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## 7. Description

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

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Situated high on a hill overlooking the tranquil town of Webster Springs, and surrounded by mountain vistas, is the Morton House, Webster County's only remaining example of outstanding Victorian architecture.

Built on a solid stone foundation, the massive red brick house is one of the largest private dwellings in Webster Springs. Upon first viewing the house, the most outstanding features are the two, two and a half story turrets that are corbelled on the north and north west corners of the front elevation. Each turret has two double hung windows with curved glass on the first two stories and two single pane windows on the top. Each is topped with a conical shingled roof and capped with wooden finials. The spacious, one story porch is another important feature. It wraps three quarters of the way around the house and is supported by fourteen wooden Ionic style columns. The porch is eight feet wide and provides a good example of Victorian era architecture in the Queen Ann style that emphasised spacious gallery areas. The house is situated in a location that makes it visibly prominent from nearly all points in the town.

The center section of the house is massive in construction. The main section of the house is block shaped and there is a slight protrusion in the rear extending from the regular massing. The hipped roof is massively expansive and the large gabled dormers are at each elevation and each has an arched window in the Palladian style. Three brick chimneys, one behind each of the two turrents, and one in the rear crown the top of the house. All the windows at each elevation are double hung. There is a separate one story porch on the rear elevation.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

<b>Specific dates</b>	1912	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Morton House is significant for its being the home of the Eskridge H. Morton, a prominent local attorney and elected official to the West Virginia State Governemnt, and as being the only remaining outstanding example of Queen Ann architecture in Webster County.

**Explanations**

Eskridge H. Morton (1866-1940) was a man who dedicated his life to public service in Webster County as well as to the State of West Virginia. Mr. Morton was educated in Webster County Schools and was a graduate of West Virginia University and Law School. Upon finishing Law School, he returned to Webster Springs and entered into a law partnership with William C. Woodell. This partnership lasted throughout both mens lives. In 1889, Mr. Morton was elected County Superintendent of schools and held that post until 1891. In 1892 he was elected county Prosecuting Attorney. This position he held until 1902 when he was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates. In 1908 he made an unsuccessful bid for State Attorney General. During the next several years, Mr. Morton enjoyed a prosperous law practice in Webster Springs which was prospering from its heyday as a major resort town in the Eastern United States. At this time he was a regional attorney for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In 1916, he was elected to the West Virginia State Senate and was in that office for two terms. In 1922 Governor Ephraim Morgan appointed him chairman of the West Virginia Code Commission that modified the West Virginia law code. In 1924, E. H. Morton returned to Webster Springs and his law practice. He died in 1940 having never retired from work. A book published in 1903 titled Men of West Virginia stated that Mr. Morton is "one of the greatest men in the state of his day, with unusual foresight and showed livery of no little ability".

The Morton House is also significant as being the only remaining outstanding example of Queen Ann architecture in Webster County. Built during a time when Webster Springs was enjoying its apex as a resort town and lumber industry center, the house reflects that era in its design for gracious living. The house retains all of its original features including the two towers on the front elevation which makes the structure striking in appearance. The great wrap-around porch with its wooden columns is another outstanding feature that gives the house its Queen Ann appearance. It is certainly a structure representing a bygone era but still retains original integrity and function as a private residence. It is one of Webster County's outstanding landmarks.

Upon E.H. Morton's death in 1940 ownership passed to Miss Mayme Morton who is still residing in the house. She is a retired Webster County educator. There has been little alteration in the house and much of the original early 20th century furnishings are still in use.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Webster Springs

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	5	5	1	5	6	0	4	2	5	8	5	6	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)

### 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 William T. Wright

Historic Preservation Unit

organization WV Dept. of Culture and History

date December 23, 1985

street & number Capitol Complex

telephone (304)348-0240

city or town Charleston,

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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 2-21-86

For NPS use only

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

Natasha Andrews

date 4/15/86

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Morton House

Item number 9

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Bibliography

Swiger, Elizabeth D. History and Family Record of the Morton Family of Webster County, West Virginia. (Allen Press Inc.) Lawrence Kansas 1984

Men of West Virginia Vol. II Biographical Publishing Co., Chicago, ILL 1903

Interview Miss Mayme Morton April 11, 1985 Bill Wright, interviewer.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Morton House

Item number

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at point/at corner of Union Street and abandoned alley travelling southwest 150' to point at corner of abandoned alley and Daniel Street, thence travelling southeast along Daniel Street 100' to point, thence travelling approximately northeast 75' to point, thence, travelling 40' southeast to point thence travelling northeast along embankment 75' to point on Union Street, thence travelling 200' along Union Street northwest to point of beginning.