The O’Hanlon Building

Local Historic Landmark #135
101-105 West Fourth St. Winston-Salem
Construction Date: 1915
Landmark Designation Date: 12/19/2016

Created during a period in which new heights in building construction were made possible through innovations such as steel framing and passenger elevators, the eight-story O’Hanlon Building served as the second skyscraper to be built in Winston-Salem.

The O’Hanlon Building was constructed in 1915 at the behest of pharmacist and philanthropist Edward O’Hanlon. O’Hanlon, a Fayetteville native, moved to Winston in 1894 after completing an education at the Baltimore, Maryland College of Pharmacy. After two years of employment at the S.H. Smith drug store in Winston, O’Hanlon purchased the L.E. Steer’s drug company, eventually acquiring the property in 1904. O’Hanlon operated his pharmacy until it was destroyed by a fire in 1913. Following the fire, O’Hanlon temporarily relocated his pharmacy to a new location while he had plans drawn up for what would eventually become the towering O’Hanlon Building.

Winston-Salem-based architect Willard C. Northup served as the principal designer for the O’Hanlon Building. Hoping to avoid a second fire, supervising architect W.H. Kindervater recruited fireproof construction specialists, the Travers Wood Company, to execute the project. Northup chose a neoclassical style for the building’s design, both to differentiate it from Winston’s existing Romanesque Revival-style buildings and to project an air of permanence and refinement fitting for a self-made businessman. Completed in 1915, the building features a smooth-cream terra-cotta classical ornament at both its base and capital. This is contrasted against the rough-face variegated red brick that sheathes the intermediary floors and draws attention to the building’s height. The first story contains a spacious east storefront and a smaller west storefront, intended initially for the pharmacy and retail space.

The building’s interior has undergone minor changes over the years and still retains the building’s original Norfolk Iron and Wire works staircase. The O’Hanlon also retains two passenger elevators that feature their original brass doors as well as the building’s original mail chute.

Following the death of Edward O’Hanlon in 1958, the pharmacy was managed by his wife Nancy Critz until finally closing its doors in 1961. Over the years, the building has had multiple owners. It was acquired by O’Hanlon, LLC in 2016.

Today, Mooney’s Mediterranean Café operates out of the first floor pharmacy space while the upper floors are used as offices.

Photo courtesy of Digital Forsyth, Earlier O’Hanlon Building

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