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**Cumberland County**
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QUAD

**NAME**

**HISTORIC**
M & O Chevrolet Company

**LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER**
412 W. Russell Street

**CITY, TOWN**
Fayetteville

**STATE**
North Carolina

**CATEGORY**

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Lot 7: M & O Chevrolet Company

**STREET & NUMBER**
P. O. Box 1179

**CITY, TOWN**
Fayetteville, NC 28302

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**
P. O. Box 1179

**CITY, TOWN**
Fayetteville, NC 28302

**FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME / TITLE**
Linda Jasperse, Principal Investigator, City of Fayetteville

**ORGANIZATION**
Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

**DATE**
November 12, 1982

**STREET & NUMBER**
Division of Archives and History, 109 E. Jones Street

**CITY OR TOWN**
Raleigh

**STATE**
North Carolina

**COUNTY CODE**
051
DESCRIPTION

M & O Chevrolet Company's main building is a rare local example of mid-1930s Art Deco architecture. Designed by Wilson architect Frank Benton and constructed by the Dixon Construction Company, a local concern, the automobile dealership is a celebration of modern materials, design, technology, and construction. It was built in 1934-1937 to house a business concern which had already been in operation for approximately ten years, and continues to serve the same viable Chevrolet dealership today.

The original building consisted of a showroom, meeting rooms and offices, and an expansive barrel-vaulted service center, to which an attached parts department and a free-standing office/showroom have been added. The original showroom building exhibits an interplay of horizontals and verticals complimented by a stepped arrangement of forms as is characteristic of the Art Deco. The one-story horizontal form of the building is interrupted at the front by a starkly vertical central tower, and the stepped roofline is softened at the tower's edge by rounded corners which add interest to the otherwise angular massing.

The sides of the tower along its lower half are delineated by a double line of glasslike material which also follows along the upper edge of two large front windows, thereby emphasizing the building's geometric forms. This is further emphasized in tower ornament, which includes an angular skyscraper silhouette made of the black glass composite enclosing the company's nameplate consisting of stenciled initials "M & O" in red. A stuccoed band with identifying glass insets continues around the entire front facade and part of the east side which is set back further than from the street than the old showroom.

Fenestration on the former showroom includes large picture windows which wrap around to the east side. They were at one time surrounded by scored cement walls but at present by replacement stone veneer which was added between 1951 and 1953. The single front door which opens into the original showroom (used subsequently as a parts room, a dance floor during World War II, and now as a customer service reception area) has a distinctive door handle consisting of two irregular metal rectangles which fits in with the overall geometric theme. Even the lock face to which it is affixed consists of three graduated rectangles superimposed upon each other with the unit placed vertically along the door frame.

Similar details are apparent inside. The tile floor is most distinctive with its different colored and shaped pieces set in an angular pattern which falls to a center line. Tiles are white, black, green, and red and come in square, triangular, parallelogram, and zig-zag shapes. Wooden baseboards are wide and made up of multiple curves and angles. Even the suspended ceiling boasts a stylized geometric pattern which consists of squares set on a diagonal surrounded by a rectangle, triangles, and lines. The small offices which the old showroom lead to also have a hint of the geometric in door hardware and skylight covers.
Interior woodwork is generally heavy. The old showroom has bold wainscot, window moldings, and a multi-curved cove. A former office stands to the left of the service entrance and boasts a large heavy desk with repeated single panels. This room has a suspended ceiling with a sunburst motif. Such ceilings are found in scattered places around the building.

Behind the showroom and offices is the service center with its distinctive barrel-vaulted roof. Built of common bond brick, it is well-fenestrated with huge multi-paned windows. The technology involved to support the roof was advanced since metal trusses, rather than floor-to-ceiling supports, were used to suspend the roof. Thus there are no posts or pillars to interfere with traffic/work flow. This, combined with the recent parts center and new showroom, make up the buildings which belong to the M & O Chevrolet Company.
Formed in 1926 and incorporated in 1933, the M & O Chevrolet Company has the distinction of being Fayetteville's first Chevrolet dealership. It is also housed in the only surviving Art Deco building in the local architectural landscape. The building c.1934-1937 exhibits an interplay of horizontal and vertical lines created by a general linear profile and a vertical front tower, and other characteristic Art Deco features such as geometric decoration and use of modern materials in construction. Still used for its originally intended purpose, the M & O Chevrolet Company building, designed by architect Frank Benton of Wilson, captured the spirit of an age which witnessed dramatic technological flux in both architecture and industrial science.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. The M & O Chevrolet Company was one of numerous local automobile dealerships which made up "automobile row" just southwest of the Market House during the 1920s and 30s.

C. The M & O Chevrolet Company main buildings, designed by architect Frank Benton from Wilson and constructed by the Dixon Construction Company of Fayetteville, is, with its angular composition created by intersecting horizontals and verticals, geometric decoration, and use of glass, concrete, and metal in construction, a rare and unique local example of Art Deco architecture.
Formed in 1926, M & O Chevrolet was Fayetteville's first Chevrolet dealership. It got its name from the original partners Frank and Joseph Maloney and David Owen, the first of whom (along with Robert McCoy who later became a director) started out his career in the early-to-mid 1920s by selling Fords at the Universal Garage on Hay Street. M & O occupied two different facilities before building their present showroom and garage facility in the middle 1930s at the southwest corner of Franklin and Donaldson Streets. These facilities were located in an area southwest of the Market House which during the period began to be dominated by automobile dealerships and service garages and became known as "automobile row".

M & O Chevrolet was officially incorporated on 30 September 1933 and offered a full range of services in both new and used cars. Robert McCoy acted as temporary president and, along with Frank and Joseph Maloney, as director. In 1934, the company began to acquire tracts of land bordered on three sides by Franklin, Russell, and Williams Streets, about two blocks from the location that they had been occupying. This became the site of M & O's new Art Deco Service facility which was completed by 1937 and is currently in use.

The facility was designed by Frank Benton, an architect from Wilson. Benton had worked in partnership with his brother, Charles C. Benton, between 1915 and 1935, but by the time of the building of the new M & O Chevrolet facility in Fayetteville he was on his own. The architect designed buildings in various revival styles—Gothic, Colonial, Classical—throughout his career, but in the mid-to-late thirties favored the Art Deco as is evidenced in the Wilson Municipal Building (1938) in addition to the M & O Chevrolet Company building.

The company continued to operate throughout the years but reverted to a partnership in the 1950s with Joseph Maloney and Robert McCoy at the helm. Its physical facility was expanded through building efforts and property acquisition, and included a substantial parts department built onto the main plant in 1966 as well as the more recent acquisition of the nearby Bryan Pontiac building for office and showroom use. Today's owners, Joseph Maloney, Robert McCoy, Jr., and Tom McCoy, are sons of the early owners, which provides continuity with the past.

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please see continuation sheet.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY** 1.09 acres

**UTM REFERENCES**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

All of Lot 6 and part of Lot 7, Block I, Map 78-2-3-3, Cross Creek Township, as outlined in red on map. See map section.
Reference Notes:

1 Deduced from a number of sources including Tildon Walker and wife to D.B. Owen and others, 9 September 1926, Cumberland County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Cumberland County Courthouse, Fayetteville, Book 331, Page 194, hereinafter cited as Cumberland County Deeds; Cumberland County Deeds, Book 349, Page 144; also 1909-10, 1915-16, 1924, and 1928 Fayetteville City Directories.

2 Fayetteville City Directory: 1924.

3 Cumberland County Deeds, Book 331, Page 194 and Book 349, Page 144; North Carolina Corporation Records, Cumberland County, the M & O Chevrolet Company, Book 5, Page 467, hereinafter cited as Corporation Records with appropriate references to book and page.

4 Corporation Records, Book 5, Page 467.

5 Corporation Records, Book 5, Page 467.

6 Cumberland County Deeds, Book 379, Page 18; Book 379, Page 19; Book 392, Page 160; Book 392, Page 162.


8 Partnership Records, Cumberland County, Book 1, Page 137.

9 Interview with Tom McCoy, by Linda Jasperse, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 17 June 1981.


Cumberland County Records: Corporation Records, Deeds, Partnership Records.
