

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0669300

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 22 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Cowan Depot

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Front Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Cowan

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fourth

STATE  
Tennessee

VICINITY OF  
CODE  
47

COUNTY  
Franklin

CODE  
51

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Cowan Beautification, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 53

CITY, TOWN  
Cowan

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Tennessee

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Franklin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
Court Square

CITY, TOWN  
Winchester

STATE  
Tennessee

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE  
June 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN  
Nashville

STATE  
Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>Oct. 1976</u>

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Cowan Depot was constructed in 1904 by the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad (N.C. & St. L.). It replaced a station erected in 1852 by the parent company, the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad (N&C). The depot is located adjacent to the railroad tracks in Cowan, a small railroad town located east-southeast of Winchester, the county seat of Franklin County.

A one-and-a-half story, rectangular, frame section with a gable roof forms the core of the building. Attached to the southeastern wall is a rectangular, two-story wing and to the northwestern elevation is a small single-story wing; both wings are of frame construction and have hip roofs. The building rests on a modern concrete block foundation. The roofs of the main section and the northwestern wing have asphalt shingles, while the two-story wing retains its original standing seam metal roof and finials. A bay, which has modern metal shingles, is attached to the center of the northeast wall of the main section. The exterior finish of the building has a variety of textures, including clapboards, horizontal and diagonal narrow boards, and fish tail shingles. Recently the depot was repainted in the standard N.C.&St.L. colors, green and gold. Bracket-like elements further decorate the area above the windows of the main section.

The building was moved south to the opposite side of the tracks. The Louisville and Nashville railroad (L&N, successor to the N.C. & St. L.) sold the building to Cowan Beautification, Inc. for \$1.00; the agreement of sale required that the building be relocated as far away from the active track as possible. It was necessary to reverse the orientation of the building. Originally the two-story wing faced northwest.

Early photographs reveal that the depot had a bracketed ornament in the northwest gable of the main section; this was removed in the forties or fifties. At that time an oriel window with ornate brackets and a pedimented roof, which was attached to the northeast elevation, was also eliminated. The chimney which stood on the northeast side of the main section roof was taken down prior to relocating the building, but it will be replaced.

The interior has remained largely unchanged. The present owners intend to retain the original floors and ceilings, and most of the partition walls.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The town of Cowan developed around the N&C railroad station in the early 1850s. The first depot was erected and used until 1904, when the present building replaced it. Cowan was a passenger stop on the main line which connected Chattanooga with the state capital. It also served as the terminus for the spur line, operated by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company for many years, which provided rail service to Tracy City, Sewanee, and Monteagle. Cowan was the last stop before approaching the Cumberland Tunnel (a National Register property), and the depot served as the base for the Cowan-Sherwood Pusher District. Pusher or helper engines were located in Cowan and Sherwood at the other end of the tunnel to help the overburdened locomotives to ascend Cumberland Mountain to reach the tunnel. This service has operated for more than 120 years. During World War II ten three-man pusher crews operated out of Cowan, but with the advent of more powerful diesel engines a smaller number of two-man crews now assist the long freight trains over the mountain.

The Cowan Depot was built when decorative elements were standard even for utilitarian buildings, and it is an excellent example of early twentieth century railroad architecture. Especially distinctive is the creative use of siding of many shapes and textures; this was a touch of refinement not usually found in small depots. The two-story section adds a touch of stylistic diversity, and this element is functional, as well as attractive. The yardmaster could easily supervise switching operations and the placement of rolling stock from this vantage point, and the oriel windows, which have been removed, placed him nearly over the mainline track.

The building was scheduled for demolition when Cowan Beautification, Inc. approached the L&N Railroad. The railroad agreed to sell the building if it were relocated away from the mainline track. The owners carefully moved the depot approximately 100 feet and reoriented it so that the original southwest elevation still faces the tracks. Cowan Beautification has partially rehabilitated the depot and will, as funds permit, establish a railroad museum in it.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bailey, Thomas E. "Storm on Cumberland Mountain: The Story of the Cowan Pusher District." Tennessee Historical Quarterly. Vol XXXIV, No. 3 (Fall 1975), 227-248.  
 Prince, Richard E. Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, History and Steam Locomotives. Green River, Wyo, 1967.  
 Information provided by Mrs. J. R. Brock, Cowan, Tennessee.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .35

QUADRANGLE NAME Winchester

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 590150 3891440

B               

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated is a polygonal lot bounded as follows: beginning at a point on Front Street; thence northwest along Front Street approximately 210 feet; thence northeast approximately 80 feet; thence southeast approximately 200 feet; thence southwest

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

approximately 50 feet to the CODE beginning.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

May 1978

STREET & NUMBER

170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE

(615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Robert E. Dalton*

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE 5/16/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/24/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: Bill Labovich  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

Nov 22 1978