

JUN 13 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name SOUTHPORT RAILROAD STATIONS  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 96 Station Street and 100 Center Street  not for publication N/A  
city, town Fairfield  vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code 06490

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 6/7/89  
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 7/28/89  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

RECREATION-AND CULTURE: museum

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Stick/Eastlake

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

Wood

roof Stone: slate, asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

There are two historic railroad stations at Metro North's Southport stop in Fairfield, Connecticut: the east-bound station on the south side of the tracks (Photographs 1 through 3) is a 1 1/2-story brick building built in 1884, and the west-bound station on the opposite side (Photographs 8 through 10) is a 1 1/2-story wood-frame station built about 1895 (see sketch map). Both are oriented with their long dimensions parallel to the tracks, and both are adjacent to high-level concrete platforms dating from the upgrading of the line in the late 1960s. The stations are about 800' apart, with the west-bound station further west (Photograph 8). The stations lie on the boundary between the built-up part of Southport (a National Register-listed historic district) and a residential neighborhood of modern houses to the north; both have extensive commuter parking lots.

### East-bound Station:

The east-bound station measures about 26' by 80' in plan, with piers dividing the shorter elevation into two bays and the longer into nine bays. The brick is laid in common bond with Flemish variation. The building has elaborate stepped bargeboard in the gables formed from chamfered stick braces filled in with jigsawn circles of two sizes (Photograph 4). The ends of the braces' horizontal members and the continuations of the roof purlins are beveled off at 45 degrees, forming pyramid-shaped ornaments. On all sides of the building except that facing the tracks, a standing-seam metal pent roof on wooden trusses is supported by large chamfered wooden braces with circular knobs at the joints (Photograph 5). A semi-hexagonal projecting bay is centered on both the north and south elevations. Window openings have rusticated brownstone lintels and sills and are fitted with one-over-one aluminum sash. In each gable is a pair of narrow windows. The several transomed entrances have four-panel doors with applied moldings; the paint has been removed and the doors given a natural finish. On the south side, west of the projecting bay, is a wide baggage opening with a sliding batten door (Photographs 2 and 7); like another nearby doorway, its sill is considerably above grade. Emerging from the ridge of the slate-covered gable roof are two brick chimneys, a central round sheet-metal ventilator with a turret finial, and at the west end, another square ventilator (probably a later addition).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Southport Railroad Stations  
Fairfield, CT

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Description (continued):

East-bound Station (continued):

The station formerly had a wooden roof extending out from the north wall which connected with a gable-roofed platform shelter covering the waiting area to the west of the station. That structure was removed as part of the c.1970 rail improvement program, and the platform is now open.

The interior (Photographs 6 and 7) has been considerably altered for the station's present use as an interior design shop. The ceiling and wall finishes have been removed, exposing brick, and window and door trim appear to have been boxed in under recent carpentry. The wooden roof trusses are now visible.

West-bound Station:

The west-bound station (Photographs 8 and 9) measures 22' x 82' in plan. Its gable roof has an unusual profile: because the ridge is located only about three feet back from the south or track-side wall, the front slope of the roof is much shorter than the rear slope (Photograph 10). The roofline reflects the loss of the original wooden platform shelter, which was formed in part from a continuation of the front slope of the roof. The present metal canopy over the platform dates from c.1970. The roof forms a pronounced overhang on all sides, supported (except on the south side) by simple chamfered braces; the jigsawn bargeboard is a recent addition (Photograph 11). There are two brick chimneys about one-third in from the ends of the station.

Most of exterior of the station is clapboarded, complemented by matched-board vertical siding below a molding which encircles the building at the level of the window sills. On the south elevation, the upper-story clapboards are interrupted by a series of vertical boards. Windows have plain-board frames and are fitted with two-over-two sash. The paired end-elevation windows have small-pane transoms. In the gables are louvered openings with peaked heads repeating the shape of the roof. The several entrances are transomed and have paneled doors.

The interior features hardwood floors, board ceilings, simple cornice moldings, fluted window and door surrounds with circular bosses in the corner blocks, and walls of grooved vertical sheathing over a dado of narrower matched boards (Photograph 12). In addition to the waiting room, ticket area, and restrooms, the station accommodates an art gallery at the west end.

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

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2 Southport Railroad Stations  
Fairfield, CT

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Description (continued):

Vehicles and pedestrians can pass between the stations using an underpass about 450' west of the east-bound station.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

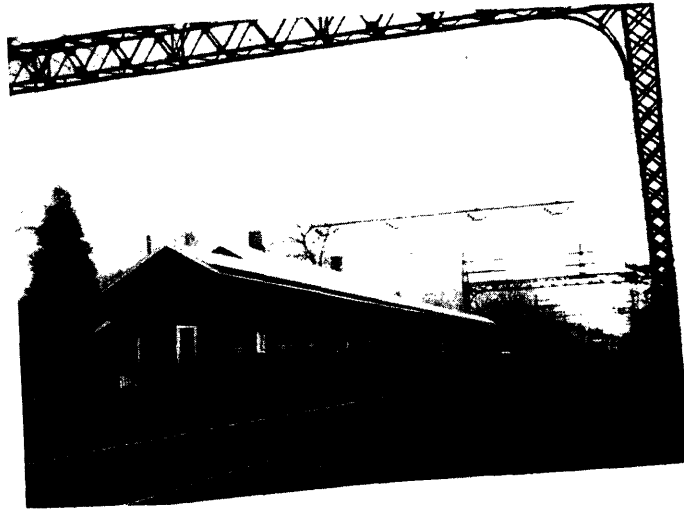
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Southport Railroad Stations  
Fairfield, CT

Section number 7 Page 3

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Description (continued):



View showing original track shelter in front of station, from Tone, 1966.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1884-c.1945

Significant Dates

1884

c.1895

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Southport railroad stations are significant as reminders of the important role of railroad passenger service in the historical development of the community, as artifacts of the New Haven Railroad, a company which virtually monopolized the state's public transportation at the end of the 19th century, and as well-preserved examples of small-town station architecture. Originating as a shipbuilding and commercial settlement which grew up alongside the harbor at the mouth of the Mill River, Southport may well have withered in the second half of the 19th century had the railroad not established a station stop at the village; the stop in Fairfield center was only a mile and a half to the east. The railroad depot enabled Southport to maintain its village identity and eventually transformed it with well-to-do summer visitors and commuters. And like other old depots, the railroad stations at Southport have local importance in the community's social life: family reunions, visitors arriving, children going off to camp or college, and soldiers departing and returning from service were just some of the important events at the stations which affected the lives of generations of Southport families. Although highways changed travel patterns in the region after World War Two, passenger rail service remains an important mode of transportation.

The older east-bound station was built in 1884 to replace a depot destroyed by fire. It is typical of the substantial brick stations built at small-town stops throughout the state in the period. Whereas earlier stations had been small wood-frame buildings, often in a picturesque Gothic or Italianate style, the stations of the 1880s were brick (probably reflecting the railroads unhappy experience with frame construction and fires) and were large enough to accommodate spacious waiting rooms, ticket counters, offices, restrooms, and a baggage area. Outside waiting and entrance areas were protected by a roof overhang, pent-roof, or attached shelter. Most stations were well-built but utilitarian structures, with only limited architectural embellishment.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Connecticut Railroad Commissioners. Annual Report, 1885, 1892-1896.

Lacey, Charlotte A. An Historical Story of Southport, Connecticut. Green Farms, Connecticut: Modern Books and Crafts, 1927.

Tone, John C. New Haven Railroad Station and Line Improvements: Preliminary Plans and Cost Estimates. New York: Tri-State Transportation Commission, 1966.

Turner, Gregg M. and Melancthon W. Jacobus. Connecticut's Railroads, An Illustrated History. Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1986.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # CT-293
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other

Specify repository:  
Connecticut Historical Commission  
59 South Prospect St., Hartford, CT

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Approximately 1.8 acres

06106

UTM References

A 

1	8	6	4	3	8	4	0	4	5	5	5	1	0	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

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B 

1	8	6	4	3	6	2	0	4	5	5	4	9	5	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary includes a perimeter of 25' around each station as well as the entire railroad right-of-way in front of and between the buildings. See accompanying sketch map.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the station and their immediate surroundings, but excludes the facility's extensive parking areas.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Bruce Clouette, Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Resource Consultants date August 29, 1988

street & number 55 Van Dyke Avenue telephone (203) 547-0268

city or town Hartford state Connecticut zip code 06106

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1 Southport Railroad Stations  
Fairfield, CT

## Significance (continued):

The Southport east-bound station embodies many typical characteristics in its size, brick construction, pent-roof shelter, and the quality of its construction, evident in details such as its slate roof and rusticated stone trim. At the same time, it is unusual in the degree of architectural attention given the bargeboard. Reflecting both High Victorian Gothic and Eastlake styles, the station's ornamentation is representative of the highly detailed architectural woodwork favored in the Victorian period. At the time it was built, Southport was already becoming an enclave of the wealthy, and the exceptional ornament might have reflected their status. Other than the striking bargeboard, the building is fairly plain and was not intended as an embodiment of any particular architectural style. The station in many ways repeats the Fairfield station built two years earlier: the overall plan, brick-pier construction, chimneys, pent-roof, and even the central ventilator are similar. However, the more elaborate pent-roof bracing, bargeboards, and projecting bays are departures from the earlier station.

The west-bound station was built in the 1890s as part of a massive rebuilding of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad's main line. The New Haven, as it was known, was formed in 1871 and eventually acquired some 300 transportation companies, including all but one rail line in Connecticut. The shore line along the coast, a major route from Boston to New York, was its principal source of passenger revenue. Beginning about 1892, the railroad undertook a far-reaching program of straightening curves, raising the rail line above the grade of intersecting roadways, rebuilding drawbridges, and doubling the number of tracks to the present four. As a consequence of the extra tracks, and the policy of providing separate structures for each direction, a series of new stations was needed for the north or west-bound side of the line. These physical improvements, the near-total consolidation of the state's rail service under New Haven control, and the electrification of the main line in the early 1900s enabled the New Haven Railroad to become one of the nations's largest carriers, accounting at one time for nearly 10% of America's passenger traffic. At the same time, railroad development contributed to the growth of all the shore line towns of Fairfield County, transforming many of them into residential suburbs of the greater New York area. Over the decade 1885-1895, the number of passengers carried by the New Haven Railroad increased from 7,582,213 to 43,838,676.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

8

2

Southport Railroad Stations  
Fairfield, CT

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Significance (continued):

Southport west-bound station stands as a good example of the New Haven Railroad's 1890s passenger facilities. In order to build a large number quickly and economically, the railroad adopted a single design concept for all the stations, reverted to wood construction, and limited the stylistic details and interior finishes to a few variations. The Southport station has the characteristic frame construction, asymmetrical roof profile, variegated exterior materials, simple Victorian stylistic details, and wood-paneled interior which together define the type. Although the concept, form, and detailing of these stations was standardized for the entire four-tracking project, no two are exactly alike; the size and plan was adapted to the needs of the specific stop.

Like the older east-bound building, the west-bound station embodies the distinctive characteristics of the small-town railroad architecture of period. It is a commodious building with Victorian decorative detail, such as variegated siding, Stick-Style brackets, and interior sheathing, giving some stylish touches to an otherwise utilitarian structure. Although the platform has been modernized and the original appearance somewhat compromised by the recently added bargeboard, Southport's west-bound station's plain form, restrained Victorian ornament, overhanging roof, and exceptionally original interior make it a significant and well-preserved example of small-town station architecture.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Photographs \_\_\_\_\_ Southport Railroad Stations  
Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Fairfield, CT

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All photographs:

1. SOUTHPORT RAILROAD STATIONS
2. Fairfield, CT
3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
4. August, 1988
5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission  
Hartford, CT

East-bound station, west elevation, camera facing northeast  
Photo 1 of 12

East-bound station, south elevation, camera facing northwest  
Photo 2 of 12

East-bound station, north elevation, camera facing east  
Photo 3 of 12

East-bound station, detail of bargeboard, camera facing east  
Photo 4 of 12

East-bound station, detail of bracing, camera facing east  
Photo 5 of 12

East-bound station, interior, camera facing northeast  
Photo 6 of 12

East-bound station, interior, detail of baggage door,  
camera facing southeast  
Photo 7 of 12

West-bound station, west elevation, east-bound station in background,  
camera facing east  
Photo 8 of 12

West-bound station, south elevation, camera facing west  
Photo 9 of 12

West-bound station, north elevation, camera facing south  
Photo 10 of 12

United States Department of the Interior  
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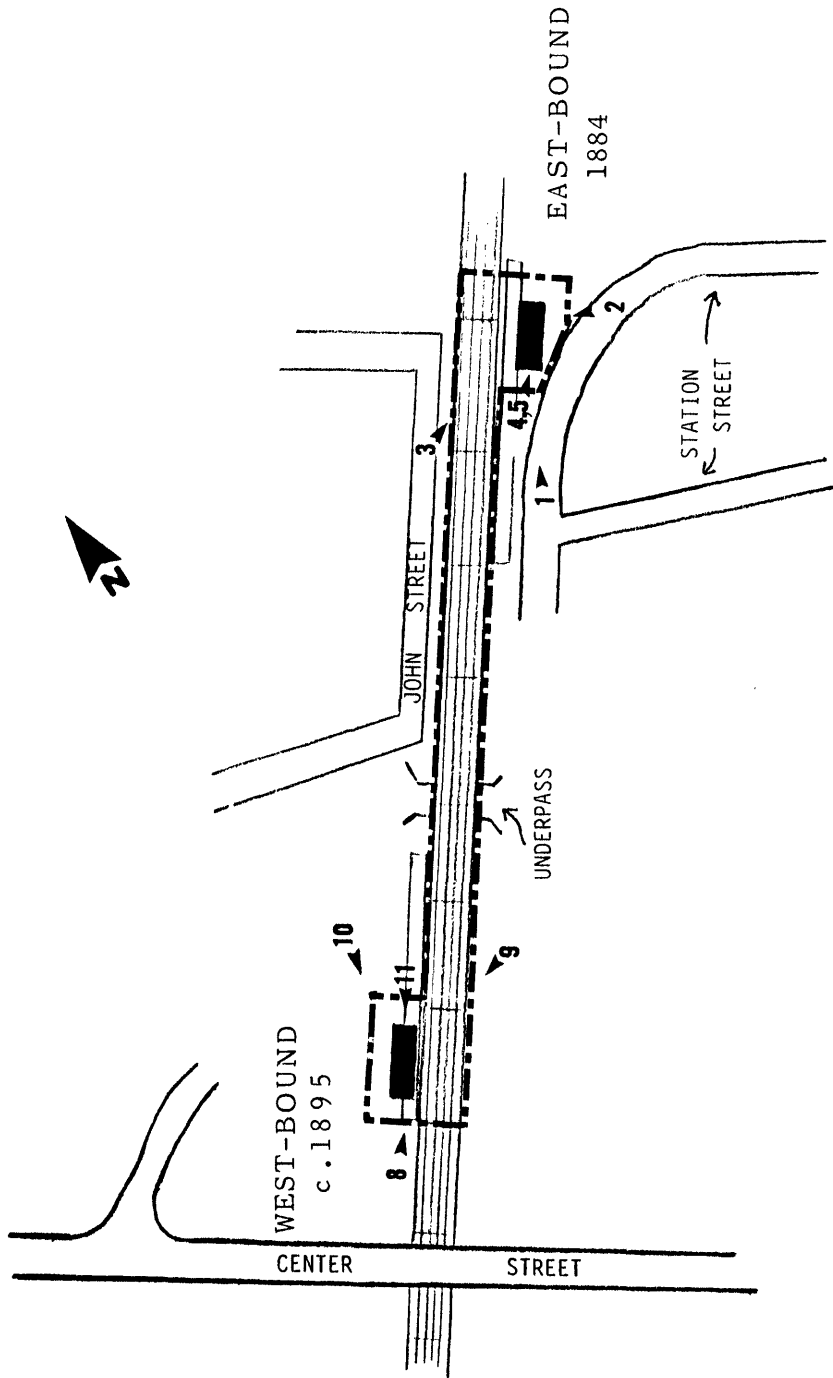
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs \_\_\_\_\_ Southport Railroad Stations  
Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Fairfield, CT

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West-bound station, detail of braces and modern bargeboard,  
camera facing west  
Photo 11 of 12

West-bound station, interior, camera facing west  
Photo 12 of 12



SOUTHPORT RAILROAD STATIONS

Fairfield, Connecticut

--- Boundary of Nominated Property

▲ 9 Photo Positions

0 220 feet  
scale