

**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

**1. Name**

historic Greystone

and/or common James E. Stagg House

**2. Location**

street & number 618 Morehead Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Durham \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Fourth

state North Carolina code 037 county Durham code 061

**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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b> N/A	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Estate of S.J. Nicholson  
c/o Mr. Henry Nicholson

street & number P.O. Box 11588

city, town Durham \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state North Carolina 27703

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Durham County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Durham \_\_\_\_\_ state North Carolina

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Greystone is situated on a 3.05 acre lot at the northeast corner of Vickers and Morehead in a residential neighborhood of Durham; the house faces Morehead Street. The yard is landscaped with broad expanses of green lawn and large shade trees. The northeast corner of the lot drops off to an adjoining wooded lot.

The exterior of the two-and-a-half story house, designed by the Charlotte architect Charles C. Hook, is best described as Chateausque in style. A deep porch with portecochere, supported by ten square limestone columns, runs across the six-bay facade of the house; a stone balustrade tops the flat roof of the porch. A large three-bay projection appears at each corner of the second floor, with three windows between them. Three closely spaced hipped dormers appear in the attic between the conical roofs of the second floor projections. The side and rear elevations of the house are irregular in design and fenestration, especially in the rear where the service wing is attached at a 45 degree angle to the larger rear wing. This irregularity of mass, together with the tall chimney stacks and the high hipped roof with numerous dormers, contributes much to the Chateausque effect. The foundation of the house is of granite from Greystone Quarry in Vance County, the first floor wall beneath the porch is of limestone, and the body of the house is of a tan pressed brick. The porch columns and balustrade, window sills, chimney caps, and cornice are constructed of limestone. The windows of the house are large one-over-one sash with a fixed transom above. The roof consists of heavy yellow-green clay tiles.

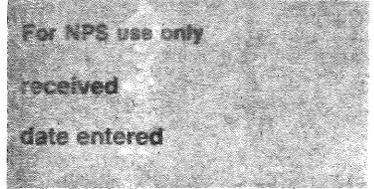
The interior of the house features notable Georgian Revival woodwork executed by the Boston firm of Irving and Casson. As originally built, the library, music room, living room, dining room, and solarium opened off the large stair hall; a smaller hall led to the breakfast room, lavatory, and service wing. The entrance hall features a paneled wainscot and a heavy dentil cornice with egg-and-dart molding. Rising from the left side of a low landing with a handsome stained glass window, the stair reaches another landing before returning on itself to the second floor. The stair is trimmed with a mahogany handrail, elaborately turned balusters, and carved foliated brackets. The approach to the stair is framed by fluted columns and pilasters. The library and music room flank the front door on the south side of the hall; both rooms are pentagonal in shape. The library features a paneled wainscot of mahogany (now painted), built-in bookcases, and a Georgian-Revival console mantel. The smaller music room has applied crosseted panels with rosettes above a wainscot. The large living room at the east end of the hall is trimmed with a heavy oak paneled wainscot and a handsome mantel similar to the one in the library. The dining room opening from the north side of the hall, is the most elaborately treated room in the house. The mahogany paneled wainscot extends three-fourths the height of the wall. The entrance is flanked by built-in china cupboards with glazed doors, and two bronze sconces remain on the wall. The mahogany mantel, with curved console supports, has a paneled overmantel with fluted pilasters. The ceiling is outlined by a raised plaster oval of elaborately modeled foliage. The small breakfast room, next to the dining room, is completely paneled with Italian walnut and features a large wall safe concealed behind the paneling.

All openings of the first floor are of three-part architrave trim, with the major doorways being crosseted. The doors are of solid mahogany with brass hardware; all paired doors slide into pockets. The fireplace surrounds are of marble and the flooring is of narrow oak. Several rooms retain the original brass curtain rods and rings.

On the second floor, seven bedrooms and five baths opened from the large hall. The trim of the second floor is simpler than that of the first, with plain cornices, three-part architrave trim, and pine flooring beneath the carpeting with oak on the exposed borders of the rooms. The mantels are in a variety of robust Colonial Revival designs.

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Continuation sheet -Description

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The bathrooms have a high white marble wainscot, and retain their original John Douglas "Vitruvian China" fixtures, with mahogany toilet seats and covers made by Irving and Casson. The large attic is floored and partitioned, and has large cedar-lined lockers for storage. The basement is only partially finished.

Circa 1961 the first floor of the house was made into two apartments, the second floor into three apartments, and the service wing into a single apartment. The only major changes on the first floor were the additions of two baths onto the porch, the enclosure of the solarium, and division of parts of the entrance hall. All the doors and trim of the new walls were matched to the original. On the second floor the stair hall was closed off at the west end, some closets removed for a kitchen, a small room at the east end of the hall was opened for a fire escape passage, and a sleeping porch was enclosed for a kitchen. These changes were carefully considered and took best advantage of the existing room arrangements and respected the architectural integrity of the house; from the exterior the changes are negligible.

The only outbuilding on the lot was a large V-shaped carriage house constructed of the same tan brick as the house. It originally featured a high clay-tiled roof, but during conversion into two apartments, it was discovered that the roof timbers had deteriorated. The carriage house now has a flat roof and possesses no particular architectural distinction.

# 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 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**      1911                                      **Builder/Architect**      Hook & Rodgers, Architects

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

"Greystone," the residence of James E. Stagg (1860-1915) of Durham, was completed in 1911 to the plans of Hook and Rodgers, architects of Charlotte, North Carolina. A nephew of Dr. Bartlett Durham for whom the city of Durham was named, James Stagg served as vice-president of the Durham and Southern Railway, as a director of the Erwin and Pearl cotton mills in Durham, and as a trustee of Trinity College, now Duke University. Stagg's wife, Mary Washington Lyon, was the niece of Benjamin Duke of American Tobacco Company fame. As designed by Hook and Rodgers, "Greystone" is a large two-and-a-half story Chateausque Revival mansion built of dressed limestone and pressed yellow brick. The handsome Georgian Revival woodwork of the interior is intact, and is executed in oak, Italian walnut, and mahogany. The woodwork, as was much of the original furniture, was furnished by the Boston firm of Irving and Casson which was also responsible for the woodwork in Duke Chapel. For over two decades the house has been divided into large well-maintained apartments.

**Criteria assessment:**

- A. "Greystone" is associated with the early twentieth century prosperity of Durham which is connected with the Duke family and the success of the American Tobacco Company.
- B. Associated with the lives of James E. Stagg, a prominent Durham businessman and with his wife Mary Washington Lyon, an active figure in Durham's cultural and philanthropic circles.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Chateausque Revival style as designed by the well-known architectural firm of Hook and Rodgers of Charlotte, as well as exhibiting a handsome Georgian Revival interior designed by the Boston firm of Irving and Casson.

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date entered

Continuation sheet HISTORY

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Greystone was built in 1911 for James Edward Stagg (27 June 1860-10 Sept., 1915), a wealthy and prominent Durham citizen. The house was designed by the architect Charles C. Hook of the Charlotte firm of Hook and Rodgers; other Durham buildings by Hook include the Benjamin Duke House (demo. 1960), the Duke Memorial Methodist Church, and several buildings on the Duke University campus.<sup>1</sup> The Georgian Revival woodwork of the interior, crafted in mahogany, oak, and Italian walnut, as well as the original furniture, was executed by the Boston firm of Irving and Casson.<sup>2</sup> The house, thought to have cost \$40,000, was constructed by contractor N. Underwood and the grounds landscaped by Nello Teer.<sup>3</sup>

James E. Stagg was born in Durham, the son of Francis Asbury and Sarah Durham Stagg.<sup>4</sup> Sarah Durham Stagg was the sister of Dr. Barlett Durham for whom the city was named.<sup>5</sup> Francis Asbury Stagg, secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina Railroad, was the nephew of Washington Duke, the founder of the Duke tobacco fortune.<sup>6</sup> After graduating from Guilford College in Greensboro, James E. Stagg served as private secretary to prominent Raleigh businessman Col. A.B. Andrews for twelve years. Stagg then operated a granite quarry at Greystone, Vance County, for which he later named his Durham home. From 1893 until 1895 Stagg was private secretary to his cousin Benjamin Duke of the American Tobacco Company fame. In 1895 Stagg became involved with the Durham and Southern Railway, serving as vice-president and general manager. Stagg's other business activities in Durham included directorships of the Erwin Cotton Mill, the Pearl Cotton Mill, the Fidelity Bank, and the Union Station Company.

In 1897 Stagg married his cousin May Washington Lyon, the granddaughter of Washington Duke. Both Mr. and Mrs. Stagg were active in Durham civic and philanthropic affairs. The Staggs gave a granite pavilion on the grounds of Trinity College, now Duke University, where Mr. Stagg served as trustee. The Staggs donated the chimes and organ to the Duke Memorial Methodist Church where Stagg was a steward and trustee; Mrs. Stagg also provided the funds for the music program at the church.<sup>7</sup>

After Mr. Stagg's death in 1915, Mrs. Stagg continued to live in the house until her death in 1945; the house was inherited by her daughter Mrs. Sterling Nicholson, and ownership remains in the Nicholson family.<sup>8</sup> The house was divided into six apartments circa 1961 with little damage to the house's integrity.

Greystone is one of few houses surviving from a once-sizeable number of ambitious mansions built with Durham's numerous tobacco fortunes around the turn-of-the-century. A documented work of the prolific architect Charles C. Hook, the house is unusual in its Chateausque exterior design, a style rarely used in North Carolina, and in the high quality of its Boston-made interior woodwork.

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.

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Date entered _____

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FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup>John Baxton Flowers and Marguerite Schumann, Bull Durham and Beyond: A Touring Guide to City and County, (N.p., Durham Bicentennial Commission, 1976), p. 52; Mr. Henry Nicholson, one of the present owners, possesses a set of drawings of the house by Hook.

<sup>2</sup>A few pieces of the original furnishings remain in the house and members of the Nicholson family, present owner of the house, own pieces with the Irving and Casson labels; author's interview with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Nicholson, June 1981. Irving and Casson also did the woodwork of the John Sprunt Hill House in Durham, Flowers and Schumann, Bull Durham, p. 53, as well as the woodwork for Duke Chapel, see William Blackburn, The Architecture of Duke University, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1939), p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Flowers and Schumann, Bull Durham, p. 52; Nicholson Interview.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel A. Ashe, ed., "James Edward Stagg," Biographical History of North Carolina, VIII, (Greensboro: Charles L. VanNoppen, 1916), p. 495.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.; Nicholson Interview.

<sup>8</sup>The Staggs were the parents of three children, John Edward Stagg, Sarah Elizabeth Stagg (Mrs. Luther Barrick), and Mary Washington Stagg (Mrs. Sterling Nicholson). The house is presently owned by the heirs of the Sterling Nicholson estate.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.05 acres

Quadrangle name Durham South

Quadrangle scale 1:62 500

### UMT References

A 

1	7	6	8	8	5	0	0	3	9	8	4	9	0	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

The property included in this nomination is the house and carriage house located on a 3.05 acre lot at the northeast corner of Morehead and Vickers avenues as shown on the attached site sketch map of the James E. Stagg property.

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Marshall Bullock, Consultant

organization Survey and Planning Branch

Archeology and Historic Preservation Section date June, 1981

North Carolina Division of Archives and History

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh

state North Carolina 27611

# 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 William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 9, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

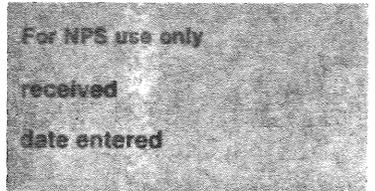
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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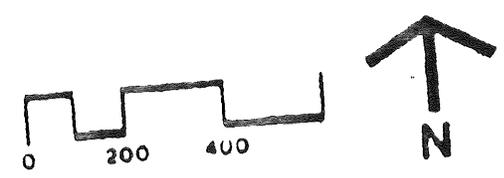
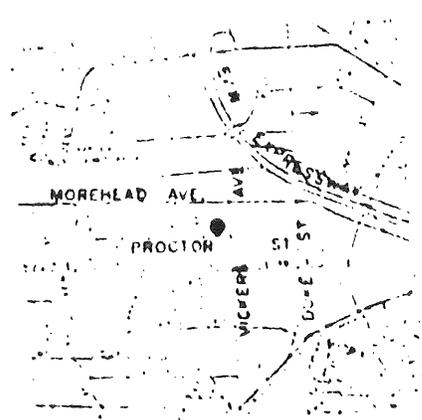
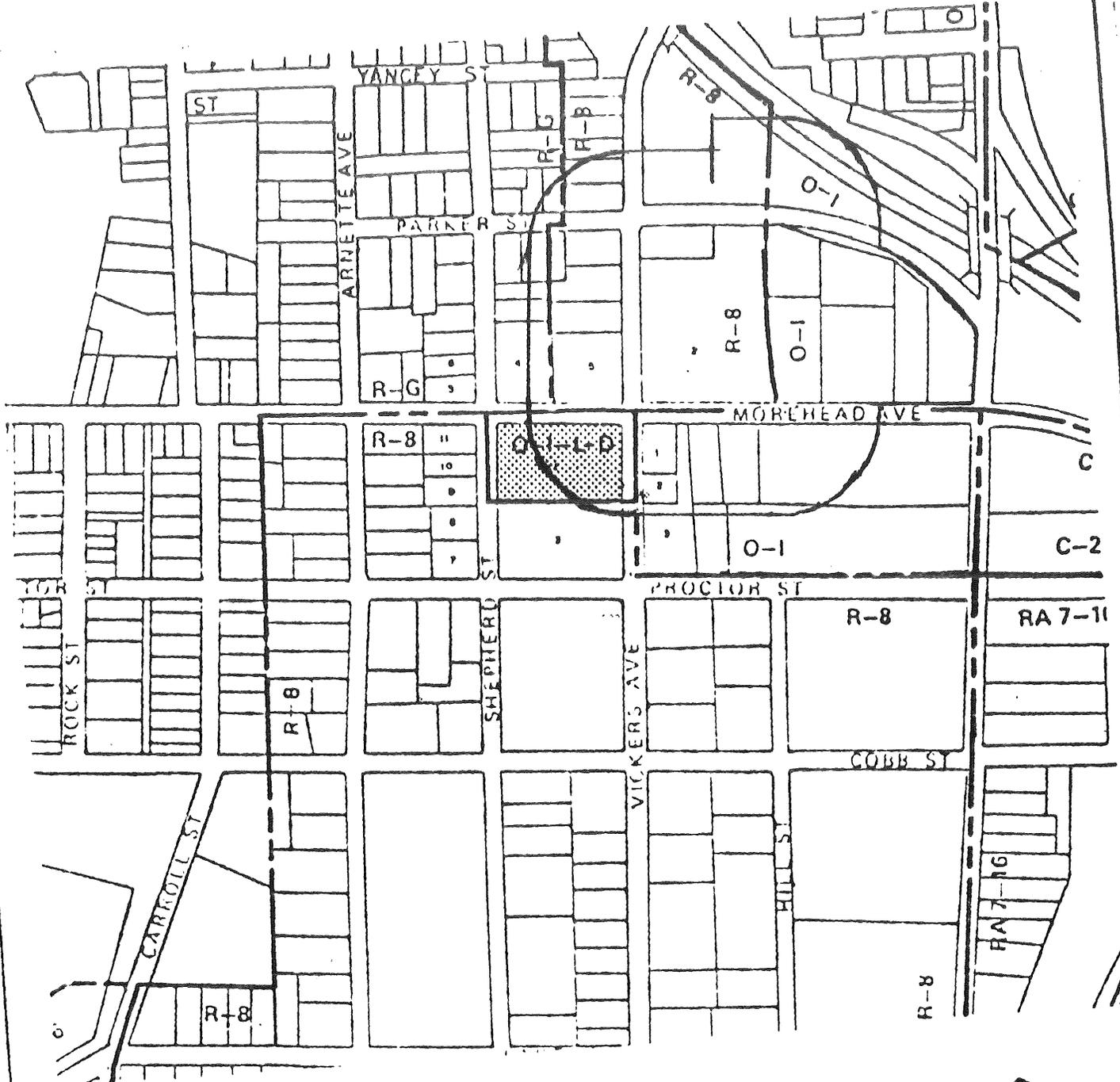
BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Ashe, Samuel A., ed. Biographical History of North Carolina. Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1916.

Author's interview with Mr. & Mrs. Henry Nicholson, Durham, North Carolina, June 1981.

Blackburn, William. The Architecture of Duke University. Durham: Duke University Press, 1939.

Flowers, John Baxton and Marguerite Schumann: Bull Durham and Beyond: A Touring Guide to City and County. N.P.: Durham Bicentennial Commission, 1976.



EXISTING ZONE: O-1-LID1  
 PROPOSED ZONE: O-1-ID1

**CONTEXT MAP**  
**P. & Z. CASE NO. P81-3**  
 CITY OF DURHAM: PLANNING DEPT.

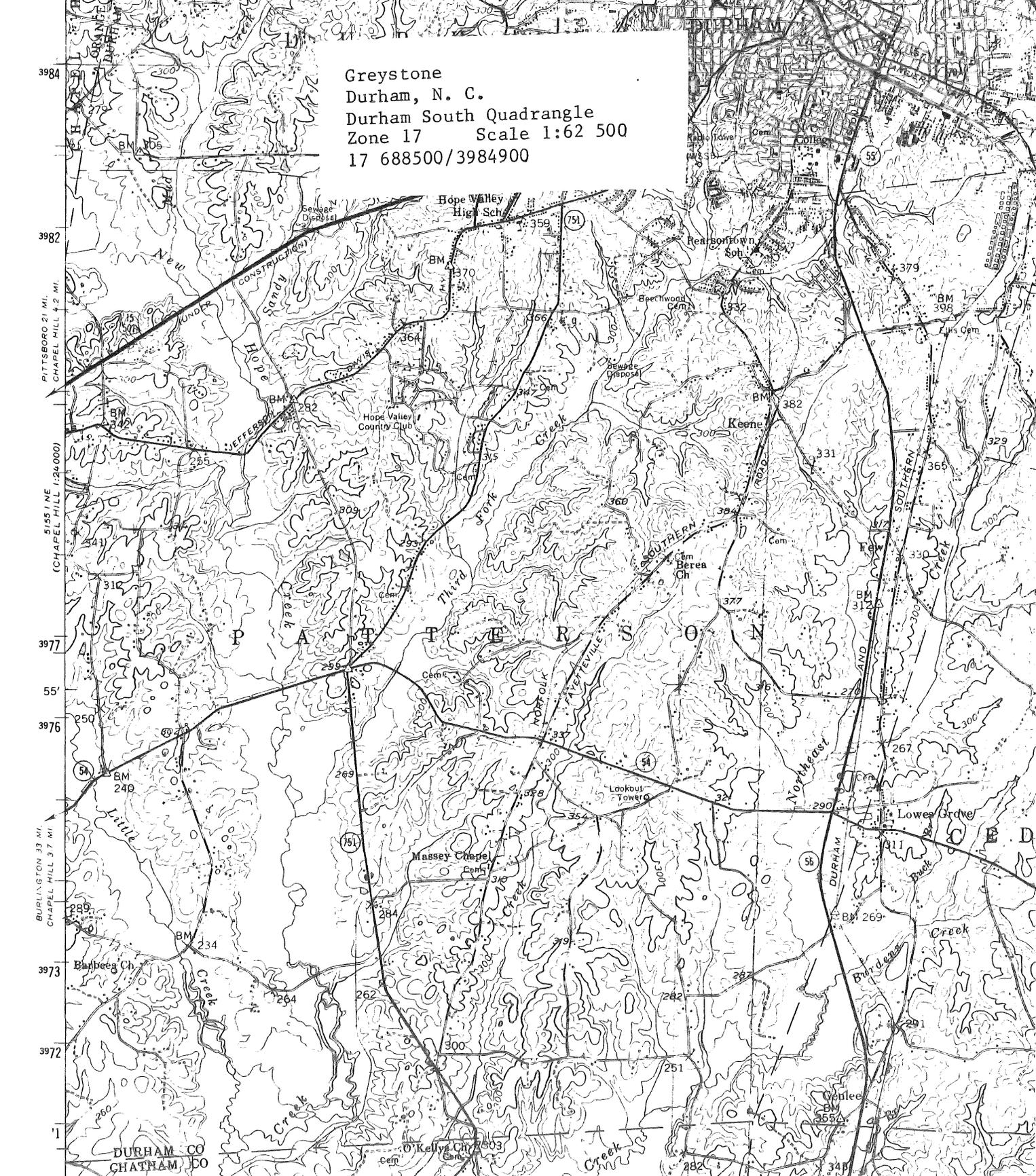
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BURLINGTON 33 MI  
3 MI. TO U.S. 70  
HILLSBORO 33 MI  
55' 70A  
5256 MI. 0.3 MI. TO  
DIXBORO 29 MIDURHAM NORTH

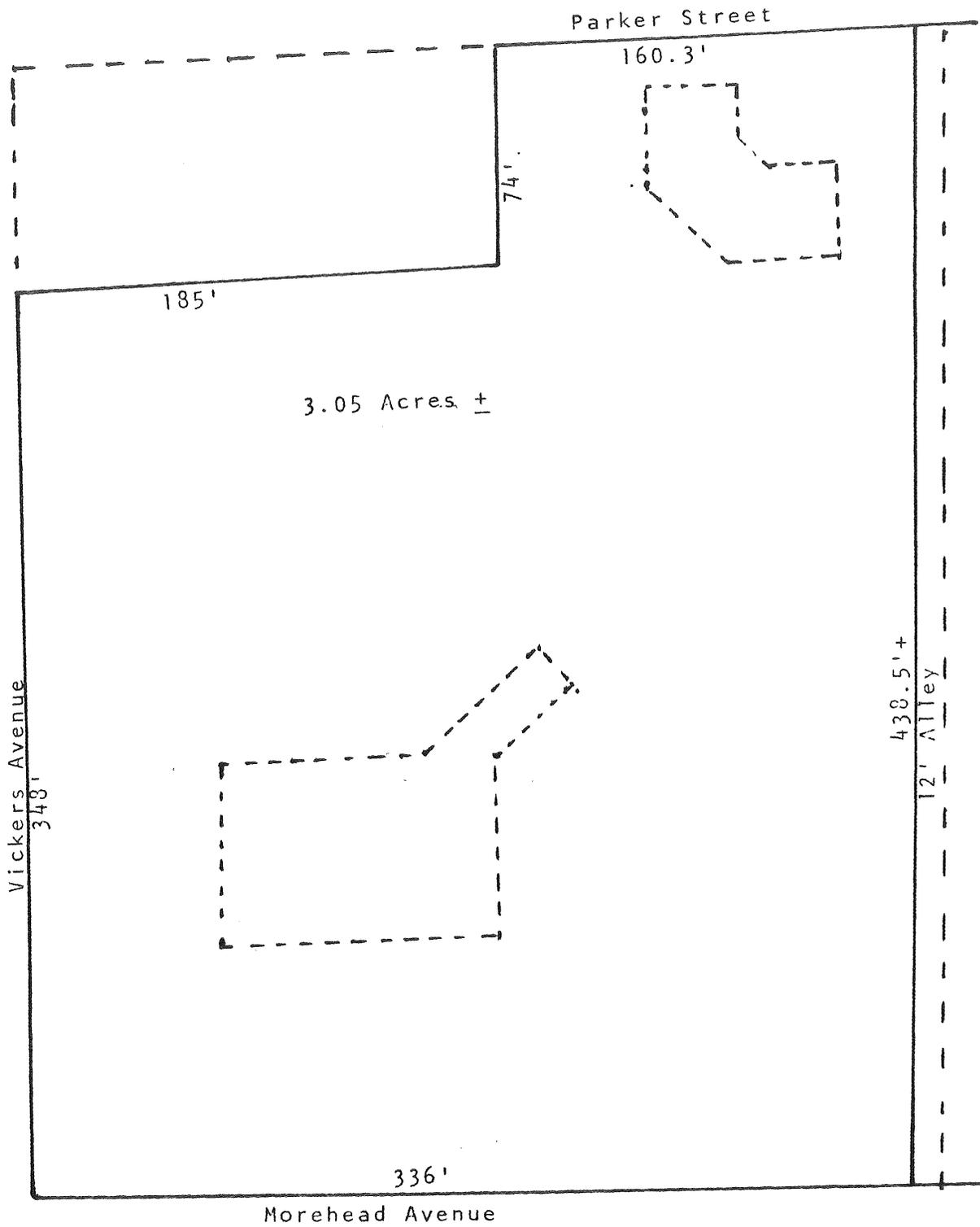
79°00' 681000m E 682 683 685 686 687 689 15' 501

36°00' 3985000m N

Greystone  
Durham, N. C.  
Durham South Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500  
17 688500/3984900



N



SITE SKETCH OF SUBJECT PROPERTY  
618 Morehead Avenue  
Durham, North Carolina

