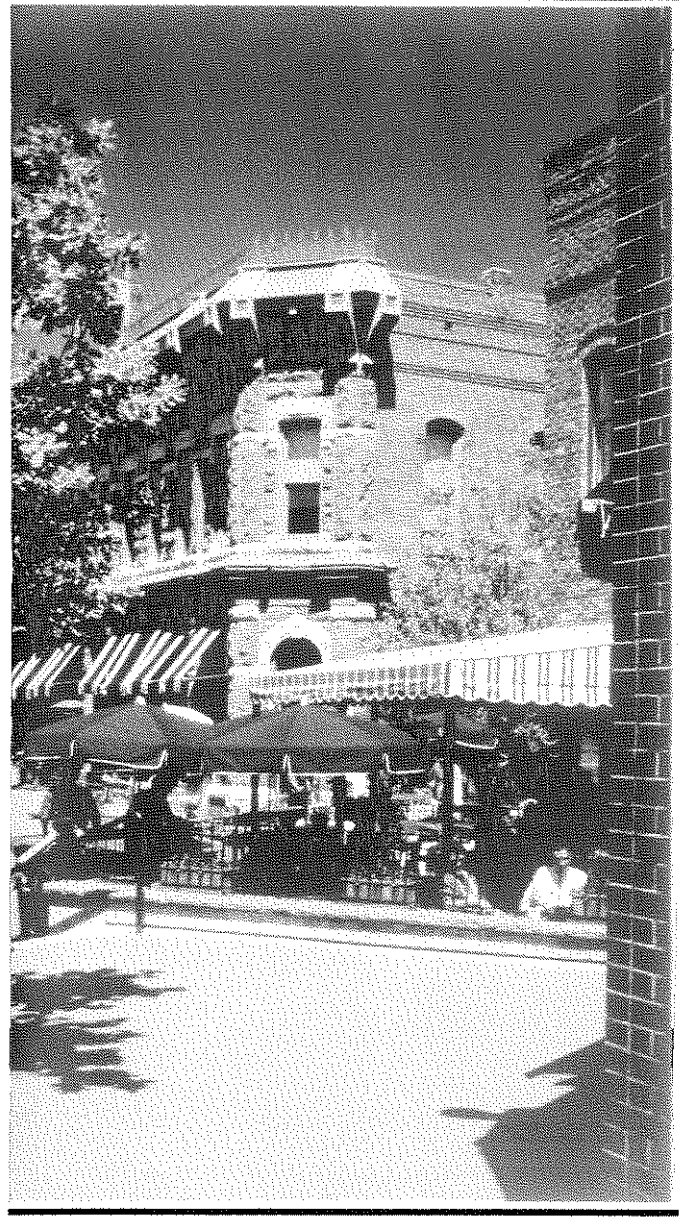
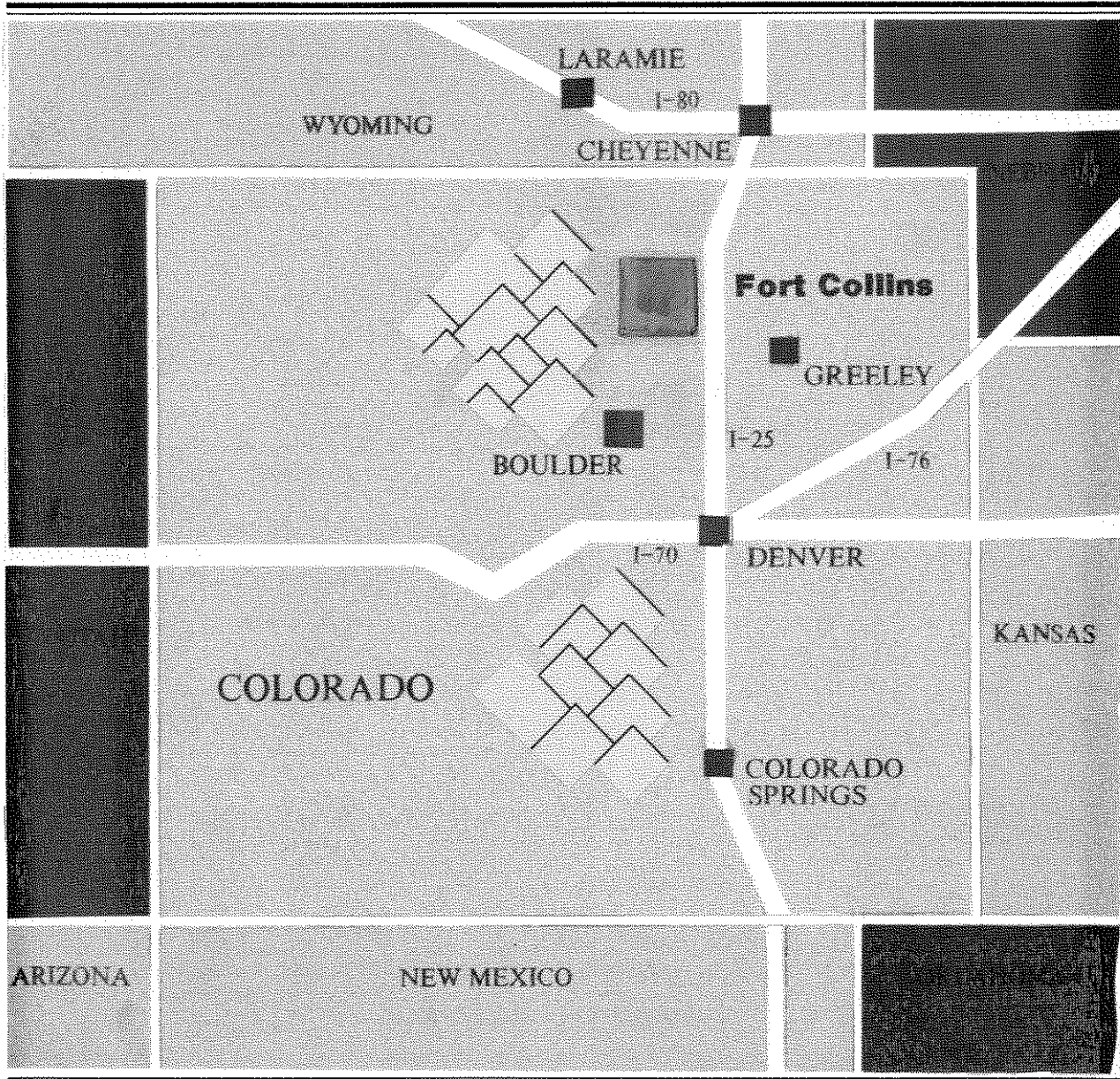


Historic Preservation in

Fort Collins



History of Fort Collins ·
History of Preservation in Fort Collins ·
Current Fort Collins Historic
Preservation Program ·
Foundation for Historic Preservation in
Fort Collins ·
Policy Issues for the Future



History of Fort Collins

Fort Collins is the northernmost of Colorado's Front Range cities. It is located 65 miles north of Denver on the Cache la Poudre River. Fort Collins was incorporated in 1873 and has continued to grow and develop. The population was nearly 90,000 according to the 1990 census. Understanding historic development patterns of the community is important in identifying the characteristics that distinguish Fort Collins from other Front Range cities and farming communities. These characteristics form the basis for the Historic Resources Preservation Program.

Just when it was that man first came into Larimer County is of course impossible to determine with any certainty. Most archaeologists would agree that the area probably was inhabited 13,000 to 15,000 years ago by early Native Americans. Little is left of the material culture of these peoples, mostly stone tools and a few bones, but their culture was probably richer than is indicated by the few pieces of evidence that have withstood the ravages of time. One very important archaeological site in Larimer County is known to date from this early "paleo-indian" period, the Lindenmeier Site. Archaeological studies indicate that it was occupied between 11,000 and 11,500 years ago. The site was probably used repeatedly as a meeting place and campsite.

Sometime between 1650 and 1700, the use of the horse was introduced to Northern Colorado. Originally brought into Mexico by the Spanish in the 16th century, the use of the horse spread rapidly northward. With this new mobility, many Native Americans took up the old nomadic, buffalo hunting style, now much easier on horseback with bow and arrows.

And so, when white men began to encroach on the area in the early 1800's they found the Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians holding almost complete dominion over the plains area. The Cache La Poudre valley seems to have been their favorite hunting grounds. They spent a good part of the hunting season along the river and their tepees were familiar sights to the early explorers and emigrants. Their camping grounds were mainly on both sides of the river near the mouth of the Boxelder Creek and at or near Laporte. Antoine Janis said he found 150 Indian lodges at Laporte when he located there in 1844. In the mountains the Utes reigned supreme, with some Shoshoni in the far northern mountains, bordering Wyoming. The foothills area was in dispute, claimed by both sides.

Native American Settlement



Antoine Janis with Indian friends

History of Development in Fort Collins

The earliest white settlement in what is now Larimer County was related to the fur trade. There were fur trappers' cabins and camps in many places. The Cache la Poudre Valley became a popular route for many travelers. The national fur trade reached its height in the 1830s; however, when the Fremont expedition came to the area in 1843, most of the trappers were gone.

Increased westward travel by emigrants during the 1850s and the gold rushes brought more and more people to Larimer County. An estimated 100,000 gold seekers fanned outward from the Denver area and the Larimer County area became a route to gold camps as well as an agricultural supply center. In 1859, a company of French Canadian families established a settlement called Colona near present day Laporte. The company built 50 log houses, a grocery, and a saloon. A ferry across the river attracted immigrants to this location.

Various Native American tribes used the area as hunting grounds, but no tribe dominated, which meant less resistance to settlement than what occurred in other parts of the region. However, threats to travelers in other parts of Colorado, by both Native Americans and outlaws, caused the establishment of military posts and military expeditions to stop hostile actions. In the summer of 1862, Camp Collins, named for the Lt. Col. W. O. Collins, was established along the Cache la Poudre River to house cavalry companies responsible for patrolling the stage route and escorting coaches and settler parties through the area. A spring flood in 1864 forced relocation of the camp, and a more advantageous location was selected. The new post was known as Fort Collins, and was the site of the future community of Fort Collins.

By 1866, threats to the trails and settlers had been greatly reduced, and Fort Collins was of little use. In 1867, President Johnson ordered it abandoned. The area of Fort Collins known as Old Town had been surveyed and platted that year in expectation that the land upon which the Fort was situated would be available for settlement. Old Town extended from the river south to Mountain Avenue and west from Riverside to College Avenue.

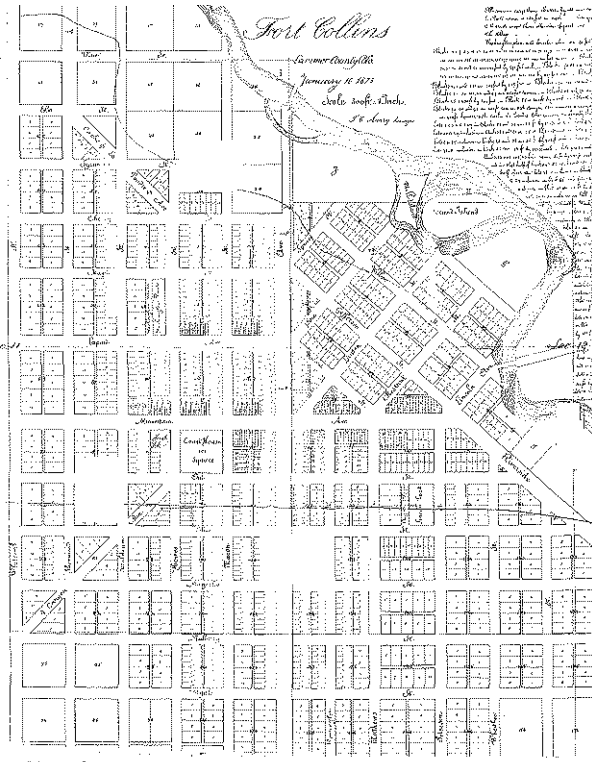
Many of the early settlers of Fort Collins were soldiers who claimed lands after the post closed. The earliest buildings were constructed of logs and/or sod. Businesses, such as a mercantile store, drugstore, mills and brick yards, flourished. In 1868, the seat of Larimer County moved from Laporte to Fort Collins. The availability of bricks and sawn lumber from area sawmills meant that log and sod structures gradually gave way to solid brick and wood-frame buildings.

The colony movement and the success of agriculture were important factors in the growth of Fort Collins. By 1869, the value of agricultural products was nearly as great as that of mining. When the area's agricultural potential became evident, land development companies and local communities began promoting the region for settlement. Building the transcontinental railroad accelerated settlement of the west. Railroads offered immigrant colonists special rates, and the colony movement became very popular by the 1870s.

The Fort Collins Colony was a scheme developed by businessmen from Greeley, which had one of the most successful colony ventures in the region. The Fort Collins Colony was planned to both spread the benefits of the Greeley colony and to make a profit on the sale of land. Colony lands encompassed three thousand acres adjacent to Old Town, and when the military reservation officially opened to settlement in 1872, a new era of development began.



Sugar beet farming



1873 plat



Typical street today



Opening U.P. branch to Buckeye in 1924

The original survey of the townsite established 400-foot square blocks, 25-foot by 90-foot business lots, and 50- and 100-foot by 190-foot residential lots. The amount of open land allowed streets in the townsite to be very wide; College and Mountain were 140-foot in width, Laporte 150-feet, and all other streets were 100-foot wide. The streets of the new section of town were laid out in grid fashion, with major roads following section lines. This was in contrast to Old Town, which had been laid out parallel to the river. The wide streets and grid street pattern remain as an important distinguishing characteristic of Fort Collins.

The founders of Fort Collins attempted to provide for what they viewed as necessary for the future development of their community. Outlying farms were sold in tracts of 10-, 20- and 40-acre parcels, and locations for a college, schools, churches, hotel, county buildings, parks, a zoo, and a cemetery were set aside to encourage development of these important community uses. Founders also emphasized what type of person they wanted to attract and announced their intention to establish superior educational facilities rather than saloons or gambling halls.

The Colony stimulated population growth and an associated building boom. The most common type of business buildings of the time were wood-frame false fronts, some of which were made more elaborate with decorative cornices and with board and batten or clapboard siding. By 1873, when the town of Fort Collins was incorporated, brick and stone commercial buildings began to transform the town from a frontier outpost to a Victorian community. When the railroad reached the region, stone detailing of brick buildings were sometimes replaced with ornate cast iron fronts and metal cornices. Pre-railroad era residential buildings were simple wood-frame, front or side gables, with clapboard siding, stone foundations, and tall narrow, double-hung windows. The style was vernacular, meaning it had no particular stylistic influences. This type of residential architecture continued to be common in Fort Collins until World War II, because it did not require formal architectural knowledge or skilled craftsmanship.

Arrival of the railroad in Fort Collins had an impact similar to that of other western communities. The railroad provided access to materials, markets, and population, and in Fort Collins, stimulated architecture, agriculture, business, and immigration, which had been stagnant after the initial burst of activity in 1873. False front commercial buildings were replaced by architectural designs developed in the East and then established in the western towns by trained builders and architects. Building materials related to this architecture could be obtained at a reasonable cost by rail. Many public buildings and facilities were built in response to development stimulated by the railroad, such as a city hall, fire station, public water system, an electrical plant, and a telephone system.



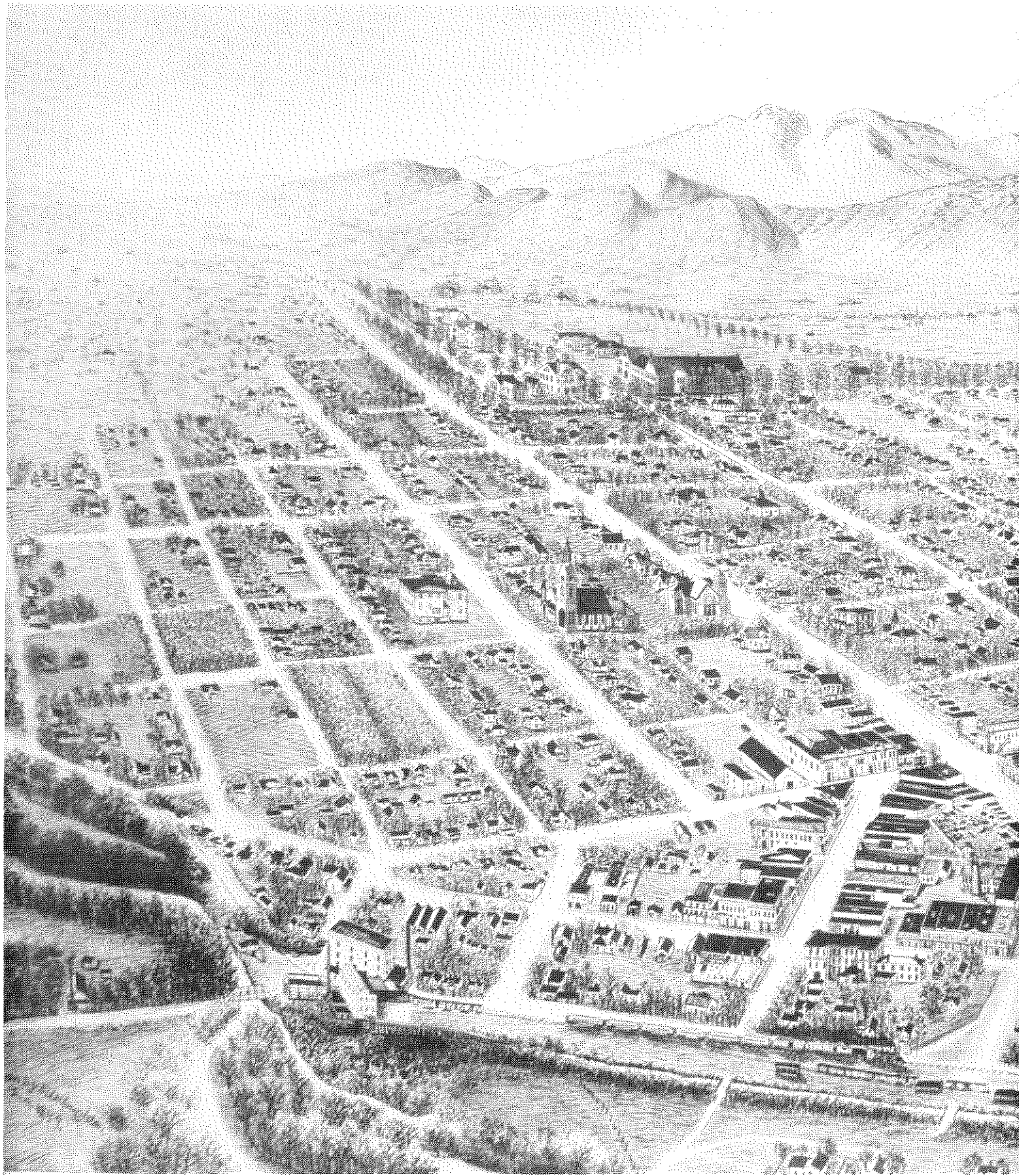
C&S passenger depot on Laporte Street (razed 1953)

By the mid-1880s, many of the blocks in the original 1873 plat had some development on them. The most heavily developed area extended from Willow Street on the northeast to Olive Street on the south and from approximately Howes Street on the west to Lincoln Avenue and Whedbee Street on the east. Railroad tracks ran generally north-south along Willow Street and along Mason Street. The commercial area generally extended from Jefferson Avenue in the northeast to the intersection of College Avenue and Mountain Avenue to the southwest and to College Avenue and Laporte to the west. The principal industrial area was on the northeastern edge of town and in the northern area along the railroad line. The heaviest concentration of groceries, dry goods, restaurants, hardware, drugs, jewelers, laundries, printers, furniture, carriage and harness supplies, saloons, and hotels was in an area bounded by Jefferson between Pine and Chestnut, Linden between Willow and Mountain, and College between Mountain and Walnut. This area also had residential development.

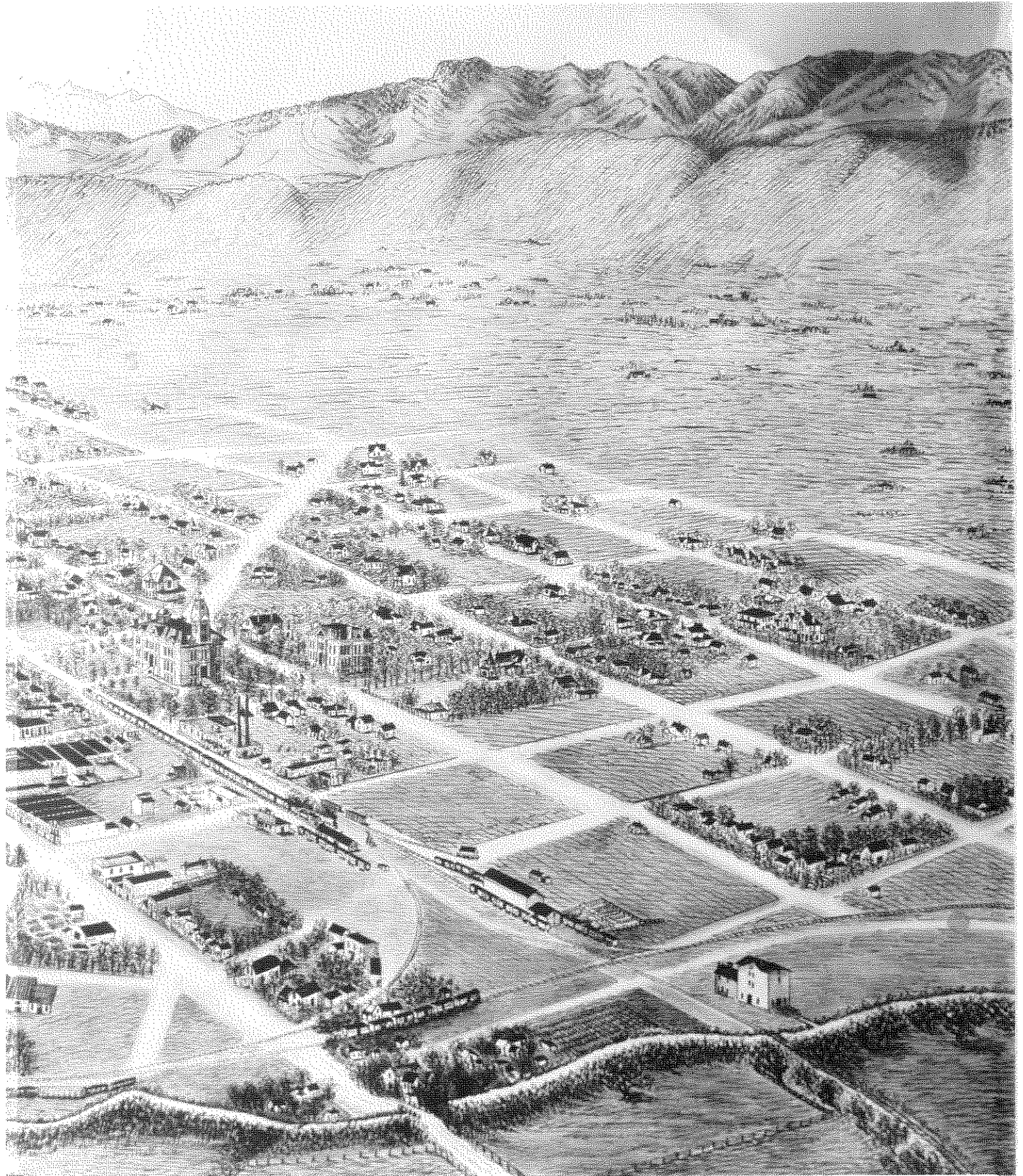
By the end of the century, the commercial area had expanded with vacant lots and residential buildings replaced by commercial structures. The business area expanded onto the block south of Mountain Avenue and further north along College Avenue. A number of large public structures such as the courthouse, schools, and many of the Agricultural College buildings had been completed. However, many blocks in the old parts of town remained unoccupied.



Miller Block - typical of character of downtown blocks



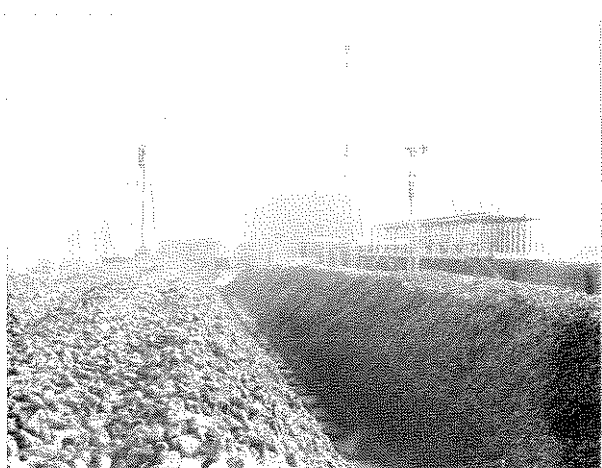
Fort Collins in 1899, painting by M.D. Houghton





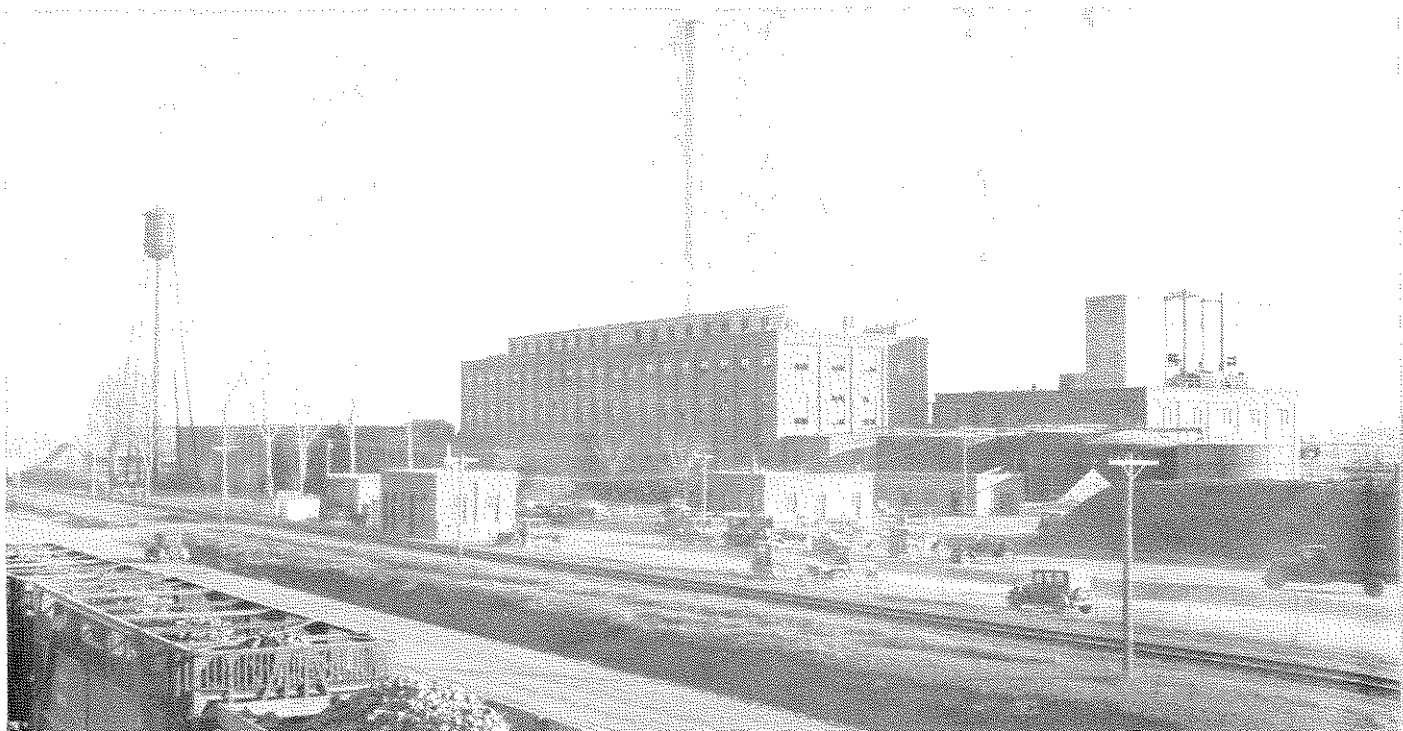
Loomis Addition

Residential areas were added to the original 1873 townsite prior to 1900 and were separated from the commercial and industrial areas. Early development activity included the Lake Park Addition to the southeast, east of College Avenue between Elizabeth and Pitkin, and the Loomis and West Side additions to the west. The Loomis Addition was bounded by Laporte, Whitcomb, Mulberry and Washington. The West Side Addition was bounded by Elm, Whitcomb, Laporte and Ward. Access to materials by rail, arrival of eastern styles with architects and builders who were attracted by the building boom, and new mail-order pattern books offered property owners greater choice than the vernacular architecture of prior years. By the mid-1890s, residential areas of Fort Collins were principally to the south and west of downtown, with smaller areas to the northeast between Jefferson Street and the river.



Sugar beets

The first part of the twentieth century was a time of prosperity and growth for Fort Collins. The sugarbeet industry stimulated the steady progress Fort Collins made during the previous twenty-five years. Construction of the Fort Collins sugarbeet factory on Vine Street made an immediate impact on the community when it was completed in 1904. Hundreds of people were employed for four months of the year, real estate prices in the area increased, construction boomed, jobs were created, new businesses were attracted to the area, and the population increased dramatically. In response, City services also expanded including a new public water system, library and gas company. Two of the earliest outlying developments, Buckingham Place and Anderson Place, were built for worker housing for the sugar factory. As residential areas were laid out, they were annexed to the City. With the annexation of Buckingham Place in 1906, the City boundaries crossed the Poudre River for the first time.



Great Western Sugar beet factory

The first decade of the twentieth century was one of substantial downtown development. By 1909, the downtown area had expanded to the northeast, west, and south, from approximately 43 to 74 acres. The arrival of the Union Pacific railroad along the north side of Riverside and Jefferson streets caused the demolition of many of the community's oldest buildings. This made future commercial expansion to the north less desirable. By 1925, the commercial area was about 76 acres in area and had expanded to the west along Mountain Avenue and south along College Avenue.



Day of sale of houses along north side of Jefferson street

A streetcar system began operating in Fort Collins in 1907 and the radial lines that extended from downtown to the western and southern periphery of town were important factors in shaping future residential and commercial development. Most real estate activity occurred on the west side of town with a number of lots platted along the West Mountain Avenue corridor prior to the streetcar. Streetcar suburbs were created to attract stable, middle-class families to modest-sized lots, with transportation to the downtown by streetcar. In this way, the streetcar generated the outward growth of the city.



Streetcar in City Park



Streetcar on Pitkin at Remington



Streetcar on road to Lindenmeier Lake about 1911

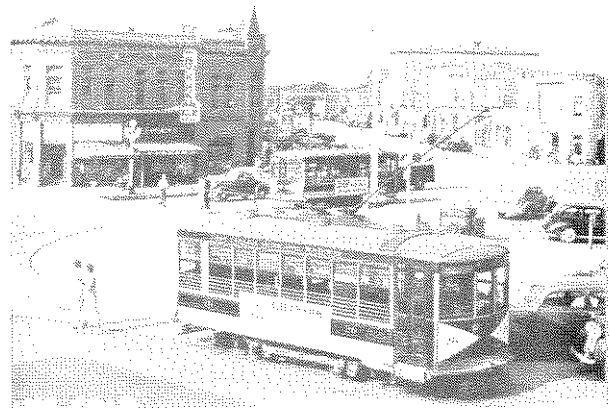
After World War I, the agricultural economy experienced hard times. Prices for agricultural commodities fell after World War I, and the industry suffered. A period of relative prosperity followed when prices finally stabilized. During this time period, the local economy was helped by the discovery of oil and gas north of Fort Collins. A small boom in oil and gas related development and tourism materialized. The oil and gas field did not prove to be as significant as hoped, and by 1930 the oil and gas industry was gone. The stock market crash in 1929, adverse weather conditions and weak agricultural markets brought on nationwide depression that lasted until World War II and affected Fort Collins as deeply as it did other agricultural communities.

By 1925, the business district extended from Willow Street on the northeast, west to Howes, south to Mountain Avenue and south along both sides of College to Olive. This expansion encroached on and displaced nearby residential areas. Few residential uses remained in the downtown by this time, and retail, commercial, service and financial uses were most prevalent. Property north of Jefferson Street and along Mason Street and the railroad lines north of Laporte Avenue were popular for industrial and transportation-related uses.

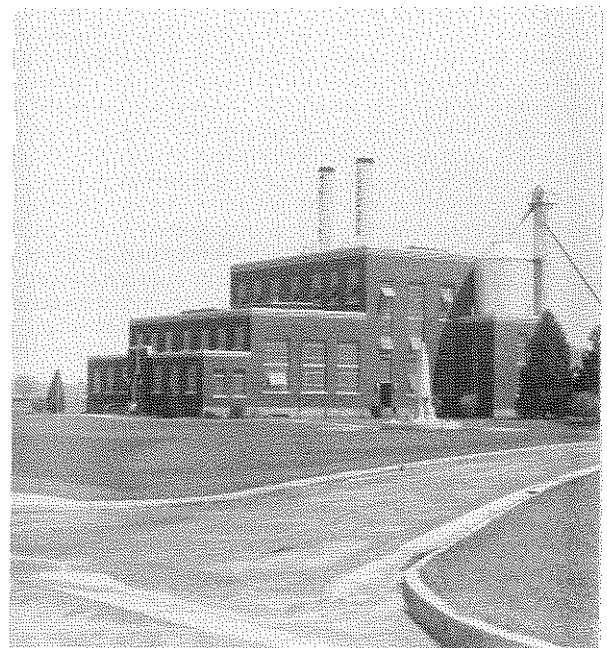
During this time period, mass production allowed the automobile to become an influential element in the American way of life. From the 1920s to the present, the automobile was the primary influence on development patterns in the community. However, the popular street railway system provided continuous service, supported by referendums in 1932, 1934, 1938 and 1950, until increased reliance on automobiles, the post-World War II suburban explosion, and competition from buses all contributed to declining ridership. The system ceased operation in 1951.

With Los Angeles leading the way in 1909, many small communities passed zoning laws by the 1930s, primarily to protect residential areas from the encroachment of business and industrial land uses. Fort Collins adopted a comprehensive zoning plan and map in 1929 with six categories of allowed land uses within the city. It was not until 1954, however, that a planning board was created to administer the zoning plan.

There was little development and construction activity in the community during the depression years. One of the largest projects of this time was the municipally-owned power plant which was constructed in 1935 on North College Avenue. Most residential growth in this period occurred in the 1920s, with little activity in the 1930s. Most of the area annexed was along the western boundary and was relatively flat and barren. The area was subdivided into a grid of streets and small- to moderate-sized lots. In many cases, the developer completed the plats, then sold lots to small builders or individual buyers, rather than developing the entire subdivision as is more common today. This practice was responsible for a greater variation in architecture than had



1937 street scene



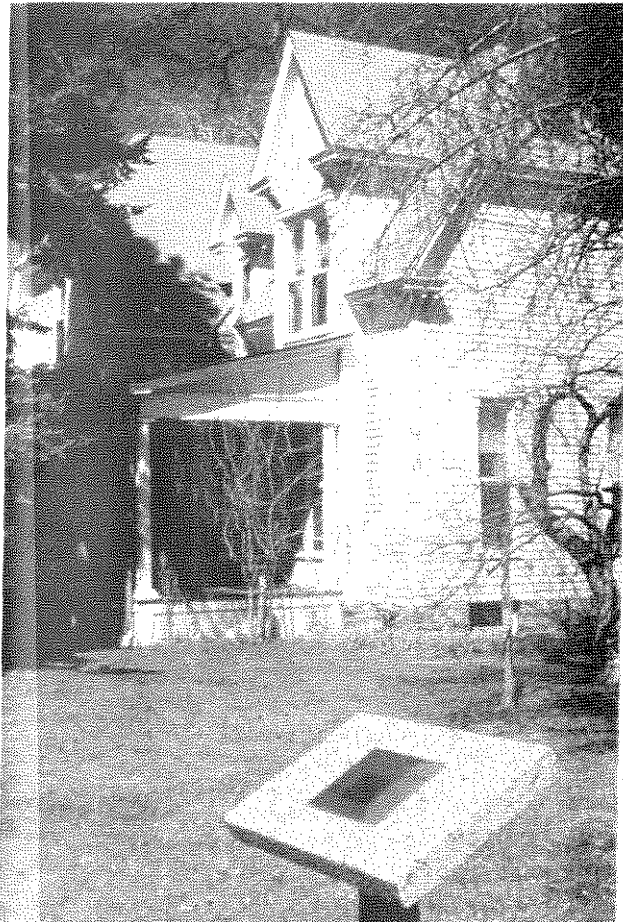
New Power Plant



Alta Vista subdivision today



First National Bank (demolished 1961)



Hoffman House, 426 E. Oak Street

previously existed. Also during this era, the Alta Vista subdivision in the northeast part of the city was platted and developed by the Great Western Sugar Company to provide housing for sugar workers in order to create a more stable labor force. There was relatively little development in Fort Collins from the 1930s until after World War II. The extent of what is considered the historic downtown and residential areas was well-established by the 1930s.

History of Preservation in Fort Collins

After World War II, the entire country was looking to the future, to prosperity, and to new technology. Few communities were interested in looking backward to their history. Across the country, many historic buildings were "modernized" or demolished and in Fort Collins as in other communities, there was general rejection of the "old." Resulting local losses included the removal of the streetcar line (1951), the demolition of the Larimer County Courthouse (1957), the First National Bank (1961), and various residences, schools, and churches in the downtown area (see Appendix A -- Demolished Structures).

Interest in protecting historic resources spread slowly across the country from the southeast and northeast, with resulting enactment of local historic preservation ordinances. The general awakening of the country in the mid-1960s to the value of protecting the environment created broader interest in historic preservation. In response to the demolition of several important structures, Fort Collins adopted in 1968 its first historic preservation ordinance and established the Landmark Preservation Commission to oversee the ordinance. The Commission's responsibilities were to preserve significant historic structures through local landmark designation and to regulate exterior changes to the designated landmarks.

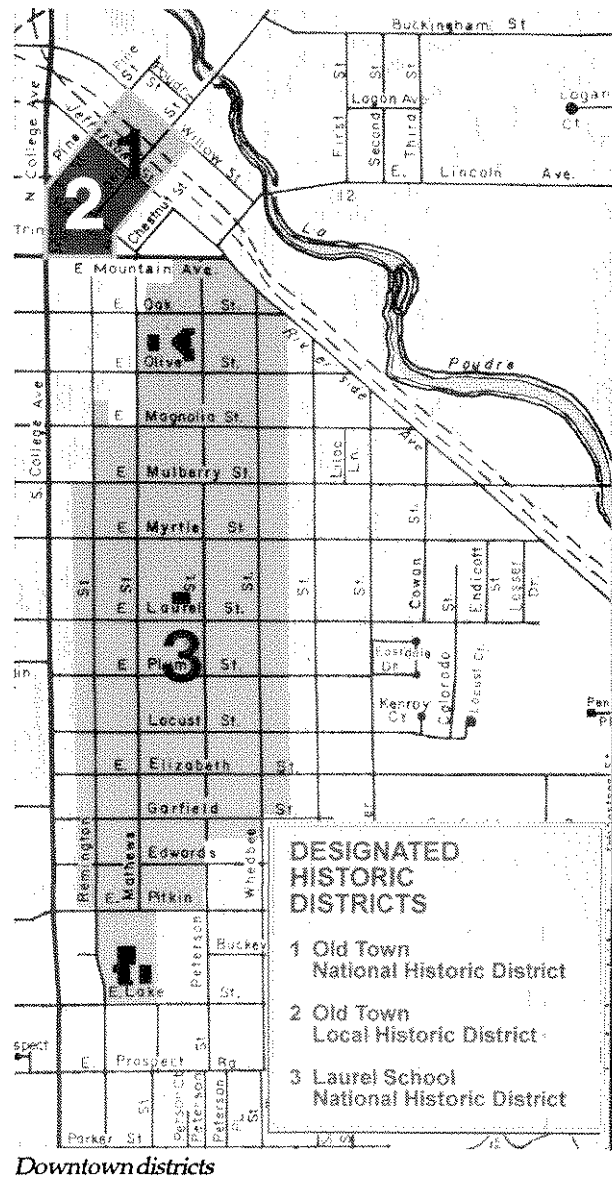
In 1969, the Landmark Preservation Commission designated the first five local landmarks. The Old Fort Site was the first locally designated landmark in 1969. In 1986, however, the Old Fort Site designation was rescinded since the area designated was determined not to be the actual fort site and the integrity of the site had been substantially altered by new construction. In 1974, the Fort Collins Centennial-Bicentennial Council attempted unsuccessfully to sponsor the rebuilding of the original military fort and subsequently turned their attention to identifying and honoring 24 historic residences, churches, schools and business blocks with plaques which still exist today.

In 1975, the Landmark Preservation Commission was replaced by the Cultural Resources Board, which was given responsibility to address matters relating to historic landmarks, with a sub-committee responsible for designations and to oversee the community museum and other cultural activities. In 1977, the *Goals and Objectives* document of the Comprehensive Plan identified goals related to preservation of historic resources. These goals are still embodied in the Landmark Preservation ordinance.

During the 1970s, twelve properties were listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a largely honorary recognition of national historic significance. Seven properties were designated as local landmarks, putting their preservation under the control of the City's Landmark Preservation ordinance. In the mid-1970s, a proposal to extend Remington Street through Old Town would have demolished several historic buildings from the original townsite. A group of concerned citizens and the City's first Preservation Planner formed the Old Town Planning Committee. This Committee was successful in preventing Remington Street from being extended through Old Town. In 1978, the Old Town Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In the following year, the Old Town Historic District was designated as a local historic district. The Old Town Planning Committee continued its involvement, and with the assistance of the City's Planning Department, developed an area plan for the district and prepared design guidelines to review proposed changes to historic buildings and signs in the historic district. The *Historic Old Town Plan* was adopted in August 1980 as the City's first neighborhood plan. In 1981, the City adopted design guidelines for review of changes in the area. It became clear that a separate group was needed to deal with design review for local landmarks. The Landmark Preservation Commission was reestablished and given decision-making authority for design review. The Cultural Resources Board retained the function of recommending local designations.

The City used its capital improvement program, *Designing Tomorrow Today*, during the 1970s, to move the Museum to the Carnegie Library, and to purchase the Avery House for a house museum. A historical park was developed around the Museum to include the historic Boxelder School, the Antoine Janis Cabin, and the Auntie Stone Cabin. During the 1980s, the Cultural Resources Board successfully nominated the Laurel School Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places, and also designated the first local landmark without the consent of the owner, the old Post Office at Oak Street and South College Avenue.

Staffing for the Landmark Preservation Commission was initially from the Building Inspection Division, with emphasis on code compliance. In 1984, the Planning Department formalized its involvement in the City's support of historic preservation by creating the Historic Preservation Program, staffed by a full-time



Cabins preserved at the museum

senior planner and a half-time preservation specialist. The program concentrated on improving design review, identifying and recording data on historic resources, and on creating awareness of the need for and value of historic preservation. In 1988, a City Council-sponsored Boards and Commissions Review Subcommittee recommended that the landmark designation functions of the Cultural Resources Board be transferred to the Landmark Preservation Commission in the interest of improving the responsiveness of citizen advisory boards. The Landmark Preservation ordinance was revised to give the Landmark Preservation Commission the responsibility for landmark designations. Also in 1988, *A Strategic Plan For the Fort Collins Historic Preservation Program* was prepared which established a five-year work plan for the Landmark Preservation Commission to follow.

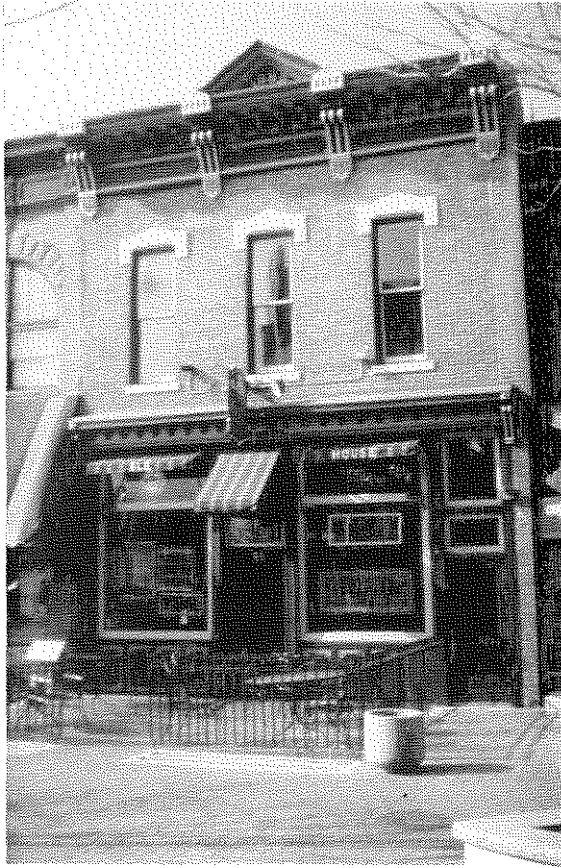
There were many successful efforts to preserve historic resources in Fort Collins during the 1980s and early 1990s, including: renovation of important Old Town buildings, including the Whitton Block, Miller Block, McPherson Building, H.A. Craft Building, and the H.C. Howard and J.L. Hohnstein Blocks; renovation and furnishing of the Avery House; acquisition of the Avery Carriage House; acquisition of the McHugh House by the Local Development Company; preservation and/or renovation of properties by the private sector, including the Arthur House, Edwards House, Reed-Dauth Building, Kissock Block, Stover-Bosworth Building, 100 block of West Mountain, Poudre Valley Bank Building, Old Firehouse, Bernard Block, Post Office, Union Pacific Depot, 205 South Meldrum, Blaine Hotel, Opera House Galleria, Forney Estate, Emerson House, and the T.H. Robertson House; preservation and exterior stabilization of the waterworks building; six successful nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, and; thirteen local landmark designations including the City-owned Power Plant and Streetcar Barn.

Other community programs have enhanced historic buildings although not specifically directed to do so, such as investments by the Local Development Corporation and Community Development Block Grant funds in downtown projects. The Fort Collins Municipal Railway Society collected private funds and volunteers to restore Trolley Car #21 and tracks to run it on West Mountain Avenue. Car #21 is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a local historic landmark.

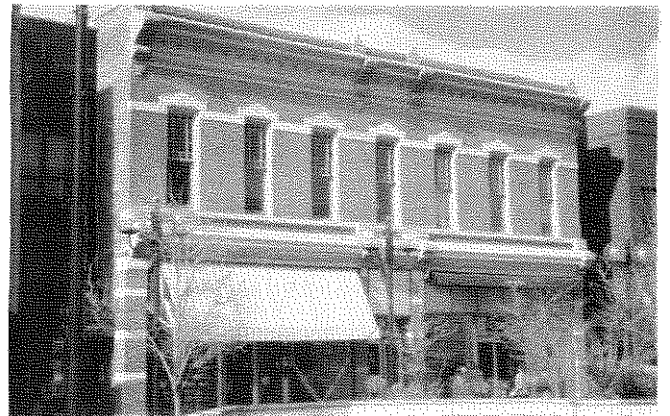
Even with these many successes, there have been occasional community controversies related to demolition of historic buildings (refer to Appendix A - Demolished Structures in Fort Collins). In 1991, the City Council allocated funds for the development of a comprehensive historic preservation program to be completed and implemented in 1992-1993. The Historic Resources Preservation Program Plan is the product of that undertaking.



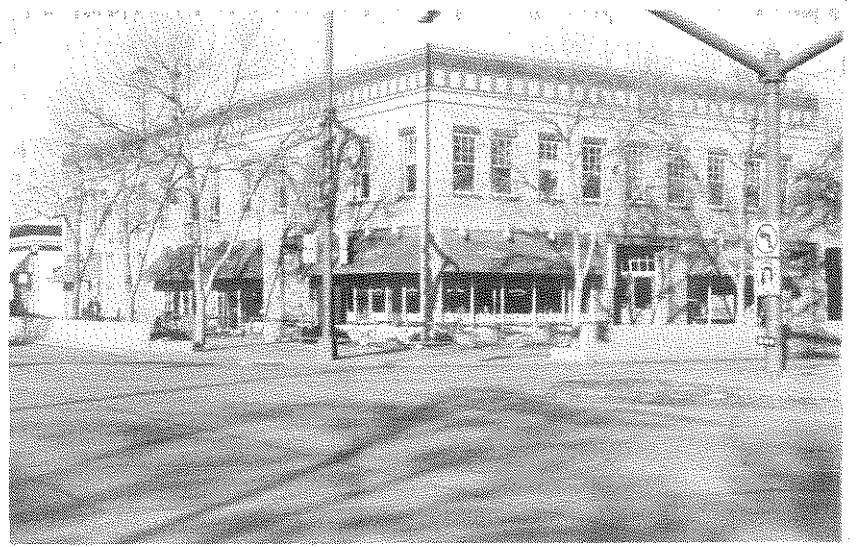
Restored Streetcar #21



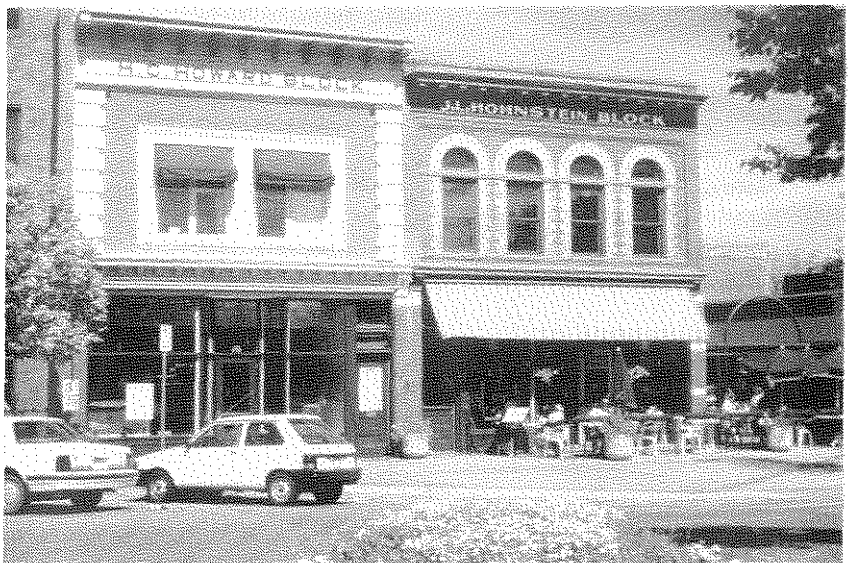
H.A. Craft Block



McPhearson Block

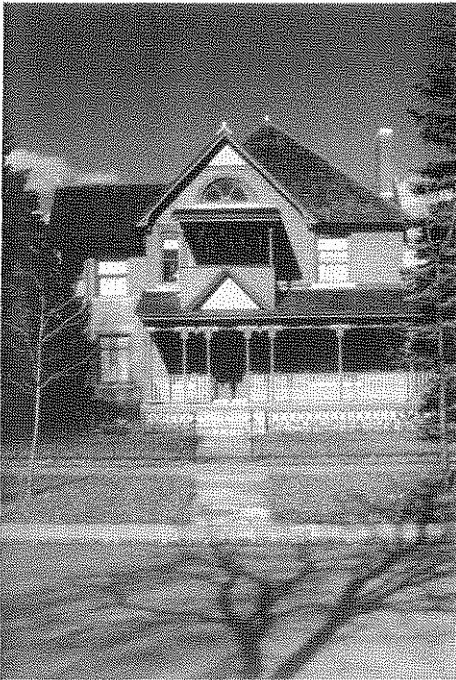


Welch Block / Woolworth Building



H.C. Howard Block

J.L. Hohnstein Block



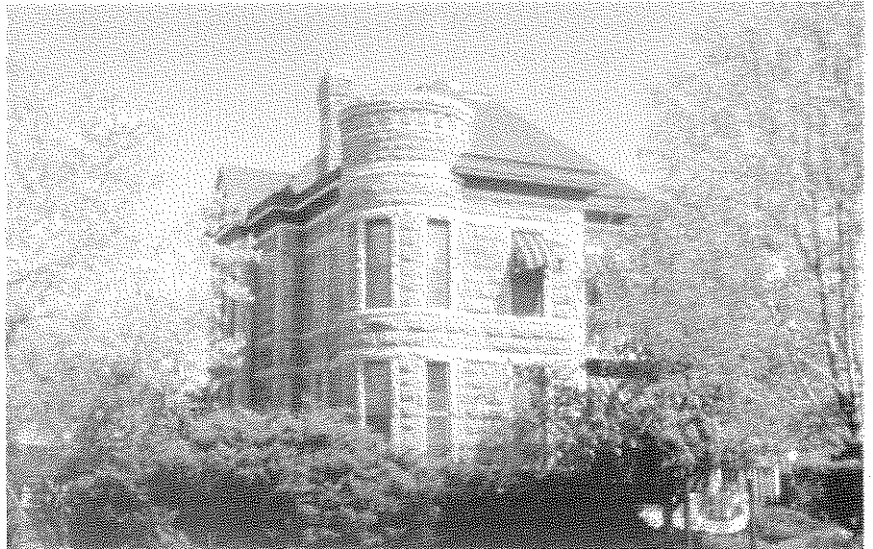
T.H. Robertson House



Edwards House



Reinholtz/Forney House



McHugh House (Andrews/Harris/McHugh House)



Cunningham Corner Barn

Current

Fort Collins Historic Preservation Program

The Fort Collins Historic Preservation Program began in 1968 and as has been typical of historic preservation programs across the country, has undergone many changes. The purpose of historic preservation in Fort Collins is embodied within Chapter 14 (Landmark Preservation) of the City Code and includes the following objectives:

- Designate, preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate those sites, structures, objects and districts which reflect outstanding elements of the City's cultural, artistic, social, economic, political, architectural, and historic heritage;
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
- Stabilize or improve aesthetic and economic vitality and values of such sites, structures, objects and districts;
- Protect and enhance the city's attraction to tourists and visitors;
- Promote the use of outstanding historical or architectural sites, structures, objects, and districts for the education, stimulation and welfare of the people of the City;
- Promote good urban design; and
- Promote and encourage continued private ownership and utilization of such sites, structures, objects or districts now so owned and used, to the extent that the objectives listed above can be attained.

This is the legal basis for historic preservation in the City of Fort Collins. The ordinance offers significant protection for the community's designated landmarks. The ordinance allows the City Council to deny demolition or inappropriate alterations; to delay for 180 days the issuance of a building permit for alterations to a building under consideration for designation as a landmark; to designate a property without the owners' consent; to integrate planning and historic preservation; and to review signs, as well as other exterior alterations to landmarks or buildings in a local historic district.



Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 14)

Landmark Preservation Commission

The Commission is composed of seven members appointed to four-year terms. The Commission functions as a design review body and is responsible for local landmark designations. Membership requires certain expertise and an effort is made to appoint commissioners with training, experience, and knowledge in architecture, landscape architecture, architectural history, structural engineering, general contracting, urban planning, mortgage lending and commerce. While a balance between professionals and lay persons is sought, technical expertise in reading site and building plans and ability to visualize the physical reality of the constructed project is important. The Landmark Preservation Commission undertakes a variety of activities as part of the annual work program, including local landmark designations, design review of projects in locally-designated historic districts or to locally-designed landmarks, Preservation Week activities as part of National Historic Preservation Week, Certified Local Government activities, and education of the public regarding historic preservation. The Commission also undertakes other projects and activities which vary from year to year as opportunities are presented.

Land Use Planning and Regulations

Fort Collins uses an array of techniques to plan for and regulate land use, including; neighborhood and corridor plans; zoning, annexation and subdivision regulations; and the Land Development Guidance System. Some of these techniques are policy planning documents which guide both public and private land use decisions while others are codified regulatory measures. Many laudatory community goals and policies are incorporated in the policy planning documents including preservation of historic resources. Some of these plans include implementation actions. However, there is a gap between the preservation goals in these plans and the regulatory means to implement the goals.

Locally Designated Landmarks

In Fort Collins, as in most communities, official designation of sites and buildings as local landmarks is the best method to ensure preservation. In designating a landmark, the historic, architectural, or geographic significance of the resource is evaluated. The Landmark Preservation Commission can consider such factors as historic importance, architectural importance and/or geographical importance in making a decision on local designation. The final decision is made by the City Council.

In Fort Collins, as is true of most communities, designations are primarily brought to the Commission by the owner. Landmark designation can impose significant restrictions on a property and the City has been understandably reluctant to impose them without the agreement of the property owner although the owner's consent is not legally required. In Fort Collins only one landmark has been designated without the consent of the owner, the old Post Office. Designation of a historic district, on the other hand, rarely has the support of all property owners. However, in the past, the City has been reluctant to designate a district

without a high percentage of support and frequently district boundaries end up being based more on property owner support than quality of resources.

Most preservation commissions, and Fort Collins is no exception, find design review of alterations is their most contentious and controversial responsibility. Fort Collins has one locally-designated historic district, Old Town which is also a National Register Historic District, and another National Register Historic District, Laurel School. Old Town has been an important element in the downtown revitalization effort. The *East Side Neighborhood Plan* proposed local designation for the Laurel School Historic District. The *West Side Neighborhood Plan* recommended further evaluation of historic resources for potential districts. Such designations are the most effective way to preserve these historic resources. However, along with greater protection comes greater requirements of the Landmark Preservation Commission for design review and for staff support.

The Fort Collins Historic Preservation Program has existed in its present form since 1984 when the reorganization of responsibilities between the Landmark Preservation Commission and the Cultural Resources Board gave the Landmark Preservation Commission the authority to recommend designations of landmarks and historic districts. In 1988 the *Strategic Plan For the Fort Collins Historic Preservation Program* was completed to provide a focus and five-year work program for the administration of the program. Issues identified by this plan included:

***Strategic Plan For the Fort Collins
Historic Preservation Program (1988)***

·Design Review

1. A more effective design review process was needed, particularly for signs;
2. Stricter enforcement of approved design review applications was necessary;
3. The program required adequate staffing to provide thorough and complete design review;

·Design Guidelines

4. The goals and expectations of commission members, property owners, and tenants of the Old Town Historic District were not clearly defined;
5. The Historic Old Town Design Guidelines did not provide adequate direction;

·Program Administration

6. A new program focus was needed to better serve local preservation efforts;
7. A sense of continuity in staffing the program was missing;
8. Additional sources of program funding and potential staffing were needed;
9. The future of the preservation program beyond the next two years was unknown;

·Public Awareness

10. City officials and staff were not informed about the responsibilities of the historic preservation program and LPC; and
11. Coordination between various groups interested in or involved in preservation activities had not been accomplished.

A work program was developed to address these issues and included: Fort Collins becoming a Certified Local Government; completion of a historic resources inventory; establishment of an administrative review for sign requests; analysis of public policies, codes, and standards for their support of preservation goals; establishment of local incentives for preservation; incorporation of a historic preservation element in the Comprehensive Plan; and proceeding with designations of districts. Since the completion of the 1988 Plan, Fort Collins has become a Certified Local Government and received several grants from the Colorado Historical Society for preservation projects. The preliminary work on the identified historic contexts has been completed and an initial survey of selected historic resources has been completed. An administrative sign review process has been instituted. And, a closer working relationship with the City's Building Inspection and Zoning staff has been developed. The implementation of the balance of the work program has not been completed.

Foundation

for Historic Preservation in Fort Collins

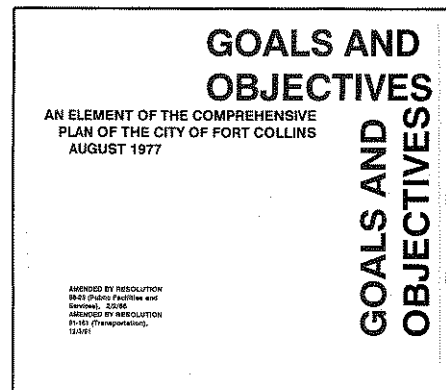
The City's Comprehensive Plan is not one document but a series of guiding documents, adopted over time, for the purpose of planning and directing community growth and change. These documents are the "elements" of the Comprehensive Plan.

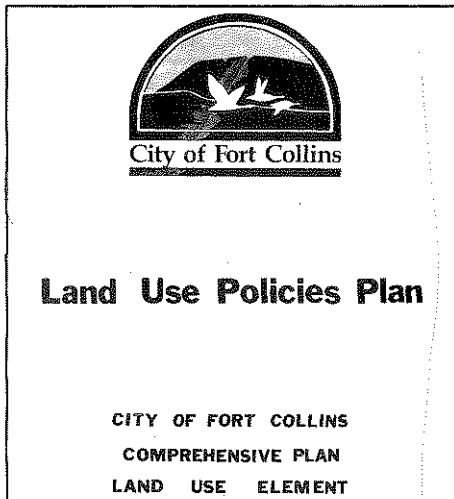
Fort Collins' Comprehensive Plan recognizes the dynamics of change and is constantly evolving to address major aspects of our community's future. The City's approach to comprehensive planning has been to define an overall set of community goals and objectives and to keep them current with important planning issues. Historic preservation is integrated to an unusual degree throughout the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes specific preservation policies, a number of policies that indirectly support preservation and various policies that are in conflict with preservation goals. The issue for the future of historic preservation in Fort Collins appears to be more one of need for more implementation activity rather than a lack of general direction.

Goals and Objectives (1977) - This document serves as the foundation for all other elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan and includes specific objectives that support historic preservation and some that are in conflict with preservation goals. Among its objectives is to "encourage the protection and preservation of architecturally or historically significant buildings" through "the official designation as "historic landmark" of buildings and houses which meet established criteria and encourage the maintenance and continued use of such buildings." The document also states that the City should "promote the preservation and maintenance of older houses and buildings which, while not of a degree of significance to merit official designation, make an important contribution to the character and historical development of the City." In achieving this objective, the document encourages the conversion of older buildings to new uses which can be done "without irreparably damaging or destroying the unique quality of the building." Further, the City should "develop provisions in the building codes" that realistically address the "unique problems of rehabilitation of older buildings."

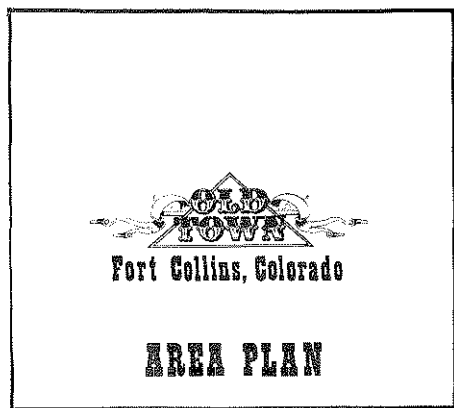
Some examples where conflict exist between preservation goals and other objectives include: transportation planning, where the goal of smooth flow of traffic may come at the expense of the integrity of a historic neighborhood; and housing goals of developing more intensive residential areas on infill sites or near the downtown which may impact the existing character of historic neighborhoods and may result in alterations or demolition of historic housing stock.

Relationship to Comprehensive Plan Elements

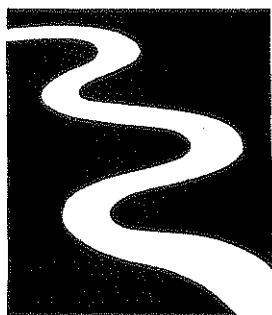




Land Use Policies Plan (1979) - This Plan is less specific in terms of historic preservation than the *Goals and Objectives* document. However, this document was primarily designed to address issues of growth at the periphery of the community and did not address in much detail the existing developed areas of the community wherein most of the City's historic resources exist. Many of the land use policies are in response to issues of neighborhood integrity. In historic residential areas, preservation of both neighborhood integrity and historic resources can be the result of the same policies. The Plan does contain policies which encourage infill development that may conflict with preserving historically important buildings. These conflicts have been resolved to some extent in the adoption of land use and historic preservation policies in subsequent plans for the Eastside, Westside and Downtown neighborhoods.



Historic Old Town Area Plan (1980) - This Plan sets forth goals and policies to be used in the revitalization of the Historic Old Town District. The Plan contains specific policies and actions for preserving its historic image; pedestrian and vehicular traffic; parking; economic revitalization; and land use. One of the products of this Plan was the preparation of Design Guidelines for Historic Old Town (1981). Some recommended actions in the Plan include providing linkages to the Poudre River; alleyway improvements; upgrading public improvements, including undergrounding of overhead utility lines; and developing an ongoing community preservation education program.

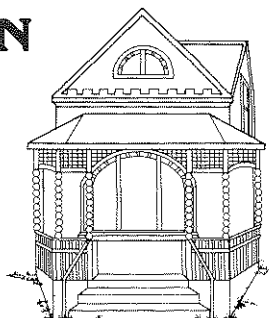


Poudre River Trust

LAND USE POLICY PLAN
Downtown River Corridor

Poudre River Trust Land Use Policy Plan (1986) - The goal of this Plan is the revitalization of the downtown river corridor through policies related to mixed use development, recreation, natural resources and historic, educational and cultural interests. A number of historic resources were identified in the river corridor, and a number of actions were recommended to preserve these resources including conducting historic surveys; developing demolition criteria; encouraging local designations; and creating an "interpretive" trail combining historic and natural resource interests. Little implementation of preservation recommendations has occurred since adoption of this Plan.

EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



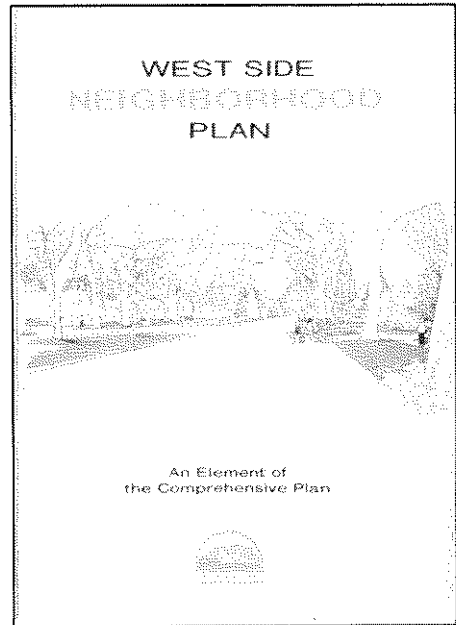
AN ELEMENT OF
THE COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN OF THE CITY
OF FORT COLLINS

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

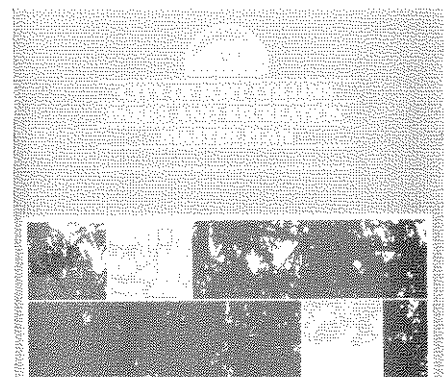
Eastside Neighborhood Plan (1987) - This Plan seeks to enhance and preserve the quality of life in the Eastside Neighborhood and to promote a balance of residential and non-residential uses. The Plan includes specific policies that are both directly and indirectly targeted at preserving historic resources. A specific element of the Plan was a commitment to implementation. In 1991, a major rezoning of the area was completed which will help protect the area from the encroachment of undesirable land uses and development. Changes to the zoning, however, did not offer specific protection for historic resources. The funding for acquisition and development of a proposed Eastside Neighborhood Park has been approved. Some recommendations of the Plan have not

been completed such as local designation of the Laurel School Historic District; survey of historic resources; transportation recommendations; and control of parking impacts from adjacent downtown activity.

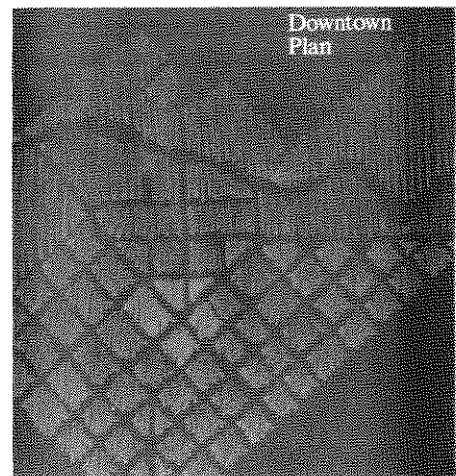
Westside Neighborhood Plan (1988) - The Westside Neighborhood is composed of the oldest residential areas of Fort Collins. The implementation of the Plan can significantly impact very important historic resources. The Plan notes that if the quality of life and character of the Westside Neighborhood is lost it will be impossible to recreate. The Plan includes a variety of policies and implementation actions that seek to preserve the historic resources of the area. In 1991, a major rezoning of the area was completed which will help protect the area from the encroachment of undesirable land uses and development. Changes to the zoning did not offer specific protection for historic resources. The Plan notes the importance of historic resources and specified implementation actions for identifying and designating them. Other recommended actions in the Plan, but not yet implemented, include discouraging demolition of residential buildings; creating financial and other incentives to encourage rehabilitation; establishing a loan program for residential rehabilitation; designation of important buildings and districts as local and/or national landmarks; and providing public improvements.



Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1988) - This Plan contains a goal to provide a balanced open space system which includes historical sites. Opportunities exist in the acquisition and development of parks and open space to integrate historical buildings and sites. Some local successes includes the preservation of the Nelson Farm Milk House; renovation of the barn on Rogers Park; and the preservation of the Lee Martinez farmhouse and associated buildings in Martinez Park. The purchase and development of parks in the core residential neighborhoods, such as the proposed Eastside Neighborhood Park, can also contribute to neighborhood preservation and revitalization.



Downtown Plan (1989) - This Plan clearly recognizes the importance of historic buildings to the revitalization of the downtown area and particularly notes several well-known landmarks as important focal points. A study prepared by Ross Consulting Group of Denver to provide market information about the downtown area, identified the uniqueness created by its many historical buildings as an essential ingredient for success and identified opportunities that could support preservation of historic buildings in order to create a focus for the downtown area. One of the major policies of this Plan is to "preserve and enhance the historic and architectural values of downtown" and the Plan recommends that this be accomplished by protecting important structures, sites, and districts; being sure that new building construction and renovation is sensitive to the historic character of downtown; integrating the trolley; providing public improvements; and increasing public awareness of historic preservation.



The Plan also provides a list of actions that should be taken to implement these policies. These actions include establishing a subdivision near the downtown where significant buildings threatened with demolition may be moved; packaging and distributing guidelines for historic building renovations; establishing design review criteria for exterior signage and building construction/renovation; establishing an incentive program to encourage renovation of historic structures; and local and national designations of eligible structures and districts within the downtown area.

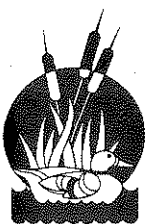
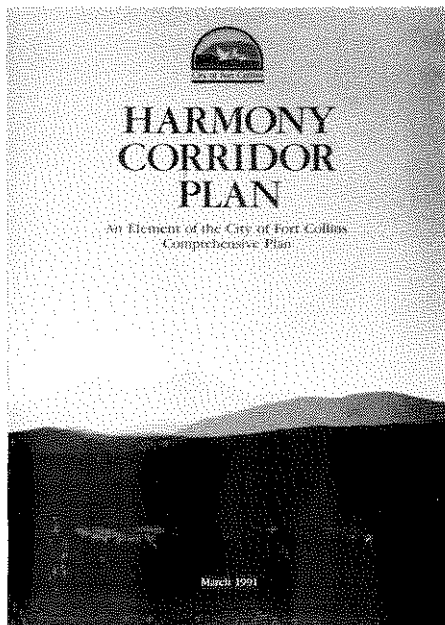
Although the policies of the Downtown Plan specifically recognize the importance of and support for preservation, the emphasis of the Plan is on attracting retail, business, and government users to the downtown, enhancement of economic activity, and making public improvements to enhance traffic flow, parking, and streetscapes. So while historic resources are valued in the Plan, preservation as an objective is secondary to economic development.

In 1991, the Downtown Development Authority commissioned a study on downtown development and zoning. The purpose was to look broadly at issues of downtown development. The most recent draft includes some strategies for implementing incentives and requirements for historic preservation.

Harmony Corridor Plan (1991) - The Plan recognizes that the historical heritage of the area is one of the interesting elements that make the Harmony corridor unique. The Plan notes the existence of historic resources, but has only limited policy that supports "efforts to preserve the historical heritage." The Plan recognizes that the existing historic buildings may eventually be lost to development. However, the Plan suggests that the historic heritage they represent can be preserved in a variety of ways. Encouraging property owners to have the historical significance of their structures documented is suggested in the Plan.

Natural Areas Plan (1992) - While the focus of this Plan is on natural areas, there are many potential opportunities for cooperation with regard to the Poudre River area, agricultural lands, and educational programs.

Fort Collins Area Transportation Plan (Underway) - This Plan is in the process of being completed and can impact historic resources. For example, avoiding channeling undesirable traffic into the core residential neighborhoods can contribute to neighborhood stabilization and revitalization; or, the widening or positioning of streets may cause the removal and/or negatively influence historic sites and districts. Opportunities exist to coordinate and merge transportation and historic preservation objectives and activities. For instance, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) recognizes historic preservation as an eligible transportation enhancement activity, and may be a factor to be considered in the future development of area-wide transportation plans and programs.



**City of Fort Collins
Natural Areas
Policy Plan**

An Element of the
Comprehensive Plan

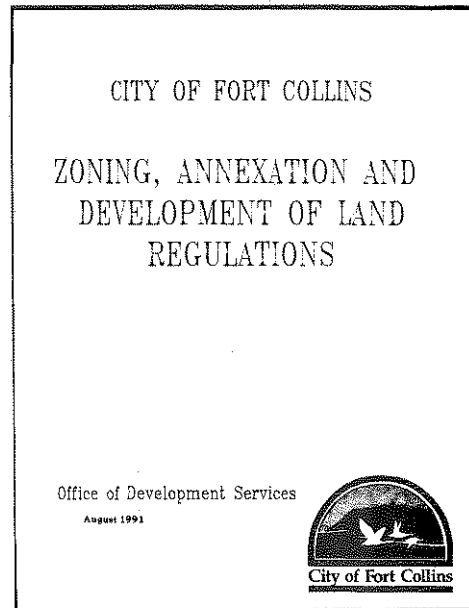
Zoning and Annexation Laws -- An evaluation of Fort Collins' development requirements indicates many places where regulations can impact the preservation of historic resources to some degree, generally by making it possible to change the historic development pattern and historic uses. There are refinements that might be considered in the relevant zoning district requirements that could make the result of changes conform better to the underlying pattern. However, there are few changes that would strongly support the preservation of historic resources that would still be in conformance with the purpose of the zoning districts. When land is developed or redeveloped through the Land Development Guidance System rather than use-by-right, there is more scrutiny of land use compatibility and historic preservation criteria. Land is annexed to the City of Fort Collins generally without the imposition of many conditions of annexation.

Land Development Guidance System (LDGS) -- The intent of the LDGS is to allow flexibility in development and by evaluating each project on its own merits, to provide for more sensible development. The basis of evaluating development proposals is a consistent set of criteria that are intended to be equally effective for infill development as they are for newly developing areas. The recent rezoning of the eastside and westside neighborhoods require development proposals to be processed in this system or through special site plan review procedures. The LDGS offers opportunities to be more protective of historic resources and for citizen participation.

The Land Development Guidance System has criteria relating to historic preservation, but they are difficult to apply. At the present time, protection of historic resources is just one of many development responses that could result in the approval of a development proposal. Part of the old core of the community has received national historic district designation. Some other structures are designated landmarks. However, the development process continues to come upon other buildings and places that many in the community find to be of historic value. It is often arbitrary and too late to impose historic preservation restriction in the midst of a development review process. Frequently, recognition that a structure is historically important comes too late in the process.

The recent audit of the LDGS indicated that the crisis and frustration that ensues would be greatly reduced if the City had a more comprehensive set of priorities and a general approach to deal with such issues. However, the LDGS may prove to be a minor tool in implementing preservation policies since most conflicts occur outside the LDGS review authority.

Relationship to Zoning, Subdivision and Annexation



Urban Growth Area Agreement- The basic premise of the Agreement is that the urban growth area is an appropriate location for urban development under prescribed conditions intended to make such development conform to City standards in the eventuality of annexation. These conditions do not consider preservation of historic resources. Larimer County has no program for designation and protection of historic resources.

Policy Issues for the Future

To determine attitudes toward historic preservation in general and the Fort Collins program in particular, a series of interviews with Fort Collins citizens, including the Landmark Preservation Commission, were conducted. Included among those who were interviewed were representatives of organizations or interests which impact historic preservation, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and citizens with an interest in banking, government, education, business, real estate, architecture, and historic preservation. In general, those interviewed considered themselves "very involved" in historic preservation. Responses to interview questions pointed to a very positive future for preservation, and one that potentially could have broad community support. Everyone interviewed stated that they were familiar with the City's preservation efforts, but were evenly split over whether or not these efforts had much effect. Comments indicated that planning efforts, in general, fall short in implementation, and citizens are very concerned that the City does not have a vision for the future, including preservation, with a true commitment to achieve such a vision.



West Side Neighborhood Porch

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) noted the issues they are confronted with in carrying out their responsibilities. They were similar to those identified in the *Strategic Plan* (1988). Design review issues focused on the inordinate amount of time the LPC spends on design review, including the problems of incomplete submissions, inadequate review time to resolve issues, and reluctance of applicants to change their completed plans. They also noted the lack of property owners' awareness of the rules and regulations, and the fact that designers/developers are not knowledgeable in appropriate historic design. Inadequate enforcement of approved designs is also a specific issue the LPC identified. And lastly, the LPC noted the need for thorough training of both new and existing members, including interpretation and application of design guidelines and standards. Design guideline issues are limited to the need to update the Old Town Guidelines. Public policy issues can be grouped into two areas of concern: historic preservation needs to be better integrated into goals, policies, and implementation of City plans and regulations; and enforcement and compliance of conditions for approval of alterations to landmark buildings needs improving and this depends, in part, upon having a better informed City staff.

Neither the public nor elected and appointed officials are fully aware of the value of historic preservation to the community, and thus preservation has a relatively low priority. Groups who have an interest and could promote preservation are loosely organized and not politically active. There have been few designations, without which the demolition of historic buildings cannot be prevented, and proposed demolitions are decided in crisis situations.

What the program makes up in terms of existing policy, it lacks in implementation. While the existing program has done an excellent job in providing what services it can given its existing, limited resources, it is not sufficient to meet existing or future customer demands. Staffing for the program has been reduced over the years due to other competing demands for staff resources. If the Program described herein is to be successful, additional resources will be required, especially in terms of additional staff. Establishing historic preservation as an important priority relative to other City programs and services is an important first step.

Landmark Preservation Commission

Public Awareness

Program Administration

Identification of Historic Resources

In the past decade, Fort Collins has completed extensive survey work to identify historic resources. Survey forms, completed earlier in the decade, are not as complete as more recent forms and some areas remain unsurveyed. Fort Collins has more information on its historic resources than many other communities. However, as is typical of many communities, the framework for evaluating the significance and degree of integrity of historic resources, known as historic context, is missing for a systematic designation program. Further surveying will be necessary to expand the historic contexts currently being developed to address structures that are thought to be under potential threat.

Designations

Locally designated historic landmarks and districts are the backbone of a preservation program. However, Fort Collins has relatively few designated landmarks and districts for a community with a historic preservation program that has been in place for almost 25 years. Efforts by the LPC to increase the number of designations have not been successful. The reasons for this are thought to be general lack of appreciation of the value of historic resources, lack of owners' knowledge of what restrictions designation would or would not place on private property, lack of financial incentive, and lack of staffing to process designations. The lack of support for historic preservation was identified as one of the major obstacles that the historic preservation program must overcome. Interviews with citizens reveal a significant degree of awareness of historic preservation, but this is accompanied by the feeling that preservation should not include many restrictions. Awareness and knowledge can be improved through education efforts; however, an important aspect of this effort is developing support that will translate into political support, as well as individual support for undertaking historic preservation projects. Developing acceptance by owners of restrictions on their historic properties will be a longer term effort.

Crisis Reaction to Proposed Demolitions

The weaknesses of the Fort Collins' historic preservation program come to focus when demolition of a historic property is proposed. The community is generally not knowledgeable of the value of saving and using the building, the owner is not willing to be restricted in redevelopment of the property and the local heritage groups do not turn out in organized support to influence the decision. If there is no unified public will to save the resource, opinion is polarized and a crisis results. The community loses through this process, and it is this situation that the Fort Collins' City Council and Landmark Preservation Commission proposes to address by developing and implementing the Historic Resources Preservation Program.