

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 McNinch, Frank Ramsay House
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2727 Sharon Lane N/A not for publication
city or town Charlotte N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28211

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.)

Jeffrey A. Cross SHPO 4/20/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

McNinch, Frank Ramsay House

Mecklenburg Co., N.C.

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
	2	structures
		objects
2	2	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)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other wood

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.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

ca. 1925-1943

Significant Dates

ca. 1925

1943

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

McNinch, Frank Ramsay

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thies-Smith Realty (contractor)

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):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Historic Landmarks Commission

McNinch, Frank Ramsay House

Mecklenburg Co., N.C.

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid for reference 1: Zone 17, Easting 5 16 4 60, Northing 3 89 0 70 0

UTM grid for reference 3: Zone, Easting, Northing

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 Richard L. Mattson
organization Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc. date August 15, 1998
street & number 2228 Winter Street telephone 704-376-0985
city or town Charlotte state N.C. zip code 28205

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 Peter B. Ridder
street & number 2727 Sharon Lane telephone 704-366-8886
city or town Charlotte state N.C. zip code 28211

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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Frank Ramsay McNinch House
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

7. Narrative Description

Constructed ca. 1925, the Frank R. McNinch House commands a tree-shaded rise of land on a deep lot overlooking Sharon Lane, approximately five miles south of downtown Charlotte. Sharon Lane is a prestigious address. This four-lane artery is lined primarily with handsome red-brick Colonial Revival residences and large suburban-style houses that represent the city's great southward expansion in recent decades. While the overall area has experienced dramatic modern development (the sprawling, up-scale SouthPark and MorrowCroft subdivisions are located to the west and south of Sharon Lane), the McNinch estate retains a portion of its original secluded setting. The imposing white-frame Colonial Revival house is the oldest dwelling in the neighborhood and reflects an earlier era when Sharon Lane was in the country and the City of Charlotte was a significant motorcar ride north. The dwelling is buffered from passing traffic by its elevated site positioned well back from the street, as well as by giant oak trees that tower over the front lawn. A driveway winds along the eastern side of the roughly three-acre lot, leading from Sharon Lane to the main house and the nearby servant's quarters/garage.

The Colonial Revival design of the McNinch House was inspired by George Washington's Mount Vernon plantation house, whose full-facade classical portico was added to an earlier Georgian house in 1784. A replica of Washington's colonnaded Virginia home had been on display at the Virginia pavilion at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. The fair's Virginia pavilion and the other state pavilions that featured broadly eclectic "colonial" domestic architecture helped spark a national enthusiasm for the Colonial Revival. In the South, the style was freely interpreted to include the architecture of an idealized antebellum past, and white-columned estates, including numerous variations of Mount Vernon, were a favorite choice of elite families (Bishir 1990: 417; Mull and Schuchman 1990).

The McNinch House is a substantial frame, weatherboard dwelling with a rectangular main block topped by a side-gable roof with a modillion cornice and gable returns. Flanked by exterior brick end chimneys, the main block is two rooms deep and has a symmetrically arranged front facade with a five-bay first floor and a six-bay second. The principal windows are twelve-over-twelve and eight-over-eight double-hung sash with simply molded surrounds. The windows are framed by wooden louvered shutters with each upper panel embellished by a cut-out five-pointed star and a quarter moon. (These shutters have been temporarily removed for restoration and painting.)

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The prominent two-story, full-facade porch features a series of six heavy, square, Tuscan-style wooden piers. These piers support a plain frieze, a modillion cornice, and a flat porch roof with a Chippendale-style balustrade. The underside of the porch roof is sheathed in tongue-and-groove ceiling, while the porch floor is composed of red bricks laid in a herringbone pattern.

The main entrance is centered on the front facade and consists of a six-panel door and an oversized pedimented Georgian surround with sidelights flanked by pilasters and square colonnettes. Later iron coach lamps, which replaced the original brass lamps, frame either side of the main entry. The handsome brass knocker on the front door appears to be original (Mull and Schuchman 1990).

A distinctive, asymmetrical double-shoulder brick chimney is the focal point of the southeast elevation. Laid in a stretcher bond with paved shoulders, this chimney has twelve-over-twelve and four-over-four windows set into the chimney on the first and second stories, respectively. A pair of small fixed-sash attic windows flank the chimney stack.

A one-story sun porch is located on the northwest elevation. While original to the house, it was doubled in size ca. 1959 (Mull and Schuchman 1990). It contains a series of large casement windows arranged above recessed wood panels, and entrance doors are located on both the front and rear elevations. Echoing the main doorway of the house, simple classically-inspired piers flank these entries. A simple frieze and cornice encircles the sun porch, which is topped by a new Chippendale-style balustrade that matches the original, which was deteriorated. The west elevation also contains an irregularly massed double-shoulder brick chimney similar to the one on the east side though without inset windows. As on the east elevation, casement attic windows are located on either side of the corbeled chimney stack.

Asymmetrically arranged windows, doors, and small additions mark the rear elevation of the house. At the east side of the rear is a one-story ell that expands the original kitchen to include a modern rear breakfast room and office. This addition features a series of long, multiple-paned French doors along the rear (south) side. A modern entry on the east side is covered with a one-bay porch with wooden piers that are smaller-scale versions of those on the front facade. A new rear porch with a pergola runs along the west elevation of the kitchen wing. This structure, which replaced a later wooden deck, includes wooden piers that reflect those on the front of the house (Mull and Schuchman 1990; DeVaney 1997).

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In keeping with the finer Colonial Revival residences of this period, the interior woodwork is elegant yet restrained. Although the inside of the house has received some modifications, the original plan and much of the original finish survive. The interior retains original flat- and raised-panel wood doors, oak floors, original French doors at the rear of the main hall, and plaster ceilings and walls. The first floor follows a center-hall plan. The broad stairhall features a handsome half-turn stair that rises in two flights to the second story. This stairway has simple square balusters that are grouped to form a circular newel, capped by a lead-crystal ornament. The center hall is finished with a molded two-part baseboard, plaster wainscoting, and a wide molded cornice.

The dining room and the living room open off the east and west sides of the hall, respectively. Oversized oval arches originally defined the opening between the hall and these two principal rooms. The arches were enclosed and replaced with the present rectangular openings in 1935. The focus of the dining room is the handsome classical mantel, which is centrally placed on the east wall. This mantel has a flared frieze topped by a dentiled cornice and a molded shelf. Fluted ceiling-height pilasters flank the mantel and frame a large, raised square panel in the center of the east wall. The dining room also features a wide molded cornice, paneled wainscoting, a molded baseboard, a narrow molded chair rail (added in the 1950s), and a large chandelier (which appears to be original) suspended from an ornamental plaster ceiling medallion.

Directly across the hall, the living room mantel has a similar classical design, with a dentiled cornice and a molded surround. Round arched openings, each with a keystone, flank the mantel. Originally these openings served as entrances into the adjacent sun porch but were converted to bookcases ca. 1959 (Mull and Schuchman 1990).

At the rear (south) of the living room, a single door leads into the informal sitting room. This originally simply executed room has been recently remodeled with raised cherry paneling and corner bookcases (Mull and Schuchman 1990; DeVaney 1997). The sitting room provides the only interior access to the sun porch. Vertical casement windows, which appear to have replaced screened openings in the 1950s, dominate the wall surfaces. The ceramic-tile floor and the simple classically-inspired mantel are original.

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The kitchen occupies its original location in the southeast section of the main block. It was extensively modernized in the early 1990s, and has been recently remodeled by the present owner. Among the current renovations are new maple cabinets, hardwood floors, and, as noted, the addition of a rear breakfast room and office (DeVaney 1997).

The second-floor rooms are simply executed. Although a series of renovations (primarily in the 1950s and early 1990s) has resulted in some changes in room size, the basic plan survives. Four bedrooms and two bathrooms are arranged around a hallway set perpendicular to the main stairhall, with an enclosed center stair leading to attic. The fireplaces in both of the end bedrooms at the front of the house were removed in the 1950s to accommodate closets (Mull and Schuchman 1990). The small middle bedroom has been converted to a laundry/utility room and a new closet has been added. The bathrooms, remodeled in the early 1990s, have been recently renovated with modern marble-tile flooring and new fixtures, sinktops, and lighting (DeVaney 1997).

In addition to the main house, the property includes a servant's quarters/garage (contributing resource), a 1998 swimming pool (non-contributing), and a 1998 pavilion (non-contributing). Built ca. 1925, the substantially intact servant's quarters/garage is sited just behind the house to the east. It is a frame, weatherboard, one-story building with a side-gable roof, a center brick chimney, and paired and single four-over-four windows. An automobile garage occupies the south bay and a later shed-roofed addition extends from the south elevation. The north bay contains a living room and a small bathroom, plaster walls, and hardwood floors.

The rectangular concrete swimming pool is located immediately behind the house. It has decorative tile trim and is bordered by concrete-tile pavers. Located just south of the pool, the frame pavilion has a hip roof and paired supports that match those on the new porches along the side and rear of the main house.

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8. Statement of Significance

The ca. 1925 McNinch House is significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Frank Ramsay McNinch, who led a distinguished political career at the local, state, and national levels. He served as mayor of Charlotte and curbed the city's bloody streetcar strike of 1919. During the strike, Mayor McNinch organized a reconciliation committee, and in the aftermath of violence authorized a citizens' guard to help restore order. He subsequently played a controversial and pivotal role in the North Carolina Democratic party. Although a Democrat, he led the 1928 opposition to Al Smith, the party's nominee for president and an opponent of Prohibition. McNinch stumped the state in support of Republican Herbert Hoover, and after Hoover's election was rewarded with a seat on the Federal Power Commission. McNinch later served as chairman of this commission during the Roosevelt Administration. In 1935, he was the United States representative to the World Power Conference at the Hague. In the late 1930s, he served as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

Commanding an elevated three-acre tract of land, the white-frame Colonial Revival dwelling testifies to McNinch's prominent status. The house is Charlotte's only surviving building directly associated with Frank Ramsay McNinch. Although he had it built after achieving local prominence as the mayor of Charlotte, and purchased a residence in Washington, D.C. in 1930, the McNinch House meets Criterion B because he continued to own his Charlotte home for most of his political career, occupying the residence as occasion permitted during his service in Washington. Despite alterations over the years, including a recent renovation and remodeling, the house survives with its key architectural elements intact. The sizable tree-shaded grounds provide an evocative setting, and the ca. 1925 servant's quarters/garage remains substantially intact as a contributing resource. The modern swimming pool and the modern frame pavilion behind the house are both non-contributing, but do not detract from the overall integrity of the property.

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Historical Background

The McNinch House was built ca. 1925 for Frank Ramsay McNinch (1873-1950) and his wife, Huldah (1894-1969). The McNinches commissioned the Charlotte-based Thies-Smith Realty Company to contract the building of the new residence (Thies 1986). The decision to hire Thies-Smith Realty, a firm not widely recognized for its role in the house-construction business, may have been a personal one. One of McNinch's sisters, Virginia Juanita "Nettie" McNinch, was married to Oscar J. Thies, a mining engineer who founded the realty company (Mull and Schuchman 1990). McNinch had purchased the 43.4-acre tract of land south of the city from William Berryhill in 1913 (*Charlotte County Deed Book* 302: 552-553). It is said that he envisioned practicing law in Charlotte while enjoying a quiet life in the country surrounded by oaks and peach orchards (Johnston 1986; Mull and Schuchman 1990). The McNinch family lived in the residence year-round until 1930, when President Herbert Hoover appointed Frank McNinch to the Federal Power Commission in Washington, D.C. While McNinch purchased a residence in Washington, he also kept the house on Sharon Lane until December 1943. Only when in ill health and nearing retirement did he find it necessary to sell this house (*Deed Book* 1114: 3; Johnston 1986; Mull and Schuchman 1990). During the 1930s and early 1940s, the McNinches occupied the house at the outskirts of Charlotte during vacations and on holiday and weekend visits (Johnston 1986; Mull and Schuchman 1990). It stands today as Charlotte's only surviving building directly associated with Frank Ramsay McNinch (Morrill 1998; McNinch 1998).

During their Washington years, the McNinches occasionally had rented their Sharon Lane residence to tenants. The house was large, and the grounds and orchards required full-time maintenance. During these years, the residence was also occupied periodically by McNinch's sister and her family, the Frank Brandon Smith's, who also helped with the upkeep (Johnston Interview 1986; Mull and Schuchman 1990). The two families spent Christmases together. Any time that Frank McNinch was in Charlotte on a Sunday, the Second Presbyterian Church expected him to teach bible class. It is said that McNinch found it quite difficult to sever his ties with his Charlotte home. Upon the sale of the house in 1943, he wrote to his sister May Smith, lamenting, "We hated to part with the house--many happy days were spent there. Many happy recollections cling to the lovely place" (Smith Private Papers).

Howard M. Wade, a manufacturer of bank and office furnishings, purchased the house and land in December 1943. Wade apparently subdivided the 43-acre

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tract for sale as house lots, and presented the house and surrounding three acres as a gift to his daughter, Isabelle Reynolds, and her family (*Deed Book* 1114: 3; Mull and Schuchman 1990). Over time, the Reynolds family adapted the house to suit their needs and tastes, replacing the columns that marked the entries to the living room and the dining room with squared doorways, and removing the bedroom fireplaces. Also over the years, the subdivided parcels of land along Sharon Lane and several newly platted streets to the south were developed into up-scale residential property. Although Isabelle Reynolds later married Charles F. Bacon and moved to New York City, she kept possession of the house, which was used by her daughter during frequent trips to Charlotte (Bacon 1986; Mull and Schuchman 1990).

In 1959, the house was sold to C. P. and Ruth Street (*Deed Book* 2037: 263-265). The Streets replaced the French doors with bookcases in the living room and expanded the adjacent sun porch. In 1975, the Streets sold the property to Dr. William J. Wortman, Jr. and his family (*Deed Book* 3759: 746-749). The Wortmans remodeled and expanded the kitchen and added a back deck (Mull and Schuchman 1990).

The current owner, Peter D. Ridder, chairman and publisher of *The Charlotte Observer*, purchased the property in 1997. Ridder commissioned local architect Jeanine C. DeVaney of Charlotte In-Vironments, Inc. to renovate and remodel the house and servant's quarters/garage (DeVaney 1997).

Criterion B: Frank Ramsay McNinch

A prominent government official and civic leader, Frank Ramsay McNinch was born into a politically influential family. He was the son of Franklin Alonzo and Sarah Virginia Ramsay McNinch. Franklin Alonzo McNinch served as the city's chief of police for three terms, was the first chief of the Pioneer Fire Company, and was later elected chief of the Volunteer Fire Department. The elder McNinch's last post of public service was that of superintendent of the city quarry (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 11, 1893).

The McNinch children followed Franklin Alonzo into public service. The eldest son, Samuel Sylvanus McNinch, was mayor of Charlotte during the period 1905 to 1907. He also served a number of terms as a member of the city's board of aldermen (*Charlotte Observer*, March 1, 1929). Daughter May McNinch Smith became prominent in civic, cultural, patriotic, and social organizations. She was president of Charlotte's Council of Parent-Teacher

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Association and was featured in an undated newspaper article entitled "Women Builders of Charlotte" (Mull and Schuchman 1990).

Young Frank Ramsay McNinch was educated in Charlotte schools and attended Barrier's Military Institute in the city. He initially studied law on his own, but in 1898 enrolled in the law course at the University of North Carolina. After gaining his license to practice law in January 1899, McNinch opened an office in Charlotte, and his practice grew. In 1904, McNinch was elected to the state General Assembly where he successfully led the Prohibition movement and strengthened the state's divorce laws. In 1917, McNinch was appointed mayor of Charlotte by the newly elected Board of Commissioners, and held office until 1921 (Powell 1996: 184-185).

It was during Charlotte's bloody streetcar strike of 1919 that McNinch earned a reputation as an effective leader and administrator in times of crisis. This incident was the most violent labor dispute in the city's history (Shaw 1980; Maschal 1994). In the summer of 1919 Charlotte's streetcar workers went on strike against their employer, the Southern Public Utilities Company (later Duke Power), for higher pay and union recognition. The union was the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Workers of America, which had been organizing streetcar workers in cities nationwide during the years around World War I (Beck 1979; Shaw 1980: 10-22).

The strike began in early August, and after several weeks of unrest, climaxed in a violent episode around midnight on August 25, 1919. Five streetcar conductors were killed and over a dozen others were wounded when gunfire broke out during a confrontation between police, armed strike breakers employed by the Southern Public Utilities Company, and a crowd of strikers and their supporters (Beck 1979; Shaw 1980: 12-22; Mashcal 1994).

Prior to the shootings, Mayor McNinch had been instrumental in organizing a reconciliation committee that included himself, the Commissioner of Public Works, and a group of citizens to mediate between the striking motormen and the Southern Public Utilities Company. On August 23, 1919, the commission proposed that Southern Public Utilities recognize the Amalgamated Association and operate an open shop, which meant that not all workers had to belong to the union. All strikes would be outlawed. The motormen unanimously accepted this offer, but Southern Public Utilities rejected it. Two days later the violence erupted (Beck 1979).

McNinch quickly authorized a group of citizens to serve as a special police force to patrol the city and help restore order. He also requested assistance from the state militia, which dispatched troops from Statesville, Lexington,

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Hickory, Lincolnton, Durham, and Winston-Salem. In several days order was restored, the strike ended, and trolley service resumed. Although Southern Public Utilities ultimately raised the wages of motormen and permitted its workers to join any union, the company refused to recognize union affiliations. Workers never again went on strike against Southern Public Utilities (Shaw 1980: 53-55).

After the streetcar strike an anonymous recall petition was circulated against Mayor McNinch and the city commissioners. It asserted that Charlotte's political leaders had been ineffective mediators during the strike, and were not sufficiently responsive to the needs of the people. However, the recall campaign failed in the face of overwhelming public support for McNinch (*Time*, May 16, 1938; Shaw 1980: 41). His obituary in *The Charlotte Observer* declared that Charlotteans ranked Frank Ramsay McNinch as "one of the city's ablest and best mayors of this century" (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 24, 1950).

After the presidential campaign of 1928, President Herbert Hoover, a Republican, appointed McNinch, a Democrat, to serve as a member of the Federal Power Commission. During the 1928 campaign, McNinch had been a leader of those members of his party who had supported Hoover against the Democratic candidate, Alfred E. Smith. Smith's position against Prohibition and his Catholicism had sparked that opposition (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 24, 1950; Powell 1996: 184-185). Subsequently, President Franklin D. Roosevelt reappointed McNinch to the commission, and the Charlottean became chairman in 1933 and served until 1937, during which time the Tennessee Valley Authority was established. In 1935, McNinch was the United States representative to the World Power Conference at the Hague, the Netherlands, and championed the administration's goal to provide cheap power to all people (*Time*, May 16, 1938; Powell 1996: 184-185).

Between 1937 and 1939 McNinch served as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (F.C.C.). Regarded as an effective trouble-shooter, he was sent to the F.C.C. to confront persistent problems in its administration. In May of 1938, a *Time* magazine cover story on Chairman McNinch of the F.C.C. characterized the North Carolinian as "a small but fearless Presbyterian Elder [who possesses] lots of political nerve. . . . He brought the Commission up to date on its hearings and eliminated departmental divisions. . ." (*Time*, May 16, 1938). McNinch was a staunch advocate of free speech on the airwaves and firmly held that radio had a public responsibility to broadcast opposing points of view. In a public address at the University of North Carolina on January 26, 1939, he declared:

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A broadcaster's duty is to see that his station is never used by persons or groups especially interested in some public question in such a way that his station's listeners are left without sufficient information to make their own independent judgments on questions they should help to decide (Powell 1996: 185).

In 1939 he resigned the F.C.C. chairmanship to accept less taxing duties as Special Assistant to the Attorney General, a position he held until his retirement in 1946. He died April 20, 1950, and was buried in Charlotte (*The Charlotte Observer*, April 24, 1950; Mull and Schuchman 1990).

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Charlotte, N.C. McNinch is the grandnephew of Frank Ramsay McNinch.

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Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds, Charlotte, N.C.

Morrill, Dan L. Interview with Richard L. Mattson. July 10, 1998. Charlotte, N.C. Morrill is consulting director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Frank Ramsay McNinch House
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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Frank Ramsay McNinch House is the approximately three-acre parcel delineated on the accompanying Physical Survey Map (Map Book 9, p. 35, Map Book 26, p. 674, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County).

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the McNinch House is the current three-acre tax parcel that encompasses the house, the adjacent contributing servant's quarters/garage, and the tree-shaded grounds that define the setting. Surrounding the nominated parcel is primarily modern suburban development.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Frank Ramsay McNinch House
Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Photographs

Frank Ramsay McNinch House
2727 Sharon Lane, Charlotte, N.C.
Mecklenburg County
Richard L. Mattson
August 1998
N.C. Division of Archives and History
Survey and Planning Branch, Raleigh

1. Front Facade and West Elevation, Looking Southeast
2. Front Facade, Looking South
3. East Elevation, Looking West
4. Main Entrance, Front Facade, Looking South
5. Rear Elevation, Looking North
6. Servant's Quarters/Garage, Swimming Pool, Pavilion, Looking East
7. Stairhall, Looking South
8. Living Room, Looking West
9. Dining Room, Looking East

