

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic West Virginia University Neo-Classical Revival Buildings, Thematic Grouping

and/or common Purinton House

2. Location

street & number University Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Morgantown _____ vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Monongalia code 061

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☐ district	☒ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture	☐ museum
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial	☐ park
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☒ educational	☐ private residence
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment	☐ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government	☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
		☐ no	☐ military	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name West Virginia Board of Regents

street & number P. O. Box 3368

city, town Charleston _____ vicinity of state WV 25333

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monongalia County Courthouse

street & number High Street at Courthouse Square

city, town Morgantown _____ state WV

6. Representation in Existing SurveysHistoric Properties Inventory (HPU) has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date May 1983 _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records History Department, West Virginia University

city, town Morgantown _____ state WV

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
☒ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☒ unaltered	☒ original site	N/A
☒ good	☐ ruins	☒ altered	☐ moved	☐ date
☐ fair	☐ unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Colonial Revival Purinton House was completed in 1904 was completed in 1904 from designs by architect J. Charles Fulton. It maintains Neo-Classical Revival features which characterize buildings of the second period (c. 1900-1930) at West Virginia University and preserves a peaceful, homey atmosphere amid the busy, modern environment on WVU's downtown campus. The building's style is reminiscent of the educational tradition of old Virginia, which WVU educators identified with during this period of the institution's history.

The designer of Purinton House followed the pattern of Colonial Revival architecture through his use of classical architectural elements and the disproportionate size of the portico and roofline compared to the rest of the house. The widow's walk adds another flare of Colonial Revivalism after the Georgian mode. Yet, the coursed ashlar exterior finish is a contemporary touch.

On the east (main) facade, two Ionic wood columns are prominently centered on the porch of the building. Slate tile adorns the hip roof. A balustraded deck tops the roof, as do four low chimneys. Two wooden dormers with triangular pediments adorn the eastern and western roof slopes and the northwestern and southwestern corners of the roof. A swan's neck pediment rests on the front center of the roof with a palladian window in it. Triangular pediments form the gable ends (northern and southern ends). These feature scroll-shaped brackets. Scroll-like modillions support the eaves under the roof. A widow's walk tops the front portico, and another rests on the front of the second story. Smaller Ionic columns supplement the support of the portico and edge the expansive porch. Low steps lead to the front and sides of the porch. A door on the left front of the house and a garage to the left of the house was added in 1937. Four 1/1 windows are on each facade. The dormer windows have 4/1 lights. The windows are not original, but the stone lintels remain.

The interior has been extensively, but not irrevocably altered. The walls are plaster. Floors are carpeted hardwood. An enclosed staircase connects the three stories. Walls have been added to create more offices. The walls are temporary and all original fabric is intact.

3. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance--Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	region	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	X architecture	X education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	theater	
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics/government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates 1904-05 Builder Architect J. Charles Fulton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Purinton House, the first on-campus home of West Virginia University presidents, is a symbol of the university's growth; at the time of its construction, the university president needed an on-campus residence in order to keep constant vigilance on the school's expanding bureaucracy, but by 1967 the university had expanded to two campuses and the president moved his residence to a house near the newer Evansdale campus. The constant need for new office space for the expanding bureaucracy caused the house to be converted into an office building. Today, the house stands as a symbol of the university's history during the first decade of the twentieth-century, just as other buildings on WVU's downtown campus stand as symbols of the historic periods in which they were built.

University President Daniel B. Purinton ordered the construction of what would later be known as Purinton House in 1904 and 1905 as the first on-campus home for West Virginia University's president. Purinton had engaged in an extensive building program for the university, and critics of the building program expenditures attacked Purinton for constructing a house for his own use. Further criticism surfaced when Purinton was denied public funds to build the house but used private funds to begin construction anyway. Other controversies occurred because the price of the lot, which was offered for sale by WVU faculty member Dr. I. C. White, was considered excessive. Construction bogged down due to lack of funds, and Purinton used student fees to complete the house. The house cost \$42,611.94, with only \$13,000 paid from private sources. Purinton celebrated completion of the house on Thanksgiving Day, 1906 with a turkey dinner for the faculty members and their spouses. Another noteworthy event at the house was President William Howard Taft's address, "World Wide Speech," on November 2, 1911, from the front porch of Purinton House.

The proponent for the house, Daniel B. Purinton, served as president of West Virginia University from 1901 to 1911. He was born on February 15, 1850 in Preston County, West Virginia, the son of a Baptist minister. He graduated from WVU and received a doctorate from the University of Nashville. He became an instructor at WVU in 1873 and served as vice-president and acting president in 1881 and 1882. Purinton was president of Denison University from 1890 to 1901. He was married to Florence A. Lyon in 1876 and died on November 27, 1933 in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Today, the building houses offices for the Alumni Association, Vice-President for Institutional Advancement and his staff, and other administrative offices. The Alumni Association will vacate the building when the new alumni center, now under construction on the Evansdale campus, is completed.

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Continuation sheet WVU Neo-Classical Revival Item number 8

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~~Purinton House~~

The Purinton House retains the appearance of an old south mansion but is not pretentious. The Colonial Revival character is unique to the Morgantown area. Its colonned portico and windows walk make for a charming addition to the downtown West Virginia University campus.

The architect, J. Charles Fulton was prominent not only for his design of the Purinton House, but also for the design and building of the Doddridge County Court House and the Randolph County Court House, both individually listed on the National Register.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name Morgantown North, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name title Randall Gooden and Mortar Board senior honorary (Elizabeth Moore Hall)

organization WVU Public History Option

date July 19, 1985

street & number Dept. of History, West Virginia Univ. telephone 304-293-2421

city or town Morgantown

state WV

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Donna J. Gasker
title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10/25/85

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet WVU Neo-Classical Revival Item number 9

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Purinton House

Boundary descriptions and floor plans from files of WVU Facilities Planning and Management Office

Amber, Charles Henry. A History of Education in West Virginia from Early Colonial Times to 1949. Huntington, WV: Standard Printing & Publishing Co., Inc., 1951.

Doherty, William T. and Summers, Festus P. West Virginia University: Symbol of Unity in a Sectionalized State. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 1982.

Core, Earl L. The Monongalia Story: A Bicentennial History. Vol. 3. Discord. Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1979.

Core, Earl L. The Monongalia Story: A Bicentennial History. Vol. 4. Industrialization. Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1982.

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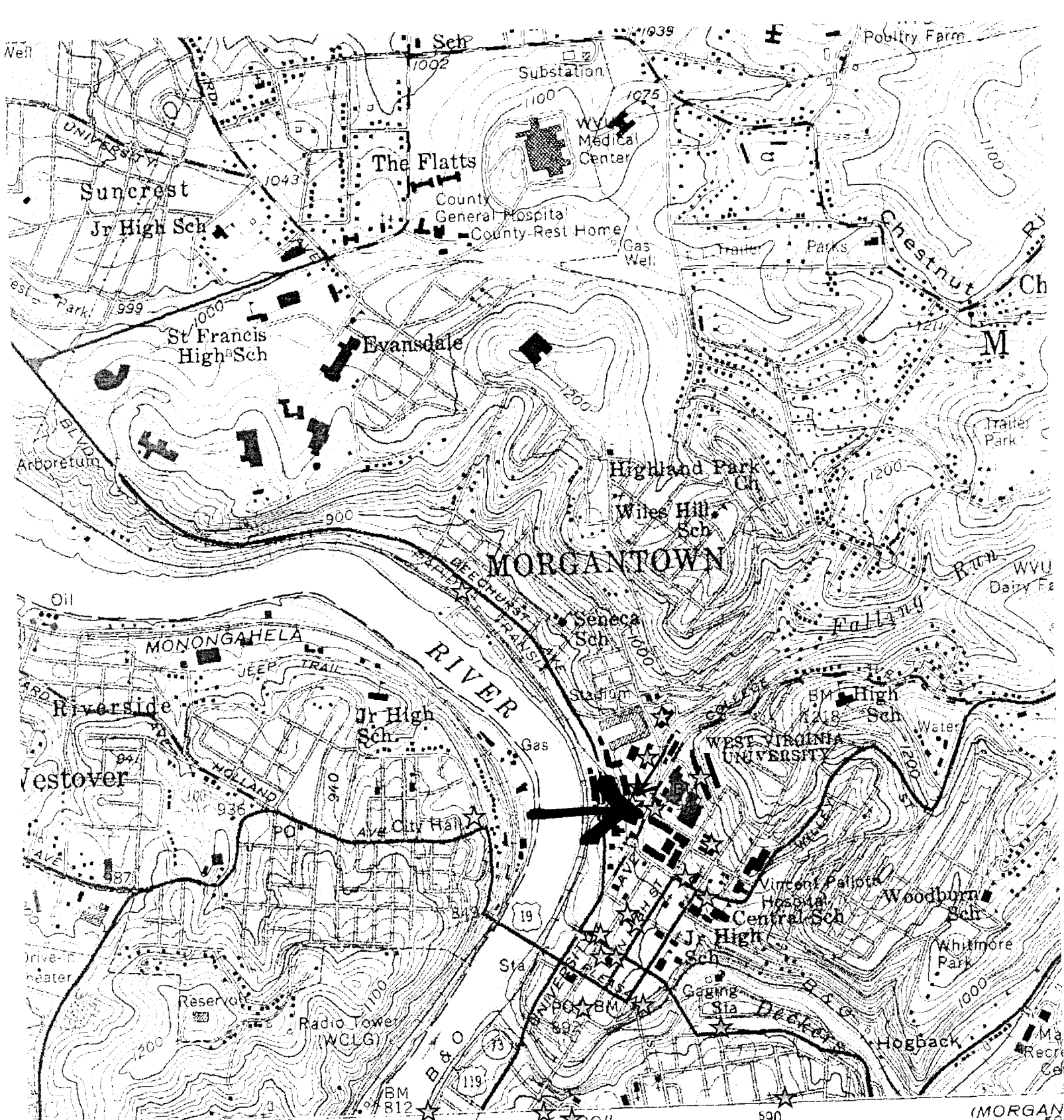
Continuation sheet WVU Neo-Classical Revival Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

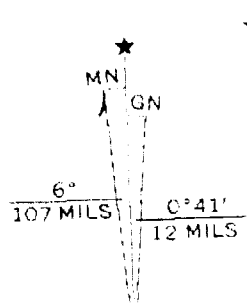
Purinton House

From point of beginning, follow sidewalk 104.5 feet northwest to point, thence southwest 145 feet to Hough Street, thence southeast 104.5 feet to corner of Hough Street and University Avenue, thence following University Avenue 117.8 feet to point of beginning. (See attached maps)

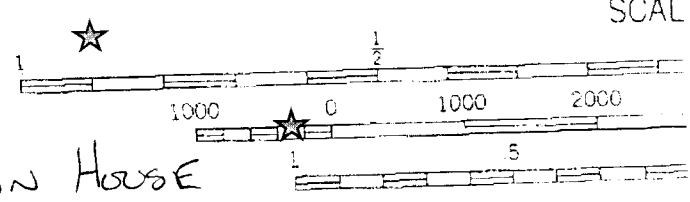


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PURINTON HOUSE



CONTOUR 1
NATIONAL GEODETIC

