

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0685119

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 25 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 8 1978

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

Barnard Observatory, Chancellor's Residence, and McCain Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Old Observatory

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

University of Mississippi Campus

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Oxford

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Mississippi

028

Lafayette

071

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED (McCain Hall)

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED (Chancellor's Residence & Observatory)

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

University of Mississippi

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

University OXFORD

VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 38677

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Chancery Clerk
Lafayette County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Oxford

STATE

Mississippi 38655

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Barnard Observatory, begun in 1857 and completed in 1859, occupies a position of prominence on the University of Mississippi campus. Facing south toward a large wooded area known as the Grove, the building stands east of the Ole Miss Student Union and west of Lamar Hall, which until recently housed the School of Law. Close by are two antebellum buildings, the Lyceum, completed in 1848, and the Old Chapel, built in 1853.

The Observatory, a two-story red brick structure of Greek Revival design, is over 160 feet long and contains over 17,000 square feet. Designed as an astronomical observatory modeled after the celebrated one at Pulkova, Russia, the building has a central dome and small observation towers in each of its two wings. The building was originally equipped with a transit room, numerous computing rooms, instrument cases, offices, and living quarters for the professor of astronomy. Contemporary observers described the building as presenting "a commanding appearance and an imposing view" and as being "a beautiful specimen of architectural taste and elegance."

Dr. W. L. Kennon, who was appointed Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University in 1912, wrote that he spent "a large part of every day for a period of thirty years in this building" and that he "never entered it without feeling the influence of its imposing construction, the massive walls, the high ceilings (30 feet in height), the arched corridors. Although much of this has been effaced by later additions and partitions," Kennon continued, one could "see what an architecturally beautiful structure it must have been originally, how unique in arrangement with its three domes, and how different from any other structure in this campus or elsewhere in America."

The west wing housed the Department of Physics until 1939, when a new physics building and observatory were built. This section of the building was remodeled in 1947 to provide classrooms, offices, and a reading room for the Department of Naval Science. The east wing, designed to serve as living quarters for the professor of astronomy, was first occupied by Chancellor Frederick A. P. Barnard, who fostered the construction of the building. Astronomy professors and then University chancellors lived in this wing until 1971, when a sorority was housed there. The east wing has been unoccupied since 1977.

Early in this century several changes were made to the outside of the building, including the addition of a two-story screen porch to the east wing. Also, numerous interior changes have been made throughout the years. The first floor contains seven major rooms, including large reception and game rooms, a circular library, a bedroom and bath, and cooking and eating quarters. On the second floor are six bedrooms, a round room, and three baths. On a third level is an observation tower built for the professor of astronomy. Both wings of the building have basements.

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/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 checked="" 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 1857-1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Barnard Observatory, one of three surviving antebellum buildings on the Oxford campus of the University of Mississippi, is an imposing structure in the Greek Revival style. It was built under the administration of Chancellor Frederick A. P. Barnard to house a gigantic telescope and other fine equipment intended to make the University an unrivaled center for the study of astronomy. It has played an important role in the history of the institution, serving numerous educational functions and providing a residence for fifteen of the University's eighteen chief executives.

The original structure is said to be "a very nearly exact replica" of the Pulkova Observatory in Russia which was designed by A. P. Bryullov, opened in 1839, and by the 1850s was regarded as the astronomical capitol of the world. The Pulkova Observatory was an appropriate model for a building which was part of Barnard's design to make the University of Mississippi the "Harvard of the South." The Observatory stands as a monument not only to Barnard but also to the past glory of the Russian observatory, which was destroyed during World War II.

For the University Observatory, Barnard commissioned a Massachusetts firm to build a telescope with a nineteen-inch lens, four inches larger than those at Pulkova and Harvard--at that time the largest in the world. Barnard's telescope was completed in 1861 but could not be delivered to Oxford because of the outbreak of the Civil War. The lens was eventually acquired by the Dearborn Observatory at Northwestern University and has been used for many outstanding astronomical discoveries. The Civil War caused the University of Mississippi to suspend classes for four years. The Observatory was turned into a hospital and its basement into a morgue. Barnard resigned his position at the University and later became president of Columbia University. It is said that Barnard was responsible for saving the University when Oxford was burned by Union troops. On July 28, 1863, W. T. Sherman wrote Barnard, "I assure you that last November, when I rode through the grounds of the College and Oxford, I thought of you and....thought I saw the traces of your life in the Observatory, of which I remember you spoke...."

Between 1865 and 1939 the west wing of the Observatory housed the Department of Physics and Astronomy. This section of the building was remodeled in 1947 and rededicated by Fleet Admiral Halsey as McCain Hall in honor of Admiral John Sidney McCain, a former student of the University. The Department of Naval Science has occupied this wing of the Observatory since 1947. The east wing, designed to serve as living quarters for the professor of astronomy, was first occupied by Chancellor Barnard. Astronomy professors, several of whom also served as chancellors of the University, lived in this wing. Between 1907 and 1971 it was

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Manuscript Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi, July 18, 1856; John Fulton, Memoirs of Frederick A. P. Barnard; Allen Cabaniss, The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years; S. C. Gladden, "A History of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Mississippi 1848-1932" (A typescript in the University Library, 1933); W. L. Kennon, "A Century of Astronomy," Ole Miss Alumni Review, I, No. 3 (October, 1947), 7-9; Franklin E. Moak, "Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard" (Manuscript).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Oxford

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 2669210 381054810
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Observatory is part of the University of Mississippi campus grounds and there are no boundaries as such for the property. Landscaping goes up to Grove Loop on the south, Union Drive on the north, and Sorority Row on the east.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann J. Abadie, Assistant Director

ORGANIZATION

Center for the Study of Southern Culture

DATE

August 29, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

University of Mississippi

601-232-7282

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

University

Mississippi 38677

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Edward R. Hilliard

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

September 19, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

12-8-78

ATTEST:

Janet H. Gummere
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12/8/78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

used as the official residence of University chancellors. The Alpha Xi Delta Sorority occupied the east wing until 1977. It is now unoccupied but has been designated as the home of the University's newly established Center for the Study of Southern Culture.

About the Observatory, former Vice Chancellor Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., wrote: "Along with the Lyceum, it represents best the history of this university--and higher education generally in Mississippi. Therefore, it should become formally what is informally--a historic treasure preserved for future generations."