

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Pennsylvania</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Philadelphia</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**CHAMOUNIX**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**West Fairmount Park, overlooking Schuylkill Falls**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Philadelphia**

STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42** COUNTY: **Philadelphia** CODE: **101**

*Robt N.C. Nix  
2nd Cong*

**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 checked="" 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 <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<b>Youth Hostel</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Fairmount Park Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park**

CITY OR TOWN: **Philadelphia** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Department of Records, City Hall**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Broad and Market Streets**

CITY OR TOWN: **Philadelphia** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Philadelphia Historical Commission Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1955, constant revision** Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Philadelphia Historical Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1313 City Hall Annex**

CITY OR TOWN: **Philadelphia** STATE: **Pennsylvania** CODE: **42**

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(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:

As originally built ca. 1800 Chamounix was a small two-story country house, three bays wide with a hipped shingle roof topped by a small flat, probably used to take advantage of the magnificent view of the falls of the Schuykill. Entrance to the house was probably through a plain portico on the river side. A notable feature was the 10' diameter bow on the south side. The first floor consisted, according to an insurance survey of 1835, of two rooms and a stair hall. Four rooms and a passage were on the second floor, and four more rooms were in the garret, which was lighted largely by six arch-roofed dormers. The kitchen and dining room were in the basement.

About 1856 after a change in ownership the house was enlarged and considerably altered. A fire insurance survey made at the time details the changes. Dimensions of the house increased from 45' long by 30' deep to 45' long by 47' deep, adding two more rooms to the first floor. The second floor now contained five rooms, a bathroom with a water closet and a shower bath, and a passage. There were now five rooms and a store room in the garret; and two kitchens in the cellar. Where the earlier entrance had been from the river facade, it was probably changed at this time, when a wide piazza running nearly the length of the west side was added. Thus, by 1856 Chamounix had piazzas on three sides with decorative iron supports. In 1885 the shingle roof was replaced with tin.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. 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) **ca. 1800**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input 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

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Chamounix was one of the numerous homes that were built as country estates or retreats by prominent Philadelphians during the post-Revolutionary period, when yellow fever was a danger in the city. It was built ca. 1800 by George Plumstead, a merchant in the India trade. The original house was enlarged about 1856 during the ownership of Topliff Johnson. The Johnson heirs were forced to sell their land in 1869 when it was appropriated as ground for public use, later to become Fairmount Park. According to a note in an insurance survey, Chamounix was a private residence in 1887, and served as a boarding house and restaurant during the summer months. About 1945 it was serving as a refreshment stand, but gradually fell into disrepair and was unoccupied for many years.

Through the efforts of the Fairmount Park Commission and a group known as the Friends of Chamounix, the house was extensively repaired and opened as an international youth hostel in 1964. The mansion retains its facade and interior layout, but now serves as overnight accommodations for up to 40 students, cyclists, or other travelers, a fine example of adaptive use in historic preservation.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Philadelphia Historical Commission files, containing insurance surveys, photographs, and other pertinent data.

Leech, William and Marjorie Winer, "Historical Notes on Chamounix Mansion," pamphlet published by the Friends of Chamounix, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19131.

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	° ' "	° ' "		40 °	00 ' 14 "	75 ° 11 ' 49 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Pennsylvania Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks**

ORGANIZATION: **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**      DATE: **8/11/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box 1026**

CITY OR TOWN: **Harrisburg**      STATE: **Pennsylvania**      CODE: **42**

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 S. K. [Signature]  
**State Liaison Officer**

Title **Executive Director, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**

Date **December 9, 1971**

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

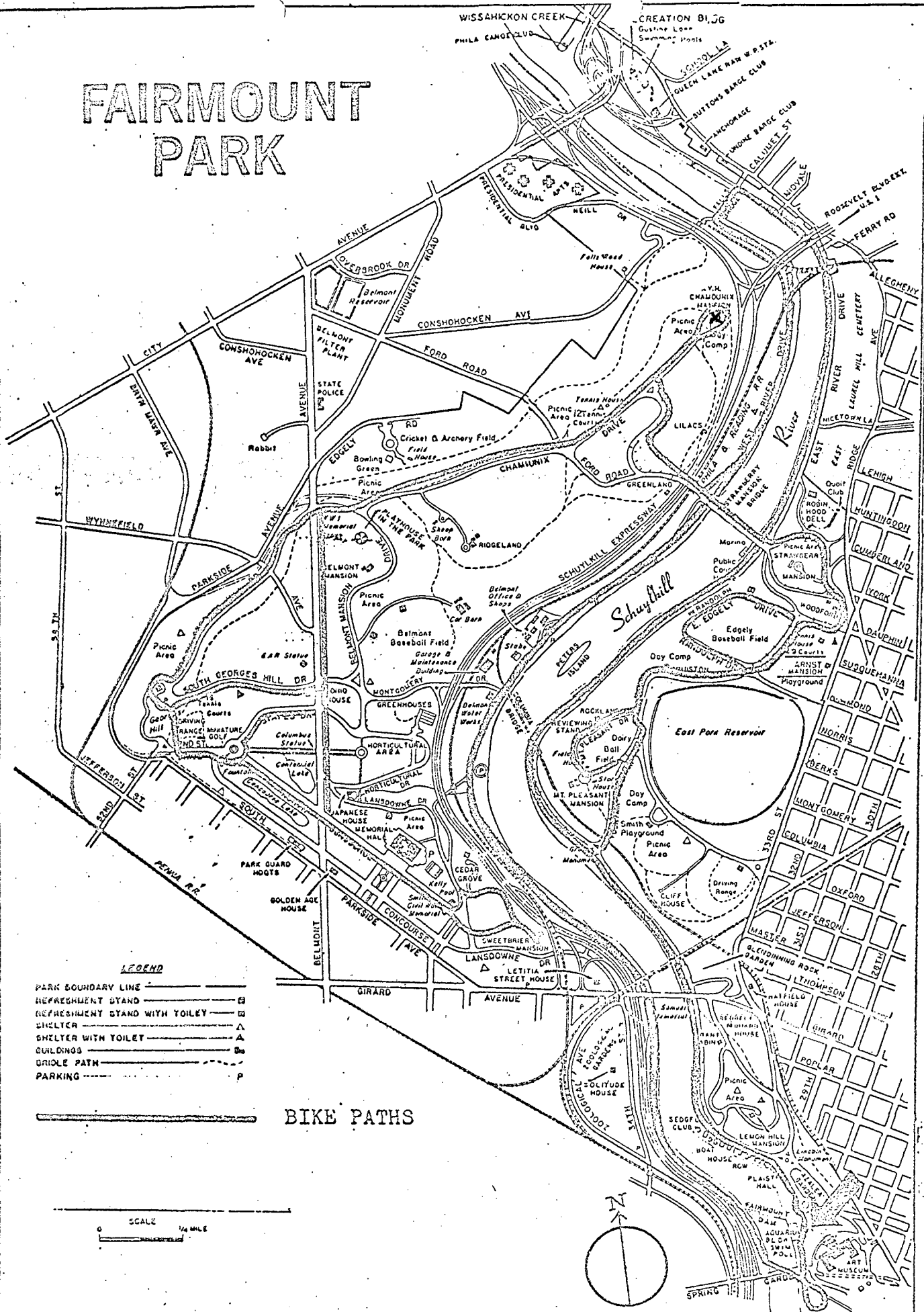
ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# FAIRMOUNT PARK



**LEGEND**

- PARK BOUNDARY LINE ————
- REFRESHMENT STAND ————
- REFRESHMENT STAND WITH TOILET ————
- SHELTER ————
- SHELTER WITH TOILET ————
- BUILDINGS ————
- DRIVEL PATH ————
- PARKING ———— P

**BIKE PATHS**

SCALE 1/4 MILE

