

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Catawba County Multiple Resource Nomination

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Joseph Alfred Moretz House

AND/OR COMMON

Moretz House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1437 Sixth Street Circle 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NOT FOR PUBLICATION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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Alice Moretz Lee

STREET & NUMBER

1437 Sixth Street Circle NW

CITY, TOWN

Hickory

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28601

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: Jim Sumner, Research Branch
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N. C.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 16, 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 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 Joseph Alfred Moretz House, located on Sixth Street Circle NW in the affluent Forest Park neighborhood of Hickory, was built in 1917 and remodelled during the late 1920s or 1930s, according to Moretz's daughter, Alice Moretz Lee. This large two-story brick house is a simple interpretation of the Cotswold (or English) Cottage phase of the English Revival style, popular in America particularly during the 1910s through the 1930s. South of the house stands a one-story brick garage contemporary with the house and a small one-story frame guest cottage built in the 1930s. Surrounding the house are approximately two acres of well landscaped grounds.

Because of the location of the Moretz House on a hill within the loop of Sixth Street Circle, so that three sides of the house face the road, both northeast and southwest sides are treated as primary facades. The most salient characteristic of the Moretz House is the steeply pitched gables which sweep from the second story attic height to the first story eaves. These large gabled areas not only reflect English domestic architectural styles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also serve to disguise the true size of the house by suggesting the appearance of a more modest cottage. Typical of the contrasting materials often used in English Revival houses, the Moretz House has rough stone entrance arches and water table which contrast with the smooth red brick veneer which sheathes the majority of wall surfaces. Other contrasting elements include the slightly darker brickwork around windows and at the corners, the wide weatherboards which enclose the south addition, the wood shingles which cover the recessed dormer on the northwest side and the small shed dormer on the southeast side of the major (northeast) facade gable, and the wood trim of the windows, doors and roof eaves. Other features of the asymmetrical exterior design include six-over-six sash windows--often paired or tripled--eight-light casement windows on the sun porch, French door facade entrances, interior brick chimneys, a second story south room which projects over the first story and is "supported" by heavy sawnwork brackets, and a terrace across the east third of the northeast facade.

The asymmetry of the exterior is reflected on the interior, where an asymmetrical collection of rooms is grouped around a central hall. Features common to the interior include plastered walls and ceilings with an ogee-molded cornice, simple oak woodwork, narrow board oak flooring, French doors in the more public areas and two-panel doors in the more private spaces, and door and window trim with plain surrounds and a molded cornice topping the lintel. The main room on the first floor on the northwest side of the hall is the parlor. Its handsome oak mantel has a tile face surrounding the firebox, a pair of slender, paneled pilasters on either side of the firebox, a frieze with paneled blocks at center and ends, and a heavily molded shelf. Flanking the parlor fireplace are French doors leading to the sun porch, which was enclosed during the 1930s. Behind (southwest of) the parlor is a narrow hall, on the opposite side of which are a sitting room and a bathroom. Southeast of the main hall is the dining room. Its fireplace has a tile face and oak mantel similar to the one in the parlor but with single paneled pilasters flanking the firebox, and frieze and shelf in the form of a full classical entablature. The dining room floor is another of the special features of the interior, with its cherry parquet banding which surrounds the room and contrasts with the regular oak flooring. Behind (southwest of) the dining room are the breakfast room with its trestle table and built-in benches and the kitchen. At the rear (southwest) of the central hall, the stair rises along the northwest wall to the second story. The present stair is designed in the Federal style with slender turned newels, molded, ramped handrail which encircles the main newel,

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and slender tapered balusters. This graceful stair is a replacement of the original, which was heavier and more blocky in feeling, like the mantels.

The second story was remodelled in the 1920s or 1930s, at which time two fireplaces were removed, a central closet was converted to a bathroom and a room was added to the south corner. The second floor now contains four bedrooms and two-and-one-half baths grouped around the central hall. The only remaining mantel on this floor is in the north corner room. It is identical to the mantel in the dining room, except that it is painted and has a mirrored overmantel.

Across the driveway from the south corner of the house is the one-story garage and storage room built at the same time as the house. Similar in design to the house, it has a gabled and hipped roof (with wood shingled gable), brick veneer siding with stone water table, and six-over-six sash windows. Adjacent to the southeast side of the garage is a small frame guest cottage, built in the 1930s. It features a gable roof, weather-board siding, six-over-six sash windows and northeast end, brick tapered chimney. The entrance to the cottage is on the northwest side.

The Moretz House is located high on a knoll on a beautifully landscaped site. Expansive lawns planted with numerous oak, fir, magnolia, hickory, walnut and other trees as well as a variety of shrubbery lead from the house to Sixth Street Circle which wraps around three sides of the large lot. Woods encompass most of the land opposite the street. A long brick walk lined with boxwoods leads up the hill from the street to the northeast entrance, while on the opposite side of the house a circular driveway leads from the street to the house and garage. The house itself is surrounded by ivy, boxwoods, azaleas and other plantings.

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 archeological 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.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL

_____ STATE

_____ X LOCAL

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 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

1917

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph Moretz House was built in Hickory in 1917 in the Forest Park development. Moretz was one of the leading citizens of Hickory during the first half of the twentieth century. A native of Watauga County, Moretz (1880-1942) moved to Hickory in 1898. He was successful in a number of business ventures, including his development of Forest Park. He was also active in textiles, finance, and retail business, among other interests. His wife Elizabeth Leonard Moretz taught art for a number of years in Hickory and was active in that city's cultural life. Following her death in 1960 the house became the property of daughter Alice Moretz Lee, who continues to own and occupy it.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Joseph Alfred Moretz House is associated with the economic and commercial development of Hickory, as well as the planned residential development in the city in the early 20th century.
- B. The Joseph Alfred Moretz House was built by Joseph Alfred Moretz (1880-1942), a textile manufacturer and businessman who was influential in social, political, educational, and religious circles in Hickory. The house is also associated with Elizabeth Leonard Moretz (18__ - 1960), wife of Joseph Alfred Moretz, who was an educator, artist, and social, civic and religious leader during the 20th century in Hickory.

See continuation sheet.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.09 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	468200	3954780	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of tract 1 in block 4 on Catawba County tax map 107H, as outlined in red on the accompanying map. It includes the house, the garage/guest house, and the surrounding lawn of approximately two acres.

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The Joseph Moretz House was built in the Forest Park area of Hickory in 1917. Moretz was one of Hickory's business leaders in the first half of the twentieth century and Forest Park, an exclusive residential area in the northern part of the city, was one of his projects.

Joseph Alfred Moretz was born March 17, 1880 in Watauga County, in the community of Meat Camp, the son of Joseph and Elnora Miller Moretz. His father was a merchant and postmaster in that community. Moretz came to Hickory around 1898 and became a clerk in a store owned by his brother McCoy. In 1906 he became a partner in the Moretz-Whitener Clothing Store.¹ In the next decade he entered the real estate field, and quickly became the city's leader in that profession. Along with Charles H. Geitner and Adolphus Shuford, Jr. he developed Forest Park, which quickly became the city's leading residential development. Moretz's house was included in this development, which took place in 1917 and 1918.²

During the 1920s Moretz became prominent in a number of areas of the economic sector in Hickory. In 1923 he became president of the Hickory Hotel Company, operators of the Hotel Hickory. Two years later he became a director of the Hickory Industrial Bank. In 1926 he sold his interest in Moretz-Whitner and in 1928 was appointed receiver for Carolina Cotton Mills.³

Carolina Cotton Mills was founded in Maiden in 1916. The textile industry started in Maiden in the 1880s and by the early years of the twentieth century the town possessed a number of successful cotton mills. Carolina Cotton Mills was unable to compete with the Providence Mills and the Union Cotton Mills and went into receivership. Moretz became receiver, took over operations and changed the name of the firm to Carolina Mills, Inc. With Moretz as secretary-treasurer and general manager the reorganized business prospered. In the 1930s Carolina Mills opened a second plant in Lexington, and in 1941 absorbed the New City Mills in Newton. By 1941 the combined plants of Carolina Mills employed 650 people.⁴

Joseph Moretz was also important in Catawba County's political and social circles. He served at various times as a member of the city council, the county tax commission, and as president of the Hickory Chamber of Commerce. Moretz served on the board of directors of Hickory's Lenoir Rhyne College and was a stockholder of the Hickory Daily Record.

Following Moretz's death in 1942 the house was inherited by his widow Elizabeth. Moretz and Elizabeth Leonard were married June 26, 1906. She was the daughter of Julius and Alice Ramseur Leonard. She was educated at private schools in the area, at Claremont College, received a degree from Lenoir-Rhyne and did post graduate work in art at Charlotte's Queens College. Mrs. Moretz taught art in both the Hickory schools and Claremont College, and was an accomplished artist. She was a founder and director of the Hickory Museum of Art, a board member of the Elbert Ivey Memorial Library, president of the local chapter of both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and state president of the Women's organization of the United Lutheran Church in America. Both Joseph and Elizabeth Moretz were active members of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hickory and both were active contributors to a number of charitable organizations.

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Elizabeth Moretz died the first day of 1960. She and her husband had eight children: Elizabeth, Joseph, Jr., Leonard, Hugh, William, Alice, Josephine, and Martha. After Mrs. Moretz's death the house became the property of daughter Alice and her husband Kenneth B. Lee, head of the music department at Lenoir Rhyne College. Mrs. Lee, now widowed, continues to own and occupy the house.⁷

Joseph Moretz moved to Hickory during a period of great expansion for that city. Hickory's population increased from barely more than 2,000 in 1900 to 7,500 in 1910.⁸ The town underwent a transition from a sleepy country town to the economic center of Catawba County and Moretz was involved in virtually every part of this growth: real estate, industry, business, finance, and politics. Mrs. Moretz likewise had an impact in the town's cultural growth. For these reasons the Moretz House is one of Hickory's most historically significant houses.

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NOTES

¹Hugh Talmage Lefler, History of North Carolina (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 4 volumes, 1956), III, 139-140, hereinafter cited as Lefler, History of North Carolina; Hickory Daily Record, August 19, 1942.

²Catawba County Deed Book 265, p. 615. Moretz owned one half of the Forest Park development, while Geitner and Shuford each owned one fourth.

³Lefler, History of North Carolina, III, 139-140; Hickory Daily Record, August 19, 1942.

⁴Charles J. Preslar, A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1954), 357-358, hereinafter cited as Preslar, History of Catawba County; Lefler, History of North Carolina, III, 139-140.

⁵Lefler, History of North Carolina, III, 139-140; Hickory Daily Record, August 19, 1942.

⁶Lefler, History of North Carolina, III, 139-140; Hickory Daily Record, January 1, 1960; Preslar, A History of Catawba County, 465, 474-475.

⁷Hickory Daily Record, January 1, 1960; Catawba County Deed Book 718, p. 232.

⁸The North Carolina Yearbook (Raleigh: News and Observer), 1902, p. 137; 1910, p. 134.

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Hickory Daily Record. August 19, 1942; January 1, 1960.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage. History of North Carolina. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 4 volumes, 1956.

North Carolina Yearbook, The. Raleigh: News and Observer, 1902, 1910.

Preslar, Charles J. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1954.

Joseph Alfred Moretz House

17 468200/3956780

Houck's Chapel

17 466660/3955500

Oakwood Historic District

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

First Presbyterian Church

17 469240/3954440

John A. Lentz House

17 468120/3954580

Piedmont Wagon Company

17 467930/3954100

Clement Geitner House

17 468720/3954140

Elliott-Carnegie Library

17 468780/3954160

Second Street Place Historic District

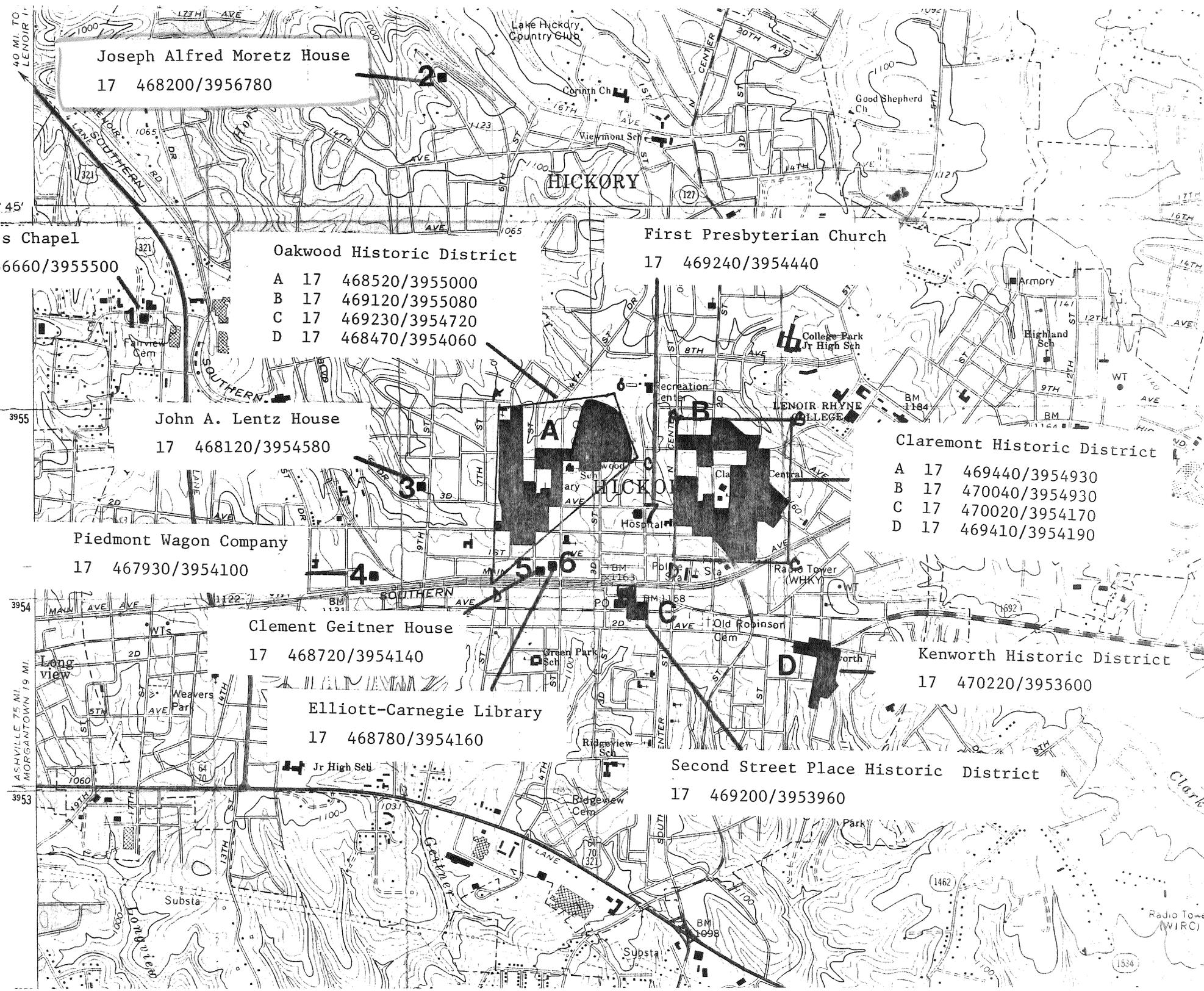
17 469200/3953960

Claremont Historic District

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

Kenworth Historic District

17 470220/3953600





145H

