

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Kingston Railroad Station

other name/site number: Kingston Depot

2. Location

street & number: Kingston Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: South Kingstown vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Washington code: 009 zip code: 02892

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Kingston Railroad Station, Washington County, So. Kingstown

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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.

___ See continuation sheet.

Frederick Williamson
Signature of certifying official

22 March 1995
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 Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: TRANSPORTATION

Sub: rail-related

Current: TRANSPORTATION

Sub: rail-related

Property name Kingston Railroad Station, Washington County, So. Kingstown

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Victorian

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation	<u>STONE/BRICK</u>	roof	<u>WOOD</u>
walls	<u>WOOD</u>	other	_____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): _____

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period(s) of Significance: 1875 _____

Significant Dates: 1875 _____

Significant Person(s): _____

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: _____

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

Property name Kingston Railroad Station, Washington County, So. Kingstown

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.51 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>286210</u>	<u>4595450</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

South Kingstown Assessor's Map 22-4, Lot 66.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

For justification of move, see section 8. The existing boundary will be unchanged.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Clifford M. Renshaw, A.I.A.

Organization: Clifford M. Renshaw Architects Date: April 94

Street & Number: 580 Ten Rod Road Telephone: 401-294-6538

City or Town: North Kingstown State: RI ZIP: 02852

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Description

Built in 1875, the wood-frame Kingston Railroad Station stands in its original location on an almost flat site at the east side of the Northeast Corridor Amtrak railway line in the village of West Kingston. The station sits very close to the tracks. The main body of the structure is approximately 14 feet from the tracks, and the original bracket platform canopy which is planned for reconstruction will be approximately 7 feet from the track's edge. Presently, an asphalt paved platform extends between the tracks and the station, and a similarly paved walkway 7 feet wide surrounds the station on the other three sides.

The station rests on a primarily stone foundation with a full cellar below the central portion and crawl spaces at either end. The upper 18 inches of the foundation is brick. Evidence of abandoned window openings in the stonework suggests that the station may have been raised at some point in the building's history, perhaps to align with a change in elevation of the railroad tracks. No foundation masonry is exposed on the exterior.

The station faces a wide paved parking area (approximately 60 feet wide) and is on axis with a circular approach drive approximately 100 feet in diameter. This driveway is in very poor condition, and one quadrant has been barricaded from passage for safety reasons. At the interior of the drive is a circle formed by 26 granite bollards with iron hitching rings which support an upper and lower iron pipe rail. This site feature appears from historical photographs to date from the turn of the century, although the configuration of the driveway itself probably dates from the time of the station's construction. The railings are now rusted and many of them are bent or disconnected.

Except for a large beech tree and some mature shrubs immediately to the south of the station, there is no planting material adjacent to the station. The driveway circle is shaded by a random grouping of old maple trees which are mostly diseased. There are no other site features of historical significance remaining in the immediate environs of the station.

It is proposed that station will be moved approximately 16 feet to the east and 35 feet to the north of its present location. Although the parking area it faces will be somewhat reduced in width, it will remain relatively wide, and the circular drive will be relocated to remain on axis with the building. As part of the project, the ring of bollards and railings will be rebuilt using original materials and will be restored to

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its original appearance. New trees will be planted within the circle to be similar in appearance to the existing.

It is also proposed that the station will be raised up approximately 3 feet to align with a new raised track platform that must be installed to meet handicapped accessibility standards. However, proposed new site grading will allow the retention of the original relationship of the station structure to grade. A new perimeter walkway will be built to match the configuration of the original which aligned with a surrounding bracketed canopy that is also being restored as part of this project.

The station will be moved to its new site intact. In anticipation of the move, the building is presently being restored to reestablish its structural integrity that was severely compromised by fire several years ago. Damaged roof structure is being replaced and wall structure is also being reinforced. Wood floor beams and sills which have been damaged over time by rot are being repaired.

Because the proposed new site is partially over the existing foundation, it is anticipated that the station will first be moved to a flat, open area just to the southeast where it will rest temporarily while a new foundation is excavated and built. The station will then be placed on its new foundation and the exposed areas of the old foundation will be covered over.

The moving of the building will be done using traditional means by qualified professionals with demonstrated experience in moving historical structures. Steel beams will be inserted through the existing foundation to support lines of bearing. These then will be carefully jacked up to allow rollers to be installed. All operations will be thoroughly monitored to minimize potential damage to the existing historic finishes of the building which will remain intact.

Archeological investigation of the site is presently being done under supervision of the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer. It is anticipated that no archeological resources of significance will be adversely affected by this project.

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Significance

The relocation of the station is proposed for several reasons. Plans are underway for the electrification of the Amtrak rail line to accommodate high speed rail service along the Northeast Corridor by the year 2010. It is projected that these high speed trains will pass the Kingston Station multiple times each day at speeds in excess of 150 mph. In addition to potential safety concerns for individuals caught on the existing narrow platform between the station and the tracks, computer modeling has revealed that the vibration caused by air turbulence from the high-speed trains will have a serious impact on the structural stability of the station. Also, new requirements for handicapped accessibility require that full length elevated platforms be provided at Kingston Station. It is felt that raising the station and regrading the site will minimize the visual impact of these platforms and will allow the station to more fully retain its original relationship to its site and historic site features.

In summary, it is anticipated that upon completion of this restoration and relocation project, the Kingston Station will retain sufficient integrity to meet the standards to maintain its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The station structure itself will remain fully intact and will be restored to its documented c. 1875 appearance. Damaged and deteriorated structure and finish will be repaired, and all original fabric possible will be retained. Elements which have been lost through time, such as the north and south portions of the original bracketed canopy, will be reconstructed, and more historically appropriate lighting and other site furnishings will be installed. Moving the station to its proposed new location will allow it to more satisfactorily accommodate its original and continued use as a railroad passenger station. Its structural integrity will be protected from potential damage by vibration and air turbulence, and life safety features and accessibility for passengers will be provided. New site work will allow the restoration of visual relationships of the station to significant site features to maintain and enhance the overall historical integrity of the property.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Kingston Railroad Station
AND/OR COMMON
Kingston Depot

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Kingston Road
CITY, TOWN South Kingstown (West Kingstown)
STATE Rhode Island
VICINITY OF Rep. Edward Beard
CODE 44
COUNTY Washington
CODE 009
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corp.)
STREET & NUMBER 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S. W.
CITY, TOWN Washington
VICINITY OF D. C. 20024
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. South Kingstown Town Hall
STREET & NUMBER 66 High Street
CITY, TOWN Wakefield
STATE Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Not so represented
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Victorian railroad station which has served the "South County" Rhode Island town of Kingston since 1875 is a small frame structure set upon a low, almost invisible masonry foundation. Seven bays long and three bays deep (76 feet by 30 feet), it appears on the exterior as a one-and-one-half-story gabled building with a raised, flat-roofed central section which registers visually as a tower, although its roof-line really does not rise above the ridges of its gabled and dormered flankers. The exterior of this fairly simple, but not entirely unadorned, building is faced to eaves-level with smooth horizontal boarding and, above that with clapboarding. A generous frieze-board with wide overhanging cornice above runs around the building below the eaves and up the gables, but is interrupted by the "tower" section, which has its own capping cornice on large curved brackets.

All major windows, including dormers, have segmental heads (those in the upper east and west elevations of the tower being paired), are surmounted by heavy moulded cornices with dentils, and have two-over-two-paned sash. There are four symmetrically-placed doorways (two on east side, two on west) which have simple moulded enframements, without the cornice elaboration of the windows. All doors were originally six-panelled, but the two serving the northern end of the building now have modern, partially-glazed substitutions. At each end (north and south) of the building there is on the principal floor a centered, semi-hexagonal oriel window between two conventional windows.

A shed-roofed canopy extends the length of the east side of the station, supported by slim square chamfered piers which flare out into brackets at their tops; this canopy covers the 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot-wide platform paralleling the railroad tracks and originally extended independently much farther north and south of the building, covering a greater length of platform than it now does. Also, at each end of the building is a concave-roofed canopy supported on ornamental, angular Stick-Style brackets; a canopy of this form also formerly extended across the town or entrance front of the station, which is served by a circular driveway surrounding a grass-plot with trees, enclosed by a barrier of granite posts and iron rods or railings. Except for the tower, which has a heavy, cubical, Italianate look, the station has an over-all chalet-like appearance, emphasized by a recent repainting in contrasting colors.

Internally, the spatial arrangement is, as it always was, one of extreme simplicity and practicality. At the ends, two lofty and roomy passenger waiting rooms lighted by ground-floor-level, dormer and gable windows take up together about four-fifths of the floor area. (It is said that one waiting room was for men and, presumably, their families, while the other was for "alone ladies.") The remaining one-fifth of

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the space, which forms the central two-storied tower -- the only portion of the structure to have horizontal internal division -- contains what we now call a "service core" accommodating the stationmaster's office with its ticket windows to both waiting rooms, rest rooms, storage spaces, stairs to the cellar heating plant and access (now by a ladder only, former stairs having been removed when the men's toilet was enlarged) to second-floor chambers once used as sleeping-quarters by train crewmen between work-shifts.

Of the two waiting rooms, only the northern one is still used for its original purpose; its southern duplicate is no longer needed and is used as a storage area, unrestored but intact. Both are of good size (about 30 by 29 feet) for local needs and are high -- flat-ceiled above the dormers but below the roof-ridge. Each has central doors on entrance and track-side fronts. At the outer end of each waiting room is a projecting three-sided oriel with windows in only the angled portions, the centre part being filled by a tall mirror in a heavy machine-carved frame. To a height of about six feet, walls are wainscoted in vertical matched sheathing of stained wood capped by a bolection moulding; above this, walls are now of plain white-painted plaster (probably of some muddier color in the 1870s); ceilings are white, and each has an ornamental central medallion from which kerosene lighting fixture depended in earlier years. Floors are of hardwood, and upon them rest honey-coloured wooden back-to-back benches with panelled ends and carved, scrolled armrests. Still extant, too, are the somewhat monumental silver-painted old-fashioned tubular radiators with grilled tops. Into this northern waiting room, at its south-east corner, there projects a corner, one-story, three-sided peninsular extension of the ticket office, which is crowned by a heavy cornice with modillions; this has a little extra bay of its own, allowing for an additional ticket window in what was apparently the busier waiting room. These narrow ticket windows are round-headed and have etched frosted-glass sashes above semi-circular shelves on carved brackets which serve customers for making change and receiving tickets. The stationmaster's office, within the ticket-selling windows, retains its 1870s flavor, having a long, built-in chest of many-sized drawers along its east wall with space for an old safe at one end; and there is still in the western bay window, overlooking the tracks, the long shelf-desk built for the use of the telegrapher-train-watcher.

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This building, in daily use for over one hundred years, had been maintained in fairly good structural condition by its successive corporate owners, although it was allowed to become neglected and grubby in surface appearance. This painfully obvious circumstance resulted in a voluntary community effort in 1973 and 1974 to refurbish the station. The Friends of the Kingston Station were successful in having repaired and repainted both the exterior and the still-used portions of the interior without detracting from the period atmosphere.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kingston Station is noteworthy for its vernacular architectural quality and typicality, its continuing function in the history of railroad transportation in Rhode Island, and its recent role as the focus of community and institutional attention and concerted action.

Just over one hundred years old, the Station, as one sees it now, is an excellent, well-preserved example of the balloon-frame, Stick Style architecture of the General Grant era. It is a picturesque, still-useful building, typical of the many small or intermediate-size rural depots built throughout the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century, most of which have, in recent decades, fallen to disuse or demolition. Kingston Station is also the only surviving building erected by the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad which is still in active use.

West Kingston is an attractive small village within the town of South Kingstown. The blue and white railroad station down in its hollow, forms a particular and pleasing adornment of the locale and provides a delightful welcome to it for the disembarking train passenger. Passing through its high, well-lighted waiting room -- with its honey-colored woodwork, white plaster walls, carved benches, large and convenient mirror, monumental silver radiators and small, frosted-glass ticket windows (and no modern posters or vending machines) -- it is difficult not to expect that the train one boards or leaves is composed of wooden coaches pulled by a locomotive with a funnel-shaped stack. Such nostalgia is furthered by the circular carriage drive in front of the station, where a hack, surrey, or buckboard should really be waiting, and by the view beyond to the yellow-and-white-painted former post office and general store. This could all be an expert television mockup or a movie set, but it is neither: it is authentic.

In the 1830s, the principal route of travel from Boston to New York was by stagecoach to Providence and from Providence to New York by overnight steamer. Rough stagecoach rides and rougher seas off the Rhode Island coast soon made it apparent that another form of land transportation would be welcome. In 1835 Boston and Providence was opened from Boston to India Point, on the east side of the Providence harbor. A second line, on the west side of the harbor, the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad (known locally as the Stonington Railroad) opened

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in 1837 from Providence to Stonington, Connecticut. Through passengers and freight were ferried across the harbor between the two lines until 1847 when they were connected. The final link in the all-rail route from Boston to New York was not completed, however, until 1889, when a drawbridge over the Thames River between Groton and New London was finished. In 1893, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad acquired the Boston and Providence line and subsequently operated the entire run between Boston and New York.

The opening of the railroad to Stonington, November 10, 1937, was a locally important occasion, for it made South Kingstown among the first communities in the United States to be served by the new means of transportation. The first American passenger train had begun operation seven years before and there were only about 2,000 miles of track in the entire United States at the time.¹

The first Kingston depot was built west of the tracks on Waites Corner Road, an east-west thoroughfare in the village. This location proved inconvenient for a number of reasons and a movement to relocate the station was successfully organized in 1874. The new station opened June 1, 1875. An anticipatory article in the Narragansett Times May 28, 1875, described the station in detail and judged that it was "tasty in style and architecture" and "supplied with modern accommodations and appliances." The article concluded that "with its long spacious platforms and gravelled carriage drives, this might well be termed the model station of the road."

The new location, half a mile southwest of the earlier depot but on the east side of the tracks, gave the bulk of the passenger traffic, which came from Wakefield and Kingston to the east, easy access to the depot and permitted long freight trains to stand at the station without blocking the cross highway to the north. A separate freight station west of the tracks was apparently constructed the following year.

¹Stewart Schneider, "The Model Station of the Road - The Story of the Kingston Railroad Station."

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The new depot quickly became a center of community activity. Its up to date facilities attracted the establishment of a new West Kingston post office and, shortly thereafter, a number of businesses dependent on rail transport. In July, 1876, the Narragansett Pier Railroad opened, using the Kingston Station as its western terminus. Narragansett Pier was a fashionable summer resort in the 1890s and opening decades of the 1900s and many of the famous -- including President Grover Cleveland and Admiral George Dewey -- and the not-so-famous passed through Kingston en route to private summer cottages and public hotels in Narragansett. The founding of the University of Rhode Island (then the Rhode Island College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts) in 1892 also increased rail traffic through Kingston. It is said that every President of the United States from Grant to Hoover stopped at least once at Kingston Station to make a campaign appearance and that General Pershing detrained here shortly after World War I.

The rise of the automobile in the 1920s caused a decline in rail travel which is still a problem today. Use of the railroad revived briefly during World War II as a result of the gasoline shortage and the proximity of the Quonset Naval Air Station; and in the late 1940s, riding the crest of the wave of war-related prosperity, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford proposed modernization of the facilities at Kingston. Town officials persuaded the railroad to update the existing depot instead of replacing it with a new structure. Declining revenues in the 1950s, however, cut short not only New Haven's plans for modernization but also their commitment to maintenance. Kingston station thus entered upon a quarter century of neglect.

By the early 1970s the future of the station seemed in serious question. Both the freight house and the express office had been demolished in 1969; by this time, too, passenger service had been drastically reduced. AMTRAK instituted further reductions when it took over operation of inter-city passenger trains in 1971.

Two factors combined to save the station from what appeared to be its inevitable end: nascent recognition of the energy crisis and the formation of the Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station in the spring of 1973. Declaring that they were "interested in the preservation of the Kingston Railroad Station and the development of its grounds, and dedicated to the promotion and revitalization of rail travel in the

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Northeast Corridor,"² the Friends spearheaded a drive to reclaim the station from its decline through unchecked deterioration. They not only overcame considerable Penn Central resistance to the undertaking, but secured from the railroad upwards of \$10,000 in funding and repair work. AMTRAK took care of such structural matters as patching leaks in the roof and replacing rotted areas, while two hundred volunteers during one week in June, 1974, scraped, primed, and painted the entire exterior. In the fall of 1974 Penn Central restored the station's interior to its present well-groomed condition. The station is today an excellent reminder of what civic and corporate pride working together can achieve.

The Friends of the Kingston Station are still active and they continue to hold periodic cleanups at the station. They are also involving themselves in the movement to encourage the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to invest in mass transit options instead of new highway proposals.

Kingston, fortunately, is still an important Rhode Island railroad stop for AMTRAK and promises to be even more vital in the future. The Kingston Station, with continued appreciation and care, will remain a charming, useful and typical reminder of the wooden architecture which characterized the United States' great age of steam.

²Membership Flier, Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station, 1976.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Schneider, Stewart P. "The Model Station of the Road - The Story of the Kingston Railroad Station", typewritten manuscript, 1974.
 Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station: Membership flier, 1976.
 Stedman, Oliver: "'Friends' Apply Face Lift. Kingston Depot Back on the Track," in the "The Spectator" section of the Narragansett Times June 19, June 26, 1974, Wakefield, Rhode Island, 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	2 8 6 2 1 0	4 5 9 5 4 5 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Map 3, Lot OL8

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Richard B. Harrington, Consultant
 Ancelin V. Lynch, National Register Coordinator

ORGANIZATION R.I. Historical Preservation Commission DATE August, 1977

STREET & NUMBER Old State House, 150 Benefit Street TELEPHONE (401) 277-2678

CITY OR TOWN Providence STATE Rhode Island 02903

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *Richard B. Harrington*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE November 17, 1977

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Kingston Railroad Station

AND/OR COMMON

Kingston Depot

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Kingston Road

...NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

South Kingstown (West Kingston) VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Rep. Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corp.)

STREET & NUMBER

955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S. W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20024

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

South Kingstown Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

66 High Street

CITY, TOWN

Wakefield

STATE

Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Not so represented

DATE

...FEDERAL ...STATE ...COUNTY ...LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Victorian railroad station which has served the "South County" Rhode Island town of Kingston since 1875 is a small frame structure set upon a low, almost invisible masonry foundation. Seven bays long and three bays deep (76 feet by 30 feet), it appears on the exterior as a one-and-one-half-story gabled building with a raised, flat-roofed central section which registers visually as a tower, although its roof-line really does not rise above the ridges of its gabled and dormered flankers. The exterior of this fairly simple, but not entirely unadorned, building is faced to eaves-level with smooth horizontal boarding and, above that with clapboarding. A generous frieze-board with wide overhanging cornice above runs around the building below the eaves and up the gables, but is interrupted by the "tower" section, which has its own capping cornice on large curved brackets.

All major windows, including dormers, have segmental heads (those in the upper east and west elevations of the tower being paired), are surmounted by heavy moulded cornices with dentils, and have two-over-two-paned sash. There are four symmetrically-placed doorways (two on east side, two on west) which have simple moulded enframements, without the cornice elaboration of the windows. All doors were originally six-panelled, but the two serving the northern end of the building now have modern, partially-glazed substitutions. At each end (north and south) of the building there is on the principal floor a centered, semi-hexagonal oriel window between two conventional windows.

A shed-roofed canopy extends the length of the east side of the station, supported by slim square chamfered piers which flare out into brackets at their tops; this canopy covers the 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot-wide platform paralleling the railroad tracks and originally extended independently much farther north and south of the building, covering a greater length of platform than it now does. Also, at each end of the building is a concave-roofed canopy supported on ornamental, angular Stick-Style brackets; a canopy of this form also formerly extended across the town or entrance front of the station, which is served by a circular driveway surrounding a grass-plot with trees, enclosed by a barrier of granite posts and iron rods or railings. Except for the tower, which has a heavy, cubical, Italianate look, the station has an over-all chalet-like appearance, emphasized by a recent repainting in contrasting colors.

Internally, the spatial arrangement is, as it always was, one of extreme simplicity and practicality. At the ends, two lofty and roomy passenger waiting rooms lighted by ground-floor-level, dormer and gable windows take up together about four-fifths of the floor area. (It is said that one waiting room was for men and, presumably, their families, while the other was for "alone ladies.") The remaining one-fifth of

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the space, which forms the central two-storied tower -- the only portion of the structure to have horizontal internal division -- contains what we now call a "service core" accommodating the stationmaster's office with its ticket windows to both waiting rooms, rest rooms, storage spaces, stairs to the cellar heating plant and access (now by a ladder only, former stairs having been removed when the men's toilet was enlarged) to second-floor chambers once used as sleeping-quarters by train crewmen between work-shifts.

Of the two waiting rooms, only the northern one is still used for its original purpose; its southern duplicate is no longer needed and is used as a storage area, unrestored but intact. Both are of good size (about 30 by 29 feet) for local needs and are high -- flat-ceiled above the dormers but below the roof-ridge. Each has central doors on entrance and track-side fronts. At the outer end of each waiting room is a projecting three-sided oriel with windows in only the angled portions, the centre part being filled by a tall mirror in a heavy machine-carved frame. To a height of about six feet, walls are wainscoted in vertical matched sheathing of stained wood capped by a bolection moulding; above this, walls are now of plain white-painted plaster (probably of some muddier color in the 1870s); ceilings are white, and each has an ornamental central medallion from which kerosene lighting fixture depended in earlier years. Floors are of hardwood, and upon them rest honey-coloured wooden back-to-back benches with panelled ends and carved, scrolled armrests. Still extant, too, are the somewhat monumental silver-painted old-fashioned tubular radiators with grilled tops. Into this northern waiting room, at its south-east corner, there projects a corner, one-story, three-sided peninsular extension of the ticket office, which is crowned by a heavy cornice with modillions; this has a little extra bay of its own, allowing for an additional ticket window in what was apparently the busier waiting room. These narrow ticket windows are round-headed and have etched frosted-glass sashes above semi-circular shelves on carved brackets which serve customers for making change and receiving tickets. The stationmaster's office, within the ticket-selling windows, retains its 1870s flavor, having a long, built-in chest of many-sized drawers along its east wall with space for an old safe at one end; and there is still in the western bay window, overlooking the tracks, the long shelf-desk built for the use of the telegrapher-train-watcher.

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This building, in daily use for over one hundred years, had been maintained in fairly good structural condition by its successive corporate owners, although it was allowed to become neglected and grubby in surface appearance. This painfully obvious circumstance resulted in a voluntary community effort in 1973 and 1974 to refurbish the station. The Friends of the Kingston Station were successful in having repaired and repainted both the exterior and the still-used portions of the interior without detracting from the period atmosphere.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kingston Station is noteworthy for its vernacular architectural quality and typicality, its continuing function in the history of railroad transportation in Rhode Island, and its recent role as the focus of community and institutional attention and concerted action.

Just over one hundred years old, the Station, as one sees it now, is an excellent, well-preserved example of the balloon-frame, Stick Style architecture of the General Grant era. It is a picturesque, still-useful building, typical of the many small or intermediate-size rural depots built throughout the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century, most of which have, in recent decades, fallen to disuse or demolition. Kingston Station is also the only surviving building erected by the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad which is still in active use.

West Kingston is an attractive small village within the town of South Kingstown. The blue and white railroad station down in its hollow, forms a particular and pleasing adornment of the locale and provides a delightful welcome to it for the disembarking train passenger. Passing through its high, well-lighted waiting room -- with its honey-colored woodwork, white plaster walls, carved benches, large and convenient mirror, monumental silver radiators and small, frosted-glass ticket windows (and no modern posters or vending machines) -- it is difficult not to expect that the train one boards or leaves is composed of wooden coaches pulled by a locomotive with a funnel-shaped stack. Such nostalgia is furthered by the circular carriage drive in front of the station, where a hack, surrey, or buckboard should really be waiting, and by the view beyond to the yellow-and-white-painted former post office and general store. This could all be an expert television mockup or a movie set, but it is neither: it is authentic.

In the 1830s, the principal route of travel from Boston to New York was by stagecoach to Providence and from Providence to New York by overnight steamer. Rough stagecoach rides and rougher seas off the Rhode Island coast soon made it apparent that another form of land transportation would be welcome. In 1835 Boston and Providence was opened from Boston to India Point, on the east side of the Providence harbor. A second line, on the west side of the harbor, the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad (known locally as the Stonington Railroad) opened

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in 1837 from Providence to Stonington, Connecticut. Through passengers and freight were ferried across the harbor between the two lines until 1847 when they were connected. The final link in the all-rail route from Boston to New York was not completed, however, until 1889, when a drawbridge over the Thames River between Groton and New London was finished. In 1893, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad acquired the Boston and Providence line and subsequently operated the entire run between Boston and New York.

The opening of the railroad to Stonington, November 10, 1937, was a locally important occasion, for it made South Kingstown among the first communities in the United States to be served by the new means of transportation. The first American passenger train had begun operation seven years before and there were only about 2,000 miles of track in the entire United States at the time.¹

The first Kingston depot was built west of the tracks on Waites Corner Road, an east-west thoroughfare in the village. This location proved inconvenient for a number of reasons and a movement to relocate the station was successfully organized in 1874. The new station opened June 1, 1875. An anticipatory article in the Narragansett Times May 28, 1875, described the station in detail and judged that it was "tasty in style and architecture" and "supplied with modern accommodations and appliances." The article concluded that "with its long spacious platforms and gravelled carriage drives, this might well be termed the model station of the road."

The new location, half a mile southwest of the earlier depot but on the east side of the tracks, gave the bulk of the passenger traffic, which came from Wakefield and Kingston to the east, easy access to the depot and permitted long freight trains to stand at the station without blocking the cross highway to the north. A separate freight station west of the tracks was apparently constructed the following year.

¹Stewart Schneider, "The Model Station of the Road - The Story of the Kingston Railroad Station."

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The new depot quickly became a center of community activity. Its up to date facilities attracted the establishment of a new West Kingston post office and, shortly thereafter, a number of businesses dependent on rail transport. In July, 1876, the Narragansett Pier Railroad opened, using the Kingston Station as its western terminus. Narragansett Pier was a fashionable summer resort in the 1890s and opening decades of the 1900s and many of the famous -- including President Grover Cleveland and Admiral George Dewey -- and the not-so-famous passed through Kingston en route to private summer cottages and public hotels in Narragansett. The founding of the University of Rhode Island (then the Rhode Island College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts) in 1892 also increased rail traffic through Kingston. It is said that every President of the United States from Grant to Hoover stopped at least once at Kingston Station to make a campaign appearance and that General Pershing detrained here shortly after World War I.

The rise of the automobile in the 1920s caused a decline in rail travel which is still a problem today. Use of the railroad revived briefly during World War II as a result of the gasoline shortage and the proximity of the Quonset Naval Air Station; and in the late 1940s, riding the crest of the wave of war-related prosperity, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford proposed modernization of the facilities at Kingston. Town officials persuaded the railroad to update the existing depot instead of replacing it with a new structure. Declining revenues in the 1950s, however, cut short not only New Haven's plans for modernization but also their commitment to maintenance. Kingston station thus entered upon a quarter century of neglect.

By the early 1970s the future of the station seemed in serious question. Both the freight house and the express office had been demolished in 1969; by this time, too, passenger service had been drastically reduced. AMTRAK instituted further reductions when it took over operation of inter-city passenger trains in 1971.

Two factors combined to save the station from what appeared to be its inevitable end: nascent recognition of the energy crisis and the formation of the Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station in the spring of 1973. Declaring that they were "interested in the preservation of the Kingston Railroad Station and the development of its grounds, and dedicated to the promotion and revitalization of rail travel in the

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Northeast Corridor,"² the Friends spearheaded a drive to reclaim the station from its decline through unchecked deterioration. They not only overcame considerable Penn Central resistance to the undertaking, but secured from the railroad upwards of \$10,000 in funding and repair work. AMTRAK took care of such structural matters as patching leaks in the roof and replacing rotted areas, while two hundred volunteers during one week in June, 1974, scraped, primed, and painted the entire exterior. In the fall of 1974 Penn Central restored the station's interior to its present well-groomed condition. The station is today an excellent reminder of what civic and corporate pride working together can achieve.

The Friends of the Kingston Station are still active and they continue to hold periodic cleanups at the station. They are also involving themselves in the movement to encourage the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to invest in mass transit options instead of new highway proposals.

Kingston, fortunately, is still an important Rhode Island railroad stop for AMTRAK and promises to be even more vital in the future. The Kingston Station, with continued appreciation and care, will remain a charming, useful and typical reminder of the wooden architecture which characterized the United States' great age of steam.

²Membership Flier, Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station, 1976.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Schneider, Stewart P. "The Model Station of the Road - The Story of the Kingston Railroad Station", typewritten manuscript, 1974.
Friends of the Kingston Railroad Station: Membership flier, 1976.
Stedman, Oliver: "'Friends' Apply Face Lift. Kingston Depot Back on the Track," in the "The Spectator" section of the Narragansett Times June 19, June 26, 1974, Wakefield, Rhode Island, 1974.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	2,8,6	2,1,0	4,5,9,5	4,5,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Map 3, Lot OL8

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE	Richard B. Harrington, Consultant Ancelin V. Lynch, National Register Coordinator	DATE	August, 1977
ORGANIZATION	R.I. Historical Preservation Commission	TELEPHONE	(401) 277-2678
STREET & NUMBER	Old State House, 150 Benefit Street	STATE	Rhode Island 02903
CITY OR TOWN	Providence		

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE *Richard B. Harrington*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE November 17, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Kingston Railroad Station
West Kingston, South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Louis Federici
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

July, 1975

View from the west across the tracks.

Photo #1





Kingston Railroad Station
West Kingston, South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Louis Federici
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

July, 1975

Ticket windows in southeast portion of north
waiting room.

Photo #3



Kingston Railroad Station
West Kingston, South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Louis Federici July, 1975
Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

North waiting room looking southwest.

Photo #4

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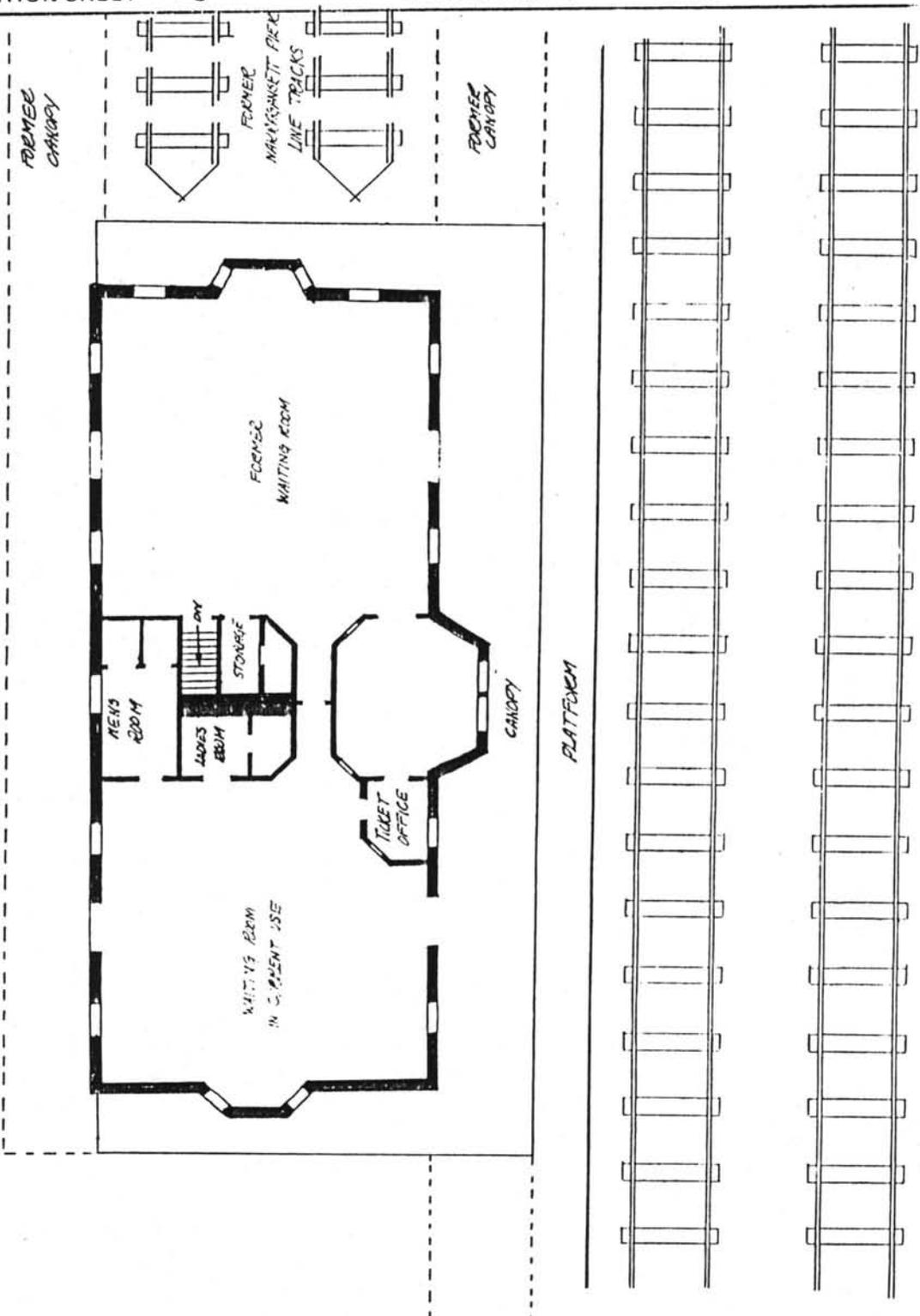
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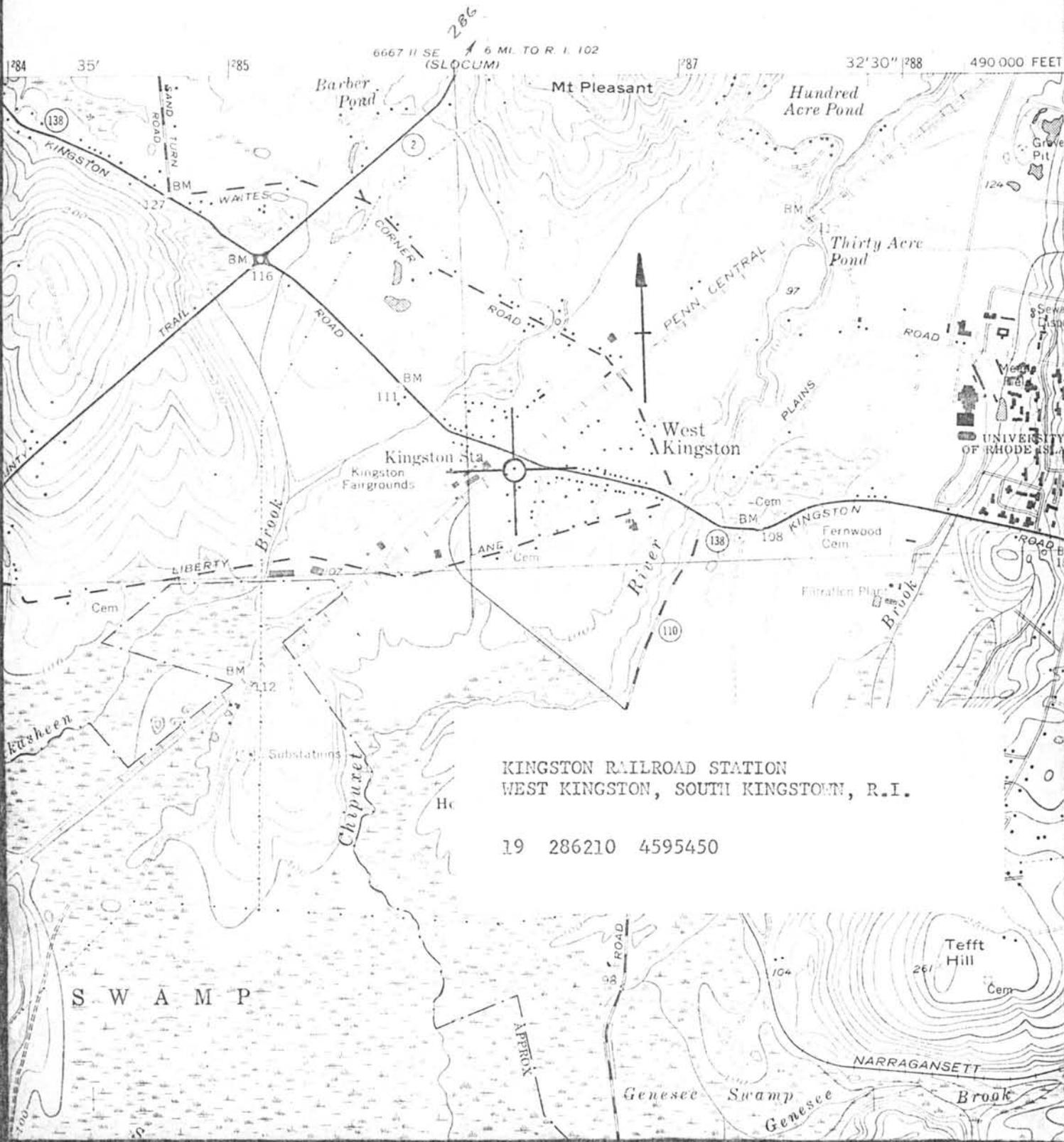
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KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
SOUTH KINGSTOWN
SKETCH PLAN (NOT TO SCALE) 1975



6667 II SE (SLOCUM) 6 MI. TO R. I. 102

284 35' 285 287 32'30" 288 490 000 FEET

KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
WEST KINGSTON, SOUTH KINGSTOWN, R.I.

19 286210 4595450

S W A M P

APPROX

Genesee Swamp
NARRAGANSETT Brook