

Santa Fe Railroad Station
1050 Kettner Boulevard
San Diego
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-1965

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SANTA FE RAILROAD STATION

HABS No. CA-1965

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37-SAND,
22-

Location 1050 Kettner Boulevard, San Diego, San Diego County, California.

Present Owner: Santa Fe Railroad Company.

Present Occupant: Santa Fe Railroad.

Present Use: Railroad station.

Significance: The Santa Fe Depot is a well planned and attractive early twentieth century railroad station. It is a very good example of the Mission style which flourished in San Diego at the time of the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition. Although "traditional" in design, symmetrical and monumental, it incorporated modern features for its date: a steel skeleton, easily maintained and permanent decorative materials, and an advanced layout allowing good circulation and separation of the various station functions.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1914-15. The depot was begun on May 28, 1914. (The San Diego Union, May 28, 1914, p. 5.) It was planned that the station should open for the first day of the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Diego, January 1, 1915, but due to problems over the closing of B Street, the station was not formally opened until March 7, 1915. (San Diego Union, March 8, 1915, Section B. p. 12.)
2. Architect: Bakewell and Brown, Architects. Arthur Brown Jr. was one of the most important of the "traditional" architects of the twentieth century. Among many other buildings, he worked on the San Francisco Civic Center and the Federal Triangle in Washington, D.C. He was a partner in the firm of Bakewell and Brown from 1905 to 1927. John R. Bakewell also designed major civic buildings, mostly in California. These include the town hall in Berkeley, the City Hall in Pasadena and work at Stanford University and the Golden Gate Exposition.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The depot is built on Lots 1-12, Block 295 of the Middletown addition of San Diego.
4. Original plans, construction: A large set of original drawings for the building is still in the office of the Santa Fe Railroad Company in Los Angeles. These include two sets of sheets measuring 2-12 by 7 ft. One set of six sheets includes the following title on each sheet: "Station at San Diego,

California, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Co. Bakewell and Brown Architects, 251 Kearney Street, San Francisco. G. W. Harris, Chief Engineer, Coast Lines, scale 1/2 inch equals 1 foot. Dated April 18, 1914, revised April 29, 1914." Several of these drawings have been reproduced for this HABS report, and are in the field records accompanying this report. The complete set includes these sheets:

1. Plan of basement and foundations.
2. Main floor plan.
3. Second floor and roof plans.
4. West elevation, section through main waiting room, section through baggage room, elevation of front.
5. East elevation, section through patio, section through baggage room, section through main towers.
6. Longitudinal section looking toward tracks, longitudinal section through main room looking toward Arctic Street, section through passage, section through restaurant, kitchen and yard.

There is also a revised plan of drawing number 2, dated February 21, 1969, showing the building with changes made at that time. The second set of drawings is dated from May to July 1914. This set apparently is incomplete but includes the following drawings:

100. Typical 1/2" scale details
104. Typical 1/2" scale details of arcade (front entrance portico)
105. Typical 1/2" scale details of main towers
109. Typical 1/2" scale details of low towers

A third set of drawings includes 12 sheets of engineering drawings showing structural details. These sheets are titled "Station at San Diego California, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Co., C. W. Harris Chief Engineer, Coast Lines, Bakewell

and Brown Architects, C. H. Snyder, Engineer." These are dated from April 18 to April 29, 1914. They include the following sheets:

- s-1 Roof framing plan and sections
- s-2 Roof framing plan
- s-3 Roof plan and truss details
- s-4 Stress diagrams and roof sections
- s-5 Tower framing and roof trusses
- s-6 Details of columns and trusses
- s-7 Roof trusses
- s-8 Gable framing, main waiting room
- s-9 Gable framing in main waiting room
- s-10 Foundation section "A"
- s-11 Foundation section "B"
- s-12 Foundation section "D"

The depot, a "long picturesque building of the mission type," was to be, when finished, the "largest, and finest station in the state." So the March 15, 1914, issue of the San Diego Union declared. This paper also noted that the contract for the building, for \$230,000, went to the William Simpson Construction Company. The steel came from Chicago, but all the other materials were purchased locally. In its January 1, 1915, issue, the same paper noted that the decorative tiles had been ordered from the California China Products Co. of National City. The furnishings were opulent and expensive; the solid brass ticket booth gratings, for example, costing \$1,000 each. This issue of the paper also reported that the depot would serve "as a model for all future passenger stations built in California by the Santa Fe."

5. Alterations and additions: The major alteration to the building was the destruction of the front portico in 1954. Other major changes include the closing of the Harvey Restaurant, originally located at the north of the waiting room and separated from it by arches. There were also a number of changes which took place in the 1960s to "modernize" the ticket selling operation. These include the removal of the ticket office on the west side of the

waiting room and the construction of a new ticket office on the north side. At this time the rooms to the north of the waiting room, including the lunch room and kitchen, were divided into smaller rooms for the telegraph office, store and filing rooms and men and women's toilets. There were other changes in the baggage room and elsewhere where new partition walls were elected. The building to the north of the baggage room was constructed at an undetermined date. See material in the HABS Field Records accompanying this report for information on current (1975) plan for the building.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

A set of construction photographs is in the collection of the Title Insurance Company, San Diego Historical Society, San Diego. These have the title "New Santa Fe Depot, San Diego, California. William Simpson Construction Co." A number of these have been reproduced for this HABS report, and are listed as photographs CA-1965-9 through CA-1965-15 in the accompanying Index to Photographs. The previously cited March 15, 1914, issue of the San Diego Union has a sketch showing the proposed appearance of the finished building.

2. Bibliography:

Duke, Donald and Stan Kistler, Santa Fe. Steel Rails Through California, (San Marino, 1963.) This book gives illustrations of the San Diego and other depots.

Ferris, Helen, M. "Santa Fe Depot: Report for Historical Site Board," San Diego, 1971, (xeroxed copy in the files of the Historic Sites Board, Planning Department, City of San Diego.)

Carrico, Richard, "Historical Survey" Appendix to the "Environmental Impact Analysis of Santa Fe Towers," (xeroxed copy in files of the Historic Sites Board in the San Diego City Planning Department.)

San Diego Union, various dates, especially:

March 15, 1914, p. 1: Final plans approved for station and illustration of planned station.

May 24, 1914, p. 1: Contract let for building.

May 26, 1914, p. 5: Ground breaking.

June 30, 1914, p. 3: Photographs show construction progress.

January 1, 1915, p. 5: Station largely finished but not open yet, detailed description.

March 8, 1915, p. 12: New station opened.

Santa Fe Magazine, August 1915. This article, quoted by several later writers, was unavailable in San Diego libraries to the HABS 1975 summer team.

See also additional material in the field records accompanying this report.

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Summer 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of the Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The depot consists of a large main waiting room with a two-story wing running along the east elevation. There is also a one-story building to the north of the main waiting room and a partial basement. The concourse along the west side is one story high.
2. Layout, shape: The depot consists basically of two buildings separated by a 20' passageway which runs east and west between them. Both buildings are adjoined on the west side by a 450' long covered concourse running the entire length of the depot.
3. Overall dimensions: 466'-2" x 110'-6".
4. Foundations: 1'-6" concrete foundations with 14" square piers transferring the interior loads.
5. Wall Construction:
 - a. South building: The walls have a steel skeletal system with unreinforced brick used for the lower 16' of the main waiting room walls, and hollow clay tile used above. Both the two-story section and the area north of the main waiting room have steel skeletons with unreinforced brick and clay tile walls. All exterior walls are covered with plaster cement.

- b. North building: The north building consists of two separate structures of totally different construction. The most southerly of the two structures was constructed with the South building as part of the depot shown on the original drawings of Bakewell and Brown Architects. The exterior walls have steel columns and unreinforced brick for their full height (except for their door and window openings). The northernmost building is of bearing wall construction with 6-1/2" thick wall panels between 18" x 24" vertical pilasters located at intervals of approximately 18'. However, the east wall appears to be a uniform 14" thickness except for two columns approximately 18" square on each side of the main entry doors.

6. Structural Framing System:

- a. South building: The construction of the main waiting room consists of a series of double transverse steel trusses or frames, at 18'-6" spacing covered with metal lath and plaster. These trusses have an arched bottom chord and a gabled top chord. Spanning between the trusses are double steel roof purlins supporting two inch tongue-and-groove redwood parallel roof sheathing over 4" x 4" redwood rafters spaced 24" on center. The steel purlins have been encased in redwood boards. Located directly north of the main waiting room is a low roofed area. This area's split level roofs are constructed of reinforced concrete slabs supported on steel beams. The second floor of the two story section consists of a 3-1/2" thick reinforced concrete slab supported on closely spaced steel beams spanning between steel girders located in the east and west walls. At the west wall, which is shared with the main waiting room, the floor girders span between and are connected to the columns of the typical transverse trusses. The roof framing consists of steel trusses. Spanning between these trusses are steel purlins which support a roof similar to that over the main waiting room. The framing of the first floor over the basement consists of a reinforced concrete slab and beam system supported on the basement walls and on interior 14" square concrete columns.
- b. North building: The most southerly section of the north building has exposed steel roof trusses spanning between steel columns at the exterior walls. Spanning between the trusses are exposed steel purlins supporting a two inch tongue-and-groove redwood roof deck. The northernmost building is of open warehouse type construction. It has a series of wood trusses spanning between bearing walls and carrying a composite roofing over 1" x 8" parallel sheathing boards.

- c. Concourse: The roof of the concourse is the same 2" deck and 4" x 4" rafters used in the main waiting room, supported on 6" x 10" redwood purlins which span between trusses. The concourse trusses are of heavy construction with steel rods used for vertical web membranes, subjected only to tensile stresses.

7. Openings:

a. Doors and Doorways:

- 1. South building: The south (main facade has four double doors affording access to the main waiting room. The wooden doors each have a single pane of glass. Each pair of doors is set in an arched opening with the remaining area glazed. The east elevation has two sets of double doors. An arched opening provides a recessed entry to a side vestibule. Each door has two molded panels. The remaining area within the arch is glazed.
- 2. North building: The north building has a series of arched openings containing window and door assemblies. The first, third and fifth arches have large sliding wood doors with glazing on the east elevation. The south elevation has three such infilled arches. The west elevation has three infilled arches with sliding wood doors and one with a pedestrian door and window assembly.

b. Windows

- 1. South building: The south elevation and the north elevation of the main waiting room both have a very large arched opening that is glazed. This opening is about 17' from the floor and is nearly 55' in diameter. The east elevation has ten openings on the first floor level. Each opening has two double-hung, one-over-one windows with horizontal lights above. The second floor office area has twenty-two evenly spaced double-hung, one-over-one windows. The clerestory of the main waiting room has nine sets of round headed windows on each side. Each of the eighteen windows has six lights in pivot sash. The north elevation has five double-hung, six-over-six windows on the ground floor, along with an arched opening infilled with door and window assembly. The second floor has two double-hung, one-over-one windows. The west elevation has identical clerestory

windows as on the east. There are nine arched openings fitted with window and door assemblies on the concourse level.

2. North building: The east and west elevations of the north building each have arched openings fitted with window, door, and mill work panel assemblies. Each elevation also has strip clerestory windows. The south elevation has three arched openings above the door height which are glazed with wooden sash.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

1. South building: The main waiting room, two-story office area and concourse are all covered by gable roofs parallel to each other. They are all covered with red terra cotta tiles. The "restaurant and kitchen" area north of the main waiting room has reinforced concrete slabs covered with built up tar and gravel roofing.
2. North building: The southern part of the north building is covered by two parallel gables and finished with red terra cotta tiles. The northern part has a flat composition roof.

- b. Cornice: A fascia and gutter cover the ends of the rafters on the long elevations. Wood beams (concourse) and steel beams encased in redwood (main waiting room) extend through the walls on the gable ends.

c. Towers:

Main towers: Located at the southerly end of the depot are two 90' high towers. They have ornate architectural finishes applied to an interior supporting framework of structural steel. At a height of about 44', the corners become convex and are flanked by fluted pilasters. A cast concrete urn is located within each convex curve. Each face of the tower has an arched opening with cast concrete balusters and railing. Each tower is capped with a glazed terra cotta tile dome and lattern. Around each drum are eight concrete urns.

B. Description of the Interior

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First floor: The depot's main entry is through the double doors and porch on the south elevation. This entry leads into the main waiting room, which measures 55'-0" x 166'-6", with newsstands, a novelty shop, and access to the concourse and tracks to the west. The east elevation of the waiting room has a series of doors leading to auxiliary spaces. Respective from south to north these are, general office with a private office and storage, women's lounge, women's toilets, stair hall, vestibule, (entry from east and lockers), smoking room, men's toilets. The main ticket counter is now located at the extreme north end of the main waiting room. Beyond the counter area is (from east to west) electrical, pipe, lumber, and general storage, with access to basement, files and storage, restrooms, telegraph office and general office. Beyond this service area is the open passage between the main passenger terminal and the baggage/express building. From south to north these spaces are baggage room, railway express storage, passage and express room.
 - b. Second floor: The second story of the east aisle is partially used now as Amtrax offices and partially vacant. The corridor runs adjacent to the main waiting room. The spaces south of north off this corridor were originally used as depot master, ladies aid, telegraph, and stairwell. Beyond were bedrooms.
 - c. Basement: The basement area is only under a portion of the building. Access to this area is only from the double doors on the east elevation.
2. Flooring: The main terminal floors are concrete with tile. The office and bedrooms have concrete floors. The baggage and express building has asphaltium on a concrete bed.
 3. Wall and ceiling finish: The main waiting room has glazed terra cotta tile to the height of the door heads. Above this tile walls are plastered. Although the giant trusses are encased and plastered, the ceiling has exposed, wood-encased purlins, and wooden rafters. The men's smoking room has wood-paneled wainscoting to window-sill height, with plaster above. Both the smoking room and women's lounge have exposed wooden beams. The minor beams run north and south, and major beams run east and west. There is plaster ceiling. The vestibule has onyx wainscoting to door height, with a plaster wall above. The ceiling is similar to those in the smoking room and lounge.

The second-story rooms have plaster walls with picture moldings and lath and plaster ceilings. The telegraph and office spaces north of the ticket counter have glazed tile and plaster walls with plaster ceilings. The baggage/express building has brick and terra cotta walls with an exposed steel truss and purlin ceiling, supporting 1-3/4" sheathing.

4. Doorways and doors: All doors off the main waiting room to the east wing are double doors with two molded panels, the top panel being glazed. These doors are set within arched openings, the remainder being glazed (except for wood panels) to a height of 3-1/2 feet. All the glazing has wood sash and mullions. All second story doors have two tiers of molded panels and molded door trim. Doors within storage and service area are five paneled with plain trim.

C. Site:

1. General setting: The main facade of the depot faces south to Broadway. The concourse and tracks run along the west side, the tracks being on the same level as the concourse. The area between the main entry and Broadway has been asphalted for parking.

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