

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name FRANKLINTON DEPOT
other names/site number (former) Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Passenger Depot
Franklinton Woman's Club Clubhouse

2. Location

street & number 201 East Mason Street n/a not for publication
city, town Franklinton n/a vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Franklin code 069 zip code 27525

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: None
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

William S. Frazier Nov. 14, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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 the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION rail-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete block

walls Wood- weatherboard

Wood- shingle

roof Asbestos shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Franklinton Depot
Franklin County, N.C.

The Franklinton Depot stands about 200 feet from its original location on a lot adjacent to the right-of-way of CSX Transportation, originally the route of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad. There are no other structures standing between the depot and the railroad tracks to the west, nor are there any nearby structures to the north or east. Across Mason Street to the south are a few simple frame residences.

Except for its new concrete block foundation dating from the 1973 move, the building's exterior is virtually unchanged from its construction in 1886. Typical of small town passenger stations of the late nineteenth century, the depot exhibits simple picturesque period revival Italianate and Gothic details. Of particular interest are the distinctive double-leaf paneled doors set within shouldered surrounds, and the Gothic Revival king post ornaments with pinnacles in the gables.

The frame structure measures 51 feet in length and just over 16 feet in depth, and is covered with German siding. A steeply pitched gable roof with shallow kickouts along the eaves shelters the building. The roof is now covered in diamond pattern mineral fiber shingles. An original baggage room, 10 feet wide and 12 feet deep, is attached to the west gable end under a low-pitched hip roof. A trapezoidal three-sided bay projects at the center of the south (originally trackside) elevation. A free-floating shed shelter, about five feet deep and supported by closely spaced rafters with shaped ends, extends the full width of the south elevation. The gable ends are covered with wooden shingles in a fish-scale pattern. Attic ventilators in the gables have paired vents with triangular heads. Collar beam and kingpost assemblies ornament the gables, with simple wooden pinnacles rising at the peaks of the gables.

Flanking the bay on the south elevation are entrances with double leaf doors, each leaf with four panels with wide applied moldings. The door surrounds are shouldered at the corners in a manner common to the local Italianate idiom that first appeared in the region in the mid-nineteenth century. Identical entrances open into the south wall of the baggage room and in the north rear wall of the main block opposite the south wall entrances. Similar surrounds encase six-over-six sash windows around the building, though the bay windows have four-over-four sash.

The interior was originally two waiting rooms of equal size, one each for black and white travelers, separated by narrow telegraph and ticket offices extending back-to-back from the central bay. The offices were removed in the 1973 renovation, leaving one large meeting room for local club activities. Plaster walls and

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the original narrow vertical beaded board wainscot along the exterior walls was retained throughout. An opening was cut through the west wall into the former baggage room, which was converted to a small kitchen.

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Historical Background and Context: The Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and the Development of Franklinton, 1840-1940¹

Chartered in 1835 and completed in 1840, the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad was one of North Carolina's first two railroads (the Wilmington and Weldon began operations the same year), and the line opened a new era in the economic and cultural life of the state. The 83 mile long Raleigh and Gaston ran from the capital city north and east to Gaston on the Roanoke River at the Virginia line, connecting with northern routes and giving North Carolina, a state whose economic development had long been restrained by poor transportation, better access to distant markets.

Like many other towns that grew up along the Raleigh and Gaston and other new lines, the town of Franklinton owes its existence primarily to the railroad. The site of the town was originally called Franklin Depot when Shemuel Kearney, a landowner in western Franklin County north of Raleigh, deeded a parcel of ten acres to the new Raleigh and Gaston Railroad in the late 1830s for the establishment of a depot at the site.² Kearney was also one of those Franklin County landowners who deeded right-of-way across their lands for the proposed railway.

Construction of the new railroad went through Franklin Depot in late 1838 or 1839. While the line was under construction, three men realized the potential for a town around the depot, which was located near the crossing of the new railroad and the Hillsborough Road (later the Louisburg Road and now Mason Street), which ran between the county seat towns of Louisburg in Franklin County and Hillsborough to the west in Orange County. These entrepreneurs were Thomas Howerton, a well-to-do planter in the area who represented Franklin County in the state legislature from 1835 to 1840; Thomas Crocker, a Baptist minister and member of the original Board of Trustees for Wake Forest College; and William R. Hargrove, a surveyor.

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1. Historical background information on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and the history of the town of Franklinton from T.H. Pearce, Franklin County 1779-1979.
 2. Franklin County Deed Book 95, page 540. This deed of 1852, in which Kearney conveyed six and one fourth acres to the Railroad, refers to another deed of "some years prior" in which Kearney had granted ten acres to the railroad for the depot site, "which deed has been lost or mislaid." The 1852 deed reduced the depot parcel to the lesser amount.

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The three men purchased seventy acres surrounding Franklin Depot from Shemuel Kearney in a deed dated April 16, 1839.³ This tract was divided into numbered lots with the earliest sale being recorded May 15, 1839 to Beverly L. Waddle, whose lot was located between Hillsborough Road and the southern boundary of the Depot tract. Most important of these first sales was lot No. 1, located at the southeast corner of the Depot tract on the north side of Hillsborough Road. This was sold to Benjamin Jones and was to be the location of his tavern, the new community's social center and later the location of the Franklinton Hotel.

On December 20, 1842, the North Carolina General Assembly, in "An Act to Incorporate the Town of Franklinton," set forth its limits and Franklin Depot officially became the town of Franklinton. The town grew from this beginning to a small but thriving trade and service center for the outlying area.

Early records suggest that there was a depot building located in Franklinton from the very start. The present depot, identified in the railroad's 1886 annual report as having been constructed that year, is probably the second or third depot building at the site.

As a transportation connection, the depot in Franklinton played an important social and economic role for the entire area for over a century. During the War Between the States, Confederate soldiers would "take the cars at Franklinton," or "leave the cars at the Franklinton Depot," when coming home on leave or returning to their units. Town folk sometimes fed soldiers with food from their own tables when the trains stopped over in Franklinton. Until 1885 when the branch line was constructed, passengers from Louisburg, the county seat, took the stage west to Franklinton where they boarded trains for destinations north and south. A large livery stable stood on one of the town's original lots and provided carriages and saddle horses for hire to drummers and others who arrived on the train and needed transportation to other areas of Franklin and neighboring counties. A modern saw mill was built on one of the parcels from the original seventy acres which boasted one of the area's first circular saws. The hotel, which had evolved from the Benjamin Jones' original tavern, grew and prospered, becoming famous for its cuisine and accommodations. In the early days, trains stopped at the station while passengers dined in the hotel, just a couple of hundred feet from the tracks.

3. Franklin County Deed Book 28, page 44. Other land sale descriptions from Deed Books 28 and 29.

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The access provided by the railroad also enabled the establishment and success of Franklinton's early schools, including the Franklinton Male and Female institutes. A handbill with information on instruction and tuition distributed in late 1854 stated: "FRANKLINTON-Its location is a pleasant, enterprising village, 30 miles north of Raleigh, immediately on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad and easily accessible from all sections." Two black boarding schools, Albion Academy and Christian College, were started soon after the end of the War Between the States. The white boarding schools were discontinued in the late nineteenth century, but the black schools operated until the Depression in the 1930s.

An article in *The Franklin Courier* [Louisburg, N.C.] dated February 5, 1875, by a writer with the pen name "Your Drummer Friend," described the area and the rough trip by stage from Louisburg to connect with the train at Franklinton. The article expressed a need for a branch line to Louisburg, and described Franklinton as "not a pretty place, but it has this advantage over Louisburg, the Iron Horse comes puffing and blowing up to their very doors with their merchandise." Of Franklinton's hotel, the writer noted "To my relief we reached Mrs. Tucker's hotel, where we found a comfortable room and a good fire. After a little walk, we enjoyed an excellent dinner, which was spread temptingly before us and gave exhilaration to our spirits. This is considered one of the best village hotels in the state." He mentioned the depot buildings in the plural, saying "The Depot buildings are large and well finished and a large amount of freight is sent and received at this station." Judging by his mention of Depot buildings, it is safe to assume that the large freight depot (demolished) had by that time been constructed across the tracks from the passenger station, and it is likely to have been the building referred to in the annual reports as constructed in 1861.

In 1885 the Louisburg Railroad Company completed its branch line to connect the county seat, ten miles to the east, with the main line of the Raleigh and Gaston. This immediately was responsible for a large increase in both freight and passenger traffic. The importance of the railroad to farmers in the area around Louisburg is borne out by the fact that before the branch line to Franklinton opened in 1885, the Louisburg cotton market handled just 2500 bales, but after the railroad had been in operation two years, the Louisburg market shipped out 6500 bales. Passenger service between the two towns flourished for many years, well into the 1930s when private automobiles and better roads put an end to it. The branch line continued freight operations until 1988.

At the turn of the century the Raleigh and Gaston became part of the Seaboard Airline, which in 1967 merged into the larger Seaboard Coastline system. The depot remained in use by the railroads and was a focal point for the town of Franklinton through much of the present century. A log maintained by E.A. Harris,

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a telegraph operator at the Franklinton Depot during World War II, attests to the heavy rail activity through Franklinton at that time, with twenty trains passing by the station in one eight hour shift between 4 P.M. and midnight.⁴

The Franklinton Depot continued to serve as a passenger stop until the early 1970s. The station was closed for good on January 9, 1973, when the dispatcher/telegraph operator was transferred to Raleigh.⁵ The local Lions Club and the Franklinton Woman's Club negotiated with the railroad to secure the building, and the railroad sold the structure to the groups for one dollar on the condition that it be removed from the railroad right-of-way. The Lions Club withdrew from the project though it continued to support the move and restoration. A lot adjacent to the right-of-way was secured in 1973, and the building was moved that year. It now stands under 200 feet from and in full view of the tracks.⁶ The Woman's Club secured full title to the lot in 1976.⁷

Architectural Context: Depots on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, 1840-1900

There are few physical remains of facilities erected by the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad during its operation between 1840 and the turn of the century, when the line was absorbed into the Seaboard system. Stone piers or fragments of stone piers for the railroad's original wooden bridges erected over rivers and creeks in the late 1830s survive in four locations between Raleigh and the Tar River. The earliest depot buildings, water tanks, freight sheds, and other facilities were probably hastily built, temporary structures. An engineer's report in 1850 decrying the poor condition of the line states that the "water stations and wood depots are merely nomina[1], requiring an entire rebuilding and remodeling."⁸ New rails and crossties for the entire line were laid between 1850 and 1853. The 1855 president's report noted the poor condition of all the "Ware-houses" on the line, saying "it will be recollected these were built at the time of the original

4. Seaboard Airline Railway Station Record of Train Movements, August 21, 1942, E.A. Harris Jr., operator. T.H. Pearce private collection, Franklinton.

5. Durham Morning Herald, January 13, 1973.

6. Julia Carr, "We Lost a Depot, But We Gained a Club House," n.d., typescript manuscript in the T.H. Pearce collection, Franklinton.

7. Franklin County Deed Book 737, page 383-384.

8. Report of Major S. Moylan Fox, Civil Engineer, on the Raleigh and Gaston Rail Road. Raleigh, December 16, 1850. Typescript copy in T.H. Pearce private collection, Franklinton.

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construction of the old road, now more than fifteen years ago."⁹ All of the earliest depots were thus presumably replaced or extensively remodeled after 1855. The Seaboard Building (NR) in Raleigh, the brick headquarters of the Raleigh and Gaston, was erected 1861-1862.

Two types of small town depots appear to have been constructed by the Raleigh and Gaston between 1855 and 1900. The first type appears to have been used primarily as a freight depot, though it may have served as a combination freight-passenger depot in some locations. This was a rectangular structure with a low pitched hip roof with a deep overhang, without brackets supporting the overhang. This type was covered in board and batten, and was distinguished by heavy, multi-paneled double-leaf freight doors set in either square or segmental arch openings with molded surrounds. Freight platforms, partially sheltered by the deep roof overhangs, were located on two or more sides. One end of the building was partitioned off for a small office. There were usually no projecting trackside bay windows (the Macon Depot was an exception). Examples of this type are known to have existed in Warren Plains, Littleton, Macon, Ridgeway, and Franklinton, with surviving examples now at Warren Plains and Littleton.

The austere Italianate character of these buildings and the quality of construction have led to speculation that they might date from the late 1850s and early 1860s rebuilding of the Raleigh and Gaston. Indeed, in spite of hardships of war, annual reports from 1861 to 1864 suggest that construction continued during the early war years. The 1862 report notes that "the Depots at Henderson and Franklinton have been completed. Those at Littleton, Warrenton, Ridgeway and Wake need repairs, and it is proposed to overhaul them the present year." In 1863: "We have built new Depots at Wake and Ridgeway; the timber for a new house at Warrenton [Warren Plains] is on the ground and the building will soon be up." And in 1864: "Our depots have all been overhauled and repaired, and where necessary, rebuilt, and are now in excellent condition."¹⁰

The Franklinton Depot is the last surviving example between Raleigh and Gaston of the second type, which was strictly a passenger depot built in the 1880s. These gable roof frame buildings employed heavy door and window frames that seem to continue the regional Italianate idiom, though they included "modern" touches of the picturesque Gothic Revival and Queen Anne with shingled gable ends, pointed

9. 1855 Annual Report, p. 8, Raleigh and Gaston Railroad Annual Reports, 1852-1893, North Carolina State Archives. Hereinafter cited as R&G Annual Reports.

10. 1862, 1863, and 1864 Annual Reports, R&G Annual Reports.

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arch attic ventilators, and kingpost ornament and pinnacles in the peaks of the gables. In the 1886 Annual Report, General Superintendent John C. Winder states "There has been constructed at Wake, Franklinton, Warren Plains, Macon and Littleton neat and convenient passenger houses, which have added much to the comfort of the traveling public."¹¹ This seems to be clearly referring to the present Franklinton Depot. While none of the other depots of the 1886 building campaign survives, a ca. 1900 documentary trackside photograph from Littleton shows a passenger depot that is a mirror image to the Franklinton Depot in the foreground, with the earlier board and batten freight depot identical to the Warren Plains type in the background. The 1886 Littleton Depot was replaced about 1913 by a larger brick passenger depot, which also has been lost. The Franklinton Depot is the last survivor of the type on the old Raleigh and Gaston route and an important example of late nineteenth century small town railroad architecture on one of the state's first lines.

11. 1886 Annual Report, R&G Annual Reports.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.388

UTM References

A

1	7
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7	2	9	0	6	0
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3	9	9	8	1	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is a pie-shaped lot of 0.388 acres as described in Franklin County Deed Book 737, pages 383-384, and registered June 24, 1976, transferring the property from the Franklinton Lion's Club to the Franklinton Woman's Club, as drawn on the attached plat.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nomination boundary encompasses the depot building and that parcel of land in present and immediate association with it.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title T.H. Pearce, consulting historian, and Michael T. Southern, staff

organization N.C. Division of Archives and History date October 11, 1990

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 919/733-6545

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27601-2807

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Bibliography

Annual Reports of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, 1852-1893.

Franklin County, North Carolina, Deeds

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Freeman, S.D.

Pearce, T.H., private collection, Franklinton, N.C.

Survey Files, Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Historic
Preservation Office: Depot Buildings of the Raleigh and Gaston/
Seaboard line between Raleigh and Gaston: Raleigh, Millbrook, Neuse,
Forestville, Wake Forest, Youngsville, Franklinton, Kittrell,
Henderson, Ridgeway, Warren Plains, Macon, Littleton, and Gaston.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs by Michael T. Southern
Taken April 16, 1990

Accessioned at the Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of
Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina

Photo 1: Negative # N.90.8.10. Overall view looking north.

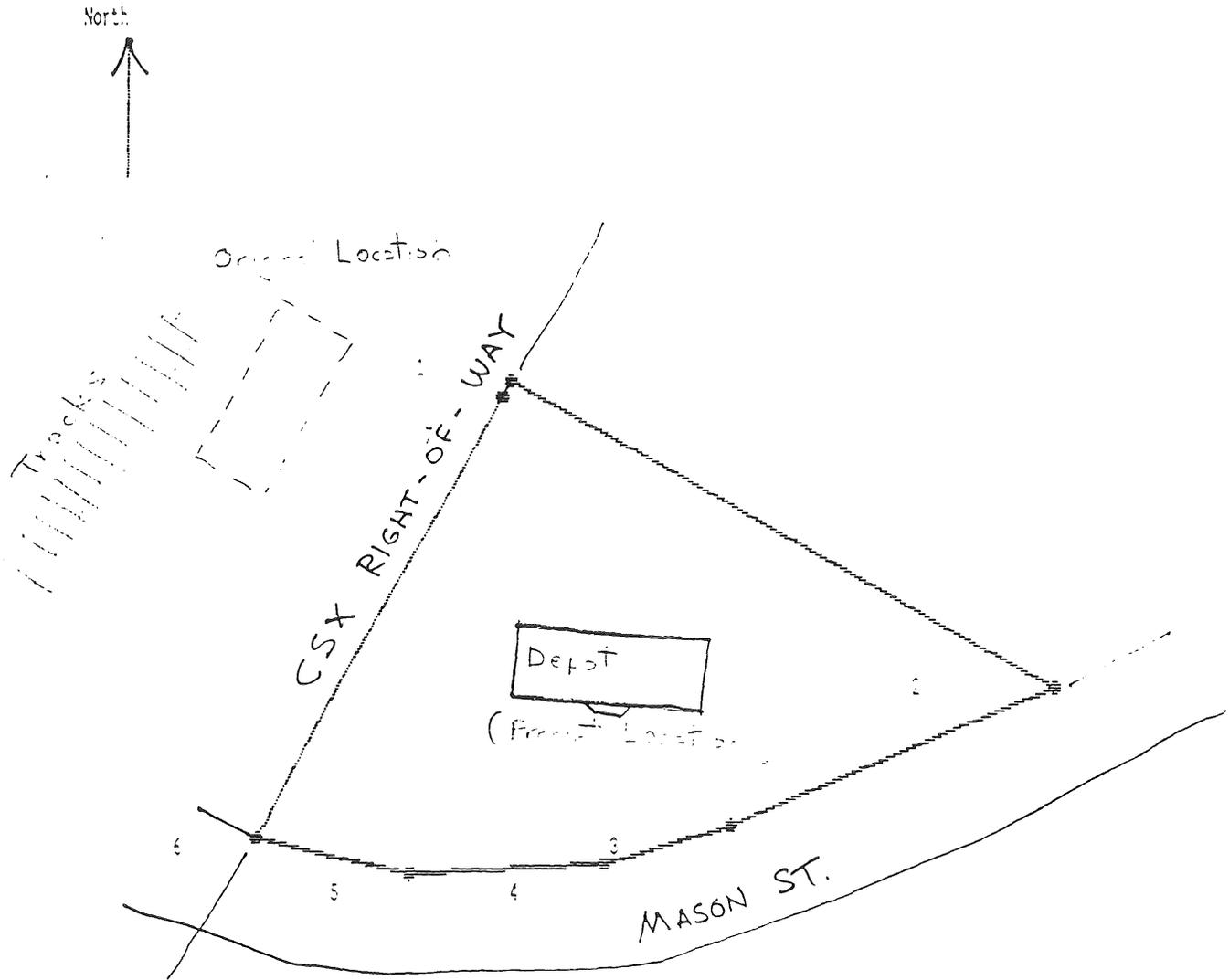
Photo 2: Negative # N.90.8.13. Overall view looking west towards RR crossing and
commercial district.

Photo 3: Negative # N.90.8.7. Overall view from rear, looking southeast.

Photo 4: Negative # N.90.8.16. Double leaf exterior door in frame.

Photo 5: Negative # N.90.8.20. Interior view looking southeast
towards bay window

Deed Description: Franklinton Depot Plat
Approximate Area = 0.388 acres
Scale: 1 inch = 50 feet



Franklinton Depot
Franklinton, Franklin County, N.C.
Property boundary drawn by computer from deed description

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

FRANKLINTON DEPOT
FRANKLINTON, N.C.
FRANKLINTON QUAD
ZONE 17 N 3998 180
E 729060

