

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Stuart Motor Company  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 109-111 East Mountain Street  not for publication N/A  
city, town Kernersville  vicinity N/A  
state North Carolina code N. C. county Forsyth code 067 zip code 27584

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historic and Architectural Resources in Kernersville, N. C.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William S. Pridgen 12-18-87  
Signature of certifying official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial/Trade:

Specialty Store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commercial/Trade: Garage

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Stuart Motor Company was built in 1926 by Ned Robert Stuart as an automobile showroom. The utilitarian brick building is divided into two sections, the first third of the building is two stories in height, the rear two-thirds is one-story. The front section is divided visually into three sections: from east to west they are a door to the second floor and a display window; a center section containing two display windows flanked by entries into the showroom; and a garage door composed of a wooden frame and 32 small lights, and entry into the maintenance section. Each of the three sections has a transom composed of two tiers of small panes of glass. The second floor consists of eight bays symmetrically arranged in two paired bays flanking the central four bays. All have six-over-one sash. This four bays deep, and the flat roof has a parapet with central arch, all coped with concrete, which extends along the sides as well. These bays on the second floor contain casement windows, with the center section of each filled with a later sash window. Between the first and second floor bays are small blind panels; the central one contains the legend "STUART MOTOR COMPANY" in Art Deco lettering. Over the central four bays second floor bays at the cornice line is a second narrow rectangular panel.

The tall rear section is nearly as high as the two-story section, is ten bays deep, and houses the garage and maintenance facilities. All bays on the side and rear elevations contain casement windows. The first four side bays are very tall and wide, the rear eleven bays are more narrow, but are as tall as the first four. In the building's rear wall are a garage bay flanked by pairs of bays.

The first floor space is divided visually into two sections by a partition wall. The front section is two bays deep, and contains the original display floor and three offices composed of wood and glass panels. Steel columns and roof system are exposed both in the front and rear sections. A glass and wood partition wall also separates the sales and display portion from a corridor which connects the front garage bay with the rear garage section.

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The second floor was originally a machine shop to serve the automobile company but by 1930 the second floor was converted to four apartments, one of which was occupied by Mr. Stuart and his family. These apartments are reached by a stair along the westernmost wall, accessed by a door in the end bay of the building. A transverse central hall provides access to the apartments.

The Stuart Motor Company is virtually unchanged from its ca. 1930 appearance when the second floor was converted to apartments. The show space and garage facilities on the first floor are unchanged. The building is now owned by Stuart's two sons, and presently houses Robert Stuart's wrecker service.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Transportation  
Social History

Period of Significance

1926 -ca. 1930

Significant Dates

1926

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Stuart Motor Company, 109-111 East Mountain Street, Kernersville, built in 1926, is eligible for the Register under Criterion C because as an early automobile showroom it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction that is quickly disappearing from North Carolina's main streets. As a building type, it is a combination of the nineteenth century downtown livery stable with the embellished facade typical of retail stores. Although Stuart Motor Company is a particularly utilitarian example of the type, it is significant because it is virtually unaltered. As representative of the first phase of adjustment to the automobile, before the automobile transformed the whole commercial pattern of life, the early automobile showroom is an important building type worthy of preservation. Stuart Motor Company is also significant to Kernersville in the area of social history, under Criterion A, because, according to family tradition, it is the scene of owner Ned Robert Stuart's resourceful response to bankruptcy during the Depression by moving his family into the second floor and invoking the Homestead Act to save the building from foreclosure. The Stuart Motor Company falls under context III, Maturation Period, property type B, Commercial and Religious Architecture of the Period of Maturation.

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Ned Robert Stuart was born in 1895, the son of J. Robert Stuart, a blacksmith and proprietor of a hardware store in Kernersville at the turn of the century. Stuart attended Oak Ridge Academy (Guilford Co., N. C., NR) and graduated in 1913. (1) In 1926 Stuart borrowed \$30,000 to build this building in which he opened the first automobile dealership in Kernersville. He originally sold Hudson-Essex automobiles, but about 1928 he changed to Ford automobiles and Stuart's business thrived until the Depression. (2)

Stuart was actively involved in the civic life of Kernersville. In 1919 The J. R. Stuart Hardware Company, belonging to Stuart's father, burned. A number of disastrous fires occurred during the next several years, and in November, 1923, Stuart organized the Kernersville Volunteer Fire Department. One of Stuart's employees, Wade Parrish, was the assistant fire chief. The town bought a truck to aid the fire-fighters; Stuart was personally responsible for upkeep and repair of the truck. Meetings were held monthly, and when Stuart built his automobile dealership in 1926 the meetings were held there, and the truck was housed there for two years until a fire hall could be built. Stuart was actively involved in the Volunteer Fire Department for forty years. He was also active in the Lions Club, and served as the town building inspector for many years. (3)

Clay Smith and Carey Ragland opened the second automobile dealership, S and R Motors, about 1928 (South Main Street Historic District, #15; ca. 1928). This was a Chrysler dealership which continues to operate today. The building is now used primarily as storage, with a modular sales office connected to the north side.

By 1930 Stuart converted the machine shop on the second floor of the business to apartments and moved his family, including his wife Annabell Lemon Stuart (1903-1948) and son, Ned, Jr. (1930-), into the largest of the four apartments. Stuart was faced with financial ruin by the Depression, and the building was put up for sale at thirty cents on the dollar to satisfy the mortgage. Family tradition states that Stuart sent his friend, Harmon Linville, to Richmond to renegotiate his loan. Since his family was living in the building, Stuart is said to have successfully evoked the Homestead Act to gain enough time to repay his loan. Stuart's wife, Annabel Lemon Stuart, was a county nurse, whose monthly income of \$125 also helped keep the family business intact, and the couple were able to pay off their loan in 1938. (4)

The Stuarts had two sons, Ned R, Jr., and Robert, born in 1930 and 1933 respectively. At Stuart's death in 1986, the company passed to his two sons, and the younger, Robert Stuart, operates a wrecker service out of the motor company building.

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Stuart's auto showroom is utilitarian in style and function, without a great amount of detailing. It resembles the functional styling of the ca. 1928 S and R Motor Company (South Main Street Historic District, #15; ca. 1928) which is the only other surviving automobile showroom from the pre-Depression period in Kernersville. Both buildings are similar to the other major ca. 1930 commercial structure in the town, the Pinnix Drugstore, which, while built in 1904, was substantially remodeled on the exterior shortly after the showrooms were built. All three buildings are two-story brick buildings with large display windows, and modest detailing: the Stuart Motor Company has modest Art Deco lettering in its sign, the S and R Motor Company has a tile hood over the second floor bays, and the Pinnix Drugstore has a modest Colonial Revival cornice.

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### FOOTNOTES:

1 Interview with Robert and Ned Stuart, March 7, 1987, in Kernersville, N. C., notes on file with Survey and Planning Branch; hereinafter cited as Stuart Interview. A photograph of the 1913 graduating class of Oak Ridge Academy, with J. R. Stuart, is in the possession of the family.

2 Stuart Interview.

3 Bicentennial Committee. Kernersville, North Carolina, Bicentennial.  
Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1971, revised 1976, pp. 60-61.

4 Stuart interview; interview with Harmon Linville, May 7, 1987. Mr. Linville was a close personal friend and business associate of Mr. Stuart, and served as mayor during the 1930s. He went to Richmond to work out a repayment plan with the credit company which held Stuart's loan.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bicentennial Committee, Kernersville, North Carolina Bicentennial.  
Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1971, revised 1976.

Interview with Robert Stuart and Ned Stuart, Jr., March 7, 1987, notes  
on file with Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives  
and History.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 17 583440 3997420  
Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated consists of the lot on which the Stuart Motor  
Company sits, from Mountain to Church Street. See enclosed tax map with prop  
erty outlines in red., Block 2100, Lots 8, 9D,9E.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The property being nominated is the lot on which the Stuart Motor Company was  
built.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Oswald  
organization Consultant, Survey and Planning Branch date October 1987  
street & number Rt. 4, Box 20M telephone (919) 362-1725  
city or town Apex state N. C zip code 27584





STUART MOTOR COMPANY