

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS BOARD OF CANADA

RAILWAY STATION REPORT

Title: Canadian National Railways Station
Caledonia, Ontario

Source: Analytica Associates, Edmonton, Alberta

RSR-232

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian National Railways (CNR) station (Figure 1) at Caledonia, Ontario (Figure 2), was erected by the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) in 1913. A replacement for an earlier GTR station situated at the intersection of two formerly independent lines which had been taken over by the GTR, the Caledonia station was the product of the company's commitment to the upgrading of its facilities in Ontario during the boom era prior to the First World War.

The design of the Caledonia station, which incorporates several distinctive features into a standard third-generation GTR station plan, reflects the company's interest in the town as the junction point for two of its divisions, and as a potential source of local traffic. The discovery of gypsum in the area, and the opening of the first mine in 1905, had helped to revive the local economy after several decades of stagnation, and the new station was built during a period of sustained industrial development at Caledonia. Expanding business led to the extension of the depot after the First World War; eventually, however, the long-term decline of passenger and freight traffic resulted in the closure of much of the building.

The original exterior appearance of the Caledonia station has been fairly well preserved over the years, though, inevitably, some details of its decoration have been altered. The most significant changes were brought about by the extension of the building in 1924. The interior of the building has been heavily modernised in places, with the loss of much of its distinctive finish and virtually all of its fittings. Nevertheless, the building has received a heritage designation from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, based on its historical and contextual significance.

While passenger and freight facilities have long since been removed, and water and electricity have been shut off, parts of the Caledonia station continue to be used on a regular basis by CN Track Maintenance and CNCP Telecommunications. No decision has been taken, as yet, concerning the future of the building, but there is some evidence of local interest in its preservation.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Thematic

A product of the last great railway boom in Ontario, in the decades prior to the First World War, the Caledonia station is linked with several important themes in the social and economic history of the province. The first railway line through Caledonia was constructed by the Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich Railway Company (BB&G) in the early 1850s, in the initial phase of the steam railway age in Canada.¹ Thereafter, the rapidly expanding network of competing railway lines transformed southern Ontario, integrating remote rural centres like Caledonia into the wider east-west pattern of continental trade, and at the same time exercising a crucial influence on the development of internal markets, which underpinned the industrialization and urbanization of the region in the post-Confederation era.²

Steam railways came comparatively late to Canada, where there had been heavy investment in improvements to established shipping and portage routes through the Great Lakes in the first half of the nineteenth century.³ It was the challenge to these routes posed by the advance of American railways already operating south of the border which resulted in the construction of the first two Canadian trunk lines in the early 1850s. From the outset, both the Great Western Railway (GWR), and its chief rival, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR), were conceived as through lines, bridging a gap within the larger network of American railways along the main route between the Atlantic seaboard and the developing mid-West.⁴ With a similar aim in view, a smaller competitor, the BB&G, was chartered, in 1852, to build a railway linking Buffalo and Brantford, two shipping centres whose interests were perceived to be endangered by their exclusion from the GWR main line, with Goderich, a port on Lake Huron.⁵ As a contemporary observer reported, the BB&G "originated in a desire, on the part of the populous city of Buffalo, to render tributary to herself the rich peninsula of Canada West, and also to divert the stream of eastern and western travel away from the Suspension Bridge [ie. GWR] route to her own hotels and stations."⁶ Without direct access to the expanding network of railway connections, Brantford, too, risked increasing marginalization, being forced to rely on inadequate steamboat service up the Grand River Canal, a once-thriving trading route made redundant by the coming of the railways.⁷

Largely funded by American capital, together with a subscription from the citizens of Brantford, secured through the Municipal Loan Fund, the BB&G line was opened from Fort Erie, opposite Buffalo, to Caledonia, a distance of 60 miles, in December 1853, and through to Brantford in January 1854. Within two months, the line was extended as far north as Paris, where a vital interconnection was made with the newly inaugurated GWR main line running westward from Hamilton to Windsor. A passenger service between Detroit and Buffalo was established, but the BB&G was crippled by financial problems before its track could be brought up to an acceptable standard, and it was only after the sale of the company, and its rebirth as the Buffalo & Lake Huron Railway (B&LH), that the extension to Goderich was opened, in 1858.⁸ At the time, the B&LH was promoted as the "best and shortest route"⁹ for increasing east-west trade (Figure 3); in the event, however, it failed to generate the expected volume of through traffic. The mainstay of its business was the hauling of grain for export, but it was hampered by unsatisfactory port facilities at Goderich, and severely affected by the sharp decline in world trade in grain after 1857. Faced with continuing financial woes in the 1860s, the railway was taken over by the GTR, with which it finally merged in 1870.¹⁰

It now seems clear that the building boom of the 1850s had provided southern Ontario with more railway lines than it needed, "and more than it could afford,"¹¹ but contemporary wisdom attributed the failure of the B&LH to its lack of a terminus on Lake Ontario.¹² Moreover, public expectations ran so high that many local authorities assumed crushing burdens of debt in order to subsidize the construction of new lines through their towns. When Hamilton business interests, in 1853, proposed the Hamilton & Port Dover Railway (H&PD), linking Lake Ontario with Lake Erie, the plan attracted large public subsidies from both Hamilton and the village of Caledonia, where the H&PD would cross the B&LH line.¹³ Yet, despite this backing, financial difficulties delayed the completion of the H&PD, which faced formidable natural obstacles at the Niagara Escarpment and the Grand River, until the 1870s. Even the initial 16 mile section of the line between Hamilton and Caledonia remained unfinished; an agreement to have the B&LH complete the construction came to nothing when the B&LH itself failed and was absorbed by the GTR.¹⁴ A further attempt to resurrect the project, under the aegis of the Hamilton & Lake Erie Railway (H&LE), incorporated in 1871, also proved futile. Only after the amalgamation of the H&LE with the Hamilton and North Western Railway (H&NW) was the link between Hamilton and Port Dover, via Caledonia, finally opened, in 1878.

Originally chartered in 1872 to build a line north from Hamilton to Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, the H&NW was backed by commercial interests in Hamilton seeking to gain access to the northern hinterland created for Toronto by the older Northern Railway (NR), and to share in the grain and timber trade of the region.¹⁵ By 1878, with the completion of the long-dormant H&PD line, the H&NW stretched from Port Dover on Lake Erie, via

Hamilton and Barrie, as far north as Collingwood on Georgian Bay (Figure 3). While the H&NW prospectus rightly pointed out the advantages of this direct line from Lake Superior and Lake Huron to Hamilton and Buffalo, the duplication of the NR's route through largely unpopulated territory proved unprofitable, and the two rival lines soon amalgamated to form the Northern & North Western Railway (N&NW). Thereafter, this new company sought to secure the long-term interests of both Toronto and Hamilton by establishing a link with the transcontinental line of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), located still further north. With this connection, the N&NW, primarily a carrier of agricultural and forest products, took on fresh significance. Eventually, in an effort to forestall the expanding CPR, already a major competitor in southern Ontario, the GTR took over the N&NW in 1888.¹⁶

Thus, by 1888, both of the railway lines running through Caledonia had become constituent parts of the expanding GTR System. In the boom decades before 1914, the policies of the GTR, led by the dynamic Charles Melville Hays, were dictated largely by its rivalry with the CPR. Despite its highly precarious finances, the GTR moved to protect its territory from the encroachments of the CPR by acquiring a number of strategically located smaller lines, like the N&NW, and by carrying out a major upgrading of the tracks, rolling stock and facilities throughout its system, as traffic increased. Double tracking began on parts of the GTR line, curves and gradients were reduced, faster and heavier trains were introduced, and many of the company's older passenger depots, including the one at Caledonia, were replaced.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the GTR, through a subsidiary, the Grand Trunk Pacific, pushed ahead with construction of a third transcontinental line in the West, to rival both the CPR and the Canadian Northern Railway, a massive project which eventually ruined the company. After World War I, the GTR became part of the government-owned CNR system, which still operates over the old GTR routes in Ontario, including the former B&LH and H&NW lines through Caledonia. The Caledonia station survives as a tangible link with the complex early history of Ontario's railway network, which played a crucial role in the economic development of the province.

Local Development

As early as the 1780s, United Empire Loyalist families began to settle on scattered tracts of land along the banks of the Grand River, in a block of territory granted by the Crown to the Six Nations natives in recognition of their loyalty during the American War of Independence.¹⁸ Concentrated white settlement in the area of Caledonia began only in 1832, after most of the native land within Haldimand County was sold, and townships were laid out.¹⁹ Early development was focussed on the river, which provided the only transportation route through the region. Construction of a dam and the Welland Feeder Canal at Dunnville, in 1829, opened navigation to lake shipping up the river as far

as the town of Indiana. Further impetus to settlement was provided by the series of dams, canals and locks built on the river between Indiana and Brantford by the Grand River Navigation Company from 1832. Caledonia was one of a number of small riverside communities which grew up adjacent to dams and locks, on land purchased by the company.²⁰ The first inhabitants of the village were canal workers, including one Ranald McKinnon, who built a saw mill at the site in 1836, and long remained the driving force in the local economy.²¹

Despite the improvements in Grand River navigation in the 1830s, the largest influx of settlers followed the construction of the the government's Plank Road from Hamilton to Port Dover, between 1839 and 1846.²² Thereafter, daily stage service rapidly transformed the fledgling settlements along "the Plank", as it came to be known. When Ranald McKinnon, the contractor for the grading of the roadway between the Grand River and Port Dover, secured Caledonia's selection as the site for the crossing of the Plank over the river, in 1842, the village's future was assured.²³ The site was formally surveyed by the government in 1843; fittingly, it was McKinnon who gave it its name.²⁴ A wooden swing bridge was completed the same year. With these advantages, Caledonia began to attract business away from surrounding communities, and industrial development commenced on the riverbank. The production of lumber remained the chief activity, until the rich pine forests which once covered the area had been cleared.²⁵ Grist and flour mills, and even a woollen factory, among others, were established at the site, taking advantage of the plentiful supplies of water power provided by the canal locks.²⁶

The arrival of the BB&G line, in 1853, marked "the end of the old era based on water power and river transportation, and the beginning of a new era based on the steam engine and the railroad."²⁷ It was widely anticipated that the coming of the railway would bring a new age of prosperity to the village of Caledonia, yet in the short term these expectations were largely disappointed. The immediate decline in traffic over the Grand River canal system, in the face of competition from the faster and more reliable railway, undermined the thriving local economy which had grown up along the locks, and hastened the collapse of the Grand River Navigation Company.²⁸ Nevertheless, it was clear that the future prospects of Caledonia and other fledgling settlements depended on access to the expanding network of railway connections, and, in the early 1850s, the village eagerly sought to be included on a second route, designed to link Hamilton with Port Dover. Though its population was probably less than 1,000 at the time, Caledonia outbid the town of Cayuga to secure a place on the proposed H&PD line, and in 1856 committed itself to provide the railway company with a £10,000 subsidy, raised from local taxes.²⁹ As a local historian later commented, "this was a heavy debt for a time when money was scarce, and held back the building of walks, roads and other necessary public work for a very long time."³⁰ Moreover,

continuing financial and logistical problems combined to prevent the railway's completion until the 1870s.

Despite this disastrous setback, contemporary observers remained convinced of the viability of a rail connection between Hamilton and Caledonia. It was expected that, by creating a new link between Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, such a line would receive a share in the rich carrying trade from the West, and turn Caledonia into an important railway hub.³¹ With hindsight, it is possible to see that "the great prophecies of what this railroad would do for Caledonia largely proved illusionary...and Caledonia, notwithstanding the heavy indebtedness it incurred for the construction of this line, was never destined to become a great railway divisional point."³² By the time the line was finally completed, as part of the H&NW, in the 1870s, its strategic value had declined, with improvements to other parts of the system of railways and canals running through the Great Lakes. Nor was the impact of this second railway on Caledonia's economy entirely positive, for the ready access it afforded to manufactured goods cheaply mass-produced by the factories of Hamilton and Toronto contributed to the failure of many local industries.³³

By 1880, the only manufacturing enterprises remaining in Caledonia were its flour mills. While the railway was by no means the sole cause of this decline, the overall pattern of industrial development in southern Ontario in the later 19th century was strongly influenced by the proliferation of rail links within the region. Increasingly, economic power was concentrated in the largest, most favourably situated cities and towns, and this inevitably led to the relative decline of Caledonia and other small-to-medium-sized centres.³⁴ For several decades, Caledonia was to remain "little more than a farm distributing point."³⁵ The population of the village began to fall off, and did not recover until after the First World War. It was only with the establishment nearby of the first gypsum mine, in 1905, that Caledonia's fortunes began to improve. In 1911, a plaster mill was opened, and in 1916 the first wallboard factory in Canada was built at the village. Other industries later grew up at the site, including a rock wool insulation plant, which began operations in 1936.³⁶ The railway station and sidings facilitated the development of these local industries, and long continued to serve them, in the face of increasing competition from trucking operations.

With this burgeoning industrial base, the local economy expanded, and the population steadily grew, exceeding 3,000 by the 1970s. In 1974, Caledonia was incorporated, together with the surrounding villages, into a new administrative unit, the Town of Haldimand, within the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk. Today, the town survives as a minor industrial and agricultural centre. Though the role of the railway has been much reduced, freight traffic continues to run over the CN tracks, in front of the station, on a regular basis.

ARCHITECTURE

Aesthetic/Visual Qualities

The handsome design and relatively spacious overall dimensions (85' x 20') of the Caledonia station reflected the GTR's policy of upgrading facilities as traffic increased over its expanded system in the boom era before World War I. The first passenger station at Caledonia had been constructed by the BB&G in the 1850s. Later, with the opening of the H&NW line through the town, a union station was erected at the intersection of the two sets of tracks. This building, a small, unadorned frame structure of GTR standard design (Figure 4), continued to serve the GTR, as successor to both the BB&G and the H&NW, until 1913, when it was replaced by the current station.³⁷

Unlike the imposing stone or brick stations built along the Montreal-Toronto main line in the 1850s, most later GTR stations built west of Toronto were of frame construction, "like those of other contemporary railways."³⁸ Yet these frame structures did not lack visual interest. Third generation GTR depots in Ontario, built in the period from about 1890 to 1914, exhibited in varying degrees that characteristic combination of "structural rationalism and visual romanticism" which architectural historians have noted in a wide range of buildings of this vintage.³⁹ The combination of gabled and hipped bellcast roofs in the Caledonia design, for example, is typical of a number of pre-war GTR stations, and imparts to these relatively simple, functional structures the stylish profile which is their trademark, though details vary significantly from station to station.

The original plan for the Caledonia station, drawn up in the Engineer's Office of the GTR in January 1913 (Figure 5), appears to derive from the cost-saving, standardized design for what was later designated the GTR "Standard No.3 Station" (Figure 6). This easy-to-build design, for a plain, one-storey frame structure of moderate size, was employed by the GTR at a number of sites in Ontario, including, for example, Bronte (later demolished; Figure 7). The formula was not rigid; the GTR was prepared to allow more local modification of its standard plans than some other companies, notably the GTPR.⁴⁰ The Caledonia plan is distinguished by its more elaborate roofline. Rising above the ridge of the main gable, a high, bellcast hipped roof, with a gable peak, extends out over the operator's bay on the track side (Figures 5 and 8), and over the washrooms at the rear of the building (Figure 9). The increased complexity of this roofline, with its interplay of triangular shapes (Figure 8), helps to relieve the austerity of the standard design. The effect is pleasingly rustic. Though a flaring hipped dormer shown in the original drawings was never built (Figures 5 and 8), other original details, such as the decorative woodwork under the end gables, the wooden "rafter tail" brackets under the eaves,

and the large station nameboards, served to accentuate the impact of the roofline (Figure 8), easily the most memorable feature of the building.

Like many GTR depots constructed in this period, the Caledonia station initially had 1" x 6" drop siding, painted a light colour, contrasting with a darker-coloured protective base, some 3' high, clad in 1" x 3" tongue-and-groove v-jointed sheathing (Figures 5-8). Door and window trim, decorative woodwork, and stained wooden roof shingles matched the base in colour, giving some much-needed definition to the otherwise simple facades (Figure 8). The fenestration of the building was largely conventional, as was the configuration of exterior doors, though for some reason the ends of the station as they appear in the original drawings were transposed in construction, and this necessarily affected door and window placement (Figures 1 and 5). The three large, double-hung windows at the waiting room end (Figure 8) help to counteract any impression of boxiness produced by the building's extraordinary narrowness relative to its length. The small track-side bay (Figure 10), and an (original) extension housing the washrooms, at the rear of the station (Figures 9 and 11), provide the only variety in the basically rectangular layout of the station.

Inevitably, some features of the exterior appearance of the Caledonia station have been altered over the years since 1913, the most significant change being the extension of the west end of the building by 20 feet in 1924 (Figure 12). While care was taken to continue the existing roof seamlessly over this extension, the elongation of the building has upset the symmetry of its original proportions and thereby weakened the visual impact of the central hipped roof (Figure 13). The extension also entailed a wholesale rearrangement of baggage and express room doors and windows, which appear to have been shuffled again during later renovations. It is not clear exactly when the sliding door at the rear of the express room was blocked off, or whether this was related to the insertion of central double doors on the same side of the station (Figure 14). The similar sets of double doors on the track side (Figure 15) are probably of the same vintage.

Other changes to the exterior of the building have been largely cosmetic in nature. The application of dark red insulbrick, some years ago, has covered up all traces of the original drop siding, with its distinctive paint scheme. Door and window mouldings are now painted white, and doors blue, to provide contrast with the insulbrick and grey asphalt shingles; the result is striking, though far from authentic (Figures 13 and 14). Moreover, original ornamental details, such as the woodwork under the end gables and the metal roof ridges (Figure 8), have been removed (Figure 1). Several windows have been boarded up. The overall effect of these changes has been to give the station a "blank", rather anonymous appearance, compared with the original. Nevertheless, the exterior of the building has benefitted from

regular maintenance, and remains in generally good repair, though the insulbrick is now worn and peeling in several places (Figure 14). The most serious deterioration is around the base of the structure, where the partially exposed foundations require immediate attention (Figure 10).

Functional/Technological Qualities

The Caledonia station, which was built on post foundations without a basement, was a typical single-storey "combination" station, designed to accommodate passenger, baggage and express facilities, as well as general and operational offices. The original layout reflected the requirements of both the public and the railway staff, which by 1915 worked on three shifts at Caledonia, and included day and night operators, a freight clerk, baggagemen and express deliverymen, a mail man, and the Agent.⁴¹ Later, as traffic patterns and staffing requirements changed, the functional division of space within the station did not remain static, but continued to evolve to meet new demands.

The building was designed to provide relatively spacious passenger facilities, befitting the junction of two divisions of the GTR. Initially, it was the general waiting room in the centre of the station which constituted the largest single space (approximately 42' x 22'). At the track side bay, a much smaller, octagonal area (some 14 feet across), was walled off to create an office for the agent, operators and conductors, with a ticket wicket and counter opening on the general waiting room (Figure 16). Connecting with the general waiting room, a separate ladies' waiting room (15' x 20') occupied the whole of the east end of the building and provided access to the ladies' lavatory located in the extension on the south side. The adjacent men's smoking room and lavatory were reached through the general waiting room (Figure 16). According to the original plans for the station, four long bench seats were situated along the walls of the general waiting room, with two more in the ladies' waiting room, and one in the smoking room (Figure 16).

By contrast with the passenger facilities, baggage and freight facilities at the Caledonia station were limited from the outset. The baggage room (only about 12' x 20'), immediately to the west of the general waiting room, was subdivided to accommodate the coal bin (Figure 16). The adjacent freight room, occupying the far west end of the building, was also cramped (perhaps 10' x 20'), with a considerable amount of space taken up by a flapped counter. A separate freight shed standing nearby initially compensated for the lack of adequate freight facilities inside the depot itself. However, in 1924, the CNR extended the Caledonia station by some 20 feet at its west end, to create an additional "express warehouse" (20' x 20') (Figure 17). The warehouse, provided with sliding doors, front and back, was connected by a new internal door with the former freight room, now converted as an express office. Public access to this office was by a new external door on the track side, which replaced the

existing freight doors (Figure 17). The walls of both the express warehouse and office were finished with standard 1 inch tongue-and-groove v-jointed sheathing; floors were of 7/8 inch maple.

The 1924 extension of the station reflected the expansion of the express business of the newly-formed CNR at Caledonia after the First World War. Thereafter, the railway's evolving requirements brought about further changes in the functional division of space inside the building. Thus, for example, the decline and final termination of passenger service at the station eventually resulted in the conversion of the former waiting rooms into office, maintenance and storage space, which continued to be used by the CN until very recently (Figure 18). The station ceased to be used as a parcel depot in 1977. Today, only small areas at either end of the building remain in regular use; at the northeast corner, about one third of the former ladies' waiting room has been partitioned off to house CNCP Telecommunications equipment, while at the west end of the building, the express extension has been closed off to create a secure storage area for CN Track Maintenance. Some railway equipment is also stored in the former baggage and freight rooms.

Successive renovations over the years have resulted in extensive alterations to the interior finish and fittings of the station. For example, stained plywood sheets have replaced the original tongue-and-groove sheathing on walls and dados in the former waiting rooms (Figure 19), which have been further modernized by the installation of dropped ceilings, fluorescent lighting and linoleum flooring (Figures 18 and 19). The disappearance of the "decorated plastered ceiling" in the waiting room⁴² is perhaps the greatest loss, yet several authentic door mouldings have been preserved, complete with their transom windows, (Figures 18 and 19), and original wall coverings and trim remain in the washroom area (Figure 20). Still, it is the former baggage and freight areas of the station which best convey some sense of the original interior; despite modifications to accommodate modern fixtures and equipment, several walls still bear tongue-and-groove sheathing, and the original brick chimney remains visible, next to a ladder providing access to the attic crawl space (Figure 21).

With the disappearance of characteristic station furnishings, such as the long waiting room benches and the iron-grilled ticket wicket, with its overhead gas lamp,⁴³ the interior of the Caledonia station, in its current condition, has less integrity than the exterior. However, the interior has been generally well maintained and remains in fairly good repair, though the washroom ceiling requires attention (Figure 20). The station is now without electricity or water, these services having recently been disconnected.

ENVIRONMENT

Setting

The Caledonia station is situated on the south side of the CNR tracks, just northwest of the intersection of Argyle Street with Orkney Street West (Figure 22), on a site somewhat detached from the main residential and commercial centre of the town. As far back as the 1870s, local industries were attracted to the site, which marked the point at which the H&NW line intersected with the older BB&G tracks (by means of a diamond laid out a short distance to the east of the station).⁴⁴ Despite a marked decline in industrial activity at the town in the late 19th century, the opening of the first gypsum mine in 1905 heralded a new era of growth; by 1925, the gypsum works and a large milling operation, as well as a dairy, clustered near the tracks, north of the station.⁴⁵

Early photographs show a grain elevator directly across the tracks from the station (Figure 23). A landmark wooden water tower for many years stood just to the south of the station, adjacent to several other railway structures, including a substantial freight shed (Figure 22) and several sidings.⁴⁶ To the east and west of the station, the railway's right-of-way remained open, in a largely agricultural setting. One anomaly, from the outset, was the proximity to the station of a tree-lined pioneer graveyard, only a few yards away to the southeast, adjacent to the tracks. This unlikely juxtaposition continues to lend a quiet dignity to the otherwise utilitarian environment of the station (Figure 24).

To the north of the station, just across the tracks, a dilapidated grain elevator still stands on the original site of the Caledonia Milling Company's plant; next to it, a modernized warehouse has been converted as a flea market (Figure 25). Further north, beyond several farm buildings, is the site of the Domtar plant, one of the town's major employers. With the exception of a lumber yard to the northeast, there has been little development in the area along the right-of-way, stretching east and west of the station; only a scattering of farm and residential buildings is visible, some distance away (Figures 25 and 26). Modern warehouses and silos cluster along the active railway sidings immediately behind the station, to the southwest; this light industrial area is accessible by gravel roads from the south and east (Figures 25 and 27). Enclosed by a chain link fence topped with barbed wire, the tall, red telecommunications pylon standing at the east end of the station remains easily the most prominent landmark in the vicinity (Figures 1 and 25).

Community Status

While no final decision has been taken by CN concerning the future of the Caledonia station,⁴⁷ there is some evidence of

local interest in its preservation. As early as 1978, the weekly Grand River Sachem reported that, when the building had outlived its usefulness to the railway as a maintenance and storage facility, it might be "offered as an historical site, before being torn down," despite problems of access which could limit its potential as a tourist attraction.⁴⁸ More recently, the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) in Caledonia conducted a preliminary study of the building, and found it "worthy of conservation,"⁴⁹ though no formal request for a municipal designation has yet been made to the Town of Haldimand, into which Caledonia has merged. Meanwhile, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture has designated the Caledonia station a Class C Heritage Site, that is, "historically and contextually significant," in its associations with the early railway history of the region.⁵⁰ As long as the building's fate remains uncertain, the best guarantee of its survival continues to be public awareness of its historical importance to the community.

Endnotes

- 1 A. W. Currie, The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), pp. 246-250. See also Wayne Paddon, Steam and Petticoats: The Railway Era in Southwestern Ontario (St. Thomas, Ontario: The Author, 1977), p. 76; and John N. Jackson and John Burtniak, Railways in the Niagara Peninsula: Their Development, Progress and Community Significance (Belleville, Ontario: Mika, 1978), pp. 91-94.
- 2 Douglas McCalla, Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784 - 1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 199-216. See also G. P. de T. Glazebrook, A History of Transportation in Canada (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), pp. 177-178.
- 3 Jackson and Burtniak, op. cit., pp. 17-19, 25.
- 4 Glazebrook, op. cit., p. 166.
- 5 Currie, op. cit., pp. 246-247.
- 6 T. C. Keefer, "Travel and Transportation," in H. Y. Hind, et al, Eighty Years' Progress of British North America (Toronto: Nichols, 1864), p. 234, cited in Jackson and Burtniak, op. cit., p. 91.
- 7 B. E. Hill, "The Grand River Navigation Company," Ontario History 63 (1971), pp. 31-40. See also W. J. Quinsey, York, Grand River, Its Early History and Directory, 1834 - 1860 (Caledonia, Ontario: York Grand River Historical Society, 1991), pp. 90-92; and Jackson and Burtniak, op. cit., p. 97.

- 8 G. R. Stevens, History of the Canadian National Railways (New York: Macmillan, 1973), p. 129.
- 9 Paddon, op. cit., p. 76.
- 10 Jackson and Burtniak, op. cit., p. 94.
- 11 Joseph Schull, Ontario Since 1867 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), p. 24.
- 12 Jackson and Burtniak, op. cit., p. 94.
- 13 Alex H. Arrell, ed., A Short History of Caledonia (Caledonia, Ontario: Caledonia Centennial Committee, 1950), p. 29.
- 14 Currie, op. cit., p. 274.
- 15 Peter J. Stoddart, "The Development of the Southern Ontario Steam Railway Network Under Competitive Conditions, 1830 - 1914," (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Guelph, 1976), pp. 69-77. See also Stevens, op. cit., pp. 125-127; Jacob Spelt, Urban Development in South Central Ontario (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972), pp. 110, 115, 121, 134; and Charles Cooper, Rails to the Lakes: The Story of the Hamilton & North Western Railway (Cheltenham, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1980), passim.
- 16 Currie, op. cit., pp. 276-280.
- 17 Glazebrook, pp. 294-304. See also Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, "Ontario's Railway Network: Its Growth and Development," (Unpublished MS, "Issue Paper" for the Ontario Heritage Foundation, 1986), p. 3.
- 18 H. R. Page, Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Counties of Haldimand and Norfolk (Toronto: H. R. Page & Co., 1879), p. 4.
- 19 Arrell, op. cit., p. 5. See also Seneca Centennial Historical Committee, The Township of Seneca History, Centennial Year, 1867 - 1967 (Seneca, Ontario, 1967), p. 4.
- 20 Township of Seneca History, p. 60.
- 21 Illustrated Historical Atlas, p. 14.
- 22 Ibid., p. 5. See also Arrell, op. cit., p. 11. The Plank had 15 different taverns along its route, and the stages stopped at every one, turning the trip to Caledonia into a "glorious carouse"; hence the expression "plunked on the Plank." Cooper, op. cit., p. 38.
- 23 Township of Seneca History, p. 62.

- 24 Arrell, op. cit., p. 10.
- 25 Illustrated Historical Atlas, p. 5.
- 26 Arrell, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
- 27 Township of Seneca History, p. 62.
- 28 Ibid. Local historians have pointed out that, while the coming of the BB&G effectively doomed the inland waterway on the Grand River, the railway did assist in opening Caledonia and other towns to settlement. See, for example, R. B. Nelles, County of Haldimand in the Days of Auld Lang Syne (Port Hope, Ontario: Hamly Press, 1905), p. 44.
- 29 Currie, op. cit., p. 274.
- 30 B. E. French, cited in Cooper, op. cit., p. 25.
- 31 Arrell, op. cit., p. 29. In 1873, one local entrepreneur optimistically asserted that "the opening of the Hamilton & Lake Erie Railroad will make Hamilton virtually a suburb of Caledonia...." Grand River Sachem, 12 May 1873, cited in Maybelle Salkeld, "Caledonia and the Railways," Grand River Sachem, 24 October 1979.
- 32 Arrell, op. cit., p. 29.
- 33 Ibid., p. 30.
- 34 McCalla, op. cit., p. 215.
- 35 Arrell, op. cit., p. 32.
- 36 Township of Seneca History, p. 67.
- 37 Cooper, op. cit., p. 40.
- 38 R. Greenhill, K. Macpherson and D. Richardson, Ontario Towns (Toronto: Oberon, 1974), unpaginated.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Charles H. Bohi, Canadian National's Western Depots: The Country Stations in Western Canada (Toronto: Railfare Enterprises, 1977), p. 46.
- 41 Maybelle Salkeld, "Caledonia and the Railways," Grand River Sachem, 24 October 1979.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.

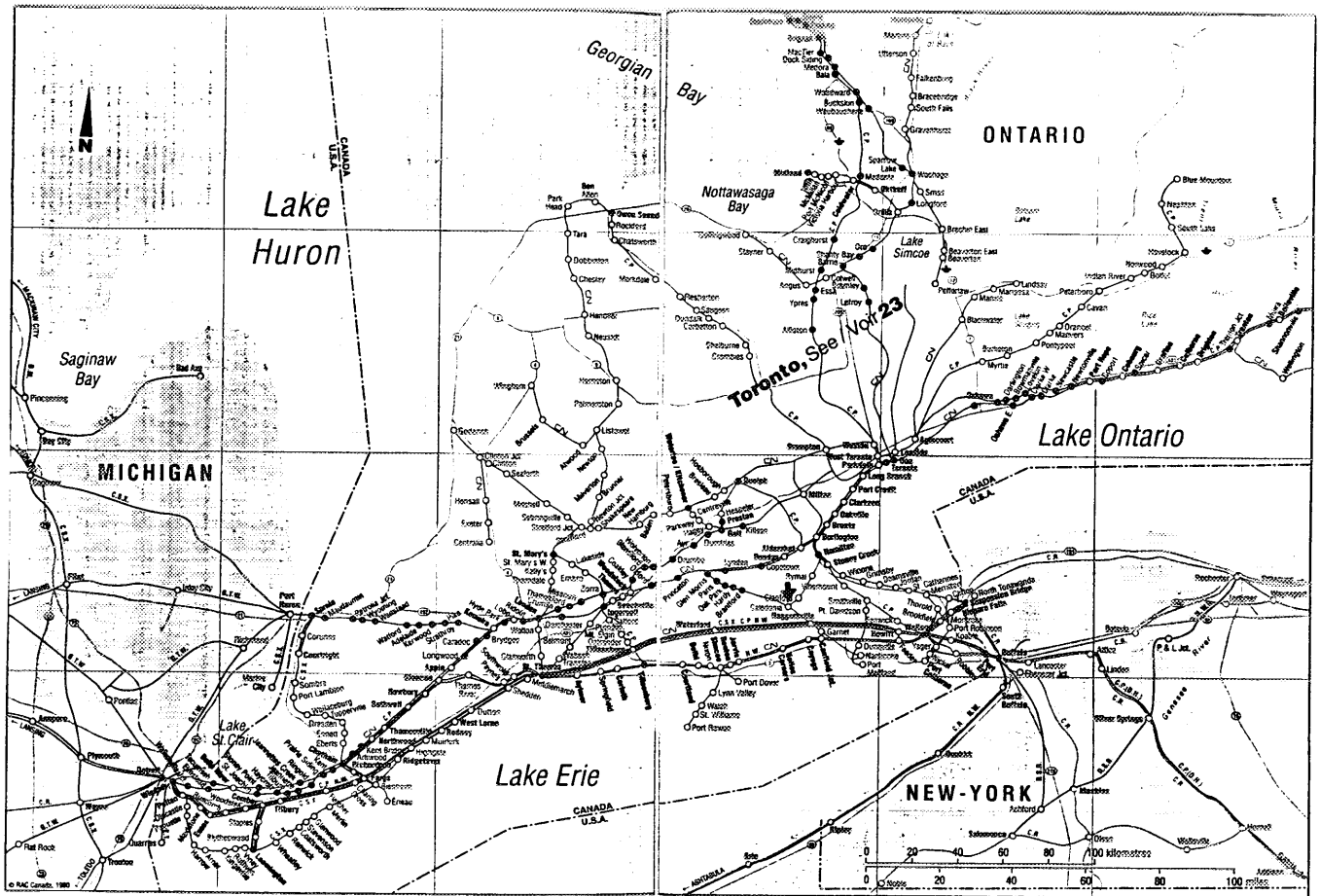
- 44 Cooper, op. cit., p. 44.
- 45 Underwriters Survey Bureau, "Caledonia, Ontario, Population 1,390, Plan, August 1925," sheet 1A.
- 46 Cooper, op. cit., p. 43.
- 47 Mr. Brian LaFerriere, CN Track Supervisor, Caledonia, in conversation with the author, 13 December 1993.
- 48 Cooper, op. cit., p. 44.
- 49 Mr. Bob Lee, President, Caledonia LACAC, in conversation with the author, 9 March 1994.
- 50 Ontario Heritage Foundation (OHF) and Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture (MCC), "Planning for Heritage Railway Stations, Volume 2, Inventory," (Unpublished MS, February 1987), "Caledonia."

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



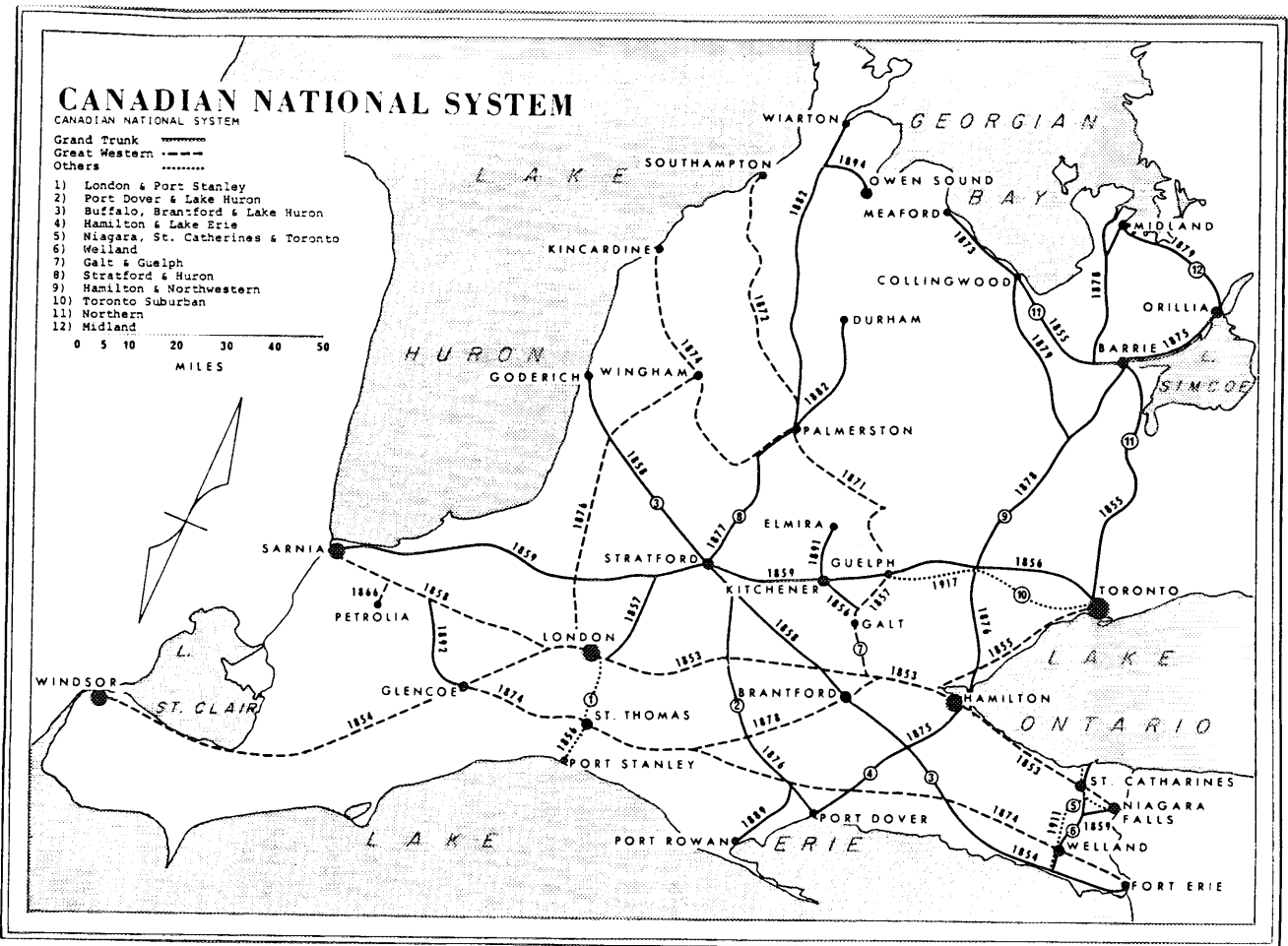
- 1 Canadian National Railways (CNR) station, Caledonia, Ontario, built by the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) in 1913, to a design adapted from a standard plan, north side elevation, three quarter view from the northeast, showing distinctive roofline, with a central hipped roof above the main gable roof, and later west end extension. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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2 Railway map of south-central Ontario, 1990, detail, showing the location of Caledonia. (Reproduced from Railway Association of Canada, Atlas: Canadian Railways, pp. 26-27.)

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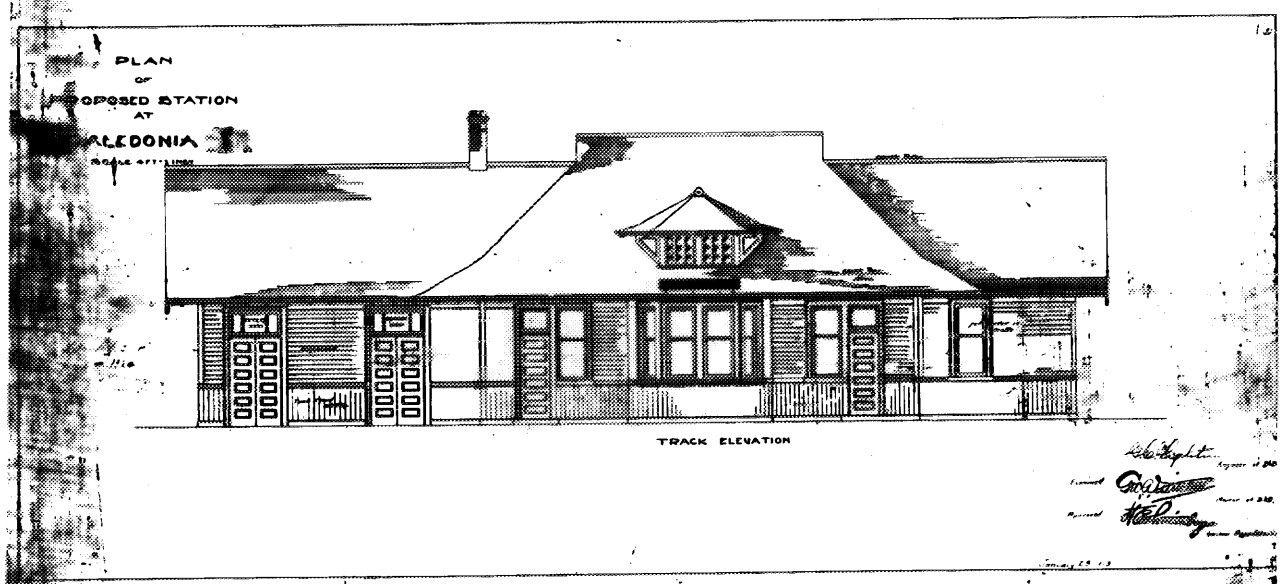
3 Map of the constituent parts of the CNR System in southwestern Ontario, ca. 1920, showing former Buffalo, Brantford & Lake Huron (3), Hamilton & Lake Erie (4), and Hamilton & North Western (9) lines. (Reproduced from Christopher Andraea, A Historical Railway Atlas of Southwestern Ontario, p. 14.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



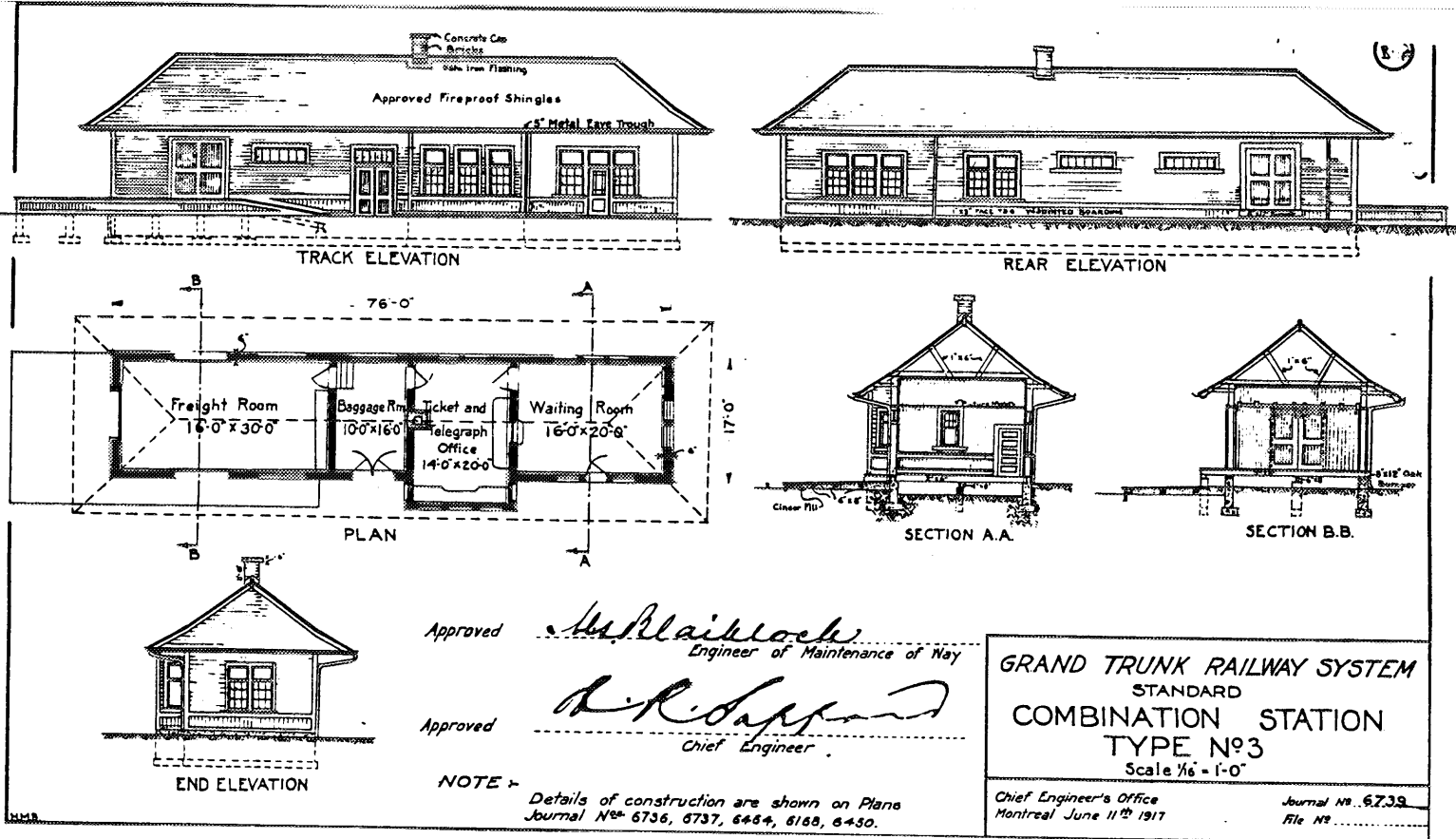
- 4 GTR "Union" depot, Caledonia, predecessor of the present station, at the intersection of the old Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich (BB&G) and Hamilton & North Western (H&NW) tracks, east end view, no date, but between 1888 and 1913. (Reproduced from Charles Cooper, *Rails to the Lakes*, p. 40.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



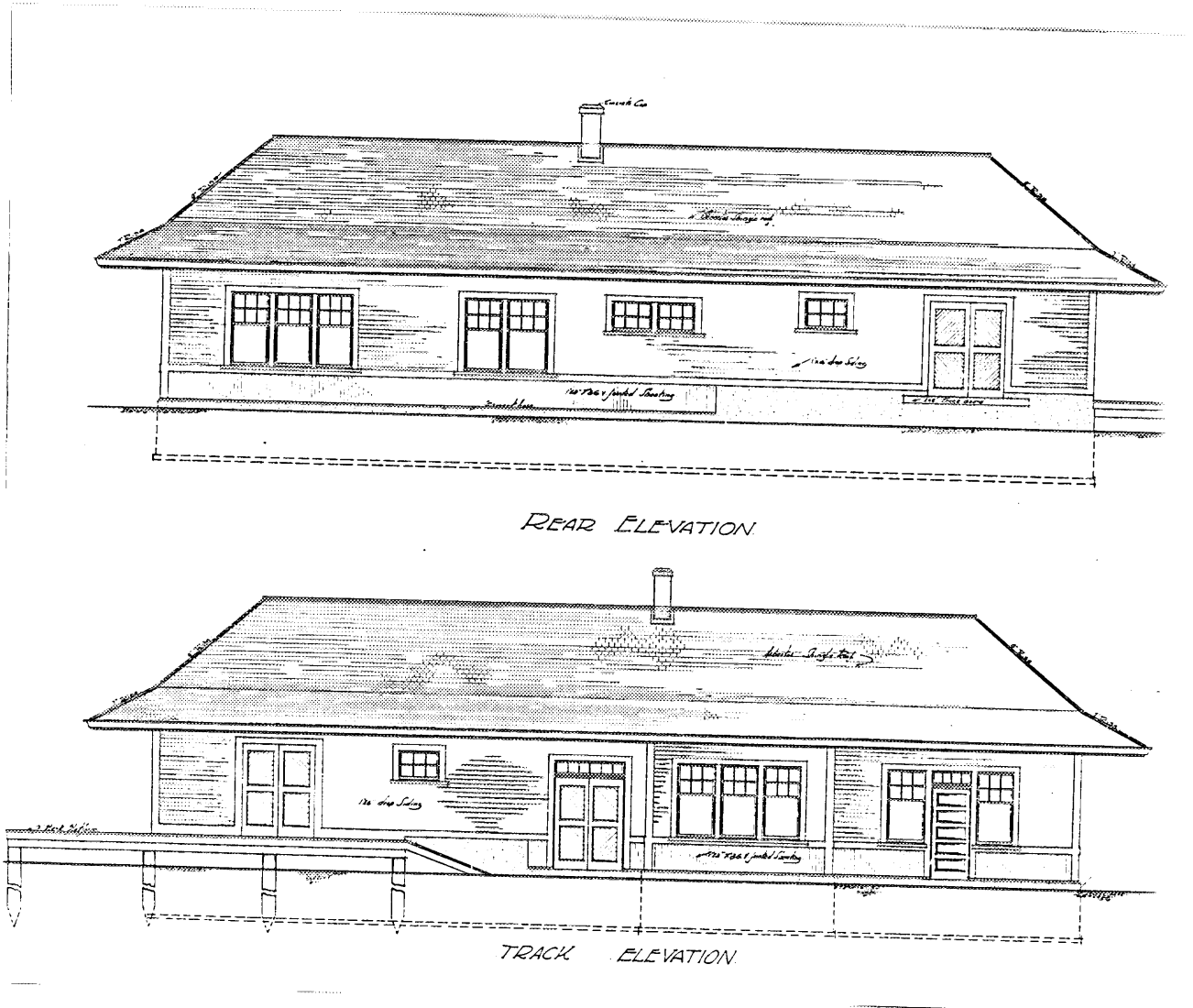
- 5 "Plan of the Proposed Station at Caledonia," track side elevation, drawing prepared in the Engineer's Office of the GTR, dated 28 January 1913, showing the distinctive central hipped roof above the main gable roof, and a hipped dormer omitted from the station as built; with the ends of the building transposed. (National Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, NMC 55042.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



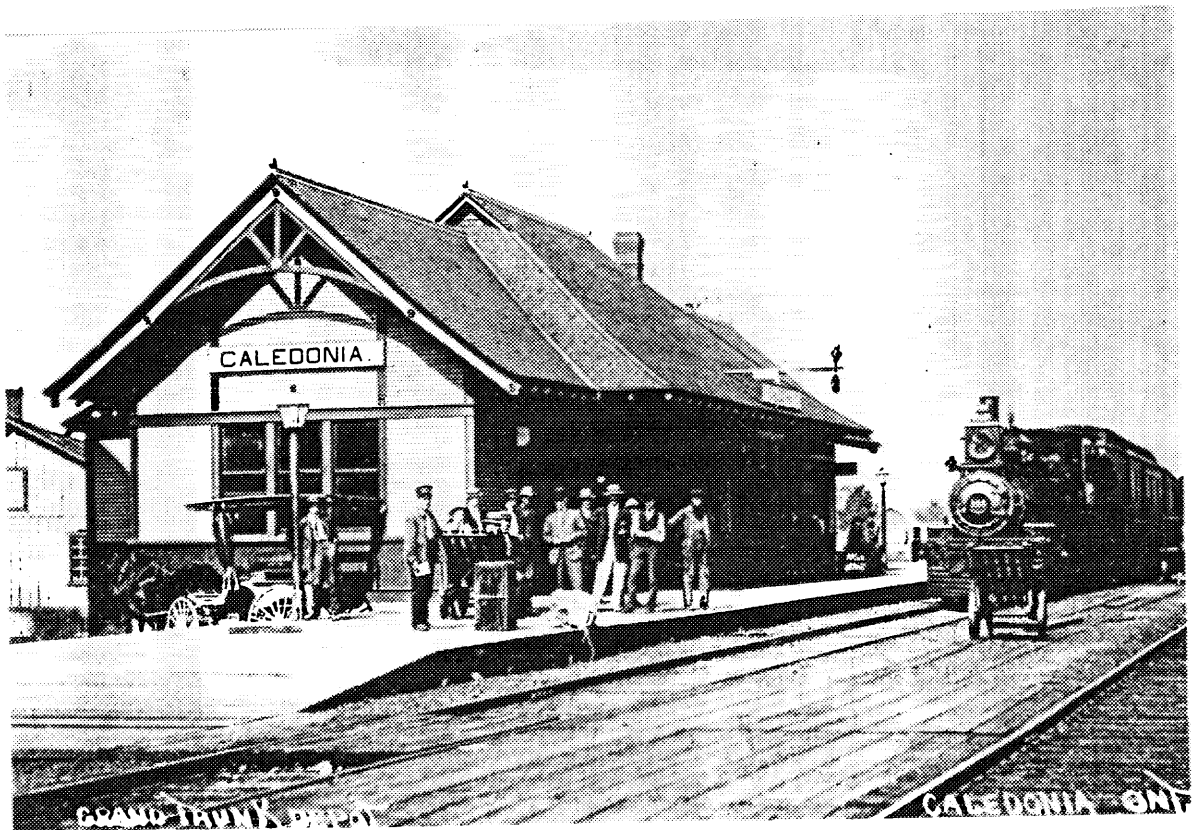
6 Drawings of "Grand Trunk Railway System Standard Combination Station Type No. 3," elevations, floor plan and sections, prepared by the GTR Chief Engineer's Office, Montreal, 11 June 1917, showing basic stylistic similarities to the Caledonia station plan, notably in overall shape and proportions, though the latter has a more elaborate roofline, and other details vary. (Courtesy of the CNR Engineering Department, Montreal.)

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- 7 "Proposed new station at Bronte," drawings of track and rear elevations, prepared in the GTR Engineer's Office, 1916, to the "Proposed Standard No. 3" plan, showing basic stylistic similarities to the Caledonia station plan, in overall shape and proportions, though the latter has a more elaborate roofline, and other details vary. (National Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, NMC 78620.)

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- 8 GTR station, Caledonia, shortly after its construction in 1913, three quarter view from the northeast, showing the original exterior appearance of the building, including the complex roofline, decorative woodwork under the gable, rafter tail brackets under the eaves, and characteristic paint scheme. (Mrs. E. J. Jones Collection, reproduced from Cooper, Rails to the Lakes, p. 40.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



- 9 CNR station, Caledonia, south facade, three quarter view from the southeast, showing the high hiped roof extending over the washrooms, with rafter tail brackets visible under the eaves. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



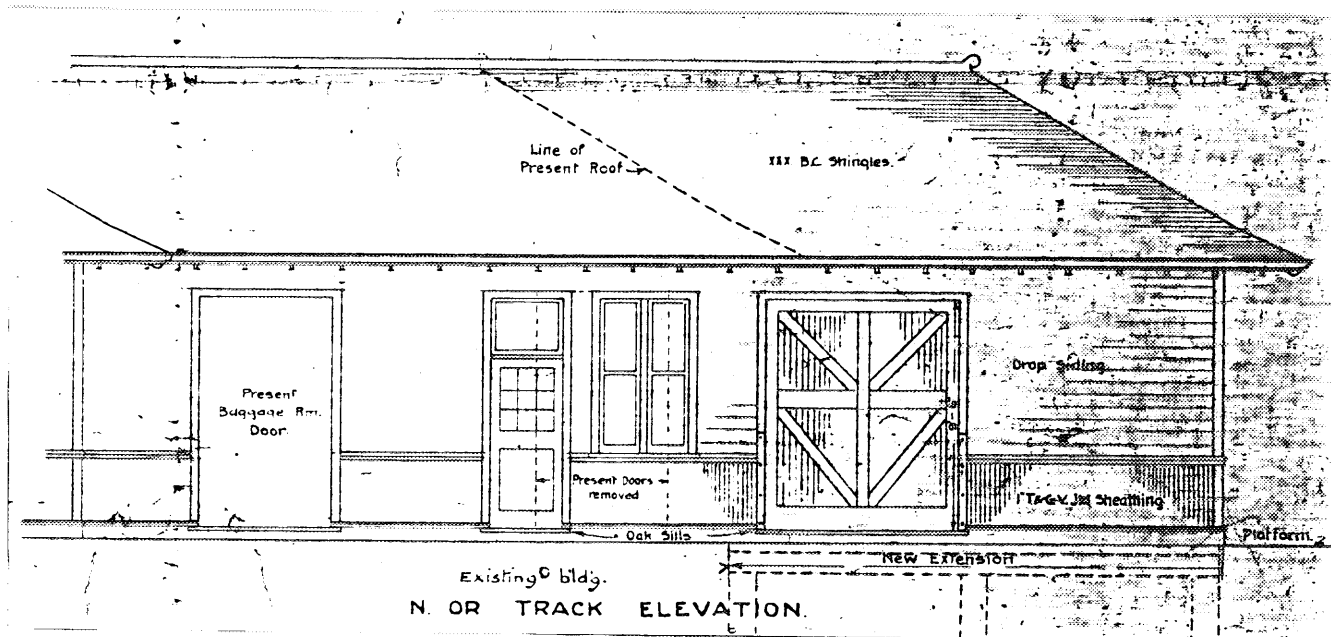
- 10 CNR station, Caledonia, track side facade, detail showing the small operator's bay, with distinctive canopy brackets above, with worn insulbrick siding, and ground crumbling away in places to expose the foundations. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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- 11 CNR station, Caledonia, south side facade, showing the basically rectangular plan of the building, varied toward the east end by the extension housing the washrooms, a feature included in the original design. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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12 "Proposed Extension to Station for Express Facilities, Caledonia," drawing prepared in the Office of the Chief Engineer, CNR, 3 June 1924, track side elevation, detail showing the 20 foot extension of the building at the west end, with continuation of the roofline and distinctive canopy brackets. (Courtesy of CN Engineering, Toronto.)

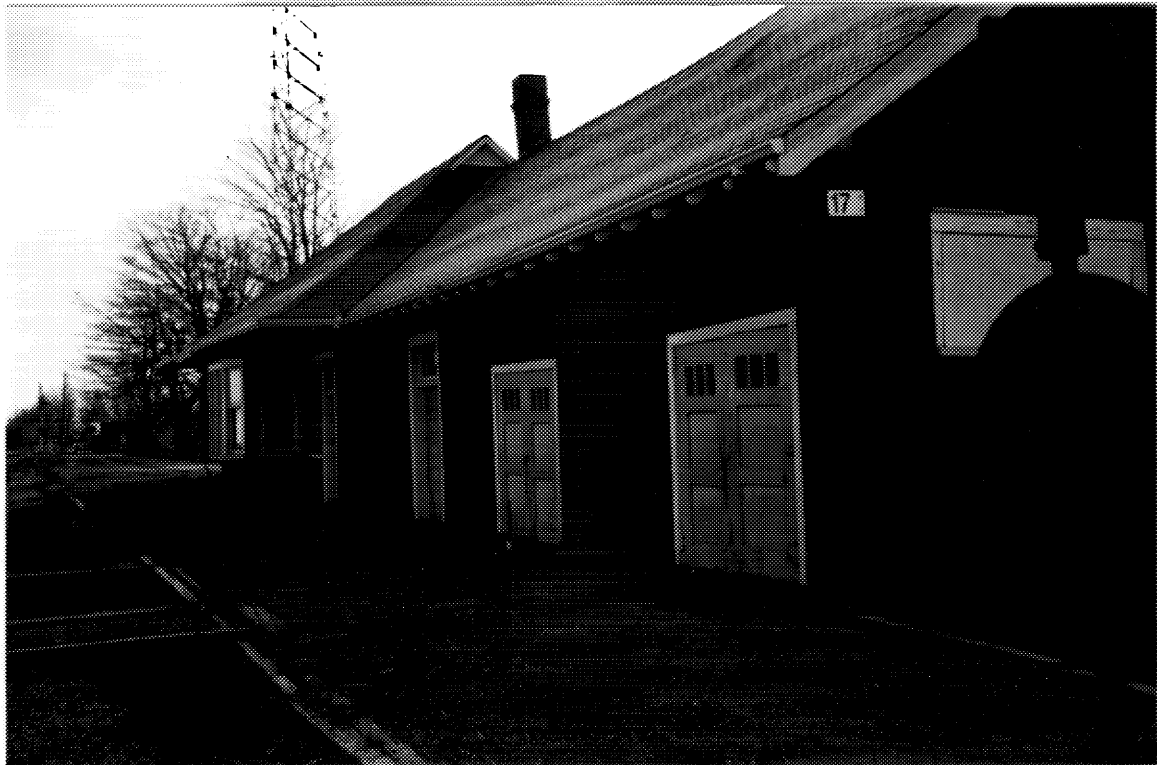


13 CNR station, Caledonia, south elevation, showing the effect of the 1924 extension of the building by some 20 feet at the west or freight end. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO

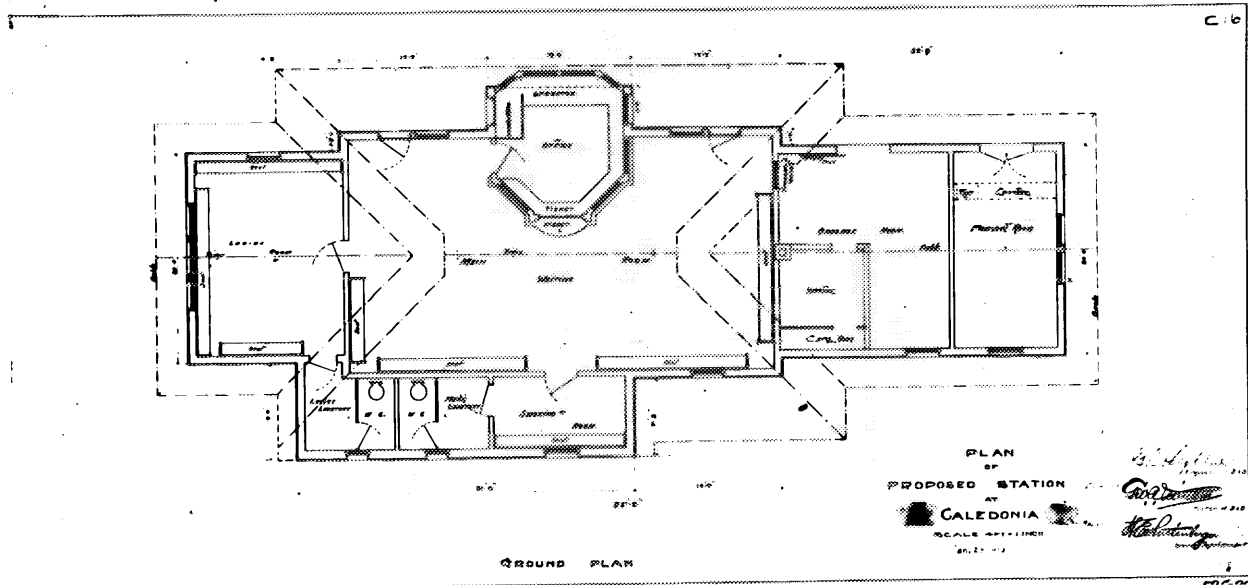


- 14 CNR station, Caledonia, south elevation, detail showing added double baggage doors at the centre of the station, with wooden loading platform. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

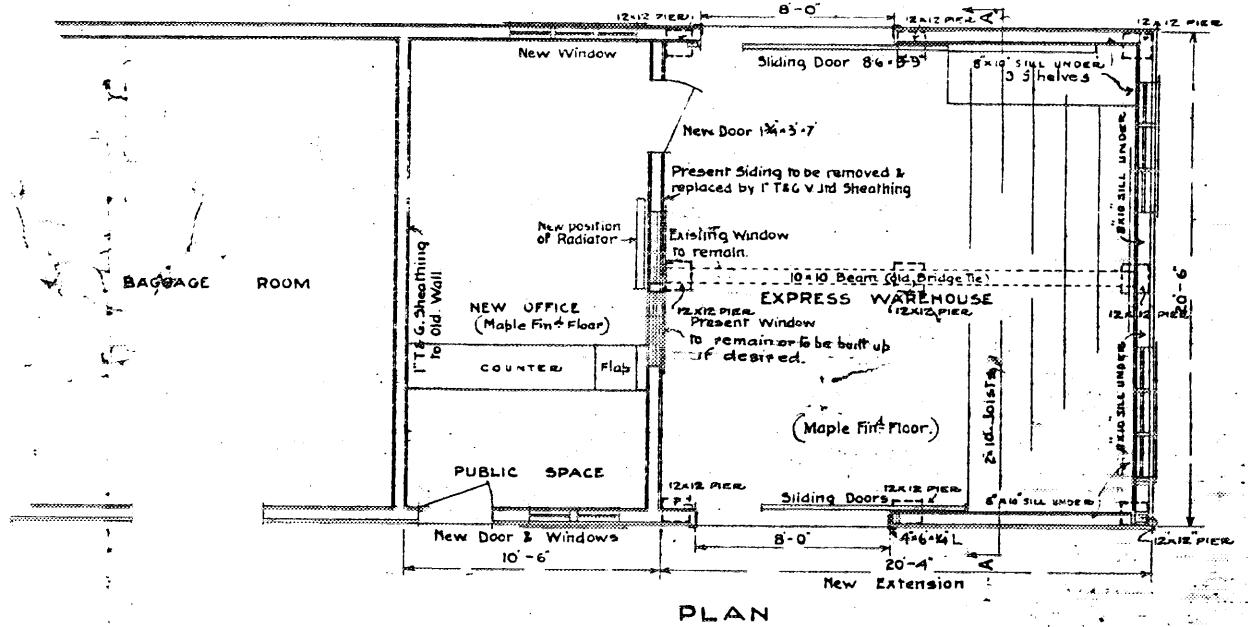


- 15 CNR station, Caledonia, track side elevation, detail showing two sets of double doors at the west end, added after the extension of the building in 1924. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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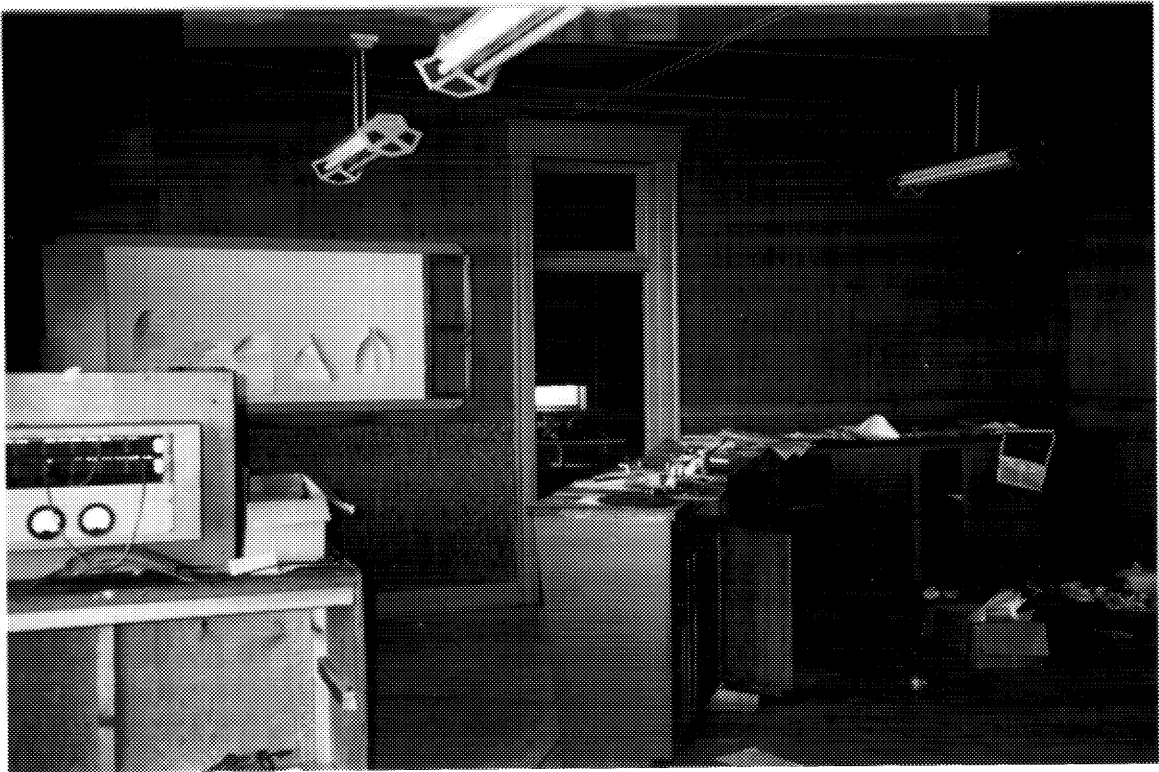


16 "Plan of the Proposed Station at Caledonia," floor plan, drawing prepared in the Engineer's Office of the GTR, dated 28 January 1913, showing the original layout of rooms within the station, though, in construction, the ends of the building were transposed. (National Archives of Canada, National Map Collection, NMC 55043.)



17 "Proposed Extension to Station for Express Facilities, Caledonia," drawing prepared in the Office of the Chief Engineer, CNR, 3 June 1924, floor plan, detail. (Courtesy of CN Engineering, Toronto.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



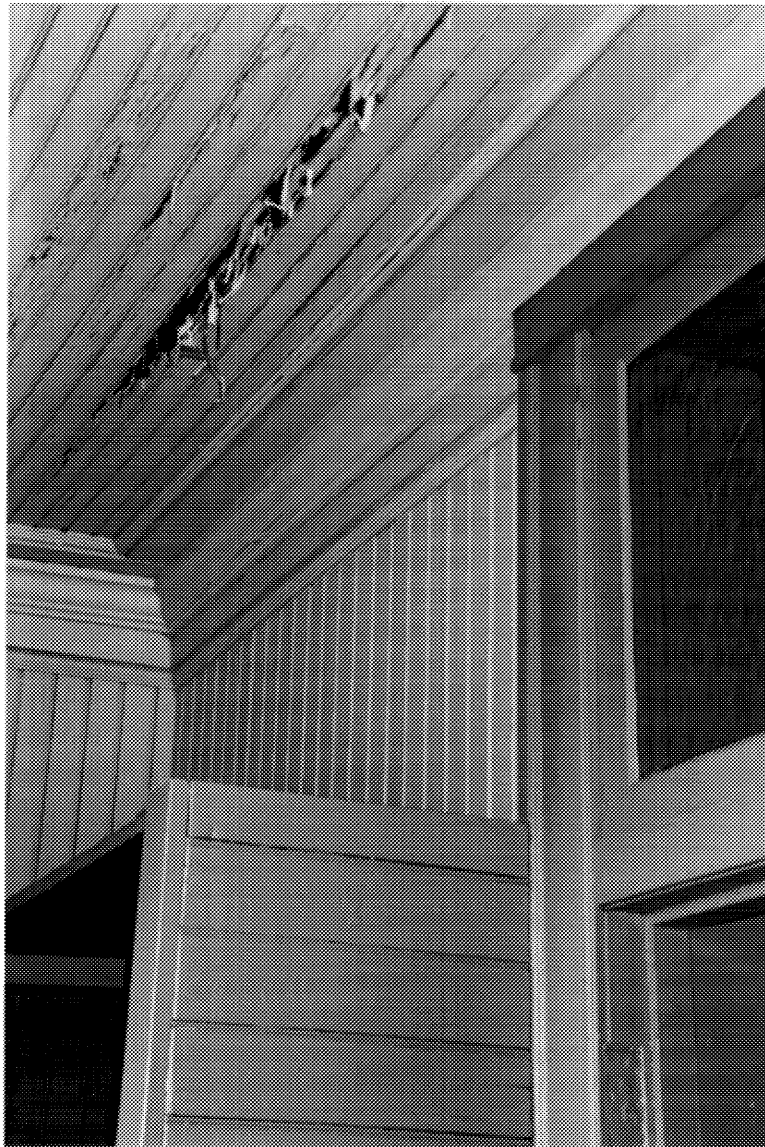
- 18 CNR station, Caledonia, interior, former general waiting room, used as office and storage space until recently, showing the effects of the modernization of the ceiling, floor and lighting; with former ladies' waiting room just visible beyond the surviving original door frame and transom. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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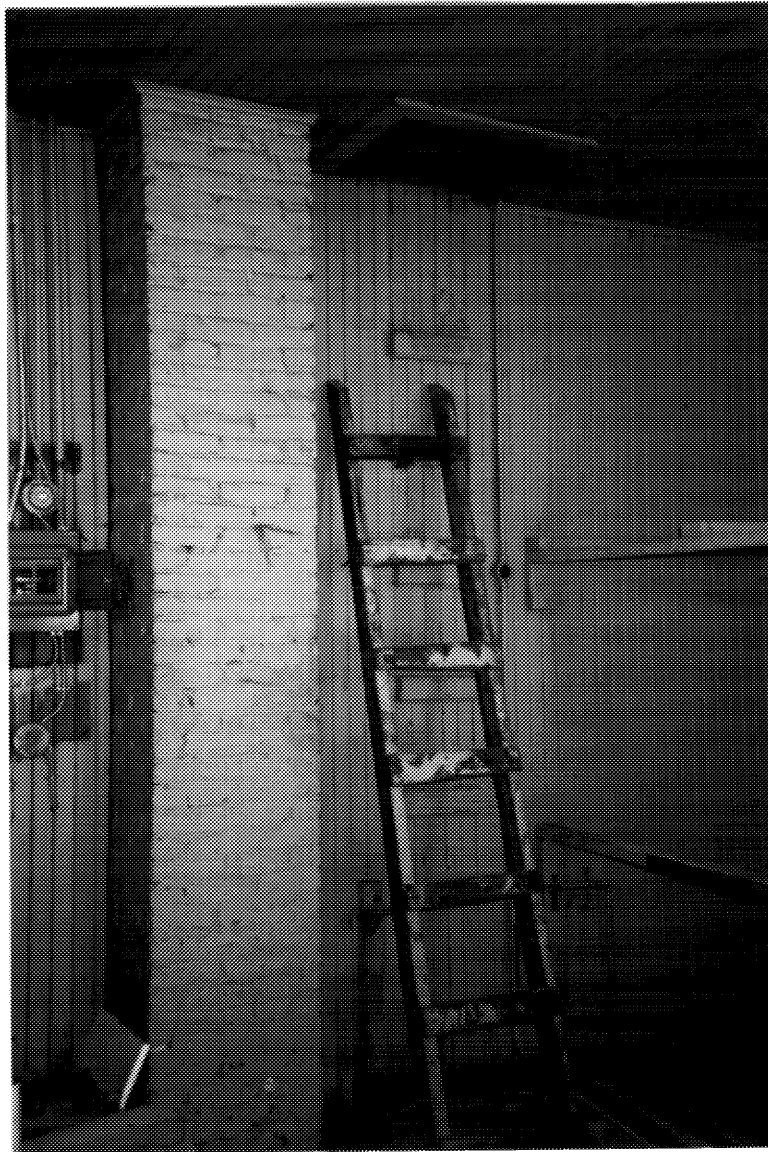
- 19 CNR station, Caledonia, interior, former general waiting room, detail showing plywood wall coverings, linoleum floors, and flourescent lighting; with original door frame and transom at the entrance to the washroom, partially visible at the extreme left. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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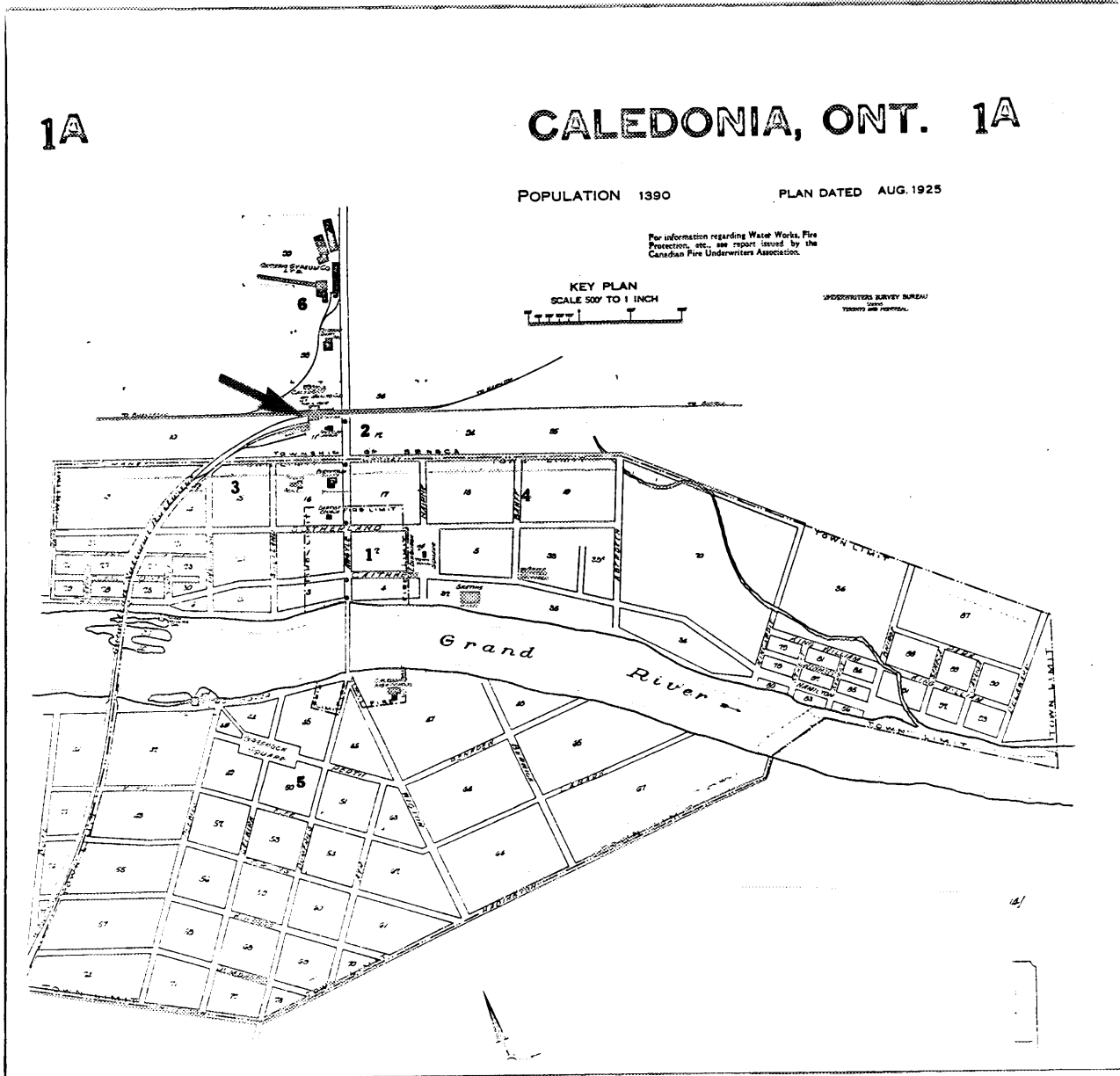
- 20 CNR station, Caledonia, interior, washroom extension, detail showing a surviving original door frame and transom, original tongue-and-groove sheathing on the walls and ceiling, and some damage to the ceiling. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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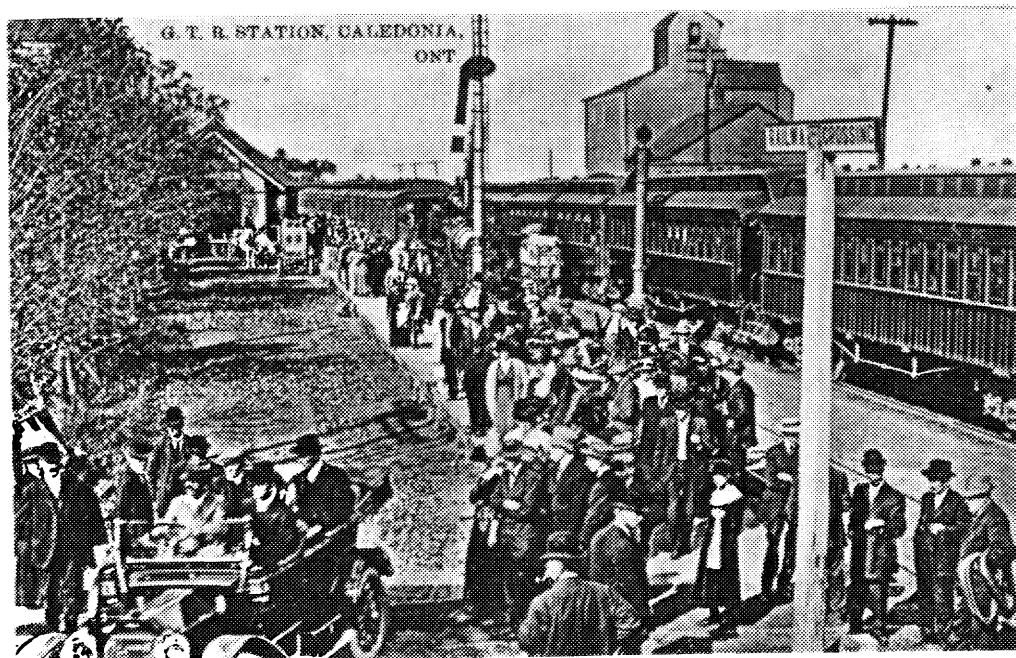
- 21 CNR station, Caledonia, interior, former freight room, detail of surviving tongue-and-groove sheathing on the wall, original brick chimney, and ladder providing access to the attic crawl space. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



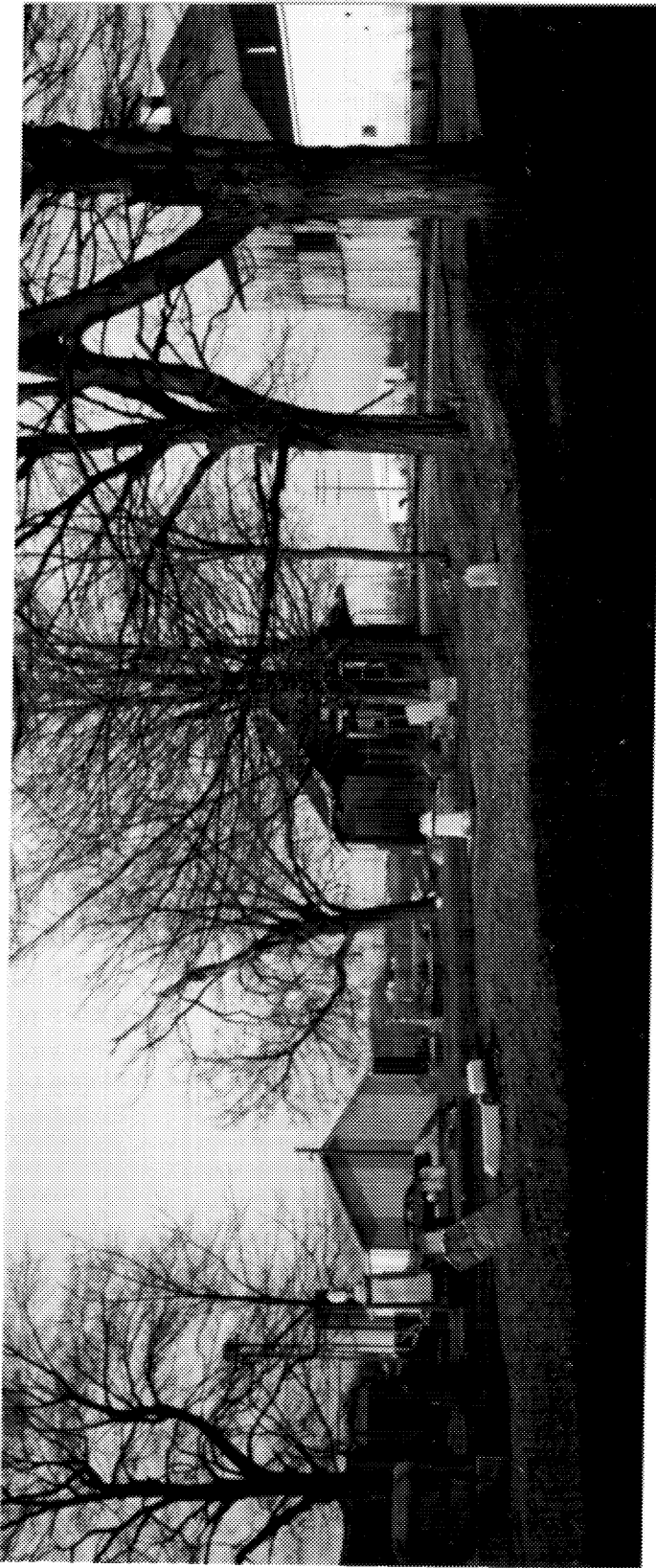
22 Fire insurance plan of Caledonia, prepared by the Underwriters Survey Bureau, dated August 1925, detail showing the location of the CNR station north of the commercial and residential areas of the town, with nearby industrial development. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, CALEDONIA, ONTARIO



- 23 GTR station, Caledonia, from the east, showing the large platform and adjacent open area, with the prominent grain elevator north of the tracks, 1913. (Reproduced from Cooper, Rails to the Lakes, p. 42.)

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24 CNR station, panorama from the southeast, showing the adjacent pioneer cemetery, sheltered by large trees; warehouses to the north and south of the station. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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- 25 CNR station, Caledonia, panorama from the east, showing the open right-of-way, with the elevator and warehouses on the north side of the tracks, and a tall telecommunications pylon situated at the east end of the station. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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26 CNR station, Caledonia, panorama from the west, showing the open right-of-way, with farm buildings some distance to the east, and the elevator and converted warehouse across the tracks. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)

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- 27 CNR station, Caledonia, panorama from the north, showing a part of the light industrial area behind the station to the southwest, and the open area along the right-of-way. (John L. Nicholls, Analytica Associates, 1993.)