United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Nar	ne						
historic	LACONIA PA	ASSENGER STATIO	N				
and/or commo	n LACONTA RA	AILROAD STATION	(Boston &	& Maine Railro	ad Sta	tion)	
2. Loc	ation		(300001				
street & number	er Veterans S	quare				_ not for publ	ication
city, town	Laconia	vi	icinity of	congressional d	istrict	First	
	Hampshire	code 33	county	Belknap		code	001
3. Cla	ssificatio	n					
Category district _X_ building(s structure site object	both Public Acquisition in process being consider	on Accessib X yes: red yes: u no	cupied in progress le	Present Use agriculture commerci education entertainn governme industrial military	al al nent	religious scientifi X transpo	residence s c
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street & number	cr City Hall,	Beacon Street	East				
city, town	Laconia	V	icinity of		state	New Hampsh	nire 03246
5. Loc	ation of L	egal Des	cription	on			
courthouse, re	gistry of deeds, etc.	Belknap Coun Belknap Coun	•	•			
street & number	er	64 Court Str	eet				
city, town		Laconia			state	New Hampsh	nire
6. Rep	presentati	on in Exi	sting	Surveys			
title	Laconia Master I <u>Historical Inve</u> r	Plan (Appendix ntory of Laconi	B: _a <mark>h</mark> as this pro	perty been determ	ined ele	gible? ye	es no
date	1979			federal _	state	e county	X local
depository for	survey records	Laconia Plan	ning Depa	rtment			
city, town	Laconia				state	New Hampsl	nire

7. Description

excellent deteriorated	Check one unaltered _X_ altered	Check one X original site moved date
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The 1892 Laconia Railroad Station, located near the city's center, is a fine example of late United States Romanesque Revival architecture.

The massing of the several elements of the building is strongly dominated by a central, three-story, high-ceilinged waiting room or rotunda, from which extend two apselike ancillary wings, a prominent porte cochere at the southeast main entrance and a long, broad hip-roofed canopy with ridge that covers the platform adjacent to the tracks.

The several enclosed sections of the station building—the massive waiting room and tower, the rounded, ancillary wings and the porte cochere—are surfaced with horizontally coursed, rusticated light gray granite with red sandstone trim, all set with red mortar.

Set in a horizontal band just below the roof line are pairs of windows on each of the four facades of the tower and vertical elements in the form of slit apertures at the beveled corners of the tower. Unifying these various parts is a series of broad, dark gray slate roofs including the high, eight-faceted, modified hip roof, with central finial and terra cotta detailing, covering the squat tower; the lower-level, rounded hip roofs covering the two apse-like wings; the porte cochere T-gable roof, and the long-ridged hip canopy over the trackside platform. These generally are flashed with copper and coated steel, and the slate is fixed with tin-plated iron nails.

The station building itself is approximately 100 feet long and 40 feet wide. A single, tall stone chimney rises above the center of the northeast tower wall.

Within the rotunda is a mammoth red sandstone fireplace, and immediately above this was a large marble-faced clock affixed to the wall. (The clock was removed in recent years, and its exact whereabouts is unknown.)

The floor of the waiting room is finished in patterned tile; the ceiling is of carved and patterned wood from a point 30 feet high to the tower's highest point of interior space—some 50 feet above the floor. The lower portions of the waiting room walls are finished in quartered oak panels to a height of ten feet above the floor. Rotunda windows are of leaded stained glass, and several windows in the rounded walls of the station's southwest wing are of bent glass.

The building has a full basement, drained by a perimeter trench set in the concrete floor. This basement is overly damp, and as there are important wooden structural members at this level, the water and humidity problems need to be corrected.

According to recent reports--including a 1977 field report by D.M. Hart and Associates, architects and a 1981 adaptive re-use study conducted by Rist-Frost Associates, consulting engineers--the station structure is sound.

Maintenance and repair work is needed at certain flashing points, at various locations on the slate roof surfaces, in the train platform area and within the building itself; several sections of the interior have been modified to varying extents sincer the railroad station structure began to be used for other purposes, but these changes are generally of a reversible nature.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The granite building provides about 3700 square feet of enclosed floor space—used originally as the generous central waiting room with a ticket window, bulletin board and train schedule board, clock and carved waiting benches; as the agent's office and women's lounge and facilities in the southwest wing, and as the baggage room and men's smoking room and facilities in the northeast wing.

The depot site is an irregularly shaped, city-owned parcel of slightly more than one acre which is adjacent to the former Boston and Maine track right-of-way immediately to the northwest between Main Street on the east and Pleasant Street on the southwest (the latter area being known as Veterans Square).

By 1963, as use of the railroad station was falling off prior to the actual discontinuance of passenger service to Laconia on the Boston and Maine line in 1965, some modifications of the interior space were made in order to provide space for Laconia police and court facilities. These included the suspending of lowered ceilings, removal of certain walls in the southwest wing, installation of new partitions throughout and some loss of portions of the building's original fine woodwork, walls, finish, trim and furnishings.

The Laconia court facility was relocated in 1978, and the police facility was relocated in 1979, leaving the rotunda and the southwest wing vacant—in which condition they have remained to date. At the time the police facility was in the station building, a trailer structure was parked on the track platform behind the waiting room, and at least one of the tree-like platform canopy support posts was removed.

The station's northeast wing now is being used as a bus depot and taxi office, and the wing's original spaces have been altered considerably. In 1966 the region's chamber of commerce was allowed to enclose some 1200 square feet of space at the northeast end of what originally was a completely open station platform.

Since 1979, on summer Saturday mornings, a farmers market is held in the vicinity of the Veterans Square end of the station's platform.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 _X_ 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture artX_ commerce communications	community plannin	g landscape architecture law literature military music ent philosophy politics/government	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater _X transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1892	Builder/Architect	Bradford L. Gilbert, A	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Laconia Railroad Station is significant not only as a fine example of late Romanesque Revival Architecture, but also for its role in transportation, commerce, and industry in Laconia and the Lakes Region. Visually, it is a pivotal element to downtown Laconia and is considered a local landmark.

The station is attributed to New York City Architect Bradford L. Gilbert and exemplifies the Romanesque Revival idiom developed and popularized by H.H. Richardson in the 1880's and 90's. The Richardsonian Romanesque style, as it is often called, is characterized by being a masonry style of large proportions most frequently employed in institutional or governmental buildings. The Laconia Railroad Station is certainly consistant with the style in these respects and also in its use of light-colored rock-faced ashlar stone wall surfaces embellished with darker masonry window and door surrounds and sill and lintel courses. In addition, the moderately-pitched slate roofs on the various sections of the structure reinforce its heavy, horizontal massing. It's use of round-headed openings and sweeping "eyebrow" pent eave on the porte-cochere are additional characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque.

The structure has further architectural significance as a surviving example of a late nineteenth century railroad passenger station in New Hampshire. Relatively few of the state's stations survive and among those which do, Laconia's is of relatively large scale and high style design and detailing. It's plan is very characteristic of passenger stations of the period with central waiting room section flanked by wings built to house the baggage room and offices, lounges, and facilities. It also retains much of the covered walkway along the tracks which provided shelter from rain and snow.

Built for \$30,000 in 1892 to serve users of the old Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroad (which was acquired by the Boston and Maine Railroad three years later), the imposing depot became a prominent center city landmark. It continues to be a striking landmark today, due to its grand architectural style and commanding location.

The massive station was built largely because of the substantial efforts of Charles A. Busiel, a Laconian who served as a managing director of the railroad and who was intent on making various improvements and expansions of the rail system in order to serve travelers and shippers throughout the Lakes Region in a better, more comprehensive way. (Busiel also served, during his busy and productive career, as a mayor of Laconia and as Governor of New Hampshire.)

Improvements made to the rail system serving Laconia had much to do with the steady attraction of industrial and commercial establishments to the area, and these improvements also supported the increasing development and popularity of the Lakes Region as a prime resort and vacation area.

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Chief of Registration

Appendix B: "Historical Inventory of Laconia," in Laconia Master Plan, 1979, Lakes Region Planning Commission. The Laconia Democrat, Volume 44, Number 34, Page 4, August 19, 1892. Vaughan, Charles W., The Illustrated Laconian, 1899, Louis B. Martin. Geographical Data 1 **0**. Acreage of nominated property _____1.09_ Quadrangle name Winnipesaukee, NH Quadrangle scale <u>1:62500</u> **UMT References** Verbal boundary description and justification A polygonal lot bounded on the northwest by the former Boston & Maine Railroad right-of-way; on the east by Main Street; on the southeast by Veterans Square, and on the southwest by Pleasant Street. Tax map #149, lot #5B. List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries state code county code code state county code Form Prepared By name/title Kenneth D. Boehner, City Manager organization City of Laconia date September 29, 1981 street & number telephone <u> City Hall, Beacon Street East</u> <u>524-3276</u> city or town .state., ... New Hampshire 03246 State Historic Preservation Officer Certification The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. **State Historic Preservation Officer signature** Commissioner, NH Dept. of Resources & Edonomic Development NH State Historic Preservation Officer date title December 2, 1981 For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register date W Keeper of the National Register Attest: date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2-SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

"Credit for the substantial and beautiful depot largely belongs to Hon. Charles A. Buseil . . . (and) it was through his efforts and local pride that Laconia was granted such an expensive and magnificent passenger station . . ."

The imposing building served Laconia well, particularly in the sense that it provided a convenient and highly visible transportation facility at the center of Laconia and at a time when railroad passenger and freight traffic was of great importance. It also was thought to be important to the community, apparently, that a significant structure be added to the local townscape—one that was entirely in vogue.

Architecturally, the railroad station structure provided Laconia with a poignant example of a romanticistic style that at the time was very popular and was being used by United States architects as part of a widespread late 19th Century fashion in architecture which had been greatly refined by such famous architects as H.H. Richardson, who was at the height of his revivalist career some ten years before the Laconia station was undertaken as a project in the late Romanesque style.

Vaughan, Charles W., Ed., The Illustrated Laconian: History and Industries of Laconia, New Hamsphire, 1899, Louis B. Martin (Gale Memorial Library, Laconia)

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

New Hampshire

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