BA-2071
Cockeysville Underpass
1930
public

A culvert grade-separation built by the state, the Cockeysville Underpass has been a visually important part of the town for 50 years, possibly the town's most salient feature. The structure is notable for its attempt to overlay a 1920s interpretation of classicism on a utilitarian concrete structure. Structure like this around the country are rapidly disappearing.

SHA # B 3108

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST BA-2071
MAGI# 0320713817

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
Cockeysville Underpass

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Md, 45 (York Road) under Conrail r,o,w, and Md, 887

CITY, TOWN
Cockeysville ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Baltimore

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	X TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
M/DOT/ State Highway Administration Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER
301 West Preston Street

CITY, TOWN
Baltimore ___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Maryland zip code
21201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:
Folio #:

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Towson

STATE
MD

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION BA-2071

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the point where the Conrail right-of-way and Maryland Route 887 cross Maryland Route 45 (York Road) in Cockeysville, Baltimore County, the Cockeysville underpass consists of a narrow below-grade cut which is partly roofed. Maryland 45 occupies the cut, while the railroad and Maryland 887 cross the structure above. The "bridge" portion of the structure is of concrete slab construction; the cut, or culvert, is built of cantilevered walls and conterfort walls. The central part of the culvert is nearly 27' in depth, and is the conterfort section, i.e., the concrete walls are buttresses from behind with triangular concrete slab buttresses, or counterforts. The linear axis of the structure is N-S, along Maryland 45. There is a pedestrian underpass set into the west wall, consisting of two double flights of stairs at either end of the bridge connected by a catwalk. Local roads follow the grade outside the culvert, but turn back in u-turns rather than crossing, so that the only way to cross the railroad and Maryand 887 is through the culvert.

Exposed surfaces are articulated is a sequence of 40' panels separated by pilasters, except under the bridge where the walls are simply incised as horizontal bands. The grade separation and stairs are lined with a balustrade by way of a safety rail, an integral part of the concrete work, except at the catwalk, which has a guard rail of steel pipe. All details are severely rectilinear and simple abstractions of classical details with suggestions of capitals, cornices and simple mouldings in relief.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	X TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1929

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Designed by Staff of the State Roads Comm., Baltimore, under Chief Engineer Williar.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cockeysville underpass is a solution to a traffic and engineering problem which is not likely to be seen again. Once common, such multiple-mode transportation nexuses are being replaced by technically advanced structures which are more disruptive to the landscape. This attempt to lend some style to an otherwise utilitarian structure gives considerable visual interest to an ordinary situation, ans was built withour apparent detriment to neighboring businesses or even landmarks.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see continuation sheet.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

Quadrangle Name: Cockeysville MD
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24 000

UTM References: 18, 358480, 4371590

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

N/A

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
N/A	
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Hnedak/M/DOT Survey Manager

ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust
DATE: 1980

STREET & NUMBER: 21 State Circle
TELEPHONE: (301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis
STATE: Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

9. Bibliography

Files of the Bureau of Bridge Design, State Highway Administration, 301 West Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

Condit, Carl, American Building Art, 20th Century; New York, Oxford University Press, 1961.

Brooks, Neal A., and Rockel, Cecil G., A History of Baltimore County; Towson, Maryland; Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

BA-2071

GENERAL BRIDGE SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of bridges in Maryland is a difficult and subtle thing to gauge. The Modified significance criteria of the National Register, which are the standard for these judgements in Maryland, as in most states, must be broadly applied to allow for most of these structures, In particular the 50 year rule which specifies a minimum age for structures can be waived, and is more commonly done so for engineering structures than for others. Questions of uniqueness and typicality, exemplary types, etc., must set aside for now, because they presuppose a wider knowledge of the entire resources than is presently available. Indeed, this survey is an initial step toward understanding the extent to which Maryland's bridges are part of her cultural resources. Aesthetic considerations may have to be sidestepped entirely, for such structures as these are generally considered mundane and ordinary at best, and sometimes a negative landscape feature, by the layman. It does take a specialized aesthetic sense to appreciate such structures on visual grounds, but a case for visual significance can be made. The remaining criteria are those of historical associations. The relative youth of most of these structures precludes a strong likelihood of participation to events and lives of import. The best generalization can be made for most bridges is that they are built on site of early crossings, developing from fords and ferries through covered bridges and wooden trusses to their present state. This significance inheres in the site, however, and in most cases would not be diminished by the adsense of the present structure.

These criteria may also be addressed positively. The primary significance of these bridges, those which were built between the two World Wars, consists in their association with rapidly changing modes and trends in transportation in America during the period. The earliest of them saw the appearance of the automobile and its rise as the preëminent means of getting Americans from place to place. Roads were being improved for increased speeds and capacity, and bridges, as potential weak links on the system, became particularly important. The technology for producing them was not new, and would not change significantly during the period. Accordingly, great numbers of easily, quickly and relatively cheaply built concrete slab, beam and arch bridges were built to span the samll crossings, or were multiplied to cover longer crossings where height was no problem.

Truss bridges with major structural members of compound beams, of either the Warren or Pratt types, while more expensive and considered more intrusive on the landscape, were built to span the larger gaps.

With an aesthetic which allowed concrete slab bridges to have classical balustrades, or the application of a jazz-age concrete relief; with the considerable variety possible in the construction of medium sized metal trusses; and with the lack of nationwide standards for highway bridge design, the resulting body of structures displays considerable variety. The sameness of appearance of currently produced highway bridges leads one to believe this variety will not reappear. For that reason alone it is wise to keep watch over our existing bridges. Regardless of ones taste and aesthetic preference, one must be admitted that these older bridges add their variety and visual interest to the environment as a whole, and that it is often the case that their replacement by a standard highway bridge results in a visual hole in the landscape.

In situations requiring decisions of potential effect on these structures, they should receive some consideration. As the recording and subsequent understanding of Maryland's Cultural resources grows, they will be recognized as a significant part of that heritage.

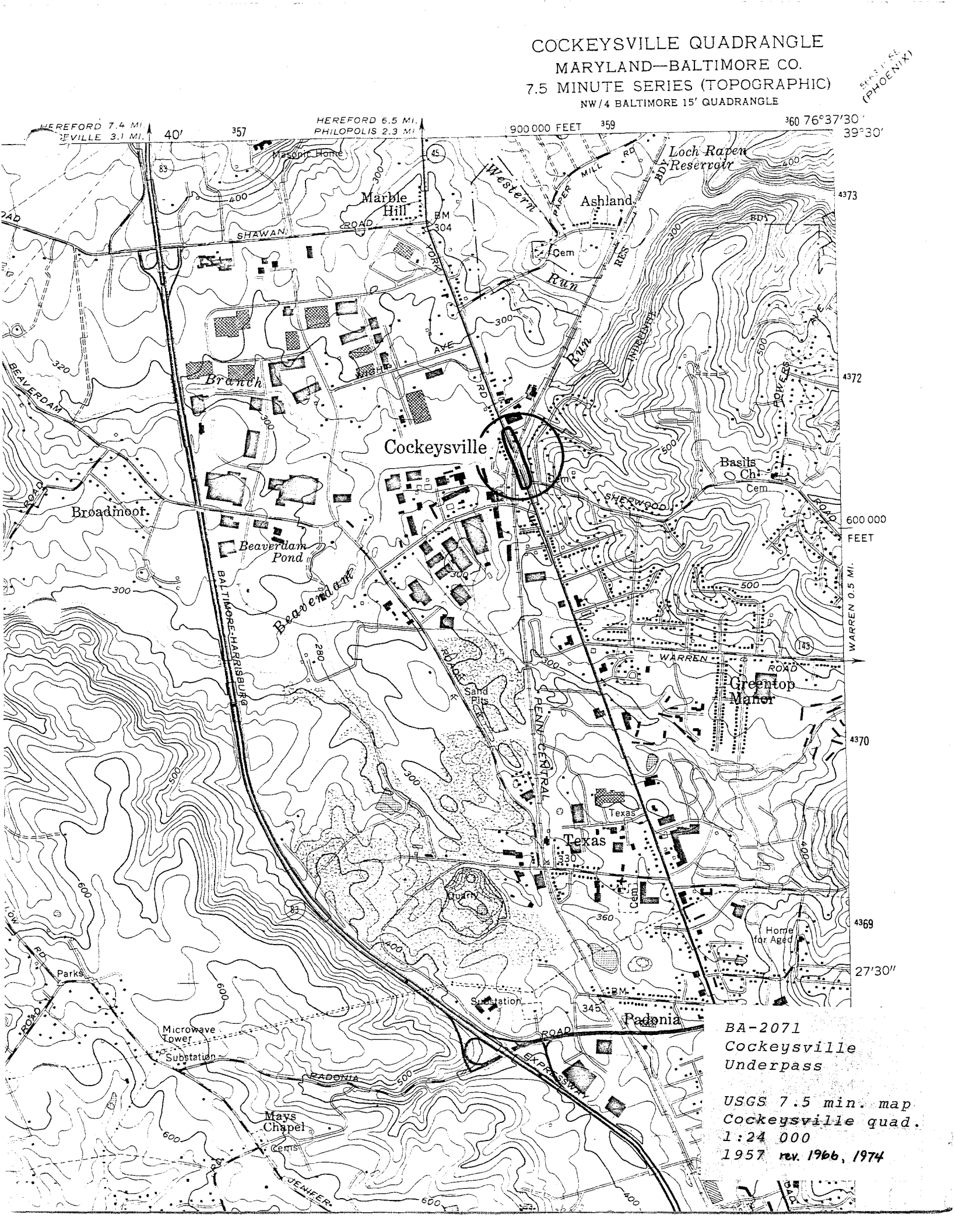
It should be noted that two non-negligible classes of structure have been omitted from this set. The first is the huge number of concrete slab or beam bridges of an average of twenty feet or less in length. These are so nearly ubiquitous and of such minor visual impact (they are often easy to drive across without noticing) that they were not inventoried. They are considered in the general recommendations section of the final report of this survey, however.

The second category is that of the "great" bridges, the huge steel crossings of the major waterways. While they are awesome and aesthetically appealing, they are not included in this inventory because they do not share the problems of their more modest counterparts. They do not lack for recognition, they have not been technologically outmoded, and are in no danger of disappearing through replacement. In a sense, they are not as rare; hundreds of

these great bridges are known nationally, and there is little doubt as to the position of any one bridge within national spectrum. There seems little point in including them with the larger inventory of bridges. From an arbitrary point of view, their dates are outside the 1935 limit which we set for the consideration of bridges. We have departed from that limit on occasion, but will not in this case. These bridges, too, will be considered in the final report.

Moveable bridges deserve a special note regarding their significance. They are rare, and all but the most recent of them have been listed by this survey by virtue of that fact alone. They are, by their nature as intermittent impediments to the smooth flow of traffic, threatened. We rarely tolerate disruptions to what we perceive as our progress. This has been demonstrated recently by the replacement of the drawbridge at Denton, on one of the major routes to the Atlantic Coast from the rest of Maryland.

However much we are inconvenienced by them, we must admit that moveable bridges contribute a share of interest to the landscape. As with significance judgements in general, we here enter a realm which is governed by taste and opinion. Some of us might not enjoy being forced to site back for a while to look at the surroundings which we would otherwise totally ignore, especially if the engine is in danger of boiling over. But there are those who are fascinated by the slow rise of a great chunk of roadway, moved by quit, often invisible machinery; who are amused by the tip of the mast which skims the top of the temporary wall; or who reflect on the nobility inherent in a river and the fact that we have not subdued every waterway with our autos, while knowing that we can if we want to.



BA-2071
Cockeysville
Underpass

USGS 7.5 min. map
Cockeysville quad.
1:24 000
1957 rev. 1966, 1974


CLEARANCE

BA-2071 COCKEYSVILLE UNDERPASS

J.H. 2/80

S

S

W. side fr. S.