

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Salem Town Hall

Local Historic Landmark #65

301 S. Liberty St., Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1912

Adaptive Rehabilitation Date: 1980s

Landmark Designation Date: 11/19/1984

Salem Town Hall was Salem's last municipal building constructed before consolidation with Winston in 1913, and is the only one of Salem's town halls to remain standing. Salem was originally founded by the Moravians in 1766 as the central congregational town in the 100,000-acre Wachovia Tract. From its creation until 1856, the town was a theocracy, whose functioning depended on the willingness of the Church's members to abide by congregational rules and regulations. During the first half of the 19th century, a drift from the firm allegiance to the theocracy occurred as outside influences began to affect the attitudes and rules of the congregation. As such, in 1856, Salem was incorporated by the State as a North Carolina municipality and Church rule ended.



Just to the north, the Town of Winston was incorporated in 1859. From that time on, the towns of Salem and Winston carried on a competitive relationship continuing well through the remainder of the 19th century. To try to hold its own with the rapidly expanding Winston, Salem continued its efforts at growth and civic improvement during the first decade of the 20th century. In 1910, the Southbound Railroad gave a tremendous boost to the town when it expanded into Salem. This extension of the rail line into the town required construction of a depot. Just how badly Salem wanted the rail line and its depot can be seen in the fact that the proposed site for the new depot was the location of the existing Salem Town Hall



*Rough and Ready Fire Company in Front of Salem Town Hall Building, Date Unknown
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens*

(constructed in 1886). Once the decision was made to surrender the 1886 Town Hall site for the Southbound Railroad (Local Historic Landmark #82), the Town was then faced with the problem of acquiring a new location and erecting a new town hall.

On May 6, 1912, the Salem Board of Commissioners purchased a lot on the southeast corner of S. Liberty and W. Cemetery Streets for \$2,100. By summer of that year, Fogle Brothers Company was selected as contractor for the new Town Hall, which was to be built according to plans by Willard C. Northup, for \$10,194. Northup was a prominent local architect who later formed a joint practice with Leet O'Brien; their firm designed many of the city's and state's most outstanding buildings. Northup's design for Salem Town Hall was an eclectic combination of both Italianate and local Moravian architectural influences, such as the round-arched bonnet hood. Fogle Brothers, the selected contractor, was one of the most prolific local builders during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Salem Town Hall was completed in late 1912, and the first meeting of the Salem Commissioners in the new building was held December 6, 1912. Yet within six months, Winston and Salem consolidated; the official

vote was taken on March 18, 1913, and on May 6th, Winston Mayor Oscar B. Eaton was elected the first mayor of Winston-Salem.

After consolidation, Winston's City Hall became the joint municipal building until the present City Hall (Local Historic Landmark #115) was constructed in 1926. Salem's Town Hall did not stand empty – it continued to be used as a fire station until the mid 1970s. Known originally as the Rough and Ready Fire Company, the station became known soon after consolidation as Station Number 2. For years, the station served as one of the primary fire stations in Winston-Salem. In 1958, a new fire station was built facing S. Main Street directly behind the former Town Hall. The two buildings then worked together as a complex. During the 1980s, the City of Winston-Salem sold the Salem Town Hall building, and it has been sensitively rehabilitated into office and commercial use.

A historic marker was placed at the Salem Town Hall in 2006 as part of the City of Winston-Salem's Historic Marker Program.

Today the Salem Town Hall Building is used for commercial office space.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Salem Town Hall National Register Nomination
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY0843.pdf>

<http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/?query=winston-salem&facet.workLocation=Forsyth%20County>



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