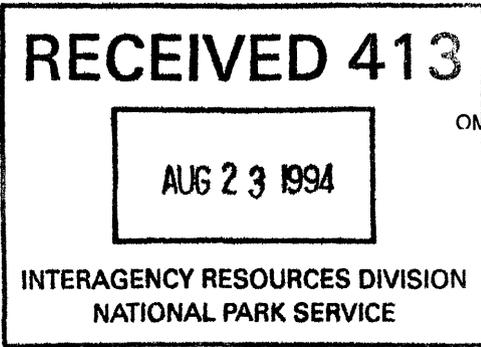


United States Department of the Interior  
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### National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission     Amended Submission

#### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

CAST IRON ARCHITECTURE OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, 1850-1904

#### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

CAST IRON ARCHITECTURE OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, 1850-1904

#### C. Form Prepared by

name/title Peter E. Kurtze, Architectural Historian, for

organization Baltimore Heritage, Inc. date March 1994

street & number 109 Brandon Road telephone (410)296-7538

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21212

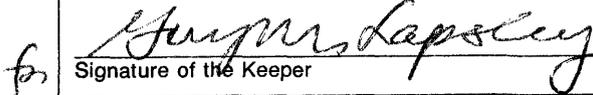
#### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
 Signature and title of certifying official STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER    Date 8/19/94

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

  
 Signature of the Keeper    Date of Action 9/26/94

**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	<b>Page Numbers</b>
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	1-10
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	11-17
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	17
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	18
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	19

**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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT:

**Cast Iron Architecture of Baltimore, Maryland, 1850-1904**

The mid-19th century application of cast iron to architectural purposes was an important step in the evolution of commercial architecture from buildings essentially residential in scale to modern skyscrapers. The city of Baltimore, Maryland, which had among its nineteenth century industries a number of iron foundries, was both a crucible and a showplace for the new technology. The Sun Iron Building of 1850-51 demonstrated the state of the art, in the first large-scale commercial application of New York inventor James Bogardus' system of all-iron construction. Located at the corner of Baltimore and South streets in the heart of the city's 19th-century central business district, this project achieved international recognition and initiated a building boom which culminated in approximately 100 iron front warehouses and commercial buildings lining the city's business district by the end of the century. In 1857, the Sun reported

Baltimore Street Improvement. At no period within the history of this city have we witnessed so many building improvements in progress throughout it as at the present time. The past year or two has worked astonishing changes every where, but on none of the thoroughfares is it more distinctly and prominently visible than on Baltimore street. Literally, the city of yesterday is not the city of to-day, and this is more particularly true of the above locality, where all things are becoming new. The dingy edifices that for half a century have stood drawn up in opposing lines along that thoroughfare are one by one being removed, and in their places new and imposing fronts of brown stone or iron present themselves, and generally on a scale of dimensions, the magnitude and magnificence of which has never before been attempted in this section. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Although, as this account indicates, cast iron remained in competition with traditional masonry construction at this early phase, the new material soon eclipsed the old. In a review of the progress of cast iron architecture in the two decades following the

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construction of its headquarters building, the Baltimore Sun summarized the advantages of the material which led to its increasing popularity:

Iron for Building Purposes. Since the introduction of iron as the principal material in the construction of important edifices, as illustrated in the erection of The Sun Iron Building, that material has been slowly but steadily increasing in favor until the present time, and now for fronts for warehouses and public buildings in Baltimore it is used to a very large extent. The advantages of iron over other materials for building purposes are claimed to be many. Amongst them is the great facility with which any architectural design may be carried out; the great economy in space, particularly in the construction of foundations; the small expense with which a building can be removed from one location to another; the easy manner in which an iron building can be ventilated; the greater security against lightning, as the electricity is diffused over a large surface, and thus loses all its intensity. These are some only of the numerous advantages possessed by iron as a building material . . . .<sup>2</sup>

By 1878, "five-story iron front warehouses of fine architectural proportions" had become "the rule" in the business district focusing on Baltimore Street. In 1878, the Baltimore American reported:

**NEW BUILDINGS**

**Fine Improvements in the Business Section of the City**

Until within a comparatively few years there was scarce a business building throughout this city that made any pretension to architectural beauty. Let any one call to mind the appearance of Baltimore street five years ago and then take a stand at the Eutaw House and look down as far as the Maryland Institute. He will be amazed at the change. The improvement even within a year has been remarkable. On both sides five-story iron front warehouses of fine architectural proportions are the

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rule. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The introduction of cast iron in the mid-19th century radically transformed the character of commercial architecture in American cities. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most urban commercial buildings were essentially similar to residential architecture. These buildings were generally domestic in scale, with a shop or office on the ground floor and living space behind and above. Large multi-paned windows may have defined the shopfront; sometimes, when the building was located on the corner of a block, a corner entrance was present.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, the outward appearance of commercial buildings had little to set them apart from domestic structures.

By the 1820s, designs for commercial buildings began to draw more attention to the shopfront. The first step in the differentiation of residential and commercial buildings was the development of display windows, historically called "bulk windows," which allowed shopkeepers to present their wares to the passing public.<sup>5</sup> These large windows were framed with heavy piers and lintels of stone, brick, or timber, which supported the weight of the upper masonry; this pattern characterized commercial facades for a quarter century.<sup>6</sup>

Cast iron was known in American architecture in this period, but its use was generally confined to interior structural elements; from the 1820s through the 1840s, cast iron columns supporting timber girders made possible the broad open floor areas of market houses and other commercial structures, and allowed buildings to rise to greater heights than had been feasible with standard masonry construction. By the mid-19th century, however, both the structural and the ornamental possibilities of the material came to be employed in the manufacture of exterior decorative elements and entire building facades.<sup>7</sup> Structurally, cast iron enabled the replacement of the heavy masonry piers and lintels which traditionally carried the weight of the upper facade wall by slender iron columns and beams of equal or greater strength. By eliminating the robust piers, display windows could be made larger, and as large sheets of plate glass became available, glazing bars could be reduced; as a result, the shopfronts of the Victorian era admitted more light to the store interior and displayed the

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merchandise to better advantage than their antecedents. Aesthetically, cast iron allowed designers scope to realize elaborate molded and foliated forms, and to utilize those forms repeatedly, in a durable material, at an economical cost.

The first cast iron building in Baltimore, and the first large-scale all-iron commercial building in the nation, was the Sun Iron Building, constructed in 1850-51 by publisher A.S. Abell at the corner of Baltimore and South streets.<sup>8</sup> To realize his ambition of creating "the finest newspaper office in America," Abell involved the pioneering engineer James A. Bogardus, architect Robert G. Hatfield, and iron founder Daniel D. Badger. The Sun Iron Building was a five-story structure with two complete iron facades, nine and twelve bays wide. It incorporated a host of innovative features, generated international interest, and launched the careers of Bogardus and Hatfield. It also demonstrated a new building form to Baltimore architects and their clients, and stimulated local founders to begin production of cast iron building elements. Within eighteen months of the completion of the Sun Iron Building in the summer of 1851, five full and seventeen partial iron front commercial buildings were already in place in the city. Founders Benjamin S. Benson and Adam Denmead, who had furnished ironwork for the Sun Iron Building, and the new firm of Hayward, Bartlett & Co., produced the elements for these new cast iron structures. About a half-dozen foundries in Baltimore furnished architectural iron through the third quarter of the 19th century; in addition to serving a burgeoning local building industry, Baltimore foundries manufactured building facades for shipment to points as distant as the Pacific Northwest.

The earliest surviving example of cast iron architecture in Baltimore is a storefront located at 318 West Redwood Street (B-4295); this marked part of the rear facade of an extensive complex of iron front warehouses facing West Baltimore Street, considered the "finest block of commercial buildings" in the city upon completion in 1852.<sup>9</sup> The foundry of Benjamin S. Benson fabricated the storefront to the design of architects Dixon, Balbirnie and Dixon.

The invention of cast iron building technology in the late 1840s and early 1850s coincided with the beginning of a period of

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industrial expansion; these two developments combined to transform the character of commercial centers in large American cities, replacing an essentially residential scale with new types of business buildings which achieved unprecedented size; cast iron served as "an important link in the evolution of commercial buildings from their residential ancestors to modern skyscrapers."<sup>10</sup> Multistory loft buildings, or "vertical manufactories," with iron interior supports and, often, full cast iron facades offered open floor areas and large windows admitting ample light; these features were especially advantageous to the garment industry, which burgeoned in Baltimore in the latter half of the nineteenth century; the city's garment factories became national leaders during this period.<sup>11</sup>

Cast iron made possible construction on a scale previously unknown. Buildings of the 1850s rose to five or six stories, with large interior spaces supported by cast iron columns; consolidation of building lots to accommodate these new behemoths began to change the traditional urban layout.<sup>12</sup> The material was capable of elaborate ornamentation, and designers exploited this capacity fully; cast iron facades were embellished with columns, arches, keystones, corbels, moldings, and rustications in repetitive array. Renaissance-style facades, with bays defined by columns and arcades, were especially well suited to iron construction.<sup>13</sup> Most cast iron buildings of the third quarter of the nineteenth century exemplify the "stacked vertical block" type of facade organization, resulting from the repetition of the same decorative elements on multiple stories.<sup>14</sup>

The earliest cast iron commercial facades, those of the 1850s, imitated traditional materials in dimensions and surface treatment. The familiar pier-and-lintel system, first executed in masonry and timber, dictated the form of cast iron facade elements, even though the new material was capable of functioning in far smaller section. The Sun Iron Building of 1850-51, the first structure in Baltimore to make use of the innovative iron technology, was finished in bronze paint to emphasize its metallic modernity;<sup>15</sup> more typically, however, cast iron was also finished to resemble stone in both color and texture. This convention is apparent in the minute descriptions of new commercial buildings that often appeared in newspapers of the period. For example, the three-story iron

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building erected in 1851 on the southwest corner of Baltimore and Charles streets for Canfield, Brother & Co., dealers in jewelry and fancy goods, was typical in that its "graceful Corinthian" front was "painted in imitation of brown free stone."<sup>16</sup> Craftsmen specialized in the technique of incorporating sand in exterior paint to achieve a granular appearance.<sup>17</sup> The earliest surviving full cast iron front building in the city, dating to 1857, is 412 West Baltimore Street (B-2340); although the street-level storefront has been altered, it is depicted in early views as having robust paneled piers between display windows, comparable in form to those on the upper stories. Here the ironwork was treated to resemble building elements commonly executed in stone; its facade was originally painted in earth colors of "green and bronze, giving to the whole a light and neat appearance."<sup>18</sup>

This tendency to imitate stone characterized cast iron commercial architecture through the Civil War period. By the 1870s, however, the inherent properties of the material began to be more frankly expressed. Columns became more slender and also taller, increasing floor-to-ceiling heights; window areas were correspondingly enlarged. Design details no longer sought to imitate masonry, and employed less florid ornamentation; primary colors began to replace earth tones in exterior paint schemes.<sup>19</sup> The neo-Grec detailing of the Peabody Library interior (1876-78) and the Abell Building storefronts (ca. 1878) present Baltimore's best surviving examples of this trend.

While the transformation of commercial architectural forms is perhaps the most celebrated effect of the introduction of cast iron technology, the material had valuable applications in residential construction as well. In domestic architecture, the function of cast iron was largely aesthetic; the material offered new ornamental possibilities related to its capacity for mass production and its structural qualities. Relatively inexpensive iron window hoods, for example, could be repeated across a facade for a rhythmical pattern; porches and galleries could be supported by visually delicate tendrils of iron rather than by stout wooden columns or posts.

In her survey of the development of cast iron architecture, Antoinette J. Lee noted that as the medium evolved structurally and

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aesthetically, it also underwent functional changes. Upon its introduction, cast iron was used for buildings with diverse functions, including financial institutions, warehouses, wholesale and retail stores; later in the nineteenth century, however, it came to be associated primarily with retail establishments.<sup>20</sup> While this pattern may have characterized cast iron architecture in American cities generally, the experience of Baltimore does not seem to conform with it, as cast iron continued to be used for diverse functions through the 1870s and indeed into the 1890s. Surviving examples include the Old Town Savings Bank (B-4294), a three-story building with two full cast iron facades built in 1871 at the southwest corner of North Gay and Exeter streets, and 423 West Baltimore Street (B-1296), which achieved its present configuration in 1893, when a three-story warehouse was altered to support a five-story metal facade.

The multistory buildings of the latter half of the nineteenth century often supported a variety of related functions, such as combined retail, wholesale, and manufacturing uses. A hierarchy of spatial organization characterized the interiors of such buildings; in many cases, this was based on convenience of access by customers and employees. Retail functions most often were located on the ground floor, where the general public had free access from the street. Wholesale activities generally took place on the second floor or in the basement; if these transactions were accommodated on the ground floor, they were confined to an interior area away from the street where they would not interfere with the "walk-in" retail trade.<sup>21</sup> Cashiers, counting rooms, and offices were located at the rear of the retail space, or upstairs. The uppermost stories were the least readily accessible parts of the building, and were usually devoted to manufacturing and storage.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century was the heyday of cast iron commercial architecture in Baltimore. This period saw the construction of an estimated 100 multistory buildings with full iron facades. By the mid-1880s, however, cast iron had begun to lose its status as the structural material of choice. Experience had disproven earlier claims that the material was fireproof and maintenance free, and as steel became more widely available in the latter half of the decade, it began to replace cast iron in building frames. Cast iron, however, had made a highly significant

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contribution to the evolution of later phases in metal frame building technology by providing architects and engineers with a "proving ground" for the development of theory concerning the structural behavior of metallic materials.<sup>22</sup>

Although the construction of full cast iron facades ceased around 1880, the material continued to be used into the 1890s for street fronts in new buildings and for alterations to earlier structures.

The majority of Baltimore's estimated 100 multistory ironfront buildings were densely concentrated in the city's principal commercial district, focusing on the Inner Harbor. Two-thirds of them were among the 1545 buildings destroyed on February 7-8, 1904, when fire devastated a 50-block area roughly located between Lexington Street and the harbor, bounded by the Jones Falls on the east and Liberty Street on the west. In the aftermath of the fire, engineers flocked to Baltimore to study the performance of recently-introduced "fireproof" building methods under actual conditions; this research helped refine emerging architectural technologies, and confirmed the obsolescence of outmoded building materials, including cast iron. About three dozen full iron fronts, located north and west of the fire's swath, survived into the 1960s, when urban renewal reduced their number to the present ten.

NOTES:

1. Baltimore Sun, May 29, 1857.
2. Baltimore Sun, July 21, 1869.
3. Baltimore American, January 24, 1878.
4. e. g., the Edward Langley store, South N and South Capitol streets, Washington, D. C., before 1798; watercolor by Nicholas King in the Joseph Downs Manuscript and Microfilm Collection, Winterthur Museum; reproduced in Orlando Ridout V, Building the Octagon, (Washington, DC: AIA Press, 1989), p. 27.

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5. Antoinette J. Lee, "Cast Iron in American Architecture: a Synoptic View," in H. Ward Jandl, ed., The Technology of Historic American Buildings (Washington, DC: Association for Preservation Technology, 1983), p. 102.

6. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 234.

7. Lee, p. 102.

8. James D. Dilts, "Introduction," in James D. Dilts and Catharine F. Black, eds., Baltimore's Cast-Iron Buildings and Architectural Ironwork, p. 7. For a comprehensive discussion of this pivotal structure, see David G. Wright, "The Sun Iron Building," in Dilts and Black, pp. 22-32.

9. 1852 newspaper account quoted in Dilts and Black, p. 74.

10. Lee, p. 97.

11. see Eleanor Bruchey, "The Industrialization of Maryland," in Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, eds., Maryland: A History 1632-1974 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1974), pp. 396-498, especially pp. 413-15; also see Kahn, Philip Jr., A Stitch in Time: The Four Seasons of Baltimore's Needle Trades (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1989).

12. Lee, p. 106.

13. Leland M. Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 121.

14. Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987), p. 76.

15. Wright, "The Sun Iron Building," in Dilts and Black, p. 27.

16. Baltimore American, May 17, 1851.

17. For example, R. R. Brooks is credited with "painting and sanding of the outside walls" of the new Canfield, Bro. & Co. building; Baltimore American, May 17, 1851. See also Pamela W.

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Hawkes, "Economical Painting: the Tools and Techniques Used in Exterior Painting in the 19th Century" in H. Ward Jandl, ed., The Technology of Historic American Buildings (Washington, DC: Foundation for Preservation Technology, 1983), pp. 189-213.

18. Baltimore Sun, September 10, 1857.

19. Lee, p. 108.

20. Lee, p. 107.

21. A description of Canfield, Brother & Company's elegant jewelry and fancy goods store, constructed in 1851, indicates both the method and the motivation for segregating retail and wholesale functions on the ground floor: "Adjoining the splendid retail salesroom . . . and occupying the space under the stairways leading to the upper part of the building, is another room, 100 feet long, which is arranged for the accommodation of the wholesale trade. . . [This arrangement] will no doubt be found a convenience to both buyer and seller, and entirely relieve the wholesale and retail trade from an interference with each other." Baltimore American, May 17, 1851.

22. Lee, p. 112.

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F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES:

Name of Property Type: **Buildings with Full Cast Iron Front**

DESCRIPTION:

Buildings of this type are two to five stories in height, with a storefront at street level and upper facades consisting of cast iron columns and arches framing large window openings. A bold cornice defines the roofline; intermediary cornices mark the transitions between stories of the facade. The cast iron elements may include a wide variety of decorative features, such as consoles, brackets, dentils, and scrolls; columns may be fluted and feature foliated capitals; building corners may be treated as rusticated piers. Earlier structures, those dating from the mid-1850s, generally appear to be less exuberantly detailed than their counterparts from the Civil War era. Storefronts frequently have been altered, and upper windows are often blocked.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The application of cast iron to the technology of building in the mid-19th century made possible the construction of entire building facades, and, sometimes, multiple facades, through the repetitive combination of mass-produced architectural elements such as columns, entablatures, and arches. The medium was well suited to the then-current Classical, Italianate, and Renaissance styles, with their emphasis on symmetry and repetition, and the opportunity for rich molded and foliate detailing.

Extant examples:

307-309 West Baltimore Street; Faust Brothers Building; B-1081  
322 West Baltimore Street; Alberti, Brink & Co. Building; B-2348  
407 West Baltimore Street; L. Frank & Sons Building; B-2360  
409 West Baltimore Street; B-2359  
412 West Baltimore Street; Blair & Co. Building; B-2340  
414 West Baltimore Street; Joshua Robinson & Co. Building; B-2341  
121 North Howard Street; George Knipp & Brother Building; B-2320  
233-235 North Gay Street; B-4293  
353 North Gay Street; Old Town Savings Bank; B-4294  
300 West Pratt Street; Wilkens-Robins Building; B-3598 (National Register listed in 1980.)

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**Name of Property Type: Buildings with Cast Iron Storefronts**

DESCRIPTION:

Properties of this type have a cast iron storefront framing broad openings, usually holding plate glass windows, at street level; the upper facade is brick. Three subtypes occur within this category: residential-scaled combination commercial buildings; multistory loft buildings; and buildings which have been altered by the insertion of a cast iron storefront.

*Subtype: Residential-scaled commercial buildings*

In areas outside the central business district, cast iron storefronts were incorporated in residential-scaled buildings to provide space for neighborhood businesses such as a grocery store or ship chandlery at street level, with living space above. This represents a mid-19th century evolutionary phase in the form of residential-scaled commercial architecture which was common in earlier periods. Such buildings are similar to other residential structures of the period with the substitution of the storefront; two to four stories high, with rectangular sash windows in the upper levels, shed roofs and perhaps some restrained Italianate detailing.

Extant examples:

202-206 West Pratt Street; B-2387

813 South Broadway; Port Mission; B-4292 (a contributing resource within the Fell's Point Historic District, National Register listed on July 14, 1986)

1638-1640 Thames Street; Admiral Fell Inn; B-4502 (a contributing resource within the Fell's Point Historic District, National Register listed on July 14, 1986)

*Subtype: Multistory loft buildings*

The earliest multistory loft buildings, were characterized by full principal facades of cast iron. Sometimes cast iron was used at the street or alley level on secondary elevations. The earliest cast iron storefront in Baltimore is a modest three-bay composition constructed in 1852 at the rear of a five-story loft building on

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West Redwood Street. In another example, a five-story loft building with a full iron front has cast iron on the first and second stories of its rear elevation along West Redwood Street.

After the full cast iron front passed out of fashion for loft buildings about 1880, cast iron columns and lintels continued to be used to frame broad openings at street level on buildings whose upper facades were constructed of brick. Most members of this category include five- or six-story loft buildings with street level retail space. A special instance of the type is represented by Engine Company No. 8, a two-story building whose cast-iron street front framed wide wagon doors rather than plate glass show windows. Properties of this type may exhibit the influence of the High Victorian Eclectic style through the use of molded brick and polychrome detailing in their upper facades; other properties display Romanesque and Classical influence in the brickwork and organization of their upper stories.

Extant examples:

- 26-28 South Howard Street; Johnston Building; B-2372
- 22-24 South Howard Street; Rombro Building; B-2371
- 118-120 North Paca Street; Sanitary Laundry Co.; B-2294
- 509-511 West Lombard Street; Turner-White Casket Co.; B-2332
- 318 West Redwood Street; B-4295
- Engine House No. 8; 1025-1031 West Mulberry Street; B-2429
- 329-335 West Baltimore Street; Abell Building; B-2364 (a contributing resource within the Loft Historic District North, National Register listed on January 3, 1985)
- 32-34, 36-38, 40-42 South Paca Street; Heiser, Rosenfeld, Strauss Buildings; B-2323, B-2324, B-2325 (individually National Register listed on March 10, 1980; a contributing resource within the Loft Historic District North, National Register listed on January 3, 1985)
- 414-418 West Lombard Street; Strouse Bros. Building; B-1079 (a contributing resource within the Loft Historic District North, National Register listed on January 3, 1985)
- 519-531 West Pratt Street; Erlanger Building; B-1075 (National Register listed on March 10, 1980)
- 100-102 North Greene Street; Swiss Steam Laundry Building; B-4091 (National Register listed on June 19, 1985)

*Subtype: Storefront alterations*

In addition to their use in new construction, iron storefronts

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were widely employed in updating existing commercial buildings and in converting residential buildings to new commercial functions. Numerous early houses were altered to accommodate new commercial uses during Baltimore's period of rapid economic growth following the Civil War, as commercial districts expanded into surrounding residential neighborhoods. The most obvious evidence of this change is usually a Victorian plate-glass storefront; surviving residences converted to commercial use are potentially significant in reflecting both a specific phase in Baltimore's development and a typical pattern of city growth in general. Properties of this type include gable-roofed Federal-style brick houses of the early nineteenth century, to which Victorian-era cast iron and plate glass storefronts have been added.

**Extant examples:**

419 West Baltimore Street; Harry Guss, Inc.; B-1272  
423 West Baltimore Street; B-1276

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**Name of Property Type: Buildings with Major Cast Iron  
Exterior Detailing**

DESCRIPTION:

These buildings are generally multiple stories; commercial, industrial, or residential in scale, type, and use; and generally of brick construction. Common cast iron elements include quoins, door and window frames, balconies, and decorative pieces.

SIGNIFICANCE:

In addition to complete building fronts and storefronts, Baltimore foundries produced a wide variety of decorative architectural elements which were used in combination with traditional masonry construction. Catalogs issued in the 1850s and 1860s by Hayward, Bartlett & Co. and its successor, Bartlett, Robbins & Co., illustrate the range of products fabricated, including--besides over a dozen combinations of columns and entablatures suitable for storefronts--23 styles of lintels, hoods, and enframements for windows; elaborate multistoried porches or galleries; iron brackets and roof cresting; landscape elements including fencing and gateposts, fountains, garden furniture, lampposts, and a prefabricated gazebo; utilitarian articles including stable partitions, racks, and mangers; and incidental items such as andirons, cuspidors, a revolving barstool, and two styles of aquarium (one of which resembled a baptismal font with gothic detailing, and was designed to revolve). Residential buildings throughout Baltimore's mid-19th century neighborhoods feature cast-iron window heads, balconies and window guards, galleries, and fences, produced by Baltimore foundries.

Extant examples:

233-235 North Gay Street; B-4293  
202-206 West Pratt Street; B-2387

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**Name of Property Type: Buildings with Major Cast Iron  
Interior Features**

**DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE:**

Only one representative of this type has been identified: the Peabody Institute, on Mount Vernon Place East, which features a helical cast iron stair with rococo detailing in its 1861 building and a highly ornate and innovative stack system constructed of cast iron in its 1876-78 Library building, both designed by architect Edmund G. Lind and fabricated by the Baltimore foundry of Hayward, Bartlett & Co. and its successor, Bartlett, Robbins & Co. The Peabody Institute buildings were previously National Register listed as contributing resources within the Mount Vernon Place National Historic Landmark District, designated November 11, 1971. There is a possibility, given the popularity of cast iron in Baltimore, that other building interiors not yet identified may feature substantial use of cast iron for mantels, columns, and radiators. For listing, such examples would have to be extensive in use and/or unique in manufacture, design, or size.

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**Registration requirements:** For a building to qualify for National Register nomination based upon the cast iron architecture theme, it must clearly retain features commonly associated with cast iron buildings, in particular material, form, and patterns, and the features unique to the individual building when the cast iron elements were incorporated into the, either when built or when renovated with cast iron elements. Enough of the cast iron features must survive to demonstrate its architectural qualities (design, materials, workmanship) and construction. Not eligible for listing under this theme are assemblages of cast iron elements manufactured during the theme study period and disassembled and reassembled after the period. For buildings significant for interior cast iron use, the exterior of the building must retain integrity of design, materials, and workmanship of the period when the cast iron was installed. Overall, integrity of feeling and association with architectural character and period of development are important. The historic physical features must be present.

These properties represent a resource type which is extremely rare in Baltimore, and therefore may be subject to a more lenient standard of integrity than would be appropriate to apply to other resource types of which more numerous examples exist. Alterations to the street level facade are common, obscuring the original configuration and in many cases involving the removal of original architectural elements. A unique feature of 19th-century cast iron construction is the assembly of facades from separate repetitive elements; this facilitates rehabilitation of damaged facades, as missing elements can be replicated from analogous pieces which remain intact. For the purpose of determining integrity, if elements are missing, sufficient material should remain to enable their replication.

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Baltimore (independent city), Maryland

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**H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

The Multiple Property Documentation Form is based upon a study of cast iron architecture of Baltimore, Maryland. Resources were identified through a review of existing historic properties inventory documentation on file at the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office and the Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, followed by supplemental field-work to comprehensively identify and document surviving examples of cast iron architecture within the boundaries of the city of Baltimore. This effort was undertaken by volunteer members of Baltimore Heritage, Inc., beginning in the early 1980s; Peter E. Kurtze, a 36 CFR 61 qualified architectural historian, performed additional research and completed the survey documentation between March and October, 1990. The survey component of the project was conducted according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification.

In 1991, the results of the survey and research were incorporated in the publication Baltimore's Cast Iron Buildings and Architectural Ironwork, sponsored by Baltimore Heritage, Inc. This book, which forms the basis of the Statement of Historic Context presented here, was edited by two veteran Baltimore preservationists and principals in the cast iron survey: James D. Dilts, a historian and architectural writer, and Catharine F. Black, a historian, writer, and longtime member of city and state historic preservation organizations. To recognize the publication of this book, the Maryland Historical Society mounted a major exhibit on Baltimore's cast iron architecture.

The present Statement of Historic Context was developed to provide a basis for evaluation of the surveyed resources. Properties identified through the survey were evaluated according to the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. This process was carried out in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Registration.

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I. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dilts, James D. and Catharine F. Black, editors. Baltimore's Cast Iron Buildings and Architectural Ironwork. Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1991.

Kurtze, Peter E., "Commercial Architecture in Baltimore, 1796-1947," ms., Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, March 1992.

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

Also see Notes to Section E.