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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 Sunnyside (Home of Washington Irving)

AND/OR COMMON

Sunnyside

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Route 9

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Tarrytown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

23

STATE

New York

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

36

COUNTY

Westchester

CODE

119

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Inc., John Harbour, Executive Director

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Tarrytown

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Westchester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

White Plains

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1969

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex-Division of Prints and Photos

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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

When Washington Irving first saw the Van Tassel cottage on the Hudson River, a few miles below Tarrytown, he was a youth of fifteen, and the Van Tassel cottage was a simple, old stone house with a central chimney, much like the common colonial saltbox. The date of its construction was supposed by some of the local inhabitants to be 1656 and by others to be in the 1680's. Irving accepted the former date and later emblazoned it in iron letters on the west gable.

Irving finally acquired the property in 1835 and set to consulting with George Harvey, a young Boston artist, over alterations to the Dutch cottage. In the course of building, modifications were in plans, but finally the two-and-a-half story house was completed. A new stone ell was constructed off the center of the northwall. The gable roof of the original house was heightened and was covered, along with the rest of the roofs, with red tile. A projecting porch which supports a room above it, was added at the center of the south wall. On this entrance porch, Irving placed two cast-iron benches designed by George Harvey, and cast especially for him. Set in the gable end above the second story window in the entrance portico was the plaque which recorded in Dutch, "Founded 1656-Improved by Washington Irving 1835-George Harvey Master-Builder." All the gables on the house were crowstepped, in imitation of Dutch style. A wooden porch, reminiscent of the Gothic, was added on the west side of the house. In the rear of the house the kitchen-ward was laid out, which included a woodhouse, root cellar and a servants' privy. Just to the north the kitchen yard he built a Gothicized ice house in 1840. A late 19th century addition to the house covered over this area, but upon its removal during the 1958-59 restoration, the various structures were reconstructed along archival and archeological guidelines. A final addition Irving made to his house made a picturesque contrast with the Dutch air of the main house. Completed in 1847, a three story stone tower, stuccoed, (as was the rest of the house) was erected at the northeast corner of the house and connected to it by a short one story passage. Architecturally the tower combined Gothic elements with pagodalike Chinese influences. The tower contained three servants' bedrooms, one guest room and a basement. The passageway housed pantries and a laundry. On the first floor, the kitchen occupied the northern arm of the ell, a parlor occupied the other arm. In the western end of the main house was the dining room and across the Minton tiled entrance hall in the eastern end was Irving's study and library where he worked and occasionally slept when the house was crowded. The top floor was divided into bedrooms. These rooms are presently furnished with period pieces, most connected with Irving and his family.

One of the outstanding features of Irving's estate was the landscaping. Irving delighted in augmenting the picturesqueness of his house by creating several wandering paths which led the visitor through secluded groves and broad vistas of the Hudson River scenery as well. This ruralizing and "sylvanizing" effect was appreciated and perhaps influenced by Irving's neighbor, Andrew Jackson Downing, who mentioned Sunnyside in his 1841

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 checked="" 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 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, 1835-1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT George Harvey

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1832, Washington Irving returned to America after 17 years in Europe, to find himself regarded as the foremost prose writer in America. In 1835, he purchased the Van Tassel cottage, a 17th century Dutch house on the Hudson River, below Tarrytown, the setting of some of Irving's best-loved tales.

For the last 24 years of his life Irving lived and worked at his estate, Sunnyside, enlarging the house and landscaping the grounds.

Today Sunnyside is owned and maintained by Sleepy Hollow Restorations as a memorial to its famous owner, Washington Irving.

BIOGRAPHY

Washington Irving was born on April 3, 1783, the eleventh and last child of William and Sarah Irving, a Scottish-English mercantile family in New York. As a youth, Irving led a sheltered life, but still managed to pursue his interests in theater, art, music, travel, and social occasions. Following a trip to Europe between 1804 and 1806, Irving returned to New York, studied for and was admitted to the bar, and began to write humorous short pieces. His first extended project, A History of New York, written under the pseudonym of Diedrich Knickerbocker, was published in 1809. It was an elaborate and intricate satire of old Dutch families of New Netherlands which required much of his time to complete. In this same year, Matilda Hoffman, a young lady whom Irving was deeply attached to, died suddenly. Irving was strongly affected by this and remained a bachelor for life.

In 1815, Irving and his brother Peter sailed for London to attend to the family business which was in great disorder. By 1818, the firm was bankrupt and Irving determined to become a fulltime author. The products of the decision were soon forthcoming and they included: The Sketch Book, 1819-1820; Bracebridge Hall, 1822-1825; The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus, published in three volumes in 1828 after his stay as an attache at the United States Legation in Madrid; and A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada in 1829 until 1832 he acted as Secretary of the United States Legation in London. In this period he produced two other works including the Alhambra, or the "Spanish Sketch Book," in 1832. During this time, Irving traveled throughout Europe, where he was well-accepted in social and literary circles.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Joseph T. Butler, Washington Irving's Sunnyside (Sleepy Hollow Restorations, New York, 1974).

Harold Dean Carter, Washington Irving and Sunnyside (Sleepy Hollow Restorations, New York, 1957).

C.D. Warner, Washington Irving (n.r., 1881).

Stanley T. Williams, The Life of Washington Irving (n.r., 1935).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approximately 27

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	59,5220	4,54,50,0,0	B	1,8	59,5230	4,54,42,40
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	59,47,70	4,54,42,50	D	1,8	59,47,80	4,54,50,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at the southeast corner of the Sunnyside property where the northern curb of Sunnyside Lane intersects with the chain link fence which forms a portion of the eastern boundary of the property, proceed north along said fence 350', thence west, continuing to follow the boundary fence 410', thence north again, still following the boundary fence for 400', thence west, still following the boundary fence for 505' to the eastern limit of the Penn Central right-of-way, thence south along the eastern boundary of the right-of-way for 1035.75', to the point of intersection with the fence which forms the southern property boundary, thence continue east along said fence, which roughly parallels the northern

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

NAME / TITLE Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey

DATE 7/18/75

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L. Street

TELEPHONE 202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Boundary Certified:

DATE

Nov 22, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1/23/78

DATE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Landmark
Designated
Boundary Certified:
George Fenwick
DATE DEC 29 1962
DATE Nov 22, 1977

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening in America.
Through historic sketches and descriptions, several of the paths have been recreated.

In addition to scenic gardening, Irving also planted an apple orchard and a flower garden and kitchen garden, two separate areas carefully laid out in geometric patterns, up the hill to the north of the house. There was also a greenhouse to the west of the gardens. Below the gardens, to the east of the house, Irving also had a large barn, a coach house, a shed and several smaller outbuildings arranged in a quadrangle. The original complex no longer stands but the 1896 complex (constructed along similar lines) now serves as the visitors' center.

One major change which occurred at Sunnyside during Irving's occupancy involved the laying of the Hudson River Railroad (now Penn Central) along the east bank of the Hudson River. The railroad intruded physically, visually and aurally upon Sunnyside, and the grading required that the small cove directly south of the house, known as Wolfert's Landing, be dammed and consequently drained. The cove now exists as a marshy depression, and on its bank, a decayed portion of an oak which Irving used as a mooringpost still survives. Above the cove, Irving dammed the brook which flows through his property to form an ice pond, and above that, a larger pond which he named the Little Mediterranean. By gravity flow through lead pipes, the Little Mediterranean furnished the house with water in the kitchen, laundry and the two new flush toilets. The pond also served as a reflecting pool.

Following Irving's death in 1859, Sunnyside continued to remain in the Irving family. With the exception of the wing added to the north of the house in 1896, there were no substantial changes made in the property. In 1945, the house was purchased by John D. Rockefeller^{jr} who provided the endowment which led to the formation of Sleepy Hollow Restorations. Substantial restoration work was done to the property at this time, and then again in 1959-1960, when the 1896 wing was removed and the kitchen-yard was reconstructed. One other major change in the grounds resulted in the rerouting of the entrance road to the east and north of the Little Mediterranean, from its original route along the southern boundary of the property, Sunnyside Lane (refer to topographical survey). The new entrance road leads into a large macadam parking lot, which is located between the 1896 stable complex and the reconstructed greenhouse and garden area.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

With the exception of "Rip Van Winkle," and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," in the Sketch Book, his works were concerned with the nostalgia and history of the Old World. Although romantic and sentimental, his books gained critical and financial success, and earned him praise from such authors as Lord Byron, Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore, and advice from Sir Walter Scott.

In 1832, Irving returned to America after an absence of 17 years, to be greeted by widespread acclaim and appreciation for introducing American literature to the European mainstream. Irving embarked on a trip through the Midwest and then returned to New York. In 1835 he purchased the Van Tassel cottage at Tarrytown and devoted his time toward the reconstruction of that house in his own personal style. In these years following, Irving's writings became less inspired and tended more towards editing older writings and republishing collected works. Once his house was completed, he invited the motherless family of his brother Ebenezer to live with him at Sunnyside and his little "snuggery" was frequently so crowded that he was forced to sleep in his study.

In 1842, Irving was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Spain by President Tyler. Irving had previously been offered the candidacy for the Mayor of New York City and the Secretaryship of the Navy in Van Buren's cabinet, but Irving chose to avoid these more political posts. Irving returned from Spain in 1846 to Sunnyside, where he began to work on his monumental biography, Life of George Washington. In 1849, he published Oliver Goldsmith: A Biography, and followed this with two volume Mahomet and His Successors. The fifth and final volume of Washington's biography had just been published when Irving died quietly at Sunnyside on November 28, 1859. His funeral, which was attended by thousands, was held at Christ Episcopal Church in Tarrytown, and he was buried in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, also in Tarrytown.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

curb of Sunnyside, for 1227.96', to the point of origin. These boundaries enclose the original 27 acres acquired by Rockefeller in 1945, when he purchased the property from the Irving family. The land to the north which has recently been purchased by Sleepy Hollow Restorations is not contained within these landmark boundaries.