

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| STATE: New Jersey | |
| COUNTY: Morris | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | JUL 24 1973 |

H13
 E 531440
 218 N 4515220

1. NAME

COMMON:
Little Red School House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Ridgedale Avenue at Columbia Turnpike

CITY OR TOWN:
Florham Park

STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34** COUNTY: **Morris** CODE: **027**

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) | Florham Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | Historical Society | Municipal meeting house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | | |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Borough of Florham Park

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Florham Park** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Morristown** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

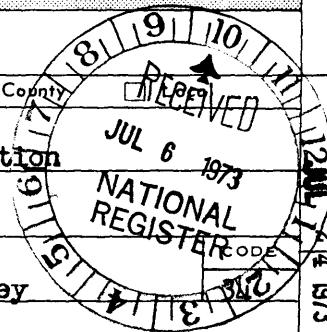
TITLE OF SURVEY:
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (1132.27)

DATE OF SURVEY: **1961, 1972** Federal State County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Dept. of Environmental Protection, Historic Sites Section

STREET AND NUMBER:
Post Office Box 1420

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton** STATE: **New Jersey**



STATE: New Jersey
 COUNTY: Morris
 ENTRY NUMBER: 113
 DATE: JUL 24 1973

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. Description

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Exterior.

The Little Red Schoolhouse is a rectangular red brick school building with a front vestibule. The school has a high pitched gable roof with a bell tower and bell towards the front of the building just behind the vestibule. The tower was originally included in the building but the bell was not added until some years later. The vestibule entrance has double doors with a segmental transom overhead. There were originally four windows on each side of the school. A later extension added two more windows, one of which was converted into a doorway, perhaps in 1905. The windows in the school are 9/9 sash with the top row of curved lights forming segmental arches.

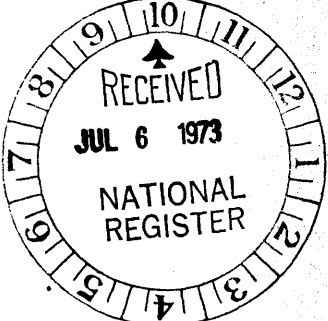
Interior.

The school is a one room rectangular building with vestibule which originally housed forty to fifty pupils. In the vestibule there are two doors which enter into the school room, and another door to a teacher's closet. In the school room, against the vestibule wall, is a display cabinet. The walls of the room have narrow board wainscoting around the entire room. The front of the room has a side blackboard. The floors are narrow 3 inch width boards.

In 1937 a small addition was tacked onto the rear of the building to act as a kitchen for the Historical Society of Florham Park, which restored the building and made it their headquarters in 1935.

CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

Senator Clifford P. Case
 Senator Harrison A, Williams, Jr.
 Representative Peter Frelinghuysen, Jr.- 5th District



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. Significance

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century

15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1866-1914

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Education.

The first school built in Florham Park, then called Hoppingtown, located on the north side of Columbia Turnpike between Ridgedale Avenue and Hanover Road, was erected in 1740.

Later a new school described as a "little red frame building" was built on the same ground and remained there until 1831, when trustees for the first public school (the first two schools were private) had the frame building moved onto the site where the Little Red school now rests. At this time the community was called Columbia and this was the towns first public school.

In 1866 the citizens of Columbia School District appropriated over \$2,000 for the construction of a new schoolhouse when the old frame building became too small. The old building was then moved and the present Little Red School House was built.

The Little Red School had only one room with a front vestibule and bell tower. Although some borough children attended other schools, the Red School was continually used until 1914, when it became necessary to build a four-room school adjacent to the Little Red School House.

The Little Red School in Florham Park has today become the town's most important historic site. It represents the beginnings of public school education in the community and it also symbolizes the way of life in Florham Park after the Civil War , and prior to World War I.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

This is Florham Park. League of Women Voters of Florham Park, Florham Park, New Jersey, 1971.
History of Morris County. W.W. Munsell & Co., 1882.
Newspapers: Madison Eagle. Newark Evening News.
 Borough Minutes.
 Board of Education Records.
 Conlon, Martha Jr. One and one-half page history of School. Unpublished. 1961.

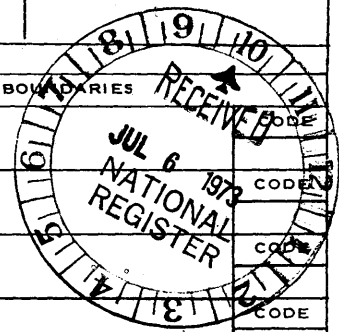
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 40° 47' 18" | 74° 23' 25" | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **less than 1 acre**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Terry Karschner, Historian-Curator**

ORGANIZATION: **Dept. of Environmental Protection, Historic Sites Section** DATE: **March 20, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Post Office Box 1420**

CITY OR TOWN: **Trenton** STATE: **New Jersey** CODE: **34**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *Richard J. Sullivan*
Richard J. Sullivan

Title: Commissioner, Environmental Protection

Date: June 13, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert M. Utsey
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 7/24/73

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 7/23/73

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

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

For HCRS use only
received **APR 28 1986**
date entered **JUN 6 1986**

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

1. Name

historic Columbia School District No. 5 Schoolhouse
and/or common Little Red Schoolhouse (Preferred)

2. Location

street & number 203 Ridgedale Avenue (corner of Columbia Turnpike) NA not for publication
city, town Florham Park _____ vicinity of _____ ~~congressional district~~
state New Jersey code 034 county Morris code 027

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Borough of Florham Park
street & number 111 Ridgedale Avenue
city, town Florham Park _____ vicinity of _____ state New Jersey

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Morris County Hall of Records
street & number Morris County Courthouse
city, town Morristown _____ state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local
depository for survey records _____
city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved | date <u>1978</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Columbia School District No. 5 Schoolhouse stands at the intersection of Columbia Turnpike and Ridgedale Avenue in the Borough of Florham Park, a location long considered to be the symbolic crossroads of the community, and one of the entry points to Morris County from the east. Columbia Turnpike is a County road, and Ridgedale Avenue is a major local connector. The Borough's modern shopping district has grown up to the west of the schoolhouse in the last 20 years, and some commercial development can be found to the east along Columbia Turnpike. A dozen well-preserved 18th- and 19th- century houses (including the National Register Hancock House, Cider Mill and cemetery can be found within a 1-mile radius of the schoolhouse.

The schoolhouse lot is bordered along its perimeter with young trees planted in lawn. A paved parking lot is found at the rear (see attached site plan), including a 4-bay flat-roofed municipal garage.

The schoolhouse is a 1-story rectangular building measuring 23'9"x45'9". An 18' vestibule projects approximately 4' from the facade. Both the vestibule and main block have steeply pitched gable roofs clad with wood shingles. The deeply projecting eaves are finished with simple wooden moldings. Painted aluminum gutters and leaders have been added. At the front of the main roof is a square open bell tower with pyramidal roof. At the rear, on the roof ridge, is a square brick chimney.

The schoolhouse is constructed of brick, laid in common bond and painted. Brick window and door heads are segmentally arched. A new foundation is cement block, painted to match the brick walls. At the rear, the foundation is faced with fieldstone. Cement block and fieldstone date from the 1978 relocation.

Entry is gained through a set of double-leaf wooden doors centered in the vestibule. They are diagonally laid batten construction set in a double-light elliptical transom protected by thin vertical wood slats. Above these doors in the apex of the vestibule gable is a wooden circle decorated with flat, radiating "spokes". A single-leaf door was added beneath the upper third of the fourth west window, probably in 1905. Two modern doors were added after the schoolhouse was moved in 1978, one at the end of the west wall, and one in the lower part of the rear wall, reached by a flight of railroad tie stairs filled with pea gravel.

Six windows are found on the east elevation, four windows and one combination window/door on the west elevation (the remaining window was bricked in at an unknown date). Each has an arrangement of 9/9 panes set in narrow muntins with segmental heads.

The interior of the schoolhouse is an undivided space with tongue-and-groove ceiling, narrow-board oak floors (probably dating from the 1905 alteration) and plastered walls. Trim consists of a molded wooden cornice, wooden picture molding and butt-jointed door and window casing. A vertical-board wainscot with molded top rail and baseboard finishes all four walls. Between the two doors leading to the vestibule is a door-height built-in bookcase approximately 8'9"

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Little Red Schoolhouse, Florham Park Borough,

Continuation sheet Morris County, New Jersey Item number 7

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long, with sliding glass doors above the wainscot. Apart from the floor, all of these features appear to date from the period 1866-1905. The room is lighted with ca. 1950 drop fixtures and the windows are fitted with modern wood blinds (i.e. louvered "shutters"). For museum display purposes, shoulder-high free-standing panels are used. After the building was moved in 1978 an 8'x12" space was partitioned in the northwest corner to enclose a stairway to the new basement room, a windowless cement block space extending the full length of the building.

The two diagonal-batten doors at the front of the room lead to the vestibule, finished with a wainscot identical to that in the schoolroom, unbeaded horizontal-board walls and tongue-and groove ceiling. All of these features are stained rather than painted, and appear to be original to the first period of construction.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet Little Red Schoolhouse, Florham Park Borough,
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JUSTIFICATION

FOR

MOVING THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE

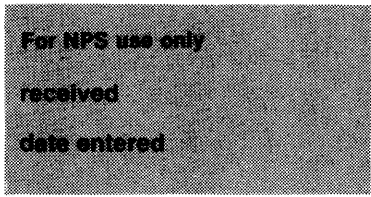
A Borough Acreage Feasibility Study written in 1960 considered the impact of the proposed widening of Columbia Turnpike and suggested that the Little Red School House be moved within the municipal complex which was then in the planning stage. During subsequent years there was much controversy within the community concerning the proposed relocation. The widening of Columbia Turnpike would place the Little Red School House within a few feet of the curb line. There was general agreement that vibration due to the heavy traffic on Columbia Turnpike would hasten deterioration of the building and that traffic noise would make the building an unsuitable meeting place. Those who wished to keep the school house in the same general location and retain the historical significance of the school house as the hub of the community supported relocation on the original property. Others opted for relocation to the vicinity of the municipal building where the Little Red School House could be incorporated into the municipal complex. The question of location was resolved by referendum in 1977 and it was decided to relocate the Little Red School House within the original property. The movement plan, finally approved, resulted in moving the building about 30 feet and placing it on a new foundation. This move was accomplished in late 1978 and renovation and restoration was begun in early 1979.

The relocation resulted in the following significant changes to the building and its surroundings:

1. The original stone foundation could not be used. This fact was compensated for by landscaping at the new location and construction of natural stone facing on visible portions of the rear foundation and construction of natural stone retaining walls around the lower level rear entrance.
2. Since the building at its new location consisted of two levels, an interior wood stairway was constructed connecting the upper and lower level. This staircase was constructed in a location which does not detract from the original interior construction.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



Little Red Schoolhouse, Florham Park Borough,

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3. The small addition to the School House constructed in 1937 to serve as a kitchen was eliminated. A portion of the connecting doorway was closed off with brick to accommodate the different elevation of the doorway required at the new location.
4. A modern heating system was installed using baseboard radiators in the historic portion of the School House. These radiators do not detract from the overall historic appearance of the School House.
5. A lower level meeting room was constructed to provide kitchen, rest room and meeting facilities. This area is separate from the historic portion of the building.
6. Landscaping of the property was changed significantly to improve the appearance of the area and to improve drainage. A parking area was also constructed to accommodate visitors to the site and users of the meeting room.

Renovation and restoration has been completed except for restoration of the interior of the original School House which is being accomplished by the Florham Park Historical Society. As soon as the interior restoration has been completed, the room will be used as a historical museum.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input 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 1866-67 **Builder/Architect** W.E. Howell; B.F. & W.E. Conklin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Columbia School District No. 5 Schoolhouse is a transitional building bridging the periods in New Jersey education before and after the 1867 Act of Public Instruction. It is one of only two brick one-room schoolhouses in Morris County to survive in a largely unaltered state. Its design and construction reflect Barnard principles as well as the dicta of the 1847 School Superintendent's Report.

The Schoolhouse site has been in public use since 1830, when David Sharp, Henry R. Hedges and Barzillai Campfield bought 31/100 of an acre of land from Archibald and Ellen Steepman with the intent of establishing the neighborhood's first school supported entirely by public funds. The date of their action is significant, since it was in 1829 that the State School Fund (established in 1817 with monies appropriated from U.S. stocks and bonds) was finally released. Whether the trustees succeeded in gaining state support before a conservative legislature revoked the fund is unknown. In 1831, however, the year that the State fund was cancelled they moved to the lot a small frame building that had served as a school nearby. That frame building was the successor to an earlier school, said to have been in existence by 1740.

Columbia was still a part of Chatham Township in 1866 when the old frame school become obsolete.

A fund of \$2,000 was raised by taxation to pay for a new building constructed by carpenter Willard E. Howell and masons B.F. and W.E. Conklin. Their combined bills for masonry (\$950) and carpentry (\$1275) brought in the new school at \$225 over budget. During its first session (1866-1867), the school was operated winter and summer, with one teacher and an average of 45-50 students.

In light of the fact that Columbia's first school is said to have become a cow shed after its replacement, the new building must have represented an impressive step forward. What the taxpayers got for their money was a rectangular brick building with a small projecting vestibule, a steep gabled roof with bell cupola, and eight tall multipaned windows. At this time, brick was a relatively uncommon building material in Morris County, usually reserved for important public buildings, a few houses and some commercial buildings. Its use for schools was uncommon.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.22

Quadrangle name Chatham

Quadrangle scale 1/24000

UMT References

A

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification The schoolhouse stands on its original, 1.22-acre parcel with frontage on Columbia Turnpike of approximately 200' and frontage on Ridgedale Avenue of approximately 180'. The parcel has a depth of 320' from Columbia Turnpike and 220' from Ridgedale Avenue.

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

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert P. Guter

organization ACROTERION

date August, 1985

street & number 45A Macculloch Avenue

telephone (201) 539-0366

city or town Morristown

state New Jersey

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

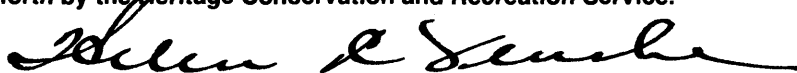
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Assistant Commissioner for Natural Resources

April 10, 1986 (original date Nomination signed 06/13/73)

For HCERS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date

6/6/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Little Red Schoolhouse, Florham Park Borough,
Morris County, New Jersey Item number 8

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The use of brick for Schoolhouse No. 5 may have resulted from the proximity of two brickyards, one in the village of Chatham and another at Prudentown, just beyond Morristown. It may also have been influenced by the 1847 Annual Report of the New Jersey School Superintendent, which emphasized the desirability of sound construction to replace the substandard structures of the preceding generation.

The Superintendent's Report specifically cited Henry Barnard's book, School House Architecture (1841) as a model for rational design. Because the Superintendent petitioned the legislature to purchase a copy of Barnard's tract for every township, it is likely that the Columbia School District trustees had access to a copy.

Barnard was an educator, not an architect, but his ideas were the single most important influence on progressive school architecture during the 1850s and '60s, in much the same way that hospital design after the Civil War was influenced by the theories of Dr. Thomas Kirkbride.

Barnard believed that pupils learned best in an atmosphere that leavened discipline with comfort. He demanded adequate light and ventilation, separation of the sexes, comfortable furniture and an interior arrangement that focused attention clearly on the teacher. The fact that such apparently basic requirements were often ignored is obvious from the 1861 Annual Report of the State Superintendent: "A miserable shanty that is scarcely fit for a stable is not the place in which to cultivate the amenities of life.....and yet there are hundreds of such schools throughout the state."

Schoolhouse No. 5 conforms to Barnard's basic dicta. The tall windows and high ceiling guarantee plenty of light and ventilation. Inside the vestibule, two separate doors allowed boys and girls to proceed to opposite sides of the room, where the teacher could command attention at the front. Barnard preferred a setting in a wooded glen, for reasons of health and freedom from distraction. Although the Columbia school occupies a crossroads site, it was a much quieter spot in the 19th century, when its tree-shaded lot was enclosed by a fence.

In 1867 the New Jersey Legislature passed an "Act to Establish a System of Public Instruction", which accelerated the standardization of both curricula and architecture. One-room schools continued to be built during the 1970s and '80s, however, and the foresight of Columbia's trustees ensured that their school remained up-to-date during those decades.

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Not until 1894 did the state change the school administrative unit from neighborhood district to township. Five years later the Borough of Florham Park was set off as a political unit separate from Chatham Township. By 1905, Schoolhouse No. 5 was beginning to feel effects of increased population. In that year a second teacher was hired; the school was enlarged by two bays at the rear (a simple process in light of the uncomplicated shape) and the resultant larger room was divided in two by a thin partition wall.

In 1911, when the local newspaper reported an infestation of head lice at "the Florham Park School", the brick building was still the Borough's only school, and housed 72 students. By 1914 enrollment was so large that a four-room, two-story school had to be built next door. The 1866 building remained in use through 1929, when, with its partition removed, it was used for a second grade classroom. At about this time an undated review by a survey team from Columbia University proves that the progressive nature of the old school, at least in matters of teaching, persisted: "The one-room building, owing to the enterprise of the teacher, has one of the most interesting classrooms the members of the staff have ever seen in a similar situation..." The survey team was less enthusiastic about the physical plant: "It is quite essential that toilet facilities be provided in this building. At the present time the little children in this building must go out of doors to the main building for access to these facilities".

By 1935, the schoolhouse had been abandoned for educational use and its future was doubtful. In order to save it, the Historical Society of Florham Park was incorporated, although the borough retained ownership. Even before its abandonment as a school, the schoolhouse had served other community functions. During World War I Red Cross sewing meetings were held there, and later it was the scene of community dances, historical society meetings and Borough Council meetings. In 1973 the schoolhouse was entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Subsequently, the County of Morris widened Columbia Turnpike, bringing the curb to within feet of the building, an action taken without the review mandated by state law. Vibrations, noise and pollution caused by the road widening made the school unusable. In 1977 a Borough referendum offered voters two alternatives: move the schoolhouse to the new municipal complex a few miles away or relocate it on its existing lot. Public sentiment favored the latter choice. The relocation was accomplished in 1978. Subsequently, the school was removed from the New Jersey and National Registers because the Borough failed to submit its plans for review.

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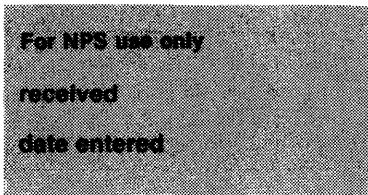
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The image of the Schoolhouse has been adopted by the Borough (stationery, maintenance equipment, cablevision and signs entering Florham Park), Rotary Flag and all material relating to the Historical Society. It is a symbol instantly recognized by residents and by motorists entering Morris County from the east.

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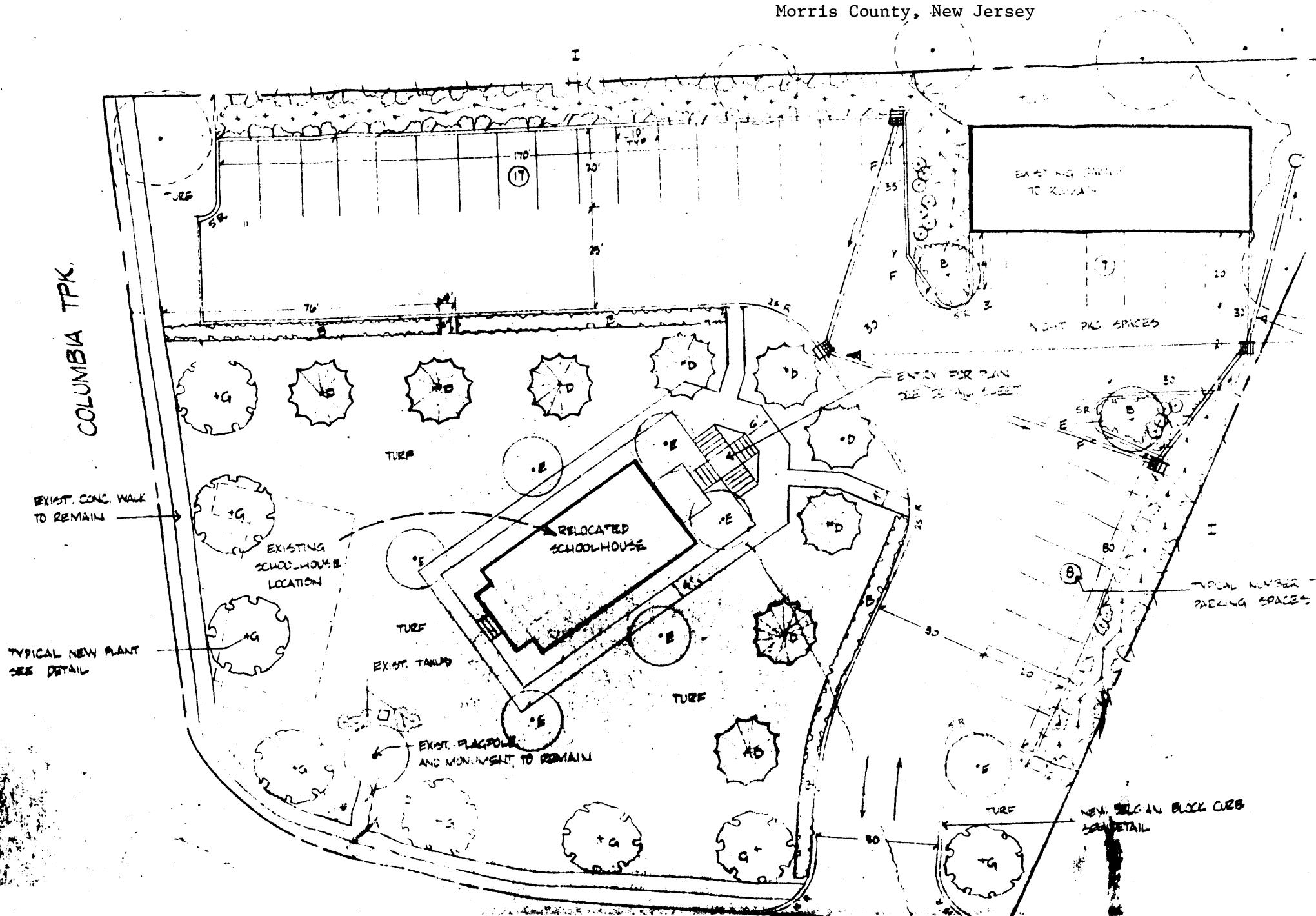
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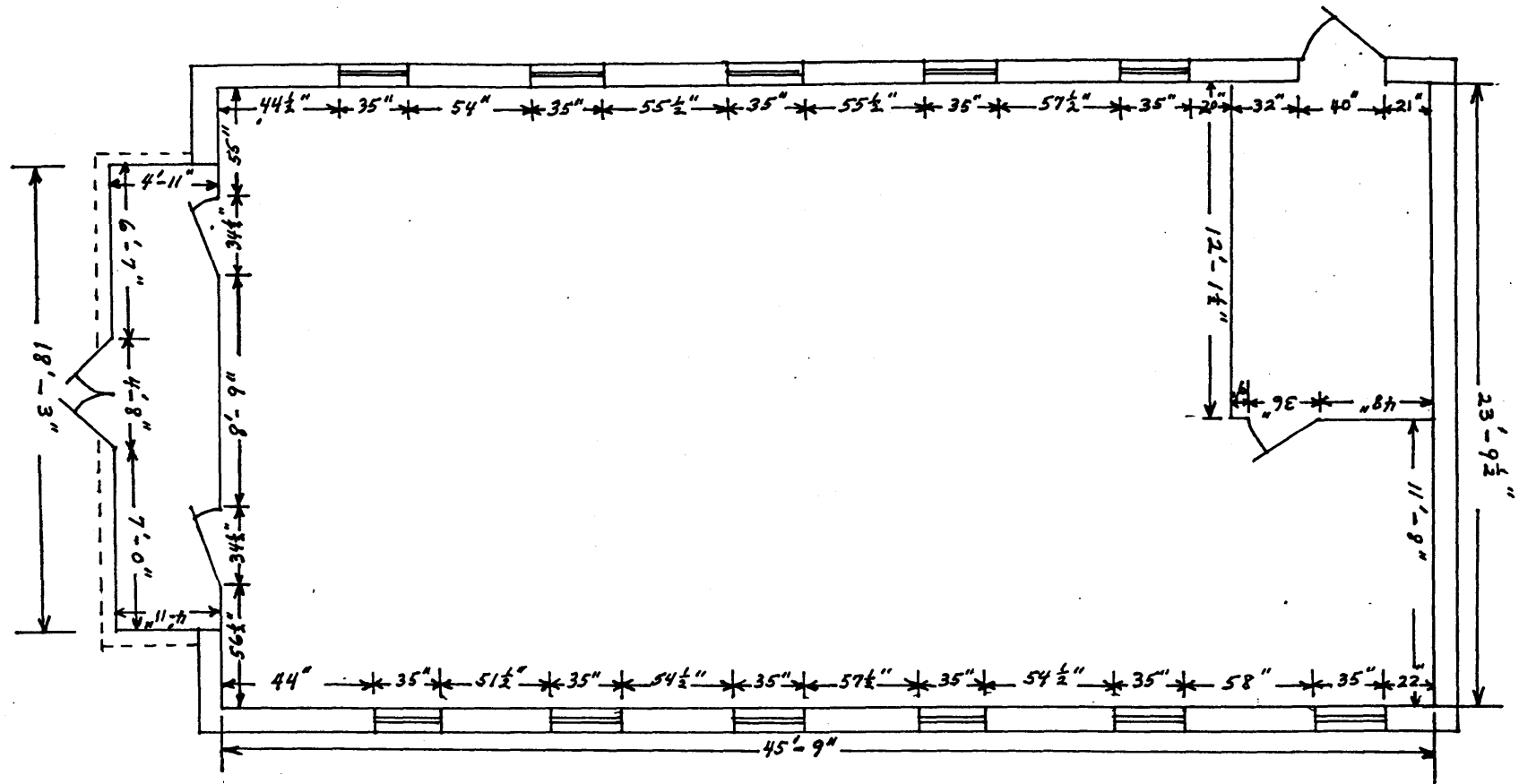
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Little Red Schoolhouse
Florham Park Borough
Morris County, New Jersey





CEILING HEIGHT... 12'-7"
 WINDOW HEIGHT... 7'-8"

FLOOR PLAN OF LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE
 FLORHAM PARK, N.J.