

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Fifth House

Local Historic Landmark #45

434 S. Main St., Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1768

Reconstruction Date: 1976

Landmark Designation Date: 12/06/1982

In 1767, the site of the Fifth House was selected and construction began, but the house was not completed until the following year. Initially, the Fifth House served as lodging for day laborers – construction workers that were brought in from outside Salem. During this time, there were so many building projects in progress that Salem could not supply all of its own work force, thus the need for using non-Moravian, “stranger” workmen. Through time, the house had a series of occupants and uses.

The property also had a strong association with the Salem pottery industry. The main pottery site was located immediately north of the Fifth House, on the site now occupied by the Dr. John Francis Shaffner House (Local Historic Landmark #71). Master potters Gottfried Aust and Rudolph Christ stored materials at the Fifth House and built a small kiln that remained in use for many years.

In 1842, Christian Ebert purchased the house, enlarged it, and added a second story. The house was also sided with weatherboards. The 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows that the house was moved to the rear of the lot facing Salt Street, but by 1917 (according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps), the house had been demolished for unknown reasons.



Vacant Lot that was the proposed site of a grocery store in 1947
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens



In 1947, an event occurred regarding the Fifth House site that would have a major impact throughout the entire Winston-Salem community. The site was selected as the location for a large supermarket, sparking a heightened interest in the preservation of Salem. Powerful families banded together to champion the early Moravian town. Ultimately, a protective ordinance was adopted to establish the Old Salem Historic District as the first locally-zoned historic district in North Carolina.

The Fifth House is a 1½-story, half-timbered structure that rests on a stone cellar and features a steep tile roof with a kick eave and central chimney. The façade contains a paneled door and two six-over-six windows.

Old Salem, Inc. purchased the Fifth House property in 1975, and in turn, sold it to Bernard Gray, who reconstructed the house in 1976, based on archaeological evidence and the Moravian records.

Today the Fifth House is privately occupied.



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