

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION Amtrak Station, Oakland

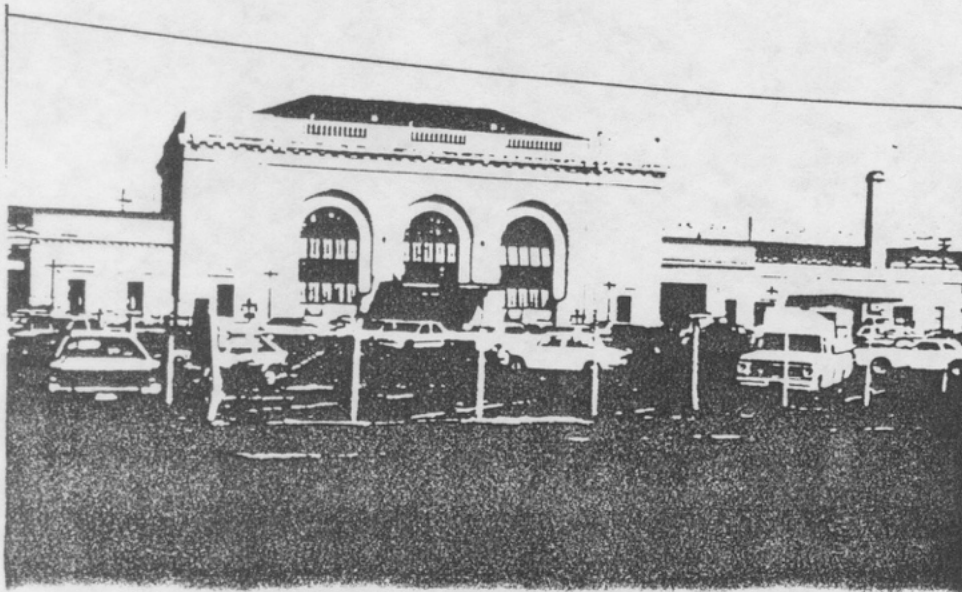
1. Common name: _____
2. Historic name: Southern Pacific 16th Street Station
3. Street or rural address: 1798 16th Street/1601 Wood Street
City Oakland Zip 94607 County Alameda
4. Parcel number: 0-310-7
5. Present Owner: Southern Pacific Co. Address: 1 Market Plaza
City San Francisco CA Zip 94105 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Transportation/rail-related Original use: Transportation/rail-related

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/Beaux Arts
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical appearance* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The Southern Pacific Depot is a brick and steel-frame, terra-cotta faced building, its main section three stories high, flanked by lower side wings and a baggage building partway behind to the right. The whole structure occupies an area about 270' long (parallel to the tracks) and 150' deep. The exterior is grooved and speckled granite-patterned gray terra cotta with a granite base. The center section has a tiled hip roof surrounded by a classical entablature with modillion blocks and a paneled parapet accented by balustrades over the main windows. The facade is dominated by three giant, round-arched windows within deep concave niches. The windows are set in iron sash, segmented in horizontal rows of five panels, each divided vertically; the top rows outline an inner arch. The central window is directly above the entrance, while the two side windows top 6'-high sculptured pedestals and fountain-like objects with bullseyes, floral bosses, and fluted scrolled pendants. At the main entrance a metal marquee is suspended on chains and supported by giant metal

(see continuation page 3)



8. Construction date: _____
Estimated _____ Factual 1910
9. Architect Jarvis Hunt
10. Builder James Stewart & Co.
Terra cotta by Gladding
McBe
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 270 Depth 150
or approx. acreage _____
12. Dates) of enclosed photographs _____

Photo No: 499-17
Date: 09/16/87

- 13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good X Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___
- 14. Alterations: Elevated tracks removed
- 15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up X
Residential ___ Industrial X Commercial X Other: _____
- 16. Threats to site: None known ___ Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: Under-use; SB547
- 17. Is the structure: On its original site? X Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
- 18. Related features: None

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)
 The 16th Street Southern Pacific Depot appears eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, architecture, as a fine example of Beaux Arts-Secessionist civic design, and Criterion A, patterns, for its role in the development of transportation in Oakland's City Beautiful era.

This station, still functioning as Oakland's Amtrak depot, was built in 1910-12 replacing an 1870s hip-roofed, half-timbered wooden station. Construction was part of a massive program of improvements in Southern Pacific's East Bay service to meet the needs of the suburbs which had mushroomed after the 1906 earthquake. The S.P.'s suburban lines were changed from steam to electric power in 1910, and concurrently four substantial new stations were built in Oakland and Berkeley between 1907 and 1913. More tracks and better waiting rooms were the practical reasons, but civic bodies in both cities also lobbied

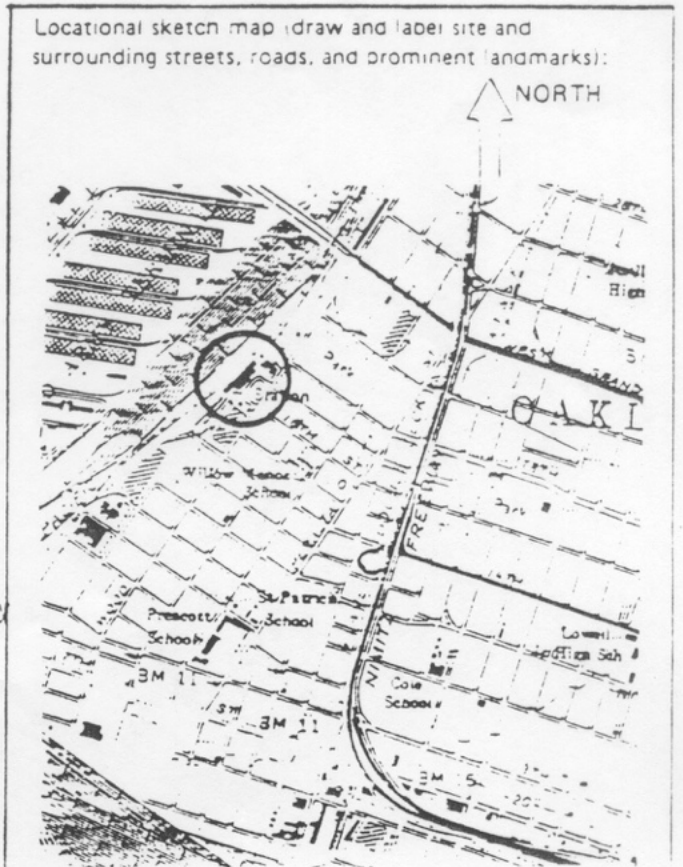
(see continuation page 3)

- 20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
 Architecture 2 Arts & Leisure _____
 Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement _____
 Government ___ Military _____
 Religion ___ Social/Education _____

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

See continuation page 9

22. Date form prepared August 31, 1988
 By (name) Staff
 Organization Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey
 Address: 1 City Hall Plaza
 City Oakland CA 9461 Zip 94612
 Phone: (415)273-3941





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7b. Physical Description (continued from page 1)

scrolled brackets with a foliate pattern. The marquee is edged with a row of raised small bullseyes, and elaborate rococo escutcheons standing up at the center and the corners. The swinging doors, with windows and kickplates, are utilitarian and probably replacements. At the outer corners of the main section's facade are small casement windows at normal height, topped by rusticated terra cotta moldings, fascias, and sheaves.

The side wings, set back a few feet from the main facade, and about 20' high, have windows with hood moldings like those on the main facade but without the sculptured ornament, and a modillion block cornice with meander patterns in the parapet panels, a variation of the main cornice. The left (south) wing has two front windows, and the north one has one window and a wide rectangular vehicle passage.

The baggage and furnace-room wing to the north, set back about 25' from the main facade and about 95' square, is the same height as the other wings, with a simpler parapet and four vehicle doors. At its far north edge, about halfway back, is a 50' chimney, rectangular, slightly tapered, terra cotta clad, with an ornamental terra cotta molding and pendants at the top. Around the station are a number of cast iron lamp posts (marked Geo. Cotter Co., South Bend, Ind.), with square bases, fluted shafts, a raised center globe in a metal frame, and two smaller globes hanging from a crosspiece.

The interior of the station consists of a waiting room 116' X 60', restrooms in the southern wing, and the baggage area in the northern wings. The waiting room is the full 3-story height of the center wing. It has a marble floor and high marble wainscot. The three giant arches of the facade are repeated on the back wall (3 windows, beginning at second story level above the ticket and concession booths, the vestibule to the tracks, and the elevated platform outside), and on the end walls. The southern wall has a large, ornate round clock at the center of its arch. The opposite wall has the Southern Pacific emblem in that same space. Below the clock, there is a painting of Mount Shasta; on the opposite wall, a painting of Emerald Bay, Lake Tahoe.

Black and white marble bullseyes in the wainscot below the front windows echo the "fountains" back-to-back with them outside. Doors and windows in the corner bays have elaborate neoclassical frames, with fruits and leaves cascading down side pilasters, and wave-patterned lintels topped by large gilt crests. The ceiling is divided into 5 deep coffers running east-west, lined with many layers of molding and foliate and meander bands. The middle 3 coffers have center circles of acanthus leaves and grillwork, from which hang large spherical light fixtures with a fishscale pattern.

The room is furnished with long oak benches. Other appurtenances are the ticket booth at right rear, souvenir and food stand at left rear with a large neon sign, and shoeshine stand at the south wall. The tracks are reached through a brick vestibule under the center rear window. There are blue openwork wood benches on the platform, underneath an elevated platform on big

(see continuation page 4)



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75. Physical Description (continued from page 3)

riveted beams and girders, which formerly connected to the tracks for commuter trains (discontinued and dismantled in the early 1940s). The back windows of the waiting room open onto this upper platform. Stairs to the upper level, at either side of the platform, still exist but are fenced off. The tracks ran right along the shoreline until this section of the bay was filled in for the Oakland Army Base in the 1940s.

The station is in generally good condition, though some of the exterior terra cotta and interior paint is peeling, and graffiti is a problem. It is underused, with only about 5 arrivals and 5 departures a day.

1709 Wood Street. About 150' north of the station, along the tracks, is the 16th Street Signal Tower, a 3-story reinforced concrete structure about 15' x 31' and 35' high, with hip roof, wide eaves, stucco exterior, and a solid band of small-paned horizontal-casement windows around the third story, just under the eaves. A common sill wraps around the building under the windows, and there is a similar belt course over the first story. Openings on the lower floors are few and small. Plans describe the first floor as containing battery room, transformer room, and machine shop, second floor containing operating instrument room and toilet.

Just below the windows on the long sides are wooden signs "16th Street Tower." Specifications describe the roof as slate, but the earliest Sanborn map of the station shows it as composition, which is its material today.

There are other outbuildings and railway-owned property in the area, including a 1929 shed at 1835 Wood Street, but the signal tower is closest and most closely related to the station, and the only one readily recognizable as a railway structure.

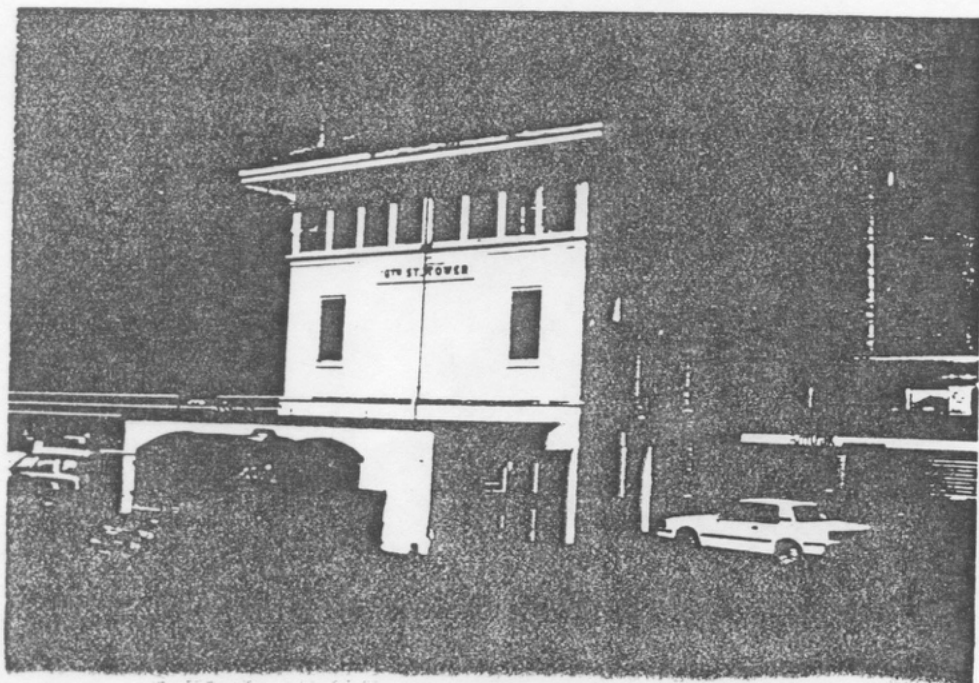


Photo No: 500-6
Date: 09/16/87
Location: 1709 Wood St.
Parcel No: 0-310-7-P



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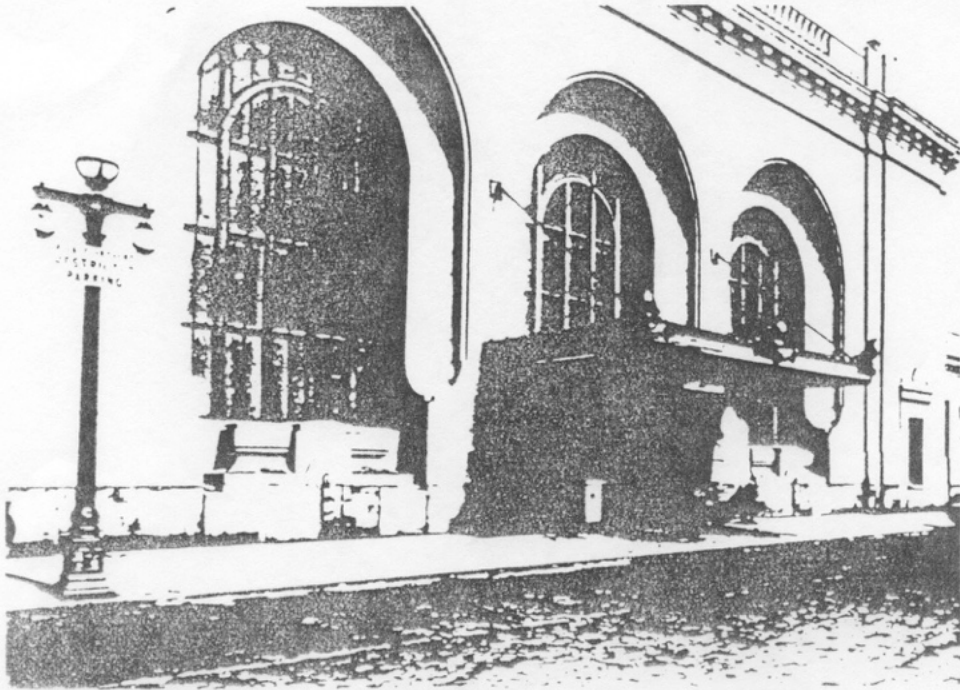
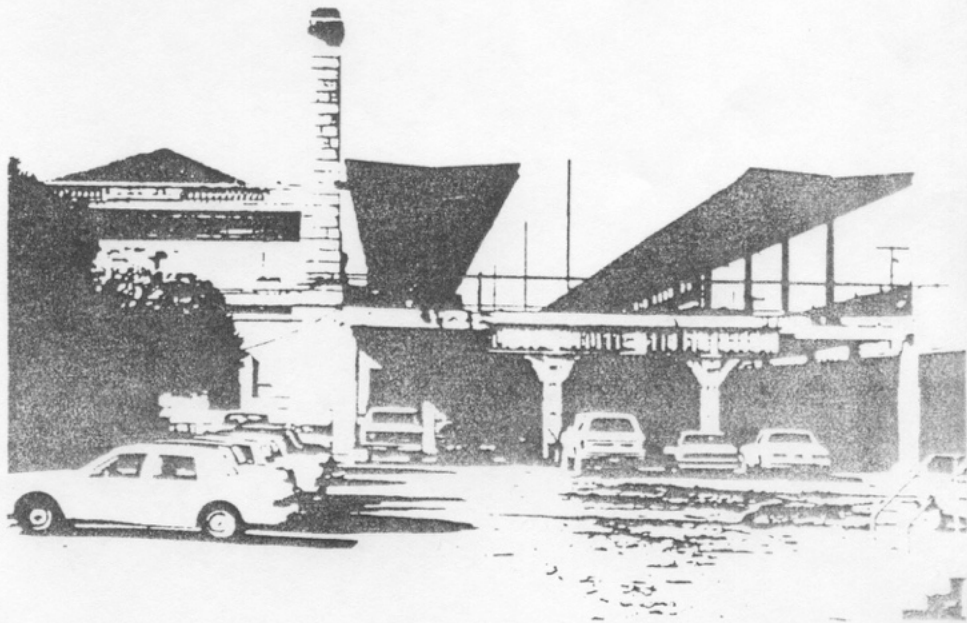


Photo No: 485-11
Date: 09-02-87
Location: 1798 16TH ST
CENTER FACADE DETAIL

Photo No: 500-7
Date: 09/16/87
Location: 16TH ST AMTRAK STATION
N. ELEV, CHIMNEY, ELEV'D PLATFORM





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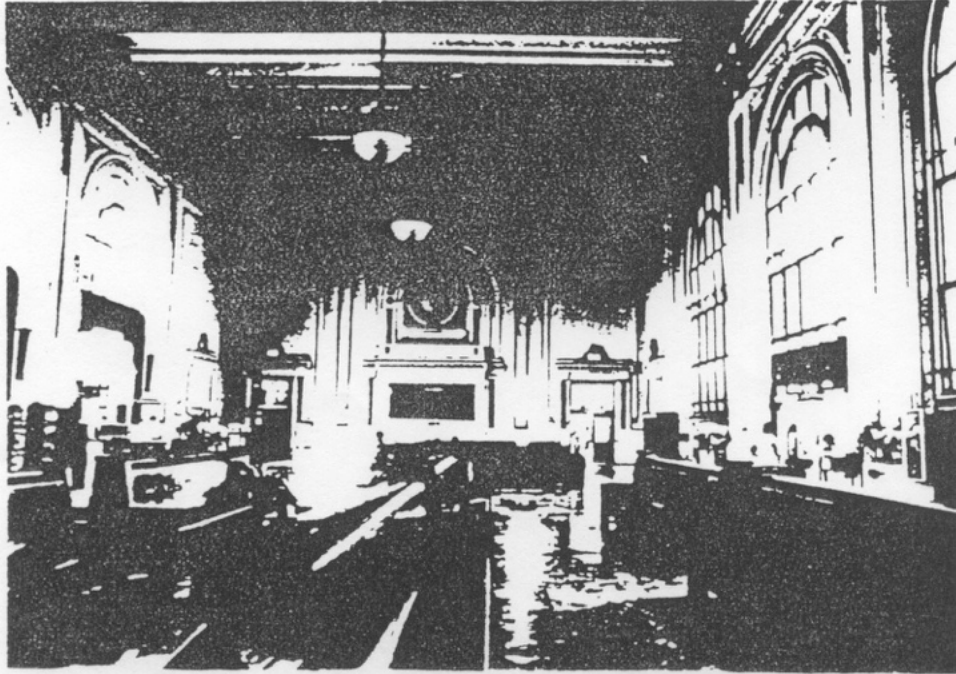
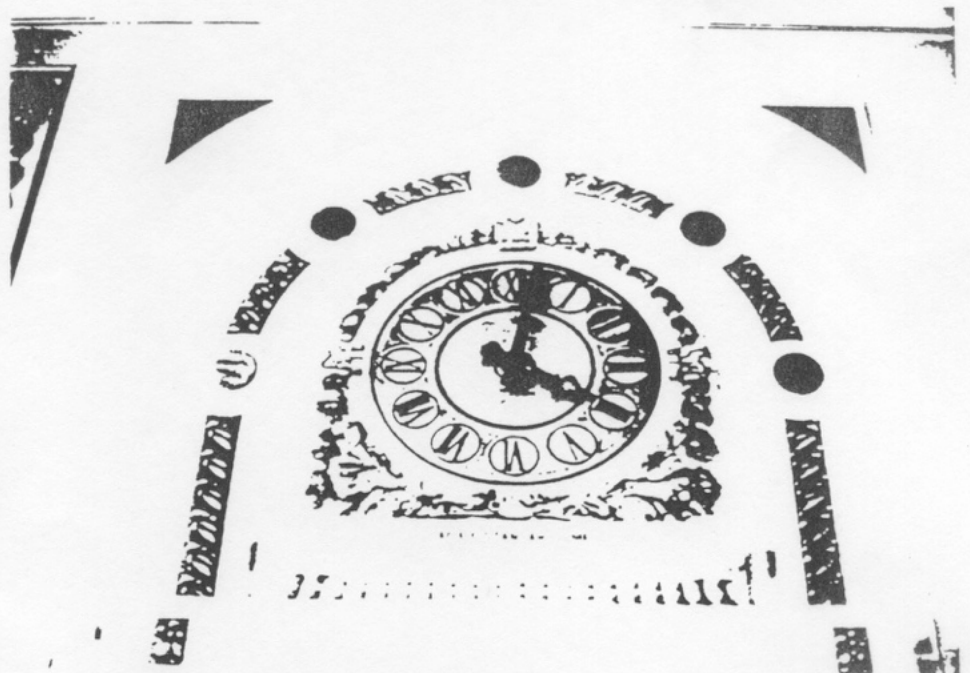


Photo No: 490- 4
Date: 09/03/87
Location: 16TH ST AMTRAK STATION
WAITING ROOM LOOKING NORTH

Photo No: 490- 1
Date: 09/03/87
Location: 16TH ST AMTRAK STATION
WAITING ROOM, CLOCK ON N.WALL





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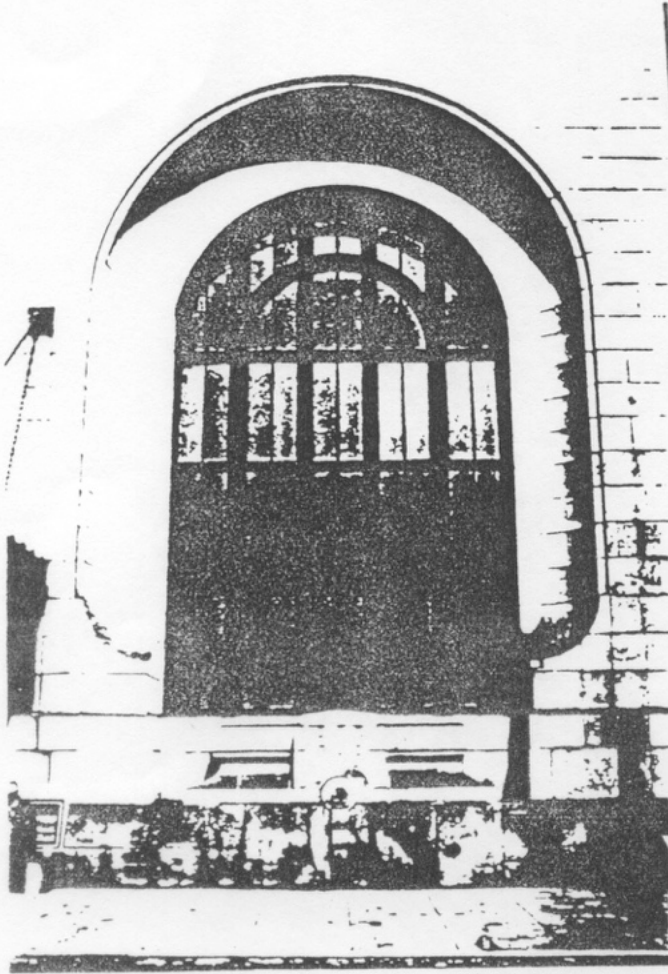


Photo No: 485-9
Date: 09/02/87
Location: 16TH ST AMTRAK STATION
FRONT WINDOW DETAIL

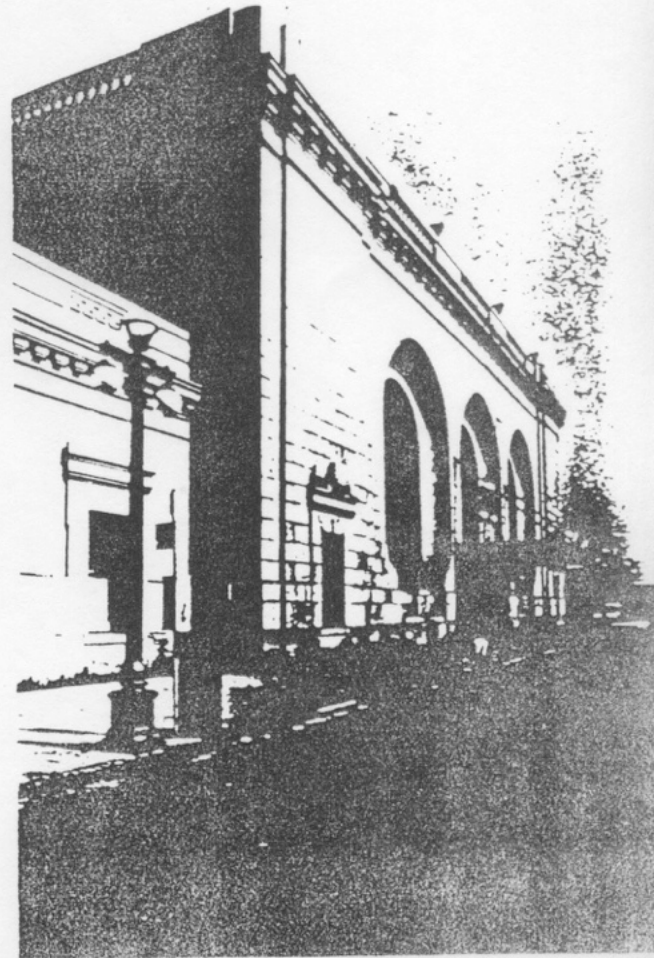


Photo No: 486-10
Date: 09/02/87
Location: 16TH ST AMTRAK STATION
VIEW NORTH ON FRONT ELEVATION



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19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 2)

the railroad for new stations as a symbol of civic pride. In the same years that the 16th Street Station was built, Oakland also boasted a new charter, new city hall, civic auditorium, school and park expansion programs, Werner Hegemann's city plan, and a hotel building boom in anticipation of the 1915 World's Fair.

The Chamber of Commerce took the lead in pushing the S.P. to build this new station, more representative of Oakland's growth and industry, and needed by a city which had doubled its population in the last ten years and attracted many industries. The Southern Pacific finally yielded to pressure from the city and from its own representatives in Oakland and tore down the old 16th Street station in 1910. At the old station mainline trains had frequently blocked local trains and delayed them as crowds of people and baggage were taken off.

The distinctive improvement offered by the new 16th Street station, accounting for the building's monumental height, was separate elevated tracks for S.P.'s local trains ("red trains"). Said to be the first elevated railway in the west, the tracks were raised on steel and pilings for about half a mile on either side of the station, from 9th to 20th Street, eliminating some dangerous grade crossings as well as train tie-ups.

On Saturday, August 3, 1912, the Chamber of Commerce staged a celebration which included an automobile parade of 500 cars through downtown Oakland and a night-time reception at the station following the parade. H.C. Capwell was master of ceremonies and M.J. Laymance was chairman of the reception committee. The first address was delivered by W.E. Gibson, president of the Chamber of Commerce. The station was considered one of the most splendid on the Pacific Coast and aroused great pride in "Oakland - My City."

Though the station was completed and dedicated in August 1912, the Suburban Elevation tracks were not ready until 1914 (duly celebrated with another gala event, a carnival sponsored by the West Oakland Improvement Club). "The construction of the dual facilities proved to be a wise decision, as within a very few years, the ground level facilities were accommodating over 50 daily mainline trains. At this same time, the Suburban Elevation saw 488 electric trains pass through each day on five transbay lines....further augmented by the more than 200 daily arrivals and departures of streetcars on the Crosstown line which used the balloon track in front of the station. To round out the transit activity in front of the station, streetcars on several of the Key Route local lines terminated on West 16th Street, only one-half block away." (Ford, Red Trains in the East Bay, p. 128)

With this volume of traffic, the new well-equipped signal tower built north of the station in 1913 was a natural accessory. A minor hotel and restaurant district also developed around the station; the mission revival S.P. Hotel at the northeast corner of 16th and Wood, developed in 1913 by Joseph B. Coryell, a developer with railroad connections in San Francisco and on the Peninsula, is the best of these buildings.

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19. Historical and/or Architectural Importance (continued from page 8)

While the Berkeley and Oakland First Street stations were designed by S.P. company architects, the 16th Street station was designed by prominent Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt (1859-1941), a nephew of Richard Morris Hunt, known for railroad terminals in Dallas, Joliet, and Kansas City (Withey). Construction was supervised by J.Q. Barlow, assistant chief engineer of the railroad, and the city building permit (#24188, issued March 21, 1912, though work reportedly started in 1910) identifies James Stewart & Co. as contractor for the \$217,000 project. Terra cotta - 350 tons - was supplied by Gladding McBean (order no. 957). Barlow also supervised construction of the 1913 signal tower (permit #31551, S.P. Company design, builder R.W. Moller of Oakland). The station's architecture, with its mannered, overscaled, geometric Secessionist elements, is individual and locally unusual, yet of a piece with such other Oakland City Beautiful monuments as City Hall, the Municipal Auditorium, and Technical High School.

The last trains ran on the Suburban Elevation in April 1941, as transit patterns changed sharply after completion of the Bay Bridge. After the Berkeley station closed in 1971, this became the East Bay's mainline Amtrak station, continuing - albeit tenuously - its original occupancy and use.

21. Sources (continued from page 2)

City of Oakland Inspectional Services Department, building permits and plans
Sanborn insurance maps, 1882-1901, 1902-11, 1912-51
Oakland City Directories

Gladding McBean terra cotta job list

City of Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, Resolution 1983-16 and
Case File LM 83-423, landmark designation of S.P. Station

Blake, Evarts J., Greater Oakland, Oakland, Pacific Publishing Co., 1911, pp.
52-66, "The Southern Pacific and Oakland"

Oakland Observer, August 3, 1912
Oakland Enquirer, August 1-5, 1912
Oakland Tribune, August 1-5, 1912

Architect and Engineer of California, September 1915, p. 100, and February
1917, plate B, illustrations

Withey, Henry, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), 1956

Ford, Robert S., Red Trains in the East Bay, 1977

The Knave, "Oakland Greeted Elevated Rails in 1914....," Oakland Tribune, August
25, 1968