

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

B-2372

Demolished - 2002

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name JOHNSTON BUILDING

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 26-30 South Howard Street N/A not for publication
city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Independent City code 510 zip code 21201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: [X] private, [ ] public-local, [ ] public-State, [ ] public-Federal
Category of Property: [X] building(s), [ ] district, [ ] site, [ ] structure, [ ] object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects, Total 1

Name of related multiple property listing: East Iron Architecture of Baltimore, Maryland, 1850-1904

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature] STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER
Date: 8/23/94
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

**6. Function or Use**

B-2372

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse  
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
 (enter categories from instructions)

QUEEN ANNE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls IRON

BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Johnston Building is a five-story loft building constructed in 1880, located at the southwest corner of South Howard Street and Cider Alley, in downtown Baltimore, Maryland. The building reflects the influence of the Queen Anne style in its facade organization and detailing; it incorporates brick, stone, and cast iron elements. The first floor facade features cast iron columns. The building retains good architectural integrity; the storefront retains most of its important cast iron elements, and the upper floors are essentially unchanged.

**8. Statement of Significance**

B-2372

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1880

Significant Dates

1880

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gott, Jackson C., Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

THEME:

Cast Iron Architecture in Baltimore, Maryland, 1850-1904

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Johnston Building is significant as representing a Cast Iron Storefront: Multistory Loft type building.

See continuation sheet

No. 4

For HISTORIC CONTEXT and MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN data.

## 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 Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

 See continuation sheet No. 10

## Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property Less than one acre

USGS Quad: Baltimore East, MD

## UTM References

A 

1	8	3	6	0	3	0	0	4	3	4	9	7	8	0
Zone	Easting		Northing											

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 See continuation sheet

## Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are defined as a single city lot, specifically identified as Block 655, Lot 15, recorded among the Land Records of Baltimore City, Maryland.

 See continuation sheet

## Boundary Justification

The nominated property comprises the city lot upon which the resource stands.

 See continuation sheet**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James D. Dilts

organization for Baltimore Heritage, Inc. date September 1987

street & number 4611 Keswick Road telephone (410) 235-9733

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21218

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 7 Page 1

---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Johnston Building is located on the southwest corner of South Howard Street and Cider Alley, facing east. It is five stories high, with a full basement and shed roof, and measures 59'6" across the front, and 81' on the alley side. The building is a double warehouse, divided lengthwise by a brick wall, thus providing space for separate tenants in each half. Contemporary news accounts refer to this detached structure in the city's former warehouse district as two warehouses; the repetitive nameplates at the top, and the cornice return on the north side, all designating it the "Johnston Buildings," plural, reinforce this idea.

The Johnston Building has eight bays; the dividing wall is expressed on the exterior as a central pilaster. The materials of the polychromatic, richly-detailed facade are red brick, with stone trim on the upper four levels, and structural cast iron for the ground floor storefronts.

The street level bays are defined by four engaged columns flanking the major pilasters at the corners and center of the building, and six free-standing ones. They are round, unfluted, and set on tall bases with partially chamfered corners. The capitals have an acanthus-leaf design topped by heavy, petal-like excrescences. The columns continue a short way above these capitals, surrounded by rectangular casings with colonnettes, which are miniatures of the primary columns. They extend through the bases as well, one of which bears a casting mark: "Variety Iron Works, No. 4 Light St[reet], Baltimore, Md."

On the northern half of the building, the middle column has been replaced with an I-beam, and the capitals of the remaining columns are lacking some of their elements. On the southern half, the capital of the column adjacent to the central pier is missing entirely; the other capitals are intact, but part of the exterior casing above them has disappeared, exposing the structural column underneath. Otherwise, the columns are in reasonably good condition, fully visible, and could be restored.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 7 Page 2

---

The iron beams these columns support also have an external casing that features a serrated lower edge, plain frieze, and cornice with a running floral and leaf pattern. The casing is damaged in spots, particularly where the column was removed; the serrated edge is missing some of its teeth. The entrances at the corners of the building, and the storefront windows between, have been covered with plywood with padlocked access doors.

Because the iron is damaged to some extent, and the plywood is recessed behind the plane of the original plate glass front, it is possible to analyze the supporting structure. Each column is attached to a three-sided metal casing, the whole forming a structural unit 15" wide and 24" deep--exactly the depth of the overhead beam, which is also hollow (containing an I-beam). The voids in the column unit and around the I-beam have been in-filled with brick. Thus, the decorative iron, half an inch thick, forms a structural envelope for the interior masonry, and together they hold up the facade above.

The design of the facade is busy and ornate, yet it offers subtle variations in plane and a full range of window treatments: stone lintels at the second level, segmental brick arches for the third, semi-circular brick arches at the fourth, and stone lintels again on the fifth (running in a continuous band across the entire face of the building). The windows are double-hung, one-over-one, with the top sashes straight or curved, to match the masonry.

Column bases, capitals, and impost blocks are of stone, in several configurations. Narrow, horizontal stone bands in the brick piers and pilasters provide further contrasts in color and material, except at the fifth story where the piers are plain. The three major pilasters are further decorated with narrow vertical slots and wider panels where the bricks have been turned so that their corners project. At the second and third levels is a set of segmental arches, each spanning two windows; their treatment varies. Finally, the facade is enlivened by small, square, corner-brick panels, along with rosettes and stylized maple leaf designs set in the stone impost blocks. A plain brick frieze and metal cornice complete the structure. Above the roofline are two large pediments with scrolled sides, each of which proclaims the date of construction and, below it, the name of the building. Some of the

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 7 Page 3

---

numerals and letters are missing from the identification panels. The masonry is in generally good condition, although dirty; some of the windows on all of the upper stories have been filled with plywood.

The building's south side is windowless; the north, facing the alley, has three windows on each floor except the fifth, which has four. Some of these are broken and boarded. At the rear, two large brick arches, each four windows wide, rise nearly to the top of the building, with the windows at the fifth level being curved to fit under the arches. The windows are double-hung, nine-over-nine (except on the fifth floor), and have been mostly broken out, although the frames are intact; the openings have been boarded from the inside. Corrugated metal covers the spandrels between floors, and there is a metal fire escape between the arches. A shallow, one-story brick shed with eight arched window openings (again, mostly boarded), and a corrugated metal roof, extends from the back of the building.

Inside the northern half (entrance could not be gained to the southern), the basement has iron columns and wooden beams. The first floor has been made into office space, with panelling, dropped ceiling, etc. The upper floors are all the same: open, column-free loft space with a wooden stairway in front next to the dividing wall, and an elevator opposite on the alley wall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 4

---

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Community Planning  
Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse  
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Known Design Source: Gott, Jackson C., Architect

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetJohnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 5HISTORY & SUPPORT:

The Johnston Building, and its fraternal twin to the north, the Rombro Building, are among the few double warehouses remaining in Baltimore. Their colorful and elaborate Victorian facades distinguish them among the city's 19th-century commercial structures. They represent an architectural use of cast iron--as storefront framing--of which relatively few examples remain. The Johnston and Rombro buildings appeared within a year of one another in 1880-1881, built by the same developer, the Johnston Brothers; designed by the same architect, Jackson C. Gott; and with their cast iron elements fabricated by the same foundry, the Variety Iron Works. Over the years, they have housed wholesale companies dealing in tobacco, hats, shoes, clothing, and home and office furnishings. Some early occupants, such as Samuel Hecht, Jr., & Sons, later became significant retailers in Baltimore. Both structures have survived for more than a century with no irreversible alterations. The developers, architect, and foundry were all closely identified with Baltimore. Harriet Lane, the wife of one of the Johnston Brothers, was an important local philanthropist; these buildings were part of her legacy.

"The locality now preferred by the wholesale business men lies south of Baltimore St[reet], and between Charles St[reet] on the east and Eutaw St[reet] on the west," announced the Baltimore correspondent of one of the nation's leading architectural magazines in January, 1881. "In this district a large number of splendid warehouses have been erected within the past two years, and as an inducement to merchants and others, property-holders in this vicinity offer to erect such buildings as may be desired if the tenants will agree to rent for a short term of years."<sup>1</sup>

The Johnston Brothers, local bankers, were such property owners. In the late 1870s, they assembled roughly half a dozen lots on either side of Cider Alley and in early 1880, they were ready to build. In February of that year, the Baltimore American noted that architect Jackson C. Gott was preparing designs for "two fine iron front warehouses on Howard St[reet]" to be named for the owners. "They will have a front of sixty feet, be five stories high, and the building will

---

<sup>1</sup>American Architect and Building News, January 29, 1881, p. 59.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 6

---

go up at once."<sup>2</sup>

Baltimore one hundred years ago was the clothing center for the entire South, and the heart of the garment trade was in the city's wholesale district. Many of the companies were housed in buildings such as this, where the goods could be displayed and sales transacted in the ground floor business area while the production took place in the lofts upstairs.

The earliest occupants of the Johnston Building were in the apparel business. The tenant, 1882-c.1898 (in the northern half), was the G.S. Howser Co., wholesale dealers in hats, caps, and straw goods. "The display is very interesting and attractive, a wonderful variety being shown in every line," according to one of the business publications of the day.<sup>3</sup> Charles Weilder and Sons, wholesalers of "cloths, cashmeres, and vestings," occupied the other half of the building.

By 1898, however, Gassaway S. Howser, the principal owner, had moved the firm elsewhere. His place was taken by S.F. and R.F. Miller & Co., "summer and bicycle clothing manufacturers."<sup>4</sup> That year, the southern half of the structure was occupied by S. Lowman & Co., also a clothing concern.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the Miller and Lowman companies moved out and the Benninghaus Tobacco Co., 26 South Howard Street, and Claussen & Wagner, cigar-makers, 28-30 South Howard, came in. The latter firm was gone by 1904; Samuel Hecht, Jr., & Sons, carpet importers and jobbers, were the new tenants. Four years later, they had expanded into China and Japan mattings (inexpensive and popular floor coverings). This and other Hecht family operations were the ancestors of the Hecht's department stores. In the 1940s and 1950s, wholesale furniture companies occupied the Johnston Building. It is now vacant.

---

<sup>2</sup>Baltimore American, February 16, 1880.

<sup>3</sup>Illustrated Baltimore, the Monumental City, 1890, New York, p. 178.

<sup>4</sup>Baltimore City Directory, 1898.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetJohnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 7

Cast iron columns were often employed to frame the first floors of otherwise masonry commercial buildings, because their compressive strength permitted them to be made more slender than brick or stone piers. With the enlarged openings filled with plate glass, they allowed plenty of light into the interior, along with a clear view of the merchandise on display. They were also decorative and could be quickly erected.

The iron framing for the Johnston Building storefronts was provided by the Variety Iron Works, York, Pennsylvania. The firm had an office in Baltimore, which accounted for a fourth of its sales, and did a substantial business in New York supplying one of the large dealers in architectural ironwork. The Variety Iron Works obtained most of its raw materials from the Ashland Iron Furnace, north of Cockeysville. The company specialized in architectural and ornamental items, such as columns and beams, stairways and shutters, and also turned out machinery, millwork, and entire iron buildings.<sup>5</sup>

The architect, Jackson C. Gott, was well-equipped to deal with these materials. He had apprenticed himself to a carpenter as a young man, and then studied architecture and building construction in the offices of several local architects before becoming one himself at age 25; Gott was often called in during his later career as a consultant on questions of structure.

Gott was born in Baltimore County on a farm on the site of what is now Ruxton. His parents died when he was young; Gott received an elementary education before becoming an apprentice carpenter. As an architect, he designed several houses, commercial office buildings, and industrial plants in Baltimore, as well as the Maryland Penitentiary. His office also produced plans for the Western Maryland Railroad stations at Glyndon and Union Bridge, college buildings in Westminster, and Masonic temples in Belair, Salisbury, and Richmond (Gott was a prominent Mason). He was an active Democrat as well, which may have accounted for his numerous commissions for government buildings.

---

<sup>5</sup>The Monumental City, Its Past History and Present Resources, George Howard, 1878, Baltimore, p. 743.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 8

---

His final design was for the Gaither Building on Baltimore Street, which has since disappeared. Gott retired following the 1904 fire, and died five years later, at age 80. A bachelor, he lived in downtown hotels almost all his life and "was a well known figure about town," said the Baltimore Sun.<sup>6</sup>

The Johnston Brothers, bankers and developers, were equally well-known among Baltimore's businessmen. Henry Elliott Johnston, and Josiah Lee Johnston, his younger brother, had inherited their father's investment banking business, and changed the name to Johnston Brothers and Company; their offices were on Baltimore Street. The two brothers, and Henry's wife, Harriet Lane, were equal partners in the properties near Cider Alley.

Harriet Lane was the niece of James Buchanan. She was an orphan, he was a bachelor. Buchanan raised and educated her, and when he became President in 1857, brought her into the White House where she served as official hostess. During the previous four years, he had been Minister to England, and for some of that period Harriet Lane, who was pretty and vivacious, was the Hostess of the London embassy, where she became a favorite of Queen Victoria. She remained with Buchanan at his home near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, after he left the White House in 1861, until 1866, when she married Henry Elliott Johnston.

The Johnstons lived on Park Avenue in Baltimore and had two sons, both of whom died when they were 13 and 14 of rheumatic fever. In 1883, a year after their second son died, the bereaved parents established the Harriet Lane Home. By this time, both the Johnston Building and the companion warehouse on the other side of Cider Alley had been completed. Henry Elliott Johnston died in 1884, Harriet Lane in 1903, and the surviving brother, Josiah Lee Johnston, in 1904. Because of complications in the three wills, the Board of Managers of the Harriet Lane Home did not immediately establish the institution, but with the death of Josiah Lee Johnston, they could proceed, and they decided to affiliate with the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

When the Harriet Lane Home finally opened in 1912, said a historian of the Hopkins hospital and medical school, it constituted "an important

---

<sup>6</sup>Baltimore Sun, July 9, 1909, p. 14.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 8 Page 9

---

step in the development of pediatrics in America."<sup>7</sup> Up to that time, there had not been a satisfactory arrangement between a medical school and a children's hospital. John Howland, the first director, and Edward A. Park, his successor, set the high standards for the Harriet Lane Home--which in the 1930s became the Pediatrics Department of the Johns Hopkins Hospital--and Helen B. Taussig, head of the Harriet Lane cardiac clinic, continued them in more recent times.<sup>8</sup>

The lack of a sufficient endowment had been a problem from the beginning. The bulk of the Johnston Brothers' estate, including the two warehouses, had been left to the Harriet Lane Home, to be administered by trustees.<sup>9</sup> In 1919, the Harriet Lane Home probably received in excess of \$125,000 when D.K. Este Fisher, trustee, sold the Johnston Building (and the other warehouse structure, the Rombro Building), to separate buyers.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>The Johns Hopkins Hospital and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Alan M. Chesney, Vol. 3, p. 222.

<sup>8</sup>Heritage of Excellence, The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Thomas B. Turner, pp. 122-125; 330-331; 468.

<sup>9</sup>Last Will and testament of Josiah L. Johnston, November 16, 1900, SRM 94-334.

<sup>10</sup>Baltimore City Land Records, Liber 3455, Folio 72; Liber 3456, Folio 215; Liber 3492, Folio 33.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Johnston Building  
Baltimore  
Maryland

B-2372

Section number 9 Page 10

---

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Baltimore City Directories, 1878-1958

Land Records of Baltimore City

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Baltimore City, Maryland  
Historical Trust, Crownsville, Maryland.

Tax Records of Baltimore City: 1896, 1924-28, 1938-42, 1953-57, 1962-66

Johnston Bldg.

B-2372

Baltimore  
Maryland

18/360300/4349780

Balt East



520 000 FEET  
910 000 FEET  
39°15'  
76°37'30"  
BROOKLYN 1.1 MI.  
GLEN BURNIE 6.1 MI.



Johnston Building  
Baltimore

B-2372

7 August 1994

RLA/MIH  
SE



Johnston Building  
Baltimore

B-2372

7 August 1994

RLA/MHT

Store front



Johnston



L to R: Johnston, Rombro bldgs  
S. Howard St

B-2371

B-2372

Rombro Bldg, 22-24 S. Howard St  
Johnston Bldg, 26-30 S. Howard St

Baltimore City MD

Aaron M Levin 1989

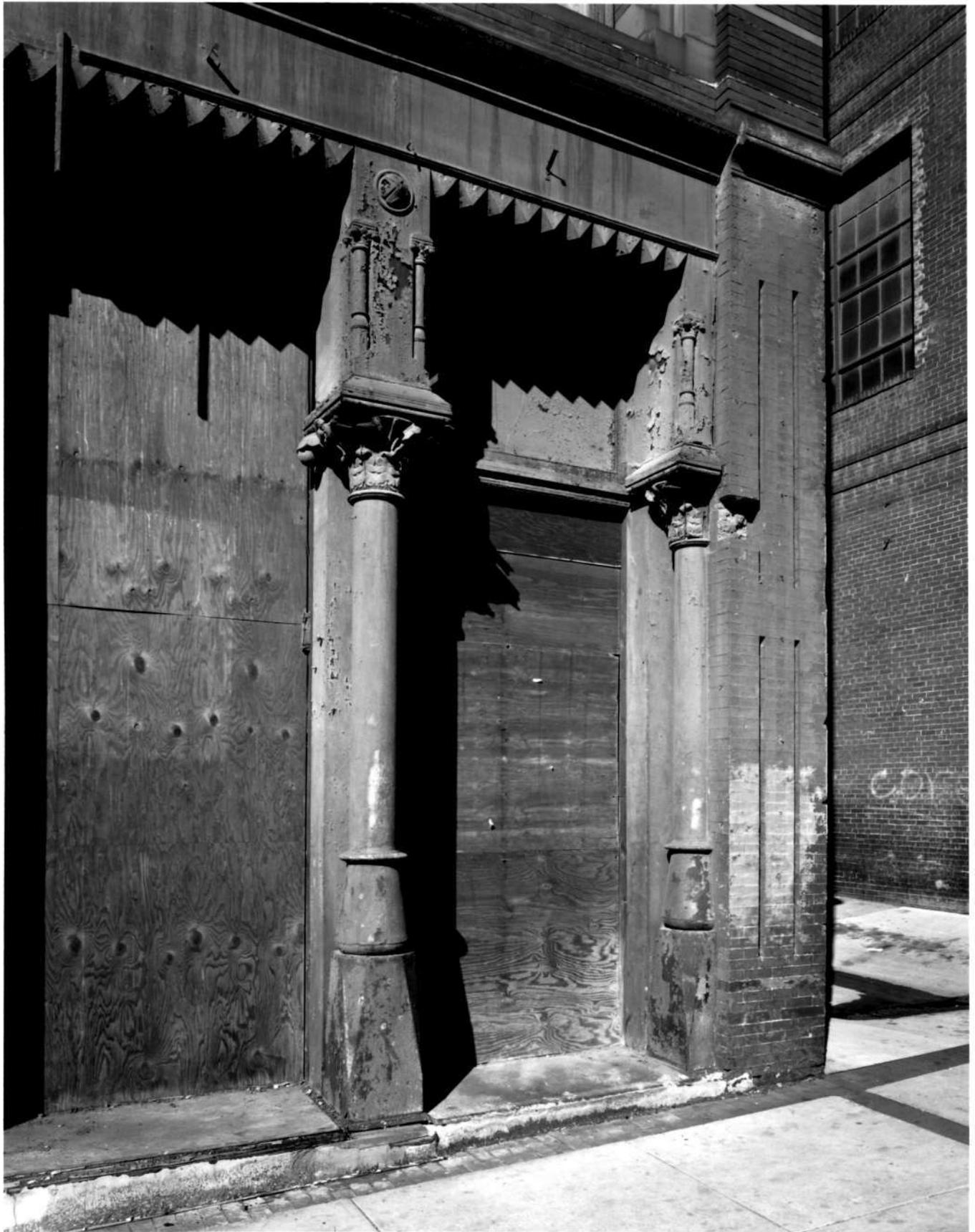
Neg at 3000 Chestnut Ave #102  
Balto MD 2124

View from SE

# 26-30 at left

# 22-24 at right

# 1 of 3



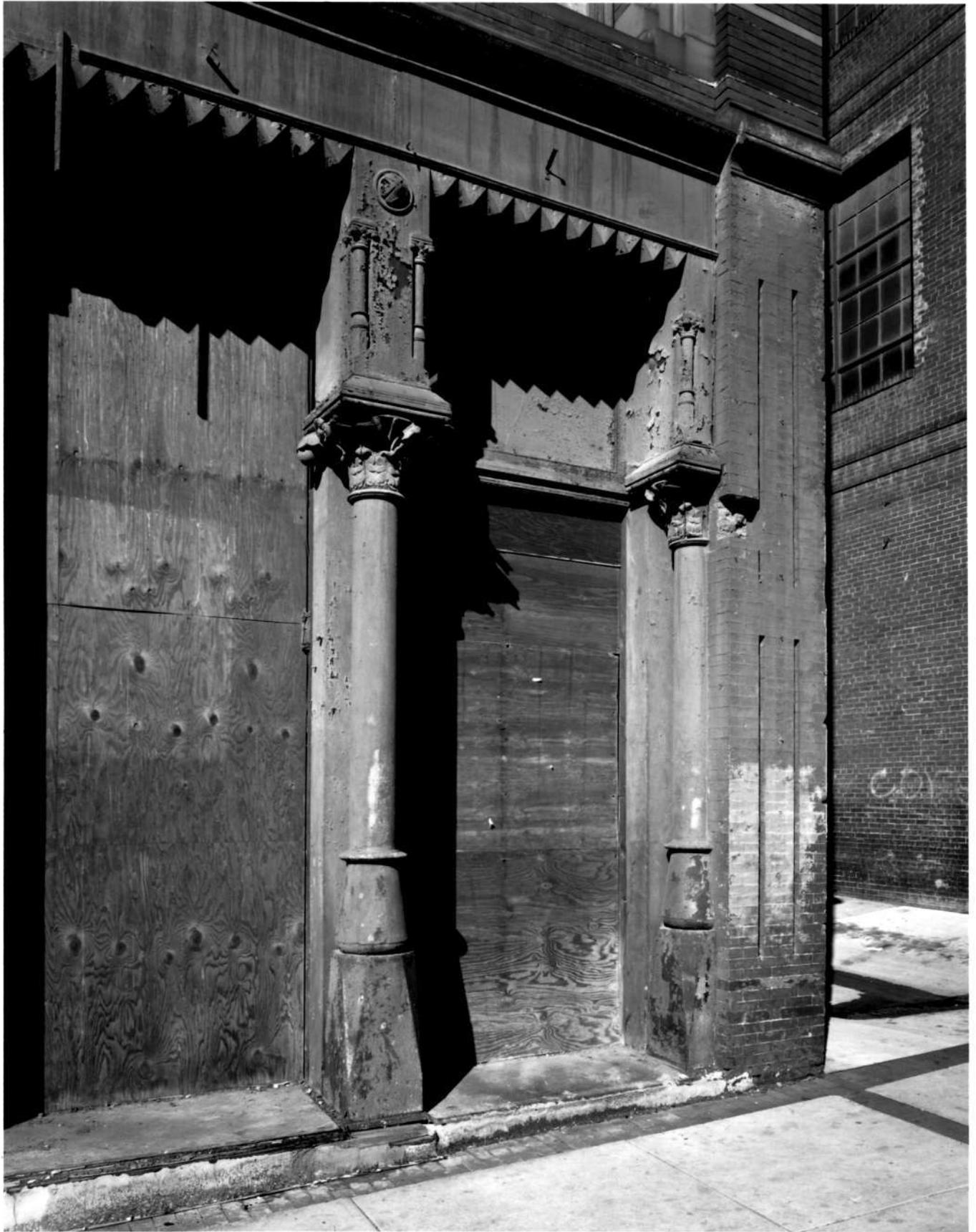
B-2372

Johnston Bldg  
26-30 S. Howard St  
Baltimore City MD  
Aaron M Levin 1989

Neq at 3000 Chestnut Ave #102  
Balto MD 21211

facade detail

# 2 of 3



Johnston Bldg  
26-30 S. Howard St.

B-2372

Johnston Bldg  
26-30 S. Howard St  
Baltimore City MD  
Aaron M Levin 1989  
Neg at 3000 Chestnut Ave # 102  
Balto MD 21211  
Facade detail

# 3 of 3

B-2372  
~~P-1075~~

Demolished-2002

Johnston Brothers

Statement of Significance

Built by the bankers, Johnston Brothers & Company, the structure at 26-28 South Howard, like its neighbor 22-24 South Howard, represents the attempt by wealthy Baltimore developers to both assist and profit from the expanding local apparel industry. Known as the Johnston Building, it has seen many different companies occupy its floors since its construction in 1880.

~~B-1076~~  
B-2372

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

Demolished - 2002

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Johnston Brothers

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 26-<sup>30</sup>~~28~~ South Howard 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 type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mayor and City Council Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Baltimore, Maryland 21201 of STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: RHB 3645  
Folio #: 301

STREET & NUMBER Fayette and Calvert Streets

CITY, TOWN Baltimore STATE Maryland 21202

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<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		

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

Excepting the first floor storefronts, these two buildings are identical. Five bays wide and four stories high, each building is faced with common bond brick and accented by terra-cotta designs, foliated squares and white stone banding. Symmetrical fenestration punctuates the facade. Each floor carries four windows, rectangular or round-headed, with stone sills; the flanking building walls define the end bays. These brick walls create double vertical recesses and are detailed by terra-cotta designs.

The street level facade of 26 South Howard Street has been radically altered by corrugated metal. At 28 South Howard Street, however, the cast-iron facade is visually intact. Four Corinthian columns on bases are united by a common cast-iron or stone slab. Two small doorways on the left of the facade lend access to the ground and upper floors.

On the second floor, the windows are subdivided into groupings of two by gauged brick arches and are accented by stone sills, parallel with an underlining band course, and lintels. They are further united by a central stone impost set with a foliated panel. The remaining imposts lack this detail. The side brick building walls are here decorated by terra-cotta designs.

A terra-cotta band course defines the division between the second and third floors.

Round-headed windows mark the third floors. The windows are subdivided into groupings of two by a gauged brick arch surmounting two individual gauged brick arches above the windows capped by stone lintels. Between these two arches occurs a foliated panel.

Splayed brick flat arches with white stone imposts surmount the fourth story windows. Naturalistic panels intersperse the facade. The side building walls are marked by corbelled brick detailing and are united by a simple cornice supported by modillions and corbelled brick brackets.

Simple, rectangular windows with one-over-one lights grace the uppermost story. White stone lintel slabs offset the vertical lines of the windows.

A cornice slab crowns the flat roofline which is partially hidden by a modified parapet underlined by a row of lintels. A rectangular panel announcing the building's original owners,

~~B-1076~~  
B-2372

# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1880-1890 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built by the bankers, Johnston Brothers & Company, the structure at 26-28 South Howard, like its neighbor 22-24 South Howard, represents the attempt by wealthy Baltimore developers to both assist and profit from the expanding local apparel industry. Known as the Johnston Building, it has seen many different companies occupy its floors since its construction in 1880.

### Historical Significance

Founded in 1853, Johnston Brothers & Company was one of the oldest and best known banks in the city. In 1880, they had branched into real estate and constructed a pair of buildings at 26-28 South Howard Street. In 1881 an additional larger pair were built at 22-24. Both buildings had cast iron columns on the first floor, a prominent feature of many loft district buildings. The newer of the structures was used by two wholesalers of boots and shoes.

Charles Weiller and Sons, a wholesaler of cloth of all types, and G.S. Howser, a hat wholesaler, were the first occupants of 26-28 South Howard. Howser had been in business since the Civil War era and was well known for the excellent quality and scope of their stock which was sold throughout the city and surrounding states. Having moved several times before coming to 26 South Howard Street, they remained for only 15 years before moving to 305 West Baltimore Street in 1896. The straw and felt goods which Howser handled were very important ingredients in the City's economy. Shipment of raw materials and finished products in and out of the City required the excellent transportation facilities that Baltimore offered. During the late 19th and early 20th Centuries Baltimore was considered the leader in straw hat production, and a firm remained in this trade in the City until well after World War II.

(CONTINUED, PAGE 2)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

B-2372  
~~B-1076~~

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Vertical Files, Baltimore Industrial Museum

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Robert Weis, Philip Kahn

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Industrial Museum

DATE

November 1980

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

B-2372  
B-1076

Johnston Brothers

7. DESCRIPTION  
Continued, page 2

Johnston Brothers, the construction date, 1880, appears above.

B-2372  
~~B-1076~~

Johnston Brothers

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Historical Significance, continued page 2

By 1890, Charles Weiler and Sons had left 28 South Howard and that half of the Johnston building was occupied by S. Lowman and Company, manufacturers of men's and children's clothing. Their products were distributed throughout the south and southwest. It is not known when Lowman left the building; nor are subsequent occupants known.

While its part is elusive, the Johnston building promises to play an important part in the revitalization of the Loft District. The building is currently for sale to a developer with a promising plan for its rehabilitation and use. Other buildings in the area have been converted into housing units, a medical clinic, community arts center, university offices, etc. When completed the redeveloped Loft District will have much of the same character that once made this section of the City one of the most active. The diversity of activity will parallel the many different types of businesses that flourished in this vital part of the Baltimore community in the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

1. SITE I.D. NO

B 1 0 7 6

## NAER INVENTORY

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

3. PRIORITY

4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION?  
(SPECIFY THREAT) YES NO UNKNOWN

5. DATE

6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT

OWNER

ADMIN

7. OWNER/ADMIN

Mayor &amp; C City Council

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Johnson Brothers

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS

City Hall 100 Holliday Street

10. STATE

M D

COUNTY NAME

CITY/VICINITY

Baltimore

CONG. DIST.

3

STATE

M D

COUNTY NAME

CITY/VICINITY

Baltimore

CONG. DIST.

3

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET &amp; NO)

26-28 South Howard Street

12. EXISTING SURVEYS

 NR NHL HABS HAER-I HAER NPS CLB CONF STATE COUNTY LOCAL OTHER

13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)

 INTERIOR INTACT EXTERIOR INTACT ENVIRONS INTACT

14. UTM ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

SIGN

SCALE

 1:24 1:62.5

QUAD NAME

Baltimore East

UTM ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

SIGN

SCALE

 1:24 1:62.5

QUAD NAME

15. CONDITION

70  EXCELLENT71  GOOD72  FAIR73  DETERIORATED74  RUINS75  UNEXPOSED76  ALTERED82  DESTROYED85  DEMOLISHED

16. INVENTORIED BY

AFFILIATION

DATE

Phil Kahn, Robert Weis

Baltimore Industrial Museum

November 1980

17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

Built by the Bankers Johnston Brothers and C ompany, the structure at 26-28 South Howard, like its neighbor 22-24 South Howard, represents the attempt by wealthy Baltimore developers to both assist and profit from the expanding local apparel industry. Known as the Johnston Building, it has seen many different companies occupy its floors since its construction in 1880.

(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE

PRESENT USE

ADAPTIVE USE

Wholesalers - Clothing Industry

Vacant

19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER

Vertical Files, Baltimore Industrial Museum

(CONT OVER)

20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?

 YES  NO

21.

22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

 YES, LIMITED YES, UNLIMITED NO UNKNOWN

23. EDITOR

INDEXER

24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?

 YES NO

NAME

DISTRICT I.D. NO

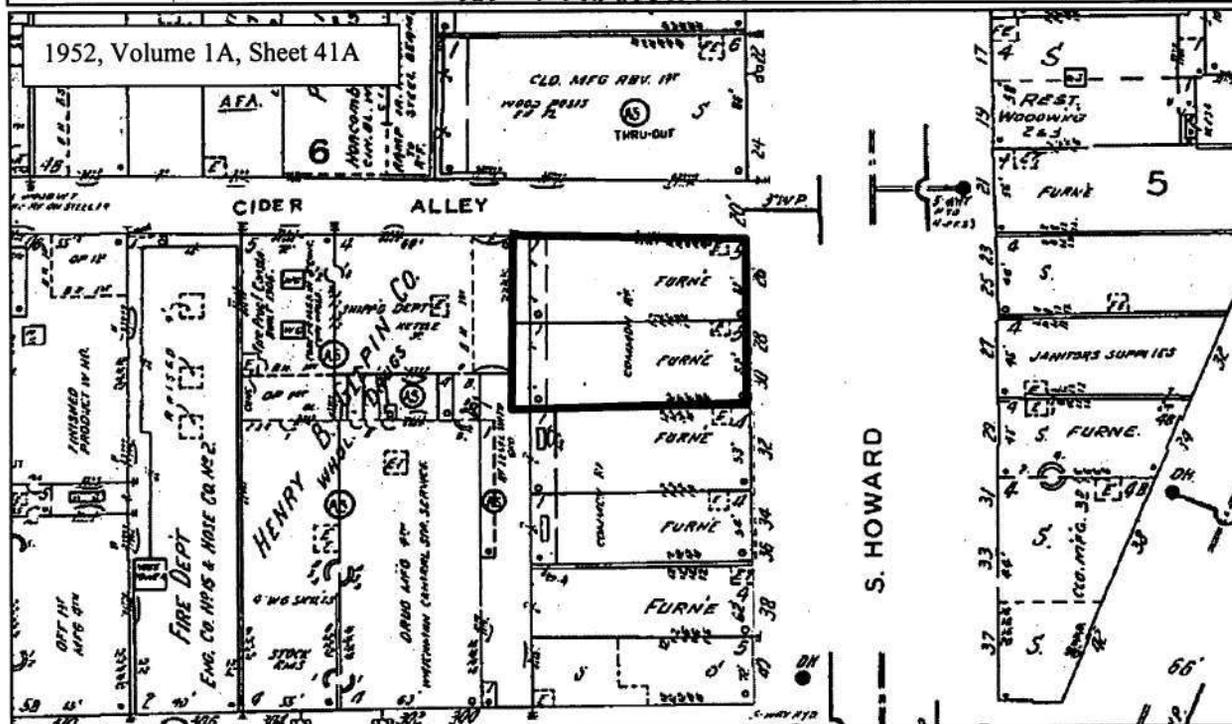
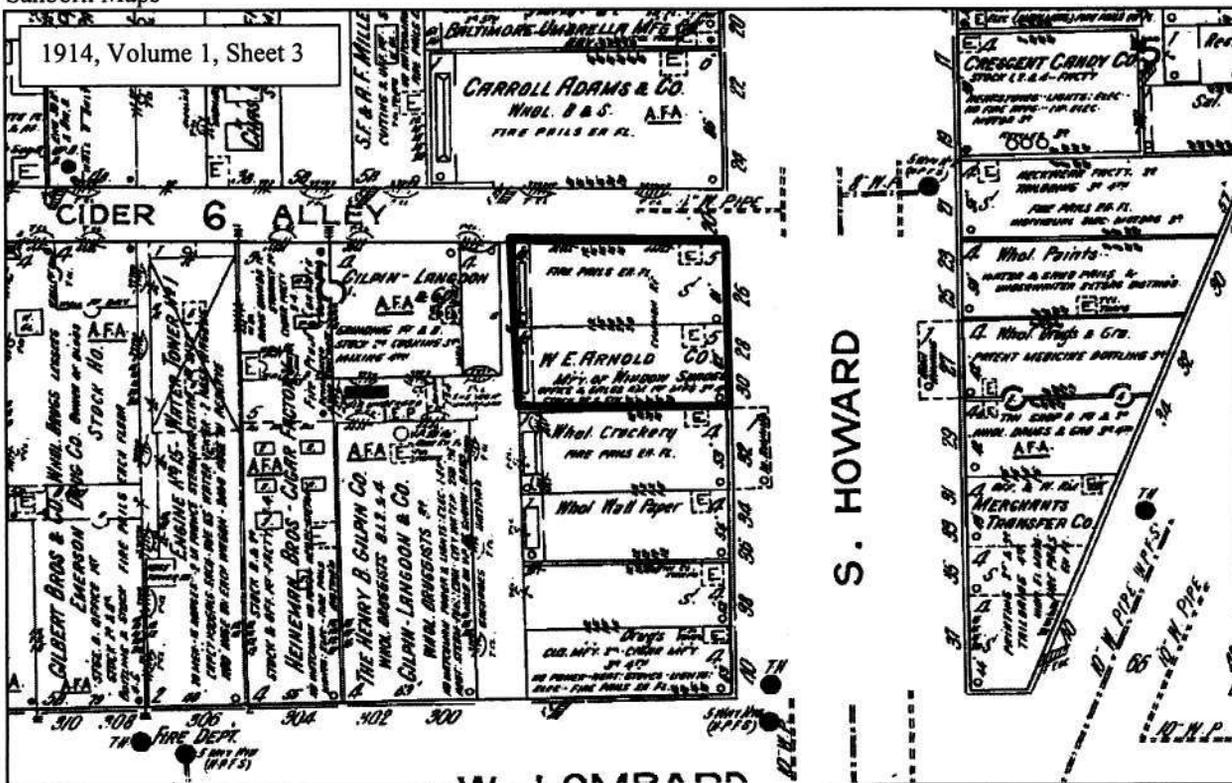
B-2372

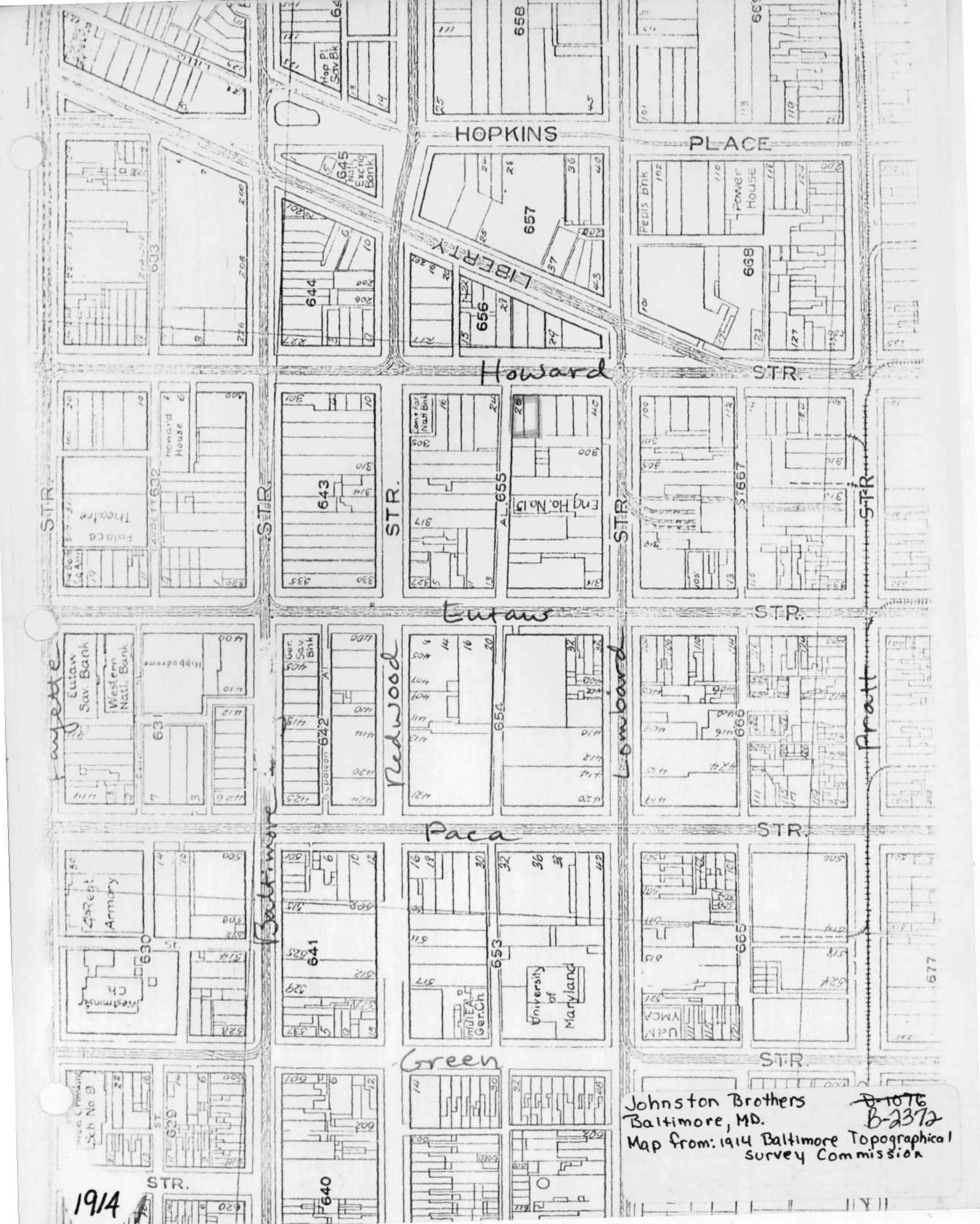
B-1076

Johnston Brothers Building, site (W.E. Arnold Co.)

26-3026-28 S. Howard Street

Sanborn Maps





1914

Johnston Brothers  
 Baltimore, MD.  
 Map from: 1914 Baltimore Topographical  
 Survey Commission

B-1076  
 B-2372

JOHNSTON  
BROTHERS

18<sup>3</sup>60155 4<sup>3</sup>49880



17'30"

30 FEET NOV 1941

B-2372

B-1076

JOHNSTON BROTHERS  
U.S.G.S. 7.5# BALTIMORE W. QUAD  
18<sup>3</sup>60155 4<sup>3</sup>49880



~~B-1090~~  
JOHNSTON BROTHERS

BALTIMORE MD

PHOTO: DENNIS ZEMBALA

NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST

JAN. 1981 Looking South West

B-2372



~~B-1096~~  
JOHNSTON BROTHERS

BALTIMORE MD

PHOTO: DENNIS ZEMBALA

NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST

JAN. 1981 / Howard St. facade

B-2372



~~B-1076~~

B-2372

JOHNSTON BROTHERS

BALTIMORE MD

PHOTO: DENNIS ZEMBALA

NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST

1/81 / Detail - windows - S. Howard St.



B-2372

Johnston Brothers

~~B-1076~~

Baltimore City

Dennis Zembala 1/81

Neg. Loc.: MD Historic Trust

Rear of building - looking east