

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 13 1982

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Colorado Ute Power Plant

AND/OR COMMON

Colorado Ute Power Plant

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

14th Street and Animas River

NA NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Durango

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Colorado

NA VICINITY OF

CODE

08

COUNTY

La Plata

CODE

067

CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**

NA DISTRICT
X BUILDING(S)
NA STRUCTURE
NA SITE
NA OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

NA PUBLIC
X PRIVATE
NA BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

NA IN PROCESS
X BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

X OCCUPIED
NA UNOCCUPIED
NA WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
X YES: RESTRICTED
NA YES: UNRESTRICTED
NA NO

PRESENT USE

NA AGRICULTURE NA MUSEUM
NA COMMERCIAL NA PARK
NA EDUCATIONAL NA PRIVATE RESIDENCE
NA ENTERTAINMENT NA RELIGIOUS
NA GOVERNMENT NA SCIENTIFIC
X INDUSTRIAL NA TRANSPORTATION
NA MILITARY NA OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Colorado Ute Electric Association

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1149

CITY, TOWN

Montrose

STATE

Colorado 81402

NA VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

La Plata County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1060 2nd Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Durango

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

Ongoing

NA FEDERAL X STATE NA COUNTY NA LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado 80203

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

NA EXCELLENT
X GOOD
NA FAIR

NA DETERIORATED
NA RUINS
NA UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

X UNALTERED
NA ALTERED

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE
NA MOVED DATE NA

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Colorado Ute Power Plant is a large two story Mission Style structure. Although primarily one space, the structure appears much higher due to its stepped gable to the north flanked by a bell tower rising to the height of the main roof ridge line and a smaller non-functional representation of a bell tower. These two elements, the stepped parapet and towers, strongly distinguish the north facade. The other sides are simple masonry with a stucco finish and many rectilinear windows. Pilasters occur at regular intervals on each side of the building.

The main bell tower at the northeast corner of the structure has a pyramidal roof with a finial. A series of three arched windows occur on each side of the shingled tower. The large open eaves are supported by simple brackets.

Adjacent to the building to the south west is a tall galvanized metal structure of an industrial character representing a strong contrast in style.

The oldest piece of equipment the building contains is a generator manufactured in 1910. There are also General Electric Turbine sets which were added to the plant in 1916. A 3500 kilowatt generator which was put into service in 1946 when the plant was changed to a combination of coal and gas also still remains. Two or three stacks were removed from the exterior of the building when the plant converted entirely to gas in the late 1940's.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

NA PREHISTORIC	NA ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	NA COMMUNITY PLANNING	NA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	NA RELIGION
NA 1400-1499	NA ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	NA CONSERVATION	NA LAW	NA SCIENCE
NA 1500-1599	NA AGRICULTURE	NA ECONOMICS	NA LITERATURE	NA SCULPTURE
NA 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	NA EDUCATION	NA MILITARY	NA SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
NA 1700-1799	NA ART	NA ENGINEERING	NA MUSIC	NA THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	NA COMMERCE	NA EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	NA PHILOSOPHY	NA TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	NA COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	NA POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	NA OTHER (SPECIFY)
		NA INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colorado Ute Power Plant is significant for its association with the development of power for the San Juan mining district and the city of Durango in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is also significant as the earliest example of mission architecture in the State and as a rare example of mission found on an industrial building.

The first electric plant in Durango was a small steam plant on 7th Street which later became part of the Ball Foundry. The plant put out 500 volts, D.C. in series lighting service. The capacity was soon doubled. In 1889 ground was broken at the foot of M Street (now 14th Street) for an iron and brick fireproof structure, 70 by 150 feet, with all new machinery planned. It was noted by the newspapers of the time that it would be "one of the finest and best arranged plants in the state." Improvements included six miles of new line to the Dwyer addition and Animas City to the north, and to the Standard Smelter at the south, with the capacity to supply twice the number of lights than before. Improvements made in 1892, included a change from D.C. to A.C., servicing of an electric streetcar and construction of a new steam plant.

In 1893, the present building was completed and the move was made from the 7th Street location to the new steam plant. Expansion and improvements continued until 1906 when daytime service was inaugurated for the first time. In 1909 a transmission line from Tacoma was constructed to the Durango plant, furnishing hydro-electric service. In the same year lines were extended to Silverton and the mining areas above Durango.

Major modification and enlargements took place in 1916 and 1917 when the General Electric Turbine sets which are still in the building were added. In 1946-47, the old boilers were converted to gas. Construction of the metal parts of the building on the west side of the existing plant and the addition of new equipment was made in the years from 1947 to 1949. The west wall of the old building was retained as the common wall of the two sections.

The heyday of the plant came in the 1960's when its bigger user was the Vandium Corporation of America mill south of Durango. But when the uranium mill closed down, it forced a major cutback, and by 1972, the plant was deemed impractical to keep in operation. Local citizen groups are now interested in converting the building to other uses.

According to Marcus Whiffen, A. Page Brown's California Building, designed for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, was the earliest building designed in the mission style. Although a long way from Chicago in both distance and sophistication, Durango appears to be the location of Colorado's earliest mission building, the Colorado Ute Power Plant.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

APR 28 1980
11:11 AM
FBI - DENVER

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

QUADRANGLE NAME DURANGO WEST, CO

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 244680 4129500

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION A building with dimensions of 132 feet long by 108 feet wide bounded on the north by 14th Street, on the east by Camino Del Rio, on the west by the Animas River, and on the south by the La Plata Electric Association Building.

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

Marjorie J. Wells, Director

ORGANIZATION

Durango Centennial Commission

DATE

February 28, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2428

TELEPHONE

(303) 247-5682

CITY OR TOWN

Durango

STATE

Colorado

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE NA

LOCAL NA

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

Arthur C. Townsend

4-27-82

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William H. Brannan

DATE 5-25-82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

Item number

8

Page

2

According to records of the Colorado Ute Electric Association and city archives showing a 1904 photograph of the building, the mission appearance of the structure dates at least to 1904 if not to the original 1893 construction date. Alterations made in 1916 and 1917 included only additions of a turbine generator and boilers to increase the plant's generating capacity.

The use of mission for industrial purposes is equally significant. Whereas mission became a very popular form of domestic and public architecture in Colorado during its heyday, it is rarely found on industrial buildings.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Bibliographical References Item number 9 Page 1

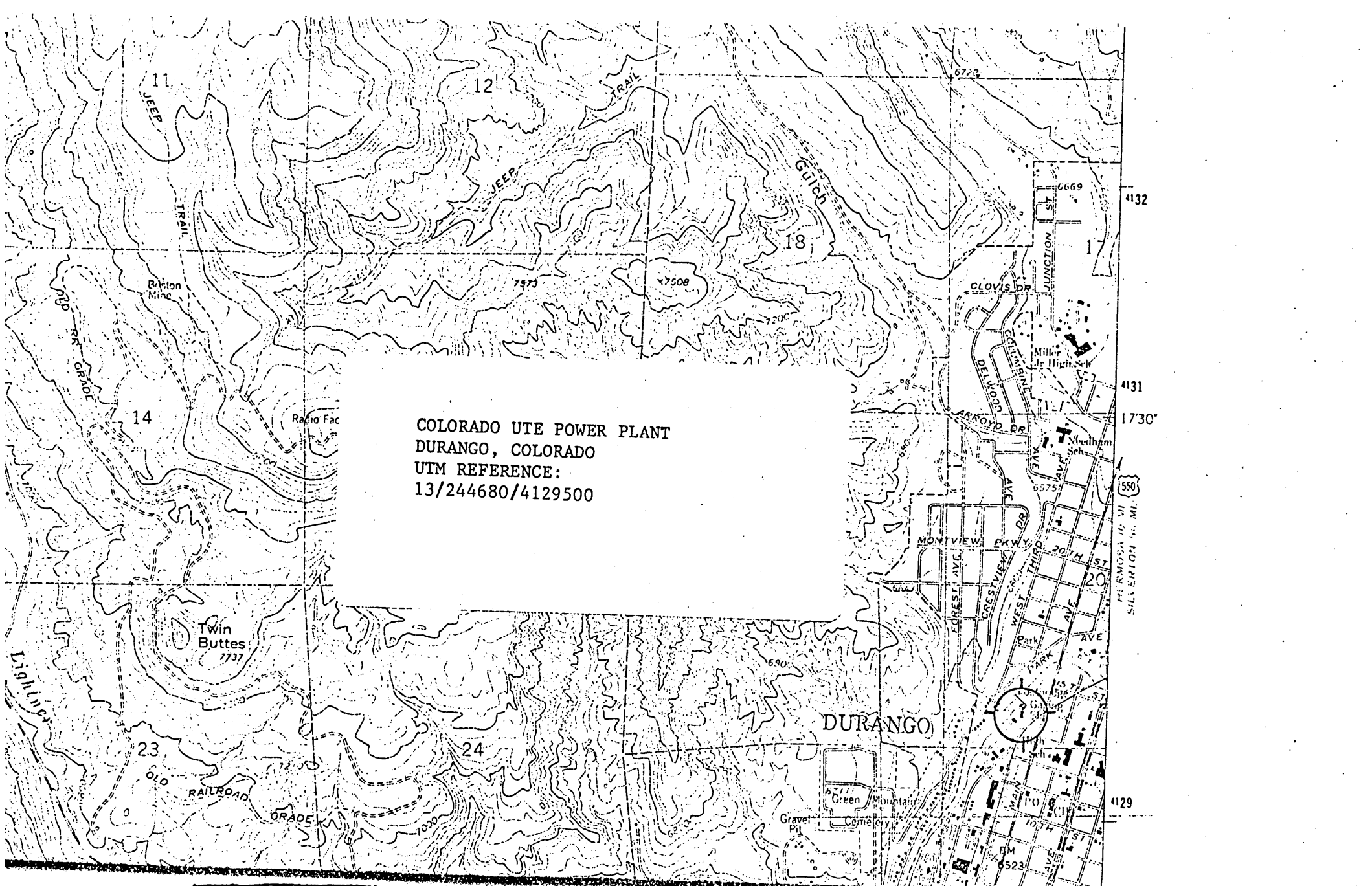
"Electric Light" - Durango Public Library

Colorado Historical Society files

"A Romance of Electricity on the Western Slope" - Western Colorado Power Co.,
publishers, Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango

Records at the Montrose office of Colorado Ute Electric Company - Courtesy of
Mr. Carley McKnight

Interviews with former employees of W.C.P. Co. - Ed Ward and Arthur "Bud" Curtis



COLORADO UTE POWER PLANT
DURANGO, COLORADO
UTM REFERENCE:
13/244680/4129500

PERMOSA 10 MI.
SILVERTON 4 MI.

