United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Norfolk Southern Passenger Station

other names/site number ___________________________________________

2. Location

street & number 109 South Hughes Boulevard N/A □ not for publication
city or town Elizabeth City N/A □ vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Pasquotank code 139 zip code 27909

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title __________________________ Date 12-14-93

State of 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 certifying official/Title __________________________ Date __________________________

State or Federal agency and bureau __________________________

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the 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) __________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
## Norfolk Southern Passenger Station

### Name of Property

#### Pasquotank County, NC

**County and State**

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### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Check as many boxes as apply</th>
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<td>☑️ building(s)</td>
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<td>☐️ district</td>
</tr>
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<td>☐️ site</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐️ public-Federal</td>
<td>☐️ structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐️ object</td>
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#### Number of Resources within Property

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<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

- 0

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### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

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<th>Enter categories from instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation-rail-related</td>
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#### Current Functions

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce/Trade-specialty store</td>
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</tbody>
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### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

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<tbody>
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#### Materials

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>walls brick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roof tile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other wood</td>
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</table>

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
**8. Statement of Significance**

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

- **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.)

Property is:
- **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- **B** removed from its original location.
- **C** a birthplace or 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.

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

**Primary location of additional data:**
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:**
Norfolk Southern Passenger Station

Name of Property

Pasquotank County, NC

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acresage of Property __________________________

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Northing</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title ____________________________

organization ____________________________ date ____________________________

street & number ____________________________ telephone ____________________________

city or town ____________________________ state ____________ zip code ____________________________

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property’s location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name ____________________________

street & number ____________________________ telephone ____________________________

city or town ____________________________ state ____________ zip code ____________________________

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
The Norfolk Southern Passenger Station consists of three buildings situated on approximately one acre of land along Hughes Boulevard in Elizabeth City. The 1914 brick Passenger Station (#1) dominates the site and two secondary buildings are located at the eastern and western extremities of the property. These two noncontributing buildings, a metal-sided building (#2) erected in the 1950s and a one-room frame office (#3) constructed in the 1980s, are clearly unrelated to the main building. While each is situated far enough away from the station so as to appear to be separate properties, both are located on the single tract of land on which the train station stands. All three buildings remain under single ownership.

1. Norfolk Southern Passenger Station, 1914, Contributing building.

Erected in 1914, the Norfolk Southern Passenger Station is a long one-story brick building displaying eclectic Spanish Revival elements. The rectangular form of the 98-foot by 36-foot building is broken only by a small thirteen-foot by six-foot control booth that projects on the northwest elevation along the railroad tracks (Exhibit B). The eight-bay by three-bay building is sheltered beneath a tall hipped roof covered with clay tiles. With the assistance of large, regularly-spaced wooden triangular braces that are subtly enlivened with chamfered corners, the eaves extend around the building to form a deep overhang that protects both the building and waiting passengers from the sun and rain. The dark red brick walls of the building are accentuated by quoins and flat arches rendered in tan brick, while rock-faced stone sills finish the small single-pane and double-hung one-over-one sash windows. Pedestrian doors--two on each of the long (northwest and southeast) elevations and one on the northeast end--contain horizontal panels, with only the doors on the southeast facade being glazed. On the southwest corner are broad sliding doors composed of diagonally laid boards. Each is surmounted by a single-pane transom window and flat arch.

The interior is divided into several rooms, with the northeastern two-thirds of the building occupied by waiting rooms. The two waiting rooms--one for white passengers on the northeast (on the right looking from the street) and one for black passengers in the middle of the building--are nearly identical in size, with the black waiting room being slightly smaller. Each is handsomely finished with wainscots six feet tall that
are composed of bevel-edged vertical boards defined with molded baseboards and top rails. Door and window surrounds are composed of simple moldings and cornerblocks enclosing bull's-eye medallions.

Situated between the waiting rooms is the ticket office, which has an angled window where the office protrudes into each waiting room; it occupies the six-foot projection on the track side of the building. In addition to a door, there are two ticket windows from the office into each waiting room, with those facing the white waiting room retaining their shallow ledges and one-over-one sash windows with MILEAGE TICKETS painted on one of the translucent upper panes and TELEGRAPH OFFICE painted on the other. Along the front (southeast) of the building are two bathrooms--one for whites and one for blacks and each accessible to their respective waiting rooms--and an office for the Railway Express Agency, which handled commercial parcel service. The express service occupied the southern one-third of the building, with its exterior walls being of bare brick and the partition wall (between it and the black waiting room) being sided with vertically-laid beaded tongue-and-groove boards. Modifications undertaken in the white waiting rooms during the 1950s or 1960s resulted in the addition of a partition wall extending from the front to rear walls and the removal of the wainscots along the exterior walls of the newly created room; the main portion of the white waiting room remains intact. All of the interior woodwork in the public rooms retains an appropriately dark, though not original, painted finish.

A documentary photograph of the building taken in 1915 shows an open-sided hipped-roof train shed attached to the passenger station along the railroad tracks to shelter embarking and departing passengers. It repeated the form and elements of the main building, with clay tiled roof supported by broad triangular brackets projecting from central posts. According to the 1923 Sanborn Map this shelter was approximately 315 feet long, extending southwestwardly from the building's northeastern corner. It was removed during the late 1940s.

2. former Cridlin Motor Company Building, 1950s, Noncontributing building.

Located at the southern boundary of the property, this nondescript metal-sided structure with rear ell is covered by a gable roof and has two-over-two sash windows and wooden sliding doors. It was apparently erected in the 1950s for the short-lived Cridlin Motor Company on a site across South Hughes Boulevard now occupied by Kentucky Fried Chicken. In the late 1950s it was moved to its present site, which had been purchased
in 1955 by the owners of the train station, and converted into an auto body shop. Since the early 1980s it has been rented as storage and repair shop to Bright’s Auto Sales and U-Haul Rentals.


This small one-room gable-roofed structure, erected in the early 1980s with vertical panel siding, is located at the property’s extreme northern boundary near West Main Street Extended. It is occupied by H and H Auto Sales, a used car dealership.
8. Statement of Significance

Summary

Just as the arrival of rail service to Elizabeth City in 1881 propelled the city into an era of prosperity theretofore unknown, the construction of a new passenger station in 1914 by the Norfolk Southern Railroad heralded the city’s advances in the early twentieth century. During the next two decades, the railroad became the dominant form of transportation throughout the Albemarle region, surpassing the marine-based transportation system on which the region had depended since settlement. The new station also accelerated residential, commercial, and industrial development at the city’s western edge, where lots had been plotted as early as 1892 but where development prior to 1910 was limited. The Spanish Revival style of the handsome red brick structure, while not common in the region, was an appropriately modern choice for a building through which the city reached for a better future. The building’s period of significance, 1914 to 1943, begins with the date of its construction. This period falls within the years covered by the Elizabeth City Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), "Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina: 1793-1943," particularly historic contexts Railroad Boom: 1881 to 1899 and Twentieth Century Progress: 1900 to 1943. Within these contexts, the subsections that most directly cover this property are those concerning transportation and physical development and expansion. The building is discussed in the MPDF under property type 4-Industrial and Commercial Architecture, section A-Industrial Buildings.

Historical Background

When the Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad was completed between these two cities in May 1881, the passenger station, freight depot, and railroad yards in Elizabeth City were located on a spur line that ran along Pennsylvania (now North Poindexter) Avenue adjacent to the Pasquotank River. As shown by Sanborn maps, the railroad facilities were situated so as to encourage the development of dockage for various steamship companies that served communities throughout the Albemarle Region. At this location, the railroad grew and prospered, changing its name in 1883 to the Norfolk Southern Railroad to more accurately reflect the railroad’s regional interest in northeastern North Carolina. The proximity of the depot encouraged residential development on adjacent tracts, and the construction of more than 200 dwellings by 1900—with an additional 100 or so during the first decade of the twentieth century—
made the area one of the most fashionable residential neighborhoods in Elizabeth City. This neighborhood is largely included on the National Register of Historic Places as the Northside Historic District (Butchko 1989, 155-156; Sanborn map 1885, 1891, 1896, 1902, 1908, 1914, 1923, 1931).

It is not known when the Norfolk Southern Railroad began looking for another site for their passenger station. Certainly the station’s situation on a dead-end spur eventually became a limitation to the timely and efficient transfer of passengers and baggage. Leading industrialists, merchants, businessmen, and especially the developers of lots on the city’s western limits no doubt realized the bonanza that would be reaped if the Norfolk and Southern could be persuaded to relocate the passenger station to a location along the railroad’s main line west of the municipal limits. During the last decade of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century several developments were laid out to the west of Elizabeth City’s central core. These included the large plats of the Improvement Company of Elizabeth City in 1892 and the West End Land and Improvement Company in 1899 and 1902, and the smaller plat of Olds, Dunstan, and Jones in 1902; these lots were located primarily along Main, Church, Colonial, and Cedar streets between Harney Street and the railroad tracts (Exhibit C)(Butchko 1989, 167-169; Deed Book 12, p. 297; Deed Book 20, p. 370; Deed Book 25, p. 490; Map Box 3, p. 18; Incorporation Book 1, p. 71; Incorporation Book 1, 232). While some of this area was listed on the National Register as part of the Elizabeth City Historic District in 1977, much of it is included in the 1993 addition to that district.

The principal shareholder in the West End Company was businessman and realtor Wile McPherson Baxter (1865-1930), who resided in an impressive Queen Anne style house he erected ca. 1900 at 708 West Church Street. Included in Baxter’s vast property holdings on the west side of Elizabeth City was the site of the future train station. On December 9, 1913 Baxter sold a narrow 160-foot strip of land on the east of the railroad’s right-of-way that extended approximately 2,300 feet between West Main Street and what is now West Church Street Extended. The grantee was Caleb W. Stevens (1862-1935), another local real estate developer who resided at 800 West Main Street, and the deed stipulated that Stevens would “convey to the Norfolk-Southern Railroad Company out of said lands a site for the erection of a passenger station.” Stevens conveyed such a tract that extended 861 feet along the track to the railroad on the last day of 1913 (Deed Book 38, p. 322, 323; Butchko 1989, 266).

Unfortunately, no Elizabeth City newspapers survive for the first six months of 1914 to shed light on the construction of the passenger station.
The first mention of the depot is a July 3, 1914 advertisement for the first excursion train to leave the new depot; fittingly, the destination for the trip during an unusually hot summer was the seaside resort of Virginia Beach, Virginia (The Advance, July 3, 1914). The first passenger train to stop at the depot was a south-bound train on Saturday July 4, 1914, and, although there was no formal grand-opening or ceremony, the newspaper reported that it "was the event of the day... attracting one of the largest crowds that ever met the train at Elizabeth City." Sadly, the account does not provide a description of the building or grounds, other than to state that "The appearance and equipment of the new depot attracted favorable comment on every hand, the Advance reporter who was on the scene hearing nothing derogatory except as to the new building's location." While there is only scattered comment in subsequent issues to clarify the last statement, presumably the location was unpopular to some residents because it was much farther from the center of town than the old station and because of a minor controversy over fee increases by hack drivers (The Advance, July 7, 10, 1914).

The Norfolk Southern Passenger Station in Elizabeth City witnessed the peak of the railroad years in the northern Albemarle region of North Carolina. To a region of the state that was historically separated by water from both its North Carolina and Virginia neighbors, the modern and reliable railroad provided a modern and economical means of carrying freight and people that was far superior and quicker than water-borne transport. Its heyday was during the early 1940s, when the rapid build-up of a Coast Guard Station and Naval Air Station (for blimps) in rural Pasquotank County south of Elizabeth City and various other military installations in the region meant considerable activity. Most of the military traffic was headed to or from the immense naval base and shipyards at Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, supplying men and materials to the East Coast's major naval headquarters.

An important secondary function of the building was as offices and shipping departments for the Railway Express Agency, a firm that offered commercial shipment of packages and produce. One of its primary customers was the Globe Fish Company, which shipped fish transported from its fleet on the Outer Banks to its riverfront plant in Elizabeth City, where it was crated and iced before shipment (Stevens interview). The REA office occupied the southern portion of the building for over fifty years.

With the proliferation of modern highways during the 1930s and 1940s, and a booming demand for private automobiles, the railroad could not successfully vie for passengers after World War II. Further competition
came from the Norfolk Southern Bus Company which erected a modern brick station in downtown Elizabeth City in 1939 (Butchko 1989, 283-184). Citing losses of almost $300,000 a year on its Norfolk-Elizabeth City-Greenville-Raleigh route, the Norfolk Southern Railway Company proposed in 1947 to halt passenger service along the unprofitable route, declaring that "local passenger trains are dead. Buses, automobiles, and airplanes have put them out of business forever." At first local opposition was strong, particularly with the railway's proposal to halt express and mail service as well. But when the railway company agreed to continue the express and mail trains, the local Chamber of Commerce agreed not to oppose the elimination of passenger service, which ceased in early 1948 (The Daily Advance, December 6, 1947; December 11, 1947; December 19, 1947; Prince 1972).

In 1952 the station was sold by the Norfolk Southern Railway Company to automobile dealer Willis S. Wright, Sr. He had purchased a strip of property to the southeast (in front of) the depot in 1951 and enlarged his holdings in 1955 with the purchase of a tract on the south now occupied by Bright's Auto Sales and U-Haul Rentals; his heirs continue ownership of all three parcels (Deed Book 155, p. 191; Deed Book 162, p. 101; Deed Book 197, p. 403). From 1948 until the 1970s the station was occupied by the Railway Express Agency and a succession of commercial endeavors. The 1958 updated version of the Sanborn Map (Exhibit D) illustrates the building with Railway Express Agency occupying both the traditional freight/baggage room and the old black waiting room, and the former white waiting room being occupied for ice cream storage. City directories in 1960-1961 and 1970 list station occupants as Main Street Auction Company and Eastern Oil Company, respectively, in addition to the express agency. From 1978 until 1990 the entire passenger station was home to Watermark, Inc., a regional craft cooperative for women, and since 1990 it has been occupied by Tireworld, a retread tire firm.

From the late 1950s to the early 1970s the northeastern portion of the lot was occupied by "Model Homes" displayed by the Jim Walter Construction Company (1958 Sanborn map; Mullin-Kille 1970, 269; Stevens interview). Since the mid 1980s this portion of the property has been leased to H and H Auto Sales (#3), a used cars dealership. The southern end of the station lot was occupied in the late 1950s by an auto body shop located in the present noncontributing building (#2) that was erected across the street in the early 1950s. The relocated building was partially occupied in 1960-1961 by Dixie Neon, was used for storage in the 1970s, and since the early 1980s has been maintained for storage and repair by Bright's Auto Sales and U-Haul Rentals (Miller 1960-1961, 372; Mullin-Kille 1970, 269, Bright interview).
9. Major Bibliographic Sources

Bright, Shelby M., local merchant, interview by author, June 16, 1993


Pasquotank County Incorporation Records. Elizabeth City, NC: Office of the Register of Deeds, Pasquotank County Courthouse.


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Norfolk Southern Passenger Station
Pasquotank County, North Carolina

Section number 9  Page 2

Stevens, J. Howard Stevens, local photographer and amateur historian, interview by author, February 7, 1993.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is all of parcel number 8914 (18) 30-5332 of Pasquotank County Tax Map Number 123, and is shown on Exhibit A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Norfolk Southern Passenger Station was drawn to encompass the land historically associated with the passenger station in the possession of the current owners.
A photocopy of the USGS map on which the nomination is plotted is included. The original, on which several nominations are plotted, has been submitted with the multiple documentations nomination, Historic and Architectural Resources of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, 1793-1943.
Northern Southern Passenger Station
Pasquotank County
Elizabeth City neighborhood development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries based on plats filed in the Office of the Register of Deeds in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

1. Conrow, Bush, and Lippencott, 1881
2. Improvement Company, 1892
3. M. N. Sawyer, 1892
4. Sawyer, Lynch, and Wright, 1892
5. A. L. Aydlett, 1893
6. M. N. Sawyer, 1895
7. Sawyer and Stevens, 1897
8. Stevens and Stevens, 1899
9. Euclid Heights, 1900
10. Dunstan and Jones, 1902
11. Riverside Land Company, 1902
12. Skinner and Gregory, 1902
13. West End, 1902
14. P. E. White, 1902
15. Perry, 1906
16. Brooks and Parker, 1907
17. Cobb, 1907
18. Commander, 1907
19. J. L. Etheridge, 1907
20. Spellman, 1907
21. Laurel Park, 1908
22. Highland Park, 1914 and 1923
23. Lavenstein, 1916
24. Washington Heights, 1916
25. West End Addition, 1923
26. Westover, 1924
27. Lambert, 1926
28. Moore Heights, 1926
29. Pine Grove, 1926
30. Roanoke Park, 1926
31. Elcinoca, 1927
32. Weeks and Weeks, 1928