

**STAFF REPORT  
for  
JANUARY 2, 2020 HRC MEETING**

**Case #:** COA2020-002  
**Staff:** Michelle M. McCullough

**Applicant:** Melinda Grey, Burchette Sign Company

**LOCATION**

District: N/A  
Street: 424 West Fourth Street  
Building: The Gilmer Building  
Local Historic  
Landmark#: 37

**REQUEST(S)**

- Installation of Signage

**APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

*Forsyth County Design Review Guidelines for Local Historic Landmarks*  
**(Please refer to the applicable sections of the *Guidelines*, as detailed in the staff comments.)**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ELEMENTS**

*Please refer to the information provided with the application.*

**STAFF COMMENTS**

The Gilmer Building is an example of 1920s commercial architecture distinguished by its use of polychromed decorative terra cotta to create an ornate façade of classical and Egyptian influence. The Gilmer Building was designed by Winston-Salem architect Harold Macklin and built for John L. and Powell Gilmer. The Gilmer brothers were prominent business leaders in Winston-Salem involved in a general mercantile business, a chain of eight retail department stores in North Carolina and Virginia, several automobile dealerships, and Camel City Lines (a bus line which later merged with Atlantic Greyhound). After developing this building, the Gilmer brothers sold the structure to Home Builders Company, which defaulted in 1928, but nonetheless managed the building until 1965. Since that time, the building has housed numerous tenants, both retail and office. In fact, since 1925, the building housed over a total of 100 commercial tenants. The Gilmer Building is significant not only because it is associated with the rapid commercial development of downtown Winston-Salem during the city's boom period of the 1920s, but also because it is an impressive example of 1920s commercial architecture distinguished by the use of decorative terra cotta.

**STAFF FINDINGS**

Commission staff finds that the application is not incongruous with the character of the Landmark because:

- 1) The proposed new signage is limited to one sign and the size is a 24" high x 48" wide x 3" thick. The sign has minimal impact on the overall historic character of the Landmark building. (*Signage*, Landmarks Guideline 4)
- 2) The proposed new signage is compatible with the Landmark building and site in terms of style, time period, materials, design, scale, and color. The proposed signage is a blade sign

located on the second pilaster from the corner that is installed 114" above ground. The proposed sign is made of High Density Urethane and will have an aluminum frame. The sign will be CNC grain cut, wood grain background with raised routed V-grooved letters. (*Signage*, Landmarks Guideline 5)

- 3) The proposed new signage is introduced in locations that do not diminish or compromise the historic character of the Landmark building or site. The proposed sign is installed with four, 3/8" x 5" L stainless steel lags into the mortar joints and does not obscure, damage, or conceal significant architectural features or details. (*Signage*, Landmarks Guideline 6)
- 4) The proposed new signage is removable. (*Signage*, Landmarks Guideline 7)

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the preceding findings, staff recommends that the Commission approve COA2020-002 at the Gilmer Building, located at 424 West Fourth Street, Local Historic Landmark #37 (PIN#6835-16-1850.00), with the following conditions:

- 1) The applicant shall receive, prior to commencement of the work, all other required permits or permissions from governmental agencies;
- 2) Commission staff shall review and approve any revisions or deviations to any portion of the as-submitted work, that qualifies as a minor work, prior to commencement of that portion of the project; and
- 3) The applicant shall submit the Certificate of Appropriateness Request for Certification of Completed Work form and photo documentation of the completed project to HRC staff within ten (10) days of its completion.