

# CAPSULE SUMMARY SHEET

**Survey No.:** M:30-24

**Construction Date:** 1941

**Name:** WMAL Transmitter Property

**Location:** 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

Private Ownership / Present Use: Commercial / Unoccupied / Condition: Excellent / Restricted Access

## **Description:**

The WMAL Transmitter Property is located on the east side of Greentree Road in the Bethesda vicinity of Montgomery County. The property is located immediately north of the Capital Beltway and includes the transmitter building, four radio towers and several satellite dishes. The main structure on the property was constructed in 1941 in the Colonial Revival style and includes a transmitter room, high-voltage room, workshop, and apartment intended for the engineers and watchmen. The property is still used by WMAL for transmission purposes, however, the building is no longer staffed and the windows have been covered with plywood for security reasons.

## **Significance:**

The WMAL Transmitter Building was constructed between 1940 and 1941 on the west side of Greentree Road. At the time of construction, the property was a cleared field surrounded by woods located north of the National Skeet Club. The station was built for Washington's *The Evening Star Newspaper* and its subsidiary the M. Leese Radio Corporation. The architects were Porter & Lockie of Washington, with Marshall & Gongwer acting as structural engineers and Charles H. Tompkins Company general contractors. The radio equipment was designed and installed by Jansky & Bailey, radio consultants. Constructed at a total cost of \$200,000, the new transmitter equipment was put into service the morning of February 3, 1941. The old transmission equipment at 712 Eleventh Street N.W. was abandoned, while the radio studios remained in the Trans Lux Building on Fourteenth Street between New York Avenue and H Street, N.W. The radio broadcasts were sent from the downtown studio to the new transmission equipment via telephone lines. According to an article that appeared in *The Star* newspaper on February 3, 1941, the building was constructed of Williamsburg Colonial brick and had a slate roof with a building frontage of 105 feet and a depth of 38 feet. The 1½-story structure with a full basement contained a transmission room, high-voltage room, and a workshop containing all the tools necessary to make repairs to the complicated equipment. The building also contained an apartment for the engineers and watchmen. The apartment consisted of a living room, dinette, kitchen, and a bath. The south wing was reserved for future expansion. The transmission room had an acoustical ceiling, while the rest of the interior had indirect lighting and venetian blinds on the windows. The building was constructed with two separate power supplies and the latest type of R.C.A. transmitter equipment. The four 400-foot tall self-supporting triangular steel towers rested on porcelain insulators anchored into a reinforced concrete foundation.

The property represents the mid-twentieth century trend of moving outdated urban transmission facilities into the suburbs to increase broadcast area and provide service to the growing number of listeners located in the suburbs. Like suburban department stores, hospitals and fire stations, the WMAL Transmitter Property is part of the twentieth century trend of bringing services to suburban residents. In addition, the suburban transmitter buildings constructed in Montgomery County tended to be elaborate showplaces for the radio station. For example, WTOP (originally WJSV) has a streamlined Art Moderne transmitter building on University Boulevard in Wheaton. WMAL's Colonial Revival transmitter building features a formal entrance portico, ornate cornice, and large round-headed windows to convey the importance of the structure. The structure retains excellent integrity, despite the boarded-over windows, and the setting remains intact.

Preparer:  
KCI Technologies, Inc.  
January 2000

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic WMAL Transmitter Property (Preferred)

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number: 7115 Greentree Road

not for publication

city, town Bethesda

congressional district

state Maryland

county Montgomery

### 3. Classification

#### Category

- district  
 building(s)  
 structure  
 site  
 object

#### Ownership

- public  
 private  
 both

#### Public Acquisition

- in process  
 being considered  
 not applicable

#### Status

- occupied  
 unoccupied  
 work in progress

#### Accessible

- yes: restricted  
 yes: unrestricted  
 no

#### Present Use

- agriculture  
 commercial  
 educational  
 entertainment  
 government  
 industrial  
 military

- museum  
 park  
 private residence  
 religious  
 scientific  
 transportation  
 other:

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

name WMAL, Inc.

street & number: 4400 Jenifer Street, NW

telephone no.:

city, town Washington, D.C.

state and zip code: 20015

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Judicial Center

liber:

street & number 50 Maryland Avenue

folio:

city, town Rockville

state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

Survey No. M:30-24

### Condition

- excellent  
 good

- deteriorated  
 ruins

### Check one

- unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

- original site  
 moved

date of move

Resource Count: 1

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

The WMAL Transmitter Property is located on the east side of Greentree Road in the Bethesda vicinity of Montgomery County. The property is located immediately north of the Capital Beltway and includes the transmitter building, four radio towers and several satellite dishes. The main structure on the property was constructed in 1941 in the Colonial Revival style and includes a transmitter room, high-voltage room, workshop, and apartment intended for the engineers and watchmen. The property is still used by WMAL for transmission purposes, however, the building is no longer staffed and the windows have been covered with plywood for security reasons.

The transmission building is 1-story in height with a brick exterior and a slate pyramidal hipped roof. The exterior of the building is ornamented in a formal Colonial Revival style with a symmetrical façade and prominent entrance portico. The building consists of a main block with the pyramidal roof, and two side-gable wings. An interior end chimney is located on the gable end of the north wing. Extending from the north elevation is a double garage connected to the north wing by an enclosed breezeway. The entrance portico is centered on the front elevation of the main block and is supported by four wood Doric columns and two engaged square pilasters. The gable-front of the portico has a full entablature with pronounced dentil moldings. The brick façade is 7 bays wide with a water table and an intricate corbelled brick cornice. Within the entrance portico is a wood paneled door below a half-circle fanlight. Flanking the entrance are two small double-hung windows. Also on the front elevation of the main block are two large round-headed windows below which are wood panels. Each of the flanking wings have a single double-hung window on the front elevation.

The south elevation has two window openings, while the rear elevation has several window openings and many transformer units with cables extending to the transmission towers. The north elevation has a single window opening.

The property is a cleared parcel of land adjacent to the north side of the Capital Beltway. The transmission building is prominently situated on a slight hill, with the transmission towers located to the north and east. A cluster of satellite dishes are located to the southeast of the building near the Beltway. The property is accessed by a paved driveway that curves east from Greentree Road to the front of the building. Modern development surrounds the approximately 75-acre property to the north, east, and west.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. M:30-24

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

**Specific Dates** 1941 **Builder Architect** Porter & Lockie

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support

The WMAL Transmitter Building was constructed between 1940 and 1941 on the west side of Greentree Road. At the time of construction, the property was a cleared field surrounded by woods located north of the National Skeet Club. The removal of the transmission equipment from WMAL's downtown radio station to a rural location followed the trend of large radio stations throughout the country. The move of transmission equipment allowed WMAL to increase its power from 500 watts during the day and 250 watts at night to 5000 watts all day, thereby increasing the broadcast area. The station was built for Washington's The Evening Star Newspaper and its subsidiary the M. Leese Radio Corporation. The architects were Porter & Lockie of Washington, with Marshall & Gongwer acting as structural engineers and Charles H. Tompkins Company, general contractors. The radio equipment was designed and installed by Jansky & Bailey, radio consultants.

Constructed at a total cost of \$200,000, the new transmitter equipment was put into service the morning of February 3, 1941. The old transmission equipment at 712 Eleventh Street N.W. was abandoned, while the radio studios remained in the Trans Lux Building on Fourteenth Street between New York Avenue and H Street, N.W. The radio broadcasts were sent from the downtown studio to the new transmission equipment via telephone lines. According to an article that appeared in The Star newspaper on February 3, 1941, the building was constructed of Williamsburg Colonial brick and had a slate roof with a building frontage of 105 feet and a depth of 38 feet. The 1½-story structure with a full basement contained a transmission room, high-voltage room, and a workshop containing all the tools necessary to make repairs to the complicated equipment. The building also contained an apartment for the engineers and watchmen. The apartment consisted of a living room, dinette, kitchen, and a bath. The south wing was reserved for future expansion. The transmission room had an acoustical ceiling, while the rest of the interior had indirect lighting and venetian blinds on the windows. The building was constructed with two separate power supplies and the latest type of R.C.A. transmitter equipment. The four 400-foot tall self-supporting triangular steel towers rested on porcelain insulators anchored into a reinforced concrete foundation.

The architectural firm of Porter & Lockie was prolific in the design of a wide range of projects in the District of Columbia and suburban Maryland from 1924 until the death of Joseph A. Lockie in 1949. After 1949, the firm continued as Irwin S. Porter and Sons until Irvin Porter's death in 1957. The firm was responsible for the construction of department stores, shops, parking garages, churches, schools, housing projects, numerous residences, and miscellaneous items such as presidential inaugural viewing stands in 1941. Among the firms most well-known projects are the Brookings Institution (1930), Scottish Rite Temple (1938), The Evening Star Parking Plaza (1941), Islamic Center (1949), and hospital and dormitory of the U.S. Soldier's Home (circa 1950).

CONTINUATION SHEET

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM

RESOURCE NAME: WMAL Transmitter Property

SURVEY NO.: M:30-24

ADDRESS: 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

8. Significance (Continued)

National Register Evaluation:

The WMAL Transmitter Property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C as an excellent example of a radio transmission building. The property represents the mid-twentieth century trend of moving outdated urban transmission facilities into the suburbs to increase broadcast area and provide service to the growing number of listeners located in the suburbs. Like suburban department stores, hospitals and fire stations, the WMAL Transmitter Property is part of the twentieth century trend of bringing services to suburban residents. As such, the property is eligible under Criterion A for its significance within the suburbanization theme.

The property is also eligible under Criterion C as a good example of a radio transmitter building and an excellent example of the Colonial Revival-style building. The building was constructed using all of the latest advancements of radio engineering technology. In addition, the suburban transmitter buildings constructed in Montgomery County tended to be elaborate showplaces for the radio station. For example, WTOP (originally WJSV) has a streamlined Art Moderne transmitter building on University Boulevard in Wheaton. WMAL's Colonial Revival transmitter building features a formal entrance portico, ornate cornice, and large round-headed windows to convey the importance of the structure. The structure retains excellent integrity, despite the boarded-over windows, and the setting remains intact.

Historic research indicates that the property has no association with persons who have made specific contributions to history, and therefore, it does not meet Criterion B. Finally, the structure has no known potential to yield important information, and therefore, is not eligible under Criterion D.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Eligibility recommended **XX**

Eligibility Not Recommended:

Comments:

Reviewer, OPS:

*altruder*

Date:

*9/11/00*

Reviewer, NR Program:

*B. Murty*

Date:

*10/12/00*

*Jmg*

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

Survey No. M:30-24

See Continuation Sheet

---

## 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of nominated property 30.28 hectares (74.83 acres)

---

Quadrangle name Rockville, MD-VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

---

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

---

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Tim Tamburrino

---

organization KCI Technologies, Inc.

date January 2000

---

street & number 10 North Park Drive

telephone 410-316-7800

---

city or town Hunt Valley

state/zip Maryland, 21030

---

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

**STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM**

**RESOURCE NAME:** WMAL Transmitter Property

**SURVEY NO.:** M:30-24

**ADDRESS:** 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

---

**9. Major Bibliographical References** (Continued)

---

The Evening Star (Washington D.C.). 3 February 1941.

The Evening Star (Washington, D.C.). 24 December 1941.

The Evening Star (Washington, D.C.). 3 January 1957.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM

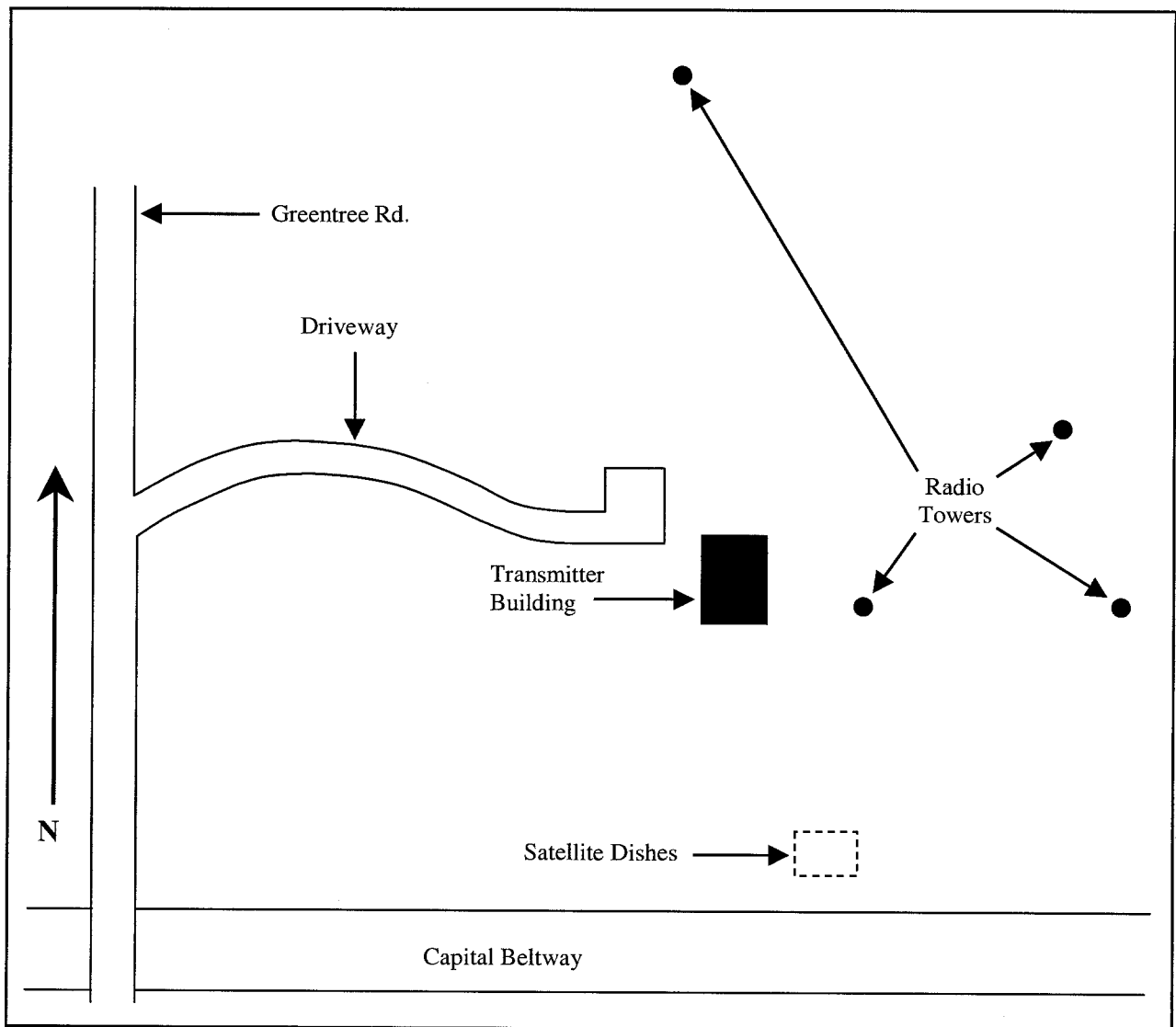
RESOURCE NAME: WMAL Transmitter Property

SURVEY NO.: M:30-24

ADDRESS: 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

10. Geographical Data(Continued)

Resource Sketch Map:





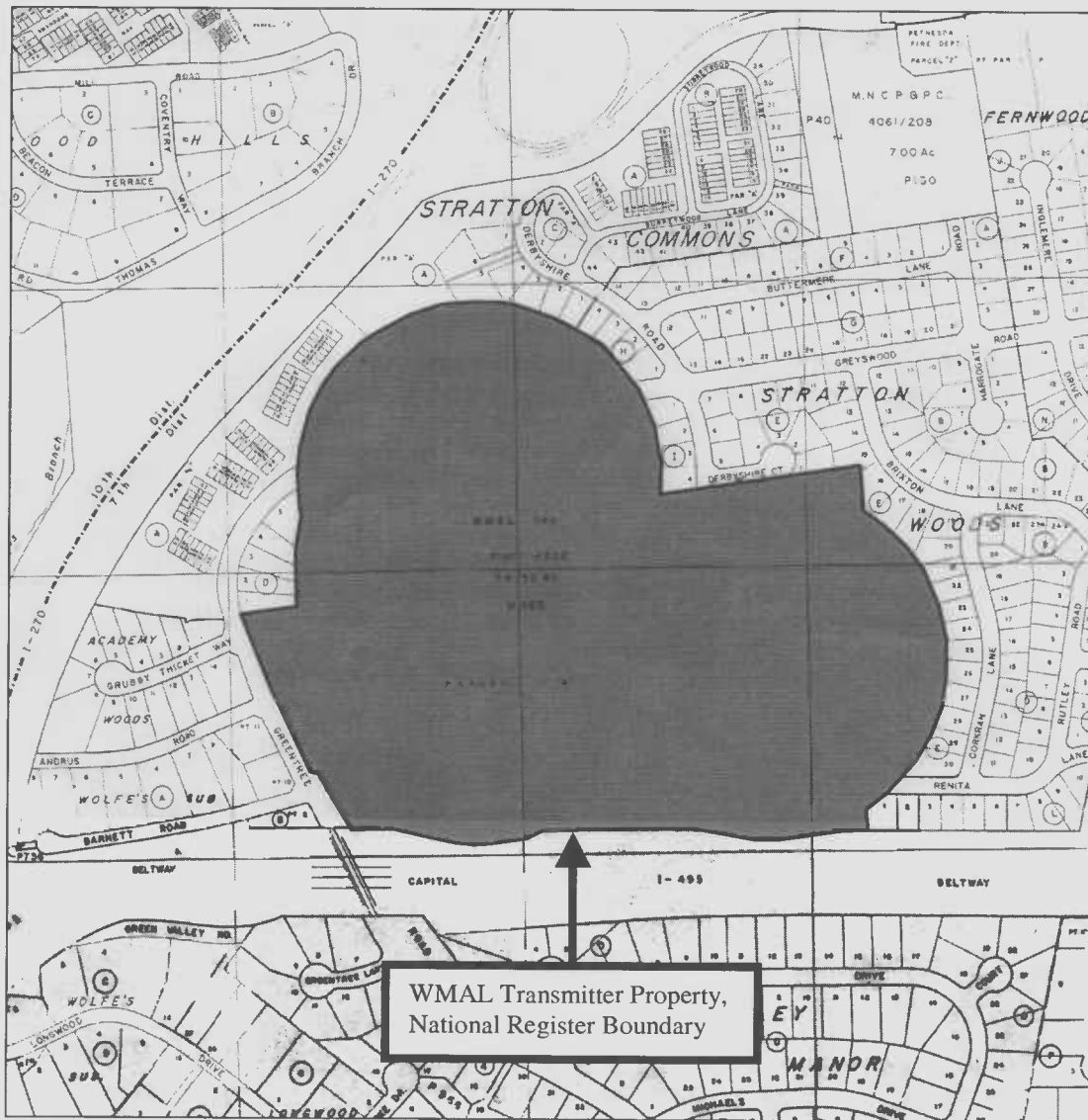
CONTINUATION SHEET

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM  
RESOURCE NAME: WMAL Transmitter Property  
SURVEY NO.: M:30-24  
ADDRESS: 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

10. Geographical Data (Continued)

National Register Boundary Map:

Montgomery County Tax Map GP342, Parcel N495



## CONTINUATION SHEET

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

**STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM**

**RESOURCE NAME:** WMAL Transmitter Property

**SURVEY NO.:** M:30-24

**ADDRESS:** 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

---

### 10. Geographical Data (Continued)

---

**Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:**

The National Register boundaries of the WMAL Transmitter Property follow the current property lines of 7115 Greentree Road (Tax Maps GP342, Parcel N495). This 30.28 hectare (74.83 acre) parcel is bounded on the north and east by adjacent residential development, on the south by the Capital Beltway, and on the west by Greentree Road. The boundary includes the transmitter building and four steel towers as contributing structures constructed within the property's period of significance of 1941. The boundary includes all land currently associated with the property. This land contributes to the historic setting of the property.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**

**STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM**

**RESOURCE NAME:** WMAL Transmitter Property

**SURVEY NO.:** M:30-24

**ADDRESS:** 7115 Greentree Road, Bethesda, Montgomery County

**Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data Sheet**

**Historic Context:**

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION DATA**

**Geographic Organization:**

Piedmont

**Chronological/Development Period Theme(s):**

Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present

**Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):**

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Communications

**RESOURCE TYPE:**

**Category (see Section 3 of survey form):**

Building and structure

**Historic Environment (urban, suburban, village, or rural):**

Suburban

**Historic Function(s) and Use(s):**

Commercial

**Known Design Source (write none if unknown):**

Porter & Lockie

**Preparer:**

KCI Technologies, Inc.

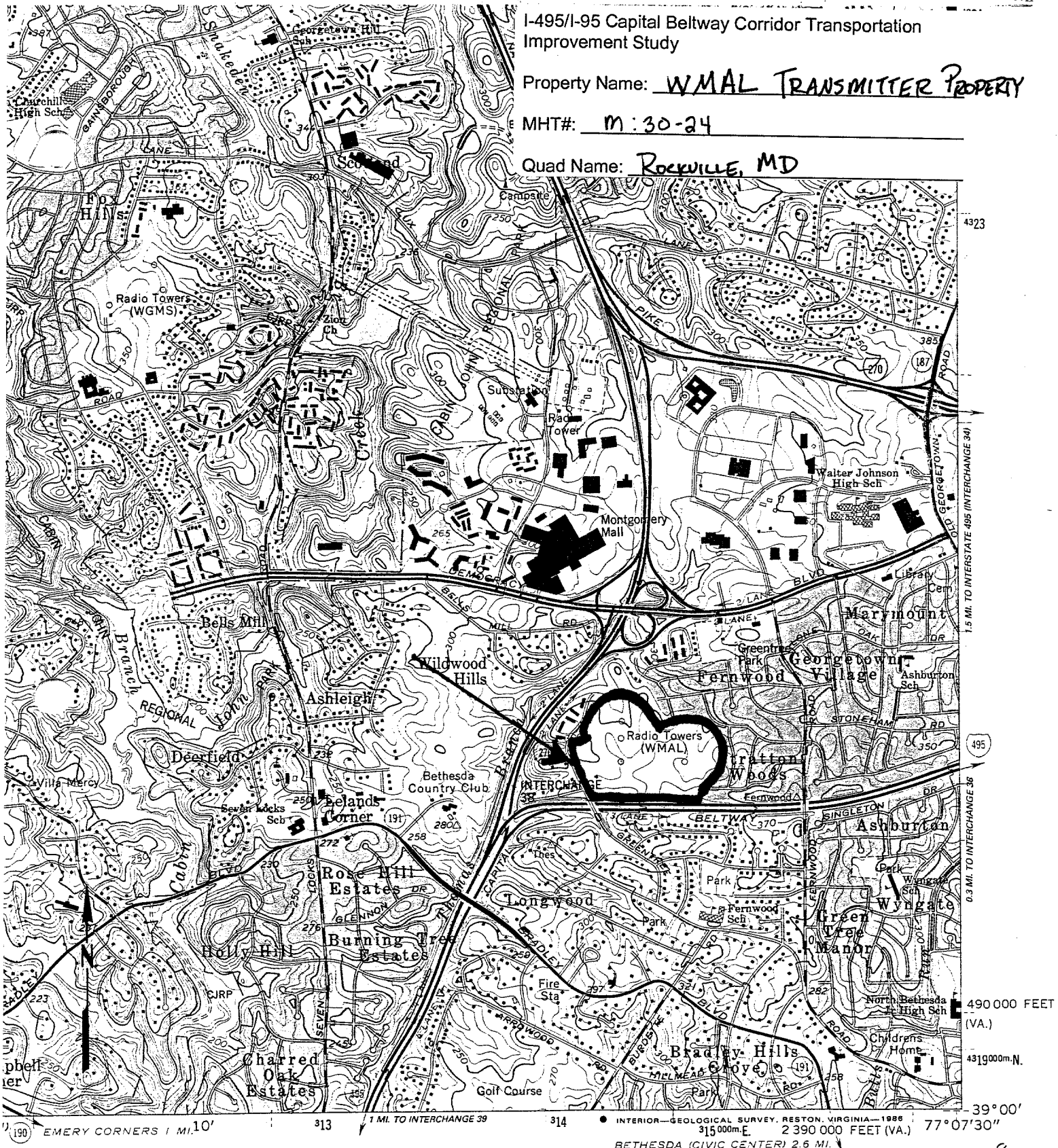
January 2000

I-495/I-95 Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Improvement Study

Property Name: WMAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY

MHT#: M:30-24

Quad Name: ROCKVILLE, MD

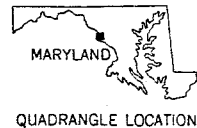


● INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1986  
 3150000E. 2 390 000 FEET (VA.) 77° 07' 30"  
 BETHESDA (CIVIC CENTER) 2.6 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	—————	Light-duty	—————
Medium-duty	—————	Unimproved dirt	-----
○ Interstate Route	○ U. S. Route	○ State Route	

1 MILE  
 6000 7000 FEET  
 1 KILOMETER



ROCKVILLE, MD. — VA.  
 39077-A2-TF-024

ORDS  
 A 22092  
 LE, VIRGINIA 22903  
 BLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1991 and other sources. This information not field checked

1965  
 PHOTOREVISED 1984



- 1 M:30-24
- 2 WMPAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
- 3 MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD
- 4 TIM TAMMURRINGO
- 5 DECEMBER 1989
- 6 MID SHRO
7. FRONT ELEVATION VIEW EAST
8. 1 OF 10



1. M: 30-24
2. WINDAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
4. TIM TAMBURRINO
5. DECEMBER 1999
6. MD SHPO
7. FRONT ELEVATION, VIEW EAST
8. 2 OF 10





1 M:30-24

2 WJMAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY

3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

4. TIM TAMBURRING

5. DECEMBER 1999

6. MD SHPO

7. DETAIL OF FRONT ELEVATION, VIEW EAST

8. 3 OF 10



- 1 M:30-24
- 2 WPAAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
- 3 MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD
- 4 TIM TAMBURINO
- 5 DECEMBER 1999
- 6 MD SITPO
- 7 SOUTHWEST CORNER, VIEW ACROSS ST
- 8 4 of 10



1. M:30-24
2. WPAAL TRANSMITTER PRESENT?
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
4. TIM TAMBUKATUN
5. DECEMBER 1999
6. MD SHPO
7. REAR ELEVATIONS VIEW NORTHWEST
8. 5 OF 10



1 M: 30-24

2. WOTPA TRANSMITTER FACILITY

3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

4. TIM TAMBARINO

5. DECEMBER 1967

6. MD SHPO

7. NORTHEAST CORNER, VIEW SOUTHWEST

8. 6 OF 10





1. M30-24
2. WYMAZ TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
4. TIM TAMBUKING
5. DECEMBER 1999
6. MID STPO
7. NORTHWEST CORNER, VIEW SOUTHEAST
8. 7 of 10



1. M: 30-24
2. WMAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD
4. TIM TAMBURRINO
5. DECEMBER 1949
6. MD SHPO
7. RADIO TOWERS, VIEW EAST
8. 8 OF 10



1. ML 30-24
2. WIRELESS TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
4. TIN TAMBUKING
5. DECEMBER 1999
6. MD SHPO
7. RADIO TOWERS, VIEW EAST
8. 9 OF 10



1. M: 30-24
2. WJAL TRANSMITTER PROPERTY
3. MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD
4. TIM TAMBUKUNDO
5. DECEMBER 1999
6. MD SHPO
7. SATELLITE DISHES - BELTWAY JUST BEYOND  
TREE LINE, VIEW SOUTHEAST
8. 10 OF 10