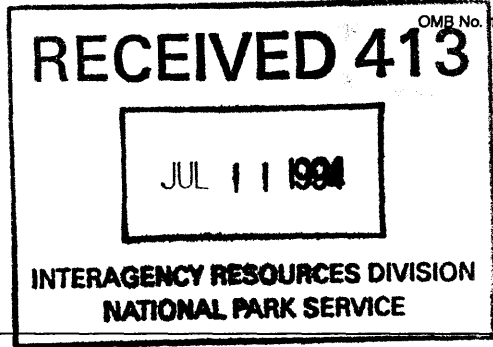


State



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Rainbow Conoco

other name/site number: Joe's

2. Location

street & number: 400 Main Street

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Shelby

state: Montana code: MT county: Toole code: 101 zip code: 59474

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maurell Shelby MT SHPO 6-24-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

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 see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register 8.16.94
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing

Category of Property: Building

 1 building(s)
 sites
 structures
 objects

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing:

Roadside Architecture Along US Highway 2 in Montana 1 TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

Current Functions:

Commerce/Trade: specialty store

Commerce/Trade: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Materials:

Other: Domestic style gas station

foundation: concrete
walls: brick
roof: asphalt
other: n/a

Narrative Description

Rainbow Conoco is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Third Avenue in the central business district of Shelby, Montana. The business faces Main Street. The original building was constructed in 1936 and designed by Continental Oil Company architects in accordance with prevailing corporate architectural policy during the mid-1930s. In 1941 the company added a second service bay to the northwest end of the original structure in response to a request by Mr. Leroy Whitney, the local lessee. The service business had increased substantially in the late 1930s and required additional indoor service space to handle the winter work load. This early expansion was exceptionally well integrated to the 1936 building, to the point where one has to look very carefully to detect the addition. Conoco sold the building in 1965 to a local bulk oil distributor, Howard Mitchell, who in turn, sold the building to station operator Joe Kincaid in 1975. Mr. Kincaid immediately erected another shop addition, a twenty-nine by thirty-five foot, flat roof metal structure that adjoins the earlier 1941 service bay. There was no attempt to architecturally integrate the 1975 construction with the original design.

The original building (including the 1941 addition) is a Continental Oil Company adaption of Pure Oil's classic domestic form known as the English cottage-type station. Conoco's version retains the steeply pitched gable roof and perpendicular gabled service bays but eliminates the slate shingles and bay windows used by most competing corporations during the 1930s. The off-white glazed brick exterior contrasts nicely with the dark green asphalt shingle roof. Orange-red natural brick trim surrounds the centrally positioned metal plate glass office door. Two almost square, fixed single pane windows flank the front entry while another identical window is located on the northeast side of the office. There are also three smaller four pane windows and a wood door along the rear and southeast side of the office portion of the complex. All windows also are highlighted in red-orange brick above and below the metal casements. The men's room is accessed from

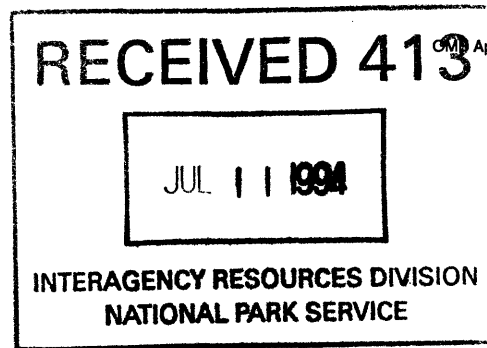
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7

Rainbow Conoco

Page 1



the office while the ladies' room is entered from the back of the building. Both rest rooms retain their original multi-colored tile trim.

Once inside the service area, it is easier to see that the far west bay was not an integral part of the original building. The bays are connected by a large central passageway that was created by removing the majority of the original west wall. Dark cream-colored tiles line the interior of both bays.

As was common to most pre-1940 service stations, office space is quite restricted. A couple of merchandising racks, soda and coffee machines, and a small desk and cash register area fill the room to capacity. Lubricants are stored in the adjacent service area.

The 1975 metal addition is an entirely different design and was never intended to be an integral part of the historic station. It was built to house an ancillary major repair business. This venture lasted only a couple of years and today the building is used mostly for storage. Built simply alongside the original station, the addition reads as almost a separate building, lessening the visual impact of its insensitive design. Fortunately, the historical portions of the Rainbow Conoco building is very well preserved, allowing this still functioning station to convey strongly its original design and historic associations.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C	Areas of Significance: Architecture Commerce
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a	Period(s) of Significance: 1936-1944
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: 1936, 1941
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/BUILDER: Continental Oil Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

Rainbow Conoco is one of finest examples of 1930s era gas station design in Montana. Equally impressive is the fact that the business has operated continuously for nearly sixty years, providing three generations of motorists with courteous, dependable service. Joe Kincaid, the present owner, has operated the business for twenty-eight years. Joe's, as the station is affectionately called by most local residents, is a Shelby commercial landmark. Few businesses in the area have been owned and operated by the same individual for as long as Mr. Kincaid has managed Rainbow Conoco.

The building is the best original domestic, English cottage design remaining in the State. The styling reflected the desire to avoid conflict with nearby residential environments and blend effectively with adjacent commercial structures. The beautifully maintained glazed brick exterior is accentuated with natural brick trim around windows and doors in the classic 1930s style. The high-pitched gable roof and distinctive white and green color scheme made the station a familiar and recognizable landmark to passing motorists since Continental Oil used a similar design for virtually all of its company outlets. The architectural integrity of this particular station is remarkable. With the exception of signage, computer gas pumps, and a newer style, metal office door, virtually the entire structure has remained untouched for over fifty years. According to the present owner, the building was designed and built by the Continental Oil Company in 1936.¹ The station opened for business in early April and was first operated by Obert Knudsen. Mr. Knudsen was replaced by a Mr. Neilsen about a year and a half later, who in turn, was succeeded by Leroy Whitney. From the early 1940s until about 1960, Leroy Gunlikson, and after the war, his son Jim, leased and operated the station. Art Rossman acquired the business after the Gunlikson's. In 1965 the present owner, Joe Kincaid began an almost thirty year career with Conoco.

Continental Oil (Conoco) is one of a very few pre-Second World War era petroleum corporations still conducting business in Montana under the same corporate logo.² Rainbow Conoco has been an exclusive outlet for Continental Oil Company products during its entire commercial life. The business certainly must be one of corporation's oldest continuously operated stations in the region.

¹The Continental Oil Company has been known as Conoco since at least the late 1920s.

²Conoco may be the only 1920s era company still doing in the State. Both Texaco and Standard Oil of Indiana left Montana in the early 1980s.

9. Major Bibliographic References

- Bayer, Linda. "Roadside Architecture," Historic Huntsville Quarterly 9:1.2 (1983).
Gebhard, David and Gerald Mansheim. Buildings of Iowa. Oxford University Press, New York (1993).
Henderson, Wayne. Guide to Gasoline Logos. self-published, Marshall, NC (1993).
Jakle, John. "The American Gas Station, 1920-1970," Journal of American Culture Spring (1976).
Ketcham, Linda. Shelby resident for many years, personal communication, Bozeman, MT (1993).
Kincaid, Joe. Manager and owner of Rainbow Conoco, personal communication, Shelby, MT (August, 1993).
Liebs, Chester. Main Street to Miracle Mile. Little, Brown & Company, Boston (1985).
Suter, Scott H. "Neither Weird nor Elegant: The Evolution of the Cottage-Style Gas Station," Society for Commercial Archeology News Journal 12:3 (1993).
Vieyra, Daniel. Fill'er Up. Collier Books, New York (1978).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A 12	436575	5372720

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): SW ¼, NW ¼, NW ¼ of Section 27, T32N, R2W

Verbal Boundary Description

Shelby Townsite, Block 17, Lot 1.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the lot upon which the nominated building is located.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joseph M. Ashley, Associate Professor of Geography
organization: Montana State University date: October 1993
street & number: Dept of Earth Sciences telephone: 406/994-6904
city or town: Bozeman state: MT zip code: 59717

Property Owner

name/title: Joe Kincaid
street & number: Box 892
city or town: Shelby state: MT zip code: 59474