3700 Butler Street in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, is a three-story red-brick-faced commercial building constructed ca. 1916 as an early car dealership. In footprint it is a parallelogram, 105' on a side, facing Butler Street to the west, between 37th Street to the south, Ater Way (an alley) to the north, and a parking lot to the west (rear) of the building. It is done in Commercial Style, and has a flat roof behind parapets. The building has a concrete-encased steel frame with concrete floors and brick walls. It will be considered a contributing building to the Lawrenceville Historic District in Pittsburgh when the district nomination is finalized in 2018.

Butler Street is the main commercial thoroughfare through Lawrenceville, paralleling the Allegheny River for 4 miles from 34th Street, through the historic Allegheny Arsenal, to the first lock and dam on the Allegheny at the Highland Park Bridge. The site slopes down from east (building rear) to west (the façade on Butler Street). The building is set in the slope, and only about half of the first floor is exposed at the rear wall.

The façade has seven same-width storefront bays facing Butler Street, set between brick piers. The brick is done in Flemish bond, with the exposed headers lighter red in color while the stretchers are red-brown in color.

On the first floor of the façade, five of the seven bays are infilled with flat panels. One has a man door in the flat panel infill, and the second bay from the north (Ater Way) has a roll-up garage door. The infill and doors are modern, and all the original storefront material was removed. A newspaper article from 1923 shows the original storefront configuration. Most of the original windows survive in the second floor. Each bay has three tall 1/1 double-hung windows below a short transom. The third floor is shorter and has the same windows minus the transoms.

The 37th Street elevation has six bays and is built with the same Flemish bond brick. The western five are similar to the façade, with the same windows on the upper two floors. On the first floor, the first bay from Butler Street has an infilled storefront, with infilled windows in the increasingly shorter first floor bays up the slope of 37th Street. The eastern bay on 37th Street has a modern roll-up garage door on the first floor, short single-light windows on the second floor, and the normal third floor windows above. The garage door leads to a steep vehicle ramp to the second floor. A tall chimney stands at the center of the bay.

The Ater Way elevation fronts a narrow alley, and is faced with common red brick. It has five bays, with all of the openings infilled. There is a storefront bay adjacent to Butler Street, with the standard brick openings above. After a wide section with no window or door openings, most of the uphill bays have two vertical window openings on the first floor, with regular infilled bays above. The furthest uphill bay has a man door on the first floor, infilled vertical and horizontal openings on the second, and no openings on the third floor.

The rear elevation faces a surface parking lot is blank common brick with no masonry openings. The rear face of the elevator penthouse is part of this wall.

The roof is flat behind 3-4' stone-capped parapets on the Butler and 37th Street elevations, and there is a low tile-coped parapet over Ater Way and at the building's rear.

Interior:

The building was constructed as a car dealership and the interior is mostly exposed masonry fireproof construction. The floors are concrete and the columns and beams are encased in concrete. Exterior walls are painted exposed brick. The building's main interior feature is a very large elevator, located in the north east (rear) section of the building. The elevator appears to be operable. The garage door on Butler Street, and the garage door on 37th Street lead the first and second floors, respectively. No interior ramp connected the third floor – it was accessed by the large elevator. There are irregular concrete stairs in the southeast and northeast sections of the building.

There are modern partitions in the building in the southern part of the first floor, and the northern parts of the second and third floors. None are old or original. The building is almost completely filled with automobile transmission parts -- on racks, on pallets, in boxes, or just placed on the floor. About a dozen vehicles are interspersed with the parts.

Integrity:

The former car dealership retains its l**ocation**, **setting,** and **feeling** in a commercial setting on Butler Street in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh. Other than storefronts and other infilled first floor masonry openings, exterior and the limited interior **design** elements survive. Exterior and interior **materials** and **workmanship** survive, minus the storefronts. Its **association** with the automobile industry is maintained by the transmission parts business that occupies the building.

Significance:

The building was constructed ca. 1916 as a Ford automobile dealership, Arsenal Motors. It sold and serviced Ford cars and agricultural equipment, including Fordson tractors. In 1920 Arsenal Motors was one of six Ford dealers in Pittsburgh (*Pittsburgh Daily Post* 1/18/1920). In 1924 it was advertised as "…one of the most attractive buildings in the district…" and "…one of the most complete Ford homes in this section of the country… ." (*Pittsburgh Daily Post* 12/29/1924).

At the nadir of the Great Depression in 1933, Arsenal Motors went bankrupt and had to vacate 3700 Butler. The business was required to sell the 47 new and used vehicles in its inventory, along with $3,000 in car parts (*Pittsburgh Press* 10/29/1933).

Over the last 50 years the building has been used as a repair and light manufacturing facility, and as a warehouse. It currently houses an automobile transmission parts business.