

RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC), which makes its recommendation to the full commission. The historic landmark program was previously administered by the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission but has been transferred back to the city; procedures for administration by RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC at One Exchange Plaza, Third Floor, Raleigh, NC 27601 or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission
PO Box 829 Century Station
Raleigh, NC 27602

1. **Name of Property** (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: Branch Banking and Trust Building (BB&T)

Current Name: Capital Bank Plaza

2. **Location:**

Street Address: 333 Fayetteville Street

City/Town/Jurisdiction: Raleigh

NC PIN Number: (can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

1703771436

3. **Legal Owner of Property** (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name 333 Ventures, LLC (Don F. Carter, Bobby R. Lewis)

Address 333 Fayetteville St, Suite 100

City/State/Zip Code Raleigh, NC 27601

Email dfcarter@rdc.bz Telephone 919 821 3664

4. **Applicant/Contact Person** (If other than owner):

Name M. Ruth Little, Longleaf Historic Resources

Address 515-A St. Mary's St.

City/State/Zip Code Raleigh, NC 27505

Email ruthlittle@mindspring.com Telephone 919 412 7804

5. General Data/Site Information:

A. Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: 1965

B. Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: n/a

C. Approximate lot size or acreage: .27 acre

D. Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason: Emery Roth & Sons (Richard Roth), with Holloway & Reeves and G. Milton Small

E. Original Use: offices

F. Present Use: offices

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s) Structure Object Site

B. Ownership

Private:
Public: Local State Federal

C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	<u>1</u>	_____
Structures	_____	_____
Objects	_____	_____

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): included in Study List Application for the Fayetteville Street Historic District, 2004, by Cynthia de Miranda

E. National Register of Historic Places status:

Check one:

Entered (date _____) Nominated
Determined eligible (date _____) Determined not eligible (date _____)
Nomination not requested Removed (date _____)

7. **Reason for Request:** to seek landmark status for the honor and for the tax deferral

8. **Is the property income producing?** Yes No

9. **Are any interior spaces being included for designation?** Yes No

10. **Supporting Documentation** (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least two sets of current exterior archival-grade black and white photographic prints (minimum print size 5" x 7") of all facades of the main building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of black and white photos for these features. One set of color slides of these items should also be included. Digital copies are welcome. PHOTOGRAPHS MUST BE LABELED IN PENCIL OR ARCHIVAL-APPROVED PHOTO PEN ON THE BACK WITH NAME OF STRUCTURE, ADDRESS, AND DATE. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17".

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey & Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office at 919/733-6545 or <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Date Received: 8/2/06 Received by RTB



BB&T Building
333 Fayetteville Street
Raleigh

**Application to the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission
for Designation as a Local Historic Landmark**

**Prepared by M. Ruth Little, Longleaf Historic Resources
Aug. 1, 2006**

Architectural Description

The Branch Banking & Trust Building, 333 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, was designed in 1963 by the New York firm Emery Roth & Sons, in association with Raleigh architects Holloway & Reeves and G. Milton Small. The fifteen-story steel frame office building, completed in 1965, is an extremely fine and an extremely well-preserved example of the International Style as developed ca. 1950 by Mies van der Rohe. Situated on a narrow 56 x by 210-foot corner lot at the northeast intersection of Fayetteville and Davie Streets, the narrow, three bay wide tower stretches twelve bays to the rear to S. Wilmington Street. The building faces west to Fayetteville Street, and sits diagonally opposite the Sir Walter Hotel. The north elevation abuts the former Hudson-Belk Department Store (now The Hudson condominium building). A short distance to the north, across Fayetteville Street, stands the Wake County Courthouse.

The BB&T Building is an elegant expression of the International Style. The steel and reinforced concrete frame of the office tower is expressed on the exterior as a balanced grid of verticals and horizontals, yet the aluminum mullions superimposed on top of the curtain wall from the third floor to the roof create a pronounced verticality that emphasizes its slenderness. Key to the building's elegance is the treatment of the first two floors as an open steel arcade, an illusion created by the recession of the first floor curtain wall and by the smoothness of the second floor curtain wall.

The lower two floors of the building are finished with luxurious materials. The building is supported on steel stilts, sheathed in black granite, that extend through the first two stories. The horizontal floor and ceiling slab levels are sheathed in the same granite. Inside the grid are fully glazed curtain walls. The curtain walls of the first floor are recessed beneath the second floor on the west and south sides so that the stilts are free-standing. This creates a narrow covered plaza around the front and south side. At the base of the curtain wall is a dado of Mount Airy granite. Aluminum frames hold the window panes. Each bay of the first floor has three window panes; each bay of the second has two. The main entrance, facing Fayetteville Street, consists of two pairs of plate glass doors. Above the doors is a shallow marquee bearing the sign "Capital Bank Plaza." (Tall stainless steel numerals "333" were originally located above the entrance.) A secondary entrance in the south elevation on East Davie Street has two sets of steps rising to a recessed pair of single doors that enter the lobby opposite the elevators. One additional door is located in the front elevation in the northernmost bay. The topography slopes gradually downhill to the rear of the building. The original drive-through banking area occupies the street level at the south rear corner, extending through four bays of the side elevation and two bays of the rear elevation. The northern rear bay contains a loading dock with a metal door. The BB&T Building extends its shallow plaza out into the public sidewalk area by means of gray tinted concrete bands that correspond with the black granite stilts. This sidewalk banding is barely visible at street level, but in Fig. 1, the aerial photo, it creates a pronounced pattern, like a terrace extending around three sides.

The main section of the building, from the third to the fifteenth floor, has a reinforced concrete frame. The framework has the same expression of horizontals and verticals as the first two floors, but is covered in dark aluminum rather than black granite. Each bay has a glazed curtain wall of gray plate glass. Superimposed on top of the grid frame are vertical extruded aluminum mullions that somewhat mimic the shape of Mies van der Rohe's famous steel I-beams used as mullions on his Seagram Building in New York City of 1954-1958. The mullions divide each curtain wall into four sections. At the top of the south elevation is a large sign bearing the name "Capital Bank."

The exterior of the BB&T Building is remarkably intact, and is being nominated for designation as a local historic landmark. The only changes are the replacement of revolving doors with swinging doors and the signage. The "333" over the front revolving door and the large "BB&T" on the south side of the mechanical tower have been removed.

The original blueprints for the BB&T Building, in the collection of the current owners, number 21 pages, including elevations, floor plans, and diagrams of building details. An additional sixteen sheets detail the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, which were quite intricate for a building of this size, containing 170,000 square feet. Rentable space equals approximately 145,000 square feet.

The interior of the first two floors retains its basic spatial configuration, but the access and finishes have been altered for the requirements of different tenants. On the

interior, a large lobby occupies the front half of the first floor. The lobby ceiling is two levels high, with a balcony extending around the second floor (mezzanine level). At the rear of the first floor on the north side is a wall of four elevators with brushed chrome doors. Behind the elevator area is the banking room of Capital Bank. The lobby originally featured an up and a down escalator that rose from the center of the space up to the mezzanine. The escalators have been removed, and a gleaming marble and terrazzo floor, paneled walls, and glass balcony railing, designed by local architects Hager-Smith, was installed in the lobby in 1998.

The mezzanine level is taller than the first floor. It originally served as a large open banking room designed by G. Milton Small. The mezzanine ceiling is deeply coffered. This level has been completely reworked as well. On the front side of the mezzanine level two conference rooms with clear glass walls overlook Fayetteville Street. Behind the elevator area, the space has been divided into office suites reached by a center hallway.

Above the mezzanine, the twelve office floors have differing configurations depending on the size of the suites occupied by different tenants. Nearly all floors have a short hallway extending from the elevator area. Ceilings are a low, uniform height from floor 3 to the top office floor 14 (there is no 13th floor). The top floor, the 15th floor, contains mechanical equipment and is differentiated on the exterior by continuous louvered panels around the perimeter.

The interior does not retain its architectural integrity because it has been remodeled, leaving no original visible fabric. Portions of the office floors were rehabilitated in 1993-1994, and the first floor and mezzanine balcony area were remodeled in 1998. The interior is not being nominated for designation as a local historic landmark.

Historical Background

Branch Banking & Trust Corporation (BB&T) was founded in Wilson, N. C. in 1872 by Alpheus Branch and Thomas Jefferson Hadley. By 1959, under the energetic leadership of president J. E. Paschall, the bank had branches throughout eastern North Carolina, and applied to the State Banking Commission to open a branch in Raleigh. Their first Raleigh office was located in the Professional Building at the corner of S. McDowell and W. Hargett streets.¹ In 1961 the bank purchased the site of the old City Hall at the northeast corner of Fayetteville and Davie streets from Hudson-Belk Company. (The city hall had been destroyed by fire.) The lot measured approximately 58 feet by 210 feet.² In 1961, the *News and Observer* announced the bank's plans to build a six-story, \$1 million building on the new site. The new building was to become the home office of the bank, which had been in Wilson since its establishment. The site of the new bank was purchased from the Hudson-Belk Company, reportedly for more than \$250,000. The article included a photograph of J. E. Paschall and Karl Hudson Jr., manager of Hudson-Belk Department Store, standing on the site. BB&T's Raleigh board of directors

¹ "Wilson Banking Firm Seeks Raleigh Branch," *The News and Observer*, June 26, 1959; 1960 Raleigh city directory.

² Wake County Deed Book 1562, 316. (Dec. 29, 1961)

included Clifton Benson, owner of Carolina Builders, the largest building supply company in Raleigh; James E. Briggs, owner of Briggs Hardware, located on Fayetteville Street; and Alfred Williams III, owner of a large office supply business.³

In the process of planning the new BB&T headquarters, the bank's ambitions grew. In 1963 the bank sold the property to a partnership named 333 Fayetteville Street Associates so that the partnership could construct the building and BB&T would become the major tenant.⁴ The partnership, composed of Albert G. McCarthy Jr., Albert G. McCarthy III, and Warren G. Carson, hired the New York City architectural firm of Emery Roth & Sons, who had just finished the Pan Am Building in Manhattan, to design the BB&T Building.⁵ Emery Roth & Sons designed the most buildings of any architect in Manhattan. Among the New York City skyscrapers they designed in the 1950s and 1960s are the Penn Center, Getty Oil Building, Lorillard Building, Mutual of America Building, Hanover Bank Building, and the MetLife Building.⁶ Richard Roth was the actual designer, with local architects Holloway and Reeves as associate architects. The slender shape, black coloration, and open floor level of the BB&T Building recalls the much-taller Seagram Building of 1957, one of Mies van der Rohe's most admired skyscrapers. BB&T's bank lobby, which occupied the entire mezzanine level, was designed by Raleigh architect G. Milton Small, a student of Mies. When Governor Terry Sanford broke ground for the \$5 million, 15-story Branch Banking and Trust building in the fall of 1963, he declared that that the modern glass-and-steel building was a symbol "of the

³ "Bank Plans to Build on Old City Hall Site," *The News and Observer*, July 30, 1961. Wake County Deed Book 1486, 292 (Dec. 29, 1961).

⁴ Wake County Deed Book 1562, 316.

⁵ De Miranda, "Fayetteville Street Historic District Study List Application," 13.

⁶ Emery Roth & Sons Architects, list of buildings at <http://www.emporis.com/en/cd/cm/?id=100906>.

progress of the capital city.”⁷ By mid-summer of 1964 the building had reached fourteen floors, the tallest in Raleigh, and was completed in early 1965.⁸ The banking lobby occupied the entire second floor, with additional spaces leased in additional floors. The large BB&T sign placed on the side of the mechanical equipment section on top of the south side was “visible for miles around.”⁹ People still recall driving into Raleigh on Highway 401 and Highway 70 from the south in the 1960s and 1970s and seeing the sign as they neared the city.

As the tallest building on Fayetteville Street, BB & T became a symbol of Raleigh’s progressive economy. The sophisticated black marble skyscraper captured public attention. Owner Albert McCarthy Jr., a New York real estate entrepreneur with residences in six other cities in the United States and Europe, constructed an apartment for himself on the north side of the top floor of the BB&T building. He stayed in the apartment while in Raleigh on business. A feature story in the 1965 *News and Observer* described the mixture of Scandinavian furniture and antiques collected from around the world that made up the apartment’s décor. The floor covering was “a continuous sweep of deep pile wall-to-wall carpet in rich honeyed beige.” “An enormous living room is divided into areas by furniture arrangement and is surrounded on two sides by large windows overlooking the city.” Among the furnishings was an Eames chair.¹⁰

⁷ Vickers, *Raleigh, City of Oaks*, 128.

⁸ “Then There’s High-Rise Banking,” *The News and Observer*, July 25, 1964.

⁹ *A History of BB&T Corporation*, 1999, 84; “Then There’s High-Rise Banking,” *The News and Observer*, July 25, 1964.

¹⁰ Marion Gregory, “Businessman ‘At Home’ 14 Floors Above Raleigh,” *The News and Observer*, June 10, 1965.

Throughout the latter 1960s the building remained a symbol of Raleigh's success. The bank erected a tall Christmas tree in its lobby each Christmas season. In November 1967 Albert McCarthy Jr. and his son, Albert McCarthy III, threw a lavish Christmas tree lighting party at which Gov. Dan Moore lit the fifty-foot tree set up on the lower lobby and soaring into the mezzanine. Raleigh's movers and shakers dined on a lavish buffet with a memorable ice sculpture. "A huge ice carving of the Branch Bank Building amazingly accurate in detail was topped with a little Christmas tree fashioned of fresh strawberries."¹¹

The building has had four or five owners since its construction. Numerous tenants have occupied the office building over the years, including the Wake County court system, which used several floors between 1968 and 1970 as the new courthouse was under construction. One of the longest tenants is the law firm of Russell Dement, which has leased space in the building for twenty years. BB&T moved out of the building in 1995. In 1998 the ground floor lobby was remodeled for a new tenant, the Equitable Fund. Present owners Don Carter and Bobby Lewis purchased the BB&T Building in 2004 from Modern Continental, a contracting company.¹²

Architecture Context: International Style skyscrapers in North Carolina 1945-1965

The first glass skyscrapers in the United States, all built around 1950, were Mies van der Rohe's 860 Lake Shore Apartments, Chicago, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's

¹¹ Lucy Coulbourn, "It Was a Smash of a Tree Lighting Party," *The Raleigh Times*, Nov. 16, 1967.

¹² Don Carter and Bobby Lewis, interview by Ruth Little, Dec. 6, 2005.

Lever House, New York City, Pietro Belluschi's Equitable Building in Portland, and the United Nations Secretariat in New York City by an international team of architects.¹³ All of these were designed in the International Style which utilized the steel and glass structure of the buildings as the exterior architecture, rather than concealing the framework beneath a veneer of ornament. International Style steel frame buildings came in Raleigh in 1950 with the construction of the four-story Wake County Office Building, designed by G. Milton Small, located on S. Salisbury Street (demolished). But not until 1960 did the high-rise International Style building—the glass skyscraper—of the type that had been built in large cities since about 1950, arrive in Raleigh.

The statewide context of the glass skyscraper that follows is drawn from Cynthia de Miranda's 2004 Study List Application for the Fayetteville Street Historic District. In North Carolina, the first glass skyscrapers were built by banks in the downtown commercial core as real estate ventures that reflected the larger spatial requirements of the modern banking industry, symbolized the modern corporate bank image, and contained floors of space rentable to tenants. The earliest examples were built in Charlotte. The fifteen-story tower for Wachovia Bank was built at 129 Trade Street in 1958 from a design by New York architects Harrison & Abramovitz, in association with local architect A. G. Odell. The building featured a glass-enclosed first floor, a monolithic concrete curtain wall three stories high, and a top section sheathed with concrete panels alternating with window glass. Its integrity has been weakened by the addition of windows to the concrete middle section and the addition of decorative elements to its original unembellished surface. Two other early Charlotte skyscrapers are

¹³ Jordy, *American Buildings and Their Architects*, 233.

the 1961 North Carolina National Bank at 200 S. Tryon Street, designed by W. W. Hook; and the Cutter Building across the street. Both of these have been significantly altered. In 1964 the eighteen-story Northwestern Bank Building (now the BB&T Building) rose in Asheville from 1964-1965.

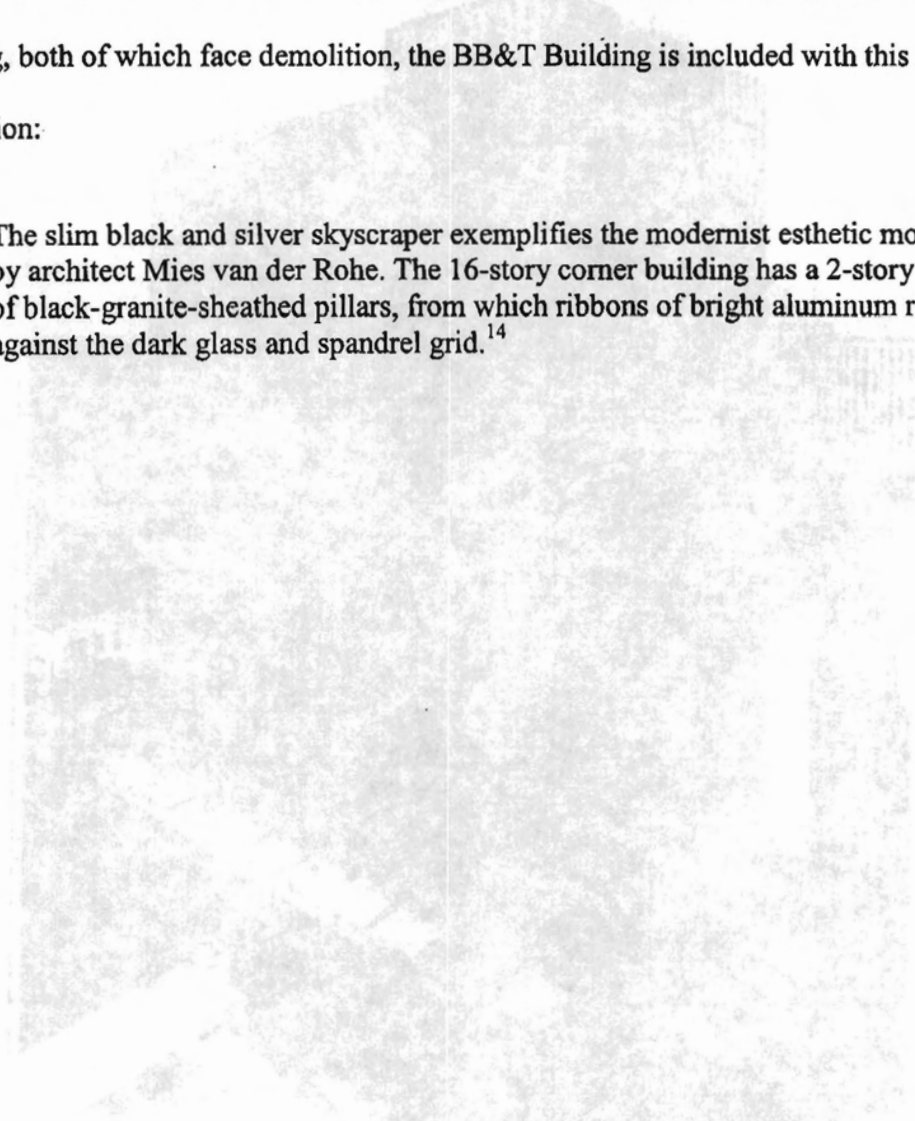
The first such building in Raleigh is the First Federal Bank Building on Salisbury Street, built in 1960 from a design by Howard Musick of St. Louis. The five-story building's glass curtain wall featured spandrels in varying shades of blue that injected a playful modernism into the business district. Three more banks erected high-rise modern buildings along Fayetteville Street that opened in 1965: Wachovia, North Carolina National Bank, and BB & T.

Although Charlotte was the first city in the state to boast a glass skyscraper, the oldest one that retains exterior integrity is the First Federal Building in Raleigh. However it is scheduled for demolition in the near future. The next intact examples are the three Modernist banks on Fayetteville Street in Raleigh and the Northwestern Bank Building in Asheville. Although none of these is yet fifty years old, they have exceptional architectural significance as the oldest generally unaltered North Carolina examples of the International Style that symbolized American corporate architecture in the mid-twentieth century.

The BBT Building remained Raleigh's tallest structure until the construction of One and Two Hannover Square in the 1980s. Yet it remains the most pristine International Style office tower in Raleigh and has exceptional significance as the

premier symbol of Raleigh's mid-twentieth century economic progress. Only three mid-twentieth century commercial buildings in Raleigh are included in *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*, the region's foremost catalogue of significant architecture. In addition to the First Federal Bank and the Sir Walter Chevrolet Building, both of which face demolition, the BB&T Building is included with this lyrical description:

The slim black and silver skyscraper exemplifies the modernist esthetic modeled by architect Mies van der Rohe. The 16-story corner building has a 2-story base of black-granite-sheathed pillars, from which ribbons of bright aluminum rise against the dark glass and spandrel grid.¹⁴



¹⁴ Bishir and Southern, *The Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*, 113.

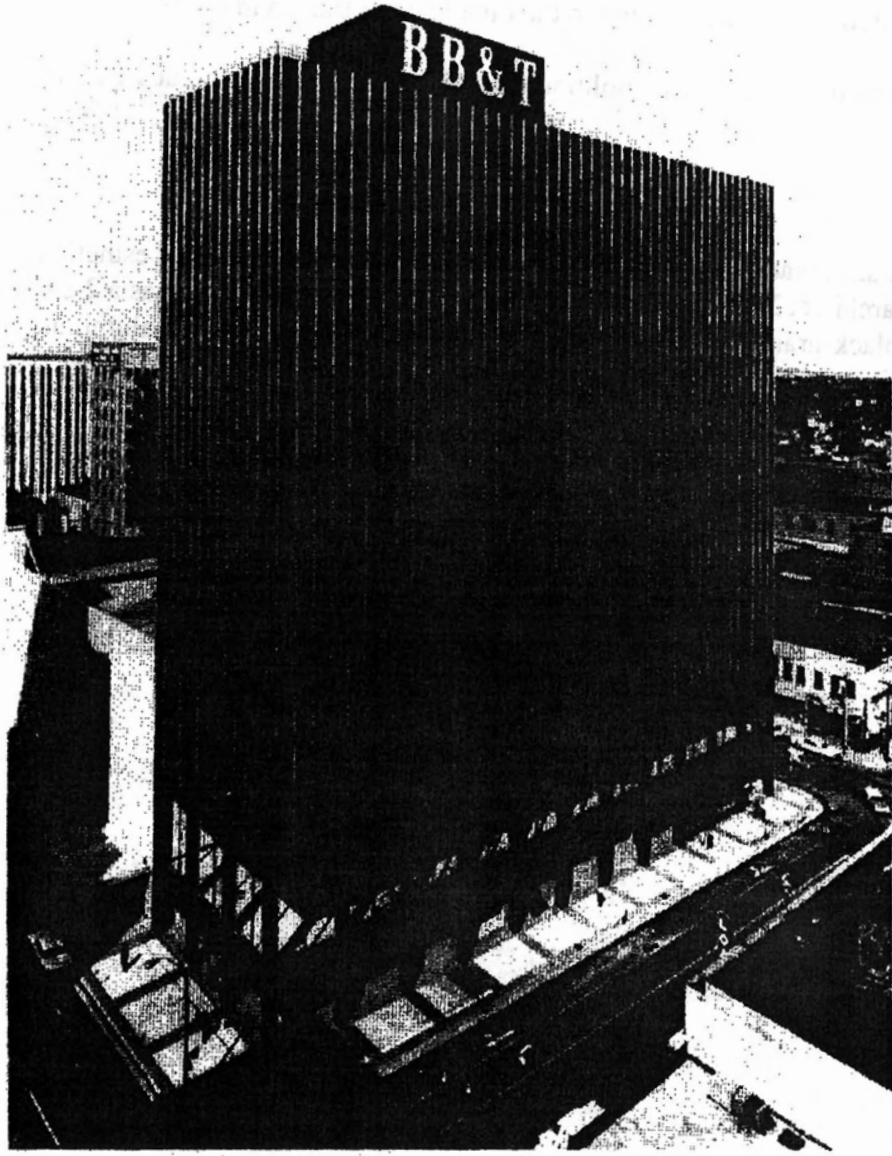


Fig. 1. Documentary photo of the BB&T Building, ca. 1965. Collection of current owners Don Carter and Bobby Lewis.

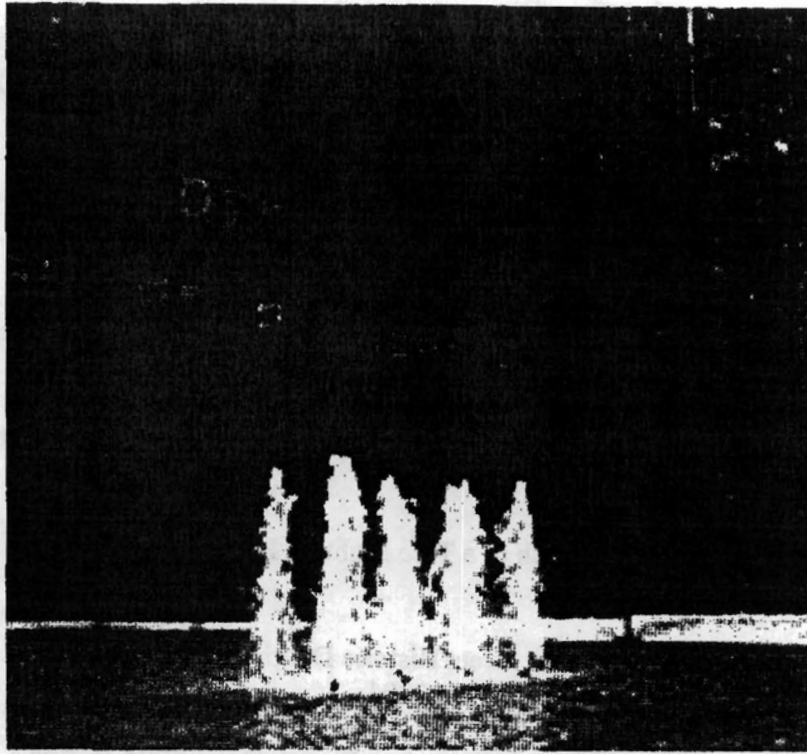
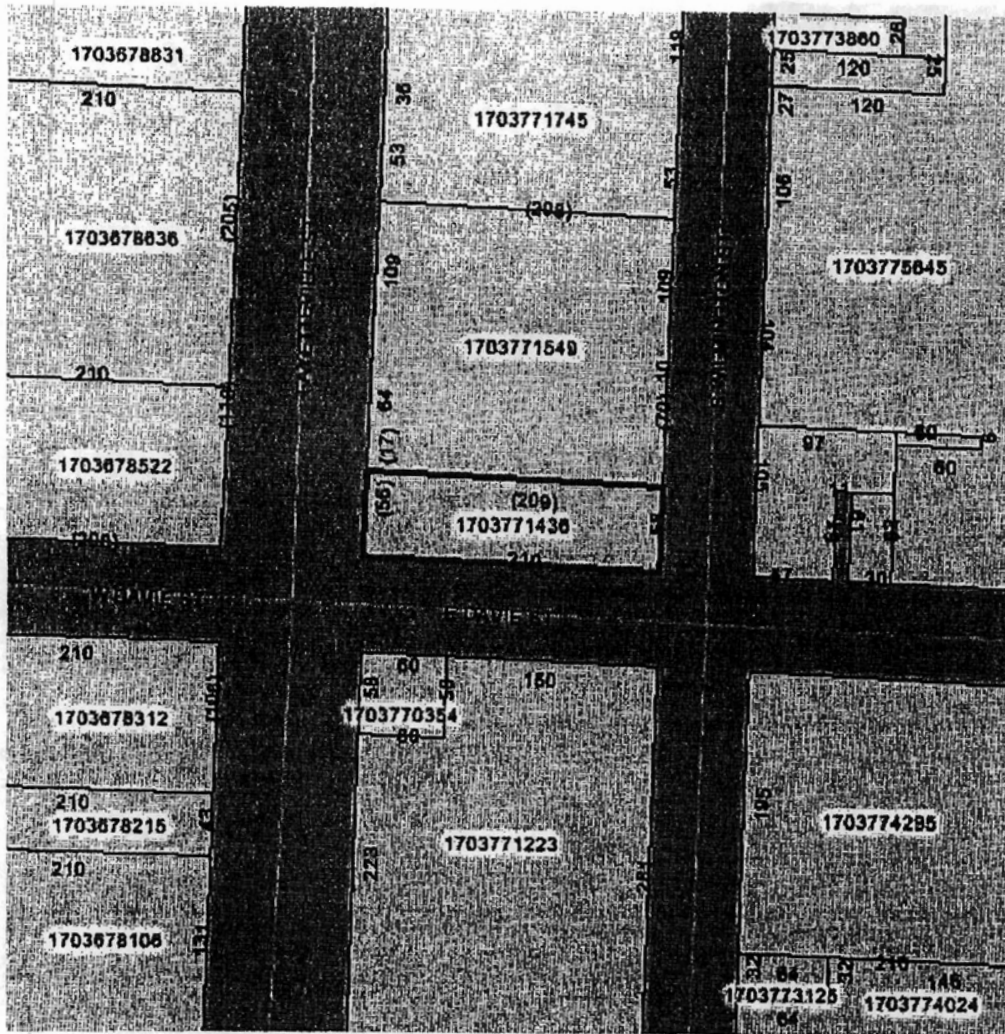


Fig. 2. Seagram Building. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (and Philip Johnson) 1957. New York City.

This logical and elegant 38-story skyscraper (525' H) has alternating horizontal bands of bronze plating and bronze-tinted glass and decorative bronze I-beams which emphasize its verticality. Placed to the rear of its site and set back from Park Avenue, it incorporates a large plaza in the front as part of the design--thus avoiding the need for set-backs. It uses granite pillars at the base and has a two-story glass-enclosed lobby. [www.GreatBuildings.com]

Bibliography

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- Vickers, *Raleigh, City of Oaks*.
- Wake County Deeds. Wake County Register of Deeds Office.
- Web site for the Seagram Building. www.GreatBuildings.com.



Branch Banking & Trust Building. 333 Fayetteville St. Raleigh.

Wake County GIS Map Tax Pin No. 1703771436



Fig. 1 (above). BB&T Building in background. View of 200-300 blocks Fayetteville Street. July 2006.



Fig. 2 (at left) BB&T Building, Three-quarter view from northwest. July 2006.



Fig. 3 (above). BB&T Building.
Three-quarter view from southwest.
July 2006.



Fig. 4 (at left). BB&T Building.
Three-quarter view from west.
July 2006.



Fig. 5. BB&T Building. Lower front elevation. July 2006.



Fig. 6. BB&T Building. Entrance lobby. July 2006.



Fig. 7 (above). Detail of front elevation showing black granite base and upper wall surface with mullions



Fig. 8 (at left). Three-quarter view from rear.