

Capsule Summary

Survey No.: B-1313

Name/Address: Jones Falls Retaining Walls

Construction Date: 1883-1886

Town/Vicinity:

County: Baltimore City

Access: N/A

Summary Description:

The Jones Falls retaining walls can be found along the visible portions of Jones Falls in Baltimore. Much of the river was diverted through a system of subterranean pipes and now runs below the city streets. South of North Avenue, the Jones Falls disappears below city streets, reemerging south of Baltimore Street, where it runs channelized for several blocks before emptying into the Inner Harbor. The segment of the retaining walls surveyed starts at the North Avenue Bridge and runs north along the west side of the falls. The bank retained by the walls supports the rail yard currently owned by Amtrak. The surveyed portion of the wall varies in height from approximately 20 feet to more than 50. It is constructed of random granite or gneiss ashlar and rubble with granite coping. At least one culvert or drainage opening is located on the wall. The round-arch opening spans about 10 feet and has regular granite voussoirs. The length of the surveyed portion is approximately 1000'.

Statement of Significance

The Jones Falls retaining wall is an late-nineteenth-century public works project intended to prevent erosion and to control the Jones Falls through Baltimore. The project was undertaken between 1883 and 1886 by city engineer Charles Hazelhurst Latrobe. Channelizing the river through the city prevented the regular flooding suffered by Baltimoreans, and enabled permanent development to occur in areas where flooding had previously precluded such construction. The project has local significance for its impact on the city, though the wall has been replaced or shored up in places with modern rip-rap, compromising its integrity. The entire length of the wall from the harbor to its northern terminus was not surveyed under the scope of this project. The surveyed section does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, as it has been partially replaced, and there is no evidence that the extant structure is representative of a unique or innovative technology that would qualify it for inclusion in the register under criterion C.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-1313

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Jones Falls Retaining Walls

and/or common Jones Falls Retaining Walls

2. Location

street & number west side, Jones Falls, north of North Avenue Bridge

not for publication

city, town Baltimore

vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland

county Baltimore City

3. Classification

Category

- district
 building(s)
 structure
 site
 object

Ownership

- public
 private
 both

Public Acquisition

- in process
 being considered
 not applicable

Status

- occupied
 unoccupied
 work in progress

Accessible

- yes: restricted
 yes: unrestricted
 no

Present Use

- agriculture
 commercial
 educational
 entertainment
 government
 industrial
 military

- museum
 park
 private residence
 religious
 scientific
 transportation
 other: retaining wall

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

name unknown

street & number

telephone no.:

city, town

state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. records not located

liber

street & number

folio

city, town

state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Cultural Resources Investigations for Proposed Construction of Double Track, North Half, Central Light Rail, Baltimore & Baltimore Co., MD

date 1999

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

federal state county local

city, town Crownsville

state MD

7. Description

Survey No. B-1313

Condition

- excellent
 good
 fair

- deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
 altered

Check one

- original site
 moved

date of move

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

Summary

The Jones Falls retaining walls can be found along the visible portions of Jones Falls in Baltimore. Much of the river was diverted through a system of subterranean pipes and now runs below the city streets. South of North Avenue, the Jones Falls disappears below city streets, reemerging south of Baltimore Street, where it runs channelized for several blocks before emptying into the Inner Harbor. The segment of the retaining walls surveyed starts at the North Avenue Bridge and runs north along the west side of the falls. The bank retained by the walls supports the rail yard currently owned by Amtrak.

General Description

The surveyed portion of the wall varies in height from approximately 20 feet to more than 50. It is constructed of random granite or gneiss ashlar and rubble with granite coping. At least one culvert or drainage opening is located on the wall. The round-arch opening spans about 10 feet and has regular granite voussoirs. The length of the surveyed portion is approximately 1000'.

8. Significance

Survey No. B-1313

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"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	

Specific dates: 1883-1886

Builder/Architect: Charles Hazelhurst Latrobe, engineer

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.

Statement of Significance

The Jones Falls retaining wall is an late-nineteenth-century public works project intended to prevent erosion and to control the Jones Falls through Baltimore. The project was undertaken between 1883 and 1886 by city engineer Charles Hazelhurst Latrobe. Channelizing the river through the city prevented the regular flooding suffered by Baltimoreans, and enabled permanent development to occur in areas where flooding had previously precluded such construction. The project has local significance for its impact on the city, though the wall has been replaced or shored up in places with modern rip-rap, potentially compromising its integrity. The entire length of the wall from the harbor to its northern terminus was not surveyed under the scope of this project. The surveyed section does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, as it has been partially replaced, and there is no evidence that the extant structure is representative of a unique or innovative technology.

History

Near annual inundation of Baltimore by the Jones Falls led to the channelization of the waterway by the city engineer during the late nineteenth century. Charles Hazelhurst Latrobe, grandson of the great British-born architect B. Henry Latrobe, designed a retaining wall system to contain the falls during periods of high water, and to stem erosion of the banks which contributed to siltation of the Inner Harbor, into which the Jones Falls empties. The retaining walls can be found along the visible portions of the Jones Falls in Baltimore. Much of the river was rerouted through a subterranean system of pipes in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and now runs below the city streets. South of North Avenue the Jones Falls disappears below city streets, reemerging south of Baltimore Street, where it runs channelized for several blocks before emptying into the Inner Harbor.

8. Significance (Continued)

Survey No. B-1313

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended _____

Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D

Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Comments: _____

[Signature]

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Date

8/5/00

[Signature]

Reviewer, NR Program

Date

8/14/00

[Handwritten mark]

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-1313

Baltimore Department of Public Works (BDPW)

1999 BDPW website. Available online at <<http://www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/dpw/>>. Accessed 9/20/1999.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property: 1000' (linear feet)

Quadrangle name Baltimore West 7.5'

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM Reference do NOT complete UTM references

zone easting northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

All contiguous portions of stone retaining wall north of the North Avenue Bridge.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kerri Culhane/Project Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc.

date 10/1999

street & number 5250 Cherokee Avenue, Suite 410

telephone 703/354-9737

city or town Alexandria

state Virginia

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
DHCP/DHCD
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032

**PRESERVATION VISION 2000; THE MARYLAND PLAN
STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

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:

- 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. Historic Period Themes:

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

IV. Resource Type:

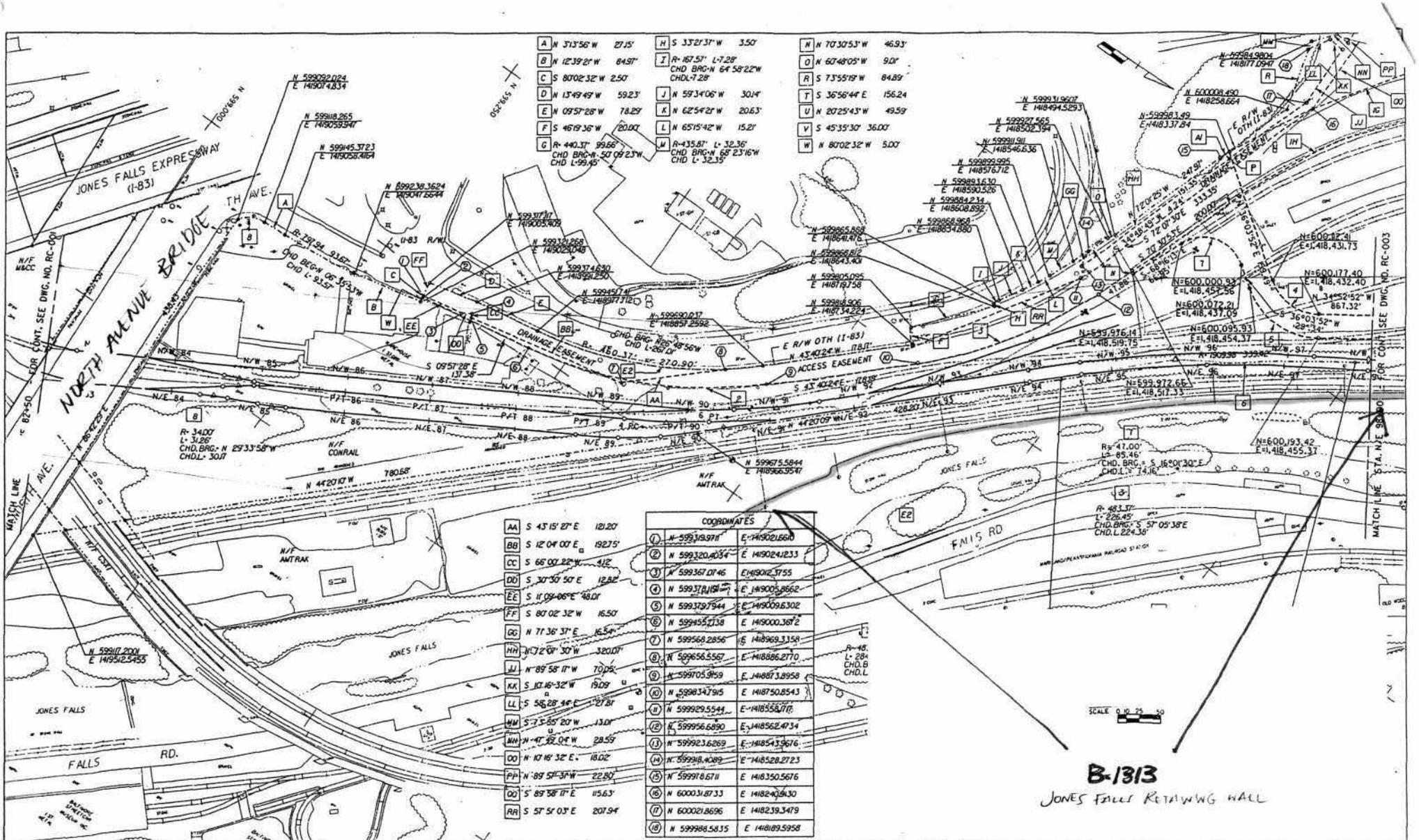
Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): GOVERNMENT: public works; retaining wall

Known Design Source: Charles Hazelhurst Latrobe, city engineer.

B-1313



A	N 313°56' W 27.15'	H	S 33°21'31" W 3.50'	N	N 70°30'53" W 46.93'
B	N 12°39'21" W 84.57'	J	R-167.51' L-7.28'	O	N 60°48'05" W 9.01'
C	S 80°02'32" W 2.50'	K	CHD BRG-N 64°58'22" W	R	S 73°55'19" W 84.89'
D	N 13°49'49" W 59.23'	L	CHD L-7.28'	T	S 36°56'44" E 156.24'
E	N 09°57'28" W 78.29'	M	N 59°34'06" W 30.14'	U	N 20°25'43" W 49.59'
F	S 46°19'36" W 20.00'	N	N 62°54'21" W 20.63'	V	S 45°35'30" W 36.00'
G	R-440.37' 99.66'	O	N 65°15'42" W 15.21'	W	N 80°02'32" W 5.00'
	CHD BRG-N 50°09'23" W	P	R-435.01' L-32.36'		
	CHD L-99.45'	Q	CHD BRG-W 68°23'16" W		
			CHD L-32.35'		

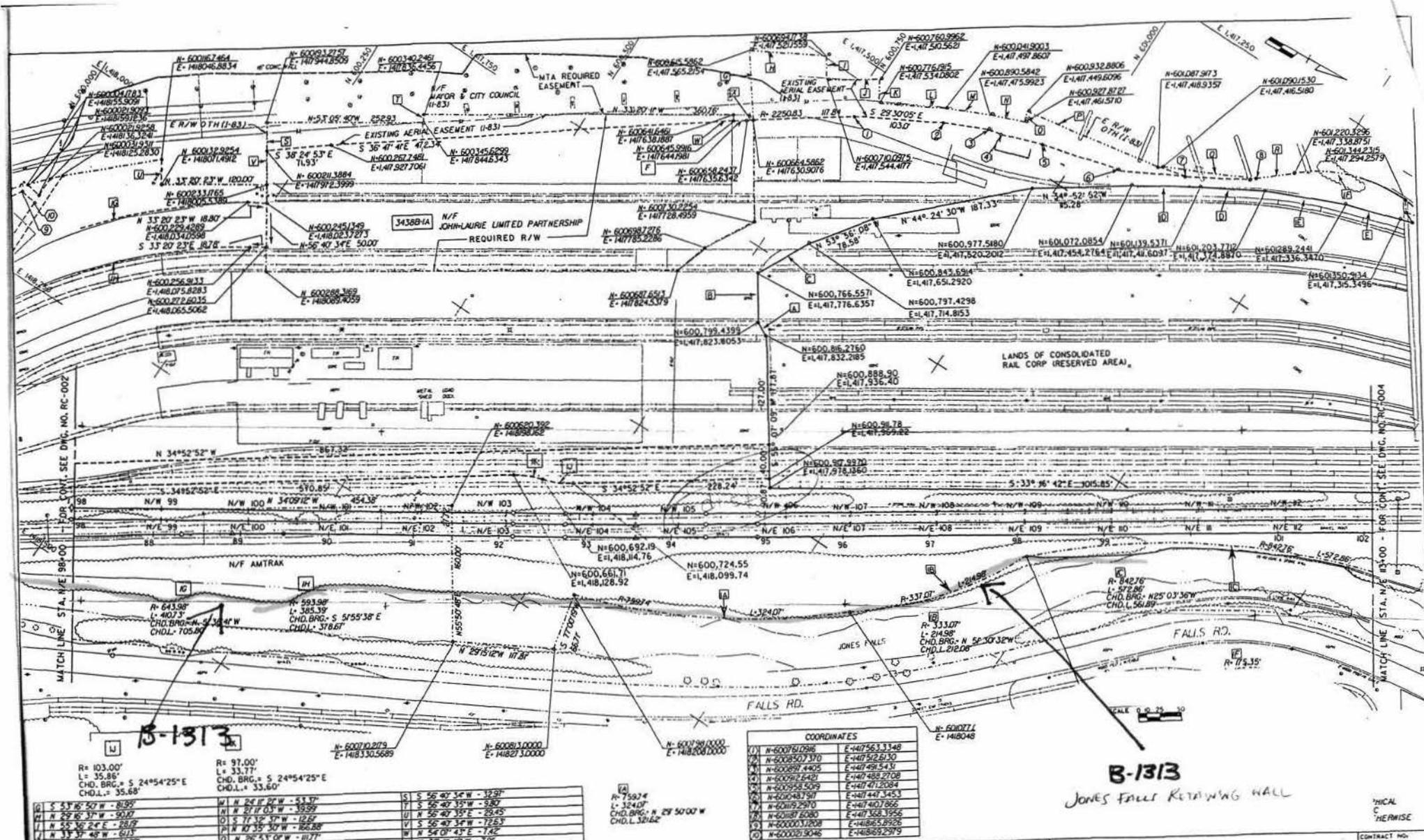
AA	S 43°15'27" E 181.20'
BB	S 12°04'00" E 192.75'
CC	S 66°02'22" W 412'
DD	S 30°30'50" E 12.86'
EE	S 11°09'06" E 48.01'
FF	S 80°02'32" W 16.50'
GG	N 71°36'37" E 16.54'
HH	N 17°20'30" W 320.01'
I	N 89°58'17" W 70.09'
J	S 10°16'32" W 19.09'
KK	S 56°28'46" E 27.81'
LL	S 73°85'20" W 13.01'
MM	N 47°42'04" W 28.59'
NN	N 10°16'32" E 18.02'
PP	N 89°57'31" W 22.80'
QQ	S 89°58'17" E 115.63'
RR	S 57°51'03" E 207.94'

COORDINATES	
①	N 5993193971 E 1419021660
②	N 5993204054 E 14190241233
③	N 5993670746 E 1419023755
④	N 5993711181 E 14190058662
⑤	N 5993797944 E 14190096302
⑥	N 5994552138 E 14190003672
⑦	N 5995692856 E 14189693158
⑧	N 5995655567 E 14188862770
⑨	N 5997053959 E 14188738958
⑩	N 5998347915 E 14187508543
⑪	N 5999295944 E 14185587716
⑫	N 5999566890 E 14185624734
⑬	N 5999236269 E 14185439676
⑭	N 5999184089 E 14185282723
⑮	N 5999168711 E 14183505676
⑯	N 6000318733 E 14182439330
⑰	N 6000218696 E 14182393479
⑱	N 5999885835 E 14181895958

SCALE 0 10 20 30

B-1313
JONES FALLS RETAINING WALL

B-1313



COORDINATES

1	N=600761096	E=1417563.3348
2	N=6008507370	E=141752261.30
3	N=6008974405	E=141749854.31
4	N=6009124221	E=141748827.08
5	N=6009583029	E=141747208.84
6	N=6009487397	E=1417447345.3
7	N=600922970	E=1417407866
8	N=600918080	E=1417368395.6
9	N=600903208	E=141865892.6
10	N=600919046	E=141869299.9

B-1313
JONES FALLS RETAINING WALL



B-1313

Jones Falls Retaining Wall

WEST BANK, JONES FALLS, NORTH OF NORTH AVE.

BALTIMORE, MD

K. CULLANE

8/1999

MD SHPO

TRANSITION BETWEEN MODERN RIP-RAP AND HISTORIC
GRANITE/GNEISS WALL VIEW TO WEST



B-1313

JONES FALLS RETAINING WALL
BALTIMORE CITY, MD

K. CULHANE

8/1999

MD SH80

WALL ALONG WEST BANK, JONES FALLS, NORTH OF NORTH AVENUE
VIEW TO NORTH WEST



B-1313

Jones Falls Retaining Wall

West bank, Jones Falls, north of North Avenue

Baltimore, MD

K. CURTANE

8/1999

MD SHPO

GRANITE/GNEISS WALL, WEST BANK JONES FALLS
BELOW AMTRAK TRAW YARD. VIEW TO NW.



B-1313

Jones Falls Retaining Wall
west bank, Jones Falls north of North Ave.
Baltimore, MD

K. CULANE

8/1999

MD SHPO

CULVERT BUILT INTO WALL. VIEW TO WEST