

City of Northfield

Northfield, Minnesota

Historic Designation Request Form

This City form is for requesting the local designation of sites within the City of Northfield as Historic Sites. The form utilizes topics and criteria similar to those on the Registration Form for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, adapted for the purpose of local designation only. This form is not to be used for nomination to the National Registration for Historic Places.

Each topic lists instructions for completing the form. Each numbered section can be expanded as needed with relevant and applicable information. Supplemental information can be referred to in the form and included by attached section continuation pages.

1. Name of the Site (a Site may be a district, property, building, landscape feature, or object)

Current name: Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific Railway Depot (CM&SP) – official name
Northfield 1888 Milwaukee Depot – local common name

Historic name: Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific Railway Depot
Other

2. Location

Street address: 204 3rd St. W. (recently assigned)

Other:

City: Northfield State: MN Zip Code: 55057 County: Rice

GPS (if available):

3. Ownership and Contact

Current owner: Save the Northfield Depot

Street Address: 204 3rd St. W., P.O. 486

City: Northfield State: MN Zip Code: 55057

Telephone number(s):

Owner Representative or Contact: Rob Martin, Pres.; Alice Thomas, Sec.

4. Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) Recommendation

HPC received this Request Form on: _____ Reviewed Request on: _____.

_____ The HPC recommends Approval of local designation (any qualifications are to be attached) _____

_____ The HPC recommends Denial of local designation at this time (any qualifications are to be attached)

Signature of HPC Chair or designee

date of signature

Name - printed

Note: Applicant may appeal HPC recommendation directly to the City Council.

5. City Council Certification

City Council received this Request on: _____ and reviewed Request on: _____

_____ The City Approves this local designation (qualifications may be attached)

_____ The City Denies this local designation (reasons are to be attached)

Signature of HPC Chair or designee

date of signature

Name - printed

ATTACHMENTS:

6. Historic Site Data

Enter information for each category below

Ownership of Property . (Check as many as needed)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	List number of resources by Category:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> district	
<input type="checkbox"/> public - local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	One
<input type="checkbox"/> public - state	<input type="checkbox"/> site or landscape	
<input type="checkbox"/> public- US	<input type="checkbox"/> structure(s)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	total of <u>one</u>

Property Dimensions and/or Area: 50’ x 20’ main waiting room; 21’ x 12’ smaller attached baggage room

Date of Original Construction: 1888

7. Historic Site Description

Historic or Original Functional Uses:
(List Uses chronologically if known)

Recent and Current Functional Uses:
(List chronologically if known and appropriate)

1888-1969 Passenger Depot

Office area used for attached freight house 1944 - late 70s
Vacant since the late 70s

Describe Architectural Features and Characteristics:

With a swooping hip roof and flared eaves held up by graceful, detailed timber brackets, Northfield’s 1888 Milwaukee Depot offers a classic, if modest, example of what might be termed “Richardsonian Depot Vernacular,” an architectural style typical of many Midwest train stations from 1870-1900. The large overhang gave passengers shelter when sitting or standing outside. Many depots, including the 1888 Northfield depot, that employed the roof style, opted for the more economical red brick than heavy stone massing that often was used in larger railway stations.

Stone was used in the door and window lintels and sills, water table and foundation. Other features included cottage style windows, doors with transoms, detailed brackets, patterned brick chimney, and roof cap cresting and finials. A member of the state preservation office observed that such details were unusual for a depot in a small town and that it would be expected in a larger city with more competition among the railroad lines.

The architecture of the exterior façade also reflects the culture of the 1888 time period – a time when men and women had separate facilities. The 1888 Depot provided separate entrance doors, ticket windows, waiting rooms, and exit doors. As reported in a thesis by McCall, *Gender and Space on America’s Railroads, 1830-1899*, this reflected the culture of the time.

While railroad passengers were initially composed of a homogenous group of middle-class men and women, increased use of trains very quickly led to separations by sex and class. Victorian understandings of respectability and gender roles and view of the world as being ordered and hierarchical strongly shaped how railroads treated their passengers. McCall, D., 1999, p. ii.

(See Appendix A for 1888 blue prints of exterior and 1888 floor plan)

(See Appendix B for archival and current photos of the architectural features)

Describe Historic/Original and Current Materials

See Appendix C for Exterior Materials

See Appendix F for Interior Materials

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Local Designation Criteria

Indicate the criteria applicable to the property that qualify it for Local Designation as an Historic Site.

More than one Criterion for Significance may be selected. Selected Criteria must be supported by information provided.

- A. The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history.
- B. The site is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
- C. The site embodies the distinctive characteristics of a building type, time period, or method of construction; or the site represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or the site represents a significance and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. The site embodies distinctive characteristics that are representative examples of a local historic contexts, and/or its developmental history, and thereby important for continued public understanding of our heritage.
- E. The site has yielded or is likely to yield information important to pre-history or history.

Description of Significance

Complete the following descriptions of Significance utilizing expanded space for each, or by Section 8 Continuation pages so indicated.

Type of Use and its Significance.

The National Register Criteria include the “association to events” as one type of significance and provide the example of "A railroad station that served as the focus of community’s transportation system and commerce” as a property associated with a pattern of events.

The demands for passenger rail brought to the town the first depot, a Milwaukee Railway depot, in 1866. That wood building was replaced with an 1869 wood building which burned down in 1888. It was replaced the same year by the 1888 Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific depot that was described at the time in the Northfield News as “a commodious brick passenger [depot]”¹. This 1888 Depot remains.

As the town grew, the demand for passenger rail grew. In January 1917, business and college leaders wrote position letters, and farmer club leaders passed a resolution regarding their concerns. The town leaders expressed their belief that a new depot was needed due to the crowded depot and inadequate facilities. The following comments from the leaders provide some evidence of the level of use of the depot by 1917:

- *A person frequently finds in the winter that the waiting rooms are filled to capacity; a seat is not available, and the air is so foul that one hesitates to remain indoors.* “
- *Six times a year considerably over a thousand students with as many trunks enter and leave Northfield. The bulk of this traffic uses the Milwaukee station.*² (Fairbank, F. J., Carleton College Treasurer)
- *We believe it is a safe estimate that of the 625 students at St. Olaf college [sic], 500 or more leave from the Milwaukee station. That the facilities are inadequate to take care of such a volume of business is quite evident. Neither the passengers nor the baggage can be cared for properly.*³ (Holland, P.O., St. Olaf College Treasurer)

¹ “A New Depot”, *Northfield News*, May 12, 1888.

^{2,3} “Deserves Better Depot Facilities: Local Patronage Heavy”, *Northfield News*, January 26, 1917.

Later in March of 1917, twelve local leaders met with the railroad superintendent and presented their concerns about the current high level of use and their prediction that it will only become worse if a larger depot is not built. President Cowling of Carleton College noted that

*Northfield's colleges now have eleven hundred students. The next ten to fifteen years mean the material expansion and more students. . . We feel that nothing short of a new station would correspond with college growth and town development in Northfield.*⁴

P.O. Holland, Treasurer of St. Olaf College, also cited statistics about the colleges' growth, predicted future needs and concluded his remarks saying, "A new depot is wanted, not for show, but because it is a necessity."⁵

Despite the attempts of the community, a new depot was not built. The railroad did indicate that they would add a pavilion to provide more shelter and to connect the pavilion to the existing baggage house that would be enlarged; architectural plans were completed but construction was never implemented.

Passenger rail was an important part of the economy and quality of life in the community; the demands and use were heavy. Notable is that at the same time that the community was pressuring CM&SP for a larger depot, there were other passenger depots serving the community. The Chicago Great Western Railways Depot provided service from 1882 – 1965. The Minneapolis St. Paul Rochester and Dubuque Electric Traction Company (the Dan Patch Line) provided travel between Minneapolis and Northfield from 1911 to 1942 (both were located on the block of the new, current location of the 1888 depot). Documentation, including photos in local archives, provides evidence that it was the 1888 depot, however, that was the depot that hosted major events of arrival and departures by passenger rail (see Appendix D). This only surviving depot served CMSTP&P passengers until 1951 and Rock Island passengers until 1969, over 80 years of service.

The above quotes document the important transportation function of the 1888 depot in Northfield for chiefly one segment of the passenger users, i.e., the college students. See Appendix D for other aspects of the town development associated with the 1888 depot including social, commercial, political, and educational events.

Time or Period of Significance.

"The CMStP&P Depot's period of significance is from 1888, when the depot was constructed, to 1944, when additions and alterations were made to the building to comply with the company's – and the transportation industry's – objective to streamline operations.

The period reflects the parallel growth of the passenger and freight service in Northfield and of rail service as a whole, with the 1911 renovations providing indoor toilets and a more advanced heating system for passenger comfort.

By 1944, however, the industry had changed its focus to freight service rather than passenger service. Most notable is the fact that the addition more than doubles the length of the depot and is devoted to a baggage room, express warehouse, and express office. The "central traffic control system" given as the explanation of the addition appears to refer to the movement of freight rather than people. In addition, CMStP&P President Scandrett's anticipation of "further improvements . . . when the roads are freed from wartime limitations" most likely refers to freight limitations rather than passenger limitations. Indeed, the rail traffic that now passes by the depot is entirely freight traffic.

The Depot, therefore, represents a period when the passenger train service was considered an essential part of rail transportation." (Ganzel, E.)⁶

^{4,5} Foster Learns of Depot Needs: Committee Makes Good Case, *Northfield News*, March 2, 1917.

⁶ Ganzel, E. (2016). *Evaluation of the Chicago Milwaukee S. Paul & Pacific Railway Depot for Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places*, p. 25.

List Significant Persons and/or Events associated with the site.

The railroad played an integral role in the development of Northfield, Minnesota. “ Unlike other communities in the area that were founded at approximately the same time but were bypassed by rail lines, Northfield benefited from the economic business that the railroad brought to the nascent milling industry and from what the reverend Delavan L. Leonard called the “easy contact and communication with the great world outside” that encouraged two liberal arts colleges to be founded in Northfield.” (Ganzel, E.)⁷

(See Appendix D for significant events)

Architect and/or Builder.

No specific architect is associated with the building. See discussion of Architectural Features above regarding typical architectural style of depots used by railways during that period.

Narrative Statement of Significance.

(Describe the significance expanding on the above summary items, and additional topics of interest.)

Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties:

“A property moved from its original site is usually ineligible for the National Register because of the loss of the integrity of its location. There are exceptions, provided that the property meets the criteria noted in Consideration B: Moved Properties. In the case of the CMStP&P Depot, the property is “the surviving property most importantly associated with an historic event”, namely, the growth and development of Northfield.

While there were once three passenger train depots serving Northfield concurrently, the CMStP&P Depot is “the single surviving property,” as required by the National Park Service, which represents the railroad connection that allowed Northfield to develop and grow. It therefore meets the Criteria Consideration B for Moved Properties.” (Ganzel, E.)⁸

National Register Standards

Below are clips from the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.⁹

<p>ELIGIBILITY FOR HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS</p> <p>A moved property significant under Criteria A or B must be demonstrated to be the surviving property most importantly associated with a particular historic event or an important aspect of a historic person’s life. The phrase “most importantly associated” means that it must be the single surviving property that is most closely associated with the event or with the part of the person’s life for which he or she is significant.</p>	<p>SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>In addition to the requirements above, moved properties must still have an orientation, setting, and general environment that are comparable to those of the historic location and that are compatible with the property’s significance.</p>
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^{7,8} Ganzel, E. (2016). *Evaluation of the Chicago Milwaukee S. Paul & Pacific Railway Depot for Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places*, p. 24.

⁹ *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, p. 36. Retrieved Oct. 15, 2020 from https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf

Integrity. As noted in Criterion B above, the concern about moving is the loss of integrity of its location. The National Park Service defines integrity as “the ability of a property to convey its significance” and identifies seven aspects: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association. The integrity of the depot in its new location is addressed below. The remaining aspects are addressed in the Appendices.

New Location. In addition to being “the single surviving property”, the 1888 depot was moved to a location that is along the same track, faces the track (same orientation), and sits just across the street from the original site (setting) (see Appendix E). The depot will be one of three structures on the site once the pavilion and transit hub are built. The area will serve as the central transportation center in the city just as the area was historically (general environment) (see Appendix E).

The block on which it is now located was historically the most densely populated area in Northfield for depots and railroad related buildings (the block was cleared for the construction of Highway #3). In that area between 2nd and 3rd streets, the 1900 Sanborn map identified the following buildings: Chicago Great Western Depot; Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Freight House, Northfield Farmer’s Merchant Grain Elevator, and related businesses (Lathrop Lumber Co. Lumber Yard, Machine Shop and Foundry, Shingles Shop, Stables (baggage & horse rental) and other small railroad related businesses. In 1910 the Dan Patch depot was also located on that block.

9. Important Bibliographical References

Include bibliographical references in the Historic Significance narrative as part of Section 8.

Primary locations of this property and historical data used for this request:

City of Northfield HPC Files

Northfield Historical Society Rice County Historical Society

Northfield Public Library

Carleton College Library and Archives

St. Olaf College Library and Archives

State Historical Society Archives State Historic Preservation Office

10. Property/Site Graphics

This information may be included as part of the Historic Significance narrative as part of Section 8

Illustrations of the site are required to include: historic, developmental, and current. Indicate those included:

Historic Photographs

Historic site drawing and/or plat map location

Photographs of key developmental changes to the property or site, if any

Current photographs

Current site plan and/or plat map location

Drawings or renderings of the original site, property, building, or object (if available)

Appendices:

- A. 1888 Blueprints and Floor Plan
- B. Archival and Current Exterior Photos
- C. Historic/Original and Current Materials – Exterior
- D. Significance of Use as Passenger Depot
- E. Aerial Map and Site Plan
- F. Original and Current Materials - Interior