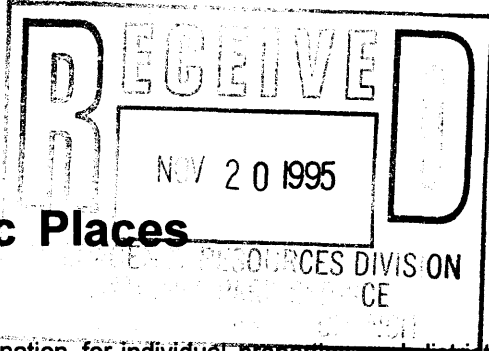


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Romeo Block

other names/site number 5DV358.92

2. Location

street & number 2944 Zuni Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80211

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

James Edward Herman State Historic Preservation Officer November 13, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
See continuation sheet [].

Entered in the
National Register.

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date 1/4/96

Romeo Block
Name of Property

Denver County, CO
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)
Contributing Noncontributing

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other METAL
WOOD

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

DESCRIPTION

The Romeo Block is a two-story brick Victorian commercial building of rectangular shape situated on the corner of Zuni Street and 30th Avenue in Denver's Highlands neighborhood. The block displays many of the stylistic characteristics of its late Victorian heritage, including the storefront fluted pilasters with multi-light clearstories, the second-story oriel windows and multi-light transoms, the decorative parapet above the cornice, and the distinctive corner turret with onion-shaped dome and finial. The exterior was recently restored and the interior spaces adaptively reused as residential lofts through a federal investment tax credit project. The interior retains its original wood staircases and balustrades, doors, windows, and trim.

The Romeo Block site consists of four city blocks measuring 100 feet along the east side of Zuni Street and 145 feet along the south side of 30th Avenue. The building is situated directly on the property lines fronting Zuni Street and 30th Avenue and measures 100 feet in length and 50 feet in depth. In addition, the building has a full walk out basement which opens to the rear (alley side) and takes advantage of the sloping contour of the site to provide windows and doors on the lowest level.

The Romeo Block contains architectural features commonly found in commercial building of the late 1800s. The walkout basement consists of a concrete floor with rock-faced rhyolite walls. The five commercial storefronts on the Zuni Street (west) facade each contain fluted wood pilasters with kickplates and multi-light clearstories, recessed entrances with paneled and glazed wood doors and multi-light transoms all topped by a secondary cornice with dentils. The northern-most storefront wraps around the corner of the building and includes a recessed corner entry. The second-story of the east elevation consists of five irregularly spaced oriel windows with decorative metal top and bottom sections and wood trim with recessed panels. All the second-story windows are one-over-one wood frame sash with multi-light transoms. The non-oriel windows contain sandstone sills and lintels and the lintels are joined visually by a stucco belt course. The wall ends with a small metal cornice with dentils topped by a paneled wood parapet. The northern-most oriel wraps around the corner above the storefront entry and is topped by a large onion-shaped turret with an 18 foot finial. The roof is relatively flat, sloping to the rear (east) at a 1/12 pitch.

In addition to the corner storefront, the first-story of the 30th Avenue (north) elevation contains two paneled wood doors with transoms at the far eastern end and a non-original casement window with sandstone sill. The second-story contains five irregularly spaced one-over-one wood frame sash windows with multi-light transoms, sandstone sills and lintels, and a stucco belt course. The metal cornice from the west elevation continues on the north as does the decorative parapet.

The south elevation abuts the adjacent building and is without fenestration. Much of the rear (east) elevation was reconstructed in 1993/94. The southerly 80 feet, 3 stories high, of this wall had to be removed due to sever bowing and cracking. It was rebuilt using wood frame with brick veneer over a concrete footing. The original fenestration was approximated in the new wall with new materials. The windows are mostly metal frame one-over-one sash with plain transoms. The lower level also contains a number of large fixed windows. The doors are glazed and those on the first and second floors contain transoms. A system of steel stairways and landings was added to provide access

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

from the rear parking area. The new stairway replaced an older wood system which was removed many years before.

The interior of the Romeo Block is divided vertically into five bays by four partitions which originate in stone footings below the basement floor and run to or through the roof. These partitions create a total of 15 spaces within the building (five on each floor) each measuring approximately 20' x 100' in gross area. Fourteen of the spaces are now residential apartment units with the last used mostly as a storage and utility area. The five top floor units are accessed by two wide interior staircases fronting on Zuni Street, as well as one smaller staircase fronting onto 30th Avenue serving one top floor unit. The five street level units are accessed through double doors opening to Zuni Street. These street level and top level units can also be entered by the steel staircases on the rear of the building. The four walk out basement units are accessed only from the rear of the building.

In 1889, Harold and Viggio Baerresen designed the Romeo Block to be used as a rooming house on the second-story, five storefronts on the street level and possibly a blacksmith shop and storage in the five basement bays. Over the years, substantial alterations of the interior, non-bearing partitions took place in three of the five top floor spaces. The remaining two spaces (on the south end of the building) retained the numerous interior partitions of the original rooming house. These original partitions were retained as the spaces were converted into apartment units on the top floor.

In converting the five street level storefronts into apartment units, any recently added interior partitions were removed to restore the original ceiling plane of the stores. The new units were constructed with an open plan and vertical partitions do not reach to the ceiling. Original window and door trim was repaired and reinstalled on the outside walls where it was still intact.

The four apartments created in the basement spaces also followed the open plan philosophy of design. Much of the original rhyolite stone foundation is left exposed in these apartments except on the east (rear) wall where it was replaced with modern construction materials.

The exterior of the Romeo Block was first stuccoed 60 years ago. Successive layers of stucco were applied to the exterior brick and even to the metal oriel windows. Twenty years ago, wire mesh was screwed to the fancy metal work before an additional stucco coat was applied, thus denting and damaging the detail. Wood paneling covered all the multi-light transom windows and many of the large storefront display windows. Luckily, almost all of these decorative features remained under the stucco and paneling. A major part of the restoration work in 1993/94 involved the careful removal of the stucco and paneling and the repair of the original metal work, wood trim, multi-light windows and masonry.

The building is now in excellent condition and the facades contain almost all the original material and architectural detail that they did in 1889, with the exception of the rebuilt portion of the rear wall and the rear staircases. The Romeo Block is fully capable of conveying its architectural significance to a modern viewer.

Romeo Block
Name of Property

Denver County, CO
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1889

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Baerresen, Harold William

Baerresen, Viggio E.

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository:

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

SIGNIFICANCE

The Romeo Block is significant under criterion C as one of the best remaining examples of a small, late 19th century, commercial block in Denver. The Romeo Block was a mixed use commercial block which served Denver's Highlands community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Prominent Denver architects Harold William Baerresen and his brother Viggio E. Baerresen designed the building. The brothers were responsible for numerous residential and commercial projects in Denver and throughout Colorado, several of them now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Denver grew rapidly in the years prior to the 1893 Silver Crash. In addition to the commercial core located near the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, residential areas radiated out in various directions along the expanding trolley car routes. The Highlands community overlooked the city from its position on the hills northwest of downtown. This satellite neighborhood contained the homes of many individuals employed in Denver's central business district. The community also contained its own business district which served the local residents. The Romeo Block functioned as a mixed use building within the Highlands commercial area, providing retail space for a number of small businesses as well as second-story residential units.

The Romeo Block displays many design characteristics of its period and type. The ornamentation found in the multi-light clearstories, the fluted pilasters, the recessed store-front entries, the oriel windows, the decorative parapet, and the corner dome are all typical of late Victorian commercial buildings. The multiple storefronts with second-story residential units typify the small scale, mixed use commercial buildings found along trolley lines in secondary business districts. The architects of the Romeo Block took advantage of its prominent corner location and created a building both functional and distinctive.

The Baerresen Brothers Architects designed the Romeo Block in 1889. Harold William Baerresen (1846-1918) and Viggio Egede Baerresen (1858-1940) were Danish immigrants born in Copenhagen. Harold arrived in the United States in 1869 and first established himself as a carpenter and baby buggy manufacturer in Louisville, Kentucky. He moved on to Denver in 1879 where he continued his work as a carpenter while also calling himself an architect and builder. In 1884, Viggio came to Denver and the pair formed the architectural firm of Baerresen Brothers. Two other brothers, Albert T. and William J. Baerresen, followed the family's path to America and joined the Denver firm around 1887. Viggio became a full partner in the architectural end of the enterprise and Albert took over the construction business.

In 1890, all the brothers worked on the design and construction of the Augustana Swedish Lutheran Church at 23rd and Logan (demolished). This building helped to establish the reputation of the firm for its design and construction excellence. The Baerresen Brothers designed numerous residential buildings in Denver and the surrounding area including the 1906 Charles O. Johnson House in Denver; the George P. Lingerfelter House at 300 Marion Street; the Carrie Kinport House at 921 Acoma; the Ephenia Johnson House in Littleton; and the home of Mrs. Adolph Coors in Golden. Harold Baerresen's own house at 1718 Gaylord is a Denver Landmark. The firm designed several

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

residences which are now part of several National Register districts. These include the Queen Anne style house at 2122 W. 28th in the Stonemen's Row Historic District; the Gibson House at 1647 Emerson St. in the Swallow Hill Historic District; and three houses in the Humboldt Street Historic District (Thompson-Henry (1905) 1070 Humboldt; Schlester-Parks-Cobb (1907) 1110 Humboldt; and Schaffer House (1903) 1131 Humboldt).

The Baerresen Brothers also designed several important commercial and public buildings in Denver. Their masterpiece structure is the 1907 Moorish Revival El Jebel Shrine Temple at 18th and Sherman Streets (Denver Landmark). The Adams Hotel (demolished) at 18th and Welton featured the area's first push button elevator and telephones in every room. Other buildings credited to the firm include the Tivoli Brewery tower addition (National Register); the Engelbach Building at 1451-1455 California; the 1892 Sheridan Building renovation (National Register); the Colorado Tent and Awning Co. building; the Reo Hotel (demolished) at 13th and Broadway; the first St. Joseph's Hospital (demolished); the Berkely Theater (demolished); and the South Denver Masonic Temple at 350 S. Broadway. Buildings constructed outside Denver include the All Saints Church of Eben Ezer (National Register) in Brush; a hotel building in Pueblo; the Powderworks Hotel in Louviers; a State office building in St. Louis; and several buildings for the Adolph Coors Company in Boulder, Montrose and Littleton. The 1889 Romeo Block is the oldest known surviving building designed by the Baerresens.

Harold and Viggio Baerresen were prominent citizens whose names appear in the membership lists of many social and civic groups. They both served terms as Danish Vice-Consul in Denver and assisted immigrants from Denmark and Norway in finding jobs and homes. Viggio was decorated with the Cross of Donneborg by King Christian of Denmark. Harold was a founding member of the Colorado A.I.A.. Following Harold's death in 1918, Viggio continued managing the architectural firm until 1928 when he retired and moved to California.

The original owners of the Romeo Block were Sam Barets and Louis M. Weiner. Weiner came to Denver from Chicago in 1879 after his home was destroyed in that city's great fire. Both men were liquor merchants, although with separate companies. Both Weiner and Barets were listed in the Social Register as belonging to several prominent clubs and charitable organizations. Barets became one of the founders of the National Jewish Hospital in 1901.

The Romeo Block thrived at its corner location. The terminus of the North Denver Tramway was across the street as was the original location of the Central Bank of Denver. Additional shops and the office of the local newspaper, the *Highland Chieftain*, were located in the adjacent Talmadge-Boyer Building. Romeo Block tenants benefitted from the convenient access to transportation and its prominent corner location.

The Wilson Drug Company was typical of the type of small retail stores which operated in the Romeo Block. The enterprise moved into the corner storefront in 1906 and continued in business at that location until 1918. The following year the company moved across the street to 3000 Zuni Street.

By the 1940s the Romeo Block had fallen into disrepair. As the neighborhood declined after World War II, so did the Romeo Block. For the last twenty years the building has been used as a plumber's office and warehouse. Its fancy facades stood encased in stucco and wood paneling. Its masonry walls crumbled. A major federal investment tax credit restoration and rehabilitation project in 1993/94 returned the street facades to a near as-built appearance while the interior spaces were

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8/9 Page 5

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

adapted to loft style apartments. The Romeo Block once again conveys a sense of commercial prosperity that historically characterized the Highland's community.

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Noel. Thomas J. and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver: the City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941*, (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987).

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Whiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780*, (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1976).

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Romeo Block
Name of Property

Denver County, CO
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 498720 4400830
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David W. Fox / manager

organization Romeo Enterprises LLC

date May 25, 1995

street & number 2150 W. 29th Ave. #501

telephone 303-478-3010

city or town Denver

state CO

zip code 80211

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Romeo Enterprises LLC

street & number 2150 W. 29th Ave. #501

telephone 303-478-3010

city or town Denver

state CO

zip code 80211

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 6

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4, Block 9, Union Addition to the City of Denver, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Romeo Block.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Additional Documentation Page 7

Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photographs numbers 1-4:

Name of Property: Romeo Block
Location: Denver, Denver County, Colo.
Photographer: David Fox
Date of Photographs: 5/15/1995
Negatives: In possession of photographer

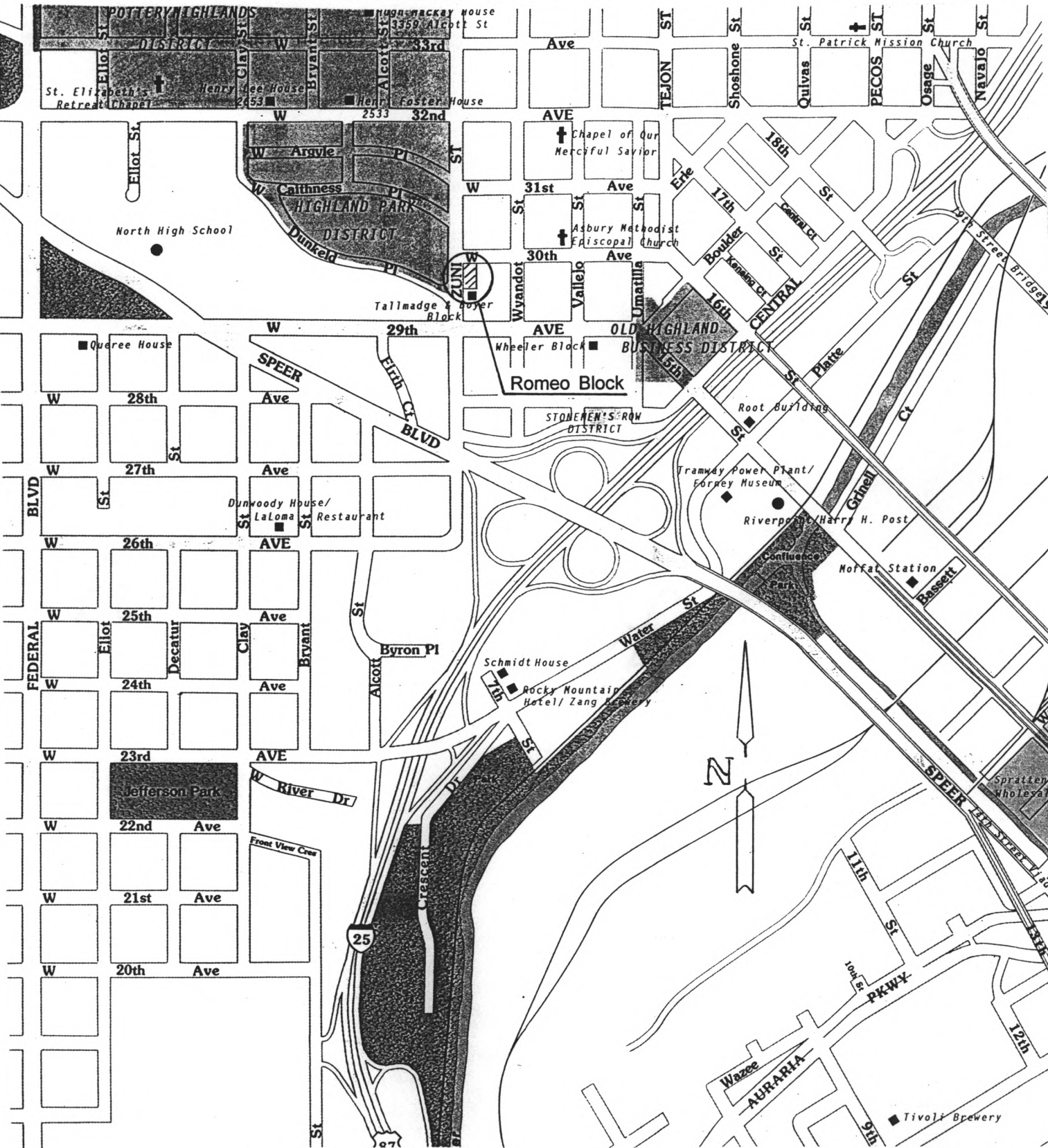
<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
1	North and west facades, view to the southeast.
2	North facade and corner detail, view to the south.
3	North facade, view to the south.
4	East elevation, view to the southwest.

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Romeo Block
Denver County, CO

Section number Additional Documentation Page 8



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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Arvada, Colo.
7.5 Minute Quad
1965, Revised 1994

