

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Nissen Building

Local Historic Landmark #110

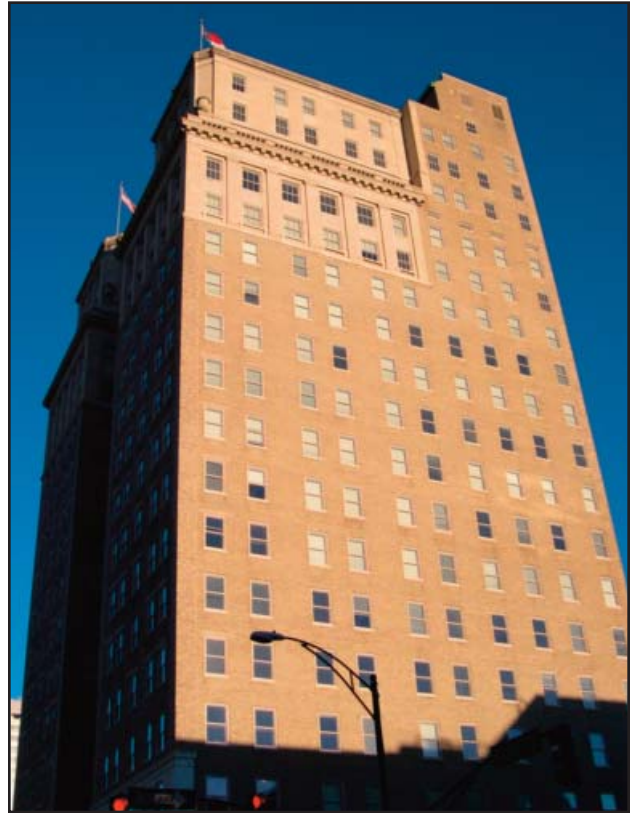
310-314 W. Fourth St., Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1926

Adaptive Rehabilitation Date: 2005

Landmark Designation Date: 02/17/2003

The Nissen Building is associated with the life of William Madison Nissen. Nissen's great grandfather was a wagon maker in the Moravian settlement of Salem, and his father founded the Nissen Wagon Works in 1834 on Waughtown Street. Continuing the business, Nissen owned and operated the Nissen Wagon Works until 1924. At the peak of production, the Nissen Wagon Works produced 10,000 wagons a year. Prior to the rise of the tobacco industry, Winston-Salem was known as the home of the Nissen wagon. In 1919, a fire destroyed the main building of the wagon works, but Nissen rebuilt the plant. However, shortly thereafter, Nissen's health began to fail and he sold the company in 1925 for close to one million dollars. Reportedly, some of this money was used to construct the Nissen Building the following year. There does not appear to be any overriding reason for Nissen's desire to build a skyscraper; he more than likely did so out of a combination of civic pride and a desire to take advantage of the business boom of the 1920s. Nissen had a vision of Winston-Salem as a progressive city and his willingness to finance and promote that view won him a special place in the hearts of city residents.



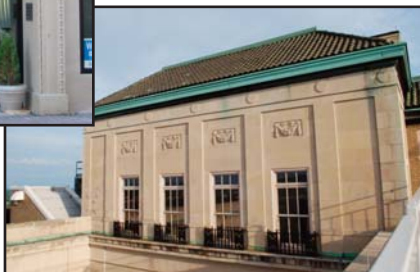
The Nissen Building is the work of New York architect, William L. Stoddart, whose other commissions in North Carolina included Greensboro's O'Henry Hotel, and the Hotel Charlotte. At the time of its construction the Nissen Building, at 18 stories, was the tallest building in North Carolina. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of the skyscrapers of the 1920s, the Nissen Building features such Neo-Classical design motifs as a modillioned cornice, balustrades, and urns. The Nissen Building was constructed for use as commercial offices, which, through time, occupied the upper floors of the structure. Most of the street level details were altered during the 1960s, when First Union Bank occupied the building. With the exception of those changes, the Nissen Building largely remains as it was constructed in 1926.

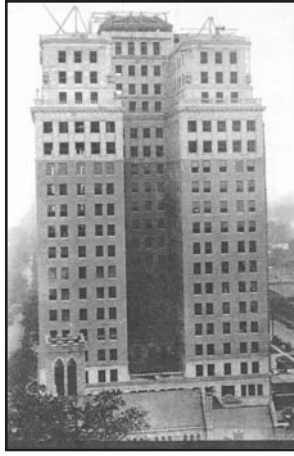
In 2005, the Nissen Building underwent a comprehensive adaptive reuse rehabilitation.

Today the Nissen Building houses residential apartments on the upper floors and commercial uses on the street level.



Photographs courtesy of Heather Fearnbach





Nissen Building under construction, 1926
Courtesy of Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's Files



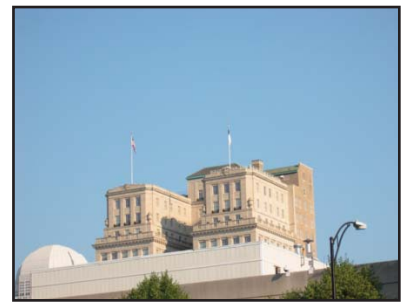
Nissen Building in Winston-Salem, c. 1930
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library
Photograph Collection via Digital Forsyth
(<http://www.digitalforsyth.org>)



Courtesy of Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's Files



Courtesy of Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's Files



Courtesy of Heather Fearnbach

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Nissen Building National Register Nomination
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY0784.pdf>

<http://www.nissenapartments.com/>

[http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?
CISOROOT=/nc_post&CISOPTR=
6562&CISOBX=1&REC=2](http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/nc_post&CISOPTR=6562&CISOBX=1&REC=2)

[http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/
Planning/HistoricResourcesCommission/Articles/
2006HeritageAwardRecipients](http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/Planning/HistoricResourcesCommission/Articles/2006HeritageAwardRecipients)



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