

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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 classification, 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 Studebaker Showroom

other names/site number PL0150

## 2. Location

street & number 519 Port Arthur

not for publication

city or town Mena

vicinity

state Arkansas

code

AR

county

Polk

code

113

zip code

71953

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  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  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carlynn A. Sater  
Signature of certifying official/Title

4-27-00  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Studebaker Showroom

Name of Property

Polk Co., Arkansas

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
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1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Concrete
walls	Concrete, Stucco
roof	Asphalt
other	N/A

**Narrative Description**

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

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS.**

Studebaker Showroom

Name of Property

Polk Co., Arkansas

County and State

**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.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C moved from its original location.
- 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.)

**SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS.**

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

LOCAL

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

**Period of Significance**

1948-1950

**Significant Dates**

1948

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** (complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

UNKNOWN

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Reeb, George. Interview by Kara Mills, 21 January 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. Interview by Kara Mills 28 February 2000.

*The Mena Weekly Star*. "Well Equipped Studebaker Agency Open." 29 July 1948.

Studebaker Showroom

Name of Property

Polk Co., Arkansas

County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>386580</u>	<u>3827390</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Section 18; Township 02S; Range 30W

Located at the corner of DeQueen Street and Port Arthur Street, the boundary for the Studebaker Showroom is as follows: Lots 13, 14, and 15 of block 35 of the original town of Mena, Polk County, Arkansas per the recorded plat.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Studebaker Showroom.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kara Mills, National Register/Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date April 1, 2000

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9880

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

### SUMMARY

Located on the Corner of DeQueen Street and Port Arthur Street in downtown Mena, the Studebaker Showroom is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a distinctive Art Moderne building. Built in 1948, the concrete block, stucco building with its curved corners and glass block windows is the best example of an Art Moderne commercial building in Mena, Arkansas.

### ELABORATION

The Studebaker Showroom, located at 519 Port Arthur, is an excellent example of Art Moderne architecture. The entire building is constructed of concrete blocks with white stucco covering the façade of the building. The Studebaker Showroom sits atop a continuous concrete foundation and is topped by a flat roof covered with tar. Ornamentation is confined to the hand-painted Studebaker logo on the façade, single pane windows, sixteen pane windows, and glass blocks which decorate the building, but it is the raised curved parapet and curved corners which give the building its overall Art Moderne feeling. The concrete ledge or coping, which surrounds the top of the entire building, further enhances this feeling.

### Southwest/Front

The building fronts Southwest facing Port Arthur Street. The façade is very symmetrical and is comprised of three bays with the center bay extending towards the street. The first bay (south end or left side) displays a panel comprised of approximately 300 glass blocks that wrap around the south corner of the facade. To the right of the glass block panel is an aluminum garage door that is bisected by three side by side panes and topped by a black canopy.

The center bay juts outward from the main body of the building, towards Port Arthur Street. On the far left side of the protruding bay is a glass pane door encased in wood, with a transom light overhead. To the right of the door, continuing west, is a ribbon of sixteen plate glass windows that follows the curvature of the projecting bay accentuating the curvilinear features of this building. On the far left side of the center bay is a glass pane door encased in wood, with a transom light resting atop the entryway.

To the right of the center projection, the third bay presents an aluminum garage door that is bisected by three side by side panes and topped by a black canopy. To the west of the garage door a panel comprised of approximately 300 glass blocks wraps around the west corner of the facade.

### Northwest/Right elevation

The left corner (west) of the northwest elevation displays the continuation of the panel of glass blocks that are also seen on the façade. Next, a wooden door, topped by a black canopy, graces the northwest elevation and is followed by a sixteen pane stationary window resting on top of a concrete sill.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

### Northeast /Back elevation

The fenestration on the back elevation includes seven sets of windows, all evenly spaced, spanning the entire length of the northeast elevation. Each window set is composed of side-by-side windows containing eight lights apiece. Each window rests on a brick sill and is topped by a concrete lintel.

### Southeast/Left elevation

On the east end of the southeast elevation are two sets of windows. Each window set is composed of side-by-side windows displaying eight lights while perched upon a brick sill. To the right (south) of the windows is the continuation of the panel of glass blocks that are also seen on the façade.

### Integrity

The Studebaker Showroom exudes integrity as it has been altered little since its construction in 1948. The alterations have been minimal and include the replacement of wooden garage doors with aluminum doors and the addition of a canopy over the door on the northwest façade (right side) and the addition of the awnings over the garage doors. However, none of the 1990s additions, which are small in scale, compromise the integrity of this building. The Studebaker Showroom maintains its integrity of location and setting, as it is located in the small town of Mena, Arkansas, near the downtown area. The building beautifully displays the workmanship, design features, and materials used at the time of the buildings construction in 1948. The physical features of this building such as its curved features and glass block panels convey the "feeling" or historic character of this building which is an excellent example of Art Moderne architecture.



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

### SUMMARY

Constructed in 1948, the Studebaker Showroom is being nominated under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of Art Moderne Architecture and is the best example of this style in Mena, Arkansas. The Studebaker Showroom is also being nominated under Criterion A for its association with the development of Arkansas Highway Culture, which is documented extensively in the multiple property listing. This building is significant for its architecture and for its association with transportation culture and is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture, 1910-1965."

### ELABORATION

The Studebaker Showroom is located on Port Arthur Street in downtown Mena, which is comprised of many commercial buildings, none of which are Art Moderne in style. The idea to construct an Art Moderne Studebaker showroom was in place by 1948 as evidenced by architectural blue prints for the building (presently in the hands of the current owner) that were designed for the Studebaker Company. On Saturday, 24 July 1948, the Lindsay Brothers, owners of the Studebaker Showroom, hosted a grand opening of the building for over 2,000 guests. An article in the *Mena Weekly Star* stated that the building is completely equipped for any kind of automobile repairs and adjustments. The article elaborates by saying, "Among the new equipment is an Allen Sychograph for motor tune-ups, starter and generator repair and adjustment equipment, welding apparatus, wheel balancer, Bear wheel aligning machinery, frame straightening equipment, Van Dorn valve refacer, cylinder reboring machine, riveting machine, portable chain hoist, new metal work benches and other smaller equipment." The building contained all the necessary equipment to service automobiles and it contained various Studebakers that were to be sold to the public.

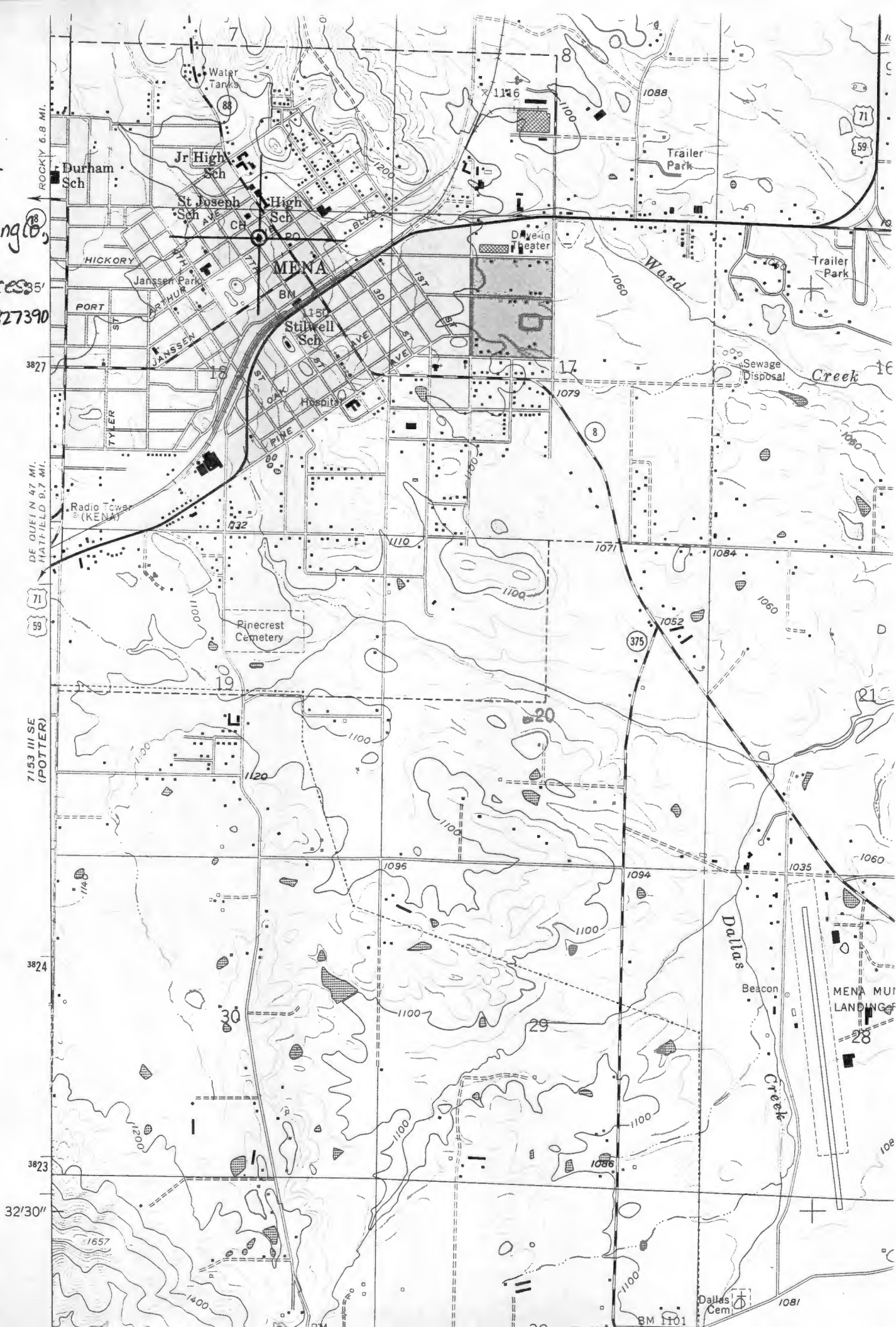
According to present-day owner George Reeb, an unknown architect for the Studebaker Corporation designed the Studebaker Showroom and an unknown builder constructed the Studebaker Showroom for the Lindsay brothers. The Lindsay brothers made sure that their building contained modern restrooms and lockers for employees. Fluorescent lighting provided light for the building while suspension type circulating butane heaters provided warmth for the building during the winter months.

The Studebaker Showroom served as a car dealership until 1962. Since that time it has been used as an auto garage, dry cleaners, machine shop, and restaurant. The present owners have taken great care to restore the building to its original 1948 appearance. Today the Studebaker Showroom serves as "showroom" for antique cars, and on display is a Studebaker truck, which was sold from the dealership in 1950 and now serves as a reminder of days gone by.

### Significance

The Studebaker Showroom is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its distinct Art Moderne design. It is also being nominated under **Criterion A** for its association with the development of Arkansas highway culture, which is documented extensively in the multiple property listing. The Studebaker Showroom is being submitted under the multiple property listing "Arkansas Highway and Transportation Era Architecture, 1910-1965" in conjunction with the historic context "Arkansas Highway History and Architecture 1910-1965."

debaker  
wroom  
Hot Springs,  
Kansas  
References  
386580/3827390



ROCKY 6.8 MI.

DE QUEIN 47 MI.  
HATHFIELD 9.7 MI.

7153 III SE  
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Dallas Cem.

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Janssen Park

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