

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

1. Name of Property

historic name Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building

other names/site number U.S. Tire Service; Beverly Tire Company; Mo Cummins Diesel Sales Corp.

2. Location

street & number 3229 Washington Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [N/A] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments .)

Mark A. Miles MAY 15, 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments .)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register See continuation sheet <input type="checkbox"/> .	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet <input type="checkbox"/> .	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain See continuation sheet <input type="checkbox"/> .	_____	_____

Royal Tire Service, Inc., Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis
[Independent City], MO

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
TRANSPORTATION/service station

Current Functions
VACANT/NOT IN USE
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
 foundation CONCRETE
 walls BRICK

 roof SYNTHETIC/Rubber
 other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Royal Tire Service, Inc., Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

Property is:

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1929-1955

Significant Dates

1929

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Barnett, Tom P., architect

McCormack, Charles B., contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: _____

Royal Tire Service, Inc., Building
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 Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	741460	4280230			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruth Keenoy, Karen Bode Baxter and Timothy P. Maloney

organization Karen Bode Baxter, Preservation Specialist date May 10, 2007

street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63109

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Winker Properties, LLC (c/o Randy VanWinkle)

street & number 5211 South Old Wire Rd. telephone (417)886-9383

city or town Battlefield state MO zip code 65619

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**Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO**

Narrative Description

SUMMARY

Constructed in 1929, the Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building, located at 3229 Washington Ave., St. Louis, Missouri, is situated on the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington and Leonard Avenues. Originally used as a tire shop and gasoline station, the property is a spacious one story, L-shaped brick service garage with a barrel-vaulted roof above a central section that features an arched parapet. Five pass-through garage bays (with original overhead doors on the north (rear) elevation) are situated within the long(northern) leg of the L. A small office is located on the shorter east leg of the L, featuring a truncated southwest corner. Gasoline pumps have been removed, but the building itself and the way it frames its corner lot clearly illustrate the property's use as an automobile-related resource. Additionally, an abundance of historic material remains. The property exemplifies and meets the registration requirements for the Service Station property type as described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO."

EXTERIOR

The Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building exterior has brick walls, a continuous concrete foundation, and a flat roof – with the exception of the taller, central barrel-vaulted section., which has an arched parapet on both the façade and rear elevations over the taller, eastern three, pass-through garage bays. The other two pass-through garage bays are shorter, located in the west end building. Until recently, the five facade garage bays had been bricked in, but they are in the process of being reopened as part of the current historic rehabilitation. The original lintels and openings are still clearly defined in these bays. Some of the parapets are capped with flat clay coping tiles, but most of the building has a simple rowlock of brick as parapet caps. While the façade walls on the interior of the legs of the L as well as the west elevation are yellow, wire brick, the back wall is simply common red brick that has been painted white.

The brick side walls of the barrel vaulted section, above the shorter one story flat roofed sections on either side, are supported internally by steel trusses. These trusses are further supported by flat steel lintels at the base of the window walls, resting on brick columns that create a three bay interior space. On each side of the barrel-vault, there are nine, 12 light, industrial steel windows (the center section has 6 light panel pivots), which are currently boarded over from the outside but intact inside.

The west elevation of the shorter, one story end of the building -- which extends parallel to the public sidewalk along Leonard Avenue -- is divided into three bays of 20 light industrial steel windows with brick rowlock sills. A six light pivot sash is centered in the top of each window. At some point, the upper portion of this wall was rebuilt, with brick that is slighter different in color.

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description

On the rear elevation, there is an arched brick parapet wall with a central steel overhead replacement garage door. This garage door is flanked by large, multipaned industrial steel windows. The two westernmost bays situated below the lower flat roofed section of the building retain historic, wood framed, multipaned overhead garage doors.

Flanking the parapeted section on the east is another one story, flat roofed section that does not have garage doors, but is connected to a small flat roofed wing behind the main building that apparently served as access to a small basement storage room. This area was possibly used for paint and chemical storage and is separated from the main building by masonry walls. Internally, this eastern end of the garage service area is symmetrical with the western one story wing, straddling the taller barrel-vaulted section. Although both wings served to house service type activities, the east wing is not visible outside because of the projecting office L, which blocks exterior views of the east garage wing.

The office wing, in the shorter eastern L, projects south towards Washington, and has a large display window facing south as well as another that historically faced the gasoline pump islands to the west. Until recently, these windows were bricked in, but they have been reopened to their original dimensions. They still retain their original brick, rowlock sills and steel lintels. The southwest corner of the office leg of the L is angled, with a pedestrian-oriented door to the office.

INTERIOR

The interior retains original exposed wood ceiling joists and rafters; wood roof decking; and steel trusses within the barrel vault. Original poured concrete floors are intact, as are exposed brick walls and brick piers (that are painted white). The garage service bays are dominated by the steel truss and barrel vault roof, exposed on the interior, as well as the flanking rows of windows in the brick side walls supported by steel I-beams that extend north-to-south between the shorter, one story sections on either side of the three garage bays in the barrel-vault section. The front bay of the east garage bay was enclosed in 1967 to create a larger office area. There is another steel I-beam that extends north-to-south between the two westernmost garage bays with two brick piers connected by a low brick wall centered below the I-beam. The office has been subdivided, and has had two different types of acoustical ceiling tiles installed at different times, one featuring 1' x 1' sized tiles, and the other featuring a suspended metal grid. Modern vinyl flooring has been installed in the office area. All of these modifications occurred in the 1950s.

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Description

ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

The primary exterior change to the property at 3229 Washington since its construction in 1929 is the removal of the site's original gasoline pumps. While the front garage bays and display windows had been bricked in, they are currently being reopened (an ongoing process reflected in the accompanying photographs), but the brick infill was positioned within each of the original openings with cold joints and the openings retain the original dimensions and steel lintels. Rear elevation brick walls have been painted white. The rear retains two of the three rear garage doors, wood framed, multipaned overhead doors with multipaned wood framed transoms. The building retains all of its original windows on the sides of the barrel vaulted section, as well as original industrial steel windows on the west and north elevations. The office area features a few modern wall partitions, a vinyl floor, and acoustical ceiling tiles added during the 1950s, but these are layers added over the original wall, ceiling, and floor finishes. The remainder of the interior space retains its historic integrity, including the impressive steel trussed barrel vaulted garage bays, the exposed brick and wood ceiling joists and rafters. The building retains sufficient physical integrity to meet the registration requirements as a good example of the "Service Station" property type identified in the MPDF "Historic Auto-Related Resources, City of St. Louis." As stated in the MPDF cover document, missing gasoline pumps are not a major integrity issue provided that the building is still easily identifiable as a gasoline station—which it clearly is. The Royal Tire Building meets this standard as evidenced in its L-shaped plan and position on the lot as noted above. In addition, the registration requirements for the MPDF note that the identifying exterior features, such as garage bays—even when modified with new infill—should be retained and such is the case with the Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building which retains all of its original garage openings, as well as two of the original wooden garage doors.

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Map of City of St. Louis, MO

Locating Property



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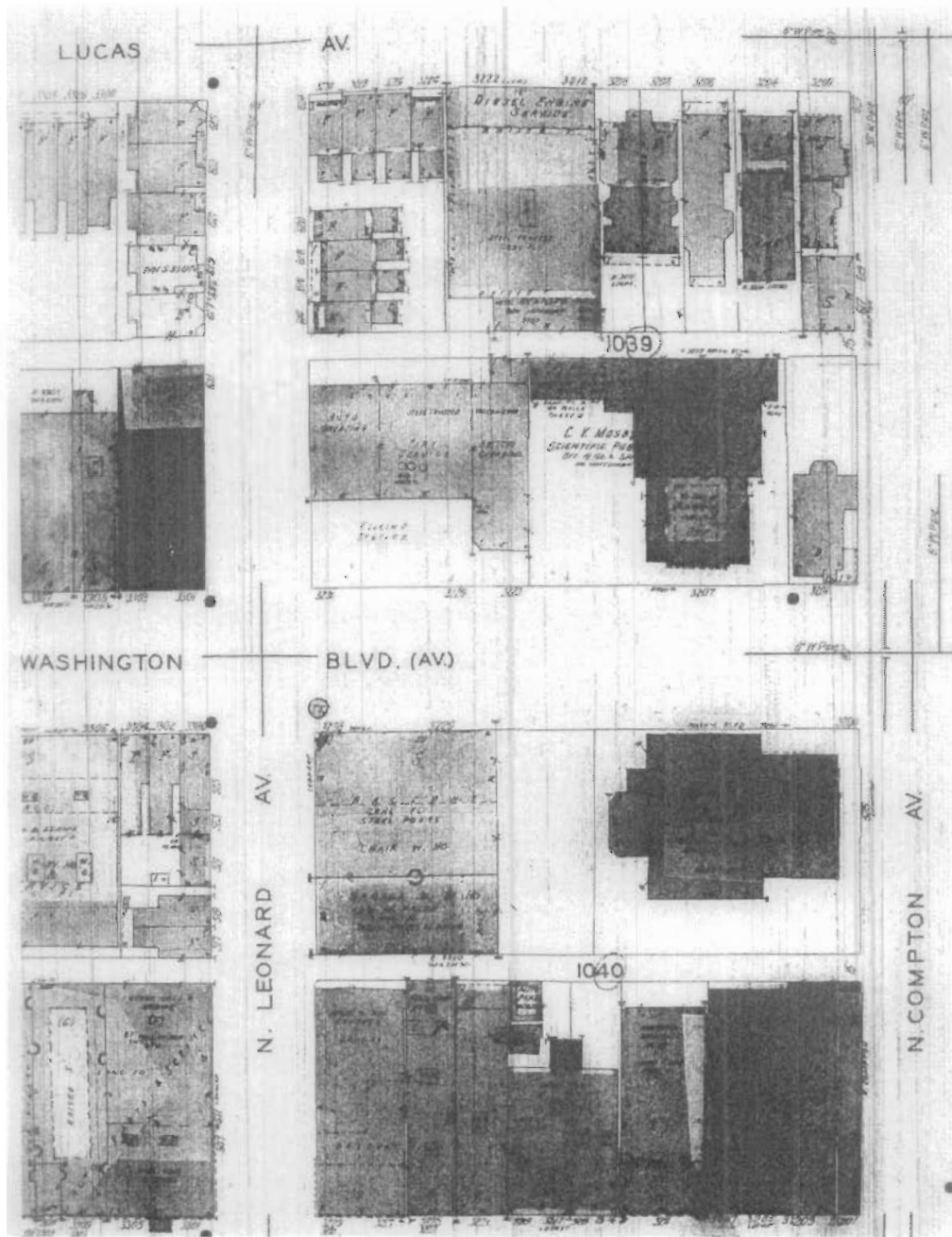
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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of St. Louis, MO

Fire Insurance Map Depicting Building and Surrounding Area



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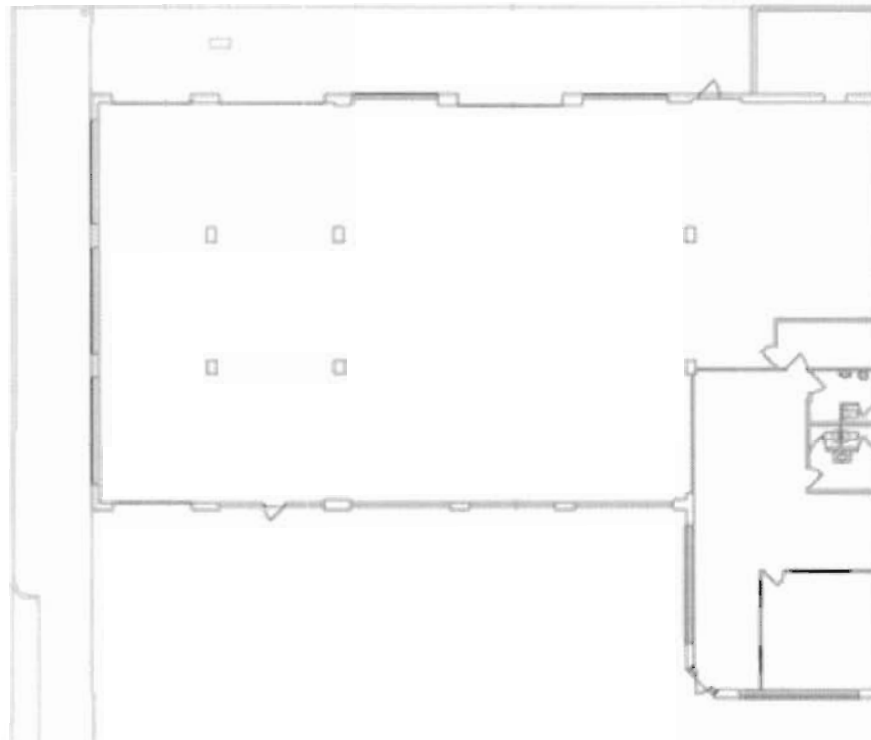
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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Vessel Architecture and Design

Site Plan of Property



3229 WASHINGTON - EXISTING FLOOR PLAN

8.7.06



ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

27 Patrick Avenue - St. Louis, Missouri - 63108 - p:314.921.0122 - f:314.921.0482 - www.vesselarch.com



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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance

SUMMARY

The Royal Tire Services, Inc. Building at 3229 Washington Avenue in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri, is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Commerce, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The property has significant associations with the context “Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis, ca. 1900-1955” as described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) titled “Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City], MO.” This sprawling, one-story brick building with an arched parapet possesses the distinctive characteristics of, and meets the registration requirements for, the Service Station property type as described in the MPDF. Constructed in 1929 as a Royal Tire dealership and repair shop, the property supported a detached curbside gasoline station originally owned by the Shell Oil Company. Today the building, designed by prominent local architect Tom P. Barnett and constructed by well-known contractor Charles B. McCormack, remains an excellent example of an early twentieth-century automobile service facility in St. Louis. From its service-oriented entries to its vast interior spaces under a barrel-vaulted roof, the Royal Tire Services Building retains a level of integrity that clearly illustrates its original design and the fact that it catered to the automobile. The 1929-1955 period of significance corresponds to the building’s date of construction through its period described in the MPDF. During these years, the property remained in constant use as an automobile tire/service shop and gas station. The building’s use as an automobile service facility continued beyond 1955 until ca. 1965, which surpasses the 50-year rule of significance for non-exceptionally significant properties.

ARCHITECT, T.P. BARNETT AND BUILDER/CONTRACTOR, C.B. MCCORMACK

The former Royal Tire Service building at 3229 Washington was designed by architect Tom P. Barnett of the St. Louis architectural firm T.P. Barnett and Company. Construction was completed by C.B. McCormack and Son. Both Barnett and C.B. McCormack were well-known in St. Louis by the time that the building at 3229 Washington was constructed. The property appears to be one of the last projects commissioned by Barnett, who died in 1929, prior to the building’s completion. Both Barnett and McCormack were strongly associated with the design and construction of prominent homes in St. Louis, particularly within the Central West End neighborhood. Neither of these men has been documented in the past as having completed other types of automobile-related properties such as that at 3229 Washington Avenue – however lack of documentation does not verify that such commissions were not completed by Barnett and/or McCormack.

T. P. Barnett was born in St. Louis on February 11, 1870 to George I. and Elizabeth (Armstrong) Barnett. The elder Barnett was a well-known St. Louis architect long before his son joined the company of Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett.¹ T.P. Barnett graduated from St. Louis University in

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

1886 with a “technical degree,” after which time he worked for his father’s architectural firm until 1913 when he established his own architectural firm.² Barnett is well known in St. Louis for many prominent commissions. He was the youngest architect assigned to the World’s Fair Commission; and he designed noteworthy projects in St. Louis, among which were the Jefferson Hotel, Temple Israel, the Kingsbury Place entry/gate, and the Arcade Building (where Barnett’s office was located). In addition, Barnett commissioned projects in Webster Groves, including Eden Seminary. In University City he designed the First Church of Christ Scientist, the Masonic Lodge, and several homes.³ Barnett “condemned harshly the tendency toward standardization in office buildings and apartments” and “was an advocate of ‘freedom in design’ in buildings . . . [specializing] largely in designing hospitals, churches, memorials and office buildings of types which permitted this indulgence.” He is known today for his “trademark” designs that incorporated a great deal of architectural embellishment.⁴ Barnett died on September 23, 1929 at his summer home in Rockport, Massachusetts from complications related to diabetes.⁵

Barnett’s design of the Royal Tire Service Building was contracted to C.B. McCormack & Son, a general construction company owned by Charles B. (Beatie) McCormack and his son, Royden C. McCormack.⁶ As noted previously, C.B. McCormack was a prominent construction contractor, born on September 28, 1858, in St. Louis. His father, Samuel C. McCormack was also a construction contractor who ran the family’s business until his death in 1884. C.B., who joined the firm as a partner in 1890, operated the firm under his own name for many years.⁷ Samuel and C.B. specialized in residential projects, including commissions for several homes in the Central West End neighborhood designed by Barnett, Haynes, and Barnett.⁸ In 1904, McCormack’s son, Royden, joined the company and became head of the firm when C.B. retired in 1937. These transitions resulted in name changes to the company as C.B. McCormack & Son (which was the case when the Royal Tire Service Building was constructed) and after 1937 as R.C. McCormack, Inc. C.B. McCormack died on April 16, 1939, following an extended illness.⁹

HISTORY OF ROYAL TIRE / UNITED STATES RUBBER

The original business that operated from 3229 Washington Avenue was a tire and auto service associated with Royal Tire Service, Inc., a subsidiary of the United States (U.S.) Rubber Company. U.S. Rubber was established in 1892 following a merger of nine American rubber manufacturers of boots and shoes. During U.S. Rubber’s early years of operation, it produced footwear at a factory located in New Brunswick, New Jersey.¹⁰ In 1896, the company began to produce bicycle tires but the venture proved unprofitable and was discontinued in 1901. In 1905, U.S. Rubber began to produce tires once again after merging with Rubber Goods Manufacturing Company, which produced G & J (Gormully & Jeffrey) Tires for the Rambler bicycle manufactured in Chicago.¹¹

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

In 1905, American automobile manufacturers produced an estimated 25,000 cars and trucks. By 1910, the industry was manufacturing approximately 181,000 automobiles and 6,000 trucks. In an effort to capitalize on its automobile tire production, U.S. Rubber relocated one of its tire plants from Chicago to Detroit in 1906 and in 1911, marketed all of its tire brands under a single nomenclature, "United States Tire Company." The company relocated its tire division headquarters to a newly constructed building along New York City's "automobile row" at 1790 Broadway that same year. It was around this time that U.S. Rubber established itself as a leader of the American tire industry. By 1912, U.S. Rubber produced 25 percent of the nation's tires, outranking both B.F. Goodrich and Diamond Rubber Companies.¹²

"Royal Tire" was an advertising slogan that U.S. Rubber utilized to sell its cord tires in 1916. Produced as early as 1903, cord tires replaced earlier productions of "Nobby Tread" and "Chain Tread" tires that were designed to prevent skidding. Initially, tire treads were manufactured using zinc oxide. The ingredient was affordable for a while, but increased demands for raw materials during World War I created shortages and zinc oxide became difficult to obtain. A more plentiful alternate material was carbon black which changed the color of rubber tires (previously white) to black. Carbon black provided resistance and durability that zinc oxide could not match, thus it remained a staple product of the tire industry.¹³

Long before the Great Depression of the 1930s, U.S. Rubber showed signs of financial troubles. Factors contributing to the company's struggles were numerous and occurred over a number of years. During the 1910s, U.S. Rubber's footwear production lagged due to changes in the shoe industry – particularly in relation to rising demands in producing women's style shoes that required no use for rubber. Additionally, the price of crude rubber fell rapidly in the early 1900s which resulted in massive overstocks. This was particularly bearing on U.S. Rubber which operated solely as a holding company until 1918. In an effort to regain its competitive edge, the company completed a number of mergers, the most significant being that with Rubber Goods Manufacturing in 1905 which allowed U.S. Rubber to expand its manufacturing base and gain a more viable economic position.¹⁴

During the 1930s, U.S. Rubber began once again to consolidate its interests and restructure modes of production in an effort to survive the faltering economy. The company secured a contract in 1931 to produce tires for General Motors (GM) in which U.S. Rubber would produce 50 percent of all tires manufactured for Chevrolet and Buick. By 1933, U.S. Rubber tires were used exclusively for GM's "prestige" models, including Cadillac, LaSalle, and Rolls Royce in America. Outside of its production for GM, U.S. Rubber also produced tires for Packard, Graham-Paige, and Mack Truck. These contracts helped to lower the company's manufacturing costs and recapture a large interest in the tire industry for the corporation, but they failed to completely eradicate the company's struggles. As a result, U.S. Rubber began to produce

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

replacement tires. This proved successful, at least initially. By the late 1920s, replacement tire sales was a lucrative business spurred in large part by the success of Goodyear Tires which contracted with Sears Roebuck and Company and Firestone – the latter of which operated a nationwide chain of retail tire stores. U.S. Rubber attempted to follow Firestone's lead but failed to secure sufficient financial backing to establish its own line of tire stores. Alternately, the company conducted replacement sales through independent dealers, oil companies, and Montgomery Ward and Company.¹⁵

In 1925, U.S. Rubber organized Quick Tires Service, Inc., which through various subsidiaries of the company acquired and operated retail outlets. The newly established retail establishments serviced and sold tires and accessories that were made by U.S. Rubber subsidiaries. Some of these tire stores/stations also sold gasoline. This appears to be the case with the property used by Royal Tire in St. Louis. The Royal Tire Company was the first occupant of the building at 3229 Washington Avenue following its construction. Royal Tire Service, Inc. was one of many companies administrated by U.S. Rubber's Quick Tires Service, Inc.¹⁶ U.S. Rubber supported 28 subsidiary companies that operated retail tire stores during the 1920s-30s. By 1934, 26 of these retail distributors had been dissolved. Royal Tire followed suit in 1935; and U.S. Rubber discontinued its retail tire services entirely until after World War II. This explains the presence of U.S. Tire Services, Inc. at 3229 Washington which used the site in 1937 (also a subsidiary of U.S. Rubber). Despite the hard times experienced by the company during the Depression, a subsequent inventory indicated that throughout the Great Depression, of the few tire dealers that managed to stay in business, all distributed U.S. Royal tires.¹⁷

In addition to Royal Tire/U.S. Rubber, the property at 3229 Washington was also used by Shell Oil Company, which owned gasoline pumps on the parcel. Although the property changed ownership throughout its years of use as an automobile-related business from 1929 until ca. 1965, it remained associated during most of this time with tire sales, service, and general repairs. Until around 1960, the property also operated as a full-service gasoline station, which was becoming increasingly popular throughout the United States.¹⁸

SHELL PETROLEUM, INC.

As noted, the property at 3229 Washington, in addition to supporting a tire shop operated by Royal Tire Service, Inc., also featured a Shell gasoline pumping station. Based on city directories and Sanborn maps from the early 1930s, it appears that the filling station was in full operation shortly after the gasoline pumps were installed in 1929. The 1932 (revised) Sanborn map illustrates that the gasoline pumps were situated at the northeast intersection of N. Leonard and Washington Avenues. The Royal Tire Company building was (and remains) set back from the edge of Washington and Leonard Avenues, providing ample space for cars to enter/exit the lot from both N. Leonard and Washington.¹⁹

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Shell Petroleum Corporation, as the business was known by the early 1930s, established its "Mid-Continent" division in 1912 as Roxana Petroleum Company of Oklahoma – the same year that the company began to produce and market petroleum in the United States. Shell Oil originated in London, England during the 1890s when the Samuel brothers, Marcus and Samuel, expanded their father's import business. In addition to their father's importation of seashells from the Far East, the Samuel Brothers began importing kerosene from the Black Sea. The Samuels "transported their product entirely in bulk" rather than in traditional five-gallon drums as used by other importers. This manner of transport was so successful that in 1897, the brothers separated their oil import business from all other interests and named the new company "Shell Transport and Trading Company, Ltd." By the turn of the century, the Samuels owned one of the world's largest oil companies.²⁰

In 1907, Shell merged with another large oil-producer, Royal Dutch Company.²¹ In 1912 Shell began its United States operations as the Roxana Oil Company during the oil boom in Oklahoma and also operated in the Pacific Northwest as the American Gasoline Company. Roxana's operations centered on oil-production; whereas American Gasoline's efforts were geared toward marketing and imports. It was the former operation – Roxana – that became directly associated with St. Louis when Shell opened a refinery at Wood River, Illinois in 1917 (in operation by 1918).²² In 1919, against the then current trend, Roxana moved its corporate office to St. Louis from Tulsa, Oklahoma (then considered the "Oil Capital of the World" due to the number of oil companies headquartered in Tulsa). The company was incorporated in Delaware in 1922 following a merger with Marland (Continental) Oil in 1921, and with Union Oil in 1922. In 1928, the name of the Roxana Corporation was officially changed to Shell Petroleum Corporation. A second Midwestern refinery began operating in 1923 in Arkansas City, Kansas; and in 1926 yet another refinery opened near Chicago. Despite the addition of the two new refineries, the Wood River location continued as the company's primary Midwest oil supplier.²³

Shell's corporate St. Louis office was managed by Dan E. Lavin, and the building that Shell constructed in 1926 for its Midwest corporate headquarters remains standing today at 1221 Locust Street.²⁴ The 1920s were prosperous years for Shell, with new refineries and pipelines opening in Texas and Louisiana. The company's holdings included many interests and in the late 1920s, Shell purchased the New England Oil Company of Massachusetts that served most eastern seaboard petroleum interests. The era of the Great Depression slowed activities as oil prices fell dramatically and in 1938, the company closed some of its marketing offices, including the one in St. Louis. The Wood River refinery continued to operate with expansion during the 1930s that included construction of a new pipeline through Indiana and Illinois, replacing most of Shell's Midwestern pipeline facilities. A merger in 1939 with the Pacific Northwest offices renamed the company again as "Shell Oil Company, Inc." The following year, Shell closed its

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

corporate office in St. Louis and transferred all of its Midwestern corporate activities to New York.²⁵ The Wood River refinery – which still exists today – remained under Shell’s ownership until 2004 when it was purchased by Enbridge Energy Partners.²⁶

EARLY SERVICE STATIONS

The gasoline station at the corner of Leonard and Washington Avenues was an urban curbside gasoline station featuring two underground tanks for which the real estate company that initially owned the site, Bixby and Smith, gained a building permit in January 1929.²⁷ The nation’s first gasoline pumping station is attributed to Harry Grenner and Clem Laessig of St. Louis, who opened a “drive-in” gasoline pump on Theresa Avenue in 1905 by attaching a garden hose to a gravity-fed tank. Prior to the invention of gasoline pumps, fuel was distributed at bulk stations where customers filled small containers with gasoline and then used a funnel to pour fuel into automobile gas tanks.²⁸ Grenner and Lassig established a network of pumping stations that they sold in 1929 to Shell Petroleum under the name of the American Gasoline Company –also the name used by Shell for its Pacific Northwest operations. In 1929, Grenner and Lassig were managing 40 retail stations and one bulk depot in St. Louis.²⁹ Shell was an early proponent of independent oil dispensaries or retail outlets that became known as “service stations.” By 1929, the company sold gasoline in all of the nation’s 48 states.³⁰ The company opened its first gas station in St. Louis at the intersection of Palm and Farrar Streets in 1923, prior to the 1929 acquisition of the American Gasoline Company.³¹

Although St. Louis boasts of having the nation’s first curbside gas station, it was the State of California that directly influenced development of the modern gasoline station. Two companies that were particularly prominent in California during the early years of the gasoline station’s development were Standard Oil and Puente Oil.³² California played a large role in modernizing the gas station primarily because the state’s landscape allowed for construction of early good roads that directly linked the region’s oil reserves to local refineries. In most cases, oil was produced, distributed, and sold through a single interest. In the beginning, such an interest was not necessarily that of a large oil company. Many independent retailers also operated small refineries. In 1920, Standard Oil operated 220 gasoline stations nationwide; Shell Petroleum owned 77 stations; and Union Oil operated 32 stations.³³ Very few of these were located outside of California. Shell’s establishment of inner-city service stations in St. Louis by 1923 indicates the strong role that the city played in early automobile development. St. Louis supported a number of early gasoline stations because of its direct access to the Wood River refinery, but also because it catered to the automobile. As noted in the MPD, the city was one of the first in the nation to develop the automobile and it heavily promoted its good roads that by 1895 were among the best in the nation.³⁴

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

The lot associated with 3229 Washington Avenue was an ideal location for a service station. There was no more coveted place to put gasoline pumps than at the corner of two well-traveled streets. Corner lots were ideal for single-pump filling stations because they provided drivers with a “better chance to observe the approach of vehicles.”³⁵ Once automated pumps and underground tanks became available by the 1910s, oil companies began to heavily market existing businesses and roadside markets as automobile service stations – a much less expensive undertaking than constructing independent service stations. Gasoline could be purchased anywhere . . . “almost overnight, bicycle shops, automotive dealers, car garages, and carriage shops all had gasoline pumps installed in front of their establishments,” as did hardware stores, general stores, and roadside markets.³⁶ This trend continued until zoning ordinances (such as that established in 1908 by the City of St. Louis) and increasing competition among oil companies forced distributors to build attractively designed full-service stations.³⁷

The early gasoline pump was soon improved, outdating Lassig and Grenner’s 1905 model. In 1906, John J. Tokheim introduced the “Tokheim Dome Oil Pump Outfit,” which was designed to imitate a nineteenth-century model pump developed by Sylvanis F. Bowser that “plunged” or “pulled up” lamp and stove fuel into a metal holding tank. Tokheim’s model worked about the same way, pumping gasoline into a glass-domed tank that allowed customers to measure the amount of gasoline that they desired to purchase. The pump, which ejected up to 12 gallons per minute into the repository, also deposited gasoline directly into the automobile tank.³⁸ Once gasoline pumps became widely available during the 1910s, the underground tank was developed soon afterward, which simplified “the curbside positioning of gasoline pumps in urban settings.”³⁹ Underground gas tanks were in use as early as 1912, when the Gilbert & Barker Company began to manufacture its “T-8 Gallon Curb Pump” used to express fuel from underground tank systems.⁴⁰

By the time that World War I began, curbside gasoline pumps were as common as sidewalk mailboxes. Anybody could install one – they were easily assembled and gasoline tanks could be placed at almost any site. Even residential homeowners could put a pump in their front yard if they so desired. Excessive and random placement of gasoline pumps along any curb, street, or corner began to cause a lot of problems. Vehicles waiting to use pumps backed up traffic and blocked inner city streets. No type of safety measures were taken to avoid cars from running into pumps and causing fires or explosions.⁴¹ And, much to the distaste of proponents for the City Beautiful movement, although these pumps were “necessary,” they held “no architectural merit whatsoever.”⁴²

Due to the multiplicity of problems related to curbside pumps, oil companies and independent owners began to plan individual buildings where gasoline, as well as service and supplies were provided. Many early gas stations were designed as small houses or box-style buildings that

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

supported a “grafted” wing with restrooms and/or service areas. Gas pumps were placed on small islands, to provide visibility and prevent cars from bumping into them. Competition between oil companies spurred the development of unique building designs and/or logos so that customers could easily associate oil products with the companies that distributed them.⁴³ As noted in an architectural journal from 1925, “while most of our stations are painfully ugly, some of the oil companies are making an effort to provide pleasing park-like places embellished by beautiful little buildings and thoughtful architectural entourage.”⁴⁴ The idea sparked an entirely new movement. Oil companies hired well-known architects to design modern buildings that featured amenities such as clean restrooms, full-service automobile care, and refreshments. The gasoline curbside station at the corner of Leonard and Washington Avenues in downtown St. Louis was one that illustrates the transition between the roadside curb pump and the fully-planned service station that became popular after World War II. Until that moment arrived, the Royal Tire Service property was a unique addition to St. Louis -- an early example of the full-service automobile station, complete with curbside pumps that also provided tires, repair services, and oil lubrication for its customers in a professionally designed modern facility.

HISTORY OF ROYAL TIRE SERVICE BUILDING, 3229 WASHINGTON AVENUE

The property at 3229 Washington Avenue was designed by T.P. Barnett and constructed by C.B. McCormack. The building permit issued in 1929 identifies the proposed building as a single story “service station.” Estimated initial construction costs were \$25,000.⁴⁵ Between 1929 and 1935, Royal Tire Service, Inc. occupied the building as a tire and battery retailer and service facility; and the property also held three gasoline pumps with two underground tanks owned by Shell Petroleum, Inc. that were added to the site in 1929. Royal Tire was a subsidiary of the United States (U.S.) Rubber Company. The Royal Tire section of the company situated at 3229 Washington Avenue was incorporated in 1929 (in Delaware), and T.D. Hinchecliffe served as the tire company’s president at that time. In addition to use by Royal Tire, the building (during the 1930s-50s) was utilized by U.S. Tire Service and Beverly Rubber [Tire] Co., the former of which was also a subsidiary of U.S. Rubber Company. In 1958, Beverly Tire vacated the building. By 1959, the building was used by Mo Cummins Diesel Sales Corp. which remained as the tenant until ca. 1965. The associated filling station on the property remained in operation until ca. 1959, slightly longer than the building was used by Beverly Tire. Subsequent owners that operated the gas pumps after Shell included Byrne & Tooley (early to mid-1940s) and Grable F. Reynolds (mid-1940s to late 1950s). After 1965, it appears that the property was not used for any purpose – a pattern that continued for more than 15 years.⁴⁶

Prior to construction of the Royal Tire Service building in 1929, the lot associated with 3229 Washington Avenue featured two 2.5-story brick dwellings identified as 3231 and 3229 Washington Avenue.⁴⁷ The character of this area known as Midtown changed rapidly following the introduction of inner-city streetcars in the late 1900s that ran along main avenues such as

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Locust, Olive, Grand, and Washington Avenues. Commercial buildings quickly replaced residences along these streets by the early 1900s, and the area “took on an urban appearance . . . supporting numerous shops, hotels, and theaters that by the 1920s ‘rivalled downtown’ as the city’s primary retail center.”⁴⁸ The vicinity of 3229 Washington Avenue supported a large number of transportation-related businesses featuring automobile manufacturers, dealers, service providers, and supply stores that by the 1910s became collectively known as “Automobile Row.”⁴⁹ It was by no accident that the property which came to house Royal Tire’s home in St. Louis was constructed on Washington Avenue near Leonard. The property was within direct vicinity of the city’s early automobile dealerships and retail establishments that centered on Locust Street and Olive Boulevard.

The location and design of Royal Tire at 3329 Washington Avenue fits the Service Station Property Type defined by the MPD. Situated on a corner lot, the site was within an area of the city that catered to early automobile garages and service stations as noted. A 1908 city ordinance restricted the construction of automobile service stations and gasoline dispensaries to areas west of “12th Street [and] south of North Market Street.”⁵⁰ This reflects a national trend to restrict businesses that utilized explosives, such as gasoline, to areas outside of residential and commercial centers. Such restrictions were enacted not only for reasons of safety, but also to “clean up” inner city streets that were becoming dotted with curbside gasoline pumps and clogged with automobile traffic. The location of the Royal Tire Service building at its corner lot with access to and from Washington, Leonard, and the alley north of Washington, gave customers an easy way to enter/exit the pumping station and the repair shop. The main office faced Washington, providing direct customer entrance from the primary thoroughfare. A rear automobile/lube service wing faced the alley off of Leonard, which was a less pedestrian-oriented street. The central section of the building was used specifically as a tire shop, also featuring access to and from the alley. The interior of the building was designed so that cars could be easily moved, with interior steel truss supports and a “crescent” (barrel vault monitor) roof above the tire shop.⁵¹ The building proved exceptionally functional as evidenced by the fact that the property remained in use for its designed purpose long after the popularity of the area for similar businesses declined in the early-to-mid 1950s.

The Royal Tire Service building was erected during a period of time when St. Louis’ automobile properties were specifically designed for the car itself, rather than the earlier decades in which existing buildings were remodeled for automotive use. This was also a time in which independent gasoline/filling stations were beginning to evolve as a distinctive property type.⁵² In 1951, when the building remained in use by Beverly Rubber [Tire] Co., it was “remodeled” under a contract with William B. Dettermann.⁵³ The property was again altered in 1957 (still in use by Beverly Tire Co.) under a contract with Elmer Cass when partitions were added to create office and storage space.⁵⁴ No doubt interior alterations were made to update the building and

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

support the changing needs of its occupants. However, no significant alterations appear to have been made during these years with both interior and exterior conditions of the building matching the original materials, including original overhead doors on two of three rear garage openings, original windows on the sides and rear within the central section of the building, and original exterior brick materials. The only interior alterations appear to be those in which space was partitioned for offices (1950s), ceilings were updated with acoustical tile (1950s) and a wall was added to enlarge the office space in 1967.⁵⁵

An overview of properties along Washington Avenue during the years 1930-1933 demonstrates that this area supported numerous automobile service and repair shops including (but not limited to) Safety Brake Service Corp. at 2106 Washington; S.G. Hoffman Magneto Co. at 3134 Washington; Johnston Bros. Tire & Service at 3145 Washington; United Garages, Inc. at 3309 Washington; Wayne Auto Service at 3313 Washington; General Tire Company at 3400-3402 Washington; Real/Riehl Brake Service at 3415 Washington; Grand-Washington Garage at 3658 Washington; service and supply businesses at 2800, 2943, 3301 and 4614 Washington; and independent repair shops at 3336 and 4243 Washington. In addition, numerous hardware stores along Washington Avenue offered tire sales and service.⁵⁶

The building at 3229 Washington Avenue fits the property type of the service station identified in the "St. Louis Auto-Related Resources, Marketing and Servicing the Automobile" MPDF.⁵⁷ In St. Louis, "oil companies and independent retailers began constructing actual [gas] stations" by the 1910s "with off-street access to the pumps."⁵⁸ As noted and illustrated by the Royal Tire Service property, early service/gasoline stations in St. Louis were most often masonry construction with flat or barrel vaulted roofs, featuring L-shaped one-story plans that provided ease of access to and from the gasoline pumps and service bays. In addition, most of these early stations were situated along major arteries, such as Washington Avenue, and in addition to dispensing gasoline, provided a specialized service, such as tire distribution.⁵⁹ Service stations in and around the vicinity of automotive row (Locust Street) during the early 1900s were not uncommon, however very few examples remain intact today.

CONCLUSION

The Royal Tire Service building at 3229 Washington Avenue is a noteworthy example of an early St. Louis automobile service garage and gasoline pumping station. The property meets the MPDF context of "Marketing and Servicing the Automobile in St. Louis ca 1900-1955" as a service station property type. It is an excellent example of a full-service station that provided gasoline and tire service near St. Louis' early Automobile Row situated two blocks south of the property. The property meets NRHP Criterion A: Commerce as a service station that contributed to the city's marketing and servicing of automobiles in the early 1900s. The property's distinctive design as an automotive service/gasoline station, as well as its association with

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

architect T.P. Barnett and C.B. McCormack meet NRHP Criterion C. The property's early use is associated with two large corporations, including the United States Rubber Company (Royal Tire) and Shell Oil Company, which further illustrates the role of St. Louis in the early development of the automobile. The Royal Tires Services, Inc. Building retains a high level of architectural integrity that clearly illustrates its original use and design.

ENDNOTES

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³Leonard, 38; “Tom Barnett’s Ashes Will be Buried . . .”, 10; and Judy Little and Esley Hamilton, *University City Landmarks and Historic Places* (University City, MO: Historic Preservation Commission of University City, 1997), 3, 21, 23.

⁴“Tom Barnett’s Ashes Will be Buried . . .”, 10; and Mary Bartley, *St. Louis Lost* (St. Louis: Virginia Publishing Co., 1993; reprint edition 1998), 141.

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⁶“Building News / Building Permits,” *St. Louis Daily Record*, (5 March 1929), 4; and *Gould's St. Louis City Directory*, 1933.

⁷St. Louis Star-Sayings, *The City of St. Louis and Its Resources* (St. Louis: Self-published, 1893), 146.

⁸Bartley, 146-147.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

⁹Missouri Historical Society (comp.), "Necrologies," (Volume 20, September 1938 – March 1940), 51; St. Louis Star-Sayings, 132; and *Gould's City Directories* 1893, 1904 and 1933.

¹⁰Glenn D. Babcock, *History of the United States Rubber Company* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1966), 19-21, 33.

¹¹Ibid, 45-46, 49.

¹²Ibid, 114-117.

¹³Ibid, 119-121.

¹⁴Ibid, 57-74.

¹⁵Ibid, 307-10.

¹⁶Ibid, 216.

¹⁷Ibid, 312-13.

¹⁸*Gould's City Directories*: 1930, p. 1379; 1932, p. 1149; and *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* (Volume 2, Sheet 27, 1932 – revised from 1909), 37.

¹⁹*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1932.

²⁰[Shell Oil Company], "Oil is a Major Source of Power" (unpublished corporate history on file at Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, September 1952), 6.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid, 11.

²³Shell Oil Company, "Shell Oil Company Corporate History Data Sheet (unpublished document on file at Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, [1955]), np; Judi Adams, "Shell – Past, Present and Future – January Program" (Paper presentation online at http://d.dwest.netbox.com/history_shell_bulletin.doc; Access date 15 May 2006), np; and [Shell Oil Company], 11-12.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

²⁴George McCue and Frank Peters, *A Guide to the Architecture of St. Louis* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 58.

²⁵[Shell Oil Company], 13-16.

²⁶Alexander's Gas & Oil Connections, "Enbridge to acquire Shell's oil pipeline and storage systems," online article (Volume 9, Issue #1, 15 January 2004 online at <http://d.dwest.netbox.com/history/shellbulletin.doc>; Access date 15 May 2006), np.

²⁷City of St. Louis Building Permits, Engineering Real Estate Data Cards (St. Louis City Block 1039, Lots 1-2, Microfilm Roll J-1856), 14 January 1929.

²⁸Ruth Keenoy, Karen Bode Baxter, Timothy P. Maloney and Mandy K. Ford, "Historic Auto-Related Resources of St. Louis [Independent City] Missouri," (Multiple Property Listing [MPD] – copy on file at Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Commission, Jefferson City, MO), Section E:10.

²⁹Kendall Beaton, *Enterprise in Oil A History of Shell in the United States* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), 273.

³⁰Jack Doyle, *Riding the Dragon, Royal Dutch Shell and the Fossil Fire* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 22.

³¹Beaton, 303.

³²Ibid, 272.

³³Ibid, 273.

³⁴Keenoy et al., Section E: 1.

³⁵[no author], "A Word as to the Filling Station," *The Western Architect* (March 1925), 32.

³⁶Michael Karl Witzel, *The American Gas Station: History and Folklore of the Gas Station in American Car Culture* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1999), 30, 32.

³⁷Keenoy et al, Section E: 10.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

³⁸Witzel, 20-21.

³⁹Ibid, 32.

⁴⁰Ibid, 33.

⁴¹Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile. American Roadside Architecture* (Boston: Bullfinch Press, 1985), 96.

⁴²[no author] *The Western Architect*, 32.⁴³Liebs, 102-104.

⁴⁴[no author] *The Western Architect*, 32.

⁴⁵City of St. Louis Building Permit, F-2189, 4 February 1929.

⁴⁶*Gould's City Directories*, 1929-1980.

⁴⁷*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1932.

⁴⁸Keenoy et al, Section 8:14.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid, Section E, Page 9.

⁵¹*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*, 1932; and City of St. Louis Tax Assessor's Office, Real Estate Cards, City Block 1039.

⁵²Keenoy et al, 2005, Section E: 10.

⁵³*St. Louis Daily Record*, (14 August 1951).

⁵⁴*St. Louis Daily Record*, (20 November 1957).

⁵⁵*St. Louis Daily Record*, (August 1951, November 1957, September 1967).

⁵⁶Keenoy et al, Section F: 41.

⁵⁷*Gould's St. Louis City Directories* [Classified Sections], 1930-1933.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

⁵⁸Ibid, Section F: 40-42.

⁵⁹Ibid, Section F: 41.

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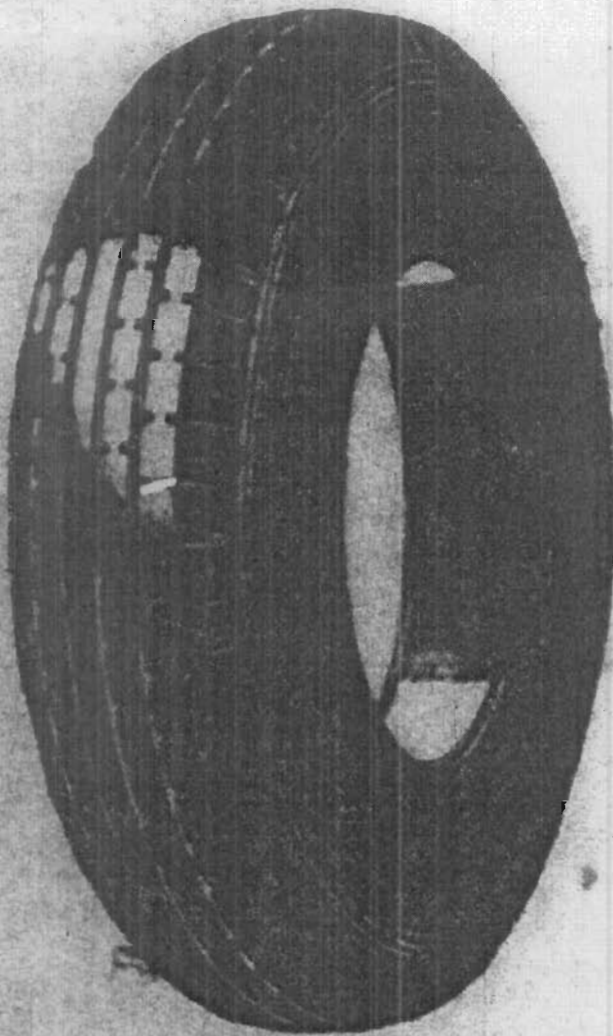
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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

St. Louis Phone Book, 1932

Royal Tire Services, Inc. Advertisement

UNITED STATES TIRES



Distributors of
**U. S. Pneumatic
and Solid Tires**

**DAY & NIGHT
ROAD SERVICE**

Other Services Rendered

**Battery, Car
Washing, Alighting
GAS and OIL**

ROYAL
TIRE SERVICE, Inc.
3229 WASHINGTON
JEfferson 2055

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Globe-Democrat, 25 September, 1929

Photograph of Architect Tom P. Barnett



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Missouri Historical Society Necrologies, v. 20

Photograph of Contractor Charles B. McCormack



Charles B. McCormack, 81, retired building contractor, who died yesterday at his home, 4522 Westminster place.

C. B. McCormack

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Verbal Boundary Description

A lot in Block 1039 of the City of St. Louis, fronting 124 feet 4 ½ inches on the north line of Washington Boulevard by a depth northwardly of 124 feet 8 inches to an alley; bounded west by Leonard Avenue, east by a line 189 feet 10 ½ inches west of the west line of Compton Avenue.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries incorporate all of the property that has been historically associated with this building and the property’s legal description. Except for public sidewalks, the concrete drives and a small area behind the building at the back alley, the building encompasses the entire lot.

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Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
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Photo Log

Photographer: Sheila Findall
September 2006

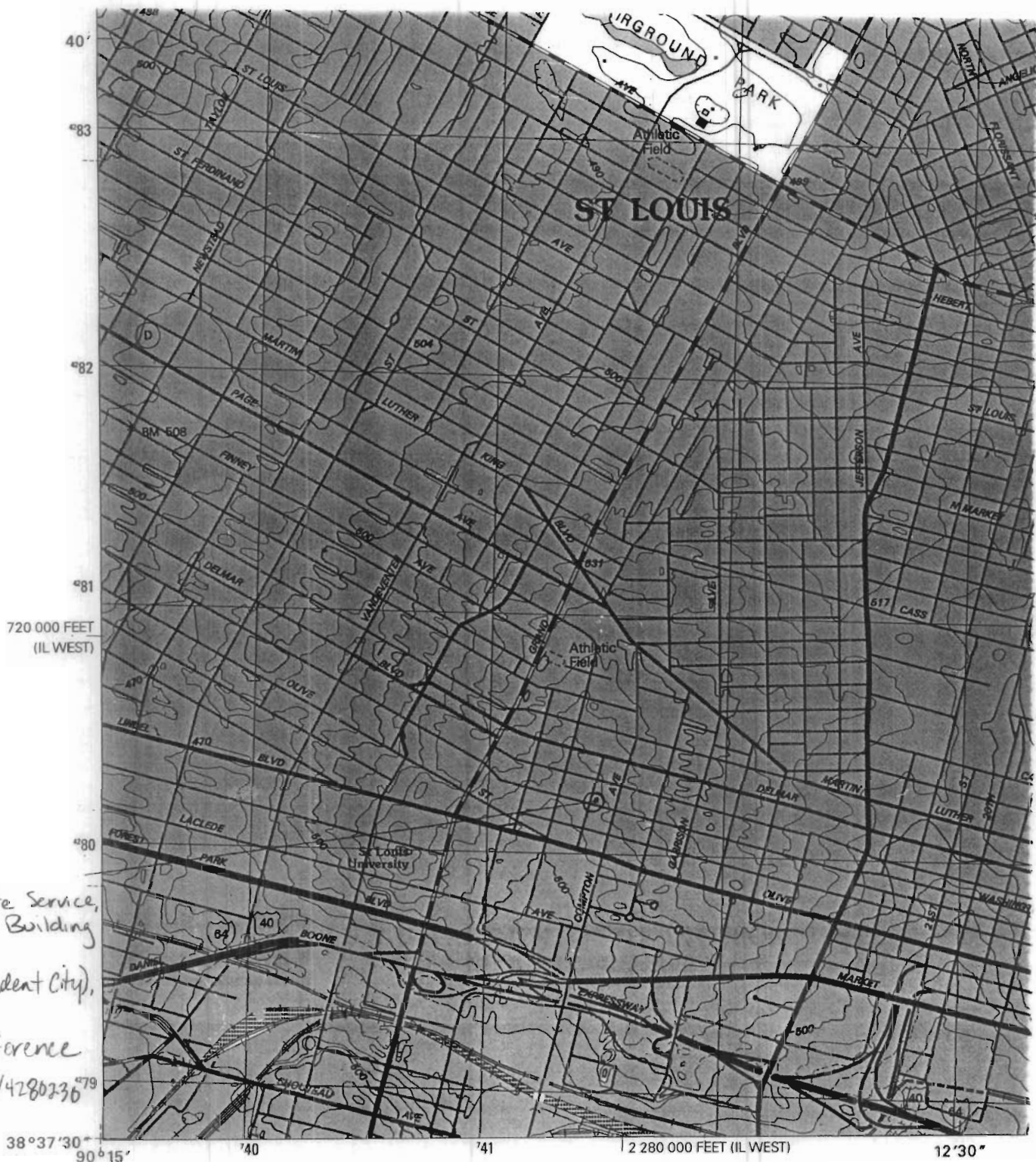
Negatives with photographer: Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo #1: Exterior, looking NE at S façade and W elevation

Photo #2: Exterior, looking SE at N and W elevations

Photo #3: Interior, main garage, from SW corner looking NE

Photo #4: Interior, main garage, from SE corner looking NW



Royal Tire Service,
 Inc. Building
 St. Louis
 (Independent City),
 MO
 UTM Reference
 15/741460/4280236

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

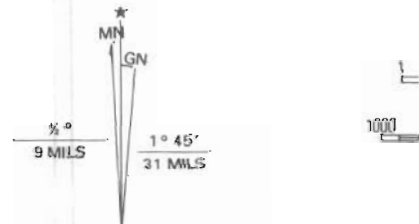
Topography compiled 1952. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1993 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1998; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1954. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15
 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



20% TOTAL RECOVERED FIBER



Royal Tire Service, Inc., Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Mo
Photo No. 1



Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Photo No. 2



Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), Mo
Photo No. 3



Royal Tire Service, Inc. Building
St. Louis (Independent City), MO
Photo No. 4