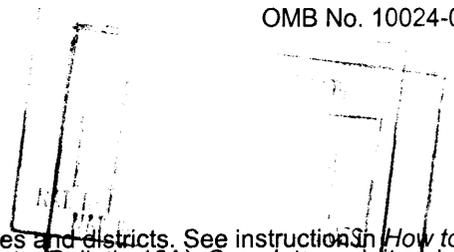


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex

other names/site number Civic Center Apartments; 5DV2049

2. Location

street & number 25 East Sixteenth Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80202

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title: Georgina Cortez Date:
State Historic Preservation Officer

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 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 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:

- [X] 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.

Signature of the Keeper: Beth Boland Date of Action: 7/30/04

Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE
SOCIAL/Civic
DOMESTIC/Hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE
SOCIAL/Civic
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
Terra Cotta
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado
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 Bibliographical 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)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1906 – 1954

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marean, Willis

Norton, Albert

Simon, Walter

Hipp, John B.

Comfort, Josh

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 501210 4399117 (NAD27)
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. 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 Diane Wray

organization _____ date March 9, 2004

street & number 3058 S. Cornell Circle telephone 303-761-8979

city or town Englewood state CO zip code 80113

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 (see continuation sheet)

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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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YMCA and Annex

Denver County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1**Description**

Sited on the northwest corner of 16th Avenue and Lincoln Street in downtown Denver, the five-story, L-plan, flat-roofed 1906 Downtown Denver Central YMCA Building faces south onto 16th Avenue. The original Neo-Classical Revival Style building, constructed of hard-fired buff brick masonry with tinted mortar, was more than doubled in size with a 1958 seven-story annex of Miesian Style curtain wall construction along Lincoln Street to the north. A multi-level parking garage now abuts the annex. To the west, a paved, double-lane public alleyway extends along the original three-story gymnasium structure infilling the 1906 plan and the newer three-story gymnasium structure backing onto the 1958 annex. A five-story squash court tower is located at the northwest corner. The alleyway provides service access for the basement levels of the YMCA, and for the parking garage and drive-in banking at the Colorado State Bank and Trust tower constructed directly to the west.

Built to the outer limits of the property lines, the YMCA occupies its entire site—approximately three quarters of the eastern half of the block between Lincoln and Broadway. A paved sidewalk extends around the south and east sides and provides access for the original south entrance, the newer accessible east entrances into the older structure, and a pair of fire stairway exits of the 1958 annex. There are no street trees or other landscape amenities except for a series of low post-modern concrete wall sections and shallow steps that are remnants of sculptural effects when 16th Avenue was contained as a cul-de-sac street in the recent past.

The 1906 Downtown Denver Central YMCA embodies the Neo-Classical Revival style characteristic of the "City Beautiful" movement. The five-story block has a nine-bay south facade with a central, one-story entrance portico. The east elevation has twelve narrower bays. Both elevations are characterized by having a rusticated first story. The above three stories are comprised of Ionic pilasters set in antis within corner pavilions. The pavilions have rusticated masonry and architrave enframed windows at each level. The Ionic pilasters support a parapet level, the fifth floor. A continuous lintel runs above the parapet window openings and supports a shallow frieze. A full overhanging cornice with large modillions once extended above the frieze band roof parapet. The cornice was probably removed during the construction of the 1958 annex to streamline the cornice line.

Similar detailing extends along the short section of the secondary west alleyway elevation. The first-floor level has only three bays and all are infilled; one with blond brick and two with glass block. At the second-floor level, the northern-most window appears to never have had terra cotta trim and is set with a pair of double-hung sash. At this level, one of the two windows within the interior bay was never installed. At the intermediate three floors, the corner pavilions are simply defined as quoining. Architrave-enframed windows are narrower to the north and all are on the same plane as the intermediate bays that lack pilasters. Below the first-floor level, a high basement accommodates the downhill slope of 16th Avenue. The basement level is constructed of coursed ashlar stone masonry. Near the south corner, it is clad in rusticated smooth-faced granite veneer that has a continuous granite cavetto watertable course extending the width of the west alleyway elevation. The rusticated granite extends onto the facade where the watertable forms a continuous lintel over the western double-leaf doorway basement entrance below a short flight of steps and the basement window openings of the south facade, most of which have been infilled. To the east of the central entrance, the basement windows open into a light well topped with pipe railings. At the east elevation of the 1906 structure, only the cavetto watertable is visible above the sidewalk.

The first-floor rusticated brickwork, above the granite watertable, is ornamented with flat arches that have segmentally arched soffits over the heads of beaded window frames. Granite sills are set directly on the watertable. The deeply set rusticated joints of the brick walling integrate into the rusticated voussoirs with crossettes over the window heads, each set with a projecting granite keystone. Windows, typical of the first two stories of the 1906 building, are double-hung, one-over-one light, wooden-frame sash. The rusticated window

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arches support an intermediate cornice with a brick frieze band, and a granite bed molding and fascia forming a shallow crown.

A polished granite cornerstone is set into the southeast corner directly above the watertable. The south face is incised with "YOUNG MENS / CHRISTIAN / ASSOCIATION / AD MDCCCCVI." The east face is incised with "THE FOUNDATION OF / GOD STANDETH SURE / II TIMOTHY IIXIX."

Centered on the facade is a one-story, granite entrance portico providing access to the first floor. The portico has a pair of freestanding Tuscan columns with plinths on podia that flank the granite entrance stairway extending from the public sidewalk to a recessed entrance landing. Tuscan pilasters on granite walling form the jambs of the entranceway. The sidewalls have rose-beige marble wainscoting on a black marble base. The plaster ceiling coffer has a crown molding and dentils; the floor is modern tile work. Modern aluminum-framed glazed doors with sidelights and transoms open into a vestibule. The un-fluted Tuscan columns, with egg and dart echinus capitals, support a full Doric entablature complete with triglyphs and with mutules in the soffit. The projecting cornice supports a shallow parapet composed of paneled pedestals, which were originally carried globe light fixtures on standards, and a low railing of Roman clathri design.

The second level of the 1906 structure extends through three floors above the first floor base. The rusticated corner pavilions, with shallower coursing than the first floor, appear to be slightly projecting at each end of the in antis Ionic pilaster colonnades. Raised on brick masonry above the intermediate cornice of the first floor level, a continuous band of terra cotta forms the second-floor windowsills across the three elevations. At the pavilion windows, leaf and dart moldings enrich the terra-cotta architrave window surrounds set on terra-cotta sills. Each of the flat-headed pavilion window openings, with double-hung, one-over-one-light sash, is set with an ornamental acanthus leaf ancone forming a keystone. Like the first floor, the second-floor sash are wooden; above, the window sash are later aluminum replacements.

Set directly on the intermediate cornice are the plinths of the Ionic pilasters. The continuous sill band of the second floor is interrupted by the terra-cotta plinths and bases, which have full double torus and scotia molding. The brick shafts of the pilasters, like the corner pavilions, project from the window plane. The pilasters lack entasis, but each has a terra cotta Ionic capital of the Italian Scamozzi order. A continuous shallow cornice extends across all the pavilions of all three elevations and the colonnades of the two main elevations. This terra-cotta cornice has a simple frieze band, a bed molding, and a fascia projection enriched with running Vitruvian scroll ornament. The vertical recesses between the pavilions and the pilasters are infilled with tiers of flat-headed window openings with double-hung, one-over-one-light sash. The only ornament of the openings are the splayed brick flat arches of the second floor only, raised brick spandrel panels, and terra cotta windowsills. The third-floor sills extend the width of each vertical recess.

Above is the top parapet level, or the fifth floor, which is very simply detailed. The flat arched window openings are set directly on the projecting fascia and contain double-hung, one-over-one-light sash on all three elevations. A continuous terra-cotta crown molding on a brick fascia extends above the window heads and the raised brick panels that are ornamented with corner notches. The above-frieze course roof parapet, which has a cap, is unornamented as it provided a base for the lost main cornice.

Along the east elevation, the detailing is similar except that the modulation of the spacing of the Ionic pilasters is compressed, making the first-floor windows somewhat narrower than those of the facade. Pavilion windows are the same width and all windows have double-hung, one-over-one-light sash, though the northern-most first-floor pavilion window has a raised sill. The upper windows within the pilasters have narrower jambs, all of which heightens the effect of a longer elevation. The central two bays of the first floor level have been converted into the gymnasium and spa entrance. The doorways provide full accessibility to the building with a concrete

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fronting stairway and side ramp set with pipe railings. The north bay of the entrance was a 1906 service doorway with a brick panel infilling the crown above the opening. The south doorway was originally a window cut down to form the doorway. Each opening is infilled with a single-leaf aluminum-framed door and sidelight; the south opening has a glazed transom. A green canvas awning on a metal structure extends over the two openings.

Extending to the north from the 1906 structure is the 1958 annex that abuts the original north elevation and is constructed flush with east elevation's brick masonry. A seven-story curtain wall of ten bays with aluminum-mullioned fenestration, set between stairway towers, forms the principal architectural feature that extends a full story above the original 1906 roofline. The stairway towers, the southern tower abutting the earlier building, form strong vertical elements that have slightly raised diamond grillwork screen sections fabricated out of pink exposed aggregate. The panels are stack-bonded and at the south tower are screened, providing ventilation for the stairway; the north tower screens are backed with concrete block enclosing the stairway. Beige exposed aggregate veneer panels enframe the screens at the jambs and the heads, which extend above the roof parapet. The entrance to the southern tower was raised above grade during a 2001-2004 rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation. New entry doors, set below the original flat-roofed cantilevered canopy with an aluminum fascia, are accessible by a ramp to the south and a stair to the north. The northern tower has a simple, slightly recessed exit doorway at the base.

Between the towers, the curtain wall is supported at the base on beige exposed aggregate veneer panels that extends to the first level of fenestration. During the 2001-2004 rehabilitation, these panels were partially replaced by a new curtain wall system that now forms the first and second levels of the building. This new section visually resembles the historic curtain wall system of the five floors above. These floors have fenestration consisting of two pairs of casement sash above a lower awning sash. The window units are spaced with a single enameled-steel panel. Enameled-steel spandrel panels are typically incorporated into the mullions of the curtain wall. Above the top floor, the curtain wall extends to form a continuous enameled-steel panel parapet between the stairway towers. The north elevation above the adjacent garage has no fenestration

Along the alleyway to the west, the 1906 flat-roofed three-story gymnasium masks the lower levels of the rear two elevations. It is attached directly to the north elevation of the original structure and is separated from the west elevation by a light well. The brick-masonry inner elevations contain simple segmentally arched window openings with row-lock coursed heads and stone sills; typically the openings have double-hung, one-over-one-light aluminum sash. A metal fire escape provides egress to the roof of the gymnasium. A brick masonry sixth floor has been added over the east wing of the 1906 building and has windows with fixed glass and casement sidelights. The west elevation of the 1958 annex has twelve bays of windows, similar in design to the east elevation, set into brick masonry. The gymnasium extension abuts the structure and encloses the original light well.

Gymnasium fenestration is generally utilitarian with two levels of segmentally arched openings on the 1906 section of the gymnasium above the alleyway level of coursed ashlar masonry. Service doorways and original window openings have segmental arches. Some alley-level and upper-level mezzanine windows are blocked; most lower-level windows contain aluminum double-hung sash. The rear wall of the 1958 gymnasium was rebuilt during the 2001-2004 rehabilitation. New windows openings were created in the high concrete foundation and the upper wall rebuilt in blond brick, to match historic, with two levels of window openings. The five-story, flat-roofed squash court tower at the northwest corner of the 1958 gymnasium is on a concrete foundation with blond brick walling above, to which a series of new window openings were added in the 2001-2004 rehabilitation. Its only architectural feature is a slight step-back of the upper floor. The tower abuts an adjacent service tower and forms a backdrop for the UMB Bank Plaza that opens to Broadway.

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The roof of the Downtown Denver Center YMCA is flat with a rooftop penthouse set well back from the south and east parapets. The concrete-block penthouse, with a central south doorway to the roof and bays of window openings having a pair of casement sash over an awning sash, fronts the original elevator shaft extension and the sixth-floor level constructed on the 1906 east wing. The penthouse provides a corridor to access to the seventh floor of the 1958 annex. The shaft supports a south-facing "YMCA" sign and has a door and window opening onto the penthouse roof; the north elevation is concrete block construction. A brick chimney with a corbeled cap is located above the north wall at the intersection with west wall of the east wing. The 1958 stairway towers, extending a full story above the roof surface, provide that roof access. A parapet separation and various installations of mechanical equipment define the flat roofs of the gymnasiums; roof access is by the northwest squash court tower's south doorway.

The YMCA has few significant interiors as very little has survived alterations of the late 20th century. Upon entering the building from the south portico entrance is a vestibule with corner section pilasters and a coffered ceiling with a dentilled cornice. The walls are plain plaster and set with modern chair railing. The vestibule opens into a reception lobby that retains corner section pilasters and a pair of pilasters that receive a ceiling beam. The full pilasters have three-groove fluting and no capitals echoed in the corner section pilasters. The ceiling of the lobby is coffered with a similar dentilled cornice. The floors are carpeted; walls are plastered. At the double elevator shaft, the stairway wraps around behind and ascends to the second floor offices where a wrought iron railing and cast iron newel post suggest the original fittings of the open stairway. All that remains of the second floor hallway finish are fragments of original door trim that has simply molded jamb sections and flat head pieces topped with a crown molding. The upper residential floors of the 1906 building have a double loaded corridor with typical trimmed doorways and transoms. All have been altered with modern flush panel doors set in modern trim attached to the original trim. Some five-across panel doors remain on interior spaces as does window trim.

The 1906 gymnasium is the only space that retains integrity. It is a two-story space with a suspended running track at the mezzanine level. The modern roof structure is supported on iron trusses carried on wide interior pilasters. The running track is hung from the trusses and is structured of steel beams. The floor is wood as is the gymnasium floor, surfaced in maple. A metal spiral stairway in the southwest corner provides access to the track from the gymnasium floor level. Only the lower tier of west windows continues to light the space naturally. There is evidence in the painted brick masonry walls of north and east windows that have been blocked. The 1958 gymnasium is of similar design with a running track mezzanine, but constructed entirely of modern materials. This space is built over a swimming pool with tiled wall and floor surfaces. There was a pool below the 1906 gymnasium but the space has been converted for other uses.

The interiors of the 1958 annex, at the first and second floor levels, display some surviving glazed structural clay tiles that finish the wall surfaces. This section was converted to housing in the 2001-2004 rehabilitation. The original residential floors above connect to the older building, either directly or by short flights of steps. There are no architectural features of merit.

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Section number 8 Page 5**Statement of Significance**

The Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of *Entertainment/Recreation* and *Social History*. The 1906 building with its 1958 annex served as the main facility and headquarters building of the Denver YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). The Central YMCA was originally constructed by the Denver YMCA, an important service organization founded in the earliest days of the city's history. Beginning in the late 19th century, the Denver YMCA provided the frontier city with cultural, scientific, technical and religious programs. By the 1880s, the Denver YMCA was involved with social work and outreach to the poor and working classes, and began to provide facilities for athletics of various sorts. In the early twentieth century, in association with the construction of the Central YMCA, the Denver YMCA extended its activities to include athletic facilities and a transient hotel.

The Central YMCA is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good example of early twentieth-century Neo-Classical Revival style architecture in downtown Denver. The Central YMCA is a steel-frame structure that is clad in buff brick with granite and cream-colored terra-cotta trim used to ornament the windows and doors. The standard of the brickwork, with the use of fancy laying techniques, such as the setback horizontal courses, is notable. Also made to a high standard are the custom-designed terra-cotta details including plaques, columns, pilasters, and a variety of window ornaments, in particular, the surrounds on the corner bays of the building's two principal elevations, the facade on 16th Avenue, and on the Lincoln Street elevation.

The building is also significant as an important design in the body of work of the architectural firm of in the Marean and Norton. Willis Marean and Albert Norton are generally acknowledged as masters of early twentieth-century Denver architecture. The Central YMCA is the earliest of the firm's four major Neo-Classical Revival style commissions.

YMCA in Denver

The Denver YMCA was founded on December 30, 1875, by a group of thirteen men and three women who gathered at Occidental Hall to form a local chapter of the international organization. Henry Tuggy was elected the first Chairman of the Board. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 3.) The YMCA had been founded in London in 1844 by George Williams, a clerk in the drapery trade. Williams' aim was to improve the spiritual and mental condition of young working-class men. The original London YMCA was a reading room where religious meetings were held and where young men were given personal counseling. The first YMCA in the United States, based on the London model, was opened in Boston in 1851.

The Denver YMCA of 1875 was not the first YMCA to be founded in the city. The first YMCA in Denver was founded in 1867, (*Rocky Mountain News*, December 30, 1867, p. 4.) but it had failed owing to financial difficulties that arose as early as 1868. (*Rocky Mountain News*, January 8, 1868, p. 4.) The first YMCA in Denver, like the ones in London and Boston, operated a reading room.

The Denver YMCA of 1875 also operated a reading room in a series of different locations during the next several years, leaving their original home in 1876. (*Rocky Mountain News*, July 9, 1876, p. 4.) The move was necessitated by the growing membership of the Denver YMCA that had reached nearly two hundred, with an annual operating budget of over \$1,000. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 3.)

In its early years, the religious nature of the organization predominated over other aspects of the YMCA. The Denver YMCA held a revival meeting in 1877 (*Rocky Mountain News*, March 14, 1877, n.p.), and two years later, in 1879, a temperance meeting. (*Rocky Mountain News*, August 2, 1879, n.p.)

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Even during this early period, secular and educational programs were presented such as the concert sponsored by the group in 1877. (*Rocky Mountain News*, October 14, 1877, n.p.)

Membership in the YMCA at this time and for the next several decades, was limited to white Christian men exclusively. In response, a Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) was founded in Denver in 1878, a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in 1893, and, in 1908, a segregated African-American YMCA. This African-American YMCA that was organizationally linked to the Denver YMCA was called the Glenarm YMCA.

In the spring of 1880, the Denver YMCA briefly suspended operations (*Rocky Mountain News*, May 9, 1880, p. 4.), but the association resumed operations by the time the members of the Young Men's Christian Association's International Executive Committee visited the Denver YMCA in the fall of that same year. (*Rocky Mountain News*, November 12, 1880, p. 5.) The financial viability of the Denver YMCA was greatly enhanced, at least in the short term, by a large donation in the fall of 1881 from then-former Colorado Governor John Evans. (*Rocky Mountain News*, September 8, 1881, p. 1.)

As the city of Denver grew in the 1880s, so, too, did the activities of the Denver YMCA. The Denver YMCA hosted lectures of general interest including a series of medical talks presented in 1881, (*Rocky Mountain News*, November 10, 1881, p. 4.) and in 1884, a series of lectures and presentations by a Dr. Wegener on the qualities of the then fairly new and novel microscope. (*Rocky Mountain News*, March 18, 1884, p. 4.)

In 1882, a Women's Auxiliary was formed at the Denver YMCA (*Rocky Mountain News*, September 8, 1881, p. 1.) and in 1884, the Denver YMCA began out-reach work to the city's population of homeless young men, who had come west in search of fortune and sadly had not found it. (*Rocky Mountain News*, January 13, 1884, p. 5.)

In 1885, the Denver YMCA opened its first gymnasium in the city, located at 412 Larimer Street. The gym cost \$600.00 to equip, (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 3.) and in 1891 the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company outfitted a YMCA branch in west Denver.

In 1892, the Denver YMCA opened "spacious new quarters on the corner of Eighteenth and Champa streets." At the house-warming ceremonies, G. T. Shurtleff, the general secretary of the Denver YMCA was among the speakers at the event and he is quoted in the *Denver Republican* as saying "This is no ordinary occasion in the history of the Y.M.C.A. We have bidden you hither to see with your own eyes and believe with your own hearts that something practical is being done for young men by young men." Denver Police Chief Farley, described as "arrayed in full uniform," made remarks that "extolled the influence of the Y.M.C.A. in keeping young men in the right path" and described "the dangers of evil associations" and the YMCA's role in preventing them. (All excerpts from the *Denver Republican*, November 23, 1892, n.p.) The sentiments expressed by Shurtleff and Farley make the point that the YMCA's early goal was in keeping young men off the streets—or more to the point, out of the saloons—by offering them healthy diversions.

The same sentiment was expressed a few months later in an un-credited news item entitled "The Denver Y.M.C.A." that also appeared in the *Denver Republican*. In that piece, the anonymous author writes: "There is probably no city in the world where young men are so prominent and important a factor in social, business and political life as they are in ours. No one who gives even superficial thought to the subject can fail to recognize the demoralizing influences which the conditions of modern municipal life bring to bear upon young men, and it requires strong and vigorous manhood to withstand them. Hence the importance of bringing young men within healthy and helpful surroundings in their leisure hours cannot be overestimated." (*Denver Republican*, January 15, 1893, n.p.)

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With the new facility, the membership of the Denver YMCA doubled, going from approximately five hundred to more than one thousand.

James Naismith joined the physical education staff at the Denver YMCA in 1896. Naismith, in 1891, had invented the game of basketball, hanging a pair of peach baskets from the elevated runner's track in the YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, and laying out a group of simple rules that were published by the YMCA the following year, in 1892. Naismith personally introduced Denver to the new sport while he was working in the gym of the Denver YMCA. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 9.) At some point during the 1890s, the Denver YMCA opened its membership to boys who were known as "juniors".

Newer, larger quarters were secured for the Denver YMCA in 1901 in "the Club Building on Arapahoe Street near 17th Street." The facility included an auditorium, a reading room, a checker & chess club room, open to members only, committee rooms and classrooms, a lunch counter and dining room, lockers, showers and a gymnasium. There were separate facilities next door for the boys, or "juniors." In a vacant lot adjoining the building were tennis courts and an outdoor gymnasium. The camera club, and classrooms were found on the third floor. This new YMCA opened just before the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the first YMCA in the United States in Boston, and delegates from the Denver YMCA left for Boston right after the opening of the Club Building facility. (*Denver Times*, June 6, 1901, n.p.)

Also in 1901, William E. Sweet, later governor of Colorado, was elected the president of the Denver YMCA and he served in this capacity until 1925. Sweet launched a capital campaign in 1903 to fund the construction of a new building. Eventually almost a quarter of a million dollars was raised. The site at the corner of 16th Avenue and Lincoln Street was selected as the new permanent home for the Denver YMCA. In 1905, the directors of the Denver YMCA adopted the plans presented by L. A. Desjardins of Marean & Norton for a new Central YMCA.

"The building alone will cost about \$255,000, the site and the furnishings bringing the figure up to \$350,000. It will contain five stories and a basement and will be constructed of light stone and brick. Its interior will contain every modern comfort. A swimming pool 20 x 60 feet built of tile and with shower baths will be the feature of the basement. Here will also be located a cafe and kitchen, bicycle room, barber shop, four bowling alleys, a billiard and pool room, besides a large engine and machine room. On the first floor entrance, which will be on Sixteenth avenue, will be the rotunda or main hallway. It will be 125 x 60 feet and will extend back to the alley. To right of the hallway will be placed the offices of the secretary and on the left will be the reading rooms and refreshment apartments. In the rear will be an auditorium with a seating capacity of 500 and 3,000 lookers. A large gymnasium together with rooms for the physical directors and various vocational classes will be located on the second floor. Quarters will also be provided on this floor for the junior department. The remaining three floors will contain the dormitories. There will be 106 of them, each with its private bath and lavatory. As all the rooms will face on the street or a court they will all be light." (Excerpted from "Plans for New Y. M. C. A. Adopted", *Denver Republican*, July 5, 1905, n.p.) The cornerstone was laid in 1906 in an elaborate and formal ceremony by United States Vice-President Charles W. Fairbanks. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 3.)

Soon after the building was completed, probably around 1907, the Denver YMCA published a pamphlet entitled "Some Things Inside Worth While" which described the new Central YMCA's headquarters building and its programs. (The undated, un-credited pamphlet is in the YMCA manuscript file at the Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.)

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The pamphlet begins with a description of the religious programs including Bible classes which were tuition-free that were held in every department at the Central YMCA. Other religious programs included the "Men's Meetings" held on Sunday afternoons. These "Men's Meetings" concerned "subjects of vital importance to manhood" with "the music...a most important feature of these meetings." There was also a "Community Extension" in which "religious meetings are conducted at the noon in a number of shops and factories and in the summer and fall, "street preaching services are held on the principal street corners of the business sections of the city."

The pamphlet then goes on to describe the social activities at the Central YMCA. "The Lobby, with the big fireplace, is the center of the social life of the Association. The clubroom back of the fireplace, and the members' reading-room overhead, add to the social life. The spacious and excellently appointed recreation-room is always a lively social center. A special series of Pool, Billiards, Chess and Checker Tournaments enhances the interest in these games."

Special social events were also held including "Thanksgiving Dinner, New Year's Open House, Members' Annual Banquet and Gymnasium Men's Dinner." Every Saturday Night there was "a 'get-together' around the fireside for members and their friends—an hour of music, song, story, jokes and fun. A jolly crowd of good fellows is always on hand for these Saturday night fireside rallies." Weeknights, the Central YMCA presented "entertainments" which consisted of "musicales, lectures, motion-picture and other entertainments that are instructive and amusing."

But, as pointed out in the pamphlet, "The most valuable feature of the Association's social work, however, is the spirit of real fellowship and genial cordiality that pervades the Association building and the many activities conducted therein. Every man may be sure of receiving a frank, outspoken welcome, and abundant opportunity for meeting, socially, and in other ways, others of congenial spirit."

The Central YMCA maintained an education program that included a stenographic course, college preparatory courses, automobile course, machine shop practice and mechanical drafting. The Central YMCA also ran a Night School offering a wide range of courses including algebra, English, penmanship, salesmanship, architectural drawing, Latin and typewriting, among a host of others. There was also a special school for "Employed Boys" providing primary and secondary education in the evenings during the era of child labor.

In the physical department there were a number of classes, some held during the lunch hour, others after five when the workday was over. There were classes offered in wrestling, boxing, swimming, first aid, and recreation that included basketball. The Central YMCA also offered individual instruction in "all forms of physical training."

The Central YMCA maintained a dress code during class hours with members required to wear "white shirt, long gray trousers, rubber-soled shoes." This "class costume" was obtainable from the gymnasium office for "\$2.50."

The dormitory was also described in the pamphlet. "One hundred and ninety men are 'at home' in the Association dormitories or living rooms. The entire third, fourth, fifth, and half of the second floors of the Association building, comprising one hundred and twenty rooms, are set aside for this purpose. The many social and other features of the Association, and the moderate prices charged for rental serve to keep the dormitories filled at all times."

Other general features of the Central YMCA included a barbershop, "one hundred United States mail-boxes with combination locks," and "fifty double-combination-lock" safety deposit boxes for the use of the members.

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With the opening of the Central YMCA in 1907, a weekly newspaper was published entitled "Denver Young Men." "Denver Young Men" was put out for decades with the Western History Library of the Denver Public Library having a bound volume that encompasses the years 1945 to 1948.

Less than ten years after the Central YMCA opened its doors, the United States entered World War I. During the course of America's involvement in the war, the Central YMCA accommodated traveling servicemen who were allowed to stay in the dormitories without charge. Between 1914 and 1917, more than one hundred thousand servicemen took the Central YMCA up on the offer of free lodgings. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 3.)

The World War I period also saw the development of a modern gay male culture in the United States, and, as is well established, the YMCA played a role in this. With the mass conscription of men for the war effort beginning in 1914, young men were freed from the constraints of family and hometown and were thereby allowed to more freely express themselves sexually. Big city YMCAs were important as meeting places for this group and not unexpectedly, Denver's Central YMCA became a regional center for gay life as early as the 1910s. It's important to remember, however, that this gay culture at the Central YMCA, and at other big city YMCAs, was completely hidden behind a screen of privacy and double entendres, including the use of the word "gay" itself which was already established English slang by the 1920s.

Membership at the Central YMCA was at first limited to white men so in 1924, the Denver YMCA constructed a "Colored" facility at 28th Avenue and Glenarm Street called the Glenarm YMCA. The simple and straightforward red brick building was designed by Denver architect William Norman Bowman. This extension was the first step toward the future creation of a metropolitan YMCA. (The dedication program of the Glenarm YMCA is in the YMCA manuscript file at the Western History Library at the Denver Public Library.)

The Denver YMCA would again play a role in the early history of modern sports, as it had decades before when James Naismith, the inventor of basketball, came in the 1890s to work for the Denver YMCA and introduced the then-new sport to the region. Softball, which was already a popular game at the time, was codified into a proper sport in 1926 by two members of the Central YMCA's athletic staff, Homer Hoisington and Walter Hakanson. The two men created a set of rules and a declaration of principles for softball.

The sport, which had been derisively called "kittenball" or even known by the homophobic name "sissyball," spread nation-wide with its new "official" moniker. Hoisington and Hakanson were well aware of the negative connotations associated with the game, as revealed by the term "sissyball" and surely this was the reason that "inclusiveness and good sportsmanship" were emphasized in their rules and principles. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 4.)

In the 1920s, likely around 1926, the Denver YMCA gathered a variety of demographic information on the association and published it in a booklet entitled "The Service the 'Y' Renders Denver". (The booklet is in the YMCA manuscript file at the Western History Library at the Denver Public Library.) The booklet lays out the Denver YMCA's membership at various facilities including the Central YMCA, the Glenarm YMCA and the University YMCA in the "Arts" building at the University of Denver, as comprising approximately "10,000 boys" and "16,500" men. Boys ranged in age from 12 to 18, and were divided into groups of "Grade School Boys," "Junior High School Boys," "Senior High School Boys," and "Employed Boys." The men were divided into "Industrial Men," "University Students," "Business and Professional Men," "Immigrants," and the "Negro Group."

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The Central YMCA had an average membership of "4,426" and "thousands of strangers passing through the city" stayed in its dormitory. "More than 3,000 visit this building daily."

The booklet extensively describes, complete with demographics, the Central YMCA's facilities and services:

- "A Home for Young Men away from home. A dormitory of 90 rooms with 177 beds has been a receiving station for thousands of young men since the building was opened nearly twenty years ago."
- "A School of Physical Training used 92,914 times by men and 27,066 by boys during the past year. Conducted 1,083 gymnasium classes, gave 17,066 swimming lessons to boys and 13,072 to men...One thousand soldiers, sailors and national guardsmen given free use of department."
- "A University of the Second Chance, where 522 men are enrolled in 30 different classes."
- "A Social Club with lobbies, reading and small game rooms, billiards and cafeteria."
- "An Employment Bureau where positions were found last year for 858 men..."
- "A Character Factory where all the above activities and others contribute to the main purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association, the building of square manhood and square boyhood—the development for Denver of Christian citizenship."
- "The work in this building is 95 per cent self-supporting...The Men's side of the buildings more than pays its own way. The 5 per cent is for downtown boys' work inside and outside the building. This work with boys can never be self-supporting."

The Denver YMCA continued to expand in the 1930s and 1940s. The Denver YMCA organized the 20th Street YMCA in 1938, the Westside YMCA in 1941, the South YMCA in 1946, and the Sportland YMCA in Northeast Denver in 1949. Also in 1949, land was purchased for the construction of the Southeast YMCA, later renamed the Schlessman YMCA.

During the Second World War, from 1941 to 1945, the Denver YMCA provided a variety of services to over 2 million GIs, including the use of the dormitory at the Central YMCA. Servicemen across the country took advantage of the coast-to-coast facilities of the YMCA including those at Denver's Central YMCA.

Again, as happened after World War I, the mass conscription of the war era led to many men being freed from the social constraints of family and home. And again, the YMCAs across the country became meeting places for gay men.

The 1940s to the 1960s was a period when gay men faced severe discrimination. There was a strictly legal proscription against same sex affection and even the casual touch between men in the wrong place at the wrong time could result in a prison sentence. The corridors and dormitories of the Central YMCA, and other YMCAs nation wide provided a haven for gay men, as long as they remained hidden. With the rise in the gay civil rights movement, there became less reason for gay men to hide their identities. As such, the Central YMCA became less important to the gay male community as overt gay institutions, business and bars began to proliferate in the 1970s and through the present day.

Segregation of the races, as illustrated by the fact that membership in the Central YMCA was limited to white men, began to unravel in the 1950s as de jure segregation was outlawed by the Supreme Court in a series of decisions beginning with *Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Segregation of a de facto sort, however, remained in place in Denver, and elsewhere in the country, well into the 1970s. Now, and for the last several decades, membership in the YMCA, the Central YMCA included, is open to all men.

The same may be said for membership by all women. In the spring of 1963, the Denver YMCA opened a Women's Health Club, even before the rise of the second wave of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, with the aim of guaranteeing equality for women. The Denver YMCA lifted its ban on membership by women before many other clubs, organizations and associations did.

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The restriction of membership to Christians was also removed and Jews and other non-Christians were allowed to join the YMCA. Although the exact date of this decision is unknown, it likely happened sometime in the 1960s or 1970s.

The post-war period, during which the Denver YMCA became a more secular and more democratic institution, also witnessed a great expansion in its facilities with the Littleton YMCA opening in 1955, the Jefferson County YMCA in 1961, the Aurora YMCA in 1962, and the Adams Country YMCA in 1971. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 5.)

The Central YMCA also expanded in the post-war era. A \$1.7 million dollar annex was made to the building. Ground was broken in 1959 on a site immediately north of the Central YMCA, (*Denver Post*, March 23, 1959, p. 28.) The Miesian style addition by Walter Simon and John B. Hipp was completed in 1961. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 5.)

In 1975, the Denver YMCA celebrated its centennial anniversary. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 5.) The Chatfield YMCA was established in 1977 moving to a permanent location in 1993. The year before, in 1992, the Highline Family YMCA was opened. Both the Chatfield YMCA and the Highline Family YMCA are housed in formerly private recreation facilities that had both been closed due to bankruptcy. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 5.)

In 2000, the Denver YMCA, now known as the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver, celebrated its 125th anniversary. (*Y Metro News*, December, 2000, p. 5.) Also in 2000, the decision was made by the board of directors of the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver to sell the Central YMCA. The asking price was \$8.45 million. At this time, the YMCA hoped to lease back from the future buyer, its athletic facilities and its offices. (*Denver Post*, August 17, 2000, p. 1B; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, August 17, 2000, page 5A.)

In 2001, the majority of the building was purchased by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless with the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver retaining an abbreviated athletic facility. In this way, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless was able to expand the low-income housing component of the building while the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver continued its downtown fitness programs. The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless then completed a 2001-2004 rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

Neo-Classical Revival Architecture

The Central YMCA embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Neo-Classical Revival style as laid out in Marcus Whiffen's *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* published by the MIT Press in 1992, on pages 166-169.

Neo-Classical Revival style is a uniquely American variant of the European Ecole des Beaux Arts tradition. Buildings in the Neo-Classical Revival style are seen to be more closely associated with the early 19th century Greek Revival Style buildings of the Eastern United States than to either the buildings of the roughly contemporaneous if slightly earlier Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style, or to the buildings of Classical Antiquity in Greece and Italy.

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The widespread popularity of the Neo-Classical Revival style is typically seen by architectural historians to be rooted in its introduction to a wide public by the buildings and site planning seen at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Because the huge structures of the exposition had been constructed essentially of lathe and plaster, none survive. However, Charles B. Atwood's Fine Arts Building was reconstructed in permanent materials as Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry.

The style of choice for the design of important buildings in America in the late 19th and early 20th century was one or another of the classical revival styles then in vogue including the Neo-Classical Revival Style, Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style and the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

This same interest in using one of the classical revival styles for the design of important buildings is seen here in Denver from early on in the city's history with the construction of two major public buildings. The first is the circa 1890 Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style Arapahoe County Courthouse (demolished in the 1930s) designed by David W. Dryden which stood on Court House Square, Cleveland to Court Places, 15th to 16th Streets. The second, a few blocks away is the Neo-Classical Revival style Colorado State Capitol Building, occupying the blocks bounded by Lincoln to Grant Streets, East 14th to East Colfax Avenues. The Capitol was begun in 1886 with a design by Elijah E. Myers of Detroit. In 1894, Denver architect Frank E. Edbrooke took over, completing the building with his modifications in 1904.

That same year, 1904, Mayor Robert W. Speer took office. Speer, a former real estate developer, was interested in the City Beautiful movement that according to the book *Denver: The City Beautiful* by Tom Noel and Barbara Norgren "became the most important architectural theme" of the first half of the 20th century in Denver. Speer's embrace of the City Beautiful movement led the three-term mayor to greatly expand the city's park and parkway system, to establish the mountain park system, and to create the Civic Center downtown which was originally meant—though it never would—to link the Colorado State Capitol Building to the Arapahoe County Courthouse. The Civic Center grew mostly after Speer left office. His last term, which was not continuous with his previous two terms, ended in 1920.

The importance to Denver of the construction of the Central YMCA and its important place in the local City Beautiful movement is amply demonstrated by the fact that United States Vice President Charles W. Fairbanks laid the building's cornerstone. Also its site, just a block from the State Capitol grounds, demonstrates its importance to Denver. And though the Central YMCA is not among the first Neo-Classical Revival Style buildings to be constructed in the city, it is relatively early, predating most of the many Neo-Classical Revival Style monuments and buildings of the Civic Center, as well as the 1916 Central Post Office on Champa Street between 18th and 19th Streets. The Central Post Office was designed by the New York architectural firm of Tracy, Swartwout and Litchfield.

The Architecture of Marean and Norton

The designers of the 1906 Central YMCA were the Denver architectural firm of Marean and Norton, acknowledged masters of local architecture. The firm was a partnership of Willis Adams Marean (1853-1939) and Albert Julius Norton (1867-1944).

Willis Marean was born in Livonia, New York. He attended the Middlebury Academy and the New York State Normal School. At the age of twenty he moved to New York City where he worked as a draftsman for several architectural firms. Marean came to Denver from New York City in 1880 and was employed as a draftsman in the office of Frank E. Edbrooke.

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Albert Norton was born in Utica, New York. He received a B.S. degree from Cornell University in 1884. Before coming to Denver in 1890, he worked for various architectural firms in Boston and New York City. For a year, in 1891, he worked for the Denver architectural firm of Varian and Sterner and then in 1892, he joined the Frank E. Edbrooke office where he met Marean.

In 1895, the two men left Edbrooke's employ in order to form the partnership of Marean and Norton. In the book *Denver Landmarks* by Langdon Morris published in Denver in 1979 by Charles W. Cleworth, four buildings by Marean and Norton are illustrated and briefly discussed. Author Morris describes the partnership as "...the well-known architectural firm of Marean and Norton." (page 291.)

The firm of Marean and Norton became chiefly known as designers of luxury residences in a variety of revival styles. Among the most notable of these is the Georgian Revival Style 1908 Colorado Governor's Mansion (the former Cheesman-Boettcher Mansion) at 400 East 8th Avenue. Another important example of the luxury residential work of Marean and Norton is the Italian Renaissance Revival Style Stoiberhof Mansion (Stoiber-Reed-Humphries Mansion), also of 1908, at 1022 Humbolt Street. Mayor Speer hired the firm to design his own home at 300 Humbolt Street, a c. 1910 Craftsman style house. Other large residences by Marean and Norton include the c. 1915 Bosworth Mansion at 301 High Street and the 1920s Schwab Mansion at 2611 East 7th Avenue. Both are fine examples of the Italian Renaissance Revival Style. Marean and Norton were also responsible for the design of one the city's best examples of Spanish Colonial Revival Style architecture, the 1920s Steele Mansion at 555 South Downing Street.

The Neo-Classical Revival 1909-1911 Chamber of Commerce Building by Marean and Norton is described in Tom Noel and Barbara Norgren's *Denver the City Beautiful* on page 211 as one of the firm's "...rare commercial buildings..." In addition, a small group of modest downtown Denver commercial buildings by the firm were recently identified including the 1901 Colonial Hotel and the 1908 Cheesman (later Standish) Hotel.

The firm's obvious success with wealthy clients from Denver's high society, as indicated by commissions for mansions from many of the city's best-known names, reveals the social position of the Denver YMCA. The Denver YMCA was controlled by the city's business and political elite. And not surprisingly, given their social connections, Marean and Norton received several public commissions notably the 1913 Tudor Revival style Decker Branch of the Denver Public Library at 1501 South Logan Street. In addition, Marean and Norton received two of the most highly sought-after public commissions of the time, the 1912 Neo-Classical Revival Style Cheesman Park Pavilion in Cheesman Park and the Neo-Classical Revival Style 1919 Greek Theater in Civic Center Park. The Central YMCA is the oldest of the firm's four major Neo-Classical Revival style designs. The other three are the Chamber of Commerce Building, the Cheesman Park Pavilion, and the Greek Theater.

Early twentieth-century Denver was a regional center for the use of architectural terra cotta. The Denver Terra Cotta Company, later called the Northwest Denver Terra Cotta Company, was a nationally prominent maker of architectural terra cotta, the only such producer in a thousand mile radius of the city. As a result, it seems likely that the Denver Terra Cotta Company manufactured the architectural terra cotta used on the facade, and on the Lincoln Street elevation of the Central YMCA.

A Miesian Style annex was added to the north side of the building in 1958, greatly expanding the dormitories and providing additional space for children's programs. The Miesian style annex was designed by Denver architects Walter Simon and John B. Hipp.

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The 2001-2004 rehabilitation by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless made no visible exterior changes to the 1906 building. New fenestration was added to the east and west elevations of the 1958 annex in order to facilitate the re-use of recreational portions of the building as housing. All work was done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation as part of a Federal investment tax credit project. Denver architect Josh Comfort designed the rehabilitation for Lawrence Group Architects.

The Denver YMCA, today called the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver, continues to provide a variety of services and activities at various locations throughout the greater Denver area including the Central YMCA. A current plan calls for the Central YMCA to be converted into a facility that would maintain the athletic component of the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver while converting the transient hotel into a residential hotel for formerly homeless individuals. This plan, jointly being worked out by the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver and the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, is consistent with the history, traditions and mandate of the YMCA internationally, nationally and in Denver—that is to provide service and to lift up the disadvantaged.

Summary

The Central YMCA served as the main facility and headquarters building for the Denver YMCA. The Denver YMCA was instrumental in the social and cultural development of Denver. The association of the Central YMCA with the Denver YMCA is the historic context in which the Central YMCA is evaluated to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places according to criterion "A."

The Denver YMCA was, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and through the present day, an important social and cultural amenity. The Denver YMCA offered a variety of activities including religious study, athletics of various kinds, education and social work. Throughout its long history, beginning as early as the 1880s, the Denver YMCA conducted outreach to under-served communities in the city. The Denver YMCA also has carried on programs directed at children, at first limited to boys, but later encompassing activities for girls, too.

The Denver YMCA is also important to the history of modern sports. In 1896, James Naismith, who had invented basketball just a few years earlier in 1891, joined the athletic staff. Naismith introduced the game to the region at the Denver YMCA. And, in 1926, a game derisively known as "kittenball" or "sissyball," was codified into the sport of softball by Denver YMCA staffers, Homer Hoisington and Walter Hakanson both of whom worked at the Central YMCA. The game of softball was soon being played nationwide.

And because its membership was originally limited to white Christian men, the history of the Denver YMCA provides indexes to the social history of the United States in the twentieth century. The history of the Denver YMCA involves the civil rights movement, the struggle for religious equality, the women's movement and the gay rights movement.

The Central YMCA also has architectural significance as a fine example of the Neo-Classical Revival style in Denver from the early twentieth century period. The Neo-Classical Revival style is the historic context in which the Central YMCA is evaluated to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places according to Criterion "C."

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The Central YMCA is a good example of early twentieth century Neo-Classical Revival Style architecture in downtown Denver. The Central YMCA is a steel-frame structure that is clad in brick with a base of granite at the basement level with cream-colored architectural terra cotta used to decorate the entrances and the windows. The standard of the granite, with elaborate and precise cuts and finely done mortar joints is notable. The buff-colored brickwork is likewise finely done. Also made to a high standard are the custom-designed terra cotta details and panels. These terra-cotta ornaments and panels were most likely made by the Denver Terra Cotta Company. The architects for the Central YMCA were Marean and Norton, acknowledged masters of early twentieth-century Denver architecture. The Central YMCA is the earliest of the firm's four surviving Neo-Classical Revival Style commissions.

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November 23, 1892

"The Service the 'Y' Renders Denver," undated (1926?), un-credited booklet in the Denver YMCA manuscript files at the Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

"Some Things Inside Worth While," undated (1907?), un-credited pamphlet in the Denver YMCA manuscript files at the Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library.

Y Metro News, December 2000, in the Denver YMCA manuscript file at the Western History Library of the Denver Public Library.

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National Park Service**Downtown Denver Central
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Verbal Boundary Description

The nomination includes the land defined as Parcels 0234935032032 and 0234935033033, City and County of Denver, Colorado.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land historically associated with the Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex.

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-14:

Name of Property: Downtown Denver Central YMCA and Annex
 Location: Denver City and County, Colorado
 Photographer: Diane Wray
 Date of Photographs: March 2004
 Negatives: Possession of the photographer

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	East and south elevations; view to the northwest.
2	East elevation, original building; view to the west.
3	East and south elevations; view to the northwest.
4	South and west elevations; view to the northeast.
5	South elevation detail; view to the northwest.
6	South elevation entry; view to the north.
7	West elevation; view to the north.
8	West elevation; view to the southeast.
9	West elevation; view to the east.
10	West elevation; view to the east.
11	East elevation of annex; view to the northwest.
12	East elevation of annex; view to the west.
13	East elevation annex entry; view to the southwest.
14	East elevation of annex; view to the northwest.

PROPERTY OWNERS

YMCA of Metropolitan Denver
 25 E. 16th Ave.
 Denver, CO 80202

Civic Center Apartments LLP
 2111 Champa St.
 Denver, CO 80205

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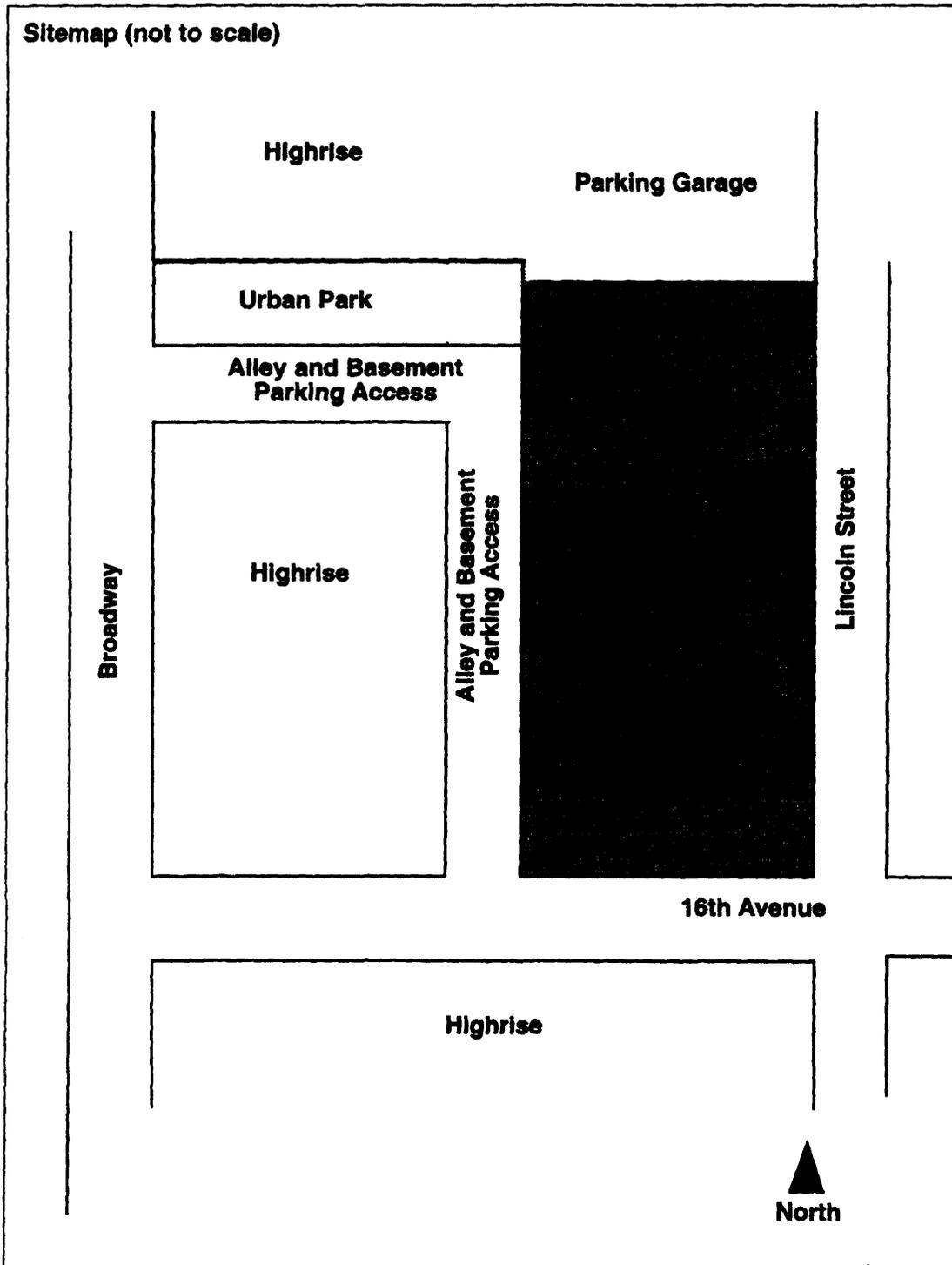
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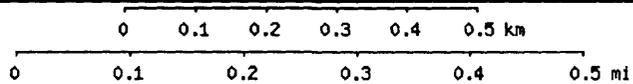
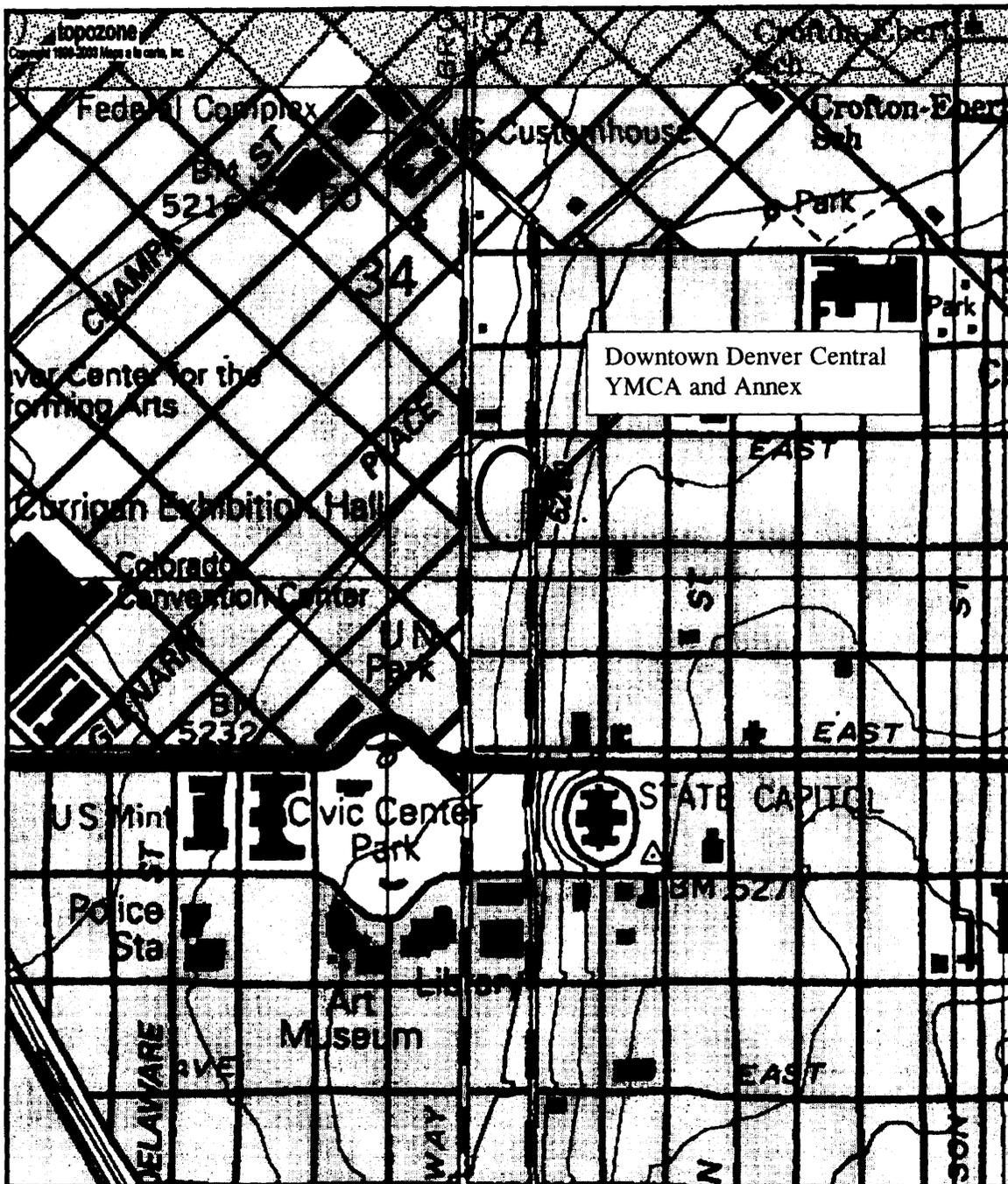
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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Englewood Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series (enlarged)

UTM: Zone 13 / 501210E / 4399117N (NAD27)
PLSS: 6th PM, T3S, R68W, Sec. 34 W¹/₂ SW¹/₄ SE¹/₄
Elevation: 5,240 feet



Map center is UTM 13 501199E 4398968N (NAD27)
Englewood quadrangle
Projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD83 Datum

M=10.067
G=0.009