



# MCNEIL PAPER COMPANY WAREHOUSE



*This report was written on June 8, 1989*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the McNeil Paper Company Warehouse is located at 305-07 E. 8th Street, Charlotte, NC.

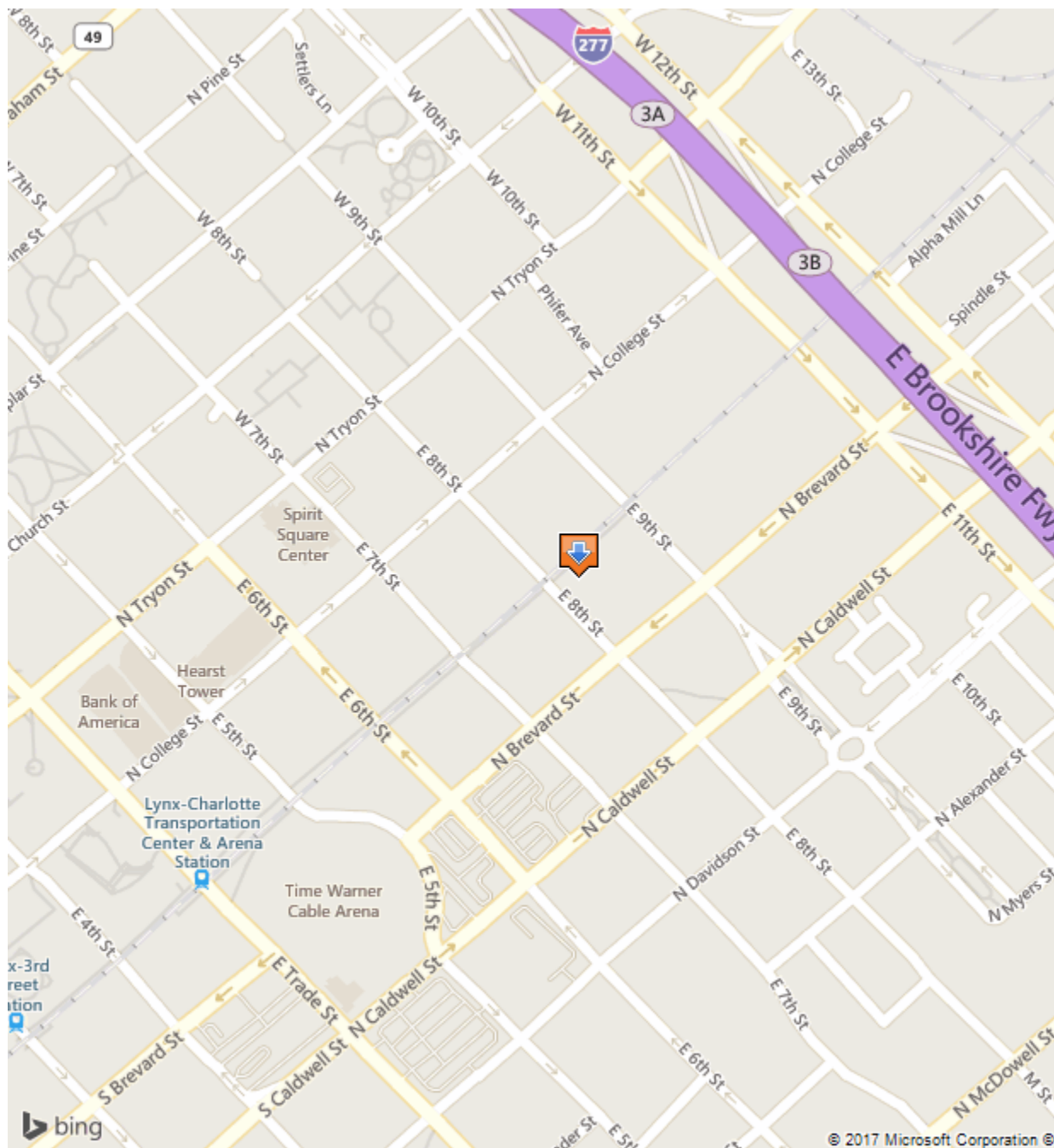
**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property:** The owners of the property are:

Claes C. Honig  
Rudy & Jacqueline Heer  
311 E. 8th St.  
Charlotte, NC 28202

Telephone: (704) 376-0107

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map which depicts the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** This is in the Mecklenburg County Deed Book 5871, page 837. The most recent deed to his property is #5871. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 080-043-15.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Mary Beth Gatza.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Mary Beth Gatza.

**8. How property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the McNeil Paper Company Warehouse does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the McNeil Paper Company Warehouse is a good, primarily intact example of its genre; 2) the warehouse and its site reflect the importance of the railroad in the growth and development of Charlotte during the late-Nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; 3) it is an integral component of a small enclave of industrial and warehouse buildings close to the center of Charlotte.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural description by Mary Beth Gatza, which is included in this report, demonstrates that the McNeil Paper Company Warehouse meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." The current total appraised value of the improvements is \$29,370. The current appraised value of the .197 acres of land is \$10,320. The total appraised value of the property is \$39,690.

**Date of preparation of this report:** June 8, 1989

**Prepared by:** Mary Beth Gatza  
2228-E East Seventh Street  
Charlotte, NC 28204

Telephone: (704) 342-2268



### *Historical Overview*

The McNeil Paper Company Warehouse building is located in the [First Ward](#) section of Charlotte. During the later years of the nineteenth century, First Ward was a quiet residential neighborhood which bordered on the center of Charlotte. Over the years, as Charlotte has grown larger and larger, the area has changed in response to urban pressures. In the 1880s Southern Railway built a spur line along what was then called "A" Street, which fed into their main track, and to the freight depot nearby. After the track was laid, warehouse buildings eventually sprang up alongside it, as railroad frontage made the moving of large quantities of merchandise more feasible and economical. The McNeil Paper Warehouse building stands within a small enclave of warehouse buildings of this period, and serves as a reminder of the importance of light industry to the growth and development of Charlotte.

The lot (# 58 in Beers' and Butler's maps of Charlotte) was used for residential purposes during the late nineteenth century. Two large frame dwellings formerly stood just behind the warehouse (fronting Brevard Street) well into this century. One was torn down within the past fifteen years, and the other about twenty five years ago.<sup>1</sup> A one story frame house stood on the warehouse lot as late as 1911. It was replaced by this and the adjacent warehouse building sometime during the 1910s or early 1920s. The warehouse lot passed through various owners until it was purchased by the McNeil Paper Company in 1934.<sup>2</sup>

The McNeil Paper Company was a wholesale supplier of paper products, which included wrapping paper, paper bags, twine, and school supplies. Thomas C. McNeil served as president and treasurer, and Felix G. McNeil functioned as vice-president and general manager.<sup>3</sup> No manufacturing of products took place here, since the business was a wholesale distributor. Merchandise was shipped in by rail, unloaded onto the platform at the front of the building, and then moved inside for storage. As orders were filled, the goods were packed inside the

warehouse and loaded out the back door. Local deliveries were made by mule-drawn wagon in the early days; other orders were shipped by railway express throughout the state.<sup>4</sup>

As the business grew, more and more space was needed. An addition was built onto the rear of the warehouse during the early 1940s.<sup>5</sup> Around this time, also, an opening was cut into the west wall which permitted access to the adjacent building. It appears that McNeil Paper Company was using space in that warehouse as well. The McNeil Paper Company carried on business in this building until 1949 when financial changes within the company necessitated a restructuring of the business. The property was transferred in bankruptcy proceedings in that year. Thomas C. McNeil, however, continued to operate a wholesale paper distributor out of the building, changing the name of the operation to the Industrial Paper Company. The Industrial Paper Company did not ever have legal title to the land or building.<sup>6</sup>

The Industrial Paper Company was both a large and a renowned operation until its demise in the 1960s. Since that time, various owners have used the building for general storage. The current owners are in the process of restoring the building and converting it for use as artists' studio space.

---

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Stephen Davis, Charlotte, NC, June 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company Map, 1911. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 844, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte City Directories, 1937.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Thomas C. McNeil, Charlotte, NC, June 1989.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Stephen Davis, Charlotte, NC, June 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Thomas C. McNeil, Charlotte, NC, June 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 473, p. 49; Interview with Stephen Davis, Charlotte, NC, June 1989; Charlotte City Directories, 1950, 1960.

## *Architectural Description*

Built during the 1910s or early 1920s, this building has always served as a warehouse. Of solid masonry construction, it is laid up in six-course **common bond** brick, with brick segmental arches over each door and window opening. It stands two stories tall, but is banked into its site, so that it gives the appearance of a one-story building from the front. The upper story opens out to a platform which is just above ground level. The platform, a concrete deck supported by brick piers, faces the railroad spur line which runs through the middle of the block. It was here that cartons of goods were loaded and unloaded. The facade features a centrally-placed double-wide doorway and two arched windows on either side of it. The doorway is now fitted with a modern garage door, and the four windows have been replaced with glass block (as a security measure). The facade of the building is topped by a simple brick parapet. The roof is not visible.

The east elevation faces an eleven foot alley. Full-sized windows overlook the alley on the second story, and smaller windows pierce the lower story. All of the windows have been rebuilt, using new glass but retaining as much of the original sash and frames as possible. All of the windows are fitted with iron bars. One bay of the east elevation has been altered; it was originally a window which was enlarged at some point, and then later bricked in. The west elevation of the building abuts another warehouse and is not exposed. At one time an opening was cut into this wall, giving access to the adjacent warehouse. It has since been bricked up.

The rear of the building has received an addition, probably in the early 1940s. It is laid up in five-course common bond brick, two stories tall and three bays deep. Industrial steel sash windows were used in the addition, both on the side and rear elevations. There are two windows and three doorways on the first story of the rear elevation. All of the doorways have been retrofitted with modern doors. The upper story windows in the addition (two on the side and one on the rear elevation) are small, half-sized windows topped by segmental arches.

The interior of the building is largely intact, although altered. It was originally a single open space on each floor, but interior partitions have been added on the second story of the original portion and on the first story of the addition. This breaks up the interior into three spaces on each floor. A stairwell has been cut through the floor of the older portion, beneath the original skylight. Previously, the only access to the upper floor was by a steep ladder or stair which led to a trap door in the ceiling. The skylighted space on the second floor retains the beaded board ceiling and wall surfaces. The floors throughout the building are constructed of three-inch thick splinted floorboards. The floors of the upper story are supported by 17 1/2" beams which are braced and in turn supported by 7 1/2" square posts. There is a poured concrete floor on the lower level. The interior walls are exposed brick, though traces of plaster remain in sections. A steel vault encased in brick sits tucked into the southeast corner of the older portion of the building. It may be original, but could have been added sometime after the initial date of construction.

Since the building was always a warehouse and not a manufacturing facility, no equipment is ever known to have been used there. There is a pit, however, in the rear addition, which was where the scale for weighing the paper products was located. There was a wooden chute which

led down to it, and the paper was slid down from the second floor (where it would have been stored), weighed, loaded, and carted out the back door.