

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Virginian Railway Passenger Station**

other names/site number VDHR site # 128-5461

2. Location

street & number 1402 Jefferson Street Southeast not for publication
city or town Roanoke vicinity
state Virginia code VA county _____ code 770 Zip 24013

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the

National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the National Register

_____ removed from the National Register

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

name of property
location

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: eclectic

Other: Railroad Station vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation concrete

roof terra cotta tiles

walls brick

other coarse-aggregate concrete

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.
-

name of property
location

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Architecture

Period of Significance 1909-1953

Significant Dates 1909

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1 17 593900 2 4124000 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are indicated on accompanying map entitled "1402 South Jefferson Street."

Boundary Justification : see continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Michael J. Pulice, Architectural Historian, and John Kern, Director, Roanoke Regional Office

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date December, 2002

street & number: 1030 Penmar Ave. SE telephone 540-857-7585

city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Roanoke Chapter, National Railroad Historical Society

street & number P. O. Box 13222 telephone 540-389-3935

city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24032

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Virginian Railroad Passenger Depot
City of Roanoke, Virginia

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7. Summary Description:

Constructed in 1909, the Virginian Railway Passenger Station is located at 1402 Jefferson Street Southeast, in the City of Roanoke, at the edge of an existing rail yard. It is composed of two similar one-story buildings, oriented on a southwest-northeast axis, with a covered area between them. When it functioned as a station, the southernmost building was used as a waiting room and the north building as a baggage room. Prior to the fire that severely damaged the station roof in late January of 2001, the south building was occupied by a country store known as Depot Feed and Seed. The north building was partially vacant and partially used as a storage facility.

Detailed Description:

Both buildings making up the passenger station are similar in structure and design- one-story, with solid masonry walls and hipped roofs with gently flared eaves covered with red terra cotta tiles; however, the southernmost building is the larger and more stylish of the two. It features a transverse gabled bay, offset just to the north of center, extending outward four feet from the front and rear facades. Its gable ends are decorated with faux half timbering in-filled with a buff-colored, coarse-aggregate concrete, giving the building something of a Tudor Revival appearance. The bay is pierced on its west end with four wooden, single-sash, nine-light windows that are hinged so that they open by tilting inward. On the bay's east end, the windows have double-hung sashes, and are covered with iron bars. Elsewhere the south building features nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows, resting on the belt course, with coursed jack arches above. The north building has hinged nine-light windows only. They rest on painted concrete sills, also with coursed brick jack arches above. Divided-light transom windows overlie the original entrances of both buildings. Most of the original wood doors and hardware of both buildings survive.

Both buildings rest on foundation walls coated on the exterior with buff-colored coarse-aggregate concrete, with thick, painted, concrete belt courses dividing the foundation walls from the brickwork above. The coarse-textured yellow bricks were applied as a veneer, with a light-colored mortar in narrow grapevine joints. Behind the yellow brick veneer are two wythes of common red brick. The masonry appears to be in fine shape, with no evidence of previous repairs. A small shed was built onto the west front of the feed store (south) building in recent years, obscuring part of the west façade.

Both buildings are covered with identical medium-pitched hip roofs, with deep eaves extending approximately 6 feet from the walls. The soffits consist of 1 ½-inch wide beaded matchboards,

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many of which have completely deteriorated. The roofs are covered with red terra-cotta tiles, which appear to have been in fairly good shape, except for a few places, prior to being severely damaged by the fire. Original downspouts survive, but are missing their connections to gutters. The area between the two buildings is covered with a dark red, low-pitched, standing seam metal roof, supported by massive chamfered wood columns on concrete bases. A single, large timber stud wall, constructed sometime in the latter half of the twentieth century provides additional support for this roof.

The primary fire damage was to the roofs of both buildings, the ceilings in the south building, and the contents of the feed store. The fire did not affect the covered middle section or the north building's interior.

The interior of the north building was divided by thick brick walls into small rooms for accommodating baggage. The lower 4-5 feet of the walls are painted green, the upper portions white. Ceiling joists, where exposed, are painted white. The floors are dark gray poured concrete.

A single, taller room at the center of the north building has 2" board ceiling, and a flight of stairs to access storage bins suspended from the ceiling. All rooms in the north building maintain near-perfect integrity.

The spacious passenger room in the south building is now completely empty, but the walls survive intact and the concrete floor has not been damaged. In the northeast corner is a polygonal-walled ticket booth. The three double-leaf entrance doors feature multi-paned transom lights. A few of the original windowpanes, now boarded over, have been lost. The interior walls are divided into a waist-high brick base below a brown-painted concrete ledge that corresponds to the exterior belt course, and a plastered upper portion with a narrow picture rail two feet below the high ceiling. A brick base for seats or benches skirts the lower one-foot of the walls. The plastered ceiling in the waiting room was severely damaged by the fire. To the north of the waiting room, under the transverse gabled section in the south building, is an additional room of smaller dimensions from which the feed store operated. It sustained severe fire damage to its ceiling and roof, but the walls are still intact. The original purpose of this room is unknown.

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8. Statement of Significance

The Virginian Railway Passenger Station is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Transportation because of its contribution to the railroad industry and its facilitation of passenger transport to and from Roanoke. The railroad industry was largely responsible for the foundation and growth of the City of Roanoke beginning in the 1880s and continuing through the 1940s. The period of significance for the Virginian Passenger Station began at the date of its construction in 1909, extending to the period when its use for railroad passenger service was discontinued in the mid-1950s. The buildings are also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for their unique visual characteristics and methods of construction that were only used for a brief period of time, and only by the railroad industry.

Historical Background

The Virginian Railway Passenger Station in Roanoke was constructed in 1909, the year that the Virginian Railway completed track and coal transport from Deepwater on the New or Kanawha River in West Virginia to Sewells Point at Hampton Roads. The opening of the Virginian's Sewells Point piers, along with the Norfolk & Western Railway pier at Lambert Point and the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway terminus at Newport News, made Hampton Roads the world's largest shipping point for coal.

Consolidation of the Virginian Railway was engineered by industrial entrepreneur Henry Huttleston Rogers. On the eve of the Civil War, Rogers invested in a small oil refinery in northwestern Pennsylvania that sold out to Standard Oil in 1874. Rogers subsequently became chairman of Standard Oil's manufacturing committee and was a Standard Oil vice president by 1890. When it became apparent that John D. Rockefeller did not favor Rogers as his successor at Standard Oil, Rogers expanded his interests in mining and transportation to gain a personal fortune in the first decade of the twentieth century, then valued at more than \$100 million. Sometime around 1900 Rogers obtained a controlling interest in the Deepwater Railway Company in West Virginia, a short line built in 1895 from Deepwater to a large timber operation, with prospects for expansion into neighboring coal fields. Rogers amended the Deepwater Railway charter in 1902 to provide for its extension to the border with Virginia at Glen Lyn on the New River. When neither of the established competing lines, the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Norfolk & Western, offered to buy out the Deepwater, Rogers chartered the Tidewater Railway in Virginia in 1904 to connect with the Deepwater and deprive the rival railways of valuable freight from the rich West Virginia coal fields.¹ Rogers obtained a charter for the

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City of Roanoke, Virginia

Virginian Railway in 1907 to combine the Deepwater and Tidewater lines and spent \$40 million of his own

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funds that year to finance completion of the road. Trains were running on Virginian tracks from Roanoke to Deepwater by February 1909 and from Norfolk to Roanoke by June 1909. Rogers died in New York City in May 1909, a month before train traffic on the Virginian ran the entire 440-mile length of the line.²

Because Roanoke stood at the division point between the New River Division and the Norfolk Division of the Virginian Railway and because Roanoke was the largest city on the Virginian line between Deepwater and Norfolk, it was fitting that construction of the Virginian Railway Passenger Station began in 1909 within two months of completion of the line. A 1909 *Roanoke Times* article reported, “The foundation for the Virginian Passenger Station was started September 25 for a building 162 feet long and 32 feet wide. The waiting rooms would be at one end, the baggage and express quarters at the other.”³ A photograph of the brick hipped-roofed passenger station and baggage room is featured in a ca. 1912 promotional publication for the Virginian Railway that noted Roanoke’s strategic location, “situated at the gateway of southwest Virginia, in close proximity to and in direct communication with the Virginia and West Virginia coal fields.”⁴

The Virginian electrified the 130-mile line between Roanoke and Mullens, West Virginia, in 1925 at the same time that the railway placed in operation the four-turbogenerator electrical power plant at Narrows, Virginia. The Interstate Commerce Commission denied a proposal by Norfolk & Western to lease the Virginian in 1926. All steam engines were replaced by diesel-electric locomotives in the mid-1950s, passenger service was discontinued, and the Virginian Railway finally merged with Norfolk & Western in 1959.⁵

Plans for Rehabilitation of the Virginian Station

Plans for rehabilitation of the Virginian Station are presently under way in conjunction with development of the High Tech Medical Center in Roanoke. David Hill has been working with John Baker of the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Mike Brennan of Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, and Roanoke City Manager Darlene Burcham on plans to develop the station as part of the Med Center complex. Roanoke City Director of Planning and Code Enforcement Evie Lander reports that all parties remain highly interested in the rehabilitation potential of the station as a key redevelopment component of the Med Center plan. She indicated that this interest has not

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diminished since the fire that occurred in late January 2001. Hill has written a memo to Baker and Lander that recommends renovation rather than demolition of the fire-damaged passenger station. Lander expressed strong support for the present documentation provided by RRPO to facilitate an informal determination of eligibility. The determination is sought because if the depot remains eligible it becomes a candidate for state and federal tax credit incentives.

Notes

1. The most recent biographical treatment of H.H. Rogers reports that he could not force a buyout because the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Norfolk & Western had formed a secret "community of interest" pact that prevented Rogers from playing one of the lines against the other. Eugene L. Huddleston, "Henry Huttleston Rogers," *American National Biography*, vol. 18, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 759-760.
2. Huddleston, "Henry Huttleston Rogers," p. 760. Sam R. Pennington, *The Virginian Railway*, Bluefield, West Virginia, 1933. H. Reid, *The Virginian Railway*, Kalmbach Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1961.
3. Quoted in Raymond P. Barnes, *A History of Roanoke*, Commonwealth Press, Inc., Radford, Virginia, 1968, p. 465.
4. Joseph B. Baker, *The Virginian Railway*, ca. 1912, pp. 16, 43.
5. Reid, *Virginian Railway*, pp. 196-202.

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Bibliography

Baker, Joseph B. *The Virginian Railway*, ca. 1912, pp. 16, 43.

Barnes, Raymond P. *A History of Roanoke*, Commonwealth Press, Inc., Radford, Virginia, 1968, p. 465.

Huddleston, Eugene L. "Henry Huddleston Rogers," *American National Biography*, vol. 18, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 759-760.

Pennington, Sam R. *The Virginian Railway*, Bluefield, West Virginia, 1933.

Reid, H. *The Virginian Railway*, Kalmbach Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1961.

Verbal boundary description

Boundaries are indicated on accompanying map entitled "1402 South Jefferson Street."

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated parcel includes only the station buildings and the land that they sit on.

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All photographs are of:

Virginian Railway Passenger Station
City of Roanoke, Virginia

Date: February, 2001

Photographer: Michael J. Pulice

Negative # 20162

Location of negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

1. VIEW OF: west (primary) façade
Photo 1 of 12
2. VIEW OF: west (primary) façade,
facing north
Photo 2 of 12
3. VIEW OF: northwest corner
and context, alternate angle
Photo 3 of 12
4. VIEW OF: rooftop, facing north
Photo 4 of 12
5. VIEW OF: north elevation
Photo 5 of 12
6. VIEW OF: northwest corner, eave detail
Photo 6 of 12
7. VIEW OF: east elevation, facing south
Photo 7 of 12
8. VIEW OF: partial east elevation, facing
west
Photo 8 of 12
9. VIEW OF: north building, baggage room
Photo 9 of 12
10. VIEW OF: passenger waiting room
and ticket booth, facing northeast
Photo 10 of 12
11. VIEW OF: Passenger waiting room,
facing northwest
Photo 11 of 12
12. VIEW OF: Passenger waiting room,
facing south
Photo 12 of 12