



News Release

State of New Mexico
Historic Preservation Division, Department of Cultural Affairs
407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

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CONTACT:
Tom Drake, 505-827-4067

Albuquerque Rail Yards Are New Mexico's Newest Historic District Raton Historic District Expanded

Santa Fe — The largest historic industrial complex in New Mexico has been designated a state historic district, the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Department of Cultural Affairs announced today.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Locomotive Shops , which form the crux of Albuquerque's Rail Yards established in 1880, were listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties as an historic district by the Cultural Properties Review Committee on August 8. Because of the property's historical and architectural significance, the committee forwarded the nomination to the National Park Service as a potential National Register of Historic Places listing.

"The crucial role these building and structures played in transportation, industry and Albuquerque's social history from 1914 to 1956, and the architectural and engineering significance of the Locomotive Shops puts this district at the local and state levels of historical significance, said Jeff Pappas, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director of HPD.

As one of only four AT&SF division points west of the Mississippi River, the Albuquerque shops were an integral part of the national railway system. The machine shop serviced simultaneously as many as 40 steam locomotives suspended on massive bridge cranes. Locomotives were loaded on a turntable that still exists within a 113,000 square foot foundation, and directed into one of 35 covered stalls for servicing. The Rail Yard established Albuquerque as a transportation hub and was the city's largest employer through World War II, providing jobs to a quarter of its workforce or 1,500 people during peak years.

After 1956, when the last steam locomotive was phased out in favor of diesel-powered engines that required less maintenance, jobs began to disappear. The grand, multi-storied machine shop and the boiler shop—two of the earliest examples of glass curtain-wall construction in the U.S.—fell into disuse by the late 1970s and have been largely vacant since.

“They were the largest buildings in Albuquerque,” Steven Moffson, HPD’s State and National Register coordinator said of the two buildings. “They are notable for their severe appearance but classic proportions.”

They are considered excellent examples of the Romanesque Revival and Stripped Classicism architectural styles. In all, 21 of 25 buildings, structures and a site are designated as historic on a 27- acre parcel of land in downtown Albuquerque.

“This is a big day for us,” said Maryellen Hennessy, a senior planner with the City Of Albuquerque, at the meeting. “The monumental scale of the property will make for a challenging redevelopment, but we see it as a major employer again in Albuquerque.”

The city purchased the property in 2007 to preserve and redevelop it. Papers signed by Mayor Richard Berry in late July allow redevelopment plans involving a combination of new businesses, housing and events to begin. The city recently invested \$1 million in the Rail Yard’s historic Blacksmith Shop for a Sunday farmer’s market and other events.

The city hired consultant William A. Dodge to help develop and draft the nomination with Hennessy, senior planner Petra Morris and former senior planner Ed Boles. Parts of the nomination were based on an earlier draft by University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning professor Chris Wilson.

Listing a property in the State Register makes it eligible for state historic preservation tax credits of up to \$25,000. If listed in the National Register, developers would be eligible for a 20-percent credit with no credit cap that has been used in New Mexico to help finance multi-million-dollar redevelopments of historic buildings in Clovis, Las Vegas and Albuquerque where Old Albuquerque High School, Hotel Parq Central and Hotel Andaluz are examples.

Raton Historic District

The committee also expanded the Raton Downtown Historic District by increasing its northern and southern boundaries, and by including buildings constructed through 1966 as contributing to the district. The historic district originally established in 1977 included buildings constructed between 1880 and 1927.

Twenty additional buildings in the enlarged district are considered historic for a total of 78. They are completed in many architectural styles including late Victorian, Italianate, Queen Anne, Commercial, Art Deco and now Modern.

A mining town located at the foot of Raton Pass, Raton sprang up alongside the AT&SF Railroad.

Expansion of the historic districts was sponsored by the City of Raton, the local MainStreet organization and New Mexico MainStreet.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tom Drake, Public Relations
Historic Preservation Division, Department of Cultural Affairs
Bataan Memorial Building
407 Galisteo St., Suite 236
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 827-4067
tom.drake@state.nm.us
www.nmhistoricpreservation.org