

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

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I. IDENTIFICATION

- 1. Resource number: **5WL.5598** Parcel number: **080721202001**
- 2. Temporary resource number: **Not Applicable**
- 3. County: **Weld**
- 4. City: **Windsor**
- 5. Historic building name: **Dowding Building; Dowding Opera House; Windsor Opera House; Windsor Masonic Lodge**
- 6. Current building name: **201-205 4th Street**
- 7. Building address: **201-205 4th Street**
- 8. Owner name: **W-R Ehrlich Company (First Story); P.J. Veenendaal (Second Story)**
- Owner organization:
- Owner address: **400 Walnut St (First Story); 10687 Cooper Dr (Second Story)
Windsor (1); Littleton (2), CO 80550 (1); 80127 (2)**

44. National Register eligibility field assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individually eligible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not eligible	<input type="checkbox"/> Need data	<input type="checkbox"/> Previously listed
State Register eligibility field assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individually eligible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not eligible	<input type="checkbox"/> Need data	<input type="checkbox"/> Previously listed
Local landmark eligibility field assessment:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individually eligible	<input type="checkbox"/> Not eligible	<input type="checkbox"/> Need data	<input type="checkbox"/> Previously listed

II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **6N** Range: **67W**
NW 1/4 NW 1/4 NE 1/4 NW 1/4 of section **21**
10. UTM Reference Zone: **13**
Easting: **508305** Northing: **4481005**
11. USGS quad name: **Windsor** Scale: **7.5**
Year: **1969**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 26, 28, 30, and 32; Block 11**
Addition: **Windsor Original Town** Year of addition: **1882**
13. Boundary description and justification: **The boundary, as described above, contains but does not exceed the land historically associated with this property.**
- Metes and bounds exist

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building Plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
Other building plan descriptions:
15. Dimensions in feet: **3,750 square feet**
16. Number of stories: **2**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Brick**
Stucco
Other wall materials:
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
Other roof configuration:
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
Other roof materials:
20. Special features: **Chimney**
Window/Segmental Arch
21. General architectural description:
Oriented to the west, this commercial building rests on a random-coursed, rock-faced, sandstone ashlar foundation, with a projecting watertable. The walls consist of red, pressed bricks set in a 7-over-1 common bond. However, salmon-colored stucco covers the exterior walls of the front (west), north, and rear (east) elevations. A red, raked-brick veneer covers the first story of the front façade. Windows are generally 1-over-1-light, double-hung sash, with gray-painted wood frames. They open between rock-faced sills and segmental arches. Those windows opening in the second story of the front façade are paired. Windows opening in the secondary elevations of the first story have been boarded shut with brown-painted sheets of plywood and broad, horizontal wood siding. Three separate storefronts, addressed from north to south as 201, 203, and 205 4th Street, punctuate the front façade's first story. Each has plate-glass windows with aluminum frames. The windows of the northernmost storefront (201 4th Street) have faux divided lights. Canted, recessed entryways provide access to the stores; 203 and 205 share the same entryway. Concrete steps approach the entryways, which shelter brown-painted, glass-in-wood-frame doors, opening behind wood-frame screen doors. Three secondary doorways open the rear elevation's first story. All open within wider, segmental-arched openings, filled in with brown-painted wood siding. The center doorway hosts a wood slab door. The end doorways have 9-light, 2-panel, steel doors, painted white. A steel fire escape, without steps, connects two doorways opening in the south end and in the center of the rear elevation's second story. The southern doorway hosts a 6-panel steel door, painted white, opening beneath a 2-light transom. The center doorway has been enclosed. A covered, wood staircase ascends from 4th Street to a doorway in the west end of the south elevation's second story. Sheets of gray asphalt cover the nearly flat roof, surrounded by parapets on its north, west, and south sides. A small chimney is engaged to the north elevation. Other chimneys protrude from the center of the rear elevation and from the center and east end of the south elevation.
22. Architectural style: **Late 19th And Early 20th Century American Movements/Commercial Style**
Other architectural style:
Building type:
23. Landscape or special setting features:
This building is located in Windsor's commercial district, on the southeast corner of 4th and Main Streets. Separating the building's front (west) facade from the street is a concrete sidewalk. A small, grass-covered strip runs between the building's north elevation and the concrete sidewalk parallel to Main Street. Gravel covers a parking area behind (east

of) the building.

24. Associated building, features or objects:

There are no other buildings associated with this property.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of Construction: **1902** Actual Estimate

Source of information: **Weld County Assessor Property Profile.**

Greeley Tribune. 6 November 1902.

26. Architect: **Unknown**

Source of information:

27. Builder: **William M. Alter and Charles F. Chipman**

Source of information: **The Poudre Valley, 6 December 1902.**

28. Original Owner: **John and Charles Dowding**

Source of information: **Greeley Tribune. 6 November 1902.**

29. Construction history:

According to Weld County Tax Assessor records, this building was constructed in 1902. An analysis of the style, materials, and historical records corroborates this date. The exterior staircase was originally unsheltered, but was enclosed in the 1940s. The stucco appears to date to at least the 1970s. Based on historic photographs, the storefront façade treatment was installed after 1980.

30. Location: **Original Location** Date of move(s):

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Commerce and Trade**

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

32. Intermediate use(s): **Commerce and Trade**

Recreation and Culture

33. Current use(s): **Commerce and Trade**

Vacant/Not in Use

34. Site type(s): **Opera House**

35. Historical background:

The Dowding Opera House was the vision of Weld County pioneer John Dowding and his son, Charles Henry Dowding, who rose to become prominent Windsor area farmers and early civic leaders. John Dowding was born in May 1837 in England and immigrated to the United States between 1865 and 1870, quickly settling in Weld County, Colorado Territory. His wife, Sarah, was also born in England, in September 1835. Their eldest son, Albert, was also born in England. Son Charles and daughters Emma and Florence were all born in Colorado.

Built by Windsor contractors William M. Alter and Charles F. Chipman, construction of the Dowdings' imposing edifice on the southeast corner of 4th and Main streets began in March 1902. The building would include three storefronts on the first floor and a large auditorium on the second floor. But the Dowdings' vision only increased, ordering stone masons to expand the foundation's dimensions twice during construction. By April 165,000 bricks arrived from Fort Collins. On October 1, 1902, tenants began to move into the first-floor storefronts. The entire building was largely completed by November, when the *Greeley Tribune* provided this description:

"The Dowding block is the latest building to be erected. It is a fine two-story brick [building], the upper part to be used as an opera house—I believe that is the proper western term. The drop curtain will be twenty feet wide and the stage will be 20x60 feet. It will seat 400; then look out for *10 Nights in a Bar Room, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and East Lynne.*"

The Dowdings officially christened their building the Windsor Opera House, but locals continued to call it the Dowding Opera House. Regardless, John and Charles Dowding inaugurated the auditorium on December 23, 1902, with a staging of William B. Bradbury's 1856 cantata *Esther, the Beautiful Queen*, perhaps the most popular large-scale choral work by an American composer during the nineteenth century. The cantata was an ambitious choice because it generally required gaudy costumes and elaborate scenery, but was always a perennial favorite of school groups and ladies' organizations. Roy Ray, editor of Windsor's *The Poudre Valley* newspaper attended the show and provided a glowing review of the new theater in his paper on December 27, 1902:

"Windsor may well be proud of her new opera house. It is adequate for all present needs of the town. The seating capacity is easily four hundred. The stage is large and fitted with very pretty scenery. Acetylene gas lights the entire building in a brilliant manner, from all appearances it would seem that this lighting is entirely satisfactory for stage purposes, as very pretty effects can be obtained by

proper regulation.”

The opera house immediately became the social and cultural heart of Windsor. School groups and women's organizations continued to provide most of the entertainment during the opera house's brief history. But traveling shows also played at the opera house, staging everything from the elaborate *The Gladiator* to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Perhaps the most famous actor to perform at the Windsor Opera House was comedian Joseph Newman and his company of vaudeville players. Yet not all events were theatrical. On May 23, 1903, Windsor hosted the first annual track and field meet for northern Colorado high schools at a park beside Windsor Lake. That evening boys from Greeley and Longmont high schools participated in the first basketball game ever played in Windsor—held at the Dowding Opera House.

Yet the opera house was short-lived. Newspaper articles suggest that the Dowdings struggled to book new acts. In May 1903, the Dowdings contracted “Raymond and Branch” to manage the theater. R.P. Penney succeeded them by 1905. Despite changes in management, the auditorium was never much of a paying proposition for the Dowdings. Meanwhile, Windsor Masons had outgrown their lodge in the second story of the McNeil Building at 428 Main Street (5WL.5622). Thus in March 1905, the organization agreed to purchase from Charles Dowding the second story auditorium. This was a blow to the larger community. As the *Fort Collins Weekly Courier* noted, “This purchase will leave Windsor without an opera house which will be greatly missed.” After three months of preparation, the Masons moved into their new lodge hall, holding a house-warming party on June 20, 1905. The remodeling, completed by Greeley contractors Agard & Rose, converted the auditorium into a large hall room, dining room, assembly room, and parlors. By 1917, the organization had entirely paid off its portion of the building.

Windsor Lodge No. 69 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons was originally organized on June 23, 1887, under the jurisdiction of Fort Collins Lodge No. 19. The Windsor Lodge was duly constituted on October 29, 1887. The Masons originally convened in the local schoolhouse until acquiring the upper story of the McNeil Building. With their purchase of the Dowding Opera House's second story in 1905, Windsor Masons added a higher branch of Freemasonry, Chapter No. 40 of the Royal Arch Masons.

Through its century-long history in Windsor, the Masonic Lodge was dominated by three families: the Fries, Tellers, and Lindblads. Indeed, George Teller rose to become Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Colorado in the late 1940s. In addition to the Masons, this lodge hall also hosted the associated women's organization Order of the Eastern Star, Columbia Chapter No. 16, organized in 1893. Like most fraternal organizations across the country, membership in the Windsor Masonic lodge continued to dwindle until it was disbanded in the 1980s.

The building's three, first-story storefronts, addressed from north to south as 201, 203, and 205 4th Street hosted a variety of small businesses, offices, and bars. When the building opened, the tenant at 201 4th Street was T.F. Vincent's wholesale produce store. At 203 4th Street was Joseph G. Hess's New Bakery. The bakery required the construction of a large oven, which protruded from the center of the rear elevation. Dexter “Deck” B. Cloud and his son opened City Market, a butcher shop and grocery store, at 205 4th Street. In 1906, the 201 4th Street unit was vacant, while 203 continued to host Hess's New Bakery, and 205 contained City Market. By 1911, a motion picture theater occupied 201 4th Street. This theater predates George I. Richards movie theater, which he opened in the adjacent former armory building (207 4th Street, 5WL.5599) in 1912. As Roy Ray notes in his *History of Windsor*, these earlier efforts to establish a theater in Windsor operated “under the management of Wimmer Bros., J.T. Perkins, and Wingfield.” The New Bakery remained at 203 4th Street. 205 4th Street was vacant. A decade later, 201 4th Street was again vacant, while a secondhand store occupied both the 203 and 205 storefronts.

In 1940, Pete Moore opened Pete's Place bar at 201 4th Street. Soon thereafter, the business became the Main Street Tavern, which it remained for the next two decades. The various owners included John Gomer, Elmer Engebretson and Charles Goodman; Alex Martin Jr.; and Al Ehrlich. In 1949, Elmer Andrews purchased the tavern and operated it until 1964, and beginning around 1960, Andrews also operated his Andrews Radio & Television Service business in this building. The tavern then changed hands several times; some of the owners were Eddie Mayer and Glenn Debban; Ed Schwindt; Richard Parker; Tony Macy; and Rodney Stewart. The name of the business changed as well during this period, from the Why Not Tavern, to the Good Times Tavern, and finally to the Unemployment Office Tavern, which occupied the space in the 1980s.

Another longtime business to occupy the Dowding Building, at 203 4th Street, was Dave's Liquor Store, owned and operated by Dave Winograd from before 1940 until 1970. That year, Winograd sold the business to Wayne Lutz, who operated it as Wayne's Liquors for a couple of years before selling the business to Clyde and Velda Wittig. They rechristened the establishment as Vel Kay Liquors, which they later moved to the Windsor West Shopping Center.

Perhaps the most prominent business to occupy the 205 4th Street unit was owned by the Dowding family itself. Charles Dowding established the Service Dairy in 1936. The business remained here through at least 1941.

At the time of this survey, the W-R Ehrlich Company owned the first story of this building; occupants were the Olde Towne Frame Shoppe and Gallery (201), Alley Katz thrift store (203), and Eagle Mountain Wealth Management (205).

36. Sources of information:

Ray, Roy. *Highlights in the History of Windsor, Colorado: Golden Jubilee Edition*. Windsor: Press of *The Poudre Valley*, 1940, pp. 25, 39-40, 62, 85.

Lindblad, Mary Alice. *A Walk Through Windsor: 1940-1980*. Windsor, Colo.: by the author, 1980, p. 140, 170.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (for Windsor, Colorado). New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., December 1900, January 1906, May 1911, and November 1921.

Greeley Tribune. 6 November 1902.

Fort Collins Weekly Courier, 15 March 1905.

Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company. *Telephone Directory [for Weld County]*. Consulted 1927-28, 1929-30, Summer 1936, November 1941, November 1945, June 1950, Winter 1954-55, Summer 1960, and 1964.

U.S. Census of 1880. Weld County, Colorado. Roll: T9_93; Family History Film: 1254093; Page: 476.1000; Enumeration District: 109.

U.S. Census of 1900. Precinct 4, Weld County, Colorado. Roll: T623 130; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 198.

Windsor Leader, 15 March 1902, 12 April 1902, 21 June 1902, 6 September 1902, 23 September 1902, 4 October 1902, 18 October 1902, 25 October 1902, and 8 November 1902.

The Poudre Valley, 22 November 1902, 6 December 1902, 27 December 1902, 18 April 1903, 5 December 1903, and 14 December 1905.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: Yes No

Designation authority:

Date of designation:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Embodies 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.
- D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see manual).
- Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Applicable Colorado State Register criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history.
- B. Connected with persons significant in history.
- C. Has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan.
- D. Is of geographic importance.
- E. Contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history.
- Does not meet any of the above Colorado State Register criteria.

Applicable Town of Windsor landmark criteria:

- 1. Architectural: a) Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period.
- 1. Architectural: b) Example of the work of an architect or builder who is recognized for expertise nationally, statewide, regionally or locally.
- 1. Architectural: c) Demonstrates superior craftsmanship or high artistic value.
- 1. Architectural: d) Represents an innovation in construction, materials or design.
- 1. Architectural: e) Style is particularly associated with the Windsor/Northern Colorado area.
- 1. Architectural: f) Represents a built environment of a group of people in an era of history.
- 1. Architectural: g) Pattern or grouping of elements representing at least one (1) of the above criteria.
- 1. Architectural: h) Significant historic remodel.
- 2. Social: a) Site of historic event that had an effect upon society.
- 2. Social: b) Exemplifies cultural, political, economic or social heritage of the community.
- 2. Social: c) An association with a notable person or the work of a notable person.
- 3. Geographic/Environmental: a) Enhances the sense of identity of the community.
- 3. Geographic/Environmental: b) An established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community.
- Physical Integrity 1. Shows character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, region, state or nation.
- Physical Integrity 2. Retains original design features, materials and/or character.
- Physical Integrity 3. Original location or same historic context after having been moved.
- Physical Integrity 4. Has been accurately reconstructed or restored based on documentation.
- Does not meet any of the above Town of Windsor landmark criteria.

39. Areas of significance: **Commerce**
Performing Arts
Social History
40. Period(s) of Significance: **Commerce 1902-1958; Performing Arts, 1902-1905; Social History 1905-1958**
41. Level of Significance: National State Local Not Applicable

42. Statement of Significance:
This property is historically significant under Windsor Landmark Criterion 2b for its association with the commercial development of downtown Windsor. It was one of the largest commercial blocks built in the town and has hosted a variety of businesses for over a century. The building is also significant for its association with the development of the performing arts in Windsor, serving as the town's opera house and social center for three years. It is significant in the town's social history as Windsor's longtime Masonic lodge. The Masons were the largest and most active fraternal organization in the town. While the levels of architectural and historical significance, combined with physical integrity, are not to the extent that this property would qualify for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties, it could be individually eligible as a Windsor Landmark.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:
Constructed in 1902, this commercial building and former opera house exhibits a moderate level of physical integrity relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The most notable alteration has been the application of stucco over the original masonry walls on three elevations and the modification of the storefront façades. However, the building retains its original massing, many of its original windows, and suggestions of decorative elements, such as the corbelled cornice. Many of the exterior modifications may not have impacted the original fabric of the building. Thus, physical integrity should be reassessed if the stucco and storefront façades are removed.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: Individually eligible Not eligible Need data Previously listed
State Register eligibility field assessment: Individually eligible Not eligible Need data Previously listed
Local landmark eligibility field assessment: Individually eligible Not eligible Need data Previously listed
45. Is there National Register district potential: Yes No

Discuss: **Windsor's downtown district, surveyed as part of this project, represents a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration of buildings united by their historical associations, particularly the commercial development of the community. However, the district lacks architectural integrity and, therefore, architectural association because more than half of the downtown facades were remade in the 1970s and later, mostly in the Windsor German Old-World style.**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building contributing: Yes No N/A

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it contributing: Yes No N/A

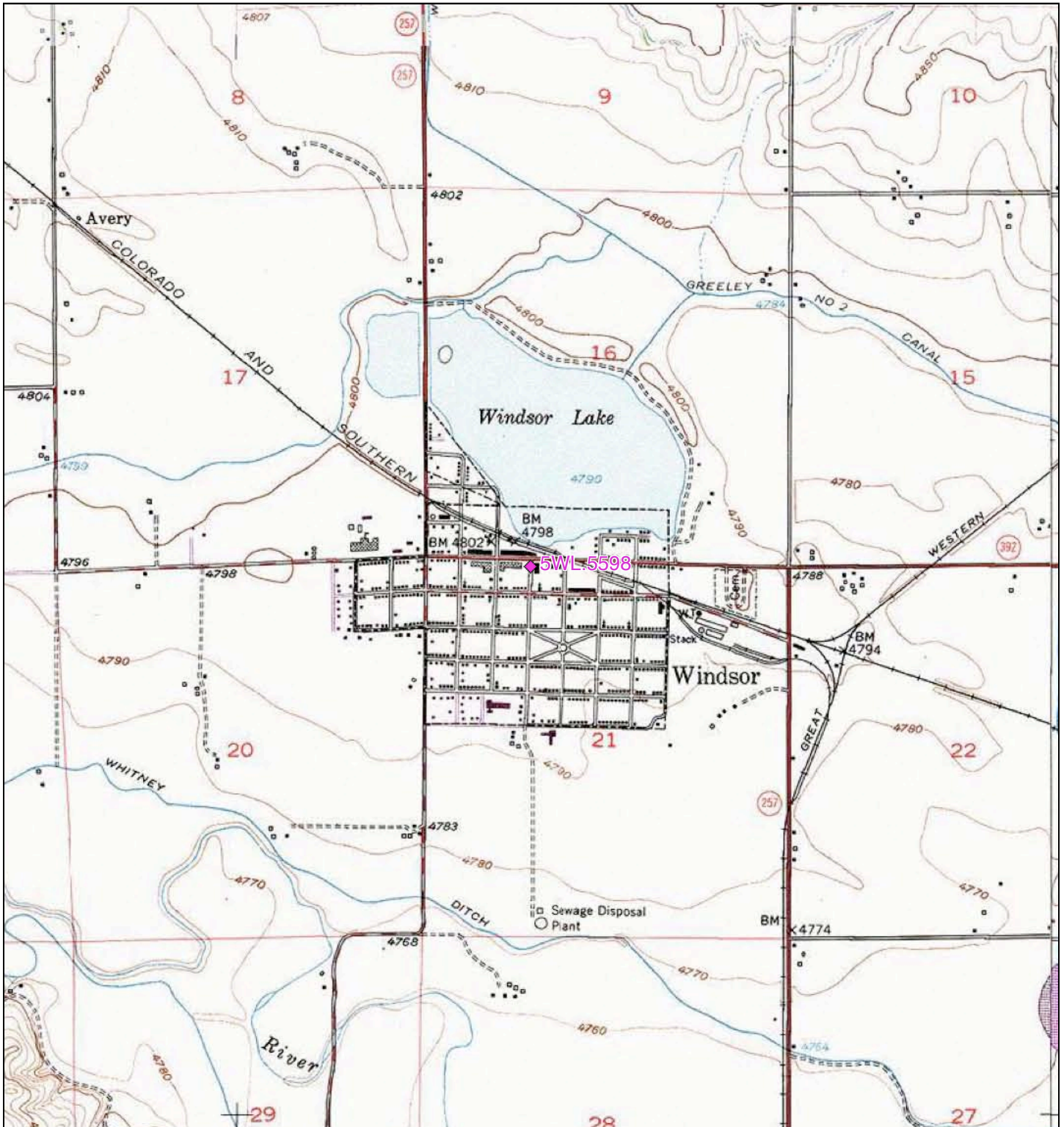
VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Digital photograph file name(s): **4thst201-205 - 1 to 4thst201-205 - 5**
Digital photographs filed at: **Town of Windsor
301 Walnut St
Windsor, CO 80550**
48. Report title: **Downtown Windsor Survey Report**
49. Date(s): **4/29/2008**
50. Recorder(s): **Adam Thomas, Jeffrey DeHerrera, and Rachel Kline**
51. Organization: **Historitecture, LLC**
52. Address: **PO Box 419
Estes Park, CO 80517-0419**
53. Phone number(s): **(970) 586-1165**

SKETCH MAP



LOCATION MAP



Source: U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Windsor - 1969

Downtown Windsor Survey

Historitecture, LLC

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