

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 13 1987
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Spur Gasoline Station

and or common Jay's Cars: Office

2. Location

street & number 201 East Bridge Street not for publication

city, town Cynthiana vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Harrison code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Jay Browning

street & number 420 East Bridge Street

city, town Cynthiana vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harrison County Clerk's Office

street & number Harrison County Courthouse Annex

city, town Cynthiana state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April, 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Spur Gasoline Station is a small, square, one-story prefabricated building of neo-classical design. It is strategically located at the edge of the Cynthiana commercial district, one block from a major transportation artery (U.S. 27), and adjacent to the main railroad line through Cynthiana. Cynthiana is the county seat and largest city in Harrison County, which is located at the northern edge of the Bluegrass region of Kentucky. Cynthiana is located 28 miles north of Lexington and 52 miles south of Cincinnati. (See National Register nomination for the Cynthiana Historic Commercial District, listed in the National Register on October 19, 1982, for additional information.)

The Spur Station is a square building measuring 13 feet one inch on each side. It is eight feet in height at the eaves. Each side is divided into three bays. The front has a central door with windows on either side (see photo 2), the right side a door in the bay on the right (see photo 3), and the left side has three window units (see photo 4). The rear of the original building is covered with a small shed addition. All of the window bays utilize a prefabricated metal base with a nine-over-nine metal sash above. Structural support is provided by four metal Doric columns set at each corner (see photo 6). A concave metal panel allows the columns to be inset at each corner.

The columns support a partial entablature with frieze and cornice and a pyramidal-shaped roof of terra cotta tile. The roof is pierced once by a small chimney tile which is located toward the right, rear of the building. The station has a poured concrete floor separate from the thicker concrete slabs which support the columns. A three-foot wide area adjacent to the building on all sides is delineated by a concrete block border. This area, which apparently contained plantings at one time, separates the filling station from the gravel parking lot.

A few changes have been made to the building over the years. A corrugated metal storage shed was added across the rear of the station in the late 30s or early 40s, a replacement door has been added in the front, and the central bay on the left has been slightly modified to allow for the insertion of an air conditioner. None of these changes have a substantial impact on the overall integrity of the building. Gasoline pumps associated with the original purpose of the building have been removed but a free-standing glass and metal display case which was originally used to display various products remains on site. It is located eight feet to the west of the station and is aligned with its original rear wall. The current use of the station and lot as a used car dealership is the ideal adaptive use.

The nominated area includes one contributing building. The free-standing display case is considered a shed and was not counted.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	C. 1925	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Spur Gasoline Station in Cynthiana is significant at the state level under criteria A and C for the period 1920 - 1935. It is an excellent example of a method of construction—prefabricated small commercial buildings—which utilized classical design concepts. The station is also significant in relation to American commercial transportation history—the development of specialized stores selling gasoline and other products used by the automobile. The service station concept developed in the 1920s reflected the marketing concept of the petroleum companies which stressed developing a corner lot with a small attractive service building surrounded by extensive parking areas. This property is the first of its type to be individually nominated to the National Register in Kentucky.

The philosophies of the petroleum companies can be determined by studying their primary trade journal, The National Petroleum News which began publication in 1909. According to this publication, good design became a priority in the decade of the 20s. We have many remaining examples of aesthetically successful, well-constructed deco and international style buildings. In subsequent years when petroleum companies had begun to emphasize maximum marketability of their products, quality design of their architecture became a secondary goal.

During the 1920s when this building was constructed, the future of the automobile was promising; but the American public had not yet said a final farewell to the horse. Major problems had to be solved before the automobile (consequently the filling station) was to become a permanent fixture on the American landscape. Early 20th century roads were quite primitive. Construction and maintenance was not yet a federal responsibility; the Kentucky State Highway Department was not even established until 1912. According to the Good Roads Yearbook (Washington, D. C.: American Highway Association, 1917, pp. 28 and 475) all of the state's roads outside the cities were macadamized (gravel), with the exception of 59 miles of bitumen-covered gravel and three miles concrete, circa 1915. City streets were surfaced and maintained more efficiently; therefore, it was within the cities that the first filling stations appeared.

The filling station of the 20s was not constructed with a canopy to shelter attendant or driver. This was not a consideration because the automobile itself was not suitable during inclement periods.

With the automobile not yet firmly rooted in the American culture, the petroleum companies progressed cautiously. They realized the prime location for their businesses would be a corner site with accessibility from two streets. This invariably required demolition of an earlier structure, which, consequently, often began their relationship with a neighborhood on uneasy footing. To compensate they provided their service in a building with appropriate aesthetics for the neighborhood. To facilitate this, the companies employed an architect who offered a selection of styles, most were modular structures which could be quickly, therefore economically, assembled. The most frequently used form was called the "English Cottage style," complete with steep gables, tile roof, white stucco, and flower boxes. Cynthiana has two of this type remaining. The neo-classical Harrison County building is typical of this short period in its structure and its philosophy. However, it falls into a category of more unique designs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Democrat, Cynthiana, KY, April 10, 1986.

"The Gasoline Station 1920 to 1970," by John Jakle, The Journal of American Culture.

The National Petroleum News, various issues.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Cynthiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	7	3	6	1	6	0	4	2	5	2	0	6	0
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B

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C

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H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Farmer

organization n/a date April 18, 1986

street & number Route #1, Leesburg telephone 606/234-1802

city or town Cynthiana state Kentucky

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *David L. Meyer*

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date March 17, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date *4/27/87*

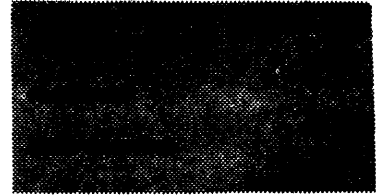
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



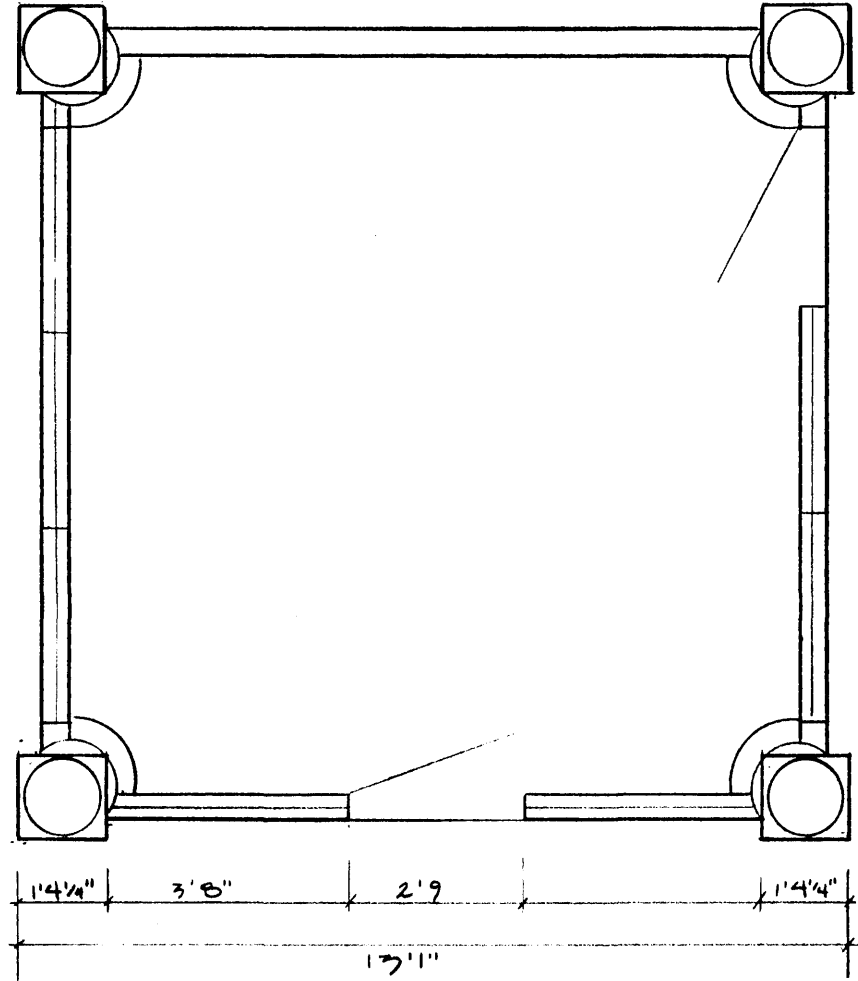
Continuation sheet Spur Gasoline Station
Cynthiana, Harrison Co., KY Item number 8 Page 2

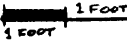
Why is a tiny, prefabricated service building worthy of research or documentation? The building blocks of American culture are equal in size and importance, but they are a multitude of shapes and colors. Just as monumental Greek Revival plantation houses represent one phase of the American experience and early communities of log and stone buildings represent another phase; the architecture of our transitory roadside represents another period of our history. The attempt in Harrison County to transpose the Romantic landscape image of a small Greek temple to the central business district as a gasoline filling station is not only a notion that should be documented—it is a structure that should be preserved.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description & Justification

Beginning at intersection of Walnut Street and Bridge Street in Cynthiana at southeast angle and intersection; thence east with curblines of Bridge Street about 114 feet to curbing on Railroad Avenue; thence south with curblines of Railroad Avenue 55 feet to Hayden's line; thence west about 114 feet to Walnut Street; thence 55 feet to the beginning. The boundary includes the entire lot historically associated with the Spur Service Station.





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 1 FOOT

 SCALE

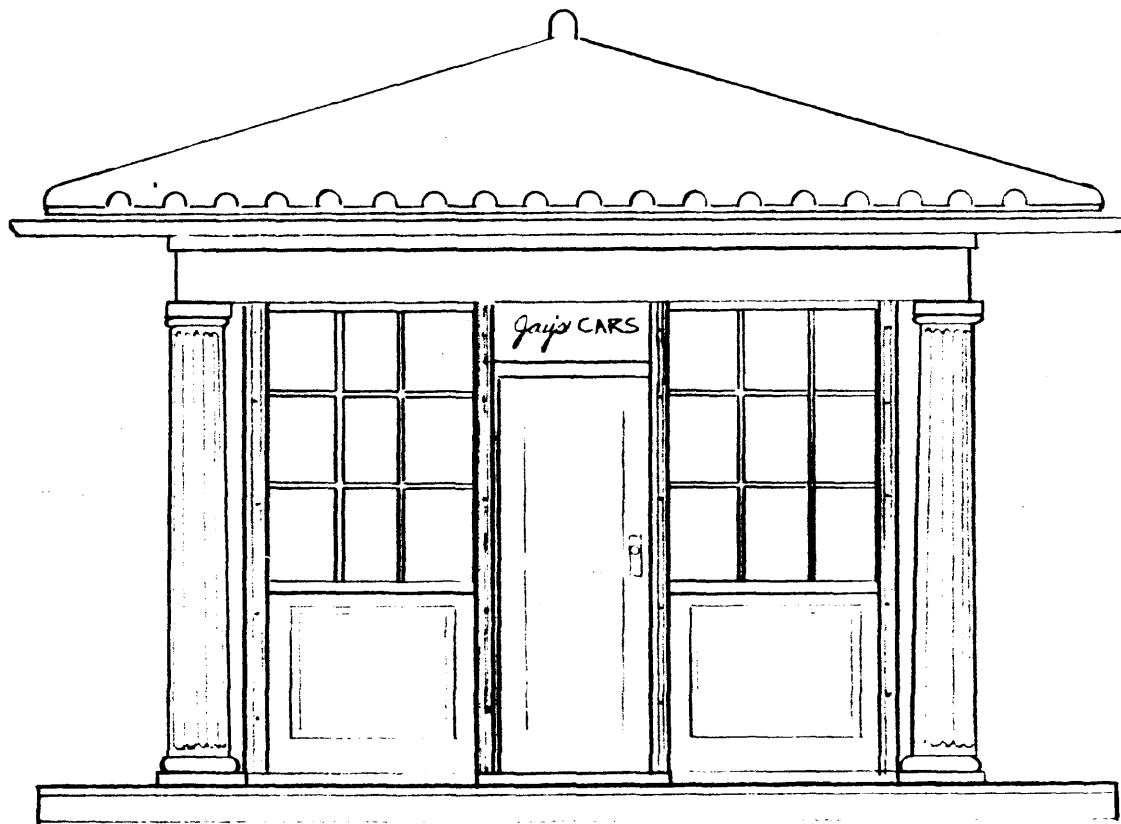
PLAN

APRIL
1986

NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION
NANCY FARMER

NEOCLASSICAL
FILLING STATION

PAGE
1 of 4



FRONT ELEVATION

1 FOOT
1 FOOT
SCALE

APRIL

1986

NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION

NOVICY FARMER

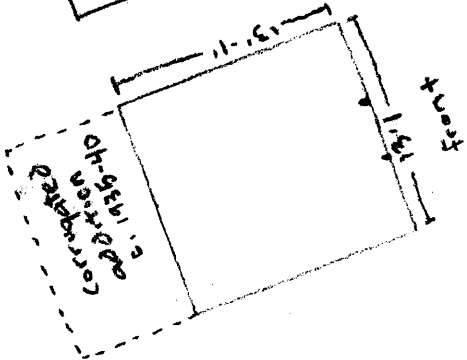
REGISTRATION

PAGE
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← 144' →

SIDEWALK

← 70' →

RAILROAD AVE.

R.R



- NOT TO SCALE -

JAY'S NEOCLASSICAL BUILDING