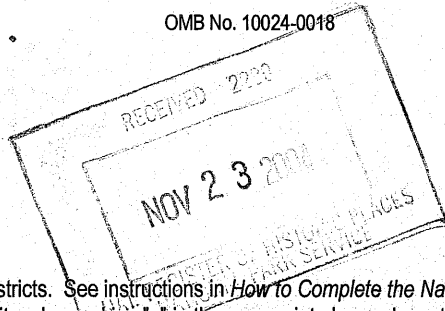


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Pettit Cleaners Building  
Other name/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

Street & number 114 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  not for publication  
City or town Winfield  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Cowley Code 035 Zip code 67165

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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard D. Pankratz DSHPO November 17, 2004  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official /Title Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:)

Edson W. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

11/15/05

Pettit Cleaners Building  
Name of property

Cowley County, KS  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            |                 | buildings  |
|              |                 | sites      |
|              |                 | structures |
|              |                 | objects    |
| 1            |                 | total      |

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

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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: business  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: business  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Moderne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick; Stone: limestone; Stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt; Concrete  
other Glass  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Property Pettit Cleaners Building County and State Cowley County, KS

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- 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 likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

##### Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### Period of Significance

1947

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### Significant Dates

1947

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

##### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

##### Architect/Builder

William N. Caton

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property Pettit Cleaners Building

County and State Cowley County, KS

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |      |      |   |         |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|------|------|---|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Zone | 1    | 4 | Easting | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 0 | Northing | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 2 |      |      |   |         |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 3    | Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 4    |      |   |         |   |   |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

**Boundary Justification**

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

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/title Katrina Klingaman, Tax Credit Coordinator

Organization Kansas State Historical Society

Date August 2004

Street & number 6425 SW 6th

Telephone 785-272-8681

City or town Topeka

State KS

Zip code 66615

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

name Richard and Majorie Hall Bicker

street & number 901 E. 7th Avenue

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Winfield

state KS

zip code 67156

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   1  

---

The Pettit Cleaners Building is a rectangular building facing south onto 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Winfield, Kansas. The building is 25 feet wide and 145 feet long. To the east is a one-story commercial building and to the west is a two-story commercial building across an alley. There is another alley/parking area to the north.

The south section of the building is 65 feet long, from north to south, and is two stories tall. A shallow pitched roof tops this section behind a parapet wall on the south and a simple stepped parapet on the north. The remainder of the building is a single story with a flat, pre-stressed concrete roof. This roof features two, large monitor roof skylights.

The original structure dates from approximately 1880. The 1884 Sanborn Map shows a long rectangular, one-story building with a 25-foot front and three main spaces. The building is labeled as "E.T. Rogers Carriage Works" and the main spaces are labeled "painting repository," "black smith," and "trimming shop." A one-story building directly to the east is labeled "paint shop" and may have been part of the carriage works business. By 1886 the name of the carriage works had changed to "S.G. Bishop" but the three rooms remained. The building to the east is labeled "repository." There were no major changes in the layout of the Pettit Building until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 1905 Sanborn Map shows that the southern section of the Pettit Building became two stories and a connection was made to the building just east. The rear sections of the Pettit Building remained one-story and the building continued to be used as a carriage works. Between 1905 and 1912 more changes occurred to the Pettit Building. The rear sections of the building were raised to two stories and the building was divided into two major spaces on the ground floor. The front of the first floor was used for a black smith shop and the rear was a carriage shop. The upper level was used as a paint shop over the entire length. The ground floor is labeled as cement on the 1912 Sanborn Map and the one-story building to the east was extended at the rear and continued as a paint shop.

This configuration continued until about 1925 when the Sanborn Map shows the building with a new use. The entire structure was still two-stories, but the front half was labeled "battery station" on the first floor and "auto top repair" on the second. The rear of the building was labeled "auto storage." There appears to be an elevator in the northwest corner.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   2  

---

Between 1925 and 1947 the building underwent more changes into what appears to be the building's current configuration. It appears from Sanborn Maps that the rear two-story section, which has been added around 1912, was brought down to one story. These small, one-story rooms at the back of the building accommodated the functions of a dry cleaning business. The rooms contained a cistern, a boiler room, and a space for the actual dry cleaning process. The northern most section was labeled on the 1947 Sanborn Map as being of "fire proof construction." The floor and ceiling were concrete and the walls were lined with fireproof tile. The 1947 map also appears to show at least one of the monitor roof skylights.

In 1947 local architect, William N. Canton, designed a Streamline Moderne façade for the building. The reconfiguration of the rear of the building probably occurred before this redesign of the façade. The Pettit Building's façade, as it appears today, is a stuccoed vertical rectangle with three regularly spaced, raised lines of stucco running horizontally across the front at the top of the parapet. A 36"x96" steel sash window is featured in the center of the upper story. Beneath the window is a recessed area, 7 ½' x 5', that was originally covered with blue structural glass, and later, signage. Salvaged architectural glass has been installed here. The entrance consists of a glass door next to a full-length window framed in aluminum and recessed 2 feet into the façade. The door appears to be the same as in a 1962 photograph of the building. The entrance is centered between two round, wood framed "porthole" windows. Above the entrance and porthole windows is a flat, projecting, angled roof awning which measures 6 feet deep on the west end and 3 feet deep on the east end. Signage similar to that shown in historic photos tops the west end of the canopy and painted lettering decorated the southern edge. The black Vitrolite glass panels that banded the lower façade have been lost, however, salvaged architectural glass has been reinstalled to match the original.

The long west wall along the west alley is exposed limestone with red brick accents over doors and windows. This wall has been stuccoed in the past, but due to a long neglected roof, lack of guttering, and improper repointing that stucco has failed. Renovations in 2003 corrected the lack of guttering and repaired the roof. The brick arches over windows and doors in the south end of the west wall have been re-exposed due to fallen stucco. There are ten steel sash windows in the southern section of the west wall and two door openings. A steel staircase rises northward along the west wall one door in the upper story. At the southern end of this wall, a ground floor

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   3  

---

window has been infilled with matching limestone. The brick arch is still visible. Similarly, the ground floor doorway toward the center of this section was previously narrowed by partial infill with matching limestone.

North of the two-story, southern section is a one-story addition. This section has retained the majority of its stucco. The west wall of the addition features one 12-pane steel sash window, a 6-pane steel sash window, and one door opening. Between the larger window and the door is a 5 foot square, 16 foot tall, riveted steel cistern. The cistern is slightly recessed from the west wall. Rainwater from a neighboring building was diverted into this cistern and was used to feed the boilers. East of the cistern, on the roof, sits the smaller of two monitor skylights.

Beyond the cistern section is the northern-most section of the building. This section is mostly exposed limestone rubble construction with remnants of stucco. The west wall of this one-story segment features two door openings, a 9-pane steel sash window, and three window openings with glass block infill. A much longer monitor skylight sits atop the roof of this section.

The north end of the building is mostly exposed limestone with remnants of stucco. There is one, four-pane steel sash window and one wide steel door on the north wall. A short retaining wall sits at the east end of the rear wall for structural support of the north façade. The east wall of the Pettit Cleaners Building is very plain. A pre-school is located in the building to the east and a mural has been painted on the exposed stone masonry of the east wall of the Pettit Building to accent their rear play yard. There are no openings in this section. South of the mural is the cistern section. The east walls of that section appear to be red brick or hollow clay tile. The three window openings on the east wall of this section have been boarded over, but the steel sash windows remain on the interior. The southern-most section of the east wall is shared on the first floor by the building to the east. The upper level of the east wall is visible above the eastern building and is primarily exposed limestone. The upper wall features four steel sash windows with red brick arches.

The roof at the rear portion of the building is somewhat visible from the ground and has many interesting features. From the north end of the second story of the southern section, one can access the roof of the one-story sections through a door. West of the door is an 8-pane steel sash window. Over the door and the window is a porch-like structure giving access to the roof of the two-story section. The north wall of the two-story section also features a simple stepped parapet.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   4  

---

Directly north of the two-story section is a monitor roof skylight set east of the large cistern. A slightly longer skylight sits further north. Both feature translucent glass on the vertical sides between aluminum frames and electric fans in the ends. The skylights are topped with curved, corrugated metal. A few vents also pierce the otherwise flat roof of the northern sections.

Overall the exterior has suffered minor deterioration since the changes of the 1940s. The building retains its overall appearance with a few minor exceptions for finishes.

The interior has similarly lost some detail, but retains its structural integrity. It also retains a mixture of its Moderne and late 19<sup>th</sup> Century history. The upper story is a single large room measuring 23 feet by 45 feet. The south wall is built of red brick with a restored plaster surface painted white. The large front window sits centered in the wall. Regularly spaced, steel sash windows sit in the west and east walls. Windowsills are very wide due to the thickness of the limestone walls. A door leads from the west wall out to an exterior staircase. The east and west interior walls have also received repairs to restore the plaster surfaces. There is a single window on the north end and a door that opens to the flat roof beyond. The original pine flooring was severely damaged by water and has been covered with a modern linoleum-type flooring. A simple interior staircase rises through the floor toward the center of the eastern wall. The severely deteriorated plaster ceiling was repaired in 2003.

The lower floor is essentially one, very long room with concrete floors the entire length. The south wall features wooden Art Deco-inspired cabinets built around display cases behind the porthole windows flanking the entrance. Similar to the second floor, the plaster walls of the first floor were repaired in 2003. Moving north from the entrance one finds a moveable Art Deco inspired point-of-sales counter trimmed in teal and chrome with rounded corners. The counter is apparently original to the building from the 1947 redesign. East of this counter is a built-in safe. Safe doors, salvaged from the early Home National Bank, front a 6 foot by 16-foot room along the east wall that was used for fur storage. The concrete ceiling of the safe features imprints from local newspaper "felts" (Winfield Daily Courier) dated October 11, 1938. There is a wooden staircase at the north end of this little safe room leading up to the second floor. Details around the staircase and a closet doorway at the northwest end of the fur storage closet reflect a late 19<sup>th</sup> century style.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   5  

---

North of this main sales space is the central portion of the lower floor. The section features plastered, red clay block walls. The cistern extends into the area from the west wall. The cistern has been adapted into a play space for children. Across from this, on the east wall, is a small former rest room that is now used for utilities and a broom closet. To the north of the cistern is a walled area, approximately 11 feet by 17 feet with a wide diagonal opening. Plumbing supplies, tools and a workbench were stored here. The current use of this space is for two restrooms. Centered in the concrete ceiling of this central section is the smaller monitor roof skylight with a fan on the north end for ventilation. The skylight and fan have been restored, but are currently inoperable.

The very north end of this building is a large concrete room with double steel doors on the west, and a wide steel door to the north. A sliding steel fire door hangs at the opening on the south wall. Another, small rest room is in the north east corner. The larger monitor skylight provides natural light from above. A multi-pane, steel sash window sits south of the door on the west wall and glass block windows line the west wall to the north of the door. This north room housed the boilers and a clever.

The interior of the Pettit Cleaners Building suffered from water damage and neglect even before it was vacated in 1987, but the overall structure and major features of the building remain. The 2003 rehabilitation of the building maintained the remaining original features and enhanced the character of the building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   1  

---

The Pettit Cleaners Building is being nominated to the National Register for its architectural significance as an example of a Streamlined Art Modern commercial structure. The building is significant for its association with well-known Winfield architect, William N. Caton and his redesign of the building's façade in 1947. The building is also significant for its long association with the commercial development of Downtown Winfield.

The building sits within the locally designated Downtown Historic District of the City of Winfield. From the time of its construction, this building, located ½ block east of Main Street and one block north of Winfield's main intersection, has served as a vital part of the downtown business district. Winfield was founded in 1869 approximately 50 miles southeast of Wichita. The town flourished throughout the 1870s and 1880s becoming the Cowley County Seat and drawing the attention of many railroads. The city received telephone and telegraph service in 1881, natural gas in 1884 and electricity in 1897. Public transportation was installed in 1887 with mule-drawn streetcar service from the City Park down Main Street to the Santa Fe Depot. The city was growing rapidly and the Downtown commercial district was profiting.

The businesses in the Pettit Cleaners Building were no exception. Originally the building functioned as a carriage works and the building was only one story at that point, with three identifiable sections. The 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Winfield shows the building labeled as "E.T. Rogers Carriage Works." The works included a trimming shop in the back, a black smith shop in the middle, and a painting repository in the longer front shop. Two smaller buildings to the east are also marked as "paint shop" and "black smith." They may have been linked to the carriage works also. According to the city directory, the sons of E.T. Rogers, Frank and Jess, worked as blacksmiths in the shop with William Hillman during 1885. The directory also shows that H. Alford worked as a carriage maker and trimmer. The 1886 Sanborn shows the carriage works was renamed "S.G. Bishops Carriage Works." The black smith shop was moved to the front section of the building and three forges can be seen against the east wall. The middle section of the building is labeled "painting" and the rear section remained a trimming shop for wagons. This configuration of the business seems to have stayed relatively the same through the turn of the century. The 1887 city directory lists S.G. Bishop as a carriage maker at 116 E. 8<sup>th</sup>, which was the Pettit Cleaners Building address.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the building and carriage works went through some changes. The 1905 Sanborn Maps show the longer front section of the building had been made into two

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   2  

---

stories and there seems to be a connection to the small building to the east that was not present in 1886. The building continues to be labeled as "black smith & wagon shop" with the eastern building labeled "painting." An elevator sets in the northeast corner of the two-story section. A photograph of the building (**Historical #4**), probably taken soon after the building became two-stories, shows the Winfield Carriage Works with a wooden façade. The name "R.B. Sanford: is painted on the front. City directories from 1903-04 list Bert Sanford as a carriage painter at 114-116 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He along with blacksmiths C.W. Hanchett, E.S. Orr, and J.M. Reed occupied the building until about 1905. The historic photograph further shows a sign on the large, open, double-doors that says "paint shop upstairs." Farm implements and a wheel can be seen on the flat roof above a sign advertising rubber tires. Some type of electrical or telegraph wires run above the building. Three men are standing in the doorway and one is holding a horseshoe with metal tongs. Behind the men is some sort of display or maybe a wagon with "Groceries" painted on the side.

In the late 1906-07 Winfield City Directory the business has been renamed the Carter Brothers' Winfield Carriage Works after the owners Charles L. and Eugene A. Carter. The Carter Brothers made, repaired and painted carriages but also conducted blacksmith work such as horseshoeing. Evidently, Robert B. (Bert) Sanford became involved in a real estate, loans, and insurance business across town, while Edwin S. Orr stayed a carriage painter at a business at 121 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

By 1912 the carriage works expanded. The rear of the building was made two stories and the Sanborn Map notes that the first level had a cement floor. The building was divided into two basic sections on the ground floor. A blacksmith shop was located in the front and a carriage shop was in the back. The upper level of the building was one long paint shop for carriages. The 1918 map shows the same configuration with the addition of an elevator at the north end of the rear section.

By 1925 the carriage business had transformed into the automobile business. The 1925 Sanborn Maps show the building's use as a battery station and auto storage on the ground floor, with "auto top repair" on the second level. An elevator sat in the northwest corner of the rear section. It is unclear what the façade looked like at this point. The 1929 City Directory lists the Winfield/Willard Battery Station at 114 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Paul D. Guy was the proprietor. By 1931

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   3  

---

the Kemp Brothers Electrical Radio and Battery Service was occupying the building. W. Loren and Leland Q. Kemp owned the business for only a few years.

Sometime between 1925 and 1947, probably after 1945, some of the biggest changes to the building occurred. The September 1932 Winfield City Telephone Directory lists Peter Pan Cleaners, owned by Earl L. Pettit, at 114 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Pettit had previously owned other dry cleaning businesses in town including Unique Cleaners at 213 E 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The 1947 Sanborn Map shows a dramatic change in the configuration of the building from the 1925 map. The front, two-story section of the building remained, but the rear sections of the building were taken down to one-story. The rear section was broken up into basically two sections. The middle section contained the boiler room and cistern on the west wall and facilities for dry cleaning on the east wall. The north or rear section was "fireproof" with concrete floors and ceilings and tile lined walls. The dry cleaning business continued to be called "Peter Pan" until 1939 when it became "Pettit Cleaners and Dyers - Licensed Sanitone Cleaner." Earl Pettit continued to own the business although county records do not show Mr. Pettit as the owner of the building until 1945 when he bought the building from Mrs. Ada Black for "one dollar and other valuable considerations." This may have been when the major changes to the rear sections of the building occurred.

In 1947, Earl Pettit commissioned William N. Caton to design a new façade for the building shortly before passing the business on to his daughter and son-in-law, Mary Lee and Robert Beckwith. William Newton Caton was the son and grandson of two prominent Winfield citizens who also happened to be skilled carvers of marble. William B. Caton arrived in Winfield, Kansas in 1878 and immediately started the Caton Marble Works in 1880. He had married Julie Blankenmeister in 1869 and she thrived in Winfield as a teacher and later superintendent of the county schools. Their eldest son, Harry Aaron, grew up in Missouri, but came with the family to Kansas after studying architecture in St. Louis for a time. He joined his father's marble business as a partner and took over the company in 1920 when his father retired. William Newton Caton was born to Harry and his wife, Lola, on January 27, 1895. He graduated from Winfield High School and attended Kansas State College. Upon finishing college in 1917, William N. had a degree in engineering. He later completed a degree in architecture through a correspondence course. He served one year in England during World War I with the U.S. Army Air Corps. His work took him into the countryside where he was exposed to English country cottages in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   4  

---

Cotswold and Stratford areas. The inspiration of that style of architecture stayed with Caton as he returned to Winfield and set up an architectural firm.

William N. Caton set up his architectural practice in 1924. He is listed as the only architect in Winfield from 1929 until 1946. His office was located in the Caton Building at 310-312 E 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, probably upstairs from the Caton Marble Works. Mr. Caton became very well known for his designs of small residences in the style of English cottages. A locally produced driving tour brochure lists many of Caton's homes still present in Winfield.

By 1947, Winfield was a prosperous town of close to 10,000 citizens. It had not suffered the boom and bust cycles that affected so many other towns during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Winfield continued slow growth on staples such as wheat, corn, alfalfa, oil, and natural gas. The city boasted seven public schools and two colleges in 1947. In this environment, Earl Pettit hired Bill Caton to design a façade for his dry cleaning business that would emphasize the prosperity of the business and project a modern image.

Though Bill Caton was known for his beautiful, English Cottage inspired homes, he had experience with Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles that had swept the country since the early 1920s. Some of his earlier projects had incorporated Art Deco or Moderne elements. Three of his commercial Art Deco/Moderne storefronts, in addition to the Pettit Building, still exist in Winfield. He was also exposed to the popularity of these styles as a rash of façade "modernizations" swept through Winfield during the 1940s. Although 1947 is a late date for this style, it is apparent from newspaper articles and other resources that Streamline Moderne was still a favored style for "modernizations" of commercial buildings in Winfield.

Streamline or Art Moderne is an architectural style closely related to Art Deco. Moderne is characterized by smooth wall surfaces (usually stucco), with horizontal grooves or lines in the wall and a flat roof. Moderne elements also include glass block windows and small "porthole" windows. Often, these features were accentuated with neon lights and brightly colored Carrara or Vitrolite glass panels. Stainless steel, aluminum, and chrome further set off the exterior while linoleum, Formica and plywood were the favored interior materials. The style grew out of the Art Deco trends of the 1920s and 1930s, but was somewhat influenced by the emerging

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   5  

---

International style. However, the biggest influence for the Moderne movement came from the Modernistic designs of streamlined industrial products like ships, airplanes and cars. Smooth, horizontal lines gave the impression of airstreams sweeping over and around the objects. Soon, even household appliances were designed in the streamline fashion. With the growth of mass-produced, inexpensive, ready-to-install materials the Moderne style survived the Great Depression of the 1930s and thrived in the 1940s. After World War II, the style had much competition from the International Style, but it was still the ultimate expression of modernity for small town business owners, such as Earl Pettit, who wanted to update the look of their buildings.

Earl Pettit and his family had been in the dry cleaning business for many years. Soon after the renovations to 114 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue were completed, Mr. Pettit turned over the running of Pettit Cleaners to his daughter and son-in-law, Mary Lee and Robert Beckwith. Thus it is known regionally as Pettit Cleaners or Beckwith Cleaners. Robert Beckwith is remembered as a flamboyant entrepreneur who also operated a men's clothing store and a real estate concern. He is credited, along with a partner, for developing the forerunner of the modern "blow-up" pressing forms. He is also remembered for innovative marketing strategies and for his purple delivery van. In 1986-1987 the building was operated as Monarch Cleaners until EPA regulations made it unprofitable. It has been vacant since then, due primarily to fear of expensive site contamination. These concerns have been addressed and resolved by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Richard and Marjorie Bicker purchased the building at a Sheriff's Tax Sale in March 2001. Richard Bicker is an Assistant Professor of Education at Southwestern College in Winfield and Marjorie Bicker is a self-employed artist, muralist and art educator. They completed a rehabilitation of the property in 2003.

When the façade of Pettit Cleaners Building was finished in 1947 it looked very much like it does today. Mr. and Mrs. Bicker used Caton's original drawings for the façade rehabilitation. The drawings show the façade itself was a two-story rectangle clad in light colored stucco. It featured two "porthole" windows on either side of a central entrance. These windows were originally trimmed in neon lights and were used as display windows. Below the windows, running along the ground, was a band of black or dark blue Vitrolite glass. The central entrance was a glass door next to a full-length window framed in aluminum and recessed 2 feet into the façade. Over the entrance was a very unique awning trimmed in aluminum. The awning was a flat, projecting, angled roof which measures 6 feet deep on the west end and 3 feet deep on the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   6  

---

east end. Above the awning, centered in the flat, stuccoed wall, was a recessed area, 7 ½' x 7 ½', that was originally covered with blue structural glass and a business sign designed by Caton specifically for the Pettit Dry Cleaners. At the very top of the wall, three raised lines of stucco ran horizontally across the wall, just under the parapet. Little is known about the interior of the building at that time. It is doubtful that much, if any, of the interior was redesigned since the majority of the interior space was functional in design and used as a dry cleaning facility.

Over the years, some of the façade features originally designed by William Caton have been modified, but the structure and evidence of the original design is intact. The blue Vitrolite glass on the upper façade was painted over with black paint and covered with signage at different points. A photograph from the 1960s shows the blue glass peeking out from peeling black and white paint. Eventually, all of the Vitrolite glass was removed from the façade, but some pieces remained with the building until the Bickers took possession. The neon lighting around the porthole windows was also removed. The original signage was modified and eventually removed at an unknown date. The unique angled awning suffered from deterioration, but was restored in 2003. Similarly, the interior has lost some of its finishes due to deterioration, but the simple floor plan and structure are intact. Art Deco/Moderne inspired cabinets, located behind the porthole windows are intact along with a moveable, streamlined, plywood and chrome, point-of-sales counter. Some late 19<sup>th</sup> century details, such as woodwork near the staircase and the wood floors of the second story, still remain.

Because of the stature of William N. Caton as an architect in and around the Winfield area and due to the intact nature of this building, for which he designed the 1947 façade, the Pettit Cleaners Building should be considered eligible for the National Register under criteria C. The building does embody the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style as it occurred in the form of small town commercial building renovations of the 1940s. It is also the example of the work of a master architect, William N. Caton. These elements, combined with the long history of the building's contribution to the community's commercial development as a carriage works, battery station, and dry cleaners, make the building at 114 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Winfield, Kansas a significant cultural resource.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

#### Bibliography

Assorted family photographs.

Connelley, William E., History of Kansas State and People, Chicago: American Historical Society, 1928, vol. 5, p. 2529-2530.

Deed to property. Held by owner.

Gabhard, David, The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996, p. 1-17.

Jayhawk Jaycee, June 1947, p. 26, 30.

“Julia L Caton, widow of W.B. Caton,” Winfield Daily Courier, Jan 21, 1948.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000, p. 464-467.

Mueller, Roland and Dale Nimz, Winfield, Kansas: Historic Resources Survey, August 20, 1985, p. 12-25, 46.

Potter, Don, AIA, Winfield Convention and Tourism Committee, The Caton Legacy in Winfield: A Driving Tour of Historic Winfield, Kansas, 2000.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps: Winfield, Kansas, 1884, 1886, 1893, 1899, 1905, 1912, 1918, 1925, and 1947.

Winfield Daily Courier, February 27, 1950, p. 8-A, 8-I.

Winfield, Kansas City Directory, 1885, 1887, 1903-04, 1906-07, 1929, 1931, 1933, 1935, 1937.

Winfield, Kansas Telephone Directory, 1932-1941, 1943-1948.



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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Pettit Cleaners Building is located on Lot 13, Block 127 in Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas. The rectangular building facing south onto 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. To the east is a one-story commercial building and to the west is a two-story commercial building across an alley. There is another alley/parking area to the north.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the nominated building.