APPLICATION for HISTORIC DESIGNATION
HISTORIC and ARCHITECTURAL

INFORMATION FORM

1. Name of Property: Historic SOSNIK'S/MORRIS–EARLY COMMERCIAL BLOCK

Common LOEWY BUILDING

2. Owner's Name and Address: TRIAD PROPERTIES GENERAL PARTNERSHIP

1521 Locust Street, Suite 500

Philadelphia, PA 19102

3. Location of Property: 500 West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

4. Amount of Land to be Designated: Less than 1 acre

5. Tax Block: 81, lots 10, 11A (excludes parking lot) Tax Lot: 

ADDITIONAL SHEETS OF PAPER WILL BE NECESSARY FOR DOCUMENTATION ON QUESTIONS 6 THROUGH 13.

6. When was the building erected? For Whom? (If you don't know the exact date, please give a general time frame.) Have there been additions or modifications? If so, describe and give dates.

7. Do you know the names of any of the craftsmen who worked on the building? (i.e., architects, carpenters, contractors, landscape designers, etc.) Do any architect's plans or building accounts exist? Where?

8. Do you have any old photographs of the building? If so, do you know the dates of the photographs?

9. How has the building been passed down through the years, from whom to whom? (i.e., a quick chain of title) If possible, please give some background on each occupant, (i.e., occupations or other interesting facts). List the sources of your information.

10. What was the building's original use, if different from today? Has the building ever been moved? List the sources of your information.

11. What is the significance of this property (Please be specific and to the point). Include a complete list of sources for your information.

City of Winston-Salem

County of Forsyth

Town of Kernersville
8. Do you have any old photographs of the building? If so, do you know the dates?


9. How has the building been passed down through the years?

1. Mrs. William N. Reynolds, owner, 1929; Morris-Early and Sosnik's, tenants.

2. 1949, Sosnik's and Thalhimer's merge; 1958, Thalhimer's expands into entire block.
   (Property was actually owned jointly by First Presbyterian Church and Carter-Hawley-Hale Properties, Inc.)

3. 1984, buildings were developed into office and retail space by a Winston-Salem partnership, Cwood Properties.

4. Loewy building now owned by Triad Properties General Partnership which acquired it in 1986.

10. What was the building's original use, if different from today? Has the building ever been moved?

   It was retail space; no.

11. What is the significance of this property?

The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block is associated with the boom period of the 1920s in Winston-Salem when the tremendous wealth generated by tobacco, textile, and other industries enabled businessmen and others to finance and invest in the construction of downtown buildings. It represents the expansion of the downtown commercial district to the west in the 1920s, as well. The buildings were the work of local prominent architects, Northup and O'Brien, and are two of only seven Art Deco-influenced buildings which remain in downtown Winston-Salem. In addition, the buildings are the only pair of Art Deco structures in the city, and their side-by-side orientation makes them contribute even more strongly to the Fourth Street streetscape. (For a detailed discussion of significance, see Section 8 of the National Register nomination.)

12. Describe the architecture and present condition of the structure.

The Morris-Early building combines both classical elements and Art Deco geometric designs. The brick structure's three-bay facade features terra cotta ornament on the Fourth Street elevation and also on the Poplar St. elevation. All of the three-over-three windows on the Fourth St. facade are outlined in terra cotta cable
molding, and terra cotta panels under each window feature a geometric pattern of concentric squares. Stylized Corinthian pilasters rise from the sidewalk to the parapet of the building on either side of the Fourth St. elevation, and the cornice features stylized urns, wave molding and patera with rosettes. The Morris-Early building had two large display windows on Fourth St. on either side of a recessed entrance door with an arched transom. The base of the display windows was marble, and a granite foundation reached around to the Poplar St. side of the building. The rich contrast of the red brick of the building with the white terra cotta ornament was lost when Thalhimer's painted the Fourth St. facade white.

Not long after the Morris-Early building was constructed, work began on a large commercial building to the east in which Sosnik's clothing store was the major tenant. It is a three-story, limestone-faced structure with nine bays on Fourth St. and ten on Spruce St. The building features low-relief geometrical designs with stylized floral motives and limestone columns between each bay featuring incised parallel lines. Sometime between 1929 and 1949 the building may have been raised from two stories to three. In 1949 the exterior appearance of the building changed when the street level was sheathed in limestone blocks and trimmed in granite. The front entrance was moved to the center of the building, and there were three display windows to the left and two to the right. In the Sosnik's-Thalhimer's effort to "modernize" the storefront, all of the Art Deco ornamentation under the second floor windows was eliminated, and the Fourth Street facade became starkly streamlined. In addition, two of the three display windows on the Spruce St. facade were enclosed. (See National Register nomination for further descriptions.)

13. Is the property listed on the National Register?

Yes.
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COVER • Richard F. Stone
The mural in the Lafayette Department, developed in pastel colors by Artist Jim Patton, was the inspiration for a refreshing color scheme of pale green and pink with grey. The chairs, by P. Nathan & Sons, are upholstered with two fabrics, front and back, from P. Schumacher & Co. The cases with scalloped frames are noteworthy, as is the glass-topped serving table with accompanying chairs, by J. C. Furniture Co., covered with a multicolored striped fabric from P. Schumacher & Co.

One of the most interesting decorative features of the Teens' and Children's Shoes Department is the mural painted by Jim Patton in colors from the Harlequin fabric by P. Schumacher & Co. The furniture is by J. C. Furniture Co., the chairs from Lehigh Furniture Co., and the bench by Mathis Furniture.
BACKGROUNDs FOR COMMERCE
Raymond Loewy Associates Design for the South

The determining factor in evaluating a designer's services in a department store is not merely in architectural background, nor the furnishings combined with it, nor a dramatic color scheme, but rather a coordination of all these factors.

The interior designer wields an important power in business today, a fact of which the progressive department store owner is fully cognizant. For big areas enriched and deftly executed under the clever hand of an interior designer provide the impetus for increased business. The interior designer indirectly increases sales through his power to create the background and supply the furnishings of stores that make an immediate and favorable impression upon smart shoppers who want to go to and be seen in the latest, smartest and most complimentary interior.

Indeed in designing a store the interior designer is not only called upon to ply the various techniques of the profession, but he is expected to be a psychologist, a psycho-analyst and an efficiency expert as well. For the interiors of the store not only have the immediate and direct effect upon the customers, but they even contribute to the civic development of the city in which the store is located. Their proper functioning not only assures the success or failure of the store itself but the development of the entire community.

This observation is apparent in the fact that many department stores tend to emphasize in their design and arrangement the aims and character of the community they serve. The Somik-Thalhimer Department Store, a high quality women's shop in Winston-Salem, is such a store, combining gracefully all the aforementioned qualities yet representing a new departure in store design. Its services are addressed to the more affluent customers in this rich tobacco country and for thirty-five years it has been identified in serving not only North Carolina but the three neighboring states as well.
Drama is conferred upon the Better Selling Shop, by a mural by Artist Jim Patton. The flanking marbled columns are from Lavezzo, and all furniture is upholstered in rich fabrics by Jofa.

Below, one of the display platforms with its unobstructed view of hanging clothes in rear cabinets; the draperies of crinkly taffeta are by Jofa, and the floor is pink and white marble set on a black base to make it appear floating in air.

Recently a modernization and expansion program was undertaken by the store in order to gain much-needed additional space. Two floors of the old building were modernized and an adjoining property was acquired. Then the entire facade of both was changed, uniting the two buildings into a single attractive department store of the latest and most modern design that marks a milestone in the development of local department stores.

For the creation of this important new outlet, Raymond Loewy Associates, New York, specialists in many phases of design, has integrated the intimate charm and chic of specialized shops into an efficiently regulated whole, designed to serve a thoroughly modern clientele with complete satisfaction.

This firm was well aware that department store interiors offer special problems for the designer, arising mainly from conditions of occupancy, since a store is a distributing center between the public and a trained staff. The more quickly and simply this distribution is accomplished, the better its chief function is served. Traffic areas therefore were a primary consideration, since only when they are properly planned is the utmost efficiency attained.

Closely allied with the plan and layout of fixtures in the store is the color scheme. True harmony is achieved only when architecture and the decorative scheme are perfectly coordinated, and in this the designers have suc-
A plan of the second floor, embodying the "store-within-a-store" idea shows the newest developments in layout and traffic aisles for customers that make for more comfort and convenience.

The Men's Department is characterized by an unusual color scheme, effective lighting, and specially designed furniture by J. C. Furniture Co. Selling tables are important features.

A circular pouf and French Provincial armchairs, made by Affino-Weiland and upholstered in quilted taffeta from Stroheim & Romann, contribute a yellow note in the Sportswear Dept.
Through a wide doorway set in a glass wall curtained by a casement fabric of palest blue by Seymour Fabrics, one glimpses the Bridal Shop with its furniture by J. C. Furniture Co. The chairs are upholstered in a blue satin, and the graceful little tufted banquettes are covered in a soft metallic blue-and-white striped fabric, all J. H. Tharp & Co.

The view of the Bridal Shop, right, looks out into the attractive Accessories Shop. The simply furnished room, developed in a symphony of blues, is a perfect background for bridal weary. The beautiful painted desk is by Upholstery Craft, desk chair is upholstered in a blue velvet fabric by Jofa.
Complete table settings arranged on beautiful tables are a regular feature of the Silverware Department. The chandelier was especially designed by Raymond Loewy Associates and executed by Charles J. Winston & Co.

ceeded most admirably. Style was another important consideration, and in deciding upon the elimination of the stark, cold phases of modern and concentrating upon a scheme of Louis XV and mellow eighteenth-century Italian, combined with the more pleasing and friendly phases of modern, a style was evolved that has won acclaim from the clients and their customers alike. With this fresh rendering of modern the designers have combined the more familiar decorative mediums, such as glass, mirror, plaster and wood, in unusual ways. Each individual room has been designed as an appropriate a simple background enlivened by specially designed display tables and cabinets, providing a restful atmosphere. Here, as elsewhere throughout the store, the effect is a psychological one, the eye being drawn to the display setting for the merchandise displayed, yet the transition from one to the other is entirely harmonious.

Throughout the entire store the latest air-conditioning system is used, and the all-important lighting is both decorative and efficient, thanks to the foresight of the specialists on the Raymond Loewy Associates’ staff.

The spacious new main floor accommodates the Men’s Shop, an Underwear and Nightgown Department, a Silverware Department, an Accessories Department and a Gift Department, selling mostly linens.

The Men’s Shop, entered directly from the street, is one of the first sections to be seen in the new part of the store. It has been developed in the modern manner, with several interesting features that have resulted in

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The principal decorative feature of the Millinery Shop is a superb seventeenth-century French door in white antique wood. Fitting tables are inviting with their displays, sparkling mirrors and comfortable chairs upholstered with grey fabric shot with gold threads, by Greiff.

The furniture, including center fitting tables with Plasdecor tops, in a printed organdy pattern, is by J. C. Furniture Co.
MODERN...with a purpose!

We are particularly proud to present a group of modern living room pieces, newly created by two of the foremost modern designers. This collection is especially noteworthy since it is modern keyed to the needs of today.

May we suggest you come in and see these new pieces soon?

DEPARTMENT STORE, continued from page 51

counters and their merchandise rather than to the details of the room itself. The principal wall has been paneled in dark walnut parquet, the side walls painted deep green, the columns brown for contrast, and the carpet is grey. A dramatic note is contributed to this sober background by a frame suspended from the ceiling at one end, holding a rifle, eagle, cricket bat and semaphore signal flags. The wall cases are oak with pale yellow painted interiors, strip-lighted within and fitted with sliding glass doors. For contrast, the center display and selling tables are oak with green facing and natural light wood legs.

The Undervear and Negligee Department is highlighted by mirrors and by a dramatic mural painted by Artist Jinn Patton, developed in light blue and white, set against pale pink walls. The wall cases here are interior-lighted and framed with antique mirror in wide strips. The carpet is grey, as are the draperies to the stock and fitting rooms. The selling tables and cabinets have pale green tops and natural grey oak legs, and are faced with grey and white paint.

The Silverware Department carries out a style influenced by Colonial Williamsburg, which is reflected in its period architectural detail in a modern setting and the entrance to the shop which is framed with a bleached walnut molding incised with a classic motif. The lighting fixture here is a specially designed Early American chandelier with hurricane shades and prisms. The ceiling is painted blue to complement the grey carpet, and the silver cases and cabinets are a special grey-blue to enhance the display of silver. Additional complete table settings are attractively displayed on fine mahogany tables, as a regular feature of the department. Specially designed silver cases and cabinets set on pedestals contain stock, so that the saleswomen do not have to move to show complete place settings.

A bank of elevators opens directly upon the spacious Dress Salon occupying the greater part of the second floor and housing the smartest styles of the moment. Here a splendid interpretation of modern design has been combined with Louis XV and executed in a restrained manner which enhances but does not detract from the merchandise on display. The Millinery Department is to the right, Shoes to the left, and the shopper is exposed to accessories immediately by attractive cases.

The see-through feeling throughout the store has been maintained in the Salon by the specially designed display platforms flanking the entrance, which are draped in crinkly sateen held by antique brass rosettes. There is an effect of luxury and spaciousness, yet a desirable intimacy is retained. The ceiling is pale pink and the carpet is grey up to the line marking the shop proper, where it changes to cocoa brown.

The stage at the rear of the Salon serves as a permanent display and for fashion shows, a door to the right leading to a series of fitting rooms. Here in the Salon the *demire cpz* in feminine couture is displayed and paraded.

Continued on page 84
by mannequins to the satisfaction of the customer who appreciates a costume displayed ' in the round' as well as a bit of grandeur in her shopping. The handsome antique doors flanking the stage are painted gold and grey, and are seventeenth-century Italian, decorated in the manner of Tiepolo; the valance and draperies of the stage are champagne taffeta, matching the draperies on the columns at the entrance. A trompe l'oeil painting by Jim Patton, at the rear of the stage, gives an effect of depth and additional spaciousness that is reiterated by trilobate mirrors set in French Provincial moldings against the pink walls. The chandelier, an immense one, is satin-gold metal with reflecting bowl to throw light against the ceiling. Massive antique brass sconces have been placed above overscaled commodes holding glass vitrines used for small merchandise, such as jewelry, gloves and handkerchiefs. The comfortable sofas and Louis XV chairs have been arranged in conversational groups that confer an atmosphere of residential living and character to the room, the sofas upholstered in blue-green velvet, the chairs in colorful brocades.

To the right of the Dining Salon is the Millinery Shop, with pink walls and grey carpet. The principal decorative item here is a seventeenth-century French door in white antique wood. The fitting tables with natural legs, white trim and Plasdecor tops, have been cleverly combined with display cases set into the walls, resulting in a desirable merchandising feature. All the furniture in the room is of natural oak; the chairs, with brass twisted rope handles on the backs, are covered in grey fabric speckled with gold threads for a bit of dash.

Beyond the Millinery Department is the Corsets and Bra Department. The walls here are pale grey, paler than the rug, and have wall display units framed with antique mirrors and with lighted interiors painted pink. A decorative note is given the room by murals of fans, ribbons and flowers in shades of grey, by Artist Jim Patton. The ceiling is painted pale pink and cove-lighted with fluorescent lighting. The furniture is by J. G. Furniture Co., the chairs upholstered in cotton brocade of a pink, green and white floral pattern by Patterson Fabrics. The handsome display table, surmounted by a

imaginative modern
modern manor
creators & designers
45 west 33rd st.
bryant 9-1897

INTERIOR DESIGN AND DECORATION SEPTEMBER 1930

D. Milch & Son
manufacturers of fine reproductions
and original designs
238 east 49th street
new york 17, n. y.
DEPARTMENT STORE, continued from page 84

glass case made by Garden City Plating Co. and resembling a Louis XV souvenir case, was made by Don Ruseau.

The unique feature of the Bridal Shop, beyond a glass wall adjoining the Millinery Shop, is the interesting fact that no stock is displayed here. The interior conveys the appeal of an attractive reception room in any well-designed home: the walls and door frames are pale blue, and this color is repeated in the luxurious sculptured carpet and the sheer casement fabric over glass. A Louis XVI medallion has been set in a shaped panel above mirrored French doors leading to the fitting rooms and the stock department. The handsome upholstered furniture here, the chairs in blue satin and a tufted sofa upholstered in a blue-and-white striped metallic fabric, accentuate the general air of elegance. At the reception desk is a chair upholstered in blue velvet. This symphony of blues serves as a perfect foil for the bridal white when it is brought out for inspection by the customer.

Adjoining the Dress Salon is the Better Selling Shop, reserved for merchandise in the higher price range, which has been treated as a private dressing room and wardrobe. Informal arrangements of furniture, including a desk and chair and objets d'art and lamps with figurine bases contribute to the general atmosphere of a private house. A large colorful print set in a mirrored frame has been hung above a banquette upholstered and tufted in pale green velvet. The supplementary Louis XV armchairs are upholstered in pale green textured silk. The wall facing the glass screen delineating the entrance is covered entirely with a large mural in the Watteau manner, painted by Artist Jim Patton, which serves as a focal point for the entire floor. The mural is flanked by a pair of seventeenth-century marbledized columns with gold capitals, and by large panels of antique mirror divided into smaller rectangles, to give the mural additional importance.

Located in a section leading from the Dress Salon is the Sportswear Department, a shop of intimate informality and irresistible charm. The ceiling and walls have been panelled in rough-hewn wormy chestnut.
CHARLEY JOHNSTONE
Of Los Angeles
and San Francisco
—and—
RED RODGERS
Of Dallas

... are serving our decorator friends in the far west and gulf coast areas. And doing a magnificent job.

Charles H. Johnstone and Red Rodgers know carpets from the ground up (a logical starting point for carpets).

In their handsome showroom you will find samples of the complete Manges carpet collection—one of America's largest.

You will get on-the-spot service just as you would in Manges New York headquarters.

And you will get a royal reception. They are both swell fellows, easy to know, eager to help you. Note the addresses and plan an early visit to the Manges representative in your area:

In the far west:
CHARLES H. JOHNSTONE
131 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles 36, Cal.
251 Post Street, San Francisco 8, Calif.

In the gulf coast area:
THE RODGERS COMPANY
3017 Fairmount, Dallas 4, Texas

SIMON MANGES & SON
14 East 32nd St. New York 16, N. Y.
Carpet Exclusively To The Decorator

DEPARTMENT STORE, continued from page 96

painted white, and the display cases, built into the walls, are outlined with white moldings and have interior painted yellow that give them the illusion of being handsomely French Provincial armoires. The lighting is derived from strip-lighting concealed in the tops of the display cases and from white plaster sconces fitted with yellow shades. A large circular pouf upholstered in yellow quilted taffeta is located in the center of the room and is supplemented by armchairs upholstered in the same fabric.

The third floor is devoted principally to the younger set, with Teens and Children's Shoes and the Lafayette Department located here. The shoe salon is a large rectangular room, its keynote of décor being a colorful harlequin fabric in chartreuse, beige, white and brown, whose colors are repeated in a mural by Artist Jim Patton. The shoe benches of bleached oak were specially designed for the store, and are fitted with grey carpeting that is most attractive with the beige and green upholstered chairs. The walls are beige, and benches are white with chartreuse tie-on cushions.

The Lafayette Department is an example of what can result from careful attention to details and a refreshing color scheme. This important room with pale pink walls and grey carpet has a series of cases set into the wall that is most interestingly finished with white scalloped borders; the cases themselves are strip-lighted and have interiors painted pale green. Low wing chairs, upholstered and exuding comfort from every angle, are stationed at the bleached oak counters. These chairs are covered with a solid pale green fabric on the inside and pink and green flowered chiffon on the back; other chairs in the room are covered with multicolored stripes.

A scientific lighting arrangement is one of the major considerations in designing a department store. In Sosnik-Thalheimer's the functions of the various departments have determined the kinds of light and the location of the sources, whether direct or indirect. Lighting throughout consists of concealed overhead directed lights and lens-type Holophane fixtures. At some points covers have been used for stronger ceiling light level. Where chandeliers have been installed they act as sparkling decorative features rather than primary light sources, serving to enhance the merchandise and highlight the decorative detail.

Another unusual feature in the design is the feeling of spaciousness which has been obtained. Nowhere is there a crowded or badly proportioned element: each has been combined into a unified whole to serve a separate function in the smooth operation of each department. Through a judicious use of mirrors, lighting, and properly planned traffic lanes, a series of vistas has been created which leads the eye from room to room. The "store-within-a-store" idea pervades throughout, an idea which induces the customer to explore—a subtle method of creating the desire to shop from one room to another, one of the most valuable advances in store design in recent years.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block
and/or common Thalhimer's

2. Location

street & number 500 West Fourth Street not for publication

city, town Winston-Salem vicinity of congressional district

state North Carolina code 037 county Forsyth code 067

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name (1) First Presbyterian Church (2) Carter Hawley Hale Properties, Inc.

street & number (1) 300 N. Cherry Street (2) 550 S. Flower Street

(1) Winston-Salem (2) Los Angeles vicinity of

state (1) North Carolina (2) California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Forsyth County Hall of Justice, Register of Deeds

street & number Main Street

city, town Winston-Salem state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

From Frontier to Factory, An Architectural History of Forsyth County Has this property been determined eligible? yes X no
date 1981

depository for survey records N. C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina
7. Description

The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block occupies the south side of Fourth Street between Spruce Street on the east and Poplar Street on the west. The block is named for the building's first major tenants, and it is located at the western end of Fourth Street, Winston-Salem's main downtown retail thoroughfare. The former Sosnik's clothing store building on the southeast corner of Fourth and Spruce Streets also housed Abram Cohn's jewelers and three other retailers. The Morris-Early Building was occupied only by the Morris-Early Furniture store from 1929-1957. Both buildings were constructed in 1929 as investments for Mrs. William N. Reynolds, the former Kate Bitting. Morris-Early's and Sosnik's were designed by Northup and O'Brien, a prominent Winston-Salem architectural firm.¹

During the building boom of the 1920s in Winston-Salem, four architectural firms were based in Winston-Salem.² Willard C. Northup and Leet O'Brien incorporated as the firm of Northup and O'Brien in 1925. It was an outstanding firm which designed buildings across North Carolina including the Durham Life Insurance Building in Raleigh and the Medical School and Hospital at the University of North Carolina.³ Northup and O'Brien designed the Morris-Early building and the Sosnik's building, both with elements from the popular Art Deco style.⁴ It was the first widely popular style in the United States to break with the tradition of reviving earlier styles of architecture. Art Deco was so named because of the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs and Industriels Modernes which emphasized modernity and machine-age precision and expression in the arts.⁵ In America many of the design motifs used in Art Deco styles were taken from Indian art, and parallel straight lines, zigzags, chevrons and floral motifs were popular. In Winston-Salem, the finest example of Art Deco architecture is Shreve and Lamb's 1929 Reynolds Building, the prototype of the Empire State Building which surely influenced other structures built about the same time in Winston-Salem.

Leet O'Brien's design for the four-story Morris-Early store building constructed in 1929 combined both classical elements and Art Deco geometric designs. The brick structure's three-bay Fourth Street facade featured terra cotta ornament, and the building's Poplar Street facade featured a display window outlined in terra cotta cable molding. All of the three-over-three windows on the Fourth Street facade also were outlined in terra cotta cable molding, and terra cotta panels under each window featured a geometric pattern of concentric squares. Stylized Corinthian pilasters rose from the sidewalk to the parapet of the building.
on either side of the Fourth Street elevation, and the cornice featured stylized urns, wave molding and patera with rosettes. The stylized ornament, wave molding and vertical emphasis of the building were all typical of the Art Deco style. The Morris-Early building had two large display windows on Fourth Street on either side of a recessed entrance door with an arched transom. The base of the display windows was marble, and a granite foundation reached around to the Poplar Street side of the building. The rich contrast of the red brick of the building with the white terra cotta ornament was lost when Thalhimer's painted the Fourth Street facade white, but all of the terra cotta Art Deco features of the exterior remain intact.

Most of the interior of the Morris-Early building was completely changed when Thalhimer's expanded into it in 1958, but the office area at the rear of the first floor remains intact. A staircase with turned balusters and a molded handrail rises to a balcony where the offices of Morris-Early were located. Morris-Early used the first floor to display living room suites, the second floor to display dining room furniture, the third floor to show bedroom suites, and the fourth floor to display kitchen equipment. Sometimes in the 1940s Morris-Early expanded into the store front of the Sosnik's building immediately next to it and used the area to display carpets. An access door was cut through to the Sosnik's building in the first floor, east wall of Morris-Early. Also in the 1940s Shepherd's Art Goods, which had occupied one of the store fronts of the Sosnik's building, was incorporated into the Morris-Early store, and James R. Shepherd became the decorator for the furniture store. In 1957 Morris-Early's liquidated its stock, and in 1958 Thalhimer's expanded into the building.

Not long after the Morris-Early building was constructed, work began on a large commercial building to the east in which Sosnik's clothing store would be the major tenant. This Art Deco commercial building also was commissioned by Mrs. William N. Reynolds and designed by Northup and O'Brien. In addition to Sosnik's retail space, there were four other Fourth Street store fronts in the three-story limestone-faced structure. The Sosnik's part of the building was three stories and consisted of nine bays on Fourth Street and ten bays on Spruce. It featured low-relief geometrical designs with stylized floral motives above the street-level display windows, between the second and third floors, and above the third floor windows to form a parapet around the building. Sosnik's had three display windows on the Spruce Street elevation and four on Fourth Street. Windows in the upper floors of the structure were sash openings with three-over-three panes. The other store fronts in the building featured the stylized floral designs between the display windows and the second-floor windows,
but the areas between the second and third floor windows and between the third floor windows and the roof were smooth-faced limestone panels. Sometime between 1929 and 1949 this portion of the building may have been raised from two stories to three. The original architectural drawings show this part of the building as two stories, but photographs taken in 1949 show three stories. Between each bay of the entire building rose limestone columns featuring incised parallel lines. This vertical emphasis was typical of the Art Deco style.

In 1949 when Sosnik's and Thalhimer's merged, the building at Fourth and Spruce took on a different appearance inside and out. Thalhimer's contracted with Raymond Loewy Associates of New York to remodel the building. William T. Snaith of Raymond Loewy Associates drafted the plan for the renovation with the assistance of Fritz Koch, Thalhimer's architect. Raymond F. Loewy was best-known for his industrial designs, and his work spans the 1920s through the 1970s.

The newly-renovated Sosnik's-Thalhimer's department store took over the entire commercial building up to Morris-Early's furniture store, and the Fourth Street first-story store front was changed in 1949. Frank L. Blum was the local contractor for the renovation and an October 8, 1949 article in the Winston-Salem Journal pictures Blum's workers tearing away the old storefront. The entire street level of the facade was sheathed with limestone blocks and trimmed in granite. The front entrance was moved to the center of the building, and there were three display windows to the left of the entrance and two to the right. In the Sosnik's-Thalhimer's effort to "modernize" the storefront, all of the Art Deco ornamentation under the second floor windows was eliminated, and the Fourth Street facade became starkly streamlined. In addition, two of the three display windows on the Spruce Street facade were enclosed.

The interior of the building also was changed during the 1949 remodeling by Loewy Associates. The elevators were relocated in the rear of the building and an additional 25,000 square feet of selling space was added. In May, 1949, newspaper article, Morris Sosnik stated: "As far as the interior is concerned, it will be completely altered, refurnished and redecorated on all floors . . ." Interior Design magazine of September, 1950, featured the remodeled interior of the building in an article entitled, "Backgrounds for Commerce, Raymond Loewy Associates Design for the South." The article stated that Loewy Associates, "specialists in many phases of design, has integrated the
intimate charm and chic of specialized shops into an efficiently regulated whole . . ."18

On the first floor, William T. Snith of Loewy and Associates designed the Men's Shop, an Underwear and Negligee Department, a Silverware Department, an Accessories Department and a Gift Department. Chandeliers on the main floor were designed by Loewy Associates and executed by Charles J. Winston & Company. They feature hurricane shades and prisms.19  Interior Design stated that " . . . the Silverware Department carries out a style influenced by Colonial Williamsburg, which is reflected in its period architectural detail in a modern setting and the entrance to the shop which is framed with a bleached walnut molding incised with a class motif."

20 The chandeliers remain on the first floor as well as the "period architectural detail" in the Silverware Department.

The second floor carried out a Louis XV decorative theme as a backdrop to a fine dress salon, a millinery department, a foundations department and a bridal salon. A mural by artist Jim Patton of New York was featured in the Better Selling Rooms, now the Bridal Salon.21 Patton did several murals throughout the store, but the second floor painting is the only one which survives. Snith designed a stage in the dress salon for fashion shows and other displays, and, according to Interior Design " . . . the antique doors flanking the stage are painted gold and grey, and were seventeenth-century Italian, decorated in the manner of Tiepolo . . ."22 The stage and doors remain in the Salon, as well as the chandeliers which were described as "satin gold metal."23 The 1949 Bridal Salon, Foundations, and Sportswear Departments have all been remodeled completely since 1949, and the murals which Patton did for these departments have been obliterated.

The third floor was devoted principally to children's clothing and accessories. Patton painted murals in the Lafayette Department and the Shoe Department, but both of these have been obliterated. The recessed display cases which remain in the Lafayette Department feature scalloped borders.

In 1953 Sosnik's-Thalhimer's became solely Thalhimer's as Morris Sosnik retired, and in 1958 Thalhimer's acquired the Morris-Early store on the corner for further expansion.24 An article in the Winston-Salem Sentinel on April 8, 1958, stated that the expansion would cost more than $250,000 and would almost double the selling space in the department store. Almost all of the existing departments in the store were scheduled for expansion, and new departments to be added included a photography studio, a candy department, a gourmet shop, a book department and a stationery and notions department. The first floor of the former Morris-Early building was to be a "new home store where linens, domestics, ready and custom-made
curtains and draperies and a bath and shower shop" were to be located. A beauty salon employing 15 operators was to be installed on the third floor of the former Morris-Early structure. Thalhimer's continues to occupy all three floors of the former Sosnik's Building and four floors of the former Morris-Early structure.
Architectural Footnotes


7 Morris interview.

8 Morris interview.

10. "Heating Stores."

11. Author's interview with Jim Jenkins, Store Planning Department, Thalheimer's Inc., Richmond, Va., (Loewy drawings in possession of Thalheimer's Inc., Richmond, Va.), hereinafter cited as Jenkins interview.


16. Journal, "Longer Name."

17. Sentinel, "Million Dollar Renovation."


25. Sentinel, "$250,000 Expansion."
### 8. Significance

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#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block in Winston-Salem consists of two structures on the south side of Fourth Street between Spruce Street on the east and Poplar Street on the west. The buildings carry the names of their first major tenants. Both the three-story Sosnik's clothing store building and the four-story Morris-Early furniture store building were constructed in 1929, and both were part of Winston-Salem's late 1920s building boom. The Morris-Early building and the Sosnik's building were designed by the firm of Northup and O'Brien and are two of only seven Art Deco-influenced buildings which remain in downtown Winston-Salem. In addition, the buildings are the only pair of Art Deco structures in the city, and their side-by-side orientation makes them contribute even more strongly to the Fourth Street streetscape. Both Sosnik's and Morris-Early's were built as investments by Mrs. William N. Reynolds, the former Kate Bitting. In 1949 Sosnik's expanded and merged with Thalhimer's, and it hired the New York design firm of Raymond Loewy Associates to remodel the building. In 1958 Thalhimer's acquired the Morris-Early building and added 25,000 square feet of retail space to its existing operation. The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block has remained one of the retail anchors on the western end of Winston-Salem's downtown, and the entire block is now occupied by Thalhimer's department store.

#### Criteria Assessment

A. The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block is associated with the boom period of the 1920s in Winston-Salem when the tremendous wealth generated by tobacco, textile, and other industries enabled businessmen and others to finance and invest in the construction of downtown commercial buildings.

B. Both Sosnik's and Morris-Early's embody the distinctive characteristics of Art Deco architecture of the late 1920s, and as a pair they present an impressive block of unified facades on Fourth Street - the principal shopping avenue. The Morris-Early building and Sosnik's were the work of the prominent architectural firm of Northup and O'Brien. In addition, the noted design firm of Raymond Loewy Associates remodeled and expanded Sosnik's in 1949.
During the period from about 1915 to 1930, Winston-Salem was the largest city in North Carolina. This population growth and "era of success" was precipitated by the phenomenal growth of industry in the Twin City and the accompanying wealth which it engendered. For example, on October 19, 1913, the first "modern-type" tobacco blend, known as Camel cigarettes, went into production by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. Camel cigarettes revolutionized the marketing of tobacco and became the number one selling cigarette in America. In addition, concerns such as P. H. Hanes' Knitting Company and Hanes Hosiery Mills also prospered. In 1918 Hanes Hosiery Company converted to the manufacture of women's cotton hosiery which led to the company's becoming one of the largest hosiery manufacturers in the world.

Fueled by commercial successes, expansion of both commercial and residential areas continued unabated until 1930. In 1915 the value of building permits issued was $501,379, but by 1928 a peak of $8,531,028 was attained. Winston-Salem's commercial district experienced a marked change in its buildings' appearance during the 1920s. Motives from Neo-Classical to the modern Art Deco were interpreted in the city's first skyscrapers as well as in many smaller-scale commercial buildings. The competition for the tallest building in Winston-Salem started in 1911 with the construction of the seven-story Wachovia Building, at the corner of Third and Main, and continued with the eight-story O'Hanlon Building in 1915. In 1917 the Wachovia Bank added another story to its building to create a tie with the O'Hanlon Building, but the Hotel Robert E. Lee outdid them all with its twelve stories built in 1921. The contest continued when W. M. Nissen built his office building with eighteen stories in 1926, which was nearly equaled by the eleven-story Carolina Hotel in 1928. All of these "skyscrapers" and most of the smaller commercial buildings constructed during this period, however, were eclectic; they retained design motives from earlier periods of architecture. In 1929, however, the finest in modern design, the Art Deco Reynolds Building won the annual award of the American Institute of Architects, and Shreve and Lamb were then commissioned to design the Empire State Building in New York in 1931.

During the building boom of the 1920s six architects representing four firms considered Winston-Salem their base of operation. Willard C. Northup and Leet A. O'Brien were two of these architects, and the firm of Northup and O'Brien was an outstanding one. It designed buildings across North Carolina including the Durham Life Insurance Building in Raleigh, the Medical School and Hospital at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and a large body
of residential work. Willard Northup (1882-1942) was a native of Michigan and was educated at the University of Pennsylvania. Northup was president of the North Carolina State Board of Architectural Examiners and was a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects. Leet Alexander O'Brien (1891-1963) was a native of Winston-Salem, and attended the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1913 O'Brien joined Northup in his architectural practice, but the firm did not become Northup and O'Brien until 1925. O'Brien served for two terms as president of the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Among the many buildings which Northup and O'Brien designed in Winston-Salem are the City Hall, the Forsyth County Courthouse, the O'Hanlon Building, and the Pepper Building.

In 1929 Kate Bitting Reynolds asked the firm of Northup and O'Brien to design the Morris-Early building and the Sosnik's building in the 500 block of West Fourth Street between Spruce and Poplar Streets. Kate Bitting Reynolds was the daughter of J. A. Bitting of Winston-Salem who was president of the First National Bank and also of Bitting and Hay, tobacco manufacturers. She married William Neal Reynolds on March 6, 1889. Reynolds was the brother of tobacco magnate R. J. Reynolds. In 1918, after the death of his brother, W. N. Reynolds became president of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. He held that position until 1924 at which time he became chairman of the board, remaining in that office until 1931 and then continuing as a director until 1942.

In 1929 Frank B. Morris, J. Harold Early and Early L. Parrish moved their furniture store from its location at 609 N. Liberty Street into the new building on the corner of Fourth and Poplar Streets next to Sosnik's and Cohn's Jewelers. Leet O'Brien designed the four-story structure, and it featured combined geometric Art Deco-style ornament and Neo-Classical elements. The structure was brick; the white terra cotta ornament stood out in marked contrast. The stunning Art Deco architecture of the 1929 Reynolds Building obviously influenced local architecture during this period.

The Morris-Early Company began with a small furniture store at 609 N. Liberty Street in 1927. Frank B. Morris had been general manager of the Huntley-Hill-Stockton furniture store, and J. Harold Early had been the assistant manager. Early was president of the Morris-Early company, E. L. Parrish was vice president, and Frank B. Morris was secretary-treasurer. The firm carried quality furnishings,
and on September 24, 1929 it sponsored a large open house to celebrate the move to its new building on West Fourth Street. Mayor George W. Coan, Jr. took part in the opening ceremonies, as did the American Legion Band. The first floor of the building was filled with living room furniture and the rear was occupied by the firm's offices; the second floor carried dining room furniture; the third floor featured bedroom suites, and the fourth floor displayed kitchen equipment. After several years, Morris-Early expanded into the Sosnik's building next door by opening the common wall between them on the first floor and installing a carpet shop. After thirty successful years in business, the Morris-Early company liquidated its holdings and closed its doors on December 31, 1957.

Soon after the construction of the Morris-Early building, Mrs. Reynolds commissioned Northup and O'Brien to design a second commercial building on the block, with Sosnik's clothing store planned as the major tenant. In 1930 Sosnik's moved into the Art Deco building. The Spruce and Fourth Street facades of Sosnik's featured low relief geometrical designs with stylized floral motives between rows of three-over-three sash windows. In addition, limestone columns rose between each bay carrying incised parallel straight lines, giving the building the vertical emphasis typical of the Art Deco style. Sosnik's was a ladies ready-to-wear store which catered to Winston-Salem's affluent citizens, and it was the major tenant in the new building.

Samuel and Morris Sosnik, brothers-in-law, began their clothing store in March, 1914, at Liberty and Main Streets. In 1930 the firm became Sosnik's and Sosnik's when it moved to 420 N. Liberty Street in Winston-Salem. Samuel Sosnik had come to Winston-Salem from New York around 1911, and Morris Sosnik followed shortly thereafter. Morris Sosnik was born and educated in Pinsk, Russia, and fled that country when he was 21 years old in 1913 to escape impressment into Czar Nicholas' army. He married Miss Lillian Shapiro of Winston-Salem in 1923.

After ten years at their 420 N. Liberty Street location, Sosnik's and Sosnik's moved to its new store at Fourth and Spruce Streets. On September 30, 1930, the store, now known as Sosnik's, invited the public to its formal opening in the new location. According to a newspaper account which appeared the following morning:

An unestimated number of people running into the thousands last night attended the formal opening of Sosnik's new department store at West Fourth and Spruce Streets. An unending line of women, accompanied by a considerable number of men, streamed...
through the long aisles of the edifice . . . 

The novel parking space in the basement was filled with cars to its capacity of seventy-five . . .

The store, owned and operated by Morris and Samuel Sosnik, is said to be one of the finest of its kind in the entire South. Approximately forty-five people will be employed in the store. 28

Sosnik's was very successful in its new location, and in 1949 the store merged with Thalhimer's, Inc., of Richmond, Virginia. The merger represented Thalhimer's first venture outside the state of Virginia since the store's founding in 1842 in Richmond. 29 When Sosnik's and Thalhimer's merged, the store added more than 25,000 square feet of selling space by encompassing areas of the building formerly occupied by Cohn's Jewelry Store, the American Red Cross office, International Business Machine Corporation, and Associated Electronics. 30 The business operated as Sosnik's-Thalhimer's until 1953, when Morris Sosnik retired and the store became solely Thalhimer's. 31

When Thalhimer's came to Winston-Salem, it commissioned the famed New York design firm of Raymond F. Loewy Associates to remodel the store in 1949. 32 Loewy is best-known for his industrial designs, and his work spans the 1920s through the 1970s. He was born in France in 1893 and came to New York in 1919. He was trained in France as an engineer, but when he arrived in New York he began his American career as a fashion illustrator. In 1929 Sigmund Gestetner, a British mimeograph manufacturer, asked Loewy to design a new machine for him, and based on the new design, sales skyrocketed. This launched Loewy into an industrial design career during which he designed items such as automobiles, radios, television sets, household appliances, toothpaste tubes, buses, oceanliners, furniture, office equipment and space stations. He designed countless logos for stores and businesses such as Neiman-Marcus, and his clients included Coca-Cola (for which he designed the Coca-Cola bottle), American Tobacco (for which he designed the Lucky Strike cigarette package), and Shell Oil (for which he designed the shell logo). 33 William T. Snaiith of Loewy's firm was retained to draft the remodeling plans for Thalhimer's, and Fritz Koch, Thalhimer's architect, also assisted in the work. Edgar J. Mandel of the New York firm of Edward E. Ashley was the consulting engineer, and H. E. Glave, director of operations for Thalhimer's, also helped to carry out the remodeling effort. 34

Raymond Loewy Associates' interior design for the Winston-Salem Thalhimer's was featured in Interior Design magazine in
September, 1950. The article observed:

. . . that many department stores tend to emphasize in their design and arrangement the aims and character of the community they serve. The Sosnik-Thalhimer Department Store, a high quality women's shop in Winston-Salem, is such a store, combining gracefully all the aforementioned qualities yet representing a new departure in store design. Its services are addressed to the more affluent customers in this rich tobacco country . . .

Style was another important consideration, and in deciding upon the elimination of the stark, cold phases of modern and concentrating upon a scheme of Louis XV and mellow eighteenth-century Italian, combined with the more pleasing and friendly phases of modern, a style was evoked that has won acclaim from the clients and their customers alike.35

Artist Jim Patton painted murals throughout the store, and Loewy Associates designed chandeliers especially for the first floor main area and the silverware department.36 The silverware department remains intact and the three first floor chandeliers with hurricane globes and prisms remain. The only mural by Patton which remains is in the present Bridal Salon, formerly the Better Selling Rooms. Most of the Louis XV and Italian decor remains on the second floor, but the scalloped-frame recessed display cases on the third floor are all that remain of Loewy Associates' design on that floor.

The exterior of the building also was remodeled by Loewy Associates. A new first-story front along Fourth Street covered the original details of the building up to the sills of the second floor windows and changed the main entrance. The new facade turned the corner at Spruce Street, and two of the original display windows were enclosed.

The 1949 remodeling of Sosnik's-Thalhimer's did not affect the Morris-Early Building, but in 1958 Thalhimer's purchased the structure with the intention of adding 25,000 square feet of retail space to the existing store.37 Except for the office area on the first floor, the interior of the Morris-Early Building was completely changed, and the exterior was painted a neutral color to blend in with the limestone exterior of the former Sosnik's building. Thalhimer's continues to occupy the entire block of commercial buildings.
The pair of Art Deco structures now occupied by Thalhimer's contributes strongly to the architectural character of Winston-Salem's downtown, particularly as reminders of the modernism and exuberance of the late 1920s. In addition, the buildings' significance is heightened by the fact that they were designed by the outstanding firm of Northup and O'Brien during a period of Winston-Salem's history when building and business were at a pinnacle of success. Although no studies exist on the subject, it is quite possible that Winston-Salem's downtown contains some of North Carolina's most outstanding early twentieth century commercial architecture, and the renovation of the Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block will help to maintain the city's reputation in the preservation and appreciation of art and architecture.
Significance Statement

Footnotes

1. Winston-Salem City Directories (Asheville: Commercial Service Company) 1928, 1929, 1930, hereinafter cited as City Directory with appropriate date; author's interviews with Mrs. Lillian Sosnik (notes from interviews in possession of author), hereinafter cited as Sosnik interviews; author's interview with Frank B. Morris (notes on interview in possession of author), hereinafter cited as Morris interview.


3. Sosnik interviews; Morris interview; Winston-Salem Sentinel, "Local Store Gains Control of City Block," April 1, 1950; Forsyth County Register of Deeds, Deed Book 261, p. 278.

4. Author's interview with Jim Jenkins, Store Planning Department, Thalhimer's, Inc., Richmond, Va., (Loewy drawings in possession of Thalhimer's Inc., Richmond, Va.), hereinafter cited as Jenkins interview.


9 Tise, Building, 41, as cited in Taylor, From Frontier to Factory, 58.
10 Tise, Building, 36, as cited in Taylor, From Frontier to Factory, 48.
12 AIA, Guidebook, 184.
13 AIA, Guidebook, 185.
14 Morris-Early rendering; archival records, Newman, Calloway, Johnson, Winfree.
17 Morris interview; City Directories, 1928, 1929, 1930.
18 Morris-Early rendering; Morris interview.
19 Morris interview.
20 Morris interview; City Directories 1929, 1930.
22 Journal, "Morris-Early Store;" Morris interview.
26. Sosnik interview.

27. Journal, "Morris Sosnik Dies."


29. Authors interview with Sherwood Michael, Vice President for Stores, Thalhimer's, Inc., Richmond, Va., notes on interview in possession of author.


32. Jenkins interview.


34. Sentinel, "Million Dollar Renovation."


36. Interior Design, "Backgrounds for Commerce."