

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only  
received  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Fire Station No. 2

and/or common Old Dilworth Fire Station

2. Location

street & number 1212 South Boulevard \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Charlotte, \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district Ninth

state North Carolina code 037 county Mecklenburg code 119

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Ernest Delaney, Jr.

801 E. Trade Street

street & number Suite 100 - Civic Plaza

*9/0* Stephen H. Morris, Attorney-at-Law  
~~301 S. McDowell~~ 1400 Sky Ave. P.O. Box 28204  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28204

city, town Charlotte \_\_\_ vicinity of state North Carolina 28202

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 has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 Dilworth Fire Station standing at South Boulevard is a prime example of popular early twentieth century corbelled brick architecture. Erected with solid masonry exterior walls, wood floor and roof joists, the two story red brick building was designed to house two equipment bays on the ground level and firefighters' dormitory space upstairs. Brass poles were the natural part of original equipment, though there is also a stair at the side.

The balanced front facade features matching high arched brick openings with limestone voussoirs at the arch spring lines and keystones. Arches are soldier courses with projecting header borders. At the second floor in each tall opening are divided light casement windows with fixed window panels in the arches above. Wood spandrels below these windows have recessed molded panels. The sliding equipment doors had herringbone beaded panels with solid wood rails and stiles. In the right door a hinged cut-in panel provided the only original pedestrian entrance. These first sliding doors were replaced with wood roll-up overhead doors when motorized equipment was installed in the late teens. Also, at that time a pedestrian door was cut into the left jamb panel.

The intricate brick detailing gives the exterior its character. The solid brick walls, varying from nearly two feet thick on the ground to one foot at the upper level, are laid in 1:5 common bond. At the arch spring lines are two projecting header bands spaced eight inches. Just above the keystones are repeated triple corbelled header courses which span the width of the front facade. Above this ledge is a continuous soldier course then another triple corbel band. Finally, a double projected brick band completes the broad cornice effect and above this is a modest brick parapet with terra cotta coping.

Side and rear windows are tall single hung wood units with the top sash fixed. A single vertical muntin divides each sash. Window heads are all arched double brick soldier courses. The masonry work, both inside and out, is enhanced by soft red mortar which blends with the red kiln fired brick. Flashed headers and stretchers add texture to the wall surfaces.

The ground equipment floor is concrete, scored to resemble cobblestone. The original surface is intact scarred by hoof marks where the horses were stalled and where they stood to receive the rapid release traces when the alarm rang. The architectural drawings, which are still on hand, show the animal stalls and hay racks first built with the station house. These were removed when motor equipment arrived, but no other significant alterations have been made to the building.

The walls on the inside, as noted, are exposed brick while partitions and ceilings are tongue and groove beaded wood strips. Exposed interior beams and columns are heavy solid wood, about a foot square, with chamfered edges. All are jointed with bolted cast iron plates.

Electrical work was rudimentary when the structure was erected in 1908, so gas light jets are suspended from walls and columns here and there to supplement the incandescent lights.

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In the dormitory space the flooring consists of pine boards. Wall and ceiling finishes are narrow beaded boards. Lighting is electric but gas jets are also part of the second floor system.

This compact little fire station is a unique local example of the decorative brick commercial and institutional design so much in vogue at the turn of the century. Further, it is a rare survivor from the period and is for Charlotte an important architectural remnant.

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Significance

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At the beginning of the twentieth century, Charlotte was a fast-growing city, a leader in a state experiencing a slow but steady urban growth. It was to become the first North Carolina city to have 50,000 people, but in 1900 it had only begun its rapid growth. City government was supported by a mayor, a recorder, and a seven-man Board of Aldermen. According to the Federal Census of 1900, the city's population within its corporate limits was 18,091.<sup>1</sup> The municipal census of 1901 indicates 27,752 people living in the city and its surrounding suburbs.<sup>2</sup> The city fathers were building and expanding the foundations of services necessary to support the community's growing population.

By 1902 the city owned the city hall, the water works, a sewage system, a crematory, three school buildings, two fire departments, a modern fire alarm system, and over forty miles of macadamized roads.<sup>3</sup> The street car system and lighting plants were excellent. Latta Park, at the southern end of the street car line, was a "popular pleasure resort."<sup>4</sup>

Latta Park was located outside the city limits in an area known as Dilworth. The Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, the 4-Cs, owned the land within this suburb. Edward Dilworth Latta, for whom the development was named, was president of the 4-Cs. In 1891 Latta launched a campaign to attract industry as well as private residents to settle in Dilworth. At an April meeting of the Chamber of Commerce "it was decided to raise \$10,000 for advertising our city abroad." The 4-Cs agreed to "contribute \$5,000 to that end. . .".<sup>5</sup>

On May 20, 1891, the 4-Cs held a large land auction in Dilworth. It was a gala affair with a festival atmosphere. "In three days several hundred lots were sold ranging from \$5 to \$16 a front foot. The bidding was lively and the 4-Cs have every reason to be gratified at the result of their sale."<sup>6</sup> One of the lots sold that week was to be the future location of the Dilworth Fire Station.

"Lot number four in square number 9 . . . being fifty feet by one hundred fifty feet fronting on the street known as 'Boulevard' . . ." was purchased by James M. Oates on May 23, 1891.<sup>7</sup> According to early real estate maps of Charlotte, Oates owned several lots in downtown Charlotte. He paid \$375 for lot number four. He held the property for 16 years until it was purchased by the City of Charlotte as the location for its new fire station to serve the fast-growing streetcar suburb of Dilworth.<sup>8</sup>

In the first years of the twentieth century, the growing population in Dilworth, both residential and industrial, began to show concern over the lack of a conveniently located fire station. Before the new station was constructed, Dilworth residents received fire protection from the downtown station headquartered at 6 East 5th Street. Even when a fire was detected in its early stages, horse-drawn apparatus was slow in reaching the prosperous suburb. Residents were aware that precious minutes during a fire could be saved if a station were located in their neighborhood.

Before a station could be built in Dilworth, the suburb had to be designated an official borough of the city of Charlotte. The great desire of the residents for local fire protection was their main concern when a committee from the suburb appeared before the Board of Aldermen on May 7, 1907. They asked that a fire station be con-

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structed in the southern section of the city and that Dilworth be admitted as a borough of Charlotte. That evening Dilworth was admitted as a borough of Charlotte.<sup>9</sup> The request concerning the establishment of a fire station was deferred.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly nine months passed before the issue of a fire station for Dilworth was renewed. The concern was ". . . agitated anew since a recent fire in that ward."<sup>11</sup> At a meeting of the Finance Committee on February 27, 1908, Colonel T. L. Kirkpatrick, Alderman from Dilworth, requested an appropriation for the establishment of a station. Still, funds for such a project were not available, and the committee could only give assurances that efforts were being made to raise money needed for such a project.<sup>12</sup>

Several days later, on March 2, 1908, the matter was again discussed at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen. At this meeting a resident of Dilworth Mr. Joseph Garibaldi, offered to purchase a lot and build a station if the city was not financially able to undertake the project. He offered to ". . . accept the cities note for 4 or 6 years at 6% interest for the same."<sup>13</sup> The Chairman of the Fire Department, Colonel A. L. Smith, agreed at that meeting that ". . . a station in Dilworth was a necessity. . . but owing to the financial condition of the city he would not press the matter."<sup>14</sup> He suggested that the city might instead consider purchasing an automobile that might provide more efficient service to that part of the city. The matter of establishing a fire station in Dilworth ". . . was referred to the Finance Committee with power to act."<sup>15</sup>

On October 7, 1908, a committee from the Public Safety Committee reported that several locations for a Dilworth Station had been examined. "Col. T. L. Kirkpatrick (alderman from Dilworth) moved that it be recorded that it is the sense of the committee that a sub fire station be established in a convenient point for the purpose of serving the Dilworth section and Ward II at a cost not exceeding \$4,000."<sup>16</sup> The Oates lot was acquired for \$1,000 on October 20.

Three branches of city government were responsible for the creation of the Dilworth Station. The aldermen authorized and paid for it. The Board of Public Safety was responsible for the equipment, and the Board of Public Service built it.<sup>17</sup> Chosen as architect for the project was the Charlotte firm of Wheeler, Galliher and Stern, who designed a number of North Carolina courthouses and other buildings in this period.<sup>18</sup> The building contract was awarded to J. A. Jones at a cost of \$3,000.<sup>19</sup> (Jones's construction company later became a vast and broadly active national operation.) The construction of the station began on January 7, 1909.<sup>20</sup> According to a local newspaper article, the Dilworth Station was the same size and design as Station No. 1, the headquarters on E. 5th Street.<sup>21</sup>

Two months later the chief of the fire department, W. S. Orr, reported to the Board of Public Safety that the station was "completed and equipped."<sup>22</sup> The new station had three men on duty at all times,<sup>23</sup> with W. B. Glenn, already employed by the city fire department, serving as captain.<sup>24</sup> Equipment for the station consisted of a horse-drawn combination hose and chemical wagon, with two ladders attached, and a steamer.<sup>25</sup> Two horses were also purchased for the station.<sup>26</sup>

When horses were first used in firefighting, it was customary to board them outside the fire stations in nearby stables.<sup>27</sup> But much of the time was lost bringing

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the horses to the station for harnessing after an alarm was received. Eventually, the horses were stabled in the fire station along with the equipment and the men. The idea took some getting used to, but soon firemen and horses began "more than half a century of mutual affection."<sup>28</sup>

Dilworth's station was originally designed to house its horses on its first floor level. Architectural specifications indicate there were two stalls, one located on each side of the first floor. The stalls are no longer there, but worn flooring bears witness to the years of impatient pawing of horses' hoofs. To save time in harnessing the horses after an alarm was received, the heavy harnesses were hung from the ceiling directly above the stalls. Using a system of chains and pulleys the harness could be dropped onto the horse and fastened by the men in a matter of seconds.<sup>29</sup> Remnants of the "quick hitch" system can still be seen in the old station.

In 1912 the city of Charlotte purchased its first motorized firefighting apparatus. By 1917 the era of horse-drawn apparatus ended in Charlotte. By the late 1940s the Dilworth station could no longer accommodate the larger, more sophisticated motorized equipment. The city purchased a lot across the Boulevard from the old station and built a new one. The new Station No. 2 still serves the Dilworth section today. The old station on lot number four was sold to W. E. Price and Ethel R. Delaney on June 29, 1948.<sup>30</sup>

Price and Delaney held the property until January 1976. At that time the station was deeded to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Fire Museum, Inc., a non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the old Dilworth Station No. 2. It is their desire that the station be adaptively utilized as a museum of firefighting history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Nothing will more graphically demonstrate Charlotte's early firefighting history than the preservation and restoration of the Old Dilworth Station. While the city of Charlotte has destroyed, lost, and forgotten much of its past, the Old Dilworth Station has survived. Its preservation will provide the citizens of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County a better understanding of turn-of-the-century fire protection in Charlotte.

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Tompkins, History of Mecklenburg County and Charlotte, 2 vols. (Observer Printing House: Charlotte, N.C., 1903), p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Mecklenburg Times, 24 April 1891, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 29 May 1891, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> State of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County, Record of Deeds, Deed Book 78, 23 May 1891, p. 464. (Hereinafter cited as Deeds.)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Deed Book 242, 20 October 1908, p. 422.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of Meetings of Board of Aldermen, Charlotte, N.C., Book 10, 7 May 1907, p. 32. (Hereinafter cited as Alderman Minutes.)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Charlotte Daily Observer, 28 February 1908, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Aldermen Minutes, Book 11, 2 March 1908, p. 79.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen, 7 October 1908, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Charlotte Daily Observer, 19 October 1908, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Information obtained from original copy of the architectural specifications of the structure on file in the office of Jack O. Boyte, Architect for the restoration project.

<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Daily Observer, 9 December 1908, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Daily Observer, 7 January 1909, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Charlotte Evening Chronicle, 26 February 1908, p. 5.

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<sup>22</sup>Minutes of the Board of Public Safety, 31 March 1909, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup>Charlotte Daily Observer, 5 February 1909, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup>Charlotte, North Carolina, City Directory, 1909, p. 85.

<sup>25</sup>Charlotte Daily Observer, 9 March 1909, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the Board of Public Safety, 31 March 1909, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup>Ditzel, Firefighters, p. 152.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Information received from Chief Jesse Atkins of the Charlotte Fire Department, 22 January 1979.

<sup>31</sup>Deeds, Book 1125, p. 126.

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1909 **Builder/Architect** Wheeler, Galliher & Stern, Architects  
J. A. Jones, Contractor

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Completed in 1909, Dilworth Fire Station is characterized by its original design for horse-drawn firefighting apparatus. It stands as a locally important vestige of Charlotte's early 20th century municipal growth and services. The City of Charlotte operated several other stations at that time, but they have all been demolished, leaving the Old Dilworth Station as the oldest extant station in the city.

**Criteria Assessment:**

- A. Associated with early twentieth century growth and municipal services, a period of economic growth and prosperity in Charlotte's history. Dilworth was annexed as part of Charlotte with the understanding that a fire station be provided.
- C. The fire station is a unique local example of decorative brick commercial/industrial design. It is a rare survivor from the turn of the century. The Dilworth Station is the work of the architectural firm of Wheeler, Galliher and Stern. The removal of the horse stalls and hay racks has been the only significant change in the building. Original fabric includes original gas light fixtures and the brass pole.

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Headquarters Office, Charlotte, North Carolina.

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Microfilm.

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Mecklenburg Times. 1907-1909. Charlotte Public Library, Carolina Room, Microfilm.

Original architectural specifications of the Dilworth Fire Station. Office of  
Jack O. Boyte, AIA, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Sanborn Insurance Maps. 1905-1909. Charlotte Public Library, Carolina Room,  
Microfilm.

Tompkins, D. A. History of Mecklenburg County and Charlotte. Charlotte, North  
Carolina: Observer Printing House, 1903.

Secondary Sources:

Atkins, Jesse, Chief of Charlotte Fire Department. Interview 22 January 1979.

Ditzel, Paul C. Fire Engines Firefighters. New York, N.Y.: A Rutledge Book,  
Crown Publishers, Inc., 1976.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Index to City Minutes. A to M. From June 24, 1816 to May 6, 1935. City Clerk's Office, Charlotte, North Carolina.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Charlotte East

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary for Fire Station #2 includes the less than one acre lot on which the building stands on the NW side of South Boulevard opposite the new fire station.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state . code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

Architectural description: Jack O. Boyte, Architect & Kathleen Southern  
name/title Historical significance: Jane McKinnon & Jerry L. Cross, Researcher

organization Division of Archives and History  
Archaeology and Historic Preservation date

street & number Survey and Planning Branch  
109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh, state North Carolina 27611

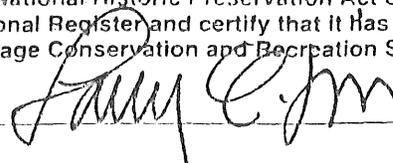
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



8/6/80

title State Historic Preservation Officer date

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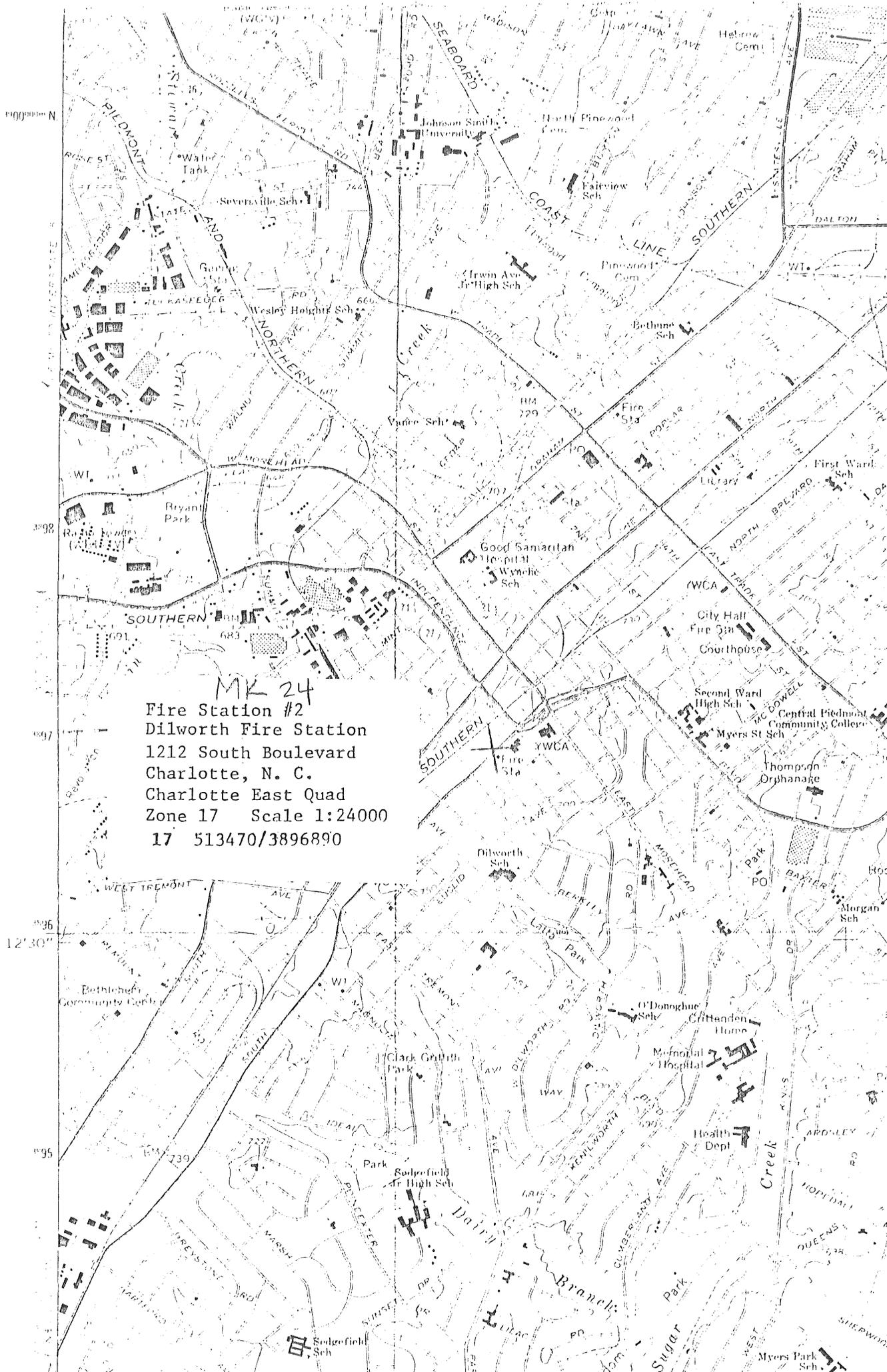
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration



MK 24  
Fire Station #2  
Dilworth Fire Station  
1212 South Boulevard  
Charlotte, N. C.  
Charlotte East Quad  
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000  
17 513470/3896890

12'30"

