

Harford Democrat Building
21 Courtland Street
Bel Air
private

This three bay brick office building with the colonial door surround and pseudo-colonial shop window was once a plain three bay building with 6/6 windows set in flat brick arches and a side door set in under a flat brick arch.

James D. Watters and William Bouldin built the building in 1869 to house their newly established newspaper, the Harford Democrat. Both men soon ceased to have a connection with the paper, but the journal continued to be published in the building until 1922. In 1923 the Bel Air Electric Company bought the building. After being absorbed by the Consolidated Gas, Electric Light & Power Company, the Company finally came to rest in the corporate name the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company in 1955.

The colonial facade dates to 1940.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

HA-1391
1313914511

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Harford Democrat Building

AND/OR COMMON

Baltimore Gas & Electric Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

21 Courtland Street

1st

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Baltimore Gas & Electric Co.

Telephone #: 234-5000

STREET & NUMBER

Box 1431

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21203

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 208
Folio #: 104

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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	1940, 1959	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two story, slate roofed brick office building is at 21 Courtland Street in the Town of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. Originally a three bay structure 20'+ x 45', the building was completely remodeled and enlarged by a 27' extension in 1940 by architects Alexander Shaw of Bel Air and Taylor and Fisher of Baltimore, with construction by Thomas Borneman of Havre de Grace. Another extension was added in 1959.

The original building was three bays wide with simple 6/6 double hung sash windows set in wooden surrounds topped by flat brick arches in the upper story and the two eastern bays of the first story. The entry was in the westernmost bay of the first story. The plain door was topped by a single pane transom, and like most of the entries on Courtland Street, it was up three steps. A plain chimney, since removed, rose inside the east elevation.

The slate covered hipped roof topped a simple cornice. (see photo) The interior was quite plain. The first floor was one big room with a large fireplace in the west wall and a chair rail. Upstairs there was also one big room. The location of the staircase is uncertain, but it was probably not straight from the door as that would have interfered with the fireplace. Possibly it was in the back (south) wall.

In 1940 the Consolidated Gas, Electric Light & Power Company altered the facade by taking out the first floor windows and replacing them with a composite window with a very slight bow as a compromise between the display window they needed and the "Georgian" effect they wished to convey. A frontispiece doorway topped with a broken scroll pediment replaced the former simple entrance. The interior was completely remodeled with the fireplace being stopped up and the chimney removed. The ground floor became a showroom with a glassed off office to the rear. The upstairs remained the Gas & Electric Co. office. (see photos) A basement was dug under the rear addition. The 1959 addition to the rear gave the building its present shape.

More recently all the wooden parts except the doorway were covered or replaced with aluminum siding and the windows altered, the upstairs to 9/9 and the show window flattened, although the 1940's effect was retained by the use of a mutin lattice of aluminum in the rear of the window. A night depository replaced the western pane. At the same time the facade was sand-blasted.

No vestige of the original interior remains except possibly the chair rail and baseboard in the front office. These may, however, date from the 1940 remodeling.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

~~Taylor & Fisher~~

SPECIFIC DATES 1869; 1940, 1959 ~~WOODRIF~~/ARCHITECT - (1940) Alexander Shaw; Contractor - Thomas Borneman

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This brick building is a very well preserved example of the kind of simple brick structures erected around the Courthouse in Bel Air after the Civil War. Like some of its neighbors it has been up-dated by back-dating it. Its present neo-classical make-up was added in 1940. The original building was less adorned.

The building was built in 1869 by James D. Watters and William Bouldin to house their new newspaper the Harford Democrat on a lease from Herman Stump, Henry Archer, and Stevenson Archer. All of the land on the south side of Courtland Street between Main and Bond Streets was acquired by these three men from the Misses Robinson who had inherited 11 of lot #33 in the original town plat. Apparently the volatile Bouldin and the more staid Watters did not get along very well. At any rate before the year was out, Bouldin left the partnership to found another newspaper, The Bel Air Record and sold his share of the lease to his partner. Watters retired from editing in 1871 when he was elected Judge of the Circuit Court for Harford County and sold the lease-and the paper-to Joseph M. Streett and Patrick N. Rutledge. Both men were lawyers and had their offices upstairs. Rutledge was states attorney for the county from 1867 to 1871. Rutledge, in turn, sold out to his partner Streett in 1876 for \$5,500. Streett was joined in the venture by his son, Grover G. Streett; and the paper was operated by the family until 1919 when it was sold to J. Wilmer Cronin, an Aberdeen attorney. The paper continued to be published in Bel Air for several years (probably until late 1922) under the name of Harford Democrat and Aberdeen Enterprise. Its headquarters were subsequently moved to Aberdeen, but it maintains a Bel Air bureau, currently at 34 Main Street, just across the Courthouse lawn from its first home.

In April 1923 the heirs of Joseph Streett sold the lease and building to the Bel Air Electric Company for \$5,000. The fee simple was still in the hands of Henry Archer's heirs; in 1927 the Electric Company extinguished the ground rent for the contractual price of \$416.67 and acquired the fee simple. The next year the Bel Air Electric Company was absorbed into the Consolidated Gas, Electric Light & Power Company.

That company undertook a major remodeling and expansion of the building in 1940 by adding a 27' extension, renovating the facade into a "Georgian" style, and entirely redoing the interior. The design was by Alexander Shaw of Bel Air and Taylor and Fisher of Baltimore. Taylor and Fisher are known for the Baltimore Trust Company Building, the city's

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harford Democrat
Interview with Mr. Stowers of the Gas & Electric Co. 30 January 1979.
The Aegis, 26 July 1940

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property occupies parcel 837 in the Town of Bel Air 20⁺ frontage.

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	
M. Larew, Architectural Historian	29 January 1979
ORGANIZATION	DATE
Town of Bel Air	838-8700
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
39 Hickory Ave.	STATE
CITY OR TOWN	
Bel Air	Maryland

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

first major skyscraper, as well as the Bourni Temple at North Charles Street and Wyndhurst Avenue. The contractor was Thomas Borneman of Havre de Grace. When the remodeling was completed the facade assumed its present look, although in wood rather than aluminum. The interior was "keyed to a soft, warm gray", with indirect lighting throughout and a "gas-fired automatic winter and summer air conditioning system." The first floor had a showroom and an office for B.P. Tilghman, the district manager. The second floor office housed the clerical staff and the switchboard.

Around 1955 the company became the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company and shortly afterward, in 1959, a further addition was made, giving the building its present configuration. A recent renovation re-did the interior in primary colors and the latest graphics. The facade was sand-blasted and the wooden parts of the building were covered or replaced with white aluminum (except for the "Georgian" entry).

This building is one of the oldest remaining office buildings in town, and, remarkably, has had only two uses - newspaper office and Electric Company office - in its 110 years.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
 21 STATE CIRCLE
 SHAW HOUSE
 ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET
 Individual Structure Survey Form

SURVEY NUMBER: HA-1391
NEGATIVE FILE NUMBER:
UTM REFERENCES: Zone/Easting/Northing
U.S.G.S. QUAD. MAP:
PRESENT FORMAL NAME: BG & E Bldg.
ORIGINAL FORMAL NAME: Harford Democrat Building
PRESENT USE: Office
ORIGINAL USE: Newspaper office
ARCHITECT/ ENGINEER (1940) Alexander Shaw & Taylor & Fisher
ENGINEER /CONTRACTOR: Thomas Borneman
PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE: Excellent (X) Good () Fair () Poor: ()
THEME: Architecture
STYLE: Neo-Classical
DATE BUILT: 1869; remodeled 1940

COUNTY: Harford
TOWN: Bel Air
LOCATION: 21 Courtland Street Bel Air, Md. 21014
COMMON NAME: Baltimore Gas & Electric Co.
FUNCTIONAL TYPE: Commercial
OWNER: Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. ADDRESS: Box 1431 Baltimore, Md. 21203
ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Yes () No () Restricted (X)
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local (X) State () National ()

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Structural System

- Foundation: Stone () Brick (X) Concrete () Concrete Block ()
- Wall Structure
 - Wood Frame: Post and Beam () Balloon ()
 - Wood Bearing Masonry: Brick (X) Stone () Concrete () Concrete Block ()
 - Iron () D. Steel () E. Other:
- Wall Covering: Clapboard () Board and Batten () Wood Shingle () Shiplap ()
Novelty () Stucco () Sheet Metal () Aluminum () Asphalt Shingle ()
Brick Veneer () Stone Veneer ()
Bonding Pattern: Other:
- Roof Structure
 - Truss: Wood () Iron () Steel () Concrete ()
 - Other:
- Roof Covering: Slate (X) Wood Shingle () Asphalt Shingle () Sheet Metal ()
Built Up () Rolled () Tile () Other:
- Engineering Structure:
- Other:

Appendages: Porches () Towers () Cupolas () Dormers () Chimneys () Sheds () Ells ()
Wings () Other:

Roof Style: Gable () Hip (X) Shed () Flat () Mansard () Gambrel () Jerkinhead ()
Saw Tooth () With Monitor () With Bellcast () With Parapet () With False Front ()
Other:

Number of Stories: 2

Number of Bays: 3

Approximate Dimensions: 20' x 100'

Entrance Location: Courtland St.

THREAT TO STRUCTURE: No Threat (X) Zoning () Roads () Development () Deterioration () Alteration () Other:
--

LOCAL ATTITUDES: Positive () Negative () Mixed () Other:

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL OR STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION:

1940 re hab addition, frontispiece doorway & new window
Showroom down, Gas & Electric office up.
Nothing of original interior except possibly chair rail

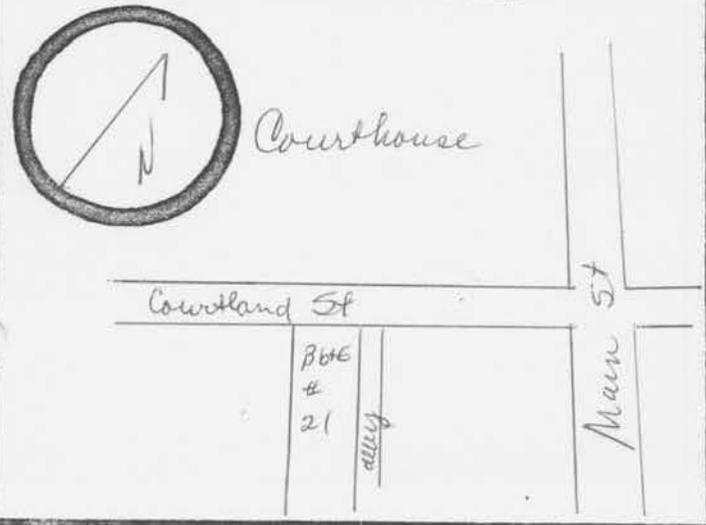
RELATED STRUCTURES: (Describe)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Harford Democrat office, Gas & Electric office 1923
(1869 - c. 1920)

REFERENCES:

MAP: (Indicate North In Circle)



SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:

Open Lane() Woodland() Scattered Buildings()
 Moderately Built Up() Densely Built Up()
 Residential() Commercial(X)
 Agricultural() Industrial()
 Roadside Strip Development()
 Other:

M. Larew
 RECORDED BY:
 Town of Bel Air
 ORGANIZATION:
 1 February 1979
 DATE RECORDED:

B6 & E BLDG.
21 Courtland

B6 & E took over the Consolidated Gas
 Electric Light & Power Co., c.1955

208/104

4 April 1928
 Bel Air Electric Co.
 to
 Consolidated Gas Electric Light & Power Co.
 of Baltimore
 all property

203/458

18 June 1927
 Safe Deposit & Trust Co. & Mary Archer
 to
 Bel Air Electric
 The fee simple belonged to Henry Archer's heirs.
 This deed extinguishes the ground rent that had
 been on the land since 1869. Price as required
 by that lease was \$416.67.

26/246

1871
 The division of Stump, Archer and Archer
 purchase (see 19/217). This piece went to
 Stump & Henry Archer. Stump sold his share
 in everything but the office building (17
 Courtland) to Henry Archer who left it to his
 heirs (will 14/151, 1910).

19/217

14 October 1867
 Henry Farnandis, Trustee, Ann Robinson &
 Martha Robinson
 to
 Herman Stump, Jr., Trustee for self, Henry W.
 Archer and Stevenson Archer

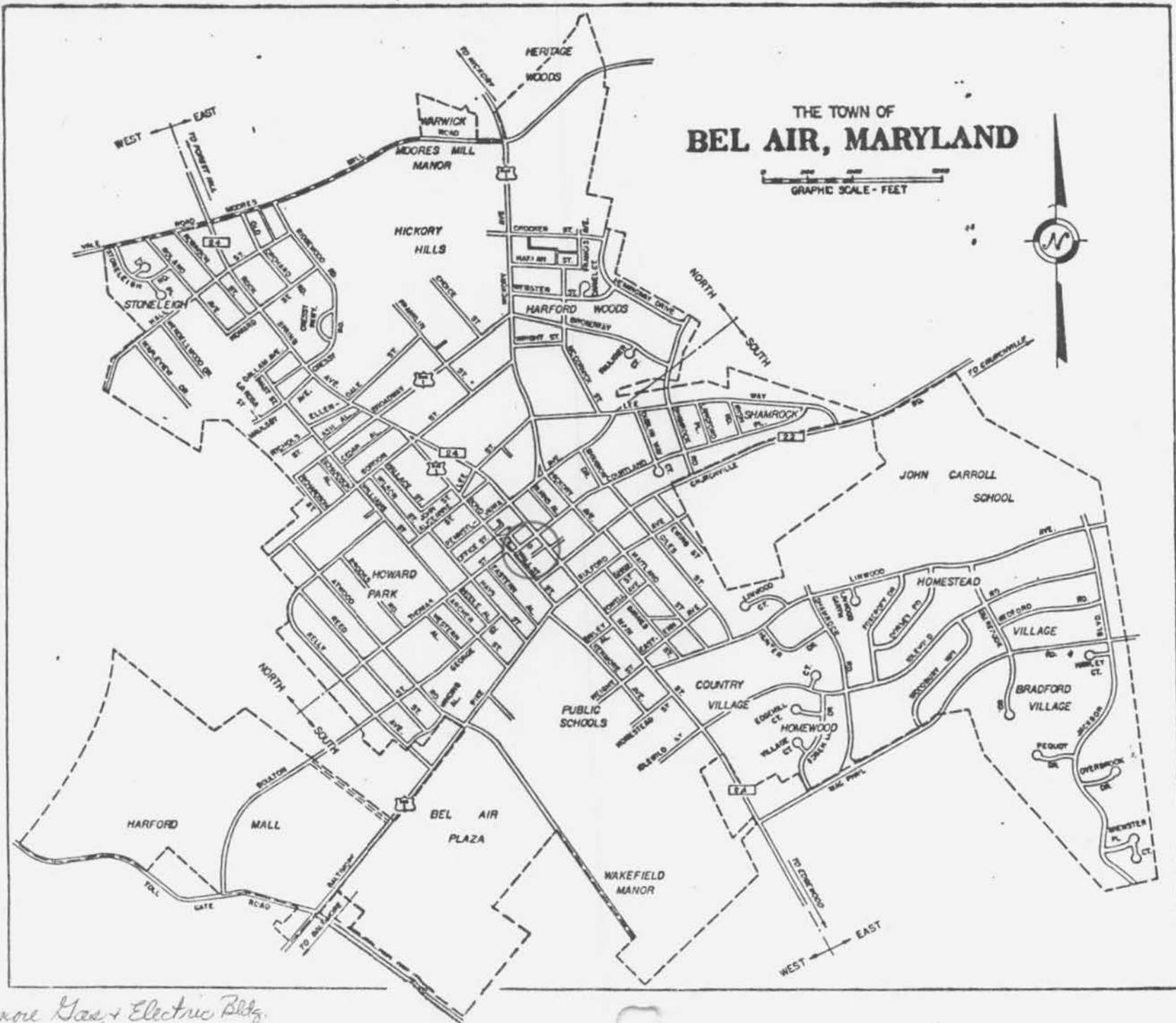
This transaction included the whole of lot
 #33 on the Plat of Bel Air. For the court
 case see 31 Courtland, The Ranneberger Bldg.

181/486

The ground rent (and Building)
 6 April 1923
 Elizabeth S. Jacobs & Frank, husband, Grace R. S.
 Page, Mabel S. Earle & Swepson, husband,
 Juliet S. Price & William J., husband.
 to
 Bel Air Electric Co.
 \$5000

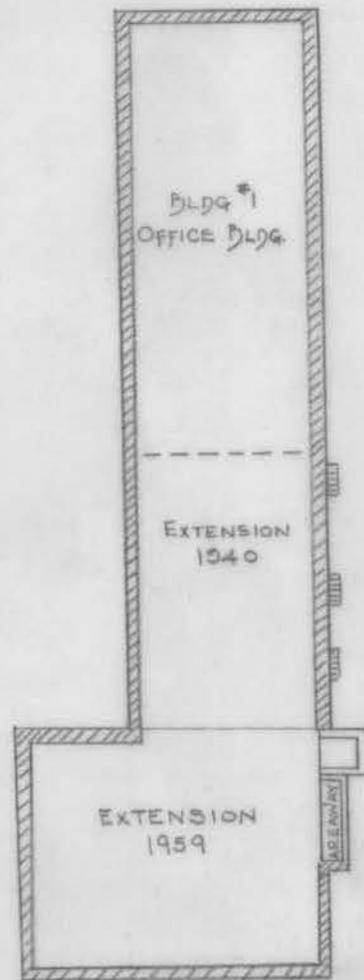
The girls are heirs of Joseph Streett who left them the property (will JA 16/328, 1921). Streett was editor of the Harford Democrat from 1870 until 1919. The newspaper was printed in this building from 1869.

- 33/97 6 March 1876
Patrick N. Rutledge
 to
Joseph M. Streett
Rutledge's share
\$5500
- 26/395 29 December 1871
James D. Watters
 to
Patrick N. Rutledge and Joseph M. Streett
- 23/465 William Bouldin
 to
James D. Watters
his share of the lease
- 21/272 9 January 1869
Herman Stump, Jr., trustee for self, Henry
Archer & Stevenson Archer
 to
James D. Watters & William Bouldin
Watters & Bouldin published the Harford
Democrat from 1868-71 when they sold it
to Streett.



HA-1391

Baltimore Gas & Electric Bldg.
21 Courtland St.
Bel Air



DRAWN BY: MARILYNN LAREW

TRACED BY: G. CUNO

HA-1391

BALTIMORE GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY

21 COURTLAND STREET

BEL AIR, MARYLAND

SCALE: 1 in = 20 ft



N



1885
ELECTRIC
WORKS

BALTIMORE
GAS AND ELECTRIC
COMPANY

Gas + Electric

© 1960

HA - 1391

THIS PHOTOGRAPH
By: W. Robert Wallis
Fountain Green Road
Bel Air, Md.



Baltimore Gas and Electric Company

BG+E BLDG, 21 Courtland, 3rd Flr

FRONT (NORTH) ELEVATION

M. L. ARDEN, 1978

HA-1391



BGE Bldg, 21 Courtland, BEL AIR

EAST ELEVATION, SHOWING 1940 & 1959
ADDITIONS

M. LAREW, 1979

HA-1391



R 364E BLDG & HOLDER BLDG., 21, 25 COURTHAND CT., BEL
ETWEEN 1923 & 1940 NORTH ELEVATION

Photo (courtesy) BEL AIR OFFICE, 364E

A-1391



BG+E BLDG, 21 COURTLAND ST., BEL AIR

2ND FLOOR OFFICE

L & R. J. ALEXIS SHRIVER & JOHN SHRIVER

MID-1920's?

PHOTO COURTESY BEL AIR OFFICE, BG+E

HA-1391



BG & E Bldg, 21 COURTLAND ST., BEL AIR

FIRST FLOOR OFFICE, 1924

PHOTO COURTESY BEL AIR OFFICE, BG & E

HA-1391



13-447. 8-2-40.
Belair Office & Store.

B6+E B106, 21 COVINGTON ST., BEL AIR

Office, 2ND FLOOR., from 1940 Rehab.

Photo: Courtesy BEL AIR Office, B6+E

HA-1391



ADFORD
PLANNED
DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Chamberlain

HA - 1391