

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Alamance Hotel

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Southeast ^{WEST} Corner of Maple Avenue and South Main Street not for publication

city, town Burlington vicinity of

state North Carolina code 37 county Alamance code 01

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Subsidized housing for elderly

4. Owner of Property

name Alamance Plaza, Limited Partnership (George E. Carr, Jr. and Jack L. Covington, General Partners)

street & number 723 Southeastern Building

city, town Greensboro vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Alamance County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Graham state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Architectural Inventory of Burlington has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981-1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records N.C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

(rehab in progress)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Standing on a prominent corner in the central business district of Burlington, North Carolina, the Alamance Hotel is one of the two structures dominating the skyline of the city. Its seven stories command a position which signals one's entrance into downtown Burlington via South Main Street. The building rises in a rectangular configuration through the first three levels and in the shape of an "L" with slight projections at the principal corners for the upper four floors. A small rear addition was constructed in 1945, when changes also were made on the interior.

Facing Maple Avenue and South Main Street, the two principal facades of the hotel are distinguished by the three-part neoclassical, "base-shaft-capital" organization characteristic of most tall buildings erected in the first four decades of this century. The rough-faced reddish-brown brick covering most of these facades is laid in decorative patterns at the upper and lower extremities. Tripartite windows at the first and mezzanine floors lighted the lobby and dining room, which were open through both levels. These windows consisted of eight-over-eight double-hung sashes flanked by narrower four-over-four windows. An ornamental bank of gray paneled terra cotta with a molded and dentilled course above marks the division between the "base" and the upper five stories. Grouped in pairs except at the building's corners, the windows on the upper floors are one-over-one double-hung sashes in wooden frames with brick sills and heads. The first four stories above the dentilled course are quite plain, faced only in the brick in a five-course bond--four of stretchers and a fifth of alternating headers and stretchers.

The uppermost floor is the most ornately appointed portion of the exterior. Here, the windows are crowned by a wooden panel and grille below a semi-elliptical verde antique terra cotta inset with raised circular panel. Between each pair of seventh-floor windows is a rectangular stuccoed panel with an incised diamond pattern; the single corner windows are flanked by similar panels with a double diamond pattern. The most interesting aspect of the top portion of the building is the deeply coved and molded terra cotta cornice, surmounted by a brick parapet with tile coping. The base of the cornice is even with the top of the grilles above the windows so that the semi-elliptical insets project into the coved cornice to create a pointed "frame" similar to the web of a groin vault.

Both public entrances originally were sheltered by iron and glass marquees with a pendant diamond pattern. The Maple Avenue entrance retains its canopy, but the canopy above the South Main Street doors, originally the principal entrance, has been removed and the entrance completely altered. Marble steps and floor initially marked both entrances. Inside the hotel, the primary first floor spaces were the lobby and dining room, with plaster walls, panelled wainscoting, and marble baseboards. Both areas were similar, with terrazzo floors in a blue and white checkerboard pattern framed by a meander border, much of which remains intact in the lobby. Scarlet and gold patterned area rugs covered the floor in the lobby sitting areas. Elaborate console brackets, a few of which survive, embellished the large piers in both public areas. Encased beams connecting the piers divide the lobby and dining room ceilings into squares evocative of coffering; each square is a shallow barrel vault. The other aspects of the first floor include the long, narrow shop near the South Main Street entrance, and the front desk, switchboard, and a small private office near the Maple Avenue entrance. Next to the front desk, leather-covered double doors led to the dining room; the kitchen is situated a few steps away. Across from the front desk are the elevators and the staircase to the mezzanine, part of which was a balcony overlooking the lobby and dining room. The original lobby and dining room ceilings survive in the mezzanine rooms created in the mid-1940s renovation.

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A wide staircase rises from the mezzanine to the upper floors. The second floor contains the ballroom which originally had wood floors and moldings and plaster walls. On this floor and those above were the original guest rooms with private baths; most rooms measured approximately eleven to twelve feet in width by fifteen feet in length, with the exception of corner rooms which were somewhat larger. Entered through wood-framed doors with transoms, the carpeted rooms had no notable interior features.

The basement originally contained a barber shop with exterior entrance, plus storage areas, the boiler room, rest rooms, and the repair shop.

During the 1945 renovation, the west end of the first floor, along South Main Street, was allocated for shops, leaving a greatly reduced lobby area with access only from Maple Avenue. All of the first floor windows were replaced with plate glass shop windows; in later years, all but one of the South Main Street windows were further altered with hoods and projecting bays. The mezzanine was extended to a full floor for additional rooms, and much interior detail on the lower floors was destroyed or hidden. The exterior of the structure above the first floor remains virtually intact. The building presently is being renovated for housing for the elderly, under the Secretary of the Interior's recommended guidelines for renovation of historic property.

(Information regarding construction of the hotel and interior features that have been altered or destroyed is based upon Charles C. Hartmann's plans; plans for the 1945 renovation; documentary photographs; and a discussion with Herb Carmen, AIA, of Alley, Williams, Carmen and King, architects for the current renovation, Burlington, N.C., on February 22, 1982.)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1924 **Builder/Architect** Charles C. Hartmann

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The last in a series of hotels to operate in the central business district, the Alamance Hotel in Burlington, North Carolina symbolizes a traditional concern on the part of public-minded citizens who, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, recognized the financial benefits for the whole community of good hostelry. It also is a highly visible symbol of the growth and prosperity of the 1920s in the United States, the South, and the particular community. It reflects a substantial and well-publicized building program and the city's drive for industrial and economic development that culminated in the giant Burlington Industries. The hotel was designed by Charles C. Hartmann, a noted architect who practiced in North Carolina for more than forty years, from the 1920s to the 1960s. A native of New York, he was responsible for many significant structures in Greensboro, North Carolina in the twentieth century, including the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company Building. When the Alamance Hotel closed in 1974, an era in Burlington's history ended which can never be recaptured. However, with careful rehabilitation now underway, the structure will again serve a worthwhile function in the life of the community.

Criteria Assessment

- B. The Alamance Hotel symbolizes an important period of growth and prosperity in the history of the nation, the South, and Burlington in particular. It perpetuated a strong local tradition of hotels serving as centers for various civic and social activities and stimulating business activities. One of many buildings constructed in the city during the 1920s, it was the product of a vigorous promotional campaign conducted by a committee of local business and industrial leaders under the sponsorship of the Chamber of Commerce. Burlington citizens viewed the hotel as serving a pressing need by stimulating economic activity and representing the community's faith in its future.
- C. The Alamance Hotel was designed by Charles C. Hartmann, a New York-trained architect who designed the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company Building (NR) in Greensboro, North Carolina, and numerous other buildings in that city from 1920 to the mid-1960s. The Alamance Hotel reflects the adroit handling of the Beaux Arts styling for which he is known, and its gracious public rooms showed his concern for interior space as well as exterior ornamentation.

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Historical Background

The tradition of interest in providing good hotel accommodations in Burlington was established in the earliest years of its existence, when the town, then named Company Shops, served as the North Carolina Railroad Company's equipment maintenance and repair center. One of the first buildings in the newly established town was a boarding house, erected in 1855 for workers at the shops.¹ Several years later, railroad president Charles F. Fisher convinced the board of directors that, among other buildings, a decent hotel was needed to provide meals for passengers and train crews as well as lodgings for railroad employees. The well-equipped Railroad Hotel was built for approximately two to three times the amount planned, a fact which led to charges of "extravagance" against Fisher. These charges were largely unfounded as the hotel was not luxurious even for its own day. Under excellent management for most of its existence, the Railroad Hotel was well patronized and served the community as the site of many festive occasions until it was destroyed by fire in 1904.² In the following years, the Ward Hotel and the Piedmont Hotel (the latter built by Piedmont Loan and Trust Company, a local institution) provided Burlington with transient lodging for many years.³

In 1923, the city's businessmen and civic leaders were greatly concerned about the development of their community. Already experiencing rapid growth reflected in an increasing number of construction projects, Burlington wanted to participate even more fully in the economic boom being experienced across the country, especially the South. Contemporary newspaper accounts extolled the drive, determination and zeal of the community in building a "Bigger, Better Burlington."⁴ New buildings of every sort were being erected as established Burlington residents prospered and newcomers settled here. One of the recent arrivals was J. Spencer Love who, with substantial local support, was to establish Burlington Mills, which later developed into Burlington Industries.⁵

Burlington joined numerous communities across the nation in seeking to construct a hotel to serve various community needs. The Blue Book of Southern Progress published by Manufacturers Record in 1926 reported that more than \$300,000,000 was spent on hotel construction in the South during 1925, ranging in cost from \$30,000 to \$10,000,000. Among those listed in the article was the Alamance Hotel,⁶ which, while being in the lower reaches of this range, clearly represented the interest of the community in attracting further business to the downtown area and providing a tangible symbol of the city's new prosperity.

Under the aegis of the Chamber of Commerce, a group of local people formed an executive committee consisting of "...29 of the leading business and professional men and manufacturers in the community"⁷ to promote construction of a new hotel and sell stock to finance its building. In August, 1922, the Burlington Hotel Corporation was formed; its directors were W.W. Brown, H.F. Mitchell and W.E. Sharpe.⁸ It was stated that the committee was

...selected from [sic] the public-spirited and successful business men of Burlington because they were more familiar with the needs and better endowed with experience and facilities of leadership to insure the success of the project...⁹

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As part of the initial effort to convince the public of the need for a new hotel, the committee stated that

The wealth in the way of extra money that will accrue to Burlington and its environs on account of this new hotel are extensive, it is generally admitted, because there will be more traveling men stopping here, more tourists stop over night, more conventions come here for meetings, and many other sources of revenue will be developed in the way of hotel trade, which the city is now losing. 10

The services of the Hackenberry System, Inc., of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who were said to be "...countrywide known as reliable promoters of hotels...",¹¹ were procured to organize the sale of stock, publicity, and selection of the hotel's management. There followed a vigorous campaign to generate enthusiasm for the hotel project and secure financial support for it. Advertisements were printed in the local newspapers under headlines such as "Why You Should Buy Burlington's New Hotel Stock," "The Burlington Hotel Company Prospectus," "An Investment, Not a Gift," and "Why Farmers Should Buy." These ads explained in glowing terms why a new hotel was needed, how all members of the community would benefit, that this was a safe investment, and that modern hotels were profitable enterprises.¹² In addition, volunteers were recruited to form twelve teams to conduct the "...New Hotel Stock Selling Campaign...", which commenced in mid-July, 1923.¹³ Newspaper articles reported the progress of the campaign, which succeeded in one week in selling \$250,900 worth of stock in the new venture. Called "...a signal victory of the community...", the campaign enticed 730 investors in the project,¹⁴ exemplifying both the public's strong interest in the growth of their community and a desire to share in its profits.

Charles C. Hartmann of Greensboro, whose Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company Building in that city was nearing completion, was hired to provide the design for Burlington's new hotel. Hartmann, who went to Greensboro in 1919 to supervise the construction of the O'Henry Hotel for the New York architectural firm of William L. Stoddart, a hotel specialist, had received his training in New York under the masters of the Beaux Arts School of Architecture. With the understanding that he would move to Greensboro and set up practice, Hartmann subsequently was hired by Julian Price, vice president of Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company, to design the company's new headquarters. During his career in that city, which lasted from about 1920 to the mid-1960s, he designed many of Greensboro's commercial and institutional landmarks, as well as numerous substantial residences.¹⁵ It is clear that when Burlington's leaders decided the city needed a new hotel, they were determined to get the most for their money by hiring a well-trained, established and accessible architect. The J.E. Beamon Construction Company of Raleigh was the general contractor for the building.¹⁶

Although Hartmann's plans for the Alamance Hotel did not match the grandeur of the Jefferson Standard Building, they were appropriate to the needs and economy of the smaller community: exterior ornamentation distinguished the building from its neighbors and the elegant interior provided a gracious backdrop for community activities. Modern in all respects, the private rooms on the upper floors were of relatively simple design and furnishings, while the public areas on the first three floors received much more elaborate treatment. The spacious lobby, open through the first and mezzanine floors,

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was an inviting area with its terrazzo floors, vaulted ceiling, and groupings of chairs and tables. The public dining room, also open for two floors, had a mezzanine balcony where a band regularly played. Similar in design to the lobby, it was furnished with linen table cloths, fine china and silverware, and silver vases filled with fresh flowers.¹⁷ As the location for high school proms, other dances, teas, receptions and political meetings, the hotel's ballroom became a center for community activities. The hotel was the site on May 9, 1949 for the opening festivities of the Alamance County centennial celebration which was attended by various state and local officials, press and radio representatives, and community leaders.¹⁹

The precise fate of the Burlington Hotel Corporation is not known. Although no further corporation papers were filed in the Alamance County Registry of Deeds, it appears that the corporation suffered bankruptcy, probably due to the Depression. A marginal note written by S.J. Hinsdale, trustee for the Deed of Trust secured by the Burlington Hotel Corporation in 1924, states "This Deed of Trust was foreclosed...and deed from the within described property has been this day made and delivered to E.M. Long the purchaser thereof at said sale. This August 31, 1935."²⁰ Eugene M. Long had previously purchased Burlington Piedmont Hotel. The Alamance Hotel remained in the Long family until 1972, when it was purchased by Robert E. Garrison.²¹

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, the Alamance Hotel continued to play a prominent role in Burlington's civic and social history, which included a period of several years as the home of radio station WBBB. As early as the 1940s, however, the drain of traffic away from the central business district by newly constructed U.S. 70 By-Pass began to affect the hotel's business. In 1945, as part of an extensive renovation, Long had the large lobby dramatically cut in size to provide space for shops which would bring in additional revenue.²² Later, with the construction of Interstate 85 on the outskirts of the city, it became increasingly difficult to operate the hotel profitably. More and more rooms were occupied by permanent residents rather than transients, and in 1964 the dining room was closed.²³ Other buildings in the community were filling the roles previously played by the hotel's ballroom and other public meeting rooms. Rising fuel costs coupled with decreasing demand for all hotel services finally caused "...the end of an era in Burlington...", when the Alamance Hotel closed on June 30, 1974.²⁴ The Long family had removed most of the more elaborate light fixtures when they sold the structure, and the remainder of the furnishings were offered for sale after the hotel closed after standing vacant for several years.

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Notes

(Most of the data on this building was compiled by Allison Harris, who conducted the architectural inventory of Burlington.)

1

Durward T. Stokes, Company Shops: The Town Built By a Railroad (Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1981), p.25.

2

Stokes, pp. 26 and 29.

3

W.T. Lasley, "City's Hotels: They Leave a Trail in History," The City-County Newspaper (Burlington, N.C.), 28 May 1977, pp. 1C-2C.

4

"Burlington in the Midst of Big Building Program," Burlington (N.C.) Daily News, 19 January 1923, p. 1.

5

Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 632; and "Burlington Mills," Fortune, July 1937, p. 44.

6

"\$300,000,000 in 1925 Hotel Construction South," The Blue Book of Southern Progress (Baltimore: Manufacturers Record Publishing Company, 1926), pp. 186-187.

7

"New Hotel Started With Good Organization by Best Leaders," The Burlington Journal, 13 June 1923, p. 1.

8

Alamance County Registry of Deeds, Corporation Book 5, Page 32.

9

Ibid.

10

Ibid.

11

"Campaign Ready for New Hotel," The Burlington Journal, 6 June 1923, p. 1.

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12

The Burlington Journal, 12 June 1923, 20 June 1923, 27 June 1923, 4 July 1923, p. 2.

13

"Volunteer Salesmen Ready To Sell Hotel Stock Next Week," The Burlington Journal, 4 July 1923, p. 1.

14

"Burlington's Dream of New Hotel Is To Be Realized Soon," The Burlington Journal, 18 July 1923, p. 1.

15

Ruth Little-Stokes, ed., An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Greensboro, N.C. (h.p.: City of Greensboro and North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1976), p. 16; and Ruth Little-Stokes and McKelden Smith, National Register of Historic Places nomination for Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company Building, Greensboro, N.C., December 1975.

16

Alamance County Registry of Deeds, Deed of Trust Book 100, Page 471.

17

Architect's Plans for New Hotel Building for the Burlington Hotel Corporation, Charles C. Hartmann, Architect, 1923 and 1924; documentary photographs of interior owned by Robert E. Garrison; and interview with Robert E. Garrison, owner, Burlington, N.C., 8 February, 1982.

18

Mamie Dunn, "'One of the Best Hotels in the State'...Is Now Closed," Durham Morning Herald, 11 August 1974, p. B-1.

19

"Calendar of Centennial Attractions," The Burlington Daily Times-News, 9 May 1949, p. 1.

20

Alamance County Registry of Deeds, Deed of Trust Book 100, Page 471.

21

Dunn, "'One of the Best,'" p. B-1.

22

Dunn, "'One of the Best,'" p. B-1; architect's plans; interview with Bobby Garrison, 17 February 1982.

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Dunn, "'One of the Best,'" p. B-1.

24

Ibid; and Garrison interview.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Burlington, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	6	4	0	4	5	0	3	9	9	5	2	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 1, Lot 2 (Burlington Tax Maps, Map #1)

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claudia P. Roberts

organization Consultant to the City of Burlington date March 15, 1983

street & number 422 South Lexington Avenue telephone 227-3603 Ext. 79

city or town Burlington state North Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 16, 1983

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

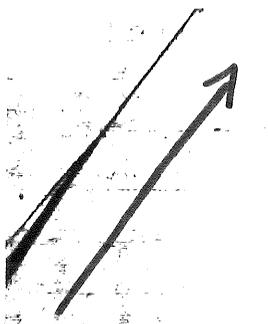
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

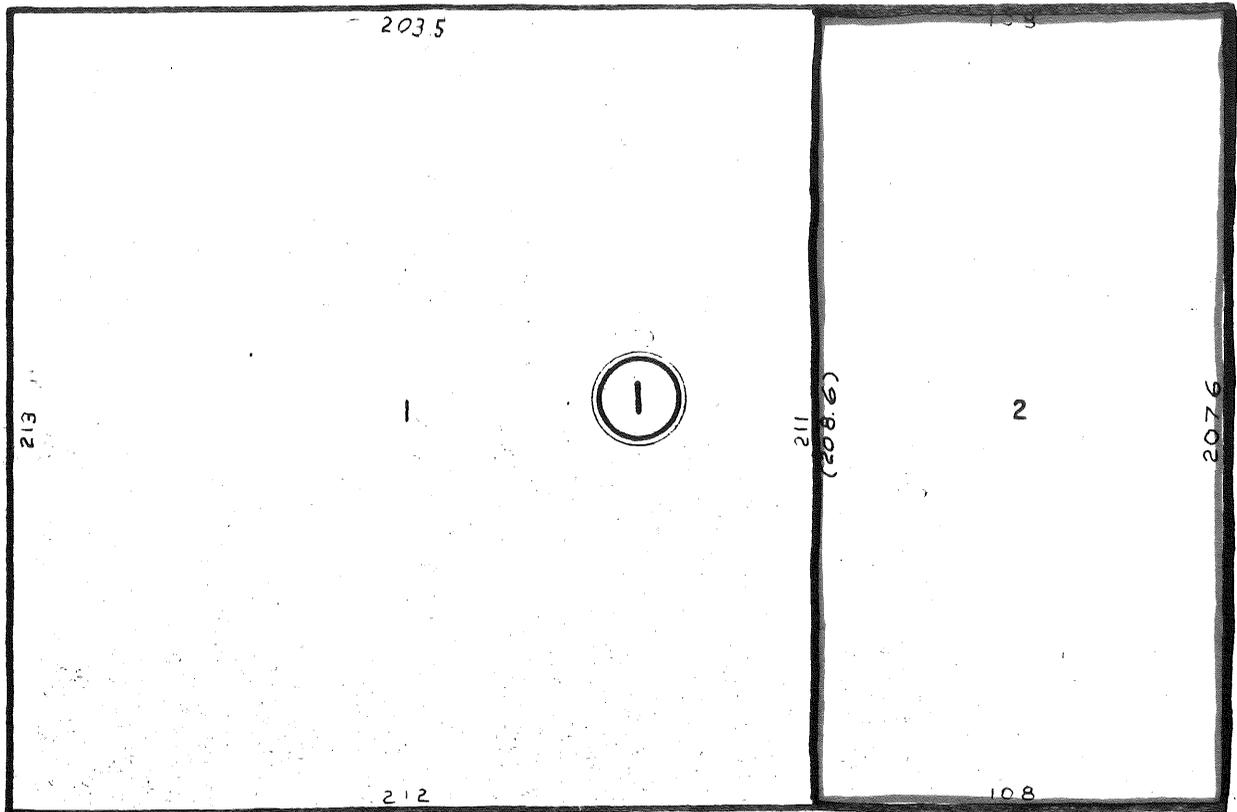
date

Chief of Registration



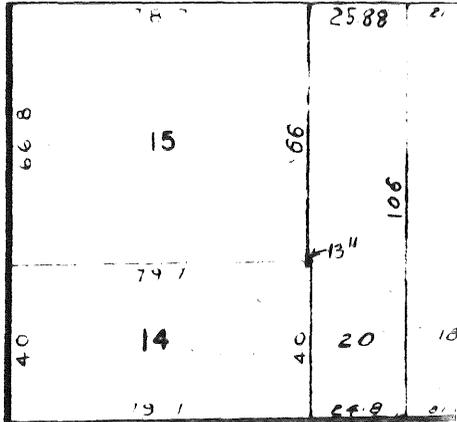
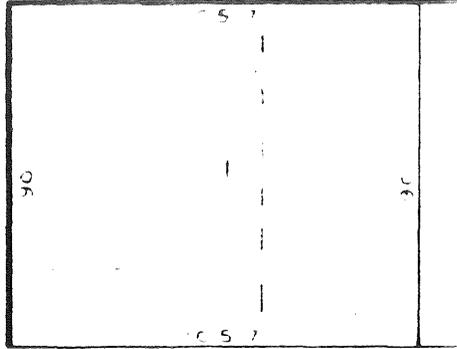
6

MOREHEAD



S. SPRING

MAPLE AVE.



STR

8

Alamance Hotel

ALAMANCE COUNTY, N. C.		
SCALE	TOWNSHIP	DATE
50'	BURLINGTON	1948
MAP 1 BLOCKS 1-2-3		

