

Architect: Monroe, John K.
Birth/Death Dates: 1893 - 1974
Practice Dates: 1932 - 1963

Biographical Information

John K. Monroe was born in Denver on April 7, 1893, and received his Bachelors in Architecture degree from Washington University in St. Louis. He returned to Denver, joined the office of architect J.J.B. Benedict as his chief assistant, and then while still associated with Benedict, established his own practice in 1932. Through his association with Benedict, Monroe became principal architect for the Catholic Archdiocese of Denver. In this capacity, he designed hundreds of churches, schools and other archdiocesan structures throughout northern Colorado for Archbishop Urban John Vehr.

While in Benedict's office, Monroe is credited with the 1941 St. Patrick's Catholic Church in La Junta and the 1943 Holy Ghost Catholic Church at 633 19th Street in Denver. Other examples of Monroe's work in Denver include the 1947 Christ the King Church at 845 Fairfax; the 1952 St. Catherine of Sienna at 4200 Federal Blvd.; 1953 St. Vincent DePaul at 2375 East Arizona; and the 1953 Good Shepherd at 2626 East 7th Avenue Parkway. All of these churches, except Holy Ghost, were designed in stripped historical revivalism, featuring modern materials, with most dependencies (school, convents and rectories) in the International style. The dependencies were constructed of buff colored brick with cream colored terra cotta trim -- virtually a John K. Monroe signature.

Monroe did secure commissions for secular projects. The 1953 Bonfils Memorial Theater, in Denver, is one of his largest non-religious projects. In 1959, Monroe elevated his two assistants, Robert G. Dunham and Robert G. Irwin, to partner status, resulting in the firm of Monroe, Irwin and Dunham. This firm was responsible for the International Style designs for the 1960 Student Union Building and Cafeteria at the Loretto Heights College at 3001 South Federal, Denver. The preliminary design in 1960 of St. Joseph's Hospital at 1800 Humbolt was also the work of this firm. In 1961, Irwin left the firm and Monroe and Dunham were joined by Monroe's son, John K. Monroe, Jr., resulting in the firm of Monroe, Monroe and Dunham. The senior Monroe retired in 1963.

Credited Buildings

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date	Assessment
St. Patrick's Catholic Church	7th & Raton, La Junta	5OT709	1941	State Register
Blessed Sacrament Church Convent	1901 Eudora St., Denver	5DV4697	1942	
Holly Ghost Catholic Church (with J.J.B. Benedict)	633 19th St., Denver	5DV512	1943	
St. James Catholic School	14th Ave. & Newport St., Denver		1947	
Christ the King Church	845 Fairfax, Denver		1947	

**COLORADO ARCHITECTS
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

St. Thomas Theological Seminary Convent	1300 S. Sable, Denver	5DV729	1949	National Register
St. Thomas Theological Seminary Recreation Building	1300 S. Sable, Denver	5DV729	1950	National Register
St. Catherine of Sienna	4200 Federal Blvd., Denver		1952	
St. Vincent DePaul	2375 East Arizona, Denver		1953	
Good Shepherd	2626 E. 7th Avenue Pkwy., Denver		1953	E. 7th Ave. Local HD
Bonfils Memorial Theater	1475 Elizabeth, Denver	5DV5045	1953	
St. Thomas Theological Seminary Theology Building Classroom Wing	1300 S. Sable, Denver	5DV729	1955	National Register
St. Thomas Theological Seminary Library	1300 S. Sable, Denver	5DV729	1955	National Register
Loretto Heights College Student Union Building (Monroe, Irwin and Dunham)	3001 South Federal, Denver		1960	
Loretto Heights College Cafeteria (Monroe, Irwin and Dunham)	3001 South Federal, Denver		1960	
St. Joseph's Hospital (preliminary design - Denver Monroe, Irwin and Dunham)	1800 Humbolt St., Denver		1961	

Information Sources

Brown, Carie. "St. Patrick's Catholic Church" Colorado State Register of Historic Properties nomination, 1998. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Ittelson, Lane. "St. Thomas Theological Seminary" National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1989. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Noel, Thomas J. and William J. Hansen. The Montclair Neighborhood. Denver: Historic Denver Inc., 1999.

Wheaton, Rodd L., Michael Paglia, and Diane Wray. "Bonfils Memorial Theater" National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1996. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Site form 5DV729, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.

Site form 5DV4697, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

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