

Patuxent River Naval Air Station Recreation Building
SM-707
East side Notch Road (MD 235) north of Great Mills Road (MD 246)
Lexington Park vicinity
1944-1945
Public

The Patuxent River Naval Air Station Recreation Building is significant as an early component of the Naval Air Station (NAS) and as a building specifically constructed to serve as a recreation facility and use as a USO entertainment center. Further, the building incorporates influences of the Art Moderne architectural style and stands as one of the few buildings on the base with discernable stylistic details.

Although the plans are labeled "Recreation Building," contemporary literature describing the NAS, as well as details and organization of the interior spaces and the siting of the building, indicate that it was designed specifically for the USO. In 1951, the NAS building was converted for use as an Enlisted Men's Club. In 1957, the Library was converted to a bar and lounge for First Class Petty Officers. The building was converted for use as a museum in the mid-1970s and some of the interior spaces were opened up and combined to form display rooms. Much of the basic original configuration of the rooms is still evident, however.

Influences of the Art Moderne style on the USO building include the rounded corners of the north and south wings on the main elevation, the bands of windows that wrap around the corners of these wings, the original light fixtures and transom details as shown in the construction drawings, and the concrete surrounds on the projecting entrances of the north and south elevations.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. SM-707

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Patuxent River Naval Air Station Recreation (USO) Building

other Patuxent River Naval Air Museum

2. Location

street & number E. Side Three Notch Road (MD 235) ___ not for publication

city, town Lexington Park ___ vicinity

county St. Mary's

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

name United States Navy

street & number telephone

city, town state and zip code MD

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse tax map and parcel 43/168

city, town Leonardtown liber and folio MRB047/243

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			
			Contributing	Noncontributing		
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/ culture	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>	objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress			
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown			
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use			
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:			
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory		
						<u>0</u>

7. Description

Inventory No. SM-707

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

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

The Patuxent River Naval Air Station Recreation Building is located directly adjacent to the east side of Three Notch Road (MD 235) north of Great Mills Road (MD 246). Mature trees, shrubs and lawn surround the building. A paved parking area is located at the east end of the property and a fence separating this property from the Naval Air Station runs along the south side of the property. A concrete sidewalk runs along the east edge of the building property adjacent to the parking lot; steps and a ramp with a metal railing provide access to sidewalk leading to the central front entrance in the east elevation of the building. Concrete sidewalks also extend along the north and south sides of the building. The building currently houses the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum and retired planes, helicopters and other pieces of air defense equipment are situated on the lawn and parking area of the property. The building is currently owned by the Navy and leased to the museum.

The one-story brick C-shaped building is supported by a concrete foundation with a concrete water table and weep holes in the brick walls. The building has a flat roof with concrete coping and a large interior brick chimney in the south end of the main block. The center section of the building has a raised roof covered with wood panels. A one-story brick ell is appended to the west elevation. A brick wall with concrete cap frames a patio/courtyard area located east of the main entrance. Windows throughout the building consist primarily of two-over-two and one-over-one double-hung wood sash and have concrete sills and iron lintels.

The main, or east, elevation consists of an inset central entry flanked on either side by projecting wing on each of the north and south ends. The wings feature rounded inner corners and square outer corners. The center section contains three bays separated by brick piers; each bay originally contained an entrance. Presently the north and south bays are closed in with vinyl siding and the center bay contains a set of double glass doors with sidelights and light fixtures attached to the brick piers. The cornice of the raised roof has a sign with the name of the museum. The south wing includes three windows that are part of a band of seven two-over-two windows that wrap around the southeast corner (the other four are located in the south elevation); a large window composed of 77 glass blocks; and a band of six two-over-two windows that wraps around the rounded northeast corner of the wing. The corners of the north wing are identical to those in the south wing. The center bay of the north wing is blank.

The north elevation includes the four windows from the band that wraps around from the east elevation. The central projecting entry includes a set of double wood doors with transoms and an Art Moderne influenced concrete surround with "stepped parapet" coping. The entry is flanked on either side by a band of three two-over-two windows. A set of paired windows is located in the west bay of the main block. The west elevation of the ell contains a set of paired windows and two single windows. Two metal scuppers rise along exterior of the main block and one is located in the ell. A louvered vent is located in the west elevation of the main block.

The west elevation of the ell contains a single window in the north elbow. A small addition projects from the west side of the ell. This addition contains seven bays: a central entry of paired wood doors is flanked on either side by three bays. The north bays each contain a one-over-one window; the south bays have been closed in with brick. Two metal scuppers rise along the exterior of the addition. A wood-framed screened porch is located in the south elbow of the addition and ell. The west elevation of the ell contains three one-over-one windows (two are enclosed in the porch). An open stairwell with iron railing leads to the cellar and is located at the southwest corner of the ell.

The south elevation of the ell contains three sets of paired two-over-two windows. The west end of the main block contains a band of four windows. A central projecting entry identical to the one in the north elevation is flanked on either side by a band of three windows. The southeast corner includes four windows from the band of seven windows that wraps around from the east wing.

The interior of the building has been renovated to serve as museum space, however, most of the original room configuration of the building is evident. Currently, the offices and ladies rest rooms are located in the south wing and a library and gift shop are located in the north wing. The center section and north and south side halls (previously lounges) are used for display space. The backstage area and dressing rooms in the west addition and the kitchen and ladies lounge in the south side of the building are presently used for storage.

8. Significance

Inventory No. SM-707

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/	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> other:
			<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	

Specific dates 1944 **Builder/Architect** US Navy

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 reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual).

The Patuxent River Naval Air Station Recreation Building is significant as an early component of the Naval Air Station (NAS) and as a building specifically constructed to serve as a recreation facility and use as a USO entertainment center. Further, the building incorporates influences of the Art Moderne architectural style and stands as one of the few buildings on the base with discernable stylistic details.

Original plans for the building, approved October 1944, indicate that the drawings were executed by Loren L. Murray. According to records at the NAS, the construction contract was awarded to Industrial Engineering Company of New York, New York and construction began on November 20, 1944. The building was "usably" complete by August of 1945. Construction of the building was sponsored by the Navy using funds transferred from the Federal Works Agency; the contract cost totaled \$156,380.57.

Although the plans are labeled "Recreation Building," contemporary literature describing the NAS, as well as details and organization of the interior spaces and the siting of the building, indicate that it was designed specifically for the USO. A 1945 guide to the NAS includes a photograph of the building and describes it as the "Patuxent River USO building" (Office of Public Information, NAS, 1945). Other contemporary records and literature state that because the rural area was isolated from a large city or town, the Navy was careful to provide regular recreation opportunities for the men and their families. The caption under a photograph in a 1951 Navy publication states: "The rural and relatively isolated location of NAS Patuxent, brings advantages to the station's personnel in the form of bigger and better on-station facilities than would usually be expected" (U.S. Naval Institute 1951:1128).

Building No. 407, which was constructed prior to this one, was listed as a combination Enlisted Men's Recreation Building and Ship's Service. The location of the building at the western edge of the NAS and directly across Three Notch Road from the Lexington Park community allowed easy access by local residents and volunteers who comprised the primary staff of the USO. The unusually large women's lounge and powder room, as well as a women's locker room, further indicate that the building was probably used by the USO, an organization largely made up of women.

The USO reached its high point of service in 1944 and by 1947, was nearly defunct. In 1951, the NAS building was converted for use as an Enlisted Men's Club. According to NAS records, interior renovations were designed by architect Jack Cohen of Silver Spring, Maryland, and included conversion of the Refreshment Room to a Dining Room, a bar was added to the Men's Lounge, and some door and window openings were closed up. Also, a dropped ceiling of acoustical tiles was added to the main hall. In 1957, the Library was converted to a bar and lounge for First Class Petty Officers. The building was converted for use as a museum in the mid-1970s and some of the interior spaces were opened up and combined to form display rooms. Much of the basic original configuration of the rooms is still evident, however.

Influences of the Art Moderne style on the USO building include the rounded corners of the north and south wings on the main elevation, the bands of windows that wrap around the corners of these wings, the original light fixtures and transom details as shown in the construction drawings, and the concrete surrounds on the projecting entrances of the north and south elevations.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Name _____
Continuation Sheet
Number 8 Page 1

Historical documentation indicates that this resource is significant under Criterion A, for its association with the establishment and development of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station (NAS) in the mid-1940s. The building is important as an example of a structure built specifically for recreation and USO use. The building incorporates details of the Art Moderne style and is also recommended eligible under Criterion C, as one of the few buildings on the NAS which displays influences a particular architectural style. The building does not appear to be eligible under Criterion B, association with an important person who contributed to local or state history. Lastly, the property is unlikely to yield information which contributes to our understanding of human history.

Although the building is located near an area which has experienced a great deal of recent modern development, it continues to retain integrity of association, feeling, location, and setting. Despite interior alterations to convert the building to an Enlisted Men's Club and later to a museum, many of the original room configurations remain intact. The exterior of the building has been subject to minor alterations and retains its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" 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: <i>Eligible as an example of USO (A) and architectural</i>	
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	Date <i>4/20/98</i>
Reviewer, NR program	Date <i>4/20/98</i>

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. SM-707

Name
Continuation Sheet
Number 8 Page 1

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:	Southern Maryland
Chronological/Developmental Period(s):	Modern Period A.D. 1930 - Present
Historic Period Theme(s):	Architecture Entertainment/Recreation Military
Resource Type:	
Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Military
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):	Recreational Use - Military
Known Design Source:	None

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. SM-707

Hammett, Regina Combs. History of St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1634-1990. Ridge, MD (privately published), 1991.
Hughes, Elizabeth. Final Report - St. Mary's County Historic Sites Survey. Valley Lee, St. George Island, Bay and Patuxent Districts. St. Mary's County Department of Planning and Zoning, 1995.
Personal communication with Ms. Marianne Graham, Historical Architect at Patuxent Naval Air Station, 7-17-98.
Information Files from Office of Historic Architect, Patuxent Naval Air Station.
Office of Public Information, NAS, Patuxent River, MD. "Pictorial Patuxent: United States. Naval Air Test Center, Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, MD." November, 1945.
US Naval Institute. "Journal" US Naval Institute, Washington, DC, 1951.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 1.84 acres
Acreeage surveyed 1.84 acres
Quadrangle name Lexington Park, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Parcel 32 , Map 43, Grid 03,09

Recommended National Register boundaries for this property encompass the building and its surrounding landscape and includes approximately 80,000 sq. ft. The recommended boundary is illustrated on the attached Resource Sketch Map.

11. Form Prepared By

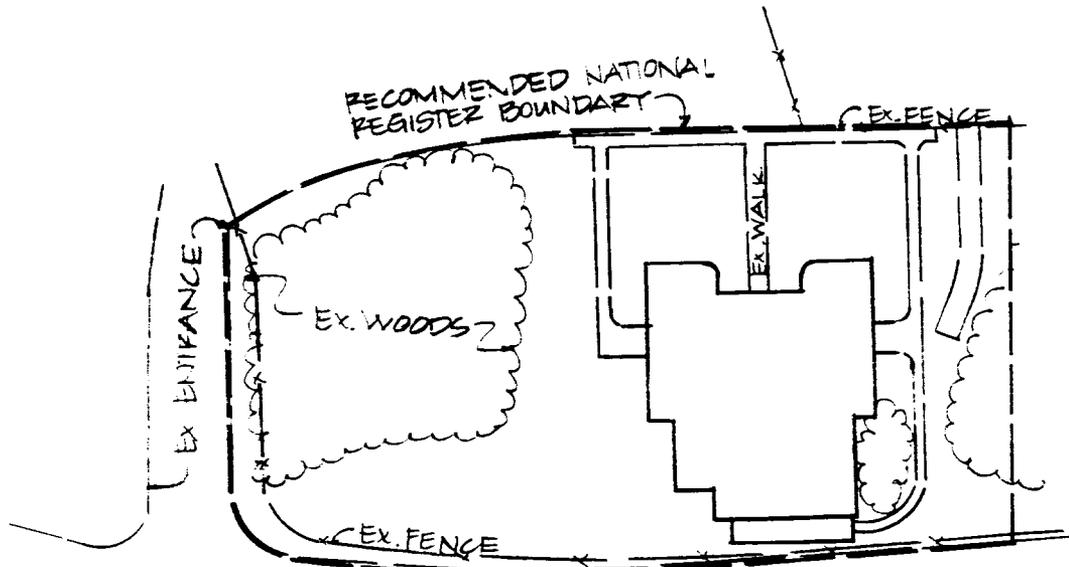
name/title	Margaret B. Parker		
organization	KCI Technologies, Inc.	date	7-21-98
street & number	10 North Park Drive	telephone	410-316-7857
city or town	Hunt Valley	state and zip code	MD 21030-1888

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
410-514-7646

SM 707



MARYLAND ROUTE 235

SCALE: 1" = 100'

SM- 707
Patuxent River Naval Air Station Rec. Bldg.
E. Side Three Notch Road
Lexington Park, St. Mary's Co.
Resource Sketch Map

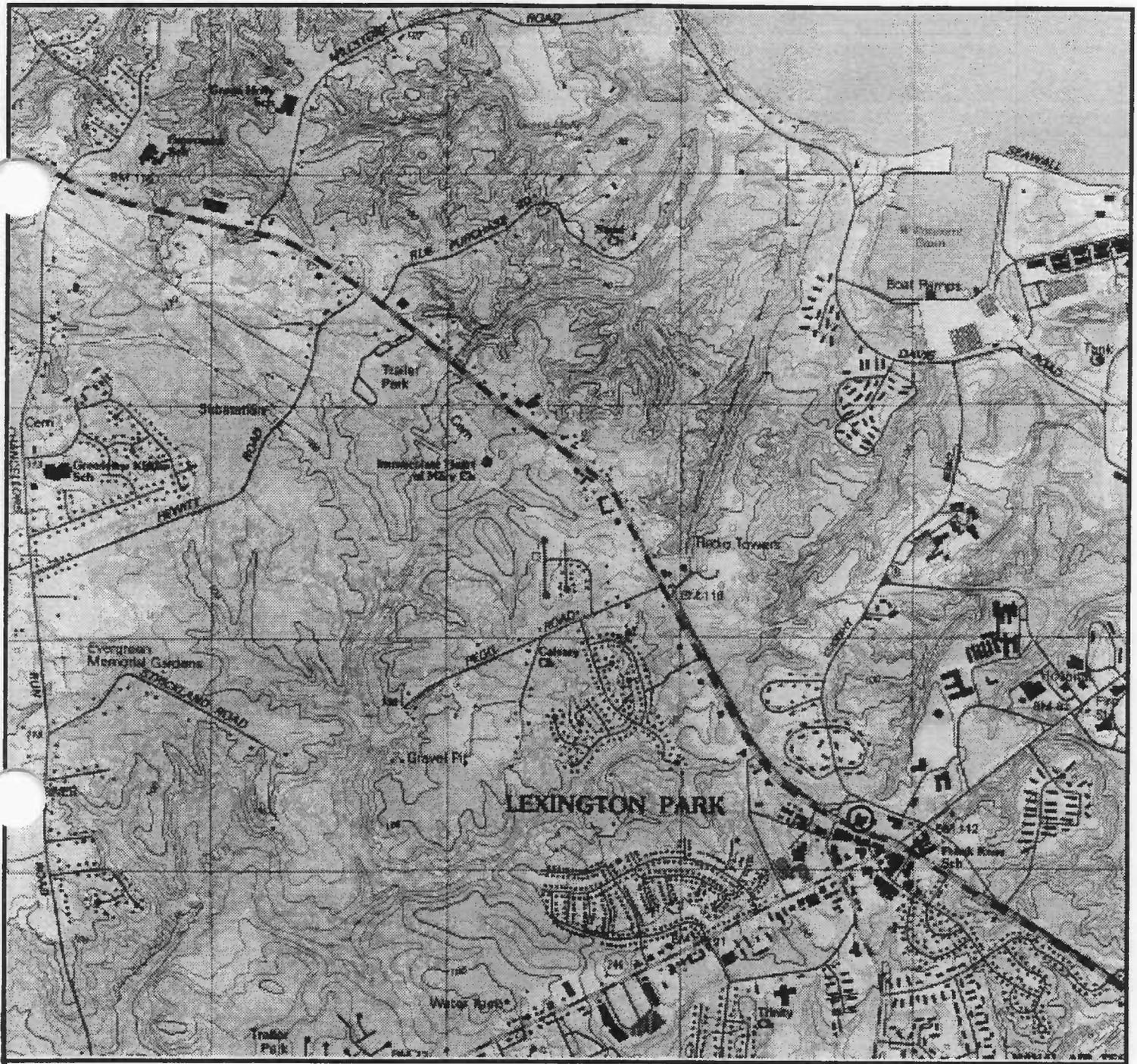


MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION

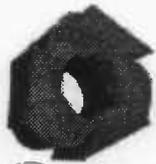
10 NORTH PARK DRIVE
HUNT VALLEY, MD 21030
410-316-7800

MD 235: MD 4 to MD 246
St. Mary's County, MD

BCS 95-17A



SM-707
 Patuxent River Naval Air Museum
 E. Side Three Notch Road
 Lexington Park, St. Mary's Co.
 Solomon's Island, MD USGS Quad
 1987



**MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY
 ADMINISTRATION**

**MD 235: MD 4 to MD 246
 St. Mary's County, MD**



10 NORTH PARK DRIVE
 HUNT VALLEY, MD 21030
 410-316-7800

BCS 95-17A

Scale: 1"=2,000'



PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR STATION

300

3000

SM-707

PNAS Recreation Building
St. Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

MD SHPO

E elev. looking SW

1 of 7

PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR MUSEUM



SM-707

PNAS Recreation Building

St Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/90

NDS SHPO

E. elev. looking NW

2 of 7

490



SM-707

PNAS Recreation Building

St. Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

MO SKPO

N. elev. looking SW

3 of 7



SM-707

PNAS Recreation Building

St Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

MTD SHPo

N elev. looking SE

4 of 7



SM-77

INDS Recreation Building

St. Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

ND SHPO

W + S elev.

5 of 7



MD-707

PNAS Recreation Building

St Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

MD SHPO

S + E elev.

6 of 7



SM-707

PNAS Recreation Building
St Marys Co.

Margaret Parker

7/29/98

NID → HPo

Detail, South entrance

7 of 7