

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Catawba County Multiple Resource Nomination

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Elliott-Carnegie Library

AND/OR COMMON

(former) Elliott-Carnegie Library

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

415 First Avenue NW

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

037

COUNTY

Catawba

CODE

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input checked="" 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 | <u>N/A</u> <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 type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Inform Properties Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1708

CITY TOWN

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28603

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Register of Deeds Office

STREET & NUMBER

Catawba County Justice Center

CITY TOWN

Newton

STATE

North Carolina

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips, Consultant

Historical Research: Jerry L. Cross, Research Branch
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 15, 1983

STREET & NUMBER

637 N. Spring Street

TELEPHONE

919/727-1968

CITY OR TOWN

Winston-Salem

STATE

North Carolina 27101

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

The former Elliott-Carnegie Library is a small, one-story brick veneer structure built in 1922. Despite its small size, the building is distinguished by its Georgian Revival design with well-executed Classical details.

The former library is three bays wide and two bays deep and is raised on a high foundation, with multi-paned basement windows, which also serves as a water table outlined by a white cement string course. Single shouldered chimneys with paved cement shoulders and caps rise from the center point of east and west elevations. The gable roof has stepped parapet ends. A wealth of Classical detailing is concentrated on the north facade of the library in a revival interpretation of the Georgian style. Pairs of fluted Doric pilasters accent all four corners of the building and define the bays of the facade. Resting on the pilasters is a full entablature with architrave, frieze and boxed cornice with modillions. The centerpiece of the facade is the elaborate Georgian Revival style entrance, reached by a flight of concrete and tile steps with ironwork railing. The glass and wood-paneled door is flanked by engaged Corinthian columns and headed by a semi-circular, traceried fanlight which is outlined by a molding with keystone. The entrance is crowned by a heavily molded pediment with modillion blocks. Large windows with heavy sills and keystoned, soldier course lintels nearly fill the outer bays of the facade. The original sash were replaced by glass blocks in the 1950s. East and west side windows which flank the chimneys are identical to those on the front but smaller. They, too, have been filled with glass blocks. Flanking the chimney stacks on east and west sides are quarter circle louvered ventilators. The below-grade entrance to the basement is on the east side. This entrance and the steps leading to it are covered by an added flat-roofed canopy supported by iron poles.

The interior of the former library was remodelled during the 1950s when it was converted for use as radio station WHKY by the Catawba Valley Broadcasting Company. The two working fireplaces were enclosed, and the interior is now finished with celotex ceiling, plywood paneling, sheetrock partitions and carpeted floors.

Around 1979 the present owners, Inform Properties, Inc., added a large one-story rear addition with dark red brick veneer walls (apparently an attempt to coordinate with the older structure), flat roof, and no windows.

The former Elliott-Carnegie Library is located at the southwest corner of First Avenue and Fourth Street N.W. in Hickory. Boxwoods line the front of the building, and a large oak tree is situated northeast of it, but little other vegetation remains on the lot. The building is separated from the streets by small parking lots on north and east sides. The site of the library is in a transitional area of Hickory between commercial and residential sections. East and northeast of the library are commercial buildings and a church. North and west are a combination of houses and small commercial structures. South of the library lot are the Southern Railroad tracks.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

B SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL

_____ STATE

 X

_____ LOCAL

| 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/HUMANITARIAN | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1922

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Worth Elliott/Carnegie Library, which opened in 1922, was part of the educational and cultural maturation of a city that only began to develop in earnest in the late nineteenth century. Emerging from the failure of a rental library in 1893, the movement for a public library gathered city support in the early years of the twentieth century. The first tax based public library in North Carolina was established in Durham in 1897, barely a decade earlier, making Hickory one of the early leaders in the movement. The Worth Elliott/Carnegie Library was the culmination of the effort and the last public library anywhere to receive a grant from the Carnegie Foundation that funded 2,507 such facilities worldwide. The Worth Elliott/Carnegie Library Building served the citizens of Hickory for thirty years before the larger Elbert A. Ivey Memorial Library was constructed. The older building now houses an advertising and public relations firm.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Elliott-Carnegie Library is associated with the educational and cultural maturation of the city of Hickory during the 20th century.
- B. Associated with the Carnegie Foundation, the Elliott-Carnegie Library was the last public library to be funded by that foundation. In addition to the funds from the Carnegie Foundation, subscriptions from the citizens of Hickory, as well as a property tax specifically for that purpose raised additional funds for the building and development of the library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

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The Worth Elliott/Carnegie Library, which opened in 1922, emerged out of a cultural and educational climate which had developed in the growing city of Hickory. Hickory drew its first vitality from the Western North Carolina Railroad which reached there about 1860.¹ Growth was slow until the first industry of size, the Piedmont Wagon Company, was organized there in 1882. Over the next two decades, the town became a center for textiles and a fledgling furniture industry.²

As the city grew, it acquired both educational and cultural facilities, including academies, two colleges and a theater. A male high school and a female school were in operation as early as 1872, and a coed primary school and a Lutheran seminary were added by 1896.³ Highland Academy opened in 1882 but was superseded by Lenoir College /now Lenoir-Rhyne/ in 1891. The other college, Claremont College, opened in 1880.⁴ Hickory from 1886 also had a theater which featured minstrel shows and also was home to a local amateur theatrical group.⁵ Such enrichments to the life of the community created a climate favorable to the establishment of a public library.

The presence of a free public library in Hickory began in 1893 with the failure of a rental library on Union Square. The rental books were purchased by a group of townspeople and a public library was established, financed by contributions and the receipts from a series of ice cream suppers and theatricals. First operated by volunteers, support for the library was organized in 1907 when the Hickory Library Association was formed by Mrs. O. M. Royster, Colonel C. A. and Mrs. Cilley, Mrs. J. A. Martin, Mrs. C. N. Granec, Misses Amy, Emily, and Julia Wheeler, Miss Josie Person, and Miss Ada Schenck. This group, with membership fees and donations from the town and private citizens, increased the book collection.⁶

Contributions made by the town of Hickory after 1907 made it an early corporate contributor to a library in North Carolina. The first tax-supported public library in the state began at Durham in 1897 while Greensboro, Charlotte and Winston and Salem followed suit in 1902, 1903, and 1906 respectively. As late as 1922, only thirty-five of the state's sixty-two largest towns had public libraries.⁷

The Hickory library continued as a volunteer effort under the Library Association. Relying on contributed space, the library operated in four locations by 1917. A year earlier, however, the Library Association under the leadership of Mrs. J. Worth Elliott began a movement to secure funding from the Carnegie Foundation for a permanent home.⁸

The Carnegie Foundation was an obvious choice for funding since it had been providing such grants since 1881. In all, the foundation sponsored 1,900 free public libraries in the United States and Canada out of 2,507 worldwide. Ten of these were in North Carolina.⁹ The Elliott library was the last of these, indeed the last public library anywhere, to receive a Carnegie grant.¹⁰

In the spring of 1917, J. Worth and Mrs. Elliott pledged to contribute a lot for such a Carnegie library. Worth Elliott died in 1918, and in 1919 his widow transferred the property to the city in his memory.¹¹ Elliott had been a prominent member of Hickory's business community, a director of the First National Bank, an officer of Elliott Building Company after 1908, and an original stockholder of the Hickory Daily Record in 1915.¹²

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The approval of the Hickory library by the Carnegie Foundation brought a grant of \$14,000. An additional \$3,000 was raised by public subscription and by the presentation of a historical pageant. The people of Hickory voted approval of a tax of .05¢ on \$100 valuation for the library's support.¹³ Construction was superintended by R. G. Henry, a former city manager of Hickory, and the library was opened August 14, 1922.¹⁴

The library continued under the direction of the Library Association, whose officers at the opening of the new building were Mrs. Worth Elliott, president; Mrs. J. A. Martin, secretary; and board members Mrs. W. B. Councill, Mayor M. H. Yount, and J. L. Cilley.¹⁵ The library was placed under a board of trustees by the city of Hickory in 1926, consisting of Mrs. Elliott, chairman; M. H. Yount, vice-chairman, Mrs. T. A. Mott, secretary-treasurer; Mayor S. L. Whitener, Mr. W. B. Councill, and O. G. Wolff.¹⁶ Miss Ruby McWhirter served as librarian from the opening until 1923, being succeeded by Miss Annie Maude Dawson from 1923 to 1926; Miss Emma C. Bonney from 1926 to 1938; and Grace Patrick who served from 1938 through the move of the library to a new building in 1952 and for a while afterwards.¹⁷

The library grew in popularity with circulation reaching 72,668 volumes in 1937, some of which may have been the result of the public's need for inexpensive entertainment during the depression.¹⁸ It was also undoubtedly related to a general increase in literacy which came with the public school system established in Hickory under a special charter in 1903.¹⁹ As early as 1938 a need for more space for the library was evident.²⁰ Growth of the book collection was severely restricted by a lack of shelf space, a problem that did not abate until the Elbert A. Ivey Library was opened on March 29, 1952.²¹

The Carnegie building was sold in 1952 to the Catawba Valley Broadcasting Company, and became the studio of station WHKY.²² Realtors Glen R. Boyd and James W. Hassell purchased the property in 1969 and sold it to the Inform Properties, Inc., in 1970.²³ It now houses the offices of the advertising and public relations firm.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Charles J. Preslar, Jr. (ed.), A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954), 243, 350-351, hereinafter cited as Preslar, Catawba County.

² George W. Hahn, The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War . . . Together with a Sketch of Catawba County from 1860 to 1911 (Hickory: Clay, 1911), 47-48.

³ Levi Branson, Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1872, p. 56; 1896, p. 171.

⁴ Preslar, Catawba County, 149-152.

⁵ J. Weston Clinard, Clinard Looks Back (Hickory: Hickory Printing Co., 1962), 61-64.

⁶ Preslar, Catawba County, 464.

⁷ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 595.

⁸ Preslar, Catawba County, 464; and Hickory Daily Record, October 7, 1916.

⁹ M. E. Anders, "Contributions of the Carnegie Corporation and General Education Board to Libraries in the Southeast" (Chapel Hill: Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1950), 14-21.

¹⁰ Preslar, Catawba County, 464.

¹¹ Catawba County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Court-house, Newton, Deed Book 141, p. 338, hereinafter cited as Catawba County Deed Book; and Preslar, Catawba County, 464.

¹² J. Worth Elliott Vertical File, Elbert Ivey Memorial Library, Hickory.

¹³ Preslar, Catawba County, 464.

¹⁴ Hickory Daily Record, August 15, 1922.

¹⁵ Hickory Daily Record, August 15, 1922.

¹⁶ Preslar, Catawba County, 465.

¹⁷ Preslar, Catawba County, 465.

¹⁸ Preslar, Catawba County, 465.

¹⁹ Preslar, Catawba County, 155.

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Footnotes (continued)

²⁰ Tar Heel Women, IX, No. 2 (September, 1938).

²¹ Preslar, Catawba County, 465.

²² Catawba County Deed Book, 438, p. 579.

²³ Catawba County Deed Book 942, p. 598; and Book 960, p. 179.

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Elliott, J. Worth, Vertical File, Elbert A. Ivey Memorial Library, Hickory.

Hahn, George W. The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War . . . Together with a Sketch of Catawba County from 1860 to 1911. Hickory: Clay, 1911.

Hickory Daily Record. October 7, 1916; August 15, 1922.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. The History of a Southern State: North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.

Preslar, Charles J., ed. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, 1954.

Tar Heel Women. Vol. IX, No. 2 (September, 1938).

Joseph Alfred Moretz House

17 468200/3956780

2

HICKORY

Houck's Chapel

17 466660/3955500

First Presbyterian Church

17 469240/3954440

Oakwood Historic District

- A 17 468520/3955000
- B 17 469120/3955080
- C 17 469230/3954720
- D 17 468470/3954060

John A. Lentz House

17 468120/3954580

3

A

B

C

Claremont Historic District

- A 17 469440/3954930
- B 17 470040/3954930
- C 17 470020/3954170
- D 17 469410/3954190

Piedmont Wagon Company

17 467930/3954100

4

5

6

Clement Geitner House

17 468720/3954140

Elliott-Carnegie Library

17 468780/3954160

Kenworth Historic District

17 470220/3953600

Second Street Place Historic District

17 469200/3953960

40 MI TO LENOIR
ASHVILLE 75 MI
MORGANTOWN 19 MI

35° 45'

3955

3954

3953

1534



Inform, Inc.
ADVERTISING
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CATAWBA VALLEY HOSEY ASSN
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TARHEEL OFFICE PRODUCTS ASSN