# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Historic Resources of Morganton

XX MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

**HISTORIC**
Avery Avenue School

**AND/OR COMMON**
Catawba Valley Legal Services

## 2 LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**
200 Avery Avenue

**CITY, TOWN**
Morganton

**STATE**
North Carolina

**MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION**

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY
- **DISTRICT**
- **BUILDING(S)**
- **STRUCTURE**
- **SITE**
- **OBJECT**

### OWNERSHIP
- **PUBLIC**
- **PRIVATE**
- **BOTH**

### PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- **IN PROCESS**
- **BEING CONSIDERED**
- **NA**

### STATUS
- **X_OCCUPIED**
- **UNOCCUPIED**
- **WORK IN PROGRESS**
- **ACCESSIBLE**
- **YES: RESTRICTED**
- **YES: UNRESTRICTED**
- **NO**

### PRESENT USE
- **X_AGRICULTURE**
- **MUSEUM**
- **COMMERCIAL**
- **PARK**
- **EDUCATIONAL**
- **PRIVATE RESIDENCE**
- **ENTERTAINMENT**
- **RELIGIOUS**
- **GOVERNMENT**
- **SCIENTIFIC**
- **INDUSTRIAL**
- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **MILITARY**
- **OTHER Legal office**

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**
Burke County %Steve Ericson
Burke County Planner

**STREET & NUMBER**
Parker Road Human Resources Center, Box 219

**CITY, TOWN**
Morganton

**STATE**
North Carolina

**VICTORY OF**

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC**
Burke County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**
South Green Street

**CITY, TOWN**
Morganton

**STATE**
North Carolina

**VICTORY OF**

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME / TITLE**
Suzanne Pickens Wylie

**ORGANIZATION**
Preservation Consultant

**DATE**
July 31, 1986

**TELEPHONE**
(704) 527-1610

**CITY OR TOWN**
Charlotte

**STATE**
North Carolina
The Avery Avenue School, believed to have been designed by Charles Christian Hook, a prominent Charlotte architect, was constructed in 1923 as the first separate high school building for Morganton. The property was used as a school until 1957 when it was converted to offices for Burke County. In 1982 the building was renovated for Catawba Valley Legal Services. Although modern tinted windows were installed at this time and the inside was completely remodelled, the school still retains sufficient integrity to illustrate its architectural significance to Morganton and its educational significance to Morganton as the city’s first separate high school. In addition, the building is important as Morganton’s oldest remaining, intact educational building.

The Avery Avenue School is a two-story, brick, crescent-shaped building with a full basement. An unusual polygonal center section features a pyramidal roof covered in mission tile and topped by a small belfry. This section is flanked by symmetrical flat-roofed wings.

Ornamentation on the building is highly eclectic and difficult to categorize. The center section displays a cornice crested with acanthus leaves and a frieze of zigzag mosaics. The main entrance is in the first story of this section and is surrounded by a simplified Tuscan order architrave that also frames a window above the door. Fenestration in the wings consists of bands of five windows with simple stone surrounds. The basement level on the sides and rear is of stone and features bands of five small windows. Small one-story sections span the space between the center section and wings, cornice and frieze level. The bands of windows in the wings are topped by centered panels of multi-colored mosaics and terra cotta heraldic symbols. Larger versions of those panels decorate the ends of the wings nearest the center section. Terra cotta urns punctuate the corners of the wing roofs. The rear of the building features a continuous band of twelve windows on the second story and a one-story, projecting rectangular wing that held the auditorium. The side wings have single windows on the first and second stories and single windows that light the stairwells.

Originally constructed to contain eight classrooms and a small auditorium, the interior was completely remodeled during its conversion to offices. Only the end stairwells remain intact.

Resources Count: 1 Building
The Avery Avenue School, located on the corner of Avery Avenue and Bouchelle Street, was constructed in 1923 as the first separate high school building in Morganton. The school is believed to have been designed by Charles Christian Hook, a prominent Charlotte architect, and is architecturally unique in Morganton. The crescent-shaped, brick building features a very unusual polygonal center section with a pyramidal roof covered in mission tile and topped by a small belfry. Ornamentation is highly imaginative and eclectic and includes a cornice bordered with acanthus leaves and a frieze of zigzag mosaics. Fenestration in the wings is topped by centered panels of multi-colored mosaics and terra cotta heraldic symbols. Larger versions of those panels decorate the ends of the wings at the center section. The school was designed to contain eight classrooms and a small auditorium. The interior space has been completely renovated for modern office space.

The Avery Avenue School is also significant in the history of education in Morganton as the first separate high school building and as the oldest school building remaining intact in the city today. The construction of a separate high school building rather than expansion of existing graded school facilities represents a progressive decision to accommodate the special and different needs of elementary and secondary school students. The school is the second building constructed by the Morganton School District, created in 1905. The original 1906 graded school building is no longer standing, therefore the Avery Avenue School is the earliest educational building extant in the city. The period of significance ends with its conversion to an elementary school in 1926 when a new, larger high school was built.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The Avery Avenue School is significant in the history of education in Morganton as the first separate high school building in the city. This represented a progressive attitude on the part of the school board, recognizing that secondary school students had specialized needs that could not be met on a graded school campus. The building is also the oldest educational building in the city.

C. The Avery Avenue School is significant in architecture for its unusual design and eclectic and highly imaginative ornamentation. In addition, the building is believed to be the design of Charles Christian Hook, a prominent North Carolina architect.
The Avery Avenue School, constructed in 1923, is architecturally significant in Morganton as a very unusual building stylistically and because it is believed to be the design of Charles Christian Hook, a prominent Charlotte architect. The school is also important in the history of education in Morganton as the first separate high school building.

The need for new school space was first noted in 1920. The 1906 Morganton Graded School was filled to capacity and school officials were faced with the question of whether to add on to the existing facility or to build a new building.

Recognizing that the educational needs of elementary and high school students were very different, the school board decided to construct a new separate secondary building. This decision represents progressive thinking on the part of the school district and was a major advancement in education in Morganton.

The board contracted with an architect, believed to be Charles Christian Hook, to design the building. The school was completed and occupied in 1923. Unfortunately, the board had not reckoned on the tremendous population growth Morganton saw in the 1920s. Within a few short years the Avery Avenue School was filled beyond capacity. A new high school was constructed on College Street in 1926 and the Avery Avenue School was used for additional elementary classroom space, a use it served until 1957. After that the school was used for a variety of purposes including Catawba Valley Legal Services. The second floor of the building is currently being renovated for additional office space. The school is the oldest educational building surviving in the city.

The Avery Avenue School is a very unusual building that defies being placed in a stylistic category. The building is crescent shaped with a central polygonal section sporting a green tile polygonal roof. Applied terra cotta ornamentation is highly imaginative and eclectic. The design of the building was very controversial in 1923 and has remained so throughout the years.

(For footnotes, see Cover Form, Item number 9.)

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Cover Form, Section 9.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately .94 acres

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the Avery Avenue School National Register nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Burke County Tax Map #42-2 drawn on a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The boundary includes the lot on which the school is located and excludes surrounding modern construction.