



City of Winston-Salem City Council
Council Agenda Item Summary

Title	Request for a Public Hearing regarding the eligibility of Bahnsen Company Building for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
City Council Committee	Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date	January 12, 2026
Staff Lead (Presenter)	Michelle M. McCullough, Historic Resources Officer
Department Head	Chris Murphy, Planning and Development Services Director
City Manager/ACM	Aaron King, ACM

Agenda Item Summary

Recommended Council Action	Resolution Approval
Suggested Action/ Motion Options	I move for approval of the Resolution finding that the said property meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places
Strategic Focus Area	Community Advocacy and Engagement
Strategic Plan Objective	CAE4: Engaging Residents and Fostering Civic Pride
Anticipated Fiscal Impact	No Material Fiscal Impact

Summary of Information:

Historic Resources staff recently received a National Register Nomination for the Bahnsen Building. The nominated property is located at 1001 South Marshall Street and is 2.02 acres in size.

The National Register is a federal program administered by the National Park Service and is the nation's official list of historic buildings and districts worthy of preservation. Listing in the Register is predominantly an honor and does not negatively affect the rights of a private property owner. Unlike the Local Historic Landmark designation, there is no local property tax deferral associated with the National Register program.

Federal and State guidelines for the Certified Local Government Program require that the City participates in the process of nominating properties to the National Register. This participation involves the review of nominations by the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission (HRC) and City Council. The HRC and City Council are also required to submit comments to the State Historic Preservation Office relaying their findings as to the eligibility of the property under consideration for listing in the National Register, and whether they believe the property meets the criteria for National Register listing. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation are attached for your information.



The Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission solicited public comments on this request at its January 7, 2026 meeting.

Significance Requirement

The Bahnsen Company Building is eligible for National Register of Historic Places listing because of its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history—specifically our local industry—as the manufacturing plant that invented, fabricated, supplied, installed, and serviced air conditioning and filtration, humidification, and ventilation equipment and systems that revolutionized factory design and operation. Mechanical air conditioning facilitated optimal material and equipment performance and promoted workforce productivity, thus increasing industrial output. The business headed by brothers Agnew Hunter Bahnsen and Frederic Fries Bahnsen originated in July 1915 as the Normalair Company, which marketed a humidifier patented by their uncle, industrialist John W. Fries. The business, reorganized as the Bahnsen Humidifier Company in 1918, became known as the Bahnsen Company by 1921 as it grew to serve an international clientele. Engineers designed site- and industry-specific systems for venues including bakeries, cotton warehouses, flour and textile mills, tobacco and furniture factories, paper plants, laboratories, museums, and educational buildings. A. H. Bahnsen Jr. became the Bahnsen Company's president in 1947 and guided its rapid expansion. The business persevered and prospered through product diversification. The enterprise's ongoing contribution to the local economy as an employer, consumer of goods and services, and taxpayer, has been enormous. The Bahnsen Company Building manifests the concern's explosive growth between 1925 and 1965. The approximately 127,000-square-foot plant evolved in stages beginning with a two-story, flat-roofed, brick, 6,480-square-foot factory erected in 1925. Additions constructed in 1935, 1940, 1944, 1947, and 1948 allowed for production increase and provided room for administrative, manufacturing, and research and product development staff to operate at the same location. The period of significance begins with the original factory's 1925 construction and continues until 1965, when the company moved its manufacturing department to a 300,000-square-foot plant on Lowery Street. The South Marshall Street complex continued to house administrative offices and the research and development department until 1985.

Integrity Requirement

Bahnsen Company Building possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity - location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship, a requirement for listing in the National Register.

Attachments

- National Register of Historic Places Nomination Review for Bahnson Company Building
- National Register Criteria for Evaluation
- Resolution Supporting the Eligibility for and Nomination of Bahnson Company Building to the National Register of Historic Places
- Presentation

Committee Action	COW 1/12/2026
For:	Against:
Remarks: Unanimous Approved	