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INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Peace Cross Survey Number: PG-69-16
~~PG-69-19~~

Project: MD 450 @ CSX Crossing Bladensburg, Md Agency: FHWA/SHA

Site visit by MHT Staff: X no yes Name Date

Eligibility recommended X Eligibility **not** recommended

Criteria: A B X C D Considerations: A B C D E X F G None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The Peace Cross, located at the intersection of MD 450 and US Route 1 in Bladensburg, Maryland, meets Criteria Consideration F and is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. The Peace Cross, erected 1919 to 1925 as a monument to Prince George's County residents who lost their lives serving in the United States Armed Forces in World War I is significant as an expression of the post war era's shared perception of the noble character and valor of the veterans and their cause. In addition, it is significant as an example of the work of John J. Earley. Beginning in 1916, John J. Earley (1881-1945) developed and refined the medium of "concrete mosaic" or exposed aggregate which in turn transformed the construction trade by allowing for factory fabrication of precast concrete building panels. Earley's career included the execution, and in some instances, design of notable buildings and monuments in the Washington area and throughout the country. Washington area examples include the "polychrome houses" in Silver Spring and Meridian Hill Park and the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington, D.C. The Peace Cross, with its use of exposed aggregates of various colors, is an early example of the process which Earley developed and popularized.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Project File, Maryland Inventory form PG 69-16, for Earley see also Frederick Cron, The Man Who Made Concrete Beautiful, Hans Hirz and Richard Stiner Washington Deco

Prepared by: Shirley Baltz, Lois Snyderman, & Susan Pearl (inventory form)

Elizabeth Hannold February 6, 1996
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence: yes no not applicable

Olav's Reddy Feb. 13, 1996.
Reviewer, NR program Date

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (prehistoric historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Object

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Recreation & Culture - monument

Known Design Source: John J. Earley

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #69-16 Building Date: 1919-1925

Building Name: Peace Cross

Location: Annapolis Road at Route 1, Bladensburg, Maryland

Public/Park/Unoccupied/Fair/Accessible

Description:

The Peace Cross is located at the intersection of Maryland Route 450 and U.S. Route 1 in Bladensburg, surrounded by a small green space containing a flagpole and planting beds. The Cross is 40 feet high, with arms extending 5 feet from the center; it rests on a large rectangular base. Its basic materials are precast reinforced concrete and exposed aggregate, predominantly tan in color, with major decorative accents of inlaid pink granite aggregate. A border of pink aggregate outlines the north and south faces of the Cross and a band of the same material extends up and around the east and west sides. Quarter-round quadrants surround the crossing on the north and south faces, suggesting a Celtic Cross. Aggregates of contrasting colors form a medallion at the crossings in the north and south faces; the medallion features a gold star on a green laurel wreath against a blue background. The letters "U.S." have been placed in the middle of the star, which is gold against a dark red center. At the foot of the Cross, on each side of the Cross, are inscribed the words "Endurance", "Valor", "Devotion", and "Courage", in bronze letters. A bronze tablet on the south face carries the names of forty-nine residents of the County who died in the War.

Significance:

The Peace Cross is a monument to the Prince George's County residents who lost their lives while serving in the United States Armed Forces in World War I. It is significant because of its historical association with World War I and the impact of the War on the County. Ground was broken for the memorial in September of 1919. This occasion also marked the dedication of a new road between Bladensburg and Annapolis, to be named the National Defense Highway in honor of the men lost in the war. In 1922, the Commissioners of Bladensburg conveyed the Peace Cross site and the unfinished Cross to the Snyder-Farmer Post of the American Legion; in July 1925, dedication ceremonies were held for the Peace Cross, constructed at a cost of \$10,000 and designed by John J. Earley of Washington, D.C. Improvements on the intersection where the Cross stands were accomplished by the State Roads Commission in the 1950's; in 1956 a longstanding controversy over ownership was settled by a Circuit Court ruling that title should be vested in the State of Maryland. The land was deeded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1960, after which that agency carried out restoration work on the monument.

Acreage: .33 acre

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Peace Cross

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Annapolis Road at Route #1 (Now Landover Rd (MD 202) & Alt. U.S. 1) not for publication

city, town Bladensburg vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county Prince George's

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

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

name Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

street & number 6600 Kenilworth Avenue telephone no.: 699-2407

city, town Riverdale, state and zip code MD. 20737

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 2511

street & number Main Street folio 99

city, town Upper Marlboro, state MD. 20772

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

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

The Peace Cross is located at the intersection of Maryland Route 450 and U.S. Route 1 in Bladensburg. It stands in a traffic island at the intersection of these two busy roads, surrounded by a small green space containing a flagpole and planting beds raised within natural wooden curbs. The Cross is 40 feet high, with arms extending 5 feet from the center; it rests on a large rectangular base. Its basic materials are precast reinforced concrete and exposed aggregate, predominantly tan in color with major decorative accents of inlaid pink granite aggregate.

A border of pink aggregate outlines the north and south faces of the Cross and a band of the same material extends up and around the east and west sides. Quarter-round quadrants surround the crossing on the north and south faces, suggesting a Celtic Cross. Aggregates of contrasting colors are used to form a medallion at the crossings in the north and south faces; the medallion features a gold star on a green laurel wreath against a blue background. The letters "U.S." have been placed in the middle of the star, which is gold against a dark red center.

At the foot of the Cross, above each base and on each side of the Cross, are inscribed the words "Endurance", "Valor", "Devotion", and "Courage", in bronze letters. A bronze tablet on the south face carries the names of forty-nine residents of the County who died in the War.

8. Significance

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1919-1925 **Builder/Architect** John J. Earley

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 Peace Cross is a monument to the Prince George's County residents who lost their lives while serving in the United States Armed Forces in World War I. It is significant because of its historical association with World War I and the impact of the War on the County. The impetus for the Cross came from the Prince George's County Memorial Committee, formed for the purpose of raising funds for the construction of a monument honoring the County's war dead.¹ The monument was placed on what was, in the eighteenth century, the Public Landing for the busy port of Bladensburg.

Ground was broken for the memorial in September of 1919. This occasion also marked the dedication of a new road between Bladensburg and Annapolis, to be named the National Defense Highway in honor of the men lost in the war.²

After that time, work was begun on the base of the cross, but funds were insufficient to complete it. In February 1922, the Commissioners of Bladensburg resolved to convey the Peace Cross site and the unfinished Cross to the Snyder-Farmer Post of the American Legion, which had consented to take on the task of completing the monument. The Legion Post raised the money necessary to complete the project, and, on July 12, 1925, dedication ceremonies were held for the Peace Cross, constructed at a cost of \$10,000 and designed by John J. Earley of Washington, D.C.³

Improvements on the intersection where the Cross stands were accomplished by the State Roads Commission in the 1950's; in 1956 a longstanding controversy over ownership was settled by a Circuit Court ruling that title should be vested in the State of Maryland.⁴ This small parcel of land was deeded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1960, after which that agency carried out restoration work on the monument.⁵ In July of 1975 the Snyder-Farmer-Butler Post of the American Legion hosted a special ceremony to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Cross's dedication.

#8. Continued

Notes

- 1 Records of Snyder-Farmer-Butler Post #3, The American Legion.
- 2 Prince George's Enquirer, 17 April 1919; Annapolis Evening Capital, 26 September 1919.
- 3 Prince George's County Deed #421:381; Records of Snyder-Farmer-Butler Post; Washington Post, 13 July 1925.
- 4 Law #7755, Prince George's County Circuit Court.
- 5 Prince George's County Deed #2511:99; Washington Star, 13 September 1961.

Chain of Title

Peace Cross
P.G. #69-16

(There is no record of conveyance of the greater part of the Peace Cross site from Snyder-Farmer-Butler Post #3 of Hyattsville to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, but the Commission has maintained the Peace Cross for many years.)

#2511:99
25 Oct. 1960
Deed

State Roads Commission to Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning; 0.33 acres, part of the Casey Tract; same which grantors acquired through eminent domain in Law #7755.

Law
#7755

Condemnation proceedings in the Circuit Court of Prince George's County - State Roads Commission vs. Heirs of William T. Casey; Court decreed that \$4,462 was to be paid to the defendants, and with that payment, 4,462 square feet of the Casey Tract became vested in the State of Maryland for the State Roads Commission.

Chapter 432,
1935 Laws of
Maryland

The State Roads Commission was directed to determine the ownership of land in the area of Peace Cross and authorized to acquire the same, by purchase or condemnation, for road improvements.

#421:381
25 Feb. 1922
Deed

Commissioners of Bladensburg to Snyder-Farmer Post #3, American Legion; Parcel on which "the cross now stands" for as long as the Post existed; if the Post disbanded, the land reverted to the Commissioners.

c. 1918

Although there is nothing in the city records, the Prince George's County Memorial Committee must have obtained the permission of the Commissioners of Bladensburg to place its proposed Peace Cross in the former public landing in the town; land was vested in the Commissioners by Chapter 428, 1870 Laws of Maryland.

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ERNE MAIL

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R-55

COLMAR MANOR

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PARCE 1
MINDLE
TRACT
4888

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COLMAR MANOR
RECREATION CENTER

C-M

8998





P.G.#69-16

Peace Cross

Prince George's County, MD

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

North elevation

Neg: Md. Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD.



P.G.#69-16

Peace Cross

Prince George's County, MD.

Susan G. Pearl

June 1985

East elevation

Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD.