

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes    
no

Property Name: Sinclair Filling Station Inventory Number: B-5118-1  
 Address: 2124 Edmondson Avenue Historic district:  yes  no  
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 22113-1111 County: Baltimore City  
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore West  
 Property Owner: Olamide Raji Tax Account ID Number: 0316080105 003A  
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): unknown Tax Map Number: 0016  
 Project: Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel Project Agency: Federal Railroad Administration  
 Agency Prepared By: Dovetail Cultural Resource Group  
 Preparer's Name: M. Chris Manning Date Prepared: 9/10/2015

Documentation is presented in: \_\_\_\_\_

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  
 Inventory Number: B-5118 Eligible:  yes Listed:  yes

Site visit by MHT Staff  yes  no Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Summary

The LA Auto Service Station, formerly a Sinclair Filling Station that currently houses an automobile service station, is located at 2124 Edmondson Avenue in the City of Baltimore, Maryland. The one-story masonry building is situated on a 5,367-square-foot lot (0.12 acres) located within a commercial strip adjacent to early-twentieth-century townhouses.

The property is located within the proposed boundaries of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-nominated Midtown Edmondson Historic District, also known as the Monroe-Riggs Historic District (B-5118), "a mixed-used area of rowhouses, warehouses and commercial buildings largely constructed between the 1880s and the 1910s" (Pousson 2015:8-1). According to the NRHP draft nomination for the Midtown Edmondson Historic District, which was submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) for review in January 2015, the proposed district is significant under NRHP Criterion A for its association with the growth of West Baltimore and for its association with the post-World War II (WW II) racial transition of West Baltimore, and under Criterion C as an example of a late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century suburb with a diverse range of rowhouse designs (Baltimore Heritage 2015; Pousson 2015:8-1).

**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 HD; not eligible individually*

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <u><i>Janie Jarman</i></u><br>Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services | <u>9/22/15</u><br>Date |
| <u><i>B. Kuntz</i></u><br>Reviewer, National Register Program           | <u>9/24/15</u><br>Date |

Location/Setting

The property at 2124 Edmondson Avenue is located in West Baltimore, just east of the former tracks of the Baltimore and Potomac (B&P) Railroad (now part of Amtrak and the Maryland Area Regional Commuter [MARC] rail system) and adjacent to a bridge carrying Edmondson Avenue over the alignment (B-4552). The property is bounded on the south by Edmondson Avenue, on the west and north by the former Atlas Safe Deposit and Storage Company Warehouse (B-5118-2), now a used appliance shop, and on the east by the Edmondson Community Center, a two-story brick building that historically functioned as a restaurant. Today the setting of 2124 Edmondson Avenue consists of a commercial strip surrounded by early-twentieth-century townhouses that comprise the Midtown Edmondson Historic District/Monroe Riggs Historic District.

Architectural Description

The resource at 2124 Edmonson Avenue is a one-story gas station constructed in the Mission Revival style. Most of the parcel is covered by a paved parking lot, with the gas station building located at the far western edge of the parcel. The building is three-bays wide by three-bays deep, with an additional bay on the primary elevation, which is canted and faces the southeast. The west elevation of the roughly rectangular building abuts the east elevation of an adjacent masonry warehouse at 2126 Edmonson Avenue. The gas station's foundation consists of poured concrete with a structural system of concrete block clad in stucco. Square columns with reverse corbelled capitals break up the surface of the southeast and east elevations and project above the roofline, providing a crenelated effect. Near the top of each column is a decorative, arched brick panel typical of Sinclair gas stations of this period, which have been painted over. The building has a flat roof with projecting parapet. A large, curvilinear, Mission Revival-style parapet with an arched niche projects above the roofline on the façade. On the south elevation and south half of the east elevation, the parapet is gabled with terra cotta tile coping. Above the service bays on the north half of the east elevation, a visor roof clad in terra cotta tile projects from the parapet. On the north (rear) elevation, the simple flat parapet is covered with metal coping. An interior brick chimney projects from the roof near the south elevation and an overly large billboard of fairly recent construction is attached to the roof near the façade.

The primary entrance is located at the corner of the south and east elevations at an angle to the street and contains a plywood replacement door with a single, fixed, diamond-shaped light and a metal-barred security door accessed via an unadorned concrete stoop. A transom above the doorway has been boarded over and painted with the building's address. The entrances to the ladies' and men's room are located on the south elevation and also contain replacement doors with boarded-up transoms. Two service bays are located on the north half of the east elevation. The service bay openings have a decorative plaster detail in the inside upper corners that mimics the curvilinear, Mission Revival-style detailing of the central parapet. Each service bay opening is protected by a metal spur stone at the lower corners. The service bay doors were open at the time of survey and thus not visible. All window openings on the south and east elevations have been infilled with concrete block topped by two or three rows of glass blocks. Original concrete sills can still be seen at the bottom of each original window opening. On the rear (north) elevation, two large window openings have likewise been infilled with concrete or stucco. There do not appear to be any additions to the building, nor does there appear to have ever been an attached canopy. No gas pumps or related fixtures are currently present on the property.

Historic Context

The Sinclair Oil and Refining Corporation was established in 1916 by Harry Sinclair and quickly became a leader in the industry (Jones 2003:58; Russell 2013:158). In the late 1920s, Sinclair became the first major oil company to incorporate integral service bays, also known as super service stations or "greasing palaces," into their standard design, a move that was soon emulated by their competitors (Russell 2013:53). In the early 1930s, Sinclair introduced a distinctive, standardized, Mission Revival-style design for

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MHT Comments:

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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

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Date

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Reviewer, National Register Program

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Date

their filling stations, commonly referred to as "the Castle," which incorporated a white stucco exterior, green Spanish tile roof, and a gabled canopy with a crenelated parapet (Russell 2013:102, 158). Sinclair's use of the Mission Revival style inspired competitors such as Standard Oil and Exxon to adopt a similar but simpler design. Unfortunately, Sinclair's attachment to this design, which provided the company with excellent brand identity, eventually led to their downfall. In the mid-1930s, the Mission Revival-style canopy became a liability due to the increased popularity of travel trailers (Russell 2013:159). Although their competitors soon abandoned the canopy, Sinclair continued to construct service stations that employed the standard canopy design (Russell 2013:158). Finally, in the late 1930s the company began abandoning the canopy feature, retaining the Mission Revival style into the mid-1940s, but never quite regained their previous share of the market (Jones 2003:76; Russell 2013:159). In 1969, the failing company was acquired by the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO), which sold Sinclair's East Coast operations to British Petroleum (BP). Today, Sinclair operates gas stations exclusively in the Midwestern and Western states.

Although tax records indicate that the Sinclair filling station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue was constructed in 1915, land records confirm that the building was in fact erected in 1935 (Baltimore City Deed Books [BCDB] 5488:321, 5544:56; State Department of Assessments and Taxation [SDAT] 2015). In 1934, the Sinclair Refining Company leased a lot on the north side of Edmondson Avenue, "together with the oil and gasoline filling and service station building improvements, fixtures, driveways, and equipment to be erected thereon by Lessor," with the stipulation that the filling station would be completed on or before September 1, 1935 (BCDB 5488:321, 5544:56-57). Unlike most Sinclair filling stations constructed in the early- to mid-1930s, the filling station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue does not appear to have ever had a canopy, as one does not appear on historic maps and there is no evidence of one on the current façade (Sanborn Map Company [Sanborn] 1951:147).

The Sinclair Filling Station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue was one of several Sinclair service stations operating in Baltimore in the 1930s. In 1940, the Sinclair Refining Company transferred the leases of more than a dozen service stations, including the property at 2124 Edmondson Avenue, to Baltimore-based Sherwood Brothers, Inc., a regional gas station chain (The Baltimore Sun 2008; BCDB 6033:325-343). The company's founder, John W. Sherwood, served as the president of the Sinclair Oil Company until 1945 and presumably the gas station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue continued to operate as a Sinclair Station until at least that date. Today the property operates in the automobile service industry as an independently-owned service station under the name of LA Auto Service.

**Statement of Significance**

For individual listing in the NRHP, a property must be demonstrated as significant under one or more criteria and must also possess most, if not all, of the seven aspects of integrity set forth by the NRHP: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Since the construction of the Sinclair Service Station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue in 1935, the resource has undergone significant alterations that have negatively impacted its integrity. Most notably, all window openings have been infilled with concrete block and/or glass block; all doors have been replaced; all transoms have been covered with plywood; the building's original white stuccoed façade and green terra cotta tile roof have been painted; and other decorative details indicative of the Sinclair "castle" design have been altered, removed, or obscured. In addition, no gas pumps or original signage are extant on the property. These alterations negatively affect the property's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship and have diminished the building's integrity of feeling and association with the Sinclair brand.

Due to a substantial loss of historic integrity, the property at 2124 Edmondson Avenue is recommended not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C. The property has no known association with an important event or an individual, so it is also recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criteria A or B. Investigations were not conducted to determine whether the property has the potential to yield information important in history or prehistory; therefore, NRHP Criterion D was not assessed.

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| <b>MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW</b>          |  |
| Eligibility recommended _____                    | Eligibility not recommended _____  |
| Criteria:    ___ A    ___ B    ___ C    ___ D    | Considerations:    ___ A    ___ B    ___ C    ___ D    ___ E    ___ F    ___ G |
| MHT Comments:                                    |  |
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| <b>Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services</b> | <b>Date</b>  |
| _____  | _____  |
| <b>Reviewer, National Register Program</b>       | <b>Date</b>  |

Additionally, the Sinclair Filling Station at 2124 Edmondson Avenue is located within the proposed boundaries of the NRHP-nominated Midtown Edmondson Historic District/Monroe-Riggs Historic District (B-5118) and is identified as a contributing resource to that district.

References:

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Pousson, Eli

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Russell, Tim

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1951 Insurance Maps of Baltimore Maryland, Vol. 2. Republished from 1914 edition. Sanborn Map Company, New York, New York. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Department Collection and State Library Resources, Digital Sanborn Maps, Maryland. Electronic document, <http://www.prattlibrary.org/locations/maryland/index.aspx?id=4324>, accessed August 2015.

State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT)

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility not recommended \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

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Sinclair Filling Station (B-5118-1)  
Baltimore, Maryland



USGS Baltimore West, Maryland Quad (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2001).

**Sinclair Filling Station (B-5118-1)**  
Baltimore, Maryland



Baltimore City, Aerial Imagery (Esri 2015).

Sinclair Filling Station (B-5118-1)  
Baltimore, Maryland



Baltimore City Parcel Map (City of Baltimore 2015).

B-5118-1, Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue, B&P Tunnel Project

| TIFF Image File Name       | Description   | Date Taken | Ink                     | Paper                         | Brand, Make & Dye Type of CD                    |
|----------------------------|---|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_01.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), Southeast Oblique, Looking Northwest                  | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_02.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), Parapet and Decorative Wall Detail, Looking Northwest | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_03.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), South Elevation, Looking North                        | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_04.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), Detail of Terra Cotta Roof Tiles, Looking Northwest   | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_05.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), Detail of Blocked-In Window Opening, Looking West     | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |
| B-5118-1_2015-08-14_06.tif | Sinclair Filling Station, 2124 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-1), North Elevation, Looking Southwest                    | 8/14/2015  | Dye-based HP Vivera Ink | HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss | Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR |

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B-5118-1, SINDLER FILLING STATION  
2124 EDMONDSTON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. Beards

AUGUST 2015  
DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP  
SOUTHEAST OBLIQUE, LOOKING NORTHWEST

1 OF 6



**LA**  
**AUTO SERVICE**

B-5118-1, Sindlaire Filling Station  
2124 EDMONDSTON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSTON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. Brooks

AUGUST 2015

DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

PARAPET AND DECORATIVE WALL DETAIL, LOOKING NORTHWEST

2 OF 6

A AUTO SERVICE

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AUTO SERVICE  
410-221-1201

MD R0477

B-5118-1, SINCLAIR FILLING STATION  
2124 EDMONDSON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. BROOKS

AUGUST 2015

DOUETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP  
SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

3 OF 6

**IGNITION**  
CHECK ✓

**LA AIT**

B-5118-1, SINCLAIR FILLING STATION  
2124 EDMONDSON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. Brooks

AUGUST 2015  
DOUETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP  
DETAIL OF TERRA COTTA ROOF TILES, LOOKING  
NORTHWEST

4 OF 6



B-5118-1, SINCLAIR FILLING STATION  
2124 EDMONDSON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. Brooks  
AUGUST 2015  
DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP  
DETAIL OF BLOCKED-IN WINDOW OPENING  
LOOKING WEST

5 OF 6



B-5118-1, SINCLAIR FILLING STATION  
2124 EDMONDSON AVENUE  
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
L. Brooks

AUGUST 2015  
DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP  
NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTHWEST  
6 OF 6