

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper

Secretary D. Reid Wilson

April 29, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Kate Husband, Architectural Historian [klhusband@ncdot.gov](mailto:klhusband@ncdot.gov)  
NCDOT Environmental Analysis Unit  
Architectural History Group

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley  
Environmental Review Coordinator

*RGE for Ramona M. Bartos*

SUBJECT: Replace Bridge No. 184 over Cabriel Creek on SR 1355 (Bailey Street),  
Mars Hill, PA 19-05-0025, Madison County, ER 21-0935

Thank you for your April 6, 2021, memorandum forwarding the Historic Structures Survey Report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments.

**MD0052 (Mars Hill College Historic District)**

Though not formally reevaluated in the report, the consultant implies through the evaluation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool that the Mars Hill College Historic District (MD0052), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2006 for its significance under Criteria A, B, and C, remains eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. We concur.

**MD0315 (Chambers Gymnasium & Harrell Pool)**

We concur that the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (MD0315) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an expansion of and contributing resource within the existing Mars Hill College Historic District. The report appears to contain a discrepancy about the significance of the resource to the district. The table of evaluated resources on page 1-1 indicates that the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool are significant under Criterion A only, while the Evaluation on page 4-35 suggests that it is significant under Criteria A and C. We believe latter is appropriate, given the emphasis on the work of Six Associates—and Henry Irvin Gaines in particular—in the 2006 nomination for Mars Hill College. We recommend a modification to the boundary of the eligible resource, which is depicted on page 4-37 of the report. Rather than reaching across the road, the northeast boundary should instead follow the edge of pavement in front of the building as illustrated below.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-814-6579 or [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

[mpfurr@ncdot.gov](mailto:mpfurr@ncdot.gov)



# HISTORIC STRUCTURE SURVEY REPORT



## REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 184 OVER GABRIEL CREEK ON SR 1355 (BAILEY STREET)

Madison County, North Carolina

TIP No. N/A; WBS No. 17BP.13.R.198; PA No. 19-05-0025

### SUBMITTED TO:

North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Human Environment Section  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

October 2019

Technical Report # 2019-176NC

RICHARD GRUBB & ASSOCIATES

# HISTORIC STRUCTURE SURVEY REPORT

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October 17, 2019

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Ellen Turco, Principal Investigator  
Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc.

Date

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Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor  
Historic Architecture Group, NCDOT

Date

### Principal Investigator:

Ellen Turco

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### Submitted to:

North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Human Environment Section  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

### Date:

October 17, 2019

Technical Report # 2019-1766NC

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## 1.0 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 184 over Gabriel Creek on Bailey Street (SR 1355) on the Mars Hill University campus in the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, North Carolina (TIP No. N/A; WBS# 17BP.13.R.198PA#19-05-0025). This project is subject to review under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects (NCDOT/North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office/Federal Highways Administration 2015). Architectural Historians at the NCDOT defined an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and conducted a site visit to identify and assess all resources of approximately 50 years of age or more within the APE. One warranted an intensive National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility evaluation and is the subject of this report: the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. The NCDOT Architectural Historians determined that all other properties and districts within the APE were not worthy of further study and evaluation due to a lack of historical significance and/or integrity.

The NCDOT investigation identified one property, the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool on the campus of Mars Hill University, and recommended additional study and a NRHP eligibility of the resource (Table 1.1). The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool lies adjacent to the northwest boundary of the NRHP-listed Mars Hill College Historic District. The Mars Hill College Historic District encompasses part of the present-day Mars Hill University campus.

In August 2019, Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. (RGA) assessed the NRHP eligibility of Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. As a result of this assessment, for the purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, RGA recommends the Chambers Gym and Harrell Pool as eligible for inclusion in the NRHP- listed Mars Hill College Historic District (MD0052) as a contributing resource under Criterion A.

Table 1.1: Resources evaluated for the current undertaking.

<b>Survey Site No.</b>	<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>NRHP Status/ Recommendation</b>	<b>NRHP Criteria</b>
MD0315	Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool	Eligible (contributing to district)	A
MD0052	Mars Hill College Historic District	Listed 2006	A, B and C

NRHP – National Register of Historic Places

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 184 over Gabriel Creek on Bailey Street (SR 1355) on the Mars Hill University campus in the Town of Mars Hill, Madison County, North Carolina (Figure 2.1). Bridge No. 184, constructed in 1968, will be replaced on its existing alignment. The proposed project includes an offsite temporary detour, lasting approximately four months, using Bruce Road and Bailey Street. Architectural Historians at the NCDOT established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) pursuant to 36 CFR Section 800.4(b) which measures approximately 800 feet along Bailey Street (Figure 2.2). The APE abuts the Mars Hill College Historic District (MD0052). One historic architectural resource that may be affected by the undertaking, the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool, was identified in the APE (see Figure 2.2).

In July of 2019, Gannett Fleming, under contract to NCDOT Division 13, contracted with Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. (RGA) to conduct an Intensive-level survey of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool and to prepare a report assessing the property's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). RGA determined that the property was not on record at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and requested a survey site number be assigned. The HPO has assigned number MD0315 to the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. RGA historian Jason L. Harpe visited the project area in August of 2019 (see Appendix A for staff qualifications). The gym and pool were visually inspected, and the interior, exterior, and setting were documented with notes and digital photographs. While on site, the original architectural drawings of the building were examined at the University's Facilities Management Department. Research was conducted at the Southern Appalachian Archives at the University and at the Western Office of the HPO to find properties comparable with the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. Research was also conducted online at Ancestry.com and Newspapers.com. The historical development, architecture, and cultural significance of the property were assessed and evaluated within their respective historic contexts according to the established NRHP criteria.

The results of this Intensive-level survey and NRHP evaluation are presented in the following chapters of this report. This report complies with the following regulations: the basic requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800); the NCDOT's current Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products, and the HPO's Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina.

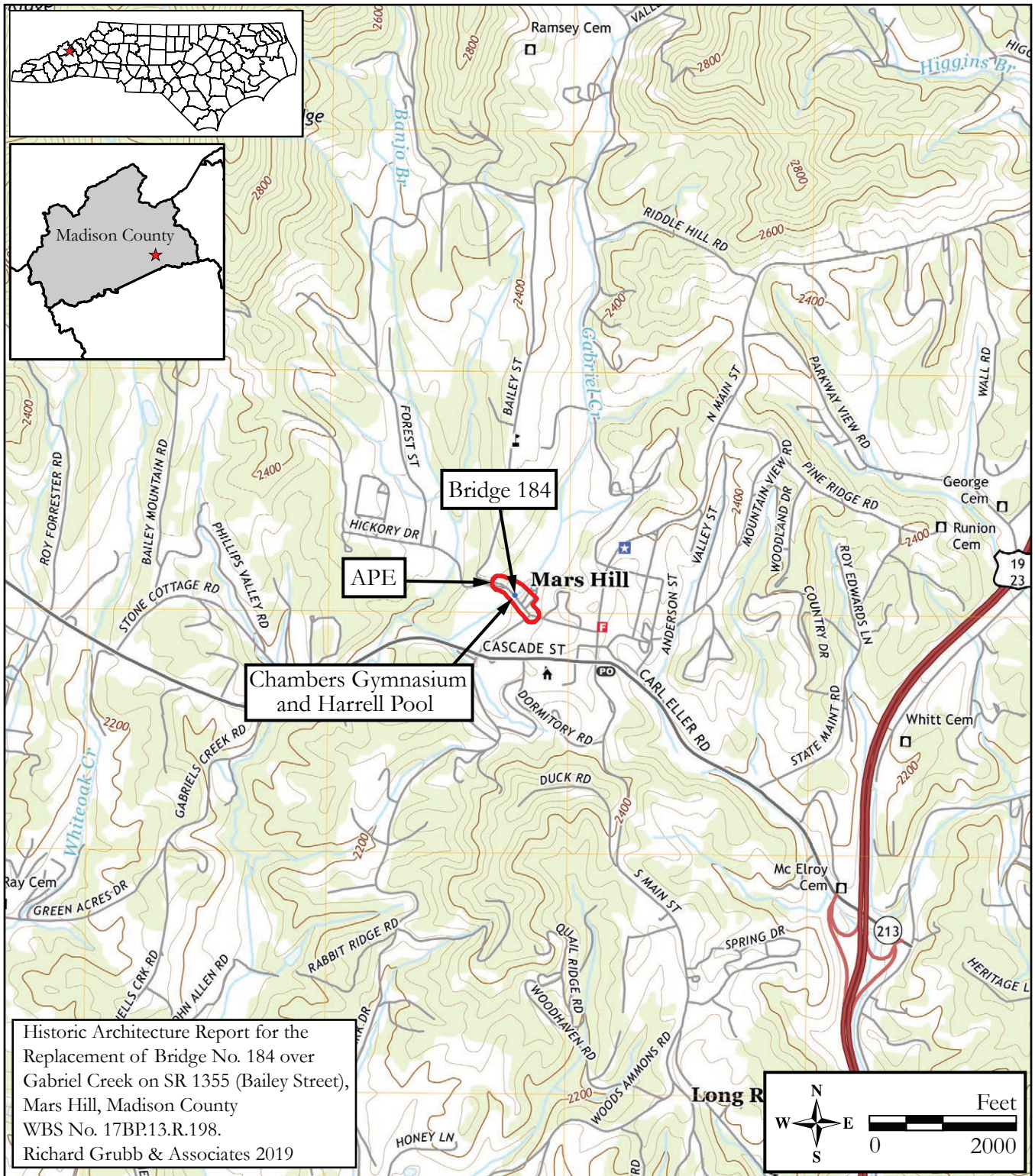


Figure 2.1: U.S.G.S. map showing the Area of Potential Effects for Historic Architecture (APE), Bridge No. 184 and the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (from 2019 U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle: Mars Hill, NC).



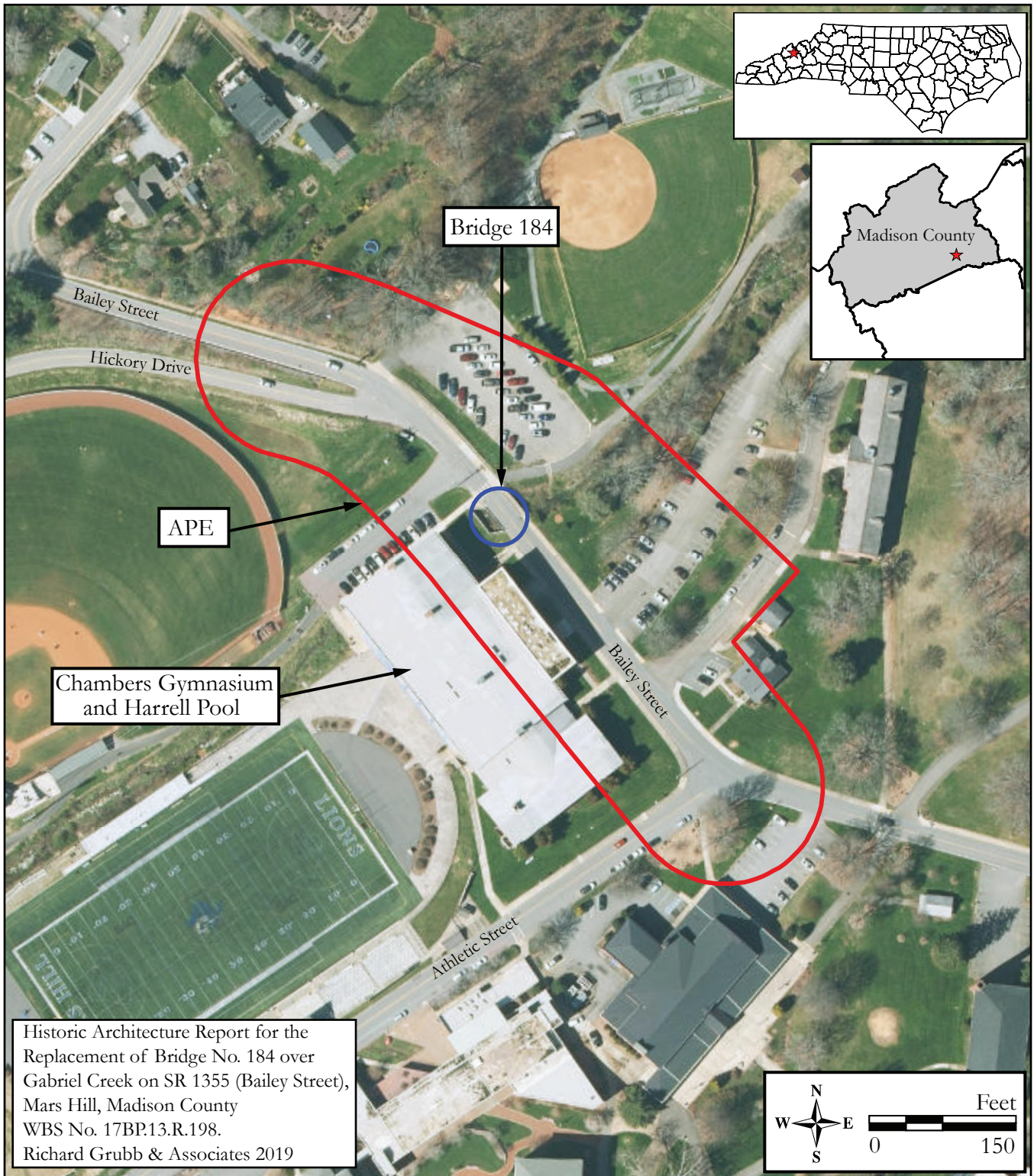


Figure 2.2: Aerial map showing the Area of Potential Effects for Historic Architecture (APE), Bridge No. 184 and the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (World Imagery, ESRI 2019).

## 3.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 3.1 History of the Town of Mars Hill and Mars Hill University

#### *Town of Mars Hill*

The Town of Mars Hill is located in eastern Madison County, North Carolina on Gabriel Creek, 15 miles north of Asheville, the largest city in western North Carolina, and 15 miles east of Marshall, the county seat of Madison County (Hill and Powell, 2010: 332). Mars Hill has a total land area of 1.9 square miles and rises to an elevation of 2,330 feet. Madison County was formed from Buncombe and Yancey counties in 1851 and was named in honor of President James Madison (Corbitt 1996: 144).

The first post office near Mars Hill College was established on September 28, 1871, and the area was named Mars in 1892 (Argintar 2014: 8:10). The name was changed to Mars Hill in 1893 when the town was officially incorporated. The town is named for Mars Hill College, a university since 2013, which is located adjacent to the town's downtown commercial district. The town's growth and development were tied to the formation and prosperity of the college. The school received its state charter in 1859 to operate as the French Broad Institute, a Baptist high school and preparatory school to serve male and female students in western North Carolina (Hood 2006: 7:2). In 1926, the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools recognized the College as an accredited junior college. Businesses opened and operated in Mars Hill's commercial district east of the campus to meet the needs of the college's faculty and students and residents who took advantage of restaurants, a theater, general stores, doctors, and drug stores that were built in the district.

During the 1920s, increased college enrollment and construction in the commercial district necessitated an extension of Mars Hill's town limits, which were extended 900 yards in every direction beyond the town's original 1893 boundary, which had extended 1,200 yards in every direction from the "old Mars Hill college building" (Argintar 2014: 8:10-11). There were 18 businesses in downtown Mars Hill in the 1920s and by the late 1930s there were 23. The stores included cafes, hardware stores, a barber shop, bank, gas stations, pharmacies, groceries, and boarding houses. Students rented rooms at local boarding houses, as well as from residents who made their homes available.

The financial hardships caused by The Great Depression of the 1930s that crippled businesses, institutions, and families across the United States also visited Mars Hill. The town defaulted on water bonds it had obtained in 1920 to establish water, sewer, light, and electric systems and to build new streets and improve older ones. The town applied for and received funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to remedy its inadequate, and in some places contaminated, water supply. Concurrently, it passed a bond referendum to match the WPA funds and passed a resolution requesting that the North Carolina General Assembly allow the town to annex properties outside of the city limits due to the number of delinquent property taxes (Argintar 2014: 8:12).

The decades of the 1940s and 1950s saw increased enrollment at the college and additional businesses operating in the commercial district. By 1947, college enrollment reached 979 and among this number were more out-of-state students. The downtown commercial district was able to retain many of the businesses that had met with hardship during the 1930s while welcoming new ones. To support this growth and continue its commitment to providing services to its residents, the town passed a bond referendum in 1942 to build a sewer system and passed a second bond in 1954 to expand and improve upon its water system (Argintar 2014: 8:13). The college's formal accreditation as a four-year college in 1967 spurred both enrollment and more businesses in downtown. Increased enrollment contributed to the vitality of Mars Hill's commercial district during periods when downtowns throughout western North Carolina were unable to sustain economic consistency. Improvements to the highway system, increased numbers of students with cars, and the development of small shopping centers, grocery stores, and restaurants pulled both students and residents out of the downtown. Although Mars Hill's downtown commercial district looks much like it did during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the types of businesses that occupy the buildings have changed. The downtown buildings now house real estate offices, attorney's offices, gift shops, and new restaurants frequented by the college's student population. The Mars Hill Commercial Historic District was listed in the NRHP in 2014. The small district of 10 buildings lies east of the NRHP-listed Mars Hill College Historic District.

### *Mars Hill College and Mars Hill University*

Mars Hill College was founded as the French Broad Baptist Institute in 1856.<sup>1</sup> The institute was named after the nearby French Broad River and the French Broad Baptist Association, which was formed in 1807 by churches from the Holston Association and the Broad River Association (French Broad Baptist 1994: 3). Organizers formed the new association because of the difficulty associated with travel during this time period and the distances of their churches from larger Baptist associations in South Carolina and Tennessee. Shortly after its formation, organizers drafted the French Broad Baptist Association's Covenant and Rules of Decorum, which contains language that defines the group as Separate Baptists.<sup>2</sup>

The topic of education was included on the agenda of the French Broad Baptist Association's meetings as early as 1850 due to concerns about the lack of educational opportunities in western North Carolina. In 1853, the association recommended that it support two schools, and in 1854 the Association's Education Committee recommended that one of the schools be within the French Broad River area. In 1856, the French Broad Institute was established with Edward Carter donating the land for the institute and other individuals providing financial support (Hood 2006: 8:39).

Edward Carter was one of the leaders of the education movement. He pushed for the establishment of the French Broad Institute. Two of Carter's nephews had attended a Methodist academy in Burnsville where they converted to Methodism (Hood 2006: 8:38). Carter was a staunch Baptist who wanted an institution that was under the auspices of the Baptist Church. Carter created a subscription list for the Institute and, along with J. W. Anderson, Thomas Washington Ray, Thomas Shepherd Deaver, Jacob C. Sams, and Berry Duyck, subscribed \$100 to fund the school. By 1855, the trustees had raised sufficient funds to enter into an agreement with Ephraim Clayton and George Wesley Shackelford to build a two-story brick building for the Institute (Figure 3.1). Clayton and Shackelford were both prolific builders in western North Carolina during the antebellum period. They worked separately and as partners on courthouses, churches, residences, and institutional buildings (Bishir, Southern, and Martin 1999: 30, 186, 240, 261, 275). They completed the two-story brick school building by 1856 (Hood 2006: 8:39).<sup>3</sup>

Excitement surrounded the founding of the Institute, but the financial support was short lived. Trustees used a slave named Joe as collateral for the College's first building. Joe belonged to J. W. Anderson, one of the Institute's trustees. The Buncombe County Sheriff seized Joe and took him to the jail in Asheville. The sheriff held Joe until the subscribers paid the debt of \$1,100 (Neufeld 2009). The building was completed by March 14, 1856.<sup>4</sup> The Institute's name was changed to Mars Hill College on February 16, 1859. Mars Hill is a place in Athens, Greece, called the Hill of Ares, where Paul delivered one of his most important gospel presentations while visiting Athens.

Over the next 40 years, the college was plagued by many issues. It was able to operate during the first two years of the Civil War but closed at the end of the 1863 session. During the war the college's first 1856 brick building and two frame residential buildings were occupied by Confederate troops (Hood 2006: 8:40). Subsequently, the two frame buildings were burned on March 8, 1865. The College reopened in June of 1865 after two damaged rooms in the 1865 brick building had been repaired. Some of the original trustees who had helped fund the college's opening in 1856 reaffirmed their support after the Civil War because they did not want to see the College fail. Through the 1870s, the college struggled to solidify a promising future.

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1 The college was chartered by the State of North Carolina in 1859.

2 Separate Baptists are a group of Baptists that formed during the eighteenth century, mainly in the South, and grew out of the Great Awakening. They were followers of George Whitefield and their earliest members withdrew from First Baptist Church in Boston, Massachusetts in 1743 to form Second Baptist Church because the pastor of First Baptist disapproved of all the excitement surrounding revivalism. The Second Baptists believe in the infallibility of the all Old Testament scriptures, and they use the King James version of the Bible.

3 This building was razed in 1910 due to its deteriorated condition.

4 This is the date on which Edward Carter conveyed to Thomas Washington Ray, chairman of the French Broad Baptist Institute's board of trustees, four-and-one-eighth acres that included "the New Academy." This deed is recorded in the Madison County Register of Deeds Office in Book 11 on Pages 303-304.

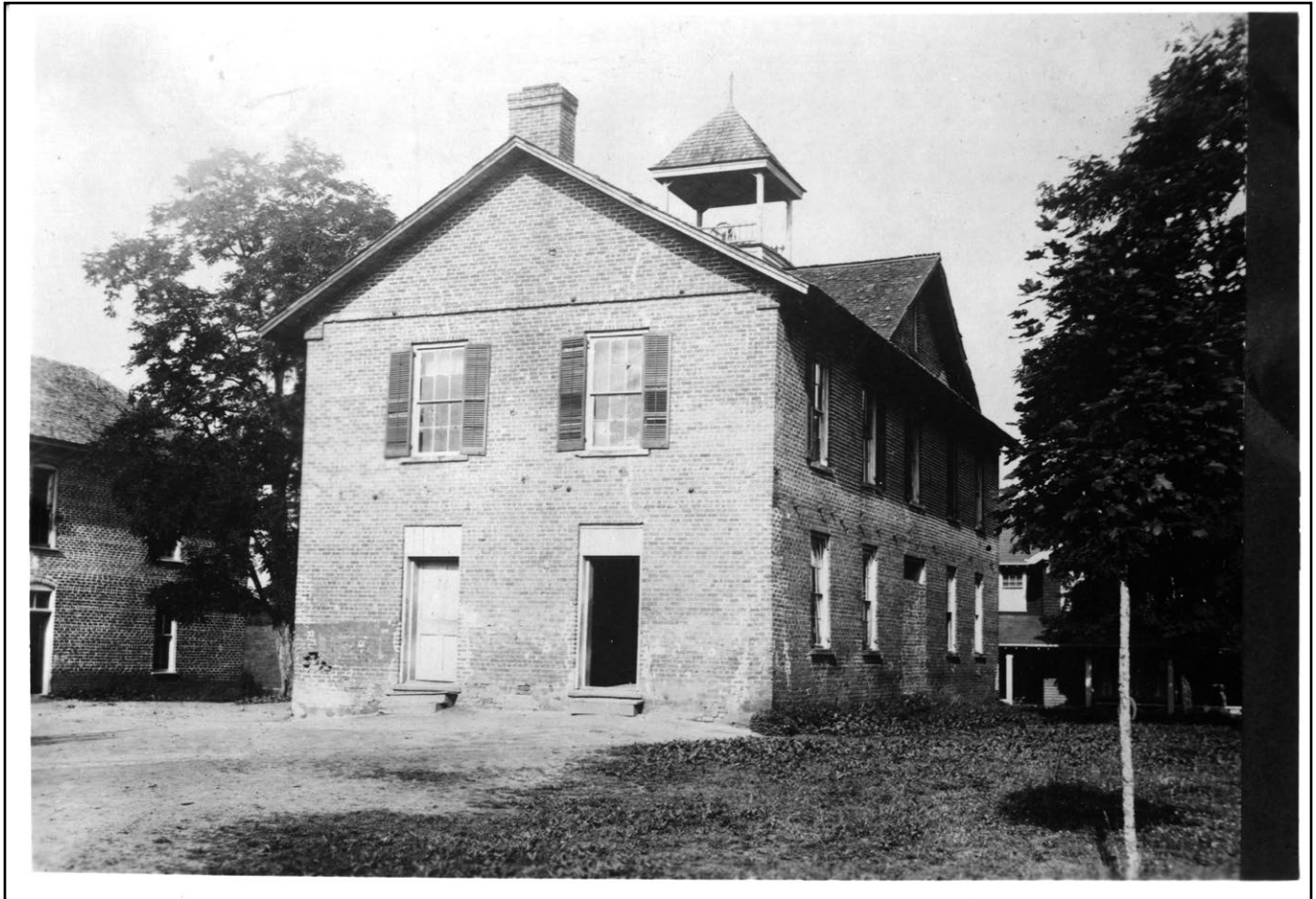


Figure 3.1: First Building on Mars Hill College Campus, 1857-1910  
(Courtesy of the Mars Hill College Photograph Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives,  
Mars Hill University).

The years following the end of the Civil War were difficult financially for families in the South and there was very little money for families to pay for secondary tuition and boarding. The College's situation was surmised in a report delivered at the Western Baptist Association's Conference in September 1872, which expressed succinctly that "Mars Hill College is dormant. It ought not to be so. It is a center of great importance to the denomination" (Hood 2016: 8:41). The 1856 brick building was used from 1874 to 1876 as the western branch of the Oxford Masonic Orphanage, and a private subscription school operated from the building from 1876 to 1878 (*The North Carolina Citizen* 28 January 1875). The trustees reopened the College in 1878, yet the school continued to struggle for nearly 20 more years. The trustees were able to secure some very qualified and capable presidents, but they struggled to keep these men on staff because of the College's inability to cover their salaries. To supplement their limited stream of income, the trustees agreed to rent space in some of its building just as they did during the 1870s.

The years of hardship and financial struggles were remedied with the hiring of Wake Forest College alumnus Robert Lee Moore in 1897. A native of western North Carolina, Moore was the principal of Amherst College in Morganton, North Carolina, before taking the reins as president of Mars Hill College. During Moore's 41-year tenure, the College received accreditation as a junior college in 1926, navigated through the Great Depression of the 1930s, improved the curriculum for men with aspirations of entering the Baptist ministry, increased enrollment, and created a much-needed endowment. Moore strengthened the College's ties to the North Carolina Baptist Convention and was able to procure grants and loans from the Convention that resulted in expanded course offerings, larger faculty, and new buildings. Under Moore's guidance, the College built the Treat Annex to the Spilman Home (1906), Auditorium (1906), Treat Dormitory (1907), Moore Hall/Marshbanks Hall (1909), Estella Nissen Montague Building (1919), Melrose Hall (1924), Brown Hall (1924-25), McConnell Gymnasium (1924), Edgewood House (1925), and Dr. W. F. Robinson Memorial Infirmary (1935) (Hood 2006: 7:2-4) (Figure 3.2).

In 1935, Moore led an effort called the "Enlargement Program of the College" that was directed by Hoyt Blackwell, a Mars Hill alumnus and professor who would carry the torch lit by Moore for the next 38 years. The board of trustees elected Blackwell president on June 12, 1938, after receiving Moore's resignation one day earlier. Blackwell hit the ground running and presided over the groundbreaking for the Charles M. Wall Science Building in 1939. Blackwell's presidency was marked by the construction of additional buildings on the College's campus. Before World War II building restrictions slowed expansion plans, Blackwell had an ell added to the Edna Corpening Moore Hall in 1941 and named it for Ruth Stroup in 1946. The College welcomed the end of the World War II with plans for more buildings designed the Henry Irven Gaines, the College's architect (Figure 3.3).

In 1946, the College acquired property on which it planned to build a new "girls" dormitory. The property included the Carter-Humphrey House and Carter-Humphrey Dependency, both contributing buildings in the Mars Hill College Historic District, built in 1924 and 1932, respectively. The new girls dormitory, Huffman Hall, was completed in 1947 and accommodated 133 female students. Blackwell concluded the decade of the 1940s with the dedication of Bridges Dining Hall in 1949.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the college built important buildings that resolved issues with its library, classroom space, science laboratories, and residences. The College's decision in the early 1960s to retain a full intercollegiate sports program that included football necessitated the building of a new athletic complex. The College had operated as a junior college since 1921, but in September 1962 it added a third year. A senior year was added in September 1963 and its first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in the spring of 1964. Enrollment at this time totaled 1,097 regular students, which had the dormitories at capacity. Some students stayed in homes in private residences in Mars Hill.



Figure 3.2: Mars Hill College, 1911  
(Courtesy of the Mars Hill College Photograph Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives,  
Mars Hill University).

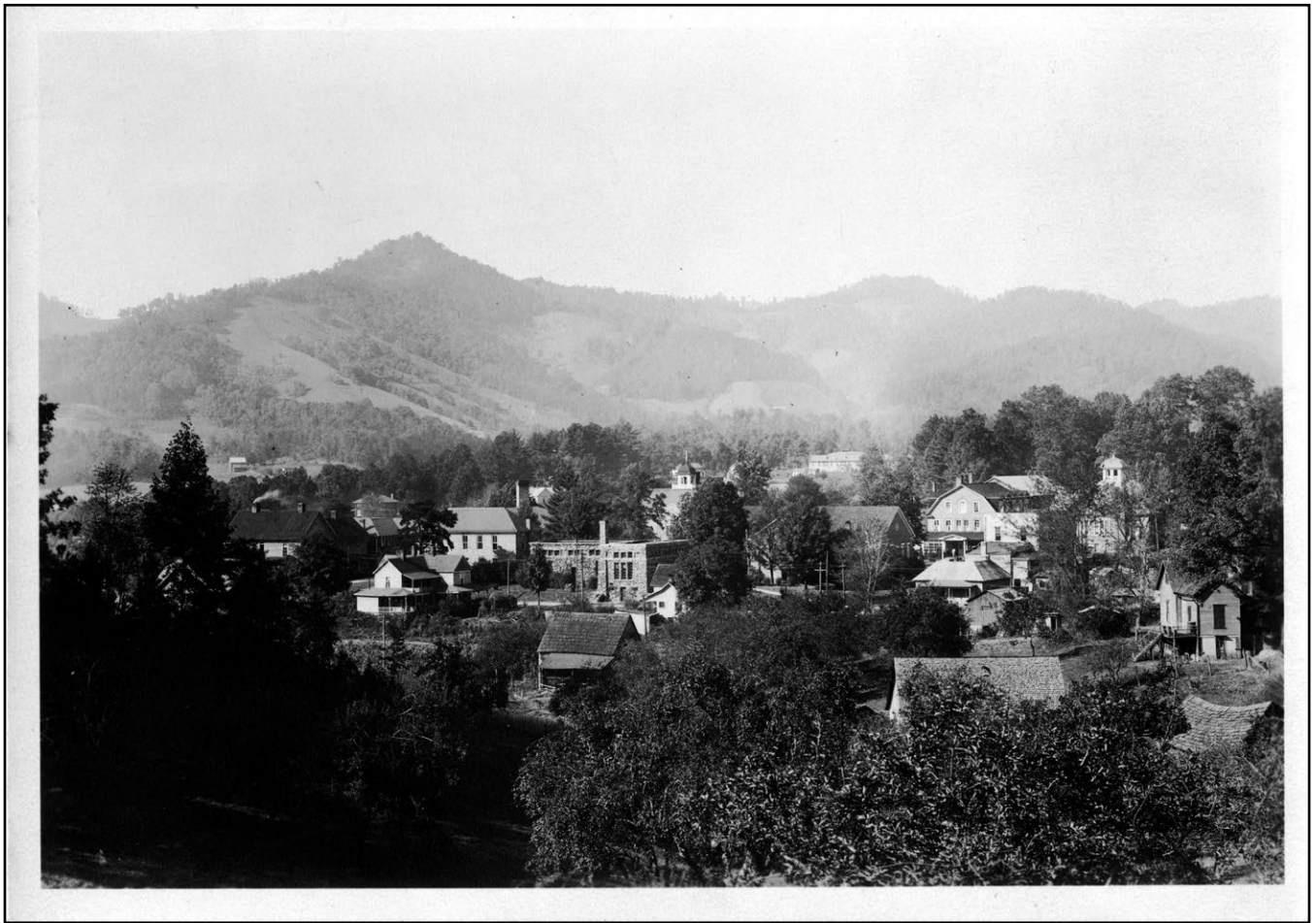


Figure 3.3: Mars Hills College Campus, 1940s  
(Courtesy of the Mars Hill College Photograph Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives,  
Mars Hill University).

Mars Hill was one of eight colleges in western North Carolina that increased its enrollment and expanded its facilities during the 1960s, but it focused much of its attention on receiving senior college status (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 14 October 1962; Gourney 1963).<sup>5</sup> Planning began as early as 1956 and involved the formation of a committee initiated by the Baptist State Convention to study Baptist institutions in North Carolina and necessary curriculum changes to become a senior college. A two-year study led to the offering of four academic degrees: Bachelor of Arts with majors in art, classical languages, elementary education, English, French, German, history and social science, music, religion and Spanish; Bachelor of Science with majors in biology and business administration, business education, chemistry, home economics, mathematics, and physical education; Bachelor of Music; and Bachelor of Music Education. The College added a 172-student junior class during the fall semester of 1962, and a 158-student senior class in the fall of 1963. Miriam Carolyn Jones was the first person to receive a Bachelor's degree from Mars Hill College. She was matriculated on May 31, 1964. In 1967, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools recognized Mars Hill as a senior college.

Hoyt Blackwell retired as president of Mars Hill College on June 30, 1966 and was succeeded by Dr. Fred Black Bentley. Bentley held the position of college president for 30 years, retiring in 1996. He oversaw the construction of seven buildings on the campus during his tenure. Under Bentley's presidency the school dedicated or built the following facilities: Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (1967), Meares Athletic Fields (1967), Gibson Hall men's dormitory (1969), Cornwell Hall (1973), Wren College Union (1973), Blackwell Hall (1978), Harris Media Center (1981), Broyhill Chapel (1989), and Pittman Dining Hall (1994). The remodeling of the Edgewood House as Bentley's residence and the former Coyte Bridges Dining Hall as the Renfro Library also took place under Bentley's presidency.

Bentley retired from Mars Hill College in 1996, and his successor, Dr. A. Max Lennon, a Mars Hill College graduate, served as president until 2002. In 2013, Mars Hill College became Mars Hill University when the first Master of Arts degree in Education was awarded. Dr. Lennon retired at the close of 2017-2018 academic year. The University's current president is Tony Floyd. As of October 1, 2018, Mars Hill College had 1,154 students enrolled. Of this number, 1,036 were traditional students, 84 were Adult and Graduate Studies undergraduate students, and 22 were graduate students.

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5 The other seven western North Carolina colleges were Asheville-Biltmore College, Montreat-Anderson College, Warren Wilson College, Appalachian State Teachers College, Western Carolina College, Brevard College, and Banner Elk College.



## 4.0 NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION OF THE CHAMBERS GYMNASIUM AND HARRELL POOL

Table 4.1: Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool Information Table.

Resource Name	Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool
HPO Survey Site #	MD0315
Location	100 Athletic Street, Mars Hill
Dates (s) of Construction	1967
Recommendation	Contributing building in the Mars Hill College Historic District Boundary Expansion



### *Setting*

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool is located at 100 Athletic Street on the west side of the intersection of Athletic Street and Bailey Street (SR 1355) on the campus of Mars Hill University in Mars Hill (Figure 4.1) (Plates 4.1-4.10) (Table 4.1). The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool is just outside the northwest boundary of the Mars Hill College Historic District.

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool are at the northeast and southwest ends, respectively, of a two-part brick building that was built in 1967. The building faces northeast towards Bailey Street and is part of the University's sports complex on the north side of the campus (Figure 4.2). The building is within the block bordered on the northeast side by Bailey Street, on the southeast side by Athletic Street and on the southwest side by NC 213 (Cascade Street). The site slopes downward from southeast to northwest from Athletic Street to Hickory Street. The Ammons Family Athletic Center, which consists of Meares Stadium, the Merrill Press Box, and the Sams-Anderson Football Field, is adjacent to the southwest side of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. The campus tennis courts and a baseball diamond are west of the pool and gym and the Ammons complex. Gabriel Creek, with its vegetated banks, runs a northeast-southwest course under Bailey Street toward NC 213. From the bridge it passes under the northeast corner of the gymnasium and emerges to follow a course between the stadium and the baseball diamond.

Landscaping around the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool consists of small shrubs, medium-sized trees, and grassy areas along the building's northeast and southeast elevations. Concrete sidewalks and steps provide access to the building on Athletic Street and Bailey Street. The rear elevation of the gym has a semi-circular paved area that connects its basement to the football field. An unnamed, dead-end paved driveway extends from Bailey Street, at the gym's northwest corner, southwest, to access the gym and tennis courts. The driveway accesses a small number of parking spaces on the northwest side of the building. Additional parking areas are located northeast of the building across Bailey Street, and in a student parking lot north of the Carter-Humphrey House and the northern edge of the current boundary of the Mars Hill College Historic District (see Figure 4.1).

### *Physical Description*

#### *Exterior*

The Chambers Gymnasium and Chambers Pool, the largest building on the University's campus, is a 5:1 bond brick building completed in 1967 in a blend of the Colonial Revival and Modernist styles of architecture (Figure 4.3) (Plates 4.11-4.18).<sup>6</sup> The building measures 268 feet by 188 feet and contains 79,588-square-feet. It is made up of three parts: the gabled gymnasium section and the gabled pool section which are arranged perpendicularly, and the flat-roofed entry pavilion that is attached to the gymnasium's facade and fronts Bailey Street. The elevations facing Bailey Street feature higher orders of decorative detail with plainer finished on the sides and rear.

<sup>6</sup> The building's cornerstone was dedicated in 1966, but the building was not finished until 1967.

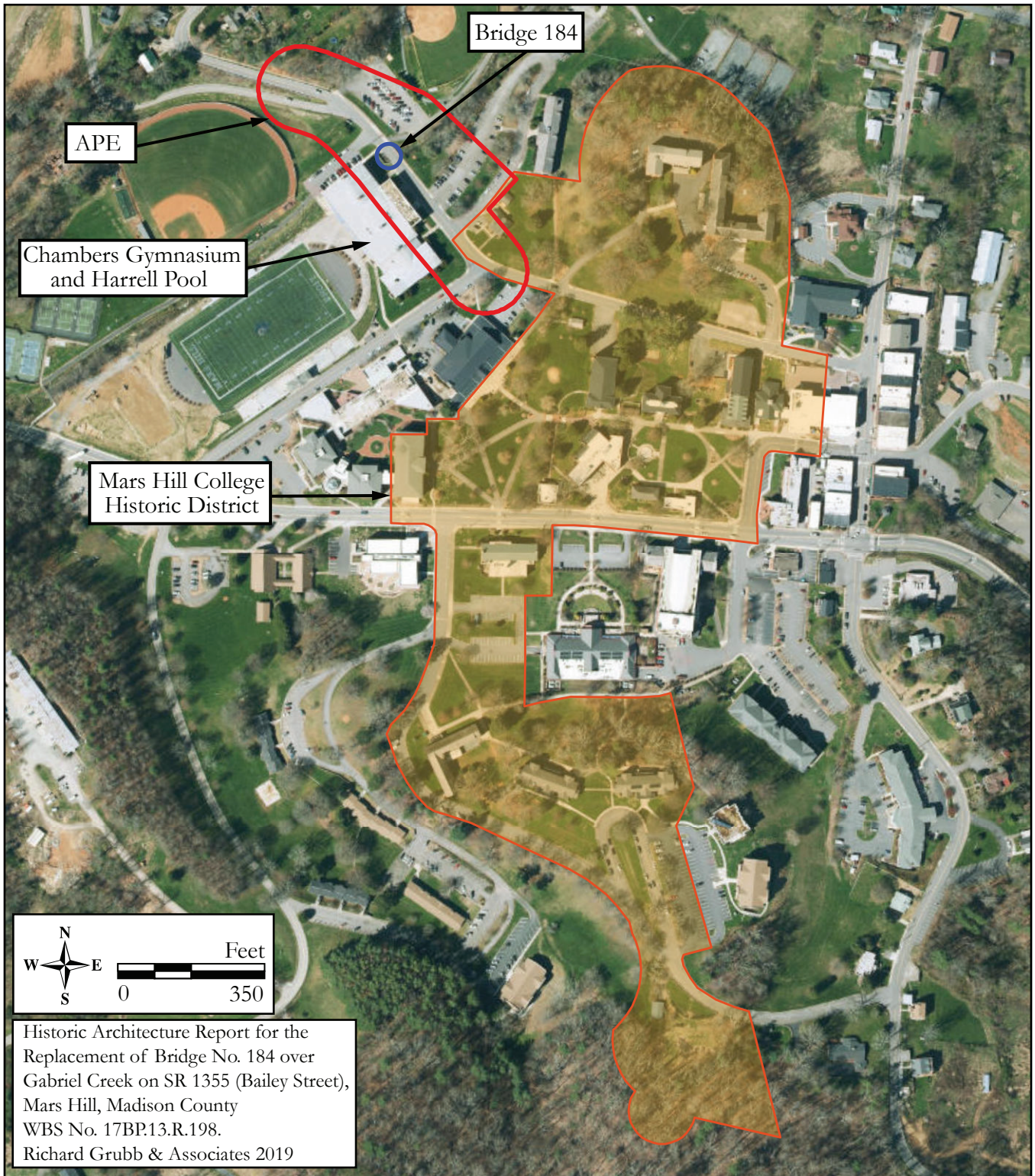


Figure 4.1: Aerial photograph showing the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool and Bridge No. 184 in relation to the Mars Hill College Historic District (World Imagery, ESRI 2019).



Plate 4.1 View of Mars Hill University's main entrance.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.2 View of the southeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool at the intersection of Bailey Street (SR 1355) and Athletic Street.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.3 View of northeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool along Bailey Street.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.4 View of the northeast elevation of Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool along Bailey Street with Bridge No. 184 over Gabriel Creek at the center-right of the photograph.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.5 View from Athletic Street to the Ammons Family Athletic Center, which is located southwest of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: West

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.6 View of the southwest elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool looking toward the Don Henderson baseball field from Athletic Street.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.7 View of the northeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool and northeast side of Bridge No. 184 over Gabriel Creek over Bailey Street.

Photo view: South

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe



Plate 4.8 View of southwest side of Bridge No. 184 over Gabriel Creek at Bailey Street.

Photo view: Northeast

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.9 View of the Carter-Humphrey Guest House which lies adjacent to the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool near the intersection of Bailey Street and Athletic Street.

Note, the guest house is a contributing building to the Mars Hill College NRHP Historic District (MD0052).

Photo view: North

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.10 View of the northeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool showing the entry pavilion.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019

The Chambers Gymnasium and Chambers Pool is built of a steel frame infilled with concrete block which is faced on the exterior with 5:1 pattern brick veneer. The roof is supported by a steel rigid frame system. Originally, the roof was covered with asbestos shingles; today it is covered with a rubber membrane and it is not known if the shingles remain under this later covering. The pool section is built on grade, with the pool below grade. The gymnasium section has a partially below grade basement that takes advantage of the sloping site. Throughout the building are four-, five-, and six-part aluminum awning windows. The windows on the rear elevation of the gymnasium section are shielded by metal sun canopies.

The building's Colonial Revival style is expressed in the overall forms of the gymnasium and pool sections, which have shallow pitched 4:12 rooflines with gable end returns and engaged false chimney stacks at the gable ends. Two additional false chimney stacks project from the ridgeline of the gymnasium. Limestone details exist, such as: the frieze, rake, and molded window surrounds of gymnasium sections, and the limestone pedimented window hood supported by modillions on the northeast side of the pool section. The pool section's frieze is made of projecting and recessed header and stretcher brick courses. Copper gutters with downspouts are built into the gymnasium section's roof and are attached to the exterior of the pool section.

The entry pavilion's Modernist style and verticality is distinct from that of the gymnasium and pool sections. It is a two-story, flat-roofed box that is slightly higher in elevation than the gymnasium section. The brick pavilion is dominated by the central entry. The seven-bay entry has pilasters and a frieze made of limestone panels. The name "Chambers" is spelled out in individual metal letters across the frieze. Each bay is filled by alternating metal frame glazed double doors with a transom, or, two sets of five-light aluminum awning windows; a set of dark-colored Formica panels with metal surrounds; another set awning windows; and at the top another set of Formica panels. A concrete planter enclosed by rusticated stone blocks is flanked by sets of limestone stone steps with brick knee walls capped with limestone at each end.

#### *Interior*

The lobby, the gymnasium, and the pool are accessed from the Bailey Street entrance to the pavilion (Plates 4.19-4.30). Along the southwest lobby wall are two entrances to the gymnasium, a concession stand, built-in trophy cases, and a women's restroom. A men's restroom, a second stair, and an office are at the northwest end of the lobby. The walls of the lobby are exposed concrete block, the floors are terrazzo with red marble baseboards, and the ceilings are covered with acoustical tiles set in a



Figure 4.2: 2019 Mars Hill University Campus Map (Mars Hill University).

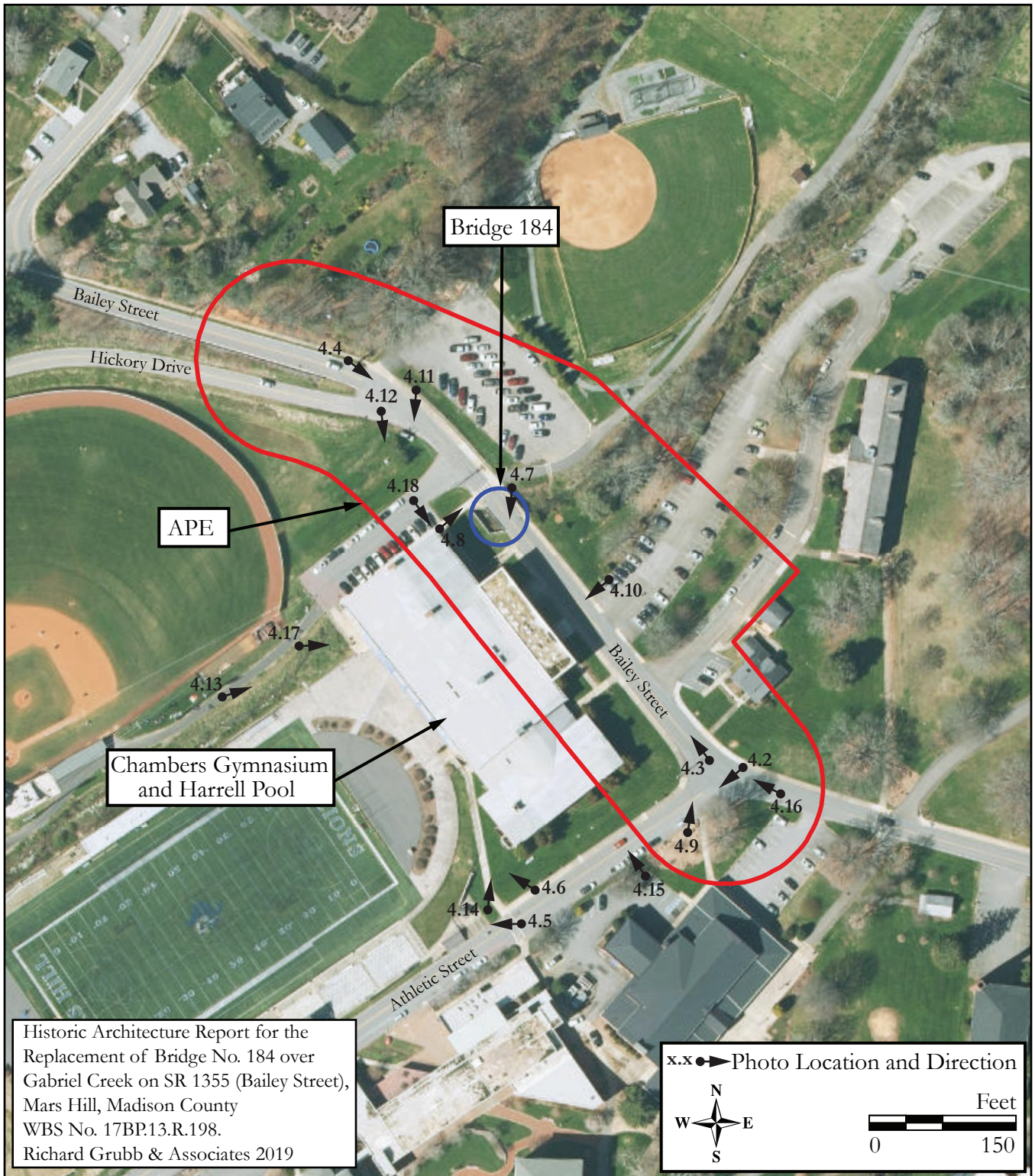


Figure 4.3: Aerial photograph showing the Area of Potential Effects for Historic Architecture (APE) and photograph locations and directions (World Imagery, ESRI 2019).





Plate 4.11 View of the northwest elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: South

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.12 View of the parking lot and an unnamed driveway at the northeast corner of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool, showing the intersection of Hickory Street and Bailey Street and Bridge No. 184 at the center-far left of the photograph.

Photo view: South

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.13 View of the southwest elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: East

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.14 View of the southwest elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool showing a paved walkway from Athletic Street.

Photo view: North

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.15 View of southeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool from Athletic Street.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.16 View of the northeast elevation of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool at the intersection of Bailey Street and Athletic Street.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.17 View of one rear entry door and window at the northwest corner of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: East

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.18 View of a paved walkway from the parking lot at the northeast corner of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool showing an entryway to the building's basement.

Photo view: Southeast

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019

metal framework. The gymnasium section contains primary and secondary basketball courts, storage areas, and lobby connector to the swimming pool. The double-height primary basketball court has galleries with pipe railings in the northwest and southeast gable ends. The walls of the gable ends are covered with sheets of finished plywood. The steel roof and wall system is exposed and the court floor is wood. The pool section of the building is accessed from the lobby connector at the southeast side of the gymnasium. The large open space has a 75-foot by 45-foot concrete swimming pool set in a deck of small blue and white, square and rectangular tiles. Larger light blue square tiles cover the walls and concrete block support columns to a height of about five feet. Above the tiles the walls are exposed, painted concrete block. A set of poured concrete spectator bleachers is positioned along the northwest wall. Blue and white team benches line the opposing wall. Along the southwest wall of the pool section are utility and mechanical rooms.

The ground floor, or basement, under the gymnasium is accessed by the northwest stair in the entry pavilion lobby. The basement lobby has the same wall, ceiling, and floor treatments as the lobby above it. The basement's three corridors access classrooms, storage rooms, locker rooms and other support areas. The basement corridors have walls of exposed concrete block, floors of asbestos tile, and acoustical tile drop ceilings. The visiting teams' housing and dressing rooms, the concession stand, and a cluster of offices line the southwest wall of the basement. The visitor's facilities have direct access to the football field.

#### *History of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool*

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s witnessed an increasing emphasis on higher education and Mars Hill College was one of eight educational institutions in western North Carolina that experienced unprecedented growth. Enrollment at these institutions increased by 57.2 percent and construction totals for these campuses were in excess of \$14,173,176 (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 10 October 1962). At Mars Hill College, the board of trustees focused on advancing the College's status from a junior college to an accredited four-year senior college. This goal was achieved in 1967 and was paralleled by aspirations to raise money for the construction of a new physical education building to accommodate the Physical Education major, which was added in 1962.

Intercollegiate team sports were an important part of life at Mars Hill College in the 1950s and 1960s. College officials considered dropping the college's intercollegiate sports program in 1962 but decided against it after a meeting between administrative leaders and the physical education department staff. The College had a full intercollegiate sports program, which included football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis, and golf. The teams played independently of any conference until the school added the fourth year of study in 1963. Although the budgets for sports were limited, the College made improvements to the football stadium and the baseball field (Terrell 1962). The College dedicated a new football stadium on October 9, 1965 during the annual homecoming celebration. Meares Stadium had 3,500 redwood seats, bluegrass turf on the football field, and a new scoreboard that was surrounded by a quarter-mile track and lit by a 216,000-watt lighting system (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 7 October 1965). The College celebrated this dedication as a positive step towards updating its athletic facilities only two years after graduating its first senior class.

The administration's perusal of four-year-college accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools was another driver in the improvement and expansion of recreational facilities. In 1966, Dr. William P. Walker, a native of Marion, was hired to head the Department of Physical Education. Walker led a staff of seven as the College navigated its way through the planning, design and construction of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 27 November 1966). In November 1966, the College welcomed physical education expert Dr. Catherine Allen for a day of lectures and demonstrations. Dr. Allen was a professor and former chairman of the Department of Recreation at Boston-Bouve College of Northeastern University in Medford, Massachusetts. Her visit to Mars Hill was part of a three-day program that was sponsored by the Visiting Scholars'



Plate 4.19 View of the lobby, concessions, and offices of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.20 View of the lobby, concessions, and offices of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.21 View of the primary court and bleachers of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.22 View of the primary court and bleachers of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northeast

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019

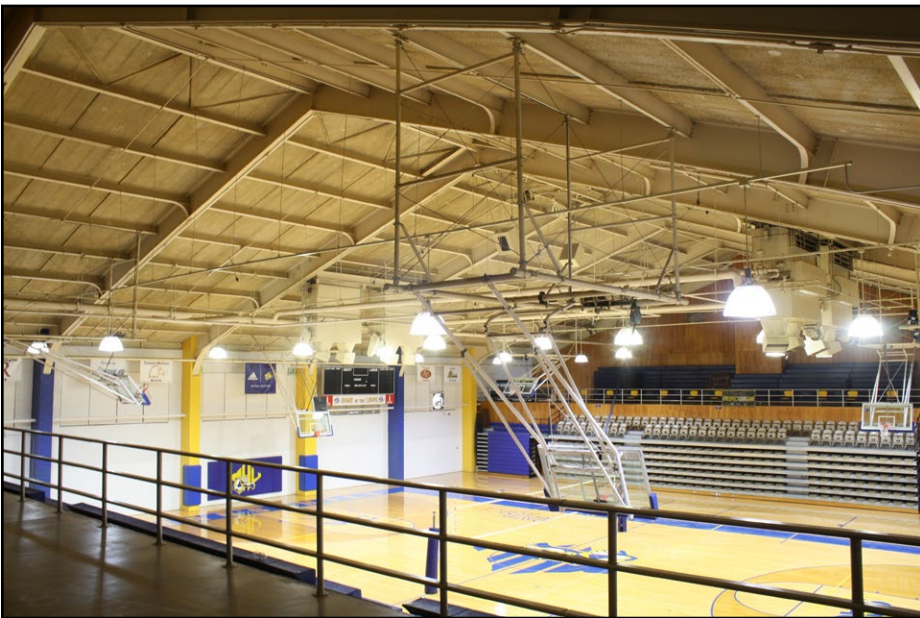


Plate 4.23 View of the primary court, bleachers, and rafters of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.24 View of the secondary court that adjoins the primary court at the northwest end of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: East

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.25 View of the secondary court that adjoins the primary court at the northwest end of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: North

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.26 View of the lobby in the basement of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.27 View of the equipment room and classrooms in the basement of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Northwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.28 View of Harrell Pool showing benches and starting platforms.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.29 View of Harrell Pool showing starting platforms, bleachers, and the front doors.

Photo view: Northeast

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Plate 4.30 View of the bleachers in Harrell Pool.

Photo view: Southwest

Photographer: Jason L. Harpe

Date: August 16, 2019



Program of the Piedmont University Center of Winston-Salem, an administrative cooperative of 17 different colleges in North Carolina. She visited other colleges and universities such as Salem, Wake Forest, Winston-Salem State, and Livingstone (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 27 November 1966).

Plans for the construction of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool began under the presidency of Hoyt Blackwell (Figures 4.4-4.6). The board of trustees identified a new physical education building as a priority to accommodate a student body of over 1,100 students, as well as a new Physical Education major. The 1924 McConnell Gymnasium was built when fewer than 400 students were enrolled at the College and by the 1960s, it was no longer adequate. The administration believed that “collegiate athletics create a valuable school spirit and also provide an important training ground for students who will one day become coaches and teachers” (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 14 October 1962).

Officials engaged Henry Irvan Gaines and his Asheville architectural firm Six Associates to design the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.<sup>7</sup> Gaines (1900-1986) served as the College architect from 1932 to 1970. Between 1935 and 1955, Gaines designed six buildings on the Mars Hill College campus: the Rustic-style stone Dr. W. F. Robinson Memorial Infirmary (1935); Colonial Revival-style Edna Corpening Moore and Stroup Halls (1938; 1941), and Huffman Hall (1946-47); the Modernist-style Charles M. Wall Science Building (1939-1940); and Memorial Library (now Brenda G. Nash Education Hall) (1954-55) and Myers Hall (1954-55), which are both hybrids of the Colonial Revival and Modernist styles of architecture (Figures 4.7-4.12). Gaines and Six Associates also drew the plans for the renovation to the Treat Dormitory/Spilman Hall in 1941. Even after Gaines retired from the firm in 1977, Six Associates designed the brick-and-glass Blackwell Hall which was completed in 1978. Blackwell Hall was the College’s first building erected to house all administrative functions (Stingley 1978).

Blackwell retired before the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool were completed, but he was present at the groundbreaking in 1965 (Figure 4.13). Dickerson, Inc. of Monroe, North Carolina, began construction on the building in July 1965 (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 1 October 1967). Other contractors on the project were Moser Plumbing Company of Asheville, Sanitary Plumbing and Heating Company of Greenville, South Carolina, and Bryant Electric Company of Brevard. The Harrell Pool was completed during the summer of 1967 and was in use by July. The gymnasium was being used by August 1967 and the first basketball game was played in the gymnasium on November 23, 1967. A contributor to the *Asheville Citizen-Times* reported in a 1967 editorial that the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool “can be listed among the finest of physical education and athletic facilities in western North Carolina” (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 1 October 1967).

Construction on the building coincided with the hiring of Fred Blake Bentley as the president of Mars Hill College on July 1, 1966 (Figure 4.14). President Bentley retired in 1996 and was one of three presidents who served the College for a collective total of 99 years. The College’s building program under President Bentley mirrored that of his predecessor Hoyt Blackwell. Bentley’s presidency yielded not only the completion of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool, but also Gibson Hall men’s dormitory in 1969, Cornwell Hall in 1969, and the Wren College Union in 1973 (Hood 2006: 8.49; 8:59) Although completed in 1965, Meares Field was officially named in 1967 at a ceremony dedicating it and the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool (Hood 2006: 8.55). The dedication ceremonies were held on October 7, 1967 during the College’s annual Founders Day homecoming celebration. The event included brief ceremonies and ribbon cutting before the Mars Hill’s football game against

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<sup>7</sup> Six Associates was started in 1942 by a group of architects practicing in Asheville and western North Carolina to be competitive with larger firms on defense contracts during World War II. This strategy paid off for the firm, which consisted of Henry Irvan Gaines, William Waldo Dodge, Jr, Anthony Lord, William Stewart Rogers, Erle G. Stillwell, and Chris Waddell, and it flourished from 1942 through the 1970s. The firm designed eight buildings on the campus of Mars Hill College and hospitals and factories in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. After World War II, all the men remained affiliated as Six Associates but remained in private practice at different offices. Henry Gaines designed on his own or with Six Associates an estimated two to three hundred residences. <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000099>; <http://www.ncmodernist.org/gaines.htm>



Figure 4.4: Chambers Gymnasium Plan, Six Associates, Asheville, N.C.  
(Courtesy of the Mars Hill College Photograph Collection, Southern Appalachian Archives,  
Mars Hill University).

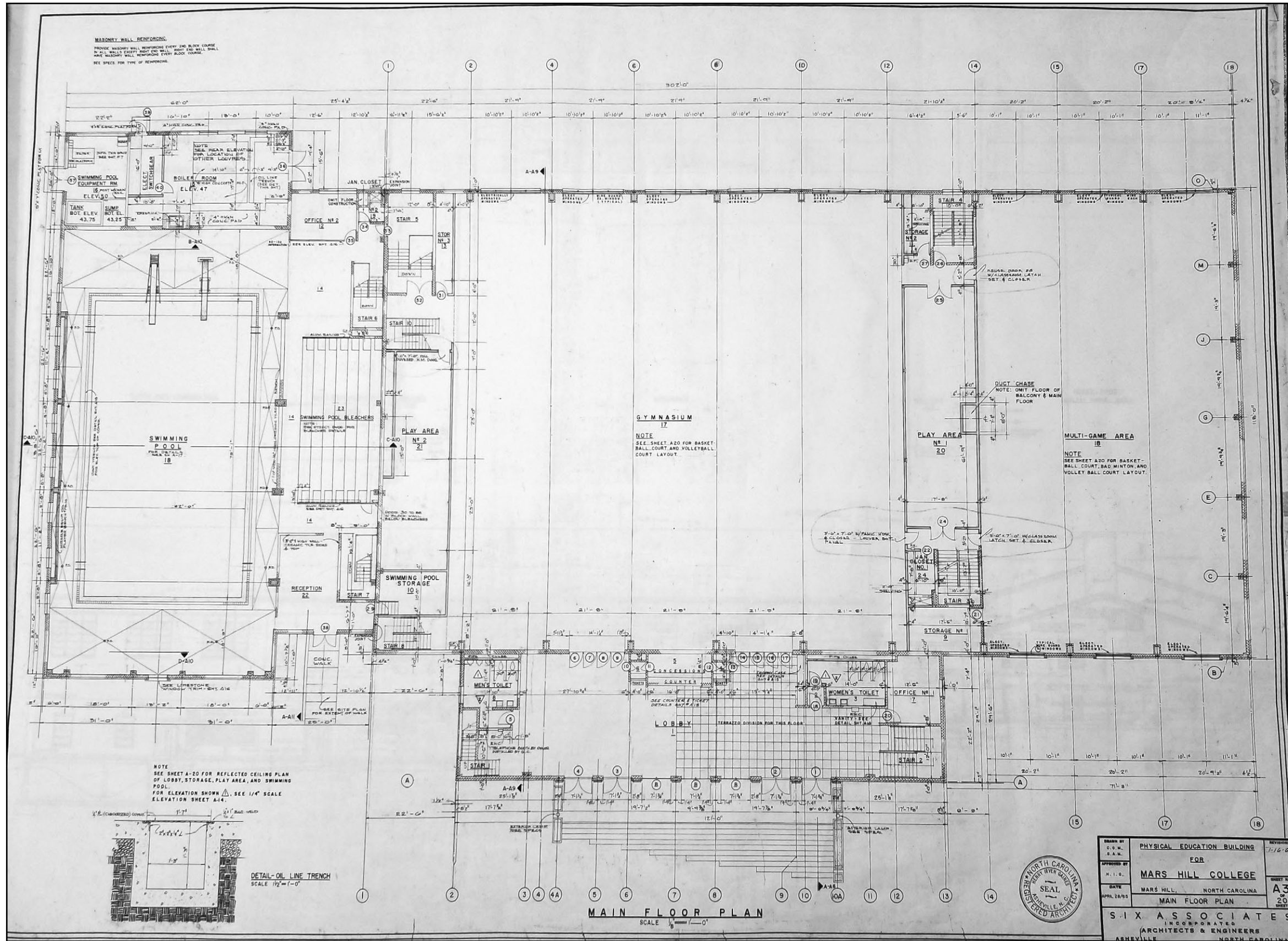


Figure 4.5: Architectural drawings of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool by Six Associates, Asheville, North Carolina (Facilities Maintenance Department, Mars Hill University).

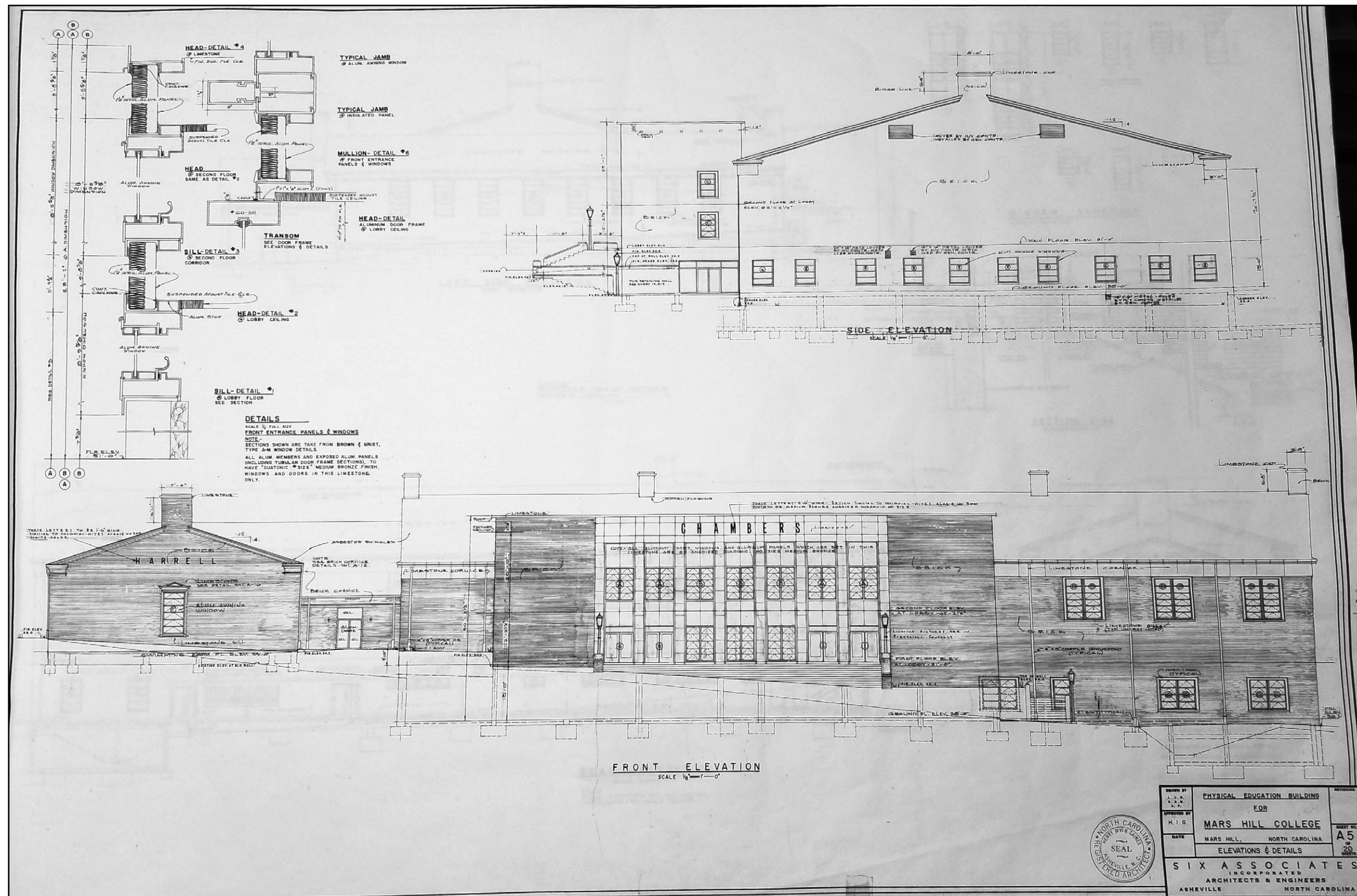


Figure 4.6: Architectural drawings of the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool by Six Associates, Asheville, North Carolina (Facilities Maintenance Department, Mars Hill University).



Figure 4.7: Dr. W. F. Robinson Memorial Infirmiry, 1935  
(<https://hiveminer.com/Tags/college%2Cinfirmiry>).



Figure 4.8: Edna Corpening Moore and Stroup Hall, 1938-1941  
(Mars Hill University's website, <https://www.mhu.edu/current-students/residential-living/edna-moore-residence-hall/>).



Figure 4.9: Huffman Residence Hall  
(Mars Hill University's website (<https://www.mhu.edu/current-students/residential-living/huffman-residence-hall/>))



Figure 4.10: Charles M. Wall Science Building, 1939-1940  
(A Walking Tour of Mars Hill University, <https://pocketsights.com/tours/place/Charles-M-Wall-Science-Building-21273>).



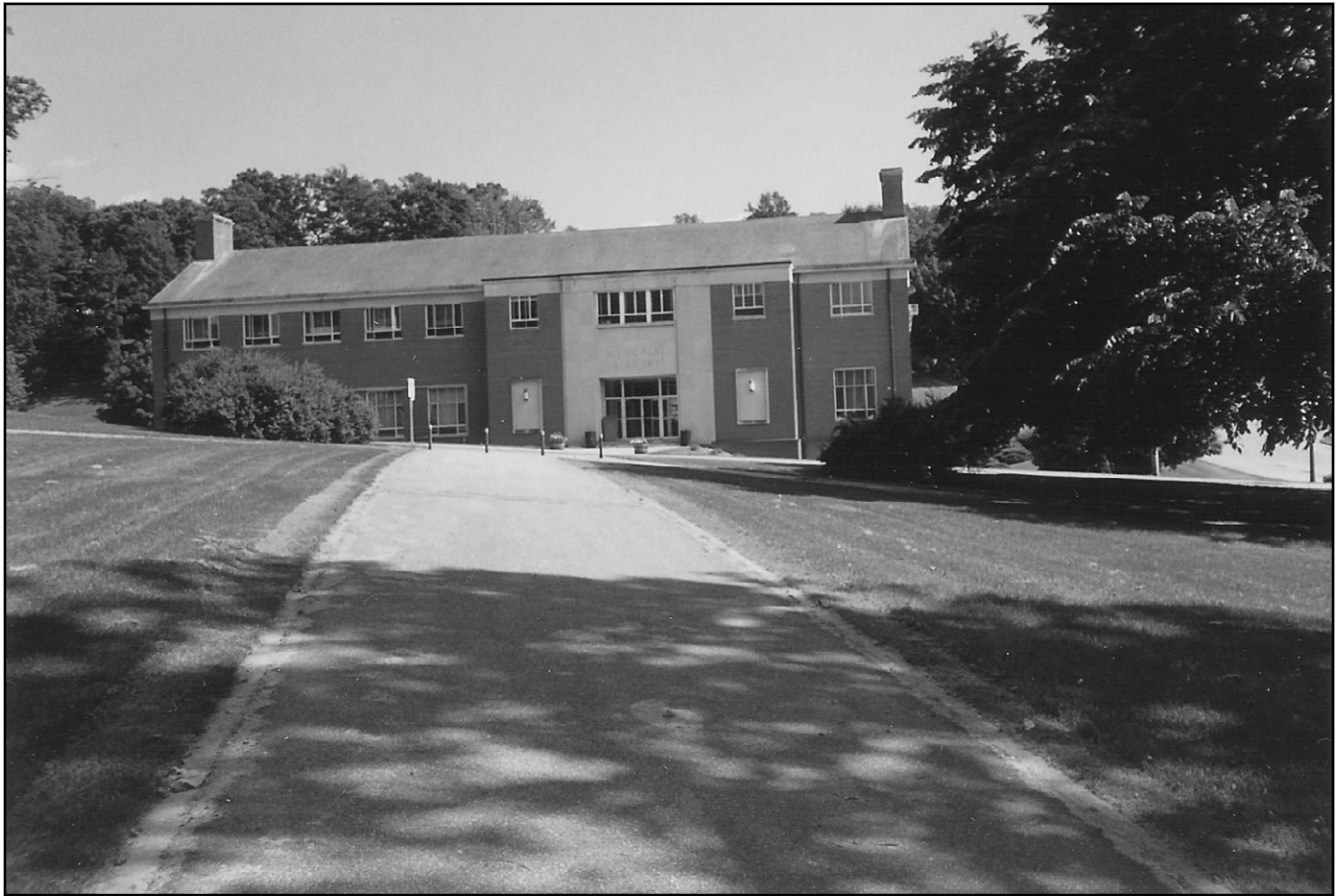


Figure 4.11: Memorial Library (Brenda G. Nash Educational Hall), 1954-1955  
(A Walking Tour of Mars Hill University, <https://pocketsights.com/tours/place/Brenda-G-Nash-Education-Hall-%28Formerly-the-Memorial-Library%29-21275>)



Figure 4.12: Myers Hall, 1954-1955  
(Mars Hill University's website, <https://www.mhu.edu/current-students/residential-living/myers-residence-hall/>).



Figure 4.13: Groundbreaking for the new physical education complex, 1965  
(*Through the Long Years: Photographic Reminiscences of Mars Hill College, 1856-2006*).



Figure 4.14: Construction of Harrell Pool and Chambers Gymnasium, 1966  
(*Through the Long Years: Photographic Reminiscences of Mars Hill College, 1856-2006*).

Carson-Newman College of Jefferson City, Tennessee. The cost of construction for the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool and Meares Field totaled \$1.75 million; the building that housed the gym and pool comprised two-thirds of the total (*The Gastonia Gazette* 1 October 1967).

The gymnasium is named for Madison County native, Walter Roy Chambers, who served the College as a trustee from 1924 to 1971 (Figure 4.15). The College's alumni association chose Chambers as the "alumnus of the year" in 1963 and named the gymnasium for him in 1965. Chambers graduated from Mars Hill in 1911, and was an attorney, banker, and civic leader in Marion, North Carolina. He helped establish a bank and formed both a chamber of commerce and development organization in Madison County, and served the Blue Ridge Baptist Association as a moderator from 1937 to 1953. In addition to all his accomplishments, Chambers held memberships with the county, state, and national bar association's American Judicature Society, Commercial Law League of America, the National Carolina Literary and Historical Society, the American Legion, and was a Freemason. In 1972, the College conferred upon Chambers the "Doctor of Humane Letters" honorary degree, which, up to that point, was only the second time in the school's history that the honor was awarded (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 29 September 1974).

The Harrell Pool was named after Burke County merchant and College trustee, Carey Curtis Harrell (Figure 4.16). A native of Northampton County, North Carolina, Harrell was born on June 6, 1906, the son of Rev. Edward H. and Ann Elliott Harrell (Ancestry.com 2007). He attended Campbell University in 1922 and graduated from Mars Hill College in 1927. During his 40 years in Morganton, he founded the Burke Furniture Center in 1936, and attended Morganton First Baptist Church where he served as chairman of the deacon and finance committees of the church and oversaw the construction of one of the church's buildings. Harrell served on the University's board of trustees for 24 years, served two terms as chairman, and was a vice-president and chairman of several of the board's committees. He was a former president of the Morganton Merchants Association and local Lions Club and was a director of the Morganton Chamber of Commerce (*Asheville Citizen-Times* 5 August 1980).

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool has been used continuously for 52 years and the building is an important part of social and recreational life on the campus. It is used for basketball games, volleyball matches, and swimming meets. Due to the building's quality design, few changes have been throughout the years. During the 2012-2013 school year, a new 2,100-square foot weight room was added to the ground floor of the Chambers Gymnasium. In 2019, the University had new flooring laid on the building's lower level from the coaches' offices to the Harrell Pool, in the coaches' hallway, and in the men's lacrosse coaching offices. A stud wall and a non-loadbearing wall was removed to expand the training room into the football equipment room. The College's sport facilities have continued to grow around the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool. In 2017, the University held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new athletics facility located opposite the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool at the south end of Meares Stadium. Named for Mars Hill University benefactor Jo Ellen Ammons, the new 14,500 seat field house was built to house all football operations, women's soccer, and men's and women's tennis, a weight room, locker rooms, and coaches' offices. Because the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool was built when the college had only eight intercollegiate teams, the University needed additional space to accommodate the 22 intercollegiate teams that it now has. The Jo Ellen Ammons Field House was dedicated on Friday, September 27, 2019.

#### *Architectural Context*

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool combines both the Colonial Revival and Modernist styles of architecture. Classical Revival and Colonial/Georgian Revival were the two predominant styles for architect-designed buildings on North Carolina college campuses throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Hood 2006: 8:65). This architectural preference is reflected in the design of the McConnell Gymnasium and other buildings on Mars Hill College's campus such as the Treat Dormitory/Spilman, the former Mars Hill Baptist Church (now Owen Theatre), Edna Corpening Moore and Stroup Halls, Huffman Hall, Melrose Hall, and Brown Hall.



Figure 4.15: Fall registration in Chambers Gymnasium  
(*Through the Long Years: Photographic Reminiscences of Mars Hill College, 1856-2006*).



Figure 4.16: Diving in Harrell Pool, 1968  
(*Through the Long Years: Photographic Reminiscences of Mars Hill College, 1856-2006*).

Between 1932 and 1978, College architect Henry Irven Gaines, designed Mars Hill College buildings in the Colonial Revival and Modernist styles. Gaines was able to successfully combine the two aesthetics. The Colonial Revival Style was a reimagination and modernization of the Georgian, Dutch, and English architecture of the American colonial period (Turco 2019: 5-22). The style's formality and historical references made it a popular choice for government and institutional buildings, as well as churches. Elements of the style include symmetrically arranged brick facades, columned porticoes, divided-light wood sash windows set in molded or classically trimmed surrounds, or, on more elaborate buildings, under window hoods. Paneled doors were set off by sidelights and transoms. Finished friezes and roof cornices were classically inspired. The 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition kicked off the style's use, but it remained a fashionable architectural style throughout the twentieth century (Bishir 1990:424).

Modernist architecture was an anti-historical reaction to the historically rooted details of the Colonial Revival style. Although it never achieved the prevalence of the Colonial Revival, it did have a heyday in North Carolina in the middle decades of the twentieth century. American Modernism had its roots in the German Bauhaus School (1919-1933) which was particularly concerned with prefabrication and standardization and the use of modern material in building design (Turco 2004: 8:11-12). The North Carolina State College School of Design taught the style and was directly and indirectly responsible for its appearance in residential, commercial and instructional building across the state. Character-defining features of Modernism include boxy, flat-roofed building forms, metal windows arranged in bands or vertically. The overall appearance is sleek and lacks the classical decorative embellishments that define and are inherent to the Colonial Revival style. The fullest expression of Modernism at Mars Hill College is Gaines' International style Charles M. Wall Science Building, built in 1940. Almost 30 years later Gaines would experiment in blending these two opposing styles, the Colonial Revival and the Modernist, into his design for the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool.

To further contextualize the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool, multiple sources were reviewed to identify college and university gymnasiums in western North Carolina.<sup>8</sup> Consultation with staff of the Western Office of the HPO identified two gymnasiums over 50 years of age: Breese Gymnasium at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee and McAlister Gymnasium at Montreat College in Montreat. The campuses of Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, and Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa do not have comparable gyms or athletic facilities over 50 years of age. Both Western Carolina University and Montreat College have stone gymnasiums. The Breese Gymnasium at Western Carolina University is an uncoursed, granite-faced building designed by Hendersonville architect Erle Stilwell and built by the WPA in 1939 (Figure 4.17). The building was recommended for inclusion in the Western Carolina University Historic District in 2018 (di Miranda and Martin 2018). The McAlister Gymnasium at Montreat College is another stone gymnasium. It was built in 1954-1955 (Figure 4.18). The Boshamer Gymnasium at Brevard College in Brevard is a brick Modernist Gymnasium built in 1962 with an attached pool built in 1963. It is perhaps the most comparable to the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool in terms of architectural style and construction date. Neither the Breese Gymnasium, nor the Boshamer Gymnasium are known to have been evaluated for the NRHP.

### *Integrity*

In order for a resource to be individually eligible for the NRHP, it must possess several, and usually most, of the seven aspects of integrity, location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, in addition to possessing significance under at least one of the four NRHP evaluation criteria (Appendix B). The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool maintains a very high level of all

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<sup>8</sup> These sources included the NC HPO's HPOWeb, Bishir et al. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, NRHP nominations for historic districts of colleges and universities in western North Carolina, and email correspondence with staff of the HPO's Western Office. A comprehensive historic architectural survey of Madison County has not yet been conducted, and the Mars Hill College Historic District NRHP nomination points out that there has been no comprehensive, statewide survey of college gymnasiums conducted in North Carolina. A multi-school context report of schools in Cleveland, Henderson, Polk, and Rutherford County conducted in 2014 for the Construction of the Rutherford Bypass (US 221) in Rutherford County did not identify gymnasiums associated with colleges or universities. The gymnasiums surveyed for this context report were built from the 1930s to the 1950s, but they are all connected to high schools.





Figure 4.17: Breese Gymnasium, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina  
(The Living New Deal website, <https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/breese-gymnasium-cullowhee-nc/>).



Figure 4.18: McAlister Gymnasium, Montreat College, Montreat, North Carolina (Montreat College website, [http://www.montreatcavaliers.com/Athletic\\_Facilities](http://www.montreatcavaliers.com/Athletic_Facilities)).

aspects of integrity, except workmanship, which was not found to applicable to this modern building built of mass-produced materials. The building stands on its original location within a college campus setting. Although some newer buildings (the Jo Ellen Ammons Field House) have been added to the larger sports complex, the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool maintains its close association with the historical physical education complex and the intercollegiate athletics and physical education academic programs. Minor changes to the layout and surface materials of the basement level are the only changes that have been identified. The building's exterior and interior design is largely the same as when it was completed in 1967 from plans by Henry Irven Gaines and the architectural firm of Six Associates. The building retains most of its authentic, original building materials, such as concrete block, brick, terrazzo, Formica and metal awning windows.

#### *NRHP Evaluation*

The 27-acre Mars Hill College Historic District was listed in the NRHP in 2006, under NRHP Criteria A, B, and C, with a period of significance between the years 1856 and 1955. Statewide significance was claimed in the areas of education and architecture. The district meets Criterion Consideration A for religious properties due to the educational focus of the historic district and its architecture (Hood 2007:8:32). The statement of significance in the NRHP nomination form states in part:

The Mars Hill College Historic District reflects the growth and development of institutions of higher education in western North Carolina... Mars Hill is both the first, lasting Baptist institution and the oldest known continuously-operating college located on its original site in western North Carolina. The resources comprising the historic core of the campus and this district are important for their association with the history of church-supported higher education in North Carolina and the private philanthropy that enabled it to succeed... The architectural significance of the Mars Hill College Historic District derives from its importance as a group of educational buildings, ranging in date from 1892 to 1955 and reflecting the procession of architectural styles used for academic buildings in the state for over a half century. The majority of the buildings and resources including the Rustic-style Montague and Robinson buildings, the Tudor Revival-style Moore/Marshbanks Hall, and the Classical Revival style McConnell Gymnasium were erected during the presidency of Dr. Robert Lee Moore, and nearly all reflect the patronage of leading North Carolina and eastern Tennessee architects. Of particular importance is the group of six buildings, erected between 1935 and 1955, together with the remodeling of a seventh building, that are the work of Henry Irven Gaines (1900-1986), an Asheville-based architect, either individually or as a partner of Six Associates which he cofounded in 1940. These buildings play a critical role in defining the architectural character of the historic campus (Hood 2007:8:32).

The district is also significant for its association with Dr. Robert Lee Moore, who served as the institution's president from 1897 to 1949.

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool was not included in the Mars Hill College Historic District when it was listed in the NRHP because the building fell outside the district's period of significance during the time of the finding. Presumably, the building was not evaluated because it was not yet 50 years of age. The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool is now more than 50 years old and visually illustrates two of the district's established areas of significance, education (Criterion A) and architecture (Criterion C), in the same manner as the district's other contributing educational buildings. It is part of the "procession of architectural styles" seen on the campus and is an example of a hybrid of two styles, the Colonial Revival and Modernist, which the NRHP nomination identifies as character-defining architectural styles within the district. Additionally, the nomination classifies Memorial Library and Myers Hall as contributing buildings to the district. These two buildings, like Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool, are a blend of Colonial Revival forms and Modernist aesthetics. For these reasons, *Mars Hill College Historic District is recommended to be expanded on the northwest side to include the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool as a contributing resource. The district's period of significance is recommended to be extended from 1955 to 1967, to include the year the Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool was completed.*

*NRHP Boundary Recommendation and Justification*

The Chambers Gymnasium and Harrell Pool at 100 Athletic Street is recommended eligible for inclusion as a contributing building in the Mars Hill College Historic District. (Figure 4.19) The building is adjacent to the current district boundaries and its inclusion does not require any other buildings, structures, sites or objects be added to the district. The recommended boundary increase begins at a point at the northwest corner of Bailey Street and the driveway accessing the Carter-Humphrey House. The boundary increase will follow the northeast edge of the pavement on Bailey Street, and then turn southwest at the unnamed driveway on the building's northwest side. The northwest boundary increase proceeds from the northwest corner of the driveway at Bailey Street and continues southwest along the northwest edge of pavement of the parking area. The recommended boundary expansion then turns to the southwest and travels in a straight line to the northwest side of Athletic Street. The southeast boundary then runs northeast and follows the edge of the pavement to connect with the existing district boundary.

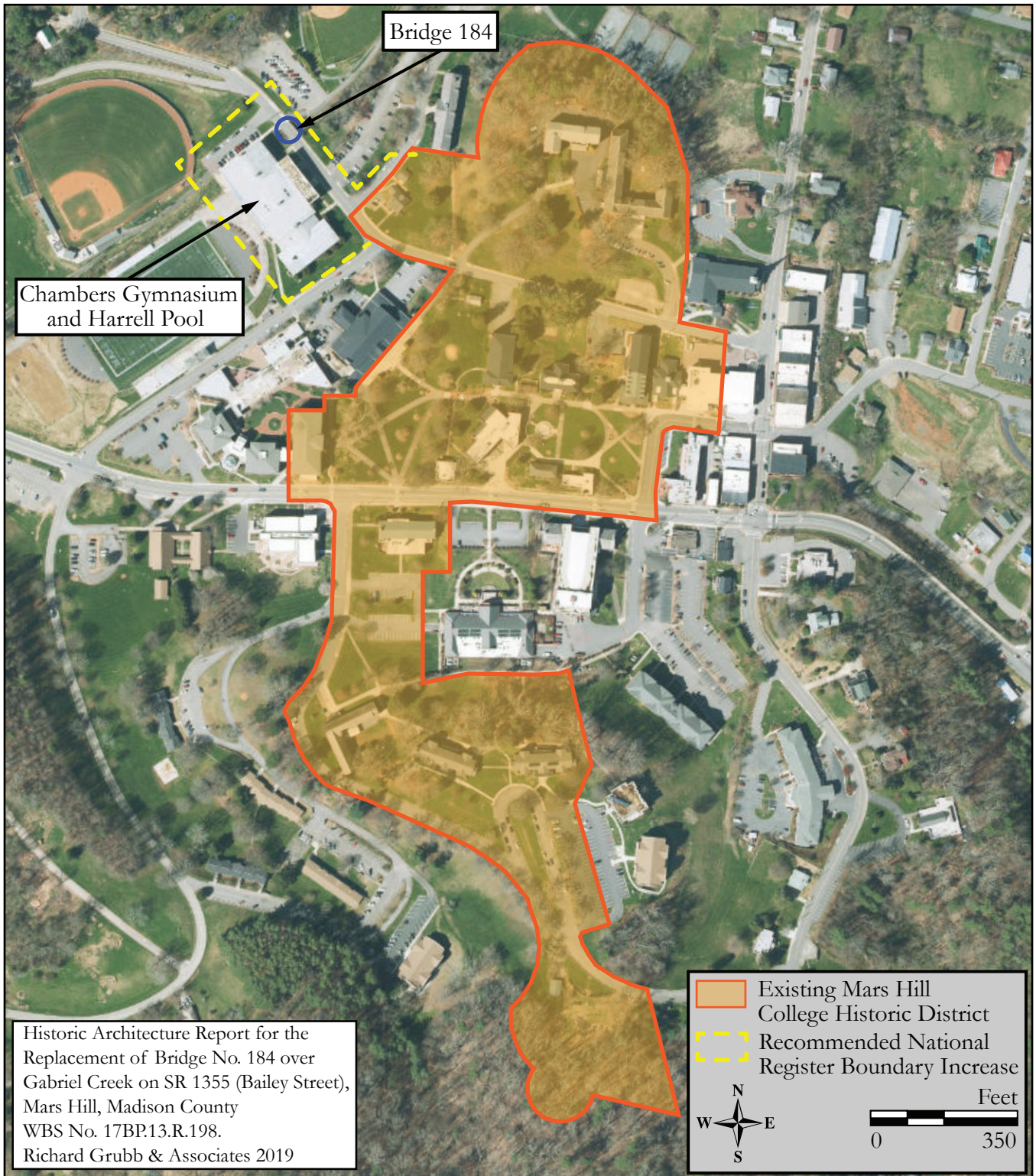


Figure 4.19: Recommended National Register Boundary Increase (World Imagery, ESRI 2019).

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## APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Significant historic properties include districts, structures, objects, or sites that are at least 50 years of age and meet at least one National Register criterion. Criteria used in the evaluation process are specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60, National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60.4). To be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, a historic property(s) must possess:

the quality of significance in American History, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture [that] is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- a) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, or
- b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or
- c) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction, or
- d) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

There are several criteria considerations. Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- a) a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance, or
- b) a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event, or
- c) a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his/her productive life, or
- d) a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or
- e) a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived, or
- f) a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historic significance, or

- g) a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. (36 CFR 60.4)

When conducting National Register evaluations, the physical characteristics and historic significance of the overall property are examined. While a property in its entirety may be considered eligible based on Criteria A, B, C, and/or D, specific data is also required for individual components therein based on date, function, history, and physical characteristics, and other information. Resources that do not relate in a significant way to the overall property may contribute if they independently meet the National Register criteria.

A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because a) it was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is capable of yielding important information about the period, or b) it independently meets the National Register criteria. A non-contributing building, site, structure, or object does not add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because a) it was not present during the period of significance, b) due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is incapable of yielding important information about the period, or c) it does not independently meet the National Register criteria.