

WI-431
Fish House
Salisbury
Private

1888-89

After the catastrophic city fire on October 17, 1886, Salisbury milliner Miss Sallie Fish was one of hundreds that were burned out. Her house and millinery were located on Main street, which was completely leveled during the conflagration. According to the March 26, 1887 issue of the *Salisbury Advertiser* she was in the process of erecting a temporary structure out of which she planned to operate her millinery business on Church Street. A little over a year later the same paper announced that Sallie Fish and her sisters had engaged contractor R. D. Abdell for the construction of their new house, separate from their business, on North Division Street. The paper stated:

The Misses Fish, who resided on Main St. before the fire opposite the Peninsula hotel, began under contract with Mr. R. D. Abdell a new residence on Division St. above F. C. Todd, Esq. this week. The lot is that portion of the Stinson property near the corner of Isabella and Division Sts. that fronts the latter street. The building will be entirely different from anything in the town. The first floor will have four rooms. It will be unique and quite handsome. Across the whole front will extend a porch, and to the south side. There will be a two story octagonal bay window at the southeast corner.

Instead of rebuilding their house and business together the Fish sisters decided to relocate their residence to the Newtown neighborhood where they could erect a frame structure on a generous lot and at the same time sidestep the requirement to rebuild with masonry materials as dictated by the town council. The Queen Anne style dwelling, with its octagonal two-story tower and two-and-a-half story pavilions on the north and south sides, offered a distinct contrast to other dwellings erected in the neighborhood at the time. Although now covered with artificial siding, the late

nineteenth-century dwelling retains some of its textural variety in the fishscale shingles that cover the gable ends and the patterned slate that covers the roof. The Misses Fish remained at this address for less than ten years when the *Salisbury*

Advertiser announced in April 1896:

The Misses Fish have exchanged their vacant lot on Main St. for the dwelling on Isabella street owned and formerly occupied by Mrs. M. A. Rider. The Misses Fish will very soon occupy their new home. Mr. R. P. Graham, who recently purchased it, will next month begin housekeeping where the Misses Fish now reside.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Fish House

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-431

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture

2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore

3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Industrial-Urban Dominance
1870-1930

4. Resource Type(s): Dwelling

Survey No. WI-431

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Fish House

and/or common Bethesda Church House

2. Location

street & number 406 North Division Street ___ not for publication

city, town Salisbury ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like building(s), public/private, occupied/unoccupied, agriculture/commercial, etc.

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Bethesda United Methodist Church

street & number 406 North Division Street telephone no.:

city, town Salisbury state and zip code Md 21801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WI-431

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Fish house, also known as the Bethesda Church house, is located at 406 North Division Street in the center of the Newtown Historic District in Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story, asymmetrically planned frame dwelling faces east with the modified gable roof oriented on an east/west axis. The Fish house, along with the F. C. Todd house on the corner of West William and Park Avenue as well as the church, are part of the property owned and used by the Bethesda United Methodist Church.

Built in 1888-89, the two-and-a-half story Queen Anne style frame dwelling follows an asymmetrical plan with a squarish center block extended on the north and south sides with two-story semi-octagonal pavilions. An octagonal tower marks the southeast corner, and a turned post porch wraps around the north and east sides. Supported on a raised brick foundation, the exterior is clad with aluminum siding. The multi-faceted roof is sheathed with patterned slate.

The east (main) elevation is an uneven facade with the three-story corner tower dominating the wall. The front door is framed by a leaded glass transom and sidelights. Single-pane sash windows are located to each side. Sheltering the first floor is a turned post porch with sawn brackets and a turned baluster handrail. The second floor of the main block as well as each face of the octagonal tower is pierced by nine-over-one sash windows. Fixed atop the roof is a large gable-front dormer covered with a combination of aluminum siding and fishscale shingles. The dormer is pierced by paired twelve-over-one sash windows, and the area within the gable end pediment is covered with fishscale shingles. The third floor of the adjacent tower has a flared base and it is lighted by twelve-over-one sash windows as well. The octagonal roof is covered with slate that retains a decorative x-pattern in each face. The peak of the tower roof is capped with a metal finial.

The south side of the house is an asymmetrical elevation with a two-story, three-sided pavilion that extends forward of the main block. The south side of the pavilion has a squarish colored glass window on the first floor and larger windows to each side. The second floor is defined by three nine-over-one sash windows. Topping the three-sided pavilion is a gable-end pediment sheathed with fishscale shingles and pierced by paired twelve-over-one sash windows. Fixed in the top of the gable end is a triangular vent.

A slightly different two-and-a-half story pavilion extends from the north side of the main block. The semi-octagonal pavilion is pierced by nine-over-one sash windows, and the gable end pediment is marked by a single multi-pane attic window framed by a field of fishscale shingle decoration. Piercing the gable end is an interior brick stove chimney finished with a corbelled cap. The east slope of the pavilion roof has a shed roofed dormer partially sheathed with fishscale shingles and pierced by a multi-pane window. Defining the first floor of the main block is a three-sided bay window supported on brackets and pierced by multi-pane windows.

The interior retains some of its late nineteenth-century woodwork, and it has been converted into a church office.

8. Significance

Survey No. WI-431

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1888-89 **Builder/Architect** R. D. Abdell, contractor

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

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Instead of rebuilding their house and business together the Fish sisters decided to relocate their residence to the Newtown neighborhood where they could erect a frame structure on a generous lot and at the same time sidestep the requirement to rebuild with masonry materials as dictated by the town council. The Queen Anne style dwelling, with its octagonal two-story tower and two-and-a-half story pavilions on the north and south sides, offered a distinct contrast to other dwellings erected in the neighborhood at the time.

¹ *Salisbury Advertiser*, March 26, 1887. "Miss Sallie Fish is having a temporary millinery store on Church street adjoining that of Miss Laura Brenzier."

² *Salisbury Advertiser*, June 9, 1888.

Salisbury Advertiser, June 9, 1888

Article on **Riverton**

Salisbury Advertiser, June 9, 1888

Building Notes

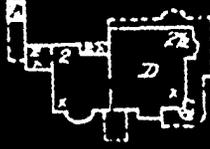
R. E. Powell, Esq. Has closed a contract for the erection of a new residence on the site of the one burned in 1886. The new building will be a handsome structure, if we can judge from the plans. It is to be erected on the same foundation and to have rooms the same. The elevations will be somewhat different. There will be a square bay window at the northwest corner with gable on the roof. The building will have two other gables on Broad St. side. The front will have no tower over the front entrance as the other building did. The building which burned, including the heating and other fixtures, cost about \$9,700. Mr. C. R. Jones is the architect. Mr. T. H. Slemmons the contractor.

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Salisbury Advertiser, June 23, 1888

Salisbury's Business Boom

Good Article on the Brisk Business Activity



W. ISABELLA

MILL

58

38

W. WILLIAM

7

PARKE AV. (PARKE AV.)

N. DIVISION

Scale 100 Ft. to One Inch.



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WI-431
Fish House
406 North Division Street
Sanborn Insurance Map
1923

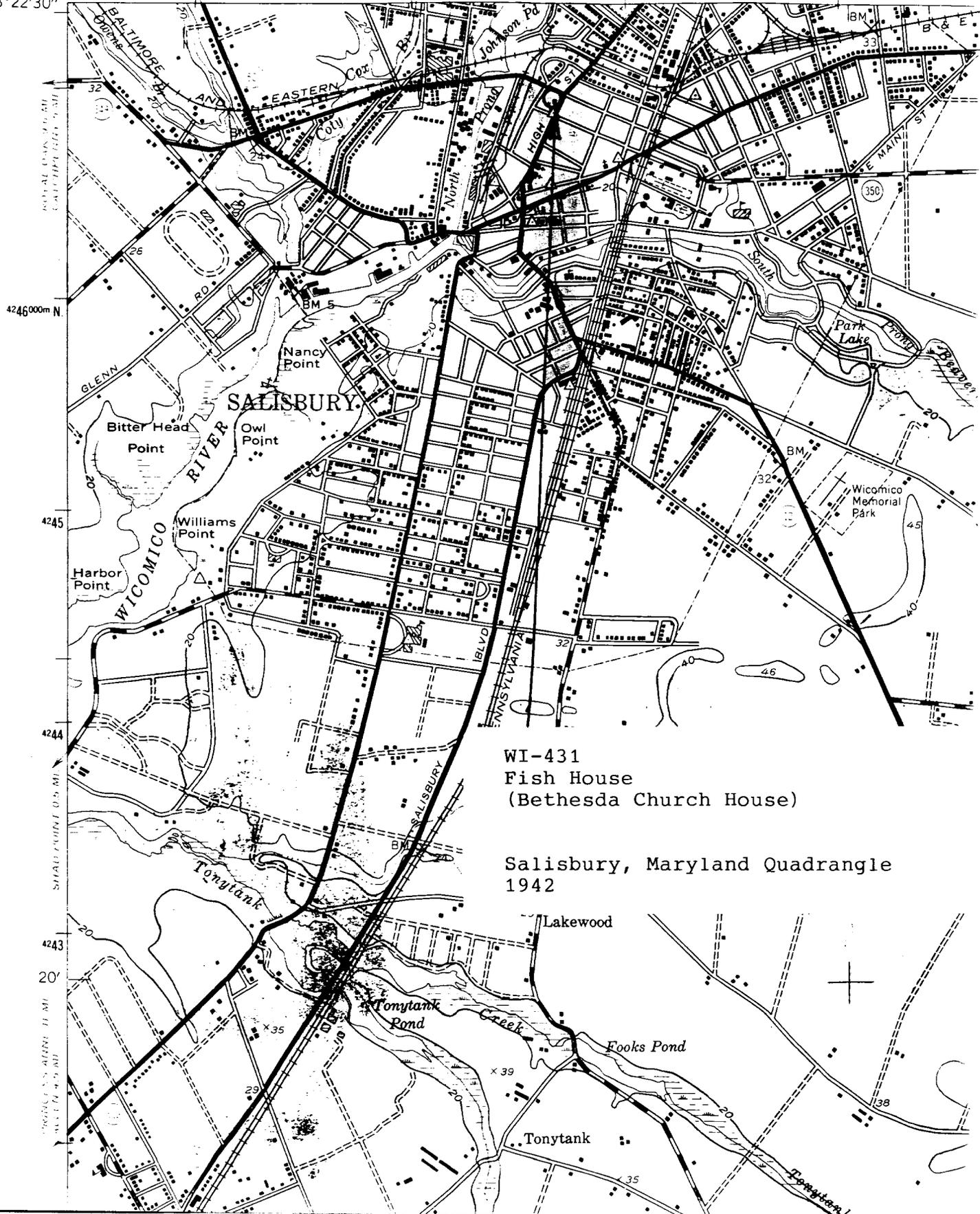
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5860 (NW)
(HEBRON)

75°37'30"
38°22'30"

470000m E

35'



WI-431
Fish House
(Bethesda Church House)

Salisbury, Maryland Quadrangle
1942



W1-431

Visit House

Salisbury, Newham Co, MD

Southern elevation

4199, Paul Touart Professional

New/MD, Howard Traut

1 of 2



W1-431

Fish House

Switzerland, Mercedes Co, Mo

NORTHEAST ELEVATION

4/99, Paris, France, PHOTOGRAPHED

NEG / MO - HISTORICAL - TRIP

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