

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001346

Date Listed: 12/6/90

Denver Civic Center Classroom Bldg.  
Property Name

Denver  
County

CO  
State

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

12/6/90  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #8, Significance:

Page 2: The past fifty years represents nearly one half of Denver's history.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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JUN 11 1990 24-0018

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

NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**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 Civic Center Classroom Building  
other names/site number: City Annex One

**2. Location**

street & number: 1445 Cleveland Place (NA) not for publication  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 N/A

**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

Lowell Shuel 12-6-90

( ) 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)

**Current Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

Education: College  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Government: Government Office  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(enter categories from instructions)

International Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundations Concrete  
walls Limestone  
roof Asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

Forming the northwest boundary of the Civic Center Historic District, the University of Denver Civic Center Classroom Building (Annex One) extends along Cleveland Place between 14th and 15th Streets. To the northwest of the building, which occupies approximately a quarter of the block, is a City of Denver parking lot which extends to Tremont Place. The building is built to the property line along 15th Street and Cleveland Place. A sidewalk and a landscaped plaza extend along Cleveland Place and at the southwest elevation. A public sidewalk is at the northeast and extends along the northwest separating the building from the paved parking lot.

Since the Classroom Building, built in 1948, was originally designed to form the periphery of an interior courtyard, or campus green, with five other unrealized buildings, there are two facades. One faces southeast to the Civic Center and is along Cleveland Place; the other, opposite, faces northwest to the center of the block and the proposed courtyard.

The building is 1 block long, flat roofed, rectangular in plan, and is four stories with a basement. It encompasses approximately 90,000 square feet. Faced with limestone veneer (4 inches thick with 3/8 inch joints) the building has steel framed ribbon windows. The ribbon windows set with green glass have continuous concrete hoods which project approximately 2 feet and have exposed plywood formwork soffits. The hoods have aluminum facias.

(X) See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

Civic Center Classroom Building

At the southeast facade, facing Civic Center, a roof terrace extends in front of a set-back fourth story. The penthouse structure has a widely cantilevered canopy extending approximately half way over the quarry tiled roof terrace.

The building's design, relying on strong horizontal banding, is asymmetrical in arrangement particularly at the side elevations and at the back northwest facade where two projecting vertical bays at the internal stairways and the internal elevator shaft stop the horizontal ribbons of windows. At the southeast Civic Center facade, the window units form continuous horizontal ribbons interrupted only by regularly spaced bays within concrete mullions which enclose three pairs of ganged window openings. Each pair is set within a steel mullion and is divided by steel muntins. The openings are infilled each with a tier of five horizontal sash with operable awning-type lights.

At the back, northeast facade the north elevator shaft, set flush with the wall, extends above the fourth floor into a mechanical penthouse. The set-back of the fourth floor penthouse extends along the northeast elevation and is reflected as an additional step at the north corner.

Further defining the building's internal vertical circulation are the two projecting bays of the stairwells. These bays, starting a half floor above grade, have 12 horizontal lights at the first 2 levels and 15 lights at the upper level. The sides are glazed. Each bay is supported on a shallow concrete corbel at the base and at each stairway landing. The northwest facade is further characterized by horizontal, four-light window openings that pierce the limestone veneer at each floor level providing clerestory type windows for restrooms and service areas on each floor. Each window opening is aligned within the stone veneer grid, is flanked by 4 inch wide stone veneer "jambs," and set with projecting stone sills. The horizontal ribbon windows, stopped by the stairwell bays and service window alignment, have foreshortened bay spacing within the structured concrete mullions.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

Civic Center Classroom Building

The southwest elevation reflects the setback of the fourth floor. At the west corner the penthouse fourth story extends flush with the walling but is set back to form a side terrace above a central vertical bay. The fourth floor's cantilevered overhang extends over the setback and is flush with the below walling. Within the vertical bay is a secondary entrance at the first floor and a recessed balcony at the second and third floor levels which are defined by wide concrete spandrels forming a parapet at each floor level.

The northeast elevation at 15th Street has no fenestration within the veneered wall and is characterized by the stepped 4th floor penthouse and the above stepped elevator penthouse near the north corner.

A southeast entrance from Cleveland Place occupies a full first floor bay off-centered towards the east corner. Directly opposite and adjacent to the more central stairwell is the back northwest entrance originally intended to open into the planned interior courtyard. An entrance is centered on the southwest elevation and at the exit from the interior north stairway adjacent to the elevator shaft. The main entrances are recessed openings. At the two back and side entrances the openings are sheltered by projecting concrete canopies set above the openings. The canopy of the northwest main entrance is an extension of the adjacent horizontal window hood. At the southeast Cleveland Place entrance a later canopy supported on tubular metal columns extends across the sidewalk and is set below the horizontal plane of the continuous window hood.

All exterior doors are modern bronzed aluminum with variations on the number of doors and sidelight and transom configurations. Opening into the roof terrace are glazed doors spaced between windows having fixed center panes and top and bottom awning sash.

While stripped of conventional architectural ornament, the exterior is characterized by its exaggerated horizontality in fenestration and detailing. At the southeast facade two courses of limestone veneer with typically aligned vertical joints rise directly from grade to a continuous projecting window sill which receives the concrete and steel mullions. Window heads have the continuous projecting concrete hoods. Continuous limestone spandrels separate the floor levels and define the shallower roof parapets which are capped with projecting continuous coping.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

Civic Center Classroom Building

Around the roof terrace are pipe railings with woven wire mesh inserts. The vertical supports correspond to the window mullion spacing. Extending around three sides of the fourth floor penthouse and at the southwest balconies, the railings are attached to the inside of the parapets.

At the Cleveland Place entrance carved into the stone veneer is "University of Denver, March 5, 1949." The lettering in all capitals forms a stylized architectonic inscription utilizing a vertical font.

Originally the interior included 85 classrooms, several laboratories, study areas, a reading room and a spacious assembly room named for Dudley Beaumont the founder of Colorado's May Company. The interior at each of the three main floors is characterized by lateral hallways opening to the southwest balconies and side entrance and three stairwells and elevator. The two main stairways, except at the cross hall entrance lobby, are enclosed at each floor by birch veneer glazed doors with transoms. Bronze push bars remain. Lighted by the projecting bays, the two main stairways have 5'6" high beige tiled wainscoting. The terrazzo treads and risers have pipe railings that curve around each landing. Pipe hand rails are mounted to the walls.

The central staircase, which extends to the basement, opens into the widened cross hall lobby. The stairwell is tiled. The lobby cross hall between the main entrance vestibules is veneered in book-matched travertine marble wainscoting. Within the Cleveland Place entrance vestibule three terrazzo steps go down to the sidewalk level. The vestibule is also travertine lined. From the lobby, glazed birch veneer doors open down each lateral hallway. To the southwest, the open office area, defined by interior square concrete structural columns, has a modern dropped ceiling.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 5

Civic Center Classroom Building

At the second and third floor, the horizontal corridor, approximately 10 feet high, extends between prefabricated modular metal clad partitions having a metal base, beaded metal battens and a narrow shallow cornice feature set below the ceiling at a picture molding height. Original interior office partitioning is similar, but there is much modern office partitioning and large open spaces. Within the metal partitions, which have fiber insulation cores, are painted metal flush panel doors with vertical "stile" grooves. Permanent plaster partitions around stairways and restrooms have flush panel birch veneer doors. Window openings extend to the ceiling line which extend, in turn, to the soffit of the exterior hoods.

At the fourth floor the few remaining southeast office partitions have birch mullions with glazed transoms with side lights. Across the narrowed corridor are office spaces similar to those of the lower floors.

Ceilings are 12-inch square acoustical tile with grid holes. Venetian blinds remain at various locations and were designed to infill each five-tier of awning sash. Early lighting is simple, ceiling mounted fluorescent fixtures in the hallways. Heating units are located below window sills. Modern carpet covers the floors, except where there is terrazzo. In the hallways dark brown asphalt tile floor coverings remain partially visible.

Restrooms have tile wainscotting, marble partitions, terrazzo floors, and white porcelain fixtures.

Approximately 7 feet deep, the southwest balconies are, like the roof terrace, laid with quarry tile. Each balcony is reached by a single glazed birch veneer door having sidelights and a transom all with birch mullions. In general, the interiors were utilitarian utilizing only a luxury material to define the first floor lobby space. The most interesting technological features are the surviving prefabricated modular partitions which were an innovative technique for enclosing the original classrooms and offices offering an original flexible planning concept.

**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)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Architecture	1949	1949

**Cultural Affiliation**  
 N/A

**Significant Person**  
 N/A

**Architect/Builder** Musick, G. Meredith  
**Architects:** Moore, Thomas; Hegner, Caspar Smith, Dudley (Smith, Hegner and Moore)  
**Builders:** Thomas Bate and Sons; C.E. Grannell

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

The Civic Center Classroom Building is an important building of exceptional architectural significance constructed during the post World War II period. The building is prominently sited as an integral component of the National Register Civic Center Historic District. The high quality of the design of the Classroom Building is significant in that it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the International Style and meets criterion "C". The stairtowers, the ribbon windows and the use of the cantilever are all elements derived from the 1926 Dessaus Bauhaus, a building important to the development of the International Style. The building is also significant in that it is the work of acknowledged masters of Denver architecture, Casper Hegner, Thomas Moore and Dudley Smith. The building is the earliest example, locally, of educational architecture in the International Style. Because the Civic Center Classroom Building is less than fifty years old, it is being nominated under Criterion Consideration Exception "G" for exceptional architectural significance.

During the Second World War, construction in Denver dwindled. A post-war building boom began in the late 1940s and continued for the next several decades, 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 directly inspired by the Bauhaus. These buildings, like their antecedents, would essentially be flat-roofed, light colored, cubistically arranged rectangular constructions in the spirit of the Dessaus Bauhaus. Denver's finest example of this kind of post-war International Style architecture is the Civic Center Classroom Building of 1949 by Smith, Hegner and Moore with G. Meredith Musick.

(x) See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2

Civic Center Classroom Building

1945 to 1960, was a time of unprecedented growth in new construction in the United States generally and in Denver in particular. Among the earliest expressions of this boom was the construction of the Classroom Building (Annex I.) The building has been characterized in Denver; The City Beautiful as the city's "...best example of International Style architecture."<sup>1</sup> Since Denver is relatively young, the past fifty years represents nearly one third the time span of the history of building in Denver. The 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 1940's Civic Center Classroom Building 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 Gideon<sup>2</sup>, Henry Russel Hitchcock<sup>3</sup>, and Nikolaus Pevsner<sup>4</sup>, 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.<sup>5</sup>

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 Jordon of 1970<sup>6</sup>, Key Monuments in the History of Architecture by Henry A. Millon of 1975<sup>7</sup>, or A History of Architecture by Spiro Kostof of 1985<sup>8</sup>, 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 1978<sup>9</sup> and Georges and Rosamond Bernier's The Best in Twentieth Century Architecture of 1964<sup>10</sup> are two examples. In addition, numerous specific studies have been directed at movements associated with the International Style, including Hans Wingler's Bauhaus of 1969<sup>11</sup> and Martin Grief's Depression Modern of 1977.<sup>12</sup> 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 1983<sup>13</sup>, and "The Machine Age in America," organized

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3

Civic Center Classroom Building

by the Brooklyn Museum in 1986.<sup>14</sup>

There are even a number of sources that focus exclusively on the post-war period in relation to the International Style. Volume 4 of American Buildings and Their Architects by William Jordy of 1972<sup>15</sup> 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 Johnson<sup>16</sup>, Louis Kahn<sup>17</sup>, and Pietro Belluschi.<sup>18</sup> For the International Style in Denver, Don Etter's Denver Going Modern of 1977, demonstrates that the International Style has long been seen as an historical topic.<sup>19</sup>

The Civic Center Classroom Building (Annex I)

The Civic Center Classroom Building was built as the University of Denver School of Commerce. In contemporary sources the building was also called the Business Administration Civic Center Campus and the Civic Center College of Business Administration Building. Inscribed on the lost original transom of the main entrance was "School of Architecture" indicating the intention of D.U. to house these facilities in this building.

Under the guidance of D.U.'s director of the Department of Development, Farrington R. Carpenter, a program was undertaken to establish a Civic Center Campus for the university, an effort that already was underway in an ad hoc capacity. Originally the plan for a Civic Center Campus of D.U. called for the construction of five other buildings on the block. The Civic Center Classroom Building was the only one every realized, however. The other buildings planned for the Cleveland Place block were Schools of Law, Music, Art, Librarianship, and a Memorial Theatre.

This ambitious program was the product of discussions in early 1946 concerning the future of D.U. At this time, D.U. was pioneering the concept of higher education in an adult evening program. The decision to create a Civic Center Campus for D.U. was a response to demands by returning World War II veterans for day and evening classes close to downtown. Land adjacent to the Civic Center, owned by the university, was to be supplemented with purchases of additional land. The goal was to acquire the entire Cleveland Place block. A fund-raising drive was launched with the goal of fifteen million dollars to pay for this new Civic Center Campus, to acquire the additional land needed, and for other projects on the main University Park Campus. Helen Bonfils, daughter of Denver Post founder Frederick Bonfils, was a leader of this fund-raising drive, which was successful enough to allow the university to begin construction

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4

Civic Center Classroom Building

on the Civic Center Classroom Building the following year.

The Civic Center Classroom Building was built as an integral component of the Civic Center. Designed in 1947 and completed in 1949, it is the only building in the Civic Center built in the 1940's. The Classroom Building relates to the Voorhees Memorial and the Carnegie Library across Colfax Avenue in Civic Center Park as well as to the nearby City and County Building on Bannock Street. The building also provides a backdrop to the Pioneer Fountain at the northwest corner of Colfax and Broadway. Since the building extends the full length of the Cleveland block between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets, it is a sight stop that screens the Civic Center from the downtown commercial core.

The design of the Civic Center Classroom Building is credited to the firm of Smith, Hegner and Moore, with the firm of G. Meredith Musick. Musick's more established firm was brought on to provide technical assistance after the preliminary design stage but within the drawing stage.

Smith, Hegner and Moore was founded in the post-war era. In 1944, still in a Marine Corps officer's uniform, Casper Hegner began corresponding with friends and fellow architects Dudley Smith and Thomas Moore. Dudley Smith was an architect of established reputation in the pre-war period and he was known for his fine work in various Historical Revival Styles like the residence at 100 Gaylord Street in Normandy Tudor Style. Casper Hegner and Thomas Moore had established reputations in the International Style.

In 1947 the firm was awarded its first large-scale, high-status commission, the Civic Center Classroom Building. The building completed in 1949, is a masterpiece of the firm's work. In addition, it is also one of the most significant buildings associated with any of the firm's principals. The building illustrates the firm's refined functionalist and reductionist design philosophy. Other International Style designs by the firm include the Grand Junction Stadium, illustrated in Architectural Forum<sup>20</sup>, which was the project that immediately followed the Civic Center Classroom Building. The stadium demonstrates the same design philosophy applied to a very different kind of structure.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 5

Civic Center Classroom Building

Thomas Moore, left the firm in 1950 to pursue a solo career on the western slope, where he had been supervising the stadium project.<sup>21</sup> The succeeding firm of Smith and Hegner was responsible for a number of fine buildings in the International Style, including the Ross-Barnum Branch Library at 3570 W. First Avenue of 1954, the Gilpin School at 2949 California Place of 1952, the Bradley School at 3051 S. Elm of 1954, and Thomas Jefferson High School at 3950 S. Holly of 1960. The firm's most important residential commission was the Coe Residence in Cody, Wyoming of 1959. The firm was dissolved when Hegner left Denver in 1962. At that time, Dudley Smith formed a partnership with George Thorsen and established the firm of Smith and Thorsen.

The original concept for the Civic Center Classroom Building was Casper Hegner's who determined that the building should be the same material, same color, and same height as the City and County Building.

Casper Hegner was born in Cincinnati on June 30, 1909. His family came to Denver 1913. His father was a prominent area physician Casper Frank Hegner. His mother, Rose Forman Hegner, was a social leader who was often involved in charitable causes. From 1926 to 1930, Hegner studied with Jean Labatut at Princeton, where he graduated with a B.A. From 1930 to 1932 he studied at Yale, where he was a contemporary of Eero Saarinen. In 1932 he received the B.F.A. from Yale, where he had studied with Otto Faelton. He returned the same year to Princeton where he received an M.F.A.A. in 1933. Two years later he returned to Denver to establish his practice.

Upon Hegner's return to Denver, he began work on his private residence at 2323 E. Dakota. The residence, completed in 1935, was a germinal step in International Style construction in Denver, as the city's oldest International Style building. Another important early International Style building by Hegner is the 1936 Young Residence at 520 S. Milwaukee which was featured in Architectural Record.<sup>22</sup> Certain features which define the International Style are seen in this building that are also seen in the Civic Center Classroom Building including the flat roofs, the roof decks with set-backs and the basic horizontal orientation of the designs. Both the Hegner Residence and the Young Residence also share with the Classroom Building the cubist conception of the rectangular volumes,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 6

Civic Center Classroom Building

though admittedly the later work is more unified and regular in its appearance when compared to the more complicated relationships seen in the earlier works. The ribbon window of the Hegner Residence, a feature not seen in the Young Residence, also anticipates the more extensive use of the same device in the Classroom Building.

In 1937 Hegner closed his office and joined the well-known Denver firm of Temple Buell. In 1940 he left Buell to work on the federal project of the Wingate Arsenal in New Mexico. In 1941 Hegner worked in Dallas with George Dahl. After service in the Marine Corps, he initiated the formation of the firm of Smith, Hegner and Moore with which he was associated until the 1950 formation of the firm Smith and Hegner. He was associated with this firm until 1962. Hegner was briefly the National Commissioner of Public Buildings in 1955 and 1956. After the dissolution of Smith and Hegner, he went to Washington, D.C. to join the Veterans Administration and was shortly thereafter promoted to Division Chief. In 1980 Hegner retired and returned to Denver. He currently maintains an apartment in Denver while living chiefly in Westcliffe.

The chief designer of the Civic Center Classroom Building was Thomas Moore. Moore worked with Hegner on the original concept and continued in a supervisory capacity throughout the completion of the project.

Thomas Moore was born in Denver in 1908. He attended Yale beginning in 1926 and received the B.A. in 1930 and the B.F.A. in 1936. While at Yale he was a close friend of fellow student Eero Saarinen and was exposed to the most advanced architectural theories of the day.

Moore returned to Denver in 1937 and worked briefly for Earl Chester Morris, another pioneer of the International Style in Denver. In 1938 Moore started his own practice. He produced two important buildings significant to the history of twentieth century architecture in Denver: the residence at 3100 E. Exposition Avenue and the architect's own residence at 1 S. Albion Street. Like Hegner's pre-war work, Moore's early residences featured elements that would later be seen in the Civic Center Classroom Building such as the exterior expression through the fenestration of the interior staircases. In the Civic Center Classroom Building, the pair of glassed-in stairtowers dominates the northwestern facade, one of the two principal facades of the building.

In 1950 Moore designed the Grand Junction City Hall, which was illustrated in Building<sup>23</sup>. When Moore returned to Denver in the mid 1950's, he taught at C.U., and was briefly associated with Denver engineer Ken R. White.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

Civic Center Classroom Building

Moore's later work was a wide variance to the contemporary work of Smith and Hegner. Whereas Smith and Hegner would continue to produce buildings of supreme restraint consistent with the Civic Center Classroom Building such as the aforementioned Gilpin School, Moore produced visually dramatic and theatrical buildings such as the Englewood Methodist Church at 3885 S. Broadway. Many of Moore's buildings of this period would express a distinct individualism sometimes featuring saw-toothed rooflines and geodesic domes. Moore's buildings were innovative for their techniques of construction as well as their design, reflecting the architect's lifelong interest in experimental building technology. Moore died in 1970.

Ground was broken for the Civic Center Classroom Building in 1948. James Sudler, who became a major force in Denver architecture in the 1950's, was the on-site supervising architect. John York, also from Musick's office, was brought on to assist Moore with the working drawings.

The Classroom Building has architectural significance because the methods of construction are appropriate for an International Style building. The mortar joints of the stonework are finely executed and are nearly invisible. The windows, a new type, were custom made in the Pittsburg Plate Glass factory. Factory made modular walls were also used. Pre-fabricated components are consistent with the philosophy of the International Style.

There are more than 3,000 window panes in the building, prompting a commentator of the period to remark that the Classroom Building "...was the most windowed and best lighted classroom building in existence."<sup>24</sup> Dr. E.G. Plowman, presiding at the dedication, described the building as "...a beautiful symbol of opportunity, a lighthouse of knowledge and thought."<sup>25</sup>

Soon after the completion of the building the university abandoned plans for a Civic Center Campus on the Cleveland Place block. In 1960, the D.U. School of Law was built at Fourteenth and Bannock. In 1966, the city of Denver purchased the Civic Center Classroom Building and the rest of the block from D.U. Shortly thereafter, the building was converted to civic use and renamed the City and County of Denver Annex One.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 8

Civic Center Classroom Building

**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.<sup>26</sup> 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.

The International Style has continuously been the expression of a set of principles applied to the theoretical underpinnings of the practice of architecture.<sup>27</sup> This set of principals has been applied utilizing two distinct yet interrelated concepts: functionalism and reductionism.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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 Civic Center Classroom Building is typical of the International Style which is a rare resource in Denver. The building is devoid of ornament.<sup>30</sup> It has been constructed with a reinforced concrete frame.<sup>31</sup> Modular walls, which were intended to create flexibility in the interior, are used.<sup>32</sup> The building's volumes are conceived in a cubist combination.<sup>33</sup> The building is asymmetrically balanced.<sup>34</sup> The walls are finished in a smooth and uniform way.<sup>35</sup> The walls are eaveless.<sup>36</sup> There are cantilevered elements including eye-brow window shades and the rooftop overhang.<sup>37</sup> The air conditioner compressor is prominently featured.<sup>38</sup> There are large areas of glazing.<sup>39</sup> The trim of the metal casement windows are emphasized with color.<sup>40</sup> Ribbon windows emphasize the horizontality of the building.<sup>41</sup> This sense of the horizontal is also stressed by the flat roofs.<sup>42</sup>

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 9

Civic Center Classroom Building

The Development of the International Style

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. 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 Behrens' office.<sup>44</sup>

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 Dessau Bauhaus by Walter Gropius of 1925 (partly destroyed, recreated).<sup>45</sup> 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 Pavillion for the 1928 Barcelona Exposition (dismantled and lost, recreated) is a key monument in the history of twentieth century architecture.<sup>46</sup> 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 the important events in Europe. Two of the most important are the Lovell Beach House of 1925-1926 by Rudolf Schindler<sup>47</sup> and the Lovell House of 1927 by Richard Neutra.<sup>48</sup> Both architects were Viennese immigrants possessing first hand knowledge of the International Style. Schindler was also familiar with Wright's work because he had been one of Wright's assistants.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 10

Civic Center Classroom Building

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.

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.<sup>49</sup>

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.<sup>50</sup> 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.)<sup>51</sup> 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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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 11

Civic Center Classroom Building

Denver was fortunate to witness the construction of a number of International Style buildings in the 1930's. As has been mentioned, 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.<sup>52</sup> 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.

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 1939<sup>53</sup> and was included in a number of compendiums of architecture, including Design of Modern Interiors by Ford and Ford.<sup>54</sup> The Bromfield Residence is similar in appearance to Stone's Mandel Residence; both buildings show the juxtaposition of circular volumes with rectangular ones. The Bromfield Residence has sadly been lost to substantial and insensitive remodeling.

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.<sup>55</sup>

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8

Page 12

Civic Center Classroom Building

**Geographic Context:**

The Civic Center Classroom Building is considered to be of exceptional architectural importance in the Denver area. In the post-war era, the Civic Center Classroom Building is the first expression of the International Style in the design of a major building. The Civic Center Classroom Building is the oldest post-war example of the International Style applied to educational architecture. An article in Architectural Review of 1950, a year after the completion of the Civic Center Classroom Building, chronicled the trend toward the choice of the International Style for the design of college and university buildings, in part due to the style's appeal among academics.

The Civic Center Classroom Building may be favorably compared to a number of Denver's most important International Style buildings constructed in the post-war era. Many of these buildings are high-rises. These buildings share stylistic affinities in line with the standard feature of the International Style.

Raymond Irwin's Denver Club Tower of 1954 at 518 Seventeenth Street, which was illustrated in Architectural Forum, has ribbon windows and cantilevered elements. J. Roger Musick's Bankers Union Life Insurance (now the Archdiocese of Denver) of 1958 at 200 Josephine Street<sup>57</sup> is asymmetrical in plan, and the treatment of the fenestration is balanced and regular. I.M. Pei's high-rises of the period in Denver are the office tower of Mile High Center of 1955 at Seventeenth and Broadway (overwhelmed by additions)<sup>58</sup> and the Hilton Hotel of 1960 at Sixteenth and Tremont.<sup>59</sup> Both were immediately recognized nationally as significant buildings and were illustrated in periodicals worldwide, including Architectural Record and Architectural Forum. Both high-rise feature the use of variations of the ribbon window. In the hotel, these windows and the exoskeleton stress the overall horizontality of the tower, an unusual feature in an inherently vertical structure like a high-rise. All of these high-rises have unified treatments, eaveless walls and large areas of glazing.

Even though the Civic Center Classroom Building was built as a university building, its prominent Civic Center site assured its role as a downtown building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 13

Civic Center Classroom Building

The Denver Public Library of 1955 by Burnham Hoyt with Fisher and Fisher is a nearby International Style building that serves the same kind of monumental role as the Classroom Building. It too is an integral component on the Civic Center. 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 regional variant of the style. The Civic Center Classroom Building (Annex I) is totally rectilinear, while the Denver Public Library juxtaposes circular volumes with its rectilinear ones. Though both buildings are primarily horizontal in their orientation, the Classroom Building is notably the more so.

The Colorado Department of Employment of 1956 by Fisher, Fisher and Davis at 251 E. Twelfth Avenue is another nearby low-rise International Style building that is closely related to the Classroom Building.<sup>60</sup> The main entrance is emphasized more on the Colorado Department of Employment than is the main entrance of the Civic Center Classroom Building with the use of luxurious stone and mosaic tiles. The north-side entrance on the Colorado Department of Employment is almost identical in feeling to the southwest side entrance of the Civic Center Classroom Building. Both buildings show a similar treatment of the massing and both buildings have flat roofs.

The Daly Insurance Building of 1959 at E. Sixteenth and Sherman Street by James Sudler is another International Style building similar in its conception to the Civic Center Classroom Building.<sup>61</sup> The composition of the building's volumes is similar to the same feature in the Civic Center Classroom Building but in the Daly Insurance Building this composition is less complex.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number   8   Page  14 

Civic Center Classroom Building

The Hotel Garage on Cleveland Place between Fifteenth and Sixteenth, an element of I.M. Pei's world famous Zeckendorf Plaza of 1958-1960, is the building in Denver that relates most closely to the Classroom Building. The Hotel Garage is a mirror-image of the Classroom Building located immediately south across Fifteenth Street. Both buildings are the same heights and there is the same sense of the horizontal. The courses of the ribbon-windows line up. Both buildings feature set-back top floors. Pei's decision to create this pairing provides a contextural link that relates the Zeckendorf Plaza to the Civic Center.

The Civic Center Classroom Building demonstrates its quality in this comparison to other Denver buildings constructed between 1945 to 1960 in the best of the International Style. That it would also become influential to the design of several subsequent buildings such as Pei's Zeckendorf Plaza, indicates the exceptional architectural significance of the Classroom Building.

**Summary:**

The Civic Center Classroom Building is a building of exceptional architectural significance. It is an integral component of the National Register's Civic Center Historic District. The high quality of the design is significant.

The Classroom Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the International Style. The International Style is the historic context within which the resource of the Classroom Building is evaluated to be of exceptional importance. The International Style has long been the focus of scholarly evaluation as an historic topic.

The Classroom Building is the work of acknowledged masters of Denver architecture who were instrumental in the establishment of the International Style in Denver in the 1930's.

1945 to 1960 marks the triumph of the International Style in American architecture. The Civic Center Classroom Building is the oldest example of the International Style used in the design for a major building in Denver from the post-war period and is also an early expression of the International Style in educational architecture.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 15

Civic Center Classroom Building

The Civic Center Classroom Building is among the finest buildings from the post war period and was instrumental in the design of other important Denver buildings.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(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:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of property: Less than one acre

**UTM References**

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Zone Easting Northing

B | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

C | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

D | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 17-32 Block 232 East Denver Addition

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the Civic Center Classroom Building

( ) See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Rodd Wheaton and Michael Paglia

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Street & Number: P.O. Box 9782

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 2

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

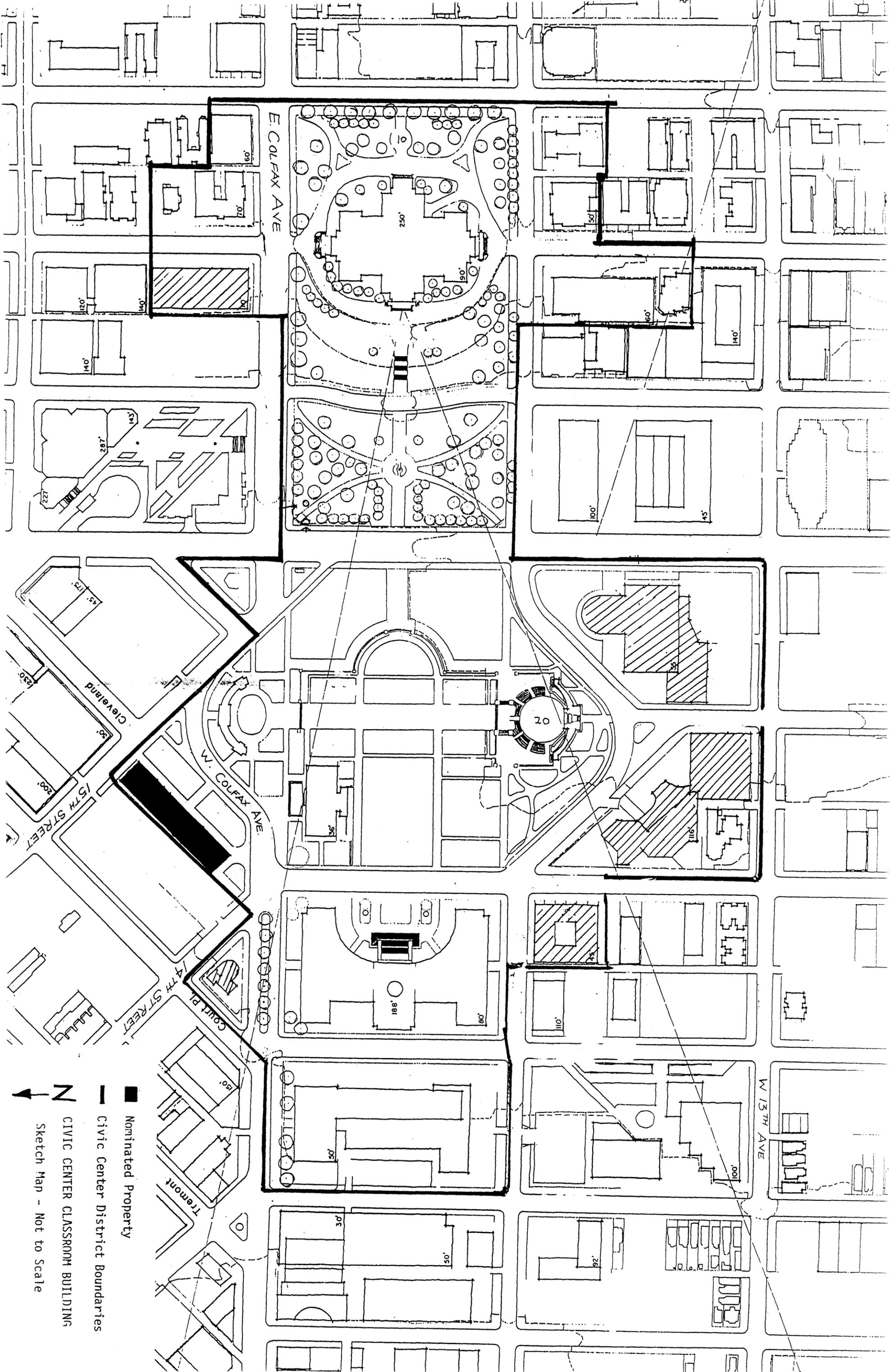
Photo Log

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Photo Log for the  
University of Denver Civic Center Classroom Building, Civic Center Historic District  
Denver, Colorado  
Arpie Chucovitch  
Summer 1990  
Negatives 1150 So. Broadway, Denver, Colorado

Photo #

1. Southeast facade from Civic Center View NW
2. Southeast facade, View SW
3. Southwest end and southeast facade, View N
4. Detail southwest end, View NE
5. Northeast elevation, View S
6. Detail, foyer of Southeast entrance.



■ Nominated Property

— Civic Center District Boundaries

CIVIC CENTER CLASSROOM BUILDING

Sketch Map - Not to Scale

