



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001
Section of Environmental Analysis

March 19, 2009

Paige Hoskinson-Olson
South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
Review and Compliance Coordinator
900 Governors Drive
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2217

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 33207, Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation
Construction into the Powder River Basin Project: Huron Yard Locale, Beadle County
(LBG No. SD3d); Request for Determination of Effect (SHPO Project No. 080515042F),

Dear Ms. Hoskinson-Olson:

Thank you for your July 28, 2008 letter regarding the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's (DM&E) proposed construction of a new railroad yard near Huron, South Dakota (see attached). In your letter, you noted that you would need to delay any comment on the undertaking pending our response to a number of questions. In specific, you requested additional information regarding the project's expected impact to Site 39BE2003 (how much of the site will be destroyed) and the Surface Transportation Board's (STB) determination of the project's effect on this historic property; you also asked if avoidance of the site is possible. We have provided our response to these questions below.

Site 39BE2003 is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with regional settlement history and economic development of South Dakota as a primary transportation system for individuals, grain, livestock, manufactured goods, mail, and other products. Although abandoned, the berm for the former Chicago & North Western Railroad grade continues to convey the linear nature of the historic railroad line and marks its original alignment. The property thus retains integrity of location and setting.

DM&E's project plans call for construction of two new rail lines in this segment of the project corridor. Aerial photograph-based maps of DM&E's proposed construction in the vicinity of Site 39BE2003 are enclosed for your review along with cross sections depicting the existing and proposed grade changes from project station markers 7387+00 through 7406+00. The raised berm representing the abandoned railroad grade (Site 39BE2003) lies within the area of potential effect from station marker 7389+00 west to station marker 7394+00 and is identified on the cross-section drawings.

E0-1163

East of station marker 7389+00 the two new rail lines are situated north of the east-west oriented historic railroad berm. The two new lines and a drainage ditch proposed by DM&B will cut through the historic railroad berm near station markers 7389+00 to 7393+00. This is where the historic berm diverges from the existing DM&B railroad and curves north toward Aberdeen. The drainage ditch along the north side of the two new east-west rail lines will measure approximately 40 feet wide and six to eight feet deep with sloped sides.

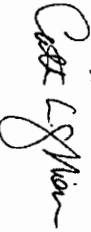
The proposed excavation of the drainage ditch and construction of the two new railroad lines at Site 39BE2003 will destroy about 400 linear feet of the extant historic railroad grade berm and will therefore have an adverse effect on this historic property. Excavation through the historic berm near its junction with the main line will however be limited in area; therefore, the historic berm will continue to be visible extending northwest away from the main line. The setting of the immediate vicinity will also obviously retain the quality of association with the active railroad line to the south. No substantial re-contouring of the surrounding landscape is anticipated outside the new drainage ditch.

Regarding site avoidance: DM&B staff engineers have explained to me that avoidance of Site 39BE2003 is not feasible given the above noted drainage requirements in the vicinity. A drainage ditch is needed through the railroad spur parallel to the existing track eastward to the existing road crossing to prevent water impoundments that could threaten the integrity of the railroad bed, the proposed yard, and the contemporary residence north of the track and west of the road. Moving the entire yard westward to avoid the site would conflict with operations involving a Burlington Northern Railroad connection at that location. Moving the entire yard eastward would conflict with existing and planned commercial development.

STB has consequently determined that DM&B's proposed construction will have an adverse effect on Site 39BE2003; however, the scale of this effect will be minor in relation to the overall areal extent of the site which can be traced for miles north to Aberdeen. As such, the proposed construction is not expected to greatly diminish the site's ability to convey the qualities of significance that qualify it for eligibility under Criterion A. Nevertheless, we will be recommending that the site be included in a treatment plan to mitigate adverse effects to the site.

I hope that this letter has provided you with the additional information that you need in order to comment on the effect of the proposed undertaking on Site 39BE2003. If you have any questions or comments regarding any of the above, or you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 202-245-0293 (Catherine.Glidden@stb.doi.gov) or Randy Withrow at 319-373-3043 (rwithrow@louisberger.com).

Sincerely,



Catherine Glidden
Section of Environmental Analysis

Cc: Herb Jones DM&E
Randy Withrow, LBG

Attachments: Letter from SDSHPO to STB (July 28, 2008)
Huron Yard Design Sheets (9)



Department of Tourism and State Development

July 28, 2008

Ms. Catherine L. Glidden
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20423-0001

SECTION 106 PROJECT CONSULTATION - IDENTIFICATION/EVALUATION
Project: 080515042F - Dakota, Minnesota and Eastern Railroad Corporation Powder River
Basin Expansion Project Corridor - Huron Yard Locale (Project No. SD3D)
Location: Beadle County
(STB)

Dear Ms. Glidden:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced undertaking pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). The South Dakota Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer is currently unable to comment on the effect of the proposed undertaking on the non-renewable cultural resources of South Dakota.

On July 15, 2008, we received your letter with the additional information concerning the proposed Huron Yard Locale in Beadle County, South Dakota. Please explain how much of site 39BH2003 will be destroyed and provide a map of the specific impacts. Explain why it is not possible to avoid this portion of 39BE2003. Finally, your letter does not contain a determination of the undertaking's effects to 39BE2003.

Should you require additional information, please contact Paige Hoskinson Olson, Review and Compliance Coordinator, at (605) 773-6004. Your concern for the non-renewable cultural heritage of our state is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jay D. Vogt
State Historic Preservation Officer

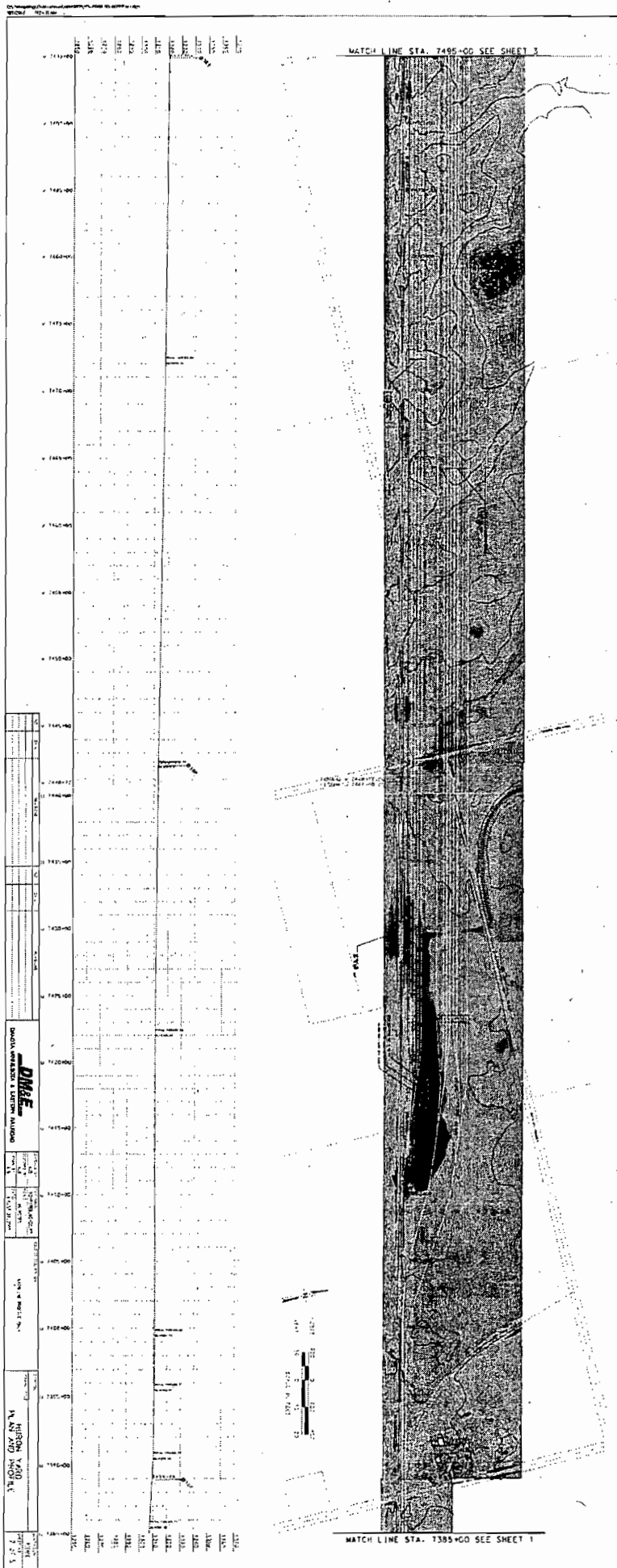


Paige Hoskinson Olson
Review and Compliance Coordinator

Cc: Mr. David Biber, Louis Berger Group Inc.

Summary of Huron Yard Aerial Photograph and Associated Cross Sections

The attached aerial photograph depicts the east end of the proposed Huron Yard in the vicinity of the abandoned railroad berm (39BE2003). The vertical lines are cross sections at various station markers and are labeled in the following manner (7390+00). The station markers correspond to the cross section charts in the accompanying PDF document. The cross section charts depict the topography along each station marker.



Station	Profile	Plan	Notes
7495+00	7495.00	7495+00	
7496+00	7496.00	7496+00	
7497+00	7497.00	7497+00	
7498+00	7498.00	7498+00	
7499+00	7499.00	7499+00	
7500+00	7500.00	7500+00	
7501+00	7501.00	7501+00	
7502+00	7502.00	7502+00	
7503+00	7503.00	7503+00	
7504+00	7504.00	7504+00	
7505+00	7505.00	7505+00	
7506+00	7506.00	7506+00	
7507+00	7507.00	7507+00	
7508+00	7508.00	7508+00	
7509+00	7509.00	7509+00	
7510+00	7510.00	7510+00	
7511+00	7511.00	7511+00	
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