

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Esso Standard Oil Service Station

Other names/site number: PU4628, Ivy, Joe Filling Station

Name of related multiple property listing:

Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1600 W. 3rd Street

City or town: Little Rock State: Arkansas County: Pulaski

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

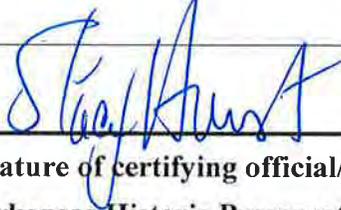
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B X C D

		<u>12-2-15</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	
Date	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)



Signature of the Keeper

1-8-2016

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne/Modernistic

MODERN MOVEMENT: International

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: OTHER/Baked enamel steel panels

Roof: OTHER/Tar

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station is an oblong box shaped filling and service station, built in 1957 and located in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The building retains structural integrity. The exterior displays the original baked-enamel steel siding and roll-up overhead doors. While the building no longer operates as a filling and service station, it contains the original arrangement of interior spaces. The building of concrete block construction contains four interior rooms. The two larger rooms include the auto service area designated by the three-bay overhead doors. Directly adjacent to the garage bays, the exterior curtain of windows indicates where the customer service counter and sales area existed. A flat cantilever awning protrudes over these windows. The building exhibits few decorative exterior elements. The two remaining rooms, the exterior accessed restrooms, complete the four room configuration. The

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Esso Standard Oil Service Station displays the ideal of function over form in its simplicity of design and floorplan.

Narrative Description

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station building, located at 1600 West 3rd Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is a former filling and service station. It exhibits typical twentieth century commercial form in the melding of the earlier Moderne style with the International style, which can be seen in the smooth external enameled cladding, flat roof, asymmetrical design, and curtain of windows. According to functionalist principals, the building's shape corresponds with the intended use as a filling and/or service station. The one-story structure reveals a fundamentally rectangular-shaped concrete block form typical of other box-type stations. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station displays function over form, with only subtle façade decoration and a flat roofline (with a parapet) typical of service station designs of this time period. Below the roofline, the exterior wall surfaces are unadorned and consist of white painted metal panels. The front exterior wall is interrupted by the three garage bay overhead doors, an entry door, and large floor-to-ceiling windows. A flat, cantilever awning or canopy protrudes beginning over the entry door continuing above the large windows of the extruding aluminum storefront glazing system and wrapping around the east corner of the building. This canopy of concrete is also concealed with baked enamel.

South elevation (front)

The front of the building faces West Third Street. A flat roof with parapet borders the top of the structure. The concrete block structure presents a surface of baked-enamel steel siding with a white finish interrupted by two red stripes. The exterior siding has a thin row of panels along the top that display a (faded) red painted line. Directly below that row rests two larger rows of siding panels in white, and below is another thin layer of panels with another red stripe. The left (West) side of this elevation contains three garage bay entries sealed by roll-up overhead doors just below the four rows of baked-enamel panels. These doors each consist of a wood frame with a pattern of fifteen panes of clear glass. The painted wood frame hue matches the white exterior siding.

Heading east along the building exterior, the customer entry door includes a wooden frame around a large pane of glass. Above this door, a transom rests topped by a white wooden strip displaying the address of the building. This portion of the building contains the customer service area. Continuing eastward on the exterior of the building below the awning, two large, almost floor-to-ceiling, single-pane windows positioned side-by-side sweep into the angled corner.

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Below the large windows, one thin row of baked-enamel tiles with red stripe concludes the wall base. The angled corner of the structure joins the south and east sides at a forty-five degree slant instead of the typical ninety degree angle of the standard rectangular building corner. This corner displays the same three rows of baked-enamel steel siding at the top of the wall, the wrap-around canopy extrudes from the fourth row of siding panels, and below it, a long glass panel enclosed by an aluminum frame and thin row of siding, also noted on the front of the building.

East Elevation

The east side of the structure connects to the south wall through the same forty-five degree, angled corner. This elevation continues the pattern of a flat roofline descending into rows of baked-enamel steel siding. The wrap-around flat canopy and single-pane glass panels, which are enclosed in an aluminum storefront glazing system, continue the design from the south elevation onto this side of the building. The first large one-paned window matches the South side; however, the second window is narrower. To the right of the aluminum storefront glazing system, another small window breaks the smooth steel panel façade. This window, a two-over-one fixed pane opening, covers three vertical bars mounted on the inside. Spaced evenly to the right of this small window, two entry doors serve as exterior entrances to restrooms including a transom above. A three-pane opaque window interrupts the standard appearance of the baked-enamel siding tiles between these entry doors.

North Elevation

The back (north) elevation consists mainly of a concrete block wall more than a story tall, as the elevation slopes downward to the north. The building wall extends down into a retaining wall to give the appearance of a two story building from this view. The façade exhibits six windows across the back wall, not equally spaced or matched. Looking from left to right, the first window contains two-over-one panes in thin, rectangular formation, which is visible internally from the north bathroom. The next window, further up the wall to the right, consists of a pane arrangement of one-over-one in a rectangular shape, but wider than the first. Further west on the wall near the roofline, the remaining windows open as tilt-in and display a two-over-two configuration in one set of three, and then two paired sets, each set divided by pilasters.

West Elevation

The west elevation presents mostly baked-enamel tiles. Two large windows interrupt the smooth surface of the tiles on the upper half of the wall. These windows are symmetrically-placed and include 16 panes each. Some of the baked-enamel siding panels have buckled near the bottom of this wall and need repair.

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Interior

The interior of the building includes four rooms. In the main section, a wall of six large panes of glass frame a glass door to create a wall between the auto service area and the customer service area. A counter still exists in the customer service area. Externally accessed restrooms finish the interior layout. This style exhibits a typical floorplan for a mid-century gas and service station.

Other Structures

While most of the property is paved, there is a rectangular-shaped area of gravel located near the south side of the lot; this gravel is between the front of the building and the street. This gravel patch indicates the placement of the pumps when the building served as a gas station. On both the east and west side of the property, retaining walls remain. The retaining wall on the east side connects to the north retaining wall which blends into the north wall of the building.

Integrity

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station has retained structural integrity. The exterior exhibits the original baked-enamel siding. The roll-up overhead doors also appear original. While the building ceased to function as a filling and service station, it still reflects the original arrangement of rooms. Standard Oil Company of Louisiana created the station at 1600 W. 3rd Street in the oblong box style, which dominated gas station design from the mid-1930s through the 1960s. The main section of the building still contains the interior design of service bays with adjoining store/counter area plus two externally accessed restrooms. The residential feel of the neighborhood transitioned to commercial over the decades since it was built, though, the building still remains across 3rd Street from the Capitol Building grounds; its proximity to the Capitol Building explains its long tenure as a traditional gas and/or service station. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station still remains an excellent, intact example of a traditional 1950s filling and/or service station, evocative of the American car culture.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1957

Significant Dates

1957

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station, located at the corner of West 3rd Street and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, is being nominated under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an example of a mid-twentieth century box-type gas station constructed in the International style. The filling station, built in 1957, embodied American car culture and filled a need in the community. It is one of the few service stations clad in baked-enamel within the downtown Little Rock area. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station exhibits the classic design floorplan of filling and service stations during the mid-century period. The storefront glazing system and the baked-enamel siding illustrates the use of experimental materials popular in Mid-Century Modern commercial architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Brief History of Little Rock, Pulaski County and the State Capitol

Pulaski County was designated in Arkansas Territory in 1819. The French explorer, Jean-Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe, created the name for the city by describing the rock on the southern bank of the Arkansas River “le Petit Rocher,” which translated into the little rock. By 1821, the territorial legislature named Little Rock the new territorial capitol, although it was not incorporated as a town until 1831. The city of Little Rock officially incorporated in 1835.¹

In 1833, Gideon Shryock designed the Old State House building to be used as the seat of government.² Before its completion, Arkansas joined the Union as a state in 1836. George Weigart modified the plans to meet budgetary guidelines and completed the building in 1842.³ State Government business remained in this building until the Union troops invaded Little Rock in 1863. During the remainder of the Civil War, the seat of government became Washington, Arkansas.

¹ James W. Bell, “Little Rock (Pulaski County),” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, last updated February 19, 2015.

² “National Register of Historic Places, Inventory – Nomination Form, First Arkansas State Capitol, Old State House,” *Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Department of Arkansas Heritage*, accessed April 19, 2015.

³ Georganne Sisco, “Old State House,” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, last modified November 18, 2011.

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Legislators approved the establishment of the Deaf Mute Institute in Little Rock in 1869. The institute subdivided and sold twenty acres to fund itself. Little Rock purchased and added the Deaf-Mute Addition bordering its boundary on the west of the originally platted area in 1871.⁴ After expanding the Old State House building in 1885, Senate Concurrent Resolution 3 called for construction of a new capitol building. In March 1899, Act 128 passed creating a Governor appointed commission to oversee the construction of the new building.⁵ The Commission moved the site of the building to the old state penitentiary at 5th and Woodlane Street. The north part of the grounds of the Capitol Building extended into the Deaf-Mute Addition. George Mann planned the original design, but Architect Cass Gilbert completed the design during the long construction process.⁶ The Arkansas State Capitol building reached completion in 1915. The Arkansas State Capitol building and ground boundaries now extend from West Third Street on the north to 7th Street on the south and from Wolfe Street on the west to Woodland Drive on the east. Residential buildings comprised the neighborhood on West Third Street, originally located on the streetcar line, directly to the north of the Capitol. This marked the beginning of the neighborhood's transition from residential to commercial use.

Brief History of the Esso Brand in Arkansas

An anti-trust decision by the United States Supreme Court resulted in the disbanding of the Standard Oil Company Trust in 1911.⁷ The broken-up Standard Oil Company became regional Standard Oil companies that then began marketed in smaller, assigned territories. Each regional company had its own brand. Standard Oil of New Jersey, also known as Jersey Standard, operated with rights in several east coast states in the early 20th century, and expanded into Pennsylvania, Delaware, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Louisiana by the 1940s. This regional company distributed gasoline under the Esso brand, which was the phonetic pronunciation of the Standard Oil initials, 'SO.'⁸ The Esso logo displayed the name in red on a white background surrounded by a blue oval.⁹ Easily identifiable logos and color schemes were used and signage was often integrated into building as a method of brand advertisement. Standard Oil of New Jersey continued to market the Esso brand in Arkansas through the 1970s, when the entire Standard Oil of New Jersey Company was renamed Exxon Corporation. All of the earlier

⁴ Rachel Silva, "Sandwiching in History, Archived Tour Scripts, May 8, 2015 – Dan Stowers Office Building," Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Department of Arkansas Heritage, accessed May 12, 2015.

⁵ David Ware, "Arkansas State Capitol Building," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, last updated November 20, 2009.

⁶ "National Register of Historic Places, Inventory – Nomination Form, Arkansas State Capitol," *Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Department of Arkansas Heritage*, accessed April 19, 2015.

⁷ "Rule of Reason Laid Down for Trust Cases in Future," *New York Times*, May 16, 1911.

⁸ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 60.

⁹ *Ibid.*

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Standard Oil of New Jersey brands were renamed to Exxon in the United States; the Esso brand continued to be used internationally due to its large market share and popularity.

Modernism into the Mid-Century

Mid-Century Modern architecture developed as a descendent of the modernist movement of the early twentieth century. Modern architecture broke away from the traditional forms of construction without creating standard characteristics to define it.¹⁰ Modernism incorporated ideas of cleanliness, sunlight, health, and openness following World War I.¹¹ Cleanliness and sunlight added to the idea of physical and psychological health, which became intertwined with the built environment. As it applied to architecture, openness referred to open space within the building, along with an extension of the outside into the interior space through design-incorporated walls of windows.¹² As a reaction to the stylistically driven and often overly elaborate design schemes of earlier architectural movements; the function of a modern building dictated the modernist form used.¹³ Practicality and simple lines became a theme that can be identified in most modernist buildings of the earliest 20th century, and carried over into the mid-century period.

Technology and building materials in the machine-age emerged to offer options in construction materials and methods. Architects utilized structural steel, reinforced concrete, and glass in new, transformational designs. Modernism experimented with new ideas and designs, as well as materials, in a complete break from tradition. “The buildings of the midcentury depend upon a host of innovative technologies, such as exterior cladding systems. Curtain walls of the period were often constructed of a steel sub-frame (with glazing and new types of thin panel cladding)...”¹⁴ Unprecedented design freedom and immediate cost savings from prefabricated materials encouraged incorporation of these changes.¹⁵ Public buildings, such as schools and hospitals, exhibited the new designs in the beginning of the twentieth century, “Combining qualities of light, air and openness with a scrupulous attention to hygiene and cleanliness, sanatoriums became the models for housing, schools and other educational buildings.”¹⁶

¹⁰ J. Mason Toms (architect with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program), email message to author, February 27, 2015.

¹¹ Paul Overly, *Light, Air, and Openness* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2007), page 9.

¹² *Ibid*, page 11.

¹³ Mark Wilcken, *Clean Lines, Open Spaces, A View of Mid-Century Modern Architecture*, video, (Conway, AETN, 2012).

¹⁴ Elizabeth Milnarik, “AIA Knowledge, Aging in Place Sustaining the GSA'S Modern Sensibilities,” *Architect Mar2012 Vol. 101 Issue 3: 27*, accessed February 17, 2015.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Paul Overly, *Light, Air and Openness* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 30.

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Identification of Mid-Century Modern architecture encompasses a combination of modernist ideas and forms, outlined by the decades in the middle of the twentieth century. Some identifiable features among ideas incorporated into this period include a) an emphasis on interior spaces and use, b) the indoor-outdoor relationship that was “quite the opposite of the emphasis on their separation in traditional buildings, c) innovations in the way buildings were put together,” and d) a lightness as “they avoid being massive and ponderous.”¹⁷ Although modernist architects reacted against the standardized common characteristics of traditional styles, some identifiers existed in modernist forms, such as the repetition of walls of windows or floor-to-ceiling windows in many building designs, as “...modernist architects persisted in the belief that open and transparent structures of glass, steel and concrete would demonstrate the benefits of sunlight and fresh air...”¹⁸ Another recurring concept is the use of structural elements as architectural details.

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station illustrates modernism ideals, both inside and out. The floorplan exhibits openness and the glazing system in the storefront, along with the glass in the three bay overhead doors, incorporates light and brings the outdoors inside. Aside from the shape, the resources used demonstrate the rise of new materials, including the aluminum frame around the floor-to-ceiling windows and the glossy baked-enamel panels. The clean, futuristic appearance also carried the car cultural ideals into the built environment. The box-type style of gas and service station were designed to attract attention with their smooth and shiny exteriors and specifically designed lighting schemes. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station is an excellent example of a box-type station with typical Moderne and International Style transitional design elements.

Brief History of Joseph Ivy Filling Station

Little Rock transportation developed much like other cities in the country. Railroad transportation dominated in the late nineteenth century for travel between cities. Within urban areas, bicycling became a popular transportation mode. This new style of transportation highlighted the need for road maintenance and improvement. The Good Roads League of the State of Arkansas founded in 1896, promoted organized work efforts on roads. The League originally worked toward passable roads for bicyclists; however, within the first two decades of the organization, auto enthusiasts joined and led the charge for improved roadways.¹⁹ The rise of the automobile’s popularity dominated post World War I society. The American Car Culture that

¹⁷ Wolf Von Eckardt, *Mid-Century Architecture in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), 21-22.

¹⁸ Paul Overly, *Light, Air and Openness* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 113.

¹⁹ Christie McLaren, “Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965” (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 4-5.

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developed throughout the 1930s and 1940s created the necessity for gasoline filling stations and service stations.

The site of 1600 West 3rd Street, Little Rock, Arkansas, held a filling and service station prior to the current building. In the 1940s, the 3rd Street neighborhood bordering the Capitol Building remained typically residential.²⁰ The predecessor filling station, showcasing the name Joseph Ivy Filling Station, contained only two bays for service and a small storefront area, as seen on the 1939 and 1950 Sanborn Maps. Standard Oil Company of Louisiana, a firm listed as part of the Standard Oil Trust until its dissolution in 1911, paid the taxes for the property at 1600 W. 3rd Street at that time. The county listed the property legal description as the south 84 feet of lots 11 and 12 of Block 5 of the Deaf Mute Addition to the City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. The tax records indicated that this service station followed the trend in which “large corporations dominated the industry.”²¹ This small two bay station operated throughout the 1940s and through the mid-1950s under the following names: Joseph L. Ivy Filling Station and Joseph L. Ivy Esso Station. Joseph Ivy worked as a gas station attendant throughout the 1930s for different stations in the area before his name appeared in the city directory on this location. Since the tax rolls do not indicate his name, he probably leased the station from Standard Oil Company of Louisiana. Esso brand originated from Standard Oil Company of New Jersey marketed in Arkansas.²² Signage and brand names inspired consumer confidence and independents without a displayed brand name found it hard to compete.²³ This phenomenon explained the name change on the two-bay gas station from Joseph L. Ivy Filling Station in 1954 to Joseph L. Ivy Esso Station in 1956.

According to *Remembering Roadside America*, “[b]y 1950, there were some 45 million cars and trucks on the nation’s roads.”²⁴ The existence of three gas stations within three blocks in the early to mid-1950s proved consumer demand for these services. According to *The Gas Station in America*, “[b]etween 1945 and 1957, the demand for all petroleum products soared some 80 percent.”²⁵ While the 1500 block remained mainly residential, Don Ridgeway’s gas station, listed in association with Spur Distribution and located at 1523 W. 3rd Street, Little Rock, offered fuel less than a block from the Joseph Ivy Filling Station at 1600 W. 3rd Street.

²⁰ *Little Rock, Arkansas City Directories*, (Dallas: R. L. Polk & Co., 1942 – 2013).

²¹ Christie McLaren, “Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965” (Little Rock: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 16.

²² John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 40.

²³ *Ibid*, 41.

²⁴ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Remembering Roadside America* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 8.

²⁵ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 67.

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Further down the street, Spur Distributing Company Station 225, located at 1706 W. 3rd Street, also offered competition. Merely five blocks away, the Samuel P. Taylor Service Station (1123 West 3rd Street) provided both service and fuel between 1938 and 1972, too. The existence of these properties in close proximity illustrates Standard Oil's expansion plan which led to the current building.

History of Esso Standard Oil Service Station

Esso Standard Oil Company, with main offices in Memphis, Tennessee, purchased 1604 W. 3rd Street, a property adjacent to the Joseph Ivy Filling Station, from Eugene B. Kelley in 1954. This land contained a house and with a legal property description of Lot 10 of Block 5 of the Deaf Mute Addition to the City of Little Rock. Pulaski County set a tax valuation of the property at \$1,000 when owned by Kelley. In 1955, the tax valuation dropped to \$400, an indication that Esso Standard Oil Company razed the house. According to the Pulaski County tax rolls for 1957, lots 10 and the portions of 11 and 12 combined billing to Standard Oil Company of Louisiana.

Standard Oil Company of Louisiana constructed the current building at 1600 W. 3rd Street in 1957 on these combined lots, according to increased valuation in Pulaski County tax rolls which was greater than the combined previous lot valuations. The existing larger, three-bay building continued the tradition on this property of offering both filling and service station roles in the community. Construction methods followed the car culture trends of that time, expressed by “[n]ew, larger station buildings were required to showcase merchandise and provide service. Consistent with post-Depression marketing trends, gas stations updated their look by introducing white, enameled structures designed in the International or Streamlined Moderne style. These box-like structures prevailed until the early 1960s.”²⁶

The oblong box shape design emphasized function through a basic practical design and low-maintenance façade that was popular for gas stations across America from 1940 through 1970.²⁷ The Esso Standard Oil Service Station exemplified the common oblong box shape used across the country, but it stood apart from the others by displaying the three bay doors instead of the more common two bay versions.²⁸ Other examples of this type of service/filling station in

²⁶ Christie McLaren, “Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965,” (Little Rock: Department of Arkansas Heritage, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1999), 17.

²⁷ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 156.

²⁸ W. Dwayne Jones, “Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, Historical Studies Branch, Historical Studies Report No. 2003-03, A Field Guide to Gas Stations in Texas,” (Buda, TX: Knight & Associates, 2003), accessed October 19, 2015.; National Park Service, “Preservation Briefs 46, The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations,” *United States Department of the Interior*, accessed September 23, 2015.

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Arkansas exist in Mena, Paragould, and Harrisburg, among other locations, however, these similar stations have not survived intact due to later alterations or various additions. The baked-enamel exterior could be hosed off just like a car and became frequently used for gas stations.²⁹ Durability, consistent brand identity, and affordability of enameled tiles also influenced construction in the 1950s.³⁰ The Standard Oil Companies generally used the white, red, and blue color schemes.³¹ This white enameled building along with its Esso sign (white background with the blue and red Esso logo) reflected place-product-package design, a tool popularly used for roadside marketing. “With their glossy white exteriors and scientifically-designed lighting schemes, box stations were meant to attract attention.”³² The glass and metal exterior presented an image of efficient modernity and professionalism that was used to entire customers.³³ The modern materials and simple form also made the box-type station easy to replicate, low maintenance and affordable while still providing an elegant show place for the growing car culture.³⁴

The design of most porcelain or baked-enameled gas stations lacked the traditional canopy.³⁵ This station followed that trend, as well as included restrooms with outside access. Restrooms played a large part in marketing a station; a clean restroom appealed to customers.³⁶ The building at 1600 W. 3rd Street remained under the ownership of Standard Oil Company of Louisiana, while providing services under the following names: Esso Standard Oil (1957-1958), Bill Fisher Esso Service Center (1959 – 1967), John Green Esso Service Center (1968 – 1969), and Capitol Esso Service Center (1970). Ownership changed from Standard Oil Company of Louisiana to Humble Oil and Refining Company in 1963. By 1959, the Exxon subsidiaries of Standard Oil Company of Louisiana and Humble Oil had integrated into the mainstream Exxon operations.³⁷ While the ownership technically changed, the signage name(s) did not reflect it.

In 1971, John F. Green purchased the building at 1600 W. 3rd Street from Humble Oil and Refining Company. During his ownership, the station operated under the following names: Green’s Esso Service Station, Green’s Exxon Service Station, Green’s 76 Service Station,

²⁹ John Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance, Glory Days of the Gas Station* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, Little Brown and Company, 1993), 96.

³⁰ Tim Russell, *Fill ‘er Up!, The Great American Gas Station* (New York: Crestline, 2013), 178.

³¹ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 41.

³² National Park Service, “Preservation Briefs 46, The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations,” *United States Department of the Interior*, accessed September 23, 2015.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ John Margolies, *Pump and Circumstance, Glory Days of the Gas Station* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, Little Brown and Company, 1993), 99.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

³⁷ Tim Russell, *Fill ‘er Up!, The Great American Gas Station* (New York: Crestline, 2013), 164.

Esso Standard Oil Service Station
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Green's Sinclair Service Station, and John Green's Service Station. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station continued operations through tough times, such as the 1973 and 1979 gas shortages. Competition did not persevere; Don Ridgeway's gas station at 1523 W. 3rd Street closed in 1956 and the gas station at 1706 W. 3rd Street formerly known as Spur Distributing Co. No. 225 became a car dealership by 1980.³⁸ Convenience stores cornered the market by the 1990s and few traditional gas stations remained. Focus on automobiles as a priority within American culture declined from 2001 to 2009.³⁹ The Esso Standard Oil Service Station defied the movement and continued operating as a gas and/or service station until 2010.

Green, at the age of eighty (80), died on June 8, 2011. Building ownership transferred to Jay Green, his son, in April 2012. In April 2013, Jay Green sold the property to Providence Properties, LLC, the current owners of the parcel and building.

Statement of Significance

The Esso Standard Oil Service Station continued the tradition of a gas and service station on this property. The business served the community and exemplified roadside architecture during the mid-century. The building exhibits typical traits of 1950s box-type gas station design and is largely unaltered from its original appearance. The building housed a filling and service station for more than 50 years and survived much longer than the nearby competition. While the building ceased to function as a filling and service station, it still reflects its original use and the original interior arrangement.

Standard Oil Company created the station at 1600 W. 3rd Street in the oblong box style of filling and service station design, which dominated in the mid-1930s to the 1960s. This style became popular when stations diversified sales to include tires, batteries, and accessories, as well as light engine repair, lubricating and washing, to accompany fuel sales.⁴⁰ The main section contains the open interior with service bays and store/counter area and two bathrooms exist on the east side with exterior access. This filling and service station reflects an important part of our cultural history; it displays American car culture and the design, modernism ideals, and material changes during the mid-century.

³⁸ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 80.

³⁹ Elisabeth Rosenthal, "The End of Car Culture," *NY Times*, June 29, 2013. Accessed December 17, 2014.

⁴⁰ John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Remembering Roadside America* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 84-85.

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With rapidly changing trends, icons of the car culture of the past require recognition. The Esso Standard Oil Service Station located at 1600 W. 3rd Street, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C**, with **local significance**, as an example of a box design filling/service station built in the International style. This building endures as one of only a few mid-century service stations from the 1950s in downtown Little Rock exhibiting Mid-Century Modernism through its shape, baked-enamel panels, and storefront glazing system.

Esso Standard Oil Service Station
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Wilcken, Mark. *Clean Lines, Open Spaces, A View of Mid-Century Modern Architecture*. video, (Conway, AETN). 2012.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): PU4628

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.36

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 565065 | Northing: 3845413 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

South 84 feet of Lots 11 and 12 and all of Lot 10, Block 5, Deaf Mute Addition to the City of Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the original property (South 84 feet of Lots 11 and 12, Block 5, Deaf Mute Addition) expanded to include all of Lot 10 to accommodate the construction of the Esso Standard Oil Service Station. The property boundaries still match the 1957 description.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nikki Senn, Intern/Researcher
organization: Capitol Zoning District Commission

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian (Edited)
organization: NR Staff, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail calliew@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9880
date: October 15, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Esso Standard Oil Service Station
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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Esso Standard Oil Service Station

City or Vicinity: Little Rock

County: Pulaski

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams

Date Photographed: July 24, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 5: (AR_PulaskiCounty_EssoStandardOilServiceStation_0001)
South and east facades, camera facing northwest.

2 of 5: (AR_PulaskiCounty_EssoStandardOilServiceStation_0002)
South (front) elevation, camera facing north.

3 of 5: (AR_PulaskiCounty_EssoStandardOilServiceStation_0003)
South elevation, camera facing northeast.

4 of 5: (AR_PulaskiCounty_EssoStandardOilServiceStation_0004)
West elevation detail, camera facing north.

5 of 5: (AR_PulaskiCounty_EssoStandardOilServiceStation_0005)
North (rear) elevation, camera facing southwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Esso Standard Oil Service Station, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas



Google earth

feet
meters



UTM

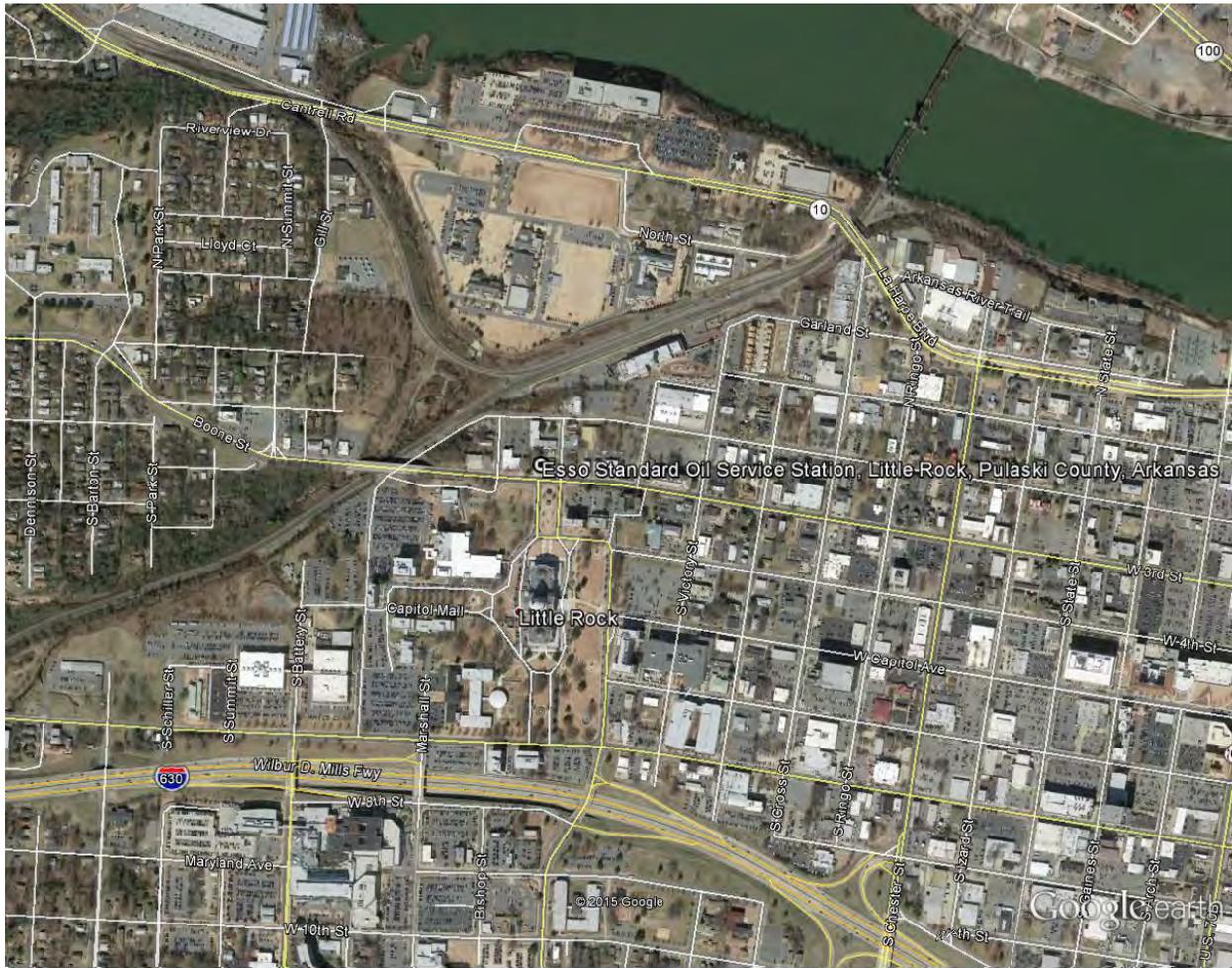
Z: 15

Easting: 565065

Northing: 3845413

NAD83

Esso Standard Oil Service Station, Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas



Google earth

feet 3000
km 1



UTM

Z: 15

Easting: 565065

Northing: 3845413

NAD83





1600 W 3RD

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

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