

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS BOARD OF CANADA

RAILWAY STATION REPORT

Title: Canadian National Railways (CNR) Station
Jarvis, Ontario

Source: Susan D. Bronson, architecte, Montréal

RSR-269

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian National Railways (CNR) station in Jarvis, Ontario (Figure 1) was constructed by the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) around 1907¹ to replace an earlier station that had been destroyed by fire. It was designed to serve two GTR lines that intersected at Jarvis: the east-west route of the former Great Western Railway's Canada Air Line and the former Hamilton & Northwestern Railway (H&NWR) line that connected Port Dover on Lake Erie to Ontario's northland via Hamilton (Figure 2). While the architectural expression of the new Jarvis station is similar to that of numerous other wood-frame stations constructed by the GTR during the first two decades of the 20th century, it distinguished itself with two features that resulted from its position at the junction of two railway lines: its two operator's bays allowed the station agents to see the trains approaching on both tracks, and its "octagonal"² waiting room provided passengers with abundant daylight and views of trains arriving from all directions.

It has been over six decades since the former HNWR tracks connecting Jarvis to Port Dover were pulled up, and the former Canada Air Line, used today only for freight transport, may be abandoned in the near future. Although the station no longer serves railway purposes, the building remains remarkably intact; its unique design and prominent location at the northern entrance to the village make it an eloquent testimony to the railway heyday enjoyed by Jarvis during the two decades leading up to and following the turn of the 20th century. Currently rented to The Neat Little Bookshop, the former station building is one of the few stations of its type that is open to the public.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Thematic

The CNR station at Jarvis, constructed by the GTR around 1907 to replace the former GWR's station building, provides a revealing

testimony to the heyday and the demise of the myriad of railway lines built by competing companies in southern Ontario during the second half of the 19th century. Both of the two lines served by the GTR's Jarvis station - the former Great Western Railway's Canada Air Line and the former Hamilton and Northwestern Railway - were constructed as a result of rivalry between railway companies, and both were threatened from the start because they were completed after other routes with similar destinations had already been established (Figure 2). Both lines were acquired by the GTR in the 1880s, the former as part of the company's effort to buy out its main competitor in southern Ontario, and the latter to prevent its other rival, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), from acquiring smaller lines in the region (Figure 3).

The first railway line through Jarvis, known as both the Canada Air Line Railway and the Great Western Loop Line, was completed by the GWR in 1873, when its position as the only east-west route through the Niagara Peninsula was threatened by a new line proposed (and soon afterwards constructed) by Canada Southern Railway (CSR) (Figure 2). So-named because "air line" refers to the shortest distance between two points, the Canada Air Line Railway linked Glencoe, just west of London - via St. Thomas (RSR-8), Tillsonburg and Jarvis - to Canfield, where it met the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway which led to the International Bridge, at the time under construction near Fort Erie (Figures 2, 3). While the company's existing route from Hamilton to the Suspension Bridge involved crossing the Niagara Escarpment twice, the Air Line was less costly to operate because it was shorter in distance and relatively consistent in elevation. In addition, it followed a straight line north of Lake Erie and thus allowed the GWR to reap the benefits of serving a series of new villages and agricultural regions.³

Eventually, the multiplicity of railways in the Pensinsula resulted in rate wars and competition for trade. In 1882, the Canada Air Line, along with the other Great Western routes, was amalgamated into the Grand Trunk's expanding railway network (Figure 3). By 1890, the only lines which were not amalgamated by the GTR were the Canada Southern Railway (CSR) and its associate, the Erie and Niagara Railway (Figure 2).⁴

The other line through Jarvis, the Hamilton and Northwestern Railway,⁵ was originally a privately owned line between Port Dover on Lake Erie - via Hamilton on Lake Ontario, and then along the Beach, through the Caledon and Albion Hills - to Barrie on Lake Simcoe and Collingwood on Georgian Bay (Figure 4). Its history can be traced as far back as 1835, when the legislature of Upper Canada granted charters of incorporation to the Hamilton and Port Dover Railroad. The depression and difficult conditions in Britain prevented progress, and it wasn't until 1853 that a group of Hamilton businessmen led by Sir Allan Napier McNab and Hugh C. Baker revived the 1835 charter and incorporated the Hamilton and Port Dover Railway with the right to build to Port Dover. Although it was clear by this time that the GWR would be

arriving in Hamilton in 1854, the Board of Directors defended its move on the basis of the success experienced in Toronto, Hamilton's rival city:

Again, turn your attention to the results of the Toronto Northern Railway, a railway which was constructed amidst much opposition and ridicule, but it has astonished everyone, and Toronto has gained by it, even if she never gets a farthing of her subscription. So with Hamilton, and we must, if we wish it to become a great city, do our best to obtain more railways.

The importance, too, of connecting Lakes Ontario and Erie by railway, bringing to our city a direct intercourse with Cleveland, Erie and other American ports on the south shore of Lake Erie, together with a cheap supply of coal, are also objects worthy of our best exertions.⁶

For a host of political and economical reasons, it wasn't until 1873 that tracks were laid as far as Jarvis and the railway, which was now called the Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway Company, was officially opened for traffic. And it took until 1878 - three years after the Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway Company amalgamated with the Hamilton and Northwestern to form the Hamilton and Northwestern Railroad Company - to complete the railway as far as Port Dover (Figure 4).⁷ According to one historian, this line was doomed from the start because it "had the misfortune, politically, to come in second:"

When construction began on the Hamilton and Northwestern, the Great Western Railway had been serving nigh on two decades. The Northern Railway (the original Ontario, Simcoe and Huron), the nemesis of the Hamilton and Northwestern, had begun operations also just over two decades previously.⁸

In addition to providing Hamilton with an important connection to a shipping port on Lake Erie and thus with an entry to the United States - the Welland Canal, despite its re-building in 1850, was apparently inadequate⁹ - the H&NWR was seen as a means of "getting to know the strangers of the hinterland." Concerned that the lucrative trade potential of southwestern Ontario would be diverted to Buffalo, Hamilton authorities were making every effort to put their city on the financial map of Ontario; the railway, they felt, was the way to do it.¹⁰

In addition to allowing the city of Hamilton new freight transport links to the Lake Erie harbour of Port Dover and various ports on Georgian Bay, the H&NWR provided passengers with a scenic journey that was considerably more comfortable, less expensive and faster than the same trip by stagecoach:

A traveller could go all the way from Port Dover to Collingwood with only one change at the King Street Station in Hamilton. He could view the rolling country, the breathless panorama from the Hamilton escarpment, the lakes,

the beach resort of Burlington Bay, and further north some of the loveliest woodland scenery anywhere in Ontario, all for a few dollars return. The journey by train was an immeasurable improvement over the uncertainty and discomfort of the stagecoach and the journey by train could be made in a day whereas a stagecoach, with the terrible condition of the roads and the need to change horse and stagecoach lines at frequent intervals, would take at least a week.¹¹

The long delay between the idea of a rail link between Port Dover via Hamilton to Barrie and Collingwood and its realization (Figure 4) was part of the reason for its eventual demise. By the time it was completed, traffic patterns had already been established by the GTR through Caledonia, the CSR through Hagersville and the GWR's Canada Air Line through Jarvis. In addition, the "Port Dover Granny" (as the H&NWR train between Hamilton and Port Dover came to be known) arrived at Port Dover in 1878, three years after another north-south route, the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway (Figure 3), had established itself in the prosperous lakeside town. Nevertheless, the line between Caledonia and Hamilton provided the GTR with a back-door entry into Hamilton, a privilege that had until then been denied due to the Great Western's presence in the city.¹²

The GTR went on to acquire the GWR in 1882, making this feat irrelevant. In addition, it had enjoyed running rights on the H&NWR since 1878 and had absorbed the line into its expanding network of smaller Ontario lines in 1884 following the amalgamation of the H&NWR with the Northern Railway.¹³ Thus the GTR operated both lines through Jarvis from the early 1880s until it was taken over by the CNR in the early 1920s. In 1931, service on the line to Port Dover was abandoned and the tracks were removed five years later.¹⁴ Eventually, the former Canada Air Line was used by the CNR only for freight transport, a tradition that continues today but may be abandoned in the near future.¹⁵

Local Development

Although the introduction of two railway lines through Jarvis in the 1870s did not lead to the transformation of this quiet hamlet into a booming metropolis, it may be said that Jarvis enjoyed prosperity during the two decades leading up to and following the turn of the 20th century, when the railways through the region experienced their heyday. And the GTR station that was constructed around 1907, like its predecessor of the 1870s, was a major focal point for both the community and the region.

The origins of Jarvis can be traced to the construction of the Hamilton and Port Dover Plank Road in the 1830s.¹⁶ This route, a project of Sir Allan McNab (who was later the President of the Hamilton and Port Dover Railway, which followed roughly the same route) was built not only to connect the city of Hamilton to a Lake Erie port but also because of the threat of American invasion; in the event that the Americans or the Whigs gained

control of the Niagara River, it was to provide a route across the Niagara frontier for troops and supplies. The first settler on the site we know today as Jarvis was James Shearman, who owned a blacksmith's shop and a shanty at the corner of Plank Road and Talbot Road, the main east-west artery across southern Ontario; he kept a supply of liquor on hand to quench the thirst of the men working on the construction of the Plank Road, and later opened a hotel where many of them were lodged. The second settler, who arrived when Plank Road was almost complete, was the toll-gate keeper.¹⁷

Shearman's Corners, as the settlement was known in these early years, started to grow with the establishment of a timber and stave trade, and later a store. By 1848, a stagecoach made the Hamilton-Port Dover run on a regular basis. When Shearman left in 1850, the hamlet was renamed after William Monson Jarvis, the Secretary of State for Upper Canada who was the site's original landowner, although he probably never visited it.¹⁸

When the railways arrived at Jarvis in 1873, the hamlet was beginning to show promise of becoming a thriving community. A fire that same year destroyed much of the village but, as it turned out, proved to be a mixed blessing; many of the razed wooden structures were replaced with handsome residences and commercial buildings constructed of local brick. The 1877-1879 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Haldimand and Norfolk boasted that "very few villages of its size contain so many handsome brick buildings as Jarvis" and noted its "unusually large number of well-kept and tasty private dwellings." The construction boom brought masons, carpenters and craftsmen, and it wasn't long before a furniture-maker launched a prosperous business, and a gallery and fancy good shop were opened nearby.¹⁹

At that time, the village's industries included a steam grist and flouring mill, a steam planing sash-and-door factory, and a steam plough factory (Figure 5). In addition, Jarvis was surrounded by "a magnificent farming region," the produce of which was shipped to different parts of Canada and the United States.²⁰ One of the earliest settlers, Walter Cutler Parsons, had brought with him from Britain expertise in the manufacture of dairy products; he opened a cheese factory that was so successful that he was exporting his produce to England. Another citizen, Louis B. Miller, invented the famous Miller plough and other innovative farm implements that were soon used throughout Ontario.²¹

Such export to the Canadian and foreign markets could never had taken place had it not been for the fast, efficient transport provided by Jarvis's two railway lines. The Plank Road soon became obsolete as far as product transport was concerned, and passengers certainly preferred the train to the stagecoach; due to the deteriorating condition of the road, the trip between Jarvis and Hamilton took up to three and a half days by coach, whereas the train was almost certain to complete the journey in three and a half hours.²²

When the H&NWR came to Jarvis in 1873, the GWR's Air Line was already in operation. At first, the former line terminated just north of the GWR's station, and the Atlas of 1877-1879 shows two separate station grounds (Figure 5). In 1878, when the H&NWR line was continued southward to Port Dover, it ran north of and parallel to the Air Line westbound across the Plank Road, crossing the Air Line at grade to continue south (Figure 6).

After the GTR acquired both lines in the early 1880s, the GWR station in Jarvis (Figure 7), a grandiose wooden structure with living quarters for the family of the station agent above, became a "union station." One of the most memorable events that took place there was the return of two soldiers from the Boer War on a cold January day in 1902. They were greeted by 150 mounted horsemen waiting to escort them through the village on a parade of honour; as the procession made its way down the main street, nearly 2,000 people from Jarvis and the surrounding region greeted their returning heroes in their open sleigh led by 50 stallions and marching bands.²³

The year 1902 also witnessed two less happy events at the train station. The first was the collision of two trains just east of the railyards:

One of the trains had been signalled to stop but had continued, possible because the engineer had dozed off. One man was killed and many of the cars derailed. Several tanks of molasses on one train split open and carloads of grain spilled into the contents. The ditches on either side of the wreck ran full of the sticky mixture which fascinated the dogs and small children.²⁴

The second event was even more tragic. While Mr. Simpson, the station master, was with his family in Brantford, a spark touched off a blaze in the warehouse adjoining the rear of the station. It wasn't long before their home, which was in the front part of the station building (Figure 7), was on fire. Fortunately, a few quick-thinking citizens managed to remove some of their furniture and valuables, but within a half hour the entire structure was engulfed in flames and despite the efforts of the bucket brigade and the fire department the building was lost.²⁵

It wasn't until 1907 that the Grand Trunk Railway completed the construction of a new station (Figure 8) to serve the former H&NWR and the GWR's Canada Air Line. Although this handsome little building was carefully sited on the opposite side of the tracks from its forerunner (Figures 5, 6) and carefully designed to accommodate the needs of both lines, it was another timber-frame structure. This decision, on the part of the GTR, is surprising in light of the village's history of disastrous fires and the fact that almost all of its important commercial and residential buildings were by this time constructed of local brick; it is perhaps explained by the fact that the GTR was at the time in the early stages of an extensive but economy-minded

station rebuilding programme that led to the replication of a number of standard stations in southern Ontario. Only the most important centres merited masonry buildings.

The railway lines through Jarvis continued to be the source of disastrous fires. Although businesses located next to the line benefited from advantages when it came to loading their goods, they also suffered. The Ivey grain elevator was razed due to a spark from a passing train in 1908, and the Johnston Evaporating Plant suffered the same fate the following year; not long after it was rebuilt, the plant burned down again, and then the warehouse beside the rail yards also caught fire.²⁶

The new station building was fortunately not affected by these fires along the lines that it served. Like its predecessor, it provided a venue for numerous events that brought together the residents of Jarvis and those of the surrounding countryside. On May 24th, 1912, for example, the parade to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday began in its parking lot (Figure 8).

By this time, however, the fortune of the railway was starting to change. Jarvis was granted the status of a police village in 1909, and shortly afterwards the appearance of the automobile led to the demand for improved roads. Due to its location at the intersection of two main roads, Jarvis was one of the first small communities in Ontario to have its main street paved. By 1912, the county assumed the cost of maintaining the roads, and Jarvis had its own automobile dealer. The impact of the automobile on a small town like Jarvis was significant:

The automobile finally made possible what the train never could. People now had the means to go anywhere at any time. It was the dawning of the mobile society, the age of machines, bringing a new society with it.²⁷

With the increasing popularity of the automobile and the improvement of roads during the 1920s came new working possibilities and a general flow from rural communities to urban centres; the population of Jarvis dropped from its peak of 1,000 around 1900 to 800, its level in 1879. Stores and businesses were forced to close. When the Red Bird Transit company started to offer bus service to Hamilton, Selkirk and Nelles Corners, it became more convenient for residents who didn't own cars to travel to do their shopping by bus than train.²⁸

The decrease in the use of its railways corresponded to the end of Jarvis's heyday. By 1925, the population of the village had dropped to 460 as numerous families moved to larger communities that provided utilities. With the depression of the 1930s, more and more people left the countryside in search of work. Despite its recovery following World War II, the village never regained the prosperity it enjoyed during its railway heyday. In 1974, it amalgamated with the towns of Waterford and Port Dover to form the city of Nanticoke (Figure 9). Today, the population of Jarvis is around 1,000, the same as when it reached a peak in 1900.²⁹

ARCHITECTURE

Aesthetic/Visual Qualities

The CNR station at Jarvis (Figures 1,8,10,11,16-25) was completed by the GTR around 1907 to replace the GWR's 1873 station (Figure 7) that was destroyed by fire in 1902.³⁰ A handsome one-storey timber-frame structure, without living quarters, that was considerably less ornate and more compact than its two-storey predecessor, the building provides to this day a revealing testimony of the GTR's economy-minded and functional approach to station design during the first decade of the 20th century, when the company was trying to establish its identity and update its infrastructure by building new stations to serve the multiplicity of lines that it had acquired in southern Ontario. While the architectural vocabulary of the GTR's Jarvis station is similar to that of a number of the company's other wood-frame stations constructed during the first two decades of this century, it distinguished itself with two features - its "octagonal" waiting room and its two operator's bays - both of which resulted from the necessity for it to serve both of the two lines that intersected beside it.

That Jarvis was considered in 1873 to be a major stop on the GWR's Canada Air Line is suggested by the rather elaborate design and impressive proportions of its original GWR station (Figure 7). This two-storey wood-frame structure must have looked quite monumental and elegant in the midst of the flat farmland that surrounded it; at that time, Jarvis was but a small hamlet stretching between its main crossroads - where the Plank Road crossed Talbot Road - to the intersection of the two railway lines (Figures 5, 6). Although the H&NWR line appears to have had its own station in 1879 (Figure 5), it wasn't long before this larger station, located at the crossroads of the two lines but on the opposite side of the tracks from the present station, served both lines; this transition probably took place following the GTR's acquisition of both lines in the early 1880s.

It was this double role that probably dictated not only the location of the new station - which was built on the other side of the tracks (Figures 5, 6) - but also its design, which featured a prominent "octagonal" waiting room and two operator's bays with views of both sets of tracks.

In its architectural vocabulary, the Jarvis station (Figures 10, 11) was not unlike numerous other GTR stations that were being constructed during the first two decades of the 20th century, when the company was working towards the production of a series of standard stations in an effort to replace many of the inadequate stations it had inherited in its efforts to expand its railway network. In addition to satisfying new railway demands for baggage and express facilities, the stations of the early 20th century benefited from greatly improved building standards and the availability of a series of mass-produced building components and materials that could be mixed and matched to suit

the needs of each locality. No doubt the drive towards standardization was also encouraged by the fact that the GTR's major rival - the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) - was also developing standard station designs by this time.³¹

Thus the Jarvis station (Figures 10, 11, 16, 17) is one of several GTR stations that share the same materials and massing. Its gently sloping shingled bellcast roof possessed a relatively shallow overhang (Figure 20). It topped a relatively simple wood-frame structure that was clad in horizontal clapboard above a sill-height moulding that defined the top of a dado composed of vertical boards and a high baseboard (Figures 18, 19). Various other replacement stations - such as those at Canfield Junction and Tillsonburg (Figure 12), both located along the former Canada Air Line, as well as Palgrave on the former H&NWR and Mitchell on the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway (Figure 13) - were similar to the Jarvis station in their general massing, materials, and overall architectural expression; in most cases, they also possessed the same standard windows, doors, mouldings, brackets and other architectural components (Figures 18-20). Early photographs of these stations suggest that their dado, doors, windows and trim were painted a dark colour, while the horizontal cladding was generally whitish or ivory in tone; this combination enhanced their architectural lines, and gave them a particularly picturesque allure.

The first feature that distinguished the Jarvis station from these and other standard station types was the "octagonal" waiting room at the west end of the building (Figure 17). This feature was not unlike the semi-circular waiting rooms on the CPR's design for "No. 1 Standard Station (without dwelling) with Baggage and Express Rooms"³² (Figure 14) - a handsome little building that was constructed at Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, Québec (RSR-224) in 1902, and then (slightly modified) at Orangeville, Ontario in 1906 and Parry Sound, Ontario (RSR-205) in 1907 - in that it provided a picturesque and prominent end elevation as well as a waiting room that enjoyed abundant light and generous views. Other GTR stations that possessed "octagonal" waiting rooms included Glencoe, West Toronto (RSR-141) (Figure 15),³³ Burlington and St. Mary's.³⁴ In the case of the GTR's Jarvis station, the waiting room's shape allowed passengers and those who were waiting for them to enjoy views of trains approaching from the north, south, west and (to a lesser extent) east.

The second feature that distinguished the Jarvis station from most of its GTR counterparts - the nearby station of Glencoe being an exception - was the fact that it possessed two operator's bays. Whereas most stations had a "trackside" elevation and a "streetside" elevation, the Jarvis station possessed two "trackside" elevations (Figures 6, 16), and thus required two bays (Figure 16) so that its operators - one would assume that there was more than one at peak hours - could see trains approaching on both tracks.

Now that the former H&NWR tracks have been pulled up, these two distinguishing features of the station's design - the two operator's bays and the "octagonal" waiting room - provide a testimony to the era when Jarvis, with its rail links to all directions, enjoyed the status of an important focal point for railway travel and transport.

Functional/Technological Qualities

In terms of its layout and construction technology, the former GTR station at Jarvis was similar to many rural stations of its day except for the two features mentioned above. It was carefully designed to meet the various functions it was to accommodate and well-built in accordance with the high standards of the GTR at that time. Its present condition, although deteriorated on the surface due to lack of maintenance in recent years, testifies to the impressive quality of its design and construction.

The station building occupies a footprint of approximately 70 feet long x 22-1/2 feet deep. Although no construction drawings have been located,³⁵ it is possible to trace its original plan from its current layout, which appears to be impressively intact (Figure 21). The waiting room occupied the west end of the building, which terminated in a generously proportioned room possessing five equal sides forming part of an octagon. The north and south sides each possessed a window and a door leading out to the tracks; the three other sides possessed pairs of windows. The central portion of the building, which projected as a windowed bay on both the north and south sides, was obviously occupied by the operator(s) and ticket agent(s). Beyond the office, at the east end of the building, were the baggage and freight room, served by two sets of wider doors on each side (Figure 16); the east end of this room had a raised floor, a common feature for freight rooms of the day.

At first glance it appears that this eastern end of the station was constructed as an addition: its roof is slightly lower than the main part of the building, and it reads as a separate mass (Figure 16). Upon closer examination of the building fabric, however, the continuity of the materials between this section of the building and the rest suggests that both parts of the structure were constructed at the same time; this is supported by the fact that the raised portion of the freight room appears in early photographs (Figure 10). In any case, the resulting ensemble is very successful in terms of its massing and proportions: the lower roof of the waiting room is balanced by the lower roof of the freight room.

The interior finishes of the station (Figures 22, 23), like its exterior, were typical of many GTR stations of the day. The ceilings and walls were covered with painted tongue-and-groove panelling, and the floor was made up of wide wood boards. The panelled doors were solid-core with oak veneer, and the windows were standard double-hung units; all openings were framed with simple mouldings. With the exception of the waiting room, which

has been refinished with wallboard, the original interior finishes are visible and intact.

The design of the station's exterior is also impressively authentic. Although it is clear from the modifications to the waiting room door on the south side of the building (facing the former Canada Air Line track) that the waiting room was converted for use as a storage room (Figure 16) following the discontinuation of passenger service on the line, the other openings remain unchanged except for the windows that are broken (Figure 19) or blocked (Figure 17). However, the deteriorated condition of the exterior woodwork - which is in need of a paint job - and roof - which requires new shingles - suggests that there has been little maintenance for several years.

The former station building has a new vocation. For the last few years it has been rented out to "The Neat Little Bookshop," and thus remains open to the public during business hours. In addition to attracting railway fans due to its collection of old photographs and new books on the subject, the store possesses an extensive collection of used books.

ENVIRONMENT

Setting

The CNR station at Jarvis, set back from the former Plank Road and visible from afar as one approaches from Hamilton, provides a most appropriate signpost for the northern entrance to the small community that it once served. Although its function as a railway building is over, it constitutes an impressively intact testimony to the important role that the two railways that intersected beside it played in the village's early development.

The GWR's 1873 two-storey station building (Figure 7) was located on the south side of the former Canada Air Line tracks, opposite the current station (Figures 5, 6). For a short time at least, it appears that there was another station building serving the H&NWR line (Figure 5); this was sited close to the present-day station, in the "V" where the two lines met (Figure 6). Across the Plank Road (now Highway 6) was the American Hotel (now the American Tavern), which was strategically located so that Jarvis became a stopover for those travelling north and south on the road or the H&NWR, as well as east and west on the Canada Air Line. Apparently there was also a warehouse across the former Canada Air Line tracks from the station, as well as a water tower. Five years after the discontinuation of service on the H&NWR line, the tracks between Jarvis and Port Dover were pulled up, leaving the operator's bay on the north side of the station and its "octagonal" waiting room as the only testimony to the former rail link between Lake Erie and Caledonia via Hamilton.

Community Status

The CNR station at Jarvis is without question one of the most important landmarks in the community and its region. Its prominent location and its rental to the bookshop provide it with a degree of protection that is not enjoyed by the numerous abandoned railway stations sprinkled across southern Ontario. Although it has not been classified at the municipal level, the station building was recognized in 1987 by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture as "Heritage Class B" on a scale of classes A ("excellent examples of railway station types found in CN's railway network") to E ("poor examples").³⁶ At the time of writing (August 1995), the station and the property around it had just been put up for sale. After having rented its premises for the past few years, The Neat Little Bookshop is interested in purchasing the building.³⁷

Endnotes

- 1 Different dates for the construction of the GTR station at Jarvis have been proposed. The February 1987 report entitled "Planning for Heritage Railway Stations: Inventory" (a study by the Ontario Heritage Foundation and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in cooperation with Canadian National Railways and Via Rail, entry of Jarvis) gives 1906 as the date of construction. In his book Rails to the Lakes: The Story of the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway (Cheltenham, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1980, p. 48), Charles Cooper proposes, on the other hand, that the station burned in 1911, and that the present-day station dates to that year. The two major published sources of local history (Ron Awde. "A History of Jarvis" (photocopied document, dated August 1976, available at the Jarvis branch of the Nanticoke Public Library); Rev. Kenneth Brueton. Walpole Township Centennial History (1967)) report that the early station was destroyed by fire in 1902, and that the new station was constructed to replace it (no date). Finally, the GTR's 1907 semi-annual report, published in the June 1907 issue of Canadian Railway and Marine World (CRMW) mentions that work had begun on the station, which suggests that construction might have begun in either 1906 or 1907, and was probably completed in 1907; unfortunately no other references to the station seem to appear in CRMW to substantiate the date of completion. With these conflicts in mind, it is proposed that, for the purposes of this report, the date of construction will be indicated as c.1907.
- 2 The "octagonal" waiting room is, in fact, composed of five sides that form part of an octagon; these are connected by a sixth side, which is necessarily longer (see Figure 21).

- 3 The GWR's Canada Air Line is discussed in the following references, among others: C.A. Andreae. "A Historical Railway Atlas of Southwestern Ontario." London, Ontario, 1972, pp. 7-14; A.W. Currie. The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1957, pp. 200-201, 208-208; John N. Jackson and John Burniak. Railways in the Niagara Peninsula: Their Development, Progress and Community Significance. Belleville, Ontario: Mika Publishing Company, 1978, pp. 107-110.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 The Hamilton and Northwestern Railway is discussed in the following references, among others: A.W. Currie. Op. cit. (1978), pp. 273-280; Charles Cooper. Op. cit., 1980.
- 6 Excerpt from a letter from board-member Jasper T. Gilkison (but signed "A Taxpayer") to the Hamilton Spectator, quoted in Charles Cooper. Op. cit. (1980), p. 13.
- 7 Charles Cooper. Op. cit. (1980), p. 14; A.W. Currie. Op. cit. (1978), p. 276.
- 8 Charles Cooper. Op. cit. (1980), p. 8.
- 9 President's report to shareholders of the Hamilton and Port Dover Railway, May 1856, as quoted in Charles Cooper. Op. cit. (1980), p. 13.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 15-25.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
- 12 Each line had a separate terminus in Port Dover until both stations burned down in 1896. The GTR, which by this time owned both lines, decided to build a single facility to replace them; this implied the extension of the Hamilton line across the river to the harbour, where it joined the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway. (Ibid., pp. 48-52).
- 13 A.W. Currie. Op. cit. (1980), p. 279.
- 14 Charles Cooper. Op. cit. (1980), p. 47.
- 15 At the time of writing (August 1995), about two freight trains pass by the Jarvis station each day. On August 16, 1995, however, a CN employee reported that the future of service on the line is threatened.
- 16 A local historian explains why the site we know today as Jarvis was not settled earlier:
It is not difficult at all to understand why Jarvis was totally ignored as a satisfactory site for settlement by early white settlers. Not only was it too far inland from any navigable body of water, it was for the

- entirety, a murky, unhealthy cedar swamp.
Ron Awde. Op. cit. (1976), p. 2.
- 17 Ron Awde. Op. cit. (1976), pp. 1-9; Rev. Kenneth Brueton.
Op. cit. (1967), pp. 12-14.
- 18 H.R. Page & Co. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Haldimand
and Norfolk. Toronto, 1877-1879, entry under "Jarvis" and
plan of Jarvis (Figure 5), n.p.; Ron Awde. Op. cit. (1976),
pp. 11-21; Nick and Helma Mika, compilers. Places in
Ontario. Their Names and Origins. Volume 1. Belleville,
Ontario: Mika Publishing Company, 1983, p. 372.
- 19 H.R. Page. Op.cit. (1877-1879), n.p.; Ron Awde. Op. cit.
(1976); Rev. Kenneth Bruemer. Op. cit. (1967).
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 The well-known saying went: "...if you don't have a Miller
plough, you aren't really a farmer." Miller's plough was
patented and rights were sold to a large implement
manufacturer; his other innovations were incorporated by
Massey-Harris farm equipment. (Ron Awde. Op. cit.
(1976), p. 73.)
- 22 Ibid., p. 68.
- 23 Ibid., p. 79.
- 24 Ibid., p. 81.
- 25 Ibid., p. 81.
- 26 Despite all these railway fires, however, it wasn't until
1915, when the store and post office were razed, that the
citizens of Jarvis took it upon themselves to re-organize
the Fire Brigade. (Ibid., pp. 84-89).
- 27 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
- 28 There was also a general resistance to change on the part of
many residents of Jarvis:
Repercussions finally made themselves felt in the
business community. Most of the stores were operated by
older people with ideas of what a respectable store
should provide. To the young people it was drab. The
stores of Simcoe and Hamilton had a larger variety of
goods and more people left the Village to do their
shopping. Problems between the Council and residents
arose as talk of needing electricity and sewers
surfaced. To the people who had lived without these
things for so long, these things were "frills," passing
fancies and to keep taxes low the talk was quashed.
(Ron Awde. Op. cit. (1976), p. 91).

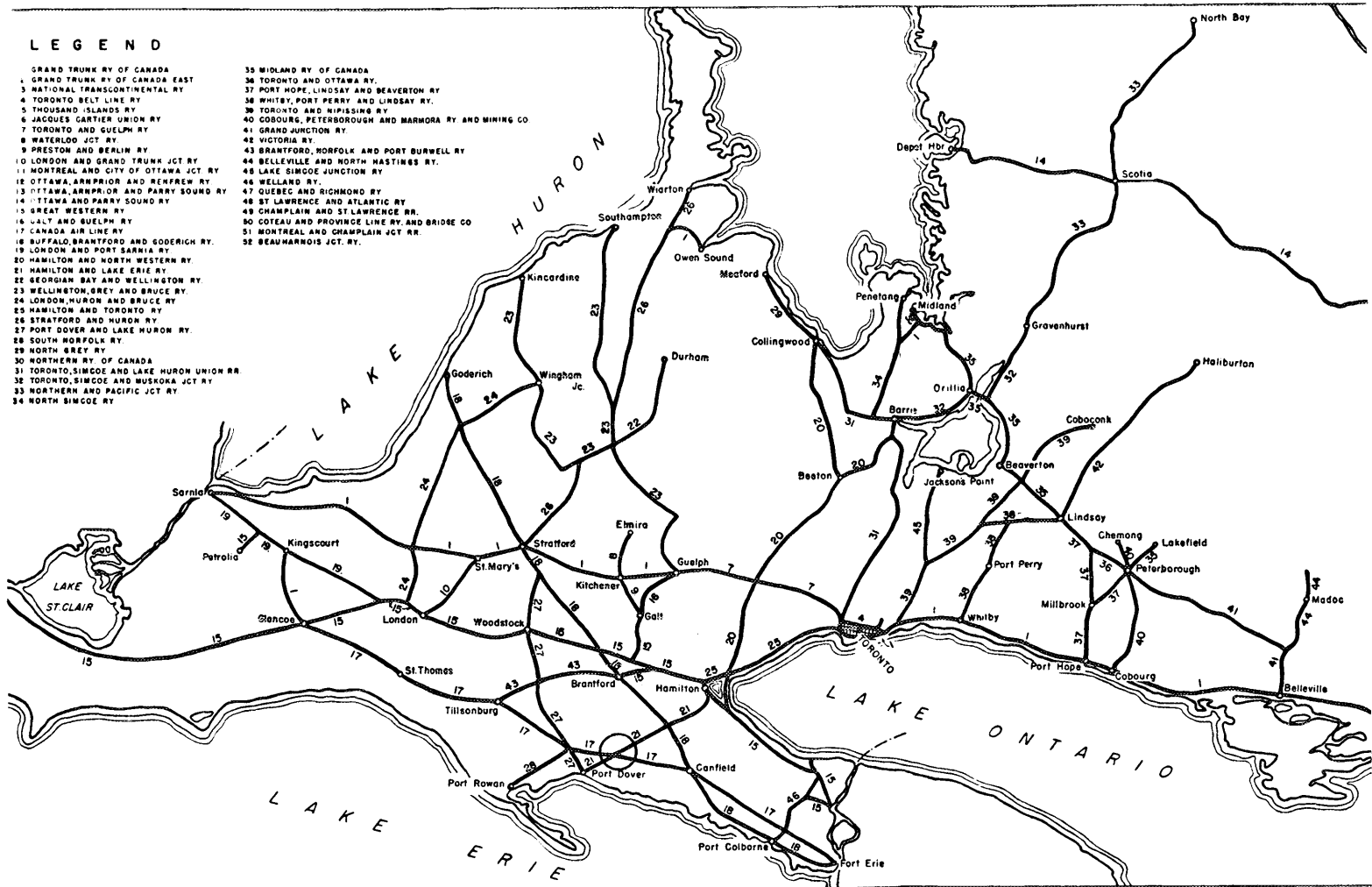
- 29 Nick and Helma Mika. Op. cit. (1983), p. 372.
- 30 Refer to endnote 1.
- 31 The CPR's "No. 1 Standard Station" (Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, Québec (RSR-224) dates to 1902 (Figure 14), and a host of others followed (CP Rail. Engineering Department, Montréal, Plan 30355 set); Ron Brown also discusses this phenomenon briefly in his book The Train Doesn't Stop Here Any More: An Illustrated History of Railway Stations in Canada (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1991, pp. 73-74).
- 32 CP Rail, Engineering Department, Montréal, Plan 30355 set.
- 33 Ron Brown. Op. cit. (1991), pp. 73-74.
- 34 Ron Brown. Op. cit. (1991), pp. 73-74.
- 35 Unfortunately, the CN offices in both Montréal and Toronto were unsuccessful in locating any plans for the building.
- 36 "Planning for Heritage Railway Stations: Inventory" (A Study by the Ontario Heritage Foundation and the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in cooperation with Canadian National Railways and VIA Rail), February 1987, entry on Jarvis and explanatory notes, p. WP 46-53 B; it should be noted that the 1987 heritage ratings of 1987 are probably out of date today and should be considered in the context of the situation with regards Ontario railway stations in the late 1980s (telephone conversation with Fred Cane, Conservation officer, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, 5 September 1995).
- 37 Discussion with owner of The Neat Little Bookshop, 16 August 1995.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, JARVIS, ONTARIO



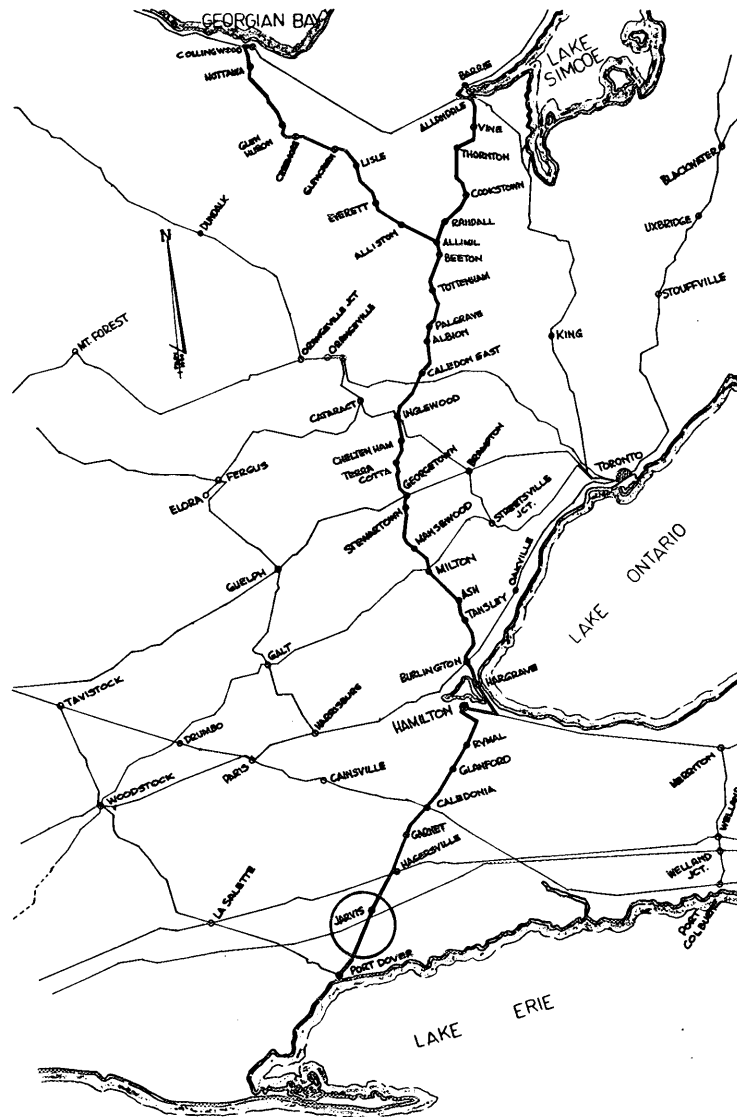
- 1 The Canadian National Railways (CNR) station at Jarvis, Ontario was constructed around 1907 by the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) to replace an earlier station built by the Great Western Railway (GWR) in 1873. Conceived to serve two lines that had been acquired by the GTR and intersected at Jarvis - the GWR's Canada Air Line and the Hamilton and Northwestern Railway (H&NWR) - the building's handsome but compact design provides a testimony to the GTR's economy-minded approach to the design of new stations during the first decade of this century. (S. D. Bronson, August 1995.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, JARVIS, ONTARIO



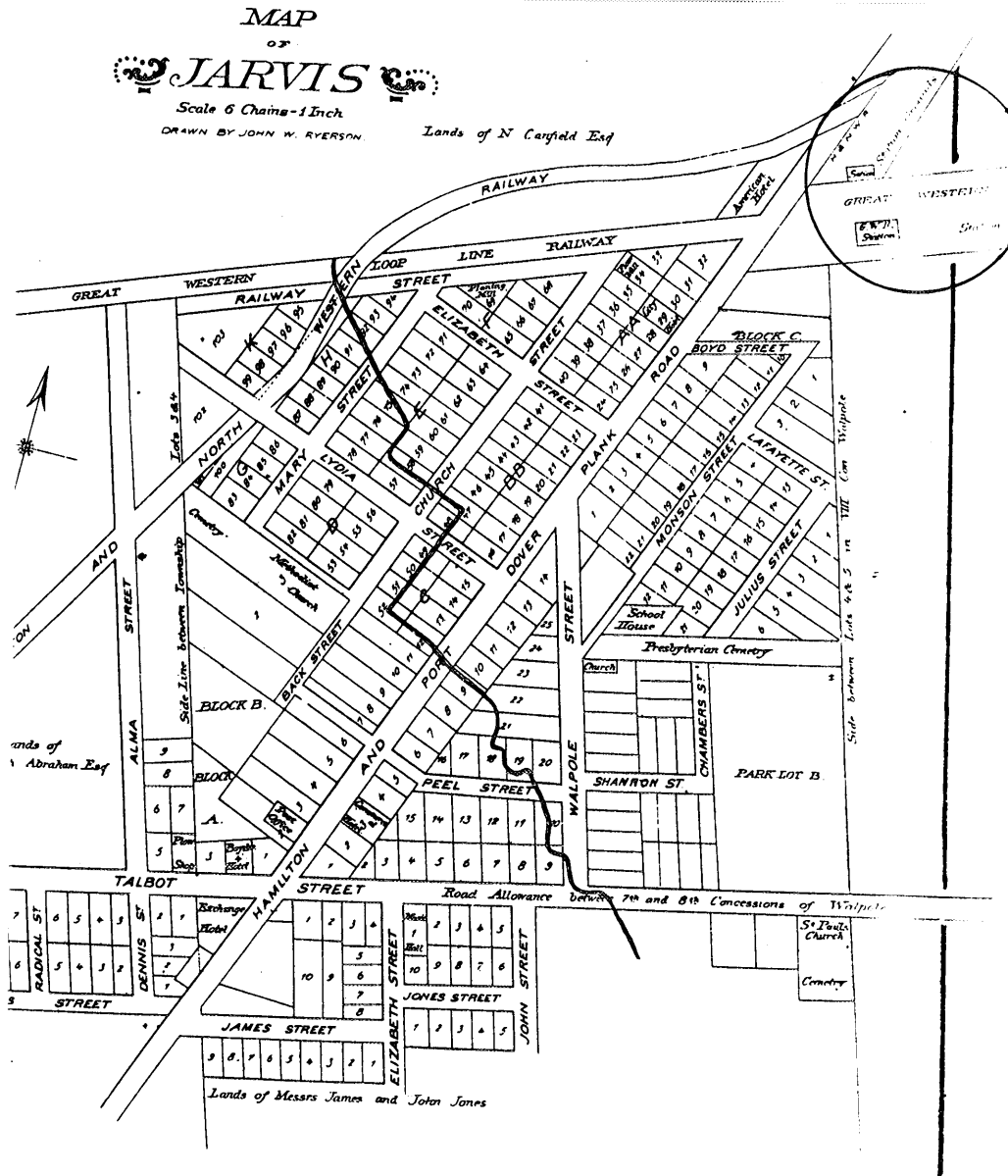
3 By the turn of the century, the GTR had acquired an impressive network of formerly competing lines through southern Ontario. In addition to the GWR and its Canada Air Line, these included the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway, the Welland Railway, the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay & Lake Erie Railway, as well as numerous north-south lines. (A.W. Currie (Op. cit., 1957), p. 271 partial insert.)

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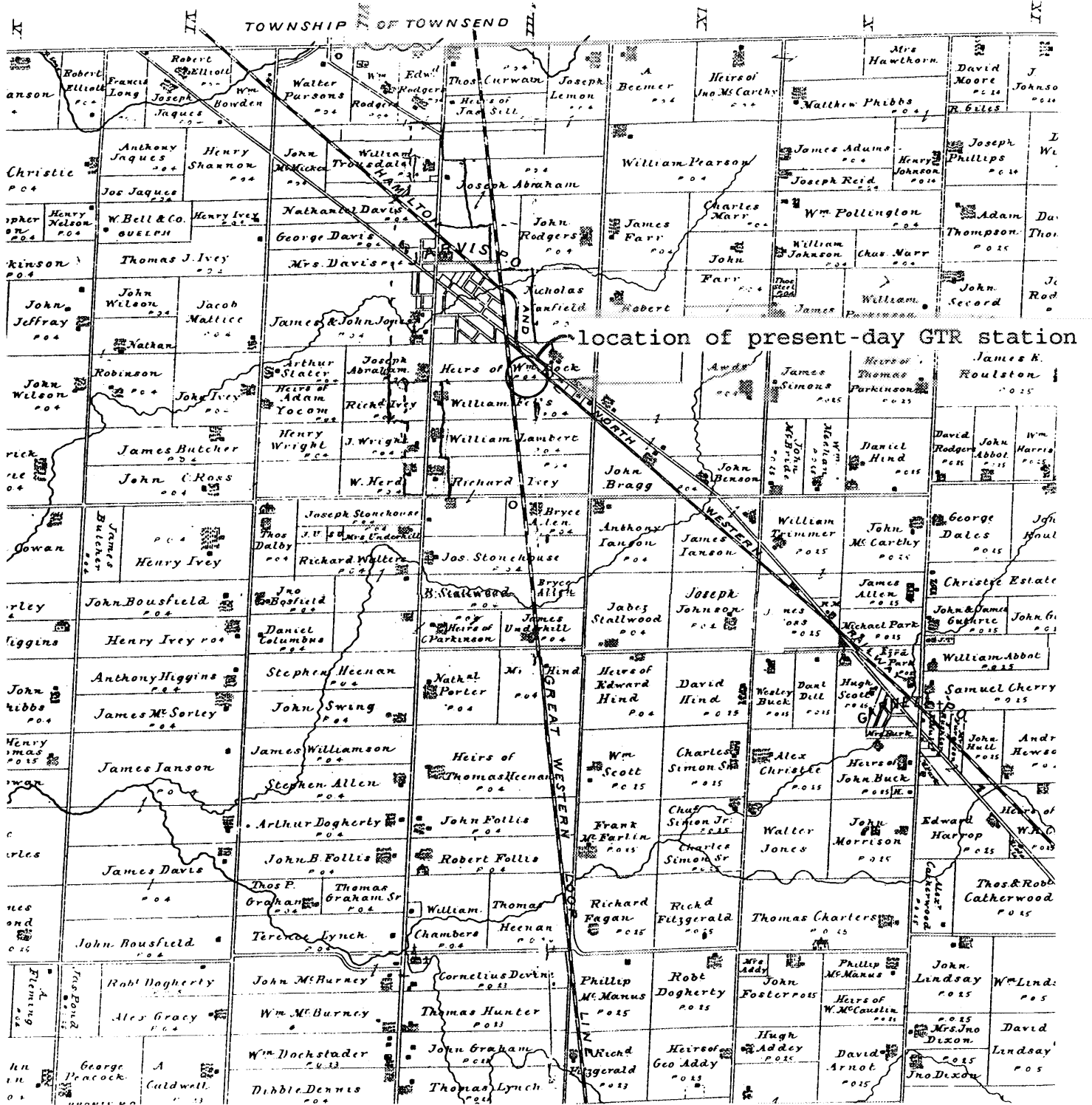
- 4 The Hamilton and Northwestern Railway (H&NW), which had granted the GTR running rights as early as 1878, was designed to link the city of Hamilton with Port Dover, a shipping port on Lake Erie, and Ontario's northland. The section between Hamilton and Jarvis was completed in 1873 and the section between Jarvis and Port Dover was terminated in 1878. (Charles Cooper, *Op. cit.*, 1980), p. 150.)

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- 5 By 1879, Jarvis, located about 28 miles southwest of Hamilton on the Hamilton & Port Dover Plank Road, had a population of about 800 and possessed five hotels, a music hall, a post office, a plow shop, a school house, a planing mill, a flour mill, a Methodist church and cemetery and a Presbyterian cemetery. On the north edge of the village, the Hamilton and Northwestern Railway intersected with the Great Western Railway's Loop Line. At that time, each railway had its own station. (H.R. Page & Co. (Op. cit., 1877-1879).)

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6 The intersection of Jarvis's two lines allowed for a single station to serve both. (H.R. Page & Co. (Op. cit., 1877-1879).)

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- 7 The original station at Jarvis, constructed in the 1870s to serve the GWR's Air Line, was a large two-storey "Swiss cottage" style structure with residential quarters. It later served as a union station for the GWR's Air Line and the Hamilton and Northwestern line, both of which were acquired by the GTR. This photograph dates to around 1900, a few years before it was destroyed by fire. (The Neat Little Book Shop (At the CN Train Station), NLBS 001; also reproduced in Charles Cooper (Op. cit., 1980), p. 47, credited to the collection of William Fess.)

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS STATION, JARVIS, ONTARIO



- 8 This photograph, taken during the May 24th Parade in 1912, showed the new GTR station at Jarvis its heyday, when it enjoyed good business and was the centre of many of the village's important events. (Jarvis Library Guild, Jarvis Historical Calendar, May 1982.)

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9 Today, Jarvis, part of the City of Nanticoke in the regional municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk since 1974, possesses a population of about 1,000. While the CNR line (originally the GWR's Canada Air Line) still marks the northern extremity of the community, no trace remains of the Hamilton and Northwestern line, which was removed in 1936, five years after service was discontinued. (Corporation of the City of Nanticoke, April 1, 1974.)

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- 10 This c.1915 view of GTR's Jarvis station shows it to be a handsome, compact structure that was constructed around the beginning of the GTR's rebuilding programme. Its most distinguishing features were its octagonal waiting room with windows facing both lines and its two operator's bays. (The Neat Little Book Shop (At the CN Train Station), NLBS 001; also reproduced in Charles Cooper (Op. cit., 1980), p. 48, credited to the collection of William Fess.)

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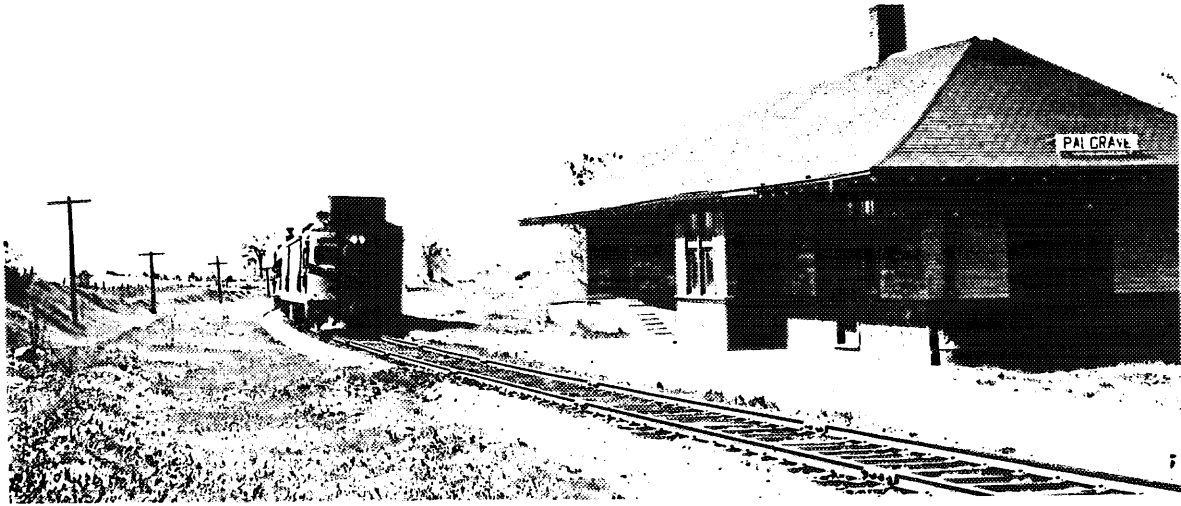
- 11 Comparison of this present-day photograph with the photo taken 80 years ago (Figure 10) reveals that the station building retains its original allure and almost all of its original architectural features. The only significant changes to its exterior, besides deterioration due to lack of maintenance, are the modification of two doorways and the paint colour, which appears to have been changed from its pale tones with dark trim to a uniform deep red and, more recently, grey. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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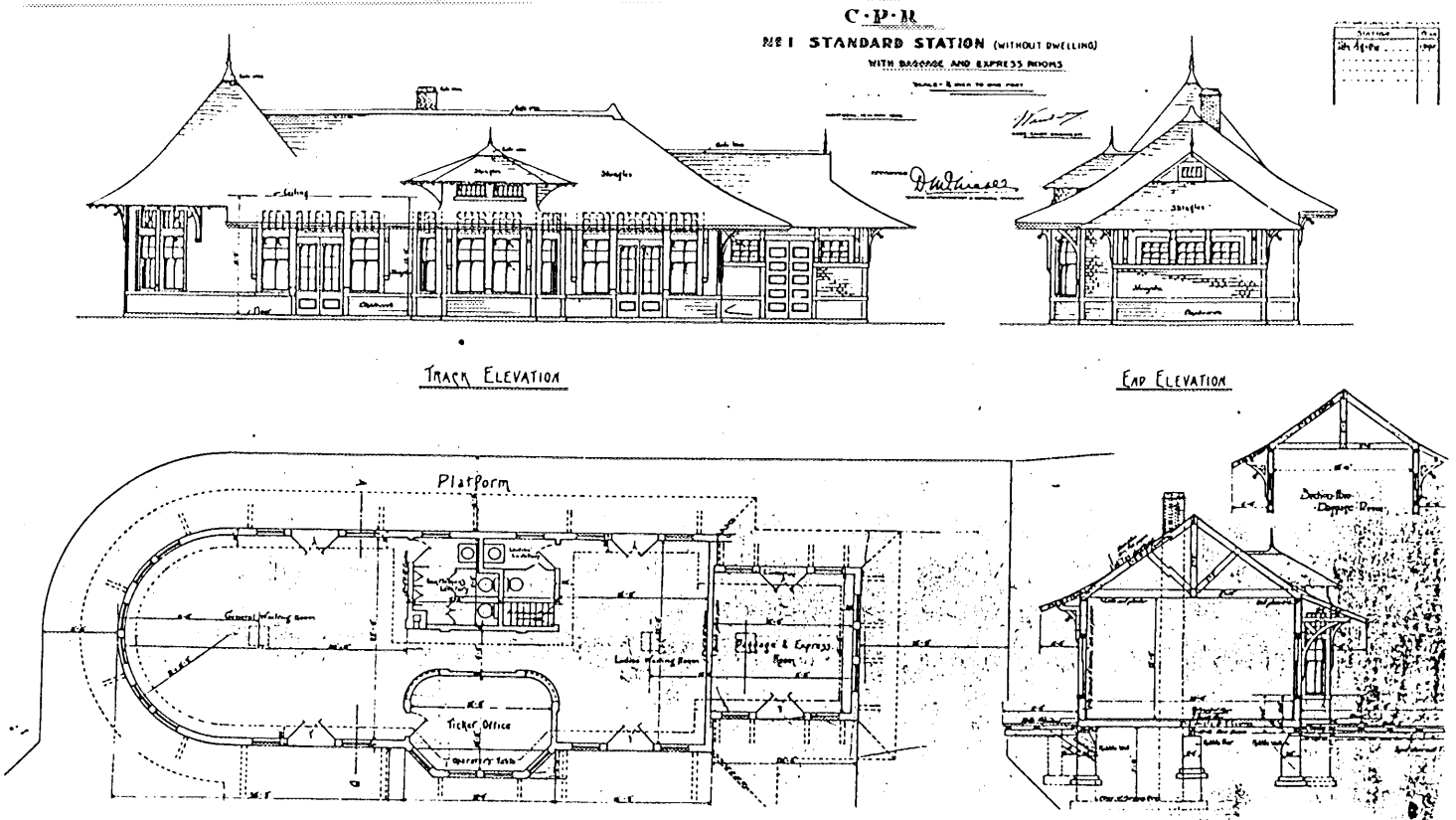
- 12 The GTR's stations at Canfield Junction, shown in the c.1900 photograph above (top), and Tillsonburg, depicted in the 1972 photo above (bottom), were both located on the former GWR's Air Line through Jarvis (see Figure 2). These stations were similar, in their architectural vocabulary, to the GTR station at Jarvis, but neither was graced with an "octagonal" waiting room or a double operator's bay. (The Neat Little Book Shop (At the CN Train Station), NLBS 005 (top); Kenneth A.W. Gansel, reproduced from Robert D. Tennant, Jr. (Op. cit., 1991), p. 162 (bottom).)

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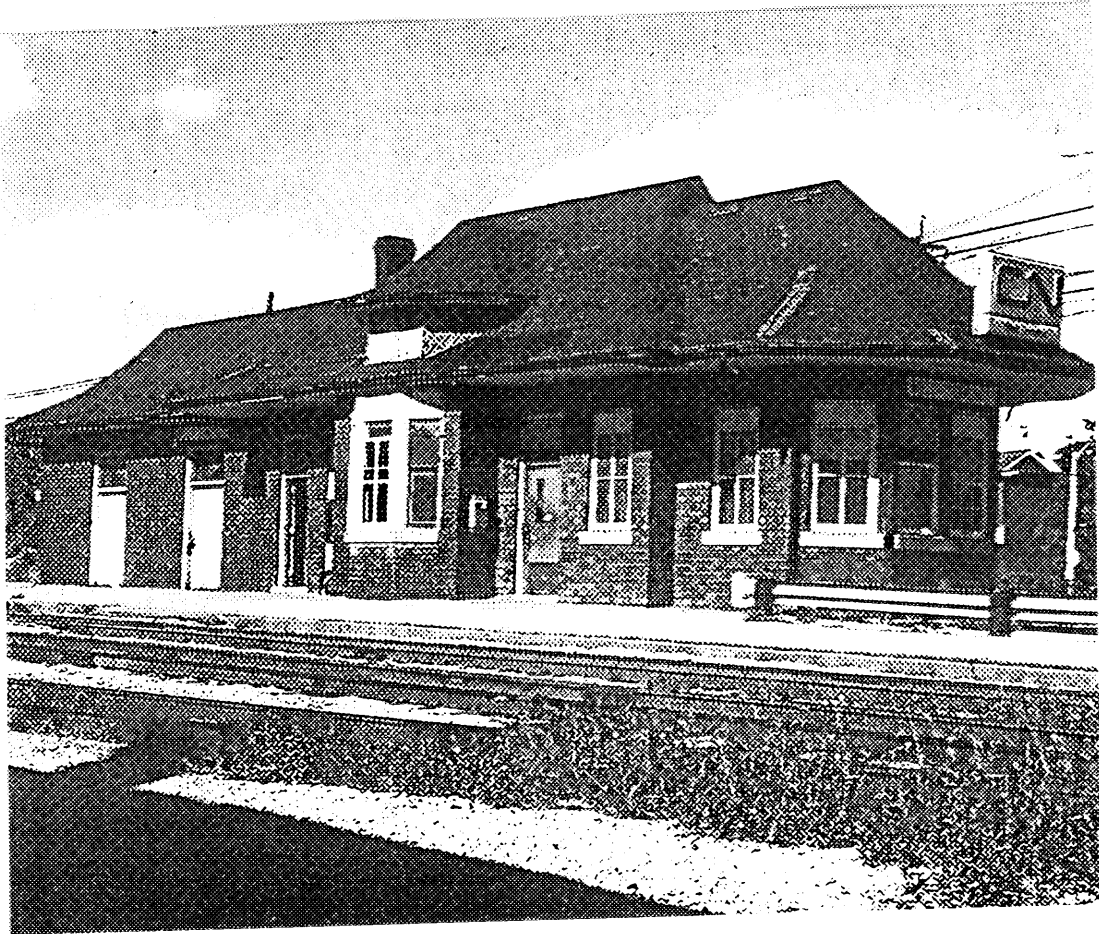
- 13 The 1958 photo above (top) suggests that the GTR's 1918 Palgrave station, located further north on the former H&NW line (see Figure 4), and its 1914 station at Mitchell (bottom), located on the former Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway, were also similar, in their basic massing, materials and styling, to the GTR's Jarvis station. (R. Sandusky, reproduced from Charles Cooper (Op. cit., 1918), p. 84 (top); Elizabeth A. Willmot (Op. cit., 1992), p. 48 (bottom).)

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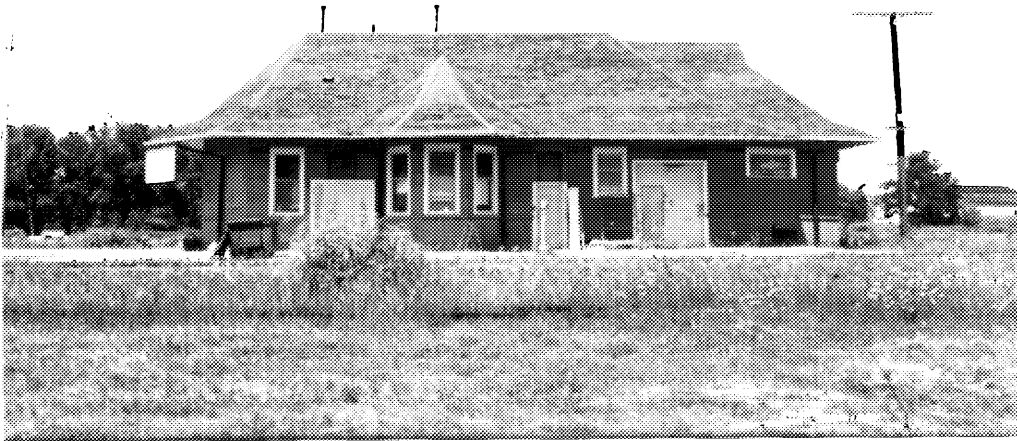
- 14 The "No. 1 Standard Station (without dwelling) with baggage and express rooms" of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the GTR's main rival, was designed in 1902 for Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, Québec (RSR-224), and subsequently constructed, with minor modifications in the Ontario towns of Parry Sound (1907, RSR-205) and Orangeville (1906). Its semi-circular waiting room and "witch's cap" roof might have prompted the GTR to develop its own standard station type featuring an "octagonal" waiting room. (CP Rail, Engineering Department, Montréal, Plan 30355 set.)

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- 15 Other GTR stations that featured "octagonal" waiting rooms capped by peaked roofs included West Toronto (RSR-141), shown above, as well as Glencoe, Burlington and St. Mary's. (Ron Brown (Op. cit, 1991), p. 73.)

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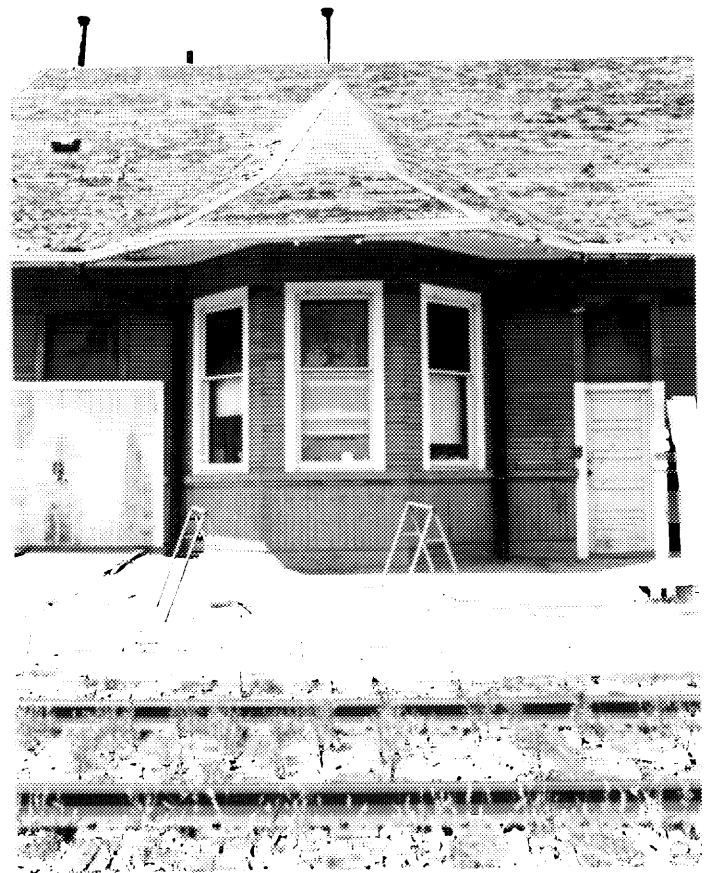
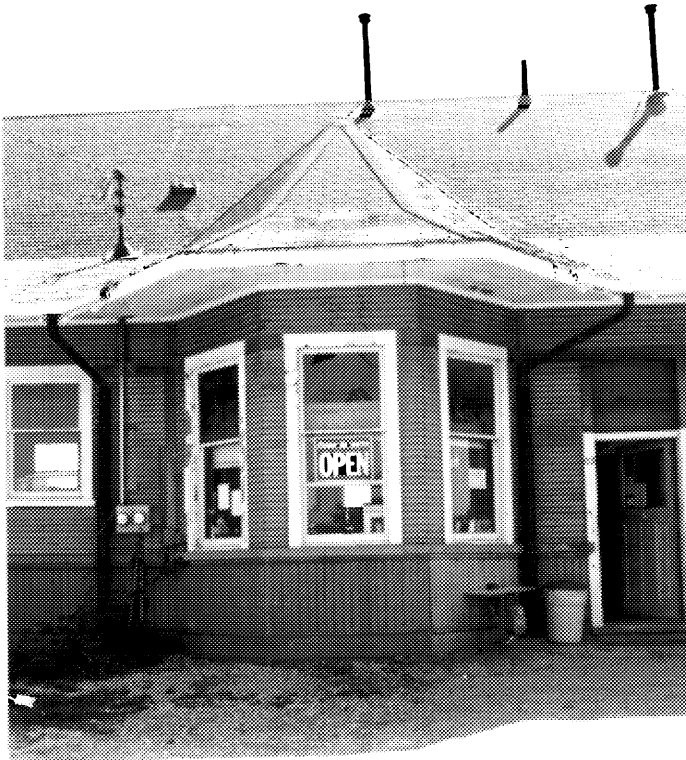
- 16 The south (trackside) elevation (top) and north elevation (bottom) of the Jarvis station are similar due to the decision to have two operator's bays, one facing each line, and a single octagonal waiting room with a view of both. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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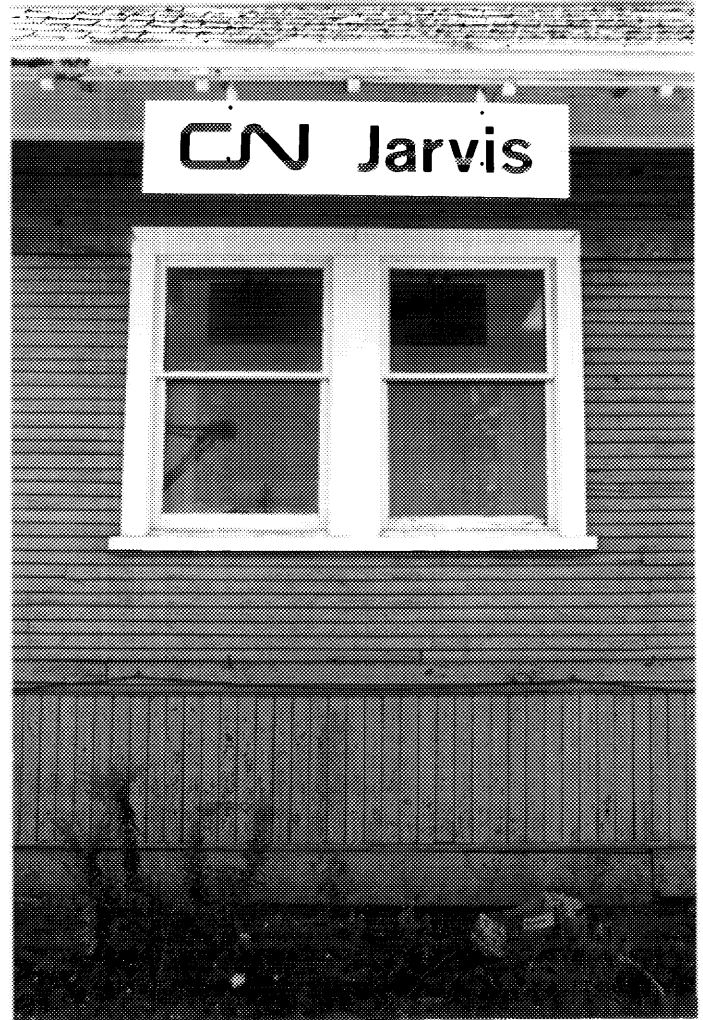
- 17 The west end of the station (left) faced the former Plank Road (Highway 6) and housed the "octagonal" waiting room; it possessed generous windows that provided a view down both tracks; most of these are protected with clapboard today. The east end (right) accommodated the freight room, with its raised floor and two high windows. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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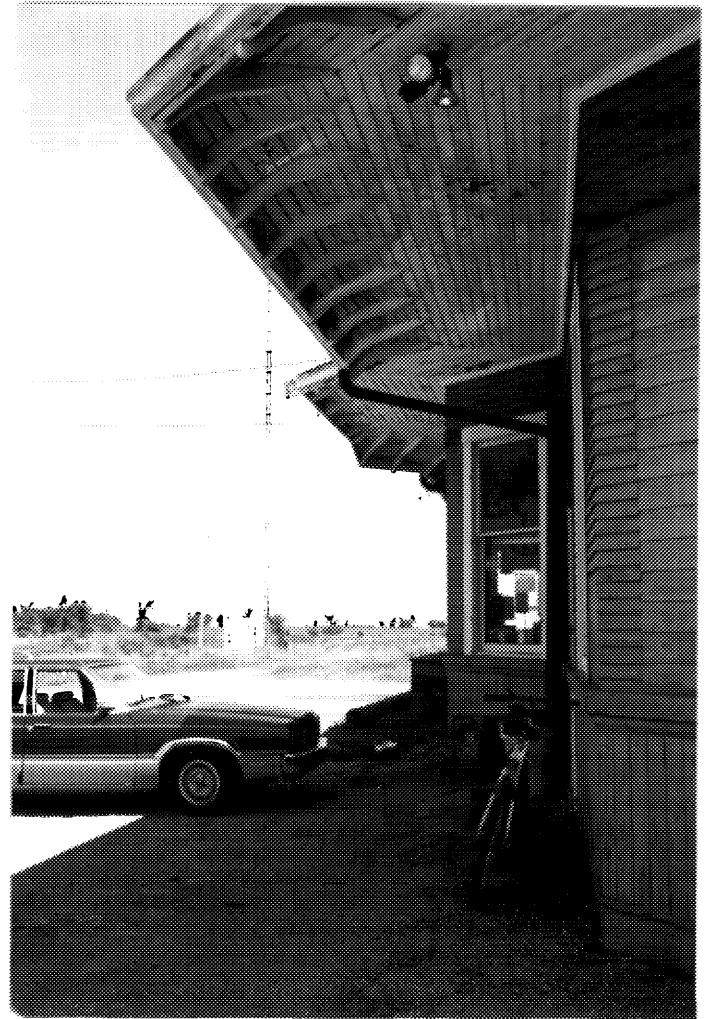
- 18 The operator's bays facing north (left) and south (right) are identical in every respect. Beside them, to the west, are the doors to the waiting room; the one on the trackside (bottom) was widened to serve as an entrance for equipment or freight following the discontinuation of passenger service. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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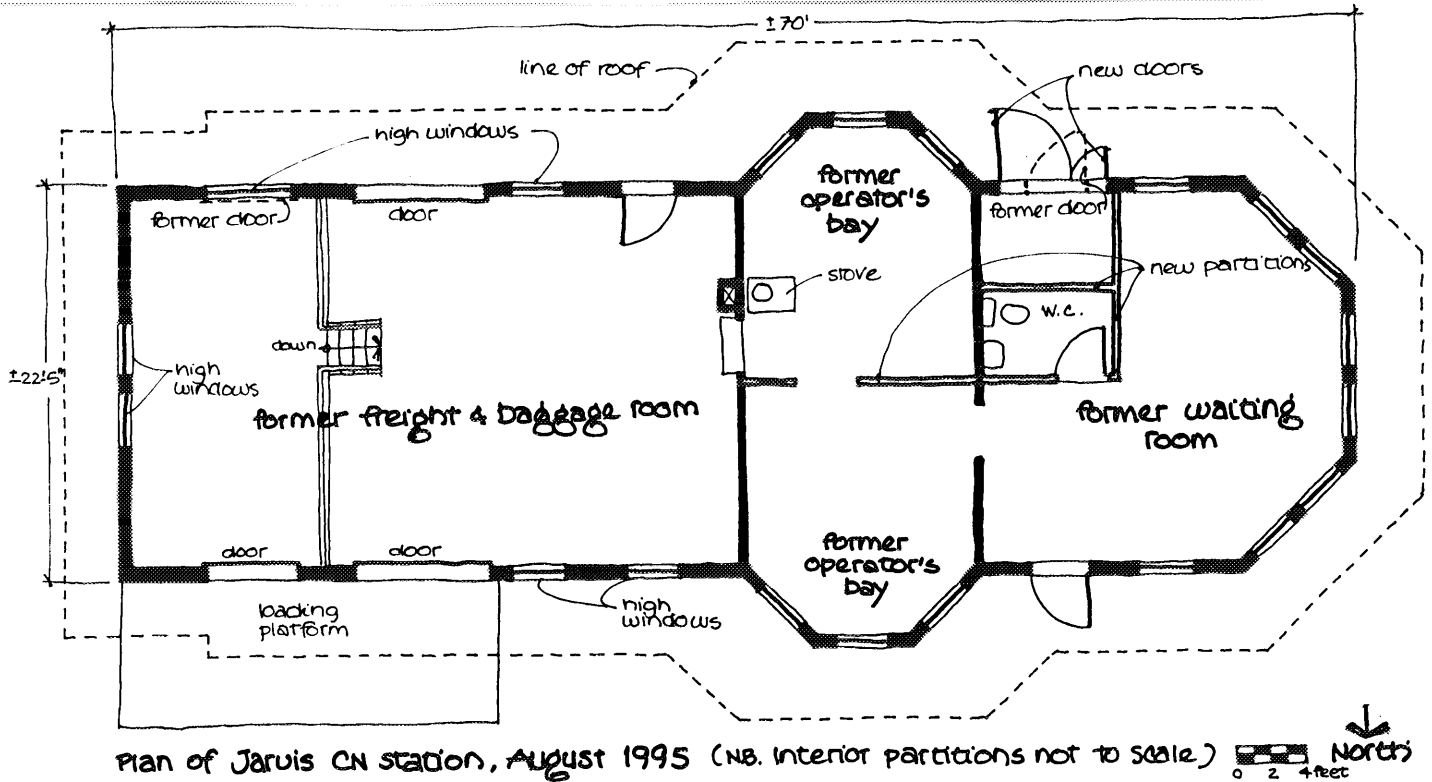
- 19 The exterior walls of the Jarvis station are clad in horizontal clapboard with a base of vertical boards and a horizontal trim that defines the building's sill height (left), except at the freight room, where the windows are higher due to the raised floor (right). The windows are standard double-hung units framed with 4" trim; a continuous horizontal trim reinforces the line of their tops. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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20 The roof overhang, which is supported by small integral brackets, varies in depth. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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21 Inside, the layout of the station remains, for the most part, unchanged despite its current use as a book shop. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995, interior partitions not to scale.)

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- 22 This view of the former freight and baggage room, which is filled with bookshelves today, shows that almost all of the original interior finishes - tongue and groove panelling on the walls and ceilings, and hardwood floors - and the simple mouldings around the openings are intact. The door to the operator's room originally possessed a transom window above it. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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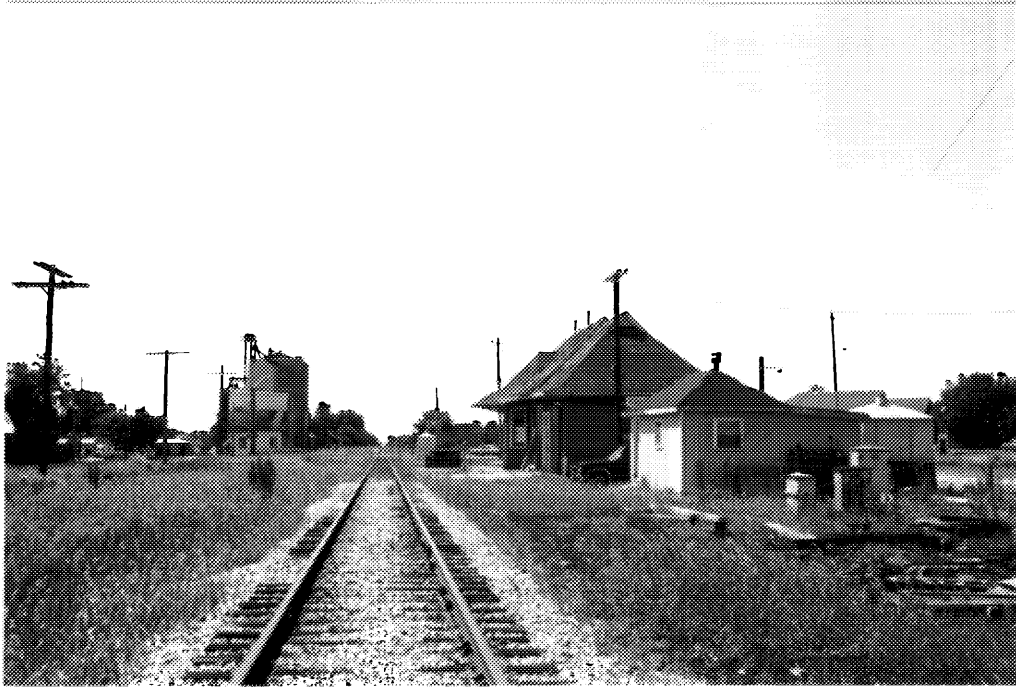
- 23 The current owners of the bookstore, who lease the station from CN, are clearly fond of railway memorabilia. They also possess a good collection of books on trains and railways and sell reproductions of photographs of stations in the region. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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- 24 Today, the railway station and the silos still mark the gateway into Jarvis as one drives southward from Hamilton along Highway 6 (the former Plank Road), which becomes the main street through the village; the residential sector begins just beyond the tracks. The H&NWR used to run approximately parallel to this road as it approached Jarvis from the north (see Figures 5,6). (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)

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25 The former Air Line (top) is still used by CN - about two freight trains pass by the Jarvis station each day - but its future is threatened. Looking from the southeast (bottom), the building that once housed the American Hotel is on the opposite side of Highway 6 from the train station; it was conveniently located so that travellers could spend the night, change trains, and continue their journey in the morning. (S.D. Bronson, August 1995.)