

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 Liddell-McNinch House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 511 North Church Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte

— VICINITY OF

9th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Mecklenburg

CODE

119

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME S. S. McNinch Heirs (Miss Mattie McNinch and John K. Slear)

STREET & NUMBER

511 North Church Street

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte

— VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina 28202

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mecklenburg County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

West Trade Street

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

Summer 1975

— FEDERAL — STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina 27611

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 Liddell-McNinch House, located in Charlotte's oldest surviving downtown residential neighborhood, is a large Queen Anne and Shingle Style house, a sensitive combination of tradition, whimsy, and sensible period compositional principles. The house is sited in a thickly planted lot featuring flowering plants, shrubs, evergreens, and tall deciduous trees. A highly complex roofline of projections, gables, porches, and spreading eaves, and wall surfaces of weatherboards, shingles, broken planes, swells, and cavities form an irregular and highly picturesque silhouette, an intricate agglutination of rich textures, patterned materials, and unrelieved asymmetry.

The two-and-one-half story frame structure, a long narrow house with a short end facing the street, rests on a brick foundation. Beaded weatherboards cover the first floor, muted dark green wooden shingles the second, with banks of rectilinear and imbricated slate shingles covering the roof. The shingles of the second floor kick out slightly where they join the weatherboards of the first. The gable ends feature saw tooth wooden shingles.

The roof is highly plastic and consists of multiple gables, hips, and cross gables stretched to suggest the interior spatial arrangement. The front elevation consists of two parts. On the left a two-story section with a bay window on the first floor and a bull's eye in the tympanum projects toward the street. On the right the roof sweeps down to the first level, dropping dramatically to the verandah where it joins adroitly with a low pent on the side, to form a combination recessed and extending L-shaped porch. The sculptural composition of the exterior minimizes the need for elaborate decorative trim. Simple chamfered posts, splayed at the top, support the engaged roof while a simple turned balustrade runs along the perimeters of the verandah.

Both the north and south sides of the house are more restrained. Though the east front of the house is related to the novel complexities of the Queen Anne style, the side elevations are more related to the Shingle Style, an American vogue since about 1880 but unusual in piedmont North Carolina. These north and south elevations have the varied massing and materials as the front, yet they flow in easier folds and broader gestures, emphasizing the skin-like shingle covering, the irregularly placed fenestration, simple masses, the wooden shingle texture and deemphasizing intricate detail. On the right (north) the planes are more expansive and broken by the porch as it wraps around the house, and by a large bay extension. On the left (south) the effect is similar. The bay extends from the ground floor through the second forming a simple tower effect. The top level is a "sun room" with extensive glazing. Turned half-posts form the sash. At the ridgeline is a sharp, ornamental metal cresting. On both the north and south sides timid eyelids pierce the roof.

Windows of various sizes and shapes (square, rectangular, and round) arranged in various groups open from equally various interior spaces. A combination of sash is in evidence, among them two-over-two, six-over-six, and sixteen-over-one. The dominant design is a simple pattern forming rectilinear lights in the upper sash over a single pane in the lower.

On the second floor of the south side is a recessed porch. Toward the rear a brick exterior chimney rises through the surface layers and overhanging eaves.

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In the south corner of the rear elevation is a finely detailed second-floor balcony opening off the master bedroom. The delicate turned balusters, molded rail and turned wood posts enclose the covered balcony, reflecting the same elements found at the first floor verandah.

The interior of the house is as richly ornate as any in the city. The shapes of the rooms are irregular, of course, but they are arranged, generally speaking, in two piles, front to back. The naturally finished oak woodwork is carved with a robustness and vigor remarkable even for the Queen Anne style, yet much of the finish has a refined Neo-Federal character with many classical elements.

The hall functions as the entry and stair hall. It is a small space with corner fireplace dominated by a massive closed string stair rising in a well in three short flights. Heavy turned newels punctuate each change in direction. Turned balusters support a heavy molded handrail. Intermediate spandrels between the newels form a stepped pattern and complex network of turned and plain elements. Wainscoting in the hall is equally elaborate. Designed in two parts, the lower consists of vertical tongue and groove beaded boards, above which is a tier of panels and molded chair rail.

From the hall, doors open into two parlors and a dining room. The surrounds, which are highly plastic, are symmetrically molded with cornerblocks and molded roundels. The doors themselves feature heavily molded raised panels in mitred frames. The original hardware is relatively simple, with oval knobs and curvilinear plates. Other appointments, including gas chandeliers and sconces (now electrified), are also original.

The library, beyond the dining room, is the most elaborate room in the house. The wainscot consists of double tiers of square panels in molded frames with slightly raised portions in their centers. Above is a stylized entablature with heavily molded "architrave" and "cornice", the latter serving as a chair rail. Decorating the "frieze" are scrolls of foliage on a rough textured field. The ceiling is complex and intricately ornamented. Dividing the room are large beams with molded edges forming giant coffer-like sections. Each section is surrounded by a molded cornice, and the flat sections of the ceiling itself feature raised panels of various sizes in molded frames, forming a regular pattern.

As one might expect, the mantels in the house are highly ornate. Most of them are of a popular Colonial Revival form, shelves supported by colonnettes with mirrored overmantels flanked by a second tier of miniature orders. All the mantels are different. Arched fire openings with elaborate grates, tiny glazed colored brick, stylized classical orders, typical classical style moldings, and a range of delicate applied swags, ribbons, filigree, and other ornament à la mode are liberally distributed.

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Even the pantry and kitchen are little changed. The simple shelves, cupboards, countertops, and appointments are still evocative in backstairs terms of the Edwardian lifestyles suggested by the architecture of the front rooms. Most of the original bathroom fixtures are original, such as porcelain sinks with turned legs and curvilinear tops, gargantuan tubs, and the simple vertical tongue and groove wainscots and molded chair rails.

Upstairs the plan is somewhat simpler though still irregular. As below, surrounds are symmetrically molded with corner blocks. These frame four and five paneled doors. The front portion of the house features bedrooms opening from a small hall. To the rear rooms are arranged along a corridor. Between the hall and corridor is an elaborate screen at ceiling height dropping about three feet. In the central section and in each corner are wooden balls held in regular repeating patterns by tiny wooden spokes. To all four sides are symmetrical sawnwork ornaments depicting stylized foliage.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891-1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Liddell-McNinch House was built for Charlotte businessman Vinton Liddell, who purchased the property on which it stands in 1891 and evidently constructed the house by 1893. It was later owned by S. S. McNinch, a mayor of Charlotte (1905-1907), who in 1909 hosted a visit to the house by President William H. Taft. Blending in lively, highly picturesque fashion elements of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles, the house is notable for the inventively irregular composition and varied texture of its exterior, and the rich finish of the interior--all well preserved and essentially unchanged. The Liddell-McNinch House is one of the pivotal elements among the scattered Victorian structures remaining in Charlotte's Fourth Ward.

The property on which the Liddell-McNinch House stands was purchased by Vinton Liddell in 1891 for \$3,000 from G. F. Bason, commissioned to sell the land according to the case of Laura B. Davidson vs. Montrose Davidson.¹ The Beers Map of 1877 shows a structure on the lot, but it was evidently removed. According to J. W. McClung, Jr., whose family lived on the opposite side of the street, Liddell constructed the present house, perhaps shortly after he purchased the property.² Liddell is shown listed at 511 North Church Street in the Charlotte city directory of 1893 (no directories are available for 1890-1892).

Vinton Liddell (1859-1915) was a wealthy and successful Charlotte businessman who moved to the city in 1875, when his father founded the Liddell Company, manufacturers of machinery. After a brief period in business in Montgomery, Alabama, and marriage to Jane Hyde Hall of Ridgeway, Pennsylvania, he returned to Charlotte in 1890. Among his business connections were the Highland Park Manufacturing Company, makers of gingham, of which he was president, and the Elizabeth Mills, which he served as vice-president. He retired from active business about 1900, at the early age of forty-one, and divided his time³ between Charlotte, travel abroad, and his summer home at Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

In 1904, not long after his retirement, Liddell sold his Church Street house to Charles M. Patterson for \$18,000.⁴ Patterson, a bachelor, kept the house only three years, selling it in 1907 to S. S. McNinch⁵, about whom little is know. McNinch served one term as Mayor of Charlotte from 1905-1907, running unopposed. In 1909 he traveled to Washington, D.C. to personally invite President William Howard Taft to speak at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County May 20th anniversary celebration of the signing of the so-called "Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence."⁶ President Taft accepted the invitation and visited the McNinch House on Church Street.

At present the house is occupied by McNinch's heirs, Miss Mattie McNinch and Mr. John K. Slear, widower of Julia McNinch Slear.

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 77:585.
- ² Interview with Mr. McClung by Patsy B. Kinsey, July, 1975.
- ³ National Cyclopedia of American Biography, 17:91.
- ⁴ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 89:124.
- ⁵ Ibid, Deed Book 222:591.
- ⁶ Patsy B. Kinsey interview, July, 1975.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mecklenburg County Records, Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Charlotte, North Carolina.

National Cyclopedia of American Biography, New York: J. T. White & Company, 1893 to present; (17: 91).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Description by Mary Alice Hinson and H. McKelden Smith, Survey Consultants
Research by McKelden Smith; & Patsy B. Kinsey, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic

ORGANIZATION Properties Commission

DATE

Division of Archives and History, Preservation Section

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

829-4763

CITY OR TOWN

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

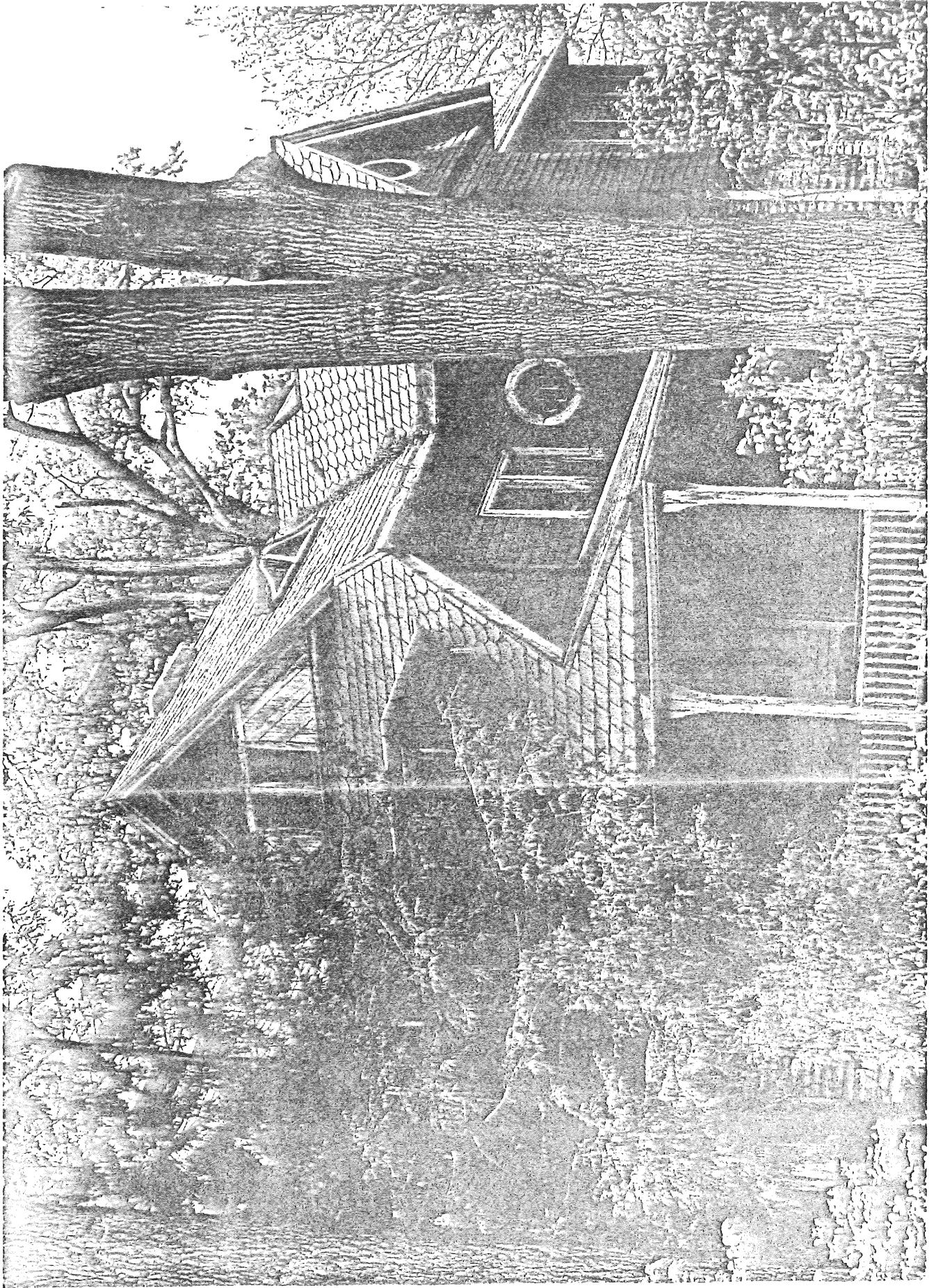
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

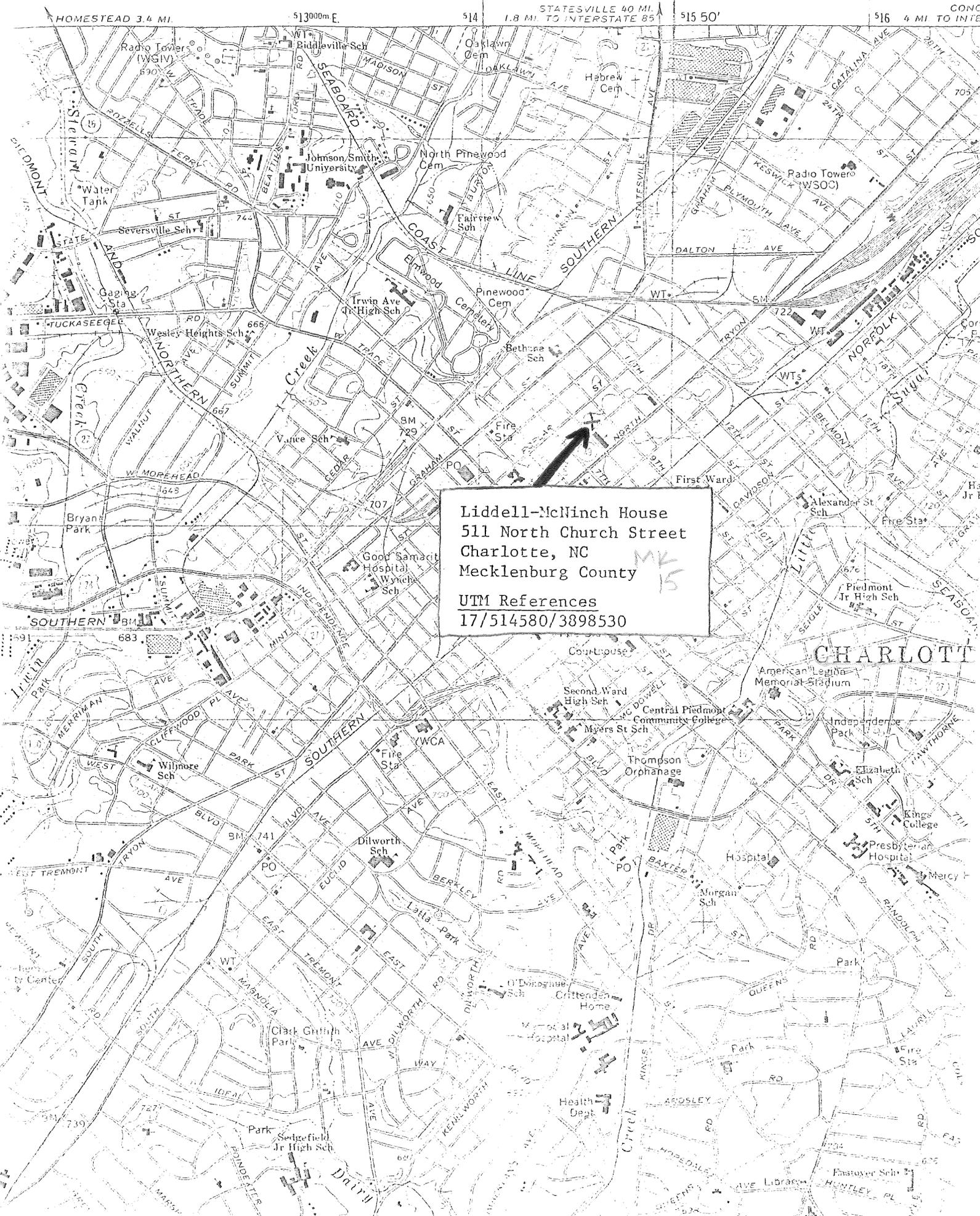
DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Charlotte East quad



Liddell-McNinch House
511 North Church Street
Charlotte, NC
Mecklenburg County

UTM References
17/514580/3898530

MK 15

