

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex

other names/site number 5ME.11658

2. Location

street & number Colorado National Monument [N/A] not for publication

city or town Fruita [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Mesa code 077 zip code 81521-0001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [X] statewide [] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Marguerite Cortez
Signature of certifying official/Title

State Historic Preservation Officer 8/19/03
Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

June 5, 2003
Date

National Park Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
[] See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain
[] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper
Carol D. Shell

Date of Action
7-15-03

Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex
Name of Property

Mesa County/ Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>buildings</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>sites</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>structures</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>objects</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Total</u>

Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

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6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape- Park
Recreation and Culture- Outdoor recreation
Recreation and Culture- Museum
Government- Government office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape- Park
Recreation and Culture- Outdoor recreation
Recreation and Culture- Museum
Government- Government office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movements

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Stone- Sandstone
roof Asphalt
other Earth (Canyon Rim Trail)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation
Community Planning and Development
Architecture

Periods of Significance

1963-1965

Significant Dates

1963, 1964, 1965

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Doty, Cecil
Romigh, Phil

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- 1. 12 695950 4330310
Zone Easting Northing
- 2. 12 696580 4330580
Zone Easting Northing
- 3. 12 696620 4330440
Zone Easting Northing
- 4. 12 695860 4330070
Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank Sturgell (NPS student intern); revised/edited by Christine Whitacre (NPS historian)
 organization National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office date November 4, 2002
 street & number P.O. Box 25287 telephone (303) 969-2885
 city or town Denver state CO zip code 80225-0287

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Colorado National Monument
 street & number _____ telephone (970) 858-3617
 city or town Fruita state CO zip code 81521-0001

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex
Mesa County, ColoradoSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex is near the intersection of Rim Rock Drive and Saddlehorn Loop Road in the northwest portion of Colorado National Monument, approximately five miles from the monument's west (Fruita) entrance. Colorado National Monument is in western central Colorado between the towns of Fruita and Grand Junction, less than 25 miles from the Colorado-Utah border.

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex encompasses the park's Mission 66-era Visitor Center and the associated Bookcliff Shelter and Canyon Rim Trail, all of which were designed and constructed as a unified element between 1963 and 1965. The Visitor Center is on the western edge of the complex; Bookcliff Shelter marks the eastern edge. The half-mile-long Canyon Rim Trail, which runs along the northern edge of Wedding Canyon, connects the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter. The boundary of the ten-acre historic district also includes the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage, which were constructed during the 1930s and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places for their significant associations with NPS rustic architecture.¹ Also within the district boundary is a noncontributing Sewage Lift Station, which was constructed during the 1970s and is outside of public view. As such, the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex includes three contributing buildings (the Visitor Center, the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence, and the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Garage), two contributing structures (Canyon Rim Trail and Bookcliff Shelter), and one noncontributing structure (Sewage Lift Station).

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex has a high level of integrity, reflecting its original Mission-66 era location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The most significant change to the Visitor Center building is a c. 1980 toilet/comfort station addition that is compatible with the original design and does not obscure the qualities for which the building is significant. Canyon Rim Trail is unchanged from its original design, serves its original intent of connecting the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter, and provides an outdoor experience for visitors, which was a goal of Mission 66 visitor center design. Bookcliff Shelter, which is the destination point for Canyon Rim Trail, also has a high degree of integrity. However, Bookcliff Shelter has suffered some deterioration; one of its five beams needs replacement and some masonry needs to be replaced and tuckpointed.

Setting

Colorado National Monument was established by presidential proclamation on May 24, 1911 by President William H. Taft. Located on the northern end of the Uncompahgre Plateau overlooking the Grand Valley of the Colorado River, Colorado National Monument is noted for its spectacular sandstone canyons and monoliths. The monument is in an arid high desert typical of the Colorado Plateau region. Sagebrush, juniper and pinyon trees, and bare soil and rock prevail. The topography of the 32-square-mile monument includes the northern rim of the Uncompahgre Plateau with its deeply cut canyons eroded by the Colorado River. That meandering canyon-cutting river is two miles away, skirting the northern edge of the monument's towering rock formations. The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex is on the rim of Wedding Canyon, and the canyon floor consists of many stone monoliths that rise up to 500 feet and which can be viewed from the Visitor Center,

¹ Kathy McCoy, historian, National Park Service, Denver, CO, National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the *Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage*, December 28, 1992. The property was listed on the National Register in 1994.

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Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex
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Bookcliff Shelter, and Canyon Rim Trail. Elevations in the monument range from 4,690 feet above sea level (asl) to 7,028 feet asl, with the Visitor Center at 5,787 feet asl.² The Visitor Center complex is in the Saddlehorn area of the park. The area was named after the Saddlehorn, a distinctive stone monument called "Ca-Roo-Nump-Ta-Chee" by the Utes, approximately one-quarter mile northeast of the Visitor Center building.

Mission 66 Architecture

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex was built as part of the NPS Mission 66 program. Mission 66 was a major effort by the National Park Service (NPS) to help meet the demand for visitor services during the years after World War II when the number of national park visitors (and their cars) dramatically increased. The concept of a "visitor center," as coined by Mission 66 planners, is described by Sarah Allaback in her book, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of A Building Type*, as "the centerpiece of a new era in planning for visitor services in American national parks."³ The new visitor centers were designed to serve as the park's combined headquarters, auditorium, museum, and restrooms. Mission 66 also represented a significant architectural shift for the National Park Service. The NPS rustic style of architecture that was prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, and for which the Park Service was so well known, was deemed unsuitable for the new large multi-use buildings. Modern architecture could better meet the new centralized management philosophy of Mission 66, as well as the public's increasing impacts on park resources. Stripped of ornamentation, modern buildings were also an economic choice, taking advantage of postwar materials and construction techniques, but still allowing for colors, textures, and materials that blended with the natural environment.

Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Description – Original Building

Designed by NPS architect Cecil Doty, the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center was true to the Mission 66 form of being distinctly modern in style. Located near the rim of Wedding Canyon, the building offers excellent vistas of the monument, with large glass windows and an external patio that overlooks the adjacent canyon. Encapsulated in natural sandstone, the Visitor Center harmonizes with the canyon's sandstone walls. The Visitor Center's exhibits highlight the park's canyons, wildlife and history, with slide shows and short movies that enhance the visitor's educational and park experience. Administratively reflecting the NPS's centralized management view, the Visitor Center also acts as the monument's headquarters and includes several administrative offices and an informational lobby.

The 3,000-square-foot Visitor Center is a one-story rectangular building with a basement; it is faced with stone masonry on a poured concrete foundation. The facade is sandstone in a random ashlar pattern. The building is comprised of two wings; a central lobby separates the exhibition wing on the west end and the office wing on the east end. The building, which faces north, is side-gabled; the gables meet near the middle of the roof and are offset at different top heights; the roof over the exhibition wing is higher than the roof over the office wing.⁴ The sandstone chimney from the

² Colorado National Monument website, "Travel Basics," <http://nps.gov/colm/pphtml/basics.html>; and Colorado National Monument Official Map and Guide, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995.

³ Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), p. 24.

⁴ The architectural plans for the Visitor Center refer to the building front as north – even though the building technically faces northwest (with the rear elevation facing southeast and the sides facing southwest and northeast). For the sake of consistency, this nomination uses "architectural north," and refers to the elevations as north, south, east, and west. However, it should be noted that the camera views given on the back of the photographs that accompany this nomination use directions as given by a compass.

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mechanical room in the basement punctures the roof at the office wing close to the lobby, near the offsetting gables. The building's overall dimensions are 132'4" long, and 46'10" wide across the west end, and 34'10" wide across the east end.⁵ The east elevation is 12'5" from the ground to the bottom of the eave; the pitch of the roof gives that elevation another 4'3" in height. The east elevation also shows nearly a full wall of sandstone facing, with one full-height window at the staircase to the basement. At the other end of the building, the west elevation shows a complete wall of laid sandstone. The public entrance to the Visitor Center is on the north side, through a full-height glass storefront in the middle front. Since the building is recessed into the side of Wedding Canyon, the basement is exposed on the rear elevation, giving it an additional 9'6" of sandstone wall. The back of the building features a rear porch and a rear entrance to the lobby.

Upon entering the Visitor Center, there are potentially excellent views of the monument's canyons and stone formations through the glass curtain walls of the open front and rear porches. (Currently, book sales racks and a bottled water refrigerator mostly block these views.) The lobby carries in the flagstone flooring that is on both the rear and front porches of the building. The lobby is "L" shaped. The long part of the room stretches from the front entrance to the rear porch; the toe of the "L" extends towards the east, along the glass wall of the rear porch. An information desk greets visitors upon entering the lobby to their left. The built-in clock in the wall behind the information desk is original. Behind the information desk is the corridor that leads to the park's offices. To the right of the lobby is the public portion (exhibition wing) of the Visitor Center, which includes two rooms: the audio-visual room and the exhibit room. The audio-visual room is towards the rear of the building and is 34'3" by 20'6". These dimensions do not include two small rooms that also are part of the audio-visual area: the projection and storage rooms. Upon walking into the audio-visual room, visitors are deviated to either the left or the right by a projection wall that is 5'4" from the entrance. The floor of the audio-visual room is flat so that the space also can be used as a multi-purpose room. The exhibit room is closer to the front entrance. The exhibit room is 41'10" by 25'6" and is used to house the park's museum exhibits, some of which, such as the exhibit on dinosaurs, date to the Mission 66 era.⁶ The exhibit room's wood-slatted full-height exhibit screens also are original. The audio-visual and exhibit rooms do not have windows or other forms of natural light.

As previously noted, the eastern wing of the Visitor Center encompasses the park's headquarter operations. A 4'0"-wide corridor runs down the middle of the office wing for 57'6", flanked by offices, a restroom, and a copy room.⁷ The four offices on the south side of the corridor are approximately 11' x 14', although each varies slightly in size. These offices, which face the canyon, feature a row of continuous casement and stationary windows that are 5'4" high and extend up to the ceiling. The northern side of the office wing has a restroom, a copy room, and three offices. Two of the offices were the building's original public restrooms, accessed through entry doors on the northern exterior of the building. New public restrooms were built c. 1980 on the western end of the building front, at which time the restrooms were converted into offices. Along the north side of the office wing, a clerestory band of casement windows runs just below the roofline. The basement can be entered from the stairs at the end of the office corridor, or from an outside entrance that also acts as the air intake for the mechanical room in the basement. The basement has four small, rectangular, horizontal, casement

⁵ "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134-C, July 17, 1962, 16 Sheets, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC), National Park Service, San Francisco, CA, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

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windows. The basement also has a workroom and storage room.

With the exception of the flagstone flooring in the lobby, vinyl asbestos tile was installed throughout the building. Both the flagstone flooring and vinyl asbestos tile are original to the building. Walls are painted gypsum wallboard throughout, except for the ceramic tile wainscoting in the restroom. Ceilings are acoustical tile in the lobby, exhibit room, and audio-visual room at a height of 11'0", while the remainder is painted gypsum wallboard at a height of 9'0".⁸ The entrance doors to the lobby from the rear and front porches are glass. All of the remaining doors on the first floor are wood. The basement doors are hollow metal and fire-rated.

The Visitor Center's walls have an exterior of randomly laid sandstone veneer with a wood 2 x 4 stud 16" o.c. balloon-framed structural wall with 5/8" plywood sheathing that is covered with building paper. The stone for the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter came from Horse Thief Canyon Ranch, Loma, Colorado. In some places, 4" concrete masonry units are used in place of exterior stud walls. The interior walls are 2 x 4 studs, 16" o.c., covered with gypsum wallboard, taped, mudded and painted. The roof is mainly 2 x 12 wood joist studs 16" o.c. connected to a 5-1/4" x 17-7/8" glulam beam; 2 x 8 joist extenders are used for eaves on the southwest end of the building. Now covered with waterproof hypalon, the building originally had a composite roof.⁹

The Visitor Center's asphalt parking lot can handle 36 cars and two to three recreational vehicles or buses in a semi-circular pattern in front of the building. As they approach the building, visitors pass a single flagpole adjacent to the sidewalk. The covered front porch is a rectangle of 22'0" by 17'9" and leads to a covered walkway that runs along the length of the east end of the building front. The walkway has a 2'0"-high stone wall with a row of 11 4" x 4" wood columns supporting the roof. The rear flagstone porch, which is used as a sitting area, also has a rectangular-shaped roof with dimensions of 30'4" by 14'4". Similar to the front porch, the rear porch has a 2'0"-high stone wall with 4" x 4" wood columns. The porch has six stone steps that lead down to a canyon overlook that has a chain link fence to protect visitors from the canyon edge. Midway between the rear porch and the overlook is the beginning of Canyon Rim Trail. On the eastern side of the Visitor Center, an asphalt service road, which is original to the complex, runs between the outside door on the southeastern corner of the building to the area of the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage.¹⁰

Alterations

The Visitor Center is in excellent condition with no known defects in structural integrity, architecture, or building systems. Many changes have been made since the building was erected in 1963. The largest change was the addition of two visitor restrooms and a utility room on the western end of the building front c. 1980. However, this addition flows out of the original building and does not diminish the integrity of the original structure. Except for slight grain differences in the natural stone veneer and a partial blocking of the original "Visitor Center" lettering, one would not know that an addition had been

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, and Suzanne Clarke, letter to Judi Lofland, Colorado National Monument, May 22, 2000. Clarke's letter and the accompanying report, "The Legend of Horse Thief Canyon" by Bonnie Coffman, p. 6, state that Joe Coffman of Horse Thief Canyon Ranch quarried the stone.

¹⁰ "Trails and Overlooks," Colorado National Monument," Drawing No. NM-COLO 3210, Sheet No. 3, "Nature Trail to Bookcliff Shelter," July 1964, designed by landscape architects Babbitt and Hughes [no first names given], Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC, and "Planting Plan," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. 3208, designed by landscape architect Babbitt [no first name given], Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC, copies in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

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built without consulting architect Cecil Doty's original plans. Maintaining the same pitch of the roof, the addition seamlessly blends into Doty's original structure. The addition was built as an extension of the original roofline and extends it until it nearly reaches the ground. (In this regard, the roofline now resembles Bookcliff Shelter.) The addition is 36'4" long along the exhibit room side of the Visitor Center, and 21'8" wide as it extends along the entry walk.¹¹ Skylights in the roof over each restroom add natural light. A retaining wall extends out from the addition along the entrance walkway, and a handicap ramp replaces the flagstone steps of the walkway. The men's restroom was built according to future Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifications.

Other major work to the building exterior included enclosing the rear porch with storefront glass to create a solarium, which has since been removed. Volunteers, including monument staff and members of the Grand Junction Solar Energy Society, built the solarium c. 1979. The project was part of an energy conservation effort by Colorado National Monument, which was one of six parks chosen by the Department of the Interior to experiment with solar energy. The project included adding a skylight in the roof of the porch and a wood-burning stove.¹² The sun and the wood-burning stove were to heat the enclosed porch and transfer the air to the lobby to defray heating costs. Although the enclosure did, indeed, defray heating costs, it was removed c. 1994 because it also increased cooling costs in the summer. At the same time, the skylights were removed and replaced with decking and roofing materials.¹³

The removal of the skylights coincided with the reroofing of the Visitor Center, at which time the built-up composite roof was removed and replaced with a tan color, coated, hypalon roofing membrane system in 1994.¹⁴ A wood parapet was added to the north elevation above the entrance to act as a break from rainwater falling over the entry. Wood blocking was added around the perimeter of the roof to divert rainwater runoff. New roofing also was placed over the restroom addition.¹⁵

In 1982, Francis Constructors of Grand Junction, Colorado added a solar heating and hot water system to the Visitor Center, at a cost of \$98,000.¹⁶ A group of solar panels was placed on the ground southeast of the building. The energy collected was transferred to the mechanical room in the basement where it was used to warm the building and domestic water. The solar panels and its associated equipment and piping were removed in 1990 because of mechanical problems.

Interior changes are many, but the integrity of the building is still intact. Other than the conversion of the original restrooms into additional offices, only two minor architectural design changes were made. These changes include knocking out the back wall of the closet and combining the closet with the janitor room to make a copy work room. The other change was to make an office in the basement by walling off a 12'3" x 10'1" section in the east corner.

¹¹ "Renovate Rest Rooms," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. 119-41006. July 1979, 10 Sheets, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

¹² Karen Hastings, "Putting 'Ol' Sol' To Work", *Westword: The Sunday Magazine of The Daily Sentinel*, November 4, 1979, Grand Junction, CO.

¹³ "Reroof Visitor Center" Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. 119-80,045, July 1994, 3 Sheets, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

¹⁴ Sayre Hutchison, architect, National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office, Denver, CO, "Colorado Cultural Survey, Historic Building/Structure Form for Colorado National Monument Visitor Center and Administrative Offices," May 20, 1998, National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office files, Denver, CO.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Unit Price Contract, Contract No. CX-1200-1-9008, date of acceptance: April 17, 1982 with Francis Constructors, Grand Junction, CO, Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

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Interior decorating changes include carpeting over the vinyl asbestos tile in the basement, the offices, and the exhibit and audio-visual rooms in the early 1980s to comply with the asbestos management plan. Paneling sheets were placed over the gypsum board on all the office walls in the late 1970s. Changes to the lobby include a replaced information desk and removal of the window between the lobby and office, which was covered over with a corduroy-style carpet. The same carpet was placed on the wall in between the exhibit and audio-visual rooms. This work was done in the early 1990s. New panic hardware and ADA-accessible door openers were installed in 2000.¹⁷ All interior and exterior painted surfaces retained their original paint colors, as specified in the "Material Color and the Interior Paint Color Schedules" on Sheet 4A of 13 of the as-constructed drawings (NM-COLO-3134-D, dated 7/17/62), until c. 1980. At that time, all interior and exterior surfaces were repainted with a variety of neutral colors. In 2001 the exterior paint scheme of "Seal Brown" and "Dunes Tan," which was first applied c. 1980, was renewed.¹⁸ Building system changes include a fire protection sprinkler system, which was added in June 1989 to comply with life safety codes. Boilers were replaced in 1985 with more efficient models.

On the exterior, along the sidewalk from the parking lot to the entrance, is a plaque to the first director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather. Opposite the plaque is an exhibit board giving basic information about Colorado National Monument. Both the plaque and exhibit board were placed c. 1987. In c. 1995, a plaque and statue of John Otto on his horse were placed between the restroom addition and the retaining wall of the entrance ramp.¹⁹

Some building features may be original but are not on the original plans. These include a sink, countertop, and cabinets in what is called the basement storage room on the plans, but which functions as an office kitchen today. The plans call for the sink to be placed in the workroom; however, there is no evidence that this was done. The other change involved more acoustical absorption from the audio-visual room. Superintendent Fred Bussey asked for a change order because too much noise could be heard emanating from the audio-visual room into the exhibit room. The same 12'x 12" acoustical tile that is on the ceiling was also placed on the walls around the entrance of the audio-visual room.

Bookcliff Shelter Description

Bookcliff Shelter rises from the ground in the form of a large open fan, offering views of Wedding Canyon, Monument Canyon, the Bookcliff Mountains, Grand Mesa, and the Colorado River Valley. The shelter is set into the slope of the top of the canyon; its natural sandstone walls and beriches designed to look as though they are part of the canyon. The shelter's roof structure fans out over the canyon like a golden eagle soaring above the canyon below. The wood beams of the roof spread out in an array, pointing to views over the wide expansive canyon below. The beams start at ground level near the parking area and elevate at a low pitch (1-13/16:12) to guide the observer to views of the canyon. The elevation at the parking lot sidewalk where the beam meets the foundation is 5,728 feet asl. The bottom of the middle and longest beam at the canyon end is 5,734.34 feet asl, which is 15 feet above the ground.²⁰ The roof decking does not fully cover the beams to the back of the structure,

¹⁷ Larry Overbye, maintenance mechanic leader, Colorado National Monument, Fruita, CO, interviewed by Frank Sturgell, March 28, 2002.

¹⁸ John Tordoff, facilities manager, Colorado National Monument, Fruita, CO, "Project Clearance Form, Colorado National Monument to Paint Exterior of Administrative Buildings," May 23, 2001, Colorado National Monument archives.

¹⁹ Overbye interview, March 28, 2002.

²⁰ "Bookcliff Shelter," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145-H, January 1965, 4 Sheets,

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leaving it open for vegetation and adding lightness and airiness. All of the walls are curvilinear, symbolic of the shaped and eroded canyon walls below.

The 3'0"-high wall along the parking area, which forms the base of the roof beams, encloses the beams and edges the sidewalk. The wall bows out toward the canyon on a curve designed on a 41'6" radius from the parking area.²¹ This curve is the basis for the roof deck above, which also has a notch indented in the middle of the low end, suggestive of an eagle's wings in flight. The next wall towards the canyon is the serpentine public back of the shelter. The west stone wall ties into the west glulam beam and runs full height up for a distance of 6'4" and then ties into the Canyon Rim Trail.²² The east wall of the shelter is full height up to the glulam beams. The last sandstone wall is 2'0" high and gives a serpentine form to the southeast edge of the shelter, protecting the public from the edge of the canyon.

Bookcliff Shelter's wall construction is of randomly laid sandstone in mortar and is both a structural element and a facade for the four 3-1/2" steel tube columns encapsulated by stone. The steel tube columns allow the beams to cantilever out an additional 25'6" out toward the canyon. The roofing structure consists of 7" wide by 26" deep glulam wood beams, with tongue-and-groove wood decking.²³ The waterproofing of the roof is built-up roofing topped with gravel construction. The shelter varies in total dimensions in every direction because of the curves and the arrangement of the beams. The greatest length from back to front is 43'6," with 23'4" of this in the usable shelter portion near the canyon edge. The shortest point in that direction is 29'0 at both the east and west beams.²⁴ Because of the dimensions of the radii, the east/west dimensions are not given on plan; the greatest length in this direction scaled off is over 45 feet. Under the roof of the shelter is an interpretive sign that identifies the monoliths in the canyon below. The shelter is also equipped with a wooden bench that offers visitors some rest after the half-mile hike from the Visitor Center.

Besides anchoring Canyon Rim Trail, Bookcliff Shelter helps with crowd control. Saddlehorn Loop Road, which runs along the canyon rim in the area of the Visitor Center, was built during the Civilian Conservation Corps era. Prior to the construction of Bookcliff Shelter, Saddlehorn Loop Road led to a small parking lot in that area for visitors to stop and enjoy the views. However, visitors stopping at what was then referred to as the Bookcliff overlook often trampled much of the area's fragile desert fauna and cryptobiotic soils. Bookcliff Shelter serves as a focal point for visitors, helping direct crowds to the Shelter and adjacent Canyon Rim Trail, and discouraging them from spreading out over a wide area.

Alterations

Bookcliff Shelter has undergone some changes that deviate from its original design by NPS architect Phil Romigh. Romigh called for the glulam beams and the underside of the roof decking to be stained with Olympic Heavy Bodied Stain "Mesa Gray."²⁵ However, that wood is now painted, not stained. Another change is that Romigh's plans called for steps and 16"-high stone walls along the walks that lead to the shelter from the parking area and Canyon Rim Trail, but these steps and walls were never built. Although drawn on the plan, this work was not included in the contract of E.C. Huff of Grand Junction. The steps and stone walls would have helped with crowd control and helped guide visitors to

designed by Phil Romigh, Division of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

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the shelter.

The most significant change to Bookcliff Shelter is that a pole now supports the canyon side of the middle beam, obstructing views of the canyon. The pole was placed in the shelter approximately 15 years ago, when the end of the middle beam that is anchored into the east wall rotted out. The rot seems to be caused by faulty flashing on top of the beam. The other beams are in excellent shape. Although most of the masonry is in good shape, some settlement cracks have occurred and a few stones have loosened on both the anchor and back walls of the shelter.

Canyon Rim Trail Description

Canyon Rim Trail runs between the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter; a small overlook is located at the halfway point along the trail. The NPS Western Office of Design and Construction, which designed the trail, called for it to be field located so that it could best harmonize with its natural surroundings. The trail is 4 feet wide and of minimal design, marked by a scattering of rocks along the trail edge and a 3" layer of chinle stone where rock is not encountered. Chinle is natural to Colorado National Monument as it forms a lower layer of rock in the canyons of the park; it is a dark red and blends well with the sand and rock along the trail. Metal guardrail posts and chain-link fencing line small sections on the outside edge of the trail to protect visitors as they walk along the edge of the canyon's 400' cliffs. The mid-point overlook, described on the original drawing as the "Monument View Overlook," does not include any structures other than fencing. Canyon Rim Trail's guardrail posts and fencing do not appear to have been changed from the original drawing, which called for straight metal posts with 30" fencing. The trail alignment also does not appear to have changed. A 1975 drawing shows Canyon Rim Trail, identified as Park Service Trail 14, as following the same general alignment as that shown on the original 1964 drawing. Monument records from 1977 also describe Canyon Rim Trail as being in good condition. A September 2000 walking survey of the trail also indicates that it has not changed substantially.²⁶

As noted earlier, the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex includes two buildings previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage, which are both rectangular one-story sandstone buildings that were designed by the National Park Service and constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1935 and 1936, were listed on the National Register in 1994 as excellent examples of NPS Rustic architecture.²⁷ Although these buildings were constructed prior to the period of significance for the Visitor Center complex, they were extant at the time that the complex was built and are part of the authentic historic scene. The Caretaker's Residence and Garage and their associated landscape features (driveway and curbing) are located on Saddlehorn Loop Drive east of that road's intersection with Rim Rock Drive.

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex boundary also includes one noncontributing structure: a Sewage Lift Station, which is an aboveground fiberglass structure that is approximately 150 feet due south of the Caretaker's Residence, and which is outside of public view. The Sewage Lift Station was constructed during the 1970s, beyond the 1963-65 period of significance for the historic

²⁶ "Trails and Overlooks," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3210, Sheet No. 3, "Nature Trail to Bookcliff Shelter," July 1964, designed by landscape architects Babbitt and Hughes [no first names given], Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO; and Christine Whitacre, historian, National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office, Denver, CO, "Colorado National Monument, Historic Trails, Determination of Eligibility Survey Report," September 6, 2001, National Park Service, Intermountain Support Office files, Denver, CO.

²⁷ McCoy, National Register Nomination for the *Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage*.

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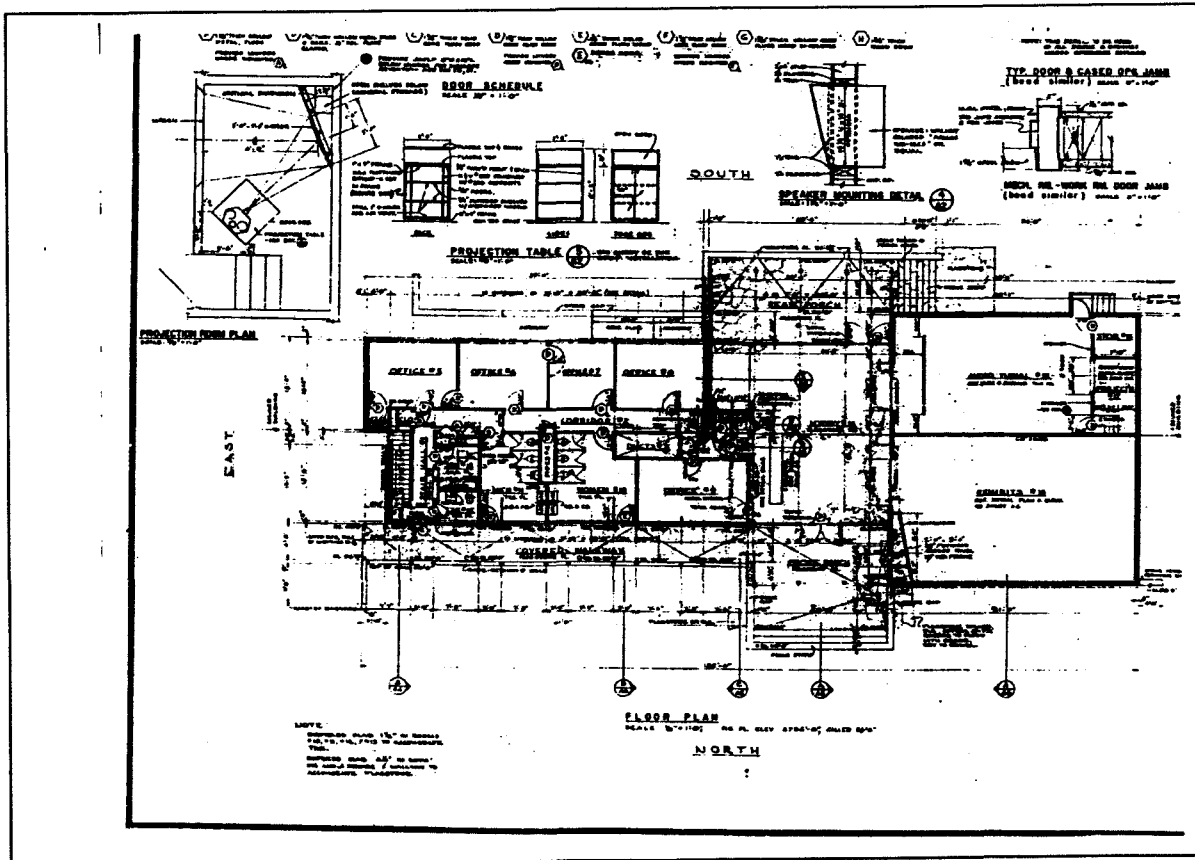
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district.²⁸

VISITOR CENTER COMPLEX SITE PLAN



²⁸ John Tordoff, facilities manager, Colorado National Monument, Fruita, CO, telephone interview by Christine Whitacre, August 16, 2002.

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Constructed between 1963 and 1965, the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex, which includes the park's Visitor Center, Bookcliff Shelter, and Canyon Rim Trail, is an excellent representation of NPS Mission 66 planning and design. The largest multi-year construction event in NPS history, Mission 66 was a major effort by the National Park Service to upgrade the national parks to meet escalating demands in the post-World War II period, when the number of visitors to the parks dramatically increased. Initiated in 1956, the goal of the program was to substantially improve the parks by 1966, hence the name "Mission 66." (Although Mission 66 officially extended from 1956-1966, the National Park Service has determined a 1945-1972 period of significance, a date range that covers the important design precedents of Mission 66 as well as later Mission-66 influenced resources.)²⁹ The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the Mission 66 program, which represented a significant change in NPS planning, management, and architecture. Within the NPS system, Mission 66 was an over-arching program that resulted in the construction of new housing, maintenance areas, entrance stations, roads, parking lots, comfort stations, campgrounds and concessionaire buildings, as well as the design of a new NPS arrowhead and uniform. The most significant expression of Mission 66 philosophy, however, was the "visitor center," a term coined by NPS planners to describe a property type that combined multiple visitor and administrative functions into one complex. Mission 66 historian Sarah Allaback has called the visitor center "the centerpiece of a new era in planning for visitor services in American national parks," and a concept that greatly influenced the development of similar centers throughout state parks in the United States as well as national parks in the rest of the world.³⁰ The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex also meets National Register Criterion C as an excellent representation of Mission 66 design. The visitor center was designed by NPS architect Cecil Doty, the Park Service's primary Mission 66 architect; NPS architect Phil Romigh finalized the plans for Bookcliff Shelter. Overall, the complex reflects several key elements of Mission 66 design. These elements include the advent of modern architecture into the parks, the placement of the visitor center adjacent to the park's major resources, the use of terraces and window walls to provide significant views of natural features, the centralization of park services within one compound, a floor plan that segregates public areas from administrative areas and encourages "visitor flow" through the building, the use of natural materials that reflect the surrounding landscape, and the construction of adjacent overlooks and trails, such as Bookcliff Shelter and Canyon Rim Trail. Although the modern style of Mission 66 architecture had its critics, historian Sarah Allaback notes that "Park Service Modern, as developed by Park Service designers during the Mission 66 era, became as influential in the history of American national and state park management as the Park Service Rustic style had been."³¹

Although the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center complex is less than 50 years old, it is eligible to the National Register under Criterion Consideration G as an exceptional example of NPS Mission 66 planning and Park Service Modern architecture in Colorado. The NPS theme study, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* by Sarah Allaback, provides a contextual basis for considering National Register eligibility of the over 100 Mission 66 visitor centers throughout the United States. Allaback outlines the registration requirements for Mission 66 visitor centers as follows: 1) the visitor center must have been originally planned and built as part of Mission 66 and fall within the 1945-1972 period of significance; 2) it should retain most or all of the distinguishing characteristics of a Mission 66 visitor center; 3) it should possess physical integrity; and 4) it should be a successful reflection of the

²⁹ Allaback, pp. 273-274

³⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

³¹ Ibid., p. 24.

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principles of Park Service Modern. In terms of Criterion Consideration G, Allaback notes that: "The historical context developed for Mission 66 visitor centers indicates that only those visitor centers that served as early prototypes (1945-1956) or which were part of the original, finite group of Mission 66 visitor centers (1956-1966) potentially possess exceptional importance."³² The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center, which was one of the original Mission 66 visitor centers, meets all these criteria for National Register listing, including the criterion for exceptional significance.

Mission 66

Mission 66 was a large-scale effort by the National Park Service to upgrade the nation's parks in the period following World War II. In 1949, NPS director Newton Drury described the parks as "victims of war." "Neglected since the New Deal era improvements of the 1930s," observes historian Allaback, "the national parks were in desperate need of funds for basic maintenance, not to mention protection from an increasing number of visitors." In 1931, 3.5 million people visited the national parks; by 1948, that number had increased to almost 30 million. But, Allaback notes, "park facilities remained essentially as they were before the war."³³ Colorado National Monument alone experienced an increase in visitation from 9,500 people in 1927, to 207,268 people in 1958. (Those numbers continued to grow after Mission 66. In 1979, Colorado National Monument was visited by 473,074 people; that number jumped to 709,641 visitors in 1980.³⁴) Contributing to the growth in the number of visitors after World War II was the post-war economic boom and the ability of more and more Americans to buy personal automobiles, enabling them to visit the nation's treasures. In response, the National Park Service needed new facilities to accommodate the crowds, and it needed those facilities designed in a way that would best protect the parks from resource damage.

National Park Service director Conrad Wirth first conceptualized the idea of modernizing the parks through a massive, multi-year redevelopment program in February 1955. Rather than submitting a yearly budget, Wirth – who "envisioned the Park Service's dilemma through the eyes of a congressman" – requested a decade of funding, rather than the traditional year-by-year funding requests, "thereby ensuring money for building projects that might last many years."³⁵ As envisioned by Wirth, "Mission 66 would allow the Park Service to repair and build roads, bridges and trails, hire additional employees, construct new facilities ranging from campsites to administration buildings, improve employee housing, and obtain land for future parks . . . to elevate the parks to modern standards of comfort and efficiency, as well as an attempt to conserve natural resources."³⁶ On January 27, 1956, Wirth introduced the Mission 66 concept to President Dwight Eisenhower and his cabinet, where it received immediate approval. The program was officially presented to the American public the following month.³⁷

At the heart of the new Mission 66 program was the concept of a visitor center. The visitor center would act as a "one-stop" service unit, equipped with an information desk, uniformed ranger, lobby exhibits, illustrated talks, museum, library, and restrooms. The center also provided space for administrative offices, which were removed from the public areas and often accessed through a

³² Ibid., pp. 268 and 273-74.

³³ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁴ "Statement for Management Regarding Colorado National Monument," approved by the acting regional director, Rocky Mountain Region, National Park Service, April 16, 1981, included in a volume entitled "Statements for Management Regarding Colorado National Monument," Denver Service Center Library, Denver CO.

³⁵ Allaback, p. 3

³⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

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separate entrance. This type of design was a major departure from the earlier NPS concept of a decentralized "park village," where different park functions were spread out in individual, rustic-style buildings. In an efficient and economic combination of services, the Mission 66 visitor center "brought these activities together in a single, large building intended to serve as a control point for what planners called 'visitor flow,' as well as a more efficient means of serving far larger numbers of visitors and cars in a more concentrated area."³⁸ Like a shopping center, the visitor center made it possible for people to park their cars at a central point, and from there have access to a range of services and attractions. To accomplish the wide-ranging goals of Mission 66, the NPS master planning process utilized teams with representatives from the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, ecology, natural history resource management, archeology, history, and other fields.³⁹ In 1956, an NPS outline titled "Mission 66: To Provide Adequate Protection and Development of the National Park System for Human Use" proposed that 100 new visitor centers would be needed. From an original request of \$786 million, Mission 66 eventually cost almost a billion dollars during its ten-year span, nearly four times the budget of the previous ten years.⁴⁰

In addition to a new strategy for management, Mission 66 also resulted in a distinctive new type of NPS architecture that reflected the new ideas – a style Sarah Allaback says can be described as "Park Service Modern." Modern architecture was the prevalent architectural style in the postwar period, and Mission 66 brought that design ethic to the national parks. Stripped of most ornamentation, modern architecture took advantage of new inexpensive materials and laborsaving techniques. The flexibility of modern architectural design also allowed for shapes and interior environments that could accommodate visitor flow, as well as offices and public spaces in the same building. By contrast, the rustic style that the Park Service had used throughout the 1920s and 1930s was costly to build on a large scale and, aesthetically, would result in new visitor centers that resembled hotel lodges. On the plus side, rustic buildings blended seamlessly with the natural surroundings because of their picturesque design and use of natural materials. Park Service Modern, says Allaback, "reinterpreted the long-standing commitment to 'harmonize' architecture with park landscapes," but accomplished that in a different way than rustic architecture. Rather than being designed as picturesque elements of the landscape, Mission 66 buildings were meant to have a low horizontal profile that was unobtrusive. In the same way, Mission 66 visitor centers often were constructed of stone and textured concrete that reduced visual contrasts with the landscape.⁴¹ Also part of the new design concept was that the visitor centers were often located "right on top of the resource" so visitors could "see virtually everything from the visitor center."⁴²

At Colorado National Monument, Mission 66 planners also addressed the "inadequacy of present developments and services for visitors."⁴³ The monument had been established in 1911 but there had been relatively little appropriation for development beyond the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration work of the 1930s. For much of its pre-Mission 66 history, Colorado National Monument had been operated as a sub-unit of Mesa Verde National Park, and the monument's

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

³⁹ Robert Koehler, "Our Park Service Serves Architecture Well," *AIA Journal*, January 1971, p. 22.

⁴⁰ Conrad Wirth, "The Mission Called 66: Today In Our National Parks," *National Geographic*, Vol. 130, No. 1, July 1966 p. 16.

⁴¹ Allaback, pp. 22-23.

⁴² Ibid., p. 27.

⁴³ "Mission 66 for Colorado National Monument, Master Plan Development Outline," prepared by Dwight L. Hamilton, park naturalist, Colorado National Monument, prepared January 1957, approved by the director, September 1, 1957, p. 2, Colorado National Monument archives.

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superintendent was its only full-time staff person. In 1956, the monument's first full-time naturalist was hired and planning began for exhibits, signs, conducted trips, park ranger talks and other means of serving the visitor's interest in the outstanding features of the monument.⁴⁴ Mission 66 also meant a significant infusion of money into the park's development. Under Mission 66, \$743,920 was budgeted for physical improvements at Colorado National Monument.⁴⁵ These improvements included the Visitor Center, Bookcliff Shelter, Canyon Rim Trail, an amphitheater, wayside exhibits, road and trail improvements, campground restroom improvements, employee housing, additional picnic areas, and additional staff. When it was completed in 1963, the Mission 66 Visitor Center at Colorado National Monument was that park's first visitor center. Prior to that time, visitors had obtained information primarily from park staff, from the park's entrance station, and from the park's informational brochure. The new Visitor Center also housed the park's administrative operations, which previously had been located in the Warehouse and Offices (HS-7H) in the utility area.⁴⁶

Colorado National Monument Visitor Center

The Colorado National Monument Visitor Center was conceptualized by NPS's principal Mission 66 architect, Cecil Doty, and reflects several key elements of Mission 66 design. These include the architectural design and function of the building itself, as well as its relationship to its environment. As noted above, Mission 66 design philosophy called for siting the visitor center near the park's major resource, using terraces and window walls to provide significant views of natural features, and encouraging visitors to use adjacent amphitheaters, overlooks, and trails. Short interpretive trails, sometimes referred to as "nature trails," were often developed to provide an outdoor experience near the visitor center; outdoor picnic and sitting areas also were common.⁴⁷

The first one-sheet conceptual design of the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center, as designed and drawn by Cecil Doty, is dated May 5, 1960.⁴⁸ The drawing depicts a low profile, one-story structure built into the slope at the edge of Wedding Canyon; public parking is in front of the building. The visitor center has a large public lobby, accessed through large glass doors in the middle front of the building. As visitors enter, the exhibit and audio-visual areas are on the right (west) side; the administrative offices are on the left (east) side. From the lobby, visitors could enjoy spectacular views of the canyon through the large window wall at the rear of the building. They could also exit the rear of the building and walk onto a large view deck that extended out to the edge of the canyon. The final version of the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center would differ from this original concept in a number of significant ways. The roofline of the final structure is side-gabled. Doty's first concept called for a flat-roofed building with three small front gables above the central lobby. The final lobby area is also smaller than the original proposal. A patio, walkway, and overlook in the final version replaced the large view deck on Doty's original design. Also, the original concept called for concrete masonry walls with exposed aggregate, as opposed to the natural stone veneer that is on the walls today. However, other key elements of Doty's original design remained unchanged through various design incarnations. These basic elements include the building's siting at the canyon edge, its low profile, a middle lobby that separates administrative operations from public space, glass walls at the front and rear of the

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁴⁶ "Colorado National Monument, Master Plan Narrative," Chapter 3, subchapter entitled "Operation Prospectus, 1952," p. 1, copy in Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁴⁷ Allaback, p. 270.

⁴⁸ "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134, May 5, 1960, 1 Sheet, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

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lobby, and access to an outdoor overlook.

Doty signed a second conceptual drawing of the Visitor Center on March 20, 1961.⁴⁹ On this drawing, the exterior walls are lower and more horizontal; a colonnade (that has more and more tightly spaced columns than what stands today) defines the walkway in front of the building. Doty's next stage of drawing is dated April 28, 1961, and is very close to the final structure.⁵⁰ This set includes plans for the first floor and the basement, building sectionals, interior and exterior elevations, and reflected ceiling plans. Doty signed the top sheet of this set, which lays out the floor plan and the front and back elevations. Other architects signed the other three sheets, suggesting that Doty supervised those drawings but did not draw them. The only differences between the actual construction documents, which are dated July 17, 1962 and the 1961 schematic set are the additions of a chimney chase and another interior wall on the east end of the building, which created an additional office.⁵¹ The as-built drawings do not mention Doty. Nevertheless, Doty is given full credit as the designer of the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center. During these years, Doty was in great demand for his designs of numerous visitor centers throughout the Park Service. As such, he often delegated drawings to others in the NPS Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) in San Francisco, as in this case, or to private firms to complete the details, to coordinate with the mechanical, electrical and civil engineers, and to supervise the construction.

Cecil John Doty (1907-1990) was responsible for an enormous amount of Mission 66 planning and design from his position as chief designer at the NPS Western Office of Design and Construction. Doty received a degree in architectural engineering from Oklahoma A & M (now Oklahoma State) in 1928. He was trained in the neoclassical beaux-arts style that was favored at the time, though he always had a propensity towards a more modern adaptation of this classicism.⁵² He began his career in the Civilian Conservation Corps state parks program; thus he was well versed in the design conventions of the rustic forbear to Mission 66 modernism. His career spanned 35 years until he retired in 1968. He received the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award in 1966.⁵³

Doty moved through the NPS ranks as a park architect, moving to the Santa Fe Region Three Headquarters and then onto the Western Office of Design and Construction in 1954. After successfully completing several large projects for the Park Service, Doty was placed in charge of the Public Use Building at Grand Canyon National Park, which became a prototype for his later Mission 66 visitor centers.⁵⁴ While it is seen as a transitional example of his work, with a rather awkward combination of Civilian Conservation Corps and Mission 66 elements, Doty had clearly begun to establish a building type that featured a more open floor plan that included exhibit spaces, auditoriums, lobbies, visitor restrooms, and offices. The Grand Canyon building also exhibits a strong relationship with the surrounding landscape, circulation through the building to an exterior view, and the use of modern

⁴⁹ "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134-A, March 20, 1961, 1 Sheet, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁵⁰ "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134-B, April 23, 1961, 4 Sheets, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁵¹ "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134-C, July 17, 1962, 16 Sheets, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁵² Allaback, p. 215.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 246.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 219-20.

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materials combined with wood and stone – all of which can be seen in the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center.⁵⁵ Doty eventually designed more than 50 visitor centers for the Park Service that were built during Mission 66, including the preliminary plans for Quarry Visitor Center in Dinosaur National Monument in Vernal, Utah, now designated as a National Historic Landmark because of its Park Service Modern design.

Local contractors constructed the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center under two separate contracts. Henry Blaylock Construction Co. of Grand Junction built the building; Corn Construction of Grand Junction built the sidewalks, parking areas, roads, and water and sewer systems for both the Visitor Center and the employee residential area located a half-mile west. The groundbreaking for the Visitor Center took place on September 21, 1962; the start of the utility work began a week later on September 28. Because of the bitterly cold winter, which included an all-time low temperature and a continuous 6" snow cover throughout the month of January, construction was slow.⁵⁶ A stop work order was given on December 7, 1962 for the utility construction, and the work did not resume until April 29, 1963.⁵⁷ The utility work was completed on May 14, and the Visitor Center was deemed substantially complete two days later. On May 24, 1963 – the 52nd anniversary of the signing of the presidential proclamation that established Colorado National Monument – the National Park Service held a grand opening celebration for the new Visitor Center. Attendees at the dedication ceremony included Superintendent Fred Bussey, Congressman Wayne Aspinall, and Assistant Secretary of the Interior John Carver Jr., who gave the dedication address.⁵⁸ The landscape design was completed the following winter on February 26, 1964 by WODC landscape architect Babbitt (no first name given).⁵⁹ The planting was completed the following spring, probably by park personnel. The planting arrangements of native grasses, yucca, junipers and other native plants have since died, and have been replaced naturally. The site development design by WODC landscape architect V. Anderson was approved in November 1961, and the construction of the parking lot, curbs and sidewalks was completed nearly simultaneously with the construction of the Visitor Center.⁶⁰

Bookcliff Shelter

Conceptualized by Cecil Doty, the final design of Bookcliff Shelter was credited to NPS architect Phil Romigh. Doty's first conceptual design of Bookcliff Shelter is dated October 5, 1961.⁶¹ This design is similar to the final fan-shaped structure, but had a concrete roof supported by three stone pillars. Doty

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 221.

⁵⁶ Monthly Narrative Report, January 1963, Colorado National Monument, by Superintendent Fred G. Bussey, report made on February 13, 1963, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁵⁷ "Public Voucher For Purchases And Services Other Than Personal," Contract No. 14/10/0232/714, June 12, 1963, Midwest Region, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Omaha, Nebraska, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁵⁸ Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Dedication program, May 24, 1963, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁵⁹ "Planting Plan," Visitor Center, Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3208-A, February 26, 1964, 2 Sheets, designed by landscape architect Babbitt, Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶⁰ "Site Development," Visitor Center, Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3135-A, 1 Sheet, November 1, 1961, designed and drawn by V. Anderson, Branch of Landscape Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶¹ "Bookcliff Shelter," Saddlehorn, Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

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drew another conceptual design in March 1962 that had a concrete back wall and a cantilevered concrete roof.⁶² The final result seems to be a marriage of these two ideas. Five other designs of Bookcliff Shelter by architects other than Doty would eventually be complete enough to receive NPS drawing numbers. The first three drawings (Nos. NM-COLO 3145 B, C, and D) were drawn in 1962 and all included pillars. Hopeful that the overlook shelter would be built in fiscal year 1963, the project went out to bid on October 24, 1963, based on drawing NM-COLO-3145-D.⁶³ However, while the budgeted amount was \$6,700, the bid came in at \$8,750, and the project was cancelled.⁶⁴ In 1964, Bookcliff Shelter was bid in combination with the construction of the park's amphitheater. But when the bids came back on April 9, 1964,⁶⁵ they were still over budget, even with the rollover of funds from the previous fiscal year. The low bid of \$32,546 was over by \$10,346⁶⁶ and the National Park Service was unable to dip into the reserves. While the amphitheater, which was the more expensive of the two structures, was immediately rebid and built that summer, the Bookcliff Shelter project was put on hold.

The third and successful try to build Bookcliff Shelter began the following year, when it went out to bid on January 14, 1965, based on a final design by NPS architect Phil Romigh of the WODC Division of Architecture.⁶⁷ Romigh's design is a curved modern-style structure with a roof cantilevered out in a fan shape that offers visitors unimpeded views of the surrounding canyons and valleys. The structure's use of natural stone and wood also blends well with the surrounding landscape. Located a half-mile hike along the rim of the canyon from the Visitor Center, Bookcliff Shelter is the eastern anchor to the Canyon Rim Trail, offering visitors an outdoor experience and a resting place with magnificent views of canyons, stone monoliths, and the Colorado River. Romigh, a long time NPS employee, was a graduate of Cornell. His only other known Mission 66-era design is the Exhibit Shelter at Gunnison Point at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. The contract for the Bookcliff Shelter was awarded to E.C. Huff of Grand Junction in the amount of \$11,000 on February 26, 1965.⁶⁸ The work was done between June 1 and September 1, 1965.⁶⁹

⁶² "Bookcliff Shelter," Saddlehorn, Colorado National Monument, March 20, 1962, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145-A, designed and drawn by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶³ Specifications for the Bookcliff Shelter, Colorado National Monument, Colorado, Project No. COLO-W 444, October 24, 1963, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶⁴ Letter from Jerry Riddell, chief architect of the WODC to the regional director of the Midwest Region, cc: Fred Bussey, superintendent of Colorado National Monument, Subject: Revised Preliminary Drawing, Bookcliff Observation Shelter – Colorado, May 3, 1963, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁶⁵ Invitation for Bids (Construction Contract) for Bookcliff Shelter and Amphitheater, Colorado National Monument, Colorado, Project No. COLO-WW-501, March 3, 1964, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁶⁶ Letter from Fred Novak, assistant regional director of the Midwest Region to Fred Bussey, superintendent of Colorado National Monument cc: Chief Architect of the WODC, Subject: Bookcliff Shelter and Amphitheater Bids, April 21, 1964, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁶⁷ Specifications for the Bookcliff Shelter, Colorado National Monument, Project No. COLO-W 563, January 14, 1965, Colorado National Monument archives; and "Bookcliff Shelter," Saddlehorn, Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145-H, 4 sheets, January 1965, designed and drawn by Phil Romigh, Division of Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁶⁸ Statement and Certificate of Award to E.C. Huff, contract No. 14-10-0232-931 for Construction of the Bookcliff Shelter on Specifications and Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145-H, National Park Service, February 26, 1965, Colorado National Monument archives.

⁶⁹ Application For Payment, Final, E.C. Huff, Project No. COLO-W-563, Shelter House, Colorado National Monument, Colorado, September 1, 1965, Colorado National Monument archives.

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Canyon Rim Trail was built in 1964, a year after the Visitor Center and the year before Bookcliff Shelter. As noted previously, Mission 66 visitor centers typically had adjacent overlooks and trails. An integral component of this design philosophy was the development of nature trails that provided an outdoor experience near the visitor center.⁷⁰ Canyon Rim Trail is an excellent example of this concept. After walking through the Visitor Center, visitors can exit the building to go onto a terrace. From the terrace, visitors descend a series of stairs to an overlook that provides views of the canyon. Canyon Rim Trail begins at this point, leading to Bookcliff Shelter, approximately ½ mile away.

A 1961 "Roads and Trails" drawing for Colorado National Monument shows the first delineation of a proposed trail that matches the alignment of what is today Canyon Rim Trail. Called the "Visitor Center Trail," this proposed trail leads from the rear of the Visitor Center along the rim of the canyon to Bookcliff Shelter. The Visitor Center footprint on the drawing is outlined in a hatched line, indicating that it, like the trail, was still only in the planning stages.⁷¹

In 1964, the National Park Service finalized its plans for the "Nature Trail to Bookcliff Shelter." The drawing for the "Nature Trail" is on Sheet No. 3 of a 4-page set of drawings (NM-COLO 3210) entitled "Trails and Overlooks, Colorado National Monument." The top sheet of the drawing set notes that they were designed and drawn by landscape architects Babbitt and Hughes of the WODC Division of Landscape Architecture.⁷² There are no records that indicate that the construction of Canyon Rim Trail was contracted out, which suggests that park personnel built it. Upon its completion in 1964, the trail connected the Visitor Center and the site of the soon-to-be-built Bookcliff Shelter. Located along the edge of the canyon, the trail provides an easily accessible outdoor opportunity for visitors, and one that offers spectacular views of the park's primary resources. Together with the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter, Canyon Rim Trail exemplifies the basic tenets of Mission 66 planning and design, including a "one-stop" visitor experience that provides a wide range of administrative, educational, and recreational services for park visitors.

⁷⁰ Allaback, p. 270

⁷¹ "Roads and Trails, Colorado National Monument," Drawing No. NM-COLO-2104-G, National Park Service, Technical Information Center, Denver, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.

⁷² "Trails and Overlooks," Colorado National Monument," Drawing No. NM-COLO 3210, Sheet No. 3, "Nature Trail to Bookcliff Shelter," July 1964, designed by Babbitt and Hughes [no first names given], Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC, copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver CO. Although Sheet No. 3 does not include any landscape architects' names, it is drawn in the same hand and lettering style as Sheets Nos. 1 and 2. By contrast, Sheet No. 4, which is in a distinctly different style, has a notation indicating that it was designed by Medicott and drawn by Benson; this sheet is of Colorado National Monument overlooks and trails other than those associated with the Visitor Center.

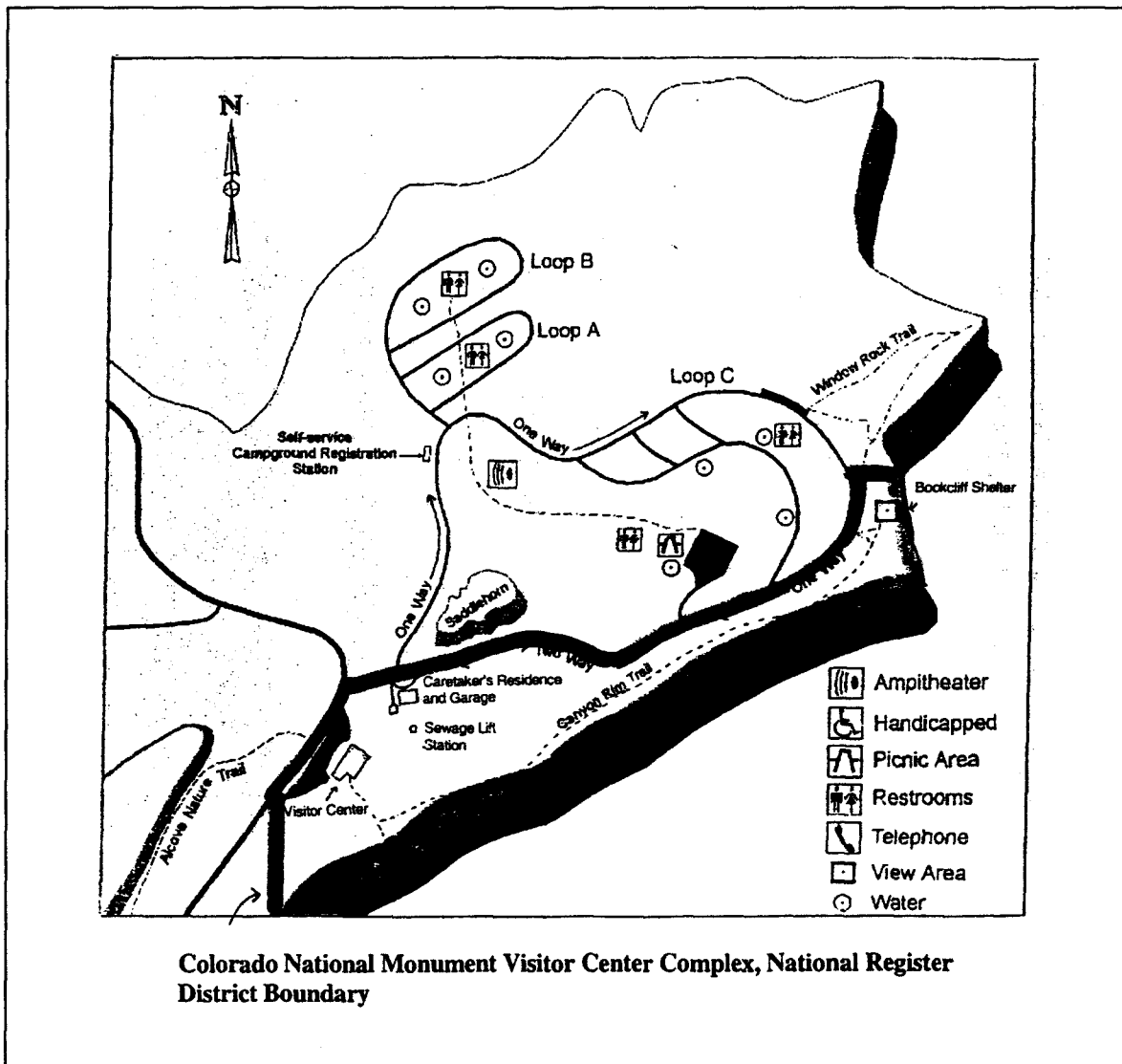
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COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT VISITORS CENTER COMPLEX



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- Allaback, Sarah. *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000.
- "Bookcliff Shelter," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3145-H, January 1965, 4 Sheets, designed by Phil Romigh, Division of Architecture, Western Office of Design and Construction (hereafter referred to as WODC). Copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver, CO.
- "Trails and Overlooks," Colorado National Monument," Drawing No. NM-COLO 3210, Sheet No. 3, "Nature Trail to Bookcliff Shelter," designed by landscape architects Babbitt and Hughes, July 1964, Division of Landscape Architecture, WODC. Copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver CO.
- "Visitor Center," Colorado National Monument, Drawing No. NM-COLO 3134-C, July 17, 1962, 16 Sheets, designed by Cecil Doty, Branch of Architecture, WODC, National Park Service, San Francisco, CA. Copy in the Denver Service Center, Technical Information Center archives, Denver CO.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary of the district is shown on the attached sketch map, entitled "Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex Boundary."

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses all of the Mission 66 buildings and structures associated with the Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex, including their associated parking lots, roads, walkways and overlooks, and the surrounding landscape. The complex also includes the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage, which were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 for their significant associations with NPS rustic architecture. Although the Saddlehorn Caretaker's Residence and Garage predate the 1963-65 period of significance of the Visitor Center complex, they were extant when the complex was built and, therefore, constitute part of the historic district's authentic setting during its period of significance. (In addition, it is National Register policy to count as contributing any buildings within historic districts that fall outside the district's period of significance but which are individually listed on the National Register.) The boundary does not include the Saddlehorn-area amphitheater, which was constructed at the same time as the Visitor Center and Bookcliff Shelter but which does not represent Park Service Modern architectural design and integrity. The amphitheater also is more closely associated with the Saddlehorn campground, which is outside the boundary of the historic district.

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Mesa County, ColoradoSection number ___ Page 23**LOCATIONAL INFORMATION**PLSS: 6th PM T11S R101W S13NE ¼, SE ¼, NE ¼
NW ¼, SE ¼, SE ¼, NE ¼
NE ¼, SW ¼, SE ¼, NE ¼
SE ¼, NW ¼, SE ¼, NE ¼PLSS: 6th PM 11S R101W S 18NW ¼, SW ¼, NW ¼
NW ¼, NE ¼, SW ¼, NW ¼
SE ¼, SE ¼, NW ¼, NW ¼Elevation: 5300 feet

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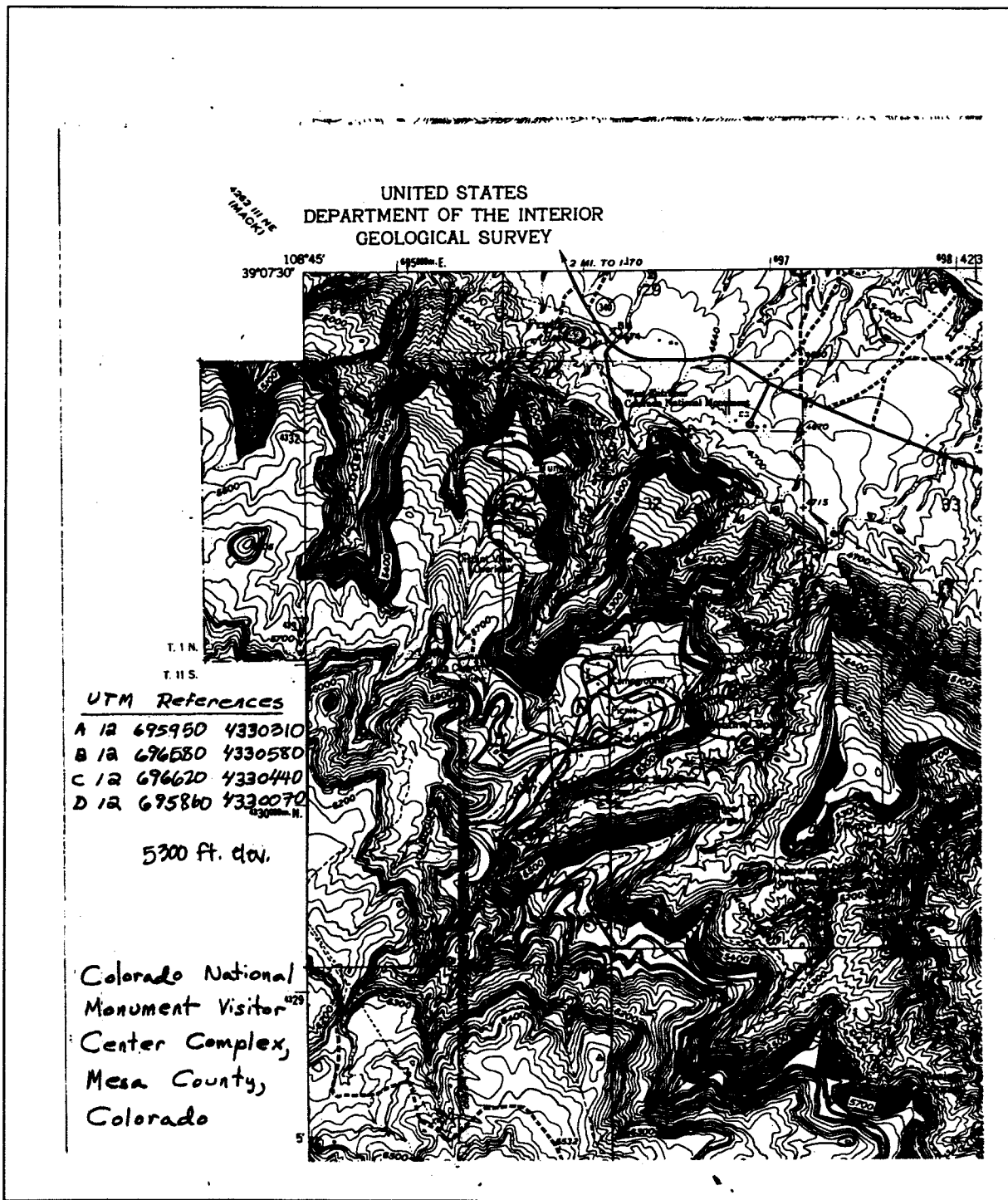
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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Colorado National Monument Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-___ except as noted:

Name of Property: Colorado National Monument Visitor Center Complex
 Location: Mesa County, Colorado
 Photographer: Seth Roberts
 Date of Photographs: March 2002
 Negatives: Colorado National Monument Administrative Office

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	Visitor Center, view from Saddle Horn, looking west (foreground buildings are the caretaker's house and garage).
2	Visitor Center from Black Ridge Trail, looking southeast.
3	Front side of Visitor Center, looking southwest.
4	Front side of Visitor Center, looking southwest.
5	Front side of Visitor Center, looking northeast.
6	East side of Visitor Center, looking northwest.
7	Back side of Visitor Center, looking southwest.
8	Back porch of Visitor Center, looking southwest.
9	Back porch of Visitors Center, looking northeast.
10	Visitor Center, information desk, looking northeast.
11	Visitor Center, Exhibit Room, Mission 66-era exhibit, looking southeast.
12	Canyon Rim Trail, as seen from the back porch of the Visitor Center, looking south.
13	Canyon Rim Trail overlook, looking southwest.
14	Canyon Rim Trail, looking east.
15	Bookcliff Shelter, looking northeast.
16	Bookcliff Shelter, looking northeast.
17	Bookcliff Shelter, looking northwest.
18	Bookcliff Shelter, looking east.
19	Bookcliff Shelter, looking southwest.
20	Bookcliff Shelter, view from inside, looking southwest.
21	Bookcliff Shelter, view from inside, looking south.