



T O U R S



BALTIMORE
21 FEBRUARY 1987

Hon:

Included on this tour are as many sites of CA interest as could reasonably be crammed into a logical two hour route. Some are particular favourites (I admit to sometimes detouring de tour to accommodate these), others are serious sites that must be included on any thorough tour of local CA, while a few happily happen to be along for the ride.

Preparation of this tour was a labour of love, a tribute to my native town, a chance to showcase not only CA, but also various neighborhoods and landmarks. I only wish we had more than two hours.

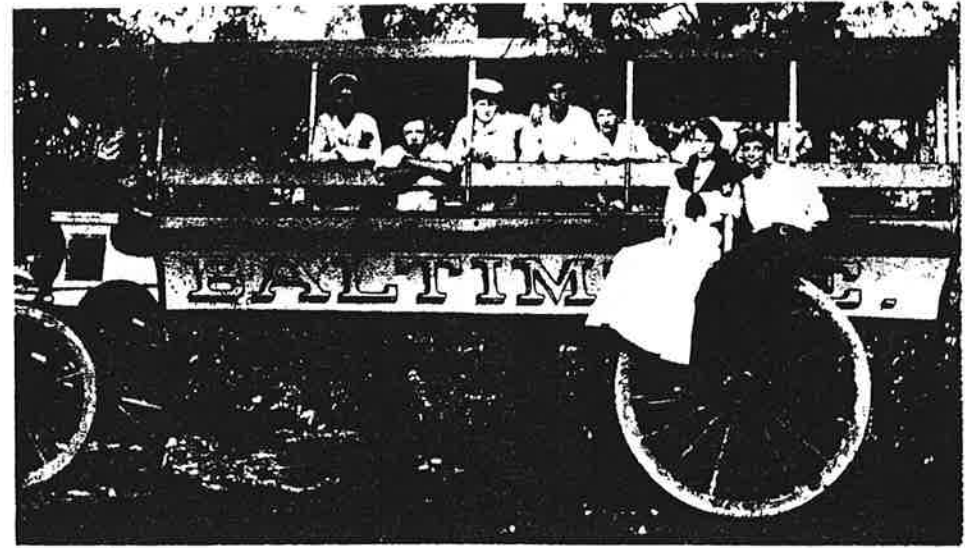
Many of you will be staying around for duckpin bowling tonight, brunch at Baltimore's deco-est house tomorrow, maybe even a movie at the Senator and more sightseeing. I hope you enjoy your stay in Bawlmer, hon.

I am grateful to all who helped me plan the tour and this weekend's other events, especially Robin Bissell of Esskay Quality Meat Company for the hats, glossies, and enthusiasm; Tom Kiefaber of the Senator Theatre for movie passes; Frank and Michel Pratka for brunch, bunks, and friendship; the folks at the City's Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation for their encouragement; and Fred Shoken for his time, patience, moral support, and incredible wit.

Let's get on the road!

Hon

Donna Beth Joy Shapiro
Society for Commercial Archeology



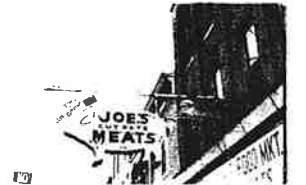
CAPTAIN JAMES LANDING
Boston & Aliceanna Streets

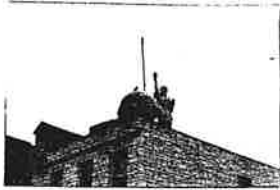
Built in 1985 by the five Tserkis brothers, this seafood restaurant is ironically sited very close to the water's edge. The Tserkis' opted for the ship shape because it made full use of the valuable triangular plot and also as homage to the vessel that brought one of the brothers to the USA from Greece in 1966. Captain James Landing is named after that ship's captain.



SIEMEK'S MEAT MARKET
1821 Fleet Street

This pig was probably happier cloaked in yellow and adorned with neon, but he still attracts customers and delights passersby.





TUTTI FRUTTI ICE CREAM COMPANY
520 South Caroline Street

A phone call to determine if strawberry, the flavour of the giant ice cream cone atop the Tutti Frutti building, is the favourite of owner Ernest Dinenna led to an invitation for our group to come sample all 70 flavours (unfortunately, Tutti Frutti closes at 2 P.M. on Saturdays). Mr. Dinenna discovered the ice cream cone, with bird firmly attached, at an auction around 12 years ago. Memories of landing at Ellis Island and seeing the Statue of Liberty at the age of eight prompted the installation of Miss Liberty during her centennial summer.



KID'S DINER
Holliday & Saratoga Streets

This is the Fells Point Diner from the 1982 MGM film, "Diner," modeled on the Hilltop Diner on Reisterstown Road that writer-director Barry Levinson frequented in the late 50s - early 60s. The Kid's Diner was built in the 50s and used in Long Island. After starring in the film, it was purchased by WBAL and donated to the City of Baltimore, where it is staffed by vocational high school students training for careers in food service.

WERNER'S
231 East Redwood Street

Step into the time warp that is Werner's! Opened as The Fountain in 1938, Werner's has been lovingly owned and operated since 1 January 1950 by Jane and Bob Kloetzli and family. Werner's has recently appeared in local TV ads and in a scene from "The Tin Men" (Barry Levinson's companion piece to "Diner," premiering tomorrow night at the Senator Theatre). Everything's home cooked and they're open for breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday. Ask Jane or Bob to light the blue lights beside the mirrors.

MARYLAND NATIONAL BANK
Light & Baltimore Streets

Designed by Taylor & Fisher, Smith & May, and built in 1929 as the Mathieson Building, this award-winning structure was acknowledged to be Baltimore's first major example of skyscraper architecture (a claim it held for decades). This building is easily one of the City's most lavishly ornamented inside and out, covered with sculptural and painted symbols of Mayan culture and Baltimore's commerce, industry and history.





KRESGE'S
Park Avenue & Lexington Street

Designed by Emile Jehle and built in 1937, #20 remained in constant use by Kresge's until 1984, when it was bought and somewhat insensitively altered by Drug Fair.



LEXINGTON MARKET
Lexington & Paca Streets

The oldest, largest, and most famous of Baltimore's public markets, Lexington Market was established on this site in 1782 by John Eager Howard as "Howard's Hill." The first market building was erected in 1804 and renamed in 1818 in honor of General Howard's Revolutionary War campaign at the Battle of Lexington. The market has been rebuilt several times, but has always remained open.

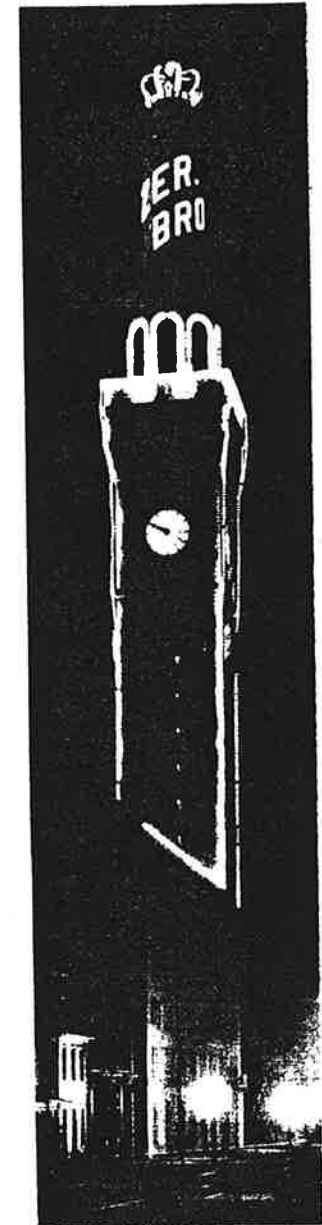


BROMO SELTZER TOWER
Eutaw & Lombard Streets

This building is a monument to Captain Isaac Emerson, the chemist who developed the famous headache remedy and named it after Mt. Bromo, an active volcano in Java. Designed by Joseph Evans Sperry to resemble the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence and built in 1911, this 307 feet high building was capped by a 17 ton, 51 feet tall, 20 1/2 feet

in diameter facsimile of a Bromo Seltzer bottle. The blue steel bottle, 10,000,000 times larger than the ten-cent original, had 596 electric lights, made 2 revolutions per minute and reportedly could be seen at a distance of 20 miles. Structural damage prompted its removal in 1936. The building was donated to the City in 1967 and renamed the Baltimore Arts Tower, headquartering the Mayor's Advisory Council on Art and Culture.

Note: When completed in 1911, the building was the tallest in Baltimore and boasted the world's largest 4 dial gravity clock, with faces 24 feet in diameter. The Tower Building, built in 1912 at Baltimore Street & Guilford Avenue, had an even larger clock, a Seth Thomas with faces 27 feet in diameter. Tragically, the Tower Building was demolished in 1986, making the Bromo Seltzer Tower's clock once again the largest (in Baltimore). The developer of the Tower Building site has promised to reconstruct the clock tower, complete with its fine repousse cap, on the new building. No comment on the odds.





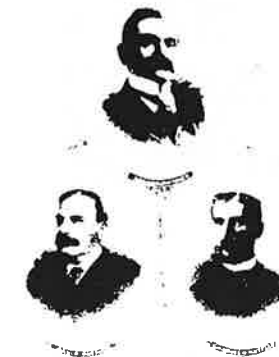
HUTZLER'S
212 South Howard Street

Designed by J. Edmunds, Jr., this award-winning Art Moderne skyscraper was constructed in two stages in 1932 and 1941. Hutzler's boasted the City's first up and down escalators, fluorescent lights, and dial telephones. Shopping in this store was pure theatre, permeated by an evocative fragrance of yesteryear. Hutzler's salespeople prided themselves on providing enthusiastic service with a smile. And when the stomach growled, nothing could beat the luncheonette's chow mein or a sandwich on cheese bread, capped with a chocolate sundae. Rum buns, available only on Wednesdays, were more than well worth the wait at the mezzanine level bakery, and often consumed during what could be an endless wait for one's car in the ever-jammed garage. Automatic elevators were always staffed, lest a customer need put down a package to punch a button. The customer always came first.

Do I sound more than a trifle bit nostalgic? I'm guilty. It was the only place we shopped, for my Zadie was a buyer there for 51 years. I mourn for the end - of - August shopping sprees, when my Mom insisted (every year) that the school year could not begin without new socks and underwear (I

still stock up on these items every summer's end). I wish I still had access to the WWII plaque beside the first floor elevators, honouring Hutzler's employees involved in the war, to locate Zadie's name. I miss the familiar pink and burgandy boxes. And I bristle thinking about the insensitivity and plain stupidity of the new owners, who transformed the last major family-owned department store in the country into a bland, useless shopping experience when they closed the Hutzler Tower in 1984 and opened a new store down the street on the site of the Hoschild-Kohn department store (another venerable Baltimore institution - ask me about the demise of that building). My anger increases, reflecting on past and current battles with the state of Maryland and others involved in the raping and pillaging of the building in their careless transformation of the Tower into the Department of Human Resources headquarters and retail space.

Nostalgia aside, this building deserved a better fate.





THE DIAMOND

519 North Howard Street

John McGraw, manager of the Orioles and Giants, and Wilbert Robinson, who played longer for the Orioles than anyone until Brooks Robinson, owned this saloon / billiards hall / gym / bowling alley where they invented duckpin bowling at the turn of the century (no two references agree on the same date, let alone what prompted its invention - some say it provided a summer alternative to heavy exertion ten pin bowling, was less dangerous to Orioles' arms, or provided a use for unsalvagably damaged balls and pins, which were cut and shaved down to duckpin size). Duckpin balls weigh 4 to 5 pounds, the pins under 2 pounds, compared to 6 to 16 pound ten pin balls and 4 pound pins. McGraw and Robinson said flying duckpins looked like flying ducks, hence, the name (again, according to some). Duckpins are found in only 5 states, all on the East Coast.

Note: I come from a long line of duckpin bowlers and I'm looking forward to tonight's challenge. Ask to see my trophies and my Mom's Triple Header Strike certificate.

WHITE TOWER

550 North Howard Street

Keen eyes will recognize this White Tower as the cover star of Paul Hirshorn and Steve Izenour's White Towers. #8 in Baltimore, it was built in 1948 and is notable also for its signage, which was the first to employ the slashed T.

Note: We recently learned that this White Tower is slated to close. The parent company, the Tombrock Corporation, has offered to move the building to a more profitable site in Baltimore (if one can be found) or sell the building to the City. The City would consider another use for it at its present location, or moving it next to the Kid's Diner. SCA has been invited to submit recommendations on the future of this little gem.





GREYHOUND

Howard & Centre Streets

Designed by Wischmeyer, Arrasmith & Elswick, this award-winning terminal opened with great fanfare in 1942. One of the only bus terminals built with an on-site service garage, it was the subject of a laudatory 1945 "Pencil Points" magazine article, describing it "as progressive a plan solution to the problem as has been built to date." The terminal has been bought by the City, and the fight to restore/reuse this most handsome structure has already begun. Acquired for residential/office/retail use, the vultures have indicated their desire to demolish the garage for parking (wouldn't it be more desirable to park in it?) and bulldoze the terminal for a highrise, though at least one developer has indicated interest in incorporating the terminal and even possibly the garage into a mixed use development. Preservationists foresee a very uphill battle.



SKARIE

707 North Howard Street

Erected in 1942, this sign looks as if it's had as hard a life as a real saw blade. Vandals long ago destroyed its neon tubing, and sheer age has rendered it almost unreadable. The City requested its removal, though it was saved by fortunately not hanging in a

district covered by overhanging signage regulations (see United Sanitary). Skarie considered relighting the sign, but constant vandalism of their building convinced them that the sign would again become a target. The sign, however, will be removed, restored - sans neon - and rehung sometime this year. Kudos to Skarie!

UNITED SANITARY

1901 North Howard Street

An informal poll indicates that this is pretty much everyone's favourite neon sign in town, though we haven't been treated to the little guy mopping back and forth in years. We might never again, if the City of Baltimore has it's way - United Sanitary has been hounded for several years to remove the sign, due to overhanging signage regulations (several neon signs of major importance have come down because of this regulation, most notably the RCA Victor sign on Greenmount Avenue, which thankfully can still be seen at the Peale Museum). The sign, designed by Triangle Sign in 1944 and installed two years later, is so well-loved by the company that United Sanitary has threatened to move its business to Baltimore County if the City continues to push for its removal. If the City relents, the sign will be repaired and we'll again thrill





CHESAPEAKE CADILLAC
2401 North Charles Street

Designed by Howard F. Baldwin and built in 1930, this building has always serviced as a Cadillac dealership.



DAWN'S OFFICE SUPPLY
2418 North Charles Street

Dawn's is known for its giant pencil and also its delivery truck topped by a plastic German Shepard's head. Dawn was the first seeing eye dog of the office supply store's owner.



J. LINARDI & SON SHOE REPAIR
2437 Saint Paul Street

The sign, of pre-WWII vintage, has remained unlit for years due to constant vandalism.



LE MILLET PRIVATE ART ACADEMY
2415 Saint Paul Street

Fabricated approximately 25 years ago by Belsinger Sign Works, the owner designed it to be relatively vandal-proof, encasing the white neon in plexiglass. Le Millet opened 40 years ago across the street, advertised by a palette and brush sign in wood. Celebrating a new location, this more elaborate sign was created (the original rests in Le Millet's basement).

HARRY LITTLE'S SUB SHOP
515 East 25th Street

This red, white, and blue submarine has wetted appetites for at least 29 years.

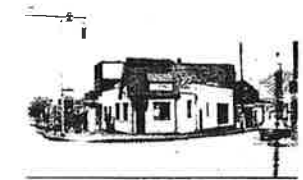


STONE TAVERN
506 East 25th Street

This rustic-looking diner reflects the turnpike history of York Road (Greenmount Avenue), the adjacent cross street.

LITTLE TAVERN
32nd Street & Greenmount Ave.

The sighting of Little Tavern Shops pleased Phillip Langdon, author of Orange Roofs, Golden Arches: The Architecture of American Chain Restaurants, on a recent visit to Baltimore, calling them "unusual gems." A Baltimore - Washington chain, this is #2.



BUTTER CRISP BAKERY
3215 Greenmount Avenue

Built in 1938 as Rabai's Bakery, it has remained virtually unchanged, except for the recent removal of the original bakery cases.





MEMORIAL STADIUM
33rd Street & Eilerslie Avenue

Erected in 1954, and voted the best baseball stadium in the country by "Sports Illustrated," the Stadium's fate hangs in the balance as government officials appear ready to succumb to vague threats that the Orioles will move unless the City builds a new stadium - threats which Orioles owner Edward Bennett Williams denies making. In its infinite wisdom, the government has determined that two new stadiums are needed, just in case a major football team should decide to relocate here. The recommended site? Historic Camden Yards, smack in the middle of downtown and adjacent to several historic neighborhoods. A Sunpapers survey conducted last week shows Marylanders, and especially Baltimoreans, against the building of one, let alone two stadiums.

RUN INN
3336 Greenmount Avenue

In business for about 25 years, the Run Inn's a favourite among local coffee shop aficionados.



SENATOR THEATRE
5904 York Road

Designed by John Zink and built in 1939, this remains one of the finest Art Deco movie palaces on the East Coast. The Senator attracts patrons from far and wide, for they know that it is the only place in town to see a movie. At night, The Senator makes quite a spectacle of herself, with red, green, and yellow neon glowing beneath the glass block. Once inside, the appreciative movie-goer finds a mostly intact, extremely well maintained interior, including a circular, muraled lobby overlooked by a lounge and the theatre itself, with its ceiling neon, wall sconces, and private viewing booths. Durkee Enterprises, the original owner, has shown a real commitment to keeping this 950 seat (originally 1,100) house untwinned by planning to build a small theatre (the first in decades with a balcony) behind the main building. "Diner" premiered here in 1982, "The Tin Men" tomorrow night.





ROLAND PARK SHOPPING CENTER
4800 Roland Avenue

Designed by J. B. Noel Wyatt and William G. Nolting in the Tudor Half Timber style, this 1896 structure claims the first shopping center in the United States title. Roland Park, laid out by Frederick Olmsted, Jr., was the first planned community in the country.



GREEN SPRING DAIRY
1020 West 41st Street

Designed by Lucius White and built in 1937, the central tower of this beautifully simple brick and glass block structure is capped by a huge metal milk can. Its dairy store is still open seven days a week.

PEPSI SIGN
1650 Union Avenue

Used as a major reference point by Jones Falls Expressway drivers and backdrop for TV reporters broadcasting live from the 41st Street Bridge during snowstorms (which in Baltimore can mean half an hour of flurrying), the Pepsi Sign has provided the time and temperature since 7 November 1969, except between 8 November 1973 and 23 June 1975, at the height of the first energy crisis.

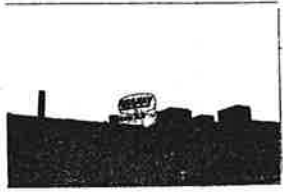
CLOVERLAND DAIRY
Monroe Street & Windsor Avenue

Established in 1912 and still family-owned, Cloverland erected this building in 1952. The milk bottle was once painted with the company's advertising. Sadly, now the owners couldn't be less enthusiastic about their whimsical headquarters. Ask me to sing the jingle.

THE BLOCK
400 Block Baltimore Street

The Block was at one time a world famous burlesque district, encompassing several blocks of Baltimore Street. The 400 block alone had 15 theatres. Surrounded by the Inner Harbour, financial district, and (ironically) police headquarters and City Hall, the City keeps chipping away at this valuable real estate, with its neon future looking very dim. Notable relics include the 2 O'Clock Club sign, with its alternately flashing neon 2 and naked lady.





ESSKAY QUALITY MEAT COMPANY
3800 East Baltimore Street

Standing 30 feet tall (the E is 12 feet high), this orange and blue flashing neon beauty was fabricated in 1931 for \$5,000 by Belsinger Sign Works. The sign was struck by lightning in 1976 and remained dark until 1986, when it was repaired at a cost of \$20,000 and relit by 44-year union Esskay employee, Fred Lengsfeld, to symbolize Esskay's new five year contract with its employees and its renewed commitment to Baltimore. This temperamental sign costs approximately \$20,000 to power and maintain.

EASTERN AVENUE

Highlandtown and Fells Point

This two mile stretch of Eastern Avenue features countless bars and other establishments adorned with glass block back-lit by neon, stainless steel doors, curved glass fronts and terrazzo pavement. My grandparents' department store, Brozer's, was located next door to Epstein's (chubby sized children's clothes were invented at Brozer's upon the recommendation to a manufacturer by my grandmother, who could not find well-fitting duds for my at one time generously proportioned aunt and other hefty customers). Of note is the Durkee-owned Patterson Theatre sign, the only vertical-reading neon theatre sign still operating in Baltimore, and art-stuffed Haussner's Restaurant (the food's terrific, too). Splitting the strip is Patterson Park, whose pagoda was restored several years ago with donated funds and labour.





DOMINO SUGARS
1100 Key Highway East

Easily the most recognizable sign of any type in Baltimore, it is the largest neon sign on the East Coast - the D alone is 32 feet tall. Fabricated in New York by the Artcraft Strauss Sign Company and erected atop the Amstar plant in 1951, it is comprised of 650 neon tubes, each 8 feet in length. The sign was turned off in 1979 during the second energy crisis and relit in 1983 following a \$50,000 renovation. Maintenance and power cost \$70,000 annually. Baltimoreans barrage Amstar with complaints whenever the sign functions less than perfectly.

Text and photos
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