

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

JUN 26 1986

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Minneapolis and St. Louis Depot

and/or common Minnesota Valley Transportation Company Depot

2. Location

street & number Park St. and Second Ave.Ss

N/A not for publication

city, town Fairfax

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

code 22

county Renville

code 129

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Minnesota Valley Transportation Company

street & number Box 218

city, town Redwood Falls

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota 56283

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Renville County Courthouse

street & number DePue Avenue

city, town Olivia

state Minnesota 56277

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984-85

federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good *ML*
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Minneapolis and St. Louis Depot at Fairfax, built circa 1883, is located between two sets of tracks on the east side of Park Street, one of the town's two major commercial streets. The depot is a one story, stucco-covered woodframe building with a gabled roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by unusual brackets with two cross pieces edged with eyelet-like detailing. The building has stickwork on the west and east facades and tall, narrow 4/4 sash. There are freight doors on the north, south, and east sides, two single leaf doors on the south facade, and a rectangular trackside bay window on the south side. The interior of the depot includes a waiting room, freight room, and central office and retains hardwood floors, wood wainscoting, and original window moldings. Changes to the exterior have included applying stucco to the exterior walls, installing asphalt shingles on the roof, and changing the easternmost single leaf entrance. Despite these alterations, the depot retains much of its original character and remains a good example of 1880's combination depot design.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates Circa 1883 **Builder/Architect** Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad Depot at Fairfax, built circa 1883, is historically and architecturally significant as Renville County's oldest and most intact depot standing on its original site, as the building which best represents the tremendous impact of railroads on the settlement of Renville County, and as a good example of a nineteenth century woodframe combination depot, a building type which is becoming increasingly rare in western Minnesota.

The Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad, a relatively small rail company founded in 1870, established a line along the north side of the Minnesota River through southeastern Renville County in 1882. The line was extended westward, across the river, and into South Dakota in 1883-84, linking southwestern Minnesota with the Twin Cities. The company was instrumental in platting southern Renville County's three major communities: Fairfax, Franklin, and Morton, all platted in 1882. The company built tracks and a siding at Fairfax in September and October of 1882, and the depot was undoubtedly constructed the following spring. By the summer of 1883 Fairfax was serviced by four trains daily which stopped at the depot, providing the newly established community with its primary link with the rest of the county and state.

Like rail lines which served many rural Minnesota communities, the Minneapolis and St. Louis was vital to the existence of Fairfax, and actively supported by members of the town. In 1936-38 when a radical dismemberment of the company was planned, Fairfax lawyer Fred K. Gage served as chairman of a tri-state "Minneapolis and St. Louis Executive Defense Committee" which successfully worked to prevent the action and insure the preservation of the line. The depot at Fairfax served as a center of community activity during its early years, and continued to provide passenger and freight service to the area until after World War II. All passenger and freight service was eventually discontinued, and for many years the depot stood unused. In 1983, however, this portion of the former Minneapolis and St. Louis line was acquired by the Minnesota Valley Transportation Company of nearby Redwood Falls. The company now provides limited freight service through the area and uses the Fairfax depot as a storage facility.

The depot at Fairfax was designed by the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad company based on one of its standard combination depot plans and is very similar to a Minneapolis and St. Louis depot standing in the community of Belview, thirty miles to the west in Redwood County. The depot is the only Minneapolis and St. Louis depot still standing in the Renville County and is the county's oldest and most intact railroad depot still standing on its original site. (There are seven depots in Renville County which were built by between circa 1900 and 1940 by the county's other rail line, the Hastings and Dakota. Two of these have been moved to other towns and none are architecturally significant.) The Fairfax depot, with its simple design and distinctive bracketed eaves, remains an excellent and rare example of an architecturally significant, early combination depot constructed in the region. It also serves as a primary site illustrating the importance of rail lines to the development of townsites in western Minnesota as discussed in the State Historic Preservation Office's "Railroad Construction and Agricultural Development" unit of the "RP3" study developed recently by the Minnesota Historical Society to provide historic contexts in which to assess the significance of the state's historic sites.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fairfax Centennial, 1882-1982. Master Graphics, 1982.

Donovan, Frank P. Mileposts on the Prairie: The Story of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway. New York: Simmons-Boardman Pub. Co., 1950.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Fairfax, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	3	6	3	3	4	0	4	9	3	1	5	5	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

The nominated property is all that which is located in the north one-half of the block which is bounded as follows: On the north side by Second Avenue South; on the east side by First Street; on the south side by Third Avenue; on the West side by Park Street, Original Town, City of Fairfax, Renville County, Minnesota.

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 Susan Granger/Contract Historian

State Historic Preservation Office

organization Minnesota Historical Society

date May 1985

street & number Fort Snelling History Center

telephone (612) 726-1171

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

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

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

6/20/86

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

for Delores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

7/24/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Minneapolis and St. Louis Depot, Fairfax, Renville County, Minnesota

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Continuation sheet

Resource Count

Item number

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The Minneapolis and St. Louis Depot nomination
contains 1 contributing building.