



City of Geneva, Illinois

Local Historic District & Landmarks Property Inventory Survey

GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

HISTORIC NAME: Open Pantry Food Mart and Launderette

COMMON NAME: Creative Sewing Center/Aunt Sassy's Quilts

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1962

SIGNIFICANT ALTERATION DATES: ca. 1985

ARCHITECT: n/a

BUILDER: Hillquist Brothers

WILSON BROTHERS: ☐ AUGUST ☐ OSCAR ☐ BOTH

ARCHITECTURAL DATA:

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Colonial Revival, Strip Mall

OVERALL PLAN SHAPE: Rectangular

NUMBER OF STORIES: 1

FOUNDATION MATERIAL: Poured Concrete

PRIMARY WALL MATERIAL(S): Brick

FRONT PORCH: Yes

VISIBLE SIDE PORCH: No

ENTRY DOOR(S): Non-historic

WINDOW MATERIAL: Aluminum

WINDOW STYLE: Fixed - Multi-Lite Display

PRIMARY ROOF FORM: Gable

PRIMARY ROOF MATERIAL: Asphalt

VISIBLE CHIMNEY: No

CHIMNEY MATERIAL: No

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

The street-facing gable; shallow, covered, "front porch;" and storefront opening and fenestration pattern are original to the building. However, the gable appears to have been rebuilt at a higher pitch and dentil molding was added (ca. 1985).

PROPERTY ADDRESS:

11 North First Street

PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN):

12-03-431-005



LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☐ Significant
- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Built After 1987
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Reversible Alterations
- ☐ Non-Contributing – Irreversible Alterations

HISTORIC DISTRICT LOCATION:

- ☒ Central Geneva NRHD
- ☐ North Geneva NRHD
- ☒ Local Geneva HD
- ☐ Not in HD / Individual Historic Landmark

NR DISTRICT SIGNIFICANCE RATING:

- ☒ Contributing
- ☐ Non-Contributing
- ☐ Not Applicable / Not in NR District



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ADDITIONAL PROPERTY INFORMATION:

BRIEF HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

From the February 5, 1962 Geneva City Council meeting minutes: "The clerk also read a letter from the Village Realty, 123 S. Third Street, stating that the old house at 11 N. First Street has been sold. The building is to be razed and a new business building erected there."

The former Joseph A. Matl house was razed on May 14, 1962 (17 February 1962 Geneva Republican). The new building housed two businesses: Open Pantry Food Mart (north side) and Open Pantry Launderette (south side).

The Open Pantry Food Mart was founded in 1961 as a Delaware corporation. It was one of the earliest, nationwide convenience store chains in the United States (although primarily located in the Northeast and Midwest). The franchise store in Geneva is one of the chain's earliest stores. (By comparison, 7-11 Marts were established in 1927 but did not adopt "7-11" until 1946 and did not franchise until 1964. Other early convenience stores included Lawson's [est. 1939] that served Ohio, primarily, and Circle K [est. 1951] that served the Southwest, primarily).

The property may have been developed by Emil Berquist, then the Executive Vice President of the First National Bank of Geneva and apparent owner of the property. However, Bluebird Systems, Inc. of Delaware may have been the original operators of the franchise at Geneva.

Although the food mart opening date is unclear, the Open Pantry Launderette opened in February 1963 (07 February 1963 Geneva Republican). The 24-hour, 7-days/week, self-service laundry offered 20-cent wash and 10-cent dry options. Advertisements for the Open Pantry Launderette were published regularly in the Geneva Republican throughout 1963.

Except for the reconstructed gable, addition of dentil molding and porch railings, and painting of the masonry, the building facade is the original storefront constructed in 1962.

The property is notable for its association with both architecture and community development—specifically mid-20th century, auto-oriented convenience stores.

SOURCES:

GHPC Case Studies; 2016 Central Geneva NRHP Update; Kane County Recorder's Office Land Records; Geneva Republican; various convenience store histories



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CONTRIBUTING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:

AS1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

AS2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

n/a



1999

HPC ACTION:

☐

Demolition Approved: n/a

Other HPC Action:

n/a