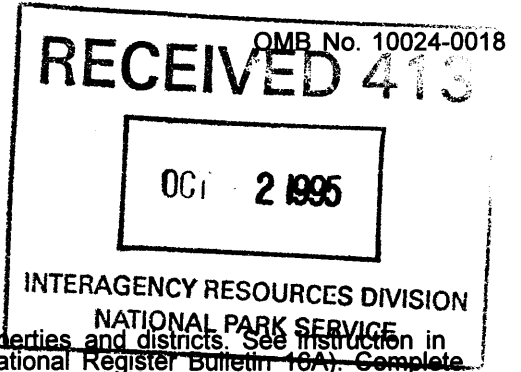


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Colorado Springs City Auditorium

other names/site number Colorado Springs Municipal Auditorium/5EP628

### 2. Location

street & number 231 E. Kiowa Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Colorado Springs [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county El Paso code 041 zip code 80903

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

James D. [Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer September 26, 1991 Date

State Historic Preservation Office, 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:

- 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] Signature of the Keeper Date 11-7-95

Entered in the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
**Name of Property**

El Paso County/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	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	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: auditorium  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: auditorium  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Limestone  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
**Name of Property**

El Paso County, 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 Bibliographic References

### Bibliography

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

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development  
Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1922

### Significant Dates

1922

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Thomas, Charles E.

MacLaren, Thomas C.

Hetherington, Thomas D.

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Penrose Public Library;

Colorado Springs City Auditorium Files;

Colorado Springs Pioneer Museum -

Starsmore Center

Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
Name of Property

El Paso County, Colorado  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.1

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. Zone Easting Northing  
13 515650 4298260

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

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

#### Boundary Justification

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

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Maureen McKasy-Donlin

organization City of Colorado Springs Historic Preservation Board date June 2, 1995

street & number P. O. Box 1575 MC350 telephone (719) 578-6809

city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80901-1575

#### 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 City of Colorado Springs

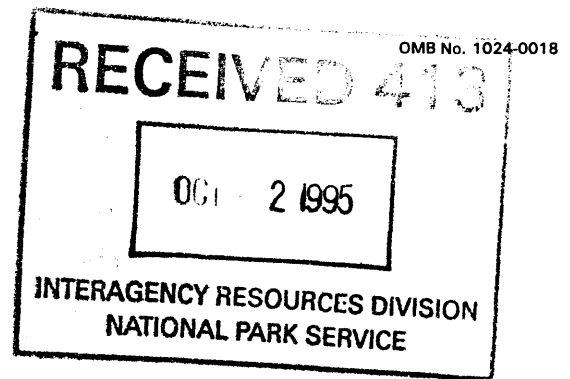
street & number P. O. Box 1575 telephone (719) 578-6600

city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80901-1575

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Description:

The Colorado Springs City Auditorium is a freestanding municipal building. Its construction began in 1922 and concluded in 1923. It is located on the northeast corner of Block 83 of the Original Townsite of the Town of Colorado Springs. Built of blond brick and limestone in Classical Revival style, it is rectangular in form with a building footprint of approximately 225' x 159". Its principal facade faces north (see photo 1). The focal point of the front is a colossal nonfunctional portico in modified Ionic order which projects from the facade center (see photo 2). The top of the portico is 50' above the ground level. The portico is supported by four two-story columns flanked by single pilasters. From the front, the building is three stories tall with rounded corners.

The building is located on the southwest corner of Kiowa Street and Weber Street. It is on the periphery of the Downtown Core and is surrounded by the First Baptist Church (to the east), the abandoned Municipal Police Headquarters (north), commercial buildings (west) and a parking lot (south). There is a one story non-contributing building approximately 36' x 60' on site located southwest of the City Auditorium.

The face brick is No. 2 kiln run gray pressed brick. The doors were made of wood framing single panes of glass. Windows are also wood double sashes with single light glass panes.

The front of the building contains the principal entry with five sets of double doors beneath a cantilevered wrought iron canopy (see photo 5). Original cast metal grilles remain above each set of doors. A limestone stringcourse begins on either side of the doors and continues around the building's sides. On both sides of the main entrance, a modern pair of double doors provides exits for the east and west interior corridors. Just above the canopy, a limestone belt course extends from the front and along the sides. Another limestone belt course provides the impression of a third story. This impression is continued on both sides of the entry and continues along the sides by a 12' brick projecting band.

Three large double hung wood windows framed in limestone are placed above this band; one is exactly in the center and the others flank the outer columns. Above the limestone pillars, a limestone cornice follows the path of the base and belt courses to the rear. The word "AUDITORIUM" is engraved in limestone above the cornice. A limestone course frames the pediment and caps the entire building. The cornerstone of Barrie granite is located on the northeast corner of the building. Its inscription reads: "LAID BY THE M.W. GRAND LODGE A.F. & A.M. OCT. 19 A.L. 5922 E.P. HUFFERD GRAND MASTER ERECTED MCMXXII."

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Description (continued):

The east side of the building is the secondary facade (see photos 8 & 9). A pair of double doors at the north end provides entry to the interior foyer. A single set of double doors provides entry to the Lon Chaney Theatre. At the south end, a third set of double doors provides egress for arena users. Windows on the ground floor are regularly spaced between the doors.

Above the stone course above the first floor, there are 11 pilasters with limestone caps that stretch above the third floor. Two ornate limestone windows with a projecting pediment are located at the second story at the north and south ends of the building (see photo 10).

Two painted metal grates set between pilasters south of the metal marquee serve as ventilation intake vents. A third story is indicated by a horizontal brick course that sits in the spaces between the pilasters. A double set of windows is paired north and south of the pilasters, and in the middle of the building. A limestone wreath ornament is located at the north and south ends above the cornice (see photo 12).

The south side of the building is largely free of ornamentation (see photo 13). Its distinguishing characteristic is a rectangular stage tower with a chimney that rises 95' high. This tower houses the main stage curtains and screens. At the south end of the tower is a one-half story extension with a shed roof that contains the original coal rooms and the boiler room. Two small windows are set near the roof line of the tower.

On both east and west sides of the tower are large metal industrial overhead doors. The door to the east accesses a loading dock (see photo 14) and the door to the west accesses a ramp that descends to the alley. On both sides of the tower are various sized windows and doors. These are asymmetrically placed and identify four floors. All windows are 1-over-1 lights with limestone lintels. These provide light and air to the stage dressing rooms, toilets, fan rooms, organ rooms and stairwells.

The west side of the building faces a north/south alley (see photos 15 & 16). It is identical in appearance to the east facade of the building.

The interiors of the building on the ground floor include a lobby with ticket booths, a foyer, the arena floor with seating, a main stage with associated dressing rooms, a theater with fixed seats (the Lon Chaney Theatre), a cafe with a kitchen, check rooms, restrooms and offices.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Description (continued):

The interior of the City Auditorium is characterized by a large interior arena and stage area, surrounded by fixed balcony seating. This space is in turn surrounded by accessory areas. Walls and ceilings are usually painted plaster. Floors and stairways are usually finished concrete.

From the north entrance, visitors enter the lobby (see photo 17). The walls are made of Keene's cement, jointed to simulate stone work and painted. The Tennessee grey marble floor is inclined up toward the interior. Ticket windows are located at the east and west ends of the lobby. The glass ticket window is framed in wood with a Tennessee grey marble shelf and set into a plaster wall. Two inch round brass railings were set 2.5 feet from the marble shelf. The ceiling of the lobby is a barrel vault.

The foyer (see photo 21) is accessed from the lobby through five wood double doors. These have glass panes located approximately in the upper quarter of each door. The foyer provides access to the arena floor through seven solid double wood doors (see photo 22). The foyer connects to the east and west corridors, provides access to the ticket windows, and leads to double stairways at the northeast and northwest corners that access the balcony seating areas (see photo 23).

The east corridor passes three wood-enclosed telephone booths (see photo 24), a check room, the current administrative offices and the Lon Chaney Theatre (see photo 25).

The Lon Chaney Theatre is accessed through a pair of double wood doors. Its dimensions are 37' by 54' with the floor sloping down to the south. It was designed to seat 255 people in three sections separated by two aisles (see photos 26 & 27). There are wood paneling and wallpaper on the sides, a barrel vault ceiling and hanging light fixtures and ceiling fans. Adjacent to the Theatre doors is a passageway up a short incline to the arena floor. The west corridor passes three wood-enclosed telephone booths, a check room, and the men's toilet.

An exit passage west passes the women's restroom. It was built with six toilets. South of the west corridor is the Curtain Call Cafe, accessed through a pair of double wood doors. The Cafe is similar to the Lon Chaney Theatre in size and shape (see photo 28). It has wood paneling, a barrel vault roof and hanging light fixtures and ceiling fans. Capacity is 80 customers. The serving area is separated from the seating area by an ornate wood divider, with the kitchen behind the serving area, accessed by a center doorway.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

### Description (continued):

The arena floor is made of maple. The floor is surrounded by a painted plaster wall on three sides and the main stage to the south (see photo 29, 30, 31 & 32). The floor dimensions are 81'8" by 120'. Full floor seating can accommodate 1,000 people (including the raised floor seating). This raised arena floor seating is placed on the east and west sides (see photo 33). Each side has five raised box areas framed with 2" brass railings set into oak caps. Each area is accessed by four stairs from the arena floor and have no fixed seats. The ceiling is 40' above the floor. There are oak caps around the floor boxes, railings and stair caps. Brass railings are 16 gauge tubing and 1/16th inch thick.

The main stage is raised 3'6" above the arena floor. Five stairs lead to the stage floor at the east and west edges of the stage (see photo 34). The original orchestra pit, located in front of the stage, has been covered by the arena floor. The date of this alteration is unknown. The stage floor is made of wood and measures 52' by 32'.

The proscenium measures 52' by 28'. The proscenium arch (see photo 35) has a plaster lattice front that covers the organ pipes. A cartouche in the center of the arch displays, in raised letters, "USUI CIVIUM DECORI URBIS," translated as "For the Use of the People and the Glory of the City." Lighting apparatus, curtains and screens hang in the stage tower above the stage floor. A scene dock is located to the west. Accessory rooms east of the main stage are on four floors. The stage floor has two dressing rooms, a toilet and closets. The second floor has a dressing room and toilet. The third floor contained a janitor's quarters, with a living room, kitchenette and dressing room. The fourth floor contains a fan room. Access is provided by two stairways. West of the main stage is a three-story scene dock. The fourth floor contains a fan room. Below and east of the main stage is a locker room and shower room, and additional storage space.

The balcony area is divided into upper and lower section and contains 1,400 wood and leather seats. The lower balcony contains five rows. On the east and west sides, there are five sections each with 11 seats per section. At the rounded corners, the sections have 12 rows and to the north, each section has 10 seats. The upper balcony has three rows on the east and west sides, and two rows to the north. The number of seats per section is the same as the lower balcony. A 2" brass rail is placed in front of the front rows of the upper and lower balcony.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Description (continued):

Principal access to the balcony is made by paired stairways at the northwest and northeast corners of the building (see photo 36). There is one intermediate landing between two sets of 14 stairs. Oak handrails are supported by wrought iron supports on the inside and attached to plaster walls on the outside. The second floor main landing (see photo 37) accesses an aisle that separates the lower from the upper balcony. Lower balcony seats are accessed from this aisle, as well as the upper balcony seats to the north.

Upper balcony seats to the east and west are accessed by an additional stairway that leads from the main landings. North of the aisle on the west and east sides are men's and women's toilets, accessed by steep stairs that turn as they descend. Secondary access to the aisle occurs through stairways at the north end of the east and west aisle. These stairs connect to the arena floor next to the stage and also connect to the exit doors on the south end of the east and west sides of the building. Above the aisle are six skylights on both the east and west sides, and two skylights on the north end. The seats are original and made of wood and leather. The seats fold up; on the underside of the seat is a wire hat rack (see photo 38).

The ceiling is a ribbed barrel vault with twelve skylights in two rows of six each that are now covered to prohibit natural light. The ceiling surface was specially designed using horsehair and quarter inch holes to aid in reducing friction and distributing sound.

The basement was built to contain a men's smoking room with five toilets in the northeast corner of the building. South of this area is a rifle range, roughly 112' by 19'. East of the rifle range is a storage area for the floor seating which was removable, and south of the range is a workshop. East of the workshop, and beneath the main stage is another storage area. South of this storage area is the boiler room and original coal rooms.

Exterior alterations are few. All original windows remain, but most of the windows on the ground floor and the decorative windows on the second floor have had metal framed exterior storm windows installed (see photos 3 & 4). The date of replacement is unknown. Some replicate the original pattern of double sash single light windows and others are a single large pane of glass. The original ground level exterior wood and glass doors have been replaced with modern steel and glass doors (see photo 6). The date of replacement is unknown.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**

### Description (continued):

A projecting triangular metal marquee on the north side is used to promote events (see photo 7). The date of its installation is unknown. A two sided metal marquee sign projects over the entry to the Lon Chaney Theatre on the east facade (see photo 11); this was added in May 1986. An identical marquee sign advertises the Curtain Call Cafe. This sign was added in Spring, 1987. A sheet metal pipe with a blower motor projects as an exhaust vent from the Cafe kitchen to a point halfway up the second story. The date of installation is unknown.

Some interior alterations have occurred. The most significant is the historic addition of two 1935 Works Progress Administration (WPA) murals in the Lobby. Located above the ticket windows, on the east and west walls, the murals are painted in a lunette shape and reflect the Social Realism school. The murals are approximately 4 ½' tall and 14' wide at the base. The east wall mural illustrates workmen at the mines, with mountains in the background (see photo 18). The artist was Archie Musick, and he referred to the mural as "Hardrock Miners." The west wall mural shows a seated woman in the center, flanked by a young boy and girl, and comedy and tragedy masks. On the left side people are dancing in formal evening wear, playing musical instruments; and on the right side is a mixed chorus of Afro-Americans (see 19). The artist was Tabor Utley and the mural was entitled "The Arts." The lobby ceiling displays a stenciled pattern (see photo 20) that, judging from the amount of grime, may have been painted at the same time as the murals. The two inch round brass railings in front of the ticket windows in the lobby have also been removed

The telephone booths in the east and west corridors are inoperative and one has had its doors removed to house a soft drink dispensing machine. The check rooms are used for storage. The women's toilet on the ground floor has been modernized and the current men's toilet occupies an original storage room. The original men's toilet in the basement has been modernized.

The Lon Chaney Theatre now seats 235 patrons. The seats are original but have been recovered. The accessory rooms on the east side of the main stage have been altered to dressing rooms. The third floor janitor's quarters are now also dressing rooms; the date of this change is unknown.

The scene dock west of the stage stores the 1928 Mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ keyboard. It was originally built for the Colorado Springs Burns Opera House. It was moved to the City Auditorium beginning in 1973. The organ connects to eight ranks, uses 604 pipes and includes such percussion

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### **Description (continued):**

instruments as drums (snare, bass and kettle), cymbals, chimes, sleigh bells, tambourines, castanets, glockenspiel, xylophones and other special effects.

Finally, the coal fired boilers were converted to burn fuel oil and now use natural gas.

These alterations have caused minimal impact on the architectural integrity of the building. The murals are historic alterations, and the remainder of changes are of a nature and scale that do not significantly detract from the historic character of the building.

### **Non-Contributing Building**

A painted, one-story red brick building is located south and west of the City Auditorium (see photographs 39, 40, 41 & 42). It has a flat roof with a simple cornice with a parapet on the front and sides. Little information is known about the building. No mention of it is made in news stories about the City Auditorium, and no mention of it has been found in the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder's Office. Its date of construction is unknown, although it appears to have been occupied in 1900.

The alley between Nevada Avenue and Weber Street was known as Carpenter's Alley. The address for this building, based upon Sanborn Fire Insurance Rate maps, was 13 and 15 Carpenter's Alley. In 1921, these addresses were occupied by Dannevick & Currie, Contractors, and D. R. Robb, Contractor.

The property was referenced in the Construction Specifications for the City Auditorium under Site Provisions. The site was to be cleared by the City "... except for the one-story brick shop in the southwest corner of the site, which has been left for the use of the Contractor during the construction, and which shall be removed by the contractor upon completion of the work." It is not known why the building was not demolished.

Its front is 36' wide and faces west. It has three wood doors and three windows on the west facade. The sides are 60' long with five windows. There is a 14' x 4.5' shed extension that appears to be an addition at the northwest corner of the building. The doors are modern and some of the buildings' windows have been replaced. The original windows are wood single sashes with nine light window panes. They are set below a double row of arched bricks and a single row of brick form the sill.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

**Description (continued):**

The building was used in the 1950's and 1960's as the U. S. Army Military Police office, as a comfort station and a U. S. Army first aid station. Since the 1970's, it has been used by the City for storage.

This building has been judged to be a non-contributing element. It shares none of the significant physical characteristics of the City Auditorium. It has had no association with the City Auditorium since its probable use as the Auditorium's construction office. However, because it is located on the original parcels purchased for the construction of the City Auditorium, the boundaries have not been redrawn to exclude this structure.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Statement of Significance:

The Colorado Springs City Auditorium is historically significant as a manifestation of community planning and development efforts that produced a valued public resource, beginning in 1922. It is architecturally significant as the final collaborative effort of two locally significant master architects - Charles E. Thomas and Thomas C. MacLaren, and as the last local representation of publicly-owned Classical Revival architecture.

Colorado Springs came of age during the 1890's boom in the Cripple Creek gold mining district. However, by 1915, the mining industry was clearly in decline, both in terms of quantity and quality of ore. Economic diversity was pursued by commercial interests, but also, members of the community expressed the desire to be regarded as serious and substantive. The idea of a City Auditorium initially surfaced with the Colorado Springs Civic League (1909 - 1916), a society of women advocating beauty and influential work. They emphasized the benefits to be derived from an auditorium, including "... everything that pertained to better city housekeeping, better social conditions, (and) more intelligent conduct of city affairs." A planning committee, consisting of nine civic groups, affirmed the need for a multi-use auditorium in 1916, but recommended to Mayor McKesson that other municipal priorities be addressed.

Charles E. Thomas, a local architect, successfully ran for a City Council seat in 1917 and was selected Mayor by his fellow Council members. He served as Mayor from April 1917 to April 1921. According to an undated entry in his notebook, a Mr. Neal Volmer, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, convinced Thomas to initiate the effort to develop a City Auditorium prior to his departure from office. Thomas prepared a sketch which was submitted to and approved by the Conventions Committee of the Chamber, of which Volmer was the Chairman. Volmer secured pledges for 50% of the cost of the project, but the controversy regarding the location of the building caused such conflict that the initial effort was abandoned.

Recognizing that endorsement from the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce could not be obtained, Thomas instead sought and obtained an appropriation from the Chamber for a reputable contractor to prepare a construction cost estimate for the building. This appropriation was publicized and provided the public with the impression that the Chamber's Board of Directors supported the construction of an auditorium. The Alex Simpson, Jr. Company was hired for \$250 to provide cost estimates. The estimate was \$0.21 per cubic foot. Thomas and Volmer did not report back to the Chamber with the estimate, but instead prompted several clubs to petition City Council to place a bond

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

### Statement of Significance (continued):

issue on the ballot. In February 1921, the local newspaper suggested in an editorial that a consensus for constructing an auditorium existed. The City Council agreed and on March 4, 1921 voted to place a bond issue before the voters. On April 5, 1921, municipal electors approved a \$390,000 bond issue to construct a City Auditorium by a vote of 1,806 to 1,120.

In June 1921, plans were presented by ex-Mayor Thomas for its construction. All nine members of City Council formed themselves as an Auditorium Committee. At this time, Thomas MacLaren, of the firm MacLaren and Hetherington, also submitted alternative sketches for the design of the building. According to Thomas, his prior opposition to a municipal paving program had alienated several members of the new City Council. When a vote on the architect was taken, both Charles Thomas and Thomas MacLaren received four votes. Consequently, Thomas and the firm of MacLaren and Hetherington were named co-architects. The City Council then created the division of responsibilities between the architects.

Contractually, MacLaren and Hetherington were to complete their initial design sketches. Thomas was to craft the working drawings and write the construction specifications. MacLaren and Hetherington were then to supervise construction. The relationship between the architects was strained. Despite a ten-year partnership and maintaining offices in the Hagerman Building, Thomas and MacLaren had not spoken for two years prior to the contract.

The Auditorium was initially considered as a cooperative project with the local School District Number 11. School Board members were invited to the City Council meeting in July 1921 to discuss a site. However, by the end of the month, the School Board Attorney reported that the State Legislature would have to approve the joint funding of an auditorium by the City and the School Board. Consequently, the site preferred by the School Board, at Platte and Nevada Avenues, was dropped. Two alternative sites were considered, one at Cascade and Platte Avenues and another at Kiowa and Weber Streets. On July 26, 1921, City Council voted 6-2 in favor of the current site. The building's capacity was set at 3,000 in September 1921.

The site consisted of three parcels. Its purchase was authorized by City Council on March 28, 1922 for \$23,000.

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

### Statement of Significance (continued):

H. W. Baum Company, a co-partnership consisting of W. W. Baum and B. F. Baum, of Salt Lake City, Utah, was approved as contractor. The electrical contractor was Robert R. Reed Co., also of Salt Lake City. Boise Stone Company, of Boise Idaho provided the cut stone. Brass railings and thresholds were supplied by Columbus Brass Company of Columbus, Ohio. Paxton and Verling were approved as suppliers of ornamental iron. Denver Metal and Tile Company supplied the marble. Lowell-Merservay, a Colorado Springs firm, supplied metal hardware, sheet metal and was approved as the roofing contractor. The two safes in the ticket offices were provided by Diebolt Safe and Lock Company of Salt Lake City, Utah. Brick was supplied by Denver Sewer Pipe and Clay Company. Seats were provided by Heywood-Wakefield of Chicago, Illinois.

The cornerstone was cut by G. F. Aldrich Marble and Granite Company of Colorado Springs. Johns-Manville Inc., of Chicago, was selected as acoustical consultants. Council approved the installation of Utica Imperial Steam Boilers, made in Utica, N. Y. A. E. Olsen, a local firm that continues in Colorado Springs, was approved as the contractor for plumbing, heating and ventilation. Dampers and thermostats and a switch control mechanism were supplied by Johnson Service Company of Denver. The Stratton Estate of Colorado Springs was the supplier of cement and crushed rock for a paving program in the City, and supplied these materials for the City Auditorium.

Charles Thomas had contracted with Midwest Steel & Ironworks of Denver to design the structural steel support. Harry K. Runnette was the engineer that performed the work. He left that firm in late summer of 1922. When MacLaren and Hetherington sought his expertise regarding design changes, Midwest Steel withdrew from the project. Mr. Runnette provided consulting advice from Denver and the steel was eventually supplied by Kansas City Structural Steel Company of Kansas City, Kansas.

The cornerstone was dedicated on October 18, 1922. Charles E. Thomas, a Freemason, was invited by the Grand Master E. P. Hufferd to be the keynote speaker. Construction was completed in June 1923. The total cost of construction was \$424,910.30. This amount included furniture, fixtures and stage equipment.

In August 1923, a committee was appointed by City Council to determine what groups would be allowed to use the Auditorium. Fee rates were also studied. Approved for usage were political meetings, performances and meetings by patriotic societies; educational conventions and meetings; high school and college graduations; and kindred societies who used the auditorium on a non-profit basis.

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**

### Statement of Significance (continued):

County fairs, agricultural displays and religious meetings were also approved. On the other hand, the committee recommended against its use for motion pictures, road shows, and boxing and wrestling matches.

No master log of users has been retained by the City. Despite care in its design, the Auditorium did not prove useful for theatrical or orchestral performances. The Colorado Springs Musical Club did perform in the early years. However, the Colorado Springs Symphony regarded the Auditorium as acoustically unsuitable for a large orchestra. During the 1920's, the building was used by a variety of community organizations, including the American Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, Al Kaly Shrine, the Masons, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and educational and religious groups. A dance, sponsored by a local Catholic organization, took place in 1926. In 1929, the City Council complied with the Colorado Athletic Department's request that equipment to enable basketball be erected in the Auditorium.

The ex-servicemen's Armistice Day Committee requested use of the building in 1932, and in September 1933, City Council resolved to reserve the Auditorium to commemorate Armistice Day for both day and evening on November 11.

Between January and September 1932 City Council heard four requests to waive the prohibition against boxing matches. By 1935, the building was used for amateur boxing and wrestling tournaments for relief purposes for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Annual Shrine Circus performances began in 1935. The Auditorium was also used for high school commencements, Colorado Springs High School Band concerts, and religious services.

In 1939, the City Council accepted bids for redecorating the City Auditorium. The low bid of S. M. Duncan of \$3,144 was accepted. The type of work performed is unknown. However, in 1939 the first major convention was held in the Auditorium by the Junior Chamber of Commerce with its "Show of Progress."

The Lon Chaney Theatre was originally named the Little Theatre. The current name was dedicated on May 31, 1986 to commemorate Lon Chaney, the silent film star who was born in Colorado Springs in 1883. Mr. Chaney began his stage career at the Colorado Springs Opera House in 1902. His final acting performance in Colorado Springs occurred in 1908. Aside from the name, there is no historic association between the City Auditorium and Lon Chaney.



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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

### Statement of Significance (continued):

Charles E. Thomas arrived in Colorado Springs in 1906 and entered into a partnership with Thomas C. MacLaren. This association lasted until 1916 and produced a number of structures and buildings that remain. An early effort produced the Charles Baldwin residence (now the Colorado Springs School, also known as the Trianon; 5EP186) in 1907. The firm of Thomas and MacLaren designed several private residences in the Colorado Springs North End neighborhood (1401 N. Nevada Ave., 1624 Wood Ave., 5EP333) and also the United Brethren Church (5EP640) in 1916. Public improvements in Monument Valley Park included the Band Stand (1911; 5EP613.5) the Open Air Pavilion (1914; 5EP613.6) and the Municipal Pool Bathhouse (1916; 5EP613.7).

After completion of the City Auditorium, Thomas would go on to design several local commercial and residential buildings through the 1930's and early 1940's, including the Perkins-Shearer Clothing Store (1929; 5EP730) and the Russian Arms Apartments (1939; 5EP612.8). In 1946, he formed a partnership with local architect Gordon Sweet.

Thomas MacLaren was the architect with the most significant influence on the development of the community's built environment. His legacy includes religious and institutional structures (Pauline Chapel, Cragmoor and Woodman Sanitoriums), residences (Wood and Nevada Avenues), commercial and governmental properties (Fire Station No. 1, Everhart Block). He arrived in Colorado Springs in 1896 or 1897. In 1904, he and P. T. Barber designed the Colorado Springs City Hall (5EP652). He practiced alone in 1905 before his ten-year association with Thomas. He then partnered with T. D. Hetherington from 1917 to circa 1926. MacLaren died in 1928.

MacLaren's range of styles was noteworthy. He designed Spanish Colonial Revival, Spanish Mission, Mediterranean, Gothic Revival, North Italian Romanesque, Tudor/Elizabethan, Colonial Revival, Beaux-Arts Classicism, Georgian and Victorian Commercial buildings.

T. D. Hetherington was one of the most prolific local residential architects in the early part of the 20th century. His earlier partnership with William F. Douglas produced numerous homes in the North End neighborhood. They also produced one of the early buildings on the Colorado College campus (Tichnor Hall, 1897, 5EP611.3). Hetherington's partnership with MacLaren would produce two significant schools in the mid-1920's -- South, and West Junior High Schools. In 1931, Hetherington would design the Municipal Utilities Building in an Art Deco style.

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**

### Statement of Significance (continued):

Architecturally, the City Auditorium provides the appearance of a civic building with a large interior space. This is accomplished by few windows along the east and west sides. It is constructed with light-colored brick that contrasts with the darker appearance of other public structures in the downtown area. The presence of several ground level doors at the principal entry, protected by a canopy, provides an accessible feeling.

The City Auditorium differs significantly from the Baldwin residence, also known as the Trianon. Charles Baldwin hired MacLaren and sent him to France to examine the Grand Trianon at Versailles. The resulting dwelling is a formal two-story U-shaped building with above grade basement windows. Built of brick with a facing of glazed terra cotta, it is highly ornamented with balustrades, ironwork, cornices and arched windows. Its formal entrance is a circular rotunda and its columns and pilasters are Corinthian.

Stylistically, the City Auditorium most closely resembles the original City Hall. Both are built in Classical Revival Style with formal entries and porticos supported by Ionic orders. Windows are double sash wood with single light panes and rectangular shape. Pedimented windows are found at the corners of both structures and cornices provide ornamentation. Also, the names are carved on the front of the buildings. The City Hall differs in that it appears as a more formal building. The portico is functional and the entry is elevated above a stairway. It is set back from the sidewalk which increases visibility. Also, it is constructed of granite and limestone, providing a more somber appearance.

City Hall was built at the same time as two other civic buildings in Classical Revival style. The Carnegie Wing of the Penrose Public Library was built in 1905 and the U. S. Post Office followed in 1910. This design is associated with values of democracy and enlightenment, and is associated with humanistic ideals. The City Auditorium is the last of the classically inspired civic buildings built in the City. Subsequent structures reflected less formal styles. Sparse use of ornamentation, particularly for a facility intended for public entertainment and enrichment indicates more attention to function as opposed to form. The City Auditorium is significant because it gave a boost to the growing social and cultural needs of the community by providing a large, multi-purpose arena/theater facility. It reflected the demand of the public for a forum for the provision of public entertainment. Its construction was approved by vote of the community and it served as a source of civic pride during its planning, construction and completion. It also marked the final cooperative effort of Charles E. Thomas and Thomas MacLaren, both of whom had a significant and lasting effect on the built environment of Colorado Springs.

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

### Major Bibliographic Reference:

#### Primary Sources, ca. 1920's

Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce. Winning Health in the Pikes Peak Region, Colorado Springs-Manitou, Colorado. Colorado Springs, 1923.

Colorado Springs City Council. Summary of Council Proceedings and Department Reports. 1921-1924. Clerk and Records Office, City of Colorado Springs.

year 1921: June 1, June 10, June 15, July 21, Sept. 28, Oct. 11, Oct. 18, Oct. 27, Dec. 16.

year 1922: Jan. 10, Jan. 17, Jan. 19, March 28, July 25, Oct. 30.

year 1923: Feb. 16, Feb. 28, April 5, June 1, July 24, Aug. 15, July 24, Aug. 15, Sept. 5, Oct. 23, Nov. 6, Dec. 12.

year 1924: March 11, March 25.

Correspondence Files between the architects and vendors re: selection and shipment of materials, parts, supplies for the City Auditorium. Located in the manager's office of the City Auditorium, City of Colorado Springs, ca. early 1920s.

Facts About Colorado Springs. Municipal Auditorium, An Unusual Convention City. ca. 1926. Local History Division, Penrose Public Library, Pikes Peak Library District

Gazette Telegraph newspaper. Colorado Springs: 1920s. Local History Division, Penrose Library, Pikes Peak Library District.

The Pikes Peak Region. Colorado Springs & Manitoba: Democrat Publishing Co., ca. 1926. Local History Division, Penrose Library, Pikes Peak Library District.

Thomas, Charles, and MacLaren & Hetherington. Specifications for General Construction of the Auditorium for the City of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Unpublished document, City of Colorado Springs. May 20, 1922.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**

### **Major Bibliographic Reference (continued):**

Thomas, Charles. Charles Thomas Notebooks. Unpublished manuscripts. Presented to the Penrose Library, Pikes Peak Library District by Arthur Sweet in 1971.

### **Primary Sources, ca. 1980s-1990s**

Abele, Deborah Edge. Downtown Historic & Architectural Intensive Survey. Unpublished report prepared for the City of Colorado Springs by the Community Development Department, Planning Division, Historic Resources Advisory Board, City of Colorado Springs, 1985.

City Auditorium Study Group Minutes. Parks and Recreation Department, City of Colorado Springs. 1986-1988.

Collins, Michael H. Architects. A Proposed Adaptive Reuse of the Colorado Springs City Auditorium into Municipal Courts for the City of Colorado Springs. Unpublished report available at Michael H. Collins Architects, Colorado Springs, CO, November 21, 1991.

Rebello, Bob. Unpublished report, Colorado Springs City Auditorium. Written by the Assistant Manager of the City Auditorium, City of Colorado Springs, 7 pages, ca. 1987.

### **Interviews in 1995**

Fenlon, Ned. W. Director of Facilities Management, City of Colorado Springs. Interviewed April 14, 1995 at Mr. Fenlon's office by Maureen McKasy-Donlin.

Swan, Rick. City Auditorium Manager, Parks and Recreation Department, City of Colorado Springs. Interviewed April 21, 1995 at the Colorado Springs City Auditorium by Maureen McKasy-Donlin.

### **Secondary Sources**

Musick, Archie. Musick Medley, Intimate Memories of a Rocky Mountain Art Colony. Colorado Springs, Creative Press Adv., Inc., 1971.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 17

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**

### **Major Bibliographic Reference (continued):**

Ormes, Manely, and Eleanor Ormes. The Book of Colorado Springs. Colorado Springs: Denton Printing Co., 1933.

**Construction Documents, City of Colorado Springs, 1922**  
by Charles E. Thomas co-architect with MacLaren & Hetherington

- Sheet 1. Foundation and Footings
- Sheet 2. First Floor Plan
- Sheet 3. Second Floor and Balcony Plan
- Sheet 5. Front and Rear Elevations
- Sheet 6. East and West Elevations (revised drawing, 8/9/1922)
- Sheet 7. Cross Sections
- Sheet 8. Section of Front (including ticket/stair area)
- Sheet 10. First and Second Floor plan of East Stair Hall
- Sheet 15. Steel Structure
- Sheet 23. Structural Support of Balconies

### **Architectural Reference**

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780 A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.

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National Park Service

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

**Geographical Data:**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 21 through 24, inclusive, plus the north 38' of Lot 20, Block 83, Original Townsite of Colorado Springs.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the auditorium.

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### Photo Log:

#### Colorado Springs City Auditorium El Paso County, CO

All photographic negatives retained in the Development Services and Comprehensive Planning Division, City of Colorado Springs, 30 S. Nevada Avenue, Suite 305, Colorado Springs, CO.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Primary Facade<br>camera pointed south southwest<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95 | 10 Pedimented Window (typical), South End of East Facade<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95 |
| 2 Portico<br>camera pointed south<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                  | 11 Lon Chaney Theatre Marquee<br>camera pointed north northwest<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                 |
| 3 Window<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                    | 12 Ornamental Wreath (typical), South End of East Facade<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95 |
| 4 Storm Window<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95              | 13 South (rear) of Building<br>camera pointed north<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                             |
| 5 Entry Canopy<br>camera pointed west northwest<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95    | 14 Southeast Corner, Loading Dock for Stage<br>camera pointed northwest<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95         |
| 6 Doorway (typical)<br>camera pointed south<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95        | 15 North End of West Facade<br>camera pointed east<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                              |
| 7 Front Marquee<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Timothy J. Scanlon<br>date: 6/2/95           | 16 South End of West Facade<br>camera pointed east<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95                              |
| 8 North End of East Facade<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95  | 17 Lobby<br>camera pointed east<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95   |
| 9 South End of East Facade<br>camera pointed west<br>photographer: Sandra K. Smith<br>date: 5/31/95  |   |

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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

### Photo Log (continued):

- 18 Ticket Window and Mural, East End of Lobby  
camera pointed east  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 19 Ticket Window and Mural, West End of Lobby  
camera pointed west  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 20 Stenciling on Lobby Ceiling  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 21 Foyer  
camera pointed east  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 22 Doorways to Arena from Foyer  
camera pointed southeast  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 23 Stairway to Balcony, Northwest Corner  
camera pointed northwest  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 24 Telephone Booths (inoperative) East Corridor  
camera pointed southwest  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 25 Stage, Lon Chaney Theatre  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 26 Rear Wall, Lon Chaney Theatre  
camera pointed north  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 27 Seats (typical), Lon Chaney Theatre  
camera pointed north  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 28 Curtain Call Cafe  
camera pointed southwest  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 29 South Wall and Main Stage  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 30 South End of East Wall  
camera pointed east southeast  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 31 North End of East Wall  
camera pointed east northeast  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 32 North Wall  
camera pointed north  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 33 Floor Seating Area and Raised Boxes, West Side of Arena Floor  
camera pointed southwest  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 34 Stage, Stairs to Floor, Wurlitzer Organ and Access Doors to Storage Area.  
camera pointed southeast  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 35 Cartouche and Plaster Grille  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95



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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO**

**Photo Log (continued):**

- 36 Northwest Balcony Landing  
camera pointed east  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 37 Balcony Aisle between Upper and Lower  
Balcony Seating Areas  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 38 Seats (typical), Balcony Seating Area  
camera pointed north  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95
- 39 Non-contributing building  
camera pointed south  
photographer: Timothy J. Scanlon  
date: 6/2/95
- 40 Non-contributing Building  
camera pointed southeast  
photographer: Timothy J. Scanlon  
date: 6/2/95
- 41 Non-contributing Building  
camera pointed northeast  
photographer: Timothy J. Scanlon  
date: 6/2/95
- 42 Non-contributing Building  
camera pointed northwest  
photographer: Sandra K. Smith  
date: 5/31/95

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

*Sketch Map*

#### Legend

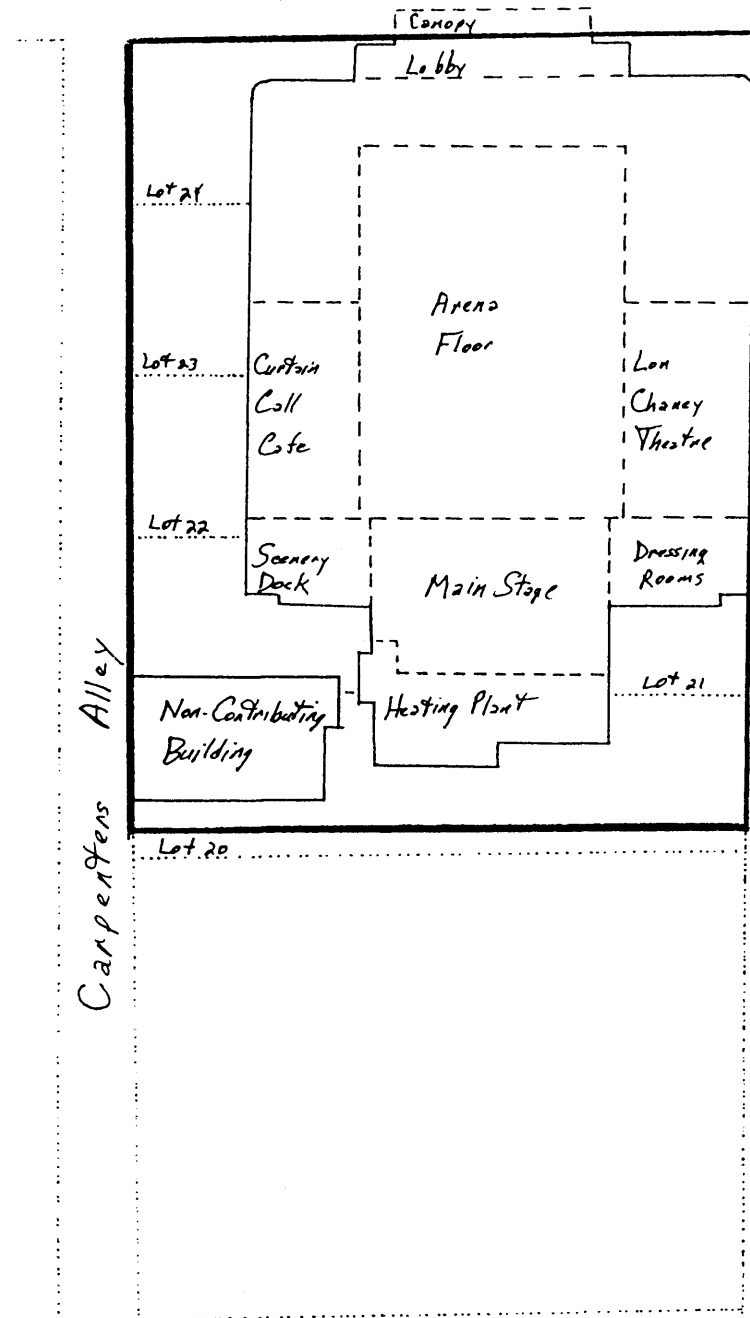
Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
Colorado Springs  
El Paso County  
Colorado

Map 1 of 2  
June 2, 1995  
Not to Scale

#### Symbols

- Lot Line ..... (dotted line)
- District Boundary ——— (solid line)
- Building Footprint ——— (thick solid line)
- Interior Divisions --- (dashed line)

E. KIOWA ST.



N. WEBER ST.

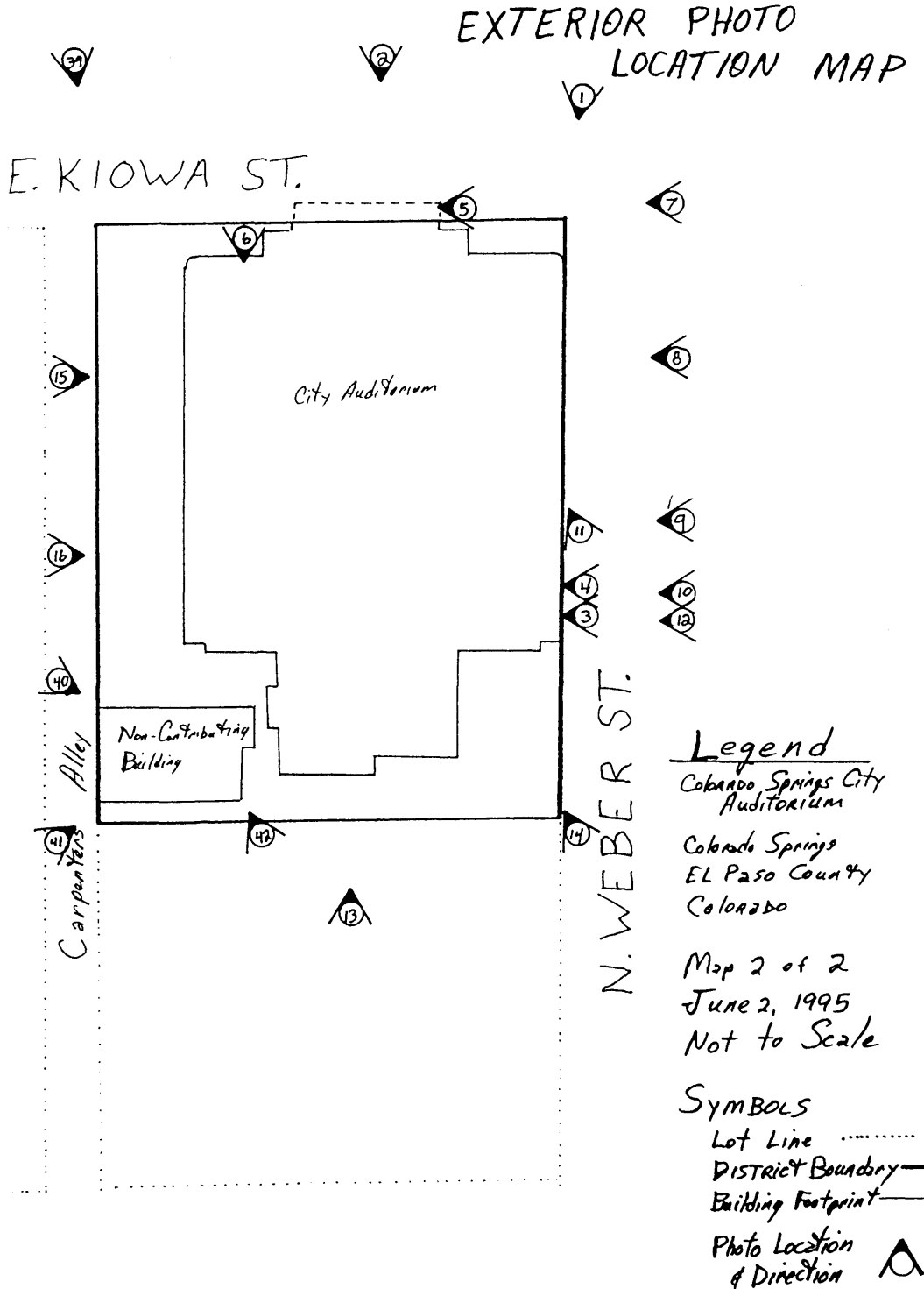
Carpenters Alley

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Colorado Springs City Auditorium  
El Paso County, CO

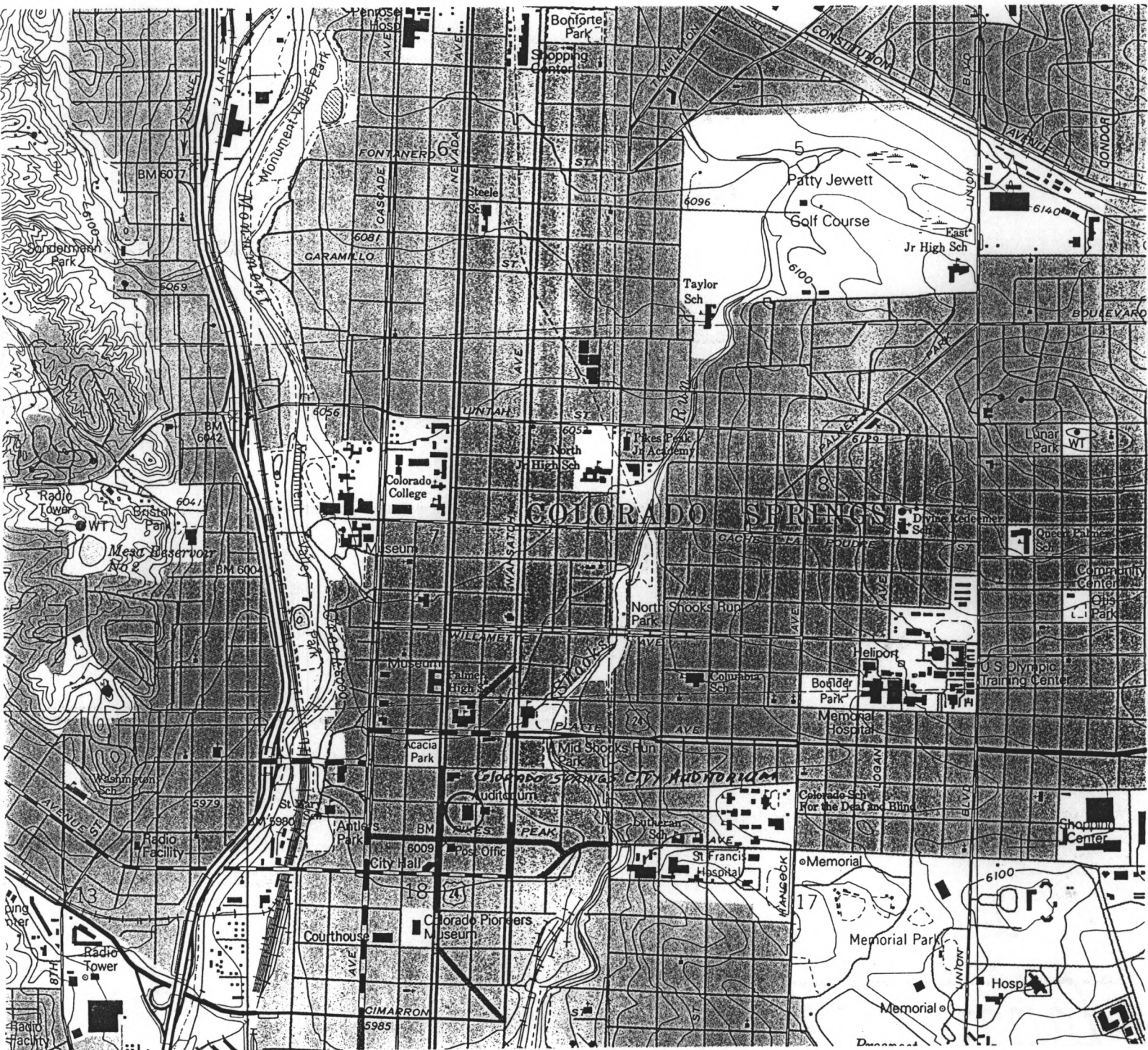


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**Colorado Springs City Auditorium**  
**El Paso County, CO**



(Colorado Springs Quad)