MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

NR Eligible: yes ___
no ___

Property Name: Suitland Federal Center Historic District Inventory Number: PG:75A-37

Address: Suitland and Silver Hill Roads City: Suitland Zip Code: 20746

County: Prince George's County USGS Topographic Map: Anacostia

Owner: U.S. Government - General Services Administration

Tax Parcel Number: N/A Tax Map Number: _____ Tax Account ID Number: N/A

Project: SFC Development Plan Agency: General Services Adminstration

Site visit by MHT Staff: ____no __X__ yes Name: Tania Tully; Anne Bruder Date: 8/24/01; 3/26/2001

Eligibility recommended ____ Eligibility **not** recommended __X__

Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G __X__None

Is the property located within a historic district? __X__no ____yes Name of district: N/A

Is district listed? ___no ___yes Determined eligible? ___no ____yes District Inventory Number: N/A

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: *Suitland Federal Center Historic Preservation Compliance; Section 110 and 106 Compliance, 1992.*

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

In 1939, the United States federal government foresaw the possibility of outgrowing the land available for office space in Washington, DC, and began the search for a tract of land outside the city to accommodate anticipated war time growth. The search culminated in 1941 with the purchase and exercise of eminent domain to assemble a parcel of 437 acres in Prince George's County. Today, the remaining 226 acres comprise the Suitland Federal Center and host tenant agencies of the Bureau of the Census, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, National Maritime Intelligence Center, and the National Archives. Adjacent properties that have been divested from the Suitland Federal Center now include the National Register listed Suitland Parkway and the new Suitland Metro Station at the corner of Suitland and Silver Hill Roads. The historic core of the Suitland Federal Center (SFC), representing construction between 1941 and 1950, occupies the easternmost 71 acres of the property. In the historic core, a plan for the region's first federal suburban office park began to be realized. Three of eight planned buildings were ultimately constructed along a curvilinear central artery. Two of the three remain, Federal Office Building (FOB) 3 constructed in 1942 and FOB-4 constructed in 1947 (PG:75A-22 and PG:75A-24 respectively). With the notable survivor of federal acquisition, the Suitland House (PG:75A-21), these three individually eligible properties comprise the Suitland Federal Center historic core. Surface parking lots are located behind the major buildings away from the central circulation path, but are connected by a network of roads and new and old sidewalks. Accessory buildings include a 13-bay garage, welding shop and one of three remaining film storage sheds. The major buildings constructed between 1941 and 1950 have similar materials and massing, but differ in their integration of function and minimalist ornamentation. The demolition of one of the three, the Naval Intelligence Command -1 (NIC-1) (PG:75A-23), eliminated the nascent geometry and rhythm of the district. Surface parking, and tennis and basketball courts replaced NIC-1,

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ____ **Eligibility not recommended** X

Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D **Considerations:** ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___**None**

Comments: FOB-3, FOB-4 & Suitland House remain individually eligible

Tania Meagan Tully — 10/26/01
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

B Kenny — 10/31/01
Reviewer, NR program **Date**

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√-entered

accommodating more cars, but diminishing the legibility of the design that separated motor vehicle and pedestrian spaces. New plantings and extended surface parking adjacent to FOB-3 have altered the landscape of the historic core. Comprehensive planting and paving patterns, if ever developed to support the historic campus, do not survive today beyond the sidewalks and tall oaks along the western end of the façade of FOB-3. FOB-4 has been substantially altered with the addition of wing "O" in 1960, satellites, trailers, and new duct work and building systems that had to be placed on the exterior to prevent disturbance of hazardous materials. The most distinctive feature of the open perimeter space is a clearly new fence.

Features of the Suitland Federal Center Historic Core

Features	**Date Constructed**	**Architect of Record**	**National Register Eligibility**	**Resource Type**	**Photo Reference**	**Condition**
Suitland House	1937		Individually Eligible	Building	P1	Altered
FOB-3	1941-1942	Supervising Architect, Louis A. Simon	Individually Eligible	Building	P2-P5	Deteriorated
Garage & Annex	1942		Contributing	Building	P11-P12	Fair
Circulation and Parking System	1942		Contributing and non-contributing elements	Structure		Good
NIC-1	*1942*		*Demolished*	*Building*		*Demolished*
Water tower 1	1945		Contributing	Structure	P13	Deteriorated
Film vault B	1946		Contributing	Building	P14	Fair
FOB-4	1947;1960	Supervising Architect, George Howe	Individually Eligible	Building	P6-P7 P9-P10	Altered
Gazebos/Picnic Areas	1980s		Non-contributing	Structure	P8	Excellent
Perimeter Fence	1999		Non-contributing	Object		Excellent

Other Features of the Suitland Federal Center

Radar Building	1958		Non-contributing	Building	P15	Deteriorated
SB2 (formerly NIC-2)	1958		Non-contributing	Building	P16	Fair
Washington National Records Center	1967		Non-contributing	Building	P18	Good
Heating and Refrigeration Plant	1967; now solar field		Non-contributing	Building	P19	Good
NMIC	1992		Non-contributing	Building	P17	Excellent
Water tank 2	unknown		Non-contributing	Structure	P20	Good
Ball Fields	Changing		Non-contributing	Site		Excellent
Plantings	varied		Elements are contributing	Site		Excellent

Below excerpts from pages 50-55 of Goodwin have been updated to reflect current conditions.

Suitland House
The Suitland House is a two-and-one-half story Colonial Revival style dwelling constructed in 1937. The house has a tripartite composition -- a side-gabled center block with two recessed wings on each gable end. An elaborate center door surround highlights the symmetrical facade. Stone veneer, simulating random ashlar masonry, and beaded wood siding cover the house. The building terminates in a gable roof clad in slate shingles. Symmetry and carefully rendered details characterize the house. Oriented to the east, the structure is sited in a landscaped and semi-wooded portion of the Suitland Federal Center office complex.

FOB-3
Federal Office Building No. 3 (FOB-3) is a large, three-story, flat-roofed masonry building constructed between 1941 and 1942 by the federal government, and occupied by the Census Bureau since that year. The defining characteristics: the plan, fenestration, and entrances - retain their integrity from the date of construction. The building has seven parallel wings perpendicular to the "head house" block. Double-loaded corridors provide natural light to all offices. Repetition of windows on flat unornamented wall planes accentuates the building's monumental scale. The central, three-story entrance bays located on main west elevation establish the visual focus of the exterior design. As part of a campus office complex in suburban Suitland, FOB-3 exemplifies the evolution of the monumental utilitarian office building. This building type incorporates influences from the International Style in scale, massing, and plan; ornamentation is characteristic of stripped classicism. FOB-4 is related in materials and massing.

Garage and Annex
The Garage and Annex building were constructed in 1942 as the maintenance facility for the Suitland Federal Center. The maintenance facility incorporates a single-story, 13-bay, masonry garage and a single-story, masonry storage building. The symmetrical design of the garage employs a three-part composition created by a three-bay central block flanked by five-bay wings. An overhead garage door occupies each bay division. The architectural style of the garage and annex is utilitarian. The garage and annex have not been modified since their construction. The garage annex is also known as the welding shop. Both buildings currently store office furniture.

Circulation and Parking System
The historic circulation system at the SFC includes the primary Swann Road, a curvilinear artery that bisects the site from the northwest to southeast, and the sidewalks between Swann Road and the entrances of FOB-3 and FOB-4. The arc of the road formed the spine along which development of the SFC was to occur. It defined the inward looking suburban site plan. Sidewalks connect the rear parking areas and the main entrances of FOB-3 and FOB-4. New landscaped walkways lead to FOB-3 and FOB-4 from extended surface parking lots. There are remnants of sidewalks that must have been pedestrian ways into the community, but these have been cut-off with the installation of the new perimeter fence.

NIC-1
The Naval Intelligence Center-1 formerly located to the south of FOB-3, has been demolished since distribution of the 1992 Section 110 and 106 Report. The site between FOB-3 and the new metro station has been paved for parking, tennis courts, and basketball courts. The flag circle remains.

WSSC Water Tower
A Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Water Tower is located at the northeast corner of the historic core on land that has been transferred to the local government. This elevated water tank holds 150,000 gallons and adopts a domed design supported by piers. The red and white structure is a highly visible element on the site. The structure was erected in 1945.

Film Vault B
Film Vault B is a single-story, masonry building constructed in 1946 to house cellulose nitrate film. The building terminates in a flat roof distinguished by projecting eave lines. The structure is utilitarian with a rectangular ground plan. Vault B is used for storage and cannot be entered without protective clothing.

FOB-4
Federal Office Building No. 4 (FOB-4) is a large, three-story, flat-roofed masonry office building constructed in 1947. The original E-shaped plan includes double-loaded corridors and a symmetrical façade. A central entrance block of vertical design that juxtaposes the overall horizontal emphasis of the building dominates the facade. A compatible fourth wing was added to the building in 1960, illustrating the modularity of the International Style. This wing is compatible in scale, and materials; however, it alters the character defining symmetry of the original design. FOB-4 is an example of mid-twentieth century modern office design. Replacement ductwork and building systems have been installed on the exterior of the building to avoid disturbance of hazardous asbestos and lead paint on the interior. Temporary buildings have been erected at the rear of the building to accommodate the cooling and security systems required for NOAA's computer systems.

Gazebo
A contemporary wooden gazebo is located southwest of Federal Office Building - 4. This structure is supported by wooden posts and terminates in a hipped roof. The shelter houses picnic tables.

Picnic Shelter
A contemporary wooden pavilion is located southwest of Naval Intelligence Command - 2. Open wooden posts support this simple structure; it houses picnic tables.

Perimeter Fence
Historically, the Suitland Federal Center was unfenced. Over time, with growing security concerns, a chain link and barbed wire fence was erected around the perimeter and high security areas. In 1999, the barbed wire fence was replaced with a black metal security fence. The vertical elements are extruded square bars with staff-shaped outward facing heads. The new fencing was installed to improve visual relationships with the community. Chain link fences with barbed wire extensions continue to line secondary boundaries and interior secure areas around NMIC, FOB-3 and FOB-4.

Plantings
The age and type of vegetation at the Suitland Federal Center varies with the periods of construction. Mature oak trees surround the yard of Suitland House and serve as a moderately effective buffer between it and the surrounding parking lots and the newly constructed metro station. Mature oaks also remain along Swann Road near the western end of the main façade FOB-3 and the entrance of FOB-4. Recent beautification efforts have provided an allee of Bradford Pears as a linkage between FOB-3 and its parking lot across the street. Young poplar trees line the roads, and dot the open space around FOB-3 and FOB-4. Other new planting areas screen the satellites to the west of FOB-4 and the view of the National Maritime Intelligence Center from the historic core.

Eligibility

Boundaries of historic core are indicated on the accompanying map. *National Register Guidelines for Selecting Boundaries* state "Exclude peripheral areas that no longer retain integrity due to alterations in physical conditions or setting caused by human forces, such as development...". The property, documented on the Anacostia USGS quadrangle, includes 226 acres under General Services Administration management. The western 155 acres are open space and new construction that do not contribute significance to the Suitland Federal Center. The proposed district includes the 71easternmost acres incorporating the buildings and structures constructed between 1941 and 1950, and the adjacent spaces that contribute to their integrity of setting.

The history and context of the site can be read in Goodwin, pages 37-80.

The historic resources at the Suitland Federal Center represent an early effort to create a federal suburban office complex in the Washington, DC area. The vision that began in 1939 is still being realized at the SFC today. As intended at the purchase, the Suitland Federal Center continues to serve as a suburban office park for federal agencies. Though the individual historic resources retain sufficient integrity to merit eligibility under criterion A and C, the material of the historic relationships between these buildings does not survive intact. The individual resources embody the federal government's expansion into the Maryland suburbs as part of a much larger American development pattern of the mid-20th Century, and exhibit architectural characteristics of their period. However, the historic core does not retain sufficient integrity as a district to merit eligibility under criterion A or C, nor is it associated with the lives of persons significant in our past (B) nor is it likely to yield

information important in prehistory or history (D). The phased plan that the Public Building Administration envisioned was realized only partially. The demolition of one of three major structures and subsequent alterations to the landscape has substantially altered the nascent characteristics of a designed suburban office park. As a district, the historic core of the Suitland Federal Center does not qualify under criterion C. While the individual resources in the historic core do represent the beginnings of federal expansion associated with mid-20th century suburbanization patterns, the surviving historic relationships between the two remaining federal office buildings do not merit the designation of a historic district under criterion A.

Prepared by: Brooks Barwell, EDAW. Inc. Date Prepared: September 28, 2001

Suitland Federal Center Historic District
PG:75A-37
Suitland, MD
1941; Public access restricted

In 1939, the United States federal govenment foresaw the possibility of outgrowing the land available for office space in Washington, DC, and began the search for a tract of land outside the city to accommodate anticipated war time growth. The search culminated in 1941 with the purchase and exercise of eminent domain to assemble a parcel of 437 acres in Prince George's County. Today, the remaining 226 acres comprise the Suitland Federal Center and host tenant agencies of the Bureau of the Census, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, National Maritime Intelligence Center, and the National Archives. Adjacent properties that have been divested from the Suitland Federal Center now include the National Register listed Suitland Parkway and the new Suitland Metro Station at the corner of Suitland and Silver Hill Roads. The historic core of the Suitland Federal Center (SFC), representing construction between 1941 and 1950, occupies the easternmost 71 acres of the property. In the historic core, a plan for the region's first federal suburban office park began to be realized. Three of eight planned buildings were ultimately constructed along a curvilinear central artery. Two of the three remain, Federal Office Building (FOB) 3 constructed in 1942 and FOB-4 constructed in 1947 (PG:75A-22 and PG:75A-24 respectively). With the notable survivor of federal acquisition, the Suitland House (PG:75A-21), these three individually eligible properties comprise the Suitland Federal Center historic core. Surface parking lots are located behind the major buildings away from the central circulation path, but are connected by a network of roads and new and old sidewalks. Accessory buildings include a 13-bay garage, welding shop and one of three remaining film storage sheds. The major buildings constructed between 1941 and 1950 have similar materials and massing, but differ in their integration of function and minimalist ornamentation. The demolition of one of the three, the Naval Intelligence Command -1 (NIC-1) (PG:75A-23), eliminated the nascent geometry and rhythm of the district. Surface parking, and tennis and basketball courts replaced NIC-1, accommodating more cars, but diminishing the legibility of the design that separated motor vehicle and pedestrian spaces. New plantings and extended surface parking adjacent to FOB-3 have altered the landscape of the historic core. Comprehensive planting and paving patterns, if ever developed to support the historic campus, do not survive today beyond the sidewalks and tall oaks along the western end of the façade of FOB-3. FOB-4 has been substantially altered with the addition of wing "O" in 1960, satellites, trailers, and new duct work and building systems that had to be placed on the exterior to prevent

disturbance of hazardous materials. The most distinctive feature of the open perimeter space is a clearly new fence.

The historic resources at the Suitland Federal Center represent an early effort to create a federal suburban office complex in the Washington, DC area. The vision that began in 1939 is still being realized at the SFC today. As intended at the purchase, the Suitland Federal Center continues to serve as a suburban office park for federal agencies. The Bureau of the Census (Census) and the National Environmental Satellite Data Information Service of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are the primary tenants of the historic core. Though the individual historic resources retain sufficient integrity to merit eligibility, the material of the historic relationships between these buildings does not survive intact. Resources at the SFC are significant under criterion A and C. They embody the federal government's expansion into the Maryland suburbs as part of a much larger American development pattern of the mid-20th Century, and exhibit architectural characteristics of their period. However, the historic core does not retain sufficient integrity as a district to merit eligibility under criterion A or C. The demolition of one of three major structures and subsequent alterations to the landscape have substantially altered the district's distinctive characteristics of a designed suburban office park. The phased plan the Public Building Administration envisioned was realized only partially. The Suitland Federal Center adapted to changing federal needs. The individual resources in the historic core do represent the beginnings of federal expansion associated with mid-20th century suburbanization patterns, but the historic relationships between the two remaining federal office buildings do not merit the designation of a historic district.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG:75A-37

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	SUITLAND FEDERAL CENTER
other	NONE

2. Location

street and number	Silver Hill Road and Suitland Parkway	__ not for publication
city, town	Suitland	__ vicinity
county	Prince George's County	

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name	General Services Administration				
street and number	7th and D Streets, S.W.			telephone	202.708.6944
city, town	Washington	state	DC	zip code	20407

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Prince George's County Courthouse			liber	615 folio 443
city, town		tax map	tax parcel N/A	tax ID number	N/A

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

_____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
__X__ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
__X__ Other: *Suitland Federal Center Section 110 and 106 Compliance Report*, 1992

6. Classification

Category
__X__ district
_____ building(s)
_____ structure
_____ site
_____ object

Ownership
__X__ public
_____ private
_____ both

Current Function
_____ agriculture
_____ commerce/trade
_____ defense
_____ domestic
_____ education
_____ funerary
__X__ government
_____ health care
_____ industry
_____ landscape
_____ recreation/culture
_____ religion
_____ social
_____ transportation
_____ work in progress
_____ unknown
_____ vacant/not in use
_____ other:

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	3	buildings
0	0	sites
2	1	structures
0	1	objects
7	5	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
0

7. Description

Inventory No. PG:75A-37

Condition

___ excellent ___ deteriorated
___ good ___ ruins
X fair X altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Summary

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Features of the Suitland Federal Center Historic Core

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Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG: 75A-37

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number _7_ Page 1

Other Features of the Suitland Federal Center

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Film Vault B
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FOB-4
Federal Office Building No. 4 (FOB-4) is a large, three-story, flat-roofed masonry office building constructed in 1947. The original E-shaped plan includes double-loaded corridors and a symmetrical façade. A central entrance block of vertical design that juxtaposes the overall horizontal emphasis of the building dominates the facade. A compatible fourth wing was added to the building in 1960, illustrating the modularity of the International Style. This wing is compatible in scale, and materials; however, it alters the character defining symmetry of the original design. FOB-4 is an example of mid-twentieth century modern office design. Replacement ductwork and building systems have been installed on the exterior of the building to avoid disturbance of hazardous asbestos and lead paint on the interior. Temporary buildings have been erected at the rear of the building to accommodate the cooling and security systems required for NOAA's computer systems.

Gazebo
A contemporary wooden gazebo is located southwest of Federal Office Building - 4. This structure is supported by wooden posts and terminates in a hipped roof. The shelter houses picnic tables.

Picnic Shelter
A contemporary wooden pavilion is located southwest of Naval Intelligence Command - 2. Open wooden posts support this simple structure; it houses picnic tables.

Perimeter Fence
Historically, the Suitland Federal Center was unfenced. Over time, with growing security concerns, a chain link and barbed wire fence was erected around the perimeter and high security areas. In 1999, the barbed wire fence was replaced with a black metal

security fence. The vertical elements are extruded square bars with staff-shaped outward facing heads. The new fencing was installed to improve visual relationships with the community. Chain link fences with barbed wire extensions continue to line secondary boundaries and interior secure areas around NMIC, FOB-3 and FOB-4.

Plantings

The age and type of vegetation at the Suitland Federal Center varies with the periods of construction. Mature oak trees surround the yard of Suitland House and serve as a moderately effective buffer between it and the surrounding parking lots and the newly constructed metro station. Mature oaks also remain along Swann Road near the western end of the main façade FOB-3 and the entrance of FOB-4. Recent beautification efforts have provided an allee of Bradford Pears as a linkage between FOB-3 and its parking lot across the street. Young poplar trees line the roads, and dot the open space around FOB-3 and FOB-4. Other new planting areas screen the satellites to the west of FOB-4 and the view of the National Maritime Intelligence Center from the historic core.

8. Significance

Inventory No. PG 75A-37

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
__ 1800-1899	__ architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	X politics/government
X 1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/ recreation	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	__ commerce		__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	X social history
	__ community planning	__ exploration/ settlement	__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation		__ military	__ other:

Specific dates 1941-1948 **Architect/Builder** Government Architect's Office.

Construction dates 1942-1947

Evaluation for:

__X__ National Register ___X___Maryland Register _____not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Summary

The historic resources at the Suitland Federal Center represent an early effort to create a federal suburban office complex in the Washington, DC area. The vision that began in 1939 is still being realized at the SFC today. As intended at the purchase, the Suitland Federal Center continues to serve as a suburban office park for federal agencies. The Bureau of the Census (Census) and the National Environmental Satellite Data Information Service of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are the primary tenants of the historic core. Though the individual historic resources retain sufficient integrity to merit eligibility, the material of the historic relationships between these buildings does not survive intact. Resources at the SFC are significant under criterion A and C. They embody the federal government's expansion into the Maryland suburbs as part of a much larger American development pattern of the mid-20th Century, and exhibit architectural characteristics of their period. However, the historic core does not retain sufficient integrity as a district to merit eligibility under criterion A or C. The demolition of one of three major structures and subsequent alterations to the landscape have substantially altered the district's distinctive characteristics of a designed suburban office park. The phased plan the Public Building Administration envisioned was realized only partially. The Suitland Federal Center adapted to changing federal needs. The individual resources in the historic core do represent the beginnings of federal expansion associated with mid-20th century suburbanization patterns, but the historic relationships between the two remaining federal office buildings do not merit the designation of a historic district.

Maryland Historical Trust State Site Inventory Forms PG 75A 21-24 present the relevant historic themes, site-specific history, and significance of each of these buildings in detail.

History and Context

Expansion of the Federal Government

Development of the Suitland Federal Center Prior to Federal Acquisition (1861 - 1941)

The site of the Suitland Federal Center is located in an area historically associated with nineteenth-century transportation routes. During the nineteenth century, Silver Hill Road, located south of the Suitland Federal Center site, linked a stagecoach route with a turnpike (now Marlboro Pike) extending from Piscataway Creek to the Alexandria Ferry (Figure 3). Colonel Samuel Suit had established a route from Silver Hill Road to the District of Columbia by 1878. The crossroads town of Suitland, named after Colonel Suit, developed around the junction of the new Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road (Figure 4). The late nineteenth-century village of Suitland consisted of a post office, store, church, and several residences. Farms surrounded the village cluster.

The agricultural character of the area diminished slowly during the early twentieth century. Suburban development was facilitated by the community's convenient location and by access to Washington, D.C. In 1920, a subdivision of single family homes known as Suitland Park was constructed along Silver Hill Road opposite the existing Suitland House property. Suitland Park extended to both sides of Suitland Road. This first subdivision in the Suitland vicinity included 45 lots of 2 to 11 acres (Community Renewal Program 1974:222).

In 1941, the U.S. Government assembled 20 parcels, totaling 437 acres, in the Suitland area of Prince George's County for the construction of a federal office complex. The monumental-scale, federal office buildings built to house thousands of employees dramatically affected develop of the surrounding community of Suitland. From a semi-rural community in 1940, Suitland was transformed into a more densely developed suburban area incorporating subdivisions, apartment complexes, and shopping centers. By the 1950s, the area dramatically differed from the minimal development that characterized the 1940s. Aerial photographs from the 1950s depict an area criss-crossed by roads and dotted with structures. In contrast, few structures were scattered on 437 wooded acres encompassed in the Suitland parcel before the advent of federal development.

Prior to condemnation and acquisition, the Suitland site encompassed 25 houses, assorted agricultural buildings, a gas station, and a grocery store. Government appraisers charged with assessing the existing building stock classified 14 as "old" or without a known date, two as built during the mid-1920s, and nine as constructed between 1937 and 1941. Several dwellings had been erected only a few years, and in four cases, a few months, before government acquisition.

The Suitland site included a 53.2 acre tract owned by Lovell Otto Minear. Parcel 7 of this tract contained a house constructed by Minear in 1937. The eleven-room Colonial Revival style house, later renamed the Suitland House, was the largest and most architecturally sophisticated building on the Suitland tract. The structure incorporated expensive materials and a high standard of craftsmanship in its construction. Federal appraisers described the Minear property "as an estate [which] has had much improvement toward beautification" (Grady et al. 1941). The Minear house was appraised at three times the individual value of the remaining Suitland houses. The majority of the Suitland houses either were wood frame farmhouses of vernacular design or modest period bungalows.

Federal Acquisition and Construction (1941 - 1950)

The federal government formulated plans for the Suitland office complex in order to supplement federal office space within the District of Columbia. Concern was raised that Washington, D.C. contained an inadequate supply of office space to accommodate federal agency expansion. In 1939, W.E. Reynolds, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, initiated a survey of potential sites for new office buildings in Maryland and Virginia (Washington Star, March 15, 1941:A20). Reynolds sought sites in areas with adequate housing so that government workers could live near their work stations. Two sites were identified as fulfilling Reynolds' geographic and housing criteria; one was in Arlington, Virginia, near existing Navy facilities, and the second was Suitland, Maryland. The Navy Department dedicated the Virginia site for use; the Suitland site was designated as general office space for agencies demonstrating the greatest needs. The selection of the Suitland area was influenced both by the enthusiastic support of the local U.S. Representative, Lansdale G. Sasscer, and by its five-mile distance from the Capitol spanned by an existing road system. Montgomery County, Maryland, was excluded from consideration due to its distance from existing federal offices.

Simultaneous condemnation proceedings and construction plans progressed rapidly for the Suitland complex. By May 26, 1941, all but one property owner accepted offers of sale. On June 2, a formal "Declaration of Taking" was invoked; the Public Buildings Administration opened construction bids on June 26. The total purchase price for the site was $425,189.00. One hundred thousand dollars was expended for the Minear property. The Suitland houses that were not demolished either were converted to construction offices or they were rented to their former owners (Figure 5).

The original site plan proposed the phased construction of eight office buildings at Suitland. Construction of the first building, Federal Office Building No. 3 (FOB-3), began on October 1, 1941. Building designs projected 500,000 square feet of general-purpose office space accommodating up to 5,000 employees. At its peak, the construction of FOB-3 employed 1,072 workmen (The Suitland Sun, June 1942:1). The new building originally was assigned to the Office of Price Administration (OPA). After consideration, OPA determined that their mission required them to maintain offices in central Washington, D.C. The agency subsequently requested an office reassignment. The Public Buildings Administration then reallocated FOB - 3 to the Census Bureau; OPA moved into a new building in southeast Washington originally assigned to the Census Bureau.

The change in building occupants caused a delay in the completion of FOB-3 as interior modifications were made to accommodate the special machines used by the Census Bureau. A Washington Star newspaper article reporting the 1942 building dedication noted that the structure "represents completion of one of the first government decentralization programs" (Washington Star, August 13, 1942:A-6).

The second building of the Suitland complex also was completed in 1942. This structure housed the Hydrographic Office for the Navy Department (NIC-1); it was similar in design and construction to FOB-3.

Transporting thousands of clerical workers to the semi-rural Suitland area on a daily basis severely strained local services. Local officials voiced concern over the impacts associated with the new "Federal City;" the demands placed upon the police force, water supply, sewage disposal, schools, and road systems, became important local issues. To address the need for adequate sewerage and water, the Suitland complex was connected to the Washington water and sewer system. Real estate inflation in the Suitland area also was spurred by the new facility. With the construction of FOB-3, the price of property surrounding the federal tract soared as private-sector developers raced to meet the anticipated demand for housing.

World War II generated rapid expansion of the federal government, creating demands for office space and land to house the war effort. As a result, the Public Buildings Administration released control of much of its vacant Suitland land to a variety of departments and agencies. The Alley Dwelling Authority received a license in 1942 to construct demountable (temporary) housing on the northwest section of the site. Construction of permanent housing was prohibited because the land officially was designated for federal buildings.

In 1943, the Public Buildings Administration transferred a 57.559 acre parcel to the War Department for the construction of a highway linking Washington and Andrews Field. This transportation artery became Suitland Parkway. The War Department also constructed a temporary dormitory known as Suitland Hall in 1942. This facility accommodated 590 persons; it was removed following the war. Although the third permanent office building at Suitland was scheduled for construction in 1945, work was not begun until 1947. The Office of Civilian Requirements rejected the Public Buildings Administration's 1945 application to build Federal Office Building No. 4 (FOB-4) due to "war needs." The agency suggested that the Public Buildings Administration delay construction one year until the amount of surplus office space due to declining war-related activities could be assessed (letter from Chief, Projects Branch, Office of Civilian Requirements to Priorities Coordinator, PBA, March 5, 1945: in Record Group 121, #54-A-468, box 5). Initial plans for FOB-4 were to provide additional space for the Census Bureau and for the Navy Hydrographic Office. In 1947, the Public Buildings Administration reprogrammed FOB-4 for a records storage facility for the Census Bureau and the National Archives (Washington Star, April 13, 1947). FOB-4 was the last building constructed at Suitland designed in the style, form, and materials adopted for the first period of complex development.

Records storage and management became an agency concern as the federal government grew during the postwar years. Agencies sought records storage space as well as room for office expansion. In 1946, the Public Buildings Administration constructed film storage vaults adjacent to the FOB-4 site. Though the Public Buildings Administration advocated the construction of two additional

storage facilities at Suitland, Congress did not appropriate funds for their construction. Congress also rejected a 1949 for funds to construct a building at Suitland.

This unfunded building had been planned to meet the spatial demand anticipated for the upcoming 1950 census. Following the census, the Public Buildings Administration planned to allocate the building to the National Archives.

Private Leases at Suitland

Housing, in addition to federal office space, was in short supply during World War II and immediately afterwards. The Public Buildings Administration continued its role of landlord of the Suitland houses. The agency rented the remaining dwellings constructed before federal acquisition to private individuals. Rents reflected the higher quality of the Minear house in relation to the surrounding Suitland housing stock. The government charged $250 monthly rent for the Minear house in 1941; this was five times the rent required for the next highest lease, and twelve times greater than the majority of the rents. Competition for the Suitland houses was intense. For one house, the Public Buildings Administration received thirty-one responses to its advertisement. The winners of the lease were lauded in the local press with the headline "Sagely Drafted Bid Wins Bungalow for Young Couple" (Washington Post, August 8, 1948). The Public Buildings Administration was forced to revise its rental policy in 1949. Rental rate hikes imposed on new tenants were found to be in violation of the National Rent Control Law. In 1952, the government filed and received a Landlord's Petition for Adjustment of Rent from the Office of Rent Stabilization; this enabled agency to increase the rents of the Suitland houses. Deferred maintenance resulted in the houses falling into disrepair; they eventually became uninhabitable. The government, although charged with realizing a financial return on property that was not used directly by government agencies, was reluctant to invest in buildings slated for future demolition.

A 1954 memorandum recommended demolition of the surviving Suitland houses, citing their structural deterioration as well as inadequacies in water and sewage systems. Conversion of the area to landscaped grounds and interior approaches in accordance with the original complex plan was recommended (memorandum from Deputy Regional Director, PBS, to Chief, Real Estate Division, December 17, 1954: in Record Group 121, #64-A-1686, box 5). With the implementation of this memo, the General Services Administration (GSA) shed its role as residential landlord at Suitland. Following the removal of the remaining temporary war housing by the end of 1954, housing was no longer a component of the federal property at Suitland. One private lease, for a children's nursery, was extended. The government determined that the local community could not adequately provide this necessary service. During World War II, a Wartime Nursery School project was operated in a house at the corner of Suitland and Silver Hill Roads to provide day care for working mothers employed by the Census Bureau. After the war, the Public Buildings Administration agreed that the nursery provided an essential service that should be continued by the private sector. The building subsequently was leased for use as a private nursery. As in the cases of the other Suitland houses, the federal agency was reluctant to undertake repairs on the nursery building. In 1953, the operator of the nursery secured a lease on the Minear house, which was in good condition. The Dale Nursery moved to the building now known as Suitland House. The government demolished the old nursery building and other structures on the corner of Suitland and Silver Hill Roads one year later. The Minear house is the only structure that survives to the present from the pre-federal acquisition era.

Continuation of Development of the Site by GSA (1951 - 2000).

Under the GSA, the Public Buildings Service (PBS) incorporated the functions of the PBA. GSA assumed control of the Suitland Center. The Commissioner of Public Buildings transferred management responsibility of the undeveloped portion of the Suitland "Building Area" to Region 3 of the GSA in 1951 (letter from Reynolds to Miller, November 19, 1951: in Record Group 121, #64-A-1686, box 5). The GSA assumed administration of the Suitland property, but did not undertake new construction during the 1950s. Other agencies, under license from the GSA, initiated building activities during the decade. In 1951, the Department of the Army erected a microwave relay station, including a 300' steel tower and two-story concrete building, on a 200' by 200' area south of

Suitland Parkway. Though factions in the GSA criticized the tower as out of character with the practical and aesthetic development of the site, the Army's pressing need for the facility and the lack of other available government sites necessitated the construction of the tower on the Suitland property. In 1958, the Civil Aeronautics Administration constructed a second tower, a long-range radar station for guiding aircraft to National Airport. The Department of Defense built the first major addition to the original three-building Federal office complex in 1958. The Navy Reconnaissance and Technical Support Center (now known as Suitland Federal Building #2), was located immediately west of FOB-4. The design of this white concrete office building with ribbon windows departed from the unified architectural design of the three 1940s buildings.

During the 1950s, GSA transferred jurisdiction over the majority of the complex south of Suitland Parkway to other Federal agencies. The Department of the Army assumed control of 47.2 acres, and the Smithsonian Institution obtained 21.01 acres. The Army developed a small complex of offices, barracks, and assorted support facilities, while the Smithsonian constructed storage structures. The GSA resumed an active construction role at Suitland in 1967 with the erection of the Federal Records Center (now the Washington National Records Center) and a Central Heating and Refrigeration Plant. Both facilities are located in the northwest section of the center. By 1967, the Suitland Federal Center assumed its current configuration (Figure 6). The Smithsonian Institution assumed control of the parcels formerly transferred to the Army and now controls the majority of the southern section of the original Suitland property.

During the 1990 GSA indefinitely loaned 54 acres of land on the center of the southwestern edge of the campus to the Navy for the construction of the National Maritime Intelligence Center. This is a fenced, guarded, secure facility. Because of its position beyond a forested knoll, the massive reflectively clad building has little impact on the view shed form the historic core.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. PG:75A-37

R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc., *Suitland Federal Center Historic Preservaiton Compliance Section 110 and 106 Compliance FINAL REPORT*, 1992.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	71		
Acreage of historical setting	437		
Quadrangle name	Anacostia	Quadrangle scale:	1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries of historic core are indicated on the accompanying map.

National Register Guidelines for Selecting Boundaries state "Exclude peripheral areas that no longer retain integrity due to alterations in physical conditions or setting caused by human forces, such as development...". The property boundary includes 226 acres under General Services Administration management, however the western 155 acres are open space surrounded by new construction that do not contribute to the significance of the resources. The boundary of a district around the 71easternmost acres includes the major buildings constructed between 1941 and 1950, and the adjacent spaces that contributes to their integrity of setting.

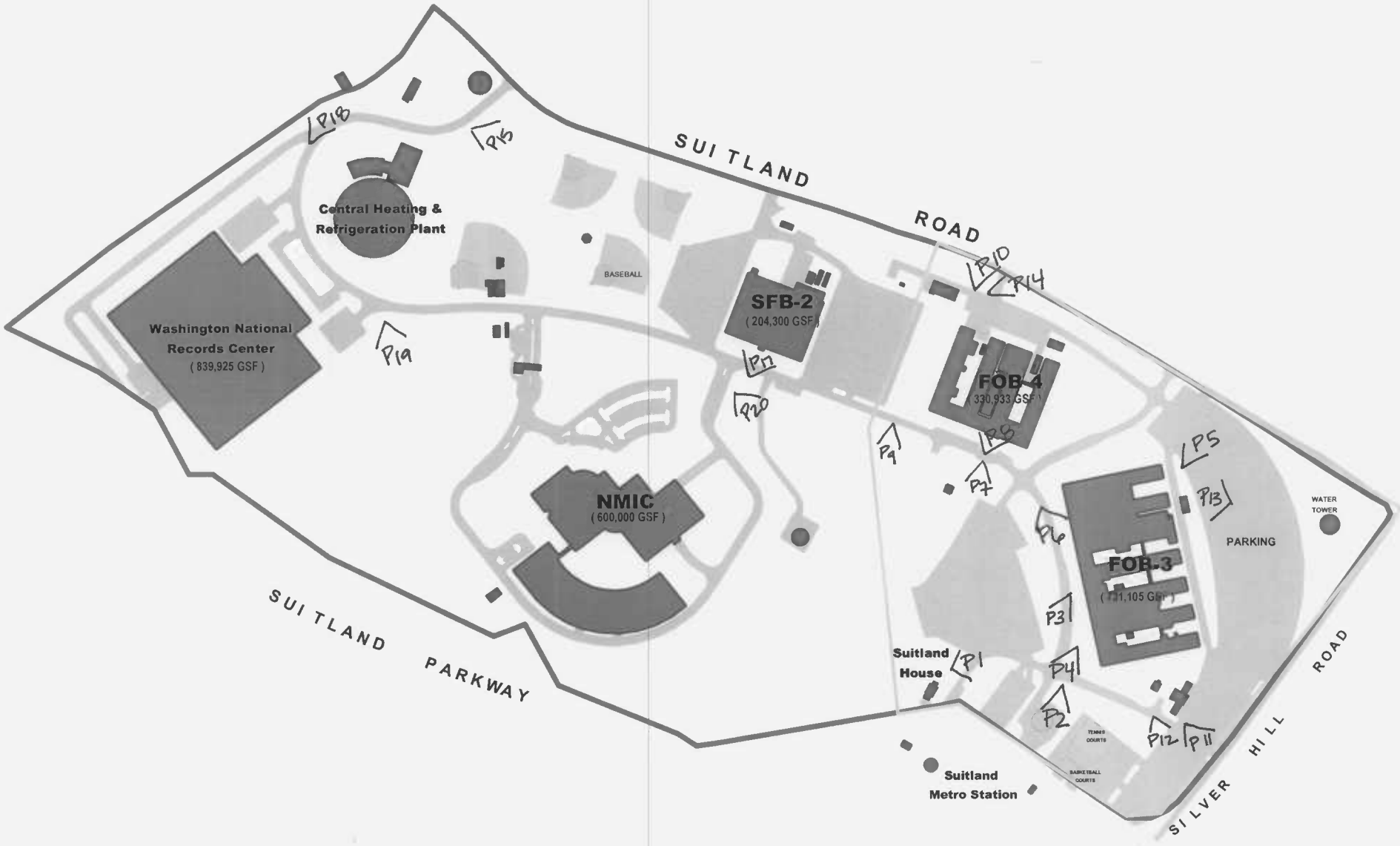
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Brooks Barwell, Cultural Resource Specialist		
organization	EDAW	date	9/14/01
street & number	601 Prince Street	telephone	703/836-1414
city or town	Alexandria	state	VA

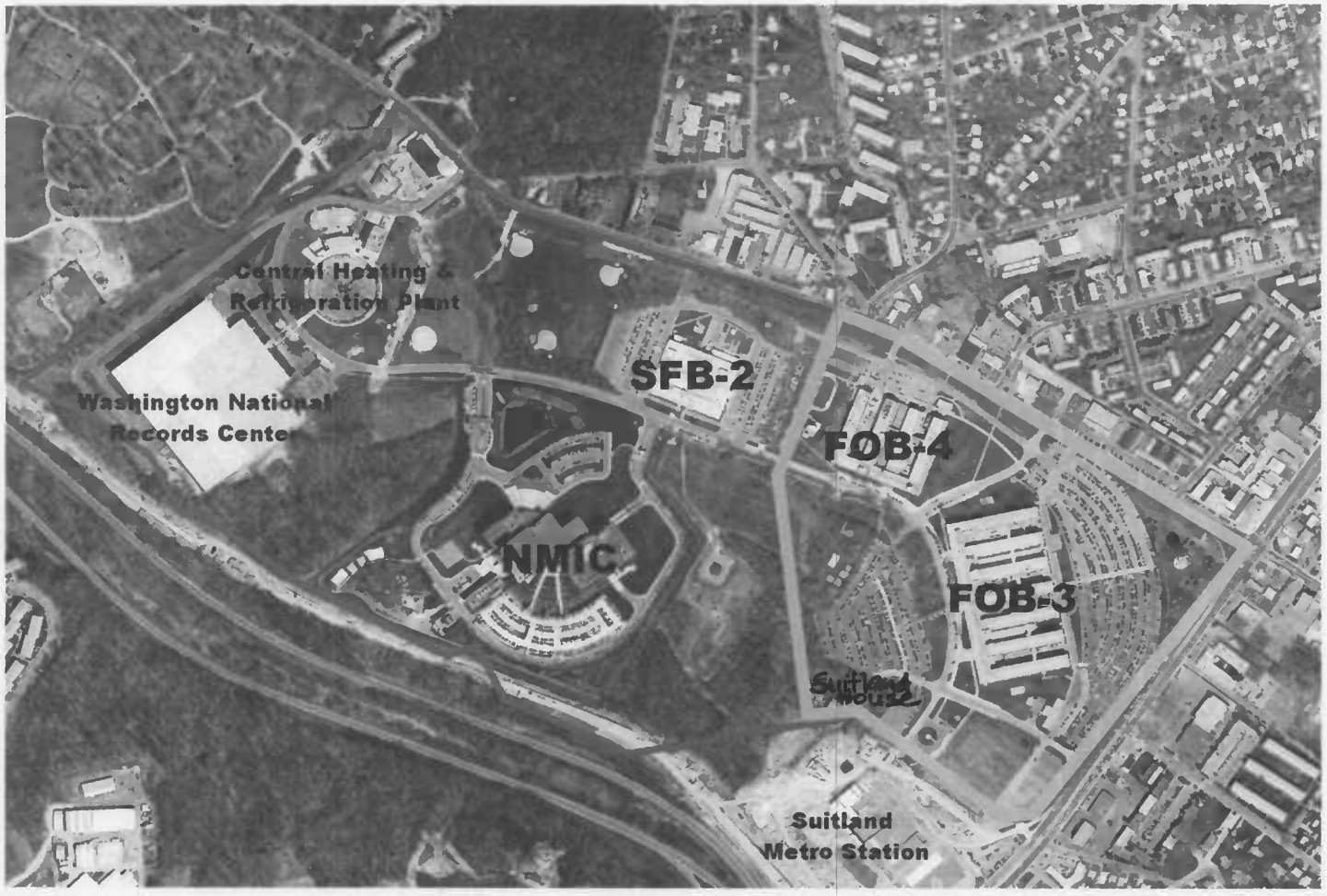
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600


SUITLAND ROAD
SUITLAND PARKWAY
SILVER HILL ROAD
Central Heating & Refrigeration Plant
Washington National Records Center
(839,925 GSF)
BASEBALL
SFB-2
(204,300 GSF)
FOB-4
(330,933 GSF)
NMIC
(600,000 GSF)
FOB-3
(731,105 GSF)
PARKING
WATER TOWER
Suitland House
Suitland Metro Station
TENNIS COURTS
BASKETBALL COURTS
P1
P2
P3
P4
P5
P6
P7
P8
P9
P10
P11
P12
P13
P14
P15
P17
P18
P19
P20
N

PG: 75A-37



SUITLAND FEDERAL CENTER

LEGEND :

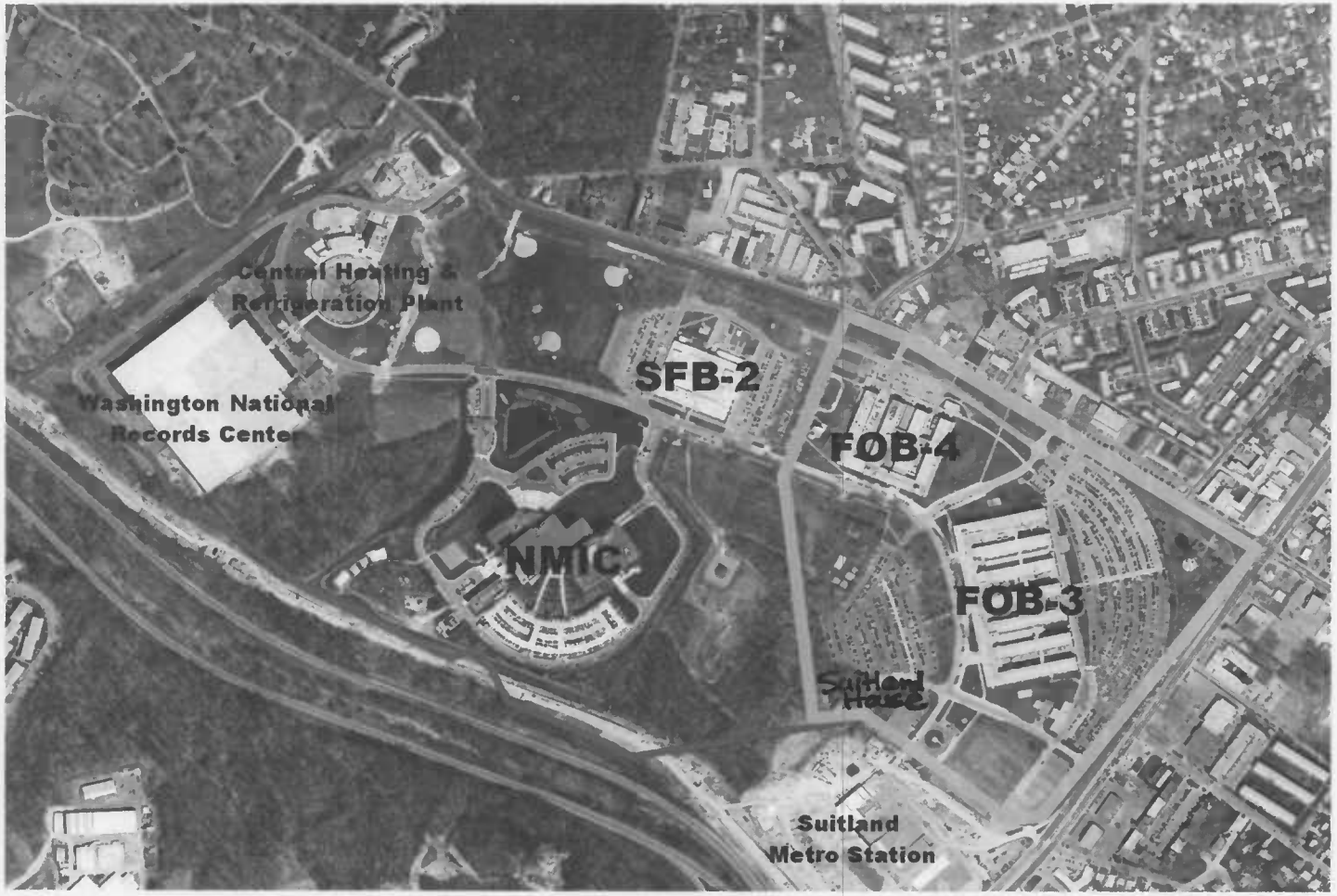
SFC Boundary Line

Suitland Historic District

N

0 200 400 600 800 1000 Feet

PG: 754-37



SUITLAND FEDERAL CENTER

LEGEND :

SFC Boundary Line

Suitland Historic District

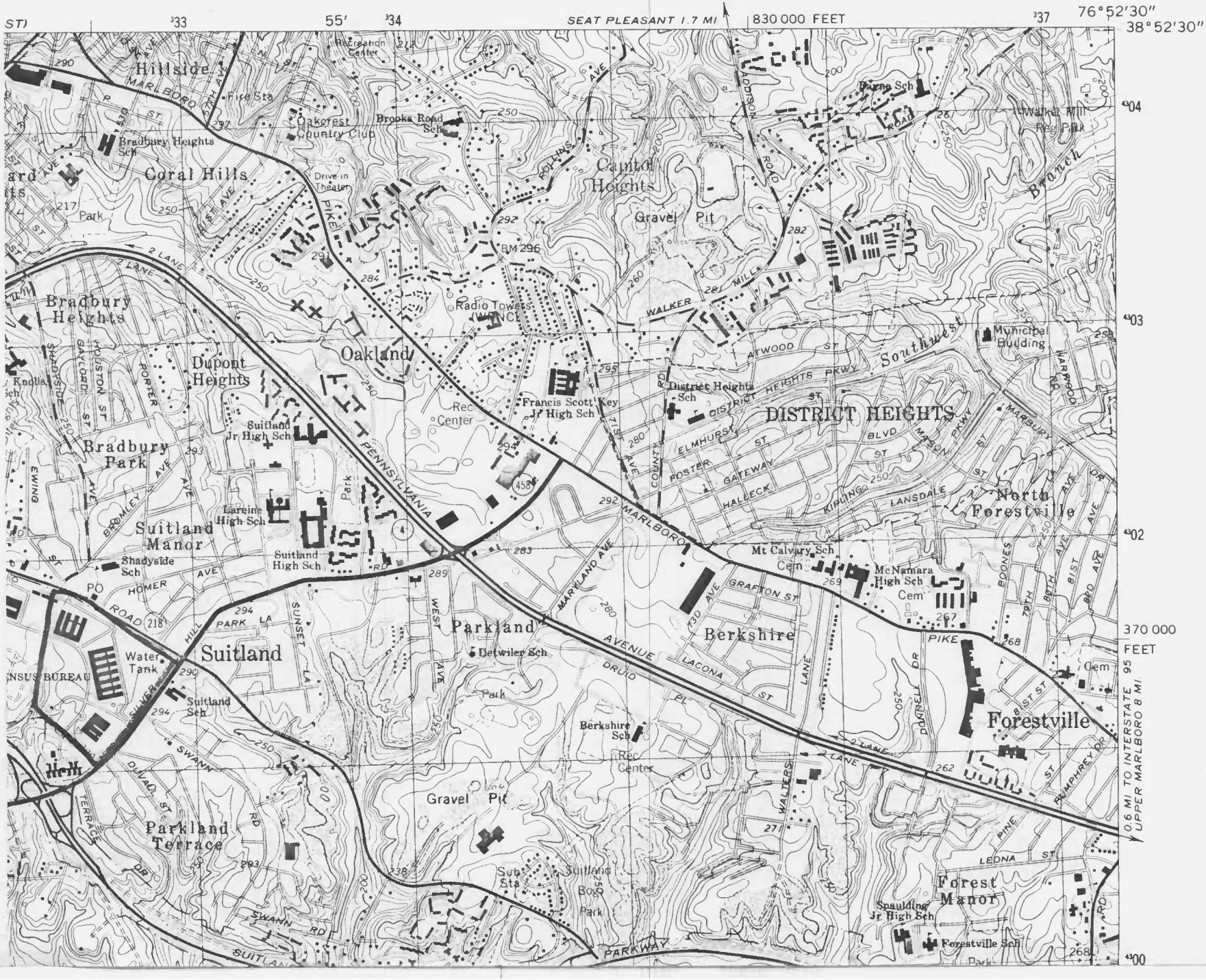
N

0 200 400 600 800 1000 Feet

RG: 754-37

ANACOSTIA QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA–MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC–BATHYMETRIC)

5561 IV NE (LANHAM)



CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500

RE: 754-37

P1:75A
Scotland House, [illegible] Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena [illegible]
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
Scotland House from NE
P1

PA 75A-37
FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo [illegible]
November, 2001
Negative: MD-HPO
FOB-3 from SW
P2

BUREAU
OF
THE CENSUS
FB 3

PA 75A-37
FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jelena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative MD-HD
FOB-3 main entrance
P3

PA 75A-37
FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jeleven/Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
FOB-3 front SW entrance
P4

PA: 75-37
FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mastrangelo
November 2001
Negative: MD-HPD
FOB-3 from NE
P5

PA 75A-37
FOB-4, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
FOB-4 from SE
P6

DEPARTMENT
OF
COMMERCE
FB 4
4401
BUREAU OF THE
CENSUS
NATIONAL OCEANIC
AND ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ICE CENTER
NAVAL ICE CENTER

RA-75A-37
FOB-4, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jelena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHFO
FOB-4 maintenance from S
P7

PA:75A-37
FOB-4, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jeleni Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
View FOB-4 main entrance to S
P8

PA: 75A-37
FOB-4 Suitland Federal Center
Prince Georges County, MD
Photo: Elena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
view from W of FOB-4 to N
Pg

PA:75A-37
FOB-4, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
FOB-4 from NW
PIO

PA-75A-37

building near FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mostovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
Boundary Conditions
P11

PA 75A-37
FOB-3, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo Jelena Mastilovic
Number 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
FOB-3 from SE
P12

PA-75A-37

SFB-2, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
SFB-2 [illegible] NE
P14

15

PA: 75-A-37

radio antennae, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jelena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
radio antennae from SE

PA: 75A-37
NMIC, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Jelena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
NMIC from NE
P17

PA-75A-37
NRC, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mostkoric
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
NRC from NE
P18

PA 75A-37

Central Heating + Refrigeration Plant, Southeast and Southwest Federal Center

Prince George's County, MD

Photo: Jelena Mastilovic

November 2001

Negative: MD SHPO

CHSRP from SE

P19

PA:75A-37
NW corner, Suitland Federal Center
Prince George's County, MD
Photo: Selena Mastilovic
November 2001
Negative: MD SHPO
NW corner of campus
P20