

PH 0668966

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 17 1978
DATE ENTERED MAR 2 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
SYMINGTON HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON
Continental House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
2 Park Place
CITY, TOWN
Newark
STATE
New Jersey
VICINITY OF
10th
COUNTY
Essex
CODE
34
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
013

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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input 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
Trinity Cathedral
STREET & NUMBER
24 Rector Street
CITY, TOWN
Newark
STATE
New Jersey
VICINITY OF
VICINITY OF
New Jersey 07102

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Essex County Hall of Records
STREET & NUMBER
High Street
CITY, TOWN
Newark
STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#2186.14)
DATE
1961
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Office of Historic Preservation, D.E.P.
CITY, TOWN
Trenton
STATE
New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Symington House (Trinity House/Continental House—depending upon owner) constructed in 1808, is a large three story, brick townhouse with brownstone trim. Originally constructed as a rectory for Trinity Church, (now the Cathedral of the Episcopal diocese), the house is Newark's finest example of the late Federal Period. It is also one of the few Federals still intact in Newark. The most distinguishing feature of the exterior is the outstanding, finely-detailed entrance porch with two fluted columns with Corinthian capital holding up a dentiled pediment, plus recessed doors with exposed carved panels.

Typically Federal, the house is symmetrical, five bays across. The windows are wide, most likely originally having 6 over 6 sashes, and are capped with simple brownstone lintels with a plain molding along the tops. The wooden cornice of the roof is decorated with brackets set between dentils, lined up nicely with the windows below. There are also a series of carved rosettes along the bottom edge of the cornice.

The sides of the house are also typically Federal with stepped up bricks following the low pitch of the roof, and a pair of chimneys on both sides. The windows on the side are not grouped symmetrically, and each window is capped by a flat slab of brownstone.

Many of the original exterior details are intact, the four-foot brownstone foundation and the massive brownstone steps remain. In 1888, however, the Symington family purchased the house and began intensive remodeling of the interior, including some additions. The original 6 over 6 sashes were replaced at this time with the present single large panes and the exterior shutters removed. The first story windows were replaced with french doors topped by purple stained glass panels which opened to a narrow cast-iron veranda extending across the front of the house. In the rear, enlargements to the rooms were made. Despite these changes, the exterior retains its distinct Federal lines. The rear stair tower goes up two stories and still has its original 6 over 6 sashes in the windows and brownstone lintels, contrasted to the other rear windows which are arched.

The interior layout has remained basically the same as originally built; the center hall dividing two pairs of similarly proportioned rooms, each with their own fireplaces, on the first and second floors. On the first floor, each front room has outstanding marble mantels and on the second floor, simple wood mantels prevail. The basement has the kitchen from 1888, as well as the original cooking fireplace. The front of the basement has a sub-basement made from the foundation of an earlier house—Dutch colonial in style and an earlier Trinity Church rectory.

The den, an original portion of the house, once had a crane not evident today. Double cross panel doors downstairs are original. It is said that these doors kept out witches from the home. Double-cross literally translates to the superstition mentioned.

The original hand-hewn beams were covered over by Symington. Rare mahogany floors are still evident in the front parlor and library. The front, first floor fireplaces, both of marble, are the most outstanding in the home.

Overall, the interior and exterior condition of Symington House is good to very good. Victorian furnishings which were donated to the house by the Newark Museum and New Jersey Historical Society have been removed. The present owner continues to be the Continental Insurance Company, which purchased it from the Symingtons in 1965 and has offices in the building.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Symington/Continental House

Newark

Essex County

~~New Jersey 034~~

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continued)

In rear of the yard, facing Rector Street, is a large carriage house, which is most-likely as old as the Symington House itself and which is of a very similar style; brick with stepped-up walls and a low pitched roof. The windows are still small paned, and the openings are capped with a flat brick arch similar to the windows on the back of the house.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1808

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Symington House, otherwise known as Trinity House and Continental House at various times throughout its history, is the last of the great mansions that once lined the north side of Military Park along the opposite side of Park Place. Until the early part of this century, when industry began replacing and encroaching upon residential areas throughout Newark, Park Place was lined with outstanding Brownstone and frame mansions, mostly of the Victorian Era. These structures vanished as the Military Park Hotel and Continental Insurance Companies built their new homes here. Only Symington House and its attached neighbor, 6 Park Place remained intact (#6 Park Place has since been demolished) into the 1950's. This pattern of Industrial/Commercial/Institutional replacement of residential areas is not at all unique to the Military Park area. Along the Washington Park frontage of Washington Street, there once existed fine Victorian styled mansions of Brownstone and frame, as well as red-brick. Today, however, only the recently restored Ballantine House remains. Polhemus House and Fewsmith House, both closer to Central Avenue, are two other fine homes which date to the era when the James Street Commons Historic District was Newark's most fashionable. Lincoln Park, perhaps, is the one exception. It has been able to retain much of its past character intact. Symington House, therefore, is the last vestige of great homes, owned by Newark's great families, to remain in the Park Place area.

Prior to the 1800's, it is said that a Dutch Colonial farmhouse (cottage) occupied the present site of the Symington House. But in 1807, the vestry of Trinity Church, at the urging of the ministry, formed a building committee to examine the possibility of constructing a new parsonage house. The church was gaining prestige and members rapidly and the older building on the same site was becoming obsolete. The church itself was about to be rebuilt (1809), having been damaged during the Revolutionary War, when it served as a patriot hospital. The period following the war proved one of enormous expansion for Trinity. Its new affluence was to be reflected not only in the new Church, but the new Parsonage House as well. Completed in 1808, Trinity House, as Symington House was then called, officially became the Rectory of Newark's first Episcopal house of worship.

Architecture

Symington House's main significance lies in its unique, rare style in Newark today. The Federal style has all but disappeared in this city, thanks to Urban Renewal. It remains the best preserved example of the Federal Period in Newark.

Historical Narrative

Finished in 1808, Symington House became the home of Reverend Matthew H. Henderson, who began a long tenure at the residence. He did not vacate the premises until 1856. The

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hetherington, William G. Company, CONTINENTAL HOUSE, NEWARK 300th ANNIVERSARY, 744 Broad Street, Newark, 1965.

Continental House Pamphlet, 300th Anniversary Celebration.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1

UTM REFERENCES

A

118	570209	4519080
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

C

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

D

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Frontage of 2 Park Place is directly opposite north side of Military Park and Trinity Cathedral; Side (north side of structure) facing Rector Street, including carriage house, opposite YMCA building; Near bend in Broad Street and Peddie Memorial Church; South side of building faces Continental Insurance Company building.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Terry Karschner, Office of Historic Preservation, Trenton, 609-292-2028)

NAME / TITLE

NEWARK PRESERVATION & LANDMARKS COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION

DATE

July, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

35 JAMES STREET

TELEPHONE

(201) 622-4910

CITY OR TOWN

NEWARK (ESSEX COUNTY)

STATE

NEW JERSEY 07102

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 National Park Service.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Terry Karschner

TITLE

Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

APR 27 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *William K. Brownell*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

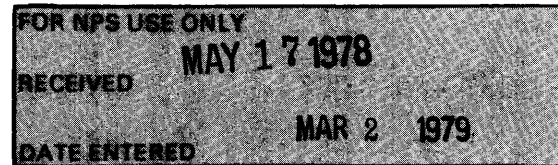
2/21/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2/21/79

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

succeeding pastors (3) lived in the home until 1867 after which the church sold the property. There are no records of residents of 2 Park Place, Trinity House from 1867 until 1879 when it was bought by Daniel Dodd, a banker and member of the Church Vestry (Episcopal). In the meantime, Trinity Church moved its rectory to 6 Park Place, directly adjacent to Trinity House which was built in 1834.

The residence passed into another era of its history when Dodd sold the house to Robert B. Symington, who gave it his name. Symington purchased the house in 1880 and subsequently renovated and enlarged it. Among other new items, he added new windows, a pantry, a cast-iron balcony across the first floor in the front and enlarged the rear rooms. The Victorian features are most evident today and it was Symington who is responsible for the interior changes.

The house remained in the Symington family until 1965, when it was purchased by the Continental Insurance Company, which has its large office building next door. The house was purchased from the widow of Robert Symington's son, Clark. Although the site was originally purchased by the insurance company for expansion, the Continental Insurance people decided instead to allow the Newark Tercentennial Committee to use it as its headquarters for the three hundredth anniversary. The restoration which was done at that time was made possible by funding from the city government and the city's business community.

At the completion of the celebration in 1966, the Continental Insurance Company again took over control of the building and rented it out for office space, which is the structure's use today. Symington House remains Newark's 3rd oldest home pre-dated only by the Plume House and Sydenham-Henderson House.

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MAR 2

1979

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

Star Ledger, Tuesday, October 15, 1968, "This Townhouse Stands as Mark of Elegant Past"; page 13.

Newark Evening News, Monday, February 1, 1965, "Historic Residence Sold", page 4.

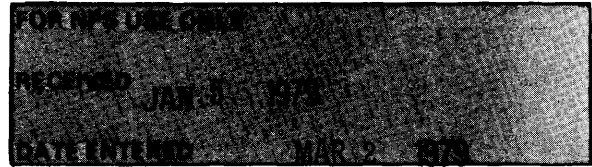
Newark Evening News, Thursday, June 24, 1965, "300th Anniversary Headquarters", page 22.

Newark Sunday News, Sunday, November 2, 1958, "Newark Dwelling Built as Episcopal Rectory, Symbolized Gracious Living", page 1.

Newark Sunday News, Sunday, September 24, 1961, "Homes With a Memorable Past", page 28.

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Symington House
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

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Addendum

The Symington House was built in 1808 as a three story, five bay structure originally utilized as the Rectory of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Newark.

Not until 1888 were any substantial changes effected upon the building. At this time Robert B. Symington added the classical front portico with corinthian columns and extending iron balcony, changed the windows and doors, and enlarged the building to the rear with one and two story units. The brackets under the eaves were probably also added at this time.

While it is quite interesting that the exterior alterations do not represent a pure style (the first floor French casement windows, the portico Classical Revival, the brackets under the eaves, and the cast-iron balcony), this was not unusual as local craftsmen and owners often made choices based on personal appeal rather than architectural correctness.

The cast-iron balcony, while an 1850's design, could have possibly come from elsewhere and been incorporated into the Continental House, or it could have been ordered new in 1888 from a local foundry, as the design was popular for decades.

None of the alterations, however, disguise the original Federal style of the Continental House. The low-pitched roof, paired gable end chimneys, and smooth symmetrical five bay facade with center hall clearly projects an early 19th century appearance, staid perhaps in comparison to Philadelphia and Boston townhouses of the period, but nonetheless one of the last buildings of the style of an important development period for Newark.

Terry Karschner
12/1978