

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 98001261 Date Listed: 11/4/98

Bowie Railroad Buildings Prince George's MD
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

2/10/99
Date of Action

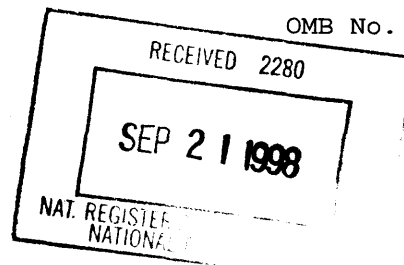
=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR amends the nomination form by changing the starting date of the Period of Significance. The Period of Significance is defined in the form as starting in 1872, however, there are no extant historic properties on the site dating to that period. The Period of Significance is amended to begin in 1910, the date of the oldest building on the site.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

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 any 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 Bowie Railroad Buildings
other names/site number PG-71-B-2-9; Bowie RR Station & Huntington Museum

2. Location

street 8614 Chestnut Avenue
not for publication n/a city or town Bowie vicinity n/a
state Maryland code MD county Prince George's code 033 zip code 20715

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

9-15-98
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: rail-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: museum

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls WOOD

other WOOD

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1872-1934

Significant Dates 1913; ca. 1930-33; 1934

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder unknown

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(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: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreege of Property less than one acre

USGS quadrangle Laurel, MD

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

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|-----------|---------------|----------------|------|---------|----------|
| A | <u>18</u> | <u>345920</u> | <u>4318890</u> | D | _____ | _____ |
| B | _____ | _____ | _____ | E | _____ | _____ |
| C | _____ | _____ | _____ | | | |

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is indicated as Block 18, Lots 1-4 on Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission Address Map No. 211 NE.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property, less than one acre, comprises the entirety of the property currently associated with the resource, and represents an appropriate landscape setting.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Sally Cannon Hein, Department of Community Resources
organization City of Bowie date March 14, 1997
street & number 2614 Kenhill Drive telephone (301) 262-6200
city or town Bowie state MD zip code 20715
=====

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 the 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

Description Summary:

The Bowie Railroad Buildings comprise three small frame structures which served as the depot complex for the Pennsylvania Railroad at the junction of the Washington (Amtrak/MARC) and the Popes Creek branches. The complex includes a single-story freight depot, a two-story tower, and an open passenger shed located alongside the tracks in the Huntington, or Old Bowie section. The buildings have been restored to the Pennsylvania Railroad livery of gray with burgundy trim, and are maintained by the City of Bowie Museum Division, and supported by the Huntington Heritage Society as a community museum.

The three buildings were saved from destruction by Amtrak by being moved away from the railroad by about one hundred feet to property secured by the City of Bowie alongside the tracks' right of way. The three structures were re-aligned into a triangular formation analogous to the old arrangement of the buildings as they originally stood, though now oriented towards the small parking lot provided for visitors.

General Description

The combination freight shed and passenger ticket office, built ca. 1930, is one story tall with a hip roof, 32 by 17 feet, of four irregular bays by two bays width. The hipped roof forms deeply overhanging eaves; the soffits are trimmed with narrow band wainscoting. The architraves are plain board millwork. On each long facade a double sliding door hangs at one end to serve the freight room, and two windows and a door are featured on the north side; three windows on the south side. Two windows are on the narrow east side, while the west side has no openings.

The interior of this building features a waiting room with built-in benches and a ticket window and door opening into the office, behind which is the freight room with the two wooden sliding doors to allow for the easy handling of freight into boxcars.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 8

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

West of the freight/ticket office building, closest to the tracks, stands the interlocking tower. This building was built circa 1913 as the interlocking tower at Severn, but was relocated to Bowie on July 31, 1934, and placed into service on October 29, switch and signal controlling equipment.¹ The tower is 15 feet square; two bays by two; and is covered in a hipped, asbestos shingle roof with deeply overhanging eaves with soffits of narrow banded wainscoting. Entrance to the tower from the rear, or east, is through a door to the first floor, and by an exterior metal staircase to the second floor. The lower door has five horizontal panels; the second-story door has two panels below glazing. A brick flue rises on the east exterior wall.

The lower floor is lighted by one window on the north and two on the south, while the upstairs has a similar pattern with the addition of a projecting rectangular bay on the west, cantilevered some two feet from the main wall. The 9-over-1 windows are set over a paneled base to the bay, which fits under its own hip roof. The interior of the tower maintains on the second floor some of the original switch and signal equipment, while the lower floor is empty, and now serves as a photographic exhibit area showing the history of Bowie and its railroad origins.

Alongside the tower stands the waiting shed, built probably about 1910 following the station fire, featuring a built-in bench for passengers. The eastern side of the shed is open and the sloping gable roof is supported by a turned, bracketed post, centered in the opening of the waiting area. Similar brackets support the roof at the corners, and the eaves are ornamented with projecting rafters. A square, unglazed opening forms a viewing window at the north end.

The site is on a grassy plot with a small amount of landscaping fronting on the Amtrak rail line, next to the Chestnut Avenue bridge crossing the tracks. The complex was restored in 1993 by the City of Bowie, and is now operated as a museum about the history of Old Bowie and the railroad. The three structures were relocated some fifty feet from the railroad right of way to avoid destruction by Amtrak, but are located in the closest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 9

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====
proximity to the rails to maintain the natural connection of the structures
to the site.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
Industrial-Urban Dominance: A.D. 1870-1930

Historic Period Theme(s):
Transportation

Resource Type:
Category: Building(s)
Historic Environment: Suburban
Historic Function(s) and Use(s):
TRANSPORTATION: Rail-related

Known Design Source:
none

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====
Significance Summary

The complex of Bowie Railroad Buildings are significant under National Register Criterion A, for their contribution to the development of rail transportation in the region, and under Criterion C, as examples of the types of buildings commonly associated with small-scale rail junctions in the early 20th century. The railroad depot structures in Old Bowie are rare survivors recalling the once prominent number of railway stations in the Washington metropolitan area. These small buildings are testament to the significance that a railroad junction had in the commerce and intercourse of the nation at the time of the heyday of the railroads.

History and Support

The Bowie area was marked as a rural and highly agrarian region which lacked a direct transportation route to the lucrative markets of Baltimore and Washington. By the early 1850s a movement had begun to establish a rail line into southern Maryland. In 1853 a state charter was granted for the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Company, with Oden Bowie as its president. Plans to build the line between Baltimore and the southern counties of Maryland halted at the outset of the Civil War. Following the war, Oden Bowie approached the directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which dominated the railroad system north of Baltimore. Since the charter for the Baltimore and Potomac allowed for branch lines of up to twenty miles in length, the Pennsylvania, longing for a chance to compete seriously with the Baltimore and Ohio's monopoly in the traffic between Washington, D.C. and the North, leapt at the opportunity. The Pennsylvania contracted with the B. & P. to construct the line from Baltimore to Popes Creek, Charles County, and to extend a branch line from Bowie into Washington, in effect giving the Pennsylvania a through line between Baltimore and Washington. Construction began in 1868 into Southern Maryland, and the following year work began on the spur to the capital city.²

Railroad junctions traditionally were busy hubs and often the locus of town developments. Land speculator Ben M. Plumb seized the opportunity and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 12

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

purchased some 300 acres, and had it surveyed into town lots surrounding the junction of the lines to Popes Creek and Washington. The town, which Plumb named Huntington City, was approximately a mile square with numbered streets running east and west, and tree-named streets running north and south. In 1870 Plumb published a prospectus for Huntington City which extolled the wide streets and future church, school and parks. The lots were 2,500 square feet, and would sell for \$25 each; the railroad buildings would be "arranged and constructed as to be an ornament and honor to the town." In August 1870, Plumb sold to the Baltimore and Potomac two small parcels of land at the junction with the condition that the company must erect by January 1, 1875 "a railroad Depot, and engine house and machine or repair shops for Railroad purposes."³

By 1870, work was well under way on both of the rail lines. Purchase of the newly-surveyed lots began almost immediately, and houses began to rise, with some of the earlier ones being erected by the railroad company. On July 2, 1872, the first train ran through Huntington between Baltimore and Washington, and over the years this branch line became the main line between Washington and points north. The Popes Creek line was finished in July 1873, changing the face of rural southern Maryland with the introduction of a line of access to commerce, education, business and leisure. A handsome building erected at Huntington stood in the crook formed by the departure of the Popes Creek line from that for Washington. The station gained the name of Bowie from the very outset, honoring the company's president, and after 1869, the Governor of Maryland. Within a decade, the town had been rechartered as Bowie as well.⁴

The population of the new little town grew also, and by 1880 there were some sixty families living there. The railroad was the biggest employer; there were 2 conductors, 2 engineers, a baggage master and brakeman, as well as all the professionals essential to a small town, including a postmaster, four merchants, four carpenters, a school teacher, telegraph operator, hotel keeper, two shoemakers, a butcher, hostler, barber and clockmaker.⁵

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 13

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====
In 1902, the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad consolidated with the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad (also operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad) to form the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington Railroad Company (PB&W). The Pennsylvania controlled the PB&W through ownership of its entire capital stock, and thus, in combination with its northeastern lines, had a monopoly on railroad transportation between New York and Washington.⁶

The controls exerted over such a large and complex system saw the development in the 1880s of the interlocking signal system, using electric currents through the rails to indicate track "blocks" that were clear or occupied. An "interlocking" tower was erected at each junction to control the signals and switches in its vicinity, whose control levers could be operated by a single man in three shifts a day, seven days a week. A tower was erected at Bowie before 1890, operating until it was destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1910.⁷

It was replaced immediately, as it served a critical function on the Pennsylvania Railroad. The new tower was used for some twenty years until work to widen and straighten the right-of-way required its replacement. In 1934 the signal tower that had been erected at Severn about 1913 was moved to Bowie and reassembled, to accompany the depot and passenger shed which had been erected at about the same time (circa 1930-33).⁸ These three surviving structures have served the functions of freight management, ticket sales, passenger shelter, and, most importantly, the controlling of train movements at this important junction for more than sixty years. In 1986, the signal system was computerized, and the interlocking system at Bowie was disconnected. The buildings were boarded up, and languished.

The City of Bowie stepped into the picture, purchasing the disused buildings in 1992, and moving the structures a few feet off Amtrak property onto track-side city-owned land, restored the buildings with the assistance of the Maryland Historical Trust. They are now open to the public as the Huntington Railroad Museum, and are supported by the City of Bowie with the help of the Huntington Heritage Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 14

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====
The rail buildings at Bowie are survivors from the period of greatest use on the line. They reflect the earlier period of establishment of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad in the 1870s, the installation of the interlocked switch and signal system, and the expansion of the great railroad companies early in this century. Only one other signal tower survives in Prince George's County: the Pennsylvania's 1906 Landover tower (PG#72a-1). The Bowie railroad buildings represent the only surviving stop on the Popes Creek line other than the modest and ruinous Croom freight station. With the exception of the B&O's 1884 Laurel Station, all the other fine Victorian and early twentieth-century depot buildings throughout this populous and historically suburban commuting county have been lost (e. g. Hyattsville, Berwyn, Riverdale, Lanham). The three railroad structures at Bowie, which repeatedly won Pennsylvania Railroad awards as best maintained buildings and grounds, were the center of the town of Bowie, literally and figuratively.⁹ They are rare survivors of a lost and important period of history.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 15

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

Notes

¹ Memorandum, Susan G. Pearl, Research/Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, to Stephen E. Patrick, Curator, City of Bowie Museums, 10 December 1997.

² Burgess, George H., and Kennedy, Miles C. *Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946*, Philadelphia, 1949, pp. 272-281; Prince George's County Historical Society, *Baltimore and Potomac, Popes Creek Line*, 1973; Interstate Commerce Commission Valuation Reports, Vol. 23, pp. 247, 262-69, 352-53. See also Maryland Historical Trust Inventory forms PG #71B-2 and PG #71B-2-9.

³ *Prospectus of Huntington*, Ben. M. Plumb & Co., 1870; Prince George's County Deed HB#2:861.

⁴ *Washington Star*, July 2, 1872; Burgess and Kennedy, op. cit.

⁵ Census for Prince George's County, Enumeration District #14, 1880.

⁶ ICC Valuation Reports, Vol. 23, pp. 262-267, 353; Burgess and Kennedy, op. cit.

⁷ Burgess and Kennedy, op. cit.; MHT Inventory form PG #71B-2-9, note #5.

⁸ Conversation with Robert Williams, reported by Susan G. Pearl in Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (PG#71B-2-9) Section 8, page 4.

⁹ Fannie and Mary Basim, *Town of Bowie, Maryland 1870-1960*, Huntington Heritage Society, 1992, p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 16

PG-71-B-2-9
Bowie Railroad Buildings
Prince George's Co., MD

=====

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See notes to Section 8