

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-3287

Victory Villa Community Building

404 Compass Road

Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland

Located at 404 Compass Road in Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland, the Victory Villa Community Building is prominently located at the northwest intersection of Martin Boulevard and Compass Road. Constructed circa 1942, the Victory Villa Community Building was built under the Farm Security Administration to provide community and recreational space for local citizens. The Victory Villa Community Center is the only extant community building of six that was erected in Middle River during World War II. Each of these community buildings was rapidly constructed with wood, and reflected the influence of the Modern Movement and the International Style, including features such as smooth, unornamented wall surfaces, industrial metal windows, and flat roofs. The buildings were generally composed of two blocks, a larger, main block providing space for athletics, with lower-set wings containing space for meeting rooms and offices. The Victory Villa Community Building continues its original use to the present, and has undergone minimal alteration at the exterior and interior since its date of construction.

The Victory Villa Community Building was constructed to serve as social and recreational space for residents of Middle River's Victory Villa housing development. Victory Villa was one of several housing developments constructed in Middle River in the early 1940s as a result of the rapid expansion of the nearby Glenn L. Martin Company headquarters and airplane factory. The housing developments in Middle River reflected the evolving community planning principles of the period, which incorporated both earlier Garden City planning ideals, and guidelines published in the 1930s and 1940s by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the United States Housing Authority (USHA). The resulting developments planned for not only residential growth, but provided for full community needs, including social, recreational, educational, and commercial amenities. The Victory Villa Community Building is associated with the history of the World War II-era defense industry in Middle River. Further, the building was designed with the materials and architectural elements of the period's fashionable Modern Movement, reflecting the modern design of the area's nearby airplane factory and the subdivision houses.

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1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Victory Villa Community Building
 other Victory Villa Community Center

2. Location

street and number 404 Compass Road __ not for publication
 city, town Middle River __ vicinity
 county Baltimore County

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

name County Commissioners Baltimore County
 street and number telephone
 city, town state zip code

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Maryland Property Records SDAT liber folio
 city, town tax map 90 tax parcel 678 tax ID number

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count		
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	1	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	1	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	_____	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory _____ 0	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		

7. Description

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Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

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

Site Description

Located at 404 Compass Road in Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland, the Victory Villa Community Building is prominently located at the northwest intersection of Martin Boulevard and Compass Road. Compass Road borders the property to the east, and Martin Boulevard forms the southern boundary. The community building is situated at the center of the Victory Villa subdivision, at the entry point to the northern section of the Victory Villa development. The building faces east toward a small, asphalt-paved parking area fronting Compass Road. Entry to the property is provided via two entry points from Compass Road that access this parking area. A second asphalt-paved parking area is located to the rear (west) of the building. Concrete walkways connect the parking lots to the building's entry points. Concrete steps with metal pipe railings directly access the entries. The grassy lot is planted with mature trees, shrubbery, and foundation plantings. A small, open wood pavilion is located within the grassy area to the rear of the building, and is used as the location for outdoor events.

Building Description

Constructed circa 1942, the Victory Villa Community Building was built under the Farm Security Administration to provide community and recreational space for local citizens. The Victory Villa Community Center is the only extant community building of six that was erected in Middle River during World War II. Each of these community buildings was rapidly constructed with wood, and reflected the influence of the Modern Movement and the International Style, including features such as smooth, unornamented wall surfaces, industrial metal windows, and flat roofs. The buildings were generally composed of two blocks, a larger, main block providing space for athletics, with lower-set wings containing space for meeting rooms and offices.¹

The Victory Villa Community Building has an L-shaped plan composed of two main blocks: a tall gymnasium/auditorium block is set to the north and a long, low block containing meeting rooms that is set to the south at a right angle; the two blocks are connected by a small, one-story wing that is marked by the primary entrance. The wood-frame structure is smoothly stuccoed and scored with horizontal lines.² A low-pitched, front-gable roof tops the gymnasium block and a low-pitched side-gable roof caps the meeting room block and the connecting wing. Each gable roof appears nearly flat and is covered in asphalt shingles. The roofline is marked by slightly overhanging eaves with metal-covered raking boards.

The primary entrance to the building is located at the recessed façade (east elevation) of the connecting one-story wing. The entry is marked by a double-leaf, metal-frame glass door, and the remainder of the entry façade features a floor-to-ceiling multi-light fixed metal window. Unless otherwise noted, symmetrical fenestration at the main blocks

¹ John R. Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," 1996, Section F, pg. 88.

² The Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," by John Breihan, notes that the building was originally covered in wood shingles; historic photographs from the 1940s (see John Breihan, "A History of Wartime Middle River," (Essex-Middle River Civic Council, Inc.: June 9, 1996)) shows that the building was likely originally covered in Masonite siding.

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typically consists of tall, vertically-oriented four-light metal windows with horizontal mullions that appear to be a combination of hopper and fixed lights; the fixed top light in each opening is glazed. Based on historic photographs, these are likely a circa 1960 replacement of the original windows, which were double-sash windows with a multi-light top sash. Secondary entries are typically marked by single-leaf or double-leaf flush plywood doors, each marked by a single square light. The windows and doors are without framing.

The prominent, two-story gymnasium block is five-bays wide at the façade. The central bay is marked by a typical, double-leaf door, surmounted by a single-light glazed glass transom. Two typical windows are situated to the south of the entry, and a typical window and a large full-story vent are located to the north. Historic photographs show that hexagonal windows were originally symmetrically placed at each bay at the second story; these openings are currently stuccoed over. The north (side) elevation of the gymnasium block is marked by a shallow, one-story wing that also wraps around the full-width of the rear (west) elevation. This wing contains rest rooms, a kitchen, and office space. The wing is topped by a flat roof and has the same material treatment and fenestration as the main blocks. A prominent, five-course American-bond brick chimney with a plain top pierces the wing roof to the rear. The north and west (rear) elevations of the gymnasium block have no window openings at the second story. The wrap-around wing is four-bays wide at the north elevation. Moving from east to west across the elevation are two single-light metal hopper windows, a double-leaf door, and two, vertically-oriented, three-light metal windows. The rear elevation of this wing features asymmetrical fenestration including three-light metal windows, and single-leaf and double-leaf entry doors.

The one-story meeting block set to the south is four bays wide at the façade, each bay marked by a typical window. The south (side) elevation is fifteen bays deep. The central bay is marked by a recessed, secondary entrance marked by double-leaf door topped by a single-light transom. Moving from east to west are three windows lighting the current main office, three windows lighting a meeting room, the recessed entrance, then four windows lighting each of two meeting rooms to the west. The rear elevation of the block has no door or window openings. The north elevation is seven bays deep, with six windows set to the east and a single-leaf secondary door with a single-light transom marking the east bay.

The interior of the community center remains remarkably intact in both plan and materials. As noted, the interior of the community center holds gymnasium and auditorium space at the north two-story block, office and meeting space at the one-story block to the south, and rest room, kitchen, and additional meeting space at the wrap-around wing surrounding the gymnasium to the north and rear. At the interior, these spaces are connected via the primary entry hall between the gymnasium/auditorium and meeting space, and via a long corridor located within the wrap-around wing and bordering the west side of the gymnasium/auditorium. There is no corridor running the length of the meeting room block, and each room is accessible by passing through the others. The floors are covered in square vinyl tile, a replacement of the original Linoleum, and the walls are clad in composite panels. The interior doors are marked by original paneled wood doors. The gymnasium/auditorium has been altered by installation of a

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drop ceiling between the first and second stories. It does not appear that the space is currently used as a gymnasium, although the original auditorium stage remains extant at the south side of the room.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1942, 1956 **Architect/Builder** Farm Security Administration

Construction dates 1942

Evaluation for:
 National Register Maryland Register not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Statement of Significance

The Victory Villa Community Building, located at 404 Compass Road in Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland, was constructed circa 1942 to serve as social and recreational space for residents of Middle River’s Victory Villa housing development. Victory Villa was one of several housing developments constructed in Middle River in the early 1940s as a result of the rapid expansion of the nearby Glenn L. Martin Company headquarters and airplane factory. An influx of defense workers flooded the area to work at the Martin plant, forcing the need for quick housing construction. The housing developments in Middle River reflected the evolving community planning principles of the period, which incorporated both earlier Garden City planning ideals, and guidelines published in the 1930s and 1940s by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the United States Housing Authority (USHA), which set forth standards addressing the current pressing need for quickly-built, affordable housing. The resulting developments, including Victory Villa (BA-3286), planned not only for residential growth, but provided for full community needs, including social, recreational, educational, and commercial amenities. The Victory Villa development was completed between 1942 and 1943, and the community building provided gymnasium, auditorium, and meeting space for its residents.

The Victory Villa Community Building is therefore considered significant for its association with the history of the World War II-era defense industry in Middle River, specifically the community planning principles employed in the construction of residential subdivisions to accommodate explosive growth in the area due to the success and expansion of the Glenn L. Martin Company headquarters. Further, the building was designed with the materials and architectural elements of the period’s fashionable Modern Movement, reflecting the modern design of the area’s nearby airplane factory and the subdivision houses. Today, the building retains strong physical integrity overall to its period of construction, and also continues its original use. The Victory Villa Community Building was one of four government-sponsored (and six total) community buildings constructed in Middle River during World War II, and is the only extant such building in the community today.

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Historic Context

Community Buildings in Middle River, Maryland

As noted, Stansbury Estates, Aero Acres, and Victory Villa generally followed Garden City principles, and FHA and USHA housing guidelines, all of which promoted comprehensive community planning in addition to residential development. Within Middle River, incorporated features to this end included planned green space, recreational amenities, pedestrian pathways to playgrounds and schools, and construction of community center buildings. Community center buildings have been noted as particularly important to Middle River's residents, composed of a diverse group of workers. The mass migration of working-class Americans to centers of defense production all over the country during World War II resulted in significant geographic and demographic changes. Thousands of male and female migrants of varying economic, geographical, and cultural backgrounds came together in the new suburbs created around the defense operations. These rapidly constructed communities did not have space created over time for social activities, and community buildings were therefore specifically built by the federal government and private groups to serve functions that would otherwise have been provided by a variety of locations including schools, churches, and libraries. In 1943, *The Baltimore Sun* published an article on the "Middle River War Industry," quoting FSA local manager James E. Cody as saying: "the war worker, as you must realize, is our second line of offense. Much depends on his ability to produce. It is up to us to see that his home life is happy, that his family is well taken care of."³

In Middle River, six community buildings were constructed in the early 1940s to help build a cohesive community out of the thousands of newly arrived workers in the area. It is said that Cody "was a tireless community organizer, using the four federal community buildings as the location for classes, dances, clubs, and groups of all sorts."⁴ Like most of the buildings in Middle River during this period, the community buildings were rapidly constructed, in this case of wood. The buildings were each influenced by Modern Movement design, employing nearly flat roofs, industrial metal windows, and little ornamentation. Each combined a large block for a gymnasium and auditorium for athletics and dances with lower-set wings providing space for meeting rooms, classrooms, and offices. These meeting spaces were often used as incubators for new churches and other civic organizations.⁵

Of the six community buildings constructed in Middle River, only one remains extant today, the Victory Villa Community Building located at the center of the Victory Villa subdivision. At the time of its construction the Victory Villa Community building was located within a small complex of public buildings for Victory Villa,

³ "Middle River War Industry," *The Baltimore Sun*, May 27, 1943, pg. 7.

⁴ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," Section E, pg. 73.

⁵ Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS Documentation MD-1218, Victory Villa Community Center, 404 Compass Road, Middle River, Maryland (2006). Historic newspaper articles from the 1940s through the 1960s reveal a variety of events and groups making use of the space, including the local Women's Club Community Chapter (*The Baltimore Sun*, January 9, 1949, pg. SC15), the Victory Villa Community Church (*The Baltimore Sun*, August 12, 1962, pg. R2), and a girl scout troop (Robert G. Breen, "A Birthday in Baltimore County: Girl Scouts and Brownies Salute Juliette Low," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 12, 1954, pg.14).

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including the community building and adjacent nursery (kindergarten) building on the west side of Compass Road. A FSA Administration Building was located on the east side of Compass Road, and a row of shops immediately to its east faced onto Martin Boulevard. The community building was also linked to the nearby Victory Villa Elementary School by a pedestrian path. These buildings were completed between 1942 and 1943. In 1956, the government-owned buildings in Victory Villa began to be sold to private owners. On April 17, 1956, the U.S. government, through the Public Housing Administration, deeded the property to the County Commissioners of Baltimore County.⁶ The building remains under county ownership today, and it continues its original use.

The Glenn L. Martin Company and Middle River, Maryland

The Victory Villa Community Building was constructed in 1942 to serve residents of Middle River's Aero Acres housing development, which borders the community building to the north and south. The community building is one of a complex of World War II-era resources constructed in Middle River in the early 1940s, including housing developments, shopping centers, and community buildings, which are associated with the growth of the American aerospace industry in the middle of the twentieth century. More specifically, these resources represent the remarkable growth of the Glenn L. Martin Company headquarters and airplane manufacturing facilities in Middle River, and associated residential and commercial growth to serve the thousands of employees who poured into the area. As such, it has been said that Middle River "offers an outstanding collection of World War II-era national defense resources in its buildings, land-use patterns, and community institutions."⁷

The Glenn L. Martin Company was founded in 1917 as an aircraft design and manufacturing company. The company headquarters was initially located in Cleveland, Ohio, but in 1928, company founder Glenn Martin moved his operations to Middle River, Maryland, a small community located approximately ten miles outside the City of Baltimore.⁸ Martin had initially planned to build his factory within Baltimore City, but when "political maneuvers and technical delays" interfered, he instead chose to locate the factory near but outside the city's border.⁹ The Middle River location was attractive due to its access to mass transit and the ample space available to expand in the relatively undeveloped community.

The Martin Company grew steadily through the 1930s, but it was the opening of World War II that spurred explosive growth in the airplane manufacturing industry in general and for the Martin Company in particular. Large orders for foreign and domestic warplanes necessitated the expansion of the plant itself, as well as a huge influx of defense industry workers. The Martin Company served to revolutionize the airplane manufacturing industry by making airplane manufacturing conform to assembly-line production, thus greatly accelerating the pace and

⁶ Baltimore County Deed Records, Liber 2946, Page 169.

⁷ Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS Documentation MD-1218, Victory Villa Community Center, 404 Compass Road, Middle River, Maryland (2006).

⁸ Donald Pattilo, *Pushing the Envelope: the American Aircraft Industry*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 66.

⁹ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-27.

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efficiency with which airplanes could be produced.¹⁰ The Martin Company's innovation, and its success in convincing the United States military that mass-production was necessary during the wartime crisis, caused its Middle River plants to boom. Originally constructed in 1928, the plant underwent a major expansion in 1939. In that year alone, Martin's workforce rose from 3,000 to more than 13,000 employees. A further round of expansions occurred in 1940-1941. Growth between 1928 and 1946 caused Middle River to become one of the largest aircraft manufacturing and testing facilities in the country.¹¹

The success of the Martin Company was largely due to its workers. Through the 1930s, the Martin Company had steadily employed between 1,500 and 3,000 workers, but the expansion of the plant during the early years of World War II saw significant employment increases. At the time that Martin located his operations in Middle River, the community remained largely rural, and as late as 1939 the small community recorded only 161 residents. Between 1939 and 1943, the numbers of workers employed by the Martin Company grew from approximately 3,000 to over 52,000 employees. Workers initially were drawn from the Baltimore labor pool; these soon being exhausted, the Martin Company began a massive publicity campaign to attract skilled workers from further away. Many came from the Appalachian Mountains of western Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, although workers were attracted from across the country.¹²

The workers who arrived to staff the assembly lines and build the massive planes flooded the Middle River area and soon overwhelmed the limited existing housing stock. Transportation corridors, water and sewer service, and other public amenities were also overwhelmed by the influx. Martin had initially envisioned that his employees would commute from nearby Baltimore City and surrounding areas via existing road, train, and streetcar infrastructure, but the increasing number of workers soon proved this to be unfeasible. Although Martin had expressed interest in expanding and improving the local road systems, no improvements had been undertaken before the explosion of manufacturing activity occurred in 1939.¹³ Traffic issues became so serious that on December 8, 1941, *Life* magazine reported on the "twelve tormented miles' of traffic jams on Eastern Avenue leading to the plant, through which workers 'snail and snarl, shrouded in gasoline fumes.'"¹⁴ To avoid serious traffic delays, many workers initially crowded into private homes, converted barns, and "hot-sheet hotels" where three men shared a single bed on rotating shifts. Others lived in private trailers on the grounds, crowding the runways and creating haphazard, unsanitary conditions.¹⁵

¹⁰ Donald Pattilo, *Pushing the Envelope: the American Aircraft Industry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 134.

¹¹ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-12-E-13.

¹² Advertisements found in newspapers as diverse as the Reno Evening Gazette, Abilene Reporter-News, Portsmouth (NH) Herald, and the Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), among others.

¹³ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-31.

¹⁴ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," Section E, pg. 32.

¹⁵ "War Workers Balk at Leaving Trailer Homes," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1944, pg. 9.

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Recognizing the need to expand and improve the housing conditions in Middle River, the Martin Company undertook planning efforts for residential development beginning in 1939.¹⁶ The Martin Company's initial vision for the surrounding community was influenced by the ideals of the Garden City movement, which promoted an ideal of self-contained communities with planned space for a variety of uses, including residential and industrial, as well as the idea of "greenbelts" surrounding the community to retain green, undeveloped space. These ideas were popular in the United States in the early part of the twentieth century, but the onset of the Great Depression largely stalled the development of such planned communities. There were several notable exceptions, namely three "greenbelt" towns that were commissioned by the New Deal Resettlement Administration in 1935. The largest of these was named Greenbelt, Maryland, located approximately thirty-nine miles southwest of Middle River. Greenbelt employed several features later adopted in Middle River, including parkland, superblocks, curving streets, and a community center. Federal subsidies during World War II made greenbelt planning affordable for lower income residents, including middle-class workers like those employed in the Martin Company factory.

The Martin Company began planning for such a community as early as 1937, the same year that Greenbelt, Maryland opened. At this time, Martin commissioned Albert Kahn to produce a master plan for the Martin property. Kahn's plan proposed to develop nearby Wilson and Strawberry Points along Garden City planning ideals. Kahn planned housing for 10,000 people through the construction of 2,000 apartment units and 300-500 detached houses, which would be arranged along curving, tree-lined streets in a superblock plan. Kahn's plan was temporarily shelved during 1938, but was revived in 1939 when expansion of the plant rapidly increased worker numbers. Work was underway by the spring of that year, as Works Projects Administration (WPA) workers began widening Wilson Point Road and approximately 550 acres of Martin Company-owned land on Wilson and Strawberry Points were transferred to the newly incorporated Stansbury Manor, Inc., with Glenn Martin named as president.¹⁷ At the time, press releases distributed by Martin described a utopian, garden city that planned for not only physical efficiency, but also for its residents' social and cultural needs through the creation of public space, shopping and community centers, and playgrounds. Despite Martin's grand vision, the plan was only partially realized at this time, with the construction of 184 units of the Stansbury Manor Apartments.¹⁸

Further development was delayed as employment levels temporarily leveled off in 1940 as disputes over extension of public services (including utilities and road improvements) in Middle River continued.¹⁹ Rising political conflict in

¹⁶ The Company's efforts resulted in the large suburban community that remains Middle River today. The draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," prepared by John R. Breihan in 1996, states that this community "was planned on 'garden city' principles but affordable even for ordinary factory workers. The new Middle River suburb embodied a number of significant features in architecture and design: the use of modern garden city planning on a large scale, the design and construction of detached houses affordable for all social classes, the provision of community centers, and the use of manufactured housing (trailers) and garden apartments."

¹⁷ The WPA was renamed from the Works Progress Administration to the Works Projects Administration in 1939. Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-37.

¹⁸ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-38.

¹⁹ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-39.

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Europe in the second half of that year again spurred growth of the Martin factory leading into 1941. The fall of France in the spring of 1940 stirred President Roosevelt to increase the United States' defenses, and he called for the production of up to 50,000 airplanes per year. The Martin Company received additional contracts from the United States and the United Kingdom governments, and as a result planned not only additions to the original plant in Middle River, but also undertook construction of a new plant. Martin anticipated the addition of 20,000 employees through 1941. An estimated twenty-five to thirty-five percent of these newest employees arrived to Maryland from out of state and were forced to make do with the provisional boarding available in Middle River.²⁰

As the slow pace of the WPA and the Maryland State Roads Commission in expanding services stalled housing development, Martin pressed for action. In 1940-41, the Martin Company negotiated deals with Baltimore County and the United States government to provide attractive housing and amenities for the growing semi-permanent population, many of whom brought their families with them. In May 1941, work finally began on the construction of Martin Boulevard, a new four-lane road that linked the Martin Company plant to Route 40.²¹ In early 1942, work began on widening the former Eastern Avenue into dual-carriageway Eastern Boulevard.²² The county also laid several miles of new sewer and water pipes.²³

With road improvement underway, the Martin Company simultaneously undertook planning and construction of a new house-building campaign, as the company agreed to construct 1,000 units and the federal government agreed to an additional 2,000.²⁴ All of the houses were built using Federal Security Agency (FSA) funds.²⁵ At this time, the Martin Company put aside the earlier plans put forth in Kahn's 1937 master plan and partially realized in the construction of the Stansbury Manor Apartments, and instead turned its attention to the construction of single-family detached houses.²⁶ The Martin Company and the government turned to quickly constructed, prefabricated

²⁰ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-40.

²¹ The road featured one of the state's first "cloverleaf" interchanges, located directly in front of the plant. Historian Breihan notes that "these two broad, gently curving high-speed highways came to define the new Middle River suburb." The roads were constructed using funding from the "defense highways" program. At the time, federal highway spending was limited to the improvement of roads directly servicing military installations or defense bases, which is the reason Martin Boulevard terminates at the airfield entrance.

²² In early 1942, work began on widening the former Eastern Avenue into dual-carriageway Eastern Boulevard.

²³ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-31 and E-32.

²⁴ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-40.

²⁵ FSA was established on July 1, 1939, with the objective of bringing together all Federal programs concerned with health, education, and social security.

²⁶ The government's initial answer to housing was less attractive and a source of great consternation to Glenn L. Martin. The government defense housing coordinator for the area attempted to house Martin employees in a large public housing project six miles southwest of the plant at Armistead Gardens. Martin employees refused the accommodation, stating that the location was too far away for convenience, the rents were too high, and that the unfurnished apartments would require the purchase of furniture. This last was particularly important to those workers who planned to return to their home states after the war and did not have either the inclination or the ready capital to purchase furnishings such as beds, tables, chairs, and storage. Martin complained before a congressional committee on defense housing, which responded by designating the Farm Security Agency to build trailer camps in the style of those used during the Great Depression to house migrant farm workers. Nearly two thousand trailers were transported to large open fields at Bengies, Bowleys Quarters, and Carroll

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units developed under a partnership between the John B. Pierce Foundation of New York, the Celotex Corporation of Chicago, and architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM).²⁷ The result of this partnership was the construction of over 1,000 "Pierce-Cemesto" houses, located in Middle River's Stansbury Estates, Aero Acres, and south Victory Villa subdivisions.

The design and planning of the Stansbury Estates, Aero Acres, and southern Victory Villa subdivisions reflect the influence of the Garden City planning model of the early twentieth century, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) guidelines established in the 1930s, and United States Housing Authority (USHA) guidelines for defense housing establishing in 1941. The Garden City model was first put forth by Englishman Ebenezer Howard in the late nineteenth century, as he promoted the establishment of self-sufficient towns and non-speculative forms of real estate. The earliest Garden Cities were created in England in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and established the design vocabulary that would go on to significantly influence suburban planning in the United States through the middle of the century. The Garden City model "was consistent with the emerging interest in collaborative planning," combining the expertise of a variety of professionals including planners, architects, and landscape architects.²⁸ More specific elements incorporated into American neighborhood planning included incorporating specifically planned open and green spaces, creating a hierarchy of major roads and secondary streets that imposed a circulation network with geometrical patterns, and providing for the full needs of the community with the construction of nearby parks and playgrounds, recreational facilities and community centers, shopping centers, and schools.²⁹

The FHA was created by the National Housing Act of 1934. As part of its operations, FHA was tasked with developing housing standards, principles for neighborhood planning, and reviewing subdivision plans submitted by developers seeking approval for FHA mortgage insurance. Under the leadership of Seward H. Mott, FHA published several standards for neighborhood development between 1936 and 1940, including *Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses* (1936) and *Principles for Planning Small Houses* (1940). These guidelines brought many of the ideals of Garden City planning noted above into mainstream subdivision design. The U.S. Housing Act of 1941 (also known as the Lanham Act) called for the use of federal funds to construct housing specifically for defense workers. The USHA, created in 1937, was charged with creating a set of standards for the design of defense housing, and produced the *USHA Standards for Defense Housing* in April 1941. These guidelines were heavily reliant on the earlier FHA guidelines, but were adapted for "temporary" wartime housing. Similar principles included long blocks with limited corners, adjustment of plan to meet traffic needs, and community privacy. Constructed beginning in spring 1941, the Stansbury Estates, Aero Acres, and southern Victory Villa neighborhoods were clearly influenced by each of

Island adjacent to the Martin plant. These "Trailertowns" were literally rows of trailers interspersed with utility buildings that contained toilet, shower, and laundry facilities.

²⁷ Breihan, Draft Multiple Property Document, "Historical and Architectural Resources of Middle River, Maryland," E-53.

²⁸ Ames, *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States*, E-18.

²⁹ Ames, *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States*, E-18 E-21.

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Name Victory Villa Community Building
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these standards, incorporating ideas such as collaborative planning and defined green space, with the mass-scale aesthetic that is common to defense developments in the 1940s.³⁰

³⁰ Ames, *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States*, 23.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 2.071 acres
Acreage of historical setting 2.071 acres
Quadrangle name Middle River

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Victory Villa Community Building is located at 404 Compass Road, at its original location at the northwest intersection of Martin Boulevard and Compass Road. The property was sold from the U.S. federal government's Public Housing Administration to the County Commissioners of Baltimore County on April 17, 1956. The property was located on a plat map dated April 17, 1956 (Baltimore County Liber 2946 page 171), indicating an acreage of 2.071 acres and its location to the present. This location is shown on the Baltimore County Tax Map 90, Parcel 678 (2013).

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Kate Ritson, Architectural Historian		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Inc.	date	December 2013
street & number	1121 5th Street, NW	telephone	(202)393-1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Victory Villa Community Building
Continuation Sheet

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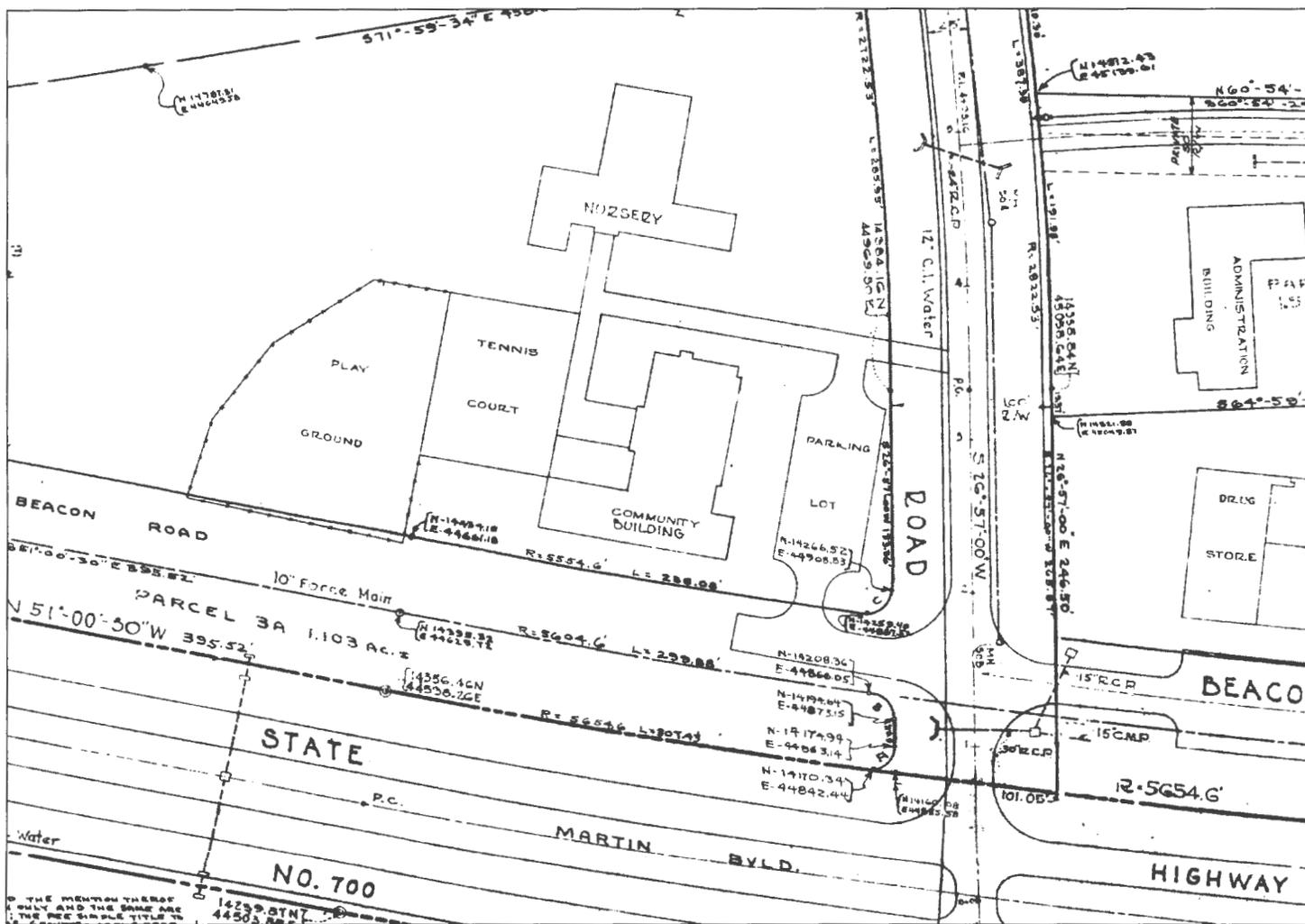
Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Victory Villa Community Building
Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 2

Historic Images



Detail of Victory Villa Community Building Lot, Plat of Victory Villa - Section 1, Plat J, February 23, 1956. Plat Book GLB 22, pg. 108. Land Records of Baltimore County, Maryland.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-3287

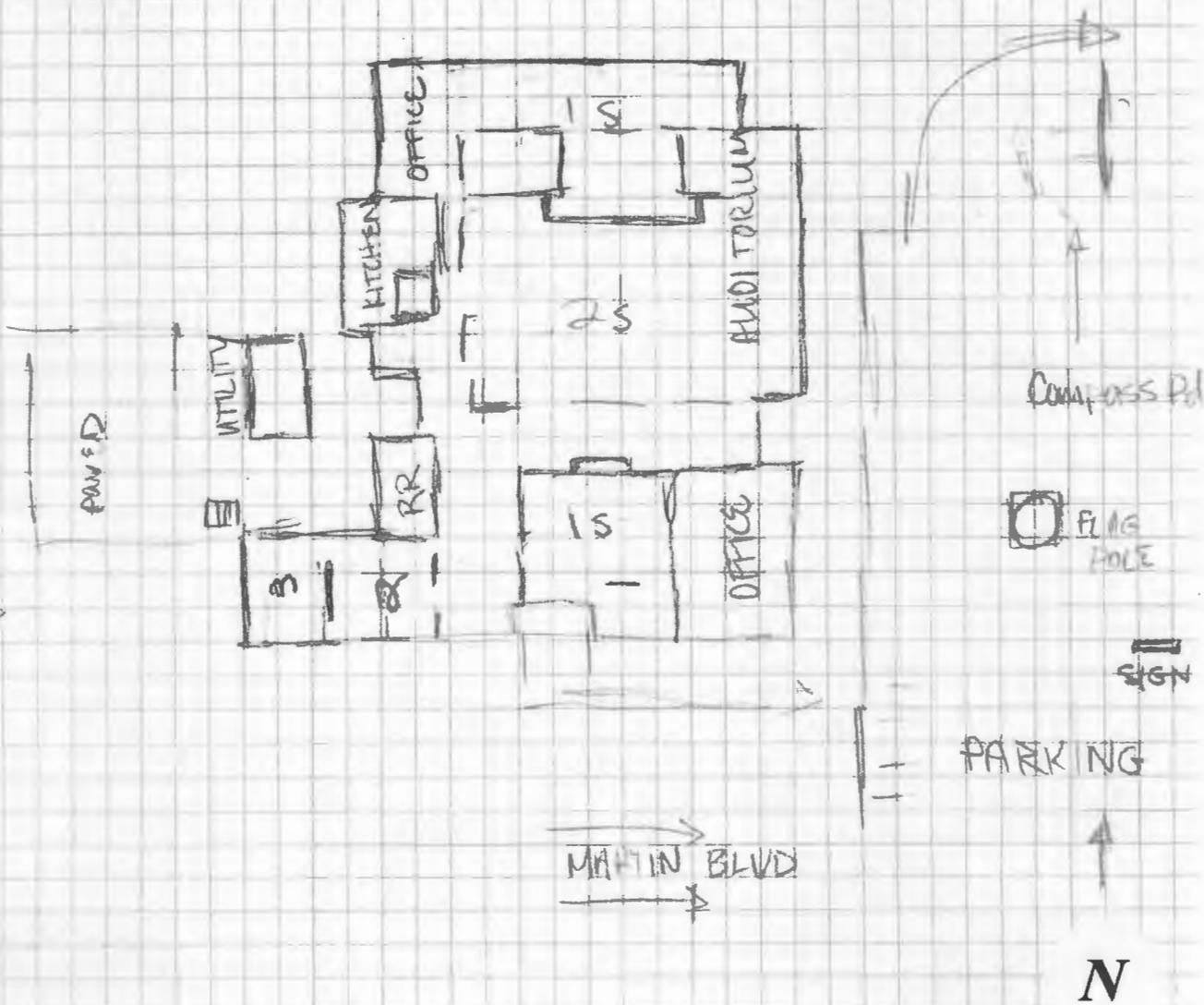
Name Victory Villa Community Building
Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 3



Victory Villa Community Building, circa 1942. Courtesy John R. Breihan, Images of America: Maryland Aviation (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC: 2006), 69.

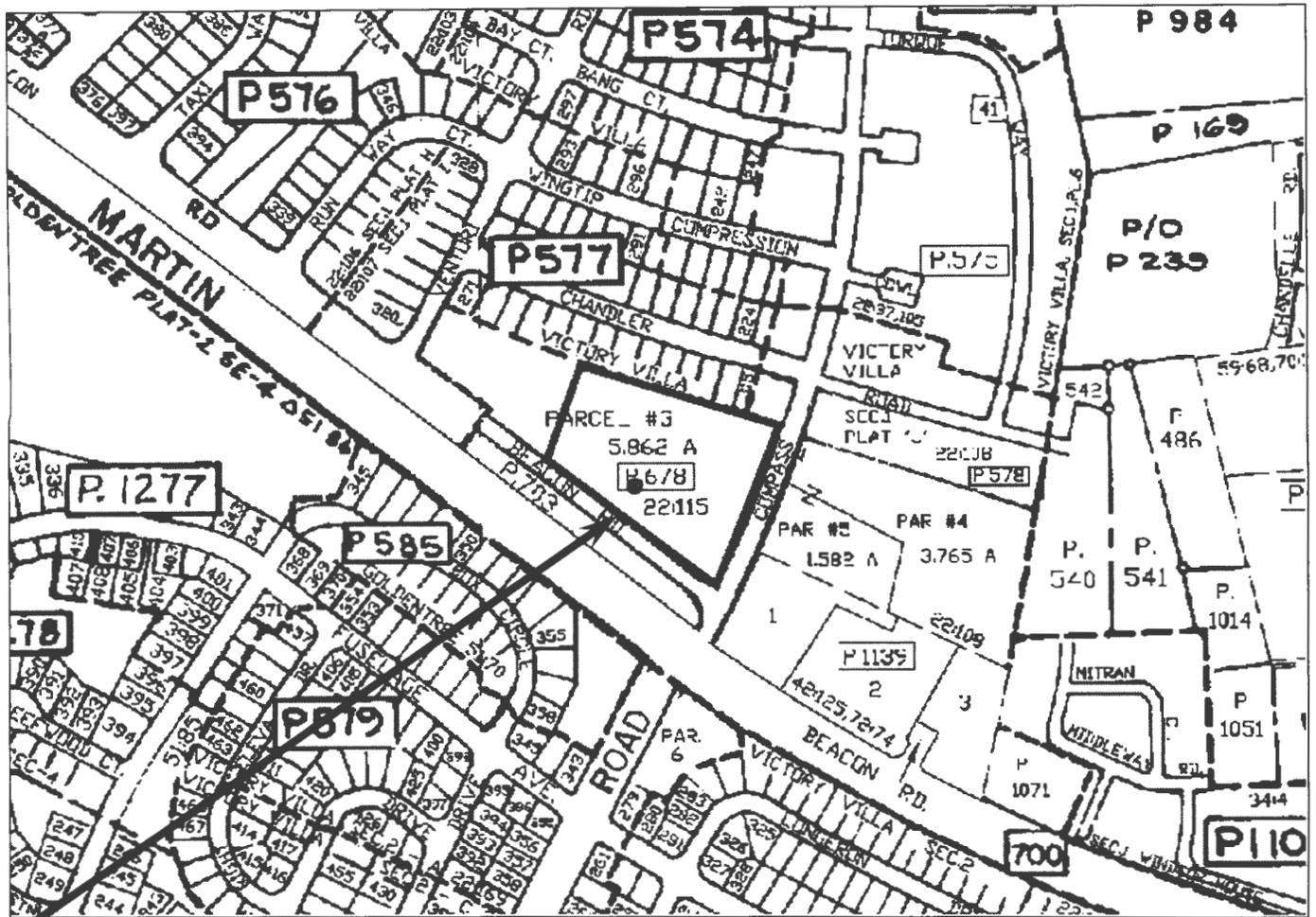
PICNIC
SHELTER



Date 11/12/2013
I.D. # BA-3287

Address Victory Villa Community Building /
404 Compass Road

Not to Scale



Victory Villa Community Building (BA-3287)

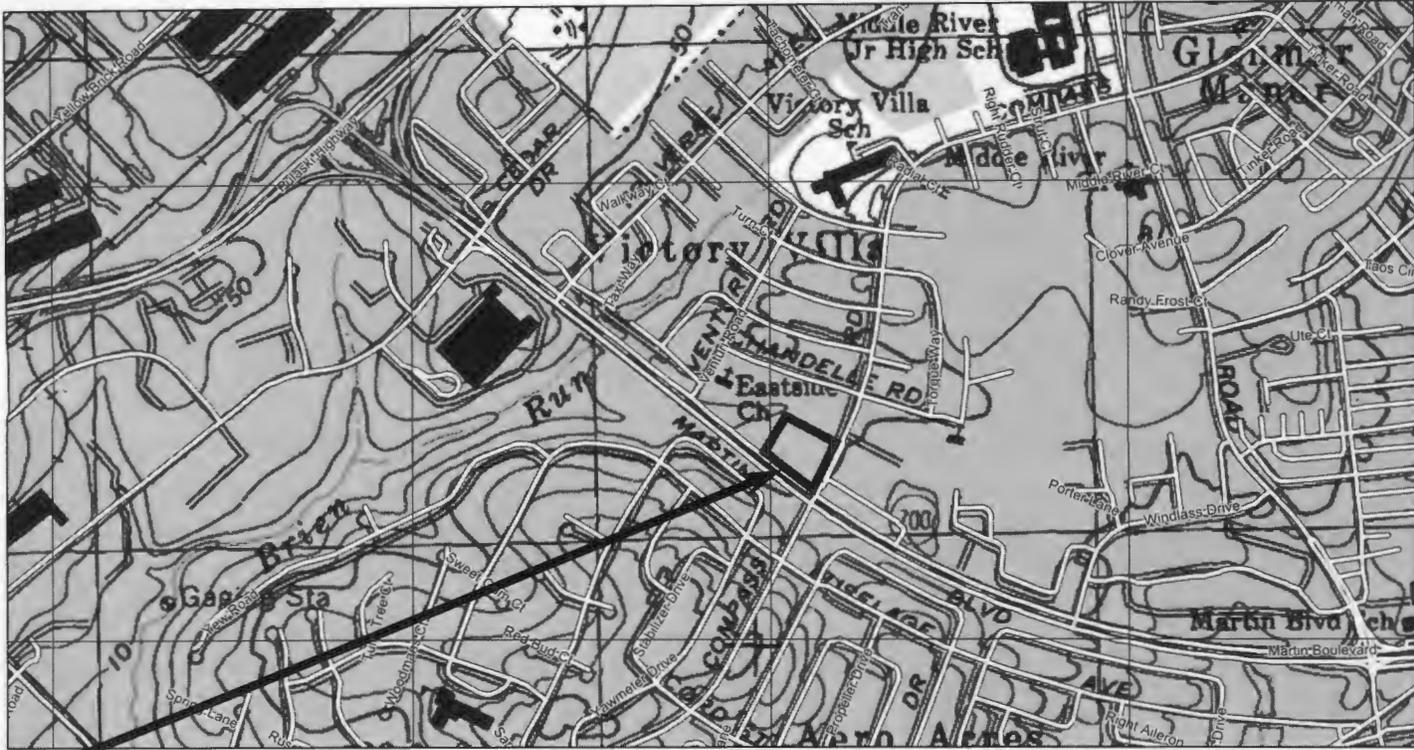
404 Compass Road

Middle River, Baltimore County, Maryland 21220

Map Courtesy of Maryland Property Records (SDAT); <http://mdlandrec.net>

EHT Traceries, 2013



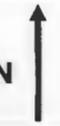


Victory Villa Community Building (BA-3287)

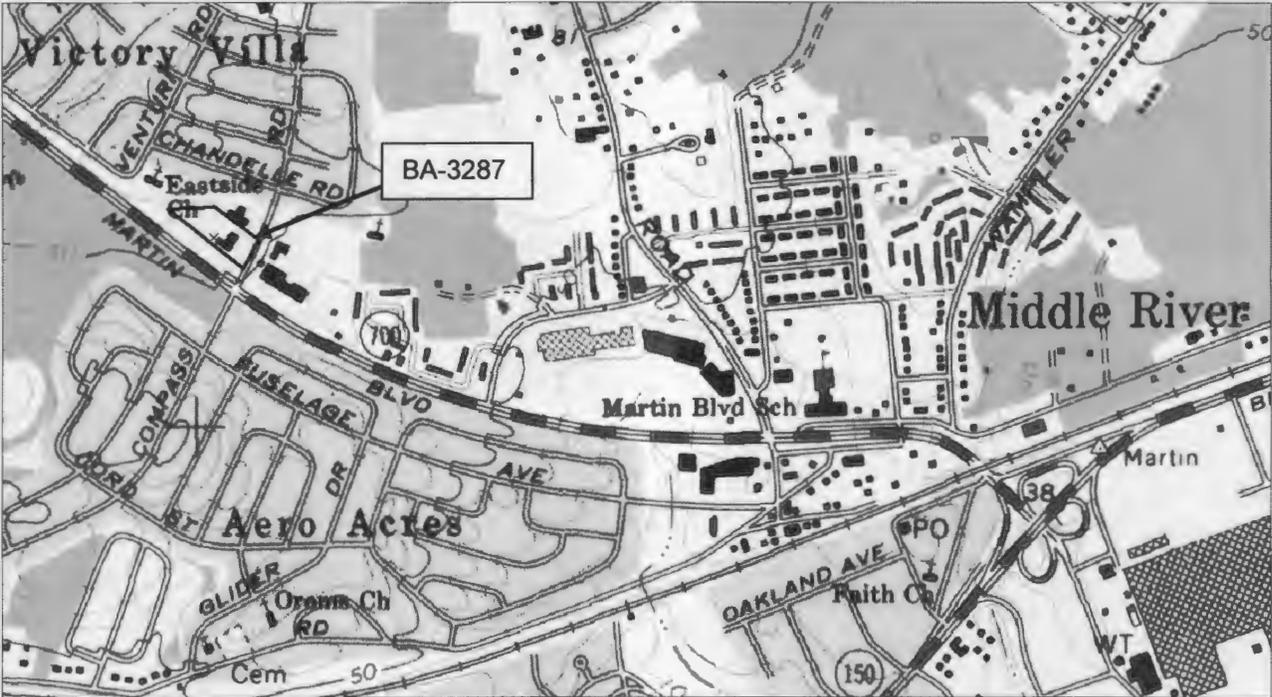
Baltimore County, Maryland

Middle River Quadrangle, USGS Topographic Map, 1965, Revised 1979

EHT Traceries, 2013



BA-3287
Victory Villa Community Building (Victory Villa Community Center)
404 Compass Road, Middle River
Middle River Quadrangle 1969, Photorevised 1985



National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2011-13



PROJECT NO. BA855B21 DIGITAL PHOTOLOG* BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND	BA-3287, Victory Villa Community Building Photographer: EHT Tracerics Date: November 12, 2013
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1.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 01	Façade, view looking W
2.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 02	Façade, view looking NW
3.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 03	Façade, view looking SW
4.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 04	South elevation, view looking NW
5.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 05	North elevation, view looking SW
6.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 06	Rear elevation, view looking E
7.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 07	Rear and south elevations, view looking NE
8.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 08	Interior, auditorium, view looking N
9.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 09	Interior, main hallway, view looking W
10.	BA-3287 2013-11-12 10	Interior, meeting room, looking SE

*All photographs printed on Epson Ultra Premium Photo Paper with Epson Ultra Chrome K3 Ink.



BA-3287

VICTORY VILLA COMMUNITY BUILDING

404 COMPASS ROAD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

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VICTORY VILLA COMMUNITY BUILDING

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