

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

OCT 03 1988

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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 archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name SOO LINE DEPOT

other names/site number UNION DEPOT

2. Location

street & number Third Avenue West at Fourth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Ashland N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Ashland code 003 zip code 54806

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>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

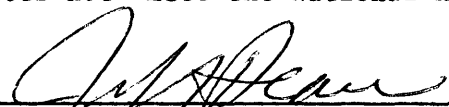
Name of related multiple property listing:

None

No. of contributing resources
previously listed in the
National Register None

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.

X 

Date 9/21/88

Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI
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

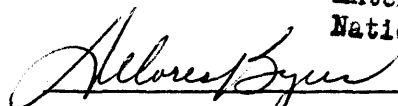
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet

Entered in the
National Register



11/3/88

___ determined eligible for the National Register. ___ See continuation sheet

___ 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

Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

foundation Sandstonewalls Sandstone

roof Asphaltother Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Soo Line Depot is located two blocks southeast of the commercial business district in downtown Ashland. The depot is separated from the commercial district by parking lots located at the rear of the commercial buildings on second street. The surrounding buildings are mainly one and two story utilitarian structures. Ashland is located on the edge of Lake Superior and at the turn of the century was a prosperous shipping harbor and railroad terminus. The population in 1891 numbered 12,000; the present population of the community is approximately 9,000.

The substantial, two story brownstone, Soo Line Depot is designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The entire building is constructed of native (Chequamegon Bay & Apostle Islands), random rock-faced brownstone. It is built on a rectangular plan parallel with the adjacent railroad tracks. Loading docks were located on the southeast and southwest facades.

An 1889 edition of the Ashland Daily News stated that the structure was built at a cost of \$50,000.00 and had a platform 400 feet in length (demolished). There were two waiting rooms and on the western side of the main lobby, a generous dining room, supplemented by a large dining room "where white aproned fraternity dispense hospitality with smiles." The primary facade faces to the northwest on the axis of Third Avenue West with a commanding vista through the heart of the commercial district and full visibility from U.S. Highway 2 and Chequamegon Bay. This facade is fully symmetrical and marked by a central tower with a pyramidal roof pierced by louvered dormers and focused by a porte-cochere. Below the tower's roofline are a triplet of round arched windows with prominent stone voussoirs set above three rectangular second floor windows. To each side of the tower enfolds the large hipped roof core of the main depot. Three broad arches with stone voussoirs extend arcade-like in each direction from the three story pyramidal-roofed tower on the ground floor level. On the second floor, above each arched window, are large rectangular window openings with triplet sets of 1/1 sash windows.

A further extension of the building's mass is established by the one story pavilions with sloping roofs and pierced dormers which extend from the larger hipped sections in each direction. The east and west facades of these extensions (the former delivery and baggage entrances) each have a pair of arched entries and two small arched 1/1 sash windows above. One rusticated brownstone chimney exists

X See continuation sheet

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at the junction of the main roof and the secondary gable; reinforcing iron strap bands surround it. The south facade of the depot shows evidence of an existing entry canopy below the station masters observation window; this structure was removed in prior decades. The south facade mirrors the north facing one with the exception that ground level entries on the south are arched rather than rectangular in the pavilion extensions. Scroll cornice brackets and dentils at the eaves are the only wood composition decorative feature. Roof finials remain intact. Original drawings indicate the original roofing material as cedar shingle and the presence of copper cresting; these features were removed over 50 years ago. The building has been recently re-roofed with "weather-wood" colored asphalt shingles. Substantial deterioration of window casings and sash exists.

Blueprint documentation received from the Soo Line railroad shows substantial interior alterations to building in 1904, 1926, 1947 and 1954. These alterations were primarily mechanical and plumbing related on the lower level and ground floor for the purpose of converting waiting rooms to gang showers and dormitories for railroad employees and consolidating office space. The original floor plan is unclear. On the ground floor the ticket window appears to have changed location several times. The signed "TICKETS" glass is the only remaining piece of true railroad memorabilia remaining in the interior. The second floor of the interior space was never completed; stud walls remain exposed except in the vicinity of the central tower and a portion of the larger main section, which functioned as the living quarters for the station master.

Upon termination of passenger service, the south facing facade became virtually inaccessible to pedestrians. A chainlink fence and freight pulp-cars obstruct any substantial view of this elevation. To the west of the depot, a pole-barn construction, Hockey-Civic Center was built in 1985. Located less than fifty feet from the depot, this building obstructs the view of the depot from the west.

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Railroad facilities such as depots and repair yards did much more than simply serve as stopping points for local service. They quickly became focal points of commercial or industrial activity, and in many cases spurred on the growth of whole commercial centers or industrial corridors. With the arrival of the rail depot came the necessity for railroad hotels to serve visiting businessmen, travelers and salesmen, and the desire of local tradesmen to locate as near as possible to the depot terminus in order to capture the attention of potential consumers as quickly as possible.

It would be no stretch of historic fact to state that there is no other building (Soo Line Depot) surviving in northern Wisconsin that "so beautifully represents the importance of the railroad in the establishment of large commercial cities in this region" (Steve Sennott, Ashland Intensive Survey, 1983, SHSW). In 1877 the Wisconsin Central Railroad linked Ashland to Milwaukee and the rest of the world and the resulting capacity for trans-shipping (water and rail) of imports and exports converted Ashland from a minor harbor town of 700 in 1880 to a substantial metropolis of 12,000 in 1891. According to the Ashland Daily News 8/25/1889: "This morning the superb and imposing structure known as Union Depot will be thrown open to the public, the event marks the beginning of an era of prosperity for Ashland (which) will be jointly occupied by the Northern Pacific and Wisconsin Central." The location of this depot established the downtown commercial district of Ashland at the heart of the city, where prior to its construction there had existed two commercial districts a mile and a half apart. (The historic commercial district which comprises the area between Ellis Ave W. and Sixth Ave W., two blocks north of the depot, was listed in the NRHP on 2/2/1984. The buildings within the district clearly represent the era of growth and expansion marked by the arrival of the depot [see WEST SECOND STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT]).

The depot facilitated both freight and passenger service for the Northern Pacific, Milwaukee Lakeshore and Western, and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha railroads in addition to the Wisconsin Central and later Soo Lines. The shipment of minerals and lumber sparked the economy and development of Ashland and northern Wisconsin alike; the railroad promoted tourism by building the elegant Chequamegon Hotel for passenger customers (the hotel located 2 blocks from the depot has been demolished). 15,000 tourists visited Ashland in 1887, thereby increasing awareness and subsequent investment in the area by visitors and businessmen alike.

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The significance of the relationship, both past and present, of the railroad and its depot to the economic and physical development of the commercial district of Ashland is well recognized. The existence and development of Ashland's commercial district was in no small part the direct result of the location and activity of the Union Depot at Third Avenue. The Depot is sited with a commanding view of the downtown; and from US Highway 2 the Depot is one of the most visible structures and serves as a visual anchor to the downtown thanks to its location astride the otherwise unchallenged rectangular grid. Aside from its location, this structure was also one of the first "permanent compositions" constructed in the early boom-town days of Ashland. The impact on the evolution and economic success of Ashland by the railroad is undeniable; the structure embodies, through its massing and siting, the dominate role of the railroad in the history of the area and its development.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Soo Line Depot is also architecturally significant on the local level as a superb example of Richardsonian Romanesque design utilizing dramatic brownstone construction. Like that in other prominent cities of wealth and industrial promise during the 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s, such as Minneapolis, Milwaukee or Superior, Ashland's architectural expression was defined principally by the leading styles then in and out of fashion in eastern cities. Among the most important styles applied to commercial buildings locally included Richardsonian Romanesque, Second Renaissance Revival, and Classical Revival forms. Because of its relative youth, small size and comparatively isolated position, architects working in Ashland at the turn of the century often erected finely detailed facades that reflected a northern Wisconsin regional interpretation of those well-known styles. Ashland is fortunate today to have inherited much of this regional architectural expression in very good condition. Just as it did in the years around 1900, Ashland has many of the finest buildings in Northern Wisconsin.

Ashland's architectural heritage survives in a variety of local raw and manufactured materials which not only nourished the associated local industries, but also guaranteed a lasting and beautiful architectural tradition that kept apace of all the major styles. In particular it was brownstone that brought a strong measure of industrial wealth to Ashland and made possible the erection of many of its most imposing commercial, civic and public buildings. The 1893 Ashland City Directory describes "Ashland Brownstone" in its introductory pages as "famed

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throughout the United States. Of a rich, brownish red color, indestructible and unchangeable in all kinds of weather, it has qualities for building purposes possessed by no other stone." Seven brownstone quarries were in operation in the early 1890s on the Apostle Islands and along the Chequamegon Bay shoreline. Four companies had offices in Ashland, which provided important rail and sail transshipment facilities for the product. By the late 1880s and 1890s, Ashland erected many large and beautiful brownstone buildings, the most significant of which were located on Second Street in the commercial and governmental heart of the community. Even just a cursory review of survey materials for Wisconsin's northernmost communities provides clear evidence of Ashland's dominance in the use of brownstone as a major building material.

Ashland's most impressive surviving brownstone blocks include undoubtedly the 1892 Old Post Office, the city's most dominant public building; the c.1890 Fifield and Bristol Blocks on West Second Street; the Soo Line Depot, and the largest surviving example, the 1888 St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church. Many other local structures relied heavily on the stone for use as decorative trim, foundations, and detailing.

The stylistic form most readily identifiable with the use of rough, rock-faced brownstone is the Richardsonian Romanesque. By 1890, with Ashland's boom period of growth now well under way, the downtown area of the city was lined with impressive business blocks and public buildings designed in the leading styles of the day. While the earliest structures utilized simple Romanesque Revival forms, by the late 1880s, the Richardsonian Romanesque style was becoming very popular in the city. Modeled on H.H. Richardson's work in Boston, these buildings were made of brick with brownstone details or entirely of brownstone. The style commonly features brownstone arches, massive proportions, rectangular or circular towers, and often a large and foliated entry. Among the best preserved local examples noted in the Ashland Intensive Survey were the First National Bank Building, Baily's Brown Stone Block, the Bristol Block, the Fifield Block, the Soo Line Depot, the local Masonic Temple and the beautiful Old Post Office Building (NRHP 1974).

Thus the elaborately styled SOO LINE DEPOT represents a significant local building tradition tied to the availability of a handsome local building material and the perception at the turn of the century that Ashland was an up and coming industrial and commercial metropolis on the Lake Superior coastline. The depot is among the

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finest regional examples of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and is a fine representation of Ashland's boom period activity. (The text for the Architectural Significance section was based in large part on the text taken from the overview chapters of the City of Ashland Historic - Architectural Intensive Survey Report., Sennott, 1983, SHSW).

Despite the evolution of uses of the Soo Line Depot and the subsequent changes required to the historic fabric to accommodate these new uses, the Depot retains a great deal of its original fabric. The removal of the platform and entry canopy over below the station master's observation window are lamentable losses of integrity, but have little impact on the overall integrity of the depot. Certainly of greater concern is the alteration of interior spaces to create dormitory spaces for rail workers. Fortunately these alterations were primarily plumbing and mechanical related and the essential and significant features of the Soo Line Depot remain.

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

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Specify repository: _____

Engineering Record # _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Less than one

UTM References

A	<u>1/5</u>	<u>6/6/2/1/1/0</u>	<u>5/1/6/1/4/3/0</u>	B	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>	D	<u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan McCue
organization Past and Present date 2/22/87; revised 9/12/88
street & number P.O. Box 163, 713 Chapple Ave. telephone (715) 682-8392
city or town Ashland state Wisconsin zip code 54806

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Advocate, 23 July 1880, Willmington, Illinois.

"Ashland and its Railroads" in Ashland Daily Press- Annual Edition, 1893. p. 39.

Ashland Daily News, 25 August 1889.

1886 Bird's Eye View Map of Ashland, Chicago: Columbia Engraving Company, 1886.

Polk, R.L. and Company. Ashland City Directory. St. Paul, MN: R. L. Polk and Company, 1893.

Reconnaissance Survey. Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Historical Society, 1975

1884 Sanborn Map.

Sennott, Steve. City of Ashland Historic-Architectural Intensive Survey Report. Ashland: Northwest Regional Planning Commission, 1983.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A parcel of land located in Lots thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen, block 119 and lots one, two, three, and four, Block 120, Ellis Division, together with adjoining portions of the vacated alley in said Block 120, vacated of unvacated Fourth Street West and Third Avenue West; all in the City of Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The property being nominated is the entire parcel of land historically associated with the SOO LINE DEPOT in Ashland.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1) Property: Soo Line Depot
- 2) Location: Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin.
- 3) Photographer: Susan McCue
- 4) Date: 2/26/87
- 5) Location of Negative: State Historical Society of Wisconsin
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

- Photo 1 of 4
View looking SE at front and side elevations
- Photo 2 of 4
View looking South at main front (North) elevation
- Photo 3 of 4
View looking west of east (side) elevation and rear platform area.
- Photo 4 of 4
View looking south of main entry.

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