

**Proposed Landmark Designation
Upton Mansion, 811 W. Lanvale Street**

Staff Recommendation: The Upton Mansion qualifies for landmark designation meeting the following standards:

- #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; and
- #4 is significant of the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, method or construction, or engineering, or is the notable work of a master builder, designer, engineer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; and
- #5 contributes information or historical, cultural, or social importance relating to the heritage of the community.

The Upton Mansion is primarily significant as a rare surviving, nineteenth century Greek Revival country house, representing an early stage of development within Baltimore City [Standard #1]. The building is architecturally significant for retaining representative details of Greek Revival architecture despite some alterations [Standard #4]. The building also contributes to the heritage and history of Baltimore City since it served over the years as the home of a prominent attorney; headquarters of one of Baltimore's earliest radio stations; the home the Baltimore Institute of Musical Arts, Inc., a pioneering African-American musical conservatory; and a special educational school [Standard #5].

Description from (Upton National Register Nomination)

Upton is a large, brick, Greek Revival mansion constructed c. 1838 on the south side of West Lanvale Street in the western part of Baltimore City. The house was built as the country residence of David Stewart (1800-1858), a prominent Baltimore attorney and politician. The entrance facade faces north, toward Lanvale Street; the south garden façade is oriented toward views of the river and harbor. The house stands 2 ½ stories high on a raised basement, three bays wide and two rooms deep, with a center-passage plan. The north entrance features double-leaf doors flanked by sidelights. A one-story portico shelters the entrance. This portico has square columns, a Classical entablature, and a shallow pediment; it is served by a flight of marble steps, and features railings of cast iron with a rose-and-thistle motif derived from the Stewart family crest. The first-floor windows have iron grilles with similar rose-and-thistle decoration. The building is capped by a Classical entablature and a parapet which obscures the low hipped roof. The upper level is lighted by dormers; a balustrade or cupola formerly surmounted the roof. A three-sided projecting bay occupies the southern portion of each of the side walls; a two-story service wing, one bay wide and one room deep, was added to the west elevation in the third quarter of the 19th century. The south facade formerly featured a two-story porch; this was replaced by a brick stair tower in the late 1950s. The new construction respected the proportions of the former porch, and utilized materials compatible with the original building. The interior remains substantially unaltered, with the majority of its original Greek Revival decorative detailing intact, including a paneled ceiling in the entrance hall, a richly detailed stair, molded plaster cornices, six- and four-panel doors, door and window architrave trim, and baseboards. Also on the property is a brick carriage house which is contemporary with the mansion.

History and Background

The name Upton is derived from an earlier country residence that was built in this vicinity around 1785 called "Upton Park." In 1838, Upton Park was purchased by David Stewart (1800-1858), a prominent attorney who served as a State Senator in 1838 and filled out the remaining term of a U.S. Senator for about one month from 1849-1850. Stewart built the Greek Revival house which still stands. The architect is not known, but it has been suggested that it may be the work of Robert Cary Long, Jr.

Ten years after Stewart's death, his family sold the property to Francis W. Damman, an importer of woolen goods. A photograph of the building at that time shows that it has changed little, except for the surrounding land. Although the Damman family was forced to sell the property to Metropolitan Savings Bank in 1901, due to business failure, the house was leased back to the Dammans for nearly two decades. Members of the Damman family are listed at 731 W. Lanvale Street (an early address for the house) until 1922.

In 1924, Upton was sold to Robert J. and Matilda Young. Robert J. Young owned a Real Estate and Insurance business, but is also listed as a musician in one city directory. He is listed at the current address of the property, 811 W. Lanvale Street in "Colored Professional, Clerical and Business Directories of Baltimore City" from 1925-1928. Probably due to the Depression, he was not able to pay his mortgage, and the property was obtained by his creditors.

In 1930, it was sold to Monumental Radio, Incorporated, the parent company of WCAO and became the headquarters of the radio station. WCAO was Maryland's oldest broadcaster, first licensed in 1922. The first floor rooms were used as studios, with offices, programming facilities on the second floor. The carriage house was converted into the main control room. Two, 165 foot high broadcast towers were built on the grounds. The centralized location of the house and its high elevation was ideal for use this use.

In 1947, the property was sold to the Baltimore Institute of Musical Arts, Incorporated, a pioneering music conservatory for African-Americans. At the time, African-Americans were not allowed to attend the Peabody Conservatory and this institution founded by Dr. J. Leslie Jones was to provide the same quality of musical education for African-Americans. It was the only accredited music school open to African-Americans south of Julliard in New York City. Its faculty was fully integrated and Felix Robert Mendelssohn served as the first dean of the school. At its peak, 300 students attended the musical conservatory. The school intended to raze the mansion and build a \$250,000 complex on the property, but was never able to obtain sufficient funds. When other musical conservatories began admitting African-Americans and the G.I. Bill of Rights offered financial aid to African-American vets to attend formerly whites only schools, enrollment declined and the school closed in 1955.

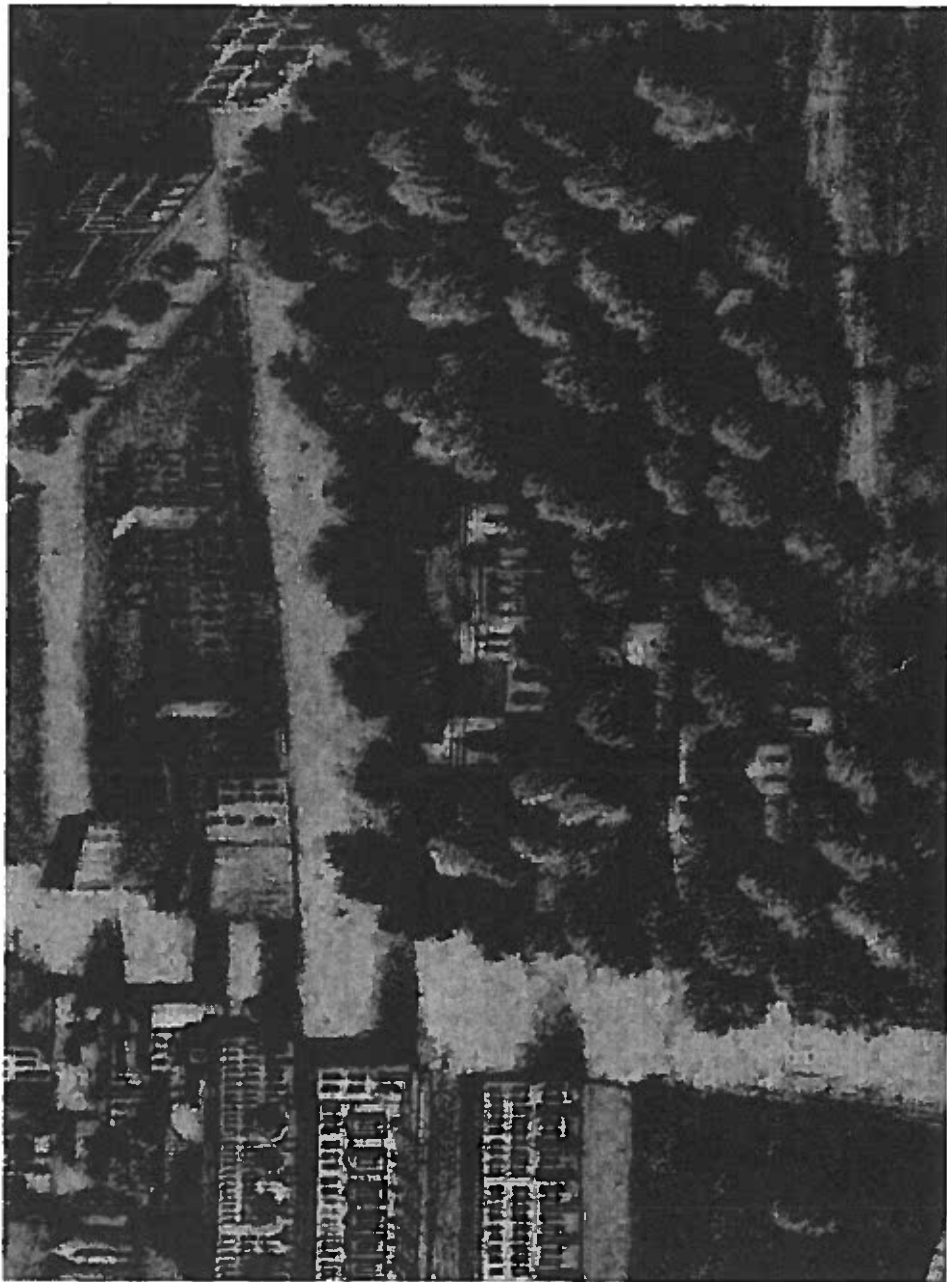
The City of Baltimore purchased the property for \$35,000 and renovated the building for trainable and exceptional children. The building was remodeled for this use by Baltimore architect, Charles H. Marshall, creating seven classrooms and associated support areas.

While the rehabilitation was sensitive in the retention of architrave trim, compatible new windows and doors, and the basic appearance of the exterior front. The two story rear porch was converted into a stair tower. The carriage house was remodeled into an assembly building with a single large interior space.

Upton housed the trainable program until about 1977, when the building was occupied by the Home and Hospital Services branch of the Department of Education. This agency carried out programs for students who, because of illness or disability, were physically unable to attend school. The Department of Education vacated the building in 2006 and it is now under the auspices of the Department of Housing and Community Development. This agency is seeking a compatible new use for the building.



Upton Mansion 1869



1869 Sachse Bird's Eye View showing Upton



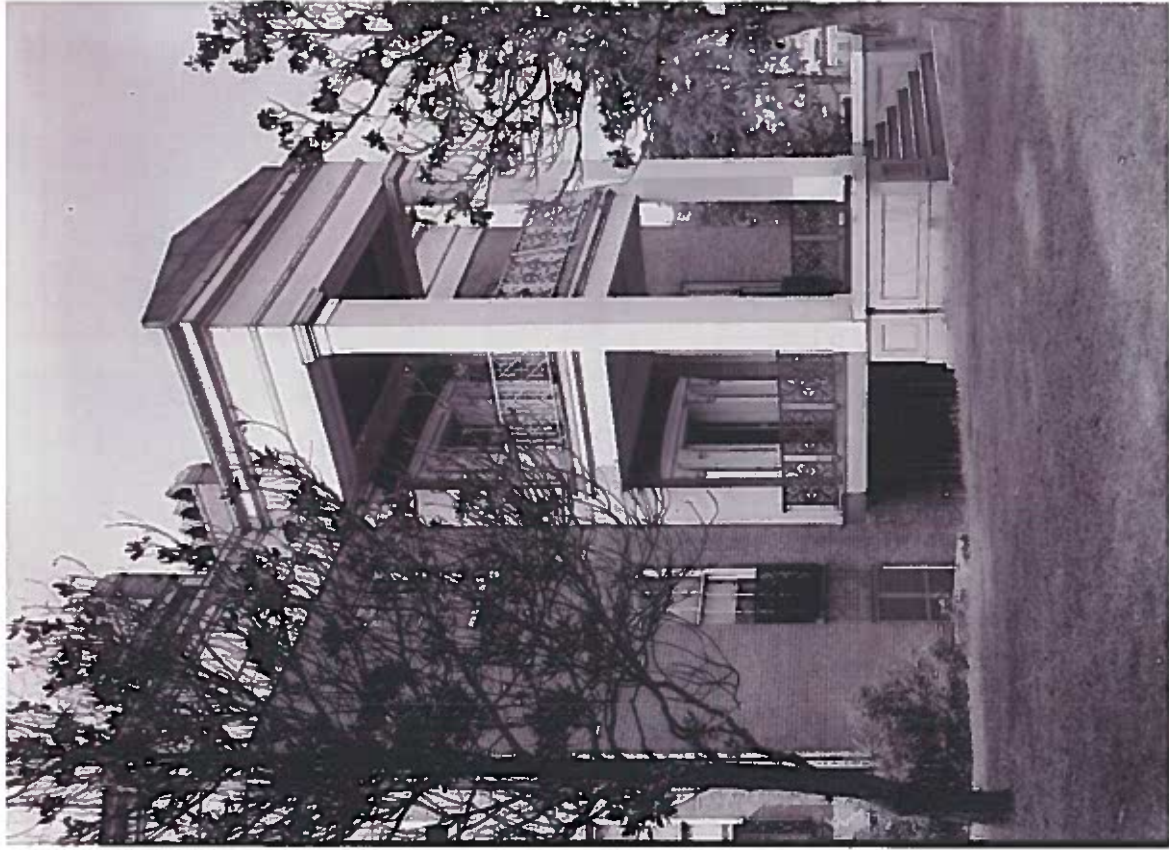
Aerial View Looking North



Aerial View Looking South



Front 1936 HABS Photo and Same View Today



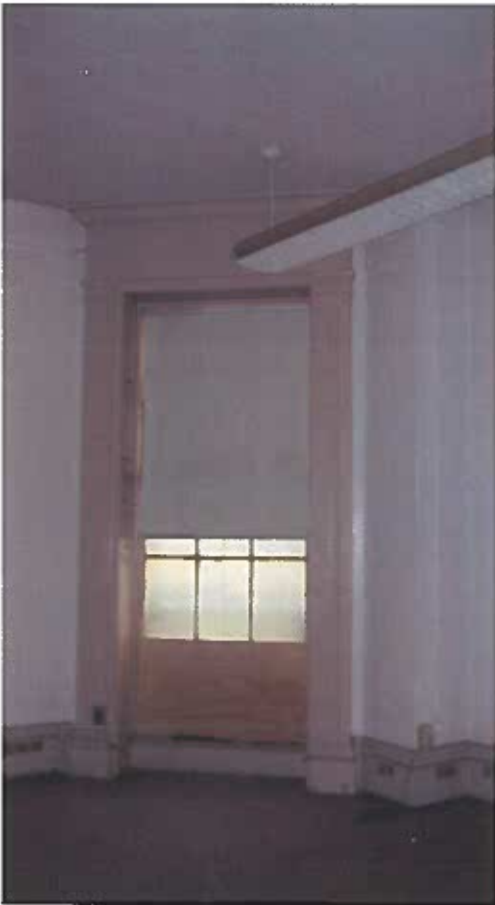
Rear Porch 1936 HABS Photo and Similar View Today



Interior: Main Hall



Capital Main Hall



Typical First Floor Room



Stairway