

# BVL HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESEARCH

## Century Service Station, built 1929 80 Ashley Avenue, Charleston, SC

### HISTORIC TIMELINE

**1916:** Cleo L. and William J. Cantwell sold No. 80 Ashley Avenue to Abbie L. Moore, who used the property as a rental.<sup>1</sup>

*The property, measuring 70' x 55', was occupied by a late-nineteenth century, two-story frame single house that served as the Cantwell family's primary residence as early as 1908.<sup>2</sup> Cantwell's Grocery occupied the first floor as early as 1915 (Figure 1).*

**1925:** The property was described by realtor C. Deas Gadsden as an “excellent location for a filling station” in an advertisement for sale.<sup>3</sup> Aerials from this time depict a two-story, L-shaped dwelling with a north-facing piazza (Figure 2).

**1929: APRIL 1st:** Moore sold the property to local firm Economy Oil Company (Figure 3-4).<sup>4</sup> Economy Oil Company was organized in 1913 and was one of the largest independent distributors of “high grade gasoline” in the state at this time. The company’s president was Harry J. O’Neill (1892-1952) (Figure 5). O’Neill was the former business partner of author DuBose Heyward in the insurance firm Heyward & O’Neill, which was founded in 1909 but dissolved by 1913 due to Heyward’s “demands in literary work.”<sup>5</sup> O’Neill’s sister was renowned artist and preservationist Elizabeth O’Neill Verner.

*Elizabeth O’Neill Verner and O’Neill’s aunt Antoinette Barbot O’Neill were vocal in the preservation movement in Charleston at this time, often fighting the demolition of old buildings for the construction of filling stations. Within the year, for example, Antoinette Barbot O’Neill and founder of the Preservation Society of Charleston Susan Pringle Frost protested the construction of a filling station around the corner at the intersection of Rutledge Avenue and Montagu Street, calling it “a shocking invasion of a most attractive, residential section.”<sup>6</sup> At this time, there were no laws that restricted the construction of filling stations in any part of the city. This would soon change with the proposal of a Standard Oil gas station at the corner of Meeting and Chalmers Streets, now known as the Historic Charleston Foundation bookstore, after significant opposition from the public.<sup>7</sup>*

**APRIL 6th:** A demolition request was made by Economy Oil Company for the single house at No. 80 Ashley Avenue.<sup>8</sup>

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1 Charleston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book E28-170, Charleston County, SC.

2 City of Charleston Directory, 1907-1907, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

3 “For Sale,” 1925 April 4, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

4 Charleston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book D35-42, Charleston County, SC.

5 “Harry J. O’Neill Named as Advisor,” 1929 September 12, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

6 “Orderly Growth,” 1930 June 9, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

7 “Rehearing This Afternoon On Filling Station Site,” 1929 October 23, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

8 “Building Permits,” 1929 April 6, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

**APRIL 19th:** Economy Oil Company requested a building permit to erect a “filling station at 80 Ashley Avenue.”<sup>9</sup>

*Economy Oil Company constructed a Colonial Revival-style station that was comprised of a one-story office with a connecting garage bay. A second garage bay was also erected in the property’s northeast corner. Built using historic brick laid in the Flemish brick bond, the station featured brownstone sills, wooden sash windows, a bell-cast roof, jack arches and three equidistant iron lamp posts along the complex’s main elevation, most of which were salvaged from another historic property. The office contained an open floor plan with a small office at the northeast corner and was finished with a concrete floor and plaster walls.*

*The contractor for the structure was Dawson Engineering, which often used recycled bricks in their projects.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that the building materials came from the eighteenth-century brick structure at No. 44 Broad Street. Demolished one year prior for the Citizens and Southern Bank, the building contained similar stone sills as the gas station and most of the materials, such as the ironwork and woodwork, were donated to the Charleston Museum. While Dawson Engineering likely did not work on this project, O’Neill had affiliations with the museum, possibly through E. Milby Burton (1898-1977).<sup>11</sup> Burton was a former insurance agent who became director of the museum by 1932 and had been on the board in the years leading up to his appointment. He would eventually became vice president of the Economy Oil Company.*

**MAY 18th:** According to the *News & Courier*, “ancient bricks caressed by hands of time” were used to construct the new station, which the paper called Charleston’s “latest gasoline haven.”<sup>12</sup> The newspaper referred to the use of old masonry as “adapting the charm of old Charleston to a highly modern use,” confirming that a new process was used for removing mortar from the bricks “so that they will have the appearance of genuine age, without the speckled white, which has marred other attempts at duplication of old houses.” The newspaper described the complex as reflecting “old architecture” containing a “quaint house,” a five-foot brick wall along the eastern boundary, “arched carriage gates” that led to wash racks and greasing pits, and gasoline tanks in a “concrete courtyard.”<sup>13</sup>

**JULY 6th:** The Century Service Station formally opened and was operated by the Glover-Pinckney Tire and Battery Company, owned by Joseph Glover, Jr. (1893-1944) (Figure 6). Glover and O’Neill served on the Publicity, Tourist and Development Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce together, and were integral in the establishment of the first Cooper River Bridge that year.<sup>14</sup> Glover-Pinckney also operated a “drive in and out” station at No. 155-157 Meeting Street, which has since been replaced by the Days Inn.<sup>15</sup>

The *Evening Post* described the Century Service Station as “most attractive” and being constructed “along unique lines.”<sup>16</sup> It offered battery service, car washing, polishing, waxing, and Alemite lubrication as well as gasoline, oil and tire service. The *News & Courier* called it “Charleston’s newest and most beautiful station.”<sup>17</sup>

Rufus “Tom” Thompson German (1907-1992), a 23-year-old Black gas station attendant, was hired as one of the station’s first workers. Tom would remain on site for the next few decades and eventually become operator.<sup>18</sup>

**NOV.:** George William LaTrace (1892-1963) was named operator of the station. A native of St. Louis, MO, he was stationed in Charleston with the U.S. Navy during World War I and remained in the city to serve as a vulcanizer for tire companies following the war.<sup>19</sup> At this time, he resided at No. 81A Ashley Avenue, directly across 9 “Building Permits,” 1929 April 19, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

10 “Work Started on Woolworth Store,” 1929 January 26, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

11 “Woodwork to Museum,” 1928 May 18, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

12 “Old Charleston Model For New Gasoline Station,” 1929 May 18, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

13 Ibid.

14 “Directors Favor Publicity Bureau,” 1929 January 16, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

15 “Century Service Station to Open,” 1929 July 5, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

16 Ibid.

17 “The Glover-Pinckney Co.,” 1929 July 6, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

18 “Negro Runs Service Station, 95% of Clientele is White,” 1928 September 19, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

19 City of Charleston Directory, 1920-1924, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC; “George William LaTrace,” 1963 May 31, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

the street.<sup>20</sup>

**DEC.:** Chicago firm Pure Oil Company purchased shares of the Economy Oil Company, which allowed the local firm to tap into national resources.<sup>21</sup> Pure Oil Company installed “bright blue pumps” at the Century Service Station.<sup>22</sup>

**1930: MARCH:** Glover-Pinckney filed for bankruptcy.<sup>23</sup>

**1933:** The Century Service Station was one of sixty-one stations located throughout the city (Figure 7).<sup>24</sup>

*Among the sixty-one service stations, Century Service Station is one of seven stations that still survive.<sup>25</sup> Those remaining include the former Coastal Service Station at No. 1072 King Street, General Battery and Tire Company at No. 131 Spring Street, an unnamed station at No. 125 Spring Street, Motor Inn Service Station at No. 650 King Street, Standard Oil Company at No. 108 Meeting Street, Standard Oil Company at No. 246 Calhoun Street and Standard Oil Company at No. 211 Rutledge Avenue.*

**1936:** Donald Condit Davis (1912-2007) was recruited to manage the service station. Davis was born in Panama during his father’s tenure as an engineer for the construction of the Panama Canal and moved to Charleston as a young boy after his father relocated to the Charleston Navy Yard. Davis served as a rock crusher laying roads in Nantahala National Forest with the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933 and managed service stations in Charleston since 1934.<sup>26</sup>

Tom had informally run the gas station before Davis’ arrival and fostered a significant amount of relationships with car owners in and around the neighborhood. Decades later, Davis recalled a booming business within the first year of his management due to Tom’s procurement of clients, which forced the men to work on cars both in the service bays and on the street. In addition to Tom, Davis hired at least five more attendants, including another man named Tom from Yemassee who they called “Speed” due to his slow working style.<sup>27</sup>

**1938:** Due to the influx of clients, a central garage was added to expand and connect the service bays at the cost of \$142 (Figure 8).<sup>28</sup> This new garage reflected the design and scale of the original bays.

**1940:** Davis was recorded as working for “H.J. O’Neill of Gulf Oil Company” at No. 80 Ashley Avenue.<sup>29</sup>

**1941:** Davis officially became the owner of the Century Service Station, described at this time as a modern and “up-to-date” station offering “one-stop service.” In addition to providing gas and oil changes, services included battery and tire replacement and emergency road-side service (Figure 9-10).<sup>30</sup>

According to Davis’ granddaughter Brook Trego, Davis left behind significant oral histories of his life in Charleston and often recalled the station’s patrons. One of the most frequent customers was Cornelia Farrow Roebling, the widow of Washington Roebling who designed and engineered the Brooklyn Bridge with his father. The station was positioned along the quickest route in and out of the city from her house at No. 64 South Battery, which she purchased in the late 1920s.<sup>31</sup>

20 City of Charleston Directory, 1931, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

21 “Pure Oil Company Plans Reshipment Plant Here,” 1929 December 19, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

22 Ibid.

23 “Bankruptcy Petition,” 1930 March 21, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

24 “We, the undersigned...” 1933 August 29, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

25 Ibid.

26 Oral History recorded by Don Davis, private collection of the Trego family.

27 Ibid.

28 “Building Permits,” 1938 September 22, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

29 “Donald Condit Davis,” 1940 October 16. *U.S. World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947*. Ancestry.com.

30 “Complete Service Offered by Century,” 1941 December 2, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

31 Interview with Brook Trego, in-person interview by author, 2023 May 12.

**1942:** Davis left to join the Army Air Force as a glider pilot while Speed managed the gas station.<sup>32</sup> After Speed was drafted later that year, Tom took over management (Figures 11-12).<sup>33</sup> Tom employed two attendants and his son Julius, a senior at Avery High School, after school and on weekends.<sup>34</sup>

**1944:** The structure was depicted on a Sanborn Fire Insurance map for the first time. It was recorded as a one-story brick filling station with three bays. The main office was finished with a concrete floor (Figure 13).

**FEB.:** Thompson sought “two colored service station attendants” for the property.<sup>35</sup>

**1948:** In an article titled “Negro Runs Service Station,” the *News & Courier* highlighted Tom’s work as a Black operator with a “95% white clientele” (Figure 14). Regarding his success, Tom credited “courtesy and service,” citing dedication to hard work and trust as integral for a Black businessman to be successful “in a white section” of the city.<sup>36</sup>

The article confirmed that the gas station was made with “English bricks from old Charleston buildings” and was designed to mimic Charleston’s overall historic architecture. It also confirmed that the station was named “Century Service Station” for its history-inspired design and century-old materials, embracing the motto “100 years old in design but up to the minute in quality and service.”<sup>37</sup>

**1950: JUNE:** Davis, who owned a gas station at Spring Street and Ashley Avenue after the war, returned to the Century Service Station and Tom became an assistant manager.<sup>38</sup> At this time, Tom began his ministry studies and would eventually become a well-known reverend and elder of several Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal churches in the Charleston area from the 1950s until his death in 1992.<sup>39</sup> In 1950, however, census records documented Tom as a “car washer.”<sup>40</sup>

The station advertised the sale of used cars that were parked on the property, including a 1940 Oldsmobile, 1943 Buick and a Model-A Ford.<sup>41</sup>

**1954:** Lester A. Hutto (1920-1992), former Charleston Navy Yard steamfitter, took over management the station.<sup>42</sup> He would ultimately serve as City of Charleston Sheriff during the 1970s.

**1955:** Economy Oil Company was purchased by Hay Oil Company, Inc. (Figure 15).<sup>43</sup> At this time Economy Oil Company was headed by E. Milby Burton, the director of the Charleston Museum.<sup>44</sup> Hay Oil Company was owned by locals Frank Seabrook Hay (1905-1989) and Jane Chaplin Hay (1907-2007), who were also trustees of Economy Oil Company. Hay was a former manager for the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey during World War II.<sup>45</sup> They immediately took over ownership of the Century Service Station.

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32 Oral History recorded by Don Davis, private collection of the Trego family.

33 “‘30s service station a glimpse into city’s automotive past,” 2004 April 3, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC; Oral History recorded by Don Davis, private collection of the Trego family.

34 “Negro Runs Service Station, 95% of Clientele is White,” 1948 September 19, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

35 “WANTED,” 1955 February 16, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

36 “Negro Runs Service Station, 95% of Clientele is White,” 1948 September 19, *News & Courier*, Charleston SC.

37 *Ibid.*

38 “Charleston Business,” 1950 June 8, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

39 “Elder R.T. German dies in local hospital,” 1992 September 21, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

40 1950 U.S. Federal Census.

41 Various advertisements, 1950, *Evening Post* and *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

42 City of Charleston Directory, 1954, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

43 Charleston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book D35-42, Charleston County, SC.

44 “Hay Buys Economy Oil,” 1955 September 16, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

45 “Frank Seabrook Hay,” 1940 October 16. *U.S. World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947*. Ancestry.com.

**1958:** By this time, Georgia-native Etheridge “Alex” Silvey (1918-1969) managed the station.<sup>46</sup> As a mill worker in Augusta, GA prior to World War II, Silvey moved to Charleston and worked at other service stations as early as 1950.<sup>47</sup>

**1962:** Silvey sought “an experienced white man” who was “mechanically inclined” for the station.<sup>48</sup>

**1969:** Silvey died of a heart attack. On his death record, he was documented as the operator of the Century Service Station while residing at No. 174 Wentworth Street, which is directly next door.<sup>49</sup>

**1971:** Theodore “Teddy” L. Weeks, retired city purchasing agent for the City of Charleston, operated the station (Figure 16-18). He had entered into the gas station business as early as 1939.<sup>50</sup>

**1975:** The station is not listed in city directories by this time.

**1977:** Shenandoah’s Auto Repair opened at the Century Service Station.<sup>51</sup> The station was still active, offering Phillip 66 gas.

**1978: OCT:** Hay Oil Company sold the property to Hardee Brothers, Inc., who immediately sold it to widow and preservationist Arden Ball Howard (1915-2004).<sup>52</sup> Prior to her purchase, Howard was known for fighting to protect the historic fire tower near Meeting and Queen Streets in 1975.<sup>53</sup> A few months after her purchase of the Century Service Station, she wrote a lengthy “Letter to the Editor” in the *News & Courier* titled “Preservation is Progress” on the power of preservation and adaptive reuse.<sup>54</sup> According to her son Demi Howard, she was a close friend of Frances Edmunds, the first director of Historic Charleston Foundation.<sup>55</sup>

The Century Service Station closed under Howard’s ownership.

**1981:** The Board of Architectural Review approved plans to convert the station into office space but did not approve the proposal for the construction of a new fence along the west and south boundaries (Figure 19).<sup>56</sup>

**1982:** Howard sold the property to her son John “Demi” B. Howard.<sup>57</sup> Demi Howard operated the structure as a headquarters for his solar energy company. During his ownership, he re-roofed the northern bays and installed solar panels (Figure 20-22). A second floor and stairs were added to the interior of the main structure (Figure 23). Extra floor joists and walls were also installed at the second floor for a proposed bathroom that was never completed.<sup>58</sup> The underground storage tanks and pumps were also removed and interior plaster of the office covered with drywall. Due to the building’s former use, Demi Howard claimed that “the whole building reeked of oil” and the liquid “permeated the walls” despite the building not being used as a service station for many years.

**1988:** Demi Howard closed his business and the property was vacated.<sup>59</sup>

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46 City of Charleston Directory, 1958, Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

47 “Etheridge Alex Silvey,” 1940 October 16. *U.S. World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947*. Ancestry.com [last accessed 2023 April 8]; 1950 U.S. Federal Census.

48 “Experienced,” 1962 July 26, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

49 “Etheridge A. Silvey,” 1969 February 15. *South Carolina, U.S. Death Records, 1821-1971*. Charleston County Public Library, Charleston, SC.

50 “A Resolution,” 1979 October 26, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

51 “Ashley at Wentworth,” 1977 September 24, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

52 Charleston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book H117-352, 353, Charleston County, SC.

53 “Much Owed to Firemen,” 1975 February 11, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

54 “Preservation is Progress,” 1979 April, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

55 Interview with Demi Howard, in-person interview by author, 2023 March 14.

56 “BAR Approves Demolition of Piazzas,” 1981 February 26, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

57 Charleston County Register of Deeds, Deed Book R127-179, Charleston County, SC.

58 Interview with Demi Howard, in-person interview by author, 2023 March 14.

59 Ibid.

**2002:** Demi Howard proposed to demolish the building's northern bays to erect a large dwelling within the northern half of the property while preserving the station's former office (Figure 24-27). This proposal was denied by the Board of Architectural Review and the structure remained vacant.

**2006:** The windows were boarded and exterior lamp lights were removed by this time (Figure 28).

**2017-**

**2019:** The garage doors were removed between June of 2017 and July of 2019, per Google Street View.

**2023:** The property was sold to 80 Ashley, LLC, a company owned by Historic Charleston Foundation (see current photos).<sup>60</sup>

*Despite significant deterioration, the service station remains a well-preserved and exceptional example of a Colonial-Revival gas station in Charleston, symbolizing the city's evolving building inventory in the pre World War II period and early preservation efforts to maintain the character of historic neighborhoods.*

## FIGURES

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Figure 1: undated photograph of Cantwell's Grocery at No. 80 Ashley Avenue (Historic Charleston Foundation)



Figure 2: 1920s aerials of the intersection of Ashley Avenue and Wentworth Street (U.S. National Archives)

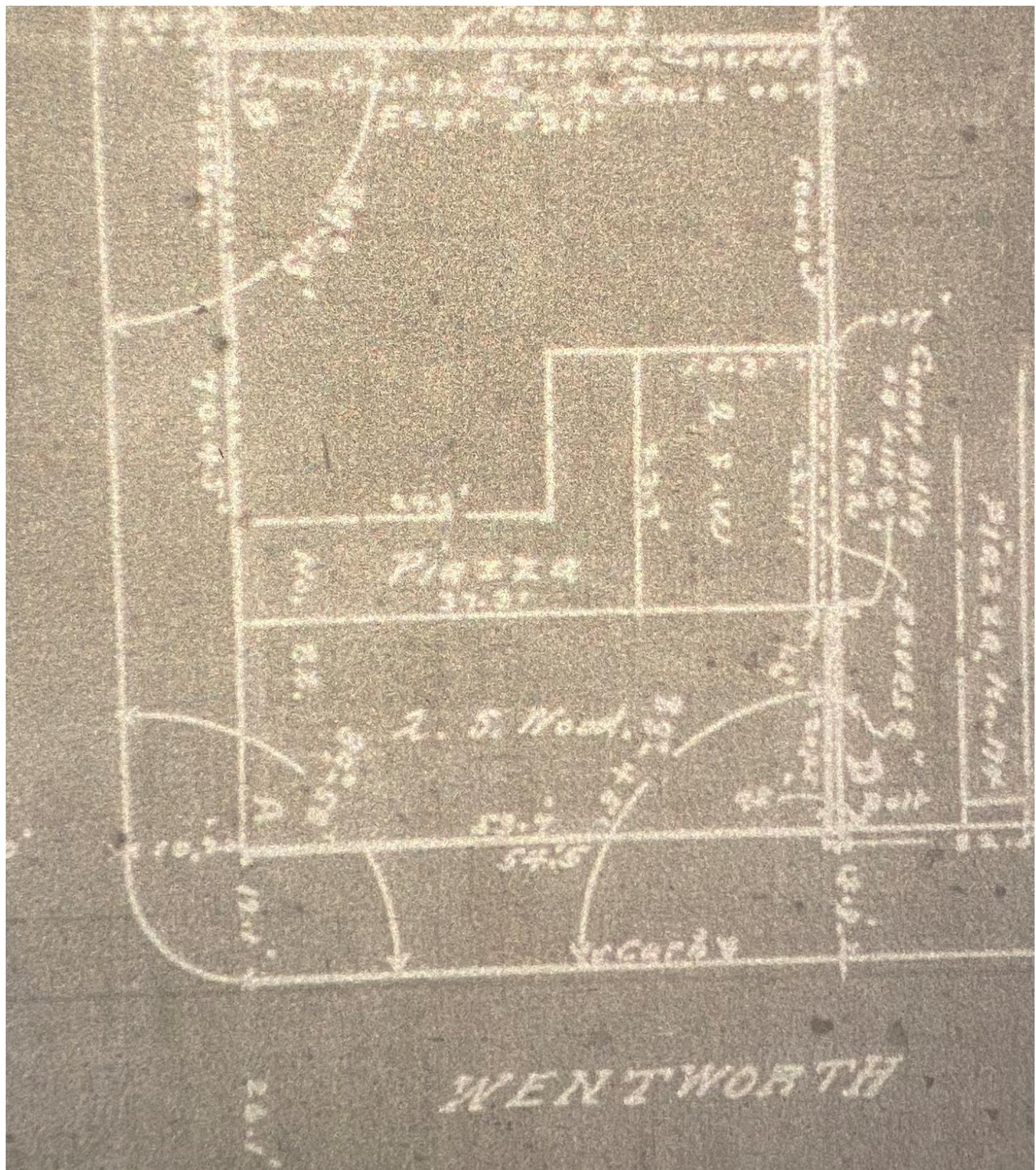


Figure 3: Detail of 1929 plat of No. 80 Ashley Avenue (Charleston County Deed Book D35-42)

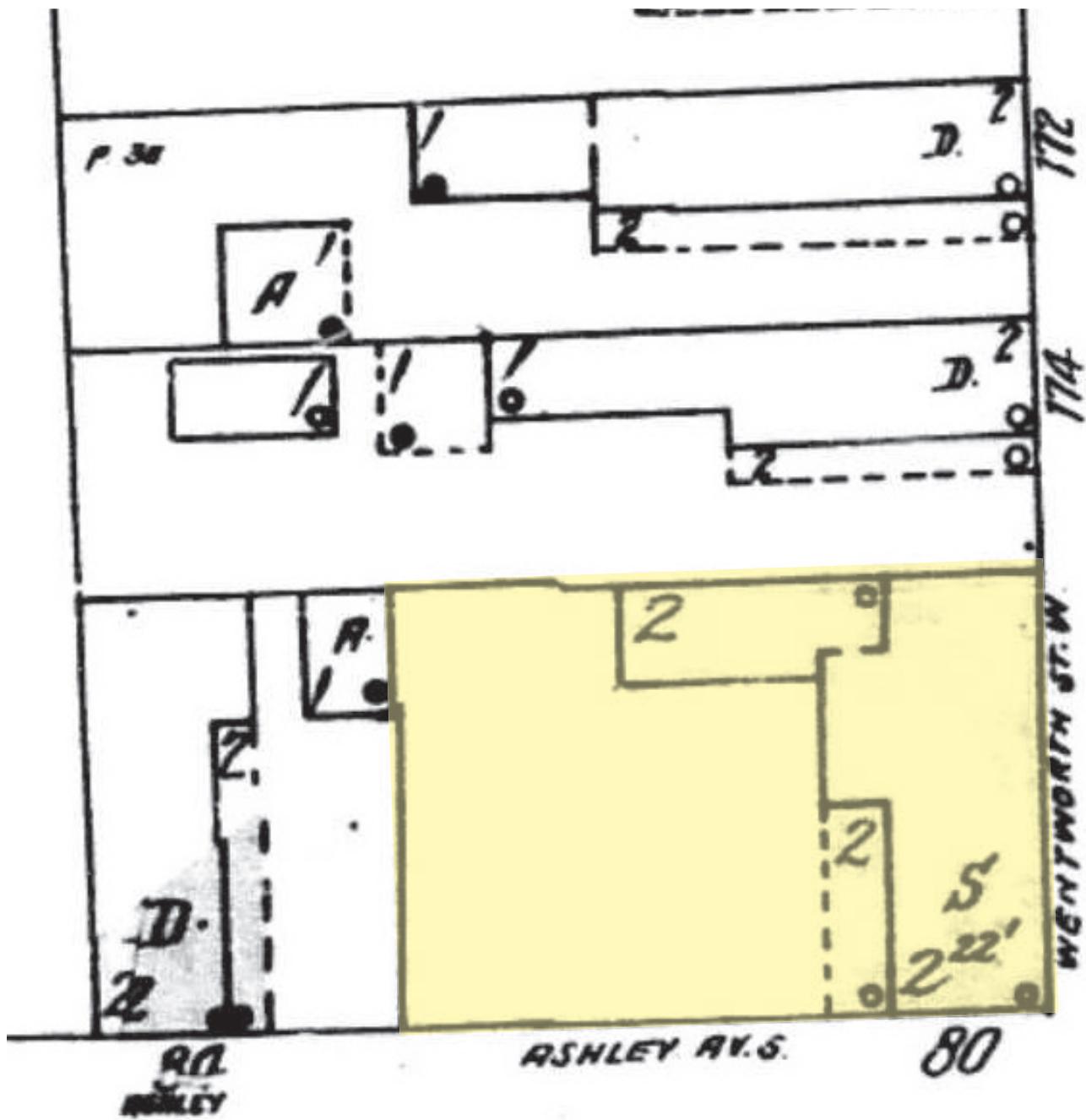


Figure 4: Detail of 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Charleston County Public Library)



Figure 5: Undated photograph of Harry O'Neill (South Carolina Historical Society)

# The Glover-Pinckney Co.

Announces The Opening  
Saturday, July 6th. of Their Unique New

## CENTURY SERVICE STATION

CORNER WENTWORTH ST. AND ASHLEY AVE.

PHONE 12

"Charleston's Newest and Most Beautiful Service Station"

OUR SERVICE AT BOTH OF OUR STATIONS INCLUDES

**Batteries, Washing and Polishing  
Alemite Lubrication, Washing  
Gasoline, Oils, Tires, Vulcanizing!**

THE MOST  
UP-TO-DATE  
**HIGH-PRESSURE**  
**WASHING**  
—and—  
**ALEMITE**  
**LUBRICATING**  
SERVICE  
IN THE CITY!

We are opening this new station at Wentworth Street and Ashley Avenue because we believe motorists in this section of the city will appreciate the convenience of a "near-by" service station that is 100% modern and offers every service motorists need.

It has been built beautifully unique so that it is actually a beauty spot—and we will keep it clean and attractive, and render the highest type of service, so that you will enjoy coming to it again and again for your every automobile need—and phoning for our courteous road service when in trouble.

ROAD  
SERVICE

Call us for Tire Trouble, for Battery Trouble, for Gasoline. We maintain a fleet of Fast Road Cars to give quick, dependable service.

PHONES 157-158 Meeting St. 1967

Wentworth Street  
and Ashley Avenue 12

**WILLARD**  
**BATTERIES**  
=====

**RECHARGING**  
**AND**  
**RENTAL**  
**SERVICE**

... In fact, we offer you the most complete Battery Service in the city . . . on any make battery!

## GLOVER-PINCKNEY TIRE & BATTERY CO.

157-159 MEETING THRU TO HORLBECK AND ASHLEY AVE. CORNER OF WENTWORTH

Figure 6: 1929 July 6, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC



Figure 7: (top) early-to-mid 1930s photograph of the Century Service Station; (bottom) details of the same photograph; the original second bay is pictured on the left (Private collection of the Trego family)



Figure 8: Late 1930s photograph of the Century Service Station (Private collection of the Trego family)



Figure 9: 1941 photograph capturing the parapet of the Century Service Station (Gibbes Museum of Art)

# The Century Service Station

DONALD C. DAVIS, Owner  
LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF WENTWORTH AND ASHLEY

DIAL  
**7828**

**GAS**  
WASHING



**OIL**  
WAXING

DIAL  
**7828**

FOR  
INSTANT  
ROAD  
SERVICE  
DIAL  
**7828**  
—●—



FOR  
INSTANT  
ROAD  
SERVICE  
DIAL  
**7828**  
—●—

AUTHORIZED

**AUTO-LITE  
BATTERIES**

SALES  
AND  
SERVICE

(S-34)

WE ARE EQUIPPED TO OFFER TWO NEW TYPES OF  
SERVICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

Thorough cleaning of  
motor and chassis with  
the new Kerrick "Hot  
Vapor" Cleaner.

Quick battery recharg-  
ing without removal  
from car while you  
wait—no rental costs.

AUTHORIZED

**AUTO-LITE  
BATTERIES**

SALES  
AND  
SERVICE



Figure 11: Photograph of Davis during his World War II service  
(1944 January 27, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC)



## **RUFUS THOMPSON**

*Figure 12: Photograph of Rufus “Tom” Thompson German  
(1952 February 23, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC)*

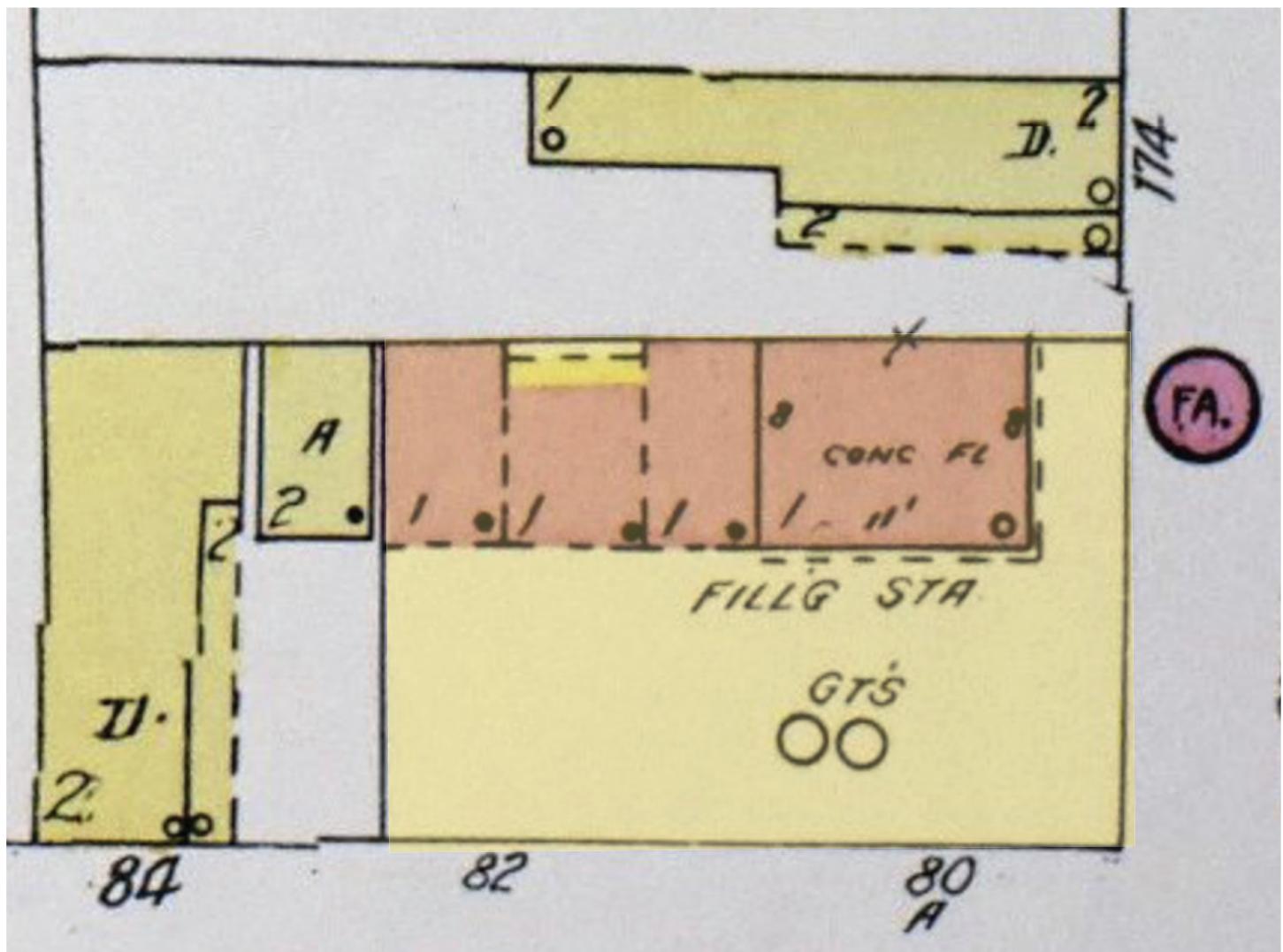
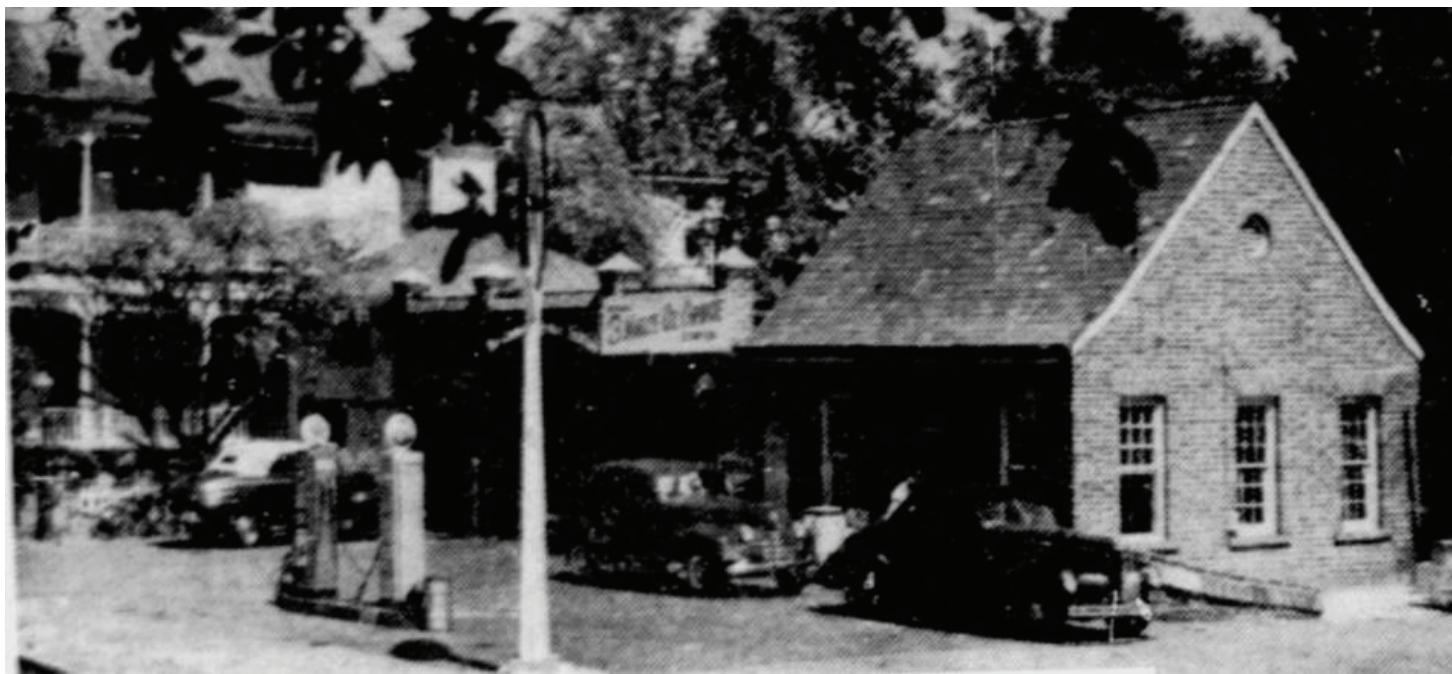


Figure 13: Detail of 1944 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Charleston County Public Library)



**SUCCESSFUL STATION**—Rufus Thompson, negro who operates the Century service station at Ashley avenue and Wentworth street, finds that service and hard work are all that are necessary for success. His station is in a white section and 95 per cent of his customers are white. (Staff Photo by Reilly.)

## Negro Runs Service Station, 95% of Clientele Is White

English bricks from old Charleston buildings were used to construct a service station at Ashley avenue and Wentworth street back in 1929.

In keeping with the aged bricks and with Charleston's historic architecture, the station was designed along simple colonial lines. It was named the Century service station in accord with its design and material.

Among helpers starting to work when the business was opened was 23 year-old negro, Rufus Thompson, who is still there. He had moved to the city from Awendaw

at the age of 14 and, after a couple of years with a contractor, began working in service stations.

Before World War II Donald C. Davis was proprietor of the Century station. He went into the army air corps early in the war and his successor gave up the business after a few months.

Thompson took over operation of the station in January, 1942, and has had a growing business ever since.

He employs two regular attendants and extra help as the demand warrants. In addition, his son, St. Julian Thompson, a senior at Avery high school, works there in the afternoons and on Saturdays.

Thompson estimates his clientele as being about 95 per cent white. About half are customers of long standing and most trust his judgment in taking care of their automobiles.

Thompson said a negro need have no difficulty in dealing with white patrons. All it takes is courtesy and service, he explained. With those characteristics and hard work, a negro can easily make a success in this area, he believes.

Thompson, his wife and son reside at 170 Coming street. He hopes some day to expand his business. Meanwhile, he is concentrating on giving the best service possible to the clientele he has.

The Century station's motto is, "100 years old in design but up to the minute in quality and service."

the low price field today, the required terms would run \$600 down and roughly \$80 a month for 18 months.

The monthly payments alone would take one-fourth the monthly income of a \$3,840-a-year family, while operating would swell the expense further.

The down payment could come out of savings, still plentiful and widely distributed. Those with old car to trade in could count it toward the down payment.

Auto manufacturers' representatives here said they were not worried about sales of new cars, observing that:

1. The new control requirements—a third down in cash and the rest in 18 months (15 months, if the credit balance is under \$1,000)—are little if any stiffer than past terms of major auto finance companies.

2. The backlog of orders on hand now is big enough to absorb all the new cars that can be turned out in the next two years—at which time the credit controls are scheduled to expire.

Nobody knew how many of these orders were placed by persons wanting a new car not to keep but to resell at the profit afforded while "new used" cars bring premiums of \$300 to \$2,000 above listed prices for new ones.

The late model and "new used" cars were the most vulnerable to the new credit controls, although the controls apply in milder form to a dozen other articles such as refrigerators, radios, furniture and various household appliances.

For these latter, control requirements will be a downpayment of

Listen to  
**"The Eternal  
Light"**  
**TODAY 12:30 P. M.**  
**WTMA**

**STORY & CLARK  
SPINET**  
**—PIANOS—**

Figure 14: 1948 September 19, News & Courier, Charleston, SC

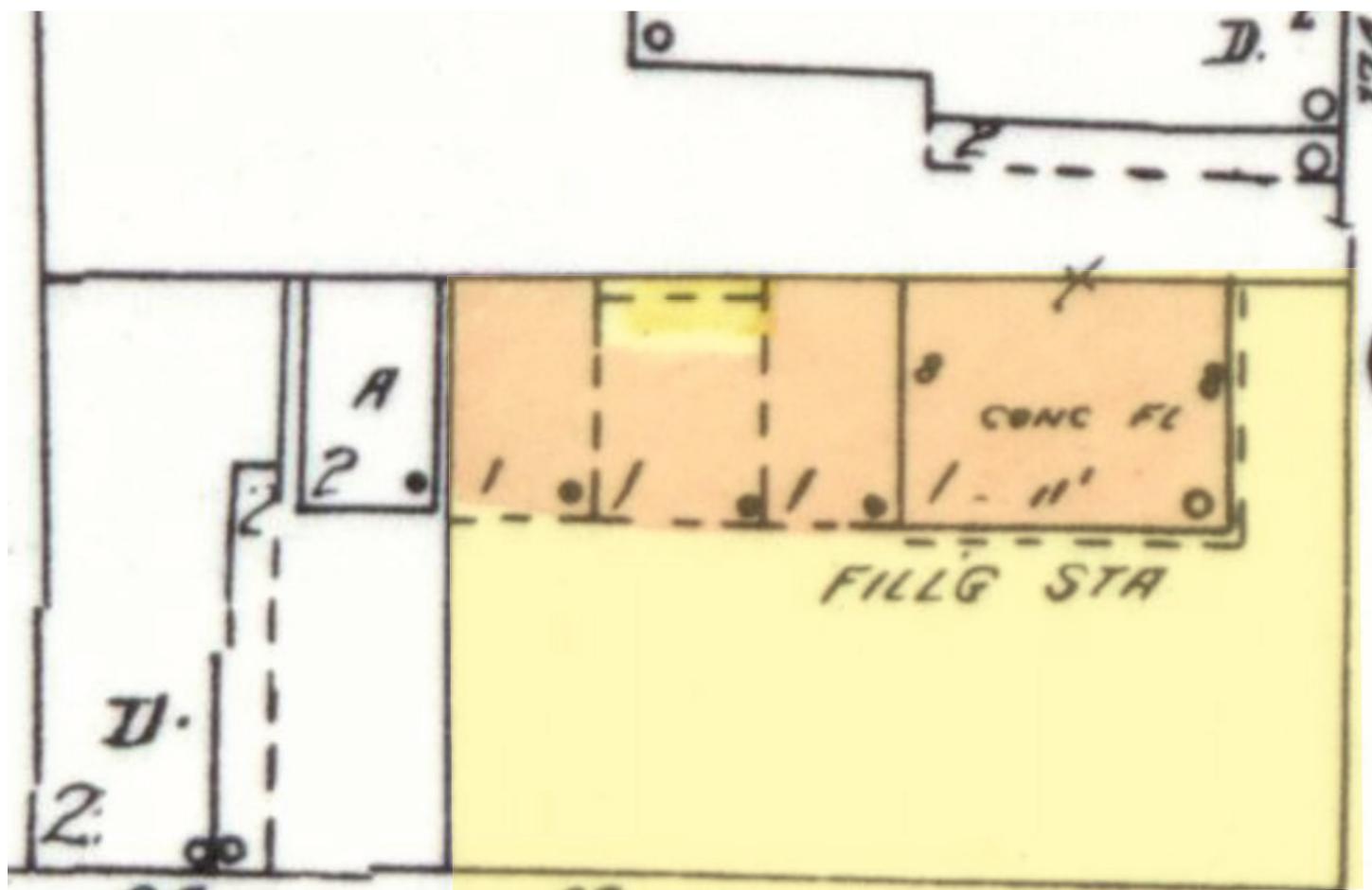


Figure 15: Detail of 1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Charleston County Public Library)



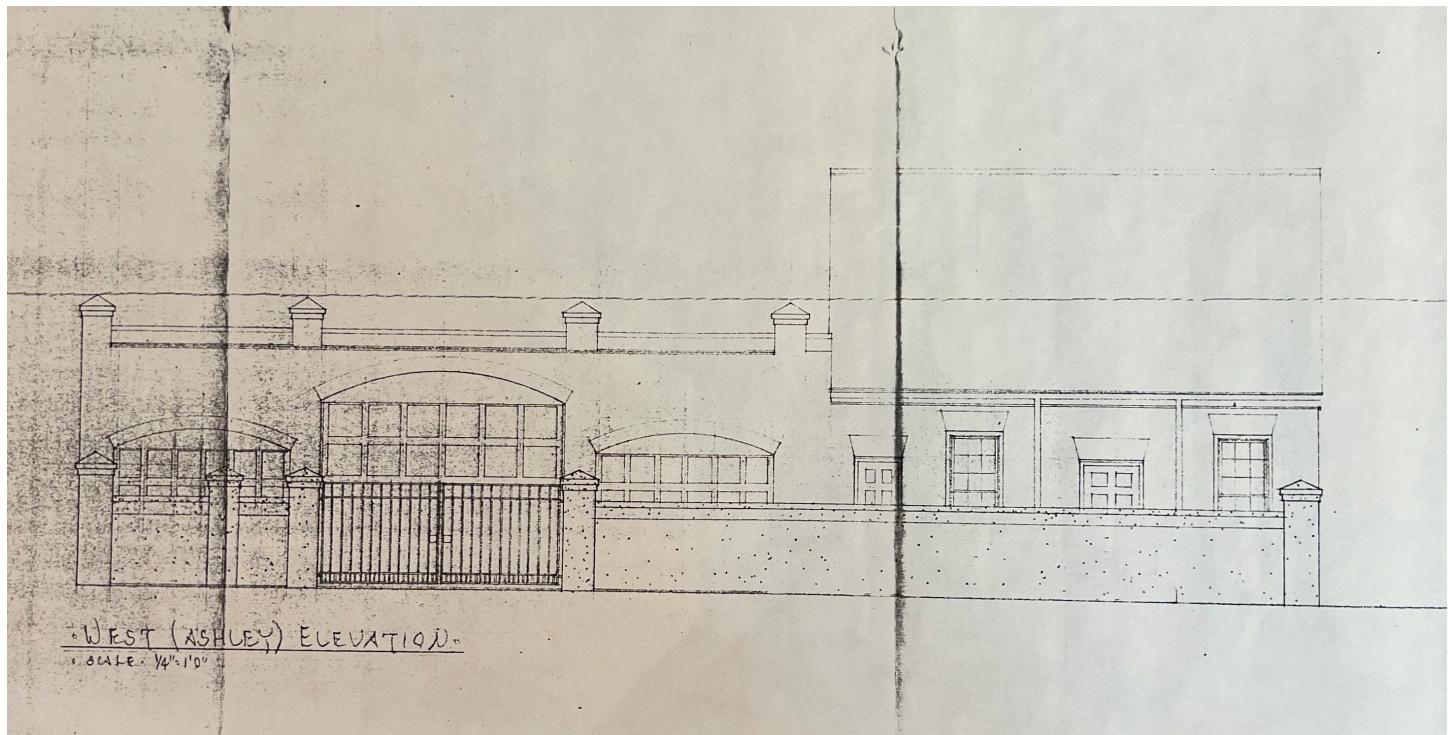
Figure 16: Late 1960s, early 1970s photographs of the Century Service Station  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)



*Figure 17: Late 1960s, early 1970s photograph of the Century Service Station  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)*



Figure 18: Late 1960s, early 1970s photograph of the Century Service Station  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)



*Figure 19: 1981 proposed plans for a fence around the Century Service Station  
(Private collection of Demi Howard)*



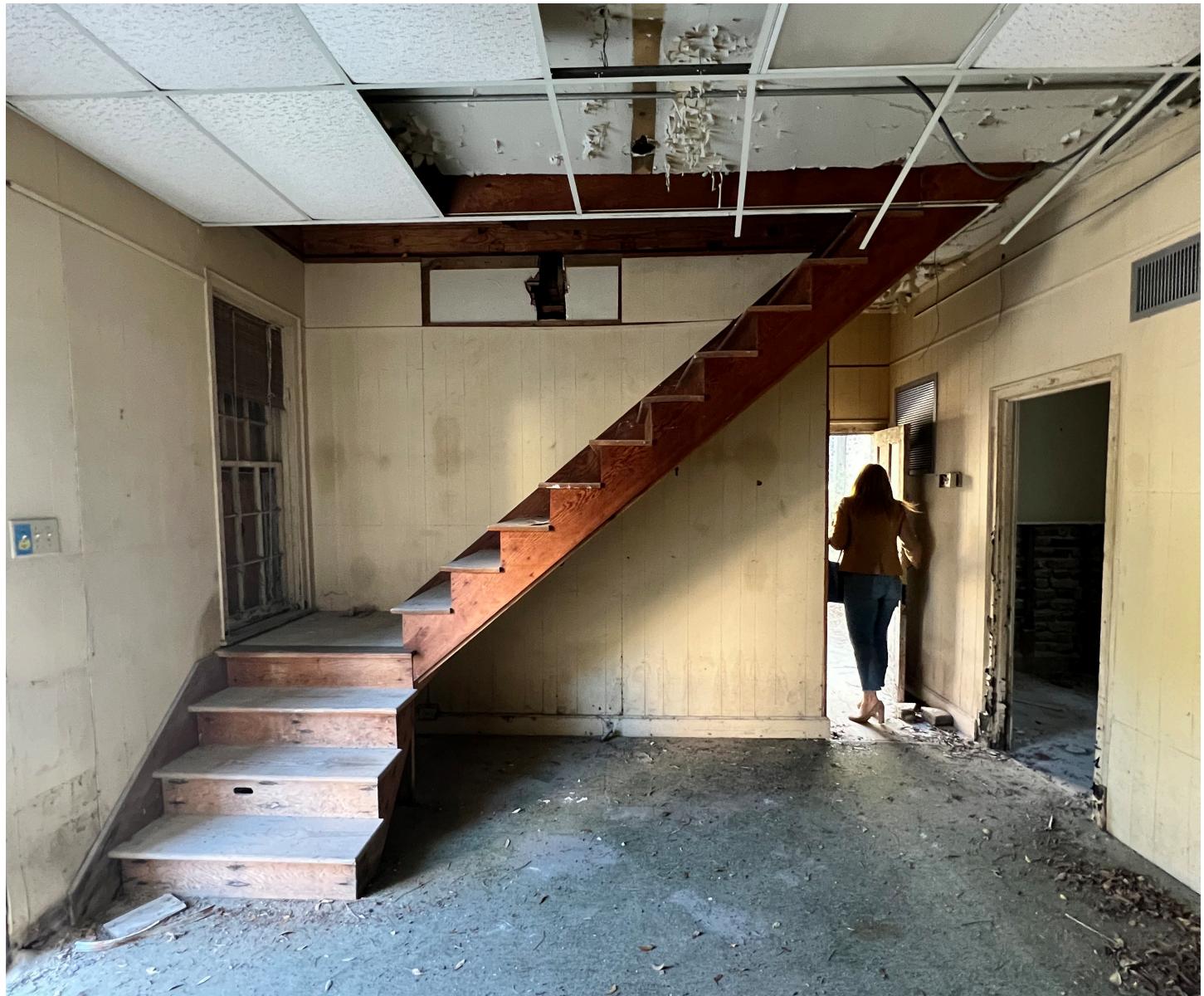
Figure 20: 1980s photograph of the Century Service Station; solar panels can be seen above the service bays  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)



*Figure 21: 1980s photograph of the Century Service Station; solar panels can be seen above the service bays  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)*



Figure 22: 1980s photograph of the Century Service Station; solar panels can be seen above the service bays  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)



*Figure 23: View of 1980s stairs, looking north in main office towards service bays  
(Photo taken by BVL HPR, 2023)*

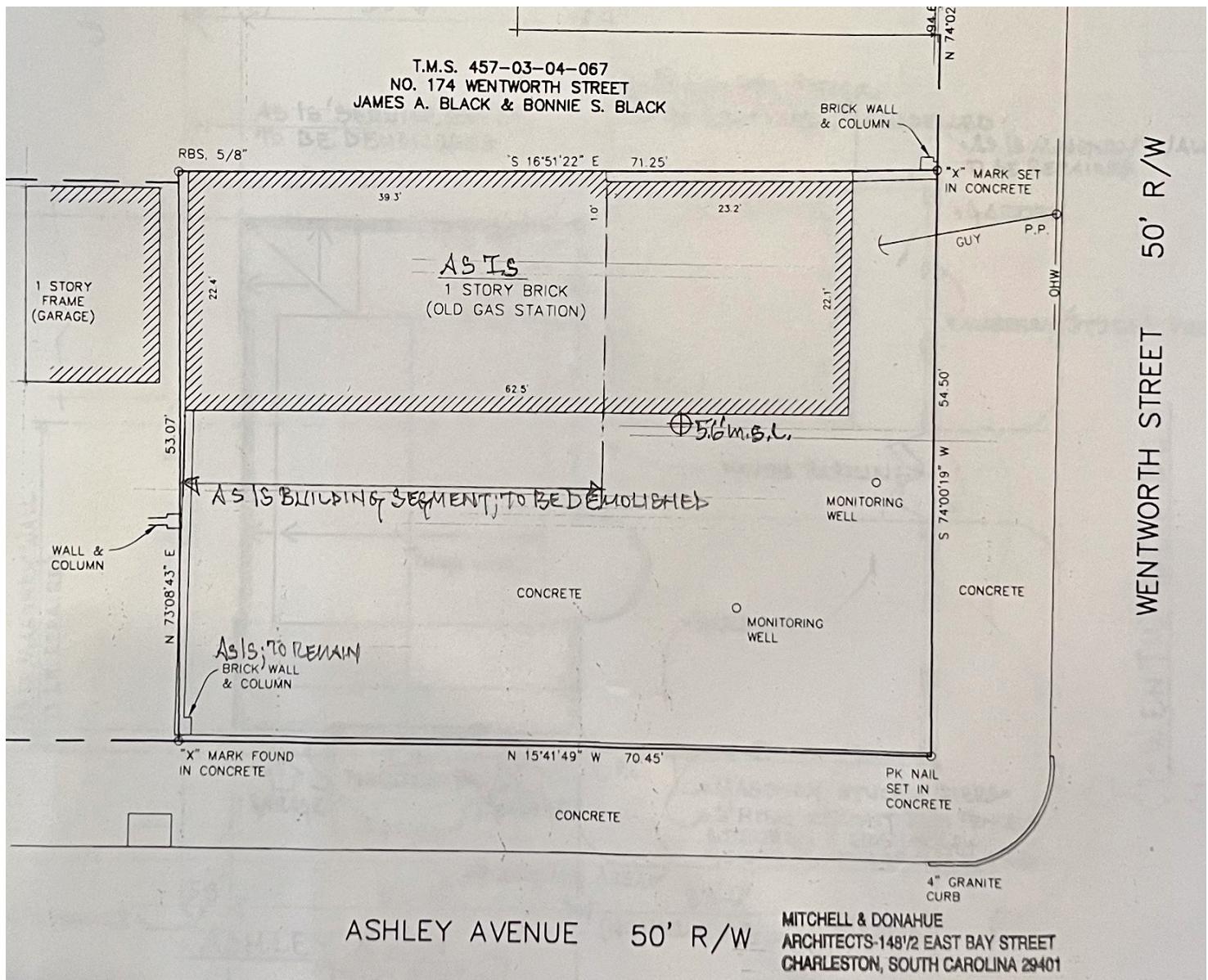


Figure 24: 2002 site plan of the former Century Service Station  
(Private collection of Demi Howard)

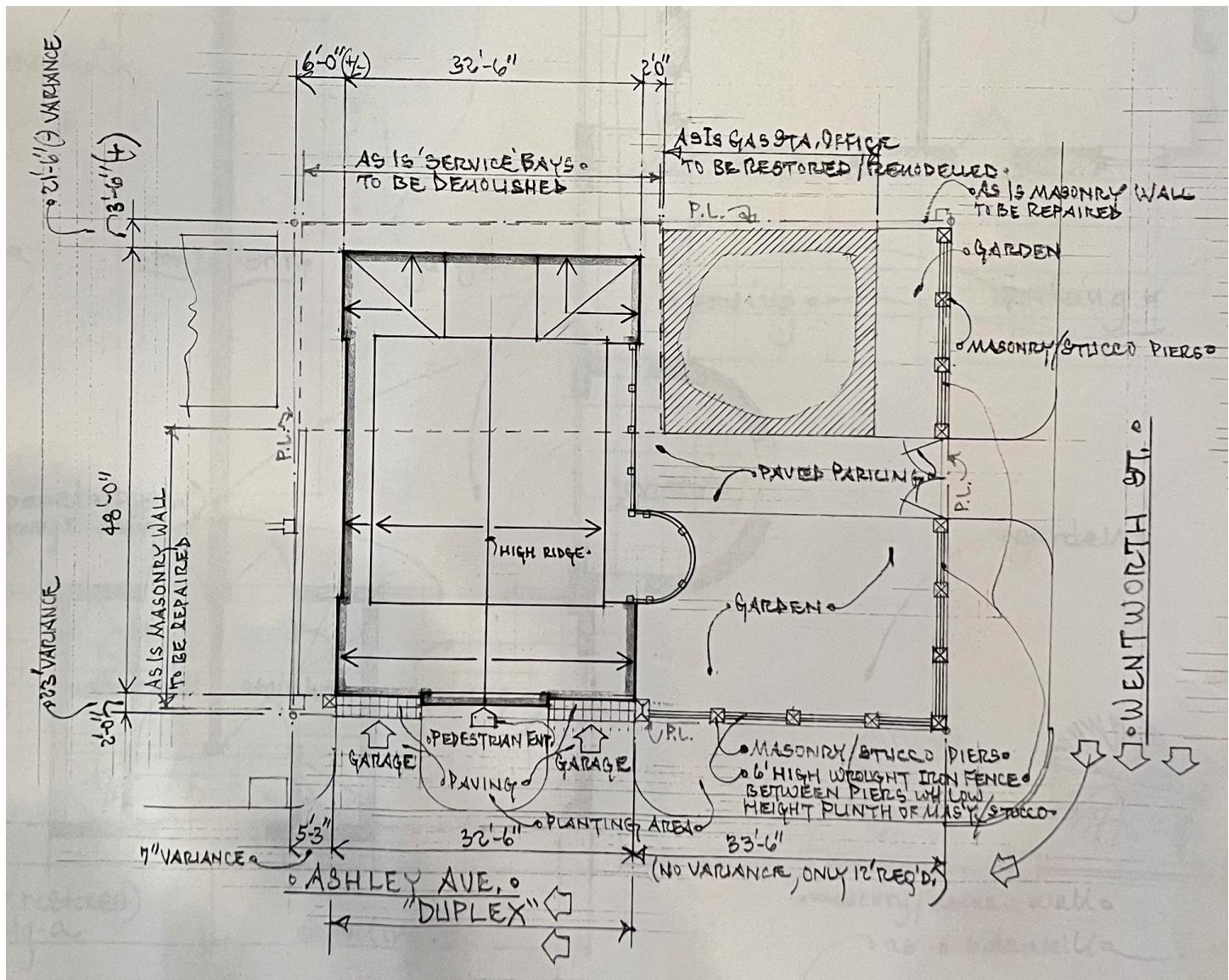


Figure 25: 2002 proposed site plan of the former Century Service Station property  
(Private collection of Demi Howard)

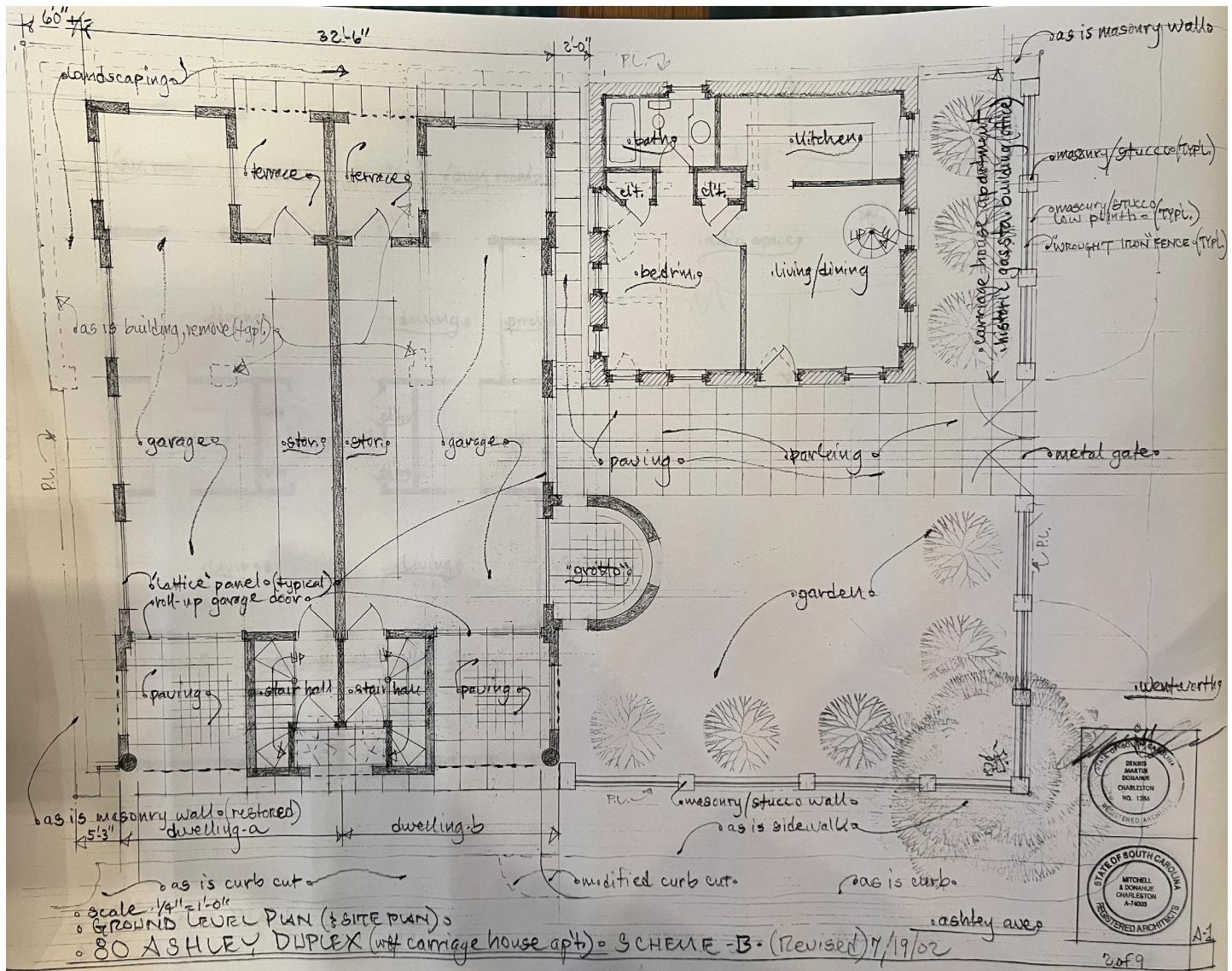


Figure 26: 2002 proposed site plan of the former Century Service Station property  
(Private collection of Demi Howard)



*Figure 27: 2002 proposed west elevation of the former Century Service Station property  
(Private collection of Demi Howard)*



*Figure 28: 2006 photograph of the Century Service Station  
(City of Charleston Board of Architectural Review)*

## CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

*(photographs by BVL HPR, 2023)*



*Main (west) facade*



*Detail of main office; historic mosaic terracotta tile survives beneath the pavement*



*Detail of service bays*



*South elevation; note the slight bellcast roof as well as the original brownstone sills and oculus*



*East elevation of main office; original 9/9 wooden sash intact*



*View looking north from rear of main office towards the rear wall of the original service bay*



*View looking southwest from the side yard of No. 174 Wentworth Avenue*



*View looking northwest from the side yard of No. 174 Wentworth Avenue*



*View looking east at first floor of main office*



*View looking east within original office at first floor, showing original 9/9 wooden sash and lath*



*View looking south at first floor, showing original window sash and 1980s drop ceiling*



*View looking west at first floor, showing original window sash, lath and evidence of plaster*



*View looking north at first floor, showing 1981 stair and drop ceiling*



*View looking north from original south service bay*



*View looking west towards original south service bay opening*



*View looking east within middle 1938 service bay, showing 1930s infill of half-height boundary wall*



*View looking north within middle 1938 service bay towards original north service bay*



*View looking west towards service bay openings*



*View looking south within original north service bay*



*Detail of north elevation of main office, showing original 4/4 wooden sash*



*Detail of historic stone flooring within first floor*