

PUBLIC HEARING  
(PRELIMINARY) DRAFT

AMENDMENT TO THE  
**MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**  
IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

**WASHINGTON GROVE HUMPBACK BRIDGE**  
**#21/220**

An amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*; being also an amendment to the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan (1985) amended 1988 and 1990*; and an amendment to the *General Plan for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District within Montgomery County, Maryland*.

Prepared By:

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760  
**June 2005**

Reviewed By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
(Date to be Established)

Approved By:

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
(Date to be Established)

## ABSTRACT

**TITLE:** Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Washington Grove Humpback Bridge*

**AUTHOR:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Washington Grove Hump Back Bridge*

**DATE:** June 2005

**PLANNING AGENCY:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**SOURCE OF COPIES:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

**ABSTRACT:** This document contains the text, with supporting maps, for an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County*, being also an amendment to the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan (1985) amended 1988 and 1990*; and an amendment to the *General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. This amendment recommends designation of one individual site on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, thereby extending to it the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

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## **MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS**

Master Plans provide policy guidance concerning the private and public use of land, for use and reference by private landowners, public agencies, and interested parties generally. Every master plan amendment also amends the General Plan for Montgomery County. The process of initiation, review, and adoption of amendments is generally as follows:

### **Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Amendment**

This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan. It is prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Before proceeding to publish a final draft of the amendment, the Planning Board must hold a public hearing. After the close of the record of this public hearing, the Planning Board holds an open worksession to review the testimony, and to determine whether to make any revisions to the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft.

### **Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment**

This document contains the Planning Board's final recommendations. It is transmitted to the County Council for review. In addition, the County Executive is sent a copy and has sixty days in which to provide comments on the amendment.

The County Council typically schedules a public hearing on the Planning Board (Final) Draft Amendment. After the close of record of this public hearing, the Council holds an open worksession to review the testimony, and then adopts a resolution approving, modifying, or disapproving the amendment.

Failure of the County Council to act within the prescribed time limits constitutes approval of the plan amendment as submitted to the body that fails to act.

### **Adopted Amendment**

The amendment approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the amendment officially amends the various master plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

The *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and the *Historic Preservation Ordinance*, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, are designed to protect and preserve Montgomery County's historic and architectural heritage. When an historic resource is placed on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the adoption action officially designates the property as an historic site or historic district, and subjects it to the further procedural requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Designation of historic sites and districts serves to highlight the values that are important in maintaining the individual character of the County and its communities. It is the intent of the County's preservation program to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing the County's historic and architectural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations of Montgomery County residents. The accompanying challenge is to weave protection of this heritage into the County's planning program so as to maximize community support for preservation and minimize infringement on private property rights.

The following criteria, as stated in Section 24A-3 of the *Historic Preservation Ordinance*, shall apply when historic resources are evaluated for designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*:

(1) Historical and cultural significance:

The historic resource:

- a. has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation;
- b. is the site of a significant historic event;
- c. is identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society; or
- d. exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities; or

(2) Architectural and design significance:

The historic resource:

- a. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;
- b. represents the work of a master;
- c. possesses high artistic values;
- d. represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- e. represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or County due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Once designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, historic resources are subject to the protection of the Ordinance. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its environmental setting must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and an historic area work permit issued under the provisions of the County's Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-6. In accordance with the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* and unless otherwise specified in the amendment, the environmental setting for each site, as defined in Section 24A-2 of the Ordinance, is the entire parcel on which the resource is located as of the date it is designated on the Master Plan.

Designation of the entire parcel provides the County adequate review authority to preserve historic sites in the event of development. It also ensures that, from the beginning of the development process, important features of these sites are recognized and incorporated in the future development of designated properties. In the case of large acreage parcels, the amendment will provide general guidance for the refinement of the setting by indicating when the setting is subject to reduction in the event of development; by describing an appropriate area to preserve the integrity of the resource; and by identifying buildings and features associated with the site which should be protected as part of the setting. It is anticipated that for a majority of the sites designated, the appropriate point at which to refine the environmental setting will be when the property is subdivided.

Public improvements can profoundly affect the integrity of an historic area. Section 24A-6 of the Ordinance states that a Historic Area Work Permit for work on public or private property must be issued prior to altering an historic resource or its environmental setting. The design of public facilities in the vicinity of historic resources should be sensitive to and maintain the character of the area. Specific design considerations should be reflected as part of the Mandatory Referral review processes.

In the majority of cases, decisions regarding preservation alternatives are made at the time of public facility implementation within the process established in Section 24A of the Ordinance. This method provides for adequate review by the public and governing agencies. In order to provide guidance in the event of future public facility implementation, the amendment addresses potential conflicts existing at each site and suggests alternatives and recommendations to assist in balancing preservation with community needs.

In addition to protecting designated resources from unsympathetic alteration and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Environmental Protection and the Historic Preservation Commission to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

The Montgomery County Council passed legislation in September 1984 to provide for a tax credit against County real property taxes in order to encourage the restoration and preservation of privately owned structures located in the County. The credit applies to all properties designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* (Chapter 52, Art. VI). Furthermore, the Historic Preservation Commission maintains up-to-date information on the status of preservation incentives including tax credits, tax benefits possible through the granting of easements on historic properties, outright grants and low-interest loan programs.

## THE AMENDMENT

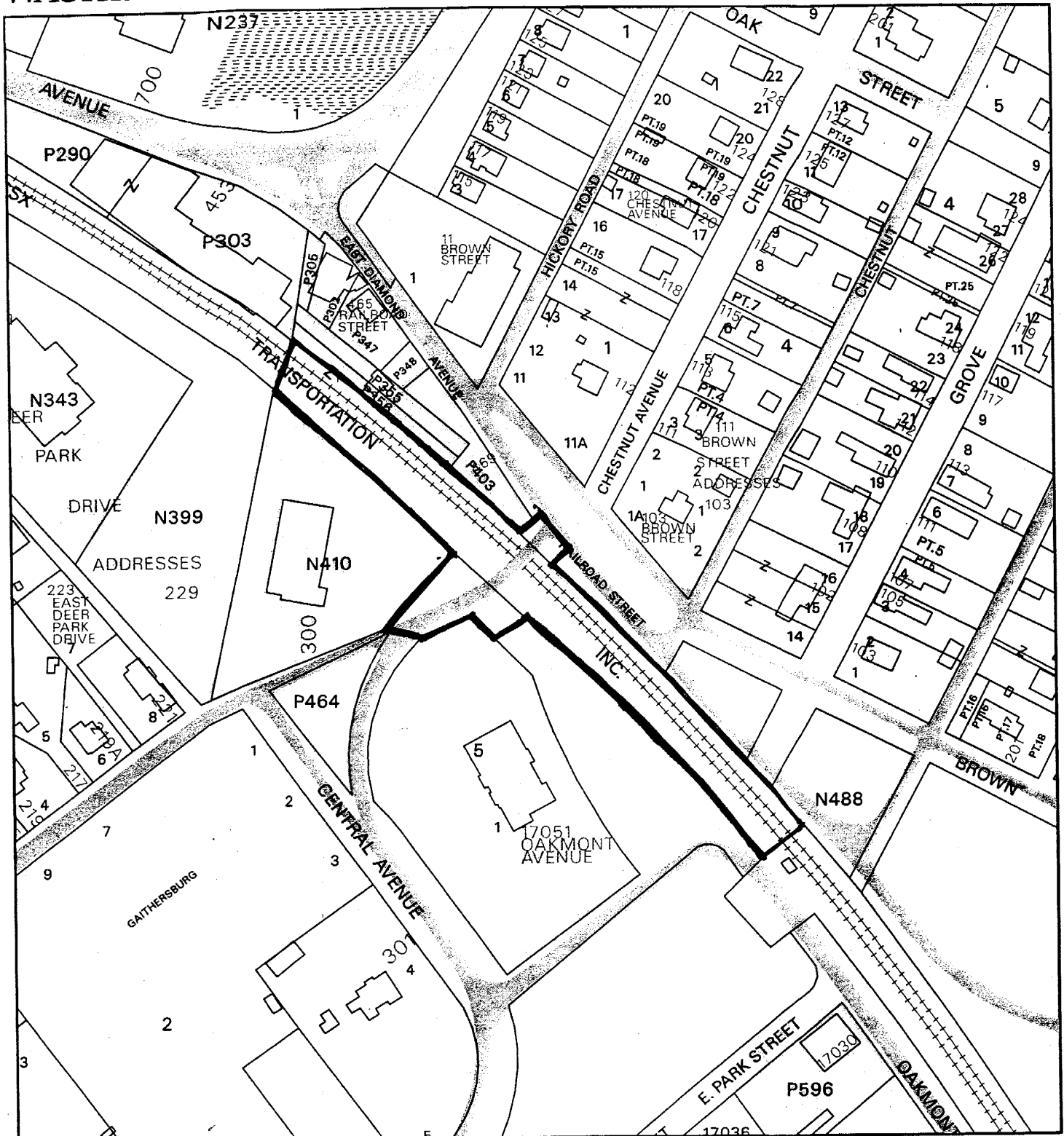
The purpose of this amendment is to designate one individual site on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, thereby extending to it the protection of County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code.

21-220 Washington Grove Humpback Bridge,  
East Deer Park Drive over CSX tracks at Railroad Street

- The Humpback Bridge is a historic site that is integral to the context of Washington Grove, a National Register Historic District. The bridge, which spans the railroad tracks and is adjacent to the Washington Grove station site, represents the origin and development of Washington Grove and the surrounding areas of Oakmont and Gaithersburg.
- The Humpback Bridge is a local landmark that is a unique established and familiar visual feature. The bridge's distinctive rounded profile is a visually striking feature recognizable to residents, motorists, and pedestrian passersby, as well as MARC train commuters.
- The form and profile of the bridge are reflective of bridge construction from 1945, the year that the structure was erected. A timber bridge has been in place at this location since the 1880s. The bridge was rehabilitated in 1988 and 2000.
- This resource meets criteria 1a, 1d, 2a, and 2e.
- The proposed environmental setting is outlined on the attached map. Future restoration or rehabilitation work on the bridge must preserve the form, scale, and location of this resource. The traditional rustic use of wood is important, but materials should be considered in the future with some leniency.



# WASHINGTON GROVE HUMPBACK BRIDGE



Map compiled on May 18, 2005 at 12:38 PM | Site located on base sheet no - 223NW09

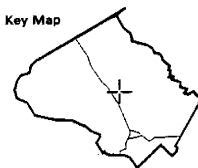
## NOTICE

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Property lines are compiled by adjusting the property lines to topography created from aerial photography and should not be interpreted as actual field surveys. Planimetric features were compiled from 1:144.00 scale aerial photography using stereo photogrammetric methods.

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Key Map



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Research & Technology Center  
0 200

1 inch = 200 feet  
1 : 2400



PO Box 463  
Washington Grove, Md 20880  
July 6, 2005

Clare Cavicchi  
Historic Preservation Commission Staff  
MNCPPC-Montgomery County  
Spring Street  
Silver Spring, Maryland

Re: Washington Grove Humpback Bridge, MD-MC 21-220

Dear Clare,

I attach an addendum to my MIHP #21-220 form supporting my nomination of the Washington Grove Humpback Bridge to the County Register.

Please make it available as appropriate.

Of particular interest might be the potential for federal Transportation Enhancement Program reimbursement for part of any county rehabilitation costs for the bridge.

Sincerely,

Patricia Gail Littlefield

Addendum to MDIHP 21-220 Paragraph 9  
Washington Grove Humpback Bridge

Further Integrity Analysis of Washington Grove Humpback Bridge

I. Background

At the hearing before the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission held May 25, 2005, questions regarding the integrity of the Washington Grove Humpback Bridge were raised. This Addendum further analyzes the bridge and its updates in terms of the Secretary of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places criteria and the Maryland State Highway Administration Historic Bridge Context Report.

II. National Register Seven Aspects of Integrity.

As summarized in the National Register Bulletin on Historic Aviation Properties,

"In addition to being significant under the National Register Criteria, properties must retain integrity to be listed. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. *To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.* (emphasis supplied)  
The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. *Determining which of the aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant.* (emphasis supplied)

The basic guidance for evaluating the integrity of historic properties is found in the National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The following sections supplement that bulletin with an emphasis on evaluating the integrity of historic aircraft.

**SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY:**

- Location
- Setting
- Materials
- Design
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association"

The Washington Grove bridge retains its ability to convey its historic significance as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the county (MC ordinance 1a), as exemplifying the cultural, economic, social, and historic heritage of the county and its communities (MC ordinance 1d), as embodying the distinctive characteristics of its type, a humpback beam bridge with timber supports (MC ordinance 2a), and as an established and familiar visual feature due to its singular physical characteristics and landscape (rural woods and open space, small roads, vernacular structures).

III. Maryland State Highway Administration, Historic Bridges in Maryland: 1631-1960, Historic Context Report <sup>1</sup>.

A. Historic Integrity (Report, Appendix C, Section C)

The bridge retains significant original character-defining elements, as delineated by the Maryland Highway Administration Historic Bridge Context Report, cited at footnote 1. Of “primary importance” are the bridge’s original timber bents, concrete piles, and concrete abutments. (Report at C-31).

The 1988 replacement of the deteriorated timber beams (“primary importance”) of the bridge with steel was not “in kind,” due to cost and uncertainty of ready supply.<sup>2</sup> The replacements of the wood deck, asphalt surface, and wooden guard rail (“primary importance”) in 1988 and 2000 were “in kind.” (The present wood guardrail design has been “heavied up,” undoubtedly to provide additional safety as traffic flow and weight have increased.)

As the attached c.1980 pre-rehabilitation photo of the bridge shows, the replacement of the beams with steel is not “disruptive to the element’s as-built structural and visual impact.” Therefore, under this Maryland standard, the beams have only suffered “moderate loss of historical integrity.” (Report at C-29)

Likewise, the design and workmanship of the present bridge are largely intact. The steel replacement beams are of the same length and height as the 1945 timbers and thereby preserve the 1945 profile of the bridge. (See attached c. 1980 bridge photo to compare to current condition photo MD-MC WG Bridge 1)

Assessments of loss of integrity need to be made on a case-by-case basis. (Report at C-29). Balancing the Washington Grove bridge’s historic and engineering significance with its scarcity (detailed in the MIHP 21-220 form and below), its integrity qualifies it for designation.

B. Maryland Expanded National Register Criteria For Bridge Evaluation (Report, Appendix C, Section A).

Maryland bridges are eligible for the National Register for their historic significance under criteria that are similar to the Montgomery County criteria 1a and 1 d. Under the Maryland expanded criteria, the bridge would be eligible under A. 1. (“reflects trends in the social, economic, industrial, and transportation development of the locality, [and] state....”) and A.2. (“is associated with historical crossings.”) (See Report at C-1-2).

The Maryland Expanded National Register criteria for bridges, among other things, balance the generic National Register criteria with a Maryland historic bridges’ scarcity. Thus, a bridge which is “a representative example of a specific bridge type which may survive in substantial numbers” need only have “*sufficient integrity* of design, materials,

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<sup>1</sup> Found at <http://www.sha.state.md.us/keepingcurrent/maintainRoadsBridges/bridges/OPPE/historicBridges/histbrpg0.asp>. Hereinafter “Report.”

<sup>2</sup> See MIHP 21-220 form at 9-3 for details.

workmanship, association, setting, and location.” (Report at C-2, Criteria C.5.) A bridge which “exemplifies a bridge type which is *now rare*” meets the National Register criteria “*even if its integrity may be compromised to a greater degree* [than required under C.5].” (Report at C-2, Criteria C.6.) (emphasis supplied)

As covered in the MIHP 21-220 nomination form for the bridge, the Washington Grove bridge is the only remaining “humpback” type bridge in Montgomery County and possibly in the State of Maryland. As such the bridge qualifies as a rare representative example. The attached 1939 drawing for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway of a “Typical Overhead Highway Bridge” illustrates the once ubiquitous nature of humpbacked railroad crossing bridges.<sup>3</sup> It shows a three-span, slope-sided bridge resting on piers and abutments remarkably similar to those at Washington Grove. These simple bridges, once common, have all been replaced with other designs.<sup>4</sup> The only exception we know of in Maryland is the Washington Grove Humpback Bridge.

#### IV. National Register Eligibility and its benefits.

As explained above, the Washington Grove Humpback Bridge is eligible for individual National Register designation under Maryland criteria A1, A2, C5, and C6.

The bridge is also eligible for the National Register as a contributing resource to the Metropolitan Branch B & O Railroad, a historic resource which stretches the length of the rail line from Washington Union Station to Point of Rocks, Md., and the width of the right-of-way. In addition, the bridge could be a contributing resource to the National Register Historic District of Washington Grove, if the historic district boundaries were to be expanded in the future to include it.<sup>5</sup>

National Register eligibility is significant to the future of the Washington Grove Humpback Bridge because “eligible” bridges qualify to compete for the Maryland Highway Administration Transportation Enhancement Program.<sup>6</sup> Rehabilitation of the bridge could qualify for the reimbursement program under Program Category “Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities, (including historic railroad facilities and canals).”

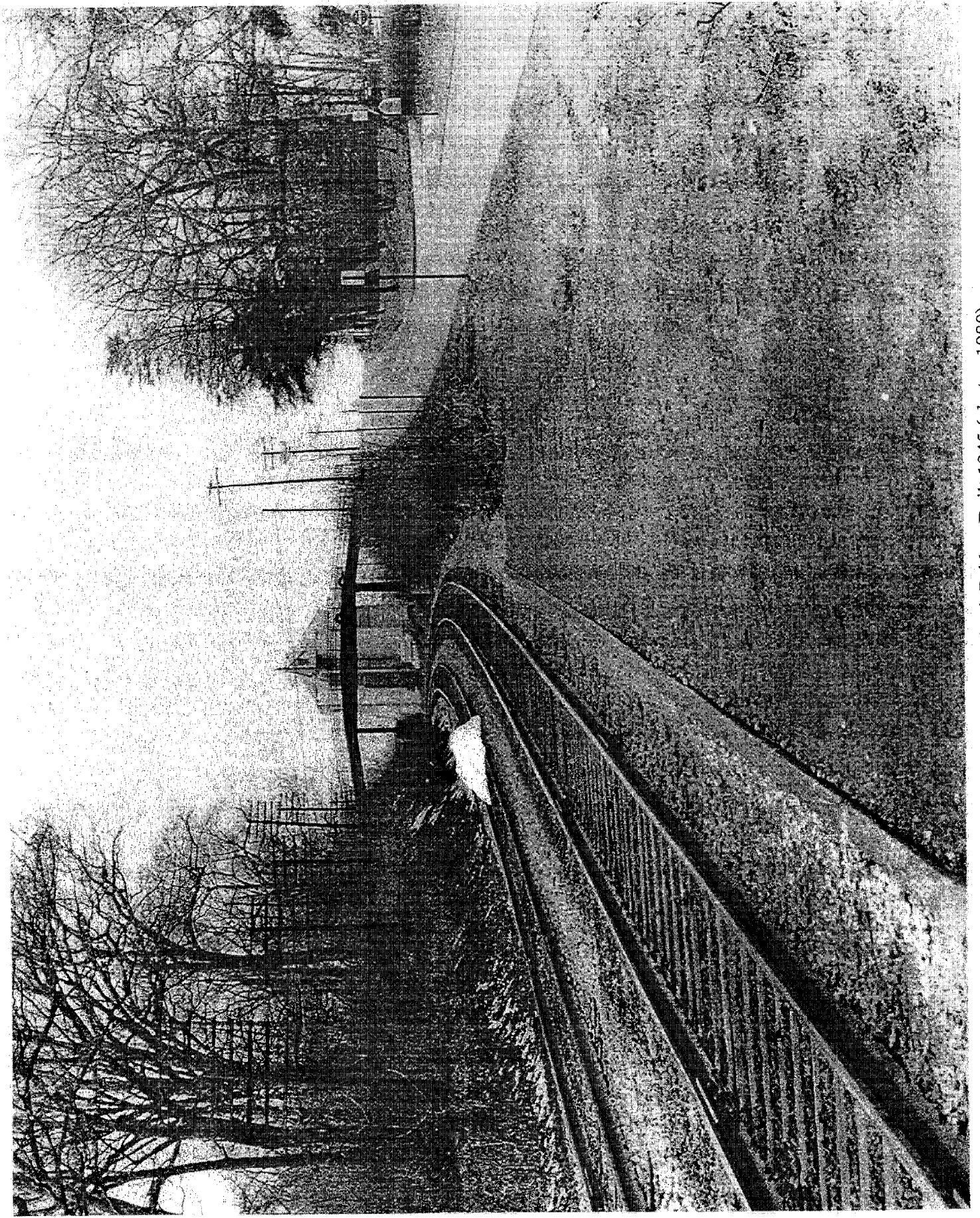
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<sup>3</sup> Original provided by Thomas Dixon, Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society, Inc.

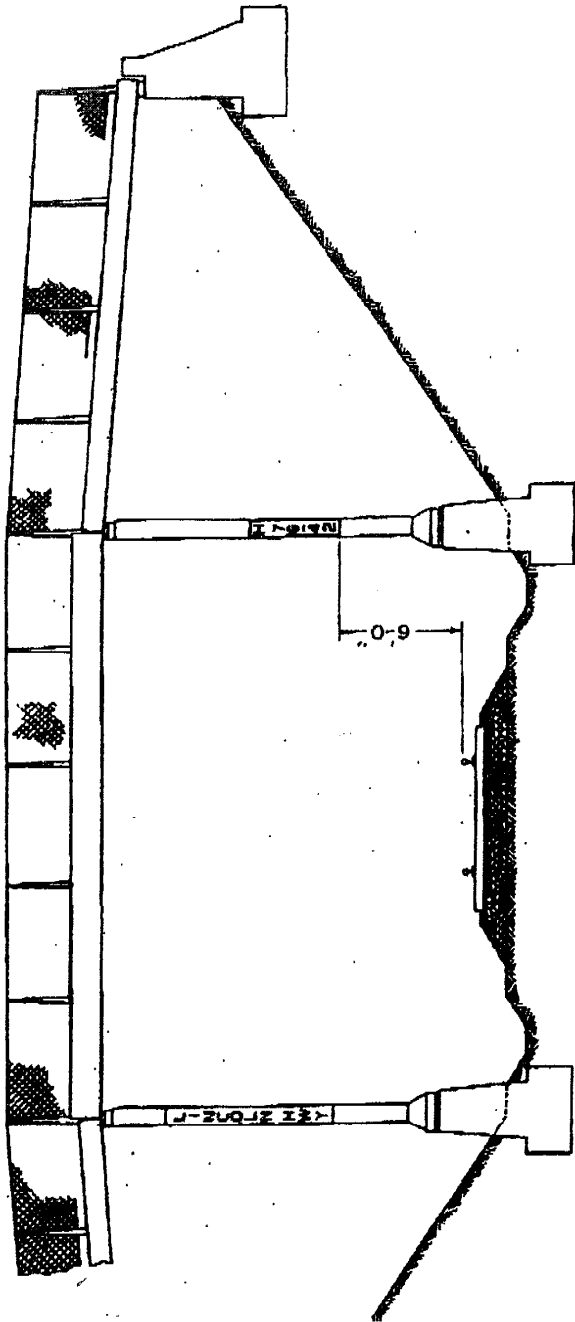
<sup>4</sup> Eric DeLony, retired director of the National Park Service’s Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) concurs—“[Y]ou’ve got what is known as an “over bridge,” i.e. a bridge that goes over the rail line. From your description, it appears to be a timber trestle structure with concrete abutments and wing walls and concrete pedestals for the wooden bents – a standard structure for railroads. These have become rare since they are being replaced. .... [I]n my experience they are rare and being destroyed at an accelerating rate.” Email to Nancy Helme of 6/26/05.

<sup>5</sup> Under the Maryland criteria, an historic bridge can be considered a contributing resource to an historic district if it was built within or no later than 10 years after the district’s period of significance and complements the historical and architectural character of the district in style, scale, and materials. Report at Appendix C, Section D, at C-65-6. The Washington Grove Historic District’s period of significance is 1873 to 1937. The bridge’s 1945 construction date coupled with its complementary style and materials would qualify it as a contributing resource in an expanded district.



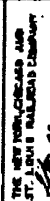


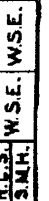
<sup>6</sup> Details at <http://www.sha.state.md.us/ImprovingOurCommunity/OPPE/tep.asp>.



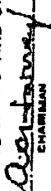
Washington Grove Humpback Bridge, Built 1945 (photo c1980)



TYPICAL OVERHEAD HIGHWAY BRIDGE  
NO SCALE

APPROVED FOR USE		THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY	
THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY		ERIE RAILROAD COMPANY	
THE NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS RAILROAD COMPANY		PERE MARQUETTE RAILWAY COMPANY	
 <small>CHIEF ENGINEER</small>		 <small>CHIEF ENGINEER</small>	
 <small>CHIEF ENGINEER</small>		 <small>CHIEF ENGINEER</small>	
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H.L.S.	W.S.E.	W.S.E.	R-615-A
S.N.H.			

**STANDARD  
BRIDGE NUMBER  
SIGNS**

APPROVED BY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WAY AND STRUCTURES  
NOV. 9, 1939  
  
CHAIRMAN