71

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

B-3705

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Canton House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

300 Water Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Baltimore City

CODE

510

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X__BUILDING(S)	X__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDEN
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Hartman, McLean & Schmidt, Inc.
Canton House Associates, a Ltd partnership, c/o Carl W. Schmidt, President

STREET & NUMBER

300 Water Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21202

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office, Room 601

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Municipal District Study

DATE

1977

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

B-3705

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Canton House is a 4½-story building of the Colonial Revival style. Its walls are composed of seven bays across the front (Water Street) facade and three bays across the side (South Street) facade. The exterior wall material is marble at the first story level and brick laid in Flemish bond from the second story up.

The main entrance, in the central bay of the front facade, is surrounded by a pilastered architrave and two fluted Corinthian columns. The entranceway is capped with a plain marble lintel. A similar entrance, with the exception of the pilasters, is located in the central bay of the side facade.

Shuttered triple windows flank either side of the main entrance, each set containing a central window with 8/8 lights and side windows of 6/6 lights. The first story end windows of both facades are shuttered and have 8/8 lights.

The marbled first story facades of the front and side are divided from the upper levels by a marble fascia. An identical fascia trims the top of the fourth floor.

In the central bay of the second and third stories of the front, and of the second story of the side, is a large window with sidelights. The central divisions have 8/8 lights and each sidelight has four lights. These windows are decorated with marble lugsills, a characteristic of all windows of the building, and arches of radiating voussoirs.

The remaining second, third, and fourth-story windows of the front and side facades have double-hung sash with 8/8 lights and flat-arched lintels of radiating voussoirs. Fourth story windows of both facades are noticeably shorter than the others.

The central window of the fourth story front is flanked by two circular details, one containing the date in which the Canton Company was founded, 1828, the other the date of the Canton House construction, 1923.

A gabled parapet caps the front facade. In the center of the gable is a semi-circular window with three divisions. The window has an arched lintel of radiating voussoirs and a marble lugsill.

In the roof level between the first and second, and second and third bays of the side facade are pedimented dormers. Each dormer contains a window of 8/8 lights.

The interior of the Canton House totals 16,747 square feet in floor area with 2,962 square feet per floor from the basement through the fourth floor and 1,937 square feet on the fifth (attic) floor. There were no major structural changes during the 1977 rehabilitation.

The cellar basically houses storage, mechanical and electrical (telephone and air conditioning) functions. Also included are an unimproved restroom and a paneled room, located in the southeast corner, to be converted into a lunch room at a later date. Of historical interest are the remnants of stone and brick foundations of buildings pre-dating the Baltimore Fire of 1904. These foundations indicate that the streets and sidewalks were widened during the reconstruction of the area, since they project under what is now the sidewalk along Water Street.

Behind the main entrance of the first (ground) level is a marble floor which extends through the elevator lobby. The marble was originally the wall material in the entry, but this area was widened during the rehabilitation to provide a possible reception area. The entry is presently unused. The double leaf, paneled door of the main entrance was installed as part of the rehabilitation. The panels are

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 1)

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(Rev 10-74)

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#7 DESCRIPTION (continued):

bevelled glass to reflect the Colonial character of the building. The office space of the first floor is sub-leased by the Canton House Associates to outside tenants.

The second, third and fourth floors have similar floor plans, with a walkway on an east-west axis giving access to offices basically laid out in a "U" plan. With exceptions in only several fourth story rooms, the ceilings of these floors have been slightly lowered to cover the newly installed central air conditioning ducts and a maze of other utility pipes installed in earlier years. The hung ceiling does not interfere with any of the architectural features (windows, doors, etc.).

The second floor is presently open and vacant. The Canton House Associates may retain this space for future expansion.

The third floor, fully carpeted, houses the reception, accounting and underwriting functions of the major tenant, Hartman, McLean and Schmidt, Inc., an independent insurance agency.

The fourth floor, also fully carpeted, contains the executive offices of Hartman, McLean & Schmidt, Inc. This floor, with its wainscoting, and plain cornice trim in several offices, is the most decorative of the building. An Adamesque mantel with flanking pilasters and three delicately detailed ovals, is located in the office at the southeast corner. Two large mahogany sliding doors separate this office and the executive conference room. The conference room is decorated with wainscoting and a plain wooden cornice trim. A bar, replacing a shower, was installed adjacent to the conference room during the rehabilitation.

The fifth (attic) floor is paneled and houses the personal lines department of the agency. This area, laid out with open offices, was left unchanged during the rehabilitation.

Paneled mahogany doors of natural wood finish have been retained throughout the building. Also characteristic of the entire building are attractive modernized restrooms, two on every floor except the cellar, and walk-in iron vaults, original elements presently used for storage.

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8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1923 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Smith & May, arch (Balt)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Canton House was designed and constructed as the headquarters of one of Baltimore's largest and most colorful businesses, the Canton Company. This business was established in 1828 by Peter Cooper, most remembered for inventing and manufacturing the Tom Thumb steam locomotive, and Ames Benney, a Boston entrepreneur. A number of top businessmen helped purchase 6000 acres of land, stretching from Harris' Creek to Back River, which would serve as the pier and service area of the Canton Company. This speculative venture was dependent on plans that called for the rapid construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, conceived to revitalize the local goods movement being eroded by the recently opened Erie Canal and Mississippi River steamship trade. By 1830 the State of Maryland endowed both companies with very lib .l benefits and the beginnings of two commercial giants were firmly established. Sinc. 1830 the Canton area, through the efforts of the Canton Company, has served as a nerve center of import and export traffic, and as a large manufacturing center for the entire Baltimore area.

The Canton House was conceived by Walter B. Brooks, then president of the Canton Company, with the idea of giving the company a permanent homelike atmosphere. He suggested that the design of the home building should reflect the beginnings of the company that had been identified with the growth of Baltimore for almost a century. Consequently, it was decided that the building should follow the "Colonial" style popular in this state when the Canton Company was in its formative period.

When completed the Canton House received many compliments on its architectural design: "By the simplicity of its Colonial outline and the dignity of its style it arrests the eye of the passerby and wins from even the casual at least a moment's notice as a tribute to its beauty." (The Baltimore Sun, May 4, 1924.)

The Canton House is located within the boundaries of the Municipal District Urban Renewal Area. The Area was designated in 1973 to assure the preservation of the many fine, architecturally significant buildings concentrated within the district. The recently renovated City Hall and the Block, currently undergoing renovation, are locatec in the area.

Early in 1977 the Canton Company moved its offices to the World Trade Center in the Inner Harbor.

The Canton House has recently undergone interior renovation by its new owners, Canton House Associates, for commercial use as a modern office building. Hartman, McLean and Schmidt, Inc., the main tenant of the building, is one of the largest genera insurance agents in the Baltimore area.

B-3705

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Simplicity Marks Canton House." The Baltimore Sun, May 4, 1924.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Baltimore East QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24 000

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	361002	4350820	B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

CS

NAME / TITLE
Bill Tamburrino, Planning Assistant

ORGANIZATION
Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation

DATE
1977

STREET & NUMBER
100 North Holliday Street

TELEPHONE
(301) 396-4866

CITY OR TOWN
Baltimore

STATE
Maryland 21202

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

TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

B-3705
Canton House

Baltimore East Quad

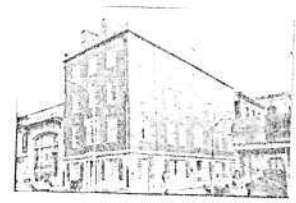
BALTIMORE METROCENTER SURVEY

SURVEY NO.: B-3705

AREA: Financial District

MAGI NO.: 0437055711

Address: 300 Water Street
Current Name: Canton House



Block: 1348 Lot: 9
Height: 4 1/2 stories
Condition: Good
Use: Office
Designation: NR

Lot size: 39' x 83'
Materials: Brick
Owner: Canton House Ass. Lim. Part.
Accessible: Yes
Liber/Folio: RHB 3451-409

Historic Name: Canton House
Date: 1923
Architect/Builder: Smith and May
Style (if appropriate): Colonial

Description:

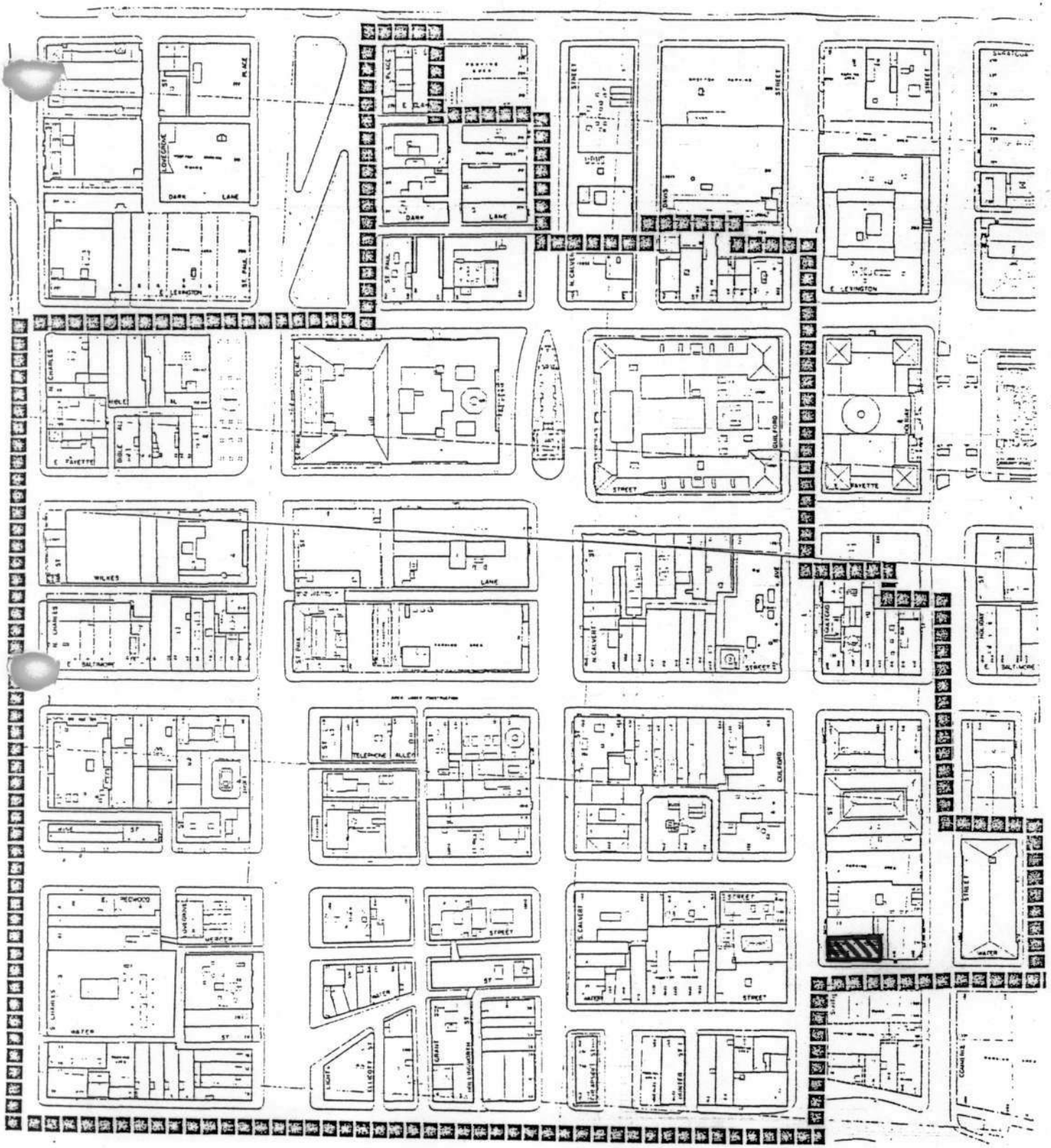
This four and one-half story high brick building at the north east corner of Water and South Streets features Colonial style architecture. The South Street facade is three bays wide and the Water Street elevation is seven bays wide. Both elevations have central recessed wood and glass door entances on the first floor flanked by fluted Doric columns. The limestone first floor walls are punctuated by wood frame windows with decorative wood shutters. The upper floor walls are built of Flemish bond brick. Most of the windows are eight over eight with stone sills and splayed brick lintels. Three part segmentally arched windows are located above the entrances. A simple stone cornice completes the building walls. Above the cornice is a gabled slate roof and two dormers along South Street. The brick gable end at Water Street features a large semi-circular window. Two date stones displaying the years 1828 and 1923 are located at the fourth floor of the Water Street facade, while a Fire Insurance plaque is visible at South Street.

Significance:
Area: Architecture

Level: Local

The Canton House was built in a Colonial style of architecture reflecting the architecture of the day when the Canton Company was founded in 1828. It in some ways represents on a grand scale the earliest houses located in what is now the Financial District. The building is significant for both its unusual Colonial Revival style architecture and the history of the Canton Company. The Canton Company played an important role in the development of the Canton community and the large industrial complex in that southeast Baltimore neighborhood. The building was designed by Smith and May, the architects of some of the few 1920s and 30s buildings constructed in the Financial District.

Sources: BS 3/16/1923 p. 15 c. 3; BS 3/29/1923 p. 18 c.3.
Surveyor and Date: Fred B. Shoken, April 1985.



Baltimore Financial District Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland

N

B-3705 Canton House
300 Water Street

300 Water Street

B-3705

Canton House
300 Water Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Fred Shoken
Date: October 1983
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Southwest corner view