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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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.

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Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Automobile Alley Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 156-157 North Cedar Street, 108 North Dearborn Street, 100-101 North Franklin Street, 156 North Hamilton Street, 163 North Lawrence Street, 453-701 St. Anthony Street, 205-662 St. Louis Street, 600 St. Michael Street.

City or town: Mobile State: AL County: Mobile

Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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:

x A \_\_\_ B x C \_\_\_ D

<u>Lee Anne Wofford</u> /Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer		<u>5/11/16</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>		<b>Date</b>
<u>Alabama Historical Commission</u>		
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>		

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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**Signature of commenting official:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Title :** \_\_\_\_\_ **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government** \_\_\_\_\_

**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:) \_\_\_\_\_

*for Alexis A. Heronathly*  
Signature of the Keeper

6/22/14  
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
-

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Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>29</u>	<u>7</u>	buildings
<u>17</u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>46</u>	<u>7</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Business

Religion: Religious Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Business

Religion: Religious Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements: Commercial Style

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century: Greek Revival

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival Styles: Classical Revival

Modern Movement: Moderne

OTHER: Brutalist

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick,

Terra Cotta,

Concrete,

Stucco,

Metal: Corrugated

### 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.)

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### The Automobile Alley Historic District Addresses

North Cedar Street: 156,157;

North Dearborn Street: 108;

North Franklin Street: 100,101;

North Hamilton Street: 156;

North Lawrence Street: 163;

St. Anthony Street: 453,601,659,701;

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St. Louis Street: 205,209,251,260,301,303,308,358,361,400,450,455,500,  
505,507,551,554,556,557,600,610,653,660 and 662;

St. Michael Street: 600

The Automobile Alley Historic District is bounded to the north by St. Anthony Street, North Scott Street to the west, St. Michael Street to the south, and North Conception Street to the east. This boundary includes all or part of the following streets:

North Cedar Street, North Dearborn Street, North Franklin Street, North Hamilton Street, North Lawrence Street, St. Anthony Street and St. Louis Street.

### Summary Paragraph

The Automobile Alley Historic District, which extends westward along St. Louis Street for approximately 11 blocks, is located within a portion of the oldest section of downtown Mobile. The street can be found on the 1824 Goodwin and Haire Map and is a key feature of Mobile's original grid plan. St. Louis Street, which is referred to locally as "Automobile Alley" for the car dealerships located along its length from the late 1920s to the mid-1960s, was originally residential in character. Despite the relocation of the car dealerships in the late 1960s to areas west of downtown Mobile, the street continues to be an important commercial corridor. Automobile Alley covers approximately 30 acres.

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### Narrative Description

The Automobile Alley Historic District consists of all or part of 11 city blocks in downtown Mobile. The district is bounded on the north by St. Anthony Street, on the east by North Conception Street, on the south by St. Michael Street, and North Scott Street on the west. In total Automobile Alley extends from the 200 block to the 700 block of St. Louis Street, which is the focal point of the district. A small section along the eastern portion abuts the DeTonti Square Historic District. The Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District lies approximately one block to the south. The 36 built resources located in the Automobile Alley Historic District were constructed from the 1860s to the present.

The district is located within one of the oldest portions of Mobile, and its development follows typical 19<sup>th</sup> century planning. Maps from the colonial period in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the 1768 Pittman Map, show the core downtown area, especially along the waterfront. Fort Conde is the focal point and a few blocks exist around the fort. The area containing St. Louis Street is mostly wooded. The Spanish maps of the same area reveal that not much had changed. However, the 1824 Goodwin and Haire Map shows the area fully developed. This is after Mobile became an American city in 1813. The grid pattern is quite distinct, and all the major streets, including St. Louis Street, have been named. The grid pattern in this area remains mostly intact despite urban renewal efforts in the early 1960s.

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Blocks average approximately 350 feet by 250 feet or 200 feet by 230 feet. The streets are asphalt paved and mostly concrete curbed. The majority of streets are flanked by concrete sidewalks. Most streets average a width of 25 feet; although St. Louis Street is approximately 50 feet in width. Most lots, which contain commercial buildings, are of irregular size. The area is overwhelmingly urban in character, presenting streetscapes of brick, stucco, and concrete buildings, often with large expanses of storefront windows along their facades. The buildings, with few exceptions, have minimal setback with entrances opening onto the sidewalk. The district retains its original setting as there have been no significant changes to alter the area's overall appearance since it became an urban commercial area.

Architecturally the district consists mostly of one part commercial block buildings of one or two stories, sometimes executed in classical but most often in modernistic styles. The majority of all commercial resources are concrete, terra cotta, or brick construction. However, Automobile Alley was not always a commercial corridor. The 1878 City Atlas, 1888 Sanborn Map and 1891 Bird's Eye Map reveal most of the surveyed area to be residential with the bulk of the housing consisting of modest one story frame cottages, shotguns and duplexes. There still remains one Greek Revival building (301 St. Louis Street/ circa 1860) indicative of the areas earlier residential character along with the St. Louis Street Missionary Baptist Church (108 N. Dearborn Street/ circa 1870).

The shift from residential to commercial appears to have begun in the decade after World War I. The 1925 Sanborn Map reveals that many blocks, which had been residential in the 1904 Sanborn Map, now contained numerous businesses. The existing building stock also confirms this as most structures are comprised of forms and styles common for that time. As noted above the majority of these resources are concrete, terra cotta or brick construction, in mostly modest forms. However, a few exhibit Art Moderne styling. They were also adapted to serve the needs of the new and growing automobile industry, specifically, open interior floor arrangements for the display of automobiles and large exterior openings for vehicular access. As the majority of resources retain these features their association for their intended purpose remains. Since there have also been minimal alterations to their storefronts, these buildings continue to portray their original use and design as well, and, thus, retain their integrity along with their workmanship and materials. Although the dealerships have since moved to areas further west, the district is still commercial. Additionally, many automotive related services are still present and in this regard the district still retains its integrity of location and feel. Of the 36 built resources in the district, 29 would be contributing buildings. Also, there are 17 parking lots associated with their respective buildings. These are considered historic resources and are counted as such.

Overall the buildings of the Automobile Alley Historic District are in excellent condition and retain enough integrity to portray their significance as components of an early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial district. Although there have been minor alterations to storefronts, the contributing buildings retain their original form and continue to portray their original use and design.

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Also, despite the alterations the district as a whole retains integrity of design, location, workmanship, setting, feeling, association and materials. Few buildings have been altered to a degree that they no longer contribute to the district. The majority of buildings in the district retain their original facades, and there are few modern intrusions.

### **Archaeological Component:**

Although there has been no archaeological survey of the district, the likelihood of archaeological subsurface artifacts or remains is minimal. It is possible that artifacts from an earlier time in the area's history may be discovered should there be any effort at serious excavation in the future.

### **Inventory**

The following information was compiled from historic research and field surveys by Mr. Shaun Wilson, a Preservation Consultant with the Mobile Historic Development Commission. Beginning in June 2014 and progressing through June 2015, Mr. Wilson did a thorough survey of the entire district, photographing and describing both the contributing and noncontributing buildings.

Most construction dates are circa, based on the period of development of the particular street on which the building is located and the architectural characteristics of the building itself. In the case of exact dates, these were obtained by city directory references, title and tax record research. Other sources include published material from the Municipal Archives and unpublished material maintained in the files of the Mobile Historic Development Commission.

### **Inventory Key**

Each property description begins with an inventory number, which runs sequentially upwards. The address follows, then the date, then the name of the business or church if relevant, then the architectural description. Finally, the NR photo number of the photograph depicting the property where appropriate, followed by a "C" for contributing and "NC" for noncontributing. In addition to the built resources there are a number of parking lots associated with several of the buildings. These are enumerated below the main entry by the use of a subscript "a" with a circa date in the description.

### **Building Inventory:**

#### **N. Cedar Street**

1. 156 North Cedar Street. Circa 1955. 4 story brick veneer free-standing commercial building with gable roof, concrete slab foundation, three bay façade, entrances in southernmost bay and middle bay, auto bay with metal roll door in northernmost bay, metal frame plate glass storefront window on first floor and metal frame awning windows on upper floors, louvered vent in gable peak. C

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2. 157 North Cedar Street. Circa 1950. 1 story corrugated metal prefabricated building with gable roof, concrete slab foundation, two bay façade, auto bay with metal roll door and central entrance recessed, windowless façade. C

#### **N. Dearborn Street**

3. 108 North Dearborn Street. **St. Louis Street Baptist Church.** Circa 1870. 2 story stucco front-gabled ecclesiastical building with corner bell tower, concrete foundation, five bay façade, double door entrances in middle three bays, metal frame windows. Photo #1. C **NRHP 1976**

#### **N. Franklin Street**

4. 100 North Franklin Street. Circa 1950. 7 story brick faced tile free-standing commercial building with flat roof, 5 bay façade, entrance recessed, Neo-classical first story with engaged classical columns and cornice, metal frame 6/9 windows, enclosed skywalk attaches building to 101 North Franklin Street. Photo #2. C
5. 101 North Franklin Street. Circa 1970. 3 story free-standing commercial building with flat roof executed in the Brutalist style, concrete slab foundation, two bay façade, entrance with plate glass doors in both bays, façade windowless, skywalk attaches building to 100 North Franklin Street. NC

#### **N. Hamilton Street**

6. 156 North Hamilton Street. Circa 1960. 1 story free-standing commercial building with flat roof, structural tile, concrete slab foundation, five bay façade, entrance offset, metal frame plate glass windows, auto bay with metal roll door. C  
  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1960. C

#### **N. Lawrence Street**

7. 163 North Lawrence Street. Circa 1970. 1 story concrete block free-standing commercial building with gable roof, concrete slab foundation, two bay façade, entrance with burglar bars in northernmost bay, auto bay with metal roll door in southernmost bay, windowless façade. NC



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### St. Anthony Street

8. 453 St. Anthony Street. Circa 1930. 2 story brick veneer free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, 1 bay façade on ground floor and 3 bays on second floor, inset entrance, windows covered second floor, windows infilled first floor with concrete block. C
9. 601 St. Anthony Street. Circa 1945. 1 story brick storage building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, six bay façade, windows infilled, entrance at rear elevation. C
  - (a) Parking Lot. Circa 1945. C
10. 659 St. Anthony Street. Circa 1950. 1 story concrete block free-standing commercial building with Quonset style roof and art Moderne styling, concrete slab foundation, 7 bay façade, two doors centrally located on façade, windows infilled with brick but fenestration pattern still identifiable. C
  - (a) Parking Lot. Circa 1950. C
11. 701 St. Anthony Street. Circa 1945. 1 story brick veneer Art Moderne building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, three bay façade, entrance in westernmost bay, metal frame plate glass windows. C

### St. Louis Street

12. 205 St. Louis Street. Circa 1900. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, brick foundation, three bay façade, entrance in westernmost bay, metal frame plate glass windows, façade altered at later date. Photo #15. NC
13. 209 St. Louis Street. Circa 1950. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, three bay façade, centered entrance with flanking metal frame plate glass storefront windows. C
  - (a) Parking Lot. Circa 1950. C
14. 251 St. Louis Street. Circa 1930. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with side gable roof and parapet end walls, concrete foundation, five bay façade, centered double door entrance, metal frame plate glass windows. C
  - (a) Parking Lot. Circa 1930. C

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15. 260 St. Louis Street. **Davis Motor Supply** and/or **Lee Automotive**. Circa 1930. 1 story concrete free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, 6 bay façade, corner entrance with multi-light transom, windows covered, auto bays with metal roll doors, four bays infilled but still identifiable. Photo #4. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1930. C
16. 301 St. Louis Street. Circa 1860. 2 story brick Greek Revival free-standing commercial building with flat roof, brick foundation, six bay façade, entrance with classical surround, metal frame 6/6 windows, stucco brick scored to resemble ashlar. Photo #14. C
17. 303 St. Louis Street. Circa 1950. 1 story brick veneer free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, 1 bay façade with plate glass door and surrounding plate glass windows, metal awning across façade. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1950. C
18. 308 St. Louis Street. Circa 1925. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, three bay façade, concrete foundation, two entrances in easternmost bay, paired multi-pane metal frame windows first floor, multi-pane metal frame windows second floor. Photo #3. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
19. 358 St. Louis Street. **Threaded Fasteners**. Circa 1925. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with hip roof, concrete foundation, three bay façade, centered entrance, windows covered, corrugated metal addition added to west elevation at later date. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
20. 361 St. Louis Street. Circa 1905. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, brick foundation, 15 bay façade, multiple entrance along façade, metal frame plate glass windows, façade altered with the addition of corrugated metal siding. Photo #13. NC

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21. 400 St. Louis Street. **Kittrell-Milling Motor Company** and/or **Dodge and Graham Building**. Circa 1925. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, 11 bay façade, centered inset entrance, windows infilled and painted over with murals. Photo #5. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
22. 450 St. Louis Street. Circa 1925. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with parapeted roof, concrete foundation, five bay facade, centered inset entrance, windows altered to narrow banks of 1/1 metal frame windows under an attached metal awning running across façade, windows infilled second floor but fenestration pattern still discernible. Photo #6. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
23. 455 St. Louis Street. **Turner-Todd Motor Company** and/or **Buick Building**. Circa 1925. 2 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, six bay façade, corner entrance inset, first floor windows boarded, metal frame multi-pane windows second floor, auto bay with roll door. Photo #12. C **NRHP 2008**  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
24. 500 St. Louis Street. **Kamil Ship Supply**. Circa 1925. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with parapeted roof, 1 bay façade, corner entrance, single bay on facade with auto bay and metal roll door, windows infilled with brick but fenestration pattern still discernible. Photo #7. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1925. C
25. 505 St. Louis Street. Circa 1930. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, two bay façade, inset entrance with flanking glass block, metal frame plate glass storefront window with burglar bars in remaining bay. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1930. C
26. 507 St. Louis Street. Circa 1930. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, three bay façade, centered entrance with flanking metal frame plate glass windows, burglar bars added. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1930. C

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27. 551 St. Louis Street. Circa 1925. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, multiple storefront with 9 bay façade, two autobays with metal roll doors, inset double door entrance, metal frame plate glass storefront windows. C
28. 554 St. Louis Street. Circa 1955. 1 story stucco free-standing commercial building with gable roof, concrete slab foundation, 2 bay façade, entrance with attached canopy, window in remaining bay removed and louvered vent installed, addition added to east elevation at later date. Photo #8. NC
29. 556 St. Louis Street. Circa 1930. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, three bay façade, entrance in easternmost bay, narrow metal frame plate glass windows, original two bay façade altered by infill consisting of concrete block. NC
30. 557 St. Louis Street. Circa 1930. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with hip roof, concrete foundation, single bay with metal roll door, windowless façade, façade altered with vertical weatherboarding. Photo #11. NC
31. 600 St. Louis Street. Circa 1940. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, 3 bay façade, centered entrance and storefront windows boarded. C
32. 610 St. Louis Street. Circa 1940. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, 3 bay façade, centered entrance and flanking window bays boarded, corner entrance with auto bay and metal roll door. Photo #9. C  
(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1940. C
33. 653 St. Louis Street. **Treadwell Ford**. Circa 1925/45. 1 story brick Art Moderne free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete foundation, four bay façade, Art Moderne style corner entrance with curving roofline, metal frame plate glass windows, centered entrance along original facade now infilled with brick, 2 window bays infilled with brick but still identifiable. Photo #10. C
34. 660 St. Louis Street. Circa 1940. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with side gable roof, concrete slab foundation, two bay façade, arched entrance in easternmost bay, narrow plate glass windows in remaining bay, original window infilled with brick, side chimney. C

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35. 662 St. Louis Street. Circa 1945. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof, concrete slab foundation, three bay façade, centered entrance infilled with brick but still identifiable, flanking windows infilled with brick but still identifiable. C

(a) Parking Lot. Circa 1945. C

**St. Michael Street**

36. 600 St. Michael Street. Circa 1890. 1 story brick free-standing commercial building with flat roof and stepped parapet gable façade, brick foundation, 1 bay façade, large double door entrance, windows boarded, louvered vent in gable. C

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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  
Commerce  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1860-1965  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1860  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

C.L. Hutchison, Sr.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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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 Automobile Alley Historic District (1860-1965) is locally significant under National Register Criterion C for architecture for its large, mostly intact collection of early to mid-20th century commercial buildings used for the burgeoning automobile industry. The buildings have not been significantly altered and therefore retain their elements of design, materials and craftsmanship.

The district is also locally significant under Criterion C for landscape architecture due to the impact the automobile dealerships had on the urban landscape. A number of vacant lots were created in order to meet the needs of constantly evolving business model of the young industry. In this case it meant the necessity of maintaining a large stock of vehicles for potential customers. Because the urban landscape has not been significantly altered the district retains its setting.

Additionally, Automobile Alley is locally significant under Criterion A for commerce as it was the focal point for the automobile industry in Mobile for approximately 50 years. The main thoroughfare, St. Louis Street, was primarily residential at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but was rapidly transformed into a center of commerce by the rapidly growing industry and related suppliers. As the area is still referred to by many Mobilians as "Automobile Alley" and a number of automotive related businesses still exist in the area the district retains its association with the automobile industry.

Finally, the Automobile Alley Historic District meets National Register Criteria Consideration A (religious properties deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance) because of the St. Louis Street Baptist Church (108 North Dearborn Street). Although constructed during the period when St. Louis Street was primarily residential, the building is representative of the work of the noted local architect C.L. Hutchison, who redesigned the façade in 1905. Mr. Hutchison was also responsible for the commercial buildings at 400 and 500 St. Louis Street. It is therefore a testament to this architect's range and skill as he is also responsible for a number of residential designs in other areas of the city.

The Automobile Alley Historic District retains a strong sense of time and place. The appearance of the district has not been significantly altered, and it retains much of its historic character.

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

The Automobile Alley Historic District is located within Mobile's downtown core, primarily extending from the 200 block of St. Louis Street to the 700 block of the same.



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This area comprises much of the land associated with Mobile's earliest development after it was moved to its present location by the French in 1711. During this colonial period the western limits of the town reached only as far as Joachim Street, which is only half a mile from the river (*Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District NR Nomination* 1995, 31). The area was dominated by Fort Conde with scattered buildings along the few existing streets. By the American period, beginning in 1813, the western limits of the city reached Broad Street, which is the western boundary of the survey area. This slow early growth reflected the colonial nature of Mobile's economy and the lack of significant attention after New Orleans became capital of French Louisiana in 1718 (*Ibid* 1995, 32).

The American period in Mobile saw a dramatic change in its appearance. Fort Conde was pulled down and the rubble used to fill along the river (Thomason 2001, 66). Brick warehouses were built along the river and mostly frame stores were constructed along Dauphin Street, which was becoming the commercial corridor of the developing town. Houses were built within close proximity (McClaurin & Thomason 1981, 38). The 1824 Goodwin and Haire Map shows a fully developed plan for expansion with streets laid out in a precise grid pattern as was typical of early American urban planning. The City's economy steadily grew throughout the 1830s. This growth was based on one commodity, cotton (*Church Street East Historic District NR Nomination* 1983, 42). Tens of thousands of bales were shipped by steamboat down the Alabama River system to the wharves of the port city. There it was loaded onto ships for transport to the mills of England and the Northeast United States. Mobile's lucrative cotton trade resulted in a solid nucleus of professional elite, including cotton factors, bankers and lawyers (*Ibid* 1983, 42). The Old Marine Hospital and City Hospital on St. Anthony Street were constructed during this period. By 1850 Mobile was enjoying the golden years of the cotton boom. Cotton factors and financiers built brick townhouses in the blocks near the river while the working classes erected frame houses in the rest of downtown, especially St. Louis Street (Thomason 2001, 67).

The Civil War was disastrous for Mobile. Though the city was spared actual fighting, the resulting economic strangulation and stagnation brought growth to a standstill. The harbor silted up and trade fell off considerably (*DeTonti Square Historic District NR Nomination* 1985, 19). Recovery was slow but a determination not to rely on a single commodity, like cotton, drove business leaders to develop the lumber, grain and fruit markets with the result that business slowly improved (*Ibid* 1985, 19). Mobile's 1870 population was over 32,000. By the 1890s the City's growth was steadier. Electric trolley lines replaced the mule-drawn trolleys that ran through downtown (McClaurin & Thomason 1981, 96). The City's commercial center was still concentrated along the waterfront and down Dauphin Street (*Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District NR Nomination* 1995, 31). The surrounding blocks, as evidenced by the 1878 City Atlas, 1888 Sanborn Map and 1891 Bird's Eye Map were overwhelmingly residential. Modest one story frame buildings appear in abundance.

The turn of the century saw little change along St. Louis Street and the surrounding blocks. It was not until World War I and the subsequent growth in business and trade that the residential areas began to shift to commercial use.

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The change in character from residential to commercial is quite dramatic. This was in large part due to the growth of the automobile industry (*Turner-Todd Motor Company NR Nomination* 2006, 4). Although the first documented sale of an automobile in the United States occurred on March 24, 1898, it costs \$1,000, which was a large sum of money at the time (Genat 2004, 6). It was not until the enterprising efforts of Henry Ford and his implementation of the assembly line, which helped to reduce the price of his Model T to \$400, did the automobile become affordable (*Turner-Todd Motor Company NR Nomination* 2006, 3). In 1908 250,000 Model T's were produced (*Ibid* 2006, 3). The 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows an unpaved residential street with only a few shops located along its length. The map reveals only one car dealership listed on a later addition. The Sanborn Map for 1925 however reveals several car dealerships on the newly paved street. City Directories also confirm that that the residential character of the street had been supplanted by the new industry. This is not surprising as there were more than 4.5 million automobiles on America's rapidly expanding roadways by 1929 (Genat 2004, 6). Despite subsequent upswings and downswings in the market, an estimated 39.6 million passenger cars were on the road by 1950 (*Ibid* 2004, 11).

The locations and the buildings, themselves, were key factors in the success of the new dealerships. In the majority of cases prevailing commercial building forms and architectural styles were utilized during the first decades of the new automobile industry. However, building designs were modified to include a large open interior space with a highly visible storefront to display new models. Large openings were also added for vehicular access to an on-premises service center, which was a requirement of automobile manufacturers (*Turner-Todd Motor Company NR Nomination* 2006, 4). It was also necessary for the dealership to be close to the local rail yard as automobiles were usually shipped by rail at that time (*Ibid* 2006, 4).

Despite the modification of existing building designs it was soon realized that in order to maintain a large enough inventory other methods would be needed. The vacant lots created by the demolition of residential buildings during St. Louis Street's transition from a residential to commercial district provided ideal parking lots for increased inventory. This resulted in a mixed urban streetscape of buildings and open areas which contrasted with neighboring blocks, such as the Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District (NR listing 1979), with their near continuous streetscape of commercial buildings typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century urban areas. As sales of the automobile increased, especially following World War II, attention became more focused on the customer. Leaders at General Motors took notice of the various innovations in sales by automobile dealers throughout the country and with their input produced a book, Planning Automobile Dealerships, in 1946. This ultimately led to the development of the modern "auto mall," which is still the dominant plan for car dealerships (Genat 2004, 44).

Although downtown dealerships benefited from an extended lifespan, automobile dealers became convinced that a cramped, outdated showroom had a negative impact on the customer and, accordingly, sales (*Turner-Todd Motor Company NR Nomination* 2006, 5). As a result, automobile dealers began to move their dealerships to the newly developed suburban areas.

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

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Many of the older buildings were still involved in the automobile industry, mostly as auto parts or maintenance shops. As the focus shifted to the newly developed suburban neighborhoods, the downtown area, as a whole, saw a period of decline (*Ibid* 2006, 5).

There have been some changes, however, in recent years as a renewed interest in downtown living has resulted in rehabilitation efforts in various locations (*Lower Dauphin Street Commercial District NR Nomination* 1995, 34). Automobile Alley still retains a strong sense of time and place, and sensitive rehabilitation will ensure that the appearance and historic integrity of the district will not be significantly altered.

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

“Automobile Alley Historic District”, National Register of Historic Places nomination. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. March 18, 1999.

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Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street. New York: AltaMira Press, 2000.

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The Mobile Register. Library of Local History. Mobile, Alabama.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Mobile, Alabama, 1904, 1925 and 1955. Municipal Archives. Mobile, Alabama.

“Turner-Todd Motor Company”, National Register of Historic Places nomination. Mobile, Alabama. June 28, 2006.

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

Thomason, Michael (ed.). Mobile: The New History of Alabama's First City. Alabama:  
University of Alabama Press, 2001.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**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):** \_\_\_\_\_

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 30

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 30.694702 | Longitude: -88.044438 |
| 2. Latitude: 30.693130 | Longitude: -88.043690 |
| 3. Latitude: 30.690298 | Longitude: -88.051790 |
| 4. Latitude: 30.691614 | Longitude: -88.053319 |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The boundary of the Automobile Alley Historic District is shown on the accompanying map, entitled "The Automobile Alley Historic District". The scale is 1" equals 102'. All non-contributing resources are marked by cross-hatching over the building.

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the Automobile Alley Historic District was drawn to include the largest concentration of historic resources in the area known as "Automobile Alley" by local tradition and which can be verified through historical research.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Shaun Wilson/Preservation Consultant, reviewed by Jennifer Bailey/AHC  
organization: Mobile Historic Development Commission  
street & number: P.O. Box 1827  
city or town: Mobile state: AL zip code: 36633  
e-mail mhdc@cityofmobile.org  
telephone: 251-208-7281  
date: February 5, 2016

---

**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.)

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

**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: Automobile Alley Historic District

City or Vicinity: Mobile

County: Mobile County

State: Alabama

Photographer: Shaun Wilson

Date Photographed: June, 2014 – August, 2014

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

- 1 of 1 .108 N. Dearborn Street, camera facing east  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00001.tif)
- 1 of 2 .100 N. Franklin Street, camera facing northeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00002.tif)
- 1 of 3 .308 St. Louis Street, camera facing north  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00003.tif)
- 1 of 4 .260 St. Louis Street, camera facing northeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00004.tif)
- 1 of 5 .400 St. Louis Street, camera facing northwest  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00005.tif)
- 1 of 6 .450 St. Louis Street, camera facing north  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00006.tif)
- 1 of 7 .500 St. Louis Street, camera facing northwest  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00007.tif)



Automobile Alley Historic District

Mobile County AL  
County and State

Name of Property

- 1 of 8 .554 St. Louis Street, camera facing north  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00008.tif)
- 1 of 9 .610 St. Louis Street, camera facing northeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00009.tif)
- 1 of 10 .653 St. Louis Street, camera facing southeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00010.tif)
- 1 of 11 .557 St. Louis Street, camera facing south  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00011.tif)
- 1 of 12 .455 St. Louis Street, camera facing southeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00012.tif)
- 1 of 13 .361 St. Louis Street, camera facing southeast  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00013.tif)
- 1 of 14 .301 St. Louis Street, camera facing south  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00014.tif)
- 1 of 15 .205 St. Louis Street, camera facing south  
(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00015.tif)
- 1 of 16 . Streetscape, north side of 200 block St. Louis Street, camera facing west,(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00016.tif)
- 1 of 17 . vacant lot, north side of 200 block St. Louis Street, camera facing north(AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00017.tif)
- 1 of 18 . vacant lot, north side of 300 block St. Louis Street, camera facing north (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00018.tif)
- 1 of 19 . Streetscape, north side of 400 block St. Louis Street, camera facing west (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00019.tif)
- 1 of 20 . Streetscape, north side of 550 block St. Louis Street, camera facing west (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00020.tif)
- 1 of 21 . Streetscape, south side of 650 block St. Louis Street, camera facing east (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00021.tif)
- 1 of 22 . Streetscape, south side of 350 block St. Louis Street, camera facing east (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00022.tif)

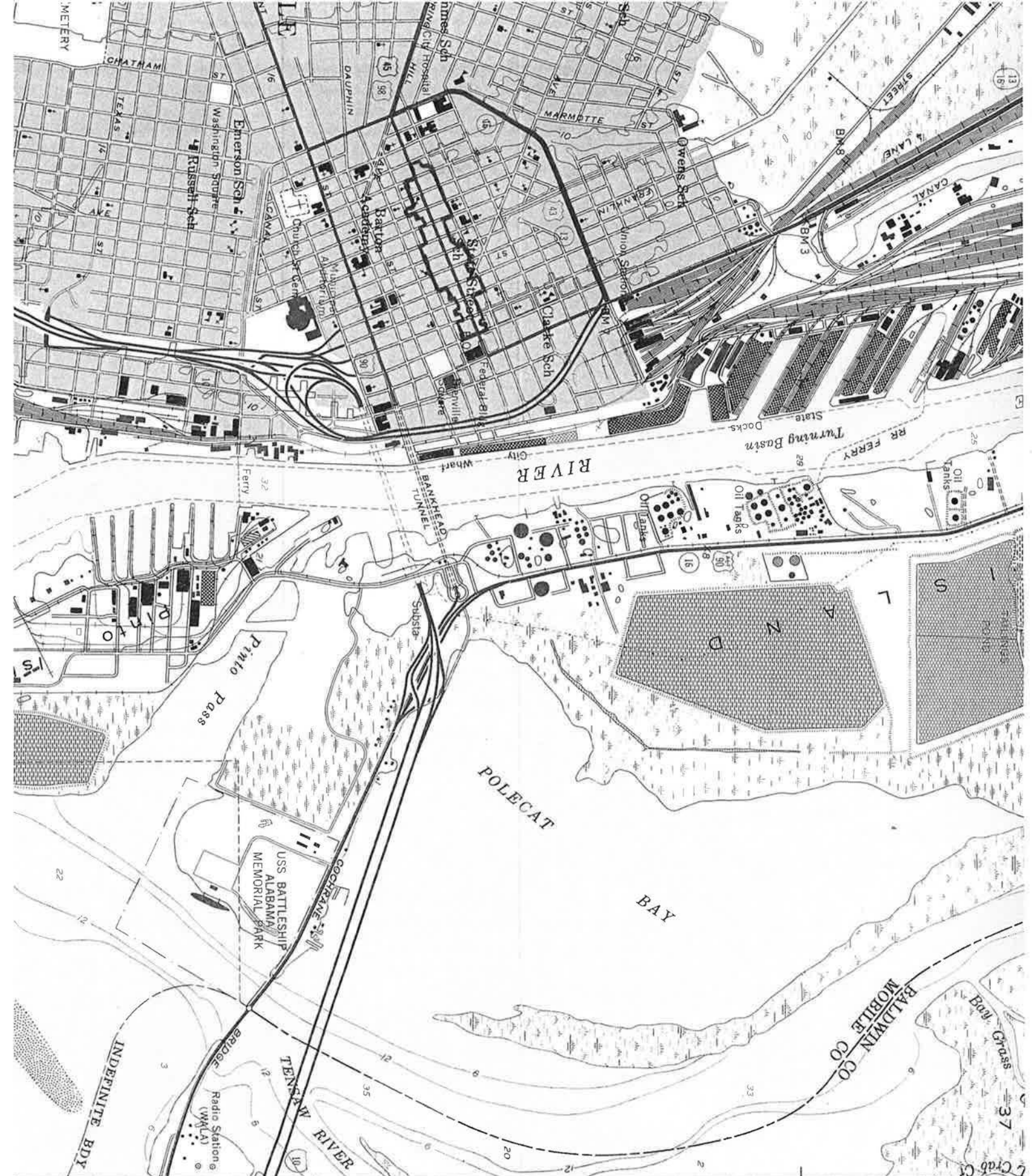
Automobile Alley Historic District  
Name of Property

Mobile County AL  
County and State

1 of 23 . vacant lot, south side of 250 block St. Louis Street, camera facing  
east (AL\_MobileCounty\_AutomobileAlleyHistoricDistrict\_00023.tif)

**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.



BRIDGEHEAD 5.3 MI.  
 LOXLEY 17 MI.

31 90 98  
 16 42

PENSACOLA, FLA. 64 MI. (BRIDGEHEAD)  
 3445 III NW

3396

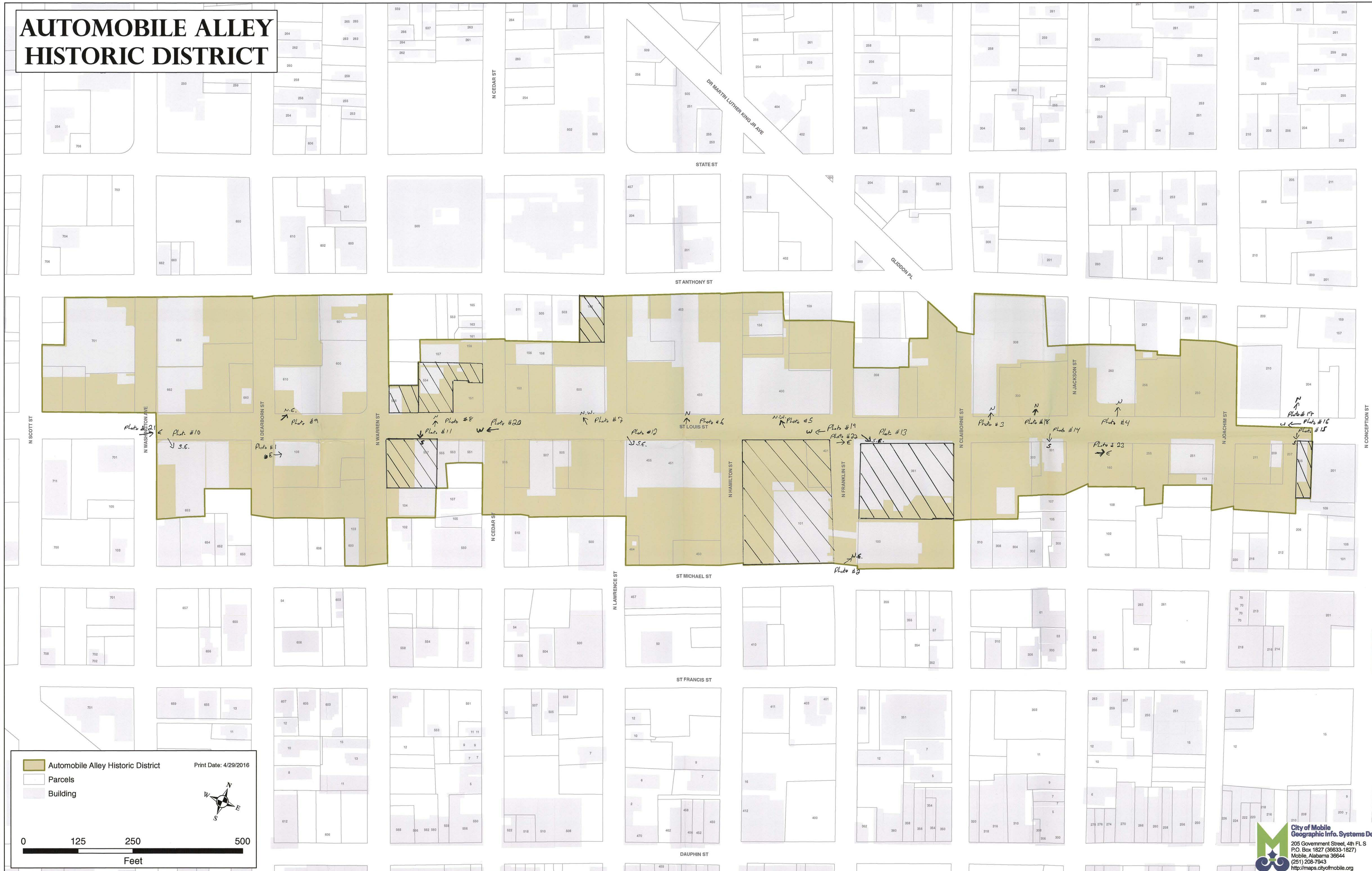
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42 30"

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37

# AUTOMOBILE ALLEY HISTORIC DISTRICT



Automobile Alley Historic District  
 Building  
 Parcels

Print Date: 4/29/2016

0      125      250      500  
Feet



St. Louis Street  
Missionary  
Baptist Church  
Pastor: Dr. W. J. Davis

Dearborn St

MCR

MCR



N Franklin St

ONE WAY

NO PARKING



308

NO PARK

BB

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Automobile Alley Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ALABAMA, Mobile

DATE RECEIVED: 5/13/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/02/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/17/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/28/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000400

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6/22/16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER Abrenally DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



STATE OF ALABAMA  
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

May 11, 2016

LISA D. JONES  
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

TEL: 334-242-3184  
FAX: 334-240-3477

RECEIVED 2280  
MAY 13 2016  
Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

Ms. Stephanie Toothman  
Keeper of the National Register  
U. S. Department of the Interior, NPS  
Cultural Resources  
National Register, History & Education Programs  
1201 "I" Street NW (2280)  
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear Ms. Toothman:

Enclosed please find the nomination and supporting documentation to be considered for listing the following Alabama resource in the National Register of Historic Places:

Automobile Alley Historic District  
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama

Your consideration of the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nomination is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lee Anne Wofford  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

LAW/nw

Enclosures