

City, Village or Town: <b>Eau Claire</b>	County: <b>Eau Claire</b>	Surveyor: <b>M. Taylor</b>	Date: <b>9-29-81</b>
Street Address: <b>324 Putnam Avenue</b>	Legal Description: <b>see continuation sheet</b>	Acreage: <b>less than one acre</b>	

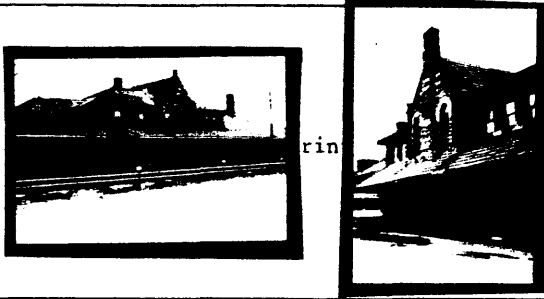
Putnam Avenue

Current Name & Use: <b>Chicago &amp; Northwestern Railroad Depot</b>	Current Owner: <b>Chicago &amp; Northwestern Railway Co.</b>
---	---

Film Roll No.  
**EC 4L**

Negative No.  
**28, 31**

Facade Orient.  
**N**



Current Owner's Address:  
**Chicago, Illinois**

Special Features Not Visible In Photographs:  
UTM: zone 15  
Easting: 618890  
Northing: 4963470  
USGS Eau Claire East Quadrangle  
1:24,000 Interior visited?  Yes  No

324

Original Name & Use:	Source	Previous Owners	Dates	Uses	Source
<b>Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis &amp; Omaha Railroad Depot</b>	<b>A (ECMRP)</b>				
Dates of Construction / Alteration <b>1893</b>	<b>C</b>				
Architect and/or Builder: <b>Charles Frost</b>	<b>A</b>				

**3** Architectural Significance

Represents work of a master

Possesses high artistic values

Represents a type, period, or method of construction

Is a visual landmark in the area

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  None

**4** Historical Significance

Assoc. with lives of significant persons

Assoc. with significant historical events

Assoc. with development of a locality

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

None

Architectural Statement:  
  
**See continuation sheet.**

Historical Statement:  
  
**See continuation sheet.**

Plat Map #5

**5** Sources of Information (Reference to Above)

**A** Architectural Reviewer. Sept. 1897, pp. 19-47

**B** Eau Claire Leader, November 23, 1941, p. 18.

**C** Eau Claire Leader, June 13, 1941.

**D** Withey, H.R. AND E.R. 1970. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects Deceased, p. \_\_\_\_\_

**E** Peterson, D. 1970. "Lumbering on the Chippewa The Eau Claire Area, 1845-1885". PhD dissertation, Univ. of Minnesota.

**F** *see continuation sheet*

**6** Representation in Previous Surveys

HABS  NAER  WIHP  NRHP  landmark

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**7** Condition

excellent  good  fair  poor  ruins

**8** District: \_\_\_\_\_

pivotal  contributing  non-contributing

224.initials: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

**9** Opinion of National Register Eligibility

eligible  not eligible  unknown

national  state  local initials: *net*

5L/28

OCT 24 1985

ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT:

Description: The depot, located on the city's near north side in an industrial area, is a long low structure constructed of rock-faced Lake Superior brownstone laid in irregular courses. On the main facade which faces the railroad tracks, a two story component "rises through" the continuous camel-back hip roof that is covered by red tiles. This element which is capped by a hip roof is intersected by a gabled projection identified by a shouldered triangular parapet. Three roundheaded openings accented by smooth stone voussoirs are within the projection. To either side, three small rectangular windows punctuate the stone walls. According to an article in the Architectural Reviewer, the second story contained some of the division offices (B).

Below, on the ground level, the center section is characterized by two broad, round arched openings, Richardsonian trademarks, which serve as the main entrances to the waiting room and ticket area. The glassed portion of the openings is divided by wooden mullions. Between the two arches is a slightly projecting feature which indicates the ticket office. The glassed portion of this element is rectangular and once again divided by mullions. Flanking the center are one story sections which contain additional round arched openings, one to the east and two to the west. These windows are separated into small panes and, like all the arched openings, outlined by smooth stone voussoirs.

Extending laterally from the main block of the depot are an open waiting area (to the east) and a baggage and express area (to the west). The baggage and express building is connected to the depot by the low sloping roof but is separated by an open passage. This portion of the building, the feature most common in Frost's stations, is relatively unadorned with rectangular windows and doors breaking the wall surface. A small rounded projection at the north-east corner contains the telegraph office. At the opposite end of the depot is an open waiting space, also sheltered by the roof which is supported by heavy stone piers. In addition, the roof extends beyond the front of the entire building to cover the region immediately adjacent to the tracks. The roof here rests on wooden posts with radiating brackets.

The rear of the building presents a nearly identical design. The gabled projection on this elevation features an exterior chimney with a narrow round arched opening to either side. The main entrances on the first floor are protected by a bracketed roof.

The depot's Art Moderne interior is also significant. Totally remodelled in 1949 (B), the interior, incorporating the arched elements already in place, features rounded corners and little wall decoration to create an appropriate "streamlined" feeling.

The depot is still in use though on a very limited basis as passenger train service was discontinued in 1963. The structure is in fair to poor condition. Reflecting the need to recognize the importance of the depot and to insure its survival, the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission has recently designated the building a local landmark.

CHICAGO, ST. PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS & OMAHA RAILROAD DEPOT (324 Putnam Avenue)  
Intensive Survey Form - Continuation sheet (2)

Significance: The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad Depot, an identifiable Charles Frost-designed station, is an architecturally significant resource within the city representing both a type and a period of construction. Erected in the Richardsonian Romanesque manner, the depot in Eau Claire is one of several in Wisconsin attributed to Frost, who was recognized for his contribution to small railroad station design. Using local materials and incorporating specific construction principles, the Eau Claire depot is a fine representation of Frost's work and of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture.

Charles Frost, born in Maine in 1856, studied architecture at MIT and was then employed in the Boston office of Peabody and Stearns. In 1881 Frost moved to Chicago where he entered a partnership with Henry Ives Cobb which was dissolved in 1889. From that year until 1898 Frost practiced alone and during that time the Eau Claire depot was designed and constructed. Frost next practiced with Alfred Hoyt Granger, forming the Frost and Granger partnership which also specialized in depot design. Frost's marriage in 1885 to Mary Hughitt, the daughter of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway's president gave him access to railroad commissions that allowed him to incorporate his design ideas into the plans for several new depots erected on the Chicago & Northwestern lines (D). Frost summed up his architectural philosophy with following statements: "Architecturally the building should express its purpose, and when possible, also give some hint as to the character of the town or city it serves. Above all things, as it is intended for a waiting place, the shelter feature must be strongly developed" (A).

In Wisconsin a number of Frost and Frost and Granger stations are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Among these are the Watertown Depot (NRHP 1979; 1903), the Lake Geneva Depot (NRHP 1978; 1891), the Oconomowoc Depot (NRHP 1980; 1896), and the South Milwaukee Depot (NRHP 1978; 1893).

HISTORICAL STATEMENT:

In 1870, two years before the city of Eau Claire was incorporated, the first train arrived in the lumber community. A long awaited event, the occasion represented the end of an intense effort to bring train service to Eau Claire. The incorporation of the Chippewa Valley Railroad Company signalled the initial attempt "to bring a railroad from the Mississippi River to Eau Claire parallel to the Chippewa"(E). Unfortunately the Panic of 1857 intervened and the project was halted. In 1863 the Tomah & Lake St. Croix Railroad Company was organized by a number of prominent men from the counties of west central Wisconsin. Joseph G. Thorp and Richard F. Wilson represented Eau Claire county's interests (E,F). Construction on the road began in Tomah in 1867 and reached Eau Claire as mentioned previously in 1870. By this time the line was the West Wisconsin Railway which had taken control of the Tomah & Lake St. Croix Company in 1866 (E).

Mergers and bankruptcies occurred with regularity until 1900. In 1878 the bankrupt West Wisconsin was purchased by the Chicago, St. Paul & Minneapolis Railway Company which added "Omaha" to its name in 1880 after a merger with the North Wisconsin Railway Company (E). Two years later, the majority of the stock in the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha line was purchased by the Chicago & Northwestern Company. The Omaha road continued to operate under its own name but was connected to the C&NW system (G).

CHICAGO, ST. PAUL, MINNEAPOLIS & OMAHA RAILROAD DEPOT (324 Putnam Avenue)  
Intensive Survey Form - Continuation sheet (3)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (cont.):

- F. Stennett, W. 1910. Yesterday and Today: A History of the Chicago and North-western Railway System, p. 79.
- G. Raney, W. 1936. "The Building of Wisconsin Railroads", Wisconsin Magazine of History, 19:307-403.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Unplatted part of S $\frac{1}{2}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , section 17 Town 27 North, Range 9 East, known as depot grounds.