

= Ambler 's Texaco Gas Station =

Ambler 's Texaco Gas Station , also known as Becker 's Marathon Gas Station , is a historic filling station located at the intersection of Old U.S. Route 66 and Illinois Route 17 in the village of Dwight , Illinois , United States . The station has been identified as the longest operating gas station along Route 66 ; it dispensed fuel for 66 continuous years until 1999 . The station is a good example of a domestic style gas station and derives its most common names from ownership stints by two different men . North of the station is an extant outbuilding that once operated as a commercial icehouse . Ambler 's was the subject of major restoration work from 2005 ? 2007 , and reopened as a Route 66 visitor 's center in May 2007 . It was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2001 .

= = History = =

Located at the intersection of U.S. Route 66 and Illinois Route 17 in Dwight , Illinois , United States , Ambler 's Texaco Station was built in 1933 by Jack Schore on property originally owned by Otto Strufe . The gas station is no longer in operation as a filling station , but when it closed , it held the record as the longest operating gas station along the historic Route 66 . The station last dispensed gasoline in 1999 . In 1936 , the station was leased to Vernon Von Qualen and became known as Vernon 's Texaco Station . Over the next two years , Von Qualen purchased the station from Schore , and sold it in 1938 to Basil " Tubby " Ambler . Ambler owned the station from 1938 ? 1966 . Ambler 's ownership was the longest of any owner during the most historically significant period ; as a result , the station was known as Ambler 's longer than by any other name .

The owner at the time of the building 's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places , Phil Becker , grew up living on Mazon Street (Illinois Route 17) . He had been hanging out at the station since he was nine and began working at the station in 1964 . One year after Becker 's employment began , Ambler sold the station to Earl Kochler . Kochler sold the station to Royce McBeath , who ran it between 1965 ? 1970 . The station changed hands once again when Becker bought the station from McBeath on March 4 , 1970 . About a year after Becker took over operation of the station , Texaco suddenly stopped supplying the location with gasoline and Becker contracted with Marathon Oil . The brand change was accompanied by a name change to Becker 's Marathon Gas Station , a name the station would be known by for over 26 years . Becker operated the station , along with his wife Debbie , from the time of purchase until 1996 . After closing the station , the couple leased the building out as an auto repair shop and eventually donated the building to the village of Dwight .

In 2005 , a project to restore the old gas station began . The village of Dwight applied for and received a US \$ 10 @, @ 400 federal cost @-@ share grant from the U.S. National Park Service and its Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program . The grant required the village to present matching funds in the amount of the grant . The restoration 's ultimate goal was to reopen the station as a rest stop and interpretive center along the historic roadway .

= = Restoration = =

The combined grant and village @-@ funded restoration included door , window , and roof repairs , along with interior and exterior repainting . The repainting matched the station 's 1940s color scheme . On April 24 , 2007 , the National Park Service presented a plaque commemorating the restoration project at the station . In early May 2007 , with the restoration completed , Ambler 's Texaco Gas Station reopened as a visitor 's center .

Following the restoration , the station evokes the 1940s ; the interior is complete with a potbelly stove , tiny Coca @-@ Cola bottle and antique Dwight Lumber / Route 66 advertising yardsticks . Also inside are an old cash register , old 7 Up bottles and a plaid stamp saver book . The restored station is owned by the village of Dwight .

== Architecture ==

The Ambler 's Texaco Station is built in a common gas station style known as " house and canopy " style or " domestic style . " The style was developed by Standard Oil of Ohio in 1916 , and consisted of a small house @-@ like building with an attached canopy . The canopy extended out over the pumps to protect customers from the weather . The style was meant to evoke feelings of home and comfort in travelers and , in turn , to make people more at ease buying goods from the station .

The one @-@ story building has no basement and originally consisted of only the house and canopy portion , and three Texaco gas pumps . The house , or main office portion of the station includes the interior office and the men 's and women 's restrooms . The men 's restroom is accessed from the interior office and the women 's restroom is accessed via an outside door on the south side of the building . The original " LADIES " sign still protrudes from the wall above the entrance . The entire house section of the station is 23 feet (7 @. @ 0 m) by 14 feet (4 @. @ 3 m) . The exterior of the building is wood and sided with clapboard , save the garage bay area which is concrete block . The bay was built during World War II , between 1941 ? 45 , and material shortages forced the use of the differing building material .

The building has a wooden , side gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles , which extends over the station 's canopy . The canopy supporting piers originally " flared out " and have been altered since the building 's original construction . The three original Texaco pumps were replaced with 1960s era Marathon pumps , which are on display in the service bay . The Marathon change @-@ over also resulted in a sign being attached to the roof of the service bay which read " Marathon , " this sign is no longer extant .

== Icehouse ==

Located on the property of Ambler 's Texaco Gas Station , just north of the station , is a 24 @-@ foot (7 @. @ 3 m) by 16 foot (4 @. @ 9 m) wood clad , wooden frame building that once housed a commercial icehouse . Though its exact dates of operation are unknown , it is believed the icehouse was established by a member of Jack Schore 's family during the 1930s . While the icehouse was in business , there was a small pond located about 200 feet (61 m) east of the property . Operators cut ice from the pond and stored it in the building until sale . After the icehouse ceased operation , a date that is also unknown , the building was used as a storage shed for the gas station . The building features a double wall with sawdust stuffed in between the walls to provide insulation . The wooden roof has asphalt shingles . Ambler 's Texaco Station listing on the National Register lists the icehouse building as a contributing property .

== Significance ==

The building is a good example of the house and canopy style , and for its architectural and commercial significance it was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in October 2001 and listed on November 29 , 2001 . Commercially , the station is most significant for the services and products it provided travelers along U.S. Route 66 , including fuel , oil and automobile repairs . The gas station met all criteria listed in the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property form as requirements for adding gas stations to the listing . In order for gas stations along U.S. Route 66 in Illinois to qualify for listing on the National Register , they must show a clear connection to and raise feelings associated with early traffic and tourism along Route 66 . A gas station listed for its architecture , such as Ambler 's , must be a " good example " of an architectural style or type through many details from design to location , all of which must convey a connection with its historic appearance along Route 66 .