

United States Department of 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 A). 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 10A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Motor Service Company

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 402 St. Joseph Street N/A not for publication

city or town Rapid City N/A vicinity

state South Dakota code SD county Pennington code 103 zip code 57701

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 forth 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

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 of Federal agency and bureau

Motor Service Company

Pennington, South Dakota

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.
continuation sheet.

See

determined eligible for the
National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National
Register.

other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of

Category of

Number of Resources within Property

Property (check
only one box)
apply)

Property (Check
the count)

(Do not include listed resources within as many boxes as

Contributing

Noncontributing

private

building(s)

public-local

district

1 buildings

public-state

site

_____ sites

public-federal

structure

_____ structures

object

_____ objects

1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property
listing (Enter "N/A" if property is
multiple property
listing.)

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register

not part of a

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty Store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Brick

roof Tar

other Glass

Narrative Description

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

Motor Service Company
Name of Property

Pennington, South Dakota
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)

A Property is associated with events
that have made a significant
contribution to the broad patterns of
our history.

Architecture

B Property is associated with the lives
of persons significant in our past.

Period of Significance

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.

1929

Significant Dates

1929

D Property has yielded, or is likely to
yield, information important in
prehistory or history.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

Criteria Considerations

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

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

N/A

B removed from its original location.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

Architect/Builder

E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.

James C. Ewing/
M.A. Garland Construction

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age 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 Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more
continuation sheets.)

Motor Service Company
Name of Property

Pennington, South Dakota
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
 preliminary determination of

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office

individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

Other State Agency
 Federal Agency

previously listed in the National Register

Local government
 University

previously determined eligible by the National Register

Other

designated a National Historic Landmark

Name of repository:

Rapid City Public Library

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one (1) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/3 6/4/2/2/6/0 4/8/8/2/0/4/0 3 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / 4 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara M. Kooiman/Elizabeth Butterfield/Christina Slattery
organization U.S. West Research, Inc. date 12 December 1994
street & number 421 Main St., Suite 306 telephone (608)782-3338
city or town La Crosse state WI zip code 54602

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps 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)

Motor Service Company Pennington, South Dakota
Name of Property County and State

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name John Morrisson
street & number 402 St. Joseph Street telephone 605/342-0558
city or town Rapid City state South Dakota zip code 57701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with 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 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Section 7: Description

The Motor Service Company building is a one-story modern broad-front commercial building with a rectangular floor plan.¹ The Commercial Style building with Art Deco influences, designed by James C. Ewing, was completed in 1929. The building has an exposed concrete foundation, red brick walls, and concrete ornamentation, including a cornice line on all four elevations. The curved tar roof is supported by a system of steel trusses. The interior space of the building is divided into a showroom, office, parts department, and a garage area.

The Motor Service Company building is found in a commercial area of Rapid City and was historically in close proximity to other automobile dealerships. Dean Motor Company, built also in 1929, (currently Midwest Tire and Muffler Company), is located across Fourth Street on the adjacent Main Street block at 329 Main Street. Black Hills Auburn Company, yet another automobile dealership, was located across the street from Motor Service Company at 521 St. Joseph Street.²

The Motor Service Company building, measuring 50 feet x 140 feet, is located on the southeast corner of an urban downtown block. The building has an equal size car lot, also measuring 50 feet x

¹Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985), 249.

²R.L. Polk, *Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory 1930-1931* (Colorado Springs, Co: R.L. Polk Directory Co., 1930-31), 238.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

140 feet, adjacent to it on the west side.³ At the time of construction, the building was initially set back from both St. Joseph and Fourth streets. There was a grassy lawn between the building and the street on both the south (front) and east sides of the building. In the 1940s, the lawn was consumed when St.

Joseph and Fourth streets were widened leaving the building to stand closer to the street as it is presently found.⁴

The front (south) elevation is the main facade of the building facing St. Joseph Street. It has three bays with a protruding segmental arch entryway and corner brick piers. The front facade has a dominant brick arched parapet with concrete cornice line. The entryway is flanked by floor to ceiling fixed display windows on both sides. The display windows with glass transom have plain brick sills and lintels, as well as thin mullions. The brick double door entryway is defined by brick pilasters on each side and a concrete cornice line. There is decorative brick checkerwork in the arch above the doorway. The entryway has two wood single pane glass doors with glass transoms.

The side (east) elevation, facing Fourth Street, has seven brick pilasters with defined concrete tops equally spaced across the brick wall. On the side elevation the roof line is horizontal with segmental arches above both the south, original service door, and the corner display window. The entire roof line has a

³"Add Two More to Building Program," *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 23 February 1929.

⁴John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc. 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

concrete cornice line. The side elevation has a single doorway and two service doors. A double door, which provides access into the showroom, displays wood with single glass pane doors. The entryway is highlighted with brick trim and concrete corner blocks. Both multiple panel wood service doors enter into the garage and maintenance area. Originally, there was only one service door, but the northernmost door was added in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Also at that time the original door was enlarged to accommodate the height of trucks.⁵ Fenestration on the east elevation includes the corner display window with transom and four sixteen pane metal frame windows with brick sills. The center three over three pane portion of the windows open as an awning window.

The rear (north) elevation of the building faces the alley between St. Joseph and Main streets. The rear elevation has a dominant arch parapet, identical to the front facade, with a concrete cornice. The rear elevation also displays a single nine pane frosted glass and metal casement window on the western side.

The side (west) elevation of the building faces the car lot for the Motor Service Company and has a utilitarian appearance. It has a horizontal roofline. There are seven brick pilasters equally spaced across the brick wall with only the southern pilaster, closest to the main facade, having a concrete top. The wall features two double metal frame windows with fifteen panes and brick sills located on the northern half of the elevation. The center three-over-three pane portion of each window is an

⁵John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

awning type window. There is also a metal sash multiple pane window with brick sill to the south.

The interior of the building is divided into two main spaces, the garage area and the showroom area. The showroom area, located on the southern half of the plan, includes office space in the northeast corner, another office in the southwest corner and a parts department, containing a parts storage area and counter. The showroom has a tan tile floor with black and red stripes, brick block walls painted white and a finished ceiling. Original features remain in the showroom, including the restrooms, a drinking fountain and an arch doorway in the hallway leading to the garage area. In the 1940s the parts department in the northeast corner was remodeled to an office and the ramp and french doors to the garage area were removed.⁶ The parts counter, parts room, and office were added into the showroom floor during a remodeling in the 1950s.⁷ The garage area is a large open space with concrete floor and brick block walls with exposed metal steel trusses. In the garage area the floor slopes slightly towards a central drain to collect fluids.

The signage of the Motor Service Company includes signs for the company, services offered, and a history of types of automobiles sold by the company. The original sign for the company was a wooden sign on the main facade above the entryway reading "Motor

⁶John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

⁷John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Service Company," which was utilized until about 1939.⁸ Currently on the front facade there is a neon sign "Motor Service Co." above the arched entryway dating to the 1950s.⁹ In the 1950s the dealership sold Studebakers and a neon sign hanging above the front door extending out from the building advertised them and it read "Studebaker, Motor Service Co." This sign remained above the main door until it was removed in the late 1960s.¹⁰ Currently, on the top of both of the brick piers are rectangular neon shaped signs which are the Triumph automobile symbol, cars once sold by the Motor Service Company. The neon signs on the main facade date to the 1950s and are currently inoperable.¹¹ On both sides of the entryway are large rectangular illuminated blue and white plastic signs. The one on the right reads "Jaguar, Triumph, British Leyland," with the company's symbol and the one on the left reads "Austin, MG, British Leyland," with their symbol. On the southeast corner of the building a round plastic sign hangs reading "Alfa Romeo" and on the southwest corner of the building there is a rectangular wooden sign reading "Cars."

Additional signage on the building includes wooden signs over each of the bays on the east elevation, facing Fourth Street. The signs read as follows from left to right: Motor Service Co., Import, Domestic, Sales, Service, Center, and Motor Service Co. The original signs on the building read from left to right: Goodwill,

⁸John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

⁹John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

¹⁰John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

¹¹John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Used Cars, Motor Rebuilding, Brake Service, Battery Service, Washing and Greasing.¹² Also on the east elevation are two signs extending out from the building on both sides of the original service door. The round glass and brass signs currently read "Triumph and MG" respectively. These two signs were originally Paige signs advertising the automobiles made by the Graham Paige Automobile Company of Detroit and are original to the building. The signs were removed and repainted in the 1970s to represent the automobiles being sold by the dealership at that time.¹³ In the car lot to the west of the building there is a free standing neon sign reading "Motor Service Co."

The Motor Service Company is of local significance as an excellent representation of a Commercial Style building with Art Deco influences in the city of Rapid City, South Dakota. Furthermore, the building is a good example of the commercial work of local architect James C. Ewing. Since the Motor Service Company has been owned by the same family throughout its history and underwent only minimal alterations, the overall integrity of this building is high.

¹²Historic Photograph in the collection of John Morrison.

¹³John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Section 8: Statement of Significance

The Motor Service Company building, built in 1929, is an excellent example of a modern broad-front commercial building with Art Deco style influences, designed by James C. Ewing. The property retains integrity of original design with few exterior and interior alterations to the building and it retains its historic function. The building meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as one of the best local examples of a commercial modern broad-front Art Deco style building in Rapid City. The Motor Service Company relates to the historic context "Depression and Rebuilding 1893-1929: New Transportation Facilities and the Impact of the New Automobile" outlined by the *Historic Contexts for Historical and Architectural Resources in South Dakota* by the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Center.¹⁴

Historical Background

Rapid City, located in west central South Dakota, lies at the junction of the Black Hills and the rolling plains in Pennington County. Prior to permanent Euro-American settlement in the Black Hills, several mining parties attempted to enter the area and prospect for gold. However, they were often refused entry by the United States Army. This pressure prompted a United States Government sponsored expedition headed by General George A. Custer

¹⁴South Dakota Historical Preservation Center, *Historic Contexts for Historical and Architectural Resources in South Dakota* (Vermillion, South Dakota, 1989), 209.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

to the Black Hills in 1874. By 1875, the Black Hills' territory was overrun with approximately 1,000 miners prospecting for gold and mining communities such as nearby Lead and Deadwood, South Dakota were born.¹⁵

Rapid City was founded in 1876 during the initial Black Hills mining boom.¹⁶ It served as a trade center for communities in the Black Hills. By 1877, the city was designated as the county seat of Pennington County and the community was replatted to expand the boundaries of Original Town to include 130 blocks. Three years later, the population of Rapid City reached 312. On October 19, 1882, the city was incorporated and by 1890 the population jumped to 2,128. The growth of Rapid City increased as a result of the arrival of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad, under the ownership of the Chicago & Northwestern System, on July 4, 1886.¹⁷

After the turn of the century, additional railroad activity included the connection of Rapid City to eastern markets by both

¹⁵*The Story of Homestake: A South Dakota Enterprise* (Lead: Homestake Mining Company, 1948), 5-6; William Bronson and T.H. Watkins, *Homestake: The Centennial History of America's Greatest Gold Mine* (San Francisco: Homestake Mining Company, 1977), 21-22.

¹⁶Pennington County History Book Committee, *A History of Pennington County, South Dakota* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1987), 22.

¹⁷Jeff Buechler, "City of Rapid City Historic Context Planning Document," May 1989, 7; Mary McCormick, Dale Martin and Lon Johnson, "West Boulevard Neighborhood Rapid City, South Dakota Historic Sites Survey Phase II," March 1992, 10; Rick Mills, *Making the Grade: A Century of Black Hills Railroading* (Rapid City, South Dakota: Greilind Photographics), 27-28.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

the Milwaukee Railroad and Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Herbert Schell, prominent South Dakota historian, notes that Rapid City served as "the eastern gateway to the mining region and an important station on the transportation routes from south and east."¹⁸ As a result of the improved railroad access, a rush of settlers entered the region stretching from the Cheyenne River to the White River.¹⁹ With the increase in settlers the economy of Rapid City flourished. Increased commercial, social, and industrial activity prompted the construction of many of the current downtown buildings up to World War I. During this period, the city not only served as a trading center and a political center, but growth of the community was also incurred from the tourism industry of the Black Hills promoted in the 1920s.²⁰ By 1930 the population of Rapid City, according to the U.S. Census, was 10,404 and it was now the largest city in the Black Hills with a greater population than the early mining towns of Deadwood and Lead combined.²¹

¹⁸Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota, Vol.III* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 143.

¹⁹Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota, Vol.II* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 253.

²⁰Jeff Buechler, "City of Rapid City Historic Context Planning Document," May 1989, 7; Mary McCormick and Dale Martin, RTI Inc., "West Boulevard Neighborhood and Other Historic Properties, Rapid City, South Dakota Historic Sites Survey Phase III Project Report," February 1993, 16.

²¹Jeff Buechler, "City of Rapid City Historic Context Planning Document," May 1989, 7. McCormick, Mary and Dale Martin, RTI, Inc., "West Boulevard Neighborhood and Other Historic Properties, Rapid City, South Dakota Historic Sites Survey Phase III Project Report," February 1993, 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section _____ Page _____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

The introduction of the automobile brought about the development of varied property types including automobile dealerships and repair and service centers. The first fireproof garage was constructed in Rapid City in 1911. The Rapid City Garage building at 827-829 Main Street provided service and storage of cars for one of the first auto dealerships in the city. In the late 1920s Raymond Motor Company dealership began occupation of the building.²² When the Motor Service Company was constructed in 1929 there were twelve auto dealerships in Rapid City.²³ Three dealerships were located within a block of the new Motor Service Company. The Black Hills Auburn Company was at 521 St. Joseph Street, the previous location of the Motor Service Company. Dean Motor Company, on the corner of Fourth and Main streets, was completed the year after the Motor Service Company building. The James Motor Company, on the corner of Third and Main street was under construction in 1929.²⁴

The Motor Service Company was built in Rapid City during a period of significant construction. In 1928 the Rapid City building program was estimated at 1.75 million dollars, including significant buildings such as the Alex Johnson Hotel, St. John's

²²Mark W. Thomas, Rapid City Garage National Register Nomination, 1984, 8:2.

²³R.L. Polk, *R.L. Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory 1928* (Colorado Springs, CO: R.L. Polk Directory Co., Publishers, 1928).

²⁴"Building Program for 1929 Well Under Way Here," *Rapid City Journal*, 6 April 1929; R.L. Polk, *R.L. Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory 1930-1931*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Polk Directory Co., Publishers, 1931), 238-239.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section _____ Page _____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Hospital, and the School of Mines Gymnasium.²⁵ In April of 1929 the *Rapid City Journal* reported that ten major structures were under construction in Rapid City, including the Rapid City Auditorium, James Motor Company, Western South Dakota Alfalfa Seed Growers Exchange, Fairmount Creamery and three large buildings for the Fish and Hunter Lumber Company, as well as Edgar Morrison Garage.²⁶ In 1929, it was estimated that 140 new homes were constructed and eighteen new businesses.²⁷ During the years 1928-1929 at least six automobile garages were under construction or expanded. They include the James Motor Company Studebaker Garage at 229 Main Street, Rapid City Motor Company at 826 Main Street which doubled its size, Barlow-Hudson-Essex Garage, Dean Motor Company at 325-331 Main Street, Motor Arcade, and Motor Service Company at 402 St. Joseph Street. All of these buildings were one-story commercial structures in the modern broad-front style.²⁸

The Motor Service Company was opened by Edgar Morrison in May of 1923.²⁹ His first shop was located in the Bradsky Building on Main

²⁵"Million and a Half Building Program for 1929." *Rapid City Journal*, u.d., article in the collection of Eka Parkinson.

²⁶"Building Program for 1929 Well Under Way Here." *Rapid City Journal*, 6 April 1929.

²⁷"Million and a Half Building Program for 1929." *Rapid City Journal*, u.d., article in the collection of Eka Parkinson.

²⁸"Million and a Half Building Program for 1929." *Rapid City Journal*, u.d., article in the collection of Eka Parkinson

²⁹*Rapid City Daily Guide*, 7 May 1923.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section _____ Page _____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Street and West Boulevard with the service station in the rear of the Boulevard. Edgar Morrison moved the business to a new location

at 521 St. Joseph Street remaining there until 1929, when the present building was completed a block east at 421 St. Joseph Street.³⁰

Edgar Morrison bought lots 31 and 32 of Block 86 Original Town on January 19, 1929 for \$2,250 from Fannie E. Reeves.³¹ Edgar Morrison, owner of Motor Service Company planned for a new garage to be built. The new garage was designed by James C. Ewing, architect of Rapid City. Plans were discussed in the *Rapid City Journal* on February 23, 1929 indicating that the fire-proof building was to be 50 feet wide and 140 feet long.³² The *Rapid City Journal* also reported that construction was under way in April of 1929 and the "building may be ready for occupancy by June 1 or earlier."³³ The contractor for the building was "Curly" Garland, later of M.A. Garland Construction Company.³⁴ The building

³⁰John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc. 28 June 1994.

³¹Warranty Book of Deeds Pennington County, South Dakota. Book 50, pg. 250 Warranty Deed #124

³²"Add Two More to Building Program," *Rapid City Daily Journal*, 23 February 1929, 1.

³³"Building Program for 1929 Well Under Way," *Rapid City Journal*, 6 April 1929, 1.

³⁴John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc. 28 June 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

construction was completed in 1929.

The Motor Service Company offered both sales and service of automobiles. In the 1932-1933 City Directory the Motor Service Company advertised "Graham, Pontiac, Cadillac and LaSalle Motor Cars, Sales and Service, Auto Repairing, Storage and General Garage Work."³⁵ The Motor Service Company sold a variety of automobiles. Originally the company sold Pontiacs and Cadillacs, then Graham Paige Automobiles through ca. 1939, followed by Studebakers through the mid 1960s and then Triumphs, Land Rovers, MG, Jaguars, and finally Alfa Romeos. Currently the Motor Service Company is phasing out the sale of automobiles and focusing on the service of import and domestic automobiles.³⁶

Architectural Development

The Motor Service Company and the related dealerships and garages built in the same time period often reflected the new commercial style of architecture with the modern broad-front commercial building. Characterized as one-story structures with large open spaces, the building type was able to accommodate the open space needs of automobile showrooms and service garage areas. The Motor Service Company building demonstrates the design and materials characteristic of the modern broad-front commercial building. It is a one-story brick building with parapet, brick piers, concrete

³⁵R.L. Polk, *Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory 1932-1933*, vol. III (Colorado Springs, Co: R.L. Polk Directory Co., 1933), 115.

³⁶John Morrison, Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc. 28 June 1994.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

and brick ornamentation, on the primary facades, and large display windows.³⁷

Architect: James C. Ewing

James C. Ewing was born on May 16, 1888. He received his formal education from the Chicago School of Technology and Georgia Tech. Ewing worked for the architectural firm of Hulse & Company of Des Moines, Iowa until 1920 when he opened a practice in Rapid City. Ewing was exposed to Rapid City when he worked on the construction of the Pennington County Courthouse while being employed with Hulse & Company. Ewing joined a partnership with Adrian Forrette in 1944. The firm of Forrette and Ewing operated until 1960 when both men retired. Other buildings designed in Rapid City by Ewing include the Rapid City Steam Laundry, Riss Building, Jefferson School, and what is currently the Fair Grounds Administration Building. The latter building was one of the first pre-cast concrete structures constructed in Rapid City. In 1984, at the age of 96 James Ewing passed away. As a result of the Flood of 1972, all floor plans held by the Ewing Family were destroyed.³⁸

In conclusion, the Motor Service Company building, located at 402 St. Joseph Street in Rapid City, South Dakota is representative of a prominent architectural style, the Commercial Style with Art Deco

³⁷Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985), 249.

³⁸James C. Ewing, Jr., Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., 19 July 1994.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

influences. The building, constructed in 1929, was designed by the regionally renowned Rapid City architect, James C. Ewing. This date of construction clearly falls in the statewide historic context of "Depression and Rebuilding 1893-1929: New Transportation Facilities and the Impact of the New Automobile." Contextually, the building also relates to the commercial development, more specifically the automotive industry in Rapid City. The building has been owned by the Morrison family for over sixty-six years. Based upon the above-referenced information, the Motor Service Company building meets the National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture. It is an excellent example of Commercial Style architecture with Art Deco influence in the city and as the work of architect James C. Ewing.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Section 9: Bibliography

Bronson, William and T.H. Watkins. *Homestake: The Centennial History of America's Greatest Gold Mine*. San Francisco: Homestake Mining Company, 1977.

Buechler, Jeff. "City of Rapid City Historic Context Planning Document." May 1989. Prepared for the city of Rapid City, South Dakota.

Ewing, James C., Jr. Telephone conversation with U.S. West Research, Inc. 19 July 1994.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design 1870-1940*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985.

McCormick, Mary and Dale Martin, RTI, Inc. "West Boulevard Neighborhood and Other Historic Properties, Rapid City, South Dakota Historic Sites Survey Phase III Project Report." February 1993. Prepared for the city of Rapid City, South Dakota.

McCormick, Mary, Dale Martin and Lon Johnson, RTI, Inc. "West Boulevard Neighborhood Rapid City, South Dakota Historic Sites Survey Phase II." March 1992. Prepared for the city of Rapid City, South Dakota.

Mills, Rick. *Making the Grade: A Century of Black Hills Railroading*. Rapid City, South Dakota: Grelind Photographics, 1985.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section _____ Page _____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Morrison, John. Interview with U.S. West Research, Inc., Rapid
City, South Dakota, 28 June 1994 and 19 July 1994.

Morrison, John. Photograph Collection. Rapid City, South Dakota.

Parkinson, Eka. Collection of *Rapid City Journal* articles, u.d.

Pennington County. *Warranty Book of Deeds Pennington County, South
Dakota*. Book 50 Warranty Deed #124. Located in the Pennington
County Courthouse, Rapid City, South Dakota.

Pennington County History Book Committee. *A History of Pennington
County, South Dakota*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company,
1987.

Polk, R.L. *Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory, Vol. 1928*.
Omaha, NE: R.L. Polk Directory Co., Publishers, 1928.

Polk, R.L. *Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory, 1930-1931*.
Colorado Springs, CO: R.L. Polk Directory Co., Publishers,
1931.

Polk, R.L. *Polk's Rapid City, South Dakota Directory, 1932-1933*.
Colorado Springs, CO: R.L. Polk Directory Co., Publishers,
1933.

Rapid City Daily Guide, 1923.

Rapid City Journal, 1928-1930.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Schell, Herbert S. *History of South Dakota*. Lincoln:
University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center. *Historic Contexts for
Historical and Architectural Resources in South Dakota*.
Vermillion, South Dakota: State Historical Preservation
Center, 1989.

The Story of Homestake: A South Dakota Enterprise. Lead: Homestake
Mining Company, 1948.

Thomas, Mark W. National Register Nomination for the Rapid City
Garage, Rapid City, South Dakota. Listed 1 August 1984.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Section 10: Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary includes lots 31 and 32 of Block 86 of the Original Town.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the Motor Service Company building, historically and presently owned by the Motor Service Company.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs:

Motor Service Company
Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota
Photographer: Christina Slattery, U.S. West Research, Inc.
Date: November 1994
Negatives located at South Dakota Historic Preservation Office,
Vermillion, South Dakota

Photo 1 of 9
Exterior, South and east elevations
Photographer facing northwest

Photo 2 of 9
Exterior, South elevation
Photographer facing north

Photo 3 of 9
Exterior, South and west elevations
Photographer facing northeast

Photo 4 of 9
Exterior, east elevation
Photographer facing southwest

Photo 5 of 9
Detail of signage on east elevation
Photographer facing south

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section ____ Page ____ Motor Service Company, Rapid City, Pennington
County, South Dakota

Photo 6 of 9
Detail, east elevation
Photographer facing west

Photo 7 of 9
Exterior, north elevation
Photographer facing southwest

Photo 8 of 9
Interior, Showroom
Photographer facing northwest

Photo 9 of 9
Interior, Garage area
Photographer facing north











