

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oak Hill Railroad Depot

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number corner of Virginia Street and Central Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Oak Hill ☐ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Fayette code 019 zip code 25901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. ...  
Signature of certifying official/Title

2.9.95  
Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 of the Keeper

Date of Action

Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Name of Property

Fayette County, WV  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: Rail-related

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: Not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD  
walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof METAL: Tin

other ASPHALT

BRICK

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Name of Property

Fayette County, WV  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

### Period of Significance

ca 1903-1943

### Significant Dates

1922-Addition of larger warehouse,  
transfer platform, and ramp.

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

White Oak Coal Company

Name of repository: Fayette County

Historic Landmark Commission

Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Name of Property

Fayette County, WV  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 25 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	486880	4203100
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn A. Hill, Chairman and J. William Hill, BA & MA, History

organization Depot Preservation Council date Dec. 15, 1994

street & number 231 Highland Avenue telephone (304) 469-9366

city or town Oak Hill state WV zip code 25901

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Norfolk Southern Corporation

street & number 185 Spring Street S.W. telephone (404) 529-2335

city or town Atlanta state Georgia zip code 30303

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet**

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**Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV**

**Description**

The Oak Hill Railroad Depot is located at the south-west corner of the intersection of Central Avenue and Virginia Street in Oak Hill, West Virginia. Situated on about .25 acres at the edge of a commercial district and neighborhood, the depot is a rectangular one-story wood frame building. Its longest perimeter extends in an east-west direction, and, to its north, is parallel to an existing railroad track and Virginia Street. A well-kept grass and tree-lined median separates the track and this street, enhancing the beauty of the depot's location. Oak Hill City Park, which is also wooded, borders the depot's lot to the west.

The depot is a good example of small-town-turn-of-the-century railroad station architecture. Its exteriors' entirely board and batten construction and sparse Victorian embellishments (i.e. gabled roofs, decorative eaves, etc.) represent the prevalent style of railroad stations built in small communities of the late 19th and early 20th century America.

At present, the depot stands vacant. It was utilized for freight service by the railroad until April 1983, which had helped preserve the building. (Passenger service was discontinued at the end of World War II.) In 1993, repairs were made to a section of its roof, the exterior of the building was repainted, and due to vandalism all of its window and door openings were temporarily covered with exterior grade sheeting. The building's original paint color was not discernable. However, an attractive turn-of-the-century gray color was used at this time to preserve the structure's integrity. No vandalism has occurred since this work was performed. Except for minimal deterioration due to the weather and/or vandalism, and the lack of furnishings, the depot is intact.

Built in circa 1903, the original section of the depot (its present west end) was designed for both passenger use and freight handling. This section consists of an approximately 67 X 20 feet rectangular area with a gable roof and a 14 X 4 feet separately gabled room or bay protruding from the center of its north wall. (See attached illustration.) The bay forms part of the station master's office-its wooden shelving, ticket counter, and stacked cubicles for parcels still extend several feet into the railway express room.

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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

Description (continued)

Located at a height of 5-1/2 feet on the bay's north wall, a 5 feet long by 1-1/2 feet high opening once accommodated the depot's manually operated semaphore. This semaphore, which was used to signal and to direct the movements of trains, was later covered by boards and replaced by an electric-lighted pole located alongside the tracks outside of the depot. The electric-lighted semaphore has since been removed.

The original railway express room opens directly east into the freight warehouse. On the west side of the express room, a single doorway and ticket window joins it to the passenger room. A raised-brick chimney (bricks laid on top of an 8 X 8 inch lumber frame, resting upon reinforced ceiling joists) for a wood or coal stove sits in the middle of the passenger room's roof. Cast iron "railroad call numbers" for the depot, "109 WO-15-A", adorn the space above and outside of the north passenger room doorway.

All of the lumber used to build the depot's exterior and interior was planed and milled oak. This included the wide hardwood flooring (all extant), and narrow tongue and groove paneling which originally covered the walls and ceilings of the passenger room and station master's office (both, partially extant). The north, west and south walls and the ceiling of the passenger room, as well as those of its adjacent supply/rest room, were later covered with celatex wall-board and painted light green. The wall separating the passenger and express rooms remains tongue and groove paneling. On the express room side of this wall, studs are visible. The other walls of the express room, as well as those of the freight room, (both, north and south walls) are covered with vertical oak skirting boards. However, double-sized sliding batten doors, hung on metal tracks, predominate the south sides of both of these rooms.

Other alterations to the original 1903 structure include: 1) the covering of a hole in the roof for a stove pipe (located near the center of the express railway room, and just outside of the station master's office); 2) the addition of a 10 X 8 feet supply room adjoining the southern most end of its west wall, which was later

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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

**Description (continued)**

divided to make an indoor rest room; 3) the elimination of its east wall and gable to access a freight warehouse addition, built in 1922; and, 4) the replacement of its original tin roofing with galvanized metal.

Metal grills, used to hinder break-ins and to add decoration, covered the exteriors of all five of the original structure's windows. Vandals removed one of these grills, as well as some interior skirting boards, and broke all of the glass windows.

In 1922, the following additions were constructed on the east side of the depot: a larger freight warehouse (as mentioned), a loading dock, and a ramp. This 37 X 24 feet warehouse addition was attached directly to the original freight warehouse. Except for its King-rod roof trusses, shingled roof, and unornamental gabled roof, the style of construction and oak materials of the addition perfectly match those of the original. Double-wide sliding batten doors on metal tracks are located on all three walls of the addition. These walls are sheathed with horizontal skirting boards placed at varying heights of 3 to 5 feet from the floor to accommodate specific dimensions of freight.

Due to the eastern downward slope of the depot's lot, the warehouse addition and the loading dock are elevated nearly 4 feet above the ground. The foundations of the additions, as well as those of the original structure, are 8 X 8 inch wood piers set on cement footers. Most of the foundation is in good shape, except for the supply/bathroom at the west end of the depot and the western-most part of the passenger room.

The loading dock addition completely surrounds the east and south sides of the warehouse addition. On the east, the dock is 30 feet wide; on the south, it is 6-1/2 feet wide. An 8 feet wide ramp extends nearly 19 feet from the southeast corner of the loading dock, terminating about 9 feet from the pavement of Central Avenue.

Including the before-mentioned window grills, the decorative features of the depot are few. However, all of its ornamentation is Victorian and only exists on the original section. On the

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**Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV**

**Description (continued)**

exterior of this section, the exposed ends of the rafters have been cut to form scallop-like convex curves, and fascia has been applied to close off the eaves. The monotony of the exterior's board and batten walls has been broken by the fishscale tapering of the gables' vertical wall boards. These fishscale patterns or tracerings can be found on the north gable wall of the bay or station master's office, and, on the east gable wall which is now enclosed by the warehouse addition. (Please see attached illustrations.)

Today, no other buildings or structures exist on the depot's lot. A tool shed, outdoor privy, and sidetracks on the south side are reported to have once shared this parcel, which is situated along the railroads' sparsely used but well-maintained right of way. Fortunately, the depot has kept its architectural and historic integrity. Although altered and damaged during its 91 years of existence, the Oak Hill Depot retains the essential physical features that enable it to be locally known as "the depot".

**Statement of Significance**

The Oak Hill Railroad Depot is historically significant for its role as a transportation center which affected the development and growth of Oak Hill and the surrounding area. During the early 20th century, the depot served Oak Hill's townspeople and merchants, as well as the local coal industry, citizens, and farmers, as their predominant commercial and social link with the outside world. The depot -the oldest standing public building in Oak Hill and its only train station- is also culturally significant since it greatly enhanced the quality of life for the people of the Oak Hill area.



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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

Historical Background and Significance:

The first settler of Oak Hill was William Blake, who obtained a large land grant and came to the Fayette Plateau area to farm in 1820. Blake was most likely drawn to this region since it was relatively flat compared to most of western Virginia, and offered fertile soil and vast timberlands which could be readily used for his family's homesteading. Moreover, the area's scenery was beautiful and its climate was moderate. Construction of the Giles, Fayette, and Kanawha Turnpike, the region's first major road, was completed in 1851. Eventually, part of this road would become Main Street of Oak Hill. Until 1851, only two other families had settled in the vicinity: the families of Peter Bowyer, who operated a water-powered mill, and of Charles Windsor, the turnpike's toll-gate keeper. However, other families soon began populating the area, and by 1866 a post office had been established at the local trading center known as Oak Hill.

On February 25, 1903, Oak Hill was officially incorporated as a town. During that same year, the White Oak Railway Company constructed a branch line that transversed the small town, and built a railway depot about 1/8 of a mile from Main Street. The impact of this station upon the growth and development of the town was immediate. In 1900, the population of Oak Hill was 237; by 1910, it numbered 764 persons; and, in 1920, it had 1,037. This trend continued through the 1930s and 1940s- when the population rose to above 3,000 people.

Within 10 years after the depot's completion in 1903, the small farming town had been transformed into a local commercial center with its first 2 banks, a lumber yard, hotels, drug stores, wholesale furniture and dry-goods stores, and several new churches and schools. In the next 10 years, a telephone exchange, hospital, theaters, and automobile garages, and other businesses would be added to his list. Due to the strength of the local coal industry and its commercial businesses, Oak Hill withstood the Depression well. By the early 1940s, it had supplanted the towns of Thurmond and Mount Hope to become the commercial and social center of southern Fayette County.

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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

**Statement of Significance (continued)**

The completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's (C&O) mainline through the New River Gorge in 1873 affected the earliest coal mining in Fayette County, West Virginia. By the 1890s, most, if not all, of the coal properties within the New River Gorge had been bought by industrialists, and were being developed for their own concerns. This compelled subsequent coal investors and operators to purchase undeveloped lands which lay a considerable distance from the gorge and the C&O. In order to utilize these properties, many independent coal operators had to build railroad branch lines to transport their coal to mainlines and to sustaining markets outside of West Virginia. The Oak Hill Railroad Depot was constructed as a result of this phenomenon, and, ultimately, as a consequence of the flourishing local coal industry of the late 19th and 20th century.

Establishment of the coal company, which precipitated the building of the Oak Hill Railroad Depot, began in the mid 1890s when Colonel Samuel Dixon, a local coal operator and entrepreneur, encouraged eastern capitalists to buy large tracts of undeveloped coal properties in Fayette and Raleigh Counties, West Virginia. (Much of this property lay near the small village of Oak Hill.) In 1899, Dixon and his associates consolidated their holdings and formed the White Oak Coal Company. Under the direction of Dixon, who had been elected its president and general manager, the partners also organized the White Oak Railway Company. Branch lines were soon constructed from MacDonald to Price Hill, and from Glen Jean to Carlisle (all, south of Oak Hill). In 1903, the railway company built a line from Glen Jean through Oak Hill to access new mines at Summerlee and Lochgelly. (Oak Hill, itself, was never a mining town.) The Oak Hill Railroad Depot was constructed along this line to serve as a checkpoint for counting coal cars and tonnages, and to produce added revenue for the company as a passenger and freight station.

In 1905, the White Oak Coal Company merged its holdings with other investors and became known as the New River Fuel Company. A year later, the name was changed to the New River Coal Company. By the time of Dixon's retirement in 1913, the New River Coal Company had

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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

Statement of Significance (continued)

become the largest producer of coal in the New River coal field. This coal became noted for its low volatility (e.g. high heat output and lack of smoke and ash), making it highly profitable. Primarily used by the metallurgical industry, the coal found eager markets throughout the world. From the time of Dixon's reign until the early 1950s, the New River Coal Company and its predecessor companies maintained retail coal yards in Washington, DC; Richmond, Virginia; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Louisville, Kentucky, and Chicago, Illinois.

Notable changes in the operation and the ownership of the White Oak Railway Company, and its Oak Hill Railroad Depot, have occurred over the years. In 1912, the Virginian Railway Company leased all of its property, and eventually bought it outright in 1922. In 1957, the Virginian Railway Company was purchased by the Norfolk and Western Railway Company, who later merged with the Southern Railway, and now operates as the Norfolk Southern Railway.

Today, the depot stands as a mute reminder of the long period of prosperity which Oak Hill and its environs enjoyed earlier in this century. Oral histories show the immense value the depot has for those who knew it as hub of activity: Children from outlying areas were able to obtain a high school diploma- the district school was located one block from the depot. College students could more easily travel to schools of their choice. The weather very seldom stopped trains from reaching hospitals in the Kanawha Valley. For entertainment each year, throngs of people arrived by train to attend the county fair, which was held on grounds located adjacent to the depot. In 1917, volunteers, answering the call-to-arms of World War I, said their good-bye at the depot; and, were also reunited with their families here in 1918. A small engine, which was parked on the depot's sidetrack, became the town-crier, announcing by whistle that someone's house was on fire, that the war had ended, and that it was a New Year. The ever-important daily mail service was provided by the depot's Railway Express Company. Mail was transferred between the depot and the Oak Hill Post Office by a horse-drawn wagon. Later, the depot's freight office received the post office's first motorized delivery vehicle.

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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

Bibliography

Craigo, Robert W. The New River Company. Published by the New River Company, 1976.

Hood, E.E. Fayette Journal, No. 30, Vol. 35. Fayetteville, WV: Fayette Journal Company, 1911.

Kidder, Frank E., and Nolan, Thomas. The Architects' and Builders' Handbook. 17th ed. enlarged. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1921.

Peters, J.P., and Carden, H.B. History of Fayette County West Virginia. Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing Company, 1926.

Reid, H. The Virginia Railway. 4th ed. Milwaukee, WI: Kalmbach Publishing Company

Rice, Otis K. "History of the New River Gorge Area". Unpublished manuscript in possession of the author, circa 1973.

Shawkey, Morris Purdy. West Virginia, Vol.1. Chicago and New York: The Lewis Printing Company, 1928.

The following oral histories were collected by Carolyn A Hill and are on file at her home at 231 Highland Ave., Oak Hill, WV 25901:

- Wilma Flint Birt, retired teacher, Oak Hill, WV.
- Charles E. Christian and his wife, Virginia Harvey Christian, retired railroad agent and housewife, Oak Hill, WV.
- Hettie Lively Duncan, (deceased) housewife, Oak Hill, WV.
- Mary Simms Duncan, (deceased) secretary, Oak Hill, WV.
- Glen S. Frazier, retired railroad station agent, Page, WV.
- Grace Dummitt Harrah, retired teacher, Whipple, WV.
- Mildred Faye Baumgartner Henry, housewife, Murfreesburg, TN.
- Claude R. Hill, Jr., retired banker, Fayetteville, WV.
- Sidney Lucas, retired railroad clerk, Livonia, MI.
- J. Stuart McLain and his wife, Evelyn Thomas McLain, retired APCO foreman and housewife, Oak Hill, WV.
- Isabel Sessler Tyree, retired teacher, Oak Hill, WV.
- Floyd Warrick, retired U.S. Postmaster, Oak Hill, WV.

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**Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Approximately .25 acres located at the southwest corner of the junction of Central Ave. and the Norfolk Southern Railway's tracks. (Please see attached sketch map with boundary line marked in red.)

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the depot and its contiguous lot.

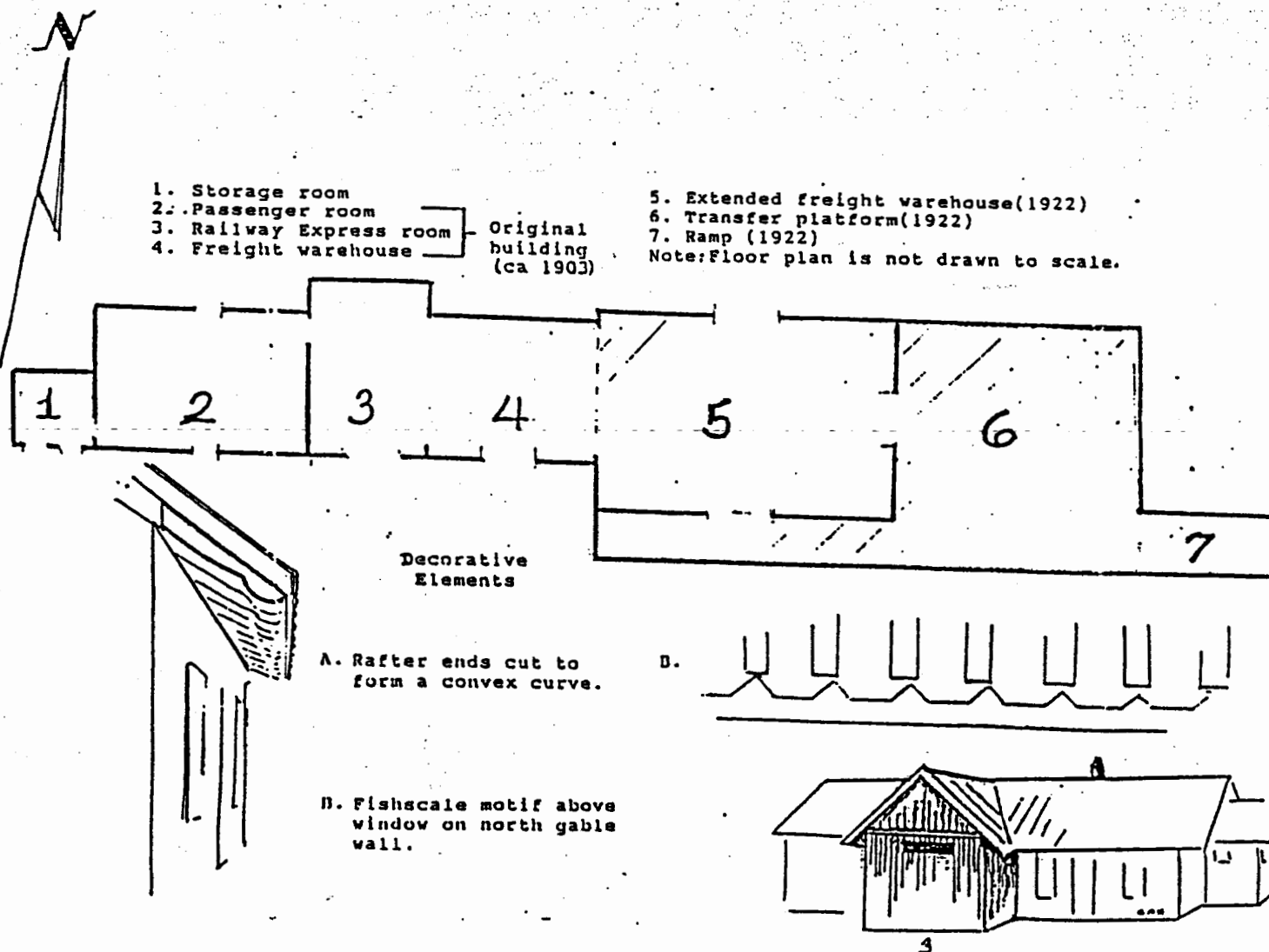
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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

Illustration



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Oak Hill Railroad Depot  
Fayette County, WV

PHOTOGRAPHS (2 Sets)

Photographer: Carolyn A. Hill

Date: Nov. 1994

Negatives: 231 Highland Ave., Oak Hill, WV,  
Hill residence

This information applies to photographs #1 and #2.

Photograph #1 Southeast view: South facade faces empty lot where siding once was. East elevation, platform, and ramp face Central Avenue.

Photograph #2 Northwest view: North facade faces rr track, tree-lined median, and Virginia Street.

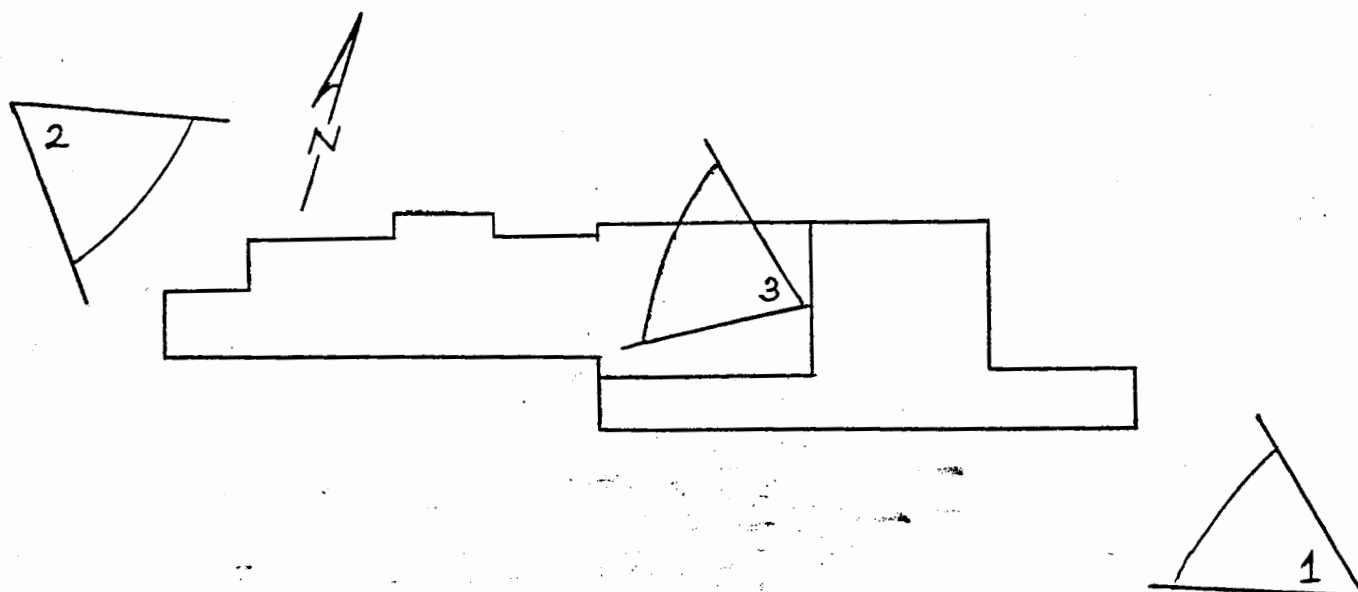
Photograph #3 Enlargement of postal card

Photographer: unknown

Date: circa 1903

Location of negative: unknown

East elevation, platform, and steps. Fishscale motif is faintly discernible above window.

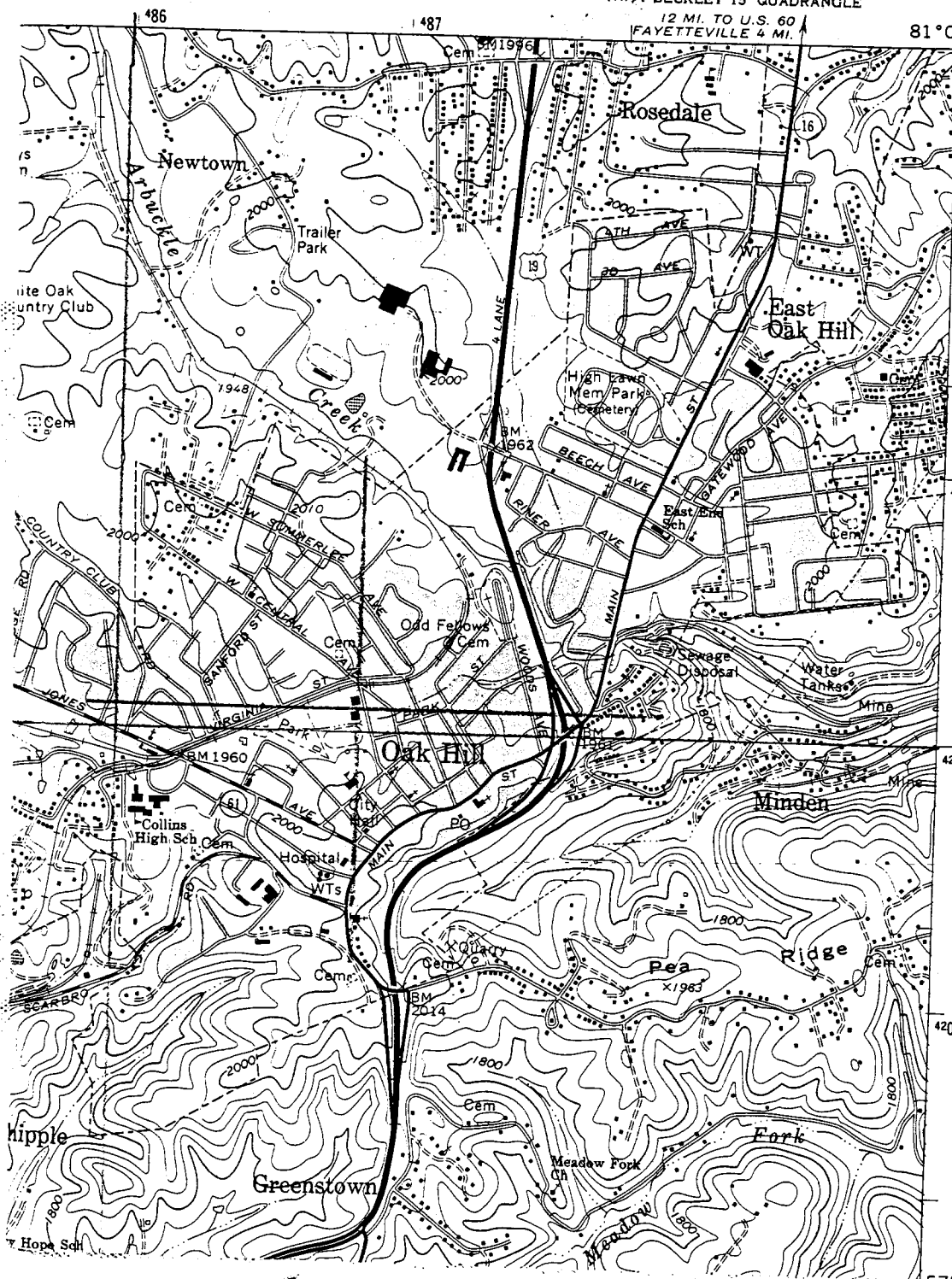


OAK HILL QUADRANGLE  
WEST VIRGINIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 BECKLEY 15' QUADRANGLE

12 MI. TO U.S. 60  
FAYETTEVILLE 4 MI.

4780 II SE  
(FAYETTEVILLE)



OAK HILL  
RAILROAD DEPOT  
FAYETTE CO.  
W.V.

UTM:

17/486880/4203100



