

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Bagby Furniture Company Building

other names/site number Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory No. B-1011

### 2. Location

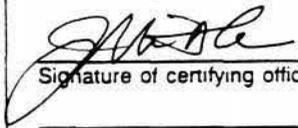
street & number 509 South Exeter Street  not for publication

city or town Baltimore  vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21202

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title

9-18-98  
Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: manufacturing site

COMMERCE/TRADE: distribution facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: industrial/warehouse building

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

\_\_\_\_\_

roof N/A

other N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance**

1902-1947

**Significant Dates**

1902, 1907

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

William Hugh Bagby

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Not known

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References Baltimore East, MD quad  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1, 8	3, 6, 2, 0, 0, 0	4, 3, 4, 9, 3, 9, 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Betty Bird

organization Betty Bird & Associates date April 1998

street & number 2607 24th Street, NW, Suite 3 telephone 202-588-9033  
202-588-9059 (fax)

city or town Washington, District of Columbia state N/A zip code 20008

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Skylar Development LLC

street & number 519 N. Charles Street telephone 410-332-1352

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21201

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Bagby Furniture Company Building is a 4 story, U-shaped, brick factory building comprised of three sections constructed between 1902 and 1907. Its site occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of Fleet and Exeter Streets in the Little Italy neighborhood of Baltimore. The Bagby Building has a shallow gable roof. Brick architectural detailing includes piers, segmental and jack arches above openings, a corbelled watertable, and a corbelled cornice. The building was modernized with new windows and 1st floor office space in 1950. A non-contributing concrete block addition was added to the northeastern portion of the building in 1962. Two small structures that housed the dry kiln and lumber storage are located along the eastern edge of the property. Because of numerous alterations, these two minor structures no longer retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the significance of the resource. Despite changes, however, the Bagby Furniture Company Building retains its early 20th century architectural character and possesses sufficient integrity to convey its historic associations.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Bagby Furniture Company Building, constructed from 1902 to 1907, occupies a site encompassing almost one third of a city block. The brick building, situated at the corner of Exeter and Fleet Streets in the Little Italy neighborhood of Baltimore, has a rectangular footprint with a 190 ft. frontage facing west onto Exeter and a 112 ft. frontage facing south onto Fleet. The north facade faces a taller 6 story brick building and its parking lot across a narrow alley. Low-scale late 20th century structures housing the Koldkiss Corporation are built up to the eastern property line of the Bagby Company site and abut the concrete block addition and secondary buildings on the eastern portion of the site. In 1962, a 2 story concrete block addition was constructed against the northeast portion of the Bagby Furniture Company Building. A 1 story hollow clay tile structure that housed the dry kiln adjoins the south wall of the concrete block addition. A 1 story dilapidated structure sheathed in corrugated metal, formerly used for lumber storage, is connected to the south wall of the dry kiln structure. A narrow loading area opens off Fleet Street and extends to the south wall of the 1962 concrete block addition between the Bagby Furniture Company Building and its outbuildings.

The Bagby Furniture Company Building, which was constructed in three stages from 1902 to 1907, has the appearance of a single, large building. The four-story brick structure has 9 bays along Exeter Street (west) and 7 bays along Fleet Street (south). The construction stages of the Bagby Building can be distinguished on the exterior by fire walls that divide the building into its three component sections. The three components form a U-shaped mass with the center of the U on the center of the east side of the building. The interior of the U is occupied by a 1-1/2 story boiler house, creating the Bagby Furniture Company Building's rectangular footprint. The Bagby Company denoted the three components of the building as "Building A," "Building B," and "Building C." On the south, Building A (1902) at the corner of Fleet and Exeter is 4 bays (west) by 7 bays (south) wide. On the north, Building C (1907) extends 3 bays south from the alley. Building B (1902) is at the center of the structure. Shallower than Building A and Building C, Building B provides the center notch resulting in the U shaped, 4-story mass that accommodates the 1-1/2 story boiler house.

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The Bagby Furniture Company Building features a brick watertable at the basement level and has a shallow gable roof with gables situated on the north and south facades. The watertable on Building A is corbelled. Piers demarcating bays extend up from the watertable to the corbelled brick cornice. Windows within graduated openings under segmental arches are placed within the recessed wall plane between the piers. Basement windows in Building A are surmounted by jack arches. Bays vary in width, housing one to three openings. A large ca. 1970s painted ribbon sign incorporates "Bagby Furniture" within a rainbow band extending around the south and west facades of the building between the 3rd and 4th floor level. A smaller, older black and white sign is visible on the east wall of Building C between the 3rd and 4th floors. A recent, back-lit plastic sign projects over the pedestrian entry at the center of the west facade.

A 1-1/2 story brick boiler house and a narrow corridor leading to Building B occupy the center of the U on the east side of the Bagby Building. The floor level of the boiler house is approximately 5 ft. below grade. The boiler house is topped with a hipped roof of corrugated tin supported by metal trusses. The corridor leading into Building B was formed by roofing over the space between the boiler house and Building A and constructing a ramp between the two sections. A large stack set against the south wall of Building C rises from the boiler house.

Loading entrances to the building predominate over pedestrian entry. A single door at the north end of Building A on Exeter Street (west) provides the only pedestrian entrance from the street. This entrance has a frame, pseudo-Gibbs surround that dates to the latter half of the 20th century. A second pedestrian entrance described in the paragraph above is located on the east facade of Building B, south of the boiler house. (A similar entrance to the east facade of Building C can be found within the 1962 concrete block addition.) There is a garage entrance at the north end of the west facade in Building C, a loading bay on the north facade of Building C, a loading bay at the center of the south facade of Building A, and a loading bay in the east facade of Building A. The loading bay on the south facade of Building A opens into a freight elevator. An additional loading bay on the east facade of Building B and a narrow pedestrian entry on its west facade have been infilled with brick. There is an opening with a recent overhead garage door at grade level on the east wall of the boiler house.

Most of the windows on the west and south street facades have been removed and window openings infilled with recent aluminum windows. Openings on the upper floors have been lowered by plastic inserts above stock one-over-one aluminum windows. Glass block has been used to infill 1st floor windows. Many 12-over-12 wood windows remain on the north and east secondary facades; smaller windows on the 4th floor have 8-over-8 sash. Most of the window openings on the secondary facades are sealed with metal fire shutters.

The interior of the Bagby Furniture Company Building consists of open plan space adapted to house furniture retailing and office space. Brick fire walls separate the three component sections of the building. Openings with self-closing metal fire doors connect these three sections. The visible structural system includes wood piers supporting wood floor beams and roof joists. Exterior door frames for the two pedestrian entrances at the rear (east) sides of Buildings A and C exhibit the only decorative trim in the building. Each has an entablature with bead mold in the door frame between the door and the transom. Two stairs and two freight elevators provide vertical circulation. The freight elevators are located against the center of the south walls of Building A and Building C. One stair, which is recent in structure and finish, is located against the north wall of Building A. A

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second utilitarian wood service stair is located against the west wall of Building C. Fire egress is provided by a fire-escape located on the east facade of Building A.

Other than the exposed structural system, which dates to the building's construction in the early 20th century, most of the finishes and partitions date to the second half of the 20th century. Recent finishes are concentrated in Building A and Building B. A vestibule area and office space were installed in the southwest portion of the 1st floor of Building A in 1950. The 2nd and 3rd floors of Building A and Building B have recent finishes and dropped ceilings in areas that were furniture show rooms. Many columns in showroom floors have been encased within other materials. The interior of the boiler house is bisected by a brick wall running north-south. The boiler and incinerator were situated in the eastern half of the structure, which consists of an open 1-1/2 story space. The western half of the boiler house is divided into two stories with the floor level of the lower story below grade and the floor level of the upper story at the level of Building B.

The 1962 concrete block addition is an ell-shaped, 2-story structure attached to the east wall of Building C. The exterior of the east wall of Building C functions as the west interior wall of this addition. The Bagby Furniture Company Building retains its historic integrity despite this non-contributing addition. Because the east wall of the Bagby Furniture Company Building survives and because the 1962 addition is lower than the main building and situated on the interior of the city block, the effect of the addition on the main building is minimized. Two one story structures that housed the former dry kiln and lumber shed extend south from the 1962 addition along the eastern edge of the property. While kiln and lumber storage structures have been present at this location since the early 20th century, it is not known whether these particular structures, which incorporate a significant amount of mid-20th century fabric, are replacements for earlier structures. A loading dock against the west wall of the former dry kiln has been enclosed with corrugated metal to provide a passage connecting the concrete block addition with the kiln and the lumber shed. This enclosed passage was constructed after the date of the 1951 Sanborn Map.

Both the former dry kiln and lumber shed have been so heavily altered over time that they no longer retain their integrity. Their setting, feeling, and association vanished when the adjacent lumber yards were abandoned and the railroad tracks removed. The former lumber shed structure, which rests on deteriorated concrete piers, has corrugated metal walls that have been damaged by trucks and are peeling away from the facade. It is likely that these walls date to the 1950s and were installed when the loading dock against the former dry kiln was enclosed with similar corrugated metal walls. While the former lumber shed retains integrity of location and massing, it has lost integrity of setting, materials, feeling, and association and no longer contributes to the significance of the Bagby Furniture Company Building.

The former three-compartment dry kiln has been encased within recent construction and its west wall has been effectively removed. The taller Koldkiss building abutting the kiln to the east obscures the east exterior wall; the south wall is hidden within the former lumber shed and the north wall is now within the 1962 addition. The dry kiln has three compartments that now open to the enclosed passage that connects the 1962 addition with the former lumber shed. These compartments are separated by masonry walls. Sliding doors on all three compartments, which formed the west wall of the former dry kiln, are gone. The remaining walls of the former dry kiln are hollow clay tile, brick, and concrete. The flat roof is concrete. The concrete is deteriorating and spalled.

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Reinforcing bars are visible on the interior of the ceiling. The upper center portion of the side (east-west) walls of the compartments have been patched with brick. No visible evidence of the character-defining mechanical system of this building, including provisions for ventilation, remains. (The three existing stacks, which appear to be recent, would have been insufficient to vent operable kilns. *The Air Seasoning and Kiln Drying of Wood* shows ranks of chimney stacks venting compartment kilns similar to this building.) The exterior of the former dry kiln is no longer visible; the structure retains only integrity of location and no longer contributes to the significance of the Baghy Furniture Company Building.

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bagby Furniture Company Building, constructed between 1902-1907, represents a locally significant component of Baltimore's furniture industry. The Bagby Furniture Company, which operated from 1879 to 1990, embodied adaptive strategies that enabled a 19th century furniture manufacturing concern to evolve and continue in the furniture business through the 20th century. The Bagby Building meets National Register Criterion A because of its association with the evolution of Baltimore's furniture industry. It also meets National Register Criterion B because of its association with William Hugh Bagby, a major figure in the wholesale furniture business. The period of significance of the Bagby Furniture Company Building is 1902 to 1947, the year William Hugh Bagby was named "Man of the Decade" by the National Wholesale Furniture Association. The four story Bagby Furniture Company Building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic association despite a 1962 concrete block addition and the loss of integrity of remaining minor structures on the site.

### HISTORY

Charles T. Bagby and A.D. Rivers founded the firm of Bagby & Rivers in 1879. Bagby & Rivers were manufacturers and wholesalers who shipped their merchandise to southern and mid-Atlantic states. Around 1896 Charles T. Bagby and his associates bought out A.D. Rivers and in 1897 the concern was incorporated as the Bagby Furniture Company.<sup>1</sup> The company was originally located at 624-632 West Pratt Street. From 1897 until 1902 it was situated at the corner of Biddle and Chester Streets, moving to its present location in 1902. Showrooms were located at 108 South Eutaw. The Bagby Furniture Company's 1902-1907 plant on Exeter Street, which had 73,000 sq. ft. of floor space, was designed specifically for furniture manufacture. When Charles T. Bagby decided to sell the company in 1931, William Hugh Bagby, a distant cousin, purchased it and consolidated it with his own plant in Baltimore.<sup>2</sup> The company remained in operation until 1990.

The history of furniture manufacturing in Baltimore during the 19th and early 20th century provides the historic context for the Bagby Furniture Company and its association with Baltimore's history. Furniture manufacturing was an important component of Baltimore's 19th and early 20th century industrial and mercantile economy. Furniture manufacture developed out of Baltimore's strong 18th and early 19th century craft tradition in cabinet-making enhanced by the advantages Baltimore's harbor and railroads offered for supply and distribution. While not as well known or well studied as Baltimore's canning or clothing industries, furniture manufacture constituted an important element of Baltimore's diverse industrial base.

The transition from the craft of cabinet making to the industry of furniture manufacture was fueled by the advent of steam powered machinery in the 1840s and the concurrent rise of retail furniture stores. Both developments spurred the growth of furniture wholesalers.<sup>3</sup> By the late 19th century, the quantity of southern lumber coming through the port made Baltimore a major center for furniture manufacturing.<sup>4</sup> While sugar refining, tanning, and

<sup>1</sup>Isidore Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, p. 206 and "W. Hugh Bagby Now Heads Old Furniture Concern."

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Wm. Hugh Bagby, Jr., January 17, 1997 and "W. Hugh Bagby Now Heads Old Furniture Concern."

<sup>3</sup>Gregory Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland 1740-1940*, p. 206.

<sup>4</sup>Dennis Zembala, ed., *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway*, p. 32.

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shoe manufacture declined after the Civil War, furniture manufacturing and transshipment of lumber prospered.<sup>5</sup> During the 19th century Baltimore's Horstmeier Lumber Company spearheaded the distribution of southern pine throughout the United States. This cheap, durable wood transformed the housing industry and made Baltimore, with its numerous sawmills, woodworking plants, and lumber yards, a national center for lumber trade.<sup>6</sup>

The 1882 *City of Baltimore: A Descriptive Review of the Manufacturing and Mercantile Industries* considered furniture-making one of Baltimore's 19 principal industries.<sup>7</sup> The 1870 census listed 64 furniture operations employing 815 workers producing \$1,145,740. By 1880 there were 71 manufacturers employing over 1000 workers producing goods worth \$1,791,134. This total rose to 95 concerns manufacturing products worth \$2,250,000 in 1884.<sup>8</sup>

During the period from 1840 to 1890, furniture manufacturers became increasingly specialized in the goods they produced and the markets they addressed. As furniture became room-specific and function-specific, firms concentrated on particular types of furniture or furniture for distinct markets, like offices or hotels. The proliferation of cheaper, mass-produced goods led many older firms to separate themselves from their means of production. High end operations, like the Potthast Company, emphasized hand craft and workmanship to distinguish themselves from their competitors.<sup>9</sup> By 1890, consolidation and specialization within the industry had taken its toll on the number of establishments that survived in Baltimore. While there were 60 furniture manufacturers listed in the 1887-88 city directory, there were only 33 listed in 1900.<sup>10</sup>

The Bagby Furniture Company insured its survival during this decline by careful attention to the business of furniture manufacture and distribution. While other furniture tradesmen conceived of themselves as an extension of an earlier craft ideal, the Bagby Company carved out a niche based on value, selection, and efficiency. The Bagby Furniture Company manufactured high quality "low and medium priced furniture." "No better goods of this class are made in this territory."<sup>11</sup> The company, which was noted for its "innovative use of steam machinery,"<sup>12</sup> sold

<sup>5</sup>Robert Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980*, p. 314.

<sup>6</sup>Zembala, ed., *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway*, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Gregory Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland 1740-1940*, pp. 205 and 215. The other 19 industries included boots and shoes, bread and crackers, carpentry, cigars, men's clothing, women's clothing, confectionery, fertilizers, flour and grist mill products, canned and preserved produce, iron and steel, iron casting, machinery, marble and stonework, meat packing, printing and publishing, saddlery and harness-making, shirts, sugar refining, and tobacco and snuff.

<sup>8</sup>*Half-Century's Progress of the City of Baltimore*, p. 39. By comparison, the value of women's clothing produced in Baltimore in 1884 was \$2,000,000.

<sup>9</sup>Gregory Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup>Gregory Weidman, *Furniture in Maryland*, p. 213. In addition to the growth of larger firms, Weidman attributes this decline to increased competition from other parts of the country as well as a stylistic trend toward eclecticism in interior design. This decline continued through the early 20th century. The 1930 city directory lists only 26 furniture manufacturers.

<sup>11</sup>Isidore Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, p. 206.

<sup>12</sup>Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form for the Bagby Company, p. 8.1.

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their goods through catalogues and salesmen concentrating on eastern seaboard and southern states.<sup>13</sup> Among their other clients, the company sold to general stores in small towns.<sup>14</sup>

The Bagby & Rivers entry in *Illustrated Baltimore: The Monumental City*, published in 1890, demonstrates how the company presented itself. The descriptions set forth by other furniture manufacturers featured in this volume boasted sumptuous fabrics and hardwoods and incorporated phrases like "rarest design and materials," "tasteful design and artistic workmanship," "rare elegance and tasteful composition," "all hand-made," "made to order," and "elaborately carved."<sup>15</sup> The Bagby & Rivers Company's market-driven self-description provides a vivid contrast:

This concern is one of the largest establishments of the kind in the city, and its productions are in steady and increasing demand in the trade all over the United States, owing to the uniformly high standard at which the same are maintained. They are manufacturers of popular furniture of almost every description, besides mattresses and chairs, and turn out a superior class of work, the productions being, in their respective grades, unsurpassed for general excellence by any on the market. This enterprising and flourishing firm was established about eight years ago, and from its inception the venture has proved a most unequivocal success. The premises occupied as factory, etc., comprise four buildings, fronting 150 feet on Pratt Street, and extending 180 feet through to King Street, [Bagby's location prior to Fleet and Exeter] and are supplied with ample steam power and completely equipped with the latest improved machinery, etc. while employment is furnished to about one hundred hands. A very large and complete assortment is constantly carried in stock to meet the requirements of the trade. Messrs. Charles T. Bagby and Arthur D. Rivers . . . are men of energy and enterprise, thoroughly conversant with the wants of the trade.<sup>16</sup>

In 1895, Bagby & Rivers were listed in bold under Furniture Manufacturers in Polk's City Directory. Their listing noted "furniture, chair, and mattress manufacturers." The Bagby Company's 1906 catalogue featured oak furniture dominated by bedroom suites. They also sold iron beds, chairs, tables, office furniture, couches, and parlor suites. By 1910, the Bagby Furniture Company listed its specialties as "chamber suits, hall racks, wardrobes, chairs, dining room and kitchen furniture, etc."<sup>17</sup> Their 1923 catalogue illustrates how the Bagby Furniture Company pursued a value-driven commercial market:

Our forty-three years experience as makers of furniture has given us the unquestionable reputation of making and selling VALUES in furniture that can't be beat. . . . Each piece is built with the idea that it must bear out in quality the reputation that Bagby Furniture Company enjoys. . . . these pieces will tone up any store's line of low-priced oak goods. . . . The low price makes the sale easy -- and the quality makes the customer satisfied.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup>W. Hugh Bagby Now Heads Old Furniture Concern" and Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, p. 206.

<sup>14</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1988.

<sup>15</sup>*Illustrated Baltimore*, pp. 117, 130, 162,

<sup>16</sup>*Illustrated Baltimore*, p. 146.

<sup>17</sup>Isidore Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, p. 206.

<sup>18</sup>1923 Bagby Furniture Company Catalogue.

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Both the 1906 and the 1923 catalogue emphasize that the Bagby Company shipped all of their goods from Baltimore, "not from some far distant point."<sup>19</sup>

Charles T. Bagby (1860-1943) was born in King and Queen County, Virginia and came to Baltimore at the age of 16, graduating from the night school at Eaton & Burnett Business College.<sup>20</sup> After he began to suffer from ulcers and other stress-related health problems, he retained ownership of the company but withdrew from active participation to become an attorney. Charles T. Bagby graduated from the University of Virginia law school and by 1902 joined the practice of his younger brother Alfred Bagby, Jr. (1866-1948) in the law firm of Bagby and Bagby.<sup>21</sup> Although Charles T. Bagby's son, Charles T. Bagby, Jr., nominally served as vice president and manager of the Bagby Furniture Company through the early 1930s, the company was run by general manager C. Marion Dodson.<sup>22</sup>

Location played a major role in the success of the company, giving the company an advantage over its competitors. By moving to Fells Point in 1902, the Bagby Furniture Company survived the Baltimore Fire of 1904, which destroyed 70 blocks in the downtown area. The Bagby Furniture Company's new plant in Fells Point was ideally suited for efficiency of supply and distribution. In 1896, prior to construction of the present building, the 11 blocks bounded by Jones Falls on the east, the harbor on the south, Central Avenue on the west, and Eastern Avenue on the north consisted almost entirely of lumber yards surrounding the Pennsylvania Railroad engine house and freight yard.<sup>23</sup> The Bagby Furniture Company constructed their new building in the midst of this lumber distribution center.

Because of the shallow depth of the Inner Harbor, Fells Point served as Baltimore's deep draft port for larger vessels. Until World War II, lumber schooners brought their wares into the Lancaster Street wharf, two blocks south of the Bagby Furniture Company's plant. The Pennsylvania Railroad freight yard was across Fleet Street from the new Bagby Furniture Company Building and lumber piers were two blocks south. (Henry James & Co., the predecessor of the Horstmeier Lumber Company, was located two blocks south of the building.) Furniture could be shipped out from deep water piers in Fells Point, where Lykes and Southern Pacific operated intracoastal freight shipment from 1930 until World War II.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup>1923 Bagby Furniture Company Catalogue, pp. 28-29.

<sup>20</sup>Obituary, *Evening Sun*, April 6, 1943.

<sup>21</sup>Obituary for Charles T. Bagby and Alfred Bagby, Jr., *Evening Sun*, July 7, 1948 and 1902 City Directory. Alfred Bagby, Jr. was a professor of testamentary law at the University of Maryland Law School and author of a text on Maryland law of Executors and Administrators. Another brother, George Poindexter Bagby, was president of the Western Maryland Railroad (*Evening Sun*, June 9, 1932).

<sup>22</sup>Obituary for Charles T. Bagby, Jr. *Sun*, April 2, 1947. Family obituaries indicate that one son, Dr. English Bagby, was a doctor teaching at the University of North Carolina. Charles T. Bagby, Jr. became an auditor for the U.S. Tariff Commission and later chief accounting officer for Baltimore's Public Improvement Commission. (*Evening Sun*, June 9, 1932.) Interview with Wm. Hugh Bagby, Jr., January 17, 1997.

<sup>23</sup>Bromley Atlas of Baltimore, 1896.

<sup>24</sup>Robert C. Keith, *Baltimore Harbor*, pp. 119-121.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

In 1918 William Hugh Bagby (1896-1988), a distant cousin of Charles T. Bagby, moved to Baltimore from Virginia after graduating from the University of Richmond.<sup>25</sup> Working as a commission salesman for the Bagby Furniture Company from 1918 to 1925, he became so successful that his income soon exceeded that of Marion Dodson, the general manager. Dodson responded by reducing Bagby's territory and commissions. Exasperated by the situation, William Hugh Bagby left the company in 1925 and started another concern, Wm. Hugh Bagby and Company, with his brother R. Harwood Bagby. When Charles T. Bagby decided to sell the Bagby Furniture Company in 1931, William Hugh Bagby purchased it and consolidated it with his own operation. He retained Dodson as a traveling salesman. R. Harwood Bagby became vice president and general sales manager, a position he held until 1965, when he became president and chief executive.<sup>26</sup>

Under William Hugh Bagby, the Bagby Furniture Company survived the depression by cutting back on its local manufacturing and gradually making the transition from furniture manufacture to wholesale furniture distribution. William Hugh Bagby insured the survival of the company by capitalizing on the advantages of Baltimore's transportation network rather than competing against cheaper labor costs in the growing North Carolina manufacturing centers. By 1930 there were only 26 furniture manufacturers listed in the Baltimore City Directory, continuing the gradual decline Gregory Weidman traced in the late 19th century. The Bagby Company stopped making bedroom furniture and set up manufacturers in the south, where labor costs were cheaper. They continued to make dining room furniture and boudoir or "cricket" chairs by assembling parts manufactured elsewhere. In effect, the Bagby Company became a noted early proponent of the technology of pre-fabrication.<sup>27</sup> The Bagby Company shipped furniture by rail throughout the east coast. It served as a distributor for other companies like Thomasville (code no. 21C in Bagby catalogues) and for retail furniture stores. By the 1940s they discontinued manufacturing to concentrate on wholesale distribution, including high end lines for interior designers.<sup>28</sup> At that time they were one of the largest furniture distributors in the country and the largest customer of Simmons Bedding.<sup>29</sup> The company moved into retailing in the mid-1980s.<sup>30</sup> Like many other furniture retailers, they were unable to compete with furniture sold directly from the same manufacturers that they carried, particularly since customers could avoid state sales tax on out-of-state purchases.<sup>31</sup> Faced with this difficult environment, the Bagby Furniture Company closed the business in 1990.

<sup>25</sup>"Services set for William Bagby of furniture firm," *Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 1988.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Wm. Hugh Bagby, Jr., January 17, 1997; "W. Hugh Bagby Now Heads Old Furniture Concern;" Obituary for R. Harwood Bagby, *Sun*, July 1, 1979; "W.H. Bagby Heads Nat'l Furniture Group," *Evening Sun*, August 11, 1945.

<sup>27</sup>Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form, p. 8.1.

<sup>28</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1988.

<sup>29</sup>Interviews with Wm. Hugh Bagby, Jr., December 1996 and January 17, 1997. The Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form for the Bagby Furniture Company states that "In their heyday, they were one of the nation's largest furniture dealers."

<sup>30</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1988.

<sup>31</sup>*Baltimore Sun*, April 8, 1988. While Maryland residents were supposed to pay a tax when the furniture was shipped into the state, there was no enforcement mechanism. Transient roadside operators also undercut legitimate furniture retailers by avoiding state taxes and licensing fees.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Both William Hugh Bagby and R. Harwood Bagby were active in community and industry affairs. William Hugh Bagby was chairman of the Baltimore Bedding and Furniture Association in the early 1930s.<sup>32</sup> He was chairman of the Industry Advisory Committee for furniture wholesaling for the federal Office of Price Administration. In 1945, he became president of the National Wholesale Furniture Association, a group he had previously served as vice president.<sup>33</sup> The organization named him "Man of the Decade" in 1947.<sup>34</sup> He served on the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners and was director of a local savings and loan and founder of the Maryland Home Furnishings Association. A trustee of the University of Richmond, he also supported the Seamen's YMCA close to the factory.<sup>35</sup> R. Harwood Bagby served as president of the National Wholesale Furniture Association in 1960 and in 1961 and was also named its "Man of the Year."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup>"Bedding and Furniture Body Moves to Help Employment." The Association spearheaded a goodwill campaign to urge Baltimore merchants to buy local products to keep Baltimoreans employed during the Depression.

<sup>33</sup>"W.H. Bagby Heads Nat'l Furniture Group," *Evening Sun*, August 11, 1945.

<sup>34</sup>"Services set for William Bagby of furniture firm," *Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 1988.

<sup>35</sup>"60 years with furniture firm adds up to large sign for Bagby." The newspaper article was prompted by a sign employees had posted on the 2nd floor of a neighboring building. Wm. Hugh Bagby, then a vigorous 82, climbed a ladder to be photographed with the sign; "Services set for William Bagby of furniture firm," and obituary notice, *Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 1988.

<sup>36</sup>Obituary for R. Harwood Bagby.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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"Services set for William Bagby of furniture firm," *Baltimore Sun*, April 24, 1988.

"60 years with furniture firm adds up to large sign for Bagby." *Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 1978.

"W. Hugh Bagby Now Heads Old Furniture Concern." Photocopy of magazine article in Bagby Company vertical file, Maryland Room, EPFL, n.d., but probably ca. 1932.

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B-1011

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

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## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

Ward 3, Section 6, Block 1441, Lot 7/8

### Boundary Justification

The verbal boundary description corresponds with the legal description of the Baltimore City block and lot on which the Baghy Furniture Company Building is located.

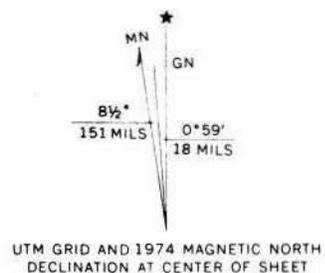
B-1011

BAGBY  
FURNITURE  
CO. BLDG.  
BALTIMORE  
CITY, MD  
E-362000-  
4349390



(RELAY)  
5862 11 NW

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and City of Baltimore  
 Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods. Aerial photographs taken 1943. Field checked 1944  
 Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1953  
 Hydrography compiled from USC&GS Chart 545 (1951)  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Revisions shown in purple compiled by Geological Survey from





B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD  
APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM SW SHOWING W & S FACADES  
1 OF 10

5022-1 706726 P049



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO, BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM SE SHOWING CONTEXT AND S & E FACADES

2 OF 10

S022 -1 T00925 P045



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM NE SHOWING CONTEXT & E & N FACADES

3 OF 10

S022 -1 T00731-P046



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BITTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM NE SHOWING N WALL & TOP OF E WALL OF BAGBY BLDG  
& 1962 ADDITION

4 OF 10

S092 -1 100593 P047:



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

EAST WALL OF BAGBY BLDG, S WALL OF 1962 ADDITION FROM S

5 OF 10

100403 P054



B-1011  
BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

E WALL OF BAGBY BLDG, W WALL OF DRY KILN & LUMBER SHED FROM N

6 OF 10

S022 +1 T00497 P078



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

DETAIL OF BRICKWORK AT CORNICE OF WEST FACADE

7 OF 10

9022 +1 100465 P077



B-1011  
BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD  
BETTY BIRD  
APRIL 1998  
MD SHPO

INTERIOR = 1ST FLOOR, BUILDING A, VIEW FROM SE SHOWING N WALL OF BLDG A  
3 OF 10

S022 +1 T00491 P001



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

INTERIOR: 3RD FLOOR, BLDG B, VIEW FROM NW SHOWING E & S WALLS OF  
BLDG B

9 OF 10

S022NOR T00402 P057



B-1011

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

BETTY BIRD

APRIL 1998

MD SHPO

INTERIOR: PASSAGE BETWEEN BLDG A & BOILER HOUSE SHOWING DOOR WITH  
DECORATIVE TRANSOM

10 OF 10

0808 146001.2+ 2208

**BAGBY FURNITURE COMPANY BUILDING**  
**509 South Exeter Street**  
**Baltimore, Maryland**  
**B-1011**

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

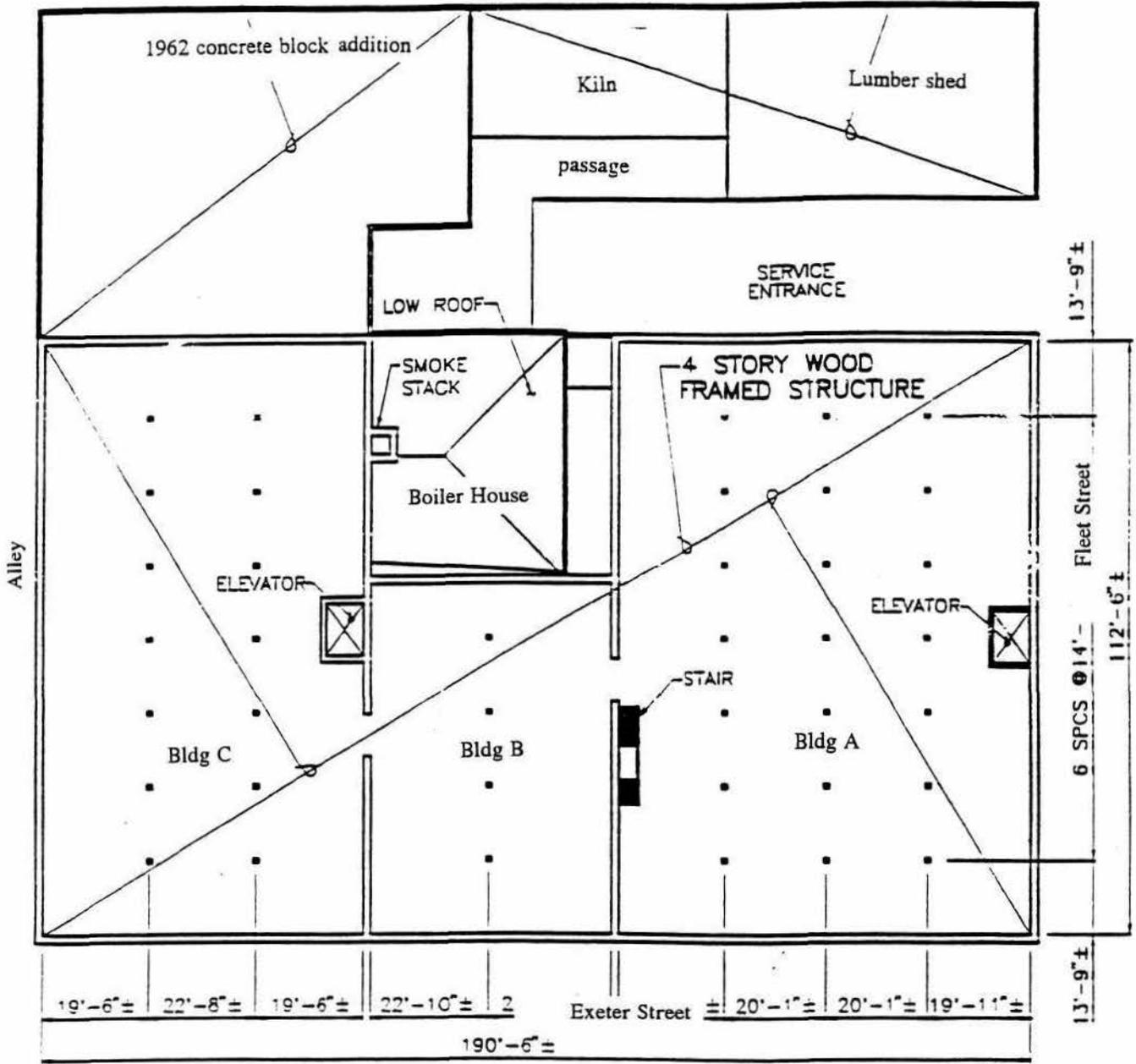
Geographic Organization:	Piedmont
Chronological/Development Period(s):	Industrial/Urban Dominance Modern Period
Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):	Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
Resource Type:	
Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Urban
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):	Furniture Manufacture and Distribution
Known Design Source:	None

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. BLDG

SITE PLAN

1 STORY KILN/METAL SHED -

Koldkiss building



# BUILDING FLOOR PLAN



WHITNEY  
BAILEY  
COX  
MAGNANI

CONSULTING  
ENGINEERS  
848 Farmount Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
410-512-4500

B-1011

Jmg

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

(509-21 South Exeter Street)

Property/District Name: Bagby Furniture Company Survey Number: B-1011

Project: Bagby Building Rehabilitation (Apartments) Agency: F/HUD

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)  
Located at 509-21 South Exeter Street, Baltimore, the Bagby Furniture Company is a four story brick building which depicts a U-shaped configuration in three distinct sections. Measuring nine bays by seven bays, the building is ornamented with brick pilasters and a corbeled cornice. Constructed in 1901, the building provided a new warehouse for the Bagby Furniture Company. English born architect Alfred Mason designed the building. The furniture company building is typical of late 19th/early 20th century factory architecture. It does not appear to embody distinctive characteristics of type, period or method of construction to be individually eligible. The building's surrounding environment includes a lot of modern construction, negating the possibility of a historic district. CHAP determined that the building was not eligible for the National Register; the Trust concurred.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: with this form & in compliance file

Prepared by: CHAP

L. Bowlin & Jo Ellen Freese October 29, 1992  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

Program concurrence:  yes  no  not applicable  
R. Andrews 11-25-94  
Reviewer, NR program Date

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (  prehistoric  historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: building

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): industrial/ warehouse

Known Design Source: Alfred Mason

## Bagby Furniture Company

The Bagby Furniture Company, organized in 1879, was originally known as "Bagby & Rivers", manufacturing and wholesalers. Although a wholesale company, the first factory and warehouse building was located on Clay Street, in the heart of the retail district. It soon moved to 626-634 West Pratt Street, where the firm employed about 100 workers and produced an annual product of over \$200,000.

In 1897 Charles T. Bagby purchased the interest of Mr. Rivers and the name changed to the Bagby Furniture Company. From 1897 to 1902 the company was located at the corner of Biddle and Chester Streets. In 1901 the Bagby Furniture Company bought four lots at the corner of Caton Avenue (now Fleet Street) and Exeter Street from the American Ice Company of New Jersey for \$12,500 and commissioned architect Alfred Mason to design a new factory building. In 1902 the Bagby firm built and moved into the 73,000 square foot, four-story, brick factory and warehouse building. The factory was equipped with modern machinery and had its own lumber yard and dry kiln connected with the plant.

In its heyday the Bagby Company made all types of furniture and specialized in moderately and low-priced oak bedroom suits which they sold through their catalog, traveling salesmen and retail store at 108 South Eutaw Street. Their sales extended throughout the southern and eastern portions of the United States.

The Bagby Furniture Company building is composed of three distinct but connected sections which form a U-shaped configuration. The west facade has nine bays, each separated by a brick pilaster. Each bay has two segmental arched windows with sandstone sills and brick lintels. Above the uppermost windows is a double corbled brick course and a triple corbled brick cornice. Most of the original 12 over 12 windows have been replaced with one over one windows with infill panels. The basement windows are small casement windows. The second north bay has been altered with the installation of a loading door and the sixth north bay has been altered with the installation of a new entrance door. The south facade is similar to the west facade although it has seven bays, four bays with two windows and three bays with one window, and the roof line is a brick gabled parapet. The east facade is also similar to the west facade although it forms a U-shape whose open courtyard is occupied by a one-story structure which originally housed a steam engine and boiler. The smokestack remains as do the iron shutters on the windows of the east facade.

The Bagby Furniture Company Building is typical of late 19th century factory architecture. However in the mid-twentieth century much of the interior space was converted to show rooms and used to display rather than manufacture the furniture line. The Bagby Furniture Company is no longer in business and the interior shows no evidence of the former manufacturing use.

Bagby Furniture Company, cont'd.

Page Two

To reiterate from Kathleen Kotarba's letter of October 16, 1992, we do not believe that the Bagby Furniture Company building meets National Register eligibility standards because we do not believe that the building's architecture or its history would meet standards for individual listing and we feel that the surrounding area lacks the characteristics of an historic district. Although the building is in the vicinity of Little Italy we do not believe that the Bagby Furniture Company was functionally related to the Little Italy community. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century the area historically considered Little Italy was already a densely populated neighborhood of rowhouse buildings. Therefore it is most likely that the residents of Little Italy were employed within their community prior to the arrival of the Bagby Furniture Company. It is also likely that many of the employees from the factory on the corner of Biddle and Chester Streets remained when the factory moved approximately two miles southwest to its location at Exeter and Fleet Streets.

CITY OF BALTIMORE

KURT L. SCHMOKE, Mayor



COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Charles L. Benton, Jr. Building  
Suite 1037, 417 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

*Called left message 10/22/92 B-1011*

RECEIVED

OCT 20 1992

October 16, 1992

Ms. Jo Ellen Freese  
Administrator Review & Compliance  
Division of Historical and Cultural Programs  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023

RE: Bagby Furniture Company

Dear Jo Ellen:

Janet Blutstein and I have conducted a preliminary survey of the Bagby Furniture Company, located at 509-21 South Exeter Street in Baltimore City. We have met at the site with Patrick Turner (Henrietta Corporation) and Glen Charlow (Manekin Corporation), and we are now familiar with the structure's surroundings and its details. In the interest of expediency we send you this written recommendation regarding National Register eligibility, which will be followed at a future time with photographs and additional research information.

The four story brick structure was constructed in 1902 for use by the Bagby Furniture Company. The building's architect was the English-born Alfred Mason who entered practice in Baltimore in 1881. (Active 1887-1910). Mason is best known for the design of Booker T. Washington School #130 (former Western Female High School) located at Lafayette Avenue and McCulloh Street.

The Bagby Furniture Company building is a fairly typical manufacturing/warehouse type building of early 20th century design. It actually consists of three separate, but connected structures. Some original 12 over 12 windows remain in the first floor. Most original windows are gone and have been replaced with 1/1 windows with infill panels. Many original

(continue, please)

Bagby Furniture Company, cont'd.

Page Two  
10/16/92

metal (clad over wood) shutters remain. There is some modest brick detailing, including corbeled recesses between piers.

Having visited the site, we do not believe that the Bagby Furniture building meets National Register eligibility standards. First, we do not believe that the building's architecture or its history would meet standards for individual listing. Second, the surrounding area lacks the characteristics of an historic district.

Although the building is in the vicinity of Little Italy, this structure does not relate to the small scale rowhouse buildings in the neighborhood and the tightly defined street pattern. We know of no direct historical association with Little Italy, as well. The area immediately surrounding the Bagby building consists of recent construction and parking lots. Had this building been surrounded by structures of similar character, I believe that we would recommend otherwise. Patrick Turner has provided us with "aerial" photographs which will confirm the fact that this building, basically, stands alone and does not fit into a district. He may have already sent a set of these to you, as they are most useful in the review.

As always, feel free to contact us if we can provide additional information to you, regarding our recommendation.

Sincerely,

*Kathleen*

Kathleen Gilbert Kotarba  
Executive Director

KGK/lw

cc. Patrick Turner  
Glen Charlow  
Mary Ann Henderson  
Janet Blutstein



B-1011



BAGBY FURNITURE

BAGBY FURNITURE

BAGBY FURNITURE

AVAILABLE 494-871  
MANLEY

Site

E-1011

509-21 S. Exeter Street

Bagby Furniture Company

Baltimore, Maryland

Photographer: J. Blustein

September 1942

Neg Loc: CHAP

West and South Elevations



AVAILABLE 494-1171  
MANEXIN

BAGBY FURNITURE

FURNITURE

B-1011

509-521 S. Exeter Street  
Bagby Furniture Company  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Photographer: J. Blutstein  
September 1992  
Neg Loc. CHAP  
SW Elevations



509-521 S. Exeter Street

Bayby Furniture Company

Baltimore, Maryland

Photographer: J. Blustein

Sept. 1992

Neg Loc: CHAP

E & S Elevations

B-1011



B-1011

509-521 S. Euter Street

Bagby Furniture Company

Baltimore, Maryland

Photographer: J Blustein

Sept. 1992

Neg Lee CHAR

East Elevation

Bagby Furniture Co. (B-1011)

Statement of Significance

Access to Southern timber and excellent transportation facilities allowed Baltimore to develop an important lumber trade. After the Civil War, as a result of increasing industrialization, Baltimore also became a center of furniture manufacture. The Bagby Furniture Company is an example of this successful development.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No. 0410115714

DOE  yes  no

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bagby Furniture Company

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number Fleet and Exeter Streets  not for publicationcity, town Baltimore  vicinity of  congressional districtstate Maryland  county

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Bagby Furniture Company

street &amp; number Fleet and Exeter Street telephone no.: 727-6880

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21201

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liberJFC 1703

street &amp; number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 450

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title none

 federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. B-1011

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
		<input type="checkbox"/> moved
		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This four-story structure is composed of three distinct sections. The main block is 8 by 11 bays having its longitudinal axis parallel to Fleet Street. Attached to it on the north is a second section of eight bays length with its axis along Exeter. A third section runs east from Exeter. Together the three have a u-shaped configuration whose open court is occupied by a one-story structure which formerly housed a large steam engine (150 Horse Power) and boiler. The smoke-stack remains. Internally the three are separated by brick firewalls. Structurally, the brick masonry bearing walls and heavy timber post and beam interior are typical of late 19th century factory architecture. 14" x 14" posts in the basement decrease in size to 12 x 12 on the 1st floor. Beams are held by cast-iron shoes on top of each post.

Internally there is almost no evidence of former manufacturing operations. The building is now used exclusively for warehousing.

<input type="checkbox"/> museum	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> public
<input type="checkbox"/> park	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private
<input type="checkbox"/> private residence	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> both
<input type="checkbox"/> religious	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition
<input type="checkbox"/> scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> year: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> in process
<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> year: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered
<input type="checkbox"/> other	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name: Baby Furniture Company  
 street & number: Fleet and Exeter Street  
 city, town: Baltimore  
 state and zip code: Maryland 21201  
 telephone: 410-527-8880

## 5. Location of Legal Description

street & number: Fleet and Exeter Streets  
 city, town: Baltimore  
 state: Maryland  
 folio: 428  
 index: 1702

## 6. Representation in Existing

title: None  
 federal:  state:  county:  local:   
 city, town: \_\_\_\_\_  
 state: \_\_\_\_\_  
 repository for survey records: \_\_\_\_\_

# 8. Significance

Survey No. B-1011

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D

and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Access to Southern timber and excellent transportation facilities allowed Baltimore to develop an important lumber trade. After the Civil War, as a result of increasing industrialization, Baltimore also became a center of furniture manufacture. The Bagby Furniture Company is an example of this successful development.

## History

Founded in 1879 by Charles T. Bagby and A.D. Rivers, the company was first known as "Bagby & Rivers", located on Clay street where furniture was sold wholesale. Soon after its inception, the firm began manufacturing furniture with a factory and warehouse at 624-632 West Pratt Street.

In 1897, Rivers sold his share of the company, and the name was changed to the Bagby Furniture Company. From 1897 to 1902, the firm was located at the corner of Biddle and Chester Streets, and in 1902, they built and moved to a large four-story brick factory at Canton Avenue (now Fleet Street) and Exeter Streets. The building, which had 73,000 square feet of space, was equipped with modern machinery. A large lumber yard and dry kiln were also connected with the plant. The company sold their line of moderately and low priced chamber suits, hall racks, wardrobes, chairs, dining room and kitchen furniture from their salesrooms at 108 South Eutaw Street. Their sales extended throughout the East Coast.

The Bagby Furniture Company is still in operation as wholesale dealers of furniture at their Fleet and Exeter Street location. In their heyday, they were one of the nation's largest furniture dealers. They are also known for their innovative use of steam machinery, and work with pre-fab furniture.

RETURN TO:  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-1011

Interview with Mr. Hugh Bagby, President  
Baltimore City Maryland: The book of its Board of Trade

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie Barr Dennis Zembala

organization Baltimore Museum of Industry

date 12/82

street & number 1415 Key Highway

telephone 727-4808

city or town Baltimore

state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

1. SITE I.D. NO # B 1 0 1 1

## HAER INVENTORY

Historic American Engineering Record  
Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

3. PRIORITY

4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION?  
(SPECIFY THREAT) YES NO UNKNOWN

5. DATE

6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT

OWNER

ADMIN

7. OWNER/ADMIN

Bagby Furniture Co.

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Bagby Furniture Company

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS

Same as above (sect. 11)

10. STATE COUNTY M D COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY CONG. DIST. STATE COUNTY M D COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY CONG. DIST.

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET &amp; NO.)

Fleet + Exeter Sts.

12. EXISTING SURVEYS

 NR NHL HABS HAER-I HAER NPS CLB CONF STATE COUNTY LOCAL OTHER

13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)

 INTERIOR INTACT EXTERIOR INTACT ENVIRONS INTACT14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE  1:24  1:625 QUAD NAME Balto. EastUTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE  1:24  1:625 QUAD NAME15. CONDITION 70  EXCELLENT 71  GOOD 72  FAIR 73  DETERIORATED 74  RUINS 75  UNEXPOSED 76  ALTERED 82  DESTROYED 85  DEMOLISHED

16. INVENTORIED BY Leslie Barr, Dennis Zembala AFFILIATION Balto. Museum of Industry DATE 12/82

17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

[See attached statement of significance]

(CONT OVER)

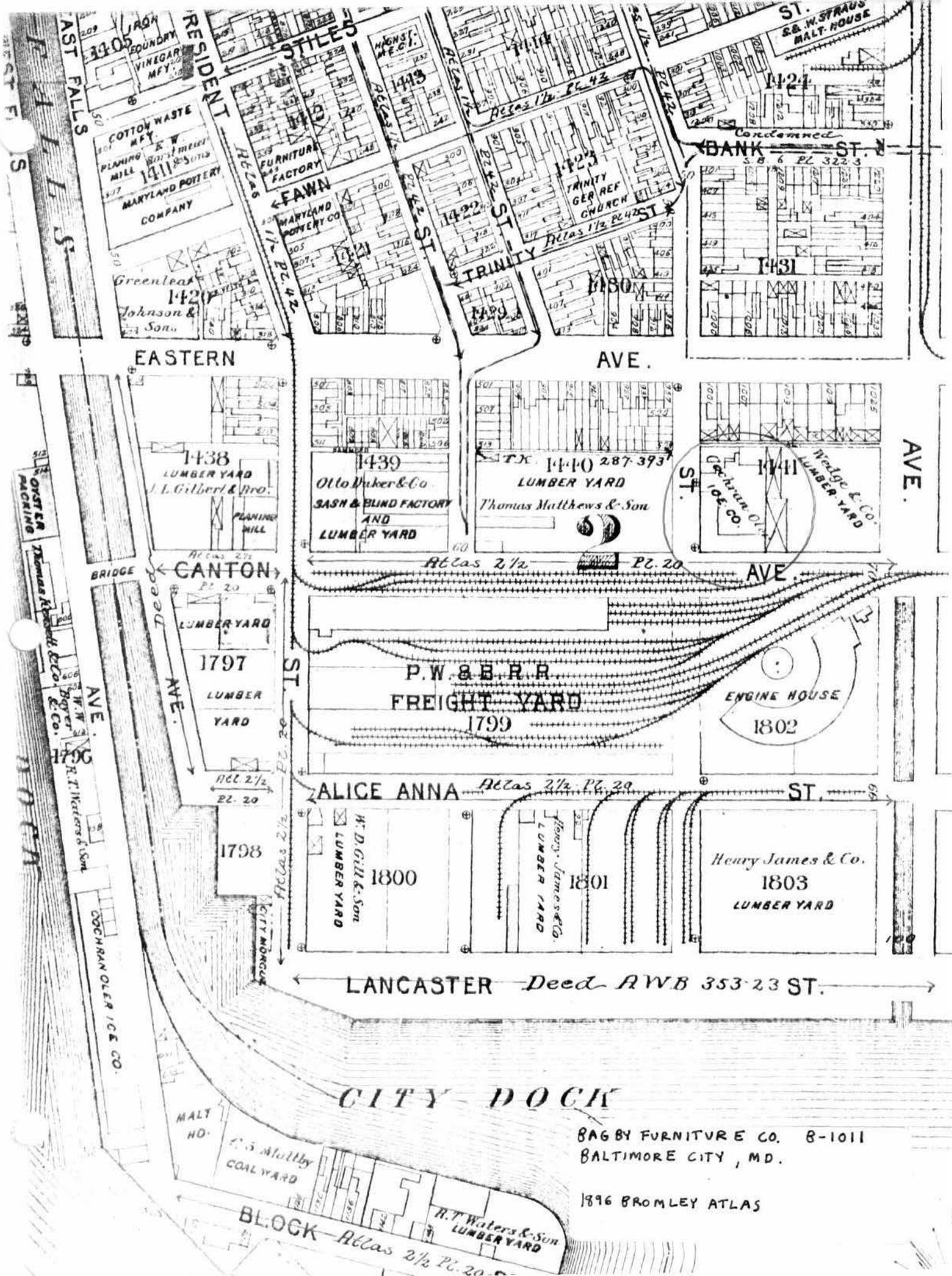
18. ORIGINAL USE Manufacture + Wholeselling (Furniture) PRESENT USE Wholeselling (Furniture) ADAPTIVE USE

19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER

Interview w/ Mr. Hugh Bagby, President  
Baltimore City Maryland: The Book of Its Board of Trade

(CONT OVER)

20. ORRAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?  YES  NO 21. NPS REGION 22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY  YES LIMITED  YES UNLIMITED  NO  UNKNOWN 23. EDITOR INDEXER24. LOCATED IN AN HIST. DISTRICT?  YES  NO NAME DISTRICT I.D. NO.



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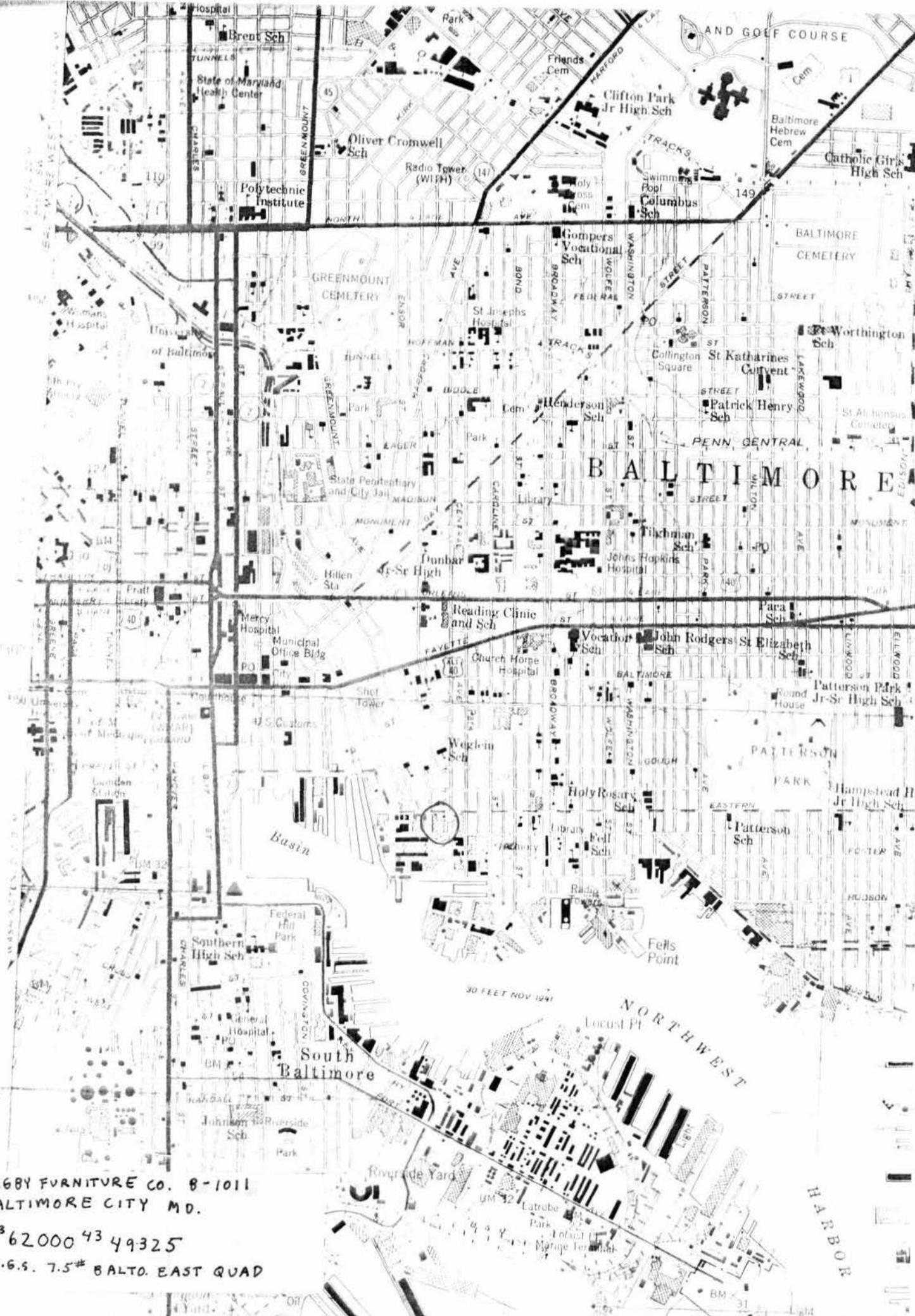
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# BALTIMORE

BAGBY FURNITURE CO. 8-1011  
BALTIMORE CITY MD.  
18<sup>3</sup>62000 43 49325  
U.S.G.S. 7.5# BALTO. EAST QUAD

HARBOR

NORTHWEST

South Baltimore

30 FEET NOV 1941



THE BOBY FURNITURE CO.

FURNITURE  
ELECTRIC

B-1011

Bagby Furniture

Baltimore, MD

Neg. Loc: MD. Hist. Trust

Dennis Zambala 11/80

Looking N/E from

~ Fleet St.



Bagby Furniture

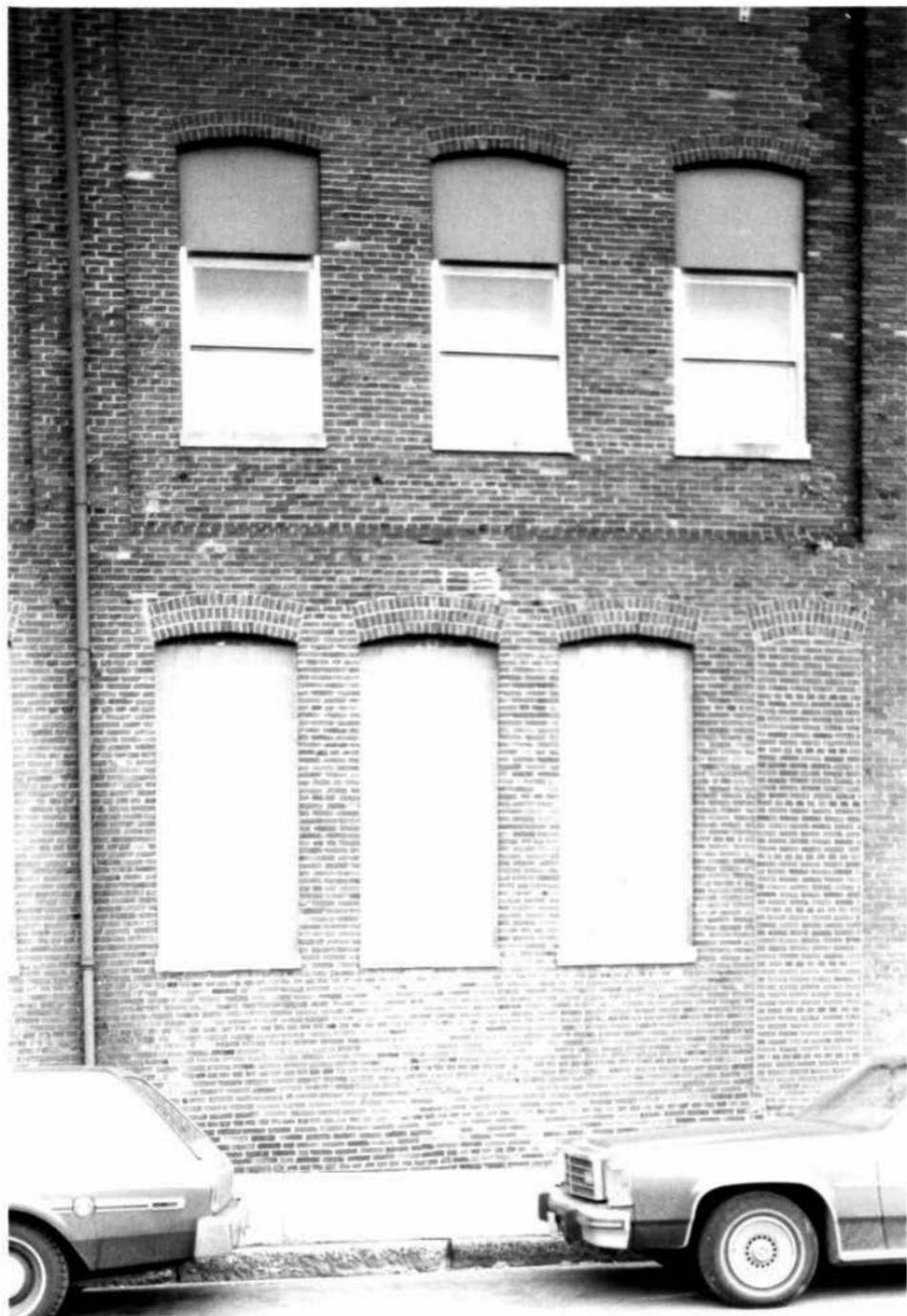
B-1011

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

11/80 Fleet St, looking N/W



B-1011

Bagby Furniture

Baltimore City

Neg. Loc: Md Hist. Trust

Dennis Zembala 11/80

Window detail,

Exeter St. facade