

**The Commission for Historical and
Architectural Preservation**

**Landmark Designation Staff Report
March 13, 2012**



The Turnbull Building

(also known as the Howard Uniform Company Building)

311-313 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland

Property History

The building is located on the block between West Baltimore Street and Redwood Street in the Market Center, or Westside neighborhood of Baltimore. It is a contributing building to the Market Center National Register Historic District. The building was designed and owned by the Turnbull family. Lawrence Turnbull, a prominent Baltimore lawyer, real estate dealer, and literary figure, purchased this property as an investment from Ernest L. McElroy in 1905.¹ Lawrence Turnbull was the editor of the “New Eclectic” magazine and “The Southern Magazine”, among others, and published many writers, including the poet Sidney Lanier.² He was cited as being “a vital force in the professional and literary life in Baltimore”.³ The Turnbull family was part of the Baltimore elite during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The family mansion at 1530 Park Ave in Bolton Hill was host to literary salons and events. It is now incorporated into the Beethoven Apartment Building. Lawrence’s wife, Francese was the author of several novels, and was the founder and president of the Women’s Literary Club of Baltimore. Lawrence and Francese established the Percy Turnbull Memorial Lectureship of Poetry at Johns Hopkins University in honor of their son who died in childhood.⁴ Their four surviving children were very prominent in their chosen fields. Edwin Litchfield Turnbull was a real estate broker, composer, conductor, and the founder of the Johns Hopkins University Orchestra. Bayard Turnbull was an architect and French scholar. Their daughter Grace Turnbull was a famed artist and sculptor, and daughter Eleanor was a translator.

When Lawrence Turnbull purchased the property for \$35,000 in 1905, it was already improved with 2 three-story structures that had survived the Great Fire the year prior.⁵ He demolished the buildings in order to construct this fireproof warehouse. The property fronts on both West Baltimore and German (now Redwood) Street, and has entrances on both streets. The front elevation of the building facing West Baltimore Street is five stories tall; the rear elevation on West Redwood is six stories tall. The difference in height is due to the steep grade.⁶

The building was designed by Lawrence Turnbull’s son, Bayard.⁷ Bayard Turnbull was a prominent Baltimore-area architect. He designed a house in Guilford for his sister, the artist Grace Turnbull, which is a Baltimore City Landmark. The Shingle-style home that he designed for himself in Towson is listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.⁸

In 1906, the plans for the warehouse were announced in the Baltimore Sun: “[I]t will be 33 feet by 174 feet. The entire structure, except for the front piers and side curtain walls will be of reinforced concrete. Both the Baltimore and German street fronts will be of brown brick, terra-cotta and copper work. The building will have electric elevators, steam heat and electric lights, and will be completed by September 1.”⁹ This fireproof building comprised of a first floor retail/office and five story warehouse above was completed in 1906 by Hopkins, Barnett & Co. for a cost of \$54,000.¹⁰

The property was passed down through the Turnbull family. Upon Lawrence’s death in 1919, the property passed to his wife, Francese. When she died in 1927, the property was

jointly owned by their four children. In 1945, following the death of Edwin Turnbull, sisters Grace and Eleanor and brother Bayard Turnbull, sold the property. The Safe Deposit and Trust Company was the Turnbull siblings' trustee, selling the property to William Abrams of A for \$52,500.¹¹

William Abrams owned the property until 1974, when he sold it to Howard Pumpian, Marian P. and Jacob I. Krampf. Howard Pumpian was the owner of the Howard Uniform Company, which had been located in that building for two decades at that point. Pumpian and the Krampfs owned the property for nine years, until Pumpian's death in 1983. The Krampfs sold the building and the Howard Uniform Company to Rajan A. and Seema Shamdasani. The Shamdasani's owned the property under two other company names as well – 321 Investments, Inc. and Howard Uniform Company. The property was sold in 2006 to 311 W. Baltimore Street, LLC, which sold the property in 2011 to 311 West Baltimore Street, LLC.

The building is known as the Howard Uniform Company Building after the most recent tenant, which moved out of the building in the 1980s. The building also has been called the Turnbull Building, in a *Sun* article in 1925,¹² which seems more appropriate, given that the Turnbull family designed and owned the structure.

Tenants

When the building first opened, it was home to Stern & Rothstein, and Thanouser & Weiller, both clothing manufacturing firms. In the 1910s, it was also home to the Greenebaum-Shapiro Dress Company from 1913-1917.

Stern & Rothstein, manufacturers of the “Lord Baltimore” brand of young men's and children's clothing, occupied 18,000 square feet in the building from 1907 until 1913.¹³ Their offices were located at 311 W. Baltimore. After dissolving their partnership in 1913, the company became H.W. Rothstein & Co.¹⁴ and remained in the building until 1918.¹⁵

Thanouser & Weiller, another clothing manufacturing firm, owned by Sidney P. Thanouser and Charles I. Weiller, rented space in the building from 1909-1916. They established their firm in 1906, and specialized in shirts, overalls, and children's play suits. In an advertisement in the 1910 book, *The Jews of Baltimore*, the firm advertised a workforce between seventy-five and one hundred employees.¹⁶ Thanouser and Weiller were Jewish, and their faith was made explicit in a 1911 classified ad calling for workers in their factory. Benefits of working for the firm included physical comforts, such as lights and fans, but one unique benefit listed was “Holidays on Saturdays” which was emphasized with larger font.¹⁷ This is the only ad that explicitly states Saturday - the Jewish Sabbath - as a day off, indicating that the company was marketing itself to Jewish workers. Prior to unionization, “days off” in a factory were very rare. This indicates the devoutness of Thanouser & Weiller, sacrificing an entire day of production (and profit) each week. Sidney Thanouser was also on the Board of School Commissioners for Baltimore City.¹⁸

Makover, Roten & Co., another manufacturing firm, was located in the building from 1922-1923. On July 18, 1922, workers at the company were part of a 4,000 worker strike against men's clothing manufacturers. After a one day strike, ten manufacturers including Makover, Roten & Co. registered and signed agreements with the union Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, agreeing to union scale wages and union-approved working conditions.¹⁹ Bernard Makover later served on the Baltimore Regional Labor Relations Board.²⁰ He also was a Director of the Commercial and Farmer's National Bank of Baltimore, and was involved with the Federated Jewish Charities.²¹

While there is no description of the working conditions or pay rates of the workers, garment factory work was laborious and dangerous. Only a decade prior, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire occurred in New York City. There were documented fires at this and other buildings on West Baltimore Street. The machines, the building's heating system, even the elevators were potential dangers. (A clerk for the Cardean Knitware Company was fatally struck by a descending elevator in 1944.) The factory was inherently dangerous, and the working conditions could make it even more so. The workers in this and other factories in Baltimore - men, women, children, American-born and immigrants - joined unions and organized strikes to receive the pay and the working conditions that they sought.

In the 1930s, the building was rented to several companies, including Rosenthal & Myers in 1932, furniture stores in 1934 and 1936, and Harry L. Mills, a prominent auctioneer, for use as his auction house in 1937. The largest companies that settled into the building during the 1930s were the Berne Hat Company, Sammer Pants Company, and Cardean Knitwear.

In 1938, the ground floor was rented to Cardean Knitwear Company.²² Cardean Knitwear was a national brand of knitwear, swimwear and sportswear that was sold on the East Coast.²³ Cardean Knitwear ended their lease in 1945. Sammer Pants Company occupied the 3rd floor of 311 West Baltimore from 1939 – 1952.

The fourth floor of 313 W. Baltimore St. was leased to the Berne Hat Company in 1937.²⁴ The Berne Hat Company produced hats, including straw hats,²⁵ which were a staple of the Baltimore millinery industry. Berne Hat Company, noted as “one of the most successful in the East”²⁶ was closed in 1955 due to labor struggles. A labor strike began at the company in August 1955, after the owner fired six workers for attempting to organize a union. After a few months of the four-month-long strike, owner Irving Bernen threatened to shut the company down if the strikes continued. In December 1955, he followed through on his threat, closing the company rather than meeting the demands of his striking workers.²⁷ The 130 former employees opened up a new company one block away under the name “Baltimore Hat Company” with the help of a union loan.²⁸

Starting in the 1940s, there is a perceivable shift in industry of Baltimore that can be seen at the level of this warehouse. Garment manufacturing was waning. While the tenants were still largely manufacturing firms, such as the Berne Hat Company and the Schwartz Manufacturing Company, who leased space in the building from 1943 – 1948; the building began attracting other tenants, such as the Baltimore Luggage Company from

1943 – 1944. Starting by 1951, a Wholesale Radio Parts company had moved in, and stayed until 1967. A dry cleaners was located in the building in 1969.

The most recent tenant of 313 West Baltimore Street is the Howard Uniform Company, a clothing manufacturer. The business started by 1943 and moved to this location in 1951, where it remained for over 30 years. Following the death of owner Jerome Pumpian in 1982, the business was sold and moved to another location in 1984. The company made a variety of uniforms, but was best-known for its production of Baltimore City and Maryland State Police uniforms.²⁹ The company still exists in Baltimore City.

Architectural Description

This early 20th century commercial building with Neoclassical architectural elements is five stories on its north façade (West Baltimore St), and six stories on its south elevation. The West Baltimore Street façade features three bays. The first floor is faced with terra cotta molded to look like cut stone. On the first floor, doorways are located in the left and right bays, and the middle bay is comprised of a large picture window. Above the window is a large decorative terra cotta volute decoration with the address of the building. Each doorway features a pediment heavily decorated with dentil and egg-and-dart molding. Above the pediment is a large transom window. Both the door and the transom window feature decorative patera and fluting molding and other decorative molding on the surrounds. Between the first and the second floors is a terra cotta belt course, the bottom of which has egg-and-dart molding.

The top four floors of the building are faced with brown brick. The three bays are framed by brickwork, but the bays themselves consist of 1/1 windows and metalwork. The left and right bays of each floor hold one window, and the central bay features three windows. There is metal grillwork between each floor in the window bays, and in the central bay, the grillwork features a central decorative floral medallion. Between the windows in the central bay are metal fluted columns.

The fifth floor windows are all topped with a segmental arch; the arches in the right and left bays have a terra cotta keystone. Located above the central window is a carved human face in place of the keystone. This face may depict Lawrence Turnbull, styled in a Greco-Roman fashion.³⁰ In between each of the bays are decorative terra cotta brackets that extend down from the cornice. The cornice features decorative dentils and egg-and-dart molding.

The Redwood St. elevation is less decorative. Six stories tall, the first two floors have a rusticated terra cotta block finish. There is a central entrance on the first floor, evenly flanked by two window openings. The second floor features three window openings, one in each bay. A large metal panel separates the first-floor central entrance from the window above. The rest of the elevation is the same as the Baltimore St. façade, except that this elevation features metal fire escapes accessible from the central bays of each floor. The elevation also lacks the human face on the Baltimore St. façade.

Significance

This building is representative of the majority of the garment factories in Baltimore – smaller warehouses that were rented to multiple firms. The clothing industry was the primary manufacturing activity in Baltimore during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; Baltimore was second largest clothing manufacturer in the country.³¹ This factory was located in the heart of the garment manufacturing district, which was located close to Camden Station and the harbor. This location took advantage of the proximity to both the railroad and ships that would bring raw materials and distribute the manufacturing company's products to the region or nation. Items produced by the companies in this building were also sold in the various shops just around the corner on Howard St. – the city's major commercial street. A few of the firms in this building produced national and regional brands.

The building is also significant for its association with the Turnbull family, and prominent business owners of manufacturing firms. The building was designed by local architect Bayard Turnbull for his father Lawrence Turnbull as an investment property. Lawrence was a prominent attorney, publisher and literary figure in Baltimore. The owners of many of the businesses and companies once located in this building were leaders in civic and religious organizations.

Staff Recommendations:

The Turnbull 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 Turnbull Building was a factory and warehouse that housed many firms involved in manufacturing – including national and local garment manufacturing firms, a hatmaker, and others. This building is representative of the majority of the garment factories in Baltimore – smaller warehouses that were rented to multiple firms. It also played a role in local labor movements in the early-to-mid-twentieth century.

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

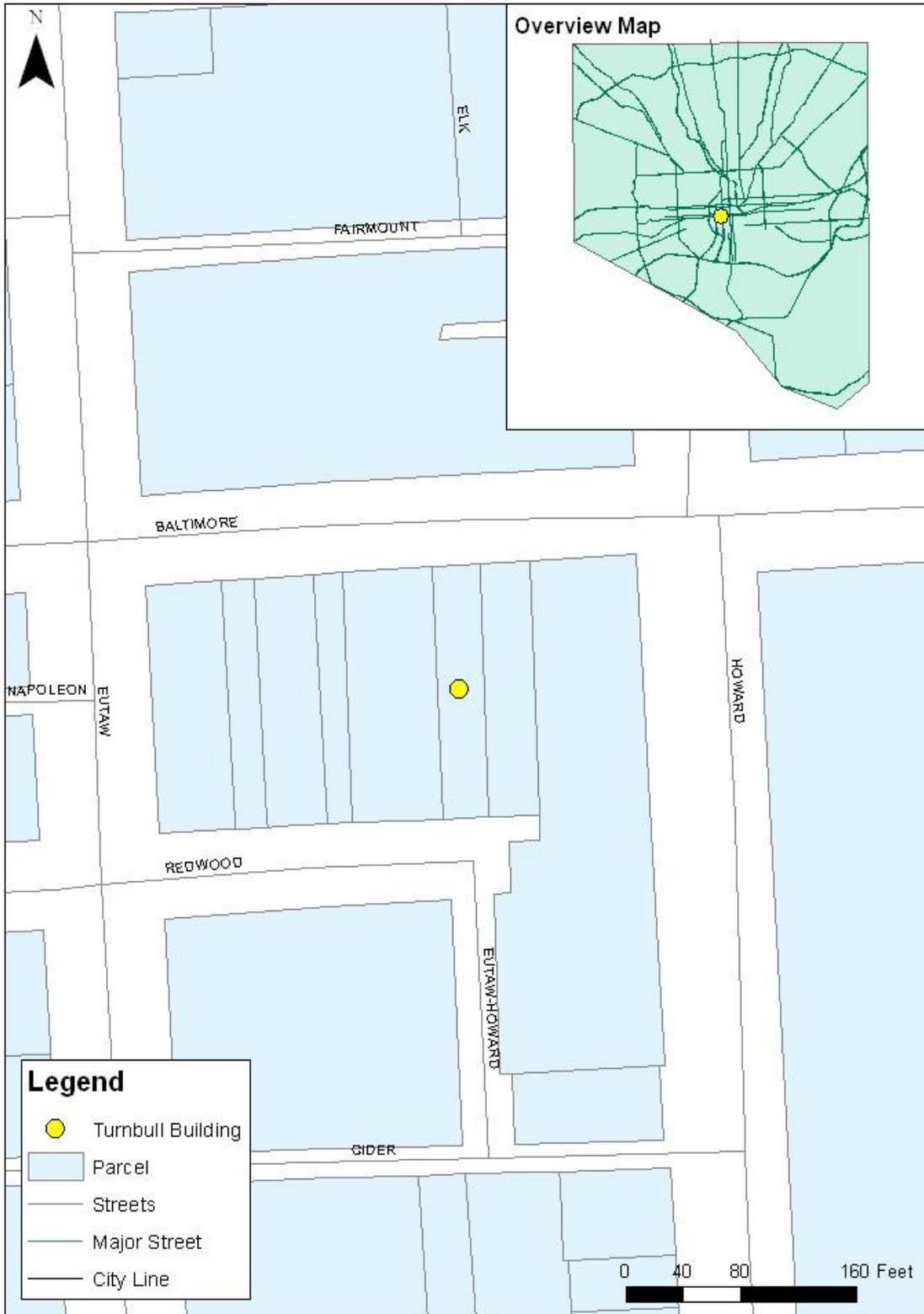
The building was designed by Bayard Turnbull, Baltimore architect, for his father, Lawrence Turnbull, who was a significant figure in literary circles both in Baltimore and nationally. It is one of several designed by Bayard Turnbull – one of which, the Grace Turnbull House, is listed as a Baltimore City Landmark. In addition, many of the owners of the firms

that rented this building were leaders in civic and religious organizations in Baltimore.

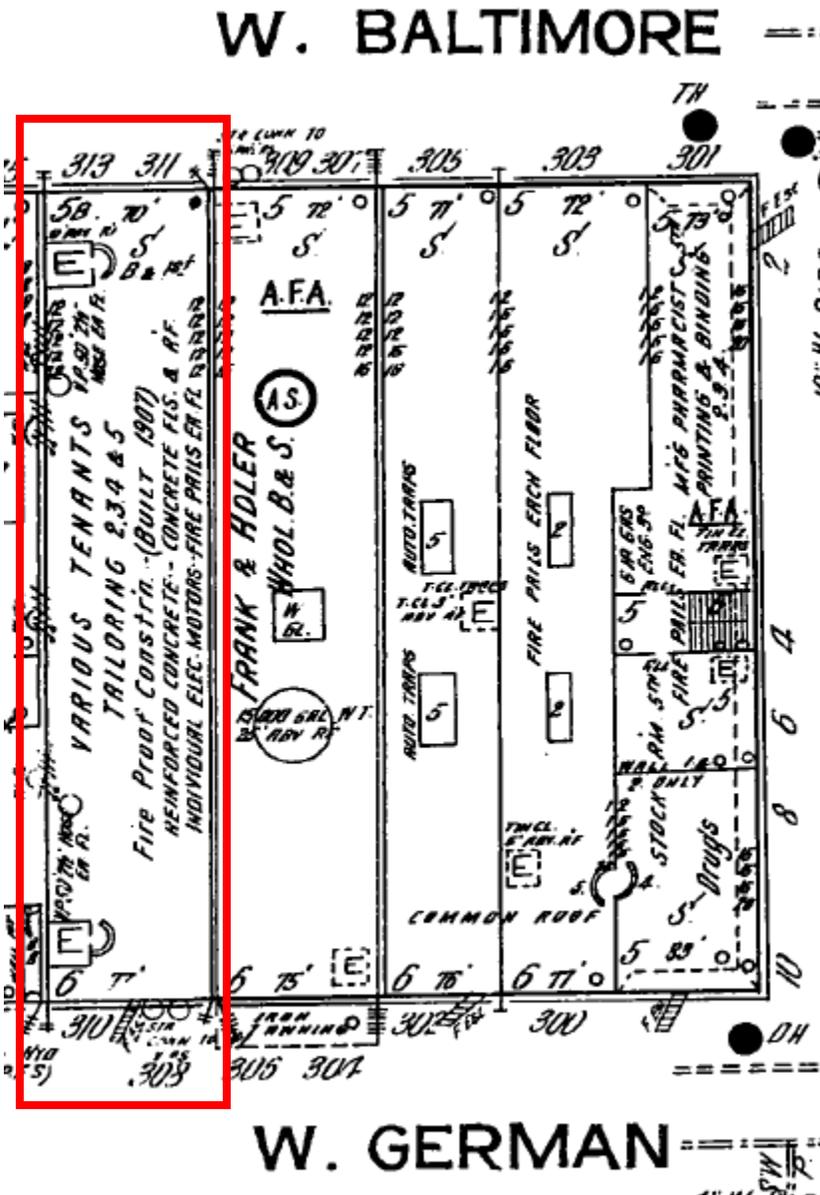
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The structure is a fine example of an early 20th century commercial warehouse building. Constructed two years after the Baltimore Fire, the building boasted all of the modern technologies available at the time; while its exterior is reminiscent of Greco-Roman grandeur with ornate Neoclassical embellishments that exhibit the pride that the Turnbulls took in this building. The building is also graced with a sculpted face that is likely intended to represent Lawrence Turnbull.

Locator Map

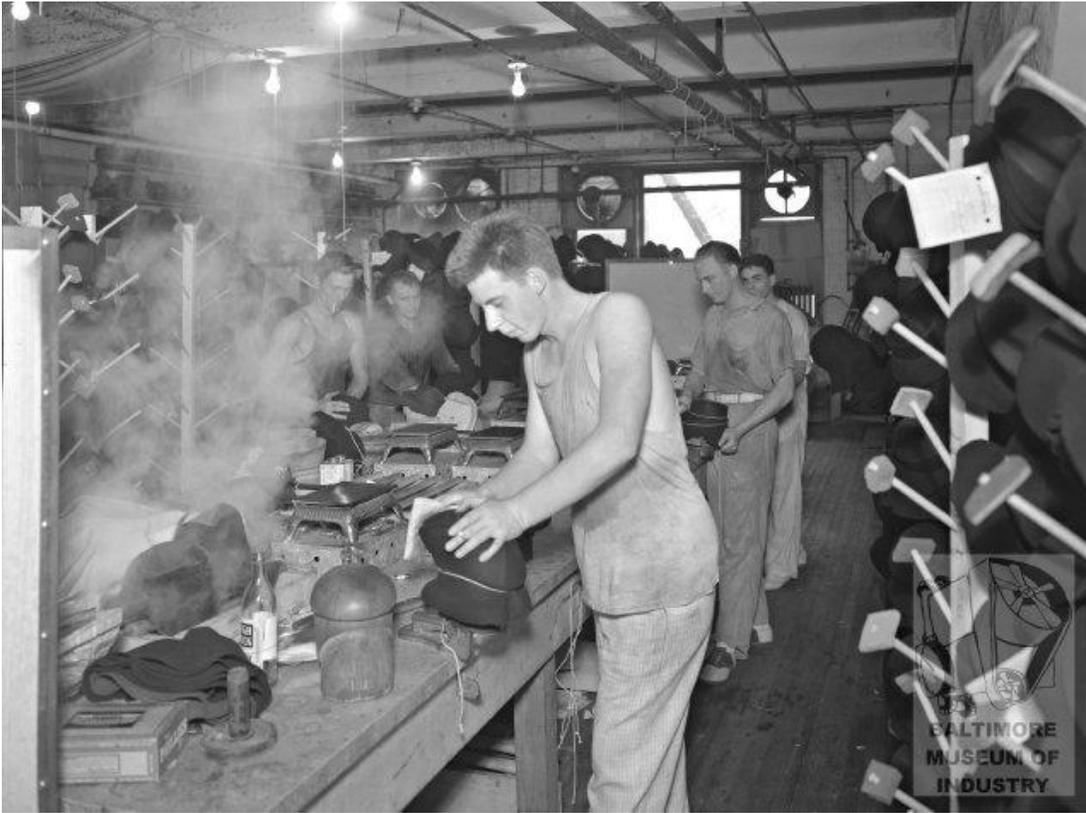


Sanborn Map



1914 Sanborn Map, depicting the building. (Baltimore Sanborn Map, 1914-1915, Vol. 1, 1914, Sheet 3)

Historic Images



“Interior view showing workers making hats at the Berne Hat Company located on West Baltimore Street”, (BGE.12594, 1939, BG&E Print and Negative Collection, Baltimore Museum of Industry, copyrighted)

Current Photos



The W. Baltimore St. façade of the building is located just to the left of the parking deck; the entire length of the building is visible.



The upper floors of the W. Baltimore Street façade.



The human face gracing the keystone above the central 5th floor window may depict Lawrence Turnbull in a Greco-Roman style.



The façade of the building on the streetscape; facing west on W. Baltimore Street.



The decorative volute with the building's address.



The Redwood Street façade, facing north.

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- ¹ “Grace Turnbull, Sculptor, Crusader, dies”, *Baltimore Sun*, December 29, 1976, C1; “Buys Three Pratt St. Lots”, *Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1905, 9; Deed. Ernest L. McElroy to Lawrence Turnbull, March 31, 1905, Baltimore City Land Records, Liber RO 2148, Folio 395.
- ² Grace Turnbull, *Paintings and Sculptures*, (Grace Turnbull, 1959), 9.
- ³ “Editorial”, *Baltimore Sun*, May 11, 1919, in The Francese Litchfield Turnbull Collection, 1840-1947, MS1101, Maryland Historical Society.
- ⁴ Meekins, Lynn R. “Men of Mark in Maryland Volume II” (Baltimore: B.F. Johnson Inc., 1910), 56. Accessible in Googlebooks.
- ⁵ “Buys Three Pratt St. Lots”, *Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1905, 9
- ⁶ “To Build on Baltimore Street”, *Baltimore Sun*, February 17, 1906, 9
- ⁷ “To Build Warehouse”, *Baltimore Sun*, April 10, 1906, 9
- ⁸ Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, BA-1764.
- ⁹ “Hopkins Barnett Company Secures Contract for Warehouse on Baltimore St. For Lawrence Turnbull”, *Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 1906, 9
- ¹⁰ “Hopkins Barnett Company Secures Contract for Warehouse on Baltimore St. For Lawrence Turnbull”, *Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 1906, 9; “Mr. Turnbull Will Erect Warehouse”, *Baltimore Sun*, May 9, 1906, 9
- ¹¹ “Real Estate, Building News”, *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1945, 22.
- ¹² “Experts to Check on Assessments”, *Baltimore Sun*, August 20, 1925, 3
- ¹³ *Men’s Wear Vol. 27*, No. 11, Oct 9, 1907, 89. Accessible in Googlebooks.
- ¹⁴ “Classified Ad 12 – No title,” *Baltimore Sun*, September 18, 1913, 10.
- ¹⁵ *Merchants and Manufacturers Association*, Vol. 11, January 1918, p. 65; *Ibid.* April 1918, 61. Accessible in Googlebooks.
- ¹⁶ Harry Blum, *The Jews of Baltimore*, (Baltimore: Historical Review Publishing Co., 1910), 362.
- ¹⁷ “Classified Ad – No Title”, *Baltimore Sun*, Aug. 10, 1911, 3.
- ¹⁸ “School Men Confirmed”, *Baltimore Sun*, September 19, 1911, 14
- ¹⁹ “Clothing Workers Start Strike Here”, *Baltimore Sun*, July 19, 1922, 22.
- ²⁰ “Regional Labor Board Increased”, *Baltimore Sun*, Nov. 11, 1934, 3
- ²¹ “Display Ad 6 – No Title”, *Baltimore Sun*, January 16, 1905, 1 ; “The Help the Helpless”, *Baltimore Sun*, Jan 21, 1907, 14.
- ²² “Real Estate Deals and Building News”, *Baltimore Sun*, January 6, 1938, 19
- ²³ “Classified Ads”, *Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, April 7, 1947, 19; Ad for Manning’s Clothing and Footwear Store, *Gastonia Gazette*, November 16, 1948, 7
- ²⁴ “Real Estate Deals and Building News”, *Baltimore Sun*, November 28, 1937, S17
- ²⁵ “Display Ad 55 – No Title”, *Baltimore Sun*, February 14, 1939, 14.
- ²⁶ “Union-Back Plant Opens”, *Baltimore Sun*, December 20, 1955, 23.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ “J. Pumpian, Uniform Manufacturer, dies”, *Baltimore Sun*, January 4, 1982, C2
- ³⁰ Based upon images of Lawrence Turnbull located in the Francese Litchfield Turnbull Collection, MS 1101, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society.
- ³¹ National Register of Historic Places, Loft Historic District North, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Maryland, B-4045, Section 8, 5.