

PHD 363314

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 2 1977
DATE RECORDED JUN 9 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC Ideal Building or

AND/OR COMMON Colorado Federal Savings Building

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
821 17th Street

CITY, TOWN
Denver

STATE
Colorado

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1

VICINITY OF

CODE
03

COUNTY
Denver

CODE
081

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Colorado Federal Savings and Loan Association

STREET & NUMBER
821 17th Street

CITY, TOWN
Denver

VICINITY OF

STATE
Colorado 80202

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC
Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER
City and County of Denver

CITY, TOWN
Denver

STATE
Colorado

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE
On-Going

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
State Historical Society of Colorado, 200 14th Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Denver

STATE
Colorado

DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ideal Building, located on the northeast corner of 17th and Champa Streets, is an eight story symmetrical structure with a ninth story "penthouse". The roof of the building is flat and there is no cornice. With its unadorned vertical lines and its arched windows, the building shows influence of both the Commercial and Sullivanesque styles of architecture.

The building is constructed of concrete and is reportedly the first major multi-story concrete building to have been built west of the Mississippi. On the exterior, the first two floors are faced with large blocks of dressed travertine marble from the quarries near Cotopaxi, Colorado. The remaining six floors were originally brick, but since the 1920's the brick has been covered with a neutral colored stucco. The ninth floor, in contrast, is covered with a light colored tile.

Flat lintel windows are arranged in groups of two separated by vertical piers that begin at ground level and terminate just below the ninth floor. In comparison, on the ninth floor the windows have rounded tops and are arranged in groups of three.

The exterior ornamentation, which is at a minimum and reminiscent of Sullivan, is found on the metal surrounds of the first floor windows and in the horizontal concrete band which runs, unbroken, beneath the second floor windows. The design is organized into squares with four different patterns utilizing circles and curved lines to form interlacing motifs.

The monumental, two story high entrance is round arched and outlined by a twisted rope effect in cast concrete. This is bordered by alternating blocks of smooth and decorated concrete. There is a large American eagle keystone designed by Denver artist Mrs. Clara S. Dieman. The notable features of the entrance are the two cast bronze doors, each weighing one ton. Another local artist, Mrs. Nena deBrennecke, designed the sculptured panels indoors depicting authentic Indian dances.

Upon entering the building beyond an entrance vestibule, there is an outer lobby which contains a double stairway descending into the basement level. This lobby has a wainscot of dark marble and a ceiling with alternating plain and decorative panels designed by Mrs. Dieman.

The main lobby has a soaring ceiling supported by columns, quatrefoil shape, with bronze color Byzantine capitals, which feature western motifs such as cactus and buffalo.

The columns have the appearance of marble, but are in reality rolled steel and painted to look like marble. These columns support large exposed ceiling beams which span the room. John Thompson decorated the beams in reds, blues, browns, and golds which compliment the stained glass skylights in between.

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The most outstanding work of art in the room is the sculptured frieze, which is divided into panels at the mezzanine level. Arnold Ronnebeck designed each panel to depict a period in the history of money beginning with the Chinese in 3000 B.C. and ending with the Machine Age.

In the basement, which is presently in use as a restaurant, is the huge vault door leading into the vault that was used when the building was owned by Denver National Bank. This lends a most unusual atmosphere to the restaurant and the vault provides interesting and private dining spaces.

In 1927 an addition was added to the original 50 foot deep building. It was designed by the architectural firm of Fisher and Fisher and carries out perfectly the architectural lines and materials of the original building. The only difference is there is no ninth floor or penthouse level. It was also at this time that there were interior alterations to fit the needs of the new bank. All of the interior art work found today, as well as the entrance design and the entrance doors, was done at that time.

The Denver National Bank was one of the first banks to adopt a new philosophy about banking, and their banking facilities were designed to reflect this philosophy—that of "cordial informality". The design of the bank lobby did away with barred teller cages and had low counters to lend an atmosphere of friendliness and warmth between the bank employee and the bank customer. The richly decorated lobby was part of this new idea and helped transmit the banking philosophy to all who entered the building.

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SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1907

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Montana Falls, John Steen 1907

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wm. E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher
1927

The Ideal Building is significant because it was the first multi-level building constructed of reinforced concrete west of the Mississippi, and the building has been and continues to be an important center of financial activity in the West.

The Ideal Building was constructed in 1907 by the Dome Investment Company to be the best office and bank building in Denver. Dome Investment Company was a holding of F.G. Bonfills, the founder of the Denver Post, and Claude Boettcher, the pioneer financial tycoon.

The cost was approximately \$250,000 to build. The concrete to build the structure was bought from Colorado Portland Cement Company (1899), which through no coincidence was also a holding of Claude Boettcher. The Colorado Portland Cement Company was the corporate predecessor of: Cement Securities (1911), Ideal Cement Company (1924) and Ideal Basic Industries.

The primary objective of constructing the Ideal Building was to promote the practice of building with reinforced concrete, and thereby the Colorado Portland Cement Company.

On October 24, 1907 the Ideal Building was examined and tested by R. V. Willison, the Denver Building Inspector. The Denver Post reported that "A slab of the first floor, five inches thick, was loaded with tremendous weight (65,000 lbs.). Immediately beneath, in the basement, an intense fire was lit, and the temperature of the slab raised to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit. After an hour and a quarter of this treatment, the slab was suddenly cooled by water to 50 degrees Fahrenheit. It showed absolutely no crack or other effect. Under the weight, the floor showed a deflection of only three one-hundredths of an inch". The article continued by inviting the public to observe the inspection tests of the building anytime during the upcoming week. The building inspection process had become part of the promotion of the Ideal Building and Colorado Portland Cement Company.

The early tenants included the Capital National Bank, Colorado Portland Cement Company, several brokerage firms, real estate companies and mining interests. The penthouse used to be occupied by a barbershop where prominent financiers, who were also tenants of the building, would meet in the morning to have their hair trimmed and spend their early day hours in an unofficial meeting place.

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One year after the building was completed, the real estate in the neighborhood, as reported in the Denver Post business section, had increased forty percent since the Ideal Building was constructed. The Ideal Building had become, in many ways, one of the cornerstones of 17th Street, Denver's Wall Street.

In 1924 the Ideal Cement Company was incorporated, and the Ideal Building came to be known as the Ideal Cement Building. In 1924 the Denver National Bank bought the Ideal Cement Building from the Dome Investment Company for one half million dollars and spent an additional one half million dollars adding the wing along Champa Street for additional office space. The architects for the addition and renovation was Fisher and Fisher. The Denver National Bank occupied and owned the building until 1959 when the Denver National Bank merged with the U. S. National Bank to become the Denver U. S. National Bank Complex, the predecessor of the United Bank of Denver. From 1959 until 1976 Ambrose and Company owned the building.

The two story main lobby was empty and neglected for many years after the Denver National Bank moved, until it was leased by the brokerage firm of Dean Witter and Company. Working with architect Rod Davis, the executives of Dean Witter decided not to "modernize" the lobby but to bring the lobby back to the glory it once had, hidden though it was at the time.

In the same tradition the Broken restaurant occupied the basement in 1968, where the old vault and trust department were located. The restaurant is designed in the style to which the patrons of the bank at the turn of the century must have been accustomed.

Colorado Federal Savings bought the building in 1976 for \$1,100,000 and estimates spending another \$2,000,000 in renovation to the exterior and interior. The renovation plans include saving all of the original oak woodwork and marble that is possible. In addition, new marble slabs and woodwork will be added to restore as much as possible the original decor and atmosphere of the building that was constructed to be the best bank and office building in Denver. Through its history the building has been and will continue to be a center for western banking, finance and real estate as a cornerstone of Denver's Wall Street.

FOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Denver Post October 24, 1907 Page 4
 Denver Post April 19, 1908 Page 2
 Denver Post May 15, 1908 Page 12
 Denver Post March 17, 1927 Page 1
 Denver Post October 16, 1967 Page 50
 Denver Post June 30, 1968 Page 39

Denver Post
 January 30, 1976 Page 37

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

GRID REFERENCES

A	1, 3	5, 0, 0, 7, 0, 0	4, 9, 9, 5, 1, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, Block 128, East Denver, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ronald Page

January 13, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Colorado Federal Savings and Loan Association

DATE

534-4241 ext. 261

STREET & NUMBER

621 17th Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

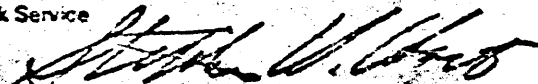
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

MARCH 31, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER


 DATE 6-9-77