Baltimore City
Commission for Historical and
Architectural Preservation

Landmark Designation Report
February 12, 2013

Haven Street Factory

101 N. Haven Street
Baltimore, Maryland
Significance Summary

Haven Street Factory, a brick industrial building, was constructed in 1903 and 1904 for the Steiner Mantel Company in an industrial section of what was then Baltimore County. It was originally used as a factory for fireplace mantels, wood veneer, and furniture, contributing to Baltimore’s large wood products industry in the early 20th century. In the mid 20th century, the factory contributed to Baltimore’s food processing and shipping as a canning factory, a paper box factory, and later served as a warehouse for Esskay, the meat-packing company. The building’s close proximity to rail, shipping, and truck routes made this a prime location for manufacturing throughout the 20th century. Haven Street Factory’s history reflects the broad patterns in Baltimore’s manufacturing heritage.

Property History

Steiner Mantel Company

The factory building is located at 101 N. Haven Street in the largely industrial section of Baltimore City known as Kresson. This property was originally located in Baltimore County prior to the 1918 annexation into Baltimore City. In 1891, Jessamine Townsend of Atlantic City, New Jersey, became the owner of 14 acres of land in the county south of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Turnpike, which is now Pulaski Highway. In 1905, she leased a lot for a term of 99 years to the Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County, which produced fireplace mantels. The lot was originally almost twice the size of what it is today, bound by Fairmount Street to the south, Eighth Street (now N. Haven Street) to the west, Fayette Street to the north, and the rail lines of the Union Railroad Company of Baltimore to the east, comprising of an entire block. The property’s location directly adjacent to the railroad was a prime site for a manufacturing business.

Interestingly, Steiner Mantel Company had already constructed a building on the property prior to the lease agreement. In 1903, a factory was constructed for Steiner Mantel Company on Eighth Street, but a storm destroyed the building and damaged a railroad car located on the Union Railroad tracks next to the building. A lawsuit followed between the company and the builder that became contract case law. Despite this loss, it appears that the factory was quickly rebuilt, because in January 1904, it was announced that a three-story addition to the factory located on the corner of Eighth and Fairmount (incorrectly identified as “Clairmont”) Streets, would be completed at a cost of $12,000. This is likely the southern wing of the building that fronts on N. Haven Street.

The factory was threatened six months later by a devastating fire at the Williamson Veneer Company, located directly south from Steiner’s factory across Fairmount Street. This fire destroyed the entire 3.5 acres of the wood veneer company’s plant and drew spectators from miles around. Steiner was only able to save his factory by organizing a bucket brigade. Due to this incident, the Great Baltimore Fire one year earlier, and the fact that his manufacturing material, wood, was highly flammable, it is no wonder that...
Steiner installed automatic sprinklers in his factory, had a large water tank and a hydrant on the property, and employed watchmen at night and on weekends to protect against fire.\textsuperscript{7}

Charles F. Steiner was clearly an attentive property owner, but he was also a politically astute and engaged citizen who established the Merchants and Manufacturer’s Association of Highlandtown, served as a leading member and president of the East End Improvement Association, was the Republican Congressional candidate for the Third District, and served as a member of the School Board under Mayor Broening.\textsuperscript{8} His acumen for advertising was exhibited in 1905 when the Steiner Mantel Company sent out return envelopes to all of its customers and business correspondents with “Greater Baltimore, Maryland” emblazoned on them in large letters. While common today, this was an innovative advertising practice at the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, and was intended to “boom” Baltimore. According to the \textit{Sun}, Mayor Timanus was greatly pleased by Steiner’s campaign, stating that this practice would not only stimulate trade, but also create a greater feeling of civic pride, and that “The world will be informed that the business men of this city are proud of Baltimore.”\textsuperscript{9}

In 1905, the northern portion of the property at Eighth and Fayette Streets was improved with a three story factory for the Baltimore Veneer Panel Company, of which Steiner was also president.\textsuperscript{10} The following year, the two companies switched buildings, with the Steiner Mantel Company operating on Eighth and Fayette Streets, at the northern portion of the property.\textsuperscript{11}

Several changes occurred in 1909 and 1910, likely precipitated by the 1908 failure of the Baltimore Veneer Panel Company - also headed by Steiner - requiring the reorganization of the two company’s assets.\textsuperscript{12} Steiner resigned as president and general manager of the Steiner Mantel Company, and the company moved back to the factory on the southern portion of the property, at Eighth St. and Fairmount Ave.\textsuperscript{13}

The same year, under the direction of Robert Krieger, the company became a member of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association of Baltimore, which promoted commercial and industrial business in Baltimore.\textsuperscript{14} It was also the only Baltimore-based member of the national Wood Mantel Manufacturers’ Credit Association.\textsuperscript{15} In the August 1909 edition of nationally distributed \textit{Mantel and Tile Grate Monthly}, the new management of the Steiner Mantel Company thanked its customers and friends and advertised that it was “unequalled by any other wood mantel manufacturer” despite the fact that it is one of the youngest companies in the field.\textsuperscript{16} A full page ad for the company was also included on page 2 of the same edition. (See Image 1)

In 1910, the Charles J. F. Steiner Mantel Company officially incorporated as a manufacturer of mantels and other household and office furnishings, offering stock options in the company.\textsuperscript{17} The northern portion of the property, at the intersection of Eighth Ave. and Fayette Street, was sold by the Steiner Mantel Company to the King Cork & Seal Company for $42,000.\textsuperscript{18} The property boundaries actually divided an existing building, so the terms of the sale addressed the mutual responsibility for the
The Steiner Mantel Company continued to operate the factory at Eighth and Fairmount Streets until 1919, when the Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County sold the property to August A. Gassinger. The Steiner Mantel Company continued to operate the factory at Eighth and Fairmount Streets until 1919, when the Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County sold the property to August A. Gassinger.20

Gassinger Table Factory, J.M. Raffel Company, and other manufacturers
August A. Gassinger immigrated from Bavaria, Germany around 1865, when he was 15.21 Trained as a cabinetmaker, he manufactured furniture in Baltimore under several names in the 1890s through the 1910s.22 After purchasing the former Steiner Mantel factory, he established a profitable table factory named Gassinger Table Company.23 According to August’s son, Gerard Gassinger, he then decided to sell furniture rather than make it, and opened Gassinger Bros & Co. furniture store with his sons in 1921 on the 1700 block of N. Gay Street.24

August retained ownership of the factory on N. Haven Street, renting it out in 1920 to the J. M. Raffel Company, paper box manufacturer, for a term of ten years.25 The Raffel Company moved to this building from their original building in Federal Hill, which is designated as a Baltimore City Landmark due to the company’s significance and contribution to Baltimore City.26 This company was an innovator in the industry of paper box manufacturing, and corrugated boxes revolutionized the packing and shipping industries, both of which were played key roles in Baltimore’s industrial success in the early 20th century.27

After the Raffel Company’s lease ended in 1930, Gassinger attempted to sell the factory in 1930 and 1931, advertising a factory with 65,000 square feet, three floors, sprinklers, elevators, and railroad siding.28 He sold the property to his own real estate firm, August A. Gassinger & Sons, in 1931 and continued to rent out space in the building to various businesses, including a canning collective and the Printer’s Finishing and Manufacturing Company in the late 1930s and early 1940s.29 (See Image 2)

Helwig & Leitch
In 1939, the property was sold to Helwig & Leitch, which manufactured food products. Helwig & Leitch was established as a Baltimore food packing company in 1888, using the “Majestic” trademark, which was sold nationally and filed with the US Patent Office in 1929.30 The company was run by Louise G. Helwig, Wilbur R. Leitch and Winfield M. Kehs, and for many years, their factory was located on the 1500 block of Gorsuch Ave in Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello until this property was purchased.31 This factory served as a pickle factory, according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1951, although it likely manufactured some of the multitude of other food products made by the company, such as mayonnaise, mustard, and other condiments.32 (See Image 3) According to the Sun, Helwig & Leitch was acquired by the firm Jewett & Sherman in 1947.33 However, Helwig & Leitch still manufactured products under their name, even expanding into frozen foods in 1949.34

Schluderberg-Kurdle Company
In 1952, the property was sold to Baltimore-based Schluderberg-Kurdle Company, Inc., commonly known by its trade name, Esskay.35 It was the East Coast’s largest
independent meat production firm in the mid-twentieth century.\textsuperscript{36} The company was the result of a merger between two Baltimore firms, the William Schluderberg Company, which was established as a butcher shop before the Civil War, and T. J. Kurdle’s butcher shop, established in 1880. The two companies merged in 1920, bringing together their specializations in pork packing and beef butchering. The Schluderberg-Kurdle Company’s main meat-packaging plant was established in 1920 on Baltimore Street and N. Haven St, one block away from 101 N. Haven Street.\textsuperscript{37} (See Image 4) A track of the Pennsylvania Railroad used to run immediately south of 101 N. Haven Street to the Esskay plant, delivering livestock for slaughter.\textsuperscript{38} (See image 5) The company likely used 101 N. Haven Street as a warehouse. After reaching the pinnacle of its success in the 1960s, it declined thereafter, unable to compete with other national meat-packaging companies. In 1985, the financially troubled company was sold to Smithfield Foods, Inc.\textsuperscript{39} The Esskay plant was demolished, and today the property is owned by H&S Bakery.

Recent owners
In 1986, 101 N. Haven Street was sold to 101 N. Haven St. Partnership, which owned the property until 2008, selling it to Thomas Pappagallo and Evelyn Kozlowski, who in turn sold it to 101 North Haven Street LLC, of which David Seibert is the owner.\textsuperscript{40} This entity is in the process of rehabilitating and renting the property as a mixed-use office complex with the name of King Cork & Seal Company. The owners have requested landmark designation of the property.

Contextual History

The factory building located at 101 N. Haven Street is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history. The lifeblood of this factory was its convenient location to various transportation routes. It was directly adjacent to a railroad line, originally the Union Railroad Company of Baltimore, and later the Pennsylvania Railroad, which gave this factory access to the Port of Baltimore as well as Philadelphia and other cities across the East Coast.\textsuperscript{41} Throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the factory’s proximity to Routes 7 and 40 and the development of major interstate highway systems after World War II allowed for the factory to take advantage of the ever-increasing role of trucking in product distribution.\textsuperscript{42}

The significance of this property is also due to the variety of manufacturing and uses of this building throughout the twentieth century, reflecting the changes in Baltimore’s larger industrial heritage. In the first part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the factory contributed to Baltimore’s large wood products industry, first as a fireplace mantel and wood veneer manufacturing plant and later a table manufacturing plant.\textsuperscript{43} In 1909, over 150 million feet of wood was processed in Baltimore City and County, more than the rest of the counties in Maryland combined.\textsuperscript{44} The next tenant in the building, the Raffel Company, was an innovator in paper box manufacturing, and its corrugated boxes played an important role in the shipping and packing industries in Baltimore, which achieved great industrial success in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{45}
The city of Baltimore served as the center of American canning from the 19th through the early 20th centuries, and this factory played a role in that success. From the 1930s to the early 1950s, the factory was used for food canning and packing by the Hillsboro-Queen Anne Cooperative Corp. and Helwig & Leitch, manufacturers of the Majestic food brand. The building also housed the Printer’s Finishing and Manufacturing firm, which among other things printed canning labels. The Raffel Company’s innovation in paper boxes revolutionized the packing and shipping industries and brought Baltimore great industrial success. From the 1950s to 1986, the factory was owned by the meat manufacturing firm Schludenberg-Kurdle Company, which for many years was the largest independent meat-packing company on the East Coast. These manufacturing firms employed many Baltimore men, women, and children in what was one of the city’s largest employment sectors through the 20th century. The last few decades of underutilization at Haven Street Factory and current rehabilitation and adaptive reuse is also part of the larger trend of Baltimore’s recent history of deindustrialization.

Architectural Description

The factory is a three story L-shaped brick utilitarian industrial structure, sited on the southeast corner of the lot, directly adjacent to the former railroad lines located to the east. The building was constructed in two stages barely one year apart, in 1903 and 1904. The southern wing extends the full width of the lot, with the west façade fronting on N. Haven Street. This façade has six bays, framed and divided by four simple pilasters. It features a stair stepped roofline, with decorative brick crenellation on the cornice. The rest of the building features generally evenly-spaced bays, crenellated cornices, and otherwise simple elevations. There have been some changes to the bay sizes and locations over the past century. Due to a rise in topography, the east elevation of the building adjacent to the former railroad tracks is only two stories in height. The boiler and engine rooms are located in the northeast corner of the property in an attached building. The current owners are currently rehabbing the property, and have replaced all of the windows and doors, and painted the exterior of the building, including a banner that reads “King Cork & Seal Bldg.” Photos of the building prior to the rehab show that a company banner did run around the building, though the company name is indecipherable.

There are also two single story ancillary buildings located on the northern portion of the property, which were constructed prior to 1914 as dry kilns and a lumber shed. These structures are brick, but their exteriors have been moderately altered over the years with the addition of formstone and concrete block. There is still minor architectural continuity between the lumber shed and the factory building, in that the west façades of both building have a stair stepped roofline.

The property is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places, nor does it contribute to a National Register or Baltimore City historic district.
Staff Recommendations

The property 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;

Haven Street Factory, a brick industrial building, was constructed in 1903 and 1904 for the Steiner Mantel Company in an industrial section of what was then Baltimore County. Originally used as a factory for fireplace mantels, wood veneer, and furniture, it contributed to Baltimore’s large wood products industry in the early 20th century. In the mid 20th century, the factory contributed to Baltimore’s food processing and shipping as a canning factory for several companies, a paper box factory for the Raffel Company, and later served as a warehouse for Esskay, the meat-packing company. The building’s close proximity to rail, shipping, and truck routes made this a prime location for manufacturing throughout the 20th century. Haven Street Factory’s history reflects the broad patterns in Baltimore’s manufacturing heritage.

Locator Map
Historic Maps

1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the factory when it was used by the Steiner Mantel Co. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Baltimore, MD 1914-1915, Vol. 5, 1914, Sheet 431)

1936 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the factory when it was used by A.A. Gassinger & Sons (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Baltimore, MD 1928-1936, Vol. 5, 1936, Sheet 537)

1953 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the factory when it was used by Helwig & Leitch (makers of Majestic brand) as a pickle factory (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Baltimore, MD, 1914-1953, Vol. 5, 1953, Sheet 537)
Images


Image 2 - 1939 photo of employees printing canning labels at the Printer’s Finishing and Manufacturing Company, which was located in the building in the late 1930s and early 1940s. (Photo copyright Baltimore Museum of Industry.)
Image 3 - Helwig & Leitch’s Majestic Sandwich Spread ad, date unknown. (Courtesy of Michael Chasar.)

Image 4 - Aerial View of the Esskay plant circa 1960s, with 101 N. Haven St. in the upper right corner. At that point, 101 N. Haven was owned by the Schluderberg-Kurdle Co. This photo was altered by the company to edit out properties that weren’t part of their plant — such as the block of rowhouses on the west side of N. Haven St., across from 101 N. Haven St., and the factory to the north of 101 N. Haven St. (Courtesy of Charlene Clark.)

Image 5 - This Schluderberg-Kurdle Co. stock car was manufactured for model train sets. (Ebay)
Current Photos

View from southwest, on N. Haven Street.

View from west.
View of primary façade on N. Haven Street.

View of ancillary buildings and boiler room (located behind.)

1 Stevenson A. Williams et al., trustees to Jessamine Townsend, 1891. Baltimore County Circuit Court (Land Records) Liber LMB 190, Folio 171-173
2 Jessamine Townsend and Husband to The Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County, Lease, 1905. Baltimore County Circuit Court (Land Records) Liber WPC 289, Folio 424-426; “Asks For Bill Of Sale” The Sun (1837-1987); Jan 17, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 8
3 “Factory in Ruins: Charles J. F. Steiner's Building At Highlandtown Blown Down”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jul 13, 1903; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 2
5 “Altar And Pulpit Dedicated”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jan 18, 1904; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 6
6 “... .... ...”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jul 5, 1904; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 12
8 Chas. J. F. Steiner Dies In Hospital: Member Of School Board Under “”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jun 18, 1931; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 21; “For Mutual Protection”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jun 28, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 12; “Named for Congress: Young Men's Republican Club Indorses Steiner And ...”
9 “Address Greater Baltimore”, The Sun (1837-1987); Oct 8, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 16
10 “Other 17 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Oct 26, 1905; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 9; “Asks For Bill Of Sale”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jan 17, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 8
11 “Classified Ad 11 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Feb 1, 1906; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 3
12 “Asks For Bill Of Sale”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jan 17, 1908; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 8
13 “Display Ad 11 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Feb 9, 1909; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 3; “Display Ad 14 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Dec 1, 1909; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 3
17 “Steiner Mantel Co. Incorporates”, The Sun (1837-1987); Dec 28, 1910; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 5
18 “Real Estate Transaction 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Apr 16, 1910; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 5; “New Building for W. M.: Company Has Plans To Expend Large Sun In “”, The Sun (1837-1987); May 22, 1910; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 4
19 The Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County to King Cork and Seal Company, Deed. 1910. Baltimore County Circuit Court (Land Records) Liber WPC 361, Folio 90-94
20 The Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County to August A. Gassinger, Deed. 1919. Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) Liber SCL 3307, Folio 161-162.
22 “Business Troubles: Gassinger Brothers & Company and Edward J. Snow”, The Sun (1837-1987); May 6, 1896; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 10; “Classified Ad 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Aug 12, 1916; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 9
23 Gerard P Gassinger; “Classified Ad 9 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jun 4, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 20
24 Gerard P Gassinger; “Classified Ad 5 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Apr 5, 1922; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 24
25 “Real Estate Transaction 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); May 15, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 16
27 “Baltimore City Landmark Designation Report: Raffel Building 107 W. Heath Street”
28 “Classified Ad 7 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Nov 12, 1930; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 24; “Classified Ad 36 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jul 2, 1931; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 26
29 August A. Gassinger to August A. Gassinger & Sons, Deed. 1931. Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) Liber SCL 5187, Folio 63-64; “Real Estate Transaction 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Nov 17, 1935; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 40; “Classified Ad 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); May 10, 1936; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. SS11; “Classified Ad 5 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Aug 20, 1942; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 21
31 Baltimore City Directory 1918-1919 (Baltimore, MD: R. L. Polk and Co.), 1918, p. 1041
33 “Food Concern Plant Pointed To As Typical”, The Sun (1837-1987); Jun 27, 1954; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. S8
34 “Helwig & Leitch Expands Business”
38 The Benjamin Latrobe Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, pg. 23.
39 “Business Briefly: Esskay sale OK'd”; “Display Ad 14 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Dec 1, 1909; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 3
41 Jessamine Townsend and Husband to The Steiner Mantel Company of Baltimore County, Lease, 1905. Baltimore County Circuit Court (Land Records) Liber WPC 289, Folio 424-426; “Real Estate Transaction 1 -- No Title”, The Sun (1837-1987); Apr 16, 1910; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 5; The Benjamin Latrobe Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, pg. 13.
42 The Benjamin Latrobe Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, pg. 9, 13.
45 “Baltimore City Landmark Designation Report: Raffel Building 107 W. Heath Street”
47 The Benjamin Latrobe Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, pg. 9.