

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received APR 9 1988

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Great Northern Depot

and/or common Burlington Northern Freight Depot

2. Location

street & number off Minnesota Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Bemidji N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Minnesota code 22 (MN) county Beltrami code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Burlington Northern Railroad c/o V. D. McKnire, Manager, Tax Compliance

street & number 2680 Continental Plaza, 777 Main Street

city, town Fort Worth, N/A vicinity of state Texas 76102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Beltrami County Courthouse, County Recorder's Office

street & number Beltrami Avenue and Sixth Street

city, town Bemidji state Minnesota 56601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Beltrami County Historic

Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society

Fort Snelling History Center, St. Paul Minnesota 55111

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u> N/A </u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Great Northern Depot stands at the southern end of Minnesota Avenue, separated from downtown Bemidji by Soo Line tracks about one-quarter mile to the north. The principal (south) facade overlooks a brick-paved waiting platform and four main-line tracks. The rear (north) facade borders a concrete loading dock and a single freight track.

The depot's overall plan is cruciform: a one-story, hip-roofed, rectangular block (33' x 217') intersects with a one-story, rectangular, cross-gabled pavilion (20' x 48') near the building's west end. The materials are red-brown brick; dressed, buff-colored, sandstone trim; green composition shingles; green-and-white-painted, wood doors; and green-painted wood sash. From bottom to top, the facades are composed in the same general manner: a stone water table; a narrow band of common bond brick; a stone stringcourse that follows the line of the window sills; an expanse of smaller, Flemish (double-stretcher) bond brick enclosing the window zone; and wide, overhanging eaves, supported by exposed, wooden rafters in the "Craftsman" manner.

The depot has a distinctly neo-classical flavor, deriving primarily from the architectural detailing of portals and fenestration. The east two-thirds of the building was designed as a baggage and freight house. It displays, on both the south and north facades, a visually commanding row of oversized, irregularly-spaced freight doors, each topped by a Roman-arched window with fanlight and oversized, stone keystone and skewbacks. The western third of the building originally contained waiting rooms and station offices. In this section, there is a noticeable difference in the detailing of the front (south) and rear (north) facades. The front facade is dominated by the pavilion, which displays a semicircular fanlight window in the pedimented gable, centered above a projecting bay window with sheet-metal cornice topped by an elliptical-arched, fanlight window. On each side, the pavilion is flanked by paired, Roman-arched, waiting-room windows with fanlights. The windows feature double-hung, one-over-one sash with fixed, six-over-six storm sash. All of the arches have oversized, stone skewbacks and keystones. On the rear facade, the same type of Roman-arched waiting-room windows frame the pavilion, but the pavilion itself is less ornate. It exhibits a single, small, rectangular window in the pedimented gable, centered above another small window, flanked on each side by a larger, rectangular window with double-hung, one-over-one sash. Similar rectangular windows are on the rear elevation between the loading doors. On both the rear and front elevations, there are also two, rectangular, single-leaf personnel doors with transoms.

The depot has not experienced any major, exterior alterations since the date of its construction. The property consists of one contributing building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1913 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Great Northern Depot is historically significant as the only active, early-twentieth-century, railroad building remaining in Bemidji, which owed its initial settlement and prosperity to railroads in general and to the Great Northern Line in particular.

Although Beltrami County was established in 1866, the heavily wooded pine region was not officially organized until 1897, when the county seat was located at the newly platted townsite of Bemidji. At that time, Bemidji was a sparsely settled town of about 400 people. In the summer of 1898, however, the Great Northern Railway constructed a line through Bemidji, connecting Fosston on the west with its Duluth Branch at Grand Rapids on the east. This extension was the first major, east-way trackage through the pine lands of north central Minnesota. Since Beltrami County had few streams suitable for driving logs, rail construction was essential for developing the region's lumber industry. Its impact on Bemidji was immediate, transforming the village from "an isolated pioneer community into a busy logging town." In addition to opening the region's timber resources to lumber companies, the Great Northern also brought homesteader to cutover lands, enhancing Bemidji's role as a regional trade center.¹

In 1905, the city's population exceeded 3,000 residents. This rapid growth partly reflected the arrival of several smaller, logging railroads, as well as a branch line of the Northern Pacific Railway. Despite the new rail connections, the Great Northern dominated the city's passenger and freight business until 1910, when the Soo Line laid its tracks into the city and erected a new "union" station. To counter the competition, the Great Northern completed its own new depot in 1913. Although passenger service was discontinued about 1950, the old depot still handles freight for the Burlington Northern Railroad, which took over the Great Northern's operation in 1970. With the deactivation of the Soo Line station and its unsympathetic remodeling into a restaurant, the Great Northern Depot remains the only active, early-twentieth-century, railroad building in Bemidji, which once prided itself on being "the most important railroad center in north central Minnesota."²

NOTES

1. The Great Northern Depot is associated with two statewide "historic contexts": "Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction, 1870s-1920s," and "Northern Minnesota Lumbering, 1870s-1920s"; see Minnesota History in Sites and Structures. Historic Context Outlines: The Post-Contact Period Contexts (St. Paul: Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, 1985), pp. 10-15; Barbara Hightower and Jeffrey A. Hess, "Beltrami County Historic Properties Survey 1986," unpublished report prepared for Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, 1986. For the impact of railroad construction on the development of lumbering and the growth of Bemidji, see Harold T. Hagg, "The Beltrami County Logging Frontier," Minnesota History, 29 (June 1948), 137-149.
2. New rail construction in the early 1900s is discussed in "Coming of the Railroads," WPA Notebook D. , c. 1937, Beltrami County Historical Society; Bemidji Pioneer, December 13, 1905. For the construction of the Soo Line Depot, see Bemidji Pioneer, June 24, 1911. On the Great Northern Depot, see Bemidji Pioneer, January 9, 1913.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bemidji Pioneer, January 9, 1913.

Hagg, Harold T. "Beltrami County Logging Frontier." Minnesota History, 29 (June 1948), 137-149.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bemidji West Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale: 24000

UMT References

A

1	5	3	5	8	1	6	0	5	2	5	8	6	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jeffrey A. Hess

organization Jeffrey A. Hess, Historical Consultant date February 7, 1987

street & number 305 Grain Exchange Building telephone (612) 338-1987

city or town Minneapolis state Minnesota 55415

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/21/88

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 5-26-88

Alvin Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Great Northern Depot, Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Beginning at a point formed by the intersection of the south boundary of Second Street and the west boundary of Minnesota Avenue, then progressing due south in a straight line (herein designated "Line A") until said Line A intersects with the center line of the four main tracks of the Burlington Northern Railroad, then turning at a right angle to the east and progressing in a straight line a distance of 275 feet, then turning at a right angle to the north and progressing in a straight line a distance of 100 feet, then turning at a right angle to the west and progressing in a straight line until said line intersects with the abovementioned Line A; thus enclosing a rectangular parcel of land in the original Great Northern Railway Right of Way, in Government Lot One, in the Original Townsite of Bemidji. The boundary includes that parcel that has historically been associated with the property and which maintains historic integrity.