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## 7. Description

Inventory No. WA-HAG-196

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### Condition

excellent       deteriorated  
 good             ruins  
 fair               altered

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

The Old Post Office is located at 101 Summit Avenue, at the southwest corner of the intersection with W. Antietam Street, in downtown Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland. It is built on a hill that ascends to the west, and is banked into this hill, with an exposed foundation on the east. The foundation is of brick, including several courses of rowlock on the bull brick. There is a water table of concrete on the east, while this water table on the south elevation is of brick. Above the water table there is granite ashlar. The first story has Flemish bond brick with glazed headers. The gable roof has an east-west ridge and appears to have asphalt shingles, but it is hidden behind a balustrade.

The east elevation has an exposed foundation of granite ashlar with a new glazed steel door and sidelights in an original opening in the center bay. The end bays have dog leg stairs of granite with wrought iron posts and balustrades. The balustrades consist of a pattern of linked ovals. There are landings at both the north and south ends of the building, then the stairways turn toward the center, with another landing in the center. On the east face of this landing there is a Vitruvian wave moulding. On the first story, above the granite, is a limestone water table with a Vitruvian wave below a torus. The center entrance has a wood door with one light over one panel, sidelights of five lights over one panel, and a transom with a wrought iron grille consisting of circles inside of squares. There is a granite sill and a limestone architrave that is paneled and has plain bosses in the corners. This is flanked on each side by a marble Doric column that supports a full entablature with tryglyphs and metopes in the frieze and a dentil cornice. Above the cornice is a squat swans' neck pediment, with a large carved limestone eagle above it, in the tympanum. Behind the eagle is a wreath and carved foliage. The doorway is set in a semi-circular arched recess, and is flanked on each side by a cast iron light standard. The cornice is broken by the semi-circular arch in the center bay. The cornice is limestone, with dentils and uncut blocks, and this is used in the raking eave, as well. The gable end has tapestry brick. The end bays project about three inches and contain a six-over-six double hung sash in a blind arcade. The arcade has a limestone sill, impost blocks, and keystone, with tapestry brick in the tympanum. Above each arcade is a limestone belt course with bosses, and a limestone panel on each side above the belt course. At the north corner is a stone carved with "Washington County Annex Building 1937 County Commissioners John Ankenny, President; Frank R. Beard, Sr.; Harry T. Brewer; Simon L. Downey; William C. Maugans; J. R. R. Black, County Clerk".

The north elevation has the same foundation and water table as found on the east. In the foundation of the four end bays are six-over-six sash set halfway below grade, with granite window wells topped by iron grates. The center bay has granite steps. The first story has a new glazed steel door with sidelights and transom in the center bay. Above this is a fanlight with a limestone intrados. The doorway has a metal canopy with five bosses on it that is suspended from the wall by iron bars with foliage brackets. The doorway is flanked by cast iron light standards. The windows on this elevation are large, ten-over-ten double hung sash with fanlights and limestone architraves. They are set on paneled limestone plinths with scroll brackets on each end, and have limestone imposts and keystones. Above the openings on all five bays are the same belt course, panels, and cornice found on the east elevation. On the roof is a limestone balustrade.

On the west elevation, the water table is consistent with the east and north elevations. On the first story, the north bay window is identical to that on the north elevation. The center bay is also the same, but has Flemish

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WA-HAG-196

Name Old Post Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

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bond brick infill in place of the sash. The south bay is also the same, but has a small four-over-four sash with limestone lug sill and Flemish bond brick infill around it. Above the windows is a typical belt course, three panels, and cornice. There is an oculus in the tympanum that has limestone keystones at the cardinal points.

The south elevation has a three-bay by five-bay addition in the center. This addition has a parged foundation, Flemish bond brick with glazed headers, and a flat roof behind a low parapet wall. The south elevation of the addition has five sixteen-over-sixteen sash with limestone lug sills and plain limestone cornice. The west elevation of the addition has aluminum siding infill in the three windows and a low, shed roof addition covered in aluminum siding. The plain limestone cornice on this elevation aligns with the belt course of the earlier building. The west bay of the south elevation of the original building has a window like those on the north elevation, but the addition cuts through much of this opening. Above this altered opening is a typical belt course, panel, cornice, and balustrade. The east elevation of the addition has three windows that are typical for this addition, as well as the typical cornice. The east bay of the south elevation of the original building has a window like those on the north elevation, with belt course, panel, cornice, and balustrade above. Just west of this window opening is a narrow window with a two light sash over a board. It has a limestone lug sill and a splayed brick jack arch. The foundation of the east bay has a window and well like those found on the north elevation.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. WA-HAG-196

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

Architect/Builder

J. Knox Taylor/Mark P. Wells

Construction dates 1908-1910

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.)

### MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period:  
Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):  
Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Community Planning  
Government/Law
- IV. Resource Type:  
Category: Building  
Historic Environment: Urban  
Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Post Office  
Known Design Source: J. Knox Taylor

The Old Post Office, at 101 Summit Avenue in Hagerstown, was constructed to replace the post office located in the Masonic Lodge on S. Potomac Street, which had been constructed in 1898. The lot, a little over 17,000 square feet improved with eight dwellings that had to be demolished, was purchased in June 1907 for \$22,950. Upwards of \$85,000 was appropriated for acquisition of the site and construction of the building, and plans were completed in July, 1908 under the direction of Supervising Architect of the Treasury J. Knox Taylor. The design, a local newspaper explained, “. . . is an adaptation of the style known as that of the ‘Georgian Period,’ which prevailed in England contemporarily with the ‘Colonial’ in America.” The use of classically derived design was to be expected. In his annual report of 1901, Taylor proclaimed that the government would return to “the classic style of architecture.” This was one of several trends in government building initiated by Taylor during his tenure from 1897 to 1912. He insisted that quality materials be used to ensure that the buildings would last a long time, and he refused to create standard designs for building types such as small town post

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## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Old Post Office  
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work.<sup>4</sup>

The excavation required dynamite, and this created tension in Hagerstown in January 1909. The *Hagerstown Daily Mail* noted that “the same bed of rock runs through from Antietam [Street] to far beyond Antietam Hall and the blasting is cracking the plastering way over to the south side and loosening the ceilings all over the building.” It was the opinion of some locals that heavy blasting was not necessary. The local constabulary became involved, and the man in charge of blasting, Harry Kaylor, testified that the charges he was setting were not heavy, but that he would use more caution.<sup>5</sup> Either he did ease up on the amount of dynamite being used, or had sufficiently completed its use by the time he had to report to the police station, for there seems to be no more complaints over the excavation.

The actual process of construction of the post office must have gone smoothly, because it is little commented on after this point. In February S. H. Nealy, the superintendent of construction of public buildings for the U. S. government, rejected some sand and bricks that had been delivered to the site because they did not “. . . come up to the sample . . .” This sent William Eaves, the superintendent of construction for the building contractor, to the Mont Alto sand banks and Chambersburg the following day to buy acceptable materials. No other mention is made until August, when there was a small fire in a cement shed behind the building, the result of someone dropping a cigar butt. Coincidentally, the Hagerstown fire chief was standing at the corner when the fire started, and it was quickly extinguished.<sup>6</sup>

Several days after the fire there was another mishap. The *Daily Mail* related:

By the slipping of the cable attached to one of the large derricks at the new post office building Friday afternoon a large stone being raised to be placed in position on the cornice on the north side fell and struck two sections of the cornice stone breaking them into pieces. The stone being raised also was damaged. Fortunately the workmen were at a safe distance when the accident occurred. The damaged cornice stones were replaced.

During the past week two similar accidents happened, one of the large corner cornice stones falling, but was not damaged.

Another piece of cornice stone fell and was broken.

This potential for accidents, and damage to completed work, explains a note in the newspaper at the time of the

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<sup>4</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 9 October 1908, p. 1, c. 5; 20 October 1908, p. 1, c. 3; 11 November 1908, p. 1, c. 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 11 January 1909, p. 1, c. 6; 25 January 1909, p. 1, c. 5.

<sup>6</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 9 February 1909, p. 1, c. 6; 10 February 1909, p. 1, c. 3; 11 August 1909, p. 1, c. 2.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Old Post Office  
Continuation Sheet

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cornice block installation. The *Daily Mail* stated: "A large block of granite has been placed in position over the entrance. A large eagle will be carved on the stone." This was followed up on 28 September 1909 with the report that "Giovanni Batista, the Italian carver, who has been working on the marble eagle for the dinky Post Office, has completed his task. The eagle is a thing of joy and beauty and cost \$500."<sup>7</sup>

The contract for construction of the post office stipulated that it be completed by 31 October 1909, but in mid-December it was noted that work had to be suspended because the supply of marble for the wainscoting had been exhausted. Completing the work was not only hampered by the lack of materials, but by limitations on labor. As noted in the newspaper, "In the specifications special attention is called to the act of Congress, limiting the hours of daily service of laborers and mechanics employed upon public works of the United States to eight hours." The building did not open until mid-February, the old office being closed on a Saturday night and the new one opened on Sunday morning.<sup>8</sup>

From the beginning, the project was a political football. The *Daily Mail* described the building as "squatty" and "dinky", and noted that construction would be pressed in the fall of 1908 in order for Congressman Pearre to use the project for positive publicity in the upcoming election. It is hard to tell, for example, just how serious the blasting damage was, or how much of the fuss was political. Both Hagerstown newspapers had complaints about the building. The dyspeptic *Daily Mail* opined that the building ". . . has an elegant architectural shape, like a shoe box with a piece of munster [sic] cheese on it . . ." The reason for their displeasure was hardly veiled in their harangue over the building, as they noted that the ". . . Republican Central Committee . . . will also have several secluded rooms under the roof where they can see their candidates privately and talk over politics without being annoyed by the public." While conceding that the interior finish of the building was ". . . all that could be desired . . .," the *Hagerstown Morning Herald* felt that the post office was ". . . small in size, not attractive in design or material and does not provide even in the slightest way for all the federal offices."<sup>9</sup>

It was not unusual for a community to complain about the quality of the Federal buildings and railroad stations being erected there. As the expense was not coming directly from their pockets, most citizens wanted the best building they could get to present their town in the most positive light. Politicians used this pork barrel to great effect to gain political patronage, and it was made easier in this period by the passage, in 1902, of the first so-called omnibus public buildings law. Ironically, though the public and the press were not satisfied locally, on a

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<sup>7</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 14 August 1909, p. 1, c. 5; 28 September 1909, p. 1, c. 3.

<sup>8</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, 15 December 1909, p.1, c. 1; 14 February 1910, p. 1, c. 3; 25 September 1908, "Election Nearing, P. O. Plans Arrive," p. 1, c. 5.

<sup>9</sup>*Hagerstown Daily Mail*, "Election Nearing, P. O. Plans Arrive," 25 September 1908, p. 1, c. 5; 18 August 1909, p. 1, c. 1-2. *Hagerstown Morning Herald*, 14 February 1910, p. 1, c. 3.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name Old Post Office  
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national level they worked to curtail the pork barrel by placing a ceiling on expenditures and reducing the staff of the supervising architect. This occurred right after the completion of Hagerstown's post office, in 1910 and 1911. Yet the building that Hagerstown got was actually very high in architectural quality. The question of its size is more problematic. The *Morning Herald* overestimated the size of Hagerstown when they stated that the post office was too small for the city's needs, but ironically, the complaints about pork barrel building projects often included the charge that the building was larger than was necessary for the size of the town. In fact, in 1913 Congress created the Public Buildings Commission, with one of its goals being how to determine the need for, and required size of, public buildings. On the other hand, the Hagerstown post office did not remain in service long. In July, 1937 the building was sold to the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County for \$20,000, and the post office moved to its current location on W. Franklin Street. Numerous public buildings were replaced in the 1930's, and this may be due more to depression-era make-work policies than to overwhelming need. No doubt the question of pork barrel politics was still rife.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Craig, *The Federal Presence*, pp. 239-40. Numerous post office buildings constructed in this period seem to have been disposed of in the 1930's, and many of them have been subsequently demolished. See Lowry, *Building a National Image*, plates 89, 95, pp. 220-22.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. WA-HAG-196

See footnotes

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 17,168 sq. ft.  
Acreage of historical setting \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name Hagerstown

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

116 ft. by 148 ft. lot, sw corner Summit Ave. and W. Antietam St.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	<u>Kenneth M. Short</u>		
organization		date	<u>June 2000</u>
street & number	<u>610 Register Avenue</u>	telephone	<u>410-377-4953</u>
city or town	<u>Baltimore</u>	state	<u>MD</u>

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.

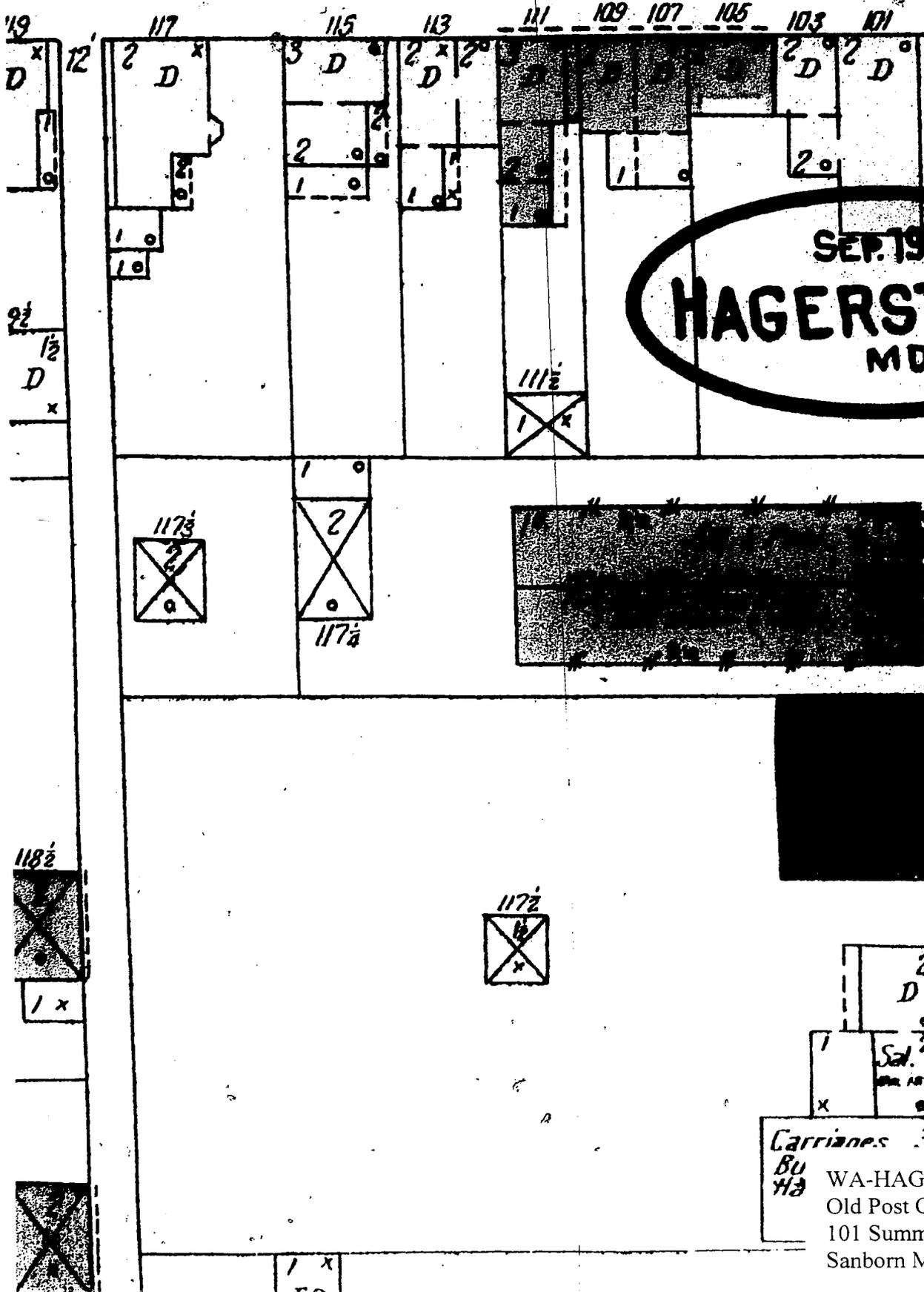
return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

WA-HAG-196  
 Old Post Office  
 101 Summit Avenue-Hagerstown

CHAIN OF TITLE

GRANTOR	HOME COUNTY	GRANTEE	HOME COUNTY	DATE	LIBER	FOLIO	TRANS-ACTION	COMMENTS
United States of America - Post Office & Treasury Depts.		Board of County Commissioners of Washington County		9 July 1937	204	450	Deed	\$20,000 148' on Antietam, 116' on Summit, "old post office site and building"
John W. & Clare E. Feldman (wf)	Washington	United States of America		3 June 1907	126	345	Deed	\$22,950 116' x 148', sw cor. Summit & W. Antietam

6



SEP. 1904  
**HAGERSTOWN**  
 MD.

117 117 1/2 ANTIETAM HOSE HO.

A. 125 B.

AND

Carriges  
 Bu  
 Ha

WA-HAG-196  
 Old Post Office  
 101 Summit Ave., Hagerstown  
 Sanborn Map, Sept. 1904

JULY 1910  
**HAGERSTOWN**  
 Md.

S. JONATHAN ST.

6" W. PIPE

90

4" W. PIPE

ANTIETAM HOSE HO.

117 117<sup>1/2</sup>

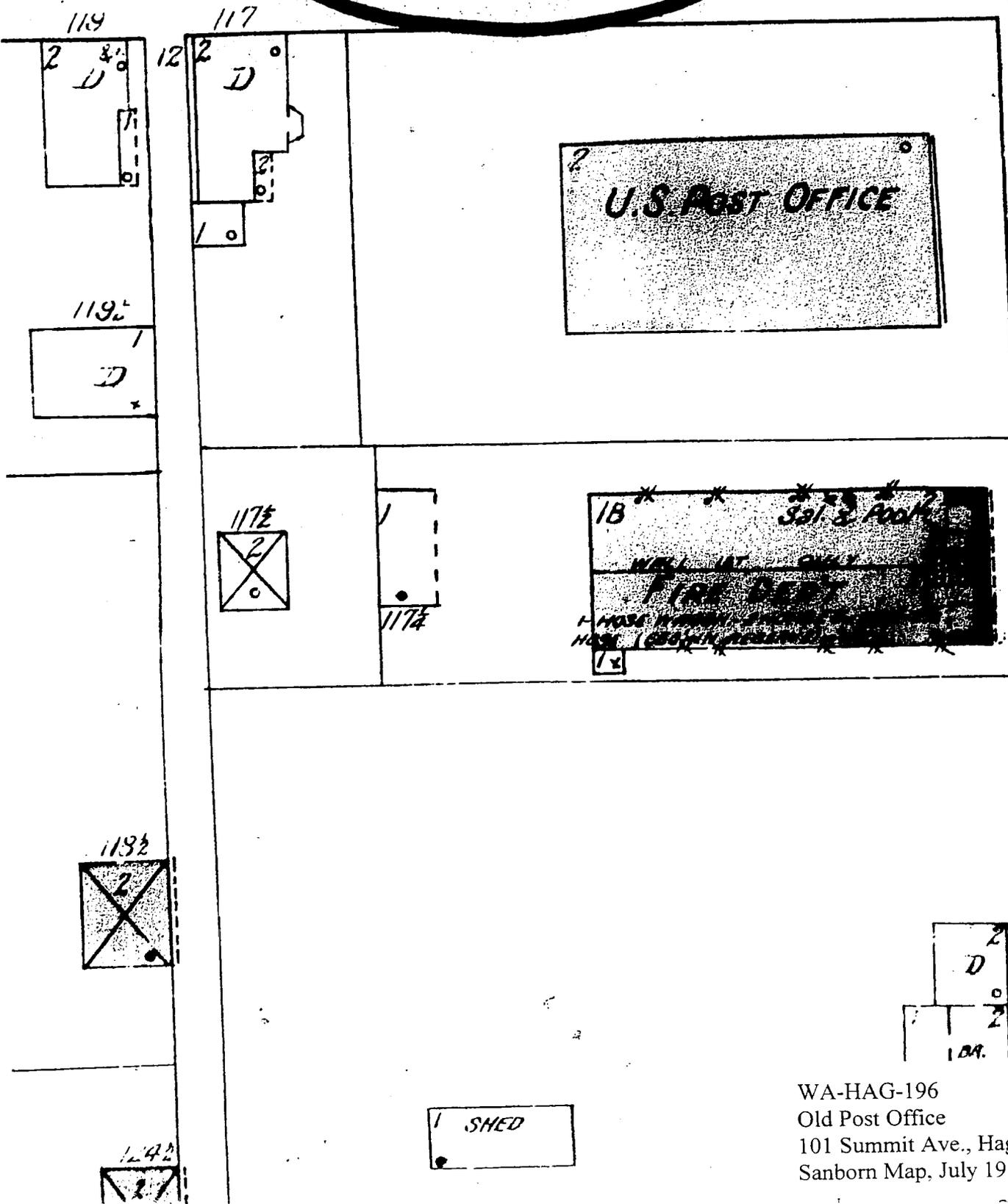
125B

U.S. POST OFFICE

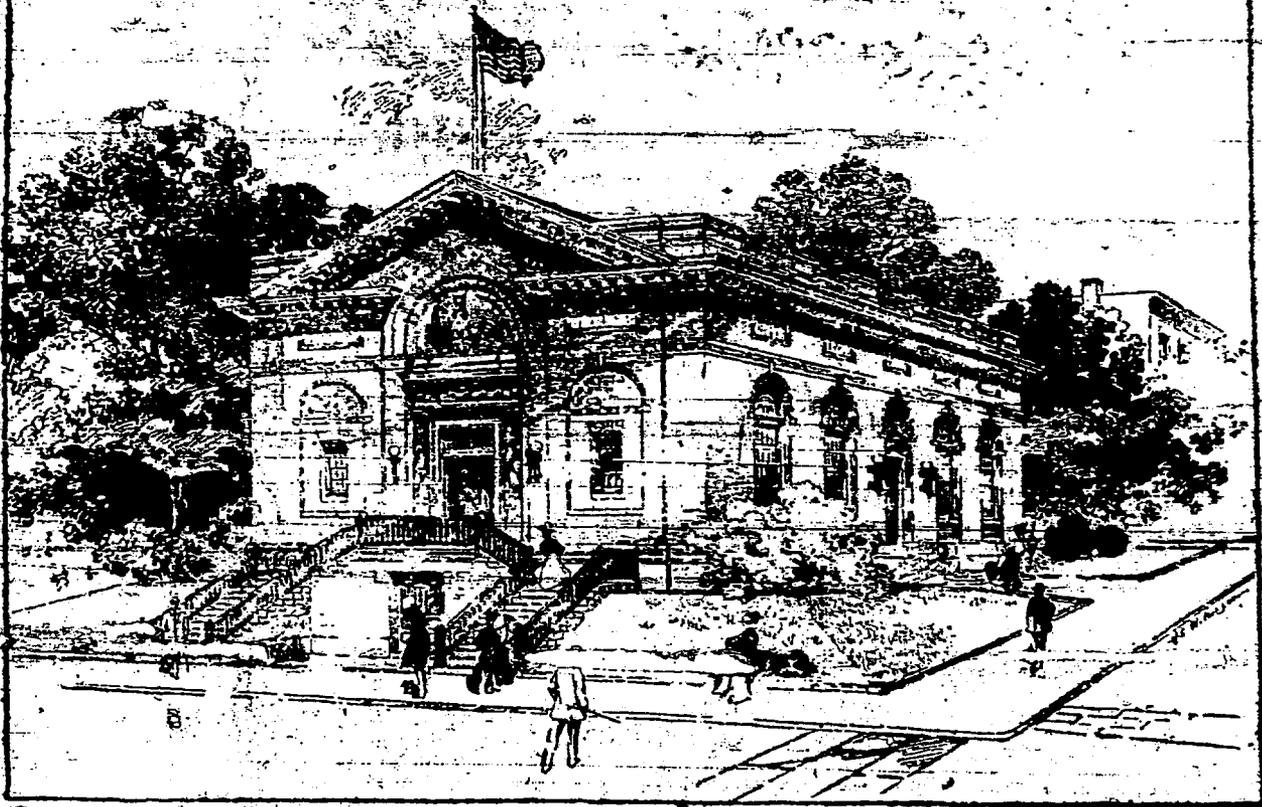
1B \* \* \* \* \*  
 3rd & 4th  
 WALL (AT) ONLY  
 FIRE DEPT.  
 1 HOSE (100 ft) ...  
 HOSE (100 ft) ...

1 SHED

WA-HAG-196  
 Old Post Office  
 101 Summit Ave., Hagerstown  
 Sanborn Map, July 1910

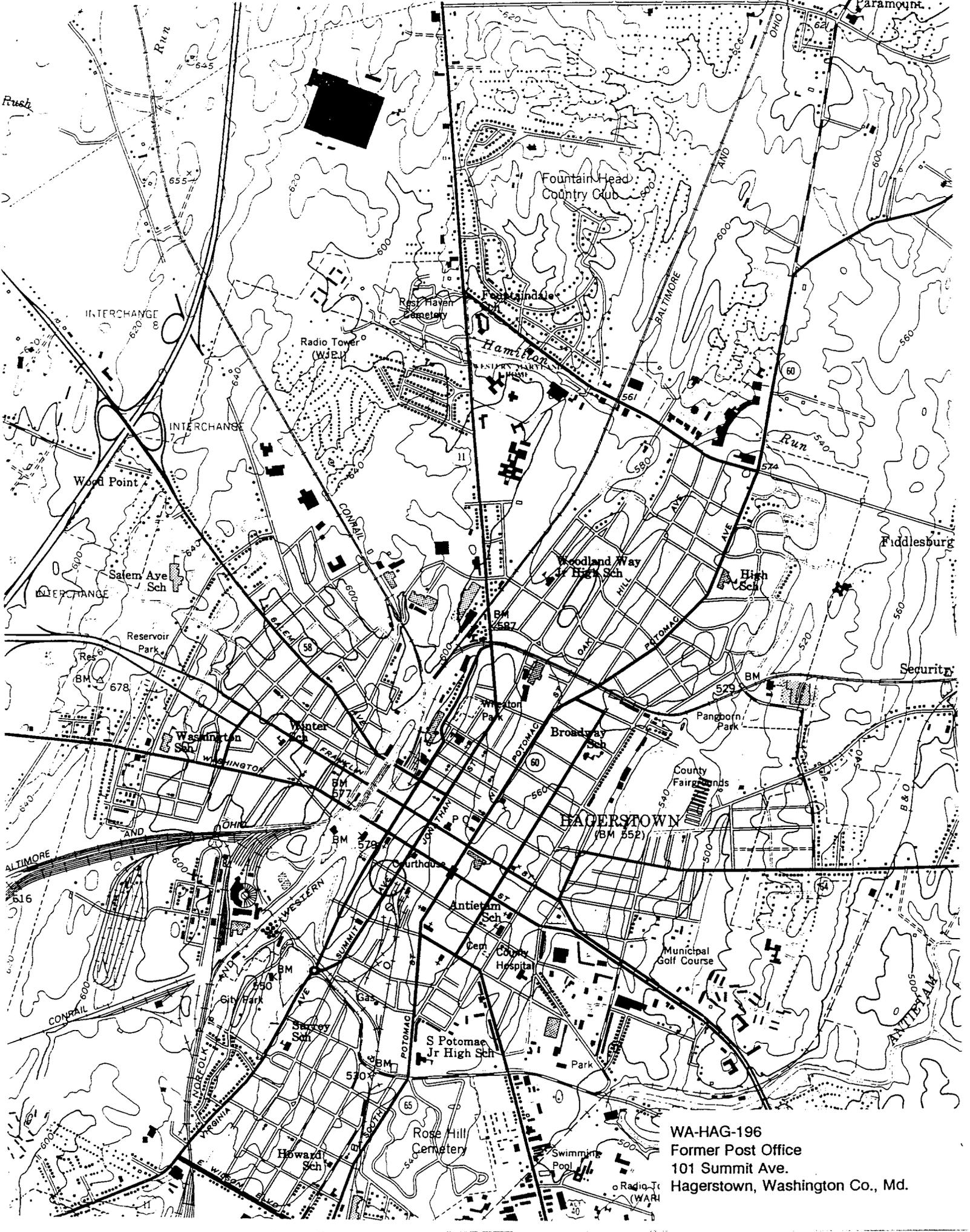


UNITED STATES POST OFFICE  
HAGERSTOWN, MD  
JAMES HOOK TAYLOR  
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT



New Post Office.

WA-HAG-196  
Old Post Office  
101 Summit Ave., Hagerstown  
*Daily Mail*, 22 Sept. 1909, p. 5.



WA-HAG-196  
Former Post Office  
101 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown, Washington Co., Md.

o Radio-T  
(WJEL)



DO NOT  
ENTER

WA-HAG-196

old Post Office

101 Summit + Arch

Hagerstown, Washington Co, Md

Photo: Kenneth H. Child

Date: March 2000

SEE NI NI NI NI 6851 TERRACE TOWNSHIP

Neg loc: MD SHPO

SBG.ekus

1/6



COMMUNITY  
ACTION COUNCIL  
ENTRANCE

WA-1TAG-196

Old Post Office

101 Summit Ave

Hagerstown, Washington Co, MD

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 2000

220 N N N N N EAST BRIDGE ENDS-W

Neg loc: MD SHPO

E. elev. Starway

2/6



WA-HAG-196

Old Post Office

101 Summit Ave

Hagerstown, Washington Co, MD

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 2000

SHPO NEGATIVE ARCHIVE

Neg. loc: MD SHPO

E. elev, center bay detail

4/6



WA-HAG-196

Old Post Office

101 Summit Ave.

Hagerstown, Washington Co, MD

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 2000

3111 N N N N N N EAST PARKWAY DR. DUNDAS-W

Neg loc: MD SHPO

E-eku, center bay

3/6



WA. HAG. 196

Old Post Office

101 Summit Ave

Hagerstown, Washington Co, MD

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Owner: Mark [unclear]

SPS-N N N N N ASSE BRBBB I ONSHI

No. loc: MO SHPO

CGN elev:

5/6

COMMUNITY ACTION  
COUNCIL  
PARKING ONLY  
AUTOMOBILES  
WILL BE TOWED



WA HAG-176

Old Post Office

101 Summit Ave.

Hagerstown, Washington Co., MD

Photo: Kenneth M. Short

Date: March 2000

~~2000~~ N N N EAST TERRACE OBS-W

Reg loc: MD SHPO

NBW elevs

6/6

## HAGERSTOWN LANDMARKS RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties # WA-HAG-196

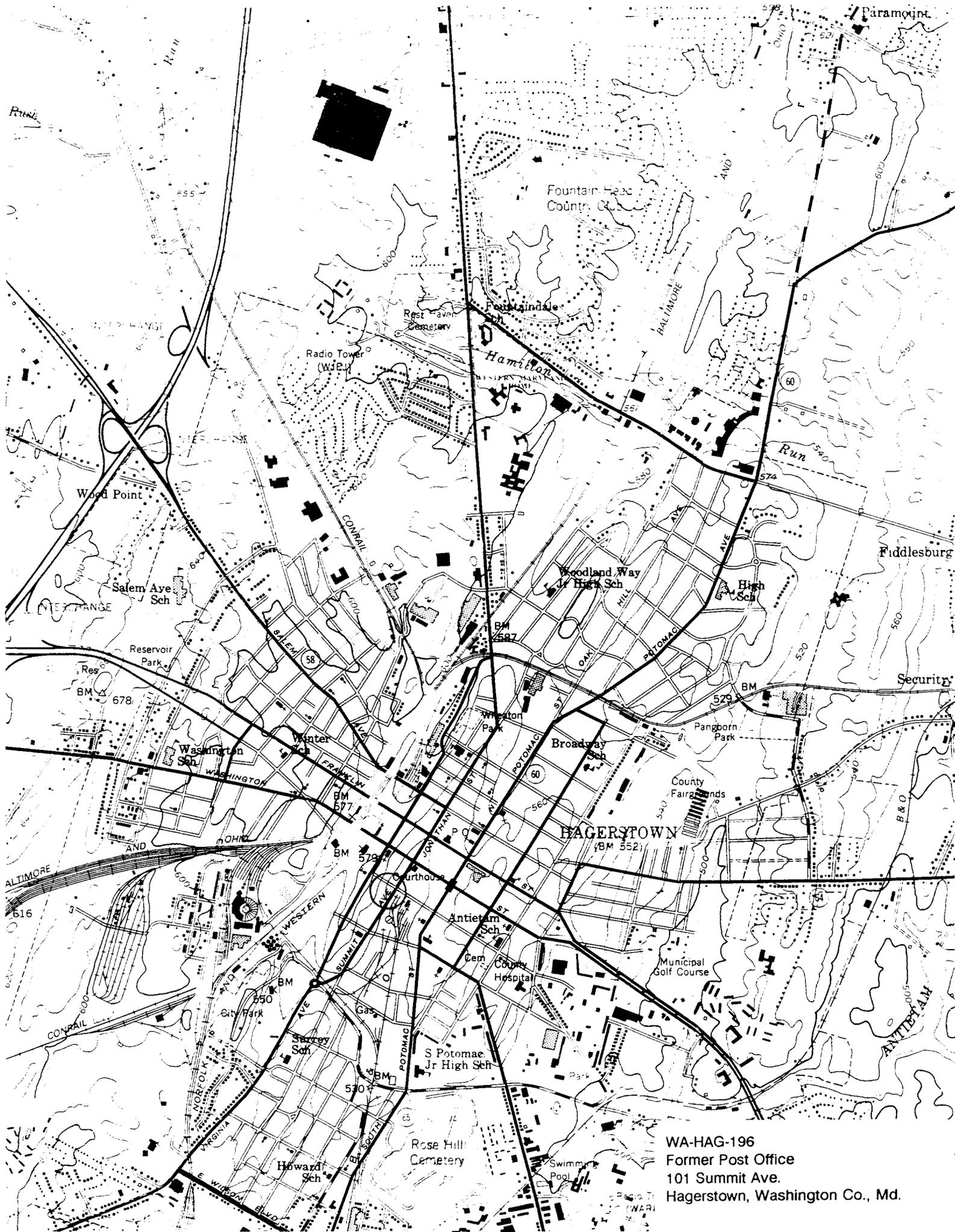
Property Name/Address: 101 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland

Description/Significance: Constructed ca. 1900 as a Post Office, this outstanding Neoclassical Revival building was renovated in 1937 to serve as the Court House Annex; it currently houses the Community Action Council. The building is faced with brick laid in Flemish bond above a cast stone basement; it incorporates elaborate embellishment worked in cast and carved stone. The Antietam Street facade is five bays wide; it features a central entrance surmounted by a small pediment below a fanlight, and sheltered by a marquee. The outlying bays hold large multipaned sash surmounted by fanlights; stone keys and imposts detail the opening, and the area below the sills is decorated with a cast stone panel and consoles. A stone string course detailed with Classical motifs runs above the windows. The frieze is decorated with stone panels, and the building is capped with a modillion cornice above a row of dentils. A parapet balustrade finishes the roofline. The Summit Avenue gable end is also highly elaborate, with a grand double flight of steps rising to a central entrance flanked by engaged columns supporting a full entablature; a niche above the entrance displays statuary, including a large eagle. Shallow arched recesses on either side of the entrance hold small 6/6 windows. The brickwork within the arches above these windows is laid in a basketweave pattern. The Summit Avenue elevation is topped with a broken pediment; diagonal basketweave-pattern brickwork appears within this area.

### MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

- I. Geographic Organization: Western Maryland
- II. Chronological/Developmental Period(s):  
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
- III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):  
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
- IV. Resource Type  
Category: Building  
Historic Environment: Urban  
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):  
GOVERNMENT/post office  
GOVERNMENT/court house [annex]  
Known Design Source: Unknown

Form Prepared by: Peter E. Kurtze  
109 Brandon Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21212  
August 15, 1991



WA-HAG-196  
Former Post Office  
101 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown, Washington Co., Md.



WA - HAG - 195

OLD POST OFFICE, 101 SUMMIT AVE.

HAGERSTOWN MD

7/91 P. KURTZE

VIEW FROM NORTHEAST