APPLICATION
LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

1. Name of property    John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House
                        Winmor (name given by current owner)

2. Owner’s Name & Address
    Richard W. Sickles
    605 West Cascade Avenue
    Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27127

3. Property Location
    605 West Cascade Avenue
    Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27127

4. Amount of Land To Be Designated (acreage)
    3.32 acres

5. Interior To Be Designated
    ______ X ______ Yes ______ No

6. Tax Block(s) 1151
    Tax Lot(s) 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015,
              016, 017, 018, 019, and 020D
    PIN: 6834-07-5729 & 6834-08-7013.00

Please complete the following information on continuation sheets

7. When was the structure 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.

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

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

10. How has the building been passed down through the years, from whom to whom (i.e., a quick chain of title)?

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

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

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13. Describe the architecture and present condition of the structure, also including any outbuildings or other appurtenant features to be included in the designation. If the property has been restored, what were the dates of restoration? Was the restoration done under the supervision of any historic preservation organization? If the property has not been restored, is any restoration planned for the property?

14. Is the property listed in any existing architectural or historical survey (i.e., the National Register of Historic Places)? If so, please give the title and date of the listing.

In addition to written application, the following materials must be submitted simultaneously:

- a black and white 8" x 10" overall photograph clearly depicting the property being designated.

- Digital photos showing all sides of the main structure and any outbuildings (may include architectural details, interior and exterior, which add to the property’s significance)

- The images should be jpegs with a minimum image is 1950 pixels x 1350 pixels. They may be larger. Such an image would make a print of 6.5" x 4.5" at a resolution of 300 ppi (a 7" x 5" print with margins). A 3 megapixel camera should create an image of about 2100 x 1400 pixels

- The images should be submitted on CDs. Do not use "rewriteable" CD-RW disks, which often cannot be read by computers other than the one on which they were created. Use the less expensive CD-R disks. Photos that are burned to the CD cannot subsequently be edited on the CD, though you can add additional photos or copy over a photo with a new version of the same file name at a later time. The XP operating system enables you to burn files to a CD without the purchase of any special software.

- a tax map showing the location of the property, including any buildings and appurtenant features.

(Please label the above materials with the name of the property owner)

APPLICATION FEE $50.00 (Check Payable to City of Winston-Salem)

The following information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date 5-21-16

Signature of Property Owner

Mailing Address:
Richard W. Sickles
605 West Cascade Avenue, Winston-Salem, NC 27127

Telephone [Redacted]

Updated August 4, 2014

Submitted by Laura Phillips.
7. The house was completed in 1929 for John L. and Emma J. Gilmer. There have been no additions. At some point, date unknown but either while the house was still in the Gilmers' ownership (up to 1948) or during the ownership of Hubert L. and Estelle R. Tucker (1948-1983), the window of the engaged service porch off the kitchen at the northwest corner of the house was enclosed and the door to the same porch was converted to a window so that the kitchen could be enlarged by encompassing that space. After Richard W. Sickles purchased the property in 1983, he updated the kitchen and pantry, finished the previously unfinished basement and attic, and replaced the existing radiator heat with a central HVAC system. At the same time, on the rear of the house, he enlarged the dormer of the master bath/dressing room (over the one-story south wing) and added a gabled dormer to the attic-level bedroom. A tornado that struck Winston-Salem in May 1989 took fifty-two trees on the property, damaging the perimeter chain-link fence and uprooting a towering oak behind the house. In response to this damage, the present owner replanted in the same locations some of the trees that had been lost. He replaced the chain-link fence with an ironwork picket fence. At the rear of the house, where two large uprooted oak trees had left large craters, he built an in-ground swimming pool surrounded by a stone patio matching the stones used on the walkways around the house. At the same time, he replaced the two windows at the rear of the living with a double-leaf French door with broad sidelights and a narrow transom.

8. The Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O'Brien designed the house. Copies of the plans are in the possession of the current owner and in the Special Collections Library, North Carolina State University (Northup & O'Brien Architectural Records, folder 150). Fogle Brothers of Winston-Salem constructed the house. The contract ledger for the house, dating from July 1, 1928 to February 16, 1929, exists in the Fogle Brothers Collection (folder VIII-D, pp. 1304-1313) at the Moravian Archives, Southern Province, Winston-Salem. Morobullia: Seventy-five Years of Winston-Salem Rotary, page 46, mentions "the Gilmers' New York landscape architect." However, who that was has not been determined.

9. No old photographs are known to exist of the house. However, a 1924 photograph of the Gilmers' original 1903 house on the property that burned in 1928 is in the Digital Forsyth Collection of the Forsyth County Public Library (John L. Gilmer House, Cascade Avenue – 1924) and can be accessed at www.digitalforsyth.org.

10. There have been only three owners of the house:
Emma J. Gilmer purchased the property on May 8, 1899 (Deed Book 60, p. 597) from Ernest A. Holt (who had purchased it from the Southside Land and Investment Company on March 8, 1899).

Hubert L. Tucker purchased the property on April 21 and 29, 1948 (Deed Book 581, pp. 116, 117, 343) from Emma J. Gilmer.

Richard W. Sickles purchased the property on May 10, 1983 (Deed Book 1397, p. 600) from Hubert L. and Estelle R. Tucker.

11. The house has always been a private residence. It has never been moved.

12. **Summary Statement of Significance**

John Lash Gilmer (1872-1947) was a consummate entrepreneur in Winston-Salem during the first half of the twentieth century. He began his business life in 1893, when he left the University of North Carolina to take charge of his father’s mercantile business in Winston-Salem. From that time forward until his death, his commercial endeavors were many and far-reaching. Over his decades’ long career, centered on Winston-Salem’s “Era of Success,” his significant contributions to the development of local commerce included a retail and wholesale dry goods business; a cotton mill shipments and commission business; a chain of retail department stores in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia; the early development of automobile sales and related automotive businesses in Winston-Salem; the development of both commercial and residential real estate with a particular focus on the expansion of commerce along West Fourth Street; and the establishment and expansion of the Camel City Coach Company that extended over a multi-state territory until merging with Atlantic Greyhound Lines, of which he was vice-president and sales manager. In many of his enterprises, John Gilmer was associated with his younger brother, Powell, but he usually had the lead role. The house that John Gilmer shared with his wife, Emma, is the best physical manifestation of his overall accomplishments and status in the community.

When John and Emma Gilmer built their second home at 605 West Cascade Avenue in 1928-1929 to replace their ca. 1903 house on the site that had burned, they selected the prominent Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O’Brien to develop the design and Fogle Brothers to build it. The resulting house, which has a commanding presence on its hilltop setting overlooking Washington Park and is accompanied by 3.32 landscaped acres, is a stately, well-articulated example of the Colonial Revival style that is replete with finely crafted stylistic features on both exterior and interior.
The John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House is locally significant and meets two criteria for designation as a Local Historic Landmark. It meets Criterion B, because it is associated with the life of John L. Gilmer, a significant force in the development of Winston-Salem’s commerce for nearly half a century. It meets Criterion C, because it embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of the Colonial Revival style and is an excellent representative of the residential work of the distinguished and prolific Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O’Brien. The period of significance spans the years from 1929, when construction of the house was completed, to 1948, when Emma Gilmer sold the house and surrounding acreage after the death of her husband. The house possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Historical Setting
In 1752, Germanic Moravians in Pennsylvania under the leadership of Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg purchased approximately 100,000 acres in North Carolina, which they called *Der Wachau*, later anglicized to Wachovia. This land constituted thirty-seven percent of what today is Forsyth County. The following year, a group from this religious sect arrived in Wachovia and settled Bethabara, the first community in their new land. It was followed by Bethania in 1759 and, in 1766, by the central congregation town, Salem. Salem was the administrative center for the Moravian Church in Wachovia, which governed the community. With its many skilled craftsmen, Salem soon prospered as the center for trade and commerce not only in Wachovia, but also for the surrounding area. The craftsmen in Salem were accompanied by small cottage industries, but in 1836, the Salem Cotton Manufacturing Company was established at the western edge of town, and Salem entered the world of larger-scale industry. As Salem continued to prosper and the population of the town and the surrounding Wachovia continued to expand, the need for a new county centered on Salem became evident. In 1849, the North Carolina General Assembly voted to form a new county, to be named Forsyth. Although Salem refused to be the new county seat, not wanting the sometimes raucous behavior and outside influences that would come with a court town, the leaders of the congregation did agree, on February 5, 1849, to sell approximately fifty-one acres 500 yards north of Salem’s boundary for a courthouse and county seat. In 1851, the new town was named Winston. Progressives in Salem soon gained more influence in the congregation town, and the Moravian Church ceased its control over business, land ownership, and residency in
1856. In December of that year, Salem was incorporated as a North Carolina municipality.¹

By 1870, Winston was still small in comparison to Salem, with Salem’s population of 905 residents greatly overshadowing Winston’s population of 445. However, this soon changed. Winston’s first tobacco warehouse opened in 1872, to be followed by many more. Winston had a single tobacco factory in 1872, but the completion of the North Western North Carolina spur line connecting Winston with Greensboro in 1873 dramatically changed Winston’s industrial outlook, and by 1878 sixteen tobacco factories in the town manufactured chewing and smoking tobacco. During these years, Richard Joshua Reynolds arrived from Virginia and built his first tobacco factory in 1875.²

Prior to 1900, Winston’s industrial expansion centered almost entirely on tobacco. As the tobacco industry proliferated, scores of merchants and other businessmen arrived in Winston to take advantage of the new prosperity. Soon frame commercial buildings were being replaced by longer-lasting brick buildings. Meanwhile, Wachovia National Bank was established in Winston in 1879, and it was able to finance many of the town’s industrial and commercial pursuits.³

The late 1880s brought more change that affected growth in both Winston and Salem. In 1887, electric street lights were installed, and in 1889 the Roanoke and Southern Railway arrived in Winston (although the full line was not completed until 1891), further enabling the development of industry and commerce. At the close of the 1880s, more than thirty tobacco factories were in operation. Around 1900, the American Tobacco Trust brought economic uncertainty and change to the tobacco industry in Winston, but it also brought, by necessity, an increased diversification of industry—which included cotton, iron, wool, flour, planing, furniture, knitting, and wagon-making, among other industries—which had a positive impact on the overall economy of both Winston and Salem.⁴

The first decade of the twentieth century was a period on strong growth in Winston and Salem. In 1910 the Southbound Railroad was completed between Wadesboro and the towns of Winston and Salem—a distance of eighty-nine miles—further encouraging the

⁴ Phillips and Taylor, 8: 7, 13.
development of local industry and commerce. In 1911, the United States Supreme Court broke up the Tobacco Trust, and Winston’s R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company was once again on its own to determine its own future. In 1912, the company decided to enter the cigarette manufacturing business, which ushered in another boom period for the community.

On May 9, 1913, the towns of Winston and Salem merged, becoming Winston-Salem. This was the formalization of a relationship that had been, for all practical purposes, in place for some years, as leaders of the two communities had come together for business endeavors, development initiatives, and infrastructure improvements. At the time of consolidation, Salem occupied 1.6 square miles and had 6,500 residents, while Winston’s 19,500 residents occupied 3.75 square miles. The years between 1913 and 1930 have been labeled Winston-Salem’s “Era of Success.” Civic leaders adopted the slogan “50-15,” indicating a goal of 50,000 people by 1915. Although that goal was not met, growth in all areas was significant. In 1913, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company put the first modern-type tobacco blend into production as “Camel” cigarettes, a product that revolutionized the marketing of tobacco and became the number-one selling cigarette in America. The following year, the Shamrock Hosiery Mills was renamed Hanes Hosiery Company and, by the 1930s, it had become the first company to put seamless nylon hose on the branded market. *Winston-Salem, City of Industry*, published in 1918, claimed not only that the city led the world in the production of flat plug tobacco and the South in the manufacture of knit goods, but that it had the largest weekly payroll between Richmond and Atlanta. All this was accompanied by the construction of numerous substantial public, commercial, industrial, religious, and educational buildings in the city. By 1920, according to the United States Census, Winston-Salem, with a population of 48,395, had become the largest city in North Carolina, a position it held until being overtaken by Charlotte in 1930.

Winston-Salem’s growth was, of necessity, accompanied by residential expansion, including, in the early 1890s, the development of suburban neighborhoods enabled by the establishment of streetcar lines. The first of these neighborhoods was the West End, which was planned on the west side of Winston in 1890 by civil engineer Jacob Lott Ludlow. Soon thereafter, in 1892, Ludlow laid out an area south of Salem for the

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6 Phillips and Taylor, 8:15.
7 Fearnbach, 31.
8 Phillips and Taylor, 8:16, 18-19.
Winston-Salem Land and Investment Company that later became known as the Washington Park neighborhood. Its curvilinear western section encompassed a seventeen-acre green space labeled Sunny Side Park, the initial section of what grew to be a larger recreational area owned by the city and renamed Washington Park. A branch of the Winston-Salem Railway and Electric Company streetcar line ran west from South Main Street along Cascade Avenue all the way to the park. This, along with its location atop a ridge, made the lots along Cascade Avenue the most desirable in the new neighborhood. In the 1910s and 1920s, Cascade Avenue became known as “Millionaire’s Row” due to the elegant and expansive homes of industrialists and business entrepreneurs that lined it. It was at the west end of Cascade Avenue that John and Emma Gilmer made their home for nearly half a century.

The World of John and Emma Gilmer
John Lash Gilmer was born in Walnut Cove, North Carolina, on January 4, 1872, to Capt. John Eli and Laura Lash Gilmer. Two years later, he moved with his family to Winston, where his father established a general mercantile business and where John’s brother, Powell, was born on December 4, 1874. In their growing-up years, the brothers worked in their father’s store. In later years both remembered the campfires behind the store of mountaineers who brought such products as cabbage, chestnuts, herbs, and balsam to trade. It was not uncommon for 75 to 100 wagons to be parked at a time in the store lot. John Gilmer attended the University of North Carolina for three years, but at the age of twenty-one left to take charge of his father’s mercantile business. That same year, in 1893, the name of the store changed to Gilmer, Marler and Company, but in 1901, after brother Powell Gilmer had entered the business, it took on the name Gilmer Brothers Company. John L. Gilmer served at president. Engaged in the retail and wholesale dry goods and notions business, Gilmer Brothers Company operated for a number of years. This was the start of the many joint business ventures of the brothers John and Powell Gilmer.

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On October 19, 1898, John Gilmer married Emma Rison Jones of Danville, Virginia. On July 6, 1900, Emma Gilmer purchased a series of lots, totaling approximately sixteen acres, lying within the bend of Park Boulevard adjacent to Sunny Side Park and continuing southward in part to Cascade Avenue and, in another section, even farther south to Banner Avenue. For this land, she paid owners Ernest A. and Julia S. Holt $5,500. Whether the property was simply purchased under her name or whether Emma Gilmer was, herself, a real estate investor is not certain. However, the latter option appears likely, for between the years 1900 and 1952, she is listed in the General Index of Real Estate Conveyances as the grantee in at least twenty-six transactions. At the same time, like many prominent women of her day, Emma Gilmer was a “club woman,” and in 1922, she was chairman of districts and second vice-president of the North Carolina Federation of Women’s Clubs. Around 1903, Emma and John Gilmer selected a hilltop site overlooking Sunny Side Park on which to build their home. The 1904-1905 city directory is the first to list them at this location. A 1924 photograph of the house shows it to have been a large, two-story, Colonial Revival-style dwelling which retained the influence of the Queen Anne style in its large wraparound porch that expanded outward at one front corner to form a circle. How the Gilmers used the entirety of their large, undeveloped, tract is not known. However, according to a 1920 newspaper article, John Gilmer enjoyed growing dahlias, and at least one acre was devoted to the cultivation of multiple varieties of this flower – with more than 500,000 in one field.

In 1905, John and Powell Gilmer began a mill shipments and commission business, in which they handled direct shipments from cotton mills to retail and department stores. The business expanded until millions of dollars in goods passed through its hands annually. As a spin-off of this business, the Gilmer brothers developed a chain of eight retail department stores in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. In 1919, the Gilmers discontinued their commission business and, at the same time, sold their retail stores to Gilmers, Inc. James B. Duke and the United Retail Stores owned a controlling

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12 Forsyth County Deed Book 60, p. 597; “Plat of the Property of the Winston-Salem Land & Investment Co.,” Forsyth County Plat Book 4, p. 147.
13 Forsyth County General Index to Real Estate Conveyances (Grantee), 154.
15 Walsh’s Winston-Salem City Directory for 1904-5 (copyright 1904).
16 Photograph courtesy of Digital Forsyth, Forsyth County Public Library.
17 “Five Hundred Thousand Dahlias in One Field,” The Twin-City Daily Sentinel (Winston-Salem), September 18, 1920, p. 15.
interest in the new company, but John Gilmer served as president and Powell Gilmer as vice-president. Soon after these changes took place, more department stores were added in the three states. In 1921, the Gilmer brothers ended their ties with Gilmers, Inc. in order to focus on their other interests, particularly related to automobiles.\(^{18}\)

Another early business involvement of John Gilmer’s was with Inverness Mills, manufacturers of bed sheeting and sheeting. He served as vice-president of the company.\(^ {19}\)

John and Powell Gilmer clearly saw the wave of the future when they decided to capitalize on the new automobile industry. John Gilmer was one of the pioneers in the sale of automobiles in Winston-Salem, opening the first Buick agency in 1907. In 1920, John and Powell Gilmer, along with Lindsay Fishel, were owners of a variety of automotive-related businesses, including Universal Auto Company, the Motor Company, Tire Service Company, Battery Sales Company, Automotive Implement Company, Automotive Parts Company, and Automotive Repair Company. When, in 1922, the Motor Company, of which John Gilmer was president and general manager, organized a large used-car sale, the company encouraged potential buyers by offering free driving lessons supervised by a competent instructor to all purchasers. In 1924, the Gilmer brothers formed the Motor Sales Company, which was the distributor for Chrysler, Plymouth, and Chevrolet automobiles. John Gilmer served as president, a position he held until his death. He also served as president of the concern that was the distributor of G. M. C. trucks. At the same time, Powell Gilmer was president of Salem Motors Company. Combined, these companies sold around 3,500 cars annually, amounting to about $3,000,000 in 1927.\(^ {20}\)

In addition to their automobile interests, John and Powell Gilmer were real estate developers with a particular interest in Winston-Salem’s business district. Among the earlier buildings they constructed were the Motor Company Building, the Farmer’s National Bank Building, and a building at the corner of Liberty and Fourth streets. They pioneered especially in the development of the West Fourth Street retail real estate district and were the first to pay $1,000 per front foot for property along that street. In

\(^{18}\) “John and Powell Gilmer Have Had Important Part in Business Life of City.”


1924, they purchased and developed the property at 416-424 West Fourth Street, 
retaining architect Harold Macklin to design a handsome two-story commercial building 
bearing their name, and then sold the building in 1926 to Home Builders Company. The 
Gilmers were also involved in residential development. In 1922, they, along with Ray 
Johnson, chartered the Bon Air Realty Company and developed a residential 
neighborhood along Patterson Avenue that was called Bon Air. They also developed 
Briarwood, in the city’s south side, and Motorville north of the city.\textsuperscript{21}

John Gilmer’s entrepreneurial endeavors did not cease with his mercantile businesses, his 
automotive enterprises, and real estate development. One of his most noteworthy 
accomplishments was the establishment and expansion of a new bus line for Winston-
Salem. In December, 1925, he purchased the single inter-city bus line operating out of 
Winston-Salem. His initial goal was to provide a convenient means of transportation 
between Winston-Salem and Charlotte. On January 19, 1926, the Camel City Coach 
Company, with John Gilmer as president, began operations with six buses. Greatly 
 improved hard-surfaced roads made long-distance bus travel more comfortable, more 
practical, and more dependable. From six regular schedules initially, the number 
increased to twenty-five by the end of the first year. By the end of 1930, sixty-four buses 
were coming in and out of the terminal in Winston-Salem daily. A large, one-story brick 
and steel building still located at the south end of Marshall Street at its juncture with 
Salem Avenue was the principal maintenance shop for the company and also held the 
administrative offices. During the first year, the buses traveled 33,000 miles, but by 
1930, that number had increased to 330,000 miles a month. The first year, the company 
had gross revenue of $60,000, but in five years that number had climbed to over 
$1,000,000. This dramatic growth saw the company expand from providing bus service 
between Winston-Salem and Charlotte to covering, with its affiliated and connecting 
lines, seventeen states, including most cities and towns in North Carolina, South 
Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida by 1930. That year, the Camel City Coach 
Company provided employment for 125 people. The company’s phenomenal growth 
continued until it merged in the mid-1930s with Atlantic Greyhound Lines, of which John 
Gilmer became vice-president and general sales manager.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} "John and Powell Gilmer Have Had Important Part in Business Life of City;" Laura A. W. Phillips, "Gilmer Building" 
(National Register nomination, 1982), 8:1-2; "Bon Air Realty Co. to Develop Tract," \textit{The Twin-City Sentinel} 
(Winston-Salem), February 20, 1922, p. 10. 
\textsuperscript{22} "J. L. Gilmer, Bus Pioneer, Dies at 75;" "Camel City Coach Co. Grows in Five Years to South's Great Bus System," 
\textit{Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel}, Sunday edition, November 2, 1930, p. 8-D; "J. L. Gilmer Calls His Birthday 
'Happiest Day in My 75 Years'," \textit{Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel}, Sunday edition, January 5, 1947, p. 3-B.
Along the way in his adult life, John Gilmer served in several other roles in his city, including the following. In 1916, the directors of Wachovia Bank and Trust Company elected him to take the place of his father, Capt. John E. Gilmer, who had recently died, as a director of the bank. In 1918, he was the State Retail Merchants Director of the War Savings Committee. He also served as president of the Winston-Salem Board of Trade, but in 1920 resigned that post due to the press of his private business. He was one of the original members of the Winston-Salem Automobile Club and served as its president. He was also a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary, the Kiwanis Club, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, and the Sky Club.23

1929: A New Home
In 1928, John and Emma Gilmer’s home on Cascade Avenue burned. After some consideration, they determined that there was nowhere else they would rather live, so they commissioned the Winston-Salem architecture firm of Northup and O’Brien to design a new house for the hilltop site overlooking Park Boulevard and Washington Park. The plans for the large, Colonial Revival-style dwelling are dated May 31, 1928. Fogle Brothers served as the construction contractor. The first entry in the contract ledger for the project is dated July 1, 1928, and the last entry is for February 16, 1929. The ledger contains entries for various supplies and payments for wages. Among the many listings for materials are both regular bricks and face bricks, cypress siding and molding, white pine and poplar cabinets for the kitchen and pantry, bags of plaster, two garage doors, and heavy wire fencing. The total cost for the construction of the house was $30,178.77. The original landscaping for the house is believed to have been designed by a New York landscape architect, but who that was has not been identified.24

The Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O’Brien was both distinguished and prolific, practicing throughout North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century. The firm was comprised of Willard Close Northup (1882-1942), Leet Alexander

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O’Brien (1891-1963), and after 1927, Luther Lashmit, all of whom left a considerable mark on Winston-Salem’s architecture and were leaders in the establishment and promotion of the architecture profession in North Carolina. A native of Michigan, Northup was living in Asheville by the time he graduated from high school. After attending Drexel Institute and the University of Pennsylvania, he lived and worked several places before opening a practice in Winston (-Salem) in 1906. The following year, he hired O’Brien, a Winston-Salem native who was a graduate of Carnegie Institute of Technology. The partnership firm was formed in 1915 or 1916. In 1913, Northup was one of five North Carolina architects who were instrumental in establishing a state chapter of the American Institute of Architects (NCAIA), and in 1915, he also played a pivotal role in the passage of legislation regulating architectural practice in the state. Northup held several offices in the NCAIA before becoming president in 1921. In 1919, he was appointed president of the North Carolina Board of Architecture, a position he held until 1931 and again from 1933 until his death in 1942. In 1932, Northup became a fellow of the AIA, one of the highest honors an architect could achieve. O’Brien also held several offices, including president, in the NCAIA. Many talented architects received their start in the Northup and O’Brien firm, some becoming members of the firm. One such architect was Winston-Salem native Luther Lashmit, who was one of North Carolina’s outstanding architects of the mid-twentieth century. Like O’Brien, he graduated from the Carnegie Institute of Technology. The Northup and O’Brien firm gained a strong reputation in North Carolina not only for their countless commercial, institutional, educational, and ecclesiastical commissions, but also for the many fine houses in a variety of styles they designed. Among their most prominent buildings in Winston-Salem are the last Salem Town Hall, the Winston-Salem City Hall, the 1926/1958 Forsyth County Courthouse, the O’Hanlon Building, the Pepper Building, Sosnick’s Department Store, Calvary and Ardmore Moravian churches, the first building of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Clemmons, Old Town, Lewisville, and Griffith schools, and countless finely detailed residences, including Graylyn, Merry Acres (the R. J. Reynolds Jr. House), and many in the Colonial Revival and other styles. One of their outstanding residential commissions was the John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House. Northup and O’Brien’s plans for the Gilmer House were carried out by Fogle Brothers, a general contracting and building material supply firm established in 1870 by brothers Charles A. and Christian H. Fogle. The firm’s general contracting operation ceased in 1932, but the building material supply function remained strong through the 1960s and did not shut down until 1988. Although no longer in operation, the Fogle Brothers building legacy in Winston-Salem remains indelible.25

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Northrup and O’Brien designed a stately Colonial Revival-style house for the Gilmers that utilized features derived from both the Georgian and the Federal periods. The house on both exterior and interior is replete with finely crafted features. The brickwork of the two-story house is laid in Flemish bond with recessed mortar joints that increase the crispness of the brickwork. The side-gable roof is sheathed with Ludowici-Celadon tiles and has a molded cornice with block modillions. An interior end chimney rises through the roof at the south end. The focal point of the symmetrical five-bay façade is the Georgian-influenced entry, which boasts fluted pilasters and a full entablature with a molded architrave, a pulvinated frieze, and a segmental-arched broken pediment outlined with dentils and centered on an acorn on a pedestal. Flanking the entrance are two oval windows. Windows exhibit a classical graduation in size and detailing that responds to their relative location. The first-story windows are the largest, with twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash, and are the most decorative, with flat-arched lintels highlighted by a cast-stone keystone. In contrast to these, the windows of the second story are eight-over-eight sash and have flat-arched lintels but no keystones. The windows have fixed-louver wood shutters. The exception is the two second-story windows on either side of the center-bay window. They are only four-over-four sash and have no shutters. At either end of the house is a one-story frame porch with fluted posts. At the north end, the porch is open (now screened), and at the south end it is a window-enclosed sun room. An unusual feature for the time in which the house was built is the basement-level two-car garage beneath the north-end porch. The focal point of the interior is the graceful stair that rises, in multiple turns, from the broad entrance hall to the attic. Other exceptional features of the interior are the heavily molded cornices of the entrance hall and dining room, the distinctive wood moldings, the paneled living room, and the two mantels—a delicate Federal-style one in the living room and a more simply classical one in the master bedroom above the living room.

The 1920s were part of Winston-Salem’s “Era of Success,” during which great wealth produced an impressive collection of architect-designed houses, many of which were Colonial Revival in style. It is difficult, if not impossible, therefore, to single out one or a small number of houses as being the best. Still, one can say with certainty that the John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House is an impressive representative of this significant group of houses from the period. An important aspect of the Gilmer House is its relationship to the environment. Few houses can boast the commanding hilltop setting of the Gilmer

House that overlooks Washington Park. At the same time, the size of the tract on which the Gilmer House stands is notable. Although only a fraction of the sixteen acres originally associated with the house, the 3.32 acres surviving with the house is more than twice that of any other house in the Washington Park neighborhood. It is also larger than most of the house tracts found in fashionable period neighborhoods such as West Highlands, Stratford Place, Buena Vista, and Reynolda Park.

The Post-Gilmer Years
On January 31, 1947, less than a month after John Gilmer celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday at a party with employees of the Atlantic Greyhound company in the dining room of the Robert E. Lee Hotel, he died. Emma Gilmer apparently did not care to live in the large house alone. Accordingly, in two transactions on April 21 and another on April 29, 1948, she sold the house along with 3.32 acres to Hubert L. Tucker. Then, on July 1, 1948, she sold the remainder of the acreage west of the house to Forsyth Realty Company, who sold it as multiple lots on which small houses were erected. Hubert and Estelle Tucker occupied the house for thirty-five years, until May 10, 1983, when they sold the property to Richard W. Sickles, the present owner. In the eighty-seven years since the Gilmer House was built, it has had only three owners. The Gilmers, the Tuckers, and Richard Sickles have all taken great care with the house, so that today it is well-preserved and in excellent condition.

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13. **Summary:** The 1929 John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House at 605 West Cascade Avenue is a two-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style dwelling. Accompanying the house on its 3.32-acre tract are a long concrete driveway, stone steps and walkways, a wrought-iron fence, a garden shed/greenhouse, an in-ground swimming pool, and a cast-iron fountain.

**Setting and Landscape Features:** The house is located at the western edge of the Washington Park National Register Historic District (1992). Facing east, it stands at the south end of its commanding hill-top site that overlooks the wooded Washington Park. Cascade Avenue runs along the south side of the property, and the curving Park Boulevard follows the east and north property lines. On the west side, the property abuts small parcels with small, Minimal Traditional-style houses built between 1948 and 1950.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\)These houses are part of the sixteen-acres that originally formed the Gilmer tract. After John Gilmer’s death in 1947, that portion of the property was sold and developed as a collection of seventeen smaller lots with small houses built between 1948 and 1950.
The land slopes downward from each side of the house and is composed primarily of a grassy lawn. A 1989 tornado destroyed fifty-two trees on the property, most of which were oak, poplar, and hickory trees. However, some large trees survived and some trees of the same types were replanted in the same locations occupied by trees that were lost. Among the trees – pre- and post-storm – on the property today are oak, poplar, hickory, pine, cedar, weeping cherry, Japanese maple, crepe myrtle, and other kinds.

Original English boxwoods line the front of the house and another one is behind the house. Other foundation plantings fill in elsewhere around the house. Two large beds of flowering shrubs on the front lawn are located at the southeast corner of the property and downhill from the house but closer to the east entrance. The beds are original, but with the loss of shade after the tornado, some in the bed closer to the entrance died and had to be replanted. Growing in these beds are azaleas, rhododendron, camellias, and mountain laurel.

Originally a chain link fence surrounded the property, but after it was damaged in the 1989 tornado, the present owner replaced it with a wrought-iron picket fence. Green Giant Arborvitae were planted along the house side (as opposed to street side) of the fence around most of the property, excluding the area from the east side of the Cascade Avenue entrance eastward to Park Boulevard and from there northward to the south side of the Park Boulevard entrance. At the same time, square brick gateposts topped by cast-concrete iron lions and side-sliding iron gates were added at the two entrances. A third, more decorative, pedestrian iron gate is located along Cascade Avenue southeast of the house.

A long concrete driveway that follows its original location runs between the two entrances, curving around the north and west sides of the house. Behind the house near the Cascade Avenue entrance, the driveway encircles a grassy area with a cast iron fountain set in a stone basin at its center.31

The landscape also features various original stone retaining walls, walkways, and steps. Rubble-stone retaining walls with protruding mortar joints are located along much of the Cascade Avenue side of the property as well as north of the house extending outward from either side of the garage entrances. A stone walkway runs along the front of the house. At the north end, it follows stone steps down to the driveway. At the south end, it

31 The fountain is original to the Gilmer property, but was located in the former garden on the south side of Cascade Avenue. When that part of the property was sold after John Gilmer's death, the fountain was moved to its present location.
curves southeastward from the house until meeting stone steps down to Cascade Avenue. Other sets of stone steps and walkways are found on the north side of the house heading northward from the driveway and down to the lower north lawn; northwest of the house down to the driveway and, across it, continuing down to the garden shed/greenhouse; and west of the house down to the circle in the driveway.

Several other buildings and structures accompany the house in its landscape. Northwest of the house and downhill from the driveway stands a one-story frame garden shed. It has vertical-board siding, a double-leaf entrance at the east end that is sheltered by a shed roof supported by heavy sawnwork brackets, single six-over-six sash windows on the south side and west end, and an asphalt-shingled front-gable roof. Attached to the north side of the building beneath a shed roof is a greenhouse. The date of construction of this building is not known, but it appears to have been built during the Tucker ownership, 1948-1983. Northeast of the garden shed/greenhouse is the frame for a swing, with single vertical iron pipes connected at the top by a horizontal pipe. After the 1989 tornado uprooted trees behind the house, leaving craters where they had stood, the present owner built an in-ground swimming pool. It is surrounded by a stone patio made with the same kind of stones used in the original walkways.

**House:** The John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House was designed by the Winston-Salem architectural firm of Northup and O'Brien and built by Fogle Brothers between July 1928 and February 1929. It is an excellent example of a well-proportioned and finely detailed Colonial Revival-style dwelling. A comparison of the current house with the original plans reveals the overall intactness of the house as well as alterations that have been made since its initial construction.

**Exterior:** The two-story house is laid in Flemish-bond brickwork with recessed mortar joints that increase the crispness of the design. The side-gable roof is covered with green Ludowici-Celadon tiles. Within the north gable is an eight-over-eight sash window, and within the south gable, two four-light windows flank the chimney. The symmetrical façade is five bays wide, and at each end is a one-story frame wing – a screened porch at the north end and a sun room at the south end. An interior-end brick chimney with a cast-stone cap rises at the south end of the house.

At the center of the façade is an impressive Georgian Revival-style entrance. A low, semi-circular step of slate with a cast-stone border rises to the door from the stone terrace. A glass- and wood-paneled outer door opens to the main door, which is broad and is composed of six wood panels. Across the top of the door is an arcaded glass
transom. Fluted pilasters flank the door and support a full classical entablature with a molded architrave, a pulvinated frieze, and a dentiled cornice with a broken, segmental-arched pediment from which rises an acorn on a pedestal. Flanking the doorway is a pair of oval windows with nine lights, a molded wood surround, and a brick border.

First-story windows are twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash with a molded sill and a flat-arched brick lintel with a cast-stone keystone. With the exception of two narrow four-over-four sash windows that are part of the center bay, the other second-story windows are eight-over-eight sash with a flat-arched lintel but no keystone. All of the sash windows, except for the two four-over-four sash windows of the second-story center bay, have fixed-louver wood shutters. Immediately above the first-story windows is a slightly projecting brick string course. Immediately above the second-story windows and beneath the roof eaves is a molded cornice with a block modillion course and returns at each corner. The house has copper gutters and downspouts.

The slightly projecting one-story porch at the north end of the house features fluted posts, a plain, ironwork balustrade, a molded and dentiled cornice across the front and rear and a pedimented, dentiled cornice at the north end. The end gable is sheathed with weatherboards and has a four-over-four sash window in the center. The porch has been screened. Beneath the porch, at basement level, is an original two-car garage. Its openings are headed by segmental arches with flat-arched lintels with a central, cast-stone keystone.

At the south end of the house, the one-story sun room repeats the design of the north-end porch, except that instead of open spaces between the fluted posts, there are twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash windows above wood-grilled panels and, in the center of its east façade, a double-leaf screened door with a double-leaf French door with transom behind it.

On the rear elevation, the center bay projects one-bay deep from the primary elevation. Within its gable is a vertical louvered vent. Halfway between the projecting bay and the north end of the house a secondary chimney projects from the rear of the house. Below cornice level, it is covered by the one-story kitchen ell. The kitchen ell extends westward from the north end of the rear elevation. Two windows are on north elevation of the kitchen ell. A third window, closest to the west end of the ell, has been enclosed. The rear elevation has two windows, but the one closest to the north replaced a door to a small porch at that location. The gable end has a vertical louvered vent. The ell’s south
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elevation has a single-leaf, ten-light door crowned by a four-light transom and a six-over-six sash window between the door and the primary rear elevation.

In addition to the windows of the kitchen ell, the only alterations to the exterior of the house are found on the rear elevation. In the mid-1980s, a weatherboard-sided frame dormer with a single window and a shed roof that was located on the rear slope of the sun room roof was enlarged to have three windows. Its roof is sheathed with copper and has a central skylight. The dormer illuminates the master bath and dressing room. Also in the mid-1980s, a dormer was added to the west slope of the main roof above the south two bays of the west elevation. The frame dormer is sheathed with weatherboards, has a gable roof covered with Ludowici tiles, the same cornice details as found on the main roof, a pair of six-over-six sash windows with shutters, and a vertical louvered vent within the gable. The dormer provides additional light to the attic bedroom. The third exterior alteration came after the 1989 tornado. When the swimming pool and patio were built where fallen trees had left craters, the two west windows of the living room (south of the projecting rear bay) were replaced with a double-leaf French door flanked by multi-pane panels the size of the French door panels, the whole topped by three-light transoms above each section. A Ludowici-tiled hipped roof shelters the door and flanking windows.

Interior – The first and second floors of the house remain predominantly intact. When the present owner purchased the house in 1983, the attic was unfinished and used for storage. The basement remained partially unexcavated and was otherwise unfinished. It had several storage rooms, a boiler room, and a door to the garage at the north end. In the mid-1980s, both the attic and the basement were finished to create additional living space.

The first and second floors of the Gilmer House have oak flooring, plastered walls and ceilings, mostly six-panel doors, and molded door and window surrounds. The first-floor ceilings are nine-and-a-half feet high, and the second-floor ceilings are eight-and-a-half feet high. The house has an irregular plan centered on the entrance/stair hall. The entrance hall has molded baseboards, chair rails, and door surrounds and a heavy crown molding. Double-leaf doors enter the living room on the left and the dining room on the right. From the entrance hall, the doors are multi-pane French doors with the panes filled with mirrors. The living room and dining room sides of the doors have three raised panels per leaf. The doors have original brass hardware. At the rear of the stair hall, a broad, round-arched doorway with a molded surround and keystone opens to a narrow transverse hall. The crowning feature of the entrance hall is the graceful stair, which
rises along the south wall and then makes a right-angle turn to the second floor. The stair has turned balusters, a shaped and ramped handrail, and curvilinear sawnwork brackets decorating the ends of the risers. The bottom step curves outward beyond the other steps to serve as the base for the turned newel and the balustrade spiraling around it. The first-floor ceiling of the stair well forms a curve, which is followed by a curved balustrade on the second floor. From there, the stair continues in right angles to the attic floor, making for a dramatic view from the entrance hall looking up and from the attic level looking down.

On the south side of the entrance hall, the living room runs from the front of the house to the rear. The walls of the living room have flat panels created by the arrangement of baseboards, wide chair rail, cornice railing, and vertical board dividers. At the west end of the living room, narrow floor-to-ceiling bookshelves with base cabinets are on either side of the double-leaf French door to the exterior with its flanking windows. The focal point of the living room is the projecting fireplace with its elegant Federal-style mantel. The mantel features a pair of attenuated colonettes on either side of the fireplace that support a three-part frieze with oval panels and a projecting mantel shelf. The mantel is replete with reeding and other types of carving in classical motifs. Marble with a blue faux-finish overlay borders the brick-lined firebox and forms the hearth. Between the fireplace and the front wall of the living room, a doorway with a deep paneled reveal (covering the brick wall) and a single-leaf French door opens to the sun room, which has a slate floor and is surrounded by windows with interior louvered shutters. A double-leaf French door opens to the front of the house.

On the north side of the entrance hall, the dining room has a baseboard, molded chair rail, and heavily molded cornice. At the north end of the dining room, a single-leaf French door opens to the screened porch which, like the sun porch, has a slate floor. At the northwest corner of the dining room, a six-panel swinging door opens to the pantry.

The pantry and the adjoining kitchen to the west were updated in the mid-1980s. Though the pantry has new cabinetry, it continues the plan of wood cabinets below countertops and glass-fronted shelving above. The kitchen has new cabinetry and appliances, and the open area between the kitchen and the pantry has a built-in table and banquette. On the south wall of the kitchen, a six-panel door opens to the outside.

A narrow transverse hall with a baseboard and molded chair rail runs from the pantry, behind the dining room, to the entrance to the basement stair behind the primary stair. A door on the west side of the transverse hall near the pantry opens to a closet. Another
door, opposite the round-arched door to the entrance hall, opens to the study. The woodwork of the study is unpainted and consists of a vertical-board wainscot, a narrow crown molding, and two doors on the north side—one opening to a modern bathroom and the other opening to a closet.

On the second floor, the stair hall is diminished in size from the first-floor stair hall due to the insertion of two large closets that project westward from the front wall. These are original. The north closet is accessed from the stair hall, and the south closet is accessed from the master bedroom. Like the other primary rooms on the second floor, the stair hall features a baseboard, a chair rail, and a crown molding. The second floor has three bedrooms. Each is accompanied by a dressing room, and there are two bathrooms.

On the south side, the stair hall opens to the master bedroom, which, like the living room below it, runs from the front of the house to the rear. The focal point of the master bedroom is the classical mantel, which has paneled pilasters, a plain frieze, and a molded shelf. The brick-lined firebox is bordered by white marble, which also forms the hearth. On either side of the projecting fireplace are built-in drawers and bookshelves. These were added in the mid-1980s. East of the fireplace, a door opens to the master bath/dressing room. The master bath/dressing room was remodeled in the mid-1980s and has modern fixtures, a marble tile floor, mirror-faced closet doors and mirror-faced walls and ceiling.

On the north side of the second-floor stair hall is another bedroom at the front of the house. On its north side, a door opens to a dressing room with closets along the east wall. The narrow, half-story dressing room is above the screened porch. Like the master bath and dressing room at the south end of the second floor, its present use corresponds with the use for this space shown on the original plans. Doors on the west wall of the bedroom open to a closet and to a modern bathroom.

On the west side of the second-floor stair hall, at the top of the stair, a door opens to a third, rear, bedroom. A door on its north side opens to closets and a dressing room, one wall of which is mirrored. On its north side, the dressing room opens to a modern bathroom, which also has a door opening from the front bedroom on the north side of the stair hall.

From the second-floor stair hall, the stair continues to the attic, which was finished for additional living space in the mid-1980s. On this level, the walls and ceilings are sheet-rocked. A long, narrow hall with closets runs along the east wall from one end of the
floor to the other. At the south end is a bedroom with closets along the east wall. A
door on the west side of the hall north of the stair landing opens to a bathroom. A door at
the north end of the hall opens to a room with HVAC equipment. On the north wall of
this room can be seen the brick blocks used as the inner layer of the exterior walls.

The stair to the basement is accessed by a door at the south end of the first-floor
transverse hall, immediately behind the entrance hall. Finished in the mid-1980s to
create more living space, the walls in the two main rooms of the basement are wood-
paneled over brick and have been faux finished. The floors are carpeted, and the ceiling
is sheet-rocked. At the foot of the stair is a large TV room. A door on its south side
opens to a large billiard room. On the west side of the stair is a small music room. At the
north end of the TV room, a door on the east wall opens to a bathroom. A door opposite
the bathroom on the west wall opens to laundry and utility rooms, which have exposed
brick walls. On the north wall, a door opens to the garage.

14. The property was recorded as the John Gilmer House in the Forsyth County Inventory of
Historic and Architectural Properties, conducted by Gwynne Stephens Taylor between
1978 and 1980 and culminating in the 1981 publication of From Frontier to Factory: An
Architectural History of Forsyth County (Winston-Salem: North Carolina Department of
Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History with Winston-Salem/Forsyth
County Historic Properties Commission and the City-County Planning Board of Forsyth
County and Winston-Salem).

It was included as the John L. Gilmer House in the National Register nomination for the
Washington Park Historic District, prepared by Langdon Edmunds Oppermann and listed

It was recorded as the John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House in the Forsyth County
Architectural Survey Update, conducted by Heather Fearnbach from 2006 to 2009 with
continuing research until 2014, and was included on pages 511-512 of the resulting book,
Winston-Salem’s Architectural Heritage, published 2015 (Forsyth County Historic
Resources Commission and City of Winston-Salem, North Carolina).
John L. and Emma J. Gilmer House
605 West Cascade Avenue, Winston-Salem, NC 27127
(Property owned by Richard W. Sickles)

Disclaimer: Forsyth County cannot guarantee the accuracy of this information, and the County hereby disclaims all warranties, express or implied, as to the accuracy of this information.
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