Salem Tavern

Local Historic Landmark #48
800 S. Main St., Winston-Salem
(Original Salem Lot 68)
Construction Date: 1784
Restoration Date: 1956
Landmark Designation Date: 12/06/1982

When Salem was initially settled, having a tavern in the community was an extremely high priority. Salem's first tavern was built in 1771, but burned in 1784. During that same year, it was rebuilt on the existing foundation of the previous tavern; however, the new tavern was expanded to be a 2½-story brick structure. This was to be the first all-brick building constructed in Salem. In fact, materials that had been produced for building the Single Sisters' House were diverted to construct the tavern. These materials included roofing tiles and bricks, both made by Johann Gottlob Krause, the renowned potter and mason. Krause was made a master mason upon completion of the Salem Tavern, rising to this distinction in three years, as opposed to the usual seven-year apprenticeship.

The Salem Tavern, 1882
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens
via Digital Forsyth (http://www.digitalforsyth.org)

Old Salem Tavern, 1918
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library
Photograph Collection

Salem Tavern was a business venture of the Church until 1850. During this time, the tavern was a place of interaction between Moravians and non-Moravians, referred to as "strangers." The tavern expanded over the years to meet growing needs. By 1805, guest rooms were added to the attic; between 1815 and 1816, a two-story wing was constructed off the rear elevation to add more dining hall space. In 1816, the Salem Tavern Dining Room (Local Historic Landmark #15) was built on the adjacent lot north of Salem Tavern. In 1832, a two-story dining hall annex was constructed between the Tavern and the Tavern Dining Room. By 1838, a two-story porch was built across the facades of all three buildings. By the late 19th century, these three buildings were collectively known as the Salem Hotel. The middle building, the annex, was removed by 1897 and the Salem Tavern Dining Room had become a tenement. During the early 20th century, Miss Ada Allen and her sisters lived in and conserved the Salem Tavern.

Salem Tavern is a large 2½-story Flemish bond brick structure with stone steps to a front porch. It is roofed

in tiles and has two brick interior end chimneys. The herringbone wood door does not have a transom above and there are no windows on the façade's first story. It was designed in this manner so as to discourage "peeping," which is reminiscent of taverns in Germany. The second story has six-over-six window with elliptical arches. The single-story, full-façade porch with chamfered posts has a wood-shingled roof. On the rear is a two-story, front-gable brick ell with casement windows. Attached to the ell's west elevation is a wood-shingled shed roof over a reconstructed bake oven. The tavern property also features several outbuildings, including a large wooden barn moved from the Jones House (Local Historic Landmark #34) in Bethania, in 1961. The relocated barn dates from the same era as the original barn and is believed to be quite similar to it.

In 1941, Richard J. Reynolds Jr. purchased the property and donated it to the Wachovia Historical Society. It was restored in 1956.

Today Salem Tavern is an exhibit property of Old Salem Museums and Gardens.

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