

Capsule Summary
BA-2624
Germantown Building
9537 Belair Road
Perry Hall, Baltimore County
ca. 1922
Private

The Germantown Permanent Building Association of Baltimore County constructed the Germantown Building at 9537 Belair Road in Perry Hall for residents of the local farming community. The first financial institution in the community at the time of its construction in 1922, the Germantown Building is built of rock-faced concrete blocks, a new and fashionable building material in the first quarter of the 20th century. During this period, the town of Perry Hall, located to the northwest of Baltimore, had developed from a small crossroads community into a suburban community with a thriving commercial and institutional corridor along Belair Road. In 1989, the Germantown Permanent Building Association was absorbed by the Cowenton Savings and Loan Association, and the title of the Germantown Building then transferred into the name of the latter organization. The building served as a bank for only two more years before finally being sold to residents of Baltimore.

The Germantown Building is a one-story commercial building constructed of rock-faced concrete block with panel-faced concrete block quoins. The modest rectangular-shaped building, constructed circa 1922, features a crenellated central entry portico. The building has an asphalt-shingled hipped roof with overhanging eaves, bed molding, aluminum covered soffit, and aluminum covered cornice. The raised foundation is parged, capped by a chamfered watertable that encircles the entire building. A corbeled interior end chimney is present on the south side of the building.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2624

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Germantown Building

other _____

2. Location

street and number 9537 Belair Road _____ not for publication

city, town Perry Hall _____ vicinity

county Baltimore County

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

name John M. Valunas

street and number 3109 DuBois Avenue telephone 410.661.0369

city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21234

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel map 72, parcel 892

city, town Towson liber 8735 folio 77

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 type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>_____</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>_____</u> sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u>_____</u> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<u>_____</u> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<u>1</u> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			<u>1</u>

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-2624

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.

The Germantown Building, located at 9537 Belair Road, is a one-story commercial building constructed of rock-faced concrete block with panel-faced concrete block quoins. The modest rectangular-shaped building, constructed circa 1922, features a crenellated central entry portico. The building has an asphalt-shingled hipped roof with overhanging eaves, bed molding, aluminum covered soffit, and aluminum covered cornice. The raised foundation is parged, capped by a chamfered watertable that encircles the entire building. A corbeled interior end chimney is present on the south side of the building. The building originally functioned as a bank, but has subsequently been renovated to serve as a repair shop.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The primary façade, facing northwest, measures three bays in width. This elevation is dominated by the projecting, one-bay wide, entry vestibule. The raised vestibule, reached by side-entry steps, is detailed with poured concrete. Constructed of rock-faced concrete blocks, the vestibule is pierced on three sides, one being the entry opening. Finished with poured concrete sills, and lug lintels, these openings have been infilled and stuccoed. Poured concrete coping and crenellations of rock-faced concrete mark the flat roof of the vestibule. The entrance, located on the southwest side, consists of a one-leaf replacement door of wood. The door has been retrofitted to fill the space. On the main block of the building, flanking the vestibule, are two window openings with poured concrete sills and lug lintels. These openings have been infilled and stuccoed. Smaller, replacement 6/6 vinyl windows have been installed in the large openings.

The southwest elevation measures two bays deep. Again, the larger openings historically associated with the building's original use as a bank have been infilled and stuccoed. Smaller, replacement 6/6 vinyl windows have been installed. The poured concrete sills and lintels of the original window openings are extant. It has two parged blind windows with poured concrete sills and lintels. At the southeastern end of the elevation, a set of poured concrete stairs leads to the basement.

The rear elevation of the building, facing southeast, displays a centrally located window opening. This opening has been infilled and stuccoed, although the poured concrete sill and lintel are present. Similarly, the two window openings on the northeast elevation have been infilled and stuccoes, while retaining their poured concrete sills and lintels.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior was not accessible at the time of the survey. A cursory examination records that many interior alterations have occurred. The original bank vault, however, is still present.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-2624

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates 1922-1989 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates 1922

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.)

The Germantown Permanent Building Association of Baltimore County constructed the Germantown Building at 9537 Belair Road in Perry Hall for residents of the local farming community. The first financial institution in the community at the time of its construction in 1922, the Germantown Building is built of rock-faced concrete blocks, a new and fashionable building material in the first quarter of the 20th town of Perry Hall, located to the northwest of Baltimore, had developed from a small crossroads community into a suburban community with a thriving commercial and institutional corridor along Belair Road. In 1989, the Germantown Permanent Building Association was absorbed by the Cowenton Savings and Loan Association, and the title of the Germantown Building then transferred into the name of the latter organization. The building served as a bank for only two more years before finally being sold to residents of Baltimore.

HISTORY

In the late 17th century, the land now encompassed by the town of Perry Hall was part of a land grant to George Ligan. The property was located between the Baltimore and the White Marsh Run to the south and the Great Gunpowder Falls and Kingsville to the north. After Ligan acquired the 1,000 acres named "The Adventure" in 1684, he appears to have deeded a portion the estate to Corbin Lee, who began constructing a Georgian style house on the property in the mid-1700s. In 1775, Henry Dorsey Gough purchased the estate from Lee and renamed it Perry Hall. Belair Road connected Baltimore to the town of Bel Air as the mid-1700s. Dating to the 1730s, Joppa Road connected settlements along the Patapsco River with Joppa, the original Baltimore County seat located on the Big Gunpowder River. The Perry Hall estate was located a short distance to the north of the intersection of these two important Colonial period roads. This set the area on a course for development as a crossroads community.¹

By the mid-19th century, the lands associated with Perry Hall had been greatly subdivided, and several other landholders in the area began to construct residential buildings along either side of Belair Road. The 1850

¹ William B. Marye, "The Old Indian Road," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 15 (1920): pp. 208-213; see also "The New Perry Hall School," *Federation PTA News* 6 (April 1930): p. 1, and E. Frances Offutt, *Baltimore County Landmarks* (Towson, MD: Baltimore County Public Library, 1971), p. 46-48.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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county atlas shows at least nine residential structures located between the two rivers. In addition to these, three taverns clustered around the center of the community near the intersection of Joppa and Belair Roads. The name Germantown came to this settlement in the 1860s, when a significant number of German farmers began to settle in and around the area.²

Between 1850 and the mid-1870s, the Germantown community grew considerably. From the nine residential structures in 1850, the town grew to at least thirty-seven in 1877. This number continued to increase, for the county history published shortly thereafter records the population as fifty inhabitants. At this time, there was a general store, two blacksmith shops, a schoolhouse, three churches, and tavern, and sawmill in the small settlement. In addition, settlements developed in towns in the vicinity of the Belair/Joppa Road intersection. Greenwood, located to the west of Germantown, had a population of one hundred by 1881. Kingsville, the town just north of the Great Gunpowder Falls, had a population of one hundred and fifty. Although this area was still rural in its agricultural character, it was maintaining a rapid rate of development throughout the second half of the 19th century.³

In 1867, the Baltimore and Jerusalem Turnpike Company incorporated with the intent of creating a better road from Baltimore to the town of Jerusalem. The turnpike was slated to follow the path of Belair Road until it reached the Little Gunpowder Falls, at which point it would veer off and follow Jerusalem Road for the remainder of the distance. The Turnpike Company completed the first eight miles of the road to just south of Perry Hall with the remainder of the road left unimproved. Due to complaints by local citizens and administrative changes in the company, the road was completed for an additional four miles to the existing bridge over Little Gunpowder Falls in 1886. The first tollgate was constructed within the city of Baltimore. The second tollgate along the road was constructed just south of the intersection of Joppa Road and the newly renamed Baltimore and Jerusalem Turnpike.⁴

Throughout this period, however, there does not appear to have been a financial institution of any kind in or near Germantown. It is not presently known whether or not one or a few of the community's more prominent citizens acted in the capacity as a banker for the other residents. Nevertheless, by the early 20th century, the residents of the community needed a financial institution where they could save or borrow money. Some towns and larger communities in the mostly rural Baltimore County had already established banks and savings and loan companies in the late 1800s. Communities like Germantown, however, did not have this advantage until after the turn of the 20th century.

² J. C. Sidney, *Map of Baltimore City and County, Maryland, from Actual Surveys* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1850; see also John McGrain, *Inventory of Baltimore Landmarks*, np).

³ *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1877), p. 61.

⁴ E. Frances Offutt, *Baltimore County Landmarks* (Towson, MD: Baltimore County Public Library, 1971), p. 46; see also William Hollifield, *Difficulties Made Easy: History of the Turnpikes of Baltimore City and County* (Cockeysville, MD: Baltimore County Historical Society, 1978), p. 78.

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BUILDING HISTORY

In 1917, Frank and Mary Bliven purchased eight acres of land from Carl and Barbara Scheller. Five years later, the Blivens sold a portion of that acreage to the Germantown Permanent Building Association with the stipulation that no improvements to the lot could be made other than those used directly by the building association. In other words, the only structure that could be erected on the site would be a financial institution. Additionally, any building that would be constructed by the Germantown Permanent Building Association had to be completed within one year. Indeed, if a building was not completed within one year of the title transfer, the deed was to be considered null and void and the property would then transfer back into the name of the Blivens.

The association followed through with the agreement and completed the construction of a modest concrete block building that served as the local bank until 1991. The building's architecture reflects a common type of the 1920s throughout the United States. The one-bay wide, two-bay deep structure with a central entrance is a versatile plan that could serve nearly any commercial business. Buildings of this type were used as stores, restaurants, and many other types of commercial interest in the first half of the 20th century. Most likely a pattern book design, the Germantown Building was not unique as far as overall type is concerned. However, when it was constructed, the boxy rock-faced concrete block building might have seemed out of place in a landscape that was so agricultural and rural in its character. Patented in 1900, rock-faced concrete block instantly became one of the leading building materials in the United States. The concrete blocks were a cheap, quick, and easy alternative to more traditional materials, with a block costing between thirteen and twenty cents to make in 1910. Advertisers also pointed out that it was fireproof, required no paint, and needed little care. Notwithstanding all these advantages, one of the most important reasons for the popularity of concrete block was its ornamental versatility. Any number of wreaths, scrolls, or cobblestone faces could be produced in concrete block.⁵ A combination of changes in both taste and technology in the 1930s led the industry to shift production to the more utilitarian and less decorative panel-faced block.⁶ In the case of the Germantown Bank, the rock-faced concrete was used as a decorative embellishment on the top of the vestibule.

Since the mid-20th century, the landscape of Germantown has greatly changed. To begin, the community was absorbed by the town of Perry Hall to the immediate south, which developed more through the early 20th century than Germantown. In 1906, the portion of the Baltimore and Jerusalem Turnpike lying between White Marsh Run and the Little Gunpowder Falls had deteriorated to the extent that all toll collection along this section ceased by order of the state government. After five years of deliberation and petitioning by local

⁵ Pamela H. Simpson, *Cheap, Quick, and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930* (Knoxville, TN: the University of Tennessee, 1999), p. 23.

⁶ Simpson, p. 27.

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residents, the turnpike was finally ceded to Baltimore County. The rural character of the area, however, did not change until after the Great Depression. Increased outmigration from Baltimore and development of the surrounding area led to the suburbanization of Perry Hall. Belair Road, now a main thoroughfare through the town, was widened in the latter half of the 20th century and is now a four lane highway. Commercial buildings, churches, and other institutional buildings now intermingle with a few pockets of residential construction along Belair Road just north of its intersection with Joppa Road.

In 1989, the Germantown Permanent Building Association was absorbed by the Cowenton Savings and Loan Association, and the title of the Germantown Building then transferred into the name of the latter organization. The building served as a bank for only two more years before finally being sold to residents of Baltimore. The Germantown Building currently serves as the offices of the heating and air conditioning company J. R. Mechanical Services, Incorporated. It was most likely the present owners who altered the building's fenestration.

Chain of Title:

- April 19, 1917: Carl Scheller and Barbara Scheller, wife, to Frank S. Bliven
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 476 Folio 221
- April 13, 1922: Frank S. Bliven and Mary A. Bliven to Germantown Permanent Building Association #2 of Baltimore County
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber WPC 549 Folio 591
- January 3, 1989: Germantown Permanent Building Association #2 of Baltimore County transferred to Cowenton Savings and Loan Association
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 8225 Folio 277

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March 15, 1991: Cowenton Federal Savings and Loan Association to John M. Valunas and Roy R. Vanderwarka of John
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 8735 Folio 77

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-2624

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland*. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Hollifield, William. *Difficulties Made Easy: History of the Turnpikes of Baltimore City and County*. Cockeysville, MD: Baltimore County Historical Society, 1978.
Marye, William B. "The Old Indian Road," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 15 (1920).
McGrain, John. Inventory of Baltimore Landmarks.
"The New Perry Hall School." *Federation PTA News* 6 (April 1930).
Offutt, E. Frances. *Baltimore County Landmarks*. Towson, MD: Baltimore County Public Library, 1971.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of surveyed property Less than one Acre
Acreeage of historical setting Less than one Acre
Quadrangle name White Marsh Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Since 1928, the Germantown Building has been associated with the 1,875 square feet known as parcel 892 of grid 3, map 72 of the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's Office.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	L. V. Trieschmann, A. L. McDonald, and J. J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Inc.	date	8 October 2000
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
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

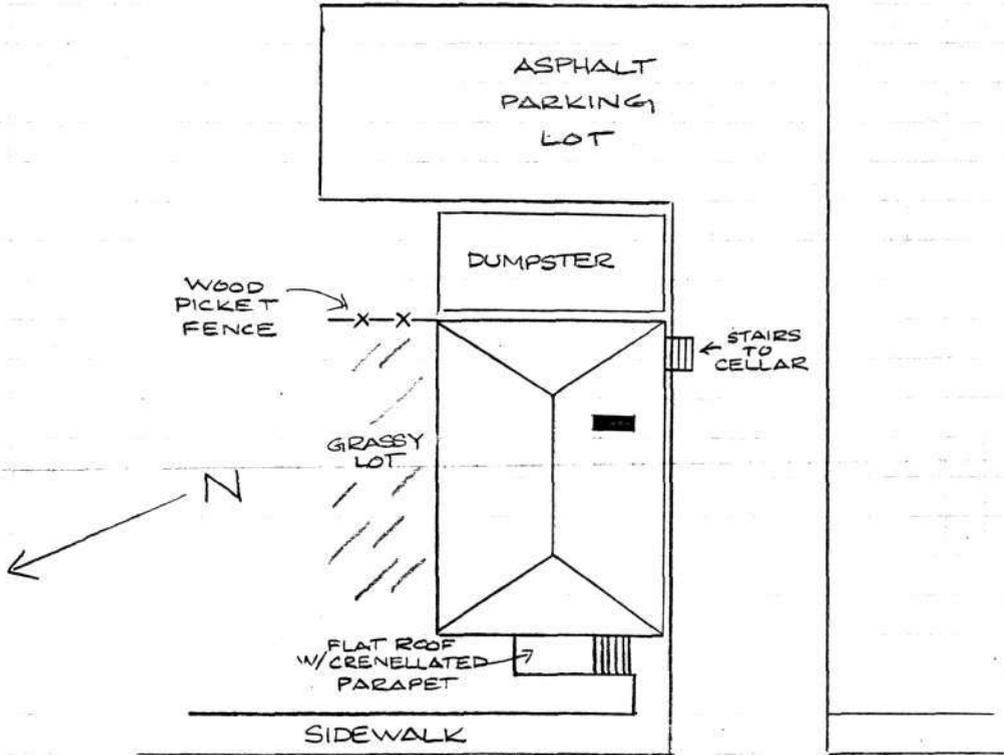
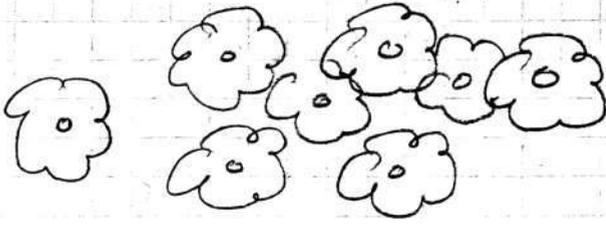
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Sidney, J. C. *Map of Baltimore City and County, Maryland, from Actual Surveys*. Philadelphia, PA: James M. Stephens, 1850.

Simpson, Pamela H. *Cheap, Quick, and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee, 1999.



BELAIR ROAD

BA 2624
GERMANTOWN BUILDING
9537 BELAIR ROAD
PERRY HALL
BALTIMORE COUNTY

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

A 2624
537 BEL AIR ROAD

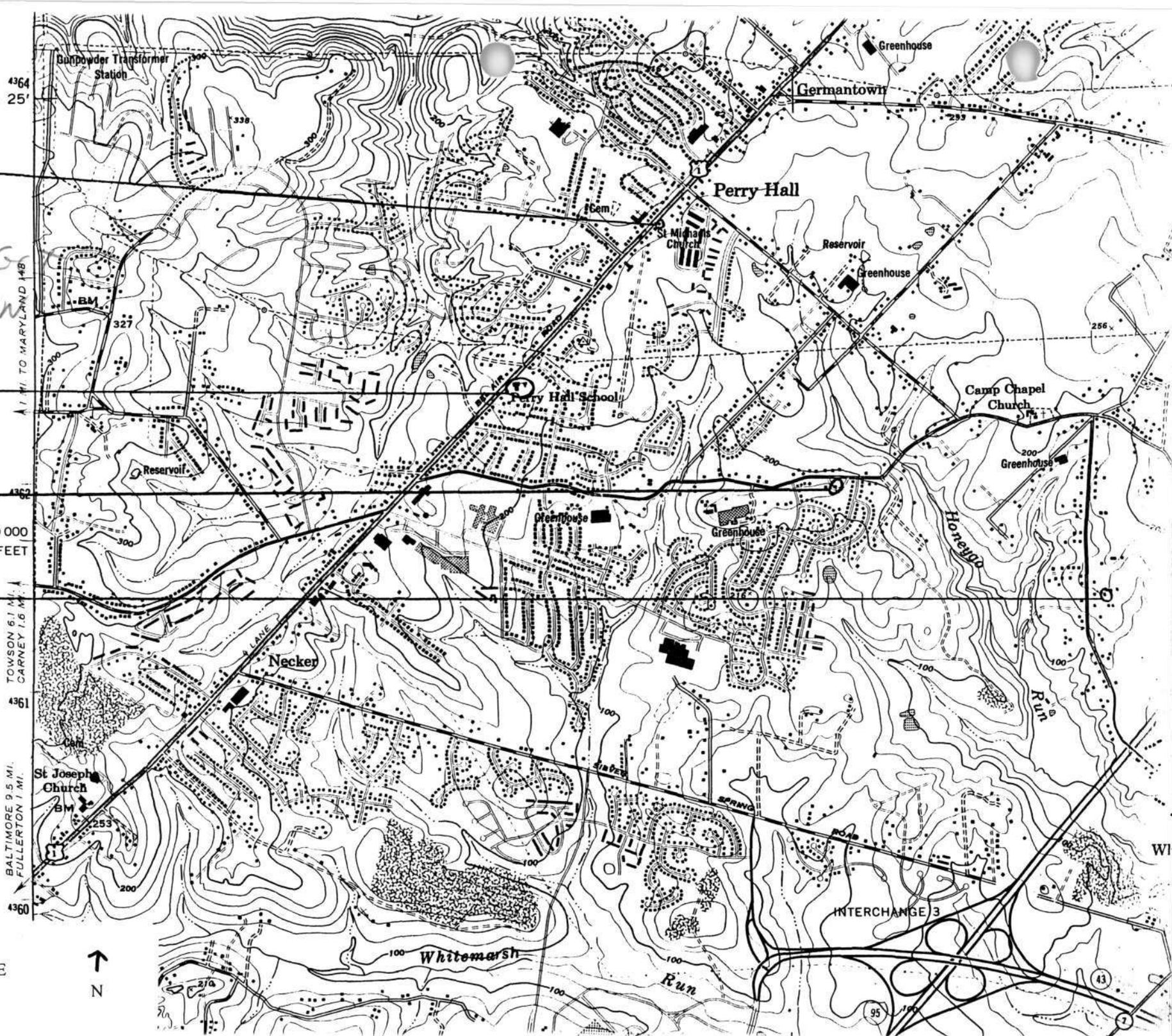
INCORPORATED
LOCATION

A 2622
317 BEL AIR ROAD

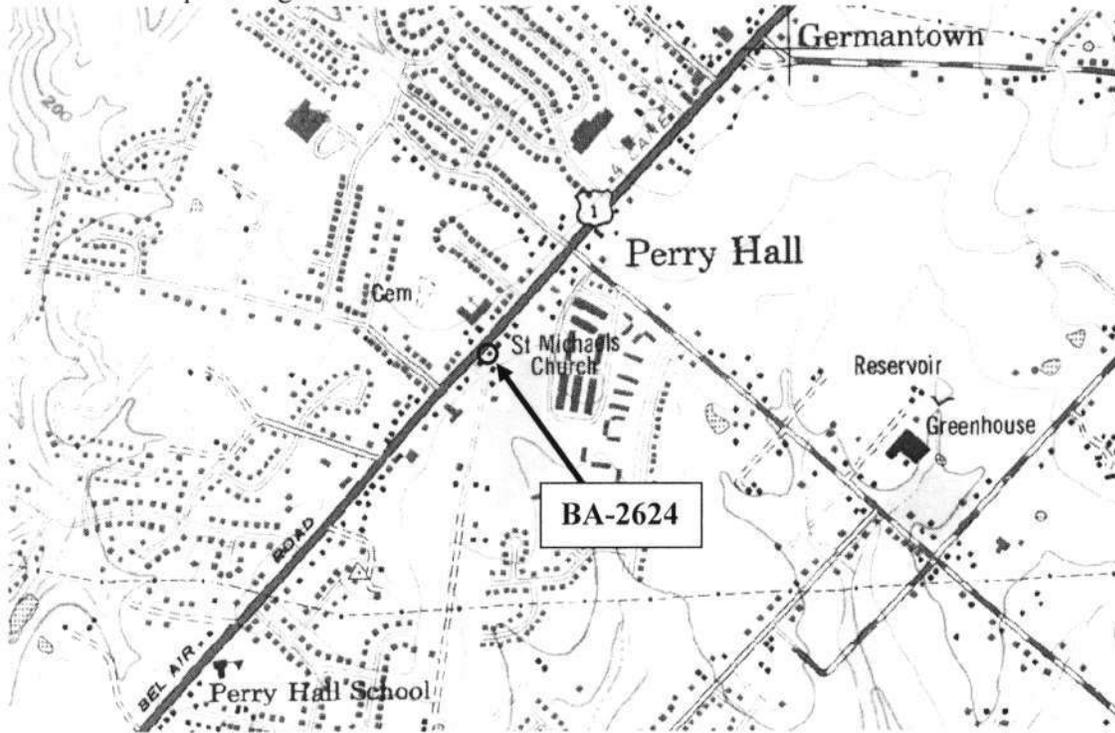
A 255
705 JOPPA
ROAD

1356
25 LOWENTON
AVENUE

USGS QUADRANGLE
WHITE MARSH

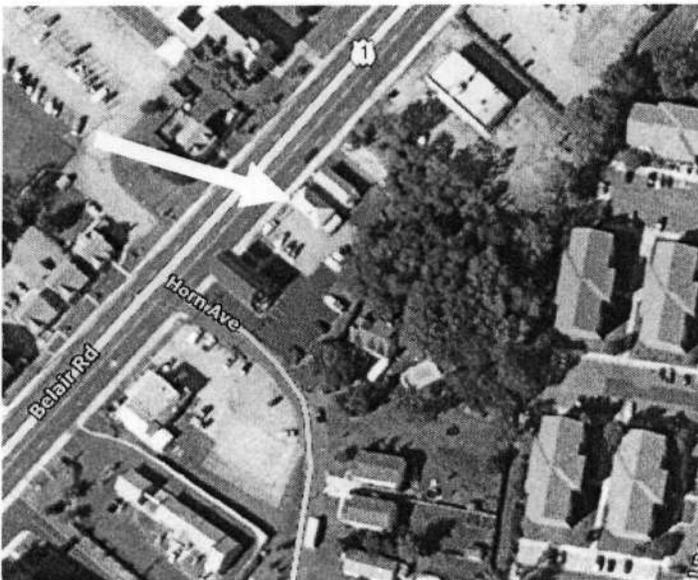


BA-2624
Germantown Building
9537 Belair Road (US 1), Perry Hall
White Marsh quadrangle



Mapquest aerial photo, c. 2007

Tax Map 72, p. 892





9537

JR
MECHANICAL
SERVICES

HEATING AIR CONDITIONING

529-5257

9537

BA- 2624

GERMANTOWN BUILDING

9537 BELAIR RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

WESTERN CORNER, LOOKING EAST

10P3



9537

JR
MECHANICAL
SERVICES
HEATING AIR CONDITIONING

529-5257

9537

BA-2624

GERMANTOWN BUILDING

9537 BELAIR RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

NORTHERN CORNER, LOOKING SOUTH

2 of 3



BA-2624

GERMANTOWN BUILDING

9537 BELAIR RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

EASTERN CORNER, LOOKING WEST

3 of 3

BA-2624

GERMANTOWN BUILDING ASSOCIATION - ca. 1920 - 9537 Belair Road, Perry Hall. Small concrete block structure that housed the village's first financial institution. Characteristic Northeast commercial architecture using rusticated or rock-faced concrete block. The name reflected the German farmers who settled in the vicinity in the 1860s. Now the J.R. Mechanical repair shop (1994).