

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1 Name of Property

historic name Garden of Eden Station

other names/site number Pickel's Station; McBride's Station

2 Location

street & number Old Highway 13 at County Road 215NW [n/a] not for publication

city or town Warrensburg [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Johnson code 101 zip code 64093

3 State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Claire F. Blackwell 7 March 1994
Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4 National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5 Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

n/a

0

6 Function or Use

Historic Function
COMMERCE/speciality store

Current Functions
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7 Description

Architectural Classification
OTHER: Functional gas station

Materials
foundation sandstone
walls sandstone
roof asphalt
other wood

Narrative Description

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

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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.

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

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or 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.)

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

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

circa 1928-1942

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown/Pickel, Bernard (Ben)

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: _____

10 Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	435570	4293670			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
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[] 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 Roger Maserang/Historic Preservation Coordinator
organization Show-Me Regional Planning Commission date September 17, 1993
street & number P.O Box 348, 122 Hout Street telephone 816/747-2294
city or town Warrensburg state Missourir zip code 64093

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 FOP for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FOP.)

name Eva McBride
street & number 213 NW 21 telephone _____
city or town Warrensburg state Missouri zip code 64093

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

Summary: The Garden of Eden Station, constructed of coursed sandstone blocks in ca. 1928, is a small, relatively unaltered rural gas station on its original site approximately one mile north of Warrensburg. Its flat, parapeted roof extends frontward to where it is supported by two sandstone columns, providing a sheltered refueling area or drive-through. Walls of rock-faced and smooth dressed sandstone blocks give the nearly square, symmetrical building a rather stately appearance. In terms of design, the station can be classified as an early example of the broad "Functional" category described by Vieyra.¹ Gas pumps--unused for nearly 20 years, although they are not the station's first--are between and adjacent to the columns. The station is located on the east side of Old Missouri Route 13, a lightly-traveled stretch of highway bypassed by new construction, at the intersection of County Road 215NW. The sandstone, originally light gray but now somewhat darker with a brownish patina, is from Warrensburg's historic Pickel quarries which are nearby but long closed. Architectural and historical integrity of this survivor from an early period of motoring are very high.

Elaboration: The main elevation of the Garden of Eden Station is three-bay and faces southwest. A central entrance with a paneled, dark-stained door with a window is flanked by double-hung, 3/1 windows with white-painted sash and enframements. The windowed area of the front door consists of three vertical panels, matching the upper sash of the station's windows. Northwest and southeast sides have identical entrances at the back and pairs of double-hung, 3/1 windows in single openings in the forward portions. The rear wall contains three plywood-covered windows--a double-hung unit in the center plus two single sash windows. Walls, including wood framing, are approximately one foot thick. Overall dimensions including the extended roof are approximately 14 1/2 feet (facade elevation) by 30 1/2 feet. Dimensions of the office alone are approximately 14 1/2 feet by 16 1/2 feet. Height (ground to top of front parapet) is approximately 12 1/2 feet.

No formal design is apparent, although the rough texture and horizontal emphasis of this essentially vernacular building are of course reminiscent of the Richardsonian Romanesque styling for which Warrensburg sandstone was well suited and often used. But the form of the Garden of Eden Station is best

described as Functional, using the criteria established by Vieyra. Vieyra classified gas stations into four basic categories based on recurring themes that have been translated into design variations: Fantastic, Respectable, Domestic and--the most recent--Functional. Functional examples came in many variations but, like the Garden of Eden Station, all were instantly identifiable as gas stations. The clean and smooth Functional designs were influenced by a variety of styles including Moderne and International, while the use of natural materials (such as Warrensburg sandstone for the Garden of Eden Station) was advocated by Frank Lloyd Wright. With its simple lines and few but essential components, the Garden of Eden Station conveyed a sense of efficiency.²

Although laid in courses, the individual sandstone blocks of the Garden of Eden Station are of various sizes. Beltcourses of smooth dressed stone are keyed to the lintels and lugsills, with the latter beveled to facilitate

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drainage. The water table also is beveled, smooth stone. Except for these three courses and the foundation which is also smooth, the office consists of rock-faced sandstone. The terrain slopes rather sharply from the front, where no foundation is visible below the water table, to the rear where the foundation extends more than five feet from floor to ground. A square opening in the rear foundation provides access to a small area suitable for storage.

The longest stone blocks, up to 5 1/2 feet in length, are in the water table and beltcourses. The column bases, which are smooth and beveled stone, are 20" x 20" and at least 16" in height. Above the bases, the columns consist of seven courses of interlocking 10" x 20" blocks capped by square single pieces, all rough-faced. The projecting roof, apparently supported by pairs of I-beams, consists of two courses of rock-faced blocks. The parapet is topped with a coping layer. A brick chimney protrudes from behind the northwest parapet.

On the side facades of the projecting roof, spread over two courses of rock-faced blocks, the words "GAS 2__1/2" are neatly painted in fading black and red shadow letters against a silver background. No other signage is extant, but five original electric light sockets remain along the underside of the arch created by the columns. At night, a row of small light bulbs in these sockets would have provided enough illumination to carry out business while marking the station for approaching motorists.

Interior walls are covered with vertical tongue-and-groove siding, a 1950s replacement of sheets of composition board which previously had been nailed to the framing. A partitioned area for a restroom was installed in the east corner at about the same time. Some of the original composition board is still present in the ceiling. At some point the tongue-and-groove floor was covered with linoleum tile; some original flooring is visible. The restroom uses an original doorway (the builder intended a restroom at that location). A second planned restroom in the opposite corner was never completed. The tapering base of the brick chimney is in the upper half of the northwest wall.

There are no outbuildings from the period of significance. Nearby are a 1956 brick residence and a small, ca. 1950s frame building with asbestos siding. Despite its proximity, the residence--only about 35 feet south of the station--is set back farther than the station and consequently front and side views are unobstructed. The frame building is directly behind the station, and is relatively inconspicuous.

The setting is enhanced by the proximity of Old Missouri Highway 13, a narrow ribbon of concrete across the gently rolling landscape north of Warrensburg. Except for many unrepaired breaks in the concrete, the road past the station probably looks about the same today as when it was in operation. Traffic has been light and local since a new section of Missouri Highway 13 was constructed in the early 1970s. Behind the station, out of view in a wooded grove, is the west rim of one of the old Pickel quarries.

Except for minor changes to the interior as noted, and replacement of the original gas pumps, the Garden of Eden Station remains substantially unaltered from when it began providing services for motorists in ca. 1928. Its historic

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character is intact and, consequently, it remains strongly evocative of its period of significance, ca. 1928-42. This appraisal is confirmed by a historic photo (ca. 1928) of the primary elevation. Although the photo shows that masonry work on the office has been completed only to the lugsills, the columns are up and it is obvious that the present form was also its original form. The Garden of Eden Station was sensibly designed along what are now recognized as classic lines for a filling station, and it is also important as a unique local rendering in sandstone from historic quarries.

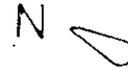
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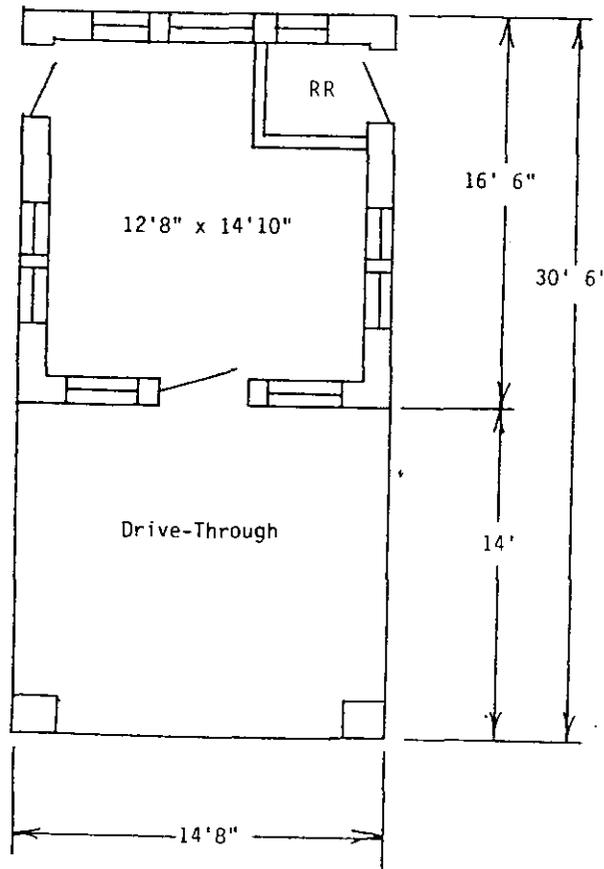
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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

GARDEN OF EDEN STATION
Johnson County, Missouri



FLOOR PLAN



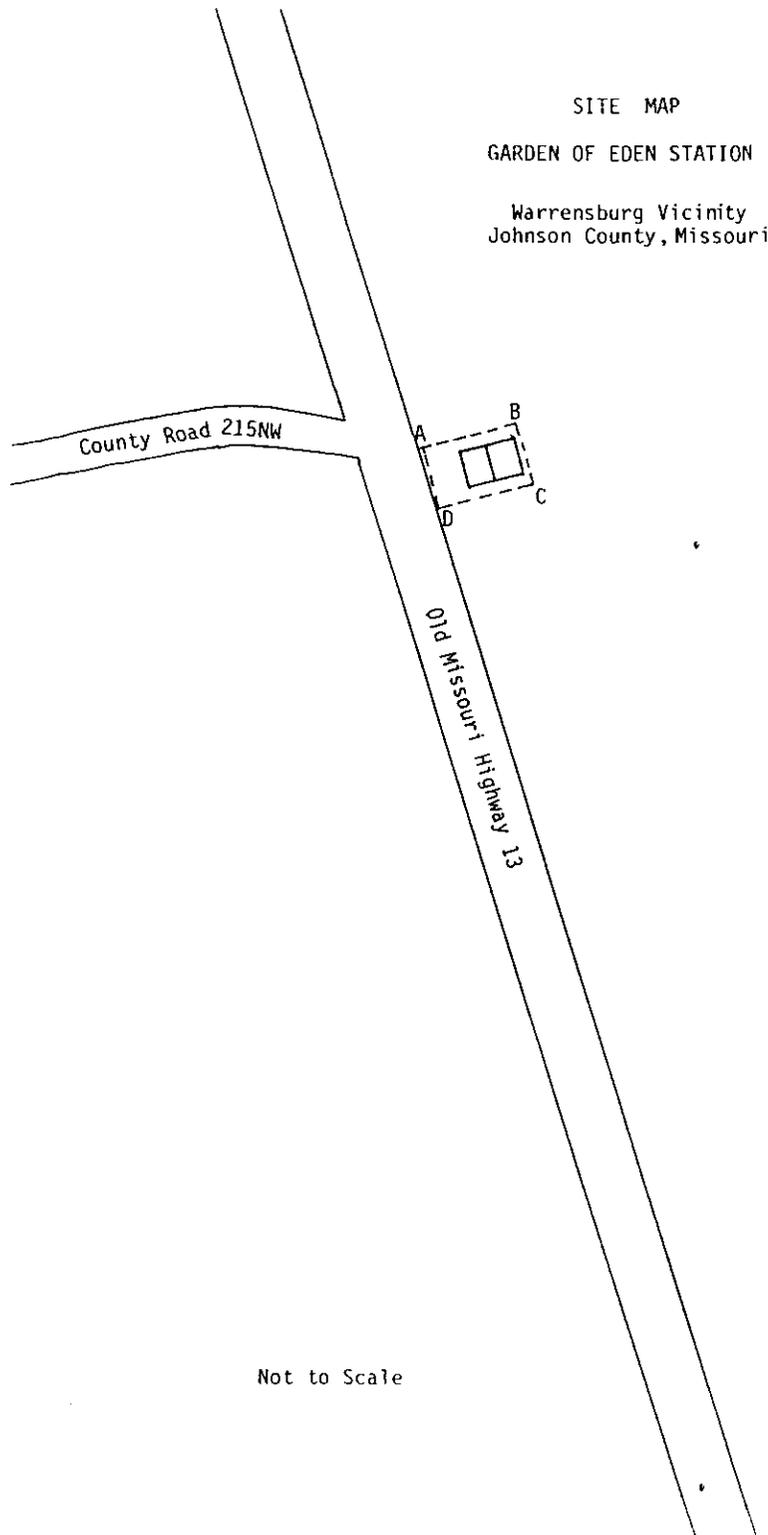
Scale: 1" = Approx. 6'

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Garden of Eden Station
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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

Summary: The Garden of Eden Station, located on Old Highway 13 at County Road 215NW, Warrensburg vicinity, Johnson County, is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of ARCHITECTURE and COMMERCE. Built circa 1928, the Garden of Eden Station is representative of the rapid growth of motoring in the first decade after World War One. It also exemplifies the thousands of small rural stations that blossomed along newly graded and paved highways across much of Missouri, providing the essential fuel, oil, water and services that allowed motorists to confidently travel far from home in machines that were transforming the society as much as the landscape. While its design is an early local rendering of a form that became classic, the Garden of Eden Station has the added distinction of being constructed of Warrensburg sandstone, a historically and architecturally significant building material quarried locally. The station's period of significance, ca. 1928-42, corresponds to the date of construction and the years of operation by its builder and original owner, Bernard (Ben) Pickel.

Station History (Part I)

The Garden of Eden Station, also known as Pickel's Station and later known as McBride's Station, was constructed by its original operator, Ben Pickel, over a period of a year or so in the late 1920s. The station's first name was an attempt to associate it with the Garden of Eden Swimming Pool which Pickel had developed earlier in the main west quarry, one of several local pits once operated by the Pickel Bros. north of Warrensburg. Construction of the station coincided with paving of what had been the old Lexington Road, redesignated as Missouri Highway 13, in the late 1920s.

Pickel was a son of relatively wealthy German immigrants Jacob and Catherine Pickel, who came to the Warrensburg area from St. Louis in the early 1870s. Jacob and brothers Anton and Peter--who had worked quarries in Germany--purchased the land containing a local "free" quarry and developed a commercial enterprise that reportedly employed up to 300 workers. In 1888, Warrensburg sandstone purchased from the Pickel Bros. was the contractor's choice for remodeling of the Missouri State Capitol (which was destroyed by fire in 1911). Ultimately, the Pickel Bros. quarries in Sections 11 and 12 provided the stone for hundreds of other prestigious buildings in the Midwest including Chicago's Union Depot, the Arkansas State Capitol at Little Rock, and the U.S. Post Office at Kansas City.³

Although the Pickel family accumulated much wealth in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the money flowed away, probably through a combination of bad investments and imprudent donations of land and money. In 1904 upon the death of his father, Ben Pickel apparently inherited most or all of the Warrensburg facilities and operated them profitably for several years but sandstone gradually declined in popularity. The quarries might have remained competitive by converting from steam-driven equipment to modern machinery when it became available, but by then most of the money was gone and it could not be recouped.⁴ The convenience, adaptability and relatively low cost of concrete led to the substantial displacement of natural stone as a building material in any case. The Garden of Eden Station was not the last building

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constructed of Warrensburg sandstone, but it may have been the last to use material from a Pickel-owned quarry.

Although the quarries were essentially idle when Pickel erected his tiny station in ca. 1928, cars were being manufactured in increasingly large numbers and gas stations were a necessary part of motoring; the prospects must have seemed rather promising. But the economics of the nation were about to change dramatically and today, the location itself does not seem to have been well chosen. In any case, Pickel was never motivated to complete the built-in restrooms as he undoubtedly planned to do when the amount of business warranted it. While neither the swimming pool nor the gas station proved lucrative, together they provided Pickel and his wife, Ella, with at least a modest income through the Great Depression and into the 1940s.

Station History (Part II)

A historic (ca. 1928) photo offers evidence of the Garden of Eden Station's earliest days. The photo shows Ben Pickel standing near a lone gas pump, hands on hips; the station obviously is open for business even though the building is still under construction. The columns are in place up to the parapet but otherwise the stone courses have been set only as high as the lugsills. Pickel was not a mechanic, and the station lacked any sort of service bay. Metal signs for beverages attached to the wooden framework suggest that there were no immediate plans to complete the work, and that at least minimal refreshments were available along with gasoline, oil and water. It was a summertime photo; probably the remaining courses were laid before winter.

In the photo, the words "GARDEN OF EDEN STATION" are painted on each of the two front windows. Small, unrecognizable containers are visible behind the glass. A row of light bulbs is under the front parapet; their sockets are extant. A wooden barrel, probably containing water, is nearby. The solitary gas pump--centered between the columns--is a tall, tapering model with a slender glass bowl. The markings are illegible; it resembles an old Phillips 66 pump although the builder reportedly bought his gasoline off the open market.

Except for being adjacent to a highway and convenient for the operator (Pickel lived on the opposite side of the highway), the location of the Garden of Eden Station was not particularly good. Even before it grew northward, Warrensburg, which had several stations at the time the Garden of Eden Station was built, was only two miles away. Unless they left home with an almost empty tank, motorists from Warrensburg were unlikely to need gasoline by the time they reached the Garden of Eden Station. Pickel probably made more money during a hot summer weekend at the Garden of Eden Swimming Pool (at 25 cents per person) than he made all week at the Garden of Eden Station (with gasoline selling for 10 cents or so per gallon). To help attract customers, Pickel probably offered gas for a penny or two less than the stations in Warrensburg.

After Pickel died suddenly on Christmas Day, 1942, the Garden of Eden Station was unused until it was purchased and reopened by the second owner, Charles

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McBride. McBride, who made only minor changes and did a good job of preserving the building, reopened it in about 1951 (after the arbitrary National Register cutoff date for historic significance). McBride kept it open until 1974, when completion of a new section of highway greatly reduced the amount of business.⁵

Architecture

Gas stations began appearing on Missouri's cultural landscape in ca. 1905, in St. Louis. For a few years before these prototype stations were constructed by the Automobile Gasoline Company, gasoline for the handful of automobiles in Missouri (the first had been introduced in about 1891) was simply provided as a sideline by various hardware and blacksmith shops, grocery stores, livery stables, etc.⁶ But the production of automobiles increased dramatically and, by 1912 or so, their numbers justified the construction of buildings specifically designed to serve the motoring public. Oil companies built many of them, sometimes utilizing architects who designed gas stations in Greek Revival, English Tudor, Spanish and other "Respectable" styles. Other early stations sought to attract attention with dramatic, "Fantastic" designs. Many stations, perhaps resembling cottages or bungalows, were designed and constructed by local builders who sought a "Domestic" image. Still other stations followed a straightforward, "Functional" design that looked like nothing else so much as a station that dispensed gasoline.⁷ Of the home-grown stations (like the Garden of Eden Station, an early Functional example), a few were distinctive because of the special vision or talent of their builders and/or because uncommon materials were used in their construction.

There was no particular way to build a gas station, no particular style to follow when the Garden of Eden Station was constructed in ca. 1928. If anything, the decade of the Twenties was a time of "anything goes" in terms of form and style. Many gas stations were being built according to the same basic plan as the Garden of Eden Station, however, and builder Ben Pickel undoubtedly selected it because it struck him as immensely practical. Compared to stations in other locales that resembled such things as airplanes, wigwams and windmills, the Garden of Eden Station is a very conservative building. But it was thoughtfully designed (a practical size, a protective roof over the pumps, provisions for restrooms) and ruggedly built along more or less traditional lines.

However, the Garden of Eden Station is mainly significant because of its sandstone block construction. While assuring relative longevity, sandstone block construction made the station distinctive and (in conjunction with its simple but elegant design) gave it a dignity which has weathered the years. Even if the early gas station was not an endangered architectural species, this uncommon use of stonework makes the Garden of Eden Station unique in at least the Johnson/Lafayette/Pettis County portion of the Show-Me Region. In the sense that a distinctive local building material was used for its construction, the Garden of Eden Station has something in common with the rubble stone and "giraffe-rock" properties erected in some of the state's Ozark counties.

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Garden of Eden Station
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In its day, sandstone's generally sterling reputation was not entirely untarnished. But while sandstone had its detractors who considered it prone to dampness, etc., its resistance to alternate freezing and thawing and the variety of purposes for which it could be used made it immensely popular with builders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the Midwest, so-called "Warrensburg" sandstone (much of which came from the Pickel Bros. quarries north of Warrensburg) was widely sought. In 1888, the reputation of this material was enhanced when it was used in remodeling and enlarging of the Missouri State Capitol. The Garden of Eden Station is constructed of precisely the same material as many government buildings, university halls, churches, hotels, banks and private mansions erected in such states as Missouri, Illinois, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky and Arkansas from the 1870s into the 1920s.⁸

In 1904, Warrensburg sandstone was described by Missouri state geologist E. R. Buckley as "a fine grained, calcareous sandstone in which the quartz grains are cemented mainly with calcium carbonate. The stone has a light bluish gray color in the upper part of the quarry, gradually taking on a deeper blue tint, as the depth increases, to within eight feet of the bottom, where the color changes to white. . . . A thin section of this stone, examined under the microscope, shows that it consists chiefly of small roundish to subangular grains of quartz with subordinate amounts of calcite, mica, chlorite, iron oxide, bitumen, feldspar and clay. The chief cementing constituents are calcite and iron oxide."⁹

The so-called "white" stone, actually a very pale shade of gray, was harder and more durable than the darker layers above it. The softer stone near the surface was more likely to be used for curbing, foundations, retaining walls, sidewalks, chimneys, hitching posts, stepping blocks, etc. Pickel is believed to have used gray sandstone from the intermediate or upper levels of what had been the main west quarry when he built the Garden of Eden Station. Specifically, stone removed for steps when this quarry was converted into the Garden of Eden Swimming Pool is thought to have gone into the station. Although not known as an artisan, Pickel, a large and physically powerful man, apparently cut and shaped most or all of the sandstone blocks used in the station, and definitely set them.¹⁰

Overall, the design selected by Pickel for his Garden of Eden Station was an immensely functional one that never became outmoded. The station's projecting roof was a thoughtful touch that sheltered motorists as well as the operator from the elements. (Drive-throughs were common but hardly universal in ca. 1928.) Pickel designed the station to include the restrooms that he thought it should have, but apparently it never became feasible to complete them. Because its design was so functional, the building will remain instantly identifiable as an old filling station even if the present gas pumps are someday removed. Because it is also picturesque, the Garden of Eden Station is popular subject matter for local art students. Antique car buffs occasionally use it as background in photographing their vehicles.

The Garden of Eden Station is an exceptional rural gas station, a dwindling type of resource, rendered in sandstone in what has become a more or less classic functional form. Because of its sandstone construction which is

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uncommon in such a structure, the Garden of Eden Station is unique within the Show-Me Region of West-Central Missouri. Although a ca. 1928 photo is too softly focused to reveal fine details, it contains sufficient information to conclude that the Garden of Eden Station easily retains architectural integrity in its primary elevation, while the other facades are equally unaltered. For all of these reasons, the Garden of Eden Station merits listing in the National Register of Historic Places on the basis of its ARCHITECTURE.

Commerce

The Garden of Eden Station is significant in terms of COMMERCE because it provided essential goods, services and commodities for motorists traveling along a section of Missouri Highway 13 from ca. 1928 through 1942, and beyond. Here, on the road between Warrensburg and the next gas station at the Locust Grove Store about 10 miles farther north, motorists could have their vehicle's fuel tank refilled and its oil and water replenished. Various other automotive supplies as well as soft drinks, etc., could be purchased from builder/operator Ben Pickel. In addition to this direct role, gas stations like the Garden of Eden were also part of the system in which commerce in a wider area was stimulated by the advent of the automobile. Secure in the knowledge that their car's needs could be satisfied, motorists were free to travel to larger, more distant towns where the selection of products was greater than locally.

By the time the Garden of Eden Station was constructed, the automobile's great transformation of America was well under way. Throughout Missouri, rural gas stations in many shapes and styles dotted the landscape along roads and highways. Probably no station was singularly important to the development of motoring, but as a group they were essential because they dispensed the fuel that enabled travelers to go virtually anywhere they desired, leading ultimately to the reshaping of society as well as the landscape.

Early growth in automobile ownership had, of course, been phenomenal. In 1924, Warrensburg historian William E. Crissey wrote that "automobiles have taken the country and city. There are seven filling stations here and several sidewalk fillers now and likely to be more when the North and South Highway (Missouri Route 13) has been established."¹¹ In 1928, the approximate year that Pickel built the Garden of Eden Station, there were 712,965 vehicle registrations (mostly for cars) in Missouri. Less than a decade earlier, in 1919, the state had only 244,427 automobiles. In 1910, when there probably were no more than 15,000 automobiles in Missouri, only about five per cent of the state's highways had been improved. All too often, the state's vast network of dirt roads turned to mud.¹²

Modernization of Missouri's roads was primarily carried out under the administrations of Governors Frederick D. Gardner (1917-21) and Arthur M. Hyde (1921-25). Under Gardner's administration, voters approved a \$60 million bond issue for highway construction and Missouri began accepting federal aid for road building. Under Hyde (who had operated an automobile business in Trenton before being elected governor), the Centennial Road Law "lifted Missouri out

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of the mud." Also under Hyde, highway construction and maintenance, formerly controlled by counties, became the responsibility of the State, and a 7,640-mile highway system to include 1,500 miles of paved roads was launched.¹³ Missouri Highway 13 was among the roads selected for paving as well as grading. Meanwhile, bridges spanning the Missouri River were recently completed several miles north of the Garden of Eden Station at Lexington and, farther east, at Waverly. This was the climate in which Pickel, presumably with high hopes for success, built his gas station.

As a historical footnote, it is perhaps worth noting that things did not turn out all that well for Pickel (and for many other operators who built gas stations during the same period.) For one thing, conditions during the Great Depression limited driving and caused the rate of automobile production to level off significantly. Plus in Pickel's case, the location of the Garden of Eden Station was less than ideal from a practical standpoint. While for many years only one gas station operated on Missouri Highway 13 between the Garden of Eden Station and U.S. Highway 40 south of Higginsville, several gas stations were available only two miles away, in Warrensburg. The Warrensburg stations served many travelers as well as local residents. The Garden of Eden Station had some loyal customers and served an occasional traveler, but was probably better for subsistence than for profit.

While the Garden of Eden Station is primarily significant for its architecture as a unique local rendering of a classical form in sandstone, it is also significant in the area of COMMERCE for its direct role as a dispenser of the gasoline, oil and water which enabled motorists to trade in more distant, larger towns, with great and irreversible impact. While the period of significance is ca. 1928-42, it perhaps should be noted that the station served motorists for several additional years. After some eight years of inactivity following Pickel's death, the station reopened as McBride's Station in about 1951. Charles McBride, who operated the station until it was bypassed by a new section of highway in 1974, was the station's second and last operator. Other than storage as at present, the Garden of Eden Station never has been used for any purpose other than as a gas station.

Endnotes

¹ Vieyra, Daniel I., "Fill 'er Up": An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979, pp. 54-77.

² Ibid.

³ The History of Johnson County, Missouri, (Kansas City: Kansas City Historical Company, 1881), pp. 427-430; Buckley, E.R. and H. A. Buehler, The Quarrying Industry of Missouri, Vol. II, 2nd Series, Missouri Bureau of Geology and Mines, (Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Co., 1904), pp. 272-277;

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and "Bernard (Ben) Pickel Dies Unexpectedly," The Warrensburg Star-Journal, Dec. 28, 1942.

⁴ George Warden, 86, said the Pickels lacked the financial resources to upgrade the quarries when their steam-powered equipment became obsolete. Apparently the family's values were more ethereal than material, because Mr. Warden also recalled that they donated large amounts of money (hundreds of thousands of dollars) as well as acreage to the Catholic church. At the time of Ben Pickel's death in 1942, a brother was a priest in Ohio and a sister was a nun in St. Louis. Mr. Warden was interviewed in August 1993.

Mrs. Madeline Kurtz, 91, also provided information about the Pickel family. As a 12-year-old, Mrs. Kurtz came from New York on the "orphan train" and was taken in by the Pickels as a companion for Clara Pickel, Ben Pickel's sister. Mrs. Kurtz recalled that the Pickels built a Quarry Schoolhouse and other facilities for the families of quarry workers. A fourth Pickel brother remained in St. Louis to operate a marble works there, she said. Mrs. Kurtz was interviewed in July 1992.

⁵ Mrs. Eva McBride, Charles McBride's widow, is the primary source for information about the station during its second period of ownership, 1951-74.

⁶ Early gas stations and the growth of auto ownership in Missouri are discussed by Karen Grace in Preservation Issues (Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 4-5), a publication of the Historic Preservation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

⁷ Vieyra, op cit., p. 10; pp. 14-77.

⁸ References to numerous specific buildings made of Warrensburg sandstone from the Pickel Bros. quarries are in the 1881 History of Johnson County, the 1904 Buckley and Buehler quarrying article and the 1942 news item about Ben Pickel's death, all cited above.

⁹ Buckley, E. R. and H. A. Buehler, op cit.

¹⁰ George Warden, who knew Ben Pickel, remembered seeing him set the sandstone blocks for his Garden of Eden Station, but could not recall seeing him actually cut and shape the stone. Gail Higgins, who also knew Pickel, suggested that someone who had worked at the quarries as an artisan may have fashioned the blocks used in the station walls. However, Warden thought that Pickel had sufficient skill to cut and shape the stone into blocks of the necessary shapes and sizes. In addition, Warden recalled that Pickel probably obtained enough sandstone to build the station when he cut steps for the Garden of Eden Swimming Pool. Warden and Higgins were interviewed in August 1993.

¹¹ Crissey, William E., Warrensburg, Mo.: A History with Folk Lore, (Warrensburg: Star-Journal Publishing Co., 1924), unpagged.

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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

¹² Vehicle registration data were obtained from the Missouri Highway Patrol.

¹³ Meyer, Duane, The Heritage of Missouri: A History, (St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 588.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Johnson County, MO

9. Major Bibliographic References

Buckley, E.R., and H. A. Buehler, The Quarrying Industry of Missouri, Vol. II, 2nd Series, Missouri Bureau of Geology and Mines. (Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Co., 1904.)

----- The History of Johnson County, Missouri. Kansas City: Kansas City Historical Company, 1881.

Meyer, Duane. The Heritage of Missouri: A History. St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1973.

Vieyra, Daniel I. "Fill 'er Up": An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

Warrensburg Standard-Herald, Jan. 1, 1943.

Warrensburg Star-Journal, Dec. 28, 1942.

Personal interviews:

Kurtz, Madeline, July 31, 1992.

Warden, George, August 6, 1993.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the nominated property is a rectangular parcel measuring 25 X 52 feet, whose northwest corner (Point A on site map) is at the east edge of the right-of-way of Old Missouri Highway 13 at a point directly opposite the south edge of the right-of-way of County Road 215NW. From Point A, proceed east 52 feet parallel to the north wall of the station to Point B; then proceed south 25 feet parallel to the rear (east) wall of the station to Point C; then proceed west 52 feet parallel to the south wall of the station to Point D; then proceed north 25 feet along the right-of-way of Old Missouri Highway 13 to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification: The boundary of the nominated property includes the station and two small sections of a sidewalk associated with the station and extends to the edge of Old Missouri Highway 13, encompassing a small portion of the drive which was historically served the station. The boundary is drawn to exclude a modern dwelling and modern storage building west and south of the station.

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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information is the same for all photographs, unless otherwise noted:

Garden of Eden Station
Old Highway 13 at County Road 215NW, Warrensburg vicinity, Johnson County, MO
Photographer: Roger Maserang
Negatives: Show-Me Regional Planning Commission
P.O. Box 348 (122 Hout St.)
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093

Garden of Eden Station and Old Highway 13
July 1993
Facing southeast
1 of 10

Main (southwest) elevation
July 1993
Facing northeast
2 of 10

Main (southwest) elevation with builder/operator Ben Pickel
Ca. 1928
Facing northeast
Photographer unknown (Photo courtesy Mrs. Eva McBride and Mrs. Madeline Kurtz)
3 of 10

Northwest and southwest elevations
July 1993
Facing southeast
4 of 10

Southeast elevation
July 1993
Facing northwest
5 of 10

Southeast and Northeast (rear) elevations
July 1993
Facing west
6 of 10

View from station entrance
July 1993
Facing southwest
7 of 10

South column

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Garden of Eden Station
Johnson County, MO

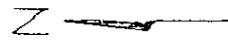
July 1993
Facing northwest
8 of 10

Station interior (looking toward entrance)
July 1993
Facing south
9 of 10

Station interior
July 1993
Facing northeast
10 of 10

GARDEN
OF EDEN
STATION,
JOHNSON
COUNTY, MO

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