NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Montgomery Ward Warehouse & Retail Store

other name/site number B-4616

2. Location

street & number 1000 S. Monroe Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Baltimore ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21230

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 8-8-00

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

B-4616

Montgomery Ward Warehouse & Retail Store
Name of Property

Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland
County and State

Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ public-local
- ☒ private
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- ☐ district
- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	5	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/warehouse
Commerce/department store

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements:
Commercial Style
Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete
roof Built-up tar
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet 7-1

B-4616

Montgomery Ward Warehouse & Retail Store
Name of Property

Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance
1925-1950

Significant Dates
1925 and 1927

Significant Persons
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
McCaully, W. H. (Engineer of Construction)

Wells Brothers Construction Co. (Builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by HAER #

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other: Name of repository:

B-4616

Montgomery Ward Warehouse & Retail Store
Name of Property

Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 16.24 acres

UTM References Baltimore West, MD quad
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Zone	Easting	Northing
1 18	358040	4348730
2 18	358340	4348380
3 18	358220	4348280
4 18	357900	4348640

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Fred B. Shoken
organization
date February 15, 2000
street & number 1707 Park Avenue
telephone (410) 669-5669
city or town Baltimore
state MD zip code 21217

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Samuel K. Himmelrich, Jr., Manager Carroll Park L.L.C. c/o Himmelrich Associates
street & number 200 Mt. Washington Mill, 1340 Smith Avenue
telephone (410) 779-1234
city or town Baltimore
state Md. zip code 21209

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Description Summary

Located on a 16.24 acre parcel of land in southwest Baltimore, the Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store is a mammoth eight story (plus penthouse) concrete structure overlooking Carroll Park. Its immediate surroundings are other industrial buildings, railroad tracks and a public park, including a 9 hole municipal golf course. The main building is roughly shaped like a squared-off number "4." It has a 642′ front facade on Monroe Street facing the park. A penthouse tower at the main entrance bay features a balcony and is capped by a flagpole. Sections of the main building are defined by slightly protruding bays and pronounced roof line details. The eighth floor features segmental arched windows capped by keystones and flanked by concrete ornamentation influenced by Art Deco design. The northern building sections flank a former train shed. A narrow bridge encloses an 80′ by 300′ open courtyard above the shed. A second, smaller train shed is located adjacent to the railroad siding on the building's western elevation. The building houses over 1,200,000 square feet of floor space flooded by light from approximately 1,000 large multi-paned, steel frame, windows. Concrete columns 20 feet on center penetrate largely undivided interior spaces. Ceiling heights are approximately 16′ on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 8th floors, and 12′ on the remaining floors. Major alterations include: a 1960s canopy and shuttered ground level store windows on the Monroe Street facade, the enclosure of the train shed on the northern elevation, and drop ceilings hiding original entrance details on the first floor interior. The overall condition of the building is good with the exception of peeling paint and some leaking pipes. The large, 1 story high "north building" dates from c. 1940. It was built as a mail order and retail warehouse adjacent to the railroad switch track.

General Description

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store was built in two stages. The original building was only 464′ long on Monroe Street. Within two years of its completion, two 200′ by 142′ building sections designed to be identical to the original structure were added to the building and flank the main train shed. This addition offset the main entrance on Monroe Street which was originally centered along the front facade.

The main entrance comprises three bays. The original triple segmental arched entrance extended above the first floor. It was removed in the early 1960s and replaced by a flat rock faced finish surmounted by a projecting canopy extending into the front parking lot. The central entrance bay is punctuated by tripartite fenestration featuring a central window, four panes wide, flanked by three pane wide windows. The other windows of the central bay are two-part, each four panes wide. The entrance bay is nine stories high with a tenth floor forming a tower. Segmental arched end windows on the ninth floor are flanked by large projecting Art Deco inspired geometric ornaments. The tenth floor tower bay features a double door set into a decorative surround with access to a massive concrete balcony.

Building Section #1 south of the entrance is ten bays wide. The southernmost bay, enclosing a stair tower, projects slightly from the facade and is defined by tripartite windows with three panes wide sections. A pronounced roof line defines the end of the building section. It is capped by a segmental arched crown and decorations mimicking the entrance bay. Above the ground level, a portion of the original end entrance surround is extant over the 1960s canopy. The other windows on the Monroe Street facade are wider comprising three, four pane wide sections. However, the tripartite windows just inside the end and entrance bays feature four pane wide central sections flanked by three bay wide end sections. The central sections of the steel frame windows feature hopper windows which can be opened out for ventilation. Three part panels define floor levels on each bay and are penetrated by a small central scupper at every other bay.

This first building section is only 84′ wide and features four bays along Washington Boulevard. The Washington Boulevard elevation is similar to the front facade. However, the two central tripartite windows feature 5 pane wide central sections flanked by three pane wide ends. The western elevation of the building section features flatter details and lacks the keystones at the roof line. Windows are slightly wider. Each three-part window feature five pane wide central sections flanked by four pane wide

ends. The central window section is only four panes wide for the bay immediately inside the end bay. A two story high boiler plant connects to the building along this elevation as well as a later addition to the retail store. A balcony passageway also cuts diagonally at the end of this elevation on the fourth floor level. Three passenger elevators and a stair tower are located at the northwestern corner of this building section.

Building Section #2 is styled in a similar manner as the first building section. There are ten bays along the Monroe Street facade with a pronounced end bay enclosing a stair tower. This building section and the remaining three are 142′ wide as opposed to the 84′ wide first building section. A two bay wide passageway connects to Building Section #3 to the west. Both the southern elevation facing Washington Boulevard and the western elevation facing the courtyard of these sections are less decorative than the Monroe Street front facade and feature slightly wider windows. The central bay on the courtyard and northern end bay enclose elevator towers.

Building Section #3 is identical to second building section, but since no exterior elevation fronts Carroll Park, all feature more restrained detailing. Large neon letters spelling out "Montgomery Ward" were installed along the roof line of the southern building elevation in 1951. It was later removed, but the support structure for this sign remains. Adjacent to the railroad siding, a 36′ wide train shed is attached to this building section. Exterior finishes of this train shed are compatible to the rest of the main building.

Building Section #4 and Building Section #5 were added within two years of the completion of the original three building sections. They are each 200′ by 142′. The Monroe Street front facade of building section #4 duplicates the details of the other building sections on Monroe Street. The remaining elevations feature more restrained detailing. An 80′ long steel passageway clad in corrugated panels connects the two building sections approximately 60′ from the northern building elevation. This passageway encloses the open courtyard above the central train shed. Windows punctuate the bridge only on the northern elevation. Elevator towers are located along the southern and central bays of the courtyard elevations Stair towers are located on the northernmost bay along the courtyard.

The interior of the building is primarily made up of large open spaces penetrated by round reinforced concrete columns 20 feet on center. The diameter of the columns is reduced as loads diminish on upper floor levels. The columns support 6" high, 8' by 8' plinth blocks. Plank formed poured in place slabs form floors and ceilings throughout the building. Outer

wall surfaces are also concrete. Brick partition walls with sliding industrial metal fire doors separate building sections 2 and 4, and building sections 3 and 5. Radiators located below large industrial windows heat the building. Lighting and ventilation is accomplished primarily from large industrial windows augmented by overhead fluorescent lights installed at a later date. Stairways are steel and concrete with plain metal pipe railings. Wooden racks and conveyor belts are located along some floor levels. Corkscrew type chutes allow for the swift movement of merchandise from upper to lower floors. A circular stairway leads to the penthouse tower which houses a large water tank. Many of the lavatories have remained unchanged throughout the building's history. The building features an extensive exposed sprinkler system.

The decorative main entrance on Monroe Street features marble floors and plaster ceilings with egg and dart and acanthus leaf motifs. The round columns were originally enclosed within squared-off wood panels, but they have been removed. The decorative ceiling is hidden by drop acoustical tile. Modernized interior finishes were added to the retail store space which functioned until 1985. Round interior columns on the second floor store level feature a slightly decorative cap as compared to the Spartan industrial finish throughout warehouse spaces.

The roof of the central train shed is supported by a steel truss framework. The interior space is 22′ high. A railroad siding original ran directly into the shed providing direct access for shipping and receiving. Railroad tracks are no longer evident in the interior, but portions of a later conveyor system are extant which was used to move goods throughout the building. This train shed, the second train shed adjacent to building section #3, and the main building are all contributing elements.

Directly north of the main building is the one story high "north building." It was originally built for additional warehouse space between 1933 and 1941. An insurance map dated July 10-11, 1933 does not show a building at this location, however, it is shown on a plot plan dated June 30, 1941. This contributing building was built along the railroad switch track leading to the main train shed. Even though it has a large floor plan, the building's relatively low scale does not block views of the main building nor does it detract from its appearance. In fact, the exterior materials are similar in appearance to the main building, and it retains large multi-paned windows. Functionally it is compatible with the other historic structures.

This masonry building faced with stucco is 440′ long along Monroe Street, 101′ wide on its southern elevation and 250′ wide on the northern elevation. The western elevation steps back along the railroad tracks and includes a loading dock covered by a metal canopy. Several loading doors

and large multi-pane industrial steel windows punctuate the brick building walls. Other large industrial windows provide lighting and ventilation on the southern and northern elevations. The 15' building height recedes along the windowless Monroe Street eastern elevation as the topography rises at the northwest corner of the site. The interior of the building includes large open spaces and several smaller storage rooms. Steel columns break up interior spaces and support steel beams and the roof.

Five ancillary buildings which do not contribute to the character of the main building were connected to the original structure at a later date or built near it. A 55' by 150' masonry auto service building and a 16' high store addition connects to building section #1. An adjacent garden shop and outdoor sales facility are located directly west of these additions. A receiving building which wraps around building section #5 features eighteen loading bays and stands on the former site of the railroad siding leading to the main train shed. A 30' by 30' two car garage stands next to the railroad siding just west of this irregularly shaped building.

Parking lots surround the building on three sides. The railroad siding bounds the property on the west. There are no substantial landscaping features on the site. A large one story distribution center building was constructed west of the railroad siding in 1963. It is connected to the main building by a tunnel underneath the railroad tracks. This building, which was sold off separately from the historic structure, and an adjacent abandoned parking lot on Washington Boulevard are not included as a part of this nomination.

In spite of non-contributing additions and some deterioration, the property retains its historic integrity. Except for the installation of canopies along Monroe Street, the main building is virtually intact retaining original materials, fenestration, decorative elements and industrial character. The later additions and structures while not entirely in character of the main building do not greatly impact the integrity of the structure. They are primarily one story in height and located to the back and side of the main building, and therefore do not greatly detract from the great size and original appearance of this structure.

Statement of Significance

The Baltimore Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store is architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C as an example of a type of large fireproof warehouse of the early 20th century. Among its distinctive characteristics are: extensive use of reinforced concrete as a fire safety measure, installation of large multi-paned windows to provide light and ventilation for the building, incorporation of a train shed into the building design for ease of shipping and handling materials, and the early stylistic combination of Commercial style architectural elements with Art Deco details. Designed by in-house company Engineer of Construction, W. H. McCaully, it is one of nine large warehouses built by Montgomery Wards in the United Sates. The building is historically significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the growth of the mail order/catalog business in the United States, the role of government and civic associations in attracting new businesses to Baltimore City, and the centralization of retail stores in the early twentieth century. This was the seventh of nine large warehouses built by Montgomery Ward and Company throughout the United States in the early twentieth century representing the peak of the mail order/catalog industry. Montgomery Ward located its Atlantic Coast Headquarters in Baltimore largely due to the efforts of the city government and the Industrial Bureau of the Association of Commerce to attract new businesses - an early example of a public economic development program. The building not only housed a regional warehouse, but a major retail outlet. For nearly sixty years, Montgomery Ward was a major business in Baltimore. It employed thousands of people, sent out hundreds of thousands of catalogs emblazoned with the name Baltimore to customers throughout the eastern seaboard, and provided a new shopping alternative to generations of Baltimoreans. The period of significance, 1925-1950, extends from the date of the building's construction to a point fifty years in the past.

Resource History and Historic Context

The historical significance of this building is linked to the importance of Montgomery Ward and Company, which pioneered the mail order industry in the United States. As one of only nine buildings of its kind in the country, the Baltimore plant played a major role in this commercial enterprise. Montgomery Ward and Company was founded in Chicago in 1872 with a one page price list sent out to members of a farming organization. Although other retail establishments sold goods by mail order prior to this date, none were exclusively mail order operations and none could match Montgomery Ward in the variety of items sold. By 1883, its catalog had grown to 240 pages and sold 10,000 items. By the turn of the century, its catalog was over a thousand pages with 70,000 items. Total sales were over $8,7000,000 and the company built a huge warehouse in Chicago to house its operations.

Montgomery Ward flourished in an era when the population of the United States was predominately rural. Farmers were isolated from manufacturers of goods and depended upon small general stores, peddlers and retail middle men to purchase necessities. Farmers could purchase some items directly from manufacturers, but many businesses did not sell directly to consumers. Montgomery Ward filled a market niche by purchasing large quantities of merchandise directly from manufacturers, advertising these products through catalogs and selling them directly to farming communities at a lower price than was previously available. The low cost of mail and shipping rates turned the catalog businesses into a profitable venture.

In the 1890s, Sears, Roebuck and Company began to compete directly with Montgomery Ward and by the early twentieth century surpassed Montgomery Ward in sales due to aggressive advertising and cheaper prices. Throughout the early twentieth century, Montgomery Ward and Sears competed with each other in the lucrative mail order/catalog business. In order to operate more efficiently, and ship goods throughout the country, regional warehouses were established. Montgomery Ward branched out to Kansas City, Missouri in 1907, followed by Forth Worth, Texas and Portland, Oregon. Expansion continued after World War I, with Montgomery Ward opening warehouses in new regions. The St. Paul, Minnesota and Oakland, California warehouses were built in the early 1920s. Until this time, all of its major operations were located in the West and Mid-West. An eastern seaboard location was needed to efficiently process orders on the East Coast.

The Baltimore Association of Commerce, through its Industrial Bureau first contacted Montgomery Ward officials in the autumn of 1919 suggesting

Baltimore as a location for an eastern regional headquarters. A complete report was submitted to company officials the following year, however an economic downturn from 1920 to 1921 foreclosed the possibility of expansion. It wasn't until March 1924, that Montgomery Ward officials resumed discussions with the Industrial Bureau to find a possible site for its Atlantic Coast headquarters. Philadelphia was competing with Baltimore to attract this business.

Montgomery Ward specifically requested a site with railroad access next to park land. The most promising location was a ten acre parcel of land across Monroe Street from Carroll Park. The site had been purchased by the Board of Park Commissioners to expand Carroll Park, however it had been leased to the federal government for use as a munitions plant during World War I. After the war, the Lyk-Glass Auto Painting Corporation occupied the site.

The Vice President of Montgomery Ward, George B. Everitt met with Mayor Jackson, the City Solicitor and members of the Park Board in August 1924. As a result of this meeting Baltimore City officials agreed to sell this park property to Montgomery Ward for the construction of their eastern warehouse. With the approval of the City Council and Board of Estimates, the land was sold for $115,000 - $11,500 per acre, which was approximately $3,000 more than its assessed value. The proceeds of the sale were turned over to the Park Board for use in purchasing park property at other locations.

In an open letter to the people of Baltimore printed in the Baltimore Sun of July 26, 1925, Theodore F. Merseles, President of Montgomery Ward and Company, explained that fine public spirit and interest shown by officials and citizens of Baltimore was a major factor influencing the company to select Baltimore for its Eastern Headquarters. He thanked the Mayor, City Council, Park Commissioners, and Industrial Bureau of the Association of Commerce, among others, for invaluable aid.

This effort to sell park land to a private business entity was an early example of a private-public partnership to help spur economic development. Most businesses in this era acquired land privately. The role of both a civic association and the city government to actively assist a private entity to acquire a site for business purposes foreshadowed modern day economic development programs of state and local governments.

Montgomery Ward was an important addition to Baltimore's commercial life. Not only would it employ approximately 1,500 residents, but it would also purchase locally manufactured goods for sale through its catalog. In

addition, the Montgomery Ward Catalog would advertise Baltimore to its customers. "Baltimore" was prominently displayed on all catalogs sent out throughout the eastern seaboard, newspaper advertisements, sales circulars, and merchandise shipped to customers. The amount of mail generated by this company required its own postal zone in WWII and increased mail receipts in Baltimore by an estimated 10%.

In order to house this immense business concern, a warehouse of gigantic proportions was designed by the Montgomery Ward, in-house Engineer of Construction, W. H. McCaully. He also designed Montgomery Ward warehouses in Portland, Oregon, St. Paul, Minnesota and Oakland, California.

Since this facility was to handle orders and ship goods throughout the Eastern Seaboard, a mammoth building was needed. One of the main requirements was for fireproof construction, hence reinforced concrete was used throughout (walls, floors, structural columns and stairwells). Since wood was only used in the decorative lobby space and for storage racks, the building was virtually fire-proof - an important feature for a building housing a wealth of merchandise.

An innovative floor plan was devised roughly shaped like a squared-off numeral "4" in order to allow light and ventilation to the large open spaces throughout the building. Nearly 1,000 large multi-paned windows were utilized in this effort. For the most part the building was illuminated by sunlight rather than electric light and was cooled by natural ventilation rather than electric fans, thereby lowering operating costs for this huge structure.

The efficient shipping and handling of goods was accomplished by incorporating a train shed within the design of the warehouse. While it was common for warehouse structures of this era to include a railroad siding for shipping and delivery, the train shed of this building was a central design element. The warehouse wings of the building wrapped around the central train shed and freight elevators were positioned along walls bordering the shed to speed the movement of goods throughout the building. Corkscrew chutes allowed for the quick movement of merchandise from upper to lower floors.

Although primarily a utilitarian structure, decorative elements combine three-part windows representative of the Commercial Style with roof ornamentation representative of Art Deco design. This represented a break from traditional Baltimore architecture which was often conservative and slow to embrace new styles. Although not a fully-realized example of the Art Deco style, the Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store predates all

other examples of Art Deco design in Baltimore as illustrated in Sherri Cucchiella's book Baltimore Deco.

This building was nationally recognized for excellence in warehouse design. The February 1926 issue of Architecture magazine illustrated an article on industrial buildings with a photograph of the Montgomery Ward warehouses for Baltimore and St. Paul.

The original building had a 464 foot frontage on Monroe Street and contained 700,000 square feet. Within two years the building was extended an additional 200 feet to the north, increasing its floor space to 1,200,000 square feet. It was called the largest mercantile building in Baltimore City and continues to dwarf other buildings of its type.

The Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Retail Store is much larger than other multi-story industrial structures in Baltimore. Since it was built shortly before the Depression, few commercial concerns approaching this size were constructed until post-World War II economic recovery. A few similar early twentieth century buildings were built in and around downtown Baltimore. The Candler Building, the McCormick Building (demolished 1989), the Industrial Building on East Preston Street, the Tin Deco Building and the Paca-Pratt Building are other examples of large, multi-story industrial/commercial type structures built in Baltimore. These buildings dating from 1905 through 1925, all had large multi-paned windows and most had reinforced concrete construction, often with masonry rather than concrete exteriors. None had over a million square feet of space, as does the Montgomery Ward Building.

Also these other building were located near the waterfront or in heavily built-up urban settings. The Montgomery Ward Building fronts a park and was located on what was then, the outskirts of Baltimore City. It was favorably compared at the time to the Maryland Casualty Company (today the Rotunda office building and shopping center) as a major business concern built outside of the downtown area. It's park setting had advantages for its employees and provided a pastoral setting for such a major commercial concern.

The founder of the company, Arron Montgomery Ward (1844-1913), was not only known as a leading entrepreneur, but a defender of Chicago's waterfront parks. He sued the City of Chicago to keep buildings off the waterfront. The location of Baltimore's Montgomery Ward Building fronting on a public park is in keeping with the philosophy of the original founder of this company who encouraged the preservation of "breathing spots" for residents of urban areas.

Although the majority of the space in this building was taken up by warehouse and catalog operations, it also housed a retail store with 86 departments and 30,000 items. When it opened in 1925, Montgomery Ward retail outlets were only located in warehouse facilities - seven for the entire country. It wasn't until 1926 that individual retail or catalog stores were first opened by the company. This store may be considered the first suburban department store in Baltimore. Major local department stores did not open suburban branches until the 1940s. Sears opened its first Baltimore store in 1937 at North Avenue and Harford Road, which was also a more remote location than traditional downtown stores, however the Montgomery Ward Retail Store preceded Sears by twelve years. Original advertisements for this retail store prominently displayed "Plenty of Free Parking," one of the factors which encouraged major retail operations to move to suburban areas in the mid-twentieth century.

On Saturday, August 1, 1925, the Montgomery Ward facility was complete and opened its doors to the public. The open house was attended by Governor Albert Ritchie and Mayor Howard Jackson. The retail store was to have opened on August 3rd, but thousands of local residents attending the open house wanted to purchase merchandise. Cash registers were opened and the store began operations two days earlier than intended. A letter of thanks signed by the store manager was incorporated in the store ad for Monday, August 3rd with a "satisfaction-guaranteed pledge" - an early trademark of Montgomery Ward.

Within two years the building was expanded by nearly 60% with the construction of building sections #4 and #5. Although Montgomery Ward sales were hampered by the Depression, the Baltimore Warehouse was one of the busiest in the country. After the Baltimore plant was built, a Denver Warehouse was constructed to serve Rocky Mountain States. East coast sales grew to such a degree that in 1933 the last warehouse was built in Albany, New York. It catered to New England States formerly served by Baltimore.

Montgomery Ward was affected by the rapid urbanization of the United States, as well as, easy and quick motorized transportation. Direct retail sales in stores began to account for more business than catalog operations. With the construction of retail outlets, Montgomery Ward now competed with local department stores for customers within urban and suburban areas. Baltimore took on a new role as a central distribution center for shipping merchandise to retail outlets in the mid and south Atlantic states. Even with the dominance of store sales, catalog operations continued to provide a service for rural customers. African-Americans who were not welcome to shop. In some retail stores due to Jim Crow practices could purchase quality merchandise through catalog companies, such as Montgomery Ward.

Due to conservative business practices after World War II, Montgomery Ward did not expand to the degree of its leading competitors, Sears and J. C. Penney. In the early 1960s, a major effort was made to expand and modernize facilities. The Baltimore Warehouse and Retail Store was altered in 1963 with a canopy, show windows and rock faced panels on the Monroe Street ground floor level. A major overhaul was planned by James R. Edmunds, Jr., a Baltimore architect, and the national construction firm, The Austin Company which would have also covered large portions of the building facade, but this was never accomplished. At roughly the same time a new one-story distribution center with 61 shipping bays was built southwest of the warehouse. Baltimore became one of five regional headquarters for Montgomery Ward.

In 1968, Montgomery Ward merged with Container Corporation of America to form Marcor, Inc. This corporation was acquired by Mobil Oil in 1976. In 1985, the corporation unveiled a specialty store strategy. Catalog sales were discontinued and many stores were closed, including the original Baltimore Montgomery Ward Retail Store. With the cessation of catalog sales, the warehouse was vacated. In 1988, senior management of the company bought out the Mobil Corporation interest and Wards became a privately held company.

Of the original nine Montgomery Ward warehouses built throughout the country in the early twentieth century, four are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Chicago, Ft. Worth, Oakland and Portland. The Portland building was re-named Montgomery Park in 1993 and converted into office space and an exhibition facility. The Oakland building is under threat of demolition for construction of a public school. The Denver and St. Paul buildings were imploded in 1993 and 1996, respectively. The Kansas City building now houses a huge flea market operation. The Albany building has been considered for re-use as state offices, but these plans have not come to fruition.

Major Bibliographical References

"Property Sold Unsuitable for Park, Boyd Says," Baltimore Sun, August 12, 1924, p. 24, col. 3.

"Sale of Park Land Ratified by Board," Baltimore Sun, August 13, 1924, p. 3, col. 4.

"Carroll Park Site Sold for $115,000," Baltimore Sun, August 26, 1924, p. 22, col. 2.

"Baltimore's Advantages Attracted Big Plant," Baltimore Magazine, March 1925, p. 20-22.

"Open Letter Advertisement," Baltimore Sun, August 26, 1925.

"$1,500,000 Ward Plant Opens Today," Baltimore News, August 1, 1925.

"M. Ward & Co.'s Opening Draws Thousands," Baltimore American, August 2, 1925.

"Ward's New Baltimore Store Brings You Better and Quicker Service," Montgomery Ward and Company Catalogue #103, Fall and Winter 1925-26, p. 3.

Architecture Magazine: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Vol. 53, No. 2, February 1926, p. 37.

Power Pictorial, September 1927, p. 32-33.

"Montgomery Ward's 30 Years in Baltimore," Baltimore Magazine, December 1955, p. 65.

"Ward's Sets $3,000,000 Rehabilitation of Store," Baltimore Evening Sun, July 26, 1963.

"Monroe St. store part of a city landmark," Baltimore Evening Sun, November 5, 1985.

Herndon, Booton. Satisfaction Guaranteed: An Unconventional Report to Today's Consumers. New York: McGraw -Hill Book Company, 1972.

Hoge, Cecil C. The First Hundred Years are the Toughest. Berkley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1998.

"Our Past" http: www.wards.com web site.

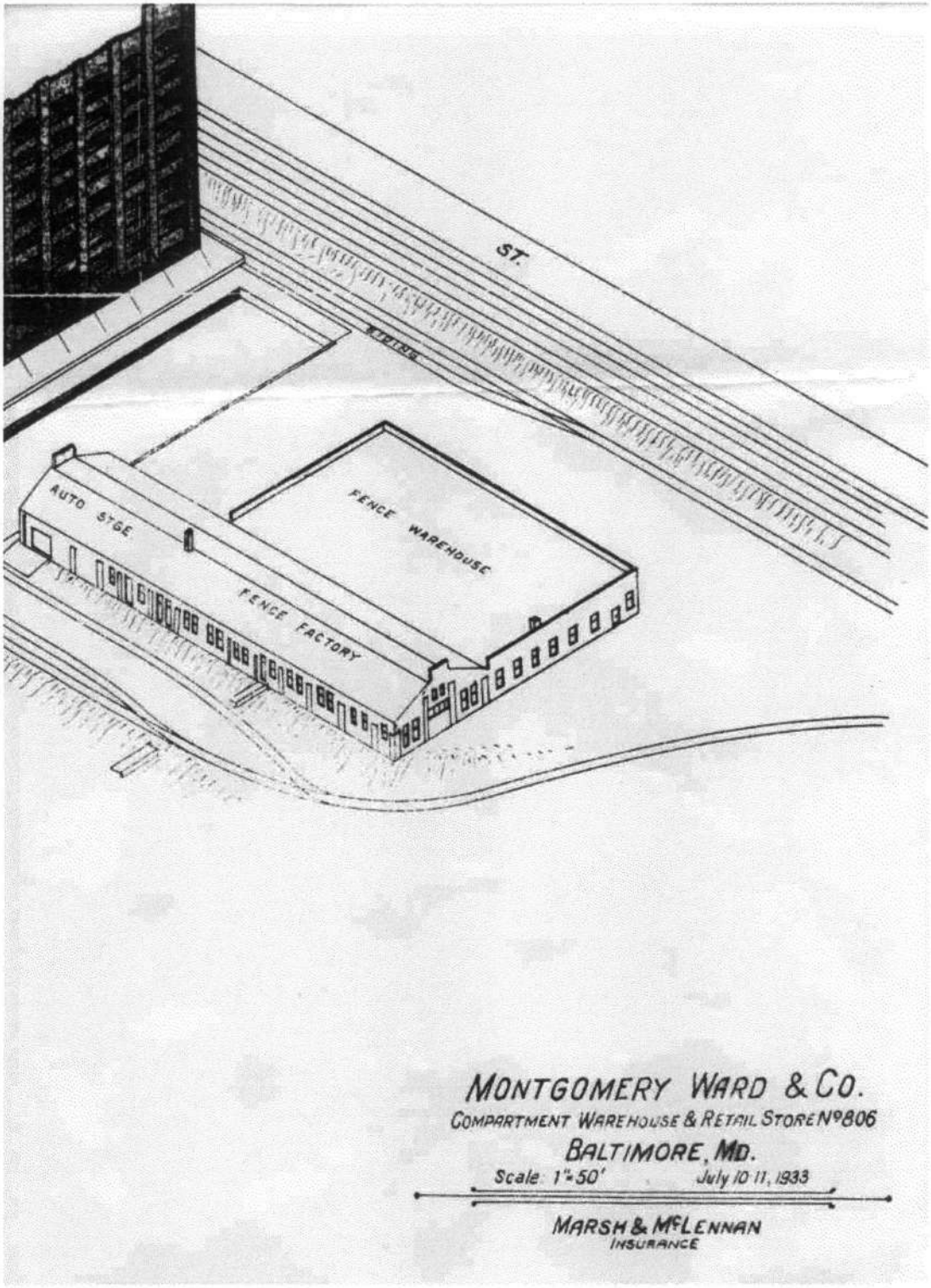
Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

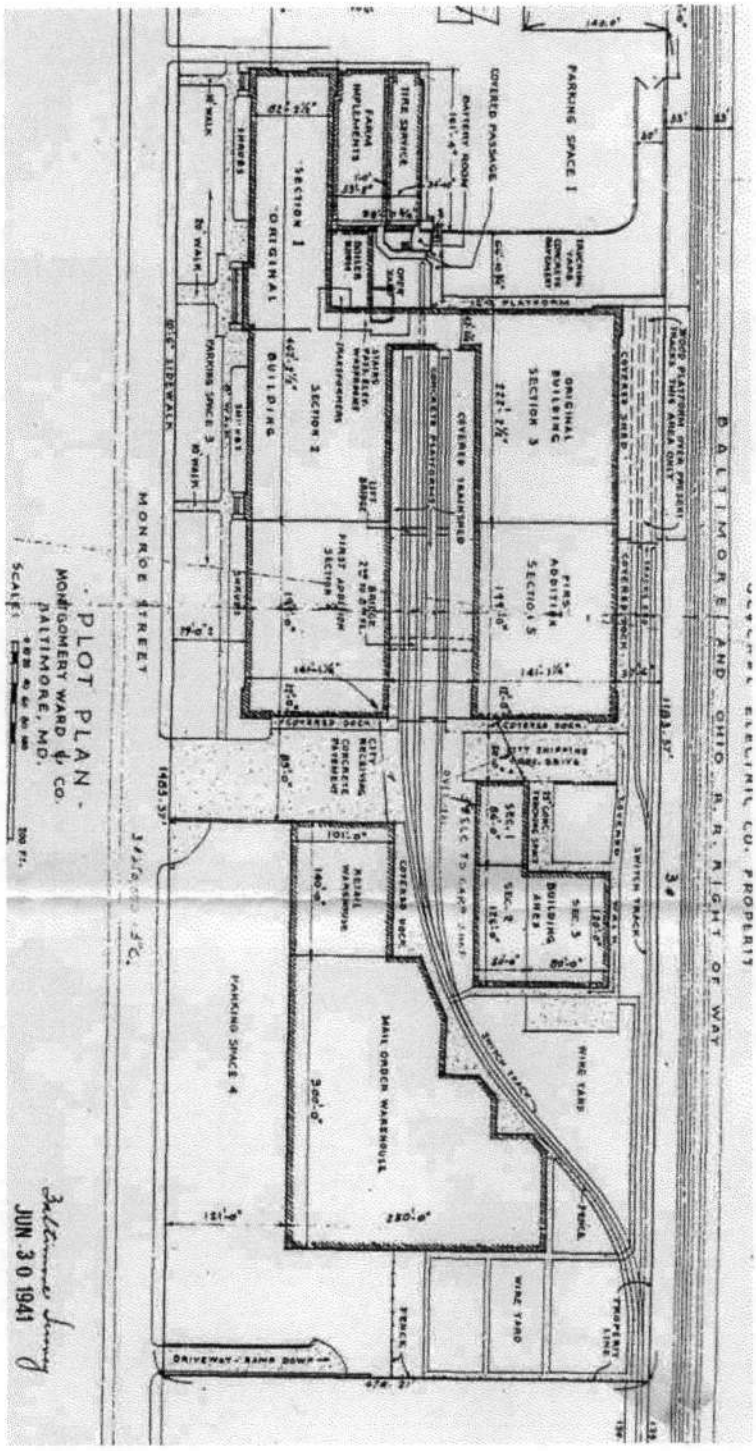
The boundaries of this historic resource are identified in Baltimore City Land Records as Block 731, Lot 1A. It is bounded by Monroe Street 1437' on the east; Washington Boulevard 433' on the south; the railroad right of way along the former bed of Putnum Street 1483' on the west; and along the property line of Carroll Park 476' on the north.

Boundary Justification

The boundary takes in the eastern portion of the original land parcel purchased by Montgomery Ward and Company from the City of Baltimore in 1924. The western portion of the lot to the east of the railroad siding was not built upon until the construction of the long, low one story distribution center in 1963. This portion of the site was sold off separately from the main building. Directly south of this structure is a large abandoned parking lot which is not included in the nominated property; it was never built upon, and is separated from the nominated property by the railroad siding which creates a physical barrier.



1933 Insurance Drawing



1941 Plot Plan

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
BALTIMORE CITY
MARYLAND

A: 18-358040
-4348730

B: 18-358340
-4348380

C: 18-358220
-4348280

D: 18-357900
-4348640

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE, BALT. MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

AERIAL VIEW LOOKING NORTH

1 OF 30

NO
LEFT TURN

B- 4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE., BALT, MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

MONROE STREET FACADE FROM WASHINGTON BOULEVARD LOOKING NORTH

2 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANSI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE., BALT. MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN ELEVATIONS FROM WASHINGTON BOULEVARD LOOKING NORTH

3 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH & ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE., BALT. MD. 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
NORTHERN ELEVATION LOOKING SOUTH
4 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

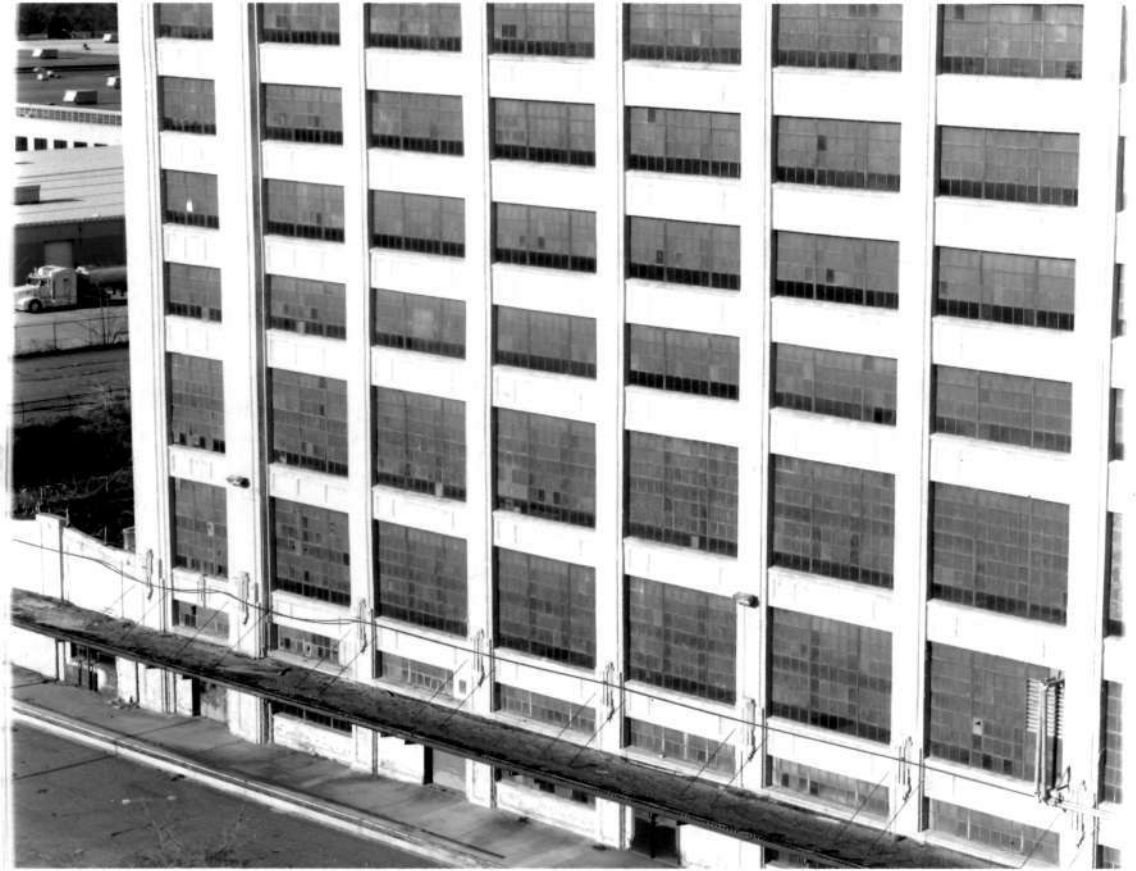
KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVENUE, BALT. MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

WESTERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING SECTION #1 SHOWING RETAIL STORE ADDITION, GARDEN SHOP, AUTO SERVICE BUILDING & BOILER HOUSE LOOKING EAST

5 OF 30



B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1240 SMITH AVENUE, BALTO MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

SOUTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING SECTION #3 - ~~ROOF~~ SHOWING

~~DETAILS FROM SOUTH~~

SMALL TRAIN SHED AT RAILROAD SIDING LOOKING NORTH

6 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1540 SMITH AVE, BALT. MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

SOUTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING SECTION #3 SHOWING ROOF DETAILS LOOKING NORTH

7 OF 36

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
*JANUARY 17, 2000
RECEIVING BUILDING, NORTH BUILDING & 2 CAR GARAGE LOOKING NORTH FROM UPPER FLOORS BUILDING SECTION #5

8 OF 30

*NEGATIVE - HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE. BALTIMORE, MD. 21209

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES 1340 SMITA AVE., BALT. MD. 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
OPEN COURTYARD OVER TRAIN SHED LOOKING NORTH
TO STEEL BRIDGE
9 OF 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE ST.
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE., BALT. MD. 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR - TYPICAL WAREHOUSE SPACE - 12' CEILING
10 OF 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE, BALT. MD. 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR - TYPICAL WAREHOUSE SPACE - 16' CEILING
11 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVENUE, BALT. MD. 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

INTERIOR - TRAIN SHED

12 OF 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE ST.
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE, BALT. MD, 2120
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR - MARBLE FLOOR AT ENTRANCE BAY
13 OF 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HAMMERICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE, BALT. MD, 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR - COLUMN DETAIL 2ND FLOOR MAIN BUILDING
14 OF 30

89

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVENUE, BALT. MD, 21209

JANUARY 17, 2000

INTERIOR - CONCRETE PASSAGEWAY FROM BUILDING SECTION #2 TO #3

15 OF 30

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

KANJI TAKENO

HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVENUE, BALT. MD. 21209

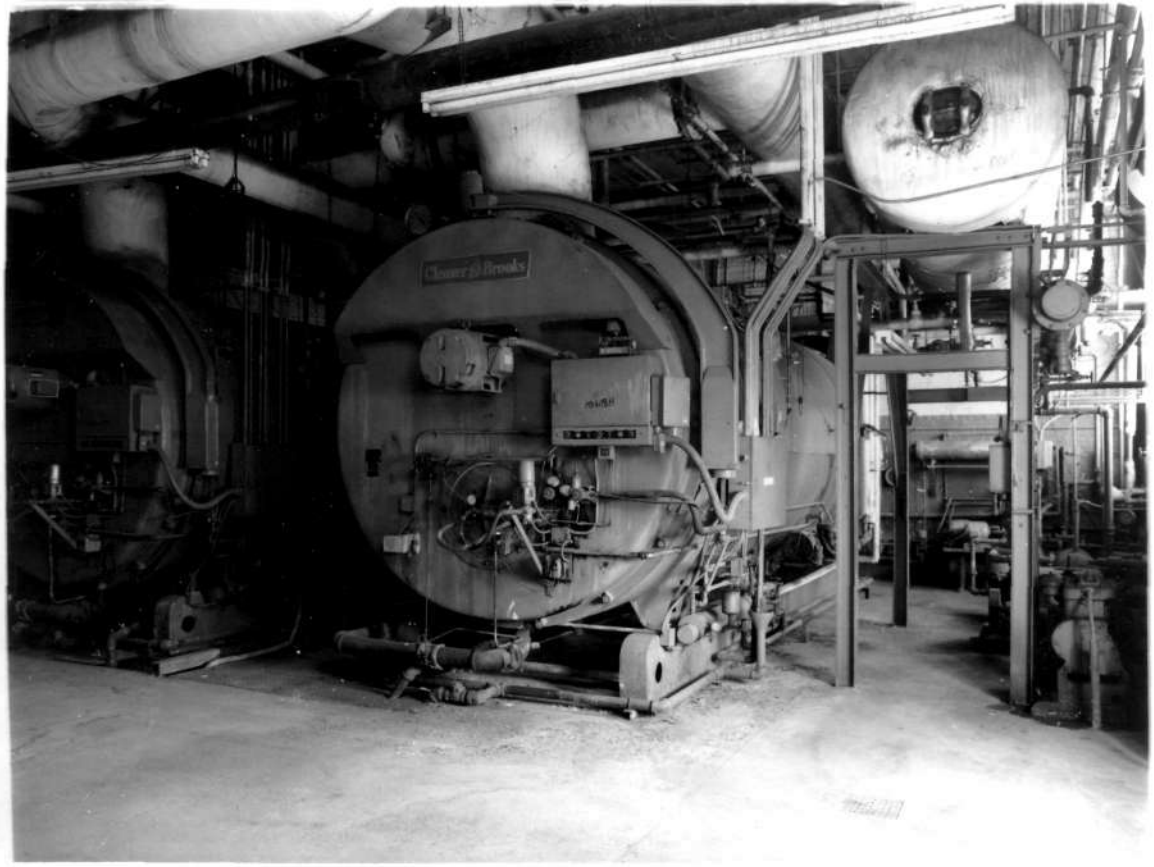
JANUARY 17, 2000

INTERIOR - STEEL BRIDGE FROM BUILDING

SECTION #4 TO #5

16 OF 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE ST.
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANJI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1390 SMITH AVENUE, BALT. MD 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR STAIR (TYPICAL)
17 OF 30


Cleaver-Brooks

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE STREET
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
KANSI TAKENO
HIMMELRICH ASSOCIATES, 1340 SMITH AVE., BALT. MD. 21209
JANUARY 17, 2000
INTERIOR - BOILER HOUSE
18 OF 30

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE B-4616
1000 S. MONROE ST.
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND
FRED B. SHOKEN
7/1/00
MARYLAND SHPO
NORTH BUILDING - SOUTH ELEVATION FROM EAST
19 of 30

JUL 00 008 NHND 15.---

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SHOKEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH BUILDING - WEST ELEVATION FROM NORTH

20 of 30

JUL 00 00 WWD 3

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SHOKEN

7/6/2002

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH BUILDING - EAST ELEVATION FROM SOUTH

21 of 30

ORIENTAL

JUL 00 008 HNC 11.

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SHOKEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH BUILDING — SOUTH ELEVATION FROM EAST

22 of 30

JUL 00 0080 NNND 18.

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD & WAREHOUSE RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE STREET

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED L. STOKEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH BUILDING - TYPICAL INTERIOR

23 of 30

JUL 00 '00 MMMN 17.---

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WHOLESALE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

FRED B. SCHOLZ

7/1/2000

MARYLAND

NORTH BUILDING - IN REPAIR - INDUSTRIAL DOOR

24 of 30

JUL 00 2000 NNNN 15

ORIENTAL

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MD.

FRED B. SARKER

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTH BUILDING - INTERIOR - NORTH ELEVATION WINDOWS

25 of 30

JUL 00 2008 NINN4

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SHOKEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

MAIN BUILDING LOBBY CEILING

26 of 30

JUL 00 005 NNNN 25.--

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SADKEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

MAIN BUILDING – LOBBY – CEILING DETAIL

27 of 30

JUL 2000 MNN 27

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

FRED B. SHADEN

7/1/2000

MARYLAND SHPO

TRAIN SHED INTERIOR

28 of 30

JUL 00 005 NNNN 23.

B-4616

MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE

1000 S. MONROE ST.

BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

MAIN STORE - STAIR TOWER DETAIL

29 of 30

B-4616
MONTGOMERY WARD WAREHOUSE & RETAIL STORE
1000 S. MONROE ST.
BALTIMORE (CITY), MARYLAND

MAIN BUILDING - B7A FROM WINDOW

30 of 30

B-4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility, 1000 S. Monroe Street

1925-26 with additions in 1938 and 1961

Baltimore City, Maryland

Completed in 1926, the Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail facility on Monroe Street in Baltimore is significant in commerce. The facility was an important element of the Montgomery Ward operations and at one time supplied the chain's entire east coast operations. The facility is emblematic of the evolution of mail order and chain store retail in the 20th century. The building also possesses architectural significance as an example of an Art Deco Style commercial structure. In addition, its interior design and extant mechanical workings are technologically significant as examples of the workings used to operate the massive mail order and retail operations of the second and third quarters of the twentieth century.

The Montgomery Ward Baltimore Plant was built in several stages. The majority of the main facility which fronts on Monroe Street, however, was completed in 1925-26. The main, irregularly shaped building, was built using reinforced concrete, flat slab construction. Essentially, there are five eight-story sections that comprise the main block. The building stands on a 16.38 acre parcel at the corner of Monroe Street and Washington Boulevard in West Baltimore. A warehouse west of the railroad tracks is associated with the Wards Complex. Built in 1961 by Wards, it is now on a parcel under separate ownership.

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Montgomery Ward Retail and Mail Order Facility Survey Number: B-4616

Project: Mount Clare Maintenance Facility Agency: MTA

Site visit by MHT Staff: x no ___ yes Name _____ Date _____

Eligibility recommended X Eligibility **not** recommended ___

Criteria: X A ___B X C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G
___None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The Montgomery, Ward pioneered large scale, mail-order merchandising in this country, following its founding in 1872 by Aaron Montgomery Ward. In the early 1920s, sales for all mail-order merchandising companies declined as more and more people acquired automobiles which allowed them to travel to more distant stores more easily. In 1926, Ward's opened its first retail store. However, before entering the retail market, in 1925 Ward's attempted to expand its mail-order business by building 10 mail order facilities throughout the United States. The Monroe Street plant in Baltimore was a result of Ward's expansion activities, and it served the east and southeast United States. The first building, designed by engineer William H. McCauley, is an 8-story structure with a total floor area of 739,826 square feet. It was enlarged in 1926. The mail-order department included catalog shipping operations, a printing operation, industrial engineering and accounting departments, a cafeteria, employee clinic, phone order center and administrative offices, as well as a retail outlet to serve local residents. The complex continued to grow, and in the 1960s, Ward's undertook several expansion projects, including a massive warehouse building dedicated in 1961. Ward's closed the retail facility in 1985, and ceased all other operations in the early 1990s. The entire complex is eligible for the National Register under criterion A as an example of mail-order facilities, which was an important method of shopping during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The buildings are also eligible under criterion C as examples of retail and catalog warehouse commercial structures.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Project Review and Compliance

Prepared by: Parsons, Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas for MTA

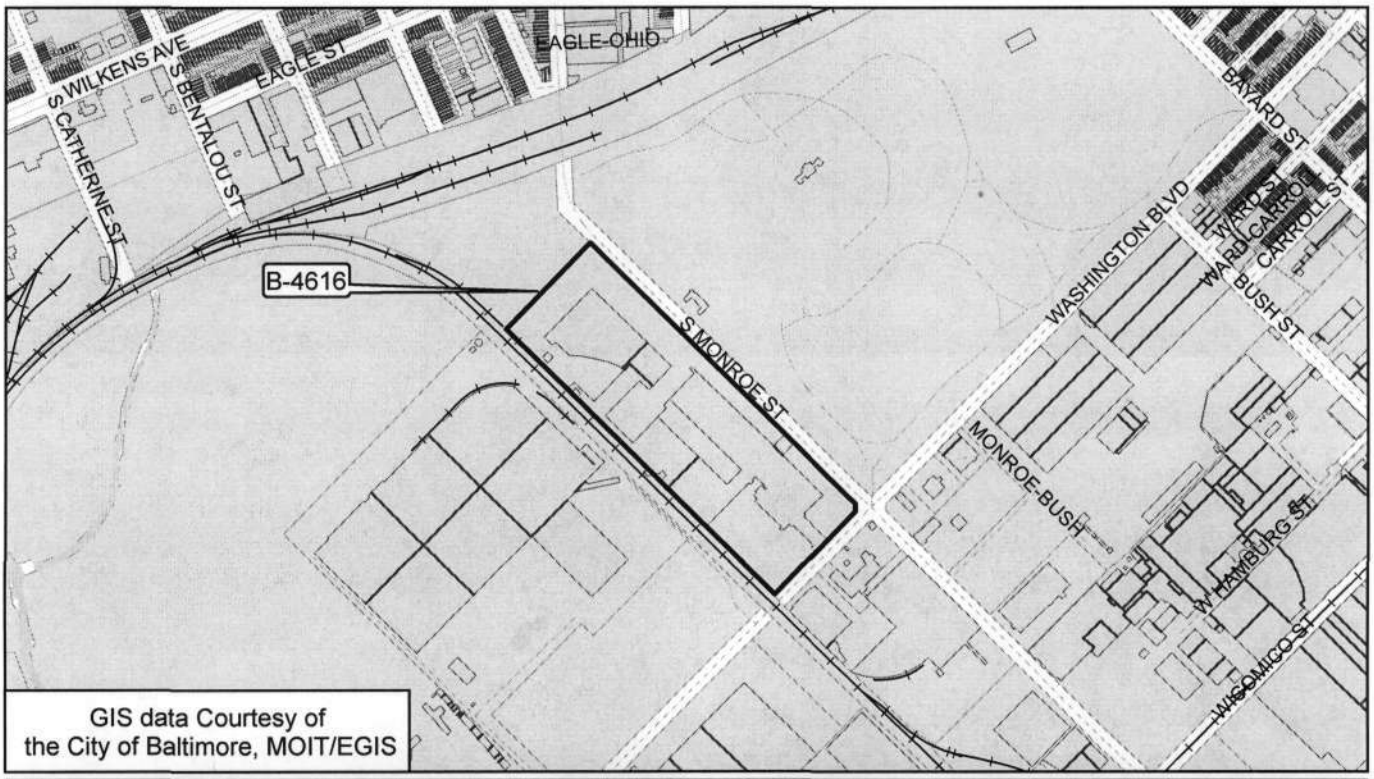
Anne E. Bruder March 21, 1998
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

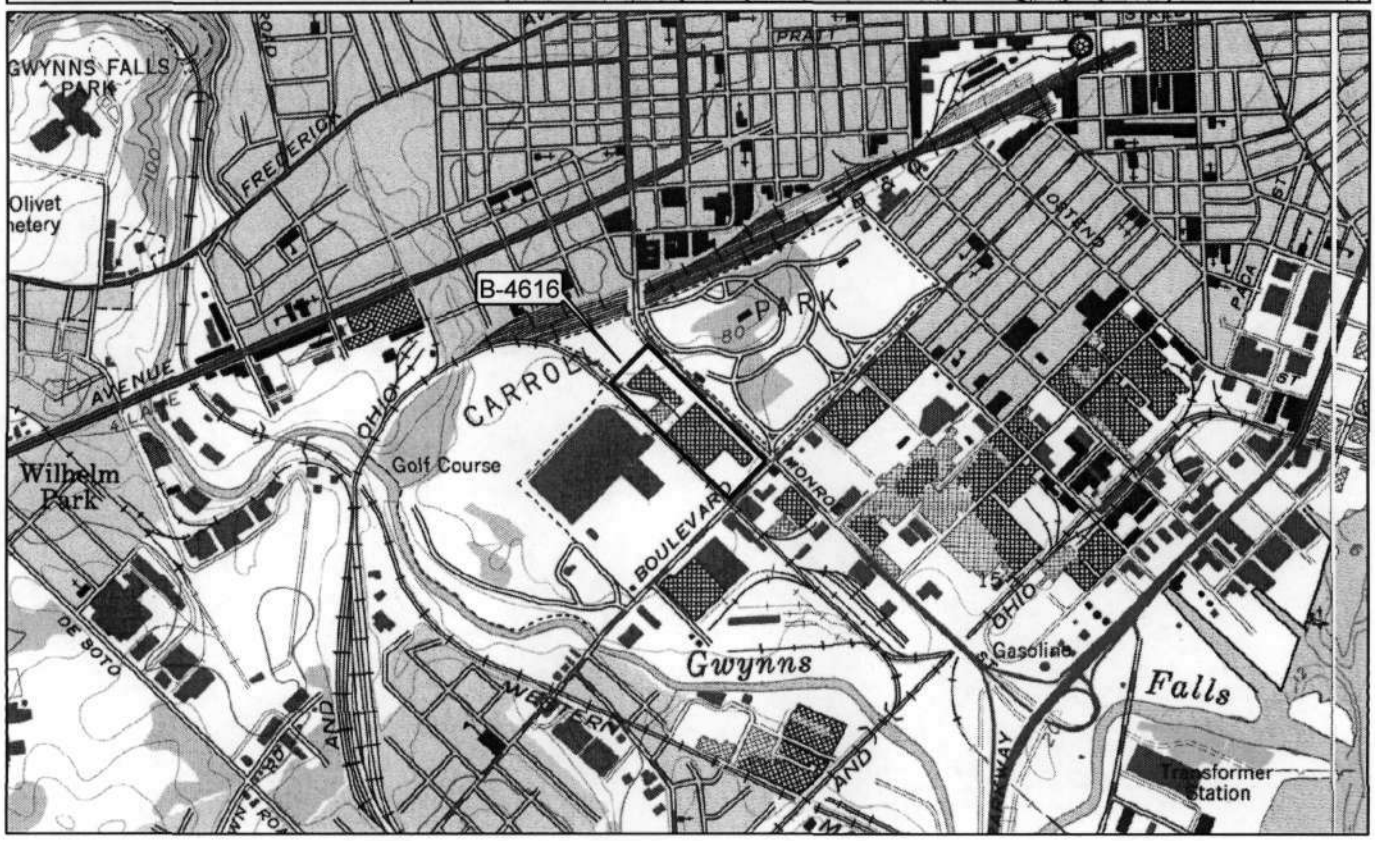
NR program concurrence: X yes ___ no ___ not applicable

[signature] 3/26/98
Reviewer, NR program Date

gmg

B-4616
Montgomery Ward Warehouse & Retail Store
(Montgomery Ward Mail Order & Retail Facility)
1000 S. Monroe Street
Block 0731, Lot 001A
Baltimore City
Baltimore West Quad.





Survey No. B-4616

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

____ Eastern Shore	(all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
X 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:

____ Paleo-Indian	10000-7500 B.C.
____ Early Archaic	7500-6000 B.C.
____ Middle Archaic	6000-4000 B.C.
____ Late Archaic	4000-2000 B.C.
____ Early Woodland	2000-500 B.C.
____ Middle Woodland	500 B.C. - A.D. 900
____ Late Woodland/Archaic	A.D. 900-1600
____ Contact and Settlement	A.D. 1570-1750
____ Rural Agrarian Intensification	A.D. 1680-1815
____ Agricultural-Industrial Transition	A.D. 1815-1870
X Industrial/Urban Dominance	A.D. 1870-1930
X Modern Period	A.D. 1930-Present
____ Unknown Period (___ prehistoric ___ historic)	

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

____ Subsistence
____ Settlement
____ Political
____ Demographic
____ Religion
____ Technology
____ Environmental Adaptation

IV. Historic Period Themes:

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

V. Resource Type:

Category: Site
Historic Environment: Urban
Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Commercial retail and mail-order buildings
Known Design Source: William H. McCauley, built by Wells Brothers Construction Co.

PROPERTY: Montgomery Ward Retail and Mail Order Facility, 1000 South Monroe Street, Baltimore City

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

Geographic Organization:	Piedmont
Chronological/Development Periods:	Industrial/Urban Dominance Modern Period
Historic Period Themes:	Architecture and Economic
Resource Type:	
Category:	Buildings
Historic Environment:	Urban
Historic Functions/Uses:	Commercial (Mail Order/Retail operations)
Known Design Source:	William H. McCauley, Engineer

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-4616

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1000 S. Monroe Street ___ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ___ vicinity of congressional district

state MD county Baltimore

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_x_ building(s)	_x_ private	_x_ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	_x_ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	___ not applicable	___ no	___ military	_X_ other: vacant

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

name Montgomery Ward and Company

street & number telephone no.:

city, town Chicago state and zip code IL

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City liber 3325

street & number Abel Woolman Building folio 472

city, town Baltimore City state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. B4616

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_x_ original site
_x_ good	___ ruins	_x_ altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

The Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility stands at the northwest corner of Monroe Street and Washington Boulevard in West Baltimore. The eight-story mail order plant was completed in 1926 and is influenced by the Art Deco Style.

The Montgomery Ward Baltimore Plant was built in several stages. The majority of the main facility on Monroe Street, however, was completed in 1925-26. The main, irregularly shaped building, was built using reinforced concrete, flat slab construction. Essentially, there are five eight-story sections that comprise the main block. The southernmost section (Section 1) has ten bays along Monroe Street and four bays along Washington Boulevard. This section abuts a three-bay tower. North of the tower along Monroe Street is a section 10 bays long by seven bays deep (Section 2). Behind this section is a one-story gable-roofed train shed and an 8-story section identical to that on the front--10 bays wide by 7 bays deep (Section 3). To the north of both Sections 2 (along Monroe Street) and Section 3 are 1926 additions of two sections 10 bays long and 7 bays wide (Sections 4 and 5). Connecting Sections 2 and 3 and Sections 4 and 5 (at either end of the train shed) are narrow eight-story sections that contain passageways.

The building exterior is inspired by the Art Deco Style. The exterior facades feature pilasters dividing the window bays. These narrow pilasters provide the vertical emphasis common in the Art Deco style and are topped by Art Deco-inspired geometric motifs of cast concrete. The size of the windows decreases as the building rises--windows on the lower floors are square while the upper floors have smaller, rectangular windows. The eighth story window in each bay (with the exception of the tower) features a segmental arch with a keystone like vertical element in the center of each arch. All of the windows are multi-paned casements.

The tower on the Monroe Street facade is off-center today but when built in 1925 was centrally located. It is three bays wide and projects slightly from the facade. It also projects one story above the eighth floor where it is three bays wide and reaches back seven bays. The pinnacle of the tower rises one story above the roof and is one-bay by one-bay in size. This upper tower features a tri-part, multi-paned casement window and Art Deco detailing on all four sides.

In 1938, a one-story section was added onto the rear of Section 1 to accommodate auto accessories and a farm store. In the 1960s, the ground floor of the Monroe Street elevation was remodeled. A concrete canopy marks the front entrance and a concrete awning stretches across the front of the building as a result of that renovation. The entranceway was also altered to accommodate plate glass windows and doors. An auto service wing was also added at this time onto the auto accessory section on the far southern end of the building along Washington Boulevard.

The interior of the building contains open "warehouse" spaces. Massive concrete piers spaced 20-feet center to center support the one-foot thick concrete slab floors. The floors carry 320 pounds per square foot. Floor heights are 14'-9" on floors 1, 2, 3 and 8 and 10'-9" on the other floors.

The eight freight and three passenger elevators have workings that date after 1960. The boilers were replaced in 1973. The interior of the building, however, does contain many of its original mechanical merchandise-moving systems. In the train shed, the train tracks have been filled in but installed in the floor is a chain track that utilized wheeled bins with sensors to distribute merchandise throughout this section of the building. In the corners of each floor are spiral chutes for transport of goods downward. There also exists remnants throughout the building of a tube system used for transporting orders. Many conveyor systems are extant, particularly on the second floor of the mail order house where the conveyors from all of the floors once merged. With the exception of the offices, this was the only air-conditioned floor. (This floor had windowed boxes dropped from the ceiling for security to oversee operations.) Some floors retain their original shelving and sorting bins while other floors are completely cleared. The 1950s phone banks are extant in one room and underneath each of the banks are conveyors that once transported phone orders received. The executive offices are finished in 1960s decor and have walnut paneling and carpeting. The retail facility on the first and second floors is cleared of retail fixtures but some 1960s carpeting and linoleum floors remain.

To the north of the main building is a one-story structure that was completed in 1925. This structure was connected in 1972 to the main building with an L-shaped addition.

In 1960, work began on a massive warehouse, west of the main building and on the opposite side of the railroad tracks. This one-story structure, approximately 500,000 square feet in size, was connected to the main building by a tunnel under the railroad. Shipping bays lined the sides of the building. A shipping building was added to this structure's south side in 1973. It has been sold and is now under separate ownership.

8. Significance

Survey No. B 4616

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	x architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	x commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
x 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: x A ___ B x C ___ D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G

Level of Significance: ___ national ___ state x local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail facility on Monroe Street in Baltimore is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for commerce. The facility was an important element of the Montgomery Ward operations and at one time supplied the chain's entire east coast operations. According to the author of *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway to the Chesapeake*: "The Montgomery Ward Warehouse and Distribution Center . . . is emblematic of Baltimore's role as a transportation hub and manufacturing center". The facility is emblematic of the evolution of mail order and chain store retail in the 20th century. The building also possesses architectural significance under Criterion C as an example of an Art Deco Style commercial structure. In addition, its interior design and extant mechanical workings are technologically significant as examples of the workings used to operate the massive mail order and retail operations of the second and third quarters of the twentieth century.

Founded in 1872 in Chicago by Aaron Montgomery Ward, Montgomery Ward & Company pioneered large scale, mail order merchandising in this country. By the 1920s Wards shared the majority of mail order business in the United States with Sears, Roebuck & Company. In 1924, Sears opened its first retail store and Montgomery Wards followed suit in 1926 when they opened ten retail stores across the nation. The success of these stores convinced Wards management to actively enter the chain store business. By the end of 1927 there were 36 stores by 1928 there were 244. In 1928, Wards also opened its first full line department store. By 1929 there were 500 retail stores and by 1930, the 556 operating retail stores generated over $200 million in sales.

The Monroe Street plant in Baltimore was a result of Ward's 1920s expansion activities. Baltimore's Industrial Bureau of the Board of Trade had actively marketed Chicago-based Montgomery Wards in the early 1920s to build an eastern branch in Baltimore to serve the densely populated east and southeast. After looking at other cities, the company selected a site in west Baltimore in the westernmost portion of Carroll Park. In 1924, the city Park Board agreed to sell 10 acres of land in the extension of Carroll Park to Montgomery Ward & Co. for construction of its East Coast plant because the land "was unsuitable for park purposes."

The Baltimore mail order house was one of ten such facilities in the United States. The engineer in charge of the Baltimore project was William H. McCauley. The eight-story structure, the largest in West Baltimore, was built by the Wells Brothers Construction Company at a cost of $2,000,000. The mail order house had a total floor area of 739,826 square feet when it opened in 1925 and was enlarged the following year by 466,424 square feet to make a total of 1,206,250 square feet. By the 1950s, the mail order house served Florida, Delaware, North and South Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia along with parts of Georgia, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The operation featured its catalog operations, a printing operation, industrial engineering and accounting departments, a cafeteria, employee clinic, phone order center, and administrative offices.

A retail outlet served local residents. The retail store started out in the 1920s as a place where the company disposed of sample merchandise. In 1953, the company opened its first full scale retail store in Baltimore on the first and second floors of the Monroe Street mail order building. During that decade, there was also substantial growth in telephone ordering by customers and there were 37 catalog offices and 71 catalog desks in retail stores that relayed orders to the Baltimore plant. The company purportedly employed over 2,000 people at its peak. In the 1960s, Wards undertook several expansion projects as part of the company's extensive plan for growth on the eastern seaboard. Projects included a massive warehouse building for the Monroe Street complex and renovation of the retail store.

In 1985, Montgomery Ward's Officials announced that the Montgomery Wards retail store would be closed. By the early 1990s, the company had ceased all operations in the building. Still owned by Montgomery Ward, the retail and mail order building is vacant today. The 1961 warehouse, north of the railroad, is under separate ownership.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B461L

Montgomery Ward & Co. Complex, Chicago, IL. National Register Nomination
Enoch Pratt Library Clipping Files

Interview with Jim Skeen , Property Manager 4/97

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 16.243

Quadrangle name Balt West MD **Quadrangle scale**

UTM **References** do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

City Baltimore Ward 21, Section 4, Block 731, Parcel 1A. This parcel contains the original land associated with the 1925-26 complex.

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 Margaret Slater, Cultural Resource Specialist

organization Parsons Brinckerhoff **date** May 1997

street & number 1900 Church St. #203 **telephone** (615) 327-8514

city or town Nashville **state** TN 37203

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.

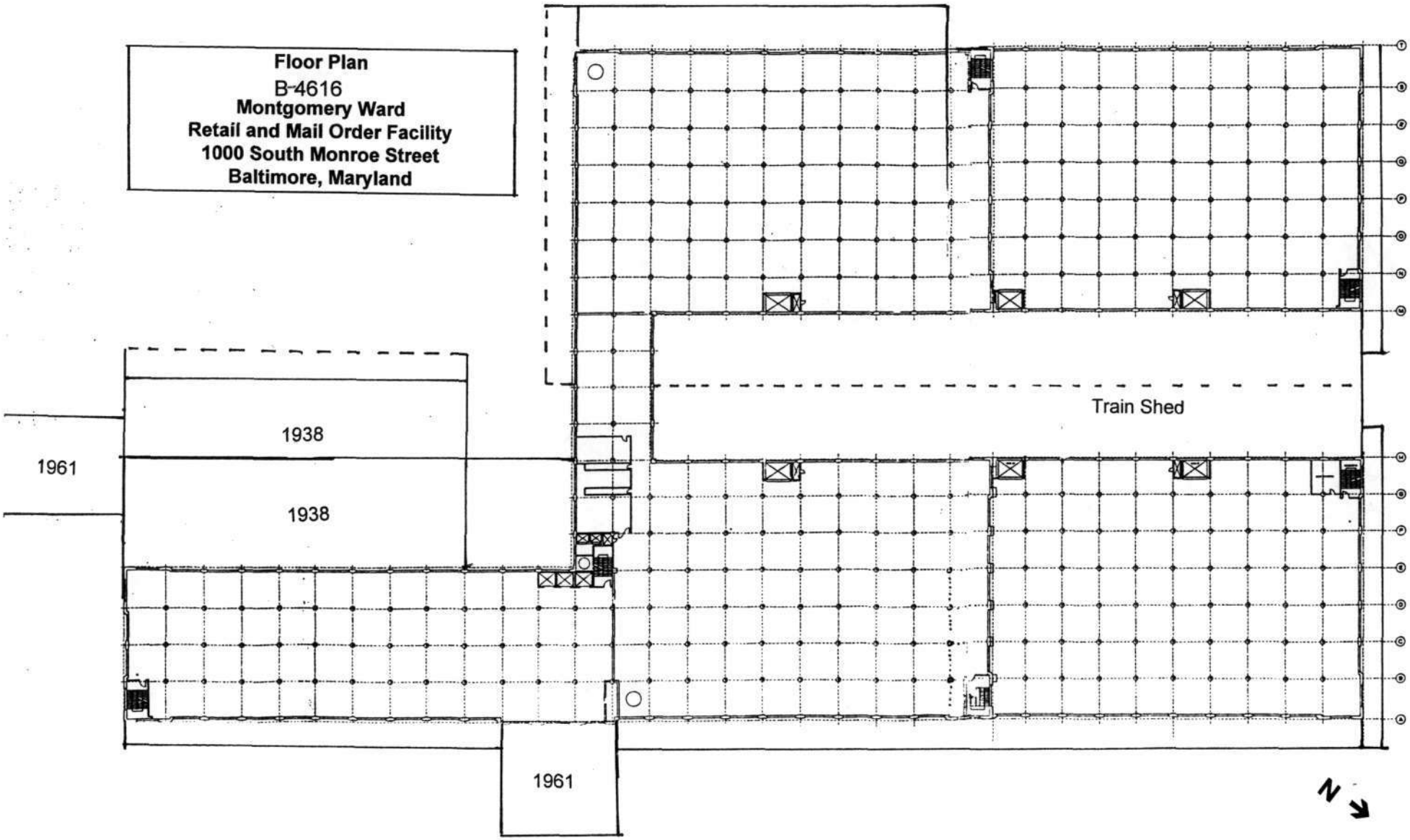
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

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
614-7600

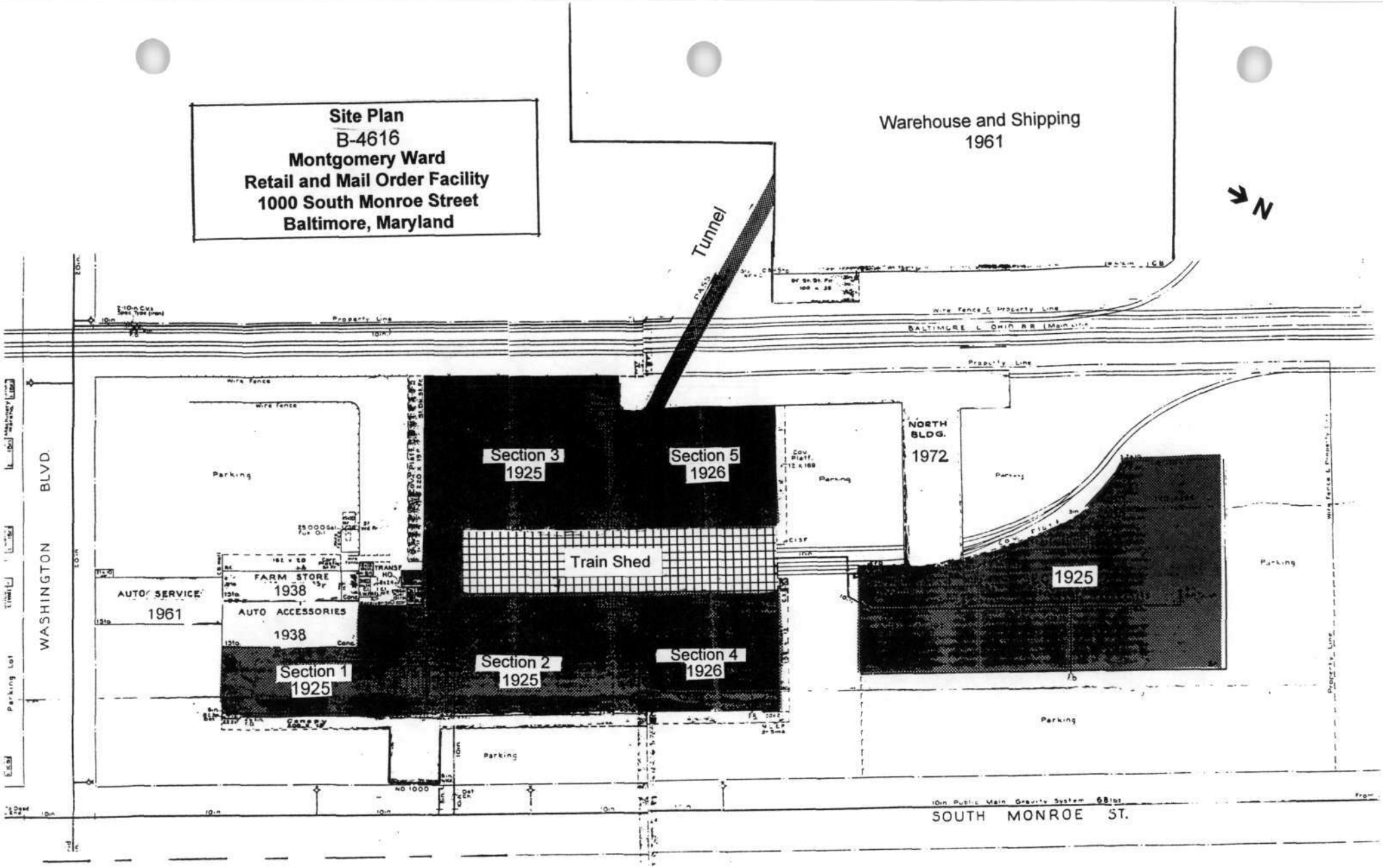
PS-2746

Floor Plan
B-4616
Montgomery Ward
Retail and Mail Order Facility
1000 South Monroe Street
Baltimore, Maryland



Monroe Street

Site Plan
B-4616
Montgomery Ward
Retail and Mail Order Facility
1000 South Monroe Street
Baltimore, Maryland



1 MILE

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1 KILOMETER

9

N LO TER
HIGH WATER

STANDARDS
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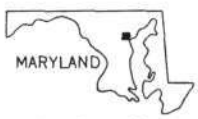
B-4616
Montgomery Ward Mail Order
and Retail Facility
1000 S. Monroe Street
Baltimore City, MD



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — Light-duty
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route — U. S. Route — State Route

BALTIMORE WEST, MD.

SW/4 BALTIMORE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3915—W7637.5/7.5
1953

PHOTOREVISED 1966 AND 1974
AMS 5662 I SW—SERIES V833

B4616
Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility
1000 S. Monroe St.
Baltimore City, MD
Margaret Slater
4197
Maryland SHPO
Front elevation, View SW

1 of 10

591 13** N N N 2-02 2(036)
800< > 96

B466
Mortgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility
1000 S. Monroe Street
Baltimore City, MD
Margaret Slater
4/97 - Maryland SHPO
Front elevation, 1925 section, view SW

2 of 10

591 13** N N N 3-06 2(036)
96 < >010
010<

B4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility

1000 S. Monroe St.

Baltimore City, MD

Margaret Slater

4/97

96 < >009
591 13** N N N 3-05 2(036)

Maryland SHPO

Northeast elevation, view SW

3 of 10

B 4616
Montgomery Ward Mail Order & Retail Facility
1000 S. Monroe St.
Baltimore City, MD
Margaret Slater
4/97
Maryland SHPO
Rear of Sections 2 & 4, trail shed, View NE
4 of 10

B4616
Mortgomery Ward Mail Order + Retail Facility
1000 S. Monroe St.
Baltimore City MD
Margaret Slater.
4/94

Maryland SHPO
Detail of Tower - View SE
5 of 10

591 13** N N N 1-08 2(036) >004
96 < >004

B4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility

1000 S. Monroe St

Baltimore City, MD

Margaret Slater

4/97

Maryland SHPO

Interior, columns

6 of 10

96 < >001
591 13** N N N-2 60 2(036)

EXIT

B4616

Montgomery Ward Mail order + Retail Facilit

1000 S. Monroe St.

Baltimore City, MD

Margaret Slater

4197

Maryland SHPO

Interior, Front entrance to retail. 1st flo

7 of 10

591 13** N N N 2 35 2(036)
96 < >007
200<

B4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order + Retail Facility

1000 S. Monroe St

Baltimore City, MD

Margaret Slater

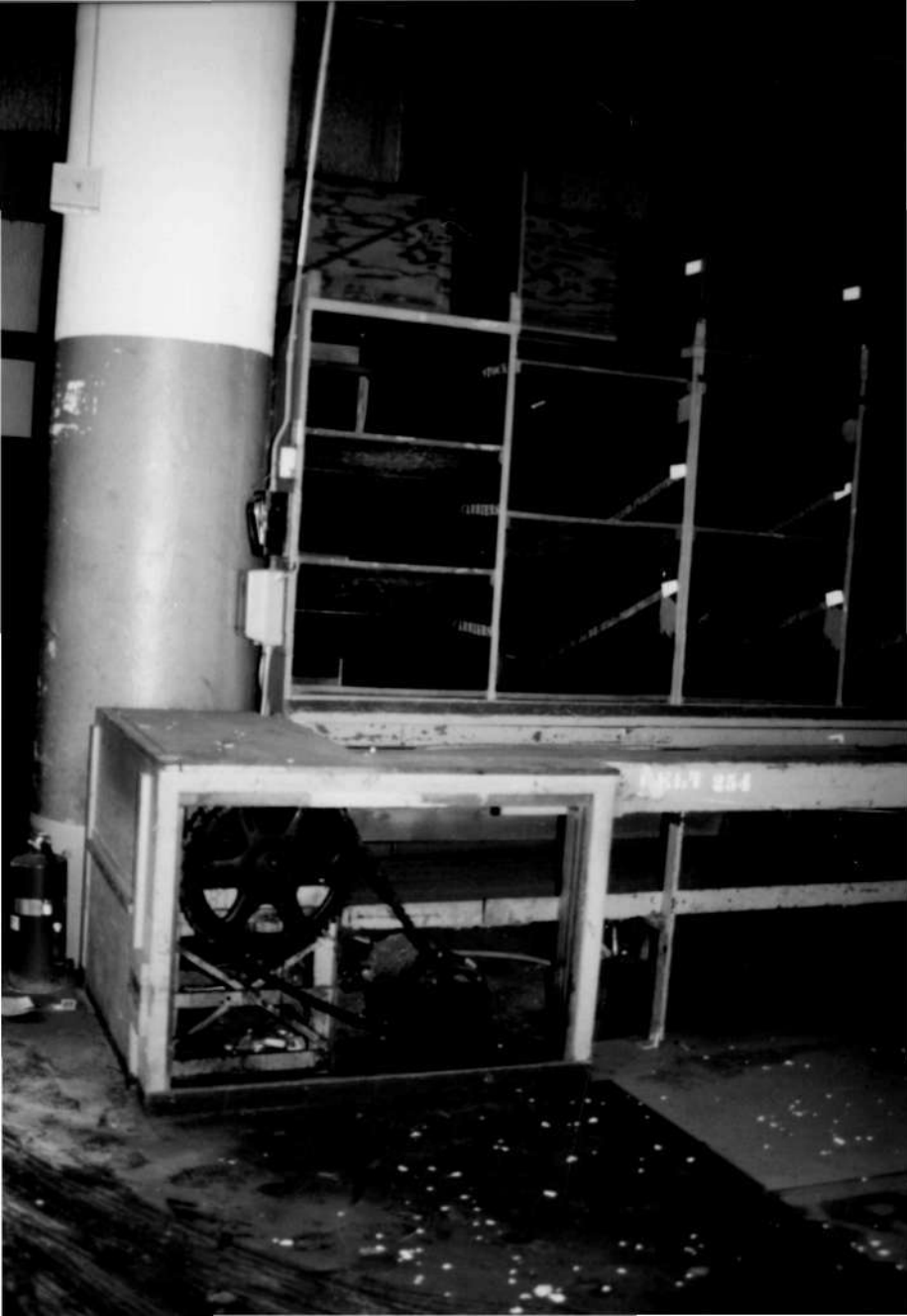
4/97

96 < >005
591 13** N N N 2 23 2(036)

Maryland SHPO

Interior - merchandise chute

8 of 10



B 4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facilo

1000 S. Monroe St.

Baltimore City MD

Margaret Slater

4/97

Maryland SHPO

Interior, sorting bins, conveyor

9 of 10

591 13** N N N 4 25 2 (036)
96 < >006

EXIT

B4616

Montgomery Ward Mail Order and Retail Facility

1000 S. Monroe St

Baltimore City, MD

Margaret Slater

4/97

96 < >003
591 13** N N N 3 16 2(036)

Maryland SHPO

Interior, Conveyor

10 of 10