

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received JUN 15 1981

date entered JUL 13 1981

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Felton Railroad Station

and/or common

2. Location

street & number E. Railroad Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Felton _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district One

state Delaware code 10 county Kent code 001

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Proposed as Town Office |

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Felton

street & number Box 329

city, town Felton _____ vicinity of _____ state Delaware 19943

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse

street & number The Green

city, town Dover _____ state Delaware 19901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey: (K-335) has this property been determined eligible? yes nodate 1980 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Old State House, The Green, P.O. Box 1401

city, town Dover _____ state Delaware

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 type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Felton Railroad Station is a one-sided type, single level, brick passenger depot constructed in 1868 by the Delaware Railroad Company in the southern Kent County town of Felton. It supplanted an earlier frame depot plotted in Beer's Atlas of Delaware, Felton map, (1868) at the center of town where Main Street crossed the railway. The present building is located three blocks north of the site of the first depot, on Railroad Avenue East directly by the tracks between Sewell Street and High Street.

Best described as "truncated" Italianate, the low mass of the 1-story brick building is offset by a regular placement of round-headed doorways and windows defining three principal chambers aligned with its rectangular plan. The coursing of the exterior brickwork varies, with 6, 7 and 8-course common bond segments present on each wall. The most distinctive architectural feature is the projecting double row of header bricks defining the heads of the doorways and windows. The present low-hipped composition shingled roof with shallow, bracketless eaves, a replacement of unknown vintage, is very similar to the original standing seam sheet metal-clad hipped roof with deep eaves apparent in a late-nineteenth-century photograph of the station. The central bay of the building, defined on the facade by a projecting bow-front window, housed the ticket office, telegraph station and business office. The other two chambers which flank the office were used as waiting rooms (perhaps, at first, segregated by gender), each with a round-headed double door on both facade and rear elevations as a means of access. The northernmost waiting room was later converted into a baggage room, with the facade doorway widened and reinforced with heavy plank jambs and a beam lintel to accommodate a hand-car operating on a short run of rail going through the doorway to the edge of railway to facilitate baggage handling. The single surviving original door, on the north exterior wall of the baggage room, features four slightly raised, square shouldered panels with heavy, applied Grecian ogee moulding. The windows are now temporarily covered by plywood as rehabilitation continues for eventual use as town offices. Originally, they housed tall, two-over-two pane sash windows.

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/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1868

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Felton Railroad Station is a significant architectural symbol of the central role of the Delaware Railroad in the post-Civil War economic development of Delaware as a means of rapid and efficient transfer of passengers, goods and produce throughout the Delmarva Peninsula.

The Delaware Railroad, connecting the agricultural hinterlands of Delaware and portions of the Eastern Shore of Maryland to northern markets by way of Wilmington and Philadelphia, represented a regional culmination of the railroad building mania sweeping America in the mid-nineteenth century. Envisioned as a link between existing northern and southern railways, the Delaware Railroad operated the length of the state by 1859, and by 1866 was extended to the town of Crisfield, Maryland, on the Chesapeake Bay.

Prior to the construction of the railroad, Felton consisted of a few frame buildings scattered along Main Street, a transpeninsular road connecting the early-nineteenth-century town of Frederica, Delaware, on the Murderkill River, with Choptank Bridge some 25 miles to the west in Maryland.

The economic and commercial optimism generated by the railroad brought into being a new community in Felton. A 1868 map of the town in Beer's Atlas of Delaware, portrays the town's plan for future development along a gridded street plan centered on a new town square several blocks to the north of Main Street. The Felton Railroad Station, built in 1868 just as the Atlas of Delaware was published, was conspicuously sited as a focal point to encourage planned growth in the undeveloped area of town that filled in during the later decades of the century. The town was named for Samuel N. Felton of Philadelphia, elected president of the Delaware Railroad Company in 1865 and a member of its board for over 35 years.

In similar fashion, other towns springing up along the route of the railroad at this time were named for other railroad officials.

Manlove Hayes, a director of the Delaware Railroad Company, accurately appraised the social and economic benefits arising from the railway in his History of the Delaware Railroad (1888):

"Well cultivated farms had succeeded to the dense forests and jungles that stretched for miles together on the borders of the railway when it was first opened. New villages had grown up at Clayton, Wyoming, Felton, Harrington, Farmington and the other principal stations. Tasteful residences, public schools, academies and churches in the larger towns presented inducements to people seeking new homes and brought many settlers to the neighborhood. The substantial and effective appearance of the new brick Passenger Depots and grounds, ornamented with plants and flowers, which were to be seen at many of the stations, showed the travelers that the managers of the railroad were performing a commendable part in their educating, cultivating, and refining the tastes of a people."

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1/4 Acre

Quadrangle name Wyoming

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

A

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B

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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D

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G

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

H

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes only the building itself. The dimensions are approximately 50 X 24 feet.

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 Dean E. Nelson, Historian

organization Bureau of Archaeology & Hist. Preservation date May 22, 1980

street & number Old State House, The Green, P.O. Box 140 telephone (302)-736-5685

city or town Dover state Delaware 19901

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Samuel R. [Signature]

title _____ date June 9, 1981

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 7/13/81

Attest: *Emma Jane Saxe*
Chief of Registration

date 7-13-81

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Continuation sheet # 1

Item number 8

Page 2

The country passenger depots built by the Delaware Railroad Company throughout the state during the second half of the nineteenth century came from plan books whose basic tenants were later codified by railroad architect Walter Gilman Berg in his treatise Buildings and Structures of American Railroads (1893). Discussing the particulars of smaller facilities, he wrote:

"Where standard designs or 'class depots' are adapted, stress should be laid on having the designs modified in minor details, so as to avoid a monotonous sameness of similar structures along the road. This can be easily accomplished by making modifications in the details of the exterior finish, gables, dormer windows, ridge cresting, finials, roof brackets, chimneys, etc., without in reality changing the ground plan or the frame or walls of the buildings."

The Felton Railroad Station, considered as an element in a unified network of Delaware Railroad stations surviving from the second half of the nineteenth century, is a good example of the architectural percepts governing much of the railroad depot construction of the time. Its architectural and historical qualities are paralleled in the stations of Middletown and Seaford, both listed in the National Register for their association with Delaware railroading. In addition, nominations are currently being developed for the Milford Railroad Station and Wyoming Railroad Station to document their respective and collective significances in Delaware's heritage.

Since the primary significance of the site is as an architectural symbol, the nominated property includes only the building itself. The immediately surrounding ground is not considered to have any particular significance, although the relationship of the structure to the surrounding town of course does. This same reasoning was used to determine the boundary for a sibling structure, the Wyoming Railroad Station, which was entered in the National Register December 4, 1980.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| FOR HCRS USE ONLY | |
| RECEIVED | NOV 3 1981 |
| DATE ENTERED | JUL 13 1981 |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FELTON RAILROAD STATION

CONTINUATION SHEET

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Berg, Walter Gilman. Buildings and Structures of American Railroads; A Reference Book For Railroad Managers, Superintendents, Master Mechanics, Engineers, Architects, and Students. New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1893.

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Meeks, Carroll Louis Vanderslice. The Railroad Station: An Architectural History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956.

Mitchell, Jon Clayton. "Railroad Building in Delaware," unpublished, M. A. Thesis, University of Delaware, 1948.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware: 1609-1888. Reprint ed., Port Washington, New York: Kenikat Press, 1972.

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Hayes, Manlove. History of the Delaware Railroad and Its Connections. Wilmington, DE: Aldine Publishing & Engraving Company, 1882.

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Continuation sheet

Item number Revisions

Page

Felton Railroad Station, Kent County, Delaware
Revisions and Clarifications requested 12/80

7. The appearance of the station has not and will not be altered under present plans. These plans involve simple repair of existing exterior features rather than alteration of any of them. Such original interior fabric as remains will also be retained in the course of conversion to town offices. The repair work is proceeding on an ad hoc basis using local, donated labor, and no formal rehabilitation proposal exists. Current photographs are enclosed to document these statements.

8. See re-typed form. The first four paragraphs were inadvertently omitted from the original form. The final paragraph contains a boundary justification.

10. See re-typed form.

