NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Union Brothers Furniture Company
Other names/site number: Plymouth Wallpaper Building ; B-5313
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 1120 South Hanover Street
City or town: Baltimore State: MD County: Baltimore Indep. City
Not for Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this **X** nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property **X** meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** ___**statewide** **X** **local**
Applicable National Register Criteria:

___**A** ___**B** **X** **C** ___**D**

Director/SHPO 1/29/18

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Maryland Historical Trust

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	[x]
Public – Local	[ ]
Public – State	[ ]
Public – Federal	[ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	[x]
District	[ ]
Site	[ ]
Structure	[ ]
Object	[ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY / Manufacturing Facility
COMMERCE/ Specialty Store
COMMERCE / Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
OTHER: Industrial/Warehouse Building

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _____
Foundation: Stone
Walls: Brick
Roof: Other – Built-up Roofing

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Union Brothers Furniture Building is an irregular-shaped brick factory building constructed in three distinct sections between 1923 and 1955, located southwest of the intersection of Cross and South Hanover Streets in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. The building fronts on both South Hanover and West Cross streets, surrounding a corner site that has been a filling station since the mid-1930s in the neighborhood known as South Baltimore. The Union Brothers Building has gently sloped roofs, reading as flat, and reflects three distinct types of industrial architecture that typify the Baltimore region. The 37 West Cross Street and 1118 Clarkson Street structures reflect the utilitarian design typical of factory structures erected in the first quarter of the twentieth century, consisting of simple brick walls with punched openings holding industrial steel sash windows. Structurally, 37 West Cross Street reflects the longstanding tradition of "Baltimore Mill Construction," combining masonry with timber framing, while 1118 Clarkson Street utilizes the poured-in-place concrete construction techniques of the early 20th century. The 1120 South Hanover Street structure was constructed in 1955 and reflects many mid-century modern influences, including its single-story form comprising masonry bearing walls spanned by steel beams, more elaborate brick detailing, and a decorative streamlined aluminum entrance canopy. Some of the original windows appear to have been bricked in or replaced with modern insulated glass units, however the majority of the original industrial steel sash windows remain, many of which are in very good condition, protected behind the exterior brick infill. The Union Brothers Furniture Building retains its original architectural character and possesses sufficient integrity to convey the history associated with the building and its occupants.

Narrative Description

The site is comprised of eleven parcels in an irregular form assembled in several stages, with the initial structure occupying a parcel at 37 West Cross Street, the initial addition constructed on a parcel at 1118 Clarkson Street, a second addition constructed in 1955 on parcels 1120 through 1124 South Hanover Street, a deteriorated one story garage occupying parcels at 1120 through 1126 Clarkson Street and an open lot occupying parcels identified as 112 through 118 Seldner Place. Long before the site was developed by Union Brothers, the area had previously been developed, with the 37 West Cross Street address previously used as a two-story cooperage by John Eppler and the remaining parcels previously occupied by individual rowhouses. The current building fronting Cross Street, constructed in 1923, has a rectangular footprint with 50'-0" of frontage along Cross Street and 164'-0" of frontage along Clarkson Street with an area of approximately 8,125 gross square feet per floor. This three story structure is approximately 39'-0" tall to the cornice line and is connected by a narrow two story bridge to the rectangular, three story addition at 1118 Clarkson Street. This 38'-4" by 54'-4" addition, approximately 2,075 gross square feet per floor, was constructed in 1925 with a height of approximately 39'-0" from grade to cornice line, and as noted above has a 21'-4" by 39'-0" one story concrete block garage in poor condition abutting to the south. 1120 South Hanover Street, comprised of three parcels and constructed in 1955, is a two story building with 39'-7" of frontage on Hanover Street and 137'-4" of mid-block frontage, approximately 27'-3" in height and approximately 4,975 gross square feet per floor. For clarity, we have identified the original structure at 37 West Cross Street as Building 1, the 1925 addition across Clarkson Street as Building 2, and the 1955 addition on Hanover Street as Building 3.

Building 1 (contributing) is two structural bays wide facing Cross Street by eight bays deep. An excellent example of Baltimore Mill Construction, unornamented brick bearing walls define the building perimeter, with a mixture of wood and steel framing supporting a wood floor structure. Modestly decorated false gable ends define the north and south elevations, the south elevation of which is partially obscured by the 1955 addition. The Cross Street elevation consists of a loading dock door occupying the easternmost bay of the first floor, with two punched window openings and a grade level entrance leading immediately to interior stairs in the western bay of the first floor. The original sign band, advertising Union Brothers Furniture and now painted over, can still be seen above the first floor. A series of six punched openings stack vertically on the second and third floors, with smaller windows at the east and west ends of the façade, and 4 larger, equally sized openings found in the center of the elevation. The door at the west end of the Cross Street Elevation was the original primary entrance to the building. The Second and Third levels of the Clarkson Street elevation are identical, consisting of eleven punched openings of varying sizes entry on each floor as well as the bridge connection to Building 2. The Ground Level elevation along Clarkson Street has had many of the original windows that aligned with windows above receiving brick infill, with the original windows protected behind the infill. There are also two loading dock doors and a pair of doors discharge onto Clarkson Street from an interior stair. There are two larger blank brick expanses on this elevation that reflect the location of stairways within the building. The east elevation of Building 1, paralleling Hanover Street, is much more regular with fifteen punched openings on each floor of approximately the

same size evenly spaced along this elevation. The windows on the second and third floors have been replaced with modern aluminum horizontal sliding windows. In addition to the three levels above grade, there is a full basement with bricked in clerestory windows along the east and west elevations. There is evidence of ongoing water penetration in the basement level, most of which is dealt with by a series of perimeter trench drains leading to several sump pits where the water is collected then discharged to the exterior via sump pumps. Along the west side of the building, adjacent to Clarkson Street, there are two single run wooden stairs connecting the levels above grade, with the north stair also connecting to the Basement level. There is also a large freight elevator connecting all levels of the building located in the middle of the building on the west side of the floor. Originally constructed as a factory, the character defining elements - open floor plan, steel columns, wood joists, exposed brick walls and vertical circulation (stairs and elevator) held against the west elevation to create the maximum amount of flexible, free area – still remain fundamentally intact. Of particular note, many of the existing window openings that appear to be bricked in and missing the original windows actually have these original industrial steel sash windows intact, with the brick infill outside of the original windows sometimes staggered to allow for daylighting while providing some measure of protection and security.

Building 2 (contributing) is two bays wide by three bays deep, and reflects the rapid adoption of concrete construction in the 1920s. Three levels above grade align with the previously constructed Building 1, however there is no basement in this structure. Constructed just two years after the original building, the unornamented brick exterior walls surround a concrete structure consisting of concrete columns supporting cast concrete floor beams that in turn support cast concrete floors. Curiously the building is slightly trapezoidal in shape, while the structural grid is orthogonal, leading to some unusual conditions where columns do not fall directly under beam intersections. The original steel sash industrial windows are mostly extant in Building 2, with each sash filling a single punched opening per structural bay. A single roll up door fronting Clarkson Street provide access to the ground floor, while the upper two levels are accessed via a bridge from Building 1. Single run cast-in-place concrete stairs connect all three levels of Building 2. The character defining elements of this building – exposed perimeter walls, exposed concrete structure and copious daylight through large industrial steel sash windows remain fundamentally unaltered. There is a dilapidated one story concrete block garage, likely dating to the 1940s, abutting the west bay of the first floor of Building 2. It is not clear if or how this garage was related to the Union Brothers operation, and given the structure's poor condition it is proposed that this garage be classified as a non-contributing structure.

Building 3 (contributing) is one structural bay wide on Hanover Street by seven bays deep, running perpendicular to Hanover Street at mid-block. This much more stylish structure features ornamental brickwork, intermixing stacked and running bond panels, sleek aluminum windows and a streamlined canopy over the recessed entrance on Hanover Street. The exterior walls consist of brick veneer with concrete block backup, in contrast to the solid wythe brick masonry walls found in Buildings 1 and 2. The primary structure consists of steel columns and primary beams, with wood floor joists supporting the second floor and a steel and gypsum system serving as the roof deck. Two sets of single run wooden stairs are located on the south side of the floor, connecting the two levels – one of these stairs includes a partially-intact modern-style metal handrail. There is no basement in Building 3. A portion of the first floor of Building 3 was

purpose built as a showroom to promote sales of Union Brothers furniture, but there are few traces of the showroom after the several decades of subsequent occupancy after Union Brothers closed, mainly limited to several display rooms on the south side of Building 3 near the Hanover Street entrance.

What is striking when viewing all three structures as an ensemble is that the rapid evolution of the design and construction of manufacturing facilities in the early-to-mid 20th century can be discerned. From 'traditional' mill construction techniques found in Building 1 (perimeter brick bearing walls with wood floors and joists bearing on steel columns) to the advent of reinforced cast in place concrete structure in Building 2, to the brick veneer with concrete block back-up perimeter walls, lighter-weight structure, and modern details found in Building 3, the changes in design and construction techniques over just three decades is remarkable.

A small concrete block garage abuts the south elevation of Building 2. This structure is not clearly related to the Union Brothers plant, and is considered non-contributing.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1923-1955

Significant Dates
1923
1925
1955

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Stanislaus Russell - Architect
Louis Ulman & Co. - Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Union Brothers Furniture Company, which operated between 1919 and 1972, incorporated evolving trends in manufacturing and employed new architectural styles to promote sales of their furniture pieces. The Union Brothers Furniture Company Building, constructed between 1923 and 1955, meets National Register Criterion C, embodying fundamentally intact examples of three distinctive architectural styles and construction techniques representative of the evolution of Baltimore's industrial architecture. The building derives additional interest for its association with the growth and development of Baltimore's furniture industry and also for association with the owners of the company, brothers Philip and Rubin Union and their partner Benjamin Ruttenberg, who assumed prominence and leadership roles within the Baltimore furniture manufacturing community. The buildings retain sufficient integrity to convey these historic associations despite the limited modifications and minor loss of integrity to the structures.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Evolution of Industrial Architecture in Baltimore

Purpose-built factories and other industrial buildings in Baltimore have existed since the 18th century. While smaller workshops and factories tended to mimic similar, and frequently adjacent, residential construction, larger factories present a different typology. The buildings that make up the Union Brothers Furniture Company represent three distinct phases of the development of industrial facilities in Baltimore. **37 West Cross Street** is a late example of "Baltimore Mill Construction," combining timber framing with masonry bearing walls. **1118 Clarkson Street** exemplifies cast-in-place concrete frame construction, with concrete columns, beams and floor slabs, defines the building. The third phase of construction, at **1120 South Hanover Street**, represents the single-story factory buildings of the Post-WWII era, with concrete and bearing walls spanned by steel beams supporting dimensional wood framing. The Streamline Moderne façade of 1120 South Hanover Street reflects its purpose as a retail showroom as well as manufacturing space.

Early Factories

Larger scale early factories (18th century – mid-19th century) typically consist of heavy-timber framed structures with exterior masonry bearing walls. Masonry walls were composed of brick or stone, with stone more likely along waterways or other areas in close proximity to quarries. Typical of these unreinforced masonry walls were small, regular punched openings with either wood or masonry lintels. Windows within these punched openings were most likely be wood double-hung windows with multiple, small lites, although wood casement windows were utilized on occasion. Roofing material was typically wood shakes. Most, if not all, materials required for construction were sourced locally, and the structures were two, three, or occasionally four stories

tall. This combination of heavy timber framing with perimeter masonry bearing walls, referred to in modern building codes as 'Type 3B' construction, is colloquially referred to in the Baltimore region as "Mill Construction" or "Baltimore Mill Construction". Given the high floor loads required of factories and the relative modest spanning capacity of wood construction, column grids were as small as twelve feet on center up to 18 feet on center.

Structures that represent this type of construction can be found along the Jones Falls and Gwynns Falls Valleys, where water provided the motive force to power the mills. Flour mills were the first type of mill constructed, then in the early 19th century textile mills became popular, both for newly constructed mills as well as mills converted from flour production to textiles when the economics favored this type of work. Mills tended to be long, narrow utilitarian structures for several reasons. Without functional artificial illumination, these mills relied upon natural daylight to illuminate a structure's interior. Power was conveyed throughout a structure from a water wheel through a series of belt drives. These belts then drove power takeoff axles to power nearby machines. Early flour mills relied upon gravity to move grain through the milling process, with grain hoisted up to the upper floor and then fed through the grinding and finishing process, to arrive at the lowest level for packaging and distribution.

Factories constructed during this era tended to be integrated into a mixed-use environment, interspersed with housing and civic functions, as workers in the mill walked to work and the mills were located adjacent to the power source utilized (water). Existing Baltimore structures exhibiting this type of construction include the National Register-listed Washington Mill and Rockland Grist Mill on the Jones Falls, and Owings Upper Mill on the Gwynns Falls.

Post-Civil War Factories

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, most larger factories were constructed in a similar fashion. The exterior masonry bearing walls continued in use; however, more and more were composed of brick, as low-cost modular brick became readily available with the advent of the industrial revolution. Openings in these exterior walls were still punched and typically found in a regular pattern, however the openings could grow in width with the incorporation of cast iron or steel lintels as these materials became more readily available. Prior to the turn of the 20th century, these openings would typically receive wood double-hung windows with larger lites, although unlike earlier factories these windows would frequently be mass produced in a factory rather than hand-built. As opening widths grew and new window technologies emerged, these openings could also be filled with steel projected sash windows, one of the character-defining elements of early 20th century factories. The interior structure was still typically heavy timber-based with large dimensional wood beams supporting either heavy timber girts and sub-girts or lighter weight dimensional lumber (2" or 3" wide by 8" to 14" deep) floor framing with wood decking above. Structural columns could be one of several materials: heavy timber, heavy timber with cast iron column caps, or cast iron (later steel) columns. These ferrous columns could be simple tubes, cast with elaborate decorations, or built up out of smaller sections. Factories constructed during this time period typically did not exceed five stories in height, and elevators began to be incorporated into these structures in the later part of the 19th century. Roofs were typically framed with heavy timber and the roofing material could be any of the readily available roofing materials of the day (slate, sheet metal, or early forms of asphaltic, built-up

sheet roofing. This type of construction remained popular for many factories through the 1930's, due in no small part to its ease of construction, affordable cost and use of familiar building materials. As wood was still the primary structural spanning element, column grids were still relatively closely spaced, typically sixteen to 22 feet on center. Better engineering practices allowed for these longer spans, and additional iron or steel reinforcing could be introduced to increase the structural capacity of wood beams where unusually heavy loads were imposed.

After the Civil War, first steam and then electricity provided power to factories, freeing these buildings from the requirement of being located adjacent to flowing water. However, given the limited transportation options and lack of modern, Euclidean Zoning requirements, factories were still integrated into mixed use and residential communities. Until the widespread adoption of incandescent illumination, factories still tended to be narrow, as natural daylighting was required. Where incandescent illumination was adopted, many of these industrial structures grew in depth.

Industrial buildings embodying Mill Construction are extremely common in Baltimore, with many structures surviving to this day. An early example, dating to 1867, is Druid Mill – a contributing structure in the Woodberry National Register Historic District. Additional examples include the National Register-listed H.F. Miller & Sons Tin Box and Can Manufacturing plant, the Procter & Gamble complex in Locust Point, and most significantly for this analysis, **37 West Cross Street** – the initial building constructed for Union Brothers

As **37 West Cross Street** was constructed relatively late in this era of 'mill construction' buildings, the structure incorporated several elements not found in earlier structures. While brick bearing walls with punched openings are typical of all buildings of this type, a deeper footprint indicates that artificial illumination was provided from inception, the window openings were filled with projected steel sash windows in lieu of wood double-hung windows (see photos 0001 and 0003), and the structure utilizes steel columns in conjunction with heavy timber beams with lighter-weight dimensional lumber floor joists in lieu of a complete heavy-timber assembly. The 1953 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates indicates the overall use of **37 West Cross Street** as a Furniture Factory, with the First Floor containing offices, as well as a Mill Room and Spray Booth, while Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps published after the construction of 1120 South Hanover Street no longer include the office function in 37 West Cross Street.

The Rise of Concrete and other New Materials

At the dawn of the twentieth century, many new building materials became available, one of the most significant of which was concrete. While the use of concrete as a building material goes back to the Romans, it wasn't until Portland Cement was developed in the nineteenth century that modern concrete came into use. While traditional "Mill Construction" was still quite common after the dawn of the twentieth century, some factories were constructed out of concrete. While a concrete frame with concrete floors is the common element in these structures, there was a wide variety of reinforcing systems utilized at this time. Concrete construction technology was relatively new during this period and a consistent, efficient approach to the structural design of concrete structures had not yet been established. A variety of reinforcing rods and bars could be found in columns, while incredibly diversity was found in

flooring systems. Reinforcing bars, reinforcing mesh, concrete encased steel beams, plaster of paris fill, cinder concrete, and many other materials could be found in the concrete floor systems of this day. With the transition from perimeter bearing walls to a concrete frame, windows could grow much larger, even spanning from column to column for an uninterrupted expanse of glazing. Windows installed within these openings would almost always be the ubiquitous steel projected sash windows. Roof structures were typically also cast-in-place concrete, with some form of asphalt-based waterproofing commonly used. Concrete structures rarely exceeded 4 stories in height. Column spacing for two-way flat plate construction is typically twenty to twenty-five feet on center, with one-way flat slab or full concrete frame column spaces capable of exceeding thirty-five or even fifty feet. In addition to high load bearing capacities, one of the additional benefits of concrete construction was that these structures are inherently non-combustible.

The growing availability of plentiful and inexpensive electricity during this era provided power to the equipment within the factory, as well as artificial illumination, allowing these structures to become quite deep as natural daylight was no longer a requirement to function. Many of these structures were still located in dense residential communities, in order to allow for easy access by the workforce. However, buildings constructed later in this period could be located more remotely in designated industrial areas, with workers commuting to work by bus, trolley or private automobile.

Existing representative examples of this type of construction include one of the first documented uses of two-way flat slab construction in the Baltimore area, the Crown Cork & Seal Machine Shop, a contributing structure to the North Central National Register Historic District; the National Register-listed Signature Building of the American Can Company in Canton; and most significantly for this analysis, **1118 Clarkson Street** – the second building constructed for Union Brothers

1118 Clarkson Street, while modest in scale, is a quintessential example of this type of concrete factory construction. A clearly articulated cast-in-place concrete frame structure, with concrete columns, beams and floor slabs, defines the building. Projected steel sash windows span from column to column, with brick infill panels below the window sills completing the non-load bearing exterior walls to the slab below (photo 0006). To complete this essay in concrete construction, single-run cast-in-place concrete stairs connect all three floors. The 1953 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map lists the use of 1118 Clarkson Street as a Warehouse (while 37 West Cross Street is listed as Furniture Factory), however in Sanborn Maps published after the construction of 1120 South Hanover Street the use of 1118 Clarkson Street was revised to Factory Building, while 1120 South Hanover Street was listed as Office and Warehouse.

Post-World War II Factories

Due to the inherent inefficiency of multi-story factories, and the broader areas available for development with the expansion of road networks, the rise of suburbs, and individual ownership of automobiles, factories no longer need to be located within walking distance of workers. Factories built in the second half of the twentieth century tended to be one story in height and in less urban locations. Large factories frequently consisted of long-span steel structures with

corrugated metal or fiberglass siding or concrete masonry unit exterior walls, corrugated metal, built-up or single-ply membrane roofing and a concrete slab on grade. This prototypical factory typology constructed during this time period frequently also required few, if any, windows. Column grids for large structures can span one hundred feet or more, utilizing steel trusses when long spans are required.

Smaller-scale factories, such as the third component of the Union Brothers complex, located at **1120 South Hanover Street**, could have been constructed with a wide variety of materials available at the time, depending on the use, location and other owner requirements. 1120 South Hanover Street utilized brick and concrete masonry unit exterior walls, with the longer, east-west walls proving bearing for steel beams supporting dimensional wood floor and roof framing. As this building was conceived as a showroom as well as a factory, it appears that the typical design for heavy live loads found in factory design were not anticipated for this addition. Furthermore, 1120 South Hanover Street was also much more consciously a 'high-style' design, with more purposeful design elements incorporated into the design of this addition, compared to the previous two structures that were constructed as simple, utilitarian factory structures. Continuous windows on the Hanover Street elevation spanned the entire width of the elevation, along with a decorative aluminum canopy and storefront door system (photo 0005).

The Union brothers and the furniture industry in Baltimore:

As noted in other histories, furniture manufacturing developed out of Baltimore's strong 18th and 19th century craft tradition in cabinetmaking, coupled with the growth of Baltimore as a center of manufacturing, taking advantage of Baltimore's port and rail networks to receive raw materials and the distribute finished products. While not as well studied as other industries, such as canning and clothing manufacturing, furniture manufacturing nevertheless constituted a significant sector of Baltimore's diverse manufacturing base. Furthermore, as documented in the history of the National Register-listed Bagby Furniture Company, furniture manufacturers became increasingly specialized in the goods they produced and the markets they addressed. As furniture became room-specific and function-specific, firms concentrated on particular types of furniture or furniture for distinct markets, like offices or hotels. In the case of Union Brothers Furniture, the firm focused on upholstered furniture for residential settings.

Founded in 1919 by brothers Rubin and Philip Union and their partner Benjamin Ruttenberg, Union Brothers Furniture grew rapidly, paralleling Baltimore's growth as a center of furniture manufacturing on the east coast. All three partners were Jewish immigrants from Russia who had come to Baltimore as children and then each apprenticed in the furniture business for several years, Philip having apprenticed as an upholsterer with the prominent firm of Levenson and Zenitz. The partners exhibited the drive and entrepreneurship to start their own firm at relatively young ages – Rubin, the older Union Brother was only 22 years of age when the firm was founded, while his younger brother Philip was just 20 and Benjamin Ruttenberg was 24 or 25. The 1920 census indicated that Philip, Rubin and their younger sister Anne were all single and lived with their parents, Nathan and Brindle. Another sister, Ida, was born sometime after 1920. The father, Nathan's, occupation was listed as a tailor of women's clothing, while Philip and Rubin were both listed as upholsterers in the furniture industry. By 1930, Nathan was listed as a

Foreman for a Printer, while Rubin (still living at home) was listed as the Proprietor of a Factory, Anne and Philip had moved away, but a 12 year old grandson, Morris was listed as living with Nathan and his wife. By 1930, Philp had married, and he and his wife Clara had two children, Ruth, born ca. 1924 and Abraham, born a year later. Benjamin Ruttenberg was also married by 1930, with a wife, Clara (also a Jewish immigrant from Russia) and three children, a son, Louis, born in 1924 and daughters Elsie and Pauline, born in 1927 and 1930 respectively.

Initially established in rented space at 2119 East Fayette Street, within four years the partners were already looking to expand their enterprise and relocate to a larger, purpose-built factory at 37 West Cross Street. They commissioned noted Baltimore architect Stanislaus Russell (1876-1958) to prepare a design and Louis Ulman & Co. was selected as the contractor to construct the new facility for approximately $50,000.00, consisting of three stories above grade, plus basement, totaling 32,500 square feet. Within a matter of two years the three story, 6,225 square foot annex, connected by a two story bridge to the original 37 West Cross Street facility was constructed across Clarkson Street. The firm continued to grow rapidly, and the partners decided to expand in 1928 by acquiring a city block bounded by Beason, Decatur, Clement and Lowman Streets in the Locust Point neighborhood of Baltimore - a little over a mile away from the primary facility that served as the main offices of the company - in order to construct a larger ancillary facility. The first phase of this satellite facility, over 67,000 square feet in area, was completed by 1929, just six years after constructing the initial factory at 37 West Cross Street, and by 1942 this ancillary facility had grown to 120,000 square feet of space, with the final 52 foot by 104 foot addition designed by architect Benjamin Frank in 1939. The Locust Point plant apparently manufactured the wood frames for the furniture, with the upholstering and finishing completed at the South Baltimore Plant that is the subject of this nomination.

Each partner was responsible for a specific area of the business, with Rubin Union responsible for running the administrative and financial aspect of the business, Philip Union serving as the chief designer of the furniture pieces, and Benjamin Ruttenberg heading up sales. Rubin achieved some measure of prominence within the broader furniture-making community of Baltimore, serving as one of three representatives from the fourteen Upholstered Furniture Manufacturers involved in negotiations with the Upholsterers Union in 1933 during a contentious strike pertaining to a minimum wage of 40 cents per hour and a maximum work week of 44 hours. The workers picketed both the manufacturers as well as the Department Stores that sold furniture produced by these manufacturers. Benjamin Ruttenberg and his wife became prominent members of Baltimore society, appearing with some frequency in the society pages of the Baltimore Sun, and the engagement of their daughter, Elsie, the lead item in the May 12, 1957 society column. Benjamin would pass away just eight years later in October of 1965. Philip passed away in May of 1974.

From its inception the firm continued grew quickly, with sales up and down the east coast, as far away as New York City and beyond. In order to keep current with evolving postwar trends, Union Brothers expanded their headquarters facility by connecting their original building at 37 West Cross Street with a new two-story, 10,000 square foot addition at 1120 South Hanover Street in 1955, and made this new structure their principal business address. However, in less than two decades the business ceased production, reflecting national trends away from locally-

produced furniture in the urban northeast and the advancing age of the firm's partners (and in Ruttenberg's case death), with the firm sold in 1969 and the equipment from both the South Baltimore and Locust Point factories auctioned off on June 8, 1972. After the closing of the Union Brothers Furniture Company, the South Baltimore facility, like so many other former factories in Baltimore, assumed a new life as a mixed-use warehouse, distribution and modest retail facility for a variety of tenants.

After the closure of Union Brothers Furniture Company (and after the period of significance), the primary tenants of Building 1 (37 West Cross Street) consist of L&M Company from the mid-1970s to the late 1980s and Jupiter Enterprises Limited from the late 1980s to the late 1990s. There is no evidence of commercial activity in Building 1 after 1997. From the mid-1970s to early 1980s the primary tenant of Building 3 (1120 South Hanover Street) was the Maryland Dry Goods Corporation and from the late 1980s to late 1990s the primary tenant was the Plymouth Wallpaper Surplus Store, signage for which is still visible to this day. For a brief period in the mid-1980s a photographer rented space in the Hanover Street building – a dark room still exists on the second floor of the building. Since the late 1990s the site does not appear to have been used for any commercial purposes, with the facility utilized for storage by the previous owners of the building.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Rabun, J. Stanley. *Structural Analysis of Historic Buildings: Restoration, Preservation, and Adaptive Reuse Applications for Architects and Engineers.* New York, John Wiley & Sons. 2000.

"Real Estate Deals and Building News: Bids Asked For Erection Of Unit For Plant Of Union Brothers" *Baltimore Sun*, December 28, 1939.

"Real Estate Deals and Building News: New Factory for Union Bros. Will Be Erected In Block In Locust Point Section" *Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 1928.

"Real Estate Deals and Building News: Plans for Furniture Manufacturing Plant on Cross Street Completed" *Baltimore Sun*, March 15, 1923.

"Real Estate Deals and Building News: Union Brothers Will Erect Daylight Factory Building" *Baltimore Sun*, February 9, 1923.

Sanborn Maps of Baltimore, 1914 and 1951

"Seven Creditors Named: Marylanders Make Claims In Bankruptcy Petition" *Baltimore Sun*, January 8, 1930.

"Temporary Injunction Is Issued Against Union: Upholsterers' Group Enjoined from Picketing Several Plants In City" *Baltimore Sun*, September 20, 1927.

Vertical Files. (Maryland Room, EPFL)

"Wants: A Business Bureau for Decorators, Designers, Craftsmen and Skilled Artisans", *Good Furniture Magazine,* March 1921, p. 28

Zembala, Dennis M., ed and Benjamin Latrobe, Jr. Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology, *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake Bay.* Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1995.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register

_____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
_____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): __B-5313_____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property __less than one acre___

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.276152 Longitude: -76.616031

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is recorded among the Land Records of Baltimore City, Maryland as Ward 23, Section 5, Block 948, Lots 4, 52/54, 65 through 69 and 74 through 77

Note: Lot 4 corresponds with Building 1 (37 West Cross Street)
Lot 65 corresponds with Building 2 (1118 Clarkson Street)
Lot 52/54 corresponds with Building 3 (1120 South Hanover Street)
Lots 66, 67, 68 and 69 correspond with the noncontributing concrete block garage
Lots 74, 75, 76 and 77 are open lots with no structures

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property, 0.442 acres, encompasses the city lots historically associated with the resource.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Tom Liebel / Principal
organization: Marks, Thomas Architects
street & number: 1414 Key Highway, 2nd Floor
city or town: Baltimore state: MD zip code: 21230
e-mail TomL@marks-thomas.com
telephone: 410-539-4300
date: June 28, 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

B-5313
Union Brothers Furniture Company
1120 S. Hanover Street, Baltimore, MD 21230
Baltimore City
Maryland
Latitude: 39.276152 Longitude: -76.616031
Baltimore East, MD Quad
USGS Topographical Map
1:24,000



Index to Photographs

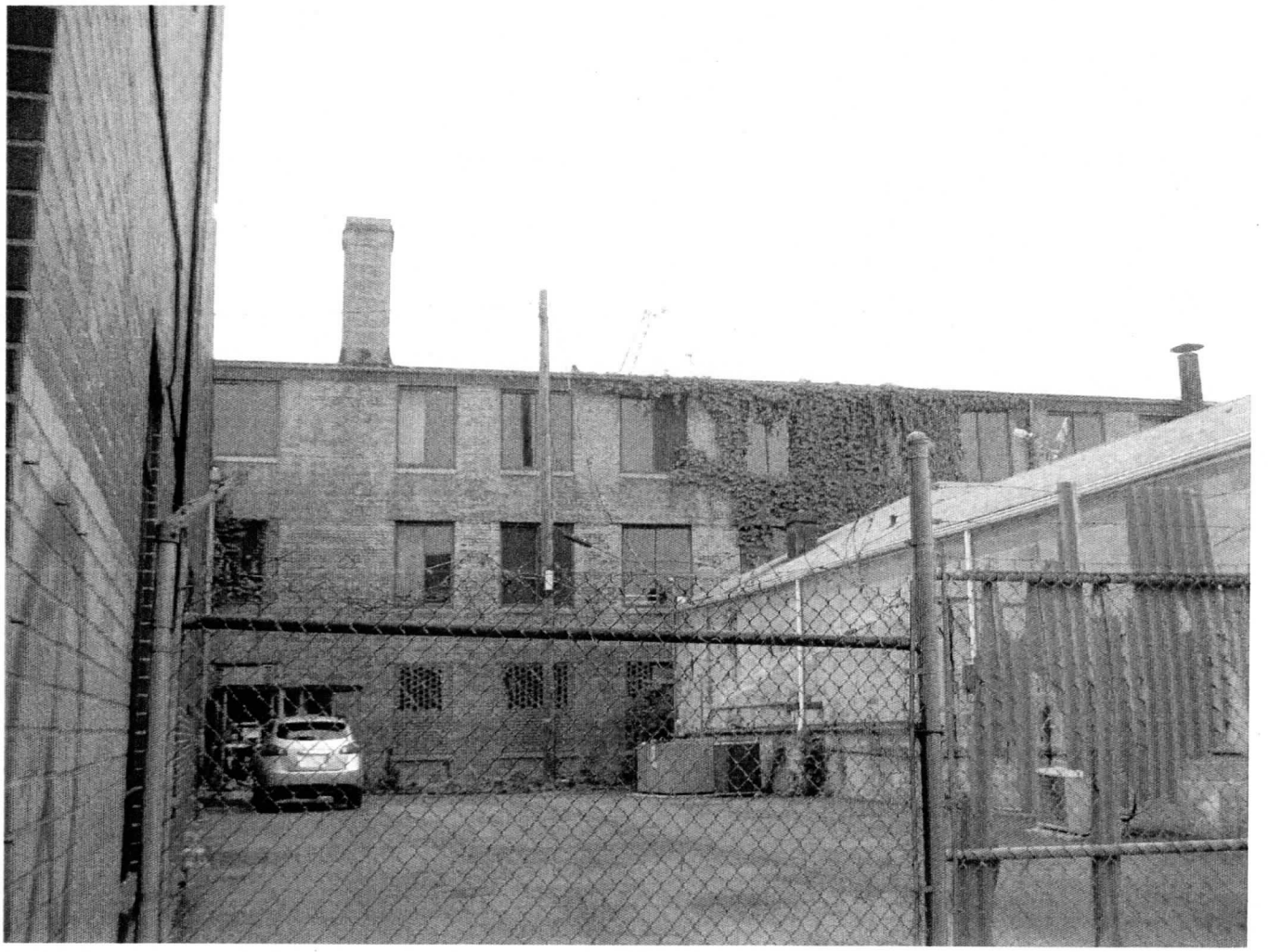
The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number: B-5313
Name of Property: Union Brothers Furniture Company
Location: Baltimore City, Maryland
Photographer: Chris Weston
Date taken: April and May, 2016
Location of original digital files: MD SHPO

Photo captions:



MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0001.tif
Building Exterior – Cross St. (North) Elev. – Bldg. 1
1 of 27



MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0002.tif
Building Exterior – East Elevation – Bldg. 1
2 of 27

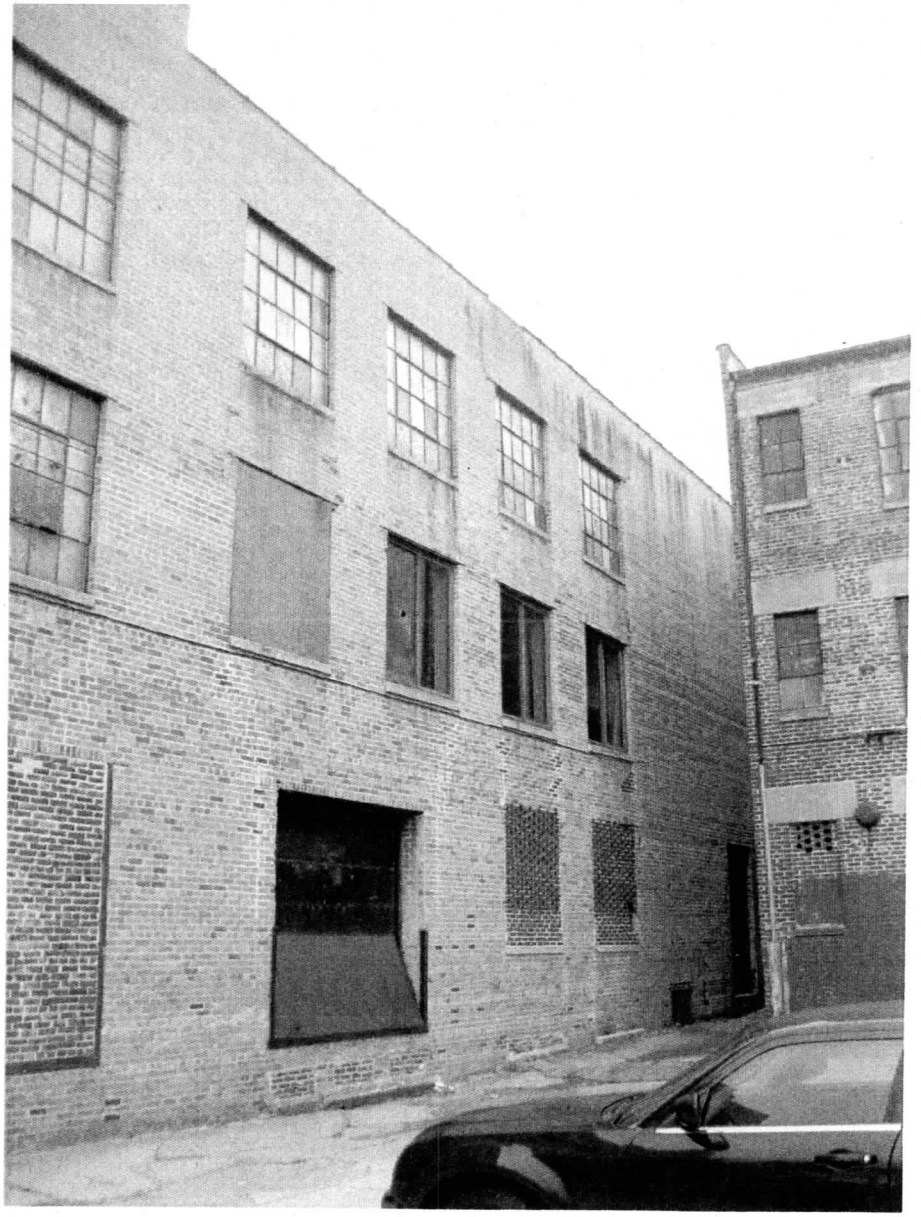
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

B-5313
Union Brothers Furniture Company
Name of Property

Baltimore City, MD
County and State

Section PHOTO Page 4



MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0003.tif
Building Exterior – Clarkson St. (West) Elev. – Bldg. 1
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

B-5313
Union Brothers Furniture Company
Name of Property

Baltimore City, MD
County and State

Section PHOTO Page 5



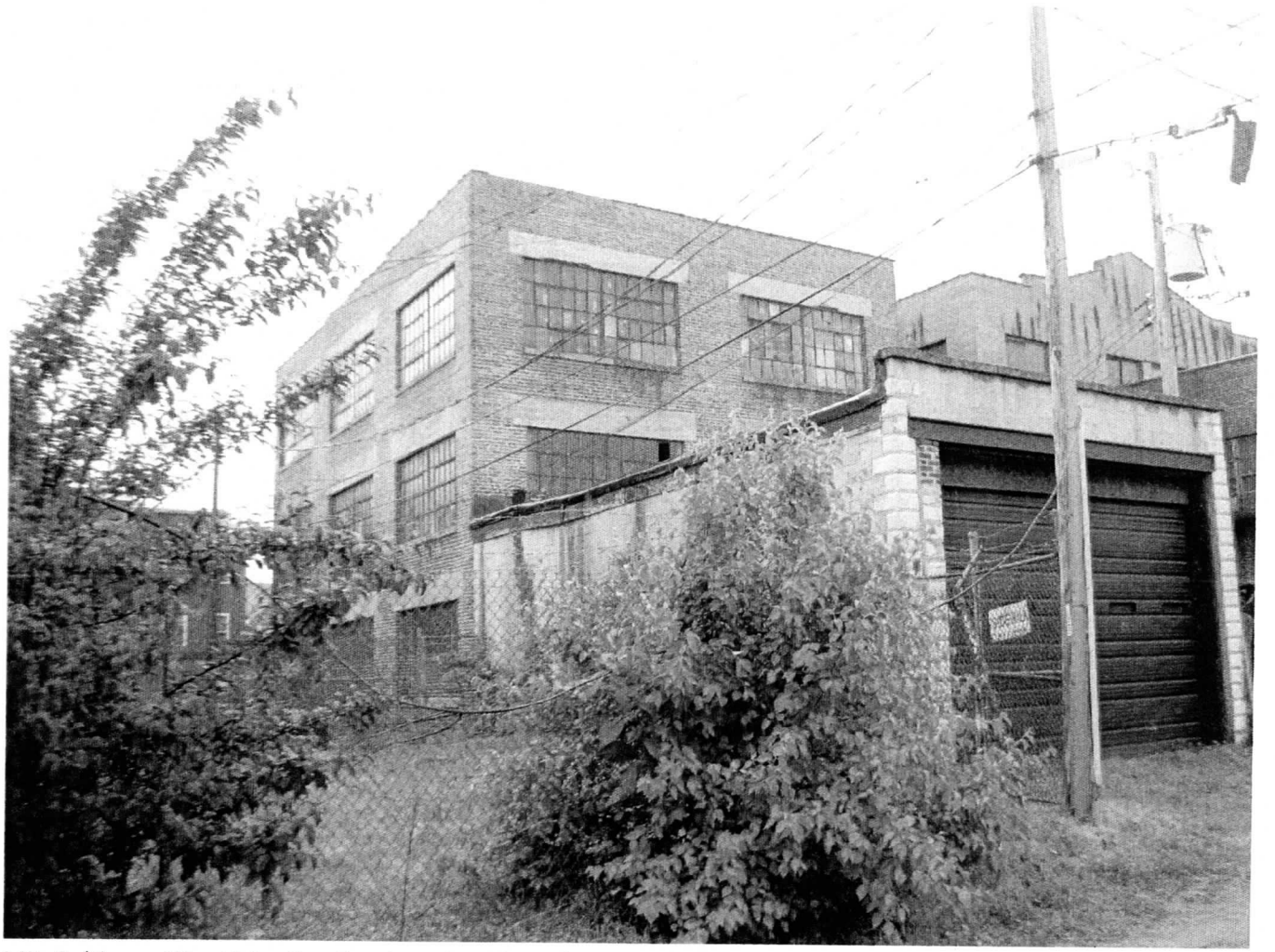
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Building Exterior – Hanover St. (East) Elev. – Bldg. 3
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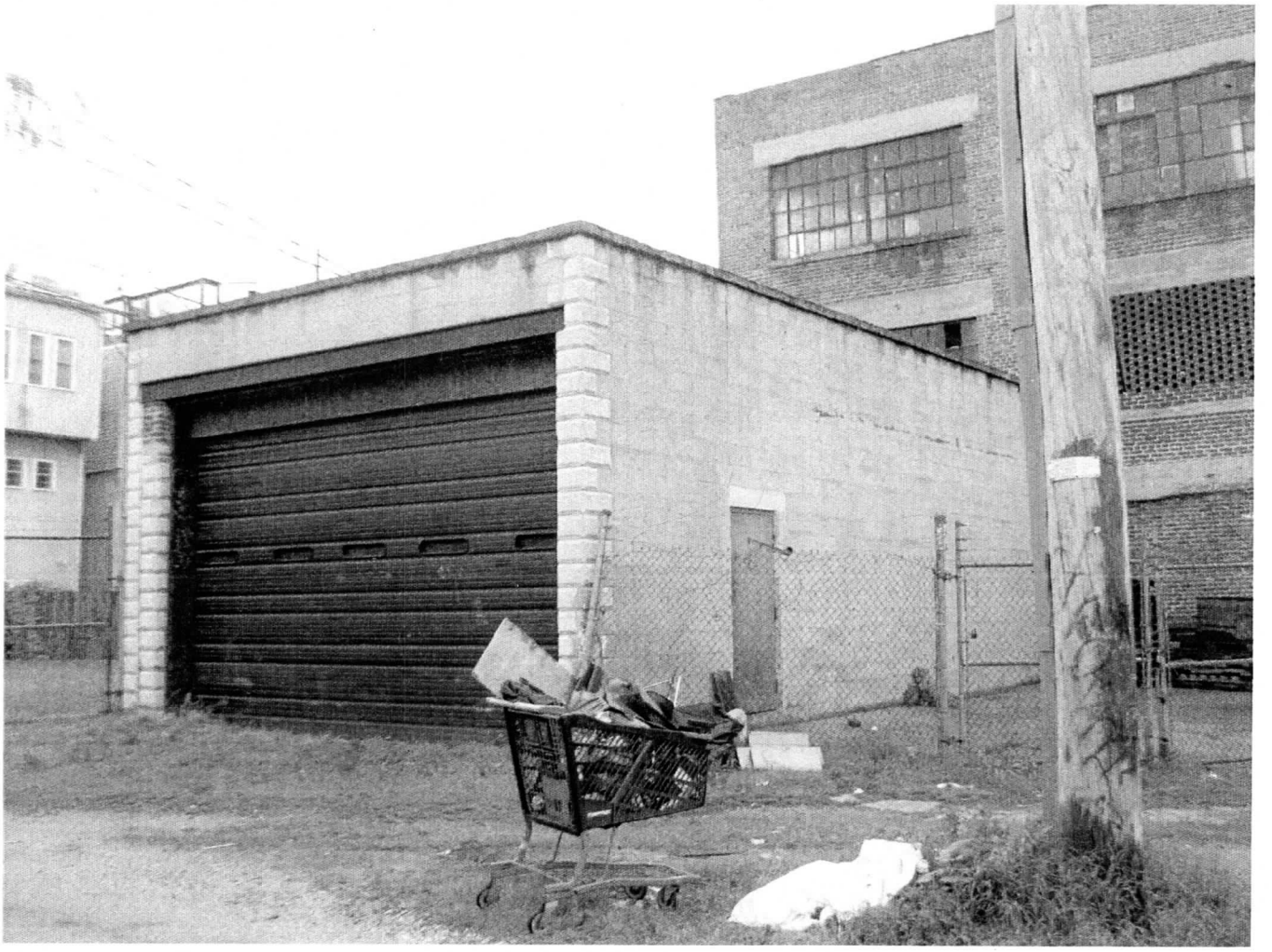
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Building Exterior – Entry Detail – Bldg. 3
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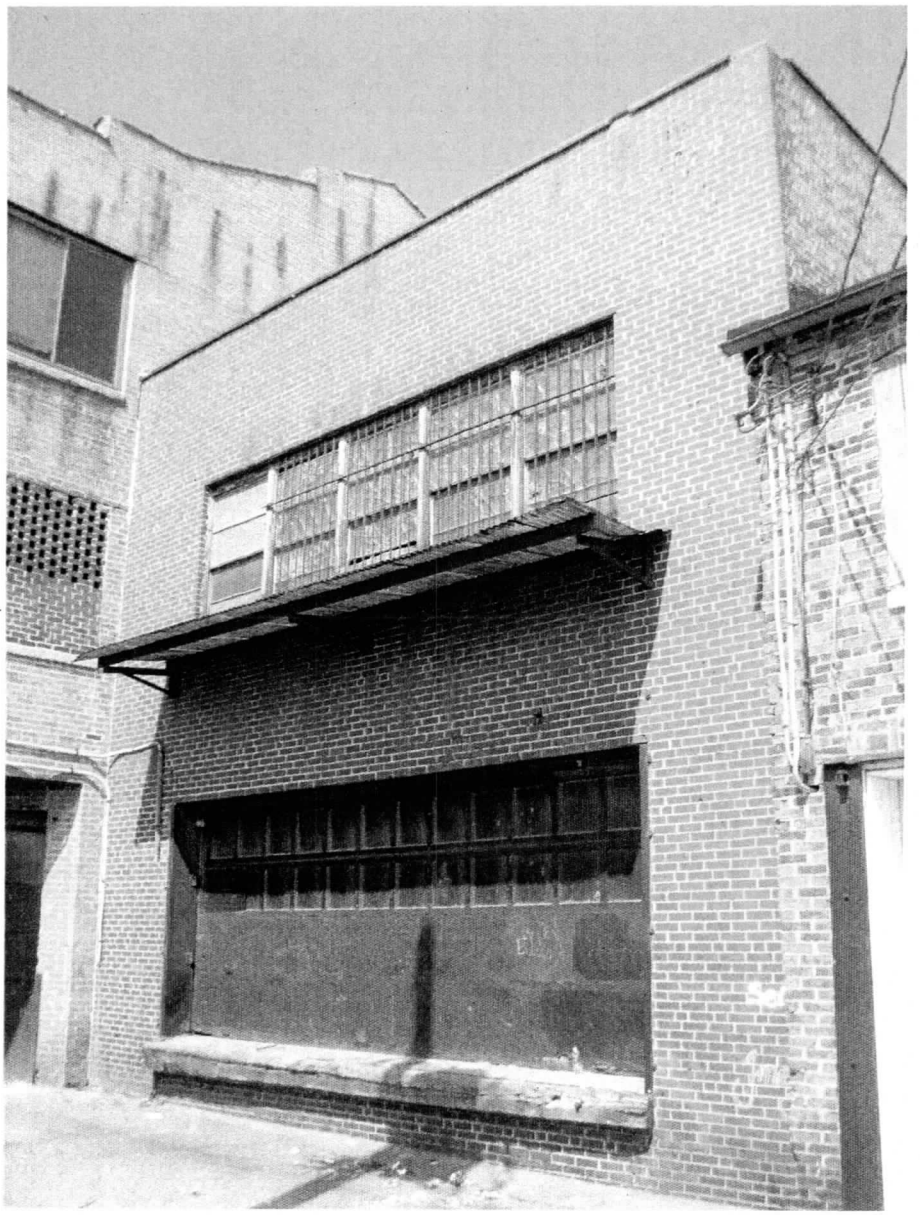
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Building Exterior – North Elevation – Bldg. 2
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0007.tif
Building Exterior – View to NE – Bldg. 2 and (noncontributing) Garage
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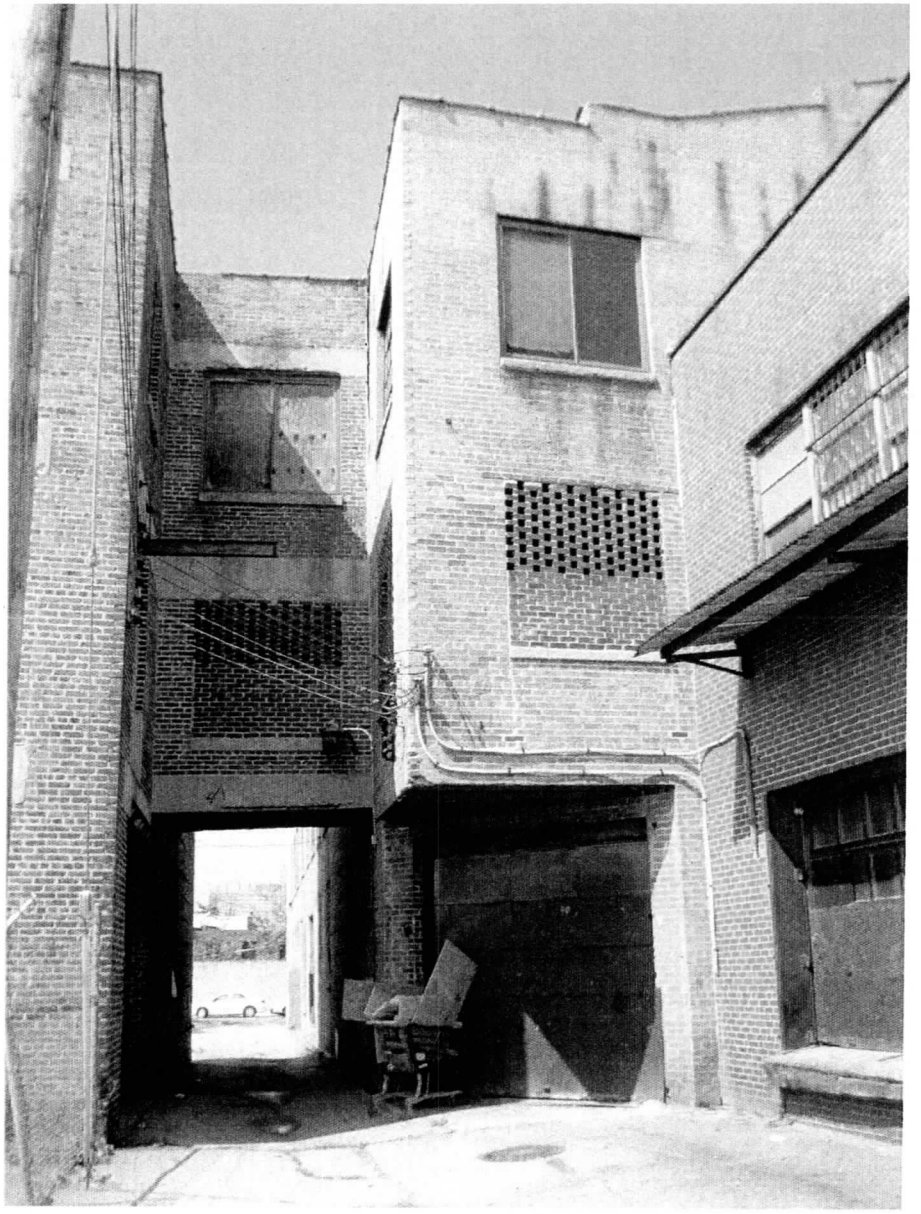
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Building Exterior – Garage (noncontributing) with Bldg. 2 beyond
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0009.tif
Building Exterior –NE View to Loading Dock – Bldg. 3
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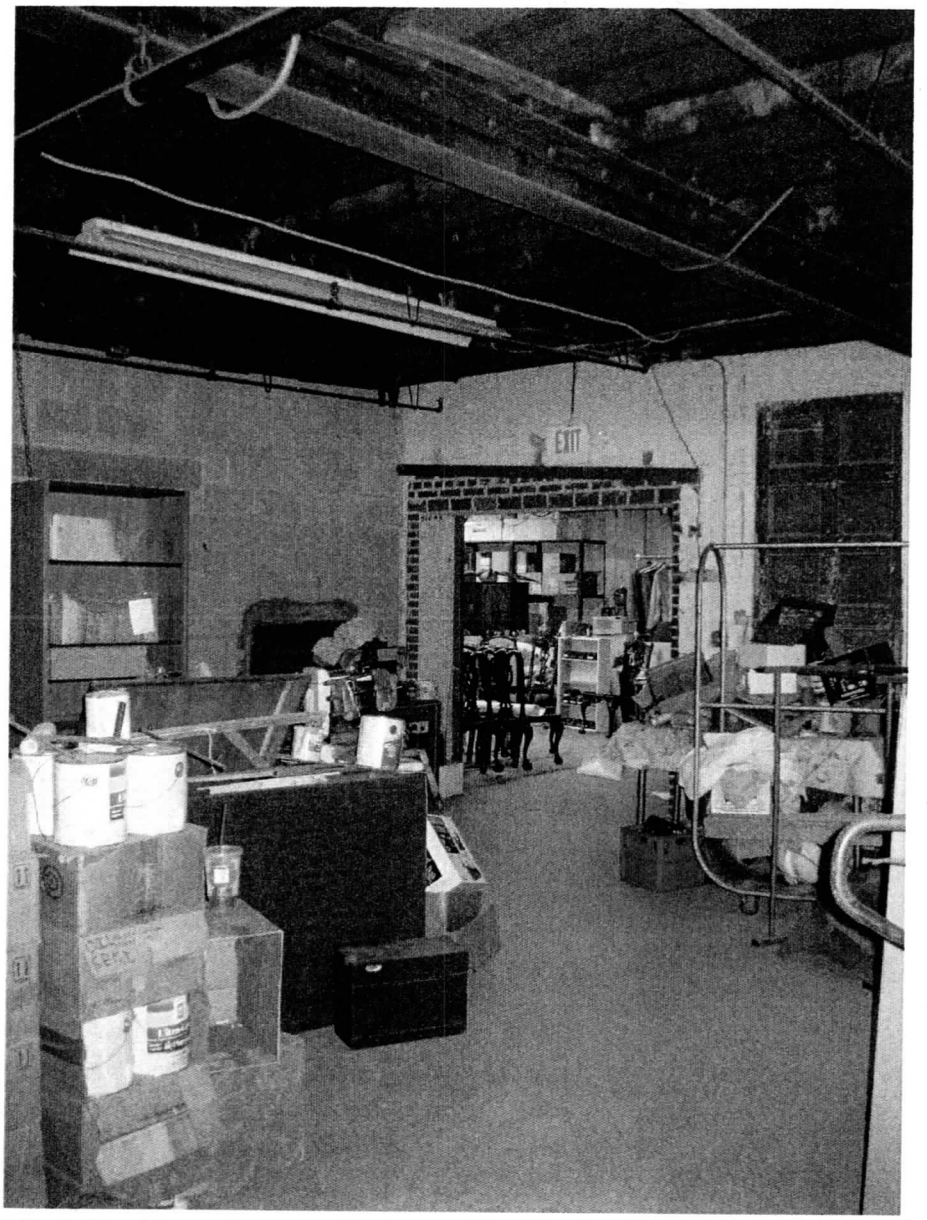
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Building Exterior – South Elevation – Bldg. 2
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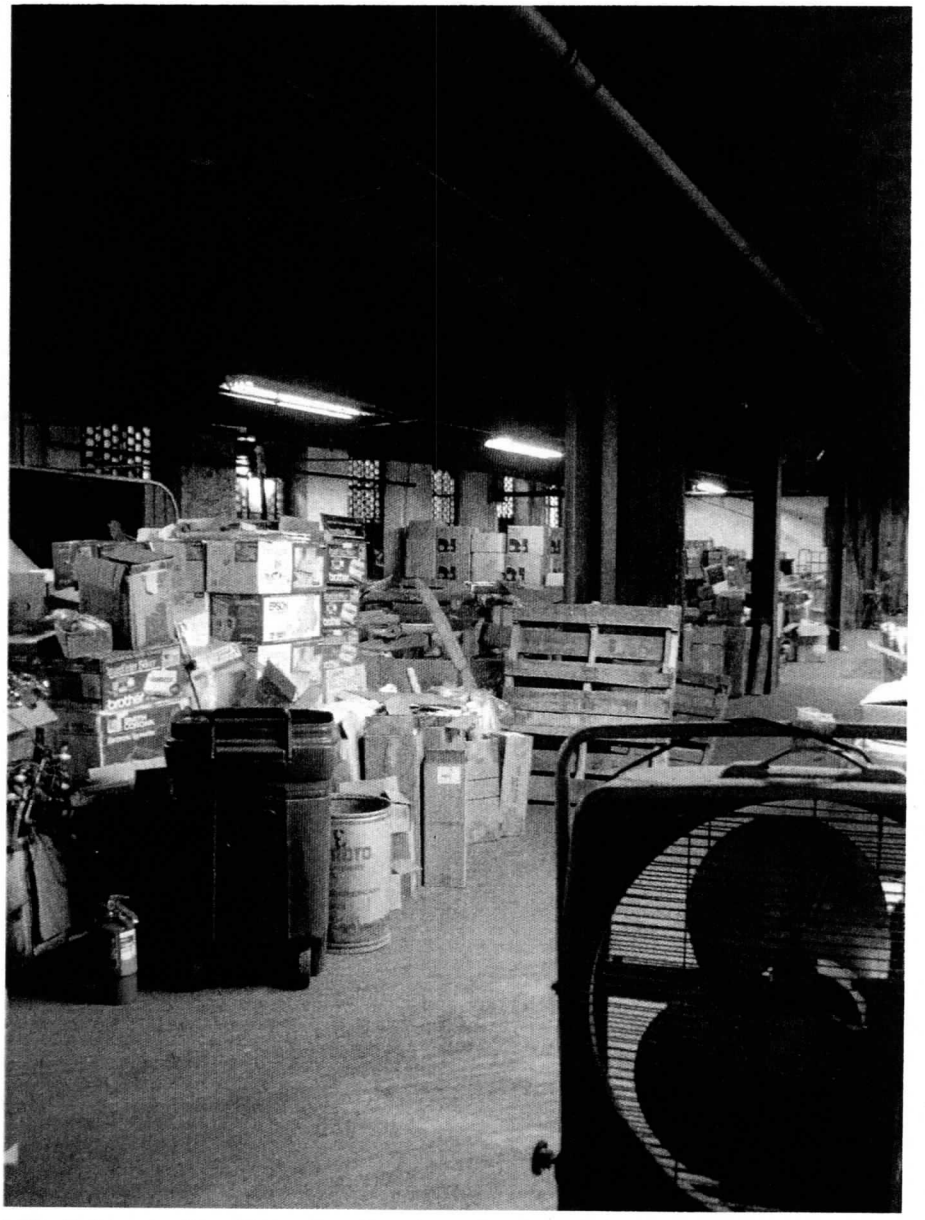
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Building Exterior – South Elev. of Bridge and Bldg. 1
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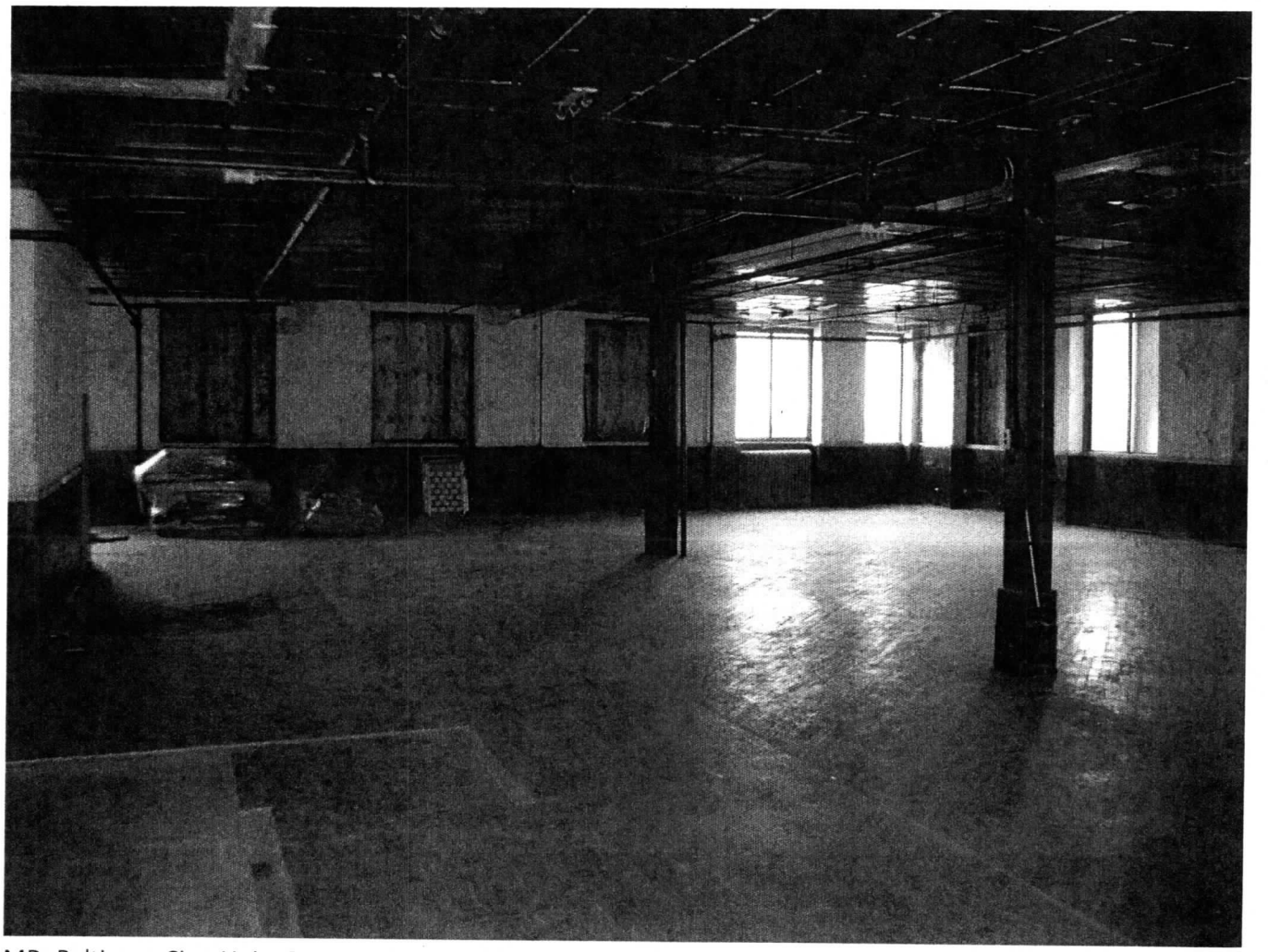
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Building Exterior – West Elev. of Bldg. 1 from Bldg. 2
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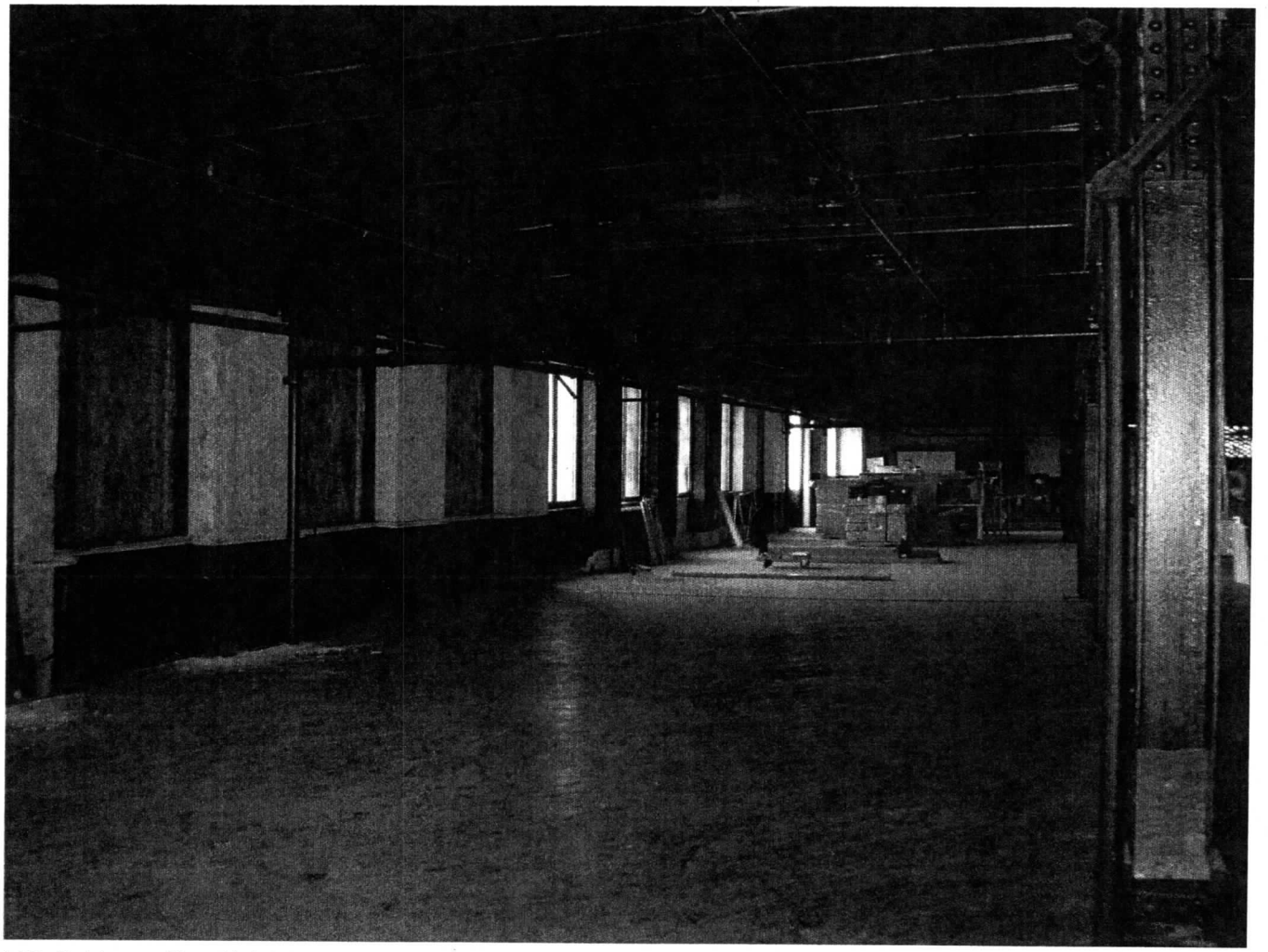
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First Floor – View South toward Bldg. 3 – Bldg. 1
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0014.tif
First Floor – View to Southeast – Bldg. 1
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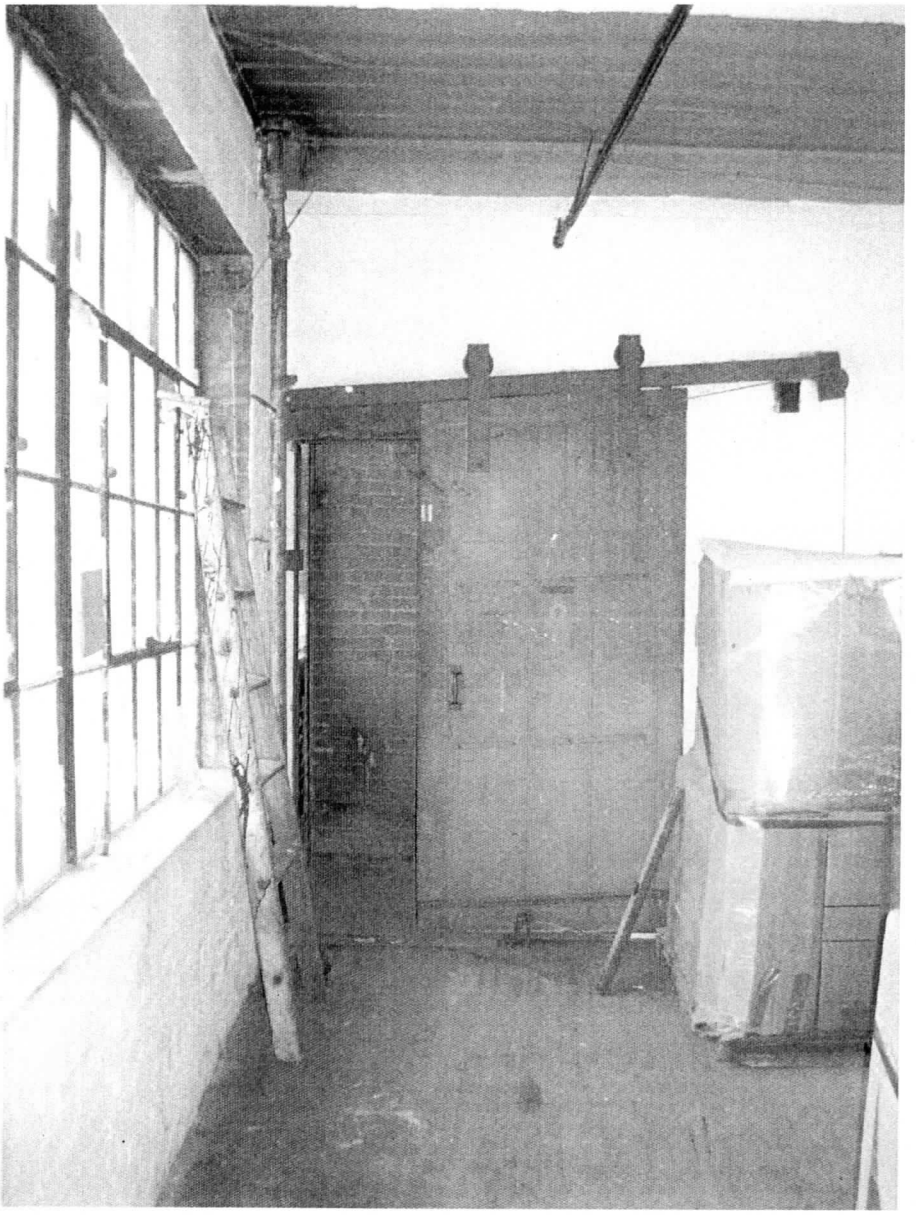
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Second Floor – View to Northeast – Bldg. 1
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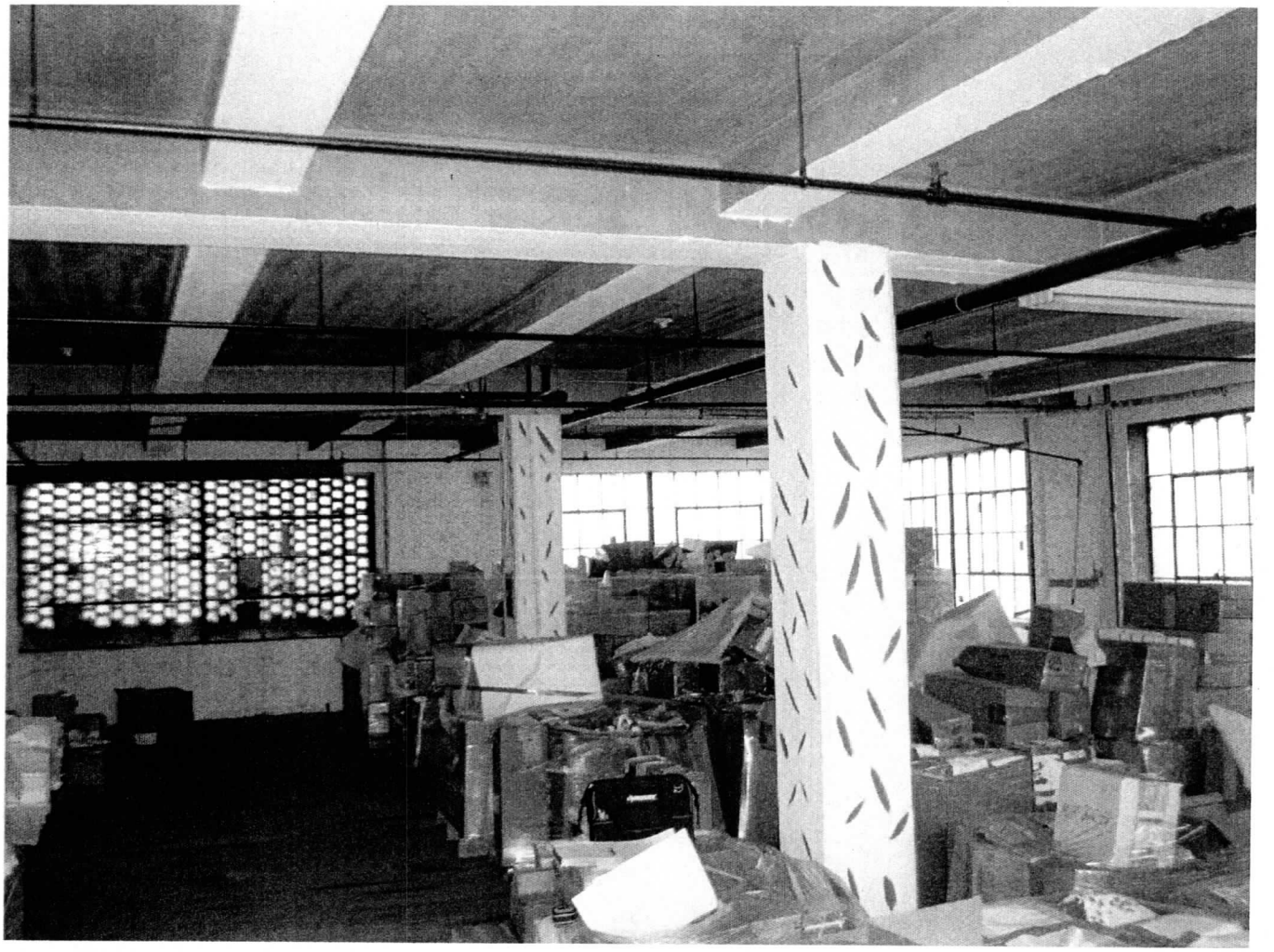
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Second Floor – View to Southeast – Bldg. 1
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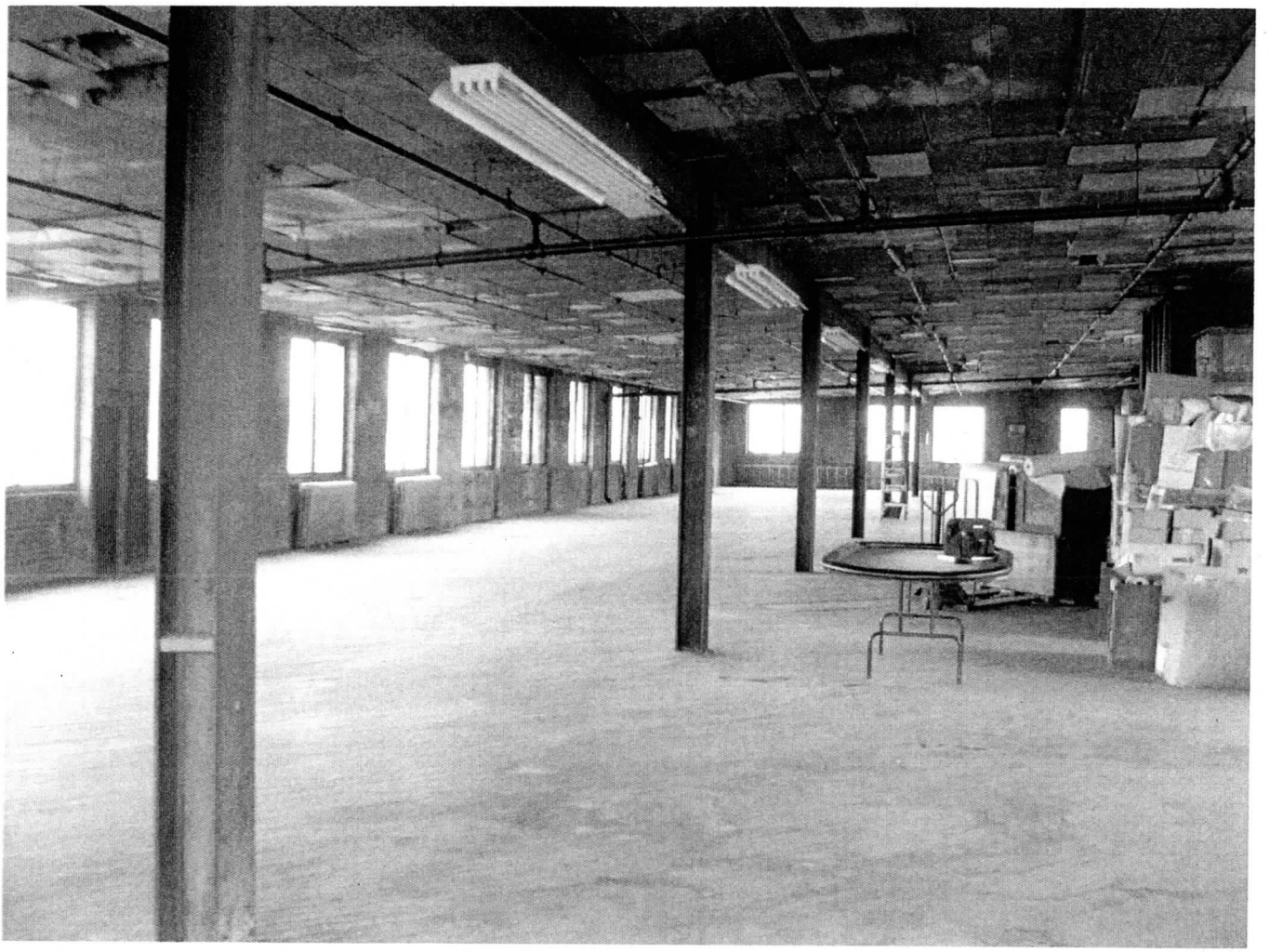
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Second Floor – View to Northwest – Bldg. 1
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0018.tif
Second Floor – View East toward Stair – Bldg. 2
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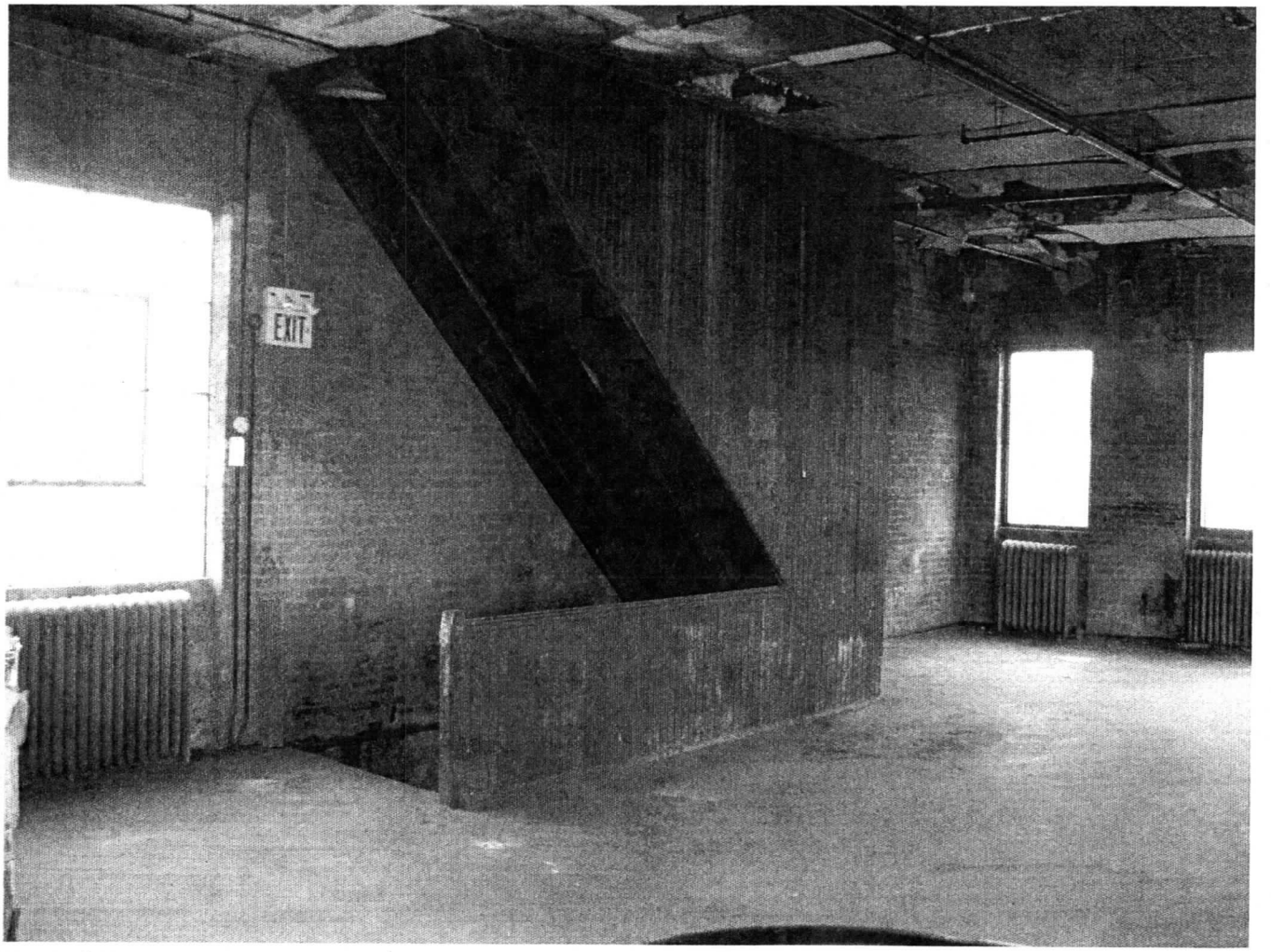
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Second Floor – View to Southwest – Bldg. 2
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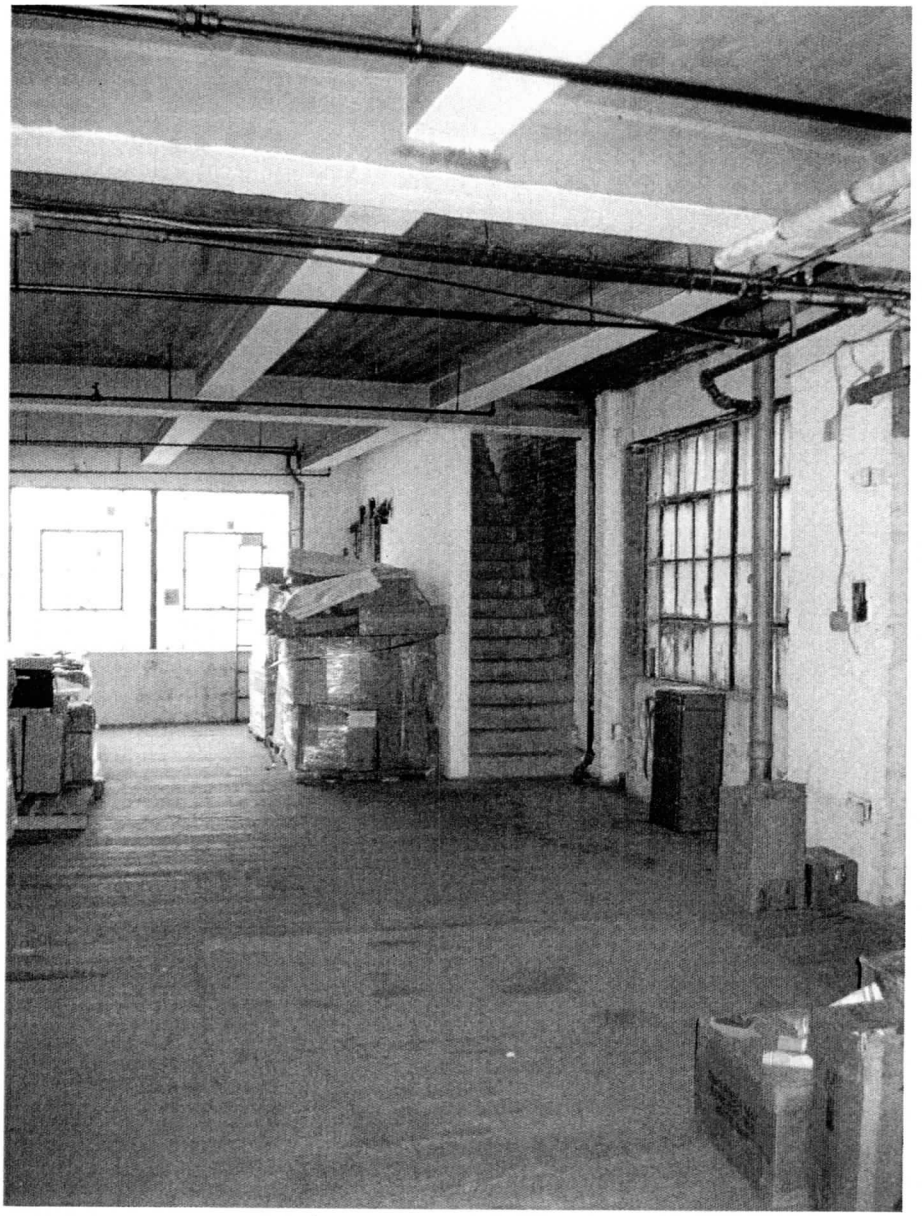
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Third Floor – View to Southeast – Bldg. 1
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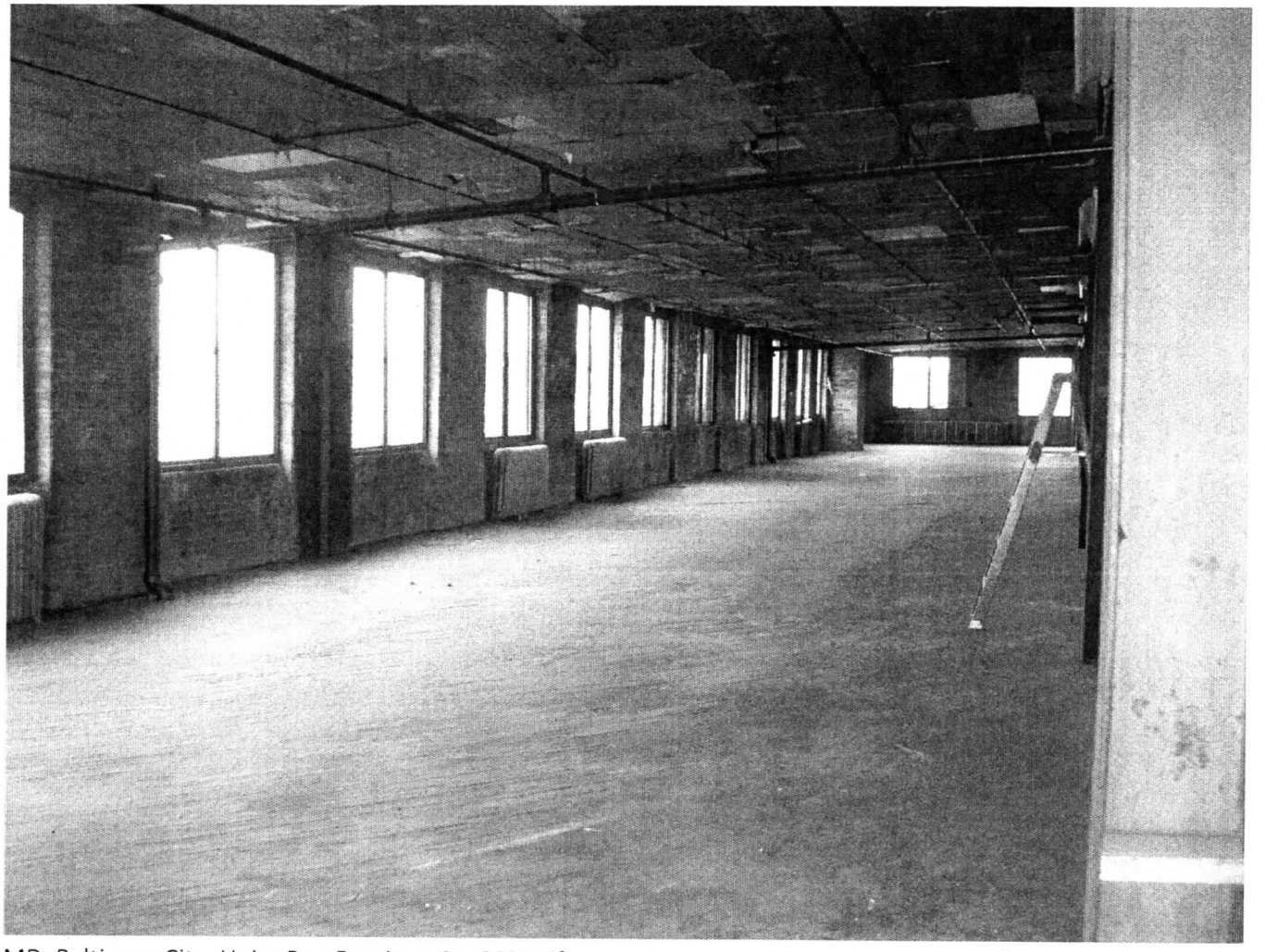
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Second Floor – View to Northeast – Bldg. 2
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0022.tif
Third Floor – View to Northwest and Stair – Bldg. 1
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0023.tif
Second Floor – View to North and Stair – Bldg. 2
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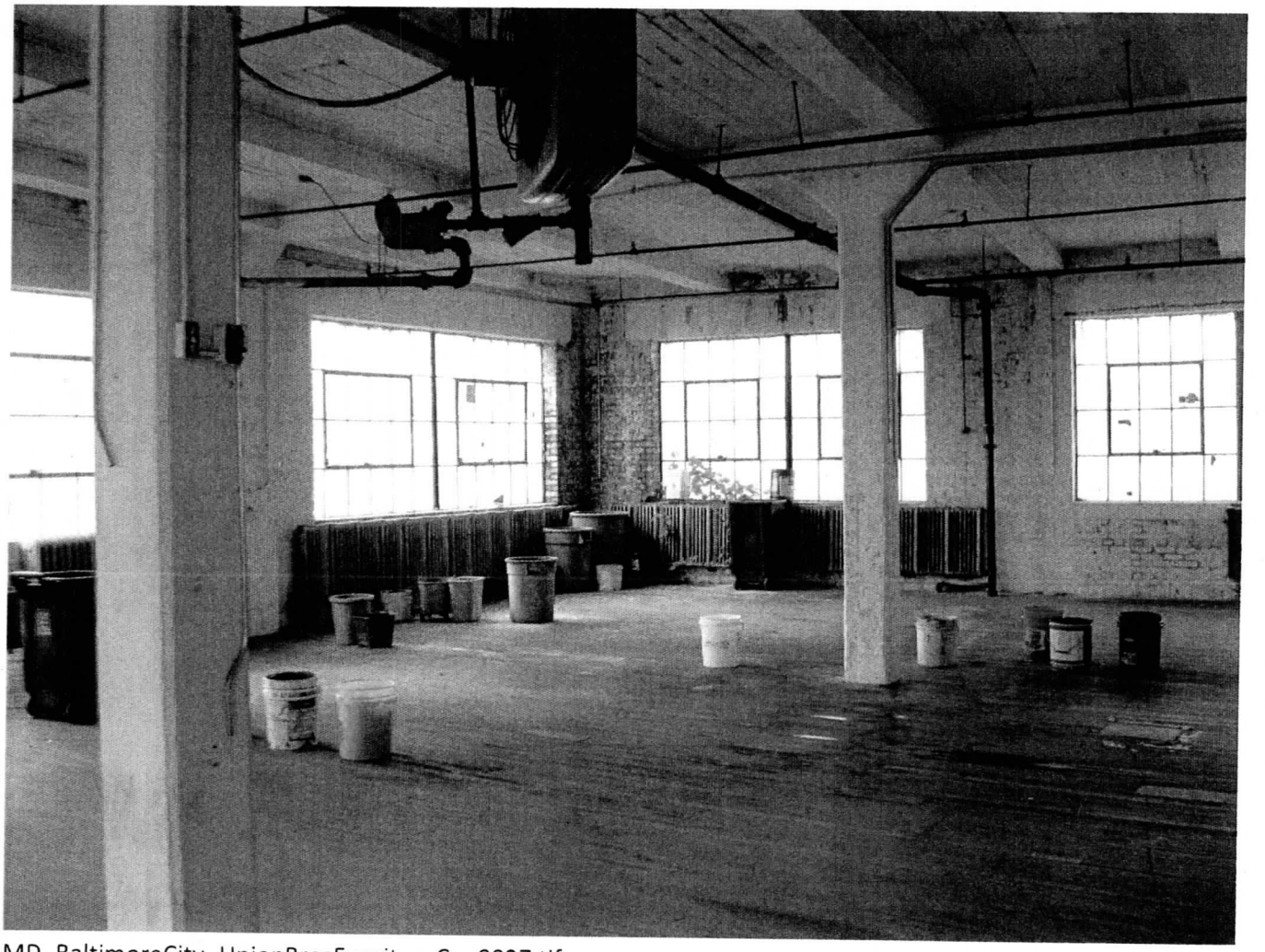
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Third Floor – View to Southeast – Bldg. 1
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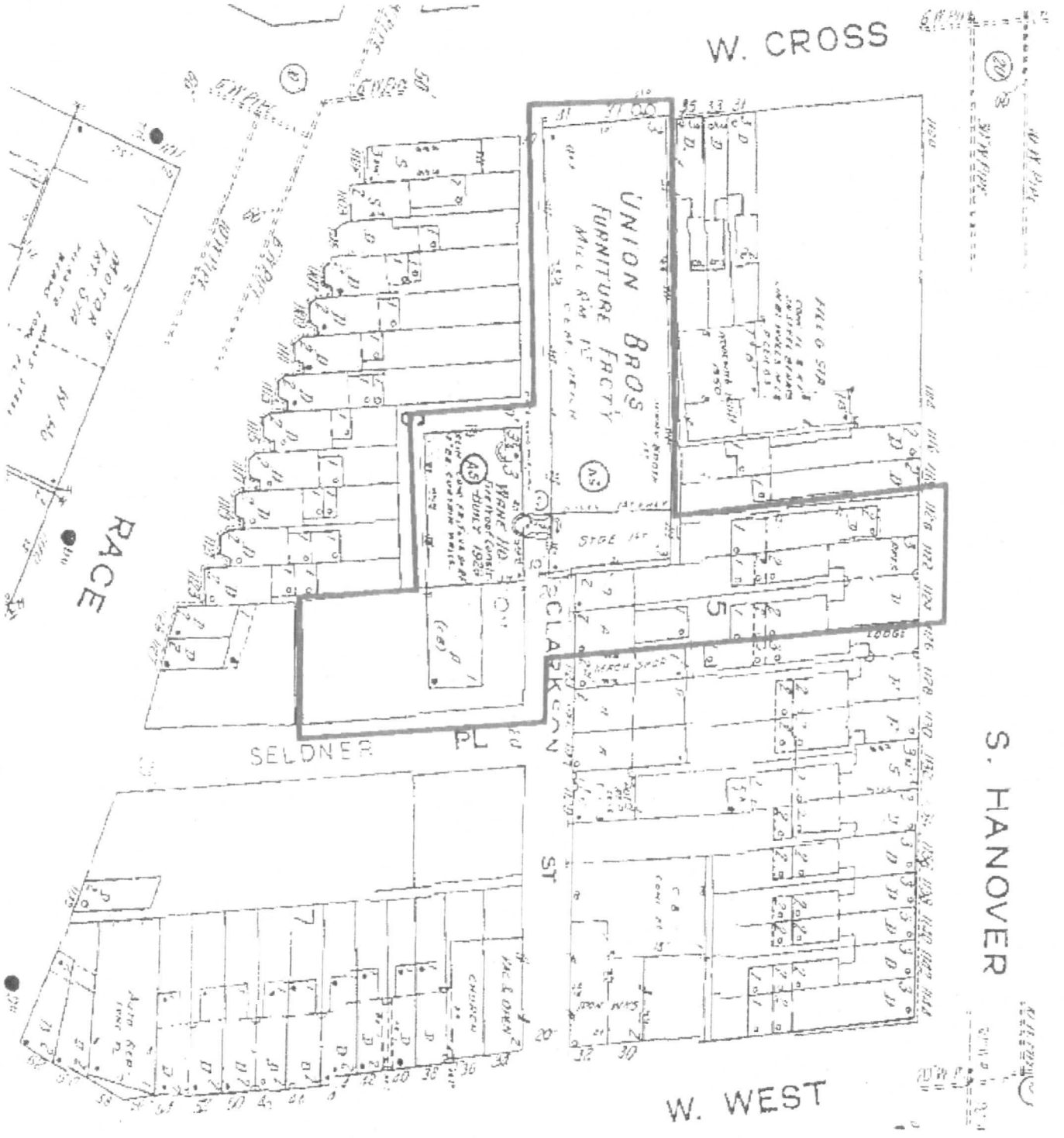
MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0025.tif
Third Floor – View to Northwest – Bldg. 1
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0026.tif
Third Floor – View Southeast to Bridge – Bldg. 2
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MD_BaltimoreCity_UnionBrosFurnitureCo_0027.tif
Third Floor – View to Northwest – Bldg. 2
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Site – Union Bros. Furniture Company
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map – 1953
Volume 1A
Sheet 75A

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