

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes   
no

Property Name: 2301 Queens Chapel Road (Merkle House) Inventory Number: PG: 68-131  
 Address: 2301 Queens Chapel Road City: Hyattsville Zip Code: 20782  
 County: Prince George's USGS Topographic Map: Washington East  
 Owner: Basilica of National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Is the property being evaluated a district?  yes  
 Tax Parcel Number: 000 Tax Map Number: 49 Tax Account ID Number: 17 1919554  
 Project: MD 500 from Washington D.C. line to MD 208 Agency: State Highway Agency  
 Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the property located within a historic district?  yes  no

*If the property is within a district* District Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 NR-listed district  yes Eligible district  yes District Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource  yes  no Non-contributing but eligible in another context

*If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)*  
 Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible  yes  no

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Previously undocumented. Historically associated with North Woodridge Survey District (PG: 68-133) and 2305 Queens Chapel Road (PG: 68-130)

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

**Summary Statement**

2301 Queens Chapel Road is an excellent example of middle-class, Tudor Revival style domestic architecture. Built in 1932, this well-preserved dwelling also derives significance for its connection with the region's early suburban development.

**Description**

Constructed in 1932, this elegant and well-preserved example of the Tudor Revival style stands on a .62-acre lot, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Russell Avenue and Queens Chapel Road, immediately north of the North Woodridge subdivision boundary. A cast-iron picket fence defines the front lawn area, while a modern chain-link fence surrounds the back yard. Vehicular access to the property is through a gated entrance on Russell Avenue.

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|---|--|
| <b>MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW</b>   |  |
| Eligibility recommended <input type="checkbox"/>  | Eligibility not recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |
| Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D | Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| Comments: <u>Undistinguished example of a common type</u>   |  |
| <u>Jim Telesmanis</u><br>Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services  | <u>2/19/2016</u><br>Date   |
| <u>[Signature]</u><br>Reviewer, NR Program  | <u>2/22/16</u><br>Date   |

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The north-facing dwelling consists of a 2 ½-story, 3-bay, brick main block measuring roughly 36 ft. x 20 ft., that is augmented on the west side by an original, 1-story, 12 ft. x 18 ft. sun porch. A c. 1996, 30 ft. x 15 ft., 1-story, flat-roof, frame addition dominates the rear wall. Decorative cast-iron supports elevate the addition's enclosed area, while the grade-level, open space beneath, serves as a carport.

2301 Queens Chapel Road displays almost all of the hallmark features that define the Tudor Revival style. Important architectural elements include the asymmetrical façade, steeply pitch roof, textured wall surface, projecting cross gable, multi-light casement windows, faux half-timbering, and prominent chimney (Bucher 1995). This example is built in brick; the most common wall material for Tudor Revival buildings (McAlester and McAlester 1991).

Exterior walls are laid up in a 7:1 common bond, using bricks of contrasting shades of red. Fenestration consists of multi-light, metal-sash casement windows of varying size. A flat arch and sill, built of soldier course and header-course bricks respectively, accent most window openings. A two-brick belt course runs directly below the second-story windows.

Slate shingles cover the roof. Their subtly varying color echoes the wall's brickwork. Both main dwelling and front cross-gable eaves overhang slightly and terminate with a slight upward kick. The otherwise plain verge boards match this profile. Other notable façade features include the two hipped-roof dormers cut into the roof at eave level.

The small, enclosed, gable-roof entry porch, centered on the façade at grade level, contains a glazed-and-paneled door and single-pane sidelights. Above, a faux-timber king truss decorates the gable. Faux timbering also appears around the sun porch windows.

The end walls are two bays deep, with two, second-story windows and a pair of casements at attic level. An exterior fireplace chimney runs between the openings along the east gable end. The visually prominent chimney stack terminates with ten courses of corbelling and terra cotta chimney pots. At ground level, the basement wall becomes visible as the grade steeply falls away.

Setback and landscape features match 2305 Queens Chapel Road. A 55 ft. front lawn separates the house from the public sidewalk. Plantings include a mix of shrubs, including laurel and boxwood; flowering bushes such as azalea and rhododendron; and various species of deciduous and evergreen trees. No secondary buildings appear visible from the public right-of-way.

### **Summary History and Significance**

The dwelling at 2301 Queens Chapel Road was constructed in 1932 as the home of successful magazine printer and conservationist, Edgar A. Merkle (1900-1984), and his wife Katherine McDewitt Merkle (d. 1993). This fine and well-preserved example of the Tudor Revival style was only the second house constructed on property associated with the suburban community of North Woodridge (PG:68-133). Munson O. Bull, North Woodridge's original developer and builder, sold the lot to Mrs. Merkle in 1932. She and her husband later acquired and subdivided eight adjoining acres, and advanced the development of North Woodridge in the 1940s and 50s (Plats 1948, 1952).

### **General History**

Born in 1900 and raised in Prince George's County, Maryland, Edgar A. Merkle made his professional career in printing and publishing. After returning from service in World War I, he accepted a position in the printing department at the Washington, D. C. firm of Ransdell, Inc. (Merkle 1984). In 1929 he married Kathleen McDewitt, and moved with his bride to 1530 Rhode Island Avenue, NE (Census 1930). By 1930 Merkle worked as Ransdell's general manager. Two years later he acquired the company, which he later renamed Merkle Press, Inc. (Boyd's 1939).

The same year Edgar bought Ransdell, Inc., Kathleen Merkle purchased (solely in her name) a one-acre lot in Prince George's County, and started work on 2301 Queens Chapel Road (Deeds 1932). She bought the lot from Munson O. and Linda Bull. It was a part of the 28 acres Bull had recently purchased and planned to develop into the area's first suburban community. In

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1932, however, the only new development in the area remained the Bull residence, located on the adjacent lot at 2305 Queens Chapel Road (PG: 68-130) and the new Merkle home.

Munson Bull's concern as both a neighbor and developer motivated him to include covenants in the deed that included race restrictions. Another proviso related to construction, stating, "...dwelling to be erected on the eastern 55 ft. frontage of Queens Chapel Road, shall not cost less than \$9,000" (Deeds 1927). The name of the architect or design inspiration for 2301 Queens Chapel Road remains unknown, but Munson Bull clearly represents a likely resource for suggestion.

The finished design was a well-crafted, and very good example of 1930s Tudor Revival domestic architecture. The Tudor Revival style first appears at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (McAlester and McAlester 1994). It was one of the exotic or romantic styles adopted in the United States, inspired by the English Queen Anne movement (Girouard 1977). Interestingly, Tudor Revival architecture far more closely resembles English Queen Anne prototypes, than the American versions of the same name.

Locally, the style peaked in popularity around 1920, and in the region's suburban development most commonly corresponds with the *Industrial/Urban Dominance Period (1870-1930.)* The Merkses constructed 2301 Queens Chapel Road just as style started to lose appeal, at the start of the Modern Period (1930-1960) (KCI 1999). Later examples are found within North Woodridge, and across Queens Chapel Road in Avondale (PG: 68-000).

The first of North Woodridge's several plats dates to 1934. Both 2301 and 2305 Queens Chapel Road stand on out-parcels located outside of subdivision boundaries (Figure 1). The construction of two model homes and first house sales followed in 1935 (Bull 1935). After the death of Munson Bull in 1939, the couple bought 2305 Queens Chapel Road, as well as eight acres of undeveloped land within North Woodridge (Figure 2). They later subdivided the acreage and furthered the development of North Woodridge during the 1950s and 60s (Plats 1952, 1948).

In 1940 a census worker valued 2301 Queens Chapel Road at \$14,000, and listed Kathleen's parents, John and Minnie D. Dewitt as household members. The 1956 Sanborn map for the area shows the Merkle house, and a second dwelling; potentially an in-law house. The second house and the other outbuildings shown are now gone (Figure 3).

Edgar Merkle retired from printing in 1962. He sold his company and devoted his time to interest in agriculture and wildlife conservation. Merkle owned a 400-acre farm in Croom, Maryland where he raised cattle. Back in 1932, he brought three pairs of domesticated geese to the farm. At the time wild geese wintered on Maryland's Eastern Shore, but not west of the Chesapeake Bay. Wild, migratory geese, enticed by his domesticated birds and left over cattle feed, started to fly in, and some wintered over.

Mr. Merkle acquired more land and turned it and his farm into an informal wildlife refuge. By the time of his death, an estimated 200,000 geese stopped in the area annually, with 10,000 or so remaining through the winter. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources purchased the Croom property, which is now the Merkle Wildlife Refuge (Meyer 1984).

Edgar Merkle died in 1984. Kathleen Merkle continued residing at 2301 Queens Chapel Road until her death in 1993, after which her children sold the property to the Catholic religious order, Christian Brothers Major Superior's, Inc. The organization built the rear addition about 1996, and, according to a directory listing brought up by a Google© search, used the property as a religious retreat. In 2011 sold to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Merkses previously sold 2305 Queens Chapel Road to the Basilica in 1997 (Deeds 1977). The Basilica continues to own both properties.

**National Register Eligibility Recommendation**

2301 Queens Chapel Road meets National Register eligibility requirements for significance under Criteria A (Events) and C (Design/Construction). The property achieves significance at the local level for its strong association with the early suburban development of the area, and for embodying the distinctive characteristics associated with suburban examples of Tudor Revival style architecture.

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Eligibility is not recommended under Criterion B (Person). While Edgar A. Merkle achieved financial success as the owner of Merkle Press, Inc. there is no evidence he made a lasting impact on the industry. Mr. Merkle's most enduring legacy remains his avocational accomplishment as wildlife conservationist; specifically his successful efforts at enticing Canadian Geese to winter on the Western Shore. In that context, Merkle's Croom farm, now Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, better represents this achievement. Kathleen Merkle is not associated with accomplishments of historical importance.

The property appears in excellent condition, and able to communicate its historic associations. Except for a large, but reasonably unobtrusive c. 1996 addition, 2301 Queens Chapel Road maintains its original appearance. The property possesses nearly undiminished integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. 2301 Queens Chapel Road fails to fit neatly into the suburban property type categories identified in the 1999 *Suburbanization Historic Context and Survey Methodology* report, developed for Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway's Administration (KCI 1999). Chronologically, the property relates to the *Modern Period (1930-1960)*. As a property type, it is technically an *individual resource*, "differing from the surrounding development by construction date (Ibid). Though an *individual resource*, it remains closely linked to North Woodridge both in terms of proximity and shared history.

The property did not receive evaluation under National Cooperative Highway Research Program, *A Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing*, because as the title indicates, that document relates to post-World War II housing, and not relevant for a house built in 1932 (Pettis et al. 2012).

#### **Boundary**

The PG:68-131 survey boundary corresponds with the property's legal boundary as shown on Maryland Tax Map 49, and described in Prince George's County land records in Liber 33029, Folio 164.

#### **Bibliography**

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Meyer, Eugene L. 1984. The Legacy of Edgar Merkle: Canada Geese on the Patuxent. *The Washington Post*, August 18, 1984. Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

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Continuation Sheet No. 4

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Prince Georges County Land Records, Deeds. Liber 33029, Folio 164

\_\_\_\_\_ Liber 4714, Folio 640 (1977)

\_\_\_\_\_ Liber 376, Folio 323 (1932)

\_\_\_\_\_ Liber 658, Folio 220 (1943)

**Bibliography (continued)**

Prince Georges County Land Records, Plats. Book WWW 23, Page 12 (1952)

\_\_\_\_\_ Book WWW 16, Page 10 (1948)

\_\_\_\_\_ Book BB 6, Page 40 (1938)

\_\_\_\_\_ Book SDH 4, Page 17 (1934)

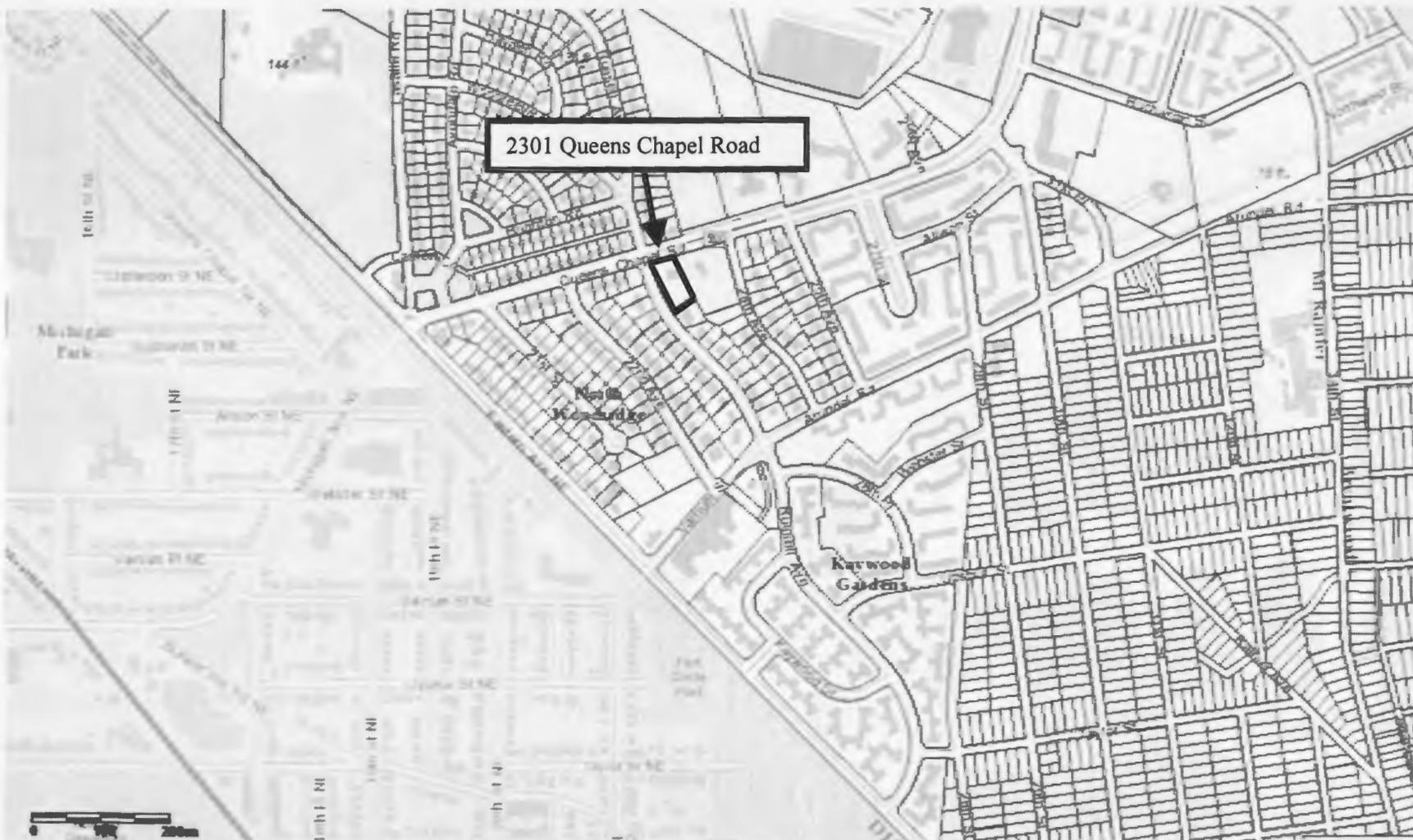
U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910-1940. Accessed through Ancestry.com.

Prepared by: Sherri Marsh Johns  
The Ottery Group

Date Prepared: November 16, 2015



2301 Queens Chapel Road (PG: 68-131)  
USGS Washington East Quad, 7.5 min series  
Source: MERLIN [www.mdmerlin.net](http://www.mdmerlin.net)



2301 Queens Chapel Road (PG: 68-131)  
Maryland State Department Assessment Taxation Map 49, Lot 1 42  
Tax ID 17 1919544  
Source: MERLIN [www.mdmerlin.net](http://www.mdmerlin.net)

**PG: 68-131**  
**2301 Queens Chapel Road**  
**Hyattsville, Maryland 20782**  
**Photo Log**

.tif format digital images taken on November 4, 2015 by Sherri Marsh Johns for Ottery Group. Digital images recorded on Verbatim UltraLife Gold archival grade CD\_R with 24K gold AZO recording dye with hard coat. Photographs printed by Fromex Photo and Digital, Inc., using true black-and-white chemistry, printed on Ilford black-and-white silver gelatin paper.

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1. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_01 View of 2301 (right) and 2305 (left) Queens Chapel Road, facing southeast from Russell Avenue.
2. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_02 Perspective view facing southeast.
3. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_03 Closer perspective view facing southeast.
4. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_04 Perspective view facing southwest.
5. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_05 East gable end facing east..
6. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_06 Detail east gable end facing east
7. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_07 Rear façade, taken from Russell Avenue facing northeast
8. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04\_08 View of wrought-iron fence and driveway gate on Russell Avenue, facing east.
9. PG:68-131\_2015-11-04-08 View of chain link fence and plantings in rear yard, facing east.

RUSSELL AV



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Road

Prince Georges Co, MD

by Sherri MARSH Johns

Nov. 11, 2015

Digital MASTER COPY AT MD SHPO

View of 2301 (Right) and 2305 (left)

Queens Chapel Road, facing southwest

photo 1 of 4



PG 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Road

PRINCE GEORGES CO., MD

by ShERRI MARSH Johns

NOV 11, 2015

Digital MASTER COPY AT MD SHPO

Perspective view facing south east

Photo 2 of 9



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd

Prince Georges Co., MD

by Sherri MARSH Johns

Nov 11, 2015

Digital MASTER AT MD SHPO

closer perspective view facing  
southeast

photo 3 of 9



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd

Prince Georges Co., MD

by Sherri MARSH Johns

NOV 11, 2015

Digital MASTER COPY AT MHT, MD SHPO

Perspective view facing SW

photo 4 of 9



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd

Prince Georges Co, MD

by Sherril Marsh Johns

Nov 11, 2015

Digital MASTER copy AT MD SHPO  
east Gable End facing east.

photo 5 of 9



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd.

Prince Georges Co, MD

by ShERRI MARSH Johns

NOV 11, 2015

Digital MASTER AT MD SHPO

EAST Gable End facing east

Photo 6 of 9



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd.

Prince George's Co., MD

by Sherri MARSH Johns

NOV 11, 2015

Digital MASTER AT MD SHPO

Photo 7 of 9

Rear Facade facing northeast



PG: 68-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd  
Prince Georges Co., MD  
by ShERRI MARSH Johns  
NOV 11, 2015

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Photo 8 of 9

Fenced Back yard taken FROM  
Russell Ave facing east



PG: 48-131

2301 Queens Chapel Rd  
Prince George's Co., MD  
by Sherri MARSH Johns

NOV 11, 2015

Digital MASTER AT MD SHPO

Photo 7 of 9

Backyard facing EAST