

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1
Depot Historic District
Wake County, North Carolina

Section 7: Description

Raleigh's Depot Historic District, located east and north of the Norfolk and Southern railroad tracks in the southwest corner of the original 1792 town plan, contains approximately four blocks of brick commercial and industrial buildings dating from the 1880s to the early 1950s. Located two blocks west of Fayetteville Street, Raleigh's main commercial street, the district forms a transition between the high-rise office buildings and institutional buildings of the central business district and the residential area to the west. The district includes **Nash Square** (#34), the southwest square in Raleigh's original 1792 city plan, also known as Nash Park in the early part of the century. It and Moore Square, the southeast square, are the only ones of the original four which are still parks. Nash Square's formal Beaux-Arts-style walkways and gates, its large oak trees and verdant masses of shrubs and flowers contrast strongly with the stark industrialism of the rest of the district, whose buildings abut the street, leaving little open space for landscaping.

Railroad buildings and structures impart a dominant transportation character to the district. An eight-track wide band of railroad tracks are in the southwest corner of the district. The Southern Railway Passenger Station (now Amtrak) (#2) and the Freight Depot (#11) sit on opposite sides of these tracks. At the north edge of the district, the former "Grand Union" station (#12) fronts Nash Square. Between are blocks of warehouses, factories, and commercial buildings, interspersed by vacant parcels used as parking lots for downtown workers. Buildings, ranging from one to three-stories in height, are generally of load-bearing brick construction, with flat roofs, and utilitarian industrial or commercial design, with loading doors, small windows (the earliest with segmental-arch openings), and modest decorative brick details.

Thirty-five buildings stand in the Depot Historic District, twenty-seven of which retain architectural integrity and contribute to the character of the district, as does Nash Square (historic site), and one contributing structure, a ca. 1920 crane at Southern Railway Freight Depot. Contributing buildings were built during the period of significance, which extends from the 1880s to 1952. Of the eight noncontributing buildings, two were constructed after 1952. Six historic buildings have major character-altering changes that render them noncontributing. The former Raleigh Cotton Oil Mill & Fertilizer building (#21) at 322-324 S. Harrington St. was built about 1885, but its historic character has been compromised by mid-to-late twentieth century additions and remodelings. The ca. 1950 tire warehouse (#20) at 320 S. Harrington St. lost integrity when it was substantially remodeled ca. 1986. The former *Raleigh Times* office (#24), 211 W. Martin St., lost integrity when its front section was remodeled about 1970, and Union Station (#12) has been significantly altered. The ca. 1980 statue of Josephus Daniels in Nash Square is a non-contributing object.

The district retains integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association from its period of significance from the 1880s to 1952 when it was Raleigh's transportation and industrial hub.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETSection 7 Page 2
Depot Historic District
Wake County, North Carolina

All of the buildings date from the 1910s to the early 1950s with the exception of the Raleigh Cotton Oil and Fertilizer Company buildings, the earliest of which date to the 1880s, and two 1970s office buildings. The boundaries of the district were drawn to include as many as possible of the historic warehouses and railroad-related buildings in this section of Raleigh. Warehouses to the north and south of the district were constructed in the late 1950s. Buildings east of S. Dawson Street are generally commercial in character; a number are tire warehouses. West of the district is residential development. Historical feeling and association are enhanced by the railroad sidings beside a number of buildings and the granite paving blocks, laid at the turn of the century, in the yard of the Southern Railway Freight Depot. Due to minor ongoing alterations, some buildings exhibit compromised integrity of design and materials but they retain overall massing and sufficient character to be contributing. For example, the Raleigh Cotton Oil & Fertilizer Company warehouse, 310-314 S. Harrington Street, has segmental-arched windows infilled with brick and some added garage doors, but retains its decorative brick headers and parapet gable ends.

Inventory List

Note: The following inventory list is arranged alphabetically by street name, north side first, then south side; west side first, then east side. Construction dates are derived from the following primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the 1884, 1888, 1896, 1903, 1909, and 1914 Sanborn Maps [SM], Raleigh City Directories [CDs], and interviews. The major secondary source is the survey files compiled by Helen Ross during the 1989-1990 comprehensive historical survey of Raleigh [Ross]. All buildings are categorized as C (contributing) or NC (noncontributing) based on the following criteria. Any building built after the end of the period of significance, in 1952, is noncontributing due to its age (NC-age). Buildings built before 1952 that have lost their architectural integrity because of substantial additions and/or alterations incompatible with their historic pre-1952 character are categorized as noncontributing because of these changes (NC-alt.). The buildings are named for their original or early tenants, and not for their current tenants.

W. Cabarrus Street, North Side

1C	312-316 W. Cabarrus St.	Schafer & Son Beer Distributors	c. 1949	Large 1-story flat-roofed brick commercial building, four bays wide, with two glass storefronts, one original garage bay, and an office bay. Built ca. 1949 for Schafer and Son beer distributors. [1947, 1950 CDs]
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12
Depot Historic District
Wake County, North Carolina

Section 8: Statement of Significance

The Depot Historic District, a four-block area located two blocks west of Raleigh's central business district, was the city's railroad and warehouse distribution hub from the 1850s to the 1950s. Because Raleigh's 1854 Central Depot has been demolished, the district retains historical and architectural character from the date of its earliest buildings, the 1880s, to ca. 1952. Nash Square, at the district's northeast corner, one of only two original 1792 town squares that remains open as a park, is an urban oasis with a distinguished 1940 formal WPA landscape design. The urban character of the district has been shaped by the railroad. The 1891 former Grand Union Station (224 S. Dawson St.) faces Nash Square. The circa 1912 former Southern Railway Freight Depot (327 W. Davie St.) and the 1949 Southern Railway (Amtrak) Passenger Station stand on opposite sides of the tracks on the site of the Central Depot at the southwest corner of the district. As Raleigh grew in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, factories, warehouses, wholesale houses, restaurants and hotels replaced the houses that had been built along the gridded streets in the district in the late 1800s. The earliest surviving buildings are the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century brick structures of the Raleigh Cotton Oil and Fertilizer Company. Spur tracks extended to one-story brick warehouses along W. Martin Street, such as the ca. 1916 Dunn Bros. wholesale grocery building (311-313 W. Martin Street), the ca. 1926 McRae Co. and U. S. Tire Co. Building (307-309 W. Martin Street), and the late 1920s Brogden Produce Company (409 W. Martin Street). The first two are distinguished two-story brick buildings with retail stores and upstairs warehouses. Brogden Produce is a gabled two-story brick warehouse that was enlarged on the front and sides. Spur tracks also extended to the one-story brick warehouses of Ball Wholesale Grocers, Armour & Co. meat suppliers, and Red Band flour company along W. Davie Street, all built in the 1930s. One of the last warehouses built was the ca. 1950 Schafer & Son Beer Distributors building (312-16 W. Cabarrus Street). Other significant buildings are the small three-story brick Atkins Hotel (217 W. Martin Street), built about 1920, and two restaurants, the 1950 Warren's (301-303 W. Martin Street) and the 1949 Pete & Mike's (424-430 S. Dawson Street), brick buildings that occupy pivotal sites along busy S. Dawson Street.

The Depot Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for the local architectural significance of its industrial, commercial, and railroad-related architecture dating from the 1880s to 1952. Among the distinctive features are covered loading docks, utilitarian windows, decorative brick parapet cornices, and modest stylistic elements from the Romanesque Revival to the Art Moderne. The district also has local community planning significance for the 1940 WPA design of Nash Square.

The Depot District also qualifies for the National Register under Criterion A for its significance to Raleigh's industry, transportation, and commerce as the city's wholesale distribution center from the 1880s to ca. 1952. Because of its proximity to the railroad tracks that skirted the west side of Raleigh, this district contains the only significant collection of railroad, factory, warehouse and related buildings in Raleigh during the heyday of railroad transportation. The other three quadrants of the