

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 23 1986

date entered MAY 22 1986

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

1. Name

historic Northern Colorado Power Company Substation

and/or common Corporate Offices--U.S. Express Corporation

2. Location

street & number 1590 Broadway n/a not for publication

city, town Boulder n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Boulder code 013

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name James C. Hanifin and Sharon J. Hanifin

street & number 1590 Broadway

city, town Boulder n/a vicinity of state Colorado 80302

5. Location of Legal Description

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

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

city, town Boulder state Colorado 80306

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City of Boulder Landmarks Advisory Board has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date May 3, 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Ordinance 4753, Film #1254, Rec. #552445, Date 5-31-83 Clerk & Recorder

city, town Boulder state Colorado 80302

# 7. Description

|   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                              |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input 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    |   |   |

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

The Northern Colorado Power Company Substation is a small, three-bay, brick industrial structure composed of a one-story base and a two-story tower. Its plan is "L" shaped. The tower rises from the center of the west elevation. A series of six ventilation portholes are cut into the second story on the north and south elevations of the tower. Originally, terra cotta pipe projected several inches from the portholes. The present windows are metal one-over-one, replacing original six-over-six wooden ones. The sandstone lintels and sills have been retained. A sandstone parapet tops the one-story base and the tower. A decorative stepped brick course divides the two stories of the tower and the area between the portholes and parapet. The same style course runs directly below the parapet on the north, south, and west facades of the one-story base. The building currently has two entrances: an original entrance on the south facade of the one-story section and a new opening on the south facade of the tower. Window openings on the east, which had been closed after 1926, were reopened in the 1985 renovation. The building is currently painted a buff grey color. A stepped flagstone wall topped by an iron fence parallels the building on its north and west sides.

The interior of the building originally was without ornamentation. The walls were unplastered. As part of its renovation, walls and partitions were added to allow for private office spaces. The lower third of the brick walls has been sheetrocked leaving the upper two-thirds as they were originally. The ventilation tower, designed originally as one space, has been divided into two stories accessed by a new spiral staircase. The electrical transformers and mechanical "buswork" were removed by Public Service Company in 1980.

The substation is located at the foot of University Hill at the corner of Broadway and Marine in the Grand View Terrace Subdivision in Boulder, 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |   |

**Specific dates** c. 1908 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Northern Colorado Power Company Substation, built about 1908, is historically significant for its close link with the development and expanded use of electrical power and development of mass transportation systems in Colorado. The substation was built to transmit electrical power, generated at the Northern Colorado Power Company's steam plant in Lafayette (dismantled in 1963), to downtown Boulder and the growing University and to operate the Denver-Boulder interurban railway and the trolley to Chautauqua. It was the third power generation-related structure to be built in the city of Boulder. The substation is the only remaining structure within the city limits that illustrates early power generation systems in Boulder.<sup>1</sup> Few substations from this period in north-central Colorado still exist.<sup>2</sup> After the 1920s, substations consisted of unmanned, unhused equipment platforms enclosed with security fencing.

The history of the utility industry in Colorado began in 1869 with the incorporation of the Denver Gas Company. Denver's first electrical generating firm, the Colorado Electric Co., was established in 1881 to provide street lighting and domestic service. A year-end review of electrical progress published in the January 1, 1908 edition of the Denver Republic reported that: "Four immense generating systems, started as many districts in 1907, foretell the dawn of a new era in every branch of industrial, commercial, and agricultural development."<sup>3</sup> The four projects referred to were the Shoshone Power Plant in Glenwood Springs; Eastern Colorado Power Company's (the Central Colorado Power Company) generating plant in Boulder Canyon; the Northern Colorado Power Company's plant in Lafayette; and the Summit County Power Company generation plan in Breckenridge.<sup>4</sup> Between 1869 and 1910, power generating companies were being established all over Colorado. Many failed; others merged together to form more efficient companies for providing electrical service.

In 1884, the Boulder Gas Company was incorporated for the purpose of providing manufactured gas for street lighting. In 1887, five years after Thomas Edison's first electric light plant was constructed on Pearl Street in New York City, the Boulder Electric Light Company was incorporated and by 1899 had built a power generation facility at Walnut and 13th Street (demolished). Competition between the gas and the electric companies was fierce because they each provided the same product; but electricity soon won out. In 1899, the Boulder Railway & Utility Company was formed to operate the trolley system, including service to Chautauqua, and to sell power. Two years later, a new company was formed to take over the operation of the Boulder Electric Light Company, and the Boulder Electric Light & Power Company came into being in 1901. The following year, the new company also bought out the railway company. It continued to run the trolley system and extended the system to the sanitarium on Mapleton Hill in 1903.<sup>5</sup> That same year, plans were laid for a rapid transit service between Boulder and Denver. The new service, provided by the Denver and Inter-urban Railroad, electrified the Colorado and Southern Railroad line between Denver and Boulder. The first trolley arrived in Boulder in 1908. The Boulder substation was important in the distribution of electricity to power this system.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1

Quadrangle name Boulder Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 13 476395 4428830  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 1, Block 1, Grand View Subdivision

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

state n/a code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Felicia Furman Dryden

organization date January 15, 1986

street & number 920 Mapleton Avenue telephone (303) 440-4029

city or town Boulder state Colorado 80302

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state xx 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 April 16, 1986

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 5-22-86

for *Allan Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

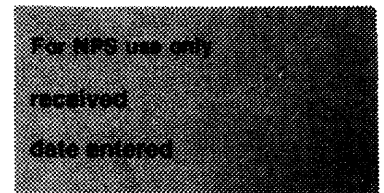
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Northern Colorado Power

Continuation sheet Company Substation

Item number 8

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In 1906, a Denver man named Joseph J. Henry established the Northern Colorado Power Company which sought control of isolated utility properties in order to take advantage of a central system for power generation and transmission. In that same year, Henry built the coal-fired Lafayette plant which was one of the most advanced operations of its time.<sup>6</sup> It served the growing towns of Lafayette, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, Berthoud, Fort Collins, Greeley, Fort Lupton, and Brighton. The Boulder substation was one of the substations that distributed current from this plant and is one of the few still extant.

Nearly simultaneously with the formation of Northern Colorado Power, the Central Colorado Power Company was formed in 1906 by Myron T. Herrick, later governor of Ohio and ambassador to France, who came to Colorado to have field tested certain theories and practices having to do with hydroelectric generation, which up to that time had only been used in the laboratory.<sup>7</sup> Herrick immediately began construction of the Shoshone hydroelectric plant in Glenwood Springs and the Boulder hydroelectric plant in Boulder Creek Canyon. Because of the depression of 1907, the project in Boulder was not completed until 1910.

After the formation of the Public Service Company in 1923, at which time the Northern Colorado Power Company and the Central Colorado Power Company, among others, merged, the Old Power Substation transmitted power from several sources including the Boulder hydroelectric plant in Boulder Creek Canyon and the Vailmont steam plant built in 1924, south of the city limits.

<sup>1</sup>Another structure, the hydroelectric plant (completed in 1910) is located five miles up Boulder Creek Canyon, outside Boulder's city limits.

<sup>2</sup>According to records of the Public Service Company, two substations, built about the same time as the Boulder substation, still exist in Berthoud and Loveland. The Fort Collins substation of the same period was recently demolished.

<sup>3</sup>Denver Republic, January 1, 1908.

<sup>4</sup>"Electrifying Challenge!" Rocky Mountain News, April 19, 1959.

<sup>5</sup>The electric and transportation industries in Boulder were inextricably connected. When the Boulder Railway & Utility Company was bought out by the Boulder Electric Light and Power Company, it still had a contract with the city to provide trolley service. Merger after merger, the city retained this concession from the power companies to operate a public transportation system. It was not until 1972 that Public Service Company was able to divest this unprofitable operation.

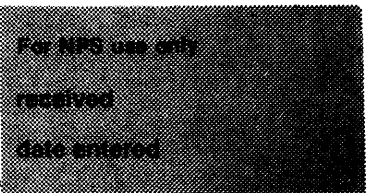
<sup>6</sup>Files of the Public Service Company of Colorado

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

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Northern Colorado Power Company Substation, Boulder Co., CO  
Major Bibliographical



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