

PH0001554

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Delaware	
COUNTY: Sussex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 4	1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Sussex County Court House and The Circle

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
The Circle

CITY OR TOWN:
Georgetown

STATE Delaware	CODE 10	COUNTY: Sussex	CODE 005
-------------------	------------	-------------------	-------------

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"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Sussex County Council

STREET AND NUMBER:
Sussex County Court House

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown	STATE: Delaware	CODE 10
-----------------------------	--------------------	------------

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Sussex County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:
The Circle

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown	STATE: Delaware	CODE 10
-----------------------------	--------------------	------------

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
None

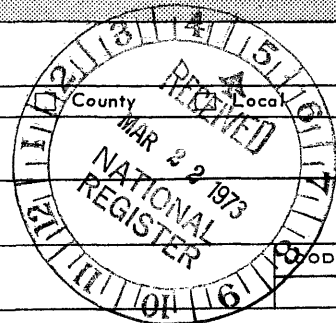
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

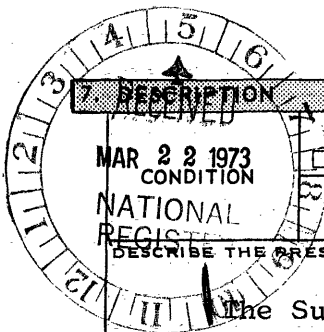
STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:
---------------	--------	-------

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
COUNTY:	JUN 4 1973	
	SUM A	
	FOR NPS USE ONLY	



(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sussex County Court House is a two-story brick structure with a brick tower over the entrance hall. Alterations in 1914 and 1970 have considerably embellished the original design.

When William Strickland completed the original structure in 1840, it featured a squat entrance tower surmounted by an undersized cupola. Strickland had predicted in 1837 that the building would be unattractive without some decoration, but the building committee insisted upon economy. Some of the design's deficiencies were corrected in 1914, when the tower was enlarged and columns were added to the front, in keeping with Strickland's original proposal. The 1970 renovations gave the building a decidedly more Georgian appearance than the architect had intended, but are nonetheless consistent with the general lines of the structure.

The Circle, or town square, on which the courthouse is situated, is an example of baroque town planning. Georgetown was laid out in 1791 and 1792 in the form of a circle, with streets radiating outward from a public green. Around the circular green were to be built the courthouse, public buildings, taverns, and other structures necessary for a county seat. This plan was followed remarkably well as the town developed along the radiating streets. The circular green has been preserved, even though modern traffic is forced to drive inconveniently around its perimeter.

One of the first buildings on the circle was the frame courthouse of 1793, now standing on a side street. Other early buildings included banks, taverns, offices and private residences around the edge of the green.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1837-1840

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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

Even though the architect was dissatisfied with its drab red-brick exterior, the Sussex County Court House is an important specimen of the designs created by William Strickland, one of America's first professionally-trained native architects. In 1837, Strickland was engaged by the Sussex County Levy Court to design a new courthouse, for which he was paid \$60.

Strickland probably accepted such a small fee because of the business setbacks he had suffered, and because he was already in Sussex County, supervising the construction of a breakwater at Lewes.

The circle on which the courthouse stands is a well-preserved example of baroque town planning; roads from various parts of the county converge here in an orderly, radiating pattern. The town limits likewise describe a circle.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Eberlein, Harold Donaldson, and Hubbard, Cortlandt van Dyke. Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware. Dover: Public Archives Commission, 1963.
 Gilchrist, Agnes Addison. William Strickland / Architect and Engineer 1788-1854. New York: DaCapo Press, 1969.

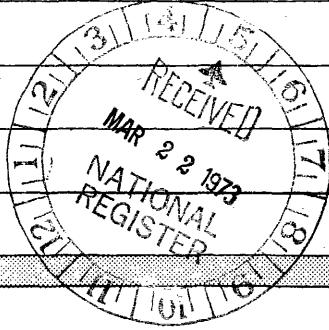
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	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	° ' "	° ' "		38° 41' 24"	75° 23' 07"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Edward F. Heite, Historic Registrar

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs DATE: 10/13/72

STREET AND NUMBER: Hall of Records

CITY OR TOWN: Dover STATE: Delaware CODE: 10

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 E. Berkeley Tompkins
Dr. E. Berkeley Tompkins

Title Director, Div. of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Date 3-12-73

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

Robert Van Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/4/73

ATTEST:
A Bradford
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 5/30/73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

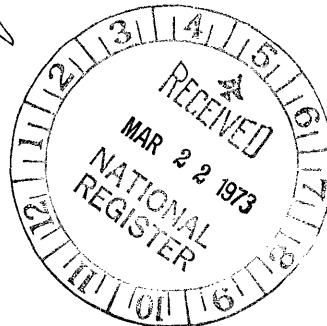
STATE Delaware	
COUNTY Sussex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUN 4	1973

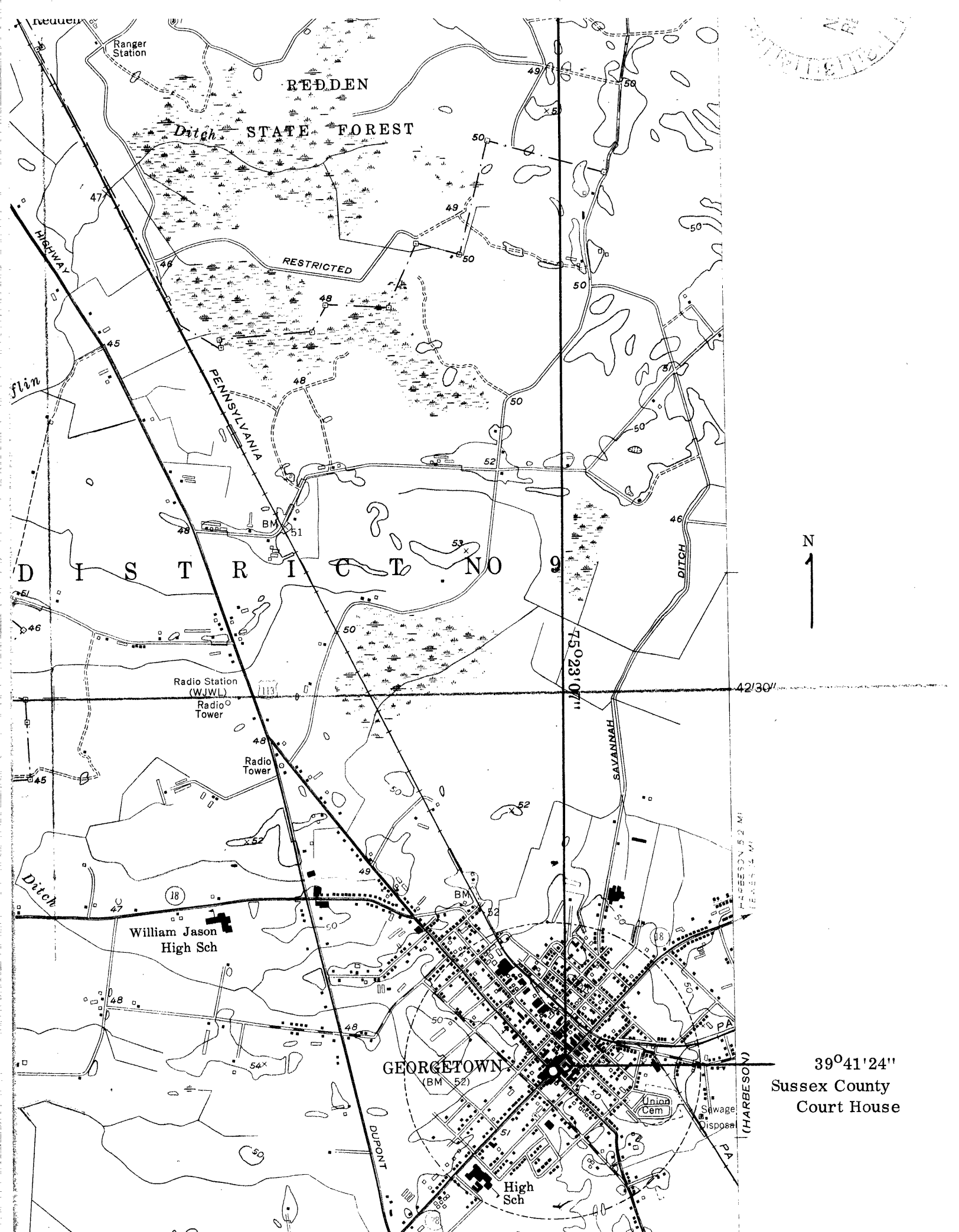
(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (continued)---

Strickland's courthouse of 1837-1840 faces the circle on the original site of the 1793 building. Among the original features that still can be seen in the facade are the Flemish-bond brickwork, the main entrance door with sidelights but no transom; the three-part window with its iron balcony for the court crier, and the stub of Strickland's original tower, now incorporated in the modern tower.

Georgian embellishments, added in the present century, include an elaborate cupola, with balustrades and brick pilasters, a pedimented portico with two-story fluted columns, and a very large swinging lantern over the main doorway.





7502310711

N
↑

7502310711

7502310711

GEORGETOWN

39°41'24"
Sussex County
Court House