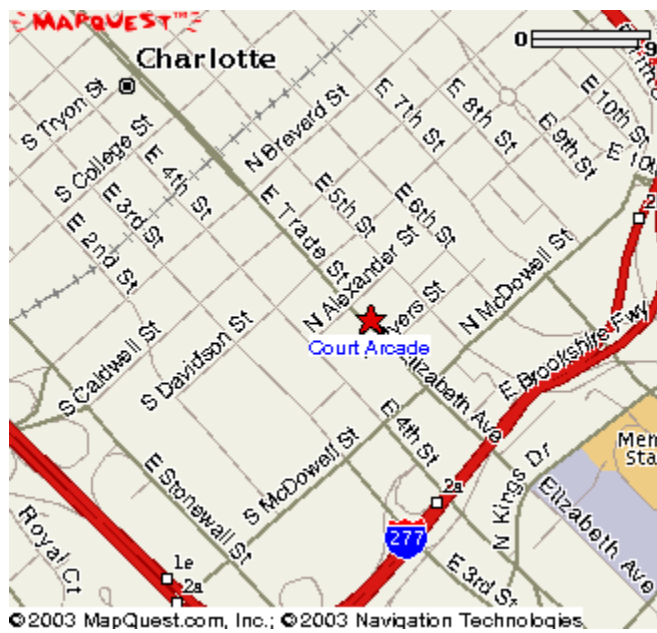


**The Court Arcade.** UTM: 17 514883E 3897432N Architect William H. Peeps designed the Court Arcade in the mid-1920s as an office building for attorneys who had to visit the Mecklenburg County Courthouse and other governmental buildings immediately across East Trade St. It is one of two arcade buildings in Center City Charlotte that Peeps designed -- the other being the Latta Arcade. The Classical Revival style contrasts sharply with the design of the Latta Arcade, illustrating that Charlotte's architectural tastes were becoming more conservative by the 1920s. No doubt Peeps was also endeavoring to be sensitive to the Classical Revival style of the Charlotte City Hall and Mecklenburg County Courthouse.



William H. Peeps





## **The Court Arcade**

**Opened between 1926 and 1929, the Court Arcade consist of two distinct sections. The two-story front section faces south onto East Trade Street, and originally featured retail storefronts on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The one-story rear section is composed of twelve narrow offices all opening onto the north/south arcade that runs through both sections.**



**The two-story front section is six bays wide and five bays deep. The building is constructed of brick with stone veneer on the facade. The facade is asymmetrical with two rectangular store front openings to the west of a round-arched arcade entrance. To the east of the arcade entrance are three equal-sized storefront openings, and each of these bays contains a bank of three windows on the second story. The round-arched bay containing the entrance is the narrowest of the six front bays and is topped with two windows. The bay directly to the west of the arcade entrance appears to be the same size as the three bays to the east of the arcade entrance, and is likewise topped with three windows. The westernmost front bay is the largest, and is topped with a bank of four windows.**



Originally frame storefronts were virtually flush with the facade. Historic photographs show that each of the original storefront were topped with transoms composed of three multi-light sash. It appears that the storefronts and transoms were removed sometime after 1980. New construction in the storefront openings consist of metal framed plate glass. This new construction is set back from the facade forming a gallery along the Trade Street sidewalk.



The facade is faced with finished sandstone blocks. As was typical, the first course of stone at ground-level is durable granite. Carved blocks rise from the granite and forms pilasters that separate the six bays of the facade. With the removal of the original storefronts, the pilasters and their supporting masonry have become de facto posts. The pilasters extend to a second-story freeze, and feature a single recessed panel. Each pilaster is topped with a Corinthian capital. The half-round entrance arch is supported by scrolled brackets, and features stylized three-part keystone. Below each of the second-story windows is a plain panel. Above the arched entrance the panels curve to match the arch and contain the original lettering "COURT" and "ARCADE." Metal framed windows have replace the original double-hung sash windows in the facade. Above the pilasters is a plain, narrow freeze bordered below by moulded trim, and topped with a deep shelf decorated with dentil brackets. Above the shelf is a parapet with a cap.





The remainder of the building is constructed of brick laid in common bond. Low parapet walls topped with terra cotta tile surround the building's flat roofs. The brickwork on the west elevation is continuous from the two-story front section to the six bay deep one-story rear section, but to conform to the site's topography, the floor of the rear section is raised above the first story of the front section. The seven-bay-wide rear elevation appears to be symmetrical. Centered on the rear elevation is a segmental-arch recessed entrance now filled with a replacement door. The remaining six bays on the rear elevation consist of paired window openings, now filled by replacement double-hung sash. A raised skylight that runs the length of the arcade is visible from the rear of the property.



The most significant interior feature of the Court Arcade is the arcade itself, which is located in the one-story rear section of the building. While the building has been extensively refurbished, most of the original features associated with the arcade are intact. The arcade skylight is supported by exposed timber trusses with curved sawn bases. Originally the arcade skylight consisted of operable sash metal sash, which have been replaced by fixed metal sash. Original light sconce fixtures are attached to each truss

near the base. Glazed cream colored brick piers support the trusses, as well as the soldier-course brick lintels that define the twelve office "storefronts" that open into the arcade. The wooden framed plate-glass and single-light doors also appear to be original.



Changes to the interior include the addition of a long ramp between the front and rear sections of the building, which replaced a flight of stairs. Applied moulding on the ceiling of the front hallway forms large panels that contain original hanging light fixtures. Other notable features in the front hall include deep crown moulding and Corinthian brackets. Tall applied wall panels in the front hall have been replaced by short panels located near the ceiling.



