

KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
Railroad Avenue
South Kingstown
Washington County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-400

HABS
RI
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service

Northeast Region

Philadelphia Support Office

U.S. Custom House

200 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, P.A. 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION

HABS No. RI - 400

Location: Railroad Avenue
South Kingston
Washington County
Rhode Island

USGS Kingston, RI Quadrangle
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinate: 19.286210.4595450

Present Owner: State of Rhode Island

Present Use: Railroad Station

Significance: The Kingston Railroad Station is significant for its vernacular architectural quality and design, and for its role in the history of railroad transportation in Rhode Island. It has recently been the focus of community and institutional attention and preservation action. The station, in continuous use as a railroad depot since it was built in 1875, is a rare and well-preserved example of a late nineteenth century rural railroad station. It is the only surviving building erected by the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad Company still in active use. The wood frame railroad station has served as a community anchor and landmark since it was built. The construction of the station fostered the development of the village of West Kingston, including the establishment of the West Kingston Post Office ca. 1875, the siting of the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (later University of Rhode Island) in 1889, and the relocation of the county courthouse from Kingston Village in 1894. When the building fell into disrepair in the 1970s, the Friends of the Kingston Station was formed to preserve and restore the station. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. After a devastating fire on December 12, 1988, the Friends rallied to refurbish the station. At the behest of the Friends, the Town of South Kingstown, both U.S. Senators of Rhode Island and their staffs, and others, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation with funding from the Federal Highway Administration agreed to undertake a project to rehabilitate the station and redevelop the surrounding area.

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Note: The text below has been adapted from the Kingston Railroad Station National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Richard B. Harrington and Ancelin V. Lynch, prepared for the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1977 and The Kingston Station Historic Structure Report, Clifford M. Renshaw Architects, prepared for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation Planning Division, 1993.

PART I KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION - DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Kingston Railroad Station is sited to the southeast of the Northeast Corridor Railroad, parallel to the tracks. For the purposes of this report, the tracks are considered to run north and south, and the siting of the station is referred to as north (facing Route 138), east (facing the original circular drive), south, and west (facing tracks).

The Kingston Railroad Station, constructed in 1875, was built as a passenger depot for the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad. The depot replaced an earlier structure constructed one half mile to the northeast near Waites Corner Road in 1837 when the railroad was first put through. The building suffered substantial damage from a fire in 1988 and underwent emergency repairs and stabilization in 1994.

Exterior

The building is a one-and-one-half story, wood frame structure set upon a low, brick foundation. The station, rectangular in plan, is approximately 76' x 30', symmetrical in design, with a gable roof. Its east and west elevations are articulated into seven bays and its north and south elevations into three bays.

The main roof, pitched at approximately 7:12, rises above overhanging eaves with built-in gutters. The center of the roof is pierced by a full-depth, cross-gable dormer with low hipped roof which resembles a truncated tower. The tower is flanked by segmental arched dormers to the north and south on both sides of the station. A brick chimney rises from the center of the tower.

The building has a generous frieze with wide overhanging cornice below the eaves which continues up the gable ends. The frieze is interrupted on the east and west elevations by the tower which has its own cornice with large curved modillions. The eaves of the dormers are trimmed with wood dentils. The original roofing material was wood shingle. Prior to the 1988 fire the roof was sheathed with 1" thick wood boards of varying widths of 8" to 12" with roll roofing. Much of the roof and roof structure at the north end, including the two dormers and the overhanging eaves were destroyed in the fire. The entire roof of the building was replaced in 1994 with wood shingles on the main building and lead coated copper on the dormers and center tower.

The first story of the station to the eave level is sided with horizontal, shiplapped, flush wood siding, approximately 3" wide. The siding has been selectively replaced as part of the 1994 repairs, replacing areas of fire damage at the north end and rotted members above the foundation at the perimeter of the structure. The second story, above the projecting canopy, is covered with painted wood clapboard of approximately 4" exposure. A surface-mounted frieze board runs the perimeter of the structure at window sill height and has been selectively replaced in-kind. The bottom of the walls are finished with a surface mounted baseboard, approximately 8½" in height, replaced in-kind in 1994.

The building is illuminated by tall, two-over-two, double-hung wood windows at the first floor which have segmental arched heads and sashes with heavy bolection molding casings. At the north and south ends of the building are oriel windows centered between two conventional sash. The center

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panel of each oriel is infilled with flush siding rather than a window, which appears to be an original feature. The west elevation facing the tracks is also treated with an oriel window with two double-hung sash in the center panel flanked by single double-hung sash on the diagonal faces. The underside of this wide bay had been covered by vertical wood boards, an alteration that was removed as part of the 1994 repairs to expose the original flared base. The second floor has single, two-over-two, double-hung wood windows within the dormers and at the gable ends and paired sash in the central dormer. Several of the sash were replaced as a component of the 1994 repairs. In addition, many of the windows at the first floor have been covered with metal security screening and/or modern storm and screen windows.

The building is served by four symmetrically placed doorways to the north and south of center on the east and west elevations. They provide access to the pair of waiting rooms on the interior. At the south end of the building, two five-panel wood doors measuring 3'2" x 8'0" appear to be original. The doors are trimmed with the same bolection molding as the windows. The two northern entrances have been replaced in-kind with new five-panel wood doors. A five-panel door with transom has been added at the center of the east elevation, replacing two hopper windows that were a later alteration to accommodate the modernization of the toilet rooms on the interior. Physical evidence uncovered during the recent emergency repairs revealed a casing indicating this opening had originally been a door.

When the station was originally built it had a projecting, concave-curved canopy on all four sides, supported by ornamental, angular, Stick-Style brackets finished with a simple chamfer, approximately 10' on center. The canopy at the track (west) side was replaced with a shed-roof style canopy extension in 1904 that extended south along the platform approximately 200 feet. It was supported by slim square chamfered piers with simple flared brackets. The shed-roof canopy was originally sheathed with pressed tin resembling shingles. This canopy was removed as a component of the 1994 repairs. The canopy along the east elevation was removed sometime after 1955. The canopy at the north gable end of the station was heavily damaged by the 1988 fire, while the original canopy remains at the south gable end. A concave-curved canopy matching the original at the south elevation was restored at the north, east, and west elevations in 1994.

Interior

The interior, which is largely intact, is simple in plan. At the north and south ends of the building are spacious passenger waiting rooms measuring 30' 5" x 28' 10". The rooms are almost identical except for a small, flat roofed extension to the ticket office which projects into the north waiting room. This feature, designed to house the telegraph office, may be original. The waiting rooms have high ceilings lighted by first floor, dormer, and gable windows. History holds that one waiting room was for men and their families, while the other was for "alone ladies".

The two waiting rooms are separated by a small service core which housed the stationmaster's office with ticket windows to both waiting rooms, a hallway connecting the two waiting rooms, toilet rooms, storage spaces, stairs to the cellar heating plant, and access to a second floor private office. The second floor is reported to have once been used as sleeping quarters by train crewmen between shifts. Later renovations of the toilet rooms necessitated the removal of the original stair which has rendered these upper rooms accessible only by ladder.

North Waiting Room

Much of the original interior detailing remains intact except for that portion of the north waiting room damaged by fire. The room rises approximately 20' under the gable roof to an area of flat plaster ceiling. Single dormer windows on the east and west elevations and a single window in the north gable end bring light into the room. Remaining hinge hardware suggests that all of these windows had

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shutters. At the center of the north end is an oriel window. There had been a faux window of matching size covered over with wood shutters on the interior south wall, of which only the casing remains since the fire. The center panel of the oriel window originally contained a tall, framed mirror. This was damaged by the 1988 fire and has since been removed.

The walls of the waiting room are treated with stained and varnished, beaded vertical wainscotting to a height of approximately 6'. The 3" wide wainscotting is capped with bolection molding. The walls above the wainscotting and the ceilings are smooth plaster on wood lath, much of which is now damaged or destroyed. Doors and windows are trimmed with heavy bolection molding matching that on the station exterior. The moldings, approximately 5½" wide, are now painted. Silver "monumental" tubular radiators with grill tops which heated the spaces have been removed since the 1977 National Register nomination. Wall mounted heating convectors have since been installed, necessitating the removal of the lower portions of the window casings.

On a diagonally-placed wall at the southwest corner of the room, a simple, round headed window with a semi-circular sill resting on a carved bracket opens to the ticket office beyond. A single-hung window with obscured glazing slides into a pocket in the wall above. Adjacent to this is a small, one story, three sided ticket office "annex" with matching ticket window. Its flat roof is trimmed with a dentillated cornice. The original etched glass for this window remains in storage in the building.

The south wall of the room is perforated by a passage with splayed walls that provides access to a door connecting the two waiting rooms. East of this passage are two doors that serve two toilet rooms. The eastern most door opens into the men's toilet room, but originally provided access to a second floor stairway. The other door, topped by a transom, provides access to the women's toilet room.

The original floors had been covered with an upper layer of wood flooring that was damaged in the 1988 fire and suffered surface buckling from water damage. It was removed in 1994 to expose the original and intact 3" tongue and groove maple flooring.

Waiting room benches were removed and placed in safe storage after the 1988 fire. They will be reinstalled as part of the upcoming station relocation and rehabilitation project.

South Waiting Room

Originally, the south waiting room was almost the mirror image of the north waiting room with the only significant difference being the lack of an extension to the ticket office in this space. This room, however, has been subdivided with temporary partitions and lowered ceilings. Much of the work was completed in the 1970s to provide expanded ticket office and storage space. The machinery from the switching tower was moved inside the station, to the south waiting room in 1983 or 1984. Additional work was undertaken after the 1988 fire to provide a temporary waiting room.

Exposed areas reveal the original finishes that exist beneath the wall coverings to be in generally good condition, including wainscotting, plaster walls, and ceilings. The original plaster medallion from which a kerosene chandelier once hung remains, though is obscured by the dropped ceiling. The tongue and groove maple flooring has been covered over with later wood flooring and is in poor condition.

On the north wall of the temporary waiting room, a modern door has been added to provide access to the men's toilet room. The original ticket room window has been removed though the opening remains behind a modern partition and insulation.

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Ticket and Telegraph Offices

The original ticket office is an elongated hexagon in plan. A wide bay window at the west side overlooks the tracks with a built-in counter with added storage compartments below for use by the telegrapher/train-watcher. A high desk runs the length of the room along the east side where the diagonally-set ticket windows serviced the adjacent waiting rooms. The desk is original and retains its built-in varnished oak counter and drawers, though a space for a safe has been cut. The walls of the office, like the waiting room, are treated with painted, beaded vertical wainscotting to a height of approximately 6' with smooth plaster and lath above. The wood floor has been covered with linoleum.

The north wall contains a rectangular opening providing passage to the small annex, which was the original telegraph office. This opening, with flat 1" x 6" casings, does not appear to be original. The offices were likely to have been separated by a solid wall, with the telegraph office accessible by a door from the north waiting room and the ticket office accessible by a door from the south waiting room.

The telegraph office contains a painted oak counter with drawers matching the detailing of the ticket office desk, which extends in front of the round-headed window on the west side of the office. A door opens to the waiting room at the east wall of the space. Finishes in the telegraph office are similar to the ticket office.

Toilet Rooms

The toilet rooms are located between the north and south waiting rooms. An early description of the new depot does not refer to any "toilet rooms", though there is strong physical evidence, including plumbing, that indicate the two rooms on either side of the central chimney were intended for this purpose.

The entryway and stairway room on the north side of the service core were adopted for use as a men's toilet in the early twentieth century, probably when the New Haven Railroad closed off the south waiting room as a public room. Its walls are finished with painted wood wainscotting and the room has a beaded board ceiling. The paint finish of the west wall suggests where stairs previously ran to the second floor. This stair was removed and has been replaced with a ladder and trap door opening in the ceiling. The floor is cement. The east wall has been infilled with a new five panel door within an original opening. A contemporary door has been added to the south wall to access the waiting room beyond. It is possible that the small storage room to the west of the adjacent basement stairs, accessible from the south waiting room was the earlier men's toilet room.

The women's toilet room, accessible from the north waiting room, is smaller than the men's. The walls are finished with painted beaded board wainscotting. A transom above the door provides ventilation. The entrance to the women's toilet room is narrower than the entrance to the men's toilet room. This entrance will be widened to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The interiors of both the men's and women's toilet rooms have been altered to accommodate modern plumbing fixtures.

Cellar

A full-height cellar of approximately 28' x 32' x 9' is located under the center of the building. Access to the space is provided by a stair from the south waiting room. Two rows of closely spaced, 5' on center, monolithic granite piers approximately 1' square, carry timber beams supporting the bearing walls above. The floor is framed with 3" x 8" wood joists, 18" on center. The foundation walls are built of very large, rough faced, uncoursed granite. There is a crawl space to the north and south beneath the far ends of the waiting rooms.

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The full-height portion of the cellar does not relate exactly to the dimensions of the building above, but appears to be an original feature. The north and south end walls support beams carrying the floors of the waiting rooms above, and the two rows of stone piers in the space support the framing of the two-story tower portion of the building. The perimeter stone walls and the granite piers are topped with six courses of brick masonry. This suggests that the station may have been raised approximately 16", possibly to accommodate a change in elevation of the railroad tracks or platform. There is also evidence that window or vent openings along the perimeter walls were filled in, perhaps when the original wood platforms were replaced with asphalt paving.

Second Floor

The second floor, accessed by a ceiling opening in the men's toilet room, is divided into three spaces. At the center of the space is a landing which remains from an earlier stair. From this landing are two short runs of stairs with railings formed from vertical wainscot boarding. The walls and ceiling of the landing are plaster. To the east, the stairs rise into a hall which provides access to a small, windowless interior room. The walls of the interior room are plaster above 4'4" wainscotting of plain horizontal wood boards. An original four panel wood door between these spaces remains, though it has been removed from its hinges, as have wood shutters from the paired windows in the hall.

The short run of stairs on the west side of the landing leads to a passage with a four panel door which serves a larger room beyond. The walls and ceiling of this space are deteriorated plaster. The pair of windows facing west retain original shutter hinges. Casings and baseboards throughout the second floor are painted wood and the floors are 5½" wide wood planks.

Site

The station is located on the east side of the railroad tracks. It was originally surrounded by a wooden walkway extending along the tracks. This has been replaced with an asphalt platform. The station fronts on a circular drive which is probably an original site feature. Early photographs document that the circular drive was defined by a simple wood rail fence which was replaced in the early twentieth century by granite bollards with iron pipe railings. This feature remains today with the stone piers largely intact and in good condition, though the iron railings are rusty, and some lengths are missing or damaged. The center of the circular drive is grassed with a cluster of mature but poorly maintained trees. The outer perimeter of the drive is overgrown with dense brush.

Access from the main road serving the station, now Route 138, was provided by a driveway running adjacent to the tracks and Railroad Avenue. In 1936, the original grade crossing of Route 138 north of the station was replaced with a reinforced concrete highway bridge. Construction of this overpass and the associated site improvements required a reconfiguration of the original driveway. The existing asphalt drive, approximately 83' in diameter, fronts the station to the east. The drive is flanked by a grassed area with a basketball court and some picnic tables. Adjacent to the tracks is a paved parking area extending from the station to the overpass. This is the site of a former railroad building composed of four separate but attached offices that accommodated, from south to north, the original switching tower, the Railroad Express Agency, Inc., the baggage and shipping functions, and the maintenance room. The tracks are bordered by irregularly-spaced wooden utility poles.

At the time the station was constructed, a freight house and water tower were built opposite the station on the west side of the tracks. These structures are no longer extant. Tracks and switches remain, but the area is currently an underutilized freight yard overgrown with brush. Further west beyond the freight yard is a row of privately-owned warehouses.

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In the early twentieth century, a large railway express shed with second floor switching station was built just north of the station. This structure is also no longer standing. A small switching tower constructed about 1930 was built to replace the original tower that had stood 128.7' north of the 1875 depot. The 1930 switching tower supported new technology and machinery that was smaller and more automated than the original, which probably was operated by early hand-thrown levers. Approximately 35' in height with a 15' x 15' floor plate, the two-story, hipped roof tower has an exterior stair leading to the control room on the upper floor. The first floor of this building was later leased out to the U.S. Post Office, an area of 294 square feet. The building was obstructed from direct view of the depot by the original row of railroad buildings north of the station, though connected by telegraph wires as late as 1976. The switching machinery was moved to the south waiting room of the depot in 1983. The switching tower was moved from its original site near the depot to just north of the Route 138 overpass to save it from destruction. The tower provided functional support to the station for more than half the life of the depot, and is historically significant as the only standing adjunct railroad building associated with the station. The tower is not a contributing structure to the Kingston Railroad Station National Register nomination.

In 1876, the year after the station was built, a local rail line, the Narragansett Pier Railroad, was built with its western terminus at the Kingston Railroad Station. The line entered the site and ran along the east side of the main railroad platform to its terminus at the station. This line was abandoned in the mid-twentieth century and the majority of its tracks have been removed. Although some of the tracks and the remains of an engine turntable are still visible to the south of the station, the line is primarily recognizable as a grassy right-of-way in an otherwise undeveloped and densely overgrown landscape. These features also do not contribute to the Kingston Railroad Station National Register nomination.

PART II KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION - HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In the 1830s, the principal mode of travel from Boston to New York was by stagecoach to Providence, with transfer to steamer from Providence to New York. As the ride could be difficult and the route often compromised by weather, it became increasingly apparent that alternative land-based transportation was a necessity. In 1835, the Boston and Providence Railroad was opened from Boston to India Point, east of the Providence Harbor. A second rail line on the west side of the harbor, the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad opened in 1837 from Providence to Stonington, Connecticut. This line was known popularly as the Stonington Line. Passengers travelling through were ferried across the harbor between the two lines until 1847 when they were joined. The final all-rail route between Boston and New York was not completed until 1889 when the drawbridge over the Thames River between Groton and New London, Connecticut was completed. In 1892, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad leased the New York, Providence, and Boston, and in 1893 acquired the Boston and Providence line, subsequently operating the run between Boston and New York.

The opening of the railroad to Stonington in 1837 was an important occasion for South Kingstown, for it made the small town one of the first in the nation to be served by this relatively new means of transportation. The first American passenger train had begun operation seven years earlier and there were only 2,000 miles of track in the United States at the time. The new railroad was put through what was to become the village of West Kingston. The first Kingston depot was built west of the tracks to the north of Waites Corner Road, an east-west thoroughfare in the village. At the time, there was a store adjacent to the depot and a neighboring residence, otherwise the area was undeveloped.

Local business people initiated a campaign to build a new station in the early 1870s when they petitioned railroad authorities to erect a depot south of the existing station. The original location proved to be inconvenient for several reasons. The depot was sited at-grade near the intersection of Waites Corner Road. Long trains blocked the intersection, especially when there was freight to be handled.

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Also, the land adjacent to the depot was in private ownership and not available for development. This restricted expansion of the station and prevented construction of a vitally-needed freight yard. This also precluded the establishment of new businesses in the vicinity of the station. Another reason for the relocation may have been related to plans that were developing at the time for the construction of the Narragansett Pier Railroad. The spur railroad was proposed to run from Narragansett through Wakefield and Peace Dale to connect to the main railroad at West Kingston. A new station located on the east side of the tracks at the proposed rail junction would provide access between the two lines.

In 1874, the Rhode Island State General Assembly passed an act authorizing the railroad to "change the location of their station at Kingston, ...and to take down and remove their present Kingston Depot and abandon that station: Provided, said corporations shall locate a new station and build a new depot upon the line of their said Railroad within one mile of their present station." (Schneider 1974)

The new location, one-half mile southwest of the earlier depot and on the east side of the tracks between Waites Corner Road and Liberty Lane, allowed long freight trains to stand at the station without disrupting other traffic. It also permitted easier access for passengers, most of whom came from Kingston and Peace Dale to the east. A new section of road was built west of the Chipuxet Creek Bridge to provide access to the site. This road eventually became part of State Route 138, the primary east-west highway through this area.

An anticipatory article in The Narragansett Times describes the station, then under construction:

...a new station house, tasty in style and architecture, supplied with modern accommodations and appliances, the comfort of the travelling public will be greatly increased. The house is in the main but one story, with an outer tower two stories high, sixty-seven feet long, and thirty wide, located east of the track, and about four hundred feet south from the new highway; surrounded upon all sides by a piazza and wide platform. The apartments consist of two sitting rooms, each thirty feet square, baggage room; ticket and telegraph offices are upon the first floor, with a private office above. Directly opposite, and upon the west side of the track, will be the freight house, not yet completed. Two tank houses, furnished with water by a curiously constructed windmill and pump, supply the locomotives. A small steam engine has been set to be used when there is no wind.

A neat looking two story dwelling house adorns the extreme northeast corner of the lot, as a residence for the station agent. The grounds to the east and north of the station have been set with thrifty shade trees, and at no distant period will afford both shade and shelter to man and beast. With its long spacious platforms and graveled carriage drives, this might well be termed the model station of the road. (The Narragansett Times 1875)

A ca. 1875 photograph of the station shows the depot as it originally appeared with its decorative cantilevered canopy surrounding the building on all four sides. A hooded platform also rings the buildings and extends for some length north and south along the tracks. Lamps on stanchions provide illumination. The original wood railing at the circular drive is visible in this photograph. This was later replaced by the existing granite and metal fence. The freight house west of the tracks is a simple gable roofed, one-and-one-half story structure with vertical board and batten siding. This was completed the following year. One of the tank houses described in the 1875 article is visible in the photograph to the north of the freight house.

The station opened on June 1, 1875. The new depot became the center of community activity and promoted further development in the area. In addition to describing the new station, The Narragansett Times article also details the beginning of development of West Kingston Village.

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Messrs. Watson & Wells, two of our enterprising business men, have just completed a large store, packing house, and sheds. They propose dealing in poultry, calves, and farm produce. Flour, grain, coal and wood, patent manures, etc. Their location, with their business integrity, will secure for them, as it already has, a large share of public patronage, and as pioneers to the new settlement we wish them success. Through the endeavors of J.G. Clarke, Esq., the Post Office Department have established a Post Office at the station, naming it West Kingston...

Mr. Joseph Sherman has in process of building a new residence, the size and style same as that of Mr. William Watson's at the old depot. (The Narragansett Times 1875)

These structures were apparently located on the new highway near the new railroad crossing. The Everts and Richards map of 1895 indicates that Mr. Sherman's house appears to still stand, facing the station at the east end of the circular drive.

In July 1876 the Narragansett Pier Railroad was completed, with Kingston Railroad Station as its western terminus. The tracks extended to the south end of the station allowing the long wood platform along the main rail to serve both lines. A turntable to the south of the station allowed engines to turn around. Remnants of the track and turntable are still visible. Narragansett Pier was a fashionable summer resort in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and Kingston Railroad Station witnessed summer residents passing through en route to private cottages and public hotels at the shore.

By 1895, the new station location fostered development of a substantial village known as West Kingston. The village developed primarily along the east-west highway (now Route 138) with approximately twelve houses, a boarding house or hotel, and at least two stores. The Rhode Island College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (now the University of Rhode Island) was established a few miles to the east in 1889 and increased traffic through Kingston Railroad Station. The courthouse, previously located in nearby Kingston, was relocated to West Kingston in 1894. During this period, the Washington County Fairground was established near the station to the west of the tracks. A freight house, coal yards, and lumber yards developed at the periphery of the station to facilitate the delivery of goods into West Kingston and the shipment of local produce out of the area.

A review of historic photographs of the station documents changes at the site. By the late nineteenth century, the tank house to the east of the tracks had been removed, and a new gable-roofed tank house had been built to the north of the station on the east side of the tracks. This structure was subsequently replaced in the early twentieth century, by a one-story, gable roofed building with overhanging eaves and a large, square tower element at its south end. The building, located 128.7 feet to the north of the depot measured approximately 88.7' in length, 14' deep, and was sited 11.6' from the tracks. It was composed of four separate but attached railroad offices and accommodated, from south to north, the original switching tower, the Railroad Express Agency, Inc., the baggage and shipping functions, and the maintenance room. A small shed north of this switching tower completed the complex at the height of the station's development in the first decades of the twentieth century.

By the early twentieth century the original canopy along the tracks at the west side of the station was replaced with a much longer platform canopy. The original wood platform had been paved, and the station may have been raised to accommodate a change in the elevation of the railroad tracks or platform. A third track was laid in 1918 to serve local traffic running as far north as Davisville, Rhode Island and was later removed. A freestanding switching tower was built by approximately 1930.

In 1936, a reinforced concrete railroad overpass was constructed at Route 138 to replace the original grade crossing. The construction of the bridge, its approaches, and embankments required the

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demolition or relocation of eight structures and drastically altered the setting of the village and station. The existing access roads to the station date from this period.

The rise of the automobile in the 1920s resulted in a decline of rail travel that continues to the present day. Use of the railroad revived briefly during World War II because of the gasoline shortage and the proximity of the railroad to the Quonset Naval Air Station. In the late 1940s, war-related prosperity led the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad to propose modernization of the facilities at Kingston Station. Town officials rallied to upgrade the existing station rather than replace it with a new structure. Unfortunately, declining revenues in the 1950s derailed any modernization plans, along with the rail company's commitment to the facility. Kingston Railroad Station then entered a quarter century of deferred maintenance and neglect. Photographs from the late 1950s reveal that much of the early complex of structures surrounding the station was still extant, including the freight house to the west of the tracks, the early twentieth century baggage house and the switching tower on the east side. Declining ridership, however, resulted in the demolition of the freight and baggage structures in 1969, at which time the fate of the station and switching tower were also in question.

A local citizen's group, The Friends of the Kingston Station was formed after the fire in 1973, dedicated to the preservation of the station, development of its grounds, and the promotion and revitalization of rail travel in the Northeast Corridor. The Friends spearheaded a drive to reclaim the station from its decline, and successfully secured support from the railroad. In 1974, the station was restored and refurbished with funding from the railroad and extensive volunteer effort by the group. The Friends were also instrumental in moving the switching tower to its current location north of the Route 138 overpass. While separated from the station, its relocation assured its preservation.

The north end of the station was heavily damaged by a fire in December 1988. The station suffered subsequent damage from further deferred maintenance and exposure to the elements. Despite the damage, the station possessed sufficient architectural integrity and historical significance to remain eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Considerable emergency repair and stabilization was undertaken in early 1994 to prepare the building for its relocation and subsequent restoration and reuse in 1995.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: No original drawings are known to exist

B. Historic Views:

Amtrak Files

ca. 1915 View northeast of station and platform canopy.

Collection of Jack McCabe, South Kingstown, RI

ca. 1915 View south of station.

Collection of Benjamin McCleary, South Kingstown, RI

ca. 1955 View southeast of baggage house & switching tower and station on east side of tracks and freight house on west side of tracks.

ca. 1955 View southwest of station with original canopy on east elevation with freight house beyond on opposite side of tracks.

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- Prentice Collection at the Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, South Kingstown, RI
1875 View northeast of early tank house on west side of tracks and newly built station on east side of tracks.
- ca. 1895 View north of freight house on west side of tracks and station with early wood platforms and original canopy and tank house on east side of tracks.

C. Interviews:

- Jack McCabe, Kingston Station Agent and Friends of Kingston Station Board of Directors, 1995
Clifford Renshaw, Clifford Renshaw Architects, Inc., 1995
Stewart P. Schneider, author, The Model Station of the Road, 1995
Craig Stedman, Friends of Kingston Station Board of Directors, 1995
David Whelan, President, Friends of Kingston Station Board of Directors, 1995

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- 1994 Kingston Station Intermodal Transportation Facility, South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Draft Section 106 Preliminary Case Report. Submitted to Federal Highway Administration and Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Providence, RI.
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1969 Short Haul To The Bay. Steve Green Press.
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1875 "The New Depot". The Narragansett Times, May 28, 1875. Narragansett, RI.
- Renshaw, Clifford M., Architects
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E. Historic Maps and Plans

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1831 A Topographical Map of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Newport, RI.

United States Geological Survey

1957 Kingston, Rhode Island Quadrangle. Photorevised 1970 and 1975. Washington, D.C.

Walling, Henry F.

1857 Map of the Town of South Kingstown, Washington Co., Rhode Island.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is planning the development of the Kingston Station Intermodal Transportation Facility in the Town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island, utilizing Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act funding. The project provides for the relocation, elevation, restoration, and reuse of the Kingston Railroad Station and the development of the site to service future rail, bus, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian use. Supporting the facility will be taxi stands and parking for approximately 170 cars on the adjacent three-and-one-half acre site. The project is being undertaken to accommodate the proposed increase in use due to the future high-speed rail service on the Northeast Corridor.

The proposed project will necessitate the relocation of the Kingston Railroad Station. The building, refurbished in the 1970s, suffered severe damage in a 1988 fire. Emergency structural repairs were undertaken in early 1994 at the north end of the depot, including work on the interior, exterior, and roof, to prevent further deterioration of the building and to provide a sound structural frame. The building is proposed to be relocated away from the tracks approximately 16' east and 40' north of its present location, at a new elevation of three-and-one-half feet above the existing grade, to meet future Amtrak high level platform requirements and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The FHWA and RIDOT, in consultation with the Rhode Island Department of Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), determined under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act that the proposed project will have an adverse effect on the Kingston Railroad Station. A Memorandum of Agreement outlining stipulations that will minimize or mitigate any project related impacts has been

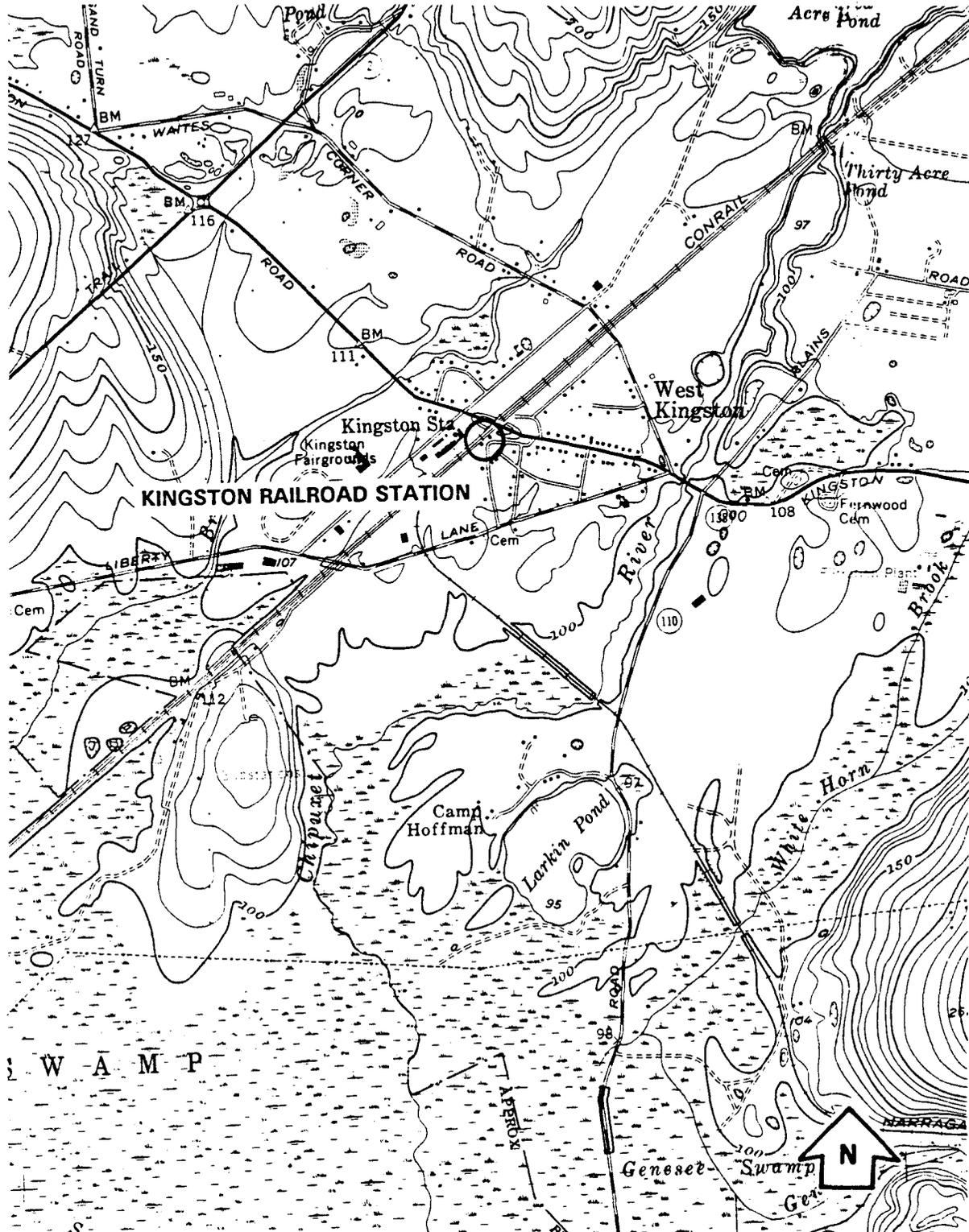
**KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
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drafted among FHWA, RIDOT, and RIHPHC: One of the stipulations of the MOA is the recordation of the Kingston Railroad Station to Historic American Buildings Standards (HABS) prior to the project commencing.

The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL Inc.) was retained by Frederic R. Harris, Inc. on behalf of FHWA and RIDOT to prepare HABS documentation for the Kingston Railroad Station. The report was compiled in September 1994 by the PAL Inc. project team including Maureen A. Cavanaugh, Preservation Planner. The large format photography was completed in September 1994 by Robert Brewster of Warren Jagger Photography, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island.

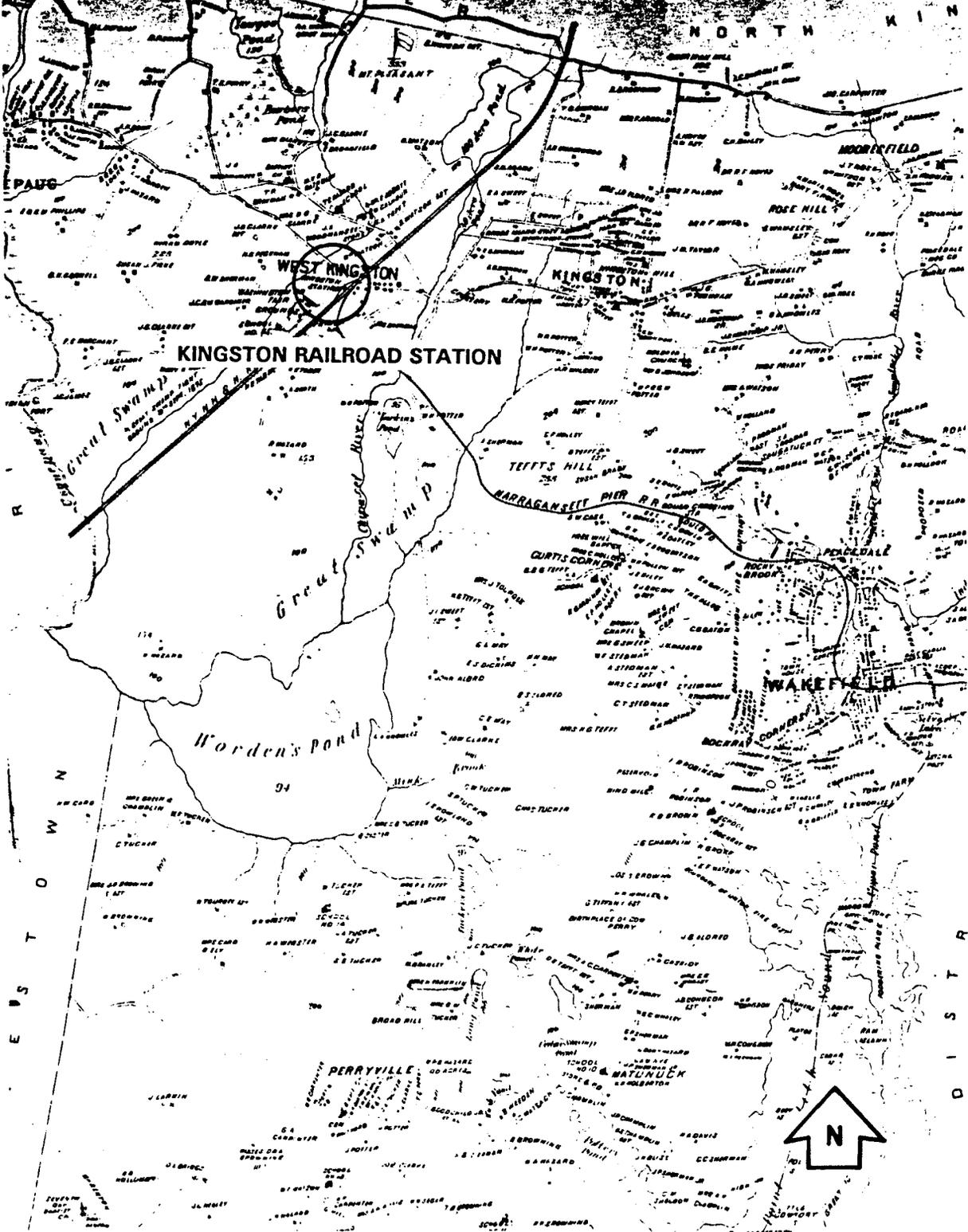
KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
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Location Map (USGS Kingston, RI)
Scale: 1:24,000



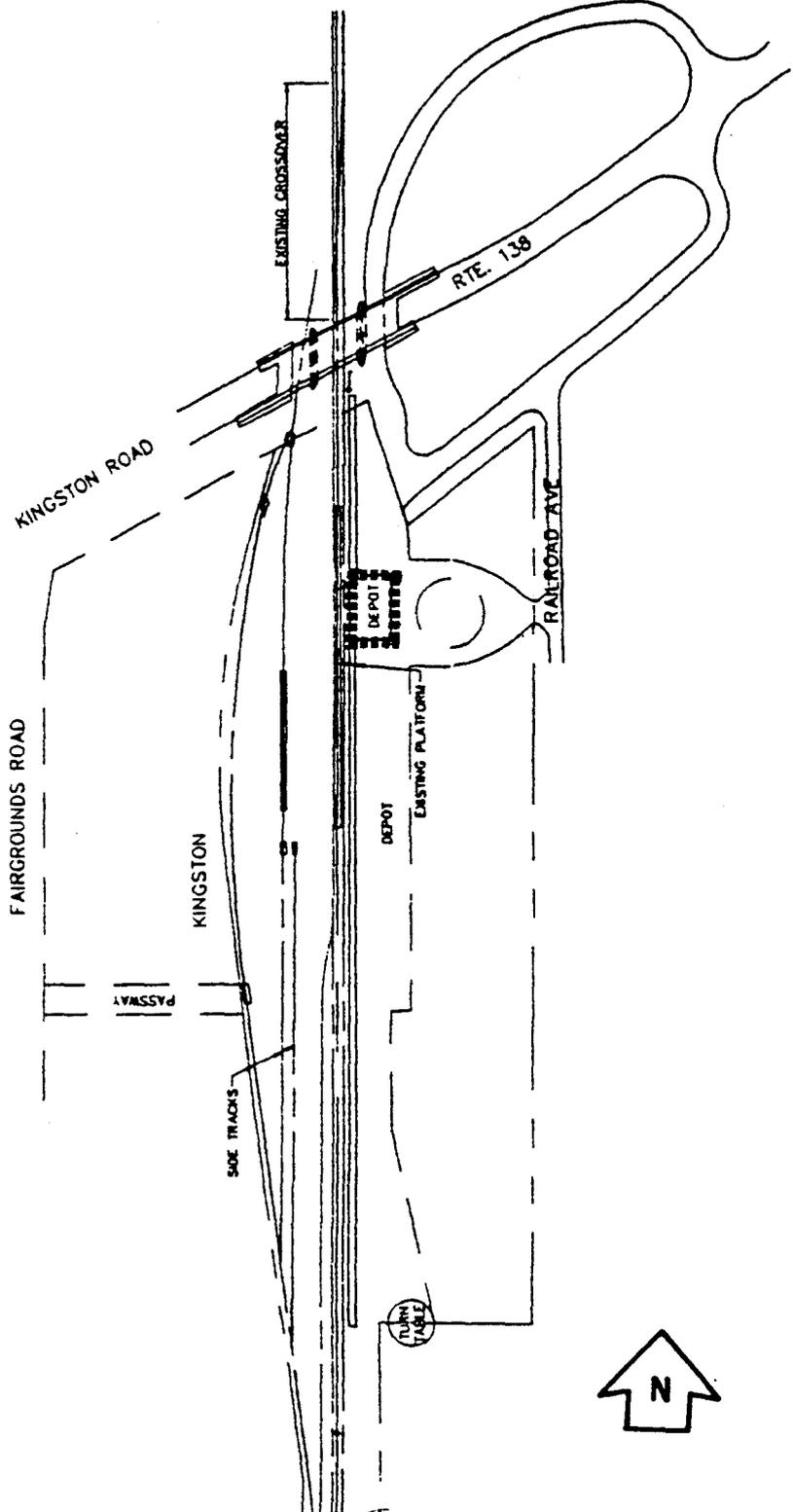
KINGSTON RAILROAD STATION
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Portion of a Map of South Kingstown, Rhode Island
Everts and Richards 1895
Scale: Unknown



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Site Plan



Floor Plan

