NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC
Central Motor and Finance Corporation Building (preferred)
AND/OR COMMON
Fagan Building

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
222 West Seventh
CITY, TOWN
Topeka
STATE
Kansas
CODE
66603
VICINITY OF
N/A
COUNTY
Shawnee
CODE
20

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
— DISTRICT
— BUILDING(S)
— STRUCTURE
— SITE
— OBJECT
PRESENT USE
— AGRICULTURE
— MUSEUM
— COMMERCIAL
— PARK
— EDUCATIONAL
— PRIVATE RESIDENCE
— ENTERTAINMENT
— RELIGIOUS
— GOVERNMENT
— SCIENTIFIC
— INDUSTRIAL
— TRANSPORTATION
— MILITARY
— OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
B & A Development Co., Inc.
STREET & NUMBER
627 College
CITY, TOWN
Topeka
STATE
Kansas
CODE
66606

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
Shawnee County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN
Topeka
STATE
Kansas
CODE
66603

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
None
DATE
N/A
FEDERAL
STATE
COUNTY
LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
N/A
CITY, TOWN
N/A
STATE
The old Central Motor and Finance Corporation building at the northeast corner of Seventh and Van Buren streets is a rectangular two-story structure that is faced with dark red brick and terra-cotta trim. To insure that it would be fireproof, it was built of reinforced concrete with brick curtain walls. The roof is flat behind decorative parapet walls. The exterior brickwork is of conventional "running" bond with a "soldier" course atop each opening. A stone base course wraps around the building on all sides.

The main (south) facade, with its entrance and three bays of glass display windows, extend 75 feet on Seventh Street. Transoms of sheet prism glass, that now display signage, extend above each of the display windows. At the second level is a bank of double-hung windows set in wood frames on terra-cotta sills. The awnings hang as originally conceived above the display windows on both the south and the west sides.

A secondary pedestrian entry and the automobile entrance mark the west facade, which extends 150 feet along Van Buren Street. The stone base course terminates at stone jamb guards on either side of the automobile entrance. The original two gas light fixtures adorn either side of this entrance. There are nine bays on this side.

The parapet, capped by a terra-cotta coping, is interrupted in four distinct intervals along the south facade by detailed terra-cotta finials. These are located atop each of the brick pilasters which frame the bays. On the west facade, the parapet wall is broken in the center by a stepped and arched gable above the automobile entrance.

The east elevation, which adjoins the building of the former Lawson and Rausch paint company, consists of common brick facing, exposed concrete beams, nine-inch, salt-glazed tile wall coping, and a total of 14 sets of wire-glass windows in steel frames. The mechanical penthouse is located at the center of this elevation.

The north elevation is constructed identically to the east elevation. A narrow, 18-inch passage separates it from the building on Van Buren Street that formerly housed the Mosby-Mack Car Wash.

The combined square footage of the two upper floors and the basement amounts to 33,800 square feet. The floors are constructed of six-inch-thick concrete.

The interior is open & spacious, having been freed of obtrusive structural members by the reinforced concrete frame construction. This was vital both to the showing and maneuvering of cars, and the concept persists in contemporary car dealerships.
ALTERATIONS

Despite minor interior remodeling throughout its history, the building remains relatively unaltered.

The original display window frames were replaced by aluminum frames, while the transoms of sheet prism glass were covered by signage. The hand-carved and gold-leaf signage above the transoms on both the south and the west facades was removed.

The revolving car wash rack, which had been located next to the elevator on the second level, also was removed.
The Central Motor and Finance Corporation building at 222 West Seventh, built in 1926, was heralded at that time as the last word in modern construction and convenience. Designed by Thomas W. Williamson of Topeka, it was part of a two million dollar building campaign which took place in the vicinity of Seventh and Kansas streets in 1926. The property was owned by George Lawson and Grover Rausch and leased to Central Motor. The structure has served for all but five years of its existence as an automotive establishment of one sort or another.

Topeka experienced a steady economic growth in the 1920's, and one of the most obvious displays of the prosperity was in the increased use of the automobile. The August 25, 1929, Topeka Daily Capital reported that "a large portion of the retail trade is devoted to the automobile and its accessory lines." It also pointed out that "with 16 agencies dealing in pleasure cars, five devoted to trucks and tractors and 20 tire shops, to say nothing of approximately 150 (last count) filling stations, the needs of the motorist are well cared for."

The Central Motor and Finance Corporation Building was an important addition to the automobile industry in Topeka. Designed by Thomas Williamson and built at a cost of $100,000 it was an important part of the two million dollar building campaign going on in that area. The Hotel Jayhawk, the Jayhawk Theater, and the Jayhawk Walk, across the street from, and one block east of the Central Motor Building, were also designed by Williamson and account for about a million and a half dollars worth of that late 1920's construction boom.

The Central Motor and Finance Corporation ran a Studebaker dealership, a used car department, and a storage department "devoted exclusively to the public for the storage of their cars." The construction methods used in the new building and its equipment were the most up-to-date available. In addition to space for showrooms and a repair shop where there were no supporting posts "to obstruct the view or hinder the easy movement of cars in and out," there were such amenities as shower and lockers for mechanics, a second floor car wash, a public telephone booth, and ladies rest room. The garage, which was guaranteed fireproof and was open 24 hours a day, was billed as the official garage of the Jayhawk Hotel.

After the Central Motor and Finance Corporation vacated the building, a series of car dealerships occupied it until 1970. These were the Sanderson-McCaig-Butler Motor Company (1929-1931), W. H. Imes Dodge dealership (1931-1935), a truck center
for the Mosby-Mack Motor Company (1936-1938), Jack Frost Oldsmobile (1938-1959),
building was occupied first by Stevenson Restaurant Supply, and then by R and
C Distributors, Incorporated. In 1975 Steve Fagan Classic Cars, a broker of
vintage automobiles, took over the building, and has carried on the automotive
tradition of the Old Central Motor and Finance Building.

In addition to using the latest construction methods and housing state-of-the-
art service equipment, the Central Motor building was also up-to-date in its
overall massing and decorative detail. Functionalism and simplicity were
beginning to make themselves felt in the design world, and it is evident in
commercial structures such as this. The Central Motor building displays such
typical features as plain brick facades punctuated by many windows, simple
silhouette, and linear terra-cotta roof-line ornamentation.

Although some interior modifications have been carried out, the Old Central
Motor and Finance Corporation Building stands today in a basically unchanged state.
Its continuous use and its function today as a car showroom bear witness to the
strength of the original Williamson design.

THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT.


"Doors to Stand Wide Open for Topeka Tonight," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"Every Central Motor Employee Knows His Job," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.


"Last Word in Service," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.


"Name of Bowers Long a Building Line Leader," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.

"New Building is Jayhawk Hotel's Official Garage," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.


"Nose in Circle as a Boy, Now Busy Architect," The Topeka Daily Capital, August 26, 1926.


Personal recollections from conversations with Mr. John Finden, president, Topeka Bank and Trust Co.; Mr. Sims Firestone, vice president, Topeka Bank and Trust Co.; Mr. Charles Bennett, president, Fairlawn Plaza Shopping Center; Mr. John Ripley; Mr. Victor W. Yarrington, president, Vic Yarrington Oldsmobile, Inc.; Miss Olive I. Schrader, retired secretary, Mosby-Mack Motor Company.

"Rapid Advance is Made by Lawson and Rausch," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.


"The Hotel Jayhawk, Convenience, Consideration,Courtesy," The Topeka State Journal, August 26, 1926.

The Topeka Daily Capital, Advertisements, July 31, 1926, August 31, 1926.


"Used Car Department an Important Factor," The Topeka Daily Capital, July 31, 1926.
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 258
UTM REFERENCES: Topeka Quadrangle, scale: 1:24,000

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1,5 26,8 6,7,0
C 4,3 2,6,15 2,8,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
B 1,5 26,8 6,7,0
D 4,3 2,6,15 2,8,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:
Van Buren Street West 75 Feet of Lots 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216.

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

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Marcia L. Foster, Julie Wortman, Architectural Historian; Nora Pat Small, Architectural Hist.

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER: 120 W. 10th

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

DATE: 1-8-82

TELEPHONE: 913-296-3252

STATE: Kansas

66612

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ______ STATE ______ LOCAL X

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: [Signature]

TITLE: Executive Director, Ks. State Historical Society

DATE: Jan. 8, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892-453