

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

7

date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic Missouri-Pacific Depot

and or common Helena Depot (preferred)

## 2. Location

street &amp; number Corner of Natchez and Missouri Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Helena

N/A vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Phillips

code 107

## 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  
☐ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☐ government  
☐ industrial  
☐ military☐ museum  
☐ park  
☐ private residence  
☐ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportation  
☒ other: Vacant

## 4. Owner of Property

name Union Pacific Railroad c/o Mr. C. O. Durham

street &amp; number 1416 Dodge Street, Rm 306

city, town Omaha

vicinity of

state Nebraska

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Phillips County Courthouse

street &amp; number 622 Cherry Street

city, town Helena

state Arkansas

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Helena Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date Spring 1985

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

city, town Little Rock

state Arkansas

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

### SUMMARY

Located on the southeast corner of Missouri and Natchez Streets at the southern end of the downtown area and paralleling the levee, the Missouri-Pacific Depot in Helena is a fine unaltered example of early-twentieth century depot architecture in Arkansas. Constructed ca. 1915 of red brick with limestone accents, this two-story building exhibits detailing from the Craftsman period as well as subtle Classical Revival influences. Originally designed to serve as the regional headquarters for the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad, the depot has a two-story northern section which is more finely detailed than the more functional one-story freight section of the building. The entire structure is surmounted by a hip roof covered with composition shingles and features large decorative knee braces supporting the wide overhanging eaves. Gabled and louvered attic vents occur midway across the one-story section and above the south (rear) elevation. The building has a steel frame structure and rests on a poured concrete foundation. Lintels, sills, belt and string courses are all of limestone blocks. The bricks used in the exterior of the building have rounded edges and the mortar employed is reddish in color. A brick platform surrounds the building and continues approximately seventy yards south of the rear of the structure. The Missouri-Pacific Railroad sold the property to the Union Pacific Railroad who has recently boarded up the building on the first level. This significant structure survives as the southern architectural anchor for the downtown and retains a high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

### ELABORATION

The facade of Helena's Missouri-Pacific Depot is three bays wide and faces north to the downtown area. The northern two bays of the building are two stories tall. This section exhibits more detailing than the one-story section of the structure. This two-story section features a widely overhanging hip roof supported by paired brackets and decorative rafter ends at the eaves. The northern (facade) elevation displays a centrally located entrance covered with a small suspended shed roof. The shed roof is covered with barrel tiles, which indicates the original roofing material of the entire building may have been of this material. The entry is flanked by a pair of elaborate console brackets and symmetrical projecting bays with arched windows. Windows throughout the building are wooden casement with rectangular panes grouped in pairs and surmounted by a horizontal pane. This arrangement is coupled to fill one sash. The arched window retains this arrangement with the added fan-light above. Outlined by radiating brick voussoirs with stone springers and keystones, these more elaborate windows display radiating muntins in the fan-light. A limestone belt course divides the upper, lower and basement levels. A limestone stringcourse accents the red brick facade at the sill level and the simple cornice above the arched windows is also of limestone blocks. Windows on the upper level retain the same arrangement, but are smaller, which further emphasizes the horizontal orientation of the facade.

The east elevation runs parallel to the levee upon which the train tracks run. This elevation contains two bays of the two-story section, three bays of baggage section and eight bays of freight section, for a total length of thirteen bays. Originally, the freight and baggage sections were separated by a breezeway which must have been filled in during the early history of the building because the decorative brick which characterizes the rest of the structure was used in the enclosure. The mortar is a lighter red color than the rest of the building, which emphasizes this enclosure. Several of the original batten freight doors and paneled entry doors on this elevation remain.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The southern (rear) elevation is two bays wide with a freight door in both bays. This elevation retains one of its original batten doors. A wooden loading dock occurs across this elevation.

The west elevation retains the same divisions as the east elevation. However, the freight bays display wooden loading docks and transom areas which are flanked by smaller casement windows in the same sash arrangement as the rest of the building. Due to the sloping of the site, the depot building is set on a raised poured concrete foundation, which is most visible on this elevation.

A brick paved platform wraps around the building and abruptly ends at the loading dock area on the west elevation. This platform continued around the north and east elevations and continues down the tracks in a southward direction for approximately seventy yards. This entire platform area is included in the boundaries of the nomination.

The interior of the building retains its historic room arrangement. The lower level of the two-story building retains its segregated waiting room areas. These rooms retain their decorative floor tiles but have suffered paneling and lowered ceilings. The baggage room is accessed from the waiting room closer to the tracks. A large metal cage is located in the baggage area. One bathroom is located off the waiting room closer to Natchez Street. Another bathroom is located in the baggage area. Access to the upper level is through a simple unadorned staircase, the entrance of which is located on the outside of the building. The offices are arranged around a central hallway and retain many of their historic features including ceiling height, chair rail, baseboards and plaster walls.

Two other Missouri-Pacific Railroad depots which are currently listed in the National Register include the Beebe Depot in White County (NR 1979), and the Earle Depot in Crittenden County (NR 1986). Both of these depots are small, one-story, brick depots which were used as combination passenger and freight facilities. The Beebe Depot, built in 1910, displays architectural detailing similar to the Helena depot including large overhanging eaves supported by large knee braces, and an overall stylistic bent toward the Craftsman period. The Earle Depot, built in 1922, displays subtle Craftsman and Classical Revival influences. The Helena depot is larger and is more finely detailed than these smaller buildings because of its broader range of functions. Unlike these buildings, the Helena depot is oriented toward the downtown area and not the railroad tracks.



## 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 checked="" 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** c. 1915 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SUMMARY

Constructed c. 1915, the Missouri-Pacific Depot in Helena is one of Arkansas' finest examples of the architecture which characterized that company's construction in the early days of the twentieth century. Of Craftsman design with Classical Revival influences, the depot was built on the site of an old Arkansas Midland Railway Company depot, and is the city's best representative of the railroad industry which once rivaled river traffic to make Helena one of Arkansas' transportation centers.

#### ELABORATION

The city of Helena (population 9,000) has always been known as Arkansas' only port on the Mississippi River. Located fifty miles south of Memphis, the town grew before the Civil War as a shipping outlet for the products of the rich alluvial farms of Arkansas' delta. During the 1870's the lumber industry discovered the vast pine forests of southern Arkansas, and railroad lines began laying miles of track to facilitate the movement of raw and milled lumber. With its reputation as a transportation center already established, Helena became the location for as many as five railroad lines by the turn of the century, providing an alternative route for rail traffic by bypassing Memphis and its high transfer fees.

The Arkansas Midland depot at that time occupied the site of the present Mo-Pac structure. In 1901 Arkansas Midland was purchased by railroad baron Jay Gould and became part of his St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern line. The latter company was eventually merged with Gould's other holdings to form the Missouri-Pacific.

During the course of the transfers of ownership, the original depot was enlarged and remodeled, but 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show plans for a new structure to be located a few yards north of the original building, and 1918 maps show the depot completed in its present form and owned by Missouri-Pacific. The Helena depot boasts a two-story facade, with the upper level being used for offices and administrative purposes, a reflection of Helena's importance to the Missouri-Pacific line and the company's importance to the city. The hipped roof and wide eaves which distinguished Mo-Pac architecture of the period are very much in evidence. The building is virtually unaltered, and is one of Arkansas' best remaining examples of popular-design railroad architecture.

A once booming transportation center, Helena is now suffering economically as a result of the agricultural depression and competition from Arkansas' fast-growing trucking industry. The Missouri-Pacific depot was sold to the Union Pacific railroad in 1985. It is now boarded up and the track next to it is being removed. Although buildings from other railroad companies remain from Helena's heyday, none is as intact or as architecturally outstanding a reminder of the rail industry which once flourished there.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories. Helena, Arkansas. 1900, 1909, 1917, 1923/24.  
McCool, B. Baren. UNION, REACTION AND RIOT, A BIOGRAPHY OF A RURAL RACE RIOT.  
Memphis State University: Memphis, 1970.  
Porter, Jesse. "By Steam and Rail to Helena", HELENA, THE RIDGE, THE RIVER, THE ROMANCE.  
Little Rock, 1978.  
Porter, Rusty. "Walden Galleries Formerly Depot", HELENA-WEST HELENA ARKANSAS WORL.  
April 26, 1981.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Helena

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5
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7	2	1	6	1	0
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property associated with the Helena Depot is a triangular-shaped piece of land bounded on the north by Missouri Street, on the east by traintrack and levee, and on the west by Natchez Street. This is all the property historically associated with the Helena Depot.

### 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 Robin K. Bodo, Preservation Consultant, edited by AHPP staff

organization for Main Street Helena

date August 1986

street & number 276 N. Garland

telephone (901) 278-3102

city or town Memphis

state Tennessee

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

     national      state   X   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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date April 30, 1987

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

87000877

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Substantive Review

Helena Depot  
Phillips County  
ARKANSAS

MAY - 7 1987

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_

Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: 6/4/87 - 6/21/87

Action: ACCEPT

RETURN 6-19-87

REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☒ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Please see attached comments.

Recom./Criteria Return

Reviewer Noble

Discipline Historian

Date 6/19/87

X see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below  
☒ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
		<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_

Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☒ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☒ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☒ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Pell Grosvenor

Date 6/19/87

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



## Missouri-Pacific Depot

### Reviewer's Comments:

Although this depot is clearly an outstanding local historical resource, the nomination must be returned because of a need for further justification of transportation as an area of significance. Evidence must be explicitly presented which clearly demonstrates why this resource is significant in the local transportation realm.

A related problem concerns the fact that the summary paragraph refers to the depot as "the city's best representative of the railroad industry which once rivaled river traffic to make Helena one of Arkansas' transportation centers." In other words, the depot's historical significance is being used as a basis for claiming criterion A. Although this nomination does explain Helena's historical role as a nineteenth-century transportation center, this discussion stops short of explaining the town's twentieth-century transportation significance. Consequently, we do not have adequate context to understand how the Helena Depot, constructed in 1915, is historically significant under criterion A.

Please extend the discussion of Helena's transportation history into the twentieth century and relate this discussion to the Missouri-Pacific Depot. Also, while the nomination mentions that the Missouri-Pacific Depot retains greater integrity than the other historic railroad buildings remaining in Helena, the context discussion could be greatly improved by including an analysis of these other depots. Given Helena's prominent role as a transportation center, some discussion of other depots and railroad buildings, and the events which led to their construction, would greatly enhance the claim for criterion A and for transportation as an area of significance by clarifying the importance of the Missouri-Pacific Depot's associations or qualities in comparison to other similar resources.

If any additional questions arise, please do not hesitate to call (202-343-9547).

Bruce Noble, Historian  
National Register





Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
North elevation  
Photographed by Jean Sizemore  
March 1985  
Negatives on file at AHPP

MAY 7 1987





Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
West elevation  
Photographed by Jean Sizemore  
March 1985  
Negatives on file at AHPP

MAY 7 1987







Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
exterior detail  
Photographed by Julie Vosmik  
October 1986  
Negatives on file at AHPP

MAY 7 1987





Missouri Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
Exterior detail  
Photographed by Jean Sizemore  
March 1985  
Negatives on file at AHPP

MAY 7 1987





Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
Interior  
Photographed by Julie Vosmik  
October 1986  
Negatives on file at AHPP







Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
Interior  
Photographed by Julie Vosmik  
October 1986  
Negatives on file at AHPP

NOV 7 1987



Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County  
Interior  
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MAY 7 1987



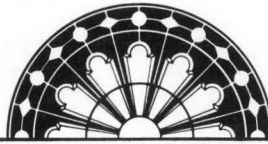


There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map. Gray tint indicates area in which selected buildings are shown.

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204

**PROVISIONAL MAP**  
Produced from original  
manuscript drawings. Infor-  
mation shown as of date of  
field check. 3





ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

April 30, 1987

Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1100 "L" Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination for the Missouri-Pacific Depot. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Wilson Stiles  
State Historic Preservation Officer

WS/TJ/dr

Enclosures



MAY 7 1987

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

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1. Name

historic Missouri-Pacific Depot

and/or common Helena Depot (preferred)

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street & number Corner of Natchez and Missouri Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Helena

N/A vicinity of

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code 05

county Phillips

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3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
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has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date Spring 1985

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

city, town Little Rock

state Arkansas



## 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**

### SUMMARY

Located on the southeast corner of Missouri and Natchez Streets at the southern end of the downtown area and paralleling the levee, the Missouri-Pacific Depot in Helena is a fine unaltered example of early-twentieth century depot architecture in Arkansas. Constructed ca. 1915 of red brick with limestone accents, this two-story building exhibits detailing from the Craftsman period as well as subtle Classical Revival influences. Originally designed to serve as the regional headquarters for the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad, the depot has a two-story northern section which is more finely detailed than the more functional one-story freight section of the building. The entire structure is surmounted by a hip roof covered with composition shingles and features large decorative knee braces supporting the wide overhanging eaves. Gabled and louvered attic vents occur midway across the one-story section and above the south (rear) elevation. The building has a steel frame structure and rests on a poured concrete foundation. Lintels, sills, belt and string courses are all of limestone blocks. The bricks used in the exterior of the building have rounded edges and the mortar employed is reddish in color. A brick platform surrounds the building and continues approximately seventy yards south of the rear of the structure. The Missouri-Pacific Railroad sold the property to the Union Pacific Railroad who has recently boarded up the building on the first level. This significant structure survives as the southern architectural anchor for the downtown and retains a high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

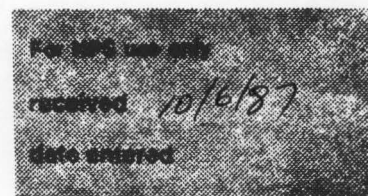
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The east elevation runs parallel to the levee upon which the train tracks run. This elevation contains two bays of the two-story section, three bays of baggage section and eight bays of freight section, for a total length of thirteen bays. Originally, the freight and baggage sections were separated by a breezeway which must have been filled in during the early history of the building because the decorative brick which characterizes the rest of the structure was used in the enclosure. The mortar is a lighter red color than the rest of the building, which emphasizes this enclosure. Several of the original batten freight doors and paneled entry doors on this elevation remain.

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A brick paved platform wraps around the building and abruptly ends at the loading dock area on the west elevation. This platform continued around the north and east elevations and continues down the tracks in a southward direction for approximately seventy yards. This entire platform area is included in the boundaries of the nomination.

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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 checked="" 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** ca. 1915–1930 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SUMMARY

Constructed c. 1915, the Missouri-Pacific Depot in Helena is one of Arkansas' finest examples of the architecture which characterized that company's construction in the early days of the twentieth century. Of Craftsman design with Classical Revival influences, the depot was built on the site of an old Arkansas Midland Railway Company depot, and is the city's best representative of the railroad industry which once rivaled river traffic to make Helena one of Arkansas' transportation centers.

#### ELABORATION

The city of Helena (population 9,000) has always been known as Arkansas' only port on the Mississippi River. Located fifty miles south of Memphis, the town grew before the Civil War as a shipping outlet for the products of the rich alluvial farms of the Arkansas' delta. During the 1870's the lumber industry discovered the vast pine forests of southern Arkansas, and railroad lines began laying miles of track to facilitate the movement of raw and milled lumber. With its reputation as a transportation center already established, Helena became the location for as many as five railroad lines by the turn of the century, providing an alternative route for rail traffic by bypassing Memphis and its high transfer fees.

The Arkansas Midland depot at that time occupied the site of the present Mo-Pac structure. In 1901 Arkansas Midland was purchased by railroad baron Jay Gould and became part of his St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern line. The latter company was eventually merged with Gould's other holdings to form the Missouri-Pacific. By World War I, Mo-Pac was Helena's major rail line, although service was also provided by various short lines and a ferry connection was available to the Illinois Central. (The Illinois Central depot is the only other railroad structure remaining in Helena, and it possesses neither the architectural significance nor the integrity of the Mo-Pac Structure.) Lumber shipment continued and rail traffic grew due to the wartime boom in agricultural markets, particularly cotton and Arkansas' newest money crop, rice. Helena became the outlet for disbursement of this grain from farms on the prairie to points all over the country. The Mo-Pac depot is significant as the key representative of this period of the city's railroad history. Helena continued to grow and prosper until the onset of the depression (census figures show population went from 9,000 in 1920 to 17,000 in 1930) and the railroad was at that time a major facet of its economy. Although railroads continued to operate in Helena, the effects of the Depression were lasting and the prominence of the rail industry never equalled its zenith of the early twentieth century.

Construction on the Missouri-Pacific depot probably began in 1915. During the course of its transfers of ownership, the original Arkansas Midland depot was enlarged and remodeled, but 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show plans for a new structure to be located a few yards north of the original building, and 1918 maps show the depot completed in its present form and owned by Missouri-Pacific. The MoPac depot boasts a two-story facade, with the upper level being used for offices and administrative purposes, a reflection of Helena's importance to the Missouri-Pacific line and the company's importance to the city. The hipped roof and wide eaves which distinguished Mo-Pac architecture of the period are very much in evidence. The building is virtually unaltered, and is one of Arkansas' best remaining examples of popular-design railroad architecture.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories. Helena, Arkansas. 1900, 1909, 1917, 1923/24.  
McCool, B. Baren. UNION, REACTION AND RIOT, A BIOGRAPHY OF A RURAL RACE RIOT.  
Memphis State University: Memphis, 1970.  
Porter, Jesse. "By Steam and Rail to Helena", HELENA, THE RIDGE, THE RIVER, THE ROMANCE.  
Little Rock, 1978.  
Porter, Rusty. "Walden Galleries Formerly Depot", HELENA-WEST HELENA ARKANSAS WORL.  
April 26, 1981.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Helena

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	7	2	1	6	1	0	3	8	2	2	4	7	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property associated with the Helena Depot is a triangular-shaped piece of land bounded on the north by Missouri Street, on the east by traintrack and levee, and on the west by Natchez Street. This is all the property historically associated with the Helena Depot.

### 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 Robin K. Bodo, Preservation Consultant, edited by AHPP staff

organization for Main Street Helena date August 1986

street & number 276 N. Garland telephone (901) 278-3102

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

     national      state   X   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 *Julie Wosmik*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 10/03/87

### For NPS use only

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

*Amy Schlager* date Nov 5, 1987

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

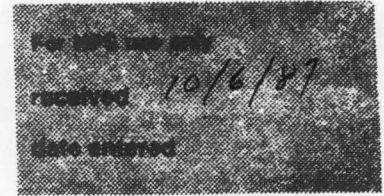
date

Chief of Registration



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

A once booming transportation center, Helena is now suffering economically as a result of the agricultural depression and competition from Arkansas' fast-growing trucking industry. The Missouri-Pacific depot was sold to the Union Pacific railroad in 1985. It is now boarded up and the track next to it is being removed, although current plans are for the city to acquire the building and restore it for use as a museum. The Mo-Pac depot remains as an architecturally outstanding reminder of the railroad industry which once flourished during Helena's heyday.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEETHelena Depot  
Phillips County  
ARKANSAS~~Substantive Review~~Working No. 5.7.87Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/89Date Due: 11-20-87Action: ☒ ACCEPT 11-5-87☐ RETURN☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ resubmission  
☐ nomination by person or local government  
☐ owner objection  
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☒ NR decision

## Reviewer's comments:

Property identified clearly as important  
 connection point for railroad development  
 in Helena - key representative of this  
 period of growth when Helena served  
 as distribution terminal for agricultural

Recom./Criteria Accept A, CReviewer AschdelDiscipline Arch HistDate 11/5/87

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below products. Building also finest example of  
☐ substantive reasons discussed below early 20th century commercial  
architecture.

## 1. Name

## 2. Location

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

## 4. Owner of Property

## 5. Location of Legal Description

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

## 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

- ☐ summary paragraph  
☐ completeness  
☐ clarity  
☐ alterations/integrity  
☐ dates  
☐ boundary selection



## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_

Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



ARKANSAS  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
PROGRAM

September 21, 1987

Ms. Carol D. Shull  
Chief of Registration  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1100 "L" Street  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Missouri-Pacific Depot  
Helena, Phillips County

Dear Carol:

Enclosed is the nomination for the above-referenced property, which was returned to us for substantive revision. We have provided additional information in order to further justify transportation as an area of significance.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Julie Vosmik  
Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

JV/TJ/bjm

Enclosures

OCT 6 1987

Suite 200 • Heritage Center • 225 East Markham • Little Rock, Arkansas 72201 • Phone (501) 371-2763

A Division of the Department of Arkansas Heritage



SEP 25 1987