

Property Address <u>Columbia Pike at Dustin Road, Burtonsville, Montgomery County</u>
Owner Name/Address <u>University of Maryland, 2101 Main Administration Building, College Park, MD 20742</u>
Year Built <u>circa 1945</u>

Description:

The Burtonsville Forest Fire Lookout Tower, erected circa 1945, was previously surveyed by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) in 1973. The structure is currently unaltered from its appearance at the time of the previous survey. However, its condition has degenerated since 1973. The steel frame is rusting, and several wood planks are missing from the landings. Several steps are also missing, and all of the windows and some sections of the cab floor are missing. Adjacent to the tower are two outbuildings which were not noted in the previous survey. In addition, the previous form did not contain a history of the tower. A description of the two outbuildings and a history of the tower follow.

Located at the base of the tower is a 1-story front-gable concrete shed. This shed has a poured concrete foundation, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The structure is clad in asbestos shingles. The second outbuilding is a 1-story concrete privy with a shed roof. The structure is located northwest of the tower.

Significance:

Forest fire lookout towers were built from the late 1930s through the 1940s in Maryland, generally in co-operation with Western Union, which used the towers as relay stations. These towers were used to locate fires during the Spring and the Fall, and were run by one operator during daylight hours. The towers had steel frame construction with a "cab" located at the top of the structure. Most cabs were 10' x 10' with steel walls, 4' in height and large awning windows. Tower operators gained access to the cab through a trap door in the floor. The cab was initially equipped with a desk, a telephone, and an alidade. In later years, a two-way radio was also installed.

The alidade, or "fire finder", was used by tower operators to pinpoint the location of fire or smoke. A circular table, 3' in diameter and approximately 4' to 5' in height, was placed in the center of the cab. A map representing a 30 to 50 mile radius around the tower was placed on top of the table, and the alidade was positioned in the middle of the map. Upon seeing smoke, the tower operator would align the alidade with the smoke to determine the compass bearing. The operator then estimated the fire's location based upon its proximity to specific landmarks. An operator was trained to recognize topographic landmarks, and knew the distance from the tower to these landmarks. The nearest tower was then called to repeat the same procedure. Working together, the staff of two or more towers estimated the location of a fire based upon the location of the intersection of the lines from the alidades. This process, based upon a theory of triangulation, was accurate within several hundred yards.

By the mid-1970s, the fire towers in all but Frederick County were no longer used to detect fires. Most of the towers were used as radio units in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, and today, the majority are used for antennae communications. Approximately 40% of Maryland's fire towers are still extant (Oral Interviews with: Allan Zentz—State Fire Supervisor, Department of Natural Resources: March 11, 1996/March 18, 1996 and George Rocky—Regional Fire Manager, Department of Natural Resources: March 11, 1996).

National Register Evaluation:

Constructed circa 1945, the Burtonsville Forest Fire Lookout Tower is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with the governmental response to the problem of forest fires and coordination of firefighting efforts, dating to the 1930s and 1940s. The property does not meet Criterion B, as it has no known association with historically significant persons. In addition, the structure is not eligible under Criterion C due to its loss of integrity, including the loss of such character-defining features as the alidade and sections of the tower cab. Finally, it is not eligible under Criterion D, as it has no known potential to yield important information.

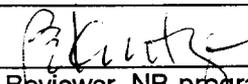
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST ADDENDUM SHEET
INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR PROJECT

Property Name: Burtonsville Forest Fire Lookout Tower
Survey No.: M:15-66 (PACS D8.1)

Property Address <u>Columbia Pike at Dustin Road, Burtonsville, Montgomery County</u>
Owner Name/Address <u>University of Maryland, 2101 Main Administration Building, College Park, MD 20742</u>
Year Built <u>circa 1945</u>

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:

The National Register boundary of the Burtonsville Forest Fire Lookout Tower follows the current property lines of Tax Map KS 563, Parcel 898. This .13 hectare (.32 acre) parcel is bounded on the east, north and south by adjacent tax parcels, and on the west by the Columbia Pike (U.S. Route 29). The boundary includes the fire tower and two outbuildings, which contribute to the significance of the property. The parcel and the structures were conveyed to the University of Maryland by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in 1985. The property is now bounded to the west by a six lane highway and to the east and south by open land.

MHT CONCURRENCE:													
Eligibility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	recommended	<input type="checkbox"/>	not recommended									
Criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> G	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments:													
E. Hannold/K. Williams				8/13/1996						3/11/02			
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services				Date		Reviewer, NR program				Date			

Preparer:
P.A.C. Spero & Company
October 1996



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM for the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC: Burtonsville Lookout Tower				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER: Southeast corner of Burtonsville Road and Route 29				
CITY OR TOWN: Burtonsville				
STATE Maryland		COUNTY: Montgomery		
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered
				<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
				ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
				<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
				<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Montgomery County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville			STATE Maryland	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY: None				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	

M:15-66

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The structure is a fire look-out tower of steel frame with a look-out station.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Empty box for the Statement of Significance.

M:15-66

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Empty box for Major Bibliographical References.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

Empty space for Acreage Justification.

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

STATE:		COUNTY:	

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC DATE: 1/24/73

STREET AND NUMBER:
8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring STATE: Maryland

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

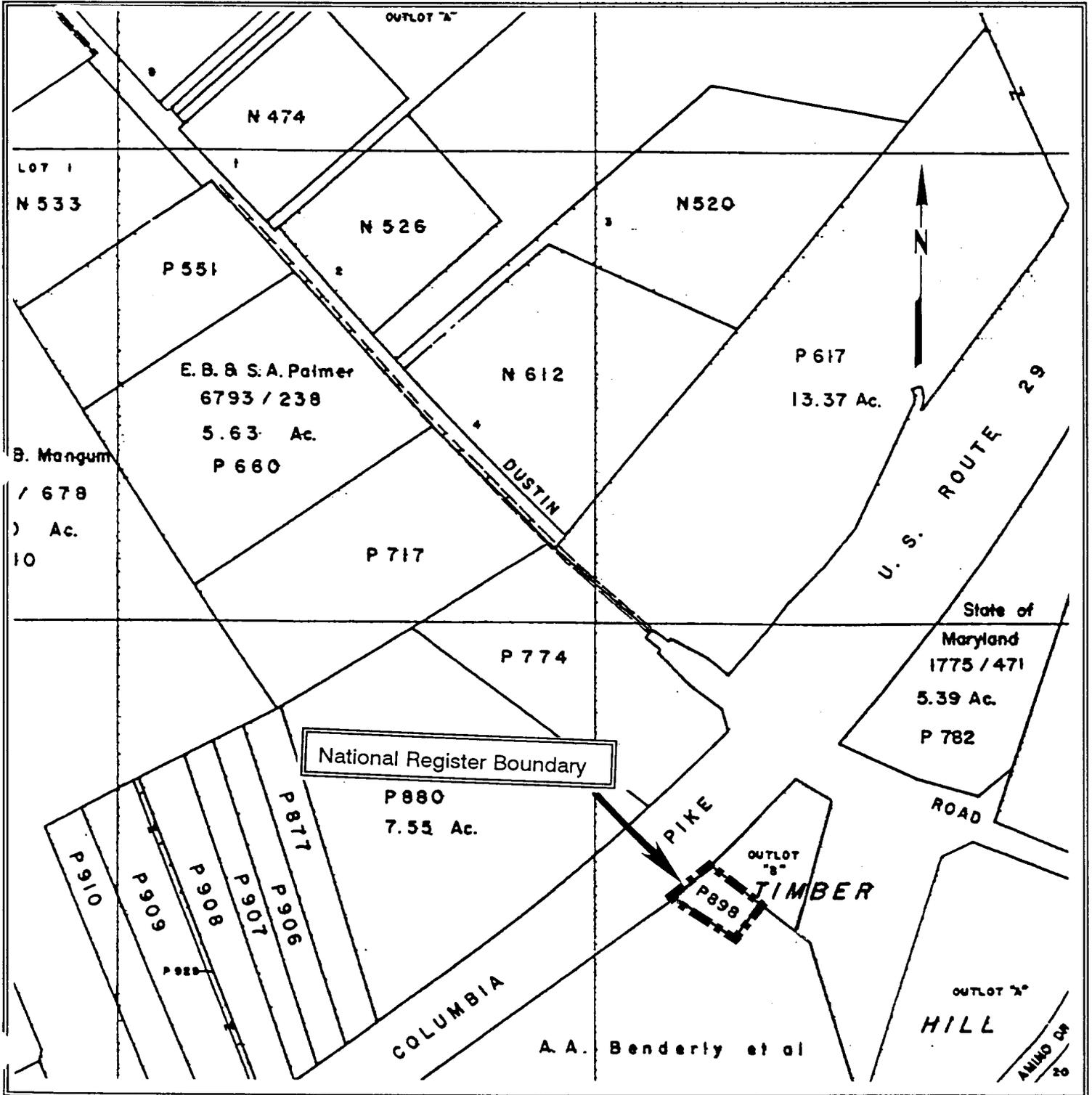
National State Local

Signature _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Property Address Columbia Pike at Dustin Road, Burtonsville, Montgomery County
Owner Name/Address University of Maryland, 2101 Main Administration Building, College Park, MD 20742
Year Built circa 1945

Resource Sketch Map and National Register Boundary Map:



57°30'

Calvary Ch

BURTONSVILLE
FIRE TOWER

M: 15-66
Burtonsville Fire Tower
Beltsville Quad, 1951

UNION
CEM

Burtonsville

SPRING

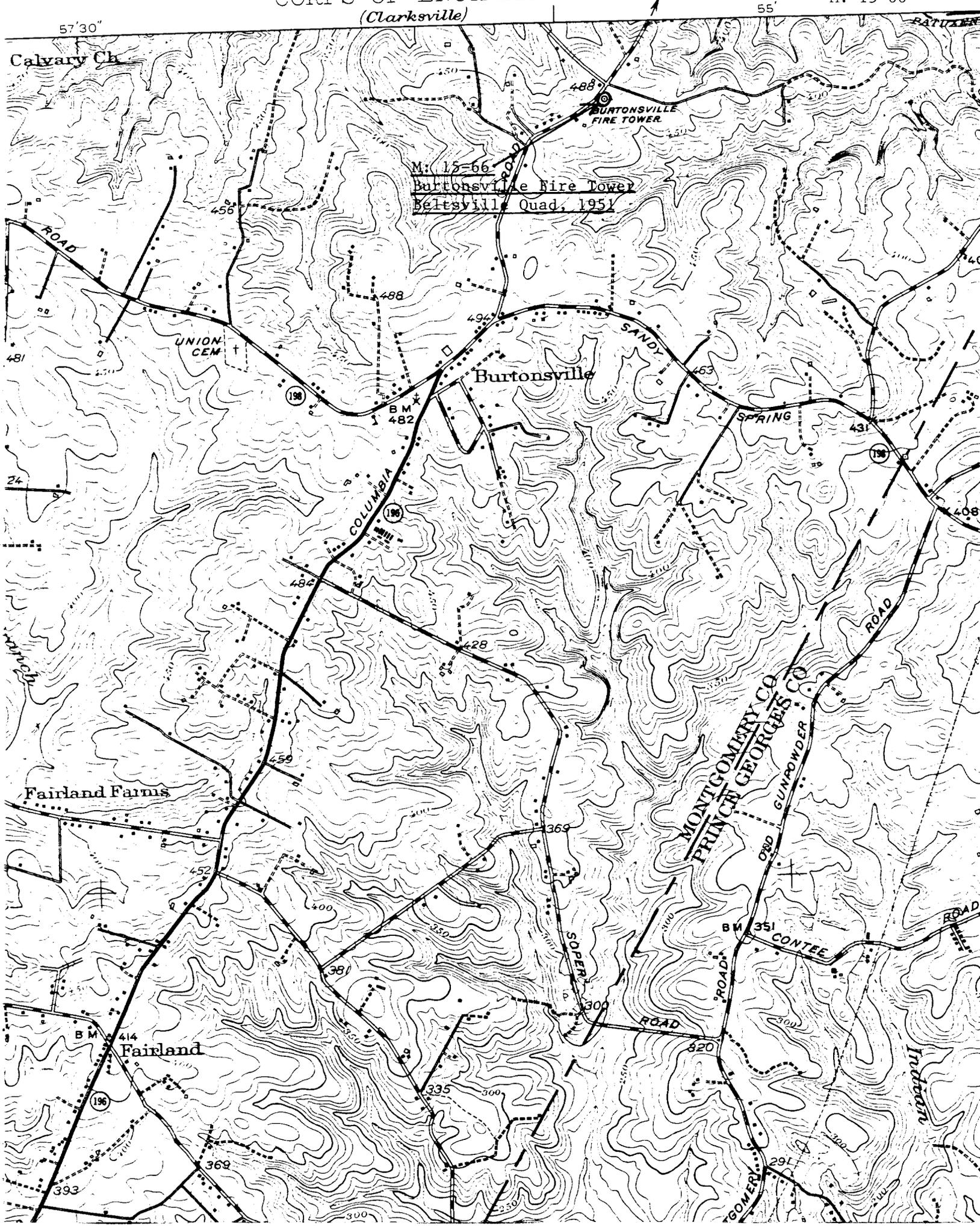
Fairland Farms

Fairland

MONTGOMERY CO
FRINCE GEORGES CO
GUNPOWDER CO

CONTEE

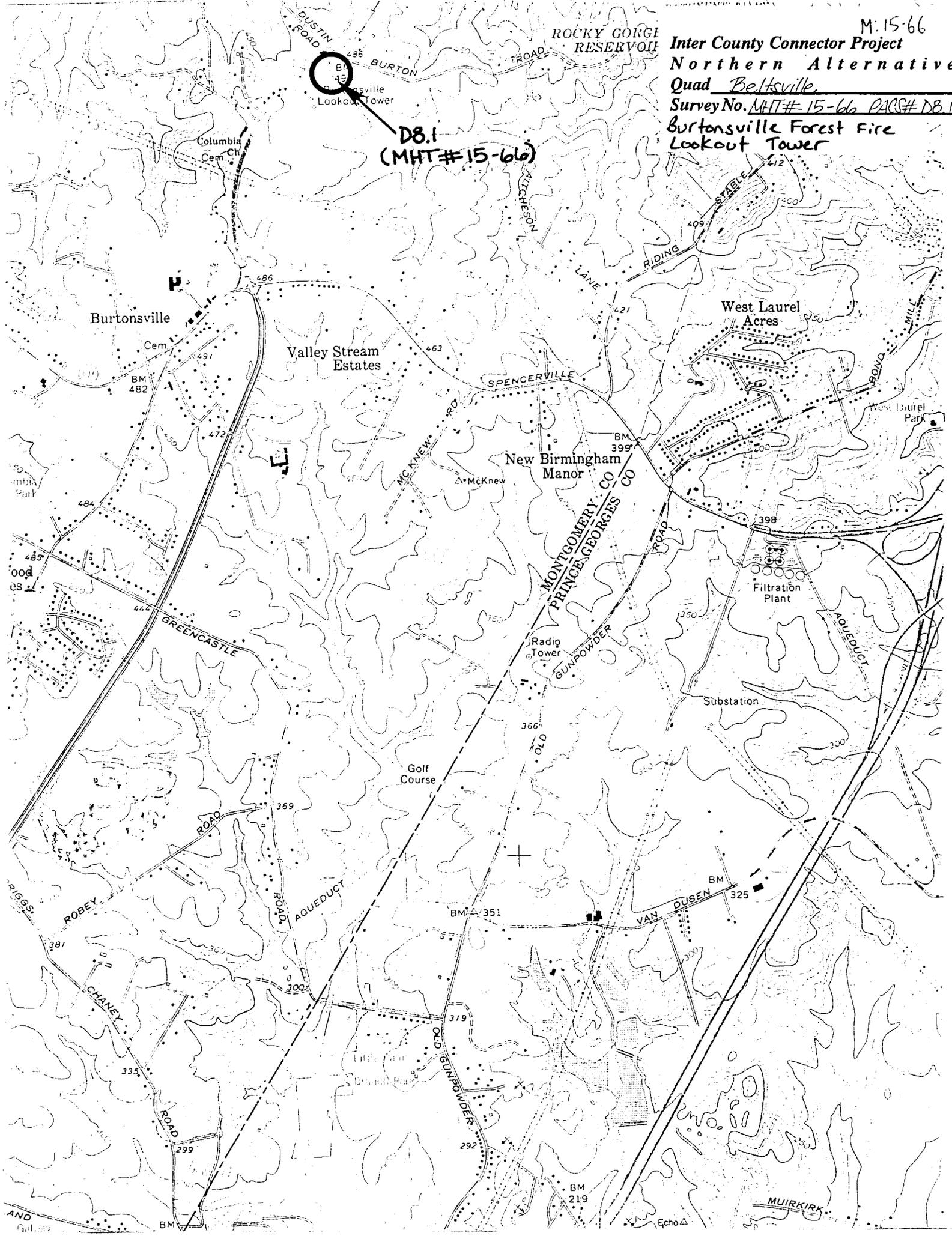
Indian
Road



M. 15-66

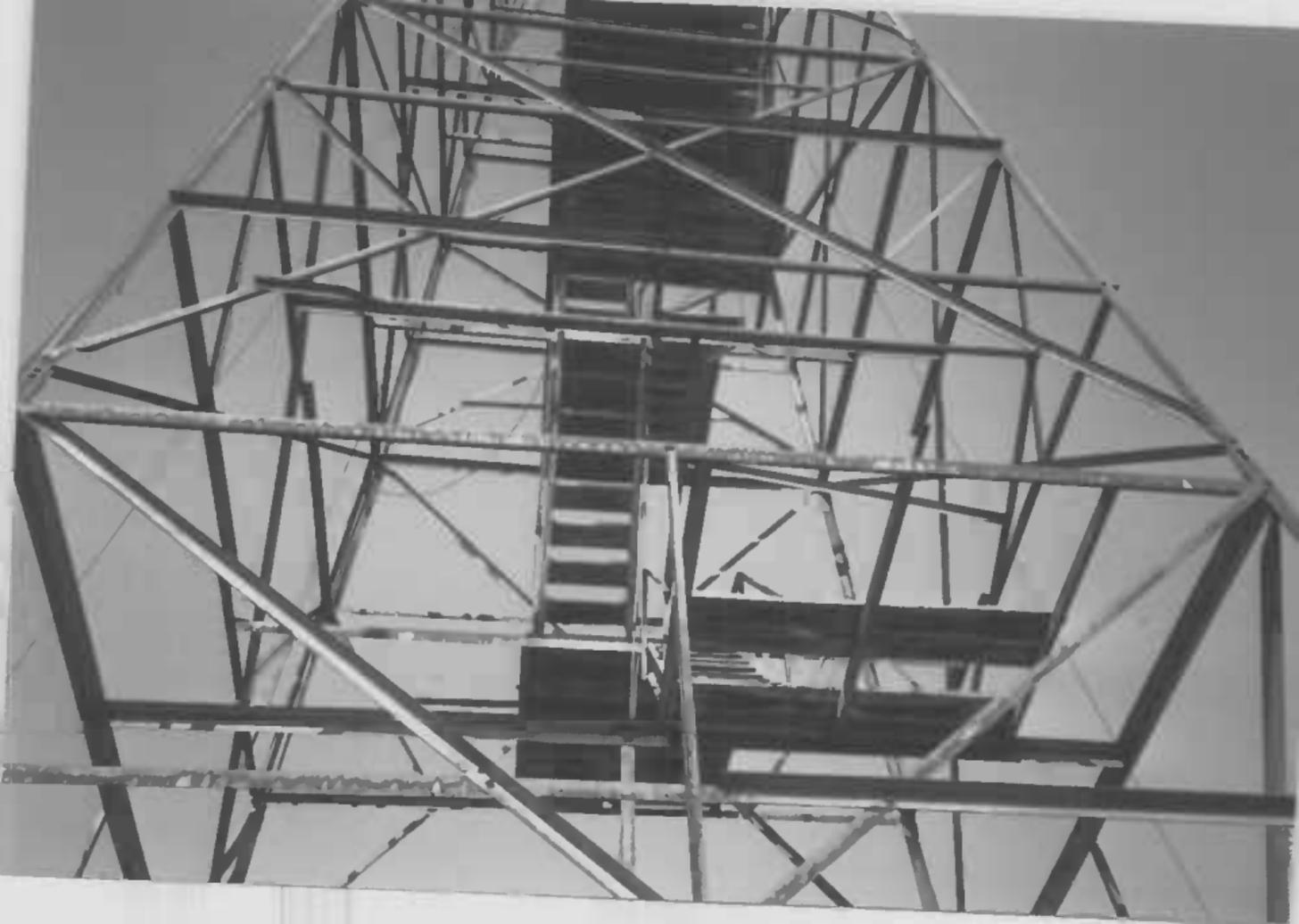
Inter County Connector Project
Northern Alternative
Quad Beltsville
Survey No. MHT# 15-66 PAC# DB.1
Burtonsville Forest Fire
Lookout Tower

DB.1
(MHT# 15-66)





- 1 AHT # 15-50
- 2 Burtonsville Fire Look-out Tower
- 3 Montgomery County
- 4 Adrienne Cowden
- 5 February 1996
- 6 PAC Spero and Company, Towson MD 21204
- 7 Burtonsville Fire Look-out Tower, Fire Tower
N/A



- MHT #: 15-66
- 2 Burtonsville Fire Lookout Tower
 - 2 Montgomery County
 - 4 Adrienne Cowden
 - 5 February 1996
 - 6 P&C Specia and Company, Towson MD 21204
 - 7 Burtonsville Fire look-out tower, Detail-Deck



1 MHT # 15-26

2 Burtonsville Fire Look-out Tower

3 Montgomery County

4 Adrienne Cowden

5 February 1996

6 PAC Spero and Company, Towson MD 21204

7 Burtonsville Fire Look-out Tower, Detail
Watch (Look-out)
Tower

8 3 of 5



1 MHT # 15-65

2 Burtonsville Fire look-out Tower

3 Montgomery County

4 Adrienne Cowden

5 February 1996

6 PAC Spew and Company, Towson MD 21204

7 Burtonsville Fire look-out Tower, Outhouse

84 of 5



- 1 MHT # 15-66
- 2 Burtonsville Fire look-out Tower
- 3 Montgomery County
- 4 Adrienne Cowden
- 5 February 1996
- 6 M.C. Spico and Company, Towson MD 21284
- 7 Burtonsville Fire look-out Tower, station house
- 8 5 of 5



MI: #15-66

NAME FIRE LOOKOUT TOWER

LOCATION RT. 29 BURTONSVILLE, MO.

FACADE LOOKING WEST

PHOTO TAKEN 1/16/73 M. DUYER