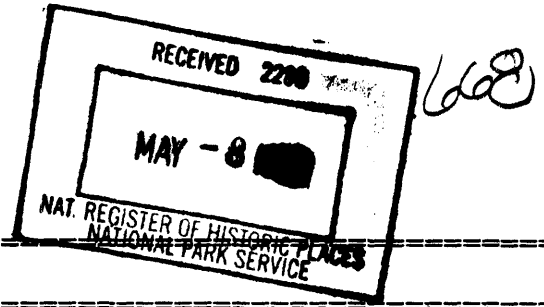


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Norton-Johnson Buick Company

other names/site number Garage Loft Apartments

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 117-125 Northwest 13th Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Oklahoma City vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Oklahoma code 109  
zip code 73103

=====  
3. State/Federal Agency Certification  
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this XX 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 XX meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide XXX locally. ( N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]* 28 April 1998  
Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
4. National Park Service Certification  
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register *[Signature]* 6/22/98  
     See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register       
     See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====  
5. Classification  
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> buildings
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> sites
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> structures
<u>  0  </u>	<u>  0  </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   N/A  

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

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE specialty store

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Art Deco

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

other OTHER:Cast Stone

\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====  
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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1930  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates ca. 1930  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>14</u>	<u>634740</u>	<u>3927390</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	4	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

N/A See continuation sheet.

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

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

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Jocelyn Lupkin

organization Robison & Associates Architects date December 10, 1997

street & number 2927 The Paseo telephone (405) 524-4544

city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73103

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage  
or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

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

name Mr. Mark Ruffin, co-manager, Loft Group 113  
street & number 6600 N. Harvey, Suite 120 telephone (405) 842-1511  
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73166-7902  
=====



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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

**Summary**

The Norton-Johnson Buick Company is a large, three-story, free standing Art Deco building with a rectangular plan, constructed in 1930. The building is located on an inner-city commercial corridor with a mix of a few smaller commercial style buildings which have retained some degree of integrity, altered older buildings, new buildings, and vacant lots. The front elevation faces south on N.W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, an east/west corridor for the inner city area. A one-story automobile dealership building constructed in 1966 is adjacent to Norton-Johnson Buick on the east. On the north and west are paved lots. The building location is one block south of Heritage Hills (NR 79), a residential neighborhood composed of substantial single-family dwellings in a variety of styles; and two blocks north of the proposed Automobile Alley Historic District, a commercial area chiefly composed of masonry multi-story buildings historically related to the automobile trade.

As a certified investment tax credit project, the building has recently been rehabilitated. Completed documentation for the Department of Interior certification process has been submitted.

**Exterior Description**

The Norton-Johnson Buick Company is an imposing Art Deco building. The approximate dimensions are 125 feet by 160 feet, for a cumulative area of 60,000 square feet in the three stories above grade, plus a basement area of about 1,000 square feet. There is also a small penthouse extending from the stair tower in the northeast corner for roof access and a small, first floor, one-story service wing on the west side of the north elevation which was added in 1955. The structural system at the first and second floors is concrete post and beam supporting a concrete slab. The roof structure is metal trusses framed into metal wide flange beams that are, in turn, supported by metal columns. (This portion of the building appears to be steel, however, it was noted in Sanborn maps as being iron.) The roof covering is a ribbed steel deck with asphalt built-up roofing. The exterior wall finish is a buff brick running bond with decorative contrasting brick veneer detailing, ornamental cast stone and granite accents.

Large industrial steel multipane windows with operable hopper panels are used throughout the building, except at the south elevation storefront. Full height storefront glass is located in the first floor central and eastern bays where the showroom area is located. Window glass types are clear, obscure and wire panes. Window sills are bricks set in rowlocks.

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The south, or front, elevation is symmetrical, with two equally sized bays on either side of a larger central bay. The south elevation features a stepped and shaped parapet wall with an articulated cast stone cap. These decorative elements continue around the building on the south bay of the west elevation (Photo #1) and the three southernmost bays of the east elevation. (Photo #2) There is a low relief brick treatment of a slightly darker color at the pilasters, in a series of chevron panels and in a stepped pyramid pattern in the two east and west bays between the second and third floors (Photo #3), and in a series of contrasting horizontal bands in the large central bay. (Photo #4) Ornamental cast stone is also featured on the first floor along the south elevation at each door and window surround and at the main entry to the building, which is identified by an oversized cast stone frame with a zig-zag pattern. (Photo #5) There are plain cast stone panels in the center of the chevron panels between the second and third floors, at the low relief brick veneer details between bays above the third floor windows, and at the third floor window heads. (Photos #3 and #4) Granite veneer in a black, pink and white blend is used to dress out window sills at the storefront and at the bases of the pilasters between each bay. An obscure glass panel is set in the ornamental cast stone window surround above the headers at the overhead doors and storefront glazing on the south.

Windows and Doors:

From west to east on the first floor, there is an original wood panel overhead door, now fixed in place, in the first bay with a new flush steel pedestrian door. This western overhead door matches the overhead doors in the north elevation. In the next bay, which is the entry to the auto ramp, a new metal overhead door was installed. Windows in the central bay and in the east bays are an aluminum storefront system. Centered between the two east bays is the pedestrian door with the ornamental cast stone frame.

On the second and third floors, the two bays on the east and west ends each have two sets of paired windows with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights per window. The central bay on the second and third floors has three paired steel windows with 4 vertical lights by 5 horizontal lights per window. All windows are separated by running bond brick veneer panels.

On the east elevation, the first floor is obscured by a showroom building which was constructed next door to Norton-Johnson Buick in 1966. On the second and third floors, the three southernmost bays have similar decorative detail as the south elevation. They have the same contrasting low relief brick at the pilasters, between the second and third floors, and at the top of the parapet wall; and the same ornamental cast stone pieces at the top of the parapet. The remainder of the brick veneer to the north is a plain running bond.

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Windows and Doors:

From south to north on the second floor, the three southernmost bays have paired windows with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Then there are two triple unit windows with end units that are 4 vertical lights by 5 horizontal lights and a center unit that is 5 vertical lights by 5 horizontal lights. There are no windows in the northernmost one-third portion of this elevation.

From south to north on the third floor, the three south bays each have two sets of paired windows with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights per window. Continuing north, there is a three unit window with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Further north there is a two unit window with 4 horizontal lights by 4 vertical lights and a single window with 3 horizontal lights by 4 vertical lights. All windows are separated by running bond brick veneer panels. The northernmost end of the east elevation encloses a stair tower which is a solid brick vertical panel and extends above the roof to a penthouse for roof access. (Photo #2)

The north, or back, elevation has a plain running bond brick veneer. Exterior components of the mechanical and electrical systems are located on this elevation. A small service building addition was added in 1955 at the westernmost corner of the first floor on the north side. The service building brick is very close to the same buff color as the main building brick veneer, however, it is a rougher texture. The brick is partially toothed into the main building on the west side where the addition abuts the main building. On the west elevation of the addition, there is a large opening which probably used to accommodate an overhead door and a window with 4 horizontal units by 4 vertical units. On the east elevation, there is a pedestrian door on the south end, a single window with 4 horizontal units by 4 vertical units, and an original wood panel overhead door in poor condition. On the north elevation of the addition, there are paired windows with 5 horizontal units by 4 vertical units centered in the wall, and there is an original sheet metal downspout on the west side of the window.

Windows and Doors: The overall composition of the fenestration pattern and door locations is more random than on the other elevations.

On the first floor going from east to west, there are paired windows with units that are 2 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Next is a three unit window with 4 horizontal lights by 4 vertical lights in each unit. In the center of this elevation is an original wood panel overhead door and a pair of windows with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Moving west, there is an original wood panel overhead door. And the westernmost opening is obscured by the service building addition.

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On the second floor going from east to west, there are paired windows with units that are 2 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Then a three unit window with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights in each unit. Next is a three unit window with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a paired unit with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. The westernmost section of the north elevation has two triple unit windows with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights.

On the third floor, the first bay has two single windows with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. The second bay has a single window with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and paired units each with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. The third bay has a paired unit with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights, a single unit with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights, and a paired unit with 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. The two bays on the west each have a three unit window with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights.

On the west elevation, only the southernmost bay has the same contrasting low relief brick at the pilasters and at the top of the parapet wall, ornamental cast stone pieces at the top of the wall, and granite slabs at the pilaster bases as there are on the south elevation. (Photo #1) The five bays to the north are finished in a plain running bond.

Windows and Doors:

On the first floor, from the north to the south, there is a new steel overhead door. Then four triple unit windows with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Moving south, there is a paired unit each with 4 horizontal units by 5 vertical units and a single window with 3 horizontal units by 5 vertical units. The southernmost end of the west elevation first floor has no windows or doors.

On the second floor, from the north to the south, there are six triple unit windows with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. Identical to the first floor, the southernmost portion of the second floor has no openings.

On the third floor, from the north to the south, there are six triple unit windows with end units that are 4 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights and a center unit that is 5 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights. The

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southernmost section of the third floor has two single windows with 3 horizontal lights by 5 vertical lights.

**Interior Description**

The building interior was originally used as an automobile showroom on the east two-thirds of the first floor, and for parts, service and storage on the remainder of the first floor and the second and third floors. There is a two-way auto ramp and indoor parking areas which serve each floor. The ramp and parking take up nearly half of the area on each floor. The remainder of the first floor is the former auto showroom, which is now being used as a furniture showroom (Photo #7); and the remainder of the second and third floors have been subdivided into apartment units. (Photo #8) The third floor has two original pyramidal skylights oriented east and west. The skylights are approximately sixty feet long by twelve feet wide and provide daylight to the third floor parking area and to two of the loft apartments. (Photo #9)

The former automobile showroom has the original black, gray, and white mosaic tile floor finish. There are three offices with walnut wainscoting and glass infill above the wainscoting. In plan, the east wall of the offices is composed of two partitions at a ninety degree angle to form a sawtooth configuration. These offices may be original since a newspaper description notes that "... around the general offices of the company which are located at the back of the salesroom, is a wainscoting of genuine black walnut four feet high." The original ceiling is no longer in place, however, a curvilinear ceiling cove from the 1950s remains. (Photo #7)

**Alterations - Exterior**

The building exterior has undergone only minimal alterations. On the south elevation, a pedestrian service entry and storefront on the west end is evident in early photographs of the building. This storefront and pedestrian door were removed and replaced with a wood panel overhead door which matches the overhead doors on the north side of the building and appears to be an original door. The overhead door is now fixed and has been altered to accommodate a flush steel pedestrian door. It is likely that the door on the west end of the south elevation was moved from the opening on the west end of the north elevation during the construction of the addition in 1955. The overhead door opening on the west end of the north elevation was filled in with concrete masonry units, presumably, when the service building addition was constructed in 1955. The service building addition covers the entire opening.

Other alterations include a new operable metal overhead door east of the wood panel overhead door in the west bay of the south elevation to provide vehicular access to upper levels for apartment tenants and shed roofed, perforated metal

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awnings were installed on the second and third floor apartment unit windows to mitigate glare. A new sign was designed for the apartments. This design was executed by refacing an existing metal sign with aluminum sheet and is the same shape and in the same location as the original sign. (Photo #3) Also a new sign for the furniture store tenant was installed at the pedestrian double doors at the original auto showroom entry. (Photo #5)

**Alterations - Interior**

The building interior on the first floor was divided into the showroom area and an auto ramp and servicing area. This major interior spatial relationship has been preserved. A contemporaneous description of the showroom states that it "...is correctly proportioned for the proper display of six automobiles. More may be displayed if so desired, but with the tendency in automobile display swinging to a tasteful arrangement of a few cars, rather than a bewildering array of many, it is planned that at no time will more than six cars be displayed..." The inference is that the showroom was designed to be an open space, conducive to showcasing a few products without distractions. The showroom remains open, but is now used for displaying a bewildering array of furniture rather than a few cars. A kitchen and ADA compliant restrooms were added at the back of the showroom space. (Photo #7) However, these additions were made within the limits of existing partitions. The existing auto ramp is still in use and the original auto servicing area is used for indoor parking. All portions of the ramp and adjacent indoor parking area are original and intact.

On the second and third floors, approximately half of the floor area is utilized for indoor parking and for the auto ramp. Apartments have been constructed on the building's perimeter on the north, south and west sides. The apartments are designed within the original concrete column and beam structural grid. The concrete floors were left unfinished at the parking and ramp areas and minimally finished with gray paint in the apartments. The structure is visible throughout all portions of the second and third floors, and in the ramp and parking areas of the first floor. The interior red brick infill between the exterior concrete columns is left exposed as an interior finish. (Photo #8)

Overall, the Norton-Johnson Buick Company building retains its integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Norton-Johnson Buick Company is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as the best remaining example of a large, brick, multi-story, Art Deco commercial building in the Oklahoma City downtown area. The building was constructed in 1930, when the dealership outgrew a 56,000 square foot building at 1101 N. Broadway, the Buick Motor Company Assembly Plant, which is located on the north end of the proposed Automobile Alley Historic District. The earlier building was constructed in 1926, but the rapid expansion of the company necessitated that another building be constructed in 1930. After the construction of the new building, the earlier building was used for offices and wholesale sales; and the new building was used for retail sales, parts and service.

**Historic Background**

The location of Norton-Johnson Buick is the result of a unique confluence of circumstances relating to the local and national economies. The building is located on the northern edge of a commercial area that was developed after the core of the central business district became relatively crowded. It is also one block south of Heritage Hills, one of the first affluent residential development in Oklahoma City.

Heritage Hills (NR 1979), which is composed of substantial single-family dwellings in a variety of styles, was fully developed just prior to the construction of Norton-Johnson Buick. In fact, "...the blocks of Heritage Hills were virtually complete by 1928."<sup>1</sup> The development of Heritage Hills was a reflection of a wave of growth and prosperity in Oklahoma City. "From 1910 - 1920 the central business district changed from low wood structures to many storied brick and reinforced concrete buildings."<sup>2</sup> Growth continued into the 1920's, when "[f]or the most part, Oklahoma City's business district was prosperous and dynamic. Economic growth in the area was attributed to the construction of an excellent street car system with its hub in the central city, the removal of the Rock Island and Frisco Railroad track from the heart of downtown...and the discovery of oil in the city in 1928 [which] further

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<sup>1</sup>Bob Blackburn, Heritage Hills: Preservation of an Historic Neighborhood, (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Books, 1990) p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, Oklahoma City 1890 to 1930: Platted, Parked and Populated, (Oklahoma City Community Development Planning Division, 1982) p. 9.

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accelerated development.”<sup>3</sup> New businesses including “...utility companies, brokerage houses and commission concerns ... established their headquarters downtown.”<sup>4</sup> The result of this growth and construction was a lack of space and a rise in land values in the central business district. This necessitated that expanding and new businesses be constructed further out from the immediate environs of the Oklahoma City downtown area.

Also in 1928, Nichols Hills was platted north of Northwest 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Touted as the “premier country club addition in the Southwest”, Nichols Hills became “the fashionable place to live in a society that valued things ‘new’.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, began the cycle of commercial development expanding out of the downtown area and the suburbanization of Oklahoma City.

Despite the prosperity of the 1920's and the local oil boom, the Great Depression gradually took its toll on the Oklahoma City economy. The effects of the depression, coupled with competition from suburban and commercial development stressed inner-city residential areas. The result was that

“...older, established neighborhoods such as Heritage Hills [suffered] the twin effects of hard times and commercial encroachment.”

“In the Heritage Hills area, 13<sup>th</sup> Street absorbed the shock waves of the trend. In 1929 there was no commercial property on 13<sup>th</sup> west of Robinson and east of Shartel. On the contrary, it was the gateway to Oklahoma City's premier neighborhood, a row of stately homes crowned by the majestic Colcord home. Only three years later, as the Great Depression spread, the residential contours of 13<sup>th</sup> Street were disrupted by a doctor's clinic, a real estate office, a funeral home, and a dressmaker, all on the 200 block...”

“The encroachment picked up pace as the depression deepened. By 1935 all of the 100 block [the location of Norton-Johnson Buick] was commercial.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Works Project Administration, Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1941) p. 175.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. 184.

<sup>5</sup>Bob Blackburn, Heritage Hills: Preservation of an Historic Neighborhood, (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Books, 1990) p. 25.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. 27.



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In general, automobile registration followed the same pattern as the economy. In 1929, over a half million passenger vehicles were registered in the state. The number declined to its lowest point in 1932 and began to rise again in 1933.<sup>7</sup>

The design and construction of the Norton-Johnson Buick Company reflects the success of the company and the optimism engendered by the economic conditions of the 1920's. The goal of the owners was to build a dealership that "...represent(s) the ultimate in automobile building design, in both sales and service facilities." The attention to the marketing environment is noteworthy. A description of the showroom states that it "...is correctly proportioned for the proper display of six automobiles. More may be displayed if so desired, but with the tendency in automobile display swinging to a tasteful arrangement of a few cars, rather than a bewildering array of many, it is planned that at no time will more than six cars be displayed..."<sup>8</sup> In addition, great attention was given to the design of the finishes and lighting in the showroom. More than one newspaper wrote an article with a detailed description of the interior:

"Six hanging lamps of cast bronze in an exclusive design created only for this showroom, hang from the ceiling. At night the light from these chandeliers will be augmented by flood lights arranged above the windows.

"Flooring in the salesroom has been installed with the purpose of presenting a neutral surface upon which the automobiles may be displayed to best advantage. Tile, in white, gray and black, laid in square-line design compose the flooring. The pattern is of white and black squares with margins of gray to relieve the black and white.

"Particular attention has been given to the ceiling of the salesroom. Aside from being decorative a ceiling must play an important part in the lighting of the room, and this has been accomplished with a highlight paneled ceiling, the panels of which have been done in a silver texture effect to lend assistance to the lighting effect. The border around the panels is in ornamental stencil work, as are also the cornices."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Oklahoma Tax Commission, Trends of Vehicles Registered and Collections by Year (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Tax Commission, 1997) p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June 8, 1930, Section E, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup>Oklahoma City Times, June 11, 1930, p. 17.

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The careful design shows a desire to appeal to discriminating customers with adequate disposable income to purchase relatively expensive automobiles. For example, an advertisement for the "latest Dodge Brothers Six" shows a base price of \$835.00.<sup>10</sup> A Norton-Johnson Buick advertisement emphasizes a history of successful sales for "cars priced above \$1200.00".<sup>11</sup>

The design and construction of the Norton-Johnson Buick Company is a link to a pivotal time in the development of Oklahoma City. It is an example of the impact of the automobile on Oklahoma City's economy and shows the outward migration of the central business district during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The attractive Art Deco design and sound construction of the building may be key reasons that it still stands. The Norton-Johnson Buick Company building is a carefully preserved reminder of a time when Oklahoma City made the transition from an easily defined commercial center with adjacent residential development, to a more complex metropolitan area shaped by the national as well as the local economies.

**Architectural Significance**

The Norton-Johnson Buick Company is the best remaining example of a mid-sized, brick, multi-story Art Deco commercial building in the Oklahoma City downtown area. Most of the buildings in the N.W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street commercial corridor have been altered beyond recognition or demolished and replaced with newer buildings or parking lots. There are other examples of Art Deco buildings in the downtown area, but they differ from the Norton-Johnson Buick Company in terms of size, building material and decorative detail.

Much smaller brick veneer buildings in the downtown Oklahoma City area include the Rockwall Apartments, a three-story apartment building with 2.5 story stepped cast limestone panels carved with a stylized Art Deco motif of zigzags and roundels; the Blackwood-Davis Business College, a two-story office building with minimal decorative stone detail, fixed aluminum windows and side elevations which may have a recent stucco coating; the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Distribution Corporation, a one-story commercial building with striking decorative detailing in black glazed terra cotta; and, the Fleshman Motor Company, another one-story commercial building with arresting black glazed terra cotta detailing. Although sharing the same style and brick building material, all of these buildings are visually distinct from the Norton-Johnson Buick Company Building in terms of size and decorative detail.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June 8, 1930, Section E, p. 8.

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There are also several scattered examples of Art Deco buildings in the downtown area which are constructed of limestone. These include the limestone veneer Baptist Building (now the Lawyer Title Building), a five-story office building with stylized, aluminum decorative detail and a two-story left wing and rear addition; the thirty-three-story First National Bank building with elaborate cast aluminum birds, foliage and nudes as decorative detail; and the sprawling, limestone Santa Fe Railroad Station, a two-story building with decorative geometric detailing including metal lanterns at the entry, stone relief panels and metal gates. Other examples of limestone public and government buildings in the Art Deco style in Oklahoma City include three large buildings constructed under the auspices of the Public Works Administration in the late 1930s, including the Municipal Building/City Hall, the Municipal Auditorium (now called the Civic Center Music Hall) and the Oklahoma County Courthouse (NR 1992), and the two-story, 1946-47 Centre Theater. Constructed of limestone, the above buildings are visually distinct not in only terms of basic building material and size but also decorative detail from the Norton-Johnson Buick Company.

The Norton-Johnson Buick Company is eligible for the National Register because of the unique combination of its decorative detail, size and materials. It remains an excellent, distinctive example of a large, brick, multi-story, Art Deco style, commercial building in downtown Oklahoma City.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

A tract of land in the Northeast Quarter (NE 1/4) of the Southeast Quarter (SE 1/4) of Section Twenty-Eight (28), Township Twelve (12) North, Range Three (3) West of the Indian Meridian in Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, described as follows:  
Lots Thirty-eight (38), Thirty-nine (39), Forty (40), Forty-one (41) and Forty-two (42), and the south Ten (10) feet of the vacated alley adjoining Lots Thirty-eight (38) through Forty-two (42) on the North, in SCOTT'S ADDITION, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, according to the recorded plat thereof.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the Norton-Johnson Buick Company.

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Photo #1

- . Jocelyn Lupkin (applies to all photographs)
- . November, 1997 (applies to all photographs)
- . Oklahoma SHPO (applies to all photographs)
- . Camera facing northeast.

Photo #2

- . Camera facing west southwest.

Photo #3

- . Camera facing north northeast.

Photo #4

- . Camera facing north northwest.

Photo #5

- . Camera facing north northwest.

Photo #6

- . Camera facing southeast.

Photo #7

- . Camera facing northwest.

Photo #8

- . Camera facing west.

Photo #9

- . Camera facing east.