

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

1103

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

AUG 17 2005

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 Harden Street Substation

other names/site number Harden Street Fire Station

2. Location

street & number 1901 Harden Street  not for publication

city or town Columbia  vicinity

state South Carolina code SC county Richland code 079 zip code 29208

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 for 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.)

Mary W. Edmunds  
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/15/05  
Date

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

9/28/2005  
Date of Action

Harden Street Substation  
Name of Property

Richland, South Carolina  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Resources Associated with Segregation in Columbia,  
South Carolina, 1880 - 1960

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: fire station

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: fire station

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Masonry

walls Brick

roof Composition

other Cast stone

Concrete

**Narrative Description**

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

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Narrative Description:

The Harden Street Substation is a two-story municipal fire station with a rectangular plan and a flat roof constructed in the Moderne style. The masonry foundation supports brick walls laid in a variation of common bond, with every sixth course laid with alternating headers and stretchers. In addition, every other course is recessed only slightly to create a textured effect for the entire wall. Horizontal concrete and ribbon window bands composed of panels dominate the upper floor of the asymmetrical façade that incorporates three garage bays for three firefighting vehicles. Located at 1901 Harden Street in Columbia, South Carolina, the building fronts east amidst an assortment of commercial, residential, and local government properties. The Harden Street Substation is in excellent condition and has had very little alteration since its construction in 1953.

The main block of the Harden Street Substation is a rectangular building three bays wide and three bays deep. The main block along Harden Street is two stories, while a one-story section extends to the rear for two additional bays. The three front bays contain three garage doors on the first floor, with the southernmost part of the façade being solid brick on both the first and second stories. The southernmost garage door is original to the building, whereas the other two are later replacements. Between each garage door is brick pillar of the same bond pattern. Above the garage bays on the second story is a ribbon of eleven contiguous, single-glazed windows. The windows replaced the original one-over-one glazed windows but do not detract from the historic character or architectural integrity of the Harden Street Substation. Between the top of the garage doors and the bottom of the windows is a rectangular panel of pebbled concrete, which is repeated in a similar panel that fills the space between the top of the windows and the roofline. The panel directly above the garage doors is highlighted with red plastic letters spelling out "Harden Street Fire Station." The edge of the roofline of the flat roof is accented with a concrete coping. A hefty square brick chimney laid in the identical textured brick pattern up to the roof line rises along the rear wall of the two story front section. Above the roofline, the chimney is laid in a running bond without the textured effect. The north elevation incorporates three paired reflective glass windows on the second story and five historic steel windows, all of which are glazed in ten horizontal panels, five-beside-five, divided by a thicker mullion or post. The south elevation contains six single-glazed windows in the upper story.

Directly beneath the easternmost window is an inset doorway incorporating a transom light over a solid door, and a rectangular concrete panel between the top of the inset and the second story floor. From this doorway westward are five windows that have been covered with wood. As the principal pedestrian entrance to the building, this area on the first floor is set apart visually and architecturally with a narrow, projecting concrete beltcourse separating it from the upper portion of the building. Since the brick bond patterns in this section range from the common bond variation on the remainder of the building to the weaker stretcher stack bond and header stack bond, it may be assumed that the concrete beltcourse denotes the location of a structural

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steel beam. This bestcourse extends as the roofline coping for the rear one-story section of the fire substation. Another doorway is located at the rear [west end] of south elevation, where the building is one story in height. Along the one story section of the south elevation, oriented to the westernmost end of the building, a lean-to garage structure has been added. One story in height, with clapboard siding and an asphalt shingle roof, the lean-to garage is unobtrusive and does not detract from the character of the Harden Street Substation. Cyclone fencing encloses the full width of the western (rear) elevation. Within the fenced perimeter are several utility sheds of various manufacture and vintage, none of which appear to be on permanent foundations.

The building's interior contains much of the fabric of its usage; however, some changes have been made to the living quarters on the upper level. Although the building continues to serve the needs of the Columbia Fire Department, the relocation of the department's central headquarters to a site only three to four blocks away caused the substation to be closed as an active station for fire fighting. It is currently used for storage by the department.

In spite of its inactivity, the city's fire department maintains the building. The Harden Street Substation has strong integrity to the original design by well-known Columbia architect Heyward Singley in 1953, with only minor modifications since its construction.

**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** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- 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.

**Levels of Significance** (local, state, national)

Local

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Ethnic Heritage – Black

**Period of Significance**

1953-1969

**Significant Dates**

1953

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

**Cultural Affiliation** (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

**Architect/Builder**

Singley, Heyward

**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:

Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina

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### Statement of Significance:

The Harden Street Substation of the Columbia Fire Department is historically significant for its strong association with segregation in Columbia, South Carolina. It is an excellent example of the duplicative architecture often built to maintain institutional segregation. It was constructed in 1953 to employ the Columbia Fire Department's first African-American firemen and to serve the predominantly African-American Waverly community. The Harden Street Substation was the only Columbia Fire Department substation to employ African-American firemen for fifteen years until integration of the entire department in 1969. The Harden Street Substation, carefully maintained and well preserved, continues to serve the local community today and is a significant material representative of the duplication of services commonly utilized to maintain the institution of segregation in Columbia, South Carolina in the middle of the twentieth century. The Harden Street Substation meets National Register Criterion A in the area of history for its association with segregation in Columbia, South Carolina. In the social history of the Civil Rights era, the Harden Street Substation was the focal point of change in the Columbia Fire Department and the precursor to complete integration of the organization. The Harden Street Substation possesses integrity of location, design, materials, and association.

### Historical Background and Significance:

Before 1903, the city of Columbia, South Carolina relied upon volunteer firefighting companies to serve its citizenry. African Americans served in volunteer companies that were predominantly black and in companies that were predominantly white. In the former, African Americans served in all capacities, from firemen to captains to owners. In the latter, African Americans typically served as drivers of the horse-drawn firefighting equipment of the day.<sup>1</sup>

In 1892, Columbia's African-American firefighting companies voluntarily disbanded. This action was the result of a dispute between John Simons, captain of the African-American Vigilant Fire Company, and the Mayor's Court of Columbia. Captain Simons was a fire master, a member of the executive board charged with investigating fires and establishing fire codes in the Columbia city limits. After a fire had been extinguished in a downtown building, Captain Simons entered the building to begin an investigation. A Columbia policeman told the captain to leave or be arrested for trespassing. Captain Simons told the policeman he was a fire master authorized to enter the premises and refused to leave. Captain Simons was arrested and fined ten dollars by the Mayor's Court. Outraged, the men of the Vigilant Fire Company and the

<sup>1</sup> Darrick Lamont Hart, "Overcoming the Flames of Prejudice: The Integration of the Columbia Fire Department, Columbia, South Carolina, 1948-1969" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2000), 7.

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Enterprise Fire Company, the city's other African-American fire company, withdrew their services from Columbia. Some African Americans continued to serve in white-owned firefighting companies as drivers.<sup>2</sup>

The Columbia Fire Department was founded in 1903. With the establishment of Columbia's first professional firefighting department, the remaining white volunteer firefighting companies were disbanded. Many volunteers joined the Columbia Fire Department as paid city employees, and some African Americans continued to serve as drivers. However, the Columbia Fire Department did not remain an integrated institution. In 1921, eighteen years after founding, the Columbia Fire Department motorized its entire organization, rendering its horse-drawn firefighting apparatus obsolete. African-American drivers, who had excelled as handlers of horse-drawn firefighting apparatus, were relieved of their duties. The only employment allowed African Americans in the Columbia Fire Department was in menial capacities such as janitors.<sup>3</sup> This loss of employment opportunity for Columbia's African Americans as firemen was reflective of a movement in American society that for African Americans restricted economic opportunity, regulated interaction with whites, and negated political power. This movement, the institutionalization of racial segregation commonly known as Jim Crow, ensured that the segregation of the Columbia Fire Department would remain unchallenged for the next quarter-century.

Following the Second World War, African Americans began to challenge segregation. Having fought for liberty in Europe and Asia, many black veterans determined to obtain similar liberty in the United States. One of these veterans was Clarence Mitchell, a resident of Columbia's Waverly community. Waverly was a prominent African-American district that contained two colleges, two hospitals, a library, and a substantial number of businesses, all operated by and catering to the surrounding neighborhood. Following discharge from military service in 1947, Mitchell took and passed the city's civil service exam and applied for employment as a fireman with the Columbia Fire Department. Mitchell was denied employment on the grounds that the Columbia Fire Department had no fire department substations for blacks. In 1951, Mitchell complained to Columbia city mayor Frank Owens, who arranged a meeting with the head of the Columbia Fire Department, Chief Archie Marsh. Chief Marsh told Mitchell that he could not hire him as long as the city had no substations exclusively for African-Americans, and the issue was referred to Columbia's city council, which took no action.<sup>4</sup>

Having made no progress by persuasion, Clarence Mitchell contacted the president of the state and local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Reverend James Hinton. Reverend Hinton approached the city council and the new mayor, J. Macfie Anderson, and attempted to

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 19, 27-29.

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persuade them to construct a fire department substation for African Americans, or hire black firefighters and integrate them into existing facilities. Reverend Hinton told the city government that under the terms of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that established the doctrine of “separate but equal,” it was illegal for the city to provide substations for white citizens and not for black citizens. Arguing that state law prohibited whites and blacks from working together in public buildings, the Columbia city council and mayor avoided and ignored Mitchell and Reverend Hinton for six months, and made no attempt to construct a fire department substation for African-Americans or to integrate the department. Frustrated by the failure of patience and persuasion, Reverend Hinton gave Mayor Anderson formal notice of his intent to file a lawsuit on behalf of his client, and this threat alarmed the city government.<sup>5</sup>

Columbia wished to avoid the tarnish that an NAACP lawsuit would bring to its good reputation and did not at all wish to see violent civil unrest such as that which plagued many other southern communities. Furthermore, Columbia did not want to find itself forced to integrate the fire department on terms set by the federal government. After consideration of these factors, the Columbia city council decided to build a new substation of the Columbia Fire Department, and to staff it with African-American firemen under white officers. This act was the first concrete step on the road to complete integration of the Columbia Fire Department, and as such was a major victory against segregation for Columbia’s African-American citizens.<sup>6</sup>

With the decision to build a substation of the Columbia Fire Department in the Waverly Community, steps were taken to hire and train the men who would staff the facility. Reverend Hinton and Clarence Mitchell canvassed Columbia, looking for African-American men with sufficient education, physical strength, and willingness to endure intense prejudice with restraint in order to become the city’s first professional black firemen. Clarence Mitchell and seven other men were officially hired by the Columbia Fire Department on 16 May 1953 as probationary firemen and began an intense three-week training program. Throughout the rigorous program, the probationary firemen were subjected to ridicule, harassment, and actions calculated to make the new hires quit the program. In spite of the oppressive atmosphere, all eight of the men persevered to graduate from training with high marks on both written examinations and physical drills.<sup>7</sup>

15 June 1953 was a very significant day in the history of segregation in Columbia, South Carolina. On this day, the Harden Street Substation of the Columbia Fire Department was officially opened, and Columbia’s new African-American firemen had a home. Designed by Heyward Singley, a prominent local architect, the new substation was a state-of-the-art facility that had cost \$112,000 to build. Equipped with the most modern radio systems, alarm signals, and firefighting equipment, as well as a new fire engine, the Harden

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 32, 36-37.



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Street Substation was touted as a black fire station. However, the new substation was actually an integrated facility, albeit integration with a distinct hierarchy and partitioning between black and white personnel. In addition to the eight new African-American firemen, there were two white officers and two white engineers. There were separate dormitories, lockers, showers, and restrooms for black and white personnel, but the dining and recreation rooms were open to men of both races.<sup>8</sup> In spite of this, the opening of the Harden Street Substation was the first step on the road to complete integration of the Columbia Fire Department and as such is of extraordinary significance in the history of race relations in Columbia, South Carolina.

From 1953 through 1968, the Harden Street Substation was the focal point of a transition in race relations within the Columbia Fire Department and the city. For fifteen years the substation served the Waverly community as well as Eau Claire, a predominantly white community. During this time it was the only Columbia Fire Department facility to employ African-American firemen, and was witness to substantial changes within the fire department and the city. For the first eleven years of the substation's operation, African-American firemen were denied opportunities for promotion. These early years were characterized by wariness on the part of Columbia's white citizens and firefighters concerning the black firemen. The chief of the Columbia Fire Department was reluctant to promote black firemen before they had been fully accepted by the community. However, by 1964, attitudes had softened to the point that two of the Harden Street Substation's African-American firemen were promoted to assistant engineers. Simultaneously, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 became federal law, and criminalized discrimination on the basis of color, race, national origin, religion, and gender. The combination of this law with the outstanding performance of the African-American firemen of the Harden Street Substation encouraged the Columbia Fire Department to fully integrate its organization in 1969, allowing black firemen to work from any of the departmental substations and opportunities for professional advancement. Of the original eight African-American firemen hired in 1953, one retired an assistant deputy chief and another, a deputy chief. The Harden Street Substation was built for the first African-American firemen to work in the city in fifty-five years, and for the next fifteen years was the scene of substantial changes in racial attitudes culminating in the acceptance of African Americans as first-class firemen in the Columbia Fire Department.<sup>9</sup> The Harden Street Substation continues to serve the Waverly and Eau Claire communities today and remains an outstanding example of the architectural duplication that once segregated the races.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 41-52.

Harden Street Substation  
Name of Property

Richland, South Carolina  
County and State

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### Bibliography:

Hart, Darrick Lamont. "Overcoming the Flames of Prejudice: The Integration of the Columbia Fire Department, Columbia, South Carolina, 1948-1969." M.A. Thesis, University of South Carolina, 2000.

Harden Street Substation  
Name of Property

Richland, South Carolina  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 497808 3763587  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James C. Steele  
organization Public History Program date January 30, 2005  
street & number University of South Carolina telephone 803-777-6398  
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29208

**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 City of Columbia  
street & number 1737 Main Street telephone 803-545-3000  
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29201

**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 listing. 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 20303.

Harden Street Substation

Name of Property

Richland, South Carolina

County and State

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## **Continuation Sheet**

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the black line marked "Harden Street Substation" on the accompanying Richland County Tax Map # R11408, Parcel 12, Lot 1, drawn at a scale of 1" = 100'.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property is restricted to the historic fire station and the city lot on which it is located.

Harden Street Substation  
Name of Property

Richland, South Carolina  
County and State

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property:        Harden Street Substation  
Location of Property:    1901 Harden Street, Columbia  
                                  Richland County, South Carolina  
Name of Photographer:    Beth Wiedower  
Date of Photographs:     19-20 November 2004  
Location of Original  
Negatives:                S.C. Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

1. East Elevation/Facade
2. East Elevation/Facade
3. South Elevation
4. Rear and West Elevations
5. North Elevation