

BALTIMORE CITY - COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

CDBG SURVEY YEAR: MTA/Northeast Extension of the
Baltimore Metro

SURVEY NO.: B-4216

AREA: Jonestown

MAGI NO.:

ADDRESS: 1230 East Baltimore Street
CURRENT NAME:



BLOCK: LOT: LOT SIZE:
HEIGHT: 1½-3 MATERIALS: Brick
CONDITION: Good OWNER:
USE: Present--Mission ADDRESS:
Historic--commercial ACCESSIBLE:
DESIGNATION: LIBER/FOLIO:

HISTORIC NAME: Belfort Observatory
DATE: mid-18th century, ca.1896, 1918
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Edward H. Glidden (1918) and others
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE):

The Belfort Observatory Complex, 1230 E. Baltimore St., is located on the northwest corner of East Baltimore St. and N. Central Ave., in the Jonestown Planning District of central Baltimore, MD.. The complex consists of 3 buildings. The oldest, the house, faces Baltimore St.. It is a 1½ story, brick, side gable building with interior end chimneys. The houses's primary facade has been boarded over. It has 2 thin gable roof dormers and a projecting hipped roof dormer between them. The gable ends are trimmed with scroll cut bargeboards. Directly to the rear of the house is a 2 story, stuccoed, rectangular brick factory building. It is a plain structure with a thin belt course between the first and second floors and a dentiled cornice. To the east of the factory is a 3 story eclectic brick building, which seems to have at one time served as the entrance to the factory. The building has undergone some alteration yet most of its ornament remains. There is an ornate door surround with fluted Doric columns supporting thick brackets, between which is a low relief of a crouching lion. It is a representation of the Belfort Lion of Belfort, France, the home of Julien P. Friez, the founder of the Observatory. The second floor is highlighted by paired center windows under a round arch in a stone gable. There is a round Doric column separating the two windows. The third floor is 9 bays wide with rounded Romanesque windows. An overhanging tiled roof is supported by brackets from the third floor. The entrance was built in 1918, designed by the architect Edward H. Glidden.

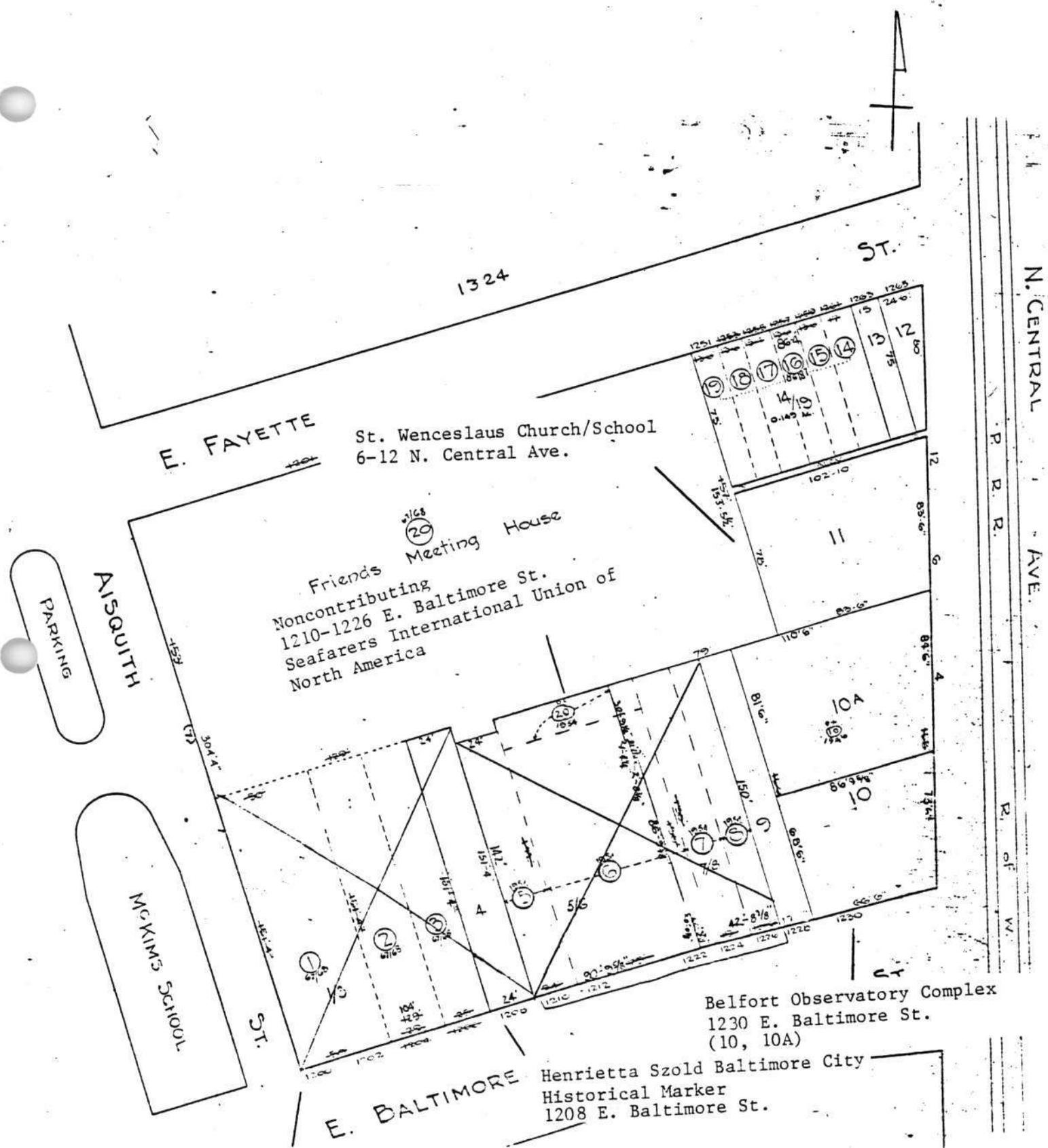
SIGNIFICANCE:

AREA: Architecture, Science LEVEL: Local

The Belfort Observatory would be eligible for the National Register for both its architectural significance and the scientific contributions of the Belfort Company. Besides being an unusual grouping of buildings and, in part, the work of a well known Baltimore architect--Glidden, a section of the house is reported to be an 18th century dwelling. If that is true it would be one of the oldest surviving homes in Baltimore City. The house does appear on the Poppleton 1819 map. It is labeled as the McKim Free School. Deeds show that at the end of the eighteenth century the land at 1230 Baltimore was held by trustees for the Society of Friends. The house could have been used for the school before the permanent McKim was built. Julien P. Friez received title to the property in 1896. Before Friez purchased it the house was the home of Green's Bicycle Club. Friez was a prolific scientist and inventor. He had many patents to his name and was the superintendent of the Mergenthaler Manufacturing Co. when the linotype was being perfected. In 1897 he established the Belfort Observatory and moved his business to the site. Friez commissioned the factory building, ca. 1896, and the entrance building. For many years Belfort was a successful weather observatory and factory, producing weather, aviation, and automobile instruments. During the first decades of the 20th century they were the principle contractor for the government. In 1942 the company, by SOURCES: then the Bendix-Friez Co., moved to Baltimore County. A number of factories SURVEYOR AND DATE occupied the buildings until 1970 when it became the Christian Community Center. It is now the Baltimore Rescue Mission.

SOURCES: Book of Maryland Men and Institutions. Maryland Biography Association. 1920.; CHAP, Vertical File.; Enoch Pratt Free Library, Biography File, Quarry File, Vertical File.; Friez, Sister Mary Pierre. Belfort My Eighteenth Century Home. 1976.; Poppleton Map, 1819.; Sanborn Maps.

SURVEYOR AND DATE: Mary K. Mannix, March 1987

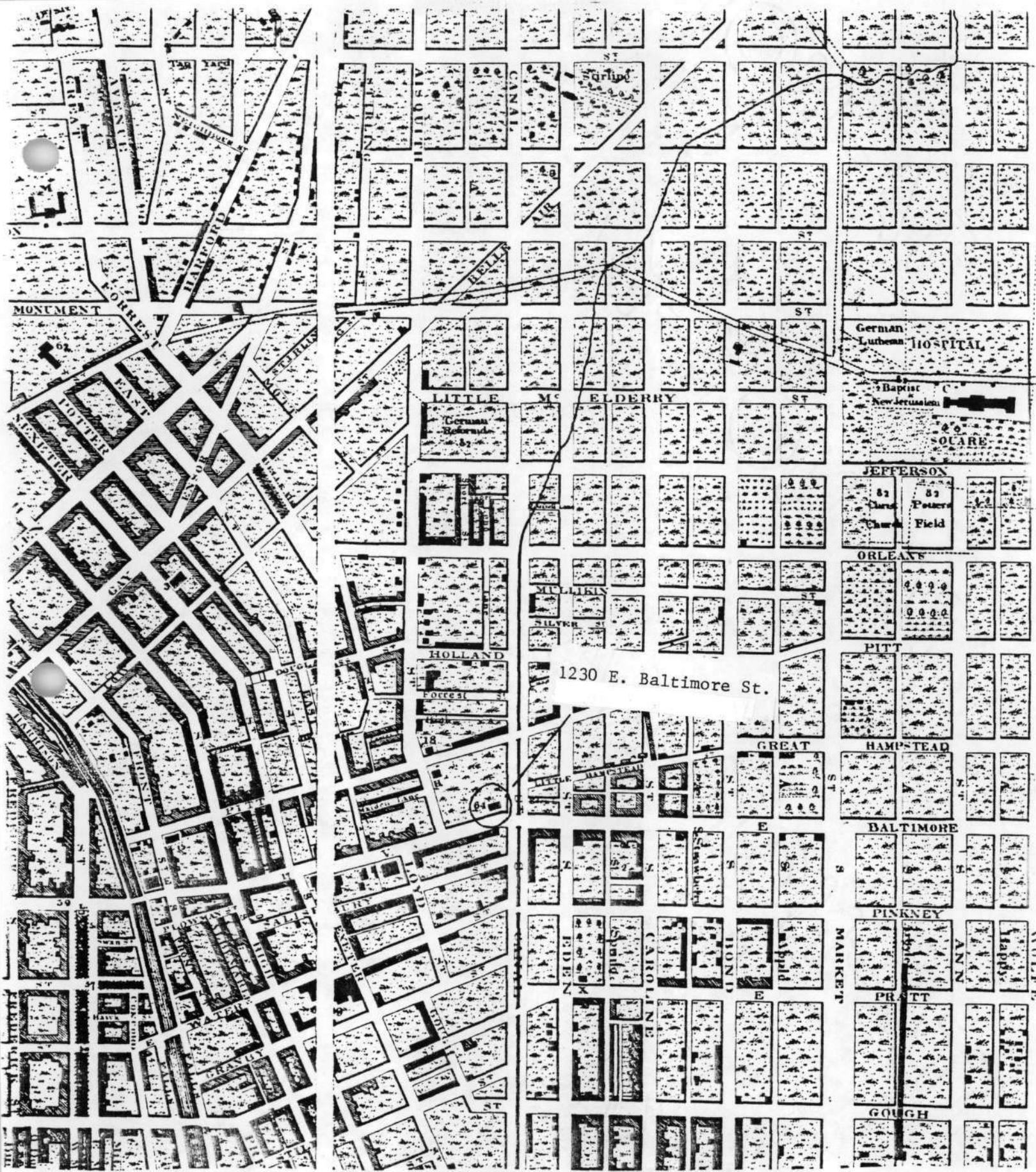


Park
1200-1208 E. Baltimore St.

Belfort Observatory Complex
1230 E. Baltimore St.
(10, 10A)

Henrietta Szold Baltimore City
Historical Marker
1208 E. Baltimore St.

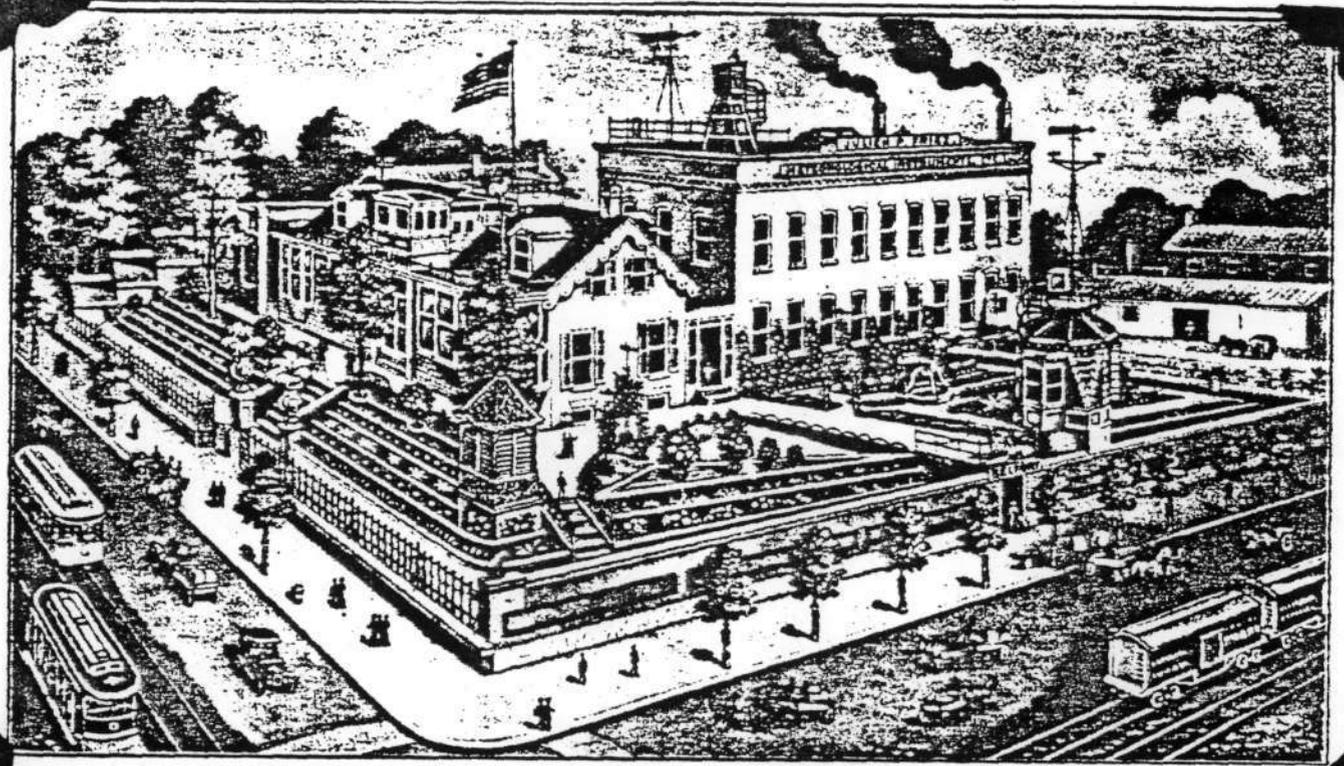
CITY OF BALTIMORE
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
 BUREAU OF SURVEYS
 PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION
 WARD 5 SECTION 8
 BLOCK 1339



T. H. Poppleton. Plan of the City of Baltimore. 1818.

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BELFORT METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATORY



This drawing shows the appearance, in about 1910, of Belfort Observatory, the first privately owned weather observatory in the country set up by Julien P. Friez in ~~the~~ ~~Seventies~~.

THIS IS A COMPOSITE PICTURE. IT IS HISTORICALLY VALUABLE IN THAT THE ARTIST ACCENTED EVERY MINUTE DETAIL.

Sister Mary Pierre Frieze. Belfort My Eighteenth Century Home. 1967. Maryland Historical Society. Library.

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Belfort Observatory Complex. 26 September 1929.

C.H.A.P. Vertical Files.

B-4216
Belfort Observatory
4 Central Avenue (formerly 1230 E. Baltimore Street)
Block 1339, Lot 009 (formerly lots 009, 010, & 010A)
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.

