

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic *Hershey Community Center Building*

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number *2 Chocolate Avenue* not for publication

city, town *Derry Township* vicinity of congressional district *043*

state *Penna* code *42* county *Dauphin* code *042*

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name *Hershey Foods Corporation*

street & number *100 Mansion Road East*

city, town *Hershey* vicinity of state *Penna*

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. *Dauphin County Court*

street & number *Front & Market Streets*

city, town *Harrisburg* state *Penna*

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title *Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places* has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date *April 1980*  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records *Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission*

city, town *Harrisburg* state *Penna*

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Community Center is a distinctive landmark in Hershey. Its architectural character owes a great deal to the notable Philadelphian Paul Cret who was directly involved in the early design phases of the building with Milton Hershey.

Both the exterior and interior of the building exhibit a scale and craftsmanship with materials of highest quality all of which have been enhanced by excellent maintenance and respectful use. Total space in the building is 190,699 sq. ft. The large theatre accounts for 51,525 sq. ft. or 27% of the building, the small theatre 5,525 sq. ft. Major recreational facilities include the gymnasium, pools, game rooms, locker rooms and showers, approximately 30,000 sq. ft. The balance of the building is allocated to a wide variety of general office, educational, residential and service functions. Some of these, such as the library (6,640 sq. ft.) were heavily utilized by the Community whereas the dormitories (15,970 sq. ft.) have been largely unused for the past five years or so. The building itself is five stories high and covers approximately six acres of floor space. It is made of faced white Indiana limestone, and the building is shaped like a distended E with an open court in the front center. Balustrade line the sun porches on three sides overlooking an open central patio where three bronze swans spout water into a large white marble fountain. The sloping portions of the roof are made of Spanish tile.

The main entrance leads into a spacious lobby running the full length of the building. Finished in Adam style of period design, it conveys an original interpretation of a classical theme. The color scheme is green and gold the walls being finished in a harmonious emerald of charming simplicity. The woodwork is of solid walnut.

The west wing of the building is designed in the fourteenth century Italian Renaissance style, with spanning rafters painted in reds, blues and yellows. The first floor of the east wing is architecturally similar to the west wing, yet its artistic scheme is different, being painted in southern French style of the Provençal School with rich royal blues and delicate fleurs-de-lis dominating the decorative pattern.

The east wing of the building is occupied by a theatre seating 2,000 persons. Its entrance salone is executed after a Greek design in blue and gold. The outer foyer is a representation of a Pompeian design and is executed in this delicate terms of ivory, green and gold. The walls are Italian marble. The inner foyer consists of a graceful arch ceiling done after a Persian pattern in gold mosaic. The ceiling of the theatre shows clouds moving across the horizon on a dappled carpet of stars clustering about the moon, depending upon the lighting. On the sides of the theatre are the facades of Byzantine castles with their porphyry window towers and golden battlement. The back ceiling is an ancient design, panelled in the fashion of rough-hewn oak. In the front is a large stage with six movable parts capable of being raised or lowered at will, which also applies to the orchestra pit and pipe organ console.

In another part of the building is a swimming pool, finished in tile of intricate mosaic design. Around the top of the pool area are leaded glass windows.

# 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1932-33

Builder/Architect Hershey Estates C Emlen Urban

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hershey Community Center represents the culmination of a general plan by Milton S. Hershey to provide recreational facilities for his employees and the residents of the town.

Mr. Hershey built the Hershey Chocolate factory in March of 1903 in an area of Derry Township made up of only farms. Up the road was a small village called Derry Church, which was the only settlement in the area. During the latter part of 1904, the factory was ready for operation, and Milton Hershey and 20 of his employees moved from Lancaster (where his former operation was located) to the area of the factory. There were no houses in town, and only choice was to room at a weather-beaten country hotel in Derry Church.

The second floor of the Cocoa House contained a hallway almost as large as a tennis court, and to provide recreational facilities for his employees, Mr. Hershey built a tiny stage at one end so that by arranging chairs before it the hallway could be converted into a little theater. It was utilized in this fashion upon several occasions, minstrel shows being the big attraction.

Mr. Hershey was conscious of the fact that unless he took every precaution, the town he was building in sparsely-settled Derry Township might develop into a ugly, stereotyped factory town, so at the very beginning he took specific pains that would avoid such a fate. To his way of thinking, one of the chief elements in the development of a community was a facility for intelligent recreation. As will be seen, execution of this idea began with the small stage at the end of the hallway on the second floor of the Cocoa House, and culminated with the Community Center.

In 1911, Mr. Hershey decided to utilize the Cocoa House as a YMCA, and without delay proceeded to put his plans into concrete form. The large room formerly occupied by the dining room and post office was converted into a auditorium capable of seating several hundred persons. Then the adjoining room, formerly used by a store, was turned into a reading room and waiting room for the patrons of the Hershey Transit Company. In the rear of the building, stone masons constructed a large limestone gymnasium, sixty by ninety feet. It was encircled by a running track, which was also used as a gallery to enable spectators to witness basketball games. In the basement was placed a large tile swimming pool, as well as large shower and locker rooms. Close by was a game room, fitted out with billiard and pool tables and a shuffleboard.

Subsidized by Mr. Hershey, the cost of the YMCA membership was established at that point in time at \$3.00 a year for men and \$1.00 per year for boys. More than 100 members made up the first enrollment and a full time general secretary and physical director were hired. Once or twice a week, especially during the winter months, events were scheduled for the gymnasium. Additionally, each Wednesday and Saturday evening, movies were shown in the auditorium for the price of 5¢. This innovation was a favorite means of entertainment during the dull winter months. Eventually, the YMCA affiliation was dropped and the building became the Hershey's Men's Club.

The other part of this combination involved the McKinley School, a large, two-story limestone building, built in 1905 on land presented to the school board by Mr. Hershey. The McKinley School replaced a smaller one-story limestone school house which had been used since before the building of the chocolate factory. Despite the fact that the McKinley School had been built in 1905, by 1913 the size of the town had rendered it too small to support the community. It was Mr. Hershey's belief that all the small school houses scattered throughout the township (at that time, fifteen) should be closed and replaced by a consolidated school. Since such a project was beyond means of the township, Mr. Hershey agreed that in exchange for the present school building and grounds, he would build and equip a modern school building large enough for one thousand pupils. Furthermore, he agreed to pay some of the

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Hershey Community Center

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

expenses of its operation and maintenance. As a result, on October 13, 1914, the MS Hershey Consolidated School of Derry Township was dedicated.

This building still stands and is used as a middle school by the township. The McKinley Public School building which stood on the southeast corner of Chocolate and Cocoa Avenues was then converted into the Hershey Central Theater. It was a large attractive building which besides providing facilities for entertainment, embraced a library and the Hershey Employment Bureau on the first floor, and two rooms on the second floor used by the local Red Cross Chapter. Initially, the Theater showed High-Grade movies on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights at a subsidized admission of five cents. There were also other attractions, such as vaudeville, musical, lectures, and home talent shows.

The Community Center was conceived at the same time as the Hershey Central Theater conversion was taking place. The building designed to provide entertainment and recreation as well as to fulfill educational, civic and religious functions of the town, was, in the estimation of many, the one single thing needed to make Hershey a highly desirable, year-round residential town. In 1916, the local newspaper, the Hershey Press, published a discussion of the proposed community center and a half-page illustration of the architectural rendering.

Actual construction, however, was not begun until shortly after the beginning of the Depression. At that time, in order to provide employment\* for construction and trades personnel in the area, Mr Hershey decided to go ahead with the building of the Community Center to take the place of the Men's Club, the Theater and the local dining facilities. In addition to the recreational and cultural features described in Item 7, an elegant dining room was located on the first floor of the east wing. On the lower floor was a large cafeteria and the kitchen facilities. These replaced a quick lunch building previously added to the east side of the Men's Club and the cafe dining room, which had been eliminated when the Hershey Company Office Building was constructed.

From 1932 to 1941, the Community Center housed the Hershey Hospital, and from 1938 to 1968 it also provided the space for the Hershey Junior College. In the early Sixties, the old women's club building was razed, and women and girls of the community began using the recreational facilities.

### Conclusion

The Community Center building was the centerpiece of the construction financed by Mr. Hershey during the Depression, and to those outside of the town, it continues to be the ultimate expression of essence of Hershey as a planned community, designed, constructed, inhabited and enjoyed long before anyone invented the term.

To the residents, however, its meaning is much deeper. Many were born there, many more educated there, and almost all have been enriched by its recreational and cultural facilities.

\*Other large projects financed by Mr. Hershey during this period included the Hershey Hotel (1933), the Milton Hershey School Jr. Sr. High School Building (1934), the Hershey Chocolate Company Office Building (1935) and the Hershey Sports Arena (1936)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Shavely, "An Intimate Story of Milton S. Hershey," (Hershey, PA, 1957)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2,580

Quadrangle name Hershey, PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	1	8	3	5	9	8	3	0	4	4	6	0	5	3	0
Zone			Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

C 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

D 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

E 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

F 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

G 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

H 

Zone			Easting						Northing					

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title R. D. Foster, Assistant Treasurer

organization Hershey Foods Corporation

date March 19, 1980

street & number 19 East Chocolate Ave

telephone 534-4274

city or town Hershey

state Pennsylvania

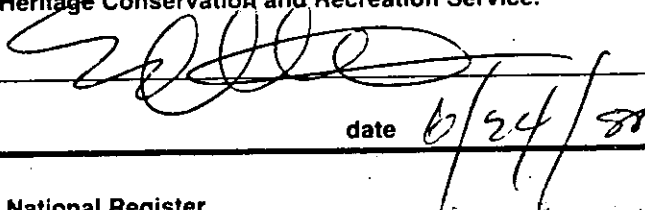
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



ED WEINTRAUB, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/24/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

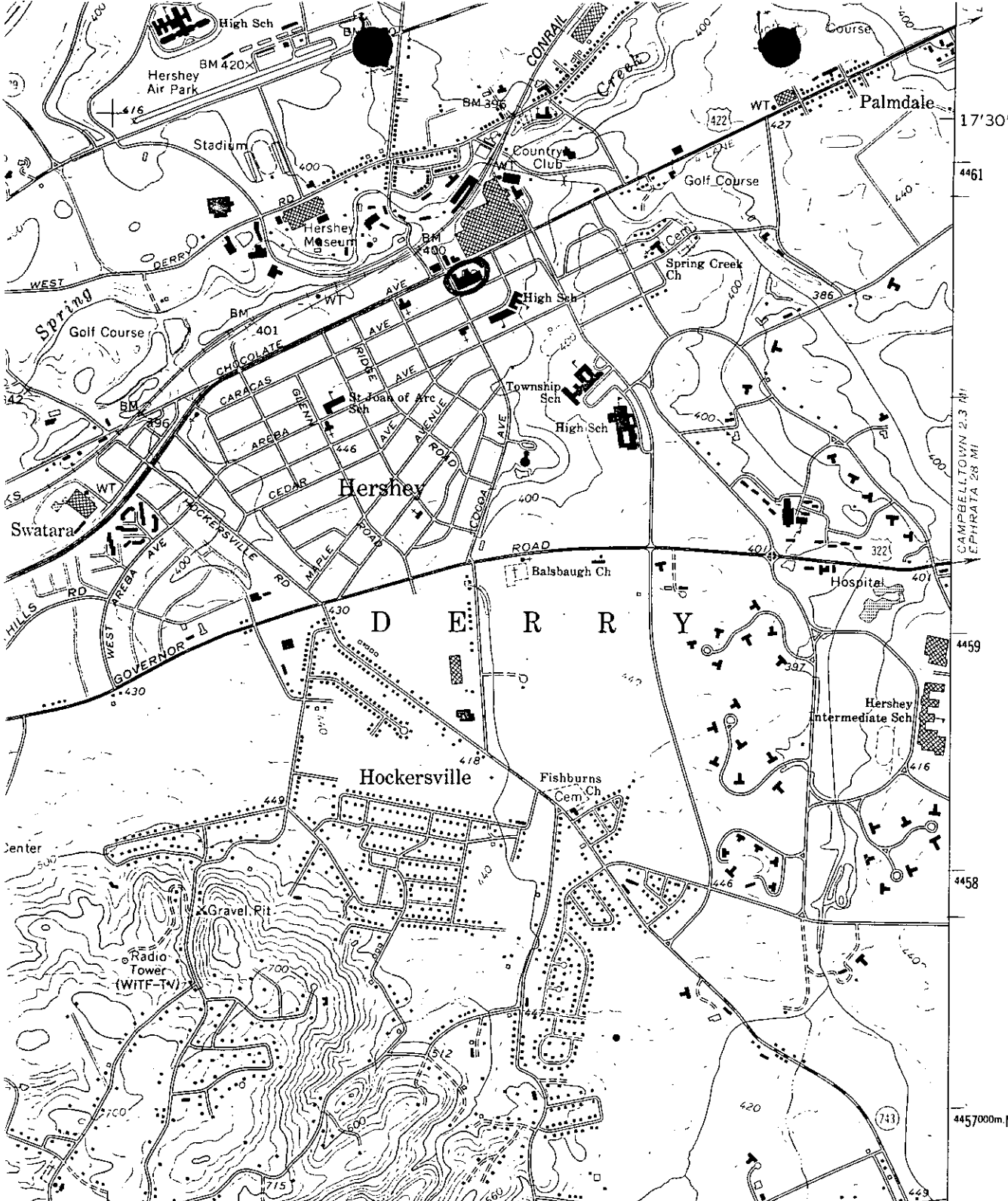
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

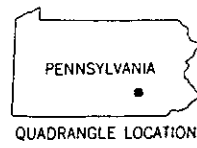
date

Chief of Registration



1358 40' 1359 360 361000m E. 76° 37' 30" 40° 15' 4457000m N.

1 MILE  
EET



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road	
Interstate Route	U. S. Route	State Route

**HERSHEY, PA.**

SW/4 HUMMELSTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE  
N4015—W7637.5/7.5

1969  
PHOTOREVISED 1974  
AMS 5664 ! SW—SERIES V831

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of Pennsylvania agencies from aerial photographs taken 1974. This information not field checked

(ELIZABETHTOWN)  
5664 11 NE  
**CAMP HILL DISTRIBUTORS**  
STATIONER  
821 Market St., Hershey, Pa.  
737 - 6481 737 - 2643