

**Historic Significance and Integrity Assessment Report for the Roald Amundsen Pullman Car  
in McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park, 7301 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, Arizona, 85250  
Cases #3-ZN-2009 and 1-HP-2009**

**Background**

The Scottsdale Historic Preservation Ordinance was passed in July 1999 creating the Scottsdale Historic Register (SHR) to serve as the City's official list of historic and archeological resources which have special significance in United States, Arizona, and/or Scottsdale history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Pursuant to Sec. 6.118.B, Preservation staff and the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Officer have conducted a preliminary study of the Roald Amundsen Pullman car, and produced this report detailing the findings. The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car has been identified as having significance in the following areas:

**Historic Contexts**

**Significant Events: Politics/Government Theme - American Presidents**

The pattern of using private railroad cars by American Presidents is of national significance. The Roald Amundsen was frequently leased for use by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in which he and his staff traveled extensively across the United States. The Roald Amundsen is particularly important for its association with the historic events leading to the Ogdensburg Declaration between the U.S. and Canadian governments in 1940. The Amundsen railroad car was also used as a campaign vehicle during the presidential campaigns of President Hoover (1932), President Roosevelt (1936) and President Eisenhower (1952). The rear observation deck was well suited as a place from which these presidential candidates could stand and be seen by the public.

**Significant Event: Transportation and Railroads**

The nation has a long history related to traveling by rail for moving people and freight over the past two centuries. The railroad park in Scottsdale and the significance of the Roald Amundsen Pullman Car in particular arose out of the development of railroads in America and the national appreciation and enthusiasm for trains. A century ago, luxury train cars were the preferred form of transportation for elite travelers until trains were surpassed by air travel. The Amundsen private railroad car is a manifestation of the growth and success of railroads in America from the late 1800's into the early 1900's. The Pullman Car Company in Illinois saw a demand in the 1920s for private cars to be leased or sold for use by business and government leaders requiring privacy, comfort and security in an era before the proliferation of air travel or the interstate highway system after World War II. The Amundsen is an excellent representation of the luxury Pullman car from this bygone transportation era.

**Significant Transportation Technology –  
Design and Construction:**

The Roald Amundsen was part of the specialized Explorer series of six private passenger cars built in 1928 by the Pullman car Company. George Pullman was the most famous and successful builder of railroad cars in America at the time and his Pullman Car Company was the dominate builder of distinctive luxury and private railroad cars in America in the early decades of the 1900s. Unlike the separate dining and sleeping cars rented to the railroads, the Explorer series of cars were each designed to accommodate all the needs for the passengers to travel in luxury in their own private car. Each private car contained a dining room, several private sleeping rooms,



*The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car sits on tracks in the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park.*

a bathroom, a kitchen and pantry, sleeping quarters for a cook and porter, and an observation room and observation deck in the rear – everything needed for long trips by rail. This car represents the height of technology for its time for the design and construction of a luxury railroad car for the elite traveler. The Amundsen and Magellan were two sister cars originally built to the same floor plan by Pullman as Plan number 3972C. However, the Amundsen is the only remaining Explorer series car with the original Plan number 3972C floor plan and interior intact because the Magellan was extensively refurbished and armored in 1942.

### **Description**

The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car is located at 7301 E. Indian Bend Road. The railroad car is in the middle of the city-owned railroad park on parcel number 174-19-001A. For the purposes of this HP overlay zoning district, the proposed boundary includes the footprint of the railroad car, roughly 81' x 10', plus a ten foot buffer around the railroad car to serve as the setting, for a total area of .07+/- acres or roughly 3030 square feet. The HP overlay zoning will only apply to the portion of the parcel where the structure is located since the underlying zoning remains unchanged and the rest of the parcel has not been determined to merit designation for its historical significance.

**Exterior Description:** All the exterior materials, finishes, and openings are intact and the exterior form is original. The six Pullman wheel trucks the car sits on today were installed by New York Central Railroad sometime between 1948 and 1965. The car is painted the traditional Pullman green. The Pullman name is centered on both sides of the car above the windows and below the Clerisy roof in the original Pullman gold style lettering. The Amundsen was built with high quality construction materials utilizing mahogany, steel and brass, including a brass railing on the rear observation deck. It was built for a cost of \$205,000 in 1928 and the City of Scottsdale spent over \$250,000 on its restoration after it was donated to the city.

If you enter the car from its front entrance on the left side of the car, the hallway side of the car contains 14 windows that vary in size with the wider windows in the Dining and Observation rooms. The right or compartment side of the car facing forward contains 19 windows of varying sizes. The custom arrangement of doors and windows, along with the rear observation deck, reflects the custom design of the Explorer series private cars. There are four doors to the car; one each on the front and rear, a front side entrance and an entrance to the vestibule and kitchen area where supplies and ice for the air conditioning were loaded onto the car. The interior of this private car is not included in this description since the HP overlay zoning by the city only recognizes the historic significance of the exterior. A description of the interior is included on the separate nomination form for the state and national registers where the condition and integrity of the interior is considered as part of its eligibility for designation.



*The Amundsen is part of a railroad museum that includes the pictured locomotive, baggage car and Pullman private car.*

**Setting:** The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car is currently on display at the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park as a part of the City of Scottsdale's specialty park with a railroad theme. The car is coupled to a 1907 Magma Arizona Steam Locomotive and a 1914 Santa Fe baggage car that together make up the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park Museum. The three piece train is in a typical railroad setting, sitting on tracks and pulling into the Stillman Station replica of an earlier train depot design. The museum is open to the public so visitors can walk through this private luxury car and stand on the rear observation deck holding the brass railing as presidential candidates did in past decades.

The McCormick Railroad Park opened on October 4, 1975 on land donated to the city by Anne and Fowler McCormick and with miniature stream locomotives and train cars at 5/12 scale donated by Anne's son Guy Stillman. Guy Stillman originally built the miniature train and 15" tracks in the 1950s around the Stillman Ranch home for his six children to enjoy. He called his train and tracks the Paradise and Pacific Railroad and Scottsdale still uses this name for this miniature railroad that operates at the park today. In fiscal year 2007-2008, 54,635 visitors from all over the world toured the museum and visited the Roald Amundsen Pullman Car. The park now receives over 600,000 visitors a year.

### **History**

After the Roald Amundsen was constructed by Pullman in 1928, the car was used by three presidents of the United States from 1932-1952 for campaigning for the office of president of the US and/or for conducting the duties of the office of president by Presidents Hoover, Roosevelt and Eisenhower. In 1940 President Roosevelt and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King held meetings aboard the Amundsen in Ogdensburg, NY to discuss mutual defense. Their meetings resulted in the Ogdensburg Declaration on August 18, 1940 which later evolved into the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). The Amundsen was used for presidential campaigns including Herbert Hoover's 1932 campaign, Franklin D. Roosevelt's re-election campaign in 1936, and Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1952 campaign. Roosevelt traveled more than any other president by train and the Amundsen was leased by the government for FDR's use in 1940 because he traveled so much by private train car. From 1940-1942, Roosevelt used the Amundsen for tours of defense facilities, other state business and for trips to his Hyde Park, NY residence. After the U.S. entered the war, presidential security personnel wanted to increase the president's safety when traveling by train by changing his routes. Another of the Explorer series private Pullman cars, the Ferdinand Magellan, was purchased by the government and was armor-plated and refurbished for both additional security and comfort. After Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, President Harry Truman traveled to the burial service on the funeral train to Hyde Park on the Amundsen while Eleanor Roosevelt traveled in the armored Magellan.

The Amundsen was sold to three different owners before it was donated by the Talley family to Scottsdale for its railroad themed specialty park, then under development. The city's specialty park with a railroad theme must have seemed like an ideal setting for the Pullman car when it was donated to the city by the heirs of Franz Talley for the public to enjoy. A major celebration took place at the Roald Amundsen Pullman Car in the park on August 18, 1990 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Ogdensburg Declaration with representatives of the U.S. and Canadian governments in attendance.

### **Significance**

The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car has been determined to have significance under the following criteria from the Secretary of the Interior standards and the city code: Criteria A (Section 6.113.A.1.) – Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, and Criteria C (Section 6.113.A.3.) – Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values.

The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with politics/government and transportation. The private car was used by U.S. presidents for both presidential campaigns and for matters of state while in office so the Amundsen is specifically related to American Presidents and is nationally significant in the area of politics/government. It is important in terms of transportation, as the Amundsen illustrates generally the predominance of railroads as an important mode of travel in America in the 1800s and 1900s. Specifically it represents the specialized accommodations which were developed for wealthy and prominent patrons.

The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car is significant under Criteria C for its association with transportation technology. It is the last intact example of the six cars in the 1928 Explorer private car series illustrating the design and construction techniques used by George Pullman and his company for private luxury cars in 1928. The Explorer series of cars were each designed to accommodate all the needs for the traveling elite and they represent the height of railroad technology for their time.