

VLR-10/17/72 NRHP-7/24/73

91-72

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Sussex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Sussex County Court House Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
A circle with 1000 foot radius with center point: at the center of front facade of the court house,

CITY OR TOWN:  
Sussex (Watkins M. Abbitt, Fourth District Congressman)

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY Sussex	CODE 183
-------------------	------------	------------------	-------------

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	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"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	town	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Multiple ownership

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Sussex

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Sussex County Court House, Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Sussex

STATE:  
Virginia

CODE:  
51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959, 1969  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE:  
D. C.

CODE:  
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: VIRGINIA

COUNTY: SUSSEX

ENTRY NUMBER: 11

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sussex County Court House is the focal point of the village of Sussex encompassing the intersection of Routes 735 and 634 just south of State Route 40. The court house complex, including the clerk's office, the court house, the County Office Building, jail and the Dillard House stand on the west side of 735. The two-story, seven-bay brick court house has a gable roof with a central pedimented pavillion and a cupola. The walls are laid in very even Flemish bond which has been painted since its construction. The three-bay pavillion is one-bay deep and becomes an open arcade on the ground floor with five rounded arches each having a white keystone, a white washed stuccoed soffit, and a spring line marked by two courses of corbelled brick. A modern six-bay brick structure with a gable roof and end pediment was added to the three-bay T of the original building in 1954. A semicircular window with tulip muntins is centered in the pediment. The doors, the door and window frames, the sashes (nine-over-nine), and the louvered shutters are original.

The court room on the second floor is approached by stairs (not original) ascending to the right of a vestibule just inside the door. Tiers holding the wooden benches arise from the floor in front of the judge's bench, creating an amphitheatre. The west wall and the front of the bench are covered with panelling. This room apparently was originally two stories in height with a gallery in the east end. Rooms, the depth of the main section, open off each side of the east end of the court room. These rooms have simple mantels and molded chair rails.

The clerk's office, built 1924, is a brick, one-story, three-bay, temple-form building and stands south of the court house. Four engaged Tuscan columns support a pediment. A semicircular window with fans is centered in this pediment. The walls are laid in common bond with six courses of stretchers. The County Office Building, a one-story pedimented temple-form structure similar to the clerk's office, was built in the 1950's. The brick jail buildings stand to the west of the court house.

North of the court house and the County Office Building, facing onto the square, is the circa 1800 Dillard House. This frame, two-story, five-bay structure is covered with white clapboards, some of which are beaded, and has a gable roof. There are three brick Tidewater style chimneys, two on the east, one on the west, each with elaborate corbelled and mousetoothed caps. A shed porch supported by Tuscan columns shelters the first floor of the south facade and part of the east end.

The mid-nineteenth century county treasurer's office (now Sussex County Farm Bureau and Early Settlers Insurance Company Offices) stands on the east side of Route 735 facing the Court House Square. It is a brick one-story, two-bay structure with a steeply pitched gable roof. All four walls are laid in common bond with four courses of stretchers to one of headers. There is an interior-end chimney on the north and a frame ell on the east.

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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

Sussex County was formed in 1753 from the southern part of Surry County, and took its name from the shire of Sussex lying south of Surrey in England. The first court house was built in 1755-6 at the approximate center of the county. A new court house (the present one) built by Dabney Cosby, the builder of Goochland Court House, and a mason employed by Thomas Jefferson for the building of the University of Virginia, was completed near the site of the first in 1828.

The Sussex County Court House is a member of a significant group of court houses in Virginia directly inspired by the architecture of Thomas Jefferson. The masons and carpenters at the University were deeply influenced by Jefferson's designs and they carried his style over into their own work, examples of which can be found throughout the Commonwealth. Sussex Court House is not only composed of classical elements and proportions advocated by Jefferson, who felt that the Roman mode was eminently suitable for a young Republic, but it also exhibits the fine craftsmanship demanded by Jefferson of his workers. The arcade used on the building is a continuation of a traditional feature of public buildings in Virginia, and parallels the English Renaissance town hall with a gable end facade with an arcade on the ground level.

In Virginia the court house, the seat of local government, has in many instances become the center of a town serving the county as a commercial center. At Sussex the court house village retains its cross-roads rural setting and nineteenth century character. The village with the court house as its focal point is composed largely of buildings essential to the function of county government. Structures of interest, other than those pertaining directly to county business, such as the Clerk's and Treasurer's Offices and the County Building, are the Dillard House, occupied at one time by the tavern keeper and possibly housing the tavern itself, and the Bannister House, formerly a girls' school. In 1847 the square in front of the Court House was considered to be "hemmed in on the North by a large private building," on the south by a tavern and by stables on the south and northwest. The resultant crowding left no room for a pillory, shipping post or gallows. Other disadvantages included an abundance of mud in wet weather and dust in dry. A movement to change

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mary A. Stephenson, Old Homes in Surry and Sussex. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1942.

Workers of the Writer's Program of the W. P. A. in the State of Virginia, Sussex County, A Tale of Three Centuries. Waverly: Sussex County School Board, 1942.

Files of Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

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	
NW	36 ° 55 ' 05 "	77 ° 17 ' 01 "		°	' "	
NE	36 ° 55 ' 05 "	77 ° 16 ' 35 "				
SE	36 ° 54 ' 45 "	77 ° 16 ' 35 "				
SW	36 ° 54 ' 45 "	77 ° 17 ' 01 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 50 acres

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:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission      DATE: September, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

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 J. R. Fishburne

J. R. Fishburne, Director  
Title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date OCT 17 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE VIRGINIA	
COUNTY SUSSEX	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7.

Standing in a grove of trees to the northeast of the Treasurer's Office is the John Bannister House, a white clapboard, two-story, five-bay structure. It has a gable roof and exterior end chimneys. It retains the original window trim and six-over-six sashes. A one-bay porch supported by four piers shelters the west door, and a similar porch, with two piers, the north door.

The structures clustered around the court house and square grew up, for the most part, as dictates exigencies of county political and legal activity. Despite the intrusion of a few modern structures, Sussex, with its brick county buildings and its shaded white frame residences, retains the aura of a nineteenth century court house village.

G.P.H.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE VIRGINIA	
COUNTY SUSSEX	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

#8 Significance

the location, however, could not muster sufficient support, and the Court House remained in its present location, Although some of the 1847 buildings no longer stand and others have been added, Sussex's county seat remains an important example of a cross-roads court house village with an architecturally outstanding court building.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Sussex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: <b>Sussex County Court House Historic District</b>			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
<b>A circle with 1000 foot radius with centerpoint at the center of front</b>			
CITY OR TOWN: <b>facade of the court house.</b>			
<b>Sussex</b>			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Sussex</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE:			
<b>U. S. G. S. 7½ quadrangle Sussex, Virginia</b>			
SCALE: <b>1:24000</b>			
DATE: <b>1967</b>			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

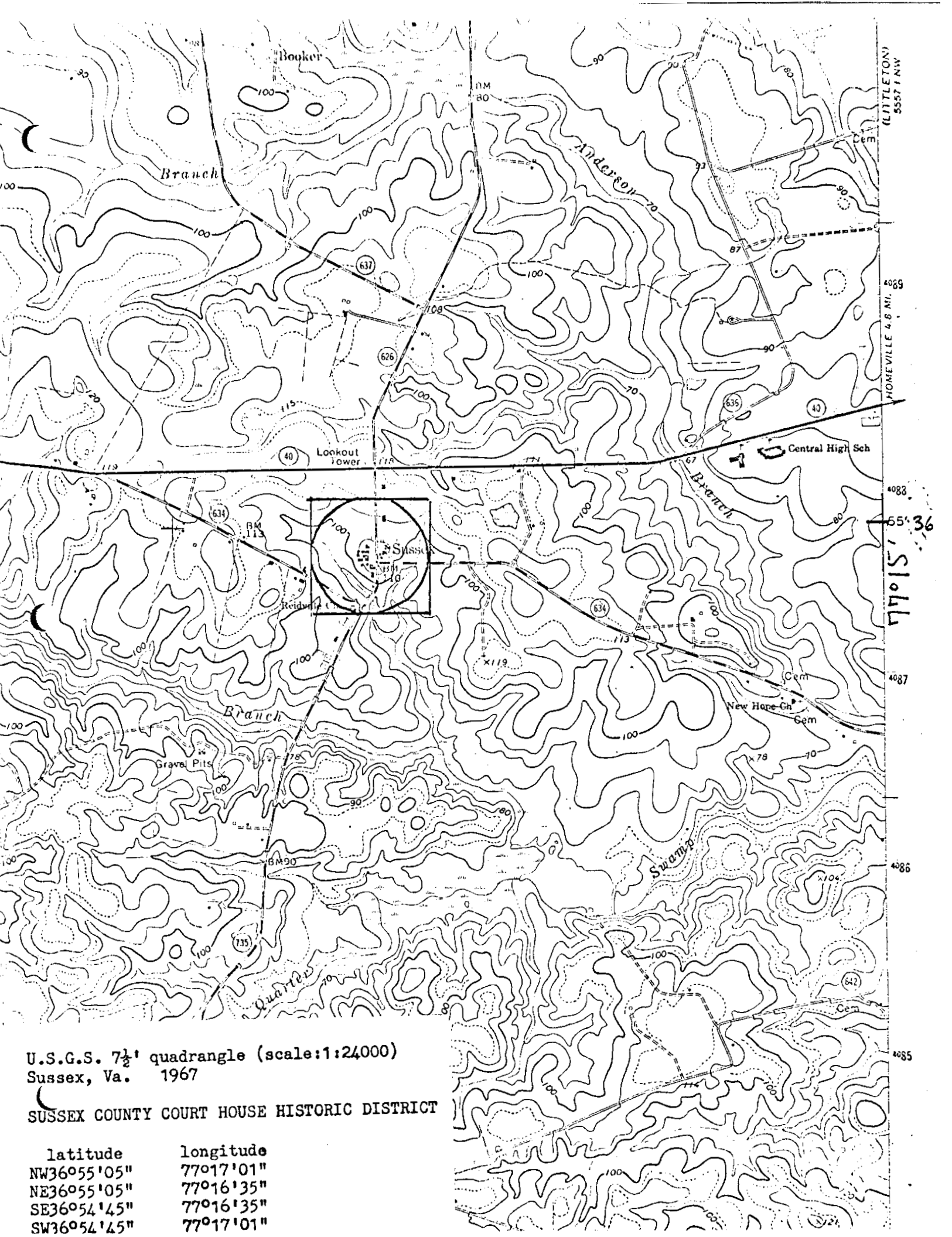
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Sussex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: <b>Sussex County Court House Historic District</b>			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
<b>A circle with 1000 foot radius with center point at the center of front</b>			
CITY OR TOWN: <b>facade of the court house.</b>			
<b>Sussex</b>			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Sussex</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: <b>Phil Flournoy</b>			
DATE OF PHOTO: <b>1941</b>			
NEGATIVE FILED AT:			
<b>Virginia Chamber of Commerce; Richmond, Virginia</b>			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
<b>View of court house from the southeast</b>			



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
 Sussex, Va. 1967

SUSSEX COUNTY COURT HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT

latitude	longitude
NW36°55'05"	77°17'01"
NE36°55'05"	77°16'35"
SE36°54'45"	77°16'35"
SW36°54'45"	77°17'01"