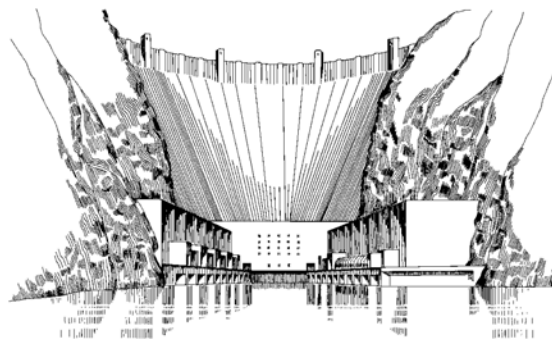
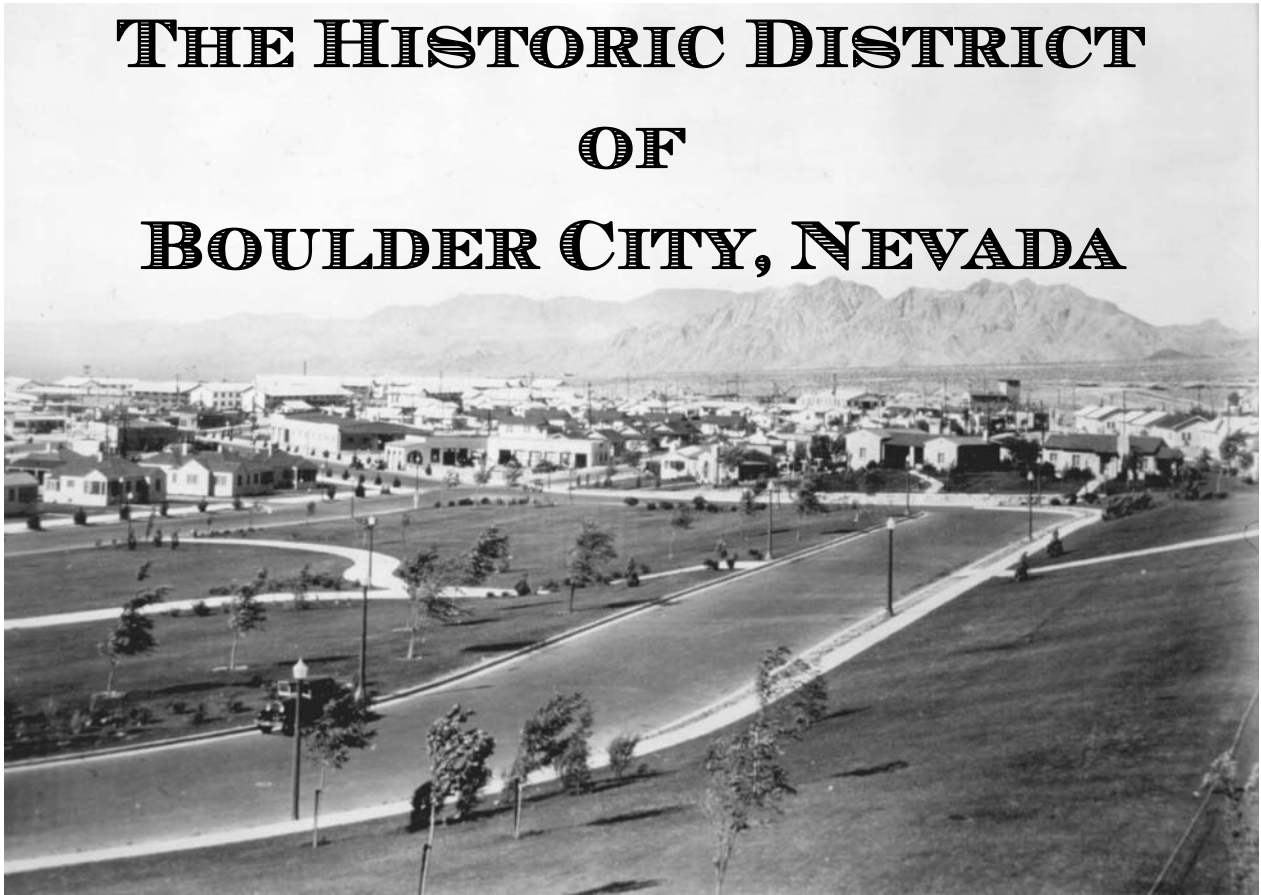




THE HISTORIC DISTRICT OF BOULDER CITY, NEVADA



Home of Hoover Dam

Map of Boulder City, Nevada
HISTORIC DISTRICT
as listed on the National Register of Historic Places



A brief history of Boulder City, Nevada – Home of Hoover Dam

- The Boulder Canyon Project Act, authorizing the building of Hoover Dam and the creation of Boulder City was signed by President Calvin Coolidge on December 21, 1928.
- The contract to build the dam was awarded to Six Companies, Inc. (a company composed of six separate construction companies) on March 11, 1931.
- Boulder City, built to house the workers who came to work on the dam, holds national significance as the first fully developed experiment in new town planning in the 20th Century. The town site was on federally owned land and title to all land was retained by the federal government under the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Boulder City was built as the “Boulder Canyon Project Federal Reservation” and federal rangers maintained law and order on the reservation.
- Housing in Boulder City was built during 1931 and 1932 by the Bureau of Reclamation for its department heads, engineers, and employees and by Six Companies, Inc. for its executives and the workers on the dam.
- Beginning in 1931 permits began to be issued by Sims Ely, the City Manager, for commercial buildings in the city. By 1932 the view north on Nevada Way toward the Bureau of Reclamation Building on the hill looked much as it does today.
- The dam was completed in 1936, 22 months ahead of schedule because of the management skills of Frank T. Crowe, one of the most competent construction engineers to work in Reclamation.
- When the dam was completed, the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light (now the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power) and California Edison Company were contracted to distribute power to southern Nevada and southern California.
- In 1958, Congress approved the Boulder City Act and after 29 years of federal control, the Bureau of Reclamation transferred ownership of approximately 33 square miles to Boulder City’s new government, retaining only those facilities necessary for the operation and maintenance of Hoover Dam. Boulder City was incorporated in January 1960.
- The citizens of Boulder City have enacted various charter amendments to keep growth contained, striving to maintain the small-town charm of the city. The citizens adopted a ballot initiative in 1979 for growth control and another in 1997 to restrict how city land can be sold, as most of the vacant land is owned by the city. The city’s territory increased in 1995 with the acquisition of an additional approximate 167 square miles of former federal land and again in 2008 with the annexation of 6.5 square miles of federal land, bringing the total area within the city’s limits to approximately 207 square miles, most of which is owned by the city, undeveloped and restricted to stay that way.
- The Boulder City Historic District was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. At that time the district encompassed 514 buildings and structures, most of which were constructed between 1931 and 1942, corresponding to the initial construction and operations phase of the city’s history.

Boulder City Historic District The City's Streets and Buildings

The seven main streets of Boulder City were named for the seven states the Colorado River drains: Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California. Denver Street is named for the City in which the Bureau of Reclamation Headquarters was, and still is, located. Nevada Highway (U.S Highway 93), the original route through the city, has been renamed Nevada Way for the portion between Buchanan Boulevard and the U.S. 93 Truck Route.



The following pages briefly describe several of the historic buildings in Boulder City, although it is not a comprehensive list. More detail is found in the various documents listed as references at the end of this report, and also within the adopted guidelines for various parts of the historic district that can be found on the city's website at bcnv.org.

The report addresses the following:

- Administration buildings built by the federal government for the Bureau of Reclamation, which oversaw the construction and continued administration of the dam.
- Commercial buildings built by the first business people of Boulder City.
- Residential areas built for the employees of the Bureau of Reclamation, the operators and employees of the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light and the Edison Company, and the employees of Six Companies, Inc.

To locate the buildings, most of the addresses listed in this report can be found using Google Maps, with or without Street View.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PARKS

City Hall / 401 California Avenue: City Hall was originally the Boulder City Elementary School, built in 1932 by the Bureau of Reclamation and operated with Six Companies funds. The building has distinctive brick patters along the front and end walls and a red clay tile roof; it has been restored to closely resemble its original appearance.



Bureau of Reclamation Admin Bldg / 1200 Park Street: Located on the highest elevation downtown and north of City Hall, this building is the most important, as well as the most dominant, government building in Boulder City. It was completed in January 1932 and housed the offices of the Chief Construction Engineer and other staff during the construction of the dam.



Parks and Recreation Building / 900 Arizona Street: To the east of City Hall is the original high school built in 1941 of concrete block construction. The Class of 1942 was the first to graduate from the high school. The building, which included a gymnasium/auditorium, now serves as the City's Recreation Center. Before the high school was built, Boulder City high school students were bused to Las Vegas and graduated from Las Vegas High School. An addition to the rear of the building was built in 1991.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Admin Bldg / 601 Nevada Way: At the southeast corner of Nevada Way at Wyoming Street is the Lake Mead National Recreation Area Administrative Offices, built in the International Style circa 1949 - 1959. Located at a key intersection, it is the largest example of its style and contributes to the understanding of Boulder City's expanding role through time as a government center.

Police Station / 1005 Arizona Street: At this southeast corner of Arizona Street and California Avenue is the original Municipal Building that is now occupied by the Police Department. This building, built in 1932, originally housed the post office, a courtroom, and a kindergarten room. In 1933, a small library opened in the basement with 3,000 books on loan from the Library of Congress. Federal law enforcement offices were also located in the building. This building has been preserved and restored to closely resemble its original appearance.



Department of Water and Power Bldg / 600 Nevada Way: This building is an excellent example of late Spanish Colonial Revival architecture and is a key element within the Historic District. It is distinguished by its irregular plan and massing, exposed masonry ("weeping mortar"), and the short octagonal tower denoting the formal entrance to the building.



- The Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light was one of two agencies contracted to operate the generators at the dam and distribute electricity to southern California. This building, built in 1937, housed its administrative and maintenance offices.
- The maintenance of this building, now owned by the City, is subject to oversight by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Water Filtration Plant Bldg / 300 Railroad Avenue: The original water treatment filtration plant was built in 1932 to provide the first pure, potable water for Boulder City residents. It is an exceptional example of industrial architecture. The water tank (still in use by the City) is located on the hill to the northeast of the treatment plant.

- In the fall of 1982, the use of this Bureau of Reclamation plant was discontinued and Boulder City joined the Southern Nevada Water Project for the source of its treated water. A deed transferring the plant from the U. S. Government to the city was recorded in January 1985. It is presently not in use and deed-restricted for health-related purposes, but future uses are being debated for the time when the deed restriction can be lifted.



Plazas and Parks: Boulder City originally had three broad, open plazas that separated the government district from the workers' residential district. These plazas were named for early explorers of the Southwest. Escalante Plaza on Arizona Street, the largest of the three, which lies between City Hall and the U. S. Post Office on the north and

between the Police Station and Central Market on the south, is the only remaining of the three plazas. Coronado Plaza to the east became the site of the new Library built in 1982, which now houses the Senior Center. Cardenas Plaza to the west became the site of the Boulder Dam Hotel, built in 1933.

Wilbur Square Park is named for Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, who named both Hoover Dam and Boulder City. The park is the preeminent green space downtown, completely bounded by public streets (between Nevada Way, Park Street, Utah Street and Arizona Street); it is located directly north of Escalante Plaza and provides an impressive view of the Bureau of Reclamation's Administration Building to its north.



- One of the huge turbines used to generate electricity at Hoover Dam is situated at the southwest corner of the Square.

On Nevada Way between Birch and Cherry Streets is Frank T. Crowe Memorial Park.

- Frank Crowe is considered to be one of the most competent construction engineers to work in Reclamation. In 1931 he was put in charge of the construction of Hoover Dam. Because of his management skills and his ability to inspire men to their fullest working potential, Crowe was able to complete the dam 22 months ahead of schedule.

The many parks and planned landscaping in the city, along with the green, grassy lawns and tree-lined streets in the residential areas, combine to make Boulder City an oasis in the desert and continue to give the city its distinctive character. All of the parks downtown are well used year-round for recreation and community events.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial District – Nevada Way

Buildings built in 1931-1932: South of Arizona Street, at 512 Nevada Way, is the building that was originally Newlin's Green Hut Café; built in 1932; it remains in business today as a café.

The building that was Ida Browder's Café, at 552 Nevada Way, was built in 1931 and had expanded south to the corner of Ash Street and Nevada Way by 1940 to include 554 and 558 Nevada Way. Today, the diner at the corner is the only part of the original complex to remain in business as a café.

- The café is the oldest remaining commercial building in the city and Ida



Browder was the city's first businesswoman. She was actively involved in community matters and joined with Elwood Mead of the Bureau of Reclamation to persuade the Library of Congress to loan the 3,000 books that supplied the city's first library.

On the east side of the street is the former Mannix-Vaughn Building (523 through 541 Nevada Way) and other buildings built in 1932. The arched arcades over the walkways along that side of Nevada Way have been restored to follow the original architectural plan for the city.

On Avenue B which joins Nevada Way, just south of Arizona, are buildings built in 1932. Only the tavern (533 Avenue B) at the site of the original Laubach's Amusement Palace remains in a similar business.

- In 1933, following the repeal of Prohibition, the first 3:2 beer and 4% wine were allowed in Boulder City and were served at Laubach's. The first bottle of liquor wasn't sold in the city until 1969, nine years after the city was incorporated. The tavern has continued the tradition of offering a free beer to everyone any day the sun does not shine in Boulder City.

Newer buildings: North of Arizona Street along Nevada Way, commercial buildings of contemporary construction, some of which have been designed to suggest the original southwestern style with covered arched arcades or implied arches, can be seen on both sides of the street.

At the corner of Nevada Way and Hotel Plaza is the Western-Mexican Center building (415 Nevada Way), built in 1950, that was originally the Photo Studio of Bill Belknap and Cliff Segerblom.

- Segerblom was hired in 1938 by the Bureau of Reclamation to become the first official photographer of the Boulder Canyon Project. He continued to record Nevada history in paintings and photographs throughout his lifetime.

Commercial District – Arizona Street

This part of the commercial district is along Arizona Street extending east from Nevada Way and includes commercial buildings to the north and south of Arizona along Hotel Plaza. As originally planned, the commercial district was to be composed of arcaded



blocks surrounding three landscaped parking plazas in the center of town, encouraging pedestrian passage from shop to shop. A southwestern architectural theme was chosen as a guideline to ensure visual continuity. This plan, innovative in 1931, was the predecessor of today's shopping plazas.

Buildings built between 1941 and 1950: On the south side of Arizona Street and on the west side of California Avenue are buildings built between 1941 and 1950, when architectural controls stipulating a southwestern style were no longer an important consideration.

Construction emulated current national stylistic trends or was generally functional in nature. Examples are the American Legion Hall (508 California Avenue), the Boulder Bowl (504 California Avenue) and Central Market (1101 Arizona Street). The Legion Hall and the Boulder Bowl still function in their original purposes, and have largely maintained their original appearance. Central Market, which first opened on Wyoming Street in 1931, moved to its current location in 1947.

The **Boulder Theater building / 1225 Arizona Street**, built in 1932 by Earl Brothers, and the connected Uptown Hardware building (1229 Arizona Street and continuing south on Hotel Plaza), built in 1939, are examples of large single buildings of a common style, housing multiple businesses, with well-proportioned matching arcades. They come the closest to adhering to the original architectural plan for the district. The theater building has been restored by Amy and Dezi Arnaz, Jr. and retains a similar use as the home of the Boulder City Ballet Company and the Dam Short Film Festival.



- Earl Brothers, who built and operated the movie theater, offered free movies to construction workers 24 hours a day in the cooled theater as relief from the extreme summer heat of the desert.

To the north across the street from the Boulder Theater Building is the former Bank of Nevada and Nevada Drug Building (1220 thru 1228 Arizona Street), also built by Brothers in 1941. This unique building is constructed of prefabricated elements and designed in the International style. It is one of the best examples of this popular architectural style in the district.



Boulder Dam Hotel / 1305 Arizona Street: Further along the south side of Arizona is the Boulder Dam Hotel, built in 1933 on what was originally Cardenas Plaza. The hotel was built in order to accommodate a growing tourist industry once construction of the Dam began. It is a large, Southern Dutch Colonial style building, which is a conspicuous departure from the southwestern architectural guideline for the district, and is a focal point in the commercial district. Fine hospitality, a richly appointed interior and a private

bath for each room were some features that contributed to the hotel's popularity and success during the 1930's.

Commercial Area – Wyoming Street

At the northeast corner of Wyoming Street and Avenue B is the R.H. Collins Building (1340 Wyoming Street), built in 1933. Living quarters are built at the back in two stories, a feature of the original Uptown Hardware Building as well. Just north of the Collins Building on Avenue B is the original Nevada Electric Building, built in 1932 (555

Avenue B). At 1300 Wyoming is the original Laundry Building, built around 1945, which is reminiscent of the art deco industrial style.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

Six Companies Hospital / 700 Arizona Street – 701 Park Place: Built by the Bureau of Reclamation, this building served as the city's only hospital from 1931 through 1974 when the new local hospital was built. Since that time it has been primarily used as a religious retreat center.

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church / 812 Arizona Street: This historic church is located at the northwest corner of Arizona and Utah Streets. Built in 1932, it is one of two of the four original churches built in Boulder City which still exist.

Grace Community Church / 1150 Wyoming Street: This Protestant non-denominational church was built in 1933 through the combined efforts of seven Protestant denominations.

St. Christopher's



Grace Community



St. Andrew's Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, originally located in the Historic District, have re-built their churches in other parts of the city.

The early formation and construction of the Community Church, the Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church, and the Church of Latter-Day Saints was a reflection of both the diversity and collective spirit of the people who came to build Hoover Dam and stayed to build Boulder City.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Power Operators Residential Area – Ash, Birch and Cherry Streets

Along the west side of Ash Street (508 – 526 Ash Street, north of Nevada Way) are duplexes built by the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light in 1942. These duplexes remain as originally designed and built, including the flagstone porches, porch light fixtures, and mailboxes. Only the landscaping has been altered to replace the grassy lawn with rock.



On Ash Street north of Arizona Street, the homes here were originally built for Six Companies engineers and superintendents. The Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light acquired them in 1936 and covered the stucco exteriors with drop wood siding and replaced the original roofing with red asbestos composition shingles. Most of the screened front porches and south-facing sun rooms on these homes have now been enclosed.

At the southeast corner of Birch Street and Railroad Avenue, there are four cottages built as additional housing by the City of Los Angeles for its Power Operators. These cottages (1501 and 1505 Railroad Avenue and 405 and 411 Birch Street) were built around central courtyards with a common garage located at the rear of the property. The architectural details and design of these cottages remain as originally built. (Another grouping of City of Los Angeles cottages exists at 1608, 1612, 1616 and 1620 Arizona Street.)

The homes on Birch Street were built by the City of Los Angeles in 1937 for the Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light employees. This neighborhood presents one of the most pleasing architectural environments in Boulder City. Sensitively designed, with red clay tile roofs, stuccoed walls and flagstone porches, the houses were built from three basic floor plans, alternated along the streetscape to provide diversity.

- The City of Los Angeles retained ownership of these homes and maintained them until they were auctioned to private individuals in 1988.



On Cherry Street, each house is based on a roughly square plan featuring an inset corner entry porch, with cross-bracing on the railings. The gently sloping grassy yards, mature shade trees, and concrete pedestrian walks, along with the subtle diversity of house models, give unity to the group and make it one of the best-preserved, historic neighborhoods in the District.

Bureau of Reclamation Residential Area – Denver / Colorado Street Area

Along Denver Street are homes built for Bureau of Reclamation Project Managers and Engineers. The homes the Bureau built for its department heads, project managers, and field engineers are on the north side of the street. The first house on the corner of

Denver and Nevada Way (1300 Denver Street) was occupied by the Chief Construction Engineer for the Bureau. Distinctive facade treatments were used to vary the architectural character of the streetscape. These homes have been well preserved and retain their original appearance. On the south side are homes built for other employees of the Bureau. Most of these homes have been altered or remodeled over the years.



West of Denver Street, on the hilltop west of the water tower, are two prominent homes. The largest (1400 Lodge Road) was the Lodge used by executives of Six Companies and dignitaries visiting the project site, including President Herbert Hoover. The house further to the west (1411 Denver Street) was occupied by Six Companies Construction Superintendent Frank T. Crowe. A park and monument built in honor of Crowe are located at the foot of Birch Street at Nevada Way.

All of the houses on the north side of Colorado Street were built between 1931 and 1932 for field and office engineers working on the Boulder Canyon Project. The standardized floor plans were given different architectural styles in order to vary the character of the streetscape. These homes maintain a high level of original integrity with only minor or reversible alterations. The success of this effort resulted in one of the finest historic neighborhoods in Boulder City.

South of Colorado Street along Avenue B, these homes were built as additional temporary housing by the Bureau. Because they were planned to be temporary, no effort was made to vary the character of the streetscape. Most retain their original architectural design.

Six Companies Residential Area – the Avenues

The Avenue Streets are located east of Nevada Way, extending south from Wyoming Street. These streets (specifically Avenue B through Avenue F) comprise the Six Companies Residential Area. These houses, built in 1931, were the first single-family houses built by the Six Companies for its employees. A total of 136 three-room houses were built of identical plan, containing a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, with a covered, screened side and front porch. Only a few of these homes remain in their original appearance, as additions and modifications have been made over the years to accommodate growing families and changing lifestyles.

Apartments



The Cherry Lynn Apartments (633 Nevada Way) were built with financing from the Defense Housing Corporation in 1942 to house personnel working at the Basic Magnesium plant in Henderson during World War II. Seven structures, built on Nevada Way, New Mexico Street and Avenue A, comprise the apartment complex and were built around central courtyards. These are the only remaining original apartment buildings in the historic district.

This report was sponsored by the Boulder City Historic Preservation Committee.

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