

SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD WEST OAKLAND SHOPS, CAR
PAINTING SHOP
Foot of Cedar Street
Oakland
Alameda County
California

HAER CA-2262-B
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
PACIFIC WEST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

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SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD WEST OAKLAND SHOPS,
CAR PAINTING SHOP
HAER NO. CA-2262-B

- Location:** Foot of Cedar Street, Oakland, Alameda County, California
- USGS 7.5 minute series – Oakland West, Calif.
UTM Coordinates: 10 . 561290 . 4184240
- Date of Construction:** Ca. 1874, with alterations ca. 1901, 1942, 1949, 1956, and 1958
- Present Owner:** Union Pacific Railroad
1416 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68179-0310
- Present Use:** Diesel Locomotive Maintenance Shop
- Significance:** The Southern Pacific Railroad Car Painting Shop is the oldest extant building in the West Oakland Shops, dating to the period of the Shops' first great expansion. It was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990, as a contributor to the Southern Pacific Railroad West Oakland Shops Historic District.
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I. DESCRIPTION

The Car Painting Shop is a brick masonry building, laid up in 5:1 common bond. Almost square in plan, it has a double-gable roof with the two ridges aligned roughly north-south. The east and west walls have seven bays with service tracks that run through the building. Brick pilasters define the bays, and brick corbelling at the top of the walls is suggestive of a cornice. The roof is sheathed in corrugated metal, with galvanized metal gutters.

All of the doors and windows have segmental-arch heads. The large windows in the north façade are divided into quarters, with 24-lite sash in each quadrant. There are also paired, 24-lite sash in the gables of the north and south walls. The east and west facades each have one tall, narrow window of 32 lites. Only four pairs of the original wood train doors survive, at each end of the two northernmost bays. The remaining train doors were enlarged prior to 1945, with all of the brickwork between the pilasters removed and the opening spanned by wood lintels. Many of the replacement doors in these enlarged doorways have been removed, leaving the building mostly open along the east and west sides. The doorways in the third bay from the north end have been reinforced with concrete columns and lintels.

The interior is one large open working space, with the iron roof trusses supported by riveted iron columns. The four southernmost bays have lowered floors and drop pits for accessing the lower portions and undersides of locomotives and train cars.

A one-story, gable-roofed brick addition, aligned perpendicular to the main building, abuts the south end of the Car Painting Shop at the southwest corner. Like the main building, it has a double-gable roof, brick pilasters and corbelling, and a roof of corrugated metal. The segmental-arch windows have 24-lite sash. A later addition of wood frame construction extends from this brick addition across the entire length of the south façade. It has corrugated metal on the walls as well as the roof, with mostly 6-lite and 12-lite windows. There is also an addition on the eastern portion of the north façade, with corrugated metal on the walls and roof, which houses the air compressor room.

II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Easily the oldest building in the district, the Car Painting Shop is a survivor from the earliest days of Southern Pacific's West Oakland Shops. The eastern half of the building dates to ca. 1874, the year in which the Shops underwent great expansion. A hip-roofed boiler house with square brick smokestack then stood adjacent to the southwest end of the shop. Photographic evidence indicates that the parallel gable-roofed addition, which doubled the size of the shop, was in place by 1902. Likely the 1901 construction date indicated in Southern Pacific's records refers to the building of this addition. Shortly thereafter, the present paired gable-roofed boiler house was constructed on the south side of the building at the west end, replacing the original. This addition was built separately from the main building, as there is a "cold joint" between the two structures, with no direct connection of the masonry bearing walls.

It was in this shop that the passenger cars built and maintained by the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific were painted and decorated. Lacking the radial track arrangement and turntable of a roundhouse, the building was served by a transfer table which moved cars to any of the building's seven interior tracks. The building's use between about 1910, when the company began to build steel passenger cars, and 1942, when it was converted for diesel locomotive maintenance, remains unclear, though it is likely that it continued to function as the passenger car paint shop well into the steel car era.

The shop was further modified in 1942 to serve the diesel locomotives of the new *City of San Francisco* streamliner, at which time it was renamed the Streamliner Shop. The transfer table was removed at this time, and a wood frame, gable-roofed addition was added to the south side of the building, abutting the boiler house. The original arched doorways were also altered at this time to handle the new, larger equipment.

The building received further interior alterations in 1949 and 1956, and the small compressor house on the north end of the building was added in 1958. Presently equipped with subfloor inspection pits, elevated service walkways, and a small machine shop, it functions as a service and paint shop for diesel locomotives.

III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Maps and Plans

"Oakland yard, scale, 1 In. = 100 Ft., May, 1910."

"Oakland Yard, Scale 1" = 100'. June, 1915. (revised to Jan. 31, 1918.)"

"Oakland 1st St., Cedar to Kirkham, Scale 1" = 100', Nov. 1913."

"Right of Way and Track Map, Main Line, Central Pacific Railway Company, Operated by Southern Pacific Company, Western Division, Alameda County, California, from Station ____ to Station ____, Scale: 1 Inch = 100 feet, December 31, 19__ [traced Feb. 1917], Office of Chief Engineer, San Francisco, California."

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Oakland, 1889, 1902, 1903, 1911, 1912, 1925, 1928, 1929, 1911-50, 1912-50, 1912-51, 1925-50, 1926-50, 1928-50.

"Southern Pacific Co., Compressor House, West Oakland, Elevations & Plan, Oct. 14, 1958."

"Southern Pacific Co., Diesel Shop, West Oakland, Calif., Ventilation, Section & Plan, 1952."

"Southern Pacific Co., Extension to Diesel-Shop at West Oakland Yard, Oakland, Cal., Aug. 12, 1947."

"Southern Pacific Co., Streamliner Facilities, West Oakland, Calif., Addition to Car Paint Shop, Floor Plan, Elevations, April 15th, 1941."

"Southern Pacific Co., Streamliner Facilities, West Oakland, Calif., Changes to Doorways at Track #16, May 15th, 1941."

"Southern Pacific Co., Streamliner Facilities, West Oakland, Calif., Remodeling Diesel Shop, Oct. 6, 1944."

"Southern Pacific Co., West Oakland Coach Yard, Part Plan showing location of Proposed Commissary Stores Bldg. And Facilities for servicing Streamliner Trains, Feb. 20th, 1941."

Manuscripts

Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, Vol. 28A, Oakland City Planning Department, 1990.

“Southern Pacific Co., Historical Outline, 1931.” Typescript prepared by Southern Pacific Bureau of News, Development Department, 1933.

Photograph Collections

History Center, Transportation Library, California Department of Transportation, Sacramento.

History Room, Oakland Public Library.

Roy D. Graves Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Vernon Sappers Collection, Western Railway Museum Library, Rio Vista Junction.

Interviews

Interview with the late railroad historian and author Vernon Sappers at his home in Oakland.

IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The California Department of Transportation constructed a new segment of Interstate 880 in Oakland, to replace the Cypress Street structure that collapsed in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989. The new freeway is on a different alignment, and a portion of the Southern Pacific Railroad West Oakland Shops was acquired by the State of California as right-of-way for construction of the new freeway. While not affecting the Car Painting Shop directly, the proximity of new freeway will alter the building's setting. This documentation of the Southern Pacific Railroad West Oakland Shops is intended to comply with part of the mitigation requirements for the construction of the new freeway, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.