

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM — PHOTO/SITE PLAN SHEET

89A

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
 Bureau of Historic Preservation
 Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026

Survey Code/Tax Parcel/Other No.: 52-00-18514-001 County: Montgomery
 Municipality: Springfield Township Address: North side of Willow Grove Ave., west of S.R. 0309
 Historic Name/Other Name: Sims Estate (41)

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION

SEE FOLLOWING PAGE

Attach Photo Here



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
	View of the east facade of the mansion	
Photographer Name: <u>Wanda S. Czerwinski</u>		Date: <u>11/94</u>
Negative Location: <u>CHRS Inc. 403 E. Walnut St. North Wales Pa. 19454</u>		

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

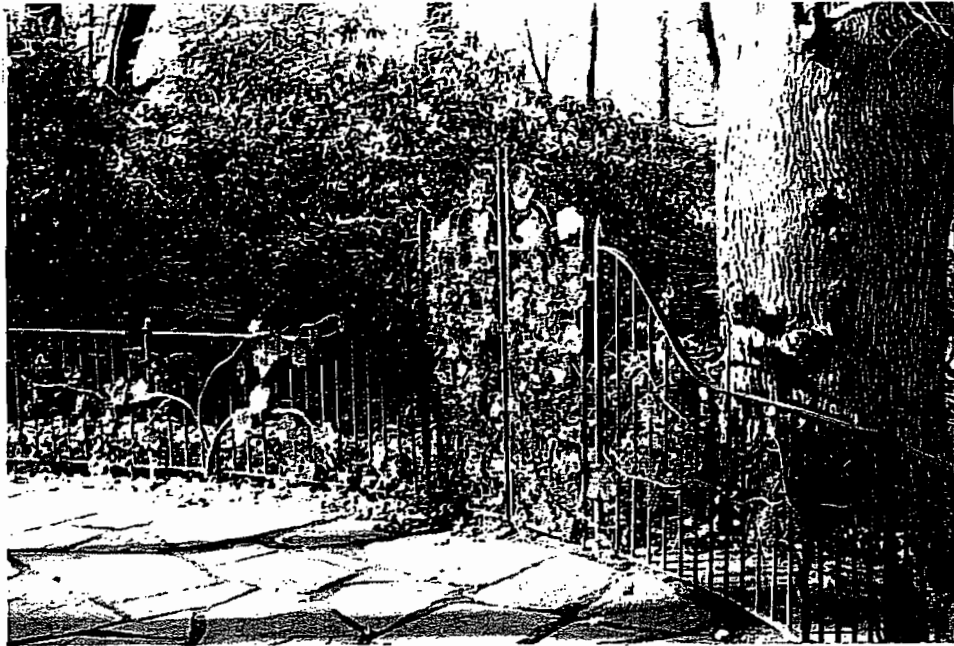


(2) View of the front door of the mansion house.
Note Colonial Revival detailing.



(3) View of the sunroom at the rear of the house.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS

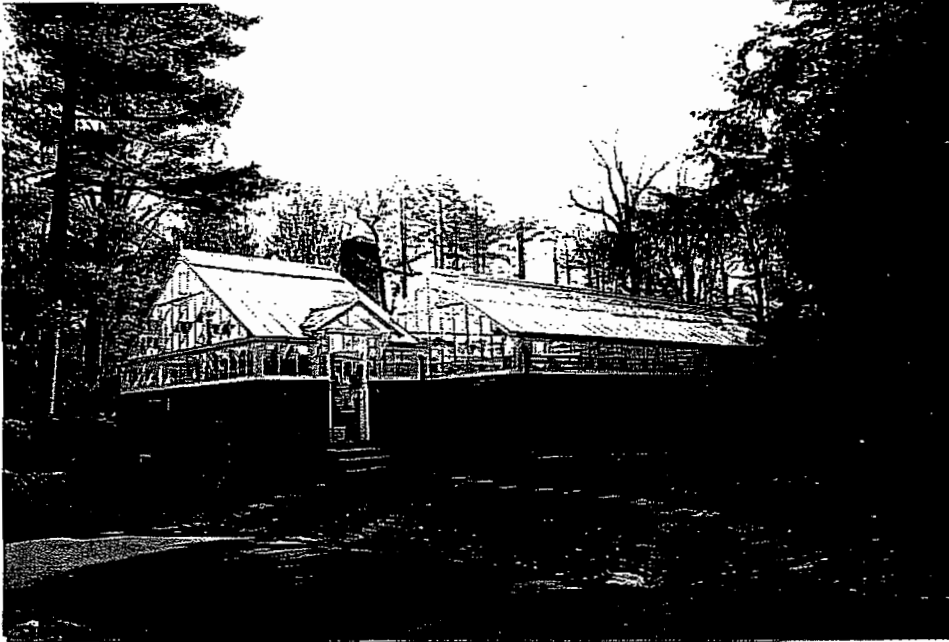


(4) View of the iron gate in the formal garden adjacent to the house.



(5) View of the caretaker's houses.
Note Colonial Revival details.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



(6) View of the greenhouse.
Note elaborate entrance to the brick forebay.



(7) View of the rear of the carriage house.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



(8) View of the storage building situated along Willow Grove Avenue.

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM

Bureau for Historic Preservation
 Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
 Box 1026, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108-1026

COUNTY
 Montgomery
 HISTORIC NAME
 Sims Estate

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: Tax Parcel Number: 52-00-18514-001
 County: 1. Montgomery (091) 2.
 Municipality: 1. Springfield Twp. 2.
 Address: North side of Willow Grove Ave., west of S.R. 0309

Historic Name: Sims Estate (41)
 Other Name: Lloyd Property
 Owner Name/Address: Morris and Starr Hope Lloyd
 1799 E. Willow Grove Ave.
 Wyndmoor, PA 19038

Owner Category: xx Private Public-Local Public-State
 Public-Federal

Resource Category: xx Building District Site Structure Object
 Number/Approx. Number of Resources covered by this form: 8
 USGS Quad: Germantown, PA N-4438590 E-484600; N-4438530 E-484570; N-4438440
 UTM References: E-484570; N-4438540 E-484420; N-4438630 E-484510

MUNICIPALITY
 Springfield Township
 OTHER NAME

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category	Subcategory	Code
A. Domestic	single dwelling	01-A
B.		
C.		
D.		

Particular Type A. dwelling complex
 B.
 C.

Current Function Category	Subcategory	Code
A. Domestic	single dwelling	01-A
B.		
C.		

ADDRESS
 West side of S.R. 0309
 north of Willow Grove Ave

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification A. Tudor (53)
 B. Colonial Revival (51) C.
 D. Other:

Exterior Materials: stone (40)
 Roof: slate (45) Walls: stone (40)
 Other: Foundation: stone (40)

Structural System: Masonry (20)
 Width: 5 bays (E) Depth: 2 bays (B) Stories/Height: 2 1/2 (B)

SURVEY NO.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: c. 1894

Additions Dates: 1917

Period:

Basis for Dating: xx Documentary xx Physical

Explain: Based upon an examination of the property, historic maps, local histories, and personal communication.

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation:	1. N/A	2.
Associated Individual(s):	1. N/A	2.
Associated Events:	1. N/A	2.
Architects/Engineers:	1. N/A	2.
Builders:	1. N/A	2.

Major Bibliographic References:

(see Continuation Sheet)

PREVIOUS SURVEYS, DETERMINATIONS

none

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual National Register Potential xx Yes No

Explain: The property is significant as a largely intact example of an estate dating to the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.

Contributes to District: N/A Yes No
District Names/Status:

Threats: None xx Public Development Private Development
 Deterioration/Vandalism Other

Explain: The property may be impacted by the S.R. 309 Roadway Improvement Project.

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Wanda S. Czerwinski
CHRS, Inc.
403 E. Walnut St.
North Wales, PA 19454

Date: 3/95
Telephone: 215-699-8006

ADDITIONAL SURVEY DOCUMENTATION

Continuation Sheet (s):

Site Plan	xx Yes	No
Photographs	xx Yes	No

Other:

CONTINUATION SHEET

Sheet 1 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Sims Estate was started in the late nineteenth century and enlarged in the first quarter of the twentieth century to its present arrangement. A macadam driveway winds through the estate from the two entrance gates set into the stone fence along Willow Grove Avenue. The yard is landscaped with flower beds, hedgerows, mature trees, fruit trees, terraces, formal gardens and rolling lawns. A mansion sits atop a hill overlooking two caretakers houses, historic tennis courts, a greenhouse, a carriage house and storage building.

The mansion is basically rectangular in plan and stands two and one-half stories. The mansion has a side gable roof with front facing, projecting cross gables at both ends. It is five bays wide and three bays deep. The building rests on a concrete foundation, and the walls are constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. Concrete detailing accents the windows and doors. The roof is sheathed with slate tiles. Five brick interior chimneys pierce the roof. A variety of multi-pane windows illuminate the house. Sunroom wings are situated at the west end of the house along the front and rear sides. The sunrooms overlook a formal garden situated adjacent to the west end of the house. The gardens are enclosed with a brick wall and accessed by elaborate iron gates decorated with vines and leaves. Pathways paved with stone wind through the garden that contains statuary and fountains along with flower beds and shrubs.

Although the mansion is grand, it is not highly decorated. The architect incorporated elements of the Tudor and Colonial Revival styles in the design of the house. Tudor elements include front facing cross gables and tall narrow casement windows grouped together. Colonial Revival details are limited to the entrances and sunrooms. The elaborate Classical door surrounds with fluted pilasters and pediments, Palladian windows, and temple-like sunrooms are typical of the Colonial Revival style.

The principal facade of the mansion faces south. It overlooks a circular driveway and landscaped grounds. The facade is symmetrical with a centered doorway accessed via a path from the driveway. The door surround is concrete. Fluted pilasters support a classical, rounded pediment decorated with floral reliefs. An entrance bay projects forward from the concrete door surround. Additional pilasters flank the entrance of the vestibule, which contains glass doors. The double glass doors opening into the vestibule both have twelve lights. The second set of double paneled doors opens into the dwelling from the vestibule. Eight-pane, fixed sash windows flank the entrance. A set of triple windows flank the entrance in the main block of the house. The windows each contain twelve-pane, casement windows. Casement windows are also situated in the projecting gables. The western gable contains four contiguous casement windows; each with twelve panes. The eastern gable is lined with contiguous, twelve-pane, casement windows on all sides. The second story contains five sets of contiguous windows situated above the first story openings. The second story windows are also casement, but only contain eight panes. A round window is situated in the attic of both projecting gables.

The west side of the mansion looks out over the formal garden. Three, multi-pane French doors in the first story of the main block of the house open onto the garden. Three casement windows are situated in the second story. A Palladian window is centered in the gable. One-story sunrooms flank the main block of the building. The wall of the sunrooms are lined with floor-to-ceiling windows of twenty panes each.

CONTINUATION SHEET
Sheet 2 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION CONT.

The rear, or north, side of the house is five bays wide with a door in the central bay. The central bay projects forward from the facade. The wood door is set within a concrete surround. The surround includes two fluted pilasters supporting a flat pediment. Two, three-pane, fixed sash windows flank the entrance. The entrance bay is flanked by two windows. The eastern window retains three contiguous multi-pane casement windows, while the western opening contains a single large pane. The sunroom described above projects from the western bay in the first story. A room at the eastern end of the facade mirrors the plan of the sunroom. Five windows containing three contiguous, multi-pane, casements are located in the second story of the dwelling above the first story openings. The outer bay at both ends of the facade extends another story above the rest of the facade. Three contiguous casement windows are situated in both three-story sections.

A brick and concrete deck with wide stairs leading down to a rolling lawn is situated along the rear, or north, side of the house.

The east side of the house is devoted to service areas. The driveway leads up to the house. A loading dock is hidden behind a tall brick wall extending out from the house. Casement windows illuminate two flat roof wings along this side of the mansion.

Two caretakers' houses stand side by side, down the hill, east of the mansion. The Colonial Revival style dwellings stand two stories and are three bays wide by two bays deep. They are constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond. Their side gable roofs are sheathed with slate shingles. A central chimney is situated on the ridge of both houses. The windows are six over six, double hung with wood surrounds flanked by wood shutters. The doors are paneled and set in wood surrounds. Flat-roofed porches supported by two columns shelter the doorways which are centered along the west facades. A molded cornice with gable end returns lines the eaves of the roofs.

The northern caretaker's house has a two-story frame addition to its north gable and a frame sleeping porch attached to the rear. The two-story addition is clad with aluminum and illuminated by double hung sash windows and sliding doors situated on the east side. The sleeping porch stands one story and is lined with multi-pane windows and sliding doors along the north side.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Sheet 3 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION CONT.

A brick carriage house is recessed in the space between the two caretaker's houses, and its front facade is even with the rear walls of the houses. The carriage house stands one and one-half stories on the principal, or west, side. The building is laid in Flemish bond. It has a T-plan with a three bay wide by four bay deep main block with a one bay deep ell. Its side gable roof is sheathed with slate shingles. Two interior end brick chimneys are situated at either end of the building. A frame pinnacle is centered along the ridge of the roof. A pair of paneled doors with six lights centered along the facade allows vehicles into the building. The doors are flanked by a multi-pane window to the north and a paneled door to the south. Three gable dormers containing six over six, double hung sash windows are situated on the roof. The north and south gables of the building are both four bays wide with four, six over six, double hung sash windows in the first story and two, six over six sash windows in the second story. The east side of the building is illuminated by six over six, double hung sash windows, and a paneled door is centered in the ell. Three dormer windows are also situated on this side of the roof.

Another storage building with an L-plan is situated further down the hill on the east side of the caretakers' houses. The building stands one and one-half stories and has a gable roof. Like the other buildings, it is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond. The roof is sheathed with slate shingles. The building is illuminated by multi-pane, double hung sash windows and dormers on the roof. A set of large board and batten doors opens on the north side of the ell. Two paneled doors are situated along the east wall.

The final buildings on the property are related to the greenhouse. The greenhouse is situated southwest of the caretakers' houses. The greenhouse has a brick foundation with glass in the upper walls and roof. The interior is framed with metal, and a brick chimney extends up from the roof. The main entrance to the greenhouse is situated on the east side of the building. A pair of paneled doors are situated in an elaborate wood surround crowned by a large semi-circular fanlight.

A historic tennis court is situated directly west of the northernmost caretaker's house. A stone retaining wall parallels the eastern side of the courts along a roadway that travels past the buildings. The tennis courts sit on a stone and brick foundation, and a modern metal fence surrounds the courts.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Sheet 4 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Sims Estate was one of many large estates settled in Montgomery County as a year-round residence during the early twentieth century as wealthy Philadelphians moved west to escape the city. The earliest portion of the Sims Estate was built in the early 1890s for John Clark Sims (pers. comm. Lloyd 1994). John Clark Sims and his wife moved into the estate, known as Falcon Hill, in 1894. John Clark Sims was influential in the Pennsylvania Railroad. He originally served as Assistant Secretary in 1877. Between 1882 and 1900, he served as Secretary of the railroad. He was elected Vice President of the railroad in 1901, but he did not serve in this position for long. His tenure ended with his death in January of 1901.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the estate included this property and the adjacent Jonathan Huston farm property (40) (Klinge 1927). The estate encompassed just over 5.3 hectares (13 acres). The tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad ran along the east side of the property. Several other outbuildings and a small bridge over the railroad tracks were once situated on the property (Franklin Survey Company 1938).

The property was purchased by Isaac T. Starr and enlarged in 1917 and 1918 (pers. comm. Lloyd 1994). At this time, the mansion house was enlarged, and the caretakers' houses, greenhouse, carriage house and storage building were erected. Henry Platt designed the mansion house, and J.S. Cornell was the builder (pers. comm. Lloyd 1994). The house and grounds have not been altered significantly since Isaac T. Starr developed the estate in the early twentieth century. The Starrs changed the name of the estate to Laverock Hill (Klinge 1927).

The support buildings on the estate are executed in the Colonial Revival style, and the mansion house is eclectic containing a mix of Tudor and Colonial Revival elements. Continuity is established throughout the estate through the use of Flemish bond brick walls in all of the buildings. Both the classic Colonial Revival style and more exotic Tudor style were popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the estate was constructed.

The Sims Estate was assessed according to criteria outlined in the *National Register Bulletin 15* (National Park Service 1991). The property appears to meet the criteria of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the property is significant as a largely intact estate dating to the early twentieth century, when wealthy Philadelphians built elaborate summer homes and year-round estates in the country. The southeast section of Montgomery County was an especially popular location for these homes. While portions of many of these estates survive, very few survive in virtually their original configuration. In addition, very few still function in their intended capacity as residences. Just within the area of the S.R. 0309 Road Improvement Project, one of these estates is now a theological seminary, one is a college, and one has lost all of its associated buildings. The Sims Estate is the best example of an early twentieth-century estate in the area of the S.R. 0309 Road Improvement Project and one of the best in the area.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Sheet 5 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE CONT.

Under Criterion C, the Sims Estate contains good examples of two styles: Tudor and Colonial Revival. The mansion house displays many elements of the Tudor style, although this eclectic house is not a classic example of the style. The symmetry of the principal facade with its projecting cross gables and elongated casement windows are typical of the Tudor style. The house is missing such elements as decorative half-timbering, stucco wall cladding and chimney pots which often identify the style. Instead, decorative elements in the mansion house are executed in the classic Colonial Revival style. The support buildings on the property are also constructed in Colonial Revival style. These include the caretakers' houses, greenhouse, carriage house and storage building. All of the buildings on this property retain excellent architectural integrity. The northernmost caretaker's house has been altered most extensively with a frame addition and sleeping porch. Other than those additions, the buildings retain their original form and massing, as well as structural and decorative elements.

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The proposed National Register Boundary for the Sims Estate follows the tax parcel boundary for the property. The boundary encompasses approximately 5.5 hectares (13.7 acres). The boundary includes all surviving buildings and structures historically associated with this property. The southern boundary is marked by the stone wall along Willow Grove Avenue. The western and northern boundaries are other residential properties. The eastern boundary extends to a wood fence along S.R. 0309 at the southeast corner of the property but then draws back to skirt another residential property that is situated adjacent to S.R. 0309. This boundary was prepared in accordance with guidelines set forth in the *National Register Bulletin Number 21*, "How to Establish Boundaries for National Register Properties," (National Park Service 1987).

CONTINUATION SHEET

Sheet 6 of 6

Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form Resource Name: Sims Estate

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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National Park Service

1991 "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." *National Register Bulletin Number 15*, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

1987 "How to Establish Boundaries for National Register Properties." *National Register Bulletin Number 21*, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Scott, J.D.

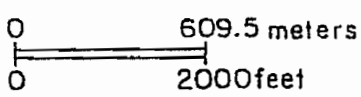
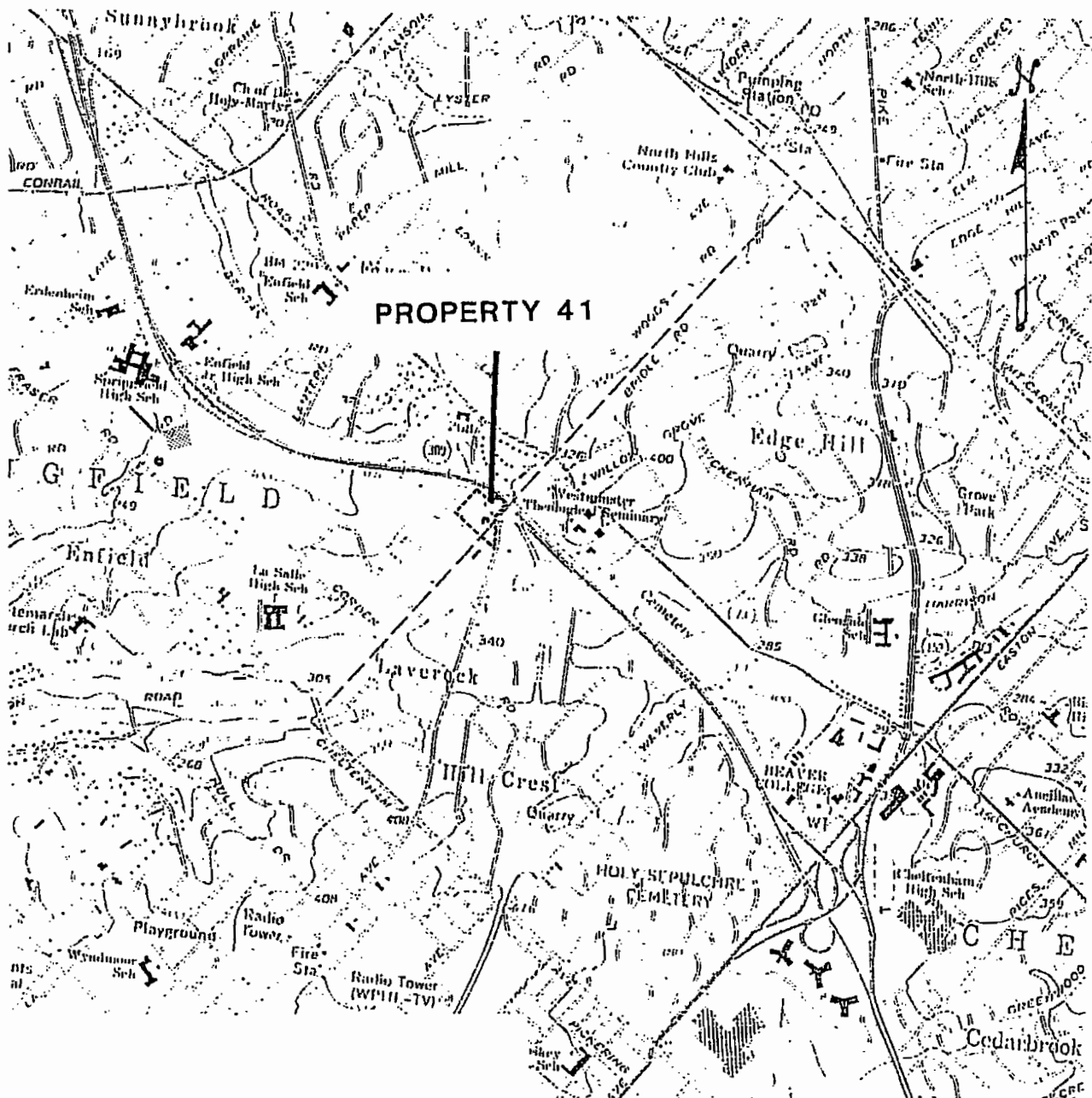
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United States Geological Survey

1967 Germantown, PA Quadrangle 7.5 minute series. Photorevised 1983.



----- NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY

SOURCE - USGS

Prepared by CHRS, Inc.

NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY - HISTORIC RESOURCE LOCATION MAP

ROUTE 309 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT