

Charlotte and Its Neighborhoods (1986)

By Thomas W. Hanchett for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission

Forward (2026)

How this architectural inventory manuscript came to be

In 1981, Dr. Dan Morrill of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission (now Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission) secured a matching grant from North Carolina's State Historic Preservation Office to hire a scholar to do what was called "architectural inventory work" in Charlotte's older areas. What were the histories of Charlotte neighborhoods built before the 1930s? Were there historic buildings that should be considered for official landmark designation?

The Landmarks Commission made good use of the survey findings as it worked to designate properties during the 1980s and 1990s. But it chose not to publish the survey as a book. Most communities that undertook surveys went on to publish volumes showcasing the findings – a tool for educating the public and decision makers about local historic resources. The Landmarks Commission did put some sections of the manuscript up on-line, when that became possible in the 1990s. But not all chapters were included.

In 2026 Tom Hanchett, the original scholar on the project, picked it up again. With Carol Sawyer, he digitized the typescript, and digitized and inserted photographs of "significant properties." The result is what you are reading now.

* * *

The effort to create architectural surveys in American cities was part of a national effort to slow the rapid demolition of America's historic structures and landscapes. It was a reaction against the bulldozer mentality of the 1950s and 1960s when so-called "urban renewal," Interstate Highway construction and other programs had taken a great toll on older buildings. Interest in history increased in the 1970s around the time of the Bicentennial of the United States, keyed to 1976 celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Charlotte and surrounding Mecklenburg County formed the Historic Properties Commission in 1973. Founding Director Dr. Dan Morrill, an history professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, worked with a citizen board led by another UNCC historian, Dr. Edward Perzel, to establish a rigorous process in which well-footnoted Survey and Research Reports were prepared, the citizens board discussed the findings, then decided whether to recommend the property to the local government for official designation as historic. The first designations were buildings that were already widely regarded as important, such as the 1774 rock house of Hezekiah Alexander, the 1830s Elm

and Oak Row residence halls at Davidson College, the 1830s Cedar Grove plantation house near Huntersville, and Biddle Hall (1880s) and Carter Hall (1890s) at Johnson C. Smith University. (For a current roster of designated properties, consult <http://landmarkscommission.org/historic-properties-2/designated-historic-landmarks/>)

But Morrill and Perzel realized that much of Charlotte's built environment dated from after 1900. That was a largely uncharted frontier for U.S. historians – who were just barely beginning to acknowledge the importance of Victorian architecture from the 1870s-1890s. Morrill's research for Survey and Research Reports was turning up tantalizing information. Charlotte had been a national center for textile manufacturing from the 1890s into the mid-20th century. Neighborhoods near the current center city – Dilworth, Elizabeth, Plaza Midwood, Myers Park and more – had begun as “streetcar suburbs” served by the new technology of electric-powered trolley cars. The Olmsted Brothers, sons of famed landscape architecture pioneer Frederick law Olmsted had designed curving avenues in Dilworth in 1911. That same year, John Nolen of Boston had laid out posh Myers Park. Both the Olmsteds and Nolen were almost forgotten in Charlotte and indeed among historians nationally – who would eventually come to regard them as among America's most influential urban designers.

So Morrill was glad to learn from Catherine Bishir, a renowned architectural historian who directed the survey work of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, that matching grants were available to begin systematic study. At the urging of Morrill and neighborhood leaders, City Council appropriated matching dollars to begin the work, with an initial focus on the Olmsted portion of Dilworth (Morrill had already surveyed the pre-Olmsted streets with architectural expert Ruth Little), the Fourth Ward in the center city (part of which had been designated as Charlotte's first official Historic District in 1977) and the Biddleville/Five Points neighborhood adjacent to Johnson C. Smith University.

Young historian Tom Hanchett arrived in Charlotte in May of 1981. He had taken courses in urban history, architectural history and historic preservation as part of his undergraduate study at Cornell University. He spent a year doing architectural survey work in Salt Lake City, then began a Masters degree at University of Chicago including courses in urban geography and community organizing. In Charlotte he found a city with an impressive early-twentieth century history -- which had barely been documented. The main book about the city's past, *Hornet's Nest* by LeGette Blythe and Charles Brockmann, ended its narrative with the Civil War. He completed the initial study of Dilworth, Fourth Ward and Biddleville, then worked with Dr. Morrill to write additional grants through 1986.

What to look for in the manuscript

The manuscript that you are now reading was the main fruit of Hanchett's research. Its focus is on the history of Charlotte's built environment, especially the years from the

1890s to about 1930. The official cut-off for buildings to be considered for the National Register of Historic Places was fifty years -- the early 1930s when this study was written in the early 1980s. Coincidentally, America saw little new construction during the early 1930s, the depth of the Great Depression, so the chronological cut-off made sense in that regard, as well.

Section I: Context – History, Neighborhood Planning, Architecture

The manuscript begins with three overview chapters that set forth the historical context of the city's economic growth, its architectural patterns, and its robust neighborhood planning tradition. A couple of key insights that set Charlotte apart from many of the other cities that are leaders today in the U.S.:

- Charlotte was quite small in the early twentieth century: barely 20,000 people in 1900, 100,000 in 1940. So the stock of Victorian and earlier buildings was not large. Also, the city has witnessed continuous growth from the arrival of railroads in the 1950s to its status as a major U.S. banking center today in the 2020s – with a city population of nearly one million and a metropolitan regional population of almost three million. Money always seemed available to knock down old structures and build anew.
- Like most inland cities in the South, Charlotte attracted almost no immigrants during the great wave of European arrivals in the decades around 1900. The South was simply too poor in the wake of slavery and the Civil War to be a desirable destination. There were small numbers of Native Americans and a small number of Greek immigrants. But most Charlotteans were native-born whites or native-born Blacks.

Section II: Uptown/the Four Wards

What is now the center city (within the Interstate 277 loop) was almost the whole of Charlotte from the town's founding in the 1760s to the start of the streetcar era in the 1890s. The manuscript explores why the central business district is known as Uptown rather than downtown, notes how the city divided itself into four election districts, called Wards, in the boom years of the 1870s, and documents how the built landscape has changed many times over subsequent decades.

The chapter is divided into five sub-sections, the first looking at the central business district, the next examining First through Fourth Wards in turn. At the end of the chapter is a listing of buildings that Hanchett deemed significant when the manuscript was completed in 1986. Only about half still stand in the 2020s.

Section III: White Streetcar Suburbs.

When Edward Dilworth Latta hired the famed inventor Thomas Edison to electrify Charlotte's previously horse-drawn street railway, he kicked off the development of a ring of streetcar suburbs.

First was the grid street section of the neighborhood called Dilworth. Opened with huge fanfare in 1892, it included parts of today's South Boulevard, East Boulevard and Morehead Street and adjacent streets. Two decades later, the Olmsted Brothers added a section of curving avenues, including Dilworth Road. City Council designated the best-preserved blocks of Dilworth as an official Historic District in 1983 and 1992.

Subsequent streetcar suburbs included Elizabeth, begun in the late 1890s, Plaza Midwood, developed mostly during the 1910s – 1930s, and grand Myers Park, initially designed by John Nolen of Boston starting in 1911 and largely built out by the late 1920s. A final chapter in this section looks at smaller neighborhoods: Crescent Heights and Chantilly on the city's east side, Wilmore and Wesley Heights on the west side.

Most of these neighborhoods were platted a few blocks at a time, often initially conceived as separate subdivisions owned by different investors. Plaza Midwood, for instance, began as a dozen disparate developments which only joined together as "Plaza Midwood" in the 1970s during a successful effort to thwart construction of a highway through the district.

Each chapter begins with a history of who laid out the streets and when. At the end is a list of structures that Hanchett recommended for historic designation.

Significantly, nearly all of Charlotte's streetcar suburbs were "exclusive." Deed restrictions, introduced in Charlotte starting in 1900, limited ownership and occupancy to whites only. (The restrictions remained in effect for half a century, until the Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that they were unenforceable). That segregation story became a key theme in Hanchett's later book, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875 – 1975*, 2nd edition (UNC Press 2020).

Section IV: Black Neighborhoods

While little had been written about Charlotte's white neighborhoods, even less information existed about Black areas. The architectural inventory focused on the three pre-1930 Black neighborhoods where early buildings were relatively well-preserved.

Two had begun as residential clusters at the edge of town -- before streetcars made the city's edge very desirable.

- Biddleville formed around Johnson C. Smith University, originally Biddle Institute begun in 1867 to train Black leaders after the Civil War.

- Cherry began in 1891 on the opposite edge of the city, created by W.R. Myers, a white landowner. Myers was a proponent of Black education and advancement, including helping to fund the Myers Street School, the town's major Black elementary school in the decades after the Civil War. He sold lots in Cherry to Black workers, a rare chance for blue-collar Blacks to become homeowners. Some twenty years later, adjacent lands owned by Myers became the elite white suburb of Myers Park; its Black servants sometimes lived in Cherry. But Cherry's history in actuality was independent of Myers Park.

The final early Black neighborhood that remained largely intact in the 1980s was Washington Heights. Research for this architectural inventory uncovered its surprising, but largely forgotten, history. Washington Heights was platted in 1911 as a streetcar suburb for Black middle-class families. It is believed to be the only Black streetcar suburb in the United States.

There had been other Black neighborhoods in Charlotte during the first decades of the twentieth century. Second Ward, also known as Brooklyn, flourished as a city-within-the-city complete with churches, schools, business buildings and over 1000 dwellings. The U.S. "urban renewal" program of the 1960s wiped it out. The federal bulldozers of expressway construction and "slum clearance" also took other smaller districts such as Greenville off Statesville Road northeast of uptown, and the area around Alexander Street school southeast of uptown.

Because very little remained of those areas, they were not included in the architectural inventory project.

Section V: Textile Mill Communities

As Dr. Dan Morrill had started exploring Charlotte's built environment in the late 1970s, he realized that cotton textile factories and their "mill villages" of company-owned housing constituted a distinctive part of Charlotte's cultural landscape. This was a major finding; previous writing about the city's past barely mentioned this blue-collar, workaday history. But the prosperous men who launched Charlotte's banks and other institutions – including what became the huge electric utility Duke Power -- were nearly all connected to textiles. Thousands of families left farms across the South to labor in the mills, not only in the city itself, but also in surrounding mill towns such as Gastonia, Kannapolis. By the 1920s, Charlotte ranked as the major trading city for America's top textile manufacturing region.

This section of the architectural inventory focused on districts where the millhands lived and worked. The manuscript documented

- The Belmont/Villa Heights/Optimist Park neighborhood, northeast of downtown along the Southern Railway, now sometimes called "the mill district."

- The North Charlotte district (re-branded as a hip residential area called NoDa in the 1990s), located beyond Villa Heights.
- The residential areas around the Chadwick Hoskins mills, northwest of downtown.

Section VI: Dawn of the Automobile Suburb

By the 1920s, enough Americans owned automobiles that developers began to envision neighborhoods with no streetcar connections. First of these in Charlotte was the ultra-elite Eastover. Platted in 1927, it held gracious mansions on large lots set well back from the street. As the twentieth century continued, Charlotte would sprout more and more sprawling suburbs dependent upon the motorcar.

While the automobile emphasis was new, in other ways Eastover was the culmination of trends that had begun with Dilworth, then expanded with Myers Park. Indeed the curving avenues were laid out by Earle Sumner Draper, who had begun his career as an assistant to John Nolen in Myers Park. Eastover held the residences of textile, electric power and banking leaders for the Carolinas. It and Myers Park marked southeast Charlotte as the city's most desirable quadrant for upscale living for decades to come.

Recommendations for historic designation

At the end of each chapter, Hanchett offered brief descriptions of buildings that might be considered for official designation as "historic." The Landmarks Commission or the property owners could choose to pursue these possibilities by completing more-detailed reports, then following procedures for two types of designation.

- ***Local landmark status.*** Implemented by the local Historic Landmarks Commission, upon a vote by the local governing body (the City Council, if within the city, or the County Commission, if outside the city boundaries).
 - The property must look substantially as it did at least 50 years ago.
 - Changes can be made to the property only when the Landmarks Commission issues a Certificate of Appropriateness, after seeking public comment.
 - Cannot forbid demolition, but can delay for up to one year to give time for citizens to find an alternative that is acceptable to the owner.
 - Property receives a 50% reduction in local property taxes. But if demolished, three years of the deferral must be re-paid.
- ***Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.*** Implemented by the State Historic Preservation Office (with final sign-off by National Register officials in Washington).

- Surprisingly is LESS restrictive than local designation. Has no effect on what private owners can do. The Register was created as a list of sites that federal government projects should avoid harming, if possible.
- If the property is income-producing (ie. not a private residence), renovations may qualify for an income tax credit.

Hanchett only made recommendations of individual buildings, since that was the focus of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. But it is also possible to designate Historic Districts, either under local authority or under the National Register.

Local district designation is often politically difficult. If a substantial number of property owners express opposition – unwilling to have anything affect their property rights – then local government is seldom willing to designate. So some neighborhoods are National Register Historic Districts but not local Historic Districts.

Partly as a result of research in this volume, neighborhood residents subsequently won the designation of the following districts:

- Myers Park (pre-1930 areas): National Register Historic District
- Hermitage Court: local Historic District (and is part of the Myers Park National Register Historic District).
- Dilworth: local Historic District and National Register Historic District
- North Charlotte (portions of what is now considered NoDa): National Register Historic District
- Elizabeth: National Register Historic District
- Plaza Midwood: local Historic District
- Wesley Heights: local Historic District and National Register Historic District.

It bears repeating that this manuscript, created in the early 1980s, only considered buildings and neighborhoods that looked substantially as they had 50 years before, at the beginning of the 1930s. It is a good survey of pre-1930s Charlotte, as it was intended to be – but it does not cover the city’s continuing explosive growth thereafter.

A word about photographs

If the manuscript had been published as a book, it would have been profusely illustrated. Hanchett indicated some of those photos in his draft, using black-and-white “thumbnail” images from oversized contact sheets supplied by the commercial photo processor for the project, Quality Chrome. That effort remained incomplete when survey funding ran out in the 1980s.

The thumbnails that do exist have been scanned in 2026 and inserted into the manuscript. They are the black-and-white images in this on-line edition of the manuscript.

As part of his work in 2026, Hanchett also added some 2020s images from Google Streetview. Those are in color in this on-line edition of the manuscript.

A word about typefaces

This edition of the manuscript uses two typefaces:

- One is a **serif typeface**, indicating text that was written in 1981 – 1986.

Within the serif paragraphs, occasional small tweaks have been made, mostly to make the wording more clear. In the few places where the new text carries new information, that is indicated with [square brackets].

- The other is a **sans serif typeface**, indicating fresh material written in 2026.

INTRODUCTION TO CHARLOTTE AND THE SURVEY PROCESS

Charlotte, North Carolina, is the largest city in the Carolinas and a distribution, banking, and textile center of the Southeast. It is located in Mecklenburg County on the border of South Carolina, in the Piedmont region about midway between the North Carolina state capital of Raleigh and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The city itself has 310,799 people by the 1980 census, and geographers consider it the center of a twelve-county urban region known as Metrolina, containing over 1.3 million inhabitants.¹

Charlotte has more than tripled in size since it first surpassed the South Carolina port of Charleston in 1930, and to a casual observer it appears a very new city. Charlotte's most impressive growth, however, occurred in the fifty years before it took the lead. Between 1880 and 1930 the city's population jumped more than eleven-fold, from 7,094 to 82,675 citizens.² The city today is very much a product of this "New South" era, the decades following the Civil War and Reconstruction when the whole Southeast forcibly began to turn itself from farming to industrial and urban development.

Charlotte had always been a trading point, from settlement at a crossroads of two Indian trails in the 1750s. Nearby discovery of gold, leading to construction of a United States Mint in the village in 1837, expanded the trade territory, as did the building of railroads beginning with western North Carolina's first line in 1852. As late as 1880, nonetheless, Charlotte remained a dirt-street crossroads community with barely seven thousand inhabitants, where farmland was only a fifteen-minute walk from the central Independence Square.

Then in 1881 Charlotte's first cotton mill opened. It was part of a regional movement that saw American investment in textile mills transferred out of New England to the Cotton Belt of the upper South. The movement began as a trickle and grew to a torrent. As early as 1906, boosters celebrated the fact that "within the radius of 100 miles of Charlotte there are more than 300 cotton mills, containing over one-half the looms and spindles in the South."³ In 1927 the South surpassed the Northeast in textile production, making Charlotte the center of a major new American industrial region.⁴

Much as Boston had been for the New England textile empire in the nineteenth century, Charlotte was a trading and financial hub of the New South textile region in the twentieth century, although on a smaller scale. Regardless of where in the region their mills were, mill owners like LeRoy Springs, Martin Cannon, and Stuart Cramer, Jr., had their homes and offices

¹ James W. Clay, ed., *Atlas of Charlotte Mecklenburg*, 2nd ed 1980, preliminary statistics. 2nd ed. (Charlotte: Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 1981), p. 1. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Twentieth Census: 1980, preliminary statistics.

² Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, "1950 Census Data" (Charlotte: Chamber of Commerce, 1950). This report conveniently includes figures back to 1850.

³ Julia M. Alexander, "Charlotte in Pictures and Prose: An Historical and Descriptive Sketch of Charlotte, North Carolina" (New York: Blanchard Press, circa 1906), unpaginated.

⁴ Broadus Mitchell and George Sinclair Mitchell, *The Industrial Revolution in the South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1903), p. 3.

in the city. They were joined by hundreds of cotton brokers, graders, salesmen, and machinery dealers who kept the mill economy humming. Charlotte was headquarters, as well, for the bankers and financiers who helped make large scale production possible. Here, too, were the estates of the engineer-entrepreneurs of Duke Power, whose inexpensive hydroelectric power helped attract and hold the region's industry as the twentieth century progressed.

Cotton was not the only game in town. Charlotte's central location in a growing web of railroads and paved highways, together with the capital available from the textile entrepreneurs, resulted in a quite diversified economy by the 1930s. Charlotte became a distribution center for, among other things, motion pictures in the Carolinas, and it was an important regional focus for country music and blues recording in the days before the prominence of Nashville. Charlotte investors funded buildings, neighborhoods, resorts, and factories all over the Southeastern U.S. With the rapid population growth came department stores and all the other service industries of an affluent city.

The town's economic growth between 1880 and 1930 fueled a complete physical transformation, more radical than even the population increase would suggest. Charlotte's New South leaders went to great lengths to rebuild their city to emulate the big industrial capitals of the North. They were bold in their faith in what was new and urban, even if common sense maintained that the city's small size did not yet really justify some undertakings. By 1930 the former dirt-street town had not only pavement but parks, mass transit, skyscrapers, and a ring of suburbs in the former farmland. Charlotte's development patterns were set much as they would continue into the 1980s.

Charlotte's finest architecture and neighborhood planning are a product of this era of wealth. The city's early New South leaders cared a great deal about how their city would look and function, and hired some of the best design professionals in America. Few small American cities can match the quality of talent at work in Charlotte in the 1910s and 1920s. These included nationally important city planning leaders like the Olmsted Brothers and John Nolen of Boston, and such widely recognized architects as Philadelphians Aymar Embury and Charles Barton Keen, and New Yorker William L. Stoddart. Charlotte also produced its own regionally important body of designers including architects C. C. Hook and Louis Asbury, and especially city planner Earl Sumner Draper. Most of the architects, planners, engineers, and builders serving western North Carolina and upper South Carolina were headquartered in the city.

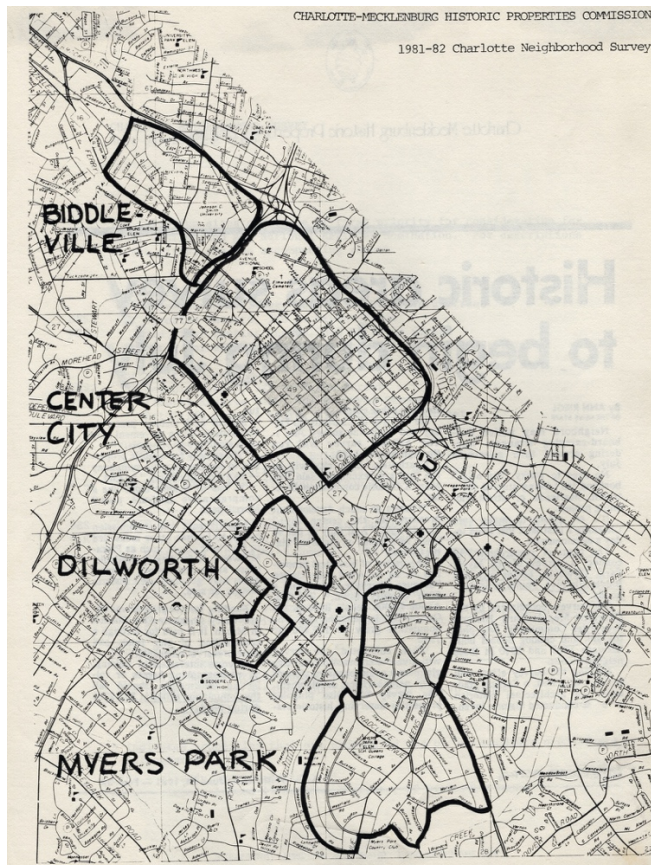
The growth of Charlotte since 1930 has destroyed parts of her early New South legacy, particularly in the central city where hundreds of buildings have been demolished for parking lots, expressways, and empty land. Yet much of historical value remains from Charlotte's proud past. Today people are rediscovering the nineteenth century origins of Fourth Ward and Biddleville, taking new pride in the tree-shaded winding avenues of the New South streetcar suburbs such as Dilworth and Myers Park, and even recognizing the importance of the commercial and industrial landmarks that survive to illustrate Charlotte's transformation from town to city.

The Neighborhood Survey Process

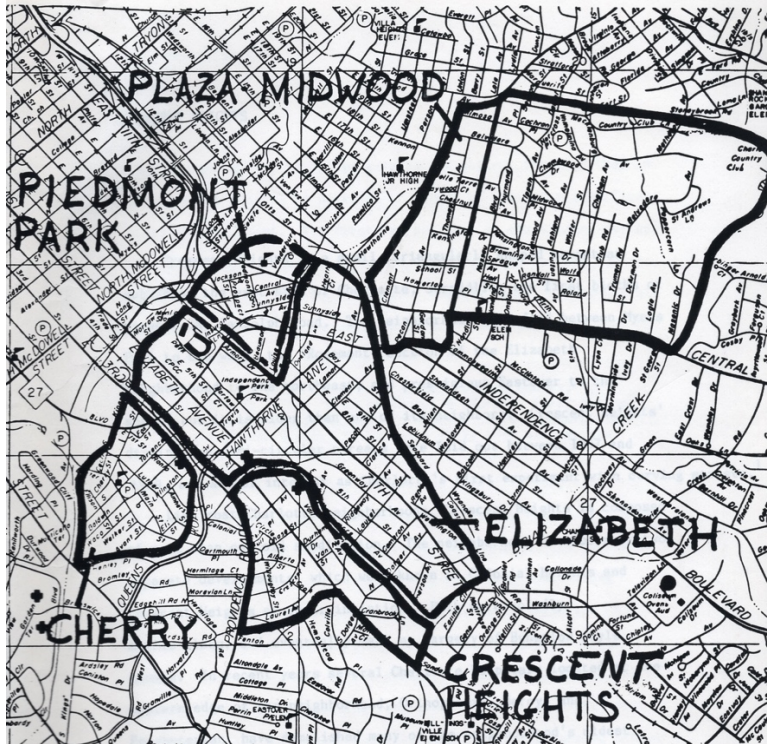
In 1981 the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, a city-county agency, began a three-and-a-half year project to record buildings in the city's older neighborhoods and identify those of historic and architectural importance.

- Phase I of this Charlotte Neighborhood Survey focused on the Center City area (Charlotte's oldest section), on Biddleville (its earliest well-preserved Black neighborhood), and on Myers Park and the newer sections of Dilworth, the city's two finest pre-World War I suburbs.
- Phase II targeted three more early suburbs -- Elizabeth, Plaza Midwood, and Crescent Heights -- plus Cherry, believed to be a turn-of-the-century "model Negro housing development."
- Phase III included suburban Eastover and Washington Heights, plus the blue-collar textile mill neighborhoods of Belmont-Villa Heights, Chadwick Hoskins, and North Charlotte.

The survey covered all important pre-World War II development areas in the City of Charlotte.



Phase I survey areas



Phase 2 survey area

1982-83 Survey Areas

Charlotte Neighborhood Survey

Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission

The work of a neighborhood survey goes far beyond consulting published histories of a place. Each building in the target neighborhoods is photographed. Research is done in early city directories, property deeds, and even in water hook-up records to determine when the structures were built and who their earliest occupants were. This data will be kept on file permanently by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Raleigh.

The project has produced the report you are reading -- with a written history of each neighborhood, its development, architecture and residents. The report also includes essays focusing on the city's architectural development and city planning efforts, as well as a broad history of the growth of the city as a whole.

The neighborhood survey's final product is a list of buildings and places that should be considered for local designation as "historic properties." Under North Carolina law N.C.G.S.160A-399.4, local governing bodies are empowered to designate a structure or site as an historic property if it possesses "special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance." Such properties must also possess "integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association."

Within the City of Charlotte, the City Council makes such determinations after careful study by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission. Each prospective property identified by the Survey is placed on the Commission's Study List, and an exhaustive Survey and Research Report is prepared on it by a trained historian and architectural historian. Based on the report, the Commission votes whether or not to recommend the property to City Council for consideration.

If the Commission votes affirmatively, a public hearing is scheduled before Council to ensure input from property owners and other interested citizens. The report is also forwarded to the staff of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History in Raleigh for further professional comment. Based on this extensive groundwork, the City Council decides whether the property is of such significance to the community that it merits the special protection of historic property status.

One important benefit of designation is community recognition of its historic resources. A free pamphlet distributed by the Commission, entitled “Historic Properties in Charlotte-Mecklenburg” includes photographs and historic information on all historic sites. Owners of designated historic properties are entitled to apply for a fifty percent deferral of *ad valorem* property taxes. If the property is later altered to such an extent that it is deemed no longer historic, the owner must pay back three years of the deferred tax. Before the owner can make any material alteration to the property, he or she must notify the Historic Properties Commission, which grants a Certificate of Appropriateness if it is convinced that the alteration will not harm the property's historic character.

Unfortunately, under North Carolina law, the Commission cannot forbid demolition of a designated historic property. It can, at most, require the owner to wait for 180 days. This provision is intended to give the Commission and the community time to work with the owner to find a way to save the structure.

* * *

The Charlotte Neighborhood Survey primarily identifies individual properties for potential local designation. **Local historic property designation** is only one of three legal mechanisms available in North Carolina to help protect older buildings, however.

The **locally designated historic district** is a way to preserve important groups of structures. People have come to realize that individual landmarks can become meaningless out of context. The church surrounded by expressways or the grand mansion in the midst of used car lots give no feeling for the neighborhoods they once dominated. A street of modest bungalows, preserved in their original condition, tells us as much about a past era as the isolated birthplace of a famous person.

The process of designating a district moves from research to approval by City Council in much the same way as for an individual property. District designation carries fewer regulations than individual designation, and includes no tax reduction.

The third legal preservation tool is the **National Register of Historic Places**. It is a list, kept by the Secretary of the Interior in Washington, of buildings and districts that should be treated with care when federal money is spent. The Register came to maturity in the 1960s when federally funded Urban Renewal and highway building were inadvertently destroying important sites. Historic places of local and regional, as well as national, significance are safeguarded under its provisions.

The Division of Archives and History in Raleigh handles National Register designation for North Carolina. Nominations to the National Register are researched and reviewed extremely thoroughly, and designation is considered an honor and a mark of authenticity. Listing in the register places no controls on private owners, but rather regulates government-funded projects.

* * *

The present Charlotte Neighborhood Survey builds on earlier work done in the city and county. Since 1973, when the Historic Properties Commission was first chartered, over 80 structures have been individually designated historic properties. Many of these have been brought to the Commission's attention by owners, elected officials, Commission members and community residents.

In 1976 the first effort was made to systematize the study process by making a large-scale "inventory" of buildings. During that summer, University of North Carolina at Charlotte professor James Vaseff, University of Virginia professor H. McKelden Smith and student volunteers carried out a quick survey to record pre-1900 buildings throughout Mecklenburg, one of North Carolina's earliest inventories. Though dating was somewhat unreliable due to heavy reliance on county tax office records, the project did produce data cards on some 1700 properties and is now part of the working files of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission.

A second, more in-depth, survey occurred in 1978 of a single neighborhood, the original grid street area of Dilworth. Historian Dr. Dan Morrill and architectural historian Ruth Little-Stokes produced a thick manuscript, "Architectural Analysis Dilworth: Charlotte's Initial Streetcar Suburb," under the sponsorship of the Dilworth Community Development Organization. It identified a number of individually significant buildings that have subsequently been designated by City Council, and proposed that the core of the area be named a local Historic District, an action taken by the City Council in 1983. The present Charlotte Neighborhood Survey extends this process to other early Charlotte neighborhoods.