(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant

other names/site number B-1064

2. Location

street & number 333 West Ostend Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Baltimore ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21230

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☑ 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 ☑ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☑ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 10-25-90

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Parker Metal Decorating Company Plan.
Name of Property

Baltimore y, Maryland
County and State

B-1064

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	-0-	buildings
-0-	-0-	sites
-0-	-0-	structures
-0-	-0-	objects
1	-0-	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE
INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE
walls BRICK
roof N/A
other N/A

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Parker Metal Decorating Company Plat.
Name of Property

County and

B-1064

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1921-1949

Significant Dates

1921, 1925, 1927, 1929

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .735 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	360120	4348360
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Scott Meacham

organization Betty Bird & Associates date May 3, 2000

street & number 2607 24th St., NW, Suite 3 telephone 202-588-9033; fax 202-588-9059

city or town Washington, D.C. state N/A zip code 20008

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name 333 Ostend LLC

street & number Stone Mill, 1340 Smith Avenue, Suite 200 telephone 410-779-1234

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21209

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1993 O - 350-416 QL 3

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant is a steel-frame brick industrial building comprised of five components built in stages between the first decade of the 20th century and the 1940s (see Attachment A). The plant occupies a trapezoidal site bounded by West Ostend Street; South Howard Street; the CSX Railroad tracks; and a Baltimore City alley, Plum Street, just below the elevated Interstate 395. The building, which ranges from one to three stories in height, is flat-roofed; a monitor roof tops the earliest 1-story section (Section A). The building was continuously occupied by the Parker Metal Decorating Company between 1921 and 1994 and has a period of significance from 1921 to 1949; the various additions within this period are inextricably linked to Parker Metal's adaptive strategies. Recent alterations include slight changes in massing and the reversible infilling of windows. Such alterations are typical of industrial buildings in continuous use and reflect the changing functions of the building's occupant. Despite these changes, the Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant retains its historic architectural character.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant, built in five main stages between the first decade of the 20th century and the 1940s and altered again in the 1970s, occupies a rectangular site between Plum Street (below Interstate 395) and the CSX Railroad wye south of Camden Yards in Baltimore City. The building's primary facade, which faces north onto West Ostend Street, is surrounded by paved streets and parking lots on three sides and the railroad right-of-way on the south. The brick industrial building, which ranges from one to three stories in height, has a rectangular footprint with a frontage of approximately 155 feet facing north onto West Ostend Street and approximately 231 feet facing east onto Plum Street, now a parking lot below the elevated I-395. The building is composed of five main sections that evolved in a clockwise direction from the earliest section. Section A, constructed as a bakery in the first decade of the 20th century. The building's main entrance occupies the north facade, while loading bays occupy all four facades.

Section A

The earliest section of the building is the 1-story portion in the southwest corner, built ca. 1901-1910. Originally a bakery, this part of the building bears a monitor roof with infilled openings that have been covered recently. Only the south and west facades are visible: the seven-bay south facade is composed of banded common-bond brickwork with a stone foundation. The six eastern segmental-arched openings are covered in plexiglas while the westernmost opening is infilled with brick. The openings contain 9-over-6 sash; the two western openings are shorter than the rest and contain 6-over-3 sash.

The twelve-bay western facade features segmental-arched openings and is surmounted by a corbelled brick cornice. A metal loading dock at the southern end of the facade extends from the building onto the Howard Street right-of-way. Some of the building's 1st-floor openings have been infilled, lengthened, and widened to accommodate changes in use.

Section B

Section B expanded the building to the north and east prior to 1914. This section, originally 1 story high, was raised to 2 stories in the late 1920s. Section B likely supported a change in occupancy from the original bakery to a bag and burlap maker.[1] The north facade of Section B comprises most of the primary facade of the Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant. The first level is topped by a corbelled brick cornice and divided by pilasters into five unequal bays. The bays, originally large window openings, are now mostly covered, leaving three small openings, a doorway without a stair (the former main entrance, ca. 1910s-1970s) and the current main entrance door.

The 5-bay west facade of Section B continues the wall plane established by Section A, reiterating the form of the earlier openings with a wider spacing. The openings have been infilled and lengthened. Painted letters reading "THE PARKER METAL DECORATING CO." adorn the 1st floor level of Section B.

Section B, originally 1 story high, had a second level added in two parts ca. 1925-1932.[2] The second level contained mostly offices and darkrooms. This space was extensively remodeled in the 1980s; recent finishes and partitions are now gone. The 2nd floor addition likely relates to the Parker Metal Decorating Company's purchase of the sign department of Crown Cork & Seal, including its photoreproduction equipment, at some time before 1925. The pier-and-spandrel construction of the upper level of Section B contains 7 north facade openings and 4 west facade openings, all housing industrial steel sash.

Section C

Section C, which forms the greater part of the east facade of the building, stands three stories high and was built to house Parker Metal's expanding lithography and can-making operations. Section C was constructed in two phases, with the first level built in 1925. The upper two floors were built

[1] The 1914 Sanborn map notes that the Burnett Bag & Burlap Co. occupied the building, including the then-1-story Section B labeled "sewing."

[2] This second level was likely built, like Section C, to house Parker Metal's new Independent Can Company (1927). The western four bays of the 2nd floor have a different floor height, slightly different materials, and a different fenestration pattern than the rest of the floor.

in 1927[3] for the production line of Parker's subsidiary Independent Can Company. This seven-bay section shares the pier-and-spandrel construction of the north facade of Section B and has similar industrial steel sash windows. Some first floor openings are modified by concrete-block infill and ventilators. A 1st-floor opening on the 2-bay portion of the north facade has also been infilled. A freight elevator tower visible on the exterior occupies the southwest corner of Section C, adjacent to a stair. The north facade of Section C bears painted letters reading "THE PARKER METAL DECORATING CO." at the 2nd floor level.

Section D

Section D, located in a U shaped space formed by Sections A, B, and C, was the Bag Yard of the Burnett Bag & Burlap Co. in 1914. Some time after 1925 this 1-story area was roofed over and joined to surrounding portions of the building through new wall openings.

Section E

The southern section of the complex, Section E, is comprised of ca. 1940s-1970s 1-story additions filling out the site along the CSX railroad siding. These changes were made to accommodate the continual growth of the Parker Metal Decorating Company, which became the country's third largest manufacturer of metal housewares with its Parmeco line (1932-1959).

The bulk of Section E is a pre-1947 1-story warehouse addition that originally brought a series of loading bays flush with the plant's railroad siding. On the east facade of Section E openings are infilled with brick, cinderblock and ventilators; the 4 south facade openings are also largely infilled or boarded up. A portion of Section E was raised ca. 1972 to provide room for an internally-fired drying oven, now gone, at one end of Parker Metal's new fifth production line.

The plant's western loading dock (pre-1947) was walled in to create a second paint storage room (ca. 1970s). The new walls are of a lighter red brick than the surrounding fabric and frame a loading door on the south facade and a garage door on the west facade.

Interior of Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant

The interior of the building consists primarily of open-plan spaces; ca. 1980s offices, now gone, were located on the 2nd floor of Section B. Two recent side stairs (ca. 1970s-1980s) in Section B, no longer extant, also reached the second level, replacing a missing ca. 1925-1932 stair in the northwest corner of the building. A recent freestanding metal stair resting on a ca. 1970 modular office, also missing, also provided second-level access from Section A.

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[3] Reconstruction Finance Corporation form (1935) pg. 4 item 3. Parker Metal Decorating Co. files. Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.

In Section C a 1925-1927 corner stair and adjacent freight elevator provide access to the upper floors of the building. On the 2nd floor, physical evidence shows that the original west wall of Section C was removed to accommodate the 2nd floor addition to Section B. An existing loading chute at the south end of the 2nd floor of Section C originally led to the 1st floor of Section E. On the 1st level of Section C a 1 story extension created a paint-storage room (ca. 1930s).

Interior features include exposed structural systems with round, square and I-beam steel columns as well as timber posts. The concrete floors of the building are uneven, especially in the portion of Section A once occupied by the early-1900s baking ovens. Interior walls are of unfinished exposed brick. Level changes and differences in structural column forms indicate the various building campaigns. All machinery was removed shortly after Parker Metal vacated the building in 1994.

SUMMARY SIGNIFICANCE

The Parker Metal Decorating Company, which occupied the Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant from 1921 to 1994, pioneered technical innovations that contributed to Baltimore's metal decorating industry. Metal decorating was an essential component of the city's major canning industry, and the plant's association with metal decorating makes it locally significant under National Register Criterion A. The Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant is the only standing building associated with the city's smaller early-20th century metal lithography firms. The building's period of significance extends from 1921 to 1949, while the company's survival into the late 20th century exemplifies the flexibility and adaptive market strategies that Baltimore's location and broad industrial base made possible.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

The history of the Parker Metal Decorating Company (1919-1994) provides an excellent example of the obstacles facing the numerous smaller industrial operations that evolved to serve Baltimore's major manufacturers. Parker Metal's survival into the late 20th century illustrates the strategies that allowed many of these companies to prosper in an environment over which they had little control. Through command of technology and shrewd strategic planning, the Parker Metal Decorating company was able to exploit the flexibility its small size afforded, surviving as many other metal decorating giants fell by the wayside. By continually seeking new markets and adapting technology to new uses, Parker Metal was able to maintain a thriving business in the face of increasing consolidation within the canning industry. The firm's long-time survival into the 1990s testifies to the strengths this small-scale operation developed.

The Parker Metal Decorating Company occupied its plant south of Camden Yards in Baltimore City beginning in 1921. Founder Edwin Augustus Parker (ca. 1875-1929)[1] established the firm to print designs directly on metal sheets, a technique that would persist even as the firm sold to different markets over the years. Among the firm's products were printed food can bodies for outside can companies as well as its own in-house Independent Can Company; metal household products such as wastebaskets and pantry sets; and metal display racks and advertising signs. Maintaining these three distinct categories distinguished the firm among Maryland tinprinters. To accommodate changing industrial processes the Parker Metal Decorating Company added new sections to its building, beginning in 1925 and continuing into the 1970s.

Baltimore, the site of early progress in food canning in the U.S. and the closest East Coast shipping port to Midwestern farms, was among the nation's canning centers. The city relied on one of the

[1] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.

largest tin mills in the world, the Bethlehem Steel works at Sparrows Point,[2] to supply the raw materials for its cans. On these strengths Baltimore also become one of the national centers of metal lithography, alongside Chicago and Pittsburgh. By midcentury every major can company in Baltimore had its own lithography department, including the American Can Company, the National Can Company, Crown Cork & Seal, and the Continental Can Company.

Parker Metal operated in the midst of the giant firms, sustained by a niche market for small runs of lithographed designs. Other small metal lithography firms included J.L. Clark and, beginning in the 1940s, Sheet Metal Lithography & Coating.[3] Both firms were larger than Parker Metal. At its peak, Parker Metal carried an employment of about 150 people; by comparison the city's largest metal lithographer, the Tin Decorating Company (which Continental Can purchased in 1944), had about 2800 employees at its peak in the 1920s.[4] Possibly because of the continuity of its independent management or its small size, Parker Metal managed to outlive other Baltimore tinprinters and adapt its technology and skilled workforce to diverse applications.

The canning process in the early 20th began with a cannery that had products to pack. The cannery would typically order its cans from a can company, which (if it did not print its own or use paper labels) would then contract with a job metal printer such as Parker Metal for the flat can bodies. By lacquering or coating and then lithographing the cut metal sheets it received from Bethlehem Steel, Parker Metal turned tinplate into decorated can bodies ready to be rolled into cylinders. Along with cans, in some cases a Parker client would stamp or form the metal sheets it received into bottlecaps or toys.[5]

The founder of the Parker Metal Decorating Company, Edwin Augustus Parker, was a lithographic pioneer in New York. Parker's most important development was a method for ball-graining a zinc printing plate, or rolling balls on a sheet of zinc to give its surface a uniformly fine, porous texture that would hold ink. Up to that point stone had been the standard lithographic medium,[6] and Parker's technique allowed for commercial printing plates to be made of metal instead.[7] This

[2] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000. Parker Metal received and sent shipments by its three-car rail siding (1935 Reconstruction Finance Corporation form).
[3] Telephone conversation with Michael Massenior, National Metal Decorators Association, 3 April 2000. J.L Clark, contemporary with Parker Metal, left Baltimore for Havre de Grace in the 1970s and its building was demolished; Sheet Metal Lithography & Coating closed in the 1990s after being bought by the Ball Corporation.
[4] "History of Tindeco" (1980), Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[5] *Baltimore* (July 1959).
[6] *Baltimore* (July 1959).
[7] Telephone interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.

development in turn allowed lithographers to replace the flat press with the more efficient rotary press. This innovative technology formed the basis for the metal-decorating niche in which Edwin Parker's firms would operate.[8]

Parker marketed his grained plates through the Parker Process Co. in New York, incorporated in 1905. By 1910 prominent advertisements in the trade journal *National Lithographer* touted the company as "the only concern in the world making a specialty of lithographic plates and solutions" and claimed the plates themselves to be "The Standard of the World." The firm had at least five factories and branch offices in New York, Cleveland, Chicago and Toronto.[9]

Parker himself never patented the graining technique that comprised the Parker Process,[10] and the firm's advertisements indicate that imitators were cutting into its market. Parker patented other printing devices, including a press in 1914,[11] though there is little indication that it was useful to others.

Edwin Parker moved from New York to Baltimore in the 1910s to work as head of the lithography department of Crown Cork & Seal. The Parker Process Company came with him, by now run by sons Edwin W. Parker (1904-1976)[12] and Spencer Wayne Parker (ca. 1909-1980s).[13] Edwin Parker was able to begin a new firm in Baltimore based on the achievements of his earlier company, and with another employee of Crown Cork & Seal, Harry G. Evitt, founded the Parker Metal Decorating Company, Inc. in July of 1919.[14] In 1921 the firm's first building at North Avenue and Gay Streets burned and the company moved to the unprepossessing industrial building at South Howard and West Ostend Streets that would serve as its long-time home.

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[8] *Baltimore* (July 1959). Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.
[9] *National Lithographer* 17, no. 1 (January 1910), 18, 39. *National Lithographer* 17, no. 2 (February 1910), front cover.
[10] Interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 23 March 2000.
[11] Edwin Parker, "Printing-press," patent no. 1,087,975 (24 February 1914). Jay Parker mentioned patents granted while in England ca. 1901-3, and other sources call Parker a "patentee."
[12] Baltimore *Sun* (2 September 1976).
[13] The Parker Process Co. continued to ca. 1951-53, by which time its technology was outdated. Both sons came to Parker Metal, with Edwin W. Parker as Vice President of sales for Parmeco and Spencer Parker as Superintendent of the printing operation. Edwin left ca. 1956 and Spencer stayed to his retirement in the 1970s (Conversation with Winslow ["Jay"] Parker).
[14] "Old Baltimore Establishment was Pioneer in Metal Sign Printing," *Baltimore* 33, no. 11 (August 1940), 26. Parker Metal Decorating Co. charter, 21 July 1919, Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.

The building that Parker Metal occupied is located in an area of Baltimore that housed industrial uses through the first half of the 20th century. The plant stood adjacent to Bailey's Roundhouse of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Other neighbors included furniture factories and wooden-crate makers; a canmaker and foodpacker called the William Grecht Company stood south of the Parker Metal plant during its early years.[15]

Parker Metal's building had itself housed other industrial uses before the firm moved in. The oldest portion of the building dates to ca. 1901-1910 and originally housed William Freihofer's Vienna Baking Company.[16] In 1914 the City Baking Company owned the building, which housed the Burnett Bag & Burlap Company. The 1914 Sanborn Map noted the building retained its unused bakery ovens. In 1918 the Union Smelting & Refining Co. purchased the building, selling it in 1921 to George Walther. Parker Metal rented the building in December 1921 and bought it from Walther in July, 1923.[17] With engineers from pressmaker R. Hoe & Co., Edwin Parker helped design the plant's rotary lithographic presses.[18]

Not long after the company was founded, the vertical integration of the canmakers threatened Parker Metal's survival.[19] By the 1920s can companies, satisfying a growing demand for canned goods, were combining into trusts. Parker's response was to expand the company's product line by purchasing the sign department from Crown Cork & Seal. This department, begun in 1879 as the independent Ronemous & Co., had in its early days originated the practice of metal sign printing. With the purchase Parker acquired the Crown Cork & Seal method of photoreducing designs and conveying them to lithographic plates.[20] In 1927 Parker Metal also bought the lithographic department of the Southern Can Co. This purchase allowed Parker to strengthen its trade in advertising signs, display racks, etc.[21]

Parker's second strategy was to bring canmaking into the firm's existing printing works by creating the Independent Can Co. in 1928. The first can of this wholly-owned subsidiary of Parker

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[15] Grecht had been replaced by a furniture factory by 1947.

[16] Baltimore City Deed Record 2558-468. The building does not appear on the 1896 Bromley Atlas of Baltimore or the 1901 Sanborn map. According to Jay Parker the firm removed all equipment remaining in the building from earlier occupants.

[17] Reconstruction Finance Corporation form, 1935, Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center, pg. 4 item 3.

[18] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000. The first presses in the plant were traditional flat presses.

[19] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.

[20] "Old Baltimore Establishment was Pioneer in Metal Sign Printing," *Baltimore* 33, no. 11 (August 1940), 25-26.

[21] *Baltimore* (July 1959).

Metal, a lard pail, came off the line on 29 January 1929.[22] The operation helped provide a customer for Parker's printing operation, and its name reflects the squeeze that the larger conglomerates were placing on Parker Metal. The Independent Can Co. made general-line cans along with some sanitary food cans, such as crab cans in summer and oyster cans in winter.[23] A salesman's information sheet from the 1928-1929 season shows the Parker Metal prices as slightly higher than those of Crown Cork & Seal for the one-pint and one-gallon oyster cans, but less expensive for the one-quart cans. Other competitors listed were the American and Continental Can Companies and the Armstrong Can Co. in Chicago.[24] To house the new operations Parker Metal added a one-story wing to the east in 1925 and placed an additional two stories above this in 1927.[25] The firm also added a second floor to its original building (ca. 1925-1932).[26]

When Edwin Parker died suddenly at age 56 in 1929, his associate Harry G. Evitt took over control of the firm for the next 15 years. Parker Metal continued to explore new markets, introducing a line of metal housewares (pantry sets, wastebaskets, candy tins, etc.) under the name Parmeco in 1932.[27] The housewares went directly to retail outlets such as department stores instead of to jobbers. Though the Depression and war years were difficult for many manufacturers, a 1932 appraisal notes that the owners of Parker Metal "apparently are doing a very successful business even in these times of depression."[28] The Second World War placed restrictions on materials that reduced the plant's effectiveness, though the firm did produce some work for war effort.

Returning the company to family control in 1944, Parker's son Winslow Harrison Parker (1907-1973)[29] concentrated on lithography, signs and housewares in the postwar period (the firm sold the

[22] Parker Metal Decorating Co., "You and your company" [internal publication, n.d.], Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[23] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.
[24] Sales department records, Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[25] Reconstruction Finance Corporation form, 1935, Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center, pg. 4 item 3. Parker Metal Decorating Co. and Independent Can Co., "You and your company" (ca. late 1940s), Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[26] The second floor does not appear in a Dec. 1925 *Power Pictorial* photo, but is noted in a 1932 appraisal in the Reconstruction Finance Corp. report.
[27] *Baltimore* (July 1959).
[28] Harry E. Gilvert and Milton Denner, appraisers, Parker Metal Decorating Co. appraisal, 7 October 1932, Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[29] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000. Winslow Harrison Parker was Edwin Parker's third son and Jay's father, starting at Parker Metal as a pressman and moving up.

Independent Can Co. in 1949 due to "conflicting seasonal demands"[30]). Parker Metal was unique in Maryland in that it maintained three specialized divisions, job metal decorating, housewares and signs. By 1959 Parker Metal was the third largest producer of lithographed metal housewares in the country.[31]

As the sanitary food cans that symbolize canning in Baltimore declined in the second half of the 20th century Parker Metal had to find its market elsewhere. In the 1950s flash-freezing was developed, and cans lost status as food packaging. The growth of cardboard boxes and plastic packaging only hastened this trend, and the larger can companies declined in the 1960s and 1970s, several closing their Baltimore operations.[32] The demand for metal signs and specialty cans, such as decorated gift packs, was growing.

The Parker Metal Decorating Company remained small and flexible, and by the end of the 1960s the firm was focused on high-quality custom printing jobs.[33] These were short to medium runs that allowed for very few mistakes, with careful multicolor printing, at which Parker was particularly efficient.[34] Challenging multicolor metal advertising signs in particular required the firm's highly-skilled workforce and sustained Parker Metal for decades beyond the demise of similar companies.

Parker Metal continued to adapt its plant to new conditions. In 1972 the firm added a fifth production line in the eastern part of its building (Section C). The firm also revived the Parmeco name as the name for its sign department in the early 1970s, having sold the original name ca. 1961.[35] The sign department occupied the 2nd and 3rd floors of the building until 1975, when it moved out to Forest Hill in Harford County, Md. Coating and printing still took place at the main plant, but the metal was shipped out to Parmeco for fabrication.[36] The building's 3rd floor became a machine shop dedicated to repairing the lithography presses.

In 1973 Parker Metal became the nation's first metal printer to switch to an all-ultraviolet curing plant, allowing for quicker curing and eliminating solvent-laden coatings. Other leaders in the

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[30] *Baltimore* (July 1959). Jay Parker recalls that Parker Metal sold the Independent Can Co. to the Huether family, which continues to run it successfully in Maryland.
[31] "McCusker named Vice President by Parker Metal Decorating," *Baltimore* (January 1956).
[32] Telephone interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.
[33] Telephone interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.
[34] Telephone interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.
[35] The firm sold its housewares division to Edward S. Tuttle, founder of the Harvell Mfg. Co. according to a speech by Winslow Parker in Parker Metal Decorating Co. records, Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center.
[36] Telephone interview with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.

industry toured the plant, in part as an effort to create demand that would spur ink producers to make UV-appropriate inks at a large scale. By the 1980s the firm's products included tins for Twinings Tea and Old Bay Seasoning. Undercut by the entry of U.S. Can into the specialty printing business on a large scale, however, Parker Metal closed in January of 1994.[37]

[37] Telephone conversation with Winslow ("Jay") Parker, 24 February 2000.

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GEOGRAHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant is situated on a trapezoidal lot bordered by South Howard Street, West Ostend Street, Plum Alley, and Stockholm Street/CSX Railroad right-of-way. South Howard Street forms the western boundary of the lot along a frontage of 186 feet; West Ostend Street forms the 155-foot northern boundary of the lot; Plum Alley forms the eastern boundary of the lot along a frontage of 231 feet; and the CSX Railroad tracks form the southern edge of the lot along a distance of 168 feet with a curve to the northwest, as described more fully in the metes and bounds description found in the land records of Baltimore City Liber SEB 5862, Folio 429.

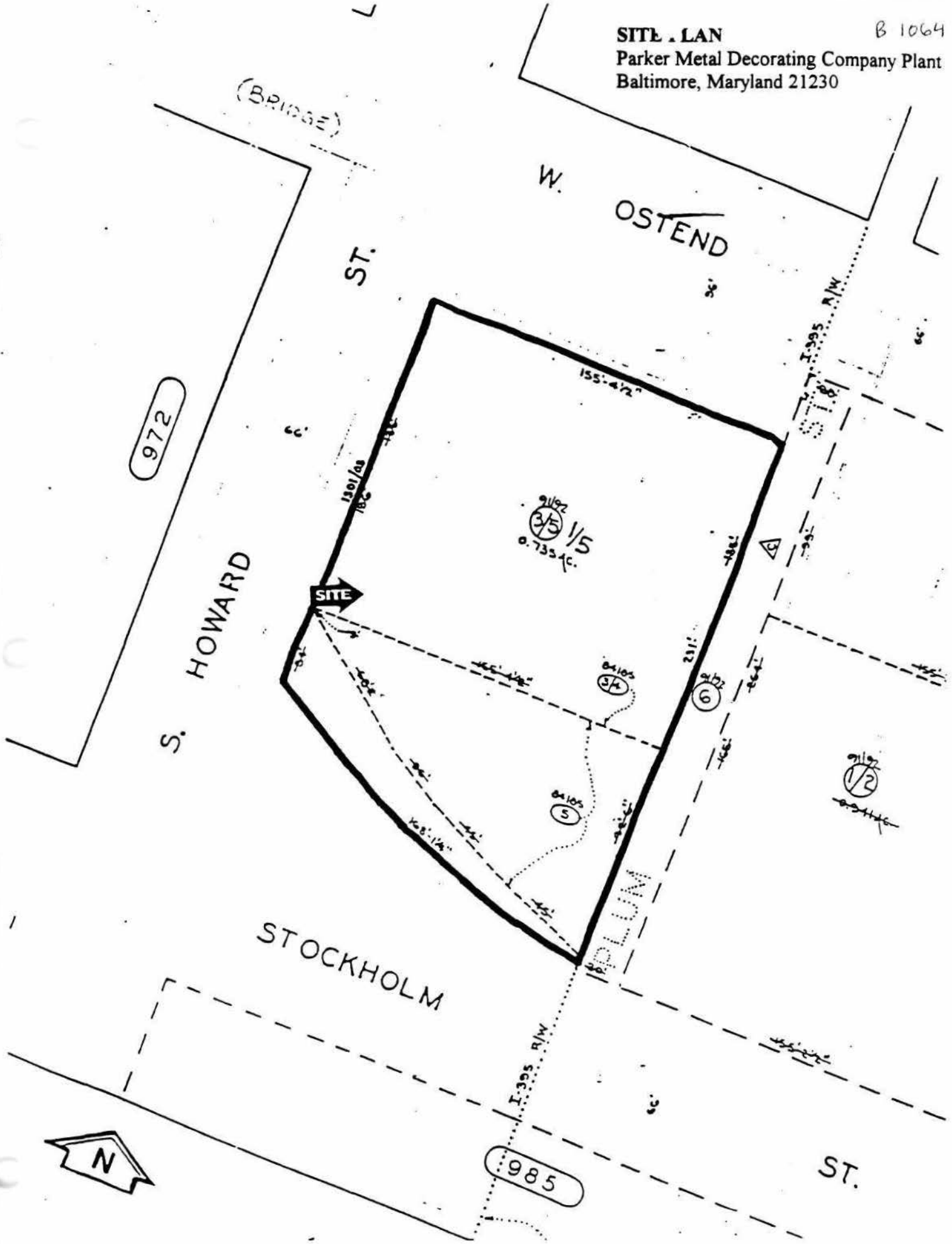
Boundary Justification

The boundary corresponds with the legal description of the property and encompasses the full extent of the Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant site.

SITE PLAN

Parker Metal Decorating Company Plant
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

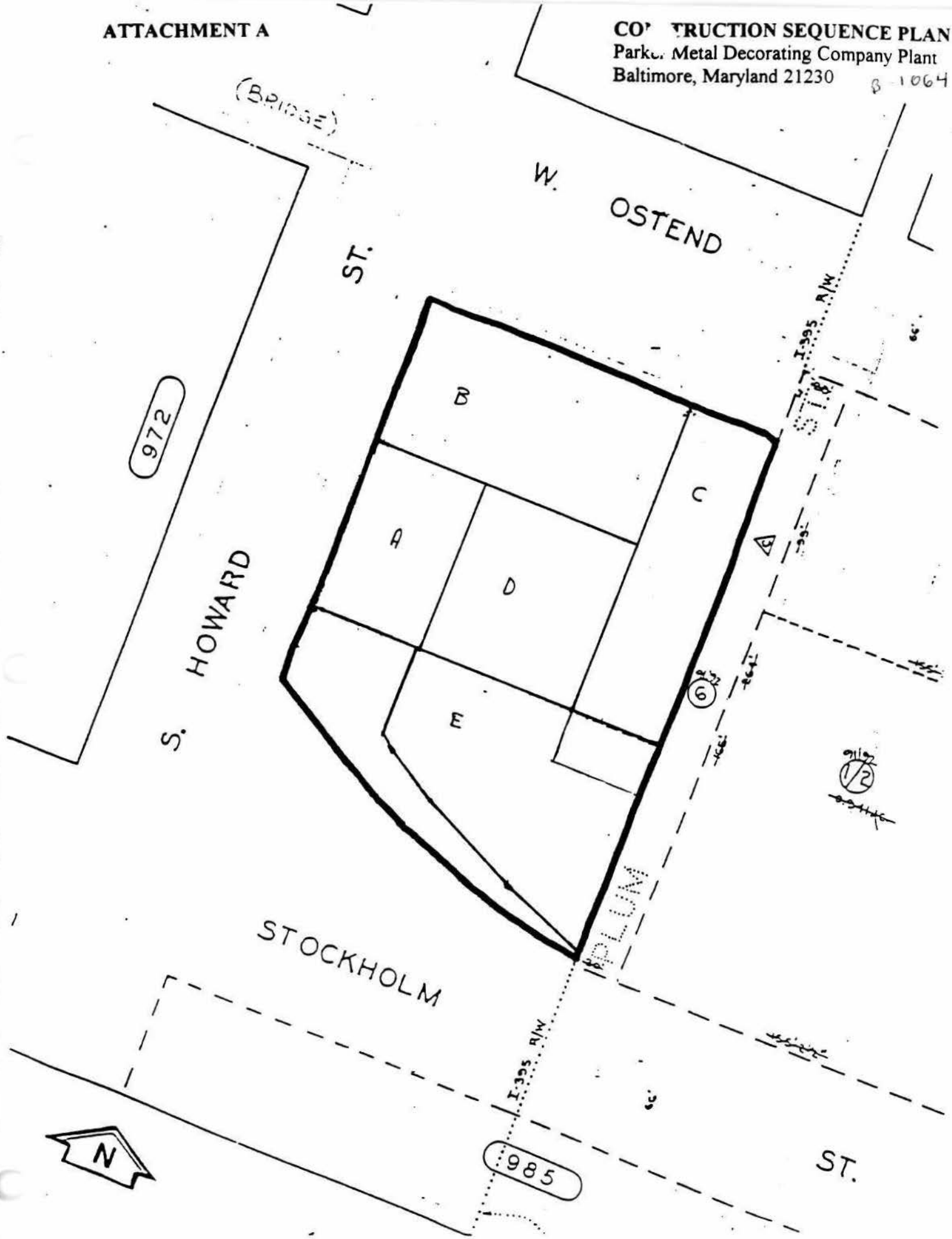
B 1064



ATTACHMENT A

CO' 'RUCTION SEQUENCE PLAN
Parke.. Metal Decorating Company Plant
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

B-1064



B-1064

PARKER METAL DECORATING COMPANY PLANT

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

18-364180-4348360