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B-2320

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

31 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 GEORGE KNIPP & BROTHER BUILDING  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 121 North Howard Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Baltimore N/A  vicinity  
state Maryland code MD county independant city code 510 zip code 21201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Cast Iron Architecture of Baltimore, MD 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  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.  See continuation sheet.  
[Signature] STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER Date 10/25/94  
Signature of certifying official  
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:) \_\_\_\_\_  
Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register 12-1-94  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouseCOMMERCE/TRADE/businessINDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/manufacturing**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

(enter categories from instructions)

ITALIANATEfoundation brickwalls ironbrickroof asphaltother wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:**

The George Knipp & Brother building at 121 North Howard Street is a five-story brick commercial structure with a four-bay cast iron facade, constructed about 1875. The two lowest stories have been altered by the addition of a modern brick and metal facade which unites the building with 117 and 119 North Howard Street. The cast iron facade of the upper stories remains intact, comprising four bays defined by large window openings flanked by Corinthian columns and headed by flat arches with rounded corners. Dark translucent plastic has been installed in the window openings; the visible sash have 2/2 lights. The floor levels are marked by intermediary cornices comprising crown and bed molding running between consoles decorated with heraldic shields, above a geometric frieze. Piers at the corners of the facade are decorated with recessed panels. The building cornice has a deep overhang, supported on large foliated brackets above a frieze enriched with stylized modillions.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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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  
c.1875

Significant Dates  
c.1875

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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 George Knipp & Brother building is significant as representing a Full Cast Iron Front type building.

See continuation sheet no. 2  
for Historic Context and Maryland  
Comprehensive Historic Preservation  
Plan data.

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:**

Baltimore City Directories, 1870s-1940s

Industries of Maryland: A Descriptive Review of the Manufacturing and Mercantile Industries of the City of Baltimore

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD

See continuation sheet

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

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

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre  
 USGS quad: Baltimore East, MD

UTM References

A 

1	8	3	6	0	3	3	0	4	3	5	0	1	1	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing							

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are defined as a single city lot, specifically identified as Block 620, Lot 23, 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

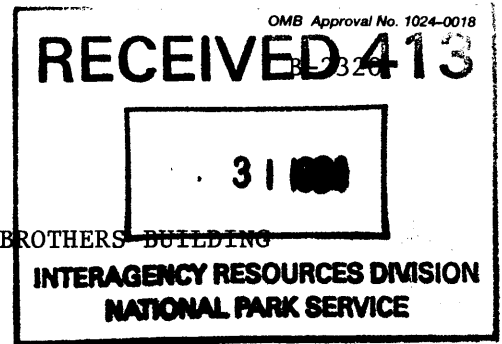
**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Peter E. Kurtze, Architectural Historian  
 organization Baltimore Heritage, Inc. date May 14, 1990  
 street & number 109 Brandon Road telephone (410) 296-7538  
 city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21212

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

GEORGE KNIPP & BROTHERS BUILDING  
Baltimore  
Maryland



Section number 7 Page 1

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The George Knipp & Brother building at 121 North Howard Street is a flat-roofed brick commercial building erected about 1875 for a manufacturer and dealer in furniture and plumbing supplies. The building is five stories high, and features a cast-iron facade above an altered first-and second-story front. The upper facade is four bays wide, defined by corinthian columns framing flat-arched window openings with rounded corners. The window openings have been covered with dark translucent plastic; large 2/2 sash survive behind this treatment. The windows are set deeply within the openings; the edge of the spandrels between the arches is decorated with a continuous molded band. The floor levels are marked by intermediary cornices with crown and bed moldings running between consoles decorated with heraldic shields, above a frieze of stylized geometric forms suggestive of an egg-and-dart motif. The building cornice has a deep overhang, supported on large foliated brackets above a row of stylized modillions. The corners of the facade are defined by piers with recessed panels.

The facade was altered at street level and on the second story in the mid-twentieth century by the construction of a modern facade of metallic panels, plate glass windows, and brick infill uniting this building with the two structures immediately to the south. The original cast iron framing elements may remain largely intact behind this modern screen.

The cast iron facade of 121 North Howard street is strongly similar to that of the Fava Fruit Building (c.1869) which formerly stood in the 200 block of South Charles Street. Before its dismantlement in 1976, the Fava Building was the largest surviving cast iron front in Baltimore. Elements which 121 North Howard Street has in common with the Fava Building include the building cornice, side piers, and geometric frieze under the intermediary cornices. It is highly likely that the two structures were the products of the same local works, although it is impossible at this time to determine which of the seven Baltimore foundries which manufactured building facades during the period may have been responsible.

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GEORGE KNIPP & BROTHERS BUILDING  
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**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA**

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870-1930  
Modern, 1930-1941

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

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

Resource Type: Architecture

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

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

Known Design Source: none

**See Continuation Sheet No. 2**

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GEORGE KNIPP & BROTHERS BUILDING  
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**HISTORY & SUPPORT:**

121 North Howard Street achieved its present configuration about 1875. The Baltimore city directory for 1870 indicates this address as the dwelling of John C. Knipp, a use which is inconsistent with the present building; the property was the location of John Knipp's furniture business and his brother George Knipp's enterprise in gas fixtures and plumbing supplies. It is likely that the present building was constructed between 1870 and 1876, when George Knipp was assessed for a 5 story iron front warehouse on the site. The Sanborn map for 1879 shows a 5 story iron front building, with a furniture and upholstery manufacturer on the top floor. The firm of George Knipp & Brother was profiled in the 1882 edition of Industries of Maryland: A Descriptive Review of the Manufacturing and Mercantile Industries of the City of Baltimore: "Twenty years ago Messrs. Knipp & Brother founded their present house, which is one of the most leading and prominent emporiums for gas fixtures and fine cabinet furniture, and one of the largest plumbing and gas-fitting establishments in Baltimore, in the style of its superior fittings and furniture, etc. The buildings occupied is a double store, and is 53X66 feet in extent, and is equipped in the best order for the display of the handsome stock held. The stock carried consists of an extensive and varied assortment of the finest artistic design and finish for all household or office use, or for large public buildings, etc., etc..." (p. 180).

The building continued to be occupied by George Knipp & Brother until George Knipp's death in 1904. At that time, the furniture and carpet firm of John Turnbull Jr. and Son moved in, having been burned out of their quarters at 16 West Baltimore Street. The Turnbull firm occupied the building for only about a year. Between 1910 and 1915, the carpet and furniture firm of Gusdorff & Joseph occupied 117, 119, 119½, and 121 North Howard Street. In 1927-28, Theo Friedmann, Inc., shoe repair, was a tenant in #121. Since 1929, the J.G. McCrory Co. store has occupied the first two stories and basement. The Celestial Restaurant also was located in the building in 1930.