

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AL 12 1987  
date entered SEP 10 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Longmont Power Plant

and/or common Longmont Hydroelectric Plant

2. Location

street & number Old Apple Valley Road n/a not for publication

city, town n/a vicinity of Northwest of Lyons

state Colorado code 08 county Boulder code 013

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	n/a museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Longmont Attention: Kathie Faatz, Conservation Specialist

street & number 1100 S. Sherman c/o City of Longmont Electric Utility

city, town Longmont n/a vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Boulder County Courthouse, Boulder County Clerk and Recorder

street & number 13th and Pearl Street, P. O. Box 471

city, town Boulder state Colorado 80306

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Ongoing  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver state Colorado

## 7. Description

<u>X</u> excellent	<u>n/a</u> deteriorated	<u>X</u> unaltered	<u>X</u> original site
___ good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved
___ fair	___ unexposed		date <u>n/a</u>

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The city of Longmont's hydroelectric power plant is located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains just northwest of the town of Lyons, Colorado, alongside the St. Vrain River. Water from the Ralph Price Reservoir (five miles up river) enters a penstock box and on into the power plant to turn the two Pelton water wheels, to provide electric power for the city of Longmont (population 50,000) twelve miles away. The site contains a total of four contributing buildings and one non-contributing carport. The nomination includes the buildings located within the legal boundaries of the hydroplant site owned by the city of Longmont.

The site is characterized by the foothills setting of hilly terrain with indigenous vegetation and rocky outcroppings. The 1911 power plant is located at the lowest point on the property on the bank of the river. The building is at the end of a long gravel driveway with the three residences and outbuildings on the slope of the hill to the northeast. The site retains much of its natural setting and integrity. The drive has a low rock retaining wall constructed in the 1930s along the upslope side of the drive. The hillside has been grassed, but the rocky outcroppings and native trees and shrubs that have been left there creates a natural park-like setting in the front of the houses. Leading up from the gravel driveway to the fronts of the houses is a broad, randomly laid, sandstone walkway edged with stones.

The power plant building is a long, rectangular one-story structure constructed of concrete with a side gabled roof faced with clay tile. There is a lower, gabled roof wing at the west end which is the maintenance shop. The power plant's interior contains approximately 1,606 square feet and is completely unaltered, other than the addition, in 1986, of a computerized control panel on the east wall. The panel has no effect on the building's interior integrity since everything else remains as originally constructed.

In one corner, there is a "Round Oak" (P.D. Beckwith, #18) wood stove in working order and polished to a high shine. The generating equipment includes two K.V.A. generators, each connected to two 400 h.p. Pelton water wheels which are regulated by Pelton oil pressure governors. The Pelton water wheel buckets were repaired in the early 1960s and again in 1985. All other fixtures such as door knobs, trim and doors are original and in immaculate condition. There is an original drinking fountain continuously bubbling with fresh water.

Across the driveway from the power plant, is a contributing garage which is built into the side of the hill with only the roof visible (photo #3).

The three houses are similar in design with elements of the Bungalow style. In general Bungalows are one story houses with front gabled, gently pitched roofs with exposed rafters, a lower gable covering a porch with a larger gable covering the main portion of the house, wood framed with a wood shingle exterior finish. All three houses are rectangular in plan, have a double gable front with the smaller

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Longmont Hydroelectric Plant

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gable extending over a screened porch, and have one over one double hung windows on the sides. They are all constructed on concrete foundations with a basement level. The basement of house #1, built in 1918, has an above grade basement built out from the slope of the hill, creating a ground level story. The basement of house #2 is partially above grade creating a half story at ground level while the basement of house number three is almost entirely below grade.

The lower gable of house #1 covers a two story, screened-in porch which covers the front of the two story house. A screen door entrance is located on the basement level at the left side on the front of the porch. To the right of the doorway, extending across the front of the porch, is a panel of multi-pane windows. The second story of the porch is screened-in on the side and front with a multi-pane window panel on the far right front.

On house #2, which was built in 1913, the lower gable covers a one and one half story porch. The porch is smaller than that on house #1 and covers the right half of the front elevation. The bottom floor of the porch is framed-in with the second story being screened-in. A flight of wooden steps leads to a screen door entranceway on the north side of the porch. The lower gable of house #3, built in 1925, covers a one story screened-in porch. Across the front of the house are two square lights located in the porch gable. A screen door porch entrance is located on the right side.

All three houses remain essentially as originally constructed though modern plumbing was installed at a later date. A bedroom addition was made to the rear of house #2 in the 1920s. In the 1960s, a small flat roof addition and attached flat-roof carport were added to the northeast side of house #2. House #3 had a small shed roof addition and attached flat roof carport added to the southwest corner in the 1960s. The wood frame additions blend well with the original structures and do not significantly detract from their integrity.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
n/a prehistoric	n/a archeology-prehistoric	n/a community planning	n/a landscape architecture	n/a religion
n/a 1400-1499	n/a archeology-historic	n/a conservation	n/a law	n/a science
n/a 1500-1599	n/a agriculture	n/a economics	n/a literature	n/a sculpture
n/a 1600-1699	n/a architecture	n/a education	n/a military	n/a social/ humanitarian
n/a 1700-1799	n/a art	n/a engineering	n/a music	n/a theater
n/a 1800-1899	n/a commerce	n/a exploration/settlement	n/a philosophy	n/a transportation
<u>X</u> 1900-	n/a communications	<u>X</u> industry	n/a politics/government	n/a other (specify)
		n/a invention		

**Specific dates** 1911 **Builder/Architect** C. W. Fravert of Hendri and Bolthoff

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The city of Longmont's hydroelectric power plant, constructed in 1911 in Lyons, Colorado, meets Criterion A in its historic role in pioneering the use of hydroelectric power in northern Colorado. When the plant began operating in 1912, Longmont was the first municipality in the northern part of the state to have its electricity supplied by a publicly owned hydro plant.<sup>1</sup> The buildings at the power plant site and the setting retain their original integrity and there have been few changes made since original construction.

The settlement of the mountains in the western United States in the middle to late nineteenth century revived an interest in hydropower which had been used earlier in the eastern part of the country for industrial uses. Colorado's early hydroplants were built in the mountains to provide electricity for mining operations to power hoists, stamp mills, pumps, and drills. The equipment most extensively used in these locales was the Pelton wheel designed by a miner-mechanic in California in the 1870s. Easy to transport into the mountains, even on muleback, the Pelton wheel quickly won favor among mining men as a solution to the needs of deep-level mining and won wide acceptance in the Western mountains.

In theory, the water reached the wheel from flumes and ditches connected to wooden or metal penstocks, finally issuing forth under great pressure from a needle nozzle. The jet of water hit the wheel paddles at a tangent and turned the wheels. This basic construction technology became standard for the late nineteenth-century hydroelectric projects that were built in the West.

In Colorado, many of the nineteenth-century hydroplants in the mining communities have been dismantled. The few still in operation around the state include the Longmont plant at Lyons (1911); the 1890s plant in the Georgetown National Historic District; one in Salida, Colorado; the large 1909 Shoshone plant in Glenwood Canyon, and a large plant near Boulder, Colorado.

The Lyons plant was the first publicly owned plant to be constructed in northern Colorado. Until 1911, the front range towns of Lafayette, Boulder, Loveland, Berthoud, Fort Collins, Greeley, Fort Lupton and Brighton were provided electric power via a coal fired plant owned by the Northern Colorado Power Company (NCP). When the contract with this private company was due to expire in 1912, the city of Longmont determined it could provide hydroelectric power at a cheaper rate than NCP. A group of 63 Longmont businessmen each donated \$1,000 to begin construction of the plant outside of Lyons, Colorado, along the St. Vrain River, and twelve miles of distribution lines to carry the power to Longmont.<sup>2</sup>

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Lyons Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	4	7	4	9	9	0	4	4	5	3	5	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathie Faatz, Conservation Specialist

organization City of Longmont

date February 11, 1987

street & number 1100 S. Sherman Street

telephone (303) 651-8360

city or town Longmont

state Colorado 80501

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Barbara Sudler*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7-31-87

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9-10-87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Longmont Hydroelectric Plant

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The Northern Colorado Power Company immediately filed an injunction against the city of Longmont. The determination of the citizens of Longmont to have their own utility company is well documented as the local newspaper recorded the ensuing court battle.<sup>3</sup>

On January 5, 1912, Longmont received its first electric power from the hydroplant which supplied the entire town with a population of 4,500 with electricity. Today, this plant supplies 1% of Longmont's power, saving the city approximately \$75,000 in annual costs to purchase power.<sup>4</sup>

When the Lyons plant first went into operation, the power plant building was the first to be constructed. O. J. Ramey, who was in charge of operations, stayed at the site in a tent until the first house was constructed in 1913 on the hill above the plant. This two story dwelling housed two families with two men attending the operations. In 1918, a second house was built and in the 1930s, the extensive rock work lining the driveway and the walks was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). A third house was constructed in 1925, when more men were needed to run the plant.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Longmont Ledger - 1/19/1912, "Explains the Situation."

<sup>2</sup>Longmont Ledger - 12/15/1911, "The Injunction Suit."

<sup>3</sup>Newspaper files of the Longmont Public Library, 1911-1913.

<sup>4</sup>Files of City of Longmont Electric Utility.

<sup>5</sup>R. E. Wellborn, "The Faithful Hydro Plant", typescript.

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Longmont Ledger "The Injunction" November 17, 1911

Longmont Ledger "The Injunction Suit" December 15, 1911

Longmont Ledger "Turn Out the Northern Lights" February 12, 1912

Longmont Ledger "Explains the Situation" January 19, 1912

Files of the Longmont Public Library

Files of the City of Longmont Electric Utility

Files of the Longmont Pioneer Museum

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Continuation sheet Geographical Data

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Page 1

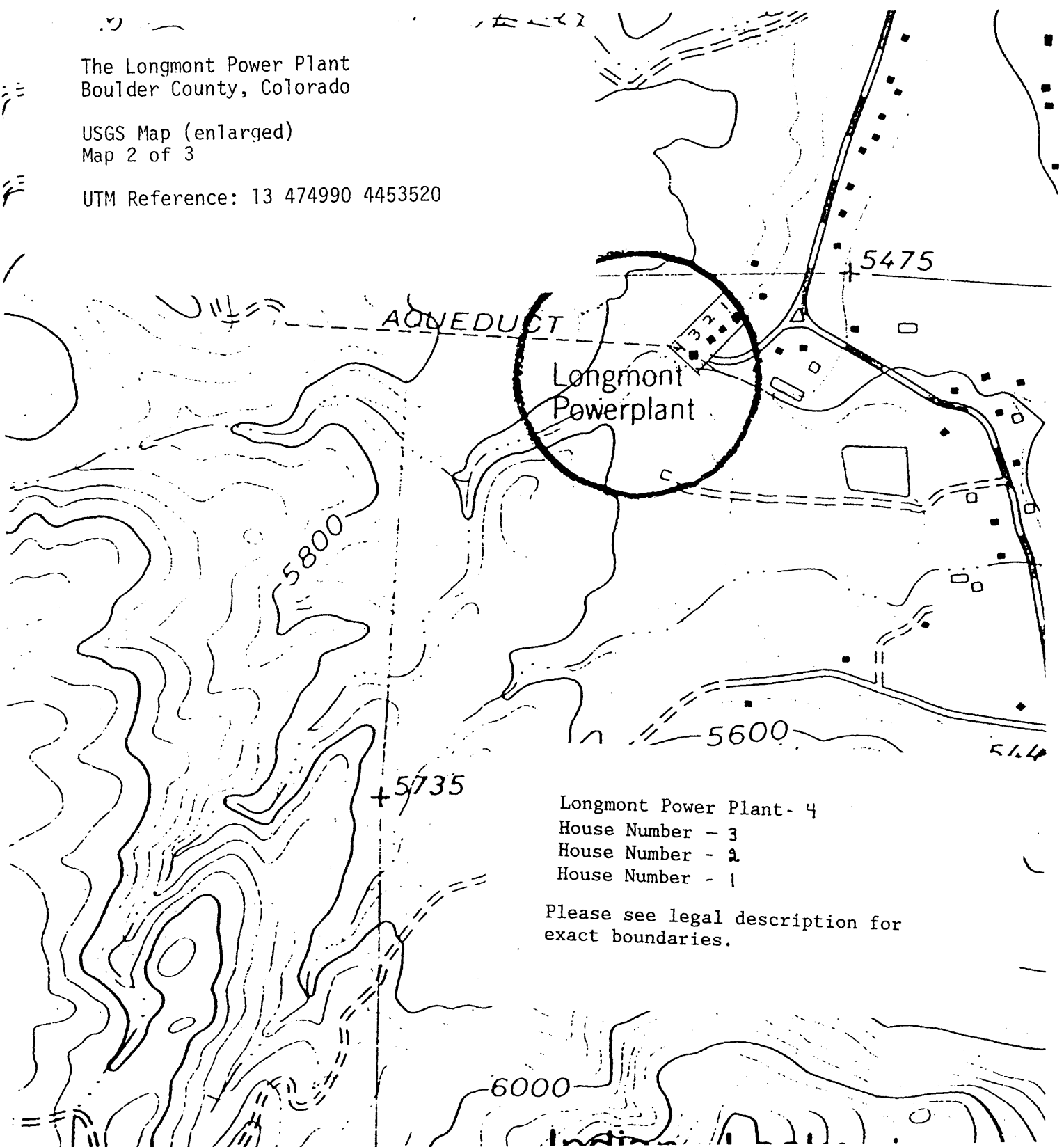
A certain tract of land in the Northeast Quarter (N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of the Northwest Quarter (N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) of Section Thirteen (13), Township Three (3) North, Range Seventy-one (71) West of the 6th P.M., described as follows: A strip of land sixty-six and two-thirds ( $66 \frac{2}{3}$ ) feet in width lying south of a line described as follows: At a point whence the Northwest corner of Section 13 bears North  $71^{\circ} 28'$  West 1610 feet distant, thence North  $65^{\circ}$  West 300 feet.



The Longmont Power Plant  
Boulder County, Colorado

USGS Map (enlarged)  
Map 2 of 3

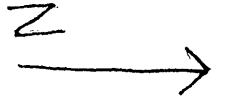
UTM Reference: 13 474990 4453520




Longmont Power Plant - 4  
House Number - 3  
House Number - 2  
House Number - 1

Please see legal description for  
exact boundaries.

Longmont Hyaro Flann  
 Boulder County, Colorado  
 Sketch Map  
 Map # 3 of 3



Key  
 Non-Contributing   
 Photo # 