

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Latta Arcade
AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
320 South Tryon Street
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte
STATE
North Carolina
VICINITY OF

CODE
37
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
9th
COUNTY
Mecklenburg
CODE
119
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Realty Co.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
F. J. H. Realty Company
STREET & NUMBER
140 Brevard Court
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte
VICINITY OF

STATE
North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Mecklenburg County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte
STATE
North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Latta Arcade, designed by William H. Peeps and built in 1914, is a handsome two-story commercial building with a first-floor pedestrian passage which serves as an inter-block artery linking two parallel city streets. Sited along the most densely developed commercial street in Charlotte, the state's largest city, the Arcade is important both as an innovative contribution to human-scaled urban design and as a rather sophisticated example of Art Deco interior design. Adjoining the rear (west) of the building at ground level is the Brevard Courtyard, which acts as an extension of the first floor Arcade thoroughfare. The Courtyard was built sporadically yet forms a harmonious unit with the Arcade since it consists entirely of one-story brick offices and retail shops facing a brick open-air pedestrian walkway. The Arcade and Courtyard together function as a vital urban amenity.

The Latta Arcade is a masonry structure, although its brick walls are hidden by adjoining buildings, and a smoked glass curtain wall, supported by marbleized piers, fully screens the main (east) facade. Behind the curtain wall, added during the 1969 renovation by Wolf Associates, Architects, the brick facade with its corbeled cornice remains intact.

The Arcade is divided into two blocks. The front block is covered by a gable roof which rises into an asymmetrical parapet along both north and south sides. The eastern slope of the roof is sheathed with muted green Spanish tiles and forms a slight overhang which is underlined by a row of decorative modillions. The rear block is covered by a tripartite roof mass consisting of two pent roofs flanking and buttressing the taller center gable roof which shelters the pedestrian walkway on the ground floor below. The gable is sheathed with translucent corrugated yellow-tinted fiber glass and acts as a gigantic skylight channeling light downward to flood the atrium-like area of pedestrian thoroughfare.

The front block, a trapezoid measuring 99 feet wide, 84 feet deep on the north and 76 feet deep on the south, is designed much like any commercial office building of the period. The South Tryon Street (main) entrance is recessed and framed by flush marble-faced jambs which lead to the new double leaf plate glass door with transom and unbroken sidelights framed by brushed aluminum. The doors open onto a center hall with a tile floor and marble-faced plastered walls. Opening off either side of the long hall is office space for two major firms, a bank and a retail outlet. The interior of both banking and shopping concerns ascends to a full two-story height.

Located slightly off-center in the southeastern quadrant of the front block is an imposing staircase which joins the two floors. The stair design is rather elaborate, consisting of a lower flight running east-to-west leading to a transverse landing from which springs both a second east-to-west flight and a west-to-east flight, thus providing access to both the eastern office block and the principal western one. The stair balustrade consists of slender rectangular-in-section cast-iron balusters with small horizontal tie-beams connecting each baluster at top and bottom, resulting in a lattice-like effect along the diagonal passages of each flight. A marble wainscot of mottled green, trimmed with brown, runs along the stair and the entire eastern end of the second floor.

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Originally the second story of the front block housed the offices of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company (4 Cs), the huge conglomerate presided over by Edward Dilworth Latta, financier and developer for whom the Arcade was built. Located in the southeastern corner is the handsome entrance to the former Latta office, a large single leaf Philippine mahogany door with fifteen boldly raised panels framed by sidelights and surmounted by a casement transom with ornate leaden tracery.

The western block of the Arcade is also a trapezoid and measures 104 feet deep on the south, 100 feet deep on the north, 87 feet wide on the east, and 88 feet deep on the west. It is this area that gives the building its remarkable character, in which the original structural and decorative elements are enhanced by a sophisticated and sensitive contemporary refurbishing. The color scheme throughout is an impeccably tasteful combination of grays, black, and white with firm names and office numbers standing out in bold block-letter graphics. Uniform globe-shaped lights rhythmically mark the bays.

The interior of the first floor west block is cut in half by the eight-bay-long walkway, the Arcade proper of the building. Offices and retail shops line its perimeters. The easternmost bay of the Arcade is flanked by office fronts recessed in a demi-hexagonal arrangement on both sides. The shop and office fronts which flank either side of the Arcade consist of plate glass curtains divided into severely rectilinear doors, show windows, and transoms. Engaged pillars mark every bay and support a simple frieze ornamented with three rectangular wooden dentils above each pillar.

Above this frieze is a wooden balustrade which rims the large rectangular well of the upper level. The well, 92 feet long and 12 feet wide, permits the light from the glazed roof to stream down upon the Arcade while emphasizing the sense of open planning which pervades the building. The balustrade is composed of rectangular balusters, a rectangular handrail, and square-in-section posts with lateral bracing.

Set back from the well is the upper tier of office space with fronts of plate glass windows resting on flat-paneled aprons which alternate with full-length plate glass doors. Pilasters are located at each bay. Each pilaster is topped with a geometric cap projecting from a blind entablature which stretches the length of the Arcade. Above the entablature runs a broad decorative frieze divided into eight bays. Each bay features a bold central diamond-shaped panel with a recessed plastered center. Flanking the center diamond are rectangles broken into chevrons along their inner sides to conform to the contours of the diamond. All of the frieze paneling consists of wooden molding strips applied to the face of the frieze. Above the frieze stretches a clerestory divided into three plate glass rectangular windows per bay.

At the next to last bay of the western end of the upper level is a partition which runs from the roof ridge line to the level of the pilaster caps. In bold relief in the center of the eastern side of the partition (visible from the Arcade below) is a broad trabeated design, truncated and featuring splayed feet. A roundel medallion, framed by a concave base, surmounts the lintel. Beneath this, in the rear bay of the outer wall,

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are three large plate glass windows. The center rear bay of the wall contains a segmental-arched window with a curving, bisected transom and sidelights ornamented with stained glass Art Nouveau designs. Each flanking bay of the rear wall contains a window surmounted by a rectangular Art Nouveau designed transom.

The roof is supported by seven evenly spaced exposed metal fan trusses. Arched wind-braces reinforce the lateral ends of each truss tie-beam. Thin metal rafters, running from the ridge line to the wall plates, as well as larger metal purlins, running at right angles to the rafters, are also exposed.

The Wolf Associates renovation only slightly altered the original core of the Arcade; all additions, such as the lighting fixtures and the new synthetic roofing (for safety reasons the glass of the original had to be abandoned) are in keeping with the Peeps design.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Urban planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Built 1914; 1969 Renovation/
Restoration BUILDER/ARCHITECT William H. Peeps

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Latta Arcade was designed by William H. Peeps and built in 1914 for the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, the real estate development firm of Charlotte entrepreneur Edward Dilworth Latta, who did much to shape Charlotte's urban development in the twentieth century. One of two arcades in the state, it is a handsome, rather sophisticated example of Art Deco interior design. Described when it was built as "a marvel of beauty and of elegance," the Arcade has been enhanced by its sensitive rehabilitation in 1969 by Wolf Associates, Limited.

Edward D. Latta was born in Pendleton, South Carolina, May 4, 1851, to Mr. and Mrs. James T. Latta. He was educated at Pennington Seminary in New Jersey and at Princeton University. Arriving in Charlotte in the fall of 1875, he entered the retail dry goods business. By 1878 he was engaged in the clothing business under the firm name of E. D. Latta & Bro.

Latta is believed to have entered the real estate business "on a large scale" in 1890, when he and several other prominent Charlotte citizens formed the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, with the avowed purpose of purchasing, improving, and selling land in or near Charlotte. The "Four Cs" Company (as it soon became known) purchased about 1,000 acres of land lying south of the town and quickly developed it into a pleasant middle-class residential neighborhood known as Dilworth. This section was Charlotte's first suburb. The company also purchased one of Charlotte's early horsecar lines, which it later converted to an electric streetcar line. This holding, along with a water works, gas mains, and an electric power system, was later sold to James B. Duke, son of tobacco baron Washington Duke, Charlotte industrialist, and founder of the Duke Power Company.

About 1910 E. D. Latta turned his energies to the acquisition of large quantities of real estate along and near Charlotte's Tryon Street. He is said to have paid about \$400,000 for this realty, which consisted chiefly of "oldtime residence properties." He then initiated a massive program of office building construction, a novel concept for pre-World War I Charlotte. Latta's ambitious efforts created a building boom which helped to convert Charlotte "from a cross-roads town into a city of office buildings, factories and handsome suburbs. . . ." The Latta Arcade was one of these efforts, and it is said to have been Latta's favorite achievement.

The land upon which the Arcade building was erected was purchased by Latta in January, 1911, from Mrs. Mary S. Brevard, a widow, for \$44,000. This lot, lying on the west side of South Tryon Street between Second and Third streets, measured 100 feet wide by 161 feet deep. Plans for the building were drawn by William H. Peeps, a prominent Charlotte architect.

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Peeps (1868-1950), a native of England, came to Charlotte in 1905 from Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he had been a furniture designer. He resided in Charlotte for the remainder of his lifetime, where he designed the original J. B. Ivey & Company Department Store, the clubhouse of the Myers Park Club, and an orthopedic hospital at Gastonia.

The building contractor for the Latta Arcade was T. L. Caton, who in January, 1914, agreed to complete the structure within eight months for the price of \$40,616.20. His bid was the lowest of ten submitted. The contract called for the construction of six stores fronting on Tryon Street, with an arcade at the rear extending through the entire city block. Sixteen stores were to front on this arcade. "It is planned," reported the Charlotte Daily Observer, "to make this a business block where desirable stands can be secured on reasonable terms. They will be large enough but not too large, thereby enabling small establishments to start out in business with selected stocks." (The newspaper apparently viewed the Arcade as a potential center for various retail establishments rather than as an office complex, which it turned out to be.)

When the Latta Arcade was opened to tenants in January, 1915, the Observer--noting that the structure was "a departure in all particulars from the usual style of office buildings . . ."--praised its appearance, especially its expansive interior. "In material," boasted the paper,

the building is unapproached by any of its kind in this community. It is a marvel of beauty and of elegance. The ornate quarters of steel brokers in Pittsburg or Wall Street geniuses in New York have little to outdo the splendor of the Latta Arcade in physical appearance. Marble stairs and railings and walls strike the eye as one enters from the front and a complete view of finely-worked wood and marble and decorative effects extend in panoramic fashion before the gaze of a visitor. For intensive beauty the Arcade is pre-eminent among office edifices of the city and what it lacks in exterior pretensions as to magnitude of height is more than made up for by the lavishness of its inside splendor.

The newspaper also noted that E. B. Latta's Four Cs Company occupied the entire south end of the second-floor offices. (Another early tenant was the building's designer, architect W. H. Peeps.) Wade H. Harris, a prominent Charlotte newspaper editor, later noted that the Latta Arcade "blazed the way to a profitable and desirable form of utilization of ground space." After the Arcade building was completed, E. D. Latta continued to undertake ambitious construction and development projects throughout Charlotte. His Four Cs Company was characterized as "the lever that set Charlotte moving."

In August, 1917, Latta purchased two small tracts adjoining the Arcade building. These were later made into a courtyard and incorporated into the overall plan of the Latta Arcade. Described as "an arcade without the roof," the Brevard Courtyard extended from the rear of the Arcade building entirely through the city block to Church Street. Although Latta purchased the land upon which the Courtyard was later created, it is doubtful that he was directly responsible for it. (Editor Wade Harris credited the

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concept of the Brevard Courtyard to Albert Brown, probably another Charlotte real estate developer.)

Illness eventually forced E. D. Latta to take a less active role in the activities of the Four Cs Company. About 1923 he moved to Asheville, where he began acquiring prime real estate in the heart of the town. (That same year he conveyed the Latta Arcade to his son E. D. Latta, Jr.) Latta died in Asheville June 14, 1925, at the age of seventy-four. He is said to have been one of North Carolina's wealthiest men, owning at the time of his death twenty or thirty buildings in Charlotte and a considerable amount of real property in Asheville.

The Latta Arcade, after years of neglect, was renovated in 1969 by its then owner, the F. J. Heath Realty Company of Charlotte. The architects who supervised this renovation, Wolf Associates, Ltd., of Charlotte, purposely approached their task "with a conscious amount of delicacy." The basic structure of the Arcade was left unchanged and the renovation that was performed violated little of the structure's integrity. The owners, architects, and contractors received the 1973 "Historic Building Preservation and Restoration Award" from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Today both the Latta Arcade and the Brevard Courtyard are busy retail and office centers, benefitting from an "almost constant flow of pedestrian traffic." They are living reminders of the era of Charlotte's "awakening" as a center of commerce in the Carolinas.

¹"LATTA ARCADE NOW OPENED FOR TENANTS," Charlotte Daily Observer, January 4, 1914, p. 6.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Abbott, F. C. Fifty Years in Charlotte Real Estate, 1897-1947. Charlotte: By the Author, n.d.

Branson, L., ed. The North Carolina Business Directory, 1877-1878. Raleigh: L. Branson, Fifth Edition, 1878.

Charlotte Daily Observer. "LATTA" (editorial), January 22, 1915, p. 4; "LATTA ARCADE NOW OPENED FOR TENANTS," January 16, 1915, p. 6; "MR. T. L. CATON LANDS ARCADE CONTRACT," January 4, 1914.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

State Plane Coordinate System 17/441,572/165,242

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

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description

by Mary Alice Hinson, consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Archives and History

27 August 1975

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

919/829-7862

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina

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 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 27 August 1975

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

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- Charlotte Daily Observer. "BUILDER OF A CITY" (editorial), July 15, 1925; "REMAINS OF E. D. LATTA WILL BE BROUGHT TO CHARLOTTE TODAY," July 15, 1925; "WILLIAM PEEPS IS DEAD AT 82," September 11, 1950.
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UNITED STATES
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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

52'30" HOMESTEAD 3.4 MI. 513 1/2 MI. E. 514 1.8 MI. TO INTERSTATE 85 515 50' 516 4



Latta Arcade
Charlotte
North Carolina
UTM Reference:
17/514020/3897860

