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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 Fort Morgan Power Plant Building

other names/site number 5MR615

2. Location


street & number North Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Fort Morgan N/A vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Morgan code 087 zip code 80701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 December 14, 1993  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
Signature of the Keeper National Register Date of Action  
Steph M. Rapaley 1/28/94

Ft. Morgan Power Plant Building  
Name of Property

Morgan, Colorado  
County and 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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	2	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

**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**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: public works

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: public works

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American  
Movements  
Other: industrial

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete  
walls brick  
roof asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

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**FORT MORGAN POWER PLANT BUILDING**

**DESCRIPTION**

The Fort Morgan Power Plant Building, a post-and-beam industrial building clad in brick, is prominently located on the southwest corner of Riverside Park, at the north end of Main Street, known historically as Fort Morgan's "Great White Way."

The Power Plant is a rectangular, three and one-half story structure with a stepped, flat roof bordered by decoratively crenelated parapets. All elevations of the building feature a rectilinear alignment of steel, industrial, center pivot windows framed by brick panels, the effect of which is to emphasize the structure's height and symmetry. The bays are enclosed with raised brick pilasters and raked parapets. Decorative brick panels and diamonds above the windows add interest to the flat walls. These repetitive elements frame the building and contribute to its architectural balance.

The original entrance on the main facade is no longer used, but it still retains its Tudor archway with multi-light transom, decorative terra cotta quoining, and sconces. Above the doorway is a panel incised with the name of the building: "City of Fort Morgan Power Plant." The rectangular composition with buff brick stringcourse below the first story windows continues around from the main facade to the sides of the building.

The north elevation reveals all three and one-half stories due to a drop in grade. The same window and wall design employed on the west (main) facade is repeated. The last two bays contain no windows and instead feature large panels surrounded with a single course of buff brick and topped with diamonds. A large drive-through entry with rolling door opens off the lower floor. Half of the entry is bricked in and contains a metal framed steel door.

The rear (east) elevation contains a two-story concrete coal bin that stretches across the full length of the building. The bins are accessible by trucks from the south elevation. A small, one-story brick lean-to runs the length of the coal bin and is topped with a shed roof. A series of openings provides truck entry. The main power plant wall contains windows only along the top floor with decorative brick panels below and diamonds above. The windows are covered with wood panels.

The south elevation resembles the north but reveals only the top two floors above grade. The last two bays are windowless with brick panels while the third contains a truck entry with rolling metal door with industrial sash windows above framed in decorative brick panels. A small one story switch gear room extends from the two westernmost bays and contains the style windows and brick work found throughout the plant.

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Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

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Modern, noncontributing steel transformer equipment sits in a yard area directly south of the gear room. The equipment is no longer operational. A small noncontributing greenhouse made of 2x4 lumber sheathed in plastic also shares the yard space.

The interior support for the power generating equipment at the Fort Morgan Power Plant is provided by massive concrete columns, beams and slabs. The even spacing of this post-and-beam structural system defines the interior space and, with its unadorned simplicity, delineates an architectural clarity for this definitively industrial space.

**ALTERATIONS**

Originally, the two-story front facade was divided into three equal width bays. The main entrance in the central bay featured a double-leaf doorway with six-light, paneled wood doors.

In 1930 the Power Plant building was expanded by two additional bays on the north side, which housed a new 2000 kW generator. The new wall replicated the design of the original except for a change in the parapets from raked to flat. The two rear bays, above the open basement level which housed the boilers and fireboxes, feature a flat brick facade detailed with buff rectangular panels instead of windows. The concrete coal bins on the east elevation were expanded. A one-story addition for the electric switch gear was added to the southwestern corner of the building in 1935. The addition retained the materials and architectural style of the original, deviating only in the use of glass block in place of the industrial multilight sash windows.

The present building is in good condition. The exterior remains largely unaltered. The original front doors have been removed and replaced with cement blocks covered with concrete. The original basement roll-up door has been modernized.

The interior of the building remains unaltered except for the removal of the power generating equipment. The electric switch gear addition has been converted to an office. The upper levels are used for storage.

Ft. Morgan Power Plant Building  
Name of Property

Morgan, Colorado  
County and State

## 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.)

## 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1923; 1930

### Significant Dates

1923; 1930

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Cox, George

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Fort Morgan Heritage Foundation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Morgan County, Colorado

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Fort Morgan Power Plant Building is significant under Criterion C for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of early 20th century industrial architecture. With its well developed proportion, mass, fenestration, and detail, the building is a distinguished example of technological and industrial development, as well as architectural design. In its design and details, the Power Plant building represents the most sophisticated exercise in publicly owned industrial architecture in Fort Morgan. Forming the northern terminus of Main Street, the Power Plant is a prominent local landmark.

Unusual in an industrial building, its flat facades, stepped parapet, vertical emphasis, and geometric elements were commonly used in commercial buildings of its period and foreshadow the Art Deco Style. The Tudor arch entryway, although somewhat incongruous, was an attempt to provide a suitably striking entrance to this public building, and it was in keeping with the various revival styles popular in the early 20th century.

George Cox, civil engineer and Fort Morgan's first city superintendent, designed the Power Plant building to house an array of large, complicated coal fired power generating equipment. He developed the design within tightly controlled spatial and structural parameters, using a sophisticated concrete post-and-beam structural system with exterior curtain walls. In doing this, Cox successfully integrated the intricate functional requirements of the interior spaces with an architecturally expressive exterior. Although the primary consideration for the design of the structure was operational efficiency in the generation of power, it was also intended to be pleasurable to work in and enjoyable to look at.

The extensive use of steel, center pivot windows with shallow aprons of brick represented a revolution in industrial window design in the early 20th century. Also at this time, reinforced concrete was clearly the state-of-the-art material for the construction of factories, warehouses, elevators and bridges. It combined the advantages of low cost, relatively quick erection and easy maintenance with a structural stability that was shockproof, waterproof, and fireproof.

The power plant utilized other modern elements of industrial design as well. Ample room, both horizontal and vertical, insured easy access to all equipment and interior spaces. Stairs were provided rather than ladders between the different levels of service walkways around boilers and other equipment. Upper level working platforms were built with curbs and guards to prevent tools from being pushed or dropped to the levels below. The south entrance to the building, which opened to all levels, allowed trucks and cranes access to both sides of the plant for maintenance. The spacious windows permitted natural light for visibility and fresh air for the employees.

The design of early industrial buildings was generally considered to be beneath the station of architects. The responsibility for these structures was thus assumed by civil engineers. With their bridges, dams, canals, exhibition halls, and railroad

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depots, civil engineers forged a place for themselves in the industrial vitality of the country. Although often overlooked in favor of the more high styled municipal architecture represented by city halls and county courthouses, engineer designed industrial buildings such as the Fort Morgan Power Plant formed an integral and important part of the urban fabric.

George Cox, a civil engineer from Belle Plaine, Iowa, became Fort Morgan's first city superintendent in 1904. The municipal services were born and directed under the hand of Cox during his 36 years of service. The planning and designing of the Power Plant building was the pinnacle of his career. Other cities sought to emulate his record achievements for developing the city power and water systems, sewer system, curb and gutters, paving projects, parks and public building construction. He also served the state as municipal commissioner and became president of the Colorado Municipal League in 1930.

**HISTORY**

Located about 80 miles northeast of Denver, Fort Morgan has a history of vigilance and resourcefulness in reclaiming the plains and cultivating prosperous farmlands. In 1882, two railroads, the Union Pacific and the Burlington, passed north and south of the townsite, thus increasing the value of the area. In 1884, Abner Baker, founding father of Fort Morgan, completed the first irrigation canal from the South Platte River, which delivered life sustaining water to the economy of the region. That same year the town was platted, and by the end of the year five houses and a twenty room hotel had been built.

Fort Morgan continued to grow and expand as it became an agricultural center for the region. The Fort Morgan electrical department was organized in 1906, with \$6,000 in bonds and \$3,500 raised by subscription. The town board passed Ordinance No. 89, which authorized the municipal ownership of a lighting, power and heating plant for service of a population of 5,000. The Western Electric Company of Denver installed the first power plant that year for \$11,000.

The power was supplied by a 75 kW generator, which was run evenings only. A defining feature of Fort Morgan's lighting history was the policy of providing free power for residential porch lights. This innovation was adopted by the city administration in lieu of street lights, and Fort Morgan soon became known as "The City of Lights" on the northeastern plains of Colorado.

In 1908, when the plant was moved to the newly completed city hall building, a 100 kW turbo generator was added. The generator's capacities were increased to 250 kW and 400 kW, respectively, in 1920.

In 1923, under the direction of George Cox, the plant was moved to an eighty acre tract of land north of town, along the South Platte River. The new concrete Rainbow Arch Bridge had just been completed there, and the adjacent land was developed into Riverside Park, with a municipal swimming pool, picnic area, and playground.

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Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
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Designed by Fort Morgan City Superintendent George Cox and constructed entirely by city employees, the new plant was built for a cost of \$190,000. The Power Plant site was developed with landscaping that placed the power generating equipment above the flood plain of the South Platte River. It was situated adjacent to the Rainbow Arch Bridge (which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and near the Great Western Sugar Factory (1906), forming a cohesive industrial district and a visual anchor at the northern periphery of the city.

When the new plant was completed on December 21, 1923, Fort Morgan boasted about having the highest pressure steam plant in the state. Two Badenhouser high-pressure water tube boilers operated under a pressure of 325 pounds and 200 degrees superheat. Two 1000 kW Allis-Chalmers condensing turbines accommodated the demand for electricity. Three wells furnished cooling water for the condensers. The lukewarm water from the condensers was piped to the new swimming pool.

In 1930 a new addition was made to the building to house a new 2000 kW generator along with additional boilers, fire boxes and work areas. In 1935 a switch gear room for the control boards and switching equipment was added. However, by 1950, power was generated at a lower rate by the Bureau of Reclamation from its 5000 kW substation located east of the Power Plant. The city plant continued to be used as an auxiliary system until 1952, when it was closed and the machinery sold to a steel mill in Lima, Peru. Today, the Power Plant building is used by the city parks department as a maintenance and storage facility.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

One Hundred Eleven Trees, (Fort Morgan Heritage Foundation, Inc.)

Blumenson, John, Identifying American Architecture, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977)

Munce, James F., Industrial Architecture, (F.W. Dodge, 1960)

Pevsner, Nikolaus, A History of Building Types

Reid, Kenneth, Industrial Buildings, (F.W. Dodge, 1951)

The Colorado Municipalities, Volume 10, June, 1934, Number 3  
\_\_\_\_\_, Volume 2, February, 1927, Number 6  
\_\_\_\_\_, Volume 11, October, 1935, Number 5

The Fort Morgan Times, Diamond Jubilee Edition

City of Fort Morgan scrapbook



Ft. Morgan Power Plant Building  
Name of Property

Morgan, Colorado  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	3
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6	0	2	0	0	0
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4	4	5	7	7	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

4 

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 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 Lyn Deal

organization Fort Morgan Heritage Foundation date September 3, 1993

street & number 404 Sherman Street telephone 303-867-7928

city or town Fort Morgan state Colorado zip code 80701

**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 The City of Fort Morgan

street & number 710 E. Railroad Ave. telephone 303-867-3001

city or town Fort Morgan state Colorado zip code 80701

**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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The west 300 feet of the north 125 feet of the south 1477 feet of the  
SE 1/4 of Section 31, T4N, R57W of the 6th P.M. Morgan County, Colorado.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

An area to include the power plant building and its surrounding landscaping  
historically associated with the building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 7 Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information is common to all photographs:

Name of Property: Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Location: Fort Morgan, Morgan County, Colorado  
Negatives: City of Fort Morgan files

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
1	Photographer: Unknown Date: ca1925 Description of view: Main (west) facade, view to the east
2	Photographer: Unknown Date: 7/1/1925 Description of view: view to the southeast
3	Photographer: Clayton Fraser Date: 7/15/93 Description of view: Main facade, view to the northeast
4	Photographer: Clayton Fraser Date: 7/15/93 Description of view: North elevation, view to the southeast
5	Photographer: Clayton Fraser Date: 9/9/93 Description of view: East elevation, view to the southwest
6	Photographer: Clayton Fraser Date: 9/9/93 Description of view: South elevation, view to the north
7	Photographer: Clayton Fraser Date: 7/15/93 Description of view: Interior view of concrete support structures

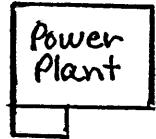
Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

HIGHWAY



RIVERSIDE PARK

125 ft.



Nomination Boundaries



300 ft.

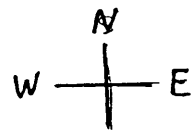
Bureau of Reclamation

STATE

UPPER

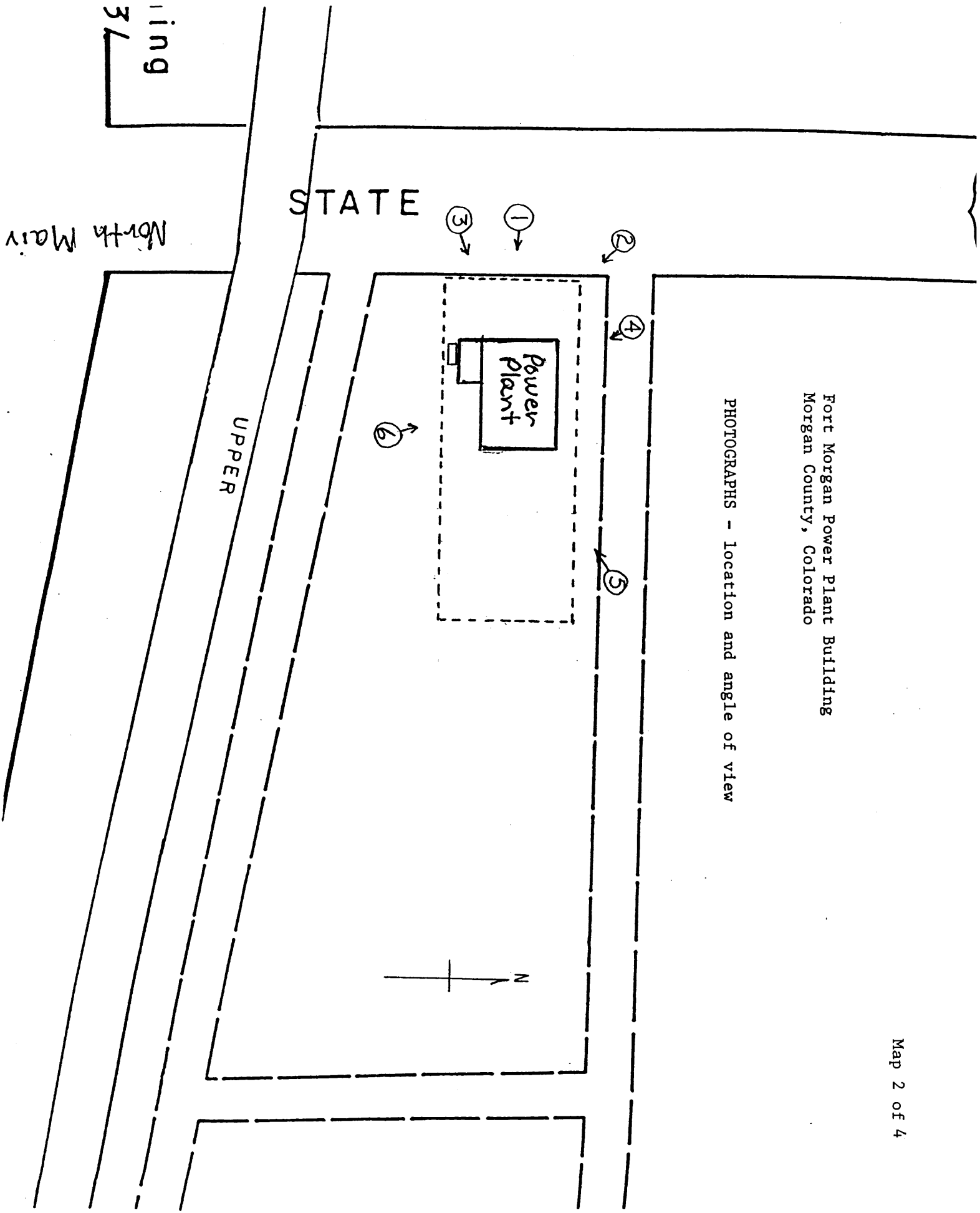
ing  
37

North Main S



Fort Morgan Power Plant Building  
Morgan County, Colorado

PHOTOGRAPHS - location and angle of view

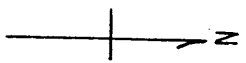


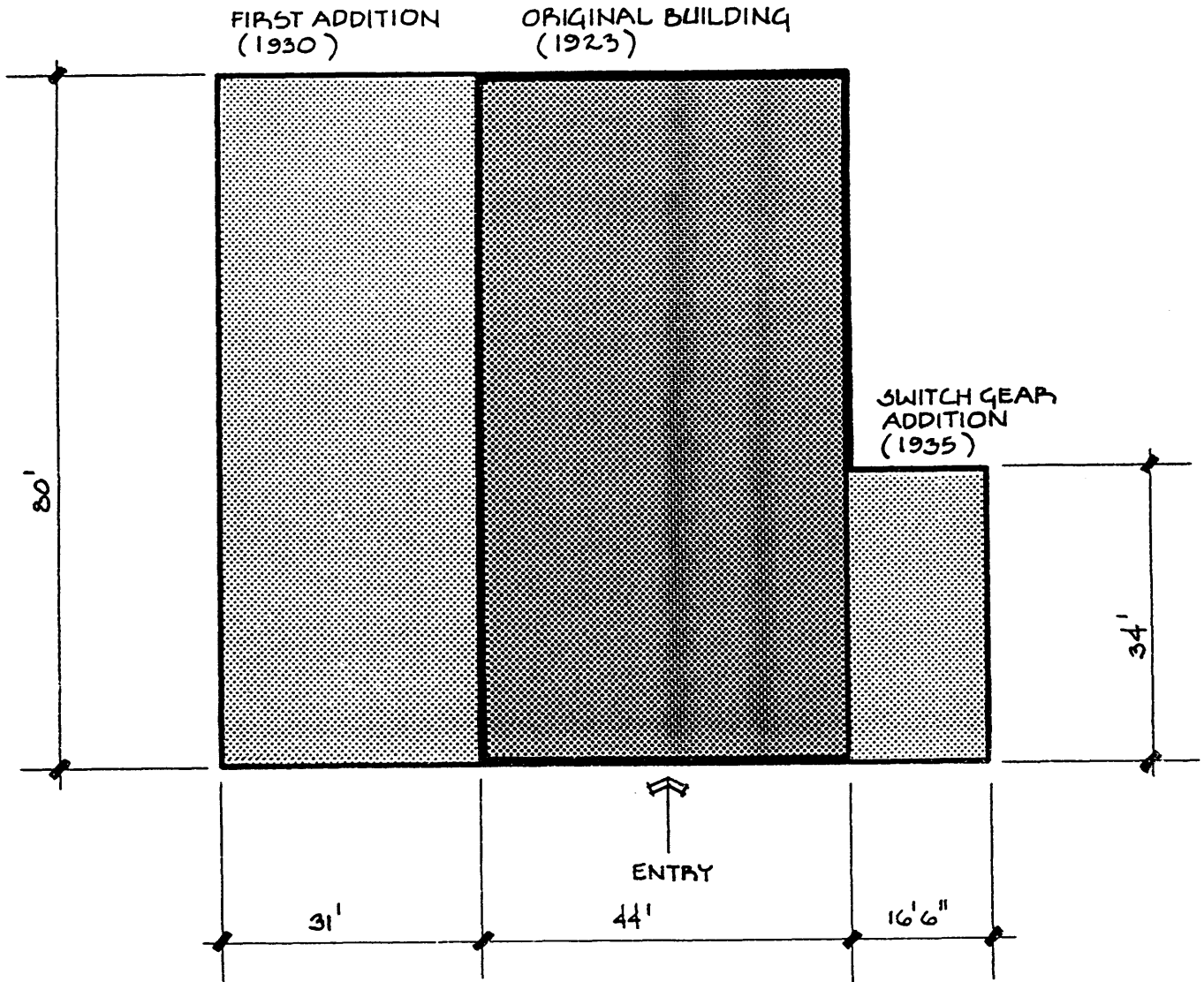
STATE

UPPER

North Main

ring 31





Outline Plan Scale: 1" = 20'

# FORT MORGAN POWER PLANT

Fort Morgan • Morgan County • Colorado

Fraserdesign 30 September 1993