

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Southern Pacific 16th Street Station and 16th Street TowerOther names/site number: Alameda County Parcel 18-310-13-1Name of related multiple property listing: African Americans in California MPDF

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

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**2. Location**Street & number: 1798 16th Street/1601 Wood Street (station) and 1709 Wood Street (Tower) (Alameda County Assessor address for parcel is 1405 Wood Street)City or town: Oakland State: California County: AlamedaNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

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**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ **national**      \_\_\_ **statewide**      \_\_\_ **local**  
Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ **A**      \_\_\_ **B**      \_\_\_ **C**      \_\_\_ **D**

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: ☒

Public – Local ☐

Public – State ☐

Public – Federal ☐

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☒

District ☐

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Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

2

Noncontributing

0

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/horticultural facility

VACANT

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Station: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Beaux Arts

Signal Tower: OTHER

### Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

#### Main Hall and Baggage Wing

Foundation: CONCRETE, STONE/granite

Walls: BRICK, TERRA COTTA

Roof (historic): CERAMIC TILE

Roof (current): SYNTHETICS

Other: METAL/iron

Interurban Platform CONCRETE, METAL/steel

#### Signal Tower

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: CONCRETE

Roof: ASPHALT

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Beaux-Arts Southern Pacific 16th Street Station is at the western edge of the Prescott neighborhood of West Oakland. It is sited on a 4.7-acre parcel that is east of the 880 freeway and west of Wood Street between 16th and 18th Streets. The neighborhood setting is characterized by a combination of contemporary and historic development that includes commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential uses. Contributing features of the historic property are: the Station with a 13,000 square foot main hall, smaller flanking wings, an 8,000 square foot baggage wing; a two-level concourse with elevated steel interurban platform structure; a Signal

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Tower, and roughly 500 feet of railroad right of way northwest of the buildings. The monumental Station is 273 feet wide with a 60-foot-tall main block and lower-height recessed wings. The building was designed by Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt, a master of the Beaux-Arts style and of railroad depot design. The building epitomizes the typology of the Beaux-Arts railroad terminal in which the importance of transportation is proclaimed by monumental scale, heavy masonry construction, and classical ornament. Its primary façade is oriented toward the street, and the building, while expertly designed for functional integration with railroad infrastructure, shields the industrial nature of railroad transportation from public view. Soaring arched windows evoke Roman baths and flood the grand main hall with natural light, providing the visitor with a majestic portal into Oakland. Meanwhile, its carefully engineered integration with national and regional rail lines, its steel concourse, and its reinforced concrete construction underline the inherent modernity of the 16th Street Station. The small three-story Signal Tower, roughly 125 feet northeast of the Station, is functionally significant and lacks the rich materials and grandeur of the primary building.

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**Narrative Description**

*16th Street Station Main Building: Exterior*

The Station building is steel frame, reinforced concrete, and brick masonry construction with a granite base and terracotta facing tile. Its double-height 116 x 60-foot main block is flanked by slightly recessed one-story symmetrical wings, each 30 x 55 feet. The deeply recessed one-story baggage handling/boiler room wing at the northeast end of the building measures 80 x 88 feet and is slightly lower in height than the wings. The two-level 300 x 60-foot passenger concourse stretches along the entire northwest façade of the building.

With its stately massing and weighty materials, the slightly projecting central volume is the imposing focal point of the property. Its height and the wide cantons at its corners further highlight the significance of the central block, emphasizing grandeur, solidity, and permanence. The base of the building is composed of heavy granite blocks; speckled gray terracotta cladding above the base emulates the appearance of ashlar stone masonry with fine joints and arched openings with keystones. Three massive arched windows, set within deep concave niches and fitted with multiple-light metal sash, dominate the primary (southeast) façade. A temporary protective wood framework has been added atop the original window frames; some panes are broken, some are boarded up, and others are intact. The primary entrance beneath the center window is sheltered by a heavy cast iron and glass marquee suspended from the building façade by chains. The highly ornamental marquee is supported by elaborate scrolled brackets featuring a foliate motif and fluted columns, edged with a row of raised bullseyes; raised escutcheons at its center and corners have been partially removed and there are some areas of rust. The wide opening under the marquee is fitted with two sets of double paneled wooden doors; originally partially glazed, glazing has been covered. A single-leaf paneled door at the center of the entrance has been enclosed. Ornamental pedestals with foliate motif and rosettes project below the arched windows flanking the central entrance. Small rectangular secondary windows within

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the corner cantons are set deep within projecting shouldered surrounds capped with acroterium flanked by horizontal scrolls enclosing fasces; rectangular openings have been boarded up. The upper central volume exhibits a restrained and formal interpretation of classical entablature, with simple molding and plain frieze topped by a shallow cornice supported by block modillions. The parapet (which obscures the hipped roof from ground level) is shaped above the corner cantons and accented by a balustrade above the large arched windows. There are two ornate metal light standards in front of the central block; glass elements have been removed and metal is rusting in some areas.

Symmetrical wings are set back behind the central block; their 24.5-foot height is less than half that of the dominant central volume and serve to further emphasize its monumentality. Small windows set within plain projecting surrounds match those on the cantons except for their lack of ornament atop their crowns. Molding, frieze, block modillions, cornice, and parapet continue the pattern established on the primary volume at a slightly smaller scale. A Greek key-inspired motif adorns the parapet above wing windows. A large opening on the north wing adjacent to its junction with the central block leads to a passageway that accesses the passenger concourse.

The baggage handling and boiler room wing is recessed a further 30 feet behind the north wing; its northwest end extends beneath the upper concourse, so it is nearly square in plan. It is about 22 feet high and features a simplified cornice and window surrounds. Its placement, lower height, and lack of ornament convey its utilitarian purposes. Fenestration includes both square and rectangular windows in plain surrounds without crowns. Large entrances centered on its southeast elevation are sheltered by a simple metal awning; it is deteriorating and supported by scaffolding. A tall, terra cotta-clad, brick chimney with an ornamental cap projects from the heating plant at its north end.

Architectural details of the northwest façade echo the primary façade with three massive arched windows (which are boarded up) and formal treatment of cornice and parapet. It is immediately adjacent to the 300-foot-long two-story passenger concourse, so its visibility is limited. Concrete and steel beams support the raised reinforced concrete platform, designed to provide grade-separated access to interurban trains. Two long steel butterfly canopies designed to provide shelter for waiting passengers run the length of the upper concourse, with a depression between them where two sets of interurban tracks were originally installed. Some of the catenary standards adjacent to the tracks (which originally supported the overhead electrical system that powered the trains) have been preserved. Wide sets of steps at either end of the central block, which are sheltered by flat-roofed metal canopies, provide access to the lower level. A metal-framed glazed enclosure along the outer (northwest) edge of the concourse with projecting sections at stairways has been removed; original multi-light glazing has likewise been removed from stairwell enclosures adjacent to the Station. The lower-level exterior waiting area is sheltered by the platform. The 82-foot-wide baggage wing projects below the upper concourse, so the open lower area is 218 feet long. The exterior walls on the less visible lower northwest elevation are clad in facing brick rather than terra cotta.

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*16th Street Station Main Building: Interior*

Interior decorative features are concentrated in the double-height 116 x 60-foot main waiting room, which is highly ornamented and as expressive of the Beaux-Arts architectural style as the exterior of the Station. The monumental arched windows on the long southeast and northwest walls flood the interior with natural light, heightening the formal grandeur conveyed by the abundance of decorative detail executed in polychrome plaster. Pilasters flanking the arched windows divide front and rear walls into five symmetrical bays; heavy ceiling joists aligned to pilasters similarly subdivide the ceiling, which is adorned with ornate moldings and medallions that once held chandeliers. The central arch on the northeast wall begins at floor level has entrance doors below the window: flanking windows end above wainscoting. Arched openings on the northwest wall, which leads to the concourse, all begin at floor level and are fitted with the same metal framework as the primary façade windows except for decorative spandrel panels at the platform level. The southernmost opening has five paneled doors identical to those on the main entrance, while the central opening has decorative wrought iron grilles installed c2011 for a film. A wide set of faux marble steps, also installed c2011, leads into the northernmost arch. Ornamental features adorning walls and ceiling include rosettes, guttae, acanthus, Greek key, and Cretan-derived wave moldings, as well as other foliar moldings with California-inspired motifs including oak leaves and acorns. Floors are California marble and original marble wainscoting has either been removed and replaced or covered with wood-framed embossed wainscoting on the lower walls. End walls are divided into three bays of the same size with molded blank arches echoing the pattern established by the arched windows. An original Southern Pacific herald on the southwest wall and a large clock on the northeast have been removed, as have mounted paintings of California scenes. Rectangular openings in the outer end wall bays have decorative surrounds topped with escutcheons. Original furniture and light fixtures have been removed; at least some waiting room benches are stored in the baggage wing. Paint is peeling from plaster, and plaster is falling away in places; plaster condition is especially poor on the ceiling and end walls. Small side rooms in the passenger section of the Station lack decorative features. The baggage wing interior is a utilitarian space with exposed concrete columns and brick walls; it lacks ornamental features or references to Beaux-Arts architecture.

*16th Street Station Signal Tower:*

The 16th Street Station Signal Tower is a three-story, reinforced concrete building with a hipped roof and wide, boxed eaves. It is located about 125 feet northeast of the Station along the railroad right-of-way (from which tracks have been removed). The rectangular-plan building measures about 21 feet x 36 feet and is approximately 35 feet tall. The original plans called for the roof to be clad in black slate, but the present roof is composition shingle, and it is unknown if slate was ever installed. Simple belt course moldings encircle the building between the first and second floor and just beneath the third-floor windows. Ribbon bands of tall windows on all four sides of the third story were designed to give tower operators an unobstructed view of train movements. Below the third-level windows on the longer northwest and southeast elevations are signs that read "16th Street Tower." Tall second story window openings are intermittent rather than continuous. The ground floor has small square windows and entrances on the shorter southwest and northeast elevations. Windows, originally operable wood sash, have been boarded up and

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their condition is unknown. Doors have likewise been boarded up. The interior is not accessible, but research indicates that original equipment has been removed.

Alterations and Current Condition:

*Site*

Interurban tracks were removed from the upper concourse when service was discontinued in 1941. The associated trestles were removed shortly after interurban service stopped. Main line tracks were removed in 1994 when Amtrak service ended at the Station. In 2005, the south end of the interurban platform was truncated by a developer building a nearby residential project, but the section integral to the main station building and baggage wing remains. The site is fenced off. Formerly landscaped areas and parking lots are untended or utilized for a plant nursery; weeds are pervasive. Some original light standards have been lost and those that have been retained are missing their glass fixtures

*Main Building: Exterior*

The Station was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, and the building remains seismically unstable and at risk of being further damaged in an earthquake. The principal roof was replaced by previous owners in 2003, and some leaks repaired in 2016. Original decorative dormer windows are missing; they are likely to have been removed when the roof was replaced in 2003. The tiles were removed from the roof and are stored in the baggage wing. Marquee escutcheons on the southeast façade were removed prior to 2008. There is graffiti and surface damage to terra cotta tile cladding, and some terra cotta has been painted to cover graffiti. Windows are boarded up and the condition of windows is unknown. Multi-light glazing that originally protected the interurban platform on the upper concourse from weather has been removed; most of the original platform glazing had been removed by 1980, glazing around stairwells was removed after 1992. Exterior features that have been retained including granite base, terra-cotta cladding, brick walls, steel and concrete concourse, and ornamental features are in fair to good condition; the building appears generally sound from the exterior.

*Main Building: Interior*

The two original paintings are gone, as are the original clock and Southern Pacific symbols; all were removed after 1992. The original large hanging lamps were removed, stored in the baggage wing, damaged in a fire, and then discarded. Interior plaster walls exhibit cracking, peeling, and water damage; the building suffered decades of deferred maintenance before it was abandoned, and by 1992 interior plaster was peeling, although condition has worsened it does not appear to have accelerated and no major further structural deterioration is evident. Original paintings had been removed by 2008; marble wainscoting (currently not visible) was also damaged by this time. Several current features of the interior main waiting room were installed about 2011 when the building was used as a film location; wood-framed embossed wainscoting, the faux staircase in the northernmost arched opening on the concourse side, doors, and metal grilles in doorways all appear to have been installed for this project. Decorative original end wall features including clock and Southern Pacific emblem are likely to have been removed at the same time. Marble



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wainscoting appears to have been stripped from lower walls prior to installation of current wainscoting. Other features, such as decorative grills and staircase appear to be reversible.

Damage to the terra cotta exterior has allowed water penetration and spalling. The site has been subjected to graffiti, broken windows, a minor fire in the baggage wng, vandalism, stripping, intrusion and theft.

*Signal Tower*

Interior equipment was removed between 1991 and 2012; windows and doors are boarded up.

**Integrity**

*Location*

The 16th Street Station and Tower is in its original location and retains integrity of location.

*Design*

The 16th Street Station and Tower's design is expressed through its Beaux-Arts architecture with character-defining features including monumental scale, heavy masonry construction, massive arched windows and classical ornament. Exterior character-defining details include windows set deep within projecting shouldered surrounds capped with acroterium and horizontal scrolls enclosing fasces, heavily ornamented marquee, and parapet with balustrade. Interior character-defining features include marble floors, pilasters, coffered ceilings, and ornamental elements such as rosettes, guttae, acanthus, Greek key, and Cretan-derived wave moldings, and foliar moldings with oak leaves and acorns. It also expresses the functional aspects of a Beaux-Arts depot in its carefully engineered integration with rail lines, steel concourse, and reinforced concrete construction. Despite deterioration over the decades of disuse and the stripping of some interior features such as marble wainscoting, the building clearly conveys its identity as a grand Beaux-Arts depot. Likewise, the double-height concourse with its catenary standards conveys the original function of the building as a node for intermodal transportation. Therefore, the building retains integrity of design.

*Setting*

The residential and commercial neighborhood surrounding the building has retained some of its historic-period buildings as well as the overall character present during the period of significance. The 16th Street Station and Tower therefore retains sufficient integrity of setting to convey its significance.

*Materials*

The 16th Street Station and Tower's granite base, steel concourse structure, terra cotta cladding, marble floors, and interior plaster date from the period of significance. They express both this unique building's Beaux-Arts decorative qualities and the larger architectural program of the railroad during the period of significance. The building conveys its historic identity through its materials despite some loss of historic fabric over the decades.

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*Workmanship*

The 16th Street Station and Tower's workmanship dates from the period of significance and the conveys its historic identity through its workmanship.

*Feeling*

The 16th Street Station and Tower strongly evokes the feeling of Beaux-Arts depot through the presence of most of it the character-defining original features.

*Association*

Although railroad tracks have been removed and the property is vacant, the 16th Street Station and Tower's original use remains apparent and therefore allows it to retain integrity of association.

The 16th Street Station and Tower retains all seven aspects of integrity and therefore conveys its significance as a historic school.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☒

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐

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B. Removed from its original location

☐

C. A birthplace or grave

☐

D. A cemetery

☐

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐

F. A commemorative property

☐

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

A – TRANSPORTATION, ETHNIC HERITAGE – Black

B – SOCIAL HISTORY

C – ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1912 – 1971

**Significant Dates**

1912 Construction of Station completed

1913 Construction of Tower completed

1924 C.L. Dellums becomes a porter at Station

1925 Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) formed

1941 Interurban service ended

1968 C.L. Dellums becomes BSCP President

1971 Amtrak replaced Southern Pacific for passenger service

1978 BSCP merged with Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks

1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and closure

1990 Declared Eligible by Caltrans for National Register under Criteria A and C

1994 Tracks removed and Station activities relocated

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Dellums, C. L. (VP and President, BSCP)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

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**Architect/Builder**

Hunt, Jarvis

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Southern Pacific Oakland 16th Street Station and Tower is eligible under Criterion A at the local level in the areas of transportation and ethnic heritage. Its period of significance under Criterion A (1912 – 1971) begins when it became the principal railroad depot for Oakland and ends when the Southern Pacific turned over passenger operations to Amtrak. The property is also eligible as the western locus for the formation America's first Black union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), which was established in 1925 and won an important contract with the Pullman Company in 1937. The 16th Street Station and Tower is eligible under Criterion B (1925 – 1968) at the local level for its connection to Oaklander C.L. Dellums, who was a porter at the station before becoming the vice president of the BSCP in 1929 and later its president. The 16th Street Station and Tower is eligible under Criterion C at the local level in the area of architecture as excellent example of a Beaux-Arts railroad station designed by Master architect, Jarvis Hunt. The combined period of significance for the property is 1912 – 1971. The property is nominated under cover of the *African Americans in California Multiple Property Document* under the theme *Making a Living*, as a property type associated with industry and labor, specifically *Institutional Buildings and Sites* as a significant workplace for Pullman porters and redcaps, and *Properties Associated with Significant Persons* as the work site of C.L. Dellums.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Background:**

Oakland

When the Gold Rush brought large numbers of Americans to California in 1849, the East Bay became an important transit station for passengers and cargo. American hunters and fortune-seekers began camping in the area that would become Oakland, which was part of a Rancho held by the Peralta family. Horace Carpentier was one of these squatters, and after obtaining a lease from the Peralta family incorporated Oakland Township in 1852. Carpentier received an extremely valuable grant for the use of most of its waterfront at the first meeting of the city trustees. Carpentier maintained control of the waterfront with the help of his partners at the Central Pacific Railroad. Together, they formed the Oakland Waterfront Company in 1868, and Oakland became the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad. The railroad tracks and pier system were expanded in 1870, 1871, and 1879-1881. Alameda County became an agricultural center in the late nineteenth century, and much of its produce was shipped via Oakland's railroads and port. Southern Pacific began operating a steam-operated regional street railroad in the 1860s; horse-drawn streetcars from the same era were replaced with electric

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streetcars in 1889. In 1903, the electrified Key System owned by Borax Smith began competing for local rail traffic.<sup>1</sup>

Port and railroad development led to rapid industrialization and population growth and drew immigrants as well as working-class Americans to Oakland. Railroad workers and their families tended to settle in West Oakland near the waterfront and railroad yards. The Pullman Palace Car Company (which employed exclusively Black porters) arrived in 1869, leading to the establishment of Oakland's large and early Black population. (The Pullman Company employed around 30 percent of the local Black population in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.) By 1900, there were significant European immigrant populations as well as over 1,000 Black residents. The Black population continued to grow and included homeowners and business owners. The Oakland and East Bay Negro Business League, the first organization of its kind in the region, was formed in 1919. Oakland Point was known in the 1920s and 1930s for its Black music venues and nightclubs.<sup>2</sup>

Robust local streetcar and regional street railroad networks allowed residential expansion outside original city limits by the late 19th century. Population growth was further spurred by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, which drove thousands into the East Bay; Oakland's population doubled between 1900 and 1910. Much of downtown Oakland was developed during the first decades of the 20th century; Beaux-Arts style public buildings including the City Hall, Municipal Auditorium, and Oakland Technical High School were all completed in 1914, reflecting the optimism and civic pride of local boosters.

Oakland grew by annexing new territory as well as by attracting newcomers and had a population of 284,063 by 1930. During this era, Oakland was one of the largest cities in the state. In 1936, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was constructed, and the Port of Oakland was developed further. Although designed to carry railcars as well as personal automobiles from Oakland to San Francisco, the bridge led to a decline in interurban rail traffic. In the 1940s, population in Oakland grew rapidly due to wartime economic expansion; the combination of a large port and railroad terminus drew a significant amount of wartime industry. Long distance and local rail travel peaked during the war. The rapid growth of Oakland's African American population continued into the 1950s. Postwar deindustrialization and the decline of the railroad industry of caused job and population loss toward the end of the decade. In the 1950s, Cypress Freeway construction cut through West Oakland and isolated it from the rest of the city. The Oakland Redevelopment Agency formed in 1956, and began urban renewal projects, mostly in

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<sup>1</sup> M. W. Wood, *History of Alameda County, California*, M.W. Wood, Oakland California: 1883, 485; Beth Bagwell, *Oakland: The Story of a City*, Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982, 33-36; Annalee Allen, *Oakland: A Postcard History* (San Francisco: Arcadia Press, 2005), 9; Anonymous, "Overview," The Planning History of Oakland, CA, <https://oaklandplanninghistory.weebly.com/index.html>, Accessed Jan. 20, 2024; Oakland Point District DPR, Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, August 23, 1990, 30-31, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Oakland Point District DPR, Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, August 23, 1990, 25-27, 29-36, 38;  
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West Oakland. Redevelopment was a devastating blow to a community that had been hit hard by the shrinking railroad industry and loss of industrial jobs in the decades following the end of World War II.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1960s, population shifted from the downtown area to neighborhoods beyond urban Oakland. Freeway construction and plans to develop the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) began in 1958. BART and freeway construction, conceived from a regional transportation perspective with little attention to effects on inner-city neighborhoods, led to demolition and disruption of the urban fabric in Oakland and intensified trends toward suburbanization. Oakland, and particularly West Oakland, was hit hard by the drug epidemics of the 1970s and 1980s. The large office buildings, hotels, and convention center facilities that brought economic revitalization to downtown Oakland during this era did not bring similar benefits to West Oakland. The Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 destroyed buildings in Oakland as well as the Cypress Freeway, which collapsed, killing 42 people. Residents organized and successfully pushed Caltrans to re-route I-880 around the neighborhood, and the Southern Pacific alignment at the western edge of the neighborhood was replaced by freeway in the mid-1990s.<sup>4</sup>

Gentrification due to the Bay Area's tech economy began to affect Oakland in the 1990s and escalated after 2000. An eviction crisis led to unprecedented levels of homelessness in the city, and the Black population has consistently declined in numbers for decades. By 2010, Oakland's Black population was smaller than the white population for the first time since 1970. Since 2000, Oakland's population diversity has increased, and more neighborhoods have gentrified. In 2020, approximately 440,000 people lived in Oakland, and Oakland continues to be one of the busiest ports in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

**Criterion A: Southern Pacific 16th Street Station and the BSCP**  
**Oakland Transportation and the 16th Street Southern Pacific Station**

The railroad network was the ascendant form of transportation and freight infrastructure across the US in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the railroads were emblematic of modernity and American industrial power. As the western terminus of the transcontinental rail network, Oakland's prosperity and identity were closely tied to its status as a rail hub. After its population doubled in the first decade of the new century, the old Southern Pacific station could not support the

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<sup>3</sup> Mitchell Schwarzer, *Hella Town: Oakland's History of Development and Disruption*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 208, 206.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell Schwarzer, *Hella Town: Oakland's History of Development and Disruption*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 23, 192 – 196; Robert Lindsey, "Oakland Fighting Back to end Drug Violence," *New York Times*, October 7, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> "4.3: Cultural and Historic Resources," *West Oakland Specific Plan – Draft EIR*, 4.3-7; "West Oakland: A Neighborhood Divided," *Connect Oakland*, 2015, accessed December 1, 2021; Brett Jackson, "Replacing Oakland's Cypress Freeway," *Public Roads* Vol. 61 No. 5, March/April 1998; Angela Rowen, "Black Oakland's Story," *A Changing Oakland*, 2019, accessed December 2, 2021.

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increased volume of passengers and baggage, which frequently blocked the flow of trains and delayed service. Furthermore, the 1870s-era wooden station did not fit local promoters' vision of Oakland as a great metropolis, and civic leaders were unhappy that a building they considered "ramshackle" formed the traveler's first impression of Oakland. The Oakland Chamber of Commerce and other civic bodies had been lobbying for a better depot since before the turn of the century. By 1909, the Southern Pacific had agreed to build a new, modern station at 16th Street, and had already raised the budget for the project from \$150,000 to \$250,000.<sup>6</sup>

Work on the new building began in 1910 with the demolition of the old station; construction of the elevated tracks began the same year but took longer to complete. The new Station, which was constructed under the supervision of J.Q. Barlow, Southern Pacific's assistant chief engineer, was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$350,000. All its building materials were quarried or manufactured in California. At that time, the Station was on the waterfront (in the 1930s, portions of the bay west of the tracks were filled to create new land for industrial development). A formal dedication was held on August 1, 1912, and two days later the Chamber of Commerce orchestrated a celebration, including a parade of 500 automobiles and an evening reception at the Station. The cutting-edge design of the 16th Street Station integrated functional intermodal features, modern materials, and classical forms, and was heavily influenced by the City Beautiful Movement.<sup>7</sup>

The 16th Street Tower was completed as a necessary adjunct to the Station in 1913. With the construction of the new Station and its increased electric train service, a modern tower with needed to control the multitude of complex train movements in and out of the Station. The Tower was constructed of reinforced concrete instead of the more common wood frame. Barlow also supervised its construction. By 1914, the Tower was ready to handle the increased main line and local train traffic.<sup>8</sup>

A few years after its opening, 50 main line trains, 488 electric interurban trains and 200 streetcars were passing through the new Station each day. Passengers could seamlessly transfer between long distance trains and local trains. For example, a passenger could arrive on a main line train, take the stairs to the second story level and transfer to an electric interurban train to downtown Oakland, East Oakland, Berkeley or San Francisco, foreshadowing today's BART-, Muni-, and airport-integrated stations. Other features touted as modern were baggage elevators, a heating system, and a branch post office in the baggage wing. The upper concourse, which was said to be inspired by a famous European roof garden, was a particular point of pride. The grand central waiting room had a vestibule that provided access to the lower concourse, newsstand,

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<sup>6</sup> Oakland Enquirer, "A Suitable Depot Building for Oakland," December 4, 1909, 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Railway Employees Magazine*, "S. P. Opens New Depot at Oakland," Sept. 1912, 16; National Park Service, Department of the Interior, "Southern Pacific Railroad Sixteenth Street Station," Historic American Buildings Survey, No. CA-2805.

<sup>8</sup> *Building and Industrial News*, "Railroad Const. Stations and Equipment," 1914, 8.



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telegraph and telephone offices, and a ticket office. The concourse could also be accessed through the open passageway between the main waiting room and the baggage wing, the baggage wing also held a small police station, transfer agent's office, and baggage master's office. South of the main waiting room was a smoking room with a men's restroom, and a women's waiting room with restroom and matron's office.<sup>9</sup>

The 16th Street Station was the gateway to the Bay Area: before bridges spanned the bay, visitors to San Francisco had to pass through the Station en route to the San Francisco ferries. It also became the portal to Oakland, a focal point for community pride, and a grand stage on which to engage the public. For visitors, the monumental Station would be their first impression of Oakland; the Station was likewise the last view of home for locals departing Oakland. When politicians, professional athletes, or other prominent public figures arrived at the Station, they were formally welcomed by committees of local dignitaries that could include the mayor, city manager, local business leaders, and even state officials. A special chamber of commerce committee would also be dispatched to the 16th Street Station to officially bid farewell to local delegations to professional conferences and political conventions. These arrivals and departures were press events and opportunities for public figures to make speeches to people gathered at the Station. When the US entered World War I in 1917, hundreds of recruits were seen off at 16th Street Station by family members and well-wishers. Herbert Hoover made multiple appearances at the Station when he was running for president; after he became the Republican nominee in 1928, Oakland City Council was so excited at the prospect of a Californian becoming president that it formally adopted a resolution urging all citizens of Oakland to assemble en masse for his July 20 arrival at 16th Street Station. Governor James Rolph traveled from Sacramento to formally welcome Hoover back to California when his presidential term ended in 1933. The 16th Street Station remained the gateway to Oakland and the formal backdrop to public welcomes and farewells for decades; President Harry Truman drew a crowd of hundreds when he arrived at 16th Street Station in 1948. By the early 1960s, however, car culture had supplanted rail travel, and the 16th Street Station had become just one of many ways to enter and leave Oakland. When the station lost its role as a symbolic gateway to Oakland nothing replaced it.<sup>10</sup>

Although it was a portal for all Oakland residents, the Station was particularly important for the local Black community. Called "Ellis Island for the African American community" by Oakland Mayor and 14-term member of the US House of Representatives Ron Dellums, the 16th Street Station was the gateway for waves of African Americans coming to California during the Great Migration. As the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad, Blacks seeking a new life in the Bay Area had to pass through the Station as they arrived. And since West Oakland had a

<sup>9</sup> John W. Snyder, Architectural Inventory/Evaluation Form, Oakland Amtrak Station, CA Department of Transportation, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> Oakland Tribune, "Naval Committee Here Tomorrow," March 21, 1919, 13, "75 Dairymen Leave City for East Tomorrow," September 25, 1923, 39, "Herbert Hoover: Candidate Will Arrive on Friday," July 17, 1928, 22; Oakland Post-Inquirer, "Lakeside Park Crowd Hears Truman Address," September 23, 1948, 4.

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robust African American community by the early 20th century, many new arrivals stayed in Oakland, for whom the Station would become emblematic of home. The 16th Street Station was also one of the main employment centers for African Americans in Oakland, since the railroads were willing to employ Black workers (in contrast to government and many types of businesses). Pullman Porters (who traveled aboard the trains serving passengers on long journeys) were among the earliest Black residents of West Oakland. African Americans also worked as laborers at the Oakland Mole and adjacent rail yards, and as waiters, cooks, and maids on the trains. Others, such as Redcap Porters, worked within the 16th Street Station itself, assisting passengers with luggage and acting as Southern Pacific ambassadors. In the 1930s, the 40 Redcaps who worked at the Station were all African American men. Redcap positions were highly desirable since station porters could make \$100 a day in tips during an era when most full-time workers earned about \$20 a day; being hired as a 16th Street Station Redcap was nearly impossible from the 1920s to the 1940s without personal connections.<sup>11</sup>

After the Bay Bridge opened in 1936, rail traffic through the Station began to decline. Electric train ridership across the bridge did not reach projected numbers, and service across the bridge only lasted until 1940. In 1941, Southern Pacific ended local service. Passenger and freight rail traffic revived during World War II in response to rapid population increase and mobilization of war industries in the region, but postwar prosperity accelerated reliance on personal automobiles. During this era, the Southern Pacific began to defer maintenance at 16th Street Station. In 1958, Southern Pacific steam trains were converted to diesel and its ferries were replaced with bus service to San Francisco. The train shed at the Oakland Mole was demolished in 1965 for the construction of the BART system. Service transferred from Southern Pacific to Amtrak in 1971; but rail traffic did not rebound, and Amtrak did little to maintain the Station. Deterioration increased after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. Passenger service was eventually moved to a small, modern building to the north of the station. In 1994, a new passenger station opened in nearby Emeryville and in 1995, one at Oakland's Jack London Square, about two miles to the southeast. Due to damage, the decrease of train travel, and construction of the freeway on the Southern Pacific alignment, the 16th Street Station and Tower closed in 1994.<sup>12</sup>

Few alterations were made to the 16th Street Station over the eight decades it was in active use as a railroad depot. Building permits document only a handful of projects over the years: a canteen for World War II servicemen was added to the interior in 1944 and expanded in 1945. Men's restrooms were repaired in 1954, and marble wainscoting replaced with tile. In 1959, the newsstand/soda fountain was expanded. In 1964, interior walls, apparently in the baggage wing, were reconfigured for offices. One of the earliest interior alterations, which is not documented in

<sup>11</sup> Willie R. Collins, "'Putting on the Big Hat': Labor and Lore among Oakland's Redcaps," *Sights and Sounds: Essays in Celebration of West Oakland*, Caltrans, December 1977.

<sup>12</sup> National Park Service, Department of the Interior, "Southern Pacific Railroad Sixteenth Street Station," *Historic American Buildings Survey*, No. CA-2805; Harre W. Demoro, "Station Was Part of SP Owner's Grand Plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 2, 1989, A4.

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permits but is visible in historic photographs by 1949, was the expansion of the ticket office. Located in the northernmost bay on the west wall, ticket agents originally worked behind individual windows within the plane of the west wall that were fitted with metal grill work. As traffic increased, the ticket office apparently needed more space, and wooden counters were installed that projected into the main waiting room. The most significant exterior alterations were removal of interurban tracks and trestles in the 1940s, conversion of landscaped areas to parking in the 1950s, and the 2013 replacement of the original roof.<sup>13</sup>

Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters

The Southern Pacific attracted workers from across the US to live and work in West Oakland near the Station, many of whom were African Americans. West Oakland became one of the first Black enclaves in California with a vibrant residential, business, and entertainment community, mostly Black owned.<sup>14</sup>

Train travel across the United States was long and uncomfortable. In response to this, George Pullman developed the Pullman car. By 1870, the Pullman Palace Car Company was turning out luxurious and comfortable sleeping, dining, and parlor cars for train travel. Traveling in his cars was like staying at a fancy hotel or taking a first-class ocean liner. They featured plush seats, chandeliers, windows with silk curtains, and walnut woodwork. The clientele was mostly white and the porters who serviced the cars were Black.<sup>15</sup>

The Pullman Company operated the cars as well as manufacturing them and was the largest employer of African Americans on the railroads. Over 20,000 Black Americans worked for the Pullman Company. Pullman required that each car have a Black porter to render top-quality service to its patrons. Supervisors were white. Porters kept the cars meticulously clean, shined shoes, carried luggage, and performed other tasks as requested. Since porters were always on call to take care of each passenger's personal needs, long hard hours were the norm. Many worked 20-plus hours a day for around 25 cents an hour during an era when manufacturing jobs or federally funded New Deal projects paid double that. The Pullman Company required the porters to wear uniforms, which the porters had to purchase. The Company also required its porters to live near the stations, since they needed to be on call for unscheduled duty. It was a humiliating common practice to call porters "George" after George Pullman, and not by their given names. Yet, despite these conditions, being a porter was considered a good job given the lack of options for African Americans during this period. It provided Black men one of the few chances to travel and earn a steady income. Travel exposed the porters to new people, places and, most

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<sup>13</sup>Building permits on file with City of Oakland.

<sup>14</sup> Jim Herron Zamora, "Dellums Backs Museum at Depot," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 3, 2005, B3; Hannah Meyer and Lynn Weinstein, "Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union Formed," Library of Congress, Jun. 16, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Jimmy Stamp, "Traveling in Style and Comfort: The Pullman Sleeping Car," *Smithsonian Magazine*, Dec. 11, 2013.  
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importantly, ideas. At the 16th Street Station, the porters' activities were concentrated in the baggage wing at the north end of the Station.<sup>16</sup>

In 1925, the porters formed the first Black labor union in the country, the BSCP. The Union represented all Pullman attendants including maids, who were Black or Chinese women and who suffered the same difficult working conditions as the porters, and Women's Economic Councils were formed. The Pullman Company did all it could to discourage the organizing, including firing workers who joined. The Union was based in Chicago, but its western branch in Oakland, run by C.L. Dellums (Ron Dellums's uncle), was the Union's western headquarters and played an important role in the organization.<sup>17</sup>

The BSCP not only fought the Pullman Company for better pay and working conditions but had to battle racial discrimination within the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Building support in the Black community was also a long and difficult process, since many community leaders were anti-union and viewed the Pullman Company as an ally to African Americans, but the Union had grown to 1,150 members by 1928. After an aborted strike, years of company reprisals against members, and the onset of the Great Depression, Union membership declined sharply in the early 1930s. But almost half the members who stuck with the Union over the 12 years it took to win its first contract were based in Oakland. The BSCP finally won recognition from both the Pullman Company and full membership in the AFL in 1935, and membership rebounded to 4,165 Union members across the US. Finally, the union won a major victory when it negotiated a contract with Pullman in 1937, after years of tireless organizing, raising wages and establishing a 240-hour work month as well as the right to overtime pay. The BSCP was eventually able to win shorter working hours, the right to a hearing before termination, and controls on abusive service inspectors.<sup>18</sup>

The BSCP is recognized as supporting the establishment of the Black middle class in America and spurring the modern civil rights movement. In 1941, BSCP President A. Philip Randolph threatened to march to Washington to protest employment discrimination (more than 20 years before the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King, Jr. made his "I Have a Dream" speech). BSCP leadership approached President Roosevelt and asked him to end discrimination

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<sup>16</sup> Robert L. Allen, *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: C. L. Dellums and the Fight for Fair Treatment and Civil Rights*, Paradigm Publishers: Boulder 2015; Oakland Heritage Alliance, "Forlorn But Not Forgotten," Accessed Apr. 22, 2024; Hannah Meyer and Lynn Weinstein, "Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union Formed," Library of Congress, Jun. 16, 2023.

<sup>17</sup> C. L. Dellums, *International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Civil Rights Leader – Oral History transcript and related materials*, 1970–1973.

<sup>18</sup> Daren Salter, *Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (1925 – 1978)*, November 24, 2007, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/brotherhood-sleeping-car-porters-1925-1978/>, accessed August 1, 2024; Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman porters and the rise of protest politics in Black America, 1925-1945*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 104, 126.

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in war industries. Roosevelt at first declined but relented after the Union threatened to bring 100,000 marchers to Washington, agreeing to issue Executive Order 8802 to prohibit discrimination. Randolph and Dellums were well known for using the Union as an “independent base from which to build a general movement for racial justice,” and it became an important impetus behind the US civil rights movement.<sup>19</sup>

Oakland’s tradition of civil rights activism including the Black Panthers, the Occupy Oakland Movement, Moms 4 Housing, and others built upon the achievements of the BSCP. Offspring of Union members became community leaders. In addition to Ron Dellums, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Brady and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall were descendants of Pullman porters.<sup>20</sup>

Membership in the Union took a sharp downturn in the 1950s and 1960s as the numbers of porters employed by Pullman fell in response to diminishing rail travel. In 1974, Amtrak further weekend the BSCP by signing a contract with a rival union. In 1978, the BSCP merged with the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks.

**Criterion A Conclusion**

The 16th Street Station is significant due to its association with transportation; as the western terminus of the transcontinental rail network, it was the most important Southern Pacific station in Northern California when rail was the ascendant form of transportation infrastructure. It was an essential element of Oakland’s identity as a rail hub, a symbol of its metropolitan prosperity, and the portal to both Oakland and the greater Bay Area. It was the entry point for African Americans who came to Oakland during the Great Migration and is associated with development of the thriving Black community of West Oakland. The Southern Pacific and Pullman Company were major local employers, and African Americans came from all over the country to live and work in West Oakland near the Station, thus supporting a working-class community and establishing a Black middle class. The 16th Street Station was where many Pullman Company and railroad employees were hired and based as well as being the full-time job site for Redcap Porters and other station workers. The 16th Street Station is also significant for its association with the first national Black labor union, the BSCP. A driving force behind the early development of an organized civil rights movement in the US, the BSCP was also the first Black labor union to successfully confront a large corporation. The Union successfully improved the wage and working conditions of Pullman porters. The Union was also an organizing base for the national civil rights movement and had important impacts on employment equality and the

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<sup>19</sup> Fred Glass, “Arsenal of Democracy: Fighting Racism in Bay Area Shipyards During World War II,” CA Labor History Newsletter, Jun. 16, 2016; Robert L. Allen, *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: C. L. Dellums and the Fight for Fair Treatment and Civil Rights*, Paradigm Publishers: Boulder, 2015, 127.

<sup>20</sup> C. L. Dellums, *International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Civil Rights Leader – Oral History transcript and related materials*, 1970–1973; Hannah Meyer and Lynn Weinstein, “Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union Formed,” Library of Congress, Jun. 16, 2023.

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struggle for racial justice writ large. The building conveys its significance as a monumental railroad depot and as the western locus of the BSCP.

**Criterion B: Cottrell Laurence Dellums**

C. L. Dellums

Cottrell Laurence Dellums (1900 – 1989) was born in Corsicana, Texas and came to the Bay Area as a young man, intending to live in San Francisco and hoping to attend law school at the University of California, Berkeley. An African American porter advised him on the train to California to stop in Oakland rather than San Francisco, since its larger Black community would make it easier for him to find work and housing. Dellums got off the train at the 16th Street Station and would live in Oakland for the rest of his life. In 1924, he started working as a Pullman porter based at the 16th Street Station. Dellums found that the Pullman Company treated its workers poorly. After hearing A. Philip Randolph speak in Oakland, Dellums joined the Union in 1925, the year it was formed. In 1927, Dellums was fired by the Pullman Company due to his open support and participation in the BSCP, which had its western headquarters in Oakland. The BSCP then hired Dellums to work full-time as a union organizer for the Oakland branch.<sup>21</sup>

Although Dellums kept an office and meeting hall nearby on 7th Street, much of his organizing took place at the 16th Street Station since it was where the porters did their work when they were in town. He would meet porters as they got off the train to collect dues before they had a chance to start spending their tips. In at least one instance, he went to the 16th Street Station in disguise to expose Pullman Company spies and their local collaborators.<sup>22</sup>

Dellums married Walter Allen, who had also relocated to California from Texas, in 1928. Walter Dellums was unusual among wives of BSCP leaders in that she was an active participant in the work of the organization; she raised funds, attended meetings, and even helped run a boardinghouse for porters and maids. Before their daughter Marva was born in 1944, she also worked as a maid, and was at times the main breadwinner. In 1929, Dellums was elected West Coast Vice President of the Union. He helped achieve the collective bargaining agreement with the Pullman Company in 1937. As a result, porters' wages increased by 12%, and their standard monthly schedule was reduced from 400 hours to 240 hours.<sup>23</sup>

Dellums was also an important figure in the larger civil rights movement, serving as regional director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1944 to 1967, organizing the March on Washington with other movement leaders, and fighting for fair

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<sup>21</sup> C. L. Dellums, *International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Civil Rights Leader – Oral History transcript and related materials*, 1970–1973.

<sup>22</sup> California Eagle, "Company Spy was Covered," July 24, 1931, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Robert L. Allen, *The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: C. L. Dellums and the Fight for Fair Treatment and Civil Rights*, Paradigm Publishers: Boulder 2015, 1-2, 37

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housing in Oakland. He and Randolph fought for years to get the AFL to change their racially discriminatory policies and allow Black Americans to participate fully in the labor movement. In 1959, Dellums was appointed to California's first Fair Employment Practice Commission, which he served on for 26 years. Dellums became President of the BSCP in 1968 after Randolph's retirement. Dellums died in 1989 in Oakland. He continued his work as a civil rights activist until his death.<sup>24</sup>

**Criterion B Conclusion**

The 16th Street Station is significant at the local level under Criterion B for its association with C. L. Dellums. For five decades, Dellums was instrumental in the leadership of the BSCP, fighting employment inequality and discrimination and working for civil rights in Oakland and beyond. Dellums remained active and at the center of the BSCP. Oakland was the western headquarters for the BSCP, and the Station was the center of their work. Dellums spent much of his productive life in and around the Station. Although Dellums' home is extant, it is not significantly associated with his productive life. The building that held the BSCP office is also still standing, but its ground floor has been converted to a liquor store and its exterior architecture has been heavily modified. Therefore, the 16th Street Station is the property most significantly associated with Dellums' productive life as a labor leader and civil rights activist.<sup>25</sup>

**Criterion C: Architecture and Design**

**Jarvis Hunt**

Jarvis Hunt (1859 – 1941) was born in Wethersfield, Vermont. He was a nephew of Richard Morris Hunt (1827 – 1895), famous for designing the pedestal to the Statue of Liberty, and as the first American architect to train at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Jarvis Hunt studied architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard; MIT was the first American university to have a Beaux-Arts curriculum. Hunt designed a wide array of buildings including train stations, suburban estates, industrial buildings, and club houses. In 1893, Hunt traveled to Chicago to supervise the construction of the Vermont State Building for the World's Columbian Exposition, after which he decided to establish his firm in the city. Most of his architectural work was in the Midwest. He retired in 1927. Hunt has long been an acknowledged master architect, and at least seven of his buildings are NRHP-listed<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Plain Dealer*, "Oakland," Dec. 9, 1989, 49; *Daily Press*, "National Labor, Civil Rights Leader Dellums Dies at 89," Jul. 1, 1989, 23; Tarea Hall Pittman, C. L. Dellums, and Joyce Henderson, *C. L. Dellums: International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Civil Rights Leader, An Interview Conducted by Joyce Henderson, Earl Warren Oral History Project*, 1971;.

<sup>25</sup> Emily Phillips, "C. L. Dellums: An Oakland Civil Rights Hero," Oakland Public Library, Nov. 4, 2014; Alexandra Catsoulis, "Honoring Labor and Civil Rights: Activist C. L. Dellums, California Labor Federation, Feb. 6, 2019.; *California Eagle*, "Company Spy Was Covtred," Jul. 24, 1931, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel A. Roberson, "Indianapolis News Building," United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, Inventory Nomination Form, Feb. 2, 1984; United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, "Kansas City Star Building," Inventory Nomination Form, May 10, 2019.

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While Hunt designed many different styles of buildings during his career, he is known for his formal execution of monumental Beaux-Arts designs. They exhibit the solidity, monumental grandeur, and rich ornament associated with the style, as well as its embrace of modern materials and attention to use and site. Hunt's Beaux-Arts designs of the Kansas City Union Station, Joliet Union Station, Dallas Union Station, and the 16th Street Station all feature a central section flanked by two slightly recessed wings, three large arched main façade windows, and Classical details. In addition to his masterly deployment of the classicist forms associated with the Beaux-Arts style, Hunt was deeply attentive to program and function as exemplified by the unusual plan that allowed his Joliet Union Station to respond to the intersection of railway lines. Beaux-Arts architecture remained popular for large institutional buildings in the United States until the Great Depression. There are several examples of Beaux-Arts architecture in Oakland, but the 16th Street Station is one of Hunt's few California projects.<sup>27</sup>

**Prominent Works:**

- Vermont Villa, Chicago, 1893
- Chicago Journal Building, Chicago, 1897
- Saddle & Cycle Club, Chicago, 1897
- Rector Building, Chicago, 1905
- Indianapolis News Building, Indianapolis, 1909
- The Newark Museum, Newark, 1909
- Indianapolis News Building (NRHP), Indianapolis, 1910
- Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Oak Bluff, 1911
- Kansas City Star Building (NRHP), Kansas City, 1911
- Southern Pacific 16th Street Station, Oakland, 1912
- Joliet Union Station (NRHP), Joliet, 1912
- Kansas City Union Station (NRHP), Kansas City, 1914
- Commerce Trust Building (NRHP), Kansas City, 1914
- Ayers Bank Building (NRHP), Jacksonville, 1914
- Dallas Union Station (NRHP), Dallas, 1916

**Ritter & Mott**

Ritter & Mott were Chicago-based engineers. Louis E. Ritter (1864 – 1934) was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He received a civil engineering degree from Case School of Applied Science in 1886. From 1892 to 1899, he worked for Jenny and Mundie in Chicago. In 1899, Ritter started his own civil engineering firm with Mott. Arthur D. Mott (1869 – 1945) received his engineering degree from the University of Michigan in 1890. After graduating, he worked for General

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<sup>27</sup> Roger Straus, Hugh Van Dusen, and Ed Breslin, *America's Great Railroad Stations*, Penguin: 2011; Chicago Architecture Center, "Beaux-Arts," Accessed Jul. 2, 2024.



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Duffield in Kentucky before going back to school for iron construction work. After working with their firm, Ritter & Mott, for many years, Mott moved with his wife, Elizabeth Mott, to Wyoming, where he was the president of an irrigation and electrical power company.<sup>28</sup>

**J. Q. Barlow**

John Quincy Barlow (1861 – 1949) was born in Connecticut and attended the Western Polytechnic Institute in 1882. After school, he started working for the Northern Pacific Railroad Company as an assistant engineer. Around 1886, he became the division engineer for the Union Pacific Railroad. For the next decade, he worked as a chief engineer on various railroad projects. In 1891, Barlow became the chief engineer and general manager for the Columbia Railway and Navigation Company. In 1900, he married Kate Ethel Newitt (1876 – 1960) and they had two sons, John and William Barlow. By 1902, Barlow was the chief engineer for the Western Maryland Railroad. From 1908 to 1918, he worked as the assistant chief engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, with headquarters in San Francisco. Following his work for the Southern Pacific Company, Barlow worked as a consulting engineer for the Utah Construction Company of San Francisco.<sup>29</sup>

**16th Street Station Design Influences**

After E. H. Harriman gained control of the Southern Pacific in 1901, he initiated a modernization program for the entire system. Terminals, shops, rolling stock, equipment and trackage were improved, standardized, and/or reconstructed. New track was laid to shorten existing routes and extend lines. Part of Harriman's vision was the replacement of suburban steam trains with cleaner, quieter electric trains, and this was particularly urgent in the East Bay as the electrified Key System began to capture market share. When Oakland began establishing a municipal electric system in 1905, the Southern Pacific started electrification of their Big Red Car system. Existing lines were rebuilt, 21 miles of new lines were added, overhead electrical lines were installed, and new stations were constructed to accommodate the electric suburban trains. By February 1909, the Southern Pacific had announced their plans to build a new station at 16th Street that incorporated elevated tracts for local trains. Harriman hired Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt to design the new 16th Street Station along with Chicago engineers Ritter & Mott, who prepared plans in late 1910 and revised them in 1911. The new facility was specifically designed to serve long distance trains at grade level and electric interurban trains from an elevated platform. Electric interurban trains ran on a double elevated track structure that extended beyond the Station from 9th Street to 20th Street; they were the first elevated train tracks to be constructed west of the Mississippi, and an early example of intermodal design. Local newspapers and *Railway Employees' Magazine* reported that the "principal feature" of the newly

<sup>28</sup> *Plain Dealer*, "Louis E. Ritter, 70, Dies," Jul. 4, 1934, 7; *Battle Creek Enquirer*, "Although 40 Years Elapse Ranks of Battle Creek High Class of 1886 Remain Unbroken," Mar. 21, 1926, 18.

<sup>29</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union*, "Engineers Inspect Railroad Holdings," Oct. 21, 1916, 6; *Oakland Tribune*, "Ex-Service Men to Have Job Preference," Mar. 4, 1931, 1; *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Southern Pacific Company: J. Q. Barlow," Jan. 16, 1918, 49; *Oakland Tribune*, "Barlow," Mar. 21, 1949, 39.

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completed station was the grade separation of the different types of traffic and predicted that it would eliminate confusion, delay, and danger. In addition to the elevated tracks west of the station, the interurban line looped through a landscaped garden between the station building and Wood Street; the area in front of the station was eventually converted to a parking lot. Despite the careful intermodal design, the electric interurban trains arrived at ground level alongside the main tracks after the station opened in 1912 since the second-level interurban infrastructure was not completed until 1914.<sup>30</sup>

The Southern Pacific was known for architectural regionalism, and many of its Western stations featured Spanish-inspired design. The strong Beaux-Arts character of 16th Street Station used the design language made famous by Grand Central Station and utilized by many depots east of the Mississippi, and its architect was based in Chicago. For these reasons, it has often been seen as an “East Coast” style station and an exception to Southern Pacific regionalism. However, Oakland’s city fathers in all likelihood lobbied the company for a Beaux-Arts railroad station, a style that conformed to the principles of the City Beautiful Movement and conveyed their vision for Oakland as a great city during these boom years. When the new depot was being designed in 1910, Oakland had concurrently embarked on construction of a monumental City Hall, a new Civic Auditorium, and Oakland Technical High School; the three Beaux-Arts public buildings were completed in 1914.<sup>31</sup>

**Criterion C Conclusion**

Designed at the height of Hunt’s career in 1910 and constructed in 1912, the 16th Street Station is an extraordinarily successful example of Hunt’s Beaux-Arts design oeuvre, with its monumental proportions reflective of the Station’s role in Oakland history. It is one of a few examples of Beaux-Arts architecture in a train station on the West Coast. Popular from the 1890s through the 1920s, Beaux-Arts is known for its classical Greek and Roman influences, Renaissance and Baroque ornamentation, heavy masonry construction, and monumental grandeur mostly as well as attention to program and utilization of modern materials. The building’s design features are consistent with other Hunt-designed railroad station buildings, and it is an excellent example of the Beaux-Arts depot typology made famous by Grand Central Terminal in New York. Hunt’s Beaux-Arts depots are notable for their successful integration of decorative splendor and functional integration of railroad infrastructure. The 16th Street Station is notable as an early example of intermodal design and was specifically designed to have a double-height concourse to seamlessly accommodate mainline and interurban travel on separate

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<sup>30</sup> National Park Service, Department of the Interior, “Southern Pacific Railroad Sixteenth Street Station,” Historic American Buildings Survey, No. CA-2805; John W. Snyder, Architectural Inventory/Evaluation Form, Oakland Amtrak Station, CA Department of Transportation, 1990; Oakland Tribune, “Southern Pacific to Erect Splendid Station,” February 20, 1909, 1; Railway Employees’ Magazine, “S. P. Opens New Depot at Oakland,” September 1912, 16 – 17.

<sup>31</sup> National Park Service, Department of the Interior, “Southern Pacific Railroad Sixteenth Street Station,” Historic American Buildings Survey, No. CA-2805.

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levels. Passengers could depart the mainline train and quickly transfer to a local electric train, an innovative feature that prefigured later intermodal transportation stations. The additions and renovations over the years have changed little to the building's design, and all of the primary exterior and interior character-defining features are intact.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # HABS CA-2805
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # HAER No. CA-2264
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government

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☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans), City of Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, University of California Bancroft Library, African American Museum and Library at Oakland (branch of Oakland Public Library), Oakland Public Library History Center, Library of Congress

Northwest Information Center: Northwest Information Center California Historical Resources Information System, Sonoma State University, 150 Professional Center Drive, Suite E, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, [nwic@sonoma.edu](mailto:nwic@sonoma.edu), NWIC File Number: 23-0976

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** HABS CA-2805, HAER No. CA-2264

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** 3 acres proposed for designation, total parcel 5 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: n/a

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.815157 | Longitude: -122.297360 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.815396 | Longitude: -122.297689 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.816369 | Longitude: -122.296654 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.816332 | Longitude: -122.296595 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.815945 | Longitude: -122.296930 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property boundary begins at the south corner of the 16th Street Station building and follows its southwest elevation to the west corner of the concourse; from there it travels northeast 450 feet to the north corner of the Signal Tower. The property boundary then follows the northeast and southeast elevations of the Signal Tower to its south corner, thence 100 feet southwest to the northwest edge of the concourse/passenger platform. The property boundary then follows the northeast edge of the platform to its east corner, where it turns

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southwest to follow the platform to its junction with the baggage wing. The property boundary follows the northeast and southeast elevations of the Station building to the point of beginning at its south corner.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The 16th Street Station and Signal Tower is nominated herein to the National Register of Historic Places. The plaza area in front to the east of the main station and baggage wing was historically part of the Southern Pacific passenger-serving area but has lost integrity and is therefore not included in the property. Railroad tracks have been removed, and most of the historic alignment has been replaced by the freeway so the rail alignment has likewise lost integrity. The railroad right-of-way is not included within the boundary of the historic property. The historic property is limited to the main Station and Signal Tower buildings along with the roughly 25' x 100' strip of land that connects the buildings.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kara Brunzell/Principal, Tatyana Dunn/Historian, Britney  
Evans/Researcher  
Feleciai Favroth/Treasurer, Daniel Levy/President, Naomi  
Schiff/Secretary, Kathleen Rogers/ Member  
organization: Brunzell Historical/Oakland Heritage Alliance  
street & number: 446 17th Street, Suite 301  
city or town: Oakland  
state: California  
zip code: 94612  
e-mail: info@oaklandheritage.org  
telephone: 510-763-9218  
date: April 1, 2024

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.



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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph



Figure 1 Location Map



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- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.815157 | Longitude: -122.297360 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.815659 | Longitude: -122.297978 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.816484 | Longitude: -122.296844 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.816308 | Longitude: -122.296595 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.815945 | Longitude: -122.296930 |

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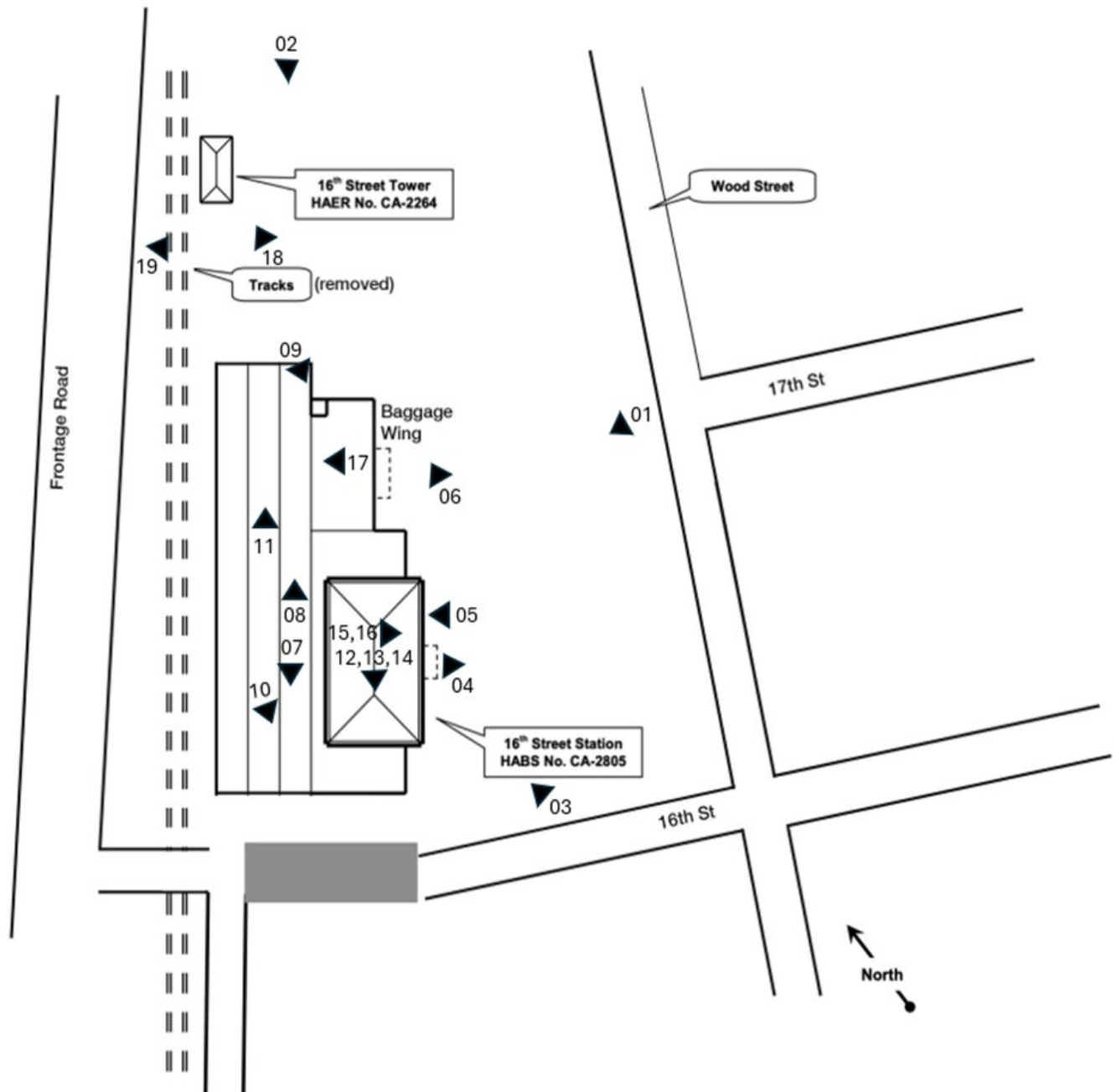
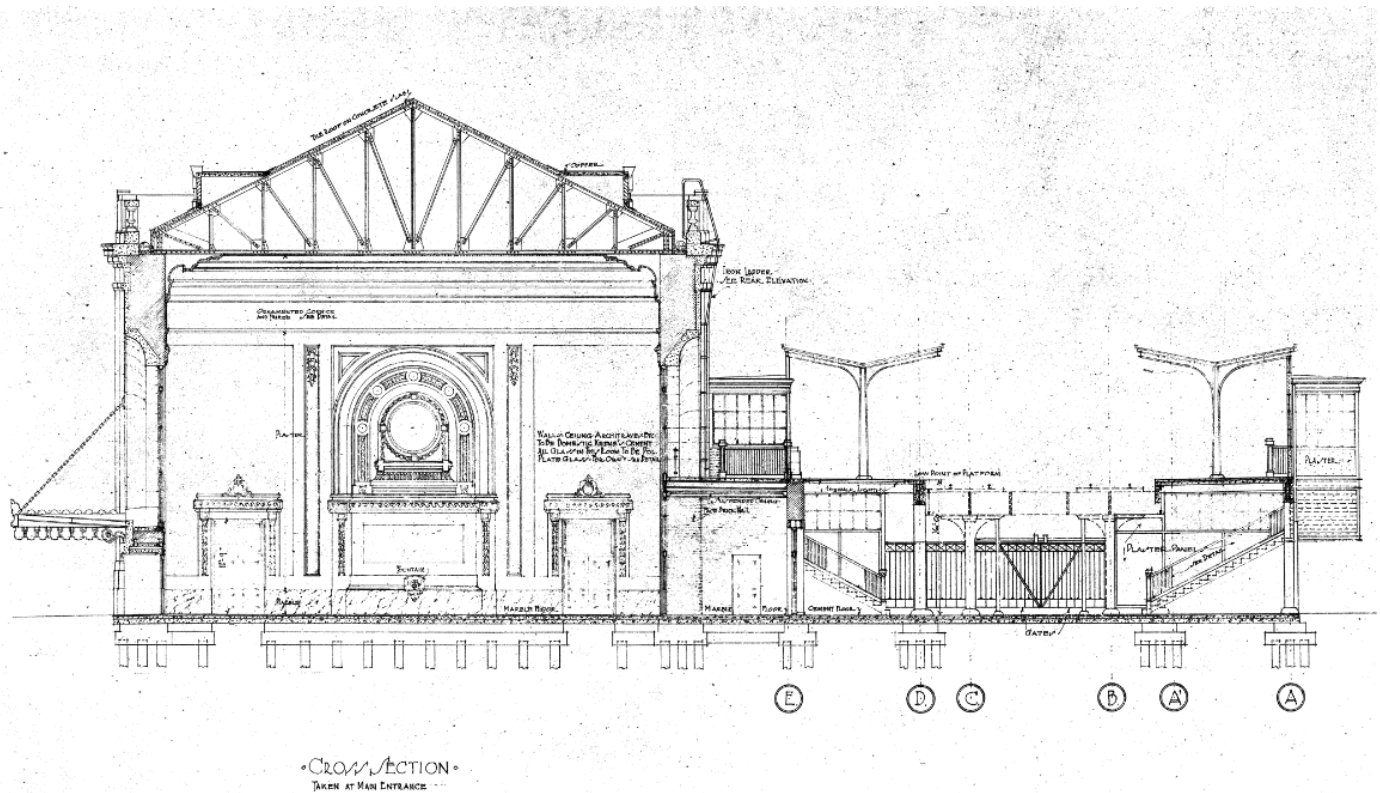


Figure 2 Sketch Map/Photo Key

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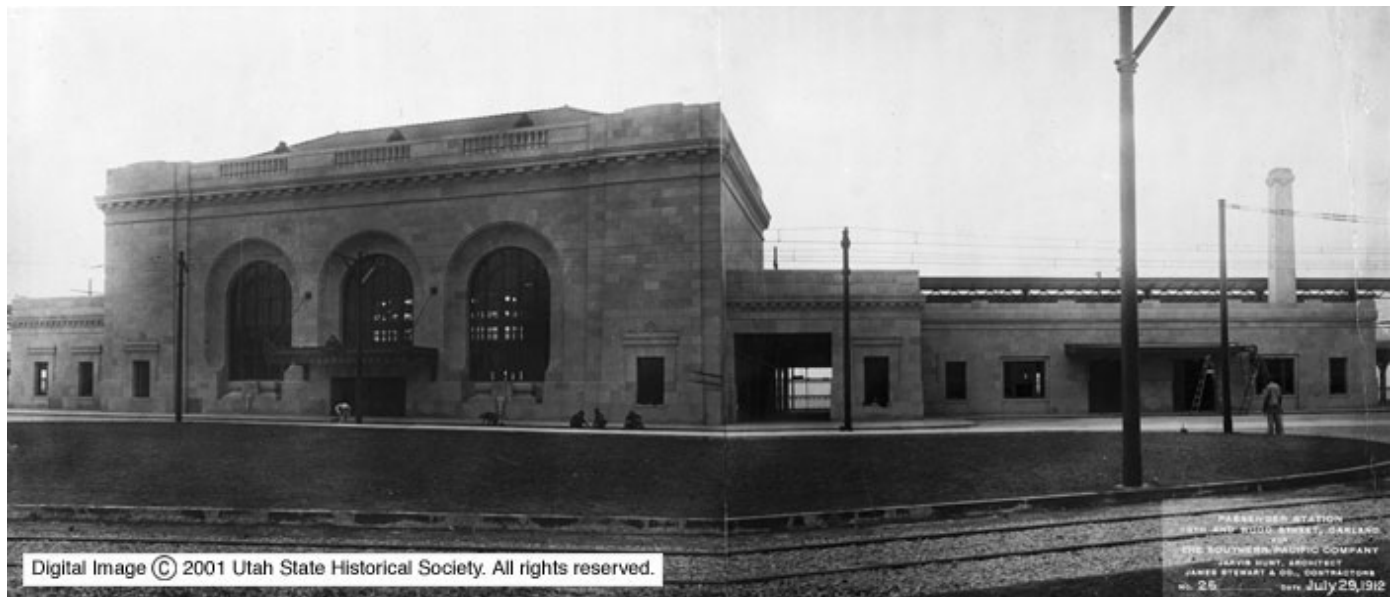


**Figure 3** Detail showing interior elevation and passenger concourse, Passenger Station at Oakland California for the Southern Pacific Company, Jarvis Hunt Architect, December 3, 1910, revised January 17, 1911 and April 14, 1911.

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**Figure 4** 16th Street Station, July 29, 1912, *Harry Shipler, Shipler Commercial Photographers.*



**Figure 5** 16th Street Station Interior, 1912, *Western Architect.*

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**Figure 6** 16th Street Station showing tracks, concourse with catenary system and elevated tracks, and Signal Tower background, undated c1920.

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**Figure 7** 16th Street Station showing passengers waiting on both levels of concourse, undated c1920.



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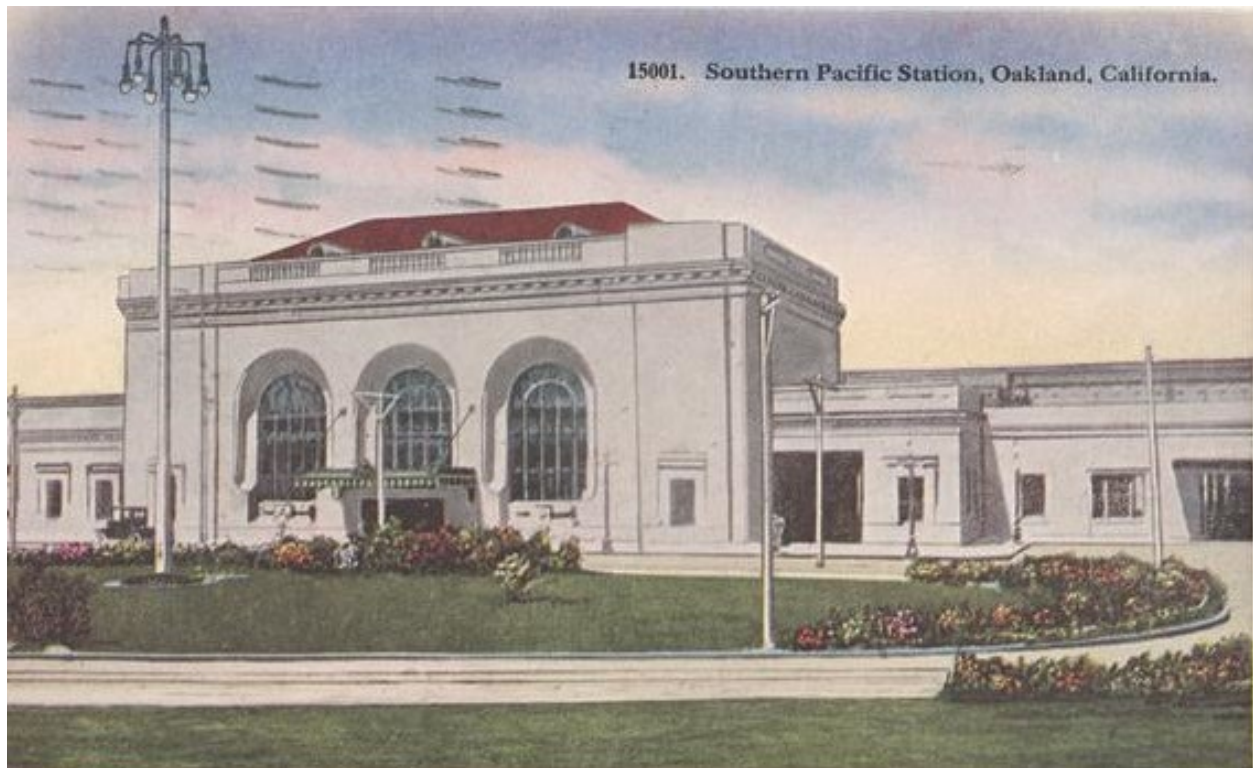
**Figure 8** Porter Clinton Jones handling baggage at 16th Street Station at 1920s, *African American Museum and Library at Oakland*.

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**Figure 9** 16th Street Station Postcard showing landscaping and interurban tracks in front of main facade, c1930, *Pacific Novelty Company*.



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**Figure 10** 16th Street Station interior, 1949, *John Signor*.

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**Figure 11** 16th Street Station showing parking lot in front of main facade, 1956, *Harold Winder, Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation.*

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**Figure 12** 16th Street Station interior, 1962, *California State Railroad Museum*.

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**Figure 13** 16th Street Station interior, 1962, *California State Railroad Museum*.

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**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Southern Pacific 16th Street Station and 16th Street Tower  
City or Vicinity: Oakland, CA  
County: Alameda  
State: California  
Photographer: Naomi Schiff for Oakland Heritage Alliance  
Date Photographed: Exteriors: November 12, 2023 and March 26, 2024  
Interiors: March 26, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0001

View of southeast elevation, facing northwest

2 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0002

View of station and signal tower, northeast elevation, facing southwest

3 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0003

View of southeast façade, facing northwest

4 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0004

View of marquee detail, southeast elevation, facing north

5 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0005

View of cornice detail, southeast elevation, facing northwest

6 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0006

View of light standard, facing northeast

7 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0007

View of northwest elevation second-story concourse, looking southwest

8 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0008

View of northwest elevation second-story concourse, facing northeast

9 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0009

View of northwest elevation detail of second-story concourse, facing southwest

10 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_S.P.16thStStn\_0010

View of northwest elevation first-story, facing south

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11 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0011

View of northwest elevation first-story, facing northeast

12 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0012

View of main hall interior, facing south

13 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0013

View of main hall interior detail, facing south

14 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0014

View of main hall interior escutcheon, facing south

15 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0015

View of main hall interior windows, facing southeast

16 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0016

View of main hall interior ceiling panels, facing southeast

17 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0017

View of basement, facing northwest

18 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0018

View of tower exterior, facing north

19 of 19 CA\_Oakland\_ S.P.16thStStn \_0019

View of tower exterior, facing northeast



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Photograph 1: Southeast elevation, camera facing northwest.



Photograph 2: Northeast elevation, camera facing southwest.



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Photograph 3: Southeast elevation, camera facing northwest.



Photograph 4: Detail, marquee, southeast elevation, facing north.



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Photograph 5: Detail, cornice, southeast elevation, facing northwest.



Photograph 6: Detail, light standard, camera facing northeast.



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Photograph 7: Northwest elevation, camera facing southwest.



Photograph 8: Northwest elevation, camera facing northeast.



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Photograph 9: Northwest elevation, camera facing southwest.



Photograph 10: Northwest elevation, camera facing south.



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Photograph 11: Northwest elevation, camera facing northeast.



Photograph 12: Interior, camera facing south.



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Photograph 13: Detail, interior ornamental molding, camera facing south.



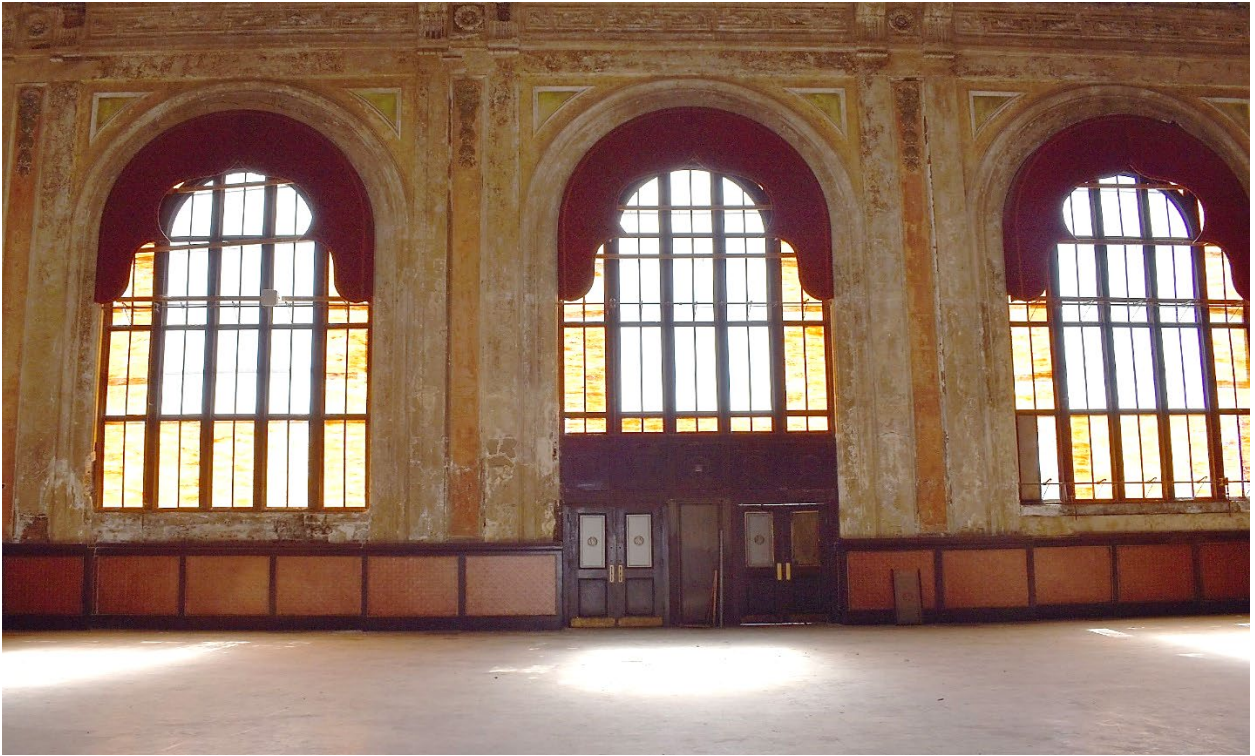
Photograph 14: Detail, interior escutcheon, camera facing south.



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Photograph 15: Detail, interior windows, camera facing southeast.



Photograph 16: Detail, ceiling panels, camera facing southeast.



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Photograph 17: Interior, camera facing northwest.



Photograph 18: Tower, southwest and southeast elevations, camera facing north.

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Photograph 19: Tower, northwest and southwest elevations, camera facing northeast.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.