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 any 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: Seaboard Air Line Railway Depot
   other names/site number: Amtrak Depot

2. Location
   street & number: 1100 West DeKalb Street (U.S. Highway 1)
   city or town: Camden
   state: South Carolina
   code: SC
   county: Kershaw
   code: 055
   zip code: 29020

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.

   Mary W. Edmonds
   Signature of certifying official
   4/28/2000
   Date

   Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.
   State or 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 commenting or other official
   Date

   State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification
   I, hereby certify that this property is:
   [X] 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
   6-2-00
   Date of Action
5. Classification

<table>
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<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<td>(Check as many boxes as apply)</td>
<td>(Check only one box)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources)</td>
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<td>X private</td>
<td>X building(s)</td>
<td>Contributing 1 Noncontributing 0</td>
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<td>_ district</td>
<td>buildings</td>
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<tr>
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<td>_ site</td>
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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
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Transportation Subcategory: rail-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Transportation Subcategory: rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

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<td>walls brick</td>
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<td></td>
<td>roof slate</td>
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<td>other</td>
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Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets, pp. 5-6.
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)

X 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.

X 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.)

a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

b removed from its original location.

c a birthplace or a 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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1937-1950

Significant Dates

1937

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Wadesboro Construction Company

Significant Person

Complete if Criterion B is marked above

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 7-11.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 #

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository:

South Caroliniana Library
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  

1.25 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

<table>
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<th>Northing</th>
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</table>

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.)

See continuation sheets, p. 13.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel J. Vivian
organization
street & number 824 Woodrow Street
city or town Columbia

date 11/19/99 telephone (803) 252-5005

state South Carolina zip code 29205

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 the SHPO or FPO.

name CSX Transportation, c/o Ms. Patricia J. Aftoora, Vice President & Corporate Secretary
street & number 500 Water St., Speed Code J160
city or town Jacksonville

state Florida zip code 32202
Description

The Seaboard Air Line Railway station is a one story red-brick building that stands at 1100 West DeKalb Street, at the western edge of the Camden city limits about one mile from the center of town. Erected in 1937 and built on a rectangular plan, the station has a lateral gable roof with an interior chimney at each end. In the rear is a shed more than 400 feet in length that covers a passenger platform adjacent to the railroad tracks. Immediately in front of the building is a circular driveway, and paved parking areas are located to each side. The station is set back about 500 feet from West DeKalb Street, and the grounds at the site are landscaped with tall pines and large shade trees.

The station is a Colonial Revival design. Quoins are set into the brickwork at each corner of the building. The gable ends (the southwest and northeast facades) feature pediments. Centered in both pediments is a medallion cast in relief with eight fleur-de-lis set in a circular pattern within an eight-pointed star. The four compass points of each medallion are marked by keystones. White trim accentuates the pediment medallions and the building's other architectural details, including the window frames, door surrounds, and the cornice line. The contrasting red brick walls are laid in a modified common bond pattern with a course of alternating stretchers and headers set between every five courses of stretchers.

The main (southeast) facade displays unbalanced fenestration. Two small, nearly square six-over-six double-hung sash windows are set into the wall at the center of the facade and flanked by a pair of single wooden doors, each with a three-pane transom. To the left, at the southwest end of the facade, are two larger, vertically-oriented rectangular six-over-six double-hung sash windows. On the other (northeast) end of the facade is another six-over-six double-hung sash window of the same size and an eight-panel double wooden door. Above each door and window is a brick lintel with a white stone keystone; each window has a stone sill that has been painted white. Above the single door slightly to the right of the center of the facade is a red, white, and blue sign that reads “Amtrak rail passenger station.” Projecting from the slate-shingle roof are two gabled dormers with pediments and six-pane windows.

The northeast and southwest facades of the building are similar. Below the pedimented gable on the southwest facade are a pair of six-over-six double-hung sash windows. Set into the wall of the northeast facade are two eight-pane casement windows. All of these windows have brick lintels with keystones and stone sills that have been painted white.
The rear (northwest) facade is dominated by a central projecting bay with two six-over-six double-hung sash windows on the main section and a narrow four-over-four double-hung sash window on each side. Flanking the projecting bay are a pair of single wooden doors, each with a three-pane transom. At the northeastern end of the facade is an eight-panel double wooden door that provides access to the freight room and a six-over-six double-hung sash window. Two windows of the same type are set into the wall at the southwestern end of the facade. As on the main facade, each window and door has a brick lintel with keystone, and all of the windows have stone sills that have been painted white. A central gable projects from the roof, which adjoins the shed covering the passenger platform.

The interior of the building is sparsely finished, reflecting the utilitarian functions for which it was designed. At the southwestern end is a large passenger waiting room with two adjoining bathrooms. The center of the building is occupied by the station attendant’s office. On the northeastern end is a narrow workroom with two adjoining bathrooms and the freight room.

Covering the train platform besides the tracks in the rear of the station is a slate-roofed shed over 400 feet long. The shed, which adjoins the roof of the station, has a wood-frame understructure and is supported by a series of metal columns.

No significant modifications have been made to the building since its construction. Though in need of maintenance, the station, the adjoining platform shed, and the surrounding grounds retain their historical appearance and integrity.
Statement of Significance

The Seaboard Air Line Railway depot in Camden, South Carolina is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its significance in the economic development of the local area, and under Criterion C, as a representative example of a mid-twentieth-century railroad station. The Colonial Revival building was built in 1937 and replaced the original Seaboard freight and passenger depots in Camden, which dated to 1900. The building has undergone no significant alterations since its construction and retains its historical appearance and integrity.

When the Seaboard Air Line Railway reached Camden in 1900, it sparked what residents would eventually come to remember as “a new era in the growth of the community” and demonstrated the railroad’s renowned capacity to serve as an agent of economic development and social change.¹ In the closing years of the nineteenth-century, many of Camden’s businessmen and booster-minded citizens had grown increasingly concerned about the slow pace of commercial and industrial development. They regarded the lack of major railroad connections as the single most important factor limiting the development of the local economy. Camden had long been served by small regional railroads; in 1848 the South Carolina Railroad reached Camden, linking it to Columbia and Charleston, and in 1887 the line was extended to Marion, North Carolina. But direct connections to the rising commercial and manufacturing centers of the New South and major cities above the Mason-Dixon Line were an entirely different matter. Passengers and freight destined for northern cities, for example, had to travel sixty miles by rail to Rock Hill to reach the mainline of the Charlotte, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad. Travel to the Midwest required several short trips to reach the mainline of the Richmond and Danville system at Blacksburg, Virginia.² What Camden needed to reach its full commercial potential, believed many citizens, was a direct railroad connection to a city such as Charlotte, Chattanooga, or perhaps even Atlanta.

In 1900, the situation changed virtually overnight when the Seaboard Air Line Railway completed its north-south mainline between Richmond and Tampa by laying ninety-one miles of track from


Cheraw to Columbia. Camden was the largest and most established community on the new section of the line. Seaboard, one of a handful of large rail systems formed in the aftermath of the Panic of 1893, gave Camden direct connections to major urban markets via a transportation corridor that was designed to reap profits from shipping Florida produce to northern cities and carrying northern tourists to the sunny South. The expectations raised by Seaboard’s arrival were considerable. The *Camden Chronicle* declared that the railroad would “be a lasting blessing to our city” and optimistically told residents to expect large numbers of “tourists and pleasure seekers” and “a great influx of population.” Soon after the Seaboard line was completed, further railroad development created even greater opportunities for civic and commercial growth. In 1900 the Northwestern Railroad extended its line from Camden to Sumter, and two years later the Southern Railway, another of the large rail systems operating in the southeastern states, acquired the old South Carolina Railroad.

The completion of the Seaboard line delivered an immediate boost to the local economy. Evident throughout the community were the signs of growth that Camden’s merchants had long anticipated. Decades later, the *Camden Chronicle* would recall the changes that took place: “Then came construction of The Kirkwood Hotel, the enlarging of the Court Inn, many new homes were built while in the business district new stores made their appearance.” Some signs of change appeared immediately; others took years or even decades to emerge. In retrospect, it is clear that the newly established transportation connections reinforced existing patterns of commerce and at the same time laid the groundwork for economic diversification. In the 1880s and 1890s, as the majority of commercial activity in Camden had continued to be based on the town’s traditional role as a center of local agricultural trade, the community developed a reputation as a fashionable health and pleasure resort. By the early 1890s four tourist hotels were operating, and one account estimated that 3,000 people visited Camden every winter. The Seaboard line made Camden more accessible than ever to northern tourists and brought an increased flow of visitors. For some, Camden was a destination; for others, it was a convenient place to spend a day or two on the way to Florida. At the same time, as

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3 *Camden Chronicle*, 7 April 1899, p. 3, col. 1.


Camden grew to be one of the most popular resorts in the southern pine belt, a number of manufacturing enterprises were established after 1900, introducing a small but important industrial sector to the town’s economy. The most significant of these were the Southern Cotton Oil Company, which employed about fifty people, and two textile mills, the Camden Cotton Mill and the DeKalb Cotton Mill, which together employed a labor force of almost 300. Also important were smaller firms such as the Camden Water, Light and Ice Company, the Camden Veneer Company, and the Camden Iron and Brass Works.

The increased volume of trade was a key factor in reshaping Camden’s economy. Of particular importance were the closer business ties between Camden and Columbia that the Seaboard line made possible. Although the two towns had been connected by rail for over half a century, a circuitous route made the trip an unnecessarily lengthy sixty miles, even though Columbia lay only about thirty overland miles southwest of Camden. A mere thirty-six miles separated the two communities by way of the Seaboard line, and the daily train schedule allowed passengers to leave Camden at 8:22 a.m., reach Columbia at 9:45, and then return in the early evening, arriving in Camden at 7:40 p.m. As a result, a tightly-woven net of commercial relationships emerged as Columbia’s businessmen took steps to make towns such as Camden and Cheraw a part of their commercial sphere.

Seaboard’s influence in Camden extended beyond the realm of the local economy. The construction of passenger and freight facilities influenced traffic patterns in the community and ultimately even the direction of urban growth. Initial plans called for a single freight and passenger depot to be built at the corner of Gordon and Chestnut Streets, but when merchants complained that the site was too far from the business district, Seaboard officials responded by building a separate freight depot on West DeKalb Street at the western edge of the downtown area. The passenger station was built at the Gordon-Chestnut Street location as originally proposed, across the street from one of the six public

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10 The State, 10 May 1900, p. 8; Camden Chronicle, 11 May 1900, p. 3.
squares established as part of the original town plan in 1799. The square had not previously had a formal title, but it became known as “Seaboard Park” soon after the depot entered operation.\footnote{Camden Chronicle, 1 Sept. 1899, p. 3; 29 Sept. 1899, p. 2; First Annual Report of the Seaboard Air Line Railway for the Year Ending June 30th, 1901 (Norfolk, Va.: Burke & Gregory, n.d.), 11. Other facilities built at the site of the freight station included a cotton platform, a 50,000-gallon capacity water tank, and a “standard set of section-houses.”}

By the late 1930s the volume of passenger traffic in Camden had increased markedly, leading Seaboard officials to build a new station. The site selected was on U.S. Highway 1 at the western limits of town and was part of a large municipal park development. In 1937, the efforts of “a group of . . . business and professional men” resulted in an agreement to locate the station on the edge of an eighty-acre tract of land given to the city by Ernest L. Woodward of Leroy, New York. Woodward, a “capitalist and winter resident of Camden,” was well on his way to becoming one of the community’s leading benefactors; less than a decade earlier, in 1929, he had given land for the construction of Camden’s first airport, Woodward Field. His new contribution to community development deeded nearly all of the eighty acres to the city; one and a quarter acres were granted to Seaboard for the new depot.\footnote{Camden Chronicle, 16 Jul. 1937, p. 1; Historic Property Associates, Inc., “Historic Resources Survey of Camden, South Carolina,” pp. 26-27, State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.}

The brick, one-story station, built at a cost of $30,000 by the Wadesboro Construction Company of Wadesboro, North Carolina, was a replica of the Seaboard station at Williamsburg, Virginia. A passenger shed over 400 feet long, reputedly “one of the longest on the Seaboard system,” was erected at trackside in the rear of the building. Construction began in early August and drew considerable attention as it progressed during the next several months.\footnote{Camden Chronicle, 16 Jul. 1937, p. 1; 6 Aug. 1937, p. 1; 29 Oct. 1937, p. 1.} The building was virtually complete by mid-November, prompting several civic and commercial organizations to begin planning for a dedication ceremony.\footnote{Camden Chronicle, 5 Nov. 1937, p. 1; 12 Nov. 1937, p. 1.}

The opening of the new station, held on the afternoon of November 25, 1937, was a gala affair. Train number 191, the “crack Seaboard Air Line flyer from New York to Florida,” pulled into the station...
with the head of the local American Legion post “hanging onto the whistle rope” and J.H. Osborne, the mayor of Camden, acting as engineer. The crowd gathered to witness the event included citizens, city and county officials, and members of such civic organizations as the Garden Club, the Rotary Club, and the Camden Merchants Association. Speeches were delivered by Mayor Osborne, Senator S.F. Brasington, Seaboard Superintendent R.W. Rodgers, and J.C. Darby of the South Carolina Public Service Commission. In bringing citizens together to dedicate the new station, the ceremony gave symbolic recognition to the prominent role the Seaboard system had played in the community since the turn of the century and, at the same time, expressed aspirations for continued growth and development.

The design of the station reflected contemporary trends in architectural style and the functional requirements of small-town railroad depots. The influence of the Colonial Revival was evident in exterior details such as quoins, gable-end pediments with bold, decorative medallions, and the symmetry of the overall design. Yet at the same time, the arrangement of interior space made clear the building’s fundamentally utilitarian role. The plan placed the station attendant’s office at the center of the building and, in turn, all railroad operations. The projecting bay on the rear facade allowed the attendant to serve passengers waiting at trackside and to operate signals for approaching trains. Interior ticket windows provided access to the waiting rooms on each side of the office; in all likelihood, the smaller room (which is currently used as a workroom) was originally used by black passengers, while the larger room at the southwestern end of the building was reserved for whites. The freight room, which was entered through the double doors on the main and rear facades, occupied the northeastern end. In all, the building was typical of stations erected across the nation during the 1930s and ‘40s to serve small cities such as Camden.

As soon as it entered operation, the new station immediately assumed a place at the center of civic affairs in Camden, fulfilling the same roles served by the two original Seaboard depots in earlier decades. It continued to provide the critical transportation connections that gave merchants access to distant markets and brought substantial numbers of tourists to Camden every winter. Yet as Seaboard continued serving the community in the 1950s and ‘60s, the rise of automotive transportation began to reduce the nation’s reliance on the railroad. The changes that accompanied this trend were manifest in Camden much as they were in communities of similar size across America. Certainly by the 1970s, most local businesses had turned to trucking companies for freight service, and the volume of passengers traveling by rail had also declined sharply. The Seaboard depot consequently became less a part of day-to-day commerce and more a symbol of the forces that had shaped Camden during the first half of the century.
Today, the station stands essentially as it did when it first entered use more than sixty years ago. No significant changes have been made to the appearance of the building and the surrounding landscape. At present the station serves as an Amtrak stop but is otherwise unused. It nonetheless provides an important reminder of central role the railroad played in the civic and commercial life of Camden for much of the twentieth century.

Bibliography

*Camden Chronicle* (Camden, S.C.), 11 May 1900; July-November 1937.


*The State* (Columbia, S.C.), 10 May 1900.


Wittowksky, George H., and J.L. Mosely, Jr. *Kershaw County: Economic and Social*. [Columbia]: University of South Carolina, 1923.
Verbal Boundary Description: The boundaries of the nominated property, which is triangularly-shaped and encompasses 1.25 acres, are formed on the northeast by the railroad line owned by CSX Transportation of Jacksonville, Florida; on the south by West Dekalb Street (U.S. Highway 1); and on the east by the easternmost edge of the driveway leading to the station and the adjoining parking lot. See attached Kershaw County tax map no. 284-10 for detail.

Verbal Boundary Justification: The nominated property includes the building built in 1937 and historically used as the Seaboard Air Line Railway depot and the surrounding grounds.
Photographs

The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Seaboard Air Line Railway Depot
Location of Property: Camden, South Carolina
Name of Photographer: Daniel J. Vivian
Date of Photographs: 13 November 1999
Location of Original Negatives: In the possession of Daniel J. Vivian, Columbia, South Carolina

1. Main (southeast) facade.
2. Main (southeast) facade, alternate view.
3. Main (southeast) and southwest facades.
4. Southwest facade and underside of train platform shed.
5. Main (southeast) and northeast facades (oblique view).
6. Northeast facade with parking area in foreground.
7. Rear (northwest) facade. Doors to freightroom are evident at far left; projecting bay show in center of photograph.
8. Rear (northwest) facade, alternate view.
9. Tracks and train platform shed (view from northeast).
10. Tracks and train platform shed (view from southwest).
11. Depot, train platform shed, tracks, and surrounding area as seen from bridge on West DeKalb Street (U.S. Highway 1) over tracks. Grounds of station obscured by trees on right.
12. Interior view of workroom on northeast side of depot.
13. Interior view of passenger waiting room on southwest side of depot.
15. Interior view of station attendant’s office.
16. Landscaped drive leading to depot from West DeKalb Street (U.S Highway 1).
17. View of landscape grounds on the southwestern corner of the property. The depot can be seen in the distance in the center of the photograph.

Maps

1. Kershaw County tax map 284-10 showing location and boundaries of nominated property.
2. USGS topographic map, Lugoff quadrangle, showing location of nominated property.