

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland	
COUNTY: Baltimore City	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Baltimore Shot Tower

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Phoenix Shot Tower, Merchant's Shot Tower

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Southeast corner Fayette and Front Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore City

STATE Maryland	CODE	COUNTY: Baltimore City	CODE
-------------------	------	---------------------------	------

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Not in use</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____	

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

STREET AND NUMBER:  
City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore City

STATE: Maryland	CODE
--------------------	------

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Land Record Office of the Superior Court of Baltimore City

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 610, Baltimore City Court House

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore City

STATE: Maryland	CODE
--------------------	------

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1964     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Baltimore City

STATE: Maryland	CODE
--------------------	------

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Shot Tower is constructed of brick laid in common bond. The tower is 234-feet, 3-inches tall, 40-feet in diameter at the base tapering to 20-feet in diameter at the top. The top of the tower is crenellated and has merlons the shape of a Gothic arch. The brickwork and mortar of these crenellations and that of the first three or four feet of the top of the tower are of a different color than the rest of the shaft. This suggests that they were rebuilt after the 1882 fire or as part of the 1928 rehabilitation of the tower. The walls are five-and-one-half-feet thick at the base narrowing to one-foot, eight-inches at the top. The masons built the tower working from the interior and so no exterior scaffolding was needed. The tower has heavy metal doors at the base and rectangular windows placed at random to light the stairs. These windows are double hung sash with nine panes over nine. The window lintels are granite. A window within reach of the ground has a wooden vertical plank shutter.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**6 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1828**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Phoenix Shot Tower in Baltimore, Maryland was built in 1828 to manufacture lead shot. It remained in operation until 1892. The red brick tower is an excellent example of the severe beauty that often results in industrial architecture from purely functional design. However the major significance of the structure is its impressive height of over 234 feet. Seventy feet higher than the Washington Monument in Baltimore, and 45-feet higher than the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, it was the tallest structure in the United States until work resumed on the Washington National Monument on the Mall in the District of Columbia after the Civil War. Never a building type erected in great numbers, it is estimated that less than four shot towers remain in existence and that the Phoenix Shot Tower in Baltimore is the most outstanding remaining example.

History  
(History prepared by the Maryland Historical Trust)

Known originally as the Phoenix Shot, then the Merchants' Shot Tower and now the old Baltimore Shot Tower, this building was erected in 1828 and its cornerstone laid by Charles Carroll of Carrollton. It is the last remaining of four such towers in Baltimore and one of a very few still in existence in this country.

It was used for the manufacture of shot by dropping molten lead from a platform at the top through a sieve-like device and into a vat of cold water, which caused it to harden. When dried and polished, the shot was sorted into 25-pound bags. A total of 1,000,000 bags of shot were produced each year and this capacity could be doubled if necessary.

In 1882 the interior of the tower was destroyed by fire, but quickly rebuilt and the manufacture of shot continued until 1892. Then in 1921, the Union Oil Company purchased the building, but decided to abandon it shortly thereafter. This caused a group of citizens to raise \$25,000 by subscription and present it to the City. It was briefly opened to the public, but is now closed. A new Shot Tower Historic Park is being planned for the surrounding area.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Ballow's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion, March 22, 1856. "Shot Tower at Baltimore", pp. 180-18.  
The Federal Architect, January 1940; pp. 16.  
Harper's Weekly, 1828, "Shot Tower at Baltimore."  
Illustrated News, April 16, 1853. "The Merchant's Shot Tower," pp. 244-245.  
 Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Baltimore City and County, Maryland (Baltimore: publ. 1881), pp. 420-421.  
 Lane Record Office of the Superior Court of Baltimore City, Maryland; Liber SGL 4336 Folio 34.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 17' 26"	76° 36' 20"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **less than 1 acre.**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**W. Brown Morton III, Architect**

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.** DATE **July 30, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**801 - 19th Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington,** STATE **D.C.** CODE

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____  <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____  <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
--	---

SEE INSTRUCTIONS