

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common Reading Railroad -- Pottstown Station

2. Location

street & number High Street between Hanover & York Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Pottstown N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 42 county Montgomery code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Owen Kugel (Optionee) - O.K. Properties

street & number 8 North Queen Street - Suite 504

city, town Lancaster N/A vicinity of state Pennsylvania

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Norristown state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date N/A

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Pottstown Station of the Reading Railroad is set back on its lot, fronting on High Street in the downtown area. Designed in the Neo-Classical style, the railroad station, office building, outside waiting shelter and freight platforms were built in 1928 for the Reading Company by Clark Dillenbeck, Chief Engineer.

In the twentieth century, architectural styles associated with our emerging nation lent themselves to adaptation and revival owing to the historical appeal of classical building form and style. These design modes were particularly popular in the early part of the century, a counter response to the frenetic qualities of nineteenth century Eclectic design. Twentieth century Revival architecture was widely used for public and institutional buildings owing to the scale and detailing of these styles. The renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White is often credited with bringing Revival style architecture, particularly Georgian and Colonial, back into the mainstream of American architectural design. This style is noted for its reverential imitation of stylistic elements, often made larger than life, so as not to confuse the viewer as to the actual date of construction.

Unlike many Revival style buildings, the Reading Station is a subtle interpretation of Colonial-Georgian design, implemented in a warm hue of stone with terra cotta detailing. The main station building is two stories in height, owing to the double bank of windows in the waiting room, flanked by one story arms. An open pass through to the platform connects the main station to the office building. The waiting area has a symmetrical facade, pierced by nine window and door openings. The fenestration is regular, defined by the main, center, entrance - double leaf doors with a decorative pedimented hood. The original design called for plate glass doors with multi-light side lights and transom, all presently boarded over. On either side of the entrance are tripartite window openings which had multi-light sash. Above these openings are large, arched windows, divided into three parts, also with multi-light sash, which flooded light into the waiting area. These giant order windows were enhanced by stone lintels with terra cotta keystones. A simple terra cotta stringcourse rests above the window openings and above that is a terra cotta panel incised with the words READING COMPANY. Crowning the building is a terra cotta molded cornice and hipped roof with glazed terra cotta tiles.

The left flanking building arm has three single window openings embellished with splayed stone lintels and keystones; while the right flanking section has a double leaf door opening, single window and freight opening, all capped by splayed stone lintels with keystones. A large copper canopy running across the front of the structure, becomes a protective covering over the platform area. Over the entrance, the canopy is decorated with finials in a Greek Anthemion motif, also executed in copper. Terra cotta lion's heads clutch the iron canopy supports while they offer a watchful eye to arriving and departing passengers.

The office structure is identical to the station in plan and massing. It is a two story, three bay structure, also done in stone. On the first floor is a small sash window and three loading docks with terra cotta sills. On the second floor are three parts of double hung sash windows. Above all of these openings are splayed stone lintels with keystones. A terra cotta cornice and hipped roof with glazed tiles finish the building.

The track elevation is almost identical, with the exception of some of the window openings.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1928

**Builder/Architect** Clark Dillenbeck, Architect

William Hampton, Builder

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Station in Pottstown is a very good example of the type station which was built subsequent to rail transportation's most prosperous period during the late nineteenth century. Although economic conditions in the 1920's forced the Philadelphia and Reading to scale down its operations, station construction remained a high company priority. The line built few stations in this era, but attempted to retain many of the qualities characteristic of earlier stations. Despite the overall similarity of the newer stations, the Pottstown station exhibits unusual sophistication in design.

Chartered by an Act of the Pennsylvania Legislature, in 1833, the Philadelphia and Reading line had become the longest inlaid railroad in the United States by 1839. During those early days the line served as a primary transportation link between the anthracite coal region in the Lehigh Valley and Philadelphia market. The line also enhanced the growth of the entire Schuylkill Valley, ultimately supplanting the canal. Located in the corridor between Philadelphia, which is thirty-eight miles to the southeast, and Reading, which is seventeen miles to the northwest, Pottstown was one of the towns that significantly benefited from the Philadelphia and Reading line. The line became an important component of Pottstown's industrial and demographic expansion during the mid and late nineteenth century.

During the 1880's and 1890's, years considered to have been the "Golden Years" for the Philadelphia and Reading, the company began a major program of expansion and construction. Among those to design stations for the company was Philadelphia architect Frank Furness who completed drawings for more than 125 new railroad buildings and alterations for others. Unfortunately the prosperity of the late nineteenth century did not last. Over expansion and decreasing ridership plunged the company into a financial decline. Though the construction of new buildings remained a high priority, the company was forced to scale down its operations. The result was a marked difference in the appearance of company stations. Newer station buildings, while current with architectural styles, tended to be reduced in scale and embellishments. By the 1920's and 1930's utility, efficiency and economy heavily influenced station design.

Built in 1928 and designed by Clark Dillenbeck, Chief Engineer of the Reading Company, the Pottstown Station is a spacious attractive, yet utilitarian example of Neo-Classical design. Employing the prototypical design of the Philadelphia and Reading's early twentieth century stations, the main station included waiting room, a ticket office, a baggage room, and a smoking room. The two story central building is flanked on either side by one story wings. The station was constructed of stone in warm hues and has terra cotta detailing. Plate glass doors with multi-light side lights and a transom serve as the entrance. The wings feature a large copper canopy with decorative finials in a Greek Anthemion motif and terra cotta lions heads which clutch iron canopy supports. The handsome detailing of the exterior is carried through on the interior as well. Though not an exquisite example of a railroad station by late nineteenth century standards, the station is a quite handsome example of a station building constructed in the late 1920's.

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Continuation sheet Reading Railroad--Pottstown Station  
Item number 8

Page 2

There are actually only a few stations on the Reading line contemporary to Pottstown since station construction had all but come to a halt by the 1930's. In addition to the Pottstown Station, Horace Trumbauer's 1929, North Broad Street Station in Philadelphia, the West Trenton Station (1930) and Reading's Franklin Street Station (1930) were built during this period. Trumbauer's building cannot readily be compared with the other stations since it was architect designed, a practice more common with Reading's late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings. West Trenton, Franklin Street and Pottstown represent examples of the simpler, utilitarian stations built by the Reading Company's in-house design staff. Despite the apparent cookie cutter approach to station construction adopted in these later years, the Pottstown Station is more refined and sophisticated, closer in design and appearance to the earlier architect built stations, than to its contemporary structures.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Pottstown Sesqui-Centennial: 150th Anniversary of the Formation of the Borough, 1965  
 Hunsicker, Clifton S. Montgomery So.: A History. Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1923  
 Challenger, Paul. History of Pottstown. 1950.  
 Lewis, Edward A. Reading's Victorian Stations, The Baggage Car, PO Box 223, Strasburg, PA 17579, 1976

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.231

Quadrangle name Pottstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Mintz

organization ELIZABETH R. MINTZ

date September 13, 1983

street & number 301 Cherry Street

telephone (215) 592-0465

city or town Philadelphia

state PA

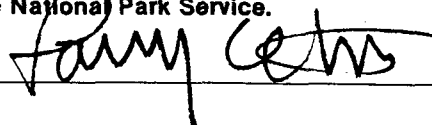
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date 11/23/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet POTTSTOWN RAILROAD

Item number 10

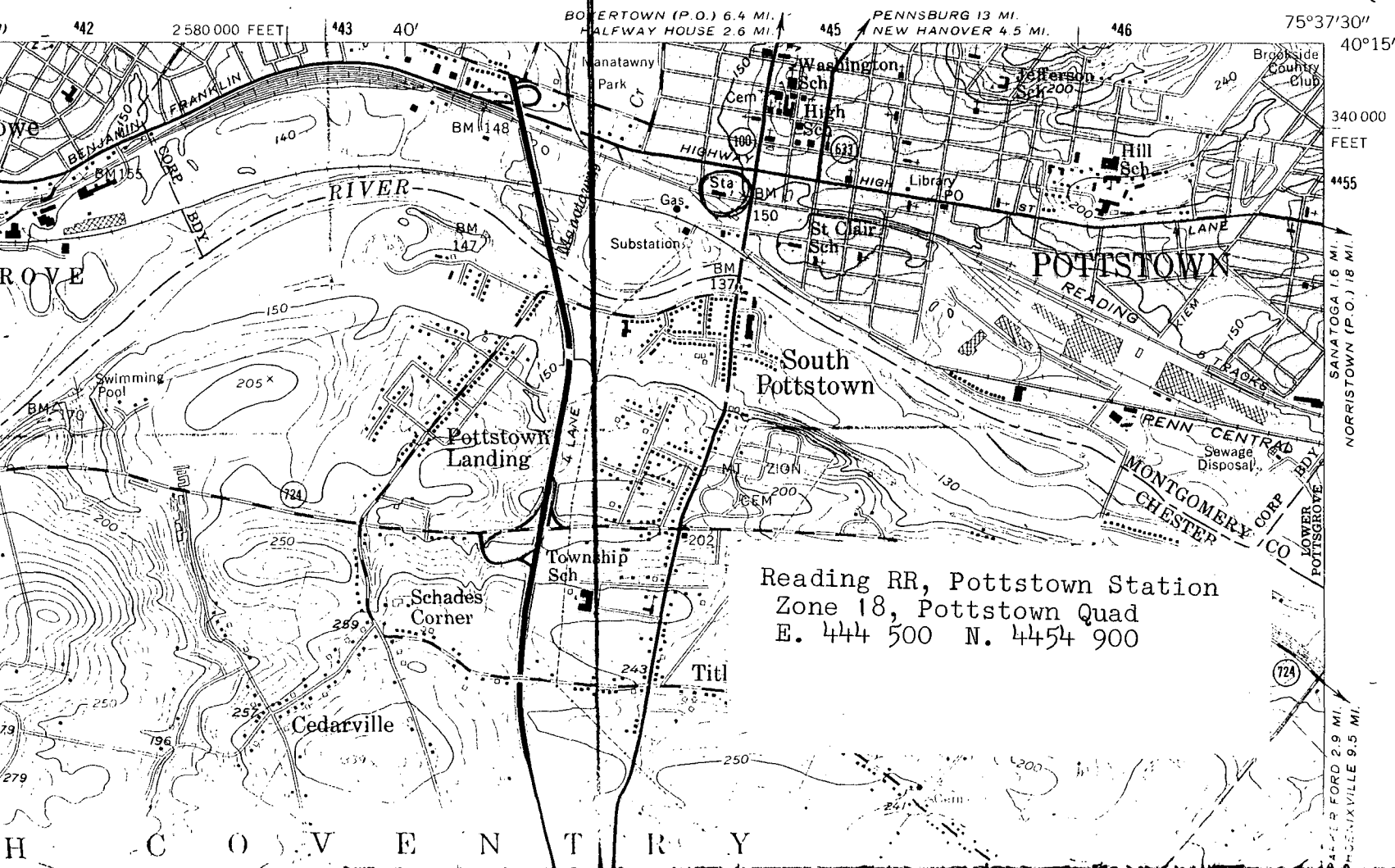
Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 180 feet 83 inches from High Street; thence east 34 feet thence south 50 feet thence east 216 feet to Hanover Street; thence south 60 feet 30 inches to the railroad tracks right of way, known as Queen Street; thence west 602 feet 83 inches to York Street; thence in a northeasterly direction 191 feet thence south 39 feet 12 inches; thence east 134 feet 62 inches to the point of beginning.

POTTSTOWN QUADRANGLE  
 PENNSYLVANIA  
 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5864 1 SE  
 (GASSAMANSVILLE)



Reading RR, Pottstown Station  
 Zone 18, Pottstown Quad  
 E. 444 500 N. 4454 900