The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

Landmark Designation Staff Report
April 10, 2012

The Appold-Faust Building
(also known as the Faust Brothers Building)

307-309 W. Baltimore St
Baltimore, MD
Summary

The Appold-Faust Building is a late-19th century iron-front factory and warehouse, and is one of the finest examples of cast-iron architecture in the City. It is one of a handful of buildings in the City that have two cast-iron façades. Cast-iron façades were once ubiquitous in the business district. The building was constructed in 1870 by prominent builder Benjamin F. Bennett, and the ironwork likely cast by the foundry of Bartlett, Robbins, and Co. for George J. Appold, a prominent Baltimore businessman. The rear of the building was constructed in 1875 for John Faust, a pioneer in machinated shoe manufacturing. The building housed a variety of businesses and manufacturing firms, representative of how the garment district grew and changed throughout its history.

Architectural Description

This late 19th century commercial building is significant as one of the few buildings with two cast-iron facades left in the City. Its principal cast-iron façade is located on the southern side of the 300 block of West Baltimore Street. The building extends the length of the block to the northern side of Redwood Street. This façade features cast-iron on the first two floors.

The Baltimore Street façade is strikingly similar to that of 300 West Pratt Street. The façade is five stories tall and four bays wide. The first floor has recently been restored to its original appearance, which was recorded in several late-19th century illustrations. In the mid-20th century, this first floor was altered significantly. Now restored, the first floor is comprised of four segmental arch bays, framed by fluted piers with Corinthian columns. The inner two bays have double-leaf doors, and the outer two bays have display windows. The upper floor stories have four bays, each filled with segmental arch window and framed by Corinthian columns. All of the bays are deeply recessed and feature paneled soffits. The spandrels between the arches are decorated with molded paneling. Each floor has an intermediary cornice with modillions. The windows in the second, third and fourth floors have 4/4 sash windows, and those in the fifth floor are 2/4 sash. The cornice has dentils and egg and dart molding, overhangs a paneled frieze, and is supported by paired foliated brackets. The cornice soffit features rosettes. Above the first floor, the corners of the building have alternating rusticated and paneled iron blocks that imitate stone quoins.

Illustrations of the building show that between 1873 and 1895, a paneled parapet with scrolled decoration was added to the roofline, but that this feature was removed by 1910. This feature was not added in the restoration of the building.

The rear façade of the building on Redwood St is six stories tall, due to a difference in grade. The first two stories are cast-iron, with four segmental-arch openings separated by paneled pilasters topped with Corinthian columns. There is a fleur-de-lis in place of a keystone on each arch, and the spandrels feature a foliated bracket. The intermediary cornice at the top of the cast-ironwork features modillions and dentils. The first floor has
four double-leaf doors. The bays of the second floor feature large 6/6 sash windows. The rest of the façade is brick. The second, third and fourth floors feature brick quoins on the sides of the building, and 4/4 sash arched windows in each bay, topped with a band of connected brick hoods. There is an intermediary cornice between the fifth and sixth floor. The sixth floor features six 4/4 sash arched windows and lacks ornamentation.

**Architectural and Historical Context**

In the United States, the use of cast-iron in architecture began in the early 19th century. First used for interior structural piers in buildings, it wasn’t until the mid-19th century that cast-iron was used for the exterior of buildings, and the decorative possibilities of cast-iron were explored. The technology of cast-iron architecture helped commercial buildings evolve into modern skyscrapers.\(^2\)

The Sun Iron Building, constructed in downtown Baltimore in 1851 was the first large-scale commercial building constructed completely of iron. This building led to a great interest in cast-iron, and Baltimore’s iron industry and economy surged due to the demand for cast-iron across the nation. Many buildings in Baltimore itself were constructed with cast-iron, or had cast-iron details. By the end of the 19th century, there were approximate 100 iron front warehouses and commercial buildings in the City.\(^3\)

This building, constructed in 1870, was part of the cast-iron boom. By 1878, five story cast-iron front warehouses “of architectural proportions” had become ubiquitous in the business district, particularly on Baltimore Street.\(^4\) These iron-front warehouses were used primarily as “vertical manufactories” that benefitted from cast-iron both on their façades but also on the interior supports. They had open floor plans and large windows that were beneficial for garment or other mid-scale manufacturing.\(^5\) Located in the garment district, this building was used as a factory and warehouse during its first several decades.

This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building to the Market Center Historic District, and also a contributing building to the Multiple Property Listing “Cast Iron Architecture of Baltimore, Maryland, 1850-1904”.

**Building History**

The building was constructed in 1870 for owner George J. Appold. He purchased two adjoining properties in 1864 on West Baltimore Street,\(^6\) and demolished them in order to construct a five story iron-front warehouse on Baltimore Street.\(^7\) The rear portion of the building was constructed five years later under the ownership of John Faust.\(^8\) The address of the property was 331-333 West Baltimore Street until 1889, when all of the addresses in Baltimore City were updated. Since 1889, the property has been 307-309 West Baltimore Street.
The building was constructed by Benjamin F. Bennett, a prominent 19th century contractor. He began his business in 1851, and constructed the Academy of Music, Broadway Market, Mt. Vernon M.E. Church, and numerous other churches and private residences “of more or less pretension to beauty and ornamentation.” Bennett used this building in an ad for his business in George W. Howard’s book *The Monumental City*, first published in 1873. The iron-front is likely the work of the foundry of Bartlett, Robbins, and Co, one of the premier foundries in the country. This foundry did work on numerous iron-front buildings in Baltimore, including the News American Building, as well as work in numerous civic and government buildings in Washington, D.C. and New York.

George Appold (1820-1897) was a prominent businessman and entrepreneur in Baltimore. He was the head of George Appold & Sons, which he inherited from his father. This business was the city’s leading tannery and leather dealer. Called “one of the most vigorous characters in public life in this section of the country,” Appold had numerous business interests. He was president of the Merchant’s and Miners Transportation Company for twenty years. Incorporated in 1852, this company owned twelve large steamships that travelled to Boston, Providence, Norfolk, and Savannah. Both the steamships themselves and their machinery were constructed of iron, innovations of the late-19th century. These ships transported passengers as well as goods. Appold served on various professional committees and boards, including as the president on the Board of Steam Navigation, as vice-president of the Shoe and Leather Board of Trade, and served as a director for several other companies. He also engaged in humanitarian endeavors, and he and his brother Samuel donated land and funds to construct the Appold Methodist Episcopal Church in 1894, named in honor of their father, George Appold. Appold was noted as “one of the enterprising improvers of real estate in Baltimore”, owning “excellent properties” across the city, several of which were also constructed by Benjamin Bennett.

It is quite fitting given Appold’s enterprising role in iron steamships that this building had a full cast-iron façade. Appold was responsible for constructing the original iron-fronted warehouse. On April 5, 1870, and three subsequent dates that month, Geo. Appold & Sons advertised that the four upper floors of their newly-completed iron front building were for rent, “suitable for any business requiring light, space and an independent entrance from Baltimore street.” There was also a dwelling and store on the rear of the property, at 46 German St. The rear portion of the warehouse with the iron-front elevation on German (now Redwood) Street was added five years later.

From 1871 to 1873, the firm Kimberly & Moorehead rented 333 West Baltimore St. for their wholesale boots, shoes, and hats business. The firm W. L. Gosnell & Co. had a shoe factory at 333 West Baltimore St. from 1873 to 1874.

In 1875, the property was sold to John Faust for $78,000. In the *Sun*, it was announced that Faust would demolish the two rear buildings on German Street, and construct “an iron-front warehouse, uniform with the one fronting on Baltimore street” that would be installed with machinery for a “shoe manufactory”. The front warehouse would be used
as a salesroom by his firm, Faust Bros. It is possible that the same contractor and iron foundry firm were used to construct this addition. Interestingly, the German (now Redwood) Street façade is not uniform with the West Baltimore Street façade as was proposed, because it has only a two story cast-iron façade, and the façade differs slightly from the one on Baltimore St. Regardless, it is quite rare for a building to have two cast-iron façades, and this structure is one of only a few left in Baltimore that has two cast-iron façades. It is the only example left in this part of the City.

John Faust immigrated from Heese-Darmstadt, Germany in 1849, and he was one of the leading pioneers in shoe manufacturing in Baltimore. After the Civil War, he was the first to use machinery for shoe manufacturing south of the Mason-Dixon line. This pioneering enterprise likely first occurred in this very building, as Faust ran a shoe manufacturing company from this building from 1875 to 1888 under several names, including Faust Bros, Faust Bros & Hohman, Faust & Hohman, and J. Faust & Son. In 1888, the company constructed their own building at 409-411 German St, and in 1890, the firm moved their factory to Havre de Grace. John and his wife Julia Faust owned this building until 1895, when it was sold to William Keyser.

The first floor of the building was leased by tenants during Faust’s ownership. In 1877, Lucius L. Lanier & Co. operated a wholesale dry goods and notions at this address and Phillips Bros. & Co., another dry goods wholesale firm owned by William B. and John R. Phillips, were in the building from 1878-1886 or 1887.

In 1880, the *Sun* published an article about a city-wide “spectacle of illumination” event one night. According to the article, Baltimore Street was the most beautiful street, “a sea of dazzling light, which... gave the thoroughfare a strikingly brilliant appearance.” Phillips Bros. and Faust & Hohman participated in the show, lighting the front of their warehouse with gas jets.

Between 1889 and 1901, another wholesale dry goods and notions firm, Pearre Bros. & Co. leased the building. The firm was originally Boyd, Pearre & Co. when it was established in 1866, but changed to Pearre Bros. & Co. by 1870. The firm carried domestic and imported European goods, specializing in woolens for men’s clothing. The company had a market in the Mid-Atlantic and the South, with 17 traveling salesmen plying their goods in 1895.

In 1895, John and Julia Faust sold the building to William Keyser, one of the leading Baltimore businessmen. Keyser inherited his father’s company, which became a leading firm in the import, trade, and production of iron and steel. It was named Keyser, Troxell & Co. and later Keyser Bros. & Co. He was vice-president of the B&O Railroad, as well as a director for several other railroads, president of the Baltimore Copper Company, and a director of several banks and corporations. He invested greatly in real estate in the city of Baltimore, was involved in many civic institutions, and even donated some of the land that became the Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University. At the end of his long and prestigious career, he was appointed by Mayor McLane to head the Burnt District Commission, following the Great Fire in 1904. He served in that position for several
months before dying suddenly. Following his death, this property was owned by his estate and heirs until 1944. This building was one of several that he owned in the city, though he lost a few in the Great Fire.

The auction firm Grotjan, Lobe & Co. were located in the building from 1901 – 1907. The related auction firm Lobe, Winkler & Co., (which was later N.B. Lobe & Co.,) was also located in the building from 1904-1907. While the majority of the central business district was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1904, the south side of the 300 block of Baltimore Street was spared. Following the fire, many businesses temporarily relocated to other quarters after losing their buildings. 307 West Baltimore Street briefly housed a ticket office for the Chesapeake Steamship Company, and housed the Baltimore Transfer Co., a transportation firm, for a year following the fire. W.M. Lucy & Co. sold cash registers at 307 West Baltimore Street in 1905 and 1906.

On August 17, 1907, there was a deadly fire on the fifth floor of the building that caused $95,000 worth of damage. While firemen fought the fire on the top floor, it collapsed, killing fireman Tillerman Gill and injuring fifteen more firemen. The collapse was determined to be due in part to faulty construction of the floor, where the company covered over a former skylight to create more floor space. A month later, the firm moved out of the building.

The Baltimore Shoe House, run by the firm Levenstein & Lubin, was located in the building from 1908 – 1912. Israel Levenstein was born in Russia in 1860, and immigrated to the US after some years in Sweden. He founded the Baltimore Shoe House in 1895. In 1908, Joseph Lubin joined this firm, selling shoes and boots in the Mid-Atlantic and the South, and as far west as Texas and Oklahoma. The firm prided themselves on the fair dealings of the Baltimore Shoe House, calling it “The Fair and Square House.” This firm also suffered from a fire in the building in 1911. The fire began late at night in the basement, but luckily the automatic fire-alarm box in the building sounded. Over $20,000 worth of merchandise was damaged, and $1,000 worth of damage was done to the building. Fires were a common threat in factories, and were made more dangerous by the great amounts of flammable consumer goods stored in the buildings.

In August 1912, the building was leased to wholesale shoe firm Frank & Adler, one of the leading shoe wholesalers in the city. Before they moved in, a modern sprinkler system was installed. The firm was founded in 1873 by Solomon Frank, Simon C. Frank, and Joseph Adler. The firm was one of the organizers of the Baltimore Shoe and Leather Board of Trade. The firm leased the building until Adler’s death in 1923. The same year, the department store Hochschild, Kohn & Co. leased the building for merchandise storage. Between 1928 and 1938, Harry M. Blum & Son, a men’s furnishings store, was located in the building.

From 1941 until the 1970s, the building housed The Trading Post, a riding store, that was run by George and Josephine Epstein, and Sadie and Irving Okum. These two couples purchased the property in 1944 from the Mercantile Trust Company of Baltimore, which
was the trustee of R. Brent Keyser’s estate. The property passed between the Epsteins and Okums, until 1982 when the property was sold to Seymour Farbman by Alfred and Fanny Mae Okum. Seymour Farbman sold the property in 2006 under the name West Baltimore 307-309 LLC to Faust Brothers LLC. This property has recently been rehabbed and is available for lease as office space.

**Staff Recommendations:**

The Faust-Appold Building meets CHAP Landmark Designation Standards:

B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history;

   *The Appold-Faust Building is a late-19th century iron-front factory and warehouse. It is one of the few iron-front buildings that survived the Great Fire of 1904. It housed a variety of businesses and manufacturing firms, representative of how the garment district grew and changed throughout its history.*

2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past;

   *The building was constructed by prominent builder Benjamin F. Bennett, and the ironwork likely cast by the foundry of Bartlett, Robbins, and Co. for George J. Appold, a prominent Baltimore businessman. The rear of the building was constructed for John Faust, a pioneer in machinated shoe manufacturing.*

3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

   *This structure is one of the few remaining buildings in Baltimore City that has two cast-iron façades. Cast-iron façades were once ubiquitous in the business district, but many were lost in the Great Fire of 1904, and others lost to development. This five-story ornately cast iron-front building is one of the finest examples of cast-iron architecture still remaining in Baltimore.*
Images and Maps
1879 Sanborn Map detail of the building. (Sanborn maps 1876-1915, Volume 1, p.628)
Historic Images


Image of the Appold Building, bottom right, in an ad for Benjamin Bennett. In George W. Howard’s *The Monumental City* (Baltimore: J.D Ehlers & Co, 1873), 452.
1980 Photo from National Register Nomination, taken by Ann Steele.
Current Building Photos

Upper Floors and Cornice, Baltimore St. façade.

Restored first floor, Baltimore St.
Redwood St. façade.
2 National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, Cast Iron Architecture of Baltimore, Maryland, 1850-1904, Section E3-5.
6 Deed, Edward M. Greenway to George J. Appold. March 26, 1864, Baltimore City Land Records, Liber AM 247, Folio 492; Deed, Solomon J. Kann to George J. Appold, May 1, 1864, Baltimore City Land Records, Liber AM 252, Folio 375.
7 “Classified Ad 10 – No Title”, *The Sun*, April 5, 1870, p. 3; Proquest Historical Newspapers.
8 “Local Matters”, *The Sun*, April 9, 1875, p. 4; Proquest Historical Newspapers.
10 George W. Howard *The Monumental City* (Baltimore: J.D Ehlers & Co, 1873), 452.
11 Dilts and Black, 64.
12 George W. Howard, 443.
15 “Local Matters, The Sun, August 19, 1871, p.4 Proquest Historical Newspapers; Forrest, 354-355.
16 Forrest, 354-355.
18 “Local Matters”, August 19, 1871, p.4, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
21 “Appold Church to Celebrate”, *The Sun*, November 19, 1904, p.7 Proquest Historical Newspapers.
23 “Classified Ad 10 – No Title”, *The Sun*, April 5, 1870, p. 3. Proquest Historical Newspapers.
26 “Local Matters”, *The Sun*, April 9, 1875. 4, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
27 “John Faust”, *The Sun*, December 29, 1910, 5, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
29 “Classified Ad 21 – No Title”, *The Sun*, June 27, 1888, 2, Proquest Historical Newspapers; “Havre de Grace will get the Factory”, *The Sun*, August 5, 1889, 6, Proquest Historical Newspapers; “Built on a Hill”, *The Sun*, August 16, 1890, 6, Proquest Historical Newspapers; “John Faust”, *The Sun*, December 29, 1910, 5, Proquest Historical Newspapers.
31 NR Nomination form, Sec. 8, p.4; *Woods’ Baltimore City Directory*, 1877, 400
32 1878 *Woods’ Baltimore City Directory*, 536; 1886 *Woods’ Baltimore City Directory*, 1044; 1888 Polk City Directory, 867