

The Current Situation with the Pillars

Historical Surveys in 1980-81

In May 1980, the Boulder County Historical Society (BCHS) prepared a [historic survey](#) of the pillars in accordance with the guidelines of the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office. They were determined to have historical significance as “associated with significant events or patterns.” Accordingly, the pillars were considered “field eligible” to be listed on the State Register of Historic Places. The Survey was submitted to Office of the State Archaeologist of Colorado, given an official site number (5BL.432), and added to the list of properties eligible to be listed on the State Register. However, no official determination was made concerning whether the property should be listed on the Register.

A year later, in preparation for the road widening project at the intersection, the Colorado Department of Highways prepared a second survey. Under then-existing law, if the pillars were determined to be a historic site, then it would be required to take substantial effort and expense to preserve and protect them. Though the author of the [CDOH Report](#) was aware of the BCHS Survey prepared eighteen months earlier, its finding was not mentioned. Instead, the CDOH Report reached a diametrically opposite conclusion, stating that “the Road of Remembrance Gateway lacks the integrity and historical significance to qualify for inclusion in the national Register.” Accordingly, the widening project proceeded in 1983, resulting in the destruction and later relocation and reconstruction of the north pillar.

2021 Intersection Widening Project

In 2015, the Town of Erie announced a public-private partnership with Evergreen Devco, Inc. to develop a 45-acre tract on the southeast corner of the intersection of Arapahoe Road and US 287. At the time the project was announced, Evergreen Devco publicly stated that the construction would “complement the existing historical architecture” and “honor the 1928 vision of beautifying the intersection where the historic Road of Remembrance Gateway still stands.” Beginning in 2015, Evergreen Devco began tying its proposed development to the Gateway, advertising that its design would be developed “[i]n deference to the Road of Remembrance pillars.”

Work on the project began in mid-2019. At some point, a decision was made that, as part of the project, lanes would be added to Arapahoe Road and its intersection with US 287 would be reconfigured. CDOT has stated this was a “developer-driven intersection improvement project,” and that its sole involvement was to issue “a temporary access permit to the developer.”

Included in [Evergreen Devco’s proposed design](#) was the addition of another eastbound through traffic lane on the west side of the intersection, where the south pillar was located. Initially, Evergreen Devco sought to relocate the south pillar to make room for a new right turn lane for eastbound traffic. CDOT apparently rejected that proposal.

Faced with a possible denial its permit application, Evergreen Devco changed the design to keep the south pillar in place by surrounding it with a raised and landscaped “pork chop” island located between a new, separated right turn lane and Arapahoe Road. The south pillar would also be girdled on three sides by a reinforced steel guardrail.

Under Colorado State Register of Historic Places Act, §24-80.1-104, C.R.S., CDOT was required to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer concerning the effect of Evergreen Devco's proposed intersection widening project on the pillars, and not issue the permit "until a final determination concerning the effect of the" project on the Monument.

Those procedures were not followed. Instead, according to CDOT: "Due to an oversight by CDOT Region 4, the presence of a previously recorded historical resource in the project area was overlooked, and the permit was issued." Operating under the CDOT permit, Evergreen Devco constructed new right turn lane south of the south pillar, installed the "pork chop traffic island" around that pillar, and constructed the steel guardrail was constructed facing oncoming traffic on the south, west and north sides of the pillar.



The 2021 Survey

In the summer of 2021, Boulder Rotary Club brought the project to the attention of officials at CDOT. At that time, CDOT realized that the permit to Evergreen Devco had been issued without complying with the Colorado State Register of Historic Places Act.

In belated compliance with the Act, CDOT evaluated the impacts of the Evergreen Devco project on the pillars and prepared an [Architectural Inventory Form](#) outlining its findings. Concurring with BCHS's 1980 findings, CDOT determined that: "Based upon an abundance of information, CDOT finds that the memorial pillars meet the eligibility criteria of the State Register of Historic Places." CDOT also found that the "integrity of the pillars (5BL.432) has been greatly impacted by both the 1983 and 2021 intersection improvement projects." Regarding the construction of the right turn lane behind the pillar and the creation of the pork chop traffic island, CDOT determined that "visual impact of these changes is severe." CDOT accordingly determined that "the developer-driven Arapahoe Road and US 287 intersection improvement project has resulted in an adverse effect to 5BL.432, the Arapahoe Road gateway pillars." At the same time, CDOT found that the raised pork chop traffic island and its reinforced steel guardrail "adds a new and serious vehicular hazard" for eastbound traffic on Arapahoe Road.

By letter dated October 26, 2021, CDOT presented these findings to the SHPO, who concurred that (a) the pillars “are eligible for inclusion in the State Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C,” and (b) Devco’s construction work at the intersection “[has adversely affected the pillars.](#)”

[READ MORE DETAIL CONCERNING THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH THE PILLARS](#)