

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Residential/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Bowles House is a two story Italianate style residence that was constructed 1871-1876. It stands on the original Bowles homestead, located close to the old business district of Westminster. The grounds of the house were re-landscaped with native plants and herbs in the 1980s. There are a number of mature deciduous and evergreen trees on the property. The yellow rosebush, planted by Mahalia Elizabeth Bowles in the late 1800s on the east side of the house still flourishes. A willow tree was planted to replace the historic willow that was on the west side of the house. The Bowles house makes a bold architectural statement of prominence and wealth in what was a small agricultural settlement of the 1870s.

The house has a square plan with a truncated hip roof. It is divided equally into four major rooms on the two floors. Both contain 940 square feet with a central staircase. The exterior has a symmetrical north facade with a center entrance. There is a steep single gable with an arched window in the center of the roof. The exterior is faced with red sand brick laid with matching mortar. The first floor load bearing exterior walls have bond coursing on all four sides. The masonry is tied together with a header course every 7th to 11th course. On the north front and east and west sides there is a decorative belt course at window sill level with an additional decorative header course. The bricks are laid diagonally to develop a sawtooth type shadow line which can be seen near the head of the window openings on both floors. This decorative coursing was used to break up the high, plain looking walls.

All of the windows are one-over-one sash and have a segmental or semi-circled arched headers detailed with radiating voussoirs. The eaves have widely spaced double brackets characteristic of the Italianate style. The hipped roof is covered with nonoriginal asphalt shingles. There are two brick chimneys on each side of the widow's walk which has new decorative iron railings or cresting similar to the original. The railing also extends along the ridge of the front gable.

The original front porch was removed in the 1940s when the house was remodeled. A balcony with an iron railing was installed on the second floor over the front door. In 1979 the Bowles House was purchased by the City of Westminster and underwent a restoration that was sensitive to the architectural history of the house. The work included duplicating the original front porch using old family photographs for the design. The porch roof is steeply pitched with a flat portion forming a second story

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Bowles House

open porch with a wooden balustrade. The porch roof is supported by turned wooden posts which have decorative brackets on three sides. The low porch railing has turned balusters. The second story porch is accessible by a door from the central hall and has a transom over the opening. A new door, more appropriate to the 1870s period, has replaced the nonoriginal French door.

On the interior the woodwork is painted. The stairway has a reproduction of the original railing with turned spindles. The city has converted the first floor rooms into offices. The original kitchen and pantry were made into a utility kitchen, bath and back entry through the east porch.

On the second floor a closet was converted into a bathroom in 1938. The second floor bedrooms have been restored for use as a museum with wallpapered walls. There are original picture moldings three quarters of the way up the walls and also ceiling moldings.

The attached east side porch has a shed roof and is of the same sand brick as the house. At the turn of the century it was enclosed with four multi-paned windows.

In 1980, on the grounds to the west of the house among large pine trees, two outbuildings, an outhouse and a gazebo were erected. These buildings are non-contributing. The grounds were planted with historically researched plants, herbs and flowers. Mrs. Bowles' original yellow rosebushes are located next to the east side porch. There is a lawn on the north front and a new parking area at the south rear of the lots. A nonoriginal low wrought iron fence runs along the front property line on Newton Street.

The renovation work, has restored the house to its original appearance on the exterior. Before the work began, the house was vacant, boarded up and porchless. The grass was dead and bushes were overgrown. The new landscaping, fence, new gazebo and outhouse create an appropriate 19th century setting for the Bowles House and is an enhancement to the community. The new parking lot at the south rear, is not visible from the front of the house and has been screened from the rear yard by landscaping.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Exploration/Settlement

1871 - 1923

1871

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Not known

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Bowles House meets Criterion C for its architectural significance as one of the oldest examples of the residential Italianate style in Westminster and for its architectural detailing which characterizes the Italianate style. The house is also significant for its association with the history of settlement in Westminster and meets Criterion A. The house was home to Edward Bruce Bowles, a pioneer community leader who had a great influence on the growth of the surrounding area. He was instrumental in bringing the Colorado & Southern Railroad into the area which prompted its growth.

The Bowles House is significant in the settlement of Westminster because it was among the earliest permanent residences built in the area. Edward Bruce Bowles first came to Colorado Territory in 1863 from the state of Missouri with his family. He was 17 years old and hauled freight from Missouri to Denver, Salt Lake City and Santa Fe, crossing the plains eleven times. Edward was around 24 when he married Mahalia Elizabeth Longan in 1871. That same year the couple homesteaded the land where the Bowles House stands. The original purchase of the land from the federal government was called a "patent" as indicated within the property abstract. To take advantage of the Homestead Act of 1861, the couple chose an area north of Clear Creek and south of Crown Point. At that time this area was known as DeSpain Junction, named after the first homesteader, Pleasant DeSpain who settled here in 1870. Edward B. Bowles became the second permanent resident when he homesteaded south of the DeSpain farm. When DeSpain and Bowles first lived in the area there still were Indians in the vicinity and the only way to reach nearby communities was by the ferry operated by Jim Baker. In the 1890s, DeSpain Junction was called Harris Park or Harrisberg and in 1911 it became Westminster, named for the nearby college.

The Bowles first built a frame homestead cabin to live in and immediately started work on a two story brick home. The frame house is now gone.¹ Construction took five years, reaching completion in 1876, when Colorado became a state. The Bowles House has architectural significance because, although the brick farmhouse was the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Reference Files, N. R. Nomination, Colorado History Museum, March 5, 1975.
History of Westminster, Colorado 1911 to 1961 (copies available Westminster Historical Society, Bowles House Museum).
Marion Smith, taped interviews collected for book Westminster - Then and Now, 1975.
"Colorado Question Box", Rocky Mountain News, July 13, 1958.
"Obituaries", Colorado Trails, p. 23, March 15, 1923.
Gary and Rosemary Wormington, History of the Bowles House and Early Westminster, copies available, Westminster Historical Society, Bowles House Museum.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Bowles Museum Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.459

UTM References

A 13 496740 4408360
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Bowles House is situated on 0.459 acre of land and is located in the northwest one-quarter of northwest one-quarter of northeast one-quarter of northeast one-quarter of Section G, Township 3 south, Range 68 west of the 6th p.m., county of Adams, State of Colorado, described as follows:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the 0.459 acre of land that has been historically associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Kalem
 organization Westminster Historical Society date June 20, 1988
 street & number 8751 Dover Circle telephone (303) 431-1557
 city or town Westminster state Colorado zip code 80005

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2

Bowles House

center of a working ranch and farm, fashionable and expensive features were included. There was cresting on the rooftop, eave brackets, bargeboards on the gables and a highly decorated front porch. Houses of this style were more often found in urban settings than in rural areas. The Italianate style with decorative brick work and arched windows reflects the architectural trend in the 1870s. The design of the Bowles House also makes an architectural statement of the influence of Edward Bowles and of the history and culture in Westminster when it was just a small rural settlement and which has now become a progressive and fast growing suburban community.

The Bowles family raised horses, planted an apple orchard, wheat, barley and alfalfa on their land. Edward Bowles worked hard to get the railroad to the area and it was completed through his land in 1881. He built a depot on his property to serve the railroad and the citizens of Westminster (then called DeSpain Junction by the railroad). The railroad had a positive impact on the development of the community and surrounding agricultural area by providing convenient transportation to distribute the local produce spurring more growth and development. A sugar beet dump was constructed and farmers shipped their grain and produce from this point. The railroad depot is now gone. The site is not in the nominated boundaries of the Bowles House

The Bowles opened their home on Sunday morning for the services of the Community Church. It was the only church service in the area and all denominations were invited; later Edward became a charter member of the First Church of Westminster.

Edward later became a member of the school board and an active member of the Sons of Colorado. When Mesa Verde National Park was developed, Edward was hired by the government to work on it. Taking advantage of the nationwide gold fever he began to haul freight to the gold miners in Central City. A breeder of fine horses, he rode one of his best stable horses in the Denver Pioneer Parade each Colorado Day. Before his death, Edward Bowles had become a well known and respected pioneer of Colorado. Edward and Mahalia raised their nine children in the house. The Bowles were instrumental in the development of the community and their children carried on that tradition of community service.

Edward Bowles died in this house January 10, 1923, at the age of 76. Mahalia followed him in death the next year. The house remained in the Bowles family and various members lived there until it was sold in the early 1930s.

Gradually the house fell into disrepair. In the mid 1970s the house was sold to the City of Westminster and was scheduled to be used for a practice burn by the fire department. The school children at the Vista Grande Elementary School in Westminster and the Westminster Historical Society started a campaign to save the Bowles House. The publicity shifted public opinion in favor of preservation.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Bowles House

The Bowles House was completely restored to its 1870s appearance by the city in 1979-1985. The grounds are newly landscaped mainly with native plants (included are the yellow roses planted by the Bowles family). The house is leased by the Westminster Historical Society for a Westminster Historical Museum. The society has spent many hours in research and interviews with members of the Bowles family. They have collected photographs, articles and various documents related to the Bowles House and family. Some of these items are currently on display at the Bowles House Museum which is open every weekend.

1. The cabin site is not in the boundaries.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

The Bowles House

Beginning at the southwest corner of the intersection of West 72nd Avenue and Newton Street. Proceed west 120.5 feet along the curbline of West 72nd Avenue, turning south for 166.0 ft. then proceed east 120.5 ft. to the west curbline of Newton Street and finally proceed north 166 ft. along the west curbline of Newton Street to the point of origin.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Photographs _____ Page 1

The following information is the same for all the photographs listed

- 1) The Bowles House
3924 West 72nd Ave.
- 2) Westminster, Colorado 80030
- 3) Elizabeth Kalem
- 4) June 10th 1988
- 5) 8751 Dover Circle
Westminster, Colorado 80005

Photograph number 1

6) Front of house as it looks from the east side of Newton Street. It shows the front north face of the house standing and facing southwest

Photograph number 2

6) The context in which the house is located. Part of the front and west side lawns, showing gazebo, and the outhouse among the trees. Looking southwest

Photograph number 3

6) Attached side entrance porch on the east wall of the house looking southwest

Photograph number 4

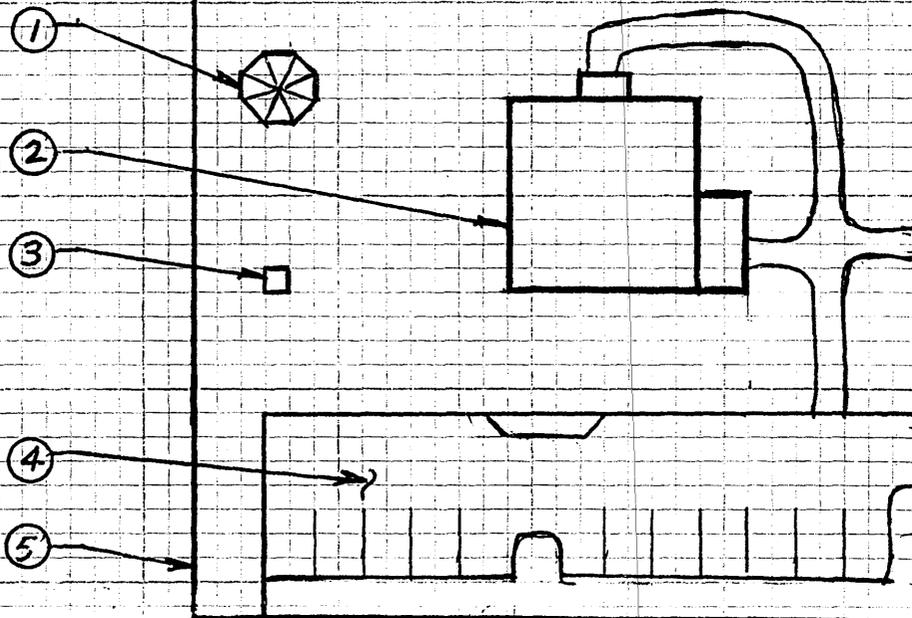
6) North front of the house, view south

Photograph number 5

6) Interior - second floor hallway and stairs.

WEST 72ND AVENUE

NEWTON STREET



KEY PLAN

- ① GAZEBO
- ② THE BOWLES HOUSE
- ③ OUTHOUSE
- ④ PARKING LOT
- ⑤ PROPERTY LINE

NOTE: SEE VERBAL BOUNDARY DISCRPTION.

SKETCH MAP

(NO SCALE)

(APPROXIMATE SCALE OF 1/32" = 10')