

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0500542

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RECEIVED JUL 6 1977

DATE ENTERED JAN 9 1978

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

Equitable Building

AND/OR COMMON

Equitable Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

730 17th Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Denver

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Colorado

VICINITY OF

CODE

08

COUNTY

Denver

CODE

031

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Ground: University of Chicago.

Building: Urban Management, Limited

STREET & NUMBER

Chicago, Ill. 60637

Attention: Donald G. Horton

300 Cambridge Building

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

~~Office of the Clerk and Recorder - Denver City and County Bldg.~~

STREET & NUMBER

East 14th Avenue and Bannock Street

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Historic American Buildings Survey (also the Denver Inventory and the
Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites)

DATE 1968

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

The State Historical Society of Colorado

CITY, TOWN Denver

STATE Colorado

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Equitable Building is an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture as expressed in a 19th century office building. Situated on the south east corner of 17th Street and Stout Street, this nine story building is shaped like two large E's placed back to back. The exterior wall material is of evenly coursed Colorado granite blocks for the first two floors and pressed brick for the upper seven. The roof is flat and there are no chimneys or dormers.

The basic visual effect is one of four horizontal layers created by white terra cotta string courses located between the second and third floors, the fifth and sixth floors, and the eighth and ninth floors. These layers climax in a dramatic, heavily decorated cornice.

The main floor of the building, on the 17th Street side, is dominated by a large highly decorated arch with a smaller arch on each side. This arrangement, reminiscent of the Palladian style, is repeated in the two story high, Palladian window of the Law Library on the fourth floor. This window is notable for its classical decoration and sculpture in terra cotta within the round arch of the center window. Above, there is a large balcony of terra cotta supported by ten brackets. The front and sides of the balcony are paneled. On the front of the balcony, at each end, a wreath surrounding a large letter E is visible.

Other important features of the first floor include a set of tall iron lamps supported by decorative terra cotta brackets with globes on top and located on each side of the main entrance.

The first floor windows, which are double height, are set in round arches with three on each side of the entrance arch. These windows are balanced by the smaller second floor windows, 1 X 1 double hung, set in Byzantine arches that are arranged in pairs and divided by an engaged column. There are three pairs of windows flanking the center element, which is made up of four arches divided by engaged columns.

The next layer, the third through the fifth floor, in addition to the large grand window already discussed, features rectangular windows, 1 x 1 double hung, on the third and fourth story and round arched windows on the fifth story with round medallions between the arches.

The third layer of the building, made up of the sixth through eighth story, contains many of the same architectural features established in the second layer. The windows on the sixth and seventh story are rectangular, 1 x 1 double hung, with terra cotta lintels. The eighth story windows feature decorative brick work around their round arched tops, and between the arches are medallions also of decorative brick work.

The ninth floor, the fourth layer, becomes increasingly ornate. The windows are rectangular and are grouped into sets of three, each outlined by terra cotta. The central group has five openings. In each end group there is a panel between every other window.

Crowning the entire facade is a heavily ornamented entablature of terra cotta comprised of a plain frieze, topped by dentils which in turn are surmounted by an egg and dart motif. The cornice is supported by decorative terra cotta brackets, evenly spaced, with panels between them on the soffit.

When the building is viewed from the Stout Street side, the E shaped floor plan of the building is evident. The most notable features are the three bays which form the ends of the E. There are rectangular bays on each side of the central focal point, an eight story angular bay with a flat roof edged by a terra cotta balustrade. The remainder of the wall surfaces recede into the void of the E above the second story.

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The fenestration on the Stout Street facade of the building follows the same pattern as that on the 17th Street side. The only differences are in the seventh and eighth stories of the center bay. On the seventh story the windows are round arched design and the eighth story windows are arranged in pairs and are divided by an engaged column, a repetition of the second story windows. There are also two small terra cotta balconies between the fourth and fifth stories, one on each end bay.

Upon entering the building from Stout Street, there is a vestibule with dark marble floor and walls and a vaulted ceiling. The vestibule leads to the main lobby and hallway, magnificently finished in marble of different shades and bronze stair rails.

The barrel vaulted ceiling of the lobby is overlaid with mosaic tiles. There are rectangular marble pillars dividing the ceiling into bays. Part of the original lobby has been partitioned, but the ceiling above remains intact.

There is a grand staircase of marble with a handsome bronze handrail that has the E motif, which is carried throughout the building, set into the tops of the newel posts. The stair case divides at a landing which has a magnificent backdrop of three Tiffany stained glass windows. Here again the symbolic E is integrated into the design of the window. Another beautiful Tiffany window is at the south west end of the main corridor. It is round arched and is a symphony of greens and yellows.

The building is in excellent condition and is virtually unchanged, both inside and out. What changes have been made have been contained mainly to the interior fixtures as opposed to structural changes. New light fixtures have been installed.

The Equitable Building remains today a noteworthy and handsome structure on 17th Street, which has seen a proliferation of modern skyscrapers. As a result of the blending of local craftsmanship and pride, the Equitable Building remains an architectural landmark in downtown Denver.

8 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Andrews, Jaques and Rantoul

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Equitable Building is significant because of its architecture, Italian Renaissance revival, and because it has, since its construction, been associated with much of the political and commercial history of Colorado. It was completed in 1892 during the building boom in Denver that occurred during the late 1880's and early 1890's. At this time, Denver, seeking to become a city of national importance, was self-conscious about its frontier image. So when the Equitable Assurance Company of New York determined to build its western headquarters in Denver, there was a happy meeting of minds, money, and talent necessary for the construction of the Equitable Building.

The Denver Equitable Building Company was formed to construct the building. The architects were Andrews, Jaques, and Rantoul of Boston and Chicago. At the time of its completion it was by far the tallest building in Denver.

The Equitable Building had its own electrical and water systems. To this day, the artesian well in the basement still runs the elevators, of which there are eight. All the rooms had radiators; most had water closets and hot and cold water, and many also had gas fireplaces.

At the time the building was completed, its elegance and modern features attracted other businesses to 17th Street. Most people attribute the development of 17th Street as the present business and financial center of Denver to the Equitable's location there in 1892. In 1896 David H. Moffat moved the First National Bank of Denver there, which, although it has moved from the Equitable Building, remains on 17th Street a few blocks away. For many years, the Rio Grande Railroad offices were located in the building (Its president, William Barth, bought the building in 1910.) A. E. Reynolds, of mining fame, also had his office there.

In addition to its connection with commercial activities, the Equitable Building has had a long association with law and politics. In 1893 and 1894 it was the seat of the state executive offices while the state capital was being built. In addition, many famous Colorado lawyers have had their offices in the building. They include Edward O. Wolcott; Julius Gunther, U.S. Senator; Henry McAllister, Colorado Governor; and Malcolm Lindsay to name a few. Mary Lathrop, the first woman admitted to the Bar in the United States, had her offices in the Equitable.

It is the home of two excellent law libraries, the Equitable Law Library, one of the most extensive in the western United States, and the other located in the private law firm of Holland and Hart.

At present the Equitable Building is in excellent condition. There has been interior remodeling and modernizing, but on most of the floors those 19th century features compatible with a 20th century office building have been retained.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brettell, Richard R., Historic Denver, 1858-1893, Historic Denver, Inc., 1973. p.25
Smiley, Jerome C., History of Denver, The Sun Times Publishing Co., Denver, 1901. p.83
The Lookout, edited by Malcomb G. Wyer, Denver, 1926. p.14.
Descriptive and Illustrative of the Equitable Building . . . et al, Exhibit Publishing Co., New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.
News articles in various issues of The Denver Post, The Daily Herald, The Denver Republican, 1890 - 1940.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Under 10 acres *less than 1 (see photo log)*

UTM REFERENCES

A 13 500 75 0 4 3 99 4 10
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 140 Lots 1-12 East Denver Addition.

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

Barbara Norgren - Preservation Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Historic Denver

DATE

December 23, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

770 Pennsylvania Street

TELEPHONE

837-1858

CITY OR TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

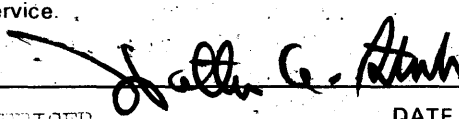
NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

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



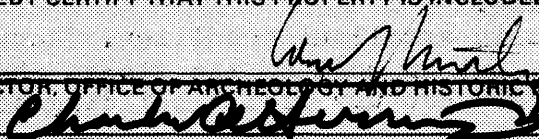
TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE MARCH 31, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST



KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1.9.78

DATE 1.8.78

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The building now houses such diverse tenants as the Carson Gallery of Western American Art, the offices of Great Western United Corporation, the Korean Consulate, and the Denver branch of Barton and Company, as well as many law firms which have been tenants for many years.

The Equitable Building, from its beginning, has been an important building in Denver. Even today, its tenants regard it with much affection and the interior is beautifully maintained. It is an excellent example of quality architecture and loving craftsmanship as exhibited in a 19th century "skyscraper" in Denver.