

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8/86)
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)
(Approved 3/87)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JAN 31 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name CHICAGO AND NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD DEPOT

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 500 NORTH COMMERCIAL STREET

N/A not for publication

city, town NEENAH

N/A vicinity

state WISCONSIN

code WI

county WINNEBAGO

code 139

zip code 54956

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Jeffrey N. Shaw
Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

1/24/94
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

Edson H. Beall 3/7/94

 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet

**Entered in the
National Register**

 determined not eligible for the National Register.

 removed from the National Register.

 other, (explain:)

 Signature of the Keeper Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/rail-related

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description	
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
ROMANESQUE	foundation <u>LIMESTONE</u>
	walls <u>BRICK</u>
	roof <u>ASPHALT</u>
	other <u>WOOD</u> <u>SANDSTONE</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Depot is situated on the west side of Doty Island approximately 200 feet south of the municipal boundary between Neenah and Menasha. It is located on the northwest corner of Clybourn Street and North Commercial Street, the principal commercial corridor connecting the two cities. The surrounding neighborhood is a transitional area of industrial, commercial and residential uses, consisting of contemporary masonry structures and small frame vernacular houses from the early 20th century.

The depot is a one-story Richardsonian Romanesque Revival railroad depot of masonry construction, built in 1892 and designed by noted Chicago architect Charles Sumner Frost. The layout consists of a tall, central passenger depot with a separate express office and baggage room to the west and east, respectively. The plan configuration of the passenger depot is rectangular and the roof form is hipped with shouldered cross gables facing north and south. The platform is concrete, the foundations are rock-faced ashlar limestone, and the walls are red pressed brick with an American bond. The roof is steeply pitched and flared at the eaves, and the roofing materials are asphalt shingles which approximate the color of the blue slate shingles they replaced.

The rectangular baggage room and express office are of identical materials as the passenger depot, to which they are connected by a low pitched hipped roof which forms a canopy around the depot. This roof is centered north of the depot roof and covers the full-length north platform adjacent to the tracks. Large knee-brace brackets support the roof on all four sides of the joint structure. Between the depot and the express office the roof covers a large open area and is supported by four piers. These piers are constructed of limestone to the height of the foundations, above which they are brownstone. The open area between the depot and the baggage room was enclosed in 1942 for use as a two-bay garage.

The fenestration of the passenger depot is formal and consists of double-hung, twelve-over-one sash, presently boarded over. On the north and south facades two windows flank either side of the cross gables and include a transom located between the canopy and main roof. Above the canopy on the north gable is a large stilted arch window, above which is a narrow lancet window. Below the canopy are three windows which replace a central ticket bay and flanking doorways. On the south gable altered brickwork indicates the possible location of a porte-cochere no longer extant. A palladian window group is located above these altered bricks, and two windows are located below. All the windows above the canopy roof were bricked closed in 1942 but retain the reveal of the historic trim extant elsewhere.

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The baggage room and express office fenestration is functional and consists of double-hung, twelve-over-one sash. The north facade of the express office has one window located at the northeast corner, and the south facade has one on either side of the loading dock. The baggage room has three windows located on the south, one on the east, and one on the north facades.

The passenger depot entries are formally balanced and consist of lighted solid core doors that appear to date from 1942. Two are located on the north facade between the windows that flank the gable. This same arrangement is repeated on the south facade. A basement entry is located on the west facade in the large open area adjacent to the baggage room. The baggage room and express office entries are functional. The express office has two located on the north facade by the tracks, and one on the south facade. The south facade entry is a raised loading dock and the door is paneled. The baggage room has one entry with sidelights on the north facade facing the tracks. The enclosed area between the passenger depot and the baggage room has two garage openings on the south facade and one on the north.

Character defining features include rock-faced ashlar brownstone quoins located on the passenger depot, baggage room, and express office. Rock-faced ashlar voussoirs surround the stilted arch and lancet windows on the north gable of the passenger depot. Similar voussoirs are found in the round arch of the south gable palladian window group, above a dressed brownstone lintel. The use of dressed brownstone lintels is repeated above all other windows, except the passenger depot transoms which are brick. These brick lintels break a denticulated belt course which is repeated in the north and south gables. Coffered pressed metal gable springers with tapered finial posts are located on the north and south gable shoulders. Similar finials were incorporated into pressed metal roof cresting which at one time were located on all roof ridges.

The renovation of 1942 stripped the historic features of the interior in favor of more contemporary usages. Subsequently, ten years of neglect and vandalism has destroyed what remained of the 1942 remodeling. Recent stabilization of the structure has uncovered remnant crown and frieze molding above the 1942 dropped ceiling.

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The 1942 alteration of the depot as detailed herein impacted various building features, which in other circumstances would have significantly impaired architectural integrity. In this instance, much care was taken to repeat the use of historic building materials in the creation of garage space, the removal of the platform ticket window, and the closure of various windows. The thought with which these changes were made maintained the strength and simplicity of Frost's design, and indicate the continuing utility and adaptability of his work. These changes, while significant, do not materially impair the integrity of site and form.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: nationally statewide X locally

Applicable National Register Criteria X A B X C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Transportation

1892-1943 (1)

1892 (2), 1942 (3)

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Frost, Charles Sumner (4)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot is nominated to the National Register for its local significance under criteria A and C. The property is nominated under criterion A for its association with the development of rail transportation in Neenah, which significantly contributed to Neenah's growth and economic development. The property is also nominated under criterion C for its distinctive architectural characteristics which embody the Romanesque period of construction addressed in the Cultural Resource Management Plan. The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot is reflective of a period of significant growth and achievement in the community.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Neenah began in 1835 as an industrial and agricultural mission for the Menominee Indians. Its early white settlement, attracted by the water power of the Fox River, started a few years later. Neenah incorporated as a village in 1854 and became a city in 1872. Developing in the 1850's as the second largest flour milling center in Wisconsin, Neenah's industrial economy evolved into a nationally prominent center for paper milling after the formation of Kimberly-Clark Corporation in 1872. The economic development of the late 19th century produced a number of substantial fortunes for local industrialists who built notable residences on East Wisconsin Avenue and East Forest Avenue. After the turn of the century the local paper industry turned from bulk papers to consumer products, a move which resulted in continued industrial expansion and economic stability during the early 20th century.

Located on the Fox-Wisconsin waterway, Neenah depended on river transportation until the extension from Oshkosh of what became the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Completed in 1861, the line ran west of Little Lake Butte des Morts, about a mile away from the mills in Neenah and even further from those in Menasha. An alternate

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route was laid through town in 1862 when both cities agreed to defray the cost of bridging the two channels of the Fox River. The depot which had been constructed on South Commercial Street was then relocated to the east side of North Commercial across from the present day depot. In 1875 a spur line was laid along the waterpower, and by 1884 the depot had been replaced by more extensive frame facilities which flanked either side of the tracks. At that time the passenger station was located on the east side of the tracks while the freight depot, water tank, and baggage storage were on the west side.(5) By 1891 an engine house was added on a spur line that ran on the west side of the main tracks.(6) The following year the present brick passenger depot was constructed to replace the frame structure across the street. In 1903 another spur line was laid along the Lawson Power Canal in Menasha, and by 1913 the freight depot was replaced by a brick structure on the same site opposite the passenger depot.(7) The brick freight depot, water tower, and engine house were demolished sometime in the later half of this century. After demolition, freight services were moved into the passenger depot until it was closed in 1982.

The Chicago & Northwestern was the first of three 19th century railroad companies to lay tracks or construct related facilities in Neenah. In 1881 the Wisconsin Central began its own route to Milwaukee by laying tracks across Doty Island through the Neenah, and by constructing a modest frame depot at the intersection of West Wisconsin Avenue and Main Street. The Milwaukee & Northern, which had previously leased its Milwaukee route to the Wisconsin Central, then leased this route through Neenah and built a small frame freight depot, which is still standing on West Forest Avenue. With the early 20th century expansion of Bergstrom Paper Company, the Wisconsin Central Depot was moved near the intersection of Union and Main Street. The depot was demolished in the 1950's after the Soo Line had absorbed both the Wisconsin Central and Milwaukee & Northern. A new Soo Line depot further west on Main Street was built and subsequently demolished.

Charles Sumner Frost, architect for the Chicago & Northwestern Depot, studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then worked for the firm of Peabody & Stearns of Boston. In 1881 he moved to Chicago, where he was a partner with Henry Ives Cobb and later Alfred Granger. In 1885 he married the daughter of railroad magnate Marvin Hughitt, through whom he was commissioned to design railroad depots for the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Among the most noted of these depots were the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Terminal and La Salle Street Station in Chicago, and the Chicago & Northwestern Depot in Milwaukee. Frost is also known to have designed smaller depots at various locations in Wisconsin, including Oconomowoc, Eau Claire, Rhinelander, West Superior, Racine, South Milwaukee, Lake Geneva, Watertown, and Fond du Lac.(8)

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TRANSPORTATION

For twenty years the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad had a monopoly on Neenah rail service which profoundly effected the city's growth and economic development. The monopoly was in part the result of public resistance to bonding for any further rail improvements. A far more significant factor was the decision made by early Milwaukee investors to bypass the Fox River Valley and build railroads to Minneapolis-St. Paul and the Great Plains states. Cut off from Wisconsin's principal port city and flour milling center, Neenah flour could not be brought to market at a competitive price. Local capitalists were ultimately forced to find other products which could be manufactured in Neenah and shipped to Chicago. The decision made by these capitalists was to begin the manufacture of paper, a decision which ultimately transformed the entire valley and made Neenah and Menasha the nucleus of a prosperous industrial district.

This transformation was gradual, but local usage of rail transportation was immediate. In 1874, when the paper industry was still in its infancy, the Chicago & Northwestern was annually shipping carloads of local products from its Doty Island depot, nearly half of which were flour. In that year there were 1,696 cars of flour, 176 cars of mill stuffs, 309 cars of woodenware, 187 cars of wagon stock, 132 cars of barrel stock, 136 cars of shingles, 50 cars of lumber, 6 cars of laths, 3 cars of sashes and blinds, 35 cars of sand, 14 cars of livestock, 25 cars of paper, 29 cars of brick, and 550 cars of miscellaneous produce and goods for a total of 3,349 cars.(9) It is doubtful that the production represented by this volume of traffic would have taken place had Neenah been solely dependant on the Fox-Wisconsin waterway for shipping.

The impact of the Chicago & Northwestern can also be measured in terms of the population growth it facilitated. In the first decade of local service, Neenah's population nearly doubled. Then again between 1870 and 1880 it increased from 2,484 to 4,202, or by almost 70%. A decline in population growth during the following decade, when two additional railroads began service to Neenah, indicates that other factors were at work, but it is again doubtful that these significant increases in population and industrial labor force could have been sustained by plank road or by canal boat.

The peak year of local flour production was 1880, and yet within ten years time flour milling had come to an end. From the 1890's onward, the manufacture of paper dominated the local economy. Ironically, it was in the 1880s that railroads with routes to Milwaukee belatedly began service to Neenah. While comparative statistics by railroad and product are not known to exist for this time period, a significant measure of activity can be found in the facilities constructed. The modest frame

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Wisconsin Central depot was constructed in 1881 at the western end of the central business district, immediately adjacent to the mills of Kimberly-Clark Corporation and Winnebago Paper Company. The Milwaukee & Northern depot on West Forest Avenue, removed from either the commercial or industrial districts, was not much more imposing than a good-sized frame shed. By contrast, the Chicago & Northwestern facilities in the 1880's consisted of two specialized depots, a structure for baggage storage, a water tower, and an engine house located along an arc of trackage from North Commercial Street to East Forest Avenue. The present imposing passenger depot followed in 1892, extending the facilities further westward. The subsequent construction of a brick freight depot is indicative of significant shipping activities by the Chicago & Northwestern into the early 20th century. By comparison, neither the Wisconsin Central nor the Milwaukee & Northern are known to have improved or expanded their local operations.

Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan concludes that railroad expansion in the 19th century brought prosperity to many of those communities with rail service, and decline to most of those without. By 1916 railroad construction had reached its peak in Wisconsin, and although railroads remained an important transportation link until after World War II, they gradually declined after World War I. During the 1950's to the present time, railroads have been surpassed in their importance by the state's highway system. Many railroad resources have as a result decayed, been demolished, or been sold by the railroad companies.

This broad pattern of decline, decay, and demolition is locally reflected in the limited number of railroad resources remaining in Neenah. The Cultural Resource Management Plan identifies these resources as including passenger depots, freight depots, water towers, and engine houses and that these resources were primarily located adjacent to industrial or commercial corridors. In Neenah all these resources were at one time extant but only two remain: the architecturally notable Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot located on the principal commercial corridor between Neenah and Menasha, and the vernacular Milwaukee & Northern Freight Depot located in neither a commercial or industrial setting.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot interior was thoroughly remodeled in 1942 and continued in use until 1982, long after other depots in the valley were closed. This continuous operation, as distinguished from other Chicago & Northwestern depots in Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, and Appleton, is evidence of the continuing significance of rail transportation in Neenah. Presently the depot has been structurally stabilized, awaiting rehabilitation. As one of two remaining railroad resources in Neenah, the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot is historically significant as a nearly intact and typically situated 19th century railroad depot. Furthermore, its

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imposing physical presence dramatically illustrates the important role the Chicago & Northwestern played in local growth and economic development.

ARCHITECTURE

Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan states that the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival period of construction in Wisconsin began in the 1880's and continued to the turn of the century. It goes on to state that Romanesque buildings were influenced by the work of Henry Hobson Richardson and are characterized by masonry construction, general massiveness, simplicity of form, impressive strength and durability, and the use of round arches. The brownstone quarries of northern Wisconsin are also said to have afforded a ready supply of suitable building materials.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot possesses many of these distinctive architectural characteristics. The horizontal arrangement of the masonry passenger depot, baggage room and express office joined under one low, broad, overhanging roof gives the impression of massiveness and strength to a building that is in fact slender and punctuated by open platforms. The cross-gabled passenger depot, rising steeply up out of broad roof planes, reinforces this impression and adds an unexpected dimension to the simplicity of form. Brownstone quoins, vousoirs, and window lintels provide only a textural contrast to the red pressed brick of the walls. This subtle wall surface in turn vividly contrasts with the grey limestone foundations and the blue-grey roofing materials. With the exception of the typical round arch window and the unanticipated palladian window design, the depot is virtually devoid of dramatic features, relying instead on the relationship of its parts to convey a commanding presence.

The depot is one of three examples in Neenah of the Romanesque Revival period of construction. The other two examples are the Winnebago Paper Company Offices (West Wisconsin Avenue Historic District, NRHP 1982) and the McDermott & Co. Grocery (West Wisconsin Avenue Historic District, NRHP 1982), both of which were designed by Oshkosh architect William Waters. These two commercial structures are similar in their incorporation of applied bartisons, their extensive use of quarry-cut limestone trim, and their greater reliance on the contrasting polychromy of decorative features to create their visual presence. These buildings might also be more appropriately distinguished as Victorian Romanesque, although the Winnebago Paper Company Offices are dramatically fenestrated by a series of massive round arches.

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Neither of these other examples captures the underlying simplicity and strength of Richardsonian Romanesque. Unfortunately, the long continuous use of the depot included an extensive renovation in 1942. This renovation is presumed to have removed most of the historic features of the interior, and is known to have impacted the exterior by enclosing the platform between the passenger depot and the baggage room. Windows at various locations were also bricked up, the porte-cochere removed, and the platform ticket window altered. These changes, while significant in nature, were carefully and respectfully executed at the time, and in no way diminish the integrity of the architect's simple yet powerful design.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot is also a significant architectural counterpoint to the notable homes on East Wisconsin Avenue and East Forest Avenue, many of which were constructed at the time of the depot and are listed on the National Register. These include the 1890 Charles R. Smith House (824 E. Forest Avenue, NRHP), the 1891 Henry S. Smith House (708 E. Forest Avenue, NRHP), the 1893 Ellis Jennings House (711 E. Forest Avenue, NRHP), and the 1892 Franklyn C. Shattuck House (547 E. Wisconsin Avenue). Without the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad and its influence on local economic development, many of Neenah's industrial fortunes might never had been made and few of these notable homes constructed.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot is not merely reflective of a period of significant growth and achievement in the community. The railroad was the essential factor of a period which ultimately defined Neenah and the Fox River Valley. Its association with a notable architect, its dramatic architectural presence, and its essential relationship to other community resources make the depot a preeminent candidate for National Register listing.

-
- (1) The period of significance for the building begins with its initial construction date and encompasses the historic era when it served the public as a passenger depot up to the most recent 50 years when resources are not normally eligible for the National Register.
 - (2) Shattuck, 424.
 - (3) Railway Engineering and Maintenance. "Small Station Modernization Projects Point to Large Possibilities Ahead." January, 1944.
 - (4) Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places. Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot, Neenah.
 - (5) Sanborn-Perris Maps of Neenah, 1884.
 - (6) Sanborn-Perris Maps of Neenah, 1891
 - (7) Sanborn-Perris Maps of Neenah, 1913
 - (8) National Register Nomination, Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot Fond du Lac. Carol Cartwright, 1989.
 - (9) Smith, 140.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository:
City of Neenah, Dept. of Community Devel.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 1/6 3/8/3/6/2/0 4/8/9/4/1/4/0 B / //// ////
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

C / //// //// D / //// ////

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 1, Certified Survey Map 2310, Document 762444, part of Government Lot 6, Section 22, Town 20 North, Range 17 East

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the entire historic setting of this property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter J. Adams

organization N/A

date June 15, 1992

street & number 636 East Doty Avenue

telephone 414/725-1945

city or town Neenah

state Wisconsin zip code 54956

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- Sanborn-Perris Maps of Neenah: 1884, 1891, 1913.
- Shattuck, S. F. History of Neenah. Printed Privately, 1958. Neenah, Wisconsin.
- Smith, Alice E. Millstone and Saw. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1966. Madison, Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places.
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Photographic Materials - Identification

Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Depot, Neenah, Winnebago Co., WI.
Photos by Peter J. Adams; March 1993.
Negatives at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

- #1 of 8: View of depot from the north.
- #2 of 8: View of depot from the east.
- #3 of 8: View of depot from the south.
- #4 of 8: View of depot from the west.
- #5 of 8: Detail of north gable
- #6 of 8: Detail of south gable
- #7 of 8: View of remodeled interior.
- #8 of 8: Window detail showing closed transom above dropped ceiling.

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Section number Owner Page 1 Chicago & Northwestern Depot
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G Group
1233 South Commercial Street
Neenah, Wisconsin 54956
414/722-2445