

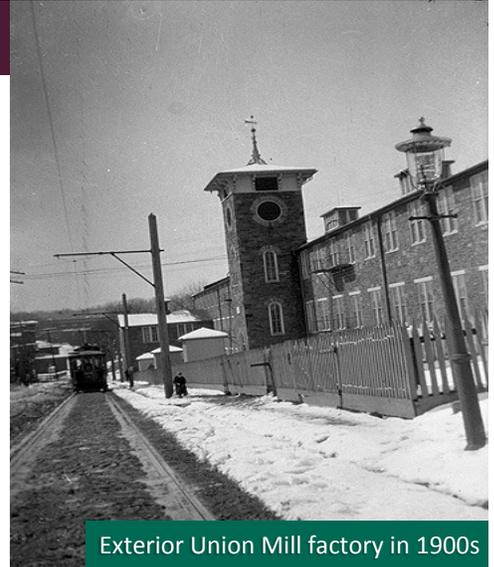


# A Successful Transformation: Union Mill Apartments

Baltimore, MD

## Site Description

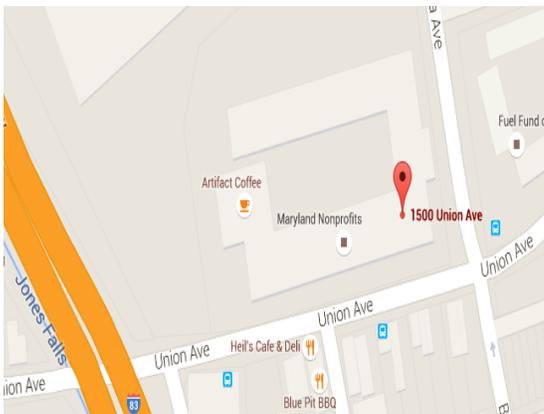
First used in 1866 as a cotton mill factory, the Union Mill sat vacant for ten years, after production ceased, until 1920. Poole Engineering and Machine Co. then occupied the site, assembling railway accessories and using the machine shop; a railroad spur ran along the northern portion of the property. By 1950, Wheelwright-Folger, Inc. and H-B Manufacturing Co. occupied the site while manufacturing and assembling Chrome furniture. Between 1962 and 2008, Life-Like Products, Inc. occupied the property and molded polystyrene foam products. The site sat vacant for a year after production ceased until it was purchased to become Union Mill apartments.



Exterior Union Mill factory in 1900s

## Environmental Issues Addressed

In 2009 a Phase II assessment was conducted that identified the presence of metals, semi-volatile organic compounds, and petroleum hydrocarbons in the soil and low levels of volatile organic compounds in the groundwater. A year later, a Phase II Addendum was conducted that revealed elevated concentration of metals in the tunnel sediment and high concentrations of cadmium. During implementation of the Response Action Plan, further delineation and soil removal was performed for cadmium contaminated soil. Nearly four hundred tons of soil was removed and disposed as toxic hazardous waste and further evaluation was completed for the subterranean tunnel system.



Location of Site in relation to Union Ave

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## Leveraged Resources

**EPA Grant Recipient:** Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)

**Year Awarded:** 2009

**Grant Types:** Assessment HW CW

**Former Uses:** Cotton Mill facility, Engineering and Machine Shop

**Current Uses:** Apartment and Office complex

The site was assessed using a \$200,000 EPA grant awarded to the Baltimore Development Corporation. The property received \$3 million in historic tax credits from the Maryland Historical Trust. \$20 million was put towards restoring original woodwork, iron columns and plastering of interior walls, the structure remained stable.

# Behind the Transformation

## Current Use Features

Rehabilitation of existing structural steel, metal columns and the original section of the mill and boiler house were divided into units, the boiler house topped with smokestacks now houses a large restaurant. The first to meet Baltimore's Green Building Standards, the former mill is now a complex of 54 open, airy apartments offered at below market rates for teachers and hosts a large courtyard for community events. The remaining 35,000 square footage is affordable office space for the non-profits that help power Baltimore's urban economy. The space allows tenants to share ideas and spare capital usually devoted to office design and renovation. The convenient space for teachers and non-profits also hosts on-site resource rooms and a copy center, study lounges, outdoor courtyard and a café (open to the public) in the old boiler room.



Union Mill apartments. Before and After Remediation.



## Community Benefit

Teacher retention rates are low in Baltimore city. Less than half of new hires stay for over five years and a third leave after two, which costs the city over \$100K for each defection. Many of the young teachers expressed to the developers a sense of isolation and discouragement after moving to a new and unfamiliar city, learning to engage children from distressed environments, and lack of support within the system. With 750 new teachers arriving in the city every year, many of them with Teach for America, and most of them financially strapped, finding affordable housing is yet another challenge. The design of Union Mill was centered on supporting teachers by encouraging collaboration and creating a sense of community.

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