



GOULD STREET POWER PLANT: A changing plant in changing times

*Story and photos by Carl Schmidt
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The Gould Street power plant in Baltimore provided electricity to the city for over 100 years. The plant's changes during its life are a fascinating reflection of a changing Baltimore, and the nation. The plant's original neoclassically styled brick building was built in 1905 for the Baltimore Electrical Power Company and contained three 2000 kW coal powered steam turbines. No sooner was the plant built, when its output was surpassed by the much larger Westport plant. The Gould Street plant was relegated to use only during peak demand, and nearly condemned in 1923

But Baltimore was growing and so were its power needs. Locust Point was the second largest immigration

After demolition, remaining are the 1927 art deco style building (right) with 55-foot arched windows and the blocky, unadorned 1952 addition (left next to smokestack).

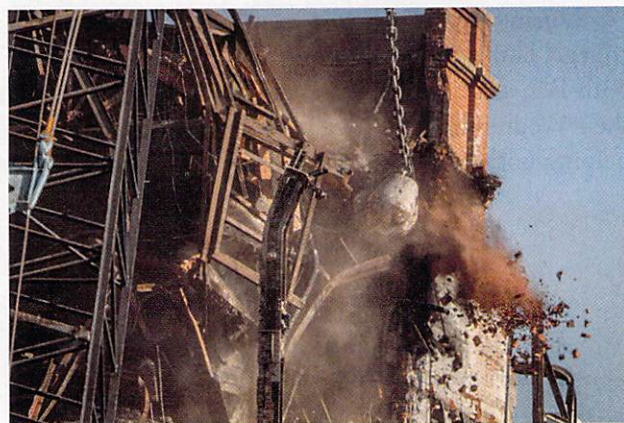
point in America. The Baltimore Planning Commission reported that, from 1900-1939, housing units grew by 50 times in northeast Baltimore alone. The Gould Street power plant was reopened in 1927 with an additional art deco style building containing two 35,000 kW steam turbines. Baltimore's growth continued after World War II, and the plant received a third steam turbine in 1952.

The 1970s brought significant changes to the plant. In 1970, the EPA Clean Air Act amendments restricting industrial emissions forced conversion of the plant to burn oil. In 1977, nuclear power arrived in Maryland in the form of the Calvert Cliffs nuclear plant.

As a result, two of the Gould Street plant's turbines were decommissioned, signaling the beginning of the end.

The Gould Street power plant's slow closure continued. Industry departed Port Covington, the area around the plant, and with it departed the demand for electricity. By 1996, the plant was once again used only for peak demand, and eventually shut down permanently in 2019. The plant was sold to Greenspring Realty Partners, Inc., who desired the real estate for the revitalization of Port Covington. The most recent changes occurred in 2019, when the plant was partially demolished, leaving the 1927 and 1952 structures standing.

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A wrecking ball is dropped through the upper portion of the coal pulverizer building, sending a shower of debris to the ground below.