

December 2, 2020

MEMO TO: Northfield Preservation Commission Members
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner



RE: Re-assessment of 1888 Depot as a Locally Designated Historic Site

This memo provides some background for the attached document, Historic Designation Request Form with attachments.

Local Designation. The 1888 Depot was designated a Northfield Heritage Preservation Site in a 1980 City Council Resolution #80-160 (see Memo Attachment A). The authorizing ordinance, criteria and assessment of the depot accompany the resolution. The HPC again addressed the depot in 2009 when there was concern that the railroad might destroy the depot. At the request of the HPC, the City sent a letter to the railroad reminding them it was a locally designated historic site.

National Designation. In 1980, the HPC also requested that the depot be assessed at the state level for national designation. No documentation has been located indicating that occurred. In 2016 *Save the Northfield Depot* was encouraged by the State Preservation Office to apply for a small Legacy grant to cover the cost of such an assessment. The grant was received, and the evaluation completed and sent to the state office. The state office deemed the report was incomplete and suggested it be resubmitted when more work had been completed on the depot. Resubmission will be considered in the near future.

HPC Consultation. During the rehabilitation of the depot, *Save the Northfield Depot* provided updates and/or sought guidance from the HPC during our decision making period in 2015, 2016 and 2017. We received approval for major decisions: reconstructing the station master bay, restoring doors that had been converted to windows, installing cottage style windows, creating templates to replicate missing brackets, reusing brick and limestone, reconstructing chimney and roof cresting (decided not to add the cresting) and considering cleaning treatments for the brick (decided not to remove paint on bricks other than graffiti spray paint).

We recognize that the documents are quite lengthy but given the situation with the inability of the total group to meet at the depot, the abundance of photos seemed prudent. Of course, individuals can visit the site and see the depot exterior at any time. We are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Rob Martin, Chair

Clark Webster, Treasurer

Alice Thomas, Secretary

Attachment A

RESOLUTION #80-160

WHEREAS, the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission has recommended to the City Council that the Milwaukee Road Depot site be clared a Northfield Heritage Preservation Site and that they request the State Historical Society to prepare nomination to the state and federal historic registers; and

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Depot meets the criteria outlined in Ordinance 329, Section 4, Subdivision B, for the designation of Preservation Sites.

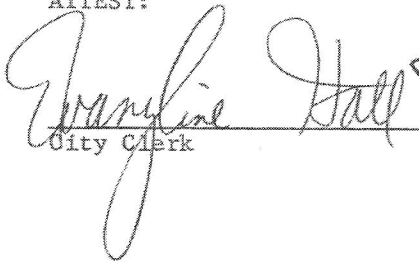
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Northfield designates the Milwaukee Road Depot a Northfield Heritage Preservation Site and requests the Minnesota Historical Society to proceed with state and federal nomination.

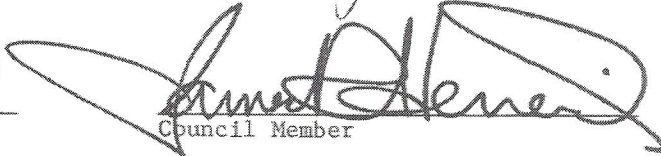
Passed by the City Council of the City of Northfield this 16 day of June, 1980.


Mayor


Council Member

ATTEST:


City Clerk


Council Member

CITY OF NORTHFIELD

Northfield, Minnesota

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council and Mayor

FROM: Patricia K. Frich

DATE: June 11, 1980

SUBJECT: Milwaukee Road Depot Historic Site

On May 10, 1978, the Northfield City Council passed Ordinance #329, relating to perservation, protection, perpetuation, and use of areas, places, and structures having a special historical, community, or aesthetic interest or value, establishing a City of Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, and defining its power and duties.

Ordinance #329, reads in part:

"Section 1. Declaration of Public Policy and Purpose. The Northfield City Council hereby declares as a matter of public policy that the preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of areas, places, buildings, structures, and other objects having special historical interest or value is a public necessity, and is required in the interest of the health, safety, welfare, and prosperity of the people. The purpose of the ordinance is to:

- A. Safeguard the heritage of the City of Northfield by preserving sites and structures which reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, visual or architectural history.
- B. Protect and enhance the City of Northfield's appeal to residents, visitors and tourists, and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry.
- C. Foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past; and
- D. Promote the preservation and continued use of historic sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of the City of Northfield. "

The intent of the ordinance was to protect and preserve buildings such as those in the downtown business district and the Milwaukee Depot.

Section 4, states the criteria. It reads in its entirety:

"B. Criteria. The Commission shall recommend to the City Council areas, buildings, districts, or objects to be designated Heritage Preservation Sites. In considering the designation of Heritage Preservation Sites the Commission shall apply the following criteria:

1. Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Northfield, State of Minnesota, or the United States.
2. Its location as a site, or contributing element in proximity to a site of a significant historic event or process.
3. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, form or treatment.
4. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the City of Northfield.
5. Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent distinctive architectural innovation.
6. Its unique location or singular physical characteristics representing established and familiar aspects of a view, vista, site, area or district in the City of Northfield.

The depot is largely intact, with few alternations since 1945. Ornamental iron work which once was in place along the roof line has been removed. The steps were changed around 1945. The walkway leading from Third Street to the Depot is brick, some of which is from Flint, Michigan.

When the garages were added, the architect used similar building materials and compatible design.

Charles Shrief, architect from the Minnesota Historic Society, has seen the depot and agrees it has a very good chance for state and federal nomination.

THE MILWAUKEE ROAD DEPOT

The Milwaukee Railway Company built its first Northfield depot, a wooden frame structure, sometime before 1888. On April 24, 1888, it burned; loss was estimated at \$25,000.

Plans for the new depot were started soon after the fire. In August, 1888, Northfielders may have seen A. J. Winnerblad, surveying the area along with the help of F. L. Austin and H. J. Huhn, who began work locating the new depot and freight houses. The present depot was located 50 feet farther south than the old building and 10 feet farther west. The move necessitated moving the tracks toward the west.

The new building was 20 x 50 with the baggage room on the south 12 x 20. The Northfield News, August 4, 1888, reported that "Spacious platforms will surround the depot giving ample room for waiting passengers."

The first corner stone was laid on November 3, 1888, the frame was up on November 11, 1888, and the depot completed on December 12, 1889. The depot was remodeled in 1900 to provide indoor toilets connected with the passenger depot. The early floor plans show a ticket office in the middle of the building, with separate men's and women's waiting rooms to each side of the ticket office.

The depot was remodeled again in 1945, the waiting room was one large area. The doorways were changed to provide one main entrance for passengers rather than two separate doors.

Later an addition for garage and storage space was added to the south. The addition was well-planned in that similar building materials and design were used.

