

Statement of Significance

Brown's Wharf Warehouse is a fine example of the type of building used in the earliest days of Baltimore's cargo-handling industry. In continuous use as a warehouse for over 150 years, the buildings have been altered little since being built. Now operated as a maritime museum, Brown's Wharf Warehouse is one of the few cargo buildings of this period to survive.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Brown's Wharf Warehouse  
AND/OR COMMON  
Fells Point Maritime Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
1621 Thames Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Baltimore  
VICINITY OF  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE  
Maryland  
COUNTY

**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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Rukert Terminals Corporation Telephone #: 675-9644  
STREET & NUMBER  
2100 S. Clinton Street  
CITY, TOWN  
Baltimore VICINITY OF STATE, zip code  
Maryland 21224

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore City Courthouse Liber #: MLP 7525  
STREET & NUMBER Fayette and Calvert Streets Folio #: 258  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
DATE  
—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

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<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Brown's Wharf, 1621 Thames Street was built in 2 stages. The first two warehouses were built in 1820-22 by the Biays Brothers, and the wharf and remaining two warehouses were added by George Brown in 1868.

The first two warehouses are built of brick, 3 stories high with a loft, and a steeply pitched roof. The west building measures eighty feet by thirty-five feet, and the east building fifty feet by forty-eight feet. The east building also has a one story annex, twenty-three by forty-eight feet. The bricks for the buildings came from England, and the slate for the roofs from Wales. The walls are twenty inches thick, the lintels eight inches thick, seven feet long, and made of granite. The eighteen by twelve inch beams are of Georgia Pine.

On the top floors of the warehouses, iron rods run from an iron plate on the outside walls and along the beams, where they are connected by a turnbuckle. These rods keep the walls from swaying in the high winds.

The 1868 warehouses, also of brick are three stories high and front on Thames Street. They are similar in construction to the original buildings. When built, there was a seventeen-foot covered roadway that ran from Thames Street, between the four buildings to the pier.

cont'd

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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SPECIFIC DATES      1822 - present      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brown's Wharf Warehouse is a fine example of the type of building used in the earliest days of Baltimore's cargo-handling industry. In continuous use as a warehouse for over 150 years, the buildings have been altered little since being built. Now operated as a maritime museum, Brown's Wharf Warehouse is one of the few cargo buildings of this period to survive.

### Historical Significance:

Brown's Wharf which today houses a museum of local history and cargo-handling operations is one of the oldest warehouses in Baltimore. It has been in continuous use for over 150 years.

In 1840 George Brown, son of Alexander Brown, bought a stretch of waterfront land that was owned by a group of Fells Point businessmen. Already in existence were two warehouses built by the Biays brothers in 1822. Brown immediately built a new pier in front of the warehouses. In 1868, he added on two new buildings, and an innovative covered roadway to keep the warehouses accessible in even the roughest weather.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

The Fells Point Story by Norman Rukert  
Baltimore: Bodine and Assoc., 1976

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning for the first thereof on the southeast side of Thames Street at the easternmost corner of the lot no. 63 which place of beginning is also at a point distant 189 ft. 10½ inches northeasterly from the northeast side of Bond Street and running thence southwesterly bounding the southeast side of Thames Street 24 ft. thence southeasterly at right angle with Thames Street 120 ft. thence nearly  
(continued on separate sheet)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen Stacey

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Industrial Museum

DATE

January 1981

STREET & NUMBER

217 N. Charles Street

TELEPHONE

301-396-1931

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

STATE

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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

The west facade of each of the 1822 warehouses is a blind facade, four bays wide. On the north facade, the first and fourth stories are all bays. There are two tall, narrow, rounded windows per bay and a double raised brick string course at the beginning of each arch. The facades are divided by raised brick pilasters. The pilasters above the string course have a brick decoration, consisting of indented and projected squares. The cornices are of corbeled brick.

On the third stories of the buildings there are two small arched windows in the first, third, and fourth bays. The second bay (on the East facade) has a large, arched door.

The interior floors are connected by an enclosed wooden staircase. In the center of each floor is a three by four foot trap door. In most rooms, the old lantern fixtures are still in place. The loft on the west side has a roof slope from nineteen feet to zero.

The Thames Street facade has arched openings on each level, some of which are bricked in. There is a grid of raised brick pilasters and 2 string courses. There are corbeled brick cornices, brick lintels, and brick modallions above each pier. The walls are eight courses thick, with massive shouldered and dramfered posts and beams.

Brown's Wharf Warehouse  
8. Hist. Sign.  
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Brown's Warehouse was one of the two largest in Fells Point, in competition with Belt's Wharf at the Foot of Fells Street. It was one of the main warehouses of firms dealing in the coffee and flour trade, such as Pendergast, Rollins, Whitridge, and Jenkins. It was also the terminal for the Havana/New Orleans Steamship line.

The advent of larger steamships that needed more rooms and longer piers led to the end of Brown's Wharf as a terminal. In 1890, a coffee clipper called the "Grey Eagle" was the last ship to dock there. Until 1904, the warehouse was used mostly for storage by local canneries. At that point it was sold to the Western Maryland Railroad, who removed part of the pier and rented out space to Fells Point merchants. The railroad continued to administer the building until 1947.

Rukert Terminals, a large Baltimore shipping firm, bought Brown's Wharf and warehouse in 1947. They fitted it out for modern storage without disturbing the original structure of the building. One wing of the warehouse has been made into a private maritime museum, inaugurated by Mayor Schaefer in 1976.

Brown's Wharf Warehouse  
10. Verb. Bound. Desc.  
p. 2

parallel with Thames Street 24 ft. the easternmost line of said whole lot 63 and thence northwesterly binding on said line. 120 ft. to the place of beginning.

Lot 2

Beginning for the second thereof on the southeast side of Thames Street at the distance of 24 ft. southwest from the northeast corner of Captain John Snyder's dwelling. (said point being also distant one hundred + 65 ft., 10½ inches northeasterly from the northeast side of Bond Street and being also at the end of the first line of the lot of ground hereinbefore firstly described and running thence southwesterly binding on the southeast side of Thames Street 24 ft. thence southeasterly at right angles with Thames Street 120 ft. to an alley 10 ft. wide thence northeasterly on said alley 24 ft. the lot of land hereinbefore firstly described and thence northwesterly binding on said lot by a straight line 120 ft. to the place of beginning.



BROWN'S WHARF WAREHOUSE  
18362220 4349860 TH WEST

#B89  
BROWN'S WHARF WAREHOUSE  
U.S.G.S. 7.5#Balto.E.Quad,MD

183622204349860

PARTS OF  
WARDS 12, 3  
BALTIMORE



B-89  
Brown's Wharf Warehouse  
1876 Atlas of Baltimore  
(Enoch Pratt Central Library)

NAER INVENTORY

SITE I.D. NO B 8 9

INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION	3. PRIORITY	4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN
	5. DATE	6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN
		7. OWNER/ADMIN Rukert Terminals Corporation

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE Brown's Wharf Warehouse	9. OWNER'S ADDRESS 2100 South Clinton Street
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10. STATE COUNTY <u>M D</u> COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY <u>Baltimore</u> CONG. DIST. <u>3</u>	11. STATE COUNTY <u>M D</u> COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY <u>Baltimore</u> CONG. DIST. <u>3</u>
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1. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO) 1621 Thames Street	12. EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> NR <input type="checkbox"/> NHL <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER-I <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input type="checkbox"/> CLB <input type="checkbox"/> CONF <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
	13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW) <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR INTACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONS INTACT

4. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1:24 <input type="checkbox"/> 1:62.5	QUAD NAME <u>Baltimore East</u>
UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE <input type="checkbox"/> 1:24 <input type="checkbox"/> 1:62.5	QUAD NAME

5. CONDITION 70  EXCELLENT 71  GOOD 72  FAIR 73  DETERIORATED 74  RUINS 75  UNEXPOSED 76  ALTERED 77  DESTROYED 85  DEMOLISHED

6. INVENTORIED BY Kathleen Stacey	AFFILIATION Baltimore Industrial Museum	DATE January 1981
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7. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

Brown's Wharf Warehouse is a fine example of the type of structure used in the earliest days of Baltimore's cargo-handling industry. In continuous use as storage space for over 150 years, the fine two-section, three story brick buildings with their steeply pitched roofs, have been little altered. Now the site of a local history and maritime museum, Brown's Wharf is one of the few cargo buildings of its period surviving today.

(CONT OVER)

8. ORIGINAL USE Warehouse & cargo handling	PRESENT USE Warehouse and local history museum	ADAPTIVE USE Residential/Museum
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9. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER  
The Fells Point Story, by Norman Rukert  
Baltimore: Bodine and Assoc., 1976

(CONT OVER)

10. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	21. <u>  </u>	22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	23. EDITOR INDEXER
24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	NAME <u>Fells Point Historic District</u>	DISTRICT I.D. NO	

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Browns Wharf  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
Photo: Dennis Zembala  
Neg. loc: MD Historic Trust  
Dec. 1980  
North facade

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Brown's Wharf

Baltimore City, Maryland

Photo: Dennis Zembala

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Dec. 1980

View from pier looking north