

# LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

## Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block

**Local Historic Landmark #86**

**500 W. Fourth St., Winston-Salem**

**Construction Date: 1929**

**Landmark Designation Date: 01/04/1993**

In 1929, Kate Bitting Reynolds asked the architectural firm of Northup and O'Brien to design the Morris-Early building and the Sosnik's building in the 500 block of W. Fourth Street between Spruce and Poplar Streets. Kate Bitting Reynolds was the daughter of J.A. Bitting of Winston-Salem, who was president of the First National Bank. Kate had married William Neal Reynolds in 1889. Reynolds was the brother of the tobacco magnate, R.J. Reynolds.

Frank B. Morris, J. Harold Early and Early L. Parrish moved their furniture store from its location at 609 N. Liberty Street into the new building on the corner of W. Fourth and N. Poplar Streets. The firm carried quality furnishings, and on September 24, 1929, it sponsored a large open house to celebrate the move to its new building.

Soon after the construction of the Morris-Early Building, Kate Bitting Reynolds commissioned Northup and O'Brien to design a second commercial building on the block, with Sosnik's clothing store planned as the major tenant. After ten years at their store at 420 N. Liberty Street, Sosnik's moved into the new store at W. Fourth and N. Spruce Streets. On September 30, 1930, the store invited the public to its formal opening in the new location. Sosnik's was successful in its new location; in 1949, the store merged with Thalhimer's Inc. of Richmond, Virginia.

When Thalhimer's came to Winston-Salem, it hired the well-known New York design firm of Raymond F. Loewy Associates to remodel the store.

The Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block features Art Deco-influenced design elements. The block consists of two buildings, which are two of only a few Art Deco-influenced buildings remaining in downtown Winston-Salem. They are associated with the boom period of the 1920s in Winston-Salem, a time of tremendous growth,



*Sosnik's Building, corner of W. Fourth and N. Spruce Streets*



*Morris-Early Building, southwest corner of W. Fourth and N. Poplar Streets*

Photographs courtesy of Heather Fearnbach

which enabled the financing of downtown building construction.

The Morris-Early component of the building combines Classical and Art Deco elements and incorporates terra cotta in its façade. The Sosnik's building is a limestone structure with low-relief geometrical designs and floral motifs.

Today the Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block houses a variety of commercial and retail enterprises.



*West Fourth Street looking east near Spruce Street at Christmas, 1938  
(Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block at right of photograph)  
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection*



*Thalhimer's Department Store on West Fourth Street, 1950  
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection*

## **WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

**Sosnik's/Morris-Early Commercial Block  
National Register Nomination  
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY1521.pdf>**



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