

B-3729

## Ridgely's Delight Historic District

### **Architectural Survey File**

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site ([mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

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***Last Updated: 07-05-2011***

MHT EASEMENTS WITHIN THE RIDGELY'S DELIGHT HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. 636 South Paca Street (EASEMENT TERM EXPIRED)  
Baltimore City

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Ridgely's Delight Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Russell Streets

Bounded by West Pratt, South Fremont, Conway and

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

Third

STATE

Maryland

CODE

024

COUNTY

Baltimore City

CODE

510

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☐ PRIVATE

☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ MUSEUM

☒ COMMERCIAL

☐ PARK

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ MILITARY

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Various Private Owners and  
Norman F. Finnance

See Continuation Sheet #9.

STREET & NUMBER

621 Washington Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21230

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse: Real Estate Department

STREET & NUMBER

Calvert and Fayette Streets

Maryland

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore,

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

4

PAGE

1

PROPERTY OWNERS LIST

Harry W. Lerner  
3016 Fallstaff Road  
Apt. D.  
Baltimore, Maryland 21209

H. Square, Inc.  
600 Rockford Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

William Trenner  
1212 Mt. Royal Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21

Alvin D. Alsenberg  
1001 Hollins Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21223

Sandra McDevitt  
405 Harwood Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21228

Jean Ferguson  
355 N. Calvert  
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Rudolph C. Turner  
1436 Bronco Road  
Boulder City, NV 89005

Lorence Stebbings  
654 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

George W. Kane  
625 Portland Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Abraham Lockett  
3810 Barrington Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Napoleon Alexander  
1114 Sterrett Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Levi Barnes  
2736 Lauretta Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21

Allen J. Dove  
614 Warner Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Robert Hayden  
771 W. Cross Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

C. Edward Hoerichs  
1815 Frederick Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21

Anthony J. Jordan  
616 Warner Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Mace Cohen  
212 W. Greene Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Linda Moore  
643 Portland Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Renaissance Properties, Inc.  
c/o Peter G. Wyman  
349 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Marie Ermine  
666 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

Melvin Fine  
2200 Wilkens Ave.  
Baltimore, Maryland 21

Melvin L. Knight  
655 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

Brian T. Dale  
668 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

Leo M. Karpeles  
647 Portland Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Charles P. Moran, Jr.  
470 Willard Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20015

Linton V. Stanson  
674 Washington Boulevard  
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Milton Kaplan  
424 Equitable Building  
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N.B.S.  
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676 Washington Boulevard  
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Evelyn Reiness  
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Charles Kuning  
707 Dover Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
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Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 2

## PROPERTY OWNERS LIST (continued)

|                                                                                     |                                                                        |                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sallie Kravetz<br>7099 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                          | Vytautas Makauskas<br>737 W. Pratt Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21201 | William Johnson<br>211 Penn Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland               |
| Russell McCloud<br>711 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                          | Samuel Latham<br>633 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland               | Mildred A. Nesbitt<br>213 Penn Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland            |
| Dover St. Properties<br>349 N. Calvert Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21202          | Elmer Battle<br>651 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                | Gordon Stiek<br>236 Dolphin Lane<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21217           |
| Albert Williams<br>718 Portland Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                       | Goldie Lawrence<br>655 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland             | Levi Barnes<br>633 Portland Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21230         |
| C. E. Stevenson<br>720 Portland Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                       | Robert Max<br>8202 Pumpkin Seed Ct.<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21208       | Scott Smith<br>632 Portland Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21230         |
| United Decorative Flower<br>Co., Inc.<br>701 W. Pratt Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland | Carolyn Turner<br>2911 Dupont Avenue<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21215      | Earl T. Henson<br>624 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland               |
| John J. Wychulis<br>1818 N. Charles Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21201             | Anna E. Martin<br>2203 Tucker Lane<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21207        | Hattie M. & Rufus Sturdivent<br>628 Dover Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland |
| S.H. Landsman & Sons, Inc.<br>P. O. Box 1801<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21203           | John Grimmer<br>308 Penn Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                 | Moore-Matthews Co.<br>P. O. Box 62<br>Phoenix, Maryland 21131           |
| Rebecca Landry<br>2502 Willow Glen Dr.<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21209                 | Sarah Dobbins<br>206 Penn Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland                | C & T Property<br>349 N. Calvert Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21202    |
| Hyman Bender<br>3122 F. Parkington Ave.<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21215                | Gertrude Collins<br>73 S. Marley Street<br>Baltimore, Maryland 21229   | Herbert Lebow<br>3403 W. Strathmore Avenue<br>Baltimore, Maryland       |

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 3

PROPERTY OWNERS (continued)

Hallmark Financial Services, Inc.  
100 E. North Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland

Mabel H. Beverly  
419 W. 28th Street  
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Ethel Adams  
205 Penn Street  
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Gross Enterprise  
647 W. Pratt  
Baltimore, Maryland

Ramax Realty Co., Inc.  
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Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Snyder Equipment Company  
655 W. Pratt Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Metta J. Allen, etal  
538 Lake Drive  
Waldorf, Maryland 20601

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Freda Cook  
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Baltimore, Maryland 21225

Manzy Fulmore  
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Baltimore, Maryland

Margaret Reise  
715 Portland Street  
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Charles M. Hyman  
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Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Viola Chandler  
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Ervin Realty  
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Rosie C. Barrett  
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

4

PAGE 4

PROPERTY OWNERS (continued)

Charles E. Horne  
604 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

Sylvia Krieger  
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Geneva Smith  
657 Portland Street  
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Robert M. Hiebel  
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Baltimore, Maryland

Raymond Smith  
659 Portland Street  
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William Sorrell  
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SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 5

PROPERTY OWNERS (continued)

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Baltimore Office Supply  
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Romell Green  
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Phillip Campbell  
604 S. Paca Street  
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Levi Atkinson  
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Baltimore, Maryland

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 6

PROPERTY OWNERS (continued)

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Baltimore, Maryland

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Baltimore, Maryland

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Mary A. Werner  
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Baltimore, Maryland

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Baltimore, Maryland 21218

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714 Portland Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Harold O. Fletcher  
636 S. Paca Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Hilda Travers  
716 Portland Street  
Baltimore, Maryland

Julia Merriam  
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Baltimore, Maryland

The Honorable William Donald Schaefer  
Mayor and City Council  
City Hall  
100 North Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Frank D. Dibattista  
651 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

Evelyn Reiness  
209 S. Fremont Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland

Melvin L. Knight  
655 Washington Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland

George Riley  
227 S. Fremont Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland

Charles G. Whiteford, Jr.  
206 Penn Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Herman F. Jennings  
229 S. Fremont Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland

# DESCRIPTION

B-3729

| CONDITION                                |                                                  | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE                                         |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED               |                                             |                                                   |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ridgely's Delight Historic District is a wedge-shaped area roughly bounded by Fremont Avenue on the west, Conway Street on the south, Russell and Green Streets on the east and Pratt Street on the north. The specific district boundaries have been drawn to exclude the modern power station on the northeast corner, which occupies the entire block bounded by Pratt Street on the north, Emory Street on the west, Portland Street on the south and Green Street on the east.

The historic district represents a surviving fragment of a larger neighborhood which has been constricted by modern development. The construction of Russell Street in the 1930's eradicated a broad swath on the eastern side of the neighborhood. Recent demolition of entire blocks on both sides of Fremont Avenue and the south side of Conway Street (in anticipation of the proposed City Boulevard) has artificially separated Ridgely's Delight from similar types of neighborhoods to the west. The expansion of the University of Maryland complex has extended to the north side of Pratt Street and forms a distinct boundary there.

However, within these artificially created boundaries exists a cohesive neighborhood, which by virtue of the "human" scale of its buildings and the irregular streets with their self-contained, intimate vistas, still possesses its original 19th century character.

To call the scale of Ridgely's Delight "human" implies an intimacy between structures and people and a consistency in the elements of the streetscape. The strength of the human scale is the primary asset of Ridgely's Delight and most readily distinguishes the neighborhood from its environs. There are no buildings in the district that are truly overwhelming. Both residential and commercial properties co-exist in harmony.

The major threat to scale is the heavy traffic which regularly uses Russell Street and Fremont Avenue. Similarly, traffic on Washington Boulevard is disruptive at times.

The street pattern is an essential ingredient of the visual character of the district. Only the northernmost blocks follow strictly the North-South grid used in the bulk of the City. Washington Boulevard, which predates the district, runs southwest from the northeast corner of the district, and determines the remainder of the plat. Streets and alleys which join the boulevard are generally perpendicular to it. South Fremont similarly predates most development, and with Washington Boulevard is responsible for the shapes of the several triangular blocks in the midsection of the district. The visual result is a number of closed vistas along streets and alleys contributing significantly to the scale of the area. This design also provides the block interiors with picturesque spaces rarely

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Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

equalled in the standard grid blocks. The intersection of Penn Street and Melvin Drive is a prime example of this; its southeast corner has recently been made into an interior park. The "Y" of alleys in the block west of Emory Street is a similar feature, but in poor condition. There are some local plans to close one of its legs for a vest-pocket park.

A landscape feature which belongs to the street pattern proper is the "walking alley" which runs between (and parallel to) Portland Street and Melvin Drive from Emory to Penn. The alley provides a quiet linear green space with views into the backyards of small houses on either side again reinforcing human scale and unusual for Baltimore.

A final outstanding feature of this urban landscape is the large number of set-back houses with ample front yards. In some cases these houses predate the intensive development of the area, and are explicable in that way; in other cases they are explained by whim. In all cases they are a welcome relief from the severity of strict at-easement facades, and their random location provides a variety and texture lacking where one extreme is the rule.

Typically, a building in Ridgely's Delight is a brick row-house<sup>1</sup>, one family residence of two or three bays, and two, two and one half or three stories, built at the property line. The roof is either flat with cornice or gabled with one dormer. Sally-ports at sidewalk level or below are common, generally placed between two houses.

The typical houses of Ridgely's Delight may be described in two ways, by size and relative elegance, or by period and style. In general, the earlier houses are the smaller, and were occupied by a less affluent class of people than the larger and later houses. In many cases, the latter were modified to conform in size and style to the former. This is most recognizable when a three-story house with contiguous smaller houses shares sill and lintel lines.

The first houses to be built were the two-bay, two-story late Federal houses. Their proportions were nearly square for facades and fenestration, windows 6/6. The roof was gabled with fairly steep pitch

1

#645 Melvin Drive is a frame building on a brick basement, at the end of a row which was once entirely frame (1879) and is now brick.

See continuation sheet #8.

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DATE ENTERED

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 8

while the ridge was parallel to the street, with a single central dormer. Where details occur, as on the gable of the dormer, they are either late Federal or early Greek Revival. Entrances were normally at the side of the house opposite the chimney side, alternating with neighboring buildings, so that the street had a rhythm of paired doors alternating with coupled chimneys. The very earliest of these were built with entrances at street level (713 Pratt). Of those that remain, the rule is a first floor above a small basement (524-532 Paca). Occasional three bay facades occur (604 Washington Boulevard). Common bond is the rule.

The next phase of the development is a continuous and gradual transition from the houses described above, to the elaborate Italianate rowhouses of the 1860's and 70's. The Federal townhouse first had the slope of its gable lessened (633-645 Melvin). The height of the facade increased to two and one half stories,<sup>2</sup> and the proportions of fenestration changed accordingly (626-632 Paca), i.e., they became taller. Often first story openings were round arched. The half story windows began as very low, flat, rectangles, and gradually increased to nearly square, but still distinguishable as only half a story-(624 Paca). Shortly after the addition of this story, the dormers began to disappear and by the time the third story arrived, were gone completely (649-653 Washington Boulevard). From this point the jump to the Italianate house was rapid. The gable roof is replaced by a corniced flat roof. The first cornices were reti- of brick headers laid with alternating depressions or in courses of in- creasing offset from the plane of the facade. Wooden bracketed cornices and metal cornices of true Greek detail were the next phase (607 Paca, 637-39 Paca). In the wooden versions, jogsaw cutouts in the barge- between the brackets (for ventilating the roof spaces) became popular during the 1870's (615 Washington Boulevard). Three-bay houses became more common than two-bay houses. The fenestration of these later houses was always of very tall proportions, and generally 2/2, but the details varied widely. Brick or metal eyebrows or hoods became popular over segmental arched windows and doors and the actual windows proportions sometimes became radically attenuated (674 S. Paca). Stained glass appeared in transom-lights over doors and windows (although little is left in Ridgeley's Delight, e.g. 663 Portland).

Brickwork remained common bond, although the bricks themselves became flatter. In a few rare and late houses, elaborate variations of brick- work were found (e.g., 601 S. Paca). The Italianate houses stand on the

2

604, 608, (probably 610 [formstone]) 620 and 622 Washington Boulevard are two-story, two-bay gable and dormer (604 is three-bay) with flemish bond faces.

See continuation sheet #0

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Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 9

major streets. Minor streets and alleys contain mostly the smaller Federal houses.

This is a district of row-buildings. There are no free-standing structures (except for the gas station). Some of the set back houses have one side wall free. A nearly universal feature of all types of row-houses is 'back buildings'. In the earliest cases they were once free-standing summer kitchens and utility buildings which became connected to the houses by subsequent intervening structures (643 Washington Boulevard). Later in the 19th Century they were built contiguous to the house proper. Narrower than the house itself, they often had promenade porches on one side, usually facing that of a neighbor (626 and 628 Washington Boulevard).

There are several structures in Ridgely's Delight which do not fall into the categories of typical houses. These include the larger light-industrial structures in the northwest corner along Pratt Street where style and materials harmonize with the neighborhood and which furthermore act as a buffer to heavy traffic.

Several other structures also differ from the norm or are of particular interest; they include:

337-339 South Fremont Avenue is a remarkable late Victorian brick adaptation of an Italian Palazzo for commercial use. The brickwork and detail are extremely fine; the facade composition is of a quality rarely exceeded in west Baltimore, sophisticated and in scale with the neighborhood. The second and third floors were used as the ever popular and ambiguous "halls," the first floor commercial or light industry.

401 South Fremont is an evolutionary end point of Victorian commercial architecture. Continuous horizontal banding of several individual brick courses give a 'moderne' look to the segmental arch windows, overhanging bay window and metal cornice that are Victorian holdovers in an Edwardian building.

612, 614 and 616 Washington Boulevard are one building which continues north through the block to Portland Street and has been industrial commercial since the late 1870's. The Washington Boulevard facade appears to have been originally three separate houses and has a cast iron shop front across the entire first story.

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B-3729

DATE ENTERED

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 10

684 Washington Boulevard was once a set-back three-story structure (the only one on the north side of the block) to which a tiny temple front bank was added at the easement line in the 1930's, a doric one-story structure with wings and a pediment with outsize acroteria.

600 Washington Boulevard (circa 1910) makes the most strident appeal to high style in the area. The Georgian Revival commercial building has such details as dressed stone quoins, carved cartouches in the arches of the first floor windows, and a roof with pedimented wall dormers which are unique to the area. The irregular plan, which is a response to the wedge-shaped corner lot, is perfectly consistent with the continuous fabric of the neighborhood. The flair of the design serves as an appropriate entrance to the neighborhood.

655 West Pratt Street is notable for its true mansard roof with dormer, the only one in Ridgely's Delight. The Second Empire style was never popular in Baltimore; hence, such a structure is a rarity. The building, dating from the 1870's is a three-bay, three-story house with brick segmental arch eyebrow windows, now converted to commercial use.

641 Washington Boulevard is a four-story commercial building which fills its entire lot. The property is of conventional residential width and over one hundred feet long. The early 20th century commercial style building is remarkable for its size and proportions.

635, 637, 639, 641, 643, and 645 Washington Boulevard and 609, 611 and 634 Paca Street are notable as set-back houses with postage stamp front yards.

Behind 635 Washington Boulevard is a series of garages built before 1925 by Dr. Merriam, which are reputed to have been the first speculative rental garages in Baltimore.

There is only one genuine intrusion in Ridgely's Delight, the gas station at the southeast corner of Russell Street and Washington Boulevard, occupying 1/2 acre or 2% of the district. It stands on the site of an extremely fine Federal house.

The homesteading activity in Ridgely's Delight began in 1974, and to this date, May 25, 1978, 28 houses have been awarded. Baltimore City is in the process of acquiring 41 additional houses for homesteading here.

Restoration is also being accomplished by several major private developers; their properties total more than 150. Private individual restoration is rapidly increasing.

## SIGNIFICANCE

B-3729

| PERIOD                                        | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |                                                 |                                                 |                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| PREHISTORIC                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION                       |
| 1400-1499                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE                        |
| 1500-1599                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE                      |
| 1600-1699                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| 1700-1799                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                 |
| 1900-                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)                |
|                                               |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |                                                 |                                                         |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ridgely's Delight Historic District represents a substantial and well preserved fragment of the large neighborhoods which developed during Baltimore's first period of expansion in the early 19th century. It is furthermore exemplary of the manner in which Baltimore neighborhoods have risen and developed, both socially and architecturally, and covers a span of time equal to any within the city's history of expansion beyond its original incorporated boundaries. The District's residential structures range from the two or two and a half story late Federal houses representing the first phase of row house development in Baltimore, to the more substantial three-story corniced Italianate versions built for the middle and upper classes toward the end of the 19th century. Frequently the latter type represents a modernization of the former. With few exceptions, the street pattern adheres to that surveyed and recorded by Thomas Poppleton in his plan of 1823. The majority of the development occurred between 1830 and 1870, following a rather cohesive pattern that reflects Ridgely's Delight conception as an urban neighborhood and which was fueled by the bordering industrial development as well as the establishment of the University of Maryland medical facilities.

During its heyday in the latter half of the 19th century, Ridgely's Delight was a prosperous middle class neighborhood; however, within recent decades the area has undergone gradual deterioration. It has become a low-rent, lower class neighborhood and its buildings have suffered from lack of maintenance as well as abandonment. Through this decay and modern development on the fringes, the larger original neighborhood has been greatly constricted. However, within the remaining area, the historic fabric has been protected from modernization, the street pattern left intact, and neighborhood integrity maintained making this isolated neighborhood an even greater phenomenon in light of its surroundings.

Today a rebirth for this historic neighborhood in Southwest Baltimore seems to be dawning. A rising number of houses are being rehabilitated as middle class housing, and selected properties are being developed through the City's Urban Homesteading Program.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,  
CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 11

The Ridgely's Delight neighborhood is the namesake of one of the early agricultural estates, that of Charles Ridgely, which occupied the open land outside of the City's original boundaries. As one of the earliest graphic records of Baltimore shows,<sup>1</sup> at the turn of the 19th century the southwest portion of land consisted primarily of the estates of Ridgely and Judge McHenry, among others, as well as a collection of smaller houses located on the established roads. The rectangular street grid of Baltimore proper had been established as far west as Green Street and beyond this the major thoroughfares were Cove Street (later Fremont Avenue), which ran from the open country in the northwest southeasterly to the Patapsco River, and Alexandria or Columbia Pike (Washington Boulevard) which ran westerly and served as the main artery to Washington.

The Thomas Poppleton survey which was coordinated with the plan to expand Baltimore's boundaries, was made in 1816 and published in 1823. In his survey, he continued the street grid beyond Green Street. However, the new streets and lots were aligned with the existing cove and Columbia roads rather than following the regular street patterns to the east. The streets as delineated on the 1823 map form the basic pattern found today. While in 1823 the area was primarily open land, at least two houses on Poppleton's map remain extant (637 Washington Boulevard and 713 West Pratt Street).

A large portion of the development of Ridgely's Delight occurred between 1816 and 1875 with particular intensity during the 1840's and 50's. There was sufficient population by 1842 to warrant the construction of the Columbia Avenue Methodist Church (655 Washington Boulevard). The 1869 Sachse illustration of Baltimore shows development to have been complete and closely resembles the neighborhood as it exists today.

This mid-century development can be largely attributed to the establishment of the University of Maryland medical facilities (slightly to the north) in 1812 and its subsequent expansion and to the appearance of heavy industry and its consequent creation of numerous jobs. Such industries included the B & O Railroad Yards (1830), Winans Locomotive Works (circa 1840), and the Hayward and Bartlett Company (1851), all located on Pratt Street to the west of Fremont Avenue.

Parallel to this development a small industrial quarter appeared in the northwest portion of Ridgely's Delight beginning with an early 19th century iron foundry at Portland and Fremont Streets and expanding into an area with a wide range of productions including a flour mill, a paint and oil factory and a silver beating manufactory. Within the neighbor-

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 12

hood were several craftsmen who supported these industries, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, and other metal workers. Other artisans and small merchants such as cobblers, coal and wood dealers, slaughterers, grocers, bakers and hostlers had their residences and shops throughout the area. A number of first floor storefronts appear in the western end of Washington Boulevard. Other light industry was scattered throughout the area.

Ridgely's Delight stabilized during the later 19th century. Paca Street, Washington Boulevard and portions of Fremont Avenue became the sites of larger middle class homes; three-bay, three-story houses with flat roofs and elaborate cornices which were often expansions and elaborations of the earlier and more modest gable-roofed houses. Simultaneously back streets and block interiors were filled with more modest housing for craftsmen and service persons, often alongside light industry.

The street pattern was changed slightly by the continuation of Penn Street south of Melvin Drive. Later during the Roosevelt Administration, Greene Street was extended south of Portland to become the northern extension of Russell Street, connecting downtown Baltimore with the new Baltimore Washington Parkway. This development relieved Washington Boulevard of Washington bound traffic, and at the same time eradicated a large section of the neighborhood, thus creating its definite eastern edge. The neighborhood began to deteriorate from this point, and was further isolated by demolition along Fremont and Conway in anticipation of another highway project.

In 1974 Ridgely's Delight was designated a homestead district, differing from other homestead districts in Baltimore in that properties available for the program are scattered throughout an occupied area, rather than being an entire vacant quarter. The program has been successful, and shows every sign of continuing so. There has been private restoration and even speculative restoration on a large scale.

The architecture of Ridgely's Delight is unified in two ways, stylistically and physically. The physical relationship consists in the fact that it is almost entirely contiguous and intact. There are no free-standing buildings in Ridgely's Delight, (although occasionally a house will have one freestanding wall), and it is significant that except for those houses which predated the Poppleton Plan, even the earliest structures seem to have been designed with that intent in mind, i.e., all houses were meant to be part of a row, whether they were built simultaneously with contiguous neighbors or not. Clearly, Ridgely's Delight

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 13

was conceived as an urban neighborhood, and its development is one of intensification of the patterns established at its outset, yielding only slightly to increases in wealth and stylistic trends.

The stylistic relationships of the area are unified by a fifty year time span, centered roughly in 1845, which defines the period of most intensive development. As in the rest of Baltimore, styles in Ridgely's Delight tend to reflect later dates than in the rest of the major eastern cities, owing to the reluctance of Baltimore builders to relinquish a style to which they had become accustomed. This conservatism provides Ridgely's Delight with a sequence of Late Federal rowhouses which date from the early 1830's into the 1850's. The characteristics of this span are distinct at both ends: the earliest are two-bay, two-story houses with steep gable roofs and central dormers; the latest are two or three bays wide, on basements, two and one half stories in height, with shallow gable roofs and central dormers.

By the time that this latter development had arrived, the second phase of house had already begun to spring up, a three-story, two-bay house with a flat roof. As the century progressed, these houses became larger and more elaborate, by the 1870's becoming full blown Italiante houses with intricate cornices. In some cases it can be demonstrated that an Italiante house is an enlargement and 'modernization' of a Federal house (637 Melvin Drive).

Having evolved as an urban neighborhood from its conception, Ridgely's Delight is both a highly unified yet diverse collection of mid-19th century structures sandwiched between industry and other intrusions which continues to exist as a cohesive urban fragment in search of revitalization and rebirth.

1  
Warner & Hanna -- "The Incorporated City of Baltimore As It Looked In 1801", (Peabody Institute facsimile, 1947, Baltimore, Maryland).

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B-3729

See Continuation Sheet #14.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 24 acres

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |   |         |    |    |    |          |   |    |   |      |    |         |    |    |   |          |    |    |    |
|---|------|---|---------|----|----|----|----------|---|----|---|------|----|---------|----|----|---|----------|----|----|----|
| A | 18   | 3 | 59      | 6  | 10 | 43 | 40       | 5 | 80 | B | 18   | 35 | 9       | 96 | 10 | 4 | 3        | 49 | 47 | 10 |
|   | ZONE |   | EASTING |    |    |    | NORTHING |   |    |   | ZONE |    | EASTING |    |    |   | NORTHING |    |    |    |
| C | 18   | 3 | 5       | 99 | 60 | 43 | 49       | 8 | 90 | D | 18   | 35 | 9       | 80 | 10 | 4 | 3        | 49 | 1  | 0  |
|   | ZONE |   | EASTING |    |    |    | NORTHING |   |    |   | ZONE |    | EASTING |    |    |   | NORTHING |    |    |    |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Pratt Street and South Fremont Avenue; proceed easterly along the south curb of W. Pratt St. to its intersection with the west curb of Emory St.; thence southerly along the west curb of Emory St., following its line to its intersection with the south curb of Portland St.; thence easterly along said curb of portland st. to its intersection with the west curb of

See Continuation Sheet #15.  
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

|       |      |        |      |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, John Hnedak, Janet Kennelly, Steven Levy

ORGANIZATION Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

Interstate Division for Baltimore City/

September 3, 1976

STREET &amp; NUMBER

TELEPHONE

2225 N. Charles Street

396-6133

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Baltimore,

Maryland 21218

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☐STATE ☐LOCAL ☒

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*M. H. H.*

2-6-80

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Ridgely's Delight Historic District are determined by strong visual and physical barriers that make this district a distinct and well-defined entity. These barriers are on the east of Russel Street, a multilaned roadway with mixed commercial and industrial areas beyond; on the south and west by Conway Street and Freemont Avenue which are areas that are being redeveloped for parkland on the south and a highway to the west; and on the north by Pratt Street and Portland Street with the University of Maryland complex beyond. Although the district includes a few pockets of vacant land created by recent demolition, the district's boundaries are drawn to include the highest incidence of historic and cultural fabric while excluding the non-contributing areas such as along Pratt Street east of Emory Street and to utilize such lines of convenience as existing curblines which are emphasized by the above mentioned visual and physical barriers. The eastern and southern boundaries are further defined by a brick wall that was erected in part as a sound barrier along the highway.

The photographs and map submitted as documentation in this application do fairly accurately represent the present appearance of the Ridgely's Delight Historic District. Although limited rehabilitation work has taken place in selected areas, no more demolition has occurred since the photographs were taken and the map drawn.

The Ridgely's Delight Historic District contains approximately 395 structures.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 14

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Interviews with:

Melvin Knight, etc.  
Mrs. Merriam  
Ms. Carol Moore

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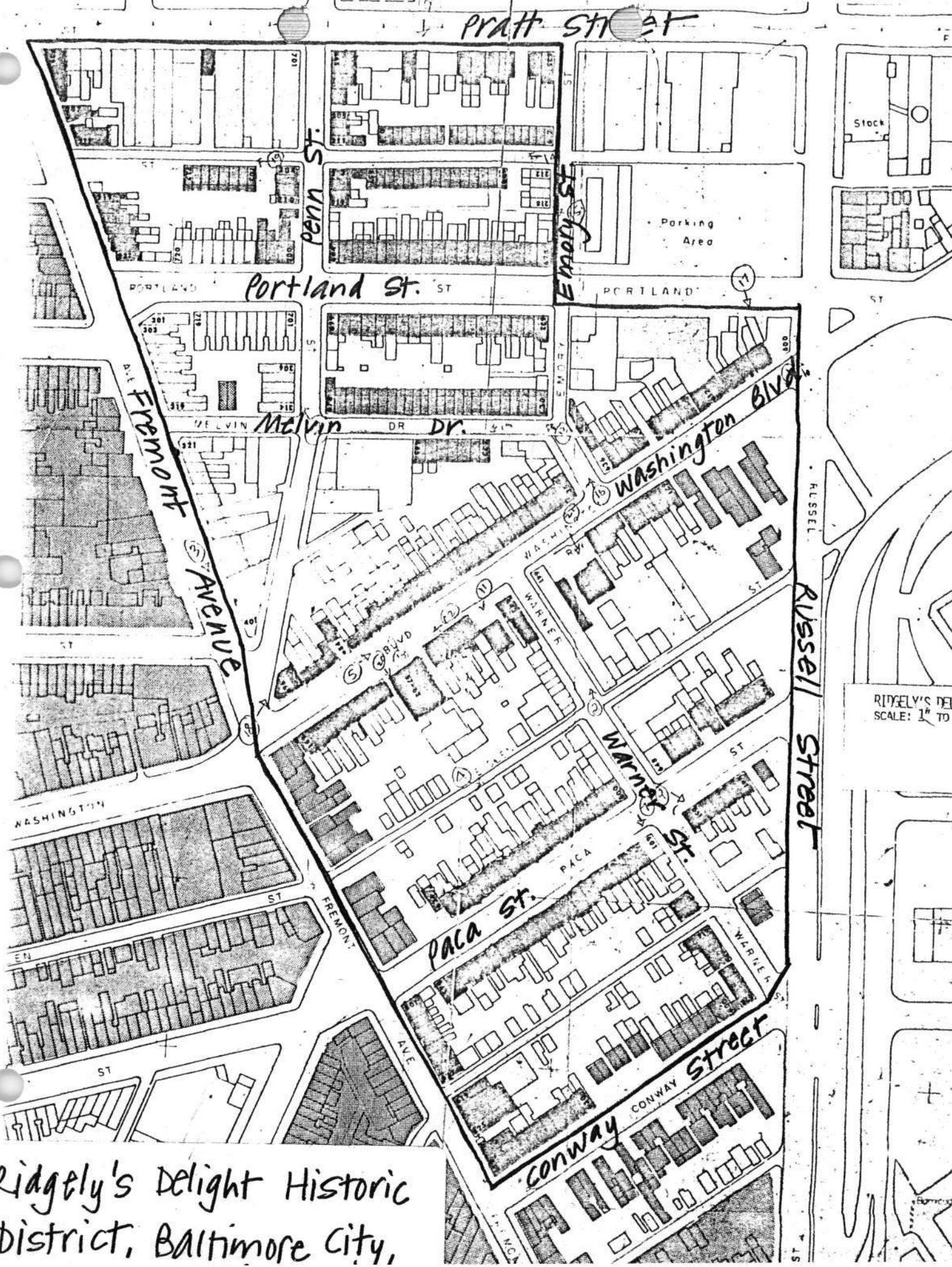
Ridgely's Delight Historic District  
Baltimore City,

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 15

Russell St.; thence southerly along said curb of Russell St. to its intersection with the north curb of west Conway St.; thence southerly along the north curb of W. Conway St. to its intersection with the east curb of S. Fremont Ave.; thence northerly along said curb to the point of origin. This boundary encloses the historic properties of Ridgely's Delight while excluding the intrusive neighboring properties.



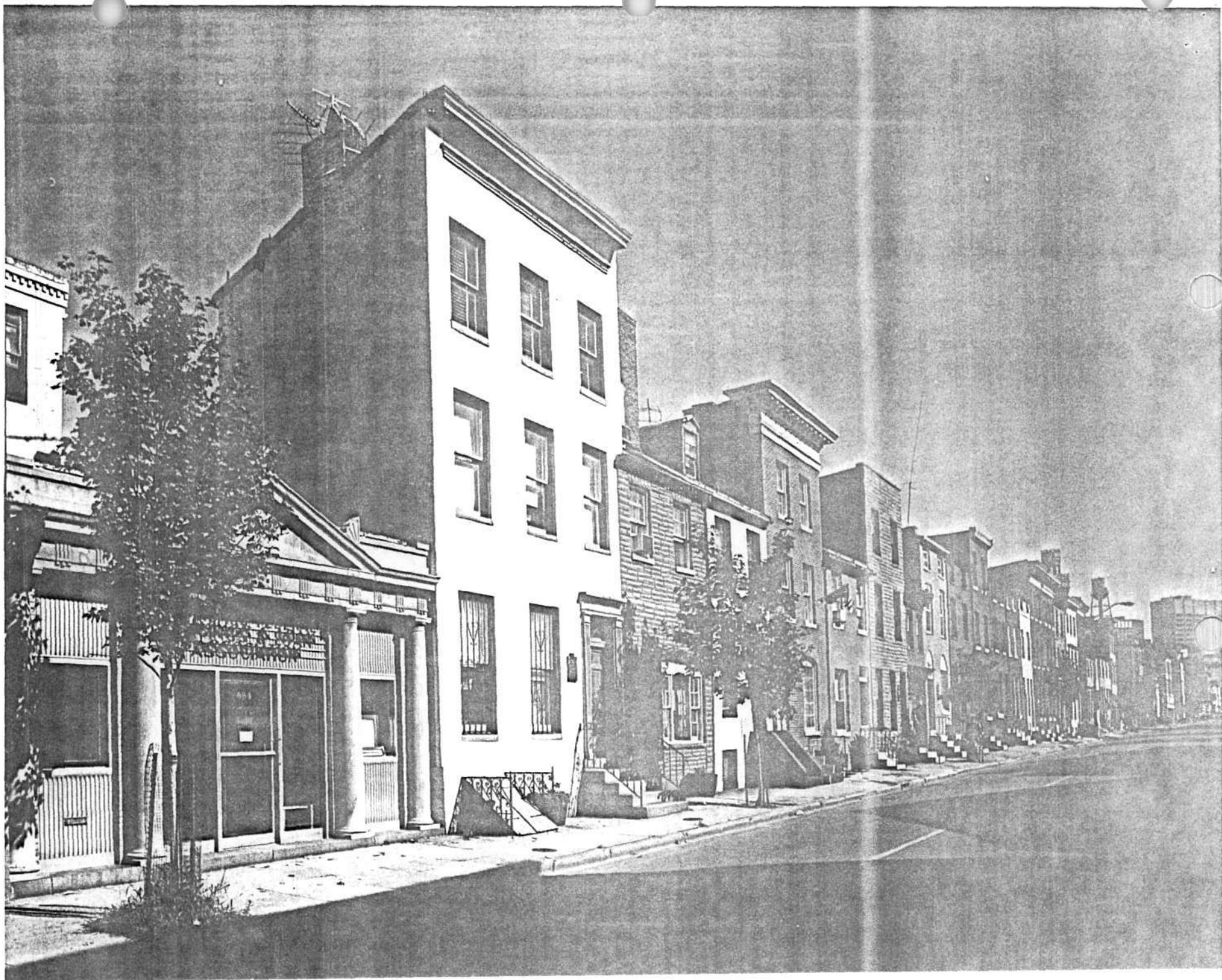
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District, Baltimore City,



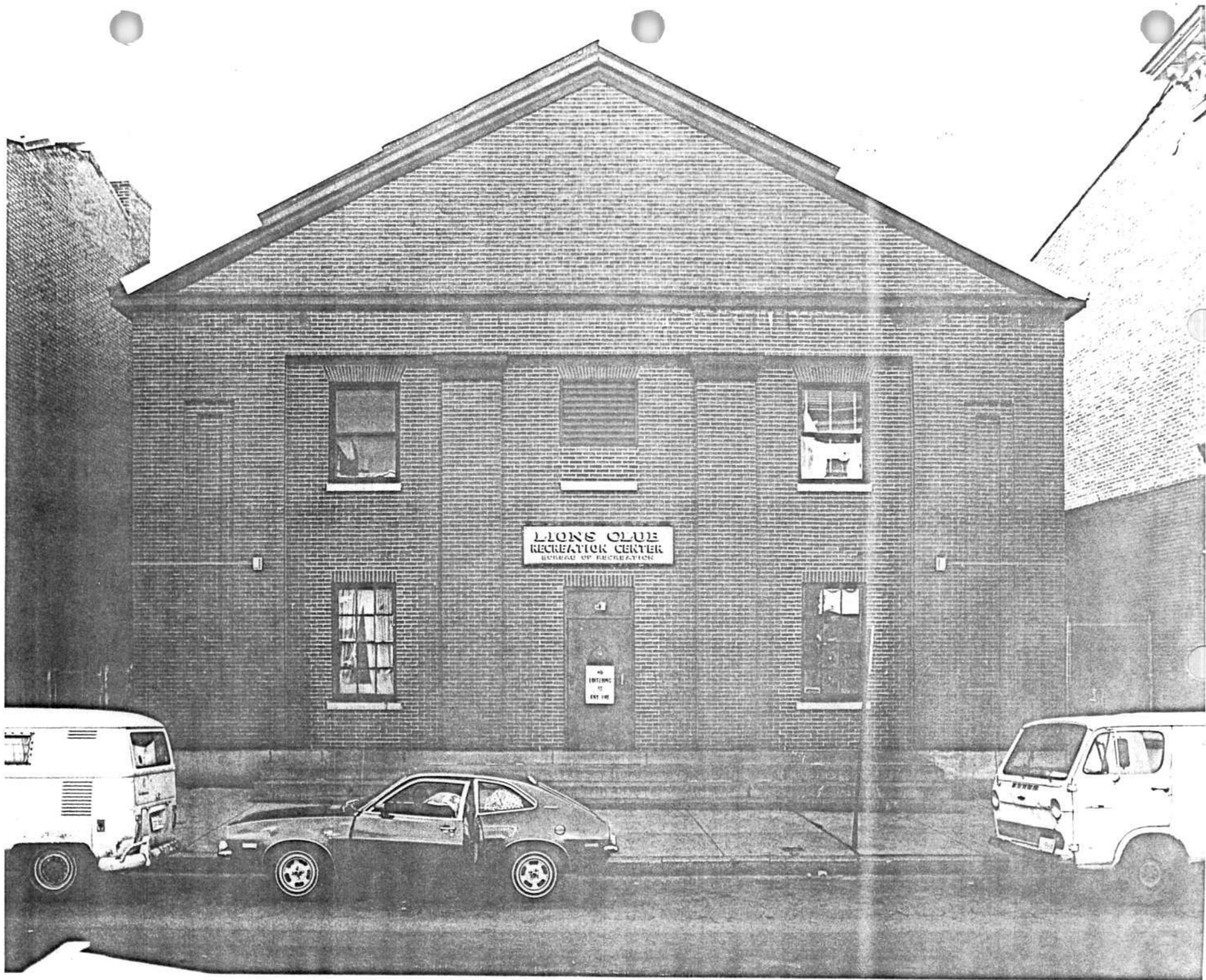
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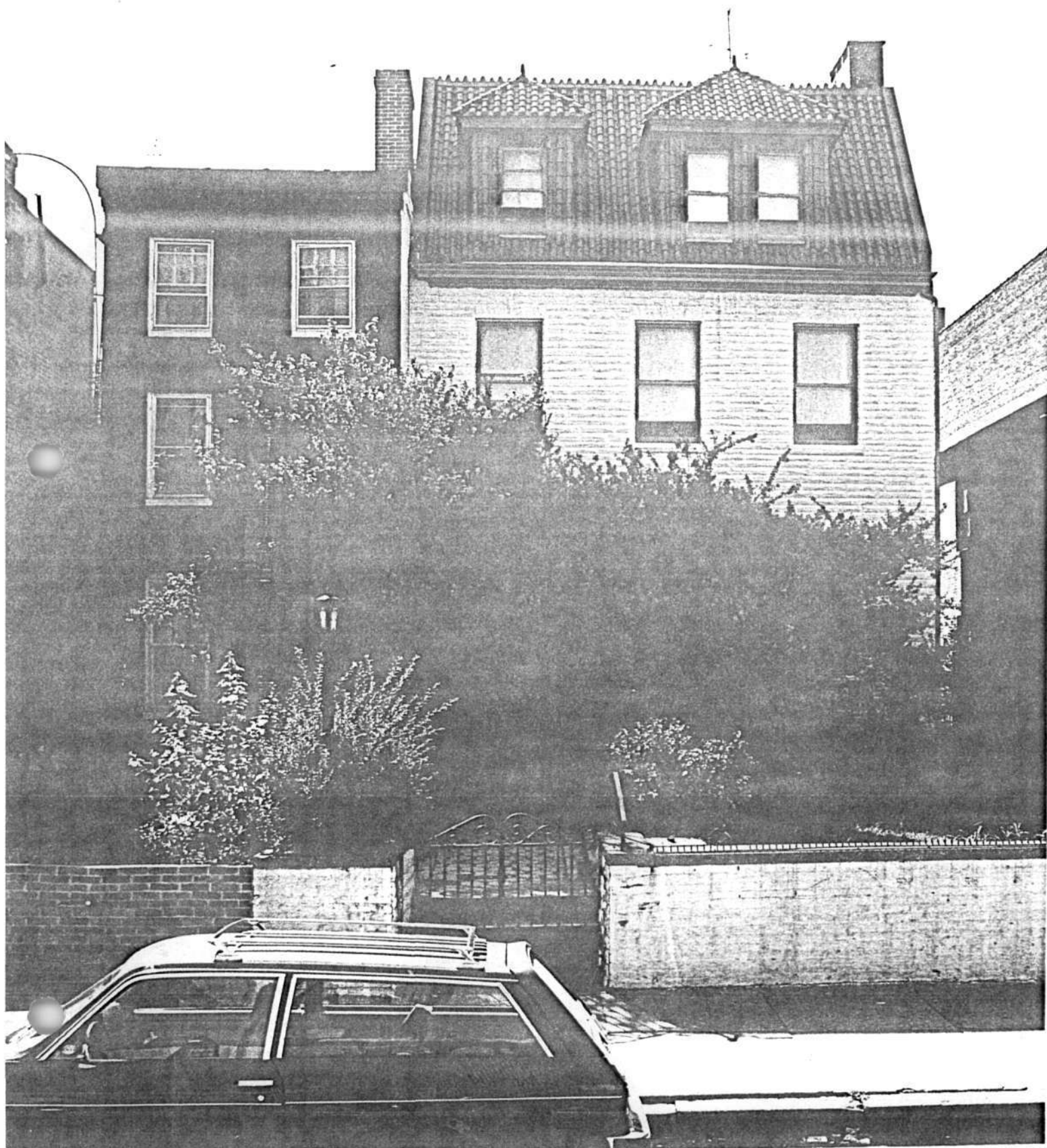


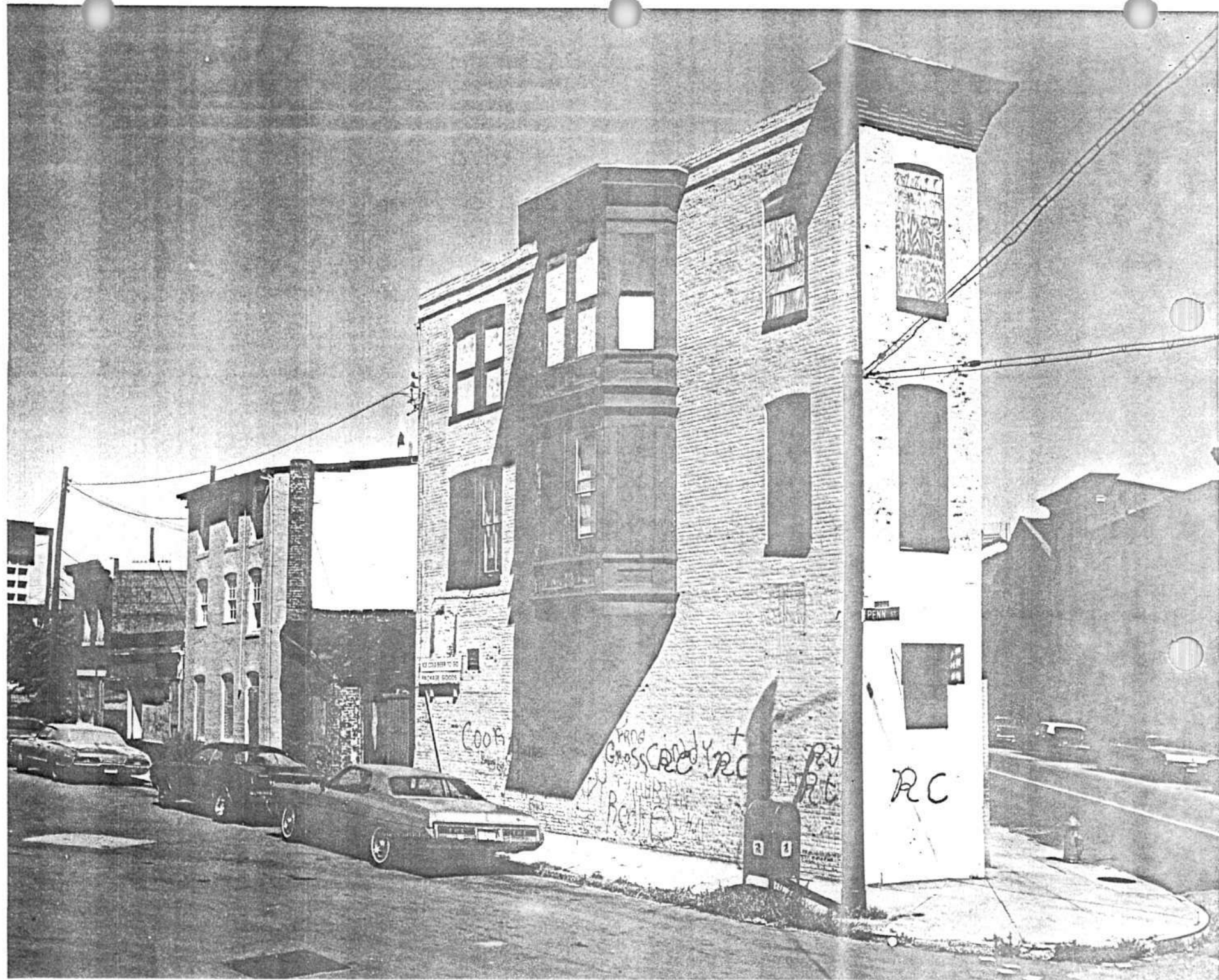
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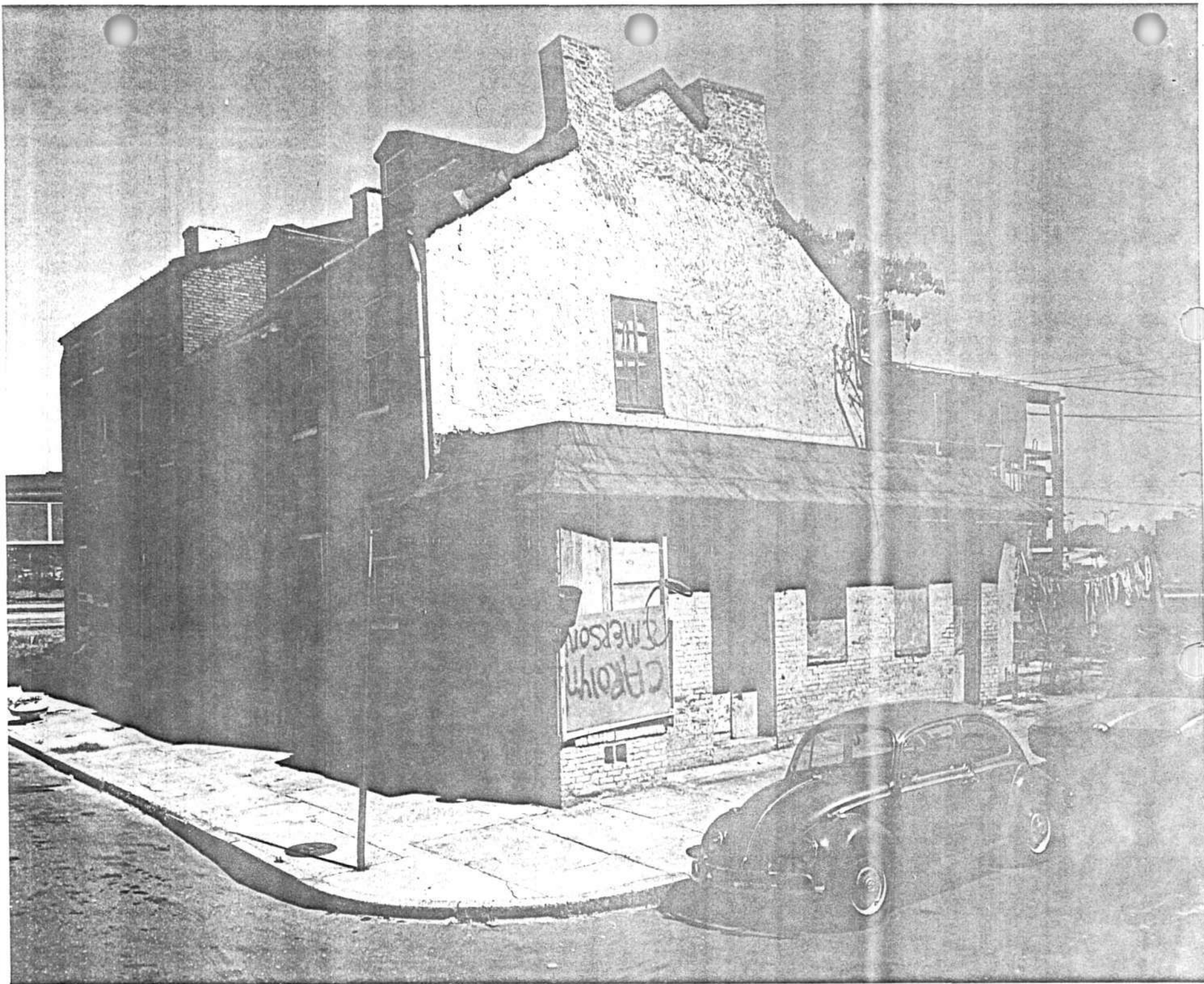
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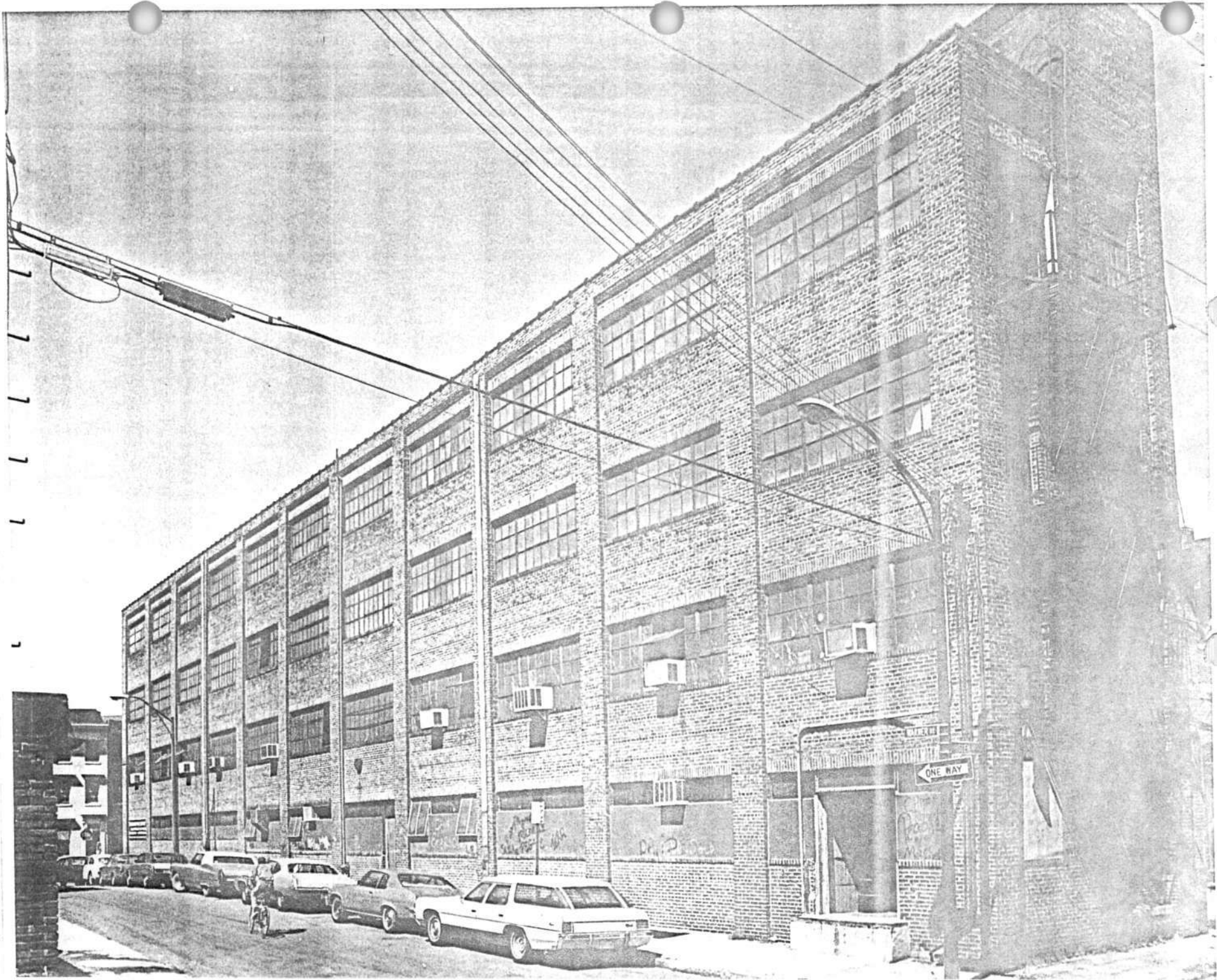


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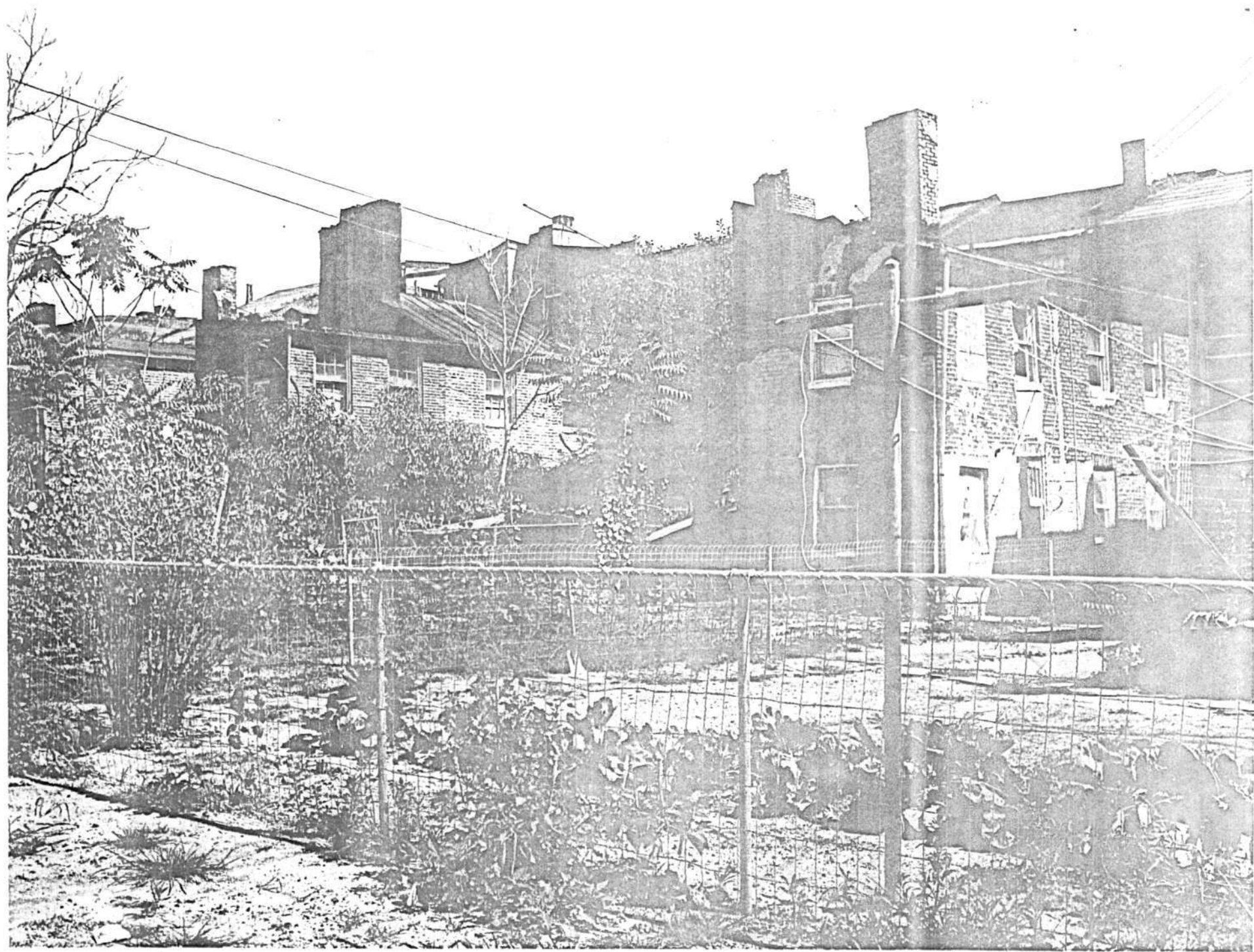




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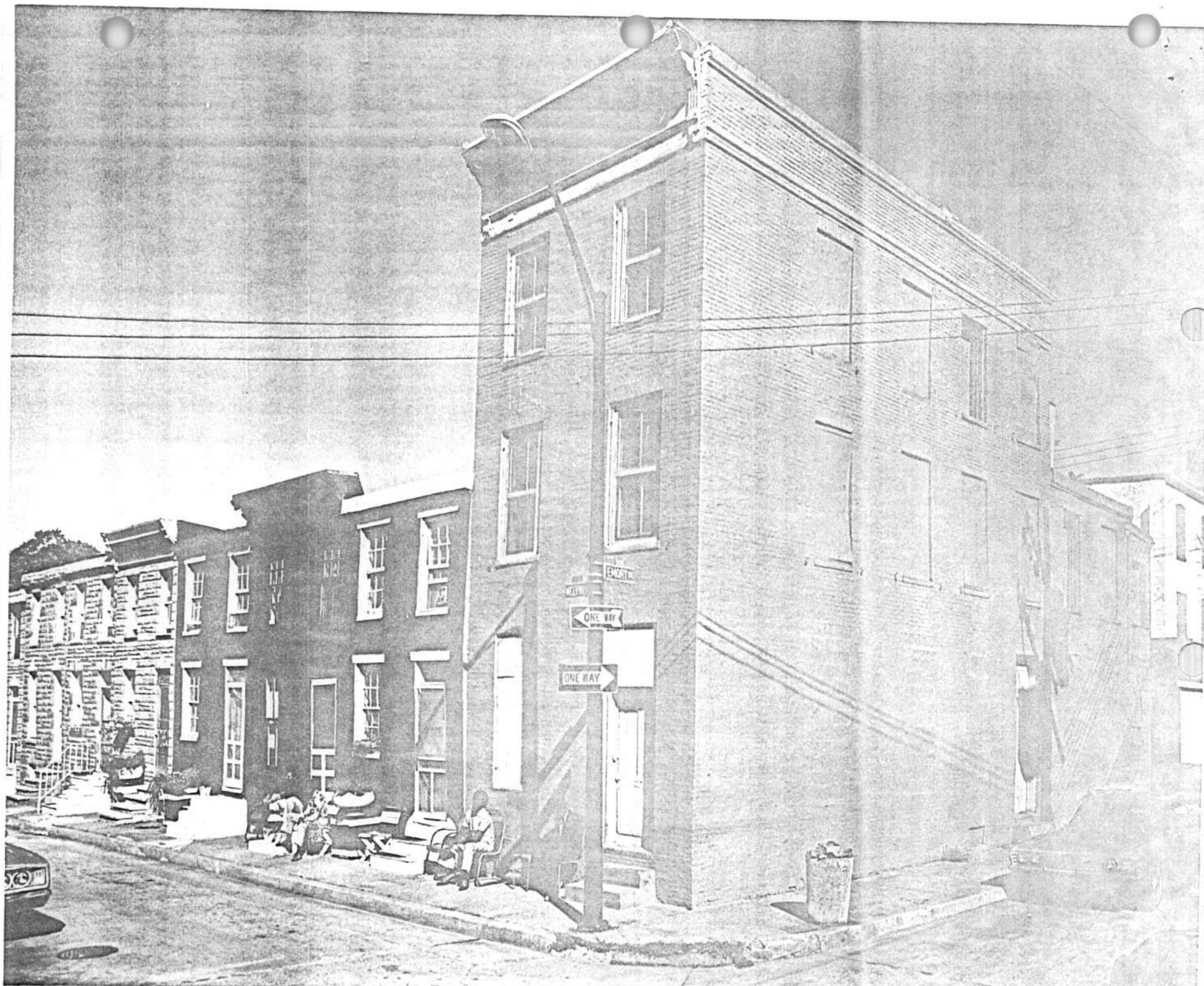
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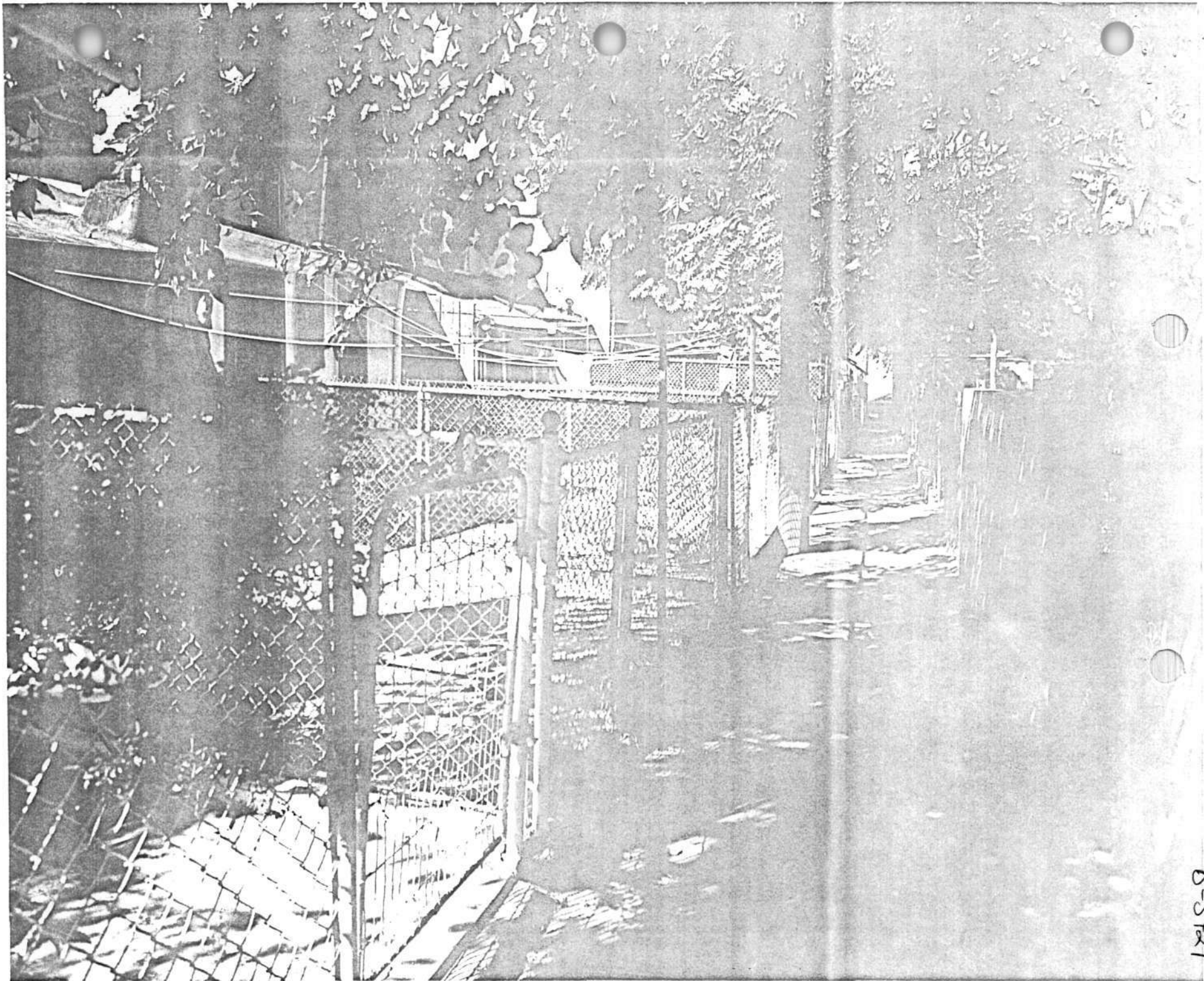
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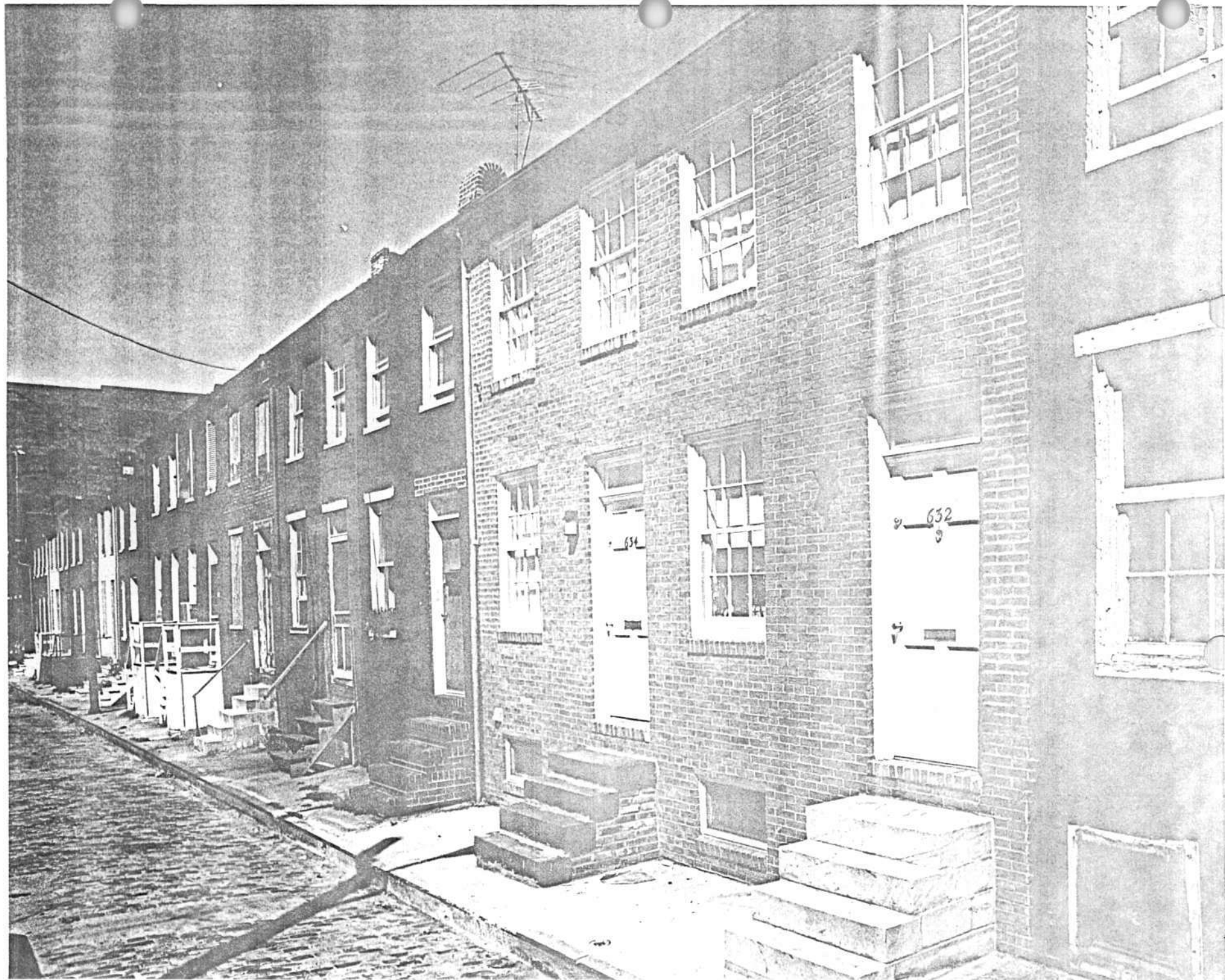
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Ridgely's Delight



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636. S. Para St.  
(B. City)

(within Ridgely's Delight  
Historic District)