

City To Restore Flag House As It Was In 1814

The city is going to restore the Flag House "as it was in 1814" and erect a small building behind it to provide museum and office space.

Mayor D'Alesandro has told the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House Association that "the restoration will make it possible for you to furnish the Flag House as it was in the days when the original Star-Spangled Banner" was being made there.

The Mayor said neglect of the Flag House has been "Baltimore's shame," and promised:

"The city is going to clean up and restore this house. It is going to restore the rotting woodwork, get rid of the warped boards, rusty tin and peeling paint.

Provides For Reproduction

"It is going to erect, just behind this house, a reproduction of the other building that was there orig-

inally—the detached 'dependency' so typical of America's early days."

The restoration project calls for installing a door on the left side and a window in the center where a door now exists.

After the Civil War, the door was shifted to the center of the front wall and a small display window constructed to its left for commercial use according to Mrs. Elizabeth M. Sewell, curator.

Had Varied Uses

The restoration will locate the door and window according to the original design of the front. The structure was built in 1793 and in 1807 was bought and occupied by Mrs. Mary Pickersgill and her husband John.

In 1813 Mrs. Pickersgill and her daughter, Caroline, made the flag that flew over Fort McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore which inspired Francis Scott Key to write the Star-Spangled Banner.

Mrs. Pickersgill lived in the house until she died in 1857. The property was left to her daughter, who sold it in 1864.

Other Uses

During subsequent ownerships, it was used as a tobacco store, a shoemaker shop, and a bank patronized by the Italian-American families of the vicinity. The banker also served as a notary public and agent for an express company.

In 1927 the city bought the property, renovated and strengthened the structure to preserve it as a historical shrine but made no change in the door and window locations of the front of the building.

The Baltimore Evening Sun
9 September 1952