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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 and North Western Depot
other names/site number Sleepy Eye Depot

2. Location

street & number Oak Street NW not for publication N/A
city, town Sleepy Eye vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Brown code 015 zip code 56085

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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 Ian R. Stewart, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date 5/12/92

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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:)

Recorded in the National Register 6/25/92

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Tudor Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof asphalt

other concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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 N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Transportation

Period of Significance
1902 - 1941

Significant Dates
1902

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Frost, Charles S. and Granger, Alfred H./
Grindele, Charles W., and Company

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

See continuation sheet

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5	3	6	2	5	0	0	4	9	0	6	2	1	5
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charlene K. Roise and Robert M. Hybben
organization Hess, Roise and Company date September 1991
street & number 710 Grain Exchange Building telephone 612/338-1987
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Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota

Description

The Chicago and North Western Depot is located directly south of the railroad tracks in the downtown business district of Sleepy Eye. The axis of the gable-roofed depot runs east-west, paralleling the tracks. A projecting bay, somewhat off-center, exhibits Tudor detailing, but the building otherwise displays a utilitarian, vernacular design. Window sills and the foundation of the single-story, red-brick structure are trimmed with concrete tooled to imitate stone. The brick is laid in common bond with an occasional header course. The roof was originally covered with slate tiles, but these had deteriorated and were replaced with asphalt shingles in the mid-1980s. The walls are pierced by bands of sash windows, which have two panes below and four vertically-oriented panes above. The windows are shaded by broad eaves with covered rafters. All exterior woodwork is painted white. Most doors are reached by three stone stairs. A concrete handicap access ramp has been added recently to the south side.

The building is essentially a rectangle measuring 127'-8" by 20'-10". Its interior is divided into five sections, which are delineated by the treatment of the exterior. A higher roof rises above the three middle parts: the ticket office and two waiting rooms. The most central section, which held the ticket and telegrapher's office on the north and rest rooms and on the south, projects about 6-feet from each side of the building and is accentuated by a cross-gable. Two narrow chimneys flank the cross-gable. Tudor "half-timbering", rendered in concrete, decorates the gable ends. The ticket office had vending windows serving waiting rooms to the east and west; the western window has been removed and is now an open doorway. Solid panes of frosted glass surround the eastern ticket window. The window itself is protected by a grate of vertical metal rods topped by round finials, all painted silver. The ticket room is lined by tongue & groove wainscoting finished by a simple molded chair rail. Plaster walls extend from there to the ceiling, which is covered with flat, painted boards. The wood-plank floor has been refinished recently. The room retains the original telegrapher's desk, as well as built-in cabinets and a safe. Modern rest rooms have replaced the original rest rooms to the south, accessible from the east and west by wood swinging doors with recessed panels. A gas, forced-air furnace has recently been installed in the central storage area, taking over from the building's original steam boiler in the basement. Radiators from the old boiler remain throughout the building.

The center section is flanked by the women's waiting room to the east and the men's to the west. The two rooms are similar in appearance, although the eastern room is somewhat larger, measuring 32 feet by 18 feet versus the western room's 24 feet by 18 feet. Both have splayed, wood-plank ceilings accented with wood beams. The beams have been cleaned and refinished in both rooms recently, as has the wood plank in the women's room; the ceiling is painted in the men's room. Ceiling fans and lights have been added as part of recent renovation work. Although the light fixtures are not replicas of the originals, they are reasonably compatible with the building's character. Refinished wood wainscoting with recessed panels and plank flooring are featured in both rooms. A large display case to hold Sleepy Eye marching band memorabilia has been installed along the east wall of the women's waiting room. The case's woodwork harmonizes with the original woodwork in the room. The room also holds two original benches from the waiting room, as well as modern display cases. A doorway in the north wall that once led to the railroad platform has been covered by a bookcase. This has also been done to a similar door in the men's waiting room. The men's room has an original, large glass case on the west wall which holds an old map of the Chicago and North Western's routes. The room is filled with museum exhibits.

Further west, and not accessible from the men's waiting room, is the baggage room, which is entered by tall, wooden, double doors on the north and south. The 15- by 18-foot space is lit by a high window in the west wall. A small closet is located in the southeast corner. Two baggage carts and a built-in work area remain in the room.

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Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota

A lunchroom is located in the depot's east end. A door in the building's south wall leads directly into the 13.5- by 7-foot kitchen which occupies the southeast corner of the 32- by 18-foot lunchroom. Diners entered the lunchroom from the platform through a double door in the building's north wall. The lunch counter and seventeen stools have been removed, but the tongue-and-groove wainscotting and wood-plank floor are intact.

There is a partial basement beneath the men's waiting room. It holds the old boiler and coal chutes. Stone foundation walls and brick fire walls enclose the space. The floor is concrete.

Paving blocks have been installed on the east, south, and west sides of the building as part of the building's recent renovation. Two old street lights from Sleepy Eye were cleaned, painted, and installed south of the building. Future plans call for restoration of the platform north of the building.

Situated just beyond the depot's eastern end is a monument to Chief Sleepy Eye, a tall granite obelisk dating from 1902. It is surrounded by a recently refurbished iron fence.¹

¹This description is primarily based on information gathered during a site visit 7 July 1991. Additional information was provided by interviews on the same day with Betty Schmidt and Tom Larson, both members of Sleepy Eye Depot Preservation, Inc., and by Robin Webster, "Sleepy Eye Depot is Home to City's History," Sleepy Eye Herald-Dispatch, 22 March 1990.

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Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota

Significance

The Chicago and North Western Depot in the City of Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of transportation for the historic context "Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction." Constructed in 1902, after passenger and freight traffic had outgrown the town's previous depot, the Chicago and North Western Depot formed an integral part of Sleepy Eye's transportation network during the first half of the 20th century. The building retains excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Given the depot's significance in the area of transportation, the Chief Sleepy Eye Monument directly to the west of the depot is considered a non-contributing object. Further investigation is necessary to determine the monument's eligibility to the National Register on its own merits.

The history of Sleepy Eye is closely intertwined with the development of the Chicago and North Western Railroad (CNW) in southern Minnesota. Located in central Brown County, Sleepy Eye was first settled in 1864 by Thomas Allison, a farmer who was born in Illinois and had come to Minnesota seven years earlier. The area remained unplatted, however, until the Winona and Saint Peter Railroad (WSP), a subsidiary of CNW, extended its line west from New Ulm in the summer of 1872. WSP had been laying track from the Mississippi River westward over the last decade and had reached New Ulm earlier in the year. The railroad originally had intended to build a depot on land three and a half miles east of Allison's claim. Allison, however, traveled to Rochester that summer and sold WSP 240 acres of his land. Allison and Walter Brackenridge, a lawyer for WSP, filed a plat for "Sleepy Eye Lake" in September 1872.¹

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Sleepy Eye had become one of the centers of railroad activity in southern Minnesota. With a population of 2,046 in 1900, up from 1,513 in 1890, Sleepy Eye had, according to a local newspaper, the most railway traffic of any town in Brown County. Authorities at CNW realized that the old depot, designed for a smaller community, was inadequate for the needs of the town. They authorized the construction of a new, larger depot in the spring of 1902, much to the relief of area residents. The Sleepy Eye Herald remarked that "the passenger traffic at this city requires just such a building. When you come to consider the amount of travel in and out of Sleepy Eye, we do not see why the building was not built five years ago."² In a separate article, the newspaper also noted that the new depot's location would allow alterations to the sidetracks to accommodate the heavy traffic:

¹The involvement of WSP in platting Sleepy Eye was not a unique event. Reportedly, numerous "towns were platted on the rail lines to serve as shipping points for agricultural products and as supply and service centers. They were platted by railroad companies, individual proprietors, and combinations of the two; for most the motive appears to have been purely economic. . ." see "Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction," chap. in Historic Context Outlines: The Post-Contact Period Contexts (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.), 10. Elizabeth Scobie, Sleepy Eye (Madelia, MN: House of Print, 1972), 32; John C. Luecke, The Chicago and North Western in Minnesota (Eagan, MN: Grenadier Publications, 1990), 2, 45, 50.

²L.A. Fritsche, ed., History of Brown County, Minnesota, vol. 1, (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1916), 491; "Railroad Yards too Small," Sleepy Eye Herald, 21 November 1902; "Sleepy Eye's New Depot," Sleepy Eye Herald, 18 July 1902.

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As soon as the new depot is completed the sidetracks will be altered considerably, and the making up of trains will be made more systematic and the traffic will be much easier handled than at present. There is more traffic handled in Sleepy Eye than any other town in the county, and improvements in the yard have got to be made in order to carry on business without delays and inconvenience.³

As it did for a number of its other depots from this period, CNW hired the Chicago-based architectural firm of Charles S. Frost and Alfred Hoyt Granger to design the building. Founded in 1898, Frost and Granger was particularly well-known for designing railroad depots throughout the Midwest and Canada.⁴ The contractor, the Charles W. Grindele Company, was also imported from Chicago. They commenced work on the depot on 21 July 1902 and presented the completed building to an official of the railroad on 16 December 1902.⁵

The Chicago and North Western Depot in Sleepy Eye is more ambitious than most of CNW's small town depots in Minnesota, a tribute to the community's position as a railway center and to the depot's importance within the town. According to CNW historian John C. Luecke, the average size of the 50 CNW depots built in Minnesota between 1890 and 1910 was approximately 22' x 77', and of these, 80% were built of wood. In contrast, the Chicago and North Western Depot in Sleepy Eye measures 21' x 128', and was constructed of brick. The result was a more permanent - and expensive -- structure.⁶

Throughout its existence, the Chicago and North Western Depot in Sleepy Eye formed an integral part of the transportation system in Brown County. CNW initially operated it as a passenger depot, while retaining the old depot, located one block to the east, to handle freight traffic. Passenger traffic accounted for roughly one-fourth of CNW's gross earnings in the early twentieth century and would continue to be a major source of revenue for the railroad for

³"Railroad Yards too Small," Sleepy Eye Herald, 21 November 1902.

⁴Like most architects in the early twentieth century, Frost and Granger adopted historical revival styles for their commissions. Granger justified this by asserting that "we have a most glorious opportunity to produce a real architecture if we will only cling to the traditions and vital principles of our inheritance from the past." The firm typically employed classical Beaux-Arts designs for monumental structures, such as the Union Depot in Saint Paul (1917-1920), the Great Northern Passenger Station in Minneapolis (1912-demolished), and the LaSalle Street Station for the Chicago and North Western Railroad in Chicago (1906-1911). For a series of smaller depots for the Chicago and North Western in Illinois and Wisconsin, they called on Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Spanish Mission styles. Tudor detailing appeared on the Lake Forest (Illinois) Station, as well as at Sleepy Eye. See Harry W. Desmond, "Work of Frost and Granger," Architectural Record 18 (August 1905): 114-125; "Forum of Events," Architectural Forum 72 (January 1940): 48; David Gebhard and Tom Martinson, A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 29, 86.

⁵"Sleepy Eye's New Depot," Sleepy Eye Herald, 18 July 1902; "New Depot is Accepted," Sleepy Eye Dispatch, 18 December 1902.

⁶Luecke, 241-244.

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several decades.⁷ As passenger revenue declined dramatically during the 1950s, however, CNW discontinued a number of its passenger lines, including, in November 1960, service to Sleepy Eye.⁸ The Chicago and North Western Depot was left as an office for the railroad's shipping agent, handling "a considerable amount. . . of freight business in and out of Sleepy Eye," including goods produced by the Del Monte canning plant.⁹ The depot closed in 1985, when the railroad consolidated its offices and closed several depots in southern Minnesota. It was then purchased by Sleepy Eye Depot Preservation, Incorporated, a group of Sleepy Eye residents interested in restoring it to its original appearance and using it for a museum. As of 1991, they have completed restoration of the brickwork, roofing, and parts of the interior.¹⁰

⁷Annual Report for the Chicago and North Western Railway Company for the Forty-Fourth Fiscal Year Ending May 31, 1903, n.p., n.d., 44; Phone interview with Charles Crouch, long-time resident of Sleepy Eye and former employee of the town's Del Monte canning plant, 10 September 1991.

⁸According to CNW's annual report, "revenues from passenger service decreased \$5,830,381 or 20.8%" between 1959 and 1960. See Chicago and North Western Railway Company Annual Report, 1960, n.p., n.d., 10-11.

⁹Chicago and North Western Depot, Minnesota Historic Places Survey, n.d., State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul; Interview with Crouch.

¹⁰"C & NW Depot Closes Its Doors," Sleepy Eye Herald-Dispatch, 23 July 1985; Deed, Instrument #234096; Interview with Betty Schmidt, Sleepy Eye Depot Preservation, Incorporated, 9 July 1991.

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Bibliography

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- Desmond, Harry W. "Work of Frost and Granger." Architectural Record 18 (August 1905): 114-145.
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Sleepy Eye, Brown County, Minnesota

Verbal Boundary Description

The general area includes that part of the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 110 North, Range 32 West of the Fifth Principal Meridian, bounded as follows: On the East by West line of First Avenue North; On the southerly side of the Northerly line of Oak West; And on the Northerly side by a line parallel with and distant 25 feet Southerly, measured at right angles, from the center line of the main track (now re-designated) of the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company, as said main track is now located, and said part being more particularly described as follows: Beginning at the point formed by the intersection of the Northerly boundary line of said Oak Street with the West boundary line of said First Avenue North, according to the Plat of the City of Sleepy Eye filed of record in the office of County Recorder of said County and State; then South 78 degrees 20 minutes 24 seconds West along the Northerly boundary line of Oak Street 308.19 feet to the East boundary line of said Second Avenue North West; the North 00 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds East along said East boundary line 57.95 feet to a point distant 25 feet Southerly, measured at right angles, from the center line of the main track re-designated of the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company, as said main track is now located; then North 78 degrees 18 minutes 35 seconds East along a line parallel with and distant 25 feet Southerly, measured at right angles, from the center line of said First Avenue North; the South 00 degrees 01 minutes 56 seconds East along said West boundary line 58.11 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the depot building and immediately adjacent grounds.