

## McNINCH HOUSE



*This report was written on 4 May 1990*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the McNinch House is located at 2727 Sharon Lane in Charlotte, NC.

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

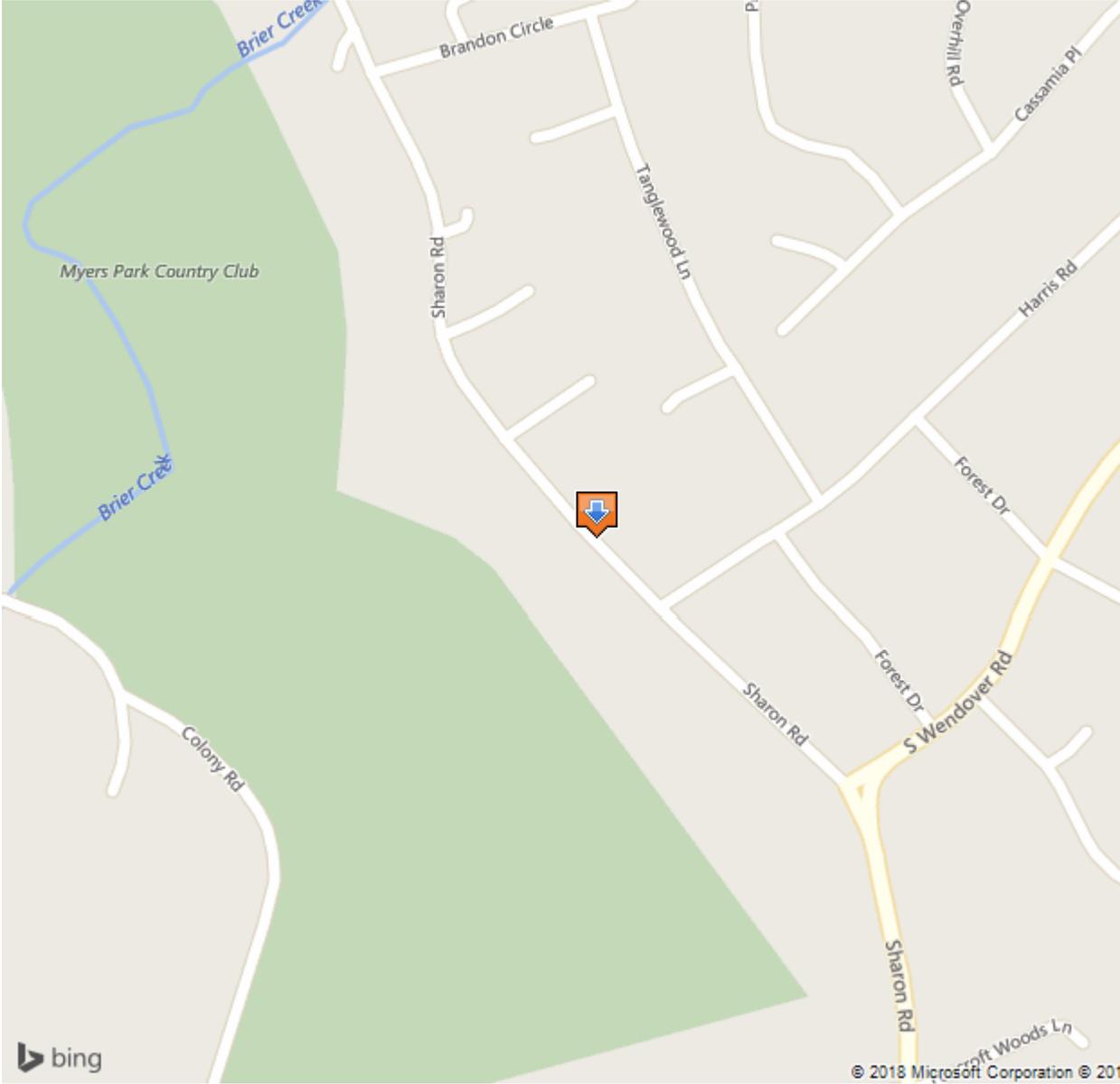
William J., Jr., and Mary Ellen Wortman  
2401 Sharon Lane  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Telephone: (704) 365-3293

Tax Parcel Number: 183-012-04

**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 maps which depict the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3759 at page 746. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 183-012-04.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Ms. Barbara M. Mull.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Mr. Joseph Schuchman.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in NCG.S. 160A-400.5:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the McNinch House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) the McNinch House was constructed in 1925 for Frank Ramsay McNinch, one of North Carolina's most prominent political figures;
- 2) while mayor of Charlotte, Mr. McNinch guided the city into the Commission form of government and curbed the bloody streetcar strike of 1918;
- 3) while serving two United States presidents in Washington, D.C., Mr. McNinch filled various high ranking positions including that of President Roosevelt's representative to the World Power Conference at the Hague;
- 4) the McNinch House later served as a home for the family of C. P. Street of the prominent construction firm, McDevitt and Street;
- 5) the McNinch House is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture that flourished following the restoration of Mount Vernon;
- 6) the McNinch House is an example of the early 20th century country estates that lured Fourth Ward residents from the downtown area;
- 7) the irregular chimney, with two windows in it, is a unique feature; and
- 8) the McNinch House serves as a focus on Sharon Lane and a reminder of an earlier era.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural description by Ms. Barbara M. Mull which is included in this report demonstrates that the McNinch House 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 a designated "historic landmark." The current appraised value of the improvements is \$197,140. The current appraised value of the 3.1 acres is \$167,400. The total appraised value of the property is \$364,540. The property is zoned R15.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** 4 May 1990

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill

*in conjunction with*

Ms. Nora M. Black

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission

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## *Historical Overview*

*Barbara M. Mull*

In the mid-1920s when Frank Ramsay McNinch (1873-1950) commissioned Thies-Smith Realty Company to construct the house at 2727 Sharon Lane, he envisioned practicing law in Charlotte and living in the quiet of the country, surrounded by great oaks and peach orchards he had cultivated since purchasing the 43.4 acre tract of land in 1913. At the time the house was built Frank McNinch had no way of knowing that he and his family would be able to enjoy living in their new home for only a few years, and that after 1930 he would spend the rest of his life in Washington, D. C., as a high ranking government official appointed by both Republican and Democratic Presidents.<sup>3</sup> For thirteen years the McNinches kept the house, but their visits to Charlotte were confined to holidays and vacations.<sup>4</sup>

The Mount Vernon-styled house Frank McNinch built for his family was impressive with its stately columned veranda stretching across the full length of the front of the house. This feeling of spaciousness was continued inside the fourteen-room residence when the architect designed the entrance hall and adjacent living and dining rooms with only Corinthian columns defining the end of one area and the beginning of another. French doors on either side of the living room fireplace opened into the sunroom, while another door led into the study. The large dining room, complete with fireplace, easily seated sixteen to twenty people. Beyond the dining room was a breakfast room, kitchen, pantry, and two small rooms. A staircase near the service area led to the basement and laundry facilities.

Upstairs there are five bedrooms, a sewing room, and two baths. Both of the end bedrooms on the front of the house have fireplaces, and the bath in the master bedroom has a unique feature, a window which extended into a portion of the chimney. The attic, which was reached from a full-sized stairway from the second floor landing, was well-lighted and provided a large storage area. To reach the widow's walk on the roof, it was necessary to stoop low and pass through a trap door, but the view from that vantage point was said to be magnificent.<sup>5</sup>

The grounds on the property were beautifully landscaped with an abundance of flowers, shrubs, and trees of many varieties. Beyond the garden at the rear of the house are servants' quarters and a two-car garage. A large red barn and a cottage were located further back on the McNinch land. Landscaping plans had originally called for formal gardens, a swimming pool, and a greenhouse, but before those things could be completed the family made the move to the nation's capital.<sup>6</sup>

Political involvement had become a tradition in Frank McNinch's family, beginning with his father, Franklin Alonzo McNinch (1841-1893), a South Carolina native who fought in the Civil War. Frank McNinch's mother was Sarah Virginia Ramsay (1842-1898) from Rowan County, in North Carolina. Franklin Alonzo McNinch settled his family in Charlotte in 1866, and over a period of twenty-five years he held many public offices in the city. For three terms he served as Charlotte's chief of police, and he was a highly respected trial justice for fifteen years. The old Pioneer Fire Company elected him as its first chief, and later he was elected chief of the Volunteer Fire Department.<sup>8</sup> In 1883 a statue was placed in Elmwood Cemetery near the entrance gate as a memorial to Charlotte's firefighters. It was made in Italy by craftsmen who worked from a photograph of Franklin Alonzo McNinch, who had been chosen by his fellows for this honor.<sup>9</sup> His last post of public service was that of superintending the city quarry, where he expanded operations and increased productivity dramatically.<sup>10</sup> Part of the legacy Franklin Alonzo McNinch left his children was the example he set in making decisions based on principles, regardless of the personal price involved.<sup>11</sup>

In later years the McNinch family made their home on N. Poplar Street and the four McNinch children grew up there. Franklin Alonzo McNinch's sons, Frank Ramsay and Samuel Sylvanus (1867-1929), followed their father into politics. During the period 1905 to 1907, S. S. McNinch was mayor of Charlotte. He served a number of terms as a member of Charlotte's board of aldermen. Businesses he founded were the S. S. McNinch Real Estate Company and Charlotte Brick Company. Franklin Alonzo McNinch's daughters married men who became pioneer builders in Charlotte. May McNinch (1879-1974) married Frank Brandon Smith and became prominent in civic, cultural, patriotic, and social organizations where she provided outstanding leadership for sixty years. When she was president of Charlotte's Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, May McNinch Smith was one of the first women to speak to various groups in support of teaching the Bible as literature in the public schools, an issue which was not at all popular at the time. Her sister, Virginia Juanita "Nettle" McNinch (1868-1912), married Oscar J. Thies, a mining engineer who later founded Carolina Realty Company, Thies-Smith Realty Company, and Thies Realty Company. Nettie McNinch Thies was described as "high spirited," with a sweet disposition, and as an accomplished pianist of concert quality. Her early death cut short a life already deeply involved in the betterment of Charlotte.

The McNinches, with their close-knit family ties and staunch Presbyterian background, produced in Frank Ramsay McNinch one of North Carolina's most prominent political figures. Young Frank McNinch was educated in Charlotte schools and attended Barrier's Military Institute. In 1900 he received his law degree from the University of North Carolina and returned to Charlotte to practice law. The year his brother became mayor of Charlotte, Frank McNinch was elected to the state House of Representatives. Twelve years later, in 1917, Frank McNinch was elected to the mayoral office and found himself faced with the difficult task of guiding the city through the years of the first World War and into the new Commission form of city government. When a bloody streetcar strike occurred in 1918, Mayor Frank McNinch authorized a group of citizens as special police officers and charged them with restoring order. A recall campaign was launched against him, but rather than destroying his political career, the vote added to McNinch's reputation as an effective administrator.<sup>15</sup> After his election to a second term as mayor, Frank McNinch resigned in 1921 to become the regional representative of the National Recreation Association. Charlotteans have ranked Frank McNinch as "one of the city's

ablest and best mayors of this century." He was recognized as "a man of exceptionally keen intellect, diligent, energetic and virile, a fluent and forceful speaker, a gifted writer, a most attractive personality, and withal a man of high ideals."

A Presbyterian elder, teacher of the Men's Bible Class at Second Presbyterian Church--and a "dry"--Frank McNinch led the 1928 opposition to Al Smith, the Democratic Party's nominee for president and a "wet" who promised repeal of Prohibition. McNinch stumped the State for Herbert Hoover, and the Republicans carried North Carolina for the first time since the Civil War. In 1930 President Hoover appointed the independent Democrat, Frank McNinch, to a seat on the Federal Power Commission as the Democratic party member, and he was confirmed by the Senate after heated opposition from North Carolina Democrats. Although McNinch rejected his party's nominee in 1928 and actively campaigned for Hoover, he remained a Democrat and did not leave his party. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to the presidency, he named Frank McNinch as Chairman of the Federal Power Commission, where he served from 1933 to 1937. This placed McNinch in the middle of the controversy over the Tennessee Valley Authority. President Roosevelt had a great deal of trust in Frank McNinch's judgment and leaned heavily on him for guidance in matters of public power policy. It was McNinch who was Roosevelt's representative to the executive council of the World Power conference at the Hague.

In 1937 a controversy began to brew over at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and President Roosevelt sent one of his best trouble-shooters, Frank McNinch, over as chairman. *Time* magazine's cover story of May, 1938, on Chairman McNinch of the FCC, called McNinch "a small but fearless Presbyterian Elder," a man who had "lots of political nerve." When Roosevelt sent McNinch over to the FCC to untangle the problems in its administration, *Time* says that McNinch took immediate and decisive action: "Within the first few months of his FCC Chairmanship, Mr. McNinch served notice on lobbyists that their visits and pleadings to Commissioners would receive the fullest publicity. He brought the Commission up to date on its hearings, eliminated departmental divisions, which caused the dismissal of a friend of Jim Farley, a relative of Justice Black and the nephew of Sam Rayburn."<sup>19</sup> Being one of Roosevelt's "troubleshooters" and working under constant pressure took its toll on McNinch's health. In 1939 he resigned the chairmanship to accept less taxing duties as Special Assistant to the Attorney General, a position he held until his retirement in 1946.<sup>20</sup>

Frank McNinch and his wife, Huldah (1894-1969), chose to remain in Washington after his retirement. They were married in 1917 when she was a young school teacher and he was mayor of Charlotte, a widower with three small children. Frank McNinch's first marriage, in 1905, was to Mary Groome (1880-1915), a writer whose poetry was well known in North Carolina. Huldah Groome McNinch and Mary Groome McNinch were sisters, daughters of Dr. P. L. Groome, a prominent clergyman in the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Frank and Huldah McNinch's two children, Robert and Huldah, were living in Washington. Frank, Jr., Mary, and Ariel, children of Frank and Mary Groome McNinch, were located much nearer to Washington, D. C. than to North Carolina. By 1943, already in declining health and nearing retirement, Frank McNinch had to come to grips with the fact that he and his family had located permanently in and around the nation's capital, and it was no longer feasible to keep the house in Charlotte.

During their years in Washington, the McNinches had rented the Sharon Lane house from time to time and in between tenants, his sister and her family--the Frank Brandon Smith 's--moved out of their house and into her brother's place to take care of it and decide what should be done by way of repairs. The house was large, and the grounds, buildings, and peach orchards required a great deal of upkeep. May McNinch Smith's daughter, Virginia Smith Johnston, still lives in the Charlotte area and enjoys talking about the many pleasant memories she has of those days. Frank McNinch corresponded frequently with his sister May over the years, and the two families spent Christmases together, with the McNinches returning to Charlotte or the Smiths making the trip to Washington. Any time Frank McNinch was in Charlotte on Sunday, the Men's Bible Class at the Second Presbyterian Church expected him to teach the class. He found it quite difficult to sever his ties with Charlotte, and on the occasion of the house's sale, he wrote to May, saying, "We hated to part with the house--many happy days were spent there. Many happy recollections cling to the lovely place, but we could never hope to live there again."

Howard M. Wade, a manufacturer of bank and office furnishings, purchased the house in 1943 as a gift for his daughter, Isabelle Reynolds, and her family. The Reynolds adapted the house to their needs, replacing the Corinthian columns with squared doorways, making the sewing room into a bathroom, and building the bedroom fireplaces in flush with the walls and plastering over them. The Reynolds family settled into the house, but the marriage ended in a divorce, and the house was placed in a trust. Isabelle Reynolds later married Charles F. Bacon and the couple moved to New York, but the house was not closed. Mrs. Bacon kept it furnished and operating so Rosalie Reynolds, her daughter, could stay there when she visited Charlotte. In a recent interview, Mrs. Bacon talked about her years in "the house with the most beautiful view in Charlotte." It was, she said, a lovely place and quite comfortable, but she finally decided to sell it because she had no plans for returning to Charlotte to live.

When C. P. and Ruth Street bought the house in 1959,<sup>28</sup> they had already reared a large family and had only one son at home, but they still needed a place with plenty of room to complement their lifestyle. One of the first things they did in making changes in the house was to create closet space at the rear of the front entrance hall and install a bath on the first floor. The middle bedroom on the second floor was turned into a customized dressing room. French doors in the living room were replaced by bookcases; the sunroom was greatly expanded, with entry rerouted through the study. The house, Mrs. Street said, was just right for them, and they spent sixteen of the happiest years of their lives there. Family gatherings were held in the sunroom; the dining room was so large it easily took care of the Street clan when they got together; and there was plenty of bedroom space when children and grandchildren came to visit. C. P. Street, of McDevitt and Street, especially enjoyed the gardens, and there was a wealth of vegetables and flowers grown on the place. The time came when the Streets felt that it would be better for them to move into an apartment, so they parted with the house with mixed emotions. Mrs. Street now lives within a few blocks of the house and passes by often. She says she hardly ever goes by 2727 Sharon Lane without thinking about how much she loved the place when she lived there.<sup>29</sup>

As a boy, Dr. William J. Wortman, Jr. used to ride his bicycle past the Mount Vernon-styled house and think about how much he would really love to live in a house like that. His boyhood daydreams about the place became a reality when the Charlotte obstetrician-gynecologist and his wife, Mary Ellen, purchased it in 1975.<sup>30</sup> During the eleven years the Wortmans have lived

there, working on the house has been a way of life. Between the two of them, they have had the patience, talent, and mechanical expertise to do most of the repairs, remodeling, and refurbishing themselves. Although they have completed major projects, such as expanding the basement, installing a temperature-controlled wine cellar, and engaging a contractor to help incorporate the four small rooms and back porch into a well-equipped, contemporary kitchen, they continue to be involved in the process of adapting the house to fit the way they live.

Because they enjoy the back garden and yard, the Wortmans built a deck across the full length of the back of the house, complete with a Jacuzzi, which gives them a more informal and relaxed setting for entertaining in the summer months. In the dining room, the Wortmans comfortably seat as many as sixteen for formal dinners, but they also like to do casual entertaining in the newly completed kitchen. For these occasions, Dr. and Mrs. Wortman do their own gourmet cooking and bring carefully selected bottles of wine up from the racks in what they call "Bill's special hideaway." He keeps a wine diary, making careful notes about every bottle he opens. Actually, according to Mary Ellen Wortman, the diary has chronicled the history of their family life.<sup>31</sup>

When Bill Wortman walks through the house, he experiences a certain sense of satisfaction with the things he and Mary Ellen have accomplished, but he is also keenly aware of new projects he would like to begin. One of those is finishing off the attic and turning it into a third floor retreat or recreation area, maybe something for Richard, a son who is a third-year engineering student at Duke University. When Bill Wortman steps outside and looks across the lawn towards the winding drive leading up to the house with its ancient oaks, he wonders about the future of the place. He has a well-developed sense of the past and its importance to on-coming generations. In the house there is a subtle blend of the old and the new, but Bill Wortman sees that there is nothing subtle about the changes in South Charlotte and along Sharon Road and Sharon Lane. The house is located on three acres of choice real estate, and Bill Wortman thinks it ought to be allowed to remain there, safe from bulldozers and apartment complexes, a protected historic property.<sup>32</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Frank R. Thies, Sr., President of Thies Realty and Mortgage Company, letter to Barbara M. Mull, September 25, 1985 affixes the date the house was built as "the mid-1920s;" City of Charlotte Water Department records, May, 1925 show a tap was installed on the property; Earl S. Draper, Sr., Landscaping Plans, signed November, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Deed Book 302, pages 552-553, February 21, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> *The Charlotte Observer*, Editorial, October 13, 1984.

- <sup>4</sup> Virginia Smith Johnston, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 8, 1986.
- <sup>5</sup> Dr. and Mrs. William Wortman, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, January 30, 1986  
Virginia Smith Johnston, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 8, 1986.
- <sup>6</sup> Earl S. Draper, original landscaping plans, November, 1924, per Miss Huldah McNinch, Silver Spring, Maryland; Virginia Smith Johnston, telephone interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 14, 1986.
- <sup>7</sup> Obituary of Franklin Alonzo McNinch, *The Charlotte Daily Observer*, April 11, 1893, on file in the Carolina Room at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library, main branch at Tryon and Sixth streets. Virginia Smith Johnston, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 8, 1986.
- <sup>8</sup> Obituary of Franklin Alonzo McNinch, *The Charlotte Daily Observer*, April 11, 1893.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Charlotte Observer*, July 26, 1980, article furnished by Virginia Smith Johnston with original photographs from which the statue of Franklin Alonzo McNinch was made.
- <sup>10</sup> Obituary of Franklin Alonzo McNinch, *The Charlotte Daily Observer*, April 11, 1893.
- <sup>11</sup> Virginia Smith Johnston, personal interview, February 8, 1986.
- <sup>12</sup> Obituary of Samuel S. McNinch, *The Charlotte Observer*, March 1, 1929.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Charlotte Observer*, "Women Builders of Charlotte," undated article. *The Charlotte News*, "At 89, Mrs. Smith Is Belle of the Convention (DAR)," February 28, 1968.
- <sup>14</sup> Obituary of "Nettle" McNinch Thies, *The Charlotte Observer*, July 22, 1912.
- <sup>15</sup> *TIME, The Weekly Newsmagazine*, "FCC's McNinch," May 16, 1938, pp. 25-28. In this issue Frank Ramsay McNinch is the subject of Time's cover story.
- <sup>16</sup> Obituary of Frank Ramsay McNinch, *The Charlotte Observer*, April 11, 1950.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *TIME*, May 16, 1938.
- <sup>20</sup> Commissioner Walker, Resolution offered to the Federal Communication Commission, April 21, 1950, in recognition of the service Frank R. McNinch gave to the FCC as its chairman during a crisis period, 1937-1939. A copy of the resolution was sent to his family.

<sup>21</sup> Obituary of Mary Groome McNinch, *The Charlotte Daily Observer*, February 22, 1915; Obituary of Mary Groome McNinch, *The Charlotte News*, February 22, 1915; Virginia Smith Johnston, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 8, 1986.

<sup>22</sup> Charlotte City Directories, 1930-1943; Virginia Smith Johnston, interview February 8, 1986.

<sup>23</sup> Frank R. McNinch, letter to May McNinch Smith, at the time of the house's sale (from May McNinch Smith's private papers).

<sup>24</sup> Deed Book 1114, page 3, December 30, 1943; Isabelle Wade Bacon, telephone interview, February 3, 1986. Mrs. Bacon says positively the house was not empty between the time she moved to New York and the time it was sold--it remained furnished and was used from time to time by her family when they returned to Charlotte to visit. Another error connected with the house while Mrs. Bacon owned it is that she operated a dancing school there. The fact, Mrs. Bacon says, is that she lectured at schools, clubs, etc., across the South on folkdancing, and that she never taught dancing per se, certainly not in the house.

<sup>25</sup> Deed Book 1519, pages 263-265, September 10, 1951.

<sup>26</sup> Isabelle Bacon, telephone interview by Barbara M. Mull, February 3, 1986.

<sup>27</sup> Deed Book 2037, pages 397-398, January 5, 1959.

<sup>28</sup> Deed Book 2037, pages 587-589, January 9, 1959.

<sup>29</sup> Mrs. C. P. Street, personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, January 30, 1986.

<sup>30</sup> Deed Book 3759, pages 746-749, May 28, 1975.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. and Mrs. William J. Wortman, Jr., personal interview by Barbara M. Mull, January 30, 1986.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

## *Architectural Description*

*Mr. Joseph Schuchman*

The Samuel McNinch House is the notable seat of an early twentieth century landed estate. This Colonial Revival structure was constructed about 1925<sup>1</sup> by Samuel McNinch, a former mayor of the City of Charlotte. Situated at the apex of a graded drive, the house is significantly recessed from Sharon Lane. Although now surrounded by handsome suburban-style dwellings of more recent construction, the McNinch House recalls an earlier time when farmland dominated the immediate environs and the City of Charlotte was a distant car ride away. As the Queen City has grown, particularly in the past two decades, the surrounding land has become a prime commercial and residential area. The McNinch House and its immediate surroundings still retain the charm and character established by its original occupants.

The McNinch House clearly owes its Colonial Revival design to two strongly related historical movements, the restoration of George Washington's beloved Mount Vernon and the reawakened interest in Colonial American art and artifacts brought about by the celebration of the United States Centennial in 1876. Mount Vernon was rescued from oblivion by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1853. The house of the nation's first president was so revered that the movement for its restoration attracted nationwide support despite growing sectional differences which ultimately led to Civil War. Following the rediscovery of colonial crafts and designs, Mount Vernon and other sites associated with the young American republic became the inspiration for numerous builders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Across America, Mount Vernon has served as a model for numerous structures, from academic style mansions to humorously conceived "Colonial-inspired" roadside restaurants. Perhaps influenced by the historic romanticism associated with the man Washington and the era in which he lived, Mount Vernon became the leading prototype for Colonial Revival residential architecture. Stylistically, details were, for the most part, classically derived. A freestanding portico across the main facade was a typical element applied to larger residential structures.

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<sup>1</sup>The date of construction is strongly based upon the date of the issuance of a permit for sewer service. A permit for sewer service was issued on May 5, 1925, Permit Number 2402, Service Number 7880, Service Book 7001-9000, approximating the construction date, the overall appearance of the house and the year in which the land was acquired by Samuel McNinch were also taken into consideration.

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This substantial house is of frame construction. Exterior elevations are weatherboarded. A gable roof covers the two and a story main block. Typical of the strong classical influence in the

building's design, the main facade is symmetrically arranged and presents a dignified street appearance. Side and rear elevations are less strictly arranged, the fenestration pattern being determined more by interior needs rather than the desire to create a balanced exterior appearance. Twelve/twelve and eight/eight sash are prominently used. Window openings are set in two part surrounds and are framed by wooden louvered shutters. The upper panel of each shutter displays a five pointed star and a quarter moon.

A two story porch shelters the front elevation. The first story of the main facade is five bays wide; six window openings punctuate the second floor. Red-colored bricks, laid perpendicular to each other, form a continuous V-pattern and serve as the porch floor. A series of six wooden piers support the flat-roofed porch. Each pier rests upon a molded baseboard and rises to a molded capital. The porch entablature is composed of a molded architrave, plain frieze and modillioned cornice. A Chippendale-style balustrade sits atop the porch roof. The underside of the porch roof is sheathed in tongue and groove ceiling.

The main entrance is centered on the front elevation and is set within an oversized Georgian surround. A handsome brass door knocker highlights the six panel entrance door. Five light sidelights, placed above a recessed molded panel, adorn either side of the entrance. Wood piers frame both sides of each sidelight composition. The piers feature recessed panels, rest upon molded bases and rise to a molded capital, the two center piers project beyond the line of the entrance wall. An entablature, composed of a three part architrave, plain frieze and a molded cornice, runs across the entrance bay; a simple angular pediment is set above the entrance door. Antique coach lamps, which were installed by the present owner, replaced existing brass lamps; these lights frame either side of the main entrance.

An irregularly-shaped chimney dominates the east elevation. The chimney is constructed of stretcher bond brick and rises to a corbelled cap; its south side presents a narrow paved shoulder while two wide paved shoulders highlight the north side. In its design, the chimney recalls the romantic motifs present in both the English Tudor and Colonial Revival styles. A 12/12 sash and 4/4 sash are each set into the chimney on the first and second stories respectively. Multi-paned transoms flank the chimney in the attic story.

On the west elevation, a one-story sun porch projects from the main block. The porch is original but was doubled in size by a sympathetically designed extension in 1956. A series of casement windows and entrance doors, on the front and rear elevations, punctuate the structure's walls. Simple piers frame the openings. Windows are placed above recessed wood panels. A simple frieze and cornice, surmounted by a crown molding, encircles the porch. A Chippendale-style balustrade atop the roofline is similar to the entrance porch balustrade.

The porch largely covers the randomly arranged west side. An irregularly massed chimney with a north (left) shoulder is centered on the elevation and rises to a corbelled cap. As on the east elevation, multi-paned transoms in the attic story flank the chimney.

The rear elevation is asymmetrically massed, largely as a result of subsequent additions to the original exterior wall. The elevation, as originally constructed, may have presented a more balanced appearance. At the rear's east end, a one story projection, which may have been

original, was altered by the present owner; the entrance door was removed and the fenestration pattern was changed. A one story sun porch, which contains the sliding glass door rear entrance, was built by the present owner. The wood deck, which was constructed at the same time, features a Chippendale-inspired balustrade, an attempt to incorporate a decorative motif of the 1920's structure.

Typical of the Colonial Revival residence, the interior detailing is elegant yet restrained. The interior has received some modifications, all in a manner in keeping with the houses original design. The first floor follows a center hall plan. The wide hall leads from the main entrance and terminates at the entrance to the kitchen. A handsome half-turn stair rises to the second story. Plain balusters, three per stair tread, support the molded rail. At the foot of the staircase, identical balusters, set in a circle, form the newel post; a lead crystal ornament sits atop the newel.

Two reception rooms, containing the dining room and parlor, open off the east (left) and west (right) sides of the hall respectively. Oversized oval arches originally defined the openings between the hall and the adjacent reception rooms. The arches were enclosed and replaced with the present rectangular openings in 1935. The center hall is ornamented by a molded two-part baseboard, plastered wainscot and a wide molded cornice.

The main rooms on the first floor carefully respect the Georgian ideal of symmetry. The focus of the dining room is the handsomely ornamented mantle. Centrally placed along the east wall, the mantle displays a plain frieze with circular insets at each end; the denticulated cornice is set beneath a molded shelf. Stately fluted piers, which rest upon molded bases, flank the mantle. Floral ornamented capitals support a wide molded cornice, which carries across the ceiling cornice. A paneled wainscot, which encircles the room, is set between a molded baseboard and a narrow molded chair rail.

Directly across the hall, the mantle in the spacious parlor is similarly detailed. Round arched openings, each with a central keystone, flank the living room mantle. These openings originally served as entrances into the adjacent sun porch and now contain similarly detailed bookshelves. These rounded openings originally echoed the oval opening between the center hall and the living room. At the rear (south) of the living room, a single door entrance provides access to the informal sitting room. A paneled wainscot, set between a molded baseboard and chair rail, highlights this simply executed-chamber.

The sitting room provides the only interior access to the sun porch. Vertical casement windows, which may have replaced screened openings, dominate the porch's wall surface. A molded edge highlights the simple surrounds. A molded baseboard and cornice encircles the porch. Double door entrances, on the front and rear elevations respectively, are set on a direct access; paneled wood transoms are placed above each entrance.

The kitchen occupies its original location in the house's southeast quadrant. The present owner has greatly expanded and modernized the kitchen; food storage and preparation facilities and a dining area are housed in a single room.

As is to be expected, the second floor is more simply executed. The main hall runs widthwise and is set perpendicular to the stair hall. Rooms are placed off the second floor hall. The second floor has undergone a variety of alterations resulting in changes in room size and configuration.

The attic is partially finished and is used primarily for storage. The unfinished basement contains service facilities; a small enclosed space houses the owner's notable wine cellar. At the rear of the house stands a one story frame building which is believed to date from the mid-1920s; the structure contains a garage and a small servant's residence. The present garage door was installed in 1985 and replaced a series of moveable wooden doors. An attractively landscaped yard surrounds the main house.

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**Erratum:** page 13, paragraph 1- Mr. Schuchman reports that the McNinch House was built for Samuel McNinch; however, the Chain of Title (page 12) shows that the only McNinch to own the property was Frank Ramsay McNinch.