



Darling-Kidder Motor Car Company

ADDRESS

626-630 Forest Avenue

DATES

1917

ARCHITECT

unknown

STYLE

Vernacular

Originally occupied by the Darling-Kidder Automobile Dealership, the brick building at 626-630 Forest Avenue was built 1916-1917. It is one of several early automobile related businesses on the length of Forest Avenue that would become known as Portland's Auto Row. Although the building has undergone exterior changes, particularly the storefront windows, it retains its thematic association with the Forest Avenue's automotive history and retains several character-defining details of its style and building type.

Darling - Kidder Company

Y. S. DARLING, Pres.

M. D. KIDDER, Treas. and Man.

"HOME OF THE REO"

SALES

SERVICES

Cumberland and York County Distributors

REO MOTOR CARS AND TRUCKS

Darling-Kidder was established in 1916 as a joint venture between Veranus Darling of Auburn and Myron Kidder of Portland. The partnership was short lived dissolving in 1919. Veranus Darling was a pioneer in Maine's automobile business. Initially an owner in a bicycle shop, he was a natural mechanic that seized on the opportunity presented by the new auto industry. He established the second automobile dealership in Maine and became the state agent for Reo motor cars. He also served as the director of the Maine Auto Dealers' Association. Veranus Darling died in 1924 and his son Elmer Darling succeeded him in the Darling Automobile Company.

In 1919 Myron D. Kidder moved the REO auto and truck dealership to 343-349 Forest Avenue. REO Motor Car Company was established in Lansing, MI in 1905. It was founded by Ransom E. Olds, founder of the Olds Motor Vehicle Company, later Oldsmobile. In 1910 REO added trucks to their manufacturing and in 1936 switched their focus solely to truck manufacturing.



The Darling-Kidder Building in 1924. Maine Historical Society Image.

The building at 626-630 Forest Avenue was subsequently occupied by Chandler Motors of Maine, distributors of the Chandler and Cleveland Motor Cars, and Regent Motor Sales Inc., a new and used car dealership. In the 1940s the former showroom and automobile service center was converted to a retail shop for Tom Taylors, a men's clothing shop.

Although the building has undergone exterior changes, particularly the lower storefront windows, it retains its thematic association with the Forest Avenue's automotive history. It retains several character-defining details of its style and building type including the multi-pane transom windows, the deep band below the projecting horizontal cornice, brick columns and bay spacing. The one-story former auto showroom building continues to contribute to the character of Woodford's Corner and the Forest Avenue corridor.

IN THE TRADE

EASTERN STATES

MAINE—PORTLAND.—One of the Reo Motor Car Co.'s progressive dealers, the Darling-Kidder Co., has recently moved into its new, thoroughly up-to-date building, built especially for the housing and sale of Reo cars and trucks. The new quarters occupies a lot of about 5,000 square feet, and cost about \$20,000. The salesroom is at the right hand side of the building and the service station, which will accommodate 15 to 20 cars, is on the left. Especially attractive is the twelve-foot sidewalk around the building, and parking spaces, between the concrete walk and the curb.



J. S. Darling

Maine Dealers Who Promoted State Convention



First row, left to right: Miles B. Mank, Miles B. Mank Motor Co., Portland; Myron D. Kidder, Myron D. Kidder Co., Inc., Portland; Haven Sawyer, Sawyer Motor Car Co., Bangor; W. B. Thombs, Portland. Second row: Carl Curtis, Lewiston Buick Co., Lewiston; V. S. Darling, Darling Automobile Co., Auburn; C. G. Abbott, the Henley-Kimball Co., Portland

From the February 23, 1918 publication of Automobile Topics