



Harrisburg Train Station

Transforming an Enduring Landmark into a
Modern Multimodal Transportation Center



To help preserve and publicize the history of the Harrisburg Transportation Center and train sheds amid ongoing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, and to meet the requirements of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) executed in 2014 under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, this booklet was prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in cooperation with:

- U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC)
- National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)



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Governor Thornburgh Presenting Check (p. 15): Courtesy of the Allied Picture Collection, Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.



image courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives

◀ Harrisburg Train Station circa 1920: Utilitarian in nature yet architecturally distinguished, the station was designed to be convenient and efficient—traits which remain today.

For well over 100 years, the Harrisburg Train Station, now known as the Harrisburg Transportation Center, has served as a gateway to Pennsylvania’s state capital. Opened in 1887 by the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad and built adjacent to Harrisburg’s business district and the capital city’s monumental core, the railroad passenger station was a major portal to the city, serving politicians, heads of state, tourists, local residents, and commuters. It continues to serve a major role in Pennsylvania’s multimodal transportation system—modernized yet retaining its historic character.

The Rise of Harrisburg as a Railroad Center

In 1846, the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) was chartered to construct a rail route between Harrisburg, the state capital, and Pittsburgh, an industrial city and a gateway to America’s West. The new railroad would bypass the existing Pennsylvania Main Line Canal (completed in 1834) and the inclined plane system used to transfer canal boats up and over the Allegheny Mountains. Completed to Pittsburgh in 1855, the PRR would change the history of the state and the country. In short order, the PRR would grow into the largest and most important railroad in the eastern United States and one of the most important in the nation.

Harrisburg played a pivotal role in building the PRR’s line to Pittsburgh. It served as the staging ground for the new railroad’s successful passage over the Allegheny Mountains. Harrisburg was also the place where the PRR

linked with existing or proposed railroads to Philadelphia—the Commonwealth’s largest and most important city—as well as to Baltimore and destinations in central and northern Pennsylvania. The PRR would eventually lease or own all of these railroads, part of a system that would extend from New York and Philadelphia on the east, to Chicago and St. Louis on the west, Michigan on the north, and Washington, D.C., and Richmond on the south. At its peak in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the PRR originated 10 percent of the nation’s freight traffic, carried 20 percent of all railroad passengers, and employed 12 percent of all railroad workers. Hundreds of those employees worked at the PRR’s shops and facilities in Harrisburg, including its passenger station.

► Harrisburg's first PRR train station, built in 1837, was a 50- by 100-foot-long brick building in the Greek Revival style. The two-story front section had a one-story porch with Doric columns. A long one-story section extended to the rear and featured an arcaded platform.



image from Wilson, 1899

Harrisburg's First and Second Pennsylvania Railroad Passenger Stations



image courtesy of Library of Congress

▲ The second train station, completed in 1857, was in the Italianate style with tracks running through and along its sides. Pavilions at the building's corners housed offices.

Today's Harrisburg Transportation Center is the third PRR passenger station in Harrisburg. The first was built in 1837 by the Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mountjoy & Lancaster Railroad, a predecessor route connecting Harrisburg and Philadelphia, which the PRR would acquire in 1861. The station was located on Market Street and included a "pie stand," which an 1860 newspaper article referred to as "the ancestor of all railroad station restaurants in America."

As the PRR's operations and rolling stock grew, the 1837 station became inadequate. In 1857, the PRR erected its second Harrisburg Train Station on essentially the same site. The PRR shared the station with two railroads it leased—the Northern Central and the Cumberland Valley. The station was designed by Philadelphia architect Joseph C. Hoxie and constructed by Stephen D. M'Culla of Harrisburg at a cost of \$58,266.20.

The 1860 newspaper article referenced above noted that the new station's "elegant dining salon" was a "far cry from the old station's 'pie-stand'" and was an example of the types of amenities railroad companies were including in their facilities to entice customers.

Famously, the building hosted President Lincoln's funeral train following his assassination in 1865.

The 1857 building served rail passengers until the PRR constructed the current station in 1887.



image courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives

▲ This woodcut of the 1887 station and train shed shortly after it opened provides a good view of the foliate relief pattern separating the third floor from the roof. The front awning actually wrapped around the side of the building, and the landscaping details in the rendering differ from those in place at the time.

Third Harrisburg Train Station Construction, 1885 to 1887

The PRR built its third Harrisburg passenger station (the building used today) between 1885 and 1887. The station was one of many improvements undertaken during the administration of PRR president George B. Roberts (1880-1897).

Roberts presided over an era of great change on the PRR. The American railroad industry was at its zenith. The PRR's freight traffic tripled and passenger traffic nearly doubled during Robert's tenure. At the same time, the era was characterized by intense competition, over-building, and rate wars, as rival railroads fought to maintain or increase their share of the market. Out of necessity, Roberts ordered improvements to the PRR's

physical plant and facilities, including changes designed to more efficiently handle freight and passenger traffic.

In addition to the Harrisburg Train Station, the PRR under Roberts erected new passenger stations at Broad Street in Philadelphia (1880-1881) and in Chicago (1881), Cincinnati (1881), and Columbus (1897). By the end of the Roberts era, the PRR mainline was four-tracked between New York and Harrisburg and double- or triple-tracked between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. Cut-off lines had been constructed to route through freight traffic around Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and new handling and sorting yards had been established throughout the system.



image from *Distinguished Railroad Men of America*, 1890

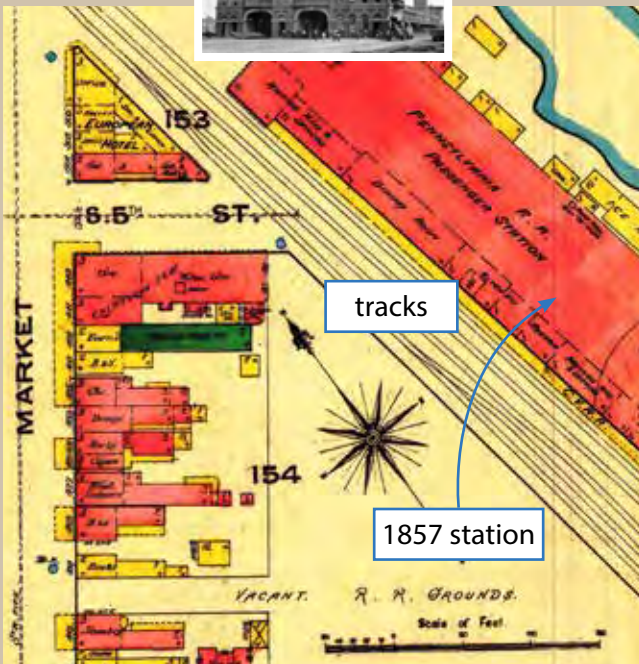
▲ George B. Roberts served as Pennsylvania Railroad president during construction of the 1887 Harrisburg Train Station.

► The brick station was one of the largest buildings in downtown Harrisburg—three-and-a-half stories high, eight bays wide, and capped by a steeply pitched, side gable roof. As shown in this 1889 photo, the roof’s dormers had roundel windows set against a flowered bas relief above a grouping of four windows. The central gabled dormer was extended to meet the roofline, forming triangular side panels clad with slate.

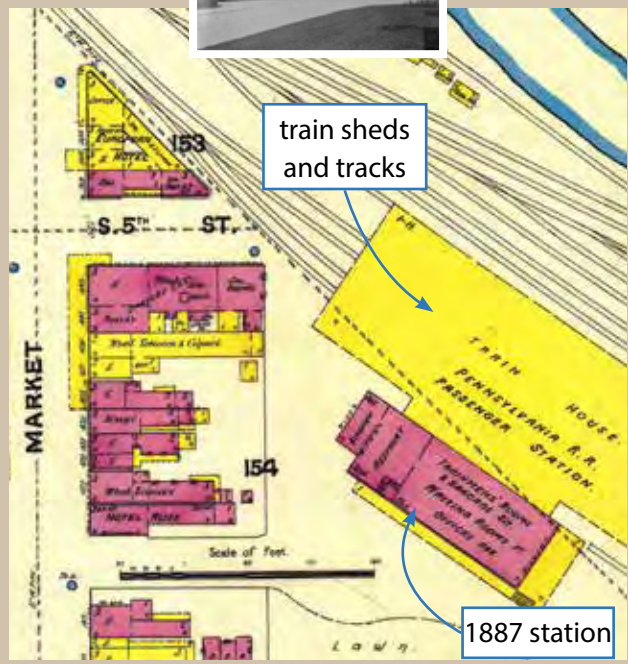


image courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia

Strategic Move for Safety



▲ The location of the 1857 Harrisburg Train Station required patrons to cross multiple at-grade railroad tracks—including the PRR’s mainline tracks—to access the station. The result was a frightful death toll.



▲ Constructing the 1887 passenger station slightly to the southwest eliminated the need for pedestrians to cross active railroad tracks. Note the relative sizes of the station and train sheds.

images (2) courtesy of the Penn State University Libraries

Architecture and Function of the Harrisburg Train Station

The PRR's Harrisburg Train Station consisted of two separate components: the station building and the train sheds. The PRR's Chief Engineer, William H. Brown, a native of Lancaster, oversaw all design and construction. The building's architect is unknown, although the PRR could have designed the station in-house.

The two-story passenger waiting room occupied the building's first six bays from the south and contained a ticket office and separate waiting rooms for gentlemen and ladies. The waiting room bays were distinguished by shallow-arched, multi-light windows. The northern two bays housed the station's restaurant. Attached to the northwest side of the restaurant was a single-story kitchen wing, also constructed of brick. A shed roof awning supported by curved, open wood brackets sheltered most of the first story and wrapped around the south side of the building. Offices occupied the floor above the waiting room.

Reporting on the station's opening, the *Harrisburg Telegraph* praised the building, noting that "the best architects have lavished their genius" on the station. The beautifully proportioned building was built in the then-current Queen Anne style, which integrated medieval and renaissance architectural ornament with a variety of materials, textures, and rooflines. The passenger station's main block had the three-part horizontal arrangement of a Renaissance palace. The base level was partially constructed with coarse rusticated stone. A smooth stone belt course separated it from the second story, and both a smooth stone belt course and an entablature divided the second and third stories. Above the third story four courses of dentil molding and a row of bosses ran along the main elevation, while the side elevations had a dense foliate relief pattern and winged gargoyle at each end.



image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ A smooth stone belt course, four courses of dentil molding, and a row of "bosses" (knob-like round ornaments) ran between the third story and roof and remain today.



image courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives

The train sheds, located behind the station, offered protection from the weather. They were longer and wider than the station building, although their open nature made them seem less imposing. Designed by Brown or his office, the sheds may have followed a standard PRR design, as they matched the sheds built in 1880 for the PRR's 31st Street Engine House in West Philadelphia.

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▲ The first train shed was in place by 1885, prior to completion of the station. Both the station and the original train shed are shown in this 1896 photo. Note the raised ventilating section at the peak of the train shed roof, called a monitor. The 420-foot-long, 90-foot-wide shed spanned four railroad tracks, while a fifth track came in under the station's rear eaves. The PRR erected a second, identical train shed to the east (right) later in 1896.

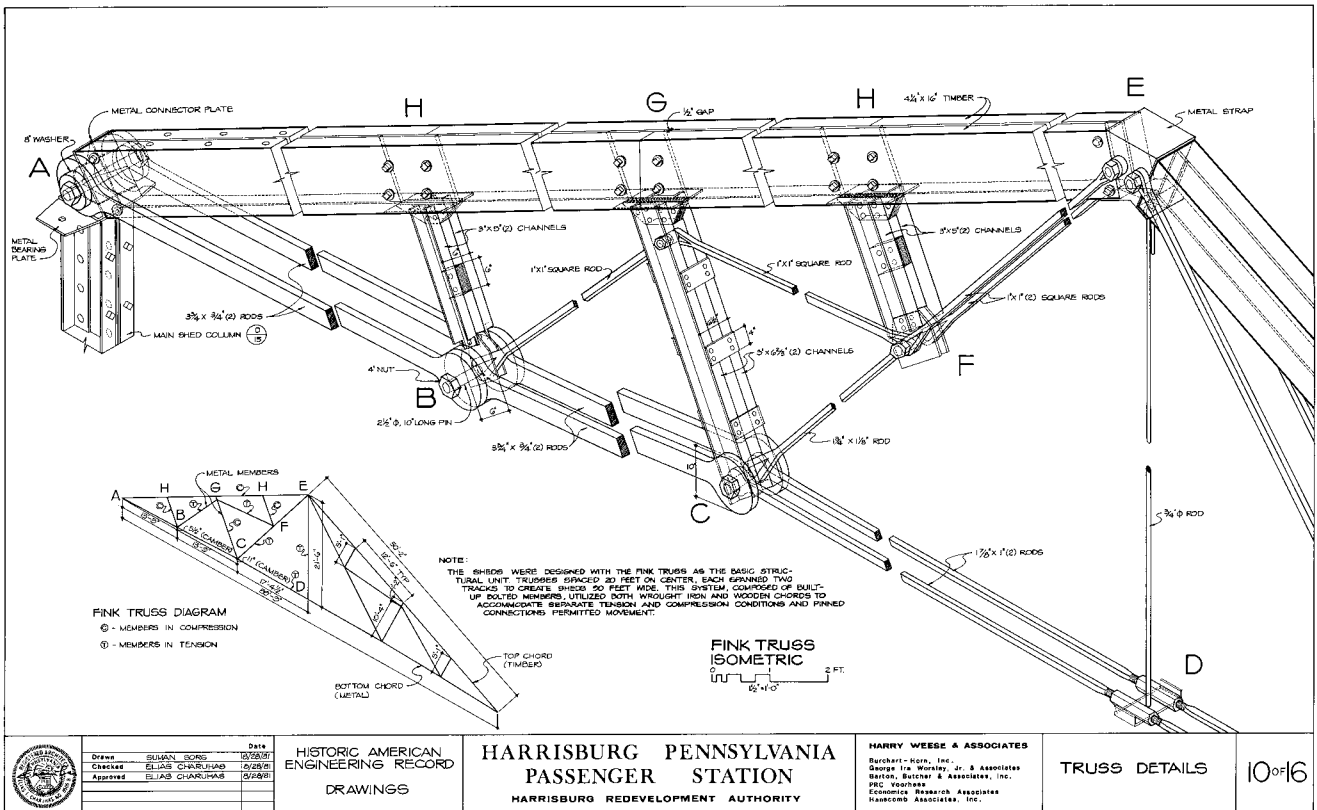


image courtesy of HAER

▲ Patented in 1854 for railroad bridges by Albert Fink of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the Fink truss design was later adapted to building roofs and as a structural design for industrial buildings.

As one historian notes, “The Fink truss was a milestone in structural design for industrial buildings. The continued use of the station’s train sheds are testimony to the soundness of his design.”

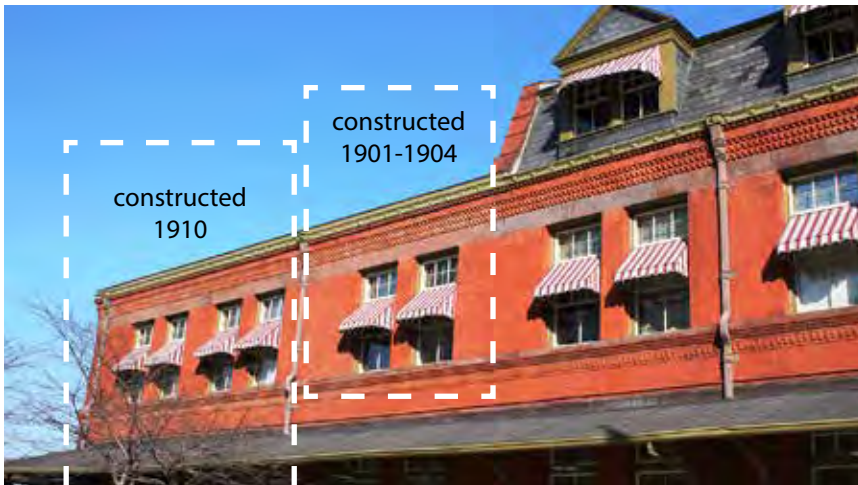
The structural unit supporting the train shed roof was known as a Fink truss. The individual roof trusses, spaced 20 feet on center, used a sophisticated system of both wrought iron and wood chords to

accommodate separate tension and compression conditions. Steel or wrought iron pins connected the members. The trusses supported a roof with a partially glazed monitor.

► The train sheds are still in use today; this 2014 photo shows the Fink trusses.



image courtesy of Skelly & Loy, Inc.



◀ The PRR constructed extensions to both the south and north ends of the building between 1901 and 1904. The north extension, visible in this 2014 photo, added a second story above the kitchen wing.

Station Expansion, 1901 to 1904

During their heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American railroads continually adapted their infrastructure to meet challenges, gain efficiency, and improve passenger safety. Between 1901 and 1904 the Harrisburg Train Station underwent major modifications that are still present today.

At the north end of the building, the PRR added a second story above the kitchen wing. At the south end,

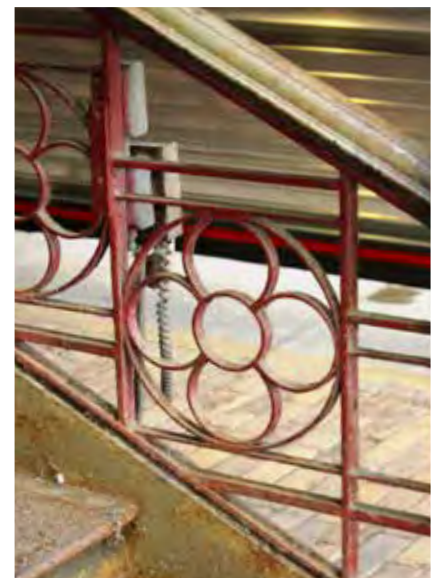
the PRR added three two-story bays with flat roofs. The architectural details of the station's extensions meticulously duplicated those of the original building.

The PRR also constructed bridges under the roofs of the train sheds to separate passengers and baggage from the train tracks. To accommodate the new passenger and baggage bridges, the station's waiting room floors had to be raised by six feet.

This reduced the waiting room from a space two stories in height to one, and the portion of the building on the plaza side from three and one-half stories to two and one-half stories. The rusticated stone base that had characterized the original exterior of the first story was re-created. To reach the station's entrances, passengers now climbed six steps (visible in the page 1 postcard image).



▲ To provide natural light to the passenger and baggage bridges, the PRR added eight skylights to the train shed roofs.



▲ To connect the bridges and the track level, the PRR installed eight staircases featuring large wrought iron quatrefoils and cast iron newel posts, which remain today.

images (3) courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.



▲ In 1904 a fire destroyed the station’s roof. The PRR replaced what had been a steeply pitched side gable roof with the current gambrel roof (sometimes referred to as a barn roof), shown above. Instead of three large dormers, the new roof featured eight smaller pediment dormers across both the front and rear. The gambrel roof increased the usable office space on the top floor, which housed offices at the south end; doctors’ offices in the center; and rest rooms, PRR meeting rooms, supply spaces, and a real estate office in the north end.

Improvements related to the expansion and 1904 fire allowed the PRR to reorder interior spaces and functions. The rebuilt waiting room had a new ticket office, wall-mounted benches, and wainscoting. The new passenger bridge served as a lobby and an extension of the waiting room. The new south addition, located at the end of the baggage bridge, contained a baggage and mail room with offices above. At the north end, the restaurant was expanded.

To further improve passenger safety, the PRR constructed a pedestrian tunnel under the tracks and platform to connect the station with Market Street. The tunnel now carries high voltage electrical wires and is no longer available for passenger use.



images (2) courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ The lobby’s cast iron interior columns and Colonial Revival style wood beam ceiling date from the early 20th century improvements.

Additional Major Changes, 1910 to 1929



Image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ This photo shows the interior of the passenger bridge in 2014, looking toward the station.

The Harrisburg Transportation Center has long served in a multimodal capacity.

The PRR continued to reconfigure both the interior and exterior of the Harrisburg Train Station between 1910 and 1929. Major changes included:

- 1910 Extending the station 60 feet to the north (visible in the photo at the top of page 7) to accommodate a lunch counter and dining room on the main floor, offices on the second, and a kitchen and trainman's room in the basement; remodeling part of what had been the restaurant into a ladies' waiting room; adding a porte cochere to the plaza side to shelter carriages and automobiles dropping off passengers; and extending the train sheds 120 feet to the south.
- 1919 Adding six riveted steel beams to strengthen the passenger bridge floor.
- 1929 Extending the passenger bridge further east over a new track and erecting a 315-foot-long canopy. Around the same time, the PRR added intercity bus service to the station.

The Bus Connection

The Harrisburg Transportation Center has long served in a multimodal capacity. In the late 1920s, in response to declining passenger rail revenues, the PRR began investing in intercity bus lines—including what would become the nation's best-known bus line, the Greyhound Corporation. By 1931, the Pennsylvania Greyhound Lines had an 8,000-mile system that roughly paralleled the Pennsylvania Railroad's system. The joint venture ensured close coordination between train and bus service and schedules. At many locations, including Harrisburg, train and bus station facilities were shared and the PRR acted as ticket sales agent for both modes. The combined services allowed the PRR to reduce the number of passenger trains it ran, particularly to remote stops with few passengers, while still providing passenger service to those communities by bus. The PRR retained partial ownership of Pennsylvania Greyhound Lines until 1954.



Image courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives

▲ Intercity buses were previously accommodated at the south end of the building, as shown in this photo from the 1950s. During the 1980s the bus terminal was relocated to the north end of the station to improve traffic flow.



image courtesy of HAER

▲ The power director's room was part of the 1930s expansion (1981 photo).

► This 2014 photo shows the passenger bridge and some of the catenaries (electric wires) that required the bridge to be raised, as well as one of the stairways connecting the bridge and platforms.



image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

Electrification, 1936 to 1937

Between 1928 and 1938, the PRR converted its multi-track mainline between New York, Washington, and Harrisburg from steam to electric traction—the largest capital improvement program undertaken by an American railroad up to that time. Finished during the depth of the Great Depression, the electrification project cost the PRR more than \$250 million and encompassed nearly 2,200 miles of track. But to the PRR, the long-term benefits far outweighed the short-term costs. Electrified locomotives could run faster, pull longer trains, and stop and start more quickly than steam locomotives.

Electrification required massive changes to the PRR's infrastructure, including construction of electrical substations, towers, and catenaries (overhead electrified wires); placement of heavier rails; construction of a new dam to supply hydroelectric power; and the manufacture of a fleet of electric locomotives. At the Harrisburg Train Station, the project required raising the passenger and baggage bridges to create adequate clearance for

catenaries. To accomplish this, the train shed roofs and passenger and baggage bridges were raised. The lifting was done by jacking up the train shed columns and inserting stub columns under the raised ends. The actual lifting took just over two hours; the passenger bridge remained

in service the entire time. The PRR meticulously reproduced the steps and decorative quatrefoils (see photo page 7) of the extended staircases to match the existing ones. To facilitate mail and baggage handling, five new elevators were added to the south side of the baggage bridge.



image courtesy of Amtrak | Chuck Gomez

▲ The electrified system put in place in the 1930s has been periodically updated and continues to be used to this day—a testament to the soundness of the PRR's strategic decision.

The Legendary GG1 Locomotive

Electrification became possible, in part, when the Westinghouse Corporation introduced a new traction motor compact enough to fit between the wheels of a locomotive, opening the door to more powerful electric locomotives.

Perhaps the best known of the Pennsylvania Railroad's electric locomotives was the legendary GG1. Introduced in 1935, the workhorse engine was built to haul heavy passenger trains at top speed; some were also re-gearred for freight service. Famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy produced the GG1's streamlined look, welding rather than bolting body segments together, softening the exterior corners, and designing the "cat's whiskers" paint scheme.

The GG1 easily handled heavy loads, in large part because of its strong steel frame and the addition



image courtesy of the Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA

▲ Two GG1 locomotives at the Harrisburg Train Station in 1966.

of concrete to the body, which provided weight to facilitate traction. Impressive for both its power and longevity, the GG1 remained in service until the early 1980s, when

advanced age and newer technology led to its retirement. A restored GG1 locomotive is preserved at the Harrisburg Transportation Center.

Electrification also led to the most recent expansion of the passenger station. A two-story-high, 50-foot-long addition was appended to the station's south end in 1937, giving the Harrisburg Train Station its present dimensions. The addition's first floor held interlocking equipment that routed trains to their proper tracks, as well as instrument racks and power equipment. The addition's second floor served as a tower which controlled train movement into the station. The basement had concrete loading docks. The architectural details of the addition matched those of the historic building except on the main floor, where pairs of six-over-six windows were used instead of the historic arched windows.

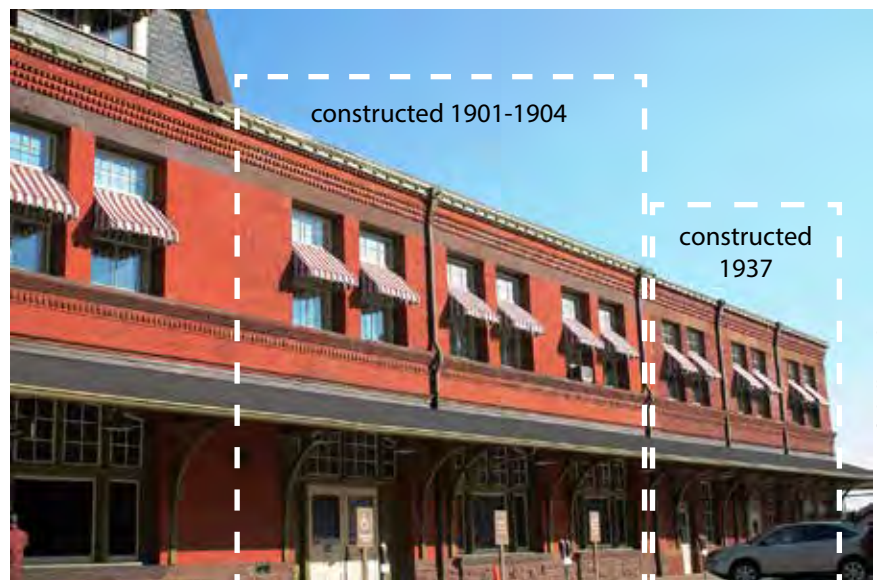


image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ A south addition was constructed between 1901 and 1904; a further south addition was built during electrification.

World War II and Postwar Changes

In 1941, a 12-foot-high reinforced concrete viaduct deck was built to connect the station plaza's south end to the Mulberry Street Bridge, which runs behind and to the south of the station. A wall was also constructed from the station to the Railway Express Agency building on Mulberry Street.

Most other changes in the 1940s and 1950s involved the station's interior functions and configurations. These included:

- Installing a bus dispatcher's office in the southwest corner of the building.
- Building a United Service Organizations (USO) room in the northeast corner of the building (now a conference room).
- Adding showers, expanded restrooms, a store, lunch tables, and lockers for railroad and bus employees.
- Converting a drugstore into a public telephone niche, adding a soda fountain to the women's waiting room, opening a concession stand, and adding a bar to the restaurant.



image courtesy of the Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA

▲ Approximately 50 feet wide, the 1941 viaduct deck served as a nine-bay bus terminal and a bridge for vehicular circulation in front of the passenger building. A flat canopy roof protected the bus bays, as shown in this 1981 photo. The intercity bus terminal was moved to its current location at the north end of the building as part of the 1980s renovations described on pages 14 and 15.



image courtesy of HAER

▲ This photo of the USO room, constructed during World War II, was taken just prior to the 1980s station restoration. This space is now a conference room.



image courtesy of HAER

Amtrak and a number of other dedicated organizations were determined to bring the station back to its former glory and revitalize it for modern, multimodal use.

▲ Years of deferred maintenance had resulted in dilapidated train shed roofs, as shown in this 1985 photo, and general deterioration of the station.

The Penn Central Bankruptcy and the Station's Rebirth under Amtrak

In 1964, an article in the *Harrisburg Evening News* compared the Harrisburg Train Station to "...somebody's grandmother. When she was 20 she had the looks to derail trains, but now that she's 77, old Granny's wrinkles have made her charming." The writer also praised the building's longevity: "While many of these railroad temples are disappearing from the American scene, Harrisburg's Granny isn't going anywhere. She is just sitting and staring across town at that relative youngster, the 59-year-old [state] Capitol."

"Railroad temples" were disappearing because railroad traffic and revenue had declined precipitously. By the 1960s, faced with competition from private automobiles, buses, and airplanes, travel by passenger trains had diminished. And not without reason; schedules were erratic, trains were run-down, and stations offered fewer and fewer amenities. In 1968, the once-mighty Pennsylvania Rail-

road, facing financial hardship as both passenger and freight traffic fell sharply, merged with its longtime rival, the New York Central, creating the Penn Central Railroad. Just two years later, the Penn Central was bankrupt. With railroad passenger service struggling throughout the country, the federal government stepped in. In 1971 it created the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, better known as Amtrak, to consolidate and operate the nation's long-distance passenger trains.

Declining revenue had resulted in deferred maintenance of the Harrisburg Train Station. Just nine years after it had been called "charming," a 1973 newspaper headline described the building as "dingy," and its dilapidated condition had gained the station unwanted notoriety. Passenger and vehicular circulation was haphazard and confusing. The historically significant train sheds were becoming structurally unsound.

But Amtrak and a number of other dedicated organizations were determined to bring the station back to its former glory and revitalize it for modern, multimodal use.



image courtesy of the Historical Society of Dauphin County, Harrisburg, PA

▲ Prior to restoration, 12 layers of peeling paint masked the beauty of the station's oak ceiling beams. Both the interior and exterior of the building were in serious disrepair.



images courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ The station's two historic fireplaces and mantels (inset) were cleaned and restored during the 1980s revitalization. This 2014 photo also shows the marble floor with a Greek key accent band, restored woodwork, and reproduction chandeliers.

Revitalization, 1974 to 1985

Revitalization began in October 1974, when Harrisburg City Council adopted the Harristown Plan, a forward-thinking blueprint to reverse the generally deplorable condition of Harrisburg's central business district. Phase Two of the Harristown Plan included revitalizing the Harrisburg Train Station into a multimodal transportation center.

As a first step, the Harrisburg Train Station was listed in the National Register of Historic Places—a recognition of the historical significance of its architecture, the engineering of its Fink trusses, and its long association with transportation in Harrisburg. National Register listing made the station eligible for federal historic preservation grants and other funding. In 1976, Amtrak leased the station and train sheds to the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority (HRA) for a 30-year period. Making the station a publicly owned facility freed up space for private development and opened up additional funding streams—key elements of the restoration plans.

In 1981, Amtrak and HRA secured funding from the U.S. Urban Mass Transit Administration (now the Federal

Transit Administration), the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to rehabilitate the Harrisburg Train Station and train sheds.

The ambitious, four-phase, \$13.4 million restoration program included the following:

- On the station exterior –
 - cleaning and repointing masonry;
 - repairing the roof and removing historically inappropriate metal ventilating monitors;
 - repairing and replacing in-kind terra cotta and brass ornament;
 - fixing broken window panes and repairing and replacing deteriorated windows with new windows that matched the historic ones;
 - removing the 1941 bus viaduct and the mail conveyor from the south end of the building; and
 - recreating the plaza side's original wood canopy.



image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.



image courtesy of HSDC

▲ Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh presented the initial funding for the station's rehabilitation in 1981.

◀ An intercity bus terminal was constructed on the north side of the station to replace the previous one on the south side of the building.

- On the station interior –
 - stripping the wainscoting, window sash, and ceiling beams of 12 layers of paint and restoring the natural oak finish;
 - fabricating new oak millwork to match the original;
 - cleaning, polishing, and repairing the mantels of the two 14- by 8-foot fireplaces;
 - repairing the cast iron columns; and
 - installing reproduction gaslight chandeliers and a new marble floor with a “Greek key” accent band around the perimeter.
- Restoring the train sheds, including replacing and rebuilding roofs and monitors, cleaning and painting columns and trusses, and, where necessary, replacing members in kind.
- Acquiring and demolishing several dilapidated and largely vacant buildings along the station’s northern boundary to accommodate a new intercity bus terminal.
- Creating a lane exclusively for local buses through the station plaza; this step and relocating the intercity buses to the north side of the station greatly reduced traffic circulation problems.



image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ The station building’s original wood awning and brackets were reconstructed on the front plaza side.

In 1976, the Harrisburg Train Station, including its train sheds, was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The designation recognizes the station as being of national significance—possessing exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. As of 2015, only about 2,500 historic places have been designated as National Historic Landmarks, putting the Harrisburg Train Station in select company.



image courtesy of Skelly and Loy, Inc.

▲ Today, the Harrisburg Transportation Center retains its 1887 character while serving modern travelers.

Ongoing Improvements and Adaptations, 1985 to Present

Since the station's restoration in the 1980s, subsequent changes have involved modifying interior functions and spaces to meet passenger needs. For example, following the restoration, the first floor featured a lobby/waiting room with a newsstand and ticket and baggage counters; a sit-down restaurant, kitchen, snack bar, concession stand, and office lobby in the north end; and baggage storage and Amtrak-related rooms in the south end.

Today, the sit-down restaurant, kitchen, and snack bar are no longer present. They have been replaced by a large multipurpose room and a convenience store selling snacks and newspapers, among other items. The former newsstand area—the station's original ticket office—now houses Amtrak security offices.

Additional upgrades, completed in May 2007, included replacing the cobblestone pavers in front of the station with a new roadway and installing flower beds and

flagpoles. Interior work included fire system upgrades; painting, repair, or replacement of floors, walls, wood panels, ceilings, beams, station roofing, plumbing, and air handling units; and replacing one elevator and modifying another.

Upgrades continue to be made to the station and train sheds. Amtrak is adding a passenger elevator to the existing high-level platform between Tracks 6 and 7 to provide safe access to the boarding area, compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is anticipated that subsequent work will include removing the early 20th century baggage bridge—which has deteriorated and is closed due to safety concerns—and building free-standing support structures to carry catenaries that are currently attached to the baggage bridge.

Additional planned improvements under Amtrak's Accessible Station Development Program include new grade crossings, concrete ramps with handrails, and full-length high-level

boarding platforms with tactile edges. Accessibility-related improvements are planned for passenger amenities such as the ticket counter and restrooms. Stairs connecting the platforms to the passenger bridges are slated to be rebuilt, but the original railing design will be reproduced.

Even with the current and planned adaptations, the integrity of the station's interior and exterior detailing remain—a testament to the quality of the original construction and the restoration in the 1980s. The station continues to serve travelers, as it has since it was completed in 1887.

The building's interior and exterior detailing remain, and the station continues to serve travelers, as it has since 1887.

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Harrisburg Train Station

1889



image courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia

circa 1920



image courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives

2014



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Harrisburg Transportation Center