

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 6 1979

DATE ENTERED AUG 10 1979

**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

Westminster University

AND/OR COMMON

Belleview College

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

3455 West 83rd Avenue

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

CODE

03

COUNTY

Adams

CODE

001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

\_\_\_ DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_\_ SITE

\_\_\_ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

\_\_\_ PUBLIC

PRIVATE

\_\_\_ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

\_\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_ NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_\_ PARK

\_\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Pillar of Fire, A Colorado Non-Profit Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

1302 Sherman Street

CITY, TOWN

Denver

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado 80203

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Adams County Administration Building; Clerk and Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 South 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Brighton

STATE

Colorado 80601

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites (01/01/0032)

DATE

Ongoing

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society; 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado 80203

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Located at 3455 West 83rd Avenue in Westminster, Colorado, Westminster University is a towering castellated structure designed and built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. The building itself is a single, detached structure irregular in shape and four stories in height with a six-story tower highlighting the south side. The University is set over a full basement part of which rises above the ground. The main or south facade has twenty-two bays, the east facade ten bays, and the west facade eight bays. The building material is primarily rock-faced red sandstone. The roof is hipped, gabled, and covered with tin.

The secondary features give the structure its Romanesque flavor. Entry occurs through three massive openings set beneath Roman arches; two lie at the base of the towers on the south facade, the third beneath a projection on the east. The steps through each opening rise to the first floor. On the north or rear side there are two other entrances, but they occur on the ground level. Accentuating the main facade are the four and six-story towers which are crowned by pyramidal roofs which are themselves flanked by crenellated secondary turrets. The more eastern, six-story tower has a balcony on the second level from which rise three secondary turrets, two of which terminate in conical roofs at the fourth story, but one of which rises to the sixth story where it ends as a battlement. The more western, four-story tower has two small turrets both of which end in battlements. Both towers have five bays of narrow, ribbon-like windows. Other key features of the main facade are the Roman arcade in the center and the massive two story towers, covered by conical roofs, at each end. A small polygonal tower rises through the western section of the roof. Throughout the structure, most windows are two-sashed and double hung; most have a transom with leaded glass; some have radiating voussoirs, some flat arches. The building also has four chimneys constructed of red sandstone.

The decorative elements are elaborate. On the south facade the main entrance, located in the more eastern tower, has a double Roman arch under a balcony in which is carved "Westminster University." Paired columns support this arch. To the east of the entrance is a cornerstone of dressed red sandstone which reads "Westminster University, June--1892." The entrance on the east facade is also under a Roman arch supporting a balcony in which is carved "Westminster University." Flanking these words at both entrances is an elaborate decorative motif, carved in stone; this motif is reflected at the roofline of the projection on the east facade, at the roofline of the two turrets at the ends of the south facade, and at the rooflines of the three turrets flanking the six-story tower. An entablature separates the first and second floors. A dentil course also surrounds the structure to form an entablature on the main facade and accentuate the roofline on the other sides. Finally, the roofline of the south facade and the two towers are accentuated with corbelling with machicolations.

The interior is spacious. The original stairways still link all floors. The original hardwood is still intact although covered by new hardwood in the main hall on the first story and by linoleum in some rooms. The classrooms remain much as they were when the structure was built. Some interior changes have been made to meet the health and fire code of Adams County. The school lies on a grand promontory, the highest point in Adams County; it is graced by trees and visible for miles around.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1892--present      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      attributed to      E. B. Gregory/  
Stanford White

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A towering monolith of red sandstone located on what used to be known as Crown Point, the highest point in Adams County, Westminster University is a prominent landmark that commands a panorama of more than 600 square miles of the High Plains and Rocky Mountains. The structure is significant for its roles in education, law, and religion, as well as for its architecture, a magnificent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

The origins of the college date back to 1882 when the Presbytery of Denver petitioned the Colorado Synod for authorization to build a school whose excellence would make it the "Princeton of the West." When the Synod, however, selected the town of Del Norte, Presbyterians in Denver formed their own plans to build the Westminster University of Colorado on a tract of land out in the country northwest of Denver. One E. B. Gregory designed a building, but the final plans have long been attributed to Stanford B. White of New York, a student of Henry Hobson Richardson. The structure was initiated in 1892, but owing to financial crises, the college did not open to students until 1907. A few years later the village of Harris changed its name to Westminster and named many local streets after prestigious eastern universities. Despite the high hopes of its founders, Westminster University failed in 1917. Its only legacy was its law school which survived under the university charter and produced several individuals who went on to notable careers: Teller Ammons--Governor of Colorado; John Carroll--U.S. Senator; and Oscar Chapman--Secretary of the Interior. In 1957 this law school merged with that of the University of Denver.

In 1920 the Pillar of Fire, an indigenous Colorado religious, educational, and benevolent organization with religious tenets similar to that of Wesleyan Methodism, purchased the building, then threatened by ruin due to vandalism and neglect. Here the Pillar of Fire established a major center of Christian education, international in scope. Now housed in the structure, Belleview College seeks to fulfill the criteria for the sale: that it be an institution continuing the purpose of the founder. "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister," with the objective of promoting liberal education under religious influence and training young people physically, intellectually, and spiritually for effective service in their respective vocations. As part of its mission, Pillar of Fire became the licensee of radio station KPOF, a pioneer in Christian broadcasting and today the oldest radio station in Colorado under the same ownership.

From an architectural perspective Westminster University manifests all the salient characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The large blocks of sandstone, their straightforward use, and the broad roof planes give the structure a massiveness, volume, and scale. The frequent use of the Roman arch over the major entrances and many windows plus the arcade along the main facade keep within the

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Norman J. Bender, "The Elusive Quest for the 'Princeton of the West,'" Colorado Magazine, LII (Fall 1975), pp. 299-316.

History of Westminster, Colorado, 1911--1961 (Westminster: City of Westminster, 1961).  
A. K. White, Towering Landmark on Denver's Northern Horizon, (Pillar of Fire, 1948).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.43 Acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Arvada, Colorado

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 497310 4410600  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at a point 500 ft. E and 500 ft. N of the SW corner of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Sec. 2, T 2S, R68W, thence 250 ft. due east, thence 250 ft. due N. thence 250 ft. due W, then 250 ft. due S to the point of beginning.

## 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 B. Dallenbach, Ph.D., President, Bellevue College

ORGANIZATION

Pillar of Fire

DATE

March 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

3455 West 83rd Avenue

TELEPHONE

(303) 427-5462

CITY OR TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Colorado 80030

# 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

*William C. Johnson*

TITLE

DATE

June 22, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Carel Skall*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8-10-79

ATTEST:

*William H. Bradham*

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

8-8-79

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style; so does the use of windows with transoms, the deeply set fenestration, and the banks of narrow, ribbon-like windows seen in the towers. The chimneys and turrets are also short so as not to be obtrusive. And finally, there are the foliated forms that serve as decorative figures. The use of these elements makes Westminster University a classic of the style.