



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Waterbury Union Station, in New Haven County, Connecticut, reference number 78002881, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 03/08/1978, as evidenced by FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of Tuesday, February 6, 1979, Part II, Vol. 44, No. 26, page 7442. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.


Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

2/12/2009
Date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

HISTORIC Waterbury Union Station

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

389 Meadow Street

CITY, TOWN

Waterbury

VICINITY OF

5th - Ronald A. Sarasin

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

New Haven

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Newspaper

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME American-Republican Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

389 Meadow Street

CITY, TOWN

Waterbury

VICINITY OF

STATE

CT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Waterbury City Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

235 Grand Street

CITY, TOWN

Waterbury

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
 TITLE New England: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites
 Historic American Engineering Record

DATE

1974

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

 DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

DC

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Waterbury Union Station

6

one

Historic Railroad Stations

Federal - 1974

National Register of Historic Places
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service

Washington, DC

Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources
State - 1975

Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford, CT

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

Waterbury's Union Station is advantageously sited at the intersection of two major streets. A public park to one side and a large plaza - now used for parking - in front provide ample open space and free the building from the crowding which afflicts many downtown stations. The tracks are to the rear of the station; access to the further tracks was provided by two tunnels, one from the station and one from a side street to the west. These are both blocked off now, though the latter still has its original iron railing around the opening. The platform shelters, of the "butterfly" type, have been removed. Most of the rail traffic is generated by the nearby freight yard. There are still four trains a day to Bridgeport, using rail diesel cars, but on the whole the track area has little left to suggest an active rail depot.

The station has four major components: the large, box-like central part which contained the high-ceilinged waiting room and railroad offices on the upper floor; smaller and lower wings to the north and south; and the tall clock tower. The whole is 350' long and 50' wide and the tower rises to a height of 245'. The walls are built of sand-struck red brick laid with 3/8" joint in common bond; the header course is not regular, however, having random stretchers included. The foundation is of Stony Creek granite, above which is a roll molding made, like almost all the building's decorative features, of terra cotta.

The streetside or main facade of the central part is dominated by three tall round-arched openings rising the height of the waiting room, the equivalent of two full stories. These were originally entirely glazed with small panes, but now they have been partially filled in where a new floor was inserted. Above the doors, located in the middle archway, is a marquise which originally extended across all three arches. Outlining the arched openings is a band of terra cotta decoration with stylized potted vines and flowers bordered by pearl, egg-and-dart and anthemion moldings. At the ends of the building the facade is brought forward slightly and is plain except for small rectangular windows. Spaced among the archways and these breaks are four large circular medallions made of two rings of radially placed bricks and a raised ring of fasces molding. Separating the waiting room level from the floor above is a series of terra cotta ornament: a round-arched corbel table, dentils, egg-and-dart molding, a frieze with cherubs, and a projecting leaf-carved molding. The top story is comparatively reduced in height and has unadorned rectangular windows, grouped in three above each arch and a single one on the ends. The main cornice is similar to that separating stories but more elaborate: a corbel table, eggs-and-darts, carved modillions, a fluted frieze and a wide carved cyma molding. The low hipped roof is concealed by a plain brick parapet.

The tower is built on the southeast corner of the main building and is square in plan. Except for rows of tiny openings, it is plain for most of its height. Three quarters to the top, on all four sides, is a clock face with Roman numerals, a cast-aluminum replica of the original. Above is a balcony supported on long, tapered corbels which come together in the form of bluntly pointed arches. There are gargoyles on the corners of the balcony, and heraldic shields on the solid rail. Finally, there is a smaller belfry stage with large arched openings and another set of gargoyles. The belfry has a cornice of round-arched tapered corbels and a tiled hipped roof. Except for the height of the clock and the lack of battlements, the tower is a detailed copy of its prototype, the town hall of Sienna.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Waterbury Union Station

7

two

The wings to the north and south are one tall story in height and slightly narrower in plan than the central part. Their hipped roofs are covered with Spanish tiles. The facade of each features an arcade of seven arches worked into the brick pattern with a series of radially laid bricks. Below each arch is a plain rectangular window. Originally, the brick within each arch was laid in a diagonal basketweave pattern, but on the north wing, windows have been installed to light the inserted second story. A row of dentils and a cyma molding at the spring of the arches suggest the capitals of piers. The cornice of the wings is simpler than that of the central part, with a corbel table, dentils, eggs-and-darts, and a plain cyma molding. Appended to the north wing is a new addition housing a printing plant. Although it compromises the symmetry of the station, it is unobtrusive and compatible in scale and material.

The rear facade is nearly identical to the front. The doors to the track have been replaced with windows and inappropriate awnings trivialize the design. There is a small section of platform shelter on the rear of the south wing. Its shallow-pitch gable roof is supported by iron trusses on center posts and by cables from the building; it formerly extended across the entire rear facade.

The south end facade is a repetition of the basic module found in the wings. There is a shed roof on large iron brackets over this area, once the baggage entrance. Here is preserved one of the station's original doors, an oversized studded and panelled affair with a fixed upper part and double doors below. Similar ones were formerly found in the center of each wing's front facade.

The interior has been greatly modified to accommodate the business and editorial offices of the newspaper which owns the building. The main waiting room has been divided into two floors, as has the north wing. Although it is now quite low, the vaulted ceiling is exposed in the second-floor offices. It is finished with large light-colored rectangular tiles arranged in a herringbone pattern. The terra cotta trim around the window arches consists of two bands carved with stylized leaves separated by dentils and a pearl molding. The cornice above the buff brick walls is a similar composition: a row of dentils, a molding with an engaged baluster-and-ring turning, and a wide cyma molding carved with stylized flowers.

The present waiting room is in the south wing, the former restaurant. Here in reduced form are preserved many details which suggest the original interior appearance: brass ticket windows, one long dark Mission-style bench, an iron radiator grill, and marble baseboards and window sills. The walls and vaulted ceiling are plastered.

Overall, the integrity of the station is fairly well-preserved. External changes are few and the recent addition is not conspicuous. Interior changes have greatly diminished the original design's impact, but representative details and major interior surfaces, such as the vaulted ceiling, have been saved. The greatest danger is to details like the lone settee or the ironwork around the platform, which may be overlooked and neglected.

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/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 1909 - built

BUILDER/ARCHITECT McKim, Mead and White

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Waterbury Union Station is a significant historical resource because of its local status as a landmark, the part played by the railroads in Waterbury's history, and the importance of its architects. The station's 240' tower is highly visible and distinctive, the most outstanding feature of the city's skyline. The effect is not accidental. Railway traffic was important to the city, with 66 trains a day at its height. In order to better accommodate travellers (and eliminate grade crossings), the present station was constructed in 1909. The grandeur of the building - its arcaded facade, vaulted ceiling, and sheer size - is typical of the railroad stations of that time. Railroads were considered the source of commercial and industrial vitality, and extravagant stations were the symbols of their importance. The early years of this century saw magnificent new stations not only in New York and Washington, but in much smaller cities like Waterbury.

The colossal scale was intended to symbolize the city's prosperity as well. In partnership with the railroads, the city began a program of urban renewal in this area, straightening streets leading to the station, demolishing deteriorated buildings and creating a park nearby. When American Brass built its headquarters across the street a few years later, it was designed to harmonize in style and material with the new depot. The railroad station was thus the central factor in the development of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Waterbury Station is also significant as an example of the second Renaissance Revival. The architects, McKim, Mead and White, were a leading firm which excelled in the restrained styles of the early 20th century. Like the contemporary Neo-Classical style, the second Renaissance Revival was an attempt to discipline the eclecticism and the preoccupation with ornamental detail which characterized much late 19th-century architecture. The Waterbury Station embodies this search for order. The massing is simple, solid and horizontal. The detailing, while rich and varied, is understated in scale and never showy. The overall impression is one of straightforward monumentality.

The tower is copied from the city hall of Sienna, a Gothic building, and was grafted onto the station at the request of the president of one of the railroads. Meeks believes the architects intended it as a deliberate rebuke to meddling amateurs. Despite its incongruity, the tower reinforces the extraordinary scale of the project.

Although the firm is often considered overly academic and even dull, the station shows a very interesting relationship between interior and exterior space. The two are related through materials, with brick, tile and terra cotta providing a warm, natural atmosphere. Secondly, the geometry of the main facade is picked up inside by the vaulting of the ceiling. Finally, the large amount of glass in the tall windows must have made the interior glow, bringing the outside light in, showing to advantage the warm colors of the interior surfaces, and dispelling the gloom which characterized other station designs.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Meeks, Carroll L.V. The Railroad Station: An Architectural History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956.

"New Depot to be in Use at 6 A.M. Today." (Waterbury) Sunday Republican, July 11, 1909, p. 1.

"Railway Station at Waterbury, Conn." Brickbuilder, XVIII (1909), 193, 197, plates 119-123.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.4

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6,6,2,8,4,0	4,6,0,2,0,0,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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	Bruce Clouette, Consultant
ORGANIZATION	Connecticut Historical Commission
DATE	November 19, 1976
STREET & NUMBER	59 South Prospect Street
TELEPHONE	(203) 566-3005
CITY OR TOWN	Hartford
STATE	CT

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE 

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE August 22, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER