

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Rollins Park Shell; Congressional Service Shell

other _____

2. Location

street and number 1807 Rockville Pike not for publication

city, town Rockville vicinity

county Montgomery

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Bonita S. Dunn et al, trustees

street and number 505 Kent Oaks Way telephone _____

city, town Gaithersburg state MD zip code 20878

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Courthouse liber 33735 folio 557

city, town Rockville tax map GQ63 tax parcel N587 tax ID number 04-00155868

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: Rockville Department of Community Planning and Development Services

6. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Current Function | Resource Count |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | Contributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape | <u>1</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade | Noncontributing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture | <u> </u> buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | | <input type="checkbox"/> defense | <u> </u> sites |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> domestic | <u>1</u> structures |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <u> </u> objects |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> funerary | <u>2</u> Total |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> government | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> health care | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> unknown | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: | |

**Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory**

7. Description

Inventory No.

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

This one-story service station building was constructed in 1969. Built of concrete block, the building is clad with a brick veneer on the north and east elevations, and vertical wood paneling on the south elevation. It has two low-pitched, intersecting front gable roofs that cover dedicated retail and service spaces. Southeast of the building is a later structure with a flat roof supported by concrete block piers that sheltered the gasoline pumps and cashier kiosk. The building is an example of the Shell "Ranch style" service station constructed across the country in the mid-twentieth century. Design elements like the large fixed-glass windows, low-pitched roof, exposed rafter ends, rectangular form, and combination of different building materials are characteristic features of the Ranch style.

COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION

This one-story service station is constructed of concrete block and clad on the east (front) and north elevations with a brick veneer and vertical panels on the south elevation. The station has two intersecting, low-pitched, front gable roofs. The larger roof on the east side of the building covers the service block consisting of four bays. The roof on the west side of the building covers a smaller block that contains retail space and restrooms. Prominent features of the roofs include a deep overhang, boxed eaves, and exposed beams. The retail block projects beyond the service block on the south elevation. Four large board-on-board panels that resemble pilasters visually separate the service bays on the façade and there is also a paneled strip at the base of the wall on the north, south and east elevations.



East elevation. Visible behind the station is the tower of the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department. (Photos except as noted: Steven A. Karr, March 2010)

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

View from northeast



View from southwest

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

On the east (front) elevation, roll-up garage doors with large divided lights provide access to the four bays in the service block; and the retail space is enclosed with fixed floor-to-ceiling windows, with access through a full-view door. There is a full-view entry door with fixed transom and sidelight on the east corner of the north elevation providing access to the service area. On the south elevation, there is a flush entry door. On the west elevation of the service block there are three full-height concrete piers that help support the structure.

The roof structure is visible on the interior of the service block, and consists of pine rafters, steel beams covered with wood panels, and tongue-and-groove roof decking. The floors are poured concrete. The interior of the retail block consists of a number of small rooms, divided between customer service, work, and storage areas, and two restrooms. There is a small addition on the rear of this block that contains the manager's office. One of the storage rooms and two restrooms are located off of a hallway on the south end of the building. Above the dropped ceiling the original wood paneling is visible, which indicates that this space was originally not enclosed but open.

Southwest of the station building is a large, flat-roofed canopy supported by large piers of concrete block. Under the canopy is a cashier kiosk and space for four gasoline pumps that have already been removed. Additional gasoline pumps once stood on concrete pads on the east side of the building near Rockville Pike and a storage shed was located at the southwest corner of the building.¹ Both pumps and shed are gone.



View of canopy from northeast
(Photo: Rosemary Prola, June 2010)

¹ 1807 Rockville Pike. Pictometry image, 2008, City of Rockville intranet.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

8. Significance

Inventory No.

| Period | Areas of Significance | Check and justify below | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000- | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> social history |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime history | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>local history</u> |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Specific dates | 1957, 1969 | Architect/Builder |
| Construction dates | 1969 | |

Evaluation for:

National Register Maryland Register not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY

The dynamic economic development and rapid population growth that followed World War II demanded improved roads to facilitate automobile traffic within Rockville and to connect the city with the rest of Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. With improvements to the road system, new businesses developed along major routes to accommodate the needs of an increasingly mobile post-war society. The gasoline station property at 1807 Rockville Pike, developed in 1957, is associated with this trend.

NARRATIVE

The years following World War II represented a period of dynamic economic development and rapid population growth in the area Washington, D.C., suburbs. To facilitate traffic movement, new roads were constructed and old roads were improved throughout the region. In addition to federal efforts such as the construction of the new U.S. Route 240 linking Washington and Rockville, the City of Rockville and the state of Maryland embarked upon projects to improve roads in the area. The State Roads Commission selected Rockville Pike and Veirs Mills Road for reconstruction and widening in the 1950s.²

Astute Rockville businessmen anticipated the needs and wants of an increasingly mobile suburban society. In July 1951 Dennis C. Simmons, a former barber and owner of a real estate company in Rockville, and his wife, Anna, purchased three-quarters of an acre on

² Eileen McGuckian. *Rockville: Portrait of a City* (Franklin, TN: Hillsboro Press, 2001), p.151-154

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

the Rockville Pike from Mary M. Pickering.³ Pickering and her late husband, Howard, had purchased the land from S. Peter Wagner and his wife, Clarissa, in 1950.⁴ In 1953 the City annexed 660 acres of land along Rockville Pike, a move prompted by area business owners.⁵ The new corporate limits included the Simmons property.

In 1955, the Simmons entered into an agreement with Shell Oil Company to lease the “automobile service station” the couple planned to build on about half the site.⁶ In the agreement, the rent was set at 1 ½ cents for each gallon of gasoline delivered to the premises each month, but not less than \$449 nor more than \$750. The initial term of the lease was 16 years, with renewal on the same conditions for two five-year periods. The building to be constructed was described as a “1952 A Type-two-bay masonry service station complete with porcelain steel enamel exterior, tile restrooms, and hard surface yard complete with sidewalks as set forth in Shell’s plans and specifications and as prescribed by proper public authorities.”⁷ When the building was completed, a supplementary lease agreement was executed stating that the term of the lease began on 19 April 1957.⁸ No later information on the lease was found in the land records. The building is shown on the 1959 Klinge atlas located just inside the corporate limits of Rockville.

An advertisement for the new service station at 1807 E. Montgomery Avenue, “Congressional Shell Service,” appeared in the 1958 Polk City Directory (right).⁹ The station manager was Julian E. Peters.¹⁰ In 1959, the Congressional Shell had new manager, Daniel L. Kraft and Robert P. Nicholson. The two men held the same position in 1961.¹¹ In 1965, the station was under new management: Daniel Bridgette, president; Arthur H. Cole, vice president; and Mrs. Anna M. Bridgette, secretary-treasurer.¹²

In 1964 and 1968, Simmons purchased three small parcels of land adjacent to the property, bringing the parcel to its present size.¹³ In the card files of the Rockville planning department are 10 entries about building permits for the property address.¹⁴ From this record it appears that a new service station was constructed on the site (“#14372 new

24

GASOLINE STATIONS

PHONE
Hazelwood 7-9897

NIGHT PHONE
GA 4-9653

CONGRESSIONAL SHELL SERVICE

24 HOUR TOWING SERVICE

1807 E. Montgomery Avenue
(Rockville Pike)
OPPOSITE F. J. NEE FURNITURE CO.
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

³ Liber 1554, Folio 129. All cited deeds are contained in the land records of Montgomery County, Maryland.

⁴ Liber 1353, Folio 349 (Parcel B).

⁵ McGuckian, *Rockville*, p. 137.

⁶ Liber 2271, Folio 579.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Liber 2342, folio 474.

⁹ Polk’s Rockville City Directory, 1958, p. 24. The street was renamed in the early 1960s, probably after the road improvements were completed.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 157. Peters and his wife, Barbara, lived at 5701 Stillwell Road.

¹¹ Polk’s Rockville City Directory, 1959 and 1961.

¹² Polk’s Rockville City Directory, 1965.

¹³ Liber 3180, Folio 196 (811 s.f., 23 Jan 1964); Liber 3782, Folio 148 (3,225 s.f., 23 August 1968) and Liber 3782, Folio 151 (5,139 s.f., 23 August 1968).

¹⁴ Card file, 1807 Rockville Pike. City of Rockville Department of Community Planning and Development Services. There are also handwritten entries for three earlier building permits that appear related to original construction and planned alterations.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

service station”) and the original station demolished (“#14614- DEM. Old ser/station”). The building date of 1969 listed in the tax records is apparently when the new station was built. In the 1969 directory, the service station had a new name -- Rollins Park Shell – and a new manager, Philip Goodall.¹⁵

While it seems unusual to demolish a building only 12 years after its construction when the its function is unchanged, by the early 1960s, the porcelain steel enamel exterior of the 1957 service station was becoming passé. Major oil companies like Shell sought to design gasoline stations that would “blend’ ... into new suburban landscapes.”¹⁶ Shell developed a new “ranch-style station,” that incorporated features prevalent in contemporary house designs, and constructed the first station of this type in 1960 in Millbrae, California.¹⁷ Many older stations were fitted with new cladding and roofs to emulate the new style; however, it appears that the owners of 1807 Rockville Pike property decided to rebuild, perhaps to create a much larger space.



Above: “Shell Ranch-style station, 1969” Photo of a prototypical ranch-style station (not the subject property) copied from the September 1969 issue of the *National Petroleum News* by Mark Potter. Downloaded from flickr.com 24 June 2010
http://www.flickr.com/photos/mark_potter_2000/3342084311/in/pool-1149631@N22

There is an additional Shell ranch-style gas station at 12515 Rockville Pike, in the immediate vicinity of the subject property. Also close in style to the 1807 Rockville Pike station is the gasoline station at 1907 Veirs Mill Road. In 1968, this 1950s Shell station in the

¹⁵ Polk’s Rockville City Directory, 1969, p. 410. Philip E. Goodall and his wife, Mary, lived at 812 Azaela Drive. Goodall was also listed as manager in 1970. In 1971, the station had a new manager, B.R. Wilson.

¹⁶ John A. Jakle & Keith A. Sculle, *The Gasoline Station in America*, (1994, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), p. 152.

¹⁷ Jakle & Sculle, *The Gasoline Station in America*, Ibid.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 6

Twinbrook neighborhood was remodeled in the new ranch style.¹⁸ The station still stands, although it is now part of the Getty chain. The Veirs Mill Road station is very similar to the subject property, and includes a key feature of the ranch style missing from the Rockville Pike station: the “chimney stack” sign.



Former Shell station at 1907 Rockville Pike (Photo: Rosemary Prola, 30 June 2010).

Additional entries in the building permit record trace later changes to the station at 1807 Rockville Pike: 1) unnamed “alterations” (permit #17283-no date entered); 2) a canopy constructed in 1979 (#24750); 3) a kiosk built in 1982 (#26674); and, 4) an addition constructed in 1983 (#27617). It is unknown whether 1807 Rockville Pike originally had the “chimney-stack” Shell sign that was another characteristic element of the ranch style.

The station closed approximately two years ago. The building and canopy were painted gray after the station closed, and the parcel was later enclosed with a chain-link fence. Bonita S. Dunn and Sonja A. Dansie, daughters of the late Dennis C. and Anna M. Simmons, own the property. Current plans are to demolish the service station and redevelop the site as a retail center.¹⁹

Today, the stations at 1907 Veirs Mill Road, 12515 Rockville Pike, and the subject property are the known gasoline stations in the Shell ranch-style design in Rockville. The original (1969) station at 1807 Rockville Pike was expanded with at least one addition on the rear and the enclosure of the covered walkway on the south elevation. However, it retains many of its original architectural features that convey the appearance and feel of the 1969 station.

¹⁸ The station at 1907 Veirs Mill Road was identified in Peerless Rockville’s Recent Past initiative. The number of gasoline stations in Rockville had also increased by 1969: the yellow pages of the 1958 Polk directory list 16 stations, while there are 23 stations listed in 1969.

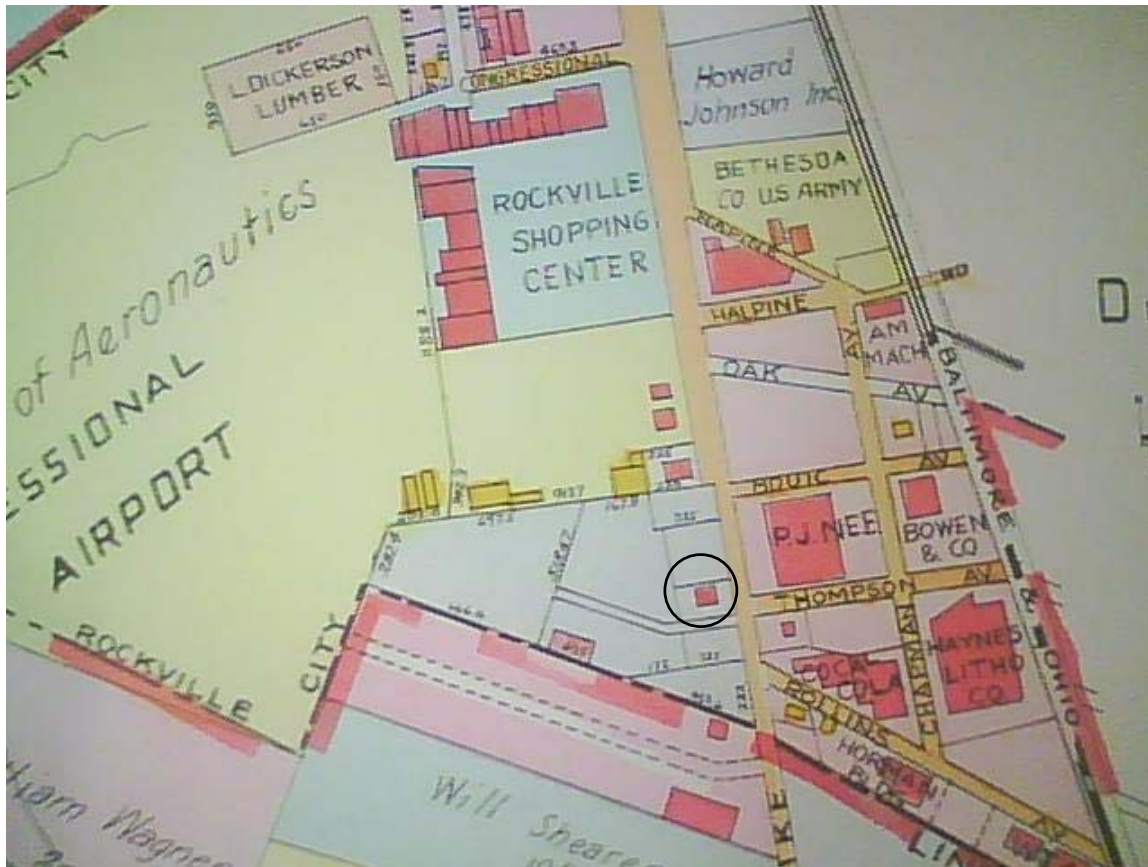
¹⁹ “Rollins Center on the Pike Project Description.” Application to City of Rockville Planning and Zoning Commission, date.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 7



1807 Rockville Pike
R.H.M. Klinge Atlas, 1959

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 8



1807 Rockville Pike
Pictometry, 2008
City of Rockville

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No.

Land records of Montgomery County, Maryland

Polk's Rockville City directory, various years

Jakle, John A. & Keith A. Sculle. *The Gasoline Station in America*, (1994, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press).

Building permit index file, City of Rockville Department of Community Planning and Development Services.

R.H.M. Klinge Atlas of Rockville, Maryland, 1949, 1959

Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas, Rockville, MD, 1960

Obituary, Dennis Calvin Simmons. *Montgomery County Journal*, 4 September 1990.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of surveyed property 36,512 s.f.

Acreege of historical setting 36,512 s.f.

Quadrangle name Rockville

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is bounded by Rockville Pike on the east, Rollins Avenue on the south, parcel N600 on the west, and parcel N589 on the north. It is parcel N587 on Map GQ563.

11. Form Prepared by

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| name/title | Rosemary Faya Prola/Contractor | | |
| organization | City of Rockville Dept of CPDS | date | 29 June 2010 |
| street & number | 111 Maryland Avenue | telephone | 240.314.8216 |
| city or town | Rockville | state | MD |

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1
