

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Suit, Samuel Taylor, Cottage; Suit Castle

and/or common Berkeley Castle

2. Location

street & number Route 9

not for publication

city, town Berkeley Springs

vicinity of

congressional district

Second

state

West Virginia

code

54

county

Morgan

code

065

3. Classification

Category

☒ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both
Public Acquisition
☐ in process
☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☐ yes: restricted
☒ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military

☒ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Walter M. Bird

street & number c/o P.O. Box 253

city, town Berkeley Springs

vicinity of

state West Virginia 25411

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Morgan County Courthouse

street & number

N.Washington and Fairfax Streets

city, town

Berkeley Springs

state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Berkeley Castle looms above the town of Berkeley Springs on Warm Springs Ridge approximately 150 yards northwest of the center of the town square on County Route 9. The massive stone edifice has long presented a romantic appeal to passersby and to visitors who have thronged to the nearby famous mineral springs to take the "cure".

It cannot be said that the Castle was designed to house its first owner in surroundings that were less than luxurious. Yet, for the wealthy of the nineteenth century accustomed to annual visits to spas and resorts, large houses under their care or ownership in these places often were referred to as "cottages". The Morgan News reported in its June 25, 1887, issue on the efforts of Washington luminary Colonel Samuel Taylor Suit to accelerate construction on his residence at Berkeley Springs. The newspaper reference, cited in an authoritative article on the history of Berkeley Castle by Morris Fraden, states that

"Col. S.T. Suit brought a force of hands from Washington on Wednesday to hurry along the completion of his cottage... Nestled among the cliffs and on the beautiful slope of Warm Spring Mountain, surrounded by primeval forests, it gives one the impression of the grand old Scottish castles we read of in history. Col. Suit hopes to occupy his castle on August 1".

Construction of Berkeley Castle began in 1885 and was completed in the early 1890's following the death in 1888 of Colonel Suit; it remained for his wife to finish the project after his death.

Quality of construction and finish particularly of rear and upper interior sections of the building does not compare favorably with the work completed in the period 1885-88.

The Castle is a two-story rectangle of solid masonry positioned against a hillside. The coursed rock-faced stone was quarried and carried to the building site from the Sir John's Run area near Berkeley Springs. Dominating the southeast facade is a 3-story round tower with rectangular window openings at the first and second levels, and circular openings at the third. Three crosses formed in relief decorate the masonry surface. The crenelated parapet corbeled above a square billet is continuous throughout the building and forms a major visual feature evoking the medieval. Running entirely across the entrance elevation is a porch with square stone posts. The cornice and parapet are fashioned of wood.

Fifteen major rooms of the interior were originally furnished in Victorian furniture. Rosa Pelham Suit, widow of Colonel Suit, was known to host frequent and opulent parties in her home. The dining hall and ballroom, the latter measuring 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 17 feet high, exhibit noteworthy finish. Two stone fireplaces and a floor of burnished mahogany are features of significance in the ballroom. The second floor is reached via a stairway of carved walnut. It provides access to three bedrooms, antechambers, and a paneled library.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Berkeley Castle, Berkley Springs, Morgan County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

2

Berkeley Castle was lost to the Suit (in later years spelled Sault) family in 1914 following a public auction. Later owners maintained the building as a residence. In the late 1930's, a boy's camp was established which used the castle and adjacent grounds. Since 1954, the Castle has been a house museum open to the public.

No additions or significant alterations have affected the three major elevations of Berkeley Castle. The major interior spaces, too, retain original integrity. Maintenance problems, however, for so large a property must be addressed. Care of stone surfaces, including attention to spalling and open joints, should receive priority. Wood features such as window frames and porch decorative trim are deteriorating. Problems such as these should require some reference to preservation planning.

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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1885-91 Builder/Architect Attributed to A.B. Mullett, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Berkeley Castle is significant because it symbolizes the resort life of Berkeley Springs, a spa in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle famous since the 18th century for its mineral springs, hotels, and parade of illustrious figures from America's society registers. The great stone building also possesses architectural features unique in West Virginia; it may be said the Castle is a Victorian folly in as much as the structure was meant to dominate the landscape in the Romantic tradition of the late 19th century. Certainly, many of the eye-catching features of the building have few functional purposes. Over the years references to legend and mystery have given the landmark additional status. Of the personages directly associated with the building the most famous are Colonel Samuel Taylor Suit, a wealthy Washington businessman, and his wife, Rosa Pelham Suit, the daughter of a Congressman from Alabama. Another important figure, architect A.B. Mullett, is credited with the Castle's design.

Berkeley Springs attracted visitors to its mineral waters from the mid-18th century. As travelers arrived to bathe in or consume the waters of the "Medical Springs" or "Hot Healing Springs", a complex began to grow to accommodate the ever growing demand for housing. The Springs were popular with the wealthy who frequently summered in the locale. Among patrons to visit the spa were George Washington, James Madison, Washington Irving, David Hunter Strother (Porte Crayon), Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, to name but a few. Attraction of scions of Eastern society to Berkeley Springs was especially great because of the sweltering heat of coastal cities during the summer. One of the big stars in Washington circles of the post-Civil War era was Colonel Samuel Taylor Suit who purchased land overlooking Berkeley Springs in the 1880's.

Samuel Taylor Suit (1830-1888) was born in Maryland and obtained his first exposure to business as an errand boy. Relocating in the West as a young man Suit established a successful distillery in Louisville and earned the Kentucky honorary appellation of "Colonel". Col. Suit eventually moved to New York where he earned a fortune in the securities market. Returning to Maryland in 1865, Suit bought 800 acres of land south-east of Washington and named the estate "Suitland". The property is now in the Suitland Road-Suitland Parkway section of Washington which contains many of the capital's most intensively developed government installations. Colonel Suit counted among his business associates Garret A. Hobart¹, vice president of the United States. Among guests in the Suit home were Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Samuel Freeman Miller.

In 1883 Colonel Suit, whose marriage had recently failed, married Rosa Pelham, daughter of Alabama Congressman Charles Pelham. They met at a famous hotel in Berkeley Springs. Not long after the wedding, plans for a sumptuous cottage at Berkeley Springs were prepared; work began in 1885.

Tradition holds that a sketch or rough plan of the Castle was drawn for Colonel Suit by noted architect A.B. Mullett on a menu or tablecloth at the old Berkeley Springs Hotel. One writer, George F. Kahne of the Washington Star, in the magazine section of

¹Later Vice President of the U.S., 1897-99

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Berkeley Castle, Berkeley Springs, Morgan County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

July 6, 1952, mentions this story. Several other authors in secondary sources also attribute the building to Mullett, including Morris Fradin in an authoritative history of the building appearing in the spring issue of Valley of History, a magazine of the Potomac Edison Company. No primary sources have been discovered authenticating the Mullett connection, though Mullett's stint as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury (1865-74) would have been completed before the Castle was begun in 1885. Mullett would therefore have been in private practice in Washington and free to take on private commissions. Mullett is known to have been a visitor in Berkeley Springs of this period, nevertheless.

Tradition also states that architect Snowden Ashford built Berkeley Castle from the Mullett plans. Ashford joined the office of A.B. Mullett following his graduation from college. Since Ashford was born in 1866, he could not have been much more than 19 when construction began, an improbable age for a professional with such a responsibility. It is interesting to note, however, that Mrs. Suit (by this time a widow), is reported in an article of the Morgan Mercury of June 20, 1891, to have entertained at the Castle "Miss Nettie Crichton, Mrs. Snoden Ashford, and Mr. Malcolm Crichton..."

Alfred Bult Mullett (1834-90), was an important architect who designed numerous public and private buildings of distinction in the United States. Among his works are the The State, War and Navy Building (Executive Office Building) in Washington, the San Francisco Mint, and the St. Louis Post Office.

Colonel Suit died September 1, 1888, before the Castle was finished. The widow, Rosa, was left a wealthy woman and undertook responsibility of finishing the structure. She made the house her year round home and for the next two decades entertained in the place on a lavish scale. The Morgan Mercury of July 25, 1891, reported (from Fradin):

" A jolly dance took place at the Castle on Thursday night. The musicians arrived promptly...the moon was in full bloom.... Mrs. Suit was elegantly attired in black crepe, which with its elegant train, gave her a queenly air. She was untiring in her efforts, in order that her guests be well entertained, and made it a complete 'at home'."

Rosa Suit eventually ran out of money and her property was sold at "trustees sale" (1913). She retired in an impoverished state to a shack in the locale. Her son, Samuel, rescued her and it is believed she spent her last years in St. Louis and Idaho.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Berkeley Springs Historical Area". (Consultants study on the tourist potential of Berkeley Springs filed at Department of Culture & History, Historic Preservation), n.d. 15 p p.

Fradin, Morris. "Mystery, History & Romance of a West Virginia Castle". "Valleys of

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 acre
Quadrangle name Hancock, West Virginia -Md.- Pa.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	7	7	3	7	7	2	0	4	3	8	9	8	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification Located 50' above and northwest of Co. Rt. 9 on a steep hillside (Warm Spring Ridge) and centered in a 150' square, Berkeley Castle is 400' due west of the intersection of Fairfax St. and Wilkes St. at Cornelius Ave., Berkeley Springs, and 450' northwest of the center of Berkeley Springs Park.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

organization W.V. Dept. of Culture and History date July 10, 1980

street & number The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex telephone 348-0244

city or town Charleston state West Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Clarence M. Moore

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 6, 1980

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

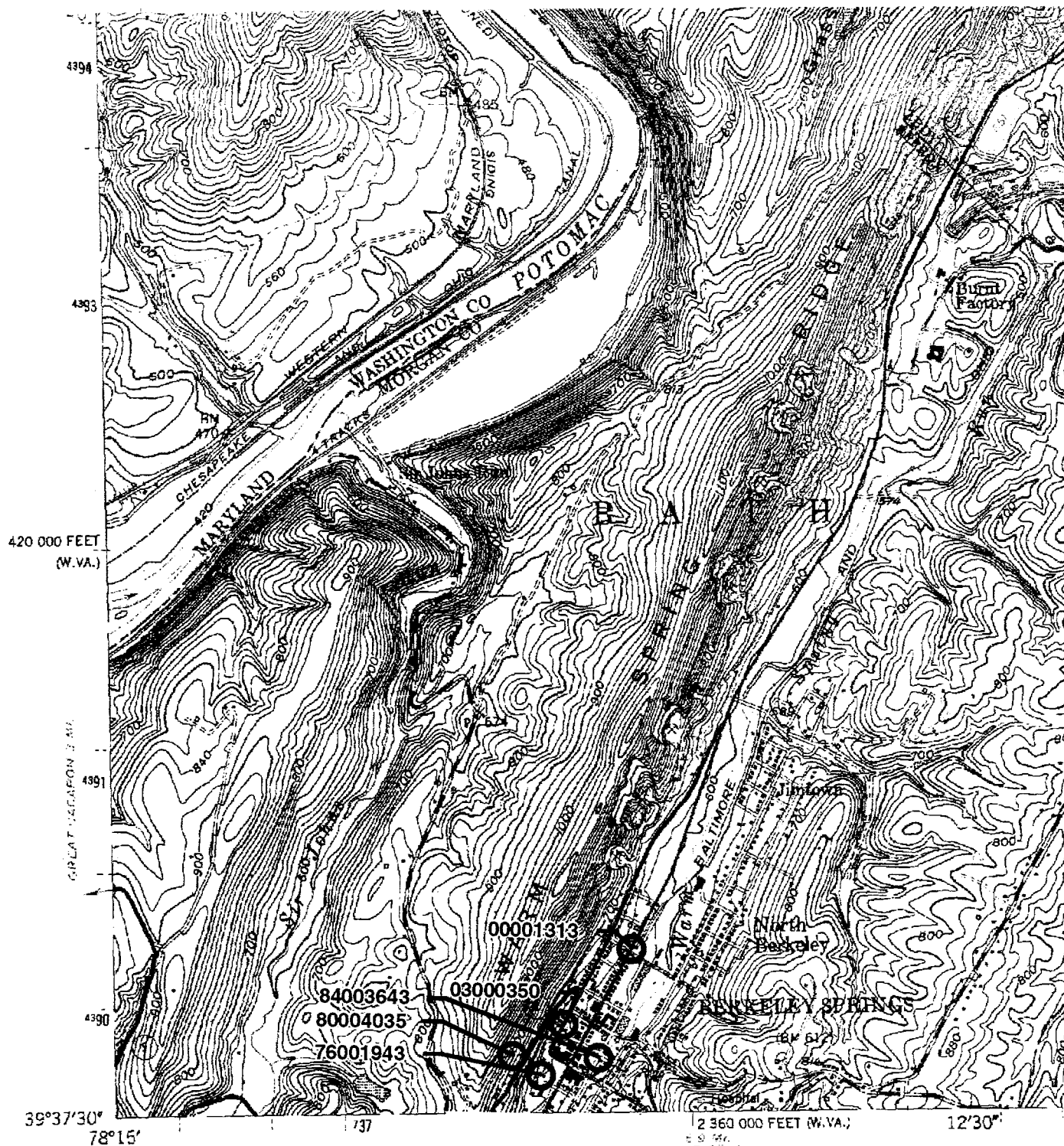
Berkeley Castle, Berkeley Springs, Morgan County, West Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Bibliographical References

History (Potomac Edison Co.), vol. 6, spring 1970, pp. 1-8.
Frederick T. Newbraugh to Rodney Collins (Memorandum on Berkeley Castle),
May 12, 1980. W.V. Department of Culture and History, Historic Preservation.



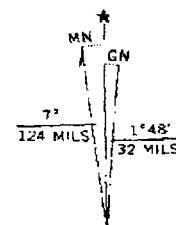
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1947. Field check 1951

Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on West Virginia coordinate system,
north zone, Maryland coordinate system, and Pennsylvania
coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1971. This information not field checked



U-TM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



