

# Teton County Historic Site Survey

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Livingston Chevrolet Dealership

other name/site number Wort Chevrolet Dealership

## 2. Location

street & number 70 West Pearl ☐ not for publication

city or town Jackson ☐ vicinity

state Wyoming code WY county Teton code 039 zip code 830

## 3. Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## 4. Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## 5. Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

## Property Owner

name/title Frank Perna Anthony Wall

street & number P. O. Box 281 P.O. Box 1664 telephone

city or town Teton Village Jackson state WY zip code

## Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

## Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

## National Register Status:

- ☐ Eligible ☐ Unevaluated  
☒ Not Eligible ☐ District Potential

**6. Function or Use****Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce / Trade: specialty store

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**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce / Trade: specialty stores

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**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Art Moderne

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**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**foundation** concrete

**walls** Ashlar / Concrete Block/ wood

**roof** unknown

**other**

**Narrative Description**

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- ☒ **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**

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

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.)

**Areas of Significance**

Commerce

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

c. 1947-1955

**Significant Dates****Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**9. Major Bibliographical 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other Name of repository:

Jackson Hole Historical Society

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than 2 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/2 5/1/9/1/3/2 4/8/1/4/0/1/1  
Zone Easting Northing2 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing3 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing4 1/2 / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10**11. Form Prepared By**

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Maps**
- **Photographs:** Representative photographs of the property.



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## Continuation Sheet

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Livingston Chevrolet Dealership

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### Narrative Description

The building that once was occupied by the Chevrolet dealership, longest operated by Harold and Floyd Livingston, is located on the northeast corner of Pearl and Glenwood a block and a half from the town square. The building is a long rectangle fronting Glenwood to the west. The building is a beautiful and distinctive Art Moderne construction, one of only a handful surviving in Jackson. In the years following the period of significance (after 1955) the building has been subdivided and turned into a variety of shops and restaurants. The exterior has been significantly changed so that while the original building remains, its appearance is no longer the same.

This automobile dealership is constructed of a tan and rose ashlar on its façade which covers its west elevation and wraps around in a graceful curve to the south elevation on Pearl. The area that was the showroom in the curved section included large fixed light windows which are extant; this section of the building is now clad with natural wood planks that rise to a point above the window but which still leave ample roof for the original stonework to show prominently. To the north on the west elevation the building was punctuated with vehicle service bays which have been modified. Those businesses now have board and batten cladding placed over the stone, although they still retain the substantial windows. The board and batten façade rises to irregular heights, presenting a western false front appearance with uneven parapets. The east elevation, which is made of concrete block, also included a row of entrances which have since been sealed. The north elevation, on the alley, is clad with board and batten and includes two service doors, one sealed. The roof is vaulted. Vehicular parking is located directly east of the building.

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Livingston Chevrolet Dealership, Jackson, Wyoming. West and south elevations, looking northeast. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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Livingston Chevrolet Dealership



Livingston Chevrolet Dealership, Jackson, Wyoming. South and east elevations, looking northwest. Photo: Michael Cassity, 2005.

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Livingston Chevrolet Dealership, Jackson, Wyoming. East and north elevations, looking southwest.

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

This building, although no longer eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its extensive physical modification, is significant under both Criterion A, for its historic importance, and Criterion C, for its architectural distinction.

The historic significance of the building derives from its role in the transformation of Jackson and Jackson Hole as a result of the rise of a tourist industry and the special part that transportation played in that evolution. Jackson's early tourist industry was to a large part dominated by the businesses that catered to an elite corps of vacationers, people who would (and could) travel to the area, often by train, and spend the summer or a good portion of it, at the valley's growing dude ranches. While the dude ranches continued to prosper even during the 1930s, and the Jackson Hole area became that much more celebrated a destination with the creation of Grand Teton National Park, another form of tourism began to supplant the old. Beginning in the 1920s and continuing into the 1930s, more and more people were taking to the nation's highways in automobiles. World War II reduced the traffic of both the migrants and the vacationers, but the end of the war enabled people who had long postponed a vacation, and even people who had never had a vacation in their life, to travel, and to do so now with an element of prosperity missing in their own and the nation's economy for many years. Jackson Hole, now with the Jackson Hole National Monument effectively increasing the size of the Grand Teton National Park, beckoned tourists—and motorists. And they came in ever larger numbers in a process that continues to this day.

The rise of the tourist industry in Jackson Hole had several concrete manifestations including the emergence of a flourishing lodging industry and the commercialization of recreational opportunities. But the development of a local industry that revolved around the automobiles that the tourists were using also reveals the direction and magnitude of social change in the valley; the valley was becoming increasingly oriented to the tourist trade, and that included the automobiles that brought the tourists to Jackson Hole. Where gasoline was initially sold only at the local hardware store, more stations cropped up in town, especially at the busy intersections. So too did the garages multiply. But the automobile dealerships also proved an important feature of this rising tourist trade. The sales of automobiles, of course, was not something that targeted especially those who traveled from afar, but an integral element of the dealership was its repair and service function, something that tourists, and the changing social fabric of the town, came to depend upon.

Several dealerships had emerged in Jackson Hole by the end of World War II, and almost all seem to have been located near the center of town including Hunter's Ford dealership (at the northwest corner of Cache and Broadway) and Spicer's Chevrolet dealership (first at the Deloney Building / Jackson Hole Playhouse, and then on Cache south of Broadway) and Kaiser Frazer automobiles (at the Deloney Building). Lee Lundy's Mountain Motors, selling Dodge and Plymouth cars and trucks, was in Wilson. A few years after the war, Luella Wort, the widow of Charles Wort, sold to the Wort Chevrolet Corporation the property at the northeast corner of Glenwood and Pearl. The Wort Chevrolet Corporation appears to have taken over the Chevrolet franchise from Walt Spicer and the

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corporation—operated by Luella Wort's sons John and Jess, built this Art Moderne building. This operation, however, was short lived and the dealership was then transferred to C. C. Spicer and Josephine Spicer in 1950, and in 1951 the Spicers leased the building to the Livingston Chevrolet Company owned and operated by Harold J. and Floyd Livingston. The Livingston brothers operated their business here until it sold in 1969.

The Livingston Chevrolet Company brought together two brothers with practical experience in the business as mechanics. Floyd Livingston after World War II operated Texaco and Phillips 66 service stations in Jackson. Harold Livingston worked as a mechanic at Hunter's Ford. Their new business sold Chevrolets and Oldsmobiles and soon added Pontiacs and Buicks to their line. It also, of course, including their wrecker service and towing with a phone number for the stranded motorist to call day or night.

Harold Livingston even seemed to represent the new generation emerging in the Jackson business community. While most business and civic leaders probably welcomed the changes associated with the new Jackson economy, Livingston saw a deeper problem and he saw a need for change in the town's leadership. Well after the period of significance closed in 1955, he challenged the mayor, Harry Clissold, who had been in office for twenty-five years in 1963 and Livingston launched a write-in campaign. He won the election by a small margin and when some of the votes were challenged Clissold refused to concede and continued in his office until a supreme court ruling in 1965 forced him out (just before his term expired) and gave Harold Livingston the office he had won. In his subsequent terms as mayor Livingston started the first zoning efforts in the community, efforts that were stoutly resisted in some quarters. Later he recalled of the nearby ranchers, sympathetically, that "They didn't want anybody telling them what to do with their land. Then, years later, big money moved in and they changed. Big money has its own way of doing things. There's no way to stop it." Appropriately, Livingston launched programs to improve the city's sewer system, garbage pickup, and streets. The town started plowing snow from the streets on a full-time basis too. These actions as mayor after the period of historic significance do not enhance the National Register eligibility of the building, but the building does reflect, both directly and indirectly, the direction of the changes underway in Jackson after World War II.

Perhaps the most important words that Livingston uttered reflected a keen perception in its understanding of the fundamental dilemma facing the valley: "So many people come here for the freedom and the easy way of life, but once here, after a few years, they want to change it to the way it was in the place they came from."

The Livingstons sold their business in 1969 and then the building began a different life. By 1977 Anthony's Italian restaurant had taken its position in the north section and other businesses also emerged. In the 1980s the locally popular LeJay's Restaurant, open 24 hours, occupied the south section of the building and remained there until 2003.

The building is also significant architecturally. It is a splendid example of Art Moderne architecture with its streamlined curvilinear appearance. The extant glass block windows on the south elevation

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bear mute testimony to the forward-looking, or at least up-to-date, vision that many people held for the community of Jackson as they tried to wrench it away from the log cabins that others clung to. A close analysis of the architectural features of this building, so many of them now concealed, would underscore the grace, the beauty, and the imagery associated with the Art Moderne style and would acknowledge the substantial skill that went into its design and construction.

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### Bibliography

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Livingston Chevrolet Dealership

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## Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

This property consists of lot 7, block 1, Wort Addition, Town of Jackson. This is also contained in the Carriage House Commercial Condominium Subdivision to the Town of Jackson filed in 1994.

### Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the property historically associated with Livingston Chevrolet Dealership.