

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: **McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart**

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: N/A

### 2. Location

Street & number:

4206 North State Street

City or town: Jackson State: Mississippi County: Hinds

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: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 for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

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

	<u>Jan. 12, 2015</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Deputy SHPO</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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

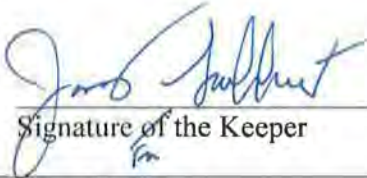
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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

  
Signature of the Keeper

3-3-2015  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)   
District   
Site   
Structure   
Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce: Department Store

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: concrete, steel, concrete block, brick, metal, decorative ceramic units

### Narrative Description

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

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### Summary Paragraph

The former McRae's department store building is a carefully and purposefully detailed, two-story, flat-roofed, Modernist masonry box (228 feet by 170.5 feet) with entrances and metal walkway canopies on its north and east sides. On its west side, it is connected to Meadowbrook Mart shopping center, which stands east of North State Street and south of Meadowbrook Road. Parking surrounds the shopping center on its west, north, and east sides. The McRae's store retains most of its exterior wall materials and detailing. The covered walkway columns and flat portions of the canopies are intact. The walkway's surmounting folded-plate canopies at the east entry and all along the north side of the building were replaced with shed roofs and glazed metal greenhouse sections in 1983, but were recently rebuilt to their original configuration according to the original construction documents. The interior was remodeled in 1983, at which time the partitions and fixtures were replaced. The original passenger and freight elevators and the three original sets of stairs remain.



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## Narrative Description

The McRae's store is the easternmost structure at Meadowbrook Mart, a north-facing shopping center located at the southeast corner of North State Street and Meadowbrook Road. South of the shopping center and across Choctaw Road there is a residential neighborhood with ample trees. East of the shopping center and so east of McRae's there is paved parking, and beyond the parking more wooded residential development. North of the shopping center and more paved parking and across Meadowbrook Road there is commercial development, with buildings one and two stories tall. The former building at 336 Meadowbrook Road (1952) was designed as their offices by the architectural firm of Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, who also designed the McRae's store, but this structure was recently demolished. West of the shopping center and across North State Street, there are more one-and-two-story commercial buildings, including a shopping plaza with a large parking lot.

Several one-story, flat-roofed, masonry, party-wall, Meadowbrook Mart structures remain west of the former McRae's store and are vacant. A block of stores at the far west end of the shopping center was demolished c.2006 to make way for a freestanding, one-story CVS Pharmacy.

The McRae's store was built in 1954, then enlarged and rebuilt in 1962, with the designs in both cases provided by the Jackson firm of Biggs, Weir, and Chandler. It was remodeled in 1983, with the exterior work done by Dean, Dale, and Dean, Architects of Jackson and the interior work done by a separate "store planner."

The 1954 store was attached to the east wall of the Meadowbrook Mart and so had an irregular but orthogonal west wall. Its east wall was set at an angle to this work, as is shown on the accompanying site/building plan.

When the 1954 building was enlarged in 1962, all of its interior partitions were removed, as were its north- and south-facing exterior walls and its angled, east-facing exterior wall. Diagonal files of pipe columns from the 1954 structure remain on the interior of the first-floor of the present building, with a file of larger-diameter columns marking the line of the earlier angled façade and with two files of smaller-diameter columns running west of and parallel to the larger ones.

The 1962 McRae's store is a two-story rectangular box measuring 228 feet on its north and south sides and 170.5 feet on its east and west sides, with a notch cut out of its northwest corner, and is 32 feet tall. Its bearing walls are concrete block, and its columns and beams are steel. It has a built-up roof concealed by parapets. A continuous steel canopy runs along the building's north and east sides. (An identical canopy was constructed along the fronts of all the Meadowbrook Mart stores in 1954 and remains in place today.) Originally, the McRae's canopy was surmounted by a secondary, folded-plate metal roof at the east entry and all along the north wall. In 1983, the folded-plate assemblies were replaced by shed roofs and curving, metal, glazed greenhouse sections. These folded plates were recently rebuilt to their original configuration according to the architect's construction documents. The building's corners above the canopy at the northeast and northwest corners and for the full height of the southeast corner have double-reentrant configurations, with their set-back planes faced with porcelain-enamel

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panels. The building's parapet is also set back, producing another reentrant angle, and it is also faced with porcelain-enamel panels.

The store's west façade has a brick facing above the level of the one-story building west of it. The store's south façade is a brick-faced wall interrupted only by metal ventilation grills. On the store's east side, there is a centrally located public entry (in its original position but with its metal-storefront assembly replaced in 1983), currently boarded-up. South of the entry, the façade is a plain brick-faced wall. Above the entry and above the walkway canopy, the original façade material was ceramic units laid up to produce a decorative screen. The screen was replaced in 1983 with synthetic stucco panels. North of the entry, the façade material is precast-concrete panels below the level of the walkway canopy and plain brick above it. On the store's north side, there are two public entries (in their original positions but with their metal-storefront assemblies replaced in 1983) symmetrically placed and located some sixty feet apart. The entry to the east is currently boarded up. There is also a metal fire-door west of the westernmost public entry. Beneath the walkway canopy, the façade material is brick in a stacked bond. Above the walkway canopy, the façade is divided by reveals into six large bays. From west to east, these bays are concrete panels, synthetic stucco replacing ceramic units, concrete panels, concrete panels, synthetic stucco replacing ceramic units, and concrete panels.

In summary, on the exterior: the building's 1962 built up roof remains intact; its 1962 brick- and precast-concrete-veneer walls remain intact; and its 1962 porcelain-enamel panel assemblies at corners and parapets remain intact. Its 1962 flat canopies remain intact, and its folded-plate canopies have been reconstructed. Its decorative ceramic-unit screens have been replaced with synthetic-stucco panels.

From 1962 to 1983, retail space occupied the ground floor, which retained the files of pipe columns from the 1954 building and had a new grid of square columns (steel with fireproof finish) in the expanded area to the east. The resulting floor had a central open-space, with one small storage-and-changing-room unit at its core. Around the perimeter of this central space and against the outside walls were sales areas, dressing and fitting rooms, and stock rooms. Within the central space, there were low, moveable display fixtures, meaning that views across the store were obscured only by the columns. During this period, the second floor contained no retail space. It had a new grid of only square columns and contained a large, L-shaped "display work room" with adjacent stock room, a large "marking" room, a large mechanical room, a substantial auditorium, and various offices. There were also lounges and restrooms for the staff and others for customers, with the customer facilities duplicated for "white" and "colored" patrons.

Vertical customer circulation to the lounges and restrooms took place on a passenger elevator and wrapping stair located on the east wall north of the east entry (still in place). Merchandise was moved on a freight elevator located on the south side of the building, slightly more than half way back from the east façade. An adjacent stair served McRae's employees. Egress in the event of fires took place by way of a fire stair located at the northeast corner of the building.

When the first floor was remodeled in 1983, the store planners removed the central fixture and the partitions defining the perimeter spaces. They added some new partitions around the perimeter, leaving an enlarged, central open-space, and this configuration remains today. They also replaced the existing low, moveable display fixtures with new ones (which have now been removed), meaning that the floor was still experienced as a singular space interrupted only

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by columns, and this condition remains true today. They retained the passenger elevator and wrapping stair, the freight elevator and adjacent stair, and the fire stair, along with the metal door opening from it to the outside at ground level. They removed the 1962 partitions on the second floor, which they made into a large, open retail space, with a new, exposed grid of square columns. They built new office and restroom enclosures at the northeast corner of the building, and these remain. They added an escalator, more or less at the center of the building, to accommodate customer movement between the two retail floors, and this escalator remains.

In summary, the interiors of the McRae's store have experienced the kind of relatively rapid and thorough remodeling typical of late-twentieth-century commercial environments, and most of the changes have involved the elimination and replacement of furniture-like fixtures that were never intended to be permanent. Today, the first floor of the store is a singular, largely open space, as it has always been, and the second floor is now like unto it. Consequently, the changes over time do not substantially detract from the building's commercial significance.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce

**Period of Significance**

1962-1964

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, Architects (1954, 1962)  
Flint Brothers Construction Company (1962)  
Dean, Dale, and Dean, Architects (1983)

**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.)

**McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as Jackson's first example of a full-service department store in a suburban context. The building occupies the eastern portion of a contiguous block of one-story stores, which was part of the automobile-dependent commercial development that transformed much of North State Street (U. S. Highway 51), beginning in the 1930s and accelerating after World War II. The McRae's store illustrates the local evolution from the downtown department store to the suburban branch store, to**

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**the full-service store in a suburban context, the latter being the final step before the construction of a full-blown shopping mall with multiple anchors stores. The period of significance, 1962-1964, begins with the year when the present store building opened and ends with the year fifty years prior to the date of this nomination.**

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

### **Chronology**

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1902  | Samuel P. McRae opens dry goods store in Jackson   |
| 1905  | Kennington's Department store opens in downtown Jackson on East Capitol Street                               |
| 1940s | Samuel P. McRae Jr. and his brother, Richard D. McRae develop the family business at 200 West Capitol Street |
| 1946  | Morgan Center shopping plaza opens in suburban Fondren   |
| 1946  | Sears, Roebuck and Company opens downtown  |
| 1947  | J. C. Penny opens downtown   |
| 1950  | Mart 51 shopping plaza opens in suburban South Jackson   |
| 1954  | Northwood Shopping Center opens north of Fondren   |
| 1954  | Meadowbrook Mart opens north of Fondren  |
| 1955  | McRae's builds Jackson's first suburban department store at Meadowbrook Mart                                 |
| 1957  | Westland Plaza opens in West Jackson with McRae's second suburban store (in leased space)                    |
| 1962  | McRae's replaces its 1955 Meadowbrook Mart store with a much larger store                                    |
| 1970  | Kennington's and McRae's merge and McRae's takes over Kennington's downtown building                         |
| 1970  | Jackson Mall opens as the city's first enclosed shopping mall  |
| 1981  | McRae's closes its downtown store  |
| 2005  | McRae's closes its Meadowbrook Mart store  |

### **The development of downtown Jackson**

Jackson was laid out in accordance with the checkerboard plan drawn in 1822 by Peter A. Van Dorn, one of the three commissioners charged with selecting a site for a new state capital. Within this grid and after the construction of the Old Capitol (1836-40) at the head (east end) of East Capitol Street and the Governor's Mansion (c.1840) facing south onto East Capitol Street two blocks to the west, Jackson's initial urban development took place in the area between them. The first railroad arrived in 1840, and the no-longer-extant Illinois Central depot went up in 1890 on West Capitol Street, causing urban development to extend farther west. Jackson's principal urban core became the area bounded by East Capitol, North Lamar, North Congress, and Mississippi streets, which contains the Governor's Mansion and Smith Park behind it. This general area is listed on the National Register as the Smith Park Architectural District (1976, with boundary increases in 1999, 2004, and 2014).

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### **Development of department stores in downtown Jackson**

The department-store type began in early-nineteenth-century England and arrived in the United States by mid century. Part of an evolving culture of conspicuous consumption, stores such as Macy's and Lord and Taylors in New York City and Marshall Field and Company in Chicago thrived. They were open to the larger public and offered a wide range of consumer goods and merchandise lines and so were divided into 'departments.'

In 1902, Samuel P. McRae opened a dry goods store in Jackson. In c.1905, the Kennington and Company department store opened at 401 East Capitol Street in the six-story Jones-Kennington Building (Smith Park Architectural District 1976), which was designed by Chattanooga architect Reuben H. Hunt and has about 12,000 square feet per floor. In 1906, the four-story building opposite it at 400 East Capitol Street opened as the S. J. Johnson Dry Goods Company. In 1930, the latter became the Emporium department store (Smith Park Architectural District, 1976), which continued operations until the 1960s and in 1989 was rehabilitated as the Emporium Building.<sup>1</sup> Kennington's and the Emporium were the principal department stores in downtown Jackson up until the Second World War.

In 1946, Sears opened a store on the edge of downtown at 300 State Street. This Modernist building is now the Eudora Welty Library.<sup>2</sup> In 1947, the J.C. Penny company erected a classic International-style building at 157 East Capitol Street. It was lost to urban renewal in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1940s, McRae's was run by brothers Samuel P. McRae Jr. and Richard D. McRae. By this time, the original store at 200 West Capitol Street had been repeatedly remodeled and enlarged. In its final form, it was two-stories tall, occupied two, adjacent, unified buildings, and had a wooden structure clad in concrete panels. The composite building, formerly in the West Capitol Street Historic District (1980), was lost to urban renewal in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

In 1970, Kennington's and McRae's merged. McRae's sold their West Capitol Street building and remodeled the Kennington's building, which became McRae's. At this time, McRae's also built a large concrete parking garage (extant) west of but in the same block as their newly remodeled store. Such a significant capital investment indicates that the McRae's company was confident that profits would continue for some time at their downtown store, which remained open until 1981 when the company ceased operations downtown, renovated their building as rentable office space, and renamed it the Heritage Building.<sup>5</sup>

In 1986, the McRae's company purchased Alabama's Pizitz department stores. In 1994, it established a business combination with Proffitt's Department Store but continued to operate

<sup>1</sup> "Renovation: The Emporium Building Renovation," *Building Renovation* (Sept.-Oct. 1992), 36.

<sup>2</sup> MDAH Historic Resources Database.

<sup>3</sup> MDAH Historic Resources Database.

<sup>4</sup> MDAH Historic Resources Database.

<sup>5</sup> Much of the chronology of the McRae's company is drawn from the "McRae's Associate Handbook" published by McRae's and distributed to its employees, c.1997, ii-iii.

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under its own name as a subsidiary. Beginning in 1996, Proffitts went through a series of mergers. In 2006, most of the remaining McRae's stores became Belk stores.

### **Development of Jackson's subdivisions after World War II**

After the Second World War, residential construction proliferated north, west, and south of downtown Jackson. To the south, subdivisions such as Alta Woods were filled with modest minimal traditional and ranch-style houses. West of downtown, Pine Hill, Van Winkle, Bullard Hills, and other new subdivisions accommodated some 10,000 families.<sup>6</sup> North of downtown and beyond Fondren, Broadmoor, Hanging Moss, Northwood, and Northmeadows subdivisions were developed, and one survey showed that in the early 1950s there were "more residences in this trade area than in the average large Mississippi town."<sup>7</sup> During this period, nationally and in Jackson, the concomitant need for suburban shopping opportunities was satisfied by the construction of neighborhood, community, and regional shopping centers.

### **Initial development of shopping centers**

#### **Nationally**

A suburban shopping "center" had appeared as early as the 1920s with the construction of Country Club Plaza in Kansas City. The well-known Highland Park Shopping Village in Dallas went up a decade later. Countless other examples followed in the post-war years, including such celebrated venues as Bellvue Square (1946) in Bellvue, Washington and the first enclosed shopping mall in the United States, Southdale Mall (1956) in Edina, Minnesota designed by architect and shopping-mall pioneer Victor Gruen.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Locally**

In Jackson's plan, State Street runs along the high ground between the eastern edge of the original street grid and the site of the Old Capitol Building.<sup>9</sup> By the early twentieth-century, State Street extended north to the spot where Canton Road branches off to the right. The area north of this fork became the community of Fondren, which was annexed by the City of Jackson in 1925. In the 1930s, State Street became U. S. Highway 51, which was the city's main north-south highway. Along it, Fondren became the first commercial concentration north of the downtown, and it became the location of the city's and the state's first shopping plaza (meaning a strip of contiguous stores built and managed as a unit with dedicated off-street parking along one side). In 1946, Edwin E. Morgan chose Fondren as the location for this development, which he called Morgan Center (now known as Woodland Hills Shopping Center and part of the Downtown Fondren Historic District listed in 2014). It is a group of party-wall storefronts

<sup>6</sup> "Million Dollar Shopping Center For West Jackson," *Jackson Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News*, 17 April 1955.

<sup>7</sup> "Expansion planned for newly completed Northwood Center," *Northside Reporter*, 28 May 1954.

<sup>8</sup> Longstreth, *The American Department Store Transformed, 1920-1960*, 2010, 138, 170, 172-73.

<sup>9</sup> Fazio, "The Planned Capital: A Universal Planning Phenomenon in the Deep South," 44-45.



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facing north toward a parking lot on a site sloping down to the east, and it remains little changed and economically viable today.<sup>10</sup>

### **Shopping-center organization and the choice of tenants**

Shopping-center developers worked at various scales, and the consensus was that

the key or anchor tenants of a neighborhood center are the supermarket and the drugstore; the key tenants of a community center are the discount or off-price department store, the variety store, the hardware/building/home improvement store, or the combined drug/variety/garden center; and the key tenants of the regional center are the full-line department stores. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Morgan Center, which began with a supermarket, drugstore, and other local businesses, but no department store, fits the description of the "neighborhood" center. The department store first emerged as a requisite for larger shopping-center success when Victor Gruen developed the mall format in the mid 1950s. These larger stores, consuming 50 to 70 per cent of a mall's leasable space, attracted shoppers, who then also visited the smaller stores. The typical arrangement was to place the anchor stores as remote from one another as possible, meaning at a mall's extremities, with the smaller stores in between them.<sup>12</sup>

### **Shopping centers in Jackson after Morgan Center**

In 1950, the shopping plaza called Mart 51 (now known as Battlefield Shopping Center), described locally as the "first strip mall" in Jackson, opened up south of downtown at the intersection of Terry Road and highway 18/80. Designed by John L. Turner and Associates, it has three, freestanding blocks of stores in an L-shaped configuration, with a parking lot in front for 250 cars. The first three occupants were an A & P grocery store, a Morgan and Lindsay dime store, and Bomar's Shoes; these were soon joined by a Jitney Jungle grocery store, Patterson-Allen drugstore, and Shainberg's Black and White Store.<sup>13</sup> This grouping of stores constituted a neighborhood center larger than Morgan Center, but similar in its mix of commercial establishments.

Designed by the Jackson firm of Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, one-story Meadowbrook Mart, was a neighborhood center when it opened in 1954, because it lacked the McRae's store, which opened the following year at the east end of the existing line of stores. The original stores

<sup>10</sup>"Downtown Fondren Historic District," Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi, National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> *Shopping Center Development Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C., 1985, 40.

<sup>12</sup> International Council of Shopping Centers, "U. S. Shopping-Center Classification and Characteristics," found at [www.icsc.org/uploads/research/general/US\\_CENTER\\_CLASSIFICATION.pdf](http://www.icsc.org/uploads/research/general/US_CENTER_CLASSIFICATION.pdf), and Jennifer Stoffel, "WHAT'S NEW IN SHOPPING MALLS; Putting a Bloomingdale's In Towns Big and Small," *New York Times*, 7 August 1988.

<sup>13</sup> "Westland Plaza not first strip mall," *Jackson Clarion-Ledger*, 4 August 2003.



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in the mart were local businesses, including a drugstore, and two supermarkets: Bomar's Shoes, Ben Franklin Variety Store, Liberty Super Market, Black and White Store, Kroger Super Market, Brady's for Dad and Lad, Brock's Hair Designer, Hemphill's Drugstore, Callaway Yard and Garden Shop, Northside Post Office, House of Harmony Records, Bruce's Barber Shop, Jackson Steam Laundry, and the Play Pen.<sup>14</sup> The parking lot to the north of the stores accommodated over 300 cars.<sup>15</sup>

In 1954, the Northwood Shopping Center, designed by John L. Turner and Associates and another neighborhood center, opened up a few blocks north of Meadowbrook Mart facing State Street. Planned to have 60,000 square feet of rental space, it initially included a Jitney Jungle, Morgan and Lindsay dime store, Patterson-Allen drugstore, Edwards Shoes, Crescent Laundry, Iris's Children's Shop, Fashion Hair Salon, Morrow's Men's Store, and a barber shop. In 1955, its parking lot accommodated 300 cars.<sup>16</sup>

In 1955, McRae's opened the first suburban department store in Jackson at Meadowbrook Mart but continued operations downtown for more than 25 years. The addition of this department store elevated Meadowbrook Mart's status to that of a community shopping center, Jackson's first.

Westland Plaza, located west of downtown at the intersection of Robinson Road and Ellis Avenue, opened in 1957. E. L. Malvaney designed it to have a V-shaped layout, with a parking lot inside the V accommodating 450 cars. In 1959, at what was their second suburban site, McRae's chose not to build, but leased space in a central location where the two wings intersect. Westland Plaza originally had some 90,000 square feet of retail space and its "neighborhood center" mix included two supermarkets, a dime store, an appliance store, a men's clothing store, a women's specialty store, a beauty parlor, and a dry cleaner.<sup>17</sup>

The Jackson Mall opened in 1970 at 350 Woodrow Wilson Drive as the first example in the city of an enclosed mall with all of its stores under one roof. It originally had three anchor stores: J.C. Penneys, Gayfers, and Woolco (two department stores and a discount retailer, respectively).

McRae's opened suburban stores at Metrocenter mall in South Jackson in 1978 and at Northpark Mall in Ridgeland in 1984, the former having D. H. Holmes, Gayfers, McRae's, and Sears as anchor stores and the latter having D. H. Holmes, Gayfers, McRae's, and J. C. Penny as anchor stores. The McRae's store at Meadowbrook Mart remained open until 2005.

<sup>14</sup> *Northside Reporter*, advertisement: "Now It's McRae's, McRAE's DEPARTMENT STORE FORMAL OPENING," 11 Mar. 1955, 7.

<sup>15</sup> "Meadowbrook Mart Nears Completion; First Stores Will Open Tomorrow," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1954.

<sup>16</sup> *Northside Reporter*: 28 May 1954, "Northwood Center holds grand opening today and tomorrow;" advertisement: "MAKE Jackson's NEWEST SHOPPING CENTER Your Family Shopping Center," 30 July 1954; and advertisement "Northwood SHOPPING CENTER Has Everything," 1 December 1955, 8.

<sup>17</sup> "Million Dollar Shopping Center For West Jackson," *Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News*, 17 April 1955.

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### **The 1962 McRae's store within the context of mid-twentieth-century retail development in Jackson**

In its 1954 iteration, Meadowbrook Mart was commercially much like Jackson's first shopping plaza, Morgan Center, with its grocery store, drugstore, and various specialty stores. The addition of the mart's custom-designed McRae's store in 1955 was the first example in Jackson of a department store in a shopping center, but McRae's modest size—about 12,000 square feet and so equivalent to one floor at the downtown store—meant that its merchandise was restricted. The 1962 rebuilding and enlarging of the Meadowbrook Mart McRae's to some 40,000 square feet on each of two floors produced a full-service department store that represented more than 60 percent of the square footage of the entire complex and so fulfilled the size requirements for an "anchor store," the first one at a shopping center in the city of Jackson.

### **The 1962 McRae's store as a unique, local retail phenomenon**

The significance of the Meadowbrook McRae's is as a transitional big-box store, Jackson's first example of a full-service department store in a suburban context. It was built during a short-lived period when retailers and commercial developers were experimenting with new spatial configurations, construction systems, and building forms in the post-World War II suburbs, experimentation that next led to enclosed malls with large anchor stores and to today's stand-alone "big box" stores. Nineteen-forties-and fifties shopping plazas such as Morgan Center and the Northwood Shopping Center, had multiple local businesses, with the largest stores being drugstores and supermarkets, while only two decades later, the 1970 Jackson Mall, a single, sprawling, internalized building, had three, two-story anchor stores facing in on a conditioned space. The 1962 McRae's store, a two-story, internalized anchor store attached after-the-fact to a one-story shopping plaza, fits in the interval between these two related but quite different retail-development models. Its window of development lasted only a few years, and commercial conditions and building type were never locally replicated, as anchoring department stores soon became the norm for local shopping malls. Architects Biggs, Weir, and Chandler were called upon to design a suburban store for which there were no local precedents, and the building they produced, while it had no specific emulators, anticipated the city's later large, unified shopping malls. While the McRae's store no longer houses retail functions, it is still representative of a distinctive and significant era in Jackson's commercial development and in the local evolution of retail activities during the automobile age.

Because of these conditions, and because the McRae's store was added to the completed, one-story Meadowbrook Mart in 1955, then rebuilt and enlarged on the same site in 1962, it stands apart in both size and construction sequence. The boundaries for the nominated property have been drawn to reflect this uniqueness.

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

### Books

Fazio, Michael. *Buildings Across Time*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013.

Longstreth, Richard. *The American Department Store Transformed, 1920-1960*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

*Shopping Center Development Handbook*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, 1985.

### Journal Articles

"Architectural Practice in Jackson, Miss." *Architectural Record*, vol. 116 (Sept. 1954), 141-52.

"Building Types Study 308: Shopping Centers." *Architectural Record*, vol. 132 (June 1962), 163-82.

Fazio, Michael. "The Planned Capital: A Universal Planning Phenomenon in the Deep South." *ARRIS*, vol. 1 (1989), 29-49.

Gruen, Victor. "Retailing and the Automobile: A Romance Based Upon A Case of Mistaken Identity." *Architectural Record*, vol. 127 (March, 1960), 192- 214.

"Renovation: The Emporium Building Renovation." *Building Renovation* (Sept.-Oct. 1992), 36.

### Newspaper Articles

"Expansion planned for newly completed Northwood Center," *Northside Reporter*, 28 May 1954.

"MAKE Jackson's NEWEST SHOPPING CENTER Your Family Shopping Center." (advertisement) *Northside Reporter*, 30 July 1954.

"Meadowbrook Mart Nears Completion; First Stores Will Open Tomorrow." *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1954.

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

"Million Dollar Shopping Center For West Jackson." *Clarion Ledger-Jackson Daily News*, 17 April 1955.

"Northwood Center holds grand opening today and tomorrow." *Northside Reporter*, 28 May 1954.

"Northwood SHOPPING CENTER Has Everything." (advertisement) *Northside Reporter*, 1 December 1955, p. 8.

"Now It's McRae's, McRAE'S DEPARTMENT STORE FORMAL OPENING" (advertisement). *Northside Reporter*, 11 Mar. 1955, 7.

Stoffel, Jennifer. "WHAT'S NEW IN SHOPPING MALLS; Putting a Bloomingdale's In Towns Big and Small." *New York Times*, 7 August 1988.

"Westland Plaza not first strip mall." *Jackson Clarion-Ledger*, 4 August 2003.

### **Unpublished Documentary Materials**

"Downtown Fondren Historic District," Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi. National Register of Historic Places nomination form, 2014.

"McRae's Associate Handbook." published by McRae's and distributed to its employees, c.1997

Sachs, David. "Tom Biggs, Architect," a paper presented at the 1997 annual meeting of The Southeast Society of Architectural Historians. (copy on file in "Tom Biggs" Artisan vertical file, Historic Preservation Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Charlotte Capers Building, Jackson, MS.

### **Maps**

Sanborn Insurance Map, Jackson 1925-Apr. 1962 vol. 2, Sheet 74.

### **Construction Documents and Portfolios**

Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, Office Portfolio, n. d. probably c. 1964. Digital copy at the Historic Preservation Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Charlotte Capers Building, Jackson, MS.

"McRae Expansion-Meadowbrook Mart." architectural construction documents prepared by Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, 1961, 30 sheets. Found in Special Collection Division, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University.

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

"Shopping Center for B M Jones." architectural-construction documents prepared by Biggs, Weir, and Chandler, 1954, 15 sheets. Found in Special Collection Division, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University.

#### Vertical File Materials

"Fondren/Woodland Hills." vertical-file folder, Historic Preservation Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Charlotte Capers Building, Jackson, MS.

#### Digital Files

International Council of Shopping Centers. "U. S. Shopping-Center Classification and Characteristics," found at [www.icsc.org/uploads/research/general/US\\_CENTER\\_CLASSIFICATION.pdf](http://www.icsc.org/uploads/research/general/US_CENTER_CLASSIFICATION.pdf).

"Jackson Mall: Jackson MS." found at [www.skycity2.blogspot.com/2012/11/jackson-mall-jackson-ms.html](http://www.skycity2.blogspot.com/2012/11/jackson-mall-jackson-ms.html).

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Special Collections, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 049-JAC-4635



McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property: approximately two acres**

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 32.360556 | Longitude: -90.167778 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

See Continuation Sheet

**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 property's boundaries with dimensions are shown on the map accompanying this nomination

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

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

The boundary includes the 1962 McRae's building and associated parking. Because the McRae's store was added to the completed, one-story Meadowbrook Mart in 1955, then rebuilt and enlarged on the same site in 1962, it stands apart in both size and construction sequence. The boundaries for the nominated property have been drawn to reflect this uniqueness.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Michael W. Fazio  
organization: architectural preservation consultant  
street & number: P. O. Box 2870  
city or town: Mississippi State state: Mississippi zip code: 39759  
e-mail: mfazio@caad.msstate.edu  
telephone: 662-312-3039  
date: 7 January 2015

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**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.)

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

### **Photographs**

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

### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: McRae's Department at Meadowbrook Mart

City or Vicinity: Jackson

County: Hinds

State: Mississippi

Photographer: Michael Fazio (photos 1-10) and Brett Couples (photos 11-16)

Date Photographed: March, 2014 (photos 1-10) and January, 2014 (photos 11-16)

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

Note: Photos 1-6 show the exterior of the building before the restoration of the original canopy.

1 of 16

CVS Pharmacy and Meadowbrook Mart as seen from the northwest, camera facing southeast

2 of 16

east façade (left) and north façade (right), camera facing southwest

3 of 16

north façade (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast

4 of 16

south façade (left) and east façade (right), camera facing northwest

5 of 16

southeast corner detail, camera facing northwest

6 of 16

northeast corner canopy, camera facing southeast

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Name of Property

Hinds, MS  
County and State

7 of 16

first floor interior, camera facing northeast

8 of 16

first floor interior at escalator, camera facing northeast

9 of 16

first floor interior at the east elevator and stair, camera facing east

10 of 16

second floor interior, camera facing northwest

Note: Photos 11-16 show the exterior of the building after the restoration of the original canopy.

11 of 16

CVS Pharmacy and Meadowbrook Mart as seen from the northwest, camera facing southeast

12 of 16

east façade (left) and north façade (right), camera facing southwest

13 of 16

north façade (left) and west façade (right), camera facing southeast

14 of 16

south façade (left) and east façade (right), camera facing northwest

15 of 16

southeast corner detail, camera facing northwest

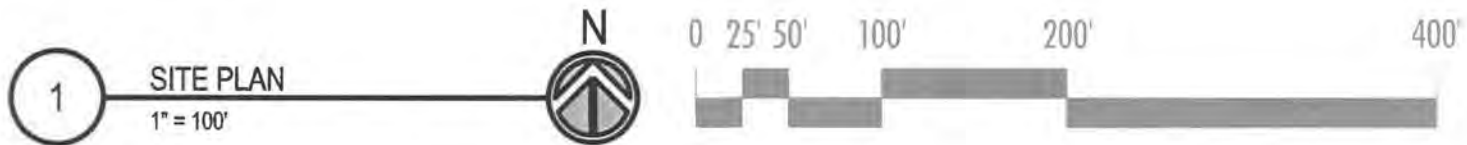
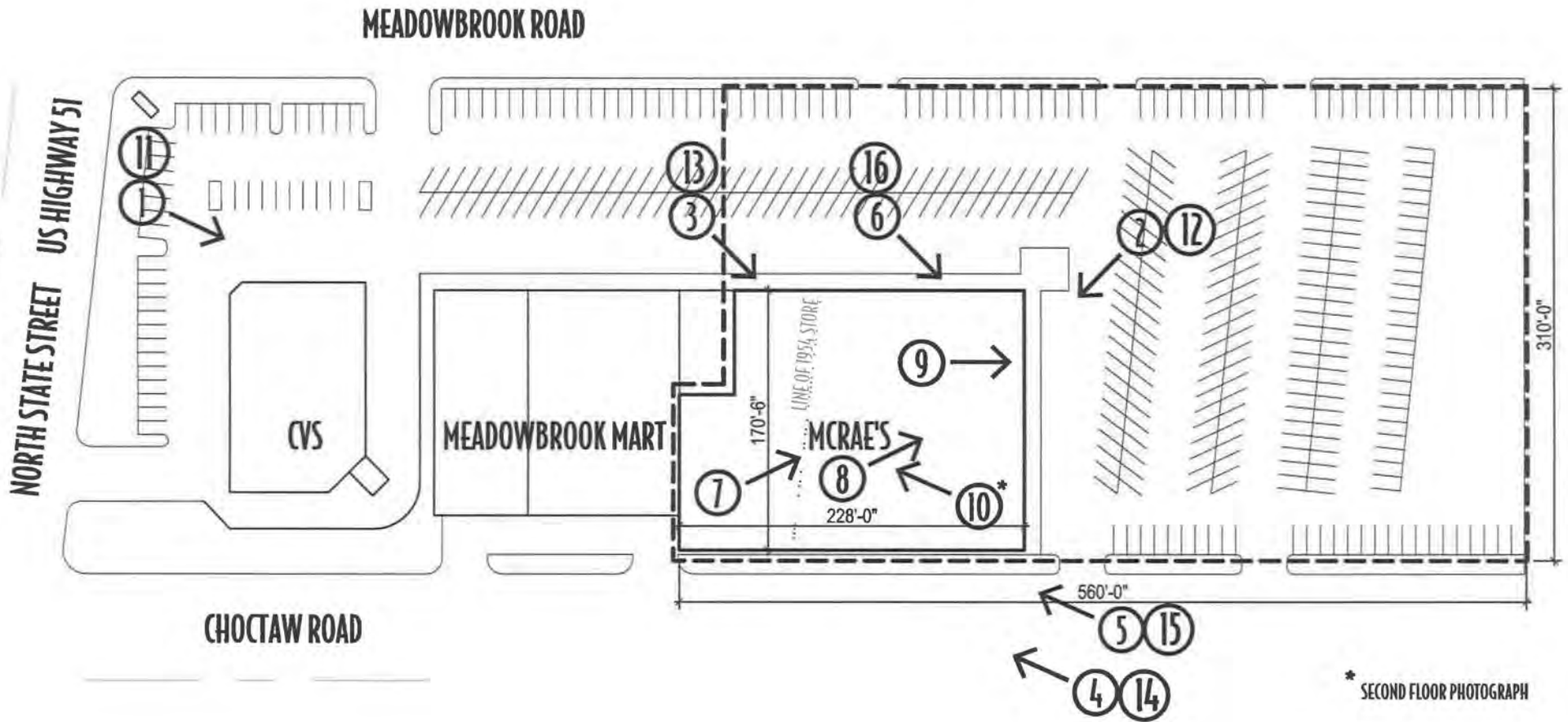
16 of 16

northeast corner canopy, camera facing southeast

**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.

# MCRAE'S DEPARTMENT STORE AT MEADOWBROOK MART







McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart

Hinds County, MS

2 of 16





McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart

Hinds County, MS

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McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Hinds County, MS  
5 of 16





McRae's Department Store  
at Meadowbrook Mart  
Hinds County, MS  
6 of 16























McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart

Hinds County, MS

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McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart  
Hinds County, MS  
16 of 16



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MISSISSIPPI, Hinds

DATE RECEIVED: 1/16/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY:      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/03/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000568

DETAILED EVALUATION:

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      3-3-2015      DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Addresses comments*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER J. Gilbert

DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MISSISSIPPI, Hinds

DATE RECEIVED: 7/25/14      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/22/14  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/08/14      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/10/14  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000568

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    9-8-2014 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*See Comments*

RECOM./CRITERIA Rehov  
REVIEWER *[Signature]*      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

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





# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## The United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Evaluation/Return Sheet

Property Name: McRae's Department Store,  
Hinds County, MS

Reference Number: 14000568

#### Reason for Return

This nomination is being returned for substantive reasons. Based on the current documentation, we do not believe that the McRae's Department Store building is eligible under Criterion C and there is insufficient information and context in order to fully evaluate it under Criterion A.

The nomination as presented raises a number of issues. The evolution of the building is well-documented; the building as presented represents its final 1983 iteration, with the most prominent architecturally distinguishing exterior features removed or obscured (the canopy, original entries, and the ceramic masonry screens) and the interior spaces reconfigured in such a way that circulation patterns and the "shopping experience" were radically altered. In terms of the architectural integrity of this department store, it needs to be evaluated based on its 1983 configuration, and within a context that extends up at least to that point in time. This would invoke Criteria Consideration "g."

Another concern is that only this section of the larger shopping center is being considered. The nomination focuses on the "shopping plaza" as the defining property type of the era, but the nomination does not include the entire (or what is left of the entire) shopping plaza. Since this type of development is typically a planned unit, there is no discussion of the original 1954 development and whether the entire property was under single ownership or management, or whether each individual store was owned individually. Did the original architectural firm of the 1954 iteration design the entire shopping center? How does the demolition of a portion of the shopping center impact the integrity of design and feeling?

There were no historic images provided that would allow a better understanding of the impact that the 1983 changes had on the building, but the description of the original 1962 design indicate that the character-defining details, beyond the overall mass and volume, were limited to the corners, the decorative grille/screen, the canopy, and perhaps the entrances. The interior was defined by a retail space limited to the first floor with offices, storage, and customer service/lounges on the second level. The 1983 renovation changed much of these defining features.

Property Name: McRae's Department Store,  
Hinds County, MS

Reference Number: 14000568

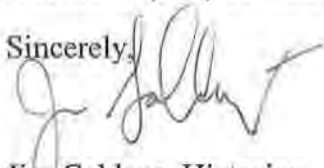
The nomination also asserts architectural significance in Modernist design based on the work and reputation of the architectural firm involved. Indeed, there is no definition of "Modernist" design except for general statements explaining that the philosophy "eschewed mouldings and all forms of applied ornamentation". In fact, in the context of 1962 shopping centers, this building was designed with significant ornamentation, just not traditional historical ornamentation. The brick veneer, porcelain panels covering structural members at reentrant corners, and the screens now covered in stucco, constitute applied ornamentation. There really is no attempt to place the building (or complex) in the context of the firm's work, or to note any recognition this design may have received. The nomination does acknowledge that there really are no similar buildings before or after to compare it to, that there is no obvious influence of the design on anything else.

In order to demonstrate significance under Criterion A, the nomination must place McRae's in a commercial context that provides sufficient information to understand the importance of the company to the commercial life of Jackson. It is not sufficient for it to simply have been a commercial entity, or even a successful entity. We must understand what the impact of the company was on the commercial development of the community and what influences it might have had. And, since the building as presented really reflects the 1983 appearance of McRae's, then the Period of Significance under criterion A must extend to at least 1983, which means justification under Criteria Consideration "g."

What was the impetus for these changes in 1983? It is unclear whether this store was a suburban adjunct to the downtown store, or whether it replaced the downtown store. If it did, was this in 1954, or 1962, or 1983, or some other time? Did McRae's have any other suburban locations? If so, when and where were they built? Were there other downtown department stores comparable to McRae's? If so, what was their fate? The nomination focuses on suburban shopping development in the immediate area of the Meadowbrook shopping center along State Street. Was this the "center" of shopping center development in Jackson, or were there other nodes of development in other sections of the city? If so, when were these other places developed?

We appreciate the opportunity to review this nomination and hope that you find these comments useful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at (202) 354-2275 or email at <[James\\_Gabbert@nps.gov](mailto:James_Gabbert@nps.gov)>.

Sincerely,



Jim Gabbert, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
9/10/2014





HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Jim Woodrick, director

PO Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571

601-576-6940 • Fax 601-576-1005

mdah.state.ms.us



July 23, 2014

Mr. Paul Loether  
Program Director, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are pleased to enclose the nomination form and supporting documents to nominate the following properties to the National Register of Historic Places:

McRae's department store at Meadowbrook Mart, Jackson, Hinds County

The property was approved for nomination by the Mississippi National Register Review Board at its meeting on July 17, 2014.

We trust you will find the enclosed materials in order and will let us hear from you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H.T. Holmes".

H.T. Holmes  
State Historic Preservation Officer

By: William M. Gatlin

National Register Coordinator



HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
Jim Woodrick, director  
PO Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571  
601-576-6940 • Fax 601-576-6955  
mdah.state.ms.us



January 12, 2015

Mr. Paul Loether  
Program Director, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are resubmitting the nomination for the McRae's Department Store at Meadowbrook Mart, Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi. The nomination was approved by the Mississippi National Register Review Board at its meeting in July 17, 2014. The nomination was September 8, 2014. After a conversation with you, Jim Gabbert and Roger Reed, the owner has rebuilt the awning and has readdressed the place of the business in the post-war commercial context in Jackson. The City of Jackson, a Certified Local Government, reviewed the nomination and supports the listing of the building.

We trust you will find the enclosed materials in order and will let us hear from you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H.T. Holmes".

H.T. Holmes  
State Historic Preservation Officer

By: William M. Gatlin

National Register Coordinator



## Evaluating the McRae's store as a Modernist work

Evaluating Modernist buildings presents some challenges. At the McRae's store, the gable forms at the canopy have been removed and the tile screens covered over, but not removed, above the entries. It is a Modernist building, simple, not simplistic, by design and actually little changed, as early photographs show. It must be evaluated by Modernist standards, not by traditional ones.

While the National Park Service has released a book-sized publication explaining the proper application of National Register criteria to the nomination of Ranch-style houses, it has been silent on the much broader field of Modernism, the principal style of the mid twentieth-century and the principal style of the most threatened collection of buildings in the United States, as the public has never fully embraced modern work due to its abstraction and austerity. And in Mississippi, where traditional, most often meaning neo-classical, buildings are even more revered than elsewhere, this problem is amplified.

Modern architecture arose in a tumultuous, highly politicized European environment and matured by the late 1920s, as architects exploited new materials and technologies to produce a "machine-made" esthetic: open-plan, functionalist designs stripped of all ornamentation. Modernism soon found its way to the United States, where a few Mississippi designers adopted its principles in the 1930s, but it was men like McRae's-store-designer Tom Biggs, whose careers were postponed by the Second World War, who became the state's principal Modernist practitioners. Modernism was prominent in Jackson only by the early 1950s and throughout the state only by the late 1950s, as Modernist schools, many of them for black students, were erected widely.

Following the European lead, these Mississippi buildings display a common design language. They have elemental geometric forms and little or no ornamentation, producing what Modernists called admiringly a "clean" look. They are carefully detailed, with an emphasis on the expression of structural elements and modern materials without intermediate artifices such as traditional moldings. And they have free-flowing interior spaces. German-émigré-Modernist Ludwig Mies van der Rohe summed up this sensibility as "less is more." But skepticism among the public was so strong that at the end of the Modernist run, post-Modernist Robert Venturi could retort that "less is a bore."

A proper evaluation of Modernism requires considering a work such as the McRae's store on its own terms and within its own time and place. It is a design predicated on a singular interior space originally subdivided functionally by low, moveable store fixtures. On the outside, its walls are large, unornamented expanses, subdivided by reveals and setbacks and defined at the corners and cornice by openly displayed structural elements set off by more reveals and setbacks. The same rigorous geometry extends to the exterior canopy, a straightforward expression of load and support. Even the (currently masked) screens above the entries are laid up in repetitive, machine-made masonry units.

In sum, while the McRae's store may seem elementary when compared to traditional designs, it is an eloquent expression of its time. And its elementary nature may give the impression that it has been much changed, which is not the case. Whether the public admires the results or not, this was the Modernist program.



