

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-4325

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

15 N. Howard Street

historic

New Deal Opticians

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 15 N. Howard Street  not for publication

city, town Baltimore  vicinity of  congressional district Seventh

state Maryland  county Baltimore

**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 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 New Deal Opticians/A & D Real Estate

street & number B-2 Shipping Creek Drive telephone no.:

city, town Stevensville state and zip code MD 21666

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse JFC1623

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610 liber 423

city, town Baltimore MD folio

state

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-4325

### 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.

Resource Count: 1

This 1938 enframed window wall commercial building faces west on N. Howard Street and abuts two partywall structures. The street frontage is 27'11" and the depth is 100'.

Coursed stone piers runs up the edges of the first and second story. A display case abuts the north pier. The remainder of the first story is recessed underneath the second. The glass curtain wall is divided into three bays. The first bay contains glass double doors and a fixed transom and sidelight to the north side. The second and third bays have two large plate glass windows that run floor to ceiling. Metal mutins divide the two plates.

Within the vestibule of the first-story recess is a fixed, freestanding boxed glass display case standing on metal legs. The vestibule floor is laid with tan tiles. A roll-down theft guard is suspended from the second story and runs down over the recessed entrance and display case.

The second story is covered with mock wood panelling of a circa 1950-1960 date. There is no fenestration. Plastic letters spelling out the name of the store are superimposed on the mock panelling.

The interior is finished with wallboard and acoustic tile ceiling. Display shelves for glasses line the walls.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. B-4325

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1938 Builder/Architect unknown

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.

The architectural design of this 1938, two-story, one-bay building is a good example of an enframed window wall commercial building in the late Art Deco style. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth writes that the enframed window wall design was "most commonly used for retail stores" and that the design "reflects an effort to give greater order to the facade composition of small and moderate-sized commercial buildings."<sup>1</sup> The late Deco style elements are the use of pressed bricks that emphasize the simple but massive rectilinear shapes of the side piers and second-story wall (now re-sided).

In this storefront, the use of traditional material such as brick and glass were combined in new ways with the turn-of-the-century structural abilities of steel framing to open up the first story into a large, recessed glass window wall. The cut-in deeply recessed entrance that permitted additional display areas along the walls, or in this case on within the vestibule floor, was a common feature of post-1930 commercial architecture. The unusual freestanding display cases are not found elsewhere in the neighborhood.

The two-story height of this retail/office space reveals the changing commercial nature of the unit block of N. Howard Street. Unlike the nineteenth century, when the neighborhood was used for combination commercial/light manufacturing businesses, during the twentieth century the manufacturing component moved elsewhere. Nor were any new functions, such as corporate or business offices needing multi-storied space, moving into the neighborhood. As a result, the two-story design of the building adequately fulfilled the limited commercial needs of the occupants.

The optician reports that the store was built in 1938 during the era of the "New Deal," thus the inspiration for the name of the store.

The 1930s enframed window wall is one of only a few examples in the district dating to this period.

<sup>1</sup> Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street, pp. 69, 68.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-4325

Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1987).

## 10. Geographical Data

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

Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad

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

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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	Diane Shaw		
organization	C.H.A.P., Room 1037	date	August 12, 1991
street & number	417 E. Fayette Street	telephone	(301) 396-4866
city or town	Baltimore	state	MD

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
301-514-7600

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA**HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization:  
Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:  
Modern Period, 1930-present

Historic Period Themes:  
Architecture  
Economics

Resource Type:  
Building

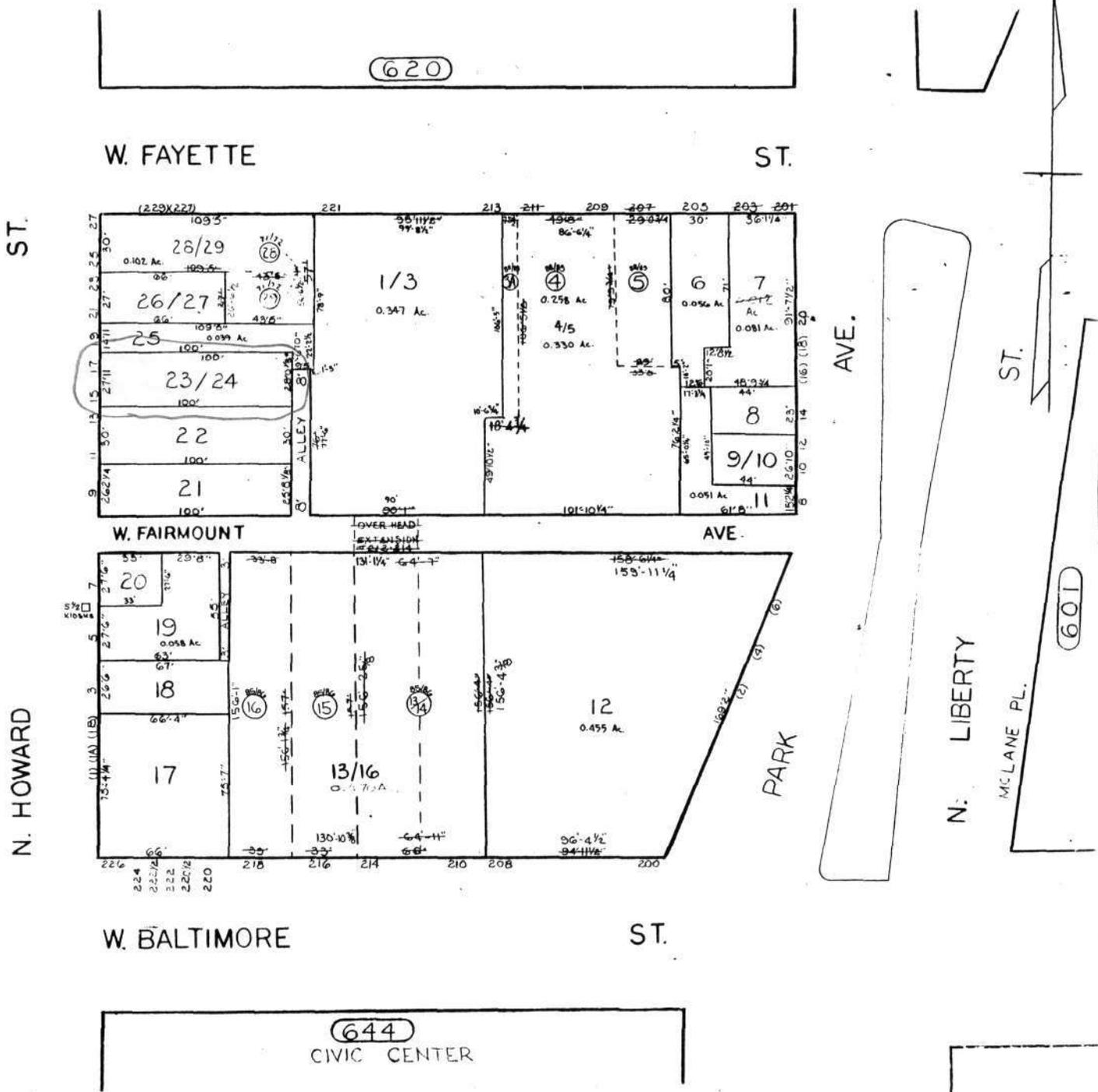
Historic Environment:  
Urban

Historic Function and Use:  
Commercial optical shop

Known Design Source:  
None

REVISIONS

T 28/29 PER P.L.S.; C.S.H. 409  
T 7 ASS'M CHANGED PER LETTER C.S.H. 84-052  
P 1/3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 19, 25 & 28/29 ASS'M CHANGED PER PLS. C.S.H. 84-219  
T 5 13/14, 15 & 16 DIM CORR PER DEED, C.S.H. 85-487  
T 5 13/14, 15 & 16 CONS'D PER APP. C.S.H. 86-253  
T 3A, 4 & 5 CONS'D PER O.O. & App. C.S.H. 85-467



CITY OF BALTIMORE  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION  
WARD 4 SECTION 10  
BLOCK 633

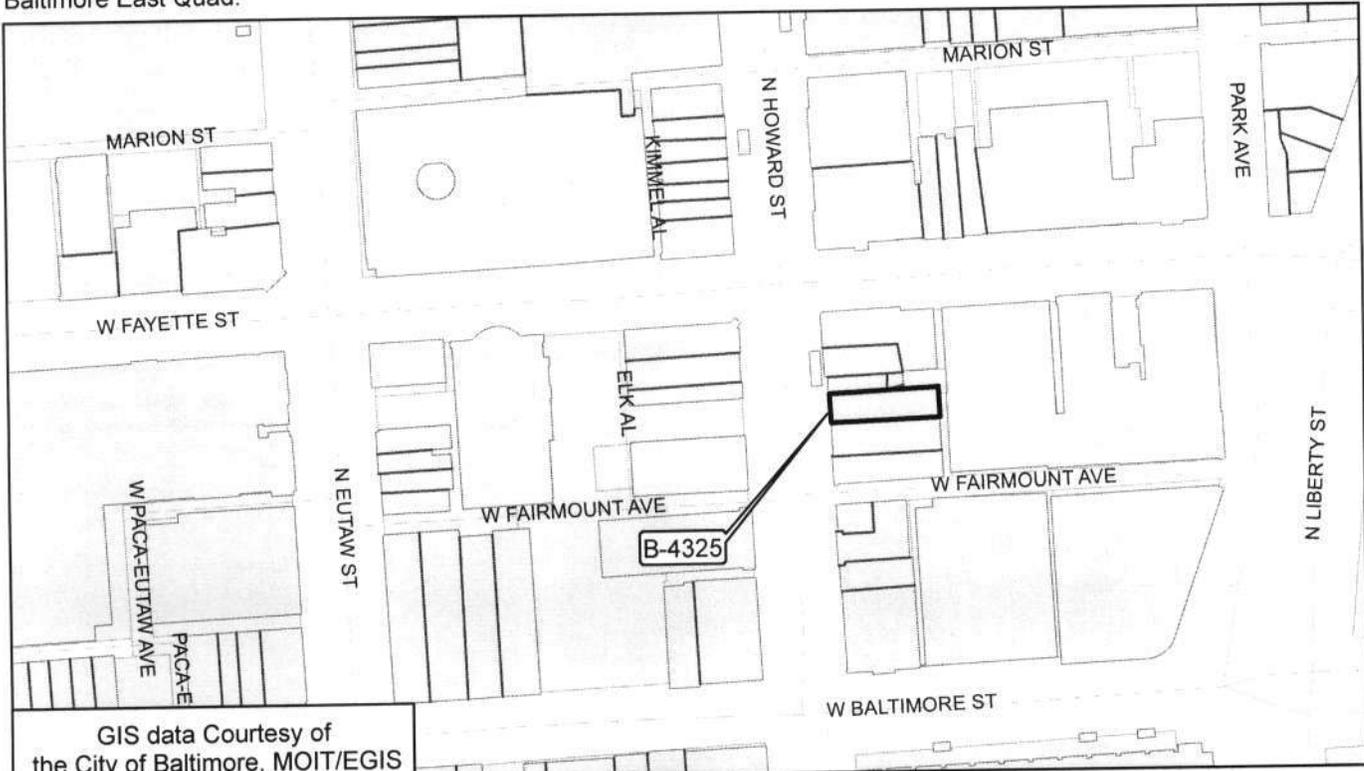
SCALE 1"=50'-0" DATE DEC. 1966

NOTICE

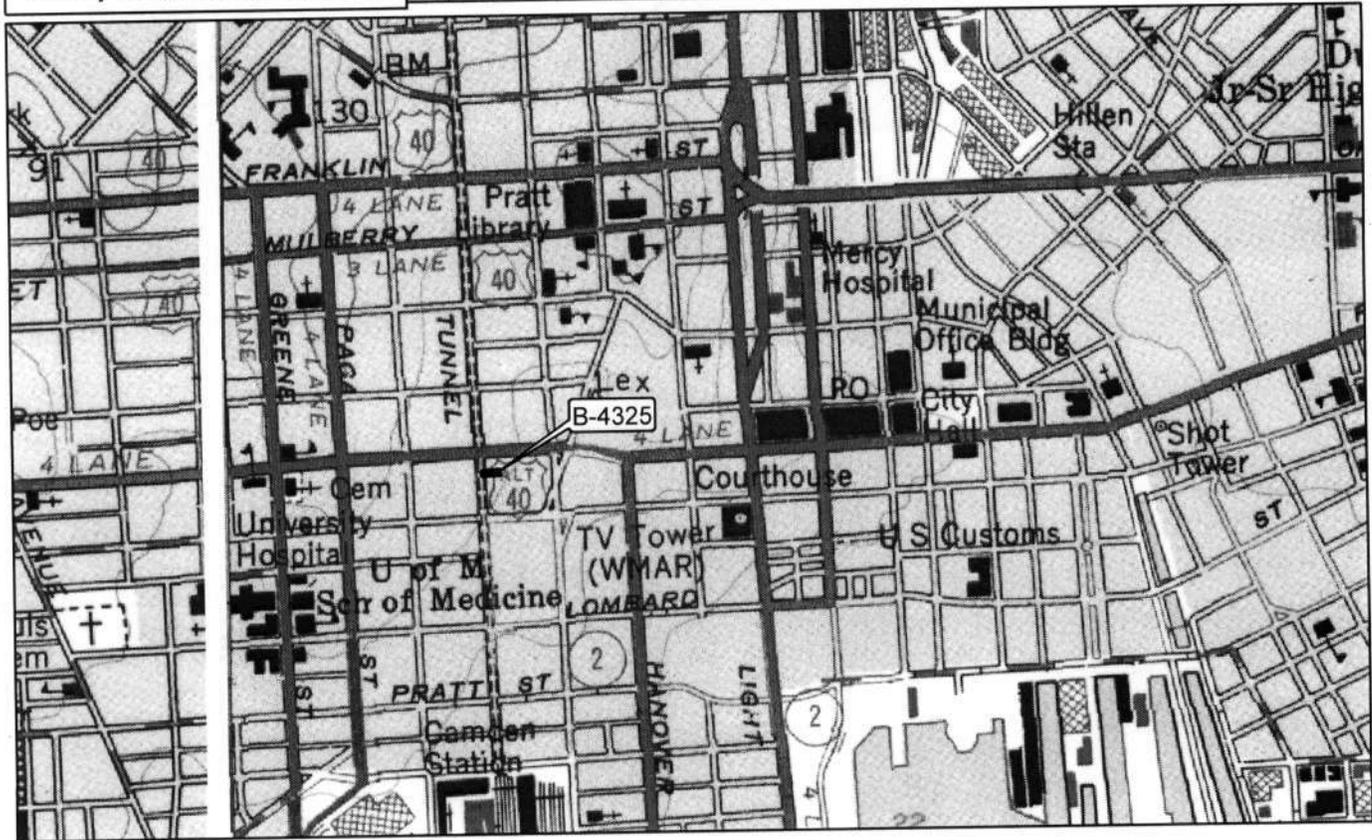
THIS IS A REAL PROPERTY PLAT AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER ARTICLE 76(d) OF THE CITY CHARTER IT IS COMPILED FROM TITLE AND OTHER SOURCES AND IS NOT AN AUTHENTIC SURVEY.

RED BY P.W.

B-4325  
New Deal Opticians  
15 N. Howard Street  
Block 0633, Lot 023  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad.



GIS data Courtesy of  
the City of Baltimore, MOIT/EGIS





INTERNATIONAL  
JEWELRY

New World Optical

15

new world optical

EXPRESS  
SERVICE  
AVAILABLE

KIDS  
PLAY

Children's Wear

B-4325

15 N. Howard St.

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

8/91

Maryland SHPO

Facade, west elevation

V1