

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chicago & North Western Office Building/Passenger Depot--Lake City  
other names/site number Lake City Depot

2. Location

street & number 401 Front Street  not for publication  
city, town Lake City  vicinity  
state IOWA code 019 county Calhoun code 025 zip code 51449

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		structures
			objects
		1	0
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic & Architectural Resources of Lake City, Iowa  
The Advent & Development of RR in Iowa, 1854-1940  
Number 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  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 7/13/90  
Bureau of Historic Preservation  
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.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)  
[Signature] Date of Action 8/27/90  
[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)**Transportation/Rail-Related

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**Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)**Vacant/Not in Use

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification****(enter categories from instructions)**Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

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**Materials (enter categories from instructions)**foundation Concretewalls Brick

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roof Asphaltother Glass

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

See Continuation Sheet, attached.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation  
Architecture

Period of Significance

1900-1940  
1899-1900, 1916

Significant Dates

1900, 1916  
1900, 1916

Cultural Affiliation

None.

Significant Person

None.

Architect/Builder

Unknown.  
Unknown.

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

See Continuation Sheet, attached.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See Continuation Sheet, attached.

**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:**

Iowa Site Inventory

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than one acre.

**UTM References**

A 

1	5
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3	5	7	3	5	0
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4	6	8	0	4	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The precise verbal boundary of the depot is a rectangle running 80' east-northeast to west-southwest, and 50' running north-northwest to south-southeast. This rectangle is centered on the depot, and allows for approximately 10' around the structure.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

This nomination includes only the above-named structure and the remnants of its brick platform

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tracy Ann Cunning  
organization PHR Associates date 15 March 1990  
street & number 725 Garden Street telephone 805-965-2357  
city or town Santa Barbara state California zip code 93101

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The Chicago & North Western passenger depot in Lake City was built in 1899-1900 as an office building for the western division of the Chicago & North Western Railroad. In 1916 the CNW converted it to a passenger station when the railroad moved its western Iowa division headquarters to Sioux City. A baggage room was added to the east end and a porte cochere to the west end at that time. Architecturally, the depot falls into the classically-influenced eclectic category. The two-story brick building faces south and is located on the south side of Front Street, in the southeast portion of Lake City. The surrounding neighborhood is composed of scattered buildings, including a lumber yard to the west and houses to the north. A large grassy area to the south disguises what was once the bustling railroad yard and shop complex.

The main portion of the depot measures approximately 60' wide by 29' deep, while the baggage room and porte cochere each measure about 15' wide. The structure rests on a concrete foundation, and has solid masonry walls (5:1 American Bond). A hipped roof with asphalt shingles and a metal coping caps the main portion. A brick chimney is set into the north roofslope. The baggage room is a one-story addition with a shed-roof; the porte cochere has two brick pilasters, but no roof for them to support.

Fenestration throughout the building is predominantly replacement one-/one-light wooden sash, with modern aluminum storm windows added to the outside. One second story opening on the south side now contains a modern casement or hopper window; part of the round headed window beneath it may also be a replacement. Since the replacement windows are shorter than the originals, the space above them has been infilled with wood. The high concrete watertable forms sills for the first floor windows, while a molded stone beltcourse forms the sills for the second floor windows. Three openings on the east side of the baggage room contain newer 3-light windows.

The south side has three pass doors: the west one has a five-panel wood door; the east one contains a modern replacement wood door; and the central one is infilled with plywood. On the north side, two central doors appear to be narrower replacements than what originally occupied the spaces; the first floor entry has rough concrete jambs, sill and lintel. The baggage room has one freight opening on the north and south sides. Both contain hinged double doors with two panels of vertical false-bead board; iron jamb guards still flank the openings. The transoms overhead have been infilled with the same material. Amazingly, the original "Railway Express Agency" sign over the southern baggage door is intact.

The main body of the Lake City depot exhibits a number of classically derived architectural features. It is vertically massed with a symmetrical facade, and its hipped roof with crested copings is reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance style. The center bay of the south (track) side projects slightly at the first floor level, and is decorated with a full entablature, round arched window, and alternating rows of projecting

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bricks. Quoins and wooden dentils adorn the depot's corners and cornice, respectively. Stone keystones highlight the first floor windows while the second floor windows have simpler splayed brick lintels.

Most of these features are similar to those used by Charles Sumner Frost, Chicago architect, who designed many stations for the Chicago & North Western between 1893 and 1919. He designed at least fifteen depots in Iowa, those erected around the turn of the century having a classical flavor (Parrott, p. 7). Since he designed so many other CNW buildings in Iowa at the same time, it is possible that Frost planned the Lake City office building as well, although an extensive search failed to reveal the name of the architect for this structure.

Since its construction in 1899 the office building has undergone several alterations. The most significant of these occurred in 1916 and are, therefore, considered part of the structure's historic fabric. The railroad moved the structure approximately 110' south of Front Street, aligned it with the existing depot platform and tracks, and converted it into a passenger depot. R. K. Ruckel, of Chicago, was the CNW general foreman for the project, and Charles Murk, also of Chicago, supervised the moving.

The railroad removed the basement portion and constructed a new watertable when it relocated the building. (When originally constructed the building was two and one half stories tall, with a tall basement and watertable.) According to the Lake City Graphic of July 20, 1916, the railroad cut "new doorways" into the building. This accounts for the conversion of the round arched opening on the south front into a window and the window next to it into a door. The east and west windows on the first floor of the south side were also made into doors. The east and west ends of the first story probably became men's and women's waiting rooms. The second floor may have continued to house railroad offices even after the division was moved to Sioux City.

The baggage room and porte cochere were added in 1916, according to the Graphic news article. At an unknown date the railroad converted the first and second floor central windows on the north side into doors, bricking up the another second floor window in the process. The iron fire escape at the second floor door was probably installed at that time, although it has since been partially removed. The windows were also replaced at an unknown date; they are wood sash and may pre-date 1940. At some time the brick chimney was cut down or replaced as well, perhaps in the 1916 move. The CNW abandoned its line through Lake City in 1972, and a local family purchased the depot for a private residence. The depot has been vacant for the last several years, but the owners are currently investigating a feasible adaptive reuse for the structure.

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Although the original design has been modified the office building/depot retains a high degree of historical integrity. The building was moved, but has been on this site for over seventy years. The building's exterior decoration is nearly original, although the North Western altered the design to accommodate passenger traffic; recycling structures and salvaging building materials were common railroad practices. Most changes appear to be historic, and those that are modern (replacement windows and doors) are reversible.

The only other building built by the CNW remaining in Lake City other than the depot is a small brick structure that appears to have been used to store light explosives. Because its history is clouded and because it is located far southwest of the depot, the storage building is not included in this nomination. A carpenter's shop and four warehouses, all wooden structures, are located near the depot and adjacent to the old CNW right of way, but are excluded from this nomination because they were indirectly associated with the railroad and are in poor physical condition.

The former CNW railroad yard in Lake City may be archaeologically significant under Criterion D, for its potential to yield information about the early railroad history of the community. Before its significance under this criterion may be assessed, however, a reconnaissance level archaeological survey of the area is recommended.

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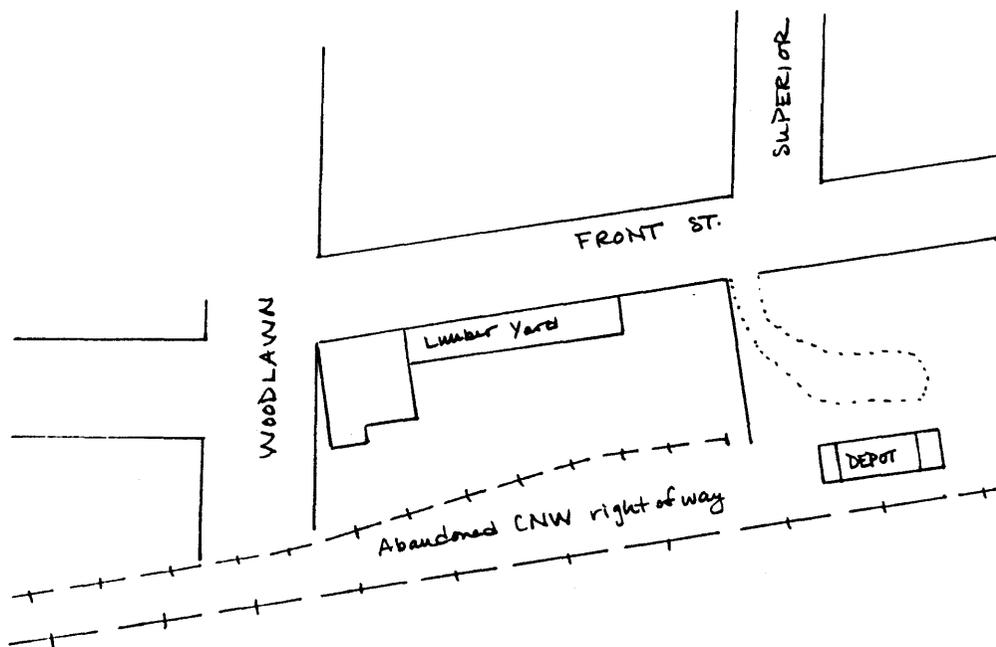
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Chicago & North Western Office Building/Passenger Depot  
401 Front Street  
Lake City, Iowa

From the 1919 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Lake City

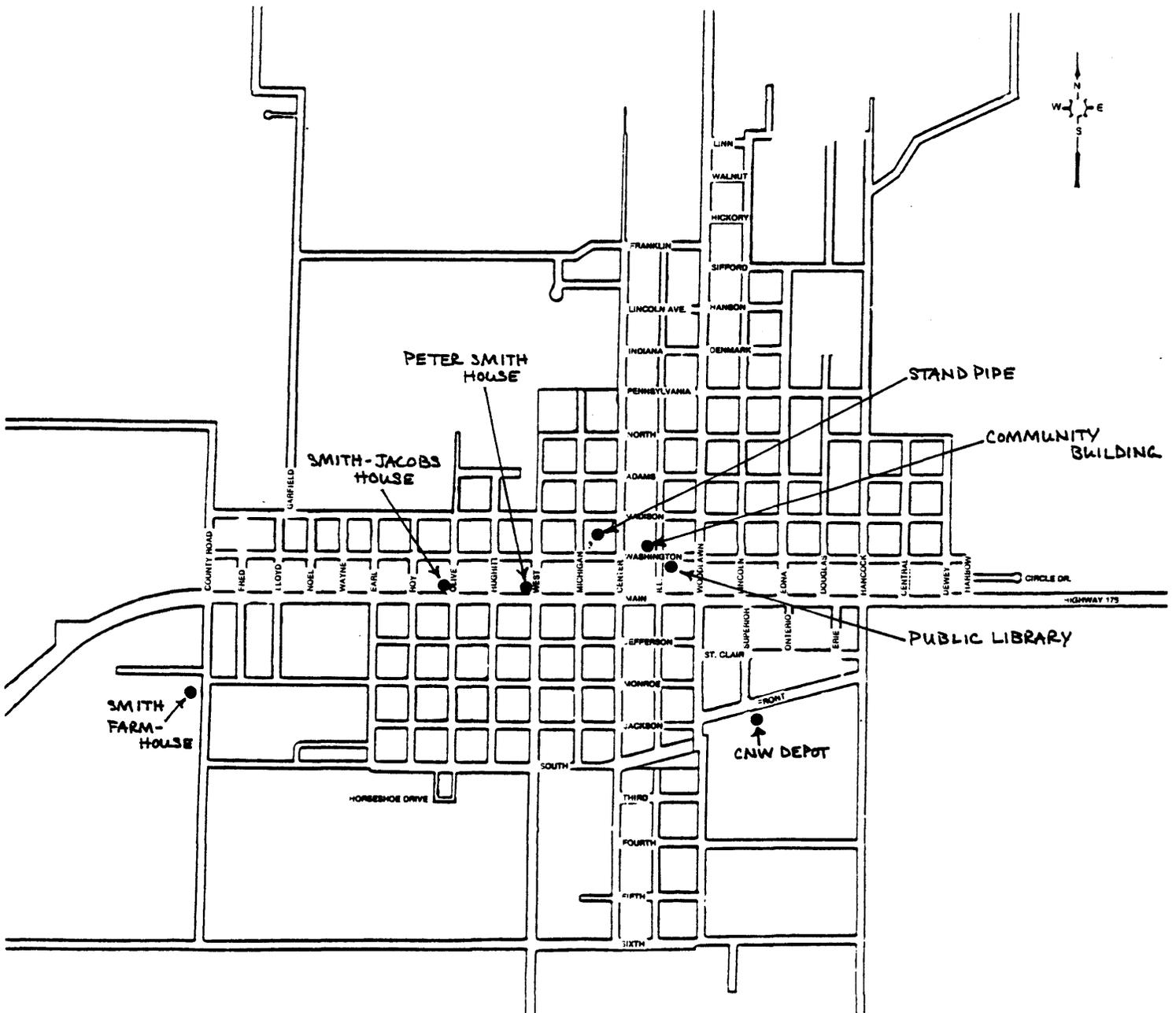


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## INTRODUCTION:

The Chicago & North Western office building/passenger depot in Lake City is locally significant under Criterion A, as the best physical reminder of the railroad's profound impact on Lake City (Historic and Architectural Resources of Lake City, Iowa: 1854-1940). It is also locally significant under Criterion C as a representative of the functionally specific buildings railroads began designing in Iowa around the turn of the century, as well as an example of the recycling policy widespread among railroads during the same period. (See The Advent and Development of Railroads in Iowa 1855-1940, "The Golden Age of Steam Railroading: c. 1890-c. 1920," and "Railroads and Architectural Standardization, Three Generations: 1855-1940.")

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Toledo & North Western Railroad was incorporated in 1869 to build a line from a junction with the Chicago & North Western Railroad at Toledo, Iowa, to the northern and western boundaries of the state. The CNW assumed a controlling interest in the TNW by June 1881, and operated the smaller railroad until the CNW formally acquired it in June 1890.

The TNW began building toward Lake City from Stratford, in Hamilton County, in the winter of 1881 and completed the line in 1882. The TNW was the second railroad to cross Calhoun County; the first was the Illinois Central, which passed well north of Lake City on its way to Sioux City in 1870. Given that Lake City was already settled, the TNW established a depot site at the southeast edge of town rather than near the center.

In 1882 the TNW built a two-story combination depot in Lake City, to provide living quarters (the second floor) for the station agent's family. The structure was undoubtedly a simple wood frame structure with little ornamentation, following the common pattern of the TNW depots.

In 1885 the TNW commenced building an engine house in Lake City since the town was conveniently located for repair and maintenance shops. (Railroads generally required such facilities every one hundred miles.) The substantial structure had twelve stalls, each with 46-foot long, stone- and brick-lined pits underneath them (Lake City Graphic, June 4, 1885). One year later, the company increased the capacity of its coal house, replaced its windmill and water tank, and planned an additional one and one-half miles of side track in Lake City. A blacksmith shop soon followed (Graphic, December 18 and 25, 1886; January 1, 1887).

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In 1886-1887 the TNW built approximately twenty miles of new track from Lake City to Wall Lake Junction, south of the town of Wall Lake. The CNW then laid rails to Sioux City in 1887, and designated Lake City as a division headquarters since it fell halfway between Des Moines and Sioux City. With its upgraded status the Lake City railroad yard received a facelift as the railroad planned a full shop and office complex at the new division headquarters.

The rail company tore down its recently constructed engine house and erected in its place a sixteen stall roundhouse, machine shops, a turntable, an oil house, and new coal chutes. The materials from the "old" engine house were salvaged for the construction of a boiler building; the relatively new windmill was retired in favor of a steam-powered pump; and the depot was "turned end for end and moved to the north side of the tracks [to face south]" (Graphic, April 16, 23, and 30, 1887 and May 9, 1887).

Construction of the roundhouse and turntable began in May 1887 and ended in August, at a cost of \$5,000. When the changes were finished, the Lake City railroad yard boasted five miles of side tracks alone (Graphic, July 9 and August 6, 1887).

After the building flurry of 1885-1888, the North Western made few additions or improvements to the Lake City yard between 1888 and 1898. The only major projects included constructing a restaurant near the depot in 1888, and converting the second story of the depot into offices for division personnel in 1892 (Graphic, April 7, 1888 and March 31, 1892). After 1898, however, it was clear that the railroad was outgrowing its Lake City facilities. In mid-1899 the CNW announced the construction of a new office building, and the addition of ten more stalls to the roundhouse (Graphic, June 8 and June 29, 1899).

The office building was the more important of the two, for it indicated that the North Western was planted firmly enough in Lake City to physically separate its administrative operations from its commercial ones. The office building represents the peak of the rail company's growth in Lake City, and its commitment to the community. This corroborates the statewide movement of railroads from all-purpose structures to functionally specific structures as they increased their passenger and freight handling capacities around the turn of the century (Railroad MPD, "The Golden Age of Steam Railroading: c. 1890-c. 1920).

In early 1900 the CNW Lake City personnel moved into the new office building, a classically influenced, two and one half-story brick structure situated northwest of the wooden TNW depot (Graphic, January 18, 1900). The building was located on the south edge of Front Street, well removed from the shop complex which was south of the depot and across the tracks. The railroad may have intentionally placed its handsome new

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office building there to impress its passengers visiting or passing through Lake City, as well as to present its best face to the local public.

Activity at the Lake City yard apparently continued unchanged until 1909, when the railroad hinted about moving the office building south toward the tracks and converting it into a passenger depot (Graphic, March 11, 1909), thus doing away with the older combination depot. In 1916 the railroad did indeed move and convert the building when it shifted its western Iowa division headquarters to Sioux City. The exact reasons for moving to Sioux City are unknown, but one may have been that the locomotives being produced in the 1910s were bigger and more powerful, requiring a larger roundhouse and turntable than Lake City possessed. Sioux City was also a larger commercial and industrial center than Lake City, which may have tempted the railroad to relocate its division offices there.

The removal of the division headquarters to Sioux City dealt a serious blow to the Lake City economy, since it meant the loss of jobs, population, and revenue for local businesses. After 1916 the shop facilities in Lake City probably operated with a skeleton crew, since major repair and maintenance work was now done in Sioux City; the railroad shops were finally closed in 1924 (Lou Sievert, unpublished manuscript, 1982). In 1926 the vacant roundhouse was destroyed by fire. A local resident then purchased most of the shop buildings from the CNW and tore them down (Graphic, February 25, 1926). This coupled with the onset of the Great Depression signalled "the end of Lake City's heyday as a railroad town" (Lake City MPD, "Depression Era: 1925-1939").

Despite the decline of the railroad and a spreading economic malaise, Lake City continued to be a shipping point for agricultural products and livestock, as well as a medical and financial center for the surrounding area. The "new" depot served as a major gateway to and from Lake City until just after World War II, when the CNW terminated passenger service in response to bus and automobile competition (Vivian Campbell, interview, March 15, 1990). The rail company retained a freight agent in the depot until 1969, when it finally closed the station. In 1972 the CNW abandoned its line through Lake City altogether. Today only the office building/depot, a light explosives storage building, a carpenter shop, and four warehouses testify to the presence of a railroad in the town. Of these, the depot is most directly associated with the railroad, possesses the highest architectural and historical integrity, and is in the best physical condition.

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When the North Western promoted Lake City to division point status in 1887, it "ushered in an era of rapid growth and economic development" which peaked in the 1890s. The railroad brought jobs, people, and income to the town. Between 1887 and 1895 population jumped from approximately 900 to more than 2,000 people. During the same period local entrepreneurs were able to build new brick stores around the central square, and contractors tried to keep up with the demand for new houses. Lake City supported three banks at one time, while grain elevators and lumber yards lined the railroad right of way (Lake City MPD, "Railroad Boom Town: 1881-c. 1895").

After the removal of the division headquarters, the loss of the shop complex, and the Great Depression, the stature and economic health of Lake City were no greater than those of other rural communities. Few new houses were built between 1925 and World War II, and almost no commercial structures have been added to the townscape since then (Lake City MPD, "Depression Era: 1925-1939").

The Chicago & North Western Office Building/Passenger Depot was first associated with the railroad's prosperity and expansion around the turn of the century. It illustrates the rail company's movement toward specific structures designed for particular functions. With its 1916 alterations, the depot illustrates the railroad industry's penchant for recycling existing structures to new uses, a practice that would gain favor as the Great Depression strengthened its grip on Iowa. In these ways the office building/passenger depot is locally significant under Criterion C. The building is potentially significant under Criterion C on the statewide level, but such a determination awaits a more indepth study of the Chicago & North Western's history and architecture in Iowa.

Equally important, the structure is significant under Criterion A for its association with blossoming of the Chicago & North Western presence in Lake City, as well as Lake City's loss of status as a division headquarters, a cataclysmic event in the town's history. As a former office building it reflects the zenith of the railroad era in Lake City; as a converted depot the structure symbolizes the end of the railroad's domination of the Lake City landscape and economy, and the debilitating effect that end had on the community. As the North Western's departure reduced the size of the office building, it also reduced Lake City's overall stature. The destruction of the shop complex in 1926 fully separated Lake City from its former railroad role, leaving only the depot to tell the story.

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Bryant, Ray L. A Preliminary Guide to Iowa Railroads 1850-1972. Bryant, 1984.

Campbell, Vivian, Lake City Historian. Lake City Historic Preservation Commission.  
Telephone Interview, 15 March 1990.

Fire Insurance Maps for Lake City, Iowa, 1905 and 1919

Lake City Graphic. June 4, 1885, and the following issues:

December 18, 1886

December 25, 1886

January 1, 1887

April 16, 1887

April 23, 1887

April 30, 1887

May 9, 1887

July 9, 1887

August 6, 1887

April 7, 1888

March 31, 1892

June 8, 1899

June 29, 1899

January 18, 1900

March 11, 1909

July 20, 1916

February 25, 1926

Parrott, Charles. "An Architectural Study of the Chicago and North Western Railway  
Passenger Stations on the Iowa Division Designed by Charles S. Frost 1893-1919."  
Paper, Iowa State University, Department of Architecture, August 1971.

Sievert, Lou, Lake City Resident. Unpublished manuscript, 1982.