

Historic Architectural Survey: 2006-2007

Westminster, Colorado



Harris Park & Pillar of Fire Neighborhoods, Transportation Resources Survey Report

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Westminster Historic Landmark Board
Department of Community Development
City of Westminster, Colorado

by:
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Purpose

This survey project was initiated by the Westminster Historic Landmark Board in response to recommendations presented in the 2005 *Historic Resources Survey Plan for Westminster*. This report provides recommendations of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, local historic designation, as well as any needs for future research.

Funding

The project was funded in part with federal funds from the National Historic Preservation Act, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior and for the Colorado Historical Society. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior or the Society, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Society.

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Project summary

A selective intensive-level historical and architectural survey was proposed to document the existing conditions of the pre-World War II resources located within the general area of the Harris Park and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods, as well as the pre-1960 buildings associated with transportation in Westminster. The results of the survey were also used to make generalizations about various property types within the city and a background history of the development of the two neighborhoods through the beginning of World War II.

Personnel

The project consultant was Deon Wolfenbarger of Three Gables Preservation, with additional research conducted by Patty McCartney. Project manager for the City of Westminster was Vicky Bunsen, Community Development Programs Coordinator. Dave Murray of the City of Westminster provided mapping and GIS services. Project reviewer for the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office was Mary Therese Anstey, Historical and Architectural Survey Coordinator.

Project dates

The project was initiated in May 2006, with field work and research conducted through February 2007. Results were presented at a public meeting hosted by the Westminster Historic Landmark Board in May 2007 for discussion and additional comments.

Summary of Results

A total of 141 historic resources were recorded and evaluated in the project area; a list of properties by address is presented in Appendix A. Of those, twenty (20) are recommended as “field eligible” for the National Register of Historic Places. There were sixty-seven (67) buildings recommended as field eligible for local designation. Initial field results were reviewed by National and State Register staff at the Colorado Historical Society, and additional information was obtained; thus the field assessments for the properties are based on more complete information and input from CHS staff. The results of the survey are summarized starting on page 43.

PROJECT AREA

Approximately 130 acres were selectively surveyed within the general area of Westminster's Harris Park plat and the neighborhood adjacent to the Pillar of Fire campus (formerly Westminster University). The transportation resources were scattered, but generally were found on either W. 72nd Avenue or along Federal Boulevard. All of the inventoried resources were within the Arvada USGS quadrangle in Sections 29 through 31, Township 2 South, Range 68 West, and Sections 5 and 6, Township 3 South, Range 68 West. The Harris Park and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods are indicated by the heavy black lines in the figure on page 5, while the transportation resources are indicated by black circles in the map on the following page.

The Harris Park neighborhood is generally level, sloping gently to the north. It is roughly bounded by Highway 36 on the north, Lowell Boulevard on the east, W. 72nd Avenue on the south, and Raleigh on the west. W. 72nd Avenue is a busy four lane street with commercial properties. A small historic commercial area is on the north side W. 73rd Avenue, with a large fire station and park on the south. Railroad tracks bisect the southwest corner of the district, diverging from the grid system of streets which are set to the compass points. The majority of streets in the neighborhood are lined with mature deciduous street trees and residential buildings dating from the turn of the twentieth century up through the 1960s. Some apartment buildings are located on the west side of the neighborhood. Bradburn Boulevard is slightly wider than the other streets for a portion of its length.

The Pillar of Fire/Belleview College neighborhood also has a grid system of streets set to the compass points, although the pattern is interrupted north of W. 82nd Avenue by the Belleview College camps and large farm lots. The college campus itself is located on the highest point of land in north suburban Denver, and the land slopes northward up towards this point. The residential streets south of 82nd Avenue are lined with street trees. In addition to the college campus located on the northwest corner, the neighborhood has residential buildings dating from the 1910s through the 1970s, as well as early twentieth century small farmsteads.¹ The neighborhood is bounded by W. 84th Avenue on the north, Federal Boulevard on the east, W. 80th Avenue on the south, and Lowell Boulevard on the west. The latter three streets are heavily traveled, with Federal Boulevard in particular serving as a major arterial roadway.

¹Belleview College an unincorporated parcel surrounded by Westminster, and was not inventoried for this project.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Survey objectives

The primary objectives of this survey project in Westminster were to inventory the extant pre-World War II historic resources in the Harris Park and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods, as well as transportation-related resources with construction dates of 1960 or earlier, and then to evaluate the resources' significance and integrity for historic designation. These evaluations include recommendations concerning the resources' individual eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places and/or as a local landmark. Utilizing the survey data, this survey project also identified common property types in Westminster, evaluated their overall significance, and provided preliminary recommendations for registration. Finally, the project made recommendations for future research.

Previous survey and designation work

This is the first intensive-level coordinated survey project for Westminster. Within the project boundaries, one property is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the Rev. William Gregory House at 8140 Lowell Boulevard (listed 2/23/1996). Historic structure assessment reports, funded by the State Historical Fund, have been prepared for the Westminster Grange Building and the Rodeo Super Market. The Grange also received a State Historical Fund grant in 2004 for exterior rehabilitation. A few properties within the survey area have been previously recorded under recent Section 106 review for proposed Colorado Department of Transportation projects. Except for 8140 Lowell Boulevard, which is listed on the National Register, all of the previously surveyed resources were also determined “not eligible,” although some of the forms featured little or no data under “historic background.” The previously recorded or designated buildings that were included in this survey project are listed below.

Resource #	Address	NR eligible	NR not eligible	NR listed	Year surveyed/ designated
5AM.44	7340 Bradburn Boulevard		✓		1988
5AM.899	8140 Lowell Boulevard			✓	1996
5AM.1651	3935 W. 73 rd Avenue ²		✓		2003
5AM.1744	3750 W. 72 nd Avenue		✓		
5AM.1747	7215 Bradburn Boulevard		✓		
5AM.1786	7790 Lowell Boulevard		✓		2006
5AM.1865	7796 Bradburn Boulevard		✓		2006

²This building has since been restored, and may now be eligible for the National Register as assessments are always subject to change.

Survey methodology

A selective intensive-level survey was chosen for the evaluation of Westminster's historic resources in this phase. Both field survey and archival research were used to obtain data on the individual buildings. The properties were selected during the survey planning phase in 2005, based on the construction date provided by the county assessor's records. However, these records were not always accurate. Field assessment and additional research revealed a few of the buildings had post-World War II construction dates. These buildings were included within this survey project not only to clarify the county assessor's date but also to provide a better picture of the general neighborhood development. By the same token, field assessment also led to the inclusion of additional buildings based on their appearance and likely construction date. Research verified that the additional buildings were constructed prior to 1940. As a result, instead of surveying 135 buildings as original planned, this project inventoried 141 buildings. The project consultant was Deon Wolfenbarger of Three Gables Preservation, with additional research conducted by Patty McCartney. Project manager for the City of Westminster was Vicky Bunsen, Community Development Programs Coordinator. Dave Murray of the City of Westminster provided mapping and GIS services. Project reviewer for the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office was Mary Therese Anstey, Historical and Architectural Survey Coordinator. The project was initiated in May 2006, with field work and research conducted through February 2007.

Field Survey: An on-site analysis of each property was conducted using a field review to assess its present condition, integrity, identification of style or type, approximate construction date, and obvious alterations and/or additions. This included the main building and any outbuildings. For several properties, however, dense vegetation, high fences, and lack of rear alleys prevented inspection of all buildings from all angles.

Photography: At least one 4- x 6-inch black-and-white photograph of each property was printed; typically three views were included. The digital photo files are labeled with street address and street name, e.g. <3801 75th.jpg>. If there was more than one view, that is indicated with brackets in item 47 on the survey form; e.g. three photos are represented by <7617 Raleigh[-2, -3].jpg>. Two copies of each photograph were printed; one copy will be stored at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at the Colorado Historical Society, and the other at the Department of Community Development at the City of Westminster. Original digital image files will also be archived at the City of Westminster in <.jpg> format. Historic photographs were also scanned or photographed digitally when possible. These will also be provided in <.jpg> format to the City of Westminster. Within the survey report, any images not credited were taken by the consultant in 2006 or 2007.

Photography was hampered in some instances by wooden privacy fences, high shrubs, evergreen trees, and a lack of rear alleys (except in a few instances). In a few rare instances, even the single view available from the public right-of-way did not provide a clear image of the resource.

Maps: UTM coordinates were recorded utilizing the <www.topozone.com> website, NAD27 datum. The USGS location maps were printed from the 1:24,000 scale, with each resource located in the center of the map, and further delineated by a red arrow.

For residential properties, information for the site maps was taken from the records of the county assessor's office, and transferred to GIS-based maps provided by the city showing each property's boundaries. Aerial photographs were also used to help locate the building on the site. For commercial properties, the city's GIS maps showed both property boundaries and building footprints; these were used for the site maps for these properties.

Archival research: Westminster was a small, rural town prior to the start of World War II. Consequently, the typical sources for building research – such as Sanborn Maps, building permits or city directories – were not available. Furthermore, census record research was hampered by lack of locational information (such as street addresses). As noted in the Colorado Historical Society's *Colorado Cultural Resources Survey Manual*, title searches can provide information about past owners, but are very time-consuming. As the manual recommends, title searches should be limited to “buildings of architectural importance about which no other information can be found.” Therefore, due to the time constraints of this project, title searches were only conducted using the online data available from the Adams County Clerk's office; those records date from 1960 through the present.

The Westminster Historical Society is a volunteer-run organization which has a variety of information on Westminster's history, ranging from historic photographs to family records. Information on historic buildings is somewhat limited, however, due to the Society's general purpose and method of filing. The Society is geared more towards documenting the history of persons significant to Westminster's history rather than the history of its built environment. Thus, donated records are indexed by accession date and the original donor instead of building address. The Historical Society is also responsible for several history activities and events during the year, as well as the operations of the Bowles House Museum. These activities leave little time for cross-referencing their numerous records. Finally, while there are a number of oral interviews that have been conducted, these have been sent to Denver University for transcription and were unavailable during this project. However, the volunteers are very interested in local history as expressed through Westminster's buildings, and were willing to help locate material. They have a small number of abstracts which are indexed by address, and the largest collection of historic photographs of Westminster and its residents.

Background research and data for the historic context utilized the following repositories:

- *Colorado State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society:* COMPASS search for previous survey and National/State Register Nominations.
- *Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy:* Local histories and maps (see Bibliography).

- *Colorado Unified Catalog – “Prospector”*: Local histories and maps (see Bibliography).

Data for the individual sites was found at:

- *Adams County Assessor’s Office*: Legal description and property owners’ names and addresses; past sales summary (from 1996 through present), dates of major alterations.
- *Adams County Clerk’s Office*: online deed records from 1960 through present, past property owners’ names.
- *Westminster Historical Society*: Abstracts, historic photos, family files, past newsletters, local history publications (see Bibliography).
- www.ancestry.com - U.S. Census Records, Adams County Colorado.

Documentation: The data from this project was recorded for each individual property on a Colorado Cultural Resource Survey *Architectural Inventory Form #1403*. Since parcel numbers are used by the city and county to identify each property, the parcel number was added to *Item 1* of the survey form. Also, in order to evaluate properties that are potentially eligible for local designation, the Westminster “Criteria for Designation” (Appendix H) were added to *Item 38. Significance*. Copies of the survey forms will be stored at the Colorado Historical Society and the City of Westminster, Department of Community Development.³

Evaluation: When evaluating properties for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, there are two primary areas of consideration – significance and integrity. While the historic data about each individual resource provides a starting point for evaluating its significance, a thorough evaluation comes only from placing properties in historic contexts. As the focus of this project were the buildings located in the oldest platted sections of Westminster (as well as transportation resources), the inventoried resources were evaluated first for their association with a period of Westminster’s development. Westminster prior to 1945 was a small rural town and the architecture and building types reflect its heritage. Thus large, elaborate “mansions” would not be expected in Westminster. Indeed, most of the residential buildings were simple houses reflective of the small town and agrarian associations.

A property’s significance is its quality in various areas, such American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. These areas of significance are evaluated by one or more of the four *Criteria for Evaluation* - A, B, C, or D. The Criteria describe how properties are significant for their association with important

³The historic resources are identified and filed according to a unique “resource number” which is assigned to each property. The first three digits of the resource number indicate the state and county in which the property is located, while the last digits indicate the order in which the properties were filed. Residents wishing to review a survey form should refer to this number when requesting a copy of this form from the Colorado Historical Society. Appendices A & C of this report list the properties and their resource number.

events or persons, for their importance in design or construction, or for their information potential, and are listed below:

A. (Associative value: events) Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. (Associative value: person) Associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or

C. (Design or construction value) Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. (Information potential) That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes. While somewhat subjective, the evaluation of integrity is grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its historical associations. Thus these buildings were primarily evaluated for their integrity dating from their construction up through World War II. The seven aspects or qualities of integrity as defined by the National Register of Historic Places are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

- **Location** is the place where the historic property was constructed. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. There were six buildings inventoried in this phase which were moved from their original location; some of these moves occurred during the historic period.

- **Setting** is the physical environment of a historic property. It refers to the historic character of the place in which the property played its historical role – how the property is situated and its historical relationship to surrounding features and open space. The physical features that constitute the historic setting of a historic property can include such elements as topographic features, vegetation, simple manmade paths or fences and the relationships between buildings and other features or open spaces.

- **Design** is the combination of elements that create the historic form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. This includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials.

- **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. If the property has been rehabilitated, the historic materials and significant

features must have been preserved. The property must also be an actual historic resource, not a re-creation; a property whose historic features have been lost and then reconstructed is usually not eligible.

- **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. It may be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery.

- **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district which retains its original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century.

- **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Therefore, a property where a nationally significant person carried out the action or work for which they are nationally significant is preferable to the place where they returned to only sleep, eat or spend their leisure time. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.

Evaluation of integrity was based upon available historic photographs and review of exterior alterations which were evident during the field survey. No original plans were found. Due to the size of Westminster during the historic period, building permits were not required at first, and then the earlier permits were not recorded. In general, a field examination of the exterior provided sufficient information regarding integrity

The resources were thus all evaluated for their individual eligibility to the National Register based on their significance and integrity. An understanding of the historic contexts of Westminster provided important information in evaluating the significance of the resources. Only with an understanding of the history of the development of Westminster – a small agricultural community before World War II – can one adequately evaluate the types of buildings that were constructed. It was not a town of great wealth, but a slow-growing community whose residents enjoyed a rural lifestyle.

As this was a selective survey, a complete evaluation of historic district potential was not possible. Some of these resources were located in areas where there was not a sufficient concentration of other historic buildings which retained a high degree of integrity. However, in other instances, the inventoried buildings were located among intact residential buildings dating from the 1940s through the 1960s. This type of scattered development along a block represents the slow growth over time typical of a small

Colorado town. In other words, a Late Victorian residence from the 1890s might be adjacent to a Craftsman Bungalow from the 1920s, which in turn is next to a brick 1950s ranch house. Therefore, additional intensive-level survey is needed in order to better evaluate the historic areas of Westminster which experienced slow development over the years. This survey report summarizes all of the findings of the current survey project. Copies of the survey reports will be given to the Colorado Historical Society, City of Westminster, the Westminster Historical Society, and the main branch of the local public library.

Historic contexts are defined as broad patterns of historical development within a community as represented by its historic resources. According to the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Preservation Planning, Identification, and Evaluation*, the proper evaluation of historic resources can occur only when they are referenced against these broad patterns of development. Cultural resources have long been examined from some sort of historic perspective, but by evaluating them in reference to historic contexts, important links can be made with local, state or even national themes in history. Accurate appraisals of the significance of surveyed properties cannot be established with locally meaningful terms unless they are defined by historic contexts. Only then may the criteria for evaluating properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places be successfully applied. An outline of historic contexts for Westminster was prepared for the 2005 *Historic Resources Survey Plan*. That report also recommended which Westminster properties should be inventoried first, in part based upon those contexts – i.e., buildings were chosen which would shed the most insight into the historic contexts. Thus, some of the results of this survey are incorporated into the appropriate contexts below.⁴

Early Settlement to Town Development: 1863-1911

Prior to the discovery of gold in Colorado, the Arapaho Indians likely maintained a semi-permanent encampment in the area near Gregory Hill, perhaps following the native herds of bison and antelope. Starting first with the gold rush in the late 1850s and later encouraged by the Homestead Act of 1862, settlers of European descent emigrated to the Colorado Territory; Jim Baker was one of the earliest in this area. In 1859, Baker settled on land near 52nd and Tennyson and began homesteading in 1863. At this site, he operated a toll ferry and store at Clear Creek where it crossed with the old Cherokee Trail known as Baker's crossing. Jim Baker did not stay long, however, leaving the Westminster area in 1871 for Wyoming. The first permanent settler to move here was Pleasant DeSpain. In 1870, he originally homesteaded 80 acres near the intersection of W. 76th Avenue and Lowell Boulevard, building a home and planting both grain and apple and



Pleasant DeSpain
Courtesy Westminster Historical Society.

⁴The original contexts were adapted from "Historic Westminster, Colorado: A Brief History of Westminster," City of Westminster, Colorado, <<http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/city/history/default.htm>>, cited 22 September 2005.

cherry orchards.⁵ He built the first home in Westminster, a sod house which was located north of W. 76th Avenue near Lowell.

DeSpain shipped his produce from a nearby railroad dock, which led to the naming of the area as DeSpain Junction. He purchased another 80 acres south of his original homestead in 1877, which included the area at W. 72nd Avenue and Lowell Boulevard. DeSpain then built a permanent home for his family at 3585 W. 76th Avenue, now demolished. DeSpain Sr. also donated land for a school site at 80th and Lowell.⁶ His son, Benjamin DeSpain, sold the property at 72nd and Lowell for the Harris Park School, now called the Pleasant DeSpain, Sr. Schoolhouse. It was built ca. 1895 at 7200 Lowell Boulevard.



*Pleasant and Sarah DeSpain's house on W. 76th Avenue (demolished).
Photo courtesy Westminster Historical Society, date unknown.*

Edward Bruce Bowles was another early settler of Westminster. He first came West in 1863 in a cattle drive. In 1871, he moved here with his wife Elizabeth, and homesteaded an area south of the DeSpain farm. Bowles later became known as a breeder of fine horses. The Bowles Residence was built in 1877 and is located just south of the boundaries of this survey project at 3924 W. 72nd Avenue. It is one of the largest and most elaborate historic residences in Westminster, and currently serves as a museum

⁵Other sources cite 160 acres, the typical amount claimed under the Homestead Act; *History of Westminster, Colorado: 1911-1961* (Westminster, CO: Westminster Journal, 1961) 1.

⁶Ibid.

operated by the Westminster Historical Society. Other settlers followed DeSpain and Bowles, and DeSpain Junction grew into a small farming community. In contrast to Edward Bowles' house, the dwellings of the vast majority of early settlers were simple, vernacular buildings. Those associated with the early settlement context due to their construction date and original owner are listed in the table in Appendix D, although some of these have since been altered.⁷



The Bowles House

Once enough residents settled the area, there were two pressing needs – the education of their children and the ability to easily acquire the goods and services needed for farming. As previously noted, the first school was built at 80th and Lowell on land donated by Pleasant DeSpain, Sr., in part because his children had to travel to Wheatridge to attend school. The second school building, constructed ca. 1895, was closer to the commercial center of Westminster at the corner of 72nd and Lowell Boulevard. It was modified in the 1920s when an addition was built on the north. It is still used today as offices for the school district.



The Harris Park School, now known as the Pleasant DeSpain Sr. Schoolhouse.

Photo courtesy of the City of Westminster.

⁷There are more residences built prior to 1911 than are shown in this list. They may be associated with either the agricultural or Westminster University contexts that follow, or their original owner and historic associations are unknown.

Prior to 1900, the early settlers had to travel to Denver for major purchases and supplies. This was a lengthy trip, requiring at least a day of travel in one direction. Some everyday necessities could be purchased in Arvada, but either location was inconvenient for the growing community. Until the railroad made the shipment of goods into town easier, however, there were not any commercial enterprises in DeSpain Junction. After the arrival of the railroad in 1881, though, a general store finally opened later that decade. Jim Williams opened the first grocery and general store on Connecticut Avenue (now Bradburn). He was followed by John Cram, who opened the first blacksmith shop in 1898 on Walnut (73rd Avenue).⁸ These commercial buildings followed the construction of a new depot, which community leaders envisioned as the best method for announcing the town's "arrival" as a permanent settlement. In anticipation of the railroad's arrival, Edward Bruce Bowles led the movement in the community to establish a depot, and even donated funds for its construction. The erection of the depot in 1881 firmly established the commercial center for the new community in the vicinity of the intersection of Connecticut and Walnut Streets. Although the number of commercial buildings was never large, it nonetheless remained the "hub" of activities in Westminster for almost seventy years. None of the late nineteenth century commercial buildings or the depot remain.



Looking northwest towards the present day Bradburn Boulevard and the former depot. Photo by L.C. McClure, ca. 1908 to 1910. Courtesy of Denver Public Library Western History Photos, call number MCC-961.

⁸*History of Westminster.*, 32.

Princeton of the West: 1893-present

While the earliest settlers generally moved to DeSpain Junction for agricultural pursuits, beginning in the 1890s several newcomers came because of news that a prominent university was planned for the area. Henry Mayham, a noted philanthropist from New York, convinced the Denver Presbytery around 1890 to build a Presbyterian University on land that he owned on Crown Point. He purchased 640 acres here in 1891 on the highest point in what was then Arapahoe County. Called Westminster University, it was envisioned as the “Princeton of the West” and was modeled after that university. The original plans for the main building were designed by architect E. B. Gregory and the cornerstone was laid in 1891. However, a national financial panic delayed construction. Mayham then asked his friend Stanford White, a prominent New York architect, to redesign the main building. White's design for a three-story structure was completed in 1893, and was built from red sandstone quarried in Colorado.



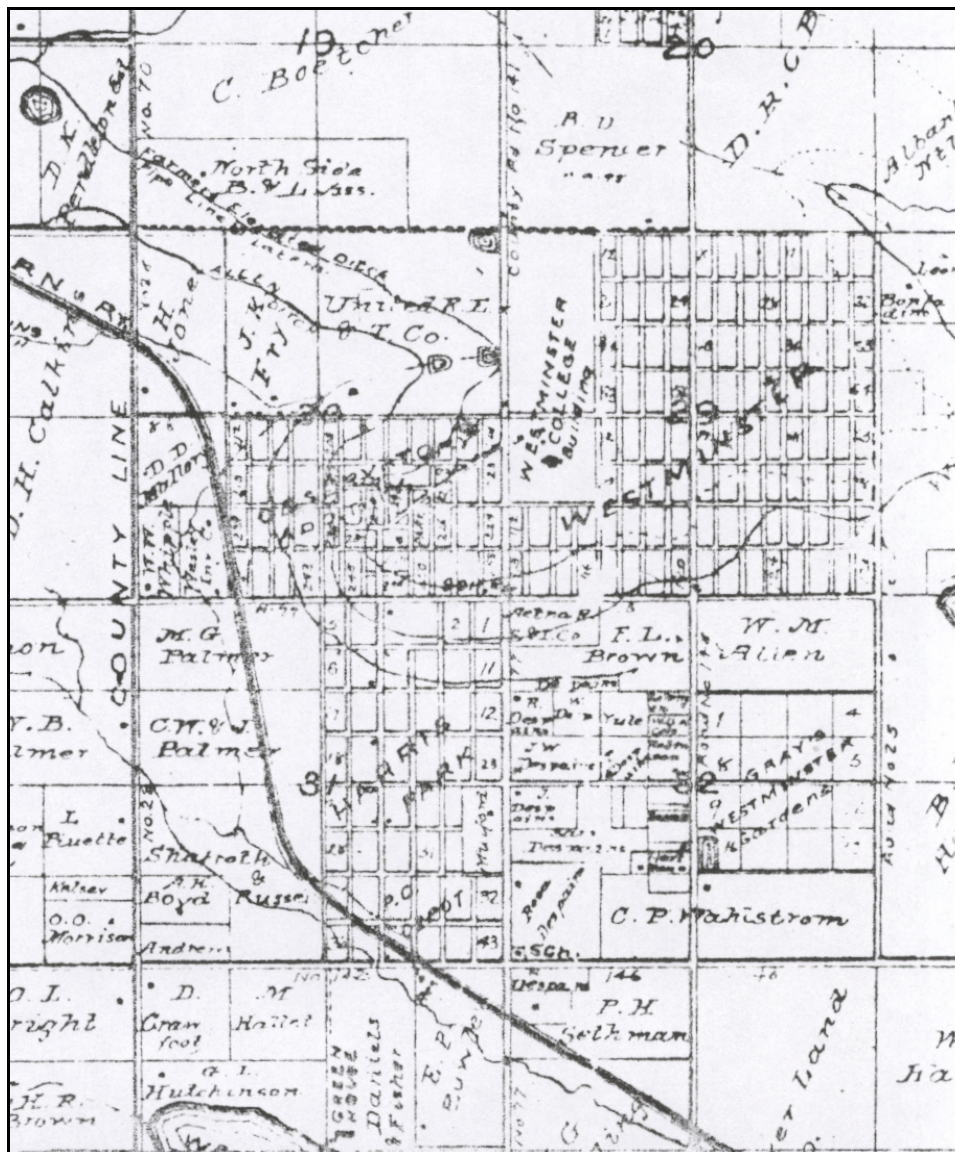
*Westminster University, ca. 1893-1905
Courtesy of Denver Public Library Western History
Photos, call number X-14805*

The completion of the building unfortunately coincided with the silver panic of 1893. Furthermore, the Presbyterian College in Del Norte, Colorado, was completed and competing for students. The school was accruing interest payments from its construction, and the Denver Presbytery felt the prospect for the school ever opening was hopeless. In 1903, though, a committee met to decide on a location of a new Presbyterian college. Pueblo, Canon City, and Colorado Springs made offers of money and land, but Denver's bid was the highest. Mayham and others donated the Westminster building to the Presbyterian Synod of Colorado, along with a power plant, forty acres for a campus, and eighty acres for a college farm.⁹

The opening of the college was delayed again, however, possibly in part due to title problems. The University was finally scheduled to open in September 1907, when concerns over the building's condition were raised. Although sound, the building had not been occupied since its completion in 1893, and needed repairs. Thus the college classes had to open at the Central Presbyterian Church in Denver.¹⁰

⁹Andy James Lavender, “The Story of a College Ministry,” (Westminster, CO: City of Westminster, 1992) 2-3.

¹⁰Ibid., 3-4.



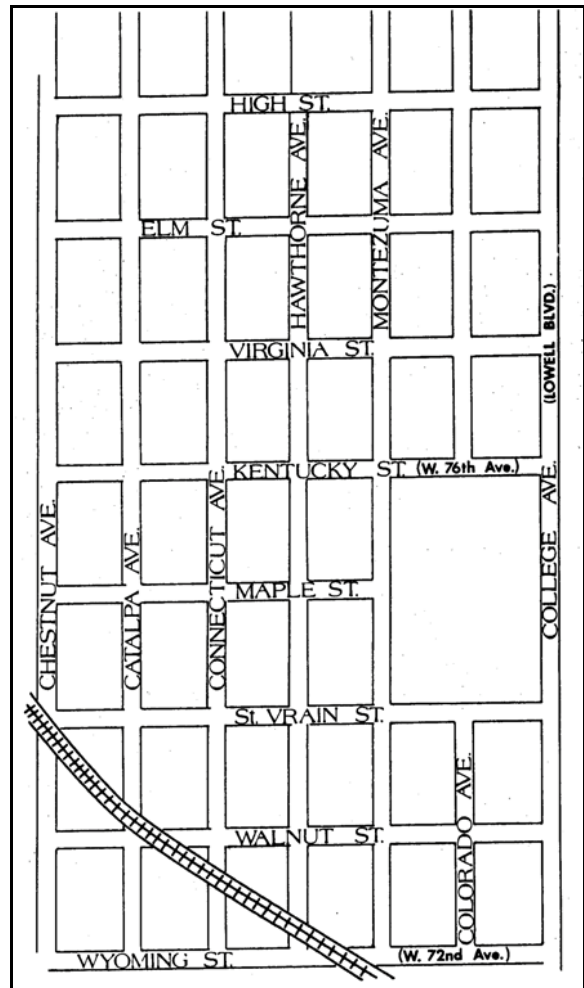
This map, prepared before the University was even opened, shows the influence the proposed college had on the early development of Westminister, with two large subdivisions, Observatory Addition and Westminister, located north of today's 80th Avenue. Taken from the 1899 "Willits Farm Map," Jeffco Red Series No. 118, Box/Vol. No. 2 Microfiche.

James D. Husted, a Denver businessman, was the first president of the university board of trustees. He was given the task of raising a one million dollar endowment, to be used for repairs, new construction, and faculty salaries. To help raise money for the endowment campaign, University officials formed the Westminister Realty Company and subdivided one-third of the school's land to sell as home sites. One-third of the platted ground

adjacent to the campus was divided into 1,000 lots, sold at \$100 each. During the first week of the campaign, 250 lots were sold.¹¹

By 1910, Salem G. Pattison (the university's new president) noted in a letter that more than 805 of the lots had been sold. The college was also used as an incentive for purchase, with some of the new owners promised entrance into the school, and other receiving tuition with the price of the down payment. Faculty members also purchased lots and built homes in the subdivision. As an added inducement to encourage growth around the campus, the University Corporation promised loans of up to ninety percent of the construction cost to property buyers. These efforts helped spur the development of the area, and in acknowledgment, the town was renamed Westminster when it incorporated in 1911.¹²

Prior to its incorporation as Westminster, DeSpain Junction had undergone another transformation. During the 1880s, some harsh winters, a drought, and a national recession led many of the early homesteaders in and around the DeSpain Junction to move away from the area. Several sold their farmland to C.J. Harris, a real estate developer from Connecticut who arrived in DeSpain Junction in 1885 after hearing rumors that a university was to be built. Harris subdivided the farms into smaller tracts, several of which he in turn sold to fruit farmers. At his request (and with Pleasant DeSpain's permission) the town was renamed Harris, also known as Harris Park after the plat he submitted in 1890. The Harris Park plat extended from Wyoming Street on the south (today W. 72nd Avenue) to



A recreation of Harris' plat, taken from A New Westminster: 1976 and Forward for Colorado's 10th Largest City. Connecticut Avenue is Bradburn Boulevard today.

¹¹Marion Smith, Westminster Then and Now (1976) 28. *Note:* there is some confusion over the date of the "Westminster" plat. It is seen in the 1899 map on the previous page, yet other records indicate the University formed the Westminster Realty Company and divided the land into lots in 1909. City records are missing for this addition.

¹²Lavender, 4.

Cornell (W. 80th Avenue) on the north, and from College Avenue (Lowell Boulevard) on the east to Chestnut (Raleigh Street) on the west. Harris named the primary north/south street after his home state of Connecticut, and planted maple trees along its route to entice potential home buyers. In later years, Connecticut was referred to as a “Tunnel of Color” as these trees reached maturity.¹³ Harris’ own house was built at 7996 Bradburn Boulevard after 1885. The imposing three story house featured imported woodwork and a fireplace in every room. The house is still extant, although the third floor was demolished in a 1928 fire. During a recent major rehabilitation, this floor was rebuilt, and the original cedar shingles were replaced with horizontal siding.

After much anticipation, classes were finally held in the Westminster building in 1908, with sixty students admitted in September. Yearly tuition was \$50.00 and the earliest classes were co-educational. However, possibly as an attempt to model the University after Princeton, the Trustees decided in 1915 to exclude women from the college. In spite of the fact this decision to banish “the plumage of girl students, [and] ‘fudge’ parties . . .” immediately and effectively reduced the enrollment in half, the Trustees were certain “that the full capacity of the present institution will be taxed when the new order goes into effect.” They felt there was a need in Colorado for a college for boys only, and that they were “only following the more advanced thought in the matter of instruction.”¹⁴ The crush of new enrollees unfortunately never occurred. Just two years later all of the students left to fight in World War I, causing the college to close its doors in 1917. Prior to closing, though, the school also established an evening law school under its charter. The classes were held in various downtown Denver buildings and continued to operate until 1957, when it merged with Denver University. Many of the state’s prominent attorneys, judges, and Supreme Court justices graduated from Westminster University’s Law School; the school also boasted a governor, U.S. Senator, and a Secretary of the Interior, Oscar Chapman among its alumni.¹⁵

At one time valued at half a million dollars, in 1920 the Westminster University was sold for \$40,000 to the Pillar of Fire Church, a Christian denomination founded in Denver in 1901 as the Methodist Pentecostal Church. The sale included forty-five acres, along with the main building, power plant, Kirkwood Hall, and the President’s House. The school reopened that same year as Westminster College. The Church established an Elementary School, High School, Junior College, and Bible Seminary during the following decade. In 1925 the name was changed to Belleview College and Preparatory School. The Belleview facility is still owned and operated by the Pillar of Fire Church. Farmland was purchased north of the college in order to provide food for the students and faculty. Although the

¹³Westminster Public Library and the Westminster Historical Society, “A Walk Through Westminster History: A Self Guided Tour – Bradburn Blvd.,” (Westminster, CO: The Publishing House, n.d.) 20.

¹⁴“Banishment of All Fair Coeds,” Rocky Mountain News (13 May 1915).

¹⁵Lavender.

farm and the main campus are not located within the city limits of Westminster, many other buildings associated with the college are; furthermore, the construction and development of Westminster University had a significant impact on the development of the city for several decades, not only in the plats which were immediately adjacent to the University, but also in the area of town closer to the original DeSpain Junction.

A number of people moved to Harris after the plans for the University were announced. Some, like Fred Strawson, came for the construction work associated with the large building. Strawson was a carpenter who moved to Harris to work on the University. However, he received an injury and was unable to continue in construction work. He purchased land on Connecticut (Bradburn), built his home, and went into real estate and insurance.¹⁶ Others, such as the Rev. William Gregory, were employed by the University. Gregory was a Presbyterian minister who came to teach Hebrew and theological courses at Westminster University.¹⁷ He built his house at 8140 Lowell Boulevard in 1910, just a short distance from the campus, in the recently platted “Westminster” addition.

With the prosperity, or at least, the *hopes* for prosperity that the University brought, some of the houses associated with this context were more elaborate than those built in the earlier period. Many of the larger residences or boarding houses are thus located closer to the campus. The houses that are associated with this period of Westminster’s development are listed in the table in Appendix D.

Residential construction was not the only segment of Westminster’s development that witnessed an increase after the University opened in 1908. There were also a number of new commercial enterprises around 73rd and Bradburn. A hardware and lumber store operated by Dawson and Bristol was opened on 73rd Avenue. Next door the first drug store was started in 1910 by Dr. Richard Russell, who was also Westminster’s first mayor after the town incorporated in 1911. After Cram moved his blacksmith business to Denver, another one was opened adjacent to the present Grange Hall in 1911 by Len Riley. That same year the residents of Harris voted to incorporate as a town. Although the reasoning behind incorporation was to secure water, the citizens also voted to change the name from Harris to Westminster in honor of Westminster University.

Even the churches of the community were influenced in part by the University. The first church services for the citizens of Harris Park were held on January 3, 1892, in the Harris Schoolhouse, after a group of Presbyterians joined together to form the town’s first congregation. Its early fortunes seemed based upon those of the University. The members agreed to name their congregation the “University Presbyterian Church of

¹⁶Ibid., 7.

¹⁷Westminster Public Library and the Westminster Historical Society, “A Walk Through Westminster History: A Self Guided Tour – Lowell Blvd.,” (Westminster, CO: The Publishing House, n.d.) 12.

Westminster.” Once the financial problems of the late 1890s set in, the church changed its name to “University Presbyterian Church of Harris.” Only after the University was under construction did Westminster become a part of the name again.¹⁸ The congregation did not have a building, however, until after the University was opened and operating for a few years. The Reverend Walter S. Rudolph is credited with founding the church. The first church building was completed on Thanksgiving Day, 1911 at the intersection of 80th and Bradburn Boulevard. In 1957, the church moved closer to the commercial center of town.¹⁹ Its original location several blocks north of the commercial center, though, was determined by the University’s location and, in turn, encouraged residential development on the north end of Bradburn.

The Rev. Rudolph’s home was also built in response to the University. His large brick house was designed to house not only his family, but also to serve as a boarding house for male students of Westminster University. The second floor had a central hallway, with doors off of each side for the boarding rooms. The third floor had a gable studio with study rooms featuring cubby holes for student storage.²⁰ Rudolph arrived in the area in 1891, and took credit for inducing Henry J. Mayham to convince the Presbyterian Synod to locate the university in Westminster. His wife Hattie is credited with supervising the construction of the house in 1892, as well as raising their seven children and managing the agricultural activities on the five acre lot. Like other residents of Harris, the Rudolphys planted a small orchard featuring apple, cherry, and even plum trees (see the following context, *Agriculture: 1863 - ca. 1945*).²¹



The Rudolph family home and boarding house, ca. 1892, 7885 Quitman Street.

¹⁸*History of Westminster*, 8.

¹⁹Westminster Historical Society, “Take an Old Fashioned Walk along Historic Bradburn Blvd. at Your Leisure,” (Westminster Historical Society, 1993) n.p.

²⁰Westminster Historical Society, “Let’s Take an Old Fashioned Walk,” (Westminster Historical Society, n.d.) 5.

²¹“Rudolph House,” Historically Speaking (Westminster Historical Society newsletter).

Agriculture: 1863 - ca. 1945

Even though the University led to a spurt of development in Westminster in the early 1900s, agriculture was the primary economic engine for the community and surrounding area for nearly a century. Starting with Pleasant DeSpain's first orchard and encouraged by C.J. Harris' development of small tracts sold to fruit growers in the late 1800s, Westminster soon became a center for fruit growing. It boasted of having the largest apple orchards west of the Mississippi, with several cherry orchards as well. Every spring, residents from the entire metropolitan Denver area came to Westminster to enjoy the apple trees in blossom, returning in the fall to buy fruit. One orchard owner built an apple house for fruit storage and apple cider production, which also served as a social gathering place for the community. Some of the more prominent orchards included the Westminster Orchard, DeSpain/Plandel Orchard, and Madison Orchard. Begun in the 1890s, Westminster Orchard covered about 40 acres between Lowell and Federal Boulevards and 76th and 80th Avenues. It was then operated by George Begole (later a Denver mayor), followed by Walter Schaefer (known then as the Schaefer Orchards). Madison Orchard, encompassing 725 acres of what is now the Shaw Heights and Westminster Hills subdivisions, shipped its fruit to New York; to handle the produce, a special railroad track line was built into the orchard.²²



A cherry orchard near Westminster, ca. 1908 - 1910, with farmhouse, windmill, water storage tank, and rail lines on the left. Photo by L.C. McClure. Courtesy of Denver Public Library Western History Photos, call number MCC-964.

Other farms within the area produced oats, barley, and alfalfa. Near the present Sunset Ridge Subdivision, Fred J. Thompson grew some of the first dry land winter wheat in the country on summer fallow ground in 1901. Along Clear Creek a large truck garden

²²*History of Westminster*, p. 2.

produced thousands of dollars of produce every year.²³ The 80-acre Savery Savory Mushroom farm, located between 108th and 112th Avenues on N. Federal Boulevard, was owned and operated by Charles Savery from the 1920s through the 1950s. Shoenberg Farm was one of the largest egg producers west of the Mississippi River and was a major dairy wholesaler from 1921 throughout the 20th Century. The largest farms in the area were scattered throughout the two adjoining counties, eventually to be annexed by Westminster; these were not covered by this survey project. The former farms that were included in this survey project were either small properties, or were the remnants of some of the close-in orchards.

The original plat of Harris Park, seen on page 25, shows the intent of C. J. Harris to sell lots as small farms. Instead of typical 25 feet', 50 feet, or 60 feet wide lots, each block was divided into four large lots, with the exception of four blocks which contained smaller (but not much) lots – two blocks along the west side of Connecticut (Bradburn) between Walnut (73rd Avenue) and Maple (75th Avenue), and two blocks on the east side of Connecticut, one each to the north and south of the other lots. There were also two large areas in the Harris Park plat not divided into lots or blocks at all – one on the west side between St. Vrain and Kentucky and the other at the north end, south of the present day 80th Avenue/Turnpike Drive. Town histories do not indicate the intended purpose for these reservations. The north one contained Harris' own house, so perhaps he desired a large property. The other may have been owned by a farmer that did not want to subdivide further. Oddly, Harris' plat does not take into account the small but already established commercial block on Walnut (73rd) between Connecticut and Hawthorne.

In spite of the hopes the new University would bring prosperity to Westminster, the growth envisioned by Harris did not materialize. In fact, Harris himself left town after only a few years. It was purported the money he used for his development schemes in Westminster belonged to his wife. As she was not aware of his dealings, he left town in a great hurry.²⁴ His plat for Harris Park, however, helped shape the type of growth in Westminster for several decades. Some new residents moved to the area to pursue strictly agricultural ventures, while others, particularly after World War I, saw it as a sideline to supplement other income. Most of the newcomers to Westminster during the 1920s had other jobs, some commuting to Denver on the interurban, which ran until 1926, and then later on the bus. They saw the town as a good place to raise a family in a rural atmosphere. Helen Wirkus' father, for example, decided to “move to the country” after her sister ran into the street in Denver and was struck by a car. Her family purchased the Oleson house at 7340 Bradburn shortly thereafter.²⁵

²³Ibid.

²⁴Westminster Historical Society, “Take an Old Fashioned Walk,” n.p.

²⁵Helen Wirkus, oral interview with Deon Wolfenbarger, 26 September 2006.



*Harris Park plat of 1890.
The large lots were designed to appeal to small-time farmers.*

The large lots in Harris Park allowed their owners to plant a garden, have a milk cow, and raise chickens. M. A. “Doc” Shipman, for example, worked in a variety of positions to support his family, but his lot in the Harris Park addition was an idyllic rural retreat. He and his wife Laura purchased a forty acre farm in 1919 in the area that would later become the Perl Mack subdivision in Westminster. In 1923, they sold this farm and bought the block at the northwest corner of 76th Avenue and Newton Streets. Shipman also bought the Star Overall laundry at the same time, operating the laundry until World War II. He then sold that business to join the Union Pacific railroad as a carpenter. They built their house in 1923, and eventually a barn, garage, and henhouse. A house from their former farm was also moved to the property and used as a playhouse for their three children. On the property were three acres of cherry trees and, from 1923 through 1926, three acres of strawberries.²⁶

Although many of the properties inventoried for this project originally had an agricultural purpose, most of the associated structures or features are no longer evident. The few features that remain are therefore significant as rare reminders of Westminster’s agricultural heritage. Several of the small farms and orchards in Harris Park relied on ditch water for irrigation. The Farmers’ High Line Canal and Reservoir Company incorporated in 1885, with water rights dating to 1860. Water was carried from the Farmers’ through the Allen Ditch. Later, the Harris Park Irrigation Company obtained its water from the Farmers’ High Line Canal and the Allen Ditch. Today, many of the ditch features are still evident along the street edges and property boundaries.

Most of the larger agricultural processing buildings and outbuildings have been demolished, with the exception of the DeSpain/Plandel Orchard Buildings (ca. 1906) at 7786 and 7790 Lowell Boulevard. However, there were an unusually high number of chicken houses recorded on the county assessor’s cards. Although all have been converted to some other use and most do not retain typical features of this property type, oral interviews with long-time residents corroborate this fact. Westminster was considered “country living” up through at least the 1950s, and many residences had chicken houses in the back yard; some even had brooder houses.²⁷ Finally, a few fruit trees are still evident in some of the surveyed properties, although many of these are nearing the end of their expected life spans. Despite the fact many of the outbuildings associated with agriculture have been demolished over the years, several residential buildings associated with this context remain, and are listed in Appendix D.

After the grandiose plans for a major university did not come to fruition, the town of Harris (with a population of 125 in 1910) remained a sleepy town. Most of the commerce in the town was geared to local residents and the nearby agricultural concerns. Of the following “businesses” listed in a 1910 business directory, several were not even

²⁶M.A. Shipman clipping files, Westminster Historical Society.

²⁷Helen Wirkus, Oral interview with Patty McCartney, 27 February 2007.

situated in commercial buildings in the center of town: F. H. Berry, harness and shoe repair; Richard Calking, physician; H. B. Gilchrist, real estate; Henry House, carpenter; R. H. Hulbert, carpenter; Mrs. Hulbert, poultry; R. H. Mollette, postmaster; H.C. Morris, dairy; L. D. Mulford, general merchandise, fuel, and feed; Rev. W. S. Rudolph, pastor Presbyterian Church; L. W. Riley, blacksmith; Fred S. Strawson, real estate; J. J. Walworth, prop. Westminster Hardware & Lumber Co.; Salem G. Pattison, Westminster University president; J. H. Williams, grocer; W. E. Wilson, railroad & exp. Agent.²⁸ Although a few buildings were constructed in the “downtown” from 1908 through about 1912, commercial growth was generally inactive for the next decade. The most significant construction within this block related to agriculture was the Westminster Grange building. It was completed in 1913 at a cost of \$1,200.00, with an additional \$300.00 spent for the two 60'x120' lots. The Westminster Grange was organized in January 1910 as an agricultural organization, but over the years it also served as a service and social group. Its early members and officers came from all walks of life and represent virtually every significant family in Westminster.



“Downtown” Westminster, ca. 1924. The addition to Stuckey’s is visible on the right side of the building. The Grange is located to the right of Stuckey’s, and the public library (also Sadie Anderson’s millinery shop) is to the left.

During the 1920s commercial growth picked back up, and several businesses either opened or changed hands. Moffett and Weber moved their grocery store to the former drug store building at the corner of 73rd and Bradburn (no longer extant). The post office was located in the store and Moffet served as postmaster. Oren Kelso then operated another grocery store in the former Moffett and Weber building. Operations of the Dawson and Bristol hardware and lumber store were taken over by W. Tyler Stuckey. He built an addition on the east side of the building, which became Westminster’s first

²⁸“The Business Community in Harris in 1910,” Historically Speaking, February 2007, p. 3.

garage in 1923, operated by Roy Miller. The first clothing store (a millinery shop) also opened during this decade. Sadie Anderson located this business next to the other stores on 73rd; she also ran the town's first library out of this building.

The first three contexts help explain the number, distribution, and types of historic resources in the historic portion of Westminster. The location of the railroad and depot near Bradburn and 73rd Avenue helped establish the original commercial center of the town. The construction of Westminster University on Crown Point, however, enticed newcomers to build residences at some distance from the commercial center. The platting of the town, featuring large lots geared towards small farming operations, encouraged development to spread across the city between these two major features. As several large orchards later became successful after the turn of the century, this further discouraged infill residential construction. Finally, the failure of Westminster University during World War I sealed the community's fate to remain a small, sleepy agricultural town for the next three decades. Thus, there is a relatively small number of pre-World War II homes in Westminster. The majority are simple residential buildings, which were perfectly suited for small farming operations. These residences are scattered across a several block area between 72nd Avenue and the former Westminster University campus at 84th Avenue, instead of being centrally located around a town center, as one might typically expect in a small rural community.

Post WWII Suburban Development: 1946-present

Several factors influenced the explosive growth Westminster experienced after World War II, not the least of which was the need to provide housing for returning veterans or former GIs that moved here after the war. New jobs in the northwest quadrant of the Denver metropolitan area, the 1951 opening of Dow Chemical in Rocky Flats, and new transportation systems, particularly the Denver-Boulder Turnpike completed in 1952, encouraged suburban growth. The turnpike initially brought approximately 7,000 people past the city every day, growing to 13,500 drivers per day by 1966. Due to the high volume of traffic, the toll-road became a freeway in 1967, fifteen years ahead of schedule. Today the highway is one of the busiest in the state, and it was a contributing factor to the growth of Westminster and other cities in the northwest quadrant of the Denver metropolitan area. The construction of the toll road destroyed many orchards and divided the historic portion of Westminster, with the college campus located on the north side and the historic commercial center on the south. However, an underpass for Lowell Boulevard was included to insure the bisection of Westminster caused less disruption. Consequently, Westminster's population grew from 1,686 in 1950 to 13,850 by 1960, and 19,512 in 1970.

Until the 1950s, Westminster's business activities centered around the First Corners area near Bradburn and 73rd. Businesses continued to invest in the area, with the construction of the Rodeo Market building in 1953 and the erection of a two story building at 3971 W. 73rd. However, the rapid growth of the postwar years and increasing reliance on automobiles gradually lured commerce to other parts of Westminster. Businesses were

attracted east to the Westminster Center; the Harris Park shopping Center, from 72nd to 73rd and Lowell Boulevard; the Westminster Plaza shopping center at 73rd and Federal Boulevard; and the La Conte shopping center.²⁹

New residential subdivisions were added at a rapid rate during the 1950s and 1960s, and the existing neighborhoods of Harris Park and around the former University filled in with new construction in the postwar period. Former lots of five acres were subdivided with the lots sold off for new construction. Thus these two neighborhoods, unlike most of the remainder of Westminster, exhibit a variety of housing styles and construction dates that reflect slow growth and infill over nearly a century of development.

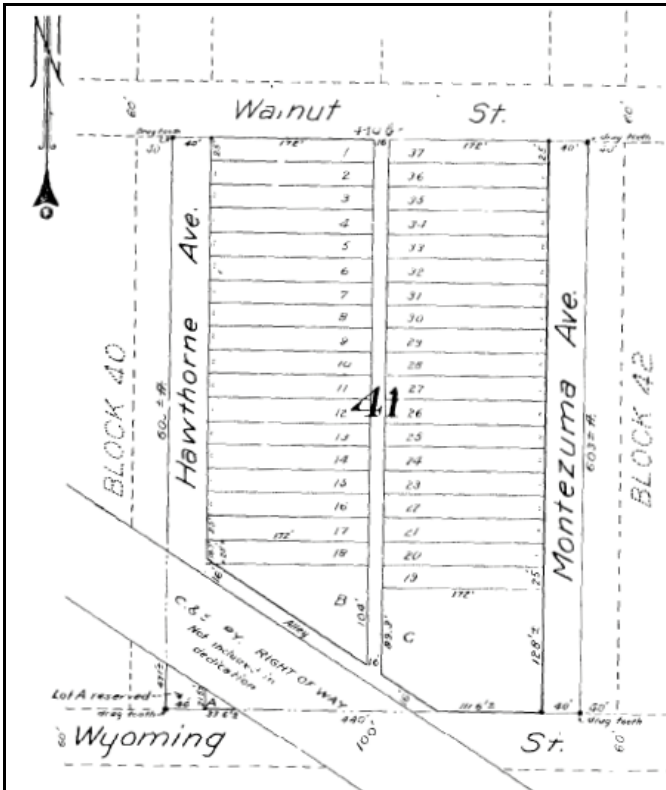


West 73rd Avenue (center diagonal road) in the 1950s, after the construction of the Rodeo Market but prior to much of the infill development. Note the open land around the residences near the top of the photo. Photograph courtesy of the Westminster Historical Society.

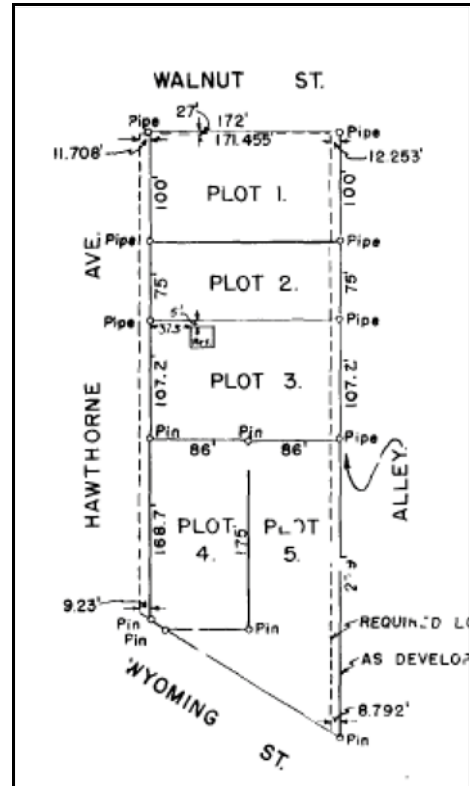
While this survey project did not include any residential buildings constructed after World War II, the postwar boom clearly impacted the historic center of Westminster. In addition to numerous new subdivisions and annexations occurring in the postwar years, the lots in Harris Park were consolidated and re-platted. Although the original plat laid out the lots in a regular and consistent manner, over the years owners either combined parcels or subdivided, so today the lots vary in size. For example, in 1947, Amos &

²⁹*History of Westminster*, 32.

Esther Paulson, William and Marjorie Morris, Anthony, Anna and Hazel Lewis, and Reece and Esther Lloyd filed to subdivide the western half of block 41 in Harris Park. South of Walnut Street, between Hawthorne and Montezuma Avenues, the lots in block 41 at some point had been re-platted from the original four large lots to 37 small, uniform lots with an alley in between, plus two irregular lots at the south end due to the diagonal railroad right-of-way near Wyoming Street. As shown below, after the subdivision of the west half of this block, there were only five lots. While this was a common occurrence, in many instances the owners did not go to the trouble of re-platting but instead just combined lots into a single “property” through ownership.



Block 41 in Harris Park prior to 1947.
 Courtesy City of Westminster



1947 re-platting of west half of block 41.
 Courtesy City of Westminster

Transportation in Westminster: 1920 - 1970

One of the purposes of this survey project was to evaluate the buildings related to transportation in Westminster. As many, if not all, of the historic resources associated with early transportation themes, particularly trail and railroad, in Westminster have been demolished, this project focused primarily on gas and service stations constructed up through the 1960s. As only ten resources were surveyed, it is impossible to develop a complete understanding of transportation in Westminster based on these sites alone. While additional survey may provide more insight into this context, a brief outline of transportation in Westminster is provided here, even though the vast majority of sites, structures, or buildings which were associated with this theme have been demolished.

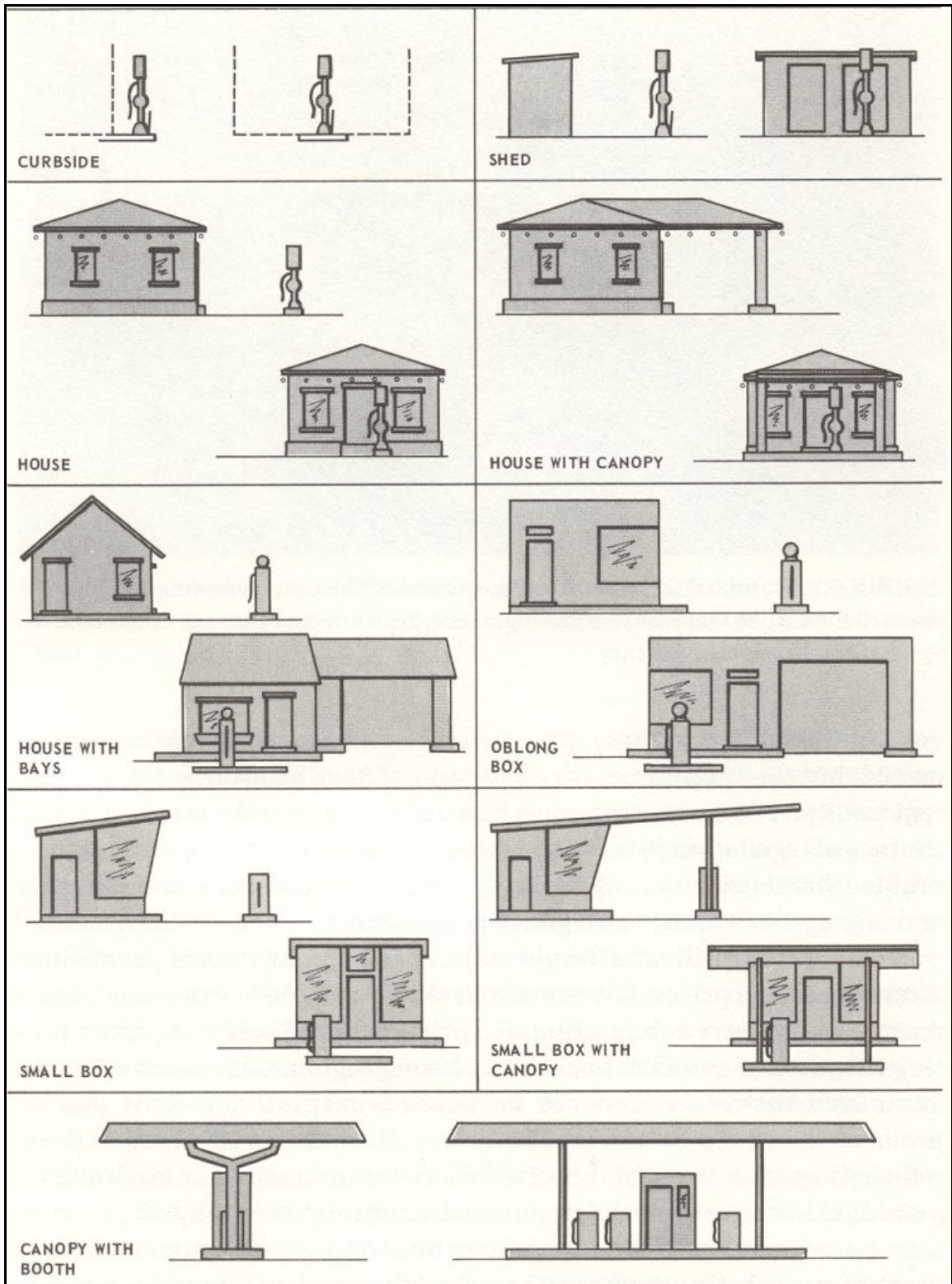
Jim Baker, one of the first settlers of European descent in the Westminster area, tied his fortunes to the earliest recorded transportation business. At his homestead near 52nd and Tennyson, he operated “Baker’s crossing” – a toll ferry and store at Clear Creek where it crossed with the old Cherokee Trail. Most of the other early settlers came after the arrival of railroad service, however. The Denver Western and Pacific Railway Company operated the first train which passed through the community. Starting in 1881, DeSpain Junction was a stop on the line from Denver to Boulder. In 1889, the line became part of the service connecting Denver to other communities along the front range of the Rocky Mountains. The community’s depot (demolished in the 1960s), located near the intersection of Bradburn and W. 73rd Avenue, was built in the 1880s with financial support from Edward Bruce Bowles. A daily passenger train stopped in the town on the daily run between Denver and Cheyenne until 1951. Another daily train between Denver and Fort Collins passed through the community until 1930.³⁰

In July 1908, a subsidiary of the Colorado & Southern, the Denver and Interurban (the “Kite Line”), ran an electric train from the Denver North Yards to Boulder. A new track was built on the east side of the C&S line. A spur from the Harris depot to Westminster University accommodated students coming from Denver. The “Westminster College Car Service” ran twice daily until 1913.³¹ A diagonal road near the college, departing from the typical grid pattern of streets, contained part of this line. Still used today for automobile traffic, it reflects the importance of the university to the town of Harris.

Except for the diagonal road, the other properties connected with early transportation in Westminster are no longer extant. The remaining historic transportation resources are related to automobile travel. Many of the earliest of these, however, have also been demolished. In light of the few historic transportation-related resources that remain in Westminster, a general overview of gas station development across the United States is presented, in order to better evaluate those that remain in the community.

³⁰Westminster Historical Society, “Take an Old Fashioned Walk along Historic Bradburn Blvd. at Your Leisure (Westminster Historical Society, 1993) n.p.

³¹Ibid.



From Jakle & Sculle's The Gas Station in America.

Gas stations are cultural American icons that are rapidly being demolished across the country. As noted by John Jakle and Keith Sculle in their book *The Gas Station in America*, “to the generation of Americans come of age in a post-World War II era of evolving automobility, roadside America, including its gasoline stations, holds strong sentimental value.”³² The image of the gas station has dominated the American’s concept of gasoline retailing and motoring. Today, however, convenience stores, car washes, grocery stores, discount warehouse clubs, and truck stops dominate gasoline retailing. The authors estimated that in 1994, there were fewer than 100,000 traditional gas stations, down from 236,000 as late as 1969.³³

Gasoline stations are roadside facilities designed to sell gasoline and other closely related products, such as lubricants, tires, and batteries for automobiles. Many also offer minor repair services. Elements of a gas station include drives, pumps, sign stanchions, sometimes planting areas in medians, and the station buildings. The stations can be categorized for analysis, and have received the most attention from architectural historians in recent years, but the other elements are also important for the historian to consider.³⁴

Prior to the invention of specialized equipment for pumping, gasoline was first stored in steel drums and dispensed in cans. It was a time-consuming and dangerous task to fill a tank for even the shortest drive.³⁵ Starting in the 1920s, gasoline corporations employed total design concepts for the entire station – from the building to the signage to uniforms and products – to project their corporate images and encourage product loyalty. The first architect-designed station was built by Gulf Oil in Pittsburgh in 1913. Standard of California followed the next year with a chain of thirty-four stations, all standardized houses with canopies and uniform signs, with the hopes to better compete with Shell.³⁶ For most parts of the country, such stations were a decade away from being common sights along the roadside. The evolution of gas station design (see previous page) shows the categories developed by Jakle and Sculle, which in turn was based on an analysis of illustrations in *National Petroleum News* from 1910 through 1990.

³²John A. Jakle and Keith Sculle. *The Gas Station in America*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) ix.

³³Ibid., 131.

³⁴Ibid., 130.

³⁵Michael Karl Witzel, *The American Gas Station* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1992) 12-13.

³⁶Jakle, 132.

Curbside

“Filling station” was a term first used in connection with curbside pumps and their associated underground storage tanks. These were installed at the sides of streets in front of grocery, hardware, and other retail stores. Prior to the establishment of curbside pumps, gasoline was dispensed into tin cans, like kerosene, then poured by hand into the cars. Popularized by a number of companies around 1915, curbside pumps remained in use for decades in rural areas. Safety ordinances in many metropolitan areas later outlawed these types of stations.³⁷



A curbside pump located at North Federal Heights Grocery & Supply Station, 93rd & Federal. Owned by Harvey Larsen. Photo courtesy of the Westminster Historical Society.

Shed

Moving gasoline pumps from the curbside changed gasoline sales facilities. A small shed was placed, generally in the center of a corner lot, to house an attendant and a few supplies, such as oil, greases, and equipment. Some of the sheds were relatively “rough” in appearance and resembled those found either in lumber yards or coal sheds. A few oil companies experimented with the use of residential architectural features, which carried over to the next phase of gas station design. The addition of a building helped encourage the sale of gasoline in the winter in parts of the country that experienced inclement weather. Prior to this development, cars were stored inside during the winter months,

³⁷Ibid., 135-136.

thus limiting the sale of gasoline. Driveways, often dirt but later graveled in higher traffic areas, were added to shed type stations to allow cars to pull off the road.³⁸

House

After 1920 gasoline companies expanded from central business districts into residential neighborhoods. This shift in location led to buildings designed to complement, or at least, not detract from the adjacent residences. Popular stylistic features included low-pitched roofs resembling Craftsman bungalows or steeply pitched roofs typical of Tudor Revival or “English Cottages.” The buildings contained an office, storage, and public restrooms. Many companies instituted standardized designs, with some station buildings even being prefabricated. Along with more attention to station design, the pumping equipment was rapidly changing. Some stations used a glass cylinder on top, called a “visible pump.” The fuel was held in place above the pump prior to being dispensed into the tank, which helped the public feel better about this new method of buying fuel (see photo below). In addition to signage, this equipment was used as another opportunity for placing corporate logos; there were often silk-screened to the inside of glass globes to protect them from the weather. These globes were common by the mid-1920s, with nearly 200 pump manufacturers operating nationwide by 1925. The pumps were still unprotected, though, and located in front of the building.³⁹



*A glass cylinder dispenser pump at the Semper Cash Store in Westminster, ca. 1920s.
Photo courtesy of Westminster Historical Society.*

³⁸Ibid., 137.

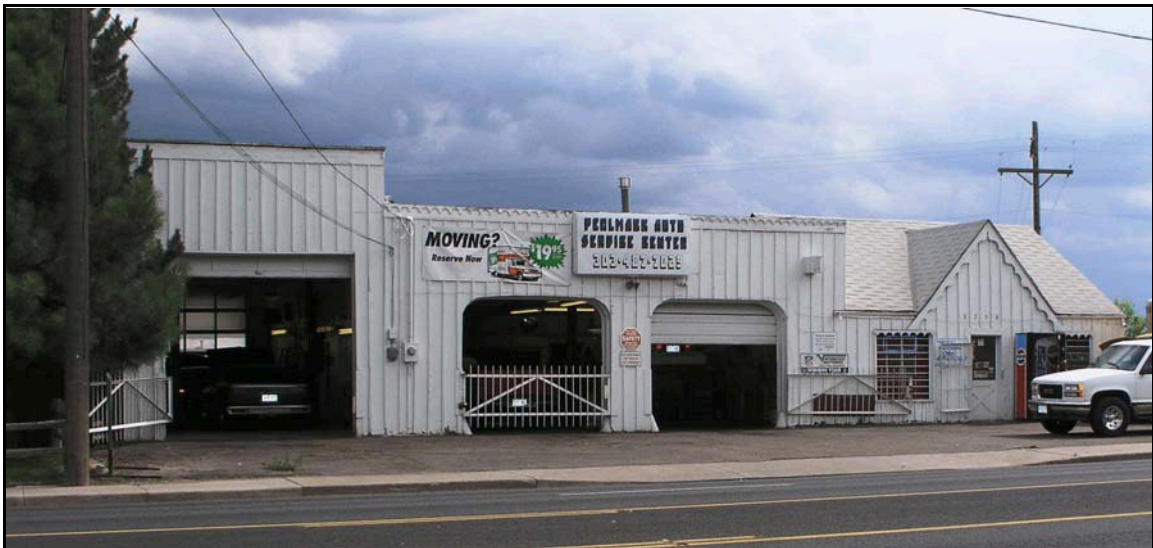
³⁹Ibid., 137-140.

House with canopy

A small house with a canopy projecting to the front of the building, usually integrated with the roof of the building, provided protection for both the motorist and the service station attendant. The addition of the canopy encouraged the use of automobiles year-round, both in fair and inclement weather, and indicated the growing reliance upon automobiles for everyday use. The canopies were most often seen with the low-pitched roofed houses, rather than the Cottage types. These were popular during the late 1920s and 1930s.

House with bays

In addition to gasoline, automobiles needed frequent and regular service, maintenance, and cleaning. By 1925 most stations had grease pits and/or car-washing floors. Grease pits were open trenches with masonry or concrete walls. After 1925 rotary lifts began to replace the pits, as neither service or maintenance were adequately rendered out-of-doors, and washing cars required a solid, well-drained surface. Thus, in the 1930s, one or more covered bays were often added to existing stations. New stations of this period were generally designed with these bays incorporated into the construction. Those built before 1935 carried out the roof forms of the house, while those after 1935 generally just used flat roofs over the bays.⁴⁰



The only remaining "house with bays" filling/service station in Westminster, located at 3750 W. 72nd Avenue.

Oblong box

As gas station design evolved in the late 1930s and 1940s, newer buildings integrated service bays into the overall design. In some instances, owners needed space to cover automobile repairs. With the onset of the Depression in the 1930s, gasoline companies

⁴⁰Ibid., 142.

were losing sales. Although fuel was still purchased for necessary travel, leisure travel was drastically reduced. Almost two and a half million cars and trucks were idle during this period.⁴¹ In an attempt to increase income, station owners not only added service and repairs, but also introduced product lines, called TBA for the sale of tires, batteries, and accessories. TBA required larger display areas and storage spaces than could be satisfied with the older buildings, plus the stations still sought to efficiently handle repair and lubrication. Some accommodated these various uses by adding a few bays to an older “house”-type station, but often this arrangement proved inadequate. A building that could efficiently handle gasoline pumps, merchandise sales, and repair was needed.⁴²

New stations were developed which were rectangular and contained two to three bays for automotive repairs. The idea was to design a structure that implied speed, modernity, and progress in a time of great economic and social uncertainty. Texaco approached industrial designer Walter Teague to develop a set of standardized stations. Influenced by the International style, Teague removed architectural ornamentation in favor of form over design. Referencing the streamline features of the Moderne style, horizontal lines accented the simple porcelain-enameled steel buildings.⁴³ TBA were showcased in large windows. Texaco constructed over 10,000 of these stations.



An oblong box with porcelain steel siding and angled corner at 3590 W. 72nd Avenue.

Based upon Teague’s Texaco model, oblong box forms were adopted by companies across the nation. These stations featured a rectangular plan, flat roof, an increased

⁴¹Witzel, 85.

⁴²Ibid., 86.

⁴³Ibid., 92.

amount of plate glass with a corresponding decrease in ornamentation, and walls of stucco, brick, terra cotta or porcelain enamel, the latter predominating in the 1940s and 1950s. The roofs over the office section were sometimes slightly higher or lower than the service bays. In other cases the office facade was extended forward or recessed relative to these bays. Some oblong box forms featured a recessed, curved or angled corner entry. Some companies used canopies, towers or pylons as additional advertising features and to distinguish their stations from competitors.⁴⁴

Cinder and concrete block construction became common after 1950 and during the sixties acrylic-vinyl and translucent plexiglass backed by fluorescent tubes for night lighting was common. Plastic was also used during this decade to mimic wood and brick.⁴⁵ One of the key distinctions between the oblong box and the “house” type station was the desire to draw attention to the buildings. There were no longer any efforts to blend gas stations in with their surroundings; instead station owners went to great pains to increase their visibility and set apart their station from domestic architecture through the basic plan, exterior materials, and night lighting. By the mid-1950s, nearly all service stations were designed with this in mind.



Herb's Service Station at 3791 W. 72nd Avenue features flagstone veneer and angled display windows in the office area. The car wash bays on the right are a later addition.

The gaudiness of the oblong box stations met with disfavor during the 1960s though, and gasoline corporations began attempts to blend in again with their surroundings. Some of

⁴⁴Jakle, 144-147.

⁴⁵Ibid., 149.

the attempts were less successful, such as the aforementioned plastic materials simulating brick or wood. Other companies added “Colonial” architectural features, such as hip roofs, cupolas, and real brick veneers. Other companies updated existing buildings by adding a gable roof and extending eaves on one end to form a porch.⁴⁶ These are sometimes referred to as “decorated boxes” or “blend-ins,” but still utilize the basic oblong box form.

Small box

During the 1960s and 1970s independent distributors and dealers gained a share of the gasoline market by discounting their prices. They were able to do this by dropping the service component of their businesses and instead concentrating solely upon gasoline, oil, and a few sundries such as soda pop and cigarettes. With fewer space needs, smaller simple boxes evolved, containing only offices, a small storage space, and restrooms.⁴⁷ Signage was still important to advertise the lower gas prices, so large billboards or sign medians were present.

Small box with canopy

Although canopies went out of style with the oblong box, many companies still used them in sunnier regions of the country. Independent dealers also began to use them during the 1960s, in part to utilize the wide band around the sides of the canopy for signage. The canopies also gave a larger presence than a small box alone could provide. There were different types of canopies, most covering two drives and a single pump island. A “butterfly” canopy attached to small box type station and swept up over the drive and pumps. A “standard” canopy had a flat roof and was freestanding over the drive and pumps.⁴⁸



A small box with butterfly canopy at 3305 W. 72nd Avenue.

⁴⁶Ibid., 152.

⁴⁷Ibid., 153.

⁴⁸Ibid., 153-154.



A small box with standard flat canopy at 3485 W. 72nd Avenue.

As the twentieth century came to a close, station offices were reduced in many instances to small booths located in the pump islands. Convenience stores also rose in prominence in gasoline retail sales, followed by grocery stores and warehouse clubs which use gasoline as a “loss leader” to bring in other sales. The demise of earlier gasoline station types was not predicated on changing designs alone, however. The development of the interstate highway system, the OPEC oil embargo of the 1970s, and changes in fuel distributing have forced many gas station owners out of business in recent decades. Once a common sight across the country and along Westminster’s primary roadways, gas stations are now increasingly threatened historic resources.

The explosive growth in residential subdivisions in the 1950s and 1960s, along with the increased vehicular traffic brought by the Boulder Turnpike, definitely impacted the number of resources associated with automobile transportation. Westminster became increasingly a bedroom community, with commuters leaving every morning and arriving in the evening. New residents also filled the streets traveling to school and shopping trips. This development obviously led to a demand for more gasoline stations. This period of growth in Westminster coincided with the development of the “oblong box” gas station. While there were obviously gas stations in Westminster in earlier decades, the population and traffic growth of the 1950s led to the construction of a number of oblong boxes in Westminster. The extant resources indicate these were primarily along W. 72nd Avenue (east/west) and Federal (north/south) leading to the turnpike exit. There are also additional older gas stations along Federal that are just outside of the city limits. Westminster’s growth continued into the 1970s, the period when gas station design converted to “small boxes.” The Westminster Historical Society currently has a permanent display of early gas stations in the Bowles House Museum. Most of the photographs, unfortunately, show either demolished gas stations or unidentified locations. Additional research may help identify the location of the buildings depicted in the photographs, providing additional information with which to assess the significance of the extant historic gas stations.

Besides gas stations, other buildings devoted to the service or care of automobiles were constructed. As gas stations went from “full service” in the 1950s to the small boxes of the 1970s, buildings devoted to automobile repair, tire sales, and cleaning were constructed. While many of these were constructed (1970 and later) outside of the period of focus of this survey, an early example of each of these property types was inventoried. A 1960s self-service, wand-type car wash is located at 8097 Federal Boulevard. A wand-type car wash features large stalls or bays which are open at opposite ends, with the car driven into the building, parked, and the owner using an overhead wand to wash the car. These differ from drive-through car washes which have rolling brushes, with the driver either remaining in the car during the wash or the car automatically pulled through with no driver. An automobile service building was built ca. 1964 at 2780 W. 72nd Avenue. The materials and design of this building are similar to those still being constructed today.

Also associated with automobile travel were roadside motels. The Arrow Motel at 7101 Federal is the oldest extant motel in Westminster. Information on other Westminster motels is lacking, although it is known another historic motel, the Sprague Motor Lodge, was located nearby at 72nd and Federal, next to Harry Gleason’s gas station. The Sprague Motor Lodge was an ell-shaped building with all the rooms connected and a carport between each cabin. Gleason also operated an automobile junk yard next to the motel.⁴⁹ It is likely the Sprague Motor



Some of the motor cabins at the Arrow Motel.

Lodge was geared to attract motorists for overnight travel. The Arrow Motel, on the other hand, was unusual in that it is less associated with automobile travel and more with the post World War II residential growth of Westminster. Rich and Norman Ranum constructed the buildings for the Arrow Motel in the late 1940s, using lumber salvaged in Trinidad from the Quonset Huts used in the German POW camp. Norman and Vida Ranum lived in the front portion and raised four children – Peggy, Gary, Valdene, Eddy – while running the motel. It was primarily used for long-term rentals for the many families moving to Westminster after the war looking for housing or waiting for a residence to be constructed.⁵⁰

The transportation-related resources inventoried in this survey are listed below, along with the original use and/or form.

⁴⁹Duane Shipman notes, Westminster Historical Society, 7 January 1998.

⁵⁰Thomas Ranum, oral interview with Deon Wolfenbarger, 29 September 2006.

Site ID#	Address	use
5AM.1964	2780 W. 72nd Avenue	Automobile service store
5AM.1744	3750 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.1772	8001 Federal Boulevard	Gasoline/service station
5AM.1996	3434 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.2036	2785 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.2038	3305 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline station
5AM.2039	3485 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline station
5AM.2040	3590 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.2044	3791 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.2045	3939 W. 72 nd Avenue	Gasoline/service station
5AM.2046	7101 Federal Boulevard	Motel camp
5AM.2053	8097 Federal Boulevard	Self-service car wash

Surveyed Historic Resources

A total of 141 resources were inventoried in this survey project for Westminster. A list of all resources by address is shown in Appendix A, and organized by resource number in Appendix C.

Property Types: function

Due to the high number of single family residences, domestic-related resources are clearly the largest category of property types by function within the survey area, with 120 surviving resources built for domestic purposes. Commerce-related resources follow, with 18 inventoried in the project area. Of these, 12 were also transportation-related facilities.

Property Types: form and/or style

The gable-front and bungalow house forms, the latter often with Craftsman-inspired features, were the two most common pre-WWII house types built in Westminster's Harris Park and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods, accounting for nearly half of the residential properties surveyed. Instead of residences with high-style architectural features, most of the buildings reflect vernacular or national buildings trends such as those discussed in Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*. There are examples of gable-front, gable-front-&-wing, massed-plan side-gabled, and pyramidal houses in Westminster. These buildings were typical of modest national folk houses which were dominant during the railroad era of construction after the Civil War. A summary of the primary housing types found in this phase of survey follows.

Bungalow/Bungaloid

The bungalow or bungaloid type represented one of the most popular forms of housing for the middle class in early twentieth century America. Although typically identified with the Craftsman style, the term "bungalow" has been confusing from its inception after the turn of this century. Generally thought of as a one or one-and-a-half story house noted for its porch roof extending from that of the main house and sweeping over a verandah, the typical Craftsman features were found in the porch supports, windows, materials, and exposed rafters or brackets in the eaves. However, bungalows were found with ornamentation from other styles as well. The bungalows that were extant in the two surveyed neighborhoods generally retained the highest degree of historic integrity of any residential property type. There were 31 bungalows surveyed.



3895 W. 76th Avenue

Gable-Front

The gable-front form evolved from the Greek Revival style, where its front-gabled shape mimicked the pedimented temple facades of that style. First common in New England and the northeast region in the pre-railroad era, it spread with the expansion of the railroads after the 1850s. It became a dominant urban folk form up through the early twentieth century. Unlike smaller “shotgun” houses in southern cities, in Westminster the typical gable-front house was wider and occasionally two stories with a moderate to steeply pitched roof. There were 33 examples of gable-front houses inventoried in this survey project, but since “gable-front” is not in the lexicon for architectural style or building type on the CHS survey form, these buildings are found within other classifications.



7313 Bradburn Boulevard

Pyramidal (hipped roof box)

While rectangular plan houses were often covered with a gable roof, houses with a square plan commonly had pyramidal hipped roofs. Although slightly more complex in their roof framing, they required fewer long rafters and were less expensive to build. One-story examples are more frequently found in southern states and are true folk forms. There were three examples surveyed.



7344 Bradburn Boulevard

Classic Cottage

In Colorado, a one-story version of the Foursquare is sometimes referred to as a “Classic Cottage.” The front elevation features a central dormer set on an elongated hip roof. The front porch is generally full width with wide porch supports; sometimes this porch is recessed beneath the main roof. Simpler versions might fit into the McAlesters’ “pyramidal” national folk house type. There were five examples inventoried in this phase.



8350 Green Court

Foursquare

The foursquare, another popular early twentieth century housing form, is a two-story building, two rooms wide and two rooms deep, with a low-pitched roof. Its features and details, like that of the bungalow/bungaloid, are usually borrowed from the Prairie and Craftsman styles. These include wide, overhanging eaves, square or tapered porch supports, full length front porches, and horizontal groupings of windows. The most distinctive feature of the Foursquare is its massive appearance. It generally featured a hip roof with enclosed eaves. Often, there were front and side dormers. There were only two examples of this property type surveyed in Westminster.



7481 Bradburn Boulevard

National Register Eligible

Out of 141 inventoried resources, twenty (20) were determined to be “field eligible” for the National Register of Historic Places (see Appendix E). This represents a relatively small percentage of the total number of properties inventoried, which may be attributed to a few factors. First, historic records are lacking for a majority of properties, making it difficult to evaluate the properties’ historic significance. Therefore architectural significance was the primary area of significance evaluated. Furthermore, this was a selective survey based on age – only those residential buildings built before 1940 were inventoried. Thus an entire block or neighborhood was not surveyed. Many more buildings may be eligible as contributing to a National Register district; it is much more difficult to be individually eligible for the National Register.

As previously noted, eligibility recommendations were not possible for potential districts. Again, this was due primarily to the nature of this project. As a selective survey, adjacent historic resources were not inventoried if they were not constructed pre-1940. For district eligibility, it is recommended that all resources in a survey area are inventoried prior to making a determination of eligibility. However, due to the ages of the adjacent buildings and the integrity of the inventoried buildings, the likelihood of a National Register district is small. The most likely district exists around the campus of the former Westminster University. The main university building is already listed on the National Register. However, this listing did not include adjacent buildings which were built in conjunction with the University, such as the president’s home, dormitories, and boarding houses.

The majority of resources were field evaluated as “not eligible” to the National Register. Generally these assessments were based upon lack of integrity: alterations, severe deterioration, or loss of character-defining features. In several cases, however, the available historic documentation did not reveal any historic significance or associations.

Westminster Landmarks and eligible properties

The Westminster Historic Landmark Board was created by approval of the City Council in March 2003. As outlined in the Westminster Municipal Code section 11-13-3, the board has the principal responsibility for matters involving historic landmarks. The board's purpose is to protect, preserve, and enhance those structures, features or sites deemed historically or architecturally significant and which represent or reflect elements of Westminster's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. Included in the board's powers are the ability to recommend designation of a historic landmark or district to the City Council, and to approve a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for proposed alterations, additions, or demolition of properties that have been designated a local landmark or are within a designated local district.

The Board consists of five to seven local residents appointed by the City Council. A local historic designation is "overlaid" on existing zoning classifications. Designation of a local district or landmark provides protection for the significant properties and historic character of the resources. The ordinance provides the means to make sure that growth, development, and change take place in ways that respect the unique local characteristics of the district. This is done through a process known as "design review," whereby the Board reviews any proposed alterations as noted above. If a proposed project meets specific guidelines and does not alter the character of the resource, the Board may issue a "Certificate of Appropriateness" which allows the proposed change to take place. The criteria for designation are found in section 11-13-5 of the city's municipal code (see J). The following properties within the survey project have already been designated as Westminster landmarks:

Westminster Grange Hall, 3935 West 73rd Avenue

Built in 1913, it is significant as an example of a specific building type, for its craftsmanship, for representing an era of Westminster's history, and as an established visual feature in the community. As a local landmark, the property received grant funding for a Historic Structures Assessment report, and subsequently rehabilitation funds.



Henry House Residence, 7319 Orchard Court

Built by pioneer Henry House in 1920, this is a late example of a Shingle Style house, with influences from the Craftsman Style as well. It is also associated with a person important to Westminster's history. House served as mayor, was instrumental in having the first water system installed, and constructed many houses in the Orchard Court subdivision.



Merton & Mary Williams House, 7335 Wilson

The Williams family lived in this Craftsman-inspired bungalow from 1929 until it was sold to the city in 2003. It was moved a block to the west to save it from demolition. The Williams were involved with community activities in the city for nearly a century.



Rodeo Super Market, 3915 W. 73rd Avenue

This was the first large “supermarket” in Westminster and the last major commercial construction along W. 73rd Avenue, the historic commercial center of the town. Operated by prominent local grocer Fred Valente from 1953 to the 1970s, a Historic Structures Assessment was completed in 2005. Construction documents are currently underway for the rehabilitation of the storefront.



Out of 141 inventoried resources, 67 were evaluated as potentially eligible for local designation. Especially in contrast to the recommendations for National Register eligibility, this may seem like a high percentage of the buildings which were reviewed for this project. Again, there are several factors which affected this result. First, local landmark designation is based on a different set of criteria than the National Register. Next, “integrity” is not defined in the city’s ordinance for landmarking. Therefore, the Historic Landmark Board may recommend landmark designation based primarily on the building’s local significance. Finally, it is important to remember that this survey intentionally focused on the oldest buildings in Westminster. When viewed in relation to the very large number of buildings presently located in the city, 67 properties is not a very high percentage. Appendix F lists the properties which may be eligible for local designation.

A few additional buildings may be eligible as “contributing” to potential local historic districts. The same problem exists for recommending local districts as it does for National Register district. Since this was a selective survey, every building within any single block was not inventoried. However, suggestions for potential local historic districts based on a collection of buildings which contain enough unifying elements to contribute to an overall historic sense of time and place are included. These recommendations may be fine-tuned or altered in the future if additional survey of the post-World War II buildings is completed. In other words, the districts shown in Appendix G could be expanded to include buildings from the 1940s and 1950s, which would better reflect the type of slow growth and development that was experienced in Westminster’s core during its first century of existence. It should be noted, however, that

the city's ordinance requires that all property owners within any proposed local historic district consent to the designation. Therefore, although the potential districts recommended in the following maps do not take into account owner consent, the boundaries are focused on the "tightest" collection of historic buildings. It is likely that the boundaries will need to be further reconfigured due to the owner consent requirement.

The remaining properties covered by this project are considered as "needing data" for local designation. Since the Westminster Municipal Code does not define integrity and it further authorizes the Historic Landmark Board to consider non-architectural criteria such as those set forth in W.M.C. section 11-13-5(A)(10-15), the community has some discretion to consider the facts about a property and make a local decision about significance. An evaluation of "not eligible" by a consultant in a past survey project would serve as a significant impediment to future evaluation by local citizens and the Historic Landmark Board based on the cultural and social criteria in the code.

Colorado Register of Historic Properties eligible

Properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places are automatically placed in the State Register; therefore, properties that are eligible for the National Register are also eligible for the Colorado Register. For this project, a separate evaluation for State Register eligibility was not provided. Properties may also be nominated separately to the State Register without inclusion in the National Register. While the research and evaluation of significance and integrity are essentially the same for both registers, the state register recognizes an additional significance criterion for geographic importance. Although the guidelines for evaluating integrity are the same as the National Register, in practice some buildings that could not be listed on the National Register due to alterations (such as the addition of synthetic siding) can be listed on the State Register.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As this project is the beginning of potentially ongoing survey projects, recommendations presented here are intended to benefit the future phases of survey and designation work in Westminster, as well as any members of the general public who might be interested in pursuing further research on their buildings.

Information sources needing further exploration

The Westminster Historical Society has a collection of oral histories that were in the midst of transcription during this project. An examination of these records, when they are returned to the Society, would be worthwhile for their potential to shed light on the built environment of Westminster. Furthermore, the volunteers were also processing hundreds of recently donated historic photographs. These photographs may provide valuable information about the original or historic appearance – information which is otherwise missing due to a lack of other records from the period – of several of Westminster’s early buildings. It is recommended that this information be cross-indexed by address in addition to owner’s or resident’s names.

Results or data from the 2006-2007 survey phase needing further research

In many cases, there was a lack of sources which could provide some insight into the historical associations of these properties. A full title search would likely reveal the necessary background to cross reference the properties with the aforementioned sources at the Historical Society and other typical data sources, such as census records and obituaries.⁵¹ Volunteers could initially focus on the properties determined eligible for listing in the National Register, and conduct title searches for these. In particular, the scattered residences and farm sites owned by the Pillar of Fire warrant additional research. For local designation, most of the properties will require additional research, as is typically uncovered during a title search. This would reveal the associations with past Westminster residents and, most likely, the historic context with which the property is associated.

Future survey or research

It is recommended the next coordinated phase of survey in Westminster cover the “scattered resources” listed in the *Survey Plan*. These properties contain all the remaining buildings within the city’s limits constructed prior to 1940. Not only are these buildings threatened by development due to their isolated or scattered locations, but an evaluation of these resources would give a more complete picture of the types and distribution of residential architecture found in Westminster from its earliest period of development. A survey of these remaining scattered resources would, like any survey project, assess the physical changes to the properties that have occurred over time, better enabling an evaluation of those resources which have the highest degree of integrity.

⁵¹Copies of the census data pulled for this project will be donated to the Westminster Historical Society.

Additional survey is also warranted for buildings within the Harris Park and Pillar of Fire neighborhoods. As previously noted, some buildings which were not listed for inclusion in this survey phase were nonetheless added to the project. Research revealed these had an incorrect estimated construction date in the assessor's office. The scope of work did not allow for many properties like this to be added, however. Therefore, it is likely that some other buildings within these two neighborhoods require documenting. The property at 7337 Bradburn Boulevard, for example, has an estimated construction date of 1940 per the county records. However, it is visible in early photos of Bradburn Boulevard. Since an inventory form for this property was previously completed for a CDOT project, it was not included in this survey. However, the historic background section of its inventory form is incomplete. Additional information may reveal, at the minimum, a locally eligible property.

It is also recommended additional research be conducted on buildings within or adjacent to potential local historic districts. During the designation process, local residents will question not only the inclusion of non-contributing buildings within but also the chosen boundaries for a potential district. The city will, therefore, want to be prepared with background information on all buildings within any proposed district and have well-defined and justifiable boundaries. Additional research will likely be necessary for the 7300 block of Bradburn, the 3600 - 3700 blocks of W. 73rd Avenue, and the 7300 block of both Orchard and Wilson Courts. This research, particularly for some of the buildings along W. 73rd Avenue, may reveal an earlier construction date than presently estimated.

Identified builders, contractors, and carpenters are also a worthy area of research. Henry House, Frank Day, and R.H. Hulbert were among those working in the early twentieth century. For Henry House, a list of residences he constructed was provided in his obituary. Unfortunately, this list only gives owners' names. Again, a title search would provide much needed information to begin to cross-reference and evaluate these properties within a larger context.

Additional research is warranted for the few historic newspapers that exist. Volunteers could cross-index the articles for information on properties by address as well as resident's name. Finally, it is recommended that scans or copies of photos on the index cards at the Adams County Assessor's Office be made. In several instances, there are multiple photographs which reveal the changes over time to a property. Some of the photographs appear to date from at least the 1960s. While this may not be the "as built" or original appearance of the property, it is nonetheless the earliest image of many of these buildings. The images should be stored at both the city and the Westminster Historical Society.

Public education

The results of the survey will be made available to the public through meetings, copies at the library, and access to the report via the city's website. Follow-up meetings could be conducted with owners interested in finding out more about the benefits of local or National Register designation.

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