

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001749

Date Listed: 11/21/90

Great Northern Freight Warehouse
Property Name

Cass
County

ND
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Roland
Signature of the Keeper

6/3/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #8, Significance: The property has been nominated and accepted under criterion C (as well as A), but "architecture" was not listed as an area of significance. Architecture is an area of significance.

This information was verified by Lauren McCroskey of the ND SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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Beth Boland

Signature of the Keeper

11/21/90

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #8: Significance:

The period of significance is 1902-1929.

Criteria Exception G does not apply.

The 1956-59 addition, while compatible, is not historic and does not contribute to the significance of the building.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1749

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

017 1 2 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Great Northern Freight Warehouse
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 420 North Seventh Street not for publication
city, town Fargo vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Cass code 017 zip code 58102

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
James E. Sperry 9/28/90
Signature of certifying official James E. Sperry, State Historic Preservation Officer, North Dakota Date
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) _____
Beth Boland 11/21/90
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade (Warehouse)
 Transportation

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade (Warehouse)

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style
 Utilitarian

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone (Granite), Concrete
 walls Brick
 roof Asphalt - Wood Frame
 other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Great Northern Freight Warehouse is a linear building with nearly east-west orientation; it is parallel and immediately south of the former Great Northern mainline right-of-way and west of North Seventh Street in Fargo, North Dakota. The building measures approximately 40'-2" wide and 579'-11" long. Four sections of the building are clearly identifiable along its length, corresponding to the several phases of its construction.

The easternmost portion of the building fronting on North Seventh Street was constructed in 1923 and probably replaced the former office portion of the original 1902 structure. The most prominent and consciously styled portion of the building, it is a two-story brick office block functioning as a headhouse; 40'-2" by 51'-8-1/2" in plan, it is about 34'-6" high at the corner of its parapets. Above a four foot high reinforced concrete base, interrupted only by the main entrance door, the building is entirely of medium red brick, with simple ornamentation derived primarily from manipulation of the brick module. Each of its three facades (south, east, and north) is a single composition unified by a central pedimented parapet. Brick pilasters occur at the corners and on the center line of the facade, dividing each into two recessed panels. The pilasters project approximately four inches and are ornamented with stacked stretchers and soldier courses organized into framed panels. Additional rectangular and circular frames occur in the entablature and pediment which the pilasters visually support.

Within this formal symmetrical composition, windows are sized and arranged according to internal needs. Double-hung wood windows are used singly, in pairs, and in triplets, possibly relating to earlier office arrangements which have not been entirely retained. Triplet window groupings predominate and are centered within their respective wall panels. All windows are capped with similar ornamental hoods, expressed only as variations within the brick pattern and flush with the wall surface. One first-floor window group on the east (right) side of the south elevation has been filled in at a later date.

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The entry door, also capped with its own ornamental "hood", provides access at grade level to a vestibule; eight risers reach the main level of the building. Two rows of wood columns (a total of six) divide the interior into three bays of approximately twelve feet each. Office partitions sometimes occur on these column lines; they often avoid them however, to align with window mullions, suggesting a later remodeling of what had been open office space at the east end of the second floor. Toilets and stairs to this second floor are located at the west party wall between this two-story office block and the single-story warehouse portion.

Beyond the headhouse, the remainder of the Great Northern Freight Warehouse extends 528'-3" in twenty-five nearly equal bays; two smaller "half" bays occur at joints in the building between its various construction phases. The four foot foundation wall is predominantly rough granite; concrete was used in the last, westernmost, phase and in the eighty foot dock extension. Above this base the majority of construction is load-bearing masonry of common Fargo yellow brick.

The original east elevation of the 1902 building has been obscured. Four identical double-hung windows on each side of this first bay, however, suggest that this (and two related windowless bays) may have been the original administrative space. Four windows in the south elevation of this bay are the only openings in the granite foundation and provide natural light to the building's only basement; all else is unexcavated crawl space.

A central column line of wood posts and knee braces divides the warehouse interior into bays of approximately twenty feet and this structural spacing is reflected on both the north and south elevations as a repetitive pattern of corresponding brick pilasters. These pilasters provide brackets for wood braces supporting the seven-foot roof overhang. The simple wood roof slopes approximately one in four and is covered with rolled roofing material.

Moving westward beyond the first three bays of the original 1902 building, there are eleven identical bays of warehouse space. Each has an eight-foot wide wood double door within a segmented arched opening, and each opening is centered in its bay within the repetitive pattern of pilasters and wood roof supports. A half bay indicates the original west end of the building. In 1927 a further westward extension added seven and one-half bays of virtually identical construction, the principal difference being the introduction of angled steel lintels in place of segmented brick arches over the warehouse doors. In 1956 four more bays were added, continuing the structural module but substituting concrete for granite in the foundation and red for yellow brick in the loadbearing walls. There was also a further simplification of the detail in the door opening. A concrete loading dock added in 1959 at the warehouse floor level extends eighty feet farther west as well as providing access along two-thirds (about 360 feet) of the building's north elevation, where a railroad siding had been located. Along this north elevation there is some evidence of an early loading dock which has been removed at an indeterminate time.

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Considering the volume of freight traffic handled through this facility during its active life, the warehouse shows reasonable signs of wear. Lower portions of exterior brick walls are scarred and gouged from the carts, dollies and other vehicles used to move freight, and some door openings have had heavy metal angles added to protect the soft brick corners. Interior floor and wall surfaces are similarly worn. Other than this and the effects of severe weather and low maintenance, the Great Northern Freight Warehouse is in good structural condition.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Commerce
Transportation

1881 - 1929

1902
1923 - 1927
1956 - 1959

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Fargo's Great Northern Freight Warehouse and Depot is significant under both Criteria A and C. Because its Northern Pacific counterpart in the City's Main Avenue industrial corridor was demolished several years ago, and many of its neighboring private storage facilities have also been removed, it remains as an increasingly rare example of a railroad-related warehouse building from the Second Dakota Boom (1895 - 1917). Also, unlike its sibling Great Northern facility in Grand Forks, constructed in 1904 but never substantially altered, the Fargo warehouse was constructed in three major building campaigns--1902, 1923/1927, and 1956/1959--reflecting subsequent periods of economic growth and the City's somewhat different role as a rail center and regional distribution point. Using repetitive heavy timber post-and-beam construction to create a linear double-loaded single-story volume, the building is also notable under Criteria C as a warehouse type distinctive in both form and technology.

The history of Fargo is inextricably linked with the history of the railroad network that brought it into being. Precise locations for what would become, Fargo, Dakota Territory, and her sister city Moorhead, Minnesota, were jealously guarded by the survey crews of the Northern Pacific railroad as they moved northwest from Minneapolis toward the head of navigation on the Red River of the North. Thomas Canfield, Director of the N.P., recognized that any city at the crossing of the Red was destined to become the next great metropolis west of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. It would serve as a section point for the railroad, as a regional center for wholesale distribution, as well as a funnel for the grain which would flow toward the mills of Minneapolis.

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Platted in 1871 and named for N.P. director William G. Fargo, clear title to the land was not established for several years. The city soon began to take form, however, generating neighborhoods and other areas of fairly well-defined function, especially following completion of the railroad bridge in 1872. Front Street and N.P. Avenue, paralleling the Northern Pacific's mainline on the north and south respectively, quickly filled with wood-framed warehouses. Utilitarian structures with little pretense to fashion, their storage areas faced the railroad sidings; office space and loading docks for horse-drawn wagons oriented toward the streets. Several railroad spur lines branched north along the river to serve a less ordered collection of lumber yards, miscellaneous industries, and docks for interchange with river boats.

Within a brief period during the early 1880's, Fargo and the Red River Valley became a playground for highly speculative railroad schemes, all intended to capitalize on her strategic location and make her the new Chicago of the Northwest. Most remained "paper" projects, however, with one notable exception: James J. Hill's Manitoba Line, more formally the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba and soon to become the Great Northern. Chartered as early as 1857 by the Minnesota legislature, the Manitoba was conceived as a north-south link with the Canadian border. Bankrupt by the Panic of 1873 (which had, incidentally, also stalled the N.P.) the company was bought by Canadian emigrant James J. Hill and three associates. Following reorganization and refinancing with U.S., Canadian, and Dutch capital, the Manitoba redirected itself beyond Fargo, intending to become a major competitor.

Lacking a government-granted right-of-way beyond Minnesota, Hill was necessarily more cautious and his railroad slower to be completed. As a consequence, the Manitoba crossed the Red River and entered Fargo in 1882, ten years after the N.P. but at the height of the Dakota land boom.

Hill's right-of-way through Fargo paralleled that of the Northern Pacific, but was three-quarters of a mile north at the opposite side of the city's emerging business district. Broadway, the city's third major commercial thoroughfare, connected the N.P. depot (a large wood-framed multi-purpose building known as the Headquarters Hotel) with Hill's Manitoba depot. The city's first rapid transit system, a horse car line, was chartered in 1882 to carry passengers between the two stations. The resultant traffic helped to strengthen the infant city's commercial core.

Industrial development within and adjacent to Hill's right-of-way followed the pace of the N.P. Due to its narrowness, however, and the lack of significant parallel streets, the order and regularity of Front Street and N.P. Avenue were not repeated. Still, it attracted a wide range of warehouses and manufacturing, including a brewery near Second Street and an iron foundry one mile to the west where the right-of-way curved toward Grand Forks.

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Slicing through the north end of the Downtown Fargo Historic District, this industrial corridor retains some of the character established more than a century ago. In addition to one pivotal building and several contributing structures within the historic district, there are other scattered buildings outside the district which relate strongly to this industrial theme of Fargo's historical development. Prominent among them is the former Great Northern Freight Warehouse at 420 North Seventh Street, a building constructed in several phases notable for their slight changes in materials and construction. Nearby are other surviving industrial structures which also fall outside the boundaries of the Downtown Fargo Historic District, most notably the former Chevrolet Motor Company plant at 701 Fourth Avenue North. Other companies attracted to the area included the Bardwell-Robinson Company, a regional distributor of building materials, the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, and two regional farm equipment manufacturers, the Advance-Rumley Thresher Company and the Grain Belt Manufacturing Company.

Close by this zone to both the north and south were related areas of small single-family homes and boarding houses. Within easy walking distance of several major employers, a survey of early city directories confirms that these were popular neighborhoods for railroad personnel and other blue-collar workers. Boarding houses such as the one remaining at 324 North Eleventh Street were built to accommodate single men. And in 1881, possibly anticipating the arrival of the Manitoba (it became the Great Northern in 1889, the year of North Dakota statehood), William Bruce Douglas developed a group of modest houses called "Douglasville" farther south along Eleventh Street and adjacent parts of Second and Third Avenues North. A sense of the neighborhood character can be seen in the surviving fragments of "Douglasville" at 1022 Second Avenue North and at 309 North Eleventh Street. Seen together, this group of related residential and industrial structures is reflective of a neglected facet of Fargo's historical development.

Great Northern records of freight revenues at Fargo during 1900-1917 and 1929-1948 provide some insight to the role played by the Great Northern Freight Warehouse in the economic life of the community. Records for the years prior to the first phase of construction in 1902 are not extensive enough to determine how that structure may have been a response to increases in freight handling. Steady growth, however, from 1903 through 1916, seems to confirm the wisdom of the first phase of construction. After reaching more than \$509,000 of annual freight revenue in 1916, there is a dramatic reduction in 1917, reflecting United States participation in World War I.¹

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Unfortunately, no station earning records exist from 1918 through 1928, a period when two major modifications were made to the original building. In 1923, the original single-story headhouse was replaced with the present two-story addition at the east end, and in 1927, the freight warehouse was extended westward by seven and one-half bays.² Judging from the fact that 1929 freight/revenues were more than double those of 1916--\$1,067,417 compared to \$509,008--additional space for both freight and administrative staff seem to have been more than justified.³ Ironically, revenues dropped dramatically during the Great Depression and the years leading up to World War II. Dollar volume did not reach or exceed the 1929 level until 1946, when the building generated \$1,326,969.

The third and final phase of growth occurred during the late 1950s. Four more bays of freight warehouse were added at the west end of the building in 1956 and three years later a concrete loading dock extended another 80 feet west, creating a building nearly 580 feet in length.⁴ Like the 1920s, this was a period of growth not covered by revenue records. But it is reasonable to project the rapid growth of the post World War II years into the 1950s: the figure for 1948 was over \$1,800,000, reflecting the continuing development of Fargo as a regional distribution center for southeastern North Dakota and a port of entry for the remainder of the state.⁵

Although the 1956 section has not yet achieved significance under the 50 year age guideline, these more recent bays complement the rhythm and scale of the original design; their construction in response to growth-related events following World War II is consistent with the other incremental stages of growth visible throughout the warehouse. This newer section, therefore, merits significance under the criterion of Exception G as important in the overall understanding of the building evolution.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps for Fargo, North Dakota (1899, 1906, 1910, 1915, 1922 and 1929), Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks ND.
2. Building Permits, Building Inspector's Office, City of Fargo.
3. A Condensed History of the Great Northern Railway. St. Paul, 1953.
4. Hidy, Ralph. The Great Northern Railway: a history. Boston, 1988.
5. Roberts, Norene A. Fargo's Heritage. Fargo, 1983.
6. Great Northern Railway Records. Station Earning Records, Vols. 1-4 (22.E.13.9B). Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1 acre

UTM References

A 14 668300 5194120
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundaries are based on the legal description of the property's location, the railroad right-of-way, easements and city government restrictions.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald L. M. Ramsey
 organization _____ date 30 July 1990
 street & number P.O. Box 5412 telephone (701) 237-8614
 city or town Fargo state ND zip code 58105

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Verbal Boundary Description

All that portion of the Burlington Northern right-of-way and part of Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6, Block 19 and Part of Lot 3, Block 16 and part of Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6, Block 11, and all being part of Robert's Second Addition to the City of Fargo, Cass County, North Dakota, and also part of the abutting vacated 8th and 9th Street North and part of vacated alleys, and said tract is specifically described as follows:

Commencing at a point which is on the West right-of-way line of 7th Street North and 98 feet Northerly on said West right-of-way line of the Northeast corner of Block 11 of said Robert's Second Addition and said point is the True Point of Beginning of tract of land hereinafter described, thence Westerly and parallel with the South right-of-way line of Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way for a distance of 876.30 feet to a point which is 70 feet East measured at right angle from the centerline of 10th Street North; thence South on a line 70 feet East and measured at right angle from said centerline for a distance of 185.85 feet to a point which is 9 feet South measured at right angle from the centerline on the spur track; thence with a deflection to the left of $83^{\circ} 43' 30''$ for a distance of 127.30 feet; thence with a deflection to the right of $3^{\circ} 20' 00''$ for a distance of 145.35 feet; thence with a deflection to the right of $80^{\circ} 26' 30''$ and along a line which is the East line of Block 19 of said Robert's Second Addition for a distance of 128.60 feet to a point on the North right-of-way line of 4th Avenue North; thence East and along said North right-of-way line for a distance of 33 feet; thence North and parallel with said East block line for a distance of 101.00 feet; thence East and at right angle with the previously mentioned line for a distance of 215.50 feet; thence Easterly and parallel with the South line of Block 11 of Robert's Second Addition for a distance of 33 feet; thence Southerly and parallel with the West line of said Block 11 for a distance of 107.50 feet to a point on the North line of 4th Avenue North; thence Easterly and along said North line for a distance of 35 feet; thence Northerly and parallel with the West line of said Block 11 for a distance of 115 feet; thence Easterly and parallel to the North line of said 4th Avenue North for a distance of 250 feet; thence Northerly and along the West line of 7th Street North for a distance of 133 feet to the Point of Beginning. Said above described tract contains plus or minus 137,740 square feet or plus or minus 3.16 acres. Also;

All that portion of the Western 40 feet of the 80 foot wide 7th Street North adjacent to the hereinabove described parcel of land, lying between two lines drawn parallel with and distance respectively 92.0 feet and 190.0 feet Southwesterly measured at right angles to said Railroad Company's main track centerline.

SUBJECT, however, to all existing interests, including but not limited to all reservations, rights-of-way and easement of record. Also;

SUBJECT, however, to City owned 266 foot long 8" pipeline and 194 foot long 12" pipeline.