



WALTERS BATH HOUSE

900 Washington Boulevard

1901

Architect: George Archer

Walters Bath No. 2 was built for the City of Baltimore during 1901-02 by Henry Walters (1848-1931). Mr. Walters, a Baltimore art collector and philanthropist, contributed four bath houses to the city even though he was living in New York City after 1894. Located at Washington Boulevard (then known as Columbia Avenue) and Callender Alley, this second bath house was built so as to serve congested neighborhoods in southeast Baltimore in the Parkin Street area. It is the only surviving bath house in Baltimore.

Bathing establishments in Baltimore began as far back as 1800, when William Finn was keeper of the baths on the west side of Jones Falls. As a private enterprise, the service they provided was considered to be a luxury. Even though the bathtub began to be installed in homes during the second half of the nineteenth century, only 10% of the dwellings of Baltimore's densely populated sections had them by the 1890's. Thus, the Walters Baths were the first such structures designed in Baltimore, not for recreation, but to provide an opportunity for cleanliness to all persons by offering them a shower, spray or tub bath, not a swimming tank.

The design of Walters Bath No. 2 is a very simplified form of Renaissance Revival popularized at the turn of the century by architects such as McKim, Mead and White. In the Bath Commissioners' report, the design is called 'Free Colonial.' The Bath is a small brick building of 40'-0" x 70'-6" laid in Flemish bond with black headers and Maryland limestone trimming. It was designed by George Archer, a local architect.