

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes no

Property Name: West End Motors, Inc. Inventory Number: B-5118-4
 Address: 2127 Edmondson Avenue Historic district: yes no
 City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21223-1112 County: Baltimore City
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore West
 Property Owner: EAA, LLC Tax Account ID Number: 0320220117 035
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): unknown Tax Map Number: 0020
 Project: Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel Project Agency: Federal Railroad Administration
 Agency Prepared By: Dovetail Cultural Resource Group
 Preparer's Name: Danae Peckler 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/ Monroe Riggs 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 commercial building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue, historically owned by West End Motors, Inc. and used as an automobile sales and service shop, is currently occupied by a business known as Gentlemen Ten, and is located on a 0.65-acre parcel of land identified as Lot 35 of Block 117 in Section 22 of the City of Baltimore, Maryland (State Department of Assessments and Taxation [SDAT] 2015). The property includes a one- and two-story, rectangular building constructed in 1947 as an auto service and sales center with elements of International styling (Sanborn 1951). It is currently owned by EAA LLC, likely an abbreviation of the previous owner, Edmondson Avenue Associates (SDAT 2015).

The West End Motors, Inc. building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue is located within a commercial area at the western edge of the Midtown Edmondson Historic District (B-5118). This district was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) by Eli Pousson, Director of Preservation and Outreach for Baltimore Heritage, in January 2015. Pousson's nomination reported that the district was eligible for listing under Criterion A for significant associations with the growth of West Baltimore in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century and also with the racial transition of West Baltimore in the mid-twentieth century. Further,

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

<u>Jim Jalunius</u> Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	<u>9/22/2015</u> Date
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, National Register Program	<u>9/24/15</u> Date

the district was found to be historically significant under Criterion C as an example of an early-twentieth-century streetcar suburb. The commercial building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue has been identified as a contributing resource to this historic district (Pousson 2015).

Location/Setting

The lot of land on which the former West End Motors, Inc. building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue is situated in West Baltimore, just east of the tracks of the former Baltimore & Potomac (B&P) Railroad, now part of Amtrak and the Maryland Area Regional Commuter [MARC] commuter rail system, and east of the bridge that carries Edmondson Avenue over the train tracks below (B-4552). Today, the setting around 2127 Edmondson Avenue consists of a primarily commercial strip situated along both sides of the B&P Railroad corridor in a residential area known as the Midtown Edmondson Historic District/Monroe Riggs Historic District.

The irregularly shaped parcel is bounded on the north by Edmondson Avenue and the former Conoco station at 2119 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-3), on the west by the B&P Railroad, on the south by a railroad spur that previously served the American Ice Company building on Franklin Street, and on the east by an alley that separates the building from a row of early-twentieth-century rowhouses. A vast majority of the lot is filled by the building itself, but setback areas at the western end of the façade are filled with pavement connecting the sidewalks directly to the north elevation. The western, eastern, and southern sides of the building were largely inaccessible, blocked from view by vegetation and overgrowth at the time of survey.

Architectural Description

The resource at 2127 Edmondson Avenue is a circa-1947, one- and two-story, rectangular, commercial building constructed in the International style. As the topography of the lot rises steeply from the south end of the lot to Edmondson Avenue, a majority of the building--six bays comprising the western half of the structure--is two stories in height. However, from Edmondson Avenue, the western half of the building appears to be one story. The eastern half of the building is not visible from the street, but the surface of its roof is accessible to vehicles from Edmondson Avenue via a small, one-lane, concrete ramp that is set back from the roadway. The flat roof of the one-story portion of the building appears to be covered by asphalt. Historic aerials indicate that it was used for additional automobile parking space as early as the 1950s (Nationwide Environmental Title Research [NETR] 1957).

Although the foundation was not visible at the time of the survey, it is identified as poured concrete on a 1951 Sanborn map. The same map indicates that this building has a "concrete frame" structural system with concrete-block walls predominantly clad in a stretcher-bonded brick veneer laid in a six-to-one pattern (Sanborn 1951). Along the façade the brickwork is laid in a decorative pattern with one course routinely recessed from the plane of the wall. Portions of the building are also clad in stucco, specifically a two-story, projecting mass situated near the east end of the façade. This resource is covered by a flat, or low-pitched, shed roof surrounded by a parapet wall that is topped by a pre-cast concrete coping and further covered by a membrane of an unknown material hanging over the edge of the wall. A single, brick-clad, chimney stack is visible near the southeast corner of the two-story portion of the building.

Along the primary, or north, elevation that fronts Edmondson Avenue, the main entrance is currently located in the center bay of a two-story projecting mass that is clad in stucco. The entrance is filled by a single-leaf metal door that appears to be a recent replacement. Fenestration along the first floor of the façade is largely boarded over or has been filled by concrete block and converted into smaller openings. Ghosts of some openings suggest that they were historically service bays designed to provide automobile access to the interior of the building. Several metal "spur stones" were observed at the base of each opening to protect the sides of each bay opening. Large window openings at the second story of the primary elevation are filled by multiple, steel-framed units with three fixed lights above a single hopper sash, separated by groupings of glass blocks. Much of the west, south,

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MHT Comments:													
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Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services							Date						
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Reviewer, National Register Program							Date						

and east sides of the building were not accessible at the time of survey. Although overgrown vegetation greatly obscured view of these elevations, the 1951 Sanborn map notes four steel-framed windows along the rear or south elevation of the structure, two in each half of the building. It also mentions "fireproof construction" and "stone walls" in the one-story, eastern half of the resource (Sanborn 1951).

Historic Context

The building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue was built in 1947 by members of the Rubin family after they acquired the property in the mid-1940s (Baltimore City Block Books [BCBB] 1943-1947:155). Rose and Hyman Rubin--two naturalized Russian immigrants residing in northwest Baltimore on Forest Park Avenue--soon leased this property, along with the adjacent Conoco Gas Station, to Maurice and Irving Rubin, and Raymond LaPides (Ancestry.com 2009; BCBB 1948). This conglomerate of Rubin family members started a business there known as West End Motors, Inc. which was operating in the new building as early as 1948 (BCBB 1943-1947:155).

The Rubins appear to have been involved in Baltimore's automobile industry, more specifically the financing and property management sector of it. In 1941, Hyman Rubin started a company known as the State Finance Corporation and later used it to leverage funding for the construction of the auto service and sales building at 2127 Edmondson Avenue (Baltimore Sun 1974). Contemporary newspaper ads indicate that the Rubins' State Finance Company was a title loan company that was initially headquartered at 1200 E. Fayette Street (Baltimore Sun 1947). The Rubin family also owned the "old State Motor Company," but reportedly terminated this business in the late 1950s (Baltimore Sun 1974). In 1943, the State Motor Company was reported to have purchased the three-story Yellow Cab building at the corner of Cathedral and Biddle Streets, "for automobile sales and showrooms and repairs in addition to its other locations at Fayette and Alsquith streets and at Highland avenue and Fayette street" (Baltimore Sun 1943).

The new auto sales building and the former Conoco gas station were controlled by family members Maurice and Irving Rubin throughout much of the 1950s (BCBB 1947-1959). In 1951, the new auto sales and service building appeared in the 1951 Sanborn map, addressed as 2129 Edmondson Avenue. The architect and builders of this structure are unknown, but the resource does appear to have been designed specifically for the site. Constructed to make use of the rise in elevation from the southern property line to Edmondson Avenue, the western half of the building appears to have contained a showroom, while the eastern portion provided storage space for automobiles. West End Motors, Inc., as managed by Irving Rubin, appears to have leased the building into the 1970s (BCBB 1967-1976:113). It is unclear when the building was adapted for use as a gentleman's night club. In 1980, the property, then identified as 2127-2135 Edmondson Avenue, was sold to a general partnership known as Edmonson Avenue Associates, and in 2007, this firm conveyed the property to EAA, LLC, the company that continues to own it today (Baltimore City Deed Book [BCDB] 3918:335, 9009:584).

Throughout the twentieth century, automobile-related architecture was increasingly constructed in cities like Baltimore, often filling open spaces in the established urban grid. Though it is unclear how many such buildings remain extant in the City of Baltimore and its environs, automobile sales buildings were often accompanied by a shop to maintain and service vehicles.

Statement of Significance

From the time of its construction in the late 1940s until circa 1980, the resource at 2127 Edmondson Avenue served as an automobile sales and service building, operated by a company that specialized in car title loans. Currently, the building is occupied by an adult entertainment venue. Much of the building appears to remain in use, but is in a deteriorated condition. Access to the interior of this resource was not granted during the time of survey.

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There do not appear to have been many additions to the West End Motors, Inc. building over time, but a number of modifications have significantly impacted the ability of this resource to convey its history as a piece of mid-century architecture designed for automobile sales and service. The most notable of these alterations is the change in fenestration. The loss of window openings and removal of several garage bays greatly diminishes the building's historic integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The concrete block and addition of stucco along the façade further detract from the resource's original design.

Built in 1947, this commercial building is not known to have been the work of a master, nor is it an outstanding example of its style or property type in the City of Baltimore. Furthermore, it is not known to be associated with an important event or individual that made significant contributions to local, state, or national history. Therefore, it is recommended that this resource be considered not eligible for individual listing on the NRHP under Criteria A-C. This resource has not been evaluated under Criterion D.

Although it is not recommended individually eligible for listing in the NRHP, the resource at 2127 Edmondson Avenue is located within the proposed boundaries of the NRHP-nominated Midtown Edmondson Historic District/Monroe-Riggs Historic District (B-5118) and has been identified as a contributing resource to it (Pousson 2015).

References:

Baltimore City Block Book (BCBB)

n.d. Baltimore City Land Records, misc. years. MDLandRec, Maryland State Archives. Electronic database, <http://mdlandrec.net/main/>, accessed August 2015.

Baltimore City Deed Book (BCDB)

n.d. Baltimore City Land Records, misc. years. MDLandRec, Maryland State Archives. Electronic database, <http://mdlandrec.net/main/>, accessed August 2015.

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1943 Real Estate, Building News. 30 May:S19. Baltimore, Maryland. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Electronic database, <http://search.proquest.com/?accountid=10750>, accessed August 2015.

1947 Advertisement for State Finance Company. 8 November:21. Baltimore, Maryland. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Electronic database, <http://search.proquest.com/?accountid=10750>, accessed August 2015.

1974 Obituary for I. Irving Rubin. 17 May:A13. Baltimore, Maryland. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Electronic database, <http://search.proquest.com/?accountid=10750>, accessed August 2015.

City of Baltimore

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Esri

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Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR)

1957 Historic Aerials and Topographic Maps. NETR Online. Electronic document, <http://www.historicaerials.com>, accessed August 2015.

Sanborn Map Company (Sanborn)

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)

2015 Baltimore Tax Records. Electronic database, http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/index.aspx?county=16, accessed August 2015.

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2001 U.S. Geological Survey. Maryland Digital Raster Graphic. Baltimore West, Maryland. Electronic document, <http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov/>, accessed August 2015.

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West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-4)
Baltimore, Maryland



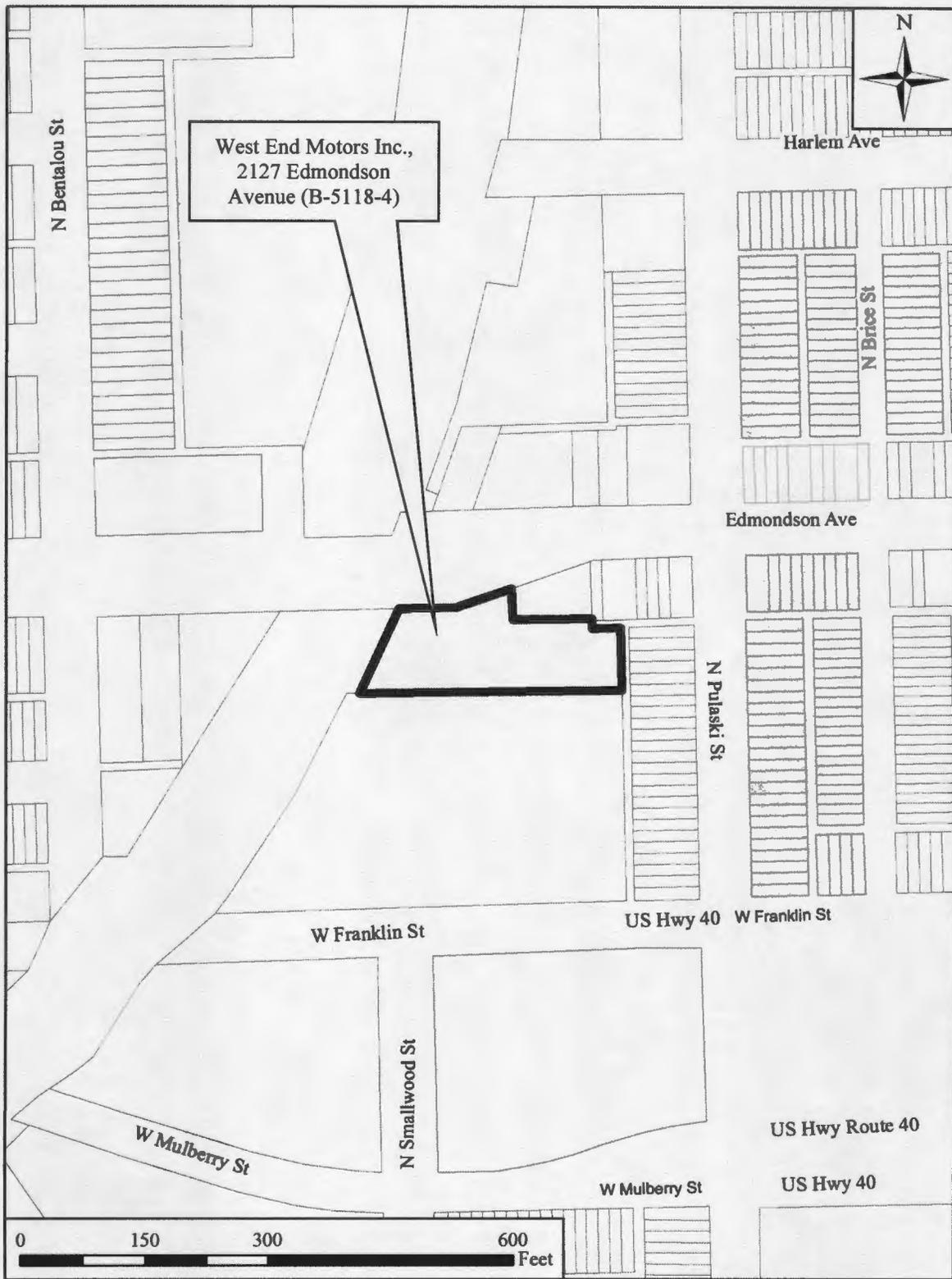
Detail of 2127 Edmondson Avenue, USGS Baltimore West, Maryland Quad (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2001).

West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-4)
Baltimore, Maryland



Detail of 2127 Edmondson Avenue, City of Baltimore, Aerial Imagery (Esri 2015).

West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue (B-5118-4)
Baltimore, Maryland



Detail of 2127 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore GIS Parcel Map (City of Baltimore 2015).

TIFF Image File Name	Description	Date Taken	Ink	Paper	Brand, Make & Dye Type of CD
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_01.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, North Elevation	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_02.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, Northeast Oblique	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_03.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, Detail of Western Bays, North Elevation	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_04.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, View of North Elevation from Bridge, Looking East-Southeast	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_05.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, View of West Elevation from West Side of Railroad Tracks	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_06.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, Detail of Projecting Bays at Façade, Looking West	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_07.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, Detail of Eastern Bay of Façade, North Elevation	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR
B-5118-4_2015-08-27_08.tif	West End Motors, Inc., 2127 Edmondson Avenue, View of East Elevation of Two-Story Section of Building and Ramp, Looking South	8/27/2015	Dye-based HP Vivera Ink	HP Premium Photo Paper, Gloss	Memorex 80 min./700MB 52x Pro Gold Archival CDR



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B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

L. Brooks

AUGUST 2015

DOUETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP
NORTH ELEVATION

1 OF 8



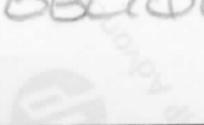


B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. BROOKS



AUGUST 2015
DOOETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP
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2 OF 8



Gentlemen TEN
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B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. BROOKS

AUGUST 2015
DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP
NORTH ELEVATION
3 OF 8



LOUNGE

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B-51184, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE

WILDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. BROOKS

AUGUST 2015

DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

VIEW OF NORTH ELEVATION FROM BRIDGE,
LOOKING EAST-SOUTHEAST

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B-5118-41, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE

MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

L. BROOKS

AUGUST 2015

DOUETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

VIEW OF WEST ELEVATION FROM WEST
SIDE OF RAILROAD TRACKS

5 OF 8



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Gentleman TEN

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DEATH.
DONTDIE.ORG



B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. Brooks

AUGUST 2015

DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

DETAIL OF PROJECTING BAYS AT FACADE,
LOOKING WEST

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B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. Brooks

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DOOETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP
DETAIL OF EASTERN BAY OF FACADE,
NORTH ELEVATION

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B-5118-4, WEST END MOTORS
2127 EDMONDSON AVENUE
MIDTOWN EDMONDSON HISTORIC DISTRICT
CITY OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
L. BROOKS

AUGUST 2015

DOVETAIL CULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP

VIEW OF EAST ELEVATION OF TWO-STORY
SECTION OF BUILDING AND RAMP, LOOKING SOUTH

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