

THE J. P. CARR HOUSE

This report was written on January 28, 1976



1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the J. P. Carr House is located at 200-206 N. McDowell St., Charlotte, N.C. 28204.

2. Name, addresses, and telephone numbers of the present owners and occupants of the property:

The official records of Mecklenburg County indicate that the present owner of the property is:

Mr. and Mrs. William R. Lee, Sr.
R.F.D. 7 Box 837
Charlotte, N.C. 28213

Telephone: 596-8682

The present occupants of the property are:

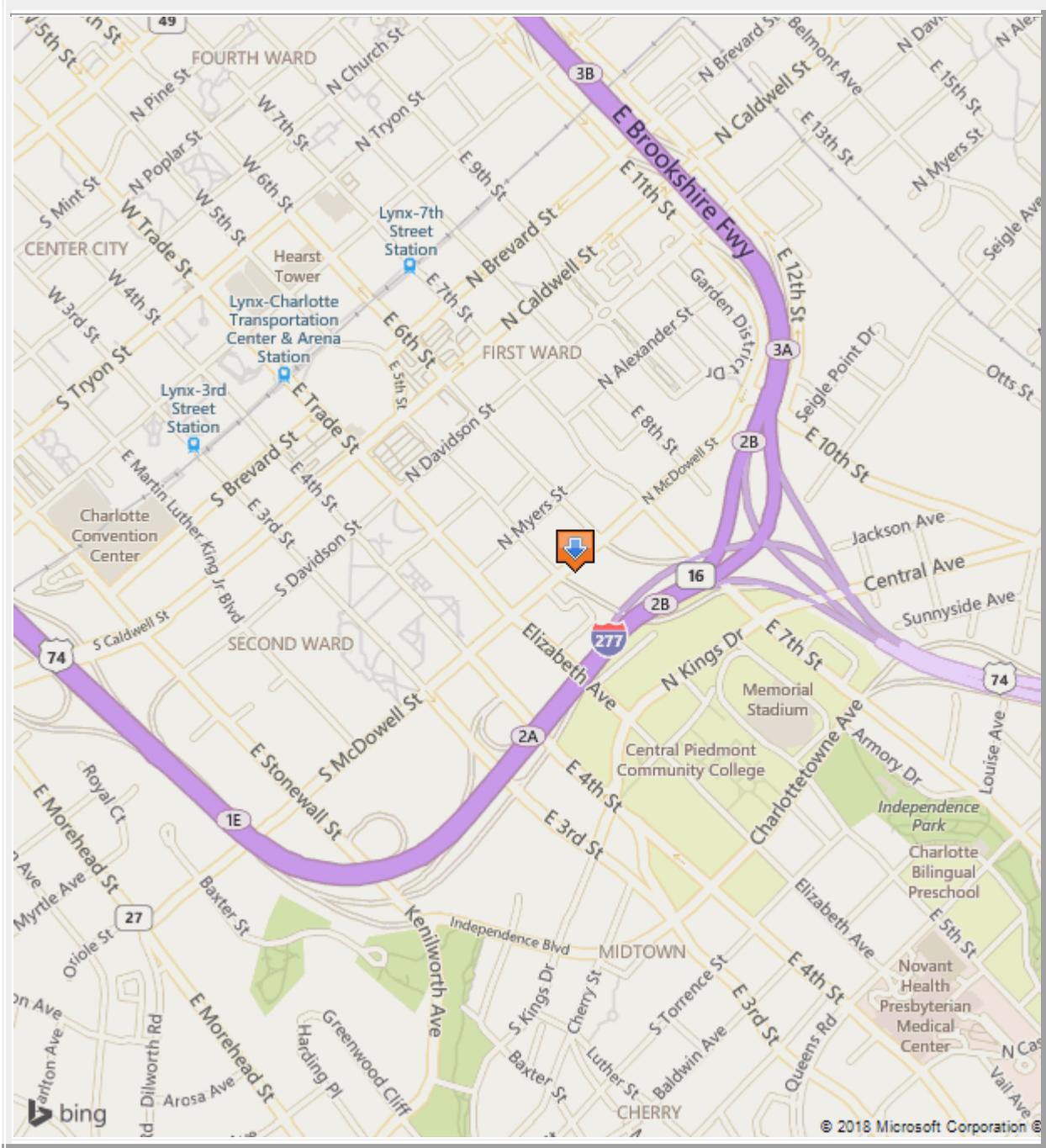
Mr. Walter Smith, Resident Manager
204 N. McDowell St.
Charlotte, N.C. 28204

Telephone: 332-4525

Mr. Edward Morrison, Tenant
Mr. Jim Miller, Tenant
Mr. James Robertson, Tenant
Mr. Craig Brown, Tenant
Mr. Charles Harton, Tenant

3. Representative photographs of the property: Representative photographs of the property are included in this report.

4. A map depicting the location of the property: A map depicting the location of the property is included in this report.

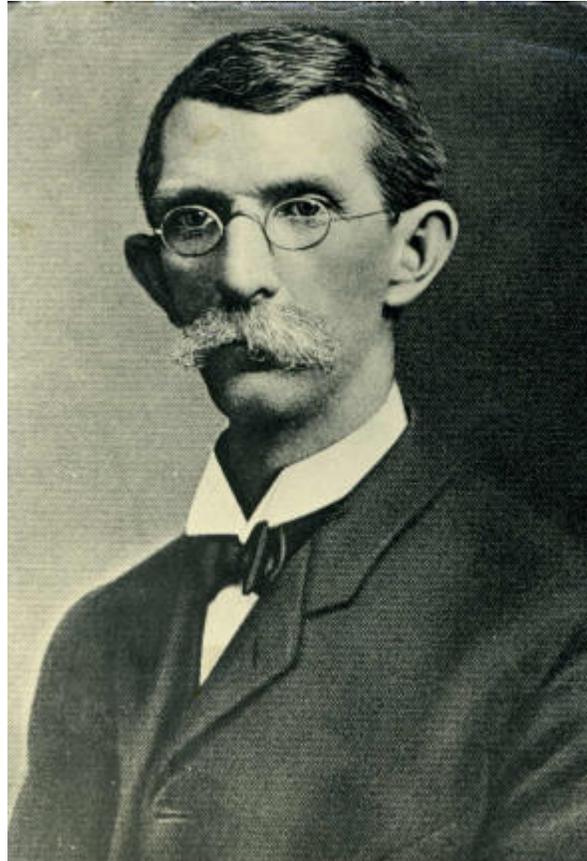


5. Current Deed Book Reference of the property: The most recent reference to this property is found in Deed Book 3720, Page 27, as filed in the Mecklenburg County Registry. The Parcel number of the property is: 08009301 (Handwritten revision to 08009308)

6. A brief historical sketch of the property:

The house was erected in 1904 by John Price Carr. The son of Thomas Milton Carr (a minister in the Methodist church) and Rebecca Price Carr, he was born on November 25, 1854, near the

present site of Trinity Methodist Church on the Beatties Ford Rd. Forced by the death of his father to leave school at an early age, Mr. Carr contributed to his family's upkeep by hauling lumber in his native Hopewell Community. Through this and other enterprises he acquired a keen business sense which was to serve him well in adult life.



Mr. John Price Carr

On February 14, 1878, (Valentine's Day) Mr. Carr married Anna Eliza Little, daughter of William Price and Hannah Sifford Little. Mr. Little, who had served in the Confederate Army, was a farmer and a former sheriff of Mecklenburg County. As newlyweds Mr. and Mrs. Carr rented the John McIntyre Log Cabin as their initial abode. For several years Mr. Carr and his older brother engaged in the raising and selling of cattle. Mr. Carr's business activities, however, expanded into other pursuits. He secured an interest in H. M. Bassamon & Co., a firm which operated a cotton gin in Charlotte. Mr. Carr sold his interest in this enterprise on September 11, 1891. But the farm boy from Hopewell, now 36 years old, must have realized that the city was the place of greatest financial opportunity.



The John McIntyre Log Cabin, the first home of Mr. John Price Carr and his wife Anna Eliza Little Carr.

On November 17, 1891, Mr. Carr began to assemble what eventually became a large tract of land to the northeast of the intersection of N. McDowell St. and E. Fifth St. Shortly after purchasing the final portion of the tract on February 15, 1895, Mr. Carr established his residence at what was then 903 Myers St., soon to be re-named E. Fifth St. From here he also operated a moving company, the enterprise which was to become his vocation for the remainder of his life. Obviously, he had selected this property because of its suitability for his business activities. Barns and other outbuildings were constructed behind the dwelling to house the mules and the equipment necessary to sustain the enterprise.

The single-story frame structure which housed the Carr family was becoming increasingly crowded with the birth of additional children. The fifth and last child, Annie Price Carr, was born in 1898. In 1904 Mr. Carr moved the family "up the hill" to their "new spacious house" at 200 N. McDowell St, "on the outskirts of Charlotte." Mr. Carr personally supervised the construction of the house. To this task he brought an impressive array of skills. Because his company had already moved several houses in the City, Mr. Carr had a firm grasp on the principles of sound construction. Having worked in the lumber trade as a boy, he appreciated the aesthetic qualities of wood. Understandably, most of the lumber used in the house was cut in Hopewell and brought to Charlotte in Mr. Carr's wagons. His administrative and financial skills enabled him to get the most for his money. The workmen who erected the house were paid by the day.

Not surprisingly, Mr. Carr selected the Queen Anne Style for his home. This was the most fashionable style of domestic architecture in Charlotte during the late 1800's and early 1900's, and by selecting it Mr. Carr no doubt sought to demonstrate to the community that his family had secured substantial status.

In subsequent years Mr. Carr continued to demonstrate that he was a man of substance and character. His business thrived. Replacing mules and wagons with an impressive collection of

specialized vehicles, Mr. Carr became the local expert on moving heavy equipment. He transferred the presses of the *Charlotte Observer* from the railroad depot to the newspaper's headquarters. He moved buildings of all types, sizes, and shapes. He played a major part in transporting materials to the site of Camp Greene. More routine business operations also occupied a considerable portion of his time. He was the major deliverer of merchandise which arrived at the Seaboard and Southern railway stations in transit to local merchants.

Mr. Carr was more than a successful businessman. He contributed greatly to the improvement of the community in which he resided. From 1905 until 1907 he served as the representative of First Ward on the Charlotte Board of Aldermen. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party in Mecklenburg County. He was a trustee of the Carnegie Public Library, the forerunner of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library. For 42 years he participated in the activities of the Second Presbyterian Church, which later served as the nucleus of the Covenant Presbyterian Church of today. He was ordained a deacon, April 3, 1910, and an elder June 29, 1913. He served on building, finance, and other committees and was a leader in the Sunday School program.

Mr. Carr's most lasting contribution, however centers around his efforts to rescue Presbyterian Hospital from oblivion. In July 1917, Presbyterian Hospital, then located at W. Trade and Mint Sts., stood on the brink of collapse. A fire had seriously damaged its facilities. Indeed, the patients were temporarily housed on the second floor of a downtown building. The Board of Directors of the Hospital, of which Mr. Carr was a member, held an option to purchase the vacated facilities of Elizabeth College for \$225,000. A campaign to raise the funds, however, was \$40,000 short, and the option was about to expire. Mr. Carr and four other men personally underwrote a loan for the necessary \$40,000. With considerable justification one can claim that without John Price Carr there would be no Presbyterian Hospital today.

Pneumonia ended the life of John Price Carr. He died on April 7, 1927, in the hospital which he had done so much to save. The funeral services were conducted at the home by Dr. A. A. McGeachy, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church. Mr. Carr is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Mrs. Carr remained at the homeplace until 1951, when she sold the house to Mr. and Mrs. William R. Lee, Sr., and moved with her youngest daughter and her son-in-law to 111 Hermitage Rd. She died in 1956. Mrs. Annie Price Carr Wurzburg, the only surviving child of Mr. and Mrs. John Price Carr, lives with her husband on Hermitage Rd. She remembers her father as a loving and kind man who displayed throughout his life the highest ethical standards.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee lived in the Carr House for several years. More recently, they have rented the house to male boarders. The house was moved slightly in the late 1960's to make way for a modification in the route of E. Fifth St.

Although current rumor suggests that the City of Charlotte has purchased the house under the auspices of the Community Development Department, the official records of Mecklenburg County indicate that this transaction has not been consummated.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: An architectural description of the property is appended to this report.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N. C. G. S. 160A-399.4:

a. Historical and cultural significance: The historical and cultural significance of the property known as the J. P. Carr Home rests upon two factors. First, the evidence suggests that Mr. Carr was a man of substantial significance in the history of Charlotte. Second, the house is one of the finest examples of the Queen Anne Style of domestic architecture in this city. It is certainly the most significant Victorian structure in the entire First Ward.

b. Suitability for preservation and restoration: A brief investigation suggests that the house is structurally sound. The exterior is beginning to show evidence of some structural decay. However, the house can be restored. And it is worth noting that it is still serving as a viable dwelling.

c. Educational value: The structure is located in an area of high visibility. Consequently, it can serve as a valuable tool for making the local citizenry more aware of its architectural history. Moreover, the career of Mr. Carr could interest a number of people in the history of Charlotte at the turn of the century.

d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, or repair: The Commission has no intention of purchasing this property. It does, however, believe that the property can be adapted to a use which will justify the cost of restoring and maintaining the structure.

e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property: As suggested above, the Commission sees this structure as well suited for adaptive use. Located near the Governmental Plaza, the house has interior spaces which could be adapted to a wide variety of uses.

f. Appraised value: The 1975 appraised value of the structure itself is \$6,230.00. The appraised value of the land is \$22,440.00. The Commission is aware that designation of the property would allow the owner to apply for a special property tax classification.

g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs: As indicated earlier, the Commission has no intention of purchasing this property. Furthermore, the Commission assumes that all costs associated with the structure will be met by whatever party now owns or will subsequently own the property.

9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion on the National Register: The Commission believes that the property known as the J. P. Carr House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places because of its

architectural merit and because of its association with an individual of outstanding local historical significance.

10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County: The property known as the J. P. Carr House is significant to the history of Charlotte because of its architectural merit and because of the historical accomplishments of its builder, Mr. Carr, by saving Presbyterian Hospital from oblivion, made a momentous contribution to the life of this community.

Bibliography

An Inventory of Older Buildings In Mecklenburg County And Charlotte For The Historic Properties Commission.

Interview with Mrs. Annie Price Carr Wurzburg (December 18, 1975).

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

The Charlotte Observer (July 26, 1917).

The Charlotte Observer (April 8, 1927).

The Charlotte Observer (January 26, 1936).

Date of Preparation of this report: January 28, 1976

Prepared by: Dan L. Morrill, Director
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission

Telephone: 332-2726

Architectural Overview

At 200 North McDowell Street cornering on East Fifth Street is the turn of the century late

Queen Anne style residence known as the "Carr House." This house is highly visible to Charlotteans since it is located on the perimeter of the bustling governmental plaza area of the Queen City. The architecture of the house offers such variety and intriguing detail that most local residents, as well as chance visitors, are drawn to lingering study of the charm of the house as they drive by.

An important outgrowth from the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 was an interest in several half timber buildings erected at the exhibition by the British Government. These buildings embodied fresh new design freedom from the traditional classical of early Victorian, and were admired by *The American Builder* magazine as "wonderfully adaptive to this country, offering comfort and livability", being plain enough and yet capable of the highest ornamental development, the style was enthusiastically endorsed. This was actually a reaction against high Victorian so much in vogue during the 70's and 80's, and showed a renewed interest in the picturesque qualities of a more rural manner. This new style was soon developed by architects and designers into a uniquely American architecture, characterized by irregular outlines, light frame construction, steep pitched roofs, open interior spaces, and verandas and porches.

In Charlotte this style was widely used in the growing residential neighborhoods of First Ward, Fourth Ward and along the affluent blocks of Tryon and Trade Streets. Only here and there are remaining vestiges of these lovely old Charlotte neighborhoods, and the Carr House is a fine example of this heritage.

The exterior illustrates the extraordinary plan irregularity with two story, gabled wings extending boldly from each axis. Across the front and curving down each side of the front bay, and sheltering the main entrance and a lesser side door is an expansive porch covered with a low tin roof. This porch is supported by delicate paired Doric wood columns set on solid panelled pedestals. While Queen Anne was the popular style of the late nineteenth century, and the Carr House an outstanding example of the style at the turn of the century designers were looking back with some nostalgia to colonial architecture. These porch columns show evidence of this nostalgic look backward and presage the coming colonial revival of the early twentieth century. Some interior work also reflects this influence.

The house rests on a solid red brick foundation wall interrupted at regular intervals by glazed, wood frame foundation vents. The entire exterior is covered with narrow horizontal beveled weatherboards. Starting above a molded drip cap over the foundation wall the siding rises to a wide molded frieze. At a moderately wide second floor roof overhang the cornice is defined with carefully molded cove and crown trim, and built-in concealed gutters blend into the overhang configuration. This molded roof overhang band is a strong design element which serves to unify the elaborate exterior massing - carrying as it does across the gable faces and segmenting the oval tower which accents the street corner facade. This turreted tower rises well above the main roof line and creates a lofty focal point. It is sheathed with narrow, tight green "fish scale" wood shingles through its full height. Queen Anne design popularly faced rounded turrets to street corners, and this house was precisely proper in this respect. It is worthy of note that of the several extant Queen Anne houses in Charlotte all have, or at one time had, street corner towers.

The four main roof gables are covered with similar wood shingles and each is pierced by a large bulls eye gable window with glazed fan lights and trimmed with wooden voussiors at quarter points in the circle.

The front bay wing has angled corners with narrow high windows in the angles at each floor. The gable wall frames above this bay create angular canopies over the corner windows and are decorated with suspended beaded grill work and turned, drop pendants. Windows are all large double hung, weight balanced single units, each sash with one large undivided glass. Over the massive panelled entrance doors at the front and side the frames are topped with finely detailed stained glass leaded transom windows. The mansard roof is covered with square edge slate shingles interrupted at mid slope with several courses of rounded 'fish scale' units. At the crown of each gable rake and at the main, hipped center ridge the roof is topped with molded cresting.

On the Fifth Street side a recessed veranda adjoins the rear kitchen. This porch offered an outside summer dining or screened sitting area and provided a screened and sheltered service entrance. The veranda has been, at some past time, solidly enclosed and is no longer open. However, some of the original diagonal screen slats and other trim remain.

Once inside the front door the elegance of the fine original oak millwork is immediately apparent. From a large hall, panelled and trimmed with golden oak, one is led through wide pocket doors to a formal parlor at the front, to a large dining room toward the rear, or to a private hall leading to family sitting rooms and bed chambers adjoining the side entrance. Rising from the other side of the entrance hall three flights of stairs lead to the second floor. In all important first floor rooms there are delicately crafted oak mantels with beveled oval or rectangular mirrors in over-mantels. These mantels are all classical in design, Georgian as well as Adam, and feature small glazed Italian tile in remarkably good condition. All rooms on the first floor are uniformly finished with warm oak wainscoting, elaborate door and window millwork, and were unstintingly trimmed by highly skilled craftsmen. Built-in window-seats, glass door cupboards and small storage cabinets were inserted in numerous nooks and crannies.

On the second floor a carefully finished hall, again wainscoted with the same fine oak, meanders about as it leads to various bed chambers, all of which are richly decorated and above whose doors high transom windows flood the hall with natural light.

The house embodies an exciting array of the best of Queen Anne detailing. Without exception the exterior escapes any chance of monotony, and the interior includes a high degree of elaboration. The design could be called an essential treasure in Charlotte's architectural heritage and the need for its preservation is absolutely undeniable.

The HPC will likely be a party to any plans for the building, and it is suggested that immediate contact with the local authority having jurisdiction be considered.

JOHN PRICE CARR HOUSE

The Carr House, 200-206 N. McDowell St., located across the street from Charlotte's main post office, was erected in 1904 by Mr. John Price Carr, and was designated historic by City Council

on July 28, 1980. The house is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The son of Thomas Milton Carr, a minister in the Methodist Church, and Rebecca Price Carr, John Price Carr was born on November 25, 1854, near the present site of Trinity Methodist Church on Beatties Ford Road. Forced by the death of his father to leave school at an early age, Mr. Carr contributed to his family's upkeep by hauling lumber in his native Hopewell Community. Through this and other enterprises he acquired a keen business sense which was to serve him well in adult life.

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Not surprisingly, Mr. Carr selected the Queen Anne Style for his home. This was the most fashionable style of domestic architecture in Charlotte during the late 1800's and early 1900's, and the style is anything but monotonous. With its magnificent streetcorner tower, four gables, shaped shingles, high hipped roof, stained glass windows, porch, and columns, the Carr house is a visual treasure in an area now dominated by concrete and glass. Downstairs, the house featured a large entry hall, panelled and trimmed with golden oak, a formal parlor, a kitchen, a large dining room, several sitting rooms and bedrooms and three flights of stairs leading to the second

floor. Nearly every room in the house featured a fine oak mantel with a beveled oval or rectangular mirror in an over-mantel. The mantels were all classical in design, Georgian as well as Adam, and featured small glazed Italian tile in remarkably good condition. Built-in window-seats, glass door cupboards, and small storage cabinets were inserted in numerous nooks and crannies in the house. oak wainscoting, and elaborate door and window millwork, were trimmed by highly skilled craftsmen. Transom windows were over the doors.

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Mrs. Carr remained at the homeplace until 1951, when she sold the house to Mr. and Mrs. William R. Lee, Sr., and moved with her youngest daughter, Mrs. Annie Price Carr Wurzburg, and her son-in-law to 111 Hermitage Road. The stalwart Mrs. Carr didn't want to move and it is reported that the movers had to carry her, sitting in her rocking chair, from the home where she had lived for half a century. Mrs. Carr died in 1956. Mrs. Wurzburg described the house where she grew up as "always a happy place, very full of life. Papa and Mama did so much

entertaining. It was quite a grand place ... quite the biggest in the neighborhood. It really was a wonderful place to grow up."

Mr. and Mrs. Lee lived in the Carr House for several years. The house, moved slightly in the late 1960's to make way for a modification in the route of E. Fifth Street, was later rented out to male boarders. The house fell into disrepair in the 1970's and was purchased by the Community Development Department of the City of Charlotte. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, worked with Mr. T. Bragg McLeod, owner of Moss Trucking Company and McLeod Trucking and Rigging Company, to save the house. Renovation of the house took more than eighteen months to complete and cost over \$400,000. Under the direction of architect Jim Johnson and with the aid of interior designer Nancy Thomas and the Andrew Roby Co., the house was painstakingly restored to its original grandeur. Mr. McLeod took a special interest in the property due to the fact that Mr. Carr had been in the heavy moving business as he is.

Mr. McLeod's nationally known companies have handled nuclear generators, textile machinery, entire plants, and structural steel. The companies have gained wide recognition for hauling Tweetsie to Blowing Rock, a Sherman tank to Charlotte's Freedom Park and the nation's 60- foot Christmas tree from North Carolina to the White House lawn in 1972. On March 17, 1981, dedicatory ceremonies were held for the opening of the renovated John Price Carr House. The conversion of the house by Mr. McLeod into offices necessitated the construction of a parking lot on the northern side and to the rear of the house. Great care was taken to preserve the "feeling" of the front yard and those portions of the back yard which were not dedicated to parking. No major changes to the property have occurred since 1981. Today, the Carr House is a living reminder of Charlotte's romantic Victorian heritage. It provides contemporary Charlotte an elegant link to its architectural past and the history of a major industry.