Full Timeline of the Mansion

1829

1853

Samuel George built No. 11 West Mount Vernon Place, an elegant brick townhouse in a row of classical style houses on the south side of West Mount Vernon Place, a new neighborhood of townhouses surrounding the park squares that flank the Monument.

1872

John Work Garrett, President of the B&O Railroad for 30 years, bought No. 11 and gifted it to his son Robert and bride Mary Frick as a wedding present. Fully furnished, it was an elegant 10,000 square foot townhome in the most prestigious neighborhood in Baltimore.

1884

After his father’s death, Robert became President of the B&O. To entertain lavishly as expected of a railroad president, Robert and Mary purchased the adjacent townhome, No. 9, and hired fashionable architect Stanford White to create a grand mansion. White’s design for the mansion emphasized the Garrett’s wealth and power. The new brownstone façade, horizontal with an entryway that juts into the sidewalk, contrasts with the typical vertical brick townhouses flanking the square. The interior was embellished with elaborate details—coffered ceilings, mosaic floors, stained glass windows, painted friezes, oval pocket doors--executed by the finest craftsmen.

White’s design masterpiece is the Entrance Hall, with its Tiffany windows, intricately carved wood paneling and spiral stairway soaring three floors, crowned by a multi-hued Tiffany glass dome. The Garretts added objects sourced in Europe, including the Venetian chandelier in the Entrance Hall and, in the renovated dining room, the exuberantly carved cabinet and fireplace surround. During the renovations, the Garretts traveled extensively, collecting Old Master paintings and medieval tapestries to embellish the walls of their mansion.

1887

Robert resigned as B&O president after his health deteriorated. He and Mary embark on a European tour, hoping for his recovery. Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs is engaged as his personal physician.

1896

Robert Garrett, age 49, died. Stanford White’s renovations are completed. Mary, the undisputed leader of Baltimore society. continues to entertain at the mansion.

1902

Mary Frick Garrett married Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs in 1902. To house Dr. Jacobs’ extensive book collection, Mrs. Jacobs purchased No. 7 West Mount Vernon Place to add a library to her mansion. By this time, fashion had shifted from the exuberance of Stanford White to the more restrained elegance of Neo-Classical design. Architect John Russell Pope, a graduate of France’s Ecole des Beaux Artes, was selected to design this third section of the mansion.

He continued White’s brownstone façade, enlarging it to an impressive 100 feet. Pope redesigned and expanded White’s drawing room, decorating it in Neoclassical style enhanced by glittering gold leaf and suffused by light from the long windows. The library design harkened back to 18th Century English baronial architecture. Pope also created “The Long Gallery,” a multipurpose room boasting a stage at one end, skylights, painted ceiling panels, and walls clad in red silk. Here Mary hosted balls. displayed her art collection and entertained with organ concerts and other cultural events. Between the library and “The Long Gallery” is the Caen Stone Hall, emulating marble rooms then fashionable in Newport, RI. Pope’s signature stairway in located here, a broad marble stairway gracefully curving to the lower level.

Guests would descend the stairway to the supper room below the ballroom. This vast room, with its Neo-classical columns, Meissen chandeliers, mirrored walls, and musicians’ gallery, was the setting for sumptuous banquets for 80 guests.

1913

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When Mrs. Jacobs needed additional space to house her art collection, she purchased a fourth property, the adjacent home at No. 13. Stables at the rear of the mansion and the back part of No. 13 were demolished to create an art gallery that connected with the Long Gallery. The art gallery created an enclosure for the courtyard. Its centerpiece was a glass conservatory filled with plants and exotic birds surrounded by a garden, which offered lovely views from inside the mansion. Cost estimates for creating the mansion total $1.5 million.

1936

Mary Jacobs died, willing occupancy of the Mansion to Dr. Jacobs for life. Her sizable art collection was willed to the Baltimore Museum of Art, with the proviso that a new wing be constructed to house the collection. Other properties were willed to various charitable causes.

1939

Dr. Jacobs died.

1940

The Mansion and its contents were sold at a three-day public auction, with the proceeds going to designated charitable organizations. William Cook bought the Mansion for $36,000 for use as a funeral parlor but zoning laws prevented this use. The British Merchant Navy Club used the basement, installing a gym and showers.

1941

The Boumi Temple bought the Mansion from Mr. Cook for $55,000 to use as their clubhouse and for social events.

1958

1961

Baltimore City leased the vacant Mansion to the Engineers Club (Founded 1905).

1962

Baltimore City sold the Mansion to the Club, renamed The Engineering Society of Baltimore, Inc., for $155k. Since then, the organization and its members have spent over eight million dollars to restore and preserve the historic building. Its carefully restored rooms host myriad social, business, and cultural events, just as Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs envisioned a century and a half ago.

1992

The Garrett-Jacobs Mansion Endowment Fund, a charitable 501 (c)(3) community organization, is established to facilitate fundraising and restoration efforts.

1996

The Endowment Fund commissioned Kahn and Associates to create the Historic Structures Report and a Master Plan for the Mansion's restoration.

1998

A fundraising effort was initiated restore the façade of the Mansion. An exterior easement was granted to the Maryland Historical Trust to protect the building and to gain access to funds from the Trust.

2001

The kitchen located adjacent to the Dining Room was abandoned and a new kitchen constructed as a "room within a room" in the Small Gallery..

2003

The Mansion celebrated its 150th anniversary and the Endowment Fund launched a new capital campaign to fund projects included in the Master Plan.

2004

The Master Plan was reviewed and updated to include covering of the Courtyard. The Club purchased No.13 West Mount Vernon Place and subdivided the property to provide space for a new structure to contain an ADA- compliant elevator and restrooms, fire suppression systems, and emergency egress

2006

The first phase of the Master Plan which included the Courtyard was completed.

2007

The Drawing Room was the first room to receive historic restoration under the guidelines of the Master Plan.

2009-2012

The interior easement between The Engineers Club and the State of Maryland Historic Trust was completed. The Ballroom Restoration Project was begun; restorations of the stage, ceiling, wall cladding, floors, and woodwork were completed.

2013

The library restoration was completed.

2018

The Tower addition was completed, adding an ADA compliant elevator and restrooms, emergency egress, and modern fire suppression systems to the building.