United States Department of the Interior tional Park Service

09

# 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 elassification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property
historic name Earl Building
other names/site number Sites #CN0238 & CN0246
2. Location
street & number 201 N. St. Joseph Street Internation Internation
city or town Morrilton 🗌 vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Conway code 029 zip code 72110
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this is nomination is 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets is a the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant is nationally astatewide in the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant is statewide in attemption of certifying official/Title in the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant is the or Federal agency and bureau is the or Federal agency and bureau is a normal of the National Register criteria. I recommend that the property is the or Federal agency and bureau is a national register criteria. I recommend that the property is considered significant is a matched of the reservation of the property is considered significant is a meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property is considered significant is a meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property is considered significant is a meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property is a considered significant is a comment. If the property is a considered significant is a comment of certifying official/Title is a comment of the National Register criteria. I comments is a construction sheet for additional comments.]
4. National Park Service Certification     Signature of the Keeper     Date of Action
Interesty certify that the property is. I determined in the National Register. I determined eligible for the National Register. I determined not eligible for the National Register. I removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Earl Building Name of Property	Conway County, Arkansas County and State		
Classification			
Winership of PropertyCategory of Property(Check as many boxes as apply)(Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in count.)		
private  building(s)    public-local  district	Contributing Noncontributing		
public-State  public-Federal  object	l building sites structure		
	objects Total		
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)	Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register		
Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965			
6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store	WORK IN PROGRESS		
7. Description			
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) LATE 19 <sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN	Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation BRICK		
MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style	walls BRICK		
	roof ASPHALT		
	outer		

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

Earl Building

Name of Property

Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

#### 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 is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### **Criteria Considerations**

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

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B**. removed from its original location.

- C. birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- **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.)

#### 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	State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 67) has been requested	Other State Agency
previously listed in the National Register	Federal Agency
Previously determined eligible by the National	Local Government
Register	University
designated a National Historic Landmark	Other
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Name of repository:
#	
recorded by Historic American Engineering	
Record #	

Conway County, Arkansas County and State

Levels of Significance (local, state, national) Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Transportation

Period of Significance 1926-1959

#### Significant Dates

1926, c.1930

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

#### Architect/Builder

Earl	Building

Name of Property

#### Geographical Data

Acreage of Property	Less than one acre.				
UTM References (Place additional UTM reference)	es on a continuation sheet.)				
1 <u>15</u> <u>523554</u> Zone <u>Easting</u> 2	3890105 Northing		3 Zone 4	Easting See continuation sho	Northing
Boundary Justification	iption property on a continuation sheet.) ere selected on a continuation sheet.)				
11. Form Prepared By					
name/title Beau Pump	hrey, Intern, and Ralph S. Wilcox, National	Register & :	Survey Coor	dinator	
organization Arkansa	s Historic Preservation Program		date	September 19	, 2008
street & number150	0 Tower Building, 323 Center Street		telephone	(501) 324-91	787
city or town Little R	ock	state	AR	zip code	72201
ditional Documentat					
-saomit the following items wit	a the completed form:				

#### **Continuation Sheets**

#### Maps

ľ

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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner					
(Complete this item at th	e request of SHPO or FPO.)				
name Burton and	Bettye Henderson				
street & number	310 Old River Road			telephone	
city or town Mor	Tilton	 state	AR	zip code	72110

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for "sting or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance h 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 20303.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Earl Building is located at 201 North St. Joseph Street, at the corner of North St. Joseph Street and East Commerce Street, in the small town of Morrilton in Conway County, Arkansas. The large, L-shaped, one-story building has a frame construction and a continuous brick foundation, as well as brick walls and a flat, tar builtup roof. The original Earl Building, which was a showroom for the new car dealership, was built in 1926, and another wing that contained the garage and repair shop was added on two or three years later.

### **ELABORATION**

### Front/Southern Façade

The front façade of the original part of the building is plain red brick. There are two front doors spaced equally apart, separating the front of the original building into thirds. The door on the left that is closest to the garage wing that is attached to the western wall of the original building is a single glass door that opens outward, and the one on the right, closest to the southeastern corner of the original building, is a glass double-door that also opens outward. There are large windows on the front of the building. Almost touching the garage wing are two adjacent windows with ten panes each. Next to this is a much larger window that has five panes of glass in a row at the top; on the left underneath this row are two very large storefront panes of glass, and on the right under this row are two smaller panes, with the single door directly beneath and adjacent to them. To the right of this window is another large window opening, which also has five small panes of glass forming a top row above six larger, taller panes of glass. The largest window lies between the double-doors and the southeastern corner of the building; it also has five panes of glass forming a top row, and has three large, almost square panes of ~lass beneath that.

The double-doors of the original building are decorated with a door surround, which has red brick pilasters on either side of the door that project outward from the building by the width of about one brick. There is also an entablature above the door, which contains a frieze and an architrave. The entire entablature is a medley of red

Earl Building	
ne of Property	

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County		

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brick and stone. The cornice consists of one row of bricks laid vertically, with a thin strip of stone above the row to separate it from the rest of the building, as well as irregularly shaped blocks of stone at either end of the row. A layered strip of stone, which juts out past the width of the body of the entablature on either side, separates the cornice from the frieze. The focal point of the frieze is a long, rectangular stone block in the center that is engraved with the word "Earl" and is dated 1926. The frieze is bordered on both sides by the pilasters, which at the level of the frieze each consist of two columns of six bricks horizontally laid, separated by one column of stone. The architrave consists of a layered strip of stone, which juts out past the width of the body of the entablature on either side. Below the architrave are four rows of horizontally laid brick, also with 'e pilasters on either side; as at the level of the frieze, each pilaster consists of two columns of brick separated by one columns of stone running down the center. A strip of stone runs directly beneath this empty space, which is above two rows of vertically-laid brick directly above the door. Higher up on the building, above the entablature, are two rows of brick that are decoratively laid diagonally.

There are small, square blocks of stone that are spread intermittently throughout the brick that makes up the front façade of the original building. The pattern consists of there being two stone blocks, one four rows of brick above the other, above both top corners of each of the larger windows with five panes of glass forming a top row. Above the window near the garage wing of the building, there is an arc of bricks that do not project from the building, but are laid as if all are pointing to the center of the arc. The two bottom points of the arc are connected by a row of vertically laid bricks that is adjacent to the top of the window. The two points at which the vertical row touches the bottom of the arc each consist of a stone block, as does the peak of the arc.

The front façade of the adjacent garage wing of the building is constructed from white brick, and is about threefourths the height of the original Earl Building. There are two large windows on the front, each consisting of two tall panes of glass. Evenly spaced between them sits a blue door with a white frame, and sitting on top of the door is a window consisting of two square panes of glass sitting side by side.

### Side/Eastern Façade

The eastern façade of the original building is red brick. There is a large section that has metal in place of the brick and which has a large air-conditioning unit attached to it. This metal extends across almost half of the northern wall and is about two-thirds as tall as the wall. There is a smaller section of metal that has another unit "tached to it to the right of this larger section. A window with twenty panes of glass is the same size as the

aller metal section, and sits to the right of it. Above the smaller metal section is a rectangular opening that has since been boarded up, and above the window is a rectangular opening of the same size that is actually a window itself, containing five panes of glass in a row. It appears that both the smaller metal opening and the boarded-up row above it both used to be windows as well, and would have matched the two on the right. Still Earl Building

e of Property

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to the right of the window with twenty panes sits a smaller one with nine panes that is near the northeastern corner of the original building.

The eastern wall of the garage wing of the building forms a 90-degree angle with the northern wall of the original building. The eastern façade of the garage building is brick that is painted white, with the exception of the bottom third of the wall, which is painted red. There are three sections of brick that project from the wall; one forms the northeastern corner of the garage wing, and the other two separate the wall into thirds. There is one red door on this side of the building, which is located between the two projected sections that are not at the mer.

### **Rear/Northern Façade**

The northern wall of the original Earl Building is painted white, with the same red stripe that covers the lower third of the eastern wall of the garage wing continuing onto it. There is an awning that runs about two-thirds of the way up the wall, across the entire north side of the original building. There is a row of large white square panels that are framed sitting on top of the awning. There is also a rain gutter along the edge of the roof at the northern wall, and three rain gutters that run down the wall above the awning and then run over the awning and down to the ground.

The northern wall of the garage wing consists of a white brick façade. There are rusted metal pipes on this side of the building as well. On the right side of the wall, there is a window opening that has been boarded up and painted white. To the left of it, there is a blue door.

### Side/Western Façade

The west side of the garage wing is plain orange brick. On the left side of the western façade, next to the northwestern corner of the garage wing, is a large, white garage door, with four small windows in a row about three-fifths of the way down. The wall of the building directly above the garage door is shorter than the rest of the wall by about ten rows of bricks, and there is short brown roof overhang in this space. There is a metal drainage pipe to the right of this door, and to the right of the pipe are two large, square window openings that have been boarded up. To the right of these two boarded-up openings are two windows that contain 36 panes of glass each. A large, white garage door with a metal frame separates these two windows from an identical one that sits near the southwestern corner of the garage wing.

The western wall of the original Earl Building is adjacent to the eastern wall of the garage wing. However, about one-fourth of the original building's western façade is visible above the shorter garage wing, and consists of plain, undecorated red brick.

Earl Building	
Name of Property	

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### Integrity

As the only automobile dealership near or within the Morrilton Commercial Historic District, the Earl Building possesses historical significance for the role that it played in introducing the automobile to many residents of Morrilton in the late 1920s. Furthermore, the one-story, brick Earl Building is typical of the types of car dealerships found in small towns in the 1920s, when automobile sales were continuously on the rise. The simple brick façade of the building accurately depicts the Standard Commercial Twentieth Century architectural style, while the ornamental pilasters and entablature on the front set the building apart from the majority within the vicinity.

Earl	Building
Name	of Property

Name of Property

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## SUMMARY

The Earl Building, located at the corner of North St. Joseph Street and East Commerce Street, is being nominated for the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its associations with the rise of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation in Morrilton in the early 1900s. A red-brick building styled after the Standard Commercial Twentieth Century influence, the Earl Building is reflective of car dealerships and other businesses that were constructed during this time period. The Earl Building is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the single property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

# **LABORATION**

Morrilton is located in Conway County, which was organized by an act of the Territorial Legislature in October of 1825. As of the publication of the 1978 edition of Goodspeed's *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Western Arkansas*, the earliest records of Conway County had been destroyed; therefore, the following information is derived from Arkansas State statutes.<sup>1</sup>

Conway County derives its name from the celebrated Conway family, and was formerly a part of Pulaski County, which was divided into three separate territories in 1825.<sup>2</sup> Originally, Cadron was selected to serve as the county seat until a permanent selection could be made. The county seat was moved in 1827 to another small town, Harrisburg. In 1828, a small section of Cherokee territory to the west was added to Conway County. In 1831, the Arkansas Territorial Legislature urged citizens to find a permanent capital for Conway County. Lewisburg, a small settlement along the Arkansas River, the major transportation artery, was chosen as the county seat. However, from 1850 to 1873, the capital was moved to Springfield before the Arkansas Territorial Legislature renamed Lewisburg as the county seat in 1873. Finally, the county seat was moved for the last time in 1883 to Morrilton.<sup>3</sup> The court house that was subsequently constructed in Morrilton was not only known to be one of the most completed and best arranged court houses in the state, but was funded with no cost at all to the taxpayers of Conway County.<sup>4</sup>

Upon the approach of the Civil War, from 1861 to 1865, there was a strong sentiment of loyalty to the Federal government among the people of Conway County.<sup>5</sup> However, after the war had actually begun, and President

<sup>&</sup>quot;Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891, p. 11

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891, p. 11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register Nomination form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891, p. 14

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891, p. 14

Earl Building Name of Property Conway County, Arkansas County

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Abraham Lincoln had issued a proclamation calling upon Arkansas to assist in bringing the seceded Southern states back into the Union, the great majority of the people came to prefer the proposed Southern Confederacy, and did all in their power to help establish it. Conway County responded liberally to the call to organize a company for the Confederate cause.<sup>6</sup>

The most significant event in the development of Conway County was the construction of the railroad line connecting Little Rock and Fort Smith, constructed by the Little Rock & Fort Smith Railroad Company. Although construction of the connecting line began in the antebellum era, the Civil War interrupted progress, which was resumed in 1866. The "Lewisburg Station" was located three miles north of Lewisburg, in the ritory that was to become Morrilton.<sup>7</sup>

In 1873, Morrilton was established on property donated from the Morril and Moose Farms. One of Lewisburg's most prominent residents was Edward James Morril. Originally from Massachusetts, Morril moved to the thriving town of Lewisburg in 1840. He was a druggist and quickly established a successful business. His son, George Hall Morril, was the first of the family to settle in the Morrilton area.<sup>8</sup>

As the railroad quickly replaced the Arkansas River as the favored means of both commercial shipping and passenger travel, the population of Lewisburg moved to be near the railroad station in Morrilton. However, it took ten years before Morrilton supplanted Lewisburg as the major community in the area. Although Lewisburg still had a population of about 1,000 in the early 1880s, residents eventually abandoned the town entirely.<sup>9</sup>

The first business buildings located in downtown Morrilton were similar in appearance: one-story frame structures occupied by saloons, general stores, and other miscellaneous establishments. Dirt streets were lined with plank walkboards. By 1889, there were seventeen brick business buildings located around the railroad station. However, more than a third of the buildings in the Morrilton Commercial Historic District were constructed during the prosperous years of the 1920s.<sup>10</sup> One such example is the Earl Building.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891, p. 15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register Nomination form. From the files of the ansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>3</sup>mith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register Nomination form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register Nomination form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Smith, Sandra Taylor. "Morrilton Commercial Historic District." National Register Nomination form. From the files of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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Built in 1926, the Earl Building is located near the Morrilton Commercial Historic District. The one-story building is an excellent example of the Standard Commercial Twentieth Century architectural style. The Earl Building is located specifically at the northwest corner of East Commerce Street and North St. Joseph Street. St. Joseph Street was named after the Roman Catholic colony established throughout Pope, Conway, and Faulkner counties in 1878. Due to its use as various retail businesses, the Earl Building has been modified over the years.

The property that now houses the Earl Building was once the site of Morrilton's Number 2 fire station, which was torn down in 1926 specifically to make room for the current structure. The Earl Building began as a new "dealership, and served to house various retail businesses over the years. It currently houses a real estate ince, and before that it was the home of an auto repairman in the added garage wing of the building. The Lighthouse Christian Bookstore was located in the Earl Building before that, perhaps at the same time as the auto repairman. Its beginning as a new car dealership, however, is demonstrative of the growing usage of automobiles in the United States at the time.

For most Americans the automobile became a way to remove oneself from the traditional guidelines of the Victorian Era. The automobile fostered family togetherness, instead of the gender-based separations that characterized the Victorian Era.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the development of cars created a much more personal experience for travelers. In using the Victorian Era locomotive, the scenery moved at a speedy, uncongenial pace. The auto offered an individual mode of travel free from the rigid dress codes and itineraries of earlier journeys. By the mid-1920s, the American Association of State Highway Officials and the United States Bureau of Public Roads formulated a plan for a national highway system with route numbers to identify interstate highways as they pass through numerous states.<sup>12</sup> For Arkansas the creation of a National Highway System meant not only better road conditions, but also the construction of automotive service centers such as gas stations, auto showrooms, and car dealerships.

Once the automobile became a routine mode of transportation for many Arkansans, the need for gas stations also became very relevant. Although many independent service station owners contracted with petroleum companies who supplied gasoline, larger corporations dominated the industry.<sup>13</sup> Even though gas stations were vital to the growing automobile industry, many Arkansas residents began to protest against the disheveled look

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Christie McLaren. "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965." National Register Nomination form. p. 2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Christie McLaren. "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965." National Register Nomination form. p. 13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Christie McLaren. "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965." National Register Nomination form. p. 29

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of many early service stations. As a result, gas stations near residential areas purposely resembled cottages so they would blend into the local neighborhood setting. As the desire for automobiles grew in the United States, commercial dealerships began to emerge along booming business districts throughout the entirety of Arkansas. Early auto showrooms did a good job of matching the local downtown façade for each town. The interior of these show places emphasized luxury and often included hotel-like lobbies complete with huge chandeliers.<sup>14</sup> In an effort to maintain the highest quality service, most dealerships also included a rear garage for servicing automobiles.

e Earl Building perfectly illustrates the development of auto dealerships and service garages in the 1920s. e separate showroom and service area spaces, as well as the architecture that blends in with the downtown commercial styles popular at the time, exemplify the 1920s development of auto showrooms. The Earl Building's location, just one block north of U.S. 64, the main east-west road during the 1920s and up until I-40 was built, also meant that it likely would have served travelers in addition to the residents of Morrilton. Today, the Earl Building remains as a reminder of the development of facilities related to the growth in popularity of the automobile during the 1920s.

# STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1926 at 201 North St. Joseph Street, the Earl Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criterion A for its associations with Arkansas automobile transportation and with the development of Arkansas highway culture in the town of Morrilton. The red-brick, one-story building is an excellent example of the Standard Commercial 20<sup>th</sup> Century architectural style. The Earl Building is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the single property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Christie McLaren. "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965." National Register Nomination form. p. 36

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-3 of Block 004 of the Moose Addition to the City of Morrilton.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Earl Building.















