

ATTACHMENT D:
**Consultant's Historical Assessment of Former Service
Station and Photographs**

MEMO

Date: July 23, 2008

To: Jason Wasmund
City of Pasadena Planning Department
Design and Historic Preservation Section

From: John English
Historic Preservation Consultant

Re: Historical assessment of former service station
1265-71 East Green Street, Pasadena, California.

Description

The property located at the northwest corner of East Green Street and Chester Avenue contains an early twentieth gasoline service station with a single fuel pump island, a one story brick and auto repair shop building, a small one story building containing restrooms, and a free standing tire storage rack structure.

The primary service station building is a one story, freestanding pre-fabricated steel and glass structure, with a hipped roof of standing seam steel. It is rectangular in plan.

Construction History

According to City of Pasadena historic building permit files, as well as Los Angeles County Tax Assessors data, the one story brick building containing a retail storefront and auto repair shop bays appears to be constructed in 1929, and the service station building was constructed in 1930. It is not clear at this time if the existing auto shop bay openings and doors date to the construction of the shop building or if they were cut in at a later date. In either case, they were clearly put in very early on in the properties history, and are character defining features of the resource. The restroom building and the shop building addition do not appear on the 1930-31 Sanborn Map but are visible on the 1951 Sanborn Map update. No clear building permits were found for these structures, however, they appear to have been constructed prior to 1945. In addition, the small tire storage rack structure does not appear on either the 1930 or 1951 Sanborn Maps; however, it appears to have been constructed within the period of significance for the resource.

Reviews of historical building permits suggest that over time permits were issued for multiple signs on the property, however not all may have been installed. A 1939 permit indicates a steel pipe support and metal sign. A 1945 permit for the installation of a pole sign closely resembles the existing sign on the property. The service station was occupied by a number of different oil companies over the years, and as a result there are a series of building permits on file for the erecting of signs for the various corporate logos and signage of the oil companies.

Alterations

- Original window in the entry door to service station building has been replaced with a recent vinyl or metal sash window. Air vent cut into metal wall panel.
- Addition of AC roof equipment on service station building
- Addition of new stucco clad walls and metal gate surrounding entrance to original restrooms building
- Auto shop doors may have been replaced, however they appear to be within the period of significance

Note: it is not clear if the standing seam roof is an original feature or was added at a later date.

Background

While this subtype was common throughout the region and the state during the 1920's and into the early 1930's, it is not known at this time how many were constructed within the City of Pasadena.

The original retail and auto shop and service station buildings were constructed for owner John H. Ahlfeld in 1929 and 1930 respectively. No building permit was available for the auto shop building and there is no architect or builder on record. City building permit number 38150 was issued in April of 1930 for the construction of a service station building with Pacific Steel Building Company being listed as both architect and contractor. The Owner was John H. Ahlfeld.

While Ahlfeld continued to own the property into the 1940's it was associated with a number of different oil companies during that time. These include the following:

Standard Oil – 1930 – 1932
Western Oil & Refining Co. – 1931
Shell Oil – 1932
Krieger Oil - 1944
Union Oil – 1945

By 1954 the property was occupied by the George Boykin Auto Body Shop, and by 1957 The National Radiator was located at 1271 East Green Street.

Significance

Criteria for historic landmark designation (Zoning Code, Chapter 17.62.40). The criteria are:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the city's history of the city.
2. It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the city.
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant historic resource property type, architectural style, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder who is locally significant, or that possesses high artistic values that are locally significant.
4. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important locally in prehistory or history.

The period of significance for the property is 1929-1945.

The former gasoline service station, auto repair garage and associated contributing outbuildings located at 1265-71 East Green Street, appear to be eligible for listing as a City of Pasadena Historic Landmark under **Criterion 3**: *it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a locally significant historic resource property type*, a gasoline service station.

The brick auto repair shop and retail storefront building is a good intact early example of the type of building that was included with gasoline filling stations to provide auto repair and related services to the motorist. These would later become common in integrated full service stations throughout the country.

Within the City of Pasadena, the service station structure is a unique and extremely rare example of a variation of the type, or subtype; the pre-fabricated service station, which is intact and retains a high degree of integrity from the period of significance.

In addition to the buildings, the sign pole and light pole, while added later, are within the period of significance, and are contributing features of the property.

Sources:

California State DPR forms A & B, 1973, prepared by Denver Miller.

Vieyra, Daniel, Fill 'er Up: An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations. New York: McMillan, 1979

Karl Witzel, Michael, The American Gas Station. Wisconsin, 1992

National Register MPS: Early Auto Related Properties in Pasadena, California, 1996, prepared by Theresa Grimes

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

John English

Sanborn Maps

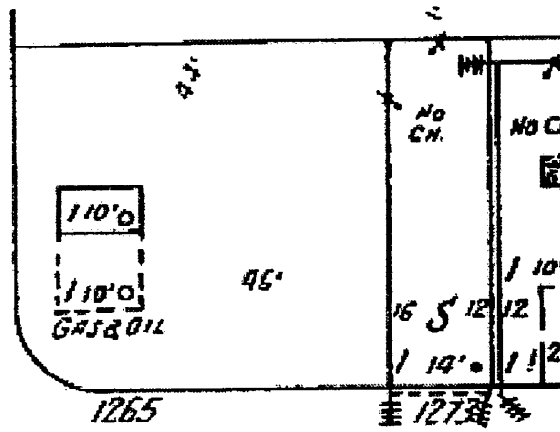


Figure 1: Sanborn Map - 1930-31

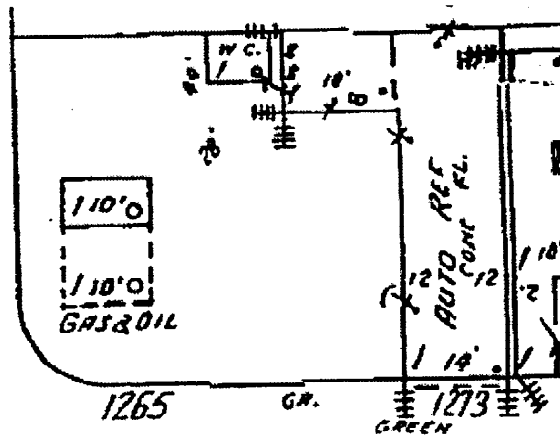


Figure 2: Sanborn Map - 1951 update