

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

Survey No. M: 31-12

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic WJSV Transmitter

and/or common WTOP Transmitter

2. Location

street & number 2021 University Boulevard not for publication

city, town Wheaton vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☒ district	☐ public	☐ occupied	☐ agriculture	☐ museum
☐ building(s)	☒ private	☒ unoccupied	☐ commercial	☐ park
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational	☐ private residence
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment	☐ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government	☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
	☐ not applicable	☐ no	☐ military	☒ other: radio
				<u>communications</u>

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

name Outlet Broadcasting, Inc.

street & number Broadcast House, 111 Dorrance St. telephone no.: (401) 276-6200

city, town Providence state and zip code Rhode Island 02903

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber

street & number 50 Courthouse Square folio

city, town Rockville state Maryland 20850

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. M: 31-12

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved date of move _____

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

The WTOP Transmitter facility is comprised of a single building of reinforced concrete, with three transmitting towers to the building's northeast and two satellite dish antennae to its east, set on a landscaped parcel of 12.36 acres. The property is located on University Boulevard, to the east of Amherst Avenue, in the community of Wheaton, Maryland.

The mass of the building is irregular and is formed by a large cylindrical volume (housing the transmitter) at the center with horizontal cubical blocks meeting at right angles and wrapping around the cylinder, forming the southwestern section of the structure.

On the south elevation (facing University Boulevard), a single story horizontal rectangular block contains the entrance at its eastern end. A second story block is set back from and rests on the first story block at the western end; at its eastern end it extends over the entry walkway and is supported by slender round piers. The western elevation is less complex, containing a motor vehicle entrance at its southern corner, and irregularly located windows.

Windows on the main building facades are horizontally grouped, forming long bands facing University Boulevard. The windows are filled with glass blocks.

There was extensive press coverage at the opening of the new building and an article in the Washington Daily News by James Middlebrooks, CBS Liason Engineer, gave a full description of the facility as it was when originally built ("CBS Expert Outlines Transmitter Construction," Washington Daily News, March 2, 1940). Portions of this article are excerpted below:

"A handsome building of modern functional design, constructed of architectural reinforced concrete, houses WJSV's new 50,000 watt transmitter.

Fabricated into one solid unit, the building could be turned over on its side and still hold...steel went into this three story building and its two story wing, with 20 tons of steel in the roof construction alone.

Practically the entire ground of the 13 1/2 acre site at Wheaton, MD., has been interlaced with copper wire buried about four inches deep. This buried wire and mesh screen furnish the three radiator towers in the center with a copper mat.

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

On the first floor of the transmitter building is the entrance lobby, a two-car garage, boiler room, locker room, air conditioning room, radiator and blower room and water circulating pump room.

Also on this floor is the main distribution switchboard, the high voltage buss connection and the water circulating tube vault.

Of special interest to non-technical visitors is the circular observation promenade which affords a clear view of the entire transmitter. Off this promenade on the second floor is the supervisor's office, the test laboratory and shop, two rooms for the public's convenience and an apartment for the station personnel.

This apartment is equipped to meet emergency living requirements, including a roll-away bed, an electric range and an electric refrigerator and a private shower bath. No one actually lives here, but at least two operators are on duty every minute of the day and the apartment has been made as comfortable for the staff as circumstances permit.

The entire building is air-conditioned and acoustically treated. Indirect lighting is used throughout the main transmitter room and second floor.

Every precaution has been taken to provide safety for employees and visitors. Every piece of metal in the building has been carefully grounded. Each door leading to live power has been equipped with an automatic electrical and mechanical switch which removes the power from all equipment should any of the doors be opened. A seven-foot metal fence surrounds the transmission lines and tower bases to keep everyone a safe distance from the power being transferred to the radiating system."

8. Significance

vey No.

M: 31-12

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

Specific dates 1939-1940 Builder/Architect E. Burton Corning, Architect

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 WJSV/WTOP Transmitter facility in Wheaton has both considerable architectural and historical significance. It is architecturally important as a classic and relatively unaltered example of the International Style--a major 20th Century architectural movement which ushered in the modern era. It also has historical importance because of its use as a major broadcasting facility and its role as a radio station during the height of the "Golden Age" of radio, before television's widespread acceptance gained in the post-World War II period. The property's modern design represents significant technological advances which were occurring for radio broadcasting in the Washington area at the end of the 1930s.

The WJSV/WTOP facility was designed by Washington architect E. Burton Corning in 1939. Ground was broken at the Wheaton site for the new building on May 11, 1939. Some delays were experienced during construction, necessitating an extension by the FCC to May 20, 1940 for the construction on the new transmitter to be completed (the original date set was November 20, 1939).

Corning was an active architect in the Washington area. His obituary in the Washington Post and Times Herald (December 10, 1957, p. B2) stated that he "designed many prominent buildings in this area during his 50-year career.... Since 1942, he and Raymond G. Moore were partners in the firm of Corning and Moore at 1302 18th St., N.W.

A native of Washington, Mr. Corning was graduated from McKinley Technical High School and studied architecture at George Washington University.

His first position was with Arthur B. Heaton, architect, with whom he eventually became a partner. In 1932, he left the firm and practiced under his own name, until entering into partnership with Moore.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 2)

Mr. Corning's most recent works include the Chevy Chase Baptist Church, the B'nai B'rith National Headquarters, office buildings at 1000 Connecticut Ave. and 1700 K St., N.W., the Berkshire, Greenbrier, Brandywine, Calvert-Woodley and 4000 Massachusetts Ave. N.W. apartment buildings and the regional headquarters building of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Silver Spring".

The WJSV/WTOP building was designed when Corning was practicing architecture alone and is one of his most innovative designs. It embodies the spirit and character of the International Style of architecture. This major modern architectural movement was receiving international attention during the time the WJSV/WTOP facility was constructed.

The International Style was an architectural movement that originated in Europe and which stressed lack of ornamentation, smooth, planar building surfaces and perception of space as volume rather than as mass. Major proponents of this new style emphasized the design of buildings as a reflection of their function and were particularly attracted to technological advances that caused structures to be viewed as, in the words of Le Corbusier, "machines for living".

The International Style, by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, published in 1932, identified the principles of this modern architectural movement as being the importance of architecture as volume (specifically as planes surrounding a volume, including the use of flat roofs and careful treatment of windows) and the avoidance of applied decoration. Concerning regularity, Hitchcock and Johnson stated, "Non-rectangular shapes, particularly if they occur infrequently, introduce an aesthetic element of the highest positive interest" (p. 64).

The design of the WJSV/WTOP building is clearly reflective of the International Style design principles. Its form is a direct response to the functions for which it was built. The overall effect of the building design is of a dramatic sculptural form in a pastoral setting. The structure's stark simplicity, lack of ornamentation, distinctive sculptural quality with unusual rounded elements, and horizontal emphasis of both the structure and its window openings are all elements that are characteristic of the International Style.

In particular, precedent for the WJSV/WTOP facility can be seen in Le Corbusier's residential design, Villa Savoye (Poissy-Sur-Seine, France) which was widely discussed by the architectural profession following its construction in 1930.

M:31-12

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 3)

The International Style movement's influence is seen in commercial as well as residential designs in the United States during the decade of the 1930s. Most of Montgomery County, Maryland was not extensively developed at that time, and the WJSV/WTOP transmitter building provides a rare and bold example of this architectural style.

The WJSV/WTOP building design was published in Architectural Record (February, 1941, Vol. 89, pp. 96-97), one year after the radio station began its operations at the building. Five photographs were included in the two pages: a distant overall view of the building with its towers, the entrance door and facade, coaxial cable supports, interior transmitter equipment, and interior circular stairway. An isometric section rendering was also included. The text accompanying the visual material described the building described in the following fashion:

"Principal plan feature of Columbia Broadcasting System's new Washington, D. C., outlet is the 50-ft. circular transmitting room on the second floor. From the ground floor entrance, a circular stairway leads up to a spectators' gallery surrounding the transmitter. Equipment, including control desk, below the gallery level, is viewed through plate-glass windows. Building construction is reinforced concrete."

Addressing the WTOP Transmitter specifically in more recent years, authors Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, in Washington Deco (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), devoted a photograph to the WTOP Transmitter building and offered this evaluation (page 80):

"...there exists (safely ensconced on a grassy suburban site) a remarkable semi-industrial Deco building in nearby Wheaton, Maryland. A radio transmitter, its streamlined Deco design reflects an architectural ideal of Le Corbusier: 'The wise play of volumes in sunlight and shade.' The crisp lines. . . have more in common with a house by Richard Neutra in California or a building in the Weissenhof-Siedlung of Stuttgart than with most of the other Art Deco in the city of Washington. Nonetheless, they reflect the most popular, expressive elements of streamline Art Deco as a nationwide vogue, including the extensive use of glass brick."

An examination of designs for radio stations, broadcasting and studio facilities given attention in the major architectural journals in the late 1930s-early 1940s demonstrates that WJSV was not the only such facility to utilize the characteristic, forward looking features of the International Style and Art Moderne--planar surfaces largely devoid of ornament, streamlined effects (rounded corners, horizontal bands of windows). The recent technological advance of radio broadcasting demanded an appropriate, futuristic architectural expression, buildings related more to the machine age than ever before.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 4)

The Architectural Forum (Vol. 70, March 1939, pp. 161-168) provided a glimpse of radio's significance to the time in its coverage of NBC's new Hollywood broadcasting studios:

"Radio broadcasting, starting from scratch barely more than a decade ago, has become a major industry. NBC itself first came on the air in 1927....In that first year, 1927, there were six million families of radio listeners; today that six has grown to 27 1/2" (p. 161).

In another issue, the Architectural Forum, in October 1940 (Vol. 73), in a major article, "Design Decade," stated, "Finally, the critical observer must conclude that the decade just closed, nearly 200 years after the Industrial Revolution, has for the first time shown a substantial accomplishment in relating machine inspired design to a machine inspired way of life."

The WJSV/WTOP transmitter facility relates not only to the architectural evolution of this building genre, but also to the historical evolution of the industry.

Radio Station WJSV was begun in 1927, with one announcer and a 50-watt transmitter. During that year, the transmitting power was increased to 10,000 watts. It was operating from a "little white bungalow" at Mount Vernon, Virginia when in 1932, the Federal Radio Commission authorized transfer of the station to the Columbia Broadcasting System, under control of the Columbia subsidiary, Old Dominion Broadcasting Co. Under the new ownership, WJSV was to operate full-time Columbia network broadcasts initially with local features added later.

Soon after its purchase of the station, Columbia Broadcasting System began construction of a one-story Colonial Revival building on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, between Washington and Alexandria. The station went out of operation for a few months following the ownership change before its move to the new facility, which contained studios, broadcasting equipment, a 10,000 watt transmitter, and adjacent towers. Dedication of the new station took place in October of 1932. Columbia continued operation of its headquarters in the Shoreham Building in Washington. At that time, the NBC Washington station, WRC, was using 500 watts.

Seven years later, WJSV announced plans to broadcast at 50,000 watts (the maximum power level allowed by the Federal Communications Commission) with the construction of a new transmitter facility at Wheaton, Maryland. In honor of the changeover from the 10,000 watt transmitter of WJSV to the 50,000 watt facility in Wheaton, the District Commissioners designated the week of March 3, 1940 to be "WJSV" week in Washington. Extensive press coverage was given to the station and its new transmitter, and numerous special events were planned by the station. With this change, WJSV became the Washington area's most powerful broadcasting station.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 5)

WJSV General Manager A. D. Willard, Jr. wrote in the Washington Daily News (March 2, 1940) of the "smart modernistic Wheaton transmitter building" and commented, "Already a leader in the broadcasting picture, WJSV adds top power to brilliant programs, sincere public service and radio advertisers' preference to rededicate itself as Washington's No. 1 station.

Listeners are cordially invited to visit the new transmitter building beginning Sunday, March 10. The transmitting equipment is situated in a well, a circular promenade providing full view of all "the works." Engineers on duty will be prepared to answer questions and each visitor will receive a souvenir booklet, 'The Magic of Radio.' " (D.C. Commissioners Set 'WJSV Week,' Daily News, March 2, 1940).

The dedication of the new transmitter occurred on March 7, accompanied by a radio program "light on talk, heavy on entertainment," including a salute by CBS to WJSV with an "all star show". Municipal, civic, and Federal leaders took part in the dedicatory ceremonies. A. D. Willard, Jr., General Manager of WJSV, presented to Commissioner Hazen the switch which actually turned on the new power" (ibid.).

The importance of the new transmitter is underscored by a letter sent by President Roosevelt to William S. Paley, president of CBS, declaring:

"The completion of the new 50,000-watt transmitter for WJSV, the key station of the Columbia System in the Nation's Capital, symbolizes not merely the commendable development of your station, but of the entire broadcasting industry. And it symbolizes not merely the remarkable technical advance of the art, but also the ever-increasing contribution of radio to a better understanding of public affairs.

In the years since Station WJSV became the principal station for the Columbia Broadcasting System in Washington, the country and the world have witnessed many stirring events--events which have been brought to the firesides of millions of Americans by radio.

Station WJSV and the Columbia network have played a stirring part in depicting these events and the construction of your new 50,000-watt transmitter marks another important step in the continued development of the industry. I congratulate you and the industry.' ("WJSV Fixing Neighbors' Sets So They Can Tune Station Out, Evening Star, March 6, 1940).

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 6)

The call letters for the radio station were changed from WJSV to WTOP in 1943, "decided upon by station officials when a survey disclosed that many Washingtonians were having difficulty remembering the old letters, which didn't spell a word.... The new letters--WTOP--represent the station's slogan--'The Station at the Top of the Dial.' ("WJSV Becomes WTOP Beginning Today," Washington Star, April 4, 1943).

In 1949, the Washington Post acquired a 55 per cent stock interest in the station, with Columbia Broadcasting System continuing to hold the remainder. In a brief article noting the change, the Post gave this account of the station:

"WTOP has built an enviable reputation for initiative in local programming and discussion of local and national issues, as well as for popular CBS network programs. Its 50,000 watts make it the most powerful station in Washington, and, according to the most recent Hooper rating, it has the largest share of the listening audience. The hope is within the next few weeks to expand WTOP's broadcast facilities with the addition of frequency modulation, or FM" ("WTOP," Washington Post, February 20, 1949).

Ownership of WTOP was transferred to a new corporation, WTOP, Inc. in 1949, owned 55 per cent by the Washington Post and 45 per cent by CBS. The Post paid the new corporation \$855,470 for its stock, and CBS transferred to the corporation properties and equipment worth \$699,930 for its share. The FCC approved the transfer on the condition that the Post sell the radio stations it then owned, WINX and WINX-FM. A new WTOP office building, Broadcast House, opened in Washington, D.C. in 1954. The same year, the Post bought out CBS' interest in the station.

Outlet Communications of Providence, Rhode Island, purchased radio station WTOP from the Washington Post Co. in 1978 for a price of \$6.675 million. In 1969, the station had gone to an all-news format and Outlet stated its desire to continue that format for at least two years after the purchase. Outlet Communications, a retail and communications company, owned television stations in Providence, Columbus, Orlando, and San Antonio and radio stations in Providence and Orlando at the time it purchased WTOP.

In August, 1989, the Washington Post reported that Outlet Communications had signed a letter of intent to sell WTOP-AM and WASH-FM (acquired by Outlet in 1987) along with two Outlet TV stations in Indianapolis and Atlanta to Chase Enterprises of Hartford, Connecticut for the sum of \$120 million. Chase Enterprises owns AM and FM stations in Hartford and Stamford, Connecticut, and St. Louis, and TV stations in Hartford and Memphis.

The transmitting facility on University Boulevard in Wheaton continues in its original function in 1989, serving WTOP-AM and WASH-FM.

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued - page 7)

Over the years, numerous individuals of national prominence in the broadcasting industry were at one time associated with the WJSV/WTOP station, including Arthur Godfrey, Walter Cronkite, Eric Sevareid, Sam Donaldson, Roger Mudd, and Connie Chung.

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

Survey No. M:31-12

See additional pages

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 12.36

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

Zone	Easting				Northing				

B

Zone	Easting				Northing				

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Carol Kennedy and Gwen Marcus, Historic Preservation Plannersorganization Maryland-National Capital Park
and Planning Commissiondate November, 1989street & number 8787 Georgia Ave.telephone 301-495-4570city or town Silver Springstate Maryland 20910

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

BIBLIOGRAPHY (ARCHITECTURAL)

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"WJSV Fixing Neighbors' Sets So They Can Tune Station Out," Evening Star, March 6, 1940.

"WJSV, With 50,000 Watts, Becomes Area's Strongest" Washington Post, March 8, 1940.

"WJSV Hub of CBS Network Activity" and
"WJSV Plays Major Role in CBS Coverage," Washington Daily News, undated clippings from Washingtoniana collection, M. L. King Public Library (Washington, D.C.); date apparently in 1940.

"WJSV, With 50,000 Watts, Becomes Area's Strongest," Washington Post, March 8, 1940.

"WJSV Becomes WTOP Beginning Today," Washington Star, April 4, 1943.

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"WTOP," Washington Post, February 20, 1949.

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Knight, Jerry. "Outlet on Buying Spree for Broadcast Stations," Washington Post, January 5, 1978.

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Farhi, Paul. "WTOP-AM, WASH-FM Radio to be Sold for \$120 Million." Washington Post, August 10, 1989, p. B1.

M: 31-12

2115

***** HISTORIC SITE FORM *****

ATLAS # 31/012-000 HIST. NAME WIOF TRANSMITTER ENTRY DATE 09/27/89
ADDRESS 2021 UNIVERSITY BLVD, WHEATON (2115 UNIV. BLVD. GIVEN IN TAX RECORDS)
OWNER OUTLET BROADCASTING CO. ADDRESS 111 DORANCE STREET
CITY PROVIDENCE STATE RI ZIP 02903 PHONE 895-5000
TAX ACCOUNT # 00915802 TAX MAP # JQ121 MAP COORD E14W02
LOT/BLOCK 2142 ACREAGE *20.12 ZONING R20 USE 470
MASTER PLAN WHEATON EBD CIVIC 128 217
* ACREAGE ACCORDING TO TAX RECORDS

***** DESCRIPTION/SIGNIFICANCE *****

CRITERIA YEAR 1932 COND GOOD STYLE INTERNATIONAL
FEATURES/INTEREST BEST EXAMPLE OF FUNCT.
ENVR SETTING ARCHITECTURE DESIGNED BY E. BURTON CORNING, EXTENSIVE USE OF
GLASS BRICK

***** ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION *****

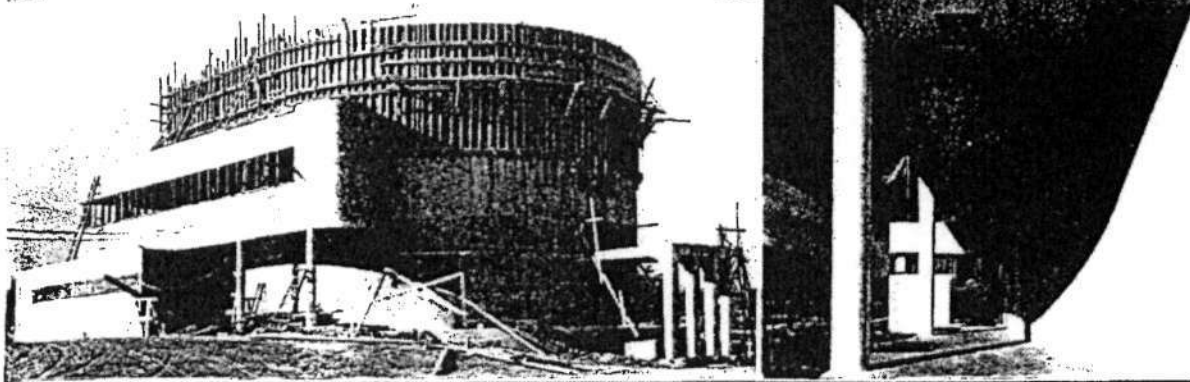
STATUS
HIST PRES COMM REC BOARD REC COUNCIL ACTION
HPC EVAL DATE BOARD HEARING DATE BOARD ACTION DATE
CC RES # CASE MNCPPC RES # DATE

COMMENTS LISTED IN RICHARD STIRNBERG BOOK ON ART DECO ARCH. IN D.C. AREA. LOC.
CONIACIL GAVE AWARD. WIOF, 3400 14TH AVE. N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE CRITERIA

- (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.
- (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. (Ord. No. 9-4, § 1.)

The new transmitter station of the Columbia Broadcasting System at Wheaton, Md. (Station WJMV), is another eloquent testimonial to Plyform. Note how Plyform was bent to form the curved surfaces . . . how it was re-used . . . how smooth the finished surfaces are. Plyform, the wallboard grade of Douglas Fir Plywood, was used extensively on the interior of the building. James Middlebrooks, CBS engineer; Burton Corning, architect; Geo. C. Martin, general contractor.



TWO "Musts" FOR SMOOTH, FINLESS CONCRETE

- ★ Specify **PLYFORM** for all concrete form work!
- ★ Then treat it properly and get multiple re-uses!

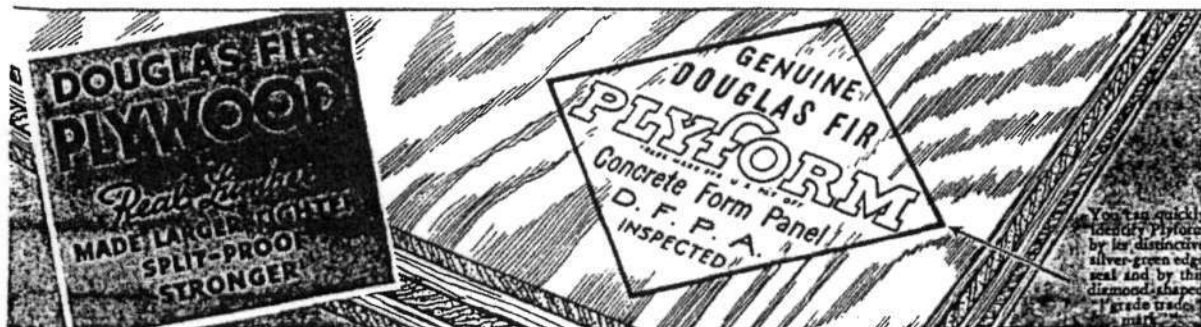
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Be sure to specify Plyform. It costs just over 1c a square foot more than SO2S Plypanel of the same size and thickness. But this small extra investment will repay you many times. For free 12-page concrete form booklet, write Douglas Fir Plywood Association, Tacoma Building, Tacoma, Washington.

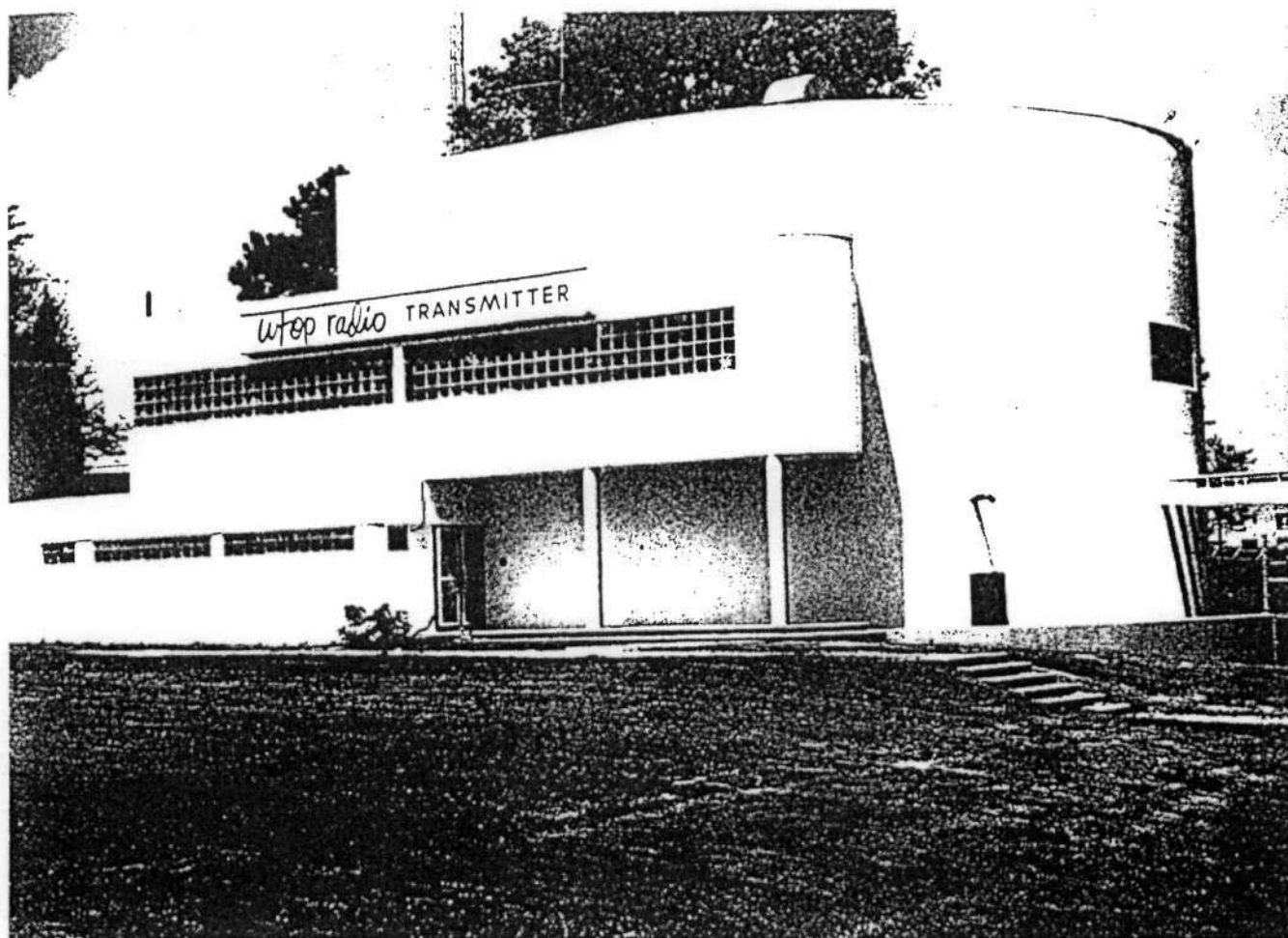
For economical performance:

1. After each use, stack Plyform flat on dry, level platforms using stickers to permit normal drying.
2. Long time storage should be indoors. (Tarpaulins may prevent proper air circulation and cause moisture to collect.)
3. Use wooden wedges rather than pinch bars in stripping.
4. Lower carefully from high places. Don't drop on edges or permit careless handling.
5. Clean panels thoroughly after each use.
6. Re-oil before each pouring. A standard wood form oil or pale oil is generally preferred.
7. Don't swab on too much oil—just enough so that the surface feels greasy to touch.
8. All newly cut edges should be sealed or doped with white lead and oil or other effective sealer.



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An apotheosis of streamlining, the radio transmitting station of WTOP in Wheaton, Maryland, was the work of local architect E. Burton Corning. In 1939 the structure was the brand-new facility of station WJSV.

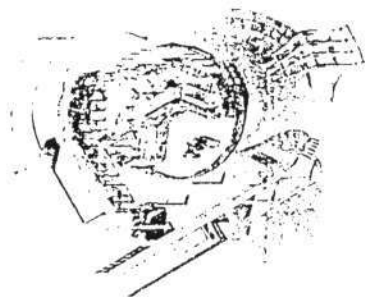
Movie Theaters

It was not until the early 1930s that the first consistently Deco theaters were built in American cities. The picture palaces of the 1920s—from small theaters in country towns to theaters of the size of New York City's Roxy, which seated 6,000—were invariably built in eclectic combinations of traditional styles. Movie houses carried on the ephemeral but vastly effective tradition of the early music halls and fairground booths until the Crash of 1929 put an end to the more voluptuous trends of 1920s design, and a crisper style took over. Until then, Renaissance, Byzantine, Neo-Baroque, Roman, French, Spanish, Moorish, Persian, Chinese, and a welter of namelessly exotic forms were displayed in American cinemas.

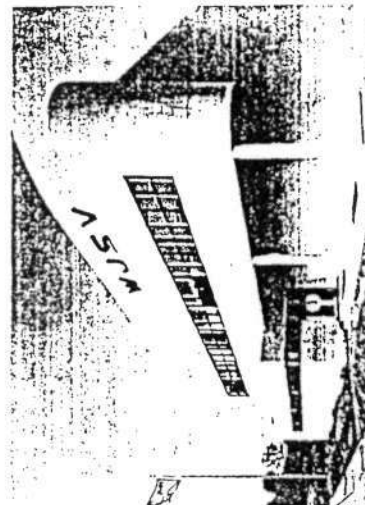
Among the leading cinema architects were Thomas Lamb of New York, whose work was firmly rooted in the Beaux Arts school, and Austrian-born John Eberson, whose so-called "atmospheric" theaters were flamboyant contrasts to Lamb's more conservative designs. The architectural firms of George and C.W. Rapp and C. Howard Crane occupied the middle ground.

In the early thirties, theater designers were consciously drawn to an array of styles

RADIO STATION



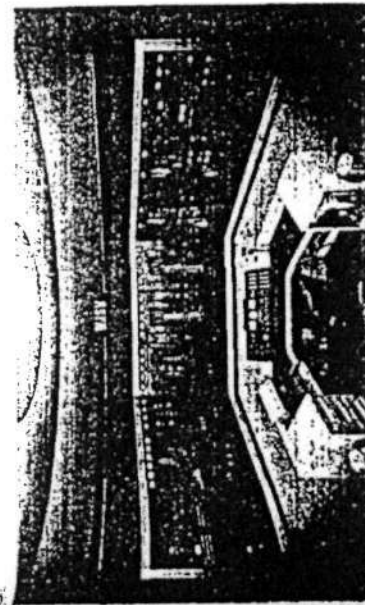
E BURTON CORNING, ARCHITECT; STATION WJLV, WHEATON, MD. Principal plan feature of Columbia Broadcasting System's new Washington, D. C., outlet is the 30-ft. circular transmitter room on the second floor. From the ground floor entrance, a circular stairway leads up to a spectators' gallery surrounding the transmitter. Equipment, including control desk, below the gallery level, is viewed through plate-glass windows. Building construction is reinforced concrete.



ENTRANCE DOOR



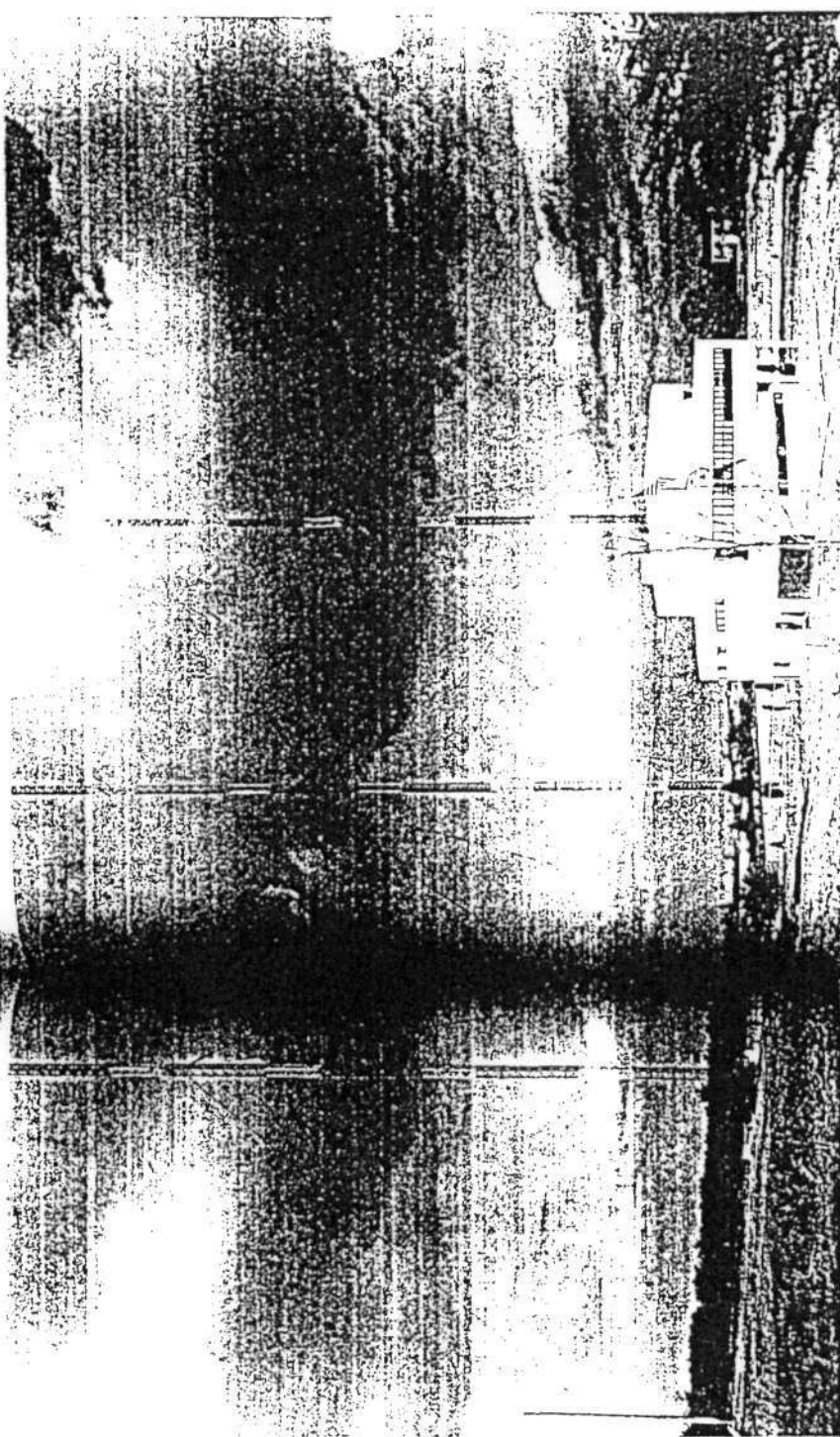
COAXIAL CABLE SUPPORTS



TRANSMITTER EQUIPMENT



CIRCULAR STAIRWAY



M:31-12

V. 7:3 [12412] ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT M: 31-12

CBS Transmitter for Washington, D. C.

By E. BURTON CORNING, ARCHITECT*

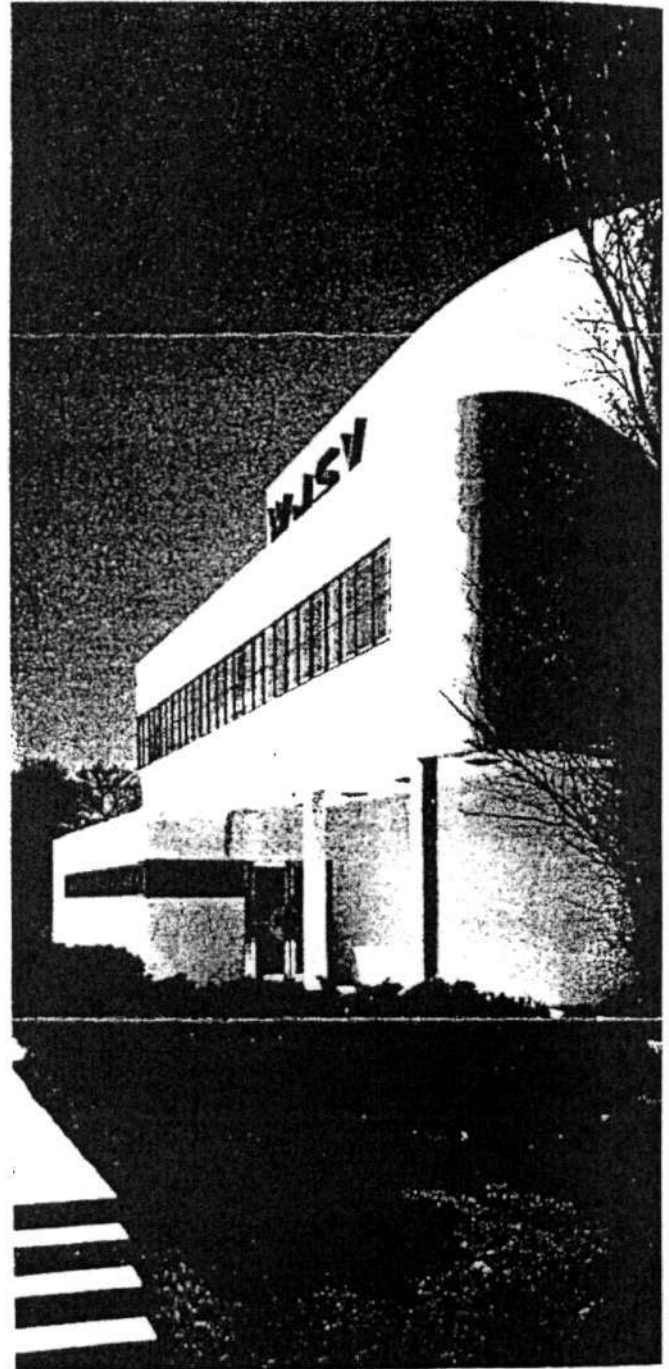
NEW 50,000-watt transmitting facilities for Station WJSV, Columbia Broadcasting System's key station in the nation's capital, is located in Wheaton, Md., about six miles from the Maryland-District of Columbia line. The site for this station was chosen for reasons peculiar to radio transmission—topography, elevation and soil conditions—but fortunately these requirements coincided with one of the most beautiful scenes in the East. Located within a short distance of Olney Pike, easily accessible from the capital by auto, the station has since completion lured an almost constant stream of visitors. This plant is considered by Columbia to be its finest and most up-to-date.

Since the building housing the transmitter has such a pastoral setting, it derives a feeling of complete detachment from the busy life of today. The whole ensemble—needle-like towers and simple masses of the structure—seems literally to grow out of the landscape. It is quite appropriate, for the science of radio deals with the elements, that the building should fit in so intimately with nature.

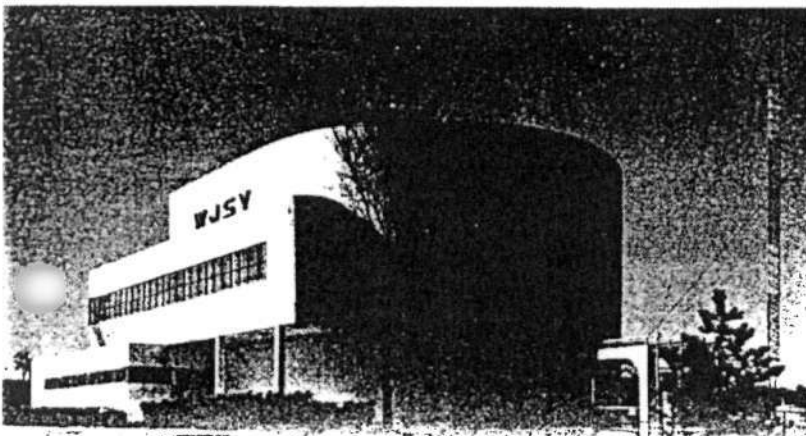
The function of the plant was the controlling factor in the design of the building, a fact which is easily recognized when the exterior of the building is studied. The observers' gallery is expressed strongly by the long strip of windows on the main floor. Access to the gallery is by a spiral stairs at the left which leads to a circular promenade around the transmitter equipment. The control desk is in a room depressed below the gallery and is in plain view of the circular corridor through a plate glass screen.

The structural scheme and the spirit of the problem seemed to make mandatory the use of architectural concrete, and with this material it was no problem to express

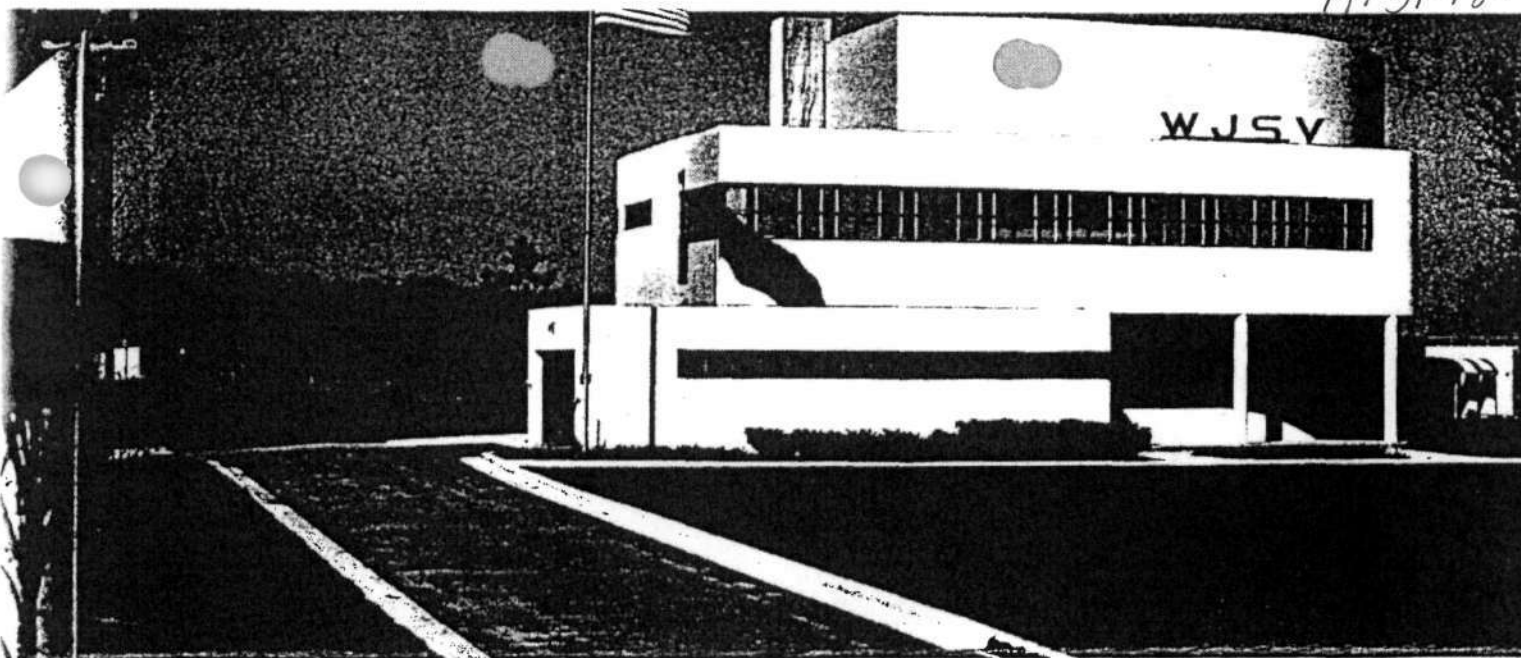
*Washington, D. C.



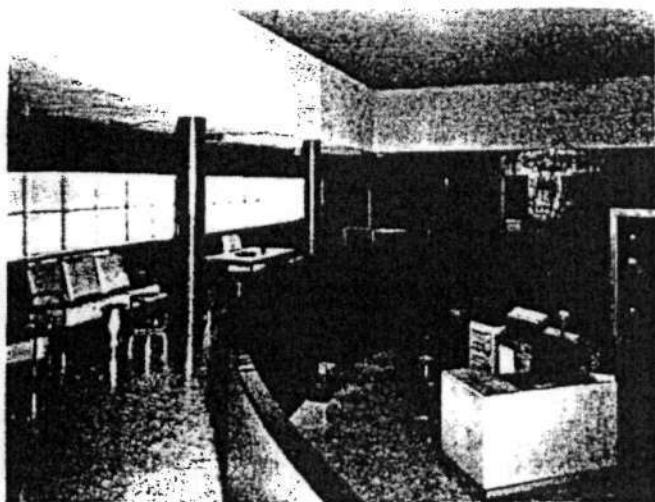
Curved lines and an effective arrangement of simple masses characterize new transmitter station for WJSV, Columbia Broadcasting System station at Washington, D. C. Located at Wheaton, Md., the building was designed by E. Burton Corning, architect, and built by Gen. Martin, contractor, both of Washington.



E. Burton Corning 7:3



The function of the building was the controlling factor in the design. The observers' gallery is expressed strongly by the long strip of windows across the



Control desk with circular promenade for visitors.

the plan and function with complete and pleasing frankness.

Specifications for the concrete followed closely those used successfully on the large architectural concrete studio building built for CBS at Los Angeles (see *ARCHITECTURAL CONCRETE*, Vol. 4, No. 3). Ready-mixed concrete was used throughout, the water-cement ratio, the aggregate grading and the proportioning being checked closely to insure proper workability. A mix containing a minimum of 6 sacks of portland cement per cu.yd. of concrete was used.

It was required that the carpenters building forms for exposed concrete be skilled men whose ability could be

demonstrated to the satisfaction of the architect. It was also required that for each concrete buggy there be one man to puddle and tamp the concrete in the forms.

The building was constructed without the use of a hoist. A bottom-discharge hopper received the concrete direct from the ready-mixed trucks. This hopper was hoisted into the air and swung over the edge of the building by a tractor crane to discharge the concrete into buggies.

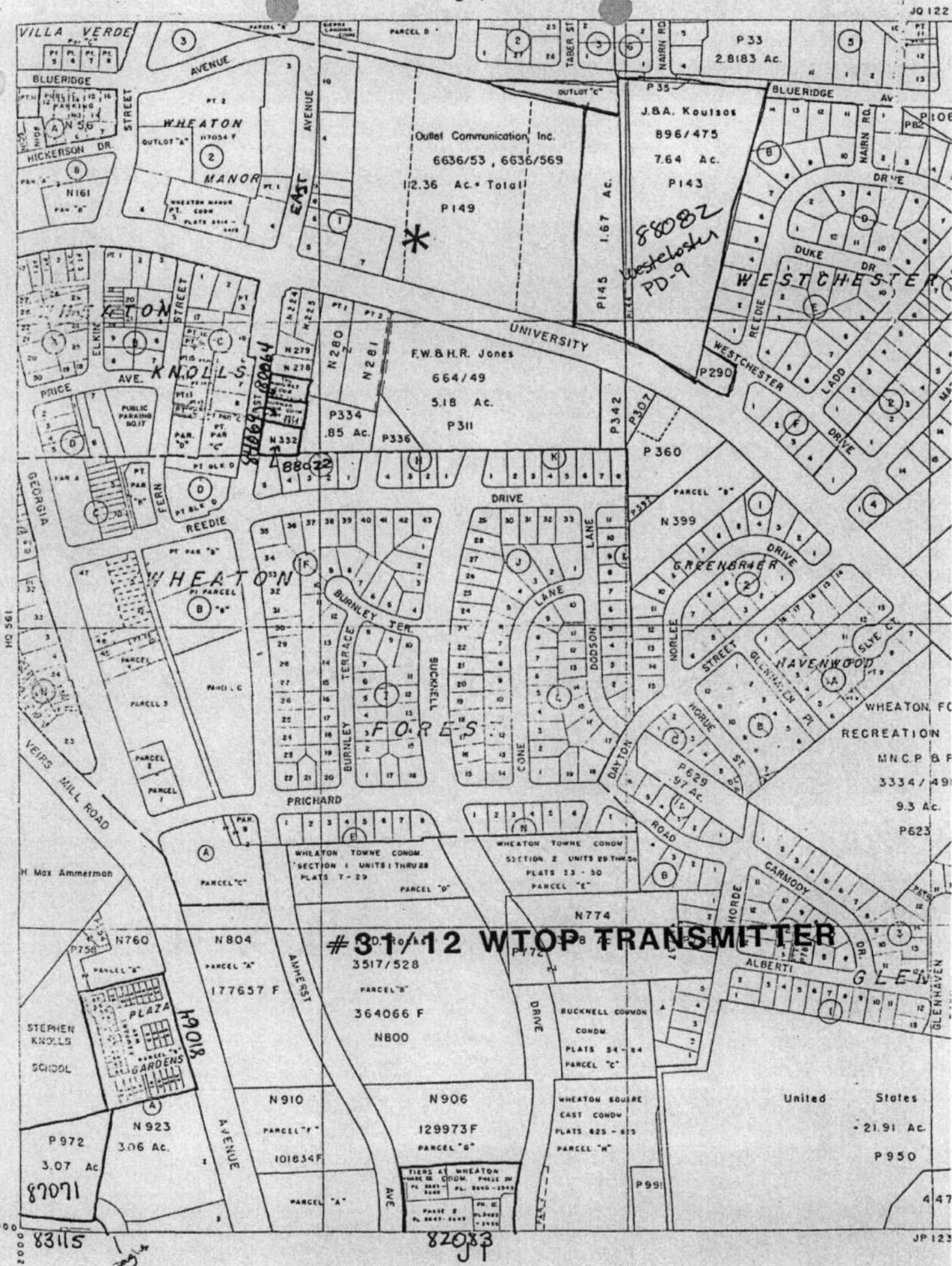
The curved walls caused no difficulties in form layout and framing. Plywood was used for all wall forms with vertical studs set to sill lines and wales cut to fit the wall curvature. Alignment was maintained by inside bracing measured radially from a center point.

No honeycomb whatever was found when outside forms were removed, proving that with a proper mix and care in placing good results are obtained.

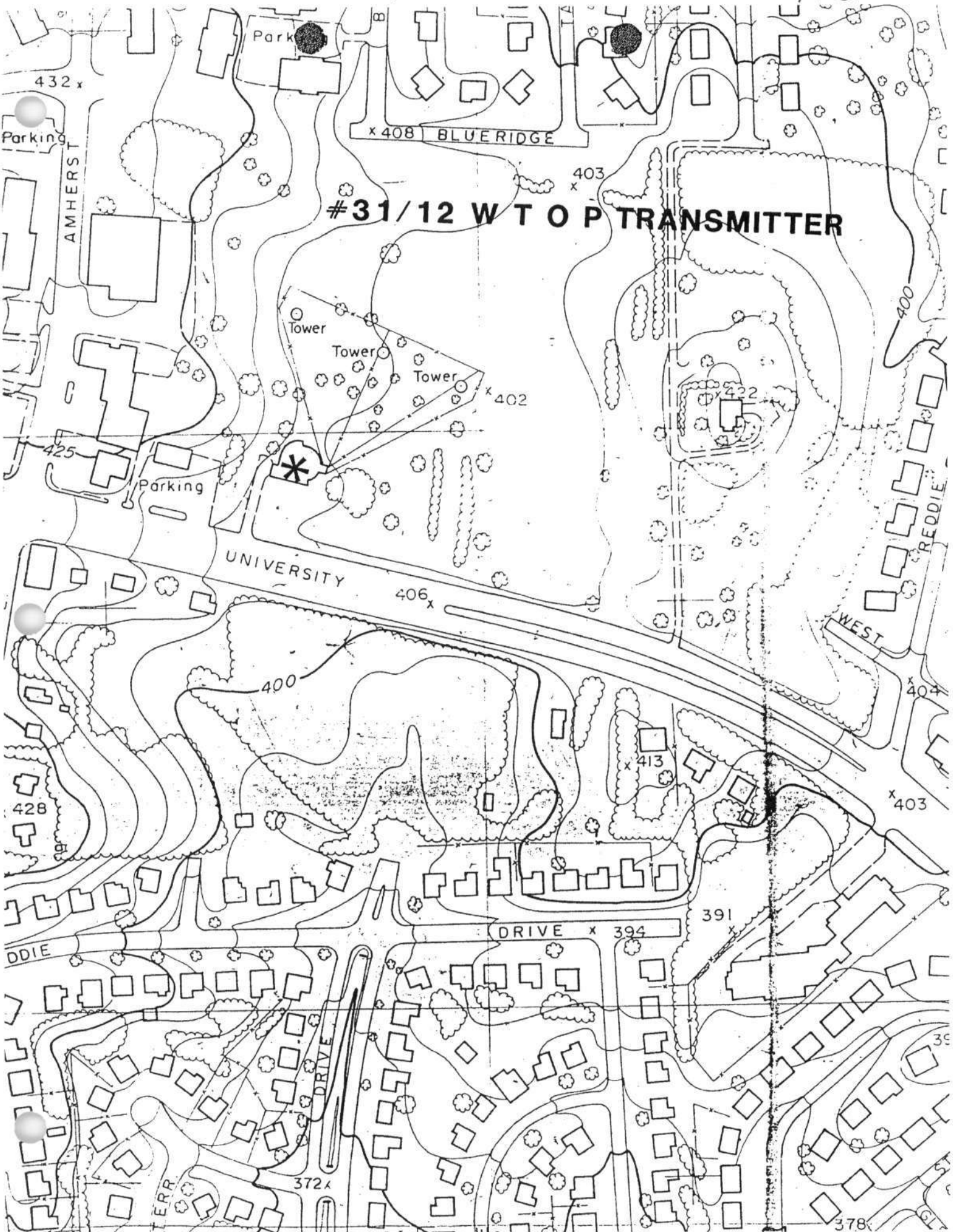
The work was inspected on almost a 24-hour basis by James L. Middlebrooks, supervising engineer for the Columbia Broadcasting System, and by the contractor's superintendent. On completion of the forming we decided to paint the concrete a pleasing "Spanish White" to gain effective contrast with the landscape.

Landscaping about the building was designed by Major F. T. Norcross, of Washington. New trees, shrubs and wide grass areas are now coming into their first full summer's green to make complete the project on which all of us worked so hard to achieve an outstanding example of honest beauty.

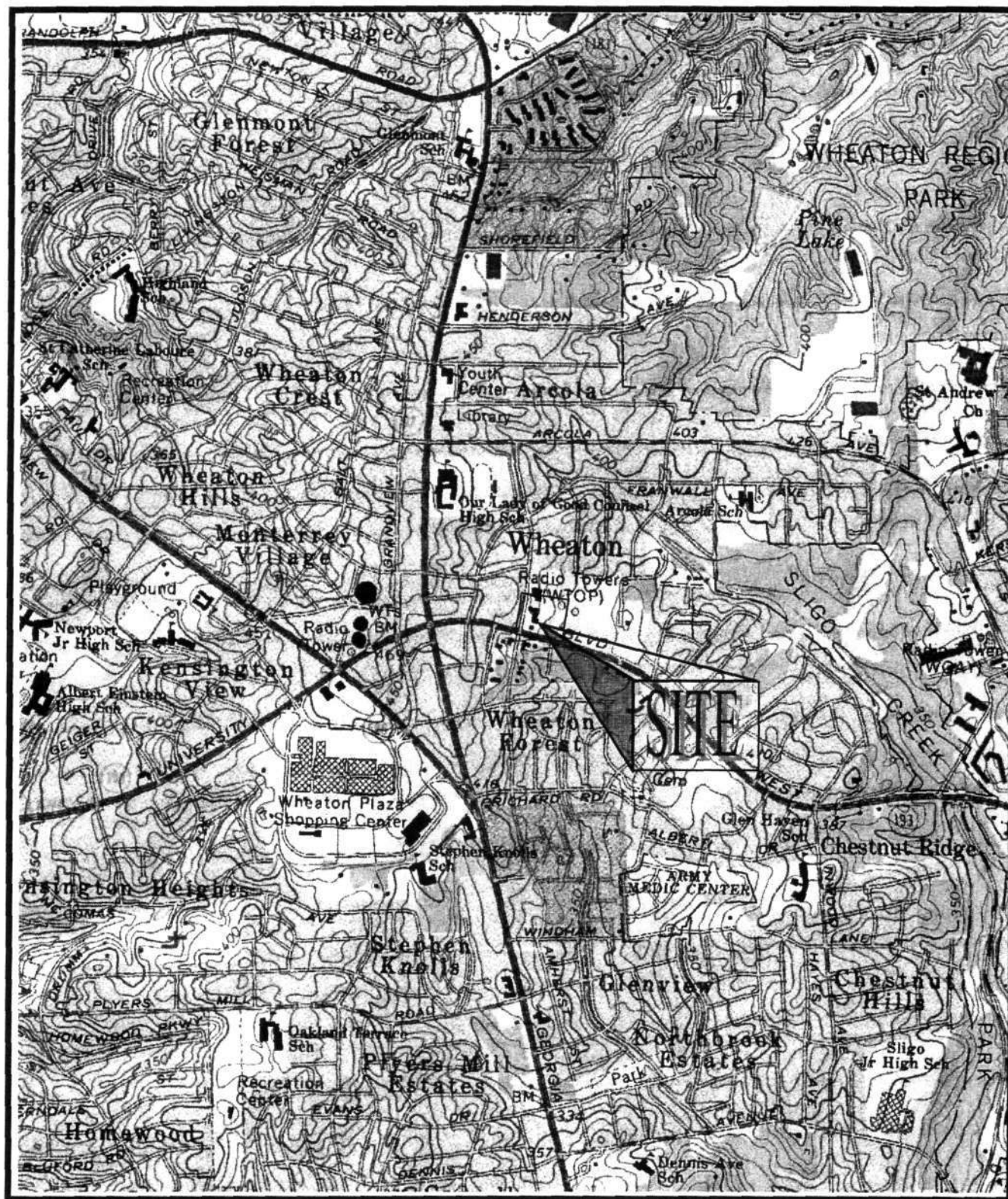
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Map center is 39° 02' 30"N, 77° 02' 47"W (NAD83/WGS84)

Wheaton, Maryland Quadrangle



NORTH

W.O.
N2095077

Terracon

Site Location Map
PEPAC WTOP Transmitter Site
2015 University West Boulevard
Wheaton, Maryland

Figure
1

M: 31-12

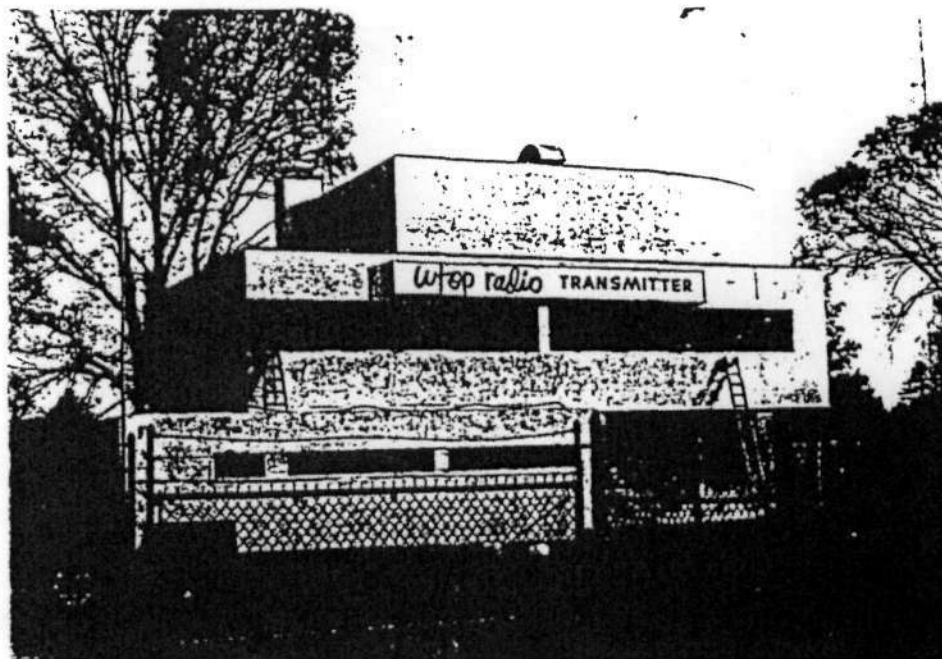




Photo 1 Looking northeast across the site.

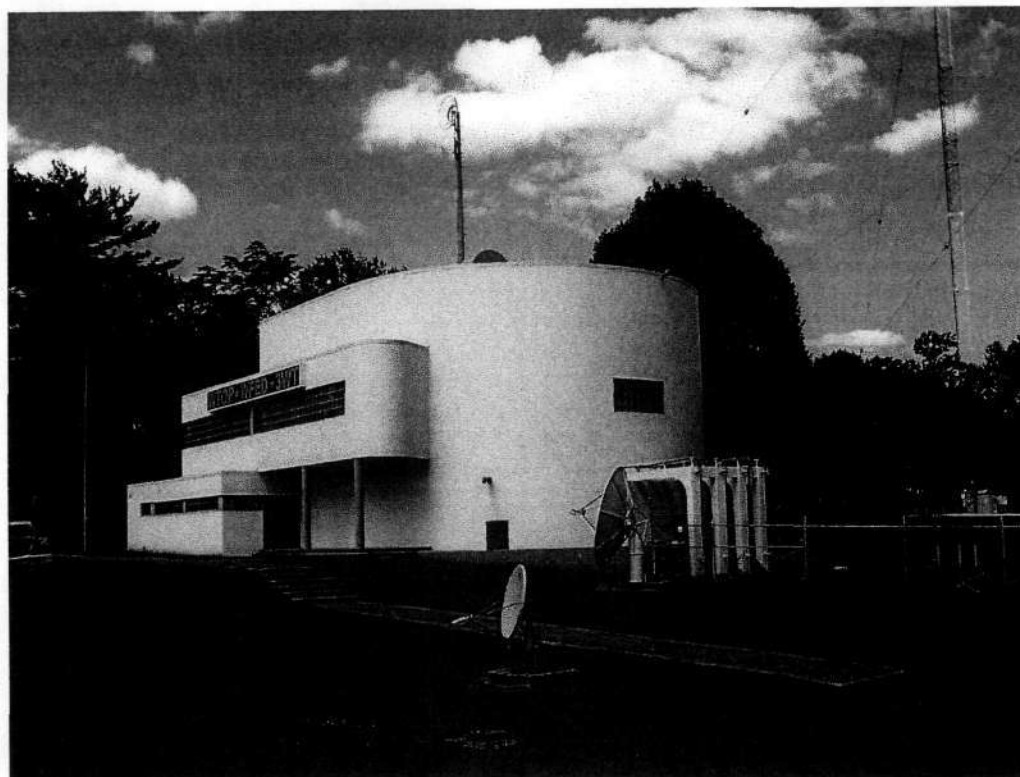


Photo 2 Looking northwest at site building.