

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE:	Maryland
COUNTY:	Baltimore City
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

AND/OR HISTORIC:
St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
600 North Paca Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Baltimore

STATE:
Maryland

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
3rd

CODE: 24

COUNTY:
Baltimore City

CODE: 510

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Associated Professors of St. Mary's Seminary

STREET AND NUMBER:
5400 Roland Park

CITY OR TOWN:
Baltimore

STATE:
Maryland

CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Baltimore City Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
St. Paul and Fayette Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Baltimore

STATE:
Maryland

CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:
1936; 1964

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress/Annex

STREET AND NUMBER:
Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D.C.

CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland
COUNTY: Baltimore City
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel is an "A" roof structure, three bays wide, four bays deep and one and a half stories high. It is set on a high basement with round arched windows set into rectangular insets.

Constructed from 1806 to 1808 by Maximilien Godefroy, it is a small brick chapel slightly less than ninety feet long and seventy feet wide. It would appear that the chapel incorporates the structure of an earlier building and that the Neo-Gothic design of the architect was forced to fit it. This suggestion has been advanced on some convincing structural evidence.

In plan, the central space of the chapel is composed of the nave, which is 50' 7" long by 36' wide including the narrow side aisles which are 4' 9½" wide each. The nave is lit by three window bays on either side. The moulded brick enframements of these windows have been added and the bricks in the nave walls are 8 1/2" x 4 1/8" x 2¼" as compared to 8 3/8" x 4¼" x 2 3/8" on the front elevation. The side aisles are divided from the nave by narrowly spaced Neo-Gothic columns 5' 8" on center. The nine bays and eight columns, arranged on this module, allow the windows to be centered on every third bay.

The sanctuary with a semi-circular apse is separated from the nave by three steps. The sanctuary floor is 18" higher than that of the nave. Immediately at the top step, the change in module between the sanctuary and the nave is marked by a pair of engaged columns on either side, 3' 7" on center, with solid wall between them. The engaged columns of the sanctuary are two bays deep, 9' on center and then terminated by the semi-circular apse which has a radius of 12' 5". Flanking the sanctuary are the north and south transept. They are both simple rectangular spaces 19' 6" (one bay) wide and 29' (three bays) long.

The first three bays of the nave carry the balcony over the west entrance. The width of the nave between the side aisles is the same width as the sanctuary. Therefore, the shallow vaulted ceiling of plaster on wood lathe is carried uninterrupted on a continuous decorative wooden cornice from one end of the chapel to the other. The ceiling has delicate false ribs in imitation of cross vaulting above the nave and the sanctuary. The change in module between nave and sanctuary is handled by the insertion of a decorative band 3' 7" wide where the two spaces meet above the paired engaged columns. The wooden nave columns and those of the sanctuary are of nearly identical design. The shafts of those in the nave are 1' 3 3/4" in diameter and are quatrefoil in plan. They have acanthus leaf capitals somewhat classical in appearance. Below the capitals at the top of the shafts are eight evenly spaced inverted acorns. The balcony railing is made up of panels of pierced Neo-Gothic decorative elements above a continuous classical Greek-bay band.

From the exterior, the chapel has an elaborate Neo-Gothic false front on the west elevation virtually stuck onto the nave. The side elevation walls have brick buttresses between the three window bays, and basement

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1806-08**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Saint Mary's Seminary Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland was designed in the Neo-Gothic style and built by the French architect Maximilien Godefroy between 1806 and 1808. Godefroy's original design fortunately survives in drawings (1806-1807) of the facade, plan, altar, and ciborium as he proposed they should be built. Therefore, it is possible to compare the Chapel as it was first built with Godefroy's design, a process necessary because the Sulpician Fathers modified the scheme in the course of construction. This small brick building occupies a unique position in the history of American architecture. It is the first church in the Neo-Gothic style to be built in the United States. Considering the national prominence this style was to achieve later in the 19th century, especially in religious architecture, it is of special importance to mark its beginning in this structure. The history of the Chapel is important to the history of American architecture in three ways. First, the original Godefroy design reveals the sources with which an early nineteenth-century architect trained in Europe worked as he composed in the "Gothick" style. Secondly, the Chapel is relevant because its nineteenth-and-twentieth-century history preserves a record of changing attitudes to Gothic revivalism in the United States. Finally, the renovation and restoration of the Chapel in 1967-1968, under the direction of Alexander Cochran, F.A.I.A., presents the problems implicit in the accommodation which must be made in such work when an early building of refined and positive stylistic qualities must go on, not as a preserved monument, but as a functioning part of contemporary life.¹

¹ Stanton, Phoebe, "St. Mary's Chapel, Baltimore, by Godefroy: The History and Restoration History of an Early Gothic Building," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XXVIII, #3.

History

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel, constructed from 1806-1808, was designed by one of the notable early nineteenth-century architects in America, Maximilien Godefroy, for the Sulpician priests of St. Mary's Seminary. The Seminary, founded in 1791, is the oldest Catholic seminary in the United States.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Howland and Spencer, The Architecture of Baltimore, Baltimore, 1953.
 Maryland Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks, Maryland Historical Trust,
 on file with National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D.C.,
 1969.
 Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Baltimore City and County from the Earliest
 Period to the Present Day. . ., Philadelphia, 1881.
 Semmes, Raphael, Baltimore As Seen by Its Visitors 1783-1860, Baltimore,
 1953.
 Sioussat, Annie Leakin, Old Baltimore, New York, 1931.

(continued)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

UTM 18.360040.4350660

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 6.5 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Pat Heintzelman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project;
original form done by W. Brown Morton III, 1971

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE: Oct 8, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L Street

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK)

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(Signature) _____
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 Date _____
 ATTEST: _____
 Keeper of The National _____
 Date _____

Landmark
 Designated: Nov. 11, 1971
 date
 Boundary Certified:
Cornelius Heine 6-19-75
 date
 Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys
 Boundary Affirmed: _____
W. B. Morton 6/2/75
 date
 Director, OAH

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS)

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7. Description: (1)

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

windows with flat jack arches underneath the first two nave window bays. These basement windows light the crypt. The main body of the church has a gable roof. The portion of the roof over the side aisles has a shallower pitch than the central section. Later additions obscure the eastern elevation of the chapel.

The west front of the church appears to have been built across the gable end of an earlier building. It has a three-bay central section slightly wider than the nave and side aisles behind it. This section has a central entrance doorway reached by a flight of nine stone steps. On either side of the double doors are engaged columns in molded brick carrying a Gothic arch with a keystone. The transom is not glazed but is a wooden panel with a trefoil design. On either side of the front entrance, in positions shown occupied by windows in the Godefroy drawings, are two niches with Gothic arches. They are intended for sculpture.

The cornice line of the chapel is carried around the west elevation and expressed by a more elaborate Neo-Gothic stucco cornice than that on the rest of the building. Above this cornice is a high rectangular brick parapet with a central circular window flanked by blind lancet arcades. This parapet masks the gable end of the chapel roof. To stabilize the parapet, brick flying buttresses from the side walls of the nave support it from the back. On either side of the main block of the west front are two low spur elements, nearly square in plan. They both have arched entrances front and rear and a window bay in the end elevation. The west elevation of the transepts have crenellated mock battlements to hide the sloping shed roof behind.

Included within the original 6.5 acres are two other buildings, Mother Seton House and Saint Mary's Seminary Building. The Mother Seton House is a two-and-one-half story red brick house similar to other small homes built in the early 1800's for the predominately French community nearby. It stands detached and is somewhat larger in scale and more pretentious in design than the similar small houses in the city. Mother Seton described it in one of her letters as being surrounded by orchards and French in design. For this reason, and because the Frenchman Maximilien Godefroy, the architect of St. Mary's Seminary Chapel, was an instructor in drawing at the Seminary at that time, there has been speculation that he may have designed this building, too. The purpose for which the house was originally erected has long been forgotten; however, it was offered as an inducement to Elizabeth Seton to come to Baltimore in 1808 and there to found a school and occupy the then newly completed house.

The Seminary Building is a large brick institutional structure in the 2nd Empire Style, St. Mary's Seminary Building exemplifying the French-inspired Victorian public architecture of the 1870's. 2nd Empire Revival was almost the official style, being used by A. B. Mullet and William A. Potter,

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(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

LANDMARKS

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7. Description: (2)

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

Architects of the United States Treasury in the early 1870's; practiced by men such as Henry Hobson Richardson in his early works, Ware and Van Brunt, and George B. Post, etc., and contemporaneous with such French architects as Lefeul and Labrouste.

Although not individually recognized as National Historic Landmarks, these buildings are within the landmark boundary and included individually on the National Register of Historic Places. Together all three structures maintain the historical integrity of the entire property.

Boundary

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel is located on the 6.5 acres of the St. Mary's Seminary School building grounds within the 23 acre Seton Hill Historic District. It is adjacent to the school building at a southwest/northeast angle. The St. Mary's Seminary property is bounded on the north by the south side of Druid Hill Avenue, on the east by the west side of Paca Street, on the south by the north side of the property on the north side of Franklin Street, on the southwest by the north side of the property on the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, and on the northwest by the east side of St. Mary's Street. The front facade of the chapel faces southwest.

NOTE: About six months after the preparation of this form, St. Mary's Seminary Building was demolished. This does not affect the landmark boundary for St. Mary's Seminary Chapel which was established independently of the Seminary building.

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(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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8. Statement of Significance: (1)

St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

The bricks used in the construction of the Chapel were originally purchased for Benjamin H. Latrobe's Basilica of the Assumption. However, when it was decided to build the Basilica of stone, the bricks were sold to St. Mary's Chapel building committee who purchased them with \$3000 given by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of the four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence and a frequent contributor to Seminary projects.

Present at the June 19, 1808 dedication of the Chapel were two prominent American Catholics, later closely associated with the Chapel: Bishop John Carroll (1735-1815) and Mrs. Elizabeth Seton, also known as Mother Seton (1774-1821). Mrs. Seton, a convert to Catholicism, founded the Order of St. Joseph and was the aunt of Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley (1814-1877). Mother Seton, the following year, in the Chapel in the presence of Bishop John Carroll, took her vows into the Order of St. Vincent de Paul.

Mrs. Seton, with the aid of her confessor, a priest in St. Mary's Seminary, founded, in the basement of the Chapel, a school which later developed into St. Joseph's Convent or the Mother House of the American Sisters of Charity, and moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland.

At the same time the basement was used for services for black French Catholics who had fled to Baltimore from San Domingo during the revolution 1791-1803 led by Touissant L'Ouverture. The Oblate Sisters of Providence, an order of black nuns, founded in the late 1820's, used the Chapel basement for the parochial education of black children.

The Chapel was used during the early years of the nineteenth century as a parish church for the French-speaking Catholics in Baltimore, many of whom also had fled from the Revolution in San Domingo. The body of Bishop Carroll, who had attended the dedication, was temporarily buried in the Chapel in 1815.

During the remainder of the nineteenth century and until 1969 the Chapel served the faculty and students of the Seminary. After the Seminary moved to Catonsville, Maryland, the Chapel has remained vacant although it has not been deconsecrated.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARK)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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COUNTY	
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(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References: (1) St. Mary's Seminary Chapel

Stanton, Phoebe, "St. Mary's Chapel, Baltimore, by Godefroy; The History and Restoration History of an Early Gothic Building," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Volume XXVIII, No. 3.

Seton House
Amendment to St. Mary's Seminary Chapel
National Historic Landmark Form
April 1, 1992

The following Architectural Description and Historical Significance Statement is for an amendment to the current St. Mary's Seminary Chapel National Historic Landmark. Designated in 1971, this nomination was prepared to demonstrate the architectural significance of the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel. Included in the boundary of the 1971 National Historic Landmark nomination form were the St. Mary's Seminary Building (demolished in 1971) and the Elizabeth Ann Seton House. The Seton House, although technically listed a NHL as part of the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel study, only received limited discussion in the 1971 nomination form. This amendment seeks to address the unparalleled national significance of Elizabeth Ann Seton, and insure that her contributions to American religious and educational history are formally part of the existing National Historic Landmark record.

Women's History Landmark Study
Dr. Page Putnam Miller, Director
National Coordinating Committee
for the Promotion of History
400 A Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 544-2422

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

Seton House

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DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The Seton House, built in the first years of the 19th century, is today located in a predominantly residential neighborhood. When occupied by Seton in 1808, the neighborhood was mostly French speaking due to the strong influence of the Sulpician Order in that area. It is not known who constructed the Seton House, but it is possible that it was built by Maximillian Godefroy who also designed the adjacent St. Mary's Seminary Chapel.

The Seton House is listed as a contributing building in the National Historic Landmark nomination of the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel, which was designated in 1971. However, the Seton house warrants a more significant place within this NHL designation. The current National Historic Landmark nomination form states that "Although not individually recognized as a National Historic Landmark, these buildings are within the landmark boundary and included individually on the National Register." Furthermore, the current nomination addresses Elizabeth Ann Seton's historical significance in just a few sentences. Thus we seek to ammend the current form to list individually the Seton House.

The Seton House is a three-bay, two-story Federal building. The walls are brick with Flemish bond masonry. The house has a steep pitched, side gable, slate shingle roof with a slight eave overhang. There is a gabled dormer with a six-over-six sash window, and two paired end interior chimneys with three pointed arches on each top.

The second story consists of three four-over-four sash windows placed singly but in a symmetrical row. Each window has a brick lintel, stone sill, and two louvered shutters.

The first story has two four-over-four sash windows placed singly but in a symmetrical row to the right of the entryway. The windows have a brick lintel, stone sill, shutters that are half louvered and half paneled. The entryway consists of a paneled door with a rectangular light overhead, two half louvered, half paneled shutters, a brick lintel, and a modern storm door painted the color of the front door and shutters.

The interior of the Seton House has a high degree of integrity; most flooring, mantels, mouldings and chair rails are original. On all of the floors, the configuration of the rooms are identical to Seton's time. On the first floor the three rooms, the parlor, dining room, and kitchen,

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extend backward in that order along the right side of the house. There is a staircase located on the left side. The porch is located to the left of the kitchen in the rear of the house. Mouldings, chair rails, and kitchen and parlor fireplaces are extant. Changes on the first floor include the enclosure of the back porch and the creation of a small fireplace (previously a bakery oven) in the dining area. The mantel over the parlor fireplace and the kitchen floor are not original.

The stairs to the second floor are known as "lady treads," as the height of each step is one inch lower than standard steps. The banister is original, and is made of applewood from orchards originally located near the house.

The second floor contains what was the craft room and the school room adjacent to each other at the front of the house, and Seton's bedroom to the rear. Again, all fireplaces, mouldings, chair rails, flooring, and mantels (except the one in the school room) are original. Elizabeth Seton's bedroom contains a sleeping alcove, a typically French architectural detail, and a small porch.

The third floor of the building, the attic, was formerly the dormitory. The floors, fireplace, and mantel are original. The large open room served as sleeping space for Seton's students, whereas a smaller storage room was probably used for dry storage. The only alteration to this floor was the removal of a partition in the large room sometime in the 1960s.

The basement contains an original brick floor, but a modern furnace replaces a fireplace. Other alterations to the building include modern heating and air conditioning, and a late twentieth century bathroom. The Seton house is currently furnished with period furniture, and is run as a museum.

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Seton House

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The house at 600 Paca Street in Baltimore was the home of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton from 1808 to 1809. It was the site where she first organized what would become the Catholic order of the Daughters and Sisters of Charity, and where she had her first elementary school, which began the Catholic parochial school system in the United States. As one biographer notes, "the year at Baltimore was, nevertheless, a momentous one for her and for the Catholic Church in the United States."¹ According to National Park Service thematic framework, the Seton house falls under theme: XXX. American Ways of Life; XXVII. Education, B. Elementary, Intermediate, Secondary Education, 1. Development of the System; XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements, J. Poverty Relief and Urban Social Reform.

There are three possible sites to commemorate Elizabeth Ann Seton and her work in the religious community of Baltimore. Following her year at the Paca Street house, Seton moved her religious order and school to Emmitsburg, Maryland. Both Emmitsburg sites possess little integrity. From July 1809 to February 1810, Seton and the Sisters of Charity lived and conducted their activities from the Stone House. In addition to only serving as Seton's headquarters for a short while, this house possesses questionable integrity. Following Seton's occupancy, the fieldstone walls were covered with stucco, and in 1834, an addition was built to the western side of the house. The first story flooring has been replaced. The entire structure was moved in 1979. Following their residence at the Stone House, Seton and the Sisters of Charity moved to what is now called the White House. This building, built of logs later covered with clapboards, has been moved twice. In 1917, most of the original logs were replaced. Much of the interior woodwork is original, but the interior floorplan was altered dramatically, and various additions built.² Unlike these Emmitsburg properties, the Paca Street house has a high degree of integrity, and is associated with the genesis of Seton's activities. The Paca Street house, although already listed as a contributing resource in the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel National Historic Landmark nomination (designated in 1971), warrants individual recognition. The current NHL form does not address the historic significance of Elizabeth Ann Seton, and thus we are seeking an ammendment to the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel NHL.

Elizabeth Ann Seton's road to the Sisterhood appears unusual. She was born to the wealthy and Episcopalian Bayley family in New York City on August 28, 1774.³ Her family nurtured the spirit of charity that would later be her life's work. Her father, in particular, who was one of the

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leading doctors in New York City, instilled this early desire and aptitude to help others.⁴

Seton was married on January 25, 1794 at the age of nineteen to William Magee Seton, a young New York merchant. Their marriage was initially a happy one, producing five children in the seven years between 1795 to 1802.⁵ However, disaster struck shortly thereafter as the collapse of the Seton family businesses coincided with a sharp decline in William Seton's health.⁶ Then in 1803, her husband's swiftly failing health forced them to take a trip to Italy, in the hope that a better climate would save him. However, this failed, and he died shortly after they arrived.⁷ Elizabeth Ann Seton also fell ill, and was nursed back to health by the Filicchi family. While with them, and staying in Rome, she was introduced to the teachings and influences of the Catholic Church.⁸

Seton returned to New York City in 1804 with Antonio Filicchi, who continued to press her to join the Catholic Church. In March of 1805 Seton joined the Catholic Church, and she was formally confirmed into the Church a year later in a ceremony presided over by Archbishop John Carroll, the leading cleric in the United States. At the time, Carroll was leading the Catholic Church in the United States from Baltimore, to which he encouraged her to come.⁹ Seton remained in New York for another three years, while she attempted to maintain a boarding house for students, but her life became extremely difficult. Her conversion to Catholicism resulted in disgrace among the largely Protestant New York social elite, such that her "existence was miserable."¹⁰

With the support of Archbishop Carroll and Monsignor William DuBourg, rector of the St. Mary's Seminary, she moved to Baltimore in 1808, and into the Paca Street House. The importance of her first year there cannot be overstated. Her letters from Paca Street indicate a profound evolution of her religious faith. The effect of moving to a city with such a strong and supportive Catholic community was from the first very liberating. After her virtual persecution in New York, she wrote of the "immense happiness of living in such Society as here surrounds us, every Soul breathing Divine Charity."¹¹ With Msgr. DuBourg's encouragement, Seton opened a school for girls in the Paca Street house, with his two nieces as her first pupils.¹² Thanks to her standing with Carroll, she was able to draw students from the most prestigious Catholic families in Baltimore.¹³ The success of the school was of enormous importance, as the "the Paca School earned for Elizabeth Seton in later years the appellation of 'patroness of the parochial school' in the United States."¹⁴ Students at Seton's school, in

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addition to studying reading and writing, also studied sewing, weaving, embroidery and painting as part of Seton's arts and crafts program.

With the success of her school and the further encouragement of the Baltimore clergy, Seton began to actively contemplate entering the religious life and forming her own order, in order to extend this work. For her, the adoption of a religious life was natural, as she had already taken to living the regimented life of a nun since coming to the Paca Street House.¹⁵ She noted to one friend, "what could I expect [from a religious life] you well know it can be neither rest, repose or exemption from poverty, I have long since made the vows which as a religious I could only renew."¹⁶ There were, nevertheless, a number of impediments to making the final step into a religious life. There was at first some concern for the care of her younger children,¹⁷ and there was a persistent problem with obtaining a suitable location for the new order's work,¹⁸ but both of these issues were ultimately resolved.

Archbishop Carroll agreed to Seton's request to become a nun, and personally presided at the ceremony on March 25, 1809, where she took her vows and formally entered the religious life. Meanwhile, with DuBourg's help, she was joined by two of her husband's sisters (who also converted to Catholicism) and some prominent young women of Baltimore. Together they would form the core of the Sisters of Charity. A month later, coinciding with the date of her arrival in Baltimore a year earlier, she appeared publicly for the first time in the order's habit, with the first four members of the Sisters of Charity of St. Francis.¹⁹

On June 21, 1809, together with two pupils from the Paca Street School, her sisters-in-law, and part of the community, Mother Seton moved to Emmitsburg, Maryland.²⁰ They first occupied a stone farmhouse of only four rooms, but the conditions were harsh, and the "Stone House," as it was subsequently designated, "proved inadequate for the needs of [Seton's] school and sisterhood."²¹ However, their work there was of enormous importance. Part of the order's educational work was a free school for boys and girls, noted as "the first free parochial school."²² Seton made a point of educating black children there as well.²³ The expenses of the school were soon covered by paying boarders.²⁴ Within a year, the order had moved into a much larger log house known as the "White House." The Stone House and the White House have obvious historical significance in relation to Seton, but as noted above, in appearance and structure they lack integrity.

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The Sisters of Charity flourished in the next twelve years under Seton's direction. In addition to education, the sisters also began to nurse the sick and minister to the poor. Shortly before her death, the Sisters of Charity began to work in the infirmary at Mount St. Mary's College and the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum in New York.²⁵ Beginning in 1914, the Sisters of Charity worked in child-care institutions, along with other social service programs such as soup kitchens and day care centers.²⁶ From the humble beginnings of the first four sisters at the Paca Street House, the order grew to over 1600 members by the turn of the century, with teachers in schools throughout the country.²⁷ Furthermore, Seton's work in establishing and running the Sisters of Charity would lay down the standards that "became normative for the communities that came after them," both for the organizing religious orders, and for the division between "free schools" and "pay schools."²⁸ She died in Baltimore on January 4, 1821.

Elizabeth Ann Seton was sainted in 1975, yet this designation only provides some small indication of the considerable work she did to educate children, and assist the sick and poor. Due to her achievements, Seton became an honorary member of the Health Care Hall of Fame in 1988. In addition to its significance as her home during one of the most important turning points in her life, her work at the Paca Street House would gain her credit as "initiating the parochial school system in the United States."²⁹ The Paca Street House is therefore the most appropriate site for recognizing Seton's work, and her national historical contribution.

NOTES

¹Annabelle M. Melville, "Introduction," in Selected Writings of Elizabeth Ann Seton, Ellin Kelley and Annabelle Melville, eds. (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 19.

²Sister Aloysia (Archivist, Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland) to Dr. Page Putnam Miller, August 8, 1990 and enclosures.

³Joseph I. Dirvin, Mrs. Seton: Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 8.

⁴Marie Celeste, The Intimate Friendships of Elizabeth Ann Bayley Seton (New York: Alba House, 1990), 4.

⁵Melville, "Introduction," 16.

⁶Celeste, 47-50.

⁷Seton, Selected Writings, 68.

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⁸Seton, Selected Writings, 141-43.
⁹Thomas O'Brien Henley ed., The John Carroll Papers (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976) vol. II, 251-53.
¹⁰Robert Seton, ed. Memoir, Letters and Journal of Elizabeth Seton (New York: P. O'Shea Publisher, 1869), 16
¹¹Seton, Selected Writings, 238.
¹²Seton, Memoirs, 20.
¹³Annabelle M. Melville, Elizabeth Bayley Seton, 1774-1821 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 133.
¹⁴Melville, "Introduction," 19.
¹⁵Dirvin, 220.
¹⁶Seton, Selected Writings, 244.
¹⁷Seton, Selected Writings, 254.
¹⁸Seton, Selected Writings, 243-45.
¹⁹Celeste, 12.
²⁰Seton, Memoirs, 48-50.
²¹Celeste, 13.
²²James Hennesey, American Catholics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 106.
²³Hennesey, 145.
²⁴Barbara Misner, "Highly Respectable and Accomplished Ladies": Catholic Women Religious in American 1790-1850 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 29.
²⁵Misner, 29.
²⁶Sister Aloysia to Page Putnam Miller, August 8, 1990.
²⁷Jay P. Dolan, The American Catholic Experience (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1985), 277.
²⁸Mary Owens, "Women in the Convent," in American Catholic Women: A Historical Exploration, Karen Kennelly, ed. (New York: McMillan Publishing Co., 1989), 22.
²⁹Karen Kennelly, "Ideals of American Womanhood," in American Catholic Women, 3.

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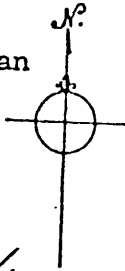
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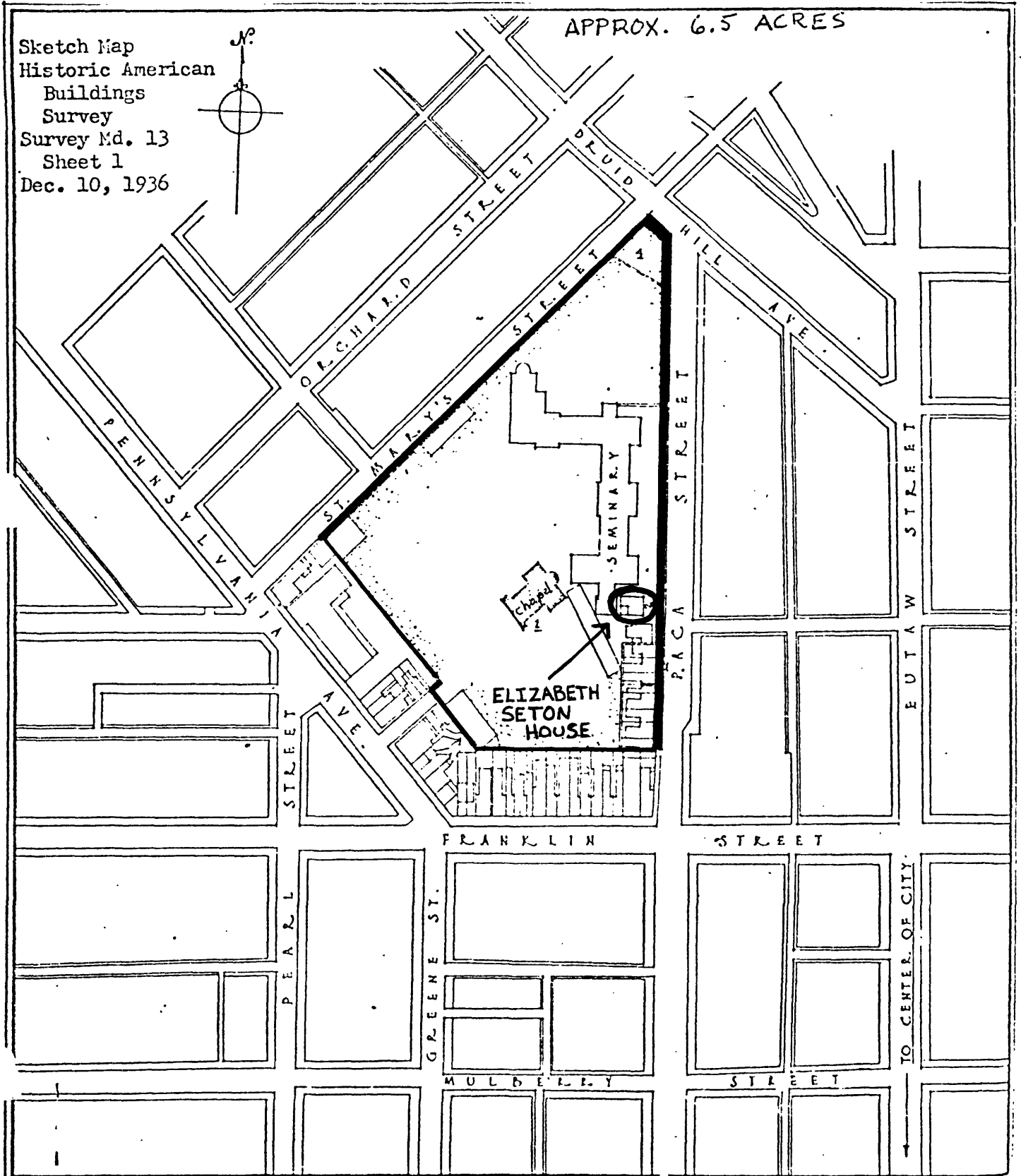
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Sketch Map
Historic American
Buildings
Survey
Survey Md. 13
Sheet 1
Dec. 10, 1936



APPROX. 6.5 ACRES



ELIZABETH
SETON
HOUSE

Chapel

SEMINARY

STREET

PEARL

GREENE ST.

FRANKLIN

MULBERRY

STREET

STREET

TO CENTER OF CITY

PENNSYLVANIA

ORCHARD STREET

ST. MARY'S

STREET

HILL AVE.

PAGA STREET

EUTAW STREET

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY SITE

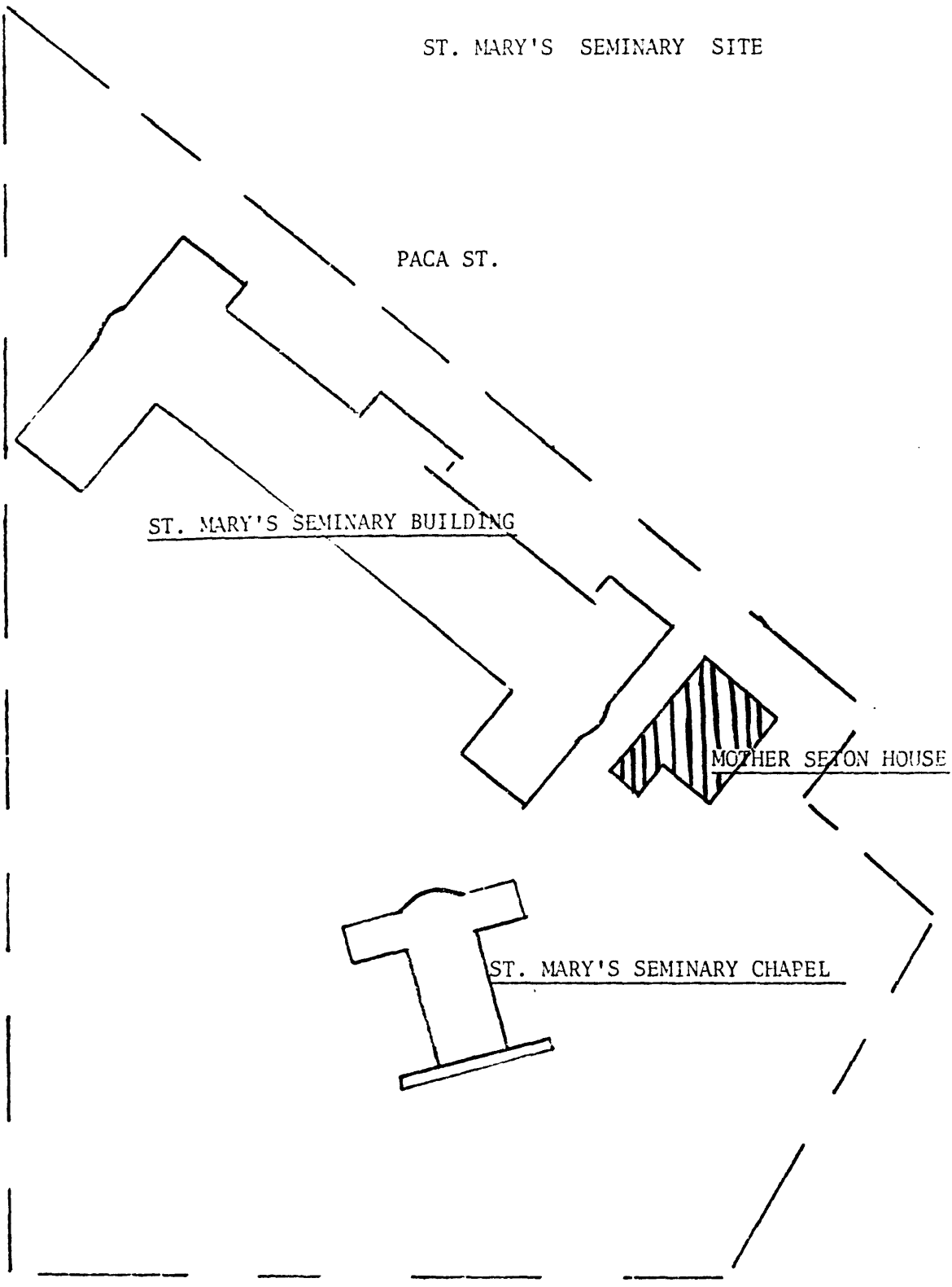
PACA ST.

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY BUILDING

MOTHER SETON HOUSE

ST. MARY'S SEMINARY CHAPEL

'S



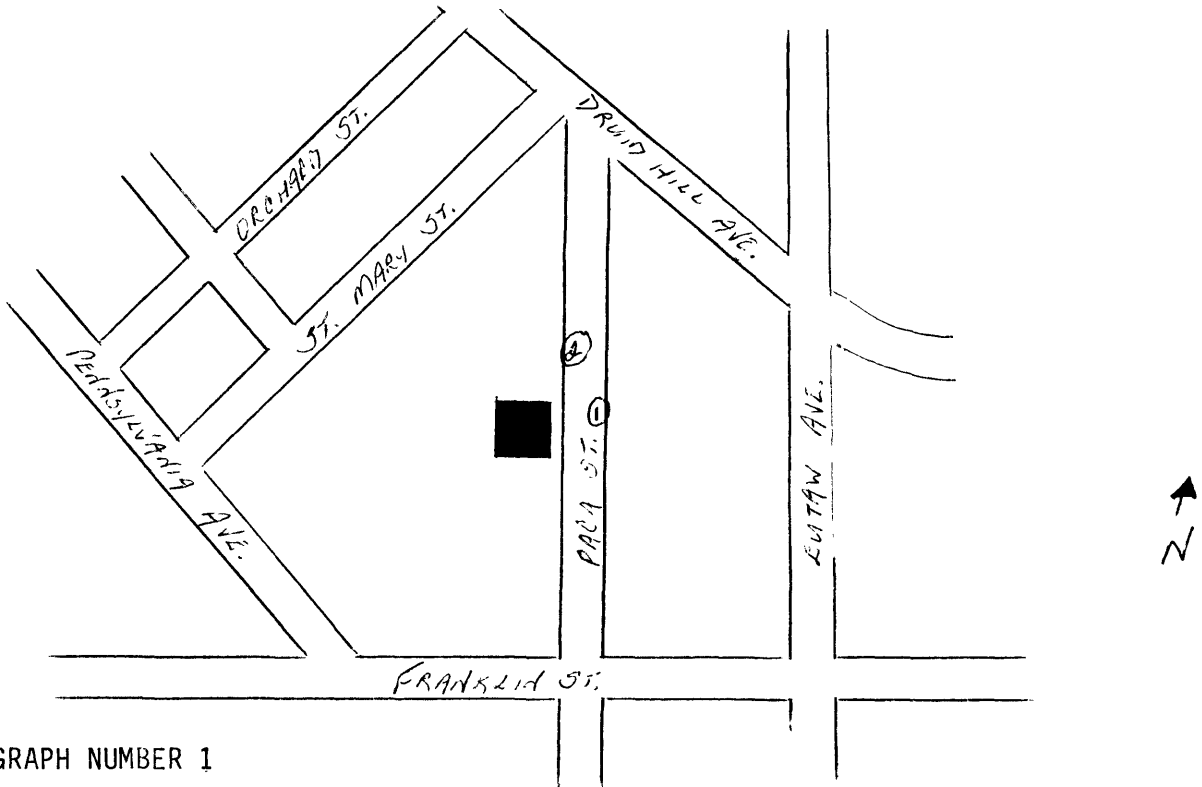
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Section number PHOTOGRAPHS

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PHOTOGRAPH NUMBER 1

- 1) Name of property: Seton House
- 2) City and State: Baltimore, Maryland
- 3) Name of Photographer: Vernon Horn
- 4) Date of Photograph: March 1991
- 5) Location of original negative: NCC, Washington, D.C.
- 6) Description of view: Facing west
- 7) Photograph number as keyed to accompanying sketch map: 1

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBER 2

- 1) Name of property: Seton House
- 2) City and State: Baltimore, Maryland
- 3) Name of Photographer: Vernon Horn
- 4) Date of Photograph: March 1991
- 5) Location of original negative: NCC, Washington, D.C.
- 6) Description of view: Facing southwest
- 7) Photograph number as keyed to accompanying sketch map: 2