

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot

other names/site number Sikeston Missouri Pacific Railroad Depot

2. Location

street & number South side of Front Street between Scott and New Madrid Sts. [n/a] not for publication

city or town Sikeston [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Scott code 201 zip code 63801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
[x] 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered  
significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

5 Mar. 00  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].

[ ] determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

[ ] removed from the  
National Register

[ ] other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

## 5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0
		0	0
		0	0
		1	0

Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National  
Register.

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Function	Current Functions
Transportation/rail-related	Recreation and Culture/museum

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification	Materials
Other: standardized railroad depot	foundation concrete
	walls brick
	roof ceramic tile
	other brick
	stone

## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **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

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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

# \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

### Periods of Significance

1917-1950

### Significant Dates

1917

### Significant Person(s)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Tucker, E. M./Duncan, J.C.

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

### UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing  
16 269180 4084090

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Sikeston Cultural Development Corporation (SCDC), Janice Matthews, Vice President

street & number One Cotton Trace telephone 573-471-0723

city or town Sikeston state Missouri zip code 63801

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 1Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

## Summary

Constructed in 1916-17, the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad depot at Sikeston in Scott County is located along Front Street between Scott and New Madrid Streets, west of the town square.<sup>1</sup> The depot is a one-story rectangular brick building with a hipped, red ceramic tile roof with wide eaves supported by conspicuous curvilinear brackets. Based on a standardized depot plan, the low-slung building occupies its original trackside location within a 100-foot right-of-way in the heart of Sikeston's business district. Other details of the 24 x 140-foot building include a projecting dispatcher's bay with a dormer-like hipped roof, transomed windows and stone trim. Prior to 1950 when more space was needed to carry out operations, pavilions at the ends under the main roof were enclosed with brick infill. Later, some window openings and entrances that were constructed within the enclosed ends were also infilled and the interior was modified. These alterations were undertaken by the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which acquired the facility shortly after it was completed. Because the corner piers at the infilled ends are intact and the roofline was never changed, the effect of the alterations on the depot's historic integrity is greatly lessened. Its original appearance can be inferred and in any case the existing building retains integrity from the time of the pre-1950 alterations. Since trains still glide past the depot on their way through Sikeston, its ambiance as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century railroad station remains strong.

## Elaboration

A dispatcher's bay projects from the west half of the southeast elevation (hereafter called south for simplicity) which faces the tracks. Eaves extend six feet and are supported by decorative wood brackets. The long elevations are indented several inches between the corners and the main section where the pavilions have been enclosed. Single, double, and triple window openings throughout the depot contain double-hung 1/1 sash with transoms. *Nearly all window and door openings have lintels of cut stone.* A stone beltcourse accentuates the building's horizontality but does not extend into the enclosed ends. The depot is also girded by a stone water table. The foundation is concrete. On the south, a platform with a brick surface extends approximately a dozen feet toward the track bed. Like the original track, the present Union Pacific Railroad track runs from east to west, diagonal to the grid pattern of Sikeston's streets.

The dispatcher's bay divides the primary elevation into two unequal portions, the largest extending eastward. The bay projects five feet from the side walls and is topped with a hipped, dormer-like roof. The side of the bay parallel to the track contains a triple window with a three-part transom. This window has a segmental brick arch with cut stone trim consisting of a keystone and corner stops. The east wall of the bay contains a transomed double-hung window. The bay's west wall contains a transomed single leaf entrance. Eastward from the bay in the main wall are, respectively, a transomed double window, a transomed single leaf entrance, three sets of transomed double windows, a transomed single leaf entrance, and a transomed double window. Westward from the bay are a transomed single window, a freight entrance with a sliding door, a single transom and a double transom. Originally, these transoms were above double-hung windows and an entrance next to the freight door. Window sills rest on the stone beltcourse. Ten large curvilinear brackets are spaced below the eaves at irregular intervals. Six small brackets adorn the eaves above the dispatcher's bay.

In the north elevation, two small, gabled dormers are located approximately a quarter of the distance in from the ends of the main roof. The north elevation lacks a dispatcher's bay but is generally similar to the south elevation. From east to west, fenestration consists of a transomed double window, a transomed single window, a transomed double window, a transomed single-leaf entrance, a transomed double window, a transomed single-leaf entrance, a transomed double window, a transomed triple window (opposite the triple window in the dispatcher's bay), a freight entrance with a sliding door, and a double transom which once

---

<sup>1</sup>Soon after the Sikeston depot opened 1917, the Missouri Pacific Railroad acquired it and other facilities of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

topped a double window. Windows are double-hung with 1/1 lights. The double windows served the waiting room while the triple window served the ticket office. Eleven large brackets are spaced along the eaves.

The east wall contains a double-leaf handicapped entrance with a five-pane transom. This entrance had a sliding door when the east end was enclosed. At the west end, a loading dock abuts the the building and there is a double-leaf entrance without a transom. Signs with the word SIKESTON in block letters are attached above the lintels at both ends of the depot.

The combination interior, currently divided into six rooms, originally consisted of waiting rooms and restrooms in the east portion and baggage rooms in the west, flanking a freight and ticket office. The largest of these segments was the waiting room. The first alteration occurred in circa 1937 when the east pavilion, one of the depot's two open air waiting areas for passengers, was enclosed to house the American Railway Express office which at the time was located near the center of the building. The local Greyhound station was moved to the depot and the waiting room was enlarged to accommodate bus as well as train passengers. At some point prior to 1950, the west pavilion was similarly enclosed and the floor was raised to create a freight room.<sup>2</sup>

In 1955 the railroad again modified the depot interior. The baggage room was extended into what had been the ticket agent's office, the men's bathroom was converted into the agent's office, and the door in the telegrapher's bay was infilled with brick.<sup>3</sup>

The six interior rooms with their original and current uses are as follows: The elevated freight and baggage room is a display area for historical artifacts. The agent's or dispatcher's office is still an office. The waiting room is an exhibit gallery. Restrooms are still present but the original restroom area now contains an art gallery and storage space as well as restrooms. The express room is a meeting room but also can accommodate display panels.

The original plank flooring has been retained in the 40' 7" x 20' 3" freight room, which also still has its tongue and groove board ceiling. Walls in this room are covered with pine boards placed vertically. Dry wall installed to establish an exhibit-quality setting blocks most windows with the exception of transoms.

The 34' 6" x 21' 5" waiting room can be entered from the ticket agent's office or the art gallery. Walls and ceilings are plastered. The original wood floor was badly deteriorated by termites and the repaired surface is covered with ceramic tile. A wide molded baseboard is present in this room and the agent's office. Twelve foot ceilings in this portion of the depot are painted off-white as are the walls. The office and waiting room have crown moldings. A double window set in the south elevation has been left uncovered. The office can be entered from an entrance on the track side as well as from the freight and waiting rooms. Restrooms and the former agent's office retain their original tile flooring.

The express room at the east end of the depot can be entered from either the present restroom or art gallery. The floor in this room is concrete. The original tongue and groove ceiling has been retained. The double windows on the north wall of this room have been left uncovered by dry wall. The depot's infilled brick walls and wood trim are in good repair.

<sup>2</sup> Enclosing a pavilion apparently was considered at least as early as 1934, according to a brief note added to the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway's 1916 floor plan. In reporting the proposed move of the bus depot in its edition of Sept. 30, 1937, however, the Sikeston Herald indicated that both ends were still open then: "The plans now made include the enclosing of one end of the railroad station," the article stated. In any case, both pavilions were enclosed by the Missouri Pacific Railroad relatively early in the depot's history.

<sup>3</sup>Railroad renovation plan of 1955.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

While the Sikeston Depot substantially retains its historic appearance from the pre-1950 alterations, its 1917 appearance also can be inferred fairly easily since the majority of the building has never been changed. The pavilions could be reconstructed by simply removing the infill and rebuilding the original end walls. Essential identifying features such as the dispatcher's bay and the roofline with its bracketed eaves have never been changed. Although some window and door openings in the enclosed ends have been infilled (an alteration of an alteration), fenestration of the original north and south elevations—the majority of the building—is largely intact.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

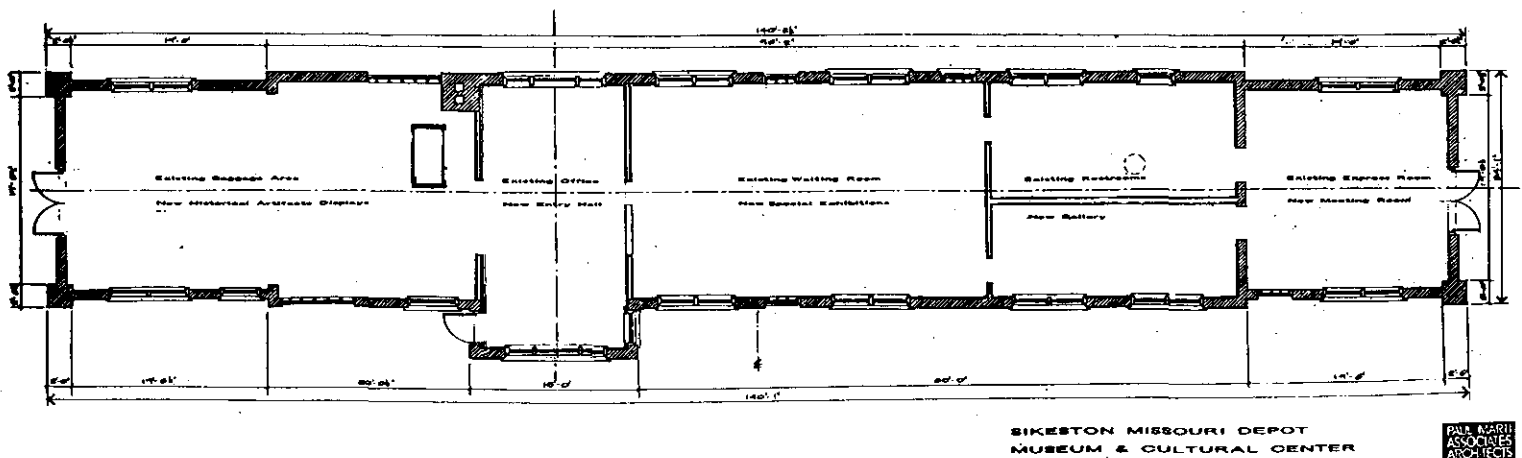
**Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot**  
**Scott County, MO**

Figure 1: Pre-Construction Drawing of Sikeston Depot  
Source: Sikeston Standard, July 14, 1916.

PROPOSED STATION FOR SKESTON MO.



**Figure 2: Current Floor Plan**





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

### Summary

The St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot on Front Street between Scott and New Madrid Streets, Sikeston, Scott County, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, and is locally significant in the areas of TRANSPORTATION and ARCHITECTURE. Constructed in circa 1916-17 to accommodate passengers as well as freight, the depot served the Sikeston area for more than half a century. The Sikeston Depot is a well-preserved, representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century standardized railroad depot rendered in brick, with modest Prairie School and Bungalow/Craftsman affinities. The period of significance begins when the depot opened in 1917 and continues through 1950, the arbitrary 50-year cut off date for National Register eligibility. Trains still run through Sikeston, but the depot was closed in 1985. While the depot retains historic integrity, its present appearance dates from mid-century when the Missouri Pacific Railroad enclosed open air pavilions at the two long ends. When pavilions existed, this was a fairly common practice when railroads needed more space for carrying out operations. Enclosure of at least one pavilion was planned as early as 1934 and accomplished in 1937, followed by enclosure of the second pavilion a few years later.

### Historical Background and Transportation Significance

Settlement in the vicinity of what became Sikeston in the lowlands of southeastern Missouri dates from the early 1800s, prior to the Louisiana Purchase. In about 1814, a tiny community known as Winchester began about a half mile south of the present town. Winchester is said to have thrived until the county seat was moved to New Madrid in 1822, one year after Scott County was created north of New Madrid County. Sikeston was platted on the route of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad by John Sikes, who gave the town its name, in 1860.<sup>4</sup> The site was where the railroad, organized in Missouri in 1854, intersected a local trail known as King's Highway. The railroad-minded Sikes set aside property for rail access between Front and Railroad Streets in the east-west center of his newly-platted town.<sup>5</sup> Today, thanks largely to the C&F Railroad, one of Missouri's oldest railroads, Sikeston is the largest city in Scott County.

Railroad construction in Missouri began in St. Louis prior to the Civil War. The original goal was to build a line or lines between St. Louis and San Francisco. Plans were drafted in 1849, when railroad conventions were held in St. Louis and Memphis to determine the "proposed road from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean."<sup>6</sup> Two years later, aided by a \$2 million loan from the State of Missouri, the Pacific Railroad Company began laying track in St. Louis. In 1852, the Pacific brought the first locomotive west of the Mississippi River.<sup>7</sup> Construction proceeded across the eastern half of the state, generally following the south bank of the Missouri River. After reaching Jefferson City in 1856, the track continued westward to Sedalia, where construction stalled during the Civil War, before finally reaching Kansas City in 1865.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain had laid its tracks from St. Louis to Pilot Knob by 1858.

The Cairo and Fulton Railroad of Missouri eventually defaulted on bonds and became the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad in 1867. Railroads continued penetrating Southeast Missouri in the 1870s. Beginning in Missouri at Birds Point on the Mississippi River, the Cairo, Arkansas and Texas Railroad was extended from Sikeston to Poplar Bluff in 1873, a year before Sikeston was incorporated. In 1874, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad was reorganized as the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway. In the 1880s Louis

<sup>4</sup>Robert Sidney Douglas, History of Southeast Missouri (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), p. 291; Goodspeed's History of Southeast Missouri, (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1888), p. 463; Audrey Chaney, A History of Sikeston (Cape Girardeau: Ramfre Press, 1960), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Douglas, p. 291.

<sup>6</sup>Edward J. White, "A Century of Transportation in Missouri," Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 15 (1921), No.1, p. 145.

<sup>7</sup>White, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup>R. E. Riegel, "The Missouri Pacific Railroad to 1879," Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 18 (1924), No. 1, p. 15.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

Houck, a Cape Girardeau entrepreneur, built a number of rail lines throughout Southeast Missouri. His St. Louis, Memphis, and Southeastern line, completed in 1902, connected Sikeston with Portageville. By 1904, passenger trains of the Frisco Railroad were running through Sikeston between St. Louis and Memphis. The Missouri Pacific Railway, which succeeded the Pacific Railroad, acquired the Sikeston Depot and other facilities of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway in a 1917 merger, forming the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company.

Sikeston's prosperity continued. Most of the large brick buildings on Front Street, replacements for earlier wooden buildings that burned, date from the 1890s. During this decade the town's first public library was established in a local drug store by the Sikeston branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. By 1900 Sikeston's population exceeded 2,000. This year also marked the beginning of commercial telephone service in Sikeston. Establishments of the period reflected those found in successful small towns around the state and included a furniture and undertaking business, millinery and jewelry stores, saddle and harness shops, hotels, restaurants, general merchandise stores, produce houses and livery stables. Services also were provided by attorneys, doctors, dentists, druggists, bankers, blacksmiths, barbers and photographers.<sup>9</sup>

Also around 1900, the invention of the dipper dredge made drainage of the lowlands of southeastern Missouri feasible. After the Little River Drainage District was formed in 1907, an extensive system of canals and ditches was created. As inundated lands were drained and made suitable for cultivation, agricultural development followed rapidly. The costly drainage projects were financed by annual taxes on the affected landowners.

Sikeston became an economic and cultural center within Missouri's great cotton region. Cotton was an important early crop, with cotton gins and compresses and cottonseed oil plants located on the outskirts of town to take advantage of the rail facilities. By the turn of the century, melons, wheat, corn and potatoes were major crops and this continued after the depot was constructed in 1917. In the early 1900s, Scott County farmers led the state in producing watermelons and cantaloupes. As early as 1902, special "melon switches" were established by Sikeston depot agent J. E. Dover and the Sikeston area was called the "watermelon capital of the world." Open cars, each carrying around 500 melons, were reported to stretch "as far as the eye could see" from the depot.<sup>10</sup> In the early 1900s, several milling companies consolidated as the Scott County Milling Co., reportedly one of the largest in the Midwest. Railroads were essential for the development of Sikeston as an agricultural center, and the 1917 Sikeston Depot was a vital and highly visible component.

The first depot at Sikeston was a frame building. It was constructed east of the present depot in the late 1800s. As the town grew, a larger station was needed. When the present depot was completed in 1917, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad moved the old building a block to the west and used it as a freight house for many years.<sup>11</sup>

The nominated building was completed in 1917 at a cost of \$13,378.<sup>12</sup> The depot architect was E. M. Tucker and the contractor was J. C. Duncan of St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>13</sup> Tucker signed the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway's architectural plan sheets for the "Brick Passenger Station" at Sikeston. Except for some minor changes, the basic plan apparently was closely followed. The sheets are dated November 23, 1916.

The Sikeston Herald reported in January 1917 that "Two more car loads of material for the building were unloaded here the first of the week, which would indicate that work would begin in the near future. The

<sup>9</sup>Missouri Business Directory, 1891

<sup>10</sup>"Watermelon Situation," Sikeston Herald, May 25, 1917, page 5, col. 3.

<sup>11</sup>"New Iron Mountain Station Now In Use," Sikeston Herald, August 10, 1917, page 2, col. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Extracted from a tax form issued December 11, 1989, by the City of Sikeston and the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

<sup>13</sup>"St. Louisan to Build New Iron Mountain Station," Sikeston Herald, January 5, 1917, page 1, col. 5.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

foundation has been in since last summer, but on account of a recent plan to install a steam heating plant in the new station, a few minor changes will have to be made in the foundation." The Herald also reported that Duncan, the contractor, was engaged to build a depot at Charleston in eastern Scott County as well as the new depot at Sikeston but was currently busy with a project at Monroe, Louisiana.<sup>14</sup> Work resumed at Sikeston later that year and the station began operating on August 7, 1917. The station began operation on August 7, 1917.<sup>15</sup> Shortly afterward, the depot and other facilities of the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad were acquired by the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The Missouri Pacific continued operating the depot as the local passenger and freight station at Sikeston until October 15, 1985.<sup>16</sup>

Passengers could sit or stand under open pavilions at either end of the depot until 1937, when the east pavilion was enclosed in connection with enlargement of the waiting room to accommodate bus as well as train passengers. Then the west end was enclosed to serve as a freight room, apparently only a few years later although the exact date has not been determined. Both pavilions were under the projecting main roof which rested on boxed steel beams supported by brick piers, so the space could be infilled with brick without disturbing the depot's distinctive bracketed eaves. In adding side fenestration, cut stone lintels similar to those in the original portion were employed. On the west end where the freight room was added, the floor was raised to facilitate the loading and unloading of baggage cars.

Upon enclosure of the east pavilion, the American Railway Express office which previously was in the center of the station was moved into the new space. At this point, along with its original and ongoing function as a railroad passenger and freight office, the Sikeston Depot also became a union bus station for the Greyhound Bus Line, the Missouri Pacific Railroad's own Missouri Trail-ways bus service and another small bus system, McKee. Leasing space to Greyhound, which had outgrown its local bus station on East Malone Avenue, reportedly had been considered "for some time" by both companies.<sup>17</sup>

After the prosperity of World War One (during which the Scott County Mill is reported to have shipped abroad more corn products than any mill in the U.S.)<sup>18</sup> and the doldrums of the Great Depression, rail traffic increased significantly during World War Two and this affected the Sikeston Depot. Cadets arrived from throughout the United States for flight training at the local Harvey Parks Air Base, activated in 1940 and one of only five such facilities in the nation where men were trained to serve as pilots in the U.S. Army Air Corps. During the war, shipments of produce, grain, flour, shoes, and cotton flowed through the Sikeston Depot. Italian and German war prisoners arrived at the Sikeston Depot for transfer to a local prisoner of war camp. After the war, the high volume of rail traffic continued as war torn countries were assisted under the Marshall Plan. Trains were loaded with locally manufactured flour for shipment to France, Germany, Borneo, Java and Egypt. Also during the 1940s, hundreds of people periodically assembled at the depot to watch as circus elephants, tigers, and other exotic animals were unloaded from train cars and marched through the city streets.<sup>19</sup>

By the late 1960s the character of the railroad began to change.<sup>20</sup> The Missouri Pacific was adopting the mobile agency concept and advanced technology was centralizing the depot personnel. Meanwhile, travel by cars and airplanes increased in popularity while passenger usage of the depot declined. The Missouri Pacific concentrated on volume movement but trucks and barges gradually displaced the railroad in the local

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.  
<sup>15</sup>"New Iron Mountain Station Now In Use," Sikeston Herald, August 10, 1917, page 2, col. 3.  
<sup>16</sup>Upon construction of the 1917 depot, the original railroad depot at Sikeston was converted into a facility used exclusively for freight.  
<sup>17</sup>"Greyhound to Use Railroad Station," Sikeston Herald, September 30, 1937, page 1, col. 5.  
<sup>18</sup>"Welcome to Sikeston," Sikeston Standard, May 2, 1933.  
<sup>19</sup>"Depot's History Goes Back 125 Years in Town," Sikeston Standard-Democrat, November 9, 1997, page 12, col. 1-2.  
<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

transportation of freight. By 1985, computer control of trains and computer billing from central locations had made the depot obsolete and it was closed.

George Douglas, in describing the social history of the American railroad, called the typical depot "a hub of activity, a focal point of energy and daily human contact. When trains were due, there was a noticeable flurry of directed motion as wagons, people expecting express packages, village loafers, and small boys were drawn to the depot square as if by a magnet. The train track was the artery of small-town life, the station its heart, if never quite its soul. On the train, when it came in, was everything needed to keep life going, or at least, it seemed, everything that would provide life with some color or variety."<sup>21</sup>

When the Sikeston Depot was closed in 1985, civic leaders, history enthusiasts, and other concerned citizens joined forces as the Sikeston Cultural Development Corporation. Ultimately the nonprofit organization acquired the building and a surrounding tract from the railroad for preservation and as a center for displaying the history, art and culture of Sikeston. So far more than \$150,000 has been spent in connection with the project to bring the depot back to life in a new role and restore its prominence in the community

#### Architectural Significance

The art of building railroad stations was already well-defined by the time the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot at Sikeston was constructed in 1917. The design of depots and how they were oriented with their associated tracks had moved from the experimental to the mature phase, and American railroad stations no longer imitated their European antecedents. The Sikeston Depot, which provided passenger and freight service in the Sikeston area for 68 years, exemplifies an intermediate form of a standardized combination railroad depot rendered in brick. The depot has modest Prairie School style affinities including such devices to emphasize horizontality as a low pitched hipped roof with widely overhanging eaves, a contrasting beltcourse and windows in groups of two and three. Typical of the combination form, the building is long and narrow with a pivotal bay near midpoint, containing the agent or dispatcher's office and separating the passenger waiting and baggage areas. In addition to a Prairie influence, modest Bungalow/Craftsman affinities are suggested by the bracketed cornice although to more precisely reflect Bungalow/Craftsman styling, the brackets should be angular rather than curvilinear. While providing those traveling by rail with a suitably prominent entrance to the town, the Sikeston Depot also served as a corporate symbol for the railroad.

The Sikeston Depot can also be classified as a one-sided combination depot, one of four types originally described in 1846 by a French architect according to the possibilities for entering and leaving the building. By 1917, most American railroad depots were designed for arrivals and departures on one side of the tracks, the identifying characteristic of the one-sided combination type. The other three types identified by Cesar Daly, editor of the *Revue General de l' Architecture*, were the head type with arrival and departure in a single building across the end of the track; the two sided type with arrival and departure on opposite sides of the track; and the "L" type with arrival at the end of the track and departure at one side or vice versa. Among other things, the one sided combination depot was more convenient for passengers because it usually eliminated the need for them to walk across any track in order to board a train.<sup>22</sup>

The Sikeston Depot fits the standardized design concept adopted by most railroad companies. The combination form not only accommodated passengers and freight, but also served as a corporate symbol with its easily recognized design and color. By standardizing their depots, the railroads could save on construction costs and still use some modifications to fit the specific location. Sikeston's depot, although operated by the

<sup>21</sup>George H. Douglas, *All Aboard! The Railroad in American Life* (New York: Paragon House, 1992), p. 271.

<sup>22</sup>Daly's typology is cited by Carroll L.V. Meeks in *The Railroad Station - An Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 29-31.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

Missouri Pacific Railroad for virtually its entire period, reflected the corporate concepts of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway which was responsible for the design. In the same year, 1917, a generally similar depot was constructed at Fredericktown in Madison County by the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway (NRHP 2/10/2000). The depot at Fredericktown is slightly smaller and less cut stone is used than in the depot at Sikeston, but in the main particulars they have much in common. The end pavilions are still open on the Fredericktown depot.

In various forms, standardized combination depots were built in small towns across America. As Douglas states, "The railroad station itself was always one of the most distinctive buildings in any small community. It was as easy to pick out by its style as the courthouse."<sup>23</sup> Because the depot was the hub of community activity and the first impression travelers received, it was important to both the town and the railroad company to provide an attractive, convenient station. However, size and construction complexity varied according to the relative importance of the town served. In Sikeston, along the railroad tracks at the heart of the business district, the attractive depot with its red tile roof signified that the growing town was not only economically viable but probably a quality place to live as well.

---

<sup>23</sup>Douglas, p. 271.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 10

Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO

**Bibliography**

Articles:

Riegel, R. E. "The Missouri Pacific Railroad to 1879." Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 18 (1924), No. 1.

White, Edward J. "A Century of Transportation in Missouri." Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 15 (1921), No. 1.

Books:

Chaney, Audrey. A History of Sikeston. (Cape Girardeau: Ramfre Press, 1960).

Douglas, George H. All Aboard!: The Railroad in American Life. (New York: Paragon House, 1992).

Douglas, Robert Sidney. History of Southeast Missouri. (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), two volumes.

Goodspeed's History of Southeast Missouri. (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1888).

Houck, Louis. A History of Missouri from the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State of the Union. (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons Company, 1908), three volumes.

Houck, Louis. The Spanish Regime in Missouri: A Collection of Papers and Documents Relating to Upper Louisiana Principally Within the Present Limits of Missouri During the Dominion of Spain. (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons Company, 1908), two volumes.

Jenks, Downing B. The Missouri Pacific Story. (New York: Newcomen Society of North America, 1977).

Meeks, Carrol L.V. The Railroad Station - An Architectural History. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

Miner, Craig H. The Rebirth of the Missouri Pacific, 1956-1983. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983).

Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. The Empire that Missouri Pacific Serves. (St. Louis: Missouri Pacific Railroad Company, 1956).

Shrum, Edison. The History of Scott County, Missouri Up to the Year 1880. (Sikeston: Standard Printing Company, 1984).

Violette, E. M. A History of Missouri. (St. Louis: State Publishing Company, 1955).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10.11 Page 11

**Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO**

**Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot is bounded by the legal description as recorded in the Scott County Recorder's Office in Scott County Deed Book No. 13, page 479. The building sits on a rectangular tract measuring 65 feet by 400 feet, indicated by dotted lines on Scott County Tax Map, Scott County, Missouri, No. 18-4-19-3 dated August 1982.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the depot and the 0.551 acre tract owned by the Sikeston Cultural Development Corporation, upon which it sits. This includes the original location of the railroad tracks and enough land to indicate the building's original relationship to its site.

**Form Prepared By**

1. Andrew M. Halter  
Southeast Missouri State University Historic Preservation Program  
One University Plaza  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701-4799  
Date: May 2000  
(573) 651-2000  
Original preparer
2. Roger Maserang  
Historian  
DNR/Historic Preservation Program  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 522-4641  
Editor and revisions

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section photographs Page 12

**Sikeston St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Depot  
Scott County, MO**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Sikeston Railroad Depot  
Sikeston, Scott County, Missouri  
Photographer: Andrew M. Halter  
Date of photographs: April 1, 2000  
Location of negatives: Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Missouri Department of Natural Resources,  
Jefferson City, Missouri.

Photo 1. South elevation, facing west.

Photo 2. North and west elevations, facing southeast.

Photo 3. East and north elevations, facing southwest.

Photo 4. South and east elevations, facing northwest.

Photo 5. Freight room/artifacts room, facing west.

Photo 6. Waiting room/exhibition room, facing east.

Photo 7. Hall with restrooms between waiting room and express room, facing east.

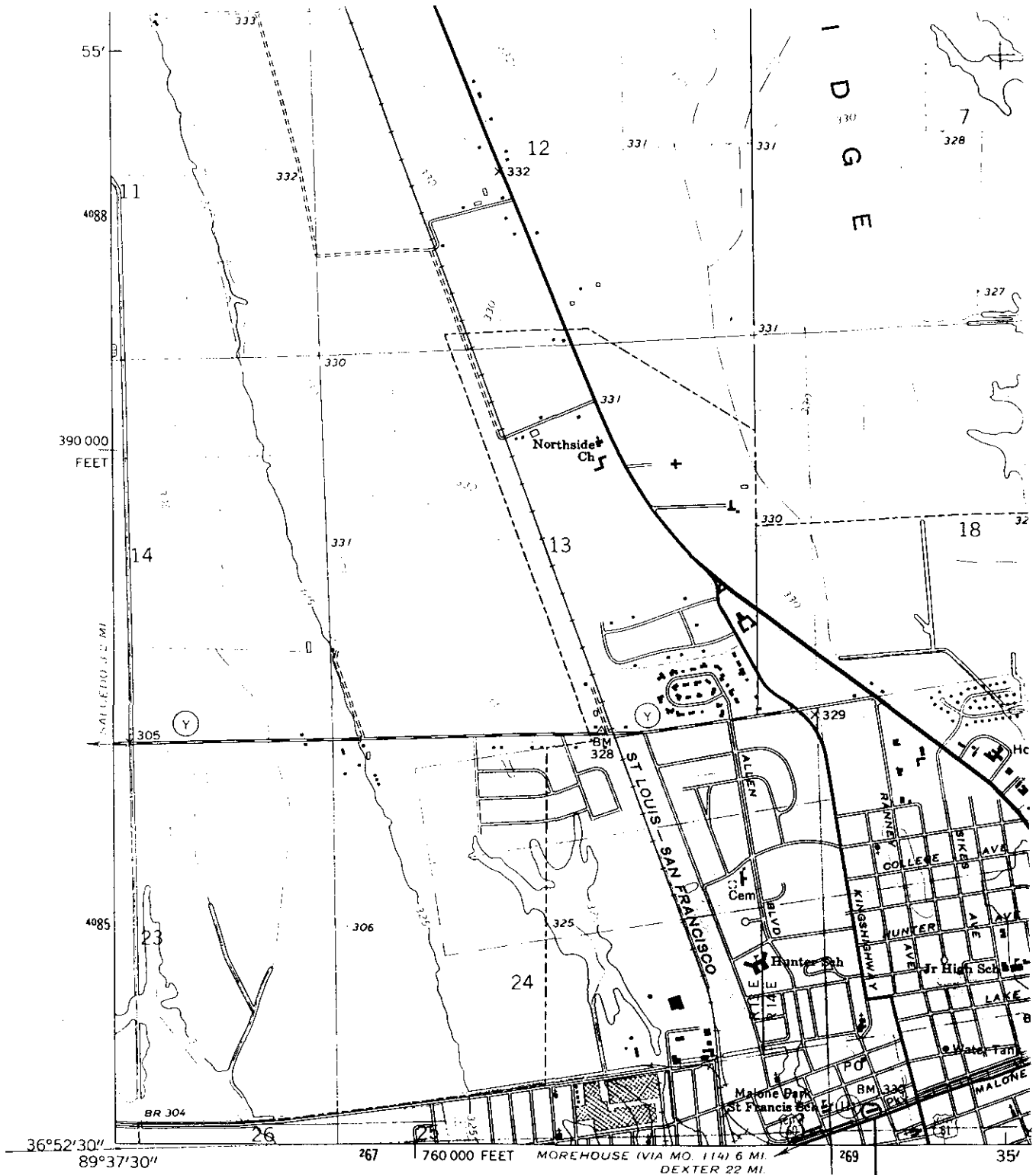
Photo 8. Gallery area between waiting room and express room, facing east.

Photo 9. Northeast corner of express room, facing northeast.





SIKESTON ST. LOUIS, IRON MOUNTAIN & SOUTHERN RAILWAY  
DEPOT  
SCOTT COUNTY, MISSOURI  
IG/269180/4084090



(MOREHOUSE)  
8057 (SW)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

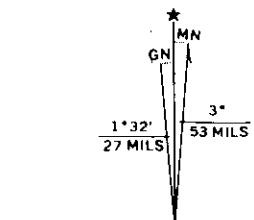
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Topography by planetable surveys 1963

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, east zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1976 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

