

CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILROAD PASSENGER  
DEPOT  
(La Estación Restaurante)  
319 Williams Street  
Waukesha  
Waukesha County  
Wisconsin

HALS WI-14  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### CHICAGO AND NORTH WESTERN RAILROAD PASSENGER DEPOT (La Estación Restaurante)

HALS NO. WI-14

Location: 319 Williams Street, Waukesha, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Lat: 43.00545 Long: -88.232967 (Center of Depot Building, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84)

Significance: The Chicago and North Western Railroad Passenger Depot on Williams Street in Waukesha, Wisconsin was designed by Samuel Dodd and built in 1881. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2012 (NRIS #422600). The depot was decommissioned for passenger use in 1949 (Sava and Villarreal, 2007), and stood empty for several years. In 1973, the site was turned into a restaurant (Lawrence, 1973; Hansen, 2011). In 2002, Tony Marquéz purchased the site and turned it into a Mexican restaurant called La Estación (Mangold, 2003; La Estación, 2012). It has operated as such for almost 10 years. This site is an example of how a local landmark was incorporated into Hispanic culture.

Description: The site is located on a parcel that sits alongside the former Chicago and North Western rail line. Because it comprises an entire side of a city block, it represents an urban landscape. Although the tracks are still in place, they are no longer in use. The parcel is bound to the north by Williams Street, to the east by N. Grand Ave., to the west by Maple Ave. and to the south by the train tracks. The depot building sits in the approximate center of the parcel, with an employee parking area on the east side and patron parking on the west side. Several decommissioned railroad cars are stationed around the property—three of them are located at the front of the restaurant to the north, and five alongside the original tracks at the back of the building.

Tony Marquéz made several changes to the exterior of this historic depot in order to evoke the atmosphere of a Mexican restaurant. The gutters and shingles were painted a turquoise blue to match the awning that was placed over the main entrance. The original gothic timbers were painted red at the top, fading to orange and then yellow at the base. Blue and orange sunburst patterns were painted in spaces between the timbers. The fascia boards were painted in multiple colors in order to emphasize their scalloped edges and floral medallion.

The areas surrounding the parking lot are set with red pavers. Pillars of recycled cream city brick were built to form the boundaries of an outdoor patio, and also to hold up the neon sign with the restaurant's name on it. The three railroad cars parked in front of the restaurant have been painted red. One of these is a caboose that displays an old-fashioned barber shop inside. Additional railroad

cars are located along the backside of the patron parking lot. Some of these are used as dining cars for group events.

The site in its current state serves as a well-known local landmark and a popular restaurant.

History: The building was designed by Samuel Dodd and built in 1881 in the Late Victorian gothic style (Hansen, 2011; National Register of Historic Places, 2012). The building is constructed from locally-quarried limestone and cream-colored brick. The depot served the Chicago and North Western (C. & N.W.) line running from Chicago to Minneapolis. Because the train was billed as being able to travel the 400 miles from Chicago to Minneapolis in 400 minutes (Reilly, 2008), it was nicknamed “The 400” (Sava and Villarreal, 2007). This depot served the “Waukesha Beach” stop, which was a tourist stop for visitors of Waukesha’s famous spring water. Carriages parked across the street from the depot, ready to take the passengers to any one of the 20 or so resort hotels in the area (Lawrence, 1973).

President Harry S. Truman made a speech from this depot on October 14, 1948 (Hansen, 2011). In 1949, passenger service ended at this depot (Sava and Villarreal), and in 1964, the railroad vacated the building (Hansen, 2011). The building stood vacant until 1973, when Edward Friend purchased it and converted it into a restaurant (Lawrence, 1973; Hansen, 2011). Friend found the 1920s train cars in a scrap yard near Aurora, IL, and had relocated to the site (Lawrence, 1973). Friend converted the caboose into a barbershop (Lawrence, 1973). He also relocated a locomotive to the site (Lawrence, 1973), but it has since been sold or removed. The restaurant then exchanged hands several times until it was converted into a Mexican restaurant in 2003 by Tony Marquéz (Mangold, 2003).

Sources: Hansen, Linda. 30 April 2011. *Milwaukee and Madison Railway Depot*. Waukesha County Historical Museum. The Historical Marker Database. Retrieved from <http://www.hmdb.org/>. 06 July 2012.

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Map 1. Bird's eye view of La Estación. North faces towards the top of the map. (Source: Waukesha County Department of Parks & Land Use Land Information System, 2010 Aerial Photograph).



Figure 1. La Estación Restaurante. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 13, 2012)



Figure 2. View of the front entrance of La Estación. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 3. View of west side of the building. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 4. View of the east side of the building. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 5. Their sign on N. Grand Ave. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 6. The view of the southeast corner of the property from N. Grand Ave. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 7. The red caboose that houses a barber shop inside, and the historical marker for the site. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 8. One of the dining cars near the parking lot on the west side of the property. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)



Figure 9. View of the southwest corner of the property from Maple Ave. (Kristi Sherfinski, July 7, 2012)