BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
2 North Charles Street
Baltimore
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1122

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MD-1122

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

HABS No. MD-1122

Location: 2 North Charles Street (northwest corner of Charles and Baltimore Streets), Baltimore, Maryland, 21201; UTM coordinates: 18.360675.4350045

Present Owner: American Office Park Properties, in association with Baltimore and Charles Associates (company offices at 7 East Redwood. Street, Baltimore)

Present Use: Mixed commercial, retail and office

Significance: Historically, this structure was the headquarters of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad. The B&O was significant not only as America's first railroad (founded 1827) but also as the pre-eminent driving force behind Baltimore's importance as a commercial center in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Architecturally, the 1905-6 building's thirteen-story height was a local novelty at the time, and its well-publicized "fireproof" construction was clearly a material reaction to the 1904 Great Fire that destroyed the company's previous headquarters building, two blocks to the east of the present site. The Beaux-Arts design by architects Parker and Thomas of Boston and Baltimore, exemplifies the style which defined the city's rebuilt commercial center, and the building is also the only known Baltimore work of associated architect James Gamble Rogers, who later established a reputation as a premier "image maker" architect for America's corporate elite and for Yale University.

Historian: Laurie Ossman, Ph.D., Summer 2001

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1905-6. Construction permit issued April 6, 1905.[1] Official opening September 13, 1906.[2]

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[1] Baltimore City Ordinances, 1905, #235, p.312.

[2] "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co., Main Office Building," Monthly Journal of the Engineers Club of Baltimore (June 1913): 5. For various accounts and descriptions, indicative of the importance attached to the structure and the B&O at the time, see: Baltimore News-American (12 Sept. 1906); and Baltimore Sun (11 August 1906); Baltimore Sun (10 September 1906); Baltimore Sun (13 September 1906). Although some sources state the building opened on the 11th, others claim that the 13th was chosen because B&O president Oscar Murray believed that 13 was his lucky number. As noted below, the building also has thirteen stories.

2. Architects: Parker and Thomas (Boston and Baltimore), principals. Hale and Rogers (New York), associated architects. The geographically eclectic team assembled to design, build and ornament the B&O building reflects not only the railroad's broad reach across the eastern half of the United States, but the fact that while the company remained headquartered in Baltimore, by 1905/6 much of its business was conducted in New York.[3] In addition, the assembled team may reflect the company's wish, under the presidency of Oscar Murray, to incorporate the "best" and most sophisticated practitioners available, as a declaration not only of the company's pride in rebuilding after the Great Fire of 1904, but of the B&O's re-emergence (also in 1904) from a decade-long domination of its ownership by its rival, the Pennsylvania Railroad.

J. Harleston Parker (1873-1930) and Douglas H. Thomas, Jr. (1872-1915), principal architects.

Thomas was the Baltimore native of the firm and headed the Baltimore office, while Parker was based in Boston. Thomas was graduated from the Johns Hopkins University in 1893, attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1893-95, and briefly apprenticed to an unknown Boston firm before traveling to Europe to study informally in Italy and Paris. Unlike Parker, who is known to have matriculated at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Thomas does not appear to have formally enrolled. It is unknown how and when Parker and Thomas met, whether as students in Boston, or later in Paris or, indeed, after Parker's return from his European travels in 1900.[4] In any case, the two formed the partnership soon after Parker's return, with the Boston-born, Harvard-educated Parker leading the Boston office and Thomas the Baltimore one.

The firm's first local commission was the prestigious Alex. Brown & Sons Banking firm headquarters (completed 1901). Presumably, Thomas was the partner in charge of the firm's Baltimore commissions. Thomas's family was socially prominent in Baltimore and, as Dorsey and Dilts note, the architect was a member of several social clubs which would have granted him personal acquaintance and access to potential clients.[5] Significant Baltimore commissions for the firm include: Alex. Brown & Sons (1901); The Belvedere Hotel (1906); Gilman Hall of the Johns Hopkins University's new Homewood campus (1904).

In 1907, Arthur W. Rice joined the Boston office as partner. It is unclear how, if

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[3] John W. Stover, History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1995): 201.
[4] "D.H. Thomas, Jr., Killed," Baltimore (Morning) Sun 12 June 1915: 14 c.3. The obituary makes reference to Thomas' time in Europe but does not specify formal attendance at any school of architecture there.
[5] According to Thomas's obituary in The Sun (12 June 1915: 14, c.3) the architect was president of the Maryland Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and a member of The Maryland Club; The Baltimore Club; the Merchants Club and the Elkridge Kennels. The obituary notes, "He took a great deal of interest in society and was very popular."

at all, his partnership influenced the firm's Baltimore commissions. Significant surviving local commissions of Parker, Thomas & Rice include: the Savings Bank of Baltimore (1907); the Gilman School (1909) and Hansa Haus (1912). While the Baltimore Gas and Electric Building was not completed until 1916 (following Thomas's death in 1915), the design and commission were likely underway during his lifetime.

Following Thomas's death, the firm had no notable new commissions in Baltimore. In the fifteen years of Thomas's leadership of the Baltimore office, he brought the firm commissions from the city's premier commercial and financial institutions which, in turn, sponsored the erection of some of Baltimore's most enduring Beaux-Arts and, especially, Georgian-Federal Revival-style landmarks. Through such commissions, Thomas played a crucial role in re-establishing the commercial and financial district's Beaux-Arts architectural identity, particularly following the 1904 Fire.

Herbert Dudley Hale (1866-1908) and James Gamble Rogers (1867-1947), associated architects.

Hale is the lesser-known of the two partners, quite possibly due to his early death. The son of a Massachusetts physician, Hale attended Harvard and soon after graduating in 1888, left for Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. According to published sources, "On his return to this country, he formed a partnership with James G. Rogers and, under the firm name of Hale & Rogers, designed the Engineers Building, New York City; Shelby County Court House, Memphis, Tennessee; and the South Boston High School. He was elected an Associate of the American Institute of Architects in 1902 and a Fellow in 1907. He was a member of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Beaux-Arts Society, and the University, Players and Harvard clubs."[6]

Rogers, the subject of a 1994 monograph,[7] is most associated today with his ten-year tenure as architectural advisor to his *alma mater*, Yale University, during which he played a crucial role in reinforcing the campus's distinctive Neo-Gothic hallmark style through projects such as the Sterling Memorial Library, the Sterling School of Graduate Studies, Pierson College, and the Harkness Memorial Quadrangle. Among his other institutional designs are the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, the Butler Library of Columbia University and the New Haven (Conn.) post office, and the Deering Library of Northwestern University. Rogers's appeal as a designer lay in his ability to translate the social and cultural ambitions of America's elite clientele into

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[6] "Hale, Herbert Dudley," republished from Brief Biographies of American Architects Who Died between 1897 and 1947, transcribed by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., from a series of obituary notices in the American Art Annual. Viewable online through the website of The Society of Architectural Historians, URL: http://www.sah.org/aame/bioh.html. Date consulted for this report: 12/08/01.

[7] Aaron Betsky, James Gamble Rogers and the Architecture of Pragmatism , intro. by Paul Goldberger, (Cambridge, MA; MIT Press, 1994).

dignified, yet opulent buildings that blended historical references and modern functional convenience. In tandem with Thomas, Hale & Rogers's participation in the B&O project virtually ensured that the result would be recognizable as a "blue chip" building, worthy of its associatively "blue chip" corporate inhabitant. As Paul Goldberger summarized Rogers's *oeuvre*,

> Rogers' private house commissions for wealthy clients s[ought] to define their lives and livelihoods through temples of taste, his corporate structures [were] notable for both lucid organization and symbolic ornamentation, and his designs for universities and hospitals ... integrated historical and social metaphors into re-definitions of institutional function."[8]

Although the choice of Hale & Rogers as associates on the B&O building is not credited, on record, to any individual or specific reason, one clue may lie in the fact that the B&O building was Parker & Thomas's first "tall" building (in Baltimore, at least) and Rogers had particular technical expertise in masonry and steel skyscraper construction, having worked in the office of Chicago School skyscraper pioneer William LeBaron Jenney immediately after being graduated from Yale.[9] It seems unlikely that a firm of Parker & Thomas's established reputation would have taken on the associate firm for design matters or conventional site supervision (especially since the Hale & Rogers office was based in New York) unless it desired to secure additional expertise in tall building and, especially, fireproof construction, as pioneered by architects like Jenney in Chicago following that city's catastrophic fire of 1871. The unprecedented height of the B&O Building (210 feet) required that the company petition Baltimore City Council for a variance to the post-Fire code which restricted building height to 175 feet. The council granted the exception only on condition that the structure be "made fireproof throughout."[10] It seems plausible that this requirement may be what gained Hale & Rogers the position of associate architects on the project. The B&O Building is believed to be the only Baltimore building associated with Hale & Rogers.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses

1905/6-1980: built and occupied by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company. In 1963, the B&O merged with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (generally known as "The Chessie") and thus ownership documents from 1963-80 list the Chessie as the shareholder of record on the ground rent agreements with the city.

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[8] Goldberger, foreword to Betsky, xi.

[9] Betsky 9, 11-13 . Also, Debra McClane, co-author of forthcoming monograph on James Gamble Rogers (Jr.), pointed out in an interview (2/21/02) that Rogers' proficiency in "tall" masonry construction was well known and that it was a crucial factor, years later, in his gaining the commission for Yale's Harkness Tower.

[10] Baltimore City Ordinances 1905, ord. 235, pages 313-5, ratified 6 April 1906. "B&O Building Open," Baltimore Sun 13 September `1906: 9 c.1-3 as well as other press accounts of the building's completion specifically refer to the B&O as a "skyscraper," which suggests just how tall the thirteen-story structure seemed to Baltimoreans at the time.

1980-present: Sold by the railroad to Baltimore and Charles Associates (7 East Redwood Street, Baltimore) in association with the Oliver T. Carr Company (1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC).

1996 (circa): Oliver T. Carr company sells its management contract agreement and transfers associated share hold to American office Park Properties. Building manager: Tom Murphy, of Baltimore & Charles Associates.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers[11]

Wells Brothers and Company [of New York]: builders
John Evans & Company [of Boston]: external ornamental stonework[12]
J.F. Purdy & Company [of Chicago]: stonework subcontractors
Excelsior Terra Cotta [of New York]: cornice and balustrade
Meader Furniture Company [of Cincinnati, Ohio]: millwork subcontractor
Harry Alexander [of Baltimore]: electrical system design and installation (1906)

5. Alterations and additions: A substantial rehabilitation in 1983/4 (described in greater detail, by specific areas, below) eradicated virtually all of the historic character of the interior upper stories and removed most remaining remnants of the once-revolutionary mechanical systems. While the interior lobby area and adjacent elevator foyer were also extensively altered, they retain a general sense of the historic appearance. While all windows were re-glazed and sealed to support HVAC in 1983/4, the exterior of the building has not otherwise been substantially altered and generally presents a historic appearance.

B. Historical Context

The B&O Railroad Company was the lynchpin of Baltimore's economy from 1830 until roughly 1945.

The first spike of the B&O was struck on July 4, 1827, but the company did not officially began operations until 1830, when it had built a whopping thirteen miles of line

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[11] "B&O Building Open," Baltimore Sun 13 September `1906: 9 c.1-3 lists the contractors and suppliers. In addition, "B& O Group Unveiled" Baltimore Sun 11 August 1906: 14 c. 3 goes into some detail about the monumental figure group over the main entrance and related exterior stone ornament.

[12] James D. Dilts, " Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Office Building," registration form for the National Register of Historic Places (OMB No.1024-0018), 10 April 1996, sec. 8 page 12 states that the Evans Company was, as of 1996, still in business and listed the following notable buildings on its roster of 19thcentury commissions: H. H. Richardson's Brattle Square and Trinity Churches in Boston; McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library; Richardson's successor firm Shepley Rutan and Coolidge's Art Institute of Chicago (built in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893). In addition, Evans did the modeling for the Fine Arts Building at the World's Columbian Exposition (designed by Charles Atwood of D.H. Burnham and Co.).

(out the 23 miles in the entire United States at the time).[13] It was, by all accounts, the first planned general-purpose, long distance railroad in the world, intended from the start to span the 300 miles from West Pratt Street in Baltimore to the banks of the Ohio River. [This apparently distinguishes the enterprise from older, *ad hoc* lines in Europe that spanned a few dozen miles or less.] By 1905, when the present building was commissioned, the pioneer railroad had reached thirteen states, running as far west as St. Louis and Chicago. Complicated corporate machinations, mergers and stock takeovers throughout the late nineteenth century, as well as period of labor unrest and major financial panics in 1873 and 1877, had left the once-pristine landscape of railroading littered with hundreds of small regional companies as well as four major eastern trunk lines (the B& O, the Pennsylvania; the Erie and the New York Central). The B&O's greatest rival was certainly the Philadelphia-based Pennsylvania Railroad. The two companies battled endlessly over rights-of-way and control of small lines linking Baltimore to the rest of the country. While the B&O was older, by the 1870s, the Pennsylvania Railroad (by purchasing smaller lines) was second only to Vanderbilt's New York Central in size, scope and profitability. Such was the competition in Baltimore that the two lines even maintained separate passenger terminals, with Mount Royal Station serving the B&O (and its dominance of lines running south) while the Pennsylvania maintained a site between Charles and St. Paul Streets, well to the north of the city's center. Eventually (and logically) the two companies settled on the Pennsylvania dominating the northeast connections, while the B&O retained its (and the city of Baltimore's) claim to being "the gateway to the South."[14]

In 1900, under the leadership of Alexander Cassatt (brother of expatriate Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt), the Pennsylvania Railroad effectively merged with the B&O, and for several years the two companies shared a Board of Trustees. Concurrently, the Republican party, led by Theodore Roosevelt (elected President 1901) began to move toward legislation prohibiting such railroad monopolies. Thus the Pennsylvania and B&O maintained separate corporate identities during this period, although the "union" of the two companies was also celebrated by Cassatt's pet project, Washington, DC's monumental Beaux-Arts Union Station (1902).

When the 1904 Fire destroyed the Second-Empire style B&O headquarters (1881-

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[13] The story of the founding of the B&O and the general outline of its history are detailed in scores of sources. This summary relies mostly on James D. Dilts, The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, The Nation's First Railroad. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1993.; John F. Stover *op cit.* ; Herbert H. Harwood, Jr., Impossible Challenge: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Maryland (Baltimore: Barnard & Roberts, 1979). The data on track mileage is taken from Stover, Appendix II.

[14] This phrase recurs often in historic documents of the city and the railroad, becoming an unofficial motto in the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War. For the purposes of this report, it noteworthy that the catchphrase was still in currency at the time the present building was opened in 1906. See: "Praise from Pulpits," Baltimore Sun 10 September 1906, page 12, c. 3.

2, described as the B&O's then-President John Garrett's "pride and joy"[15]) on the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets, the corporate officers elected to rebuild a grand, thirteen-story Beaux-Arts tower on a new site, two blocks west (corner of Baltimore and Charles). The Pennsylvania, by contrast, retained its site and elected the relatively small, restrained building seen today. The inter-relationship of the two companies and the coordination of their post-Fire building schemes is attested to by the fact that both the Pennsylvania Railroad building and the thirteen-story B&O tower on Charles Street were designed by the same architectural firm, Parker & Thomas. The clear assertion of dominance by the B&O in its home town may have been somewhat disingenuous at the time of the commission but, by the building's completion in 1906, the B&O had regained stock majority over the Pennsylvania and was effectively "independent" again. Thus the building represented the pre-eminent local company's triumphant rebuilding "bigger and better" after the 1904 Fire, it also represented the reassertion of "local ownership" after the six years of domination by the Pennsylvania Railroad and its trustees.[16]

The importance of the B&O Railroad to all aspects of the development of Baltimore can scarcely be overstated. Throughout the nineteenth century, industry grew in the city, as raw materials were easily transported by ship or by train from distant suppliers. Finance houses were founded to support the trade ventures and the development of a manufacturing sector that sprang up once the railroad created a viable infrastructure for distribution of goods produced. Manufactured goods were distributed from Baltimore to the south and the west on routes the B&O had built to open new or previously inaccessible markets. Manufacture of iron, steel and materials used by the railroad for its own infrastructure and durable goods also grew in the Baltimore region to support the B&O. As these materials found uses in other industries, such as construction, the market for these goods grew beyond supplying the railroad, but Baltimore industry still relied on the B&O to transport materials to consumers.

Until World War II, the B&O was the city's single largest employer,[17] meaning that the company–through its employees and their families–indirectly supported myriad

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[15] John F. Stover, History of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1987): 201; an image of the Second Empire building after the fire is on p. 200.

[16] Harwood, in a telephone interview of 8 February 2002 and Dilts, in an interview of 7 February 2002, caution against overstating the clarity of Pennsylvania ownership of the B&O. The term "local ownership" is set aside in quotation marks as by this date, as Stover 201 notes, the company managed most of its corporate affairs out of the New York office.

[17] This statistic is cited in many variations, with many small qualifications and variations in date. This version was stated by Herb Harwood, railroad historian, telephone interview of 8 February 2002. Harwood's statement, and the arbitrary closing date of 1930 (above) are substantiated by various data cited in Stover, most notably, Appendix VI, which shows the B&O's employee roster steadily increased from its founding until 1920, when it reached 72,000, over half of which were Baltimore residents. A slump to 66,000 in 1930 is followed by a precipitous decline to just 35,000 five years later, in 1935. A post-Depression spike saw the employment numbers recover to 64,000 in 1945, but thereafter the total dropped by half (to 33,000) by 1960.

other local industries and services, such as housing, production of domestic consumable goods such as food and clothing and even schools (through both demand via population growth and a stable tax base from which to pay for construction and salaries). Local philanthropists such as George Peabody and Johns Hopkins owed large parts of their wealth to the railroad and through their charitable activities and cultural initiatives, the B&O's good fortune was transformed into the city's most treasured institutions. Hopkins literally funded and endowed the university, hospital and medical schools that bear his name with B&O Railroad stock.

The florid newspaper coverage of the grand opening of the 1906 B&O Building gives some sense of how the company was perceived as part-and-parcel of Baltimore's civic identity in the early twentieth century. It is surely not coincidental the B&O Railroad Company building's grand opening was scheduled for the midst of the 1906 "Baltimore Jubilee"–a week-long festival of parades, expositions and entertainments intended to publicize the city's rebirth after the Fire (a "Parade of Heroes of the Fire of 1904 was among the headline events) but, especially, to emphasize the city's "progressive spirit."[18] One local minister took the opportunity of the Jubilee to refer to Baltimore, literally, as 'The New Jerusalem...the city spoken of by St. John at Patmos...a city into which all nations shall bring their glory and honor." As if that were not enough, the reverend continued, calling Baltimore, "the phoenix of the twentieth century. It has risen out of its ashes, a new creature...a miracle of nerve, a marvel of energy and a prodigy in performance."[19] The building was not only a corporate emblem depicting the company's profitability and stability to rival railroad companies (of which, by 1905, there were many) but it was also a civic monument of progress as well. One aspect of the building that particularly awed its contemporaries was its lavish use of electric light:

> At one minute past midnight last night the new Baltimore and Ohio Building was declared officially open. In token of the event 5,000 incandescent lights were turned on in the early hours of the night, which transformed the structure into a palace of radiance. Out over the roofs of neighboring buildings streamed the light, bringing into prominence the magnitude of the structure and adding materially to the illumination of Baltimore Street. From every window of the upper twelve stories streamed the light and the effect was magnificent.[20]

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[18] The entire week of 9 September 1906 is virtually given over to coverage of jubilee events in the Baltimore Sun. One good summary article is , "Baltimore Jubilee in Zenith of Its Glory: Industrial Parade Witnessed by Greatest Crowd Ever seen in City. Our industries in a Pageant Eight Miles Long." Baltimore Sun 12 September 1906: p. 16 c. 1-3 + ill. One Jubilee parade reviewing stand for dignitaries was located on Charles street, directly in front of the B&O building.

[19] "Praise from Pulpits," Baltimore Sun 10 September 1906, page 12, c. 3-4. The minister quoted is Rev. Anthony Bilkovsky of the Universalist Church at Guilford and Lanvale Streets.

[20] "B&O Building," Baltimore American 12 September 1906: 15 c. 3. It is also noteworthy that this, like most articles at the time, preferred Baltimore Street rather than Charles as the building's location, in spite of the very clear emphasis on the Charles street entry as the primary one. This strongly suggests the force of the century-old tradition that associated Baltimore Street -- not Charles-- with major trade and commerce buildings in the public mind.

The building was described in exhaustive detail by the Baltimore Sun under subheadings that suggest the values that appealed to the public at the time: monumentality and scale, materials, both lavish and novel (reinforced concrete and marble are accorded equal consideration) and, particularly, modern conveniences such as " pneumatic tube service," filtered water supply," steam vacuum heating," "air filtered and washed," and "novel electric appliances" (with a lengthy report on the number of switches and feet of wiring).[21] The public was invited to tour the building as part of the Jubilee calendar of events to marvel at both its technological marvels and its "dignified, impressive and monumental," design which was billed as an "adornment to the city."[22]

Of the four major "trunk"railroad lines in 1900, the heyday of American rail, only the B&O's headquarters from this period remains.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Beaux-Arts commercial style mid-rise office building.

The classical basis of the design is in marked contrast to the comparatively ponderous seven-story Second-Empire style 1882 predecessor located at the northwest corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets. Designed by E. Francis Baldwin, the B&O's "house" architect under the presidency of Robert Garrett, the 1882 building was typical of the structures that the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed, just as they had lost their power to impress. The multiplicity of decorative elements, the fragmented massing and polychromatic exterior (three colors of stone plus terra cotta) that had signified the prosperity of the post-Civil War company had become unfashionable. The 1893 "White City" at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago acted as an architectural manifesto for the shift in taste away from the complexities of Victorian picturesque romanticism toward the more restrained, contained Classicism, as its principles were taught at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. In this case, a direct connection exists between the White City and Baltimore's B&O Building through the participation of stonemason John Evans and Company in both endeavors.[23]

Although antiquity provided no precise model for the tall office building, as the type emerged in the late nineteenth century, the Beaux-Arts training of architects Parker and Hale (and possibly Thomas) provided them with the vocabulary of forms and a matrix of design precepts that could be adapted to the modern requirements of corporate

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[21] "B&O Building Open," Baltimore Sun 13 September `1906: 9 c.1-3.
[22] "B&O Building Open," 9 c. 1.
[23] For a list of projects that substantiate Evans' Beaux-Arts pedigree, see note 12, above.

clients such as the B&O Railroad. The use of ornamental sculpture using classical motifs and themes on the exterior to convey the meaning is characteristic of Beaux -Arts, as is the dramatic staging of the main entrance. The entry arch is surmounted by over life-sized figures of Mercury and Commerce (holding a train car signifying the modern railroad) support a globe showing the North American continent (presumably the domain of the company).[24] From this ceremonial archway, a short, low-ceilinged passage flanked by retail shops leads to the lobby, which rises two stories in height, brightly lit with decorative stained glass panels. Monumental marble staircases emphasize the height of the space, as well as provide a sense of importance, an implicitly ceremonial means of ascent (or descent).

Counteracting this dramatic, historicist spatial sequence is the equally Beaux-Arts axiality and lucid symmetry of the plan (maintained, to a great degree, on the upper floors as well). This axiality and symmetry counterbalance the upward visual emphasis of the lobby with an axis terminating in the elevator foyer, emphasized by a giant-order Ionic pilasters in Norwegian marble, the elevator doors richly treated in eye-catching polished brass. A truncated north-south cross axis leads from Baltimore Street to the elevator foyer, the primary circulation hub of the building. On axis with the Charles street entrance, at the effective "end" of the temple-form defined by the pilasters encircling the elevator foyer, one pair of full-round Ionic columns flanks an oversized bronze clock, which rests upon a bracketed lintel to a blind doorway. The clock, key to a railroad's efficiency, is the visual terminus of the main axis. Characteristically for Beaux-Arts design, the historicist references and motifs are used to reinforce and dramatize a thoroughly lucid and functional arrangement of space.

Co-existing with this classical design matrix is the state-of-the-art fireproof construction, which not only made a statement of defiance against the possibility of another great fire, but also showcased the company's forward-thinking, practical side as well. And, like the elegant ornament, rich materials and dignified proportions of the design, the technology itself was expensive and, therefore, a status symbol. As the Baltimore Sun noted,

> It is of steel construction work, each story of the exterior masonry walls being supported on steel beam work, each story independent of the other; and the entire weight is carried through the steel beams to the concrete footings below. All of the weight-bearing steel construction in the building is encased in fireproof terra cotta masonry.[25]

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[24] The figures are identified and explained in "B&O Group Unveiled," Baltimore Sun 11 August 1906: 14 c. 3. As Mercury was the Roman god of both commerce and transportation, to avoid redundancy in this context, he may represent transportation. The author of "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Main Office Building," Monthly Journal of the Engineers Club of Baltimore (June 1913), page 5, refers to the figures as "Mercury and Progress."
[25] " B&O Building Open," 9 c. 1.

The blend of modern construction (especially fireproofing) technology and classical principles of design demonstrated that the B&O Railroad Company had emerged from the Great Fire defiantly and triumphantly.

The seamless co-existence of old and new was, and remains, the essential quality of the building. The stairs, in essence, reflect traditional notions of spatial progression while the fireproof construction was wholly modern. The central colonnaded elevator lobby celebrates the actual, modern, vertical shaft of primary circulation space with the most traditional form of the western canon, i.e. the temple colonnade. The ability to blend state-of-the-art technology and practical needs with historicist decorative references and dramatic spatial sequencing marks the B&O Building as not only Beaux-Arts in style but Beaux-Arts in its design principles as well.

2.Condition of fabric: excellent.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: footprint: 169' x 155'. Thirteen stories in height (210 feet).[26]

2. Foundations: concrete, including footers, with granite facing.

3. Walls

Street level: Horizontally-rusticated Indiana limestone. North and south facades each have seven arched openings with smaller rectangular openings in the end bay of each side. Scrolled brackets act as keystones for each arched opening and are ornamented with female faces. This level terminates in a Greek fret frieze, punctuated at regular intervals by flat discs. The treatment and rhythms are maintained on the east and west, with only three bays per projecting end wall, three per receding wall and three across the central "bar." Only the central section does not utilize small rectangular openings (which leave more mural mass intact) to express the corners.

Second level: The masonry treatment of this level serves as a transition between that of the street level and the more simplified treatment of the stories above. While the horizontal rustication is continued, the massiveness of the material is visually lightened by the use of flat keystones and otherwise unembellished rectangular openings. The keystones extend upward to interrupt the running classical laurel band molding that girdles this level. Trophies with lion's heads are interspersed between openings to

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[26] "B&O Building," Baltimore American 12 September 1906: 15 c. 3 notes that the opening was supposedly scheduled to fall on the 13th, as B&O President Oscar Murray considered 13 his lucky number. This may explain why the building has thirteen stories (with even the thirteenth clearly indicated on the elevator dials, in contrast to usual tall building superstition) as well.

emphasize the solid mass of the bay divisions expressed by the implied piers above.

Levels 3-12: The smaller rectangular openings of the end bays allow for the expression of reinforcement and material mass at the corners of the building. Between these corners, six "implied" pilasters define the central seven bays of the north and south facades (one central bay on east and west, as per discussion, above, of street level). The central bays feature paired openings in elaborate copper frames, capped by a rosette block lintel and divided by a flat pilaster with shallow relief patterns. From level 4 through 12, the bottoms of the paired openings are filled with copper panels in a vertical pattern that suggests a stylized balustrade. The division between the openings is indicated in this panel by a lion's head medallion.

At level 12, the vertical unity of the openings (which read as a contiguous "void" because the copper is less visually assertive in mass and color than the limestone piers between bays) is capped by segmental arches with ornamental keystones.

The top floor is a penthouse, described in 1906 as having, "walls of hollow terra cotta, covered with cold pulled copper."[27] Lion's head trophies adorn the bay divisions.

4. Structural system, framing: steel frame with terra cotta t-brick encasement and fill.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: There are two primary entrance doors to the lobby: one on Baltimore Street and one on Charles. The secondary, Baltimore Street, entry is placed at the center (on axis) of the nine-bay facade and is distinguished by a slight recess from the datum plane of the horizontally-rusticated street level wall and the application of a scrolled bracket at the keystone. The bracket of this two-story arch is heavily ornamented with neo-Baroque ornament, the central motif of which is a lion's head. The upper story projects to the front plane, and the doorway is recessed, so the floor of the office above (located behind the glazed area above the arch springer) serves as a ceiling to protect the doorway. Six marble steps lead to a landing, and to the triple bronze door with raised heavily embellished panels. These motifs are carried through in the transoms above.

The primary entrance on Charles Street is also two stories in height, but treated very differently. The doorway is framed by the masonry arch surmounted by mythological figures representing Mercury and Commerce. The masonry is treated in the same heavily-scored horizontal rustication as the surrounding wall surfaces. The central arch is framed by paired windows, each accented with a

[27] "B&O Building Open," c.1.

scrolled bracket with a woman's head in the center of a flat lintel and ornamental disc flanked by torches (a symbol of progress) above.[28] The central archway's keystone is an elaborate cartouche, borne by two putti. The Greek fret (interrupted at regular intervals with flat disks) that encircles the building as the first-story frieze is continued around the top of the arch. Beneath the "keystone" cartouche, the arch is coved inward and a laurel-wreath molding marks the interior plane of the wall. The top half of the doorway is plate glass in six panes, framed in copper, original in appearance although no longer operable. The entry door is framed in bronze-finish metal (possibly iron overlaid with the sheet copper used elsewhere in the building), with sidelights framing a center bay with pediment and double doors. The pediment is supported by scrolled brackets of a much more delicate treatment than those of the exterior archway's masonry. The triangular pediment contains a central cartouche, without inscription, framed with olive branches.

b. Windows: First story frames of cast iron, copper clad with copper sashes. Upper floors of "heavy sheet copper," originally fitted with wire-plate glass.[29] All window sash units on floors 2-13 sealed in 1983/4 remodeling to support new central HVAC system. Paired windows retain original copper frames with rosette patterned lintels, a dividing low-relief pilaster; and attenuated guilloche bottom panel accented, at center, with a projecting lion's head.

6. Roof

a. Shape, covering: flat roof, rubber membrane covering, last replaced ca. 1996.

b. Cornice, eaves, parapet: Terra cotta cornice and eaves executed by Excelsior Terra Cotta of New York. The semi-glazed cornice matches the limestone cladding, features an unidentified foliate pattern and is capped by a rectangular-bracketed eaves. The parapet is limestone, and the four chamferred corners overlooking Charles Street are emphasized by cartouches featuring oxen (possibly in reference to the physical labor of building the railroad).

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: On each floor, the H-shaped plan houses two rows of offices in each of the long side wings. The center "bar" contains the elevator shaft and mechanical shafts, and thus serves primarily as circulation space. On the east side of this connecting "bar", larger offices (often with individual outer reception areas, therefore presumably of higher

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[28] The frequent use of uninscribed flat discs as ornament on the building might possibly be the traditional Masonic symbol of enlightenment, progress and creativity (derived from the Egyptian iconography of the Sun God Ra), incorporated by either the architects or at the clients' request.
[29] "B&O Building Open," c.2

status that the ranks in the side wings) overlook the Charles Street entrance.

2. Stairways: Two interior staircases flank the Charles Street entry axis to the building, and reinforce the axis through their symmetry. Each rises four steps to a landing marked by a massive square newel past surmounted by a bronze lamp-post in a fanciful interpretation of a fluted classical column. The lamps are marked, "Mitchell Vance Co, NY," on the base. Each post is topped by four small glass globes surrounding a larger, central globe. The first flight of each stair runs east (back toward Charles Street) and terminates in a landing which encourages the viewer to overlook the lobby from above. A few steps lead to a switch-back flight, rising to the west, terminating on a second floor mezzanine. This second stage originally also featured an identical lamp fixture to the one at the base, but these are no longer in place.[30] The constant breaks in ascent (or descent) and changes in direction force the viewer to pause, creating a typically Beaux-Arts sense of carefully orchestrated movement through the space. The lobby stairs are built of at least three tones of white marble: a gray-veined white Italian marble for the stair treads; a golden-hued, baroque-veined Greek marble for the recessed wall panels and a virtually pure white Norwegian marble for the newels and balustrades.

Two fire stairwells flank the center "bar" of the H-shaped plan and presumably serve the north and south wings respectively. These utilitarian elements appear to remain as built.

On the west side, center, running from floors 2 to 13, a circular stairwell in cast iron with marble treads features a B&O emblem at each landing.[31]

3. Flooring: Flooring throughout is now covered in standard commercial-grade carpet. In the lobby area, the original inlaid marble flooring remains beneath the carpet, but condition and pattern are unknown at this time. Corridors on upper floors were all originally marble tile, laid over t-brick set with Portland cement.[32] It is unclear if the original marble survives in these areas.

4. Wall & ceiling finish: In lieu of pattern or narrative art, the B&O lobby relies on lavish materials–mainly colored marble and gold-toned metal–to convey spare-no-expense luxury and cosmopolitan elegance. Dark gray baseboard marble came from Glens Fall, N.: The green serpentine marble of the dado revetment is Greek, capped by a polished brass chair rail that steps up to form the base of the pilasters which encircle the perimeter wall of the lobby. The nearly pure white marble of the pilasters and stair balustrades is

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[30] James D. Dilts, " Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Office Building," registration form for the National Register of Historic Places (OMB No.1024-0018), 10 April 1996, section 7 page 9.
[31] Information on this staircase comes from Dilts, Dilts, "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Office Building" section 7,page 9. The west staircase was not available for this report.
[32] "B&O Building Open," c.1

Norwegian; the inset gold-hued panels of the stairway are Greek marble; the grayish marble treads and upper level corridor wainscoting (not extant) are Italian.[33] Additional marble panels, framed in brass, surmount each elevator door, three per bay.

Thin brass ovolo molding is used as a visual emphasis in defining the transition from pilaster capitals to cornice, the ceiling coffers and the simple frieze, studded with brass rosettes, encircling the elevator lobby. Above each pair of elevator doors , an elaborate bronze dial (apparently modeled on Louis XVI wall clocks) indicates the elevator's level. Their round shapes are echoed by a central cartouche in the center of each bronze grille topping each elevator bay.

Upper stories retain the original floor plan, but historic interior paneling, moldings and associated woodwork (a source of great pride, judging from the contemporary descriptions and likely expense of the materials used) were universally removed in the 1983/4 remodeling. Approximately half this millwork salvage was sold and reused in the following nearby locations: walnut woodwork (possibly from President's Office) installed in the ninth floor, center east conference room;[34] unidentified millwork installed in jewelry store on ground floor adjacent to the lobby; unidentified paneling & millwork reinstalled at University of Maryland Club (Paca & Redwood Streets) and at council library of the Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson. While the exterior walls of the upper level of the two-story high lobby feature stained glass panels (see windows, below), the interior walls at this level have blank panels (now painted green), defined by a stenciled decorative border.

5. Openings

a. Doors: Interior doors do not appear to be original, nor does hardware.[35]

b. Windows: Lobby features ornamental stained glass in bronze frames, with paired lights divided by fluted half-columns in bronze. Each window is composed of 28 panes (four across, seven down). The second and third row of each features a multicolored medallion ornament flanked by foliate framing motifs. All other panes are uniform translucent glass with a red rosette accent in the center. Transverse hallways parallel to Charles Street, along the inside of the east wall, utilize identical panels as skylights.

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[33] "B&O Building Open," c.3 includes additional information regarding the variety of exotic hardwoods and elaborate finishes that were used in the executive offices. As these elements, as noted above, are no longer *in situ*, they are not included in this report.
[34] This room was not accessible for this study.
[35] Dilts, "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Office Building", section 7, page 10, notes that the B &O emblem appeared on door escutcheons on the executive offices. These are no longer in evidence.

6. Mechanical Equipment

a. HVAC & plumbing: Mostly date to 1983/4 renovations. Basement retains stand pipes associated with the an original steam pump (converted from coal to electricity at an unspecified date); fragments of the original sprinkler system with generator pump; coal bins associated with original steam boilers; a boiler room (brick lined for fireproofing); an electric forced air unit that served as distributor for an early air-conditioning system.[36]

b. Exterior lighting: Bronze sconces (in an upward-curving foliate form) mark the main entry as well as the one on Baltimore Street. In addition, the Charles Street entrance has paired post lanterns (in a three-tiered, extremely ornate columnar form). Both types of fixture have replacement glass globes, that echo the shape of the globe supported by the mythological figures over the main entrance arch.

c. Interior lighting: In addition to the newel lamps (described within staircase section, above) the lobby is lit by a central chandelier and a number of recessed ceilings lights. Chandeliers in the lobby are replacement pieces, installed 1983-4. In the elevator foyer, recessed lighting was installed in the coffered ceiling in this same period. On the upper stories, no evidence of original lighting remains, but some finishes and/or fixtures may survive in areas (most notably corridors) which have dropped ceilings. Major offices seen generally have recessed lighting in dropped ceilings.

d. Additional features of note: Elevator cabs have been mechanically upgraded several times, most recently in 1983-4. While the cabs seem to present an authentic appearance, they were extensively remodeled in the same period.[37]

D. Site: Urban setting. No setback or planting scheme. Certainly the building has lost much of the impact its thirteen-story height had upon pedestrians in 1906, as it is now surrounded by buildings of equal or far greater height.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: No original drawings located in the course of this study.

B. Early Views: Many early views, generally filed under different corporate subjects, are

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[36] For detailed description of original systems, see: "B& O Building Open," c.1-3.

[37] Herb Harwood, who worked in the building from 1963 until the late 1980s, recalls that the elevators had pull-across grilles and, well into the 1960s, were operated by uniformed African-American women in white gloves.

contained in the B&O archives at the B&O Railroad Museum, 901 W. Pratt Street, Baltimore. The collection includes a file of construction photographs. Images of the 1882 building are also in the collection of the Maryland Historical Society (online cat. # Z24.397 and Z24.467).

C. Interviews

James D. Dilts, railroad and architectural historian, February 7, 2002 (by phone).
Herb Harwood, railroad historian, February 8, 2002 (by phone)
Tom Murphy, building manager, August 31, 2002.

D. List of Works Consulted

"B&O Building." Baltimore American. 12 September 1906: 15 c. 3.

"B&O Building Open." Baltimore (Morning) Sun. 13 September 1906: 9 c.1-2.

"B&O Group Unveiled." Baltimore (Morning) Sun. 11 August 1906: 14 c.3.

"Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co., Main Office Building." Monthly Journal of the Engineers Club of Baltimore. (June 1913): 5-7.

"Baltimore Jubilee In Zenith of Its Glory." Baltimore Sun. 12 September 1906.

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Croly, Herbert D. and Matlock Price. "The Works of Parker, Thomas and Rice of Boston and Baltimore." Architectural Record 34 (August 1913): 97-184.

"D.H. Thomas, Jr. Killed." Baltimore Sun. 12 June 1915: 14 c.3.

Dilts, James D. "The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company Office Building." DOI/NPS/NRHP Registration Form OMB 1024-0018. 10 April 1996.

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Herbert H. Harwood, Jr., Impossible Challenge: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Maryland (Baltimore: Barnard & Roberts, 1979).

"Hale, Herbert Dudley," republished from Brief Biographies of American Architects Who Died

between 1897 and 1947, transcribed by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., from a series of obituary notices in the American Art Annual. Viewable online through the website of The Society of Architectural Historians, URL: http://www.sah.org/aame/bioh.html. Date consulted for this report: 12/08/01.

Glasgow, Jessie. "Chessie to Sell B&O Building." Baltimore (Morning) Sun 28 March 1980: 3 c1-3.

"Praise from Pulpits: City's Rapid Rise From Ashes a Theme for Preachers." Baltimore (Morning) Sun 10 September 1906: 12 c.3-4.

"Rogers, James Gamble." The Columbia Encyclopedia. 6th Ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

"Rogers, James Gamble." Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects. Adolf K. Placzek, Ed. New York: Free Press, 1982.

John F. Stover. History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. 1987. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue UP, 1995.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: More extensive investigation of the resources of the B&O archives is needed. No file on the building *per se* appears to have been kept, but searches in files for various officers and events would certainly yield images. Accounting records for the 1905-6 period might also contain correspondence and additional information regarding construction.

F. Supplemental Material: floor plans, contemporary, courtesy of Baltimore & Charles Associates. Photocopy of image of building, from Architectural Record 34(August 1913), "The Works of Parker Thomas & Rice," plate 7.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

During the summer of 2001, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Maryland Historical Trust, in coordination with the City of Baltimore's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and Preservation Maryland, recorded ten historic buildings and sites within Baltimore's Central Business District through large-format photography and original historical research. The heart of the downtown area and focus of intensive redevelopment efforts, Baltimore's Central Business District is a designated city historic district and home to a diverse array of historic commercial and civic buildings, churches, theaters and other landmarks. Many of them predate the district's Great Fire of 1904 and chronicle Baltimore's rise as a financial, commercial and civic center. This project, coordinated by Martin Perschler, Collections Manager, HABS/HAER, and Catherine Lavoie, Senior

Historian, HABS, and resulting in more than 150 photographs by Baltimore photographer James W. Rosenthal for HABS and ten detailed architectural histories by Laurie Ossman, PhD., also a Baltimore resident, grew out of concern about the recent loss of the Merchants & Miners Transportation Company Building at 17 Light Street and other buildings of architectural distinction in Baltimore.

Ranging chronologically from the Peale Museum (1814) to the Baltimore Trust Company Building (1929), and in function from Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1846) to the Gayety Theatre (1906), the ten landmarks selected for this study illustrate the architectural diversity of the district and the myriad forces that have informed the district's growth and evolution over time. The documentation resulting from this project formed the basis of a photographic exhibit that was launched at the Maryland Historical Society in May 2002 during National Historic Preservation Month.

The ten historic buildings and sites that were studied during the project are:

Alex. Brown & Sons Company Building (HABS MD-1121)
B&O Railroad Company Headquarters Building (HABS MD-1122)
Baltimore Trust Company Building (HABS MD-1119)
Gayety Theatre (HABS MD-1123)
Mercantile Trust & Deposit Company (HABS MD-191)
Monument Square & the Battle Monument (HABS MD-1126 and MD-185)
Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (HABS MD-1124)
Peale Museum (HABS MD-398)
Pennsylvania Railroad Company District Office Building (HABS MD-1125)
Vickers Building (HABS MD-1120)