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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Union Pacific Freight Building
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 104 West Yakima Avenue
city, town Yakima
state Washington code WA county Yakima code 077 zip code 98901

not for publication
vicinity

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked)
Category of Property: building(s) (checked)
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Jacob E. Shov
Date: 7/28/88
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register 9/8/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: rail-related

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: specialty store

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Commerce/Trade: business

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

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walls brick

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roof asphalt

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other terra cotta

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Union Pacific Freight Building is located on the western edge of the central business district in Yakima, Washington, and faces on Yakima Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare. Built in 1923-24, it is composed of two distinct parts, a two-story front section that originally housed the railroad's district and local freight offices, and a one-story freight depot at the rear. The handsome red brick exterior of the office building is characterized by large window openings between vertical piers and enhanced by glazed terra cotta trim. The utilitarian character of the depot is evidenced by unornamented brick wall surfaces surrounding six large loading bays. Originally, a long narrow loading platform extended southward from the freight depot, but this has been demolished. After a period of vacancy, the front section was renovated in 1987 and now houses a retail business on the street level and professional offices on the second floor. The exterior retains its original appearance, but the interiors have been modified for the new tenants' uses. The freight depot is presently being remodeled and adapted for commercial use, although its exterior will remain essentially intact.

Union Pacific's Yakima freight station is situated on the southwest corner of West Yakima Avenue and South First Avenue. The location provided easy entry to the company's offices fronting on Yakima Avenue, convenient truck loading/unloading at the depot's bays on Second Avenue, and immediate access to the rail line's tracks positioned alongside the loading bays and platform on the west side of the depot.

The office portion, or "head house," is rectangular in plan (90 feet by 40 feet) and two stories in height. The foundation is poured concrete, which also encloses a partial basement that originally served as a boiler room and storage area for the coal-fired steam heating system. The structural system is heavy timber post-and-beam, with 10-inch square posts placed 12 1/2 feet on center. At the perimeter, solid brick masonry piers correspond to the interior posts, forming seven bays of equal width on the north or Yakima Avenue facade and three bays on the east and west elevations. A concrete base with a cement plaster finish forms the bulkheads in the bays and projecting plinths for the piers. Above this base the face brick is laid up in Flemish bond, and its dark red color contrasts with the light cream-colored glaze of terra cotta accents, including pier bases and capitals, belt course and cornice, and decorative entrance enframingent. Seven emblems of the Union Pacific system are located on the wall surface just below the cornice. Plain brick spandrels between the piers mark the division between the upper and lower stories. At the ground floor, fixed wood sash windows, consisting of a single plate glass unit surmounted by three transoms, fill the entire space between the piers. At the second story, similar transoms are repeated over three single light windows of awning-type wood sash.

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The large surface area devoted to glazing provides ample natural lighting for the interior spaces. The glazed double entry doors, with mahogany frames, originally gave access to a small vestibule. A central stairway divided the interior, with the district traffic department located in the eastern half and the local freight offices in the western half. Public spaces were separated from the business areas by counters, and private offices were located in the two front corners. File rooms, men's and women's restrooms, and a large walk-in vault were aligned along the rear wall. In the recent remodeling to adapt the ground floor for a retail business, the interior has been completely altered. The central stairway was removed and a new stairway installed at the southeast corner. Interior partition walls were removed, although a few original doors were reused. Original material retained includes the entry doors, window enframements, vestibule floor covering of white hexagonal tiles, and the entire vault. The second story, now reached by a new First Avenue entrance that replicates the original Yakima Avenue entrance, has also been altered to accommodate modern offices. All original window surrounds, as well as another large vault, have been retained; but interior partition walls, moldings, wall and floor finishes, and lighting are all new material.

Abutting the head house on the south is the freight house, a one-story structure 50 feet wide and 150 feet long. The floor is a 12-inch thick reinforced concrete slab on a bed of gravel and earth. Concrete footings support brick masonry piers at the perimeter and a central row of 12-inch by 12-inch wood posts. Heavy wood girders, 14 inches by 20 inches, carry roof decking of 2 by 6's set on edge. This system provided twelve loading bays, each 20 feet wide and 25 feet deep. The six bays on the east side serviced truck loading from First Avenue, while the six bays on the west side opened to boxcars on a siding of the main railroad line. Bay openings are fitted with steel roll-up doors, those on the west side being wider than those on the east. Small rectangular wood-sash windows (three on the east, four on the west) are located above each bay. Face brick appears on the east or First Avenue elevation, while common brick is used on the west elevation facing the tracks and on the south end wall. Abutting this wall and extending to the south alongside the tracks was a roofed platform 12 feet wide and 120 feet long with an incline at the far end, built to handle the loading and unloading of machinery and odd commodities. This platform no longer exists. The three tracks that serviced the freight house and platform have also been removed.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Transportation

Period of Significance  
1924-1938

Significant Dates  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Barrett, R.E., architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Union Pacific Freight Building is significant as an intact example of a railroad facility that had particular importance in the agricultural and economic history of the Yakima Valley. From 1911 onwards the Union Pacific System was an avid competitor to the Northern Pacific Railroad for the lucrative transport business of the valley's growers and fruit brokers. By virtue of the fact that the company's tracks were situated on the edge of the central business district, the railroad could combine its business offices and its freight handling operations in one building, located on Yakima Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare, yet also adjacent to its subsidiary's tracks. From the time it completed its line into the Yakima Valley in 1911 to 1923, the year it began construction of its new combined facility, the Union Pacific had dramatically increased its freight business. With its handsome new office structure and convenient freight loading facility, the Union Pacific hoped to lure customers away from the long established Northern Pacific, whose passenger and freight depots were only two blocks away.

The town of Yakima (originally called North Yakima) was established and platted by the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1885 and immediately attracted settlers of diverse abilities and occupations. Fifty-eight specialty businesses, in addition to an assortment of hotels, restaurants, saloons and fraternal lodges, were in operation by 1893. The decade from 1900 to 1910 saw the greatest period of growth, however, when population increased from slightly more than 3,000 to over 14,000. Agricultural development in the Yakima Valley occurred as well, with rail lines again providing the impetus. The Yakima Valley Transportation Company began with electric streetcar service in downtown Yakima (1907) but soon expanded, providing both passenger and freight service to rural areas. The North Coast Railroad, incorporated at Yakima in September of 1905, began construction the following year at Granger in the Yakima Valley. The line bridged the Columbia River at Kennewick to link up with the Union Pacific transcontinental line terminating in Portland. The Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company (the successor to North Coast) became a subsidiary of the Union Pacific and opened the Yakima Valley line for traffic in March of 1911.

One of the first acts of the incorporators of the original North Coast Railroad had been to obtain a franchise for the use of certain streets in the city of Yakima. By this means they were able to locate their tracks parallel to and one block west of the Northern Pacific, thus creating a linear development pattern that became the commercial and

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Blueprints of Yakima Freight Building, Union Pacific System, Office of Asst. Chief Engineer, Portland, Oregon. Dated June and July 1923. Held at offices of Ron Cameron, architect, Yakima, Washington.  
Historical photographs in Archives of the Yakima Valley Museum, Yakima, Washington.  
Holstine, Craig, "A Survey and Inventory of Historic Resources in the City of Yakima, Washington." Eastern Washington University Reports in Archaeology & History, Cheney, Washington, 1985.  
"New Building Is Saver of Time," Yakima Morning Herald, April 4, 1924, p.11; and numerous articles pertaining to Union Pacific history and activity in area on pp.10-11.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	0	6	9	0	8	0	0	5	1	6	3	6	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described thusly: beginning at the southern edge of the sidewalk at the southwest corner of West Yakima Avenue and North 1st Avenue, proceed south along the west curb line of North 1st Avenue approximately 190 feet; proceed west along south wall of the freight house approximately 50 feet; proceed north along west wall of freight house approximately 150 feet; proceed west along south wall of head house approximately 30 feet;

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the freight house and head house that historically formed the Union Pacific Freight Building.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Shirley Courtois

organization Office of Archaeology & Hist. Preservation date April 1988

street & number 111 West 21st Avenue, KL-11 telephone (206) 753-4011

city or town Olympia state Washington zip code 98504

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industrial spine of the city. As irrigation networks expanded in the valley and growers planted increasing acreage in orchards, the railroads leased property along their rights-of-way for brokers to build warehouses. The 'teens and 'twenties were a boom period in the Yakima Valley as growers, fruit and vegetable brokers, and the railroads combined to produce and ship the land's bountiful harvest and bring prosperity to central Washington.

The first passenger depot of the O-WR&NC, or Union Pacific, was housed in the Stone Building (1905) facing onto Yakima Avenue at the corner of North Second Avenue. A large gable-roofed wood freight depot was built across the tracks on North First Avenue, with a rear open platform alongside the tracks of the freight siding. Owing to the great increase in business, there was an obvious need for larger and more modern facilities. In 1911, the year the line opened, about 1,000 carloads of all commodities (400 carloads of perishables) were handled by the Union Pacific in and out of the Yakima Valley. By 1923 the total had increased to 18,000 carloads, of which 10,000 were perishables. Construction of the new freight building, combining an office structure and a depot and platform loading area, was begun in October of 1923 and completed in March of 1924. A new brick passenger station, in modified Georgian style, was built a short distance south of the old Stone Building and opened in 1927.

By providing the necessary transportation network and access to nationwide markets, the railroads contributed immeasurable to the development of agriculture and commerce in the Yakima Valley. Although the agricultural products of the area are still a mainstay of the local economy, the role of the railroads has long since diminished. Remnants of the railroad era can still be seen in the lineal pattern of the cold storage warehouses of "Fruit Row" along the old railroad spine, in the Northern Pacific passenger station and freight depot (National Register, 1986), and in the Union Pacific Freight Building. The 1927 Union Pacific passenger station has been drastically altered in its conversion to a new use. Although the interior of the freight building has been modified, the exterior retains its historical appearance to a great degree and its presence is a reminder of the primary role the railroads played in the development of both the city of Yakima and the Yakima Valley.

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**Verbal Boundary Description Continued:**

proceed north to south edge of the sidewalk along West Yakima Avenue; proceed east along sidewalk to point of beginning. Said property is legally described as tax parcel #181324-14412 in the City of Yakima, Washington.