

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Union Depot
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
300 SW 7
CITY, TOWN
Oklahoma City
STATE
Oklahoma
VICINITY OF
CODE
40
NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
No. 5
COUNTY
Oklahoma
CODE
109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company
St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad Company
STREET & NUMBER 3325 S. Michigan
Frisco Bldg., 906 Olive Street
CITY, TOWN Chicago,
St. Louis, VICINITY OF
STATE Illinois 60604
Missouri 63101

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Clerk
STREET & NUMBER
Oklahoma County Courthouse
CITY, TOWN
Oklahoma City STATE
Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Special Union Station Survey
DATE 1977
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Oklahoma Historical Society
CITY, TOWN
Oklahoma City STATE
Oklahoma

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

Union Station would cost more than \$3 million to build today. It cost far less than that when constructed in 1930-1931 to accommodate the Rock Island and Frisco railroads, then being relocated from the center of downtown Oklahoma City (cf. No. 8). A Spanish stucco station had originally been planned (probably to follow the lead of the rival Santa Fe, then making profitable use of such structures all along its Southwestern lines). But, according to a contemporary newspaper account, the station "dished up" by the Frisco's architectural department and approved by Oklahoma City (whose bonds were, after all, paying much of the relocation cost) was "considerably larger and more substantial."

It retained the arched portico and tower and general lines of the Spanish, but it was constructed of stone. Its 70 x 70-foot main lobby had a vaulted ceiling 20 feet high, marble walls and marble floor. In all the building had 50,000 square feet of space, this in addition to the tower and two large tunnels that served the protected track area. An unusual feature was an elaborate rock garden (cf. No. 8) between the 11,000-square-foot baggage room wing and the tracks.

Today the station, though unused now for several years, is in quite good condition. The original chandeliers still remain in the building.

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 checked="" 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"/> 1600-1899	<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 checked="" 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 1930 - 1967

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When dedicated in 1931, Oklahoma City's Union Station was considered the latest thing in railroad station architecture. A handsome stone structure, it accommodated two lines - Rock Island and Frisco - and stood as a symbol, not only of the arrival of Oklahoma's capital as a major city, but also of its civic pride and self-improvement zeal.

In its early years (Oklahoma City was established in the "run" of 1889) the routing of all-important railroad lines through the center of town was de rigueur, a move generally equated with metropolitan progress and prosperity. Only as the city and rail traffic grew - with increasing inconveniences on both sides - did relocation pressures increase. Finally, a \$10,329,000 public improvement bond issue was passed. Four million dollars of it was used to purchase right-of-way a half-dozen blocks south of city's main business district. There Union Station was built. The last Rock Island and Frisco trains rolled through the downtown area on Nov. 30, 1930. Oklahoma City's Civic Center complex developed on the center-of-town right-of-way thus vacated.

The station opened with considerable fanfare. And for two decades it served the capital city and central Oklahoma with efficiency and also with a touch of class. Fine chandeliers lit the 70 x 70-foot main waiting room with its 20-foot vaulted ceiling, marble walls and floors. And in a court where the baggage room wing adjoined the canopied tracks a Frisco employe, one Don B. Fellows - hailed in a contemporary newspaper report as "probably the only man in the world with the title of railroad florist" - designed and oversaw construction of an unusual rock garden. It boasted 100 different varieties of rock from all over the world and featured a pool teeming with goldfish. And it was green with no less than 50 varieties of plants and evergreens. (Alas, it has long since disappeared.)

Following World War II, however, when the railroads proved their essential worth to the nation, passenger traffic began, ironically, to decline sharply. By 1967 both the Rock Island and the Frisco had discontinued their last passenger trains. Continuing railroad services were carried on elsewhere and Union Station, now unneeded and deserted, was put up for sale. That's its status today. Several commercial - and quasi-cultural - proposals have been advanced for its use, but so far nothing definite has developed. It is hoped that Union Station - still handsome, still structurally sound - can be preserved against the day when an economically viable adaptive use can be arranged. For this reason - as well for the role it and its two owners have played in the development of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma - National Register status for it is being sought.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Miscellaneous contemporary newspaper accounts

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

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6	3	4	4	6	8
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kent Ruth, Deputy

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

DATE

August 1977

TELEPHONE

405/884-5456

STATE

Oklahoma

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

DATE

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



Union Depot

