

THE GATEWAY BUILDING

116 West Main Street | Salisbury, MD 21801



DEAL STORY:

The welcoming rebirth of downtown Salisbury continues at an accelerating rate, with a real momentum established that hardly seems stoppable. But this is not the first transformation for Salisbury's downtown corridor. The once vibrant, people-friendly, cultural and historical hub evolved in the late 1970's when the downtown transitioned from a retail heavy district to business office space. This created a barrier for foot traffic as people were cut off from walking through downtown buildings into the plaza area. It was no longer a pedestrian welcoming space but more of an inconvenient place where people drove to work, parked and at the end of the day - went home.

At the time the best course of action being discussed was to tear down the Gumby Galleria building (Gateway Building), and construct a street from Camden Street to the Plaza, and the connecting to Saint Peters Street. Not everyone agreed. Salisbury philanthropist and business pioneer, Richard Henson, and then Mayor Paul Martin recognized the impact traffic had on the success and growth of downtown businesses but saw an opportunity to create traffic movement through the group of buildings downtown without having to tear any buildings down. Preserving buildings and providing a safe, secure means of access from parking to access the Plaza. Local developers Palmer Gillis and Tony Gilkerson were approached with a request to preserve the Gateway Building by renovating the space to save it from being demolished and provide the right of way through the building from Parking lot #1 to the Plaza.

Our development team recommended and followed through with the consolidation of two buildings into one to spread the cost of the renovation across more square footage. Over time, the development team attracted one tenant after another to occupy the renamed, Gateway Building. Tenants including Faw & Casson, Long & Foster, Stone Mill Book and Bean, Wilmington Trust, Mercantile Mortgage and the rest was infill development.

QUICK FACTS:

- Pedestrian traffic solution
- Secure, well-lit, clean, no cost to taxpayers
- 30,000 square feet
- Renovation/Preservation
- Downtown Transformation

“BACK THEN I OWNED MANGLES, A WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE AND GUMBY'S GALLERIA NEXT DOOR. I NEEDED A BUILDER - I WAS JUST A REAL ESTATE GUY. I SOLD IT TO PALMER GILLIS AND HE MADE IT LOOK BEAUTIFUL. WE RE-DID THE WHOLE SITE AND TRANSFORMED IT INTO A FUNCTIONAL SPACE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ENERGY AND ACTIVITY ON THE PLAZA.”

Bill Ahtes

Salisbury Entrepreneur, Early Downtown
Salisbury Developer

