

Jackson Street Shops,
Car Shop and Wood Shop
Jackson Street, Pennsylvania Avenue
St. Paul
Ramsey County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-67-G

HABS
MINN,
62-SAIPA,
17-G-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS
MINN,
62-SAPIA,
17-G-

BUILDING AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JACKSON STREET SHOPS
CAR SHOP AND WOOD SHOP

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Location: Jackson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, St. Paul,
Ramsey County, Minnesota.

USGS St. Paul East Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;
491920.4878640; 492560.4878640; 492560.4878540;
492300.4878540; 492140.4878400; 491920.4878400

Present Owner: Burlington Northern Railroad Company
176 East Fifth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55164

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Not Used

Significance: The Jackson Street Shops are a complex of 12 structures. The Car Shop and Wood Shop was constructed in 1882. They are gray limestone structures typical of late 19th century "machine shop" style industrial buildings. They are significant as one of St. Paul's oldest known railroad buildings. They are one of the oldest structures built in Minnesota for James J. Hill's St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company. They are the only surviving buildings from the operating division of the Manitoba Railway.

The Car Shop and Wood Shop are part of the only railroad complex in Minnesota built of stone. In terms of industry and engineering, they were considered a state-of-the-art facility. The Car Shop and Wood Shop was designed to function as a major repair facility for freight cars, passenger coaches, and locomotives. By 1900, the Jackson Street Car Shop and Wood Shop was the Great Northern's major passenger repair facility.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: 1882 with 1892 addition to the Car Shop
2. Architect: Not known, probably James Brodie

JACKSON STREET SHOPS,
CAR SHOP AND WOOD SHOP
HABS No. MN-67-G (Page 2)

3. Original and subsequent owners: The first owners were St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway, then the Great Northern Railway Company, and later, Burlington Northern Railroad Company.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway built the 1882 Car Shop and Wood Shop; Great Northern added the 1892 addition to the Car Shop.
5. Original plans and construction: No original plans exist. The design and construction was directed by Chief Engineer Colonel Charles C. Smith and Capt. C. C. Renshaw was in charge of construction.
6. Alterations and additions: There was an addition to the Car Shop in 1892 according to the Rascher, 1891-1901 insurance maps.

B. Historical Context:

The Car Shop and Wood Shop were one of the first of the Jackson Street Shop buildings to be built in 1882. They are considered pivotal structures in the Jackson Street Shop complex. The Car Shop was the major repair facility for freight cars, passenger cars and locomotives.

The Jackson Street Shops were built to meet the increasing needs of James J. Hill's Railway, the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba. St. Paul was a railroading town and the Jackson Street Shops were instrumental in the development of surrounding residential neighborhoods. The shops provided jobs for the growing city.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The Car Shop and Wood Shop are gray limestone structures typical of late 19th century "machine shop" industrial buildings. The 1892 addition to the Car Shop is of brick construction. In terms of industry and engineering, they are considered state-of-the-art facilities.
2. Condition of fabric: The exterior limestone walls are in need of tuckpointing - the roofs are deteriorating. Panes of glass are broken and cracked in many of the windows.

JACKSON STREET SHOPS
CAR SHOP AND WOOD SHOP
HABS No. MN-67-G (Page 3)

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The original Car Shop was 80' x 200'. The 1892 addition on the west side of the building made it 155' x 200'. It is one story. The Wood Shop is 100' x 250'. It is also one story.
2. Foundations: The foundations are Platteville limestone.
3. Walls: The walls are of gray, rough Platteville limestone, two feet thick. It is laid in courses. The 1892 Car Shop addition has brick walls.
4. Structural System, Framing: Exterior walls are of load bearing construction. Interior columns are of wood. The roof framing is of wood and iron trusses.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The north elevation of the Wood Shop has one door. The east elevation of the Wood Shop and Car Shop has four door openings. The south elevation has two large 22' x 14' door openings at each end. The west elevation of the Car Shop has three door openings. The west elevation of the Wood Shop also has two large 22' x 14' door openings. The bottom halves of each door on the north, east and south elevations have diagonal slatted wood panels.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The windows are 12 over 24 light sash with segmental arch tops. The exterior windows have stone sills.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: The roofs are low pitched gable; skylights are present on the roof of the Car Shops.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Floor to ceiling, the area provides for large open working areas, with machine-tool bays flanking a central erecting aisle.
2. Flooring: The original floor was wood which has been replaced with concrete. A concrete floor was added to the Wood Shop in 1945.

JACKSON STREET SHOPS
CAR SHOP AND WOOD SHOP
HABS No. MN-67-G (Page 4)

3. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorways and doors are of wood.
 - b. Windows: The interior window sills are wood. Historic photographs suggest that the windows provided a great deal of natural lighting.
4. Hardware: All doors have metal hinges and door locks on the exterior.
5. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: The Car Shop has eight skylights in the roof to provide natural lighting. It also uses low electrical industrial lighting.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Car Shop and Wood Shop are located in the midst of the other shop structures in a low area, approximately two miles north of the State Capitol area.
2. Historic Landscape Design: The Car Shop and Wood Shop were one of the first Jackson Street Shop structures built. The one-story limestone, gable-roofed buildings blend in harmoniously with all the other shop structures.
3. Outbuilding: The Car Shop and Wood Shop are an integral function of all other outbuildings of the Jackson Street Shops. Each plays a role in the repair of freight cars, passenger cars and locomotives.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Original drawings have been lost. Drawings showing later alterations are available at Burlington Northern Railroad Company, 176 East Fifth Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55164.

B. Early views:

General views of Jackson Street Shops are in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

GN Engineering Department, Structures drawing #8394-1, Minnesota Historical Society.

GN President's Office, Subject File #10-505, MHS.

GN Maps, Minnesota: Saint Paul, St. Paul Shops, 1888, MHS.

GN A.F.E. #68488, Burlington Northern Railroad Company.

The Jackson Street Railroad Shops by Helen Rausch - Chambers, unpublished term paper, 1981.

Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, Site Nomination Form, 1984.

State Capitol Commissioners correspondence. Applications for Building Superintendent, MHS.

2. Secondary and published sources:

a. Rascher Atlas, 1891

b. Rascher Atlas, 1891-1901, Vol. 1, Plate 59.

c. Sanborn Insurance Map, 1903.

d. Sanborn Insurance Map, 1927.

Prepared by:
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PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5142, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie and was funded by a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historic data was compiled and measured drawings prepared for the Wood Shop and Car Shop by Steve Nielsen and M. Kathleen Sitzmann in March, 1985.