

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Johnston Building

Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, MK1850, Listed 08/12/2025

Nomination by Cindy Hamilton, Erin Wiser, Caitlin Herrnstadt, Heritage Consulting Group

Photographs by Erin Wiser, December 2023



Exterior, view looking west at South Elevation.



Interior, First Floor, Lobby, view looking southeast.

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Johnston Building

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

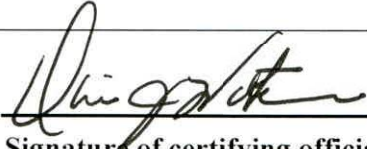
2. LocationStreet & number: 212 S. Tryon StreetCity or town: Charlotte State: NC County: MecklenburgNot For Publication: ☐ N/A Vicinity: ☐ N/A**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B X C ___ D

		
Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer Date		
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Title :		State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Beaux Arts

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Limestone, Brick, Synthetics

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Johnston Building (1924,1929) is a seventeen-story Beaux Arts office building located in the downtown center of Charlotte, North Carolina. The building is located at 212 S. Tryon Street on Mecklenburg County Tax Parcel ID #07301613, which is roughly 0.27 acres in size. Originally constructed as fifteen-stories in 1924; two additional stories were added in 1929. The seventeen-story steel-frame building is clad in limestone on the six bay façade (south elevation). Buff brick clads the secondary elevations. The flat roof features a mechanical penthouse clad in brick. The commercial office building's first floor interior features a historic character defining lobby and four tenant units on either side of the central corridor and central elevator area. The upper floors contain the historic central elevator lobbies and non-historic finishes within tenant spaces. A basement with mailroom and utilitarian spaces is accessible via an original stone and marble staircase with secondary mechanical and storage rooms. Alterations have occurred within the interior throughout the building's history in tenant spaces. Some of these alterations include replacement floors, ceilings, and reconfiguration of demising walls. It is known that interior renovations occurred at the Johnston Building between 1981-1983 to provide leasable office space at seventeen floors of the building and ground floor retail space. During this renovation, it is likely that the windows were also replaced, though the one-over-one configuration and fenestration remains unchanged. The property retains its historic integrity despite these interior renovations, as the exterior character defining features and materials and interior floor plates remain the same.

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Narrative Description

Setting:

The Johnston Building is located in the urban, downtown center of Charlotte, North Carolina (*Figure 1*) with the surrounding area largely comprised of high-rise office buildings, ranging in size from ten to twenty stories. Additional structures within a half a mile radius include one to two-story commercial buildings, stadiums, museums, performing art centers, asphalt surface parking lots, and concrete parking decks. The majority of buildings and structures within the surrounding area appear to be recent construction, dating to the late-twentieth or early twenty-first centuries, or constructed during the earlier portions of the second half of the twentieth century. The surrounding streets are organized in a grid-pattern with brick and concrete sidewalks, metal streetlamps, and street trees.

The Johnston Building largely constitutes a roughly 0.27-acre rectilinear parcel that fronts S. Tryon Street to the south, a tall mid-century office building to the east, a non-historic one-story commercial building to the west, and a six-story concrete parking deck to the north. The building sits on a NW to SE axis, but is described using cardinal directions for clarity. The broader city block is bounded by S. Tryon Street to the south, W. 4th Street to the east, W. 3rd Street to the west, and S. Church Street to the north. There is a brick and stone sidewalk located between the front of the building and S. Tryon Street, which lies outside the parcel boundary. Along the sidewalk, there are metal benches, metal streetlamps, and raised granite planter beds with street trees and vegetation, which also lie outside of the parcel boundary. No site features are historic to the property or within the National Register boundary. To the east of the site, is a narrow service alleyway between the Johnston Building and the taller office building. The north elevation is secondary and abuts a non-historic parking garage. A small, covered concrete walkway bridges the gap between the parking garage and rear access to the lobby of the Johnston Building. The west elevation abuts a side alleyway with gated access to the front sidewalk along the façade.

Exterior:

The seventeen-story, steel-frame building features one street-facing elevation and three secondary elevations. The façade faces southeast and is clad in limestone with elements of bronze, brass, and terra cotta ornamentation (*Photos 1 to 4; Photo Map 1*). The facade measures six bays wide and features the primary street-level entrance. The secondary elevations are clad in a buff brick, matching the color of the limestone façade (*Photos 1, 5 to 7*). All elevations feature replacement, one-over-one double-hung metal windows at the upper floors which appear to date to the 1981-1983 renovation. The otherwise flat roof with parapet has a mechanical brick penthouse at the seventeenth story.

The smooth limestone clad facade is the most ornamental of all elevations (*Photos 1 to 4*). The organization of the façade follows the general base-shaft-capital motif of tall office buildings with a three-story base, eight-story shaft, and a six-story capital. A granite water table extends along the first story. Three evenly spaced, two-story arches contain storefront windows that flank the primary center entrance. Tripartite storefront windows, set in brass frames, fill the flanking

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bays. The glazing is non-historic set within historic brass frames. A decorative bronze band with four floral ornaments set in rectangular frames separates the first and second stories of the storefront windows. Above the pilasters, the bronze squares contain continuous coursing of smaller floral motifs. Above each group of bronze squares is a tripartite configuration of replacement glazing set in brass frame arches. The central bay at the first and second stories features a primary, recessed entrance and second story arched tripartite brass-framed window with identical bronze detailing. The recessed entrance features a historic marble floor with circular motif JB for Johnston Building (*Figure 8*). A central set of double-leaf doors leads to an entrance vestibule which provides access to the first-floor lobby. The commercial storefronts on either side of the entrance vestibule have external entrances, including single-leaf metal frame doors, creating a trapezoid shape for the marble entry. Two ornate bronze pilasters with capitals flank the double-leaf glazed brass primary access doors that feature sidelights and central transom panel. The secondary storefront doors are replacement painted metal and glazed doors with sidelight and glazed transoms.

Above the recessed entrance doors, there is a small bronze band that separates the central fanlight and side transoms from the door frames. Two historic brass sconces fixed to the limestone flank recessed entrance bay. A small stringcourse divides the second and third stories of the base. The string course features terra cotta floral ornaments and an oval shield with a tree etching above the center arch. Six rectangular window openings with 1/1 windows pierce the third story, two above each of the arched windows. Rectangular stone panels separate each window, with larger panels emulating the appearance of window openings.

A denticulated stringcourse separates the base from the shaft between the third and fourth stories (*Photo 11*). The fourth through eleventh stories of the south elevation—the shaft—are identical. Six window openings with simple stone sills pierce each story. The windows align with the spacing of the third story, without the use of raised panels between the windows, creating an effect of smooth limestone vertical emphasis between the stories. Smooth limestone quoining defines the edges of the shaft, which is otherwise unornamented.

A simple stone stringcourse separates the shaft from the six-story, tripartite capital of the building. Three-story fluted stone pilasters with Corinthian capitals evenly divide the six bays of the building (*Photo 4*). Smooth stone pilasters with egg-and-dart molding flank the outer window bays. The three-story window units feature historic 1/1 brass windows at each story separated by decorative brass spandrel panels. The pilasters support a stone entablature that separates the fourteenth and fifteenth stories. Smooth stone pilasters evenly divide the six window bays of the fifteenth story, the top story between 1924 and 1929. Limestone trim surrounds each window opening. An ornate terra cotta frieze, with stone urns at the east and west ends, caps the fifteenth story. Two-story stone pilasters with simple capitals divide and flank the window bays on the sixteenth and seventeenth stories, constructed in 1929. The center five pilasters support a simple stone entablature with circular medallions beneath a stone parapet.

The entire west elevation is clad in buff brick and measures nine bays wide (*Photos 6 and 7*). The first story features seven storefront style window openings along the north end of the

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elevation, while the south end is void of openings. The replacement storefronts are comprised of aluminum-framing with six-lites. Located centrally within each of systems is an inset fan-lite window design. Floors two through fifteen feature double-hung one-over-one replacement metal windows with simple stone sills from c. 1981-1983 spaced in a semi-paired fashion with larger vertical spacing located between the pairs of windows throughout in their original fenestration pattern. The sixteenth and seventeenth stories largely feature aluminum-framed tripartite windows, save for the southernmost bay which features double-hung one-over-one replacement metal windows. The tripartite windows feature a simplistic aesthetic with evenly spaced vertical mullions located between the lites.

The secondary north elevation abuts a rear alleyway (*Photo 7*). The elevation is clad in a buff brick that matches the east and west elevations. Like these elevations, the windows are one-over-one double-hung c. 1981-1983 replacement units. The sixteenth and seventeenth stories have tripartite windows. The elevation has a brick mechanical vent attached to the surface that routes up from the base of the building to the rooftop. A pedestrian entrance provides rear access to the building along a raised platform that provides access to an unassociated parking garage.¹ The single-leaf non-historic metal door has sidelights and transom panels.

The east elevation faces a small alleyway adjacent to a modern office building and measures nine bays wide (*Photo 8*). The elevation is clad in buff brick. The first story has metal-framed replacement windows, similar in configuration to the west elevation. Some of the windows feature non-historic metal vents within the framework. Like the west elevation, the second through fifteenth stories feature double-hung replacement c. 1981-1983 metal-framed windows. The sixteenth and seventeenth stories have tripartite windows.

The Johnston Building has a flat rooftop with masonry parapet. Along the central section of the rooftop, there is a one-and-one-half story brick-clad mechanical penthouse. Synthetic membrane clads the flat roof with various mechanical equipment and vents.

Interior:

The Beaux-Arts design elements continue from the exterior to the interior, particularly within the entrance lobby. The commercial spaces feature more utilitarian finishes. The public first floor features a historic lobby with two commercial units to the south perimeter along S. Tryon Street. The south end commercial units are accessible via the exterior and interior of the building. The upper floors are accessible via four elevator cabs and two utilitarian stairs. The elevators are located north of center to all floors. There are three ganged elevator shafts and a freight elevator to the north end. Three elevators provide passage between all floors. The fourth passenger elevator terminates on the fifteenth floor. The staircase accessed from the lobby continues up to the seventeenth floor and into the basement. The north stair provides access from the first floor to the rooftop penthouse and was added later to the building c. 1929. Office spaces occupy the upper floors with centrally located elevator lobbies and stair access remaining central to each floor plan (*Photos 17, 18, 20*). The building was renovated in the 1980s, replacing a large

¹ This feature is located outside of the historic boundary for the building and is thus not a contributing nor non-contributing structure count on the resource.

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amount of finishes at the upper floors. The lobby, however, retains its historic volume and finish. The basement features a mailroom, tenant space, utilitarian storage room, and a secondary mechanical space.

The first floor features a central corridor and elevator lobby, both of which retain a high degree of historic materials, design, and workmanship. The lobby extends from the primary south entrance to the rear, north, alley entrance (*Photos 8 to 11; Photo Key 2*). The corridor features historic marble floors, marble walls, and an ornate barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling with coffers. The vaulted ceiling extends the length of the entire corridor. The elevator lobby features four elevator bays, with pressed metal doors set within marble openings. Historic push buttons and elevator indicators are located above and between the elevator cabs. A marble staircase with carved balustrade extends between the basement and second floors (*Photos 10 & 12*). Beyond the second floor, the stairs feature utilitarian finishes, including concrete treads, painted metal risers, painted simple metal handrails, and plaster perimeter walls. The stairs extend to the seventeenth floor.

Commercial spaces flank the central corridor on the first floor with primary entrances in the recessed main building entrance from S. Tryon Street. These spaces feature replacement finishes, including tile floors, exposed concrete ceilings with mechanicals, and painted gypsum board walls with accents of tile and wood paneling. To the rear of the first floor, there are two additional tenant units including a small convenience store and reception space. Both spaces feature non-historic finishes including tile and luxury vinyl tile (LVT) floors and a combination of dropped acoustical ceiling tile (ACT) ceilings and painted gypsum board ceilings. The rear tenant spaces are not accessible from the exterior of the building. These storefront entrances are located within the central north-south lobby.

The upper floors (*Photo Keys 3 to 9*) have functioned as leasable tenant space since the building's initial construction in 1924. As such, various tenants have made routine updates to the upper floors to meet their office needs. Finishes, however, generally date to a 1980s renovation of the building. Although the finishes have changed, the primary public circulation of the building, inclusive of its centrally located elevator lobbies and stair access have remained central to each floor plan (*Photos 17, 18, 20*). Retention of certain historic finishes within these upper floor lobbies include areas of marble flooring in the elevator lobbies.

The upper floors feature a variety of layouts beyond the elevator lobbies (*Photos 14 to 16, 19*). Certain floors feature more open floorplans with few demising walls while others feature individual tenant spaces with varying floorplans and finishes. Common finishes include ACT ceilings, painted gypsum board walls, and a combination of LVT, carpet, and tile floors. Original structural columns are located in uniform locations at the upper floors. All columns have been painted or are covered in gypsum board. The stair towers located along the east and west sides of the elevator lobbies at each floor are utilitarian in finishes, including plaster perimeter walls, painted metal stairs with metal risers and treads.

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The basement is accessible from the first floor lobby via the primary marble stair or elevators. The basement features a central corridor with carpet floors, dropped ACT ceilings, and a combination of painted gypsum board and plaster walls. The centrally located elevator lobby features two elevator cabs (the two northernmost), unlike the three or four cabs of the upper floor levels. A small mailroom is located to the east of the main corridor. A secondary storage space with stone floors and exposed structure is located to the south perimeter. A utilitarian mechanical space is located to the north perimeter of the basement. This room features a slightly higher ceiling with concrete floors, exposed painted brick walls, and an exposed ceiling structure with MEPs.

Alterations:

The exterior of the building largely retains its historic appearance, with replacement of the windows and secondary doors being the only changes. Windows, however, appear to match the historic one-over-one configuration shown in historic images (*Figures 9 & 10*). Interior renovations occurred at the Johnston Building between 1981-1983. These renovations were conducted by Howard, Howard & Barnard and Little Construction company to provide leasable office space at seventeen floors of the building and ground floor retail space.² During this renovation, it is likely that the windows were replaced and new finishes were installed at the upper floors including carpet, ACT ceilings, and demising walls. The first floor received new retail spaces within the historic tenant spaces flanking the historic central corridor. Despite these alterations and subsequent updates of finishes in independent, leasable tenant spaces, the building still reads as a finished office building in downtown Charlotte.

Integrity Assessment: The Johnston Building is an intact representative example of a Beaux Arts-style skyscraper. Constructed as a commercial office building in 1924, the Johnston Building retains a moderate to high level of integrity, despite alterations. Designed by accomplished architect William Lee Stoddart, the Johnston Building continues to convey the characteristics of a Beaux Arts skyscraper, with base-shaft-capital form, symmetrical design, geometric massing, and association with grand scale.

Location & Setting: The Johnston Building remains in its historic location and therefore retains integrity of location. When initially constructed, the Johnston Building was located in an urban downtown setting surrounded by mixed-use buildings. Today, the surrounding area remains a dense urban downtown of mixed-use buildings. A large portion of buildings in the surrounding area date to the 1980s through 2010s, making the Johnston Building one of a few older buildings in the area. Despite redevelopment of surrounding buildings over time, the setting remains intact. The Johnston Building is located along S. Tryon Street which currently remains a major artery through the downtown district and therefore, the building retains its integrity of setting.

Design, Materials, & Workmanship: The Johnston Building is one of the few examples of the Beaux Arts style applied to a skyscraper in Charlotte. Its high-style design at the exterior and interior first floor remain largely intact. The building's exterior base-shaft-capital form,

² "The Case for Restoration," *The Charlotte News*, November 28, 1981.

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symmetrical design, and geometric massing maintain an ordered appearance typical of Beaux Arts style designs. Smaller details, like the bronze friezes, terra cotta floral ornaments, and denticulated stringcourse add detailed interest to the building. The two-story arched windows on the façade incorporate the style's association with grand scale.

In the interior, the first floor retains the original central corridor and elevator lobby with flanking tenant spaces located to the front and rear of the building. The lobby's prominence and its rich, interior materials, including marble floors, marble walls, and plaster ceilings date to the original design of the space. The original ornate barrel-vaulted plaster ceiling with coffers remains a major focal point and extends the length of the entire corridor. The elevator lobby also retains its original design and features four elevator bays, with pressed brass doors set within marble openings. Original push buttons and elevator indicators are located above and between the elevator cabs. The original marble staircase with carved balustrade also remains intact and extends between the basement and second floors of the building. The upper floor leasable tenant spaces have seen additional changes to finishes as tenant turnover and modifications have occurred throughout the building's one-hundred-year history. However, retention of the core of the building at all floors includes the elevator lobby with marble floors, the south stair tower (north added later), and structural columns, therefore keeping the overall floorplan intact. New finishes have replaced the historic, however the upper floor spaces have largely retained a finished appearance, with newer mechanical equipment concealed in ceilings and walls. Therefore, the buildings' exterior design elements retain integrity as a Beaux Arts style skyscraper. Within the interior, the first floor lobby area retains integrity of the Beaux Arts style.

Similar to design, the building's exterior and interior materials are largely intact and are reflective of the building's high-style and use as an upscale and exclusive skyscraper office building. The architect's utilization of high-style materials on the exterior including limestone bronze, brass, and terra cotta, all remain intact. The one-over-one window replacements exist in the historic openings of the building and remain consistent with the historic fenestration pattern. The workmanship of the plaster ceiling and overall artistry of the space remains intact. New finishes have replaced the historic ones, however the upper floor spaces have largely retained a finished appearance, with newer mechanical equipment concealed in ceilings and walls. Changes to finishes in leasable tenant spaces are common in a multi-tenant office building such as the Johnston Building.

Feeling & Association: The building's physical presence within the downtown core in addition to its continued usage as a multi-tenant commercial skyscraper evokes its architectural design and commercial association with the city of Charlotte. Despite these changes, the Johnston Building remains an important and recognizable city landmark associated with the early twentieth century growth of Charlotte, therefore preserving the building's feeling and association.

Statement of Archaeological Potential:

The Johnston Building, constructed in 1924, is unlikely to contain intact and significant archaeological resources that either predate or contribute to the period of significance of the

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building. The surrounding landscape has been heavily disturbed by road and sidewalk improvements and demolition and construction of a neighboring parking lot and buildings. As a result, the NC Office of State Archaeology does not recommend a statement of archaeological potential for this National Register eligible property.

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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.)

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1924;1929

Significant Dates

1924

1929

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stoddart, William Lee

Hunkin-Conkey Construction Company

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Johnston Building (1924, 1929) is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an embodiment of a Beaux Arts style skyscraper in Charlotte possessing high and intact artistic value. The subject building is also representative of Charlotte's rapid urbanization and commercial shift during the 1920s. The Beaux Arts style, an architectural design employed in other early-20th century skyscrapers throughout the country is a high style design. Use of luxury materials enticed many high caliber tenants and served to create a landmark building that transformed the Charlotte skyline. Designed by architect W. L. Stoddart, the building is the only remaining example of a Stoddart design in Charlotte. The intact base, shaft, and capital composition of the building is typical of early twentieth-century skyscrapers. Its Beaux Arts ornamentation, including frieze, denticulated stringcourse, classical pilasters, and its material composition highlight its intact early twentieth-century construction. Although interior alterations have occurred at the upper floors, the first-floor lobby retains a high amount of its historic materials. This, combined with a consistent elevator lobby at each floor, allows the building to continue to convey its historic architectural design. Furthermore, it serves as one of only a few buildings remaining from that era and one of the only Beaux Arts style skyscrapers that still exists in Charlotte. The period of significance for the Johnston Building is the completion date of 1924, and the addition of the sixteenth and seventeenth stories in 1929.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Developmental History of the Johnston Building and Downtown Charlotte

The construction of the Johnston Building can be traced back to the surge in industrialization in North Carolina following the end of Reconstruction. In Charlotte, the rise of the cotton textile industry spurred widespread construction of textile mills in and around Mecklenburg County.³ Reconstruction brought with it a "new class of investors, industrialists, and businessmen" who believed that in order to find financial success in the South, they must stray from traditional farming and agriculture and move instead towards industrialization and urbanization.⁴ This trend transformed Charlotte into the metropolitan city it is today.

During the 1870s and 1880s, Charlotte began to see huge commercial and economic growth, and it soon became the most economically significant place in Mecklenburg County.⁵ Many

³ "History Timeline," *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*, accessed November 30, 2023.
<https://www.cmstory.org/history-timeline>.

⁴ Dan L. Morrill, "A History of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County," Chapter 7, 83,
<http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/History-of-Charlotte-and-Mecklenburg-County.pdf>.

⁵ Morrill, "A History of Charlotte," 82.

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motivated businessmen were drawn to the area, wanting to take advantage of the town's "strategic location and its excellent railroad connections," according to historian Dan Morrill.⁶ Commercial and economic growth created a huge population boom. Charlotte went from a small city of 7,094 residents in 1880 to what Morrill calls an "industrial and financial metropolis" with a population of 46,338 people in 1920.⁷

The 1920s was an era of prosperity and growth in Charlotte. According to a 1927 publication by the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, the amount of money invested in the construction of new buildings more than tripled between 1920 and 1926. During this decade several landmark buildings were constructed in Charlotte (*Figure 2*), including the Hotel Charlotte (*Figure 3*), the First National Bank (*Figure 4*), Mayfair Manor, the old City Hall (*Figure 5*), the (former) courthouse, and the Johnston Building.⁸

With the increased investment into the city, local business leaders in various industries sought Charlotte as a destination for further growth. One textile industrialist in the area, Charles Worth Johnston, had his sights set on expanding business and industry into Charlotte. Johnston was born in Cabarrus County, North Carolina in 1861, and moved to Charlotte to pursue a career in the textile industry. After attending Davidson College, Johnston became a merchant with the Stough Cornelius Company, which controlled Cornelius Mills, where he soon became superintendent. In 1892 he moved to Charlotte and took a job as the Secretary of the Highland Park Manufacturing Company, and by 1911 he became the company president. Johnston went on to build his own textile empire. His first acquisition was Anchor (Cotton) Mills located in Huntersville, Mecklenburg County. The mill was constructed in 1897 and expanded in 1902.⁹ As Johnston expanded his reach, he formed at least three companies to handle his various holdings: the Johnston Manufacturing Company; the Johnston Mills Company; and the Johnston Spinning Company (formerly Union Mills Company).¹⁰ By 1924, Johnston was listed as the president of Johnston Mills Company, M&F Bonded Warehouse Company, Highland Park Manufacturing Company, and Johnston Manufacturing Company. Johnston also served as vice-president of Commercial National Bank.¹¹

In 1923, Johnston's Anchor Mills Company expanded into the construction business and purchased the lot at 212 S. Tryon Street in Charlotte from the Textile Office Building Company

⁶ Morrill, "A History of Charlotte," 82.

⁷ Morrill, "A History of Charlotte," 83.

⁸ Mary Beth Gatza, *Survey and Research Report of Johnston Building* (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1991), n.p.; The Charlotte Hotel is no longer extant, demolished in 1988; The First National Bank, Mayfair Manor, the Old City Hall, and the former Courthouse are all still extant.

⁹ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Johnston Mill," Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1993, <http://landmarkscommission.org/2016/12/12/johnston-mill/>, Accessed May 2024.

¹⁰ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Johnston Mill." In 1969, more than two decades after his death, the three merged into Johnston Manufacturing Company.

¹¹ Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

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who had owned the site since 1919. The Trust Building previously occupied the site until it burned down in December 1922.¹² In 1923, an announcement in the *Charlotte Observer* newspaper details the proposal for a fifteen-story office building, of which William Lee (W.L.) Stoddart was set to be the architect, while Hunkin-Conkey Construction Company was hired as the builders.¹³ Stoddart was already an acclaimed architect in Charlotte, despite operating out of New York, having designed the twelve-story Hotel Charlotte building located at the 327 W. Trade Street (not extant) (*Figure 3*). C.W. Johnston was an investor in this building as well and likely met Stoddart through this endeavor.¹⁴ The Hotel Charlotte was still under construction when they broke ground on the Johnston Building. Nevertheless, Stoddart's impressive portfolio of "skyscraper" hotels in east coast cities gained him widespread popularity. This was especially exciting in Charlotte, where new urban "skyscraper" development was just beginning.

When the Johnston Building opened to tenants in 1924, it was the tallest building in Charlotte.¹⁵ Named after C.W. Johnston himself, the building housed Johnston's corporate headquarters as well as other offices.¹⁶ It is unclear which floors the company inhabited. The original fifteen-story office building was designed in the Beaux Arts style with a grand front entrance and first floor lobby design that both still exist today. The office building was designed to house individual tenants with a central elevator lobby at each floor. However, an article from the *Charlotte Observer* states the building's completed floorplan included 450 individual offices.¹⁷ In 1924, the rental agent for the building, Thomas Griffith, described the building as "already largely booked as to tenants and will likely have a compliment of occupants when it is ready to open."¹⁸ Charlotte City Directories reveal some of the original tenants, including the Southern Bell Telephone Company, various cotton brokers like the Charlotte Cotton Exchange, realty companies, insurance companies, and accountants.¹⁹

The Johnston Building was the tallest building in Charlotte for two years until 1926, when the extant First National Bank Building at 110-112 S. Tryon Street surpassed it at twenty stories high (*Figure 4*).²⁰ In 1928, the Hunkin-Conkey Construction Company began construction on the

¹² "Costly Flame Does \$400,000 Damages Here," *Charlotte News*, December 18, 1922.

¹³ "Begin Breaking Ground for Johnston Building." *Charlotte Observer*, March 23, 1923; Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

¹⁴ Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

¹⁵ Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

¹⁶ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Johnston Mill."

¹⁷ "Johnston Building Big Single Project," *Charlotte Observer*, February 10, 1924; Research did not yield original floor plans of the building and its fifteen floors.

¹⁸ Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

¹⁹ Ernest H. Miller, *Charlotte, North Carolina City Directory, 1925*, North Carolina Collection, <https://lib.digitalnc.org/record/25446?ln=en&v=pdf>.

²⁰ *Survey and Research Report – First National Bank Building - 110-112 South Tryon, Charlotte, NC*. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 2007.

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sixteenth and seventeenth stories of the Johnston building.²¹ By 1929, these two floors were complete, and the Johnston Building stood at its current height of seventeen stories.

The Johnston Building continued to operate as leasable office space since its opening. Between 1940 and 1960, businesses such as insurance companies (Representatives of New York Insurance Co., Ralph Harvy Fleming Jr. Insurance, John F. Durham Insurance), investment companies (Kirchofer and Arnold, Inc, Lewis G. Rogers and Co.), and financial companies (Hornblower & Weeks, and Sterling Fund Associates, Inc) occupied the office space (Representatives of New York Insurance Co., Ralph Harvy Fleming Jr. Insurance, John F. Durham Insurance)²² The Anchor Mills Company owned the Johnston Building until c. 1975, when Charles Worth Johnston's son, David R. Johnston, sold the building.²³ Coincidentally, the 1970s was a time of great economic change and urban redevelopment in downtown Charlotte (*Figure 6*). During the 1970s, the state of North Carolina refrained from instituting the commonly strict banking regulations that other states were implementing at this time, thus creating an attraction for businesses to flock to the state, specifically Charlotte since it was its metropolitan epicenter.²⁴ As such, the city became the new hub for major banks during the 1970s-1980s.

Since Anchor Mills Company sold the building around 1975, it has had various owners, all of whom have maintained its commercial usage in downtown Charlotte. A major interior renovation of the upper floors occurred in the 1980s. However, the building has always been utilized for commercial office space and remains in this use to the present day.

Criterion C – Architecture

The Johnston Building is eligible under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Johnston Building is one of few examples in Charlotte embodying the Beaux Arts style. Its Beaux Arts style possesses high artistic value and is one of few Beaux Arts skyscrapers. The intact base, shaft, and capital composition of the building is typical of early twentieth-century high-rise office buildings. Its Beaux Arts ornamentation, including friezes, denticulated stringcourses, classical pilasters, and its material composition highlight its intact early twentieth-century construction. Further, it serves as only one of a few commercial buildings from that style that still exist in Charlotte.

²¹ "Preparing to Add to Johnston Building," *Charlotte News*, June 6, 192; It is unclear if the addition was designed by Stoddart.

²² "Advertisements," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 10, 1951; "Advertisements," *The Charlotte Observer*, July 9, 1944; "Advertisements," *The Charlotte Observer*, November 12, 1944; "Hornblower and Weeks Plans a Move...Celebrations," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 15, 1964; "Advertisements," *The Charlotte Observer*, June 19, 1960.

²³ Gatza, *Johnston Building*.

²⁴ Natasha Frost, "How Charlotte, North Carolina became the banking hub of the American South," <https://qz.com/1545417/charlotte-becomes-major-banking-hub-due-to-bbt-suntrust-merger>; accessed Dec. 19, 2024

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Beaux Arts Style

Beaux Arts style architecture was pervasive throughout Europe and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The founding of the Beaux Arts style is most commonly associated with the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. This French school of architecture and fine arts attracted many successful American architects, including Richard Morris Hunt, who was considered an exemplar of the Beaux Arts style in the United States.²⁵ The style was further popularized by its extensive usage in civic and commercial buildings around the country.

French classicism and neoclassicism were major components in the evolution of this style.²⁶ Many examples of these earlier iterations of the style looked to combine Greek and Imperial Roman architecture, Italian Renaissance, and other Baroque examples. The synthesized combination of Greek and Roman structural systems is what separates this style from other classical ones.²⁷ Unlike these models, the Beaux Arts buildings in the United States employed modern technology to construct the building, meaning many “structural” features such as columns and quoins, were purely decorative. This employ of decoration signified the style’s identity and emphasis on the importance of beauty and ornament. As a result of this high degree of decoration and ornament and its associated high cost, many examples of Beaux Arts-style buildings are civic, educational, or commercial. Although examples of Beaux Arts-style apartments exist in major cities like New York and Chicago, the predominant usage of these buildings is public or commercial, as a way to impress the viewer or visitor.

The Beaux Arts style is identifiable through a variety of character-defining features, most commonly associated with classical forms, imagery, and figures. Popular from approximately 1885-1930, architectural historian, Marcus Wiffen, describes the Beaux Arts style as possessing coupled columns, monumental flights of stairs, and arched and linteled openings often set between columns or pilasters. He states, “The planning and massing of buildings are strictly and sometimes elaborately symmetrical with clearly articulated parts,” which is true of many Beaux Arts style buildings in the country.²⁸

The use of rich materials at the interior and exterior is common, including marbles, granites, metals, and plasterwork. Grand entrances and interior rooms evoke the idea of “noble” spaces and conform to the concept of a hierarchy of spaces in a building.²⁹ Similarly, the quality of symmetry at both the interior and exterior of buildings was important, as it refers to a sense of

²⁵ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996), 150.

²⁶ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, “Beaux Arts,” *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 379.

²⁷ Whiffen. *American Architecture*, 152.

²⁸ Whiffen, *American Architecture*, 149.

²⁹ Whiffen, *American Architecture*, 149.

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harmonious proportion and balance. Like its classical counterparts, symmetry was an important design element.

The Johnston Building as an Example of a Beaux Arts Style Skyscraper

The Johnston Building serves as only one of a few Beaux Arts-style buildings that still exist in Charlotte, demonstrating the style's characteristics and methodology. The building's base-shaft-capital form, symmetrical design, and geometric massing at the exterior maintain an ordered appearance typical of the style. Small details, like the bronze frieze, terra cotta floral ornaments, and denticulated stringcourse add detailed interest to the building. The two-story arched windows on the building's façade, (south elevation) incorporate the style's association with grand scale. The interior, the building's central lobby and elevator lobby continue to showcase the building's Beaux Arts style. The use of barrel-vaulted ceilings and rich materials including marble and ornate plasterwork help to uphold the style's association with grandeur and volume.

The Johnston Building serves as one of only a few remaining early-20th century skyscrapers remaining in Charlotte. During the early twentieth century, skyscrapers could be defined as narrow, steel-frame buildings soaring above ten stories in height. Its masonry base generally transitions into a masonry shaft with symmetrical windows with a capital design highlighting the architectural style of the building, like the Johnston Building.³⁰ In a letter from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. William S. Price Jr. to a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission on August 12, 1991, SHPO asserts the significance of the Johnston Building within its local context of Charlotte, stating, "The Johnston Building is remarkable for its height at the time of its construction and for its excellent design and workmanship that remain intact today."³¹ The letter, combined with the mid-20th century skyscrapers that tower around the Johnston Building, communicate how rare of an example this is in Mecklenburg County. The only other pre-1930s skyscraper that exists in Charlotte is the First National Bank Building at 112 Tryon Plaza in Charlotte (another example of Beaux Arts architecture though has been greatly impacted by the addition at the rear). Therefore, the Johnston Building remains significant in its local context. The Johnston Building retains its appearance as a skyscraper, with its base-shaft-capital composition highlighted by decorative Beaux-Arts ornamentation. Additionally, the building retains its use as a skyscraper, with a public and intact lobby at the first floor with upper floors used as office space.

Comparative Analysis: Beaux Arts Architecture in Charlotte

The Johnston Building serves as one of the few remaining Beaux Arts-style buildings remaining in Charlotte and a rare example of a Beaux Arts-style skyscraper. As the twentieth century progressed, the city gradually transitioned from an economy based on textile milling to one based on banking. This economic change created a change in the built environment as well, and

³⁰ Sarah Bradford Landau, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 302-304.

³¹ William S. Price Jr, "The Johnston Building, Charlotte," letter to Dr. Dan Morrill, August 12, 1991.

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in the decades immediately following World War II, Charlotte underwent a major architectural shift. Modernist architects rose to prominence and became outspoken advocates of modernist design principles emphasizing function and utility, while rejecting traditional architectural ideas of beauty including the use of decorative elements and ornate detailing. Neoclassical buildings that dominated the urban landscape during the early twentieth century faced much disdain. This includes Beaux Arts style buildings like the Johnston Building. North Carolina architect, A.G. Odell, Jr. led a push to reshape Charlotte's urban landscape to embrace new elements of design. His campaign was largely successful, resulting in the loss of older buildings (*Figure 6*). Today only a few examples of these Neoclassical and Beaux Arts style buildings remain.³²

One remaining example of a Beaux Arts-style building is the 1925 Charlotte City Hall (*Figure 6*). Located at 600 East Trade Street, the building was designed by architect Charles C. Hook in the Beaux Arts style, one of the most commonly used styles for governmental buildings during that era. The three-story, steel-frame building features a rather simple rectangular plan with a basement and attic space. The building's façade features eleven symmetrically placed arched openings. A pronounced belt course and balustrade divide the first and second stories and the second and third stories features large, fluted Corinthian limestone columns. The interior of the building features fluted, marble pilasters, wide marble staircases, rich marble textures and colors, ornamented cross beams, and copper-framed service windows. According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission report, Charlotte City Hall "is a fine example of a restrained and elegant use of beaux-arts Classicism. Its grounds should also be preserved as they greatly compliment and provide a park-like setting for the building."³³ Although a fine example of the Beaux Arts style, Charlotte City Hall serves as an example of this style as applied to a governmental building instead of a commercial skyscraper.

Another example of a Beaux Arts-style building in Charlotte is the 1927 First National Bank Building located at 110-112 S. Tryon Street (*Figure 4*). Locally renowned architect, Louis Asbury, designed the building. The twenty-story building became the tallest building in Charlotte, stripping the Johnston Building of the title, which it held for only two years. According to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission archive report:

The First National Building is a twenty-story steel-framed office building faced with stone panels...The First National Building features a great deal of ornamental stone-work, with much of the building's ornamentation concentrated on the building's three-story base section... The northernmost entrance (110 South Tryon) is composed of a massive and deep two-and-one-half-story tall,

³² Morrill, "A History of Charlotte," 135, 150.

³³ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Charlotte City Hall," Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1980, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Charlotte-City-Hall-SR.pdf>, Accessed May 2024

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half-round arch supported by recessed Corinthian pilasters carved into the sandstone....³⁴

The First National Bank Building remained the tallest building in Charlotte until the mid-to-late-twentieth century. In 1964, a new, modern façade was added onto the face of the building, and although efforts have been made to restore portions of the façade to its original condition, elements such as the original carved stone pediment on one of the entrances has been lost. Around 1981, the original rear elevation was covered by an addition that is sheathed with cast concrete panels. Additionally, a late twentieth century thirty-story building was attached to a portion of the building's original rear wing. These changes have resulted in a loss of integrity.³⁵

Both the First National Bank Building and the Johnston Building are important examples of the Beaux Arts style as applied to a skyscraper. They represent Charlotte's shift to embrace urbanization and commercialization as illustrated through the construction of high rises and skyscrapers. However, the First National Bank Building's large 1982 addition has resulted in diminished integrity. In comparison, though both the First National Bank Building and Johnston Building were originally constructed in the Beaux Arts style, the Johnston Building is a more intact example of a Beaux Arts skyscraper.

The Johnston Building as an Example of a William Lee Stoddart Building

Additionally, the seventeen-story Johnston Building is a representative example of New York-based architect W. L. Stoddart's work in Charlotte during the 1920s. Stoddart's impressive portfolio of "skyscraper" hotels along the east coast earned him widespread popularity. W. L. Stoddart was born in New Jersey in 1868. He studied architecture at Columbia University, and after graduating apprenticed under two architects in Atlanta. He later moved to New York where he worked for architect George B. Post from 1895 until he established his own practice in 1905.³⁶

Although he designed several bank, commercial, and corporate buildings, Stoddart is best known for his large hotels and apartment buildings. Stoddart popularized Beaux Arts style hotels at the beginning of the twentieth century. His designs were often of brick with classical cast stone detailing. Located throughout the eastern United States including North Carolina, Stoddart's designs for hotels and skyscrapers followed popular national trends. According to the North Carolina Architects and Builders project:

³⁴ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Survey and Research Report: First National Bank Building: 110-112 South Tryon, Charlotte, N.C.," Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 2007, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/First-National-Bank-Bldg-SR.pdf>, Accessed May 2024.

³⁵ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "First National Bank," 2007.

³⁶ Angie Clifton, "Stoddart, William Lee (1868-1940)," North Carolina Architects and Builders project, NC State University Library, 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000117>, Accessed November 2023.

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In some cities, Stoddart's buildings fit into a developing urban streetscape, while in some smaller communities, his modern hotels represented new urban progress and commercial advancement as well as a new marker in the skyline.... Stoddart gained commissions in North Carolina as its small cities blossomed in the 1910s and 1920s, each one generating a demand for quality hotels to attract business travelers and symbolize urban status.³⁷

Stoddart's design for the Johnston Building fit into this latter category as the building became the tallest building in Charlotte when it opened in 1924.

Comparative Analysis: William Lee Stoddart Architecture in Charlotte

Stoddart is credited with the design and renovations of three buildings in Charlotte during the 1920s. Of the three buildings, the Johnston Building is the only one that remains. Stoddart designed the Hotel Charlotte, which was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1979 (*Figure 3*). The thirteen-story Neoclassical style hotel featured similar intricate ornamentation to the Johnston Building. The building was listed in the NRHP under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture. One of the justifications in the report was that the building was "with the loss of its predecessors and many of its contemporaries, it survives as perhaps Charlotte's most important hotel landmark and a cornerstone of the history and townscape of the city's downtown."³⁸ The building was demolished in 1988.

Similarly, Stoddart designed the two-story addition to the Independence Building and interior renovations in 1927-1928 (*Figure 7*). The building was originally constructed in 1909 and demolished in 1988. The building was listed in the NRHP under Criterion A for Commerce and Criterion C for Architecture.³⁹ Stoddart's work on the building was minimal compared to the Johnston Building and Hotel Charlotte; however, for the purpose of comparative analysis it is necessary to evaluate. The upper two stories are similar in composition to those at the Johnston Building. Despite this later addition to the building, it was considered contributing to the building's architectural significance in the National Register.

Stoddart was also active in designing other buildings in North Carolina outside of Charlotte with fourteen buildings in total, nine of which still exist today. These include the Battery Park Hotel (listed on NRHP in 1977), the Bon Marche building, and the George Vanderbilt Hotel in Asheville; the Concord National Bank and Hotel in Concord; the Goldsboro Hotel in Goldsboro; the Nissen Building (listed on NRHP in 1983) in Winston-Salem; the Sheraton Hotel in High

³⁷ Clifton, "Stoddart, William Lee," 2009.

³⁸ Dr. Edward S. Perzel, "Hotel Charlotte," *National Register Nomination Form*, April 15, 1979.

³⁹ Dan L. Morrill, "Independence Building,"

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Point; the Sir Walter Hotel in Raleigh (listed on NRHP in 1978); and the Virginia Dare Hotel and Arcade (listed as contributing building to NRHD in 1981) in Elizabeth City.⁴⁰

Other prominent projects he was involved in outside of North Carolina include the Lord Baltimore Hotel (listed on NRHP in 1928) in Baltimore, MD; the Georgian Terrace Hotel (Atlanta Landmark Building) and the Ellis Hotel (listed on NRHP in 2009) in Atlanta, GA; and the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Reading, PA. Although a large number of his designs were hotels, it should be noted that he also designed commercial buildings and banks. It is evident that Stoddart was an accomplished architect during the early twentieth century, with a large portfolio of recognized buildings throughout the east coast. The intact exterior and lobby spaces of the Johnston Building are representative of his typical use of the Beaux Arts style, for skyscrapers. Additionally, the Johnston Building is a fine example of a non-hotel building that features extant ornamentation and stylistic elements also seen on his significant hotel buildings.

Conclusion

The Johnston Building (1924,1929) is an intact example of a Beaux Arts skyscraper that embodies the architectural style located in downtown Charlotte. Commissioned by and named for textile magnate, Charles Worth Johnston, the building is emblematic of the commercial shift and great economic growth that took place in Charlotte in the early twentieth century. The building was constructed as a result of the growth and prosperity of the cotton milling industry. When Johnston's Anchor Mills Company purchased the lot at 212 S. Tryon Street in 1923, they hired prolific architect W.L. Stoddart to design the building. Today, the Johnston Building serves as the only remaining example of a Stoddart design in the city of Charlotte. When the building opened in 1924, a portion of the building housed Johnston's corporate headquarters, while the remainder of the building housed tenants such as the Southern Bell Telephone Company and former North Carolina Governor, Cameron Morrison. The Johnston Building was constructed in the Beaux Arts style, an architectural design employed in other early skyscrapers throughout the county. The building's high style design and use of luxury materials enticed many high caliber tenants and served to create a landmark building that transformed the Charlotte skyline.

Since its construction, the Johnston Building has continued to house leasable office space in the center of downtown Charlotte. The building was owned by Johnston's textile empire until the mid-1970s and has served the needs of various industries and people even as the commercial and economic makeup of Charlotte has changed. Today, the building continues to exhibit its architectural style, both on the exterior and the interior first floor lobby. The building was designed to serve as office space for multiple tenants. This remains the use of the space, despite some interior finishes being replaced during the building's one-hundred year lifespan. The intact base, shaft, and capital composition of the building is typical of early twentieth-century skyscrapers that utilized newer steel framing technologies consistent with the evolution of the construction methods of the early twentieth century. Its Beaux Arts ornamentation, including friezes, denticulated stringcourses, classical pilasters, and its material composition highlight its

⁴⁰ Clifton, "Stoddart, William Lee," 2009.

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intact early twentieth-century construction. Although interior alterations have occurred at the upper floors, the first floor lobby retains a high amount of its historic materials. This, combined with a consistent elevator lobby at each floor, allows the building to continue to convey its historic and current usage as a commercial office building. Furthermore, it serves as one of only a few buildings remaining from that early skyscraper era and one of the only Beaux Arts style skyscrapers that still exist in Charlotte. Therefore, the Johnston Building is an intact example of an early twentieth century commercial skyscraper that embodies the Beaux Arts style and possesses significant artistic value.

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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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MK1850

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.27

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.226372 | Longitude: -80.845010 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is composed of Mecklenburg County Parcel Number 07301613, per the Mecklenburg County Property Ownership Land Records Information System. The parcel is bounded by South Tryon Street to the southeast, unrelated commercial buildings to the northeast and southwest, and a parking structure to the northwest (see Figure 2). The concrete sidewalk along Tryon Street is not included in the boundary.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register boundary reflects the historic and current parcel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cindy Hamilton / Erin Wiser / Caitlin Herrnsstadt
organization: Heritage Consulting Group
street & number: 15 W. Highland Avenue
city or town: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19118
e-mail projects@heritage-consulting.com; ewiser@heritage-consulting.com
telephone: 215-248-1260
date: September 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Johnston Building

City or Vicinity: Charlotte

County: Mecklenburg

State: NC

Photographer: Erin Wiser

Date Photographed: December 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 20. Exterior, view looking north at South and West Elevations
- 2 of 20. Exterior, view looking west at South Elevation
- 3 of 20. Exterior, view looking northwest at South Elevation
- 4 of 20. Exterior, view looking northwest at South Elevation
- 5 of 20. Exterior, view looking northwest at East Elevation
- 6 of 20. Exterior, view looking northeast at West Elevation
- 7 of 20. Exterior, view looking east at West and North Elevations.
- 8 of 20. Exterior, view looking northeast at West Elevation.
- 9 of 20. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, view looking southeast.
- 10 of 20. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, view looking southeast.
- 11 of 20. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, view looking southeast.
- 12 of 20. Interior, First Floor, Lobby, view looking west.

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- 13 of 20. Interior, First Floor, Lobby Stair, view looking southwest.
- 14 of 20. Interior, Second Floor, view looking east.
- 15 of 20. Interior, Second Floor, view looking west.
- 16 of 20. Interior, Third Floor, view looking northeast.
- 17 of 20. Interior, Fourth Floor, view looking east.
- 18 of 20. Interior, Sixth Floor, Elevator Lobby, view looking south.
- 19 of 20. Interior, Sixth Floor, Elevator Lobby, view looking northwest.
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Photo Key 2: First Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 3: Second Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 4: Third Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 5: Fourth Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 6: Sixth Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 7: Eighth Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 8: Eleventh Floor Photo Key

Photo Key 9: Seventeenth Floor Photo Key

Figure 1: Boundary Map

Figure 2: 1920s Photograph of Charlotte showing Johnston Building (“Charlotte High Rise Buildings,” *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark Commission*, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/High-Rise-Buildings.pdf>)

Figure 3: Photograph of Hotel Charlotte which was designed by W.L. Stoddart and demolished in 1988 (Perzel, Dr. Edward S. “Hotel Charlotte.” *National Register Nomination Form*. Washington, DC: US Dept of the Interior, NPS, April 15, 1979.)

Figure 4: Photograph of the First National Bank Building which was designed by Louis Asbury in 1927 (Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat)

Figure 5: Photograph of Charlotte City Hall which was designed by Charles H. Hook in 1925 (Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *The Center City: The Business District and Original Four Wards*)

Figure 6: 1980s photograph of downtown Charlotte showing the modern office building development that tower above the Johnston Building (Charlotte Stories).

Figure 7: Photograph of the Independence Building which was designed by W.L. Stoddart and demolished in 1988 (Morrill, Dan L. “Independence Building.” *National Register Nomination Form*. Washington, DC: US Dept of the Interior, NPS, 1978)

Johnston Building
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Figure 8: Photograph of the entrance vestibule with historic 'JB' inlay for Johnston Building (December 2023).

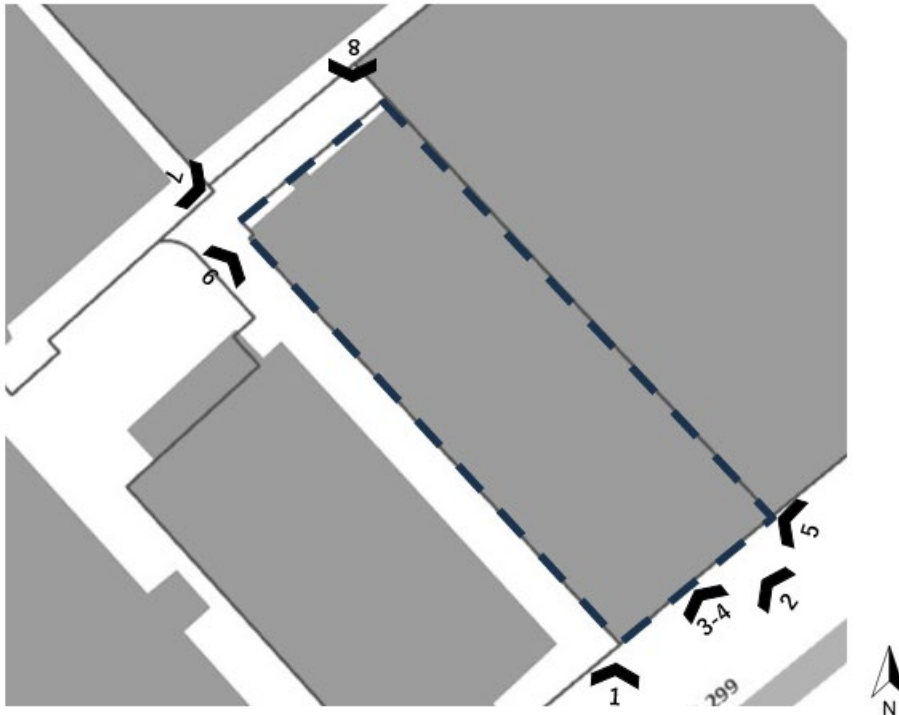
Figure 9: 1924 postcard of the Johnston Building (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library)

Figure 10: 1943 postcard of the Johnston Building (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library)

Johnston Building
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Mecklenburg, NC
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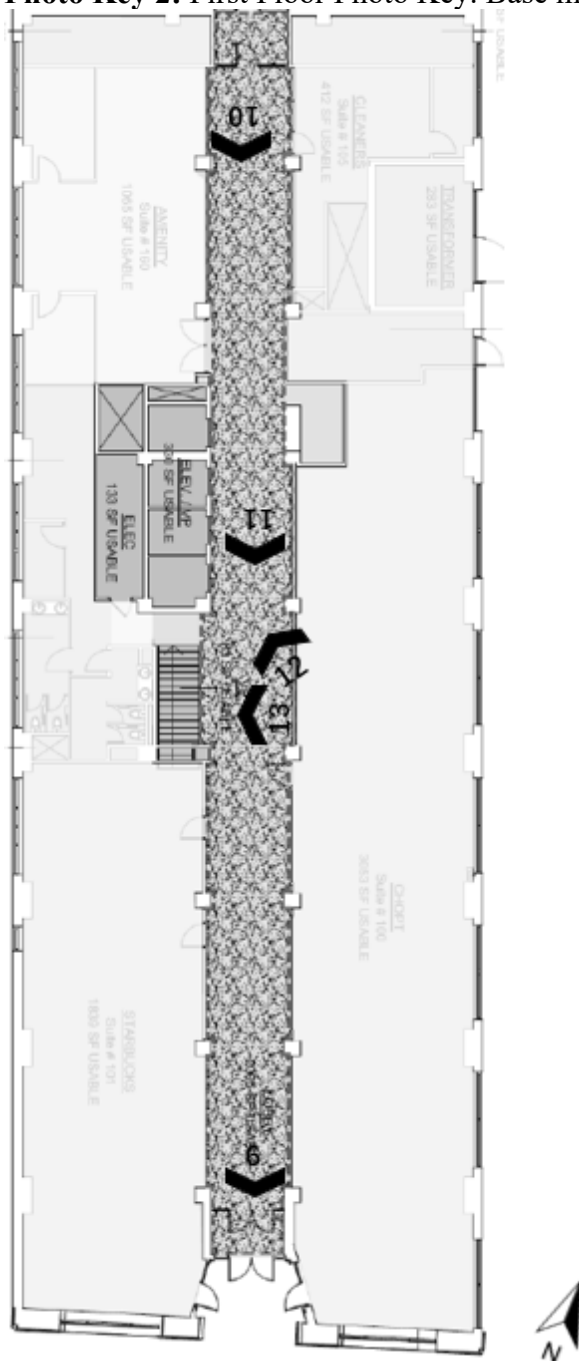
Photo Key 1: Exterior Photo Key.



Johnston Building
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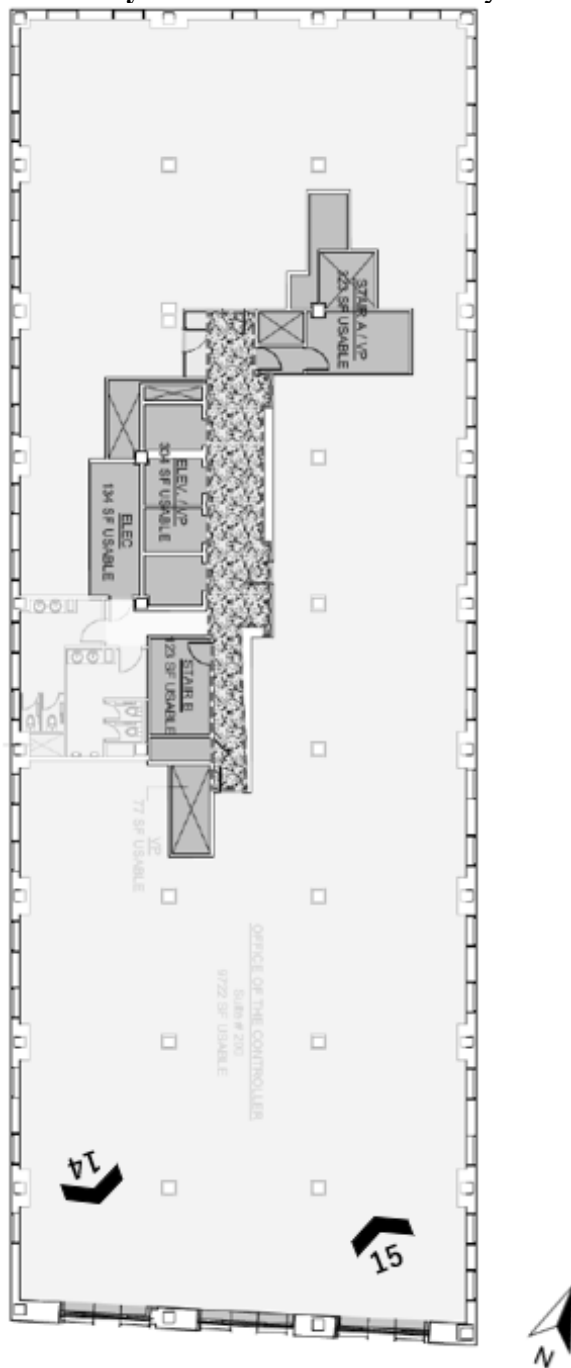
Photo Key 2: First Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



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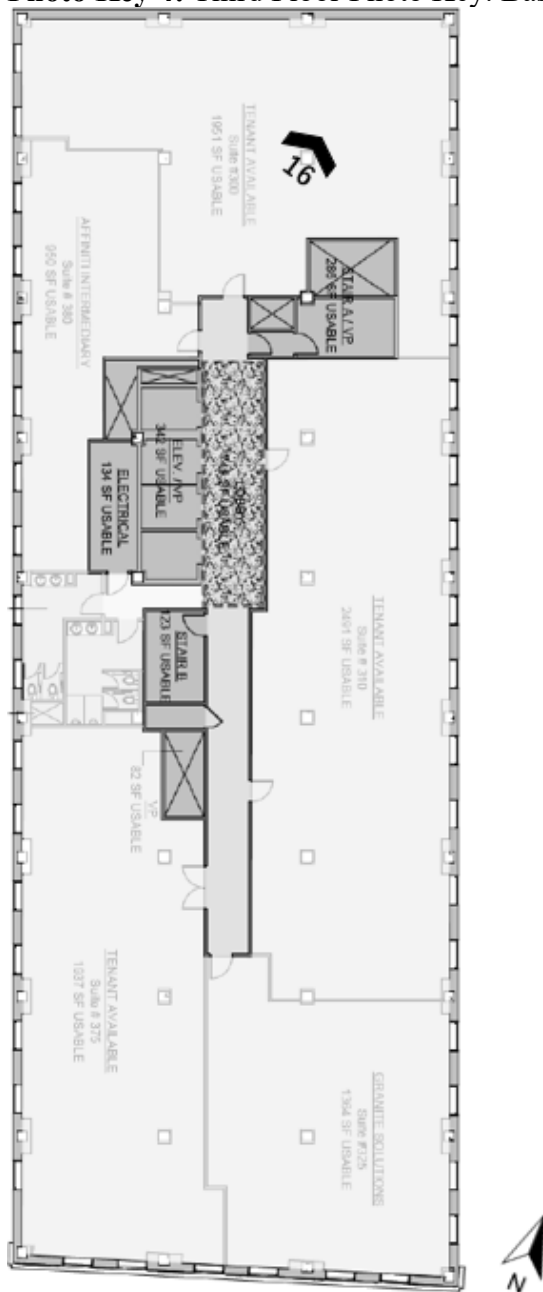
Photo Key 3: Second Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



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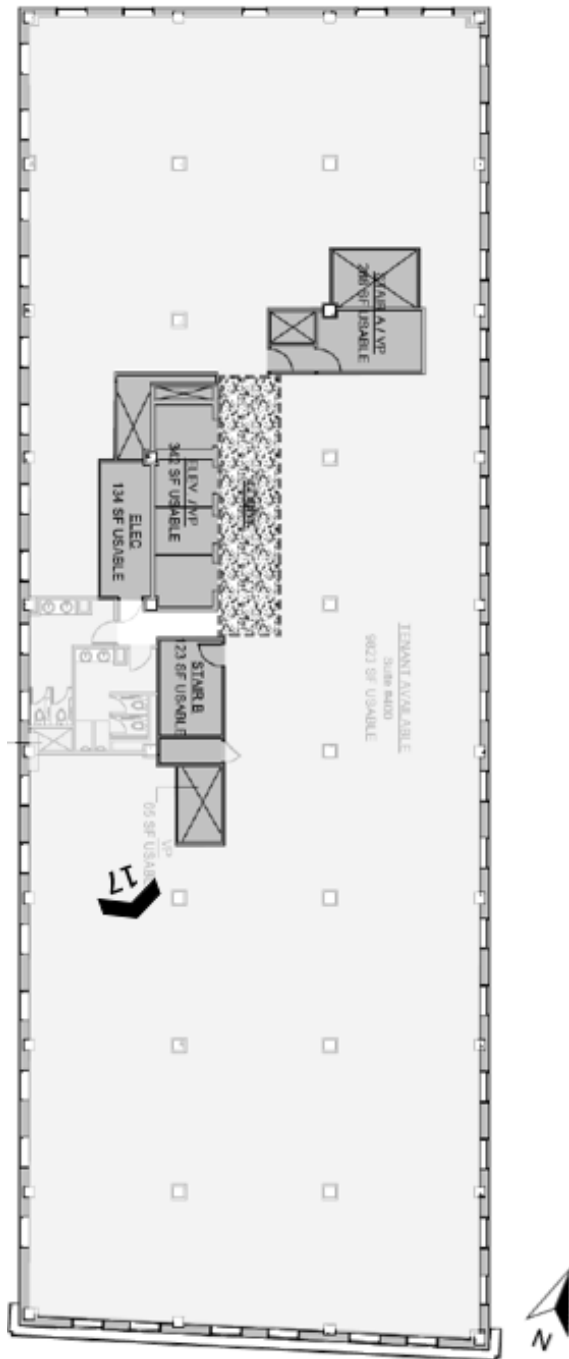
Photo Key 4: Third Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



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Photo Key 5: Fourth Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



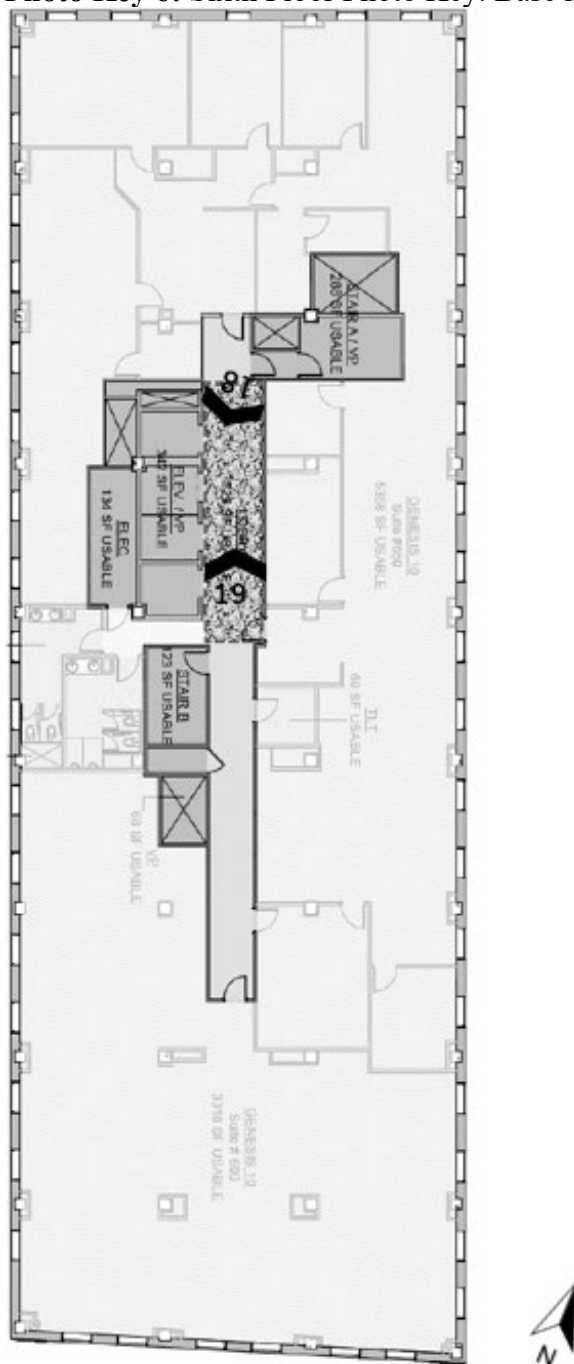
Johnston Building

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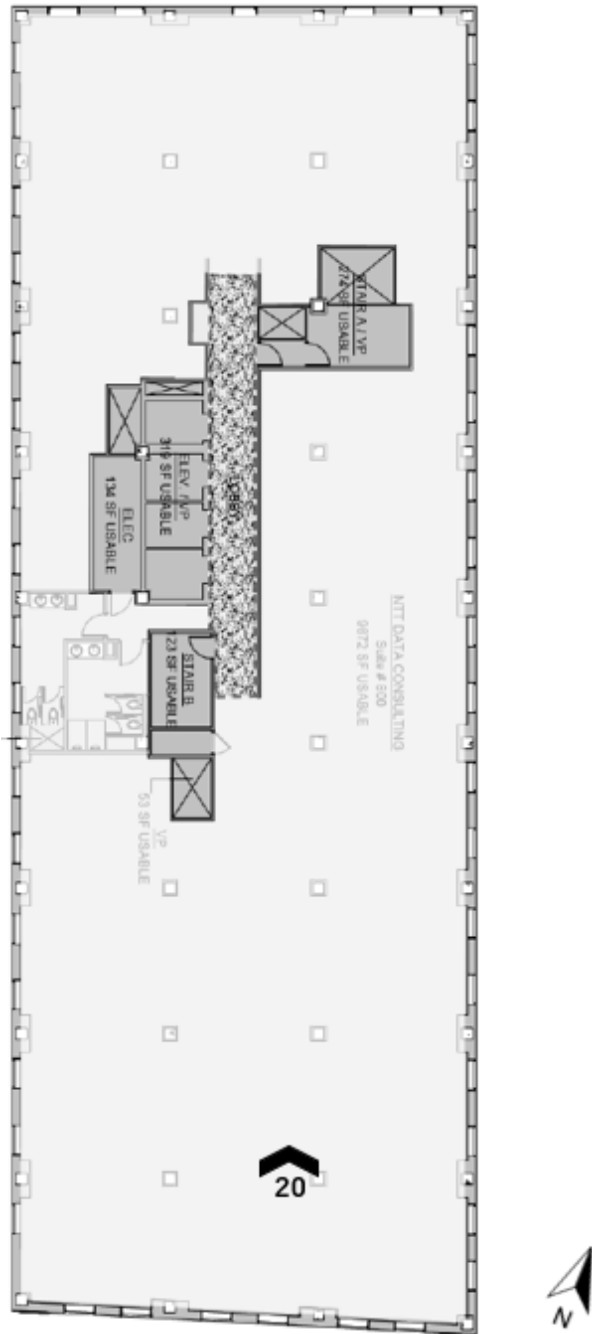
Photo Key 6: Sixth Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



Johnston Building
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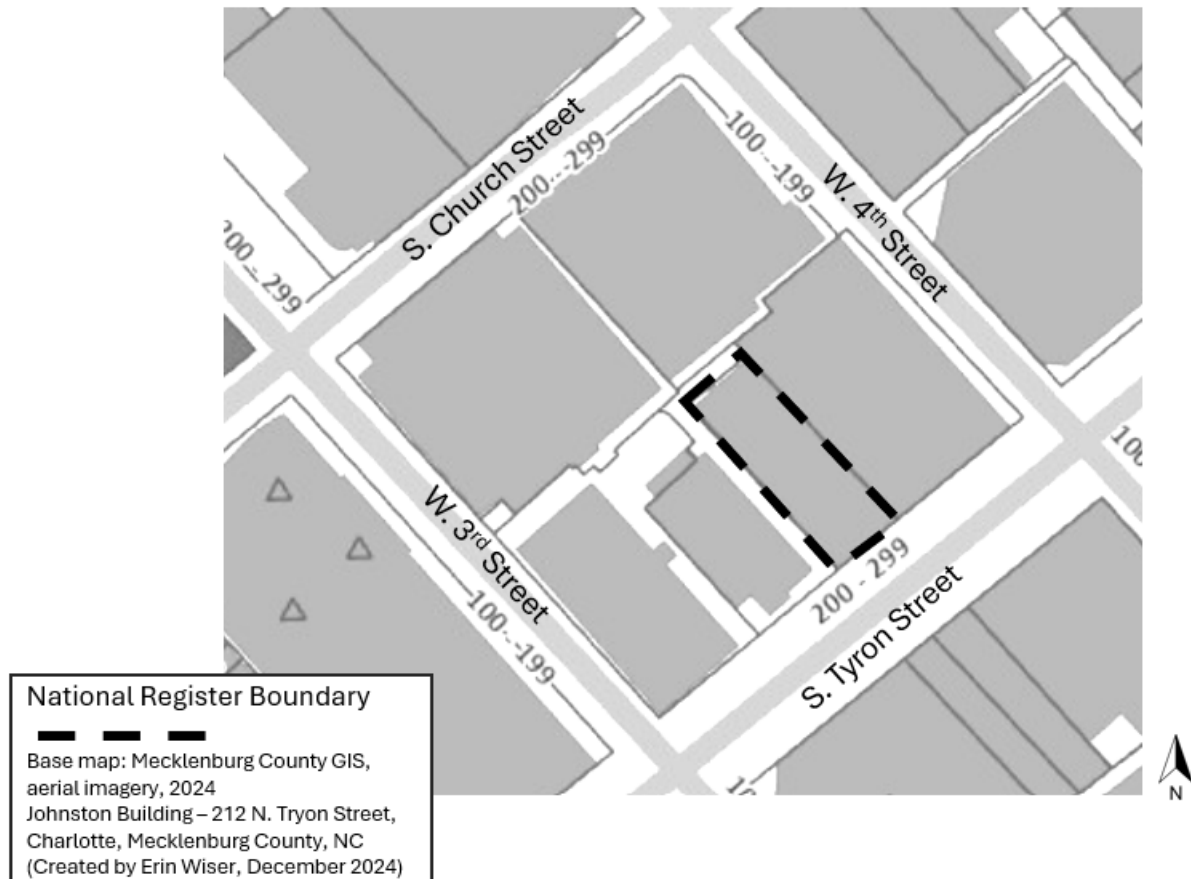
Photo Key 7: Eighth Floor Photo Key. Base map represents current conditions.



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Figure 1: Boundary Map, showing the Johnston Building within the bold dashed line:



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Figure 2: 1920s Photograph of Charlotte showing Johnston Building (left) (“Charlotte High Rise Buildings,” *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark Commission*, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/High-Rise-Buildings.pdf>)



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Figure 3: Photograph of Hotel Charlotte which was designed by W.L. Stoddart and demolished in 1988 (Perzel, Dr. Edward S. "Hotel Charlotte." *National Register Nomination Form*. Washington, DC: US Dept of the Interior, NPS, April 15, 1979.)



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Figure 4: Photograph of the First National Bank Building which was designed by Louis Asbury in 1927 (Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat)⁴¹



⁴¹ Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, "112 Tryon Place, Charlotte," Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, <https://www.skyscrapercenter.com/building/112-tryon-plaza/15512>, Accessed May 2024.

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Figure 5: Photograph of Charlotte City Hall which was designed by Charles H. Hook in 1925
(Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett, *The Center City: The Business District and the Original Four Wards*)



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Figure 6: 1980s photograph of downtown Charlotte showing the modern office building development that tower above the Johnston Building (Charlotte Stories). Red arrow indicates location of Johnston Building, which is obscured by tall, modern office buildings.



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Figure 7: Figure 7: Photograph of the Independence Building which was designed by W.L. Stoddart and demolished in 1988 (Morrill, Dan L. "Independence Building." *National Register Nomination Form*. Washington, DC: US Dept of the Interior, NPS, 1978)



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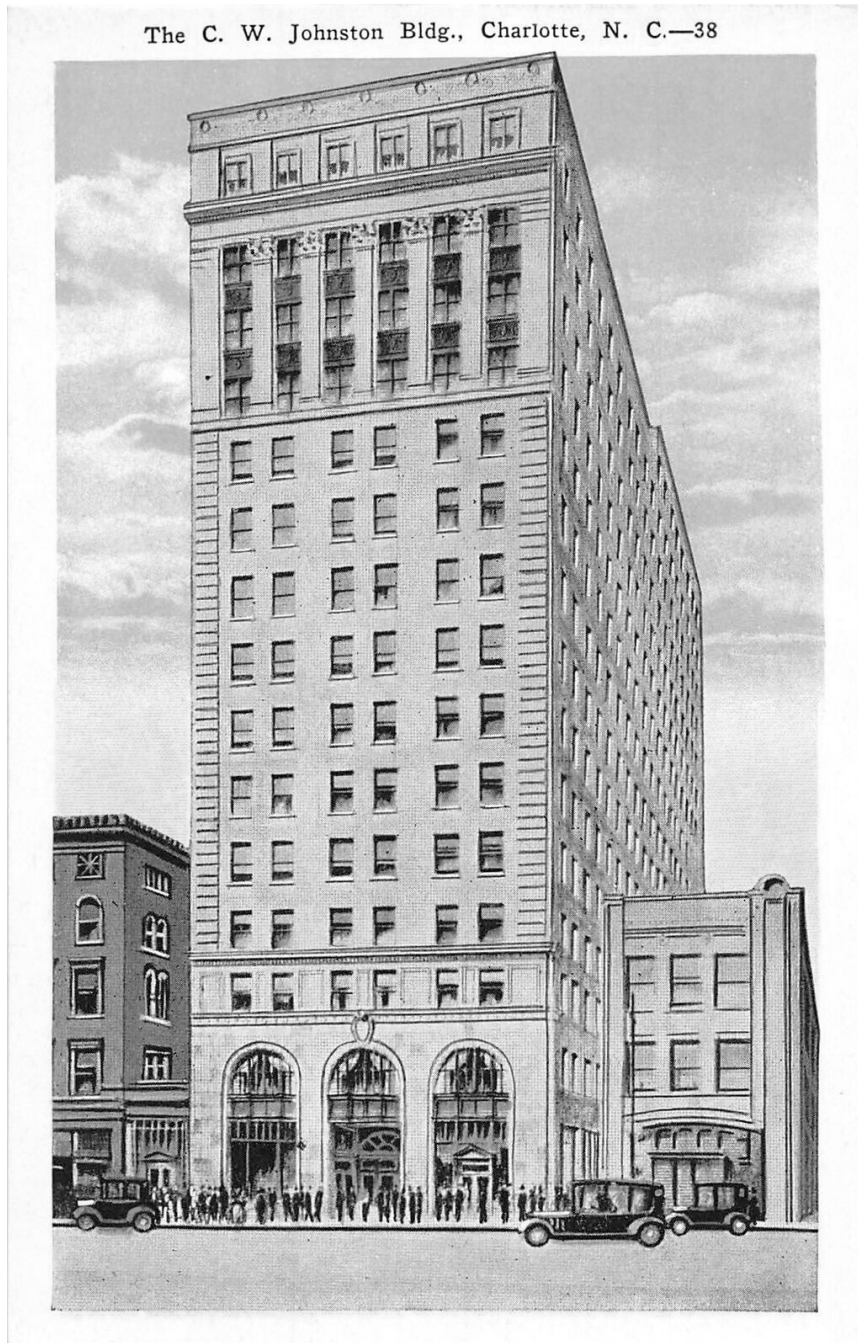
Figure 8: Photograph of the entrance vestibule with historic 'JB' inlay for Johnston Building
(Photographed by Erin Wiser, December 2023).



Johnston Building
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Figure 9: 1924 postcard of the Johnston Building (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library)



Johnston Building
Name of Property

Mecklenburg, NC
County and State

Figure 10: 1943 postcard of the Johnston Building (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library)



Johnston Building

Name of Property

Mecklenburg, NC

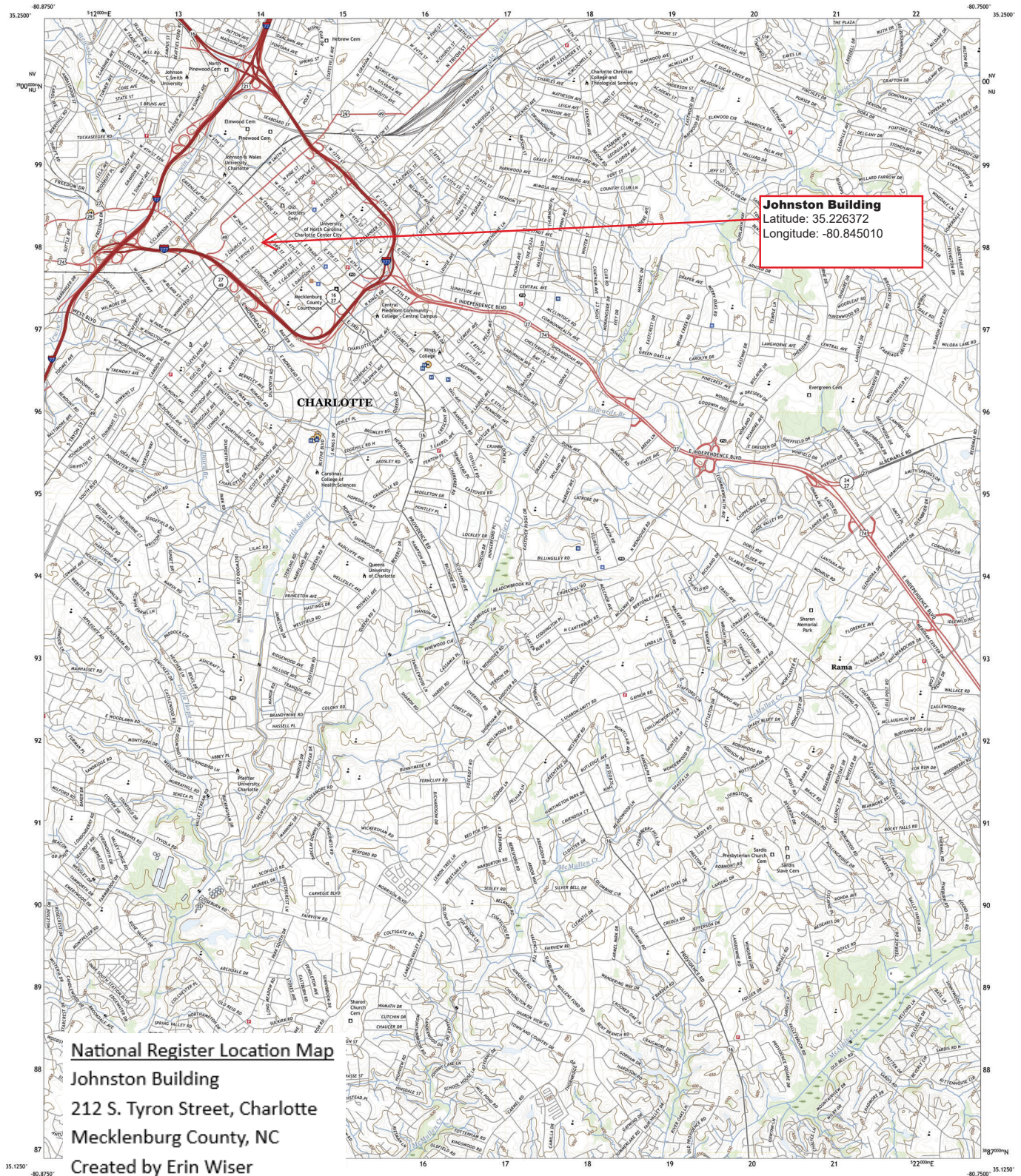
County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

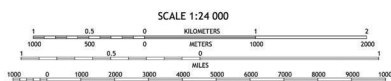
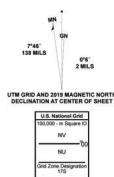
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



National Register Location Map
Johnston Building
212 S. Tyron Street, Charlotte
Mecklenburg County, NC
Created by Erin Wiser
December 2024

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1000-meter grid Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 17S
This map is not a legal document. Boundaries may be
generalized for this map scale. Private lands within government
reservations may not be shown. Obtain permission before
entering private lands.

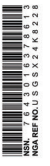
Imagery: NADP, July 2020 - July 2020
Roads: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Names: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
Hydrography: National Hydrography Dataset, 2003 - 2019
Contours: National Elevation Dataset, 2008
Boundaries: Multiple sources; see metadata file 2019 - 2021
Wetlands: FWS National Wetlands Inventory Not Available

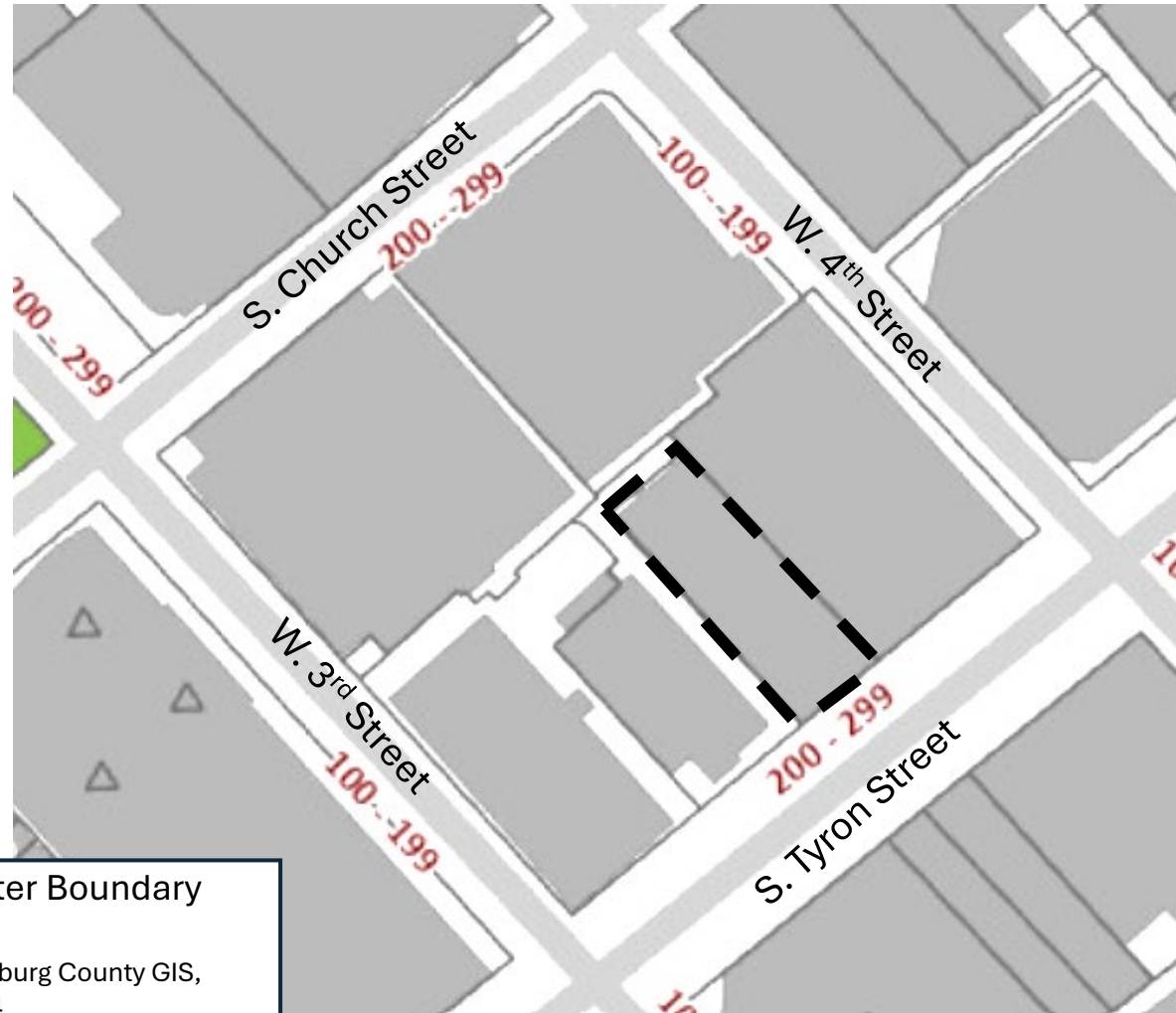


CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988
This map was produced in conformity with the
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard.



CHARLOTTE EAST, NC
2022





National Register Boundary



Base map: Mecklenburg County GIS,
aerial imagery, 2024
Johnston Building – 212 N. Tryon Street,
Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, NC
(Created by Erin Wiser, December 2024)

