





**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE, POURED \_\_\_\_\_

Roof: ASPHALT SHINGLE \_\_\_\_\_

Walls: BRICK \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1915 to 1951 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1915, 1928, and 1961  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: VA Department of Historic Resources \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property .75-acre \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 588820 4117530    2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_    4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: ANNE STUART BECKETT/CONSULTANT

Organization: ANNE STUART BECKETT \_\_\_\_\_ date: APRIL 5, 2001

street & number: PO BOX 2712 \_\_\_\_\_ telephone: 540-982-2600

city or town: ROANOKE \_\_\_\_\_ state: VA zip code: 24001

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: MR. PAUL RUCKER \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 6707 PARKWAY DRIVE, SW \_\_\_\_\_ telephone: 540-772-2780

city or town: ROANOKE \_\_\_\_\_ state: VA zip code: 24018

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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STARKEY SCHOOL (80-348)  
ROANOKE COUNTY, VA

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### Summary Description

The original Starkey School was built ca. 1894 in what was then the village of Starkey. The village at that time consisted of the Norfolk and Southern Starkey Station, the stationmaster's house, a few dwellings, some farms, a general store, a post office, and the one-room frame Starkey School. The school was named for J.G. Starkey, whose land the school was built on, and the village was named for his father Tazewell Merriman Starkey, one of the two largest landowners in southwest Roanoke County. This area remained very rural until recently and was known for its peach and fruit orchards, with the produce being shipped out from the station. The village was located in the rich bottomlands between the drainage of Poor Mountain to the west and Buck Mountain to the east along Back Creek. The Blue Ridge Parkway and the border of Franklin County ran two miles to the south. Eventually, people left Starkey for better jobs in either Rocky Mount, the courthouse town of Franklin County, or 4.5 miles northeast to the City of Roanoke. As industrialization began, the roads improved, the automobile carried people further, and by the 1920s, the frame and log one-room schoolhouses scattered across the county were becoming consolidated and were replaced by new brick schools built according to new standards. In 1915, the original one-room Starkey School was either demolished or incorporated (as oral history suggest) into a brick Graded school that was built at that time. In 1928, brick wings were added to this building, which reflected the current construction techniques of the standardized school plans at that time. In 1961, the school was closed and was purchased by Roanoke County. Although a developer purchased it in 1986, it sat vacant with its windows boarded up until its new owners purchased it two years ago for their business office and began to restore the "Old Starkey School."

### Detailed Description

Located in the heart of the community, the school faced the main road (then known as the old Trader's Path, and now known as Merriman Road) on a 1.5-acre parcel near its intersection with Starkey Road and the current Norfolk and Western railroad tracks. Both roads, as well as the village, were named for the prominent landowner Tazewell Merriman Starkey. The previous Norfolk and Southern railroad rolled through the village behind and to the east of the school, which must have been a distraction to both students and teacher. Across the railroad tracks from the school stood the frame, ca. 1891 Starkey Station, also named for Tazewell Starkey. The station obviously played a key role in the daily life of the village; local resident Barbara Guthrie, a student at Starkey during the early 1940s, remembered with delight that when the students were to be weighed, they were marched over in single file to the station and weighed on the station's scales.

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### Detailed Description (continued)

The original Starkey School was built ca. 1894 as a one-room frame schoolhouse with white painted weatherboard siding. Contrary to popular belief, white, not red, was the color of choice for country schools. The roof may have been clad with wood shingles; this was the common preference for clapboard schools because they were easily found and inexpensive. The school was probably similar to other one-room vernacular schoolhouses of that time; rectangular in shape with a gable front, and a centered door flanked by tall six-over-six, double-hung sash windows on a south elevation, and windows on the other long, rear north elevation. The school faced west, and possibly had a double-leaf entrance (based on the current opening width), which would have led directly into the one-room schoolhouse. <sup>1</sup>

Most of the early vernacular schoolhouses are now missing from the landscape. Moreover, an important feature of early schools is missing from our current schools, the belfry. There is no evidence that a bell rang from Starkey's roof, but it probably did, since by the nineteenth century a belfry or bell tower, usually placed above the entrance to the schoolhouse, had become a status symbol for many school districts. S.A. Chapman, commissioner of school buildings for Minnesota and author of *The Rural School Plan*, commented, "The belfry is a relic of the time when the school and the church were closely associated in men's minds. It served a useful purpose when reliable watches and clocks were uncommon, and telephones and gongs were unknown...." <sup>2</sup>

The school consisted of six grades taught by one teacher. Teachers kept annual school "Term Reports," and they had noted in the reports before 1915 that the school was in "poor condition." By 1915, it was in "very poor" condition. With the school heated by a coal stove and lighted by large windows with "missing panes," there were days that the teacher found it "impossible to keep the children comfortable." Broken panes and "poor floors" kept them uncomfortable many days. The building apparently was not well built, as was noted by the teacher's reports of "poor" conditions after only ten years of use, and that by 1915 its value was \$0.00. These reports may have helped prompt a change in the school building, for in the school year ending 1916, the same teacher noted that the building was now two rooms, that it was brick, and that it had been built in 1915 at a value of \$2,000.00. Obviously, there was a change during the summer of 1915. <sup>3</sup>

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1 Beckett, "Phase II Architectural Evaluations of Armel School..." p. 5.

2 Ibid.

3 "Annual Term Reports," 1907, 1910, and 1912 reports.

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### Detailed Description (continued)

#### 1915 Changes

According to oral tradition, the weatherboard siding was removed from the original school down to the wood studs and the current running bond brick pattern was then applied. The roof's centered gable remained and a hip roof was added at this time, which was covered either with slate shingles or pressed metal shingles. The hip roof and wide, projecting eave with a cornice board were typical of the standardized school plans. <sup>4</sup> Whether built new in 1915, or if the ca. 1894 schoolhouse was incorporated into the 1915 building, it had two windows on each side of the five-panel, single leaf wood front door, while the rear elevation had three windows flanking the same type of door. The window fenestration also included a set of three windows on each side of the building, making a total of 15 windows lighting the 30 ft. x 50 ft. schoolhouse. The walls and 12-ft. high ceilings were covered with lath and plaster with minimal trim and no wainscoting, and the floors had narrow-width, tongue-and-groove pine boards. Two wells and two privies were used in the back yard with the train running to the south.

In 1916, Starkey School began serving as a graded school, in which two teachers were now divided among 50 students in grades between 1 and 2, and 3 through 6. There were one or two coal stoves heating the building and more blackboards were installed. Instead of a centered hallway or stud wall to divide the rooms, a partition was built down the middle that either included a series of wood sliding doors or folding partitions. The doors no longer remain, but the top framing and metal track do. Each room measured approximately 25 ft. x 25 ft., which was more of a standard floor plan for the period. By the mid-nineteenth century, these and other common room dimensions were ideal sizes for the maximum of 30 to 40 students attending most country schools. <sup>5</sup>

By the 1920s, the days of the vernacular schoolhouse were almost over as contractors increasingly worked from architect's designs provided in standardized plan books. In Roanoke County, many schools were being consolidated or upgraded, and Starkey was no exception. Roanoke County began abandoning the many one-room schools throughout the villages and communities in favor of the larger schools.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hopper, Oral Interview.

<sup>5</sup> "Annual Term Report," 1915 and 1916

<sup>6</sup> Keagey, A History of Roanoke County, p.475.



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STARKEY SCHOOL (80-348)  
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### Detailed Description (continued)

#### 1928 Changes

In 1928, following the standardization of Virginia's schools, Starkey followed the trend as well, and when the school needed to expand, builders constructed two brick wings on the end elevations which matched almost exactly other schools under construction in Roanoke County at the same time. The tall brick wings were constructed with a three-to-one Flemish bond brick pattern with over glazed headers and a large square-diapering pattern. Cast-stone parapets top the wings, which were built high on brick foundations and projected out about 10 ft. from the original schoolhouse facade.

Each wing room measured 24 ft. by 33 ft. and consisted of one open room with "mandatory cloak rooms" at one end (the west wing had the cloak room on the front elevation, and the east wing's cloak room was on the rear elevation), large black boards on two walls, lath and plaster walls and ceilings, and wood wainscoting. The wood trim is more abundant in these rooms and was stained a dark brown color. Three matching large six-over-six wood windows on the end wall of the wing light the room. Pressed metal panels cover the ceilings. The addition of the wings blocked one original window on each side of the ca. 1894 schoolhouse, and a wide hallway was installed along the length of the front-facing original wall of the room to allow access into the wings. It was at this time that the ca. 1894 ceiling was covered with large fiberboard panels nailed in place with thick wood strips.

#### 1949 to Present

The latest change to occur to the school was a 1949 brick infill section along the façade between the two 1928 wings. This three-bay infill is a low, one-story, flat-roofed brick veneer and concrete block section with a centered entrance and flanking rooms. Existing metal casement windows lit the rooms. A single-leaf wood door opened into a small foyer, which intersected with the 1928 hallway. A boy's bathroom and the principal's office were off to the east, and the girl's bathroom and a kitchen were off to the west. Based on rising sanitation concerns, a child's-size drinking fountain was located in the foyer. The last class was held in 1961. In 1962, Roanoke County purchased Starkey School and converted it into a senior citizens center. In 1986, the Board of Supervisors of Roanoke County sold the school to Gilmer Associates, where it remained vacant until 1999, when Paul and Nancy Rucker purchased it. They have since established their family business inside the main schoolroom and are in the process of fully renovating the building within the next two years.

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### Summary Statement and Justification of Criteria

Situated in the village of Starkey, Roanoke County, along the Back Creek with views of Poor Mountain and Buck Mountain, Starkey School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an architecturally important surviving schoolhouse constructed as a Graded School in 1915. Its construction was prior to the consolidation of county schools during the 1920s, and with later brick additions that reflect standardized school plans. The schoolhouse and its .71-acre parcel have been recently purchased for a family business with goals of restoring the building. Starkey School is also eligible under Criterion A because it, and its ca. 1894 predecessor served the community for 67 years as a school and reflects the early stages of country schools in the region and the later consolidation of the schools by the Roanoke County school system. Starkey School is a humble schoolhouse that played an integral part in an agricultural village in southwest Roanoke County. It represents the growing shifts in Starkey, Roanoke County, and the county's schools system; it is the last vestige of that village, reflecting a way of life that no longer exists.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the owners of the schoolhouse, Paul and Nancy Rucker, their faithful assistant Eric Stiff, the County of Roanoke and the City of Salem's Public Library staff, the staff and Molly Dearing of the Clerk of the Court for Roanoke County, the staff at the County of Roanoke's Community Development, the staff at the RRPO, and the residents, both past and present, of the village of Starkey for their support and enthusiasm about the history and future restoration of the "Old Starkey School." The Roanoke County School Board records are not open to the public.

### Historical Background

Starkey School served the county for over six decades, first as School No. 16 and then as Starkey School, a public elementary school. In the late nineteenth century, the future site of Starkey School was located within an unimproved tract of land owned by J.G. Starkey. Joseph Gale Starkey was the son of Tazewell Merriman Starkey, who owned a majority of the land in Starkey and for whom the town and the depot were named. Tazewell Starkey, originally from Franklin County, had moved to the area in 1850 and had begun farming. In May 1865 he married Henrietta P. Harvey, daughter of Col. Robert Harvey.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McCauley, *History of Roanoke County*... p. 389

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

With 10,000 acres, Harvey was the largest landowner in southeast Roanoke County and the owner of Speedwell Plantation about one mile north from the village of Starkey. Tazewell and Henrietta continued to own much of the land around Starkey. J.G. Starkey, born in 1875, became one of the most respected citizens of Starkey and a successful farmer. However, he never left his "homeplace" and remained unmarried. He also began selling off some of his land for profit, including a 134-acre parcel for \$10, 112 to the Good brothers "near Starkey Station" in 1913, and the 1.5-acre parcel to the School Board of Cave Spring District of the County of Roanoke in 1915. Thus, the land was not donated, as had been assumed, nor had the school been named for Tazewell Starkey; it was named for his son J.G. Starkey.<sup>8</sup> Although it is unusual for a school to be located on private land, it does appear that this is the case for three reasons. Local oral history supports the suggestion, the 1.5-acre parcel is denoted consistently in the School Term Reports, and that the Board of Supervisors minutes mention that they paid "rent and fuel" and "fee for providing schoolhouses". It was further noted that they paid J.G. Starkey, but it is unknown whether this was for rent for the schoolhouse or income.

Starting in 1894, "Special Term Reports" can be found for Starkey, then known as School No.16. These reports, written by the teacher at the end of the school year, continued until 1961, the year that the school closed. From 1894 to 1906, the form layout stayed the same. During this time, the average student age was ten, with 30 children attending. The school year ended in mid-March, and a teacher's name was not given at this time. Beginning in 1899, the names were divided into four primary grades.

In March 1907, the form layout changed, and there was more description of the schoolhouse. It was noted that the school was frame, constructed in 1895, one room, at an original cost of \$250.00, present value of \$200.00, not painted, in poor condition, on a 1.5acre lot, with 14 desks, a good stove, 42 volumes in the library, two wall maps, two wooden blackboards, and one globe. In addition, by this date, the roster was divided into five primary grades. By 1910, the value had decreased to \$150.00, and the school was still in poor condition. Instead of noting a "white" teacher in 1911, the first teacher's name, Grace Terry, was provided. In 1912, the teacher reported 19 panes of glass missing. In 1913, the value further decreased to \$125.00. In 1914, the condition was noted as "very poor," with the "house very open." On April 7, 1915, the teacher reported the value as "nothing" and again the school in "very poor" condition. The desks were denoted as "22 Patent Desks," the volumes in the library had declined to 32, and only one wall map hung in the schoolroom. <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Roanoke County Deed Book 64/392 and 77/462

<sup>9</sup> Annual Term Reports, 19017-1915.

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

In 1916, the form style changed again, but so did the school. The form noted that the school was now two rooms, it was built of brick, and constructed in 1915. It still was located on a 1.5- acre lot, but was now "enclosed" and valued at \$2000.00. There were also two teachers teaching 55 children in six primary grades, with grades 1-2 in one room and grades 3-6 in the other. This was typical of other "Graded Schools," which Starkey was now considered. <sup>10</sup>

Around the time of the construction and changes to Starkey School, Roanoke County was almost strictly agricultural, with dairying being very important. It was also known for its production of fruit, particularly apples and peaches. Starkey was the center of a large canning factory known as the Shenandoah Packing Company, run by the Good brothers from Shenandoah County, and to whom J.G. Starkey had sold some of his land. The company produced 11,000 cans per season of apples, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and beans from 1908 to 1928. However, the Starkey Station remained an important transportation center from other regional farmers, particularly from Bent Mountain. <sup>11</sup>

This time period was also a period of great change within Roanoke County and especially the City of Roanoke. Rapid technological changes and increased urbanization began to change the landscape, with improved and paved roads and with cars replacing buggies, machinery on the farm, and increased population. Roanoke County's population had risen by approximately 2,700 people to 22,395. As the City of Roanoke grew, it required more land and began to annex it from Roanoke County, which resulted in over a dozen acquisitions of land. This annexation also meant a higher population density for Roanoke County and coincided with the sweeping educational changes of the 1920s and 1930s. One-room schools began to give way to newer, more modern school buildings. Between 1916 and 1940, the public school system underwent dramatic changes involving teacher preparation and degree requirements, school plants, attendance, and the length of the school year, among others. <sup>12</sup>

The condition of Virginia's public school system at the turn of the twentieth century prompted reform movements within the school system throughout the state. Between 1920 and 1925, consolidation of the old one-room schools started to occur. Improved roads and the availability of school buses helped to increase this pattern. In 1920, there were 122 white schools and 22 black schools, and by 1925, there were only 45 white schools and 11 black schools. <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kern, *Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings*...p.6.

<sup>11</sup> Keagey, *A History of Roanoke County*, p.310 and 311.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 474

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 475.

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Starkey School definitely reflected these changes in the school system, and in 1917, there were two teachers, the volume of library books increased dramatically to 116. By 1919, school was taught for seven months, or 125 days a year. The building was in good condition, was heated by coal stoves, and had 30-patented desks, slate (not wooden) blackboards, and a U.S. flag flying from the top of the building. The school year was again lengthened in 1920 to 140 days a year. Two "sanitary toilets" were installed. The U.S. Flag was "knocked down by lightning" from the roof and was installed the next year "in" the schoolhouse.

By 1922, the school had a septic tank, was in good condition with 72 "single" desks, and 16 square feet of slate blackboards, and still had two teachers teaching 50 students. The acreage had reduced to one acre with a partial enclosure. The next year, the school year was again lengthened to nine months with a required 180-day attendance. There were now 36 desks, and a "chemical toilet," and the parcel was not enclosed anymore.

In 1928, the two school wings were added to Starkey, which match almost exactly the construction of other schools being erected at that time, especially Fort Lewis Elementary School (1928) (Salem), Mount Vernon Elementary School (1926) (near Roanoke City), and William Byrd Junior High School (1928) (Vinton). There were now three teachers at Starkey. Beginning with the 1939 school year, Roanoke County School Board required that all teachers must have a degree in order to teach. Around this time, the PTA also became involved; it helped to build playgrounds and to beautify the grounds, among many other numerous activities. A 1959 photograph shows Starkey with more trees and an evergreen hedge running the width of the property along the road. <sup>14</sup>

Starkey School remained an active school with four classrooms, two bathrooms, a principal's office, and a kitchen until the end of 1961, when it was closed. Roanoke County acquired the school for a senior citizens center until Gilmer and Associates bought it for future development in 1986. However, this never came to pass, and Paul and Nancy Rucker of P D R, Inc. purchased the building in 1999 for their business office. The Ruckers are renovating the Old Starkey School for their business office, and to restore as much historic material as possible such as the large six-over-six sash windows that are so integral to the appearance of the original one-room schoolhouse. <sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "Roanoke County School Facts," pages 10-18.

<sup>15</sup> Russell, "Limited Appraisal ...of Old Starkey School," p. 8.

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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are depicted on the tax plat that accompanies the nomination. Roanoke County Property Identification Map 97.06 1"= 100' (reduced 22%).

### **VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel include the current .75-acreage of Starkey School.

(80-348)  
STARKEY SCHOOL  
ROANOKE CO., VA  
7588 820  
4117530

4119  
12'30"  
4118  
1.7 MI. TO U.S. 21  
4117  
4958 II NE  
(BENT MOUNTAIN)  
4115

