

Jefferson Pilot Insurance Company Home Office

Guilford County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

In the case of Pilot Life, the choice of the Georgian Revival style helped to characterize the life insurance company as a reliable and secure investment. Pilot Life wanted to project an image of stability and patriotism for their existing customers and for the new customers they hoped to attract. The company wanted people who purchased their life insurance policies to know that Pilot Life would be there when needed.

To enhance the message of the Georgian Revival style, the architects decorated the buildings with an iconography that conveyed the company's values and attention to detail. Much of the imagery appears in the main building, Fackler, particularly its entrance pavilion, which is covered with symbols. Within a cartouche with floral garlands above the pavilion's pediment is the "Pilot," a nautical pilot wearing foul-weather gear behind a ship's wheel, which became the logo for the life insurance company. A simpler version of the pilot is also located in the center of the third story on the east end of the building. A cartouche above the entrance at the west end of Fackler features an image of the Pilot Mountain knob encircled by a wreath of leaves with garlands of fruits and vegetables.⁶⁰ Fackler Building's main entrance bay features reliefs of a mother with her children and an old man flanking the second-story window. Above the window is a winged hourglass, a symbol of mortality, sometimes found on gravestones as a message that life is fleeting. Between the second-story bay and the first-story bay is a tripartite relief of a farmer planting his seeds on one side and a farmer with a scythe harvesting his crops on the other side. The keystone in between depicts stylized sun rays above a beehive with three worker bees. Bees were a symbol used throughout the buildings as a message of activity, work, diligence, and good order, all qualities an insurance company would want to project. Fackler Building's main entrance surround depicts plants and birds with a worm in its mouth ("the early bird gets the worm"). On the interior, scrollwork is found on the pilaster capitals in the first-floor halls and intertwined with the fluted bands along the cornice and across the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the entrance hall. In the president's office on the third floor, the pilaster capitals are adorned with a pelican feeding her young with food from her own breast. Known as the Pelican in her Piety, this symbol of self-sacrifice has been used throughout history. There is much less iconography in the flanking Commercial and Mebane Buildings, although both have an owl symbolizing wisdom in a cartouche above their main entrances.

⁶⁰ Pilot Mountain, located near Mt. Airy, North Carolina, was the original logo for the predecessor company to Pilot Life but was later supplanted by the nautical pilot.

