

# McDonald's Cafeteria & Mini-Center

2023 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte North Carolina



Anchored by the original location of his McDonald's Cafeteria, one of Charlotte's most important spaces for the African American community during the 1970s, the original Beatties Ford Road mini-center (c. 1971) built by Charlotte native and African American entrepreneur John McDonald also housed several local Black-owned and operated businesses. The restaurant quickly became a West End institution, providing space for community groups to meet and organize grassroots efforts to advance civil rights and social justice. Meanwhile, the mini-center continued to support Black entrepreneurship with reasonable commercial leases in a high-volume area even after the cafeteria moved to a new location in 1981. Business, government, and religious leaders frequently met at the original McDonald's Cafeteria to share a meal and work toward Black advancement and interracial cooperation. A local icon, McDonald's Cafeteria and Mini-Center remains etched in the memory of those who gathered, worked, created, and ate there. Despite replacement of some of its original structural materials with in-kind components, the building retains its original form and Mid-Century Modern design, leaving much of the building virtually unchanged since John McDonald first opened for business.

