

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Bank of Cape Fear

Local Historic Landmark #32
500 S. Main St., Winston-Salem
(Original Salem Lot 54)
Construction Date: 1847
Restoration Date: 1966
Landmark Designation Date: 10/04/1976

Originally, in 1783, hat maker Johann Reuz (Rights) built a home on this lot. Reuz and his wife lived in the house until his death in 1810. Salem Congregation purchased the house for the purpose of providing lodging for widows, thus calling it the Widows House. Over the years, the house fell into disrepair and a decision was made to demolish the structure.



By 1846, there was an effort to establish a branch bank of Wilmington's Cape Fear Bank, and this site was selected. The bank building was completed in 1847, and housed the operation of the bank, as well as the family of the cashier. Its first occupant was Israel Loesch (Lash) of Bethania.

After the Civil War, the bank resumed activity as the First National Bank of Salem, and continued under that name until Loesch's death in 1879. By coincidence, this was the same year that the Wachovia National Bank was established. In 1884, the building was purchased by Dr. James A. Butner, a dentist. Katherine Jane Hanes purchased the building for use as a storage facility for antiques in 1948.

The 2½-story brick building is a five-bay, side-gable building with a partially exposed cellar. The cellar is stuccoed on the front façade, with exposed brick on the side and rear elevations. The façade features two identical entries with wood paneled doors and rectangular four-light transoms. The northern door led to the banking operation and the southern door was the entrance for the private residence. A single stuccoed stoop spans both entries, with stone steps running parallel to the façade. Nine-over-six windows have stone sills. Flat arches are located above the door and window openings. A corbelled brick cornice is below the wood-shingled roof. Interior end chimneys with corbelled caps are located at both the north and south ends.



In 1965, Miss Hanes's estate bequeathed the property to Old Salem, Inc. Her heirs restored the building in her memory for use as a gallery for the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts, which later became the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Arts (SECCA). Following SECCA's departure, the building was used by Old Salem as a retail operation.

Today, the Bank of Cape Fear is a private residence.

Restoration of Cape Fear Bank Building into an art gallery to be used by the Winston-Salem Gallery of Fine Arts, 1966
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection



This information is also available
at the Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's web site:
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>