

**McDONALD'S CAFETERIA &  
MINI-CENTER  
LOCAL LANDMARK REPORT**  
2023 Beatties Ford Road  
Charlotte, NC 28216

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission**  
**Local Landmark Designation Report**  
Prepared by Gate City Preservation L.L.C.

Completed August 2021  
Updated December 2021

# Charlotte-Mecklenburg

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## Historic Landmarks Commission

### HISTORIC NAME(S) OF PROPERTY

- McDonald's Cafeteria
- McDonald's Mini-Center

### ADDRESS OF PROPERTY

- 2023 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, NC 28216

**PARCEL ID #:** 06912625

**DEED BOOK & PAGE:** BOOK 34434, PAGE 265

### ZONING COMMERCIAL

Amount of land/acreage to be designated

0.589 acres

Interior to be designated

☐ Yes ☒ No

#### **Property Owner's Address:**

E-Fix Development Co. LLC  
201 North McDowell Street, Unit 35601  
Charlotte, NC 28235

#### **Applicant's Address:**

Gate City Preservation L.L.C.  
211 Tate Street  
Greensboro, North Carolina 27403

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## I. Abstract

### *Statement of Significance*

McDonald's Cafeteria was one of the most important spaces for the African American community in Charlotte from its inception in 1970 until it moved to a new location in 1981. John McDonald – its founder, owner, and operator – was an important African American entrepreneur born in Charlotte in 1921. After living in New York City for many years, he returned to Charlotte, building a mini-center anchored by his restaurant and community center while also housing several local Black-owned and operated businesses. McDonald's Cafeteria quickly became a place for community groups to meet and organize grassroots efforts to advance civil rights and social justice in Charlotte. Business, government, and religious leaders frequently met at the cafeteria to share a meal and work toward progress for local Black citizens. The restaurant was a place for interracial cooperation on the historic and predominantly African American West Side. As an entrepreneur, McDonald wanted to build up and invest in the Beatties Ford Road section of West Charlotte to demonstrate the area's value and importance, while also supporting Black entrepreneurship with reasonable commercial leases within the mini-center. McDonald's Cafeteria became an iconic Charlotte institution and remains etched in the memory of those who gathered, worked, created, and ate there. The period of significance coincides with McDonald's ownership of the building (1970-1994), including his operation of the cafeteria at that original location (1970-1981). More than a mere restaurant, the McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center building is historically and culturally significant both as a communal foundation for West Charlotte's Black residents and as an incubator for the city's growing Black entrepreneurialism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as an apt example of Mid-Century Modern design for a shopping plaza. As detailed in the Integrity Statement below, the building also possesses integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

### *Archaeological Comments*

No known archaeological features are present at this time.

### *Integrity Statement*

- **Location:** The McDonald's Mini-Center building (which included the original McDonald's Cafeteria) remains in its original location at the corner of Beatties Ford Road and Lasalle Street.
- **Design:** The form and design of the building has been retained. Some new materials have been utilized overtime, but overall, the Mid-Century Modern design of the commercial building is still very much apparent. The large glass windows, deep overhangs, concrete details, have all been retained. As evidenced in historic photographs, much of the building has remained virtually unchanged. Two major design elements recently added are two decorative oversized concrete canopies which bracket the building on the east and west and two concrete pillars on the front elevation (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10).
- **Setting:** There is no vegetation around the building. It is surrounded by new commercial development.



- **Workmanship:** The building exhibits a high level of workmanship, specifically the careful design and installation of the steel beam glazing.
- **Materials:** Although many of the original materials of the building have been replaced by in-kind materials, the design has been retained. The main detractant from the original materials are the recently added concrete canopies and pillars.
- **Feeling:** The feeling of the building may be altered by the new surrounding commercial development, however, when looking at historic photographs of the building, the feeling seems to be retained because the design and materials have been so carefully and thoughtfully preserved.
- **Association:** The building is no longer a restaurant. It is recently been rehabilitated by J.P. Chase to house new commercial business ventures.

### ***Proposed Boundary Justification***

The proposed boundary for local landmark designation is the building's entire 0.589 acre parcel.

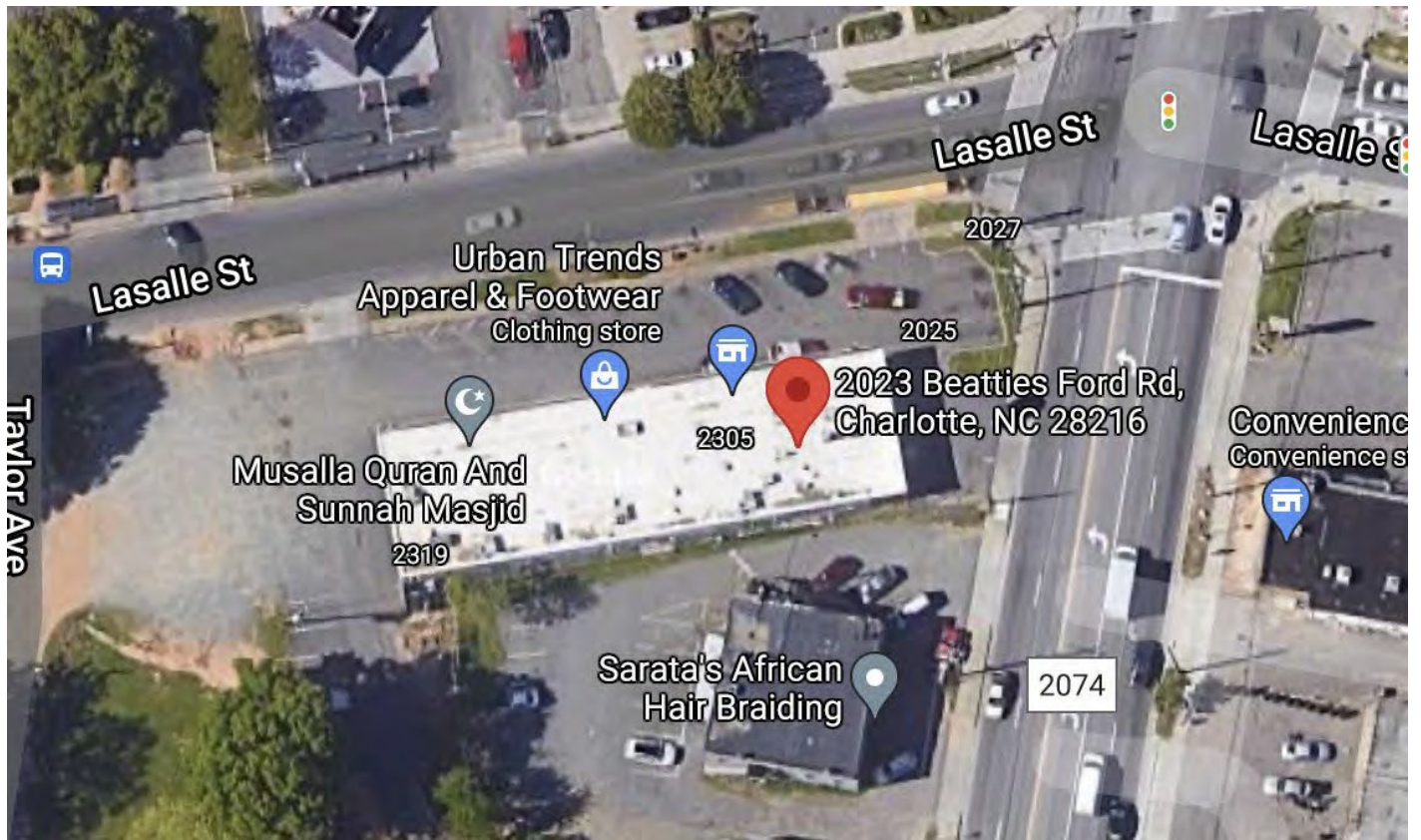
## II. Maps and Floor Plans

### *Mecklenburg County Tax Map*

Red arrow indicates original location of McDonald's Cafeteria



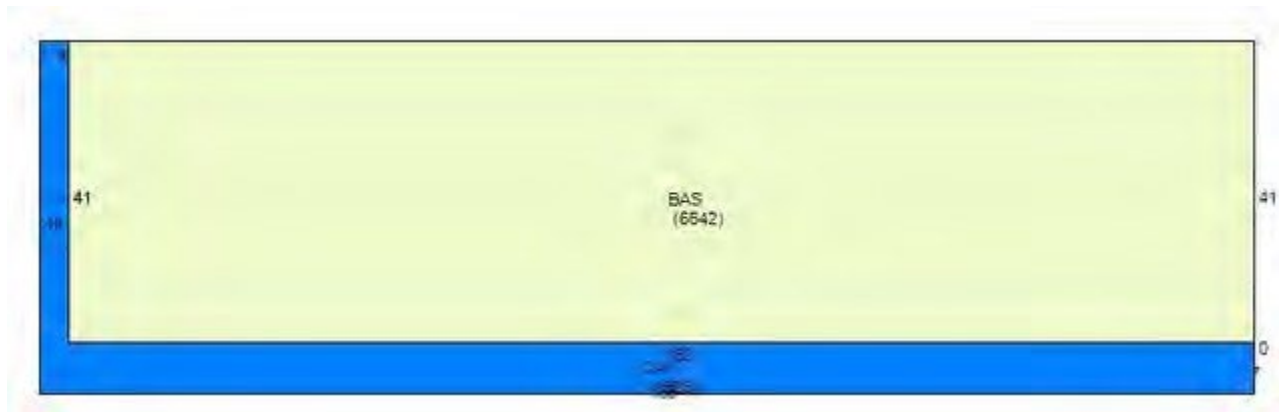
*Aerial Map*



*HPOWeb Map*



## *Architectural Drawings*



### **III. Architectural Assessment**

#### *Architectural Importance*

Starting in the mid-20th century, a large majority of business owners of commercial ventures across the United States began building new construction or altering older structures in order to update and modernize their businesses. These new, modern designs were often located in newly introduced shopping plazas and, in many cases, were residents' first introduction to modern architectural design. These buildings utilized new modern materials, which were made with state-of-the-art technology, representing an impressive status symbol at the time and giving off an air of being "with the times."<sup>1</sup> By 1970, when McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center was built, modern building materials and methods, along with the architectural designs that utilized them, were still symbols of progress and status. The Mid-Century Modern design of McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center utilized many of these characteristic features of modern commercial design, including a streamlined flat roof, long expanses of glazing, steel beams, concrete, and deep overhanging eaves to create dramatic, angular lines and shadows on the building.

#### *Architectural Context*

Modernist commercial architecture in Charlotte is representative of a significant period in Charlotte's history c. 1945-1969. Although McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center was constructed in 1970 (one year after the official historic context cutoff in the recent Charlotte modernist survey), the building's style and significance to Charlotte is still very much a part of this era of commercial design. Modernist commercial architecture in Charlotte is defined by "streamlined forms like flat roofs, long expanses of glazes, embrace of the concept 'form follows function,'" and "simplified architectural detailing which let the materials speak for themselves."<sup>2</sup> According to this recent survey, 84 properties were identified in the city of Charlotte as meeting the survey criteria and exhibiting the best modernist architecture in this period of Charlotte's history. Although McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center was not identified in that list, it is important to note that only 15 of the structures selected for that list were built contemporaneously (between 1970 and

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Striegel, "Mid-Century Commercial Modernism: Design and Materials," presentation on September 9, 2015 for the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, National Park Service, <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/mid-century-commercial-modernism-design-and-materials>, accessed December 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "Modernist Architecture in Charlotte, North Carolina," Architectural Survey prepared by SVM Historical Consulting for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, May 2019, [http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Charlotte-Modernist-Survey\\_9-12-19.pdf](http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Charlotte-Modernist-Survey_9-12-19.pdf), accessed December 2021.  
Completed August 2021



1980) with the McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center.

## ***Architectural Description***

### ***Setting***

The McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center building is located at a busy commercial corner of Beatties Ford Road and Lasalle Street. It is surrounded by new commercial buildings. Parking lots surround the building. At the time of this report, the building was undergoing significant construction (Fig. 1).

### ***Front (North) Elevation- Facing Lasalle Street***

The McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center building is a one-level Mid-Century Modern commercial building built in 1970. The front (north) elevation facing Lasalle Street is comprised of 15 bays of steel framed glazing and concrete block (Fig. 2). The building has a flat roof with a dramatically deep overhanging eave with recessed lighting (Fig. 6). Recent construction has altered the building by adding contemporary architectural elements, a concrete pillar and concrete canopy which brackets the building on the west side, all while maintaining the sleek verticality of the original mini-center's design (Figs. 10, 14-17). Five contemporary double doors with large single lights in each door contribute to the high level of glazing on the exterior walls (Fig. 7). These doors also have large transom windows that extend from the top of the door to the overhanging eave. Five painted brick planters line the facade (Fig. 12). A single horizontal clerestory window is located on the concrete block bay in the center of the building (Fig. 11). From left to right, there are two bays of steel framed glazing, a set of double doors with transom, two more bays of steel framed glazing, a concrete block bay with the clerestory window, a contemporary concrete pillar, two more bays of glazing, double doors with transom, two bays of glazing, a bay of double doors with transom, two bays of glazing, and a final set of double doors with transom. The original brick exterior walls of the side (west) elevation have been retained, but are now encapsulated by the canopy which brackets the building on the intersection of the north and west sides and enhances the sleek original structure of the building. The interior of the building has undergone under significant construction (Fig. 13).

The building has maintained a high degree of integrity as to location, setting, and association. Careful and thoughtful preservation of the building's original form, Mid-Century Modern design, and structural elements (including the continued presence of large glass windows, deep overhangs, and concrete details) have retained much of the building's integrity as to design, workmanship, and materials. Although many of the original materials of the building have been replaced by in-kind materials, the overall Mid-Century Modern design of the mini-center is still very much apparent. As evidenced in historic photographs, much of the building has remained virtually unchanged.

### ***Side (West) Elevation - Facing Taylor Avenue***

The side (west) elevation facing Taylor Avenue is very simple in design (Fig. 5). Starting with left to right is the concrete canopy bracket and then a solid brick running bond wall painted a cream color.

### ***Rear (South) Elevation***

The rear (south) elevation is constructed with cinderblock and houses the utilities for the building (Fig. 4). This elevation exhibits fabulous examples of mid-century modern concrete screens made of clover style breeze blocks (Fig. 8.) There are 11 concrete screen squares composed of 16 clover breeze blocks. There are three metal utility doors.

*Side (East) Elevation - Facing Beatties Ford Road*

The side (east) elevation facing Beatties Ford Road is composed of both vertical and horizontal glazing (Fig. 3). There are no doors on this elevation. A contemporary concrete canopy brackets the east and south exterior wall (Fig. 9). This elevation also boasts a deep overhanging eave with recessed lighting. The original brick wall between these two elevations has been retained.

#### **IV. Historical**

##### **John McDonald and McDonald's Cafeteria**

John William McDonald was born near Charlotte, North Carolina in the Paw Creek community on April 18, 1921. The son of a farmer, he married Annie Lou Hill and shortly after had a daughter, Brenda. McDonald got his start in the restaurant business working at New York Cafe at 127 West Trade Street in Charlotte.<sup>3</sup> The family moved to Brooklyn, New York in 1943 where he worked as a cook in a hotel, seafood house, and steak restaurant. In 1949, McDonald decided to cook for himself and opened McDonald's Dining Room at 327 Stuyvesant Avenue.<sup>4</sup> The restaurant started as a ten-seat grill in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, which he eventually expanded to a space that could accommodate 175 people.<sup>5</sup> The 1987 AIA Guide to New York City described McDonald's Dining Room as "a good eating and drinking place in a community that can't afford elegant bars or restaurants."<sup>6</sup> Before opening the restaurant, McDonald opened and was quickly forced to close a wig shop in Brooklyn. This experience led him to the Catholic Church which taught him "to be a good husband...to be a good businessman."<sup>7</sup> He felt called by God to return home to Charlotte and handed over ownership of McDonald's Dining Room to his daughter and son-in-law.

Ready for retirement, McDonald and his family started making plans to return to Charlotte. McDonald noticed the growing popularity of buffet style cafeterias and lunchrooms such as Charlotte-based chain S&W. Inspired by their success, he decided to launch himself back into the restaurant industry.<sup>8</sup> On April 29, 1968, McDonald and his wife Annie Lou closed on a parcel of land on the corner of Beatties Ford Road and LaSalle Street. McDonald backed the development of a new mini-center which included McDonald's Cafeteria, a seafood store, a beauty and barber shop, an insurance and real estate office, and a small grocery store.<sup>9</sup> By 1970, McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center was open for business. Remembering his early days of struggle in Brooklyn, McDonald leased the spaces to young site managers for a relatively low rate. He also employed local college students, providing on-the-job training that young people could use in their

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<sup>3</sup> United States World War Two Draft Registration Card for John William McDonald, the National Archives at Atlanta, Georgia; Atlanta, Georgia; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for North Carolina, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*; Box: 242.

<sup>4</sup> "Man Brings Home The Prosperity: Mini-Center Backer Found Church Led To Road of Success in Restaurant," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 20, 1971, page 11.

<sup>5</sup> Greg Lewis, "New Bed-Stuy Bar And Restaurant Mama Fox Serves Up "Global Comfort Food" In Historic Spot." *Bklynner*. February 1, 2018, <https://bklynner.com/new-bed-stuy-bar-restaurant-mama-fox-serves-global-comfort-food-historic-spot/>, accessed December 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Elliot Willensky and Norval White, *AIA Guide to New York City* (United Kingdom: Crown Publishing, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> "Man Brings Home The Prosperity: Mini-Center Backer Found Church Led To Road of Success in Restaurant," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 20, 1971, page 11.

<sup>8</sup> "JCSU Neighborhood History," *History South*, Tom Hanchett, <https://www.historysouth.org/jcsu/>, accessed December 2021.

<sup>9</sup> "Man Brings Home The Prosperity: Mini-Center Backer Found Church Led To Road of Success in Restaurant," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 20, 1971, page 11.



careers. Known for being tough, but fair, John McDonald quickly employed a large staff at McDonald's Cafeteria.<sup>10</sup>

McDonald's wife, Annie Lou, died on February 19, 1971 of pancreatic cancer.<sup>11</sup> John McDonald was determined to continue the success of McDonald's Cafeteria in his late wife's honor. Although he was the business owner, McDonald could frequently be found cooking, washing dishes, running the register, and greeting customers.<sup>12</sup> Dawn Neal was a waitress at the original McDonald's Cafeteria and started in 1977. She began by bussing tables at 15 and took over a waitressing job from her sister. McDonald originally did not want to hire her, saying she was too young and he had no job openings. When a young Neal pointed out that her sister had just left her post, McDonald hired her. She worked weekends, which she recalled were always busy as it was a very popular establishment. Neal remembers Miss Joan, who worked the register where patrons would order their food and pay. Patrons would then find a table and waitresses quickly brought their food and kept cups full. Although the restaurant was popular, patrons did not stay long. They ate their food and then left to make room for someone else to have the table.<sup>13</sup>

McDonald had a goal of building up the community in which he created his business, largely through the community's youth. In a 1980 interview, McDonald said that "a dependable and steady clientele is not built on low prices only, but on good food, fine service, cleanliness, quality management, and flexibility when it comes to what the community needs."<sup>14</sup> Dawn Neal recalls McDonald's Cafeteria having a family atmosphere. Neal remembers McDonald being very involved with the community and frequently hosting city officials and politicians. While White officials occasionally stopped by, Neal recalls that most customers were Black.<sup>15</sup> Spurgeon Webster, Jr., who grew up near Beatties Ford Road in the 1970s, recalled "Sundays, all our families would go to McDonald's Cafeteria."<sup>16</sup> On a typical day, the cafeteria served breakfast, lunch, and dinner, could boast a menu of such foods as short ribs, corned beef, roast chicken, fried fish, pan-fried liver, pinto beans, macaroni and cheese, carrots, turnip greens, cobblers, and sweet potato pie. Dawn Neal recalls that, by far, the most popular items for sale were the banana pudding and chitlins, which the restaurant was famous for. In fact, McDonald taught Neal an important lesson about the preparation of chitlins; you have to clean them well, and if they smell bad when cooking then don't eat them. In the words of John McDonald, "If somebody is cooking chitlins and they don't smell good, turn around."<sup>17</sup>

John McDonald was a pillar of the community who spent much of his life in Charlotte working to develop and uplift African American youth and business in Charlotte. Despite the neighborhood surrounding McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center being predominantly African American, many of the businesses in those neighborhoods were not owned by Black individuals. One of the reasons for this was long-standing

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ann Graham on McDonald's Cafeteria, Johnson C. Smith University Archives, <https://soundcloud.com/user-903488555/john-mcdonald-ann-graham>.

<sup>11</sup> North Carolina State Board of Health Office of Vital Statistics, Certificate of Death, "Annie Lou McDonald," February 18, 1971, [https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/1121/images/S123\\_621-2353?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=fb5c3e9680237a5459be7df6c8621ffe&usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=bgo1&\\_phstart=succesSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=699590](https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/1121/images/S123_621-2353?treeid=&personid=&hintid=&queryId=fb5c3e9680237a5459be7df6c8621ffe&usePUB=true&_phsrc=bgo1&_phstart=succesSource&usePUBJs=true&pId=699590), accessed August 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Oral History Interview with Dawn Neal, conducted by Stewart Gray, July 18, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "McDonald's Cafeteria Charlotte, NC," *Black Enterprise*, October 1980, 92.

<sup>15</sup> Oral History Interview with Dawn Neal, conducted by Stewart Gray, July 18, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> "JCSU Neighborhood History," *History South*, Tom Hanchett, <https://www.historysouth.org/jcsu/>, accessed March 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Oral History Interview with Dawn Neal, conducted by Stewart Gray, July 18, 2021.

segregationist policies that discouraged Black-owned businesses. McDonald was able to create his own capital to open McDonald's Cafeteria and began to help revitalize Black businesses in Charlotte by providing commercial space for lease at reasonable rates within his Mini-Center.<sup>18</sup>

From 1970 to 1971, McDonald invested nearly \$300,000 of his own money into the McDonald's Cafeteria, as well as the associated Mini-Center leasing business. His actions helped to revitalize the Beatties Ford Road area of the historic West End and incubate new Black-owned businesses. In a 1988 interview looking back on his success, John McDonald said "we have to take our money and reinvest it in our own neighborhoods to help create jobs for our people and provide for our own economic base."<sup>19</sup> John McDonald gave many young people opportunities and was well respected in the Charlotte community. Along with running the restaurant, he was known for teaching his young staff lessons in responsibility. When Dawn Neal wanted to take a weekend off to attend a concert, he reminded her "I gave you a job when you needed it, and now I need you to work this weekend." Although he even offered to reimburse her for the tickets, she refused and realized that it was her responsibility to fulfill her commitment to McDonald.<sup>20</sup>

### **McDonald's Cafeteria Move From The Mini-Center**

By 1981, McDonald realized a need for more space and broke ground on a larger building at 2812 Beatties Ford Road, near I-85, and moved the cafeteria to the new space in 1982. He maintained ownership of the Mini-Center, continuing to make commercial space available to Black business owners on reasonable terms. His new space, launched from the business he established within the original McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center building, became a West Charlotte institution. Known for its traditional southern and soul food, McDonald's Cafeteria was a Black social and political hub in the 1980s and 1990s. With 14,000 square feet to seat 250 and a 300-person banquet room, the new McDonald's Cafeteria became a popular spot in Charlotte for civic organization and church meetings.<sup>21</sup> One such example is the Christian Ministers Fellowship, which met at McDonald's for over a decade. While speaking on the decision to meet at the cafeteria, Reverend Bryant Clancy of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church said "it's a way of supporting Mr. (John) McDonald's investment in the community and identifying with it." Clancy and other members of clergy were there to sponsor and bless a service to commemorate the groundbreaking of the new space.<sup>22</sup>

Over the years McDonald expanded his space to include the McDonald's Inn hotel (a franchise of Best Western) in 1988 and an amusement park complex known as Fun City in 1992, which collectively became one of the most successful Black-owned businesses on the West End.<sup>23</sup> Charlotte financial and business leaders saw the development as a catalyst to major economic growth in the Beatties Ford Road corridor.<sup>24</sup> By 1988, McDonald's Cafeteria was widely regarded as the most popular, non-chain restaurant in the city, visited by celebrities and promoted by convention and meeting planners as a "must see and visit" place in

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Tom Hanchett on McDonald's Cafeteria, Johnson C. Smith University Archives, <https://soundcloud.com/user-903488555/mcdonalds-cafeteria-tom-hanchett>.

<sup>19</sup> "Achieving Success By Divine Plans," *The Charlotte Post*, June 12, 1988, page 2C.

<sup>20</sup> Oral History Interview with Dawn Neal, conducted by Stewart Gray, July 18, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> "Ground broken for new McDonald's Cafeteria," *The Charlotte News*, February 13, 1981, page 3.

<sup>22</sup> "Ministers fellowship explores worldly and spiritual matters," *The Charlotte News*, April 16, 1982, page 14.

<sup>23</sup> "Black Neighborhoods in Charlotte," *Charlotte, NC: The Historic West End*, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.westendcharlotte.org/african-american-neighborhoods-in-charlotte>.

<sup>24</sup> "Achieving Success By Divine Plans," *The Charlotte Post*, June 12, 1988, page 2C.

Charlotte.<sup>25</sup> Dawn Neal did not work at the new location, but ate there often. She remembers that if it was very busy when she was visiting, John McDonald would come up and ask her to help out when she was finished eating. Despite the cafeteria's move, McDonald retained ownership of the original McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center building until 1994.<sup>26</sup>

The hotel and amusement park of McDonald's development began having financial problems in the early 1990s, despite being part of one of the most successful Black-owned businesses in Charlotte. Due to poor health, John McDonald began looking for buyers for the development but was never able to successfully close a deal. During a charity golf match in October 1995, McDonald died of a heart attack. In honor of their father and his legacy, the McDonald family briefly opened a restaurant called Lil Mac's Cafeteria. Decades after his death, the legacy of John McDonald and McDonald's Cafeteria continues to live on in Charlotte. Many longtime Charlotte residents fondly remember not only the food at McDonald's Cafeteria, but the community organizing that was able to happen there.

### **Beatties Ford Road and the Historic West End**

McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center was a beloved community institution in the Beatties Ford Road neighborhood of Charlotte. Historically, the areas surrounding Beatties Ford Road have had a large African American population. Beatties Ford Road cuts through West Charlotte and is home to such historic African American landmarks as Johnson C. Smith University (one of North Carolina's twelve Historically Black Colleges and Universities), the Excelsior Club (a center of Black social and political activity), West Charlotte High School, and the city's first United House of Prayer for All People (which occupied the former McDonald's Cafeteria space).<sup>27</sup> The three-mile thoroughfare cuts through many historically Black neighborhoods of west Charlotte, including Biddleville, Five Points, Dalebrook, Lincoln Heights, McCrorey Heights, Oaklawn Park, Oaklawn Terrace, Seversville, Smallwood, Taylor Avenue, University Park, Washington Heights, Wesley Heights.<sup>28</sup> These neighborhoods were places where Black families and businesses flourished and thrived in the years after World War Two.

In the mid-1980s, the city of Charlotte identified the Beatties Ford Road area for redevelopment. Once one of the major Black business districts in the city, the area started seeing decline as many homeowners moved out, shifting the area into primarily tenant occupancy.<sup>29</sup> McDonald and community leaders felt as though the McDonald's developments were a major help in revitalizing and responsibly redeveloping the Beatties Ford Road area to once again secure its status as a majority Black owned business district.<sup>30</sup> As a hub of the Black community in Charlotte, McDonald's Cafeteria was not only a restaurant, but a center of civic and political work within the African American community. The cafeteria became a meeting place for the Black community, where they exercised their abilities to speak and organize into action. It also became a place where White Charlotteans went to engage their Black neighbors and get votes as well as some legendary

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Oral History Interview with Dawn Neal, conducted by Stewart Gray, July 18, 2021; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deeds Book, Book 7654, Page 981 (1994).

<sup>27</sup> "Street Stories," *Creative Loafing Charlotte*, November 8, 2006, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://clclt.com/charlotte/street-stories/Content?oid=2145573>.

<sup>28</sup> "Black Neighborhoods in Charlotte," *Charlotte, NC: The Historic West End*, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.westendcharlotte.org/african-american-neighborhoods-in-charlotte>.

<sup>29</sup> "Area's good points often overlooked," *The Charlotte News*, April 22, 1983, page 6.

<sup>30</sup> "Achieving Success By Divine Plans," *The Charlotte Post*, June 12, 1988, page 2C.

home-cooked food.<sup>31</sup> Frequently, White politicians would come to McDonald's Cafeteria to meet with Black community members. Local churches hosted meetings and lunches in the banquet rooms, and local educational institutions were known to frequent the restaurant for school and faculty events. For the historic West End, McDonald's Cafeteria was not merely a restaurant, it was a center of community life.<sup>32</sup>

## V. Chain of Title

### 1. Book 34434 Page 262

- a. Recorded on April 2, 2020
- b. Grantor: Huey M. Rowe-Anderson and Virginia C. Rowe-Anderson
- c. Grantee: E-Fix Development Corp, LLC

### 2. Book 9315 Page 505

- a. Recorded on September 30, 1997
- b. Grantor: R. Keith Johnson
- c. Grantee: Huey M. Rowe-Anderson and Virginia C. Rowe-Anderson

### 3. Book 7654 Page 981

- a. Recorded on January 28, 1994
- b. Grantor: McDonald's Mini-Center, Inc.
- c. Grantee: Charlotte Certified Development Corporation

### 4. Book 2962 Page 185

- a. Recorded on April 18, 1968
- b. Grantor: Thomas W. Keller and Nonie Dell Keller. George V. Keller, Jr. and Mary B. Keller, W. R. Carleton and Margaret K. Carleton.
- c. Grantee: John W. McDonald and Annie H. (Hill is maiden name) McDonald

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<sup>31</sup> "Black Neighborhoods in Charlotte," *Charlotte, NC: The Historic West End*, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.westendcharlotte.org/african-american-neighborhoods-in-charlotte>.

<sup>32</sup> "Charlotte Businessman Remembered," *The Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1995, page 1A.

## **VI. Finding Aid for Photographs**

- Fig. 1: Setting
- Fig. 2: Front (north) elevation facing Lasalle Street
- Fig. 3: Side (east) elevation facing Beatties Ford Road
- Fig. 4: Rear (south) elevation
- Fig. 5: Side (west) elevation facing Taylor Avenue
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## VI. Bibliography

### Newspaper and Magazine Articles

“Man Brings Home The Prosperity: Mini-Center Backer Found Church Led To Road of Success in Restaurant,” *The Charlotte Observer*, September 20, 1971, page 11.

“Quality, Price Hard to Beat.” *The Charlotte News*, January 11, 1975, page 24.

“Good Home Cooking for \$2.50,” *The Charlotte News*, March 17, 1977, page 27.

“Cafeteria provides food for pastors’ bodies, souls.” *The Charlotte News*, April 26, 1980, page 6.

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## VII. Appendix

### Appendix 1



Appendix 1: A 1977 photo of McDonald's Cafeteria at its original location on LaSalle Street. "Good Home Cooking for \$2.50," *The Charlotte News*, 17 March 1977, page 27.



Appendix 2: John McDonald, with development business tenants, in front of the original location of McDonald's Cafeteria on LaSalle Street in 1971. "Man Brings Home The Prosperity: Mini-Center Backer Found Church Led To Road of Success in Restaurant," *The Charlotte Observer*, 20 September 1971, page 11.



Appendix 3: Customers wait to be served at the original location of McDonald's Cafeteria on the corner of Beatties Ford and LaSalle St. *The African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*. Vol. 2. Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1998. Computer optical disc, 4 3/4 in.



Appendix 4: John McDonald, Joe Poage, and Arthur Miller calculate they had cooked more than 72,000 meals. *The African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*. Vol. 2. Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1998. Computer optical disc, 4 3/4 in.



Appendix 5: Geraldine Powe (center) introduces John Kiser (left) to Joe Martin at McDonald's Cafeteria on Beatties Ford Road. Martin encouraged Charlotteans to have lunch with people of different races. Powe was inspired by Martin's challenge and invited Kiser to join her and her friends for lunch on March 13, 1997. This is just one example of how McDonald's Cafeteria was able to foster community and civic organizing across racial lines to serve as a center of the Black Charlotte community. *The African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*. Vol. 2. Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1998. Computer optical disc, 4 3/4 in.



Appendix 6: John and Eunice McDonald, at the new McDonald Cafeteria location off Beatties Ford Road, as they announce plans for a major expansion of the restaurant to include a hotel complex. *The African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*. Vol. 2. Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1998. Computer optical disc, 4 3/4 in.

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**John McDonald**

Appendix 7: John McDonald, photographed at McDonald's Cafeteria on 2 February, 1990. *The African American Album: The Black Experience in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*. Vol. 2. Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1998. Computer optical disc, 4 3/4 in.



Appendix 8: John and Eunice McDonald in front of the Best Western McDonald's Inn. 12 June, 1988. *The Charlotte Post*. Page 2C. Johnson C. Smith University Archives.



Appendix 9: The new location of McDonald's Cafeteria at 2812 Beatties Ford Road in 1981. *The Charlotte News*, 13 October 1981, page 3.





Appendix 10: Google street view imagery of the building before its most recent renovation (top picture represents original storefront of McDonald's Cafeteria).

## VII. Figures

Figure 1: Setting

Original location of McDonald's Cafeteria on the furthest left of the building shown.





Figure 2: Front (north) elevation facing Lasalle Street



Figure 3: Side (east) elevation facing Beatties Ford Road





Figure 4: Rear (south) elevation



Figure 5: Side (west) elevation facing Taylor Avenue





Figure 6: Overhanging eave



Figure 7: Glazing





Figure 8: Concrete screens

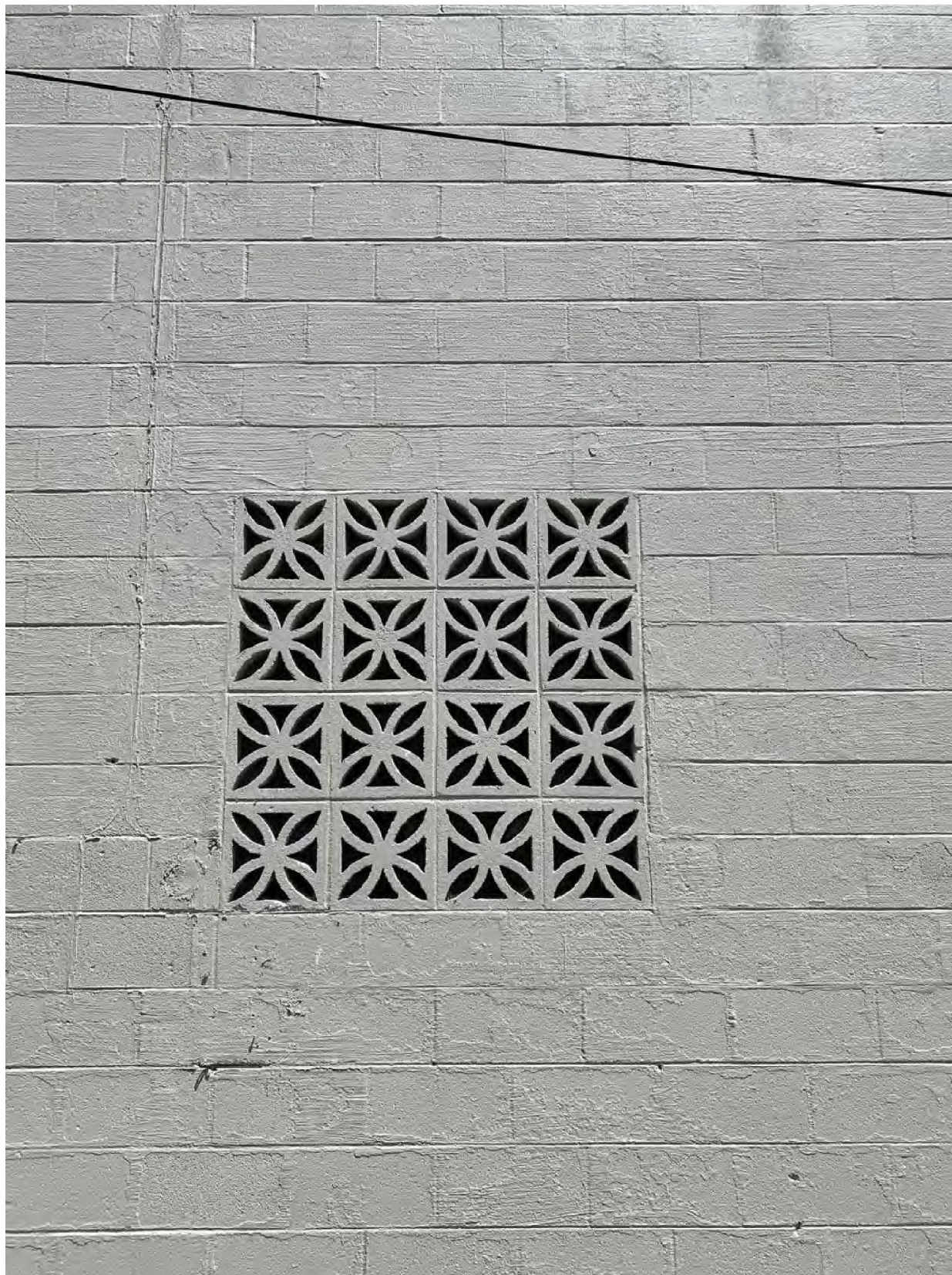




Figure 9: Concrete canopy to east



Figure 10: Concrete canopy to west





Figure 11: Window



Figure 12: Brick planter





Figure 13: Interior under construction





Figure 14: Front (north) elevation facing Lasalle Street – completed construction (December 2021)



Completed August 2021

Figure 15: Side (east) elevation facing Beatties Ford Road – completed construction (December 2021)





Figure 16: Rear (south) elevation – completed construction (December 2021)



Figure 17: Side (west) elevation facing Taylor Avenue – completed construction (December 2021)

