NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

Substantive Review

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUL 22 1984
date entered 4-10-85

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Substantive Review NR

1. Name

5DV339

historic Midwest Steel and Iron Works Company Complex

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number 25 Larimer St. NA not for publication

city, town Denver NA vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Denver code 031

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	N/A in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	N/A being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	X other: undetermined

4. Owner of Property

name Office building: Midwest Building Partnership

street & number 6900 W. 44th Avenue

city, town Wheat Ridge NA vicinity of state Colorado (cont.)

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Denver City & County Building

street & number 1400 Bannock Street

city, town Denver state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? X yes ___ no

date Ongoing ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Colorado State Historic Preservation Office/1300 Broadway

city, town Denver state Colorado 80206

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The following building descriptions are keyed to the complex site plan accompanying this form.

Office Building: 1906, 1930, 1955

The Midwest office building (A) is a two-story, brick structure built in three stages between 1906 and 1955. The original, Commercial Vernacular style office (AA) was constructed in 1906. The symmetrical structure is built in English bond brick supported by a brick foundation and terminating in a flat roof. The building's Larimer Street elevation is accented by a corbelled brick cornice which incorporates a simplified dentil design. Star tie plates mark the second story level of the building.

In 1930 a major addition (AB) was erected adjoining the east elevation of the original office. This addition is a two-story, brick structure measuring approximately seventy-two feet by thirty-five feet and was designed in the Art Deco style by Denver architect Roland L. Linder. The structure's design incorporates a hexagonal entry tower, shallow brick pilasters, spandrels with stylized chevrons and a crenelated roof-line. An ornamental iron griffin, once found over the canopied entrance, was removed in 1983 along with an ornamental iron sign reading "Office, Midwest Steel-Iron Works" which was found on the structure's roof.

The exterior of the building is faced in five-course, common bond brick including randomly spaced glazed headers. Fleur-de-lis tie plates mark the interior floor level of the second story. The addition's multi-light windows have been sheathed in plywood as have the windows of the 1906 building and the 1955 addition. The building's original windows are intact beneath this sheathing.

The structural system of the Art Deco addition employs an unusual "battleship deck" design which was first introduced in ship building to increase the lateral strength of ocean-going vessels. In this system, steel plates are connected by a light steel frame thus creating a continuous interior skin.

In 1955 a second, two-story, brick addition (AC) was appended to the west elevation of the Art Deco addition and to the north elevation of the 1906 office thus forming a nearly rectangular building block. The 1955 addition is constructed in cinder block faced in five-course, common bond brick and rises to a flat roof. The addition forms a rectangular mass measuring twenty-five feet by forty-three feet which lacks distinguishing stylistic features. This addition is a non-contributing element.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion	
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science	
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture	
___ 1600–1699	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian	
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation	
_X_ 1900–	___ communications	_X_ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates Office: 1906, 1930 Shop: 1911, 1923 **Builder/Architect** Office Addition (1930)-- Architect: Roland Linder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company is significant as one of Denver's oldest and largest metal fabricators. Since the 1890s the company has produced structural and ornamental components for buildings and engineering structures throughout Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico. Midwest's Larimer Street site served as the company's headquarters between 1924 and 1983. The four-building complex includes an architecturally significant Art Deco style office building designed in 1930 by Denver architect Roland L. Linder. The significance of the site was recognized in June 1983 when the complex was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company had its beginnings in 1893 when Paul Richter and James B. Jackson organized a metal fabricating concern specializing in building components.[1] Incorporated as the Jackson-Richter Iron Works in 1905,[2] the company first operated from a site on Champa Street in Denver. Expansion necessitated the company's relocation to larger facilities on 19th and Blake Streets in 1906.[3]

In 1910 Albert G. Fish acquired control of the Jackson-Richter Iron Works from James B. Jackson,[4] thus establishing a family association with the company which continues to the present. (His grandson, Frederick G. Fish, became company president in 1959, a position he still holds today). Albert G. Fish brought to the Jackson-Richter Iron Works extensive experience in the metal fabricating field. Prior to migrating to Colorado in 1910, Fish had been associated with two major fabricators in his native St. Louis, the Koken Iron Works, a subsidiary of the American Bridge Company, and the Banner Iron Works. The Banner Iron Works, under the direction of Fish as president and general manager, was responsible for the fabrication of the structural system of the St. Louis Flat Iron Building, the first building in that city to employ a steel structural frame.[5]

A year after acquiring control of the Jackson-Richter Iron Works, Albert G. Fish was elected president and general manager by the company's Board of Directors.[6] Fish served in this position until his death in 1947. The Jackson-Richter Iron Works continued to prosper under Albert Fish's direction. By January 1914, the company again moved to larger facilities at 3221 Blake Street,[7] and in 1917 the Board of Directors authorized the purchase of the inventory and equipment of the Brown Iron Works Company.[8]

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheets for footnote and bibliographical references.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name Fort Logan

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	13	498700	4398790
B	13	498680	4398720
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries include only the two historic structures, Buildings A and B, connected by the existing property lines (AC, BC and BD are non-contributing portions of these buildings).

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A

state	code	county	code
NA			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Herbst, Staff Historian

organization Colorado Dept. of Highways date

street & number 4201 E. Arkansas Avenue telephone 757-9440

city or town Denver state Colorado

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X 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 Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-14-84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

p. Jack Gravenor date 4/10/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

Description 7 7-2

Shop Complex: 1911, 1923, 1952, 1967

The original shop complex (Building B) is located to the north of the Midwest office and is oriented towards I 25. The core complex was constructed in four major stages between 1911 and 1967. The earliest shop building is a two-story, brick structure built in 1911. The building (BA) is supported by a concrete slab foundation and terminates in a flat roof with a stepped parapet fronting the east elevation. The building includes one-light-over-one-light sash windows enframed by wooden surrounds. The interior of the building is undivided and open to the roof system. One-ton swing cranes are located at intervals along the north and south ends of the structure. The building was last used by Midwest as a storage area for unfabricated steel shapes.

In 1923 a major addition was added to the south of the 1911 building. This addition (BB) is composed of twin brick units supported by a concrete slab foundation and terminating in twin gable roofs incorporating gabled clerestories. The addition includes multi-light, six-sash window units and east elevation loading doors.

The interior of the addition is an undivided space open to the exposed truss roof system. The southernmost addition unit includes the complex's original rivet forge and was used as the complex ornamental shop. The northern unit served as Midwest's rigging room where netting and safety equipment was stored between steel erection projects. The northern unit also includes a five-ton overhead crane secured to an eave level track running the length of the building.

Spanning the north elevation of the 1911 building are two cinder block additions (BC, BD) measuring thirteen feet deep. These additions were constructed in 1952 and 1967 and were used as a wholesale office for light steel sales. They are non-contributing structures.

As Midwest expanded over the years, the original shop machinery was gradually replaced with more efficient tools for fabrication. Unfortunately, the majority of the company's first machines were discarded in the process. Surviving in the shop complex (Building BB) is an original rivet forge dating circa 1925. Surviving at Midwest's 48th Street complex is a massive steel punch manufactured by the Scully Steel & Iron Company of Chicago (Patent No. 746716, 15 December 1903).

Significance 8 8-2

As the advantages of structural steel systems were recognized and applied to the design of commercial and public buildings, an increased demand for structural steel fabrication and erection was created.[9] The Jackson-Richter Iron Works capitalized on this demand by specializing in structural steel fabrication and erection. As a result, the fabrication of steel structural systems became the company's primary service.

World War I and the accompanying anti-German national climate prompted Jackson-Richter's Board of Directors to rename the company. In October 1919, the Iron Works officially adopted Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company as the concern's new trade name.[10]

By 1922 the Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company had outgrown its Blake Street complex. In January 1923, the Larimer Street site of the Brown Iron Works Company was purchased by Midwest to accomodate the company's increased spatial requirements.

The former Brown Iron Works site on Larimer Street included an office building constructed in 1906 and a shop built in 1911. Midwest initiated a capital improvements campaign shortly after purchasing the property which included the expansion and refitting of the existing shop complex. Midwest moved the company's offices and fabricating operation to the Larimer Street complex in the fall of 1923.[11]

Major projects undertaken by Midwest in the Denver area during the 1920's included the fabrication and erection of the steel structural systems for the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company Office Building, the Continental Oil Building, East Denver High School, the Cathedral of Colorado Consistory, A&A Scottish Rite, the Denver Orpheum Theatre, St. Dominic's Church, and the Denver City and County Building. In addition, the company also supplied steel structural components for the Moffat Tunnel, James Peak, Colorado, and the Royal Gorge Suspension Bridge near Canon City.[12]

In 1926, Midwest expanded its facilities with the construction of a second plant in Pueblo, Colorado, specializing in light steel fabrication.

As the number of major building projects declined with the economic depression of the 1930's, Midwest concentrated its efforts on bridge fabrication. During this period the company was among the

three most prolific bridge fabricators operating in Colorado.[13] Approximately thirty structures (principally short span pony and deck trusses) remain on the Colorado county road system which can be credited to Midwest.[14]

During the Second World War Midwest was awarded construction contracts for a number of regional military installations. During the war years projects were completed for Fort Francis E. Warren (Wyoming), Fort Logan (Denver), Lowry Air Force Base (Denver), Buckley Field (Denver), and Camp Carson (Colorado Springs). In addition, Midwest was among several Denver steel fabricators engaged in the first dry land ship building project for the United States Navy. In recognition of Midwest's participation in this program, the U.S. Navy awarded the company the Navy "E" for Excellence on January 23, 1944.[15]

In 1950, under new president Burton W. Melcher, a third Midwest plant was established on 48th Street in Denver. The 48th Street plant specialized in the fabrication of large steel systems for which the company was becoming increasingly well known.[16]

Although a series of additions were made to the Larimer Street complex between 1952 and 1967, the physical capabilities of the site imposed restrictions on the range of products manufactured there. The successive additions to the industrial buildings had resulted in an inflexible and inefficient design. As a result, Midwest's fabricating operation was gradually moved to the more adaptable 48th Street site.

By the early 1980's the Larimer Street complex was confined to the fabrication of the company's smallest projects. The company offices were still housed on the complex. In the fall of 1983, Midwest consolidated its operation at the 48th Street complex to include the operations formerly conducted on Larimer Street.

Physically, the Midwest complex remains essentially intact, illustrating its change and expansion over the years. Most outstanding architecturally is Midwest's two-story brick office addition built in 1931. In contrast to the Commercial Vernacular design of the 1906 office, the 1931 addition was designed in the then-popular Art Deco style by Denver architect Roland L. Linder,[17] utilizing an unusual "battleship deck" structural system.

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Significance 8 8-4

Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company, which evolved over nearly a century from a small, local metal components manufacturer to a structural steel firm of major significance, ranks as a notable leader in Colorado's steel fabricating industry. For this reason, as well as for its architectural significance, the site is worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Footnotes:

[1] "Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company Achieves Wide Reputation Through the Rocky Mountain Region", Colorado Manufacturer and Consumer, (Denver, 1928), p.13.

[2] Bert Fish, "The History of The Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company, 1894-1969", unpub., p.1.

[3] Fish, p.1.

[4] Fish, p.2

[5] Fish, p.2

[6] Herman J. Lumpp, Minutes of a Directors Meeting of the Jackson-Richter Iron Works, 3 November 1909; quoted in Fish, p.2.

[7] Fish, p.3.

[8] Fish, p.4.

[9] William Le Baron Jenney was responsible for the first use of steel beams in a commercial structure (Home Insurance Building, Chicago, 1884-1885). Cast iron columns and wrought iron beams and joists were employed prior to 1884, although steel structural members had been used by bridge engineers since c.1870.

[10] Fish, p.4.

[11] Fish, p.4.

[12] Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company, General Catalog, (1932) no pagination.

[13] The three most prolific bridge fabricators working in Colorado during the 1930's were Midwest, Minneapolis Moline, and the Minneapolis Steel & Machinery Company.

[14] Field work for the Colorado Historic Bridge Inventory was conducted 6/83 to 12/83.

[15] Fish, pp.7-8.

[16] Fish, p.9.

[17] Roland L. Linder was licensed to practice architecture in Colorado in 1921. Among the projects Linder completed during his career were the designs for the Denver Coliseum, Rose Medical Center, Mercy Hospital, and St. Luke's Hospital.

Bibliographical references 9 9-2

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Hafen, LeRoy R. Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State. New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1948. Vol.1, p.618. Vol.2, pp.598-600.

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Midwest Steel & Iron Works Company. General Catalog. 1932.

Noel, Thomas J. Denver's Larimer Street: Main Street, Skid Row and Urban Renaissance. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1981.

Rocky Mountain News. 2 August 1931, Sec.1, p.4.

Rocky Mountain News. 12 November 1977, p.22.

W.P.A. Writers Project. Interview: Harry L. Walsh, Design Engineer E. Burkhardt & Sons Steel & Iron Works Company. 19 March 1941 Unpub.

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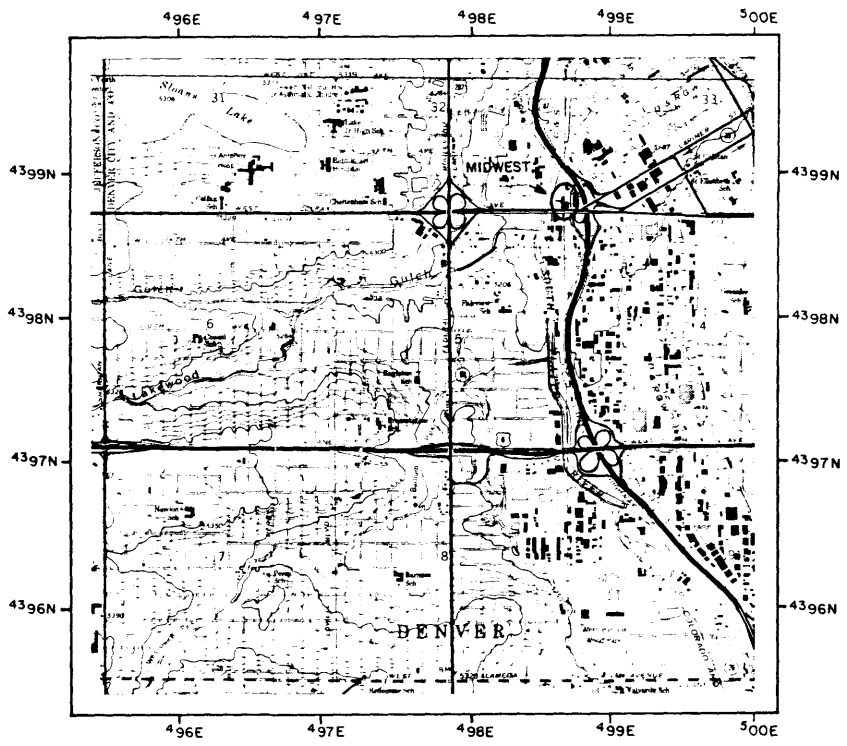
Owner of Property 4 4-2

Shop complex: Jerry Stafford
Acoustic Specialties
123 Rio Grande Blvd.
Denver, CO 80223

TRIM LINE

MIDWEST STEEL AND IRON WORKS COMPANY

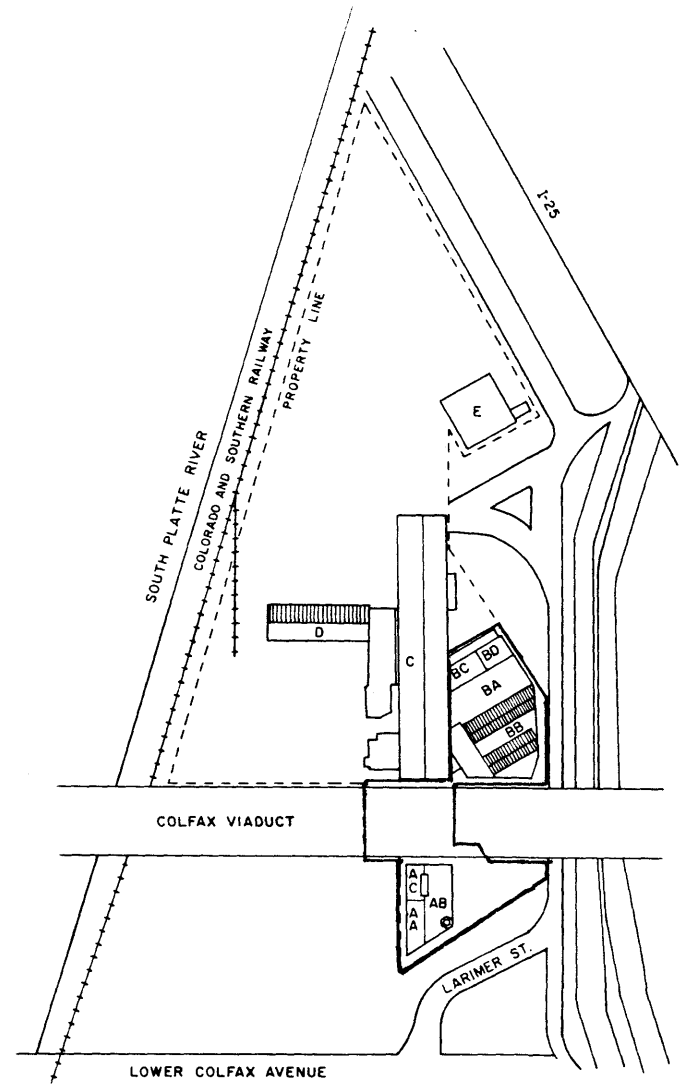


TAKEN FROM USGS FORT LOGAN, CO. 1965 (PHOTOREVISED 1971) UTM 13: 499680.4398720

LOCATION MAP
SCALE 1:24,000

FEET 0 1000 2000 3000
METERS 0 500 1000

N



N

SITE PLAN

FEET 1"=100' 0 50 100 200 300
METERS 1:480 0 5 10 20 30 40 50 100

BUILDING KEY:

BUILDING A-OFFICE
- AA (1906)
- AB (1931)
- AC (1955)

BUILDING B-SHOP
- BA (1911)
- BB (1923)
- BC (1967)
- BD (1952)

CRANE RUNWAYS
- C (1942)
- D (1965)

BUILDING E-NON-CONTRIBUTING OFFICE BUILDING CIRCA (1955)

MIDWEST STEEL AND IRON WORKS COMPANY
25 LARIMER STREET
DENVER
DENVER COUNTY, COLORADO

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SHEET 1 of 1

MIDWEST STEEL AND IRON WORKS COMPANY IS ONE OF DENVER'S OLDEST AND LARGEST METAL FABRICATORS. SINCE THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, MIDWEST HAS PRODUCED STRUCTURAL AND ORNAMENTAL COMPONENTS FOR BUILDINGS AND ENGINEERING STRUCTURES THROUGHOUT COLORADO, WYOMING AND NEW MEXICO. MIDWEST'S LARIMER STREET SITE SERVED AS THE COMPANY'S HEADQUARTERS BETWEEN 1924 AND 1983. THE FOUR-BUILDING INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX INCLUDES AN ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT ART DECO STYLE OFFICE BUILDING DESIGNED IN 1930 BY DENVER ARCHITECT ROLAND L. LINDER. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE WAS RECOGNIZED IN 1983 WHEN THE COMPLEX WAS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE COMPLEX WAS NECESSITATED BY THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF PROJECT FCU 040-4(6), COLFAX VIADUCT FINAL PHASE, WHICH WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE HISTORIC SITE. THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION IS THE LEAD AGENCY IN CHARGE OF THE PROPOSED UNDERTAKING. THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS IS THE IMPLEMENTING STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT. RECORDATION WAS COMPLETED BY KATHRYN M. KURANDA, HISTORIAN FOR HOWARD NEEDLES TAMMEN AND BERGENDOFF; AND COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS STAFF INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHER, DAVID GROVER; AND DRAFTSPERSON, DOUGLAS LANG.

Midwest Steel and Iron Works Company
Denver County, Colorado

Historic Americal Engineering Record
by Douglas Lang 1984
Scale: 1"=100'

Nominated area shown by red line.

Map 1

TRIM LINE