



December 12, 2022

Ms. Hailey E. Roessler, Clerk/Treasurer  
Village of Ridgeway  
208 Jarvis Street  
Ridgeway, WI 53582

Subject: Ridgeway Community Park Improvements  
Ridgeway, Iowa County, Wisconsin

Dear Ms. Roessler:

The Village of Ridgeway proposes improvements to Ridgeway Park and the area adjacent to the former train depot that serves as a trailhead along the Military Ridge Trail. The project is federally funded and must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Section 106). Proposed project activities include repaving the existing parking area on the south side of the depot, paving a pathway between the parking lot and the Military Ridge Trail, pathway improvements near the shelter/ball diamond area within the park, new ball diamond lighting, and a retaining wall. A project location map with proposed activities is provided in Attachment A. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) was delineated to include Ridgeway Park and the adjacent depot.

Mead & Hunt, Inc. (Mead & Hunt) architectural historians conducted a reconnaissance survey in November 2022 to identify and photograph historic structures in the APE. Prior to the field survey, the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD) was reviewed to identify properties in the project area that were previously surveyed, determined eligible, or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). One previously surveyed property is located within the APE and was resurveyed: the Chicago and Northwestern Depot (AHI No. 64662). Ridgeway Park was reviewed and it was determined that it does not meet survey criteria.

The Military Ridge Trail follows the former alignment of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway west branch corridor, which connected Dodgeville to the Madison area. The west branch started service in 1881.<sup>1</sup> Construction of the Military Ridge Trail started in 1983.<sup>2</sup> The land occupied by the park was sold to the Village of Ridgeway in 1939 by the railway company.<sup>3</sup> The park was established two years later. It features a large baseball diamond with lights and scoreboard, bleacher seats, a barbecue pit, concession stand, large picnic shelter, and restroom building. A smaller, c.2015 baseball diamond and modern playground are located to the east of the larger ball diamond. The buildings within the park are utilitarian structures that have been altered several times since their initial construction; collectively, they do not meet survey criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> "Military Ridge State Trail Description," *TrailLink*, n.d., <https://www.trailink.com/trail/military-ridge-state-trail/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Military Ridge State Trail Description."

<sup>3</sup> "Deed, Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company to the Village of Ridgeway," September 8, 1939, Available at the County Clerk's Office, Ridgeway, Iowa County, WI, County Clerk's Office, Ridgeway, Iowa County, WI.

**Chicago and Northwestern Depot (AHI No. 64662)**

The Ridgeway Chicago and Northwestern Depot was constructed in 1913. It is a one-story, wood-frame building clad in wood siding with a hip roof covered with slate tile. There are two brick chimneys at the ridgeline. The front (north) facade overlooks the former Chicago and Northwestern west line corridor and contains two entrances, one at each end, and a projecting gable portion that is centrally located. A long rectangular sign with the word “Ridgeway” is located on the side (west) elevation. The rear (south) elevation features a secondary entrance at the west end. Windows on the front, rear, and east elevations are replacement sash. It retains much of its original interior features, such as beadboard on the lower portion of the interior walls, hardwood floors, wood stoves, and the ticket counter. Photographs are provided in Attachment B.

The Friends of the Military Ridge Trail acquired the depot in 2001. It was subsequently restored under a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) enhancement grant.<sup>4</sup> That project included restoration of the slate roof, in-kind replacement of the exterior siding, and rebuilding of the original brick-surfaced loading platform between the building and the trail. As a result of the enhancement project the Ridgeway Chicago and Northwestern Depot was determined eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A: History* for its role as a vital transportation link to Ridgeway, and under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a well-preserved example of an early-twentieth-century, rural railroad depot.<sup>5</sup>

The proposed activities adjacent to the depot, which are referred to in the photos in Attachment B, are limited to repaving the existing parking lot to its south and paving a path between the existing parking lot and the Military Ridge Trail along the depot’s east elevation. These proposed activities will not impact any features that make the depot eligible for the National Register.

The project team concludes that no further history documentation is recommended under Section 106. If project activities change or you have any questions, please contact me by phone at 608-443-0406 or by email at [emily.pettis@meadhunt.com](mailto:emily.pettis@meadhunt.com).

Sincerely,

MEAD & HUNT, Inc.



Emily Pettis  
Cultural Resources Department Manager

Attachments

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<sup>4</sup> “Ridgeway Depot Commercial, Railroad Depot, Section 106 Compliance - 2001-2002,” *Isthmus Architecture*, n.d., <http://www.is-arch.com/projects/ridgeway-chicago-northwestern-railroad-depot/>; *Dodgeville/Ridgeway*, 2022, <https://www.friendsofmilitaryridgetrail.org/dodgeville-and-ridgeway.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Wisconsin Historical Society, “Ridgeway Depot Site File, Ridgeway, Iowa County, Wisconsin,” n.d., 12, Available at Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Historical Society.

**Attachment A. Project Location and Survey Map**

RED = new paths  
Blue near building = repave existing lot  
blue at ne corner = retaining wall  
blue at ballfield = new lights



**Attachment B. Photographs**

Ridgeway Community Park Improvements  
Ridgeway, Iowa County  
Photographs



AHI No. 64662, Chicago and Northwestern Depot, side (east) elevation and front (north) facade, facing southwest. Project improvements include repaving the existing path located along the side of the depot.



AHI No. 64662, Chicago and Northwestern Depot, rear (south) and side (east) elevations, facing northwest. Project improvements include repaving the existing path located along the side of the depot.



AHI No. 64662, Chicago and Northwestern Depot, rear (south) elevation, facing north. The existing parking lot adjacent to the depot, in the foreground, will be repaved as a result of the project.