A Brutal Truth:
The Threatened Legacy of Baltimore's Brutalist and Urban Renewal Architecture

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As I close this chapter of my life, I am so grateful for my experience at the University of Virginia. I know that it will help me as I move forward with my career. After nearly 20 years as a student, I am ready to begin applying this knowledge to the community and bring awareness to the significance of architectural history in that area.

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Introduction

Dominating the corners of prominent Charles and Baltimore streets, the threatened avant-garde design of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater (fig. 1), completed by architect John Johansen in 1967, embodies Baltimore's urban renewal spirit and deserves recognition for its role in directing architectural excellence and a revitalized urban identity throughout the city during the 20th century. Simultaneously imposing and engaging, the squat, abstracted concrete form of the theater stands in direct contrast to the forest of sleek-lined high rises throughout the city, commanding attention from all who encounter it. Unfortunately, the expressiveness that warranted praise and influenced design throughout the city has resulted in the Mechanic's decline. Once Baltimore's only legitimate theater, the restoration of the historic Hippodrome Theater in 2004 provided the city with an alternative and improved space for theater performances[1].

Now closed for a decade, the Mechanic stands as a decaying reminder of the city's attempt to revitalize its downtown area. Despite its significance, both architecturally and culturally, Baltimore has recently dismissed the value of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater. Rather than preserving its integrity, Baltimore officials have neglected to understand how the Mechanic Theater positively shaped the city and have instead elected to replace the structure.[2] This decision threatens to erase the legacy of urban

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[1] The term "Legitimate Theater" refers "the live presentation, available to the general public, of stage productions by professional performing artists, including but not limited to plays, musicals, and other forms of expression that may incorporate dance, music and/or other elements." Meredith J. Kane and Salvatore Gogliormella, "Legitimate Theater," *New York Law Journal*, May 30, 2007, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.paulweiss.com/media/103823/KaneNYLJ30May07.pdf.

[2] Kevin Litten, "David S. Brown's Planned 29-story Tower on Baltimore's West Side Moves Forward," *Baltimore Business Journal*, July 18, 2013, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2013/07/david-s-browns-planned-29-story.html

renewal from Baltimore's architectural narrative and our understanding of the city's cultural landscapes. Establishing the broader context for the Mechanic, however, demonstrates the need to consider the significance of this design and how it has ultimately allowed the city to become what it is today.

Modern Monuments: Constructing Urban Identity in Baltimore City

Like many other American cities, the social and economic issues experienced in Baltimore City during the early half of the 20th century drove many families to move out of the city.[3] The decline in industrialization followed by the state of unrest during the World Wars, resulted in the suspension of many revitalization projects and, subsequently, the further stagnation of the downtown commercial area. By the late 1940's, Baltimore officials, concerned with the poor living and working conditions of the city, determined to revitalize its neighborhoods, and most importantly, its downtown core. Hoping to bring people back into the city, they resolved to breathe Baltimore back to life. Architecture, according to these officials, would serve as the main tool in marketing the city as a viable social and economic presence throughout Maryland and throughout the country[4]. Charles Center (fig. 2), the earliest, and perhaps most influential project in the city of that era, relied heavily on this idea[5]. The design of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater satisfied this desire and would serve as the earliest example of urban renewal's success in Baltimore.

While the city had already begun clearing blighted residential areas of the city, Charles Center represented the first attempt to address the commercial section of the city.

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[3] *Baltimore City's Downtown Redevelopment Program: Charles Center, The Inner Harbor, Metrocenter* (Baltimore, MD: Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and Charles Center-Inner Harbor Management, 1976), 3.
[4]Martin Millspaugh, ed., "Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown Renewal," *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin* 51 (1964), 22-24
[5] Ibid, 14.

Presented in 1958, the combined private-public initiative directly addressed the issue of revitalizing the city. Rather than focusing on developing the peripheral areas of the city, Charles Center literally focused the attention on the heart of the city. Baltimore officials believed that the success of the downtown core would ensure a broad and cohesive revitalization throughout Baltimore, as later projects would radiate from Charles Center.[6] Knowing the significance architecture would play in recreating its urban identity, Baltimore decided to reference its past when it began to finalize renewal plans in the 1950's. Impressed by the architecture of the city, President John Quincy Adams referred to Baltimore as the "Monumental City, during a trip in 1827.[7]" By doing so, Adams inadvertently provided the moniker that would continue to influence its identity well into the 20th century. As few significant buildings had been constructed in the city since the 1920's, Baltimore determined that this ethic of monumentality should guide Charles Center's architectural design and control in order to communicate Baltimore's renewed prominence. It aimed to connect these earlier monuments to new designs that demonstrated Baltimore's ability to participate in a nationwide architectural dialogue and its ability to create a cohesive city identity. Although all construction in Charles Center would connect back to this idea, John Johansen's design for the Mechanic Theater marks the moment of Baltimore's architectural transformation and epitomizes its entrance into a

[6] The Inside Cover of Greater Baltimore Committee's Annual Report, 1961 perfectly illustrates this idea. A small image of the Charles Center project sits in the center of the image, and spokes relating to all other areas of improvement and renewal emanate from this core. Greater Baltimore Committee. "Seventh Annual Report, 1961." Brochure. From the Baltimore City Archives. *Mayor's Office Papers*. BCA BRG9-24-14 Box 328. (accessed November 26, 2013).

[7] Algerina Perna, "Monumental Views of the City," *the Baltimore Sun*, October 22, 2007, accessed April 29, 2014 http://www.baltimoremd.com/monuments/adams.html.

modern age.

Beautiful and/or Brutal: The Impact of the Morris Mechanic Theater

Prior to the development of Charles Center, vernacular, brick buildings dominated the architectural landscape of Baltimore. Needless to say, Johansen's dramatic concrete design challenged Baltimore's idea of architecture and introduced a new, vital force into the community. Groundbreaking, the completion of the design heralded Baltimore's willingness to engage in an age of high architecture. A visual marker, The Mechanic symbolized the tangible ethic of Baltimore's urban renewal mindset and successfully achieved the city's desire to present itself as a place of architectural innovation. When constructed, the beige coloring of the concrete mimicked the coloring of the sidewalk, giving viewers the impression that the massive structure rose organically from the site. In spite of its fortress-like exterior, Johansen wrote that relationship of these blocky forms to the cave-like interior intended to invite patrons inside the theater.[8] The bulges and piers that protrude forth from the structure, almost violently, hold the stage, seating, and receptions areas, and provide for a void in the center for the stage drama. Almost immediately, the design was praised for its innovative form and became the highlight of urban renewal programming in the state and abroad. Heralded as the pinnacle of Charles Center, the Mechanic's design proved urban renewal's viability to the community. Over

[8] John M. Johansen, *John M. Johansen: A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture,* (Milan: L'Arca Edizioni, 1996), 63-67.

time, however, the building fell out of favor, due in part to its failures as a functioning theater[9].

While the Mechanic improved Baltimore's reputation architecturally, the design did not accommodate the needs of theater production. In order to follow Johansen's vision, construction had to negotiate the placement and order of many of the interior elements. This resulted in wide aisles, narrow seating, and bizarre balconies that obscured sightlines between the audience and the stage. Neither the actors nor the patrons appreciated this design, and the theater suffered. After closing for a brief period in the 1970's[10], the city took over operating the Mechanic and attempted to improve the situation with a series of renovations. A temporary fix, the renovations slightly improved conditions, but ultimately the theater continued to fail to provide a proper space with a legitimate theater. What began as an issue of function, however, has evolved into a disdain for its aesthetics in general. As the theater continued to underperform, the novel form no longer represented architectural genius but rather the reason for the theater's shortcomings.

Viewed as ugly and insignificant, the Mechanic's "Brutalist" style, has marginalized the building. Unaware of how the aesthetic of the Mechanic actually solidified Baltimore's arrival into the modern age, passersby see the heavy, seemingly impenetrable, façade as an archaic and brutal monument detached from the city's broader plan to improve its image. Originally defined by Reyner Banham in the 1950's, the term

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[9] Allen Freeman and Andrea O. Dean, "Evaluation: A Troubled Theater Anchors Baltimore's Downtown, " *AIA Journal* 67 No. 2 (1978): 32-36.
[10] Edward Gunts, "Mechanic Theater Loses Operating Company," *The Baltimore Sun*, August 4, 2004, accessed October 17, 2013, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2004-08-02/features/0408020112_1_mechanic-hippodrome-clear-channel.

Brutalism referred to architecture that strived to understand man's role in the changing urban environment rather than either directly copy the past or focus entirely on function. Form would accommodate culture and inspire its further growth. As many of the early buildings associated with Brutalism shared this use of concrete, the term evolved from an ethical study to an aesthetical label, which Banham acknowledged.[11] Now nothing but a vague epithet, the term Brutalism today serves as an almost catchall term to describe harsh, and frankly unappealing, concrete structures constructed between the 1940s and 1970s, stripping the architecture of its original meaning in the process. Although Johansen never identified his work as Brutalist, the structure's design did seek to challenge the way the city viewed its architecture and how it would approach its future urban landscapes. Encompassing both the ideal of Baltimore urban renewal and broader architectural ideals of the time, the Morris Mechanic Theater deserves recognition for and a deeper understanding of its design.

Dreams Realized and Unfulfilled: The Future of Baltimore's Urban Renewal Era

Stemming from ignorance concerning the Mechanic's historical context and influential, innovative form, Baltimore's focus on aesthetic merit disconnects the cultural urban landscape from the architectural identity it has poignantly constructed. This mentality has not only affected the future of the Mechanic, but has also pervaded current thoughts on recent renewal programs in the city. Along with the changes to the Mechanic Theater, recent efforts in Baltimore have planned for the demolition of the McKeldin Square Fountain (fig. 3) in the Inner Harbor. Designed by Tom Todd in the early 1980's,

[11] Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *Architectural Review* 118 (December 1955), 354–61. In *OCTOBER*, 136 (Spring 2011), 19–28.

the fountain, also referred to as the *Waterfall*, serves as the gateway to the famous harbor at Pratt and Light Streets. Looking at the fountain, one cannot deny the striking similarities in form between Todd's design and the Mechanic Theater. Rectangular concrete piers in various heights and dimensions cover the footprint of the multi-tiered fountain, where water once cascaded into its shallow pools. Like the Mechanic, however, the city's focus on the negative aesthetics of abstract, monolithic, concrete structures has also contributed to its demise.

The Inner Harbor project itself owed its existence to the success of the Mechanic and Charles Center. The visual connection between the two areas underscores the importance of their coordinated design to Baltimore's urban renewal project. Interestingly, with the Inner Harbor's opening in the 1980's, programming and community interest in Charles Center waned. This decline in interest, coupled with the growing anger concerning the functionality of the structure, allowed the area around Mechanic to lose its hold over entertainment attractions. Nonetheless, the McKeldin Square Fountain survives as a testament to the continuation of urban renewal ideals. Recently, however, the city has announced that the McKeldin Square Fountain is also being considered for demolition. Once again, the city determined to remove this structure because its large concrete forms detract from the views of the Inner Harbor and impede traffic[12]. These new developments, for both the Mechanic and the McKeldin call into question the future of preservation of brutalism and urban renewal architecture in Baltimore. The fact that city officials, including Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake, have

[12] Kevin Litten, "Demolition of Brutalist Fountain at McKeldin Square Closer to Reality," *Baltimore Business Journal*, September 30, 2013, accessed February 27, 2013, http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2013/09/demolition-of-brutalist-fountain-at.html?page=all.

actively manipulated preservation clauses in order to ensure this new development especially causes concern. Attitudes need to change in order to ensure the recognition of these structures' significance for future generations.

A Brutal Truth: A Mission to Recognize Significance

With the threat to these structures looming, this thesis seeks to better understand the Mechanic Theater as a catalyst for and monument to architectural change in Baltimore. The history of its design and its resulting influence and reception paradoxically stands as the epitome of 20th century urban renewal efforts and as the reminder of its misinterpretation and demise over time. "A Brutal Truth: The Threatened Legacy of Baltimore's Brutalist and Urban Renewal Architecture" serves to educate Baltimore on the history of the city's urban renewal projects, to clarify the original intentions of the Mechanic's design, and ultimately to encourage Baltimoreans to appreciate the contributions of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater. For cities facing similar preservation issues, this effort could serve as a stimulus for the understanding of the meaning behind urban renewal architecture, bringing greater awareness to the preservation of these cultural landmarks across the country.

Providing a foundation for this paper, the first chapter, "A New Heart for Baltimore" looks at the progression of a modern Baltimorean identity through 20th century urban renewal efforts and its decision to use architecture as a means to those ends. The vision for the newly constructed environment, which reinvigorated traditions of Baltimore's past for the present, established both the desire for The Mechanic's unique design and its ultimate role as the pinnacle of urban renewal design. The second chapter,

“Baltimore’s Concrete Jewel,” meanwhile, provides an in depth formal and theoretical analysis of The Mechanic from urban renewal to urban ruin. Moving beyond the scope of Baltimore, this portion of the paper demonstrates the Mechanic’s significance in the broader architectural narrative. Connecting Johansen’s intentions and influences to architectural criticism of the time period, allows a better understanding of the complexity of its form and function. By incorporating a greater theoretical lens in which to view these theories, this study attempts to critique commonplace understanding of the term Brutalism and its repercussions for buildings like the Mechanic. Finally, the third chapter, “Renewing Renewal” chronicles the growing tension and disconnect between the Mechanic’s past reputation and present efforts of urban regeneration in Baltimore. Examining the Mechanic’s design influence along with the city’s present attempt to demolish the building demonstrates the regrettable results such ignorance of the past could have on the future of the cultural landscape. Although the argument may not save the Mechanic from the wrecking ball, it could, and hopefully will, change the current discussion about the McKeldin Square Fountain’s future.

Ultimately, this greater understanding serves to persuade Baltimore and other cities facing similar preservation issues to reconsider their current interpretations of urban renewal architecture. John Johansen’s Morris A. Mechanic Theater deserves to be praised for its contributions to the architectural history of Baltimore so that other recent past structures from the recent past can be appreciated before they too are lost forever. Understanding the logic of the design illustrates its purpose and creates a better understanding of its place within the city. If Baltimore can better appreciate the

architecture of its past and present, it can finally move forward with plans for the next great chapter of its future.

Chapter 1
"A New Heart for Baltimore"— (re)Building Baltimore's Architectural Identity

In June 1958, architectural critic Jane Jacobs introduced the design world to a project in Baltimore she believed would positively change America's approach to 20th century urban renewal.[13] Known as Charles Center, it planned to create a nucleus for commercial, residential, and entertainment venues in the heart of downtown. While not the first urban renewal effort in the country, this proposal challenged previous methods of city planning by incorporating new construction into the existing landscape, rather than excluding it to the peripheral areas of the city. Respecting the city's existing urban fabric, Charles Center stood as an integral component to the economic and social betterment of Baltimore, fostering future growth and development around its borders and throughout the city. Contrasting Charles Center to its New York and Philadelphia contemporaries, Jacobs saw Baltimore as a leader in this new wave of urban renewal. Aware of the significance of this venture long before Jacobs' publication, Baltimore officials intended to use Charles Center not only as a means of revitalizing the city but as a means of articulating a new urban identity to other cities throughout the country and the world.

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[13] Jane Jacobs, "A New Heart for Baltimore," *Architectural Forum* 108 No. 6 (1958)

Rather than playing it safe, Baltimore realized it needed to work with renowned and innovative designers to visually signify its transition into prominence in the 20th century. Noting its location within the preexisting landscape, these officials also recognized the importance of creating a dialogue between these designs and those of Baltimore's past. Connecting the architecture of Charles Center to this principle sought to create a cohesive motif that future projects could align themselves to as urban renewal moved throughout the city. Establishing the context that prompted the need for urban renewal in the Baltimore during the second half of the 20th century allows us to see how Johansen's Morris A. Mechanic Theater became the hallmark project of Charles Center. In order to understand the reasoning behind the plan for Charles Center and the justification for designs like the Mechanic Theater, this chapter explores Baltimore's journey from its humble origins, to its post-industrial decay, and then, finally, to its decision to revitalize the city and how it planned to accomplish those goals. Ultimately, the decision to construct the Mechanic helped make this goal a reality, and validated the shift in architectural identity Baltimore sought to express through urban renewal.

Ready for Renewal: Reviving Baltimore's Urban Identity

Founded in 1729, Baltimore, Maryland began as a small port town designated for the trade of tobacco and Caribbean goods[14]. Depicted in an image of Baltimore from 1752 by prominent landowner John Moale, Baltimore's early origins were humble in comparison to what was to come in the next two centuries (fig. 4). Less than fifty small,

[14] For more information regarding the overall growth and development of the city please reference: Sherry H Olsen, *Baltimore: Building an American City,* Rev. Sub. Edition, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

and rather unimpressive, buildings make up the landscape of the quaint and idyllic village, while four figures work in the foreground. The landscape bears little resemblance to the dynamic urban center that would soon develop. In less than 50 years, Baltimore's population grew from around two hundred inhabitants to 27,000.[15] In order to accommodate this development, Baltimore moved further away from the water and designated the harbor as its commercial district. As industry and trade continued to flourish in the 19th century, citizens pushed further away from the downtown to avoid the inevitable pollution and corruption.[16] Unofficially, the area north of Saratoga Street housed elite mansions and cultural centers of the now burgeoning Baltimore, while the southern sector of the city became home to commercial enterprises and the homes of factory workers.[17] Architecture served as a means of communicating this divide, creating an unofficial boundary along Saratoga Street between financial and industrial families of the city.

Just north of the unofficial boundary, Baltimore's elite neighborhoods helped shape, and later emphasize, the cosmopolitan image of the city that grew during the city's industrial era. Perhaps the most notable, the neighborhood of Mount Vernon, exemplified Baltimore's desire to produce significant architecture. Designed by architect Robert Mills in 1815, Baltimore's Washington Monument (fig. 5) sits at the center of this community

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[15] Michael P. McCarthy, *The Living City: Baltimore's Charles Center & Inner Harbor Development,* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002), 3.
[16] Thomas F. Johnson, James R. Morris, and Joseph G. Butts, *Renewing America's Cities,* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Social Science Research, 1962).
[17] Harold A. Williams, *Baltimore Afire,* (Baltimore, MD: Sheneidereith & Sons, 1954), 55-79.

and helped dictate the design of neighborhood during this time.[18] As the first monument designed to honor George Washington, the white marble form, that drew on neoclassical themes and resembled Trajan's Column in Rome, garnered national attention. While visiting in 1827, President John Quincy Adams was so impressed by the design, he declared Baltimore "The Monumental City", two years before the project was even completed.[19] For many Baltimoreans, this proclamation solidified the city's reputation and inspired the city to create a dramatic setting worthy of the monument in the 1830s.

Composed of 4-block long gardens, the neighborhood formally known as Mount Vernon Place (fig. 6) demonstrates the impact the Washington Monument had on Baltimore's architecture. Surrounded by the circular promenade the city built around the monument, Mount Vernon Place remains home to some of the leading examples of the city's impressive mansions and cultural institutions. The George Peabody Institute (fig. 7), situated on the southeast corner of the circle, for example, represents the quality of design required for the area. Designed in two parts between 1855 and 1878 by architect Edmund Lind, the Renaissance Revival style building boasts a beautiful white marble façade complete with heavy pediments supported by elaborate brackets above its doors and windows and large quoins. Equally, if not more remarkable, the interior of the library contains five tiers of ornamental cast-iron balconies, which rise dramatically to the skylight 61 feet above the floor (fig. 8). Architecturally, the buildings in the community challenged themselves to echo the monumental status established by Mills' work. The architecture of the commercial district, meanwhile, bore little resemblance to the

[18] "Mount Vernon Historic District," accessed April 29, 2014, http://architecturaltrust.org/easements/about-the-trust/trust-protected-communities/historic-districts-in-maryland/mount-vernon-place-historic-district/
[19] McCarthy 5.

grandeur expected at Mount Vernon Place. A contributing factor in Baltimore's success, these structures emphasized function over form rather than aesthetics.

The architecture of Baltimore's commercial core echoed the utilitarian nature of the industries it supported. While the number of buildings had multiplied and the size of the structures had dramatically increased, the buildings around the harbor maintained the staid qualities of the buildings depicted in John Moale's 1752 sketch. Constructed in brick or wood, these buildings often took on simple geometric forms. By the 1850's, the harbor and the expanded city appeared to have no more room to construct new buildings for the ever-growing industry, creating an oppressive landscape that mimicked the chaos of industrial work (fig. 9). Nineteenth-century commentators decried the utilitarian aspect of these utilitarian and industrial buildings.[20]

Looking at a view of the city from the harbor, one would expect these buildings would take precedence as they dominated the landscape. In the midst of these buildings, however, the Washington Monument seems to rise forth from the chaotic landscape, reminding everyone of Baltimore's architectural aspirations and cosmopolitan nature (fig. 10). The industrial landscape was often framed in opposition to Mount Vernon's notable monuments and idyllic living, to the point that some Baltimoreans believed it detracted from the prestige of the city.[21] As the city entered the 20th century, Baltimore, however,

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[20] John Wilber Jenkins, "The New City of Baltimore," *The World's Work*. In Marion E. Warren and Mame Warren, *Baltimore: What She Was, What She Used to Be, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 141-148.
[21] Ibid.

was given an opportunity to improve its overall image thanks to a "discriminating" fire of 1904.[22]

On February 7, 1904, a major fire devastated the city of Baltimore, destroying almost 140 acres of land and nearly 1,300 buildings.[23] In less than 48 hours, the area bounded by Lexington Street to the North, Liberty Street to the East, the harbor to the South and the Jones Falls to the West disappeared, essentially taking with it Baltimore's commercial landscape (fig. 11). As the urban landscape suffered an unimaginable blow, Baltimoreans took advantage of the chance to significantly change the city's architectural identity. Long upset with the aesthetics of the business district, Baltimore opted to immediately rebuild the area in a manner more conducive to the architectural precedents set by other areas of the city. Without the fire, the city may have never addressed the archaic conditions of the commercial district, including narrow streets, rotting wharves, and antiquated buildings.[24] In an effort to rise from the ashes, Baltimore appointed the Burnt District Commission on March 11, 1904 to assess the damage and create a plan to move forward from the devastation.

Evidence suggests that the Commission did not formulate a comprehensive plan for the new design of Baltimore, but rather established an approach that tackled one issue with one project at a time.[25] The project did relieve congestion near the harbor, creating a

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[22] Frederick Lewis, "Introduction," *Women's Home Companion.* In Marion E. Warren and Mame Warren, *Baltimore: What She Was, What She Used to Be, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 141-148.
[23] McCarthy 69.
[24] Williams 76
[25] Baltimore released a series of semi-annual Burnt District Commission Reports between the years 1904-1907. The haphazard presentation of these documents provided little indication that the Commission successfully followed any plan and completed projects as desired. To get a picture of the beginning and end of these projects, please reference: "Six

seemingly more open and livable plan[26]. Interestingly, the Commission's tenure in the city was tremendously brief, lasting only three years from 1904 to 1907. Although less than a quarter of the program was completed, Baltimorean's touted the overall success of the program.[27] As Frederick Lewis noted several years after the fire:

> The fire which wiped out the unsightly business district left the finer parts of the town strictly alone. It was a most discriminating fire, eliminating the bad and saving the good. So Baltimore is [now] that rare thing, an old city which is not dark nor grimy no shabby, an old city in a new business suit.[28]

Although Baltimore bounced back from the fire relatively quickly, this "business suit" did little to improve the overall quality of life in the city. Cleaned up, this suit theoretically covered up the true issue in the city's plan. The continued marginalization of the commercial area of the city failed to unite the city into a cohesive force. Keeping it at a distance, Baltimoreans removed themselves from its industry, meaning it could do very little to save it from its inevitable decline as it moved through the early half of the 20th century.

With almost the same rapidity as it had dominated the American landscape, the effects of once booming industry waned. The adjustments made by the Burnt District Commission could not anticipate these developments and the area south of Saratoga soon fell into obsolescence.[29] By the end of World War II, most families had moved further outside of the city and into the suburbs to avoid the growing blight of these once thriving

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Months Ending September 11, 1904," *Semi-Annual Report of the Burnt District Commission*, (Baltimore, MD) and Six Months Ending September 11, 1907," *Semi-Annual Report of the Burnt District Commission*, (Baltimore, MD).

[26] Jenkins in Warren, 141

[27] Jane Jacobs, "A New Heart for Baltimore," 89.

[28] Lewis in Warren, 5

[29] Johnson 1-9.

areas[30]. Realizing the benefit it could have on its economy and morale, Baltimore took radical initiatives to invigorate its downtown and to further prove its worthiness amongst other urban centers. Years of otherwise lackluster renewal efforts would culminate in Charles Center project. Building off its past, Charles Center epitomized the continuous effort to explore identity through, but in a manner that connected the city to all aspects of urban life as it boldly ventured into the future.

Imagining a New Reality: The Origins of Baltimore's Charles Center

With the end of World War II, cities across the country began devote the energy once focused on the war effort onto the rehabilitation of their obsolete downtown corridors.[31] Baltimore had not completed a new major building project in the city since the 1920's,Threatened with bankruptcy, Baltimore found a renewed and vital desire to breathe new life into city's urban core and bring people back into the city nearly 30 years later.[32] While efforts had begun to combat similar issues in the city prior to World War II, these projects faced similar problems as those completed under the administration of the Burnt District Commission. Completing a singular neighborhood certainly improved the

[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Recounting the origins of urban renewal in Baltimore, James Rouse wrote: "In 1952, the Efficiency and Economy Commission of Baltimore issued a report on what was happening to the assessable base of the city. This report analyzed the decline in the assessable base of properties in the central city and the decline in the rate of growth in the assessable base in the suburbs as the city ran out of land and development moved on out into counties. The report projected these trends and showed conclusively that the city could soon reach a turning point where the growth in new assessable base would not match the deterioration in the assessment of old properties and it concluded with a statement in the last paragraph which said, unless radical action is taken, the municipal corporation will be bankrupt within a generation." In "Correspondence between Jim Rouse and Clarence Miles (re:book)", March 1977, Columbia Archives RGI-S2 Box 26.

quality of life, but beyond the improved aesthetic and sanitary conditions, nothing existed to lure Baltimoreans back to the city center. The lack of commercial and entertainment options limited the desire to live downtown. Seeing this need, Baltimore kicked off a new urban renewal effort in the early 1950's with a series of surveys that sought to create a complete image of the city's needs.[33] Officially these efforts began with the establishment of the Housing Act in 1954, but true progress would come after with the partnership of the newly organize Greater Baltimore Committee and Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.

The surveys allowed city officials to create a plan that addressed improving downtown's commercial and residential as a cohesive unit.[34] This research also helped officials realize that the current structure of urban renewal in the city could not accomplish these goals. Federal funds alone could not cover both the commercial and residential aspects of Baltimore. A unique concept in the field of urban renewal, Baltimore determined to partner with private developers to improve the constructed environment[35]. A bold program, the partnership challenged local businessmen to come forward and participate in Baltimore's new chapter.[36] Without these individuals' collective experience the Charles Center project may not exist today.

In January 1955, 85 men met at the Belvedere Hotel for lunch and established the private enterprise organization that continues to guide development projects throughout

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[33] McCarthy 15-21.
[34] David F. Woods Associates, Report of Survey for the Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc, (August 1955). In Greater Baltimore Committee 7/54-10/60, Box 3.
[35] Millspaugh
[36] Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc., *Baltimore's Stake in Urban Renewal*, (Baltimore: 1956), 5.

the city, formally known as the Greater Baltimore Commission (GBC). [37] The discussion included prominent figures like James Rouse, a nationally renowned real estate developer who would go on to be responsible for the revitalization of Faneuil Hall in Boston and South Street Seaport in New York, as well as various influential positions on this new urban renewal committee.[38] Following the founding of the GBC, the city instituted the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency (BURHA) in 1956, to complete the public-private partnership. Managing publically funded programs, BURHA estimated the complete project would cost close to $900 million dollars in the course of twenty years.[39]

Initially, the GBC operated with the goals of developing a comprehensive urban renewal plan that addressed the needs of the business district, including the rehabilitation of port facilities, establishing planned industrial districts, accelerating construction of Jones Falls Expressway, creating a civic center, and modernizing Baltimore's mass transportation system.[40] While members of BURHA participated in discussions with the GBC, it focused on broader community and social improvements, particularly in areas related to housing. Controlling their respective projects, the two organizations could successfully work to create comprehensive programs.[41]Ultimately, the success of plan relied on this partnership. Having spent 18 months on reformulating its urban renewal structure, Baltimore was prepared to get to work redesigning downtown.

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[37] Greater Baltimore Committee, *Progress Report Relating to Activities of the Greater Baltimore Committee January 5th through July 31st 1955*, (Baltimore, 1955), 1. In Columbia Archives RGI-S2 Box 19 Greater Baltimore Committee 7/54-10/60.
[38] "Correspondence between Jim Rouse and Clarence Miles (re:book)."
[39] Letter from Mayor D'Alesandro to American Municipal Association, Chicago, October 9, 1956, Baltimore City Archives, BCA BRG9-23-1 Box 261, File 19
[40] Greater Baltimore Committee, *Seventh Annual Report for 1961—Baltimore Today Reflects the Impact of Continuous Private Action*, (Baltimore, 1961), in Baltimore City Archives BCA BRG9-24-14 Box 328, File 97.
[41] Ibid.

In order to successfully complete its goals, the GBS needed a cornerstone project that communicated the validity of these renewal efforts and provide the successful example needed to continue these projects throughout the city. Although initial talks discussed the entire area of the Central Business District, the GBC focused its attention on a single area. After raising necessary funds, the GBC hired David A. Wallace, an architect and planner from Philadelphia, to lead a planning council for the development of its first project.[42] Searching for the proper site, the planning council hoped to find a location of adequate size that was small enough to be manageable, but large enough to make an impact. Bound by Saratoga Street to the north, Charles Street to the east, Lombard Street to the south, and Liberty Street to the west, the chosen site for Charles Center, interestingly enough sits along the boundary between the elite area of Mount Vernon and the industrial district of the 19th century (fig. 12). Not coincidentally, the council determined this location, decaying from years of neglect, would serve as the ideal bridge between these two areas of the community. Unlike previous generations, Wallace and the GBC knew connecting the commercial and financial sectors of the city would ultimately result in a cohesive downtown accessible to everyone.[43]

Equipped with the perfect space, the council moved forward with the logistics of a site plan in 1957 that rivaled its contemporaries. Learning from renewal projects at home and abroad, the final design principals drew from a variety of sources in order to create

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[42] David A. Wallace, AICP, *Urban Planning/My Way*: *From Baltimore's Inner Harbor to Lower Manhattan and Beyond*, (Washington, D.C: American Planning Association, 2004), 1-10.
[43] Millspaugh, 13-14.

one of the most influential programs the country had seen.[44] The first theme placed an emphasis on the connection future buildings would have with the surrounding environment. Wishing to create a dialogue between its internal spaces, the council carefully considered how the location, mass, shape, form, and height of the future buildings would affect a viewer's experience. While the buildings would not look the same, coordinating these factors created a seamless, integral environment. As Fuad Ahmen Uthman observed, the implementation of design controls in Charles Center allowed the city to provide for a diverse, yet cohesive, landscape.[45] Working off this initial theme of formal relationships and control, the second theme attached the new site with its surrounding traditions.

George E. Kostritsky, a member of The Planning Council for the GBC and a principle architect of the firm RTKL, valued Charles Center's location within the surrounding urban landscape and believed Charles Center should connect with these existing conditions and the city's past. Observing its proximity to the Washington Monument and Mount Vernon Place, Kostritsky felt a similar emphasis on monumentality would benefit the architectural design of Charles Center. In this case the term monument did not refer to literal memorials, but rather buildings that would convey an authoritative presence through their monumental and memorable form. This idea of a Monumental City had pervaded architectural design since President Adams original

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[44] The GBC looked at examples like the Piazza Signoria in Florence, the Campadoglio in Rome, and the "streets of Rome, Paris, New York,…St. Louis, and Cincinnati." In Millspaugh, 22.

[45] Fuad Ahmed Uthman, *Charles Center, Baltimore: A Case Study of Architectural Control Through Mandatory Design Review with an Examination of Architectural Controls Within the Urban Renewal Process and Through Regulation* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1972),23.

speech. Many architectural surveys devoted chapters to this idea as a means of portraying Baltimore as an ideal city, particularly as it related to areas of wealth and prestige.[46] Citing a bridge between the new commercial district and the historically significant adjacent neighborhood would create a united architectural identity for Baltimore that valued all aspects of urban living.

Interestingly, the year 1957 also marked the centennial anniversary of the Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which encouraged the architects involved with the Charles Center project to further consider the city's architectural significance. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, then President of the Society of Architectural Historians, reminded Baltimore that its distinctive design helped establish its significance, and that this was a critical legacy to preserve. He concluded his observations, stating:

> An informed public…alone can provide the balanced support that is needed…for developing new building projects worthy of the local past. Knowledge of the architectural past of a city reveals how each successive period had something worthy to contribute to the whole and therefore helps to inspire the faith that our own may do as well.[47]

At a national level, the endorsement of a leading historian further convinced the Planning Council of the GBC to connect with these ideas as it moved forward with its own design. Inspired, the Planning Council continued to finalize the program, focusing specifically on the role architecture would play in articulating this notion of monumentality in a commercial district.

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[46] George W. Howard, *The Monumental City, its Past History and Present Resources* (Baltimore: J.D.Ehlers & Co., Printers, 1876), 35.
[47] Henry Russell Hitchcock, *Foreword*. In Richard Hubbard Howard and Eleanor P. Spencer, *The Architecture of Baltimore, a Pictorial History*, 1st ed., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953

Proving Worth: The Importance of Architecture in Baltimore's Renaissance

Ultimately, Charles Center referenced Baltimore's legacy while fostering new and innovative monumental forms for subsequent urban renewal projects. Presented to Mayor Thomas D'Alessandro on March 27, 1958, the 22-acre project design created roughly 20 development sites that the GBC hoped would house eight new office buildings, including a new Federal Office Building, a new 800-room hotel, 400,000 square feet of commercial and specialty retail space, a 3,000-seat TV Theater Center, a Transportation Terminal, two transit depots, three public parks, integrated pedestrian malls, and a 4,000-car underground parking garage (fig. 13).[48] While the office buildings would support the business needs of the city, the Theater Center aimed to keep the area alive in the evening, ensuring its continued use and appreciation. In order to provided for this new construction, the city planned to "relocate" 371 establishments related to various industry and wholesale operations and to demolish roughly three million square feet of area. Four existing properties, including the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company Building, the Lord Baltimore Hotel, and the B&O Building, were maintained predominately for their economic advantages. (fig. 14).[49] Lying on the periphery, they did not compromise the project's desire to maximize the land use in the area. Although the intentions to save these buildings had no connection to a historic preservation sentiment, GBC officials noted the unique quality their preservation had on the overall atmosphere of Charles Center. The inclusion of these select buildings amplified the project's connection to the

[48] *Charles Center*, (Baltimore: The Planning Council for the Greater Baltimore Committee, Incorporated,1958), 24-25.
[49] Jacobs, "A New Heart for Baltimore," 92.

past, and would more obviously foster a dialogue between Baltimore's history and its promising future.

Compared to its contemporaries, Baltimore's Charles Center achieved an undiluted urbanity that mimicked and celebrated the intricate environment of a city's core. Having reviewed several urban renewal projects, Jane Jacobs' main criticism of contemporaneous urban renewal projects stemmed from their inability to harness the vitality of the place itself.[50] Impressed by Charles Center, she applauded this project in "New Heart of Baltimore" for working to change this model of urban renewal:

> The site is in the very heart of downtown, not on its fringes, and it is to be re-used for precisely the things that belong in the heart of downtown—offices, entertainment facilities, a hotel, stores, a transportation terminal. Because the location and the re-use are so economically well suited to each other, the land is expected to be marketable without any write-down subsidy to cover the difference between the purchase price and the re-use value of the land…Charles Center [would not] be possible if the city were not dealing with the main reason that brought about the deterioration of the site in the first place.[51]

Thanks to Jacobs' praise, the world knew Baltimore was positioning itself to become a major player in the second half of the 20th century. This positive initial reception enticed local developers and prominent architects to get involved in Charles Center, providing the final piece of the puzzle in Baltimore's quest to reinvigorate its image through urban renewal.

Construction of Charles Center began in March 1959.[52] The first building completed on the site was One Charles Center. Located in Development Area 7 (fig. 15), the GBC had designated this site for a possible twenty to twenty-five story office

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[50] Jane Jacobs solidified her reputation as a formidable and influential critic of 20th century urban renewal and city planning with her books, including *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. For more information: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 50th Anniversary edition, (New York: Modern Press, a division of Random House, Inc., 2011).

[51] Jane Jacobs, "A New Heart for Baltimore," 89

[52] McCarthy 15-21.

building. Despite the positive reception, it took some time before six developers would come forward to get involved with the site. As the first building on the site, it would set the tone for the redevelopment. One proposal by Crown Central Petroleum owner Jacob Blaustein, presented a design by architect Marcel Breuer that "featured a precast concrete façade with recessed windows, and tree like columns along the side that would face the plaza."[53] In the end, the GBC passed on this experimental design, believing it may be too radical for the city at that time. Instead, the GBC voted in favor of a design by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.[54]

Submitted by the Metropolitan Structures of Chicago, the skyscraper epitomized the tenants of the International style. Mies van der Rohe had already successfully brought these elements to Chicago and New York, and now Baltimore could say it too featured a work by the prominent architect. The tower (fig. 16), clad with a gray tinted glass curtain wall and bronze structural elements, framed a grand open plaza, giving it the impression it climbed endlessly into the sky. The glass panel facade created an interesting surface that would sometimes reflect the surrounding buildings in the glass paneling. The familiar design became the first monument to Baltimore's arrival in the postwar era. While an incredible addition to Baltimore, some at the time noted its close resemblance to Mies' recently completed Seagram Building in New York City (fig. 17).

Well received, the Seagram Building has remained a significant example of mid-century architecture. Aesthetically, One Charles Center clearly mimics the Seagram Building. Given that the GBC hoped to provide Charles Center with architecture expressing innovation and monumentality, it readily accepted this vision. An editor of the

[53] Ibid, 32.
[54] Ibid.

Baltimore Sun suggested that Baltimore believed the inclusion of Mies' tower in Charles Center created a defining new architectural and cultural image for the city. Supporting this idea, he wrote, "His name alone guarantees for Charles Center a special national, indeed international prestige. Prestige is important to a project like Charles Center. It helps to create excitement and confidence."[55] As the first completed project in Charles Center, it asserted the viability of the project. Charles Center signified progress by its association with a prominent contemporary architect, and this model informed designs for subsequent development areas in Baltimore.

After its completion in 1962, the GBC moved its offices inside the building, as a reminder of its role in the renewal process and its dedication to continued growth. The decision made by Baltimore's leaders to adhere to the current architectural trends placed the city on the same level as competitors like New York and Philadelphia. With the success of One Charles Center, both architecturally and economically, the GBC had tangible evidence to support the logic of their urban renewal approach.[56] Having successfully introduced a distinctly modern monumental type of architecture, Charles Center proved its viability and now had the opportunity to explore experimental design. No longer afraid of challenging the expectations of Baltimoreans, the GBC was prepared to take architecture to the next level in Charles Center to further achieve its goals of the reimagined monumental city. This goal would ultimately manifest itself in John M. Johansen's design for the Morris A. Mechanic Theater.

From its origins, Baltimore found it difficult to unite the commercial and financial districts of the city into a collective urban identity. Reflected in the differing architectural

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[55] *Baltimore Sun*, May 6, 1960. In McCarthy, 34.
[56] Ibid.

styles, Baltimore's commercial district failed to achieve the same appreciation as its elite counterparts in Mount Vernon. The failed efforts to improve Baltimore after the Fire of 1904 was followed by the decline of industry and the challenge posed by World Wars I and II. Charles Center presented Baltimore City a second opportunity to revive its commercial core. Learning from the past, the design created by the Greater Baltimore Commission established a new connection between the commercial center and the existing fabric of the city. As in had the 19th century, architecture helped to assert a urban identity for Baltimore grounded in monumental architecture.

Through urban renewal, Baltimore reversed negative views of the downtown commercial core and excited the city for the future of its design. Mies van der Rohe's One Charles Center changed the past understanding of the commercial district by recreating it as a place worthy of monumental form. Continuing this approach, the expressive form of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater not only demonstrated Baltimore's ability to participate in a national architectural narrative, but also proved its willingness to accept innovative design. The following chapter explores the design of the Mechanic Theater in relation to the ongoing project of urban renewal in Baltimore Charting its initial success and its influence on other urban renewal projects in the city creates the argument for its significance. Comparing the formal and theoretical analysis of Johansen's design under the lens of this broader urban renewal movement in Baltimore seeks to clarify the confusion and inspire the city to reconsider this architectural gem before it is too late.

Chapter 2

Baltimore's Concrete Jewel—The Morris A. Mechanic Theater

Dedicated on January 16, 1967, the completion of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater represented the full realization of Baltimore's renaissance at Charles Center.[57] John Johansen's sculptural concrete design for the Mechanic Theater positioned Baltimore as a leader in urban planning and architectural innovation. Commanding attention, the Mechanic's vitality and expression not only made it a symbol of Charles Center. While One Charles Center eased Baltimore into the postwar architectural age, the Mechanic's design aesthetics challenged viewers' perceptions of the built environment. As urban renewal efforts moved beyond Charles Center and throughout the city, the legacy of the Mechanic continued to guide design both metaphorically.

In an effort to explain this innovative form, many associated the Mechanic with the style of Brutalism. Explaining the structure solely through the term "Brutalism" may obscure both the intention behind the design and its connection to urban renewal ideals it embodies. Ultimately, the Mechanic Theater remains a monument to the success of urban renewal as it inspired later redevelopment in the city. This chapter seeks to better

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[57] The Mechanic Foundation, *The Morris A Mechanic Theater, January 16, 1967,* (Baltimore: 1967), 1.

understand Johansen's design and its influence on subsequent construction, such as the McKeldin Square Fountain in the Inner Harbor. Clarifying intentionality behind the Mechanic and its relationship with the ethics of Brutalism will demonstrate the powerful message behind its design. Although the building stopped being used, one cannot deny that it significantly impacted the constructed environment and as such deserves recognition in Baltimore.

"A Tiffany Job": The Architectural Innovation of the Morris Mechanic Theater

In order for Charles Center to successfully become a nighttime attraction, the GBC realized it needed an entertainment component. The TV Theater Center, in their opinion, would achieve this goal. Located on Development Area 15, the original plan called for a combined television studio that would subsidize a 1,800-seat theater site. (see fig. 15).[58] After having had a difficult time selling the project, the Planning Council decided to devote the space to a major theater project that would be supported by restaurants and shops on the site. By 1960, Morris Mechanic, a Baltimorean businessman and patron of the arts, became attached to the project. Knowing Baltimore's need and desire for a legitimate theater venue, Mechanic decided to fill this cultural void, and he leased the site for $30,000 a year for 75 years.[59] Mechanic determined that the success of his theater depended on wholly on its design. He said, "I want a Tiffany job…something I can take pride in…something that will be the crowning gem of this architectural project."[60] Based on his experience in the arts and his involvement in earlier renewal

[58] *Charles Center*, 29.
[59] Freeman, 32.
[60] Most likely Mr. Mechanic is referring to a work by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Known for his opalescent glass work, Tiffany's design became a major indicator of taste and wealth

efforts, Mechanic's decision to work with John Johansen changed theater production in the city and, most importantly, signaled the next step Baltimore's architectural renaissance.

Originally a Hebrew school principal and chocolate shop owner, Morris Mechanic entered the art world after purchasing The New Theater in 1929 as a real estate investment. Due to its success and his interest in the arts, he decided to continue to provide the city with access to nationally acclaimed cultural acts[61]. By the 1930's, Mechanic owned and operated seven movie theaters in the greater downtown area, but he believed that Baltimore still lacked the proper venue for hosting legitimate theater[62]. In an effort to fill that void, he took over the Ford's Theater in 1942 at Fayette and Eutaw Streets (fig. 18) and began talks for planning a new cultural hub in the heart of Baltimore.[63]

A "tryout house", Ford's Theater originally served as a venue for determining which theater shows would move onto bigger stages in New York City[64]. By the time Mechanic purchased the property, however, the theater had more or less become obsolescent. News concerning the lackluster archaic performance space in Baltimore quickly spread throughout country. Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*, for example, recounts the less than civilized atmosphere for theater in the city. This musical within a musical

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in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Using this terminology, it is clear that Mr. Mechanic desire a building that would stand alone as an art piece, like a Tiffany window or vase. "Mechanic Enlists Architect for Theater Project," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 11, 1961, 32

[61] Eli Pousson, "The Centre Theatre," *Baltimore Heritage*, accessed February 25, 2014, http://explore.baltimoreheritage.org/items/show/17#.UxNnhyjOx8s.

[62] Kane and Gogliormella

[63] The Mechanic Foundation 4.

[64] Zajac, Mary, "Almost Broadway," *Baltimore Style*, accessed February 25, 2014, http://www.baltimorestyle.com/index.php/style/baltimore/baltimore_almost_broadway/

features a performance of *Taming of the Shrew* at Ford's Theater. When discussing the venue, one character remarked on the conditions and their effect on the performance, stating, "You know Baltimore. Deer running around in the balcony."[65] While no actual account exists for deer running around the theater, this quote suggests that the rest of the country did not take the theater scene in Baltimore seriously. Aware of this inadequacy, Mechanic viewed Ford's as a placeholder for a new, modern theater that would serve the needs of the city and revitalize its image in the art world.

Similar to the Charles Center project itself, Mechanic's desire to create a modern complex for theater performances mirrored the city's broader attempts to improve its image through architecture and design. Since the design for the theater was not a part of a competitive bid, Mechanic had the full authority to choose an architect he felt would create the most suitable design for the project.[66] As One Charles Center had set the stage for design expectations, Mechanic knew that his theater needed to be as architecturally distinctive to help continue to construct Baltimore's renaissance.[67] Mechanic happened upon architect John Johansen by accident. During initial talks, David Wallace notes Mechanic's desire to have a well-known architect design the building. Since Frank Lloyd Wright had died and Wallace believed Le Corbusier unavailable, Mechanic moved to his third choice, Philip Johnson.[68] Unwilling to take a pay cut, Johnson finally recommended John M. Johansen for the project. Known for his experimental designs, Johansen work

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[65] Ibid.
[66] McCarthy 39.
[67] Greater Baltimore Committee, "Minutes", May 10, 1963. In Columbia Archives RGI-S2 Box 20, GBC 4/62-11/62.
[68] Coincidentally, Philip Johnson had worked with Mies van der Rohe on the design of the Seagram Building, the inspiration for One Charles Center. Had he designed the Mechanic it would interesting to see what kind of image would have been create and what kind of dialogue would have been fostered. In Wallace, 35.

stood in direct contrast to the architecture of the designers initially considered. Ultimately, it was this innovation both in form and in theory that brought Baltimore to the architectural forefront.

A member of the Harvard Five, John Johansen (fig. 19) graduated from the university's design program in 1942 with an explicit understanding of the social responsibility of architecture as well as the notion that form should follow function.[69] Over the course of his career, he continuously pushed his designs forward, breaking through the confines of traditional design, and creating a less passive architecture. He believed, "Architecture as we knew it is no longer effective in its solutions, nor even compelling in its esthetic expression."[70] During the 1950's and 1960's, Johansen's designs sought to create environments that anticipated the human experience as a means of propelling society forward. Addressing the National AIA Convention in Miami in 1963, he said:

> The architect should be interested in the human processes, which are to take place in buildings, thereby designing them as an integral part of the human process itself. He tries to 'pre-live' human experiences…so they may be revealed to the occupant or in a broader sense, he 'pre-lives' life so that others may follow a new way of life.[71]

In an effort to liberate architecture from the confines of the boxes seen in early modern works, Johansen abandoned formal tradition to create a building specific to the site.

Emphasizing both functional and cultural context, Johansen created inimitable designs that embodied the space and community. This theory relied heavily on the difference between behavior and act. While behavior refers to the way an individual

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[69] John Johansen, *John M. Johansen: A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture*. (Milano: L'arca Edizioni, 1995), 17

[70] John Johansen, "The Mummers Theater: A Fragment, Not A Building." *Architectural Forum*, 118 No. 5 (1968), 65.

[71] Johansen, *John M. Johansen: A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture*, 37

conforms to its environment, acts allow for creativity and innovation. By consciously refusing to conform to trends and expectations, architecture should encourage designers and participants to take responsibility over the building through their actions, thus fostering a dialogue. As such, the building, as an act, then becomes a living organism in and of itself in the community, instead of a submissive object[72]. Johansen's designs therefore questioned how design could collaborate with, while also influencing, the human experience.

Understanding the needs of the projects' communities, he created sculptural fragments that would transform the way an individual would think about his or her built environment. . As such, his buildings did not often adhere to a particular visual style, valuing significance over beauty.[73] In his career Johansen would go on to complete three theater projects. Completed before the Mechanic, his design for Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House (fig. 20), reflect this same ethos yet bears little resemblance to it formally. Completed in October 1963, the structure on the Indian campus of Butler University expands on the simple box like form to create a dramatic building that mimics the drama viewers experienced during a performance.

A building within a building, Clowes Memorial Hall, complete with lofty vertical walls, sits within an outer structure of shorter vertical piers that housed the lounges, lobby, and stairwells. Although essentially rectangular in form (fig. 21), Johansen plays with the floor plan of the limestone structure, creating a stepped layout through the rhythmic placement of the piers. Inside rooms would seem to appear mysteriously from

[72] Ibid. 67.
[73] Ibid, 37.

the various piers, further contributing to the dramatic experience.[74] As Butler University boasts a somewhat Gothic style, Johansen hoped to reflect these ideals in this design. Experimenting with theater typology and responding to the existing architectural landscape, Johansen created a structure that articulated common forms in a new way. Innovative, it challenged the preconceived notions of the landscape, and subsequently the way individuals viewed and appreciated their place in these functional spaces. Although Johansen's design for the Mechanic Theater drew from these ideas, it utilizes its exterior and interior decoration and formal ornamentation to add depth to the theater itself by breaking further away from conventional forms and creating one of the most memorable and distinctive monuments the city of Baltimore has ever seen.

Described as "blocky as a fortress [and as] inviting as a cave," the Mechanic Theater covered inexpensive rough-sawn boards in concrete to give the impression of a directly formed piece of sculpture[75]. In spite of its diminutive stature in comparison to the office towers in and around Charles Center, the theater does not get lost in the site. Rather, its heavy materiality grounds the structure, differentiating it from its surroundings and drawing viewers to its stark and unique form (fig. 22). Due to its coloration, it appears to rise up organically from the sidewalk. Upon closer examination, the varying towers and bulges that draw the viewer's eyes across the façade begin to form an understanding of the use of the building itself. The tall, vertical, and lofty piers that extend from the base hold the seating galleries that extend forth from the structure, enveloping the box-like stage (fig. 23). Additionally, although they no longer exist, the

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[74] Ibid, 40.
[75] "New Shapes & New Spirit," *Time Magazine*, 1968. In Johansen, *John M. Johansen: A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture*. 65

design featured the popular use of bridges to connect the theater to the adjacent office buildings, bonding the community together further architecturally.[76] Initially, the Mechanic did not feature a prominent entrance, which forced the viewer to walk in and absorb the many facets of the building before finally getting inside the theater.

Compared to the exterior, the floor plan (fig. 24) does not blatantly feature avant-garde adaptations of the typical theater layout. It is through the experience of this space, however, that one notices its unique quality, especially as it relates the building's façade. Large windows let light into the open lobby, illuminating the large space (fig. 25). Based on the exterior, one might not expect such a cavernous interior, even though each form corresponds to an interior element. Moving around the space, one realizes, however, that the large towers holding up the seating lift the viewer above the stage, exalting the theater experience into another world, much like the actors within the play attempt to achieve. The slanted roof corresponded to the underside of the seating above. While the overall design served and reflected the specific functions of the building, the stage, meanwhile, accommodated the potential for the fantasy and the story that the theater performances would create. As such Johansen intended to provide flexible space for a variety of shows.

Through this design, the Mechanic Theater presented a provocative structure that dually embodied an impenetrable sculptural monument as well as a limitless venue for

[76] George Kostritsky noted the significance of these walkways and their power to create a level of humanity in urban renewal efforts across the country. He wrote, "They may not work right away, but I think we have to sow the seeds today and begin to develop them. We can't get rid of the automobile, for instance; we will only get rid of it to a certain extent; so these pedestrian walkways will become extremely important in the cities of the future." In Millspaugh, 23.

creative enterprise and experience. Celebrated, the majority of the GBC voted in favor of the design, noting, "it will supply the exciting form needed in the southern square."[77] Referring back to the initial design themes established for Charles Center, the design successfully conveyed the ideas of monumentality as it related to significant architecture. Since nothing like it existed in the city, Baltimore had the exciting challenge to present this to its citizens and to further transform its architectural identity.

Understanding Style: The Mechanic, Brutalism, and *Ad Hoc*

As the first legitimate theater constructed not only in Baltimore, but also in the United States, in over 30 years, the public was naturally excited to see the final product of Johansen's design[78]. In conjunction with the anticipation for a theater venue itself, the officials involved could not wait to present this innovative design. Alexander Cochran, a partner for the supervising firm leading the construction of the Mechanic, expressed this sentiment in the opening day pamphlet, writing:

> Baltimore now has a theater which it will make its own—but only with critical awareness and after thoughtful appreciation. It was initially conceived, then designed, and constructed as a community service of a special kind. This service is not only to accommodate theatrical performances. It is to deepen the sense of vitality and potential dignity of all those who use the building. As distinct from some trends in architecture today, this building can be called 'in the mainstream' of the contemporary architecture which primarily serves its citizens and goes beyond this to exalt them and give them a feeling of dignity. Over all the building is at once recognizable as a theater, but its shape goes further than needs. The resulting piers, walls, ceilings, which assert the forms and shapes of the building, should not be taken for granted, but in effect demand your attempted comprehension of every detail. This is the kind of participation which can make this building begin to belong to our community.[79]

[77] Fuad 136
[78] Ibid, 132.
[79] The Mechanic Foundation 8

Reflecting the sentiments of Johansen, Cochran's statement concerning the dignity of the Mechanic suggests that he, along with the members of the GBC and Mr. Mechanic himself, valued the new theater's ability to inspire action, rather than behavior. In order to effectively revive the downtown nightlife, the building needed to inspire a change reaction. People could not simply come and enjoy the show. Appreciating the architecture, especially Johansen's innovative form, ensured that renewal could continue throughout the city. Impressed, the AIA awarded the building with the local chapter's First Honor Award, their highest design award.[80] Unfortunately, Mr. Mechanic passed away before the structure was complete, but his "Tiffany Job" successfully helped in the continued growth of Baltimore and attracted national attention for its style.

Upon completion, the architectural community responded positively to the new design. Five months after its opening, *Architectural Forum* noted how the project brought a real urbanity to the greater Baltimore renewal project. Commenting that the outside reflected the inside, the journal praised Johansen's ability to express the theater as a fragment of the whole, both in relation to its own design, and to the rest of Charles Center. Author J.M. Dixon believed that the Mechanic's masses complemented its surrounding environment. Just as Charles Center's components and sites articulated its relationship to the broader Baltimore landscape, so too did The Mechanic's design relate the parts to a broader whole. The building's only failing, however, came from the "unbroken continuity of its handsome concrete surfaces."[81] Another critic, Wolf Von Eckardt echoed this sentiment, believing that the expressive Mechanic finally brought

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[80]"Mechanic Theater Gets Top Award," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 24, 1967, F1.
[81] J.M Dixon, "A New Theater: A Center for Baltimore," *Architectural Forum*, 126 No. 5 (1967), 78.

Baltimore to architectural prominence and avoided the saccharine efforts of many other designers.[82] In an effort to describe the design, some of these early critics attributed the Mechanic to a Brutalist style[83]. During this time, the term Brutalism, as developed by Reyner Banham referred to architecture that defied architectural tradition and connected the form to its environment. Many of these buildings featured the rough concrete façade seen at the Mechanic. Although the intentions behind the Mechanic relates to these ideas, Johansen's design represented more of an *ad hoc* approach to a building's relationship with its environment.

When he first coined the term Brutalism, Reyner Banham examined the stylistic qualities of buildings he believed expressed a move away from the generic qualities of Modernism in the mid 20th century. Modernism, in the opinion of some architects, as well as Banham, had neglected to consider the interest of man and the interest of the city in design.[84] The emphasis architects placed on formal qualities alone disconnected people from place. As such, some applied a new approach that sought to connect the physical world to humanity, ensuring that design would function on a social and psychological level. Banham believed this new architecture rooted itself in the traditions of the past, both modern and classical, in order to create a livable environment.[85] In order to better define this program and the architecture that embodied it, Banham established three principle characteristics of Brutalist architecture.

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[82] Wolf Von Eckardt,"Baltimore's New Theater is Exciting." *The Washington Post Times Herald*, January 15, 1967, http://search.proquest.com.proxy.its.virginia.edu/docview/143270496?accountid=14678.
[83] John Dorsey, "Two Years, $4.2 Million," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 15,1961, D1.
[84] Banham, "The New Brutalism," Reprinted in *OCTOBER*, 136 (Spring 2011), 19–20
[85] Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic Or Aesthetic?*, (New York: Reinhold ;Stuttgart, 1966), 14

Architects working in this mode focused how society's urges, technologies, and desires might be physically manifested in order to "make meaningful the change, the growth, the flow, [and] the vitality of the community."[86] More concerned about ethics than aesthetics, Banham dictated that these buildings should exhibit formal legibility of plan, clear expression of structure, and valuation of materials for their inherent qualities "as found." Eventually, he amended these terms to say that Brutalist buildings represent the idea of memorability as image, that the structure is the relationship of parts, while still emphasizing the raw, "as found" materiality[87]. According to Banham, this architecture would "[drag] a rough poetry out of the confused and powerful forces which are at work."[88] Ultimately, Brutalist architecture learned from the dynamics of culture and created forms that inspired its transformation into a purer form.

Works by architects like Paul and Allison Smithson heavily informed, and later embodied, Banham's theory. The Economist Building in London (fig. 26), for example, achieves memorability as image because it respected the surrounding environment and introduced a form that both worked with and challenged the existing site. Additionally, its rhythmic repetition of rectilinear bays helps define and inform the shape of the building itself, and the rough concrete material represents the "as found" material quality. Despite Banham's ethical definition, many soon associated Brutalism with the use of concrete. Many architects and critics alike attempted to embrace these materials without truly appreciating the value of Banham's original goal to create an architecture that informs change in the community. While critics most likely connected the Mechanic to

[86] Ibid. 72
[87] Ibid. 66.
[88] Ibid.

Brutalism because of its use of unfinished concrete, Johansen's design has a deeper connection to Banham's ideas. Reflecting a more *ad hoc* mentality, Johansen's design cannot be stylistically categorized, as its aesthetics did not seek to align itself with an architectural movement, but rather sought to foster continued growth in the city. As such, ascribing Brutalism to its design limits the complete understanding of the Mechanic and its influence in Baltimore.

First of all, Johansen himself never identified with Brutalism.[89] Although Banham's Brutalism valued a similar desire to achieve social change through his design, Johansen realized that aligning himself with a particular style detracted from the mission of his work.[90] Banham's conception of Brutalism inevitably affects the intention of the design and how it relates the particular community it needs to serve. Improvement, change, and innovation in design would cause them to act. Therefore, design should never rely on a particular architectural program. By adhering to defined principles, rather than a superficial stylistic categories, Johansen risked created a design that dictated experience rather than inspire its growth.

Baltimore's Mechanic Theater is more than just a Brutalist building, and represents an attempt at an *ad hoc* approach to design and urban planning. Established by Charles Jencks, the *ad hoc* spirit avoids strict guidelines for architectural design, as it restricts freedom in design. He argues that the world is completed of fragments of the past. In order to create meaning amongst this pluralism, he believes that each new project should develop a city on top of the old one. In his book, *Adhocism*, Jencks writes:

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[89] Christen Johansen, "John M. Johansen's Buildings of the 1960s—Brutalism and Beyond," *CLOG* 2 (February 2013), 67.
[90] Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver, *Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1972).

> One desirable goal in urban design is to create and reinforce these subsets on whatever level they happen to exist, and not merely use the classical means of order. Thus an *ad hoc* amalgamation of past subsystems and present overlays can be compiled without tearing apart the urban tissue every generation. In their most successful form these superimposed subsets would correspond to the plurality of subcultures, and urbanism based on an *ad hoc* approach would not seek to deny or suppress them.[91]

Similar to the ideas of Johansen, Jencks means that in order to successfully effect change while avoiding the generic synthesis of past ideas, new ideas should complement the past as a means of inspiring a citizen to reconsider the role of newer interpretations of culture in its own future[92]. Upholding Johansen's argument for a dynamic program, the Mechanic's design relates more to this idea than Brutalism. Drawing from its surroundings, the theater would go on improving the way the city lived and saw itself not only in Charles Center, but also in later renewal projects like the Inner Harbor.

Civic Responsibility: The Mechanic Theater's Role in Later Urban Renewal

While the design of the Morris A. Mechanic achieved Johansen's and the GBC's goal of creating a community monument that signified architectural excellence and change on paper, miscommunications during construction detracted from the overall usability of the theater. In certain areas, the balconies obstructed the view of the stage, while in other areas the space between rows of seats could barely accommodate a child[93]. Attempting to ensure the building opened on time, the construction crew hastily repaired these problems. Over time, these quick fixes affected the quality of the experience of the theater by patrons and actors alike. In fact, during a visit to Baltimore, actor Dustin Hoffman described his disdain for the theater, stating, "There is nothing about the Morris

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[91] Ibid, 35.
[92] Ibid, 184
[93] "Sea Of Troubles Besets Theater: Midgets, Giants Do Fine But Normal Patrons Face Problems," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 10, 1967,C6

Mechanic Theater that I like…The theater has such high balconies, it goes up in the sky…[and] the Mechanic's terrifically wide aisles produce a feeling of separation between the audience and the actors."[94] Frustrated, many community members and production companies stopped support the theater threatening its existence during its first decade.

Due to poor ticket sales, the management company, The Nederlander Corporation, backed out of its contract with the theater, forcing the Mechanic to close in May 1975. A group of Baltimoreans banded together to save the venue for the sake of its cultural significance.[95] To these men, saving the Mechanic was their civic responsibility. At less than ten years old, the prestige of the Mechanic still impressed Baltimore with its monumentality. Rather than beginning plans for a new theater, Baltimore recognized the importance of Johansen's design and its role in creating a new community in this urban renewal era. In an effort to revive interest in the theater, the individuals decided to modify the building through a series of renovations. Without consulting Johansen, the city agreed to take out 200 seats in order to expand the stage and also added a marquee to an exterior pier (fig. 27 & 28).[96] Far more functional, the community applauded the redesign and the Mechanic flourished. The nightlife attraction became the hub for all cultural events and a place to be seen. While early events at the Mechanic featured a far more relaxed atmosphere, the Mechanic of the 1970's brought a new dynamic element to the Center (fig. 29 & 30). Once again, the structure returned to its place as the icon of the Baltimore's urban renewal and served as the model for the next era of Baltimore's

[94] Neil Rosenberg, "Mechanic's High Balconies—Wide Aisles, Bother Hoffman," *The Baltimore Sun*, November 13, 1968, C24.
[95] R. Gardner, "The Fate of the Mechanic," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 29, 1975, N1.
[96] Freeman 34-35.

renaissance.

The reopening of the Mechanic in 1976 coincided with city's redevelopment of the Inner Harbor. Baltimore's next major urban renewal project, the Inner Harbor owes its existence to the success of Charles Center. Not coincidentally, the revitalization sought to visually connect the harbor with its predecessor. Although the city had considered revitalizing the Harbor area during the 1950s, it was ultimately the success of Charles Center that warranted the project's funding.[97] The success of Charles Center in bringing people back to downtown encouraged projects like the Inner Harbor to move forward. Proposed in June 1967, just five months after the opening of the Mechanic Theater, the Inner Harbor Project I sought to reinforce Baltimore's image as an urban center of distinction, charm, and vitality. Having placed early emphasis on its core, Baltimore now had an opportunity to extend that image beyond its city limits. Reclaiming the waterfront, the site responsible for its settlement, Baltimore told the world it could move beyond the scope of industrial commercialism and create a livable, attractive, and modern environment that connected with the rest of the world.

In order to complete this task, Baltimore once again hired David Wallace. Integral to the completion of Charles Center, Wallace's involvement signaled a desire in the city to create a project that related to earlier urban renewal efforts. Encompassing 85 acres, the new development provided sites for the new World Trade Center, a science center, landscaped promenades for recreational use, as well as other commercial and residential

[97] Greater Baltimore Committee, GBC Memorandum May 14, 1963, 4, in Columbia Archives GBC RGI-S2 Box 2012/62-12/63.

endeavors (fig. 31).[98] Described as, "look[ing] inward on itself, [with] its intimate scale, it [is] enclosed, framed, and yet open[ed] provocatively to the Outer Harbor and to the world," the plan for the Inner Harbor brought the renewal project full circle[99]. Much like Charles Center, the compact and cohesive plan created a complete environment that attempted to embody Baltimore's renewal image. Verbally, the city communicated this vision to the people of Baltimore in a series of pamphlets advertising the site. One read, "Finally, the Inner Harbor Project will complete the new image of Baltimore as a progressive, cosmopolitan center—an image initiated by Charles Center and carried forward in this magnificent blueprint for the future."[100] Visually, this connection manifested itself in the McKeldin Fountain.

Just as Charles Center desired to connect to neighboring areas and Baltimore's past as the Monumental City, the Inner Harbor's proximity to the water inspired those involved in the project to erect a fountain as a monument to this resource.[101] Once again, the idea of monuments resurfaces as a design themes for urban renewal. Since the Inner Harbor was an extension of the overall city revitalization plan that began with Charles Center, the planning council wished to connect these two urban areas as well to help unify disparate projects across Baltimore. After working on the site plan for the Harbor, Wallace and his team realized that the corner of Pratt and Light Streets looked out on to Charles Street and subsequently to Charles Center. As early drawings show, the arrows

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[98] Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency, *Inner Harbor Project I Renewal Plan*, (Baltimore, 1967), 1.
[99] McCarthy 69
[100] Miscellaneous Papers, Inner Harbor Renewal Project I in Baltimore City Archives BCA BRG9-25-40 Box 396 File 211
[101] Greater Baltimore Committee, *The Inner Harbor and City Hall Plaza*, (Baltimore, 1965) in Columbia Archives RGI-S2 Box 27

strongly convey the desire to construct a building or monument that could serve as a prominent connection and landmark (fig. 32). Therefore, the placement of the water feature became a means of connecting the two sites.

Designed by Thomas Todd, a partner of David Wallace, the McKeldin Square Fountain (fig. 33), completed in 1981, consists of a series of tiered pools surrounded by large concrete piers. Also known as the Meyerhoff Fountain or *Waterfall*, the water rushed from the top level of the fountain and cascaded down like a waterfall. Rising and falling along the various levels, the strong vertical forms break with the expanse of the Harbor's horizon. A series of walkways crosses over and through the fountain, connecting the Harbor to the central Downtown. The use of these walkways makes the fountain an integral part of the complex rather than a decorative feature (fig. 34). Formally, the similarity between John Johansen's Mechanic Theater and the McKeldin Square Fountain is striking.

Not only did the location of the fountain seek to connect the Inner Harbor with Charles Center, but it also echoed the Mechanic's design elements in its squat, jutting concrete forms. As Baltimore worked to reopen the theater, Wallace and Todd worked on the design for the fountain. While evidence does not exist to suggest that either Wallace or Todd were involved in the redesign of the Mechanic, they would have been aware of its significance and Baltimore's desire to see it succeed. The formal connection to the theater both justified its restoration and reminded the city that the Mechanic remained a cornerstone of urban renewal. Therefore, the fountain proves that Johansen successfully created a monument that further inspired growth and change both in theory and in physical form.

John Johansen's design for the Mechanic Theater continued the renewal efforts established by Charles Center and remains Baltimore's most experimental design to date. Monumental, the Mechanic Theater moved beyond the goals of Charles Center, by challenging the way individuals experienced space and encouraging design explorations. In attempt to understand its formal qualities, critics associated the theater with Brutalism. While the Mechanic in some respects embodies the ideas established by Reyner Banham, Johansen resisted the notion of adhering to set expectations. Aligning himself with a style risked having people conform to space rather than grow from it. The Mechanic exemplified this *ad hoc* sensibility. Additionally, it successfully managed to further inform Baltimore's next era of urban renewal design. The obvious visual connections, both in location and form, between the Mechanic and the McKeldin Fountain, solidified the legacy of the Mechanic. Nevertheless, current redevelopment efforts threaten the future of the Mechanic Theater, as well as the McKeldin Fountain.

As this chapter demonstrates, the Mechanic's significance resides not in a stylistic term but in its embodiment of urban renewal's efforts to revitalize and improve the city of Baltimore. The final section of this thesis addresses how Baltimore's current attitude toward the Mechanic Theater and other monuments to 20th century urban renewal stand in direct opposition to the core beliefs that made revitalization in Baltimore possible in the first place. The city's proposal for new development embraces more mainstream designs as a means of economic improvement rather than aspiring to effect true social change through architecture.

Chapter 3

Renewing Renewal—Determining Downtown in Today's Baltimore

The continued support for the theater after it closed in 1975 articulated Baltimore's faith in the design of the building as a means of communicating and effecting change. In spite of the renovation, the Mechanic once again fell into a period of decline. By the 1990's, as the initial renewal projects came to a close, Baltimore prepared for the next chapter of redevelopment.[102] Notably, these plans included a new theater. Rather than reviving the Mechanic for the second time, the city chose to restore the Hippodrome Theater, built in 1915, on Baltimore's suffering West Side. Just as the Mechanic had played a key role in the development of Charles Center, the restored Hippodrome anticipated doing the same for the West Side.

With the opening of the Hippodrome 2004, the Mechanic was forced to close. As the tenth anniversary of its closure approaches, the city has plans to revitalize the site of the now abandoned theater. Although numerous developers have expressed interest in the site, the Mechanic currently faces imminent demolition. In 1999, the original 40-year urban renewal controls on Charles Center expired, meaning the zoning permitted an

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[102] Fritz W. Wagner, Timothy E. Joder, and Anthony J. Mumphrey, Jr., *Urban Revitalization: Policies and Programs,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1995), 36-66.

additional million square feet of development on the site of the Mechanic. Demolishing the structure would provide the city with an incredible economic opportunity. While preservationists have come forward to save the building, the city has blatantly ignored the significance of the Mechanic. Citing their dislike of the Brutalist style, the Baltimore community agrees that the removal of the Mechanic would improve the aesthetic image of Baltimore. This disinterest has prevented them from seeing the manipulation of preservation ordinances in the city that should protect the Mechanic rather than allow for its destruction. Interestingly, Baltimore also recently announced its decision to demolish the McKeldin Square Fountain. If the city followed through with these plans, Baltimore would lose two significant examples of its urban renewal period and forever compromise the understanding of its architectural identity. This final chapter will critique Baltimore's current preservation and renewal projects in an effort to argue for these structures' preservation. Demonstrating how Baltimore's negative opinion about the aesthetics of these structures actively ignores its preservation ordinances calls out the ignorance of Baltimore officials. Ultimately, this argument reaffirms the original design themes of urban renewal and helps set the stage for positive redevelopment in the future.

Progress and/or Preservation: The Fate of Architecture in Baltimore

As urban renewal worked to improve the image of cities like Baltimore, many rundown or awkwardly located historic structures were lost to accommodate these new plans. Charles Center, for example, only preserved four structures within its multimillion redevelopment. Some in Baltimore worried about the future of its historic architecture. Although the Mount Vernon neighborhood helped Baltimore's reputation as a

monumental city, it faced neglect and potential ruin. Recognizing this important chapter in Baltimore's architectural history, Mayor Philip Goodman endorsed the creation of the first Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) in 1964. Representing most of Baltimore's significant 19th century architecture, Mount Vernon was designating as the first preservation district in the city.[103] This decision to preserve the elite examples of Baltimore's architectural legacy has become a more inclusive practice in the last 50 years, and has established the guidelines for the conservation of landmarks across the city.

Currently, CHAP's mission is to enhance and promote the culture and economy of Baltimore through the preservation of buildings, structures, sites and neighborhoods that have aesthetic, historic, and architectural value.[104] The Commission's responsibilities include designating Baltimore City's historic districts and landmarks, reviewing plans for landmarks and buildings in historic districts, operating the National Historic Landmark Edgar Allan Poe House, providing technical assistance and historical information to the public, administering the Baltimore City Historic Restoration & Rehabilitation Tax Credit, conserving and maintaining city-owned outdoor sculpture and monuments, conducting historic resource surveys, complying with Federal law to provide preservation recommendations for federal and state funded projects, integrating historic preservation recommendations into City and neighborhood plans, and, finally, administering permit review authority for over 11,000 properties in 31 local historic districts, as well as 156

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[103] "Press Statement by Mayor Philip H. Goodman, March 18, 1963, " BCA BRG9-24-4 Box 270, File 22.

[104] Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, "About CHAP", *Baltimore City Government*, (accessed December 10, 2013), http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/BoardsandCommissions/HistoricalArchitecturalPreservation/AboutCHAP.aspx.

local landmarks[105]. Using the National Historic Preservation Act as a guideline, CHAP is a unique entity allowed to run separately from the overburdened Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland's State Historic Preservation Office. In 2004, the same year as the Mechanic's closing, it joined forces with Baltimore's Department of Planning to have a more effective role in the decisions of the past's future in the built environment.[106] Combining its resources with those of the Planning Department, it has the opportunity to truly execute its mission and preserve the cultural landscape of Baltimore.

Like any other preservation commission or organization, CHAP provides interested applicants with a detailed list of criteria to illustrate which sites and properties are eligible for listing as either a historic district or landmark. General qualifications intentionally mirror those of the National Register, and include sites that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history, those associated with prominent men and women, those emblematic of a particular architect or architectural style, and, lastly, those likely to yield important information on the development of the city. Interestingly, it makes no direct reference to the significance of the 50-year marker as a qualifier. While not directly addressed, the emphasis on the 19th century history in the descriptions of architectural demonstrates that there is a greater emphasis and consideration given to older buildings.[107] Nevertheless, CHAP's guidelines include modern buildings like the Mechanic for preservation consideration.

Johansen's building fits three of the four criteria necessary for recognition. As the cornerstone of the urban renewal program and a part of Charles Center it represents a key

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

site in the formation of the present Baltimore City. Prominent Baltimoreans and Marylanders, including James Rouse, a national developer, and Morris Mechanic, an early arts advocate, played an active role in the decision to build the Mechanic, helping it reach the second criteria. Beyond those two crucial factors, the Mechanic was a creation of John Johansen, one of the original Harvard Five. As his only extant theater of this design in the country, it stands as an example of the Brutalist style set amongst a sea of glass and steel[108]. CHAP recognized this, and when the Mechanic faced initial development threats, decided to nominate the theater as a Baltimore City Landmark. By definition, a city landmark is an individual structure or property that has been deemed by City ordinance to have historical, cultural, educational, or architectural value. A landmark may include exterior structures as well as public interiors.[109]

Although the initial process of urban renewal removed parts of Baltimore's older historic fabric, the Mechanic, Charles Center, and other products of urban renewal, have now become an integral part of understanding the city's larger urban context. Now a component of the architectural past, we today have the obligation as the successive generation, to encourage its preservation and relate new projects to its heritage. Thankfully CHAP, in its procedures and guidelines, cites its contributions to the cultural heritage of the city. Looking ahead, it acknowledges the need to consider the future of the past in contemporary construction, stating:

> In the twenty-first century and beyond, the architects of Baltimore will develop new expression of aesthetics, function, technology, and environment that will take their place among the styles of the past. This rich mixture will reinforce Baltimore's character as a

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[108] John M. Johansen, "MORRIS MECHANIC THEATER BALTIMORE, MD," *John M. Johansen—Official Site*, (accessed March 2, 2014), http://www.johnmjohansen.com/Morris-Mechanic-Theater.html.

[109] Baltimore CHAP, 14

> vital urban place that preserves the best work of each generation while welcoming new creative architecture.[110]

This support represents a progressive attitude toward recent past preservation. Baltimore's CHAP has made the cognizant decision to combat these issue and promote the preservation of the broadest cultural landscape possible. While the Commission itself, however has committed to supporting modern structures, it appears that these ordinances are simply optional in the minds of higher Baltimore officials, including current mayor, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

Beyond meeting the criteria, CHAP has to personally nominate the site to the Mayor and City Council for consideration as a Baltimore City Landmark. The Commission or applicant develops the supporting evidence necessary to substantiate significance. If it meets the criteria, like the Mechanic, notification is sent within the month to interested parties such as the City Council representative for the district where the property is located, neighborhood associations, the Baltimore AIA chapter, and Baltimore City historic preservation organizations like Preservation Maryland and Baltimore Heritage. Then the process moves on the Commission determines whether or not to approve the nomination. If the nomination passes, it is sent to the City Council to propose an ordinance. Making it past this stage, the site will then have its ordinance sent to the Mayor to be written into law, solidifying its place on the Landmarks List. As renewal efforts threatened the Mechanic Theater, preservationists followed these extensive guidelines and demonstrated the significance of the theater.[111] Despite this, the

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[110] Ibid, 24.

[111] Worried about the future of the Mechanic, architects Richard Rogers, Richard Meier, James Polshek, along with the American Institute of Architects' design committee chairman Michael F. Ross, and several others, wrote to the Baltimore Historical and Architectural Preservation Commission, pleading that they save the building as early as

Mayor ignored CHAP's formal regulations and as such denied its admittance to the Landmark List, meaning that the building can be demolished without any consequence.

Image and Ignorance: Failing to Learn from the Past

Initially, the city sought to compromise with the preservationists, agreeing to preserve 80-90% of the Mechanic's exterior.[112] As such, early redevelopment efforts gutted the interior, removing any connection the site once had with a performance arts space (fig. 35). No longer reflective of its function, at least the Mechanic still remained in Charles Center. While Johansen would have appreciated a greater consideration for his design, he conceded that since the Mechanic served as the central and feature element in Charles Center it should at least remain in a sculptural accent in the city.[113] Arguing that the structure served as an architectural testament to Baltimore's triumph over modernism, he felt it deserved landmark status, or at least to remain a cultural center.

Based on the projected images now pasted on the windows of the Mechanic, it appears that the city chose a developer that wanted to incorporate the theater's shell into its design (fig. 36). This plan, headed by developer One West LLC, presents two residential towers that from the body of the Mechanic[114]. Once complete, the former Mechanic would be home to commercial enterprises such as stores and restaurants. While a far cry from the innovative design of Johansen, it at least did not remove the structure

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2007. For more information please reference: John M. Johansen, "MORRIS MECHANIC THEATER BALTIMORE, MD."

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Doug Birch, "Mechanic Theatre: Preservationists Seek to Save "Brutalist" Building from the Wrecking Ball," *Baltimore Brew*, May 9, 2012, accessed April 29, 2014, https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2012/05/09/mechanic-theater-preservationists-seek-to-save-brutalist-building-from-the-wrecking-ball/

permanently from the landscape. A false projection of the future site, the developer, however, filed a demolition permit to tear down the Mechanic in 2012. Currently, it plans to replace the structure with a 29-story residential high-rise (fig. 37)[115]. In August, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake denied CHAP's request to save the building, thus purposefully ignoring the preservation law. As the *Baltimore Sun* noted:

> The mayor's refusal to submit an ordinance is undemocratic. It denies the citizens of Baltimore the opportunity to attend a City Council hearing and tell their representatives why the Mechanic should be preserved. Historic preservation is a big deal in Baltimore. In the face of a lot of bad news for the city generally, it is the historic neighborhoods that are reviving — Bolton Hill, Mount Vernon, Federal Hill, Fells Point and Canton, among others. Many see the future of Baltimore as home to young professionals who cherish the historic character of the city.[116]

This disapproval allowed the developers to theoretically move forward with their plans without consulting CHAP on the ways to mitigate the effects of their plans with the current, historic urban fabric. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, for all intents and purposes, removed the consultation clause established by the National Historic Preservation Act.

Her failure to comply suggests she believed the Mechanic could win the its preservation battle, which meant a potentially lucrative project for the city under her tenure would not come to fruition. Overall, this undermines the preservation process itself, and raises the question if Baltimore's selective practice will further damage the history of the city's built environment. Although this sentiment outraged the architectural

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[115] James Briggs, "Baltimore's Apartment Tower Boom is Part of the 'Manhattanization of America,' Baltimore Business Journal, April 28, 2014, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2014/04/baltimores-apartment-tower-boom-is-part-of-the.html.

[116] John C. Murphy, "At the Mechanic, a Tragedy in Two Acts," *The Baltimore Sun*, September 19, 2012, accessed December 10, 2013, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-09-19/news/bs-ed-mechanic-20120919_1_historic-preservation-chap-recommendation-historic-neighborhoods.

community, many Baltimoreans did not oppose this decision. Baltimore Brew reported Doug Birch remarked, "The . . . rawly exposed cement, the purposeful championing of function over form, the relentless drabness… looks like an insecticide factory or an electric-power substation rather than a palace for the performing arts."[117] The same article would later describe the building as a Brutalist bumbling.[118] Disconnecting from the design ethics, Baltimore's focus on the cold aesthetics of the Mechanic as it relates to the style of Brutalism, especially as it is defined today, clouds the discussion and adversely affects its preservation.

The architecture of the Mechanic Theater has always exceeded the stylistic term of Brutalism. Although Reyner Banham asserted Brutalism as an ethic, he came to realize that his principles inadvertently could be reduced to merely physical forms of the structures. Ben Highmore discusses the easy reduction of Banham's idea of Brutalism to a mere question of style and how this inevitably led to a focus on the formal qualities:

> If [Banham] meant that the architectural 'image' should be memorable, then surely he would have written 'a memorable image' or 'an image that is memorable.' Why then the convoluted phrasing; why then memorability; and why an image of memorability? It is connected, no doubt, to the qualifier that 'the image is what affects the emotions.[119]

Highmore suggests that call for an "image" of memorability caused the imitation of early Brutalist forms, as Banham's wording expressly called for that quality in architecture. So, the use of concrete allowed for the casual conscription of many urban renewal buildings as Brutalist.

No sooner did the term enter the public realm its meaning begin to narrow. Brutalism lacks teeth in the present day fight for preservation and significance.

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[117] Birch
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ben Highmore, "Brutalism's Recruitment Drive," *CLOG* 2 (February 2013). 19.

Attempting to understand this phenomenon, Helen Sroat argues, "In the midst of this social and intellectual agitation, brutalism and formally ambitious postwar American architecture in general began to be reinterpreted as exhausted, empty formal gestures."[120] Removing the functional component of the Mechanic allowed for these negative and uninformed opinions to dictate its future. No longer a vital part of Charles Center, people viewed the contrast this brutal form had with its surrounding environment as an indicator of its failure and ugliness. This thesis argues, however, that the creation of the building engaged the ethics Banham advocated and thus represents a key monument to this development of the past. Preserving the Mechanic Theater, or at least acknowledging its significance, continues its tradition in the landscape as it informs the next moment of development in renewal.

Defending the collection of buildings currently associated with the empty term of Brutalism, Anthony Vidler notes:

> If there is any value…it is in learning the lesson that architectural movements can't be jumpstarted by art historical categorization but demand deeper roots in the programmatic needs of a society-structures that are more important for their social and urban innovations than for any superficial aesthetic.[121]

Urban renewal represented Baltimore's attempt to bring the city into the modern era, and Charles Center's Morris Mechanic Theater serves as the tangible manifestation of those dreams. Relegating its design to this style, it negates the significance of the building and its roots in changing the image of Baltimore during urban renewal. Vidler's argument against this superficiality suggests we have a lot left to learn about buildings lumped under the heading of Brutalism. Not only could the city of Baltimore preserve its cultural

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[120] Helene Sroat, "The Humanism of Brutalist Architecture: The Yale Art & Architecture Building and Postwar Constructions of Aesthetic Experience in American Universities and Architecture," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003).305

[121] Anthony Vidler, "Brutalism: Aesthetic or Ethic?," *CLOG* 2 (February 2013), 17

landscape by acknowledging the significance of the Mechanic, it could also start a broader movement to reconsider the significance and intention of these other urban renewal monuments across the country. Ultimately, preserving the Mechanic could drastically change the importance of recent past architecture in the field and create a nationwide movement to clarify our understanding of Brutalist architecture and its significance.

The Future of the Recent Past in Baltimore City

Even though the mayor defeated the Commission in its initial request to add the Mechanic to the Landmark List, CHAP still had the authority to review, and deny, Brown's project.[122] Denying the request, CHAP placed the Mechanic on its Special List This postponed demolition for six months in order to assess the validity of the project in relation to the historical integrity of the Mechanic.[123] As public opinion has yet to change, the city received little opposition to questioning the significance of the Mechanic. Land Use attorney John Murphy alluded that public manipulation was the reason this world-class building could not survive.[124] Promoting the image of a decaying Brutalist building, Baltimore has prevented the survival of this urban renewal monument. Once the postponement deadline passed in March 2013, the Housing Commissioner became

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[122] Baltimore CHAP, 24

[123] Mark Reutter, "Inside City Hall: Denial of demolition permit has silver lining for Mechanic owner," *Baltimore Brew,* September 11, 2012, accessed February 27, 2013, http://www.baltimorebrew.com/2012/09/11/inside-city-hall-denial-of-demotion-permit-has-silver-lining-for-mechanic-owner/.

[124] Steve Kilar, "Plans For Mechanic Theater Stir Controversy," *The Baltimore Sun,* August 02, 2012, accessed December 10, 2013, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-08-02/news/bs-bz-udarp-mechanic-20120802_1_architecture-review-panel-retail-space-shalom-baranes-associates

responsible for its fate. Unfortunately, the current commissioner sided with the developer, meaning the fate of the Mechanic has been sealed, and demolition could occur any day.

Continuing this trend of removing the supposed blighted remnants of urban renewal, the city unfortunately announced the proposal to also demolish the McKeldin Square Fountain, a little over a year since the demolition controversy over the Mechanic began.[125] Instead of maintaining the fountain, they plan to revitalize the square with an inviting, open park-like setting, later adding amenities such as a skating rink (fig. 38).[126] Losing this along with the Mechanic Theater removes two monuments that shaped the city's current landscape. Learning from the mistakes of the Great Fire of 1904 and other architectural elements in the city, 1950's and 60's urban renewal fulfilled the desire to create a new heart for Baltimore. Successfully connecting the commercial district with the rest of the city, these two structures represent the creation of Baltimore's urban identity as it moved into the 21st century. Losing these structures directly contradicts the tenants they represent, and detracts from the continued improved of Baltimore.

With the uncertain future of The Mechanic, the city needs to address its misguided emphasis on an attractive environment as a metaphor for the greater image of the city. Neglected for so long, John Johansen's Morris Mechanic Theater history and its influence on the McKeldin Square Fountain completes the overall narrative of Baltimore and, as such, its whole identity. Reclaiming this era would provide Baltimore with the full picture of its history, from its beginnings to the present. Understanding the design clarifies its purpose, and creates a cohesive picture of the actual development of he city,

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[125] Kevin Litten, "Demolition of Brutalist Fountain at McKeldin Square Closer to Reality"
[126] Ibid.

rather than the manipulated version presented today. If Baltimore can embrace its architectural past, including these concrete jewels, it can more truthfully move forward with plans for the next chapter of its renaissance.

Conclusion

Seeing the opportunity to promote a revitalized image through its architectural identity, Baltimore City helped pioneer design thinking in the era of mid-twentieth century urban renewal. As the first major project in what would become almost a thirty-year program, Charles Center, located in the heart of downtown, became the physical manifestation of those dreams. Creating a cohesive image through the revived approach to the "Monumental City" moniker, Baltimore attempted to learn from its past to create an improved future for its modern era. With the addition of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's One Charles Center, the site asserted Baltimore's growing architectural significance on a local and national scale. The addition of John Johansen's Morris Mechanic Theater, however, demonstrated the city's ability and willingness to challenge architectural trends for the benefit of exploration of form. The design, inherently tied to the community at that moment in time, perfectly embodied Baltimore's newly perceived identity in its *ad hoc* sensibility and set the stage for more unconventional construction.

Successful, Charles Center paved the way for future urban renewal projects across the city. Most notably, the Inner Harbor project still commands the city's attention and has remained a key player in each stage of renewal since it was announced in 1967. Seeing the project as a both a new, vital experience as well as an extension of other downtown development, Baltimore made an attempt to physically connect the Inner Harbor with its predecessor, Charles Center. This erection of the McKeldin Square Fountain, which seems to directly borrow its concrete forms from the Mechanic Theater, only further bolstered these ideas. Knowing it wanted to prominently feature the main

resource of water, using this fountain to visually connect the spaces speaks volumes to its significance. Representing the entrance to the Inner Harbor, the fountain's abstract shape and use of concrete piers demonstrates the importance of The Mechanic in the minds of Baltimoreans and suggests to visitors its importance and legacy.

Despite this connection, the city failed to educate the community on the significance and meaning of the design in the context of 20th century urban renewal. One can not deny that, based on an evaluation of the design and the context of their constructions, these two sites attempt to embody the prominence of Baltimore at that time and to attribute that prominence to the people who interacted with the design as well. The lack of knowledge of the design, both in and out of Baltimore, unfortunately has allowed misconceptions to grow about its form and materials. Viewed as ugly and imposing, the Mechanic Theater and the McKeldin Square Fountain have lost their connection with their respective intentions. Referring to the works as Brutalist does not simply limit the understanding of their form, but the very term now breeds contempt. The transition of Brutalism from an ethic-based design to a denigrate aesthetic has allowed many examples of urban renewal to be demolished or threated. Rather than considering the integral role these two sites have played in the development of Baltimore, people have allowed the negative opinion over the "look" of the building determine its fate for the future. The Mechanic and McKeldin Square Fountain now ironically represent a blighted resource. While it appears that the future of these structures is still uncertain, the city still has the opportunity to creatively interpret and reincorporate this history into its architectural narrative.

Neglected for so long, the history of urban renewal completes the overall narrative of Baltimore. If Baltimore can embrace its architectural past, all of it, it can more truthfully move forward with plans for the rebirth of the "Monumental City." Moreover, their efforts could serve as a catalyst for the understanding of modernism as both and ethos and an aesthetic, paving the way for a deeper awareness and appreciation of the American people during urban renewal. Forward thinkers in this effort, Baltimore could take advantage of this opportunity to lead the way in preservation thinking across the country and demonstrate its ability to move forward while appreciating its built environment.

Baltimore is not unique in the fact that its modern buildings face threats of demolition and neglect. Last year, *Preservation*, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's quarterly magazine, devoted several major articles to this concern. Its Winter 2013, in particular, featured the issue of Brutalism as the cover story, demanding the attention of preservationists across the country.[127] Concerned with the number of buildings associated with the Brutalist style that are either threatened with demolition or are already lost, the organization effectively asked the preservation community to come together and prevent this moment in history from completely disappearing. This reflects a shift in the National Trust's overall view of preservation themselves, giving credence to the recent past as it faces the most threat. Additionally, the Trust's recent decision to move its headquarters from a 1917 building on DuPont Circle to the Watergate Complex

[127] David Hay, "Defending Brutalism," *Preservation,* (Winter 2013).

reflects a further resolve to bring the importance of the recent past to the preservation field.[128] As National Trust President Stephanie Meeks noted:

> The selection of the Watergate demonstrates our ongoing commitment to recognizing and protecting important places from every era in American history, including the recent past. We hope our decision to move to this iconic building will bring increased attention to landmarks of modern design[129].

By making this effort, the National Trust conveys that the next chapter of preservation seeks to appreciate all buildings in the historical narrative. Baltimore has a unique opportunity today to participate in this dialogue with the Mechanic and the McKeldin Square Fountain.

Aligning itself as a leader of this movement, Baltimore's decision to preserve the these monuments would set it apart from all other American cities and demonstrate its ability to be a leading figure in the next wave of urban renewal. In an effort to learn from the mistakes of the past and to maintain these monuments to a misunderstood style, as the original urban renewal officials did, Baltimore would once again prove itself as a forward thinker in urban planning. Embracing its unforgiving forms will signal its importance to the community and encourage a dialogue not only with Baltimore's past but with the idea of Brutalism as well. Supporting this style will ensure that examples persist for future generations to understand and explain. As it stands currently, scholarship on Brutalism is

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[128] Daniel Sernovitz, National Trust for Historic Preservation Lands Watergate, *Washington Business Journal*, June 28, 2013, (accessed March 2, 2014), http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/breaking_ground/2013/06/national-trust-for-historic.html?page=all.

[129]Jonathan O'Connell, "National Trust for Preservation Moving its Offices to the Watergate," *Washington Post Capital Business Blog*, June 27, 2013, accessed April 29, 2014 http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-business/post/national-trust-for-historic-preservation-moving-offices-to-the-watergate/2013/06/27/b03b5e82-df60-11e2-b2d4-ea6d8f477a01_blog.html

too limited. Changing these opinions will begin to alter the perception of recent past buildings in a positive and necessary way.

As Baltimore decides to take a stance on this subject, perhaps a reminder of its urban renewal origins can inspire them to make the correct decision. The 1955 surveys that helped catalyze Charles Center observed this about Baltimore and its inhabitants:

> So far, [the people of Baltimore] have been content to accept a normal progress. Although in recent years there has been an increasing inclination among a few to accelerate the pace, the underlying and basic character of the people has not changed. It is a city united in its patriotism and divided in its tastes…Summed up, there's a feeling for and about Baltimoreans that has to be experienced to believed.[130]

Urban renewal efforts of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, like the Mechanic Theater and the McKeldin Square Fountain, respected this feeling and enhanced it. Throughout its history Baltimore has relied on its people to support the development of identity, architecturally, socially, and economically. The resulting projects have undoubtedly contributed to this "feeling" and helped create the community Baltimore knows today.

Ultimately, as examples of experimental form and a component of boosting the city's cultural presence, these represent central figures in this architectural and social redevelopment. Sherry Olson, a historical geographer, reaffirmed Baltimore's unique heritage and how architecture helped create its identity. In her final chapter "The Image: Does it Matter?" Olson claims, Baltimore built itself, not for tourists, but for Baltimoreans themselves.[131] Baltimore's image through architecture may serve as a means of communicating worth to its contemporaries, but it also, and most importantly relates completely to the understanding of a generation of Baltimore people. Architecture succeeds or suffers due to its association with particular moments in history. Survival of

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[130] David F. Woods Associates, Inc.
[131] Sherry H. Olsen, *Baltimore*, (Cambridge, MA.: Ballinger Pub. Co., 1976), 87-90

modern buildings therefore serve as the basis for understanding Baltimore's population at the time and how it has evolved into its current iteration today.

As the Mechanic's integrity has been severely compromised and its development plans seem inevitable, Baltimore needs to reverse its opinion on these brutalist designs and educate people on its significance both within the city as well as those throughout the country. To conclude, this author would like to challenge the city of Baltimore to consider the benefit the McKeldin Square Fountain can have for its people as well as the rest of the country. With the uncertainty of the Mechanic's future, the Fountain represents a manageable and palatable project for the city to undertake. Baltimore is once again ready for a bold change. Preserving the Fountain would transform it into a literal monument to 20th century renewal and serve as the inspiration for new, thoughtful growth and design for future generations. Just as it learned from the Mechanic Theater, so too can the next era of renewal learn from the McKeldin Square Fountain.

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Images

Fig. 1 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author, March 2014

Fig. 2 An Aerial of the Charles Center Plan, as projected in 1959 Baltimore, MD
Photo Copied from Martin Millspaugh, ed. "Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown, Renewal." *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin* 51 (1964), 12.

Fig. 3 McKeldin Square Fountain; Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author, March 2014

Fig. 4 A 1752 Perspective of Baltimore
Sketch by John Moale, 1752. Engraving by William Strickland, 1817.

Image Property of the Maryland Historical Society
John Moale(sketch); William Strickland, (engraving), "Baltimore in 1752," 1817, 43.1 x 73.1 cm., Hambleton Print Collection, Special Collections Department

Fig. 5 Washington Monument by Robert Mills, Baltimore, MD
Image Property of "An Engineer's Guide to Baltimore," accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.ce.jhu.edu/baltimorestructures/Index.php?location=Monument+Washington

Fig. 6 An Aerial View of Mount Vernon Place
Image Property of the Mount Vernon Place Conservancy, accessed April 29, 2014, http://mvpconservancy.org/

Fig. 7 George Peabody Institute, Exterior, Baltimore, MD
Image Property of Johns Hopkins University, "History of the Peabody Institute," access April 22, 2014, http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/about/history/

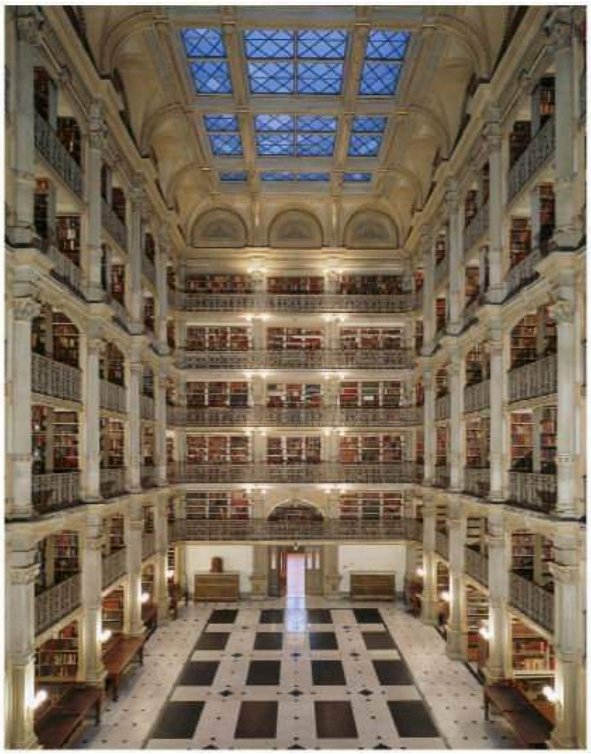

Fig. 8 George Peabody Institute, Interior, Baltimore, MD
Image Property of Michael Derrin,"Photo Gallery," The George Peabody Library, accessed April 22, 2014, http://peabodyevents.library.jhu.edu/photo-gallery/

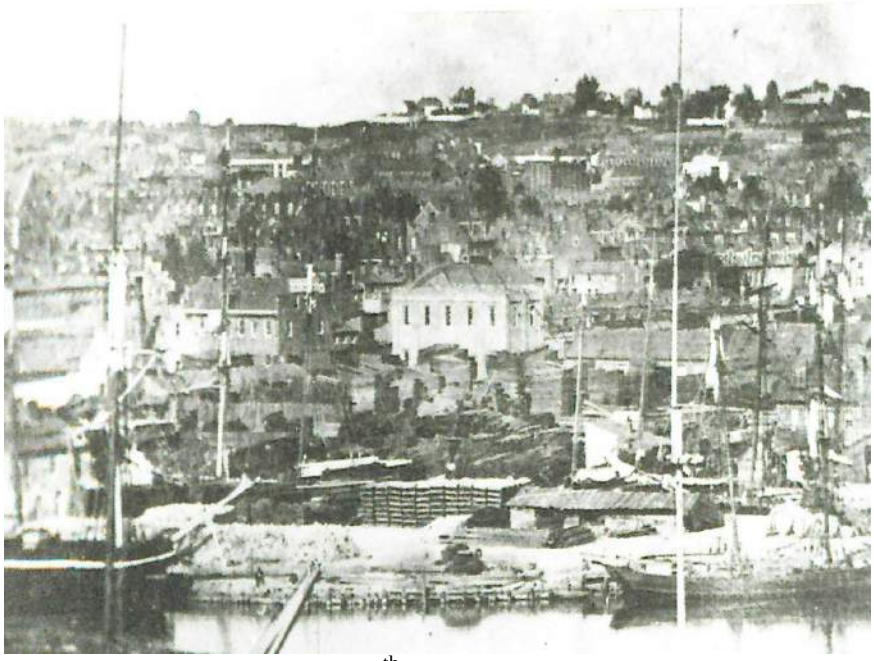

Fig. 9 An image of 19th century Industrial Baltimore
Image Property of Marion E. Warren and Mame Warren, "Jones Falls Looking East (1851-1859)," *Baltimore: What She Was, What She Used to Be, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983)

Fig. 10 Baltimore, 1850s.
The tall spire that grabs the viewer's attention is the Washington Monument.
Image Property of Marion E. Warren and Mame Warren, "Jones Falls Looking East (1851-1859)," *Baltimore: What She Was, What She Used to Be, 1850-1930* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983)

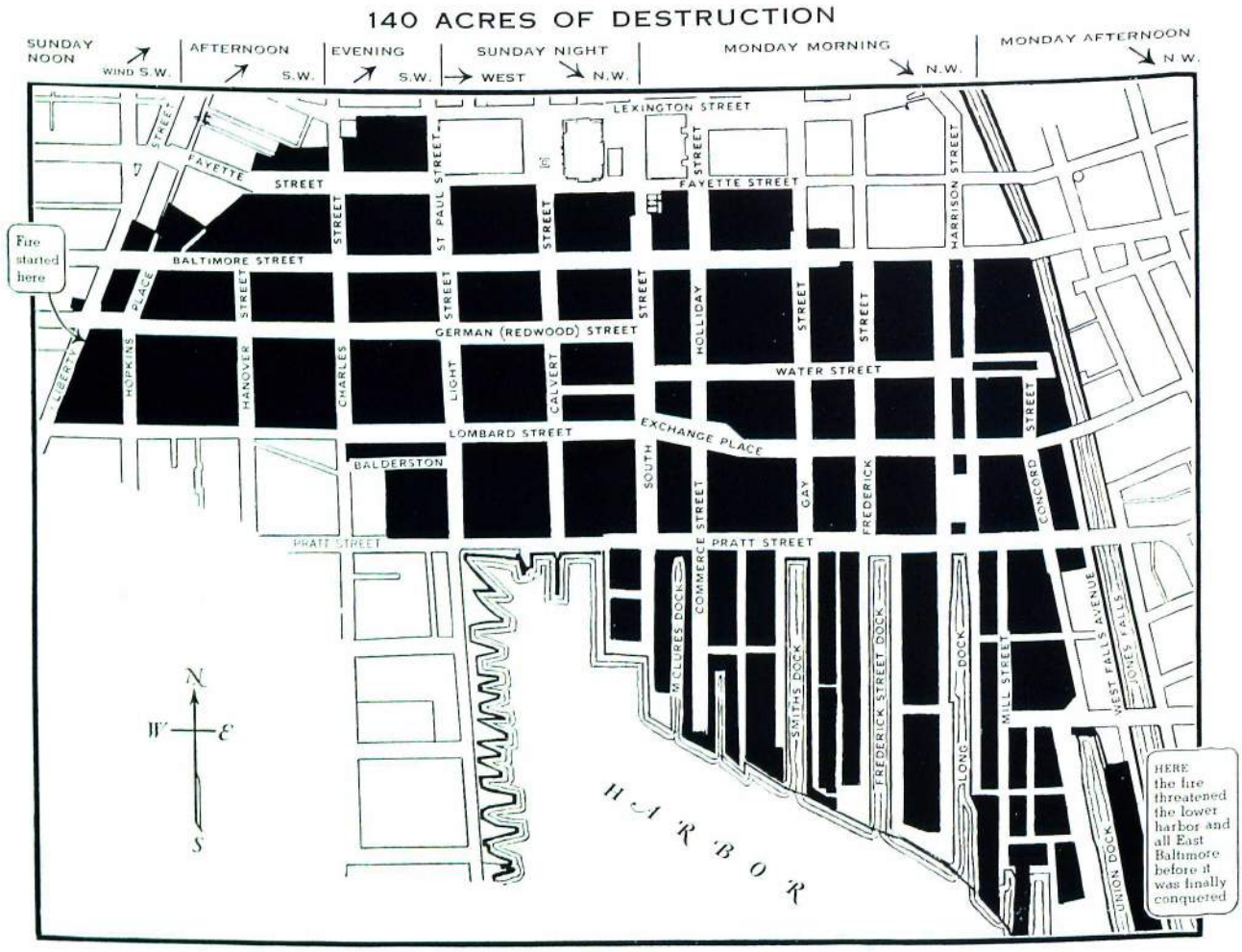

Fig. 11 Map of the Great Fire of 1904 Damage
Property of Harold A. Williams, *Baltimore Afire*, (Baltimore, MD: Sheneidereith & Sons, 1954), 4.

Fig. 12 Map of Charles Center Boundaries
Image Scanned from *Charles Center*, (Baltimore: The Planning Council for the Greater Baltimore Committee, Incorporated, 1958).

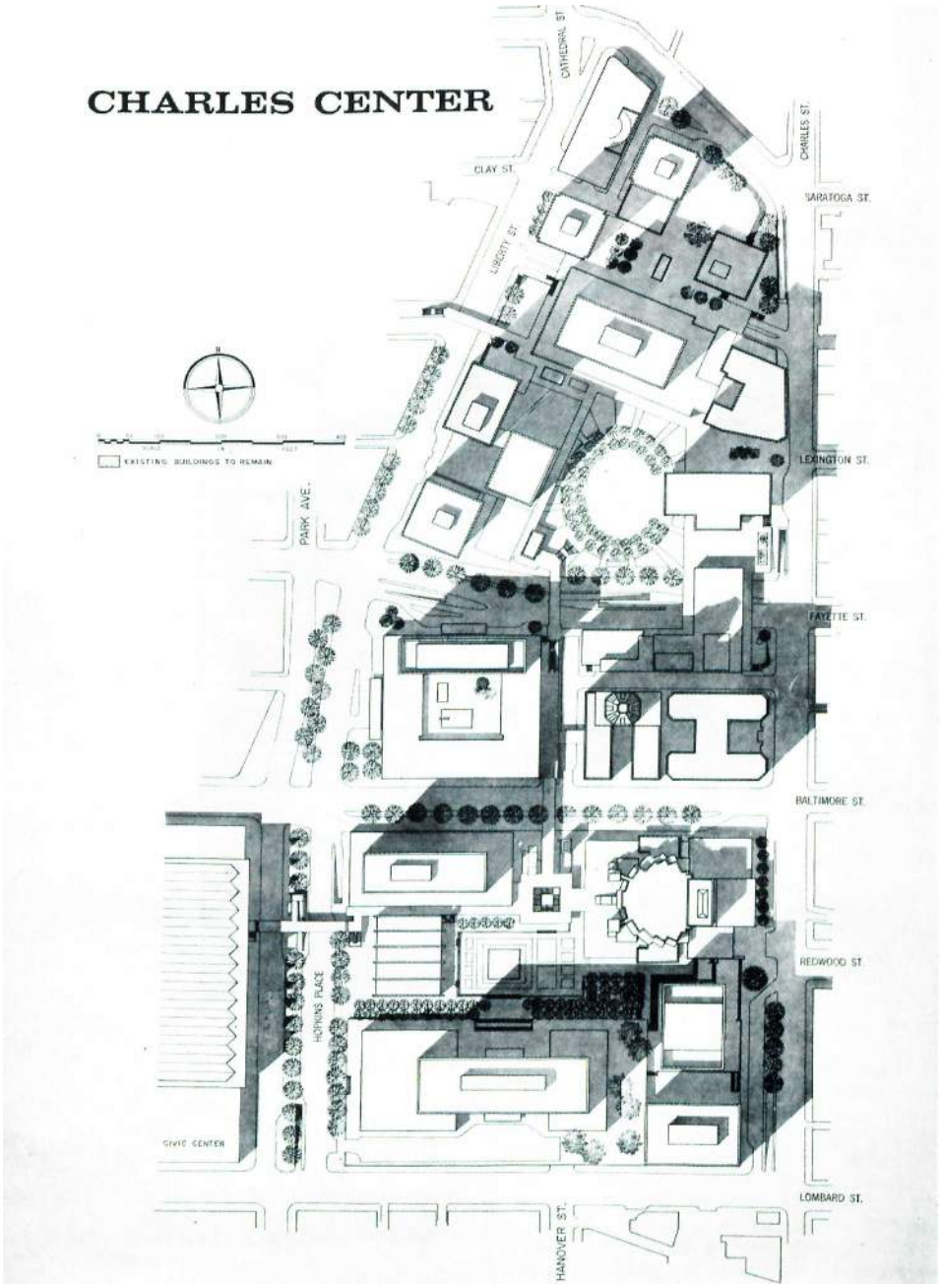

Fig. 13 Charles Center Plan

Photo Copied from Martin Millspaugh, ed. "Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown, Renewal." *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin* 51 (1964), 25.

Fig. 14. Charles Center during Construction
Photo Copied from Martin Millspaugh, ed. "Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown, Renewal." *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin* 51 (1964), 44.

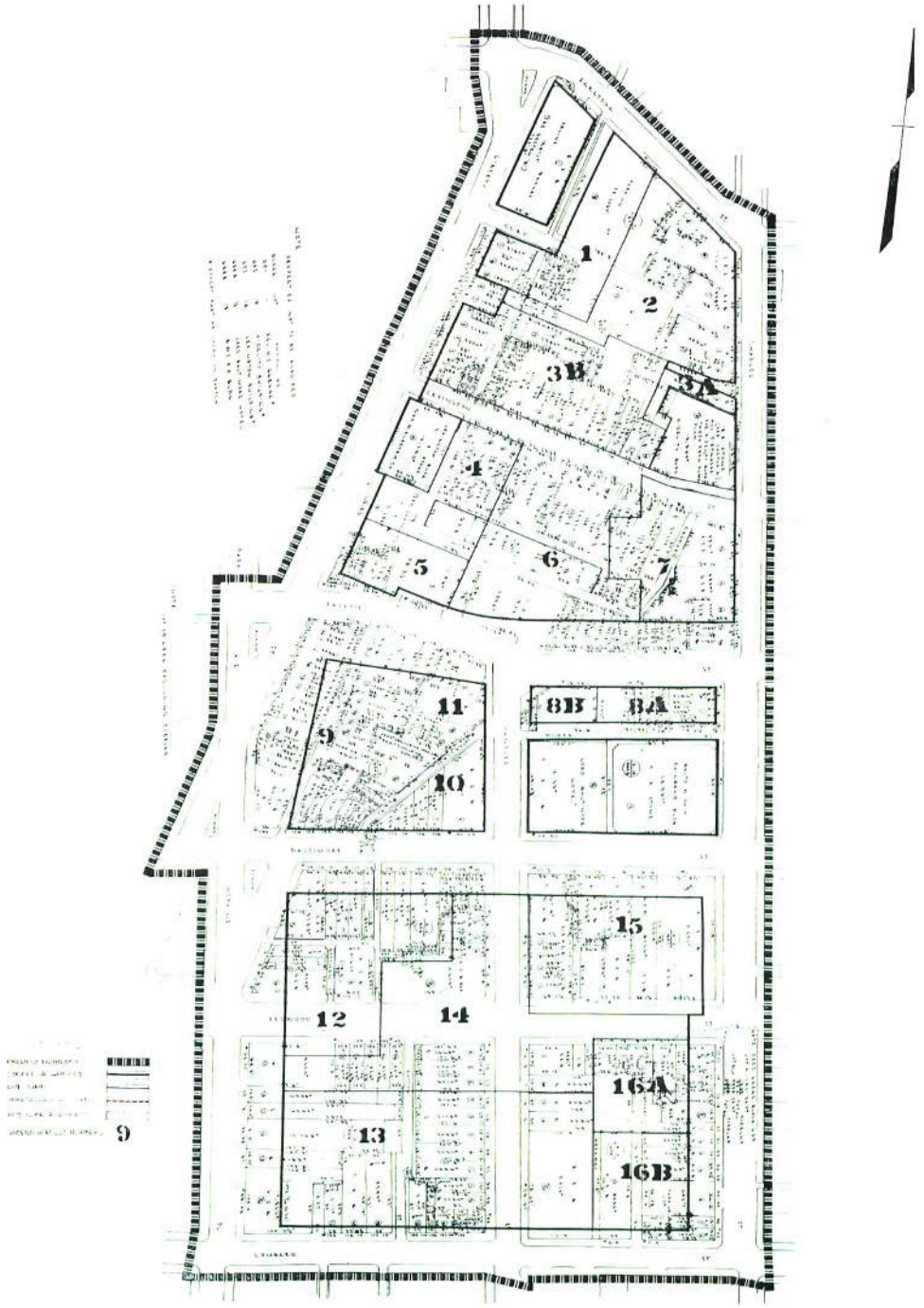

Fig. 15 Charles Center Development Area Key
Photo Copied from Martin Millspaugh, ed. "Baltimore's Charles Center: A Case Study of Downtown, Renewal." *Urban Land Institute Technical Bulletin* 51 (1964), 21

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Fig. 16. One Charles Center by Mies Van der Rohe, Baltimore, MD

Photo Property of Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.courtauldprints.com/image/155949/mies-van-der-rohe-ludwig-one-charles-center

Fig. 17 Seagram Building by Mies Van der Rohe, New York City, NY
Photo Property of Ezra Stoller/Esto, Canadian Center For Architecture, *Seagram Building*, 1958 in Mark Lamster, "A Personal Stamp on the Skyline," *The New York Times*, April 3, 2013, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/arts/design/building-seagram-phyllis-lamberts-new-architecture-book.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

Fig. 18 Ford's Theater, Baltimore, MD
Image Scanned from Mary Zajac, "Almost Broadway," *Baltimore Style*, accessed February 25, 2014, http://www.baltimorestyle.com/index.php/style/baltimore/baltimore_almost_broadway/.

Fig. 19 John M. Johansen
"John Johansen in 1976," Photo Property of Blackstone-Shelburne, in Fred Bernstein, "John M. Johansen, Last of 'Harvard Five' Architects, Dead at 96," *New York Times*, October 26, 2012, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/27/arts/design/john-m-johansen-last-of-harvard-five-architects-dies-at-96.html

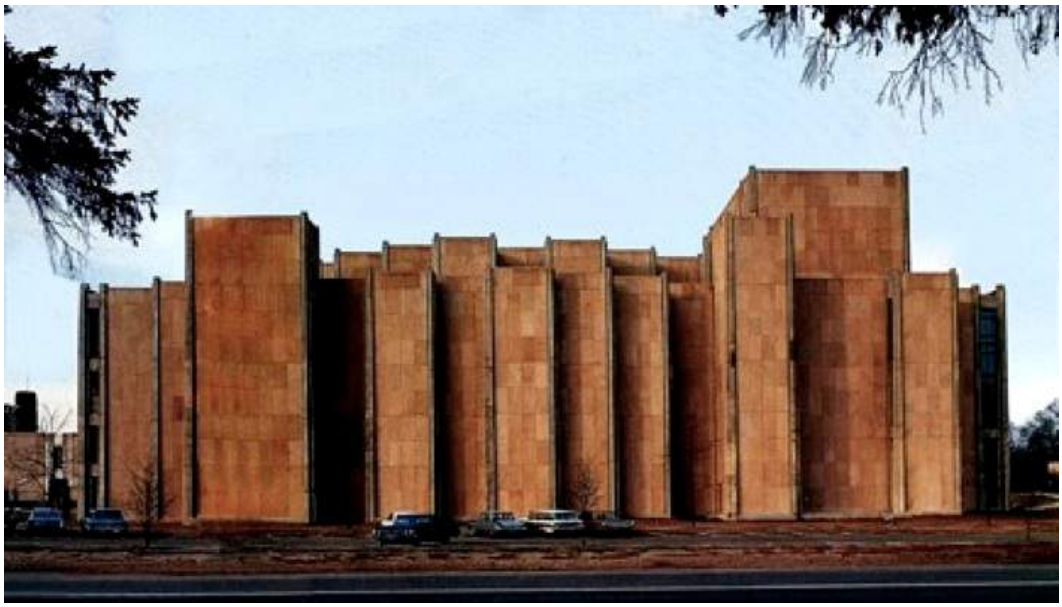

Fig. 20 Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House
Photo Property of John M. Johansen, "Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House," *Architecture*, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.johnmjohansen.com/Clowes-Memorial-Opera.html

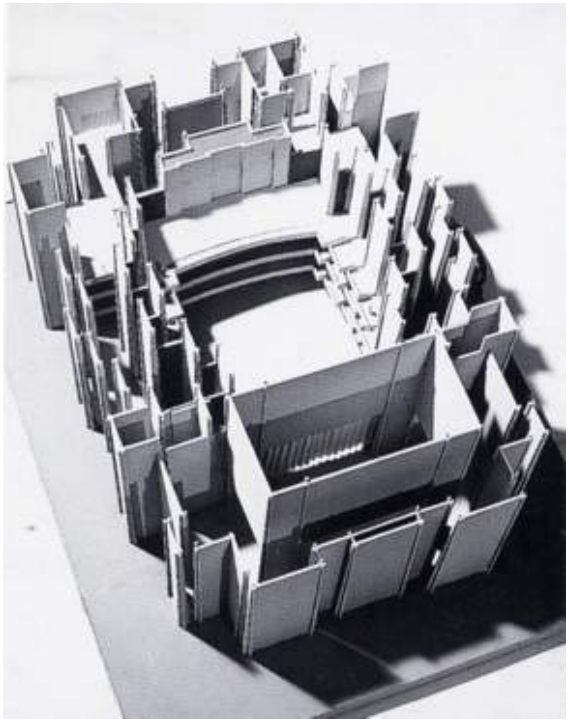

Fig. 21 Model Exposing Floor Plan of Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House Photo Property of John M. Johansen, "Clowes Memorial Hall and Opera House," *Architecture*, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.johnmjohansen.com/Clowes-Memorial-Opera.html

Fig. 22 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken By Author, March 2014

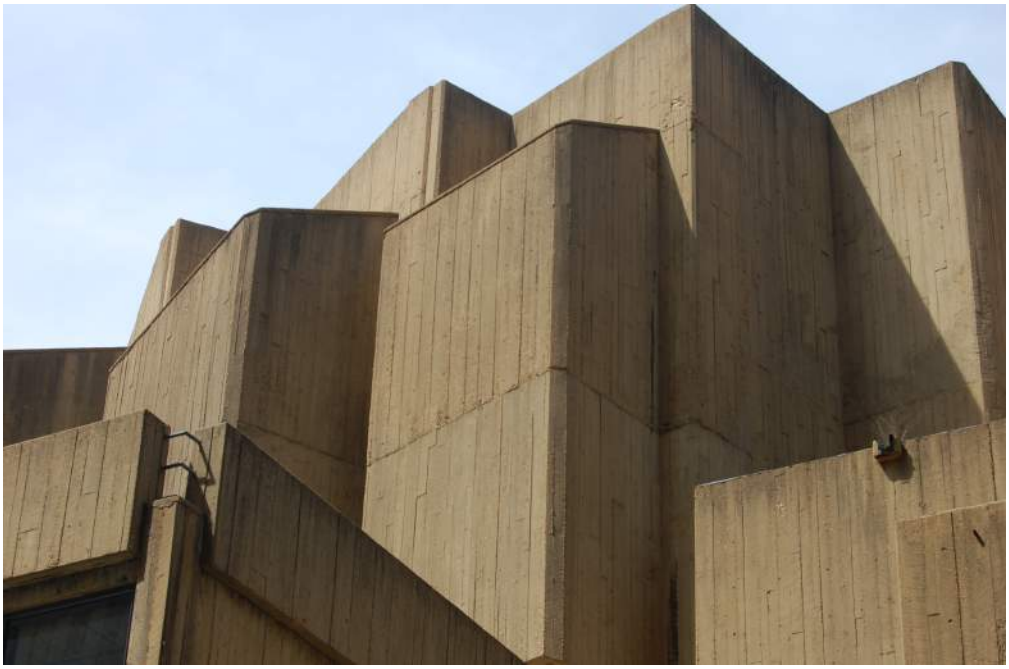

Fig. 23 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Detail of Piers, Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken By Author, March 2014

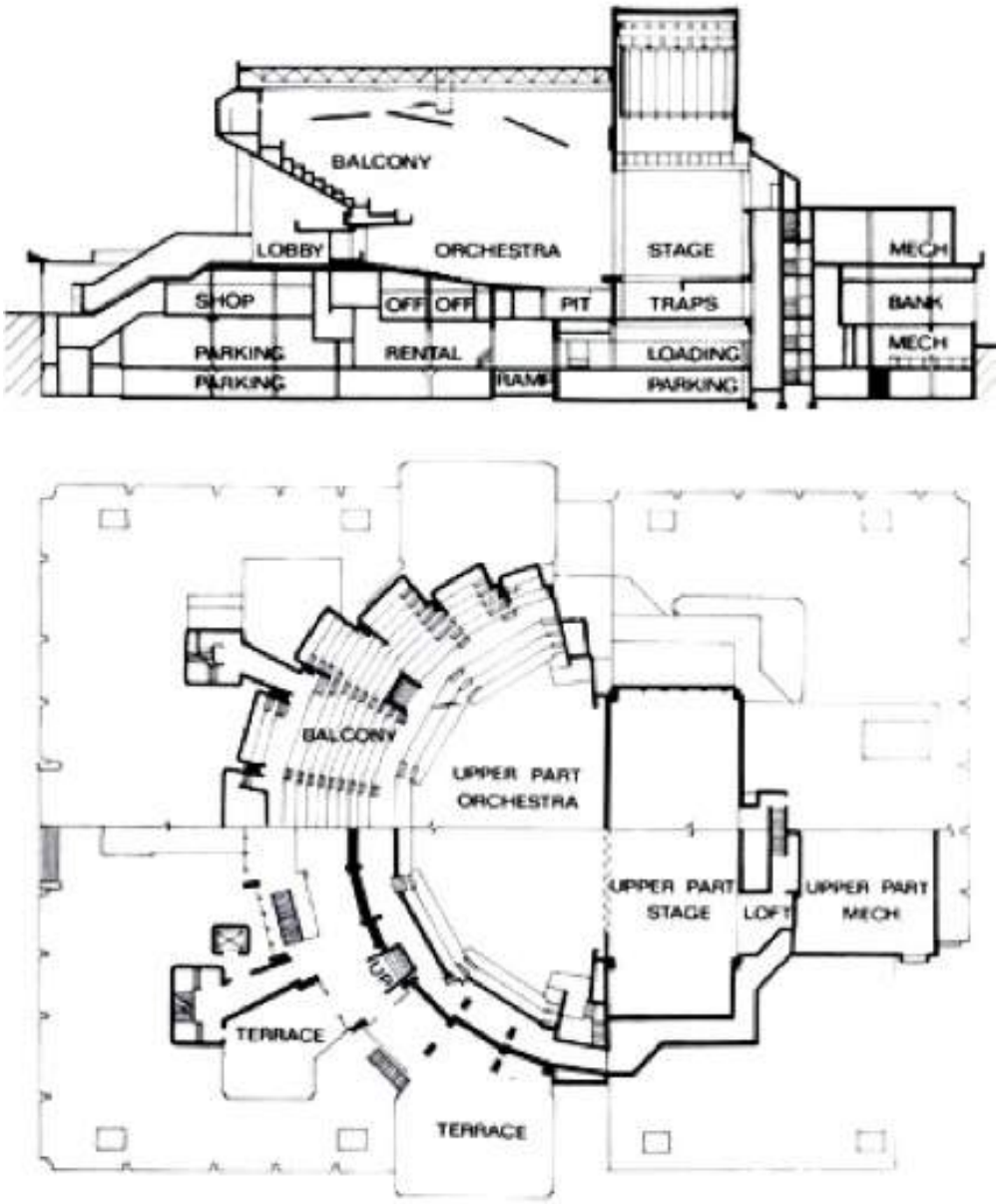

Fig. 24 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Floor Plan, Baltimore, MD
Photo Scanned from John Johansen. *John M. Johansen : A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture*. Milano: L'arca Edizioni, 1995, 65.

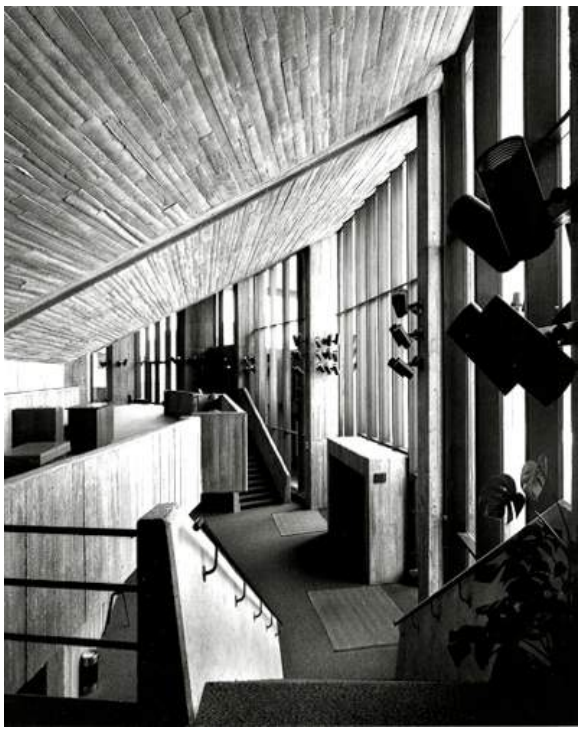

Fig. 25 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Interior, Baltimore, MD
Photo Scanned from John Johansen. *John M. Johansen : A Life in the Continuum of Modern Architecture*. Milano: L'arca Edizioni, 1995, 62

Fig. 26 Economist Building, Paul and Alison Smithson, London
Photo Property of Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.courtauldprints.com/image/159136/smithson-alison-smithson-peter-denham-economist-building

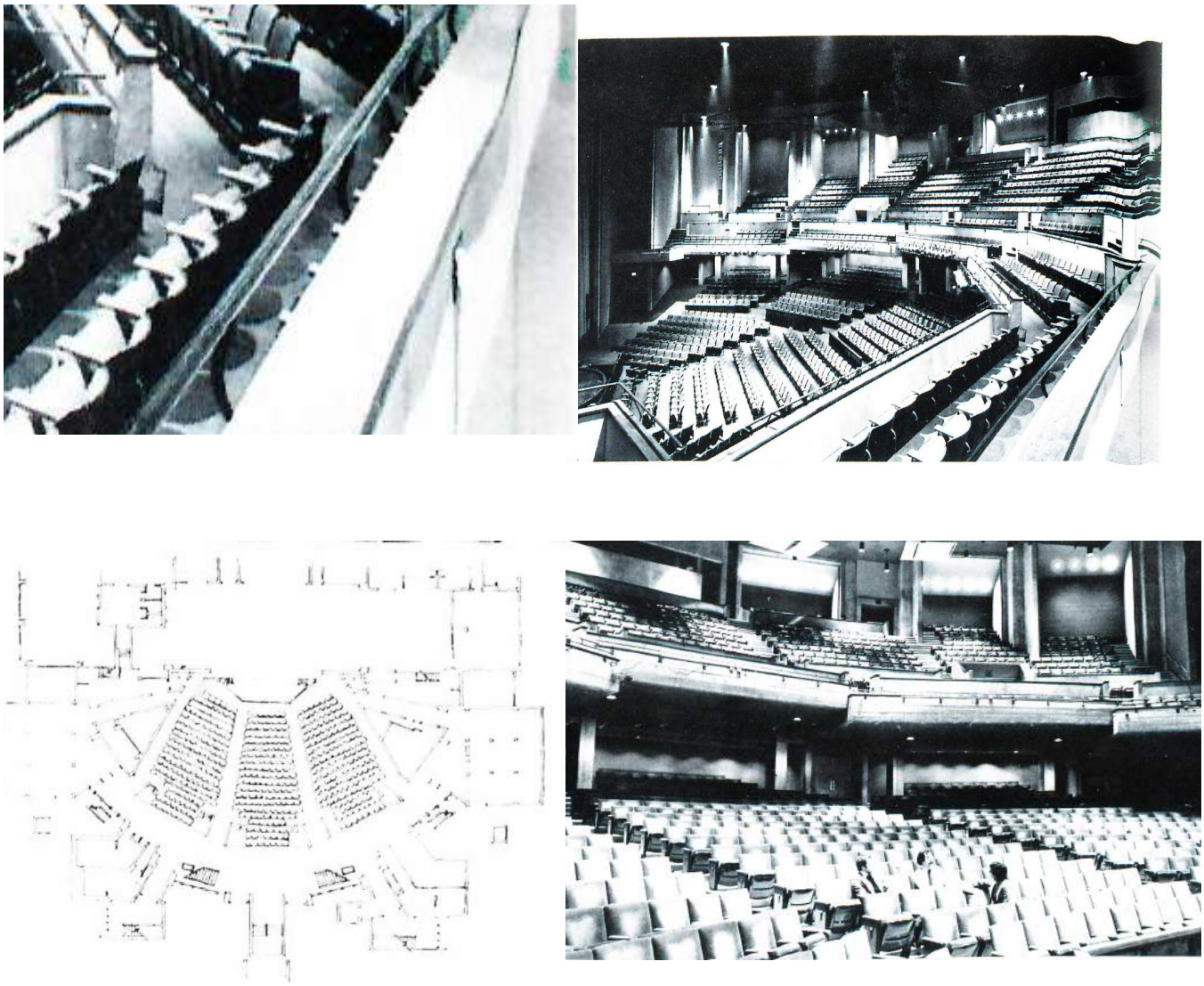

Fig. 27 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Before (top) and After (bottom), Baltimore, MD Reproduced from Allen Freeman and Andrea O. Dean, "Evaluation: A Troubled Theater Anchors Baltimore's Downtown, " *AIA Journal* 67 No. 2 (1978): 34-35.

Fig. 28 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; 1976 Marquee, Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author, March 2014

Fig. 29 Art Festival at Morris Mechanic Theater, Before 1976, Baltimore, MD
While bustling, the participants seem reserved, both in dress and in the way they interact with the space. Property of the University of Baltimore Archives at Langsdale Library, GBC Series XII, Box 11, Folder 31

Fig. 30 Patrons Enjoying the Nightlife of Charles Center, After Restoration
A far cry from the Arts Festival Scene, this couple references the new scene at the Mechanic after the city saved and improved the building.
Photo Scanned From *Baltimore's Downtown Redevelopment Program*, (Baltimore, BURHA, 1970s.)

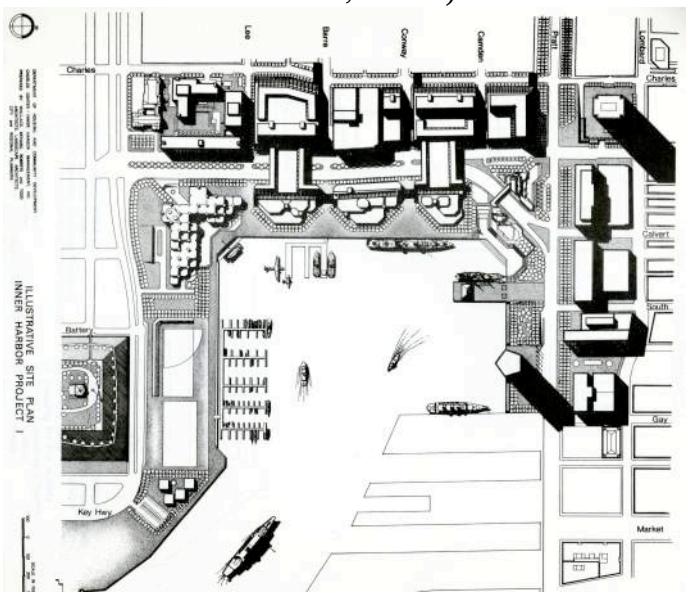

Fig. 31 Inner Harbor Project I Plan
Photo Scanned From *Baltimore's Downtown Redevelopment Program*, (Baltimore, BURHA, 1970s)

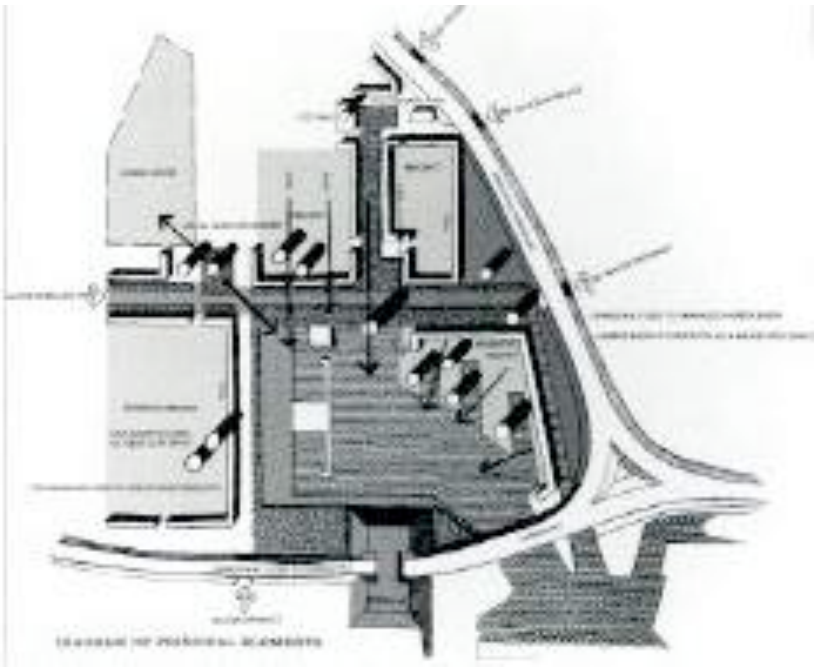

Fig. 32 Detail of Connection Between Inner Harbor and Charles Center
Photo Scanned From *Baltimore's Downtown Redevelopment Program*, (Baltimore, BURHA, 1970s.)

Fig. 33 McKeldin Square Fountain; Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author March 2014

Fig. 34 McKeldin Square Fountain; Detail, Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author, March 2014

Fig. 35 Current State of the Morris A. Mechanic Theater, Baltimore, MD
Photo "Looking up from the lower level of the Mechanic. Off to the left is the former stage, while balcony levels are visible at upper right." *Jaclyn Borowski*, "Brutal(ist)," *Baltimore Business Journal*, June 15, 2013, accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2013/06/brutalist-25-stunning-photos-of-the.html

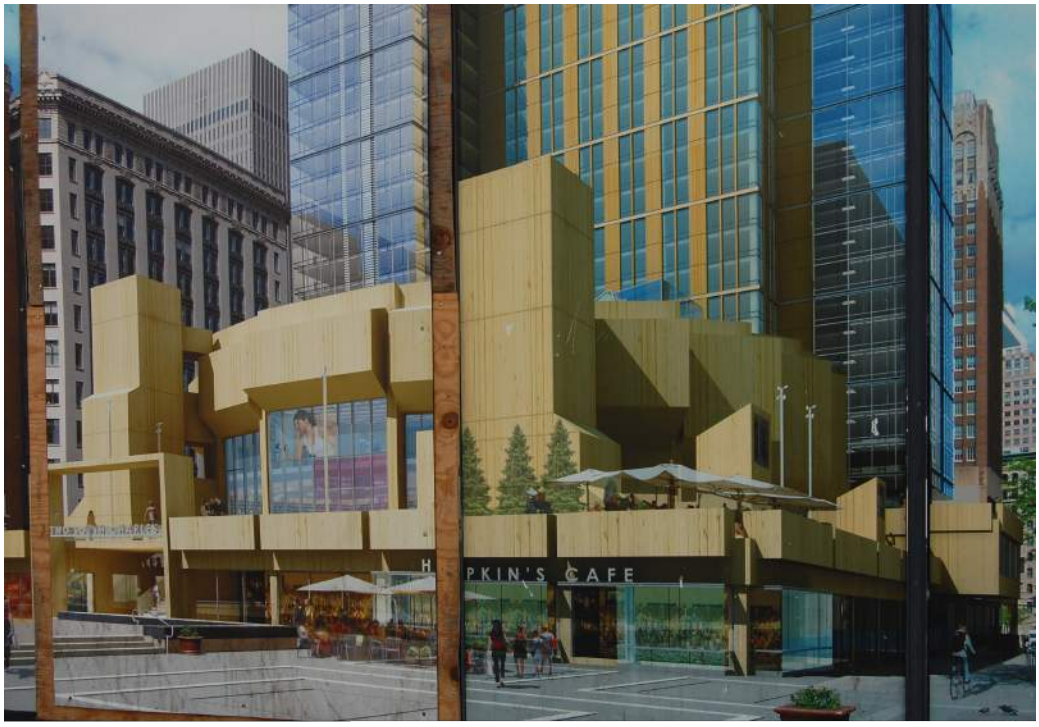

Fig. 36 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Early Redevelopment Plans, Baltimore, MD
Photo Taken by Author, March 2014

Fig. 37 The Morris A. Mechanic Theater; Current Redevelopment Plans, Baltimore, MD
Curry Architects' Design. Kevin Litten."David S. Brown's Planned 29-story Tower on Baltimore's West Side Moves Forward," *Baltimore Business Journal*., July 18, 2013. Accessed April 29, 2014, http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2013/07/david-s-browns-planned-29-story.html.

Fig. 38 McKeldin Square Fountain; Redevelopment Plans, Baltimore, MD

Rendering by Ayers Saint Gross for Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc. Kevin Litten, “Demolition of Brutalist Fountain at McKeldin Square Closer to Reality” *Baltimore Business Journal*, September 30, 2013, accessed February 27, 2013,http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/blog/real-estate/2013/09/demolition-of-brutalist-fountain-at.html?page=all.