HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION
P.O. Box 2511
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27102
919-727-2087

APPLICATION for HISTORIC DESIGNATION
HISTORIC and ARCHITECTURAL

INFORMATION FORM

1. Name of Property: Historic SHELL SERVICE STATION
   Common same

2. Owner's Name and Address: JAMES D. WATSON/A.S. CUMMINS
   1317 Verdun Street W-S, N.C. 27107

3. Location of Property: 1111 SPRAGUE STREET
   Winston-Salem, N.C. 27107

4. Amount of Land to be Designated:

5. Tax Block: 747 Tax Lot: H8

ADDITIONAL SHEETS OF PAPER WILL BE NECESSARY FOR
DOCUMENTATION ON QUESTIONS 6 THROUGH 13.

6. When was the building erected? For Whom? (If you don't know the exact
date, please give a general time frame.) Have there been additions or
modifications? If so, describe and give dates.

7. Do you know the names of any of the craftsmen who worked on the building?
(i.e., architects, carpenters, contractors, landscape designers, etc.) Do
any architect's plans or building accounts exist? Where?

8. Do you have any old photographs of the building? If so, do you know the
dates of the photographs?

9. How has the building been passed down through the years, from whom to
whom? (i.e., a quick chain of title) If possible, please give some
background on each occupant, (i.e., occupations or other interesting
facts). List the sources of your information.

10. What was the building's original use, if different from today? Has the
building ever been moved? List the sources of your information.

11. What is the significance of this property (Please be specific and to the
point). Include a complete list of sources for your information.

   City of Winston-Salem
   County of Forsyth
   Town of Kernersville
12. Describe the architecture and present condition of the structure, also including any outbuildings or other appurtenant features to be included in the designation. If the property has been restored, what were the dates of restoration and was the restoration done under the supervision of any historical group or in compliance with their requirements. If the property has not been restored, is any restoration planned for the property?

13. Is the property listed in any existing Historic Register or survey (i.e., the National Register of Historic Places or any other state or local history)? If so, please give the title of the listing.

In addition to the written application, the following materials must be submitted simultaneously:

- a black and white, 8" x 10" overall photograph clearly depicting the property being designated.
- color slides showing all 4 sides of the building (may also include any architectural details, interior and exterior, which add to the property's significance)
- a map showing the location of the property, including any outbuildings and appurtenant features

(Please label the above materials with the name of the property owner)

APPLICATION FEE $50.00 (Check payable to Forsyth County)

The following information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Date-Oct 19, 1993

Signature of Property Owner

Mailing Address:

1317 Verdun Street

Winston-Salem, N.C. 27107

Telephone: [Redacted]

b3/hpc
APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION
Shell Station, 1111 Sprague Street, Waughtown

6) The Shell Station was erected between 1930 and 1933 for the Quality Oil Company of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, established in 1929. The innovative and incomparable structure survives with much of its original design intact. The site it occupies has been modified, however, reflecting its discontinued use as a filling station (circa 1950s) and transfer to private ownership (1973): the 1930s gas pumps, signage, and wooden trellis covering a one-time service area original to the site have long since been replaced or removed (as visually evidenced in historic photographs versus existing conditions).

7) Two men of Winston-Salem, J.H. Glenn, Jr. and Bert Bennett, are listed as "inventors" of the shell-shaped station’s design, which was patented on 25 November 1930 and used in the construction of seven identical stations in the Winston-Salem/Kernersville area. Professional architects are not known to have been employed; the Frank L. Blum Construction Company of Winston-Salem is credited with the construction of the first two stations, the third by Burton Brothers Construction (letter dated 9/26/79 from James K. Glenn, Sr., to Keith A. Sculle, Quality Oil Archives, Winston-Salem). The remaining five stations, including the Sprague Street shell which is listed as "#7" out of the total eight constructed, was presumably built by one of those companies; today it stands as the only survivor. In the 1930s, Quality Oil staffed a Paint Department, "responsible for the painting of all the buildings owned by the company"; Henry Baynes "personally did all of the sign lettering wherever required by Quality’s operations" (1979 Glenn/Sculle letter). A set of elevations showing the original shell design appears on the application of the afore-mentioned patent; at this time it is not known whether or not plans or elevations specific to the Sprague Street site exist, although historic photographs of the seven other shell-shaped stations reveal no differences in proportion or design to the Sprague Street shell.

8) An extensive and accessible collection of 1930s-1950s photographs of the building and its sister stations are housed at the Quality Oil Company headquarters located off Silas Creek Parkway in Winston-Salem. Most of the photographs are dated and site-specific, although some are unidentified.

9) According to the Winston-Salem tax records of Block-747/Lot-H8, a T.S. Sink owned the 1111 Sprague Street site from 1928 until 1936, when the property was transferred to the Quality Oil company. In March 1973 the Shell Station and lot were purchased by James D. Watson and Janet W. Watson; in April 1988 the title existed solely in the name of James D. Watson, and in May of that year the name of Ann S. Cummins was included at 25% ownership of the property.
10) The building originally supported a Shell products filling station, serving motorists in the Waughtown area and route 150 traffic. The shell itself housed two restrooms adjacent to its single-story, two-room plan. At present, the building is used by the owner only as storage space for small motor engine repair equipment. The building has never been moved from its original site, as documented in the files and photographs of Quality Oil.

11) As the "significance" of the Shell Station from an historical standpoint has already been recognized and recorded in various publications—SEE ATTACHED SHEETS—it will not be addressed at this time.

A local designation of the Shell Station by the Historic Properties Commission seems a natural (albeit obvious) formality, given its existing status on the National Register, the nationwide exposure it has received through the years, and the local interest it continues to generate. As it is not lacking recognition as an historic site, additional designation of this unique property is sought to foster the building's security; ultimately, that it remain in the landscape, and in the short-term, that its "official" i.e. posted recognition as an Historic Property of Winston-Salem will perhaps act as an intimidating factor for potential vandals of the Shell to contemplate.

12) The sixty-year-old poured concrete and wire-mesh building has aged considerably well: its original shell-shaped design remains intact, as do original window and door casings with multi-layers of paint and an unknown degree of rot. Several visible cracks have appeared in the structure's exterior, the most serious of late having created a 2"-wide gap separating the shell's two "halves". This problem has been addressed, in the current owner's attempt to seal the crack and prevent further damage. It is acknowledged, however, as merely a temporary measure to stabilize the building, and not as a permanent solution to prevent further structural degradation.

Unfortunately, the historic Shell Station has been the target of unrelenting vandals. A countless number of break-ins over the past twenty years have resulted in an equally-endless number of broken window panes, graffiti scrawls, and miscellaneous scars from unknown objects. The current owner, ever-concerned with the building's security, has utilized less-penetrable materials on the window and door openings, in the hopes of deterring vandalism and protecting the structure. Over the years, parts of the building have been sandblasted and painted in the attempt to "clean it up".

At present, it is the desire of owner James D. Watson, the citizens of Waughtown, local historians, preservationists, and other interested parties to see the Shell Station protected,
restored, and perhaps sensitively used once again. As Mr. Watson, along with the community, is avidly interested in his building's future and respects its status as a local landmark, he is currently exploring options in regards to maintenance, restoration, and security issues.

13) The Shell Station of 1111 Sprague Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (nominated/prepared: 30 October 1975 by Brent Glass and Mary Elizabeth Hinson) and in the local architectural guides by the AIA (1978) and Gwynne Taylor (From Frontier to Factory, 1981). The Shell Station has also been the subject of at least two lengthy newspaper articles, the most recent one having appeared on the front page of the Winston-Salem Journal on 10 October 1993. In addition, the building has been written up in Quality Oil newsletters and was featured in the JAN 1992 issue of Railroad Model Craftsman.
**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form**

**See instructions in how to complete National Register forms**  
**Type all entries -- complete applicable sections**

### NAME

**Historic**  
Shell Service Station  
*AND/OR COMMON*  
Same

### LOCATION

**Street & Number**  
Sprague Street at Peachtree Street (N.W.)

**City, Town**  
Winston-Salem

**State**  
North Carolina

**Code**  
37

**County**  
Forsyth

**Code**  
067

### CLASSIFICATION

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### OWNER OF PROPERTY

**Name**  
Mr. James D. Watson

**Street & Number**  
1317 Verdun Street

**City, Town**  
Winston-Salem

**State**  
North Carolina

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.**  
Forsyth County Courthouse

**City, Town**  
Winston-Salem

**State**  
North Carolina

### REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**Title**  
Historic American Engineering Record

**Date**  
1975

**Repository for Survey Records**  
HAER, National Park Service

**City, Town**  
Washington

**State**  
D.C.
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION
- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE
- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

CHECK ONE
- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED

DESCRIPTION THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Shell Service Station was built about 1930 in the shape of a shell. The structure stands one story high, about eighteen feet. It is pierced by a central front entrance. On the west side are two windows, recessed deeply into the curving side of the shell; one window is on the east side. Six-over-one sash fills the windows. Attached to the rear is a small wooden shed, with a rear central entrance and a window on the east side and a door to a restroom on the west. At the intersection of the shed and the shell is a brick chimney stack.

According to the son of one of the original owners, when the station was built the interior office was boxed in first and then around that a wire frame built in a three-dimensional shell shape. Concrete was put on the wire like stucco, and the ridges formed with hose.
SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

- PREHISTORIC
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- X: 1900
- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- THEATER
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1930

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Shell Service Station is a small concrete structure built in a three-dimensional shell shape about 1930 to advertise and sell Shell Oil. The building, now a repair shop, has significance on several levels—as a vestige of the literalism of 1930s advertising, as an example of the vernacular roots from which Pop architecture grew, and as an architectural object of direct and almost universal appeal.

The service station at the corner of Sprague and Peachtree streets was built about 1930 by the Quality Oil Company of Winston-Salem. The company had been established in the fall of 1929 by Joseph Glenn and Bert Bennett to distribute the products of the Shell Oil Company. The Shell Company had not marketed its products in North Carolina before the late 1920s. Therefore Glenn and Bennett decided to attract customer attention with a series of shell-shaped service stations. About eight of these stations were built in the early 1930s throughout the Winston-Salem area, including one in nearby Kernersville. The first one, and perhaps the others as well, was built by contractors Frank L. Blum and Co. The station at Peachtree and Sprague streets is the only one known to remain. Sold to James D. Watson in 1973, it is now a lawnmower and small engine repair shop.

The station is an excellent example of the literalism of advertising in the 1920s and 1930. The design's semiological content is explicit: the building's form repeats visually the Shell gasoline brand and is a three-dimensional representation of the Shell trademark. The station falls into the architectural category which Robert Venturi has defined as "ducks." That is, the building is literally a sign, an advertisement which is read and immediately comprehended. The structure, built in 1930, is less than fifty years old, but it is such a rare and unusual survival of early twentieth century advertising techniques that it merits recognition and preservation.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Glass, Brent. Interview with James Glenn and Bert Bennett, Quality Oil Company, Winston-Salem, February, 1975

GEORGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

UTM REFERENCES

A [1.7] [51.7] [1.7] [1.1] [1.1] [1.5] [1.2] [1.5]

ZONE EASTING NORHTING

B [1.7] [1.7] [1.7] [1.7] [1.7] [1.7] [1.7] [1.7]

ZONE EASTING NORHTING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

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<th>CODE</th>
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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Research by Brent Glass, consultant; architectural description by Mary Alice Hinson, consultant

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History

DATE: 30 October 1975

STREET & NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE: (919) 829-7862

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 30 October 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
FROM FRONTIER TO FACTORY
An Architectural History of Forsyth County

Gwynne Stephens Taylor

North Carolina
Department of Cultural Resources,
Division of Archives and History

with
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County
Historic Properties Commission
City-County Planning Board
of Forsyth County and Winston-Salem

1981
BUILDING IN WINSTON-SALEM: 1930-1940

After the building boom of the 1920s faded during the Great Depression, another building explosion did not occur until after World War II in the Twin City. This is not to say, however, that the 1930s and early 1940s did not contain events important to the building history of Winston-Salem. Many of the building projects begun before the depression were completed, including the estates of Bowman Gray and James G. Hanes, the Georgia Avenue home of P. H. Hanes, and Centenary Methodist Church. Dr. Rondthalier optimistically declared in his "Memorabilia" for 1930 that . . . it is probable that the impression of business deflation and the condition of unemployment at this time so considerably preoccupied our thought that we are somewhat unaware of the very considerable progress that has been made in Winston-Salem and immediate vicinity along many important lines during the twelve months past.¹

He goes on to say that the building inspector's office quoted new construction of more than $1,590,000 during 1930, which included the Wachovia Apartments, conversion of the Carolina Apartments into a hotel and the addition of 140 rooms, the new powerhouse for Reynolds, the enlargement of Chatham Manufacturing, the new Nurse's Home at City Hospital, the completion of the Forsyth County Tuberculosis Hospital, the erection of two new storage plants by Liggett and Myers and the American Tobacco Co., the opening of the Telephone Building of the Bell Telephone Company, "the erection and occupancy of important mercantile buildings on West Fourth St.," the completion of five new buildings at Salem Academy and College, and the "very notable" completion of the new Incinerator Plant.² One of the most important developments of 1930, mentioned by Dr. Rondthalier, however, was the formulation of a zoning plan. He termed it "a significant piece of community work which will have bearing upon Winston-Salem and vicinity in all future generations . . . which is not only a highly satisfactory and exceedingly well-engineered technical plan for the further wise development of Winston-Salem, but which has to a very extraordinary degree commanded the confidence and cooperation of the citizenship of Winston-Salem . . .³

The depression years have been called "the great watershed for the twentieth century built environment a time when the nation needed a battery of hopeful images promising a bright future of scientifically designed, industrially produced prosperity."⁴ This hopeful attitude centered on the future and what it promised, and it was reflected in architecture by futuristic designs and streamlining. The national mood in architecture could be seen anywhere from the work of famous architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright to obscure buildings such as bus stations and gas stations in towns across America.⁵ (Fig. 98). Streamlining in architecture paid deference to the faster pace of American life in everything from transportation to heavy industry. In the transportation field, objects were designed for the smoothest flow of air around them; rounding corners was one way to accomplish this, and this characteristic was reflected in buildings as well as transportation vehicles. Lines of flow were incorporated into designs to give them more excitement and a sense of motion. Le Corbusier, one of the most famous architects of the twentieth century, advocated in 1923 the use of the automobile, airplane and ocean liner as essential lessons for future architecture, since these objects are a fusion of design and function.⁶

One of the most obvious and unique buildings in the country which combines design and function stands in Winston-Salem. It has been featured in national architectural exhibits of this "streamlined" era and written about in national magazines. It is the Shell Station constructed around 1930 by Quality Oil Company at the corner of Peachtree and Sprague Streets (Fig. 99). It and similar stations are said to have been designed by Charles Johnson.⁷ The idea of Bert Bennett and Joseph Glenn to build Shell Stations in the shape of shells to attract customer

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¹ Bishop Edward Rondthalier, Appendix to the "Memorabilia of Fifty Years" (Raleigh: Edward and Broughton Company, 1931), 37. Hereinafter cited as Rondthalier, Appendix, 37.
² Rondthalier, Appendix, 38.
³ Rondthalier, Appendix, 39.
⁶ Author's interview with Mrs. Mildred Johnson, May 28, 1981. Hereinafter cited as Johnson interview.
attention is an excellent example of the literalism of 1930s advertising.\textsuperscript{7} Eight of the stations were built, but only one survives. Each station consisted of a wire, shell-shaped frame which was covered with concrete.\textsuperscript{8}

A somewhat later but excellent example of streamlined architecture in the International Style is the Modern Chevrolet building in Winston-Salem at the corner of Fourth and Broad Streets (Fig. 100). With its rounded corners and unornamented facade, it has a motion-oriented, futuristic appeal. Modern Chevrolet was designed by Hall Crews in 1947.\textsuperscript{9} As seen in Modern Chevrolet, the futurism and streamlined windows and doors that epitomize the International Style.

Perhaps the most celebrated and high-style International residence in Winston-Salem was the "Merry Als," the home designed by Luther Lashmit for Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Reynolds, Jr., in 1940 (Fig. 102). The streamlined proportions of the building reminded

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7} Liebs, "Not-So-Distant Past," 59.

\textsuperscript{8} "Winston-Salem Journal," Historic Sites, September 2, 1979.

\textsuperscript{9} Author's interview with Marvin Forebee, service manager of Modern Chevrolet for 42 years, December 2, 1980 (Notes from interview in Forsyth County survey files, Modern Chevrolet folder). Hereafter cited as Forebee interview.

\textsuperscript{10} Mendelovitz, American Art, 346.

\textsuperscript{11} 1979 Winston-Salem Calendar (Winston-Salem: Brownies, Russ and Silverman, 1979).}
January, 1992
Volume 60 Number 8

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Modeling
69 RMC/Dremel Kitbashing Award: Modeling a C&NW SD18
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    A Con-Cor SD24 was used to build this fine model.
76 An RMC project layout: Scenery on the Lowville & Beaver River
    by Jeff Preston
    This month we transform our layout from open benchwork to fully
    scenicked hills, valleys and towns.
82 Ingot molds and buggies—a steel mill basic by Dean Freytag
    These interesting cars can be easily modeled.
85 Upgrading an E60CP by Frank Cicero
    With a little work, the Walthers model of this GE electric can be easily
    made to resemble one of Amtrak's upgraded units.
88 You never heard it so good: Part IV: Additional features and
    applications by Dick Roberts
    Here are some other ways the sound chip can be used in model
    railroading.
94 Smokin' Joe Bill Alspach
    Through the magic of fiber optics, we offer a cigarette that's safe for
    scale figures.
95 Corrections to "A new constant lighting circuit"
    by G. R. Stilwell
    This updated information will allow you to use this new circuit.

Prototype
66 An Erie/EL/Conrail four-bay covered hopper text and
    drawings by Chuck Jungkurth
    One hundred of these cars were built by the Erie in 1951.

Cover
A trio of Alco Centuries lead a freight on Bill Gruber's HO scale Reading lay-
sion which had a lube facility. On occasion, this took the form of a pit situated in the open or a wooden or steel rack to enable a mechanic to get under the car. This was replaced by a hydraulic rack much like that in use today but still located outside.

For modelers, The Wheelworks has produced an excellent kit in N scale of just such a station, probably based on a late 1890's prototype, and Woodland Scenics, in their HO scale white metal gas station, has included the necessary oil pumps, etc., as well as appropriate signs. It's a very complete kit. Johnson Motor Service by Columbia Valley Models represents a slightly later or modernized version of this basic type of station in HO, having more modern 1940's-style pumps, and Berkshire Valley has a kit for one version of a Standard Oil station in O scale. A look through the model catalogs will reveal others. Some kits available in a variety of scales purport to be North American filling stations of the 1930's, but appear to me to be too European in style. While they may in fact have some features of that period, they really do not work in detail.

Service stations combine all the functions of garage and filling station, dispensing gas, oil and selling automotive products in addition to carrying out a full range of repairs and services. The Magnuson model of a 1940's service station in HO with all its detail parts is a very accurate and representative of service stations everywhere in North America from the mid-1940's up to the present. In N scale, Bachmann produces a fairly typical Shell station, although the model, which comes assembled, could very definitely do with some repainting. The N scale kit by Pola representing an Esso station is very much a European prototype but can, with work, be brought closer to a North American station.

Other kits representing this period of station are made, often in all scales, including one or two appropriate for LGB from Pola (1920's) and TruScale (1950's). Don't forget that standard 1/4 and 1/2 scale car and truck kits fit and can be found in an astonishing variety. Fujimi makes tools appropriate to a modern service station in this scale. Jimmy Flintstone also makes large scale pumps and figures. Superdetailing is possible in terms of the vehicles to whatever degree you wish. An excellent source of available parts as well as car models is Scale Auto Enthusiast magazine.

Siting a station
The location of a service station was an important consideration, and you
Guidebook Committee

Chairman: Edwin E. Bouldin, Jr.

Steering Committee: Luther S. Lashmit, Chairman
Fred W. Butner, Jr.
Dale Cundiff
Tan F. Ersoy
Michael Newman
Lloyd G. Walter, Jr.

Photography: Laurence Robbs, Chairman
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J. Aubrey Kirby
Ronald J. Little
Donald Van Etten

Research/Writing: L. Ray Troxell, Chairman
Fred K. Ganey, Jr.
A.J. Hammill
Donald W. Johnson
Fred L. Williams

Graphics: Thomas D. Calloway, Jr., Chairman
Jim White
Richard L. Wilkinson
Steve Funderburk
Herbert I. Burns, Jr.

We would like to express our appreciation to the following people who assisted us in our efforts:

C. Armstrong, research on Shafter House; John Bivins; Fam Brownlee and the Winston-Salem Museum; Ms. Jean Craddock, City County Planning Dept.; William E. East, editing; Thomas A. Gray, information on Charles Barton Keen residences, Graylyn, Merry Acres, and Old Salem structures; Journal and Sentinel Library Staff; Old Salem Inc.; Moravian Archives; M.M. Wade, editing.

* Shell Auto Service Station ca. 1930
Corner Sprague and Peachtree Streets WS-12

Architect: Unknown

This is the last of eight prototype service stations erected between 1930 and 1933 for Quality Oil Co., the local distributor for Shell Oil. The buildings were built by the Frank L. Blum Construction Company.

The structures were built of masonry construction with stucco on metal lathe serving to form the fan shape of the shell. Because of their size, they became obsolete in the late 1930's. The Waughtown structure is the only survivor.

© 1978 by Winston-Salem Section, NCAIA
It's the only one left, and it has always represented Waughtown.

Men Try to Pump Life Into Station

By Phoebe Zarrow

Don Watson and John Larson are an unlikely pair.

Watson owns a living memorial for Southern Orange County, a Route 99 Tobacco Co. Larson manages restoration of the historic village of Old Salem.

But for two months now, they've been on a shared mission to save one of Winston-Salem's most famous landmarks: the shell-shaped service station at Lyndale and Peachtree streets.

Watson owns the building and uses it to store engines, parts and old lawn mowers.

The faded shell has looked a bit bedraggled for years.

The shell's paint is peeling, and vandals have broken the windows and sprayed graffiti on the walls. Inside, the turquoise walls are splattered with engine grease.

But, until this summer, the structure of, roof, metal, wooden framing and concrete held firm. Then a gapping crack appeared by the roof, a door, a front and back half-shells.

"We need to get that taken care of," Watson said. "We can paint it black. It's working for the best." Fortunately, Watson says, Larson drove by, saw the crack and figured Watson might need some help repairing it.

"It's just a matter of two people liking the same building and hoping to do the right thing by it," Larson said.

With Larson's help, Watson wants the shredder to designate the shell a local landmark. It's already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but the local designation will give Watson a break on the

SHELL STATION

10 October 1993

Winston-Salem Journal
...under construction

...in operation
Mr. Keith A. Sculle
Lincoln's New Salem
Box 236
Petersburg, Ill. 62675

Dear Mr. Sculle:

I will try to answer your questions the best I can.

1. I have corrected the order in which the stations were built on the enclosed memorandum from you.

2. The dates of construction for the stations were from the Spring of 1930 until sometime in 1933. I am sorry that I am unable to give you the month in which each was built but I do know that the No. 1 Station at Burke Street was finished and ready to open for business in the latter part of the month of May, 1930.

3. The attorneys who worked to have the design patented were Mr. Robert C. Vaughn and Mr. Horace Dubose. I am sorry but I have no idea who Mr. Wateon E. Coleman is.

4. I wish I knew how much these stations cost and I have checked and found that we do not have records that would give us this information. I do know that the cost was no more than five figures, but of course, at that time five or six thousand dollars was a lot of money.

5. The Shell Distributorship began in Winston-Salem, in the Fall of 1929 and its name was Quality Oil Company, and of course, it was the first Shell Distributorship in Winston-Salem as Shell began operating on the East Coast not too long before 1929. In the early 1930's, I believe February, the distributorship was purchased and the name was retained. The previous owners of the distributorship were not failing, but by the same token, there was no money available for their expansion. I would certainly say that part of the success of Quality Oil Company was due to the sea shell design. At the time of the construction of these type stations there was no other construction going on in the area in the way of new service stations because of the Depression and the sea shell design was somewhat unique as compared to what had been built by the other major oil companies previous to 1930.
5. (Continued)
Further, at the time of the construction of these service stations, there was not a great deal of profit in the operation of the stations but they were of tremendous benefit in building the image of Quality Oil Company as an "up-and-coming" young outfit that was aggressive and capable of expansion. Because of this I believe that the company was able to secure the business of quite a number of "mom and pop" type stations, and quite honestly, these type stations were those that were the most profitable at that time. -- Quite a contrast from what they are today.

I have talked to Mr. Henry Baynes regarding the questions which you enclosed for him to answer and I offer the following comments which he gave to me:

He believes that the owners tried to think of something that would be novel and eye-catching and the sea shell design was the result of this. Only later were design changes considered. He does not believe an architect was ever considered. The first two of the sea shell stations were constructed by Frank L. Blum Construction Company, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and he believes that a foreman for that company by the name of Mr. Huffines, along with Mr. Blum personally, figured out the way to construct this type unit. I asked if Mr. Huffines might still be living and Mr. Baynes advised that Mr. Huffines was an old man at the time he constructed these stations for us.

Mr. Baynes thinks that perhaps Mr. Glenn was more responsible for creating the design than Mr. Bennett, but he is not sure in his mind just how much either of them might have done in this regard and his comment on how long it took to design the sea shell was that it could not have been over a very few weeks since the company was purchased in February, 1930, and the first station was opened for business the latter part of May, 1930. As aforementioned, he advised that the owners left the building of the unit up to this Mr. Huffines, of Frank L. Blum Construction Company.

The attorneys involved in the patent of the station have long since been dead.

Mr. Baynes advises that Mr. Frank L. Blum built the first two stations. The third was built by Burton Brothers Construction Company and the remaining five were constructed by Frank L. Blum. I asked why Burton Brothers Construction happened to build the third station and he advised that he believes that Burton Brothers sold the owners that they could build the station cheaper than Frank L. Blum.
Mr. Sculle, I hope that the information will be of some benefit to you and if further information is required, do not hesitate to let us know.

With every good wish.

Cordially,

James K. Glenn, Sr.

JKG:mb

Enc.