

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Hotel Charlotte

AND/OR COMMON

Queen Charlotte Hotel

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

327 West Trade Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Mecklenburg

CODE

119

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
___DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	___OCCUPIED	___AGRICULTURE	___MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	___PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	___COMMERCIAL	___PARK
___STRUCTURE	___BOTH	___WORK IN PROGRESS	___EDUCATIONAL	___PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	___ENTERTAINMENT	___RELIGIOUS
___OBJECT	___IN PROCESS	___YES: RESTRICTED	___GOVERNMENT	___SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	___YES: UNRESTRICTED	___INDUSTRIAL	___TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	___MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Incoalco, Inc. (Mr. Jerome T. Rodgers, President)

STREET & NUMBER

2 Canterbury Road

CITY, TOWN

Pittsburgh

STATE

Pennsylvania 15202

___ VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mecklenburg County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE An Inventory Of Older Buildings In Mecklenburg County And Charlotte For
The Historic Properties Commission.

DATE

Summer, 1975

___FEDERAL ___STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Offices of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Cameron-Brown Building, South McDowell Street

STATE

North Carolina

Charlotte

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hotel Charlotte, 327 West Trade Street, rises thirteen stories at the intersection of Trade and Poplar Streets in downtown Charlotte. Designed by architect William Stoddart, contracted by J. A. Jones Construction Company, and built as a luxury hostelry by citizen subscription, it opened in March, 1924, with 250 rooms and quickly became one of the city's leading social centers. The hotel, which subsequently was named the Queen Charlotte Hotel and then the White House Inn, today remains as one of the few hallmarks that attest to Charlotte's history and building growth in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The hotel is supported by a steel frame which is sheathed with sections of gray granite and a buff colored brick. Ornamentation is restricted to the lower and attic sections of the building. The Trade Street facade (north) bears the major entrance and is articulated by a restrained and elegant use of classical detailing. Concrete brick facing has been applied over the original masonry of the ground floor. The doorway, located on the right side of the facade, has likewise been altered from its original state.

The piano nobile, extending two floors, is articulated by rusticated stone masonry pierced by five arched windows which open onto a large ballroom. Each window, of wood frame set into the granite, is divided by a vertical, inner arched section and a wooden spandrel. These divide the window into a central four mullioned section flanked on either side by single lights; the upper section is partitioned into a double portioned fan light. The windows are further delineated by bold voussoirs with scroll keystone. The rusticated granite between each window bay is decorated by rectangular plaques of fired terracotta. These ornamental polychrome plaques contain a tripod base (colored burnt gold) upon which rest a lion's head (lead colored), urns (burnt gold), festoons (green), and fruit (purple, green, and earthenware). Above the panels are granite shields bearing a tree containing a hornet's nest and the date "1775"--references to early Charlotte history--and framed by ribboned torches. The frieze contains running glyphs which are broken at intervals over the windows and shields by cow skulls and stylized floral swags respectively. The cornice, functioning as a belt course to divide the piano nobile from the first floor of guest rooms, is delineated by dainty acanthus leaves and above that by a dentil course.

The first story of bedrooms is characterized by a mixed use of building materials; thus, the shift from the use of stone to brick gives a more subtle transition. This floor contains singly grouped windows on each end; these frame three sets of paired windows. Each of these groups are bound by geometrically patterned brickwork set into the stone. Immediately above this story lies a second stone belt course, its lower section articulated by egg and dart design and the upper by a band of fine incised decoration.

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CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

This string course marks the transition of the facade from ornamentation to simple, unadorned surfaces and from the use of stone to a buff colored brick laid in Flemish bond. The sole decoration of this seven-story middle section are the large, highly ornamental cartouches, each of which also bears the tree with hornet's nest and the year "1775". The rest of the section is punctuated at regular intervals by single paneled, double hung windows with brick lintels; these are grouped into three bays of paired windows in the middle section. The outer-most section on either end of the facade is pierced by single windows. A rectilinear sign bearing the name "White House Inn" is attached to the north-east side of this facade.

The "penthouse" or upper-most section of the facade is marked by a blending of stone ornamentation and brick. A stone string-course divides this section from the lower one. This division contains two large windows on either end which are framed by projecting balustrades, decorative lintels, and segmental arches broken by cartouches and held by ornamental brackets. These windows frame three sets of paired windows which bear non-projecting balustrades and decorative lintels; these divide the windows into a larger, rectangular section and an upper, smaller section. Paneled brick work characterizes the areas in-between the fenestration. Above a stone belt course lie stone rosettes. The cornice contains courses of dentils, egg and dart.

The west facade of the building (Poplar Street side) contains an auxiliary entrance which enters directly to the lobby by means of an outer set of four stone steps and an interior flight of eleven marble steps. Although this facade is characterized by ornamentation and design similar to that found on the north side, the sloping grade of the lot to the south required some modification of the design. A concrete brick veneer has again been applied to the ground and basement floors of the facade. The corner of the two facades is emphasized by an indentation of the brickwork; the cornices and belt courses continue from the West Trade Street side to the Poplar Street facade. The ballroom, which extends along the west side, has three tall, arched windows.

Over the entrance, five rectangular windows pierce the granite masonry: the central window is flanked on either side by two lions' heads whose mouths once held rods to support a canopy over the entry. These windows are capped by remnants of voussoirs with keystone. Decorative medallions and garland panels define the area between these windows and five sets of unadorned double windows positioned directly above. Three rectangular, double partitioned windows pierce the south-most section of the facade. A frieze, which bears glyphs punctuated at intervals with cow skulls and on each end with a decorative floral panel, helps to unify the design of this section.

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CONTINUATION SHEET DESCRIPTION . ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

The upper sections of this facade closely resemble that of West Trade Street with the exception that the Poplar Street facade has been extended to accomodate nine sets of paired windows flanked by single windows. The facade again contains a section marked by the blending of materials and ornamentation of geometric design and bounded by two horizontal stone belt courses bearing acanthus and egg and dart molding. The next section, containing seven stories, is of brick punctuated with sets of windows, similar in arrangement to the fenestration of the West Trade Street facade. A sign bearing the words "White House Inn" is attached to the northwest corner. The final upper-most section of this facade is a repetition and extension of the design of the north facade.

The southern-most sections of the side above the second stone belt course is a later addition. The original plan appears to have consisted of a basic block on which an "L" shaped section containing the guest rooms was superimposed. The southwest section was added in the late 1930s over the pre-existing base and therefore altered the "L" into a "U" shape. The 1924 plan contained approximately twenty-seven guest rooms on each of the floors devoted to bedrooms; the addition increased the number of rooms to about 400.

The south facade of the Hotel Charlotte, not a major or "showy" side, bears no ornamentation; its brick wall is punctuated by series of uniformly spaced fenestrations. The stone cornices and string courses do extend partially from the Poplar Street facade onto the south side, providing some continuity and blending of the two facades. This side bears a fire escape; the convention center with garage, built in 1966, also abuts onto this side.

The east side contains the "U" shaped court and is entirely of red brick. This area is primarily devoted to services and maintenance.

Ornamentation and fine workmanship within the building are largely confined to the lobby. The lobby is entered on the west side by a flight of marble stairs. Sections of the walls are also sheathed in a black veined white marble. The lobby ceiling has large exposed beams which are supported by massive pink marble columns. The guest rooms have little noteworthy architectural ornamentation with the exception of marble thresholds and unadorned molding running the course of the rooms.

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE . ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

On St. Patrick's Day in 1920 the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce announced a plan to raise one million dollars from the local business community. Robert Lassiter, president of the Chamber, noted that people were walking the streets at night or sleeping in lobbies because of the lack of hotel rooms. Other Charlotte businessmen indicated that they had to take visiting salesmen into their homes and that Charlotte's poor hotel facilities were becoming a by-word across the state.¹ It was obvious that Charlotte businessmen must address the problem if Charlotte was to prosper and grow as a business center.

The campaign to interest prominent businessmen limped along during the last weeks of March and into early April of 1920. Leaders who joined Robert Lassiter in the early campaign were Clarence O. Kuester, Edward Dilworth Latta, Julian H. Little (president of Independence Trust and builder of the Independence Building) and Word H. Wood (president of American Trust). In order to add stimulus to the campaign and widen their appeal, the leaders organized a banquet of seventy-five leading businessmen. These men resolved to plan and build a hotel costing not less than one million dollars. At this April 8th banquet, business leaders C. C. Coddington, A. J. Draper, and J. H. Cutter joined Latta and Lassiter subscribing \$25,000 each.²

During the week that followed the banquet, Charlotteans were continually reminded of the benefits to be derived from the completion of this hotel. Word H. Wood said

the hotel is the foremost public utility of any city.
It is the organized host to the city's visitors. A
city without an up-to-date hotel is like a private
house without a spare or extra room for company. . .
With an up-to-date hotel, a city can think of inviting
outside capital. Until then its efforts are usually
wasted.³

It was obvious that this hotel was, in the minds of Charlotte's economic leadership, the key to future growth and development. But the leadership realized the need for broad based support. T. T. Allison, vice-president and manager of the Chamber of Commerce, stated:

It is now an established fact that the hotel will not
be built by any special group or alignment of men or
interests but that it will be a purely civic proposition
with every loyal citizen doing his individual duty. The
success of the proposition rests on the successful placing
of the burden on the shoulders of a large number of people.⁴

Regular reports were issued informing the people of the amount subscribed--April 21, \$542,700; April 23, \$617,200; April 25, \$780,000. A front page headline in the

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Charlotte Observer on April 25, 1920, announced "Million Dollar Hotel Assured For Charlotte." While the final goal was one million dollars the backers had agreed they would go forward with plans if subscriptions reached \$750,000. Speakers at a Saturday night mass meeting on April 24th chided a certain element of the city on its lack of city pride and questioned "What is the matter with Charlotte?" All speakers declared Charlotte to be the center of a trading territory unequaled in the South.⁵

The campaign for the million dollar goal continued while organization and plans for the hotel moved forward. A charter creating the Citizens Hotel Company was issued on April 30, 1920.⁶ The charter listed E. D. Latta as the largest shareholder with 500 shares worth \$100 each.

The post-war depression finally caught up with Charlotte causing a lull in the drive to build Charlotte's new hotel. It was more than a year later when the directors of the Citizens Hotel Company announced that the yet to be built hotel would be leased by a group of Greensboro men.⁷ Another six months passed before preliminary plans for the hotel were announced. The directors indicated that by delaying the start of construction, they had saved the subscribers money. They also indicated they were about to announce the appointment of an architect to draw plans for what promised to be the largest and tallest building in Charlotte. Subscribers were informed that a site had been purchased on the southeast corner of the intersection of West Trade and South Poplar.⁸ There was no indication at this time that the site choice was to become the cause of a major split in the project's leadership.

William L. Stoddart was chosen to design the new hotel. His selection has been based on his reputation as a noted hotel architect of New York City who was "recognized as one of the leading hotel architects in America"⁹ and by the fact he had designed several of the hotels run by the lessees.¹⁰

Newspaper reports concerning the shape and size of the structure were constantly changing. Starting with a fourteen story structure, it was later announced as twelve stories with 278 rooms. The room count was revised down to 250. Estimates of completion varied as much as the descriptions.¹¹

Construction finally began in the late summer of 1922. J. A. Jones was given the construction contract to build the hotel for \$713,480. The land had cost \$187,500. Another local company, Southern Engineering, was to handle the engineering. The building was described as a steel frame structure of twelve stories with twenty-seven rooms per floor. The base was to be of polished granite and the first two stories of terra cotta. The two street sides were to be faced with red tapestry brick.¹²

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

As construction was well underway, a major legal controversy surfaced. The first hint of a problem was a news story in the Charlotte Observer, March 2, 1923, which indicated that Edward Dilworth Latta had placed his home on sale and invested money outside Charlotte for the first time. The March 4th issue of the Observer shed light on the controversy. Mr. Latta was being sued for \$50,000 by the Citizens Hotel Company for failure to meet his subscription obligation. Evidently attempts had been made to settle the issue without litigation but Latta refused.¹³ The case occupied nine days of court time and was heard before a jury. Latta's testimony clearly outlined the problem. He had refused to pay his subscription for two reasons. One, he had offered to sell to the company a site on South Tryon Street which he owned and the directors chose not to purchase it. Secondly, most of his recommendations for membership on the Board of Directors had been ignored. While these appear to be the real reasons, Latta's legal arguments involved the timing of the lease and collection of the payment. He contended that the stock offer was not binding until the lease had been signed to run the hotel. He also contended that he had not seen the lease previous to the purchase of the Trade Street land and that he had not refused to pay until he learned of the land transaction. Testimony against Latta indicated he was well aware of the lease prior to the purchase of the hotel site. The court ruled in favor of the Citizens Hotel Company and demanded Latta pay \$5,000 plus interest.¹⁴ While the Citizens Hotel Company won the battle, they lost the war. E. D. Latta sold his Charlotte property and left town--thus, Charlotte lost one of its most important backers and developers. Perhaps Charlotte's economy had reached a level at which the interests of one man could not dictate the direction any longer.

The hotel project was not slowed by Latta's withdrawal. Construction continued and the Hotel Charlotte was used as a symbol of Charlotte's growth in the 1920s. While the hotel was under construction there was a real boom in downtown construction. A new Ivey's store was announced, Efirid's Department Store was constructing a large addition (now Belk's), plans for the Johnston Building, designed by William Stoddart, were announced, and the Charlotte Women's Club presented plans for an impressive edifice to be built on the edge of downtown. The hotel project was already attracting "outside capital" as Word H. Wood had promised.¹⁵ Another indicator of Charlotte's economic growth and its relation to the hotel project was the offer which the original lessees received. They were offered a bonus of \$75,000 for the lease of the new hotel from an unidentified man who considered it a good investment because "of the great possibilities of expansion and growth which Charlotte possesses."¹⁶

The Robinson-Foor syndicate of Greensboro, who owned the lease, had started to unofficially use the name Hotel Charlotte on their stationery late in 1923. That became the name the hotel was identified by until December 23, 1961, when it became the Queen Charlotte Hotel and later on October 7, 1966, became the White House Inn.

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The Hotel Charlotte originally was to open in May of 1923. The date was moved back to June, November, December, January of 1924, February and finally March 10, 1924. The opening was a gala occasion involving a banquet for the 600 stockholders followed by a dance and an open house. The Charlotte Observer summed it up. "Marking a new step of progress in Charlotte and giving the city the first shove across the threshold into the era of cooperative civic enterprises, the new Hotel Charlotte was formally opened."¹⁷

The Citizens Hotel Company under the leadership of Julian H. Little, J. H. Cutter, and John C. Meyers continued to own the hotel until 1961. During the late 1930s 150 rooms were added making it a 400 room hotel, the largest in the Carolinas.¹⁸ Despite the addition of a much needed convention center adjoining the hotel, the 1960s brought a decline in business. Motels and a new civic center sealed the fate. On December 31, 1973, the Hotel Charlotte, known at the time as the White House Inn, closed its doors.

The hotel's guest list: ---Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Richard M. Nixon; sports figures, Jack Dempsey and Babe Ruth; politicians, Jim Farley, Huey Long, and John Nance Garner; musical stars, Guy Lombardo, Lily Pons, and Tommy Dorsey--- support the claim that it was Charlotte's finest.

H. P. Patterson, president of the Charlotte Merchant's Association, summarized it best in April of 1920:

The social, political and business life of any progressive community center around its finest hotel. In the ballroom are held the special functions; around the banquet table men meet and get to know each other better, smoothing out their differences; in the meeting rooms groups of all shades of opinions gather and crystalize their ideas into action--all for the city's improvement and advancement.¹⁹

The Hotel Charlotte was, indeed, an important factor in the city's economic rise. It became a rallying point for businessmen of the 1920s, the same men who laid the foundation for Charlotte's phenomenal growth of the last half of the century. The 600 or so citizens put their money on the line as insurance for Charlotte's future in 1920. Their vision as well as their money paid good dividends. The city's growing pains are symbolized in the struggle with Mr. Latta and his withdrawal from Charlotte. The building is a visual historic reminder of Charlotte's emergence as a significant New South city, as well as a fine architectural example of the work of William Stoddart.

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FOOTNOTES

¹The Charlotte Observer, March 27, 1920, p. 1.

²Ibid., April 9, 1920, p. 14.

³Ibid., April 16, 1920, p. 7.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., April 25, 1920, p.1.

⁶Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, Corporate Charters, Book 6, p. 151.

⁷Charlotte Observer, June 8, 1921, p. 5.

⁸Ibid., January 6, 1922, p. 5.

⁹Ibid., February 1, 1922, p. 4; and Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), p. 575.

¹⁰The Charlotte Observer, February 1, 1922, p. 4.

¹¹Ibid., March 5, 1922, p. 1; April 27, 1922, p. 4; May 19, 1922, p. 4; and July 16, 1922, p. 1.

¹²Ibid., July 16, 1922, p. 1.

¹³Ibid., March 6, 1923, p. 5.

¹⁴Ibid., March 8, 1923, p. 5; March 9, p. 21; March 10, p. 1; March 13, pp.1,2; March 14, p. 1; March 17, pp. 1, 2; and March 18, p. 1.

¹⁵Ibid., August 12, 1923, Section 6, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid., November 8, 1923, p. 2.

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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¹⁷ Ibid., March 11, 1924, p. 4.

¹⁸ See Charlotte City Directories during the years 1935 to 1944.

¹⁹ The Charlotte Observer, April 16, 1920, p. 7.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

An Inventory of Buildings In Mecklenburg County and Charlotte For The Historic Properties Commission located in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission Office in Cameron-Brown Building on South McDowell Street, Charlotte.

Charlotte City Directory (1925, p. 501); (1936, p. 316); 1941, p. 41); (1950, p. 103.).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one lot occupied by hotel

UTM REFERENCES Charlotte East Quadrangle Scale 1:24000

A	1 7	5 1 4 0 6 0	3 8 9 8 2 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached plat map labeled Appendix B

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dr. Edward S. Perzel, Professor of History, History Department

ORGANIZATION University of North Carolina Charlotte

DATE

Charlotte, North Carolina 28233

April 15, 1979

STREET & NUMBER FOR: Survey and Planning Branch

TELEPHONE

N. C. Division of Archives & History.....919-733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

109 East Jones Street

STATE

Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

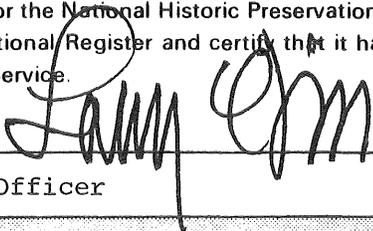
NATIONAL

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 May 10, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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The Charlotte News and Observer Clipping File (Microfilm).

The Charlotte Observer, various editions in the 1920s, see footnotes.

Legette Blythe and Charles R. Brockman, Hornets' Nest. The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (McNally of Charlotte, 1961), p. 297.

Manuscript Folders in the Carolina Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library.

Records of the Building Inspection Department of the City of Charlotte (Microfilm, Roll #49).

Mecklenburg County Records--Deeds, Tax Records, Corporate Charters--Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Charlotte, North Carolina.

4854 N SW
(PAW CREEK)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

80°52'30"
35°15'

HOMESTEAD 3.4 MI.

513000m E

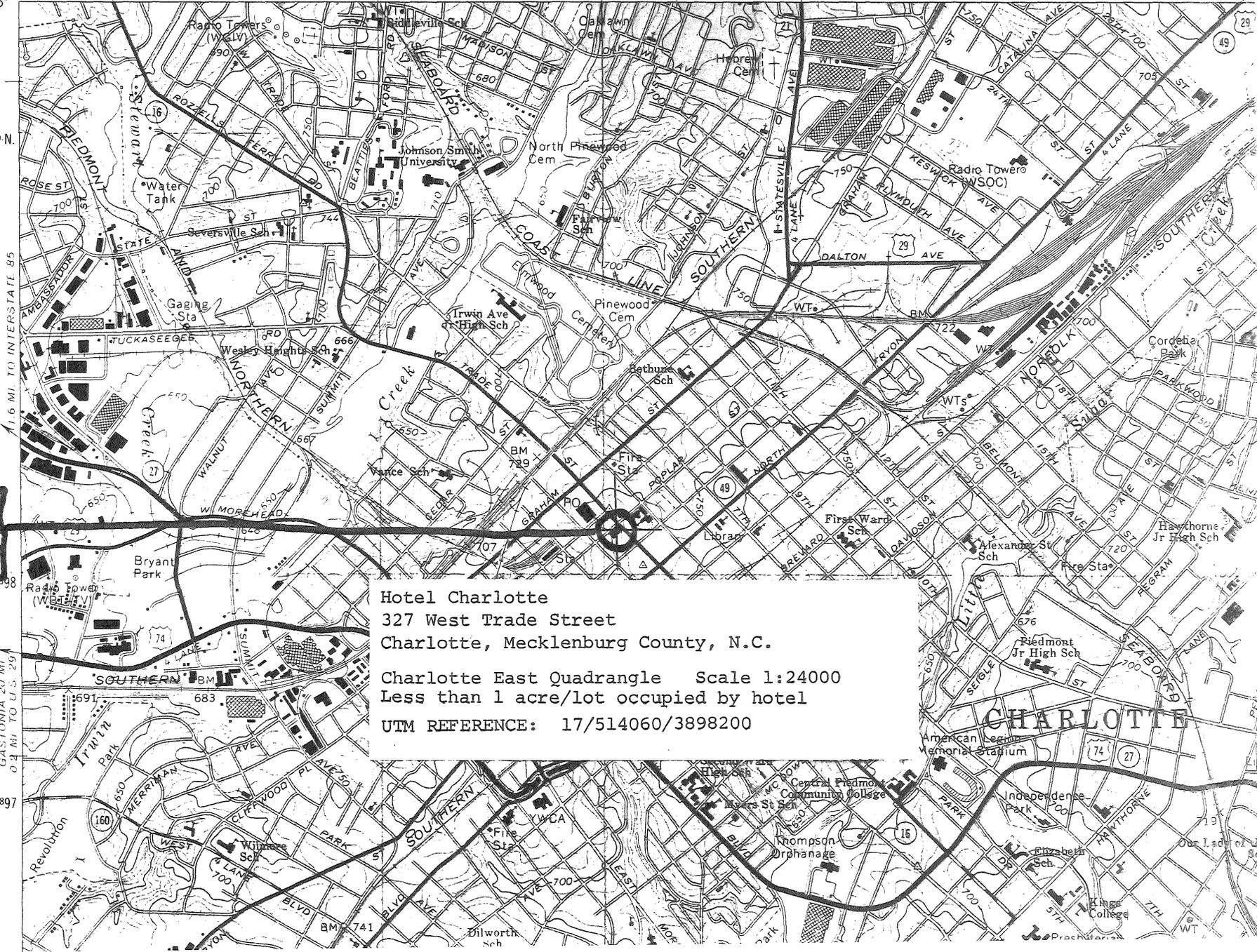
514

STATESVILLE 40 MI.
1.8 MI. TO INTERSTATE 85

515 50'

516 4 MI. TO INTERSTATE 85
CONCORD 18 MI.

3900000m N



**HOTEL
C CHARLOTTE**

Hotel Charlotte
327 West Trade Street
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Charlotte East Quadrangle Scale 1:24000
Less than 1 acre/lot occupied by hotel
UTM REFERENCE: 17/514060/3898200

GASTONIA 20 MI
0.2 MI TO U.S. 29

3897

CHARLOTTE

