

August Beck Brewery  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
B-1058  
private, 1865

Statement of Significance

Baltimore was a major brewing center in the nineteenth century, partly because of its large German population, and also because of its ready supply of grain. By the end of the century there were dozens of small, independently owned breweries. The industry remained a prosperous one until Prohibition crippled it in 1920. Brewery architecture, the only remains of this once thriving industry, with its romantic, Germanic character and elaborate decoration, has given Baltimore some of its most interesting industrial structures. The August Beck Brewery, built in 1865 on Franklinton Road in West Baltimore, is one of the earliest remaining brewery structures. The site includes large underground cellars which were used before modern refrigeration, and a mansion house, part of which was used as a tavern.

Survey No. B-1058

Magi No. 0410585514

DOE  yes  no

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic August Beck Brewery

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 200 S. Franklintown Road  not for publication

city, town Baltimore  vicinity of congressional district

state 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 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 200 S. Franklintown Realty Company

street & number 200 S. Franklintown Road telephone no.: 947-6300

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21223

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber RHB 3054

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 535

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

none

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-1058

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

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

The scale of this brewery remained virtually unchanged from the 1870's until the mid 1930's, when it became a paint factory. Its 12,000 barrel per year capacity was typical of the more than 25 breweries that operated in Baltimore at the turn of the century. The brewhouse burned in 1969 and was replaced by a modern building but the rest of the complex remains. In 1883 the brewery consisted of a brewhouse 30 by 250 feet and a warehouse 20 by 250 feet on a site 140 by 500 feet deep. A ten horse stable and a concert hall and garden also occupied the site.

Both the 1865 two-story dwelling occupied by August Beck and his later, more elaborate three-story beaux arts mansion still remain. The former is a center hall, gable roofed building of modest proportions. Beck used the ground floor front of this structure as a tavern. A vaulted beer cellar still remains beneath it. A two-story rear addition provided more living space for the early owners and now houses the offices of the paint factory. Attached to the house are the original warehouses of the brewery. These are all two-story brick buildings with sash windows on south and north facades. They have shed roofs which slope from the higher north wall down toward the brewing yard. The last warehouse contains a vertical shaft which descends to the beer cellars.

The beer cellars are intact, although two are still used for storage by the paint company. The large square shaft which descends to the cellar probably contained a storage tank at one time. A stair descends about thirty-five feet below grade to the floor. From the shaft, two corridors lead to separate banks of vaulted cellars. One series lies under the warehouse and one under the former brewhouse. Each cellar is a brick vault about fifteen by thirty feet and twelve feet high. Each has a ventilator shaft about eighteen inches in diameter which opens to the surface. The corridor which connects the warehouse cellars contains two additional vertical shafts about six feet square, formerly used to hoist barrels to the surface. A similar shaft separates two of the cellars under the brewhouse and one also has a staircase which formerly led to the surface there.

The former mansion is the only other building on the site of significance. This has been totally converted on the interior into the laboratory of the paint company and no residential appearance remains. Post and beam reinforcement has been added at the center to accommodate greater loading on the upper floors. The exterior has been covered by formstone, an invention of one of the proprietors of the paint company which purchased the site in the thirties.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. B-1058

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1865 **Builder/Architect**

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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.

Baltimore was a major brewing center in the nineteenth century, partly because of its large German population, and also because of its ready supply of grain. By the end of the century there were dozens of small, independently owned breweries. The industry remained prosperous until Prohibition crippled it in 1920. Brewery architecture, the only remains of this once thriving industry, with its romantic, Germanic character and elaborate decoration, has given Baltimore some of its most interesting industrial structures. The August Beck Brewery, built in 1865 on Franklinton Road in West Baltimore, is one of the earliest remaining brewery structures. The site includes large underground cellars which were used before the advent of modern refrigeration, and a mansion houses, part of which was used as a tavern.

August Beck, born in Germany in 1821, came to Baltimore in 1854. He worked as a brewmaster for his half brother Thomas, and then in 1865 started his own brewery on Franklinton Road, opposite Pratt Street. The brewery was small at the start, but by the time of Beck's death in 1879 it had become fairly substantial. It had a large brewhouse and warehouse, and a beer garden and concert hall on the property. The front part of Beck's first house was used as a tavern. (In 1876, Beck had built an additional house which was quite elaborate - a three story red brick with a mansard roof.)

Beck's son August Jr. became brewmaster after his father's death. He installed new machinery and modernized the plant. In 1899, however, he sold the plant to John Marr, brewer and maltster. It is believed that he was having financial difficulties at this time - at one point he was mortgaged to the malt firm H. Straus Brothers. It is also possible that he assumed the beer trust of the Maryland Brewing Company would have tried to buy him out anyway. In 1901 the brewery was bought by the Frank Steil Brewing Company, who owned it until Prohibition. August Beck Jr. died in 1902.

The property was later owned by the Lasting Products Company, manufacturers of paints, plasters, and the ubiquitous "formstone". It is currently occupied by the Contact Paint Company.



# HAER INVENTORY

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

1. SITE I.D. NO <b>B-1058</b>		3. PRIORITY		4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	
2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION <i>manufacture</i>		5. DATE <i>1865</i>		6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN	
8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE <i>AUGUST BECK BREWERY</i>		7. OWNER/ADMIN <i>200 S. Franklinton Realty Co</i>			
9. OWNER'S ADDRESS <i>200 S. Franklinton Rd</i>		10. STATE COUNTY <b>MD</b> COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY <b>BALTIMORE</b> CONG. DIST.			
11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO) <i>200 S. Franklinton Road</i>		12. EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> NR <input type="checkbox"/> NHL <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER-I <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input type="checkbox"/> CL6 <input type="checkbox"/> CONF <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN		13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW) <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR INTACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONS INTACT			
15. CONDITION 70 <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT 71 <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD 72 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR 73 <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED 74 <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS 75 <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED 76 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED 82 <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROYED 85 <input type="checkbox"/> DEMOLISHED		16. INVENTORIED BY <i>Leslie Barr</i> AFFILIATION <i>Balto. Museum of Industry</i> DATE <i>9/83</i>			
17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.  <i>see attached</i>					

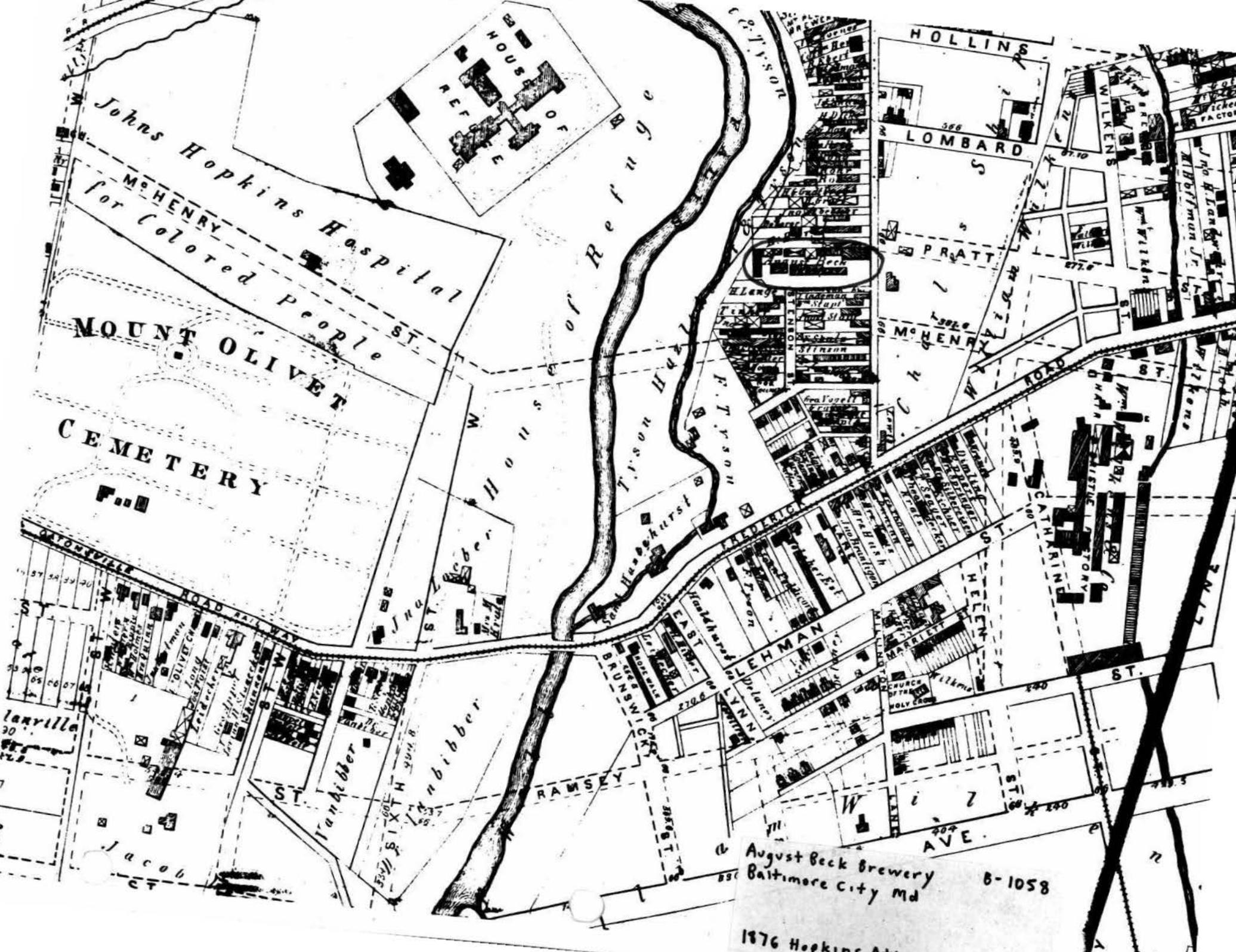
(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE <i>brewery</i>	PRESENT USE <i>paint manufacture</i>	ADAPTIVE USE
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19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER  
*Brewing in Maryland Kelly (1964)*

(CONT OVER)

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	21. NPS REGION	22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	23. EDITOR INDEXER
24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO NAME		DISTRICT I.D. NO	

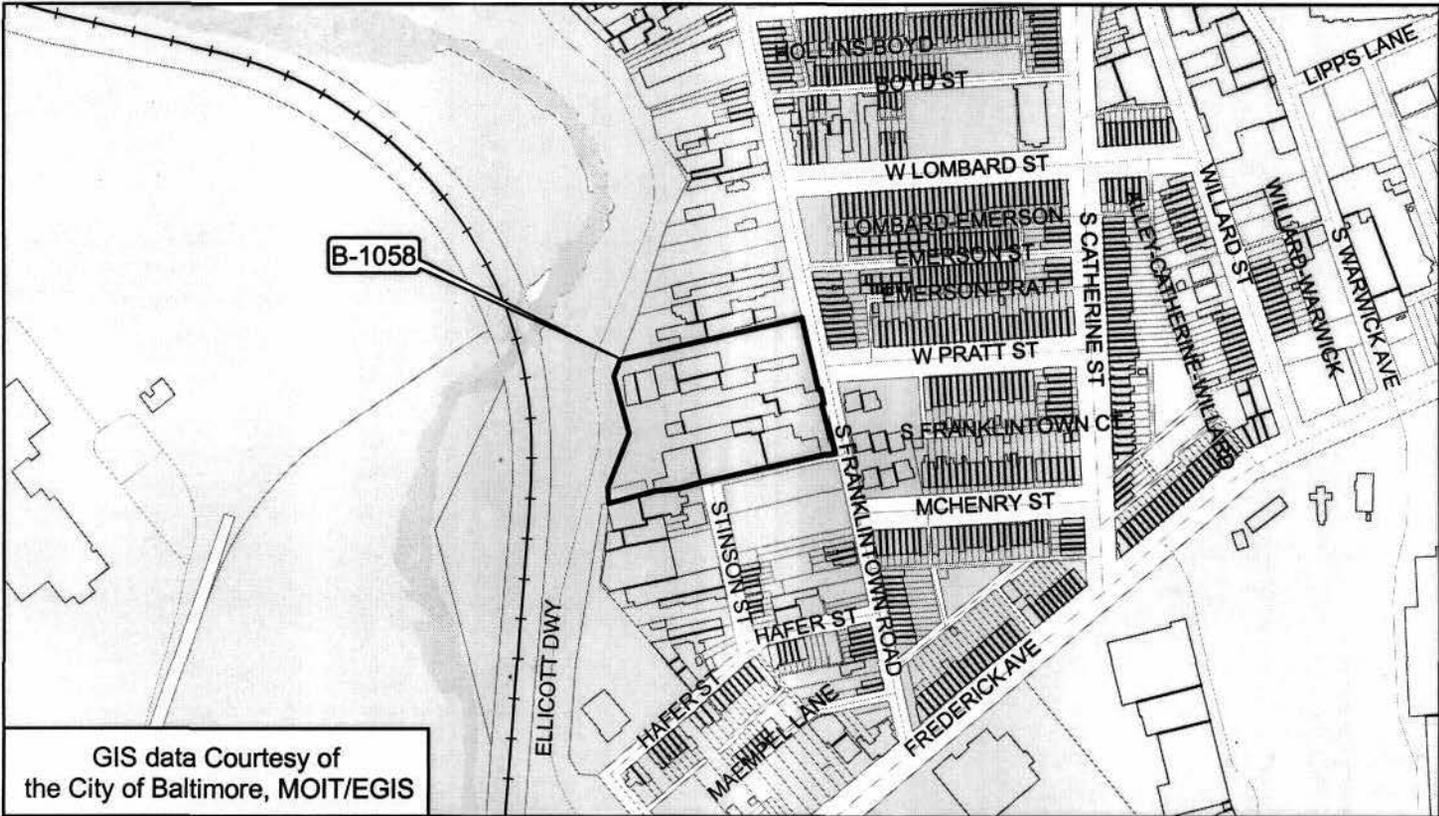


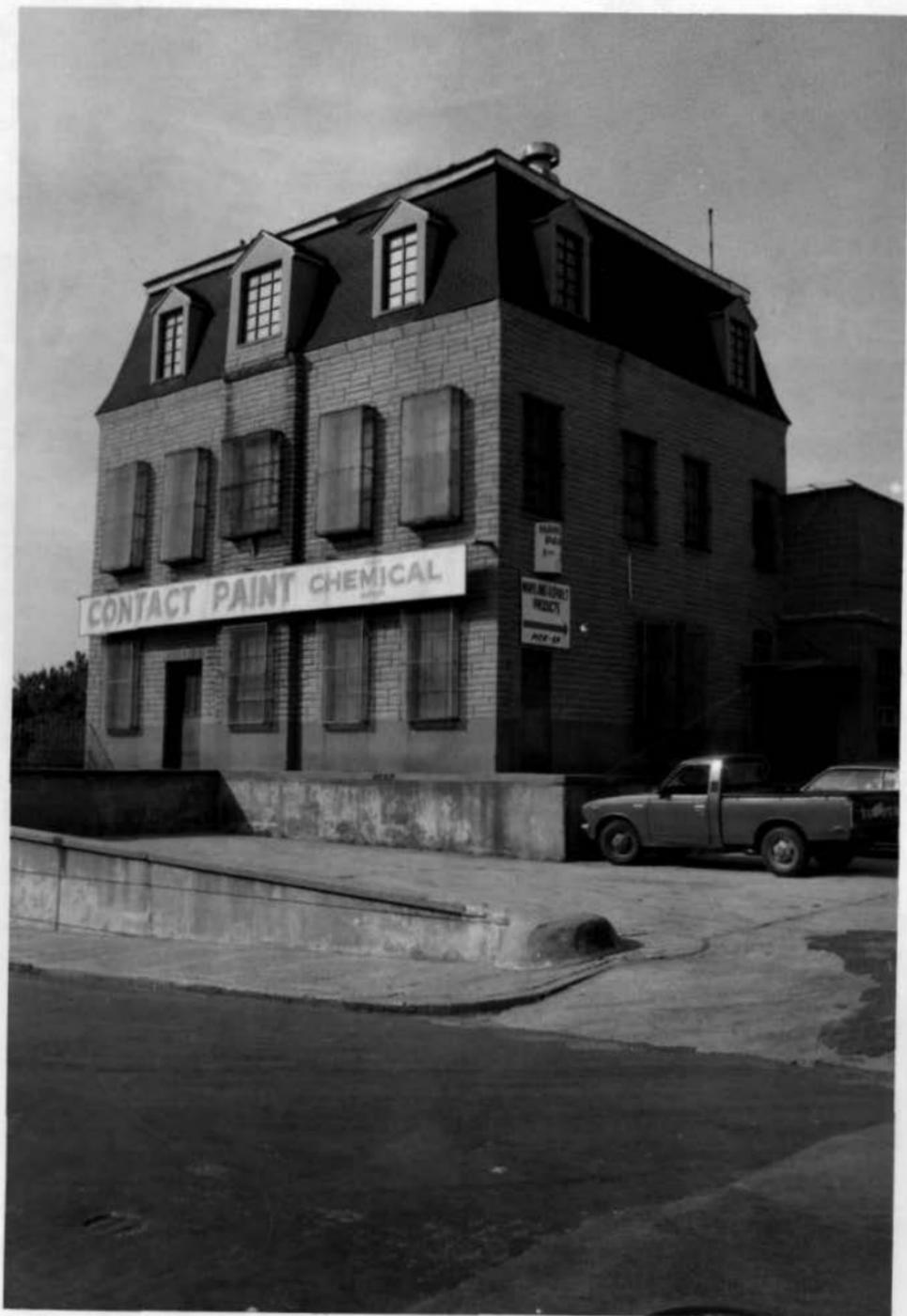
August Beck Brewery  
Baltimore City Md  
B-1058

1876 Hopkins Ave



B-1058  
August Beck Brewery  
200 S. Franklinton Road  
Block 2183B, Lot 001  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore West Quad.





August Beck Brewery  
Baltimore City Md  
Peter Liebhold 9/83

8-1058

Looking S.W.



August Beck Brewery  
Baltimore City Md  
Peter C. Liebhold 9/83

B-1058

underground vault