

CE-997  
Susquehanna River Bridge  
Administration Building

1940

The Susquehanna River Bridge Administration Building, a two story composition of steel and concrete, is an excellent example of the Depression Modern style which flourished in the United States during the 1930s. A blending of traditional structural means, elements borrowed from the International style, and some distinctive ornamental and formal characteristics, such as banding and streamlining, the building represents an important artistic episode in American life. Such a finely detailed, small-scale architectural manifestation of that episode is indeed rare.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Susquehanna River Bridge Administration Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Susquehanna River Bridge

CITY, TOWN  
Perryville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
1st

STATE  
Maryland 21903

COUNTY  
Cecil

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Maryland State Department of Transportation  
Toll Facilities Administration Telephone # (301) 288-6400

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 9088

CITY, TOWN  
Dundalk

STATE, zip code  
Maryland 21222

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cecil County Courthouse

Liber #:  
Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Elkton

STATE  
Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
None

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CE-997

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Susquehanna River Bridge Administration Building is located on the SE side of US 40, ca. 1,500' east of the Susquehanna River, in Perryville, Cecil County, Maryland.

The buildings consists of two single story blocks of steel and concrete construction, one stacked above the other, a concrete foundation and basement, a flat roof, and a small chimney, rising slightly east of center inside the south wall. While both blocks have the same width, the one above is nearly half as long as that below, and originally, was centered longitudinally on it. A lower cube-like addition, flush with the north wall and adjoining the west end of the lower block, has created an imbalance in overall formal massing.

The sides of each block are distinguished by a continuous scoring, six channels wide on the first floor and five on the second. Fitted within the bands and interrupting their visual flow are the windows with slight reveals, industrial sash, steel frames, and aluminum facing. Notably, each of the corners of both blocks is defined by a short ribbon of windows. The exceptions occur on the left side of the lower east facade, which is blank and, the left side of the lower west facade, where the addition adjoins. The north or principal facade is distinguished by a centrally placed pair of glazed aluminum doors, a bay window projection to the left, and above, a porcelain enamel metal seal representing the State of Maryland. Framing the doors is a banded slate architrave; in front of them, a low platform and steps, originally slate, but now brick. Joining the bay window and double doors into an emphatic entry motif is a streamlined concrete marquise, faced in aluminum banding and surmounted by a grouping of fourteen oversized cast aluminum block letters spelling out "ADMINISTRATION". Balancing the motif to the right of the doors is an industrial sash window similar to those at the corners. Originally, a streamlined aluminum railing adjoined the west side of the platform, but it was likely removed when a box-like vestibule was built in front of the double doors. The effect of this addition is to mask the doors completely and to detract from the entry detail. The south facade is marked by narrow horizontal ribbons of windows, flanked by single doors on the first floor and a single casement, nearly centered on the second. A wood overhead garage door may have marked the lower right side originally, but is now a door similar to the others, but capped by a small projecting metal hood. The ribbon windows, framing doors, and an outside basement stairwell fenced by a pipe rail are sheltered by another concrete marquise, unornamented and smaller than that on the north. Walls are surfaced in stucco, while the roof coping of the upper block is faced in porcelain enamel metal.

Of particular note on the interior is the stairway railing on the entrance hall, similar to that along the entry platform, and a tunnel, starting on the basement level under the bay window and extending to the adjacent range of bridge toll booths.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1940 BUILDER/ARCHITECT J.E. Greiner Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Susquehanna River Bridge Administration Building is an excellent example of the Moderne style of architecture, also known as Depression Modern or American Modern, the style flourished in the United States during the mid to late 1930s. Its influence was felt not only in architecture, but in industrial design and decorative arts, as well. Originally, a direct reaction to the vogue for the modernistic, the quest of the 1920s for applied ornamentation solely for the sake of novelty, the Moderne was a spare, and unembellished art in which everything was built to work and, just as importantly, appear as though it did (Greif, pp. 30-31). But ornamentation, however discrete, soon returned, and usually consisted of a distinctive banding treatment of surfaces and a use of curved or streamlined forms. Banding is readily evident on the Administration Building facades, while streamlining may be observed along the east side of the principal marquise.

In architecture, the Moderne style recalled much of the work of the modernists in Europe during the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the Administration Building, for example, the pronounced horizontality of massing, emphasized by ribbon windows, and the non-ornamental treatment of signage with the use of free-standing unseriffed letters, are all distinctive characteristics of the International style. Yet much about Moderne buildings relates to the pre-modern tradition. Unlike the finest International style buildings, the Administration Building often relies on symmetry, rather than carefully considered regularity, to define its fenestration, and conceals its modern structural system behind bearing walls. Mass appears more important than volume; revealed windows are carved from a solid rather than hung from a structural frame. The importance of mass is particularly noticeable on the interior which is organized by traditional bearing walls which define rooms, rather than non-structural planes which freely define space.

Thus, the Administration Building, having a distinct style which combines traditional characteristics with those of the Modern movement, represents an important artistic episode in American life. Such a finely detailed, small-scaled architectural manifestation of that episode is indeed rare.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Baltimore, September 1940, pp. 8.

Greif, Martin, Depression Modern: The Thirties Style in America, New York, Universe Books, 1975.

State Roads Commission, Susquehanna River Bridge Admin. Bldg., plans (Toll CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY Facilities Admin.).

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.64 A.

Quadrangle Name: Havre de Grace  
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24 000  
UTM References: 18.407800, 4380110

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at the point where the south R/W line of US 40 meets Sta. 776+50, proceed along said Sta. 125', thence turning east 90°, proceed 224', thence turning north 90°, proceed 125', and from thence turning west 90°, proceed 224' to the point of origin. (see general layout plan)

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Richard D. Meyer/Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE  
1980

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

TELEPHONE  
(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

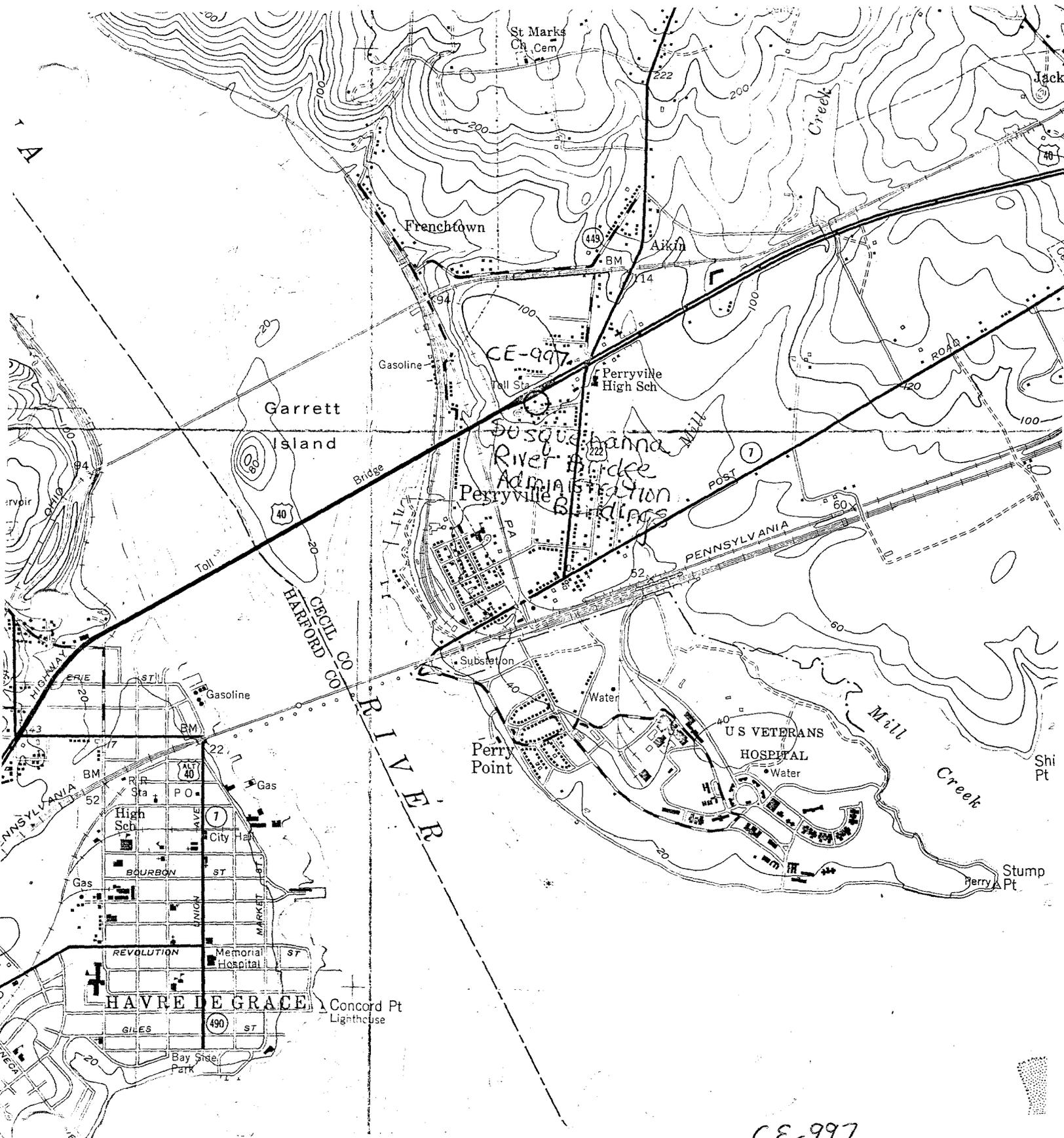
Annapolis

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



CE-997  
 Havre De Grace Quadrangle



CE-997

Susquehanna River Bridge Admin Bldgd

North elev

M/DOT survey

JDH/RDM

Summer 1980



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Susqueha-na Riv. Br. Admin. Bldg.

South elev.

M/DOT Survey

JDH/RDM

Summer 1980



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Susquehanna River Bridge Admin Bldg  
Detail, N. elev.

M/DOT Survey

JDH/RXM

Summer 1980



John Hnedale 6/80

Susquehanna R. Es. Ad. Clod.

CE-997

