

# **A History of the Roosevelt Ranger Dwelling Roosevelt, Utah**

**Richa Wilson, Regional Architectural Historian  
US Forest Service, Intermountain Region, Ogden, Utah  
2008**

## **Historic Overview**

The Roosevelt Ranger District, previously known as the Whiterocks Ranger District, was originally headquartered at the Elkhorn Ranger Station 27 miles north of Roosevelt, Utah. As transportation and communications to rural areas improved, it was common for the Forest Service to move district headquarters into towns. This trend, most evident in the years immediately following World War II, was a response to limited construction funds and the



awareness that many CCC-built stations were not situated well for the post-war administrative structure. District and Forest consolidations, usually propelled by cost-saving measures, led to the abandonment of numerous stations. The construction of roads for resource extraction and the availability of surplus military vehicles meant rangers could easily access Forest lands from towns.

Such was the case for the Roosevelt Ranger District, which relocated its base from the Elkhorn Ranger Station to Roosevelt in the early 1950s. As of 1951, the ranger lived at Elkhorn Ranger Station but maintained an office along US Highway 40 in Roosevelt.

This situation changed in 1956 when, following another Forest Service trend, the Ashley National Forest relocated the Elkhorn dwelling and garage to a site in Roosevelt. Crystal H. Broderick sold the 0.34-acre parcel, located at 144 South 100 East, to the Forest Service in 1955 for \$1,000.

Regional architect George L. Nichols designed the standard R4 Plan 1A house and R4 Plan 21 garage in 1933, the same year they were built at the Elkhorn Ranger Station. Nichols also played a role in their relocations to Roosevelt, 23 years after their construction. Exhibiting more flair than in the past, he developed a site plan showing a substantial pergola over a concrete walk connecting the two buildings. Nichols, frustrated in previous years over budgetary constraints that inhibited architectural design, may have been making a “last stand.” He retired a few months later and his successor, William R. Turner, saw the project through to completion. Nichols must have been pleased that the pergola was built and not scrapped as a frill as was so often the case.

From August 16 to September 6, 1956, the Ashton Brothers Company moved the two buildings and placed them on new foundations. Following this work, they submitted a bid for further improvements that were implemented. These included altering the front door and interior to accommodate a new stairway from the foyer to the attic bedrooms, building a closet in the south upstairs bedroom, and installing glass block in the bathroom.

In addition to recycling buildings, the Forest Service also relocated plants. In 1957, the district ranger Val Simpson moved several shrubs and perennial flowers from the Elkhorn Ranger Station, along with several species of trees from the Ashley National Forest. Landscape architect Howard W. Young prepared an elaborate planting plan – including fruit trees around a circular lawn – that was never realized. In 1963, landscape architect L.C. Tonks designed a simpler scheme, incorporating plants to be transplanted and plants already established on site by then.

In recent years, as rangers have chosen to purchase homes, the need for this site has fluctuated. At times it has sat vacant or been occupied by seasonal employees. With the current gas and oil boom, housing in the area is scarce so a district employee currently resides in the home.



### **Statement of Significance**

Despite some alterations, the Roosevelt Dwelling #1 Site maintains high integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association as well as medium integrity of materials and workmanship. The property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places with Conservation and Architecture as the areas of significance. It is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with post-war administration of the nation's forests and the Forest Service trend of shifting headquarters from national forest lands to local communities. It is also significant under Criterion C because it represents the 100-year old Forest Service trend of recycling buildings, particularly in post-war years. George L. Nichols, the original architect of the buildings, was involved with relocating the buildings from Elkhorn Ranger Station to the Roosevelt site. He designed the site layout and, in a break from his earlier creations, linked the house and garage with a sturdy pergola. The period of significance is 1956, which corresponds to the year the buildings were moved to Roosevelt. Although the house has been modified somewhat since that time, it retains most of its character-defining features such as its massing, novelty siding, exposed rafter tails, wood-shingled gable roof, and entry porch. The garage has high integrity, having undergone no alterations.

