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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.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
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: 2724 Old Shell Road

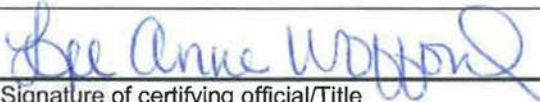
City/Town: Mobile State: AL County: Mobile
Not for Publication: _____ Vicinity: _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request 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 this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 National Statewide Local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

	/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	June 22, 2018
Signature of certifying official/Title		Date
Alabama Historical Commission		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official	Date
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): _____


Signature of the Keeper 8/13/18
Date of Action

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

5. Classification / Ownership of Property: (check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-Local
- Public-State
- Public-Federal

Category of Property: (check only one box)

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

Number of Resources Within Property: (do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use / Historic Functions: (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE / TRADE / department store/warehouse

Current Functions: (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT / NOT IN USE

7. Architectural Classification: (enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco
MODERN MOVEMENT: Wrightian
MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne
MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, CMU block, glass, aluminum windows

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, located in a mixed residential and commercial portion of Midtown Mobile, is a one-story commercial structure, primarily constructed of CMU walls, a concrete floor, large storefront windows, and exposed concrete structural roof supports. The elevations visible from Old Shell Road and Bay Shore Drive contain various openings, including pedestrian entrances, commercial truck entrances, and various large windows. The structure maintains a flat roof and is surrounded by empty lots and paved parking. The design of building falls into the category of Mid-Century Modern design, with obvious elements of the International, Art Deco, and Wrightian styles of architecture. The historic and architectural integrity of this property is substantial and has not been altered or compromised beyond a small 1970s addition that does not detract from the character or importance of the structure. The setting has changed significantly over the years. The building is flanked by Shiloh Baptist Missionary Church and UMS-Wright School and considerable development by both institutions has altered the historic residential setting, but the building's placement on Old Shell Road, an important thoroughfare connecting West Mobile to downtown, preserves the commercial feeling associated with the building. Paved parking surrounds the streetscape elevations, reflective of the automobile culture of the period, as the streetcar did not extend to this location on Old Shell Road.

Narrative Description

The mid-century modern commercial structure reflects a utilitarian function, both in design and materials. The brusque interior is original to the period of construction (except for the rear raised floor and c. 1970's infill portion) and supports the products sold within the store, the practicalities of displays, deliveries of seed sacks, and the expectations of the customers for such an operation. This 1955 structure represents a period of Mobile history whereas the surrounding area was largely undeveloped and rural, constituting the need for an agriculture/gardening based commercial establishment in this location. Today the structure is surrounded by modern developments including the recently expanded Shiloh Baptist Missionary Church and ever-expanding campus of UMS-Wright School. It also fronts onto Old Shell Rd., which is one of the most highly traveled streets in Mobile, although the width of the road has not been expanded. When constructed, Old Shell Rd. was used as a pathway to the Spring Hill neighborhood and was undeveloped farmland.

No remnants of this original period of construction are present in the surrounding landscape. Heavy overgrown vegetation surrounds the portions of the building that do not have street access. Paved parking lots, presumably from the period of construction, are present on two sides of the building. In accordance with the City of Mobile, parking is no longer legally permitted on the Old Shell Road side of the building. This is due to the traffic patterns and confinement of the parking area in relation to the street. Cars would have to back into traffic to leave the premises, and this option no longer meets the ordinances of the City of Mobile. When constructed, according to those interviewed for this application, Blue Bird Feed & Seed served as a central location for lawn and gardening sales in the Mobile area. Apparently, it was the only store of this variety when constructed. Many of those interviewed recalled the showroom being used as a social den for those interested in gardening. The setting of the structure, at the time of construction, was decidedly rural and differed greatly from the downtown commercial district and Midtown residential district. The location offered an opportunity for the architect to design something that was both functional and sympathetic to the rural landscape, following the style of Wright.

According to the Sanborn Maps for 1959, the original structure was slightly different in design from the present arrangement. An open loading dock on the west elevation, fronting onto Bay Shore Dr., was originally incorporated into the structure. The existing structural elements of the roof (both visible from the interior and exterior) reflect a change in materials from the original concrete support members. The later infill occurred c. 1970 based on the materials and design of the existing industrial roll-up doors. This infill space includes two roll-up doors, one pedestrian door, and one storefront window. It is also believed that the rear portions of the interior were raised at this time for storage. These raised levels of concrete flooring are still present, along with a concrete ramp. The changes associated with c. 1970 period of alterations have been corroborated by a series of oral history interviews, conducted in June 2017. Those interviewed for this National Register application recall the original layout/design, followed by alterations in the early 1970's. They also verified that the front room

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

(that includes the large storefront windows) was used to display small farm and gardening tools and equipment. This area also contained potted plants, many of which were on display in the parking lot near Old Shell Rd. The rear portion of the building was used for storing large sacks of seeds, fertilizer, and other gardening necessities while the front room served as a display or showcase room.

The c. 1970's alterations should not be considered detrimental to the historic character and fabric of this structure and should not compromise the building from being listed on the National Register. The alterations are mild in comparison to the remaining character defining features of the structure and are obviously not original to the property, but have been installed with a sympathetic understanding of not altering the character of the interior or exterior. Over 90% of the original materials and character of the structure is still intact, along with all the architecturally defining features of the structure.

The storefront windows and various openings are one of the primary defining characteristics of the structure. It was evident that these windows were used to display items for sale and signage to entice passing motorists to stop. Streetcar lines would not have passed this location, so the business model reflects the period when most shoppers either had a car or truck, as evidenced by the parking area in the front and side of the store and the size of the windows. Most of the storefront windows have a slight angled tilt to their design and installation, unique to this building and period of construction. The exposed concrete support beams of the roof are also important architectural features and give the structure an obvious Mid-Century Modern character, unique to this portion of Mobile during the period of construction. These original beams remain exposed and create a utilitarian tone for the structure while also representing the materials and building construction technology of the period.

The interior maintains a concrete floor, exposed concrete ceiling supports, various columns, and stoic utilitarian atmosphere, reflective of the time of construction and function of the interior. Various shelving still exists in some spaces and areas used for storing and delivering large sacks of seeds. Exposed CMU walls are present with large openings between each room. The interior represents a minimalist tone with a "build to suit" connection to the original purpose of the structure. Floors would have been covered in seeds, dirt, and other gardening equipment, therefore being able to clean the floors with a garden hose was important. Except for the small build-out on the loading dock and increase to the interior rear concrete slab, both from c. 1970, the interior remains intact with original features and the original layout.

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

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

Areas of Significance: (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

1955

Significant Dates:

1955

Significant Person: (complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect / Builder:

Architects: Archibald Reese Winter and T. Howard Ellis

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

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.)

Blue Bird Hardware & Seed was designed by Arch Winter in 1954, constructed in 1955, and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Arch Winter was a partner in the Mobile, AL based firm Ellis & Winter. The firm would become the most prolific mid-century modern architectural firm on the Gulf Coast. The crowning achievement of the firm was the Isle Dauphine Club, located on Dauphin Island, AL, and completed in 1957. This property was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. Many of the mid-century modern residences in the Sky Ranch neighborhood, also located in Mobile, were designed by Arch Winter. This neighborhood is scheduled for National Register consideration in 2018 as a new National Register Historic District. In the case of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, the structure is representative of the style and ethos displayed by Winter in Mobile during the mid-1950's. The unique blend of form, function, technology, and style, all evident in regard to the interior and exterior of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, makes this property architecturally unique to Mobile and fits within the historic narrative of the period of significance. No other structures reflective of the period of significance (1955) are located near the building nor was the area in question ever developed beyond industrial commercial structures and working-class shotgun residences. Some of the residences remain, however the expansion of Shiloh Baptist Missionary Church and UMS-Wright School have largely compromised the area from becoming a local or national historic district. This property is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places but is being submitted for consideration under Criteria C for architectural significance. The structure is locally important when considering the uniqueness of the design, the importance of the architect, and the historically relevant relationship between the form and the function of the building.

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

Criteria C: Architecture

Archibald Reese Winter, born 1913, received his architecture training at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn University) and graduated in 1935 with a Bachelor's degree in architecture. He continued his studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. where he received a Master's degree in architecture. After graduating, Winter shifted direction slightly and pursued higher education in the field of City Planning at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The institution was intended to be an American equivalent of the Bauhaus in Germany. Concepts of crafts, fine arts, and modern relationships between people and spaces were emphasized at both institutions, heavily influenced by Walter Gropius, a pioneer of the International Style. While in Michigan, winter studied under the guidance of Eliel Saarinen (1873-1950), a Finnish architect who was renounced for his Art Nouveau designs in the early 20th Century. Saarinen was an early pioneer of the Modern movement in the United States and Europe, whose most notable designs in the United States included the Tribune Tower in Chicago and the Gulf Building in Houston. While serving as the President of the Cranbrook Academy, Saarinen was also influenced by Ray Eames (then Ray Kaiser) and her eventual husband, Charles Eames.

While at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Winter would have been exposed to new concepts integrating modern materials of steel, concrete, and glass into designs and the relationship between technology (prefabrication) and natural elements and landscapes. Winter would enjoy a prolific career of architecture and planning in the Mobile area, but interestingly his obituary only listed two of his local projects, one of which was the Isle Dauphine Club (1). His architectural accomplishments did not go unnoticed as he was awarded the status of a "Fellow" by the American Institute of Architects and was honored in 1996 by the Alabama Architectural Foundation with the first Alabama Distinguished Architect award (2). He was also awarded the Mobile Historic Development Commission Certificate of Commendation in 1981. Colleague Arthur Prince lamented in Winter's obituary that Winter was a dreamer, and that "some of his dreams made perfect practical sense" and that if Mobile had done more to utilize his architectural and urban planning visions, "we would have been richer today." (3)

Winter's partner at the firm of Ellis & Winter was T. Howard Ellis (1912-1996), a native of Mobile, Alabama, and a fellow graduate of the architecture program of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn University). After graduating in 1933, Ellis continued his education at the Tulane University School of Architecture in New Orleans. Like Winter, Ellis would become a staple in the Mobile architectural community contributing to the design of the Spring Hill Avenue Methodist Church (Mobile, AL), Grace Lutheran Church (Mobile, AL), and Trinity Presbyterian Church (Fairhope, AL).

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

For the purposes of this National Register of Historic Places nomination as related to the design of the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, the lead architect and designer should be considered Arch Winter with Howard Ellis serving as second chair. The fundamental principles of the design, examined in detail in this application, along with correspondence in the Auburn University Architecture Library Archives, indicate that Winter should be considered the primary contributor.

The commercial aspect and function of the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed is relevant and important when considering the location of the business, architectural style of the structure, and commercial function. When completed in 1955, this building reflected the agrarian tradition in Mobile of maintaining urban gardens and small farms within the general vicinity of the city center. Backyard gardens were commonplace during the period of significance and the commercial vitality social importance of this establishment reflected the period. The store was one of the primary locations within the Mobile city limits to purchase gardening and small farm tools/implements, feed for animals, seeds, fertilizer, and receive advice for lawn and garden care. The store would remain a staple in the community until it closed c. 2000. It has remained vacant ever since.

As opposed to rural communities that maintained similar operations for large farm animals and commercial farming, Blue Bird Hardware & Seed was always intended to service smaller gardens within the city limits. According to the City Directories of Mobile, this was the only store within this category in Mobile until the introduction of Wal-Mart and other big box chain stores in the late 1980's.

Located outside of the historic residential and commercial developments of Mobile, at the time of construction, the operation was located in a somewhat rural setting, although still accessible by those who lived in commercial/residential center of Mobile. According to patrons who frequented the store who were interviewed for this application, the owners (unknown) developed a reputation in Mobile for offering the largest gardening selection while also offering advice to customers. It was not uncommon to see patrons spending large amounts of time in the store discussing their gardens and receiving advice. The store has been frequently described as a social gathering place for those interesting in gardening and small backyard farms.

The location of the store and decision to relocate the operation to this newly designed build-to-suit structure in 1955 further reflects the importance of the relationship between the form and function of the building. Historic photographs of the building in question have not been located, however the University of South Alabama McCall Archives located two images of the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed in 1949. The original structure was a traditional commercial structure, located within a commercial strip along a commercial corridor. The feeling and tone of the building was decidedly urban and did not reflect the agrarian ethos of the establishment. The archives of the Mobile Historic Development Commission, University of South Alabama McCall Archives, Mobile Public Library Archives, and Auburn University Architecture Library Archives were all searched for historic images and drawings of the 1955 structure, however no evidence exists on record. The previous owner of the structure was contacted; however, they were also unable to locate a historic image of the building. A Sanborn map from 1959 was located at the Mobile Public Library Archives and reflects the original footprint and location of the structure in 1955.

Viewing the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed within the context of the Mid-Century Modern movement in Mobile is complicated considering the minimal examples of comparative projects during the period of significance. The most notable and comparable examples of Arch Winter's work from the period include the nationally recognized Isle Dauphine Club (Dauphin Island, AL) and many of the residences of the planned community Sky Ranch (Mobile, AL). While the design and tone of the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed is decidedly more minimalist and less expressive than the Isle Dauphine Club, the design of the one-story commercial structure in some ways served as a testing ground for Winter's architectural opus on Dauphin Island in 1957. (See Isle Dauphine Club Photographs 1, 2, 3)

The Blue Bird Hardware & Seed and the Isle Dauphine Club were designed and constructed relatively during the same period by Winter, with the former completed in 1955 and the latter in 1957. Both structures, while wildly different in scale and function, both incorporate an expert understanding of concrete structural elements, skeletal exposed support members, open floor plans, and curved storefront windows. In fact, the glass within the storefront windows on both structures are slightly leaning to a small degree, creating an angled appearance of the glazing within the openings. This design technique was unique to Winter and has not been found in any other structures in the Mobile area. (4) In response to examining the exposed support beams on the interior and exterior of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, Cart Blackwell, Architectural Historian and Director of the Mobile Historic Development Commission, commented, "The cantilevers and the low-clung form are signature motifs of Winter's," he said. "It's not your typical Mobile design." In regard to the location of the property, Blackwell

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

further noted, the site is “at the three-way intersection of faith, education and commerce,” anchored by UMS-Wright Preparatory School to the south and New Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church to the west. (5)

According to the records of the Auburn University Architecture Library Archives, the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed was the first commercial design implemented by Winter that incorporated a stoic and modern approach to CMU block, concrete, and glass. These techniques set this structure apart from the traditional commercial designs of the period, which were mostly standard storefronts, often with a second floor for residential use, and located within a commercial strip/corridor. Nothing about Winter’s design incorporated these traditional elements, but instead the one-story flat roof structure seemed to blend into the landscape, isolated from a commercial center and public transportation. The rural surroundings, with a decidedly man-made element from the built-environment as the center, set this structure apart from anything else in Mobile during the period and further reflected the agrarian function of the business that operated within the structure.

The massing and emphasis on the overt attachment between the design and landscape push the project into a Wrightian influence with elements of the Prairie School ideals. The height of the structure, low flat roof, and central elements of gathering within the front showroom space are all elements intended to impact the human experience within the structure for consumers. This technique would later be mastered by Winter though the Isle Dauphine Club by blending the natural elements of the shores of Dauphin Island with the exterior patterns of the clubhouse. The Blue Bird Hardware & Seed offered him a glimpse into this arena and set the stage for his later achievement.

The prolific use of CMU, glass, and concrete within both the Isle Dauphine Club and Blue Bird Hardware & Seed cannot be ignored. Both structures celebrate the blending of structural elements that can also be considered decorative, while also featuring large panels of glass as key elements to the ground floor exterior. Both structures maintain exposed concrete ceiling beams that are intended to remain exposed, indicating a level of planned utilitarianism within the design. The use of glazing as a decorative and functional element is unique to both structures in that neither structure maintain traditional commercial or residential windows, in material, design, or scale, but instead feature tilted overly sized storefront windows without any decorative trim, moldings, bulkheads, or lintels. The glass seems to float out of the heavy CMU and concrete openings, creating an allusion of openness and access to the interior beyond standard storefront windows. This juxtaposition blends the stoic and bold qualities of the exterior concrete/CMU construction with approachable openings, inviting guests at the clubhouse and customers at the hardware store to come inside.

As Mobile started expanding westward from the urban and neighborhood center, the people started setting their eyes to the more modern conveniences of life. The appeal of a full functioning kitchen, modern bathroom amenities, washing machines, electric stoves and air conditioning, made people leave the beautiful historic homes that were becoming a burden to upkeep for planned neighborhoods that offered these things. Sky Ranch was advertised as a wonderful planned neighborhood with beautiful views of Mobile, and a modern alternative to the existing historic neighborhoods. Lots were divided up and sold to the modern family to build their affordable dream home. Thanks to the John Roberts and David Roberts Sr., the founders of Roberts Brothers Realty, and their dream of the modern neighborhood, Mobile now have a well-planned neighborhood perched on one of the highest points in the city of Mobile offering unbelievable views and wonderful Mid-Century Modern architecture. These homes not only displayed the personality of the architect behind the design, but also the personality of the people who called it home in the 1950’s. Arch Winter would go on to play a substantial role in the design of many of these residences, building on the techniques, style, and materials utilized with the Isle Dauphine Club and Blue Bird Hardware & Seed.

While the residences of the Sky Ranch neighborhood don’t contain angled glass on the facade, the structures do resemble the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed design in scale, period, taste, and large facade windows. They also fit into the same c. 1955 period of significance. These Mid-Century Modern residential structures were almost always one-story with flat or low-pitched roofs. Many also incorporate CMU blocks as decorative walls between the residences and the driveways, concrete floors, flat interior ceilings without molding, and many Wrightian and Art Deco influenced functional features. This planned neighborhood distinctly reflects the style and taste of the period. Sky Ranch is unfortunately not located near Blue Bird Hardware & Seed or the Isle Dauphine Club.

All of Winter’s Sky Ranch designs also feature a two-car car port, indicative of the changing transportation landscape and the affordability of a personal automobile in the 1950’s. Like Bird Hardware & Seed, these residences were built as a destination and not somewhere within an existing commercial or residential corridor. Like Bird Hardware & Seed, the Sky Ranch neighborhood, at the time of development, was considered outside of the city center and largely rural, although still

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

only a few miles from downtown Mobile. Both the hardware store and Sky Ranch are not squarely within the center of Mobile, however both designs have maintained an element of isolation that has not compromised the commercial or residential feel and culture of the designs.

An exemplary model for the linking Arch Winter's design ethos for the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed to a residential design can be found in the details of the Brigance House, located on Hillcrest Lane in the Sky Ranch neighborhood. The residence was designed and constructed in 1955, using CMU block, reinforced concrete, and large unadorned windows on the street façade. The one-story flat roof structure also includes a large carport, per the protocol for a modern suburban house in the 1950's. The structure stands today almost exactly as completed in 1955 and offers clear insight into Winter's design preferences and understanding of scale and materials for Mobile in 1955. (Brigance House Photographs 1, 2, 4, 4)

The overhang of the flat roof and exposed concrete beams on the exterior of the Brigance House closely resembles the same method and design implemented for Blue Bird hardware & Seed. The concept of exposing rustic load-bearing concrete as a decorative element was revolutionary for the period, both for commercial and residential designs in Mobile. The honesty found within the construction methods and materials blends with the Wrightian tone of both structures, especially when considering the corner placement of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed and the large suburban organic lot size of the Brigance House. The use of large floor to ceiling aluminum storefront and façade windows intentionally creates a softer approachable quality, encased within heavy CMU and concrete, and accented by the boldness of a flat roof. Both structures, in addition to the Isle Dauphine Club, all maintain these same core elements, trademark calling cards of Arch Winter in the 1950's.

John Sledge, Architectural Historian for the Mobile Historic Development Commission and prolific author of Mobile history, was interviewed regarding Winter's designs for Sky Ranch in 2009. "Midcentury architecture is not a period often appreciated in an area that features the historic homes found in Mobile," according to Sledge, "But the 'Mad Men' tie-in has stimulated a lot of interest in that style of architecture and interior decor," he said. "We, being baby boomers, grew up with all that." In fact, Sledge added, "Winter's architecture has yet to be appreciated. His work has such a distinctive stamp for that period." (6)

Arch Winter had a direct influence in establishing a culture of architectural review for another planned neighborhood during the mid-1950's, located on Dauphin Island near the Isle Dauphine Club. Writing under the title of "Planning Consultant" in the *Mobile Press-Register*, Winter went into detail regarding the importance of architectural review and the difference between "good design and not expensive design." There was purposefully no minimum price set on construction projects on Dauphin Island, allowing for as Winter explained "modest...well designed homes" to "exist compatibly alongside the most pretentious houses." Winter clarifies the Architectural Review Committee would not impose restrictions "on a particular style of architecture," however they would follow principles intended to make sure designs do not "detract from the appearance and livability of adjacent and nearby homes, and its use of materials and textures and colors must be appropriate" with a preference for "Gulf Coast Contemporary" designs. (7) This level of insight into the framework of Winter's ideas for planned neighborhoods and "good design" not being predicated on "expensive design" reflects his design of the Blue Bird Hardware & Seed and over a dozen residences within the Sky Ranch development.

The architectural category of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed is hard to pigeonhole; however, the design should be considered Mid-Century Modern with influences from the International Style, Wrightian, Rationalism, and Art Deco. The design, materials, and general relationship to location function and landscape places the project into a category of a Wrightian influenced, International Style of architecture. The shift towards this spectrum of architectural design is emphasized by a spatial conception of interpenetrating planes and calculated masses, all while considering the context of the landscape. The fundamentals of the design are International in category, but the Wrightian influence is accentuated by the consideration of the landscape, scale, and Art Deco features of the interior (namely visible in the exposed ceiling concrete support beams). Modern concepts and architectural values of the period are represented by the strained simplicity, honest and direct use of materials, and the integration of building to the streetscape, all of which permeate the design and function.

Examples of architecture from the Art Deco period consciously strove for modernity and an artistic expression to compliment the machine age. Reproductions, imitations, and counterfeits of any ancient styles were strictly prohibited. (8) Emphasis on the future rather than the past was one of the defining qualities of the movement. Art Deco ornamentation consists largely of low-relief geometric designs, often in the form of parallel straight lines. Concrete, smooth surfaces, and metal were common. (9) Forms were simplified and streamlined, with a futuristic effect being sought. The form and function of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed reflect most of the aspects of this movement, down to the exposed reinforced concrete members in the ceiling and exterior eaves. The stark concrete floors and CMU walls are softened by the slanted and sizeable storefront windows.

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Name of Property

Mobile, AL

County and State

The International Style can also be seen within the perimeters of the design and materials of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed. Like the elements of Art Deco, the International Style also emphasized modern structural principles and materials within a modern context. Concrete, glass, and steel were most common. Skeletal frame designs were a defining characteristic of the movement. (10) The rejection of nonsensical decoration was perhaps the major difference that distinguished the International Style from Art Deco. Corner windows, bands of glass, and strips of windows and solid planes helped create a horizontal feeling within single story structures. Artificial symmetry was studiously avoided in the International Style as balance and regularity were admired and fostered. The skeletal exposed concrete support beams throughout the interior, and exposed as rafter beams on the exterior, decidedly fits within the parameters of the International Style, in addition to the bands of large glass and lack of ornamentation.

The influence of Viollet-le-Duc and the concept of practicality and Rationalism seem to be stressed above everything else in the design of Blue Bird. (11) The ethos of Rationalism dictated that architects should think as clearly as their predecessors and concentrate primarily on function and structure. If done sympathetically, the results would have the same authenticity as classical periods of architectural design, but with modern materials and design features. Rationalism and engineers, each in their own way, seemed able to emancipate themselves from the varying forms of revivalism, but still faced the challenge of avoiding a design from becoming bland, materialistic functionalism lacking the quality of a true expressive style. In the case of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, the elements of the International Style and Art Deco fuse with Rationalism to create a unique blend of form and function. These movements reflect the training, education, and architectural preference of Arch Winter.

When considering the architectural style of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, it should be considered within the same c. 1955 period of significance and design context as the Isle Dauphine Club and Sky Ranch neighborhood. Blue Bird Hardware & Seed certainly did not exist in a vacuum and stands as an exemplary example of the revolutionary design and techniques that Winter was introducing to Mobile after the Second World War in the early stages of his career. The design squarely fits within his historical body of work and narrative as a mid-century modern architect on the forefront of the movement in Mobile. He would continue to focus on these modern architectural principles throughout the remainder of his career. The design stands as a testament to Winter's earliest concepts of a 1955 commercial structure, and was the first building block of his prolific and celebrated architectural career. The size of the building could be considered about average when comparing it to his projects following 1955. The structure should be considered part of Winter's overall architectural narrative and represents a significant moment in time. Even though the structure was slightly altered c. 1970, the architectural integrity of the building is almost entirely intact and reflects the form and function of a revolutionary commercial design in 1955. The structure is being nominated for the architectural significance of the structure and for the relationship of the structure to architect Arch Winter. It is for these reasons that the structure should be considered under Criteria C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

1. Mobile Press-Register. "Services Planned for Former Architect Arch R. Winter," March 18, 2005.
2. Winter Papers, Special Collections Archives, Ralph B. Dragon Library, Auburn University.
3. Mobile Press-Register. "Services Planned for Former Architect Arch R. Winter," March 18, 2005.
4. Isle Dauphine Club, National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2017
5. Mobile Press-Register. "Blue Bird Development Breaks Ground in midtown Mobile," September 26, 2017.
6. Mobile Press-Register. "Mobile home preserves "mad men" era," November 22, 2009.
7. Mobile Press-Register. "Dauphin Island's Homes Designed To Harmonize," Undated.)
8. A History of American Architecture. Leland M. Roth. Westview Press, Boulder, 2001. p. 374-381
9. A History of American Architecture. Leland M. Roth. Westview Press, Boulder, 2001. p. 374-381
10. What Style Is It? Poppeliers, Chambers, Schwartz. Preservation Press, New York, 1983. P. 92-95
11. Modern Architecture Since 1900. William J. R. Curtis. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1996. P. 55-60

Other:

1. Interview with staff of the Mobile Historic Development Commission regarding the designs of Winter in relation to the Sky Ranch, Isle Dauphine Club, and Blue Bird Hardware & Seed. June 2017
2. Interview with Laura Angle regarding the historic function of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed. June 2017
3. Interview with Stuart Kennedy regarding the historic function of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed. June 2017
4. Interview with Elizabeth Stallings regarding the historic function of Blue Bird Hardware & Seed. June 2017
5. Sanborn Maps, City of Mobile (Mobile Public Library)
6. City Directories, City of Mobile (Mobile Public Library)
7. Roots of Contemporary Architecture. Lewis Mumford. Dover Publications, New York. 1972
8. A History of American Architecture, Buildings in their cultural and technological context. Mark Gelertner. University Press of New England, Hanover and London. 1999

Historic Images/Maps:

1. Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, 1949. University of South Alabama McCall Library
2. Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, 1949. University of South Alabama McCall Library
3. Sanborn Map depicting Blue Bird Hardware & Seed, 1959. Mobile Public Library Archives

Isle Dauphine Club Photographs

1. Isle Dauphine Club 1
2. Isle Dauphine Club 2
3. Isle Dauphine Club 3

Previous documentation of 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

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .91

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

Enter coordinates to 6 decimal places.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | 30.694138 | Longitude: | -88.105957 |
| 2. Latitude: | | Longitude: | |
| 3. Latitude: | | Longitude: | |
| 4. Latitude: | | Longitude: | |

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 Bluebird Hardware & Seed is depicted by the red line around the property on the map entitled "Map 3."

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries were selected by following the legal lot of record, surrounding landscape, and surrounding street boundaries. The undeveloped wooded lots to the north and east of the structure create a natural barrier between neighboring structures and Bay Shore Drive (also known as New Shiloh Avenue) and Old Shell Road each serve as a barrier for the west and south elevations. The structure in question never had a larger footprint than the current condition nor did it contain any outbuildings in the area. Therefore, the current boundaries are also the historic boundaries.

11. Form prepared by:

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

Name/Title: Stephen McNair, Ph.D.

Organization: McNair Historic Preservation, Inc.

Street & number: 2151 Government Street

City/Town: Mobile State: AL Zip Code: 36606

Email: smcnair@mcnairhp.com Phone: 334.303.3029

Date: January 18, 2018

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.

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

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Name of Property

Mobile, AL
County and State

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 or Property: Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
City or Vicinity: Mobile
County: Mobile State: AL
Photographer: Stephen McNair
Date Photographed: June 1, 2017

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

Photo #1 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird1)
Exterior. Context shot and overview of structure. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #2 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird2)
Exterior. Context of adjacent road. Camera facing south.

Photo #3 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird3)
Exterior. Northwest corner and elevations. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #4 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird4)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing east.

Photo #5 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird5)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #6 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird6)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing east.

Photo #7 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird7)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing east.

Photo #8 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird8)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #9 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird9)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing east.

Photo #10 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird10)
Exterior. West elevation wall. Camera facing east.

Photo #11 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird11)
Exterior. Context of adjacent road. Camera facing south.

Photo #12 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird12)
Exterior. Primary corner entrance. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #13 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird13)
Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing east.

Photo #14 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird14)
Exterior. Context from street. Camera facing east.

Photo #15 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird15)
Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo #16 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird16)

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Mobile, AL

Name of Property

County and State

Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo #17 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird17)
Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo #18 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird18)
Exterior. Southeast corner of building. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #19 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird19)
Exterior. Empty lot next to building. Camera facing north.

Photo #20 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird20)
Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo #21 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird21)
Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo #22 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird22)
Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo #23 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird23)
Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo #24 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird24)
Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing southwest.

Photo #25 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird25)
Exterior. North elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo #26 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird26)
Exterior. North elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo #27 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird27)
Exterior. Northeast corner, rear of building. Camera facing southwest.

Photo #28 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird28)
Exterior. Empty lot next to north elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo #29 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird29)
Exterior. North elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo #30 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird30)
Exterior. North elevation. Camera facing south.

Photo #31 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird31)
Interior. Camera facing northeast. Primary showroom.

Photo #32 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird32)
Interior. Camera facing east. Primary showroom.

Photo #33 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird33)
Interior. Camera facing northwest. Primary showroom.

Photo #34 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird34)
Interior. Camera facing northwest. Primary showroom.

Photo #35 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird35)
Interior. Camera facing northeast. Primary showroom.

Photo #36 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird36)

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Mobile, AL

Name of Property

County and State

Interior. Camera facing east. Primary showroom.

Photo #37 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird37)

Interior. Camera facing southwest. Primary showroom.

Photo #38 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird38)

Interior. Camera facing southwest. Primary showroom.

Photo #39 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird39)

Interior. Camera facing east. Primary showroom.

Photo #40 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird40)

Interior. Camera facing southeast. Primary showroom.

Photo #41 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird41)

Interior. Camera facing northwest. Primary showroom.

Photo #42 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird42)

Interior. Camera facing north. Primary showroom.

Photo #43 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird43)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #44 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird44)

Interior. Camera facing north.

Photo #45 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird45)

Interior. Camera facing west.

Photo #46 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird46)

Interior. Camera facing south.

Photo #47 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird47)

Interior. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #48 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird48)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #49 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird49)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #50 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird50)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #51 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird51)

Interior. Camera facing north.

Photo #52 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird52)

Interior. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #53 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird53)

Interior. Camera facing north.

Photo #54 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird54)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #55 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird55)

Interior. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #56 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird56)

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Mobile, AL

Name of Property

County and State

Interior. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #57 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird57)

Interior. Camera facing east.

Photo #58 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird58)

Interior. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #59 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird59)

Interior. Camera facing south.

Photo #60 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird60)

Interior. Camera facing south.

Photo #61 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird61)

Interior. Camera facing west.

Photo #62 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird62)

Interior. Camera facing southwest.

Photo #63 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird63)

Interior. Camera facing south.

Photo #64 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird64)

Interior. Camera facing east.

Photo #65 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird65)

Interior. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #66 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird66)

Interior. Camera facing north.

Photo #67 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird67)

Interior. Camera facing west.

Photo #68 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird68)

Interior. Camera facing northeast.

Photo #69 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird69)

Interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo #70 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird70)

Interior. Camera facing southeast.

Photo #71 (AL_Mobile_County_Blue_Bird71)

Interior. Camera facing southwest.

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

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



Old Shell Rd

Jenkins St

Bay Shore Ave

Mobile St N

Dumas Wesley Community Center

Old Shell Rd

Randolph St

Mobile St N

Old Shell Rd

Old Shell Road Small Animal Hospital



Google

Map

Old Shell Rd

BLUE RIDGE HARDWARE & SEED

AVAILABLE

11.00 per
100

COMMERCIAL













ATHLETE GYM

NO PARKING



NO
PARKING













 BLUE BIRD HARDWARE & SEEDS





SAVING
S

Stump
tail



BLUE BIRD HARDWARE S







TRADE & SEED STORE















DESIGNER

OUTLET













PAINTING SERVICE
2011/12/18/19/20









HARDWARE

PLUMBING SUPPLIES
ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES







EXIT

HOUSEHOLD
GOODS

BILE
BITS







HOUSE OF
GODS

EXIT

SALE

PLUMBING SUPPLIES

WATERS, HEATERS, CUPON, SHIELDS, LUMBER, COLLECTORS,
WELLS, FILTERS, GLASS, PUMPS, SCREEN, ROPE, COUPLERS











STIC
ING
TER





EXIT

RYE
Corn
Grass

NO SMOKING

NO ONLY THIS SIDE
PLEASE USE THE OTHER SIDE

Hi-DRI









SEED DEPT





EXIT

15-0-15



RYE
Corn
Gross













EXIT











EXIT









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Blue Bird Hardware and Seed

Multiple Name:

State & County: ALABAMA, Mobile

Date Received:
6/28/2018

Date of Pending List:
7/20/2018

Date of 16th Day:
8/6/2018

Date of 45th Day:
8/13/2018

Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100002768

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Appeal

PDIL

Text/Data Issue

SHPO Request

Landscape

Photo

Waiver

National

Map/Boundary

Resubmission

Mobile Resource

Period

Other

TCP

Less than 50 years

CLG

1955 only.

Accept

Return

Reject

8/13/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: POS: 1955; AOS: Architecture; LOS: local

Recommendation/ Criteria: Criterion C.

Reviewer: Lisa Deline

Discipline: Historian

Telephone: (202)354-2239

Date: 8/13/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
P.O. Box 300900
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

June 22, 2018



Ms. Lisa Deline
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. Deline:

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

Blue Bird Hardware & Seed
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



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

July 23, 2018

Lisa Deline
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C St. NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240



Lisa,

Included in this package are the revised disks you requested once you received our initial submissions. Apart of this package are photo discs for Blue Bird Hardware, Mobile County, Riverview HD, Dallas County, and Magnolia Ave. South HD, Jefferson County.

Please let me know if there is anything else you need from me.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Collier Neeley".

Collier Neeley



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street
P.O. Box 300900
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

August 7, 2018

Ms. Jeff Joeckel
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Joeckel:

Enclosed please find **amended** photos for the:

Blue Bird Hardware and Seed
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama

Your consideration of the enclosed amendment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Collier Neeley".

Collier Neeley
National Register Coordinator

CN/nw

Enclosures



August 19, 2011