

VLR-4/21/87 NRHP-9/10/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For HPS 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 Hexagon House

(DHL File No. 138-34)

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 530 Amherst Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Winchester

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia

code 51

county (in city)

code 840

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Glass/Glen Burnie Foundation c/o Patrick Hayes

street & number P.O. Box 587

city, town Nowata

N/A vicinity of

state OK

zip code 74048

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Winchester City Hall

street & number N/A

city, town Winchester

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Division of Historic Landmarks

title Survey (File No. 138-34)

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1973, 1979, 1987

federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Historic Landmarks, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Hexagon house is located at 530 Amherst Street in the city of Winchester. Built between 1871-73, the two-story, five-course American-bond brick structure is covered by a low pitch roof. In plan the building is hexagonal with a central chimney serving corner fireplaces on the first and second floors. The nomination consists of one contributing building, the Hexagon House.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

The Hexagon house is located at 530 Amherst Street, Winchester. The five-course, American-bond brick structure sits on a stone foundation. The main facade (south elevation) is distinguished by a one-story, three-bay frame porch. The porch has chamfered wood posts, sawn brackets, and a balustrade with turned balusters. The porch shelters the main entrance which consists of a segmental arch opening that contains paneled double doors and a frosted-glass transom. The doorway is flanked by segmental arched openings that contain hinged vertical casement windows. The windows are divided into four parts with frosted-glass panes set in the middle of each window. All original second-story windows are similarly treated. The flanking east and west walls contain a three-part, one-story brick bay. The bay contains two windows, similar to that found flanking the doors. The northeast side wall has two segmental arch openings with casement windows. The northwest side wall has a small 1/1 hung-sash window and a double casement window on the first story and two original casement windows on the second story. The rear (north) wall has asymmetrical segmental arch openings with casement windows on the second story and a single door entrance and two hung-sash windows on the first story. The house is covered by a low pitch roof topped by a widow's walk. A corbeled brick chimney stack is found in the center of the roof. The eaves of the roof are ornamented by scroll brackets.

The interior plan of the Hexagon House consists of a front entrance hall with a dining room and living room immediately to the rear (north). A stair hall, kitchen and storage room occupy the rear of the building. The principal rooms are arranged around the central chimney with corner fireplaces found in the living and dining rooms. The rooms connect to each other, thus eliminating passages between rooms. The woodwork in the house is plain. Symmetrical molded architraves frame the windows and doors. Baseboards are found in the main rooms; the principal rooms with the exception of the kitchen contain unornamented wood mantels. The stair has a turned newell, molded handrail and turned balusters. The second-floor rooms originally were bedchambers and are finished similarly to the first-floor rooms.

The Hexagon House has several features not typically associated with houses of this period. Of particular note is a ventilating system on the first and second floors. The prototype for such a system may be found in Orson S. Fowlers, A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building. Air vent holes are found in all the principal rooms. Another feature that distinguishes the house is its use of vertical casement windows. Such windows are rare in Virginia. An unusual feature of the windows is the stained-glass panes, the panes executed in a variety of geometric designs.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1871-1873 **Builder/Architect** B. Leathers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hexagon House, 530 Amherst Street, Winchester, is significant as the only 19th-century hexagonal house standing in Virginia. The residence was built between 1871-73 by B. Leathers for James W. Burgess in what was then Frederick County. The building was partially influenced by Orson S. Fowler's A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall Mode of Building (1853), a handbook that popularized the polygonal house as the most practical, economical and healthful in plan for Americans. In keeping with Fowler's recommendation, the Hexagon House has ventilators in the principal rooms to remove "bad" air. The house remains in an excellent state of preservation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hexagon House sits on land that was originally part of a much larger tract owned by James Wood who platted the town of Winchester. In the late 1860s the property was purchased by James W. Burgess who, between 1871-73, erected the Hexagon House. The builder of the Hexagon House was B. Leathers. While nothing is known of Leathers, The Winchester News does provide minimal information on Burgess.

James W. Burgess was a furniture dealer in Winchester, advertising from 1871 to 1873 in the Winchester News. From Burgess' advertisements it would appear that he was a furniture wholesaler or dealer and not a cabinetmaker, purchasing his furniture already made for resale. As was typical of furniture dealers of the period, Burgess also sold caskets, keeping as he advertised in the Winchester News, "beautiful burial caskets constantly on hand."¹ Burgess' notices ceased in mid-1873 and on September 27, 1873, The Winchester News carried a notice of a "Fine Home for Sale" belonging to James W. Burgess. The advertisement referred directly to the Hexagon House and read as follows:

"Will sell my residence near the town spring. The lot contains four-and-a-half acres. I am willing to sell part or the whole. It has on it one of the most convenient and substantial new brick dwellings in the valley. All the doors and windows sills are of stone. Cistern in kitchen which, together with fuel and ample cellar room in the basement. On the next two floors there are ten ample rooms. Parlor and sitting room-15 x 20 feet each, besides bathroom, wardrobes, pantry, storeroom, halls, attics, etc. and was throughout the whole building, from basement to attic. Apply James W. Burgess, September 27th, 1873."²

The notice ran through early 1874. While it did not mention the fact that the house was hexagonal, it did note that the house was "convenient" and contained such modern amenities as a cistern in the kitchen and a bathroom. Burgess perhaps felt that mention of the house's unusual shape might keep prospective buyers away.

(See Continuation Sheet No. 2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. one acre

Quadrangle name Winchester, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	7	4	3	9	0	0	4	3	4	1	1	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard C. Cote and Division of Historic Landmarks Staff

organization Division of Historic Landmarks date 1987

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804-786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

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



H. Bryan Mitchell, Director
title Division of Historic Landmarks

date August 10, 1987

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Hexagon House, Winchester, Va.

Continuation sheet 1

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The yard in front of and to the rear of the house is noteworthy for the variety of trees that it contains. The grounds around the house are planted with ash, willow, poplar, walnut and pine trees. A stone wall is presently being erected to the west of the house along Hawthorne Drive. The front yard is in the process of an extensive landscape campaign that includes a masonry fountain.

RCC

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Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

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Although there are several octagonal houses and an octagonal barn known to survive in Virginia, the Hexagon House is the only residence of its plan and method of construction in the Commonwealth. The house with which it bears closest comparison in the Valley is the Stephen Harnsberger House, an octagonal house built in 1856. The two houses both clearly reflect an awareness of Orson S. Fowler's, A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, first published in 1848 and widely popular in America during the 1850s.

While the Hexagon House is six sided and not eight sided as preferred by Fowler in A Home for All, the house does share other elements advocated by Fowler. For example, the plan for Burgess' six-sided house follows Fowler's recommendation in making the utmost use of the interior space. The house contains an entrance hall and stair hall but contains no lateral halls or center passage. Rather, the core of the residence is reserved for the main chimney with its corner fireplaces. Also advocated by Fowler, the Hexagon House has ventilators. As Fowler noted in A Home for All, each room "should have its ventilator, and that ventilator should open at both the bottom and top of the room, so as to carry off any bad air which may settle at the bottom, or rise to the top."³ The ventilators at the Hexagon House were installed as Fowler suggested and remain in place today.

An unusual feature that distinguishes the Hexagon House from Fowler's designs is its casement windows with stained-glass panes. The panes are cut in geometric patterns and represent in Virginia an early use of stained glass in domestic architecture. Undoubtedly, Burgess as a furniture dealer had access to large urban markets where such windows could be found.

Unfortunately, Burgess did not enjoy his unconventional house for long. The house apparently did not sell and Burgess lost it through a foreclosure, the property then passing to the trustees of the Winchester Building Association. Since then, the house has had a variety of owners. It currently serves as headquarters of Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc.

RCC

Notes:

1. Winchester News, September 1, 1871.
2. Winchester News, September 27, 1873.
3. Orson S. Fowler, A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building (New York: Dover Reprint, 1973), p. 43.

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National Park Service

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Hexagon House, Winchester, Va.

Continuation sheet 3

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#9 Bibliography

Fowler, Orson S. A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building.
New York: Dover Reprint, 1973.

Quarles, Garland R. The Story of One Hundred Old Homes in Winchester, Virginia.
Winchester: Farmers and Merchants National Bank, 1967.

Winchester Building Association. Articles of Association, Constitution and Bylaws.
Baltimore: Press of J. Lucas & Son, 1867.

Winchester News, 1871 - 1874.

Wolfe, C. Toler. Echoes from the Past. Stephens City: Commercial Press, 1981.

#10

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property consists of approximately one acre. The one acre is drawn to include the house and front and rear yards. The one acre is the same amount of property conveyed by deed to the Glass/Glen Burnie Foundation on December 30, 1985. It is a fraction of the original tract, since divided, of 4½ acres.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the N side of Amherst Street at the NE corner of the intersection of Amherst Street with Hawthorne Drive; thence extending approximately 200' SE along N side of Amherst Street; thence approximately 250' N; thence approximately 200' W to a point on the E side of Hawthorne Drive; thence approximately 200' S along E side of Hawthorne Drive to the point of origin.

