

PHO 368377

# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 21 1976

DATE ENTERED SEP 19 1977

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Northern Pacific Railway Depot (Preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Burlington Northern, Incorporated, Passenger Depot

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

410 East Main Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

North Dakota

VICINITY OF

CODE  
38

COUNTY

Burleigh

CODE

015

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

#### OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

#### STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

#### ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

#### PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Burlington Northern, Incorporated

STREET & NUMBER

176 East Fifth Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota 55101

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Burleigh County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

514 East Thayer Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota 58501

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

North Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of North Dakota  
Liberty Memorial Building

CITY, TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota 58505

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Northern Pacific Railway depot is a 3-part design consisting of a 2-story central block measuring 44 by 36 feet, and east and west 1-story wings which are 51½ by 33 feet and 61½ by 33 feet, respectively. The center facade is flanked by towers 13 feet square, originally domed and crowned by louvered cupolas with bellcast roofs and finials. The four corner pilasters of the towers were capped in a manner identical to the roof treatment of the cupolas. The superstructures of the towers (domed roofs, cupolas, and corner caps) were removed in 1954 and replaced by simple peaked tile roofs, producing the effect of Tuscan campaniles. On the four faces of both towers and in the apexes of the front and rear gables of the central block are plaques bearing the Northern Pacific Railway emblem, or Great Monad, in terracotta. The symbol is of Chinese origin, its connected spirals representing unity, or the joining of the material (feminine) and the spiritual (masculine) fundamental principles. The main entrance of the depot is recessed between the towers within a 1-story portico featuring six concrete Tuscan columns; they are two feet in diameter at the base and eighteen inches at the top. In the corresponding position on the rear (south) elevation is a semi-hexagonal window which lights the agent's office inside and which originally provided a view of the semaphore mounted on a concrete Tuscan pillar near the tracks.

The east and west portions of the depot repeat the shaped gable ends of the central block, but with their longitudinal axes placed at right angles to it. The wings originally terminated in 20-foot square shelters or covered platforms with open arches, but that on the west was remodeled into a new express office in 1930 and the east end was enclosed in 1955. The former shelter arches were filled with doors, windows, or concrete, a scheme consistent with the original arch system comprising the wing walls. The triangular-patterned wooden muntins in the curve of the arches were also repeated. The foundations of the depot are concrete, and the exterior concrete walls are faced with chips from marble once intended for use in the Minnesota State Capitol. After the concrete-marble mixture was placed in forms for the depot walls and dried, particles of sand and cement were removed from the surface with a wire brush, leaving a stucco-like finish produced by the coarser marble. The original roofing of the building was red Ludowic tiles, which were replaced in 1954 during the tower alterations already noted. Roof boards were also repaired and covered with felt lapping sheets, and new copper flashing laid.

As designed, the first floor of the central block of the depot contained cherry-trimmed ticket and trainmen's offices on the south side, separated by a corridor from men's and women's lounges on the north. The "elegance and artistic finish" of the women's lounge made it the finest room in the building at the time (although strictly utilitarian in its present décor):

It is 17 feet square, floor of mosaic, walls of zenith done in stipple and tinted a rich green. The dividing line between walls and floor is a narrow strip of black. It is lighted by two large windows hung with curtains, and a handsome four light chandelier furnishes electric lighting. The floor is covered with a Turkish rug, the room provided with massive bog oak table and sofa, pier glass, and easy chairs. A lavatory and toilet adjoins, finished in white marble with silver trimmings. ("New Depot is Completed," Bismarck Weekly Tribune, December 6, 1901, p.1.)

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The stairway to the second floor of the main block is in the southwest corner and is a quarter-turn with landing. It features molded strings and tread ends, and a gooseneck handrail atop balusters slightly bulbous but being replaced gradually by straighter, slenderer members. The second floor remains unfinished except for plastered ceiling and stair partition and is used for storing records of the successive occupants of the building: Northern Pacific, Burlington Northern, and Amtrak. There are no square corners in the middle block, each one being convex or concave, a distinction which reinforces the building's simulation of a Spanish or adobe-type construction. Other expressions of the theme include the thick, slab-like shelves of the ticket windows; the inclined base moldings on interior and exterior walls, suggesting battering; the towers, roof tiles, and arches; and the texture and tone of the building fabric itself.

The east wing contains the 30 by 50-foot main waiting room, which originally featured colored terrazzo floor and walls; plaster and mosaic frieze; gilt radiators set on wall brackets; and drinking fountain with silver mug on a wall chain. The room is plainly finished today except for a cast iron ventilator grille in the center of the cove ceiling and a deep molded frieze around the walls. Four art deco lighting fixtures (aluminum canisters with fluorescent tubes) are suspended from the ceiling, and doors have sheet brass kick plates studded with brass round-headed nails in the outline of the Great Monad. In the west end of the depot are the express and baggage rooms, the latter being equipped with floor scales on which hand trucks can be weighed. Extensive plumbing and electrical repairs were undertaken throughout the building in 1967, when a gas-fired boiler was installed.

The depot was originally surrounded by 10-foot wide abutting walks of cement tile which on the south joined a 600-foot long cement walk beside the tracks. A driveway of vitrified brick formed a semicircle in front of the building, connecting Fourth Street on the west and Fifth Street on the east. Post and rail fencing enclosed the grounds, which were planted in grass and trees and at the southeast corner of which stood two Tuscan columns supporting an enameled and wrought iron sign reading Bismarck. These amenities have disappeared over the years, culminating in the conversion of the landscaped expanse which fronted the depot into a paved commercial parking lot. In view of current demands by downtown merchants for increased parking facilities, there seems little likelihood that the depot grounds will be restored; however, there does exist some support for improving the parking area with fencing and plantings.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

**SPECIFIC DATES**      1901      **BUILDER/ARCHITECT**      Reed and Stem, St. Paul

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The work of the nationally prominent architectural firm of Charles Reed and Allan Stem of St. Paul, the Northern Pacific Railway depot in Bismarck is notable for its Spanish mission-style architecture, a familiar mode in the Southwest and California but uncommon in the northern plains. At the time of construction, the quality of the depot design enhanced the popular image of the foremost rail transportation system in North Dakota, one which had reached Bismarck from the East in 1873 and which, on completion a decade later, had linked the state to the west coast. The depot occupies block 10 of the original plat of the city of Bismarck, its predecessor on the site being the 1877 Sheridan House, leading hotel in 19th-century Bismarck and the largest building, when erected, in Dakota Territory. The Sheridan served as both hotel and railway passenger depot, and when it was decided to build the present depot, the hotel was moved east across Fifth Street, remodeled, and opened as the Northwest Hotel. On the next block west of block 10 there had been a frame freight depot dating from the 1870's but it was destroyed in the fire of August 8, 1898, which leveled much of downtown Bismarck. The Bismarck Daily Tribune of August 13, 1898 ("New Depot," p. 1), carried the following notice from the St. Paul Globe:

The Northern Pacific Railway company will immediately begin the construction of a new depot and office building in Bismarck, N.D., to replace those which were destroyed by fire Monday morning. General manager Kendrick and other officials of the road were in consultation with architects yesterday, making plans for the new buildings. The company does an immense business at Bismarck and it requires ample facilities.

It is the company's intention to erect at Bismarck one of the finest depots and freight offices on its system, and one that will be all that the people of that city can desire from an architectural standpoint. As rapidly as possible the plans will be perfected and no time will be lost in commencing work.

Begun in September, 1900, and completed in December, 1901, at a cost of \$33,601, the depot attracted public attention from the start. Its opening was hailed in a page one story of the December 6, 1901, Bismarck Weekly Tribune, which emphasized both the novelty of the design and the caliber of its execution. A few years afterward, a publication endorsed by the Bismarck Commercial Club (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) boasted that "The Northern Pacific depot at Bismarck is noted for its unique beauty and is one of the notable sights pointed out to passengers on passing trains by the trainmen, the trains being held for a few moments that those who wish may inspect it" (Glimpses of Bismarck. Bismarck: W.F. Cushing, 1906).

### 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Maddox, Dawn. Personal inspection, April 21, 1976.  
 "New Depot Is Completed." Bismarck Weekly Tribune. December 6, 1901, P. 1.  
 State Historical Society of North Dakota. Collections. Plans and elevations of  
 (1) Northern Pacific Railway Depot, Bismarck (Reed & Stem, St. Paul, 1900-02).  
 (2) New Depot Express Office (Office of Chief Engineer, Northern Pacific, St. Paul, 1930).  
 (3) Reconstruction of Depot Roof (Engineering Office, Northern Pacific, St. Paul, 1954)

### 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.01 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A | 14 | 36,37,8,0 | 5,18,418,3,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

### 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dawn Maddox, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of North Dakota

DATE

October 20, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Liberty Memorial Building

TELEPHONE

(701)224-2666

CITY OR TOWN

Bismarck

STATE

North Dakota 58505

### 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*James E. Sperry*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE October 27, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles A. ...*

DATE

9/19/77

DATE

7-16-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Ten years later, in 1916, the depot was serving a total of 24 passenger trains which arrived at and departed the capital city daily. By midcentury, however, Bismarck began to reflect the nationwide decline of railroads generated by competition from vehicular transportation. In 1970 the Northern Pacific merged with four other lines to become the Burlington Northern. The identity of the company which had brought the railroad to Bismarck was further diminished by the coming of the Amtrak system, which utilizes former Northern Pacific trackage and leases the depot from Burlington Northern. The freight office of the latter, which had been in the east end of the building, was transferred in 1972 to the depot at Mandan, seven miles west. The Railway Express Agency vacated its quarters in the west end of the Bismarck depot following a declaration of bankruptcy in 1975. At present Amtrak is the sole occupant, a practice which will presumably continue in effect as long as the depot is utilized for passenger train service. A request by Greyhound Bus Lines to rent the former freight office was denied in accordance with the policy.

The fate of the depot has become a concern of the Bismarck-Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society, which is promoting the preservation of the building as a historic site. If in the future it ceases to be used by Amtrak, the Downtown Business and Professional Association is also proposing a mixed commercial/cultural role for the depot, including visitor information center, coffee shop, art gallery, and museum.