

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Home Federal Building**

Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, MK2173, Listed 1/30/2008  
Nomination by Cynthia de Miranda  
Photographs by Cynthia de Miranda, ??



Façade and side view



Side view with elevator tower

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Home Federal Building  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 139 South Tryon Street  not for publication N/A  
city or town Charlotte  vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code 28202

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Home Federal Building  
Name of Property

Mecklenburg Co., North Carolina  
County and State

**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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution

COMMERCE/TRADE: Professional

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls CONCRETE

GLASS

METAL

roof ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Home Federal Building  
Name of Property

Mecklenburg Co., North Carolina  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1967

### Significant Dates

1967

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

The Freeman-White Associates, Inc. (architect)  
Juno Construction Company (general contractor)

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Federal Building  
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County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre.

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>514220</u> Easting	<u>3897950</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cynthia de Miranda  
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date April 12, 2007  
street & number Post Office Box 1171 telephone 919/682-2211  
city or town Durham state NC zip code 27702

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Jim Donnelly, Trust Development Group LLC  
street & number 221 South Tryon Street telephone 704-804-0647  
city or town Charlotte state NC zip code 28202

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Home Federal Building  
Mecklenburg Co., N.C.

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### DESCRIPTION

The Home Federal Building is a seven-story International Style office building in the heart of Charlotte's commercial business district.<sup>1</sup> Two contrasting forms compose the Home Federal Building: a seven-story office building with a reinforced-concrete frame and an eight-story concrete-block service tower that parallels the office building section along most of its north elevation. A fountain and small arched walkway accent a secondary entrance at the narrow bay, which leads into the ground-floor elevator lobby. Inside, original terrazzo floors and travertine walls remain in the ground-floor lobby and all of the elevator lobbies; the original circular lobby stair and mezzanine railing also survive. The building has been gutted at the basement and at floors three through seven. The property is in excellent condition and has had no exterior alterations since its construction in 1967.

The building stands at the northeast corner of East Fourth and South Tryon Streets, near the center of what has been the city's business district since the nineteenth century. Today, skyscrapers from throughout the twentieth century tower over the Home Federal Building along Tryon Street. Mid-to-late-twentieth-century skyscrapers rising eighteen and more stories sprout from the remaining three corners of the West Fourth and South Tryon intersection, and a fourth late-twentieth-century skyscraper stands immediately north of the Home Federal Building, its neighbor on South Tryon Street. The urban landscape that surrounds the Home Federal Building has changed somewhat in scale and materials since 1967 but not in nature. It remains a busy commercial intersection dominated by buildings erected for financial institutions, an increasingly common building type in Charlotte since the middle of the twentieth century.

The building's parcel occupies scarcely more than ten percent of **the** 3.4-acre city block. The lot measures **seventy-nine and a half** feet along South Tryon Street and reaches back roughly 204 feet into the block, its south line edging East Fourth Street. The parcel has a very gentle downward slope from the front towards the back. The building shares the parcel with a small paved parking area at the rear, accessible from a driveway on East Fourth Street. City-installed sidewalks with granite pavers surround the building on its north, west, and south sides.

### *Home Federal Building, 1967, Contributing Building*

The Home Federal Building presents a divergent vision of the International Style, ignoring the often-employed Miesian model of dark glass walls accented by shining slender metal mullions. Instead, the

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<sup>1</sup> The street grid does not align with cardinal points but skews forty-five degrees to the northeast. For ease of description, however, the building is treated as though it does conform to cardinal points, with the façade facing true west and the building standing at the northeast corner of the intersection.

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building aggressively emphasizes the horizontal elements in its structural frame and clothes itself in precast concrete that creates texture though finish and expressive construction.

The concrete-framed office building visually dominates the **pre-cast** concrete service tower, which together compose the building. The office tower's upper stories feature expressed concrete columns, horizontal concrete sunshades, lateral expanses of dark-tinted glass, and bronzed aluminum accents. Its ground floor and mezzanine levels are enclosed by a dark-tinted glass curtain wall framed in bronzed aluminum and recessed at the facade. The service tower almost completely lacks fenestration along its vertically corrugated concrete surface. Two doors on the south side of the eighth story of the tower provide egress to the roof; these are not visible from the street. The building's two forms stand slightly apart from each other, joined by a narrow bay that shares the double-height glass-enclosed ground floor of the office building. **The fenestration of this narrow bay is defined by a set of three windows separated by vertical concrete muntins on each of the five stories above.**

The building's west-facing façade overlooks South Tryon Street. At the main office building section, two concrete columns stand free of the glass-enclosed first floor and mezzanine levels, offset from the corners of the building. The columns are rectangular and are deeper in plan than they are wide. A dark line of bronzed aluminum vertically bisects the front edge of each column, creating an illusion of narrower paired columns that keeps the building from feeling heavy. As the columns rise along the height of the building, they pierce through the sunshades, allowing the horizontal line to dominate the upper stories.

Bronzed aluminum frames subtly divide the recessed double-height curtain wall at the facade's ground floor, with horizontals indicating the partial division of interior space by the mezzanine level. The frames mark the division between the ground floor and the mezzanine with widely spaced, paired framing elements; this double line is echoed by identically spaced horizontal score marks in the concrete columns. A glass-enclosed vestibule, centered in this recessed glass wall, projects both into the interior space and beyond the exterior wall, onto the sidewalk. Three single-leaf glass doors set between full-height sidelights, all in bronzed aluminum frames, provide entry into the vestibule from the street. The interior doors, however, are glass panels hinged from the top and bottom, dissolving the apparent separation between the inner wall of the vestibule and the lobby space within.

The five nearly identical upper stories at the facade feature a treatment that alternates bright white concrete sunshades with bands of smoky brown window glass. Precast concrete sections compose the sunshades, which wrap around three sides of the building like highly dimensioned beltcourses. Each precast sunshade section features a narrow projecting sill beneath a wide band with a larger projection of concrete at the top, extending significantly beyond the plane of the sill below to provide protection from the midday sun for the story below. Where the columns intersect with the sunshades, they pass

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behind all planes of the shade, giving dominance to the horizontal line of the sunshade over the vertical line of the column. A single concrete corbel inserted between the upper and lower projections of the sunshade mark the center of each column where it passes behind each sunshade. At the third story, the first of the five upper stories, the bottom sill of the sunshade is doubled, indicating this floor's function as the base of the upper portion of the building and echoing the doubled appearance of the concrete columns.

A balustrade tops each sunshade with a flat concrete rail resting on short rectangular balusters, their narrow ends turned toward the street. With the balustrades, the sunshades take on the appearance of balconies when viewed from the street. They do not, however, project far enough from the plane of the window walls to serve as balconies and there are no points of egress along the shaft of the building.

Between the sunshades at floors three through seven, bands of tinted double-pane windows light the interior. The windows are unusual for an office building of this period in that they open: each window pivots 360 degrees from a pin centered in the width of the window. Below each window is a spandrel panel of bronzed aluminum; when viewed from the street, these spandrels are obscured by the sunshades. As the structural columns rise along the height of the building, they intersect with the window walls, the front edge of each column projecting slightly from the exterior of the window. A clean, simple parapet of precast concrete panels topped with white metal coping caps the building above the uppermost sunshade, which lacks a railing.

The facade of the narrow bay that joins the office building to the service tower features a glass-enclosed vestibule similar to that at the main entrance. The entrance consists of a pair of glass doors in bronzed aluminum frames set below a heavy concrete canopy that projects from the bay and stretches across the front edge of the service tower; this canopy is continued inside the main part of the building, forming the front edge of the mezzanine floor. The upper stories at the bay exhibit a vertical emphasis in strong contrast with the horizontal lines of the main section. Bronzed metal spandrels that correspond with the location of the floors and the horizontal sunshades of the office building section accent the fixed-sash, floor-to-ceiling windows in the narrow bay. The slender vertical concrete sunshades of the connecting bay project deeply into the space of the building as well as far beyond the exterior wall between the window glass. The bay houses the elevator lobby at each floor.

The tower, unlike the main section with its strong projecting angles, has rounded corners and an exterior surface of narrow triangular ribs rendered in the same finely grained concrete seen elsewhere on the building. The narrow ribs create a corrugated surface that catches the light and highlights the softened edges of the tower. Horizontal scoring marks the level of each floor of the building, including the mezzanine, providing a familiar horizontal element to the otherwise plain tower. A wider score



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outlines the height of the ground floor and includes verticals at the west and east ends of the north side of the tower.

The exterior treatment of the south and east elevations and the exposed portions of the north elevation on the main part of the building is largely similar to the treatment at the facade, with differences only at the double-height base of the building. Columns at the other three elevations intersect with the ground-floor curtain wall. The rear elevation, like the facade, has two columns. Six columns rise along the north and south elevations; only on the street-facing south elevation are all six visible, thanks to the placement of the service tower on the north side. The first and sixth columns on the north elevation (numbering from the facade end back to the rear of the building) are visible, however, and, like the columns at the facade as well as those at the rear elevation, they are offset from the corners of the building. All columns feature the same band of bronzed aluminum that gives the appearance that each column is a pair. The facade treatment of the windowed, horizontally expressed upper five floors fully covers the south and east elevations as well; the north elevation is interrupted by the service tower and connecting bay.

On the south and east elevations, it is the ground-floor and mezzanine-level curtain wall that differs from the facade. Along the south elevation, the curtain wall is mostly glass between the first and fourth columns; a vertically scored bronzed aluminum spandrel covers the mezzanine floor structure. As the land slopes downhill slightly towards the back of the parcel, more of the lower level of the building is above ground. A concrete planter between the second and fourth columns and between the fifth and sixth columns covers the basement area that would otherwise be exposed by the slope. The surfaces of the planter, unlike the smooth, white surfaces of the building, have a pebbled aggregate surface that brings an organic roughness evoking the earth below the sculpted refinement of the building.

The planter is interrupted between the fourth and fifth columns to allow for a side entrance into the rear portion of the sunken ground-level banking floor. The aluminum-framed glass doors are recessed into a wall of vertically scored aluminum; a heavy aluminum lintel tops the doorway. Aluminum framing elements like those in the glass curtain wall are continued in this bay so that the continuous horizontal line composed of framing elements and score marks on the columns is unbroken.

The building's rear elevation has, instead of a glass curtain wall, a scored concrete wall finished with the same pebbled-aggregate surface seen on the planters at the south elevation. Score marks continue the double horizontal line that marks the division between the ground floor and the mezzanine, while scored verticals further subdivide what would otherwise appear as a monolithic wall. The wall extends beyond the north side of the office tower section of the building, forming a visual foundation for the narrow connecting bay but remaining in the same plane as the east elevation of the main section of the building. The connecting bay has the same upper-story treatment at the rear as it does at the front. A

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small, sheltered loading dock is at the far right of this section and a single-leaf personnel door provides entry. A short flight of stairs allows access to the sidewalk along the north side of the service tower.

Close attention to detail and proportion contribute to the building's elegance and human scale. The horizontal scoring on the columns divide the long vertical line rising from the street to the bottom of the third story, and the scoring at the service tower and the rear elevation's curtain wall keep those larger wall expanses divided into smaller sections that prevent the surfaces from looking monolithic. The textures produced by the corrugated surface of the tower and the pebbled aggregate at the rear of the building also bring small-scaled elements to these otherwise broad, soaring surfaces. At the upper floors of the main section of the building, all sections are of the same width, creating aligned seams in different materials and building elements. The precast sections of the sunshades are exactly the same width as the individual pivoting windows. Narrower windows are used at the corners and near the columns so that the centers of the columns also align with the seams in the precast sections of sunshades.

Inside the building, original room spaces remain in the common areas, including the double-height main lobby, sunken banking floor, elevator lobby, and service tower. The main lobby, the area at the front of the building, between the first and second columns along the north and south elevations, features white terrazzo floors, also seen in the elevator lobby and the sunken banking floor. Five broad steps lead down from the main lobby into the banking floor. The dropped ceiling of the banking floor has been removed to reveal the concrete structural system, and some sections of the wall finish have been removed. The teller counter, which is not extant, lined the south edge of the banking floor. A receptionist desk at the center front of the banking floor has also been removed. Small offices were carved out of the space at the rear with movable walls and dividers, also not extant. A second broad set of five steps lead from the north side of the banking floor up to the ground-floor elevator lobby. Each of the elevator lobbies retains its white terrazzo floor and white travertine walls; original wood-paneled elevator doors and wood stairwell doors also remain, warming the palette.

The original curving staircase at the southwest corner of the main lobby leads to the mezzanine, its wood handrail on metal posts continuing across the front edge of the mezzanine floor. Both the stair treads and the mezzanine floor have unfinished concrete surfaces that were originally covered by carpet.

The elevator shafts are housed within the service tower, as are stairwells. The concrete-block construction of the tower is visible inside the stairwells, which feature concrete stairs and metal railings. The stairwell provides access to the eighth floor of the tower, which allows egress to the flat roof; the roof surface is tar, rubber, and gravel.

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All the office areas have been gutted, exposing the building's concrete frame at the interior. At each story, six concrete beams stretch from column to column, bridging the width of the building, while shallower concrete girders support the concrete slab floor of the story above. The result is that the entirety of each floor is open within the footprint of the main section of the building. Mechanical equipment, housed at the back of the seventh floor, has also been removed; vents fill the window areas at the back of this floor, indicating the location of the mechanical room. The basement houses a vault in the southwest corner of the building. All bathrooms have been removed from the building.

### *Fountain and Pool, 1967, Contributing **Structure***

A fountain and pool occupy the small, roughly square area in front of the service tower and connecting bay at the left side of the facade. The fountain is a square basin of concrete with a pebbled aggregate surface set on a pedestal of fieldstone. Fieldstone also lines the basin of the pool below. Granite pavers are a later addition made by the city when the sidewalks were installed.

### *Walkway Bridge, 1967, Contributing Structure*

A gently arched concrete bridge carries a walkway over the fountain's pool from the city sidewalk to the elevator lobby entrance, the secondary entrance at the facade. Arched wood handrails on metal posts line each side of the bridge.

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### *Summary of Significance*

The Home Federal Building meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion C and Criterion Consideration G as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the International Style and as a structure possessing high artistic value in expressing that style. The Freeman-White Associates (known as Walter Hook and Associates during the building's planning period) designed this airy, elevated structure, which also shows the influence of Brutalism. The architects selected a reinforced-concrete structural system to create an open floor plan; divided interior space by function and displayed that division at the exterior; elegantly expressed structure and materials and used functional elements as ornament; organized the design by repetition of elements; and rendered all these features with a sensitivity to human scale and a flawless eye for detail. The building, completed in 1967, is exceptionally significant at the local level as both a singular expression of the International Style and as the last intact first-generation International Style office building in Charlotte's commercial business district.

### *Architectural Context*

The International Style, a name coined in 1932 by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, is the formal doctrine of the Modernist Utopian movement that emerged in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, merging "the ideals of nineteenth-century rationalism and socialism" with "twentieth-century abstract art and Futurism." Hitchcock and Johnson identified three fundamental principals that defined the International Style: a concept of the building as volume rather than mass; design ordered by repetition rather than by axial symmetry; and a prohibition against applied ornament. The broader Modern movement also advocated functionalism, or the expression of function through form. Twenty years later, the International Style was "still the essential core of international architectural practice," according to Hitchcock, who asserted as late as 1963 that the style yet remained the "basis of further architectural development" owing to the fact that it was "the discipline under which almost all architects under sixty were formed." From the start, Hitchcock recognized that within the International Style, there were "stylistic divergences" and by 1963 felt that those divergences had manifested themselves more markedly than ever.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the Modernist movement and the International Style is already well documented in Charlotte. Two recent surveys have produced architectural contexts that include Modernist downtown bank buildings erected in the 1950s and 1960s. In 2000, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, *Architecture From Prehistory to Post Modern, The Western Tradition* (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1986), 534; Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, "The International Style," in *Roots of Contemporary American Architecture*, ed. Lewis Mumford, Dover ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 382-395; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "International Style," in *Encyclopaedia of Modern Architecture*, ed. Gerd Hatje (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), 112, 153.

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Landmarks Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office sponsored a survey of Charlotte's post-World War II architecture. The resulting report, by Sherry Joines Wyatt and Sarah Woodard, presented an architectural context for local building during the period, including a discussion of the early years of Modernism in the city. In 2004, the "Survey of Historic Buildings and Structures in Center City Charlotte" produced a context for high-rise buildings, authored by Dan L. Morrill and Stewart Gray.<sup>2</sup>

For the post-World War II survey, Wyatt and Woodard studied buildings erected between 1945 and 1965 but also discussed the 1967 Home Federal Building, given that its construction fell just outside their study period. Similarly, while the 2004 survey sought to examine buildings predating 1960, the context for high-rise buildings included structures erected throughout the 1960s, also including the Home Federal Building. These surveyed buildings represent the first generation of Modernist office buildings erected in downtown Charlotte. This small group includes the 1953 Jefferson Standard Building (altered by the addition of three stories and replacement of the entire curtain wall); the 1958 Wachovia Building (altered with windows cut into its monolithic base); the 1961 North Carolina National Bank (altered by the replacement of marble with glass at its once-monolithic base and changes to mullions along the tower); the 1961 American Building, also known as the Cutter Building (altered by the replacement of the entire curtain wall); and the 1967 Home Federal Building (no exterior alterations).

Wyatt and Woodard found that the Wachovia Building and the Home Federal Building met the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, despite being less than fifty years old, in part due to the "rarity of examples surviving with integrity." Not surprisingly, in the seven years since the completion of that report, the group of intact Modernist buildings continued to shrink; alterations to the monolithic base of the Wachovia Building post-date the completion of Wyatt and Woodard's survey, as do changes to the North Carolina National Bank Building. The Home Federal Building is now the only intact Modernist bank building predating 1970 in Charlotte's central business district. Clearly, this category of resources is facing loss at an alarming rate.

In addition to its status as the only intact early Modernist office building in the city's central business district, the Home Federal Building is the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the International Style, displaying a "stylistic divergence" from the Ludwig Mies van der Rohe-derived rendition most typically associated with the International Style with regard to tall office buildings.

The building also sharply differs from the version of the International Style seen in Charlotte for downtown office buildings before 1970, which tended to either reproduce variations on the Miesian

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<sup>2</sup> Sherry Joines Wyatt and Sarah Woodard, "Final Report: Post World War II Survey," 2000, <http://cmhpf.org/postww2survey.htm>, accessed March 22, 2007; Dan L. Morrill and Stewart Gray, "Survey of Historic Buildings and Structures in Center City Charlotte," September 2004, <http://www.cmhpf.org/uptownsurveyintroduction.htm>, accessed March 22, 2007.

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theme of glass-enclosed boxes or feature precast concrete panels with undulating profiles or glittering surfaces as produced by A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates.

The first in the group of early downtown Modernist office buildings was the 1953 Jefferson Standard Building. The structure rose twelve stories from a broad footprint at the corner of South Tryon and Third Streets, producing a boxy building that didn't quite achieve all the elements of the International Style. Jefferson Standard retained an earthbound feeling of substantial mass, unlike the structures that would soon appear on the skyline. The building easily fell into the broader Modernist category, however, with its exposed concrete frame, horizontal bands of windows, and lack of ornamentation. The building underwent a radical remodeling in recent years, with three stories added and a new glass curtain wall installed.<sup>3</sup>

A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates was the associate architect for the Wachovia Building, completed in 1958 at 129 Trade Street and designed by the New York firm Harrison and Abramowitz. The concrete-framed building featured a monolithic concrete curtain wall three stories high that appeared to float above the glass-enclosed ground floor, not unlike the massive base that supported the tower of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill's Lever House in New York, although not so large. An office tower framed with reinforced concrete rose above the base, sheathed in prismatic precast concrete panels that alternated with window glass to light the tower's offices. A narrower, windowless adjoining tower housed elevators and storage space. The building pioneered the use of prismatic concrete panels in the United States; Odell would work with the material in several forms throughout the 1960s, including at the Charlotte Memorial Hospital (now surrounded by additions), which featured prismatic precast panels very similar to those used on the Wachovia Tower.<sup>4</sup>

After Wachovia's innovative concrete-clad tower came two variations on Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's theme of glass curtain wall accented with slender metal mullions that reached the height of the building's shaft. The fifteen-story North Carolina National Bank Building, designed by Walter Hook and Associates, rose fifteen stories in 1961 at 200 South Tryon Street, the southwest corner of South Tryon and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, catercorner across the intersection from Home Federal's offices that were still in the Buford Hotel. The building had a classic Miesian tower faced with glass curtain walls featuring slender metal mullions. The tower rose from a multi-story marble-on-glass base similar to that of the 1958 Wachovia Building. The marble base has been replaced with glass curtain walls and decorative wings have been added to the tops of the tower's mullions. The 1961 American Building (also known as the Cutter Building) stands across Tryon Street from the North Carolina National Bank, south of the Home Federal Building and at the southeast corner of the intersection. Originally, the American Building also featured a glass-and-steel exterior but toyed with the basic elements that Mies had

<sup>3</sup> Morrill and Gray, <http://www.cmhpf.org/uptownsurveyintroduction.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> "Bank and Office Building, Charlotte," *Southern Architect* 3 (July 1956): 11; "First in the United States," *The Wachovia* (September 1957): 3; *Charlotte Observer*, August 15, 1982.

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established with the 1958 Seagram Building in New York. Continuous mullions alternated across the glass curtain wall with segmented mullions, bringing a playful line to the vertical emphasis at the building's skin. A 1999 renovation entirely replaced the original curtain wall with a flat, mirrored-glass version that eliminated the projecting verticals and dark glass that defined the earlier, Miesian version.<sup>5</sup>

The Home Federal Building differs substantially in design from all four of these examples while still holding fast to the defining features of the International Style. Rejecting both a dominant vertical expression and shallow surface texture, the Home Federal building instead highlights its reinforced concrete frame with aggressively projecting horizontal sunshades that cross in front of the structural concrete columns. The frame enables an open interior that pushes supporting columns to the periphery of the footprint. Columns are expressed at the exterior, indicating structural organization but also introducing sculptural form with the use of score marks and bronzed aluminum. The scoring and aluminum bands on the columns and the scoring and small-scaled texture—both in the form of vertical ribs and pebbled aggregate—on the monolithic walls at the service tower and the back wall bring human scale to the building, visually dividing expansive spaces to eliminate massive solids. The overall impression conveys form, materials, and lightness all at once. The fountain, pool, and bridge of the garden composition at the façade's secondary entrance is another example of the architects' ability to bring humanity to the building project. The varied textures of concrete used in the fountain and the presence of both falling and flowing water appeal to multiple human senses. The inclusion of a bridge over the pool on the path from the sidewalk into the elevator lobby requires interaction with these sensual elements, and the placement of the garden just outside the glass-enclosed main lobby keeps these naturalistic elements in clear view even to observers inside the building.

The building's design originated with Beverly Freeman, the president and a principal of The Freeman-White Associates at the time. Freeman, a South Carolina native, attended Clemson University and moved to Charlotte to work for Walter Hook and Associates in 1948. He became president in 1963, upon the death of Walter Hook. The firm name changed in 1966 to The Freeman-White Associates. Freeman retired from the practice twenty years later, in 1986.<sup>6</sup>

Freeman produced a sketch for the Home Federal Building and assigned the project to Bruce Robertson (1932-1987), a young architect who had recently joined the firm after a few years as a draftsman at A. G. Odell Jr. and Associates. Robertson was a "very talented" designer who "enjoyed working with precast concrete" recalls Hugh Edward White Jr., another principal of the firm at the time. Robertson's interest in precast concrete may have stemmed from his work at Odell, a firm that experimented with the material throughout the 1960s. At Walter Hook and Associates, Robertson

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 506; "North Carolina National Bank," *Southern Architect* 10 (November 1963): 12-13; Wyatt and Woodard, <http://cmhpf.org/postww2survey.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Beverly Freeman, interview with author, April 4, 2007; "Freeman to Head NCAIA in '72," *Southern Architect* 18 (November-December 1971): 7; "NCAIA Annual Directory," *North Carolina Architect* 35 (January-February 1987): 25.

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participated in designing the 1962 Southern Railway Passenger Station and the 1967 Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital, according to White's recollection. Both make use of precast concrete structurally and for other functional elements like sunshades and wall panels.<sup>7</sup>

Records relating to the design and construction of the building could not be located, but stylistic influences on the design are apparent. The late 1950s and early 1960s work of two architects outside North Carolina, Kenzo Tange and Paul Rudolph, has much in common with the Home Federal design. Tange and Rudolph were heavily covered in the national press in 1964, thanks to important commissions for each architect.

The Home Federal Building strongly resembles Tange's 1958 Kagawa Prefectural Government Office in Takamatsu, Japan, an "early masterpiece" of the 1987 Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect. Tange's eight-story building expresses its concrete frame with exposed columns that rise behind projecting horizontal sunshades with railings, a composition repeated in the Home Federal design. Tange placed columns directly at corners and left those as poured; the two intermediate columns across the façade, however, feature a vertical band bisecting the width of each column and creating the appearance of slender paired columns. This effect is incorporated in the columns at the Home Federal Building, but here, the columns are offset from the corners, creating a lighter feeling throughout the building and particularly at the double-height, glass-enclosed base. The sunshades at the Home Federal Building also project less than Tange's, allowing the bands of windows to be more visible when viewed from street level. Tange's sunshades may double as balconies; Freeman-White's do not. Tange's building is an elegant pairing of Modernism and traditional Japanese design, and Freeman-White's inclusion of the water feature and bridge at the secondary façade entrance may be a nod to traditional Japanese design. Tange's much-publicized 1964 Olympic Arena in Tokyo may have piqued the Charlotte firm's interest in Tange and his work.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, another high-profile building completed in 1964 influenced the Home Federal design. Paul Rudolph's Yale Art and Architecture Building was the topic of many articles both in the architectural and popular press. The Brutalist structure features exterior walls with a hand-distressed concrete treatment colorfully described as "corduroy." Concrete was first poured into forms with narrow vertical ribs. After the concrete hardened and the forms were removed, workers chiseled away the

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<sup>7</sup> "New Members Assigned to NC Chapter AIA," *North Carolina Architect* 13 (August 1966): 14; Class of 1954 Memorials, *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, <http://tigernet.princeton.edu/~cl1954/groups/r.htm>, Accessed March 14, 2007; Hugh Edward White Jr., interview with author, March 27, 2007; *Hill's Charlotte City Directories 1959-1962* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1959-1962); "Southern Passenger Railway Station, Charlotte," *Southern Architect* 11 (August 1964): 10-11; "Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose, and Throat Hospital," *North Carolina Architect* 14 (March 1967): 9-11.

<sup>8</sup> Richard L. Mattson, "Survey and Research Report on the Home Federal Savings and Loan Building, Charlotte, NC," 2001, <http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rhomefederal.htm>, accessed December 1, 2006; Tange Associates website, [www.tangeweb.com/english/projects/description/worldwide/c2/p49.html](http://www.tangeweb.com/english/projects/description/worldwide/c2/p49.html), accessed March 28, 2007; Pritzker Prize website, <http://www.pritzkerprize.com/tange.htm>, accessed March 9, 2007.



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triangular point along the length of each rib, leaving a rough-edged vertical projection that gave small-scale texture to the massive building. Rudolph used the treatment again in his Massachusetts Health, Education, and Welfare Service Center built in 1970 in Boston, on narrow towers with rounded ends and horizontal scoring, much like the service tower in the Home Federal Building. An early rendering of the Boston center appeared in *Architectural Forum* in 1964; in that rendering, the round-edged towers soar elegantly into the air, their curves contrasted starkly by the projecting corners of cantilevered stories near the top of the building. A similar effect is seen at the Home Federal Building when viewing the tower and projecting sunshades from street level next to the building. While the more aggressive traits of the Brutalist movement, such as its focus on raw rather than refined materials, are not seen in the Home Federal Building, the expression of functional spaces, the use of concrete, and the sculptural form of the building all point to influences of the Brutalist strain of Modernism on the building.<sup>9</sup>

The firm did not continue working in this stylistic vein, despite great pride in the Home Federal Building. Unlike Odell, who experimented with precast concrete panels throughout the 1960s, Freeman-White seemed less intrigued by the material and its possibilities. The single-story 1964 Southern Railway Passenger Station, built in Charlotte, also used a precast concrete frame, but combined precast concrete and exposed aggregate panels with brick veneer at the exterior. In 1967, the firm's Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat Hospital (not extant) combined a concrete structure with brick veneer and some concrete trim. Other buildings from the 1960s and later focused more heavily on brick exteriors, including the 1966 Hamlet Hospital School of Nursing and the 1969 Auditorium for West Charlotte High School. Both buildings feature massive, often unfenestrated forms with brick exteriors. The 1972 Nash General Hospital in Rocky Mount recalls the rounded tower of the Home Federal Building, but the exterior again is rendered in brick.<sup>10</sup>

In the design for the Home Federal Building, Freeman-White broke sharply from the nascent tradition of the International Style seen in Charlotte to that point, bringing a fresh presentation of the tenets of the style to a high-profile location in the commercial and financial heart of the booming city. As a singular expression of the International Style in Charlotte and as the last intact office building of the early wave of such structures, the building is exceptionally significant under Criterion C at the local level. The building's status as the lone survivor of the period and trend demonstrates the fragility of such resources as development pressures continue to act upon the central business district.

<sup>9</sup> The Kidder Smith Images Project, <http://libraries.mit.edu/rvc/kidder/photos/MA22.html>, accessed March 29, 2007; Peter Blake, "The Secret Scrapbook of an Architectural Scavenger," *Architectural Forum* 121 (August-September 1964): 104.

<sup>10</sup> Freeman interview; "Southern Railway Passenger Station," *Southern Architect* 11(August 1964): 10-11; "Charlotte Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital," *North Carolina Architect* 14 (March 1967): 9-11; "Awards of Merit," *North Carolina Architect* 13 (December 1966): 21; "Merit Award," *North Carolina Architect* 16 (February 1969): 8-9; "Nash General Hospital," *North Carolina Architect* 19 (September-October 1972): 21.

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### *History*

The Home Federal Savings and Loan Association began as the Mechanics Perpetual Building and Loan Association in Charlotte in 1883. Of great benefit to the association's business, Charlotte experienced phenomenal residential growth in the first four decades of the twentieth century, the population growing from eighteen thousand to over one hundred thousand between 1900 and 1940. In 1943, with the award of a federal charter, the association became Home Federal Savings and Loan. As reflected by its name change, the association evolved from a home mortgage lender to a savings and loan that offered financing for home mortgages as well as to home builders and contractors in addition to personal savings accounts. Charlotte's strong growth continued after World War II, translating to a boom period for Home Federal throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century. In 1955, Home Federal moved its offices from 22 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Charlotte into the Buford Hotel, a nineteenth-century building at the northeast corner of South Tryon Street and East 4th Street that the association had just acquired.<sup>11</sup>

While the sellers had just completed a \$400,000 remodeling and Home Federal put another \$50,000 into the Buford Hotel upon purchasing it, the association's leadership intended all along to erect a new building. The main motive for the purchase of the Buford was the acquisition of property at the corner, a location the association's leadership saw as key to their business. Home Federal took to calling the intersection "the prime savings corner, the banking corner of Charlotte." At the time of the move, the twelve-story 1918 Wachovia Bank Building (not extant) and the twelve-story Commercial National Bank Building (not extant) also stood at the intersection of South Tryon and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets, which is just one block south of Tryon's intersection with Trade Street, the main crossing in commercial Charlotte.<sup>12</sup>

Home Federal hired Walter Hook and Associates of Charlotte in the mid-1960s to design its new building. The firm was a successor of Charles C. Hook's, North Carolina's first professional architect and Walter Hook's father. While the elder Hook was a major proponent of the Colonial Revival in North Carolina, his son Walter was one of the first generation of Modernist architects working in Charlotte. Raised in North Carolina and educated at Columbia University—like Charlotte's early and perhaps most prolific Modernist, Arthur Gould Odell—Walter Hook returned to Charlotte to work with his father, becoming a partner in his father's firm in 1923. The younger Hook assumed the presidency

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<sup>11</sup> *Charlotte News*, March 3, 1983; Mattson, <http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rhomefederal.htm>; Wyatt and Woodard, <http://cmhpf.org/postww2survey.htm>; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory 1961* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1961), 12.

<sup>12</sup> *Charlotte News*, March 3, 1983; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory 1955* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1955), 278; Digital Sanborn Maps, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, 1929, 1929-1951, [www.nclive.org](http://www.nclive.org), accessed March 27, 2007.

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of the firm upon his father's death in 1938, and the firm became known as Walter Hook and Associates.<sup>13</sup>

According to an obituary in *Southern Architect* in 1966, the trade journal published by the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects (and an active promoter of architectural Modernism), Walter Hook's "most outstanding designs" in Charlotte were all in the Modern mode, including the 1954 low-slung, glass curtain-walled terminal at the Douglas Municipal Airport; the 1959 Central YMCA complex, which featured a residential tower with glass and precast concrete curtain walls in addition to broad, low-rise, glass curtain-walled buildings; and the 1961 Miesian-influenced North Carolina National Bank Building, a seventeen-story tower that replaced the Commercial National Bank building at the southwest corner of South Tryon and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets. While Hook was not necessarily the lead designer for all these projects—Hugh Edward White Jr. is known to be the lead designer for the airport terminal, for instance—this list demonstrates that under Walter Hook's leadership the firm had established itself as a producer of accomplished International Style design. Despite this strong reputation, it was a personal connection between firm vice-president Hugh Edward White Jr. and Home Federal's then-president, Thomas Barber, that secured the commission for Walter Hook and Associates.<sup>14</sup>

In late 1965, Home Federal moved out of the Buford Building into temporary quarters in Thacker's Restaurant Building on the 200 block of South Tryon Street. A rendering of the new Home Federal Building appeared in the 1966 city directory, as construction was underway. The rendering shows the structure as built with the exception of the water feature at the secondary façade entrance. The architects, now known as The Freeman-White Associates, added the water feature to the design before construction was complete in early 1967. Home Federal moved into its new offices in February 1967.<sup>15</sup>

Home Federal remained at this location until 2000, when the building was sold to a real estate developer. The building has remained vacant since that time. The current owner purchased the building in 2006.

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<sup>13</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, May 5, 1992; "Walter Hook," *Southern Architect* 5 (January 1958): 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> "Walter Williams Hook, FAIA," *Southern Architect* 10 (October 1963): 22; "Proposed YMCA Building, Charlotte, NC," *Southern Architect* 4 (July 1957): 12-15; White interview.

<sup>15</sup> *Charlotte News*, March 3, 1983; White interview; *Hill's Charlotte City Directory 1966* (Richmond: Hill Directory Company, 1966), tabbed page.

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### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries coincide with the legal bounds of parcel 12501208.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the entire parcel historically associated with the building.