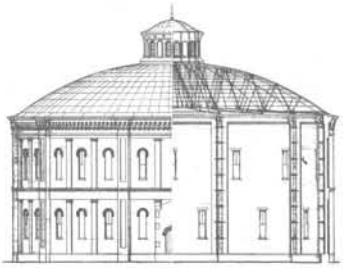

SOCIETY FOR INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

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AMERICAN BREWERY FOLDS †

Baltimore's American (*née* Wiessner's) Brewery ceased operations 30 March, leaving in question the fate of their principal building, 1887, widely viewed as one of the finest surviving examples of the peculiar style known variously as Middle-European Chalet; Teutonic Breweryesque; or Germanic Pagoda. Its owners, Allegheny Beverage Corp, faced with [illegible]s. are unable to provide any concrete preservation aid despite interest by a number of local preservation groups, and are attempting simply to dispose of the plant as profitably as possible. Preservation is further discouraged by the facts that breweries, in their specialized configuration, are ill-adapted to other functions, and that AB is located in a constricted residential area, well away from transportation access and the Central Business District. As important as the structure itself is the process refrigeration equipment: 3 steam-driven ammonia compressors, one of which, on the Linde system, was built in 1884 by Fred Wolf, Chicago, and probably is the oldest American refrigeration compressor extant. (The steam cylinder is by Gebrüder Sulzer, Winterthur.) It has been given to the Smithsonian.

A similar machine, all Sulzer, 1887; and a Wolf compressor with Corliss drive by Griffith & Wedge, Zanesville, OH, c1890, are available, where-is, to a non-profit org. Information: Editor.

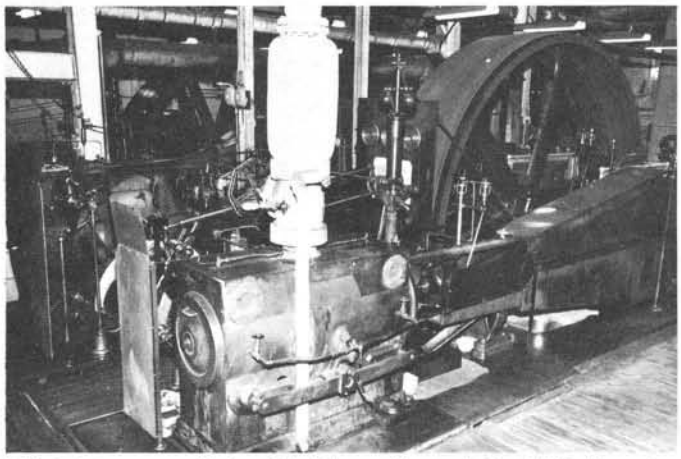
CHARLESTOWN MILLPOND DAM LOCK WALL END EXPOSED

An element of the timber tidal dam across the estuary between the Charlestown (Mass) peninsula and E Somerville, erected c1670 to power a series of mills, was exposed during a utility excavation in what Prof Douglas P Adams of MIT (SIA) believes to be one of the important IA discoveries of the decade. Shortly after construction of the Middlesex Canal in the late 18thC, a set of reversible locks was cut through the dam's east end to permit passage of the canal boats to Boston Harbor. The locks' double gates allowed passage regardless of the relative heights of pond- or sea-water on opposite sides of the dam.

In c1878 the estuary was filled in for a Boston & Maine yard (now much diminished); Canal St, adjacent to the canal, was widened into present Rutherford Ave; and all traces of dam and locks were lost to view. The possible existence of both have intrigued historians for years, but not until excavation for a major storm drain last fall was there any certain evidence of remains. Exposed to view for a brief period was the south or saltwater end of the timber wall that ran through the dam, forming the pond-side lock wall. It was in good condition. Before reentombment its location was recorded by Prof Adams and other members of the Middlesex Canal Assn (SIAN 1:4), of which he is pres.

Those concerned hope that the site can be formally excavated, and the remains of parts of the dam, locks and associated mills permanently exposed, preserved and interpreted as part of a chain of city, state and national parks and historic sites in the area (which includes nearby Bunker Hill and the Charlestown Navy Yard). Efforts are underway to involve the controlling authorities and the new Bunker Hill Community College whose campus covers part of the site. Those interested are encouraged to contact Prof Adams: 58 Monument Ave, Charlestown, 02129, (617) 241-8580.

CORLISS CORLISS ENGINE PRESERVED



High & low pressure cylinders of the Western Museum's (Geo H) Corliss engine before dismantling. *Photo by Robert W Chalue, Needham, MA*

In one of the most unexpected preservation events of the decade in the small but elite community of American technological museums, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry, Colorado Springs, CO has taken title to, dismantled, and shipped home from W Groton, Mass, one of the 2 known surviving steam engines actually built at the Providence, RI, works of the legendary George H Corliss. (Corliss, in 1849, patented the governor-controlled drop-cutoff steam valve that has been compared to Watt's innovations in the achievement of engine efficiency, and which under license and after the patents expired, was employed by dozens of engine builders in NA and Europe.) The engine, a 36-ton cross-compound, is probably the largest piece of stationary machinery moved into any museum since the assembly of Ford's collections in

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