Maryland Department of the Environment

Simpson & Doeller Site MD -0645

What You Need to Know

The former Simpson & Doeller Site operated as a label maker from the 1880s through 1954. Levinson and Klein Furniture used the property as a warehouse for an undetermined time after. Since 1987, the site has been used by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine for storage of office furniture, electronic, and miscellaneous equipment.

Site Location

The Simpson & Doeller Site is a 70,560 square foot parcel located at 2827 East Preston Street in the Collington Square section of Baltimore City, Maryland. The site is bounded by Biddle Street to the south, East Preston Street to the north, Linwood Avenue to the east and Kenwood Avenue to the west. The site is surrounded by residential property. There are occupied row homes on the northwestern portion of the block which share a property boundary with Simpson & Doeller. The 2827 East Preston Street parcels are referenced by Baltimore City as Block 1541/Ward 08/Lot 009 & 010. The geographic coordinates for the site are 39.305934° North latitude by 076.577582° West longitude.

Site History

The red brick building occupying the block defined by East Preston Street, North Linwood Avenue, East Biddle Street and North Kenwood Avenue was the site of the Simpson & Doeller Label Company from the 1880s through 1954. The property was acquired in October 1908 by the Simpson and Doeller Company in two parcels; one granted by George Gebelein and wife and the other by William M. Plant and wife.

According to Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation the property, identified as 2827 East Preston Street, belongs to Joseph Klein Sr., et. al. Klein acquired the property from East Preston Company in January 1955. East Preston Company was a successor corporation to the Simpson and Doeller Company. Levinson & Klein Furniture used the property as a warehouse prior to the corporation's demise.

Since 1987 the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU) has used the property for storage of archived paper documents, office furniture and electronics such as computers, monitors and printers, and miscellaneous equipment such as microscopes and exercise equipment. No chemicals, medical reagents, pathogens, or wastes are stored at this location.

Environmental Investigation

The property was the center of an Oil Control Program underground storage tank removal in 1994. Two 6,000 gallon steel gasoline tanks were removed from the site and contaminated soil excavated and recycled.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection (PA/SI) on April 7, 2015. Since access to the property was denied, soil samples were collected along the site perimeter in the city right of way. A potential discharge plume in a swale emanating from the back of the building, as evidenced by approximately 0.1-acre of distressed vegetation, could not be sampled. Groundwater was not encountered prior to boring refusal at depths of 16 to 24 feet below ground surface. Boring logs identify significant clay underlying the area. Analyses of soil samples identified inorganic and semi-volatile organic compound contamination. The toxicological evaluation conducted by MDE in conjunction with the PA/SI identified slightly elevated health risks to the child and youth populations from ingestion and dermal contact with soil collected from the perimeter of the site.

On October 18, 2018, MDE's Solid Waste Program conducted a compliance inspection to verify JHU's claims that the site was only used to warehouse archived paper documents, surplus office furniture and electronics, and miscellaneous equipment such as microscopes and exercise equipment. It was determined that no chemicals, medical reagents, pathogens, or wastes from JHU were stored there.

On July 2, 2019, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed its Remedial Site Assessment Decision that determined investigation of the onsite soils and groundwater was warranted to determine if the 146 nearby housing units in the 200 feet soil exposure pathway and if those homes were subject to vapor intrusion from contaminated groundwater. Therefore, EPA planned with MDE to conduct an Expanded Site Inspection (ESI) to determine potential impacts in the soil and groundwater exposure pathways.

Current Site Status

The building is currently used by the JHU for storage. MDE is planning to conduct an ESI at the site in 2020.