

# LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

## Gilmer Building

Local Historic Landmark #37

416-424 W. Fourth St., Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1925

Landmark Designation Date: 11/02/1981

The Gilmer Building is a well-preserved, two-story brick commercial building erected on the site of the Thomas S. Rucker House. Rucker was a local businessman involved in real estate and the insurance business. In 1924, Rucker sold the lot to the Gilmers.

The Gilmer Building is an impressive example of 1920s commercial architecture distinguished by its use of polychromed decorative terra cotta to create an ornate façade of classical and Egyptian influence.

The Gilmer Building was designed by Winston-Salem architect Harold Macklin and built for John L. and Powell Gilmer. Harold Macklin is credited with the designs of numerous other local buildings, such as the Spruce Street YMCA (Local Historic Landmark #99), the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel Building, and the YWCA (located in the West End Historic District). He also served as the local associate architect for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, designed by the nationally-renowned Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram.

The Gilmer brothers were prominent business leaders in Winston-Salem involved in a general mercantile business, a chain of eight retail department stores in North Carolina and Virginia, several automobile dealerships, and Camel City Lines (a bus line which later merged with Atlantic Greyhound). After developing this building, the Gilmer brothers sold the structure to the Home Builders Company,

which defaulted in 1928, but nonetheless managed the building until 1965.



*Gilmer Building, Date Unknown*  
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library  
Photograph Collection



Courtesy of Heather Fearnbach

Since its construction, the building has housed numerous tenants, both retail and office. In fact, between 1925 and 1978, the building housed a total of 99 commercial tenants.

The Gilmer Building is significant not only because it is associated with the rapid commercial development of downtown Winston-Salem during the city's boom period of the 1920s, but also because it is an impressive example of 1920s commercial architecture distinguished by the use of decorative terra cotta.

Today the Gilmer Building has been restored and houses office space on the second floor and a restaurant on the first level.



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Gilmer Building National Register Nomination  
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY1354.pdf>



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