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## AMERICAN NOTES

### Architectural Research in the Annapolis Dock Space

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Miss Werner is Assistant for Architectural Research to the Executive Director, Robert Kerr, of Historic Annapolis, Inc., 18 Pinkney Street, Annapolis, Maryland. SAH cited the Governor and the Legislature of Maryland for making a special appropriation to support their study of Annapolis' architectural history. We thought that our readers would find Miss Werner's technique of interest; there has been little or nothing published on such procedures.—Ed.

The Annapolis dock space, which comprises the land and structures immediately adjacent to the city dock, is a unique survival in America of a colonial port. Brick stores, warehouses, and taverns look out upon the dock in essentially the same pattern as they have since the eighteenth century (fig. 1). Commercial shipping and heavy industry with their huge piers, factories, and fuel tanks have bypassed Annapolis for Baltimore and other ports. Urban renewal projects which might have brought apartment houses, shopping centers, and superhighways have as yet not been scheduled for the Annapolis dock space. Nor has the neighboring United States Naval Academy taken over any of this architecturally important area. Indeed, the dock space is still an active marine commercial center while retaining its eighteenth-century scale and historic atmosphere.

Owing to the generally early date of the dock space structures and to their continuing role in the economy of Annapolis, this area was selected by Historic Annapolis, Inc. for intensive research. The thirty-two buildings extending along the three streets facing the water range in date of construction from 1720 to 1957 with 72% of them built before 1840. From these buildings, or from structures on the same foundations, merchants and tradesmen directed their business of shipping tobacco to England in the eighteenth century, tended the quiet general stores of the nineteenth century, and now sell marine and food supplies to the twentieth-century oysterman and yachtsman. Researching three centuries of the architectural history of the Annapolis dock space will contribute new documentation for a rich and important chapter in American cultural and economic history.

The methodology for this research developed only as the full extent of the project was realized. Methods customarily employed in the study of a single house were expanded to include each building in the area. The primary emphasis, however, was always placed on the structure rather than on its occupants. Techniques used to document an entire town were modified and adapted, as appropriate, for the area of the dock space is quite small when compared to that of the city as a whole. Indexing every record of Annapolis or of Anne Arundel County for a later easy tracing of one name or lot number was not practicable. Furthermore, no arbitrary terminal date for the study was chosen; any building believed to have architectural or historical value, or found compatible with such values, was to be documented regardless of its age. It was felt that the architectural continuum was one of the area's greatest assets. The procedure finally evolved for this architectural research has consisted of two methods of investigation—archaeological study and documentary search.

The archaeological study concerns analysis of architectural characteristics of each building. Limited measurements of various details are made and analyzed for a clue to the date of erection and to the possibility of later alteration. Since the emphasis is placed on the buildings which still exist, rather than on those which have disappeared, subsurface archaeology is minimal in Annapolis. The most important aspect of the study consists of the recording of significant details of construction or decoration. The data is recorded on prepared sheets with entries for identification of the property, its present condition and use, building materials, type of foundations, windows, doors, roofs, and decorative details. This check list ensures the same careful examination of each building, as well as the presentation of the data in standardized form for ease of future reference. Details are compared with the illustrations and rules for building in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century carpenters' and architects' handbooks. These books, some of which are in rare book collections, were generously loaned to the research staff by the Peabody Institute Library in Baltimore. Unfortunately, modern architectural histories lack many of the exact descriptions needed for this particular study. All con-



Fig. 1. View of dock area, Annapolis, Md. (photo: M. E. Warren).

clusions derived from the formal architectural analysis are considered tentative until the corresponding documentary research has been completed.

The backbone of the research for primary documentary material is an expanded form of title search, which establishes the owners' names as far back as the land records of Anne Arundel County extend for that property. It is far easier to do research in reverse chronological order than to begin with the first settlers and progress to the twentieth century. Information found in the title search is supplemented by items from newspapers, census records, tax assessments, insurance policies, customs books, account books, probate records, testamentary proceedings, chancery and equity cases, bankruptcy proceedings,

church records, and private papers. Often the documentary research is indirect, for validation of a fact may come through a gradual elimination of initially plausible conclusions.

A particularly valuable part of the land records is the descriptive survey of the property. An effort is made to replot the different surveys to give a better picture of the land development and to ensure the correct identification of the property. A basic problem in reploting arises, however, from the use of arbitrary and temporary types of control and identification of reference points in early surveys. The system of replot which is being used is not dependent on the existence of a permanent monument or bench mark. Instead, the narrative description of the land

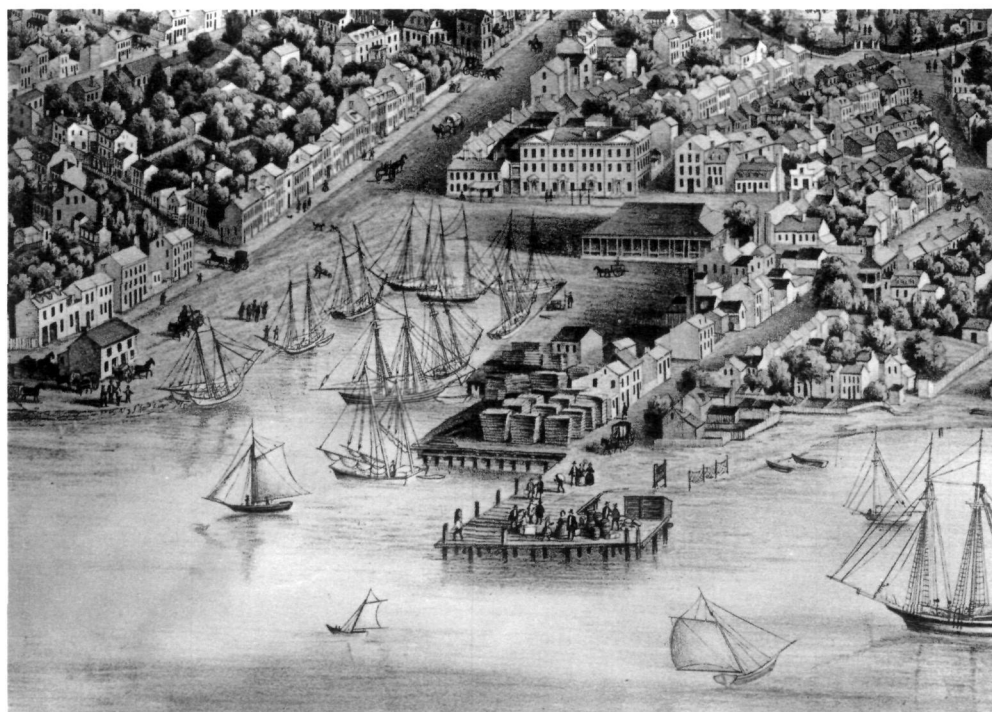


Fig. 2. Sachse lithographic view of Annapolis, ca. 1859 (photo: M.E. Warren).

survey is physically replotted on a blank sheet of paper, using a scale consistent with a current base map of the city. After the survey has been replotted for direction and distance on the blank sheet of paper, this overlay is then adjusted in direction on the base map and oriented by a rule of best evidence to the land area under investigation. The success of this system to date lies in a combination of the accuracy of the replot and the luck of the 'educated guess' in orienting the replot on the ground.

Other sources for information are maps, drawings, and photographs. Many early maps give not only the alignment of the city's streets, but also the location of buildings. This practice is particularly true of maps prepared by the town's merchants who advertised in the margins and had the exact locations of their businesses clearly indicated. In the nineteenth century, Sachse prints of views of Annapolis show some amazingly accurate details of the city (fig. 2). Drawings made of the area by visitors, residents, and artists such as Charles Willson Peale and Frank Mayer give valuable information about the early appearance of many of the buildings now hidden behind later embellishments (figs. 3 and 4). Early photographs are likewise valuable for their accuracy of detail. The search for visual documentation follows no pattern; every archive must be searched individually.

Fortunately, the chief depositories for the documentary material essential to this study are in Annapolis. Maryland's excellent Hall of Records holds all the instruments

of the county land offices and of the orphans' courts before 1855, as well as church records, tax assessments, maps, and miscellaneous papers. The original land patents, chancery cases, and surveys before 1855 are among the deposits in the Maryland State Land Office. Records of the property since 1855 are found in the Annapolis City Hall and the Anne Arundel County Court House. Reference books are found not only in the Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Public Library, but also in the Maryland State Library which holds original copies of *The Maryland Gazette*, published in Annapolis as early as 1727. Research must occasionally be pursued farther afield, however, and documents of a more miscellaneous nature have been located in out-of-town archives such as the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the National Archives in Washington, D. C., the Virginia State Library in Richmond, and the Norfolk County Court House in Portsmouth, Virginia.

As documentary material accumulates, it is arranged and catalogued in three ways. The first consists of typing an abstract of every item concerning a particular building or property on individual sheets of paper. These are then arranged chronologically as pages in a looseleaf notebook. A separate notebook is kept for each building. Among the entries are abstracts of the deeds, leases, and mortgages of the property with their replotted surveys, and also notices of births and deaths of the owners, records of the

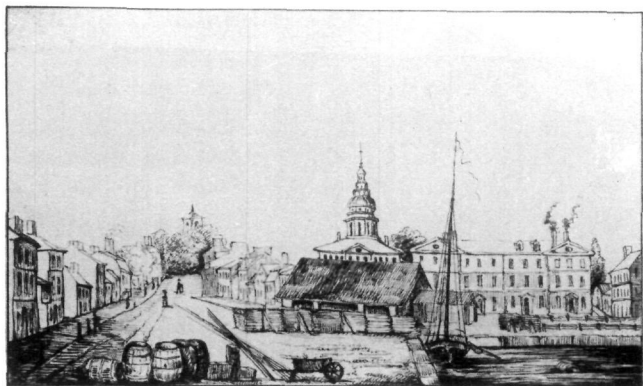


Fig. 3. Dock space and Church Street (now Main Street), early nineteenth century, anonymous sketch (courtesy Maryland Historical Society).

owner's business and social life, inventories of his goods, and contemporary newspaper items. In place of a table of contents there is a page listing the sources of information. Under the proper headings of Land Records, Newspapers, Wills, etc., are recorded the various references and the dates of the instruments contained within the notebook. As new material is added to the book, the reference is placed under the proper heading on the 'Sources of Information' page. These notebooks also contain reproductions of all available photographs of the building, including a view of the building as it exists at the time of this study.

In addition to these notebooks, a locator chart is drawn. Along the side of a large sheet of paper each building is listed in the order that it appears on the street. Across the top, there is a summary of dates ranging from 1700 to 1961. The names of the owners and tenants are put into the proper time-place block in the middle area. A quick glance at the chart shows not only the owners of the property, but also their neighbors on either side. Consequently, this diagram serves as a check for references to buildings described as 'next to X' or, 'three doors down from X'. Furthermore, it gives an exact picture of the men and buildings that were contemporaries in the various periods included in this study.

A further aid to this research is a card index listing the names of all who are known to have been active in the area. This actually is an index to the material in the notebooks. It serves to focus attention on the genealogical aspects of this study as well as being a handy reference to previous research or to research done by other members of the staff. The detailed recording of information is an effort to reduce the amount of waste time often unknowingly spent reading documents already abstracted. Progress in research should be expedited, of course, by using a method that will give the future researcher a complete record of the previous work.

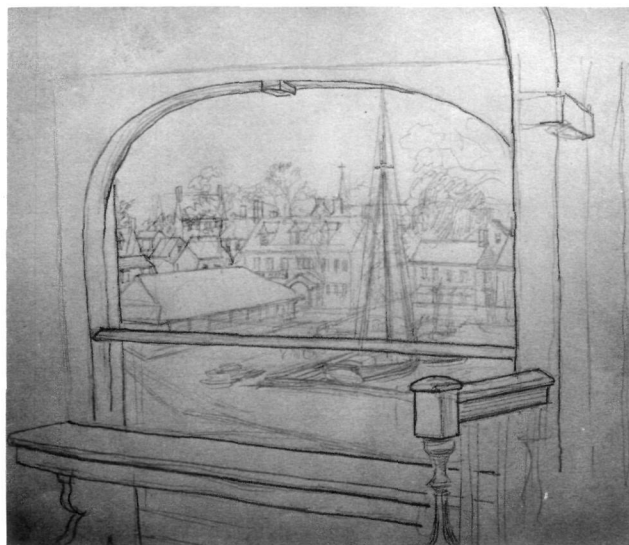


Fig. 4. Market house, dock, and the three-dormer Middleton's Tavern, ca. 1874, sketch by Frank Mayer (photo: M. E. Warren).



Fig. 5. Mandris' Restaurant (formerly Middleton's Tavern), in 1961 (photo: M. E. Warren).

The architectural research, combining archaeological and documentary knowledge, is the basis for determining the course of action for revitalizing the Annapolis dock space by preservation, restoration, or reconstruction. If the structures are to be returned to an early or original appearance, few will now be found in such good condition that only continued preservation will be needed. The large majority of buildings have succumbed to the tastes of the passing ages and require some form of restoration. Research this past summer revealed, for instance, that the structure of Mandris' Restaurant, known historically as Middleton's Tavern, held many surprises for the researcher. The apparently Federal façade (fig. 5) conceals two Georgian houses built side by side. This observation made during an archaeological study of the building was

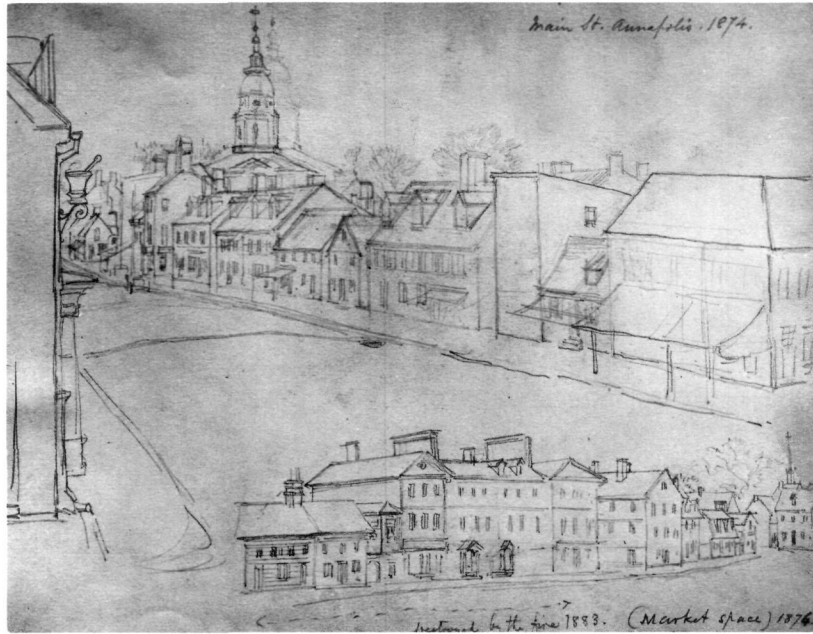


Fig. 6. Wallace, Davidson, Johnson Building and others, 1874 sketch by Frank Mayer (photo: M. E. Warren).

supported by a nineteenth-century equity case (cf. check list following). The division of the building along one wall seemed, as an isolated fact, very strange. Combined with the visual analysis, however, it served to explain the whole construction of the building. If a period restoration were undertaken, a great deal of information could be obtained from an inventory of the furnishings in 1774 which are listed as they appear in the various rooms. In addition, an identification of each room is contained in the inventory as for example, 'Barr Room', 'Arch Room', 'Next Room Yellow', 'Led Collard Room', and 'Little Room at Stair head'.

Reconstruction is the most difficult type of revitalization. In the Annapolis dock space there seems to be only one instance where this would be necessary or desirable. A large fire in 1883 destroyed the handsomest building in the area, the Wallace, Davidson, and Johnson Building. This four-part, three-story brick structure was built in 1771 by three Annapolis merchants. Three new stores have been built on the site since the fire, but archaeologists can still see a part of one of the original side walls and some of the foundations of the original building. There is a good extant sketch of the front of the building before the fire (fig. 6) and an early photograph from the rear gives more positive proof of its size. The letterbooks of the Wallace, Davidson, and Johnson Company contain a fascinating account of the business carried on in the building with a few references to its construction. Almost enough is known now to make the reconstruction feasible and to restore the only major structure which has been lost since the eighteenth century.

The methods used in this architectural research can be expanded or modified in a number of ways. Essentially, however, they can form the basis for the study of any group of buildings located in a similar area. With the increasing interest in the problem of architectural conservation in small cities, new methods for research of value must be established. As accuracy must prevail in the measurement of atoms, so it should in the measurement of man's changing culture. The careful combining of archaeological and documentary information will make such an accurate study of architectural history feasible.

A SAMPLE CHECK LIST OF SOURCES  
2, 4, AND 6 MARKET SPACE (MIDDLETON'S TAVERN)

*Anne Arundel County Chancery Court*

Liber B, No. 22, f. 5; 1759  
Middleton vs. Middleton; 1792  
No. 150, f. 603; 1833

*Anne Arundel County Equity Court*

No. 915; Liber S.H., No. 14, f. 236; 1882

*Anne Arundel County Land Records*

R.D. No. 3, f. 182; 1739  
R.B. No. 1, f. 113; 1741  
R.B. No. 1, f. 177; 1742  
R.B. No. 1, f. 362; 1743  
R.B. No. 3, f. 63; 1748  
R.B. No. 3, f. 253; 1750  
R.B. No. 3, f. 280; 1750  
N.G.H. No. 3, f. 546; 1854  
N.G.H. No. 4, f. 151; 1854  
S.H. No. 10, f. 19; 1875  
S.H. No. 10, f. 120; 1875  
F.A.M. No. 191, f. 421; 1938

*Inventory*

26 Jan. 1774 (Middleton) (Box 1, f. 18, Md. Hall of Records)

*Land Patents of Maryland*

G.S. No. 1, f. 65; 1752 (Pools Delight Enlarged)

*Letters*

Gov. Sharpe Letterbook IV, to Hamersley,

9 June 1767, *Archives of Maryland* xiv, 392-393

*The Maryland Gazette*

1750

15 Sept. 1763

25 Aug. 1768

20 July 1769

23 Aug. 1770

6 June 1771

14 March 1782

20 June 1782

12 June 1783

11 June 1789

27 Aug. 1807

*Minutes of the Proceedings of the Corporation  
of the City of Annapolis*

22 Jan. 1784

4 Feb. 1784

*Port of Entry Records for Annapolis*

31 May 1758—Outward bound, p. 93

27 July 1761

1763

1764

*Proceedings of the Mayor's Court, Annapolis*

29 Jan. 1754

31 Jan. 1758

3 Feb. 1758

29 Jan. 1761

25 Jan. 1763

28 Jan. 1769

*Saint Anne's Parish Record, 1708-1785*

14 Jan. 1742

23 Oct. 1744

23 Nov. 1747

23 Aug. 1752

2 March 1767

*Sale Book of Confiscated British Property,  
T.A.S. com'r, 1781-1785*

19 July 1781

26 March 1782

3 June 1782

*Wills—Anne Arundel County*

10 Jan. 1787 (Joseph Middleton)

24 June 1826 (John Randall)

*Correspondence*

Norfolk County Court House, 14 Aug. 1961

*Field Trips*

9 Aug. 1961

*Photographs*

ca. 1880

ca. 1900

1961

## Early Central Heating

Greville Bathe and Dorothy Bathe, *Jacob Perkins, His Inventions, His Times and His Contemporaries* (Philadelphia, 1943), credits Perkins (1766-1849) with having developed a form of central heating in his native town of Newburyport, Massachusetts, as early as 1810. Five years later he designed and installed a plant in the Massachusetts Medical College, Boston. This consisted of a basement coal-burning stove enclosed in a brick chamber with pipes to all the principal rooms (p. 52). Perkins, best known for his development of nail-making machinery, bank-note plates and steam engines, moved to Philadelphia in 1815 and to London in 1819. There his son Angier March Perkins (b. 1799) became a well-known heating engineer, his first patent for steam heating being filed in 1831 (p. 143).

On the other hand, William W. Wheildon, *Memoir of Solomon Willard* (Boston [?], 1865), claims that 'To Mr. Willard [1783-1861] belongs the credit of originating in this country the first step towards the complete, adequate and almost perfect contrivance of the present day for the production of artificial heat,—namely the Hot-air Furnace,—placed in the basement of the building, having communication with the external air and pipes leading to the various apartments to be warmed.' It seems that Mr. Willard's apparatus was a kind of open stove for burning wood enclosed with brickwork. A thousand of them were made, and architect Charles Bulfinch consulted with Willard in 1825 when planning the heating for the Capitol and White House in Washington (pp. 45-51).

We would be interested in a survey of early central heating in this country. Perhaps it would determine which of these native sons of Massachusetts merits the distinction of being first.