

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JAN 20 1982  
DATE ENTERED FEB 19 1982

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Central Motor and Finance Corporation Building (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Fagan Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

222 West Seventh St.

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Kansas 66603

N/A VICINITY OF

No. 2, Jim Jeffries

CODE  
20

COUNTY  
Shawnee

CODE  
177

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN-PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED
- N/A

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

B & A Development Co., Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

627 College

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

N/A VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas 66606

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Shawnee County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas 66603

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

N/A

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

N/A

CITY, TOWN

N/A

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old Central Motor and Finance Corporation building at the northeast corner of Seventh and Van Buren streets is a rectangular two-story structure that is faced with dark red brick and terra-cotta trim. To insure that it would be fireproof, it was built of reinforced concrete with brick curtain walls. The roof is flat behind decorative parapet walls. The exterior brickwork is of conventional "running" bond with a "soldier" course atop each opening. A stone base course wraps around the building on all sides.

The main (south) facade, with its entrance and three bays of glass display windows, extend 75 feet on Seventh Street. Transoms of sheet prism glass, that now display signage, extend above each of the display windows. At the second level is a bank of double-hung windows set in wood frames on terra-cotta sills. The awnings hang as originally conceived above the display windows on both the south and the west sides.

A secondary pedestrian entry and the automobile entrance mark the west facade, which extends 150 feet along Van Buren Street. The stone base course terminates at stone jamb guards on either side of the automobile entrance. The original two gas light fixtures adorn either side of this entrance. There are nine bays on this side.

The parapet, capped by a terra-cotta coping, is interrupted in four distinct intervals along the south facade by detailed terra-cotta finials. These are located atop each of the brick pilasters which frame the bays. On the west facade, the parapet wall is broken in the center by a stepped and arched gable above the automobile entrance.

The east elevation, which adjoins the building of the former Lawson and Rausch paint company, consists of common brick facing, exposed concrete beams, nine-inch, salt-glazed tile wall coping, and a total of 14 sets of wire-glass windows in steel frames. The mechanical penthouse is located at the center of this elevation.

The north elevation is constructed identically to the east elevation. A narrow, 18-inch passage separates it from the building on Van Buren Street that formerly housed the Mosby-Mack Car Wash.

The combined square footage of the two upper floors and the basement amounts to 33,800 square feet. The floors are constructed of six-inch-thick concrete.

The interior is open & spacious, having been freed of obtrusive structural members by the reinforced concrete frame construction. This was vital both to the showing and maneuvering of cars, and the concept persists in contemporary car dealerships.

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ALTERATIONS

Despite minor interior remodeling throughout its history, the building remains relatively unaltered.

The original display window frames were replaced by aluminum frames, while the transoms of sheet prism glass were covered by signage. The hand-carved and gold-leaf signage above the transoms on both the south and the west facades was removed.

The revolving car wash rack, which had been located next to the elevator on the second level, also was removed.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

Built 1926

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Thomas W. Williamson, Architect  
Eugene L. Bowers, General Cont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Central Motor and Finance Corporation building at 222 West Seventh, built in 1926, was heralded at that time as the last word in modern construction and convenience. Designed by Thomas W. Williamson of Topeka, it was part of a two million dollar building campaign which took place in the vicinity of Seventh and Kansas streets in 1926. The property was owned by George Lawson and Grover Rausch and leased to Central Motor. The structure has served for all but five years of its existence as an automotive establishment of one sort or another.

Topeka experienced a steady economic growth in the 1920's, and one of the most obvious displays of the prosperity was in the increased use of the automobile. The August 25, 1929, Topeka Daily Capital reported that "a large portion of the retail trade is devoted to the automobile and its accessory lines." It also pointed out that "with 16 agencies dealing in pleasure cars, five devoted to trucks and tractors and 20 tire shops, to say nothing of approximately 150 (last count) filling stations, the needs of the motorist are well cared for."

The Central Motor and Finance Corporation Building was an important addition to the automobile industry in Topeka. Designed by Thomas Williamson and built at a cost of \$100,000 it was an important part of the two million dollar building campaign going on in that area. The Hotel Jayhawk, the Jayhawk Theater, and the Jayhawk Walk, across the street from, and one block east of the Central Motor Building, were also designed by Williamson and account for about a million and a half dollars worth of that late 1920's construction boom.

The Central Motor and Finance Corporation ran a Studebaker dealership, a used car department, and a storage department "devoted exclusively to the public for the storage of their cars." The construction methods used on the new building and its equipment were the most up-to-date available. In addition to space for showrooms and a repair shop where there were no supporting posts "to obstruct the view or hinder the easy movement of cars in and out," there were such amenities as shower and lockers for mechanics, a second floor car wash, a public telephone booth, and ladies rest room. The garage, which was guaranteed fireproof and was open 24 hours a day, was billed as the official garage of the Jayhawk Hotel.

After the Central Motor and Finance Corporation vacated the building, a series of car dealerships occupied it until 1970. These were the Sanderson-McCaig-Butler Motor Company (1929-1931), W. H. Imes Dodge dealership (1931-1936), a truck center

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Baldwin, Sara Mullin and Robert Morton Baldwin, Illustriana Kansas, Hebron, Nebraska: Illustriana Incorporated, 1933. Page 1230.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .258  
 UTM REFERENCES Topeka Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

A	1,5	2,6,8,6,7,0	4,3,2,5,5,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Van Buren Street West 75 Feet of Lots 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE Marcia L. Foster, Julie Wortman, Architectural Historian; Nora Pat Small, Architectural His  
 ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society DATE 1-8-82  
 STREET & NUMBER 120 W. 10th TELEPHONE 913 296-3251  
 CITY OR TOWN Topeka STATE Kansas 66612

**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 *Joseph M. Small* DATE Jan. 8, 1982  
 TITLE Executive Director, Ks. State Historical Society

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Brasham DATE 2.19.82  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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for the Mosby-Mack Motor Company (1936-1938), Jack Frost Oldsmobile (1938-1959), and Vic Yarrington Oldsmobile, Incorporated (1959-1970). From 1970-1975 the building was occupied first by Stevenson Restaurant Supply, and then by R and C Distributors, Incorporated. In 1975 Steve Fagan Classic Cars, a broker of vintage automobiles, took over the building, and has carried on the automotive tradition of the Old Central Motor and Finance Building.

In addition to using the latest construction methods and housing state-of-the-art service equipment, the Central Motor building was also up-to-date in its overall massing and decorative detail. Functionalism and simplicity were beginning to make themselves felt in the design world, and it is evident in commercial structures such as this. The Central Motor building displays such typical features as plain brick facades punctuated by many windows, simple silhouette, and linear terra-cotta roof-line ornamentation.

Although some interior modifications have been carried out, the Old Central Motor and Finance Corporation Building stands today in a basically unchanged state. Its continuous use and its function today as a car showroom bear witness to the strength of the original Williamson design.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT.

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Condit, Carl W., The Chicago School of Architecture: A History of Commercial and Public Building in the Chicago Area, 1875-1925, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. Page 216.

"Doors to Stand Wide Open for Topeka Tonight," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"Every Central Motor Employee Knows His Job," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

Kansas: The First Century, Volume III, New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1956. Pages 276, 277.

"Last Word in Service," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

Markley, Walt, Builders of Topeka, 1956, Topeka: The Capper Printing Company, Inc., 1956. Pages 21, 19, 288.

"Motor Industry Close to First in Retail Lines," The Topeka Daily Capital, 50th Anniversary Edition, August 25, 1929.

"Name of Bowers Long a Building Line Leader," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"New Building is Jayhawk Hotel's Official Garage," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"New Home of Central Motor and Finance Corporation," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"Nose in Circle as a Boy, Now Busy Architect," The Topeka Daily Capital, August 26, 1926.

"Parking Problems, 1901 and 1926," Bulletin of the Shawnee County Historical Society, Number 49, November, 1972. Page 87.

Personal recollections from conversations with Mr. John Finden, president, Topeka Bank and Trust Co.; Mr. Sims Firestone, vice president, Topeka Bank and Trust Co.; Mr. Charles Bennett, president, Fairlawn Plaza Shopping Center; Mr. John Ripley; Mr. Victor W. Yarrington, president, Vic Yarrington Oldsmobile, Inc.; Miss Olive I. Schrader, retired secretary, Mosby-Mack Motor Company.

Polk's Topeka City Directory, 1916, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1971, Kansas City, Missouri: R. L. Polk and Company, Publishers.

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- "Rapid Advance is Made by Lawson and Rausch," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.
- "Some Topeka Construction and Reconstruction Jobs," The Topeka Daily Capital, June 14, 1926.
- "Steve Fagan--Not Your Typical Car Salesman," Kansas Magazine, September, 1977. Pages 2, 3, 4, 5.
- "The Artful Buyer," The Topeka Capital-Journal, December 2, 1979.
- "The New Home of The Central Motor and Finance Corporation," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.
- "The Hotel Jayhawk, Convenience, Consideration, Courtesy," The Topeka State Journal, August 26, 1926.
- The Topeka Daily Capital, Advertisements, July 31, 1926, August 31, 1926.
- "Topeka Always Has Been Good Business City," The Topeka Daily Capital, 50th Anniversary Edition, August 26, 1929.
- "Topeka Had Only 200 Autos 20 Years Ago," The Topeka Daily Capital, 50th Anniversary Edition, August 25, 1929.
- "Used Car Department an Important Factor," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.