

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-00984 **New** **Supplemental**
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____
 Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries
 National Register Status: (any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE
 Review & Compliance No. _____
 Non-Extant (enter year) _____

1. Name of Property

historic name Ernie's Tire Shop
 other names/site number Home Oil Company, Field Site #: FS-119

2. Location

street & number 111 Mulberry Avenue
 city or town Muscatine vicinity, county Muscatine
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____ Township No. _____ Range No. _____ Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 16 Lot(s) N81' Lots 1 and 2

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

| Category of Property (Check only one box) | Number of Resources within Property | | |
|---|--|--|------------|
| | If Non-Eligible Property Enter number of: | If Eligible Property, enter number of: | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | _____ buildings | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | _____ sites | _____ | sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | _____ structures | _____ | structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | _____ objects | _____ | objects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | _____ Total | <u>1</u> | Total |

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).
 Title _____ Historical Architectural Data Base Number _____

Historical and Architectural Survey and Evaluation of the Downtown Commercial District 70-013

6. Function or Use

| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>14D09: Transportation – Automotive Repair</u> | <u>14D09: Transportation – Automotive Repair</u> |
| <u>14D07: Transportation – Gas Station</u> | <u>14D07: Transportation – Gas Station</u> |

7. Description

| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) | Materials (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>07E: Bungalow/Craftsman</u> | foundation _____ |
| _____ | walls <u>03: Brick – Clay Tile Block</u> |
| _____ | roof <u>08B: Asphalt-Rolled</u> |
| _____ | other _____ |

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

| Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria) | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | A Property is associated with significant events. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history |

County Muscatine Address 111 Mulberry Site Number 70-00984
City Muscatine District Number _____

Criteria Considerations

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

05: Commerce
02: Architecture

Significant Dates

Construction date 1933 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates c. 1961 Canopy addition, pumps, garage doors changed

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect _____
Builder _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

| Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | _____ | _____ | 2 | _____ | _____ |
| 3 | _____ | _____ | 4 | _____ | _____ |

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jim Rudisill, City of Muscatine; Jay Brady, Chair (R.L. McCarley, consultant)
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date June 10, 2005
street & number 215 Sycamore telephone 563-264-1550
city or town Muscatine state IA zip code 52761

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____ Frame/slot # _____ Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached **photo & slide catalog sheet** for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): _____ Date: _____

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| <u>Ernie's Tire Shop</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Name of Property | County |
| <u>111 Mulberry</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Address | City |

7. Narrative Description

This small gas station was constructed in 1933, and it reflects the Craftsman style popular at that time. The city directory listings support a 1933 date. The 1928 and 1946 Sanborn maps also support this date as the building is not on the 1928 Sanborn. Ernest Root, a living descendent of the Ernest Root who had the building built for his tire business, also confirmed the 1933 date (Root interview, 2004). This building was originally constructed as a tire repair shop also selling gasoline, but did not have the front canopy. According to John Grosjean, past owner of the station, the canopy was added in the early 1960s along with two newer pumps to replace the old style pumps, and the two metal and glass garage doors to replace the older wood and glass doors. John also indicated that a fabric awning was over the pumps in the 1940s. Other than these early 1960s modifications, the building remains remarkably unaltered both inside and out.

The three-bay façade consists of two large service doors and a store entry with large windows, and it is clad in brown brick. A historic flat steel canopy on steel beams projects from the store (far right) bay and covers two non-original modern gas pumps. Fluorescent lights on the underside of the canopy provide lighting for the store entrance and gas pumps. The canopy drainage flows back to the building where it drops through a metal downspout at the southwest corner of the building. This store section consists of a single-door pedestrian entry slightly recessed and to the left of two large storefront windows. The entry door has a wood transom, and the storefront windows have large transom windows. Both service bays have large overhead metal garage doors set in a wood framed opening. The garage doors are six panels high and four panels wide, and are not original. A decorative clay-tile roof extends across the bays, and paired large wood brackets support this roof. Single fluorescent lights are attached to the underside of the clay tile roof to provide down lighting. The parapet wall is stepped to emphasize the three bays, with a large higher central portion and smaller higher side portions. The front corners are elevated. The large central portion has brick detailing outlining a rectangular panel.

The south elevation is brick and consists of a three-step roofline from the elevated front corner. Two single-light display windows sit side-by-side immediately at the west corner in a wood framed opening. The windows have a common large wood transom above. Three wood framed openings with stone lintels above are located towards the east end of the elevation. The west opening is the entry to the historic style bathroom. The later door is wood with a small single light window located in the upper portion of the door and has a small wood board above to fill the gap between the door and lintel. The adjoining window is a 4x6 glass block window with a vent occupying the two middle blocks of the row just below the top row. The window has a stone sill. The adjoining window to the east is a 5x8 glass block window with stone sill.

The north elevation is constructed of painted vitrified clay block and consists of a three-step roofline from the elevated front corner. The wall rests on a concrete foundation that becomes more exposed as the ground slopes away from west to east. The roof drains through the parapet into an exterior roof scupper then into a metal downspout. This elevation has three irregularly spaced windows – one at the back (east) corner and two clustered in the front (west) third. The east window is a double-hung wood window

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that has been modified by removal of glass and use of wood plywood to install a metal chute for waste disposal into an outside container. A set of iron bars with pointed tops have been installed over the lower portion of the window above the metal chute. The two west windows are single-over-single-light double-hung wood windows with wood frame. The windows have stone sills.

The east (rear) elevation is constructed of unpainted vitrified clay block and is two stepped down from south to north as the roof drainage flows to the northeast corner of the building. There is a small vent opening located approximately waist level in the south quarter of the elevation. The wall rests on a concrete foundation that becomes more exposed as the ground slopes away from south to north.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Ernie's Tire Shop appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the automotive industry and Criterion C for its 1930s architecture as a service station. It is likely further east than the boundary for the potential downtown historic district.

Ernie's Tire Shop appears to be individually eligible under Criterion A due to its association with an auto tire and repair business in the 1930s and use as a automobile gas station and repair business from the 1940s into the 21st Century. The building is the only surviving gas station still used as a gas station in the downtown commercial area. Additionally, there are only 4 other identified gas stations in Muscatine that date to before the post-WWII period: 101 Walnut (c.1940), 1206 East Second Street (c.1942), 506 Mulberry (c.1941), and 600 Mulberry (c.1941). At the time Ernest Root moved his business from 123 E. Front to 111 Mulberry, there were nine automobile tire repair shops in town and numerous garages and filling stations. The building is also significant as the location of three generations of Grosjeans operating a service station business. The business also ties into the 20th Century business and industry context as a symbol of the rise of the automobile in American and Muscatine commerce and the changes to the urban and rural landscape that the automobile transportation industry brought.

The gas station also appears individually eligible under Criterion C due to its reflection of the Craftsman style, as well as the only identified extant gas station in Muscatine from the 1930s or earlier. The gas station represents a significant turning point in the 19th and 20th century transportation and business history of Muscatine. Gas stations appeared in the early 20th century in Muscatine with the advent of the automobile, and this form of the "house with bays" to also incorporate service bays appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. This gas station is an excellent example of this type, constructed to both sell tires and gasoline. The addition of the canopy over the pumps in early 1960s represents the more evolved type of the gas station that began appearing in this period. Though it detracts somewhat from the historic appearance, the older gas station can still be clearly read, and this addition could be removed. The unique period detailing of the structure, such as the tile "roof" with large brackets, creates an appearance intended to convey a high level of design, and hence quality of product. Additionally, it exhibits strong historic integrity. Though the garage doors have been replaced, it clearly conveys its historic size, design, and appearance. Thus, Ernie's Tire Shop appears individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

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Ernest Root constructed the building in 1933 as a gas station and tire shop, according to living descendent Ernest Root. The lack of the building on the 1928 Sanborn, and the city directory listings from 1931 and 1934 support this date. Ernest Root, married to Kathleen, was a button cutter as of 1916, a vulcanizer at Pitchforth in 1919, mechanic in 1921, and vulcanizer at Carpenter Rubber Co in 1923-24. In 1927, Ernest opened his own tire repair business at 123 E. Front Street and was one of 14 auto accessory and tire shops in Muscatine. The 1928 Sanborn maps indicates "vulcanizing" at this location, and no gas pumps appear associated with the business. Ernest moved his tire shop to 111 Mulberry in 1933 and was listed as one of nine tire shops in the 1934 city directory. He represented Goodyear tires. A c.1933 photograph of the building show the same three bay layout of the building, clay tile roof "canopy" and brackets, and brick detailing. The business name was historically located above the clay tile roof within the rectangular brick detailing on the parapet. Ernie Root died in 1938. The store became a Goodyear Service Store in 1938 after Ernie Root died, continuing under Goodyear until 1942. Walker D. Shellady managed the Goodyear Store, and the store was listed as one of 12 auto accessory and parts stores in 1938 and 1 of 6 tire dealers and repairs in 1940-41.

Early gas stations reflected residential architecture to "blend" into communities, as gas companies expanded from pumps in commercial areas to the neighborhood gas station. Specific designs were developed by companies to market their image as well as reflect their surroundings. The gas stations expanded in the 1920s and 1930s from simple gable-roof "house" structures to the "house with canopy" and the "house with bays" to incorporate additional services offered. By the late 1930s and 1940s, the attractively styled gas station evolved into the "oblong box" focused on a streamlined appearance with larger glass windows and smooth panels, such as terracotta or porcelain enamel panels (Jakle & Sculle 1994: 137-146).

The design of Ernie's Tire Shop in 1933 reflects the "house with bays" gas station. With its tile roof "canopy," large brackets, and brick detailing, it reflects the Craftsman or Mission style architecture of this period. The inclusion of the service bays reflects the growing incorporation of this aspect of the business into gas stations, which is further reflected in this service station's original purpose as a tire shop with gasoline pumps. The later installation of the canopy over the gas pumps in the early 1960s indicates the evolution of the service at this location, reflecting the new trends in gas station architecture in this period.

While a number of gas stations existed throughout Muscatine in the 1930s and 1940s, few of these historic buildings have survived. There are only 4 other identified gas stations in Muscatine that date to before the post-WWII period: 101 Walnut (c.1940), 1206 East Second Street (c.1942), 506 Mulberry (c.1941), and 600 Mulberry (c.1941). At the time Ernest Root moved his business from 123 E. Front to 111 Mulberry in 1933, there were nine automobile tire repair shops in town and numerous garages and filling stations. While some of these businesses were in earlier storefronts, none of these other buildings that served expressly as service stations or tire dealers remain standing. Only the handful of examples from the 1940s cited remain standing, and two of these reflect the later type of station focused on large windows and metal framing.

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In 1943 this store became the Home Oil Company. Leo Grosjean opened Home Oil Company at 211-13 W. Front in 1940-41 and then moved to 111 Mulberry in 1943. The 1943 city directory listed the business under gas stations with Sinclair gas, oil, tires, and batteries. It was one of 36 gas stations in town at this time. The 1946 Sanborn map depicts the clay tile construction of the building with the brick façade. Three small gas pumps are depicted in front of the building, in roughly the same location as the c.1933 photograph of the building. The canopy is not depicted on this 1946 map. In 1961 John C. Grosjean took over the business and would continue to operate it until 1987. According to John Grosjean, the canopy was added in the early 1960s along with two newer pumps to replace the old style pumps, and the two metal and glass garage doors to replace the older wood and glass doors. John also indicated that a fabric awning was over the pumps in the 1940s. In 1971, the name became Grosjean's Home Oil Company, and it continued operation at this location until 1986. Leo Grosjean started Grosjean's Tire and Auto Express in 1987 at 325 W. Mississippi and would continue to operate the business as it moved to its various locations in the 1990s and 2000's.

In 1987 Tim and Julie Long purchased the property and opened Long's Conoco, operating this business until 2001. In 2002, Matt's Downtown Service, Matt Beason proprietor, operated at 111 Mulberry. John Grosjean purchased Matt's about a year later and reopened Grosjean's Auto.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories, Muscatine, Various publishers, 1869-1959. Available at the Musser Public Library.

"Ernie's Tire Shop at the foot of Mulberry Avenue," Photograph, c. 1933, published in *A Pictorial History of Muscatine, Iowa*, Published by Muscatine Journal, Molly Carroll Publisher, 1992, 77.

Jakle, John A. and Keith Sculle. *The Gas Station in America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1994.

John Grosjean, past station owner, Interview, July 28, 2005, Jay Brady, interviewer.

Root, Ernest, descendant of original owner. Interview with Jerry Lange, Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission, Fall 2004.

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine, Iowa," Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928, 1946. Accessed online at: sanborn.umi.com.

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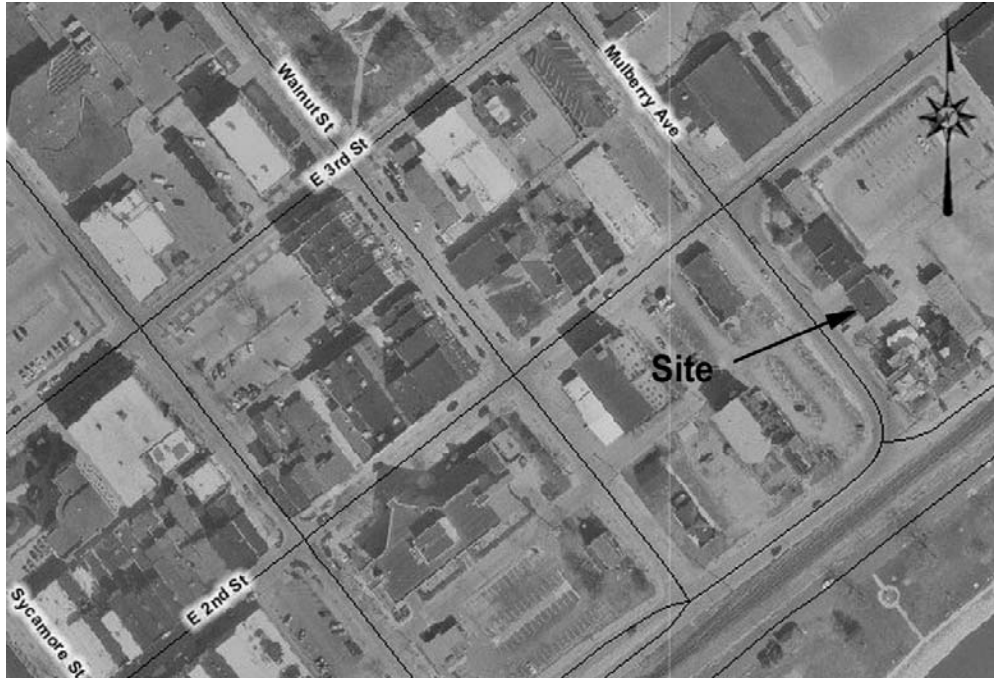
Ernie's Tire Shop
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

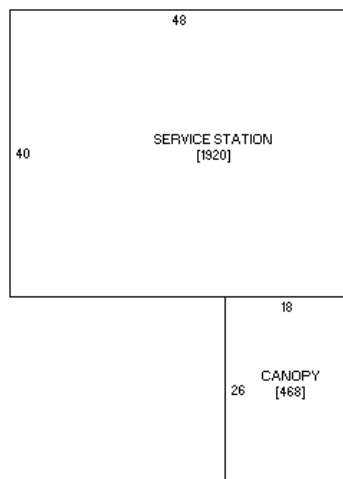
111 Mulberry
Address

Muscatine
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Location Map



Plan (from assessor's office)



(front – Mulberry)

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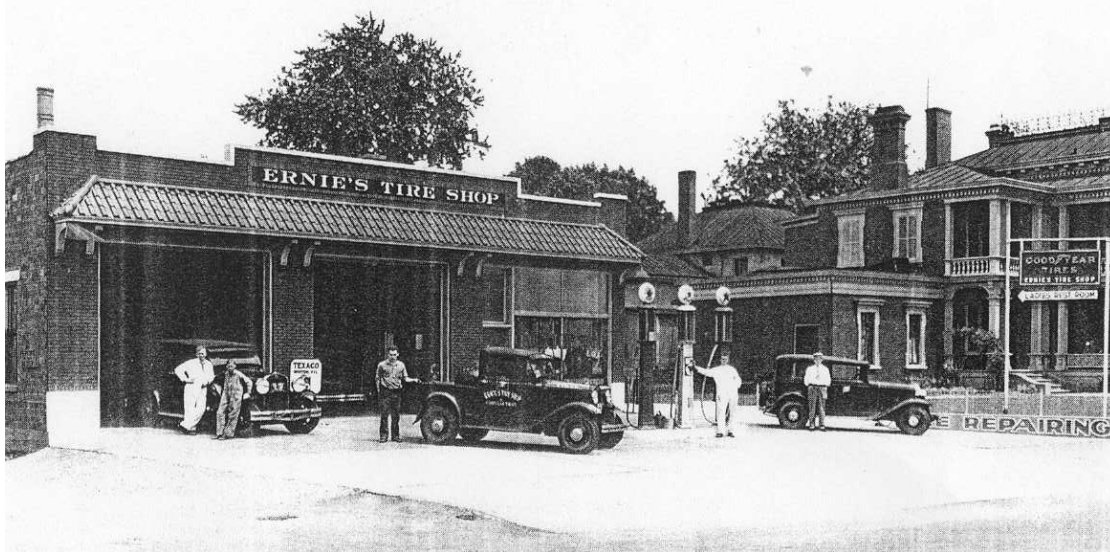
Ernie's Tire Shop
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

111 Mulberry
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City

Historic photograph of building (*Ernie's Tire Shop at the foot of Mulberry Avenue, c. 1933, Published in A Pictorial History of Muscatine, Iowa, by the Muscatine Journal, Molly Carroll Publisher, 1992*)



Photograph of building (digital image)

