

**Montgomery Ward Business Center  
1000 South Monroe Street  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
(Voluntary Cleanup Program)**

**Site Description**

This 27.5-acre property, owned by Washington-Monroe, LLC, is composed of a developed parcel (16.5 acres) and an undeveloped parcel (11 acres) separated by a CSX railroad right of way. Improvements on the developed parcel include the main mail order/retail building, a 1,200,000 square feet, eight story brick, pre-cast concrete, and steel structure constructed between 1925 and 1927; three one-story additions to the main building; a 30,700 square feet, two-story loading dock/distribution center constructed in 1972; a 73,600 square feet one-story parts repair service center; and a 900 square feet two-bay vehicle maintenance building.

The property is located within an industrial area of southwest Baltimore. Surrounding properties include a gasoline station, an MTA bus terminal, Carroll Park (recreational park land owned and maintained by Baltimore City), and assorted manufacturing, shipping, and warehousing facilities. The property is connected to Baltimore City's municipal water and sewer (sanitary and storm water) systems.

**Site History**

As early as 1900, the property was occupied by a brick manufacturing company, a paint and varnish manufacturing company, and a general manufacturing company. The Montgomery Ward distribution and retail center was constructed in 1925. The site was Montgomery Ward's east coast catalog/mail order center. A train shed was part of the main building and was used to load and unload goods on rail cars. The shed was located in the center of the main building and the tracks connected to the adjacent rail line.

A gasoline service station was located along Washington Boulevard according to Sanborn fire insurance maps. The exact dates of operation for the service station are unknown but according to available fire insurance maps, it was constructed prior to 1950 and demolished prior to 1968. The maps depicted six gasoline storage tanks adjacent to the service station.

An auto service facility with 14 garage bays was constructed as an addition to the main building in 1961. Several hydraulic lifts, a floor drain system, and a 500-gallon waste oil underground storage tank (UST) were located in the facility. A building on the northwestern corner of the property with two garage bays was also used for vehicle maintenance. Two hydraulic lifts were located in this building. Vehicle maintenance was conducted in these facilities on both private and company-owned automobiles.

In February 1992, three USTs were removed or abandoned in place. The 500-gallon waste oil tank at the auto service facility and a 25,000-gallon heating oil tank were removed from the site. Soil contamination was observed in both excavations. A total of 193 tons of soil was excavated from these two tank pits and transported off site for disposal. A 15,000-gallon UST was abandoned in place because of its location under a portion of the main building structure. Four soil borings and four monitoring wells were installed in March 1992 to evaluate the condition of soil and groundwater near the three USTs. Soil contamination

was found but groundwater contamination was not evident. Nine additional soil borings were advanced around the former 25,000-gallon UST to determine the extent of soil contamination. A UST closure report was submitted to the Department in August 1994 and the Department issued a notice of compliance for the UST closures in January 1995.

A Phase II subsurface investigation was conducted in November 1999. The investigation included a geophysical survey, a soil gas survey (33 sample locations), eight soil borings, and six groundwater samples. The soil sampling revealed minor soil contamination, primarily total petroleum hydrocarbons. In the groundwater, some inorganics were detected at elevated concentrations at two of the sample locations, including nickel, chromium, and lead. Of the six groundwater samples, volatile organic compounds were detected only in the one collected from inside the auto service facility.

### **Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) Status**

Carroll Park LLC, c/o Himmelrich Associates, the prospective purchaser, submitted a VCP application on March 1, 2000 seeking a no further requirements determination. The Department notified Carroll Park LLC in writing that they qualify for inculpable person status pending receipt of a complete application package and that they will not lose inculpable person status if they purchase the property prior to application approval. Carroll Park LLC subsequently purchased the property from 998 Monroe LLC c/o Montgomery Ward LLC.

The Department reviewed the application and requested additional information, including soil and groundwater sampling; subsurface investigation of anomalies found during a geophysical survey; soil sampling in the vicinity of a floor drain associated with a spray paint booth in the former merchandise service area; and soil excavation to evaluate the presence of a septic tank noted on an old property map. The geophysical anomalies were investigated in June 2000 and six USTs were encountered during excavation activities. The six USTs were associated with the former gasoline service station located along Washington Boulevard. The Department's Oil Control Program (OCP) oversaw the tank removal. No groundwater contamination was noted in the excavation and field screening did not detect any soil contamination. Per OCP guidance, the tank pits were backfilled with excavated soils. A UST Removal Report was submitted to OCP, and OCP closed the case in September 2000. In January 2001, the applicant completed all additional investigations requested by the Department to complete the application package.

On February 5, 2001, the Department issued a No Further Requirements Determination conditioned on the use of the property for commercial or industrial purposes and no use of groundwater beneath the property for any purpose. The current owner, Washington-Monroe, LLC, acquired the property from Carroll Park, LLC on September 7, 2001.

### **Site Contact**

James W. Metz                      Maryland Department of the Environment (410) 631 – 3493  
Voluntary Cleanup/Brownfields Division