



United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Erlanger Buildings

and/or common Inner Harbor Lofts II

## 2. Location

street & number 519-531 West Pratt Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Third

state Maryland code 24 county Baltimore City code 510

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: VACANT

## 4. Owner of Property

name Inner Harbor Lofts, Associates

street & number 36-38 South Paca Street

city, town Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21201

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Records Office Room 601

street & number Baltimore City Courthouse

city, town Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21202

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Commission for Historicak and Architectural Preservation  
has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date 1979 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records CHAP, Room 601, City Hall

city, town Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland 21202

## 7. Description

B-1075

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Erlanger Buildings consist of a four-structure turn-of-the-century loft complex. The buildings are located in the City's old warehouse district adjacent to the University of Maryland professional schools. Highly visible from Russell Street or the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the buildings take up a good portion of one city block.

The easternmost buildings, 519-525 West Pratt Street, is nine bays wide and six stories high. It is constructed of stretcher bond brick with iron storefronts and stone detailing. Four brick piers ending in pyramidal pinnacles and ball finials divide the facade into three sections. The central bay contains the entrance: on the first floor is a tripartite iron storefront divided in three by stylized columns capped by brackets above which is a cornice with circular floral motifs. In each section is a large transom above double doors of glass and wood. On the second floor is a panel of fine basket weave curved brick below a tripartite fully arched window. A terra cotta archway with decorative spandrel, billet molding, and keystone embellished with a bearded head contains the fully arched window.

The end bays have storefronts identical to that containing the central entrance. The east storefront has a single door and two windows, while the west one has three windows. On the second floor on either side of the semicircular arch) are decorative cast-iron panels below three segmental arched windows with 1/1 sash. The third floor of each building section has three 1/1 sash windows. The central windows are flat, while those in the end bays are segmentally arched with triple header brick lintels. All of the windows on the fourth floor are flat arched with 1/1 light sash. The fifth story carries three windows grouping imilar to the second floor central bay; the arches lack the keystone of the second floor, but terminate in small heads, and there is a transom above the central window of each group. This floor also boasts a corbelled brick cornice with stone molding above and pilasters with vertical notching that continue to the roof. Above this cornice is an arcade of twelve 1/1 light sash. The building's corbelled brick and brownstone roofline is thrust up into a central pediment.

Adjoining this building, at 527 West Pratt Street, is a three-bay, seven-story addition. The first floor consists of two wood paneled and glass double doors with a boarded storefront between. A stone cornice with egg and dart molding divides the first and second floors. The upper floors are defined by four brick piers which support three brick arches on the sixth floor. Three 2/2 sash windows with stone sills and lintels punctuate each floor until the sixth floor. The sixth floor has three fully arched windows. A stone cornice divides the sixth and seventh floors. Similar to the original building, the final floor features an arcade of six narrow 1/1 sash windows. The building is capped by a deteriorating notched cornice.

The third building of the complex, at 529 West Pratt Street, is a small two-story, three-bay brick structure. It has two entrances and a store window on the first floor and three large 2/2 sash windows on the second floor. The structure ends with a simple cornice and battlemented parapet. A five-story tower rises behind and above the west bay of this structure. The uppermost bay of the tower is open.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Inner Harbor Lofts II (Erlanger Buildings)  
Baltimore City  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 1

### DESCRIPTION, continued

The westernmost building of the complex is four bays wide and four stories high. The windows are tripartite with 1/1 sash and a three-light transom. Each window has stone sills and brick lintels. There are no entrances on the front facade of this building. Corbelled brickwork is featured on the first and fourth floor of each bay. The building ends in a stepped roof line. It is connected to the seven-story structure by metal bridges set back from the front facade.

The side and rear facades of the complex are constructed in common bond brick. All of the windows are segmentally arched with 2/2 light sash and triple header brick lintels. The west facade of the complex is fourteen bays wide and four stories high. A single entrance and elevator access to the building are in the southernmost bays. A loading dock has been punched into the rear building wall of the westernmost building. This rear wall has four windows, all on the fourth floor. To the rear of the two-story structure is a three-story, three-bay rear addition which projects further than the rear of the end buildings. All of the rear windows and the single rear entrance have metal fire shutters. The rear of the seven-story structure is flush with the adjoining building. This building has a single entrance and fire escapes, as well as fire shutters on the basement, first, and second floors. A loading dock and fire escapes were added to the rear of the easternmost building. Fire shutters protect second floor windows. Just south of this rear facade is an immense iron water tower rising above the roof lines of the complex. A second roof structure stands on the seven story building; it may once have held a water tank. The east side has windows identical to those on the west and south facades. Fire shutters protect the windows on the second level. An adjacent building abuts the first level of this facade.

The interiors of the buildings have large open floor plans, which were needed for industrial use. Two rows of simple columns support each level of the easternmost building. The first floor columns are iron, while upper levels are of wood construction. Often the east side of this building was divided into small offices for the manufacturer's interests. The westernmost building has a single row of thirteen columns on each floor. The remaining structures have narrow spaces which did not require the use of columns in their construction. Most of the maple flooring in the buildings is original. A boiler room is housed in the small two-story structure. All of the buildings have elevator access. Interior illumination is provided by fluorescent lights.

# 8. Significance

B-1075

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) FASHION

Specific dates circa 1892, 1899, c. 1905 **Builder/Architect** John E. Lafferty and others

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Erlanger buildings are significant as examples of the loft industrial architecture in Baltimore from 1890-1910. Within the four-building complex are a variety of architectural styles from Victorian-era loft buildings with fine details and cast-iron columns to later structures, characterized primarily by large windows, representing the Commercial Style. Historically the buildings are significant as the home of the Erlanger Manufacturing Company, which produced BVD brand underwear. Charles Erlanger, a co-founder of the company, is credited with making major advances in the design of underwear which revolutionized the industry. The name BVD has become a world-wide synonym for underwear.

The West Pratt Street complex of four buildings illustrates the evolution of loft structures from ornate buildings of the Victorian era to "modern" designs of straight fronts, little ornamentation, and large rectangular windows. The easternmost building, which dates from circa 1892, is an excellent example of the earlier type of loft building. Its large round-arched windows, pedimented roof line, cast-iron store front, and decorative keystone above the central arch provide the building with a distinguish appearance in an area which abounds with fine loft structures. The narrow building, 527 West Pratt Street, adjacent to the earlier Victorian-era structure, was erected in 1899. It was designed by John Edward Lafferty, a local architect who practiced in Baltimore between 1895 and 1925. Lafferty also designed several municipal structures for the City such as School #112 in West Baltimore. (Little information could be found on Lafferty, and the architects of the other buildings are unknown. The building was designed to conform to the early structure; however, it lacks the high style and flair of the circa 1892 building. It represents a move toward more modern industrial architecture. At the time, it was said to be "equipped with all the modern conveniences."<sup>1</sup> The westernmost building dates from circa 1905. It is representative of early 20th century industrial structures which can be characterized as belonging to the Commercial Style. It has little ornamentation and features a skeletal appearance because windows comprise a large amount of the total wall space. Together, the buildings present a diverse mixture of turn-of-the-century loft buildings and are an integral part of Baltimore's old warehouse district.

### HISTORY

The Erlanger buildings housed warehouse and factory operations of the Erlanger underwear manufacturing enterprises. In the late 19th century, Charles Erlanger, his brother Abraham, and a brother-in-law, Herman Bonheim, founded a wholesale jobbing business in Baltimore under the name of Erlanger, Bonheim and Company. This firm was succeeded by an overall and work shirt manufacturing venture called Erlanger Brothers. The brothers soon acquired the firm of Bradley, Vorhees and Day and began producing underwear under the BVD brand. The initials, BVD, apparently stand for Bradley, Vorhees and Day; however, there are many other claims to the initials. One is that it stands for "Best Ventilated Drawers." There is also a discrepancy over the location of the firm, Bradley, Vorhees and Day. One source indicates it was a Baltimore firm, although it could not be located in Baltimore City Directories. Other sources indicate a New York or California origin.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

Inner Harbor Lofts II (Erlanger Buildings)

Baltimore City

Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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## SIGNIFICANCE, continued

While engaged in the underwear manufacturing business, Charles Erlanger conceived the novel idea of the knee length drawer, making underwear most comfortable, a marked improvement over the old-fashioned bulky underwear of the day. This idea revolutionized the underwear business in America. Erlanger was, however, somewhat modest about the significance of his discovery. Harold J. Jonas, a relative of the Erlangers, relates that Charles Erlanger once silenced his son who was speaking of the importance of the BVD Company by saying, "Let's stop that line. All we ever really did was to cut drawers shorter."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, The BVD brand became world famous.

The corporate headquarters of the BVD Company was in New York, but BVD Brand underwear was produced on West Pratt Street for nearly fifty years. The company grew in the first decades of the 20th century with the acquisition of many related manufacturing interests.

In 1914 a model village was built outside Lexington, North Carolina to house workers of the Erlanger Cotton Mills. Many companies, such as the Sealpax Company of Baltimore, the Piqua (Ohio) Hosiery Company, the Langerre Sales Company of New York and the Yadkin Finishing Company of North Carolina, were purchased by the Erlangers. In 1929 the BVD corporation was established as a holding company to coordinate all the BVD interests. Eventually the firm branched out to produce pajamas, hosiery, sportswear, and robes, as well as underwear. BVD was instrumental in the development of men's topless swimming trunks and women's one-piece bathing suits. At the company's peak in the mid-1920s, an estimated 7,200,000 pairs of underwear were sold in a year.

In 1951 the BVD Corporation was sold, and operations on West Pratt Street soon ended. Until recently the Erlanger buildings have housed a wide variety of small industrial interests; however, within the past year, the buildings were sold to the Inner Harbor Lofts, Associates for development as loft apartments. The exterior of the buildings will be preserved, while the interiors are to be modernized for residential use. The Erlanger Buildings, which are historically important as the original home of BVD underwear and the manufacturing plant for the brand from 1908 to 1951, will once again have a viable use in downtown Baltimore.

<sup>1</sup>Baltimore Daily News, June 17, 1899.

<sup>2</sup>Correspondence with J. Jonas, October 1979.

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

B-1075

- National Cyclopedia of American Biography, 1937, v. 26, p. 278.
- Time Magazine, August 13, 1951.
- Underwear and Hosiery Review, February 1919.
- Baltimore Daily Record, June 17, 1899.
- Correspondences with Howard J. Jonas and Michael Erlanger in September and October 1979.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .659 acre  
 Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad Quadrangle scale 1:24000  
 UMT References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>360040</u>	<u>4349560</u>	B	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

### 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 Fred B. Shoken, Assistant Research Analyst  
 organization Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation date October, 1979  
 street & number City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street telephone (301)396-4866  
 city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:  
 national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *J. P. H.* 12-28-79  
 title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

**For HCRS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 date  
 keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: date  
 Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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Inner Harbor Lofts II (Erlanger Buildings)

Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET

Maryland

ITEM NUMBER

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Known as Lots 4-10 in Block 677 in Baltimore City Tax Records. Beginning at the southwest corner of S. Greene and West Pratt Streets; thence, easterly 183+1' intersect the partition line between Lots 3 and 4 in Block 677; thence, south 158+1' to intersect Dover Street; thence, west 183+1' to intersect S. Greene Street; thence, north 158+1' to the place of beginning, containing .659 acre.

B-1075



Inner Harbor Lofts II



INNER HARBOR LOFTS II

B-1075

UTM Reference:

18. 360040 .4349560

17°30"

520 000  
FEET

MIDDLE  
BRANCH

SCALE  
TRANSVERSE

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (EAST SECTION)

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (WEST SECTION)

Maryland Yacht Club

Light

WASHINGTON, D. C. 31 MI.

FREDERICK 45 MI.  
PINE ORCHARD 14 MI.

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Statement of Significance

The 500 block of West Pratt Street was home to the Erlanger Underwear Manufacturing Company for nearly half a century. Erlanger was the manufacturer of "B.V.D." underwear--a name familiar to many Americans. They used the building at 519-525 W. Pratt from the 1920's until just before leaving Baltimore in 1951. The original use of the building, constructed in the late 1890's, is unknown; however, a three story building at 521 W. Pratt Street was the home of the engineering firm of Spittel & Keil in 1890.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Erlanger Buildings

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 519-531 West Pratt Street

CITY, TOWN Baltimore CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE MD. 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Lofts II Associates  
STREET & NUMBER

Telephone #:

CITY, TOWN Baltimore STATE, zip code Maryland

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Records Office

Liber #: WA 3914  
Folio #: 309

STREET & NUMBER Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Baltimore STATE Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

**DESCRIPTION**

B-1075

**CONDITION** EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE** UNALTERED ALTERED**CHECK ONE** ORIGINAL SITE MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Erlanger Buildings consist of a four-structure turn of the century loft complex. The buildings are located in the City's old warehouse district adjacent to the University of Maryland professional schools. Highly visible from Russell Street of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the buildings take up a good portion of one city block.

The easternmost building, 519-539 West Pratt Street, is nine bays wide and six stories high. It is constructed of stretcher bond brick with iron store fronts and stone detailing. Four brick piers ending in pyramidal pinnacles and ball finials divide the facade into three sections. The central bay features a two-story archway entrance with a tripartite iron store front divided by stylized columns capped by brackets. A simple cornice with circular floral motifs mount three large transoms and sets of wood paneled and glass double doors. Above the cornice is a panel of fine basket weave curved brick and a tripartite fully arched window. A terra cotta archway with decorative spandrel, billet molding and keystone embellished with a bearded figure encompasses the fully arched window.

The end bays have similar storefronts. The eastern bay has a single door and two show windows, while the western bay features three show windows. Above the metal cornices are decorative cast iron panels and three segmental arched one over one windows on each bay. The third floor of each building section features three one over one windows. The central windows are flat, while the end bays are segmentally arched with triple header brick lintels. All of the windows on the fourth floor are flat arched with one over one lights. The fifth story carries three window groupings like the second floor central bay. The archway lacks the keystone of the second floor, but ends in small figure heads.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
—1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
—1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
—1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
—1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
—1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1920-1950

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 500 block of West Pratt Street was home to the Erlanger Underwear Manufacturing Co. for nearly half a century. Erlanger was the manufacturer of "B.V.D." underwear--a name familiar to many Americans. They used the building at 519-525 W. Pratt from the 1920's until just before leaving Baltimore in 1951. The original use of the building, constructed in the late 1890's, is unknown; however, a three story building at 521 W. Pratt Street was the home of the engineering firm of Spittel & Keil in 1890.

Historical Significance:

Spittel & Keil, engineers and machinists, operated from a well equipped building at 521 W. Pratt. Little is known of the firm, other than that it was formed in 1889 and they were respected engine and machine builders. They also were steamfitters and worked on many different types of projects.

Near the end of the 19th century a new six story building was constructed at 519-525 W. Pratt Street. The occupants of this exceptionally large and handsome building before 1920 are not known. Many small businesses, particularly related to the apparel trade, had short life spans in loft district buildings like this one. In 1920 it was taken over for the manufacture of B.V.D. underwear by the Erlanger Underwear Manufacturing Co. who had already built a large building at the corner of Pratt and Greene Streets.

Charles Erlanger, a Baltimorean, acquired cotton interests in North Carolina following the Civil War. Shortly thereafter he was also the owner of a mill and had interest in a cotton finishing company that produced cotton dimity, primarily used for underwear. Erlanger and his partners, deciding that it would be more profitable to produce the underwear than to sell the cloth, purchased a New York wholesale house--Bradley, Vorhees and Day--and began to produce the famous B.V.D. products.

The company built a building at the corner of Pratt and Greene c. 1908 and as the business grew they gradually took over other nearby buildings for underwear manufacture. In 1920,

Cont'd.--

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

B-1075

Vertical Files, Baltimore Industrial Museum

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Robert Weis, Philip Kahn

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Industrial Museum

DATE

November 1980

STREET &amp; NUMBER

217 N. Charles Street

TELEPHONE

301-396-1931

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

STATE

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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

Erlanger moved into 519-525 W. Pratt. The company continued to produce at the location until after World War II, when operations were consolidated into the Pratt & Greene building. In 1951 Erlanger sold the B.V.D. brand name and other assets. The Erlanger family had moved to New York in the 1920's, and other factories were operated in Lynchburg, Virginia and Cambridge, Maryland.

Today, 519-525 W. Pratt Street is used by offices and wholesalers.

# NAER INVENTORY

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

1. SITE I.D. NO B 1 0 7 5

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  
Lofts II Associates

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE  
Erlanger Buildings

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS

10. STATE COUNTY M D COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY CONG. DIST. 3 STATE COUNTY M D COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY CONG. DIST.

Baltimore Baltimore

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO)  
519-531 West Pratt Street

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 INTACT

14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE  1:24  1:62.5 QUAD NAME Baltimore East

1 8 3 6 0 2 2 8 4 3 4 9 5 9 0

15. CONDITION 70  EXCELLENT 71  GOOD 72  FAIR 73  DETERIORATED 74  RUINS 75  UNEXPOSED 76  ALTERED 77  DESTROYED 85  DEMOLISHED

16. INVENTORIED BY Robert Weis, Philip Kahn AFFILIATION Baltimore Industrial Museum DATE November 1980

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

The 500 block of West Pratt Street was home to the Erlanger Underwear Manufacturing Company for nearly half a century. Erlanger was the manufacturer of "B.V.D." underwear--a name familiar to many Americans. They used the building at 519-525 W. Pratt from the 1920's until just before leaving Baltimore in 1951. The original use of the building, constructed in the late 1890's, is known; however, a three story building at 521 W. Pratt Street was the home of the engineering firm of Spittel & Keil in 1890.

(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE Engine & Machine Building/Underwear factory PRESENT USE Offices & wholesalers ADAPTIVE USE

19. REFERENCES--HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER  
Vertical Files, Baltimore Industrial Museum

(CONT OVER)

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?  YES  NO

21.  

22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY  YES, LIMITED  YES, UNLIMITED  NO  UNKNOWN

23. EDITOR INDEXER

24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?  YES  NO NAME DISTRICT I.D. NO

ERLANGER BUILDING  
 BALTIMORE, MD  
 MAP FROM: 1914 BALTIMORE  
 TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY COMMISSION

B-1075





BALTIMORE

ERLANGER BUILDING  
18<sup>3</sup>60228 49590

B-1075

Erlanger Buiding  
Baltimore, MD  
U.S.G.S. 7.5# Baltimore East  
183602284349590 Quad

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (WEST SECTION)

FERRY BAR CHANNEL (EAST SECTION)



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981

*Pratt Street facade, looking SE*



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembalaust

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981 / Pratt Street facade



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo; Dennis Zembala 1/81

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

*Pratt Street facade, looking SE*



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981 / Doorway, Pratt St. facade



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981/*Detail of doorway,*

*Pratt Street*



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981 / Detail, east end of bld.



ERLANGER BUILDING

B-1075

BALTIMORE, MD

PHOTO: DENNIS ZEMBALA

NEG. LOC.: MD HISTORIC TRUST

JAN. 1981 / East end, looking West



ERLANGER BUILDING

B-1075

BALTIMORE, MD

PHOTO: DENNIS ZEMBALA

NEG. LOC.: MD HISTORIC TRUST

JAN. 1981 / Looking NW



B-1075

Erlanger Building

Baltimore, MD

Photo: MD Historic Trust

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Jan. 1981 / *Detail, rear of complex*



B-1075

Brlanger Building  
Baltimore, MD  
Photo: Dennis Zembala  
Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust  
Jan. 1981

Rear of complex, looking NE  
(from Dover Street)