

**For Official Use:**

I.D.#: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Nomination received

Determined \_\_\_ Eligible \_\_\_ Not Eligible

11/19/2001 HPC  Approved \_\_\_ Denied

\_\_\_\_ Public Hearing  Approved \_\_\_ Denied

12/11/2001 City Council  Approved \_\_\_ Denied

**City of Aurora**  
**Historic Preservation Commission**

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**AURORA LANDMARK PROPERTIES  
NOMINATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name Coal Creek Schoolhouse

Current Name Coal Creek Schoolhouse

**2. Address of Property**

Street Address 15500 E. First Avenue

City Aurora County Arapahoe Zip Code 80012

**3. Legal Description of Property**

P.M. 6 Township 4S Range 67W

SW ¼ of SW ¼ of NW ¼ of SE ¼ of Section 4

Quad Map Fitzsimons 1965/94

**4. Present Owner of Property**

Name City of Aurora

Address 1470 S. Havana St. Phone (303) 739-7010

City Aurora State CO Zip 80012

(If the property has multiple ownership, please give the names and addresses of all owners on one of the continuation sheets)

**Property Name:** Coal Creek Schoolhouse \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Preparer of Nomination**

Name Kim Stange-Eissler (updated by J. Bertolini, 12/12/2013) Date 08/02/01

Organization City of Aurora, Historic Sites Division

Address 170 S. Chambers Rd. Phone (303) 361-2997

City Aurora State CO Zip 80012

**6. Classification of Property**

Type:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object  area

**7. Condition of Property**

excellent  good  fair  deteriorated  ruins  
 original location  moved (date of move 1975)

**8. Use of Property**

Historic School

Current Educational/Historic Programs

**9. Original Owner** Arapahoe County School District No. 12

Source of information Smith Farm Project, Christine Berkowitz

**10. Year of Construction** c.1928

Source of information Smith Farm Project, Christine Berkowitz

**11. Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist, or Designer** Mr. Torgas, Builder

Source of information personal correspondence, Barbara Keil

**12. Architectural style/Engineering type** Prairie Schoolhouse Architecture

### **13. Description**

Coal Creek Schoolhouse is an excellent example of a one-room prairie schoolhouse from the beginning of the twentieth century. The exterior is covered with wooden clapboards siding, which has been painted white, and the roof is hipped, and covered with modern asphalt shingles. A shed roof with exposed rafters covers the entryway of the building. There are eight sash windows along three sides of the building, each with eight lights (panes of glass). There is no running water inside the building (a pump outside would have originally provided water for students' use), although there is electricity. There was originally a basement in the schoolhouse, where teachers could live during their term at the school, but one does not exist in its current setting.

The outbuildings associated with the schoolhouse consist of two outhouses and a stable, and all are from the original building site. Both of the outhouses are wooden with shed roofs, also covered with asphalt shingles, and have been painted white. The stable is also wooden with three large doors, and has an aluminum side-gabled roof.

Another associated element of the schoolhouse is the windmill. On the original site, the windmill would have been used to pump water out of the ground for use. The windmill was restored to operation in the spring of 2001.

### **14. Alterations**

The original Coal Creek School burned to the ground in either 1927 or 1928, and this replacement building was built in its foundation. Although the building has retained its physical integrity, it has been moved twice. Barbara Keil purchased the schoolhouse from the Aurora School Board in 1963, and moved it to 21361 E. Colfax Ave. In 1975, The City of Aurora moved the schoolhouse to the Beck Recreation Center/Springhill Park (800 Telluride St.) in order to commemorate the state centennial and national bicentennial celebrations in 1976. In 2011, the City moved it to its current location in DeLaney Farm Historic District & Open Space.

**Property Name:** Coal Creek Schoolhouse

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## 15. Significance of Property

### Nomination Criteria

- 1 – the property (district) exemplifies or reflects the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community
- 2 – the property (district) is identified with a historic person or historic group significant to national, state, or local history
- 3 – the property (district) embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable to the study of a period, style, method of construction, or indigenous materials or craftsmanship
- 4 – the property (district) is representative as the work of a master builder or architect
- 5 – the property (district) contains the possibility of important archaeological discoveries in prehistory or history
- 6 – the district consists of a definite area which, due to its unique location or singular characteristics represents established and familiar visual features of the neighborhood, community, or city

### Areas of Significance

Coal Creek Schoolhouse is an excellent example of a turn-of-the century

prairie school, and signifies the importance of education to rural families

during this time period.

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## **16. Significance Statement**

The Coal Creek Schoolhouse was built to provide primary education for the children from rural areas outside of Aurora. It was originally located along Coal Creek across from what is now known as the Edward Smith Farm; John Lessig deeded the land to Arapahoe County School District No. 12 “for school purpose” in 1877. Schools in the cities of Aurora and Denver were too far away for children to reach using the primary modes of transportation of the time: walking, horseback, or horse-drawn wagon.

The architecture of the Coal Creek Schoolhouse is typical of the turn of the century with its clapboard siding and hipped roof. Running water was not available inside the building, but there was a water pump on the property and two outhouses behind the school. There was also a stable for the children to keep their horses in during the school day. These outbuildings were moved along with the school to its subsequent and current locations.

Surrounding neighbors built this school in the original foundation after the original burned to the ground around 1927 or 1928. This building was used to teach grades one through eight, and later grades one through nine, from 1928 to 1945, and also from 1950 to 1960. The last graduating class from the Coal Creek School (1960) consisted of Marvin Smith and Milton Smith.

The Coal Creek School was not only an educational center for this rural area, but it served as a social center, as well. As the only public building in the area, many social gatherings were also held at the school. Spring and Christmas programs that involved the whole community were regular events at the school, and Saturday night dances were also common. The Smith brothers, Edward, Wilbur, and Harold, made up of the band that provided music for these dances.

The Coal Creek Schoolhouse is significant because it is the only known single-room schoolhouse in the Aurora area, it is built in the distinct and typical style of an early twentieth-century Prairie Schoolhouse Architecture, and its existence demonstrates a community’s dedication to education.

**Property Name:** Coal Creek Schoolhouse

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### **17. Bibliography**

Berkowitz, Christine A. *The Smith Farm Project: a study of the family farm operations of Homer J. Smith and his son Paul Smith*. Aurora, CO: Aurora History Museum and City of Aurora Parks and Open Space, April 2001.

Crabdree, Virginia Smith. *Coal Creek School*. Aurora, CO: np, undated.

Keil, Barbara. *personal correspondence*. Aurora, CO: np, undated.

Orton, Vera. *Reminiscences of Susie Larson Esterling and Ruth Larson Hood*. Aurora, CO: np, 1987.

Verba, Helen. "A Moving Benefit." *The Sunday Denver Post*. March 9, 1975.

### **18. Legislative Information**

Aurora Ward #:   2  

Colorado House District #:  43  or Name of Representative Frank O. Weddig

Colorado Senate District #:  29  or Name of Senator: Bob Hagedorn

U.S. House District #:  6  or Name of Representative: Thomas G. "Tom" Tancredo

### **19. Photocopy of USGS Map showing location of site**

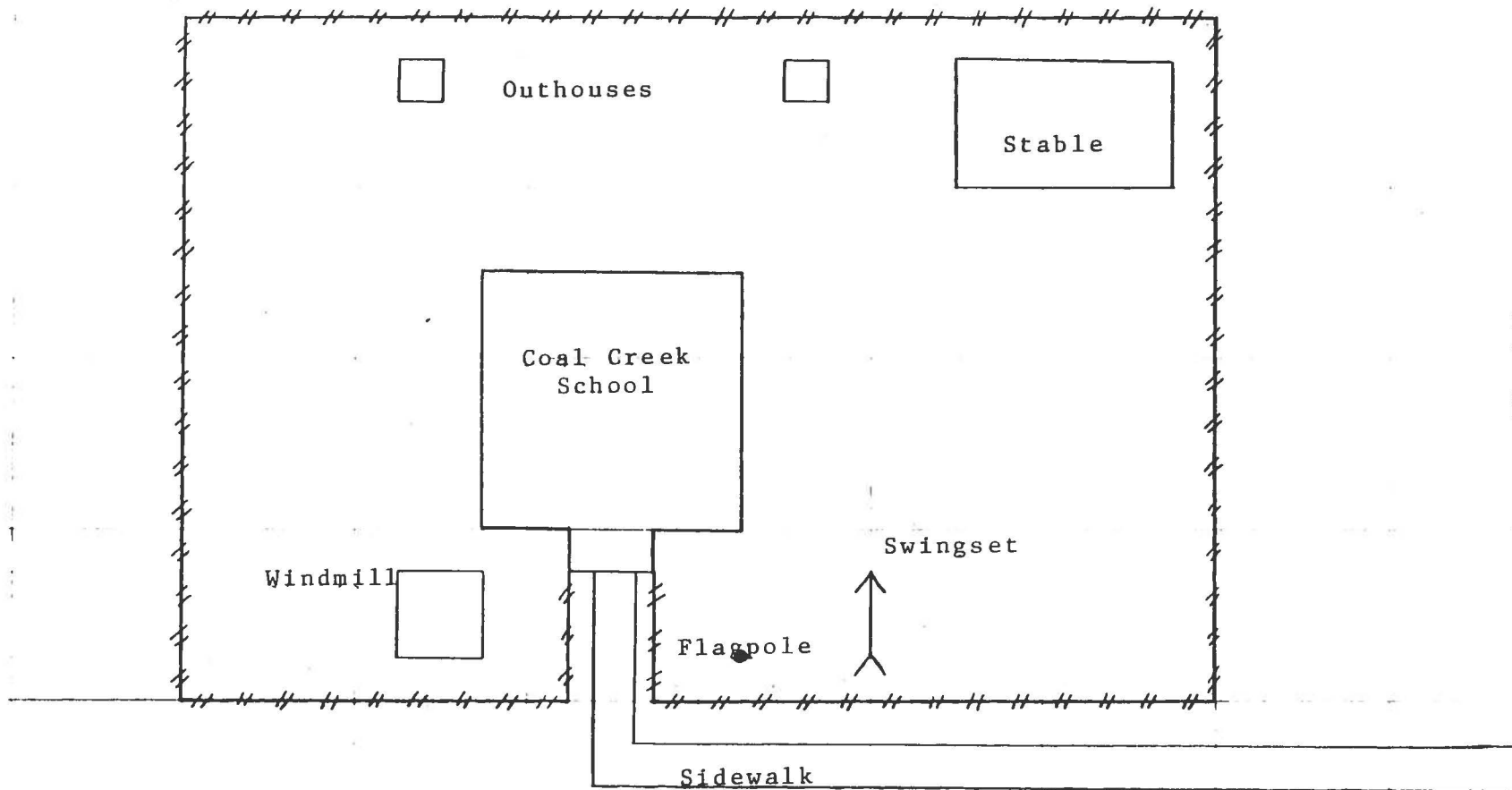
### **20. Site Plan showing site boundaries**

### **21. Black and white photographs**

### **22. Color slides**

### **23. Optional Materials**

- a. Floor plans showing existing conditions
- b. Landscape plan showing existing conditions
- c. Sequential historic floor plans
- d. Sequential historic site plans



Coal Creek Schoolhouse and Associated Features  
800 Telluride Street  
Built in 1928



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5063 / SW  
BOX ELDER SCHOOL

Coal Creek Schoolhouse  
800 Telluride St.  
Aurora, CO 80011

FITZSIMONS QUADRANGLE  
COLORADO  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

