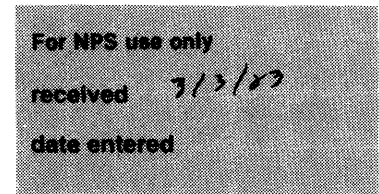


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National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet West Yellowstone MRA Item number n/a Page 1

WEST YELLOWSTONE, MRA

Name: West Yellowstone Oregon Shortline Terminus Historic District

Location and Verbal Boundary Description:

The location for the West Yellowstone Oregon Shortline Terminus Historic District is as follows:

Beginning at a point which is the southeast corner of the city limit line, west approximately 2400 feet; thence north approximately 350 feet to the south right-of-way line of Yellowstone Avenue; thence east along the south boundary of Yellowstone Avenue approximately 2400 feet to the west boundary of Yellowstone National Park; thence south along said west boundary of Yellowstone National Park approximately 300 feet to point of beginning.

UTM References: A1. 12/491550/4944800  
B1. 12/492350/4944800  
C . 12/492350/4944750  
D1. 12/491550/4944750

Acreage: Approximately ten (10) acres

Owner: City of West Yellowstone, MT

Status: Occupied

Accessible: Yes, unrestricted

Present Use: Local government offices, historical museum, medical clinic, storage.

Statement of Significance:

The establishment of the Oregon Shortline Terminus in the remote forested location at the West entrance to Yellowstone National Park instigated the initial platting and commercial development of West Yellowstone. A few years after the passenger service to the park was operating, the Union Pacific Railroad Company decided to expand its facilities and to compete actively with the newly established locally-owned restaurants and hotels in capturing a larger share of the summer tourist's dollars. A dining hall or "Beanery"

(continued on next page)

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

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

For NPS use only

received 3/7/83

date entered

Continuation sheet West Yellowstone MRA Item number n/a

Page 2

was built in 1911. During the mid 1920's the railroad constructed an overnight dormitory accommodations for men and women and a new and larger dining hall was constructed.

Additional significance is gained through the districts' association with the nationally prominent architect, Gilbert Stanley Underwood, who designed all of the major railroad buildings within the district as well as the Dining Hall and Dormitories.

Underwood studied architecture in the State University of Illinois and Michigan and held a BS degree in Architecture from Yale University and a Masters degree from Harvard University. After graduation, Underwood settled on the West Coast and established his own firm in Los Angeles, California. He rapidly became known for his design of office buildings and for civic structures in Los Angeles. As Consulting Architect to the Union Pacific Railroad, he designed many railway stations throughout the west, including the outstanding Union Terminal in Omaha, Nebraska. In 1934, Underwood went to Washington, D.C. as Consulting Architect to the Public Buildings Branch of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department. Later, under the Federal Works Agency and the General Service Administration he was Supervising Architect, serving under three Presidents. He was responsible for the design of several hundred federal buildings including the first unit of the State Department Building, the General Accounting Office and the Institute of Health in Washington, the Federal Court House in Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Mint.

Underwood added to the natural beauty of many of our national parks and vacation resorts through his imaginative designs for the Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood, the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, Sun Valley in Idaho, Grand Teton Lodge in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and "North Rim" Bryce and Zion Lodges of Grand Canyon National Park and the Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg, Virginia. In addition to the West Yellowstone Depot, Underwood designed more than a dozen Union Pacific passenger stations. Most incorporate some Beaux Art detailing during the earlier years. The West Yellowstone depot represents a slight departure from Underwood's previous depot designs. Here, he combines rustic stylistic features with basic irregular Richardsonian Romanesque massing. The expansive hipped roof of the depot contributes a bungalow-like quality to the building. When Underwood was later commissioned to design the Dining Hall dormitories at West Yellowstone, he chose to fully explore the possibilities of the naturalistic rustic style in this heavily wooded, remote setting.

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

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

For NPS use only  
received 2/3/87  
date entered

Continuation sheet West Yellowstone MRA Item number n/a Page 3

**Physical Description:**

The West Yellowstone Historic District encompasses the site of the Oregon Shortline Terminus, situated on the southern edge of the town of West Yellowstone, Montana and directly west of the entrance to Yellowstone National Park. A serene, park-line atmosphere has been retained along the railroad right-of-way. Most of the buildings and structures within the district are associated with the construction of the railroad terminus in 1908-1910 and the later development of the Union Pacific's accommodations for tourists en route to the Park. The depot, baggage building, dining lodge, dormitories, and boiler building of the Union Pacific's railroad complex were designed by the nationally prominent architect, Gilbert Stanley Underwood. The two earliest buildings, the depot and baggage building, reflect a combination of Richardsonian Romanesque (foundation and upper walls) and a more naturalistic style of architecture bordering on the rustic with exposed wooden members on the interior and prominent, hood-like roofs. Underwood was called back to West Yellowstone in 1922 to design the dining lodge and dormitories. For these buildings, Underwood incorporated more of the characteristic elements of the rustic style of architecture, a style adopted by the National Park Service and widely employed throughout the Park at this time. The native rhyolite stone used to fashion the foundations, piers, walls and colossal chimneys and fireplaces of these buildings was gathered along the railway line from Idaho. Peeled and unpeeled logs were used for posts, beams, trusses, ridgepoles, and brackets.

The following buildings, structures, and objects contribute to the historic character of the West Yellowstone Historic District (numbers are keyed to the accompanying site map):

Union Pacific Identification Pylon (#1)

This landmark was constructed and dedicated in 1910 and is located at the far eastern edge of the district. The pylon measures 8' in height and tapers from a 10' x 10' pedestal base to 6' x 8' at the top. The native rhyolite stones are randomly placed and are bonded with concrete. The mortar joints are recessed and there is some evidence of mortar deterioration. Four hand carved wood signs read "Union Pacific System, The Overland Route" and measure approximately 4' x 4' x 2'.

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

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



Continuation sheet West Yellowstone MRA

Item number n/a

Page 4

Union Pacific Depot (#3)

Designed by Gilbert Underwood in 1907 and built in 1909 under the supervision of Wallace Brown. Single story, rectangular, measuring approximately 40'x120'. Diagonal wings project northeast and northwest. Northeast wing measures 72' in length by 33' in width and the northwest wing 54' in length and 33' in width. Constructed of poured concrete at the base and lower walls. Upper portion of walls are of concrete block with rusticated quoins and random-sized, inlaid, natural lava stone. Rectangular wood frame windows and two arched entries are accented by radiating sawn stone lintels. Doors and windows feature diamond-shaped, leaded glass. Support columns for the covered loading platform and porte-cochere are of poured concrete with concrete blocks and inlaid lava stone. Wood shingled hip and gable roof with a shed dormer on the south elevation. Stone chimneys occur at each end of the depot main section.

The interior features hewn, wooden, beams and columns with the wood corbels. Plastered walls, bead board siding, and two stone fireplaces. Originally, the depot contained a center vestibule, hall, pullman and agent's office, women's waiting room, men's waiting room, a baggage area in the northeast wing; and a women's dressing room and restrooms in the northwest wing. Since 1972 the depot has been used as the West Yellowstone Museum. All displays are free standing. Both interior and exterior of the building have retained excellent integrity of materials and workmanship.

Union Pacific Baggage Building (#4)

As the number of tourists increased to West Yellowstone, it was necessary to construct a complementary building to handle the excessive load of trunks and suitcases.

Designed by Underwood's firm in 1922, and constructed by the Union Pacific in 1924. Single story, 32' x 60'. Architectural style and use of materials complements the depot. Shingled hip roof of standard wood truss construction. Originally the interior was void of partition walls. However, to accommodate the municipal facilities now occupying the building, interior alterations were made in 1969. Three 10' gunite wall cells were built in the east portion of the building. All existing windows and doors were removed and blocked in. The main room was partitioned with a patrol room, court room inspection room, restrooms, office room, closets, storage and city offices. The original windows are replaced with aluminum operable windows.

Union Pacific Dining Lodge (#5)

Built in 1925. L-shaped, measuring 132' x 182'. The interior features a multi-level floor plan with a huge main assembly room and mammoth stone fireplaces.

The Dining Lodge is of stone bearing wall construction. Native rhyolite stone is randomly coursed and randomly set with recessed mortar joints. Wood framed, multi-paned windows. Siding consists of vertical, custom-milled, red fir bark slabs, approximately 1' wide and 3" deep at their crowns.

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

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



2

Continuation sheet      West Yellowstone MRA      Item number      n/a      Page 5

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Shingled roof. Exposed log rafter ends which extend beyond the fascia. The roof is penetrated on both the east and west elevations by large rock chimneys.

The main assembly areas of the Dining Hall remain unaltered. Smaller meeting rooms, offices and kitchen facilities have been constructed or updated in recent years in the north section of the building.

Generator House (#6)

Built in 1918 to house two diesel generators. Single story, measuring 24' x 36', with a dormer vent. A shed-roofed addition on the west side. The construction compliments that of the Dining Lodge. One generator and parts of the second are still present in the structure.

Boiler Building - For Men's Dormitory (#7)

Built in 1927, measuring 16' x 24'. Boiler House for the men's and women's dormitories. Resembling the generator house immediately to the west, the boiler building is in good condition and is used presently for storage.

Remains of the Rest Pavilion

10' x 10' open shelter with a shingled hip and gable roof supported by vertical, wood pole supports and knee braces. This is all that remains of 40' x 60' rest pavilion designed and built in 1921.

Union Pacific Men's Dormitory (#9)

Built in 1927. Single story, measuring 40' x 92'. Wood shingled, hipped roof. Rustic stylistic features again employed in the design: rhyolite stones set in concrete support the corners of the structure; wood frame, multi-paned casement windows (replaced with single pane sliding windows on the North elevation); and siding of horizontal red fir bark slabs.

In 1973, the National Health Service remodeled the interior to accommodate the community medical clinic. Frame partition walls with wood paneling, dropped, acoustical ceilings and new carpeting were installed throughout the rooms, office, and reception area. Original screened porch on the west side was glassed in. Aluminum, single pane windows were installed in all existing window openings. In 1979, fire damaged the east portion of this building. A new roof of incompatible design, has been rebuilt on a portion of the building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet West Yellowstone MRA

Item number n/a

Page 6

Union Pacific Women's Dormitory (#8)

Seven stone columns is all that remains of the women's dormitory. Originally this building was known as "THE BEANERY", the first dining house for Union Pacific tourists, built in 1911. In 1925, a long rectangular addition with an enclosed screened porch was added to the south side and the existing kitchen and dining facilities were remodeled into bedrooms and bathrooms. The exterior was modified to stylistically compliment that of the new dining lodge. This building stood vacant from 1949 to 1979 when the entire structure was destroyed by fire.

Water Tower and Accessory Sheds (11, 12, 13)

The water tower (#11) is approximately 50' high and was built in 1909-1910 to service trains, supply water for depot, water livestock, and for the domestic use of railroad employees. Constructed of plate steel with riveted seams supported by channel iron struts and rivets. The central shaft is of tongue and groove bead boards. Tower serves as one of the focal points of the site.

A small frame building (#12) measuring 10' x 12'. Built in 1920.

Another storage shed (#13), built in the late 1940's, measuring approximately 8' x 8'. Frame construction with 1" x 6" ship lap siding. Corrugated metal roof.

Union Pacific Freight Building (#14)

Built ca. 1910, measuring approximately 36' x 100'. Corrugated metal siding and roof. A partially covered loading dock. Used to store building materials for Union Pacific construction projects. Today, the building is used as a city garage.

The following structures are non-conforming intrusions within the historic district:

Tourist Information Center (#2)

The Tourist Information Center is a combination of an old railroad car and a previously built frame building which was relocated to the site. It contains information and displays about West Yellowstone and the surrounding area.

The two story section is 10' x 36' constructed of cedar paneling and has a 10' x 10' second story. The attached railroad car is 12' x 72' and is faced with four-inch square, corrugated metal siding. Structures were combined in 1976-77.

Truck Trailer (#10)

This is a 12' x 48' metal semi-trailer from Garrett Freight Lines. Used for storage.

Storage Building (#15)

Measuring 30' x 50'. Masonite siding, wood trim, metal roof. Constructed in 1978-1979.

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

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

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received

3/2/82

date entered

Continuation sheet

West Yellowstone MRA

Item number n/a

Page 7

Mobile Home (#16)

This is a 12' x 60' mobile home with two-color, corrugated metal skirt. Present use is temporary housing.