Historic Resources Inventory for the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and Interstate 25

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Town of Castle Rock
Douglas County
Colorado Department of Transportation
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ABSTRACT

In November of 2007, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) completed intensive-level documentation of historical resources in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) defined for the North Meadows Extension to US Highway 85 (US 85) and Interstate 25 (I-25) in the Town of Castle Rock, located in Douglas County, Colorado. The APE was defined with input from the Colorado Historical Society/Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (CHS/OAHP). The investigation was conducted in conjunction with a broader Environmental Assessment (EA) being prepared by the Town of Castle Rock and Douglas County on behalf of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This cultural resource investigation was also required for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act. A separate archaeological survey for the same project was completed by O.D. Hand of CDOT. The archaeological survey documentation includes both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

The APE is located within Sections 15, 21, 22, 26, 27, and 28 of Township 7 South, Range 67 West of the 6th Principal Meridian.

A total of four (4) historic resources, including three railroad grades and one house ruin, were documented and evaluated in terms of eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Two of the linear resources – segments of the active Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR; formerly the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad [D&RGW], 5DA.921.1) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF; formerly the Denver & Santa Fe/Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railway [D&SF/ATSF], 5DA.922.1) – had been previously recorded, and were re-evaluated. One linear resource – an abandoned railroad grade segment (5DA.2465.1) located near the BNSF rail line – was newly recorded and evaluated. The ruins of a burned house (5DA.2652) constructed between 1955 and 1962 were also documented and evaluated.

The two previously recorded railroads were re-evaluated as NRHP-eligible under Criterion A based on their important contribution to Colorado history, and the segments within the project APE were determined to retain sufficient integrity to support the eligibility of the entire linear resources. No archival information was found about the abandoned railroad grade, and it was tentatively identified as an earlier or temporary alignment of the D&SF/ATSF railway. Due to its poor condition and lack of integrity, the entire abandoned railroad grade was evaluated as ineligible for the NRHP. The house ruin consists of a standing chimney, concrete basement, and scattered burned debris. Due to its destruction by fire, the house ruin lacks sufficient integrity to qualify for the NRHP.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

In November of 2007, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) completed intensive-level documentation of historical resources in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) defined for the North Meadows Extension to US Highway 85 (US 85) and Interstate 25 (I-25) in the Town of Castle Rock, located in Douglas County, Colorado. The investigation was conducted in conjunction with a broader Environmental Assessment (EA) being prepared by the Town of Castle Rock and Douglas County on behalf of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This cultural resource investigation was also required for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. A separate archaeological survey for the same project was completed by O.D. Hand of CDOT. The archaeological survey documentation includes both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

The proposed transportation improvement project is sponsored by the Town of Castle Rock, Douglas County, CDOT, and FHWA. The purpose of the project is to construct a new roadway from The Meadows multi-use development, located on the west side of the East Plum Creek valley, eastward to connect with US 85 and I-25. At the time the cultural resources investigations were conducted, four possible alignment alternatives (Alternatives 6, 7, 8, and 9) were under review, and the APE was designed to encompass these alternatives as well as other locations potentially subject to ground disturbance, such as interchanges, underpasses and overpasses, construction staging, equipment, and materials storage areas, and water quality ponds. By the time the EA is produced, the four alternatives will likely be winnowed down to a build alternative and no build alternative. Design details of the proposed project are contained in the EA prepared for the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project.

An appropriate APE was defined with input from the Colorado Historical Society/Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (CHS/OAHP). The APE is included on the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Sedalia and Castle Rock North topographic quadrangles (both published in 1965 and revised in 1994), and is within the Sections 15, 21, 22, 26, 27, and 28 of Township 7S, Range 67 West of the 6th Principal Meridian (see Figure 1).

Jason Marmor, Historic Resources Specialist for FHU, was responsible for the historic resources field survey, site documentation, and report preparation.
Figure 1. Historic Resources Area of Potential Effects, Shown Overlaid on the USGS 7.5’ Sedalia and Castle Rock North Topographic Quadrangles
2.0 ENVIRONMENT

The APE straddles the East Plum Creek valley, northwest of the community and Douglas County seat of Castle Rock. On the east side of the creek are broad alluvial terraces, beyond which the topography rises, with steep-sided bluffs and buttes capped by pink to light brown rhyolite deposits from an ancient lava flow. This rhyolite has been commercially quarried as a building material for many decades. On the west side of the creek, the topography rises to a system of foothills with rounded ridges and knolls. This area is now occupied by the vast “Meadows” development project and is undergoing extensive development of residential subdivisions, schools, parks, and commercial facilities. Vegetation in the APE consists mainly of grassland on the stream terraces and foothills, and a large proportion of this area has been used for livestock grazing in the past. Arid climate plants such as prickly pear cactus and yucca are found in this area. Riparian vegetation, including mature cottonwood trees and willow thickets, grow along East Plum Creek. Pine trees grow in the higher elevation portion of the APE (above 6,150 feet), close to I-25 on the east side of the valley.

The East Plum Creek Valley has been an important transportation corridor for human populations both prehistorically and historically. US 85, the Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW now Union Pacific [UPRR]) Railroad, and the Denver & Santa Fe (D&SF)/Atchinson Topeka & Santa Fe (ATSF) (now Burlington Northern Santa Fe [BNSF]) Railway all follow the course of the valley. This area on the northern end of Castle Rock has experienced rapid development in the past 20 years in response to an influx of new residents. In addition to The Meadows development, former agricultural land in the East Plum Creek valley has been transformed by construction of an extensive outlet mall, the Douglas County Justice Center, and the Pines Apartments/Castle Villas Condominiums along US 85.
3.0 HISTORY

The history of the East Plum Creek valley is generally reflective of a chronological pattern of human activity and land uses that occurred all along the eastern edge of Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.\(^1\) The East Plum Creek valley experienced only transitory visits by Euroamericans prior to the mid-1860s. These early visitors likely included fur trappers and traders who left scant records of their travels, and virtually no physical traces on the landscape.

After the US acquired the vast territory of Louisiana from France in 1803, a series of American exploring parties investigated the terrain, natural resources, and native inhabitants of what later became the state of Colorado. Among these explorers was Major Stephen H. Long, who in 1820 followed the South Platte River to the Rocky Mountains and journeyed into what is now Douglas County. Long’s party is credited with coining the name “Castle Rock” in reference to a geological feature near Palmer Lake, that later was applied to the rhyolite-capped butte near the town of the same name (Marr and Keiser 1983:18; Appleby 2001:7). In July of 1843, Captain John Charles Fremont traversed the future Douglas County during his second expedition through the uncharted West. Leaving his wagons at Fort St. Vrain while awaiting the arrival of additional mules from Taos, Fremont followed the South Platte River to Cherry Creek in search of game. Continuing on, Fremont’s party traveled up Plum Creek and East Plum Creek, where one of his hungry men christened the landmark butte near the future Douglas County seat “Poundcake Rock” (Marr and Keiser 1983:19; Noel et al. 1993:9).

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 sparked a great westward migration. Many of these Argonauts passed through Colorado, although the main route north from New Mexico and the Arkansas River towns – the Cherokee trail – followed Monument Creek north from Colorado Springs before continuing up West Cherry Creek, bypassing the Castle Rock area (Long 1947:153). A decade later gold was discovered on Cherry Creek, spawning another rush of fortune-seekers that led to the founding of Denver. The prolific influx of settlers resulted in the creation of Colorado Territory in November of 1861; Douglas County was among the 17 original counties established in the Territory (Noel et al., 1994).

Passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 and subsequent surveying of the public domain in the mid-1860s facilitated settlement and agricultural development of the plains and foothills of Colorado, including the East Plum Creek valley. Federally-sponsored cadastral surveys established a grid of townships over the land; each township was divided by survey lines into 36 sections, each one mile square and containing 640 acres. The Homestead Act of 1862 was the first of several laws allowing settlers to occupy, farm, and acquire title to public lands. The 1862 Act enabled homesteaders to claim 160 acres (1/4 section), although subsequent legislation recognized the difficulty of raising crops and livestock in the arid West, and thus increased the amount of land which a homesteader could claim.

By the late 1860s, the town of Denver grew into a regionally important population center, and transportation and supply hub, prompting the development of new inter- and intra-regional transportation links. In 1870, William J. Palmer and associates incorporated a new narrow (3-foot wide) gauge rail line, the Denver & Rio Grande (D&RG) Railroad, to extend southward from Denver.

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\(^1\) The prehistory of the project vicinity is detailed in a separate archaeological survey report prepared by CDOT.
to other outposts of civilization along the Front Range. In October of 1871, the tracks were laid as far south as Colorado Springs, and by June 15 the line had reached Pueblo (Wilkins 1974:7). In April of 1876, the D&RG was extended even farther south to El Moro, just north of Trinidad. By the end of the century, the D&RG system had been greatly expanded by the addition of new lines throughout southern, western, and central Colorado, and it ultimately became the most extensive railroad system in the state (Wilkins 1974:7).

The D&RG’s subsidiary company, the National Land and Improvement Company, established townsites along the way, including two in the vicinity of Castle Rock: New Memphis and Douglas. Located three miles north of Castle Rock, New Memphis was promoted by David S. Green of Memphis, Tennessee (Simmons and Simmons 1999:10-11). The townsite of Douglas was located approximately eight miles south of New Memphis along East Plum Creek. It initially consisted of little more than a depot (which also served as a post office) and water tank serving D&RG trains. Both of these settlements were founded in 1871. Farther up the East Plum Creek, the town of Sedalia was established in 1871 on the D&RG line.

In April 1874 another townsit was established between New Memphis and Douglas. Unlike the railroad company towns, the new townsit of Castle Rock was created by Jeremiah Gould, a Civil War veteran from Rhode Island who homesteaded a 160 acre tract near the natural landmark of Castle Rock. The settlements of Douglas, New Memphis, Glade, Franktown (established 1861) and Sedalia vied with Castle Rock for the role of county seat. On March 31, 1874, voters in Douglas County chose Castle Rock, ensuring its future growth and importance (Appleby 2001:8-9). The preeminence of Castle Rock led to the demise of the small settlements of New Memphis and Douglas. Today, virtually nothing remains of these early Douglas County communities.

One industry that added to Castle Rock’s economy in the 1870s and 1880s was the quarrying of locally abundant rhyolite. Several major commercial quarries were established on buttes in the Castle Rock area, providing the distinctive pinkish stone to building contractors in Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Omaha, Cheyenne, and Kansas City (Harvey and Harvey 1946; Marmor 2002:6).

Rhyolite was only one aspect of the ongoing development of Douglas County and Castle Rock in the late 19th Century. A new railroad line – the Denver & Santa Fe (D&S) Railway – was constructed from Pueblo to Denver in 1887. The D&S was incorporated in March of 1887 as a subsidiary of the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (ATSF) Railway, in order to establish a link from Pueblo to the burgeoning city of Denver. The ATSF also acquired the Denver Circle Railroad, a move that provided terminal space and traffic connections in Denver. Grading began northward from Pueblo in April of 1887, and by late May the rails were being laid. On October 1, 1887, the 116 mile-long line was operational (Robertson 1991:111). The line was sold to the ATSF in January of 1900, and remained under ATSF ownership until late 1995, when the Santa Fe Pacific Corporation (parent company of the Burlington Northern Railroad) merged to form a new company, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF). The BNSF still operates the line.

Agriculture has been a significant land use in Douglas County since the arrival of its first permanent Euroamerican settlers in the mid-19th Century. Climatic constraints as well as limited availability of water dictated the types of crops that could be raised. Although some experimentation occurred, settlers chiefly put their acreage to use raising grains (wheat, rye, oats and corn) and potatoes, as well as livestock (Marr and Keiser 1983:179). Revised homestead laws passed by Congress in 1909 and 1916 enabled ranchers to acquire additional acreage (320 and 640 acres, respectively).
needed to successfully graze their herds of cattle and horses. This sustainable pattern of agriculture was typical for the region, and where not displaced by modern development, has persisted to the present. One such agricultural operation in the project APE was the Cramer Dairy Farm (no longer extant), located on the broad terrace between East Plum Creek and US 85.

A pioneer trail that had been established along the East Plum Creek Valley by the mid-1860s was later developed into a major roadway connecting a series of Front Range towns, including Colorado Springs, Larkspur, Castle Rock, and Denver (USGS 1913, 1940, 1945). Sometime after the establishment of the Colorado Highway Commission (1909), this major north-south route was designated US 85. By 1940 the road was oil sealed, and a popular guidebook identified it as “the most heavily traveled north and south highway in Colorado” (Work Projects Administration 1941:364).

This important transportation corridor was selected for improvement under the aegis of the Interstate Highway Act, signed by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1956. In Douglas County, the new high speed highway generally followed the path of US 85, paralleling East Plum Creek almost as far south as Larkspur, where the route deviated to the east, bypassing Palmer Lake and following a shorter and straighter path to Colorado Springs. North of Castle Rock, the new interstate highway left the East Plum Creek Valley to follow a straighter northward path to Denver by crossing a broad ridge system. I-25, as this new north-south route was designated, was completed in 1967. For approximately four decades as of the time of writing (2007), I-25 has carried increasing amounts of truck and automobile traffic and is a vital link in the nation’s interstate highway system.

With the accelerated growth of Colorado since 1967, new interchanges have been added to I-25 to facilitate access to residential and commercial development both east and west of this transportation corridor. Douglas County reported unprecedented population growth of 191% between 1990 and 2000, due in part to its strategic location between Colorado Springs and Denver. A major component of this growth in the Castle Rock area is The Meadows multi-use development, the first plat of which was filed at the Douglas County Clerk and Recorder’s Office on July 24, 1987. The Meadows has been transforming the northwestern side of Castle Rock into a modern, multi-zoned suburb with housing tracts, commercial facilities, schools and parklands. The building boom accompanying this commuter population influx has required improvements to the regional transportation infrastructure. The Town of Castle Rock has taken a leading role in guiding the development of transportation improvements which serve its residents, such as the creation of a direct link from The Meadows development to US 85 and I-25.
4.0 FILE SEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY RESULTS

Initial identification of historic structural and architectural resources was accomplished by a reconnaissance survey of the entire APE, followed by a review of file search information using the CHS/OAHP Compass online cultural resources database. The reconnaissance survey involved a visual examination of the project area from public roadways as well as from scrutiny of high resolution vertical color aerial photography. The only resources identified were two historic railroad lines (the D&RGW and D&SF/ATSF) running on opposite sides of East Plum Creek. The D&RGW rail line through the current project APE was previously recorded as site 5DA.921.1, and the D&SF/ATSF was previously recorded as site 5DA.922.1. File search data revealed that both of these linear resources had been initially recorded in July 1998 by Rebecca Herbst and Vicki Rottman of URS Consultants, for a Colorado Department of Highways (CDOH) and FHWA sponsored project (Project #FC-STR 085-2(36) involving proposed widening of US 85 from Castle Rock to C-470. Both rail lines were officially determined by the CHS/OAHP to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A. Subsequently, these historic rail lines were subject to review in 1999-2000 for the South I-25 Corridor (Lincoln Avenue through Castle Rock) and US 85 Corridor Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

The two historic railroads were also separately re-evaluated within the past few years. The D&RGW (5DA.921.1) was re-evaluated as NRHP-eligible in February 2004 by consultant Dawn Bunyak. Subsequently, on September 22, 2004, official determinations of eligibility were made by CHS/OAHP for both railroads (5DA.921.1 and 5DA.922.1). At that time, the D&RGW (5DA.921.1) was determined to be officially eligible, while the D&SF/ATSF (5DA.922.1) was determined to be a contributing element of an existing NRHP district. Then, on May 18, 2005, the D&SF/ATSF (5DA.922.1) was determined by CHS/OAHP to be officially eligible; this recent determination reflects the agency’s abandonment of the “district” classification for linear resources.
5.0 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The objective of this investigation, in conjunction with the archaeological survey conducted by CDOT, is to fulfill the resource identification requirement of federal historic preservation legislation, namely Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. The results of the study are intended to help the FHWA comply with Section 106 and Section 4(f) as well as the broader mandate of environmental protection embodied by NEPA. The goals of this effort were specifically to 1) identify and evaluate the significance of all non-archaeological historical resources that might potentially be affected by the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project; and 2) provide management recommendations for any historical resources identified within or immediately adjacent to the APE.

Reconnaissance survey of the project vicinity revealed that two major historic land uses are relevant to the APE: agriculture, and transportation/railroads. The historical contexts relevant to this investigation include:

- *Colorado Plains Historic Context* (Mehls 1984)
- *Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948, Multiple Property Listing* (Fraser and Strand 1997)
6.0 METHODOLOGY

The intensive-level documentation of historic resources within the APE for the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project involved the following steps:

- A preliminary reconnaissance survey to identify obviously historical and potentially historical buildings and features
- Archival research to determine construction dates for specific properties
- File search and review of existing site forms, survey reports, and context documents
- Field examination and documentation of all properties within the APE meeting the minimum age criterion (50 years)

Previously unrecorded properties were described and photographed; their locations were determined on a topographic map. UTM Coordinates were obtained from ESRI Geographic Information System (GIS) software using a USGS topographic map base layer. Archival research was conducted for previously unrecorded properties in order to determine the histories of these resources. Descriptive and historical information was entered electronically onto the appropriate Colorado Cultural Resources Inventory forms.

Previously recorded properties in the project APE were re-evaluated to determine if the information provided in earlier site forms, and the assessment of significance, were still valid. Additional archival research was conducted as appropriate, and any changes noted or additional information found was entered on the Re-evaluation Form(s). Photographs and new topo location maps were appended to each Re-Evaluation form prepared.

The history of the Castle Rock area is well chronicled by a number of published books, survey reports, and historic context documents (see Section 5.0, above). It was therefore not necessary to develop a detailed historic context based on extensive new archival research. Research was conducted at the Douglas County Clerk & Recorder’s and Assessor’s offices at the county courthouse in Castle Rock, and at the CHS/OAHP in Denver.
7.0 SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Cultural resources are evaluated for significance in terms of eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). To be considered significant, cultural resources must be over 50 years old, possess sufficient integrity, and meet one or more of the NRHP evaluation criteria. These evaluation criteria, as specified in 36 CFR 60, are as follows:

“The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.”
8.0 INVENTORY RESULTS

A total of four historic resources were documented and evaluated in the APE. Three are segments of historic railroad lines, including two active railroads and one abandoned railroad grade. The other historic resource is the ruin of a rural residence located near the I-25 right-of-way. Summary data about each recorded site is presented in Table 1, and more detailed information is provided below in Sections 8.1 through 8.3. Site locations are shown on Figure 2.

Table 1. Historical Resources in the Area of Potential Effect

<table>
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<th>Site No.</th>
<th>Site Type/Name</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>NRHP-eligibility</th>
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<td>5DA.921.1</td>
<td>Denver &amp; Rio Grande Western (D&amp;RGW) Railroad (segment)</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Eligible (Officially); segment in APE supports eligibility of entire linear resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5DA.922.1</td>
<td>Denver &amp; Santa Fe (D&amp;SF)/Atchison Topeka &amp; Santa Fe (ATSF) Railway (segment)</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Eligible (Officially); segment in APE supports eligibility of entire linear resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5DA.2465.1</td>
<td>Abandoned railroad grade (segment)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Not Eligible (Field Determination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5DA.2652</td>
<td>House ruin</td>
<td>1955-1962</td>
<td>Not Eligible (Field Determination)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Historic Resources Documented Within the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 Project APE
8.1 Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Railroad Segment (5DA.921.1)

**Description**: A 4,655 ft (0.9 mile) long segment of the historic D&RGW, constituting a portion of previously recorded segment 5DA.921.1 lies within the project APE (see Figure 3). The rail line closely parallels, and runs along the west/south side of the US 85 corridor through the APE. The rail line is now operated by the UPRR. The railroad route follows an east-southeast course and then turns to a southeasterly course across US 85 from the Pines Apartments/Castle Villas Condominiums. The railroad segment is bordered on the south/west by fenced pasture land.

The standard-gauge rails and cross ties are placed atop an elevated embankment covered with crushed granite and clinker ballast. Rusty spikes and other ferrous rail hardware are found sparsely scattered on and adjacent to the railroad grade.

The railroad appears to have standard dimensions. The width of the entire grade is approximately 15 ft from edge of ballast to edge of ballast, and the height of the embankment is approximately 1.5 – 2.0 ft. The rails, ties, and ballast are in excellent condition and appear to be very well maintained. Non-historic drainage culverts are installed in at least two places along the segment, including a double cast concrete box culvert in one location, and a cluster of cylindrical culverts (two cast concrete pipes and one corrugated sheet metal pipe) in another location. The double concrete box culvert is a typical, standard, plain precast structure of very small capacity does not exhibit a stamped construction date, is modern in appearance and condition. The cluster of culvert pipes marks the former location of a small wooden railroad bridge. According to CDOT, in 2002 the UPRR placed a 54” and two 48” culverts under an existing timber bridge that failed and backfilled everything in, burying the bridge.

**Site History**: By the late 1860s the town of Denver grew into a regionally important population center, and transportation and supply hub, prompting the development of new inter- and intra-regional transportation links. In 1870, William J. Palmer and associates incorporated a new narrow (3-foot wide) gauge rail line, the D&RG, to extend southward from Denver to other outposts of civilization along the Front Range. In October of 1871 the tracks were laid as far south as Colorado Springs, and by June 15 the line had reached Pueblo (Wilkins 1974:7). In April of 1876, the D&RG was extended even farther south to El Moro, just north of Trinidad. By the end of the century, the D&RG system had been greatly expanded by the addition of new lines throughout southern, western, and central Colorado, and it ultimately became the most extensive railroad system in the state (Wilkins 1974:7).

Numerous communities and whistle stops were founded along the route of the D&RG, including the East Plum Creek Valley settlements of Sedalia, New Memphis, and Douglas, all founded in 1871 by the D&RG’s subsidiary company, the National Land and Improvement Company.

The D&RG was the first railroad in Colorado, and one of the first in the nation, to adopt narrow gauge tracks. Over time, however, the system was converted to standard gauge. In 1902 the narrow gauge tracks between Denver and Pueblo were replaced with standard (5-foot wide) tracks (Wilkins 1974:140). In 1921 the D&RG became the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW), and it later was subsumed within the vast UPRR system.
Figure 3. Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) Railroad Segment (5DA.921.1), Looking East-Southeast Toward Curve in Alignment

Significance Evaluation: This segment of the historic D&RGW rail line, extending along the Plum Creek valley through Douglas County, was recorded by Rebecca Herbst and Vicki Rottman of URS Consultants in July 1989, for a Colorado Department of Highways and FHWA sponsored project (Project #FC-STR 085-2(36) involving proposed widening of US 85 from Castle Rock to C-470. The segment was evaluated by Herbst and Rottman as NRHP-eligible under Criterion A as part of an important early transportation corridor between Denver and Colorado Springs, and the segment was determined officially eligible by CHS/OAHP on February 23, 1990. In February 2004, consultant Dawn Bunyak re-evaluated the D&RGW segment and made a field determination that it was NRHP-eligible. Subsequently, on September 22, 2004, CHS/OAHP re-affirmed that the D&RGW segment was officially eligible.

The entire D&RGW railroad in Douglas County was re-evaluated for NRHP-eligibility, and the segment passing through the APE was assessed in terms of its status as either supporting or non-supporting of the eligibility of the entire linear resource. The entire D&RGW Railroad is re-evaluated as NRHP-eligible under Criterion A because of its important contribution to the settlement and economic development of Colorado, including the communities of Colorado Springs, Castle Rock, and Denver. Although it remains an active railroad and has thus been subject to periodic maintenance activities including the replacement of ballast, ties and rails and the installation of modern signals, this segment of the active railroad retains sufficient integrity of location, design, and function to support the eligibility of the entire linear resource.
8.2 Denver & Santa Fe (D&SF)/Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (ATSF) Railway, Pueblo to Denver Line (5DA.922.1)

**Description**: A 4,156 ft (0.8 mile) long segment of the historic D&SF/ATSF Railway, constituting a portion of previously recorded segment 5DA.922.1 lies within the project APE (see Figure 4). Within the APE, the rail line follows a generally northwest to southeast trajectory along the south/west edge of the East Plum Creek valley. The line entering the APE from the northwest is double-tracked, and passes through a cut near Castle View High School/Castle Rock Middle School, then switches to a single track just north of an unnamed ephemeral drainage containing a massive historic stone culvert. The width of the grade, from the edges of the ballasted embankment, varies from approximately 30 ft for the double-tracked section to approximately 16 ft for the single-tracked section. The height of the railroad grade is approximately 1.5 – 2.0 ft. The standard-gauge rails and timber cross-ties are placed atop an elevated embankment covered with crushed red and black granitic and quartzite ballast. Rusty spikes and other ferrous rail hardware discarded when the rails and ties have been replaced, are sparsely scattered along the entire grade. The segment appears to be in good condition, and is periodically maintained. This rail line is heavily used by southbound coal trains.

![Figure 4](image_url)

**Figure 4.** D&SF/ATSF Railway Segment 5DA.922.1, Looking Southeast

A massive stone masonry culvert is located along the re-evaluated railroad segment, approximately 0.75 mile northwest of Meadows Parkway (see Figure 5). This culvert is situated in the channel of an unnamed ephemeral drainage that empties into East Plum Creek. The structure measures approximately 20 ft tall by 20 ft wide, with a semi-circular opening and vaulted ceiling to accommodate drainage (and more recently, the East Plum Creek Trail). The culvert is skillfully
constructed of dressed (locally available) rhyolite and sandstone blocks cemented with mortar. Substantial, stepped wing (retaining) walls extend out from the ends of the opening on both sides of the culvert to hold back the sloped railroad embankment. The culvert exhibits excellent masonry craftsmanship and is considered a supporting feature of the railroad. No other historic culverts were identified along the portion of the railroad segment re-evaluated for the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project.

Figure 5. Stone Culvert Beneath D&SF/ATSF Segment 5DA.922.1, Looking West-Southwest

**Site History:** This railroad originated in 1887 as the D&SF Railway’s Pueblo to Denver line. The D&SF was incorporated in March of 1887 as a subsidiary of the ATSF Railway, in order to establish a link from Pueblo to the burgeoning city of Denver. Grading began northward from Pueblo in April of 1887, and by late May the rails were being laid. On October 1, 1887, the 116 mile-long line was operational (Robertson 1991:111). The line was sold to the ATSF in January of 1900, and remained under ATSF ownership until late 1995, when the Santa Fe Pacific Corporation (parent company of the Burlington Northern Railroad) merged to form a new company, the BNSF Railway. The BNSF still operates the line.

**Significance Evaluation:** This segment of the historic D&SF/ATSF rail line, extending along the Plum Creek Valley through Douglas County, was recorded by Rebecca Herbst and Vicki Rottman of URS Consultants in July 1989, for a Colorado Department of Highways and FHWA sponsored project (Project #FC-STR 085-2(36) involving proposed widening of US 85 from
Castle Rock to C-470. The segment was evaluated by Herbst and Rottman as NRHP-eligible under Criterion A as part of an important early transportation corridor between Denver and Colorado Springs, and the segment was determined officially eligible by CHS/OAHP on February 23, 1990. On September 22, 2004, CHS/OAHP made an official determination that the D&SF/ATSF (5DA.922.1) was a contributing element of an existing NRHP district. Then, on May 18, 2005, CHS/OAHP issued a new finding that the railroad segment was officially eligible; this recent determination reflects the agency’s abandonment of the “district” classification for linear resources.

The entire D&SF/ATSF railroad in Douglas County was re-evaluated for NRHP-eligibility, and the segment passing through the project APE was assessed in terms of its status as either supporting or non-supporting of the eligibility of the entire linear resource. The entire D&SF/ATSF Railway in Douglas County is re-evaluated as NRHP-eligible under Criterion A because of its important contribution to the settlement and economic development of Colorado, including the communities of Colorado Springs, Castle Rock, and Denver. Although it remains an active railroad and has thus been subject to periodic maintenance activities including the replacement of ballast, ties and rails and the installation of modern signals and switching equipment, this segment of the active railroad retains sufficient integrity of location, design, and function to support the eligibility of the entire linear resource.

8.3 **Abandoned Railroad Grade Segment (5DA.2465.1)**

**Description**: A 2,800 ft (0.53 mile) long segment of abandoned railroad grade lies within the North Meadows Extension APE (see Figure 6). The grade, which was found during the archaeological survey conducted by CDOT for the North Meadows Extension project, is nearly invisible on high resolution color aerial photography, since it is covered with the same vegetation as the surrounding land. The grade closely parallels the active BNSF railroad on the western/southern edge of the East Plum Creek valley, and follows a generally northwest to southeast trajectory across privately-owned pastureland. The segment begins on the west side of an ephemeral drainage which passes through a massive historic stone culvert located on the BNSF grade, and continues northwestward through and beyond the project APE. The total length of the abandoned grade beyond the project limits is unknown and could not be readily determined.

The grade consists of a flat-topped soil embankment, approximately 1.0 – 2.0 ft tall, and approximately 16 ft wide as measured from the outer edges of the side slopes. No ballast, ties, rails, or other railroad-related artifacts were noted. In many places the grade is poorly defined, and has likely been damaged by livestock grazing, water, wind, and vegetation. The grade is generally difficult to discern unless one is walking near or across it.

**Site History**: The history of this abandoned railroad grade could not be determined with certainty. No archival information or informants could be located to provide identification or historical information. However, based on its alignment and close proximity to the BNSF rail line, it appears to represent an earlier alignment of the mainline that may or may not have been actually used. The absence of ballast or other railroad-related materials suggests that it may not have been actually used, or was abandoned long ago.
Figure 6. Abandoned Railroad Grade Segment (5DA.2465.1), Looking Northeast

Significance Evaluation: The history of this abandoned railroad grade is unknown; however, it appears to represent an earlier or temporary alignment of the 116 mile-long D&SF Railway line constructed in 1887 and extending from Pueblo to Denver, Colorado. The D&SF was a subsidiary of the ATSF Railway. The exact date of construction of this abandoned grade, which closely parallels the active (BNSF/former ATSF) railroad grade is unknown, nor are the circumstances or time span of its use. The grade lacks ballast, ties, tracks other features or artifacts, and is in poor condition due to erosion and heavy vegetation growth. Although this segment may have once been part of the D&SF/ATSF rail line, the clear loss of physical integrity precludes it from conveying this association, and the site is therefore ineligible for the NRHP.

8.4 House Ruin (5DA.2652)

Description: This residential property is located north of Castle Rock, approximately 50 meters west of I-25, on a high ridge northwest of East Plum Creek. It consists of a burned one-story residence, an out building, a drive and parking area, two trash dumps, and landscaping. The residence is centrally located, but most of the structural elements were destroyed by fire. Remnants, including a concrete cellar and attached chimney, are oriented in a north/south manner, with maximum measurements of approximately 15 meters by 7.5 meters. The cellar walls are all standing, but cracked in several areas. Although unclear, the cellar may have been a remodeled garage. It exhibits a single standard width door and an adjacent wide opening to the east of approximate single car width. These doors lead to a concrete slab patio that runs the full width of the structure and extends outward approximately 6 meters. The fire destroyed
all evidence of the interior of the cellar. A stairway “ghost” image is located west of the doors, on the south wall, indicating the location of access to the main habitation floor. The chimney is positioned centrally on the west wall, exhibiting a hearth on the main floor and in the cellar. The lower hearth indicates all or a portion of the cellar was occupied rather than fully used as a garage. This might be considered evidence of remodeling; however the lower hearth is original to the construction of the chimney. The chimney is constructed of cinder blocks and each hearth is lined with blond fire brick and surfaced with rhyolite. The exterior of the chimney is also surfaced with a veneer of rhyolite slabs and two rectangular terracotta flue pipes extend from the top of the chimney. The veneer pattern on the east side of the chimney indicates the structure exhibited only one story above the cellar. Charred wood remnants on the top edge of the foundation identify this as a frame structure; however there is no archival data concerning the architectural design. Evidence of the chimney’s rhyolite veneer is found on the exterior foundation walls to the west and south. Remnants extending from the chimney indicate that approximately half the west frame wall was also clad in veneer. A concrete landing and nine steps are located adjacent to and west of the chimney, placing the main entrance immediately north of the chimney. Immediately west of the house, access is defined by three footpaths, one of which is a concrete sidewalk. Burned debris associated with the house, found in the cellar and on the south patio, includes appliances, the hot water heater, the furnace, air ducts, wiring, piping, and miscellaneous wood and metal fragments.

One other structure is present, located approximately 60 meters southeast of the main residence. This is a small, shed-roofed wood frame outbuilding, originally used as an animal shelter and most recently for storage. There is also evidence of modern, temporary occupation (camping). The structure is frame construction, with vertical board siding on the south, east, and west walls. The north wall and roof are surfaced in corrugated metal; the entrance is to the south/southwest. Partially painted red, it exhibits a large opening on the west side and a standard door frame to the east. There are no doors or coverings still in place, although a plywood eave was attached onto the east end of the south wall. No flooring is present in this structure. Trash is scattered to the south and includes furniture, five gallon buckets, a 55 gallon barrel, wire tires and wood scraps.

Property access is by means of a 60 meter long driveway that originates from a dirt access road to the south. The access road originated from the area that is now the Meadows/Founder’s Parkway interchange, paralleling the west side of I-25 northward to just south of 5DA2652. The driveway is an unpaved, two-track roadway approximately 5 m wide that extends northward and terminates at a broad level surface intended for parking and turning vehicles.

Landscaping consists almost exclusively of planted tree rows. A spotty but rectangular pattern of juniper, spruce, and locust trees have been planted around the house and parking area. The west side of the house is overgrown with locust trees. The southern portion of the driveway and adjacent property line is lined with juniper and Russian olive trees.

Two areas of trash, both deposited at rock exposures, are located west and southwest of the residence. The southwest locality is predominately domestic trash and the western locality consists of construction material.
Site History: Based on a review of older aerial photographs and maps at the Douglas County History Research Center at the Phillip S. Miller Library in Castle Rock, this rural dwelling was constructed near US 87 (now I-25) sometime between September of 1955 and July of 1962. A 1955 Douglas County land ownership map indicates that the property was owned at that time by the Rocky Mountain Evangelists Association, Inc., which also owned the land upon which the nearby Silver Heights subdivision was developed. The house as well as the extant small shed-roofed outbuilding and road (leading southward from the house) are all shown on a July 7, 1962 black-and-white aerial photograph. Its original owner is unknown, and unfortunately, no early County Assessor’s property card containing information about the house appears to exist at the Douglas County courthouse in Castle Rock. The house is clearly shown on the 1965 USGS 7.5’ Sedalia topographic quadrangle, with access evidently provided by a frontage road closely paralleling I-25. The frontage road started at what is now the Meadows/Founder’s Parkway interchange, and turned west a short distance south of the house. This frontage road was removed by development of the Outlets at Castle Rock mall. The house is clearly shown on other black and white aerial photographs dated May 23, 1967 and July 18, 1975, however, it appears to be in ruins on another aerial photograph taken on August 14, 1988. The cause of the fire that destroyed it was not determined.
Significance Evaluation: The main feature comprising this property is a house, which has been almost completely destroyed by fire. The only intact architectural features are the standing chimney and concrete basement. The original form and style of the building are nearly impossible to determine due to its ruinous condition. Because of its severe loss of integrity, the property cannot convey architectural significance. Additionally, no archival information was found to suggest that the property was associated with a historically important pattern of events or persons. Finally, the property is of recent origin (c. 50 years old), and the ruins and debris scatter do not appear to have the potential to yield information of importance to the understanding of local history. For all these reasons, the site does not qualify for inclusion on the NRHP.
9.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Intensive-level documentation was completed in November of 2007 for four historic resources identified within the APE defined for the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project. These resources include segments of two active historic railroads: 5DA.921.1, the D&RGW (now operated by the UPRR), and 5DA.922.1, the D&SF/AT&SF Railway (now operated by the BNSF Railway). Other historic resources documented include one segment of an unidentified abandoned railroad grade (5DA.2465.1), and one ruin of a rural house built between 1955 and 1962 (5DA.2652).

The two active historic rail line segments (5DA.921.1 and 5DA.922.1) were previously (1990, 2004-2005) determined to be Officially Eligible for the NRHP. For the North Meadows Extension to US 85 and I-25 project, the eligibility of the entire railroads to which these segments belong was re-evaluated, and both were found to qualify for the NRHP under Criterion A for historical importance. Both active railroad segments within the project APE were then evaluated to determine if each retains sufficient integrity to support the eligibility of the entire linear resources, and in both cases an affirmative determination of "supports eligibility" was made. Consequently, avoidance and/or minimization of direct and indirect impacts to these sites (5DA.921.1 and 5DA.922.1) is recommended.

No information could be found to conclusively identify an abandoned railroad grade (5DA.2465.1) located within the project APE. This grade may represent a remnant of an earlier or temporary alignment of the nearby D&SF/ATSF railway (5DA.922.1); however, it was determined to lack integrity and would not support the eligibility of the entire D&SF/ATSF rail line in Douglas County. The house ruin within the APE (5DA.2652) was constructed sometime between 1955 and 1962, but was burned down and completely lacks integrity. Consequently, the site was determined to be ineligible for the NRHP. No further work or preservation accommodations are recommended with respect to the house ruin or abandoned railroad grade segment.
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