

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes X
no

Property Name: Ernest Maier Building Inventory Number: PG:69-39
 Address: 4700 Annapolis Road (MD 450) Historic district: yes X no
 City: Bladensburg Zip Code: 20710 County: Prince Georges
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Washington East
 Property Owner: Maier Retail, LLC Tax Account ID Number: 02-3939139
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 3-4 Tax Map Number: 50
 Project: MD 450: Peace Cross to 56th Avenue Agency: SHA
 Agency Prepared By: EHT Traceries, Inc.
 Preparer's Name: Paul Weishar Date Prepared: 10/31/2011

Documentation is presented in: DOE

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: X Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended
 Criteria: X A B X C D Considerations: A B D E F G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property:

Inventory Number: Eligible: yes Listed: yes

to visit by MHT Staff yes X no Name: Date:

Description of Property and Justification: (Please attach map and photo)

The Ernest Maier Building was constructed circa 1958 at 4700 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg, Maryland and is an example of the Modern Movement. It is recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C as documented below.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ernest Maier Building was constructed c. 1958 at 4700 Annapolis Road in Bladensburg, Maryland. This building was constructed by Ernest Maier to serve as the headquarters for his expanding concrete-block manufacturing business, which was founded in 1926 at 4617 Annapolis Road. Influenced by the architectural trends of the Modern Movement, a design aesthetic forged in the mid-twentieth century, this building has a low profile and strong horizontal lines, which are highlighted by the wide, overhanging eaves and flat roof. Vertical emphasis is created by the fixed plate glass windows along the facade. The Ernest Maier Building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a unique example of a mid-century Modern Movement commercial building located in Prince George's County, which still functions in its original context. Further, Ernest Maier, Inc., continues as a family-owned business, producing a range of concrete blocks and building materials.

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Eligibility recommended ?Q Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: X C D Considerations: B D

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- Architectural Description

ERNEST MAIER BUILDING

Constructed c. 1958 for property and business owner Ernest Maier, this commercial building reflects the influences of the Modern Movement that were prominent in the mid-twentieth century. The low profile of the building is marked by strong horizontal lines, which are balanced by the bands of fixed windows along the facade. The building is composed of a two-story main block with a one-story wing that wraps from the west (side) elevation to the rear (north) elevation and a one-story original wing located on the east (side) elevation. A second story was added to the one-story wing c. 1970. Constructed of concrete blocks and set on a solid concrete-block foundation, the building is faced with five-course, Flemish-bond brick. The building is capped by a flat roof (material was not visible). The roof is finished with very wide, exaggerated overhanging eaves, a boxed cornice, and a plain frieze of T-1 11 siding. The south elevation reads as the facade although the primary entrance to the building is located on the rear elevation to allow patrons easy access from the parking lot. The facade is fenestrated with a singular ribbon of fixed one-light metal windows; the windows have a strong vertical emphasis created by their height and narrow metal surrounds. A frieze, composed of T-1 11 siding, is located above the facade windows and is embedded with metal letters forming the company's name, "Ernest Maier, Inc., Building Materials." The second story of the west (side) elevation features a recessed panel, which is clad with T-1 11 siding.

The first story of the rear (north) elevation projects slightly from the main block and is capped with an intermediate boxed cornice like that on the main roof. The primary entrance to the building is located in the westernmost bay of the rear (north) elevation, which fronts the parking lot. The recessed entry holds double-leaf metal-frame glass doors with one-light fixed metal sidelights. Poured concrete steps provide access to the entrance. The central bay of the rear elevation features three bands of five one-light fixed metal windows with rowlock brick sills. A single-leaf metal-frame door with one light is sited in the easternmost bay of the first story. The second story of the rear elevation is recessed, framed by buttresses that flank the outermost bays. It is fenestrated with a continuous band of tripartite windows comprised of one-light fixed metal windows flanked by one-light metal casement windows. A continuous rowlock brick sill unites the windows.

A one-story, one-bay-wide wing is located on the west (side) elevation of the main block. Spanning the entire width of the side elevation, the wing, which appears to be original, has the same material treatment as the main block. It is capped by a flat roof that mimics that of the main block. The wing is faced with stretcher-bond brick and is fenestrated with large fixed metal windows with a rowlock brick sill. The northernmost bay of the west (side) elevation is pierced by double-leaf metal-frame glass doors, which are flanked by one-light fixed metal sidelights with rowlock brick sills.

The one-story wing, located on the east (side) elevation of the building, is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation; both are faced with five-course, Flemish-bond brick. A flat roof once capped this wing, although it was removed to allow for construction of the second-story addition. Wide, overhanging eaves ornament the first story and serve as an intermediate boxed cornice. The facade of the first story has no fenestration. The rear elevation is fenestrated with double-leaf flush metal doors, which are sheltered by an awning. The original opening for these doors was once larger and possibly served as a vehicular opening. The size of the opening has been decreased by infilling the outer edges with brick. Glass blocks, typical of modern architecture, fill a window opening to the west of the doors. This opening has a header brick sill. Another opening, located east of the door, has been covered with plywood.

A second story, which rises above the second story of the main block, was added to the wing. It is set back slightly from the primary elevations. Based on its materials, as well as historic photographs, it appears that this addition was constructed c. 1970. The addition is faced with stretcher-bond brick and is capped by a roof (possibly flat) with wide, overhanging eaves and a boxed

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Eligibility not recommended

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cornice. The frieze of T-1 11 siding encircles the building. The facade and rear elevations are fenestrated with tripled tripartite windows composed of a one-light fixed metal window flanked by one-light metal casement windows. These window openings have rowlock brick sills.

BUILDING #1

Located north of the Ernest Maier Building, this one-story building is used for storage. Based on its form and materials, as well as historic photographs, this building appears to have been constructed c. 1950. A one-story, full-width addition was constructed c. 1955 and is located on the rear elevation of the building. The storage building has a rectangular form, with a prominent cant to the northwest along its east (side) elevation. The building is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. A flat roof with metal coping caps the building and is pierced by a series of peaked multi-light metal skylights. The facade (south) elevation is pierced by a large vehicular opening, which contains a roll-up metal door. A metal canopy partially spans the facade and shelters the loading dock. The west (side) elevation is fenestrated with two roll-up metal doors with lights. Fenestration of the east (side) elevation was not visible.

A one-story, full-width addition is located on the rear elevation of the building. Based on its form and materials, as well as historic photographs, the addition appears to have been constructed c. 1955. The addition is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. A flat roof, which has metal coping, caps the addition. The southernmost bay of the west elevation is pierced by a roll-up metal door. The central bay contains a single-leaf metal door. The first- and second-story openings of the northernmost bay hold paired 2/2, metal-sash windows with rowlock brick sills. The rear elevation is pierced by two roll-up metal doors with lights and 2/2, metal-sash windows with rowlock brick sills.

BUILDING #2

This one-story, two-bay building is located across 47th Street, northwest of the Ernest Maier Building. The building, based on its materials and historic photographs, can be given a c. 1955 date of construction. The building is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. The facade (east elevation) and south (side) elevation have been parged. A flat roof caps the building and has metal coping. The facade is pierced by two large vehicular openings; each is covered by upward-coiling security doors. A single-leaf metal door is located in the northernmost bay of the facade. The north (side) elevation has no fenestration. The rear (west) elevation was not visible from the public right-of-way.

BUILDING #3

This two-story building is located north of Building #1. Based on its form and materials, as well as historic photographs, it appears to have been constructed c. 1955. Multiple additions and a silo obscure most of the original main block. The main block is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. A flat roof caps the main block and is finished with metal coping. The south elevation is fenestrated with three-light fixed metal windows.

A two-story addition is located on the west (side) elevation and shares the material treatment of the main block. Historic photographs, and its form and materials, indicate that the addition was constructed c. 1970. A flat roof with metal coping caps the addition. The second story of the south elevation is fenestrated with a single-leaf metal door and a window composed of glass blocks. A two-story wood deck provides access to the entry and features square wood balusters. The first story of the west elevation is pierced by two single-leaf metal doors and a series of window openings containing glass blocks. The central bay of the second story holds paired four-light metal casements and the outermost bays have glass blocks. All window openings feature rowlock brick sills. The rear elevation is open to the elements with steel trusses supporting the roof.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**Eligibility recommended****Eligibility not recommended**

Criteria: **A** **B** **_C** **D** **Considerations:** **_A** **B** **_C** **_D**

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A one-story addition is located on the southeast corner of the main block and wraps around its south and east elevations. Historic photographs, and its form and materials, indicate that the addition was constructed c. 1970. The addition shares the material treatment of the main block and is capped by a flat roof with metal coping.

A silo rises from the juncture of the south elevation of the main block and the west elevation of the c. 1970 one-story addition. The silo is clad with metal siding and features raised ridges which encircle the silo at regular intervals. A flat top caps the silo. The silo appears to have been constructed c. 1975, because of its construction techniques and materials.

A one-story addition is located along the east elevation of the main block and abuts the north elevation of the c. 1970 one-story addition. Historic photographs and its form and materials indicate that the addition was constructed c. 1975. The addition shares the same material treatment as the main block and is capped by a flat roof. The north elevation is pierced by a large opening.

A two-story addition is located along the west elevation of the main block and abuts the north elevation of the two-story, c. 1970 addition. Historic photos, coupled with the addition's form and materials, indicate it was constructed c. 1990. The addition is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation; both are faced with stretcher-bond brick. A flat roof with metal coping caps the addition. The west elevation is fenestrated with a single-leaf metal door with one light and triple one-light metal casement windows. The north elevation is fenestrated with a single-leaf door and triple one-light metal casement windows. Addressed as 4217 47th Street, the addition may be rental property.

BUILDING #4

A two-story commercial building is located northwest of the Ernest Maier Building and across 47th Street. The building, based on its materials, as well as historic photographs, can be given a c. 1955 date of construction. The building is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. The facade (east elevation), northeast (side) elevation, and north (side) elevation have been parged. A pronounced concave curve joins the facade to the north elevation and is an original feature. A flat roof caps the building and has metal coping. The facade of the building is divided into four different business fronts. The facade is fenestrated with multiple upward coiling metal security doors, single-leaf metal doors with lights, single and paired 2/2, metal-sash windows, and paired one-light metal casement windows. All window openings have rowlock brick sills. The northeast elevation is pierced by two large vehicular openings, one is covered by an upward coiling metal security door and the second holds a roll-up multi-light metal door. Several openings have been infilled and parged. The north elevation is also pierced by a large opening. It was not discernible if this opening was covered by a door.

MANUFACTURING PLANT

Located in the northeast corner of the property, this manufacturing plant stands approximately thirty feet in height. An approximately twenty-foot tall block is located on top of the plant. Based on its form and materials, as well as historic photographs, it appears that this building was built c. 1960. Constructed of concrete blocks and set on a solid concrete-block foundation, this large building is capped by a flat roof. The west elevation was not fenestrated. This building was largely inaccessible for survey due to the configuration of the yard.

A large conveyor belt sheltered by a metal hood is located on the south elevation of the plant. The belt rises from the ground to the top of the main block, which includes two smaller blocks. The blocks are clad in corrugated metal siding.

Two, one-story bays project from the west elevation. Based on their form and materials, it appears that these features were

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^C Constructed c. 1990. Each bay is approximately fifteen feet in height and is constructed of concrete block with sloped roofs. Overhanging eaves shelter the openings that pierce the west elevation of each bay. Roll-up metal grilles cover the openings from above. Set between the bays is a one-story, one-bay wing, which based on its form and materials, appears to be an original feature. This concrete-block wing has a sloped roof with an overhanging eave and a 1/1, double-hung, vinyl-sash window.

A one-story addition is located on the south elevation of the main block. Based on historic photographs, as well as its form and materials, this addition was constructed c. 2005. The addition is constructed of concrete blocks and is set on a solid concrete-block foundation. A flat roof caps the addition. The opening, which pierces the west elevation, is sheltered by a roll-up temporary tarp.

YARD BUILDING

The yard building is located north of the Ernest Maier Building. Based on its form and materials, as well as historic photographs, it appears that this building was constructed c. 1985. Set on a concrete slab, this one-story, two-bay masonry building is constructed of concrete block. As the building has no exterior cladding, the insulated concrete form block is exposed. A side gabled roof of asphalt shingles caps the yard building. The roof includes prominent overhanging eaves along the facade (east elevation) and rear (west) elevation. Raking boards in the gable ends complete the roof. Fenestration of the facade consists of a single-leaf, paneled metal door with lights set in a narrow wood surround. A window opening with nine glass blocks is located to the south of the entry. The south (side) elevation holds a large opening of sixteen glass blocks. The north (side) elevation has a paired opening of 1/1, vinyl-sash windows with false 4/4 vinyl muntins. The west elevation holds a triple opening consisting of 1/1, vinyl-sash windows with false 4/4 vinyl muntins.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Bladensburg

• **T h e** Ernest Maier Building is located at 4700 Annapolis Road in Bladensburg, Prince George's County. Bladensburg is a bustling community, bisected by Annapolis Road and Kenilworth Avenue. Commercial resources are largely concentrated along these major streets. Buildings in Bladensburg represent a variety of uses including residential, commercial, industrial, religious, and educational. Located in western Prince George's County, Bladensburg was established in 1742 by an act passed by the General Assembly, establishing a town near Garrison's Landing on the Eastern Branch, as the Anacostia River was then known. Originally called "Bladensburgh," the town was named after colonial governor Thomas Bladen. The General Assembly required that the town be divided into sixty lots, which were to be improved within eighteen months by a "tenantable House, with one Brick or Stone Chimney...that shall cover four Hundred square Feet of Ground." [1]

The construction of the Alexandria Branch of the B&O Railroad in the 1870s was essential in spurring development in Bladensburg, as the Hopkins map of 1878 documents. In support of this influential industry, two hotels and several new stores were constructed to serve those traveling through the area and those living in Bladensburg. The northern and eastern portions of the town experienced the most growth, as the town expanded closer to neighboring communities such as Hyattsville.

In the early twentieth century, the expansion of the streetcar system connected Bladensburg and other communities to Washington, D.C. Prince George's County, a quickly developing suburb of the nation's capital, offered a lower cost of living and a convenient location near the District of Columbia. Yet, the Peace Cross area of Bladensburg, near the location of Ernest Maier, Inc., suffered from intense flooding when the Anacostia River overflowed its banks during rainstorms. This flooding deterred the development of business in the area until the 1950s when the Army Corps of Engineers undertook a massive flood-control project. [2]

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Eligibility recommended

Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: __ A B C _D Considerations: _A_____B _C D _E_____F_____G

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Ernest Maier, Inc.

The Ernest Maier Building was constructed by and for Ernest Maier, Inc. Born in 1900, Ernest Maier was the son of German immigrants who came to the United States in 1893. Initially settling in Kansas, the Maier family moved to Bowie, Maryland, when Ernest was an infant. According to the 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Ernest Maier was residing in Bowie with his widower father, Joseph, who worked as a farmer, and a sister.[3] Five years later, Maier married his wife Elseba, an immigrant from South Russia. Maier initially purchased a farm near Beltsville, but turned to the manufacturing of concrete blocks after noticing the growing need for these building materials in the construction of residential foundations and structures. Maier's initial efforts began with a concrete-block machine purchased from Sears Roebuck and Co., which created seventy-two concrete blocks per day. Expanding the operation soon after, Maier hired several young men to help with the production and paid them each \$18 a week. He officially founded "Ernest Maier & Sons" concrete-block business in 1926 at 4617 Annapolis Road.[4] By 1930, the U.S. Federal Census indicates that Maier was residing with his wife and three children; Irma H., Frederick W., and Ernest Jr., in Bladensburg, Prince George's County and he was working as a cement block contractor.[5]

Although concrete was not a new building material, it was not until Harmon S. Palmer patented his invention in 1900 of a cast-iron machine with removable core and adjustable sides that the modern industry of concrete block manufacture began.[6] His machine consisted of a metal frame and mold box with a hand release lever, which allowed for the removal of the sides and cores. Competitors soon came on the market with machines that were just slight variations of the original Palmer concrete-block machines. The benefit of the machine was that two people could make between eighty to one hundred blocks per day because the machine allowed for the lever to release the block as soon as it had been created.[7]

The ease of concrete block manufacturing and its durability led to a proliferation of concrete block companies across the country. As the building material increased in popularity, the need for national standards became a priority. Several associations, including the National Association of Cement Users, the Concrete Block Machine Manufacturers Association, the Concrete Producers Association, and the Concrete Block Manufacturers Association agreed to a standard unit size in 1924. By the end of that decade, most manufacturers like Ernest Maier were abiding by the eight-by-eight-by sixteen-inch block, which was also a more convenient size for architects and builders to use.[8]

Improvements within the industry occurred quickly and by the 1920s, power tamping and "stripper" machines replaced the earlier hand-tamped, downface forms. Two major changes in the 1930s included the automatic vibrators, which ended the need for tamping, and more importantly, the invention of machines that could make multiple blocks. By the end of that decade, most steps in the creation of concrete blocks had been automated. Further, by 1940, steam became standard as a way to cure the blocks, a step that had first been suggested in 1908.[9] It is evident that Ernest Maier entered the concrete block manufacturing business at a time when the popularity of the building material was on the rise. Cheaper than brick and more durable than wood, the relative ease of construction and its sustained durability has lent it a wide distribution across the country.

During the 1940s, as Maier's company expanded, a need for a larger facility was realized and the company moved down the road to 4700 Annapolis Road. Beginning in 1948, the Maiers began purchasing small parcels to construct the new home for their company. The first land transfer occurred in January 1948 when Louis H. and Wilma Singleton conveyed a parcel to the Maiers.[10] By September 1951, the Maiers had purchased a 0.21-acre parcel from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.[11] In four separate transactions in 1955, Ernest and Elseba Maier purchased approximately 1.50 additional acres. With the purchase of each parcel, Maier began constructing the buildings needed to expand his business, which culminated with the construction of the Ernest Maier Building c. 1958. [12] The architectural elements and style employed for the new building served as a showcase for the expanding business.

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In 1964, Ernest and Elseba transferred part of their property (known as Lot 4 or Parcel 3), containing almost 4.50 acres, to Ernest Maier, Inc.[13] Ernest Maier passed away in January 1984; he was preceded in death by his wife. It is presumed that Ernest Maier, Inc., passed to his sons, who as the Personal Representatives of the Estate of Ernest Maier, transferred their interests in the property in 1989 to Ernest Maier, Inc.[14] A family-owned business since 1926, Ernest Maier, Inc., continues to operate as a large-scale concrete block manufacturing plant and building materials specialist.

Locational Description

The Ernest Maier Building is located at 4700 Annapolis Road in Bladensburg, Maryland. The building is sited on a level lot, with minimal mature landscaping limited to the front yard. Kenilworth Avenue bounds the eastern edge of the property and 47th Street enters the property from Annapolis Road to the west of the main building. Terraces, composed of building materials produced by Ernest Maier, Inc., highlight the southeast corner of the property. A patio wraps from the facade (south elevation) of the building to the west (side) elevation. An asphalt-paved work yard is located north of the main building. In addition to the primary building, this property includes a yard building, four storage buildings, and one manufacturing plant.

Ernest Maier is associated with 6.143 acres of property.

Determination of Eligibility

The Ernest Maier Building, located at 4700 Annapolis Road, was constructed c. 1958. This building is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Industry as it is significant for its reflection of evolving building techniques and methods, and advancements in the concrete industry during the mid-twentieth century. The Ernest Maier Building is not National Register-eligible under Criterion B, as it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, this building exhibits historic architectural integrity from the mid-twentieth century and illustrates strong influences of the Modern Movement as well as common construction techniques and materials of the time period. National Register-eligibility under Criterion D was not investigated as part of this study. Therefore, it is been recommended that the building at 4700 Annapolis Road is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

Assessment of Physical Integrity

The Ernest Maier Building has a high level of integrity of materials and workmanship. This commercial building retains its original windows and architectural detailing indicative of the Modern Movement. The building has a moderate level of integrity of design due to the addition of a second story on the east wing of the main block. However, this addition is sensitive to the original design and features similar materials. The building also retains its integrity of feeling and location. Integrity of setting remains high due to its placement within the Ernest Maier, Inc. concrete-block manufacturing plant. The property has retained sufficient integrity of association because of its ongoing use for the manufacturing of concrete blocks.

The four buildings and manufacturing plant maintain a moderate level of design, materials, and workmanship due to the construction of multiple additions on many of the buildings. However, the additions are indicative of the growth and success of the concrete-block manufacturing plant and are typical for industrial properties such as this. These buildings also maintain a high level of integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association due to their continuing use in the manufacture of concrete blocks and other

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building materials. Overall, the historic buildings present sufficient integrity to reflect its historic context.

The yard building (c. 1985), which retains integrity, is a non-contributing resource to this property due to its recent construction date.

Endnotes:

- 1) 1) Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, 1740-1744, Volume 42, 413-415.
- 2) "Senate Votes \$675,000 for Peace Cross: Flood Control Funds Added to Army Civil Functions Budget." The Washington Post (1877-1954), June 28, 1953, <http://www.proquest.com/>(accessed December 14, 2009).
- 3) 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Bowie, Prince George's, Maryland, Series T625, Roll 674, Page4B, Enumeration District 89, Image 770, Earnest Maier.
- 4) About Us, "History," Ernest Maier, Inc., <http://www.emcoblock.com/about/history.php>, (accessed December 8, 2009).
- 5) 1930 U.S. Federal Census, Bladensburg, Prince George's, Maryland, Series 877, Page 3A, Enumeration District 7, Image 686.0, Ernest Maier.
- 6) Pamela H. Simpson, Cheap, Quick, & Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930 (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 11.
- 7) Simpson, Cheap, Quick, & Easy, 13.
- 8) Simpson, Cheap, Quick, & Easy, 21.
- 9) Simpson, Cheap, Quick, & Easy, 28.
- 10) Louis H. and Wilma Singleton to Ernest and Elseba Maier, Prince George's County Land Records, 1007:71.
- 11) Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company to Ernest and Elseba Maier, Prince George's County Land Records, 1472:433.
- 12) "Historic Maps," Historic Aerial, <http://www.historicaerials.com/Default.aspx> (accessed December 8, 2009).
- 13) Ernest and Elseba Maier to Ernest Maier, Inc., Prince George's County Land Records, 2953:318.
- 14) Alvin R. Maier, Ernest D. Maier, Frederick W. Maier, Personal Representatives of the Estate of Ernest Maier to Ernest Maier, Inc., Prince George's County Land Records, NLP 7428:808.

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Eligibility recommended

Eligibility not recommended

Criteria:	A	B	_C	D	Considerations:	_A	_B	_C	D
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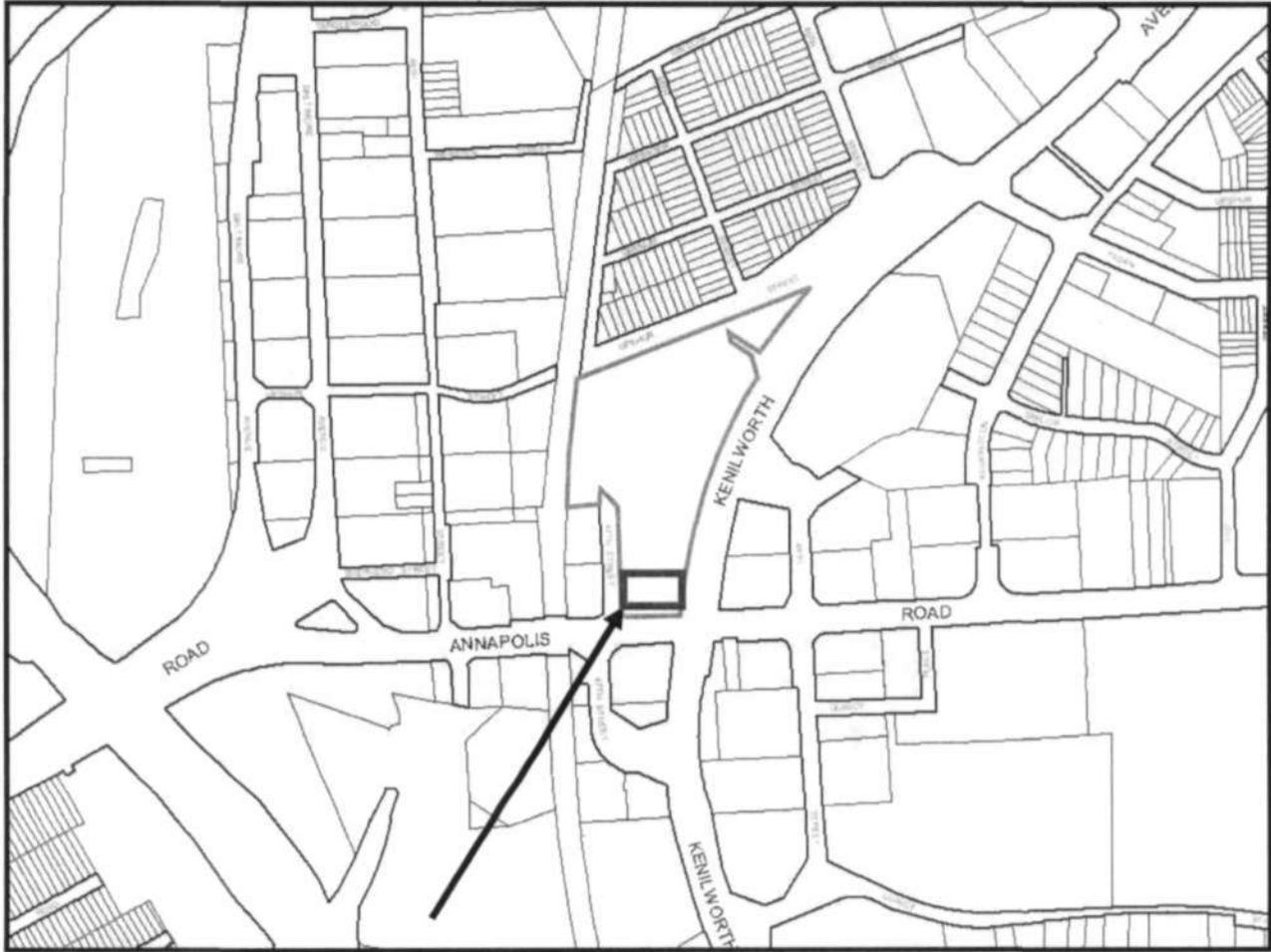
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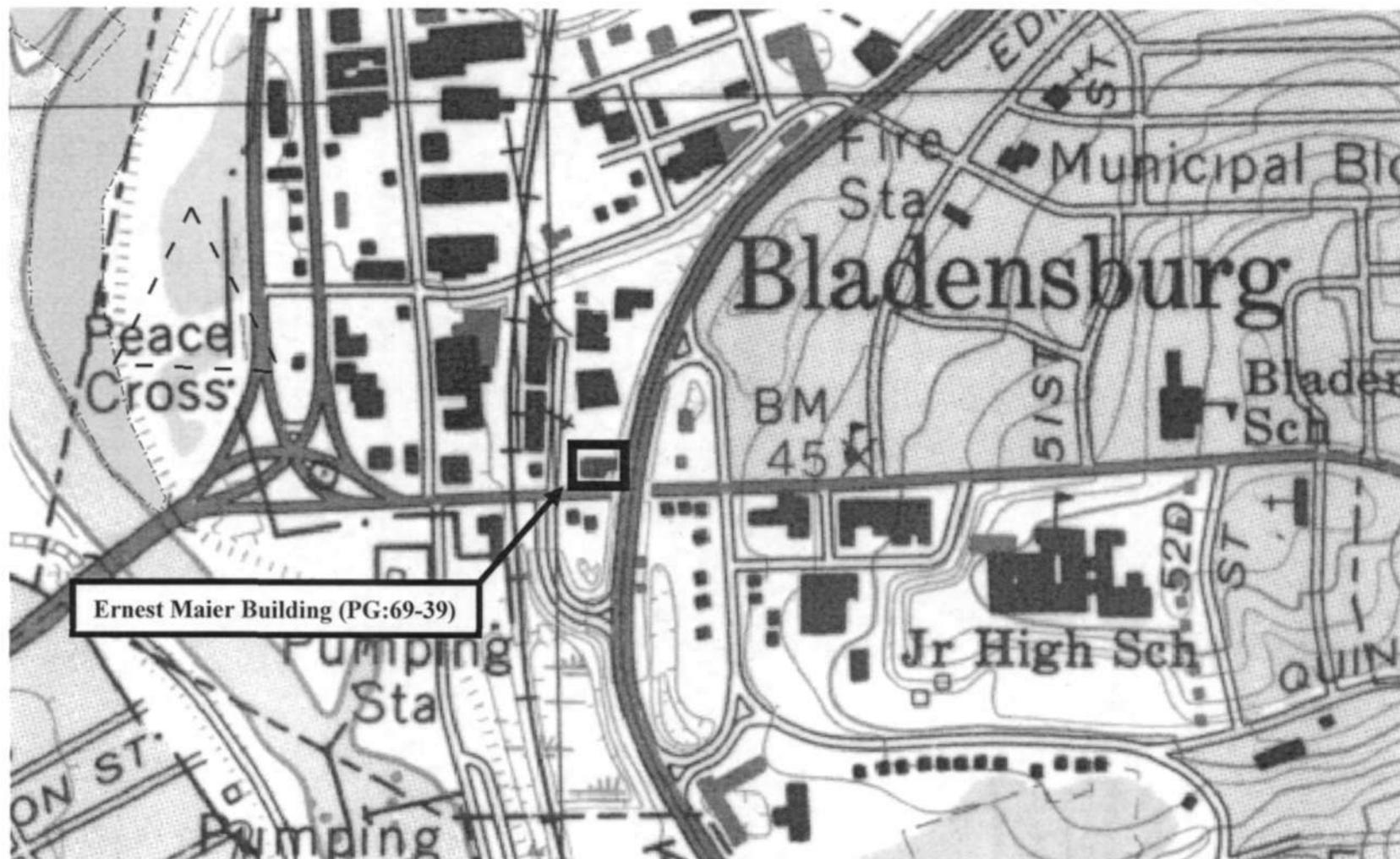
National Register Boundary - to include only the Main Building (1958)

PG: 69-39
Ernest Maier
4700 Annapolis Road
Bladensburg, MD

North ↑

USGS Map: Washington East

PG:69-39
Ernest Maier Building
4700 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg
Prince George's County
Washington East Quad





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Ernest Maier

Prince Georges County, Maryland

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MD SHPO

Ernest Maier Building Facade, looking northeast

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