

Uptown Charlotte Architectural Walking Tour Descriptions and Map

Following the address for each site are listed:
 Address • Architect/Designer • Year Built • Design Style • National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or Local Landmark (LL) designation.

1. Trade and Tryon Streets Intersection
 Raymond Kaskey, Sculptor • 1995
 The Trade and Tryon intersection is considered the heart of uptown Charlotte and the center of the financial district. In 1995, four bronze statues on granite bases were erected at the intersection of the four corners, gifted by the Queens Table, an anonymous group of philanthropists. The statues signify (1) Commerce: an early 19th century gold miner and the face of Alan Greenspan, representing the city's banking boom; (2) Industry: a woman and child millworkers from the early 20th century textile industry; (3) Transportation: African-American laborers building the railroad and an eagle suggesting air connections in the city; and (4) Future: a woman holding a child, of which all statues are looking towards.

2. Bank of America Corporate Center
 100 North Tryon • Caesar Pelli, Architect
 1992 • Postmodern
 At 60 stories and 871 feet in height, the Bank of America Corporate Center continues to hold its place as the tallest skyscraper in uptown Charlotte. Designed by Caesar Pelli, its crown-shaped spire is one of the most recognizable features of the Charlotte skyline. The Corporate Center shares a number of characteristics with the Hearst Tower, ranging from the focus of attention on the building's crown to the presence of public art in the lobby. The profile references a common form of the 19th and early 20th century skyscrapers in the way it steps gradually inward.

3. Ritz-Carlton Hotel • 100 North College
 Smallwood, Reynolds, Stewart, Stewart & Associates, Architects • 2009
 Contemporary
 Built in 2009, the Ritz-Carlton is the first LEED Gold certified hotel in Charlotte and the first within the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. The 18-story glass building features, among other sustainable elements, a vegetative rooftop, high-efficiency plumbing and electrical features, and an electric vehicle charging station.

4. Hearst Tower • 214 North Tryon
 Smallwood, Reynolds, Stewart, Stewart & Associates, Architects • 2002
 Postmodern
 The 47-story skyscraper, completed in 2002, is the third tallest building in Charlotte and has over 935,000 square feet of space. The architecture is primarily Art Deco-inspired, and the ornamentation is geometric and linear and suggests an idea of movement. The Hearst Tower is considered Postmodern in style because its design reflects a return of ornament, with historical references, and exhibits a playful quality that contrasts with the severity and simplicity of modern architecture.

5. Montaldo's Department Store
 220 North Tryon • Louis Asbury, Sr., Architect • 1920 • Renaissance Revival
 Montaldo's Department Store was designed by Louis Asbury, Sr. and was an outlet for upscale female clothing in the 1920s. The original Montaldo's building was inspired by the architecture of Italian Renaissance palaces. This is clear from the three-story classical base and a line of sculptures along the balustrade. The addition to the left of the original facade, designed by the architect's son Louis Asbury, Jr., was completed in 1950 and doubled the street frontage of the store.

6. The Carolina Theater • 224 North Tryon
 R.E. Hall and C.C. Hook, Architects
 1927 • Mediterranean Revival
 The Carolina Theater is a building whose fate is still unknown; a preservation battle in progress. What was once the entrance lobby and street front for the theater was destroyed in 1988. The Mediterranean Revival-styled Carolina Theater was an example of the typical "movie palaces" built across the country in the 1920s. Fire damaged part of the building in the early 1980s and the building was later de-listed as a Local Landmark, allowing for the removal of the lobby.

7. Charlotte Public Library • 310 North Tryon • A.G. Odell, Architect • 1956
 Modern
 The Charlotte Public Library has undergone a number of changes over the years. It began as the Carnegie Library in 1903 and was demolished for the postwar modern design by A.G. Odell in 1956. The building was again completely transformed by the 1989 renovation and addition by Middleton & McMillan. Gutted to its steel core, the facade was recast in marble and stucco and a massive new wing was added.

8. First Baptist Church/Spirit Square
 318 North Tryon • James J. McMichael
 1909 • Byzantine Revival • LL
 What is now known as the McGlohon Theatre at Spirit Square was built in 1909 as the First Baptist Church. The architecture of the church is an eclectic historicism drawing on forms from a variety of historical styles, including classicism, but most significantly from the monumental early Christian architecture of Byzantium. The renovation of the church to become the McGlohon Theatre and the sensitive postmodern addition were designed in 1980 by the New York-based firm Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates.

9. WFAE Building/Spirit Square Offices
 108 East 7th (7th and Tryon)
 Architect Unknown • 1948
 International
 The WFAE Building at Spirit Square is one of the few truly International style modern buildings in Charlotte. The architects of International style not only rejected historically-inspired ornamentation, but took their design a step further and rejected adornment altogether; the composition of the materials themselves acted as ornamentation. When constructed in 1948, the building was used as Sunday school classrooms for the First Baptist Church. Today it is home to the Spirit Square offices, the Light Factory gallery and to the WFAE National Public Radio studio.

The tour begins and ends at the intersection of Trade and Tryon Street, and continues north and south along Tryon Street. The tour is approximately 2 hours in length. Please follow the route indicated on the map.



24. Wachovia Bank and Trust Building (Former) • 129 West Trade • A.G. Odell, Architect • 1958 • Modern
 The form of A.G. Odell's Wachovia Bank and Trust was heavily influenced by Gordon Bunshaft's 1952 Lever House in New York City, which popularized a building type that became common in the U.S. during that period known as "tower-and-slab." Odell's building is clad in concrete, with folded panels on the tower that reflect an interest in the play of light and shadow and suggest cubist forms. Though the solid, heavy horizontal base has been opened and resealed, the Wachovia Bank and Trust is one of the only Odell-designed, high-rise buildings that survives in Charlotte from the 1950s.

25. First National Bank/Sun Trust Building
 112 South Tryon • Louis Asbury, Sr., Architect • 1926 • Neoclassical/Eclectic
 LL
 The 22-story First National Bank is 237 feet tall and became the highest building in Charlotte, replacing the Johnston building when erected in 1926. The design of this Neoclassical skyscraper holds in high regard the importance of classical structure and ornamentation. A base, middle and top can be clearly identified in the building's overall design.

26. NCNB Building • 200 South Tryon
 Walter Hook Associates, Architects
 1961 • Modern
 This 18-story, high-rise building was originally designed by Walter Hook Associates, Inc. and was the tallest building in Charlotte from 1961-1971 at 300 feet. The building emphasizes its horizontality through glass variations and a clear expression of a tower on a solid base. The vertical steel members on the exterior bring an additional level of depth to the facade. The NCNB building underwent a series of updates and renovations beginning in the 1970s; the most recent renovation was completed by LSP Associates in 2001.

27. Johnston Building/Midtown Plaza
 212 South Tryon • William Lee Stoddard, Architect • 1924 • Neoclassical • LL
 The 17-story Johnston Building is clad in limestone panels and buff-colored bricks and was designed in the Neoclassical style. The organization of its facade reflects a later phase of design for early 20th century skyscrapers; a design that divided the front into five horizontal parts rather than three parts to help break up the expanse of the middle. Horace Johnston, for whom the building is named, was a key player in developing the region's textile industry and owned and built numerous mills.

28. Jefferson Standard/Wells Fargo Main
 • 301 South Tryon • Pease Associates, Architects • 1953 • International
 The 10-story building was unique in that it held the title of Charlotte's first modernist high-rise. Originally designed by Pease Associates, its ribbon windows and white planar surfaces were indicative of the International style. The building underwent renovations in the 1970s and 1980s when two more stories were added. It received its largest renovation in 2004 when Little and Associates completed a facelift and re-skinning of the building's exterior.

29. Latta Arcade • 316-320 South Tryon
 William H. Peeps, Architect • 1914
 Neoclassical/Eclectic NRHP, LL
 Latta Arcade, built in 1914, is an eclectic two-story brick commercial building. The pedestrian passageway on the ground floor serves as a link between South Tryon and Church streets. The main portion of the building is organized by two parallel rows of brick offices and retail shops covered by a beautifully glassed-in ceiling.

30. 400 South Tryon • 400 South Tryon
 Pei Little & Associates, Architects
 1974 • Late Modern
 Designed in 1974, 400 South Tryon is a late modern, concrete-faced tower with gold-colored glass panels and windows that link the entire building vertically. It achieves this vertical emphasis by not distinguishing between the levels of the facade. At ground level, the building is noted for its expressive concrete canopies. Though these canopies appear to spring from thin supports, a foundation footing exists beneath street level to hold each structure.

31. Bechtler Museum of Modern Art
 420 South Tryon • Mario Botta, Architect • 2009 • Contemporary
 The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art's architecture displays a sculptural quality and energy that connects to the contemporary art inside. Though powerful in design, there is warmth to the building, due to its earthy coloring and pedestrian scale. A key design element of the four-story structure is the glass atrium that extends through the museum's core and diffuses natural light throughout the building. Notable features of the building include the cantilevered roof, seemingly supported by a single column, and the terra cotta exterior. The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art is part of the larger Levine Center for the Arts campus built in 2009, the brainchild of Wells Fargo and the Leo Levine Foundation, which includes the Bechtler, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, the John S. and James L. Knight Theater and the Mint Museum Uptown.

32. Mint Museum Uptown • 500 South Tryon • Machado Silvetti, Architect
 2010 • Contemporary
 The Mint Museum Uptown opened in 2010, consolidating the Museum of Craft + Design (previously located in Montaldo's Department Store) and the American and contemporary collections held at the Mint Museum's Randolph Road location. With an exterior clad in pre-cast concrete panels, the facade's dramatic V-shape invites pedestrians up the grand staircase and into the main lobby; once inside the space opens up onto an impressive three-story atrium.

33. Duke Energy Center • 534 South Tryon
 TVS Design, Architects • 2010
 Contemporary
 At 48-stories, the Duke Energy Center is Charlotte's second tallest building; but by total square footage is the largest in the city. It has attained the highest level of LEED certification Platinum, from the U.S. Green Building Council. The building's green features include recycling rainwater, energy-saving blinds and a vegetative roof that reduces heating and cooling needs.

34. Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture • 551 South Tryon • The Frelson Group, Architects
 2009 • Contemporary
 This area of Charlotte's urban core, the historic Brooklyn neighborhood, was originally a thriving African-American community. It was slowly displaced during the 1960s by expansion of the central business district and nearly all of the homes and businesses were demolished. The Center takes its design inspiration from the Myers School that was located nearby; a prominent exterior staircase provided the nickname "Jacob's Ladder School." The historic reference became one of the guiding themes for the Gantt Center's design as a tribute to the neighborhood.

35. St. Peter's Catholic Church • 507 South Tryon • Architect Unknown • 1888 • Gothic Revival
 St. Peter's was Charlotte's first Catholic church, built to serve Irish and German immigrants. The first church on this site was erected in 1851, but was damaged during the Civil War and replaced in the 1880s with the building that survives today. The adjacent rectory, built in 1897, has the only remaining Victorian garden in uptown Charlotte. Like other 19th century churches in the city, it is Gothic Revival in style though the overall design is simplified.

36. The Green • 431 South Tryon • 2002
 The Green is a three-tiered, public lawn that is owned and operated by Wells Fargo. The Green was developed in 2002 and beautifully disguises a massive underground parking deck. It functions as a city park and outdoor performance space and features interactive, public art based on famous authors and literature.

37. Ratcliffe Florist Shop/Bernardin's Restaurant • 431 South Tryon • William H. Peeps • 1929 • Mediterranean Revival
 LL
 Louis Ratcliffe opened Ratcliffe Florist Shop in 1917 and in 1929 commissioned William H. Peeps, architect of Latta Arcade, to design a new two-story building for his store. In 2002, when the Ratcliffe Condominiums were constructed, the 1929-flower shop was rolled across the street on custom-built railroad tracks. When construction was completed, it was rolled back into place and integrated into the new condominiums. The original vintage neon sign was removed in 2011 and relocated to its current location next to The Green.

38. Mecklenburg Investment Company Building • 233 South Brevard • William W. Smith, Builder • 1922 • Eclectic
 NRHP, LL
 In 1922 construction began on the Mecklenburg Investment Company Building, the first in Charlotte to be planned by African Americans for black-owned businesses and civic organizations. Located in the Brooklyn neighborhood, the three-story brick building was likely designed by contractor William W. Smith, the man behind the Grace A.M.E. Zion Church. The style of the building has no immediate references, but rather represents the ornamentation and blending of styles in commercial structures from the 1920s.

39. George Cutter Building • 201 South Tryon • A.G. Odell, Architect • 1961
 Modern
 The George Cutter Building was built in 1961 and, like Odell's Wachovia Bank and Trust, was influenced by the "tower-and-slab" form. The exterior of the Cutter building was completely replaced in the 1990s by Architect Wagner Murray. Originally, the lower two levels were open to the street and the building was set back. The facade incorporated an intersection of horizontal and vertical lines, but the new facade deemphasizes the verticality. The addition of ornamentation at the top during the 2011 re-cladding of the building demonstrates the renewed focus on the "capital" of the building, which places the current design more firmly in the Postmodernist style.

40. Home Federal Savings and Loan/Trust Condominium • 139 South Tryon
 Freeman-White, Architects • 1967
 Modern • NRHP, LL
 When completed in 1967, the Home Federal Savings and Loan building contrasted in scale and material with the steel and glass high rises that surrounded it. The building's designers, like others who used concrete extensively during this period, were interested in the sculptural, textural and structural possibilities of the material. The concrete slabs of each of the floor levels cantilever past the vertical supports, emphasized by the lack of vertical supports in the corners. Converted to condominiums and a restaurant in 2009, though the two-story bank lobby now functions as part of the restaurant, though the original terrazzo floors and circular staircase have been preserved.

We hope you've found this tour informative, and learned a little more about the rich variety of architecture that exists in the Queen City.

A Glossary of Architectural Styles

ART DECO 1920 – 1940
Art Deco is an eclectic design style that began in Paris in the 1920s and flourished internationally throughout the 1940s. Art Deco's linear symmetry was a distinct departure from the flowing asymmetrical organic curves of its predecessor style Art Nouveau. It embraced influences from many different styles of the early 20th century, including Neoclassical, constructivism, cubism, modernism and futurism and drew inspiration from ancient Egyptian and Aztec forms. Although many design movements have political or philosophical beginnings or intentions, Art Deco was purely decorative.

ART NOUVEAU 1890 – 1910
Art Nouveau was an international philosophy and style of art and architecture, most popular between 1890 – 1910. It was inspired by natural forms and structures and the desire to create harmony with the natural environment. Though replaced by modernism in the 20th century, Art Nouveau is considered an important transition between Neoclassicism and modernism.

BAUHAUS 1919 – 1950
From the German words 'bauen' (to build) and 'haus' (house), Bauhaus was a revolutionary school of art, architecture and design established by the pioneer modern architect Walter Gropius in Germany in 1919. Its teaching method replaced the traditional pupil-teacher relationship with the idea of a community of artists working together. Its aim was to bring art back into contact with everyday life, and design was therefore given as much weight as fine art.

BEAUX ARTS 1885 – 1930
Beaux Arts style (the fine arts) was advocated by Americans who studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in France. The style emphasized classical Greek forms, elaborate detailing, massive plans and heavy masonry. This style was most popular for grand public and institutional buildings and the private homes of America's industrial barons. The primary inspiration for the Beaux Arts style in the United States was Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

BYZANTINE
The architecture of the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire was developed from Early Christian and Roman antecedents in the 4th century. Byzantine church architecture is concerned almost exclusively with a decorated interior. The mosaics and frescoes have a dual purpose; they give inspiration to the worshipper and are windows to the spiritual world. Features include multiple domes, round-arched windows and highly decorative elements.

CLASSICAL/GREEK REVIVAL 1800 – 1855
An architectural movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, predominant in Northern Europe and the United States. The Greek Revival movement was widely accepted in the United States as a symbol of new democracy. Characteristics of the style include gabled or hipped, low-pitched roofs, dentils, porches, square or rounded columns and temple front entryways.

COLONIAL REVIVAL 1880 – 1955
The Colonial Revival was a nationalistic architectural style in the United States. Colonial Revival sought to follow the period around the Revolutionary War, with features including two story building heights, a symmetrical front façade with an accented doorway and evenly spaced windows.

CONTEMPORARY 1970 – PRESENT
Contemporary architecture is formally defined as the building style of the present day and can be varied with a number of different influences. Examples of contemporary architecture often do not have similar or easily recognizable features, however some general characteristics include a connection between indoor and outdoor spaces and the use of natural light with large and expansive windows.

ECLECTIC
Eclecticism is architecture that combines, in a single work, elements from different historical styles, chiefly in architecture, and in the fine and decorative arts.

GOTHIC REVIVAL 1750 – 1900
A style featuring pointed arches and vaults in windows and doors, steeply pitched gables and balanced thrusts in stone masonry. The style is elaborate and decorative. Gothic Revival architecture peaked from the 1750s to about 1900. It became one of the preferred styles for churches in the United States.

INTERNATIONAL 1930 – 1970
This (anti) style epitomized the height of the modern movement in the United States and Europe. By the late 1920s, American architects and clients were increasingly persuaded that European modernism was both visually progressive and structurally sound. It is characterized by modern principles and materials like concrete, glass, steel, skeleton-frame construction, rejection of decoration, flat roofs and bands of windows.

ITALIANATE 1840 – 1885
The Italianate style is distinctive for its pronounced exaggeration of many Italian Renaissance characteristics; towers, emphatic eaves supported by corbels, low-pitched roofs or flat roofs with a wide projection.

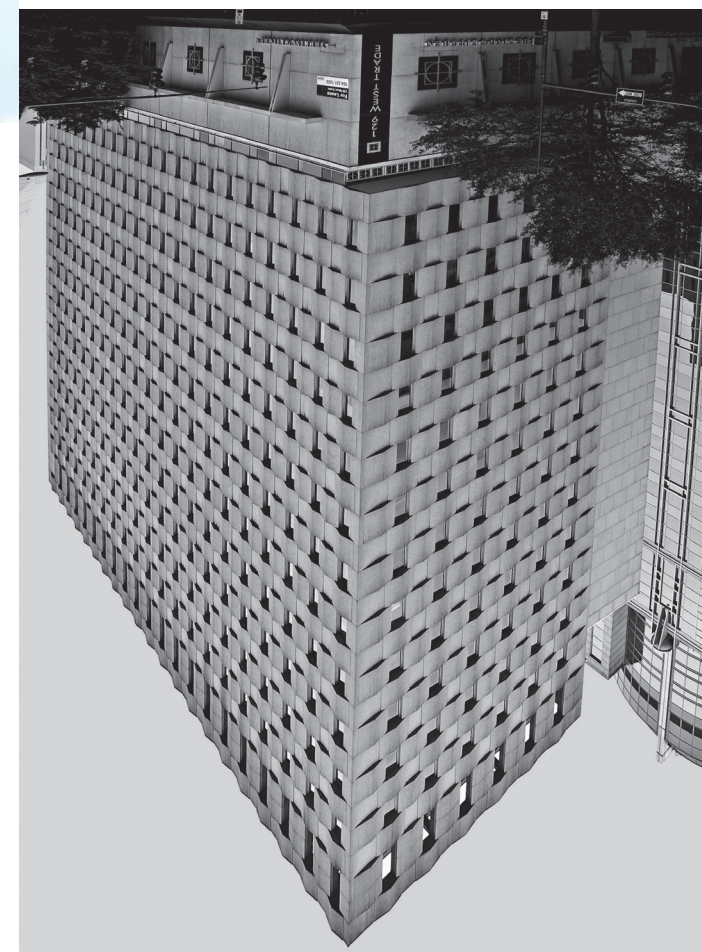
MEDITERRANEAN 1900 – 1930
The Mediterranean Revival was an eclectic style that was first introduced in the United States at the end of the 19th century and became popular during the 1920s and 1930s. The style evolved from a renewed interest in the Italian Renaissance architecture of palaces and villas. It was most commonly applied to hotels, apartments, commercial structures, train stations and residences in coastal states like Florida and California.

MODERN 1920 – 1970
Modern architecture is characterized by simplification of form and creation of ornament from the structure and theme of the building. The first variants were conceived early in the 20th century as a way to reconcile the principles of design with technological advancements. Modern architecture gained popularity in the United States after World War II and remains a controversial, often-studied style to this day. It is characterized by non-traditional forms, clean lines and the use of new technologies in building materials and construction.

NEOCLASSICAL 1895 – 1950
Neoclassical became a dominant style for domestic buildings nationwide between the 1900s – 1940s. It was directly inspired by the Beaux Arts style and the Columbian Exposition in 1893. The style tends to include the features of classical symmetry, full height porches with columns and temple front and various classical ornaments such as dentils and cornices.

POSTMODERN 1970 – PRESENT
The Postmodern era is most associated with architecture appearing since the late 1970s continuing through today. Often Postmodern architecture is referred to as neo-classic, essentially representing a revival of period styles for houses and an unending variety of forms and sleek, asymmetrical designs for commercial buildings. Postmodernism is an allusion to the past with multiple associations and meanings. It is a rejection of modernist thought, a return to traditional, historical precedents, with a re-awakened interest in history and heritage.

VICTORIAN 1830 – 1910
The first of the Victorian buildings were relatively simple in style, while those built after the Civil War became more elaborate. Beginning in the 1830s, the flexibility of balloon framing freed buildings from the timber-framed box forms of the past. Houses were now built with bays, turrets, overhangs, odd corners and irregular floor plans. The perfection of the scroll saw allowed for highly complex architectural details, made in mass. Pattern books and magazines published house plans that provided inspiration for new varieties of trim and decoration.



Charlotte's "New South" boom began after the Civil War, spurred by arrival of railroads here and collapse of slave-dependent areas closer to the coast. The city has gained population in every decade since then, as its economy transformed from cotton shipping, to a hub for America's major textile mill region by the 1920s, to the United States' second largest banking center by the 2000s.

Rapid and continuous growth has often meant that new buildings replaced older ones before anyone thought of them as "historic." Today you'll find two dozen designated local and National Landmarks dating back to the early 20th century. The next wave of construction, following a long Depression lull, came in 1950s – 1970s, leaving Charlotte an impressive collection of "Mid-century Modern" structures. Charlotte's ascendance as a banking town since the 1980s brought a third wave, with notable cultural facilities and glistening new towers. If you have more time, be sure to explore beyond the main streets — a model mixed-use district has sprung up in First Ward, while Victorian homes linger in Fourth Ward.

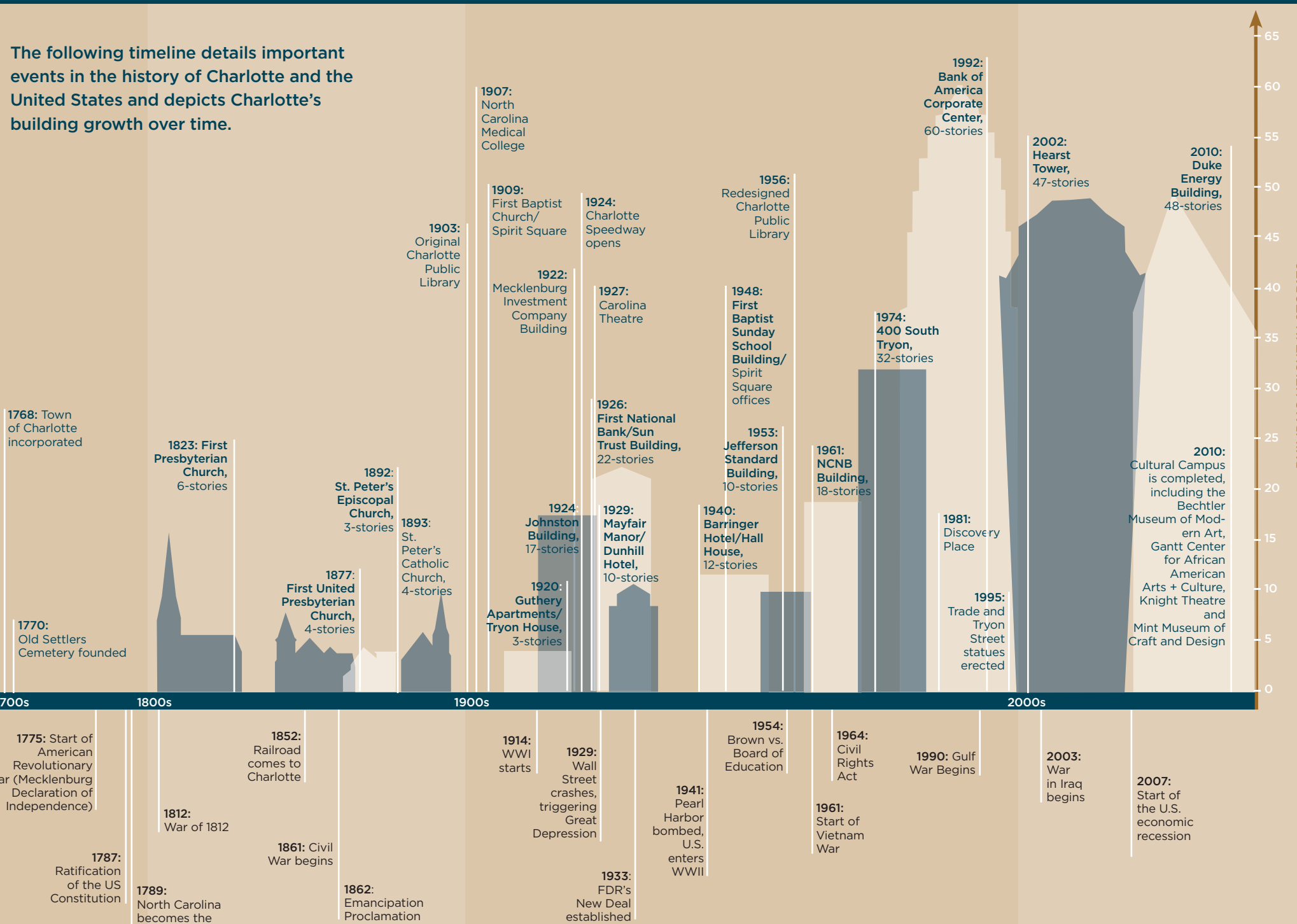
Uptown Charlotte looks very new, but it dates back over two centuries. Two Indian trading paths, now Trade and Tryon Streets, crossed on a hilltop (the reality behind the nickname "Uptown"). European settlers, many of them Scotch-Irish Presbyterians (thus Uptown's prominent First Presbyterian Church) began arriving in the 1750s. In 1768 they named their new village Charlotte in honor of the British queen, and for good measure called the new county "Mecklenburg" after her birthplace — the names helped win favor of Colonial Governor William Tryon, who made Charlotte a courthouse town, and thus started it on a path to growth.

By Dr. Tom Hanchett, Levine Museum of the New South

Introduction — The Development of Uptown Charlotte

Over Two Centuries of Growth

The following timeline details important events in the history of Charlotte and the United States and depicts Charlotte's building growth over time.



Thank You

Historic Charlotte would like to extend our gratitude to everyone involved in helping us research and produce the Uptown Charlotte Architectural Walking Tour brochure. This effort was a true collaboration within the history community. Special thanks to Dwain Snyder Photography and Kugler's Studio for capturing these iconic Uptown images and for Dr. Tom Hanchett's introductory comments.

We would also like to thank the Arts & Science Council and the Dunhill Hotel for their generous financial support that allowed for the production of this brochure. As editor and Executive Director it was my pleasure to coordinate with these groups. We hope that you will have fun taking our tour!

Diane Althouse
Executive Director
Historic Charlotte, Inc.

About HCI

Established in 1991, Historic Charlotte is a non-profit organization with the mission to promote historic preservation in the greater Charlotte region.

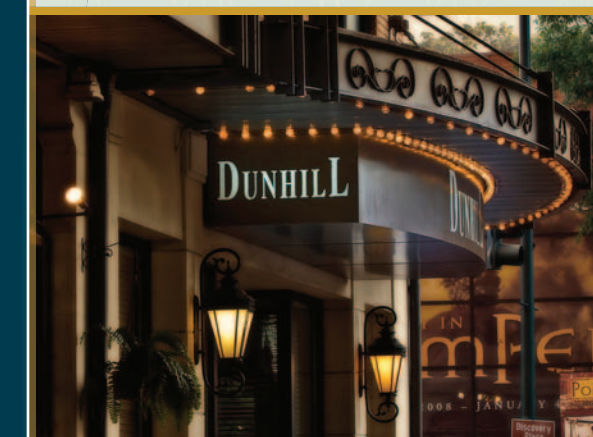
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