

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Rowland Depot
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number W. Main Street and W. Railroad Street not for publication
city or town Rowland vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Robeson code 155 zip code 28383

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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Jeffrey P. Cross SHPO 3/19/01
Signature of certifying official Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural 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:

	Signature of Keeper	Date of Action
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): _____	_____	_____

North Carolina

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: **Public - local**

Category of Property: **building**

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register : **N/A**

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Cat: **TRANSPORTATION/rail-related**

Current Functions

Cat: **RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum**

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

Foundation **BRICK**

roof **METAL**

walls **BRICK**

other

Narrative Description : See Continuation Form

Rowland Depot
Robeson County, North Carolina

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- 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.
- 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.

Area(s) of Significance

Architecture**Transportation****Community Planning and Development**Period of Significance **1925-1951**Significant Dates **1925**Significant person(s): N/ACultural Affiliation: N/AArchitect/Builder: **Unknown****Narrative Statement of Significance:** See Continuation Form

Rowland Depot
Robeston County, North Carolina

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography; See Continuation Form Section 9 page 1

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: North Carolina Division of Archives & History

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **Less than one acre**
 UTM References Zone Easting Northing
 17 656630 3822780

Verbal Boundary Description: See Continuation Form

Boundary Justification: See Continuation Form

11. Form Prepared By

Edward F. Turberg, Architectural Historian	Date January 2, 2001
307 North 15th Street	Telephone 910-762-6301
Wilmington, NC 28401-3813	

Property Owner

Town of Rowland	
P. O. Box 127	Telephone 910-422-3333
Rowland, NC 28383	

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION.

The Rowland Depot is centrally located in the small agricultural town of Rowland, in the southernmost region of Robeson County, North Carolina, along the west side of the single-track right-of-way that bypasses Goldsboro and Wilmington, saving sixty-one miles along the former Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road. The original board-and-batten depot was built in 1889 and contained waiting rooms, ticket counters, freight storage, and offices. Early in the twentieth century, it was moved south about forty feet; and in 1925 it was replaced by a new and larger, hip-roofed brick structure. Physical analysis of the current building indicates that it is a replacement rather than a renovation of the old station, replicating earlier features such as a rectangular form, projecting bay overlooking the tracks, separate entrances to the segregated waiting rooms, and bracketed roof overhangs. The new depot, separated from Main Street by a pleasing planted plaza, became a model of appealing design and functional use. In successive years of expanding growth of freight and passenger traffic, and the eventual demise of passenger revenues, the depot passed through a period of uncertain survival. Nevertheless, it remains an intact architectural resource and retains strong associations with the century-old railroad history of the region.

A. The Exterior

The depot rests on a poured concrete foundation incorporating an angled watertable. Above the rear wing are a series of rectangular metal vents providing air circulation beneath the structure. The walls are faced with red-grey bricks laid in a 6:1 bond pattern and sand colored mortar joints. Wide, sheltering overhangs of the hipped main block and the gable-end freight wing are supported by Craftsman-style triangular wooden brackets and are covered with standing-seam metal roofing. The north elevation of the structure forms a rhythmical pattern of alternating window, door, window, window, door, window. Windows contain six-over-six sash with masonry sills and lintels and molded surrounds. The intervening doors have nine-light upper panels, twin vertical lower wood panels, and are surmounted by six-light transoms. The east and west side elevations have three similar windows with an additional glazed door opening from the eastern room to a paved, at-grade platform adjacent to the tracks.

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B. The Interior

The elongated, L-shaped plan of the building incorporates three separate functions and each section is composed of slightly differing construction materials. The north passenger waiting room section, raised two steps above the exterior grade, has masonry floors with an incised pattern in the grey-colored cement simulating square blocks of slate, smooth plaster walls and ceilings, and plain baseboards. Adjacent men's and women's rooms are floored with ceramic tile in alternating square and diamond patterns. The central office core contains tongue-and-groove pine floors, plaster walls, and a board ceiling with a narrow nailer placed at the junction of the wall and ceiling planes. The rear freight warehouse wing, raised four steps above the main block, is walled with bricks repeating the 6:1 bond of the exterior, wide plank floors, and exposed-rafter wooden ceilings. The wall separating the warehouse and office is sheathed with horizontal, double-beaded boards.

1. Waiting Rooms

The twin passenger waiting rooms are of equal size. The eastern sector was built for white patrons and overlooks the railroad tracks through the side windows. The western area was for black customers. Each unit contains small rest rooms and ticket windows along the south walls. Windows and doors have plain wood frames. The doors between connecting rooms have six horizontal raised panels fitted with metal butt hinges and knobs. Doors to the rest rooms are of a five-panel type. All have simple frames matching those at the windows. The waiting rooms are fitted with elongated, stained oak benches with solid armrests at each end and open rests spaced between the multiple seating spaces. The western room has a continuous bench along the inner wall; the eastern unit features a free-standing, back-to-back bench in the center of the room. Both areas include multi-tube steam radiators and overhead lighting.

2. Office.

The middle section of the building contains a large office area extending east-west across the central portion of the structure. The east wall of the office projects several feet beyond the main body of the building to form a peak-roofed, rectangular bay with windows on three sides, enabling an unobstructed view up and down the railroad tracks and across the right-of-way. Here are contained the semaphore signal controls and other mechanical and electrical equipment necessary for the safe and efficient operation of approaching trains and station communications. Original furnishings in the room include desks, swivel and side chairs, file cabinets, clocks, hanging light bulbs in porcelain sockets, telephones, typewriters, and an oil heater with goose-neck flue attached to the interior chimney. In addition, railroad timetables and other train-related papers and documents dating through most of the twentieth century are preserved in situ.

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3. Freight Warehouse.

The rearmost section of the depot is the freight warehouse, one bay wide and three bays deep. The wide exterior sliding doors are fabricated from clinched tongue-and-groove boards arranged diagonally outside and vertically inside. The doors slide on overhead metal tracks, and when open are semi-enclosed by vertical board screens. The northwest corner of the large room houses a cast-iron scale enhanced by Greek-style fluted columns forming the upright supports. All the weights and scale armatures are intact, as well as the large weighing platform set into the floor. Adjacent to the scale is a smaller, movable, wheeled scale, also of iron, used to weigh smaller freight items arriving on the site. A status board for local and out-of-state freight consignments is nailed to the board wall at the south end of the warehouse.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

Summary Paragraph

The 1925 Rowland Depot is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: transportation and community development and planning. The structure is a highly significant example of early twentieth-century transportation architecture in Robeson County reflecting construction forms and design features adopted by the Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Because of the railroad, the entire region developed as an agricultural center and Rowland emerged as a distinctive railroad town along the North Carolina-South Carolina border. The period of significance extends from 1925 to 1951, the fifty-year cut off date for the National Register criteria. The depot is also eligible for listing under Criterion C: architecture. It is a rare survival of the once ubiquitous passenger station, preserving a high degree of integrity with original office and waiting room furnishings, operating equipment, freight scales, and lighting and heating fixtures. The well-executed exterior brickwork, multiple fenestration, and broad overhanging roofs supported by triangular brackets combine with interiors containing intact plaster walls, beaded-wood walls and ceilings, tiled and wood floors, and an exposed truss roof in the freight area.

The depot is situated in the heart of Rowland, the first station built along the 113-mile railway line linking Florence, South Carolina and Wilson, North Carolina. The Wilmington and Weldon Railroad built the line as a shortened route between Wilson and Florence, passing through the broad and level fields of Robeson County. This "Wilson Short-Cut" had a direct and lasting influence on the rapid growth of the region, spurred commerce and agriculture; and placed Rowland in the center of economic progress.

Architectural Context

The Rowland Depot was built for the Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road in 1925 to replace an 1889 frame station on the site. The former structure incorporated board-and-batten siding, peaked roof and small cubicles. The later depot, a noteworthy example of the popular Craftsman style applied to transportation architecture, is built of textured bricks and heavy timbers, the design providing fireproof conditions, large window areas brightening the interior spaces, and broad hipped-roof

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overhangs sheltering passengers standing outside. Two examples of the railroad's earlier board-and-batten designs survive in the region: fifteen miles southeast in Latta, South Carolina, currently used for storage; and thirty miles northwest in Ghio, North Carolina, now abandoned. Brick depots are more in evidence and some still serve as passenger stations. The former Atlantic Coast Line's Dillon, South Carolina; and Rowland and Fayetteville, North Carolina buildings are Amtrak stops along the main New York-to-Florida route and are prominent features of their commercial districts. Thirty miles northwest of Rowland, the Rockingham Depot, although built for the Seaboard Airline Railway, a rival company, incorporates many similar design features of the other stations such as handsome brickwork, large areas of fenestration, and a broad hipped roof. The Rowland Depot remains an important link between the region's past and present, occupies a central position in the core of the city which the railroad engendered, and represents the physical as well as symbolic sense of community that still prevails.

Historical Significance

Rowland is situated in the midst of smaller and older agricultural settlements in the heart of a fertile belt containing some of the most productive farm lands in the state of North Carolina. Flat and well drained, the area is bordered on the east and north by low, swampy lands along the Lumber River, on the west by sand hills, and on the south by watersheds of the Little Pee Dee River in South Carolina.¹

Established and developed as a direct result of new railroad construction across the state borders, the town was named in honor of Col. Alfred Rowland, II, Confederate veteran, lawyer, and member of the North Carolina state congress. On October 23, 1888, the first train on the new line steamed north from Florence into the southern district of Robeson County. That same day, lots were auctioned near the railroad for the purpose of building a town. Eighty acres of land had been purchased by Edgerton and McQueen, agents for the railroad, who formed the Southern Land and Improvement Company. The average price for the auctioned parcels was \$100.00, and the property was soon cleared for development and laying out of the grid plan of the new town.² Incorporation occurred on March 11, 1889, signed by Rowland's first mayor, Milton Lytch; and town commissioners Giles P. Robertson, J.W. Webster, D. McC. Alford, and S.A. Alford. Thereupon, the town grew steadily around the gleaming rails of prosperity, a year before the final link of forty-three miles was completed from Rowland to Fayetteville.³ Construction of a commercial district began immediately in close proximity to the railroad right-of-way.

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The first building in town was a small frame structure built as a general merchandise store for R.S. Bond on the north side of Main Street and east of the railroad tracks. Bond was also secretary/treasurer of The Rowland Land and Improvement Company. The store was later replaced by a brick building which later became a theater. The second structure was another frame store, built for Giles P. Robertson, on the north side of Main Street and west of Hickory Street. The third building, completed during the winter of 1888-89 for Milton Lytch, was a two-story frame structure containing a store at the first level and living quarters above. It was located on the south side of Main Street and west of Hickory Street, placed close to the street with porches across the first and second levels.⁴ Of special pride to the town was Alford's Drug Store, also dating to 1889, which in 1902 became the Rowland Drug Company, in a two-story brick edifice boasting a soda fountain of onyx, patterned floor tiles, and birch and mahogany counters and shelves.⁵ The Rowland Oil Mill and Fertilizer Company, organized in 1889, was the first manufacturing industry in the area, the fifth cotton seed oil mill in the country and controlled two of the largest cotton gins in the area. Rowland Hardware Company, started in 1889 by Pleasants and Cox, on the south side of Main Street, were dealers in coffins, caskets, hardware, and plants.⁶ In 1891, Henry H. Straughan, a native of Conway, South Carolina, opened a blacksmith shop on the south side of Main Street. During his residency he built and patented Straughan's Upright Cotton Plow.⁷ S.L. Adams' grocery and general store, incorporating rooms for transients upstairs, was built across from the railroad, a convenient stop-over for traveling merchants and farmers. From 1893 to 1909, Mrs. N. Pittman ran an undertaking business in Rowland. Later, she opened the second boarding house in the town.⁸

In 1889, Rowland was enhanced by the erection of a handsome passenger and freight depot at the intersection of Main and Railroad streets. Typical of designs of the period, the board-and-batten station featured twin waiting rooms, offices, enclosed storage bays, and broad overhanging roofs supported by flared brackets. The appearance of the depot in the commercial center of town attracted businessmen from outlying regions. In 1901, A. & W. McQueen, who began a mercantile business in 1882 at Plainview, a mile west of Rowland, moved their operation to a site just east of the railroad tracks along the south side of Main Street. A. McEachern moved from Marion County, South Carolina, to Rowland to open his "fancy groceries" store and fur trade. D.N. Neal's general store came to the corner of Main and Hickory streets. Dan J. Watson's blacksmith and woodworking shop stood on the west side of the railroad south of Chapel Street. And Albert Webster's tin smith shop, where he made tobacco flues and lightening rods, was opposite the old cotton platform. In addition, there were livery stables; a gun and bicycle shop; two jewelry stores; Ward's Pharmacy where the owner dispensed his patented "All Healing Antiseptic" and "444" chills and fever remedy; a Singer Sewing

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Machine agency—the railroad made this an excellent point for delivery and distribution to other areas; and Buick, Ford and Chevrolet automobile sales and service agencies.⁹ The Ford dealership was adjacent to the depot so that new automobiles, packed four to a box car, could be unloaded from the train, moved to the shop, and have wheels, fenders and some of the tops installed.¹⁰ A local tradition relates that one of the first cars in town was owned by the Mayor of Rowland, whose wife accidentally collided with the corner of the railroad station, causing much distress to Dame and Depot. The building was moved south about forty feet along the line and repaired, eventually being replaced by the current structure in 1925.¹¹

The prosperity of Rowland and its growing importance as an agricultural shipping point along a major rail line justified new ventures in the fields of communications and comforts. In 1892, L.L. Ivey built the first brick structure in town, the Merchants Hotel, just northeast of the depot.¹² In 1901, a private telephone exchange operated above Neil's general merchandise store. This was succeeded, in 1911, by Southern Bell Telephone Company's exchange opened at the second floor of Watkin's grocery. In 1924, the Yadkin River Power Company merged with Carolina Power and Light Company and began supplying electricity to the region. John Milton Lytch, whose business was on the east side of the railroad beyond the Ford shops, sold Delco battery electrical systems to farmers living beyond the reach of the CP&L power lines.¹³

In 1937, the Robeson Livestock Mutual Association was organized and Rowland was designated the chief rail shipping point for marketable farm produce. During the months of July and September of 1938, a record was set when forty-seven box cars containing 3,231 hogs were shipped from Rowland.¹⁴ Although local livestock production did not keep pace with other areas of the state, grade A dairies, beef cattle, hogs, and turkeys are still an important part of the regional economy; and tobacco and cotton remain important cash crops in the area. In the 1940s, modern farm practices were developed and advanced through organizations such as the Future Farmers of America to keep Rowland and the southern region of Robeson County in the forefront of progressive agricultural activity. The Rowland Canning Company and the Rowland Cooperative Produce Association packaged and shipped tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, onions, squash, lettuce, sweet potatoes, bell peppers, watermelons, cantaloupes from local farms to distant urban centers served by the railroad.¹⁵

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Rowland also prospered in the fields of education and religion, thanks to the growing together of communities effected by the railroad. Schools in the neighboring area included academies at Plainview, school for residents of the new town. In 1897, T.C. Easterling, a professor at Alfordsville Academy, purchased a site on West Main Street for a new school. Curiously, in the early twentieth century, the railroad tracks that bisected the town also divided it into two distinct educational districts. In 1904, East School was built at Church and McCallum Streets. West School rose at the western end of Church Street. By 1906, however, residents joined together and passed a school bond for a consolidated facility on Chapel Street between Hines and Canal streets. The structure, completed in 1909, was razed in 1949 to make way for a new elementary school, cafeteria and gymnasium. The High School was erected in 1936 on the south side of West Chapel between Canal and Hines streets.¹⁶ Rowland Presbyterian Church was an outgrowth of Ashpole Church, established in 1780. The Rowland edifice was begun in 1902 at the southeast corner of Main and Watson streets, and dedicated on April 25, 1909. The Baptist Church, organized in 1892, occupied a frame sanctuary on the south corner of Church and Hickory streets. In 1920, a new brick structure was begun on West Main and Canal streets, but delays due to the Depression and other causes put off the dedication of the church until April 4, 1937. The Methodist Church was begun in 1903 and two years later work on a house of worship commenced at the southeast corner of Bond and Church streets. This structure was replaced in 1937 by the current brick sanctuary which was open for services in February of 1938.¹⁷

The women of Rowland played an important part in community affairs through their Civic League, established in 1910. In 1915 they joined the State and National Federations of Women's Clubs to become one of the first such clubs in North Carolina. Among the many activities they directed were programs for improving and beautifying the town, including planting beds of flowers at the centrally located train depot. Other civic enterprises that gave the town great social and cultural appeal were the organization of a Parent-Teacher's Association; and music, book and garden clubs. The Rowland Book Club was begun in 1903 in the town's first library. This became a subscription library in 1912, and in 1934 it became a free public library, the first of its kind in the county and one of the earliest in the state.¹⁸

The 1960s through the 1980s were years of change both in economic and social conditions across the nation. The shift of transportation away from rail roads to vehicular roads had an effect on Rowland as elsewhere in America where the presence of rail services was being abandoned or diminished, and population shifts away from rural communities was leaving a void. Interstate 95, running from Maine to Florida, was part of a national program begun in 1964 to create limited access highways linking all

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corners of the country. Two years before, in 1962, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad removed the double tracks through Rowland, leaving only a main track and several sidings in place. By 1982, after the merger of the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line railroads formed the Seaboard Coast Line system, plans were afoot to demolish the Rowland Depot. After energetic negotiations initiated by the women of the community, the property was deeded to the Town of Rowland and leased to the Rowland Historical Society for preserving and displaying historical artifacts relating to the town and its century-long railroad heritage. The survival of the Rowland Depot into the late twentieth century, decades after the demise of local passenger and limited freight traffic in the region, attests to the deep influence and significance railroads and their associated resources continue to hold on the public imagination.¹⁹

Endnotes

1. George Reed Pate, *Town of A Thousand Friends* (Bamberg, SC, Kilgus Printing Co.: 1989), p.5.
2. *Ibid.*, 1-3.
3. *Ibid.*, 7; Eugene McM. Musselwhite, *The Iron Horse Comes to Robeson* (Lumberton, NC: 1968), p.16-17, 19; Glenn Hoffman, PhD., *Building A Great Railroad: The History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company* (Richmond, VA, CSX Corporation: 1998), p. 77-78.
4. Pate, 7-8.
5. *Ibid.*, 43.
6. *Ibid.*, 45.
7. *Ibid.*, 46.
8. *Ibid.*, 50.
9. *Ibid.*, 47-49; Thomas Ross, PhD., *One Land, Three Peoples: An Atlas of Robeson County* (Lumberton, NC: 1982).
10. *Ibid.*, 64.
11. Story related to Ed Turberg by Timothy Harper, Rowland Town Administrator, on February 14, 2000.
12. Pate, 9.
13. *Ibid.*, 65.
14. *Ibid.*, 17-18.
15. *Ibid.*, 131.
16. *Ibid.*, 18-22; 102-104.
17. *Ibid.*, 26-33.
18. *Ibid.*, 36.
19. *Ibid.*, 156.

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Section 9

Bibliography

Hoffman, Glenn, PhD., *Building A Great Railroad: The History of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company*. Richmond, VA, CSX Corporation: 1998.

Musselwhite, Eugene McM. *The Iron Horse Comes to Robeson*. Lumberton, NC, 1968.

Pate, George Reed, *Town Of A Thousand Friends*. Bamberg, SC, Kilgus Printing Co.: 1989.

Ross, Thomas, PhD., *One Land, Three Peoples: An Atlas of Robeson County*. Lumberton, NC, 1982.

Section 10

Verbal Boundary Description

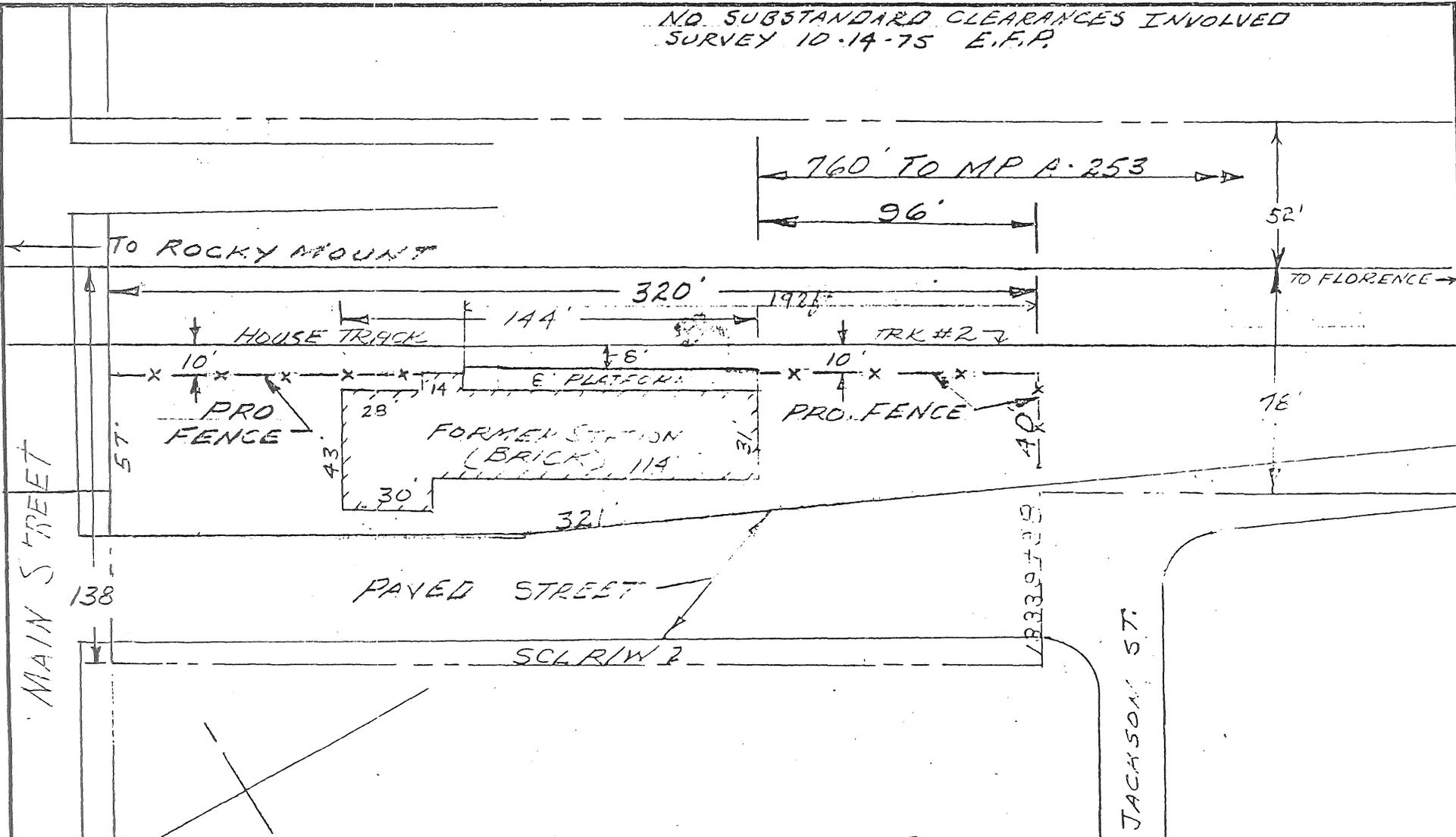
The property being nominated consists of a slightly irregular tract beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of West Main and Railroad streets, thence running southwest 321 feet to a chain-link fence, thence with the fence southeast forty feet to the southeast corner of the fence and ten feet northwest of the railroad tracks, thence northeast along the fence 320 feet to the northeast corner of the fence, and thence northwest along a portion of the fence fifty-seven feet to the beginning. The property corresponds to the boundaries shown on the accompanying tax parcel map dated June 3, 1965.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property includes the remaining intact tract historically associated with the former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad property containing and surrounding the Rowland Depot. The nominated property retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

NO. SUBSTANDARD CLEARANCES INVOLVED
SURVEY 10-14-75 E.F.P.

605



R53

Rowland Depot
W. Main and S. Railroad streets
Rowland
Robeson County, North Carolina

V3 NC
5-33

REV.
10-15-75
8-1482

SEABOARD ~~SEABOARD~~ COAST LINE RAILROAD
ROCKY MOUNT ~~STATION~~ DIVISION

PROPOSED LEASE OF SPACE

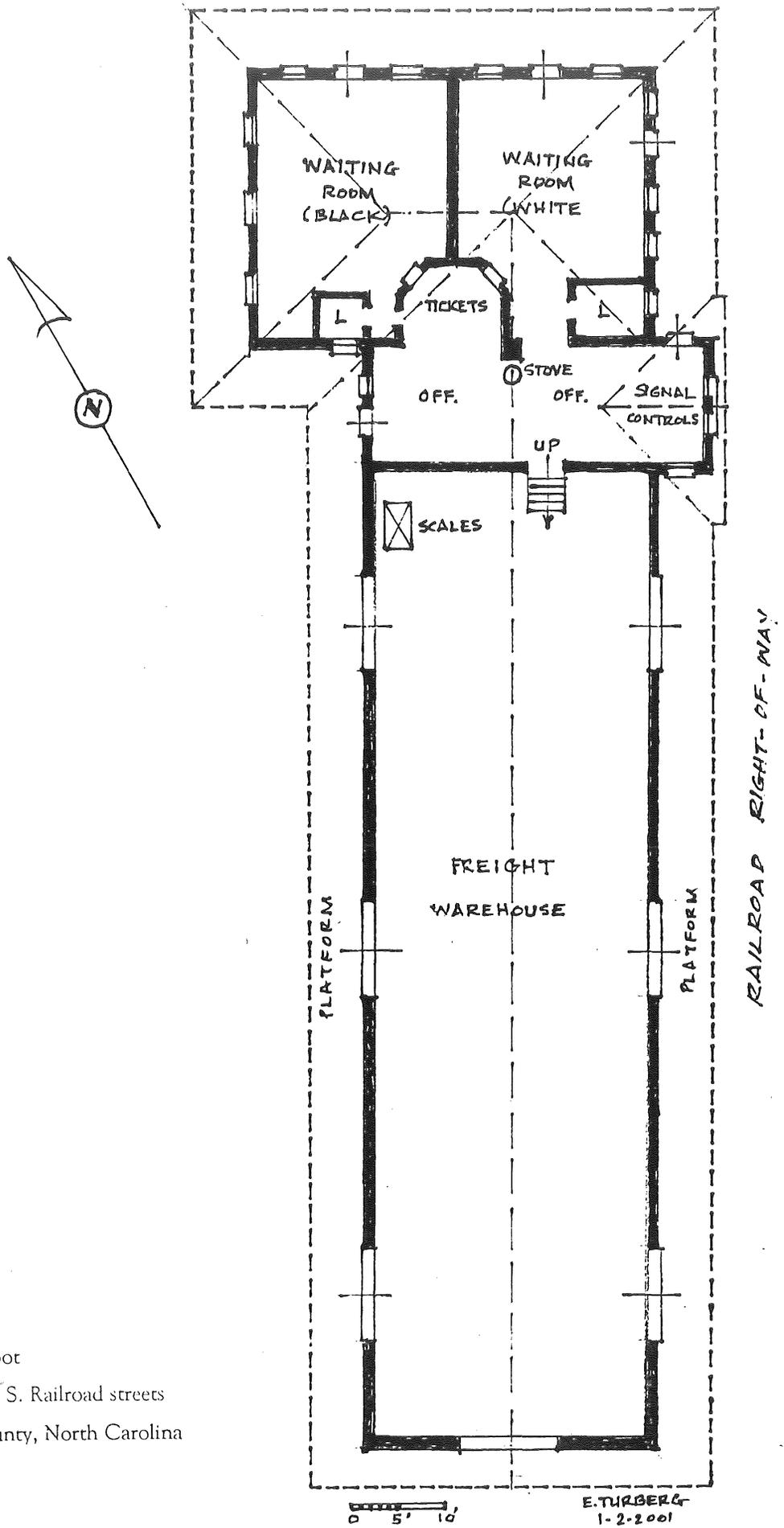
AT ROWLAND, N.C.

SCALE: 1" = 50' JUNE 3, 1965

OFFICE, DIVISION ENGINEER

ROCKY MOUNT, N. C.

ROBESON CO., N.C.



Rowland Depot
 W. Main and S. Railroad streets
 Rowland
 Robeson County, North Carolina



ROWLAND, N.C.

W. B. HILL
REBECCA HILL