

THE MONTAGUE BUILDING (128 Hargett Street)

The Montague Building, located at 128 East Hargett Street, is a basically intact example of an early twentieth century commercial building. The architectural style of the Montague Building is an interesting combination of the practicality of the then emerging commercial style of architecture on the pedestrian level with the restraint of the Neoclassical revival style on the two upper stories. This combination of business practicality with the security of classical forms is probably reflective of the mood of the city in the early 1900s.

The 1914 Sanborn Insurance Map shows the then two-year-old Montague Building in a vivid commercial-residential area around Moore Square. Opposite the south side of the square the new City Market had recently been completed, and opposite the north side, the Tabernacle Baptist Church had been well established. Early in the Montague Building's life it served as the temporary headquarters of the Post Office while its main facility on Fayetteville Street underwent remodeling. A newspaper account from December, 1913, describes the Montague Building as follows: "... the people who look after Uncle Sam's three lines of business here: postoffice (sic), judicial and revenue are in a rented building, the Montague Building, which serves the purpose very well indeed. For one thing, it is a house of many doors and windows. ... The occupants like it and could not have found a better place in the city, as they will tell you in a minute. ... When Uncle Sam moves his folks back into their new and big home the temporary quarters will become stores and places for private business".

The "stores and places for private business" were again called into government service when space in the Montague Building was used to administer W.P.A. programs

in Raleigh; after this agency disbanded, the building again reverted to commercial and office use. The building suffered from the general decline of downtown Raleigh and in late 1975 was condemned by the building inspectors as unsafe and ordered it demolished or repaired. Capital Landmarks, Inc., undertook the repair of the Montague Building, and today plans are being made to put it to a contemporary adaptive use.