

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
other names/site number Whitehall Railroad Depot

2. Location

street & number 36295 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Whitehall N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Trempealeau code 121 zip code 54773

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date 3/1/06
State Historic Preservation Officer-Wisconsin

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 commenting official/Title _____ Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot

Trempealeau County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

4.19.06

for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- site
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/ rail related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

Other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Name of Property

Trempealeau County
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1914-1949

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Green Bay and Western Railroad Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
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9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State Agency
 - Federal Agency
 - Local government
 - X University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (ARC)
 - Other
- Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 634060 4913940
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
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 Eric J Wheeler
organization
street & number 223 23rd Street North
city or town La Crosse

state WI

date September 2005
telephone 608-785-7383
zip code 54601

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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/title	City of Whitehall	date	September 2005
organization		telephone	715-538-4353
street&number	18620 Hobson Street PO Box 155	zip code	54773
city or town	Whitehall	state	WI

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

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Description of physical appearance

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot (also known as the Whitehall Depot) is located in the city of Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. The one story brick building with full basement measures 24 feet by 60 feet with flanking open-sided canopies on either side each measuring 15 feet by 29 feet. This depot was built in 1914 by the Green Bay and Western Railroad Company to replace the earlier wood-frame depot built in 1877. The depot has a rectangular mass and hip roof typical of Early Modern influenced railroad depots of the early 20th century. The windows display a Classical Revival influence.

Site

The depot sits on a long narrow site located just west of Hwy 53/Main Street in the center of the city of Whitehall. To the immediate north of the building is an active rail line currently operated by the Canadian National Railway. The south edge of the building site is bounded by a gas station and residential properties. The west edge of the site is separated from the rail line easement and defined by a plain wooden fence. The eastern edge of the site is the previously mentioned highway right of way. Access to the building site from the east off Hwy 53 is provided by a gravel parking lot and concrete walkway.

Exterior

The main structure of the rectangular building is constructed of load-bearing brick faced walls set on a poured concrete basement wall. The asphalt covered hip roof is punctuated by a plain brick chimney and vent stack in the middle of the north side. The soffits are open and clad with beaded tongue and groove siding. Windows and door openings are symmetrically placed on the dark brown brick walls. Two belt courses; one of cut Bedford limestone at approximately four feet above the poured concrete apron and another of slightly projecting brick at about eight feet above the concrete apron add to the balanced appearance of the depot and provide a modicum of exterior ornamentation.

The window design and placement is an important feature of the depot and creates a distinctive look that is a key element of the building's historic character. There are eleven half-round arched windows that sit atop nine windows and two sliding door openings. The windows are evenly placed on all four walls and feature a central mullion dividing the two sections of the arched window above and paired four pane windows below. The south wall has a pair of four pane fixed sash windows in the middle and two utility doors containing six pane windows and square transom window above. These doors flank the large half-round arched windows and have a storm door (west) and screen door (east). The

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entry to the freight section on the west end is provided by sliding doors on the north and south side containing two side by side six pane window openings topped by the previously mentioned arched windows. The west and east walls have matching pairs of half-round windows. The north wall features a three-sided projecting bay with a large arched window in the center and flanking four pane rectangular windows with large transom above on either side. From the vantage point of this central bay the stationmaster was able to view up and down and across the rail-line. The north side also has two sets of utility doors similar to those on the south side and two arched half-round windows. The half-round windows are enhanced by a three-course segmental brick arch that adds to the Classical Revival look of the arched windows.

An additional distinctive historic element that remains intact is the wooden depot sign attached to the fascia on the east end of the east canopy. The black lettering on a white background has the name "Whitehall" and the distance between the east rail terminus of the Green Bay and Western Railroad in Green Bay and the west terminus of the line in Winona. The two flanking canopies have a roof line that is extended from the main depot and provides a good visual balance to the building. The ceiling of the canopies is the original beaded tongue and groove siding. The canopies are supported by four posts with curved brackets at the top supporting the horizontal top plate.

Interior

The interior is divided into four zones that reflect the transportation utility and late Victorian ethos of the period of construction. The ladies lounge is on the east end of the depot with ingress and egress provided by exterior doors on the south and north. The gentlemen's lounge is on the west end of the main section of the depot with similar access doors. Dividing these two gender based waiting areas is a ticket booth and conductor's office area in the center of the north wall. In the center of the main depot along the south wall is a pair of obsolete restrooms leading to the respective lounges. On the west end of the depot is the freight room with interior access provided by a passage door in the north-west corner of the gentlemen's lounge. Sliding doors on the north and south walls provide access in and out of the freight room.

The interior plaster walls, ceilings and maple flooring in the main depot area are mostly intact in the lounge areas but the ticket booth and conductor's office has been significantly altered. The interior walls on two sides of this central area have been removed and the third interior wall has been extended to separate the booth area from the ladies lounge. The pattern of the original sole plate of the two walls that were removed from the ticket booth is clearly visible. The original flooring has been covered up with vinyl tile in the gentlemen's lounge and ticket booth. However, the doors, windows and most of the interior trim, molding and baseboard are still in place. An original built-in desk remains in the bay

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area of the ticket booth. The alterations that have been made since the depot ceased to serve passengers were made to provide better spatial utility for use as a woodworking shop. The depot building no longer is used for that purpose.

Interior entry to the freight room is from the gentlemen's lounge down a steep ramp to the bare plank flooring slightly below the floor level in the main depot. The ceiling is similar soft-wood planking and there is a small closed panel providing access to the attic. The walls are all original exposed brick that appear to be in good condition.

Basement

The basement underlies all of interior rooms and exterior walls and actually extends to the north past the bay area on the north to provide access and storage for coal to fuel the boiler during the historic time period. The basement has concrete walls and floor and four partitioned areas with stairway access from the Ladies Lounge on the east and the freight room on the west. The walls, ceiling and floor appear to be in good condition. The basement is currently being used for mechanical space and limited storage. There is a wood-burning stove next to the chimney in the central basement area; a hot water heater is located to the east of the chimney and plumbing pipes to the west.

Integrity

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot retains good integrity. The exterior is unaltered and has excellent historic character. The depot appears today essentially as it looks in historic photos when it still functioned as a passenger depot. The major alteration of the interior is the previously mentioned removal and alteration of the ticket booth and conductor's office walls. This issue has been addressed by architectural consultants and the Wisconsin Historical Society and will be considered as part of the project plan developed by the City of Whitehall for the depot. The depot was purchased by the City of Whitehall in 2003 and has been used occasionally for meetings of community members interested in the preservation and adaptive use of the depot.

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Statement of Significance

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot in Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under criteria A and C. More specifically, the Depot is being nominated for its associations with the areas of Transportation and Architecture, both themes that are identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan. Research into these areas of significance centered on evaluating the depot using the "Later Rail Lines" subsection of the plan's Transportation Theme section and the Vernacular Forms study unit of the plan's Architecture Theme section. The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot is significant under *Criterion A: Transportation* for its historical association with rail transportation in the community. Rail transportation played a pivotal role in the economic and social development of the city of Whitehall. The depot is also significant under *Criterion C: Architecture* as an intact example of a single story brick Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot. The depot was designed in 1914 as the finest passenger/freight depot in the western half of the Green Bay and Western line in Wisconsin and is the only remaining depot of this line with architectural and historic significance. The depot retains a high level of integrity and is being considered as a heritage tourism site by the city of Whitehall.

The period of significance is determined to be from the date of construction in 1914 until the termination of passenger service from the depot in 1949. During this 45-year period the depot served as the center of rail transportation activity in Trempealeau County.

History of Whitehall

The historical development of the Upper Mississippi region in the mid-nineteenth century was accelerated with the increase in the steamboat trade and the arrival of entrepreneurs and settlers from areas east and south of Wisconsin. Although the earliest white traders and trappers arrived in the late 17th and 18th centuries it wasn't until the 1840s and 1850s that small permanent settlements began along the banks of the Mississippi River from Dubuque north to the Falls of St Anthony in what was to become Minneapolis. In Trempealeau County the earliest of these settlements was the village of Trempealeau, established in 1852 and located on the Mississippi River twenty miles upstream from La Crosse. Soon after, in 1854, the village of Galesville was established seven miles northeast of Trempealeau on Beaver Creek, two miles upstream from the Black River. It was not until the first year of the Civil War that agricultural areas away from the Mississippi River valley began to look promising to new settlers. The wartime demand for wheat made the fertile bottomlands and ridge-tops of the central and northern part of Trempealeau County very appealing to Yankee entrepreneurs and newly

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arrived European immigrants.

In 1861, the settlement that local historians call "Old Whitehall" was established around a grist mill located one-half mile upstream from the confluence of Pigeon Creek and the Trempealeau River. The nascent village was located about 1½ miles east of the present city of Whitehall on the south side of Hwy 53 and was first developed by Norwegian immigrant Ole Knudtson, east coast Yankee Benjamin F Wing and a Mr. Georges, who reportedly did a flourishing business selling whiskey to the local Indians.¹ The years after the Civil War brought more settlers to the rich farmland of central Trempealeau County and the wheat production of the county increased tenfold from roughly 50,000 bushels in 1860 to over one half million in 1870.² Small settlements continued to grow around streamside sites where water-powered mills could be built to process the locally grown wheat into flour for shipment to markets in the region. But it was the arrival of the railroad through the heart of the county in the early 1870s that created a boom in town development for Whitehall and other communities in the county and set the transportation and economic growth pattern in the region for the next 50 years.

History of the Green Bay and Western Railroad in western Wisconsin

The Industrial Revolution began in England at the end of the late 18th century with the development of the steam engine. However it was in the United States that the application of steam power to transportation resulted in the first successful commercial railroads in the 1830s and led to the westward expansion and settlement of the trans-Appalachian west. The first railroad reached the Mississippi River in Rock Island, Illinois in 1854 and the transcontinental rail connection was completed with the driving of the legendary "Golden Spike" at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869. The historic cross-country rail link of both coasts also underscored the critical importance of connecting land to water transportation. The network of rail to ocean, lake and river transportation grids provided the pathways for people and products located away from the traditional settlements and cities located next to navigable water-ways.

The railroad development in central Trempealeau County began in 1866 with the charter for the Green Bay and Lake Pepin Railroad Company. The proposed route across the central part of the state would

¹ Curtiss-Wedge, Franklyn. History of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, page 93.

² Zeitlin, Richard H. First the Land – The History and Development of Trempealeau County – An Overview, page 10.

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provide a Lake Michigan to Mississippi River rail link that would connect to the burgeoning national rail network and bring economic prosperity to both the investors and the communities served by the rail line. The company was organized by capitalists from Green Bay, Chicago and New York who saw that there was a surplus of wheat produced in the western Wisconsin region that could profitably be brought to market. Track laying began the fall of 1871 in Green Bay and small settlements along the proposed route competed vigorously for the right of way. From Merrilan in Jackson County the rail route was to follow the valley of the Trempealeau River and thus eliminate the extra time and expense needed to engineer and build over or through steep grades. However, west of Blair, the Trempealeau River swings to the north and adds another seven miles of right of way between Blair and Arcadia. Merchants in Arcadia hoped to persuade the rail company to build directly cross-country from Blair to Arcadia and bypass the small settlements near Whitehall and Independence. They even proposed to raise the extra \$75,000 needed for the overland short cut. But fortunately for Whitehall and Independence, the company stayed with the river valley right of way partly because of efforts of a local landowner who had connections to the company management. By September of 1873, tracks were laid through the wheat field that was to become Whitehall.³ The first regular passenger service between Green Bay and Whitehall began on January 1, 1874 inaugurating a new era for the small farming settlements in central Trempealeau County. The importance of the rail connection for Blair, Whitehall, Independence, Arcadia and Dodge is noted by the fact that all five of these settlements essentially relocated to be close to the rail line. In Whitehall, "Old Whitehall" settler Benjamin Wing moved to the new town-site and erected a general store.

*"During the spring and summer of 1874, the village (of Whitehall) presented a scene of busy activity. Hotels, business houses and residences went up and there and before fall a flourishing hamlet had been established"*⁴

Another indication of the power of the railroad in the economic development of the area and the eagerness of the local settlers to ingratiate themselves to the railroad company is the fact that three of the communities along the path of the railroad; Blair and Dodge in Trempealeau County and Taylor in Jackson County, are named for Green Bay and Lake Pepin investors John I. Blair, William E. Dodge and Moses Taylor. None of these men likely ever visited these communities; they all were east coast based financiers.

³ Rolling Through Time: Trempealeau River Valley Towns and Trains, page 11.

⁴ Curtiss-Wedge, page 236.

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As the population of Whitehall increased after 1874, so did the level of commerce. The total bushels of flour shipped out of the community increased by 50% from 1874 to 1877.⁵ Along with the increase in economic activity the interest in becoming the county seat encouraged local citizens to build a town hall building that could be used as a county courthouse. Galesville had been the county seat for most of the period after 1854 and Arcadia was the county seat before a countywide vote permanently established Whitehall as the center of county government in 1877.⁶ The struggle between communities to be the site of the county courthouse had great economic implications and was very common in newly settled regions in the late 19th century. The location of the City of Whitehall on the Green Bay and Western railroad line and its central location in the county no doubt contributed to its selection as the county seat.⁷ Therefore, the railroad depot in Whitehall has had an important role to play in the history and development of the community.

The importance of the railroad in Whitehall's history cannot be overstated. The railroad was the determining factor in the location of the city and it played a vital role in its economic life. For most of the late 19th century and well in to the 20th century, the railroad was the principal means by which the agricultural products of the area were shipped out and goods brought in. Additionally, the railroad was also the only form of reliable mass transportation that was available to the residents of Whitehall well into the 20th century. Throughout this time it was the Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot that was the hub of this essential activity. The present depot, the only surviving resource associated with railroading in Whitehall, served in this role from 1914 to 1949. The Green Bay and Western Depot is therefore believed to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its local associations with the area of Transportation because of the key role it played in the history of the community. The historic significance of the depot is further enhanced by the building's high degree of integrity and overall excellent condition.

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot in Whitehall – Architectural Significance

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic

⁵ Zeitlin, page 36.

⁶ History of Northern Wisconsin – Illustrated, page 1038.

⁷ The Green Bay and Lake Pepin Railroad went through bankruptcies and subsequent name changes in 1874, 1881 and 1896. From 1896 until 1993 the name was the Green Bay and Western, and for the purposes of this nomination is considered to be the historic name.

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Places for Architecture as an excellent, largely intact example of the type of smaller, brick construction Early Modern style combination passenger/freight depots that many railroads in the upper mid-west constructed for the smaller communities they served. Such depots were once common throughout the state, but the demise of passenger service to all but a very few of the state's communities has rendered them obsolete and has resulted in the demolition of many. Consequently, the Whitehall Depot, built in 1914, is now one of the few surviving intact examples of this important and highly threatened resource type.

The original wood frame railroad depot that appears in a bird's eye view of Whitehall from 1877 was burned or torn down and replaced by the distinctive existing brick depot constructed in 1914. Several secondary sources identified the year of construction of the depot at 1914 and this is confirmed in a series of entries in the local newspaper from 1914. Coincidentally, the opening of the new Whitehall Depot in December of 1914 was almost exactly forty-one years after the first passenger service was initiated in January of 1874.

Thursday, May 7, 1914 – *“The G. B. and W.R.R Co. began the foundation for its new Whitehall depot last week. It is to be built on the south side of the main line and a few rods west of the old station.”*

Thursday, May 14, 1914 – *“Work is progressing on Whitehall's new passenger depot. It is to be one of the best on the Green Bay line.”*

Thursday, July 23, 1914 – *“The roof is on the new railroad station here. When completed it will be one of the neatest passenger depots on the Green Bay line.”*

Thursday, August 13, 1914 – *“The Green Bay Railroad company is doing a bit of grading around its property on Abrams Street and at its new depot this past week.”*

Thursday, December 24, 1914 – *“The morning passenger train pulled up at the new Whitehall depot and tickets were sold and the regular business transacted there for the first time. It is the best passenger depot this side of Green Bay on the G. B. and W. R. R., and supplied with all the modern conveniences. Agent Rozelle is prouder than a peacock, and so are all the other Whitehall citizens.”*⁸

Whitehall was incorporated as a city in 1887 and within the next decade had municipal water, sewer

⁸ Whitehall Times and Blair Banner. 7 May, 1914 – 24 December, 1914.

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and electric service. A library building was erected in 1899 and within two decades numerous public buildings and projects that are the hallmark of a modern city were built in Whitehall. These include the John O. Melby City Park (1906), a three-story Craftsman influenced City Hall (1912), Whitehall Community Hospital and Clinic (1916,) and an octagonal concrete Bandstand (1915) erected by the ladies of the Chautauqua Circle.⁹ Not long after these symbols of a thriving community were built, a new Collegiate Gothic high school was built in 1922. All of these “modern” improvements are located within a block or two of the Green Bay and Western Depot. The depot is also on the south edge of the historic commercial district located along Main Street (Hwy 53) that runs north/south through Whitehall. The depot was a pivotal element in the commercial and social life of Whitehall in the first half of the 20th century.

The fine Craftsman influenced City Hall in Whitehall was torn down in 2003 and of the remaining Early Modern buildings mentioned above, the Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot is the most architecturally significant and the most intact. The architectural tastes of the turn of the century Early Modern period in the upper mid-west were strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement that began in Britain in the mid-19th century. The aesthetic concept of this movement was applied to decorative and functional arts as well. When applied to architecture the term that is most frequently used is Prairie School or Prairie Style and Craftsman. A number of famous architects and many lesser know building designers “shared the conviction that a building must respond to its surroundings: that it be horizontal, like the prairie, and linked to the earth through low-hipped roofs, broad eaves and extensions that would unify the interiors with the exterior – porches, terraces, and pergolas.”¹⁰ The Whitehall Depot shows several of these elements in the low pitched hip roof, with the distinctive Craftsman “kick,” creating extended overhanging eaves typical of the Prairie Style. The east and west hip-roofed canopies flanking the main depot mass also display the Prairie influence. The view of the depot from the north clearly shows an extended horizontal “wingspread” appearance of the depot. The vernacular interpretation of the Prairie Style in residential architecture is evident in the bungalow. A bungalow home is commonly narrow at the front extending lengthwise to the back of the lot. Low-pitched hip roof with overhanging eaves and generous horizontal fenestration is also typical of many bungalows. Viewed from the east or west the Green Bay and Western Depot has a distinctive “bungaloid” appearance enhanced by the multiple and generous window openings. In an appropriate congruence of function and form the Whitehall Depot has a recognizable Early Modern appearance that also served its use in passenger and freight transportation for nearly 50 years.

⁹ Curtiss-Wedge, page 232.

¹⁰ Kaplan, Wendy and Cumming, Elizabeth, The Arts and Crafts Movement, page 100.

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The Whitehall Green Bay and Western Depot is significant as an example of a depot type built in the early 20th century and typically found in communities the size of Whitehall. The elongated form facing the railroad tracks provided easy and safe access both for freight and passengers entering the depot and leaving to board the train. The separate gentlemen's and ladies' waiting rooms were typical of the early post-Victorian era and indicate the social custom of the day. The unheated freight room was typically flanking the passenger area for separateness, yet ease of in and out loading. The hip roofed canopy extensions on both the east and west ends provided shelter for waiting passengers and are typical of the depot building type. The distinctive brick exterior and ample window openings provided a pleasant and safe area for passengers to embark and disembark from travels. The Whitehall Depot includes the design and detail elements that distinguish this building as representative of the depot form.

The history of the City of Whitehall began and was fundamentally dependent on the Green Bay and Western Railroad presence for nearly 75 years. The existing depot represents that history. Passenger service to Whitehall was discontinued in 1949 and local sources indicate that last depot agent retired in the 1960s.¹¹ These same sources indicate that a local lumberyard bought the depot in 1968 and used the depot for storage and cabinetmaking. It continued to be used for woodworking purposes by a local carpenter from 1984 until 1988 when it was sold to the John O. Melby and Co. Bank and rented by the bank to a local woodworker. In 1989, the ownership changed again to a self-employed furniture refinisher who used the depot for his furniture business. The City of Whitehall purchased the depot in 2003. Over the past several decades the interior has been altered somewhat for woodworking purposes.

Property Comparison

The Architecture and History Inventory that was conducted in western Wisconsin in 1981 listed the Whitehall Depot as of interest because of its unaltered early 20th century style and excellent condition. The Whitehall Depot is the only railroad depot identified in Trempealeau County in the AHI inventory. The Whitehall Depot is the only known surviving building of the Green Bay and Western Railroad of architectural and historic interest in western Wisconsin. Currently nearly 30 railroad depots in Wisconsin are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. Most are wood frame and date from the last three decades of the 19th century. Many are currently used as visitor information centers and are located along an existing or proposed recreational trail. The depot in Whitehall is of brick construction and represents a popular architectural style of the early 20th century. Because of the

¹¹ Mailer, Stan. Green Bay and Western – The First 111 Years, page 267.

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

condition and location of the Whitehall Depot, it has equal potential for use as a heritage tourism site.

The Green Bay and Western Depot and Heritage Tourism

Over the past several decades communities across the country have taken note of the importance of preserving the historic buildings that not only enhance local economic vitality but provide an important visual reminder of a sense of place. Concurrently, the "rails to trails" movement has been recognized as an important component of regional heritage tourism. Dozens, if not hundreds, of small and large communities across the nation have made use of obsolete rail depots for bicycle trail service centers. In western Wisconsin three communities along the Sparta-Elroy Bike Trail have converted their discontinued rail depots into bicycle trail headquarters and visitor information centers. They are Sparta, Kendall and Elroy. The nearby Root River Trail in eastern Minnesota has converted rail depots in Houston and Preston serving cyclists and tourists along the recreational trail.

Recently Trempealeau County has become a leader in heritage tourism in the region. The Trempealeau County Bus Tour project, self-guided Audio Car Tours and the Guide to Bicycle Routes are the most notable of these accomplishments. The success of these projects and the location and condition of the Whitehall Railroad Depot indicate that the highest and best use of the depot is a community visitor and cultural center that could complement and enhance the tourism related projects that already have been successfully developed.

Conclusion

The Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot, built in 1914, is significant in the area of transportation under *Criterion A* and additionally in the area of architecture under *Criterion C*. The arrival and continuance of the railroad was pivotal in establishing the city of Whitehall and in the economic and social development of the city and surrounding rural area. The Green Bay and Western Railroad chose to build the most substantial and attractive depot on the west half of the rail line in Whitehall. The railroad depot served as a hub of the transportation needs of Whitehall and the surrounding rural area and was pivotal in the economic and social life of the community. Additionally, the Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot is one of the finest intact examples of Early Modern architecture in the City of Whitehall and is a good example of the depot property type. As passenger rail transportation became obsolete in the last half of the 20th century most passenger depots were torn down or used in way that compromised the architectural and historical integrity of the building. The Green Bay and Western Depot in Whitehall is one of the surviving intact examples of this highly threatened property type. The preservation of this depot and the potential development of the depot as a heritage tourism center is of

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

great importance in portraying the story of railroad development in Wisconsin and the community history of Whitehall.

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is a rectangle measuring 31 feet by 118 feet as indicated on the included plat map. The boundary lines on the east and west extend to the edge of the two 15 foot by 29 foot flanking open canopies and platforms and on the north and south approximately 3 ½ feet past the north and south walls of the brick depot to include the sidewalks. The parcel of land on which the depot sits is located west of the Hwy 53/Main Street highway right-of-way and just south of the Canadian National Railroad railroad tracks. This parcel is surrounded by property owned by the Canadian National Railroad and is located in NE/SW of Section 23 T22N R8W.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the immediate setting of the Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot and consist of the parcel purchased by the city of Whitehall in 2003.

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Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

Photograph Descriptions

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Green Bay and Western Railroad Depot
36295 Main Street, Whitehall, Trempealeau County, Wisconsin
Photographer: Eric J. Wheeler, May 2005
Negatives in the collection of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Photograph 1 of 10
Street view, looking northwest

Photograph 2 of 10
View of east façade, looking northwest

Photograph 3 of 10
View of east and south façade, looking northwest

Photograph 4 of 10
Close-up view of east façade, looking west

Photograph 5 of 10
View of north façade, looking south

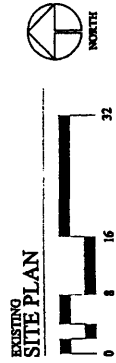
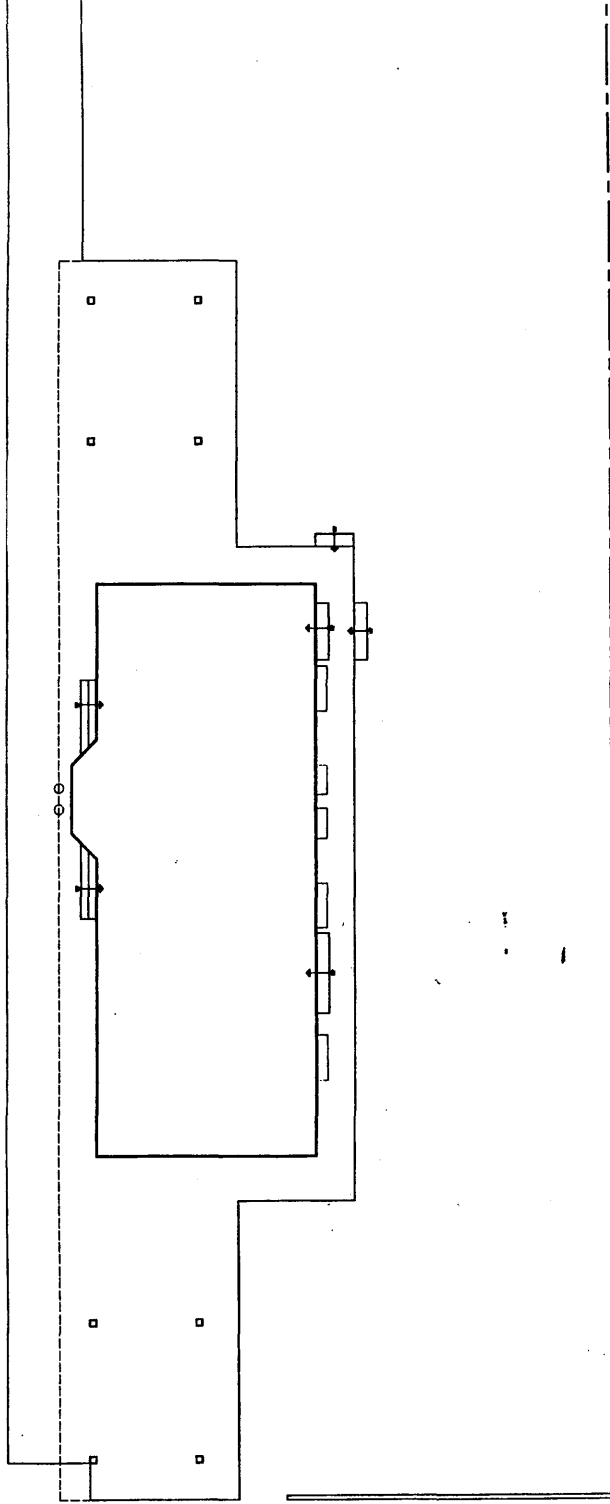
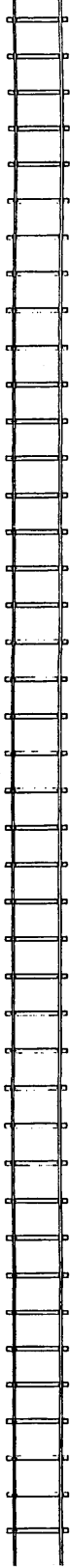
Photograph 6 of 10
View of north and west façade, looking southeast

Photograph 7 of 10
View of north and west façade, looking southeast

Photograph 8 of 10
Close-up view of south façade, looking north

Photograph 9 of 10
View of interior ticket counter area, looking northeast

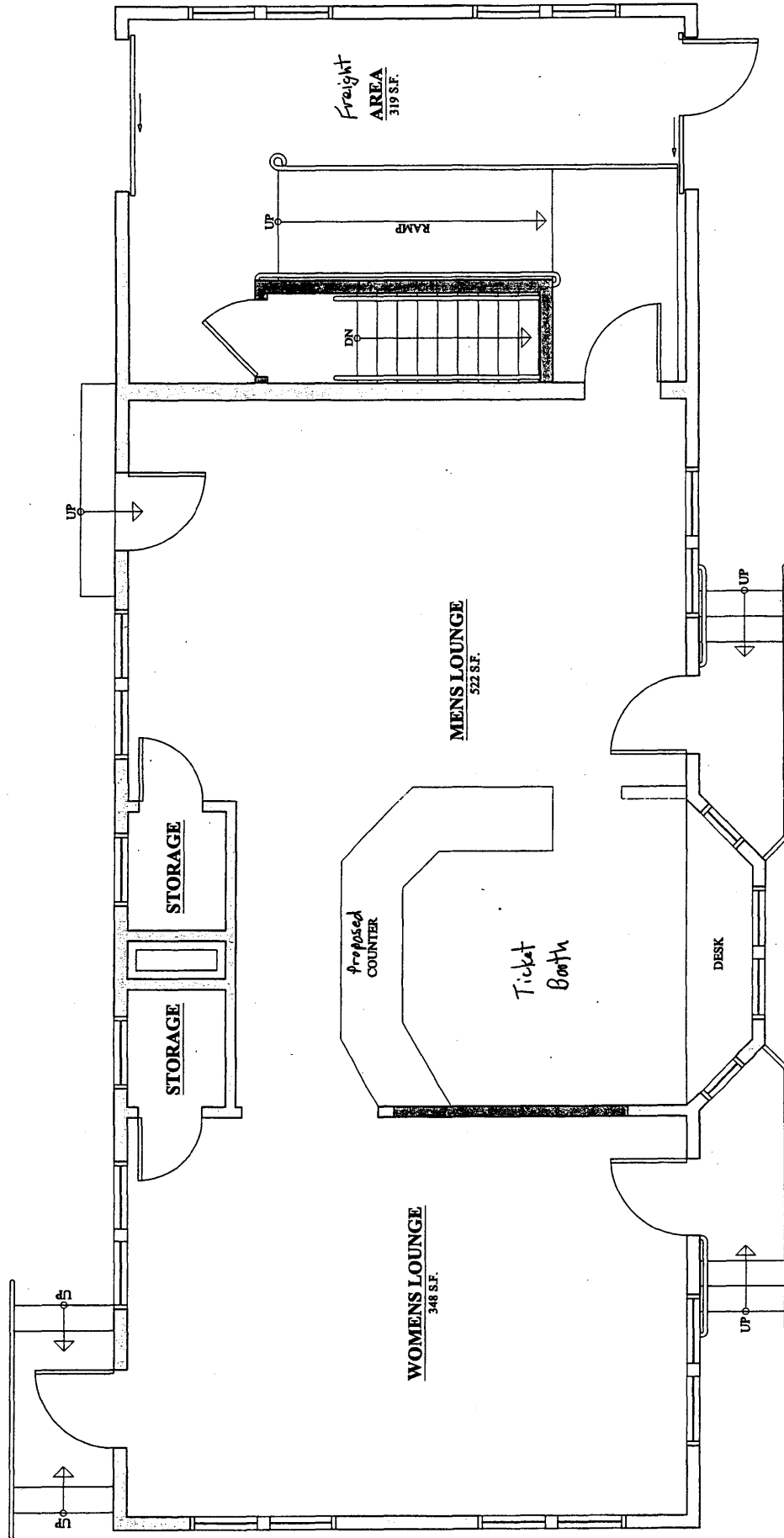
Photograph 10 of 10
View of interior ticket counter area, looking east



GREEN BAY AND WESTERN RAILROAD DEPOT
WHITEHALL, TREMPEREAU COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Existing Conditions

GREEN BAY AND WESTERN RAILROAD DEPOT
 WHITEHALL, TREMPLEAU CO., WISCONSIN

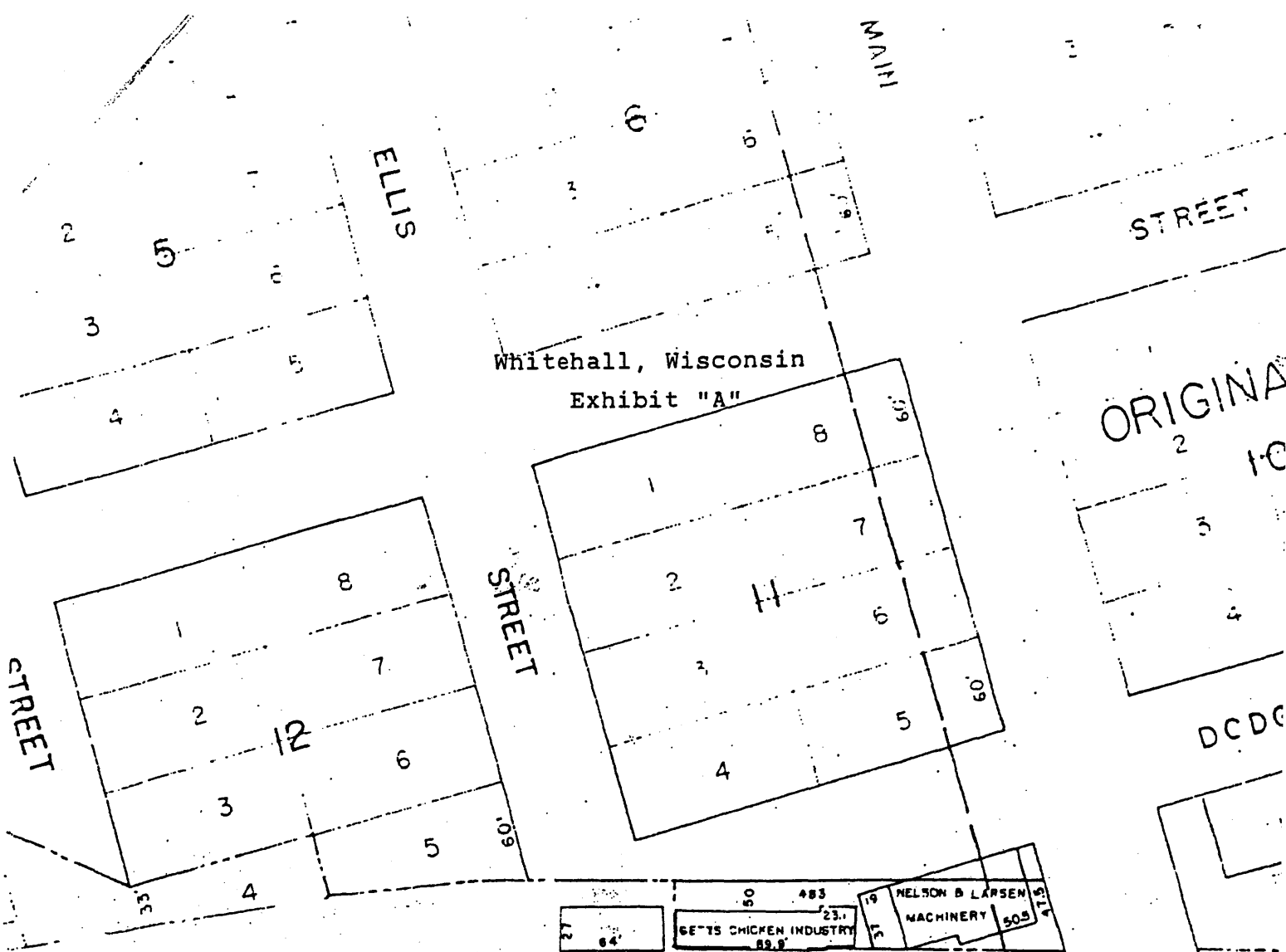


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PROJECT: #1163 White Hall
 Rail Road Depot
 EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
 DATE: 10-25-04

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

WALL LEGEND	
	PROPOSED STUD WALL
	EXISTING STUD WALL



Whitehall, Wisconsin
Exhibit "A"

ORIGINAL

DCDC

STREET

STREET

MAIN

STREET

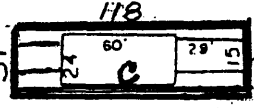
LCC 216 1819

RADIO TOWER Δ

GETTS CHICKEN INDUSTRY

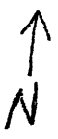
NELSON & LARSEN
MACHINERY

NO 5



Depot
Location

Green Bay & Western Railroad Company
Engineering Department
Green Bay, Wisconsin
February 15, 1989 Scale: 1/4"=100'



ADDITION

GREEN BAY AND WESTERN RAILROAD DEPOT
WHITEHALL, TREMPLEAU COUNTY, WISCONSIN

c=contributing
— boundary

[Signature]
R. E. Larsen, Director
Industrial Development & Engineering