

# Infrastructure Can Be Beautiful.

## A Photo Essay of Gas Stations on Highways

### RESPECT.

There was a day when design was respected, even for gas stations along the nation's highways. Pure Oil Company led the way with "cottage" designs as depicted herein.

The surviving gas station buildings, now adapted for a variety of other uses, serve as witness to the durability of good design.

**Pure Oil Gas Station** is a historic [service station](#) located at [Saratoga Springs](#) in [Saratoga County, New York](#). It was built in 1933 by the [Pure Oil Co.](#) in the [English Cottage](#) style. It was moved to its present location on Spring Street in 1978 after having been located at 522 Broadway.

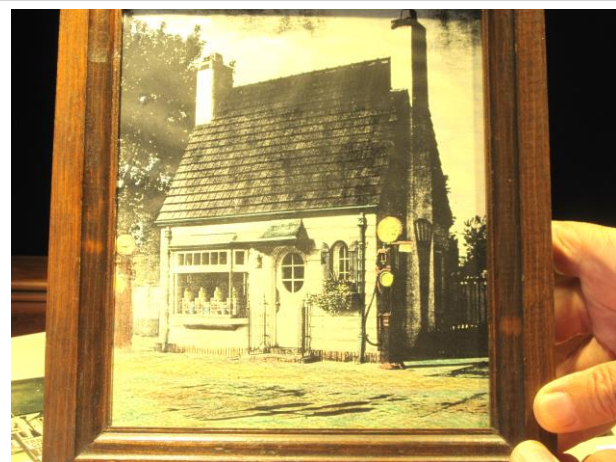
It is a one-story, brick building in three sections, measuring 34 feet by 27 feet. It consists of the main block housing the office with a rear wing and one stall garage. It features a steeply pitched roof of durable tile.<sup>[2]</sup> It was listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1978.<sup>[1]</sup> The building has now been adapted for reuse as a restaurant.



Former Pure Oil Gas Station, now repurposed as a restaurant, Saratoga Springs, NY

Link:

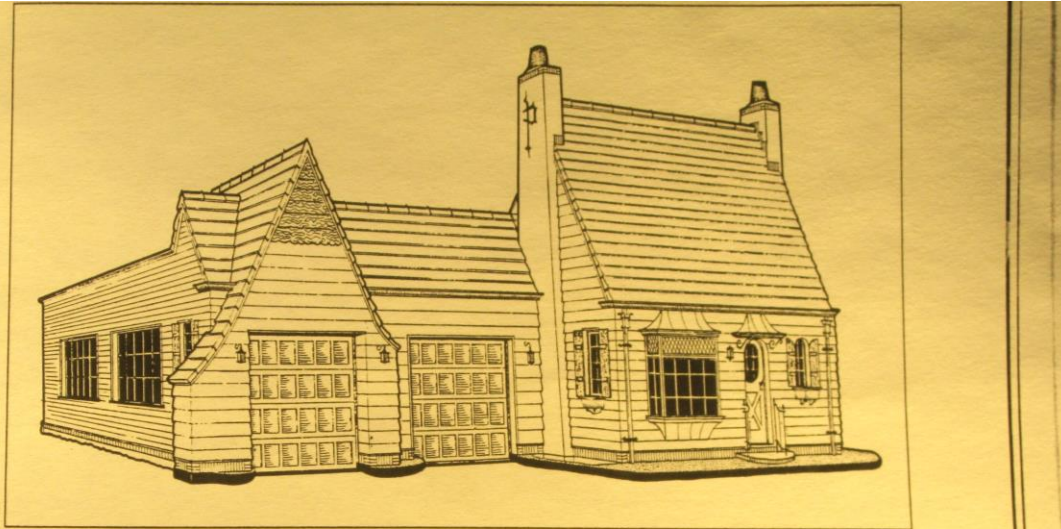
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure\\_Oil\\_Gas\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pure_Oil_Gas_Station)



Preserved and displayed by the current owner.



A very chic jewelry store, Montgomery OH...a survivor.



eateries, motels and gasoline stations that were constructed in its image.

The house quickly developed into the most popular form of architecture for gasoline sales and was readily accepted for installation in the midst of most suburban communities. Soon, residential building sites and prime corner lots were being purchased by many of the large oil concerns in the hopes of constructing new domestic stations. Because the house fit in so well and in some cases was regarded as an "architectural asset," the move toward new restrictive ordinances and construction bans was eased. As widespread acceptance of the house grew, focus was taken off the oil companies and their consumptive real estate acquisitions.

**Gasoline Becomes Visible**

The blind gasoline pumps that first appeared streetside at the earliest gasoline stations rapidly became outmoded and inefficient. Suspicious motorists felt isolated from the product

they were purchasing and were never really confident of its quality and purity. The public wanted to know what was flowing into the tanks of their prized possessions and to see what it looked like, too.

Some of the first devices that made this possible were modification kits for use on existing pump products such as the 1912 Gilbert & Barker T-8 curbside gasoline pump. With a dial indicator standard on the original model, it was easily retrofitted to utilize a five-gallon glass cylinder and could be upgraded with a new globe attachment advertising "visible gasoline." A proprietor already in possession of the basic pump could quickly modify the unit to reflect the new visible style with a minimal cash investment and only minor installation work.

Within a short time, all new gasoline pumps were constructed in the visible-register design, making upgrading unnecessary. Manufacturers like Guaranteed Liquid Measure Company, Fry, Wayne Oil Tank & Pump Company and S. F.

Designed by C. A. Petersen, the Pure house came in a variety of styles. The service bays that soon became a necessity to lubricate and repair vehicles could easily be integrated into the design to look like any suburban garages. *Jerry Keyser Collection*



Paris, KY, a 21<sup>st</sup> century survivor.

Gas stations are infrastructure, as we have recently come to appreciate; they can be – used to be – beautiful. Hopefully “charging stations” will become an art form.



Daytona Beach, FL, a survivor into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.