of GOD...”

Between 1858 and 1861, the church was enlarged. In 1868, the church began offering daily mass, the first Episcopal church in the country to reinstate this ‘ancient’ custom. From the 1870s to the 1890s, Mount Calvary Church established Saint Mary-the-Virgin and St. Katherine of Alexandria, both African American parishes. In addition, Mount Calvary helped form the convent of the All Saints’ Sisters of the Poor, the sisters of Saint Mary’s and All Saints, Saint Mary’s Home for Boys, and several schools. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mount Calvary served this changing community.

This church represents an excellent example of the work of Robert Carey Long Jr., one of Baltimore’s prominent early to mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century architect. Born ca. 1810, Robert Carey Long Jr. is the son of Baltimore builder-architect of the same name. Long Jr. studied at St. Mary’s College and traveled to Europe in 1826 to study architecture. He returned shortly after arriving in Europe (due to a cholera epidemic) and began an apprenticeship in New York with Martin Euclid Thompson and Ithiel Town. In 1836 Long Jr. returned to Baltimore to assume his father’s practice. In Baltimore, Long Jr. advocated for historical styles, lectured on the latest advancement of architecture (especially European ideas), and began designing buildings in various architectural styles, especially Greek Revival, Egyptian Revival, Gothic Revival and Italianate style. In many ways, Long Jr. set the aesthetic stage for the building of Baltimore during the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century. In 1848 Long Jr. left Baltimore and moved to New York. Robert Carey Long Jr. is the architect of many buildings in Baltimore including St. Alphonsus Church, Franklin Street Presbyterian Church, Lloyd Street Synagogue, St. Peter the Apostle, the Greenmount Gatehouse, and others.



Mt. Calvary Church close ca. 1900. Image from the Maryland Historical Society.



Mt. Calvary ca. 1920 after the tower blew off. Picture from President's Collection of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. <http://www.mdch.org/collection.aspx?id=12356>