

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic      The Gilmer Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number      416-424 West Fourth Street      \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town      Winston Salem      \_\_\_ vicinity of      congressional district

state      North Carolina      code      county      Forsyth      code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name      Mr. DeWayne H. Anderson      420 West Fourth Street Associates

street & number      P. O. Box 21

city, town      Winston-Salem      \_\_\_ vicinity of      state      North Carolina      27102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.      Office of the Register of Deeds Forsyth County Hall of Justice

street & number

city, town      Winston-Salem      state      North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title      N/A      has this property been determined eligible?      \_\_\_ yes       no

date      \_\_\_ federal      \_\_\_ state      \_\_\_ county      \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records      N/A

city, town      state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Gilmer Building is a rectangular (80x86) two-story brick commercial structure located at the southeast corner of Fourth and Spruce Streets in Winston-Salem's central business district. Built between 1924 and 1926, it reflects Winston-Salem's boom period of the 1920s and more specifically the commercial development of Fourth Street at that time. Several other buildings of the period are located in the vicinity of the Gilmer Building (along Fourth Street and on cross streets), but it remains one of the most decorative and least altered of the group.

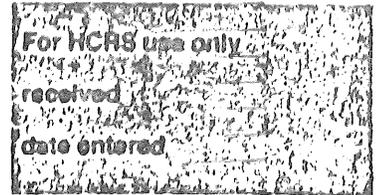
Prominent local architect Harold Macklin designed the Gilmer Building using an array of classical motifs in a striking manner. The Fourth Street facade is that of principal impact. Here terra cotta panels and ornamentation are used to define the vertical and horizontal organization of the building. Horizontally the symmetrical facade is divided into five major bays consisting of two shop fronts on either side of a central round-arched portal with stairs leading to the second floor. While originally each shop front had plate glass windows with ceramic tile dado below and glass tile transom above and a recessed entrance, they now have been largely remodelled with various up-datings of glass, metal and over-scaled signage. However, at least part of the transom of 424 W. Fourth Street remains intact, and other sections may also be hidden underneath the current signage. The shop fronts are separated by paneled pilasters which are unified above the first story by a full entablature with two-part architrave, plain frieze and a dentil cornice. Diamond-shaped panels set on a deep turquoise ground accent each of the slightly projecting pilaster "caps." The second story level is composed of a band of thirteen three-over-one sash windows separated by plain terra cotta panels. More elaborate panels separate the bays and continue the effect of the pilasters below. These panels display a classically-inspired foliate design applied to a deep turquoise ground. Above the bank of windows, the richly colored accents of the building come into full play with the heavy cavetto cornice of Egyptian roll-and-gorge influence. The rust-red and deep turquoise colors of the cornice, along with the turquoise of the other decorative panels, provide a sharp contrast to the tan of the rest of the terra cotta, and thereby greatly enliven the overall design. Above the cornice a paneled parapet caps the Fourth Street facade.

While the Spruce Street elevation is of much simpler character than the Fourth Street facade, it, too, is well detailed. Here the detailing is more subtle than flashy, and the design is carried largely through the patterning of the bricks rather than through polychromed terra cotta. At first glance this elevation appears to consist of a relatively blank wall punctuated by bands of paired windows. A closer inspection, however, reveals the use of granite window sills, diamond-shaped terra cotta blocks above the windows backed by a wide bank of brick headers, and several rows of bricks laid in soldier course fashion. A simple terra cotta tile bank serves as a cornice along Spruce Street. The only change to this elevation is the closure of several basement windows with brick.

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The east side of the Gilmer Building abuts the adjacent building.

The roof of the building is flat.

While the interiors of the first story shops have been remodelled during and after mid-century, the second story has seen few alterations. Basically, offices are arranged around a T-shaped hall which runs through the center of the building from front to rear and then from the center of this hall eastward to the east side of the building. Alterations (ca. 1980) include the removal of one office partition and the addition of two others. Otherwise the interior appears much as it did when constructed, with its stuccoed walls, moulded picture rail, and glazed and paneled doors. On the west wall of the main corridor, large windows are arranged adjacent to the doors.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1924-1926 **Builder/Architect** Harold Macklin

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Gilmer Building at 416-424 West Fourth Street is one of the best remaining examples of the commercial buildings erected during Winston-Salem's boom period of the 1920s. Designed by prominent local architect Harold Macklin for business leaders John L. and Powell Gilmer, this 1924-1926 structure is distinguished by its ornate, polychromed terra cotta facade which displays both classical and Egyptian stylistic influences.

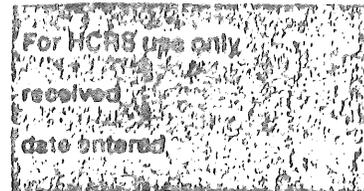
**Criteria Assessment --**

A. The Gilmer Building is associated with the rapid commercial development of downtown Winston-Salem during the city's boom period of the 1920s.

C. The Gilmer Building is an impressive example of 1920s commercial architecture distinguished by the use of polychromed decorative terra cotta to create an ornate facade of classical and Egyptian influence. The Gilmer Building was designed by prominent local architect Harold Macklin, who is credited with the designs of numerous other local buildings of the period including the Spruce Street YMCA (directly behind the Gilmer Building), the YWCA, the Journal and Sentinel Building, and Montaldo's. Macklin also served as the local associate architect for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, designed by Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram.

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Prior to the erection of the Gilmer Building, the site at the southeast corner of Fourth and Spruce Streets was part of the Thomas S. Rucker homeplace. Rucker was a local businessman engaged in real estate and insurance.<sup>1</sup> On January 26, 1924 the Ruckers sold Lot 1 to J. L. and Emma J. and Daisy V. Gilmer, who in turn transferred the property on October 27, 1924 to the Gilmer Brothers.<sup>2</sup>

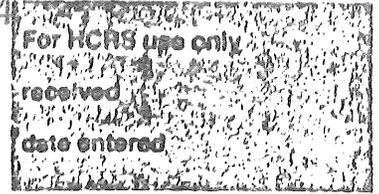
Brothers John L. and Powell Gilmer were for years prominent business leaders in Winston-Salem. From 1901 to 1905 they operated the Gilmer Brothers Company, a general mercantile business that grew out of their father's firm. In 1905 they sold their interests in this company and began a mill shipments and commission business from which evolved a chain of eight retail department stores in the Carolinas and Virginia. In 1919 they discontinued the commission business, and the retail stores were reorganized as Gilmers, Inc. In 1921 John L. and Powell Gilmer left Gilmers Inc. to devote more time to their motor interests, which has begun around 1909. In addition to serving as the dealers and distributors for almost all makes of automobiles in Winston-Salem, they developed Camel City Lines, a bus company which later merged with Atlantic Greyhound Lines. John L. and Powell Gilmer were also heavily involved in the building and development of Winston-Salem's business district and were responsible for the construction of numerous buildings downtown. In particular, they became pioneers in the development of the West Fourth Street retail district and were the first to pay \$1000 per front for property along this street. They also developed several residential areas of Winston-Salem, including Bon Air, Briarwood, Southside and Motorvale.<sup>3</sup>

The Gilmer brothers were responsible for the development of the commercial building at 416-424 West Fourth Street. After purchasing the property, they retained local architect Harold Macklin to design the two-story structure with ornate terra cotta facade.<sup>4</sup> Harold Macklin (1885-1948) was a native of Portland, England and was educated in the cathedral schools in Salisbury, England and the Architectural School in London.<sup>5</sup> In 1919 he came to Winston-Salem where he was first employed by the general contracting firm of Harry F. Hann and Company. Soon he opened his own architectural practice and for a time had his office at 420 West Fourth Street.<sup>6</sup> Macklin was a prolific architect of the period and among his many designs in Winston-Salem are the Spruce Street YMCA (directly behind the Gilmer Building), the YWCA, the Journal and Sentinel Building and Montaldo's. He also served as associate architect for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, designed by Boston's Ralph Adams Cram. Macklin's firm was reorganized several times during the years and is now in existence under the name of Hines, Northup and Ersoy.<sup>7</sup>

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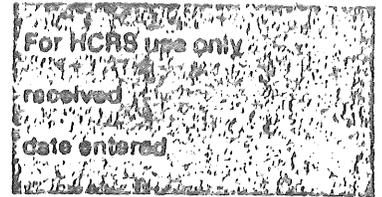
After developing the property at 416-424 West Fourth Street, Gilmer Brothers sold it on June 2, 1926 to Home Builders Company.<sup>8</sup> This real estate and home-building firm, owned by S. C. Ripple and T. M. Stevenson, had acted as the real estate broker on the Rucker tract and had signed an option to purchase the completed building from the Gilmers. The Home Builders Company specialized in speculative home building, constructing 200-300 houses throughout the city.<sup>9</sup> On November 1, 1928 Home Builders defaulted and underwent foreclosure of their Deed of Trust to the Virginia Trust Co. with Linville K. Martin serving as Trustee.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless the Home Builders Company and later Ripple Realty continued as tenants and as managing agents of the building until 1965.<sup>11</sup>

On November 22, 1940 the property was sold to Investors Service Corporation.<sup>12</sup> and on October 5, 1943 it was again sold to Milton and Robert M. Silver.<sup>13</sup> On May 12, 1980 the building was purchased by 420 West Fourth Street Associates, the present owners.<sup>14</sup>

Through the years the structure has been associated with numerous Winston-Salem business establishments -- both prominent and obscure. Between 1925 and 1978 the building housed a total of 99 commercial tenants. A sampling of these include Twin City Blue Printers, H. T. Hearn Engraving Company, Byerly and Steele Jewelers, McCall's Linen Shop, Fred W. Butner Architect, Bland's Pianos, Carolina Drugs, Kornegay Furriers and Scientific Swedish Massage and Escort Service Inc.<sup>15</sup> On November 2, 1981, the Gilmer Building was designated by the Winston-Salem Board of Alderman as a local historic property.<sup>16</sup>

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FOOTNOTES --

<sup>1</sup>Winston-Salem, N. C. City Directory (Asheville: Commercial Service Co. Publishers, 1924), p. 624.

<sup>2</sup>Deed Book 233, p. 126; Deed Book 237, p. 216, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County Hall of Justice, Winston-Salem.

<sup>3</sup>"John and Powell Gilmer Have Had Important Part in Business Life of City," Winston-Salem Journal, October 25, 1927; "J. L. Gilmer, Bus Pioneer, Dies at 75," Twin City Sentinel, February 1, 1947.

<sup>4</sup>Building Specifications for the store and office building to be built for Mssrs. J. L. and Powell Gilmer at the corner of Spruce and Fourth Streets by Harold Macklin, AIA. (Specifications in possession of 420 West Fourth Street Associates.)

<sup>5</sup>Winston-Salem Section of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Architectural Guide Winston-Salem Forsyth County (Winston-Salem: Winston-Salem Section NCAIA, 1978), p. 184.

<sup>6</sup>Winston-Salem, N. C. City Directory, 1920, 1924-1926.

<sup>7</sup>Architectural Guide, pp. 90, 184; Interviews by DeWayne H. Anderson with Don Hines and Fred Butner architects, Winston-Salem, June 1980.

<sup>8</sup>Deed Book 249, p. 34, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County.

<sup>9</sup>Interviews by DeWayne H. Anderson with S. Clay Ripple Sr. and Margaret Stevenson, Winston-Salem, June 1980.

<sup>10</sup>Deed of Trust Book 253, p. 42; Deed of Trust Book 404, p. 255, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County.

<sup>11</sup>Ripple and Stevenson Interviews.

<sup>12</sup>Deed Book 476, p. 196, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County.

<sup>13</sup>Deed Book 509, p. 94, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County.

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<sup>14</sup> Deed Book 1304, p. 489, Office of the Register of Deeds, Forsyth County.

<sup>15</sup> Winston-Salem, N. C. City Directory 1925-1978.

<sup>16</sup> DeWayne H. Anderson to Davyd Foard Hood, February 23, 1982, in the Gilmer Building File, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Winston-Salem East

Quadrangle scale 1: 24 000

UMT References

A 

1	7	5	6	8	4	2	0	3	9	9	4	8	1	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is Lot 1 in Block 79 of the Forsyth County Tax Maps. A xeroxed copy of which is attached.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura A. W. Phillips (Consultant)

organization date

street & number 637 North Spring Street telephone (919) 727-1968

city or town Winston-Salem state North Carolina

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

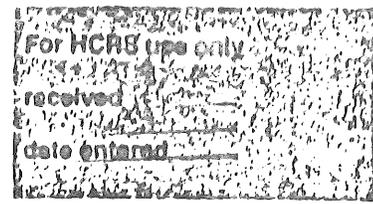
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Building Specifications for the store and office building to be built for Mssrs. J. L. and Powell Gilmer at the corner of Spruce and Fourth Streets by Harold Macklin, AIA. Specifications in possession of 420 West Fourth Street Associates.

Butner, Fred; Hines, Don; Ripple, S. Clay Sr.; Stevenson, Margaret. Interviews by DeWayne H. Anderson. Winston-Salem, June 1980.

Forsyth County Records. Office of the Register of Deeds, Winston-Salem, North Carolina (Subgroup: Deeds).

Twin-City Sentinel. Winston-Salem, 1947.

Winston-Salem Journal. 1927.

Winston-Salem, N. C. City Directory. Asheville; Commercial Service Co. Publishers, 1920, 1924-1978.

Winston-Salem Section of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Architectural Guide Winston-Salem Forsyth County. Winston-Salem Section NCAIA, 1978.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

4996 1/4 NE  
(RURAL HALL)

80°15' 568000m E. MT. AIRY 36 MI. RURAL HALL 7.7 MI. 569 570 571 12'30"



The Gilmer Building  
Winston-Salem, N. C.  
Winston-Salem East Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000  
17 568420/3994810



U.S. 64  
RG 38 M.

