

5 DV 3520
NR List 12/06/90
RECEIVED
OMB No. 1024-0018
JUL 31 1990

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8/86)
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format
(Approved 03/88)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Denver Public Library
other names/site number: 5 DV 3520

2. Location

street & number: 1357 Broadway (NA) not for publication
city, town: Denver (NA) vicinity
state: Colorado code: CO county: Denver code: 031 zip code: 80203

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
() private	(X) building(s)		
(X) public-local	() district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
() public-State	() site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
() public-Federal	() structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	() object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) nomination () request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x) meets () does not meet the National Register criteria.
() See continuation sheet.

Barbara Sudler

11-15-90

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

() entered in the National Register.
() See continuation sheet

() determined eligible for the National Register. () See continuation sheet

() determined not eligible for the National Register.

() removed from the National Register.

() other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Functions or Use**Historic Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

Education: Library**Current Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

Education: Library**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(enter categories from instructions)

International Style**Materials**

(enter categories from instructions)

foundations Concretewalls Limestoneroof Asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Denver Public Library, located within the south boundary projection of the Civic Center Historic District, is a major architectural element of the district. The site is bounded by 13th and 14th Avenues, Broadway, and flanks Acoma Street opposite the Denver Art Museum. The curve of 14th Street, around the Greek Theatre of the Civic Center, cuts off the northwest corner of the library block.

In plan the Denver Public library is essentially a rectangular 102' by 203 structure sited in the middle of the block with the long axis running east and west. A semi-circular entrance "rotunda" wing extends to the north; a children's library wing extends from the southwest corner to the public sidewalk which encircles the block. To the south, staff and public parking lots occupy the remainder of the block to 13th Avenue. The parking lots also provide vehicular access to the rear service areas of the library. The staff parking, adjacent to the structure, is partially screened by a medium height limestone wall extending from the southeast library building corner and along Broadway. A book shelf mural on the wall defines the night book drop location.

Mature trees and lawn infill the northern triangular tip of the block. Concrete walks extend around the library connecting the staff and public entrances. Along Broadway, corresponding to the width of the east elevation, is a grass parterre with trees. A wide paved plaza provides access to the Broadway entrance. A curved walkway with radial scoring extends around the rotunda and is inset with planting beds with pfister shrubs. Similar plantings extend around the foundation of the rotunda and across the north elevation of the main structure.

(X) See continuation sheet

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At the 14th Street - Acoma entrance a wide plaza extends around the building to provide access to the Children's Library entrance and the public sidewalk along Acoma.

The Denver Public Library is a five-story structure and has flat roofs. The main structure has a stepped back fourth floor and a stepped back fifth floor mechanical penthouse. The rotunda wing is two stories high; the Children's wing is one story. The building encompasses approximately 114,400 square feet above grade and has two additional floors below grade.

The library is a reinforced concrete frame structure built on a 20-foot on center module to accommodate stack shelving in 3-foot sections which fit within the module to allow 3 inches between providing access for adjustable shelves. The main structure is built around a service core containing two elevators, stairways, restrooms, mechanical and utility spaces, two conveyors for moving books vertically and a pneumatic message tube.

The exterior of the library is veneered in random ashlar Indiana limestone which was blasted with shot to raise a horizontal grain. Parapet copings and architectural detailing are smooth faced limestone. The stone is golden in color. The foundation veneer, main doorway trim, and display case trim is Austrian polished dark green granite with a mica luster. The fifth floor mechanical penthouse and full south elevation are yellow brick with limestone copings.

The library is basically a classical composition derived from the Neo-Classical Vorhees Monument and the Greek Theatre across 14th Street. The two story window bands essentially are glazed colonnades. The stepped upper two floors suggest the stepped roofing of the theatre and monument. The library, though, is rendered in a more indigenous style because of the choice of the golden random ashlar walling which softens the classical design.

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The east elevation of the main structure is symmetrically composed of a shallow projecting two-story, three-bay colonnade which supports a false parapet or "entablature" and three pairs of "attic frieze windows at the third floor within the roof parapet trimmed with coping stones. This colonnade, typical of the library, is enframed with a smooth stone, unmolded architrave band that supports a shallow false parapet which defines an entablature. Its coping forms a continuous sill for the pairs of third story "frieze" windows, two over each bay. The smooth stone, two-story pilasters of the colonnade are, in section, flared in a shallow vee, forming a single stylized flute. Within the architrave surround, the pilasters and the half pilasters which abut the jambs are in antis. The colonnade is carried on the continuous granite veneered foundation. A narrow, beveled water table course of granite extends below the architrave jambs and each pilaster as plinths.

At the stepped back fourth floor, four window openings extend across the elevation. There are no fifth floor openings. Typically third and fourth floor openings have smooth jambs recessed from the ashlar walling and lintels. The openings of the third floor have bifold single-light sash; those of the fourth floor have pairs of bifold sash with a center mullion.

Typical glazing within the colonnade bays is set within three vertical mullions extending from the granite water table to the soffit of the architrave. The second floor is defined by a band of opaque, textured spandrel glass. At each floor level are two central fixed panes with side lights having bifold sash. The mullions, frames, and sash are stainless steel with unmolded profiles.

A service door is located at the south corner and like the west elevation's north door, has smooth jamb and head stones slightly recessed within the ashlar walling. The jambs are carried on plinth blocks of granite where the foundation veneer is cut to receive the doorways. The doors are flush panel. The west door has concrete steps and aluminum railings.

Near the north corner of the east elevation is a corner stone set above the water table reading "PUBLIC LIBRARY, CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, FOUNDED 1889, ERECTED 1955."

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Continuing around the northeast corner, a north facing doorway provides direct access to the basement Wyer Auditorium lobby and secondary access to the first floor. The doorway, with a pair of glazed stainless steel doors, has wide granite trim around the jambs and head. The jamb reveals are clad in granite; the soffit is stuccoed.

The rotunda, set back from the east elevation of the main structure has a continuous colonnade of eight bays without jamb architraves. The motif extends onto the north elevation in five bays. The rotunda colonnade has a smooth architrave at the head and a shallow entablature parapet corresponding to the height of the entablature parapet of the three-story elevations. On the north elevation, the colonnade stops short of the northwest corner and typically projects within an architrave jamb, head, and entablature parapet. The third story frieze windows extend across the main structure continuing above the rotunda wing. At the stepped back fourth floor, eight equally spaced window openings extend across the elevation. Near the west corner of the north elevation is a large glazed display case with granite jambs and head set within smooth limestone trim. The display cases are set on the granite foundation veneering which forms the sill. Two similar granite framed display cases are located on the rotunda colonnade and "float" within the glazed bays.

Monumental main entrances at grade face east and west and float within bays of the rotunda colonnade. The two-story entrance features are faced with projecting granite clad jambs, which are canted, and flat heads. The reveals have built-in flush recessed lights at the second floor level jambs and at the head. At each entrance a single-light pair of glazed doors have side lights and a transom. Above each transom, corresponding to the bottom sill height of the spandrel glass, is a granite panel set with a rondel carved with "THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, 1955" superimposed over an open book. A rope border encloses the field. The rondel is encircled with "THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER" in block aluminum letters. Surrounding the entrance features are sidelights reflecting the colonnade glazing pattern and a single light transom above the granite head.

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The west elevation is characterized by the central projecting three-bay two-story colonnade with frieze windows, and four fourth floor openings. The south, first floor bay of the colonnade receives the connecting structure of the one-story, flat roofed children's wing. The corner entrance, with a quarter circle roof, encloses double doors, side lights, and a transom.

The children's wing is a random ashlar clad commercial structure that existed on the library site. The foundation is clad in limestone with a beveled water table. Two window openings face north and typically have smooth jambs and heads with center bifold windows and fixed sidelights. There are four bays on the west elevation with the southerly center being a doorway having three doors, each with a transom.

The south elevation is utilitarian since it was originally conceived as the party wall for a south addition intended to infill the parking lot. The elevation has a five-story center section, corresponding to the central service core, with stepped side wings. Fourth floor windows contain pairs of bifold sash. At the second or third floor are strip windows with two-light awning sash in gangs of three. These clerestory windows light interior stack areas. Lighting staff spaces are an assortment of eight-light steel sash windows in gangs of three and four horizontal light windows in gangs of two, all with awning sash sections. At the first floor, the stuccoed children's wing and the service areas have four horizontal light sashes. A flat roof canopy extends over the rear service entrance.

The interior of the library does not reflect classical antecedents and instead relies on institutional interior design of the period. The rotunda lobby is defined by terrazzo flooring, grey in the center and brown indicating walkways leading to the brown terrazzo stair case to the second floor and the elevator doors. Lining the lobby are circular columns clad in brown 1-inch square tiles. Similar tile clads elevator walls. The open, adjacent stack spaces are floored with asphalt tile and have square concrete columns. The terrazzo staircase, flaring at the bottom steps, has a closed stringer on which is set extruded

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aluminum railing infilled with die cut mesh. Rising to an intermediate landing, the stairway continues to a semicircular landing and on to the second floor lobby, also defined with 1-inch brown tile columns and elevator facings. The semicircular landing is paneled in bookend wood veneer. Above the landing is a full circle recessed light trough providing indirect lighting. A circular ceiling motif is located in the rotunda and is incorporated into the dropped heating and ventilating ductwork which has continuous louvered vents at the sides. The ducts define the corridors in an otherwise open space. The ceilings are acoustic tile. The third floor has flat ceiling surfaces.

Interior wall surfaces are smooth plaster. Restrooms have rectangular glazed tile work in stretcher bond. Lights are ceiling mounted fluorescent. The interior service stairways are precast concrete with pipe railings. Doors are flush panel birch.

The fourth floor, which houses the Western History Department, contains the premier public space of the library, the Reading Room. It has a beamed ceiling with wooden built-up summer beams supported on two round columns and carrying wood joists with chamfered edges. Twelve-branch chandeliers, each with a curving arm extending to large permanently attached shade, are hung in the bays of the beamed ceilings except at the east central bay. The ceiling is covered with acoustic tile between the beams and joist. The room is paneled with sheets of walnut veneered plywood set with battens over the joints. Bookcases are set into the walls. Centered in the room on the east side is a large projecting stone veneered chimney breast with an operation fireplace clad in white ashlar limestone. The projecting stone mantel shelf is supported in a solid course of limestone blocks. Opposite, enframing a window, are ashlar stone piers. The two central round columns are covered with smooth limestone veneer. The floor is square wood tiles.

The fourth floor also contains a rare book vault and a special collection room. At the third floor the area was originally devoted to administration offices. The first and second floor were designed for open shelving, reading areas, and book return and checkout. The area around the central core of each floor contains staff offices and work spaces. The two basement levels contain closed stack spaces for 1,00,000 volumes on 16.31 miles of shelving.

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Within the rotunda basement area is the 372-seat Malcom Glenn Wyer Auditorium which retains its original room finish and perfect acoustics. The walls and columns are clad in plastic laminate, in pale green and gray. The sloped floor is concrete with carpet runners down the two aisles within the fan shaped seating utilizing standard theatre seats. The north proscenium has rounded corners and is fronted by a small "orchestra" pit. The acoustic tile ceiling has dropped acoustic tile baffles. From the auditorium lobby a terrazzo stairway provides access to the north exterior doorway.

Furnishings remaining in the library are utilitarian "ladder back" desk chairs in birch. The chairs are Thonet. Simple birch tables are augmented with oak library tables from the earlier library. The shaped pedestal legs have marble kick boxes. Two upholstered chairs and a round, low table remain in the Western History Reading Room

In general, the Denver Public Library, while having a simple, utilitarian interior reflecting the original project costs and the use of modern materials in interior design, has an architecturally responsive exterior that demonstrates the architect's consideration for relating the building to existing Civic Center structures. As constructed, the library is a classically inspired modern structure ingeniously designed to relate to its site and neighbors and to recall Denver and Colorado's southwest heritage.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: () nationally () statewide (X) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria () A () B (X) C () D
 Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) () A () B () C () D () E () F (X) G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture**Period of Significance**1955**Significant Dates**1955**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Significant Person**N/A**Architect/Builder**Hoyt, BurnhamFisher, Arthur A. and Fisher, Alan B.Builder: Mead and Mount

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Denver Public Library meets Criterion C as a significant building of exceptional architectural importance in Denver. The building is prominently sited as an integral component of the National Register Civic Center Historic District. The high quality of the architectural design of the Denver Public Library is significant in that it constitutes the work of an acknowledged master of Denver architecture, Burnham Hoyt. Hoyt is seen as the premier architect working in Denver in the period. Since the Denver Public Library is less than fifty years old, Criteria Consideration Exception G is applicable.

The post-war period of 1945 to 1960, was a time of unprecedented growth in new construction in the United States generally and in Denver in particular. An early expression of this boom in the construction of important downtown Denver projects was the Denver Public Library. The building was praised in the A.I.A. guide, Architecture/Colorado, for the way in which the building illustrated a sensitive sense of scale, massing, and color.¹

The Denver Public Library has architectural significance in that it embodies the distinct characteristics of Hoyt's individual approach to the International Style. The Denver Public Library is the only major work by Hoyt completed in Denver in the post WW II period and only one of two major Hoyt projects in the International Style that survive intact.

(X) See continuation sheet

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The Denver Public Library is important as the earliest local example of library architecture in the International Style from the post-war period. Ordinarily, buildings that are less than fifty years old are not eligible for listing on the National Register. Fortunately, Exception "G" has been created which is appropriate and adequate for the evaluation of buildings in a city as relatively young as Denver. The last fifty years represents nearly half the time span of the history of building in Denver. Furthermore, the vast majority of the built environment in Denver dates back only to the boom in building of the 1960's to the 1980's. For Denver, then, the 1950's Denver Library is relatively old.

Advances in scholarship among architectural historians in the last few decades have resulted in a plethora of materials providing historic perspective on International Style architecture in the post-war period. The radical innovations of the International Style were recognized by scholars soon after its appearance in the 1920's. As early as the 1930's and 1940's, historians of architecture like Sigfried Gideon², Henry Russel Hitchcock³, and Nikolaus Pevsner⁴, began to integrate the International Style into the broad fabric of the history of western architecture. The term International Style, coined by Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson to describe the work of architects responding to the new style, first appeared in the catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art in 1932.⁵

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At present, the International Style is a well-established topic in the history of architecture. General sources such as A Concise History of Western Architecture by R. Furneaux Jordan of 1970⁶, Key Monuments in the History of Architecture by Henry A. Millon of 1975⁷, or A History of Architecture by Spiro Kostof of 1985⁸, give considerable attention to the events associated with the International Style, including explicit coverage of the post-war period. Luigi Benevolo's History of Modern Architecture of 1978⁹ and Georges and Rosamond Bernier's The Best in Twentieth Century Architecture of 1964¹⁰ are two examples. In addition, numerous specific studies have been directed at movements associated with the International Style, including Hans Wingler's Bauhaus¹¹ of 1969 and Martin Grief's Depression Modern of 1977¹². Architectural historians have typically viewed the International Style as a watershed in the history of architecture.

Exhibitions also have placed the International Style in historic perspective. Two important exhibitions accompanied by catalogues were "Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision," organized by the Detroit Institute of the Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1983¹³, and "The Machine Age in America," organized by the Brooklyn Museum in 1986.¹⁴

There are even a number of sources that focus exclusively on the post-war period in relation to the International Style. Volume Four of American Buildings and Their Architects by William Jordy of 1972¹⁵ discusses the impact of European International Style on mid-to late-twentieth century architecture. Also abundant are monographs on individual International Style architects. Post-war figures who have been the subjects of monographs include Phillip Johnson¹⁶, Louis Kahn¹⁷, and Pietro Belluschi.¹⁸ For the International Style in Denver, Don Etter's Denver Going Modern of 1977¹⁹, demonstrates that the International Style has long been seen as an historical topic.

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When the new Denver Public Library opened, it was viewed nationally as a state of the art library facility. It was featured in cover articles in both The American Library Association Bulletin²⁰ and Library Journal.²¹ The design of the Denver Public Library included a number of innovations. The building's interior is made up of a service core surrounded on three sides by public areas. The basement stacks are made up of a single 16 foot tall room, divided in half by a concrete floor which is supported by the upright book shelf standards along. The dimensions of the building were derived from combining the size of standard Remington Rand four-way compact storage stacks with the diameters of the interior supporting pillars. The results is a basic rectangular floor plan based on 20 foot squares on a grid. The two-story rotunda on the north side of the building was meant to provide space for special projects and exhibits. A unique zig-zag main desk, designed by Mr. Eastlick, was at one time at the northeast end of the rectangle where it communicated with the rotunda. The design of the flooring and lighting was such that users were directed through the library to its various departments. Another feature is the basement auditorium named for Dr. Malcolm Glenn Wyer, which was sound-engineered by physicist Floyd R. Watson working as the acoustical consultant.

The Denver Public Library was originally constructed as an integral component of the National Register-listed Civic Center Historic District. The Denver Public Library is the only major project and one of only two integral components of the Civic Center to have been built during the 1950's. The Denver Public Library is an important component of the Civic Center. The building relates to the curve in W. Fourteenth and to the Park's Greek Theatre. It is from the Greek Theatre and the other Neo-Classical Style buildings on the Civic Center that the intelligent and sensitive use of color on the library's exterior is derived.

The Denver Public Library is a significant International Style building. It is the last work of Denver's premier mid-century architect Burnham Hoyt, working with the firm of Arthur Addison Fisher and Alan Bierney Fisher. This latter firm is the second incarnation of the famous Denver firm Fisher and Fisher, a partnership of Arthur and his older brother, William Ellsworth Fisher. This firm was well known for its luxurious designs for residences of the wealthy, such as Belcaro, and for public buildings as well. With William's death in 1937,

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his son Alan revamped the firm's style by embracing Modernism. Country Club Gardens of 1940 on S. Downing at Ellsworth is an example of the second firm's work. Fisher and Fisher carried out much of the actual design work of the Denver Public Library owing to the debilitating effects of Parkinson's Disease that inflicted increasing misery on Burnham Hoyt from 1950 onward. Nonetheless, from conception through execution, the Denver Public Library is clearly within the concerns of Hoyt's oeuvre and well illustrates his mature design philosophy. Hoyt was assisted on the site of the library by architect Oscar Stromquist, who carried out Hoyt's spoken instruction. In addition, Rod Davis was the on-site supervising architect for the firm of Fisher and Fisher.

Hoyt was among the first generation of American architects to embrace Modernism in the 1930's. Though previously known for his revival-style homes and public buildings, Hoyt's true genius would become evident within the concerns of the International Style. Born on February 3, 1887, Burnham was the son of Denver carriage designer Wallace Hoyt. His older brother Merrill was also a well-known architect. The younger Hoyt began his architectural apprenticeship with the Denver firm of Kidder and Wieger. In 1908, he left for New York to complete his architectural studies at the Beaux Arts School of Design. While a student he won six competitions. He continued his professional training with George B. Post and Bertram Goodhue of the New York firm of Post and Goodhue. At this time, he is credited with the interior of the landmark New York Church of St. Bartholomew of 1919.²² Goodhue was one of the foremost architects of the early twentieth century. He was responsible for one of the great masterpieces of the Art Deco Style in America, the Nebraska State House of 1922-1932 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Hoyt's developed sense of detailing may have had its origins in Goodhue's office.

Hoyt returned to Denver to form the partnership of Hoyt and Hoyt with his brother Merrill. This firm was responsible for a number of buildings in various Historical Revival Styles. These include the English Gothic Style Lake Junior High, the Spanish Baroque Revival Park Hill Branch Library, and the Eclectic Cactus Club. In 1926 Hoyt returned to New York to undertake the ultimate commission of the first phase of his career, the Riverside Church in New York, commissioned by John D. Rockefeller.²³ After working for several years as a professor of architectural criticism at N.Y.U., he became Dean of the School of

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Architecture in 1930. At this time he was also associated with the firm of Pelton, Allen and Collins. Throughout this time he maintained a long-distance relationship with Hoyt and Hoyt. His brother Merrill died in 1933, which ostensibly ended the existence of the firm. In 1936 Burnham married Mildred Fuller, a Denver-born interior designer, in New York. That same year, he returned to Denver and established his own firm. It is at this time that his second mature phase would emerge.

Hoyt's debut work with his own firm was the Bromfield Residence of 1936.²⁴ This work immediately established Hoyt's preeminent position among the first generation of Colorado Modernists. The Residence was frequently illustrated in national publications and in surveys of modern architecture of the period. Sadly, however, this great work was lost through numerous major renovations over the last forty years.²⁵ The placement of the residence derives from an analysis of the "view" from the principal sitting room. Furniture in this room was "laid-out" by Hoyt's brother-in-law Thornton Fuller, the premier Denver interior designer of the period. The design of the rest of the house carried out from there. This careful "melding" of building to site, to paraphrase Hoyt's AIA citation of 1947, is well seen in the Denver Public Library.

The work that follows the Bromfield House is marked by a consistently high level of architectural design. These buildings constitute the most important body of International Style work in the region by a single figure. Hoyt was recognized nationally for his achievements. The Denver Children's Hospital of 1936 at E. Nineteenth Avenue and Downing was described in Architectural Forum as the first hospital design in the country to eschew the historicizing elements of the various revival styles then current.²⁶ The hospital likewise has been affected badly through insensitive resurfacing and substantial alterations. The Albany Hotel, also of 1936, was built at Seventeenth and Broadway and received praise in Architectural Forum for its elegant and functional plan (demolished.)²⁷ The Boettcher School of 1940 at 1900 Downing was featured in Architectural Forum as an early example of an educational building specially designed for the physically disabled.²⁸ An important innovation in the Boettcher School is the wheelchair accessibility of the building, which like the Denver Public Library is built at grade. Colorado Springs High School (now Palmer High) of 1940 was also praised by Architectural Forum for its up-to-date features.²⁹

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The Sullivan residence at 545 Circle Drive of 1941 is Hoyt's finest surviving commission in luxury residential design. The residence is closely associated stylistically with the now-lost Bromfield House. The Red Rocks Amphitheater of 1944 was quickly recognized by the architectural community for its high quality (additions,)³⁰ for the amphitheater was the only work of architecture in Colorado to be featured in the AIA's historical review exhibit of American architecture in 1957 at the National Gallery, as well as at a similar exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art.³¹

During the period 1945 to 1960, Hoyt's practice was severely limited by declining health. He designed his own home and studio at 3130 E. Exposition in 1947.³² With architect James Sudler, he also designed the renovation of a dry cleaner, a garage, and other buildings for the Denver Art Museum at Acoma and Thirteenth, which was on-going from the late 1940's until its completion in 1960 (demolished.)³³ Hoyt's only major commission in the period is the Denver Public Library of 1955. Suffering from Parkinson's Disease, Hoyt closed his office in 1955, and his staff was absorbed by Fisher and Fisher. Following Hoyt's death in April, 1960, Mildred Fuller Hoyt donated his papers to the Western History Collection of the Denver Public Library. As a result of the extent of loss in Hoyt's oeuvre, the Denver Public Library is one of only three major Denver projects left intact, the other being the Boettcher School and Red Rocks Amphitheater, (listed on the National Register June 18, 1990). In comparison to Hoyt's other major projects, the Denver Public Library is the architect's greatest accomplishment. The Denver Public Library is Hoyt's masterpiece, and it stands among the finest buildings in Denver from the period.

Hoyt's body of work in the International Style is a seamless and consistent whole. Hoyt generated the designs for his buildings with reference both to site and to the unique functional considerations of the building type. He often juxtaposed circular volumes to rectangular ones. Typically, these buildings have flat roofs. The regularity of the facades suggest a symmetrical treatment; yet, the facades are generally handled in an asymmetrical way. These buildings feature smooth and uniform walls. These walls are eaveless, though boxed-in

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eaves are sometimes used by Hoyt. His interest in light is demonstrated by his attention to fenestration. Large expanses of glass are typically seen. The windows and doors of Hoyt's buildings are stressed with trim. In the interiors, this interest in light is further stressed by clever uses of a variety of direct and indirect lighting. All of these standard features of Hoyt's best work in the International Style are fully illustrated in the Denver Public Library, the finest expression of Hoyt's mature design philosophy.

The aesthetic of the Denver Public Library is industrial. This aesthetic is softened, however, with the juxtaposition of the warm tones of traditional materials, such as wood and stone, with modern industrial materials like the gleaming window trim and the shiny interior surfaces. The design of the building has been generated from functional analysis. This analysis has been so completely applied that even the specific dimensions, as has been previously described, have been derived from the dimensions of the standard library shelving used. The height, color, materials, and massing of the building have been determined in response to its Civic Center site.

The interior abounds in Hoytian details. Ventilators and lighting are used to create visual interest. As has been mentioned, lighting in the Denver Public Library is laid out in a rational manner in order to direct users through the building. The lighted interior of the rotunda is surely one of the most notable views on the Civic Center at night.

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The International Style in architecture first appeared in Germany and France in the 1920's. By the 1930's, the International Style was firmly established in Europe and the United States.³⁴ After the Second World War, the International Style became a dominant trend in American architecture. The International Style increased in popularity from the 1950's to the 1970's. In contemporary architecture, the International Style remains a formidable model.

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The International Style has continuously been the expression of a set of principles applied to the theoretical underpinnings of the practice of architecture.³⁵ This set of principles has been applied utilizing two distinct yet interrelated concepts: functionalism and reductionism.³⁶ Functionalism is the tendency to generate the design of a building as the product of an analysis of functional criteria. Reductionism is the tendency to reduce the elements in a building design to its most basic expression resulting in an architecture of stark simplicity.³⁷ Utilizing these guiding concepts, architects working in the International Style have produced a sizeable body of work, the best of which are buildings of simplicity and elegance.

The Denver Public Library is a good example of Hoyt's International Style, which is a rare resource in Denver. The building is devoid of ornament. It has been constructed with a reinforced concrete frame.³⁹ The shelving was intended to create flexibility in the interior.⁴⁰ The buildings volumes are vaguely cubist in conception.⁴¹ The building is asymmetrically balanced.⁴² The eaveless walls⁴³ are handled in a uniform way.⁴⁴ The elevator shaft is prominently featured.⁴⁵ There are large areas of glazing.⁴⁶ The metal casement windows are emphasized through polishing.⁴⁷ The horizontality of the building is accentuated by the flat roofs.⁴⁸

Antecedents for the International Style were found in the work of American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. With the publication of the Wasmuth Portfolio, Wright's work became known in Europe.⁴⁹ Another early 20th century architect whose work even more directly influenced the development of the International Style was the German architect, Peter Behrens, Behrens was involved in the Werkbund movement, the goal of which was the merging of art and industry. Three of the early practitioners of the International Style, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, had been assistants in Behren's office.⁵⁰

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In the decade of the 1920's, masters of the International Style created a number of buildings that are regarded as among the most important buildings of this century. One of the most notable is the Dessaus Bauhaus by Walter Gropius of 1925 (partly destroyed, recreated.)⁵¹ Here all the elements of the International Style are clearly shown. The building is conceived as an arrangement of solid rectangular volumes which are composed asymmetrically in a regular and balanced way. The building is pared-down but retains a sense of visual interest created by fenestration and cantilevered balconies. The walls are eaveless, the roofs flat. The building features the use of concrete and steel, though the walls are principally made of stucco on brick. Devoid of ornament, the walls are treated in a uniform way with large areas of glazing, particularly in the famous curtain wall. Both metal casement windows and ribbon windows are seen throughout.

Another of the masters of the International Style was Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who, like Gropius, was associated with the Bauhaus. His German Pavilion for the 1928 Barcelona Exposition (dismantled and lost, recreated,) is a key monument in the history of twentieth century architecture.⁵² Like the Bauhaus, the colloquially-termed Barcelona Pavilion would be widely publicized and quite influential. Mies Barcelona chair was designed for this Pavilion.

In the United States, the earliest expression of the mature International Style would be the remarkable residences constructed in and around Los Angeles in the 1920's. Alone among American cities, Los Angeles fostered an avant-garde in architecture on a level with events in Europe. Two of the most important are the Lovell Beach House of 1925-1926 by Rudolf Schindler⁵³ and the Lovell House of 1927 by Richard Neutra.⁵⁴ Both architects were Viennese immigrants possessing first hand knowledge of the International Style. Shindler was also familiar with Wright's work because he had been one of Wright's assistants.

Schindler's Lovell Beach House reveals an awareness of Wright but is more closely related stylistically to Le Corbusier's work in overall conception and realization. Covered indented entrances are seen in both buildings. Both buildings are essentially boxes which are punctuated with planar walls. The Neutra Lovell House is more purely Bauhaus in conception. It is a flat-roofed building which is comprised of a complicated composition of rectangular volumes. There is extensive use of glazing, including ribbon windows.

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The radical change in architecture represented by these and other International Style buildings of the 1920's caused a world-wide sensation.

The first east coast buildings in the International Style were the New York residences of 1931 by the Swiss immigrant William Lescaze. The following year, Lescaze formed a partnership with George Howe. This firm was responsible for the most ambitious expression of the International Style in the pre-war period, the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society Tower of 1932 in Philadelphia.⁵⁵

Another early proponent on the east coast was the architect Edward Durell Stone. Stone's Mandel Residence in Mt. Cisco, New York of 1934 was quickly recognized by the architectural community.⁵⁶ He was chosen to design the new Museum of Modern Art in New York, perhaps the most sought-after commission of the decade.

The Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago of 1933 and 1934 introduced the International Style to many with exhibits such as George Fred Keck's House of Tomorrow of 1933 (dismantled).⁵⁷ Wide coverage of the Century of Progress in the popular press exposed a broad public to the International Style for the first time, since previously it was known only to intellectual circles of architects and critics. Despite this expanded exposure, even in the centers of the International Style like Los Angeles and New York, historic revival styles flourished.

The International Style's increasing acceptance in intellectual circles and the academic community was due in part to the immigration of architects from Germany. Adolf Hitler, following his appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933, began his assault on Weimar culture with an official attack on the International Style in architecture and Bauhaus concerns in general. The Bauhaus closed. Architects working in the International Style were prevented from practicing. A number of these immigrant architects took up permanent exile in the United States and accepted positions in universities here, including Mies, Gropius and Marcel Breuer.

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Denver was fortunate to witness the construction of a number of International Style buildings in the 1930's. The oldest International Style building in the city is the residence by Casper Hegner for his family's use at 2323 E. Dakota of 1935.⁵⁸ In the history of 20th century Denver architecture, the Hegner Residence is a good example of the style. The flat-roofed house is made up of a complicated arrangement of interlocking volumes. A ribbon window, the first of its kind in the city, terminates in a corner window that pierces nearly the entire horizontal mass of the living room block. Above this block is a roof deck.

As has been mentioned, another significant Denver building in the annals of modern architecture was the Bromfield Residence of 4975 S. University Boulevard by Burnham Hoyt. The Bromfield Residence appeared in Architectural Forum in 1939⁵⁹ and was included in a number of compendiums of architecture, including Design in Modern Interiors by Ford and Ford.⁶⁰ The Bromfield Residence is similar in appearance to Stone's Mandel Residence; both buildings show the juxtaposition of circular volumes with rectangular ones.

Other important figures associated with the International Style in pre-war Denver, in addition to Hegner and Hoyt were: Thomas Moore, Earl Chester Morris, Robert Max Morris, Lester Jones and Alan Fisher.⁶¹

During the Second World War, domestic construction dwindled. A post-war building boom beginning in the late 1940's and continuing for the next several decades, was characterized by the International Style. In the realm of important civic, educational and commercial commissions, the dominance of the International Style was virtually complete. Some of these buildings were individual expressions that, nonetheless, reflected the concepts of functionalism and reductionism. Among Denver's finest examples of this kind of post war International Style is the Denver Public Library by Burnham Hoyt and Fisher and Fisher of 1955.

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Geographic Context:

The Denver Public Library is considered to be of exceptional architectural importance in the Denver area from the period. For important commissions like the Denver Public Library, the style of choice was the International Style. The Denver Public Library is not only Hoyt's most important commission but his only major project that survives in Denver from the period after World War II.

The Denver Public Library may be favorably compared to other Denver buildings from the period that best represent the International Style. A number of Denver's most important surviving International Style buildings constructed in the post-war era are high-rise buildings that share stylistic affinities with the Denver Public Library in line with the standard features of the International Style.

Three of these high-rises, the Denver Club Tower of 1954 by Raymond Irvin at 518 Seventeenth Street⁶² and the two towers by the world famous I.M. Pei, the office tower of Mile High Center of 1955 at Seventeenth and Broadway, now altered,⁶³ and the Hilton Hotel of 1960 at Sixteenth Street and Tremont Place⁶⁴, were all featured in national periodicals like Architectural Record and Architectural Forum. All three buildings have uniform wall treatments. The walls are eaveless. There are large areas of glazing. There are flat roofs. The heavy structural expression of the fenestration on the hotel is not unlike the expression of the windows and doors of the Denver Public Library.

Two Denver high-rises that are more closely related to the Denver Public Library are J. Rodger Musick's Bankers Life Insurance Building (now the Archdiocese of Denver) of 1958 at 200 Josephine Street⁶⁵ and Temple Buell's State Services Building of 1960 at 1575 Sherman Street.⁶⁶ The juxtaposition of light and dark stone facings on both buildings is similar to the same feature seen in the Denver Public Library. Also like the library, the bases of these buildings are expressed in stone. Both buildings are free of ornament and have flat roofs with eaveless walls. Musick's building shows the same approach to the symmetrical and asymmetrical tension that is even more complicated and developed in the library. Musick's heavy expression of the fenestration is similar to Hoyt's use of the same device in the library.

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Because of its prominent Civic Center site, the Denver Public Library was originally conceived with due regard to its role as a public monument. As a result, the library building is most closely associated with other low-rise public buildings in the immediate downtown Denver area.

The architects of the Colorado Department of Employment of 1956 at 251 E. Twelfth Avenue, Fisher, Fisher and Davis, were also involved in the design of the Denver Public Library.⁶⁷ The Colorado Department of Employment is also nearly contemporary since the building was completed only shortly after the Denver Public Library. Among the many similarities are the uniform wall treatments and the flat roofs. The contrasting colors of the fancy black Russian marble that is set-off against the dull-gray concrete block is similar to the same feature seen on the Denver Public Library. The yellow terra cotta mosaic tile-clad columns at the main entrance of the Colorado Department of Employment may have been inspired by similar columns in the interior of Denver Public Library.

The Civic Center Classroom Building (Annex I) by Casper Hegner and Thomas Moore at 1445 Cleveland Place of 1949 is another nearby International Style building that serves the same kind of monumental role as an integral component of the Civic Center Historic District as does the Denver Public Library.⁶⁸ Both buildings subtly contrast their sleek functionalism with the neo-classicism of the older Civic Center monuments. Both have flat roofs, large areas of glazing, uniform and eaveless walls, expressed fenestration and asymmetrical massing and detailing. In spite of these similarities, the two buildings are very different in appearance from one another. Whereas the Civic Center Classroom Building is a textbook example of the Bauhaus-derived International Style, the Denver Public Library is a more individual and neo-classical variant of the style. The Civic Center Classroom Building is totally rectilinear, while the library juxtaposes circular volumes with rectilinear ones. Though both buildings are primarily horizontal in their orientation, the Civic Center Classroom Building is notably the more so.

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The Denver building that is most closely associated with the Denver Public Library is another integral component of the Civic Center; namely, the Denver Visitors' Center of 1951 at 225 W. Colfax Avenue by Roland Linder (additions.)⁶⁹ This building was originally comprised of a two-story rectangular block faced in white limestone with a single-story glass rotunda trimmed in aluminum. Linder was most likely aware of Hoyt's Denver Public Library design which was publically shown the same year in which the Denver Visitor's Center was built.

The Denver Public Library demonstrates its quality in this comparison to other Denver buildings constructed between 1945 and 1960 that best represent the International Style. Its association with other important buildings likewise indicates the exceptional architectural significance of the Denver Public Library.

SUMMARY:

The Denver Public Library is a significant building of exceptional architectural importance. It is an integral component of the National Register's Civic Center Historic District. The high quality of the design is significant.

The Denver Public Library is also the work of an acknowledged master of Denver architecture, Burnham Hoyt. Hoyt is typically seen as the premier architect working in Denver in the period of significance. The Denver Public Library embodies the distinctive characteristics of Hoyt's individual approach to the International Style. The Denver Public Library is the only major work by Hoyt completed in Denver in the post war period and is only one of two major Hoyt projects in the International Style to survive intact.

The period 1945-1960, marks the triumph of the International Style in American architecture. The Denver Public Library is significant as the earliest example locally of library architecture in the International Style from the period. The Denver Public Library is among the finest buildings from the period and was also instrumental in the design of other important Denver buildings.

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As a building of exceptional architectural significance, the Denver Public Library should be granted a Criteria Consideration Exception "G" to the fifty year guideline.

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Denver Public Library file, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

(X) See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- () recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- Primary location of additional data:
- () State Historic Preservation Office
 - () Other State agency
 - () Federal agency
 - () Local government
 - () University
 - () Other
- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property: Less than one acre

UTM References

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Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 25-36 and lot 5-16 Block 24, Evans Addition

() See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the Denver Public Library Building.

() See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Rodd Wheaton and Michael Paglia

Organization: M.A.P.L. Date: June 19, 1990

Street & Number: P.O. Box Telephone: 303-777-1163

City or Town: Denver State: CO Zip Code: 80209

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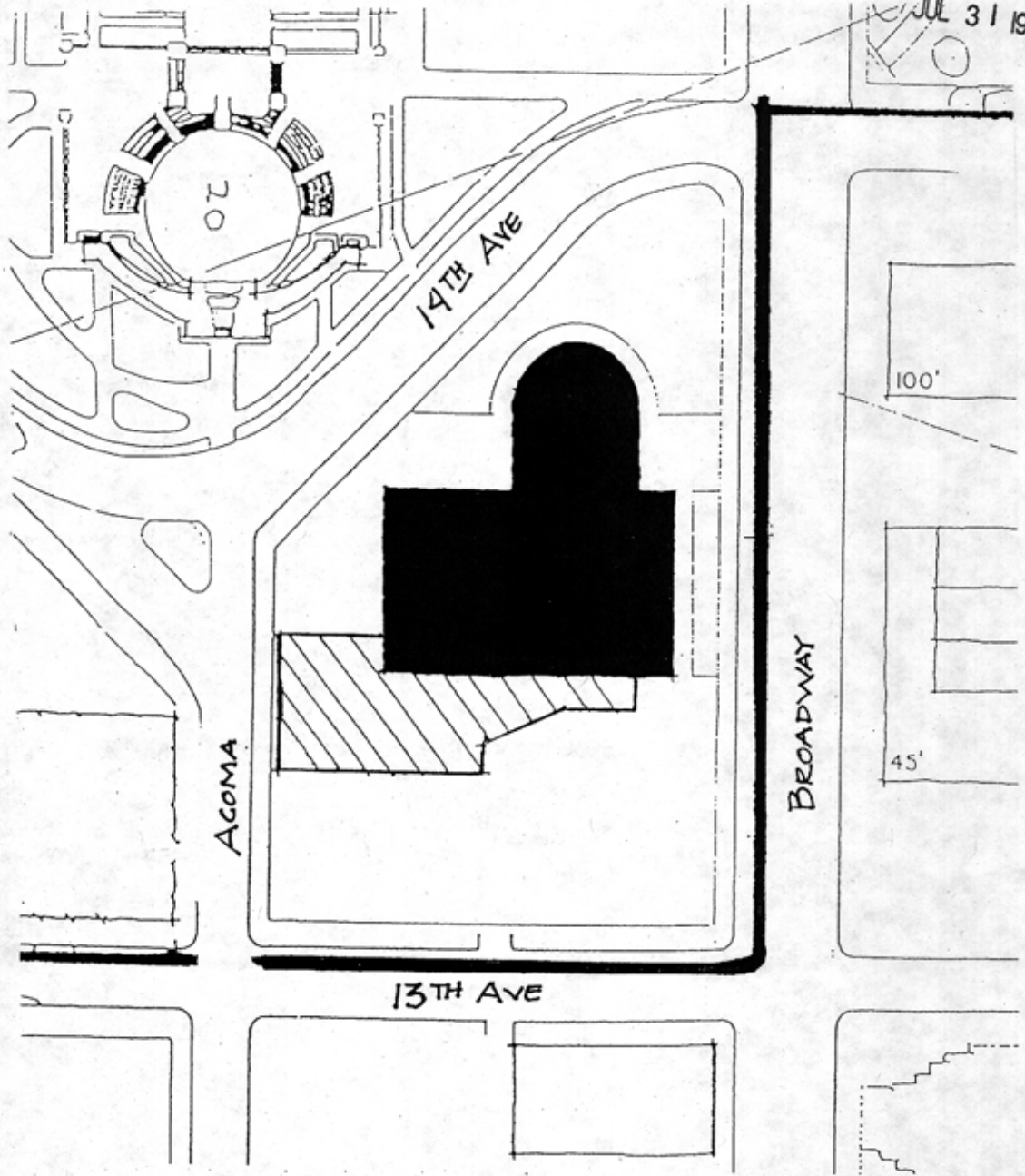
Photo Log

Photo Log for the
Central Denver Public Library, Civic Center Historic District
Denver, Colorado
Arpie Chucovitch
Summer 1990
Negatives 1150 So. Broadway, Denver, Colorado

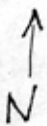
Photo #

1. Main entrance, east elevation, View SW
2. North elevation, View from Civic Center looking S
3. North elevation, View SW
4. Northwest corner, View E
5. Interior detail, main stair from first floor
6. Interior detail, main stair from second floor

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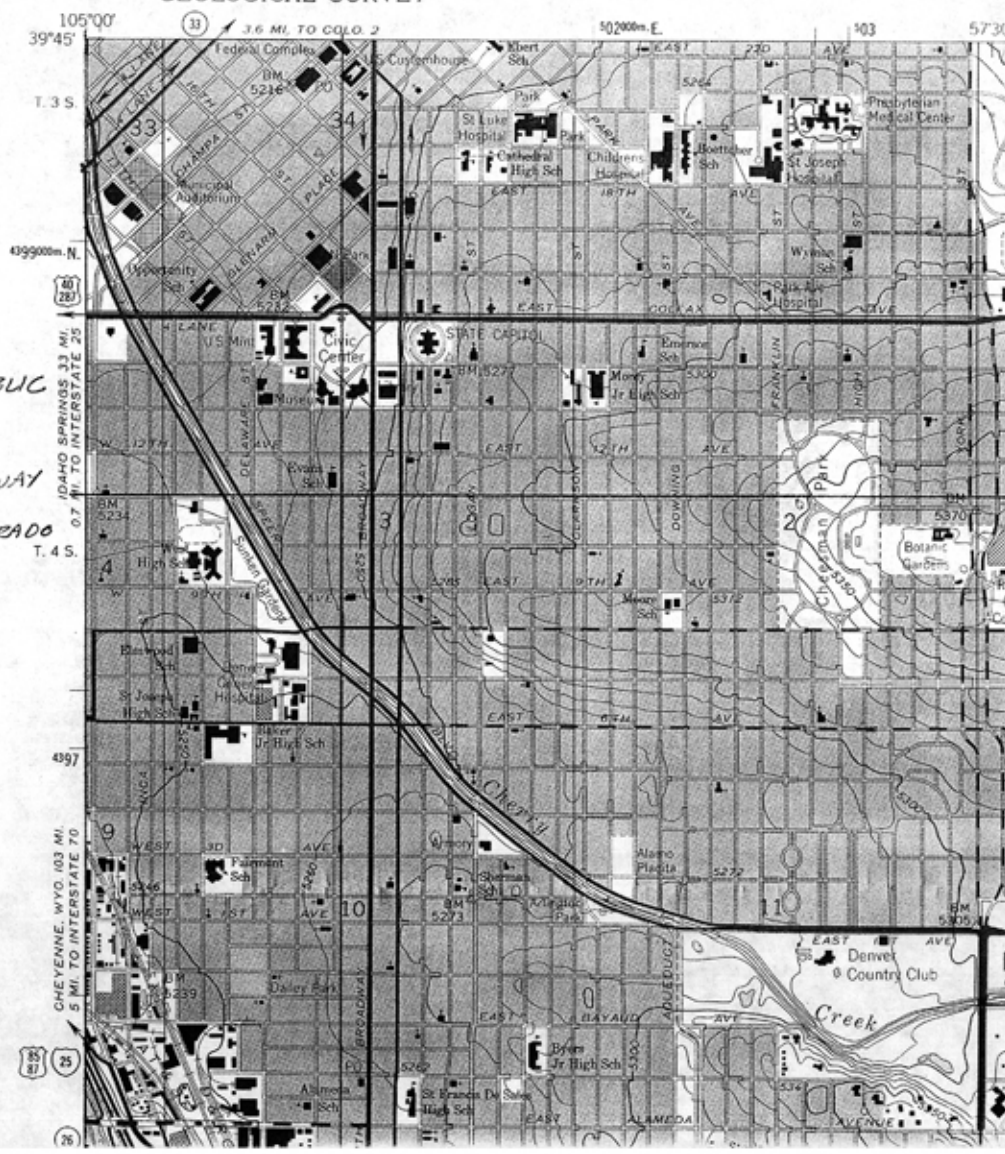


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