

# **Survey And Research Report On Eastover Elementary School**



- 1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as Eastover Elementary School is located at 500 Cherokee Road in Charlotte, N.C.
- 2. Name, address, and telephone number of contact for the current owners of the property:**

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools/Board of Education  
Education Center  
701 East 2nd Street  
Charlotte, NC 28202**

**Telephone: 980-343-3000**

- 3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.
- 4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property. The UTM coordinates of the property are 17 516263.0 E 17 3894857.1 N.



**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.

**7. A brief architectural and physical description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural and physical description of the property prepared by Stewart Gray.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S 160A-400.5.**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that Eastover Elementary School possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

1) Eastover Elementary School, erected in 1935, was designed by M. R. Marsh Architects, a design firm of local significance in the first half of the twentieth century.

2) Eastover Elementary School is important in the history of Eastover, a neighborhood of special cultural significance in Charlotte.

3) Eastover Elementary School is a well-preserved local example of Colonial Revival style institutional architecture and demonstrates great sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood streetscape.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural and physical description prepared by Stewart Gray demonstrates that Eastover Elementary School House meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owners to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a "historic landmark." The appraised value of the property is \$8,888,300. The Tax Parcel Numbers of the property are 15510236 and 15509401. The property is exempted from the payment of property taxes.

**10. Amount of Property Proposed for historic landmark designation.** The exterior of the school building and the the entire land associated with the school, being tax parcel numbers 15510236 and 15509401.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** January 18, 2011

## **A Brief History Of Eastover Elementary School**

**Dr. Dan L. Morrill**

Eastover Elementary School opened in 1935 to serve the Eastover neighborhood and adjoining white residential districts in Charlotte, N.C., including Colonial Heights and nearby portions of Myers Park and Elizabeth. The building of Eastover was part of a spate of school construction that occurred in the 1930s in Charlotte and across the United States because of the influx of Federal money provided by work relief programs during the Great Depression.<sup>1</sup> The Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration, both established in 1933, distributed money to local communities to construct a variety of public projects, including schools. In January 1934, Charlotte Mayor Arthur E. Wearn announced that funds had been granted to Charlotte to enable the City to undertake several projects, including the construction of Eastover Elementary School.<sup>2</sup>



**Mayor Arthur E. Wearn (1933-1935)**

The architect of record of Eastover Elementary School was M. R. Marsh. M. R. "Steve" Marsh (1901-1977), a native of Jacksonville, Fla., came to Charlotte in 1916 as chief draftsman for the architectural firm headed by James Mackson McMichael (1870-1944). In 1922 Marsh opened his own architectural and engineering company in Charlotte and continued to head the firm until his retirement in 1964.<sup>3</sup> The principal designer of the school was James A. Stenhouse, a native of St. Louis, Mo., resident of Charlotte from early childhood, and graduate of the School of Architecture at the Georgia Institute of Technology who joined Marsh's firm upon graduation. <sup>4</sup> Stenhouse would have a long and distinguished career in Charlotte. Remembered mostly for his design of churches, including Westminster Presbyterian Church in Eastover, Stenhouse would become a founding partner of J. N. Pease Associates in 1938, a design and engineering firm of regional significance which is still in business.<sup>5</sup> A charter member of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, now Historic Landmarks Commission, Stenhouse was also a leader in the historic preservation movement in Mecklenburg County in the mid and later twentieth century and was instrumental in establishing the Mecklenburg Historical Association.



**James A. Stenhouse with original teachers 11/10/82**

Like most public schools erected in Charlotte in the 1920s and 1930s, Eastover Elementary School was traditional in design. Stenhouse fashioned the original section of Lawyers Road Elementary School, later named Midwood Elementary School, on Central Avenue to be almost identical to Eastover in design.<sup>6</sup> One also sees revivalist architecture in such schools as the Morgan School, built for African Americans in the Cherry Neighborhood, and the Myers Park Elementary School on Ratcliffe Ave. in Myers Park.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Thomas Hanchett, resident historian at the Levine Museum of the New South, contends that traditionalist architecture, especially Colonial Revivalism, reflected the conservation values increasingly espoused by Charlotte's business elite in the 1920s and 1930s. Hanchett writes:

**Charlotte's early New South leaders had experimented freely with the newest styles, Victorian variations in the 1890s, the Rectilinear, Bungalow, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles of the 1900s through early 20s. By the late 20s, however, the Colonial Revival was adopted as the single acceptable architectural motif, with Tudor Revival variations being the only alternative. While this was part of a nationwide return to historical motifs in architecture, it seems to have been particularly rigid in Charlotte. Endless blocks of Myers Park, Eastover, and the new streets of Dilworth were developed in the 1920s with variations on the two-story brick Colonial box.<sup>8</sup>**





**Lawyers Road (Midwood) Elementary School (1935) M. R. Marsh Architect**



**Morgan Elementary School (1925) Louis Asbury Architect**



**Myers Park Elementary School (1928) C. C. Hook Architect**

Eastover, the first totally automobile, bus, or truck-dependent affluent suburb in Charlotte, eschewed by legal means experimentation in architecture. Developed by by the E. C. Griffith Company, its original section laid out by landscape architect Earle Sumner Draper, and opening in 1927, Eastover operated under deed restrictions that stipulated that "no residence of Spanish Architecture or design shall be erected upon said lots of land."<sup>9</sup> One can assume that Edward Colville Griffith did not appreciate the appearance of the Reynolds-Gourmajenko House just outside the neighborhood.<sup>10</sup>



**Reynolds-Gourmajenko House (1926) William L. Bottomley Architect**

Eastover School has flourished over the years. Not surprisingly, several additions have been made to the original building. In 1941 major changes occurred, including the construction of an auditorium, a basement kitchen and cafeteria, and the addition of five classrooms on the north side of the property. Five more classrooms were erected

to the rear of the original building in 1949. That same year the Charlotte Board of Education purchased property across Cherokee Road for use as a playground. An 8-classroom building, no longer extant, was constructed in 1955 at the western edge of the school site. In 1972 a Media Center and Physical Education facility was erected on the south side of the auditorium.<sup>11</sup> Finally, a major makeover of the building occurred in 2004-2005. The 1955 classroom building was demolished and replaced with a larger structure, and the interior of the building was gutted and totally modernized. Shook Kelley Architects demonstrated great sensitivity to retaining the ambience of Eastover Elementary School, however.<sup>12</sup>



The Eastover School is a one-story brick school building located at 500 Cherokee Road in Charlotte. The building faces east and is setback approximately seventy-five feet from the road. The school was built in a residential neighborhood and is surrounded by single-family homes. The mass of the building runs parallel to the street, and presents a wide facade, approximately 350'. The original portion of the school was built in 1935, and was greatly expanded in 1941.





Southern portion of the facade includes the auditorium added in 1941.



The original portion of the school features a hipped roof, and the facade can be divided into five sections. The principal entrance to the building is centered in the original section of the school. The entrance is located in a shallow projecting gabled three-bay-wide wing. The doorway is recessed and contains replacement doors. The doorway, once topped with a transom, is now topped with a panel. The recessed opening features a beaded-board ceiling and a dentil entablature set above a simple convex frieze. The frieze rests on simple eared trim with narrow raised panels that wrap the corners. The doorway is in the center bay, and is bordered by two large twenty-five-over-fifteen replacement windows with simple brick sills. All three bays are sheltered by a classical portico supported by four tall wooden posts. The posts feature simple bases and simple moulded trim capitals. The portico features a simple frieze topped with modillions. The pediment features more Flemish stretcher bond, an octagonal window and Adamesque garlands. The portico's concrete floor is reached via full width concrete steps. A concrete ramp with metal handrail centered on the portico has been added.





To the north of the entrance portico, the principal section of the building is pierced by three bays. The center bay contains three windows ganged together. The center window is a twenty-five-over-fifteen window bordered by two twenty-over-twelve's. The two remaining bays also contain twenty-over-twelve's. The northernmost section of the building features a shallow hipped projecting wing, with the same three-bay configuration of twenty-over-twelve and twenty-five-over-fifteen windows. The walls of the principal section of the building are laid in Flemish stretcher bond, with one row of alternating headers and stretchers separated by five rows of stretchers. In contrast the elements of the facade that projects from the facade (the gabled entrances, the shallow hipped wings) feature running bond brickwork. The school building is built over a crawlspace, and the transition from foundation to wall is delineated by a soldier course. The walls are topped by a wide band. The shallow soffit is supported by deep moulded trim, now covered with metal. Metal gutters wrap the building.





The facade to the south of the portico is a mirror of the northern part of the facade, with three bays in the principal section of the building and three bays in a shallow projecting hipped wing. All of the bays containing twenty-five-over-fifteen and twenty-over-twelve replacement windows. The 1941 addition meets the original building at the original south elevation. The addition obscures nearly all of the south elevation of the 1935 building. The original hipped roof was extended to meet the 1941 addition. A masonry firewall was extended through the roof between the original building and the addition. A jog in the firewall, may reflect an original recessed entrance on the south elevation.



Unlike the symmetrical facade the north elevation is asymmetrical, with three bays set near the rear elevation. Windows are set in the same configuration found on the facade. The center bay contains three windows ganged together. The center window is a twenty-five-over-fifteen window bordered by two twenty-over-twelve's. The two remaining bays also contain twenty-over-twelve's. The brickwork is running bond.



The rear of the 1935 building has been largely obscured with new construction. A portion of the original rear elevation is extant adjacent to the north elevation. A vent and new doorway may have been added. Two shed-roof dormer vent are set above the rear elevation. Various modern vents and pipes pierce the roof.



In 1941, the size of the school was roughly doubled with the addition of classrooms and an auditorium. The classrooms were added as essentially an extension of the 1935 building projecting from the south elevation. The original hipped-roof shallow wing afforded the architect a distinct delineation between the old and the new. The original principal roof was extended to the south to cover the 1941 classrooms, but is interrupted by a firewall that extends above the roofing and indicates the transition from the 1935 and 1941 construction.





The classroom addition is very wide, spanning fourteen bays. From the north, the first seven bays contain alternating single and double twenty-over-twelve replacement windows.



To the south, the next six bays can be divided into two identical sets of three bays. The center bay in each set contains three windows ganged together. The center window is a twenty-five-

over-fifteen window bordered by two twenty-over-twelve's. The two remaining bays in each set contains single twenty-five-over-fifteen window. Like the principal section of the 1935 building, the brickwork of the 1941 addition is laid in Flemish stretcher bond, and features a soldier course at the foundation level, and simple brick window sills. The wide band found at the top of the wall on the 1935 building is absent on the addition. The southernmost bay of the 1941 classroom addition is a recessed grade-level recessed entrance. The recess is formed by a half-round brick arch with cast stone imposts.



The southern end of the 1941 classroom addition terminates at a tall gable-front auditorium. While the classrooms can be seen as an extension of the form of the 1935 school building, the auditorium adds distinctive new qualities to the building in terms of mass and architectural elements. The temple-form auditorium is three bays wide. Nearly full-width masonry steps with brick cheek walls give access to three sets of replacement double doors set in half-round arched openings. The arches are formed by curved cast-stone blocks that rise from a full width cast-stone band. The three half-round openings contain three-light transoms,

protected by a wrought-iron filigree screens. Three recessed rectangular stone panels are set in the wall above the arched openings. Two wall mounted floodlights are set between the panels. The brick are laid in a Flemish stretcher bond. The pediment's entablature features a simple frieze, now covered with metal, and original modillions. The pediment features modillions and the letter "E" surrounded by circular trim. The temple-form front of the auditorium is one bay deep and is smaller in height and width than the principal section of the auditorium. The south elevation of the front section of the auditorium is pierced by a single fifteen-over-nine window. The cast-stone band and modillions on the facade are continued on the shallow side elevations.

The front wall of the principal section of the auditorium features a stepped and gabled parapet capped with metal. The brick are laid in a Flemish stretcher bond.



The principal section of the auditorium is five bays deep. Each bay features a round-arch opening with cast stone imposts and keystone. Each opening contains a tall twenty-five-over-twenty-five window topped with thirteen-light fanlight sash. The walls are topped with two rows of corbelled brick. The soffit is minimal and incorporates a metal gutter.

The auditorium becomes wider near the rear elevation to accommodate a backstage area. This rear section of the south elevation is largely black with the exception of a fire escape exit with

metal stairs. A single original window may have been bricked over. The rear section of the north elevation of the auditorium is similar, except that the fire escape doorway has also been bricked over. Just one bay of the north elevation is exposed (the rest is interior space). The single bay contains a window like that found on the south elevation.

Flat-roofed additions obscure much of the auditorium's rear elevation. The rear wall features a parapet, and three window openings set high in the gable.



The rear elevation of the 1941 addition is largely intact. The elevation features the same wall details found on the facade. It is pierced by three sets of twenty-five-over-fifteen and twenty-over-twelve windows.





A ca. 1949 hipped-roof classroom building is located to the rear of the principal building. The classroom building faces north, and is set back approximately 40' from Middleton Drive. The facade is blank with the exception of a pedimented recess doorway containing replacement doors. The pediment is supported by pilasters topped with moulded trim. The shallow recess is arched, and sheathed with panels. The door is topped with an adamesque fanlight. The brickwork is laid in Flemish stretcher bond. The wall is topped with a wide band covered in metal. Moulded trim, also covered with metal, supports the shallow soffit, which is wrapped with a roof gutter.

The east elevation is partially obscured by new construction, and a wheelchair ramp. One set of classroom windows remains exposed. Five windows are set in three bays, with a twenty-five-over-fifteen window bordered by two twenty-over-twelve windows in the center bay, and twenty-five-over-fifteen windows in the other bays. This same pattern of classroom windows is used on the west side of the building, where three sets of the windows pierce the elevation. The south elevation is obscured by a classroom building erected in 2001.



A large two-story classroom building was added to the rear of the property in 2001. While large, the building is not visible from Cherokee Road or Middleton Drive, and does not significantly detract from the historical significance of the property.



Attached to the auditorium by a hyphen is a ca. 1985 brick building. The building does not significantly detract from the detract from the historical significance of the property. Below is the hyphen.



## Endnotes



1. Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *The Eastover Neighborhood, Charlotte's Elite Automobile Suburb*(<http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/Eastover.html>). Hereinafter cited as *Eastover*.
2. Dr. Dan L. Morrill, *Survey and Research Report On The American Legion Memorial Stadium (1936)*, 2003. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/Surveys&rmemorialstadium.htm>).
3. Dr. Dan L. Morrill, *Survey and Research Report on the Builders Building*, 2004. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/surveys&rbuildersbuilding.htm>).
4. Mary Lynn Morrill, *Eastover Elementary School, Charlotte, N.C.*, nd. (<http://www.cmhpf.org/eastover%20elementary%20school%20history.htm>). Hereinafter cited as *Eastover School History*. At a ceremony held on November 10, 1982, James Stenhouse, who was in attendance, told Mary Lynn Morrill that he was the principal designer of the building. James Stenhouse died on November 28, 1996, at the age of 86 (Death Records of Mecklenburg County). For notice of his death also see <http://gtalumni.org/Publications/techtopics/sum97/obits.html>. The online manuscript *Eastover School History* presents many interesting facts about the school. In 1935, the year the school opened, **teachers** included Miss Mary Moore, Miss Daphne Ranson (also the principal and secretary), Miss Crawford, Miss George, Miss Gregory and Miss Kennedy. Women teachers could not be married in 1935. By 1940 married teachers were employed. In 1940 Mrs. Willie Choate Hampton, Mrs. Gray, and Mrs. Pharr were on the teaching staff. Teachers were never allowed to wear dress pants to work - only dresses and skirts were permitted. The first P.T.A. President was Mrs. F. O. Clarkson. Known P.T.A. presidents included Mrs. Edgar Gammon (1936), Mrs. Frank Thies (1937), Mrs. Raymond Thompson (1938, 1939), Mrs. G. F. Cooper (1940-42), Mrs. Kenneth Bridges (1942-43), Mrs. A.L. Roberts (1944-46), Mrs. Philo Caldwell (1946-48), Mrs. W. L. Buice, Jr. (1948-49), Mrs. Sutherland Brown (1956-1957), Mrs. J. A. Crowell (1959-1960), Mrs. Rennie Cuthbertson (1974-1975), Mrs. Dan Morrill (1975-1976). In November 1935 the P.T.A. decided to collect clothing for a rummage sale. Thus began the Outgrown Clothing Sale which was held for nearly 50 years. Beginning in 1936 the P.T.A. sponsored a Children's Artist Series and a Shakespearean Story. The first project eventually became the Children's Symphony Concerts and the latter, with the help of the A.A.U.W. and the Junior League, became the Children's Little Theater. The school still holds a large "Fall Fun Day" which was first held by the P.T.A. in the fall of 1976 to raise money to buy classroom supplies. On March 30, 1948, a "Living Memorial" was announced by P.T.A. President Mrs. Philo Caldwell: "In the event of a death of a teacher, pupil or parent associated with the school, a tree, a shrub, a book, a plaque or some such article will be purchased by the P.T.A. and presented to the school in his/her memory. The amount to be spent in each case is to be approximately ten dollars." In 1951 Peggy Tuttle, daughter of Jerry Tuttle, a beautiful, smart, six year old little girl with long golden hair (according to her teacher, Annie Sanders) left school one Friday and was dead with polio by Monday. A bronze plaque was placed by Peggy,s classmates outside on the ground under her first grade classroom window.
5. Dr. Dan L. Morrill, *Charlotte Observer Building, 1972*," n.d. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/uptownsurveycharlotteobserverhistory.htm>).
6. Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *Plaza Midwood*, 1984. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/educationneighhistplazamidwood.htm>).
7. Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *The Cherry Neighborhood*, 1984 (<http://landmarkscommission.org/educationneighhistcherry.htm>). Dr. Thomas Hanchett, *Myers Park: Charlotte's Finest Planned Suburb*, n.d. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/educationneighhistmyerspark.htm>).
8. Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *The Growth of Charlotte: A History*, n.d. (<http://landmarkscommission.org/educargrowth.htm>).

9. *Eastover*.

10. *Reynolds-Gourmajenko House*, n.d.  
(<http://landmarkscommission.org/surveys&rreynolds.htm>).

11. *Eastover School History*.

12. *Charlotte Observer* (March 13, 2005).