

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NCRS use only

received

Date entered

1. Name

historic Towson Academy

and/or common National Guard Armory

2. Location

street & number Washington Street and Chesapeake Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Towson N/A vicinity of _____ congressional district Second

state Maryland code 24 county Baltimore code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name State of Maryland Military Department CONTACT: Col. Raymond Clift
728-3388 x244

street & number 231 West Hoffman Street

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of _____ state Maryland 21201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Towson state Maryland 21204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust

Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980

federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Towson Academy is a two story brick structure with full basement, faced with a smooth light-colored, marble-like stone veneer. Almost completely devoid of ornamentation, the armory presents a severe appearance on its front (Washington Street) facade, which faces west. Oriented to the west, the front facade reads from south to north corners as follows:

The first floor and basement form a section of seven 2/6 casement windows at first floor level. The southern half of the 14-bay drill hall is visible above the first floor section, its bays punctuated by 2/6 casement windows. The roof over the drill hall is a low-pitched gable.

The center block is a simple screen, containing a shallow entry hall in front of the drill hall. Four narrow 2/3 casement windows at first and second floor levels of the center block flank a high arch over wide double doors. The interior wall of the arch is plastered and painted. Four cement steps lead to a cement slab porch before the doorway. Four short pillars of the same stone as the facade veneer flank the steps, each topped with a trumpet shaped ornament of black metal. Iron railings connect the pillars and surround the porch. The front yard contains a flagpole and is pleasantly landscaped with shrubs and grass.

The building is symmetrical and identical on both sides of the center block.

The north (Chesapeake Avenue) facade features four windows (2/6 casement) in one story sections which flank the two-story entrance to the drill hall. The entry projects substantially from the side sections with double doors recessed slightly and surmounted by a large fanlight. A brief flight of cement steps with walls faced with veneer matching the facade lead to the street. At the extreme northeast corner is a driving ramp at ground level leading into a wide garage door.

The south facade, facing onto an alley, has 11 2/6 casement windows on the first floor. The drill hall wall above presents a blank face.

The rear of the building has been altered considerably with two story additions faced with an unmatched stone veneer.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1946	<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 1933 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C
Applicable Exceptions: none
Significance Evaluated: state

The Towson, Maryland Academy is primarily significant for its association with the reorganization and expansion of the National Guard system in the twentieth century. It derives additional significance from its role as a social center for its community, a function it has served continuously since its construction date. Architecturally, the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type, including a T shaped plan with a two story front "head house" section and a one-story perpendicular "drill hall" extending to the rear; its facade is detailed to recall Medieval fortifications, with towers flanking the central entrance and strip buttresses.

Built in 1933 at a cost of \$75,000, the Towson Academy is among the last of the group of armories built in Maryland. It occupies the former site of the Smedley House, a hotel made popular as a summer rendezvous by fashionable Baltimore families around the turn of the century. The post-war building boom which radically changed the character of downtown Towson has caused a shift in scale favoring high-rise office tower development. The Towson Academy, together with the police station opposite (across Washington Street) and the courthouse diagonally opposite on the northwest corner of Washington Street and Chesapeake Avenue, contribute to the diminished nucleus of older buildings in the center of downtown Towson. The structure's simple sturdy lines blend successfully with the rich mix of building styles in the immediate vicinity.

Severe shortage of vehicle storage areas on the armory site and problems of congestion in Towson area in general have no doubt played some part in the facility's diminished usefulness as an armory. While still in some minimal use by the National Guard, the building is mainly utilized by community groups for meetings, and the drill hall is heavily used by young adults for dancing classes.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Towson Academy

Continuation sheet Baltimore County, Maryland Item number 10 Page 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description:

In Baltimore County:

BEGINNING for the same at the corner formed by the intersection of the southernmost side of Chesapeake Avenue with the easternmost side of Washington Avenue running thence binding on the southernmost side of Chesapeake Avenue south twenty-six degrees fifty-three minutes east one hundred and seventy two feet thence parallel to Washington Avenue south Thirteen degrees nineteen minutes west one hundred and fifty-five feet running thence for a line of division north seventy-six degrees fifty three minutes west one hundred and seventy-two feet to the easternmost side of Washington Avenue aforesaid running thence binding on the easternmost side of Washington Avenue north thirteen degrees nineteen minutes east on hundred and fifty-five feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property comprises the total parcel historically associated with the resource.

BA-1438



Towson Armory

BA-1438
TOWSON ACADEMY
BALTIMORE COUNTY
MARYLAND

18-361750-4362100

MARYLAND
NATIONAL GUARD
ARMORIES
THEMATIC GROUP



39° 22' 30"

76° 37' 30"

91000 FEET

BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 11) 4.4 MI.

9. Major Bibliographical References

BA-1438

Land Records of Baltimore County, Liber 913 Folio 175
Vertical files of the Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library Baltimore

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.600 acre

Quadrangle name Towson, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	3	6	1	7	5	1	0	4	3	6	1	2	1	0	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing								

B

Zone			Easting						Northing								

C

Zone			Easting						Northing								

D

Zone			Easting						Northing								

E

Zone			Easting						Northing								

F

Zone			Easting						Northing								

G

Zone			Easting						Northing								

H

Zone			Easting						Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susanne Moore, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Maryland Historical Trust date July 1980; revised 7/85

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-2438

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

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

8-14-85

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCERS use only

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

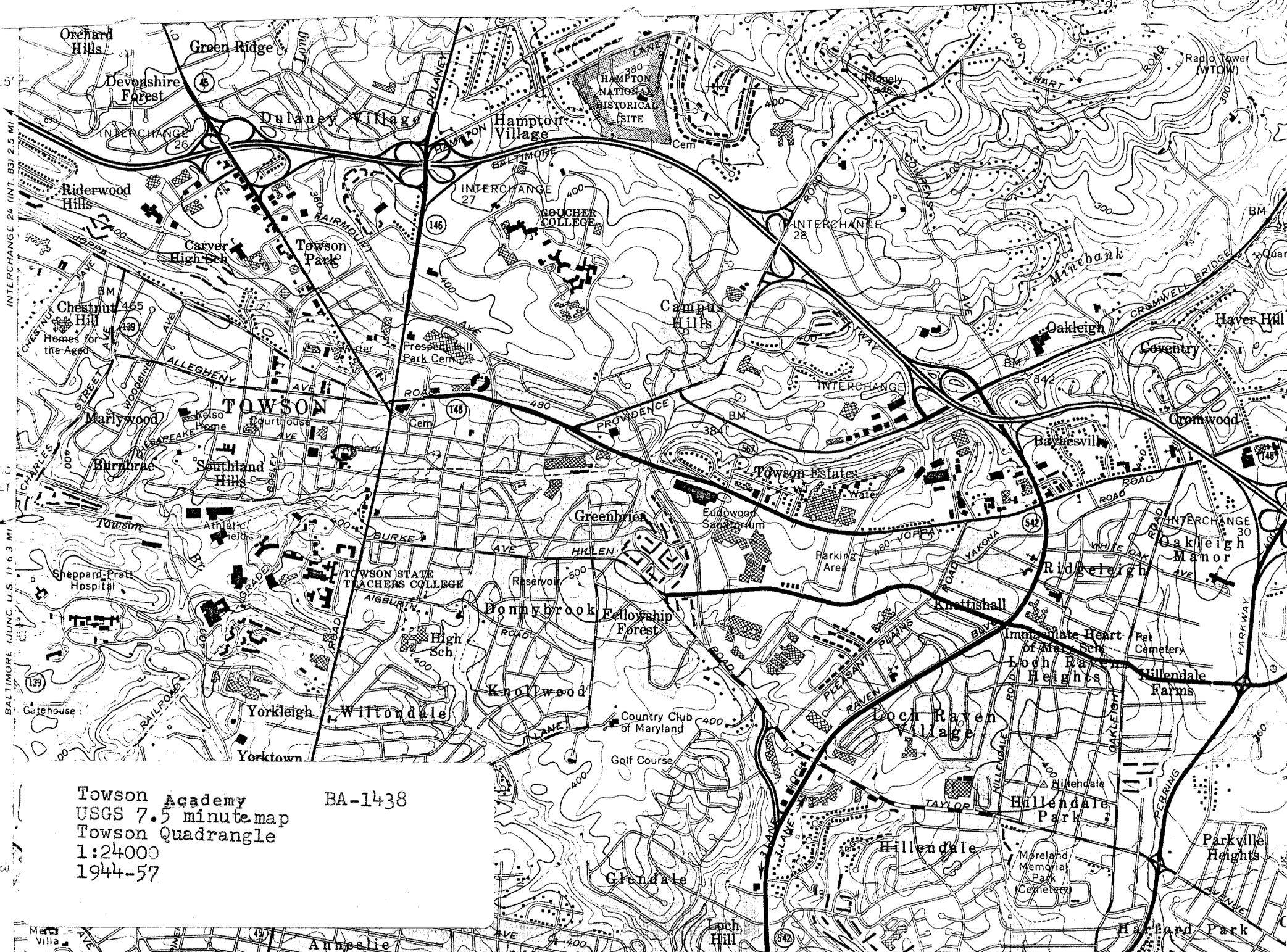
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Towson Academy
USGS 7.5 minute map
Towson Quadrangle
1:24000
1944-57

BA-1438

INTERCHANGE 24 (INT. B3) 2.5 MI. A

BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 1) 6.3 MI.

Mary Villa
Anneslie
AVE
400



Towson Armory BA-1438
Baltimore County, Maryland
photo: Susanne Moore
neg loc: Md Hist Trust, Annapolis, Md
July 1980
Northwest corner
2/3



Towson Armory BA-1438
Baltimore County, Maryland
photo: Susanne Moore
neg loc: Md Hist Trust, Annapolis, Md
July 1980
West elevation
1/3



Towson Armory BA-1438
Baltimore County, Maryland
photo: Susanne Moore
neg loc: Md Hist Trust, Annapolis, Md
July 1980
Southeast corner
3/3