

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes no

Property Name: Fire Department Engine House No. 36 Inventory Number: B-5112-4
 Address: 2249 Edmondson Avenue Historic district: yes no
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21223 County: Baltimore City
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore West
 Property Owner: Baltimore Mayor and City Council Tax Account ID Number: 0320220117 038
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): N/A Tax Map Number: 20
 Project: Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel Project Agency: Federal Railroad Administration
 Agency Prepared By: RK&K
 Preparer's Name: Philip A. Hayden Date Prepared: 9/11/2015

Documentation is presented in: Enoch Pratt Library - Maryland Room, Google Books, HathiTrust Digital Library, Maryland Historical Society, Maryland Historical Trust, National Register of Historic Places, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, www.legeros.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: Greater Rosemont Historic District (Pending)
 Inventory Number: B-5112 Eligible: yes Listed: yes

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

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

Opening Summary

This documentation expands upon a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) Form completed for the Greater Rosemont Historic District (B-5112; MHT Eligible: 8/7/2006) in Baltimore City. The Fire Department Engine House No. 36 is located within the district boundaries and has been identified as a contributing resource. The building also falls within the proposed boundaries of the pending National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Nomination for the Midtown Edmondson Historic District and is similarly identified as a contributing resource. The purpose of this form is to present additional background information and consider the potential eligibility of the Fire Department Engine House No. 36 for individual listing in the NRHP.

Architectural Description

Constructed in 1910 in the Tudor Revival style, Fire Department Engine House No. 36 measures one-by-seven bays and features a flat roof, low brick parapets with molded limestone coping, limestone cornice, limestone belt course, brick walls (both English and

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

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

MHT Comments: Contributes to Midtown Edmondson HP, also eligible individually

Jim Juliano ✓
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services
B. K. ...
 Reviewer, National Register Program

9/22/2015
 Date
9/24/15
 Date

American bond), limestone window and door architraves, and a projecting water table of granite and brick capped by limestone trim. The principal (north) façade fronting Edmondson Avenue includes a crenelated parapet above a three-sided oriel window capped by a large carved limestone tablet with scrolled acanthus leaf base and decorated with an image of the Battle Monument (Baltimore City Seal) flanked by classical columns and surrounded by imbricated and branched laurel. The oriel projects over a recessed Tudor Gothic archway opening into a shallow vestibule and the building's interior equipment bay. Both the oriel and archway are finished in carved limestone and quoining. The window is topped by a frieze of square panels decorated with quatrefoil and roundel designs over fixed replacement single-sash aluminum windows with stone mullions. The Gothic arch gateway is framed by a deep cavetto molding with decorated spandrels and topped by an elaborate carved limestone cartouche with scrolls, ribbons, and oak leaves inscribed with the letters "FD" for Fire Department. The recessed vestibule features an imitation ornamental plaster ceiling of pressed metal and flanking windows trimmed in limestone architraves with quoining. The projecting water table of finished gray granite block includes a molded limestone cap and projecting granite wheel guards at each of the archway corners. The west and south elevations, visible from Bentalou Street, continue the treatments of the principal elevation of dark brown brick, tucked pointing, and limestone window and door trim. However, the roof parapet is plainly shaped and, except for the continuation of the granite water table around the first bay at the northwest corner, the water table is plain brick. The east elevation facing the side yard also continues the principal treatment through the first (northeast) bay. The remainder of the elevation is fashioned with standard orange brick in American bond and flush pointing and features a corbelled brick cornice, and plain window openings with segmental brick arch tops and limestone sills. The rear (south elevation) includes a low chimney rising from the southwest corner, a belt course of soldier brick, a partially bricked up second floor hatchway (former hay loft), and a brick porch with simple metal roof, pipe column supports, and brick stairs. All windows are modern aluminum replacements.

The interior first floor walls are covered entirely with mosaic ceramic tile in colors of black, evergreen, gray, mustard, and white delineating baseboards, wainscoting, and door surrounds. The classically inspired cornice and paneled ceiling are decorated in ornamental pressed tin. A circular iron staircase near the southeast corner ascends from the first floor to the second level (not accessible during this survey). Numerous original interior wooden doors include four raised panels (two vertical over two horizontal) and transoms. What appears to be the original fire bell hangs on the front wall in the northeast corner. The rear quarter of the main floor is partitioned off with artificial wood paneling to form a modern kitchen and crew quarters with a dropped acoustic tile ceiling.

Historic Context

In the aftermath of Baltimore's Great Fire of February 7, 1904, which destroyed much of its business and financial district, the city inaugurated a program to modernize its fire department. The city expanded the number of engine companies, added equipment, and erected modern fire stations throughout the expanding city (Hughes and Altman 2002: Sheet 1). In 1908 alone, the city had plans to build four new engine houses designated No. 34, 35, 36 & 37 using allocated funds totaling nearly \$120,000 (Baltimore Commissioners of Finance 1908: 23).

The site selected for Engine House No. 36 lay in a rapidly developing area of West Baltimore along Edmondson Avenue. The district opened for development beginning in the late nineteenth century, but large-scale construction of rowhouse blocks began only around 1906 following the extension of the city's streetcar system along Edmondson Avenue (Pousson 2010: sec. 8, p. 4-6). This development concentrated to the west of North Bentalou Street (Sanborn Map Company 1914: 137, 147). Between Bentalou and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, however, the district remained largely vacant, providing ample room for the city to locate the new fire house. Keeping the area near the tracks vacant was due in part to the efforts of such residential organizations as the Edmondson Terrace Improvement Association, which worked to prevent the development of railroad facilities and other commercial and industrial development in the area (Pousson 2010: sec. 8, p. 8). In its opposition to the construction of a proposed gas station on the corner of Edmondson Avenue and Bentalou Street later in the 1920s, for example, one spokesman for the

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association argued that because the "south side of Edmondson Avenue in that block was already rendered unsafe by reason of a garage and a fire engine house, the north side shou'd be left unmenaced" (quoted in Pousson 2010: sec 8, p. 9).

The Edmondson Avenue neighborhood also maintained strict racial segregation, consistent with a longstanding tradition throughout the city and Baltimore's passage of the nation's first formal segregation ordinance in 1910 legislating such measures (Pousson 2010: sec. 8, p. 17). The practice was further advanced by resident groups, such as the Edmondson Terrace Improvement Association, which would go on to join seventeen other similar city groups in 1925 to actively seek passage of zoning laws and restrictive private covenants to maintain segregated communities and prevent the sale or rental of property to African Americans (Pousson 2010: sec. 8, p. 9).

The company for Engine House No. 36 was formally organized on July 1, 1909. It included a number of veteran fireman. The eldest, Louis J. Fresh, aged 71, first joined the fire department in 1872 and worked for the new company as a Hostler (horse tender). Captain Henry Stagge, aged 48, received his appointment to the department in 1891. Others members of the newly organized company included Lieutenant Robert E. O'Keefe; Engineman Thomas R. G. Milke; Assistant Engineman Walter M. Conway; Assistant Hostler August Ott; and Pipemen (nozzle handlers) Chris J. Breivogel and John G. Grimes. They included a former iron molder, motorman, stationary engineer, electrician, hostler, driver, and two butchers. Of Irish and European ancestry, all eight new firemen also lived in or near the racially segregated Edmondson Avenue neighborhood (Board of Fire Commissioners 1914: 87).

Engine House No. 36 was designed by architects William Miller Ellicott and William W. Emmart of the Baltimore firm of Ellicott & Emmart. Born in Philadelphia, Ellicott was heir to the flour milling family from Ellicott City, Maryland. After studying architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, he practiced in Portland, Oregon, before relocating to Baltimore in the late nineteenth century and forming the partnership with Emmart. Less is known about Emmart, but the firm worked on a number of prominent buildings in Baltimore, including the Colonial Trust Company building, the Mutual Life Insurance Company building, the Metropolitan Savings Bank, the National Exchange Bank, the Roland Park Hotel, St. David's Episcopal Church, Primary School No. 37, and the Forest Park Branch of the Pratt Free Library (Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project 2015). By February 1910, a \$30,000 contract had been awarded to the Fidelity Construction Company to erect the new fire house on the corner of Edmondson Avenue and Bentalou Street (Municipal Journal and Engineer 1910: 231).

The Tudor Revival style of architecture selected for the building's principal façade was fully consistent with the eclectic mix of architectural designs employed in all of the city's new fire houses. The choice of traditional building styles, typically associated with works of public architecture, created easily recognizable civic structures that also helped set the tone for developing sections of the city. As if to underscore the message of civic improvement, a bronze dedication plaque, prominently installed on front of Engine House No. 36 in 1910, proudly advertised the names of the Mayor, Fire Commissioners, Chief Engineer, and Inspector of Buildings.

The peculiar requirements for single-engine fire houses, with their narrow rectilinear plans and large vehicular entries, lent themselves to the use of classical and gothic motifs derived from the triumphal archways and medieval gatehouses of history. Tudor period gates, akin to those in London's city walls or the enclosures of England's colleges, monasteries, and palaces, proved adaptable to the needs of fire houses. In particular, this included the narrow façade, broad arched ground-floor passageway, and attention to the principal spaces located immediately above the main entry. One additional city fire house, also built in 1910, employed a similar fully mature Tudor Revival design (Poppleton Fire Station, Engine House No. 38) [B-3693; NR: 9/8/1983]. But the vast majority of Baltimore's early twentieth-century fire houses relied on more classical designs derived from antiquity (Legeros 2015). Nevertheless, by the 1920s, the city seemed to have settled upon a standard design for its fire houses that drew upon both architectural traditions. This design featured a narrow principal façade of overall classical proportions and detailing but

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incorporated an arched vehicular opening more akin to the Tudor Revival. Extant examples include Truck Company No. 16 (Calvert Street); Engine House No. 47 (B-1348; Washington Boulevard); Engine House No. 50 (Holabird Avenue); Engine House No. 51 (Highland Avenue); Engine House No. 52 (Woodbrook Avenue); Engine House No. 57 (Pennington Avenue); and Engine House No. 58 (Annapolis Road). One example no longer standing once housed Truck Company No. 24 at Eastern Avenue and Angelsea Street (Legeros 2015).

The station went into active service on December 5, 1910. When finished, the building attracted sufficient notice to appear in the pages of *The Brickbuilder*. It described the building's architectural characteristics as follows:

"The exterior is a rough dark red brick of brownish tone laid in cement of natural color, the joints being raked back. The trimming is of Indiana limestone and all woodwork is painted dark green. The walls of the first floor are tiled the entire height, while all ceilings throughout are of sheet metal. There is no connection between the hayloft and the balance of the second story, both as a protection against fire and to prevent dust. The hose shaft is tall enough for hanging the extra hose at full length when drying out. The small cellar at the rear provides for the heating apparatus and coal bunker. The building is non-fireproof. The total cost, including plumbing, heating and wiring, was \$25,500" (*The Brickbuilder* 1911: 265).

The corner site of the new fire house allowed it to have an adjoining walled yard on the eastern side of the lot. Access was provided through a wrought iron gate flanked by a pair of brick piers with large limestone ball finials fronting Edmondson Avenue. According to published plans of the building, the first floor main apparatus room originally included six box stalls (three along each wall) for stabling horses. The center of the floor was left clear to hold the fire-fighting equipment. Five poles, positioned in strategic locations around the room, allowed the firemen to descend rapidly to their respective positions when the alarm sounded. A single circular iron staircase near the southeast corner of the building provided the only access back up to the main living floor on the second level. Two rooms at the front of the fire house on the second floor looked out over Edmondson Avenue and contained office space and common living areas. The dormitory accommodated 12 beds. Lavatories and locker rooms were positioned near the back of the second floor with the separate hay loft located at the extreme rear (*The Brickbuilder* 1911: 265). The hose tower (no longer extant), an important feature of all fire houses of the period, rose 55 feet up through the roof from the extreme southeast corner of the building and was used for hanging the hoses to dry (*Sanborn Map Company* 1914).

Throughout the First World War, the fire department saw its ranks dwindle dangerously. Further pressure stemming from the City's last annexation of territory after the war, led to a reorganization and expansion of the department and the creation of a central training school at Engine House No. 36 for instructing new recruits and improving members' general skills (*Fire Service* 1921a: 3). Modeled after a similar training camp at the Fire College of New York, the Baltimore school was specifically designed to teach techniques for combating high-rise fires. Central to this effort was the construction of a five-story tower (built circa 1920; no longer extant) in the rear lot, designed to resemble one of the city's typical warehouses, office buildings, or hotels (*Fire Service* 1921a: 3). The tower also included practice sprinkler systems and other fire-fighting apparatus generally found in modern buildings. The first class of 32 captains from throughout the department began their training at Engine House No. 36 on September 15, 1921 (*Fire Service* 1921b: 7). The school remained a central part of the Baltimore City Fire Department for years to come and played an important role in the ongoing professionalization of the department during the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, shifts in the racial make-up of city during and immediately following the close of World War II, changed the character of homeownership throughout much of West Baltimore from predominantly white, middle-class neighborhoods to largely African-American households (Farnham 2006: 2). Into the 1940s, the Edmondson Avenue neighborhood remained mostly segregated, in keeping with the city's local policies and with the wider nationwide practice of denying people of color equal access to education, housing, and employment. Restrictions on housing remained common until the practice was outlawed by the United States Supreme Court in 1948. The following year, the community began to transition rapidly as African American residents found more

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housing options suddenly available to them and as white residents moved increasingly from older urban centers to newer (and largely white) suburban areas (Pousson 2010: sec. 8, p. 10, 16).

Advances in desegregation were not just limited to housing. Beginning in 1930, both the Baltimore Urban League, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People began to push for the appointment of African Americans to the city's fire department (Baltimore Afro-American 1953: 12). A survey completed in 1935 by the Urban League titled "The Negro Community of Baltimore," called attention to the lack of employment opportunities in municipal positions, such police and fire (Baltimore Sun 1935: MS1). Among the Urban League's list of priorities for action in 1949, employment in the municipal fire department topped the list (Baltimore Sun 1949a: 11). In May, 1949, the League won the opportunity to present its arguments before the Baltimore Board of Fire Commissioners for integration of the department (Baltimore Sun 1949b: 11). By 1953, the League succeeded in changing city policy, and on October 15, officials announced the first appointment of 10 African American men to the department. They were Charles L. Scott, George C. W. McKnight, Jr., Louis Harden, Charles T. Miller, Cicero Baldwin, Lee D. Babb, Earl C. Jones, Lindsay Washington, Jr., Roy Parker, and Ernest Barnes (Baltimore Afro-American 1953: 12). On Wednesday, October 30, 1953, the 10 recruits began their initial 35-week training course at Engine House No. 36, marking the successful racial integration of the Baltimore fire department for the first time. To acknowledge the historic move, William M. Passano, president of the Urban League remarked, "Since the Fire Department is one of those unique and most valuable municipal services which throughout the years are engaged in the protection of all our citizens, it seems only right that this step should be taken. We at the Urban League, who have worked for the betterment of the entire community, salute the Fire Board, the officers, and men of the Baltimore City Fire Department for their recognition of the fact that the colored community and all of Baltimore stand ready to participate in the improvement of the community" (Baltimore Afro-American 1953: 12).

Advances in fire-fighting technology, especially the shift from horse-drawn apparatus to motor trucks, led to changes in the building. The stalls were removed to make way for the equipment, and the old wooden double doors were eventually removed from their iron pintles in favor of a modern automatic lift door. Other alterations included changing out the original wooden window sash with modern aluminum substitutes, and partitioning off the interior rear of the ground floor to create a modern kitchen space. More significant losses consisted of the demolition of the original 55-foot tall hose drying tower and the removal of the fireman's school training tower. Otherwise, Engine House No. 36 remains remarkably unchanged and continues to function as an operating fire house.

Statement of Significance/Justification

The Fire Department Engine House No. 36 is recommended eligible for listing individually in the NRHP under Criterion A in the areas of social history and ethnic heritage (Black) for its associations with the expansion and professionalization of Baltimore's fire protection services during the early twentieth century and for its role in the racial integration of the Baltimore City Fire Department in 1953. The plan, layout, and style reflect modern firehouse design employed in a group of similar fire stations constructed in the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1904. The design went on to influence later city fire houses built in the period prior to World War II. As the scene for the department's central training school, the property also played a major role in introducing new fire-fighting techniques and professionalizing the department. The same school served as the setting for the initial desegregation of the department, an important event in the history of the city.

The building is also eligible under Criterion C as a well-preserved example of the rare and early use of the Tudor Revival style in Baltimore's twentieth century fire houses and for embodying the distinctive characteristics of such buildings constructed during the same period. Only the Poppleton Fire Station (B-3693; NR: 9/8/1983) from the same period possesses a similar full expression of the Tudor Revival style. With respect to integrity, the loss of the Engine House No. 36's original bay doors, windows, hose drying tower, and training school tower detract from the property's integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship. However, the

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MHT Comments:													
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building continues to occupy the same location and surrounding lot, and it retains enough of its remaining original materials, architectural detailing, and Tudor Revival styling to convey its importance as a fire house and as a work of architecture. The property clearly projects the feeling of an intact, operational city fire house, conveying its associations with early twentieth century civic architecture. Because the building possesses both significance (Criteria A and C) and integrity, the Fire Department Engine House No. 36 is recommended eligible individually for listing in the NRHP. The recommended period of significance extends from its construction in 1910 to the time it served as the scene for the first racial integration of the Baltimore City Fire Department in 1953. The recommended boundary includes the current tax parcel.

Recognizing that Fire Department Engine House No. 36 relates to a larger collection of similar resources located throughout the city of Baltimore, evaluating the historic property as part of a wider thematic historic district was beyond the scope of the present survey.

Bibliography

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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

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Eligibility not recommended _____

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MHT Comments:

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Date

Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

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Fire Department Engine House No. 36 (B-5112-4)

2249 Edmondson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21223



USGS Baltimore West
Quadrangle 7.5 minute series



0 1,750 3,500 7,000 Feet

Location Map

Date: September 2015

Fire Department Engine House No. 36 (B-5112-4)

2249 Edmondson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21223



USGS Baltimore West
Quadrangle 7.5 minute series



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Location Map

Date: September 2015

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ArcGIS World Imagery
2015

Legend

 Parcel Boundaries



0 50 100 200 Feet

Location Map

Date: September 2015

Fire Department Engine House No. 36 (B-5112-4)
Baltimore, Maryland

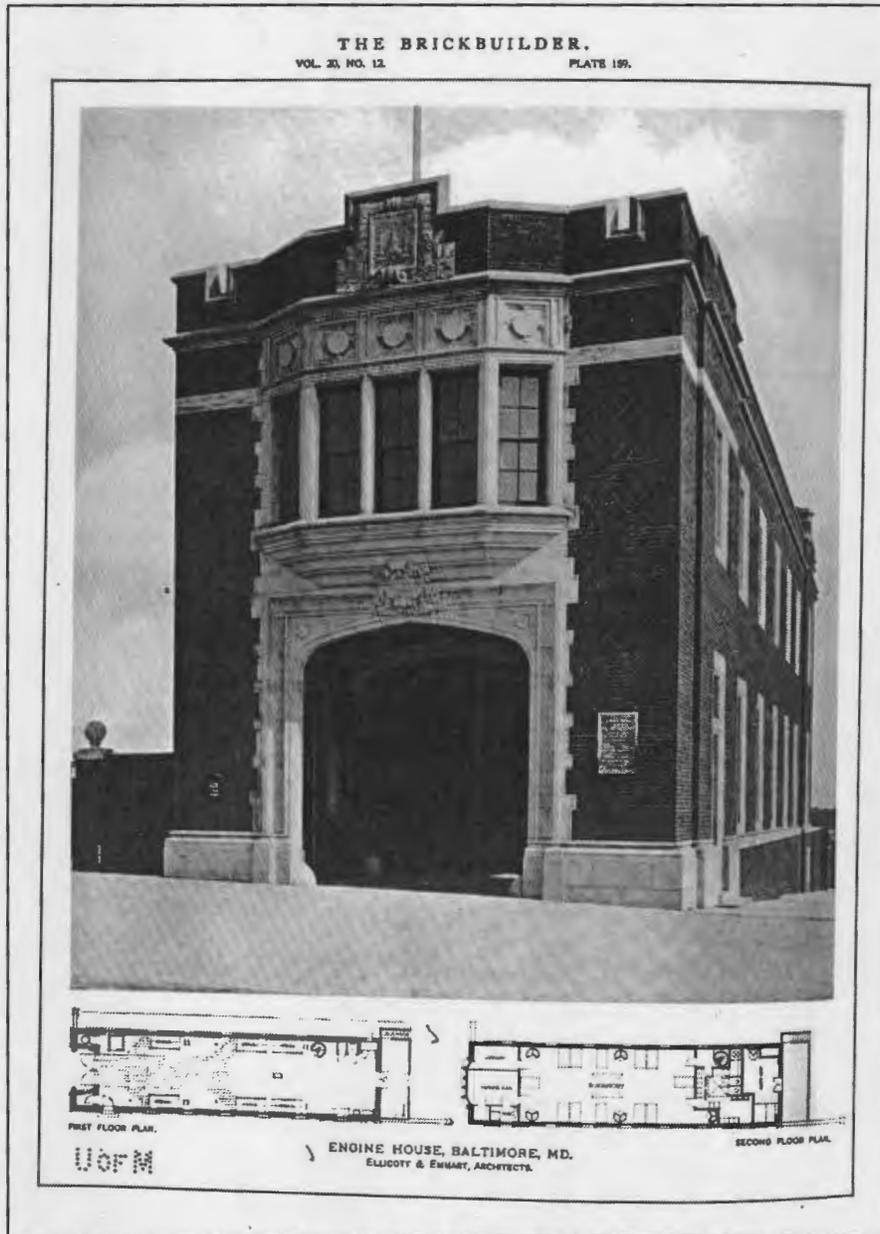


Figure 1: Published photograph and plans, shortly after construction of Fire Department Engine House No. 36 (*Bricklayer* 1911: plate 159, p. 280).

Photo Log
MIHP# B-5112-4
Fire Department Engine House No. 36
2249 Edmondson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21223
Photographer: Philip Hayden
Date: August 25, 2015

#	Digital Image File Name	Description of View
1	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_01.tif	Overview, principal (north) façade with gates to adjoining yard at left, looking south.
2	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_02.tif	Detail, principal (north) facade and yard gates, looking southwest.
3	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_03.tif	Detail, principal (north) façade depicting oriel window and cartouche over Gothic arch entry.
4	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_04.tif	Detail, eastern yard gatepost with east elevation in background, looking south.
5	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_05.tif	Overview, rear (south) and west elevations, looking north.
6	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_06.tif	Detail, arched entry vestibule depicting pressed metal ceiling and typical stone window architrave, looking southeast.
7	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_07.tif	Overview, first floor interior depicting main equipment floor, tiled walls, and pressed metal ceiling, looking northeast.
8	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_08.tif	Detail, northeast interior corner depicting mosaic wall tile treatment, door, and original fire bell, looking northeast.
9	B-5112-4_2015-08-25_09.tif	Detail, original spiral staircase to second floor, looking northeast.

Prints:

Processing – RA-4

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

DVD-R Gold:

Verbatim, UltraLife Gold, Metal Azo dyes



CHARLES E. MACOMBER FIRE
STATION

Number of Fatal Fires This Year: 0
Number of Fire Deaths This Year: 0

2249

65
65
65

B-5112-4

Fire Department Engine House No. 36

Baltimore, MD

PHILIP Hayden

AUGUST 25, 2015

Overview, principal (north) facade with gates
to adjoining yard at left, looking south.

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MD SHPO



CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY
Episcopal Church

Member of Holy Trinity Church, New York
Member of Holy Trinity Church, New York

2247

B- 5112-4

Fire Department Engine House

No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25, 2015

Detail, principal (north) facade
and yard gates, looking
southwest.

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MD SHPD



MAIL BOX



MAIL

BOX

B-5112-4

Fire Department Engine House No. 36

Baltimore MD

Philip Hayden

August 25, 2015

Detail, principal (north) facade depicting oriel
window and cartouche over Gothic arch
entry.

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MD SHPO



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Fire Department Engine House

No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25, 2015

Detail, eastern yard gatepost
with east elevation in
background, looking south.

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MD SHPO



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Fire Department Engine House No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25 2015

Overview, rear (south) and west elevations,
looking north.

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MD SHPO



2249

B-5112-4

Fire Department Engine House
No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25 2015

Detail, arched entry vestibule
depicting pressed metal
ceiling and typical stone
window architecture, looking
south east.

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MD SHPO



B-5112-4

Fire Department Engine House No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25, 2015

Overview, first floor interior depicting main
equipment floor, tiled walls, and pressed
metal ceiling, looking northeast,

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MD SHPO



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Fire Department Engine House

No. 36

Baltimore, MD

Philip Hayden

August 25 2015

Detail, northeast interior corner
depicting mosaic wall tile
treatment, door, and original
fire bell, looking northeast.

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MD SHPO



B-5112-4

Fire Department Engine House No. 36

Baltimore MD

Phillip Hayden

August 25 2013

Detail, original spiral staircase
to second floor, looking
northeast.

9 of 9

MD SHPO