

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ___
no

Property Name: Sherwood Distillery (Cockeysville Distilling Company) Inventory Number: BA-2578
 Address: 10919 York Road City: Cockeysville Zip Code: 21030
 County: Baltimore USGS Topographic Map: Cockeysville
 Owner: James Riffin PO Box 854 Sparks, MD 21152 Is the property being evaluated a district? ___yes
 Tax Parcel Number: 193 Tax Map Number: 42 Tax Account ID Number: 0813026290
 Project: Cockeysville Flooding Project MD20111115-0849 Agency: Baltimore County Department of Planning
 Site visit by MHT Staff: no ___yes Name: _____ Date: _____
 Is the property located within a historic district? ___yes no

If the property is within a district District Inventory Number: _____
 NR-listed district ___yes Eligible district ___yes District Name: _____
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ___yes ___no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ___

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)
 Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ___yes no

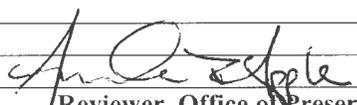
Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Baltimore County Department of Planning

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

Significance Summary:

The Sherwood Distillery, also known as the Cockeysville Distilling Company building, is located at 10919 York Road in the Cockeysville area of Baltimore County, Maryland. The large brick warehouse was constructed ca. 1947 on land once owned by the Cockey family and leased to the Sherwood Distilling Company, makers of a distinctive type of whiskey known as Maryland Rye. The original distillery that became known as Sherwood was established in 1868 by John J. Wight and William H. Lentz. Wight and Lentz had a grocery business located to the north of Cockeysville in Marble Hill and were later joined by Edward Hyatt, a wealthy Baltimore grocer and whiskey dealer. The Sherwood Distilling Company was officially incorporated in 1882 with Hyatt as president. After his death in 1894, John Hyatt Wight assumed the role as head of the company which began a multi generational family association with the whiskey distilling industry. The firm faced financial decline in the early part of the 20th century that was complicated by several legal inquiries by stockholders who challenged the accounting of profits. Other major factors, including the successful temperance movement which resulted in the Eighteenth Amendment, facilitated the downfall of the company. The Wight family sold their controlling shares in 1921 and the name Sherwood along with the firm's assets. The surviving distillery buildings were demolished ca. 1929. The end of prohibition signaled a return to the whiskey industry and Frank L. Wight, son of John Hyatt Wight, established a new distillery in Loreley, Baltimore County.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended ___	Eligibility not recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D	Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None
Comments: _____	
	<u>4/16/12</u>
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	Date
<u>N/A</u>	
Reviewer, NR Program	Date

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Continuation Sheet No. 1

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Wight sold out his interest in 1941 and built a new brick warehouse in the same area once occupied by his family's distillery in Cockeysville. Although he was unable to regain the name Sherwood, he named his new company the Cockeysville Distilling Company and the product "Ryebrook", both names of which are featured on sides of the brick warehouse. After Wight's death in 1958, production was shuttered and the warehouse became the property of the Majestic Distilling Company who used it as a storage facility for liquor barrels until it was damaged during Hurricane Agnes in 1972. It would later be rented by various tenants but has continued to suffer from structural problems relating to continued water damage and lack of maintenance.

Although the building has a strong association with Maryland's distilling history and the Wight family, it no longer retains enough architectural features or historic integrity due to its deteriorated state to convey that context or association. There are other distillery buildings in Maryland that retain the features necessary to represent the whiskey distilling history of Maryland. According to Baltimore County's Department of Public Works, the building is also structurally unsafe due to a lack of maintenance and frequent flooding which has weakened the walls and foundation. Therefore it is recommended that the property at 10919 York Road not be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B and C. The property was not evaluated under Criteria D.

Historical Background

Maryland has an association with the whiskey industry that dates back to the late 18th century, most notably the variation known as rye whiskey. Rye whiskey is predominantly made from rye grains with additions of corn, barley malt, rye malt and yeast. The green whiskey is then placed in barrels for aging from four to eight years.¹ The geology of Maryland was ideal as the limestone located underground was said to soften the water making it ideal for distilling the strong taste of whiskey. Although rum had generally been the strong drink of choice early on, naval blockades inhibiting trade made it harder to come by and more expensive for the colonists. A large number of settlers in the Maryland area came from Scotland and with them the knowledge of how to make whiskey. Whiskey production suffered a setback in 1791 due to the Federal government's first levy on the distilling of spirituous liquors, but was later reduced under Thomas Jefferson's presidency in 1802.² In the decades to follow, the distillery industry flourished; the number of distilleries in operation rose from 14,000 in 1810 to 20,000 in 1830. Although the numbers would eventually shrink, the distilling capacity at each business would steadily increase. Individual farmers and tavern owners would often distill their own whiskey and it could often be found at your village's grocery or dry goods store. There is not a definitive explanation for the reason that Maryland rye products obtained such a major following. It has been suggested that during the period of the United States Civil War, the large numbers of out of state visitors enjoyed the local whiskeys and were able to easily obtain their favorites after the war due to the improvements in rail freight service.³ Regardless of the reason, distilleries continued to find whiskey very profitable and were established all over Maryland. Between 1881 and 1913, Maryland was third compared to Kentucky and Pennsylvania in terms of whiskey production.⁴

The original distillery that became known as Sherwood was established in close proximity to the present warehouse in 1868 by John J. Wight and William H. Lentz. Wight and Lentz had a grocery business just to the north of Cockeysville in Marble Hill and were later joined by Edward Hyatt, a wealthy Baltimore grocer and whiskey dealer. The land was leased from Joshua F. Cockey and considered ideal for distilling due to its access to water and transportation. The Sherwood Distilling Company was officially incorporated in 1882 with Hyatt as president.⁵ After his death in 1894, John Hyatt Wight assumed the role as head of the company which began a multi generational family association with the whiskey distilling business. Sherwood was a true family business with several family members holding key positions in the company including president, secretary, treasurer and salesman, with the controlling interest and voting power to determine their own salaries. The Sherwood Distilling Company faced a significant hurdle in 1915 when they were sued by major stockholders Gilbert F. Heublein and Louis P. Roberts alleging mismanagement of the business. Heublein and Roberts challenged the accounting of assets, contended that the business was being conducted at a loss, blamed the large salaries being earned by the family and argued that their dividends were being adversely affected.⁶ After a lengthy court battle, Sherwood's right to bottle liquor was temporarily suspended. In addition to their legal conflicts with the stockholders, the Wight family found itself sharing the same financial difficulties that were affecting other distillers. The Federal government was diverting alcohol production for military purposes during the first World War and a successful temperance movement was encouraging the abstinence of alcohol resulting in the Eighteenth Amendment.⁷ A combination of these factors caused the Wights to sell their controlling interest in the company in 1921. Receivers were eventually named by the court, the debts were settled and ultimately the name "Sherwood" was sold in 1924 to Louis Mann along with its assets. Mann eventually moved the Sherwood enterprise to Carroll County, Maryland and constructed a new complex; many of the buildings survive and have been adaptively reused.⁸ The buildings belonging to the

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Continuation Sheet No. 2

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former Sherwood Distillery were acquired by the Maryland Salvage Company and demolished shortly after. They were abated from tax records in 1929 and 1930.⁹ After prohibition ended, Maryland reclaimed their dominance in the production of rye and led the nation in 1936 with 14 million gallons.¹⁰ Many buildings from those distilleries still exist in Maryland as a reminder of the state's association with the whiskey production industry. In spite of the loss of the Sherwood name and plant in Cockeyville, the Wight family remained involved in the whiskey distilling business. A new facility was established in eastern Baltimore County at Loreley in 1933 near White Marsh with Frank L. Wight as president. The new firm produced new products sold under the name "Sherbrook" and "Old Reserve" until 1941 when Wight announced his retirement and sold the distillery to Hiram Walker.¹¹ Shortly after the sale, the Connecticut firm of Heublein Inc. backed Wight in his plan to resurrect the family enterprise under the name "Cockeyville Distilling Company". Construction started on the new brick warehouse in 1947 and was completed in 1948. "In October (1947) the Cockeyville Distilling Company began equipping a three story building at Cockeyville for the manufacture of rye whiskey."¹² The Evening Sun noted that, "Maryland Rye Plant to Open...at old Cockeyville Distillery."¹³ With the time required to sufficiently age the product, the new plant bottled and sold their whiskey under the brand name "Ryebrook". "The distillery, Cockeyville's newest large business, is located on the site of its pre-Prohibition-days ancestor. It has not yet bottled any of its stock but is expected to begin this year 'after its fifth summer,' according to Melvin Brundick, treasurer."¹⁴ The distillery's name was proudly incorporated into the brick on the warehouse's western façade and read "Cockeyville Distilling Company". Painted along the roofline were the large words "Home of RYEBROOK" that announced the new product name to anyone passing by. "If a Hall of Fame of Maryland rye distillers is ever established, you can be sure that Frank L. Wight's name will top the list. He is the acknowledged master...The rye he's making today is called RYEBROOK. And Ryebrook has been called 'The Flower of Maryland Rye.'"¹⁵ Unfortunately Wight's death in 1958 put an end to the production of Ryebrook and the Cockeyville Distilling Company. It was sold to Majestic Distilling Company who operated a distillery in Landsdowne, Baltimore County. They used the warehouse for the storage of liquor barrels until it was damaged by Hurricane Agnes in 1972 when the Beaver Dam flooded.¹⁶ The building sat empty for a considerable amount of time and was subsequently sold to the Rosen family in 1985.¹⁷ It was never again used for whiskey manufacturing. It also continued to suffer damage over the years due to flooding by the Beaver Dam Run. Presently the building is unable to accommodate tenants due to structural issues in the foundation, walls and ceiling.

Architectural Description:

Exterior Description:

The Cockeyville Distillery Building is situated on the east side of York Road with Ashland Road to the north, and the Beaver Dam Run and Sherwood Road to the south. Constructed ca. 1947, the 3 story solid brick building is located on an approximate 2 acre parcel surrounded by industrial buildings. An asphalt driveway, accessible from York Road, is situated on the west, south and eastern sides of the building. The entrance to the building is located on the eastern elevation. A shared parking lot abuts the building to the north. The walls are partially obscured by a combination of elements including advertising banners, trucks and construction equipment. Overall the building is in poor condition with broken glass in most of the windows leaving the building open to the elements. The roof has partially collapsed and the foundation is not stable.

The western façade facing York Road has the name "Cockeyville Distilling Company" integrated into the brick with white stone. The northern and southern façades are broken into sections by vertical rowlock brick courses. Each section features multiple ventilation slit openings in the brick, most sections have one opening for each floor. The faded words, "Home of RYEBROOK", is barely visible on the third floor of the western half of the northern façade. The eastern elevation features what was likely the main entrance into the warehouse, a partial width frame and brick four bay, two story addition has been added to the southern half of the wall. The first floor of the addition features three multi light metal windows flanked by a door. The glass in the window is mostly broken or missing from the panes. The second story contains three windows that mirror the openings on the first floor. A four story square shaft projects east from the center of the wall and rises one story over the roof line. An entrance door is visible on the northern wall of the shaft.

Interior Description:

The interior was not accessible due to unsafe condition. A memo documenting the severity of the deterioration is attached.

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NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 3

BA-2578

Prepared by: Teri Rising, Balto Co Dept of
Planning

Date Prepared: February 23, 2012

¹ Frederick Rasmussen. 1975. "Drink it while it lasts: Rye whisky". *The Sun (1837-1986)*, Feb 18. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/538725504?accountid=34685>.

² James H. Bready, "Maryland Rye: A Whiskey the Nation Long Fancied-But Now Has Let Vanish", *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 85, No. 4. Winter 1990, 347-348.

³ Ibid 351-352.

⁴ Ibid, 346.

⁵ Ibid, 353.

⁶ "They sue sherwood co". 1915. *The Sun (1837-1986)*, Sep 01. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/533949888?accountid=34685>.

⁷ Bready, "Maryland Rye", 364-367.

⁸ Jack Sullivan, "Those Pre-Pro Whiskey Men! Sherwood Distillery and the Family Feud" <http://pre-prowhiskeymen.blogspot.com/2011/07/sherwood-distillery-and-family-feud.html> (Accessed February 6, 2012)

⁹ John McGrain, "Distillery at Cockeysville", BA-2578 - Baltimore County Department of Planning files, nd.

¹⁰ Rasmussen, "Drink it while it lasts"

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Caroll E. Williams, 1948. "Building costs in area amount to \$230,000,000". *The Sun (1837-1986)*, Jan 02. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/542621309?accountid=34685>.

¹³ McGrain, "Distillery at Cockeysville"

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Display ad 77 -- no title. 1953. *The Sun (1837-1986)*, Oct 21. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/542398706?accountid=34685>.

¹⁶ Ken Baake, "Forgotten Spirits: A vacant warehouse is all that remains of Cockeysville's once-thriving whiskey distillery", *Towson Times*, September 17, 1980.

¹⁷ Baltimore County Land & Will Records, Baltimore County Courthouse, Towson, MD: SM 7858:1.





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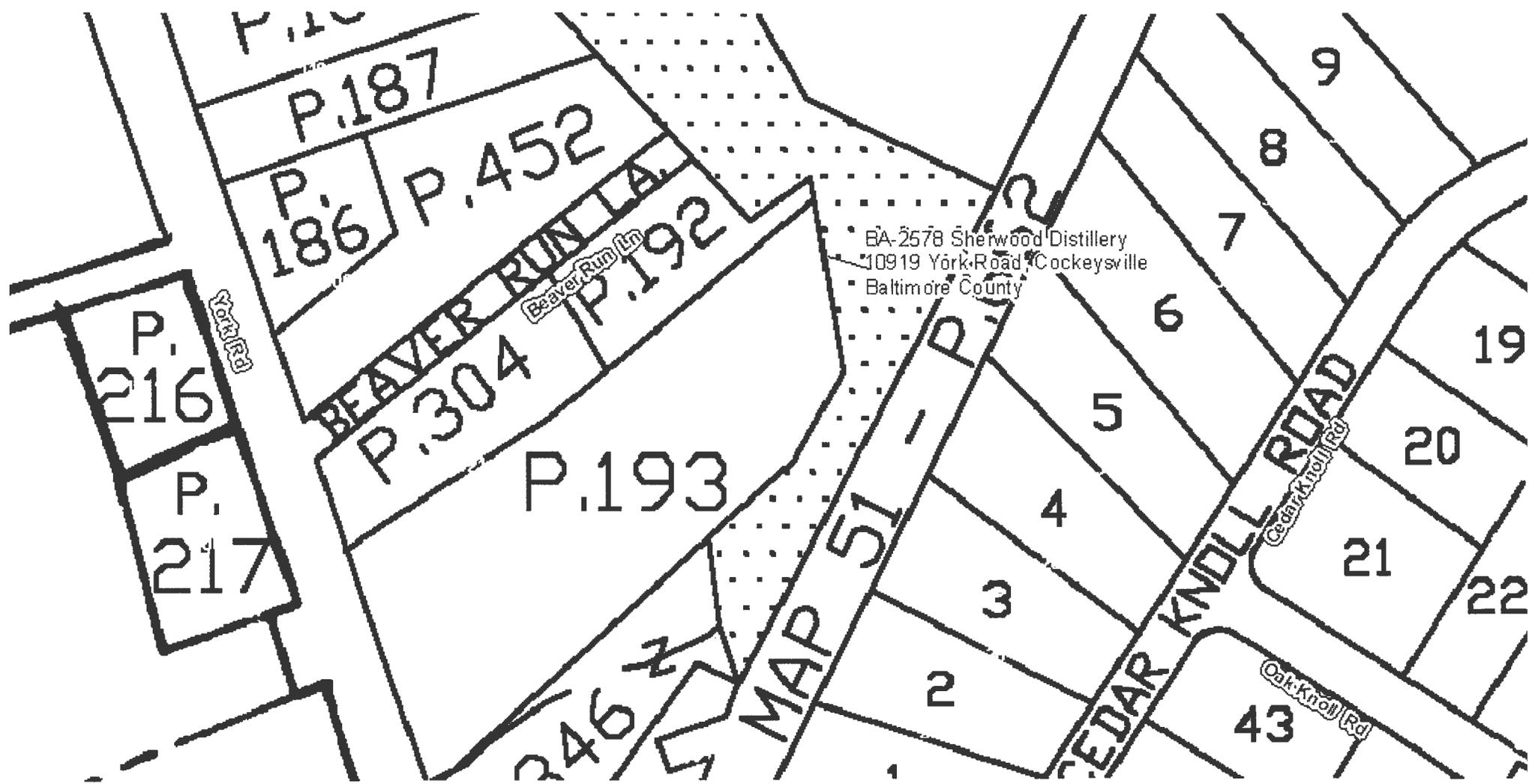
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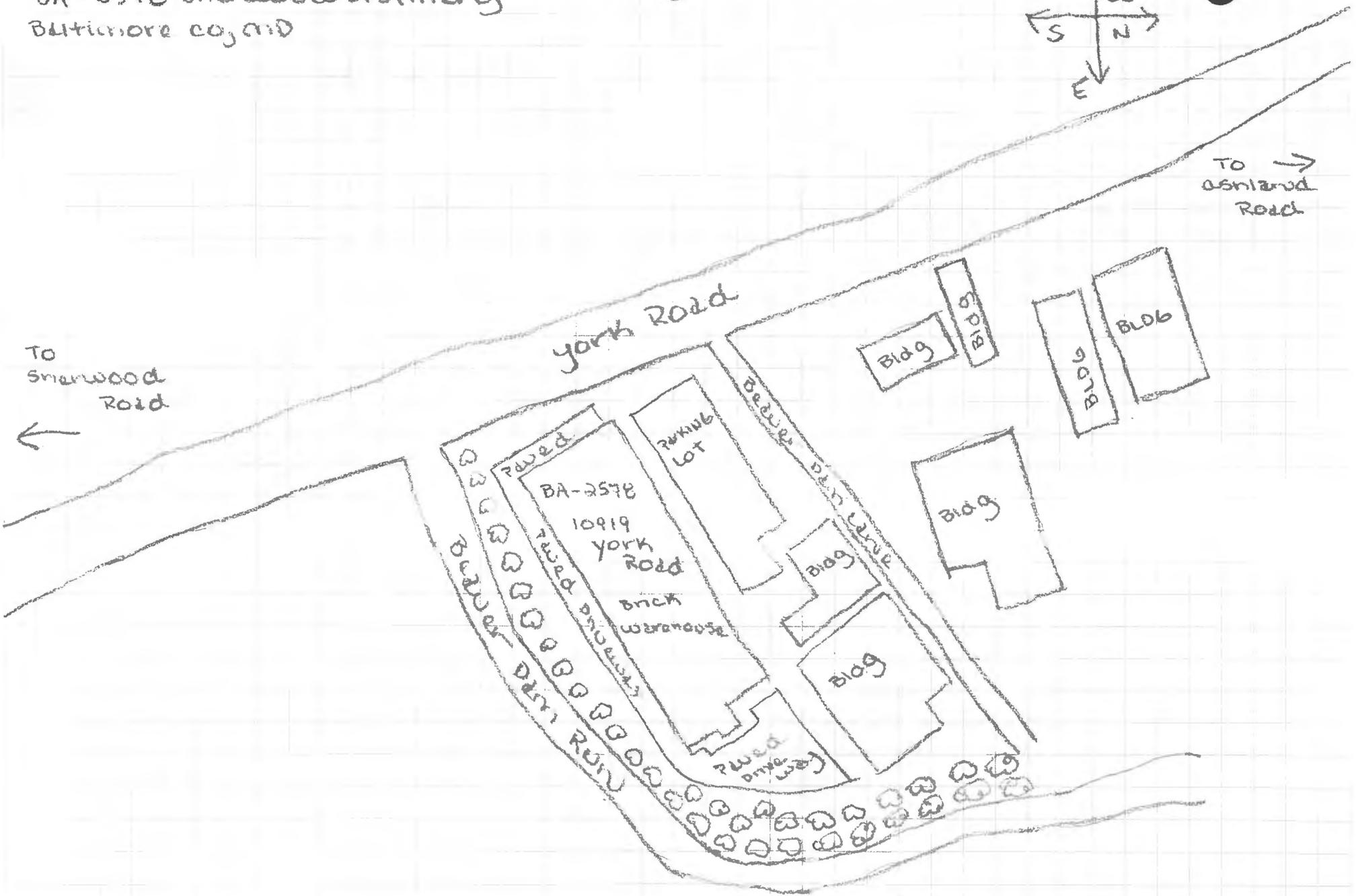
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BA-2578 Sherwood Distillery
10919 York Road, Cockeysville
Baltimore County

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Resource sketch map
BA-2578 Sherwood Distillery
Baltimore co, MD



TO
Sherwood
Road

TO
Ashland
Road



1 of 6

BA-2578

10919 York Road

Cockeysville

Baltimore Co, MD

Baltimore ⁰⁰³ County Dept of Planning

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MD SHPO

looking north

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Handwritten graffiti on the freight car.

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10919 York Road
Cockeysville

Baltimore Co, MD

Baltimore Co Dept of Planning

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Looking northeast

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BA-2578

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Baltimore CO, MD

Baltimore CO DEPT OF PLANNING

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MD SHPD

Looking South east

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BA-2578

10919 York Road
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Baltimore Co, MD

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MD SHPO

ELSC Elevation

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BA-2578

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looking east

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