

PURE OIL SERVICE STATION  
Intersection of U.S. 130 Northbound and Collingswood  
Circle. Southeast side of the circle.  
Collingswood  
Camden County, New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1234

HABS  
NJ  
4-COLLWO,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

PURE OIL SERVICE STATION

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Location: Intersection of U.S. 130 Northbound and Collingswood Circle. Southeast side of the circle.  
Collingswood  
Camden County, New Jersey

USGS Quad: Camden, New Jersey-Pennsylvania  
UTM Coordinates: 18.492320.4418140

Significance: The Pure Oil Service Station is a remarkably well-preserved example of an early corporate design service station. The Pure Oil Company developed the Tudor Revival-style cottage architecture as a standardized design for its service stations. This design became the company's trademark throughout the country. The Pure Oil Service Station is also significant for its location on the Collingswood Circle, an early traffic rotary that dates to the same period as the station (HAER No. NJ-114).

Description: The one-story, asymmetrically-massed, Tudor Revival-style service station consists of a small office area on the northern end with two service bays on the southern end. The building is constructed of clinker-bond brick with steeply-pitched gable roofs of terra cotta tiles, produced by the Ludowici Celadon Company. The station is decorated in the trademark colors of the Pure Oil Company with white walls and blue glazed roof tiles. The building has varied fenestration throughout in keeping with the quaint, picturesque style. Windows are small-light metal casement variety with masonry sills. Surrounding the building are original paving patterns.

The office has a front-gable roof with blind engaged chimneys at each end. On the asymmetrical facade are a doorway and small window, both circular-headed, and a large multi-light bay window. The doorway and bay window both have hoods constructed of standing seam copper. The hood over the doorway is supported by wrought-iron brackets. Two doorways on the rear of the office, originally leading to restroom facilities, have been sealed with concrete blocks. The interior of the office has been altered with the addition of carpeting and wallboard.

The service bay section of the station consists of two bays, each with an overhead wooden garage door. Paired multi-light casement windows with a common lintel and sill comprise the northernmost bay. The southernmost unit is set off from the rest of the section by an asymmetrical cross gable with bellcast detailing to its outside edge. To emphasize the asymmetrical nature of the building, the rear wall of the service bay

section projects from the office at an oblique angle. A brick wall with a large multi-light window serves to separate the service bays in the building's interior. Doorways between the bays are located at either end of this brick wall. The floor is concrete. The bay next to the office is the greater of the two, housing an enclosed mechanical room and a large open work area with an original "Rotary Lift" brand pneumatic lift. The end bay (southernmost), originally the wash bay, is smaller and has no lift.

History:

As evidenced by Sanborn Insurance maps of the area, the Pure Service Station was constructed between 1930 and 1943. The structure is situated on Collingswood Circle, a traffic rotary constructed as part of the Camden Extension (US 130). Filling stations immediately began locating on the circle. By the end of World War II, at least six stations ringed the circle.

Oil companies, such as Sun Oil, Conoco, and Pure Oil, relied on their service stations to reflect their corporate image to the motorists. The Pure Oil Company adapted the design of their service station from residential architecture. The standardized English Tudor Revival-style structure in Pure Oil colors--white walls and cobalt blue roof--was designed by architect C.A. Petersen, who joined the company in 1925. The domestic styling of the building, which sought to convey a feeling of security and comfort, quickly became ingrained in the public's mind as an easily recognizable symbol of the company.

Following World War II, Esso emerged as the leading service station company on the Collingswood Circle. Many of the other stations shut down. In keeping within the transportation-related theme of their original use, many of the former filling stations were converted to used car sales establishments. The Pure Service Station, converted to a used car lot ca. 1950, has continued to be utilized as such since that time. The exterior of the station has remained virtually unaltered and still retains its white clinker bond brick walls and cobalt blue tile roof.

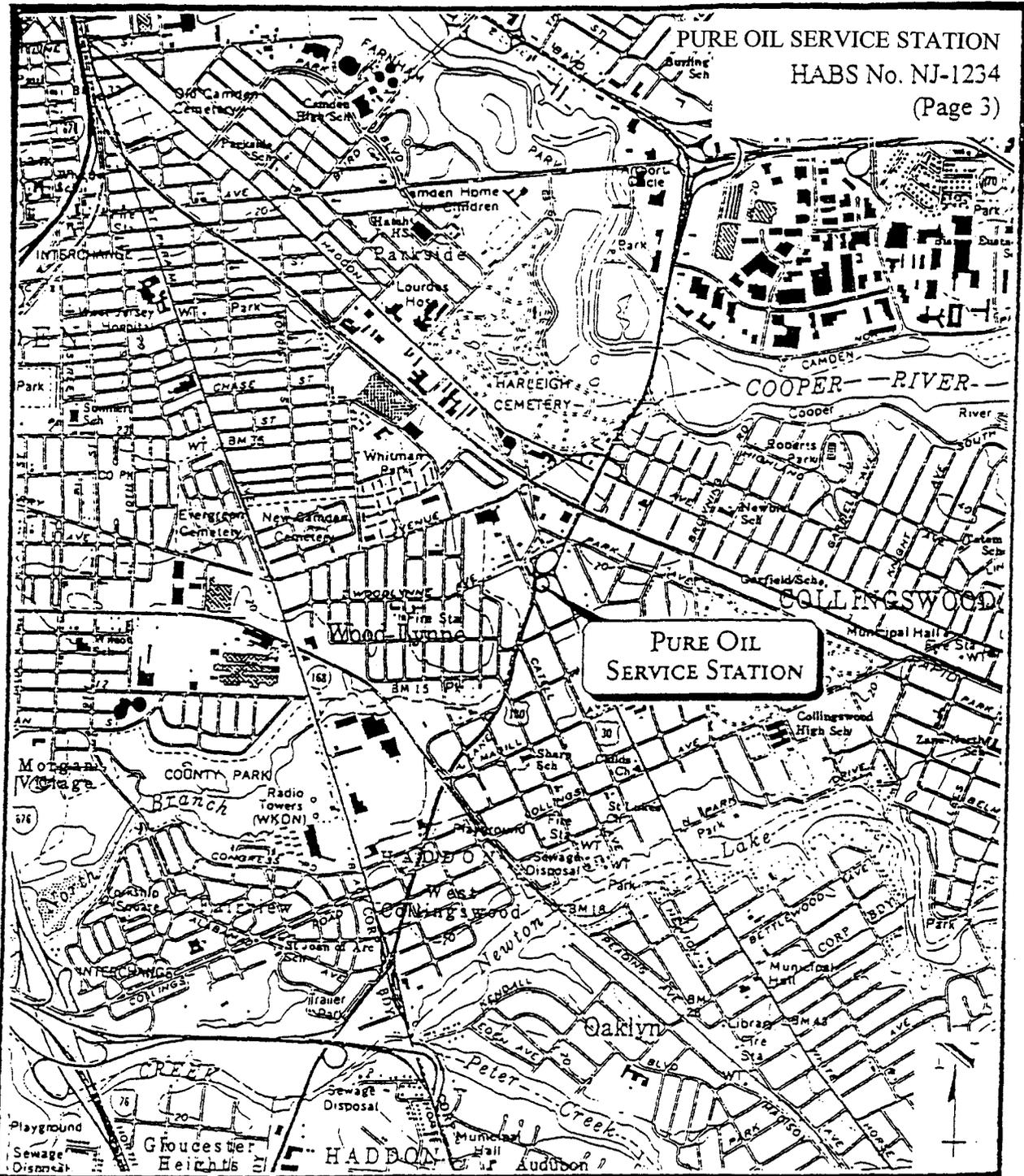
Sources:

Lichtenstein, A.G. and Associates, Cultural Resources Assessment, Collingswood Circle Elimination Project, Collingswood Borough and Camden, Camden County, New Jersey, 1995. Prepared for NJDOT.

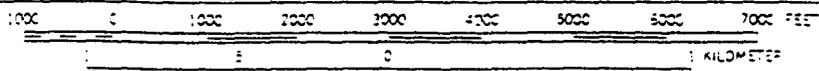
Interview with Wayne Smith, April 3, 1997.

Historian:

Nancy Van Dolsen and Wendy Zug-Gilbert, April 1997



SCALE 1:24 000



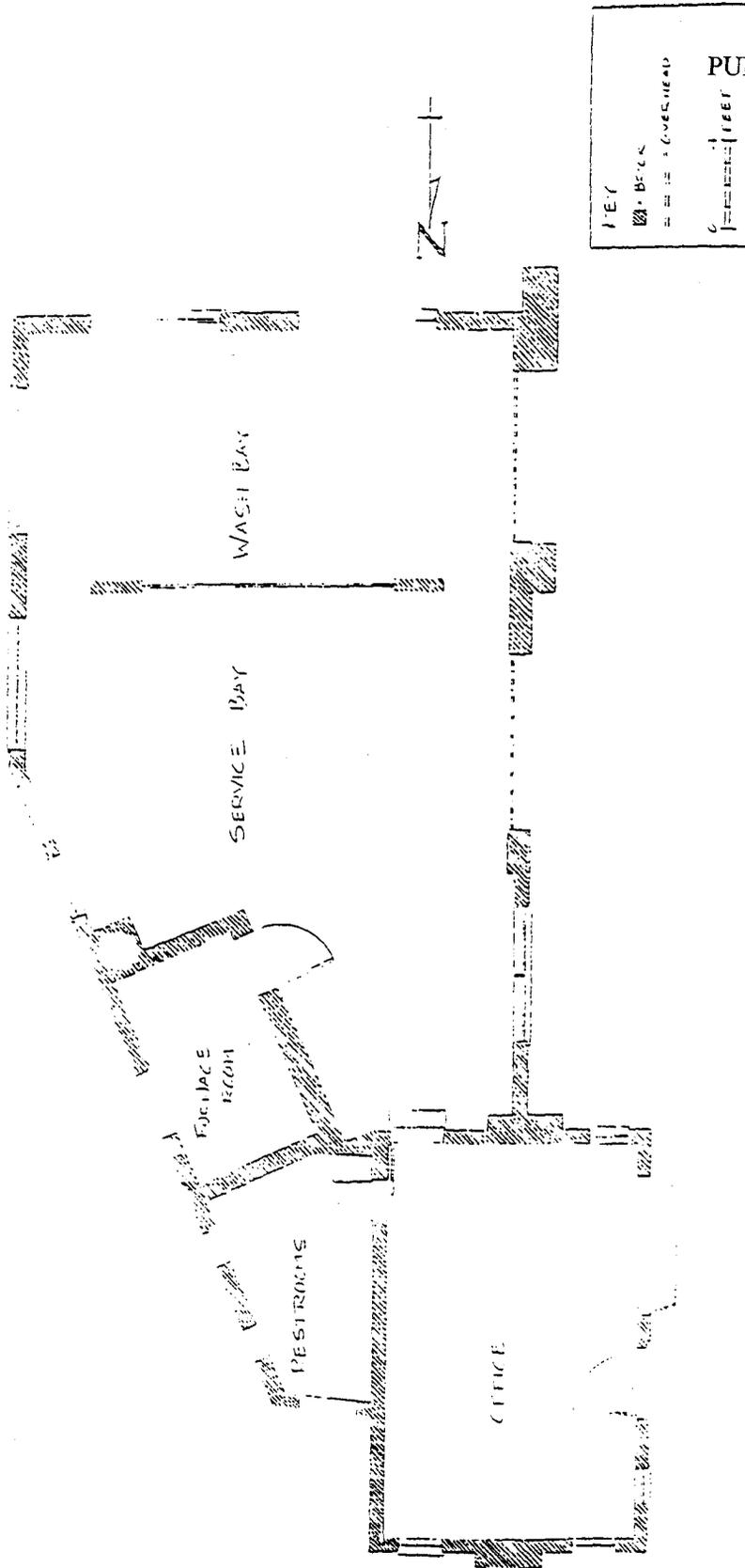
CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET

Camden, NJ-PA  
1967 (PR 1994)

PURE OIL SERVICE STATION

HABS No. NJ-1234

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Pure Oil Service Station, First Floor Plan  
Drawn by Nancy Van Dolsen, 1997.