

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Arcade Building

AND/OR COMMON

The Grove Arcade (Asheville Federal Building)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Battery Park, Battle Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Asheville

VICINITY OF

11th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

37

Buncombe

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Federal Government

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Buncombe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Asheville

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Grove Arcade building, occupying a full city block, is executed in a flamboyant and eclectic style with many Tudor Revival elements. The massive building is divided into two blocks: the lower is a rectangular slab with rounded corners; it is capped by the second block, a two-tier set-back, the visual foundation for a planned skyscraper tower that was never built. The roof deck around the set-back tower was to serve as a roof garden with a band shell, restaurant, and assembly room. In the center of the upper story of both north and south elevations of the set-back is a bronze semi-elliptical balcony, an elegant reminder of the early days of the Arcade, when the roof deck was used for outdoor entertainment.

Both north and south wings of the lower block are constructed of reinforced concrete, while the center is built up around a steel frame intended to carry the extra weight of the tower stories. The exterior of the entire building is covered with large granite blocks which are trimmed with a profusion of molded terra cotta pilasters. The north wing is two stories high and the south wing is two stories plus an intermediate mezzanine level.

The four major entrances, each one located in the center of an elevation, are deep barrel-vaulted openings filled with plate glass. Each entrance rises to the height of the roof deck and there supports the parapet which rims the entire building. Above the archivolts of the barrel-vaulted exterior arch of each entrance, the parapet wall is broken by a plaque bearing the name "GROVE" in high relief. Below the legend, to either side, is a large ram's head serving as a combination gargoyle and cartouche. The parapet above is consistently treated across all elevations and consists of rectangular panels decorated with flowing tracery. Pairs of tracery units are linked as halves of a heart and surmounted by an acanthus finial.

The main (north) facade of the Grove Arcade is dramatized by a ziggurat-like arrangement of huge ramps, which lead in two long reversing flights from the central entrance to the roof deck. Griffins, each about six feet tall, stand at the base of each ramp on molded pedestals, also about six feet high. Situated at the second level of each ramp are three trapezoidal panels featuring quasi-medieval Labors, stylized iconographic representations of various occupations, including that of the architect, a contorted figure with a compass and a scroll underlined by his name, Charles N. Parker.

Fenestration is in keeping with the rich eclecticism of the building. The ground levels originally had huge plate glass windows but these have been removed and the openings enclosed with pressed brick laid in mechanical bond and surmounted by small frosted multi-lights pierced by vents. The east and west sides of the second story of the northern wing have retained their one-over-one sash windows with jaunty Tudor-arched architraves. The third level of the southern wing is identically treated, while the mezzanine level is pierced by one-over-one sash with rectilinear molded casings above flat-paneled aprons. Similar windows appear on the second level of the northern facade. The windows of the first level of the set-back block are rectangular sash divided into three vertical units, with a vertical flat-paneled frieze above. At the second level are over-sized Diocletian windows with Tudor-arched labels.

The interior of the larger, lower block is built up around the two arcades from which the building takes its name. The arcades intersect to form an open cruciform plan with offices in the corner spaces between the arms. The intersection of the arcades creates an open octagonal area punctuated by two rectangular service cores (including elevator

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shafts) which continue all the way to the fifth floor. The north-south arcade is approximately 395 feet long, the east-west, approximately 300 feet long, and each is eighteen feet wide. The arcades are two stories high and each is roofed with a gabled skylight.

At the upper levels of the arcades are upper level walkways that border the open well overlooking the arcades. The ground level is visually linked to the upper stories by the molded pilasters, similar to those on the exterior, which grow into compound piers at the second level. The piers are knit together in the form of a colonnade by depressed three-centered arches with pyramidal hipped raised-paneled soffits. The pier bases are ornamented with rounded-trefoil Tudor-arched panels or with decorative shields covered with ogee tracery panels. Above are numerous gargoyles.

Physically, the arcade level is linked to the next level by four cantilevered bronze spiral staircases, two in the north and two in the south arcades. The balusters are turned with attached asymmetrical arabesques. The handrails are pierced and decorated with curled bronze.

The fine finish of the interior of the arcade includes a wainscot of highly polished verde antique, a mottled dark green stone set into the wall like slabs of marble. Above, the walls and ceilings are sheathed with deeply pitted light beige travertine.

The two levels of the set-back are less elaborately finished in the interior. Both levels are rectangular-in-plan with offices around the perimeters and service cores occupying the center.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 checked="" 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 1926-1929

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Charles N. Parker

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Grove Arcade building, designed by architect Charles N. Parker, was conceived by manufacturer and developer E. W. Grove, the "Father of twentieth century Asheville," as an ambitious commercial mall with covered pedestrian thoroughfares in the heart of Asheville; it is one of the few uses of the arcade scheme in North Carolina. Begun in 1926, the massive structure, featuring a skylit arcade, roof gardens, and assembly rooms, was opened in 1929; plans for a central skyscraper tower were scrapped with the crash of Wall Street. A grand and flamboyant building occupying a full city block, the stone and terra cotta tile structure is richly finished inside and out with Tudoresque and medieval ornament evocative of the theatrical romanticism of the 1920s.

Asheville's Federal Building was constructed between 1926 and 1929 as the Arcade Building, a massive multipurpose structure occupying an entire city block. It was built for Dr. Edwin Wiley Grove, a wealthy patent medicine manufacturer and real estate developer who has been called "the father of modern Asheville."

Born in Bolivar, Tennessee, on December 23, 1850, Grove purchased a drug store in Paris, Tennessee, at the age of twenty-two. He then developed a chill tonic and a cold tablet which he successfully marketed. (He later moved his business to St. Louis, Missouri.) Poor health induced Grove to visit Asheville in 1897. He returned permanently in 1905 and soon began acquiring and developing real estate. He was responsible for construction of the Grove Park Inn, the new Battery Park Hotel, and two of Asheville's residential subdivisions.

In the autumn of 1922 Dr. Grove announced that the old Battery Park Hotel would be razed, and the hill on which it stood leveled. This was the site on which he proposed to build the new Arcade Building. Dr. Grove is said to have had three specific objectives in mind for this site:

1. TO PROVIDE ASHEVILLE WITH A TOURIST CENTER FEATURING A LARGE ROOF GARDEN, WITH BAND SHELL, RESTAURANT AND ASSEMBLY ROOM.
2. TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY BY THE LARGE NUMBER OF BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS EXPECTED TO BE HOUSED IN THIS CENTRAL POINT.
3. TO PRESERVE THE BEAUTY OF THE BATTERY PARK DISTRICT BY A UNIFORM AND PLEASING ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT OF THE PLAZA.

Construction on the Arcade Building began in 1926. Approximately mid-way through the construction--on January 27, 1927--E. W. Grove died. The work was temporarily suspended,

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but Grove's executors later sold the Arcade property to Walter P. Taylor and his associates. Construction was resumed in 1928 and, except for portions of the building's tower, was completed in 1929.

The building contractor was the John M. Geary Company; the architect was Charles N. Parker of Asheville. A native of Hillsboro, Ohio, Parker moved to Asheville in 1904 and began his career with the firm of Smith and Carrier. He opened his own office in 1918 which he maintained until after World War II, when he joined the Asheville firm of Six Associates, Inc. He retired about 1958 and died at the age of seventy-five on July 30, 1961.

A description of the Arcade Building believed to have been published shortly after it was opened included the following information:

Built on the very spot occupied by the famous old Battery Park Hotel--the site of a Civil War defense battery-- The Arcade Building is distinguished, even in its location. Situated in the very heart of Asheville, and in the westward path of growth of the business district, yet surrounded by broad streets on all sides, it affords a central location, a ready accessibility and a freedom from traffic congestion.

Here is a Building distinctive in its design and construction. Here is a Building conveniently arranged and more than ordinarily blessed with light and ventilation. Here is a Building that has every virtue of a shopping center. And here is a Building that confers distinction and esteem upon its tenants. To say, "I am located in The Arcade Building," immediately places you, immediately classifies you--associates you with a highly desirable type of firms and business men.

Of Gothic design, and fireproof construction, The Arcade Building makes most effective use of terra cotta, granite and verde antique marble on the exterior. The two arcades, one crossing the Building, and the other traversing its 395 feet of length, show how beautifully travertine can be used on walls and ceilings. The central part of the Building is adequately and cheerfully lighted by skylights of special actinic wire glass that gives an impression of sunlight, even on cloudy days. This cheerful lighting, combined with the natural ventilation provided by the peculiar construction of the Building, makes The Arcade a most pleasant and comfortable place to shop or work. A further contribution to make the Building pleasant, is the fact that all windows are of plate glass.

The excellent views to be had from The Arcade Building are another factor that appeals to tenant and shopper alike. It commands probably a better view of the city and the surrounding mountains than any one other structure, taking an average of all parts of the Building. Such pleasant views inspire thought, and make easier the solving of difficult business problems.

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PAGE two

The Arcade Building has been so divided as to provide almost any desired floor space and arrangement. Shops and offices range in size from 225 square feet to 1,720 square feet, and two or more can be combined. There is also additional space in the tower--(100 x 130 ft.)--which can be divided to any special needs.

The Arcade Building Roof was designed as a smooth tiled terrace to further the social activities of Asheville, and to provide a promenade where residents and visitors might enjoy the panorama of mountain scenery. Already, it has been the scene of a number of brilliant events, and promises to be much sought after. The Roof also provides an excellent place for tenants to stage special events, such as style shows, demonstrations and other attractions that may bring large crowds.

Another convenience that appeals to tenant and shopper alike, and that encourages shopping in The Arcade, is the provision of parking facilities in the basement, at a nominal rate.<sup>2</sup>

During the next twelve years the Arcade's ground floor was occupied by retail shops and its tower by business offices; its "roof gardens" (the roof of the portion of the building surrounding the tower) were used periodically for social gatherings.

In 1942 local business leaders were instrumental in bringing about a relocation of the United States General Accounting Office's Postal Accounts Division from Washington, D. C., to Asheville. The Arcade Building was judged the only Asheville structure large enough to house the federal agency. The federal government purchased the building for \$275,000 and occupied it about January 1, 1943. The GAO's Postal Accounts Division was later supplanted as the building's principal occupant by the Environmental Data Service branch of the United States Department of Commerce's Weather Bureau (now the Environmental Science Services Administration), which has occupied the Arcade Building until the present time.

Portions of the building were renovated in 1959, 1961, and 1963. The 1963 work included the addition of central air conditioning, acoustical tile ceilings, and improved lighting. The building was officially re-named the Federal Building in a United States Government directive issued in October, 1962.

Although it is not quite fifty years old, the building merits listing in the National Register as a major landmark of Asheville (a town whose heyday was in the early twentieth century), as one of the state's few arcades, and as a grand and flamboyant example of 1920s architecture whose original fabric remains essentially intact.

<sup>1</sup>The Arcade Building /publication of unknown origin/, photocopy of original, Survey Branch, Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Arcade Building. /publication of unknown origin/, photocopy of original, Survey Branch, Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Asheville Citizen. "Charles N. Parker, Architect, Dies Here," July 31, 1961; "GOVERNMENT TAKES OVER THE ARCADE," November 5, 1942; "Renovation Slated At Arcade Bldg.," February 22, 1963.

Asheville Citizen-Times. "Federal Arcade Building Started As Community, Shopping Center," Century of Challenge Issue, January 26, 1969.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4 acres State Plane Coordinates: 287392/210492  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	5,8	9,8,0	3,9	4,0	0,0,0	B						
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							
C							D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Research by Robert Topkins, specialist; architectural description by Mary Alice Hinson, consultant <sup>survey</sup>

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History DATE 1/5/76

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE 919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Larry E. Jim*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1/5/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Charlotte Observer. "MALADY FATAL TO E. W. GROVE," January 28, 1927.

UNITED STATES  
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY  
MAPS AND SURVEYS BRANCH

3.8 MI. TO JUNCTION U.S. 19, U.S. 23,  
U.S. 25, & U.S. 70

357

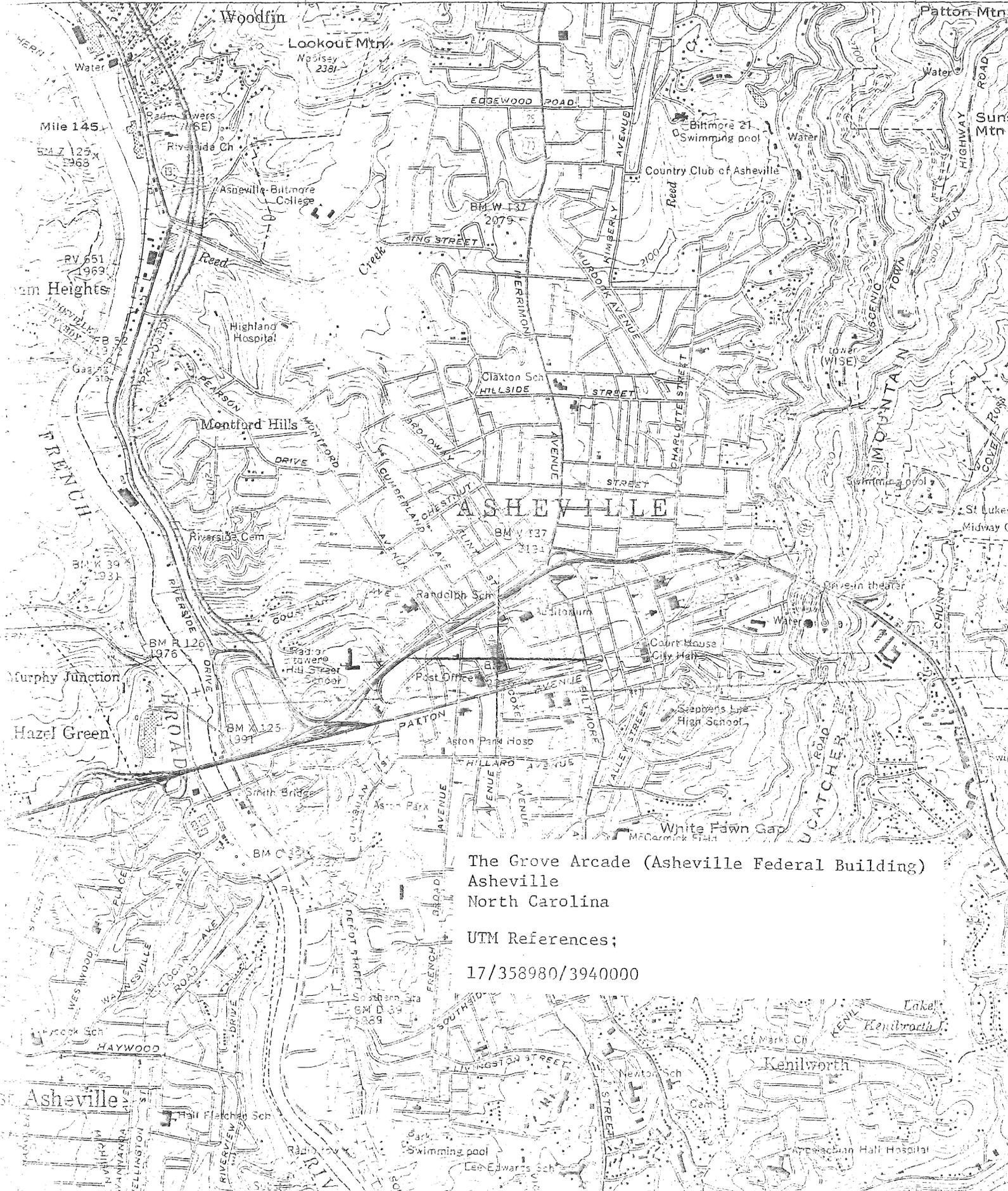
4455 II NE  
358 (WEAVERVILLE 192-NE)

359

360

32'30"

950 000 FEET



The Grove Arcade (Asheville Federal Building)  
Asheville  
North Carolina

UTM References;  
17/358980/3940000

