

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED DEC 3 1979
DATE ENTERED *Proposed for increase approved 4/19/80*

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Union Station (including Union Station Plaza and Columbus Fountain)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Intersection of Massachusetts and Louisiana Avenues and 1st Street, N.E.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

District of Columbia

VICINITY OF

CODE

08

COUNTY

District of Columbia

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Terminal Realty Baltimore Company

STREET & NUMBER

2 North Charles Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21201

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Properties recommended by Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE

March 7, 1968

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS National Capital Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Union Station

Union Station faces southwest toward the Capitol at the north side of the intersection of Massachusetts and Louisiana Avenues and 1st Street, N.E. The south principal part of the steel frame, symmetrically planned station is 626'10" long by 210'9" wide. The monumental central pavilion of Vermont white granite is composed of three arches (29'6" wide and 48'9" high) with six massive Ionic columns, two on each end and one in front of each arch-supporting pier. On pedestals atop these columns stand six 18'-high draped allegorical figures against a high frieze course. From west to east, these figures by Louis Saint-Gaudens represent Fire, Electricity, Freedom, Imagination, Agriculture, and Mechanics. Inscriptions about these subjects composed by Charles W. Eliot are cut into the three granite frieze panels over the arches. Flanking the central pavilion on the east and west, lower arcaded wings have Ionic pilasters rising between seven arches (12'4" wide and 24'8" high) below an entablature and balustrade. Flanking these wings are great single-arched (22' wide and 38'6" high) end pavilions. On each pavilion two Ionic columns on either side of the arch support two 8'-high granite eagles with inscriptions cut into the frieze panels. The end pavilions, arcaded wings, and central pavilion form a continuous vaulted loggia running the entire length of the building.

The west facade has five carriage exit arches (19'2" wide and 37'7" high) and one arch 12'4" wide and 24'8" high leading into the loggia. The east facade has a similar arch 22' wide and 38'6" high leading to the loggia, two arched windows, and five arches (12'6" wide and 24'8" high) originally exits, now windows.

Inside the main entrance pavilion the general waiting room is 120' wide by 219' long exclusive of the transverse colonnades, with a barrel-vaulted coffered ceiling 96' above the floor at its highest point and patterned after the Roman baths of Diocletian. A semicircular window 72½' in diameter at the east, three semicircular windows in the south side, and five on the north side (each 27½' in diameter) and the glass roof over the ticket lobby at the west end provide light for the waiting room. In the west wing was the ticket office, baggage room, small waiting room, and vehicular entrance; on the east, a dining room, lunch room, women's waiting room, reception room for distinguished visitors, and vehicular entrance. On the north, five archways (30' wide and 50' high) lead to the concourse through colonnaded portals. Both the transverse colonnades leading to the east and west wings and the colonnaded portals on the north and south are surmounted by standing sculptural figures.

The great concourse (originally 760' long by 130' wide) in the rear of the main building extends the entire length of the station and afforded direct passage to the trains from every part of it. The concourse, of white enameled brick with terra cotta trim at the doors and windows, is covered by a segmental arched ceiling 45' high at the center, with two longitudinal sections of glass and three of coffered ornamental plaster.

(continued)

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*Boundary process
approved 4/9/80*

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In 1974-76 Union Station was adapted for use as the National Visitor Center. Principal alterations for this purpose included shortening the concourse to 630' (to accommodate access ramps alongside each end of the building to a parking garage in the rear), construction of a sunken multi-screen projection area in the center of the main waiting room, conversion of the dining room to a bookstore, and conversion of the lunch room to two film theaters. A new and much smaller railroad terminal (not to be included in the National Register) was constructed to the rear of the building and is accessible through the concourse.

Union Station Plaza and the Columbus Fountain

The semicircular Union Station Plaza, 940' in length across the facade of the station and 540' wide at its center, was an integral part of the design. At its outer edges, opposite the east and west vehicular entrances to the station, are stone balustrades carrying ornamental iron lampposts. The end posts of the balustrades flanking the approaches to the carriage porch on the west front and the state apartment on the east front support rostral columns rising some 30' above the pavement and topped by spheres carrying spread eagles. Two other groups of balustrades surround stone fountains centered on the east and west wings of the station; a line of 16' ornamental iron lamp-posts on granite pedestals runs between these balustrades across the front of the station. In front of them and centered on the central pavilion are three 110' ornamental iron flagstaves with bronze bases and decorations. All stone in the plaza is Vermont white granite, the same material used for the station.

The centerpiece of the plaza is the marble Columbus Fountain. At its center is a 45' shaft surmounted by four eagles supporting a globe displaying the Western Hemisphere. Projecting from the shaft is the prow of a ship, with a winged figure symbolizing Discovery, bearing a 15' statue of Christopher Columbus. Male figures on either side of the shaft represent the Old and New Worlds. A low-relief medallion about three feet in diameter on the rear of the shaft depicts Ferdinand and Isabella. Flanking the semicircular fountain are two couchant lions.

The features named above and the inner plaza on which the Columbus Fountain is located are substantially as built. The outer ring of traffic islands has been modified to facilitate the flow of traffic.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1903-12

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Daniel H. Burnham

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks of the District of Columbia has designated Union Station a Category I Landmark of great importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage of both the Nation and the District of Columbia and which must be preserved. One of the first great union terminals, this imperial station with its vast interior spaces was the cornerstone of the McMillan Commission's efforts to revive L'Enfant's original plan of the city.

Almost immediately after the McMillan Commission was appointed in 1901, its members realized that any further development of L'Enfant's plan necessitated removing existing railroad facilities from the Mall. Through the efforts of Senator James McMillan and architect Daniel H. Burnham, chairman of the Commission, and with the civic-minded cooperation of the railroad companies, Congress approved a union terminal site on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue in 1903. The following statement from the Commission's 1902 report indicates the significance attached to this station at a time when trains were virtually the only means of long-distance land transportation: "This great station forms the grand gateway to the capital, through which everyone who comes to or goes from Washington must pass; as there is no railroad entering the city that will not use the station, it becomes the vestibule of the capital. This being the fact, the importance of this station is greater than that of any other one in any city in the world." Burnham, who had been Director of Works for the 1893 Columbia Exposition, became architect for the station. To make Union Station a truly monumental gateway to the capital, Burnham turned for his design to the triumphal architecture of Rome, deriving the central pavilion from the Arch of Constantine and modeling the interior after the baths of Diocletian.

In October 1903, construction crews began to level Patterson's woods and to fill in the swamp that existed on the chosen terminal site. The station opened on October 27, 1907, and was completed in April 1908. The cost of the building was somewhat more than \$4 million, but the entire enterprise (tracks, yards, power plant, etc.) cost \$21.8 million divided between the Federal Government, the District of Columbia, and the railroad companies.

Burnham planned the station to accommodate inaugural crowds of 100,000 to 120,000. By 1932 approximately 285 trains on 32 tracks carried some 30,000 passengers to and from Union Station each day. By the late 1960s, however, train travel into Union Station had declined to approximately 7,000 passengers a day and the owner of the building was considering its sale to real estate developers for demolition. On March 12, 1968, Public Law 90-264 was enacted providing for the conversion of Union Station to a National Visitor Center. A scaled-down version of the visitor center

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- H.P. Caemmerer, Washington, the National Capital, Sen. Doc. 332, 71st Cong., 3d Sess. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932.
- James M. Goode, The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974.
- The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia, Rept. No. 166, 57th Cong., 1st Sess. (McMillan Commission Report) Washington: GPO, 1902. (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Washington West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 326000 4307000

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary encompasses the limits of Union Station and Union Station Plaza, extending to the southern curb of Massachusetts Avenue as it arcs in front of the station.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

(revised by Barry Mackintosh, Historian

Nancy C. Taylor, Landmarks Historian

National Park Service, 12/22/78--426-6660)

ORGANIZATION

National Capital Planning Commission

DATE

2/26/69

STREET & NUMBER

1325 G Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

724-0211

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

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.

Federal Representative
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

J. R. Holland

TITLE *Asst. Dir., Cultural Resources*

DATE *11/28/79*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *April 9, 1980*

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE *March 24, 1980*

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plan was completed for the Bicentennial in 1976. The Department of the Interior leases the building from its private owner for this purpose.

Union Station Plaza was designed by Burnham as a grand forecourt to the station. Particularly significant elements are the Columbus Fountain, sculpted by Lorado Z. Taft and completed in 1912, and the three massive flagstaffs whose bronze bases and decorations were designed by Burnham's firm. They and the flanking fountains, balustrades, ornamental lampposts and rostral columns symmetrically placed within the semicircular sweep of open space combine to complement the imperial grandeur of the station's facade. The central portion of the plaza is Federal property administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The roadways are under District of Columbia jurisdiction except for those parallel to the station facade, which are owned by the Terminal Realty Company.

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Bruce G. Johnson
approved 4/9/80

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National Visitor Center, Washington, D.C., Report of the National Visitor Center
Study Commission, September 15, 1967.

George J. Olszewski, "Construction History of Union Station," National Park Service,
1970.