

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes  no

Property Name: Jones Falls Conduit Inventory Number: B-5192  
 Address: Roughly following the Fallsway from the Howard Street Bridge to 200 feet south of E Baltimore St Historic district: yes  no   
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21202 County: Baltimore City  
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore East  
 Property Owner: City of Baltimore Tax Account ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Map Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project: Shot Tower Station Hardening Project Agency: MTA; Department of Homeland Security

Agency Prepared By: AECOM  
 Preparer's Name: Vanessa Zeoli Date Prepared: 11/17/2010

Documentation is presented in: Zeoli, Vanessa, John Lawrence and Paul Schopp (AECOM), Cultural Resources Survey for the Proposed Shot Tower Metro Station Hardening, City of Baltimore, Maryland, 2010.

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation:  Eligibility recommended  Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

*Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:*

Name of the District/Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligible:  yes  no Listed:  yes  no

Site visit by MHT Staff  yes  no Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

**Description:**

The Jones Falls Conduit, constructed 1911-1914, is a reinforced concrete conduit that carries the Jones Falls waterway underground from I-83 and the Howard Street Bridge, to 200-feet south of East Baltimore Street where it exits the outfall and flows another 1/2-mile before emptying into the Inner Harbor. Features associated with the structure include the reinforced concrete conduits, the piers and abutments at the inlet and outlet, the drift-catcher, the Fallsway, and the Fallsway Monument. The conduit consists of three square conduits that are reduced to two at the southern end. The conduits are square, with smooth wall surfaces and no ornament. The inlet opening appears unaltered. The outlet opening was replaced about 1987 when President Street was widened into a six-lane divided highway (NETR 1971; Anderson 2005). The lintel and walls were replaced with new concrete. One mile north of the inlet is a drift-catcher, a structure intended to prevent heavy drift (trees, buildings, debris) from floating into the conduit. The 20-foot high structure has a horizontal reinforced concrete arch supported by piers (spaced 8 feet apart) that sit directly in the water to stop large debris (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1911-1914).

Where the Jones Falls exits the outfall, the waterway is contained within a channel lined with square-cut, ashlar retaining walls.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

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**MHT Comments:**

Jim Lawrence ✓  
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

3/3/11  
 Date

[Signature]  
 Reviewer, National Register Program

3/8/2011  
 Date

The stone retaining walls were erected along the Jones Falls in 1872-1873 and during construction of the conduit, the conduit walls abutted to the existing retaining walls (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1911-1914). The retaining walls are only visible south of the outfall, and appear to have been altered/repared within the last twenty-five years. As part of the President Street widening project in 1987, an entire city block immediately east of the falls was demolished; the Jones Falls reduced in width; the eastern retaining wall rebuilt with stone veneer and a steel railing erected on top; and East Lombard Street widened and the bridge replaced (NETR 1971).

The Fallsway (running parallel to the Jones Falls Expressway/Route 83 at the south and eventually joining Route 83 near East Madison Street) is a road that was constructed on top of the conduit to accommodate automobile traffic. The road was lined on either side with reinforced concrete walls with piers and a projecting lintel. At the north end of the conduit between Eager and Chase Streets, the Fallsway passed over the Union Railroad tracks via a reinforced concrete viaduct with segmented piers and arched openings under the deck. Immediately south of East Biddle Street where the Fallsway splits from Guilford Street is the Fallsway Monument: a classically-detailed marble monument with a base embellished with urns and swags and a 20-foot high pedestal adorned with Ionic columns and a statue of woman holding an urn from which water flows (representing the Falls beneath the city). The statue was originally a drinking foundation, but has since been filled in with soil (Hendrick 1915).

Historic Context:

Dams and mill raceways along Jones Falls provided numerous factories with the necessary horsepower to operate their machinery. By 1803, 12 mills received their power from the stream and less than 25 years later, Baltimore reportedly produced more flour than any other city in the world. But the loss of marsh and meadow lands along Jones Falls had severe consequences and the first flood mentioned in the historical record occurred in 1786, which destroyed the newly built German Calvinist Church and swept away several citizens to their deaths. In an attempt to better control raging floodwaters, workmen dug the flow canal deeper, but it had little lasting effect. Numerous freshets can found in nineteenth-century newspapers published in Baltimore and elsewhere across the United States. On 14 June 1837, Jones Falls inundated the city with floodwaters unparalleled to that date. After dark clouds blotted out the sun at 6:00 p.m., the rain began to fall, accompanied by lightning and thunder after several hours. An absolute deluge occurred between 9:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., resulting in Jones Falls rising well above its banks to the height of 20 feet above its bed (The Sun 1837:2). Little survived in the path of the raging flow of water with most bridges destroyed, many buildings flooded and damaged and at least 19 people drowned. On 24 July 1868, Baltimore witnessed a repeat of the 1837 flood after several hours of teeming rain fell on the city. Nothing and no one escaped from the rampaging water that flooded city streets and wrought great damage to many of Baltimore's factories located adjacent to Jones Falls. Some reports place the human loss at a minimum of 50 people and loss of property exceeding \$1 million (Vitale 2008).

Although Baltimore derived a portion of its drinking water at one time from Jones Falls, industrial effluent, domestic sewage from city and suburban source points, and other forms of pollutants soon fouled the stream beyond recovery. By the early twentieth century, the conversation concerning Jones Falls turned to channelizing the stream inside concrete and piping and placing a boulevard on top of the concrete enclosure, perhaps subscribing to the theory of "out of sight, out of mind." In responding to questions about the planned construction project, Chief Engineer Calvin W. Hendrick of the Baltimore Sewerage Commission stated:

"...he was struck with the fact that Jones' Falls, which was, he contended, an eyesore and a nuisance, could be made to serve two useful purposes. It could be made, he said, to form the center of the system of storm-water drainage, and could also be transformed into a broad, level boulevard, connecting the docks with Union Station." (The Sun 1910:12)

Estimates for the construction costs amounted to \$2 million, but the daunting price tag did not dissuade city officials from going forward with the plan. Completed in 1914, the project consisted of three main pipes to carry the flow through most of the

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Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_

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MHT Comments:

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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

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Date

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Reviewer, National Register Program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

structure's length, but reduced down to two at the southern end. At the outfall, 200 feet south of East Baltimore Street, the Jones Falls resurfaced and flows another ½-mile before emptying into the Patapsco River. On top of the flat concrete structure, workmen completed the "Fallsway" for vehicular traffic. During the final dedication ceremony, held on 27 February 1915, the keynote speaker, Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, making parody of a line from Shakespeare's play, Julius Caesar, stated, "[We] have come to bury Jones' Falls, not to praise it" (The Sun 1915:3).

Ultimately, the Fallsway contributed to the pollutants poisoning and choking the oxygen out of Jones Falls through runoff. Farms located upstream, along with the continued expansion of residential, commercial, and industrial development, contributed greatly to the river's deteriorating condition. Nitrification and sedimentation caused stagnation and dead zones in the stream, preventing fish and other aquatic life from continuing their existence in the watercourse. The EPA finally declared Baltimore's storm water as the worst tested within 28 metropolitan regions during the early 1980s.

**National Register Evaluation:**

The Jones Falls Conduit is locally significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the development of Baltimore City's public sewerage system in the early twentieth century. Passing through the center of the city, the Jones Falls had long been subject to flooding and by the late nineteenth century was contaminated and a serious health concern. The Baltimore Sewerage Commission began discussions concerning the fate of the Jones Falls during the rebuilding period following the great Baltimore fire of 1904. City-wide improvements on the sewerage system began in 1906 with construction of an outfall sewer, a disposal plant, and continued through 1911 with private house connections, storm water sewers, and construction of the Eastern Avenue Pumping Station (the Baltimore Public Works Museum 1982- 2010). By 1911 construction began on the conduit and Fallsway to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Baltimore's population, improve the visual quality of the downtown, and provide better ease of travel between the railroad station and the docks (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1911-1914).

The boundaries of the resource include the extent of the conduit (including the Fallsway and the Fallsway Monument), from its inlet under the Howard Street Bridge, to its outlet 200 feet south of East Baltimore Street. A discontinuous resource, the drift-catcher is also a feature of the resource. Alterations to the underground conduit structure are unknown, but as a municipal, functioning structure, it is assumed that it has undergone maintenance repairs and improvements to maintain its functionality as part of the drainage system. Features visible from the street that appear to have undergone some alteration are the outlet opening and the Fallsway. At the outlet, the lintel and walls appear to have been replaced during the widening of President Street in 1987. In addition, a new east wall was constructed (when Jones Falls was reduced in width) abutted to the conduit and a steel railing erected. While these alterations have compromised a portion of the conduit's integrity of materials, workmanship, and design, overall the conduit appears intact and relatively unaltered. Historic photographs included in the Annual Reports of the Baltimore Sewerage Commission illustrate the conduit's original condition.

The Fallsway, on the other hand, has been significantly altered since its construction and associated features largely eliminated. Most of the alterations to the Fallsway occurred during the construction of the Jones Falls Expressway in the 1960s. A review of aerial photography reveals that the original walls and light fixtures that lined the Fallsway have mostly been removed and viaduct that carried the Fallsway over the Pennsylvania Railroad was replaced by the Jones Falls Expressway. The concrete cartway has been covered with blacktop. The only section that appears to remain extant is a 450-foot section on the east side of the Fallsway just north of Madison Street (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1915; US Geological Survey 2010). The Fallsway Monument, located at the southwest corner of the Fallsway and East Biddle Street is still intact, but no longer functions as a fountain.

While the alterations to the Fallsway have compromised the integrity of materials, workmanship, and design of the overall Jones Falls diversion project, the conduit itself is still almost entirely intact and is still able to convey its significance. Therefore, the Jones Falls Conduit is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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<b>MHT Comments:</b>													
_____ Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services							_____ Date						
_____ Reviewer, National Register Program							_____ Date						

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 1913 Annual Report of the Sewerage Commission of the City of Baltimore. Meier and Thalheimer, Baltimore, Maryland.
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Pictometry Bird's Eye

- 2010a Bird's Eye View Map of Baltimore. Bing Maps. Available online at [http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?v=2&cp=39.32027130831938~-76.62932166159908&lvl=19&sty=r&sp=Point.qjm16k8mdt0s\\_Untitled%20item\\_&where1=Howard%20St%2C%20Baltimore%2C%20MD%2021230](http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?v=2&cp=39.32027130831938~-76.62932166159908&lvl=19&sty=r&sp=Point.qjm16k8mdt0s_Untitled%20item_&where1=Howard%20St%2C%20Baltimore%2C%20MD%2021230)

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<http://www.bing.com/maps/default.aspx?q=howard+street%2c+baltimore%2c+md&mkt=en-US&FORM=BYFD#>. Accessed 10/20/2010

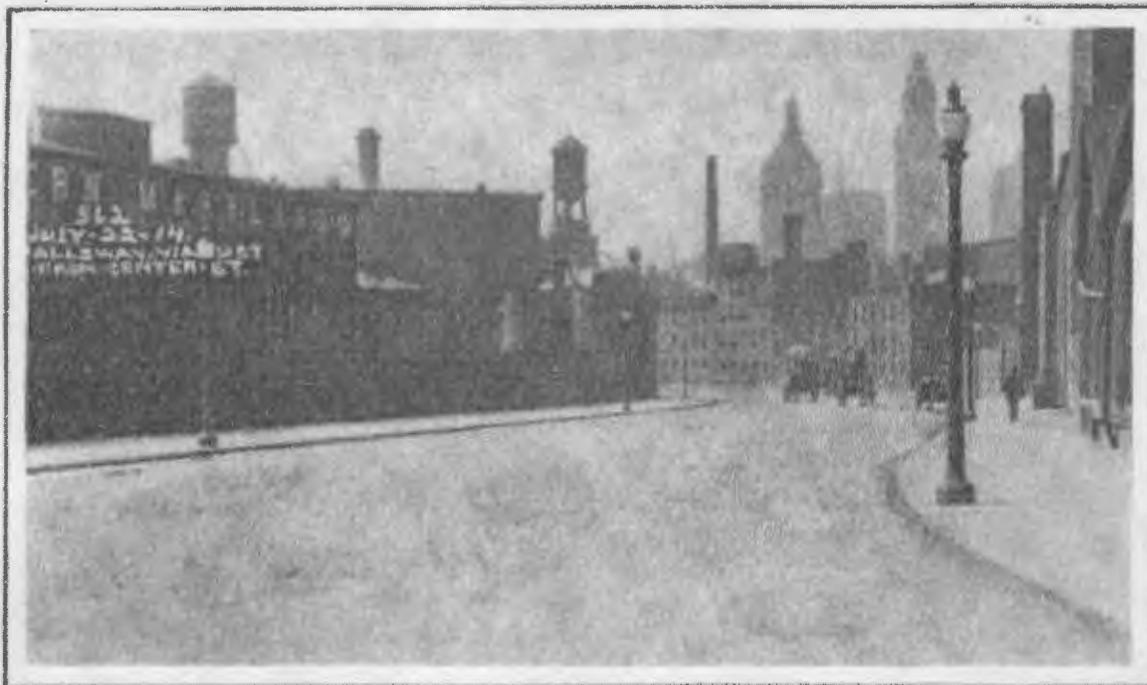
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Jones Falls Conduit under construction (Hendrick 1915:192)



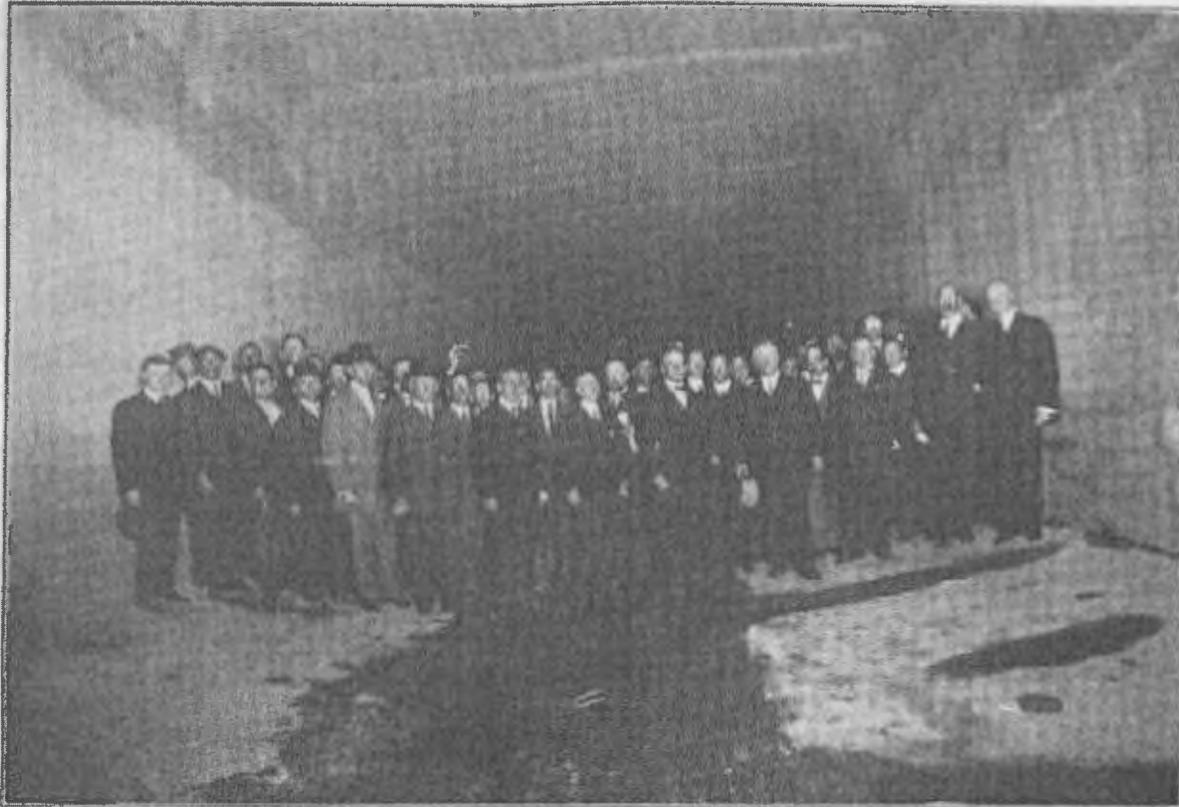
Jones Falls Conduit completed (Hendrick 1915:193)



**DECORATIVE FOUNTAIN COMMEMORATING THE COMPLETION OF THE IMPROVEMENT**  
Fallsway Monument (Hendrick 1915:193)



Jones Falls Conduit construction, view south from East Baltimore Street. Foreground of picture currently enclosed in conduit under President Street (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1914).



Interior of Jones Falls Conduit (Baltimore Sewerage Commission 1914)



Jones Falls Conduit drift-catcher, located on the west side of Falls Road and north of West 29th Street (Pictometry Bird's Eye 2010a).



Last remaining walls and obelisk associated with the Fallsway, located at the northeast corner of the Fallsway and East Madison Street (Google Earth 2010).



Fallsway Monument (Google Earth 2010)



Location Map  
(1953 USGS Baltimore East, MD, Photorevised 1966 and 1972)





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James Falls Conduit

Baltimore City, Maryland

Vanessa Zeoli

9.7.2010

James Falls Conduit outlet, view NE from East Lombard +  
President Streets

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Vanessa Teoli

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Jones Falls Conduit outlet, view NW from President Street

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