

UNION STATION -

PH0066567

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE:           | Colorado    |
| COUNTY:          | Denver      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| ENTRY DATE       | NOV 20 1974 |

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Union Station

AND/OR HISTORIC: also known as Union Depot

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Seventeenth Street at Wynkoop

CITY OR TOWN: Denver CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Colorado District One

STATE: Colorado CODE: 08 COUNTY: Denver CODE: 031

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)                                                                                                                                                                     | OWNERSHIP                                                                                                                                          | STATUS                                                                                                                                                   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site<br><input type="checkbox"/> Structure<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered<br>status <b>undetermined</b>                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied<br><input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress                                                                         |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>railroad passenger terminal, used extensively by Postal Service</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Comments |

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Denver Union Terminal Railway Company

STREET AND NUMBER: Seventeenth at Wynkoop

CITY OR TOWN: Denver STATE: Colorado CODE: 08

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: City and County Building

STREET AND NUMBER: 1450 Bannock Street

CITY OR TOWN: Denver STATE: Colorado CODE: 08

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

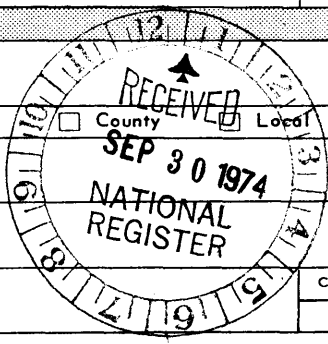
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

ENTRY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: NOV 20 1974

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

|           |                                             |                                          |                               |                                       |                                                   |                                    |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |                                          |                               |                                       |                                                   |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | (Check One)                                 |                                          |                               | (Check One)                           |                                                   |                                    |
|           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered       |                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Union Station is some 880' long, comprising of structural parts whose construction dates from three different years. The large central section, comprised of a three-storey block in the Neo-classic style, was constructed in 1914. The two wings, immediately to the north and south of the Central block were built in 1881 and are of an Italian Romanesque style. The two lower wings, to the north and south of the aforementioned two are a carry over of the same architectural motif, although they are flat roofed, and were constructed in 1892. The focal point is the central Neo-classic section, comprising about one-sixth of the total length of the structure. The structure is comprised of blocks of Colorado granite on a steel frame, and is opulently detailed with great variance. The horizontal movement of the structure is broken splendidly by the presence of three two story semi-circular windows. On the interior, the great central waiting room runs to the ceiling of the structure, to a height of three stories. Offices comprise the upper two floors, and are accessible via a hallway, the balconys of which view onto the central room. Coffee shops, a gift shop, ticket offices, and a lesser reception area comprise the first floor of the structure, the interior of which is quite austere, and painted a dark power blue. There are, of course, rows of varnished wooden benches, which occupy much of the interior space under the three story roof. On the exterior, the central section is divided into two equal parts. It is virtually impossible to describe fully the abundance of architectural details. The three large windows are surrounded with scalloped and grooved designs, topped with a massive scroll-work design. In addition to the windows, two prominent patterns of vertical movement, on either side give rise to the structure. These are two large shallow niches, set into the wall, comprising of an abundance of detail. These two niches, give the dates of the complex's building. One reads 1881 and the other 1914. The two main horizontal movements present are the massive boxed and decorated cornice near the top of the structure, and a large, translucent green glass shelter roof, supported with sculpted elements of cast iron, above the first level of the structure. Suprisingly, this overhang, does not greatly distract from the lines of the structure. The two wings, constructed in 1881, provide office, and baggage space, and are two high stories, surmounted with a low attic under the roof. Construction is of volcanic stone with pink sandstone trim, decorated nicely with sculptures, medallions and flutings, above the sets of double windows and around them, which are keyed arch. The roof type above the two wings is of a hip style. The effect of the stone detailing gives the wings a strong vertical movement. The two lesser wings, are flat roofed and of a low two story design. However, the materials are the same as in the two major wings, and a nice cornice, surmounted with a cast iron widow's walk tops it all.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS  
 10-17-14

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|                                        |                                       |                                                  |                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                                  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|                                                    |                                                 |                                                    |                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric               | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____                                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____                                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |                                                    | _____                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              |                                                 |                                                    | _____                                          |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ( In addition to below facts, please see appended sheets.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Although Denver had been served by railroads since 1868, there was no consolidated user facility for the traffic they generated until the completion of the Union Depot in 1881. Momentum gathered for a general user structure in 1879 when Jay Gould, controller of most of Colorado's railroads at that time, suggested that a commission be formed to study the possibility of a joint terminal.

Background information, leading to the joint facility, is interesting and significant, and is hereby related.

On 18 May 1868, ground was broken for the Denver Pacific, the rails of which went north to meet the Union Pacific at Cheyenne, which had elected to route its track through the less awesome Rockies in Wyoming, via South Pass. Milepost "0" for the Denver Pacific was on a line with the alley between Wazee and Wynkoop Streets at Nineteenth Street. The station for the line was located at Twentyfirst at Wazee.

On July 5, 1870 construction commenced on the Kansas Pacific Railroad. By August 15th trains were running eastwards to end of track which was to continue to join lines already extant in Kansas. During the same year work was started on the Colorado Central Railroad which was to run eventually as far as Central City and Silver Plume, via Golden.

Both of these lines rented space from the Denver Pacific station at 21st and Wazee.

On July 21, 1871, General William Jackson Palmer started work on his Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Milepost "0" for this line was at 19th and Wynkoop between two spurs of the Denver Pacific. With this track denying the Rio Grande right-of-way to the Denver Pacific Station it was necessary for the line to construct its own at 19th and Wynkoop. Two stations were now serving the needs of Denver's railroad traffic.

A third depot was added to the list in August of 1874, when grading commenced for the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad. Sixth and Larimer was milepost "0" for this line, and their depot was constructed at Sixth and Walnut.

In 1875 the Colorado Central moved to a new station at 16th and Delgany to make four the number of railroad stations serving Denver. By this time, there were problems in transfer-

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

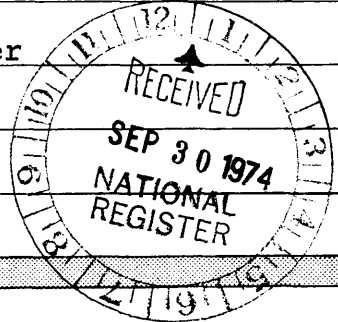
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |                         |                         | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |                         |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER                                                                           | LATITUDE                | LONGITUDE               |    | LATITUDE                                                                                                | LONGITUDE               |  |
|                                                                                  | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |    | Degrees Minutes Seconds                                                                                 | Degrees Minutes Seconds |  |
| NW                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |    | 39° 45' 10"                                                                                             | 104° 59' 57"            |  |
| NE                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |    |                                                                                                         |                         |  |
| SE                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |    |                                                                                                         |                         |  |
| SW                                                                               | ° ' "                   | ° ' "                   |    |                                                                                                         |                         |  |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.6 acres

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

|                        |                 |                       |                  |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| STATE: <u>Colorado</u> | CODE: <u>08</u> | COUNTY: <u>Denver</u> | CODE: <u>031</u> |
| STATE:                 | CODE:           | COUNTY:               | CODE:            |
| STATE:                 | CODE:           | COUNTY:               | CODE:            |
| STATE:                 | CODE:           | COUNTY:               | CODE:            |



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mark E. Stevens

ORGANIZATION: Historic Denver, Inc. DATE: 30 August 74

STREET AND NUMBER: 1059 9th Street

CITY OR TOWN: Denver STATE: Colorado CODE: 08

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]  
 Title: Colo. Pres. Officer  
 Date: 9/25/74

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

[Signature]  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

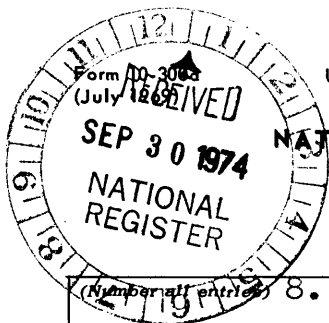
Date: 11/70/74

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: 11.14.74

HM 13 / 4400180 / 500070

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE            |             |
| Colorado         |             |
| COUNTY           |             |
| Denver           |             |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE        |
|                  | NOV 20 1974 |

8. Statement of Significance

ing freight and passengers from one line to another, across the muddy or dusty paths which existed in lower downtown Denver at that time. But the matter was to remain unchanged for several years, until Jay Gould, the controller of most of Colorado's railroads, and most of the nation's for that matter, suggested to a Union Pacific official that a commission be formed to study the possibility of consolidating facilities of the railroad companies in one location.

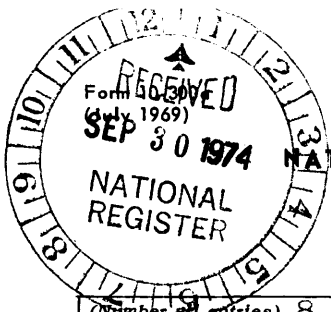
Accordingly, a meeting was held in November of 1879, between officials of the various railroads serving the city. The meeting resulted in the formation of the Union Depot and Railroad Company which was capitalized at \$400,000. Walter S. Cheesman, a prominent Denver figure, was elected President. Shortly thereafter, land was purchased at 17th and Wynkoop for the eventual construction of the facility. The lines of the property ran from Sixteenth Street to Eighteenth Street on the Southwest and Northeast, and between Wynkoop and Delgany on the Southeast and Northwest.

In February of 1880 a contract was signed between representatives of the four lines which would be using the depot. They were the Denver and Rio Grande, the Denver, South Park and Pacific, the Colorado Central and the Union Pacific, which had gained entry to the Denver market through Jay Gould's control of the Denver and Kansas Pacific railroads. The lines were to pay for use of the station on a percentage basis, depending on the amount the facilities were to be used by the railroads. Under this agreement, and through Jay Gould's control, the Union Pacific owned 4/5ths of the station, and the Denver, and Rio Grande the other 1/5th.

Architect A. Taylor of Kansas City, Missouri completed his plans on March 20, 1880 and construction started five days later. A. H. Fairfield and W. R. Burton were the contractors for the construction.

The foundation was completed in July of the same year and consisted of volcanic stone obtained from a quarry at Castle Rock, to which the Rio Grande had built a spur track. The walls of the structure were of a pink-grey rhyolite, also quarried at Castle Rock, at the quarry of O'Brian and Hathaway. The pink sandstone trim was obtained at a quarry near Morrison, and freighted to Denver by the Denver, South Park and Pacific line. The structure measured 65 feet by 504 feet, and was topped by a 128 foot tower, 32 feet square, topped with a flamboyant weathervane and flagpole.

The structure was of Italian Romanesque, and at one time Lucius Beebe called it a masterpiece of "Railroad Gothic." The appearance of the structure was not unlike that of a European city hall. Lawn and plantings fronted the structure on its Wynkoop Street side.



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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries) 8. Statement of Significance (Second Cont. Sheet)

Although the structure had been used since May of 1881, the official opening was not until July, when 20,000 people attended the festivities. At the time, the structure was four blocks Northwest of the developed part of town and was accessible only on rudimentary roads which raised considerable dust, or deep mud, depending on the season of the year. But this matter was quickly circumvented.

Through the use of joint right-of-ways, six tracks were layed Northwest of the structure for passenger train use. Baggage and office facilities were located within the wings of the structure and passenger services in the central portion. It must be noted that at the time of its completion, the depot was the largest structure in the West.

It was made even larger in 1892 with the addition of two wings at either end of the building which brought its length to 880 feet.

On March 18, 1894, the central portion of the station was flattened by a spectacular blaze, caused by an electrical short circuit. The loss was put at \$125,000 and was insured, but it cost another \$75,000 to rebuild the structure. This was done immediately, the architects of the new central section being VanBrundt and Howe, also of Kansas City. The tower on the new structure stood at 168 feet, 40 feet taller than the one which existed on the old structure. It was surmounted at the top with four clocks, each fourteen feet in diameter. The new structure was considerably less distinguished than its predecessor.

After Gould's fall from power, the Union Depot and Railroad Company was reorganized, and in 1909, another four acres of land to the Northwest was purchased, bringing the total of traffic tracks to twelve.

In August of 1912, disbandenment of the Union Depot and Railroad company commenced, and total reorganization had taken place by March of 1914. The Denver Terminal Railway Company was capitalized at \$4,000,000. The owners were the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, the Colorado and Southern, the Union Pacific, and the Denver and Rio Grande Western railroads.

Shortly after reorganization of ownership was complete, the central part of the structure, built in 1894, was razed and replaced with the Neo-Classic structure which stands today. By 1916 the tracks to the West had been raised five feet and a subway was built to provide passengers easier access to trains. At the same time, mechanical interlocking devices were installed to control the three main tracks which approached the depot, and the installation of umbrella sheds to provide shelter over the tracks during inclement weather was done. This spelled the end of the four million dollar expansion program.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
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| Colorado         |             |
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(Number all entries) 8. Statement of Significance (Third Cont. Sheet)

In August of 1932 a \$600,000 expansion was completed to aid in the distribution of public mails. In 1953 the structure underwent a million dollar facelift. The structure was thoroughly cleaned. The exterior was again renovated in 1956, but by this time traffic was only half of its wartime levels, and the era of the great transcontinentals was closing. During the war there had been between sixty and eighty arrivals and departures per day, and one million passengers a year were using the facility. By 1954 the total number of arrivals and departures had dropped to thirty a day.

Today, five trains, more or less, use the station each day, and the great central room is quiet for the most part, and a tranquil spot to think. There is still a gift shop and a coffee shop, but shoppers and diners are few. However, five trains is a considerable increase from the two which were using the facility in 1971. Most of the southern wing of the structure is used by the Post Office now, and most of the twelve tracks to the West show rust. Hopefully, the times will change, and the trains will be used again. But meanwhile, the station is kept clean, and is maintained well.

Denver has always been a transportation hub, and since the rise of the use of commercial aircraft, has remained so. But the railroads provided the transportation source once, and due to this fact, the significance of the structure in Denver's history cannot be overestimated.

