

## ***Lightburn Tunnel*** ***Site 5ST1225***

The Lightburn Tunnel was a failed attempt to undercut the Gold Run Group of claims at great depth. The tunnel was a substantial endeavor and is now part of a recreational resort known as Dry Creek Placer. The east wall of Gold Run Gulch surrounds the site and is vegetated with a second- and old-growth lodgepole pine forest. As a site, the tunnel retains poor integrity due to resort development. The site saw extensive bulldozing in preparation for the resort, and new buildings and facilities were constructed around the tunnel. Nearly all the resort's buildings and facilities are relatively new and rustic in appearance, although several of the site's historic buildings were rehabilitated. The resort was based around the theme of historic mining. In keeping with this, the operators imported old mining equipment, replicated various mine structures, and rebuilt the portal of the Lightburn Tunnel. The replicated structures include a shaft mine, a concentration mill, and the tunnel portal, all which were fabricated out of whole cloth. Historically, the shaft mine and the mill never existed on the site, but their reproduction was accurately executed. Because the site lacks intact assemblages of features and artifacts, a meaningful interpretation is impossible.

### Lightburn Tunnel History

In 1900, C.L. Lightburn and a partnership of Colorado and Pennsylvania investors organized the Gold Run Mining & Milling Company to develop the Gold Run group of claims. Lightburn served as manager because he had plenty of experience with substantial hardrock mining operations. During the 1880s, Lightburn was superintendent of three mines in the Mosquito Mountains, Park County, and managed several profitable operations at Cripple Creek during the 1890s. In Cripple Creek, Lightburn became associated with Colorado Springs investors who were interested in the Gold Run Group.

Instead of working the claims from the surface, Lightburn planned to undercut them at depth through a lengthy haulageway, which he modestly named the Lightburn Tunnel. Under foreman Hugh McKay, miners built a surface plant then began driving the tunnel. The surface plant was relatively simple and consisted of a tunnel house, a 12- by- 12-foot log blacksmith shop, a ventilation blower powered by a motor, and a boardinghouse.<sup>1</sup>

The company focused its efforts on driving the tunnel the 3,000 feet required to completely undercut the claims. By the end of 1903, the tunnel reached a length of 1,700 feet, where it passed into mineralized ground. Anticipating ore, Lightburn ordered the miners to drive 1,000 feet of exploratory passages along several veins, but they failed to find anything of worth. Unwilling to concede defeat, Lightburn pushed the tunnel another 350 feet during 1904 and had the miners drive more exploratory workings with the same poor result. By the year's end, the investors were unwilling to pour any more capital into the tunnel and canceled the project.<sup>2</sup>

### Lightburn Tunnel Site Description

Most of the historic features attributed to the tunnel's surface plant are present on the site, although they have been overshadowed by the resort facilities. The tunnel (F1) extends underground in an easterly direction. Within the last fifty years, someone rehabilitated the tunnel

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<sup>1</sup> Colorado Mine Inspectors' Reports: Lightburn; *Colorado Mining Directory*, 1901:119; "Mining News" *EMJ* 10/12/01, p472.

<sup>2</sup> "Mining News" *EMJ* 10/3/03, p522; "Mining News" *EMJ* 6/16/04 p981; "Mining News" *MSP* 3/26/04 p218.

for a length of around 60 feet. They used heavy equipment to remove all earth and rotten wood, installed new timbering, and covered the new structure with earth. The party then erected a log tunnel house around the repaired opening. While the tunnel house and timbering are recent, the materials and workmanship appear to be historic.

The waste rock dump (F2) currently manifests as a lobe approximately 82 by 120 feet in area and up to 20 feet thick. Most of the dump has been bulldozed in conjunction with a parking area. The resort operators replicated a shaft mine on the top-surface and arranged machinery to imitate a mill on the dump's west flank.

The shop documented by archival sources currently stands intact by the tunnel. The shop (F3) is a front-gabled log building 13 by 16 feet in area, 5½ feet high at the roof eaves, and 8 feet high overall. Workers assembled the walls with square-notch joints and chinked gaps between the logs with mud retained by log strips. The roof consists of planks and corrugated sheet iron cladding supported by five log beams spanning the building's length. The walls stand on a foundation of logs laid on a cut-and-fill platform large enough for the shop, and the floor is earthen. The resort operator installed blacksmith equipment in the shop's interior, which matches the arrangement and materials of the original.

An explosives magazine stands south of the tunnel portal, and it appears to have been imported by the resort operator. The magazine (F4) is a portable, front-gabled building 6 by 6 feet in area, 6 feet high at the roof eaves, and 8 feet high overall.

The mine possessed a larger group of residential buildings than archival sources suggested. Three boardinghouses stood south of the tunnel, and a log cabin was located to the north. The boardinghouse (F5) nearest the tunnel was a front-gabled log building 14 by 20 feet in area assembled with V-notch joints. The walls stood on a foundation of logs, which workers laid on a cut-and-fill platform slightly larger than the building. The northwest and southeast walls each featured a doorway and window, and the floor consisted of planks nailed to log joists. A root cellar, now a depression 5 feet in diameter, lay underneath the floor's east portion. The boardinghouse has collapsed, and buried deposits are unlikely.

The residents who lived in the boardinghouse ruin relied on a privy for their personal use. Currently, the privy pit (F6) remains upslope and manifests as a depression 3 by 5 feet in area and 1 foot deep. A log footer for the privy building lies along the west edge. No artifacts are visible, although buried deposits are possible.

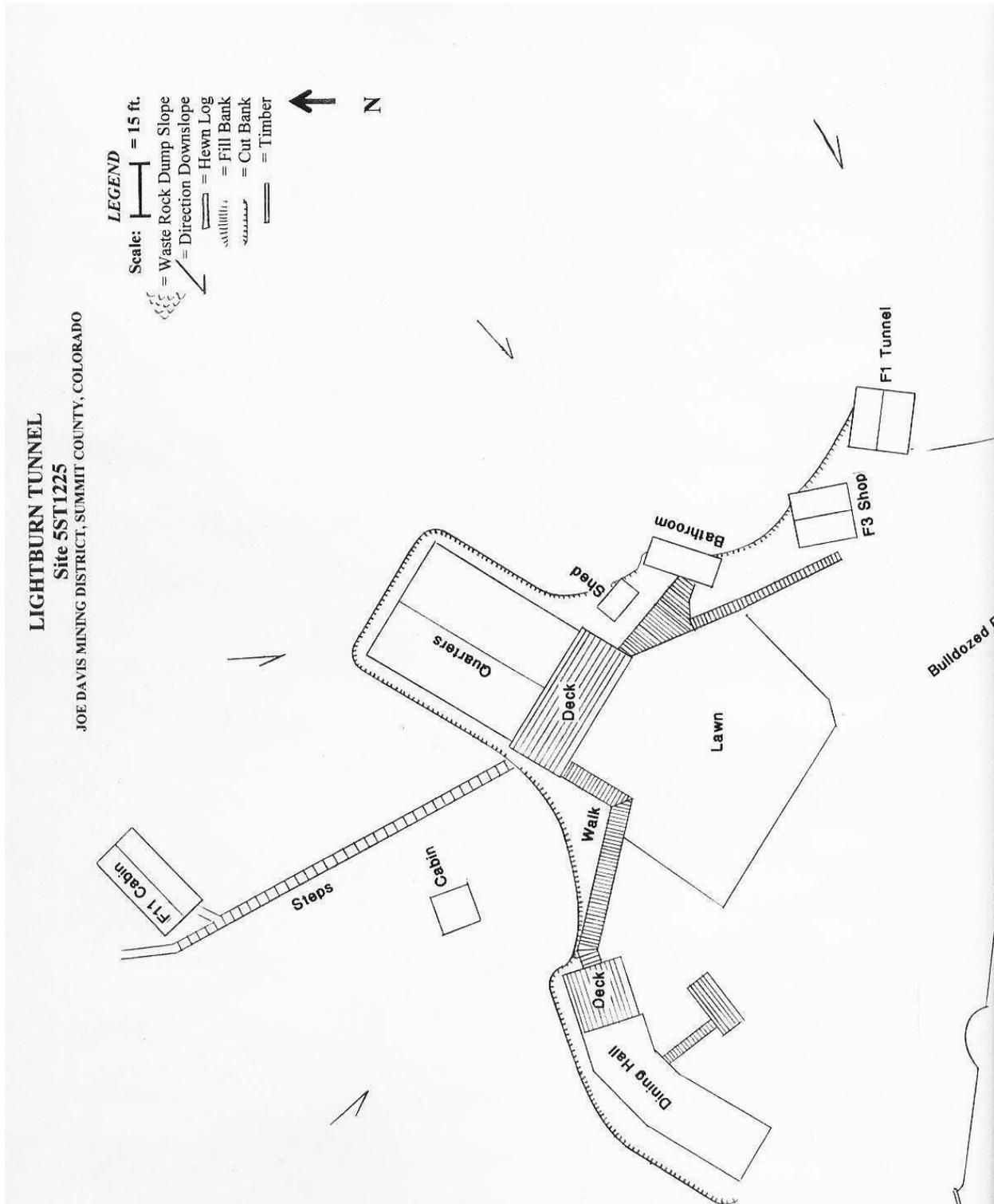


Figure 2.46: Plan view of the Lightburn Tunnel site's north portion. The south portion is continued below.

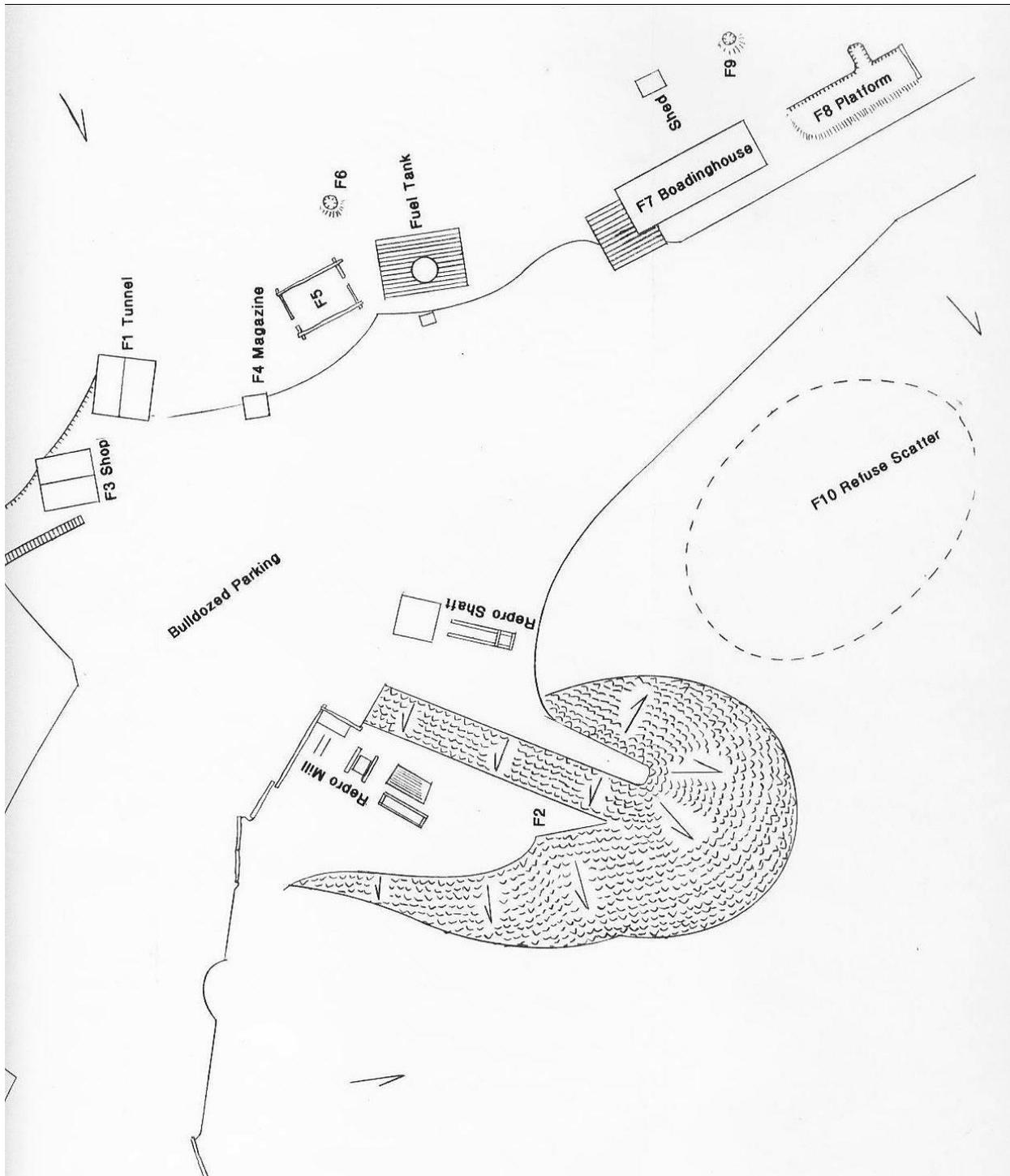


Figure 2.46: Plan view of the Lightburn Tunnel site's south portion, continued from above.

One of the boardinghouses (F7) currently stands intact and consists of two components. The oldest component is the original log cabin and an addition, which total 14 by 38 feet in area. Workers assembled the walls with square-notch joints on a foundation of logs, which they laid on a cut-and-fill platform just large enough for the building. The second component is a new, side-gabled, salt-box roof radically different from the original roof, which was front-gabled. The

original roof is gone. The new roof is oriented 90 degrees to the cabin's length and rises to a peak of 9 feet. The border around the roofline consists of 2x12 planks, and the walls under the gables are made of planks. The new roof shelters a loft and is, in general, mismatched with the rest of the boardinghouse.

The site's third boardinghouse was probably similar to Feature 7 and stood on a platform (F8) 12 by 40 feet in area. The boardinghouse is gone, leaving only the platform. Workers graded the platform with cut-and-fill methods and excavated a root cellar, now slumped, in the northeast cut-bank.

The boardinghouse residents relied on a privy for their personal use, and the remaining pit (F9) currently lies upslope. The pit is 4 by 4 feet in area, features a substantial backdirt pile downslope, and may possess buried deposits.

An isolated log cabin stands on a slope northwest of the tunnel. The cabin (F11) is a front-gabled building 13½ by 23½ feet in area, 6 feet high at the roof eaves, and 7½ feet high at the roof peak. Workers assembled the walls with square-notch joints and originally chinked gaps with mud retained by log strips. The roof has no formal shape and is similar to a boxcar type. The cabin's walls stand on a log foundation laid on a platform just large enough for the building. The cabin's southwest side (front) features a porch and woodshed. The porch consists of planks underneath a 3-foot extension of the roof, and the woodshed is 3½ by 3½ feet in area and is enclosed to keep firewood dry.

Overall, the site possesses a poor artifact assemblage due to the resort development and collection by resort staff and guests. Almost all the site's surface artifacts lay downslope from the boardinghouses and manifest as a domestic refuse scatter (F10). As an archaeological feature, the scatter is incomplete because its upslope portion was destroyed by earthmoving.

### Lightburn Tunnel Site Significance and Management Recommendations

The site is no longer significant as a historic resource due to extensive resort development. The setting of the tunnel has been lost, resort buildings engulf the few intact historic features, and the site possesses no meaningful artifact assemblage. Because the site lacks integrity, it is recommended ineligible for the NRHP and SRHP. The site warrants no further cultural resource work.