M-21-135

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic: Belt, J. A., Building

and/or common: Belt, J. A., Building

2. Location

street & number: 227 East Diamond Avenue — n/a not for publication

city, town: Gaithersburg — n/a vicinity of — congressional district: Ninth

state: Maryland — code: 24 — county: Montgomery — code: 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	X other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name: Bruce A. Hendricks

street & number: 11844 Beekman Place

city, town: Potomac — n/a vicinity of — state: Maryland — 20854

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.: Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number: 50 Courthouse Square

city, town: Rockville — state: Maryland — 20850

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title: Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory — has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date: January 1984 — ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records: Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town: Annapolis — state: Maryland — 21401

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The John A. Belt Building stands on the southwest corner of East Diamond and Summit Avenues, the main intersection of the early commercial district. The present building was constructed in 1903 to replace an 1889 structure which had been destroyed by fire; the present building may incorporate elements of the earlier structure. The main two-story rectangular brick building is four bays wide by two bays deep. The principal (north) facade has three large plate-glass display-type windows on the first story. Originally, the window space in the left (easternmost bay contained a double 1/1 sash window; set off by a quoined and paneled brick pilaster. This portion of the building is expressed almost as a separate entity. The remaining three bays hold a storefront. The second bay from the right contains a recessed entrance with double doors. There are display windows on either side of the entrance. Above all windows and the entrance are diamond-paned leaded glass windows. The area above the left bay display window is distinct from the other three bays in that the leaded glass is arched, whereas the other leaded glass areas are straight-topped. The four bays of the second-floor alternate between single and paired double-hung sash windows. Each opening is topped by a slightly projected splayed brick arch with projecting keystones.

The two-bay-wide first-floor east elevation contains a single door in the right bay topped with a transom the same dimension as the upper half of a single double-hung window. Originally, this opening appears to have contained a Queen Ann-type glass with small multi-colored panels around its periphery. The left bay contains a single 1/1 window which also originally contained a Queen-Anne-type window in the upper sash. The second-floor east elevation contains a 1/1 sash window in each bay. There are slightly projected splayed brick arches with projecting keystones above each opening on the first and second floors.

On the north facade, there are three slightly projected brick pilasters with ten recessed courses spaced five rows apart which create an illusion of classical quoins. The pilasters extend to the entablature; however, at the second-floor level, the simulated quoins are replaced by long rectangular recessed panels. Capping each of the three pilasters is a square recessed panel. The overall effect is that of columns which add to massiveness of the building. These pilasters occur on all corners of the building, and between the east bay and the storefront on the north facade. There are square recessed panels under each window between the first and second floors, except above the storefront, where an awning was originally attached.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

There is a brick water table approximately 18 inches from ground level on all elevation. The brick is laid in common bond.

The main building is flat-roofed. There is a wide three-part entablature with brick dentil course and a sculptured pressed-metal parapet. There are four evenly spaced square, recessed panels in the parapet on the north facade which project slightly above the main parapet line. In the center of the east elevation parapet is a raised half-lunet inscribed "1903" and underneath, "J. A. Belt."

Extending from the rear corner of the east elevation is a two-story flat-roofed brick section, four bays wide. The roofline is parallel to the brick course just below the entablature on the main building. There is a small, square window located in each of the four bays and situated between the first and second stories. Originally, these appear to have contained Queen Anne-type decorative glass panes. On the second floor of the east facade of the rear section are four double-hung sash windows, one in each bay. There are small splayed brick arches with keystones above all openings. A one-brick projecting string course runs above the second-floor windows, even with the top of the upper sash. The west facade is treated similarly, extending a full depth of six bays from the corner of the pressed-brick north facade.

There is a later brick shed-roofed addition located in the rear of the building on the southeast corner.

The interior of the building retains few, if any, of its original architectural elements due to the many changes of use and renovations it has undergone. Neither original floors, ceilings surrounds nor walls are visible.

8. Significance

M-21-135

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
___ 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation	
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates 1903 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B, C
Applicable Exceptions: none
Level of Significance
for evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The J. A. Belt Building is significant for its association with John A. Belt, a well-known and substantial entrepreneur in Montgomery County in the late 19th and early 20th century. Belt had established a store in Gaithersburg by 1879; over the next 25 years, Belt was influential in many areas of the city's civic, commercial, and cultural affairs. He served two terms as Postmaster and also as a member of the Board of Commissioners; was a leading exponent of the 1888 extension of the city's corporate limits to double their former area; provided library, stage, and meeting facilities for the use of city residents; and endowed the construction of a Masonic Lodge. The Belt Building derives additional significance from its architecture, which expresses the prominence of its owner in the rich detailing of its pressed-brick facades. When constructed, the building was the most ornate and substantial commercial structure in Gaithersburg; today it remains the only substantially unaltered early 20th century commercial building in the city's business district, which is predominantly characterized by buildings of more recent date and severely compromised integrity. The richly ornamented brickwork of the Belt Building, incorporating pilasters, quoins, corbeling, paneling, splayed and keystoned arches and a molded and dentiled cornice, is especially noteworthy, as are the leaded-glass transoms above the storefront and first-floor windows on the principal facade.

For History and Supporting Documentation, see Continuation Sheet No. 3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

John A. Belt is first recorded as a merchant in Gaithersburg in Montgomery County Sentinel, April 18, 1879, reporting a robbery at his Gaithersburg Store. The location of the store referred to is unknown. In 1889, Belt erected a new store building, apparently in the same location as the present brick structure according to City land records. However, this structure was destroyed by fire at the turn of the 20th century. The present structure, completed in 1903, may incorporate elements of the 1889 building.

Mr. Belt was not only a prosperous merchant, but a public spirited citizen as well, serving as postmaster from 1885-1890 and again from 1893-1897, and twice as elected member of the town's Board of Commissioners from 1890 to 1894.

In 1888, he was a leading proponent of expanding the town's boundaries which, when accomplished, almost doubled the size of Gaitherburg.

Ironically, in 1893, Mr. Belt helped to establish the first volunteer fire organization in Gaithersburg only to lose his store building to fire in 1903. This led to the construction of the existing brick structure. The building, with its elegant brick work and parapet, is as imposing a structure now as it was then in the townscape of downtown Gaithersburg. It combined delicate Victorian diamond-paned leaded glass windows with massive projecting brick pilasters with quoins. These pilasters lighten on the second floor by the use of vertical recessed panels.

The visual effect is to bring the eye upwards to the elaborate entablature with its brick dentil molding and pressed-metal parapet.

The building facade has remained virtually unchanged during the past 80 years. It has housed the Gaitherburg Post Office, the first Pontiac car dealership in Gaithersburg in 1928, and numerous commercial establishments, and is still considered by the downtown merchants to be the key structure of the commercial area.

John A. Belt was born on May 29, 1851, in Three Springs, Montgomery County, Maryland, and died at the age of 74 in 1925. In 1872, aged 21, he opened a store in Beallsville, Maryland, which he operated until 1878 when he was succeeded by Chiswell and Davis. (Sharf, History of Western Maryland, 1882, this edition Balto. 1968, page 737). G. M. Hopkins' Atlas of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1879,

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

shows Belt's store as the site of the Beallsville Post Office, thus Belt would have been postmaster of that town before coming to Gaithersburg.

The date of Belt's arrival in Gaithersburg is unknown, as is the location of his first place of business. However, we know that his store was in operation by April of 1879 through the Montgomery County Sentinel which reported on April 18, 1879, that "thieves at Gaithersburg" had robbed the John Belt Store. Belt's first land purchase at Gaithersburg was recorded in April of 1879 also. This property was purchased from William Hutton and is believed to be shown on the 1894 map on East Diamond Avenue, one lot from the bank.

In 1884 and 1886, Belt purchased more land on East Diamond from Hutton. The homes of Belt and of his mother-in-law, Mary Anderson, were built on two of these lots; however, none of these lands were within the town limits of Gaithersburg and, therefore, Belt was not a legal resident and could not vote, hold office, or influence town affairs. Thus, on February 20, 1888, a motion was recorded in the town minutes "to appoint a committee to take into consideration the extension of the Corporation limits as prayed for by Mr. John A. Belt and others." The annexation was made and Belt gained a voice in civic affairs.

Assured then that he would have some control over roads, etc., Belt proceeded to purchase a number of properties on the southwest side of Diamond and Summit Avenues from J. S. Poole in the early part of 1889. The Fall of 1889 found Belt constructing a new store on one of his newly acquired properties, the site of the present building. The Sentinel of September 6, 1889, notes his progress under the heading "Gaithersburg Improvements."

> "Mr. John A. Belt, a leading merchant of Gaithersburg, has commenced the erection at that place of a large store-house. The building will be 36 x 52 feet and two stories high. The store-room will have a dimension of 25 x 52 feet, with a ware-room adjoining 11 x 52 feet. The second story will be used as a public hall, and the building, when completed, will be one of the largest in the county. Mr. George Meem has the contract for the carpenter's work and Mr. J. T. Martin for the painting. The estimated cost of the building is about $3,000."

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

This store and its public hall, known as Norman Hall, immediately became the pivotal structure of Gaithersburg's social, cultural, and governmental activities. With his business established and comfortably situated in its new quarters, Belt began to assume a more prominent role in civic, fraternal, and town affairs.

Previously, in 1885, Belt had been appointed Postmaster. With his appointment, the two offices serving the area, Ayres, located in the railroad depot, and Gaithersburg, in Ward's store on Frederick Avenue, were consolidated and moved to Belt's old store near the depot. Belt held the office from 1885 to 1890, then again from 1893 to 1897. Thus, it can be presumed that the new building's first public function was as the Post Office.

Shortly after, it assumed another public function: town hall and polling place. In May, 1890, Belt exercised his recently received right and ran for town commissioner. He tied with a prominent doctor in town, and a run-off election was held, of which Belt was the winner. As usual, the poll was held in Norman Hall which served as the town hall and polling place until the fire in 1903. He was reelected in 1892 for the second time, receiving a second highest number of ballots cast. Much mention of J. A. Belt's presence is made in the commission minutes and he was involved in many different aspects of the town's affairs. He enjoyed a perfect attendence record at all town meetings and served as president pro tem on several occasions. His most prominent work was with tax, financial, and roadway matters.

Norman Hall rapidly became the social and cultural center of Gaithersburg. Belt himself was a member of the Waverly Literary Society which met in Norman Hall beginning in January of 1890. The Waverly Club Library was famous for the number and depth of its holdings beginning in 1890 with 327 volumes and increasing by 1894 to 1,000 volumes.

The Hall was unique in Gaithersburg in that it had a stage. As such, it was the preferred location of theater, lectures, recitals, musical presentations and high school graduations. For example, on January 17th the noted humorist Prof. Hawks lectured at Norman Hall. (Sentinel, 1/12/94) and on February 22nd, the Knights of Pythias gave a dramatic entertainment, "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room." (Sentinel, 2/16/94). Also, in 1894, Miss Minnie Smith's pupils gave

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

a musical recital in Norman Hall. (Sentinel, 5/15/94). In June, the ladies of the Ascension Church gave a Strawberry Festival at Norman Hall (Sentinel, 6/1/94) and the next week the Hon. John B. Gordon delivered his famous lecture, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," at Norman Hall (Sentinel 6/8/94). When the Jefferson Literary Society was founded in 1898, it also used the facilities at Norman Hall for its public events.

Among the many programs presented at Norman Hall through the years, the "Grand Concert" of September 29, 1890, stands out. The program features "the grandest musical entertainment ever given in this vicinity," but is remarkable to the modern reader in that the announcement noted that the "Local train leaving Washington at 7 p.m. will arrive in time for the concert and at close of the concert a special train will start for Washington and way stations" (Sentinel, 9/26/90).

Belt played host in 1890 to the newly formed "Democrats of Gaithersburg District Club." The group organized with 30 members to be called the McKaig Democratic Tariff Reform Club of Gaithersburg of which Belt was elected treasurer. Later in October, McKaig spoke to the club and others at Norman Hall (Sentinel, 9/10/90; Sentinel, 10/17/90).

But, Belt's finest moment as host was to the Fraternal Order which seems to have epitomized all of the merchant's civic, fraternal, and cultural activities .... Pentalpho Lodge No. 194 of the Masons. The Masonic order had been formed in Norman Hall on July 7, 1893, with John Belt accepting the office of Junior Warden. Belt was an avid supporter of the Lodge, serving in many capacities and as Worshipful Master in 1897. In 1896, to fulfill a lost election wager, Belt gave a banquet in "the Town Hall" (Norman Hall) consisting of seven courses with toasts to sixty guests. Among the diners were delegations of prominent Masons from Washington and Rockville. Belt was presented with a gold cigar for his gesture (Sentinel, 12/4/96).

It was this loyalty, accompanied by a generous spirit, that moved Belt when the Masonic Lodge was hit by lightning in May 1898 and much of the paraphernalia and lodge property destroyed. Belt family tradition has it that John A. Belt donated the sum of $1,500 towards the building of a new free-standing Masonic Hall which would accommodate Lodge functions and serve as a public assembly place. Unfortunately, Lodge records to substantiate this claim have been lost, but the Sentinel reports on December 15, 1899, that "A large hall building 50 x 100 feet is being erected at Gaithersburg by

See Continuation Sheet No. 7

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

John A. Belt." This item was followed on December 29, 1899, by an account of the laying of the cornerstone of the new Masonic Hall at Gaithersburg. This seems proof that the family tradition in this case was accurate.

Perhaps it was Belt's generosity and civic spirit, coupled with misfortune, that led to his decline as a Gaithersburg merchant. Belt's descendants have related his practice of giving credit to those in need and of writing off the debts of victims of ill luck. His own resources were strained in 1903 with the destruction of his business by fire.

The Sentinel reported that "The large mercantile establishment of Mr. John A. Belt on Diamond Avenue, this county, was destroyed by fire on Monday last" (9/18/03). The owner was in Westminster when the fire began in a stock of brooms in the ware-room. The flames soon spread to some stocks of oil and fammables, then to a large stock of ammunition. The employees of the store were driven out by the exploding ammunition and had to leave the building without saving any property, goods, or business records. The loss was estimated at twelve thousand dollars, only partially covered by insurance.

No record exists of the extent of the damage to the actual building. Available information suggests that the basic exterior structure of the "1903" building is similar to that of the 1889 structure and that a portion of the present building is the original fabric of 1889.

It has been observed by an architectural consultant that the entire west wall of the building is constructed of one brick as one fabric with no broken courses, excepting window openings. The brick on the east, or ware-room side, is inferior quality brick, unlike that used on the east and front, and of different courses.

It should also be noted that the exterior measurements of the 1889 building, 36 x 52, (as noted in the newspaper item mentioned above) are substantially the same as those shown in the measured drawings done in 1983 (40 x 56). Belt's measurements in his sale ad of 1914 (51 x 72) are dissimilar, but are probably erroneous

See Continuation Sheet No. 8

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

since the present building is the same one sold. The assumption is that major rebuilding occurred on the ware-room east wall where the fire was most intense and on the front, where a pressed-brick facade is present.

Most importantly, no building permit was issued to rebuild the store as was usual practice. In the case of a May, 1903, fire which destroyed the fertilizer warehouse of the Gaithersburg Milling and Manufacturing Company, and the house of C. F. Hogan, both owners applied for and were granted permits to rebuild, "On site of one recently destroyed by fire." This suggests that the destruction of Belt's 1889 building was less than total.

In October of 1902, the Commissioners of Gaithersburg decided to "pike" (grade and pave with crushed rock) Diamond Avenue from the Post Office (at the hotel) east as funds would permit. "In front of Belt's store pike to be 20 feet wide, the balance to be 18 feet." On June 6, 1904, the minutes record the request of Mr. John A. Belt to remove about 8 inches of the roadbed in front of his store. On June 14, the Corporation moved to "move all roadbed on Mr. Belt's property in front of his store. The secretary was instructed to notify Mr. Belt to remove all old bricks from the street in front of his store."

These bricks are later found to be the property of the Gaithersburg Milling and Manufacturing Company and the same ordered to remove them from in front of Belt's store or they would be arrested and fined for obstructing streets. However, it appears that Belt's store was in its same location and he was concerned with access to his business in the spring of 1904.

Unfortunately, Belt never recovered financially from the loss of his stock and damage to his property. In 1904, a deed of trust to Wm. Talbott was applied to all of Belt's properties. The Sentinel of June 17, 1904, said, "Mr. J. A. Belt, the oldest established merchant in Gaithersburg, this county, voluntarily executed a deed of trust to Atty. Wm. H. Talbott on Wed., for the benefit of his creditors. It is stated that available assets amount to $20,000, while the liabilities will reach only $8,000. Last September, Mr. Belt sustained a heavy loss in the destruction of his establishment by fire."

After this time, Belt's properties were never free of encumbrances, and finally, the store was sold in 1914. Belt was not operating a store on the premises at the time of the sale.

See Continuation Sheet No. 9

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Marshall Walker managed his business at the location until 1914 when the building was offered for sale at auction on March 21, 1914. The structure was described as a "handsome pressed brick-front store property, located on the corner of Diamond and Summit Avenues, Gaithersburg, Montgomery County, Maryland. This building is 51 x 72 feet, two stories, and built of the finest material throughout, heated by a hot air furnace (Sentinel, March 20, 1914).

The building was sold to George F. Linthicum for the sum of $8,100, stock not included, an extremely high price for the times (Sentinel, 4/6/1914).

Linthicum operated the store for a time, then it was sold to J. Forrest Walker and Clay Plummer. Plummer left the company and Forrest was joined by his cousin, Marshal, Belt's former manager. The Walker store continued until the early 1950's. After 1921, the Post Office lost its quarters and was installed in the main area of the Belt Building to remain as the hub of a small town without door-to-door mail delivery until a new office was built in 1950.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being a description of a parcel of land located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, more particularly described as the J. A. Belt property, 227 East Diamond Avenue, bounded as follows:

1. Beginning at a point on the south side of East Diamond Avenue, said point being the common corner of the J. A. Belt property and the Anthony Bonnano property, as recorded in Liber 2838 at Folio 165;

2. thence running with the south line of the East Diamond Avenue, N 86 degrees 45' 00", 35.53 feet, to a point;

3. thence N 12 degrees 07' 00" E, 3.25 feet, to a point;

4. thence S 77 degrees 53' 00" E, 41.10 feet to a point on the west side of South Summit Avenue;

5. thence with the west line of South Summit Avenue, S 12 degrees 07' 00" W, 101.11 feet to a point, said point being the intersection of the west line of South Summit Avenue and the north line of a 15' public alley;

6. thence with the north line of the 15' public alley, N 86 degrees 51' 00" W, 52.35 feet to a point, said point being the common corner of the J. A. Belt/Anthony Bonnano properties and the north line of the 15' public alley;

7. thence with the common line of the Bonnano property and the J. A. Belt property, N 03 degrees 43' oo" W, 9236 feet to the point of beginning.

The described property contains 5769 square feet or 0.13244 acre.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The present property boundaries are proposed in this nomination. More extensive original property was long ago sold-off and commercially developed. The nominated property, 0.13244 acre, comprises the single city lot upon which the resource stands.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Montgomery County Land Records
Gaithersburg, Heart of Montgomery County by Centennial Committee, 1978
Gaithersburg, Maryland, Its Advantages by Lee M. Lipscomb

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.13244 acre
Quadrangle name Gaithersburg, Maryland
Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	310360	4334640
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 10.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen C. Bowers/James Sengstack/Judith Christensen, et al.
organization Historic Preservation Advisory Committee date January 4, 1983
street & number Planning Department, City Hall 31 South Summit Avenue telephone (301) 948-3220
city or town Gaithersburg state Maryland 20877

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. McHale 6-29-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835

GAITHERSBURG HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET

ADDRESS 227 E. DIAMOND AVE. MHT # M-21-135 SURVEY # 073
County: Montgomery LOT -, BLOCK -
Gaithersburg LIBER -, FOLIO -

OWNER: E.Diamond Ave.Parnership PRESENT USE: commercial
ADDRESS: same ORIGINAL USE: commercial
CITY: same BUILDER: J.A. Belt

STYLE: early 20thC.commercial DATE BUILT: 1903 PHYS. COND: excellent

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
FOUNDATION: brick
WALL STRUCTURE: Balloon
WALL COVERING: brick

ROOF CONSTRUCTION:
ROOF STRUCTURE: Wood Truss
ROOF COVERING: poss.copper sheet
ROOF STYLE: parapet
EAVES: -
CHIMNEYS: center,right edge

STORIES: 2+ BAYS: 4 x 6 APPROX DIMENSION: -

WINDOWS:
TYPE: d.h.s.
LIGHTS: 1/1
BAY WINDOWS: -
SIDE BY SIDES: -
GABLE TYPES: -

ENTRANCES:

LOCATION: 3rd
DESCRIPTION: double

THREAT: none SURROUNDINGS: commercial-SEE NATIONAL ~~REGISTER FORM~~ REGISTER FORM

M: 21-135

HISTORIC

DESIGNATION

APPLICATION

FORM

City of Gaithersburg, Maryland

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Historic Designation Application No. - HD 4

Filed March 25, 1983

Sign Posted September 9, 1983

Ad Published September 7, 1983

P.C. Referral Date September 14, 1983

HDC Public Hearing September 26, 1983

HDC Decision/Date Approved 11/21/83

Resolution No.

EXHIBIT HD-4 #1 9/26/83 HDC

APPLICATION IS HEREBY MADE BY:

Gaithersburg Historic Preservation Advisory Committee

FOR DESIGNATION OF THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED BELOW AS A:

XXX HISTORIC SITE HISTORIC RESOURCE HISTORIC DISTRICT

1 NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic
Belt Building (M:21-135)
And/Or Common

2 LOCATION

Address
227 East Diamond avenue, Gaithersburg, Md. 20877

PLEASE FURNISH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPERTY(IES) PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION:

DISTRICT	SUBDIVISION	NAME CODE	LOT/BLOCK	ACRES/FEET	SUBDIVISION TRACT NAME
9	01		Parcel 15/16*	1591'/7514'	Summit Hall
9					
9					
9					

Continue on separate sheet.

*Building located on Parcel 16

M:21-135

3 CLASSIFICATION
(Circle one in each column)

OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE		
Public	Occupied	Agriculture	Military	Commercial
(Private)	(Unoccupied)	Educational	Park	Government
Both	Work in progress	Entertainment	Industrial	Transportation
Public Acquisition in Process	Assessible Yes: Restricted	Residence	Museum	Scientific
Being Considered	Yes: Unrestricted	Other: None		
	No			

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Bruce Hendricks Telephone No. 301/869-3680

11844 Beekman pl.
Street & Number

Potomac Md. 20854
City, Town State Zip

5 LOCATION OR LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc. Liber #: 5546 Folio #: 670

Montgomery County Court House
Street & Number

Rockville Md. 20850
City, Town State Zip

6 IS PROPERTY CURRENTLY ON NATIONAL OR STATE REGISTER? If so, complete.

Title

Date Federal State County Local

Depository for Survey Records

City, Town State Zip

7 DESCRIPTION

Physical Condition (circle one)

Excellent	Fair	Ruins	Unaltered	Original Site
(Good)	Deteriorated		Altered	Moved

M:21-135

Describe the present and original (if known) exterior physical appearance.

The Belt Building is a two story brick structure combining both Classical Revival and late Victorian features.

While the sides and rear are relatively plain in appearance, the front facade provides a dramatic mixture of design characteristics that are unique to this area.

The first story is divided into four bays with floor to ceiling display type windows in each. The use of decorative leaded glass above each window adds a distinctive Victorian effect. Three projecting brick columns with 10 recessed courses spaced five rows apart create an illusion of Classical Quoins, a characteristic which contributes much to the overall massiveness of the building.

The second story continues the four bay division with two double and two single width windows. Above each window are radiating arches with projecting keystones of brick. The three projecting columns are continued from the first story, however, at this level the columns change dramactically from the massive design of the first story to a lighter, recessed design. Capping each column at the roof line is a recessed square.

One of the more dramatic features of the front facade is the three part entablature with a cornice of dental molding under a sculptured parapet.

Brick patterns consist of common bonding on the sides and rear with a running bond on the front. There is also a brick water table surrounding the building.

As to the original exterior appearance of this building we can determine from early photographs that it has changed very little from construction in 1903.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:21-135

Areas of Significance - check and justify below

Period

Prehistoric	Archeology-prehistoric	Community Planning	Landscape	Religion
1400-1499	Archeology-historic	Conservation	Architecture	Science
1500-1599	Agriculture	Economics	Law	Sculpture
1600-1699	Architecture	Education	Literature	Social/Humanitaria
1700-1799	Art	Engineering	Military	Theater
1800-1899	Commerce	Exploration/ Settlement	Music	Transportation
1900-	Communications	Industry	Philosophy	Other (specify)
			Politics/ Government	

Specific Dates
Construction- 1903

Builder/Architect
Unknown

Statement of Significance

The Belt Building is being recommended for historic designation based on its unique architecture and the significant contributions of the original owner, John A. Belt, to Gaithersburg's commerce and civic growth.

Architecturely, the present structure which was constructed in 1903 remains almost totally in its original state. Typical of this period of architectural change and experimentation, the Belt building combines a variety of unique design characteristics.

Victorian features most notable are the front window with a segmental arch and the use of leaded decorative glass throughout.

John A. Belt, the original owner of the structure, was a very enterprising, progressive merchant who operated what was reported in 1891 to be the largest mercantile house in Montgomery County. Mr. Belt's activities as a merchant in Gaithersburg were noted as early as 1879 and extended into the early 1900's. In addition to his success in business, several historic sources indicate that he was a public spirited individual who became a significant force in the development of the town. Reportedly, he was instrumental in proposing the boundary change of 1888 which nearly doubled the area of the town; and from 1890 to 1894 he served on the Board of Commissioners.

(Reference Gaithersburg Zoning Ordinance Article XII, Section 24-225 (1) a and c, and (2) a, e, and f.)

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9 SURROUNDING LAND USES

North

East Commercial - "Olde Towne"

South

West

10 INFORMATION SOURCES

Montgomery County Land Records
Gaithersburg, Heart of Montgomery County by Centennial Committee
Montgomery County Sentinel
Gaithersburg, Maryland, It's Advantages by Lee M. Lipscomb
American Architecture-A Field Guide by Carole Rifkind

11 ATTACHMENTS

Exterior Black and White Views

Two (2) Location Maps - scale 1" = 200'

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
21 STATE CIRCLE
SHAW HOUSE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET
Individual Structure Survey Form

SURVEY NUMBER: M: 21 - 135

NEGATIVE FILE NUMBER:

UTM REFERENCES:
Zone/Easting/Northing

U.S.G.S. QUAD. MAP:

PRESENT FORMAL NAME:

ORIGINAL FORMAL NAME:

PRESENT USE: empty

ORIGINAL USE:

ARCHITECT/ENGINEER:

BUILDER/CONTRACTOR:

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE:
Excellent( ) Good( )
Fair( ) Poor:( )

THEME:

STYLE:

DATE BUILT: 1903

COUNTY:

TOWN:

LOCATION:

COMMON NAME: Bolt Bldg

FUNCTIONAL TYPE:

OWNER:

ADDRESS: [illegible] Diamond Ave.

ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:
Yes( ) No ( ) Restricted( )

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE:
Local( ) State ( ) National( )

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Structural System

1. Foundation: Stone( )Brick(X)Concrete( )Concrete Block( )
2. Wall Structure
   A. Wood Frame: Post and Beam( )Balloon( )
   B. Wood Bearing Masonry: Brick(X)Stone( )Concrete( )Concrete Block( )
   C. Iron( ) D. Steel( ) E. Other:
3. Wall Covering: Clapboard( )Board and Batten( )Wood Shingle( )Shiplap( )
   Novelty( )Stucco( )Sheet Metal( )Aluminum( )Asphalt Shingle( )
   Brick Veneer( )Stone Veneer( )
   Bonding Pattern: side - common front [illegible] Other:
4. Roof Structure
   A. Truss: Wood( )Iron( )Steel( )Concrete( )
   B. Other:
5. Roof Covering: Slate( )Wood Shingle( )Asphalt Shingle( )Sheet Metal( )
   Built Up( )Rolled( )Tile( )Other:
6. Engineering Structure: 1ctr [illegible]
7. Other:

Appendages: Porches( )Towers( )Cupolas( )Dormers( )Chimneys(2)Sheds( )Ells( )
Wings ( )Other:

Roof Style: Gable( )Hip( )Shed( )Flat(X)Mansard( )Gambrel( )Jerkinhead( )
Saw Tooth( )With Monitor( )With Bellcast( )With Parapet(X)With False Front( )
Other:

Number of Stories: —

Number of Bays: [illegible]

Approximate Dimensions:

Entrance Location: [illegible]

THREAT TO STRUCTURE:
No Threat( )Zoning(X)Roads( )
Development( )Deterioration( )
Alteration ( )Other:

LOCAL ATTITUDES:
Positive( )Negative( )
Mixed( ) Other:

M:21-135

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL OR STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION:

· water table around bldg (C)( )

front - 6 leaded glass panes above front entrance [illegible] are arched at top
[illegible] panels

left - 5 panel door

· [ ] - above window + door

arches with center keystone above all windows

brick - addition

arches - flat, no keystone, made partially with header brick (2 rows)

right - top row - 6 windows - long 1/1
2nd row - 6 square windows

RELATED STRUCTURES: (Describe)

arch - flat with center keystone; one row of header brick beneath windows

brick veneer columns - 1st floor; 2nd floor - recessed panel in column

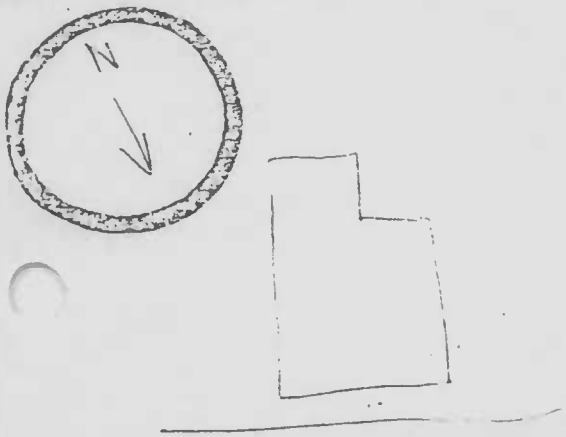
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

roof - parapet - metal brick

ground level - circle lined in header brick

REFERENCES:

MAP: (Indicate North In Circle)



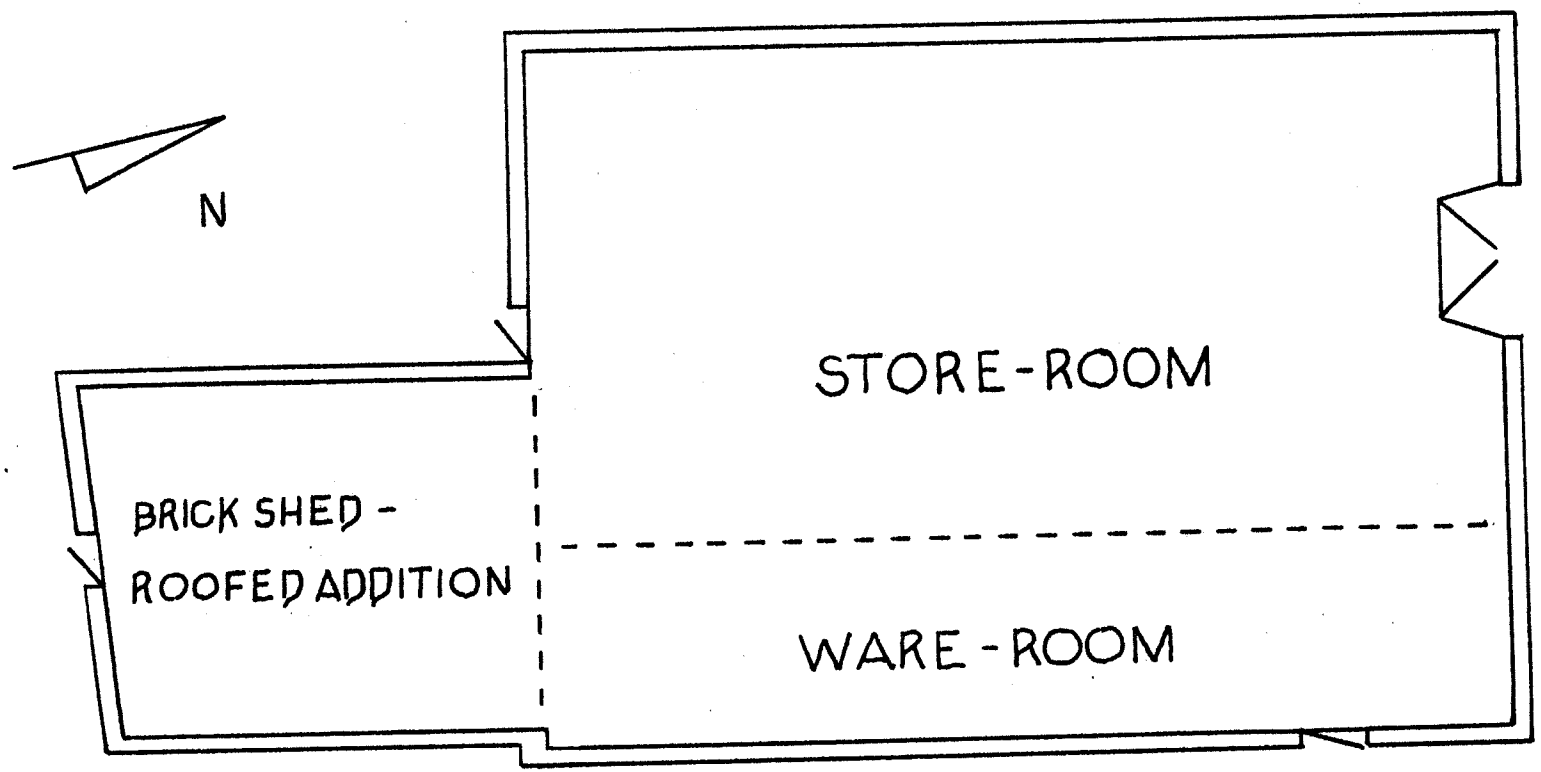
SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:
Open Lane( )Woodland( )Scattered Buildings( )
Moderately Built Up( )Densely Built Up( )
Residential( )Commercial( )
Agricultural( )Industrial( )
Roadside Strip Development( )
Other:

RECORDED BY:

ORGANIZATION:

DATE RECORDED:

THE J A BELT BUILDING



3/32" = 1'

M.21-135

Maryland State Archives

HISTORIC SITE NOMINATIONS

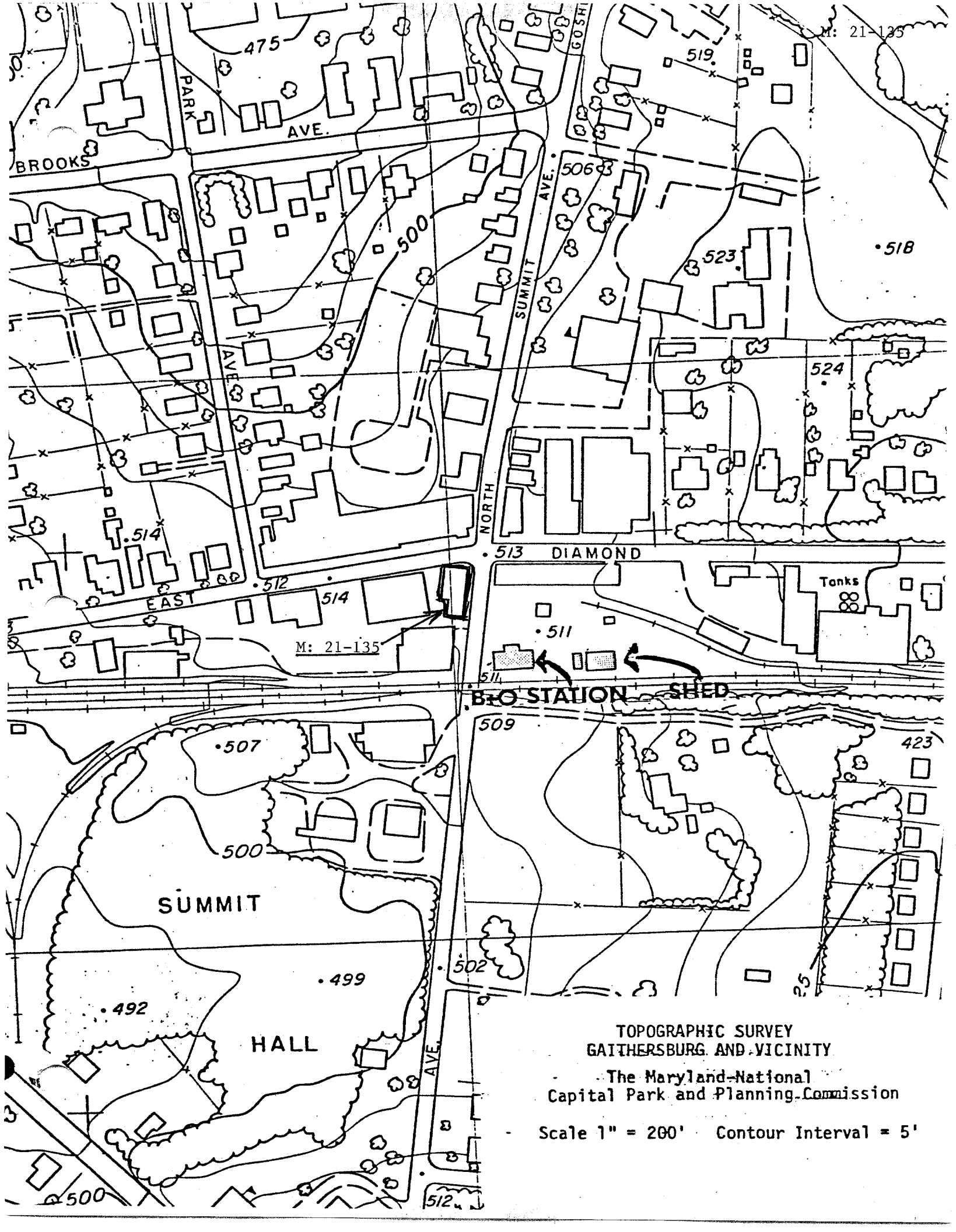
1) HD-2 GAITHERSBURG LATITUDE OBSERVA

2) HD-3 B&O TRAIN STATION AND FREIGHT S

3) HD-4 THE BELT BUILDING (M:21-135)

4) HD-5 BOWMAN'S MILL

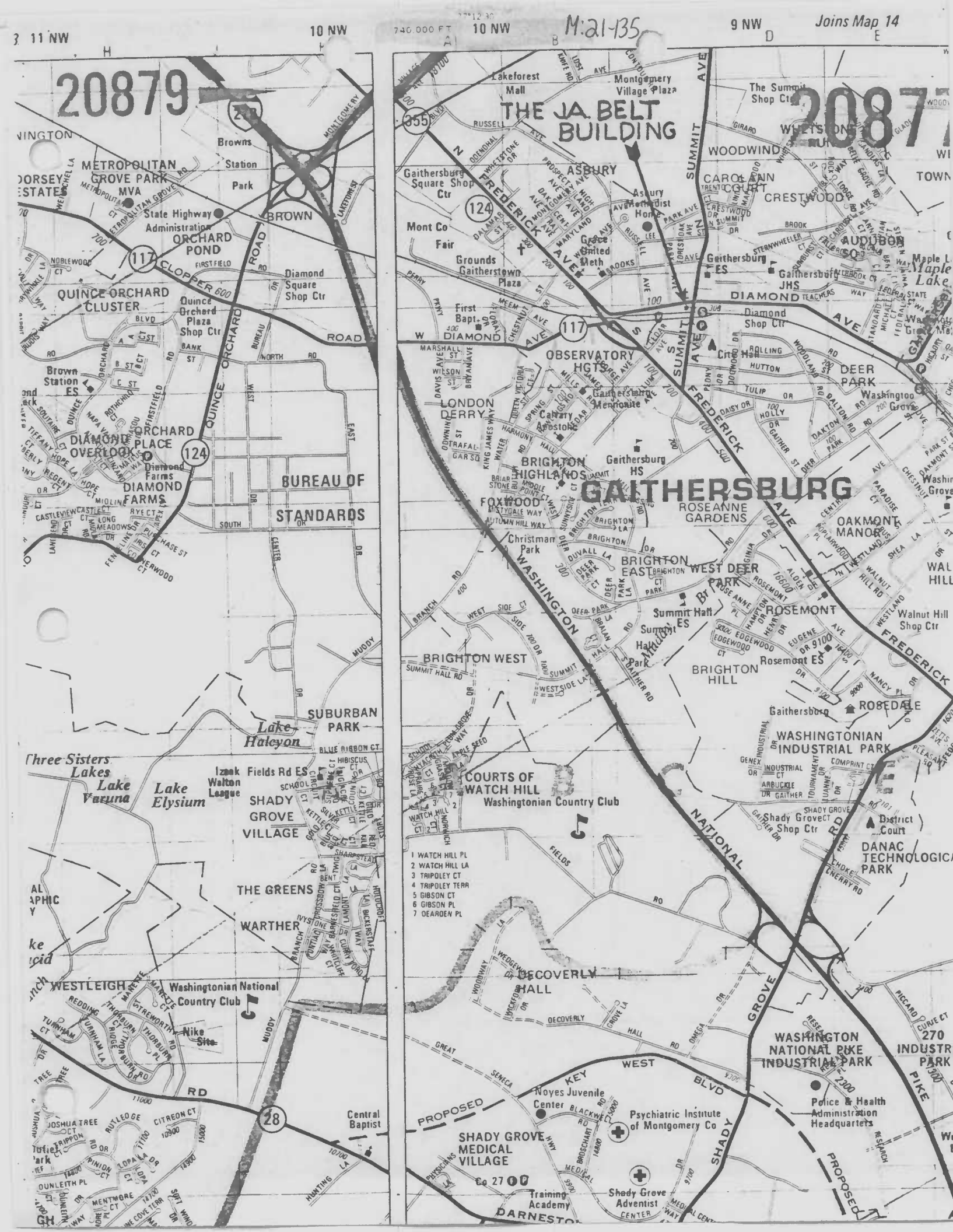
5) HD-6 THE FULKS HOUSE



TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY
GAITHERSBURG AND VICINITY

The Maryland-National
Capital Park and Planning Commission

Scale 1" = 200' Contour Interval = 5'



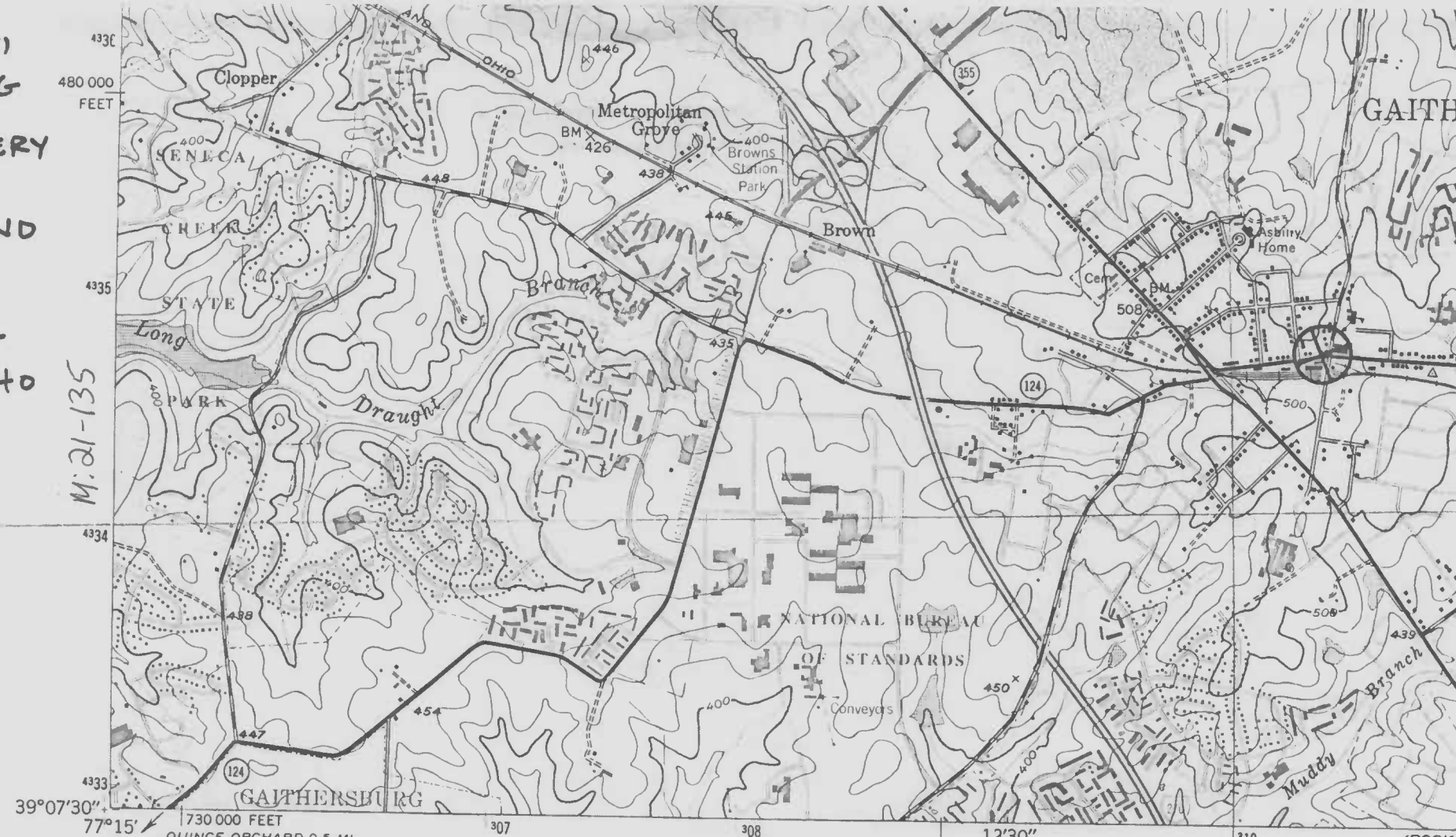
M:21-135
Joins Map 14
11 NW
10 NW
9 NW
20879
20877
METROPOLITAN GROVE PARK MVA
Browns Station Park
State Highway Administration
ORCHARD POND
BROWN
QUINCE ORCHARD CLUSTER
Quince Orchard Plaza Shop Ctr
Diamond Square Shop Ctr
Brown Station ES
ORCHARD PLACE
DIAMOND OVERLOOK
Diamond Farms
DIAMOND FARMS
BUREAU OF STANDARDS
SUBURBAN PARK
Lake Halcyon
Three Sisters Lakes
Lake Varuna
Lake Elysium
Izaak Walton League
Fields Rd ES
SHADY GROVE VILLAGE
THE GREENS
WARTHER
WESTLEIGH
Washingtonian National Country Club
Nike Site
Central Baptist
THE JA. BELT BUILDING
Lakeforest Mall
Montgomery Village Plaza
The Summit Shop Ctr
WHETSTONE RUN
WOODWIND
CAROLANN COURT
CRESTWOOD
ASBURY
Gaithersburg Square Shop Ctr
Asbury Methodist Home
Mont Co Fair
Grounds Gaithersburg Plaza
Grace United Meth
Gaithersburg ES
Gaithersburg JHS
AUDUBON SQ
Maple Lake
DIAMOND
Diamond Shop Ctr
First Bapt.
OBSERVATORY HGTS
Cite Hall
DEER PARK
Washington Grove
LONDON DERRY
Gaithersburg Mennonite
Calvary Apostolic
BRIGHTON HIGHLANDS
Gaithersburg HS
GAITHERSBURG
FOXWOOD
ROSEANNE GARDENS
OAKMONT MANOR
Christman Park
BRIGHTON EAST
WEST DEER PARK
ROSEMONT
Summit Hall ES
Summit Hall Park
Walnut Hill Shop Ctr
BRIGHTON WEST
BRIGHTON HILL
Rosemont ES
ROSEDALE
Gaithersburg
WASHINGTONIAN INDUSTRIAL PARK
COURTS OF WATCH HILL
Washingtonian Country Club
Shady Grove Shop Ctr
District Court
DANAC TECHNOLOGICAL PARK
1 WATCH HILL PL
2 WATCH HILL LA
3 TRIPOLEY CT
4 TRIPOLEY TERR
5 GIBSON CT
6 GIBSON PL
7 DEARDEN PL
DECOVERLY HALL
WASHINGTON NATIONAL PIKE INDUSTRIAL PARK
270 INDUSTRIAL PARK
Noyes Juvenile Center
Psychiatric Institute of Montgomery Co
Police & Health Administration Headquarters
SHADY GROVE MEDICAL VILLAGE
Co 27
Training Academy
Shady Grove Adventist
DARNESTOWN
FREDERICK AVE
WASHINGTON NATIONAL PIKE
SHADY GROVE RD
KEY WEST BLVD
PROPOSED

BELT, J.A., BUILDING

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

18-310360-4334640

M:21-135



Mapped by U. S. Forest Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USC&GS, WSSD, and USGS

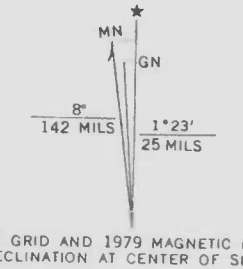
Topography from aerial photographs by KEK plotter 1944
Aerial photographs taken 1943. Field check 1945

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 8 meters south and
25 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

Area covered by dashed light-purple pattern is subject to controlled
inundation



UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1

1000 0 1000 2000 300

CONTOUR INTE
NATIONAL GEODETIC VER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIO
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL S
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

M:21-135

EXHIBIT
HD-4
#4
9/26/83
HDC

M-21-135

1. The J. A. Belt Building
2. 227 East Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland
3. James Sengstack
4. 05 December 1983
5. Gaithersburg City Hall
6. Northwestern elevation, photographer facing southeast
7. 2/2

M:21-135

1. The J. A. Belt Building
2. 227 East Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland
3. James Sengstack
4. 05 December 1983
5. Gaithersburg City Hall
6. Northern elevation, photographer facing south
7. 2/2

MI 21-135

1. The J. A. Belt Building
2. 227 East Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland
3. Trudy Walton
4. 09 January 1984
5. Gaithersburg City Hall
6. Leaded Glass Window
7. 1/2

MI 21-135

1. The J. A. Belt Building
2. 227 East Diamond Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland
3. Trudy Walton
4. 09 January 1984
5. Gaithersburg City Hall
6. Interior of Belt Building
7. 2/2

MI 21-135

SOUTH MILLER SIGNS

BELT BUILDING
Montgomery County, Maryland
Photo: Trudy Walton
Neg loc: City Hall, Gaithersburg, MD
27 February 1984
northeast elevation of building

1/2

M: 21-135

BELT BUILDING
Montgomery County, Maryland
Photo: Unknown, courtesy of Montgomery County Historical Society
Neg loc: City Hall, Gaithersburg, MD
c.1910
northeast elevation of building

2/2

M: 21-135

BELT BUILDING
Montgomery County, Maryland
Photo: Unknown, courtesy of Montgomery
County Historical Society
Neg loc: City Hall, Gaithersburg, MD
Unknown
northeast elevation of building

2/2

M: 21-135