

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

2031-2041 WEST LAFAYETTE AVENUE
(Midtown Edmondson Historic District)

HABS No. MD-1461

Location: 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland

2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue is located at latitude: 39.298459, longitude: -76.650361. The coordinates represent the approximate center of the building and were obtained on 6 July 2023 using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on their release to the public.

Significance: 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue contributes to the Midtown Edmondson Historic District's significance for its association with the growth of West Baltimore and the industrial development clustered along the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad corridor. The property at the corner of Pulaski and Lafayette (2041) was built ca. 1906 as a rowhouse with a commercial unit on the first floor and a residence above. For a time, it was used as an office by the Lafayette Mill & Lumber Company, whose sheds and sidings were located across the avenue. Around the same time, a series of rowhouses filled out the rest of the block (2031-39), occupied by working class residents. While the rowhouses were gradually torn down by mid-century, the building at 2041 survived after the Lafayette Mill was demolished and the West Lafayette Avenue Bridge was constructed as a grade separation structure over the railroad. A warehouse was built at 2031-39 West Lafayette ca. 1960. The two buildings were converted to a church by Supreme Highlights Ministries, Inc. in 2008.

Description: 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue is a two-story masonry commercial building with perimeter walls consisting of red brick and concrete masonry units (CMUs). The north façade, west elevation, and part of the south elevation are clad in modern horizontal vinyl siding. The remainder of the south elevation and the entire east elevation are painted CMUs. The building is roughly rectangular in plan and measures approximately 84'-0" east-to-west x 86'-0" north-to-south overall. The exterior condition of the building is fair with the south elevation exhibiting the most deterioration.

The north façade facing West Lafayette Avenue, underneath the West Lafayette Avenue Bridge, consists of an approximately 16'-0" wide two-story western section and a one-story eastern section that is approximately 68'-0" wide. The western section is set back approximately 2'-6" from the eastern section. Site inspection, aerial views provided by Google Earth, and archival Sanborn maps suggest that these two sections were built at different times (ca. 1906 and 1960). The scale of the two sections also suggests that the western section was once a rowhouse and that the eastern section was possibly built as an adjoining commercial addition. Although much of the building's perimeter masonry

walls are obscured by horizontal vinyl siding, sections where the masonry is exposed indicate that the western portion of the building was constructed of red brick while the larger eastern portion is constructed of more modern (ca. 1960) concrete blocks. This difference in materials is further evidence that the east and west sections of the church building were constructed at different times.

At the time of the 2023 survey, the entire building was outfitted as a church, serving Supreme Highlights Ministries, Inc. The entire West Lafayette Avenue façade is clad in off-white horizontal vinyl siding and is capped by an aluminum coping. The main entrance to the building is located near the center of the façade and consists of decorative double doors with vertical lights that are centered beneath a gabled canopy that is supported by two fluted columns. The triangular fascia panel of the entrance canopy is clad with matching vinyl siding, and the roof is asphalt shingles. The entry doorway is flanked by a set of wall-mounted decorative light fixtures. There is a rectangular vent located in the upper lefthand corner of the façade and another small vent located midway up the façade wall on the right side.

The two-story North Pulaski Street (side) elevation has off-white horizontal siding topped by an aluminum gutter that extends the full width of the wall except for 1'-0" sections of raised parapet at the north and south corners. The elevation has a centrally located windowless single-leaf man door protected by a small gabled portico that is supported by two white fluted columns. The portico fascia is clad in matching vinyl siding and the roof has asphalt shingles. A second single-leaf man door with a small vertical light is located at the south end of the elevation. There is a small sign on this door bearing the numerals 827, which probably refers to a secondary address for this building. (A Google Earth search of 827 North Pulaski Street address results in the same pinned location as the 2033 West Lafayette Avenue address.) A first-floor level rectangular horizontal four-over-four window covered with a metal security screen is located between the two doors, with two through-the-wall air conditioner units installed directly into the wall on either side of the window. On the far north end of the second-floor level is a small rectangular vertically oriented double-hung one-over-one window with a window-unit air conditioner installed directly below its sill. On the south end of the second-floor level there is a small horizontally oriented single-pane window covered by a metal security screen with a window-unit air conditioner installed directly in the wall next to it.

The south (rear) elevation faces an alley that separates the building from the adjacent property at 813 North Pulaski Street. This elevation may represent three different structures of differing heights, materials, and periods that are connected to one another. The first section of wall beginning at the southwestern corner of the building (2041 West Lafayette) is about 16'-0" wide

and two stories high. It is constructed of red common-bond brick clad with off-white horizontal vinyl siding and membrane roofing material that overlaps the parapet to act as coping. The second section of wall is recessed approximately 3'-0" from the adjacent east and west section and is one story. The wall appears to be the south wall of a small garage that is shown on the 1950 and 1952 Sanborn maps.¹ The small garage was apparently incorporated into the later, larger building expansion. This +/- 14'-wide wall is constructed of painted CMUs and is topped by an aluminum gutter. Electrical meters are surface mounted on this wall and there is a vent located on the upper west end. The third section of wall on the eastern end of the south elevation is also single story but is about 4'-0" higher than the second section. This section is constructed of painted CMUs topped by overlapping membrane roofing material. It has a central roll-up door and a vent located high on the wall between the roll-up door and the southeast corner.

The east (side) elevation, constructed of painted CMUs, faces an open field bordered by North Brice Street. The parapet steps down from north-to-south in seven equal segments and is topped by aluminum coping. There are two six-over-six windows located toward the center of the wall.

Aerial views of the building indicate three roof sections at varying heights. All three shallow monoslope roof sections are covered with black membrane roofing material. The tallest section forms a rectangle that is about 16'-0" wide east-to-west and about 81'-0" long north-to-south, coinciding with the two-story western portion of the building (2041). This section slopes east-to-west and drains into a gutter on the west elevation. The largest portion of the roof forms an irregular rectangle that is approximately 65'-0" wide east-to-west and 81'-0" north-to-south (2031-39). It coincides with the largest single-story portion of the building and slopes north-to-south. It is likely that this large expanse of roof once drained into a gutter on the south elevation, but at the time of the survey there was no gutter present. The smallest and lowest portion of the roof forms a rectangle that is approximately 14'-0" wide east-to-west and 23'-0" north-to-south. This section of roof is located on the south end of the building and slopes north-to-south, draining into a gutter on the south elevation (rear of 2039).

The interior of the building was completely refurbished when the structure was converted to a church in 2008; therefore, no existing interior elements are original

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland, Vol. 2, 1950, Image 60, Map 159, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573195002/?sp=60&st=image&r=-0.263,-0.335,1.421,1.109,0; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland, Vol. 2, Republished 1952, Image 28, Map 159, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573195202/?sp=28&st=image&r=-0.06,0.415,0.377,0.249,0, both accessed 6 July 2023.

or historic. The church interior is partitioned into nineteen spaces on the first floor, eight spaces on the second floor, and two stairwells. The second floor is located on the west side of the church atop the first-floor section of the original 2041 two-story rowhouse. All other areas beyond the former rowhouse section are single story. The spaces on the first floor include one main entry foyer, one circulation corridor, one sanctuary with altar, one audio-visual room, one secondary entrance hallway, one cafeteria, one commercial kitchen, two large meeting rooms, one bathroom with shower, four restrooms, three utility rooms, and one closet. The second-floor spaces include one meeting room, two restrooms, two offices, one hallway, and one closet.

Interior wall finishes are mostly painted gypsum board. There are suspended acoustic tile ceilings throughout, and floor finishes are mostly vinyl tile with some carpeted areas. The condition of the interior spaces is very poor, with a great deal of mold and mildew present as well as a collapsed second-floor ceiling with roof leakage.

History: During the early twentieth century, the property on which 2031-2041 West Lafayette Street now stands was divided among dwellings (2031-2039) and a commercial property (2041). The 1901 Sanborn map shows the entire area as a vacant lot.² In 1910, a newspaper advertisement indicates that the dwellings at 2031 and 2039 West Lafayette Avenue were sold to Mr. and Mrs. Felix Foley.³ Around the same time, 2031 West Lafayette Avenue was occupied by Mrs. S. L. Ellers.⁴ Meanwhile, a marriage license was issued to Irvin Stokes of 2031 West Lafayette Avenue in December 1914.⁵

In the early twentieth century, the rowhouses on the 2031-2039 block of West Lafayette Street were owned or rented by people whose work contributed to the prosperity of the growing area. United States Census data from 1920 recorded occupations of some of the residents as soft drink salesman, department store saleswoman, theater flyman, and steam railroad signal fitter.⁶ The 1930 Census noted some of the residents' occupations as saleslady, policeman, mechanic, and piano polisher.⁷

² Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 2, 1901, Image 46, Map 153, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573190102/?sp=46&st=image&r=-0.115,-0.078,1.033,0.807,0, accessed 6 July 2023.

³ Classified advertisement, *The Sun* (Baltimore), 16 January 1910, 5, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 4 June 2023.

⁴ "To Cook Ham," *The Sun*, 2 February 1911, 29, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 4 June 2023.

⁵ "Marriage Licenses," *The Sun*, 31 December 1914, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, 4, accessed 4 June 2023.

⁶ United States Census data, 1920.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1930.

Although 2031-2039 West Lafayette Avenue were residences, for the first half of the twentieth century 2041 West Lafayette Avenue was primarily a commercial property that included a residence at times. In 1906, the “store and home of Mr. William Boleyn, 2041 West Lafayette Avenue” was set afire by a disgruntled employee.⁸ A 1907 classified advertisement touts 2041 West Lafayette Avenue as a two-story “store and dwelling” with “all modern improvements.”⁹ The 1914 Sanborn map indicates 2041 West Lafayette Street housed the Lafayette Mill and Lumber Company, while a newspaper advertisement from 1930 indicates “A Large Stock of Lumber and Millwork” available at the same address.¹⁰ On the 1950 and 1952 Sanborn maps, 2041 West Lafayette Avenue is labeled a commercial property, while most of the land that once housed 2031-2039 West Lafayette Avenue appears to be a vacant lot. It is possible that the construction of the adjacent West Lafayette Avenue Bridge in the mid-1930s rendered the properties at 2031-2039 undesirable for residential use and influenced the decision to demolish the rowhouses. The 1950 and 1952 Sanborn maps indicate that both floors of the remaining 2041 West Lafayette rowhouse building were extended to the rear property boundary at the alley, and a small adjacent garage was built at the rear (southern end) of the former rowhouse lot at 2039 West Lafayette Avenue. Both of these constructions appear to be extant and have been incorporated within the existing church facility.¹¹

After the 1950s, the property at 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue appears to have had several owners. The Sanborn map dated 1971 shows new construction built ca. 1960 on the land at 2031-2039 West Lafayette Avenue, adjacent to 2041 West Lafayette Avenue. These buildings continued to be represented on Sanborn maps dated 1977 and 1982.¹²

⁸ “Admits Arson Charge,” *The Sun*, 5 November 1906, 7, <https://www.newspapers.com/>; “Given One Year for Arson,” *The Sun*, 24 January 1907, 9, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, both accessed 18 July 2023.

⁹ “Store and Dwelling,” classified advertisement, *The Sun*, 18 February 1907, 9, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 4 June 2023.

¹⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland, Vol. 2, 1914, Image 60, Map 159, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573191402/?sp=60&st=image&r=-0.518,-0.079,2.035,1.589,0, accessed 6 July 2023; “For Sale,” classified advertisement, *The Sun*, 9 September 1930, 26, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 6 July 2023.

¹¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland, Vol. 2, 1950, Image 60, Map 159, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573195002/?sp=60&st=image&r=-0.263,-0.335,1.421,1.109,0; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Baltimore, Independent Cities, Maryland, Vol. 2, Republished 1952, Image 28, Map 159, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573195202/?sp=28&st=image&r=-0.06,0.415,0.377,0.249,0, both accessed 6 July 2023.

¹² Sanborn Map Company, Baltimore, Maryland, 1971, 1977, 1982, Collection of Environmental Data Resources, Inc.

In July 1977, both the 2031-2039 and 2041 West Lafayette Avenue buildings were purchased by Charles W. Hadfield.¹³ Charles W. Hadfield was the owner and president of Bay City Supply Co., a construction materials company.¹⁴ In 1979 and 1980, property assessments listed in *The Sun* and *Evening Sun*, respectively, note that the properties at 2031-2039 and 2041 West Lafayette Street were owned by Mr. Hadfield.¹⁵

A January 1985 advertisement in *The Sun* noted that there was to be a trustee's sale at 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue.¹⁶ In February 1985, the buildings at 2031-2039 and 2041 West Lafayette Avenue were sold to Edgar B. and Bertha Justice, owners of E. B. Justice Co., a waterproofing and caulking installation company founded in 1955.¹⁷ A property deed from 2008 indicates that 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue was purchased by Supreme Highlights Ministries, Inc., which converted the interior of the building into a church that operated from the building until the ministry sold the property in 2022.¹⁸ In 2022, 2041 West Lafayette Avenue was taken by Baltimore City due to unpaid real estate taxes. Subsequent foreclosure proceedings began in 2019.¹⁹

Sources: "Admits Arson Charge." *The Sun* (Baltimore), 5 November 1906.
<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 18 July 2023.

Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) FMC 10579, 539,
MSA_CE164_19732. <https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) MB 24560, p. 0168,
MSA_CE164_33717. <https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 20 July 2023.

Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) SEB 456, 297, MSA_CE164_456.
<https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

¹³ Baltimore City Superior Court (Land Records) RHB 3514, 84, MSA_CE168_13834, <https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

¹⁴ "Charles Hadfield 3rd" obituary, *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore), 15 November 1985, 19,
<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 20 July 2023.

¹⁵ "2031-2039 W Lafayette Ave," and "2041 W Lafayette Ave," classified advertisements, *The Sun*, 5 May 1979, 53; "2031-2039 W Lafayette Ave," and "2041 W Lafayette Ave," classified advertisements, *The Evening Sun*, 11 April 1980, 41, <https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 6 July 2023.

¹⁶ Michael Fox Auctioneers, "Auction," advertisement, *The Sun*, 4 January 1985, 57,
<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 6 July 2023.

¹⁷ Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) SEB 456, 297, MSA_CE164_456, <https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 19 July 2023; "Frank L. Mahaffey at 74" obituary, *The Evening Sun*, 13 September 1982, 32,
<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

¹⁸ Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) FMC 10579, p. 0539, MSA_CE164_19732,
<https://msa.maryland.gov/>, accessed 19 July 2023.

¹⁹ Baltimore City Circuit Court (Land Records) MB 24560, p. 0168, MSA_CE164_33717,
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<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 4 June 2023.
- “For Sale.” Classified advertisement. *The Sun*, 9 September 1930.
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https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573190102/?sp=46&st=image&r=-0.21,-0.078,1.222,0.807,0.
- _____. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 2, 1914, Image 60, Map 159.
https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573191402/?sp=60&st=image&r=-0.518,-0.079,2.035,1.589,0.
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https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3844bm.g3844bm_g03573195002/?sp=60&st=image&r=-0.263,-0.335,1.421,1.109,0.
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<https://www.newspapers.com/>, accessed 4 June 2023.

“To Cook Ham.” *The Sun*, 2 February 1911. <https://www.newspapers.com/>,
accessed 4 June 2023.

United States Census data, 1920-1930.

Historians: Nancy L. Zerbe; Steven Patrick, ARCH², Inc., 2023-24.

Project

Information: The documentation of 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue was undertaken in 2023-2024 as mitigation in accordance with the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for the Frederick Douglass Tunnel Program, formerly the Baltimore & Potomac (B&P) Tunnel Replacement Program. 2031-2041 West Lafayette Avenue will be demolished to make way for construction of the South Ventilation Facility and the realignment of the Northeast Corridor associated with a new 1.9-mile-long tunnel north of the existing tunnel alignment. The documentation project was sponsored by the United States Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), in coordination with the Maryland Historical Trust. It was prepared by Nancy L. Zerbe, Principal Investigator, and Steven Patrick, Historian. Jet Lowe prepared the large-format photography. Christopher H. Marston, HAER Architect, advised the project.