

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0675571

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RECEIVED	APR 18 1979
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Denver City Cable Rail Way Building

AND/OR COMMON

"The Spaghetti Factory" and the Tramway Cable Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1801 Lawrence Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Denver

VICINITY OF

1

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Colorado

08

Denver

031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

James E. Judd

STREET & NUMBER

2949 Larimer Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Denver

VICINITY OF

Colorado 80205

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City and County Building

STREET & NUMBER

1445 Cleveland Place

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Denver

Colorado 80203

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites

(16/01/0022)

DATE

Ongoing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Denver

Colorado 80203

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in downtown Denver a few hundred yards north of Larimer Square, the Tramway Cable Building is a single detached structure rectangular in shape and two stories high. The construction material is red brick set in courses of stretcher bond. The south or main facade has seven bays, the north facade ten bays, the east facade nine bays, and the west facade seventeen bays. The roof is flat.

Entry to the building occurs mainly through wooden, double doors set inside a great arch with a keystone located on the south facade. Brickwork projects above the second story to accentuate the opening. The windows on both the south and east facades occur in pairs. Each window is two-sashed and double hung with radiating voussoirs. The windows along the north and west sides which face away from the street corner are also two sashed and double hung, but have flat arches and do not occur in pairs. All windows have stone lugsills. A polygonal chimney rises from the north side of the structure.

The brick decorative work is elaborate and superbly crafted. Pilasters along the south and east facades create the bays with two windows, and each pair of windows plus the main entry are set off by sweeping arches below which lies a star. The corbelling above the first and second stories is very detailed, the work of master craftsmen.

The interior of the structure still reflects much of the building's industrial purposes although hardly a remnant of the original machinery remains. Yet plainly visible in the 54,000 square feet are the heavy wooden floors, the great wooden columns, and the heavy wooden beams. The interior has not been compromised to any real extent by recent conversion into a restaurant.

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1889-present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tramway Cable Building is significant for its association with the evolution and development of urban transportation, for its outstanding architectural features, and for its superb craftsmanship.

The building owed its origin to the Denver City Cable Railway Company, incorporated out of another venture in 1888. This enterprise obtained a license to various San Francisco cable car patents and hired one Robert Gillham of Kansas City to build the lines which became the larger of Denver's two cable railroad systems. While the technological intricacies of the system cannot detain us here, it can be said that Gillham and his company created the largest cable railway ever run out of a single powerhouse--the Tramway Cable Building, erected in 1889. When the company began service in October of that year, it ran cars through both business and residential areas. Particularly notable was the Welton line whose great cable, 36,850 feet in length, was the longest in the United States, and was later superseded by only one other, the Lexington Avenue cable in New York.

By the early 1890s the company had thirty miles of cable railway running cars at ten miles per hour, but scarcely had the enterprise established this system when the juggernaut of technological advance established the superiority of the electric railway. The Denver City firm clung to the obsolescent method, but this, the depression of the 1890s, and competition carried the venture into bankruptcy. Still, the cable cars ran. Not until 1898 after a reorganization and merger with its rival which had converted to electricity did the cars begin disappearing from Denver's streets as the new owners converted the lines to the more efficient technology. The last cable car ran in Denver in 1900.

With the demise of the cable cars, the Tramway Building entered other pursuits. Mostly, the large interior space permitted the structure to be used as a garage in the new automobile age. In the early 1970s the building seemed to have outlived its usefulness and was acquired for demolition by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA). Public opposition, however, saved the building from the wrecker's ball, and new owners later had it converted into "The Spaghetti Factory", now a popular restaurant in downtown Denver. Today, the Tramway Cable Building stands as the last vestige of the cable car industry, a fine example of Romanesque architecture, and a tribute to the skills of long dead craftsmen. It is a prominent landmark that calls to mind a time when Romanesque architecture was prominent in Denver, but its significance here lies in the fact that it is one of few commercial buildings in this style still remaining in the city.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

George W. Hilton, "Denver's Cable Railways," Colorado Magazine, XLIV (Winter, 1967), pp. 35-52.

File 16/01/0022, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.43

QUADRANGLE NAME Commerce City

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES 530

A 13 500550 4399880

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 17 to 22 inclusive, block 66, East Denver 125' X 150'

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Fell, Jr./Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Colorado Historical Society (Colorado SHPO Office)

DATE

August 29, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1300 Broadway

TELEPHONE

(303) 839-3394

CITY OR TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado 80203

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Arthur C. Lumsden

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 12, 1979

FDR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles A. ...

DATE

7.2.79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William A. ...

6.28.79

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION