

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Peters Paper Company Warehouse
other names/site number 5DV47.165

2. Location

street & number 1625-1631 Wazee Street n/a not for publication
city, town Denver n/a vicinity
state Colorado code 08 county Denver code 031 zip code 80202

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number 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 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Bonnie Sudler 5-13-88
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer
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:)

Alvina Byers Entered in the National Register 6-16-88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Commerce/Warehouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Commercial Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Metal cornice

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Peters Paper Company Warehouse faces southeast onto Wazee Street in Lower Downtown Denver. It is located midblock in an area of two to five story buildings, mostly built in the late 19th or early 20th century as warehouses or small factories. The Oxford Hotel, located at the northwest corner of the block, has been carefully restored, but several other buildings have been recently demolished and the lots used for parking. The Peters Paper Company building is abutted on both sides by smaller structures of similar age; one of similar construction, the other modernized.

This building has a post and beam structural system and is faced with beige brick. It is rectangular in plan and has a crowning cornice of pressed metal and a flat roof. The original 1899 building occupies two lots and is four stories high. The 1915 addition to the north fills another lot and contains five floors but is of the same height. It is tied into the 1899 building by the 5th story cornice and windows which replicate the original design.

In its later days the building was used as the warehouse for the furniture store next door to the north. An attempt was made to modernize and connect the two buildings by covering over the ground story facades with a precast concrete false front. This has been removed by the present owners revealing the original storefront detailing which is still for the most part intact. The display windows and the decorative elements will be restored.

The first floor facade of the 1899 building has large storefront type windows which were initially designed to open onto a showroom for the paper products. The spacious upper stories were for storage. The main entry is recessed with kickplates and large panes of glass at the side, a fixed transom over the door, clerestory windows, and cast metal columns at the corners. There are similar display windows and a smaller entryway in the addition. Four carved stone decorations suggesting the capitals of pilasters, are at the building corners. A dentiled brick stringcourse underlines the second floor.

The two middle stories of the original structure are divided into three identical bays by pilasters. A two story slightly recessed panel contains a pair of double-sashed windows at each floor with a recessed brick spandrel in between. The windows are similarly arranged in the addition but because of the extra story the windows contain smaller single-sashed panes and are not aligned with the original windows.

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Peters Paper Company Warehouse

The attic story typically found in commercial style architecture, is the most elaborate and gives the building its sense of distinction in the greater streetscape. A string-course projecting from the wall is decorated with a carved scroll design and divides the attic from the lower stories. The arcade of windows across the attic facade is an important feature and complements the arrangement of the windows below. Another row of bricks forms the sills of the windows while dividing the arcade into groups of three windows in the 1899 building and two windows in the addition. The windows are double-sashed with arched openings that are outlined with patterned brickwork. The architects of the building, as they did later in their design for the Littleton Creamery Building, use the artistry of the brick mason to make their building distinctive. Each window has a decorated keystone. Crowning the attic story is an ornate pressed metal cornice decorated with a band of dentils, a band of egg-and-dart trim, and scrolled modillions with inset rosettes in between.

The interior of the building is mostly open warehouse space. The first floor is distinguished by structural cast iron columns with decorated capitals and a pressed tin ceiling. There is a large working freight elevator in the rear of the warehouse.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1899-1938

Significant Dates

1899

1915

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Aaron Gove, Thomas Walsh

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

The warehouse at 1625-1631 Wazee, built in 1899 as the new home for the Peters Paper Company, is significant for its architecture and for its association with the history of Denver commerce. It meets Criterion C as an excellent example of the commercial buildings erected at the turn of the century as Denver recovered from the 1893 Silver Crash, and is a small but notable example of the work done by the important architectural firm of Gove and Walsh which designed many warehouse buildings. The building meets Criterion A for its commercial significance as the home of the Peters Paper Company. From 1899-1918, this business exemplified the type of enterprise that made Denver the leading city of the region, and Lower Downtown the hub of commercial activity during much of the city's history.

Denver from its beginnings in 1858, grew because of its importance as a distribution center for essentials needed in the Colorado mining districts. When Denver became a rail center after 1870, this role increased. Although the 1893 Panic exposed Colorado's dangerous dependence on mining related industries, farsighted entrepreneurs were able to establish new industries which broadened Colorado and Denver's economic base, and the state slowly pulled out of the depression. Manufacturers and distributors of basic goods continued to prosper during the slow years and by the late 1890s were building large modern warehouses in Lower Downtown Denver to house their enterprises. Peters Paper Company was one of the businesses which thrived throughout the period.

Many of the new warehouses in Lower Downtown were designed by Denver's leading architects. The firm of Gove and Walsh was called upon to design several of the most important: the C.S. Morey Mercantile Building in 1896, the J.S. Brown Mercantile in 1899 with the Peters Paper Building in the same year, the Littleton Creamery Warehouse in 1903 and the Bartaledes Seed Building in 1906.

Aaron Morrill Gove, son of Denver school superintendent Aaron Gove, received his training with Denver's premiere institutional architect Robert S. Roeschlaub and at the Denver Office of the Boston firm of Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul. Thomas F. Walsh

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Rocky Mountain News, 7/25/1874, 1/1/1882, 4/23/1909, 12/22/1880, 12/18/1899.
The Daily Journal, 6/27/1899.
Wheelright, Wm. Bond, The Building of a Business, A Half Century of Progress. Privately
Printed: Carpenter Paper Corp., Omaha, 1936
Vickers, History of the City of Denver, Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1880
Noel, Thomas J. & Norgren, Barbara S., Denver, the City Beautiful,
Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Denver City Directories: Baists, Sanborn-Perris maps.

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:

Colo. State Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A

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5	0	0	1	0	0
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4	3	9	9	9	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 23 to 25 inclusive, block 15 East Denver

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes those lots historically associated with the Peters Paper Company building.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sharon Elfenbein, Researcher
organization Home Histories date January 1988
street & number 170 Lafayette Street telephone (303) 722-8162
city or town Denver state CO zip code 80218

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Peters Paper Company Warehouse

joined Gove in 1894 after working in Chicago with the firm of Willoughby J. Edbrooke and Franklin P. Burnham and then for six years with Holabird and Roche. Together Gove and Walsh designed numerous Colorado landmarks.

The Peters Paper Company Warehouse has architectural significance because of its design by Gove and Walsh which shows the firm's knowledge of trends in the building of commercial structures, particularly those coming out of Chicago. The building's simple rectangular shape enlivened by its simple fenestration rather than a profusion of decoration, and its balance of horizontal and vertical lines is typical of the Chicago Commercial Style. Denver's Daily Journal of June 27, 1899, considered the plans for the warehouse "thoroughly modern."

The Peters Paper Company Warehouse is important for its association with Denver's commercial history and the building has commercial significance because it exemplifies the type of enterprises headquartered in Lower Downtown's warehouses that made Denver the leading commerce and supply city in the region and which made Lower Downtown the hub of commercial activity during much of Denver's history. The Peters Paper Company was founded in 1874 as Kerstens and Peters. One of the owners, Ernst A. Peters, is a typical example of the successful entrepreneur of early Denver. Born in Germany in 1852, he came to Colorado in 1874 from Kentucky to join his uncle, Edward Kerstens, in a newly established paper business which they called Kerstens & Peters. Kerstens, also born in Germany, had twelve years of experience in the wholesale paper business in Buffalo, New York. By coming as they did to Denver's expanding market with a newly important product, their success was assured. The Rocky Mountain News of 1878 admired them for being "a pair of shrewd and enterprising businessmen (who) are constantly extending their trade."

An era of plentiful paper and cheaper books began in America in 1827 with the introduction of a machine which replaced costly paper handmade from rags. In the 1880s with the appearance of wood pulp paper, the modern paper industry began and new and varied uses for paper were found. Demand was stimulated when prices fell and paper soon became an everyday article of commerce. In the following fifty years, annual consumption rose from around thirty-five to two hundred pounds per capita. The necessity of efficient agencies of distribution increased proportionately, particularly west of the Mississippi where the raw material for pulp wood was lacking. Kerstens & Peters was one such distributor.

Kerstens & Peters had only one competitor in Denver throughout the 1870s, E. K. Smith who continued in business until 1884. With demand for paper and paper products steadily increasing, several new firms opened in Denver in the 1880s, but by that time Kerstens & Peters was firmly established as one of the largest wholesalers of

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paper in the state. In the January 1, 1882, edition of the Rocky Mountain News, the editor recommended Kerstens and Peters "to the craft and to businessmen as in every way worthy of fullest confidence...from long continued personal experience." He went on to say, "The time was when the News paid as high as a dollar per pound freight on print paper and even then was obliged to draw upon our druggists for wrapping paper upon which to print an edition. Today can be found in this city every description of paper used by printers as well as other classes of paper, in any quantity, at eastern prices, the freight only added."

Edward Kerstens retired in 1888 a year after E.W. Lehman became a partner. The name of the business was then changed to E.A. Peters & Company. In 1900 the firm incorporated with Peters, his wife and Lehman as stockholders and the company was renamed the Peters Paper Company. In 1897 E.A. Peters also opened the Western Paper Box Company.

From 1874 until 1899 the Peters Paper Company occupied various buildings in the 1600 block of Blake Street around the corner from the warehouse ultimately built for the firm. The location was convenient to the railroad and other paper wholesalers were all within a few blocks. At the end of 1894 Peters bought the vacant lots at 1625-1631 Wazee Street next to a wholesale grocers and down from the Oxford Hotel, but it was not until June of 1899 that the Daily Journal announced that E.A. Peters Paper Company would erect a four story warehouse under the charge of Gove and Walsh for a cost of \$30,000. The company continued to expand and in 1915 Gove and Walsh supervised the building of a five story addition.

Peters died in 1918. Peters Paper was then operated for several years as a division of Whitaker Paper Company. The warehouse at 1625-31 Wazee was owned from 1925 to 1942 by W. E. Warneke the manager of Inland Paper Box, a manufacturer in competition with Peter's Western Paper Box company after 1898. The name Inland Paper Box can still be seen painted on the side of the building with fainter traces of the name Peters Paper underneath.

While the building continued to serve as a paper company warehouse until 1942, the period of significance is concluded in 1938 to meet the fifty year requirements.

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Section number _____ Photo Log Page 1

Peters Paper Company Warehouse

Photo Log:

Peters Paper Company

Denver, Colorado

Photographer: Sharon Elfenbein

Date: February 1988

Location of Negatives: Colorado Historical Society, OAHP

- Photo #1 SE facade, View NW
- #2 Detail of main entrance
- #3 Streetscape of 1600 block of Wazee Street, View N
- #4 NW rear, View SE
- #5 Interior
- #6 Interior, tin ceiling and columns.