

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Capital Club Building

and or common Capital Club Building

2. Location

street & number 16 West Martin Street not for publication

city, town Raleigh vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Wake code 183

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Capital Club Associates, Ltd.

street & number 5455 North Federal Highway, Suite P

city, town Boca Raton vicinity of state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wake County Courthouse

street & number Fayetteville Street Mall

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural & Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date of Raleigh, North Carolina, 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records City of Raleigh, Preservation Planning Office

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Capital Club Building incorporates a melange of styles which illustrates the reaction to the Paris International Exposition of 1925 by architects and designers working in a highly conservative regional tradition. On the one hand, the south and west elevations are laid out in the column style, in which an ornate cornice and frieze sit atop a relatively plain shaft, the whole being supported by a heavy base. On the other hand, the decoration departs entirely from classical themes previously employed, consisting as it does of geometric elements and abstract Egyptian motifs. The same Art Deco theme prevails throughout the interior, as will be examined in the detailed description below.

The structure was first proposed to total some fourteen to sixteen stories, as we know from contemporary newspaper articles, but limited availability of capital forced a reduction to twelve floors. Since functions of the sponsoring organization entirely occupied the top three levels, and the design of the street level entrance and storefronts was determined by usual commercial practice, the "missing" two to four stories were taken from the shaft portion. A slight tendency to squatness therefore resulted from a combination of this basic change in the building proportions and the relatively small portion of the exterior surface represented by the fenestration. Of course, a strong horizontal emphasis is made by use of masonry cladding which more closely resembles bearing-wall construction than the steel frame which it actually conceals. Fortunately, a balance has been created by strong upward lines which convey, in the words of Louis Sullivan, "the sense of vertical continuity."

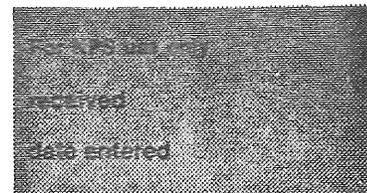
A street-to-roof thrust in the alignment of design elements can be seen most clearly in the principal, or south, elevation. Windows are stacked over arched ground floor openings in an arrangement which is accentuated by special surface treatment. Alternate rows of spandrel section brick are laid in staggered relief to form a textural link between the windows of successive floors. Each stack in the shaft portion is framed by a stretcher rowlock of horizontal and vertical brick. The contrast between this unusual feature and the remainder of the brown brick exterior is rendered even more striking by the uniformity of the no-bond, all-stretcher cladding.

In the capital section, decorative panels of copper sheeting over wooden frames conceal spandrels of common brick. The design depicts one vertical, one horizontal, and two diagonal struts crossing a square at a forty-five degree angle under a circular central boss. The window stacks are separated by cast stone panels representing fluted pilasters, each of which is surmounted by a row of triangles, above which the architect has located a stylized cartouche of Egyptian derivation. The triangles, which terminate this fluting at its upper end, are arranged in the zig-zag motif so familiar in the Deco style. A sort of plinth for each of the mock pilasters, consisting simply of a raised rectangle filled with miniature fluting, constitutes the only decoration of the band which marks the juncture of capital and shaft.

The windows themselves do everything possible to strengthen the sense of vertical continuity. Their one-over-one sash arrangement, free from extraneous ornamentation, adds the only note of "stripped architecture" present in the entire structure. The use of a steel double-hung window, manufactured by Truscon, figures prominently in contemporary descriptions of the building's special features. The band which

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demarcates the mid-section and the base itself represents a meeting of sorts; in this case, two decorative styles meet in a single building element. While the purely Roman letters in the building name would not seem out of place on a structure such as the State Capitol, the flattened cones and pyramids which make up the rest of this band could have come straight from the Paris Exposition.

The segmented glazing in the tympanum over each store window and entrance carries the lines of the window stacks all the way down to street-level. The main entrance, is placed in a slightly deeper recess behind the center arch. Although the main doors, along with the shop entrance doors, must certainly have matched the metal storefront trim originally, they have all been lost since that time.

In departing from the exact symmetry of the south front, the west elevation displays an outstanding example of the maxim, "form follows function." Since an outdoor terrace adjacent to the ballroom was desirable, if not essential, in those days before air-conditioning, the entire northwest corner of the building, above the spandrel between eleventh and twelfth floors, was replaced in the original design by a trellised roof garden. By 1948, this area had been enclosed in order to supply additional lavatory facilities to serve twelfth floor offices created by subdividing the former ballroom. The places where strict adherence to symmetry would have installed windows, were instead filled with blank panels of cast stone, and the cornice was left in its original configuration.

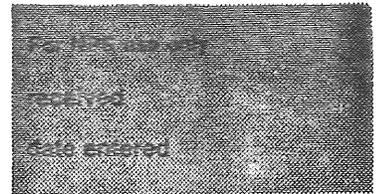
Iron tie-rods help to anchor the parapet wall, which carries the decorative cornice, to the roof. The roof deck itself is covered by a multi-ply composition. The machinery house, which serves the elevators and provides roof access, is clad in the same brown brick featured on the principal facade. Even though it cannot be seen from the street, this little structure carries its own cornice, decorated with a geometric motif, consisting of circles and squares. The north and east elevations of the main building are laid in American bond. The steel double-hung windows are glazed with wireglass supported with numerous muntins, for fire-code compliance. For the most part, the sash arrangement is three-over-three or two-over-two. The existing fire escape, on the northside, consists of slatted steel stairs and platforms original to the building, with one flight per floor.

One half-block to the east of the Capital Club Building is found the main business street of the city at the time of original construction, now Fayetteville Street Mall. The structure fills its 67x70 foot lot completely, as is usual in urban construction. Above the first floor a twenty-seven foot square setback was taken out of the northeast corner, resulting in an ell-shaped building layout.

Reaching the main entrance requires crossing a row of glass-block lighting panels set in the sidewalk. Each panel consists of nine rows of nine blocks, and the natural light which they transmit illuminates over four feet of additional basement space nearly the length of the south front. The actual entrance is made over a terrazo floor bearing the building name and the numeral "16," for its West Martin Street address. The 13x21 foot lobby itself displays a richness of trim characteristic

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of the Deco interior. Floor-to-ceiling marble walls surround a floor banded in contrasting colors. The ceiling is coved in a stepped moulding which forms a reverse ziggurat. Show windows and interior entrances for the shops to the left and right not only provide access from the lobby, but also help to furnish additional light and variety to the entrance area itself. Other features of the lobby include radiators from the existing heating plant, a Cutler mail chute/ letter box, a building directory, access to the central stairs, and the elevators. Period lighting fixtures are no longer present.

The second through ninth floors of the building originally provided a standardized layout of offices, approximately 13x17 feet, along an ell-shaped corridor, having a suite of five somewhat smaller ones sharing a common reception area at the east end of each floor. Since lavatory facilities were limited to a small room at the north end of the ell, each office was furnished with its own sink. During subsequent renovations over time, office spaces in the north-east area have been re-assigned the function of providing adequate restrooms. Each floor has a period water fountain and a mail drop. Some inappropriate partitioning and door replacement has taken place from floor to floor. For the greatest part, however, the original doors and trim are in place, and a number of doors, appearing to correspond roughly with those replaced, are now stored in the basement. Nearly all the office doors in the structure still carry the original, highly distinctive building hardware. A characteristic escutcheon featuring ziggurat stepping in two dimensions, as well as chevron detail and an overall geometric form, serves to unify the lock cylinder and doorknob assembly. The very same ziggurat and geometric motifs occur in the mail slot trim located at the base of many doors. The doors, beneath several layers of paint in many cases, are red oak, matching the mouldings and trim throughout the interior. Transom windows are still in place nearly everywhere, although the operating hardware no longer functions.

The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth floors, which once provided the Capital Club with its space for its own offices, as well as billiard room, lounges, kitchens, dining rooms, and the ballroom, have been converted into rental offices in the later years. Appropriate reuse of the rooms on the tenth and eleventh floors would not involve significant impact upon distinctive interior detail. Preservation of the ornate plaster moulding of the former ballroom, however, deserves special attention. Important structural members, including corner pillars, ceiling beams, and pilasters are dressed in ornamental plasterwork in order to raise the ceiling to its maximum height and to add drama to the building's most elaborate space. The style of this decoration is certainly not Deco, but rather broadly eclectic. Geometric themes are represented, to be sure, along with highly stylized eagles, but they are accompanied by beading, cording, and floral motifs as well. The most striking note is found in the set of wall medallions which depict, neither the Capital Club Building nor any other structure in or near Raleigh, but rather a sort of generic ziggurat skyscraper. A traditional wainscot furnishes a sober contrast to the extraordinary representations above.

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

**Specific dates** 1929/30 **Builder/Architect** Frank Buchanan Simpson

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

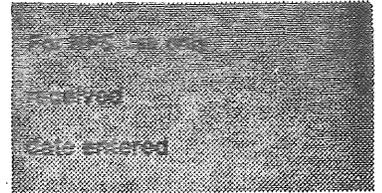
The Capital Club Building is significant to the commercial and social history of Raleigh during the early twentieth century. It was built for the Capital Club, which was one of the oldest and most prominent organizations for men in the South. Not only an important reminder of development at the State's Capital in the decade of the 1920's, the structure also serves as a recent example and influence in downtown adaptive reuse. With its collection of interior detail and its magnificent ballroom almost intact, the building represents most prominently the application of the Art Deco style to the special needs of a memorable Raleigh institution.

**Criteria Assessment:**

- A. The Capital Club Building is representative of the commercial development of the city of Raleigh during the expansion of the 1920's. Its rescue during the 1970's from the alteration or demolition which claimed other structures of similar vintage preserved a portion of streetscape extremely valuable to the revitalization efforts of the 1980's.
- B. The Capital Club Building is associated with the lives of the individuals who dominated the governmental, commercial, and industrial affairs of the state during the five decades beginning in 1885. Along with the structures it replaced, it provided a social, intellectual, and political meeting place for these men and their families.
- C. The Capital Club Building embodies the combination of Art Deco motifs with traditional regional architectural practice. Its distinctive interior and exterior detail remain substantially intact.

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The Capital Club Building is situated in the commercial district of Raleigh which is bounded on the north by the Capitol Square Historic District and, directly to the east, by the Moore Square Historic District. (See exhibit, Location Map and Nearby Historic Districts.) During the decade of 1920-1930, other important projects in this area included the Sir Walter Hotel (1922), the State Theatre (1923), the Professional Building (1925), the Carolina Hotel (1928), and the Raleigh Branch Bank and Trust Company offices (1920). No major commercial structure was built after completion of the Capital Club Building until the Durham Life Building (1942).

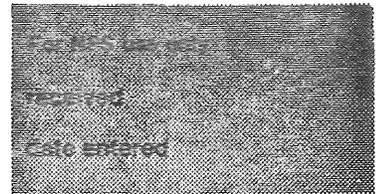
The Capital Club was chartered in August, 1885 for literary and social purposes. Biographical notes on several prominent members are included at the end of this section. For five years the Club was located in the Haywood Building, on the site of the present Ruffin Building. It then took on the second and third floors of the Henry Building (307 Fayetteville Street) until erection in 1898 of its first building at the corner of Martin and Salisbury Streets. 1/ The lot for this three-story structure was purchased from charter member William W. Vass. 2/ The Capital Club Construction Company was formed 3/ and borrowed money. 4/ The 1898 Club building was renovated in 1917 with proceeds from a refinancing arrangement with Jefferson Standard Insurance Company. 5/ By 1929, the Club had become "one of the oldest and most prominent organizations for men in the South," 6/ when President John W. Hinsdale and the Building Committee began to raise funds for a new fourteen to sixteen story office building. Architect Frank Buchanan Simpson drew the plans for a somewhat scaled down twelve story building. Simpson was local associate for P. Thornton Mayre on the Ruffin Building (1913). He was also architect for the remodelling of the Century Station Post Office (street level facade on Martin Street), the 1935 Wake County Courthouse and the old Apex City Hall. When the Club's new facilities were opened on the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth floors, November 14, 1930, 1,300 invitations were extended to members and prominent people throughout the state. Justices of the Supreme Court and Governor O. Max Gardner were honorary members. "Long one of the most important factors in the social and business life of Raleigh, it will have an even larger sphere of influence with its enlarged and better equipped quarters." 7/

Continued ownership of the new building by the Club became a casualty of the Depression when its Deed of Trust was foreclosed and the property sold. 8/ The Club itself continued in existence into the 1940's, ending up on the third floor of 8-1/2 West Hargett Street. 9/ The building served many office tenants, most notably Carolina Power & Light Company, whose headquarters remained at Martin and Salisbury until the completion of the Durham Life Building.

Relocation of downtown businesses to the suburbs threatened the economic stability of the commercial district during the 1960's and 1970's. "The... renovation of this building for office and commercial use was a landmark in adaptive use for downtown Raleigh". 10/ Purchase and improvement of the property by Harold Plummer made possible its continued economic usefulness at a time when many buildings downtown were being abandoned or demolished.

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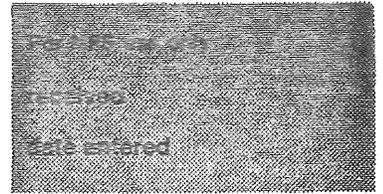
Upgrading of the building's office space to "Class A" status equivalent to that available in new and rehabilitated buildings along the adjacent Fayetteville Street Mall has been made possible by purchase of the property by Capital Club Associates. 11/

There are three nearby projects that have been certified as historic rehabilitations. (See exhibit, Nearby Tax Credit Projects) They include the Masonic Temple Building on Fayetteville Street Mall, the Professional Building on Hargett Street and the Lumsden-Boone Building on Fayetteville Street Mall.

Dr. James McKee had a distinguished career in the field of public health, serving as Secretary of the North Carolina State Medical Society, President of the Raleigh Medical Academy, and first superintendant of the Wake County Board of Health, among other offices. He was the first physician to instruct Blacks in medical science, as professor of the Leonard Medical College of Shaw University. 12/ Dr. F. T. Fuller held the post of first assistant physician to the North Carolina Insane Asylum for thirty-five years. At the end of his service, he was well-recognized in tributes such as the following: "There is not a more faithful public officer in this or any other state than Dr. Fuller. The State owes him for his faithful service for so many years." 13/ Judge Thomas C. Fuller was named in 1891 by President Harrison to the Court of Private Land Claims, a body charged with the responsibility of establishing title to lands in the American Southwest. 14/ William L. Saunders served in the North Carolina Senate before becoming a newspaper editor. In 1876 he established the Raleigh Observer. Subsequently, he wrote a history of colonial government, while serving as Secretary of State. 15/ Richard B. Raney was best known to his contemporaries as proprietor of the Yarborough House, the Raleigh hotel most frequented by visiting legislators. In addition, he was a bank and manufacturing company director, as well as manager of the Atlantic Hotel at Morehead City. 16/ Rufus S. Tucker was already a successful Raleigh merchant at the outbreak of the Civil War. After quartermaster and commissary service to the Confederacy, he expanded the family firm considerably. He was a director of the Raleigh National Bank, and also a major stockholder or director of four different railroads. He helped to form the Chamber of Commerce, being elected its first president in 1887. Despite all his business and civic activities, Tucker found time to serve as an officer of the School for the Deaf and Blind for over thirty years. 17/ Bennehan Cameron maintained a lifelong interest in improvement of agriculture, appropriate to the management of his 6000 acres of land. In addition to his banking and cotton mill interests, Cameron devoted great attention to railroad building and consolidation. The best known of these activities was the merger of numerous small lines into the Seaboard Airline. These rail holdings notwithstanding, he introduced a bill in the General Assembly for the issuance of fifty million dollars in road and highway improvement bonds. 18/ Judge J. Crawford Biggs became acting dean of the University of North Carolina Law School at the age of only twenty-seven. In the same year he was instrumental in the founding of the North Carolina Bar Association, serving first as secretary and treasurer, later as president, and finally as vice-president of the American Bar Association. In 1933, he was appointed Solicitor General of the United States. 19/ Among the honorary members of the Capital Club were the Governor and Supreme Court Justices. Judge Heriot Clarkson is as prominent in North Carolina history as a

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prohibitionist as he was as a jurist. The 1908 Act banning the manufacture and sale of liquor anticipated national prohibition by one and one-half decades. He was also active in the Historical Commission and the YMCA. 20/ Judge Henry G. Conner added judicial service to a banking, legal, and legislative career. In 1885, his sponsorship of the Conner Act brought about the registration of deeds, greatly regularizing and stabilizing land titles in North Carolina. 21/ These men were among the state's civic, industrial, commercial, and political leaders, who made up the membership of the Capital Club in the decades from the 1880's to the 1930's. The noted historian, Samuel A. Ashe, from whose work many of these biographical sketches are drawn, was himself a member.

Footnotes:

1. News & Observer, January 29, 1928
2. Deed Book 135, page 225
3. Deed Book 147, page 436, page 448
4. Deed Book 166, page 366
5. Deed Book 317, page 526
6. News & Observer, November 14, 1930
7. News & Observer, November 15, 1930
8. Deed Book 648, page 577
9. Raleigh City Directory, 1945-6
10. Architectural and Historic Inventory of Raleigh, North Carolina.  
L. L. Harris, City of Raleigh, 1978
11. News & Observer, January 5, 1985
12. Ashe, Samuel A., Biographical History of North Carolina (1905)
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Powell, William S., Dictionary of North Carolina Biography (1979)
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

The Raleigh News and Observer  
The Raleigh Times  
Raleigh Household Directory-1930  
Raleigh City Directory-1945

Samuel A. Ashe, ed., Biographical History of North Carolina(1905).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .11 acres

Quadrangle name Raleigh West, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	7	7	1	3	2	8	0	3	1	9	6	1	1	6	0	1	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 property being nominated is lot 4, Zone A, Map # 22. A copy of the map is enclosed; the property is outlined in red.

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

state N/A code  county  N/A code

state  code  county  code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jane E. Sheffield, Consultant, Comprehensive Resource Development Center

organization DePasquale Thompson Wilson date September 16, 1985

street & number P.O. Box 3636, 111 Corcoran St. telephone 919-688-8102

city or town Durham state 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 William S. Rupp

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-10-85

For NPS use only

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

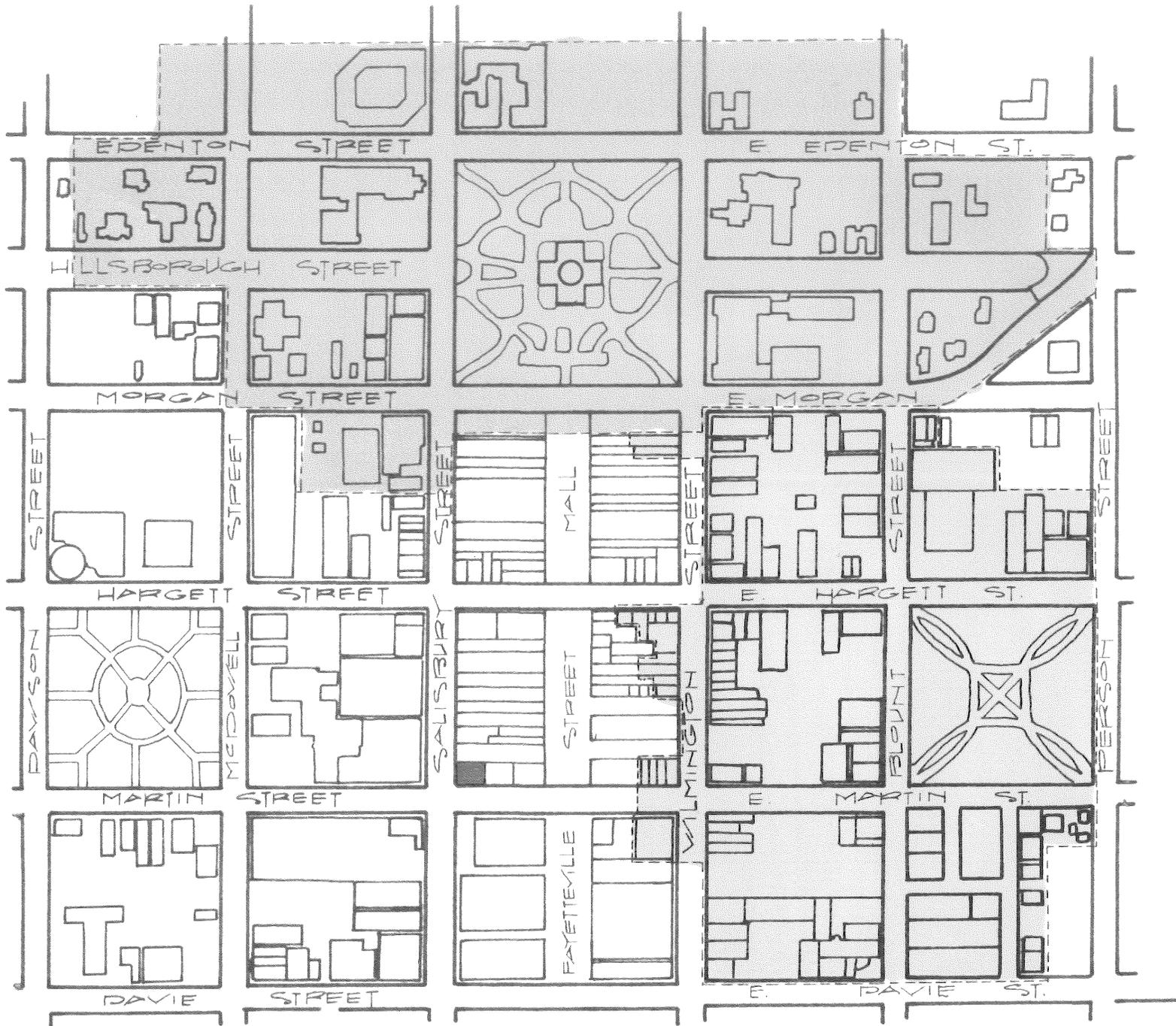
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

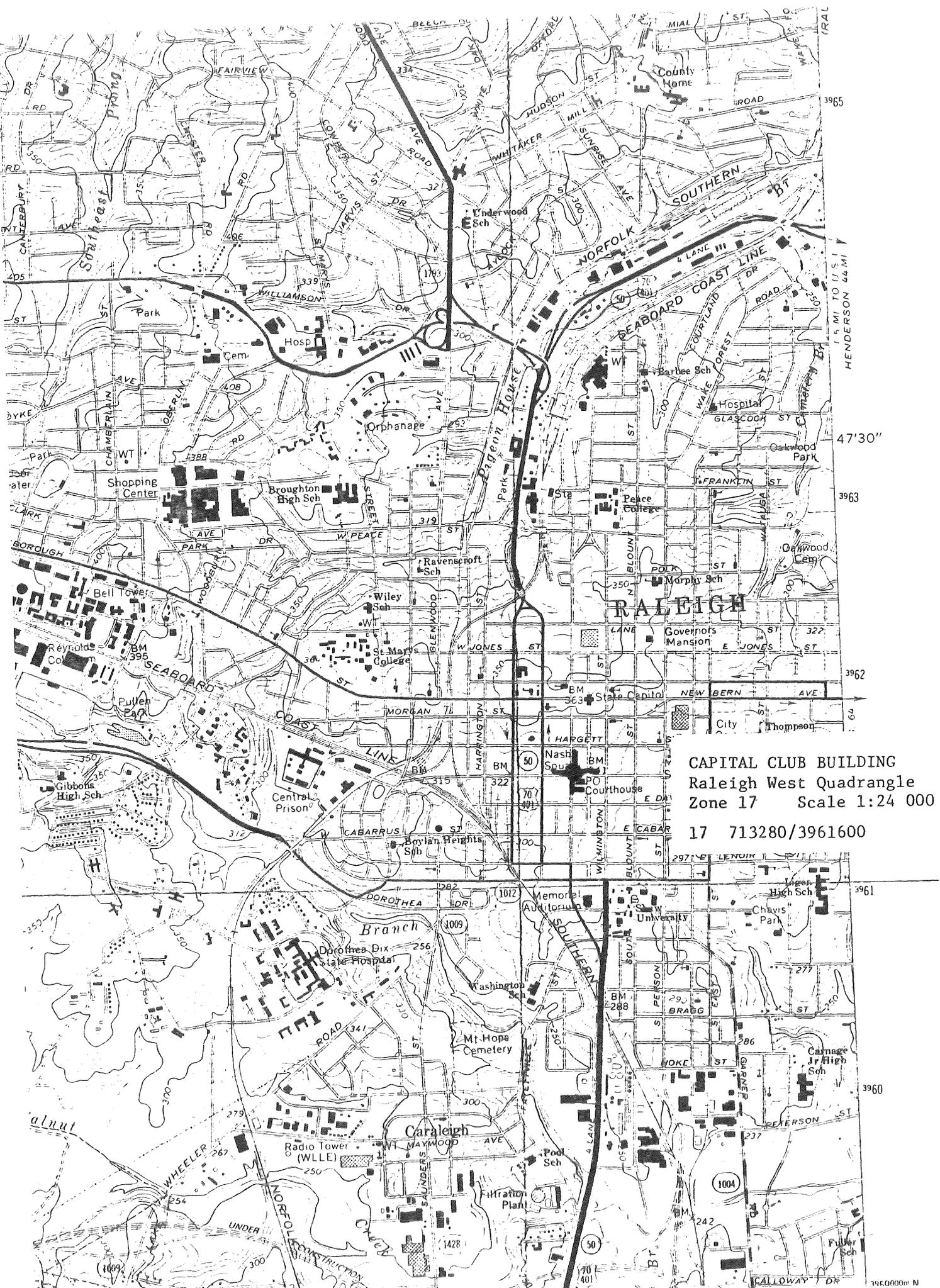
Chief of Registration



	CAPITAL CLUB BUILDING
	CAPITOL AREA HISTORIC DISTRICT
	MOORE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

# CAPITAL CLUB BUILDING

LOCATION MAP & NEARBY HISTORIC DISTRICTS



CAPITAL CLUB BUILDING  
 Raleigh West Quadrangle  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
 17 713280/3961600



McCormick

McCormick

LEARNER