

**Determining the Eligibility of a
Train Station in Danville,
Vermont for the National
Register of Historic Places**

for

Professor Alexis Paige
Technical Communications Professor
Vermont Technical College

by

Conrad Ross Meaders
English 2080 Student

Letter of Transmittal

Conrad Ross Meaders
175 Brainerd Street
Danville, VT, 05828
April 29, 2019

Alexis Paige
Technical Communications Professor
Vermont Technical College
Randolph Center, VT 05061

Dear Professor Paige,

The following is my analytical report on writing a determination of eligibility for a railroad station in Danville, VT. This report examines the process and criteria used in a determination of eligibility, and the possibility of using the railroad station to promote the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

The report discusses the history of the railroad station, the process for a determination of eligibility, the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, evaluating the integrity of a property, assessment of the railroad station, and how the railroad station can be used to support the growth of the town.

I would like to thank Devin Coleman, State Architectural Historian for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation for providing me with helpful resources regarding the Determination of Eligibility and Historic Sites and Structures Survey and for answering my questions. The bulk of this report references material that was either written by him or he provided me with.

Last but not least, thank you for breaking the process of writing an analytical report down into easy to understand steps. Beginning this report was much easier seeing that I had already, found my resources, written a glossary, and drafted an outline. This made it so that I already had a lot of the writing done.

Sincerely,

Conrad Ross Meaders
Architectural Engineering
Vermont Technical College

Table of Contents

<u>Title Page</u>	i
<u>Letter of Transmittal</u>	ii
<u>Table of Contents</u>	iii
<u>Informative Abstract</u>	iv
<u>Introduction</u>	1-3
A. Background	
B. Purpose of the Report	
C. Intended Audience	
D. Method Of Inquiry	
E. Limitations of the Study	
F. Working Definitions	
G. Scope of the Inquiry	
<u>Collected Data</u>	3-6
A. What are the procedures of writing a DOE?	
B. What are the criteria for the National Register?	
C. Which criterion is the railroad station best suited?	
D. What are the standards for integrity?	
E. How well does the building meet the requirements for integrity?	
<u>Conclusion</u>	6
<u>Works Cited</u>	7
<u>Appendices</u>	8-10
Appendix A: Glossary	
Appendix B: Images	
Figure 1.1	
Figure 1.2	
Figure 1.3	

Informative Abstract

The purpose of this report was to evaluate the eligibility of a historic railroad station in Danville, Vermont, for the National Register of Historic Places. This process is formally known as a Determination of Eligibility (DOE). Such a listing would increase opportunities for grant funding. Further investigation would have to be done to find which grants the railroad station is eligible for. The property is no longer in use as a railroad station; however, it once was the backbone of Danville's economy. One half of the building is currently used as the town's recycling center, and the other half does not have a use. The rails that once carried people and freight are no longer there, but the rail bed was recently converted into a public bike trail. Future uses of the railroad station might include a visitor center with information on nearby businesses and the trail, or a shop for local vendors. Regarding the DOE, The property most likely qualifies under Criterion A: Event of the National Registers Criteria due to its strong ties in Danville's economy for several decades.

Introduction

Background

Before the age of the automobile reached Vermont, there were two primary modes of transportation for traveling long distances: horse and buggy, and the railroad. One of the few railroad companies that traveled east to west in Northern Vermont was The St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad, later renamed the St. Johnsbury and Lamoille County Railroad (ST. J & L.C.). The first destination on the route coming from Saint Johnsbury was a small railroad station near the center of Danville, which is currently used as the town's recycling center. Today the railroad is no longer in operation; however, 33 miles of its original route has recently been reopened as the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT).

Purpose of the Report

With the advent of the LVRT, hikers, bikers, and runners have flocked to the trail during the warmer months for its scenic views of open fields, forest, the distant White Mountains, and Joe's Pond in West Danville. During the winter months, the trail is open to snowmobilers. With this new attraction comes grant opportunities to promote tourism and small businesses in the town of Danville. If the railroad station was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and if the town of Danville decides to renovate, then this would open up several opportunities to promote the town's growth. Such uses may include a visitor center with information on nearby businesses and the trail, or a shop for local vendors.

Intended Audience

The primary audience of this report includes the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Danville Historical Society, the town of Danville, grant writers, and users of the LVRT.

Method Of Inquiry

For primary research, I reached out to Devin Coleman, State Architectural Historian for the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. He provided me with resources including the 1982 documentation of the Railroad Street District on the Historic Sites and Structures Survey (HSSS) and a document titled *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. For my secondary research, I watched a documentary called “ST. J & L.C.: Vermont's Lamoille Valley Railroad” and read an article about the LVRT to aid me in discussing the importance of the Railroad Station and the LVRT.

Limitations of the Study

I am not qualified to make the final decision regarding the DOE; however, anyone is qualified to fill out the master DOE form and submit it to the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, for review. The DOE will then be presented to the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the final determination.

Working Definitions

See Appendix for a glossary of definitions.

Scope of the Inquiry

1. What are the procedures of writing a DOE?
2. What are the criteria for the National Register?
3. Which criterion is the railroad station best suited?
4. What are the standards for integrity?
5. How well does the building meet the requirements for integrity?

Conclusion of the Inquiry

The railroad station has served the community of Danville for more than one hundred years and deserves to continue its legacy. A DOE will allow us to know if the railroad station is eligible for the National Register and may provide eligibility for more grants, thereby giving the railroad station a use that would promote growth in Danville and promote the town to those who use the LVRT.

Collected Data

What are the procedures of writing a DOE?

A DOE is an evaluation of whether or not a building, structure, site, object, or district meets the criteria for the National Register for Historic Places. This process only determines eligibility for the National Register and is not to be confused with a listing. In order for a property to be listed on the National Register, it must first be documented on the HSSS. The railroad station was documented on the HSSS in 1982 as part of a proposed "Railroad Street Historic District." After that, a DOE form must be completed and submitted to the Vermont Division of Historic

Preservation. The person who fills out the form, that being me, must contact the owner of the property, that being the Town of Danville, to inform them that the property is under evaluation by the Division. The final determination will be made by the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. (Coleman: 2019)

What are the criteria for the National Register?

The criteria for the National Register are broken down into four categories: Criterion A: Event, Criterion B: Person, Criterion C: Design/Construction, and Criterion D: Information Potential.

The building, site, structure, object, or district must be associated with one or more of the criteria above in order to be considered for the national register as well as meet integrity requirements.

(National Park Service: 2005)

Which criterion is the railroad station best suited?

In the context of the Danville railroad station, it qualifies under Criterion A: Event.

The railroad station is significant for its association with the ST. J & L.C. which was an important contributor to the economic growth and transportation improvement of Danville and nearby towns. It is also worth mentioning that “A railroad station that served as the focus of a community's transportation system and commerce.” is one of the examples listed under *Examples of Properties Associated with Events* in the National Parks Services guide titled *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. (National Park Service: 2005)

What are the standards for integrity?

Properties being evaluated for the National Register can be classified under buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. Even though there are different classifications the same standards of integrity apply to all. Integrity is based on how well the property can convey its significance through its essential physical features. There are seven aspects of integrity in which properties are to be assessed: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Location is defined as "... the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred". The setting is defined as "... the physical environment of a historic property". Materials are defined as "...the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property". Workmanship is defined as "...the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory". Feeling is defined as "...a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time". Association is defined as "...the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property". (National Park Service: 2005)

How well does the building meet the requirements for integrity?

The train station is classified as a building and has all of the elements for integrity.

The railroad station is still on its original location. Historic photos reveal that the railroad station once had a slightly bigger footprint and a slightly larger canopy above the depot. Details as to the larger footprint being due to an addition that has since been removed are unknown. Nevertheless, most if not all of the original footprint remains intact. Passenger and cargo areas appear to have

little to no alteration from original layout and furnishings. The exterior has undergone minor alterations since its construction; however, essential physical features such as cargo bays, gable roof, clapboard siding, 6/6 sashes, pedimented lintels, and bay window are intact. Therefore, the railroad station maintains most of its original design. Concerning its setting, the railroad station was documented in a historic district in 1982 as part of the HSSS, and most of the surrounding landscape is the same as it was during the time when the property was in use. (Noble: 1982)

Recent changes to the landscape include the removal of the rails to make way for the LVRT. In terms of materials and workmanship, the building's timber frame structure, stone foundation, and wooden clapboards remain intact. Materials and esthetics are appropriate for a train station constructed in the late 19th century. In summary, the building has been preserved with good attention to its integrity.

What are the criteria considerations?

Some types of properties are not normally considered for listing on the national register; however, there is room for consideration. This is known as a criteria consideration and is broken up into seven categories: religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces and graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties achieving significance within the past fifty years. Each of these considerations has rules relating to the integrity of the property. (National Park Service: 2005)

Do any criteria considerations apply?

None of these considerations apply to the railroad station. The railroad station is not a rare religious site, the birthplace or grave of a significant person, a cemetery associated with many significant people or property, it was never moved from its original location, it was not built to commemorate a significant person or event, and it did not become significant within the past 50 years.

Conclusion

The Railroad station meets the criteria for the National Register, more specifically “Criterion A: Event” because of its association with the ST. J & L.C., which was a driving force in a small town economy for many decades. A listing in the National Register will make the building more attractive for grant funding. The building is located near the center of town. Half the building is currently closed year-round. With the potential funding, this unused space could be used to promote the LVRT and the town of Danville as a visitor center with information on nearby businesses and the trail, or a shop for local vendors. Even though this building is no longer used as a railroad station, it can still tell the story of the railroad and support the town in new ways.

The LVRT still serves the same purpose as the railroad did many years ago of bringing tourism to the town of Danville. The railroad station can provide a sheltered area for bikers, hikers, and runners looking for maps of the trail, information on local businesses, bathrooms, or a place to fill up water bottles.

- Coffey, Rich. "Retracing the Railroad - Morrisville to St. Johnsbury Vermont." *Retracing the Railroad - Morrisville to St. Johnsbury Vermont*, 31 Aug. 2017, rc-pedalpoint.blogspot.com/2017/08/retracing-railroad-morrisville-to-st.html.
- Coleman, Devin. "Nominating Historic Resources to the State Register." *Accd.vermont.gov*, State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, 2019, accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/Nominating%20Historic%20Resources%20to%20the%20State%20Register.pdf.
- Conservancy, Rails-to-Trails. "Vermont's Lamoille Valley Rail Trail." *Rails*, www.railstotrails.org/trailblog/2018/may/15/vermonts-lamoille-valley-rail-trail/.
- Jones, Jim R. "ST. J & L.C.: Vermont's Lamoille Valley Railroad." *Vimeo.com*, Vimeo, vimeo.com/ondemand/lamoille.
- Kanell, Beth. "Railroad Construction in the Northeast Kingdom through the Eyes of a Unique Historian." *The North Star Monthly*, 6 Mar. 2019, www.northstarmonthly.com/features/railroad-construction-in-the-northeast-kingdom-through-the-eyes-of/article_347dd488-0f65-11e9-92da-07ceecf2339.html.
- National Park Service "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation." U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>.
- Noble, Deborah. "Historic Sites and Structures Survey Form for Danville Railroad Street Historic District." 1982.
- "State Register of Historic Places." *State Register of Historic Places | Agency of Commerce and Community Development*, accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/identifying-resources/srhp.

Appendix A - Glossary

Determination of Eligibility - an evaluation of whether or not a building, structure, site, object, or district meets the criteria for the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. This process only determines eligibility for the National Register and is not to be confused with a listing. (Coleman, D.: 2019)

Historic Preservation - to maintain a historically significant building, structure, or landscape. Such repairs include using the same material types to repair existing features, removing a feature without discarding it so that it can be reinstalled at any time, or reusing a space but not necessarily for its original purpose.

Historic Restoration - to alter the current appearance of a building, structure, or landscape to accurately depict its appearance at a specific point in the past. Such repairs include replacing features that no longer exist.

Historic Sites and Structures Survey - A survey which began in 1967 with the purpose of designating historical, architectural and archaeological sites in the state of Vermont. (Coleman, D.: 2019)

Vermont State Register of Historic Places - A list of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts gathered by the state of Vermont. This is part of a larger list known as the National Register of Historic Places which was initiated in 1966 by the National Park Service.

Appendix B - Images



Figure 1.1 The railroad station could use some maintenance but it's historic integrity is mostly intact.

Source: Coffey, R.: 2017



Figure 1.1 The railroad station in 1982

Source: Noble, D.: 1982



Figure 1.2 The railroad station in all its glory. This photo was taken sometime in the late 19th century.

Source: Kanell, B.: 2019