

B-5296

Warehouse

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 02-04-2016

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes
no

Property Name: Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street Inventory Number: B-5296
 Address: 2020 Mosher Street Historic district: yes no
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21217 County: Baltimore City
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore West
 Property Owner: Bowl America Incorporated Tax Account ID Number: 0316050057 020
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): N/A Tax Map Number: 16
 Project: Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel Project Agency: Federal Railroad Administration
 Agency Prepared By: RK&K
 Preparer's Name: Elizabeth Fagan Date Prepared: 9/11/2015

Documentation is presented in: Baltimore City Archives, Enoch Pratt Library - Maryland Room, Google Books, HathiTrust Digital Library, Johns Hopkins University Libraries, National Register of Historic Places, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, www.HistoricAerials.com

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: Midtown Edmondson Historic District (Pending)

Inventory Number: N/A Eligible: yes Listed: yes

Site visit by MHT Staff yes no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Architectural Description

The Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street is located in the West Baltimore area of Baltimore City. One building, comprised of a large warehouse and smaller, later addition, occupies a 0.69 acre site. The property lies within the Midtown Edmondson Historic District, which is currently pending listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This district is primarily residential, with a strip of industrial buildings along the railroad tracks, and a small collection of commercial buildings along Edmondson Avenue. The property is bounded by North Payson Street to the east, Mosher Street to the south, and Amtrak's Northeast Corridor railroad tracks to the north and west.

The building is one story tall, consisting of a main warehouse, built in 1945, and a small perpendicular addition, built around 1951. The warehouse is oriented on a north-south axis and is located on the west side of the parcel. The main warehouse portion of the building is fairly rectangular in plan, although the northwest corner of the building is cut off at an angle to follow the curved alignment of the train tracks. The perpendicular 1951 addition is connected to the southwest corner of the warehouse and is

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended
 Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

MHT Comments: Not eligible individually, contributes to Midtown Edmondson HD

John J. Lawrence ✓
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

9/22/15
 Date

B. Kuntz
 Reviewer, National Register Program

9/24/15
 Date

rectangular in plan. The building's façade fronts Mosher Street, which dead-ends at the west side of the property where it meets the railroad tracks. To the east of the building is a large open area, which was likely used as space where trucks could load and unload materials.

The south elevation is the façade of the building. The main warehouse is constructed of a steel truss frame, concrete floor, and is faced with red brick in an American bond. The 1951 addition is made of concrete block construction and is faced with red brick, also in an American bond. The main warehouse has a flat roof and brick chimney, while the 1951 addition has a butterfly-shaped roof. Both appear to be covered in a bituminous material.

The 1945 main warehouse building is simplistic in style and has little ornamentation. Overall, the design of the building evokes the standard style of early twentieth century warehouse buildings. The main entrance and window openings are filled in with brick, which alters the original fenestration and overall appearance. The primary entrance of the building is located on the main warehouse building, towards the center of the façade. The doorway is arched and slightly recessed, with a brick corbelled surround. The tympanum is filled with brick laid in a decorative basketweave bond. To the west of the entrance are two loading dock openings with sliding metal garage doors. To the east of the entrance is a series of window openings, all of which have been bricked-in. The fenestration appears to have been five bays across. A row of soldier course brick runs along the lower portion of the façade. The main warehouse has a stepped parapet roofline, with decorative brick corbelling at the cornice line and a rectangular-framed brick panel in the center.

The façade of the 1951 addition has a utilitarian entrance on the east end where it meets the main warehouse building. This entrance is a simple, single-leaf metal door with an overhanging, shed-type metal awning. Three small, rectangular windows to the west of this entrance have been filled in with cinderblocks. At the top of the addition, where the façade meets the roof, is a row of 13 small windows that have been boarded up. The butterfly-shaped roof extends over the façade. The roof has a metal coping and is faced with plywood underneath the overhang.

Most of the east elevation is visible from the right-of-way. This elevation appears to have originally been twelve bays wide, but today all of the window openings have been filled with cinderblocks or bricks. This elevation has three loading dock openings, which likely served delivery trucks. .

The north elevation of the main warehouse is not visible from the right-of-way, and aerial images do not provide a sufficient view. The north elevation of the 1951 addition, though, can be viewed. The addition's north elevation is similar to its façade and features five bays of rectangular windows and a row of five small, square windows at the top of the wall where the façade meets the roof. All window openings have been filled with cinderblocks. This elevation also has a full-size, walk-out basement-level door, accessed by a set of stairs built down into the ground.

The west elevation of the main warehouse is difficult to view from the right-of-way, but appears to have several cinderblock-filled window openings and another loading dock entrance. The west elevation of the 1951 addition is partially covered with panels of metal grating and plywood. Most of the north and east elevation of the building has been covered in graffiti.

Historic Context

West Baltimore and the neighborhood of Midtown Edmondson consisted of primarily rural, open land with scattered homes and churches until the early 1880s, when the development of the area as a rowhouse suburb began. Before the growth of West Baltimore took off in the 1880s, a number of important transportation projects helped the area become more accessible and desirable to residents and business owners. Beginning in 1868, improvements were made along Edmondson Avenue, which helped

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to usher in residential growth. In that year, the estate of Dr. Thomas Edmondson donated land to Baltimore City, which included the area along Thompson Street from Freemont Street to Kirby's Lane. In 1871, more land was donated to extend Thompson Street west to Fulton Avenue. In honor of this, Thompson Street was renamed Edmondson Avenue. Soon after the donation, blocks of rowhouses began to be constructed along this main thoroughfare (Pousson, Section 7, 13-14).

In 1873, the Baltimore & Potomac (B&P) Railroad was completed, connecting Washington, D.C. and rural areas of southern Maryland to Baltimore and cities north. The completion of the line helped to spark commercial and industrial development in the city. The railroad tracks cut through West Baltimore, originating at Baltimore's Pennsylvania Avenue Station. While the tracks ran through a tunnel underneath the neighborhoods of Upton, Madison Park, and Bolton Hill to the northeast, the railroad tracks ran along an area of open cut through West Baltimore and the Midtown Edmondson neighborhood. When construction on the railroad came through West Baltimore, many property owners were upset about the potential loss in value of their land and the disruption of the residential area. Neighborhood residents actively fought the construction of more "rowdy" commercial and industrial development, including factories and saloons. Around the same time that the B&P Railroad was completed, horse-drawn omnibus service extended to the Midtown Edmondson area. By the late 1890s, streetcars served the area, which resulted in a boom in rowhouse construction. This construction boom defined the area as a "streetcar suburb", featuring rapid speculative development and rows of identical houses designed by vernacular builders (Pousson, Section 8, 8-9).

Alongside the growth and expansion of West Baltimore, the city's overall industrial growth was booming. Between the 1880s and 1900, the population of the city rose substantially, in part due to the annexation of land in 1888, and also due to an increase in immigration and those moving to the city in search of jobs. Most of Baltimore's industrial activity was focused around the Inner Harbor area, where both rail and ship transportation was accessible. In the Midtown Edmondson neighborhood, the National Biscuit Company opened a warehouse in 1905 at Appleton Street near the B&P Railroad tracks. The construction of this warehouse ushered in more industrial growth along the railroad tracks, including the erection of the American Ice Company Building on West Franklin Street in 1911 (B-1040).

Between 1921 and 1923, it was reported that the city's industrial growth increased by 40 percent, partly due to the rise in the value of manufactured products (Baltimore Association of Commerce). By the 1920s, increased automobile transportation brought more industrial and commercial building, although the neighborhood still remained largely residential. Some residential buildings, especially those along Edmondson Avenue, were converted to include commercial space on the first floor. Other industrial buildings built during this time near 2020 Mosher Street include the American Stores Company Warehouse at 2120 West Lafayette Avenue (DOE-BC-0003) and the Ward Baking Company at 2140 Edmondson Avenue (B-5112-2). The proximity of these properties to the junction of two major railroad carriers, the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Western Maryland Railroad, was likely an important factor in the construction of these warehouses. Companies could negotiate for the best shipping rates while maintaining access to distant markets. A 1948 map entitled "Location Map of Railroad Sidings and Industrial Tracks in Baltimore" shows that there were a number of siding locations in this area, including two sidings that appear to lead directly to the north elevation of the warehouse building at 2020 Mosher Street (Sanborn Map, "Baltimore, Maryland").

Prior to the construction of the warehouse building, the property was owned by the Lafayette Mill and Lumber Company, which used the land for lumber storage. The Lafayette Mill and Lumber Company operated out of a building just to the south, at the corner of West Lafayette Avenue and Brice Street. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate that the property at 2020 Mosher Street had been used to store the company's lumber piles from 1901 until at least 1914. Around 1915, Baltimore City was the leading center of wood manufacturing in Maryland, with 164 plants across the city and around 8,000 employees. In "The Wood-Using Industries of Maryland," author F.W. Besley argued that the plants were "of prime importance to the industrial activity of the city and the State. With unparalleled shipping facilities by rail and water, there is no reason why Baltimore should not continue a leader in the manufacture of forest products along the Atlantic Coast" (Besley, 86). Many of Baltimore's wood manufacturers and lumber

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yards were located near the Inner Harbor, but historic maps show a few companies located just south of the Midtown Edmondson neighborhood, including a furniture company on North Franklintown Road and another lumber storage warehouse near West Saratoga Street. The Lafayette Mill and Lumber Company operated out of their building at West Lafayette and Brice Streets until around 1930. After numerous fires at the former Lafayette Mill site, the vacant building and lumber yards were cleared away by 1938, as shown on historic aerial images ("1937-38 Baltimore City & Baltimore County").

The main warehouse building was constructed in 1945 by the Bowen Corporation and leased to the United States Plywood Corporation, which had previously been operating out of space on West Madison Street in Baltimore (New York Lumber Trade Journal, 24.) The United States Plywood Corporation was founded in 1937 as a merger of several smaller plywood companies, and was headquartered in New York City. The warehouse at Mosher Street was the company's 17th warehouse location. The building was described by trade journals as "completely modern in every respect...designed especially for plywood and will stock and sell the wide variety of plywood and allied products distributed by the company" (Veneers and Plywood, 39). In 1951, the United States Plywood Corporation filed plans for an "\$80,000 warehouse at 2020 West Mosher street...by Fenton & Lichtig" ("Real Estate News"). Although not explicitly stated, these plans were likely for the warehouse addition. Architectural firm Fenton & Lichtig was founded in 1945 and designed a number of apartment buildings, schools, industrial buildings, and public buildings throughout Maryland ("Questionnaire for Architect's Roster: Fenton & Lichtig").

Around 1958, it appears that the United States Plywood Corporation had left the warehouse on Mosher Street, and the building was used as a temporary warehouse location by the Western Mill & Lumber Company, Incorporated ("Display Ad 69"). By 1960, the Roddis Plywood Corporation were listed in the city directory as the new tenants of the building (Baltimore Address Telephone Directory). In 1981, the property was sold by the Bowen Corporation to Bowl America Incorporated, which used the building for warehouse storage. Bowl America -which operates numerous bowling alleys in Maryland, Virginia, and Florida- continues to own the warehouse building today.

Significance Evaluation

The Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street was evaluated for significance under the NRHP Criteria A, B, and C, using the guidelines set forth in the National Register Bulletin "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." The property was not evaluated for eligibility under Criterion D as part of this assessment. Previous Determinations of Eligibility for warehouse buildings were also consulted to inform this assessment. Of note is the MacLea Lumber Company Warehouse (B-5234), built in 1950 in the Inner Harbor area of Baltimore City. The MacLea Lumber Company Warehouse was determined "not eligible" for its lack of distinctive architectural characteristics, significant alterations, and because it was not associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. 2020 Mosher Street is identified as a contributing building to the pending Midtown Edmondson Historic District, which contains a small number of industrial buildings. The nominated district is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A and C, most notably for its significance to the residential growth of West Baltimore.

Individually, however, the subject property lacks distinction in the areas of industry or commerce. This warehouse, like many of the other warehouses in the pending District, served as a satellite building for a larger company headquartered elsewhere. This warehouse was never used as a primary facility by its tenants. The United States Plywood Corporation was headquartered in New York City, while the Roddis Plywood Company was founded in Marshfield, Wisconsin. The Western Mill & Lumber Company only used the warehouse as a temporary facility, and Bowl America Incorporated, the present owners, is headquartered in Springfield, Virginia. In addition, the center of Baltimore industry has historically been primarily focused around the Inner Harbor area. The Midtown Edmondson Historic District's few industrial buildings hold little individual significance in the larger context of Baltimore's industrial history. Although this warehouse site has been used for wood manufacturing purposes since the early 1900s, this area was not a hub of Baltimore's lumber industry. Likely, the location of this warehouse was chosen because of its

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Eligibility recommended				Eligibility not recommended									
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MHT Comments:													
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access to adjoining railroad lines, not because of its close association with Baltimore's commercial wood industry. Thus, research undertaken on the evaluated property shows that the individual building had little significant role in the areas of industry or commerce, and therefore is recommended not eligible under Criterion A.

Research has not shown that the property is associated with the lives of individuals significant in the past. Therefore, the property is not eligible under Criterion B.

The 1945 main section of the warehouse was designed to emulate the style of early twentieth century industrial buildings. Although this building was built years after this style was popular, the design itself is simple and utilitarian and does not represent a distinctive type, period, or method of construction. The 1951 addition, though, was designed and built in a contemporary style, reflecting the latest thinking in warehouse construction, lighting, and ventilation. The butterfly-shaped roof is the most distinctive and recognizable midcentury architectural feature of the addition, but this alone does not make the building significant as an individual work of architecture. Moreover, the building has lost much of its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship with its changes in fenestration, sealed windows and deteriorated butterfly roof. The façade retains little semblance of its original fenestration or overall historic appearance. Combined, the 1945 main warehouse and 1951 addition are not distinctive enough to be considered true representatives of a particular type, period, or method of construction, and therefore the building is recommended not eligible individually for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C.

Works Cited

Baltimore Address Telephone Directory. Baltimore: Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company, 1960.

"Baltimore, Maryland." Map. Scale not given. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1951 Maryland". ProQuest Sanborn Maps Geo Edition. <<http://sanborn1.proquest.com/map.php?m=250559>>.

Besley, F.W. The Wood-Using Industries of Maryland. Baltimore: Maryland State Board of Forestry, 1919.

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"Questionnaire for Architect's Roster: Fenton & Lichtig." American Institute of Architects, July 27, 1951.

"Real Estate News," The Baltimore Sun. January 14, 1951, FA15.

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Veneers and Plywood. Vol 39. 1945, 39.

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Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street (B-5296)

2020 Mosher Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21217



USGS Baltimore West
Quadrangle 7.5 minute series



0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

Location Map

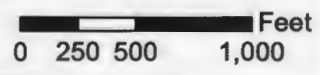
Date: September 2015

Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street (B-5296)

2020 Mosher Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21217



USGS Baltimore West
Quadrangle 7.5 minute series

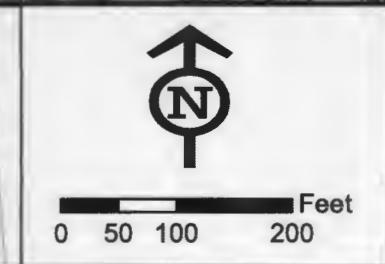


Location Map

Date: September 2015

Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street (B-5296)

2020 Mosher Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21217



Location Map

Date: September 2015

Photo Log
MIHP# B-5296
Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21217
Photographer: Elizabeth Fagan
Date: August 10, 2015

#	Digital Image File Name	Description of View
1	B-5296_2015-08-10_01.tif	<i>Main warehouse - Façade, looking northwest</i>
2	B-5296_2015-08-10_02.tif	<i>Main warehouse - Façade, looking northwest</i>
3	B-5296_2015-08-10_03.tif	<i>Entire warehouse - Façade, looking northeast</i>
4	B-5296_2015-08-10_04.tif	<i>Warehouse addition - Façade, looking northeast</i>
5	B-5296_2015-08-10_05.tif	<i>Main warehouse - East elevation, looking northwest</i>

Prints:

Processing – RA-4

Paper – Fujicolor Crystal Archive Professional Paper (Super Type CN)

DVD-R Gold:

Verbatim, UltraLife Gold, Metal Azo dye



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Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street

Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Fagan

August 10, 2015

MD SHPO

Main warehouse - facade, looking northwest

B-5296_2015-08-10_01.tif

1 of 5



B-5296

Warehouse at 2020 Mather Street

Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Fagan

August 10, 2015

MD SHPO

Main warehouse - facade, looking northwest

B-5296 - 2015-08-10 - 02.tif

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B-5296

Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street

Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Fagan

August 10, 2015

MD SHPO

Entire warehouse - facade, looking northeast

B-5296_2015-08-10_03.tif

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B-5296

Warehouse at 2020 Mosher Street

Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Fagan

August 10, 2015

MD SHPO

warehouse addition - facade, looking northeast

B-5296_2015-08-10-04.tif

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B-5296

warehouse at 2020 Masher Street

Baltimore, MD

Elizabeth Fagan

August 10, 2015

MD SHPO

Main warehouse - east elevation, looking northwest

B-5296 - 2015-08-10 - 05.tif

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