United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic	Swiss Steam Laundry Building
and/or common	Swiss Building

2. Location

street & number	100-102 North Greene Street		n/a **not for publication**	
city, town	Baltimore	n/a **vicinity of**	**congressional district**	Seventh
state	Maryland **code** 24 **county**	independent city	**code**	510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	X other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name	Greene Street Joint Venture, Mendel Friedman		
street & number	19 North Central Avenue		
city, town	Baltimore n/a **vicinity of**	**state**	Maryland 21202

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Baltimore City Courthouse		
street & number	Calvert Street		
city, town	Baltimore	**state**	Maryland 21202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory	**has this property been determined elegible?** ___ yes X no	
date	1980	___ federal X state ___ county ___ local	
depository for survey records	Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle		
city, town	Annapolis	**state**	Maryland 21401

7. Description

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		
Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of previously listed
National Register properties
included in this nomination: ___ 0 ___

Original and historic functions and uses:
commercial, industrial

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

    The six-story 1895 Swiss Steam Laundry Building fronts easterly on North Greene Street, with a facade dominated by two five-story arched bays each consisting of tripartite fenestration on the first four floors. The first story features brick rustication at the corners and a cast iron storefront with an ornamental scroll and egg-and-dart molding at the cornice. The facade, framed by large brick pilasters with rough stone capitals supporting a metal cornice, which runs between the fourth and fifth floors, is accentuated by one-over-one windows with stone sills and lintels, and brick panels between floor levels two, three and four. The features of the front facade continue on the most easterly portion of the Fayette Street (south) facade in a single arched bay. To the west of this highly articulated corner are four bays of one-over-one windows grouped in twos. The windows are segmentally arched with stone sills and splayed brick lintels. The windows on the fifth floor are arched, as are the smaller sixth floor windows, which are grouped in threes, except over the corner arch where there is a group of four. The interior of the building features iron columns on all levels and wood flooring. The first two floors are 20 feet high. The third and fourth floors are 16 feet high, while the uppermost floors are 10 feet high.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet No. 1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form
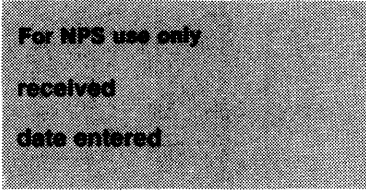
GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The six-story Swiss Steam Laundry Building, located in downtown Baltimore at 100-102 North Greene Street, was built in 1895. It has not been significantly altered, and remains a fine example of its type: the Romanesque-style brick manufacturing loft building, once the pride of Baltimore's commercial architecture. Located at the northwest corner of Fayette and Greene Streets, the Swiss Building, the architect of which is unknown, rivals many of the loft district buildings to the south in terms of its architectural design and detailing.

The building fronts easterly on North Greene Street, with a facade dominated by two five-story arched bays each consisting of tripartite fenestration on the first four floors. The first story features brick rustication at the corners and a cast iron storefront with an ornamental scroll and egg-and-dart molding at the cornice. The facade, framed by large brick pilasters with rough stone capitals supporting a metal cornice, which runs between the fourth and fifth floors, is accentuated by one-over-one windows with stone sills and lintels, and brick panels between floor levels two, theree and four.

The large arched openings on the fifth floor features four windows and a brick archway consisting of four courses of header brick and billet moulding projecting from the building walls. A projecting brick band course divides the fifth and sixth floors. Small windows with double header brick arches punctuate the building walls on the sixth floor. A modillioned metal cornice caps the facade.

The features of the front facade continue on the most easterly portion of the Fayette Street (south) facade in a single arched bay. To the west of this highly articulated corner are four bays of one-over-one windows grouped in twos. The windows are segmentally arched with stone sills and splayed brick lintels. The windows on the fifth floor are arched, as are the smaller sixth floor windows, which are grouped in threes, except over the corner arch where there is a group of four.

The rear (western) elevation features a fire escape and many four-over-four and six-over-six windows. Here, the building wall is laid in common bond brick as opposed to the stretcher bond bricks with tight mortar joints on the main facades. The northern side wall is blank. A wall sign from the 1950s for "Kravitz and Rothbard, Novelties" partially covers an earlier sign for the "Elite Laundry Company."

The interior of the building features iron columns on all levels and wood flooring. The first two floors are 20 feet high. The third and fourth floors are 16 feet high, while the uppermost floors are 10 feet high.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

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Swiss Steam Laundry Building
Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland **Item number** 7 **Page** 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The setting of the Swiss Building is very interesting. Smaller, mid-19th century buildings stand to the north, and to the east, across Greene Street, is the large three-story brick Poe School. Diagonally opposite is the Gothic-style Westminster Church with its historic burying ground, which is the final resting place of many of Baltimore's most notable early citizens, among them Edgar Allan Poe. University of Maryland hospital buildings stand to the south and west.

8. Significance

Specific dates   1895–1910   **Builder/Architect**   unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)   Applicable Criteria: A, C
    Applicable Exceptions: none
    Significance Evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

    The Swiss Steam Laundry Building is a prominently sited six-story loft
Romanesque building that is significant architecturally as an excellent example
of the loft type building as constructed in Baltimore at the turn of the century
and for its association with a period in Baltimore's history when the city was
a national leader in the manufacture of ready to wear clothing. In the second
half of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, Baltimore ranked
among the country's leading industrial cities. From 1880 until 1905, the city
placed eighth when it dipped to ninth, with the major industry in the metropolitan
district being clothing. Most of this manufacturing took place in the loft
district, about three blocks to the south of the Swiss Steam Laundry Building,
that is dominated by loft type structures. These buildings are characteristically
massive brick vertical Romanesque and early modern designed structures erected
between about 1880 and 1910. The Swiss Steam Laundry Building has the character-
istic Romanesque arches and brick and stone work. As a manufacturers' laundry,
the Swiss Steam Laundry and its successor the Elite Laundry, played a significant
role in the clothing industry.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property <u>less than one acre</u>

Quadrangle name <u>Baltimore East, Maryland</u>   Quadrangle scale <u>1:24000</u>

UMT References

A |1|8| |3|5|9|8|9|0| |4|3|5|0|0|4|0| B |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|
  Zone Easting   Northing   Zone Easting   Northing

C |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| D |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

E |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| F |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

G |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| H |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|

Verbal boundary description and justification The property is a rectangular plot measuring 46.5' by 100' on the NW corner of the interesection of North Greene and West Fayette Streets and consists only of the city lot upon which the building stands.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
n/a			
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

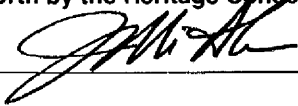|			
name/title	Elaine B. Finbury		
organization	Preservation Consultant	date	15 February 1985
street & number	14 Lynde Street	telephone	(617) 595-1970
city or town	Salem	state	Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification
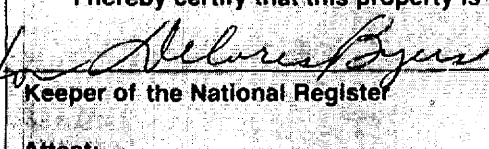
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national   ____ state   _X_ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89–665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _(signature)_   5-17-85

title   date

GPO 938 835

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Swiss Steam Laundry Building
Baltimore City, Maryland   Item number   8   Page   3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

As Baltimore City grew into a major metropolitan area in the late nineteenth century, the structure of its downtown area changed from a homogenous nature to a central business district with distinctive centers of finance, government, retailing, and industry. Industries which were closely related to shipping and major financial institutions generally located near the waterfront on the eastern portion of the downtown area. A small government center grew up in the vicinity of the Battle Monument and City Hall. The major retailing and department stores located near Lexington Market the major market place for the city. Other industries, most notably the closthing industry located just west of the harbor, but near the major railroad terminal in the city. The greatest concentration of the period (1870-1910) warehouses, vertical manufacturies, and commercial buildings in the entire state are still extant within this general area known as the loft district.

According to the Baltimore Sun of July 12, 1895, the Swiss Steam Laundry Building was built for furniture manufacturer, Charles T. Bagby (1860-1943) as a speculative real estate venture and then leased in 1896 to the Swiss Steam Laundry Company. Although contemporary accounts do not list an architect, the building permit, issued on July 11, 1895, was noted in the Baltimore Sun, the Baltimore American, the Daily Record and the Manufacturers Record.

By January 3, 1896, the entire building had been leased to John W. Lowe, who established the Steam Laundry. According to the publication Baltimore: Gateway to the South, the Liverpool of America,

> ...Mr. Lowe realized Baltimore was going to become one
> of the greatest shirt manufacturing cities in the country
> and determined to develop that most difficult and important
> branch of the business, the "laundering." The high class
> of work done made this institution a success from the
> start.[1]

According to Sanborn Atlases, each floor was used for a different function of the laundry: washing in the basement; sorting on the first floor; dyeing on the second; ironing on the third; drying on the fourth; packing on the fifth; and sorting on the sixth.

In 1898, the Company incorporated and changed its name to the Swiss Manufacturing Company. The laundry ranked among the largest in the country, with a capacity of 7200 shirts a day and 200 employees.[2] In 1900, the laundry changed its name again, to the Elite Laundry, which conducted a cleaning and dyeing operation at the same time that a laundry supplies business was carried on here as the Swiss Manufacturing Company. Branches of the Elite Laundry opened in Washington and Philadelphia, and in 1912, it merged with several other Balitmore laundries to form United Laundries, Inc., and

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

NPS Form 10-900-a
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OMB No. 1024-0018
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United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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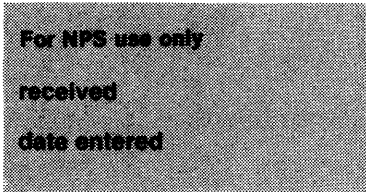
Continuation sheet
Swiss Steam Laundry Building
Baltimore City, Maryland   Item number   8   Page   4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

established new branches in Atlantic City, New Jersey. More modern facilities
were needed: and by 1915 the laundry moved from this location.[3]

Stuart, Keith and Company, maker of overalls, drawers, and shirts moved
into the building. This is one of several important garment firms that made
Baltimore a leader in this industry. George D. Keith (1863-1932), the president
of this firm was a member of Baltimore's Board of Commissioners for Opening
Streets.[4]

Stuart Keith and Company operated in this building for about 15 years.
Other garment firms subsequently located here, including KMW Suit and Cloak
Company and Maryland Cloak Company, manufacturers of lady's suits and cloaks.
From the 1930s to the 1950s the Union Wallpaper Company operated from this
building. It was most recently used by Kravitz and Rothbard Novelties
before becoming vacant a few years ago.

Thw Swiss Steam Laundry Building is associated with two notable Baltimore
citizens: John W. Lowe and George Allewalt Klinefelter. John W. Lowe (1865-
1944) was born in New Freedom, York County, Pennsylvania. He came to Baltimore
as a student of the College of Physicians and Surgeons and graduated in 1880
with high honors. He practiced medicine for two years and then became an
instructor at the college. However, Dr. Lowe found the life of a doctor
too arduous and retired from the profession. He joined his father-in-law in
the lumber business in Pennsylvania, regained his health, achieved success,
and returned to Baltimore where he began the Swiss Laundry business in 1896.
Lowe was also one of the founders of the Guardian Trust Company and the
Security Storage and Trust Company.

George A. Klinefelter (1860-1923) started as a vice-president of the Swiss
Manufacturing Company and later became president of the Elite Laundry companies
of Washington and Philadelphia, and later chairman of the board of United
Laundries, Inc. Besides his leadership in the laundering industry, he was
active in charitable institutions and in Saint Paul's Luthern Church.

The Swiss Building possesses integrity of design, location, setting,
materials, workmanship and association. Because it is designed in a distinctive
Romanesque style and constructed of iron columns with an iron storefront and
thick brick walls, this loft manufacturing building is unusually elaborate in
its design. its vertical emphasis and location evoke a period when Baltimore
was a center for manufacturing interests, especially the garment trade.
Manufacturing was basic to Baltimore's growth as a major industrial center,
and the former laundry and garment businesses which thrived at 100 North
Greene Street made a significant contribution to the development of Baltimore
as a capital of the clothing industry.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Loft buildings in Baltimore are generally characterized as follows:

Size: These buildings are built on large lots, generally over fifty feet wide, an indication of the size of industries that originally occupied them. They are not outgrowths of smaller, older structures. Most of them required the combination of smaller lots in order to build factories of this size.

Materials: The buildings have brick facades (primarily red brick, but tan or buff brick is also seen). Cast iron and stone detailing is used, but the districts retain a strong brick character. The construction materials are different from the cast iron facades of other, early industrial buildings in the vicinity.

Height: The buildings are generally from five to seven stories high. They are distinctive from the smaller commercial structures on Baltimore Street and other adjacent areas.

Date: Most of the buildings date from 1880 to 1910. They represent a break from earlier narrower, loft type facades that were often built with cast iron facades. The Abell Building which was built c. 1875 is the earliest of this type of structure.

Architectural Style: Most of the buildings have Victorian, Romanesque or early modern industrial architectural styling with some Neo-Classical details. They differ from some of the earlier industrial buildings which have Queen Anne detailing, the Italian Renaissance styling of cast iron structures or are enlargements of traditional Baltimore rowhouses or storefronts.

Footnotes

[1] Baltimore: The Gateway to the South, Liverpool of America, Mercantile Advancement Company, Baltimore, 1898, p. 71.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Tercentenary History of Maryland, V. III, p. 218-322.

[4] Maryland Men and Institutions, Maryland Biographical Association, 1920, p. 224.

[5] History of Baltimore, Baltimore American, 1902, p. 257.

[6] Tercentenary History of Maryland, V. III, p.318-322.

NPS Form 10-900-a
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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet   Swiss Steam Laundry Building
Baltimore City, Maryland   Item number   9   Page   6

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Walsh, Richard and William Lloyd Fox, ed. Maryland, A History 1632-1974.
    Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society,1974, pp. 408-431.