

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Shell Service Station

Local Historic Landmark #92

1111 E. Sprague St., Winston-Salem

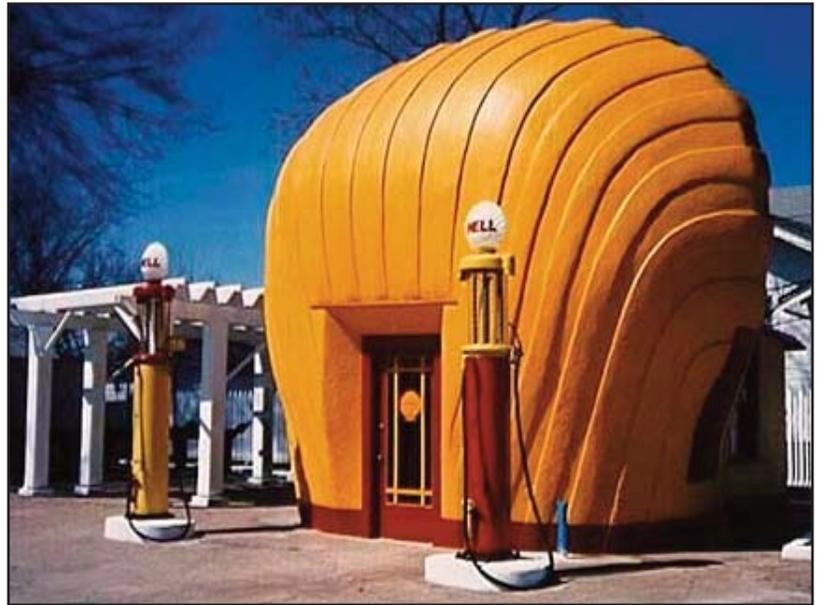
Construction Date: c. 1930

Restoration Date: c. 1990s

Landmark Designation Date: 05/02/1994

The Shell Service Station was built c. 1930 by the Quality Oil Company of Winston-Salem. The company had been established the previous year by Joseph Glenn and Bert Bennett to distribute the products of the Shell Oil Company. Shell had not marketed its products in North Carolina before the late 1920s. Therefore, Glenn and Bennett decided to attract customer attention with a series of shell-shaped service stations. Eight such stations were constructed throughout the Winston-Salem area, including one in Kernersville. The station on E. Sprague Street is the only one remaining.

The design of the station was patented on November 25, 1930. It is a shell-shaped concrete structure that is one story high and approximately 18 feet tall. The building features a central front entrance, with deeply recessed windows on each



side (two windows on the west and one window on the east). The station served motorists in the Waughtown area of Winston-Salem and Route 150 traffic until the 1950s.

The Shell Service Station is significant as a rare, surviving example of the literalism of early 20th century advertising. It also reflects the growing importance of the automobile as a symbol of freedom in America. The building's form visually repeats the Shell gasoline brand and is a three-dimensional representation of the Shell trademark. The building is literally a sign and an advertisement which is read and immediately comprehended. The shell design was unique as compared to what had been previously built by other major oil companies. Additionally, while there was not much profit in operating service stations during the 1930s, the station's unusual design was highly beneficial in promoting the image of Quality Oil Company as an aggressive, innovative, new company.

During the 1990s, the Shell Service Station was restored by Preservation North Carolina, North Carolina's historic preservation nonprofit advocacy group, and where the organization maintained a region office until 2011.

Today the Shell Service Station is privately owned.



Quality Oil Company, Shell Service Station
at 1111 E. Sprague Street at Peachtree Street, c. 1940s
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection



Quality Oil Company, Shell Service Station
at 1111 E. Sprague Street at Peachtree Street, 1954
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Shell Service Station National Register Nomination

<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY0015.pdf>

Waughtown/Belview Historic District

National Register Nomination

<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY3012.pdf>

http://www.oldgas.com/info/ws_shell.htm

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shell_Service_Station_\(Winston-Salem\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shell_Service_Station_(Winston-Salem))

<http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/11631>

<http://www.cityprofile.com/north-carolina/shell-service-station.html>



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