

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG: 79-019-64

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Crain Highway Monument

other

2. Location

street and number Old Crain Highway at Main Street __ not for publication

city, town Upper Marlboro __ vicinity

county Prince Georges

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

name State Highway Administration

street and number 9300 Kenilworth Avenue telephone

city, town Greenbelt state MD zip code 20770

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber n/a folio n/a

city, town Upper Marlboro tax map 0101E-2 tax parcel n/a tax ID number n/a

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Planning Department

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count		
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
				<u>1</u>	

7. Description

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Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

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

The Crain Highway monument is located at the western edge of the Town of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The square, stone and concrete monument was built in 1922. The monument is situated in the median of Old Crain Highway where Marlboro Pike and Old Crain Highway intersect Main Street. Mature trees and shrubs are located along with the monument in the small grass median. There are no secondary resources associated with this property.

MONUMENT

The Crain Highway Monument was constructed in 1922 in the Town of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The tall, bottle-shaped monument was constructed using local sandstone with concrete accents. The monument stands in an oval medium formed by the confluence of Marlboro Pike, Old Crain Highway, and Main Street. The uncoursed stones are irregularly shaped and sized, extracted locally from a bank located behind Trinity Church.¹ The base of the monument consists of two plinths of cut square stones. The base leads up to a square shaft constructed of stone with a concrete cavetto molding at the base of the middle section of the monument. The middle section of the monument has a square plan and is constructed of the same stone. Each face of this section of the monument is ornamented with a concrete plaque. The southwest and northeast plaques read: BALTIMORE & SOUTHERN MARYLAND TRUNK LINE --- ROBERT CRAIN HIGHWAY. The northwest face reads: AT THIS POINT CONSTRUCTION WAS STARTED SEPTEMBER 30, 1922. The southeast plaque has no inscription. The middle section of the monument, which includes the plaques, is topped by a concrete cyma reversa molding. The top section of the monument is pyramidal and is topped by a cyma reversa base capped by an acorn-shaped concrete finial.

INTEGRITY

The Crain Highway Monument retains a high level of integrity, by retaining its original form and materials. The monument has not lost its integrity of feeling, setting, location, or association, although the advancement of the automobile and road construction techniques have dramatically altered the landscape and transportation networks of Prince George's County. The Crain Highway Monument has sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a work of prominent Maryland Architect Howard Sill and as a memorial to the determination of Robert Crain, for whom the highway is named.

¹ Susan G. Pearl, "Crain Highway Monument," (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1993), 8:1.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates	1922	Architect/Builder	Howard Sill
Construction dates	1922		

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crain Highway Monument was constructed in 1922 in the Town of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The monument, designed by noted Baltimore architect Howard Sill, marks the spot where construction commenced for the new automobile route linking the City of Baltimore with the counties of Southern Maryland. The Robert Crain Highway was named in honor of Robert Crain, who was instrumental in the planning of the highway. The approximately 30-foot high stone and concrete monument has a square base with a pyramidal shape. The Crain Highway Monument retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a monument to the advancement of automobile travel and Crain.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Crain Highway Monument is located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Located in southern and eastern Prince George's County, the Crain Highway grew out of a desire to connect southern Maryland with the City of Baltimore to the north. Baltimore was the economic hub of Maryland and as such the shipment of goods from the southern counties to Baltimore became mandatory for the economies of the region. Before construction of the Crain Highway, travel between the southern counties and Baltimore was precarious and required significant amounts of time. The Official Program celebrating the opening of the Robert Crain Highway notes, "What roads there were, were narrow, twisting dirt paths. Vehicles were drawn horses, mules or oxen and skillful maneuvering upon the part of the driver was necessary to pass a vehicle bound in the opposite direction." The advent of affordably priced automobiles made it possible for the southern counties of Maryland to be connected with Baltimore.

Howard Sill (1867-1927) designed the Crain Highway Monument in 1922. A noted architect, he started his architectural career in Baltimore when he joined the firm of Wyatt and Nolting in the 1890s.² He established his

² Susan G. Pearl, "Crain Highway Monument," (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1993), 8:2.

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own office in Baltimore in 1907.³ Sill was also active in Prince George's County, due in part to his marriage to Mary Frances Duvall, a member of the prominent Duvall family.⁴ Howard Sill was selected in 1926 to be the lead architect for the Baltimore Art Museum. Unfortunately, Sill suffered a paralyzing stroke, leading ultimately to his death the following year. His associate, John Russell Pope, best known for his design of the Jefferson Memorial, finished the Baltimore Art Museum project.

The road construction project was spear-headed by Robert Crain of Charles County. According to the Maryland Archives, Crain was born in Charles County, Maryland in 1865. Crain was a farmer and a partner in the Baltimore and Washington law firm of Omer F. Hershey where he served as legal counsel for the United States Brewers' Association, an organization opposed to Prohibition. Crain was active in the Democratic Party as a fund-raiser and as a delegate to some of the party's national conventions, but he never ran for public office. He dreamed of building a road between Baltimore and Southern Maryland and led the fight to secure a state appropriation for the road.⁵ According to the Official Program of the ceremonial opening of the highway, "Mr. Crain's strong and convincing personality 'carried on' successfully and in 1922 the Legislature appropriated one million dollars for the construction of the highway." The highway was the tool by which people could travel great distances with relative ease and in a timely manner. The construction of the Crain Highway began in 1922. This event was marked by the unveiling of the Crain Highway Monument. As depicted in a historic photograph, the event was well attended.⁶ The celebration proved to be one of the most momentous events in the history of the Town of Upper Marlboro.⁷

Although a bypass now redirects the main road in the area, US 301, around Upper Marlboro, the Crain Highway Monument still stands in a heavily-trafficked location and marks the beginning of the Crain Highway. The monument stands as an unusual example of a work completed by one of Baltimore's early-twentieth-century architects and as a reminder of how the automobile changed the economic, social, and physical landscape of Prince George's County.

³ Susan G. Pearl, "Crain Highway Monument," (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1993), 8:2.

⁴ Susan G. Pearl, "Crain Highway Monument," (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1993), 8:2.

⁵ Archives of Maryland, Biographical Series, "Robert S. Crain," <http://www.msa.md.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/014000/014014/html/14014bio.html> (accessed November 15, 2007).

⁶ "Memories," *P.G. Journal* (14 February 1989).

⁷ Susan G. Pearl, "Crain Highway Monument," (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1993), 8:3.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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1920 U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule). Online: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007. Subscription database. Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC. <http://www.ancestry.com>.
Pearl, Susan G. "Crain Highway Monument" (PG: 79-19-64) Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form, 1993. Prince George's County Land Records.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property less than one acre
Acreage of historical setting less than one acre
Quadrangle name Upper Marlboro Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Crain Highway Monument is located on a grassy oval-shaped median formed by Old Crain Highway measuring approximately 150-feet in length and 40-feet in width, sited on a southwest-northeast axis. The monument is situated to the west of downtown Upper Marlboro, where Marlboro Pike and Crain Highway converge to Main Street. The monument is noted on Tax Map 0101E-2.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul Weishar, Architectural Historian		
organization	EHT Traceries, Incorporated	date	February 2008
street & number	1121 Fifth Street, NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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CHAIN OF TITLE
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY LAND RECORDS

Deed 182:388
September 6, 1922

Sadie Brandenberger (Sadie Edlavitch), William Brandenberger, and Kate London to
State Roads Commission for the State of Maryland.

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Photo: Crain Highway Monument, view of the northeast corner, looking southwest. (August 2007)

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Photo: Crain Highway Monument, view of the southeast corner, looking northwest. (August 2007)

