

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION  
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO.

HISTORIC NAME: Spring Brook House  
LOCATION: 167 James Street  
MUNICIPALITY: Morristown  
USGS QUAD: Morristown  
OWNER/ADDRESS: Loyola House of Retreats  
167 James Street, Morristown, NJ 07960

COMMON NAME: Loyola House of Retreats  
BLOCK/LOT B130/L 1, 1A & 1B  
COUNTY: Morris  
UTM REFERENCES:  
Zone/Northing/Easting

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1904-06; east addition 1947-49, west addition 1959-60  
Architect: George A. Freeman & Frances George Hasselman  
Style: Georgian Revival

Source of Date: datestone; "The Jerseyman", Nov. 16, 1906; & Loyola House of Retreats pp.66-90  
Builder: -

Number of Stories: 2½ story, main block, 2 story wings  
Foundation: granite water table.

Form/Plan Type: 7 bay main block with 3 bay front portico and rear pavilion, stepped back 3 bay sides wings, and 1 story end porches (enclosed) that connect to large modern 3 story additions.

Exterior Wall Fabric: Brick with dressed limestone trim including corner quions

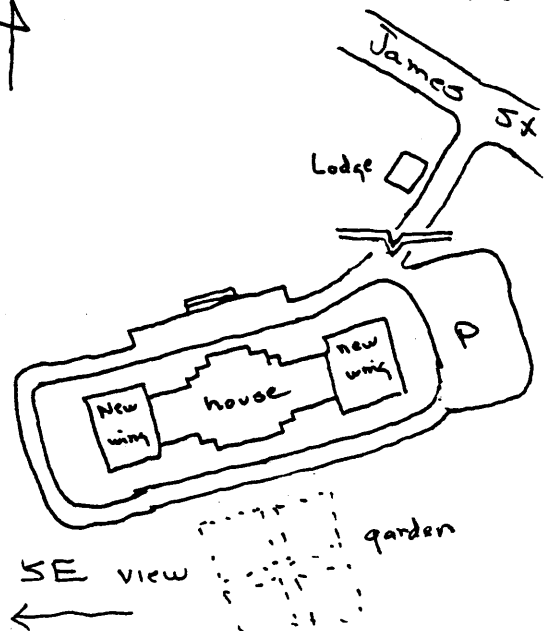
Fenestration: sash windows have dressed stone sills and lintels with eared ends and raised keystones, shutters removed.

Roof/Chimneys: Hip roof on main block, flat on wings and modern additions/various interior and wall chimneys with brick stacks.  
Additional Architectural Description:

- attic story of main block is treated as a parapet with pedimented wall dormers and paneled corner pedestals; rest of roof is balustraded.
- Large entablature of pressed metal at eaves with modillion brackets under cornice and a dentil strip.
- Flat-roofed north side entrance portico of two stories takes a continuation of the main entablature and balustrade and has four fluted Ionic columns of stone; matching paired Ionic pilasters at main block corners.
- a limestone entry vestibule extending the full width of the portico has a roof balustrade, denticulated entablature, double glass and wrought iron doors with matching side lights, and marble end panels with mounted wrought iron lanterns and paired flanking console brackets.
- south side central pavilion with entablature, balustrade, and pilasters (continued on

PHOTO Negative File No.

Map (Indicate North) attached page)



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION, 109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292-2023

SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

The house is set on hill and faces north towards Morristown overlooking Foote's Pond and park; gate posts square brick piers with molded stone cap and round stone finial; gate lodge frame, 1½ story, three bay, mansard-roofed structure with flared overhanging eaves, gable dormers with bargeboards, and clapboard siding, central entry with triangular pediment. To the north of the house is balustrade terrace; a balustraded terrace on the south or rear gives onto the "Italian garden."

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban  Suburban  Scattered Buildings   
Open Space  Woodland  Residential  Agricultural  Village   
Industrial  Downtown Commerical  Highway Commercial  Other

The lands that made up the Spring Brook Farm estate have been developed with single family houses and a golf course. Enough land surrounds the mansion to preserve its integrity of setting.

SIGNIFICANCE: "Spring Brook House" possesses the architectural and historical significance necessary for inclusion on the National Register. The work of architects George A. Freeman and Frances George Hasselman, it is a notably successful interpretation of the Georgian Revival style, popular in the early 20th century, for many of the most pretentious private residences. Not only its design, but its materials, construction, decorative detailing, and mechanical systems represent the best available at that time. Despite the utilitarian modern wings added to both ends, which nevertheless harmonize in terms of scale & materials, the original mansion has suffered almost no exterior alteration and retains much important interior fabric. The interior finishings, done under the directions of Tiffany Studios, includes splendid woodwork, wall hangings, and lighting fixtures. Undoubtedly the largest and most elaborate private house ever built in Morristown, Spring Brook House with its adjoining Italian garden, outbuilding and extensive landscaped grounds epitomizes the palatial estates that brought the Morristown area its social fame at the turn of the century.

The historical significance of Spring Brook House lies in its association with the Foote family. The local progenitor of the family was (continued on attached page)

ORIGINAL USE: residential PRESENT USE: institutional  
PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor   
REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes  Possible  No  Part of District   
THREATS TO SITE: Roads  Development  Zoning  Deterioration   
No Threat  Other

COMMENTS:

REFERENCES:

- "The Jerseyman", Nov. 16, 1906:1
- The Loyola House of Retreats at Mount St. Katherine, Jubilee of Gratitude 1927-77. Morristown, NJ: 1977
- "Morristown Topics." July 10, 1924:4
- Rae, John W. & John W. Jr. Morristown's Forgotten Past, "The Gilded Age" Morristown: John W. Raw, 1979. pp. 146-8.

RECORDED BY: D. Bertland  
ORGANIZATION:

DATE: Spring 1981,  
updated Spring 1984

## Spring Brook House

### Additional Architectural Description (continued):

- matching those of front portico has a tripart recessed entry porch surmounted by a tripart window; both have simple stone entablatures and pilasters.
- the 1 story enclosed end porches have stone balustrades, entablatures and pilasters; the west porch originally was screened in.
  - the modern wings are quite simply detailed with plain brick walls, stone cornice at the 3rd floor level, and stone faced third story.

Note: Most of the principal interior spaces of the forty-four room mansion have survived unaltered. According to "The Jerseyman" article of Nov. 1906 the Tiffany Studios of New York were responsible for the original interior decoration. Both the first and second floors are finished for the most part with Classical Revival detailing that includes elaborate paneling and plaster work, molded cornices, pilasters, Georgian mantles architrave door and window trim, paneled dadoes. Of particular note is the vast cross-shaped hall which retains its original decorative cream and gilt painted wood work, green velvet brocade wall hangings and gilded wall sconces. It is dominated by massive double staircase whose square newel posts feature carved ram's heads. Hanging from the ceiling of the open stairwell is a remarkable carved wooden lantern of over 5 feet that resembles the cupola of a Wren church. The drawing room which takes up the west end of the first floor has a coffer paneled ceiling whose two traverse beams are supported at both ends by Corinthian columns that flank the entry and fireplace. In a contrasting mode is the "Elizabethan" library with its grained mahogany paneling and plaster ceiling frieze whose elaborate ornamentation includes Masonic symbols.

### Significance (continued):

John T. Foote (1818-1902) who after making a commercial fortune in Cincinnati moved to Morristown in 1865 and settled on what became Spring Brook Farms. His son Robert D. Foote (1863-1924) inherited Spring Brook and removing the family's Victorian villa overlooking town proceeded to build the present mansion between 1904 and 1906. The close supervision that he gave this project, acting as his own general contractor (albeit assisted by a "supervising architect") and visiting the site almost every day, is indicative of the energy and attention with which he conducted all his affairs.

Through his many interests and concerns, Robert D. Foote achieved prominence at both the state and local level. Foote graduated from Harvard University, studied medicine in Germany, and became a noted linguist. However, his principal business activity was banking and he served for many years as vice president and president of the National Iron Bank, Morristown's oldest financial institution. Under his direction the bank's present Classical Revival office on South Street was erected. Foote also served a term as president of the State Banker's Association. Other business interests included the Morris County Traction Co. and the local gas company.

Foote was active and influential in the Democratic party in New Jersey for many years. He was appointed to several offices including that of State Director of Railroads in 1913 and was closely associated with Presidents Cleveland and Wilson. Foote also took part in local civic affairs and chaired several successful fund drives including those for the Red Cross and the building of All Souls Hospital. Interested in farming and hunting, Foote gave much attention to the improvement of the over 500 acre Spring Brook property. He and his wife entertained lavishly at Spring Brook House, most notably on the occasions of his daughters' weddings. Foote belonged to several clubs in Morristown, New York, and in Florida where he wintered.

## Spring Brook House

### Significance (continued):

John D. Foote died suddenly on June 24, 1924 at age 60. He was survived by his wife, four daughters and one son. Two years later Spring Brook Farms was sold to Charles Anderson of Montclair. The following year Welcome Bender purchased the mansion and about 20 acres and donated the same in memory of his mother to the Society of Jesus for use as a retreat house. Since then the Loyola House of Retreats has occupied the premises, renovating and enlarging it to suit its needs, but maintaining and preserving much of the original fabric.