

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Wachovia Building

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 301 N. Main Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Winston-Salem N/A  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Forsyth code 067 Zip code 27101

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Allen Crow SHPO 2/22/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Wachovia Building  
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., NC  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/financial institution

COMMERCE/business

COMMERCE/professional

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/business

COMMERCE/professional

**7. Description**

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

International Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls Steel

GLASS

roof OTHER: Built-up tar and gravel

other Steel (porcelain enameled)

**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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

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):

- Checkboxes for NPS documentation types like preliminary determination, National Register, etc.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1963-1966

Significant Dates

1963

1966

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cameron Associates (Albert B. Cameron) - architect

C. P. Street Construction Company -contractor

Primary location of additional data:

- Checkboxes for State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Wachovia Building  
Name of Property

Forsyth Co., NC  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than 1

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	6	8	1	0	0	3	9	9	4	9	0	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
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.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date September 16, 2000

street & number 637 N. Spring Street telephone 336/727-1968

City or town Winston-Salem state NC Zip code 27101

### Additional Documentation

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)

### Property Owner

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

name Wachovia Building Associates, L.P., c/o Andrea Pauls Backman, JMB Corp.

street & number 900 N. Michigan Ave. telephone 312/440-4800

City or town Chicago state IL Zip code 60611-1575

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Wachovia Building  
Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### DESCRIPTION

#### Materials, cont'd

**Walls:** OTHER: Cast Stone  
BRICK (glazed)

#### Narrative:

The former Wachovia Building in downtown Winston-Salem is a thirty-story International Style office building erected between 1963 and 1966. Located at 301 N. Main Street, it covers an entire city block bounded by N. Main Street on the west, W. Fourth Street on the north, N. Church Street on the east, and W. Third Street on the south. At this prime location, the building is surrounded by the old Forsyth County Courthouse, the R. J. Reynolds Building, the Phillips Building, and the Federal Building. The topography of the site slopes from west to east, so that street level on the east side of the building is a floor lower than street level on the west side. Thus, entry on the Main Street facade is at the first-floor level of the building, while entry on the Church Street side is at ground level.

The entire building contains nearly 600,000 square feet. This includes below-ground parking for 262 vehicles on five levels; the ground floor used for the Church Street lobby, offices, the bank vault, loading docks, and the parking entrance; the first-floor Main Street lobbies and offices; offices on floors two through twenty-six; and the building's mechanical plant on floors twenty-seven and twenty-eight. The tower measures 83' x 200' in section, but the first four levels above Main Street extend eastward an additional twenty-eight feet toward Church Street to form a cast-stone sheathed annex.

The Wachovia Building exemplifies the mid-twentieth-century International Style office tower in the mode of Mies van der Rohe. It is a tall, rectangular box devoid of ornamentation, with a structural steel frame, concrete floors, and a curtain-wall exterior of stainless steel and tinted glass.

White cast stone sheathes the base of the building, which is a full story in height on the Church Street elevation and then wraps around the two side elevations, becoming progressively more narrow as Third and Fourth Streets rise to meet Main Street until, at the front of the building, the base terminates in a landscaped plaza. Along the top edge of the base, a cast-stone bench-like railing forms a unifying band around the building.

Polished stainless steel mullions, four-and-a-half inches wide and set eight feet apart, reach upward from the second to the twenty-seventh floors. Emphasizing the building's verticality, the mullions are raised eight inches from the bronze-tinted glass of the curtain wall. Intermediate mullions

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rise between the primary mullions on the second story, creating a rhythmic variation. Between the primary mullions, the window panels contain four panes of bronze glass, the top two panes measuring four feet wide by seven feet tall, and the lower two measuring four feet wide by two feet three inches tall. On the second floor, where there are intermediate mullions, all panes of bronze glass are four feet wide. The glass of the curtain wall creates variations in the visual character of the building. Although the glass is tinted bronze, which helps reduce heat and glare and produces a gold reflection in the rising and setting sun, it also changes in appearance during the day through its reflection of the changing sky. Thus, the building often appears more blue than bronze. Contrasting with the tinted glass and stainless steel are the horizontal bands of nearly-white opaque glass that hide the horizontal structural girders and the floors. Except for the top band, the opaque panes between the primary mullions measure eight feet wide and three feet nine inches tall. The upper-most band of opaque glass is taller than the others, establishing a sense of finality to the height of the building. Another sophisticated, though subtle, detail is the way the mullions extend slightly above and below the highest and lowest bands of opaque glass.

At the base of the glass-and-steel curtain wall and recessed slightly from its edge, a band composed of white cast-stone panels carries around three sides of the building, ending when it abuts the rear cast-stone annex. Seven square-in-section, granite-faced posts support the soffit of this band across the Main Street facade at the first story, allowing for a wall of plate-glass panels recessed ten feet from the rest of the tower's Main Street elevation. A raised, landscaped pedestrian plaza extending thirty-four feet from the building to the sidewalk fronts the entire Main Street facade. It was originally decked with terrazzo, but when that material failed, the decking was replaced with the current granite pavers. Sets of three long steps, on either side of a central handicap ramp (hidden behind a low, horizontal retaining wall), move from the raised plaza down to the sidewalk, which is paved with the same granite pavers along the entire stretch of Main Street fronting the building.

At the top of the building, a recessed eight-and-a-half-foot-deep observation deck encircles the perimeter at the twenty-seventh floor level. The inner wall of the observation deck and the inner side of the retaining wall at the edge of the building are covered with glazed-brick tiles. Concrete posts, which correspond with the granite-faced posts of the Main Street facade, rise adjacent to the retaining wall to support the ceiling. Above the observation deck, and sheathing the twenty-eighth floor, a wide band of dark blue porcelain-enameled steel rings the building. Until they were removed in 1998, ten-foot letters spelled out "WACHOVIA" across this band on the east and west sides of the building.

Around 1972, a narrow pedestrian bridge at fourth-floor height was built over Church Street, connecting the rear of the Wachovia Building to the newly-constructed Phillips Building. Enclosed in dark-brown ribbed steel, the bridge has a very narrow, metal-sheathed, vertical support rising from the roof of the Wachovia parking deck. Only the section of the bridge located within the Wachovia property boundary is included in the nomination, as a non-contributing structure.

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Six pedestrian entrances lead inside the Wachovia Building: three on the Main Street level and one each on the Third, Fourth, and Church Street sides. The first floor contains two lobbies—the bank lobby and the elevator lobby providing access to the upper floors. The bank lobby was remodeled in the 1980s. The elevator lobby was also remodeled, but retains its original travertine walls. There are two banks of elevators, the fastest in the South at the time of construction. Five are low-rise and serve the parking garage, the ground level, the Main Street level, and levels two through twelve. The high rise elevators also serve the parking garage, the ground floor, and the Main Street level, but from there skip the next eleven floors to provide express service to levels twelve through twenty-seven.

The core of the Wachovia Building tower contains the stairs, elevators, air conditioning shafts, maintenance closets, and rest rooms. The housing of these facilities in the core provides a high degree of space utilization in the surrounding office areas. The interior was intentionally designed—and marketed—for flexibility, using moveable partitions and suspended ceilings, so that office spaces could be designed to serve the needs of a variety of tenants. Thus, within this framework, the interior has been altered repeatedly through the years. The office floors typically contain approximately 17,600 square feet each. Some have narrow circulation halls with either numerous offices or larger open-floor spaces for office cubicles. Other floors have wide halls and spacious offices. Some interior spaces are modern in feel, while others strive for a more "traditional" atmosphere. Major tenant Wachovia Bank and Trust Company occupied all or part of the ground floor through the eleventh floor of the building until the late 1990s. The eleventh floor was the fanciest of Wachovia's office levels, containing the Directors' Room, the executive suite for the President and Chairman of the Board and offices for other senior executives, the National Division, the General Trust Administration, and the International Department.

Although the interior of the Wachovia Building has been remodeled on numerous occasions, as was intended, it has retained its basic layout of service core with surrounding halls and offices. The exterior has remained largely unaltered. The only exceptions include the discreet addition of handicap ramps behind a low wall at the front of the Main Street plaza, the replacement of the travertine plaza deck with granite pavers, the replacement in 2000 of one of the elevator lobby revolving doors with a double-leaf glass entrance, the removal in 1998 of the Wachovia name from the top of the building, and the ca. 1972 addition of the bridge connector over Church Street between the Wachovia Building and the Phillips Building. In all, the Wachovia Building has retained a high degree of historic integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

This description was based on both personal examination by the author and information from the "Fact Book" prepared for the building when it opened in 1966. For additional insight into the physical character of the building, photographs and plans are included with the nomination.

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Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### SIGNIFICANCE

#### Architect/Builder, cont'd

Ezra Meir and Associates - Structural Engineer  
Stephen T. Hocsak and Associates - Electrical Engineer  
J. M. McDowell and Associates - Mechanical Engineer

#### Summary

The 1960s Wachovia Building in downtown Winston-Salem is exceptionally significant at the statewide level and fulfills National Register Criterion C as an icon of mid-twentieth-century modern commercial architecture in North Carolina. Designed by Charlotte architect Albert B. Cameron of Cameron Associates for the builder and developer Dwight L. Phillips's Northwest Corporation, the thirty-story building was erected between late 1963 and early 1966, its period of significance. The building took its name from its primary tenant, the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company. When built, this excellent example of the Miesian version of the International Style was the tallest building in North Carolina and, for a short while, the tallest building in the Southeast. In a "height makes might" business world, it was an appropriate symbol of the prominence and power of Wachovia, which had by that time become the largest bank in the Southeast. At the local level, the Wachovia Building is significant not only architecturally, but also because of its association with the commerce and downtown development of its Piedmont city, thereby fulfilling National Register Criterion A. As the first major building project in downtown Winston-Salem since the Reynolds Building in 1929, the Wachovia Building demonstrated a major commitment to the revitalization of downtown Winston-Salem by both the developer and the bank. From a commercial standpoint, the building is of exceptional significance as a catalyst for the construction of other major commercial buildings in the city's downtown for several decades following its erection. Although the Wachovia Building achieved its significance within the past fifty years, it fulfills Criterion Consideration G for its exceptional importance in the areas of architecture and commerce, as stated above.

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Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### Historical Background and Architecture and Commerce Contexts

On December 27, 1962, Charlotte developer Dwight L. Phillips made an announcement that would prove to be of great significance both to Winston-Salem and, architecturally, to North Carolina as a whole. The Northwest Corporation, of which Phillips was president, would begin construction in 1963 on a thirty-story office tower in Winston-Salem. It was to be known as the Wachovia Building, because more than one-third of the new building would be leased by Wachovia Bank and Trust Company as their headquarters.

This announcement came after a long, dry spell in the construction of significant buildings in downtown Winston-Salem. During the 1910s and 1920s, there had been a race to the sky among new downtown commercial buildings. It had begun with the construction of the seven-story Wachovia Bank and Trust Company Building (NR 1984) in 1911 and had continued with the eight-story O'Hanlon Building (NR 1984) in 1915. Not to be outdone, the Wachovia Building added an eighth story in 1917. Both buildings were surpassed by the twelve-story Robert E. Lee Hotel, built in 1921 (demolished 1972). In 1926, the eighteen-story Nissen Building (NR 1983) was erected. The race climaxed with the 1929 construction of the magnificent Art Deco style R. J. Reynolds Building designed by the New York firm of Shreve and Lamb, architects of the slightly later Empire State Building (Taylor, *From Frontier to Factory*, 58).

Then the stock market crashed and, with it, the financial stability necessary for such large-scale undertakings. Recovery from the Depression was barely under way when the United States entered World War II. While the war years helped salvage the American economy, concentration on the war effort required the use of building materials that otherwise would have been available for private construction.

When local commercial construction resumed after the war, it all but ignored the downtown business district, instead favoring the expanding suburbs. It was during this period that shopping centers began to serve the ever-growing number of suburban dwellers. The first of these in Winston-Salem was Thruway Shopping Center, built in 1956; by 1966, fourteen additional shopping centers had been developed in the city (Tise, 46).

Meanwhile, the city was exploring the concept of urban renewal. With the flight to the suburbs after World War II, a somewhat blighted inner city remained. Soon after the formation of the City-County Planning Board in 1948, a master plan of city development was formulated, including new traffic thoroughfares, slum clearance, and downtown rehabilitation. When a 1959 report showed that only forty-four percent of the buildings in the city's business district could be rated as adequate or better, city officials were spurred to begin planning new efforts at downtown rehabilitation. Plans were soon made for the construction of a Convention Center (completed in 1969), a major new office building (the

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Wachovia Building fit this slot), a new Hall of Justice, parking garages, a pedestrian mall, and other downtown amenities (Tise, 47-49). When plans for the new Wachovia Building were announced, the building's role in the redevelopment effort was made clear. According to Wachovia senior vice president Meade H. Willis, Jr., "This is the type of rebuilding that the Total Development Committee of the Chamber of Commerce has dreamed of: Getting rid of a blighted area and erecting a modern building with private funds" (Ellison, "30-Story Skyscraper").

The announcement of the planned construction of the Wachovia Building demonstrated a major commitment to the revitalization of downtown Winston-Salem by both the developer and the bank. This show of faith led not only to the construction of North Carolina's tallest building, but also served as a catalyst for the construction of other major commercial buildings in downtown Winston-Salem during the next several decades.

Dwight L. Phillips and H. Haywood Robbins of Charlotte were principals of the Northwest Corporation, the developer and owner of the Wachovia Building. As a developer and builder, Phillips had created residential subdivisions, shopping centers, office buildings, and a variety of other projects that he controlled as president of some twenty corporations. Robbins was an attorney who had been associated with large construction projects for two decades. In addition to his involvement with the Wachovia project in Winston-Salem, Robbins was also president of the Elm Street Corporation, which constructed the sixteen-story Wachovia Bank Building in Greensboro during the mid-1960s (Fact Book; Ellison, "30-Story Skyscraper"). In announcing the upcoming construction of the Wachovia Building, Phillips proclaimed that after six months of study, Winston-Salem had emerged as the company's top choice for the location of the new building. They concluded, in fact, that the city had needed such a building for five years. The interest and support of Wachovia Bank during the exploratory stage of the project further convinced the Northwest Corporation to proceed with the project (Ellison, "30-Story Skyscraper").

Wachovia Bank and Trust Company was created in 1911 from the consolidation of the Wachovia National Bank (founded 1879) and the Wachovia Loan and Trust Company (founded 1893). From its inception, the bank was a leader in banking in North Carolina, eventually expanding its presence throughout the Southeast. In 1961 Wachovia broadened its services by creating an international division to finance North Carolina's growing export trade. By late 1964, the bank's total resources had exceeded the billion-dollar mark. By the end of 1965, based on its total resources, Wachovia had become the largest bank in the Southeast and was ranked thirty-seventh largest in the nation. Since 1911 the bank had been located in a seven-story (eight stories after 1917) building (NR) at the southwest corner of Main and Third streets (Taylor nomination; Fries et al., 167-168, 248-249; Pepper, "Banking"). After more than half a century at this location, and with considerable business expansion, the bank required a new home—one that would not only provide more space but also reflect its current stature in the banking

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world. This Wachovia achieved when it moved its headquarters into the new office tower at 301 N. Main Street in 1966.

Albert B. Cameron, principal of the Charlotte architectural firm of Cameron Associates, was selected by the building's owners to design the new Wachovia Building because they liked his flair for imaginative, distinctive, and practical innovations in architecture. Also, Cameron had worked on other projects with D. L. Phillips, and Phillips knew that Cameron could complete a project on budget—an important factor when working with a project of this magnitude (Fact Book; Tom Phillips interview).

Albert Cameron received his architecture degree in 1952 from North Carolina State University's School of Design, where he won several awards for outstanding achievement. His study there coincided with the early years of Henry L. Kamphoefner's long tenure as the school's dean. Kamphoefner was a strong proponent of modernism in architecture who surrounded himself with a stellar faculty of like-minded architects. Together, they inspired and trained a generation of architects who went into practice espousing modernism (Fact Book; Bishir et al., 359).

After several years as director of design at the prominent Charlotte architecture firm of A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates, Cameron established his own firm in 1959. Labeled the "Prince of Architecture" by a North Carolina magazine in the 1950s, the talented Cameron designed office buildings, apartments, churches, and residences. Major projects included the University of North Carolina Undergraduate Library-Bookstore-Student Union complex and the Wesley Foundation Student Center, both in Chapel Hill, as well as the Cutter Building (later the American Office Building), Southwest Senior High School, and a \$5 million apartment complex, all in Charlotte. Tragically, in November of 1967—not long after the completion of the Wachovia Building—Cameron's career was cut short when he died of a heart attack at the age of forty-two (Bill Little interview; Diane Phillips e-mail; Fact Book).

Steeped in modernism, Albert Cameron chose to design the new Wachovia Building in the Miesian version of the International Style, the corporate standard of the mid-twentieth century. His design for the thirty-story structure exemplified the main characteristics of the style: a boxy, unornamented form; a stripped-down, geometric grid surface established by a structural steel frame and glass curtain walls; overall symmetry; a flat roof; and a ground floor (at least on the main facade) set back behind the outer piers of the building. The Wachovia Building would be Winston-Salem's own Lever House (Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, New York, 1952) or Seagram Building (Mies van der Rohe, New York, 1958)—in other words, the kind of prestige building that national corporations liked to occupy (Whiffen, 251; One Charles Center nomination; Arkansas Power and Light Building nomination).

Although Cameron Associates was the primary architect of the Wachovia Building, A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates of Charlotte—the firm for which Cameron had worked before establishing his own firm—served as architects for the bank's space in the building. I. S. D., Inc. of New York was the interior design consulting firm for the bank. The structural engineer for the building was Ezra Meir and

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Associates of Raleigh, the electrical engineer was Stephen T. Hocsak and Associates of Charlotte, and the mechanical engineer was J. M. McDowell and Associates of Charlotte. Northwest Corporation's general contractor for the Wachovia Building was C. P. Street Construction Company of Charlotte. In addition, a host of sub-contractors worked on the project (Fact Book).

The site of the Wachovia Building encompasses an entire block bounded by Main, Fourth, Church, and Third streets and facing the old Forsyth County Courthouse. The selection of this site resulted from three separate studies conducted by the Winston-Salem-Forsyth County Planning Board, the Northwest Corporation, and the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company. In designing the Wachovia Building, Cameron Associates considered the impact that the building would have on other nearby buildings. In particular, the massive simplicity of the Wachovia Building served well to complement rather than conflict with or diminish the effect of the outstanding Art Deco design of the Reynolds Building across Fourth Street. Further respect for the Reynolds Building was demonstrated by the setback of the Wachovia Building from Main Street, which allowed a continued view of the Reynolds Building when approaching both buildings from the south (Fact Book).

Construction of the Wachovia Building began in 1963. By late August, a block full of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings had been cleared from the site to make way for the new skyscraper ("Story of a Skyscraper"; "Big Site"). On December 17, 1963, nearly a year after Dwight Phillips had announced Northwest Corporation's plan to build the office tower, construction work commenced. It was anticipated to take approximately two years. After excavating the site, caissons were extended down to bedrock. It then took at least six months for construction on the building to reach the Main Street level (Ellison, "Work Is Started on Skyscraper"). Erection of the building's steel structure began in September 1964 and was completed the following March (Ellison, "New Claim"). On March 15, 1965, a topping out ceremony was held, during which Mayor M. C. Benton proclaimed that the building "could be the flame that ignites a general downtown rebuilding program" in Winston-Salem. When the final beam was put in place, it bore the signatures of thousands who had autographed it in the then-current bank's lobby (Bost, "New Skyscraper 'Topped'"). When construction began, around sixty-four percent of the building had already been leased or committed, including nearly forty percent allocated for Wachovia's use. Eventually Wachovia occupied approximately eighty-two percent of the total leasable area. Wachovia handled the financing for the new building and acted as broker for the New York Life Insurance Company, which took the first long-term mortgage (Ellison, "Work is Started;" Fact Book).

On the morning of February 28, 1966, a ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the formal opening of the new Wachovia Building. During the ceremony, Mayor Benton said that the building "brings us to a significant moment in the life of our community." Continuing, he said that the new building meant more jobs, more income, more taxes for the city and county, a home for business and professional people, and

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headquarters for the largest bank in the Southeast ("Wachovia Building Opens"). Wachovia provided brochures describing the building, extolling its merits, and claiming that "the attitude, purpose and character of Wachovia and its personnel are mirrored in the spacious surroundings from which they now serve you" (The Tallest Building in the Carolinas"). More than 750 people attended an open house for the skyscraper, riding the elevators to the observation tower at the top to view the city and surrounding countryside. Guided tours of the building were held for the next several days. In addition to this and other previously held opening events, the bank and building owners planned other activities to be held during the coming months that would seek to attract to Winston-Salem and North Carolina business and banking leaders of the state and region ("Wachovia Building Opens;" Loomis, "A Tower's Tale").

When the Wachovia Building opened, its owners had much of which to boast. The new building, which took up an entire city block, cost \$15 million. Its thirty floors rose to 395 feet above Main Street and 410 feet above Church Street. An observation deck at the top of the building provided, on a clear day, a fifty-mile view of the surrounding countryside. The steel framework consisted of fifty miles of beams and girders with 5,000 tons of structural steel. The exterior was composed of 183,000 square feet of stainless steel and glass curtain wall, 150,000 square feet of which was bronze-tinted glass. The building had 7,500 windows and 30,000 square feet of cast stone. Leasable space totaled approximately 410,000 square feet (Fact Book; Ellison, "New Claim").

When the Wachovia Building was planned and when construction was completed, it was the tallest building in the Southeast. During a period when the prevailing building philosophy in the business world was "height makes might," this distinction was of great importance, at least from a psychological standpoint. Entire newspaper articles at the time were devoted to this issue. Wachovia's claim came from a comparison of its statistics—410 feet high and thirty floors—with those of other buildings in the South's large cities. In Atlanta, the Bank of Georgia was 390 feet and thirty-two floors, the Georgia Power Company Building was 300 feet and twenty-two floors, Fulton National Bank was 295 feet and twenty-two floors, and the Merchandise Mart was 294 feet and twenty-two floors. In Birmingham, the Comer Building was 325 feet and twenty-seven floors. In Charlotte, the North Carolina National Bank Building was 289 feet and eighteen floors and the Liberty Life Building was 260 feet and twenty floors. The Prudential Insurance Company Building in Jacksonville was 299 feet and twenty-two floors. Memphis's Sterick Building was 365 feet and thirty-one floors. In New Orleans, the Hibernia Bank Building was 355 feet and twenty-three floors and the American Bank Building was 330 feet and twenty-three floors. Nashville's Life and Casualty Tower was 409 feet and thirty floors, and in Richmond the Central National Bank was 282 feet and twenty-four floors. These statistics suggest that feet were considered more important than the number of floors in the calculation of height, for three of the listed buildings were of thirty or more floors. Furthermore, even the contest relative to a building's footage was questionable, for Nashville's Life and Casualty Tower had the same number of floors as the

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Wachovia Building and was only one foot shorter! Nevertheless, statistics such as these, as dubious as they were, instilled local pride (“Building Heights Compared”). In the end, Wachovia’s claim in the Southeast was fleeting, for by the time the building was completed, construction of the 544-foot, forty-one floor First National Bank of Atlanta was underway (East, “Atlanta Tops”).

More important was the position the Wachovia Building attained in North Carolina’s architectural history. Although when built and for years thereafter, the Wachovia Building was jokingly referred to as “the box that the Reynolds Building came in,” that was simply an acknowledgment of its stripped-down, boxy, International Style form that contrasted so with the Art Deco styling of the R. J. Reynolds Building. When built, the Wachovia Building was the tallest building in North Carolina. There simply was no other building in the state that could compare with it—in height, in modern commercial progressiveness, or in its implied statement of prominence and power that people could easily see and understand.

By the mid-1960s, several other modern skyscrapers had been erected in North Carolina, but none came close to being a tower of the magnitude of the Wachovia Building. In 1958, Wachovia built an office tower in Charlotte. With its fifteen-floor, 217-foot height, it was the largest building erected in North Carolina in the previous fifteen years. Although it had the tall, blocky form of the International Style, its honeycomb-like skin of prismatic cast stone panels gave it an appearance quite different from the glass-and-steel curtain walls of the Miesian-influenced International Style buildings (“North Carolina’s Newest Skyscraper,” 31). Between then and 1963, two other skyscrapers were built in Charlotte—the eighteen-floor, Miesian-inspired, North Carolina National Bank Building that was much like New York’s Lever House, and the fourteen-floor Cutter Building, designed by Albert B. Cameron (Bayer, “State Growing in New Direction”). In 1963, Wachovia announced that a twenty-one-floor office building would be erected for its use in Greensboro. This was the first tall building to be erected in that city for more than thirty years. But when the International Style building, designed by A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates of Charlotte, was completed in late 1966, it stood only sixteen stories tall (“Gate City Building”; “Greensboro Building”). In Durham, the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company began construction in 1963 of a twelve-story office building. In Asheville, work was scheduled to begin in the mid-1960s on the eighteen-story Northwestern Bank Building (“State Growing in New Direction”). In Raleigh, the fifteen-story Branch Banking and Trust Company Building was erected in 1965. With its base of black granite and glass and its vertical shaft of black glass and black spandrel panels accentuated by aluminum mullions, it was the only true International Style skyscraper in the mode of Mies van der Rohe ever built in that city (“20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture: A Guide Map”). The Wachovia Building remained the tallest building in the Carolinas for several years, until the thirty-two floor Jefferson First Union Tower was erected in Charlotte in 1970-1971 (“State’s Tallest Building Near Top”).

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Forsyth County, North Carolina

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In Winston-Salem, the construction of the Wachovia Building in the mid 1960s was a primary catalyst in the revitalization of the city's downtown commercial district. It spurred the development of a sequence of new buildings in the city's downtown over the next three decades. Among these buildings were the fourteen-story NCNB Plaza erected in 1973, the 1974 Hyatt House, the 1975 county and 1976 federal office buildings, the 1980 Reynolds Plaza, the eighteen-story Integon building erected in 1982, and the nineteen-story 1986 One Triad Park office tower. In addition, several other buildings were rehabilitated, including the 1911-1918 Wachovia Bank and Trust Company Building (NR) and the 1922 Nissen Building (NR) (Compton Appraisal, 14, 51, 53, 55, 58). However, the Wachovia Building retained its title as tallest building in the city for three decades, until a new Wachovia Building slightly eclipsed it in 1995, and remains the only major Miesian-influenced International Style building in the city.

In 1974 the D. L. Phillips Investment Builders Inc. sold the Wachovia Building to Wachovia Associates to settle the estate of builder D. L. Phillips. Three years later, the building was sold to JMB Properties, the current owner (Bost, "Wachovia Building to Be Sold"). By the early 1990s, Wachovia Bank was suffering from the lack of an adequate electronic infrastructure in its headquarters building to serve new banking technology. It undertook the construction of a new headquarters building nearby which was completed in 1995. In stages between late 1995 and early 1999, the bank vacated its 1960s building; in the spring of 1998, Wachovia removed its logo from the top of the building (Loomis, "A Tower's Tale").

Today, the 1960s Wachovia Building that for so long stood as a symbol of modernity and progress, stands largely empty, except for several law and business offices. Its future remains uncertain. In the city's current drive to revitalize its downtown, the aging modern building could be demolished, or it could serve as a centerpoint in the overall plan. If the latter, it would likely require rehabilitation to bring the building up to the standards of the twenty-first century.

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Tom Phillips (son-in-law of Dwight L. Phillips), September 8, 2000.

John Rogers (preservation planner, Charlotte), April 12, 2000.

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Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is defined as Lot 151 of Block 6084 on Forsyth County Tax Map 630854.

#### Boundary Justification

The nominated property, consisting of a tract of less than one acre, constitutes the historic and current setting of the Wachovia Building.

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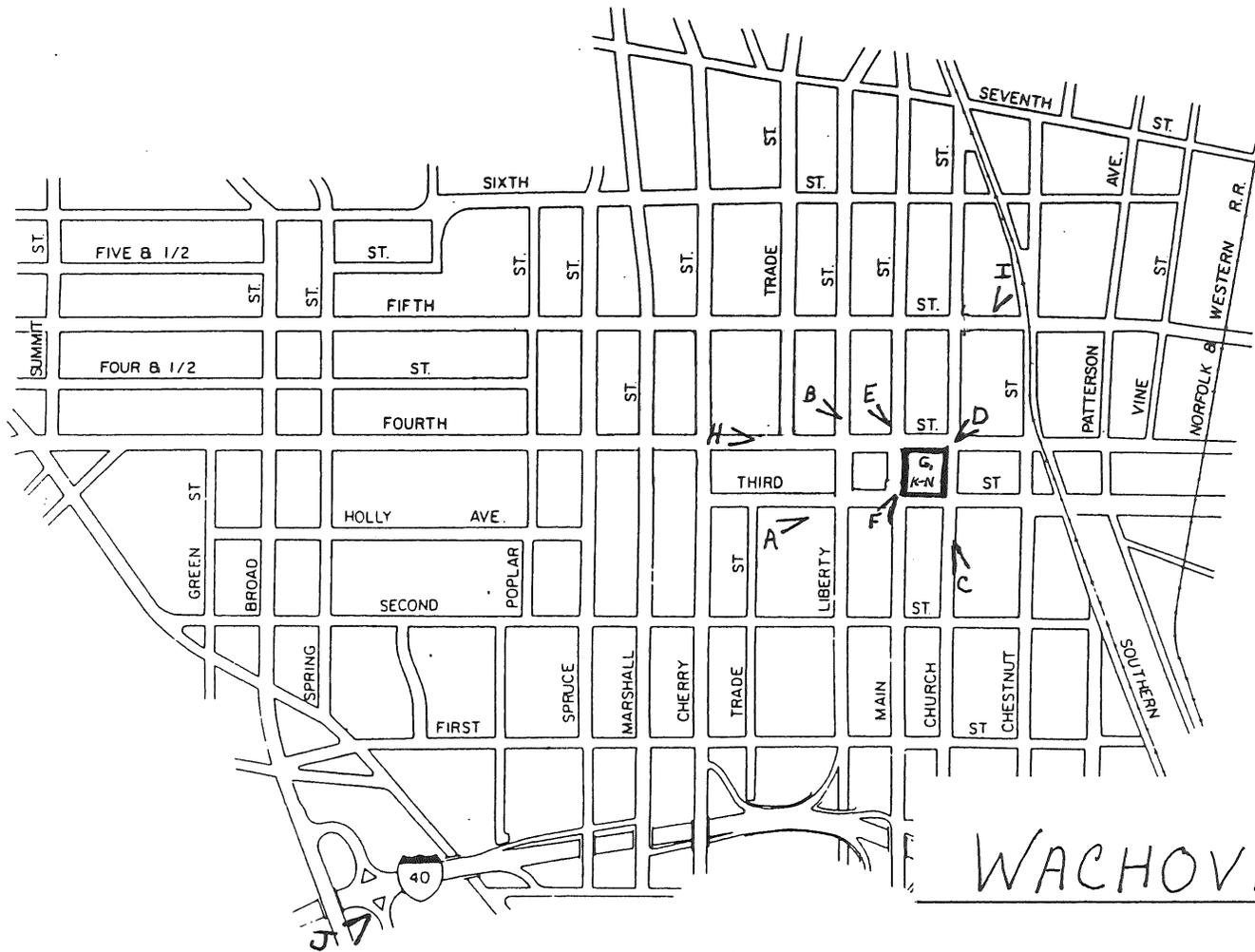
Wachovia Building  
Forsyth County, North Carolina

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) Wachovia Building
- 2) Forsyth County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) August 2000
- 5) State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 6-7) A: Overall with context from Third St., view to NE  
B: Main and Fourth St. elevations, view to SE  
C: Third and Church St. elevations, view to NW  
D: Base of Church and Fourth St. elevations, view to SW  
E: Base of Main and Fourth St. elevations, view to SE  
F: Main Street entrance plaza, view to NE  
G: Observation deck, 27<sup>th</sup> floor, view to N  
H: Fourth St. context, view to E  
I: Rear context from Fifth Street, view to SW  
J: Cityscape with Wachovia Bank at center, view to NE  
K: Office lobby, view to SW  
L: Elevators in office lobby, view to E  
M: Office, 26<sup>th</sup> floor, view to NW  
N: Office waiting room, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, view to W



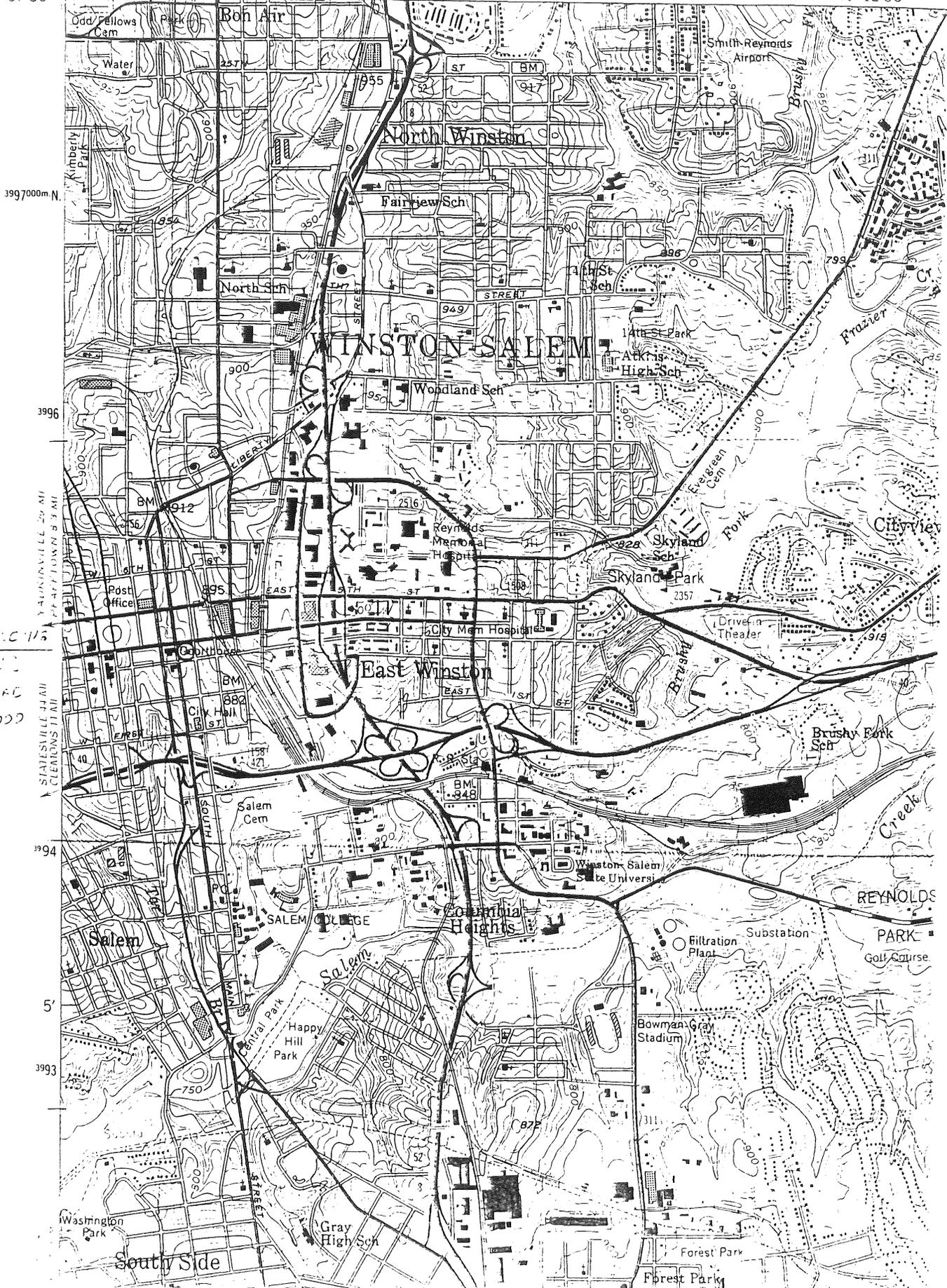
# WACHOVIA BUILDING

WINSTON-SALEM, FORSYTH COUNTY, NC

A > PHOTO ID + VANTAGE POINT  
 (KEYED TO NOMINATION PHOTO LIST)  
 PHOTOS G AND K-N ARE IN BUILDING.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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*MARIONA BURCH*  
 FOR THE U.S. G.S.  
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