

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET PH0098361

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 29 1975  
DATE ENTERED MAY 12 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC La Jara Depot (Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad)

AND/OR COMMON

La Jara Town Hall

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Broadway and Main Streets

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

La Jara

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd.

STATE

colorado

CODE

08

COUNTY

Conejos

CODE

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

\_\_PRIVATE

\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_PARK

\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_BOTH

\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_OBJECT

\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_NO

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Town of La Jara

STREET & NUMBER

Town Hall, Broadway and Main Streets

CITY, TOWN

La Jara

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Conejos County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Conejos

STATE

Colorado

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                   | CHECK ONE   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR            | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |   |   |

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The La Jara City Hall, which was originally a whistle stop railroad station, is a local example of the influence that Frank Wright, the American architect, was exerting on architectural thought. As an old railroad station, the style of design employed is somewhat unique. Many other stations utilized the more traditional and acceptable design motifs such as renaissance, romanesque, southwestern mission, Greek classical or chatesque revivals. Wright's modern prairie style, as popularized by the famous Robie House of Chicago, lacked the historical perspective which was so often required for public buildings. It is unusual, to say the least, to have this kind of style employed for this 1911 building.

The building appears to be in good structural condition. Originally a train station and now a town hall, several minor alterations have taken place. At the rear or north elevation of the second story, an old railed balcony was replaced with a stucco and framed addition.

In plan, the building is an elongated rectangle running from south to north. Railroad tracks are at the west side and the street is to the east. Accordingly, then, entrance porticos are at the southeast and southwest corners. The building has two floors with the second floor being half of the rectangle at the southern end. The porticos also house an observation cove at the west end and stairs at the east. At the main level, there occurred in sequence from south to north a waiting room, restrooms, passage and office, a waiting room, and baggage. The second floor was a living quarters for the agent. Although a small whistle stop, the building employees a variety of functions in the plan and there is concern for passengers, employees and baggage circulation.

In elevation, the building is a stucco and stone veneer with horizontal bands running around the base and second floor elevation. The south elevation is a two story symmetrical composition with evenly balanced porticos windows and long roof eave projections. East and west elevations with the two story south end resemble a steam boat with an observation tower, central chimney, low north end and even in the original design, an observation platform at the balcony. The north end is low horizontally composed facade with a small window centered in the wall.

All large windows are wooden double hung fixtures. The west office has transom lites over the main window. The smaller windows in the baggage area are also wood units with fixed panes. All the entrance doors have a full three quarter glazing and also incorporate a transom lite overhead. All the roofs are hip construction with long four foot projections that produce a long, low horizontal effect. The roof design is very similar to Frank Lloyd Wright's design at Robie House, 1908, Chicago. The low horizontal design is further reinforced with the low stone veneer band at the base of the building. The fluted band is very similar, although not as pronounced, as Wright's Larkin Office Building in Buffalo, 1904, and various other details in buildings of the same period. Even the columns are treated.

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It is very extraordinary to see a public building like this railroad station employ the techniques of Frank Lloyd Wright as early as 1911. Wright was not known nor popular in this country and it was about this period, 1910 to 1919, that his works were made known in Europe and popularized. This building employes much of the technique used in the best designs of Wright's at that time. A comparison can be made to such structures as Robie House, Isabel Roberts House in River Forest, Illinois and the Larkin Building in Buffalo. There are however, some items which do not match the mature Wright designs. The horizontal base band seems timid compared to other works. Wright often opened up great expanses of glass, even at the south, which this building does not accomplish. His column capitals were strong and original. This building has copied scroll support which Wright did not employ and no capitals at all.

The building designer was obviously influenced by Wright and due to the expression of detail may have even worked with him and seen his technique develop. However, Wright's genius and mature strength are still somewhat lacking. But the building is a good early example of Wright's influence long before he was recognized in this country. The building is a significant part of national history from that one viewpoint alone.

Phillip Gallegos, Architect  
pueblo, Colorado

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD                                     | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _PREHISTORIC      | <input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> _LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _1700-1799        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ART          | <input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _1800-1899        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE     | <input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)           |
|  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION              |  |   |

SPECIFIC DATES

1911

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The beginnings of La Jara are connected directly to the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in 1880. Though the reasons for its establishment are not as dramatic as those for Antonito, 14 miles south, none the less its basic reason for existence was and is today, to serve the local agricultural interests. Centrally located between Antonito and Alamosa, La Jara for many years was a focal point for livestock ranchers and field crop farmers who tended their herds and crops in the area. The field crops included sugar beets, wheat, barley, potatoes, oats and field peas.

A school bond circular for the La Jara district, dated April, 1915, stated that the La Jara Milling and Elevator Company produced 15,000 barrels of flour annually and that freight receipts for farm products shipped out by rail amounted to "a little over \$100,000 annually".

While the business district in those days boasted two banks, a large school, three churches and several brick business buildings, the center of interest for the community was the new railroad depot built in 1911. It was from here that the community had its contact with the outside world for many years.

It wasn't until 1970, however that the 59 year old building received a new lease on life. During that year the D&RGW, having decided it had no more use for the building, gave it to the Town. Today the old depot is the new Town Hall. It is located adjacent to a very pleasant, quite public park and picnic grounds. The Town has a long range plan to develop this small complex further and include a small locally oriented museum. While the building itself is of some national significance, it also has become the focal point for an awakening of the local heritage and a desire to preserve it.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Denver Public Library, Western Research Section, Conejos County file, and La Jara file.

State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, Conejos County file, and La Jara file.

Maxwell, John W., La Jara Depot Plans, Wheat Ridge, Colorado

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one fourth acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 41,490,5 41,256,3,5  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert A. Burggraaf, P.E., Project Engineer

ORGANIZATION

Town of La Jara

DATE

April 1, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

post Office Box 463

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Antonito

STATE

Colorado

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Cynthia L. Emuet*

TITLE

*Acting SA/PO*

DATE

*4-20-75*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*5/12/75*

ATTEST:

*Ronald M. Gresham*

DATE

*5/9/75*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*acty*