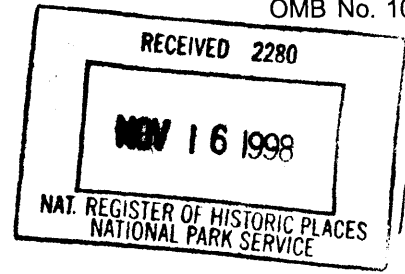


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1517

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 Motor Coach Division Building, Denver Tramway Company
other names/site number East Side Car Barn; Gilpin Street Car Barn; 5DV5337

2. Location

street & number 3500 Gilpin Street [N/A] not for publication
city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80205

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Georganna Cortez-Correa State Historic Preservation Officer November 9, 1998
Signature of certifying official/Title 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.

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 12/17/98 Date of Action

Motor Coach Division Building
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related
TRANSPORTATION: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: college

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

CLASSICAL REVIVAL
MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
STUCCO
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description

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

Motor Coach Division Building
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION

Periods of Significance
1937 - 1950

Significant Dates
1947

Significant Person(s)
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:
Colorado Historical Society

Motor Coach Division Building

Denver, Colorado

Name of Property

County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 502800 4401640
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy L. Widmann / consultant

organization _____

date May 15, 1998

street & number 637 Franklin St.

telephone 303-322-6942

city or town Denver

state CO

zip code 80218

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 The Phillips Family Trust, trustee: Toni V. Phillips Todd

street & number PO Box 110852

telephone 303-394-3881

city or town Aurora

state CO

zip code 80042

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

Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1

Description

The Motor Coach Division Building of the Denver Tramway Company is a one-story, red brick and stucco transportation garage and maintenance facility, covering one city block, that was built in stages, from 1893 to 1948. The earliest construction was an 1893 Classical Revival-style, red brick streetcar barn and maintenance building, called the East Division Car Barn. Most of the "barn" was covered with stucco ca. 1937. Located on the northwest corner of 35th Avenue and Gilpin Street, the 1893 building is approximately 125' x 250'. The 125' x 125' corner portion is taller than the remaining building. The stucco reveals 1893 Classical Revival-style details underneath. The next major construction was the 1937 bus garage addition executed in a simple expression of the Modern Movement. Located on the northeast corner of 35th Avenue and Franklin Street, the brick addition is approximately 135' x 230'. The south elevation features a parapet capped with stone that steps down toward both corners from a long, high central expanse. The west elevation features a level parapet, lower and also capped with stone. The next major construction was a 1946-47 bus storage addition, matching the 1937 addition in style and materials, that completed the build-out of the block. The Motor Coach Division Building is located in the densely built Cole residential neighborhood, developed in the late 1800s. An 1800s Classical Revival-style school is across 36th Avenue, with the remaining surrounding blocks holding small one- and two-story brick homes and terraces dating from the 1880s to ca. 1910. The terrain is flat. The Motor Coach Division Building is built out to the sidewalk. The area between the sidewalk and streets is grass covered. It holds 1800s period-style lampposts, except on the easternmost section of the 35th Avenue elevation where six large wooden doors remain.

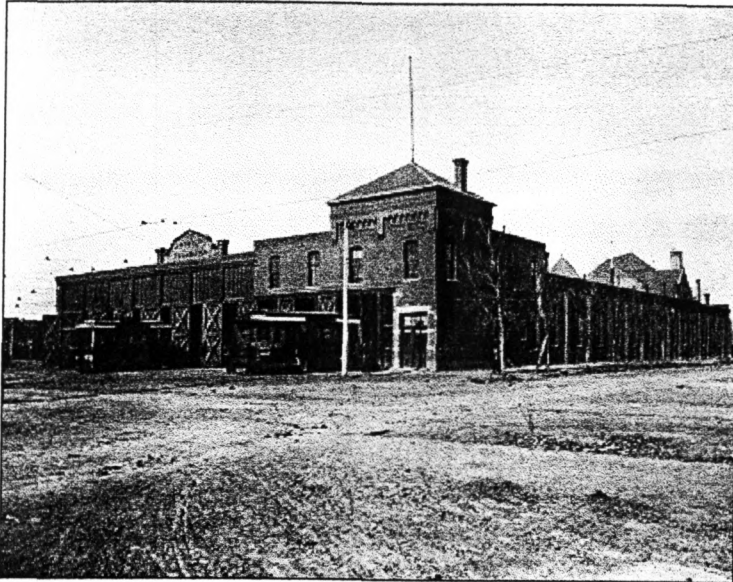
The 1893 East Division Car Barn, sometimes called the "East Side Car Barn," section of the building, on the northwest corner of 35th Avenue and Gilpin Street, is approximately 125' x 250' and is clad with stucco. The 125'-square corner portion, where the building's height is equivalent to a two-story building, has two big, wooden doors in the south elevation. The east wooden door is smaller in height and width than the west wooden door. The stucco conforms to the original red brick, revealing the 1893 Classical Revival-style details underneath. A horizontal band is interrupted by the wood lintel of the west wooden door, but continues across the south elevation two feet above the east wooden door. The shapes of four double-hung original windows, on the "second floor" level, can be distinguished by the indentation of the clinging stucco. The window shapes, with low-arched brick lintels, are evenly spaced. The stucco appears to cover a large, brick belt course above the windows. Five two-foot high dentils are evenly spaced, extending down from the belt course. Above this, half way to the even roof line, is another narrow horizontal band.

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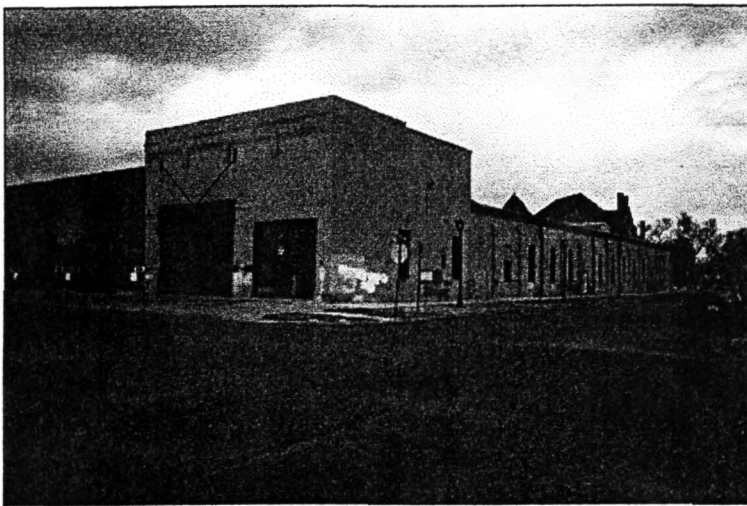
National Register of Historic Places
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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado



An 1899 view of the East Division Car Barn.
Source: Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.



The same view in 1998. The East Side Car Barn is without its original tower and is clad with stucco.
Photographer: Nancy L. Widmann.

The east elevation of the 125'-square corner portion is a flat, stucco-clad wall interrupted by three windows on the "first-floor" level. One window is centered, a very small window is further north, and the third is near the north edge of the corner portion. On the "second level," three windows similar to those on the south elevation, are evenly spaced. The south half of the roof line matches up with the roof line of the south elevation. The north half is a few inches lower.

Photographs from 1899, 1904, and 1906 offer views of the original building. It was constructed of red brick and was larger than the stucco-clad building of today. The corner portion is easily recognized. It was two stories high, and had a tower. The south elevation had a double service door near the corner, with a stone lentil above a transom light. Another narrow service door was next to the first service doors. It had a double transom light that reached the height of the three barn doors that were west of the service doors. The wood barn doors were tall enough to admit streetcars that entered on tracks running on the dirt street into each doorway. The second floor was called the mezzanine and had five windows with low-arched brick lintels. The roof line extending from the tower was embellished with a band of brick corbels. The east elevation of the corner portion had three small windows and one large window, similar to those described on the second floor, in the first floor. Two small windows were where the central larger

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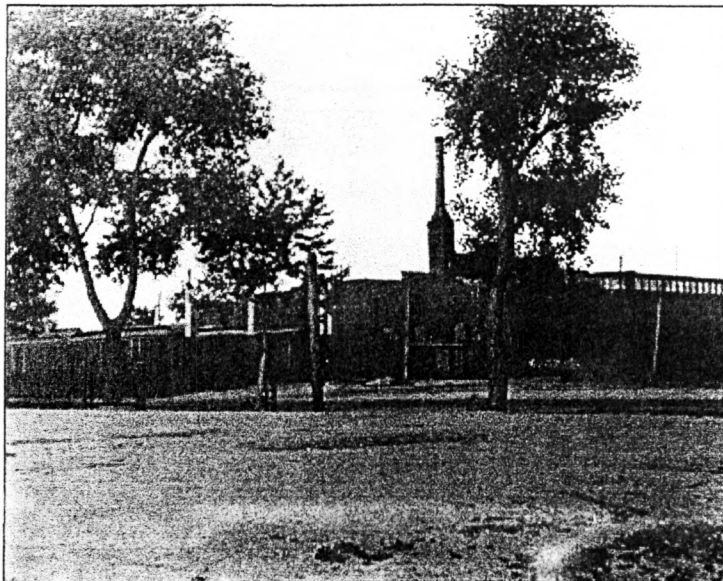
National Register of Historic Places
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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado

window is today. The others are the windows of today, but with an arch above each. The east elevation's second floor had three windows where stucco ghosts reveal them today. The roof line embellishment matched the south elevation.

The corner portion of the original building was distinguished by a tower that rose from its southeast corner above the interior mezzanine. The hipped-roof, low tower had a long pole extending from its highest point and a chimney on the east side. The tower was banded beneath the eaves by a regular pattern, formed by brick in relief, and then by a band of brick corbels. Each side of the tower had three brick "dentils" extending downward two feet--one at each corner and one centered. They ended in brick corbels. Between them were seven smaller brick corbels. Two rectangles, also formed by brick in relief, were between each of the large "dentils".



1904 rear view of the 1893 building. A fenced back yard stored streetcars. The tall smokestack was demolished. The photo is labeled "Gilpin St, Car House."
Source: Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

The stucco-clad building of today extends north from the corner portion along Gilpin Street. This east elevation has fourteen bays, ten of which have one window each that is identical to the arched windows of the corner portion of the building. Three bays are without windows and one has a small window. The bays are separated by engaged columns that rise to within three feet of the one-story roof line.

The east elevation of the 1893 building had a window in every bay and engaged brick columns to within the three feet of the roof line. Stone window sills extended across the width of each bay. A double band of brick in relief crossed each bay at the top of the windows.

The 1937 addition extends the south elevation of the 1893 building west to Franklin Street. This is a building of the Modern Movement. The red brick offers a smooth unembellished surface, with subtle, horizontal banding of a contrasting light-colored brick. It is interrupted by three large, wooden doors, one recessed entryway the size of the large doors, and lights in three sizes. Three bays are apparent. Next to the 1893 corner portion, a bay holds two of the large, wooden doors with large lights above them. The

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Motor Coach Division Building
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parapet line is straight, capped with stone. The middle bay has one large, wooden door, a service door and four lights on the street level. Four lights above give the appearance of a second level. The parapet above is capped with stone and is stepped down from a central expanse. The third bay is the largest. It ends at the corner and has the large, recessed entryway and three large lights. The parapet above is capped with stone and is stepped down from a central expanse. The west elevation of the 1937 building continues the fenestration pattern set in the largest bay of the south elevation with seven lights. The low parapet is level and capped with stone.

The easternmost bay on the south elevation of the 1937 addition covers part of the 1893 building. The 1893 elevation originally held a series of wood barn doors to allow entry to streetcars. Above the doors were large lights. Above the lights was a level brick parapet holding an additional central masonry parapet of classical shape, with pilasters repeating the chimney design. The central parapet held the words, "Denver Tramway Co."

The 1947 addition completed the build-out of the block, except for a 30' x 40' area at the corner of 36th Avenue and Gilpin Street. The open space created is covered with grass. The 1947 addition is built of red brick with the same subtle horizontal banding in a contrasting light-colored brick as the 1937



Taken from 36th Avenue and Franklin Street, this view shows the three bays of the 1947 addition connecting along Franklin with the 1937 addition. Photographer: Nancy L. Widmann.

addition. The 1947 addition features the same fenestration pattern and parapet design. Three bays with parapets are in the west elevation. The west elevation has a central entry door that serves as the entry to college classrooms. A white-painted, wood canopy above the entry holds signage for the college.

The north elevation, like the south elevation, has a series of lights on two levels, one large, wooden door and three large lights. The north elevation parapet is level and stone capped. The elevations forming the open space repeat the pattern of

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the elevations they parallel. That is, the north elevation offers two large lights and a low, level parapet capped in stone. The east elevation offers no lights, one small service door, and a stepped down parapet capped in stone.

The roof retains six rectangular clerestories with lights along the longer sides. They vary in length. Two are on the 1893 building. One is above the 1937 building. Three are above the 1947 building. Fifty percent of the skylights are metal framed; fifty percent are boarded up. Half of the remaining roof is barrel-shaped, covered with 90 lb. rolled sheeting, and the other remaining half is flat, covered with hot tar. The clerestories are only visible from the ground at a few vantage points.

Photographs confirm that as late as 1920, the 1893 building retained its original appearance. Sometime between 1920 and 1937, the stucco material was applied. It was likely done at the time of the 1937 addition, when the west part of the 1893 building was given the appearance of the modern-style addition. The stucco covering was applied to bring the old building in conformance with the design of the new addition. It would also enhance the image of the building in terms of its new function as home for the Motor Coach Division, and the new modern fleet of buses.

The 1937 addition and part of the 1947 addition now serve as satellite community college classrooms. The double row of classrooms are on the west half of the block. Remaining building space is currently leased out for storage of boats, etc. The original 1893 10' x 10' vault remains with its heavy steel door.

The Motor Coach Division Building retains its architectural integrity as it appeared when altered for reuse in 1937 and 1947.

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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado

Statement of Significance

The Motor Coach Division Building is associated with the transition from streetcars to gas- and diesel-powered, rubber-tired, motor coaches, or buses, in the Denver metropolitan region, from 1937 to 1950. The East Division Car Barn, built on the site in 1893 for streetcars, was modified when a new building addition was built in 1937. This construction by the Denver Tramway Company doubled the facility's capacity and converted its purpose to a bus garage and maintenance facility. In 1947, another large addition responded to the rapid expansion of public transportation services demanded by post-World War II growth. The 1937 and 1947 additions were necessary to accommodate changing technologies in public transportation. Covering one city block, the Motor Coach Division Building was the only Denver Tramway Company bus facility from 1940 to 1950. It is the only remaining neighborhood Denver Tramway Company garage. The 1893 building was built originally as a streetcar barn and maintenance facility and served this purpose through 1932. Built just before the Panic of 1893, it was first owned by one of over fourteen transportation companies that consolidated into one company in 1899. It was one location where shots were fired during the bloody Denver Tramway labor strike in 1920, and where armed Federal troops patrolled to stop the violence. It represents major 1937 construction to house needed new buses, in response to the recovery from the Depression, and major 1947 construction to increase capacity again in response to post-World War II demands. Designed in a simple expression of the Modern Movement, the Motor Coach Division Building represents an architectural style favored in post-Depression Denver for its clean horizontal lines. Also in keeping with national trends, the 1893 building was altered and clad in stucco to compliment the late-1930s to 1940s Modern Movement design of the building additions. The architecture of the Motor Coach Division Building reflected the modern technology and streamlined look of the new motor coaches it housed and maintained. The conversion of its use from a streetcar facility to a motor coach facility also reflected national trends. United States public transportation began system conversions from streetcars to buses ca. 1910-1920, but were interrupted twice, once by the Great Depression and again by World War II. Denver saw its first motor coach in 1925. In 1950, the streetcars made their last Denver runs, and the four remaining Denver streetcar routes, and three interurban car lines, became bus routes.

Motor Coach Division Building History and the Development of Public Transportation

On 1 March 1892, Permit #244 was taken out to build a 16' x 24' brick oil house on Block 21, Hyde Park Addition. The owner was the "Tramway Company." This was the first mention of the site in connection with public transportation. The 1933 Property Book; Denver Tramway Corporation relates the history of acquisition and ownership of most lots on the site. The lots were purchased at different

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Motor Coach Division Building
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times, from 1892 through the 1940s. The earliest mention of lot transfers was 24 June 1892 [sic] when Lots 16-20 went from The Denver Realty Company to The Metropolitan Railway Company. On 10 October 1893, the lots went to The Consolidated Tramway Company, and on 3 March 1899, they went to The Denver City Tramway Company. This record reflects the consolidation of twenty-seven different companies forming and merging since 1885, and ultimately consolidating into The Denver City Tramway Company in 1899. Though companies were formed often just to build new lines, they were usually owned by the same men that owned existing cable and railway companies. The power was in the control of wealthy Denver businessmen like Rodney Curtis, William Gray Evans, Charles J. Hughes, Jr., John A. Beeler, and Gerald Hughes. They saw an expanded transportation system enhancing their business opportunities, especially in real estate development.

Though no Denver building permits exist from 1893 to 1900, it is likely that the earliest Motor Coach Division Building, called the East Division Car Barn, was built in 1893, just after the land was acquired and just before the Silver Crash of 1893, when prosperity and expansion seemed endless for a rapidly



The East Division Car Barn, 35th and Gilpin Street, on 15 May 1904. Dirt streets held the tracks. The roof of Hyde Park School, now Wyatt School, is seen above the barn. A streetcar is leaving the barn at the left of the photograph. Source: Denver Tramway Collection, Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

growing Denver. It was the Silver Crash that forced consolidation of four companies into The Denver Tramway Company in 1893. The four companies represented thirteen companies from previous mergers. One of the four companies was The Metropolitan Railway Company, the 1892 owners of the fifteen-lot site of the East Division Car Barn. In 1899, another consolidation of five companies created The Denver City Tramway Company, the company that held the public transportation monopoly in the Denver metropolitan area until 18 April 1971, when all tramway operations were turned over to the City and County of Denver.

The East Division Car Barn was built in response to the need for space as new streetcars were purchased for the conversion from cable to electric operation. This "barn" never held cable cars; it was designed specifically for electric "trolley" cars, where

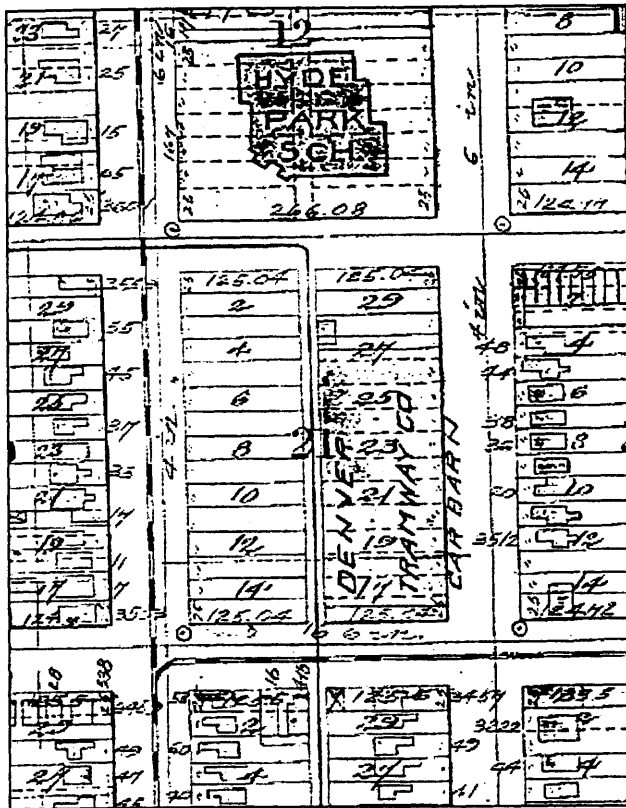
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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado

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the power pick up was through a single pole with a wheel, or "trolley," on the end which ran along an overhead wire. (The term "trolley," originally used for the pickup system, came into general use as a name for the streetcar itself.) The first Denver cable conversion to a trolley line was in 1890. Soon trolley conversions and new lines were the rule. The Panic of 1893 slowed new line construction, but conversions continued. The barn was built in an established neighborhood, well-located to serve converted lines. By 1899, The Denver City Tramway Company owned and operated 156 miles of streetcar lines.



↑ N
The 1905 Baist Map shows the East Division Car Barn on Block 21. Remaining lots are undeveloped. The map does not indicate the many tracks that led into the barn from the south, nor the fenced-in outdoor storage on Lots 28-30. Source: Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

The East Division Car Barn was built in Classical Revival style, anticipating the values of the City Beautiful Movement by rejecting Victorian Era styles in favor of order and symmetry. The barn really copies another larger Denver Tramway Company facility that was built during the same period at Colfax and Broadway. (That building was demolished when Civic Center Park was created.)

Once the 1899 consolidation was complete, the tramway company owned six storage barns (five in neighborhoods and one downtown), a few open storage yards, and several power houses. The company responded to new demands with new buildings during the return to prosperity in the early 1900s. Storage barns like the East Division Car Barn served as shops for everyday maintenance and repairs. The barn never served as a major repair or streetcar construction site.

The tower on the 1893 building housed a clubroom on the mezzanine for tramway employees who worked out of the facility. Before 1920, the company sponsored social activities for employees. There were baseball leagues, bowling teams, picnics, and other group outings for the men and their families.

Most early trolley cars housed in the barn were built by the Woeber Company of Denver. However, in

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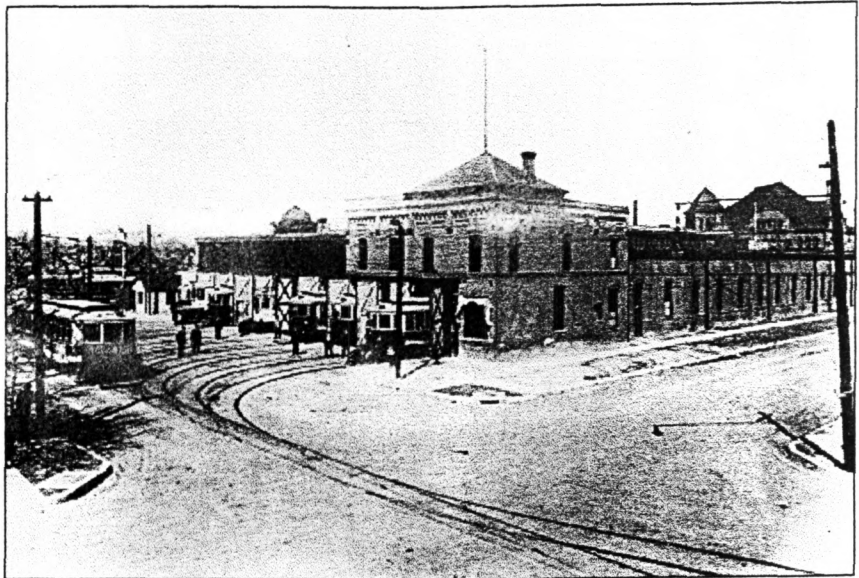
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1922, the last series of trolley cars were built in company shops. The first color scheme for all cars was "Coach Painter's Red" for the main panels and "Dark Straw" on lower panels and upper framework. After 1925, the color was changed to "Chrome Yellow." In addition to the trolley cars, trailer cars (for rush hour), snow plow cars, funeral cars, and line cars were stored at the East Division Car Barn. The snow plow cars were very efficient. Only once, in December 1913, were they defeated when a blizzard left Denver covered by 47.5 inches of snow. The blizzard caused one of only three work stoppages in company history.

The second work stoppage came on 8 July 1919 when company trainmen went out on strike. During World War I, the company had kept the fare at five cents, but found it difficult to meet operating expenses. Wages were reduced, and the strike was called for all but milk and mail cars. The mayor sanctioned the use of "jitney" buses by private entities, but they were not able to provide service for the thousands of riders, and the strike was settled by raising fares to six cents and meeting a few striker demands.



The East Division Car Barn, also called the East Side Car Barn, was photographed 20 March 1915. Tracks emerged from the barn turning west and east to take the red and yellow trolleys to their routes. Photographer: L. C. McClure. Source: Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

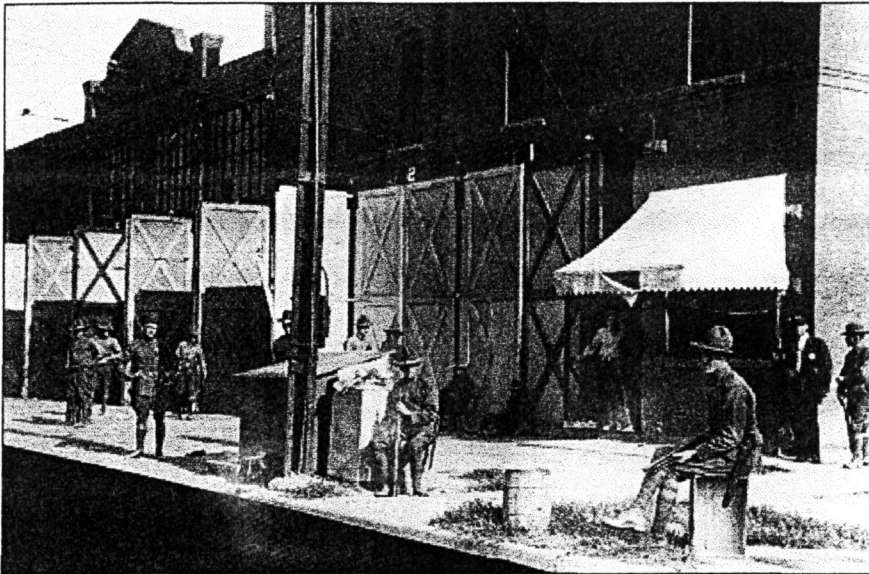
The third work stoppage was much more serious, resulting in the deaths of seven when the month long strike ended. The 1919 settlement had not resolved working condition issues nor given the men a sufficient pay raise. Many employees joined the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees. When new demands were not met, the men went on strike on 1 August 1920. This Denver labor unrest of 1920 was representative of the times. Other Denver entities called strikes, like the printers union, while similar strikes were being called across the nation.

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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado



Federal troops took control of the East Division Car Barn. Rough out-of-state strikebreakers hired by the Tramway Company had escalated the 1 August 1920 strike called by the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees. Some calm returned by 1 September 1920, but seven died, many were injured, and property damage was high. 1,000 men lost their jobs. Photographer: Joe Langer. Source: James E. Kunkle Collection, Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

John "Black Jack" Jerome was called in from San Francisco by the Denver Tramway Company. Jerome, organized several hundred fellow strikebreakers from California and tried to get the cars rolling. They put screening on Car 52's windows, and with Tramway General Manager Frederic W. Held as conductor, made several runs amidst heavy police guard. But the strike picked up momentum. Ultimately, several cars were overturned, and rioting ebbed and flowed around the city. Rocks, fists, and guns were the weapons and many were injured. Mayor D. F. Bailey asked for federal troops. Two hundred came from Fort Logan and five hundred came from Camp Funston. Troops rode the streetcars, driven by strikebreakers and new hires, and they were stationed at all Denver Tramway Company facilities,

including the East Division Car Barn. As happened at other facilities, shots were fired at the East Division Car Barn site, several lodging in the building itself. On 1 September 1920 the last of Jerome's men left Denver and normal service was resumed. The fare was raised to eight cents.

The rioting was joined by many outsiders, and many Tramway employees did not join the rioting mobs. Yet the Tramway Company, while giving a raise in 1921 and setting a course for an improved relationship with employees, nonetheless took away some long standing benefits. Among other things, the company no longer supported employee social activities. For example, the mezzanine and tower room of the East Division Car Barn were no longer available for use as an employee clubroom.

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Motor Coach Division Building
Denver, Colorado

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Some Issues Surrounding the Conversion From Trolley to Bus

In 1924, the first bus was put in service in Denver. The 1920s saw the beginning of Denver's shift away from the trolleys and toward increased reliance on buses. One reason for the shift was the increased number of automobiles and their effect on the urban lifestyles. Automobiles became affordable to more people, including blue collar workers. Therefore, the number of public transportation passengers declined after the mid 1920s. The statistics showing increases initially hid the fact that the percentage of the population riding public transportation was declining rapidly. To compete with the automobile and to keep up with changing lifestyles, public transportation looked to quieter, more modern vehicles and to new routes.

The purposes for using public transportation were affected by the automobile. Previously, in addition to taking people to work, Denver streetcars, like those in other cities, were used by whole families for excursions to schools, parks, theaters, cemeteries, and other destinations. Automobiles served these functions more conveniently. The streetcars previously were used for daily errands and trips downtown where the only major shopping area was located. The automobile encouraged residential development on the fringes of cities where new shopping centers were created. Public transportation companies needed to expand their lines to serve the new areas.

The effect of the automobile was felt nationwide. As elsewhere, the Denver Tramway Company began to feel greater financial stresses, coupled with decreasing passengers and demands for improved service. Established streetcar routes were under-utilized. New routes were needed. New streetcar tracks were expensive to install. They were also not portable. By the 1920s, Denver and other cities had their streetcar lines set. Few could afford additional streetcar lines. The conversion to buses was inevitable. The buses shared the streets with the automobiles better than the streetcars. Buses did not impede traffic flow. They offered smoother, quieter rides and less danger to passengers boarding and offloading in traffic, since they could be pulled up to the curb. Most important, their routes could be changed as needed.

The whole topic of the automobile and the conversion from streetcars to buses is even more complex. Historian Mark S. Foster, in **From Streetcar To Super-Highway: American City Planners and Urban Transportation, 1900-1940**, explored these complexities. Foster saw city planners as not always seeing the problems and as holding little power to guide changes when they did. Most planners supported decentralization, by promoting new road construction, seeing it as a cure for the social and financial ills of the city. Most also realized that public transportation should be encouraged along with the automobile. But they held no power in city bureaucracies and only offered piecemeal plans. Foster also pointed out the public's distrust of the transit companies in general. The companies were seen as bandits of the public, making a few owners wealthy while not providing up-to-date service. Within this climate, companies found the need to try to raise fares regulated by government entities, while reassuring

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the public that they were offering the best service possible. Foster concluded that by 1940, cities seemed further than ever from viable solutions to public mass transportation problems.

Arthur Saltzman, in "Public Transportation in the 20th Century," **Public Transportation**, wrote, "Probably the main reason that motor buses did not take immediate hold was that the 'transit trusts' had vast sums invested in their streetcar lines and were not willing to make their investment obsolete or to take a chance on new technologies." The 'transit trusts' saw their industry as the electric rail industry, not the public transportation industry. Saltzman further stated that by the 1930s companies were forced to make the change to the motor bus since equipment was in need of repair or replacement. Capital had been hard to attract during the Great Depression. Buses were cheaper than streetcars. Saltzman quoted a 1936 Fortune magazine article comparing buses, "mastodonic metal hulks gliding in and out of traffic with a soft hissing of air brakes, ...and a rich hum of engines," favorably with the trolley's "clanking decrepitude."

Urban planning professor, Alan Black, agreed that the streetcar industry suffered a major crisis after World War I. In **Urban Mass Transportation**, Black wrote, "Between 1916 and 1923, more than one-third of U. S. transit companies went bankrupt. In 1919 Woodrow Wilson appointed a Federal Electrical Railway Commission to investigate the problem. It made some good recommendations, but few of them were carried out. After the shakeout, the streetcar industry entered a period of stability, which lasted until the onset of the depression."

The issues outlined here were represented in Denver. The Denver Tramway Collection at the Stephen Hart Library, Colorado Historical Society, contains short accounts and newspaper clippings documenting the Denver Tramway Company's dealings with Denver City Council to secure fare hikes and route changes. Cartoons depicted a negative public perception of the company, and debates over the streetcar vs. the bus vs. the automobile. (Subways and elevated lines were never seriously considered for Denver in this time period.) Further, the unrest after World War I took its final form in Denver in the 1920 labor strike. That was followed by a period of relative stability for the company, with underlying problems building until the 1930s Great Depression forced decisions like closing some facilities and deciding to convert from streetcars to buses.

In 1925, when the first bus service began in Denver, the question of whether bus lines constituted public utilities became an issue until resolved in a 1933 court ruling. Street railways and power companies were considered public utilities. The 1933 decision allowed the Tramway Company to run buses without franchises or permits. The Denver Tramway Company ran bus lines as subsidiaries until 1933, to avoid complicating their franchise agreements with the city. The subsidiaries operated under revocable permits issued by the city. The first subsidiary was the Englewood & Fort Logan Bus Company, which

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connected the end of streetcar Rt. 3 in Englewood with the Veterans Administration facilities at Fort Logan. The second was the Fitzsimons Bus & Taxi Company, which connected Fitzsimons Army Hospital with downtown Denver along Colfax, 17th, and 18th Avenues. It was purchased by the Tramway Company in 1929 and operated as a subsidiary until it was dissolved in 1943. A third subsidiary, Bus Transportation Company, was formed by the Tramway Company in 1927. It was absorbed into the Tramway Company in 1933.

A myth concerning the alleged conspiracy to destroy the street railway industry, generally citing General Motors as the ring leader, also deserves attention as an issue because it is a myth that has reappeared as fact from time to time. No support is found in Denver transportation history that General Motors, or any cabal, conspired to cause the demise of the streetcar. As the myth goes, GM formed an alliance with oil companies, tire manufacturers, and others to financially back National City Lines (NCL). NCL was created in 1936. The myth says the GM alliance created NCL to buy up streetcar systems and convert them to bus systems, forcing the purchase of alliance members' products. Railway historians, like Van Wilkins, in "The Conspiracy Revisited," in the Summer 1995 edition of **The New Electric Railway Journal**, have researched and documented that no illegal or unethical conspiracy existed. NCL did control over sixty systems at various times. Only five were in cities over 100,000 population. Many systems were in bankruptcy already, and most had already made the decision to abandon the streetcar by the early 1930s. Most United States cities were never influenced by NCL. NCL played no role in Denver. Wilkins wrote, "Aggressive bus salesmen, yes; city officials wanting rail-free streets, yes; transit companies wanting out of rail operations, yes; financial shenanigans, yes; a conspiracy, no."

From Car Barn To Motor Coach Division Building

When the Depression dealt its devastating economic blow, the Denver Tramway Company had to make hard cutback decisions. One was to close the East Division Car Barn in 1932. From 1932 to 1937, the Denver Tramway Company stored trailers in the closed barn.

When the nation was emerging from the Depression in the mid-1930s, optimistic plans were made by the Tramway Company to embrace new technologies. The company planned for gas, diesel, and trolley-coaches, often dubbed "rubber-tired trolleys" or "trackless trolleys," to complete their conversion from streetcars to buses. The East Division Car Barn was selected as home for the Motor Coach Division to house the gas buses and, later, diesel buses. (Electric-powered trolley-coaches were used in Denver from 1940 to 1955, but were never housed in the Motor Coach Division Building. They were considered streetcars for licensing purposes.)

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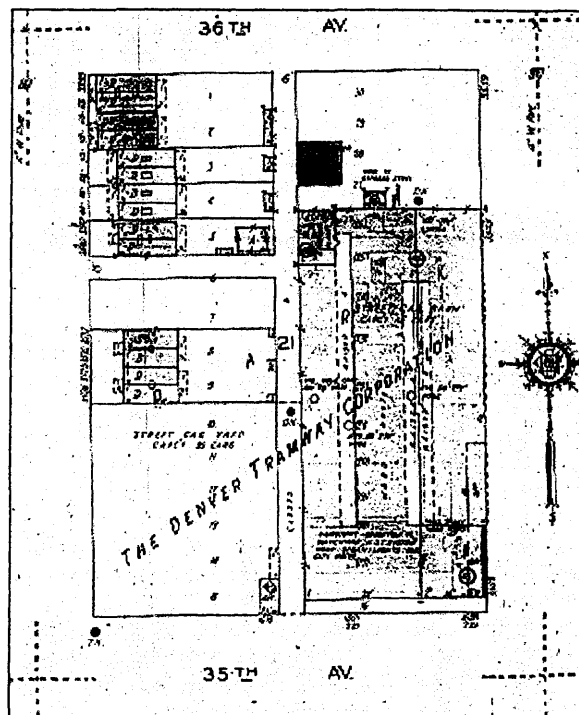
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Construction of an addition and renovation of the 1893 East Division Car Barn was completed in 1937. Purchase of Lots 10-15, Block 21, had been made by the Tramway Company in 1911. Located across the alley from the East Division Car Barn, the lots were used from 1911 to 1937 as outdoor storage yards.

Lots 6-9 had come under company ownership in 1914. Lots 6-9 held a four-unit, one-story terrace at the time of purchase. The company rented out the units at a reduced rent to Tramway employees so that the company would always have an employee nearby to watch over the barn during off hours. In 1937, Permit #2686 called for wrecking the terrace to make way for the new, modern motor coach facility. In 1937, the 35th and Gilpin Street site was again planned to be a vital hub for Denver's public transportation system. The Motor Coach Division Building opened 1 January 1940.



The entire Denver system was planned to be converted to buses by the mid-1940s, but World War II intervened. Gas buses were used during the war, but they were too small and inefficient for good service in the booming economy after the war. Though additional gas buses were purchased in 1947, by 1949 the larger diesel buses were introduced in Denver. The use of diesel buses reflected a national trend that started in larger cities like New York City in 1939-40. Denver's first diesel buses in 1949 were from General Motors who had the most advanced diesel design after World War II. These buses were similar to the size of today's buses. Denver's gas buses held from twenty-seven to thirty-two passengers, depending on the model. Diesel buses held forty-five passengers.

The 1929-30 Robinson Map shows the buildings on the west half of Block 21 that were demolished to make way for the 1937 and 1947 additions that created the Motor Coach Division Building.
Source: Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

Expansion of the Motor Coach Division Building was again necessary to meet the storage and repair demands of additional buses, especially the larger diesel buses. On 8 October 1946, Permit #11740 was taken out to build a "masonry bus garage addition for the Denver Tramway Corporation." The building addition was completed in 1947. In order to build the 1947 addition, the Tramway Company bought the

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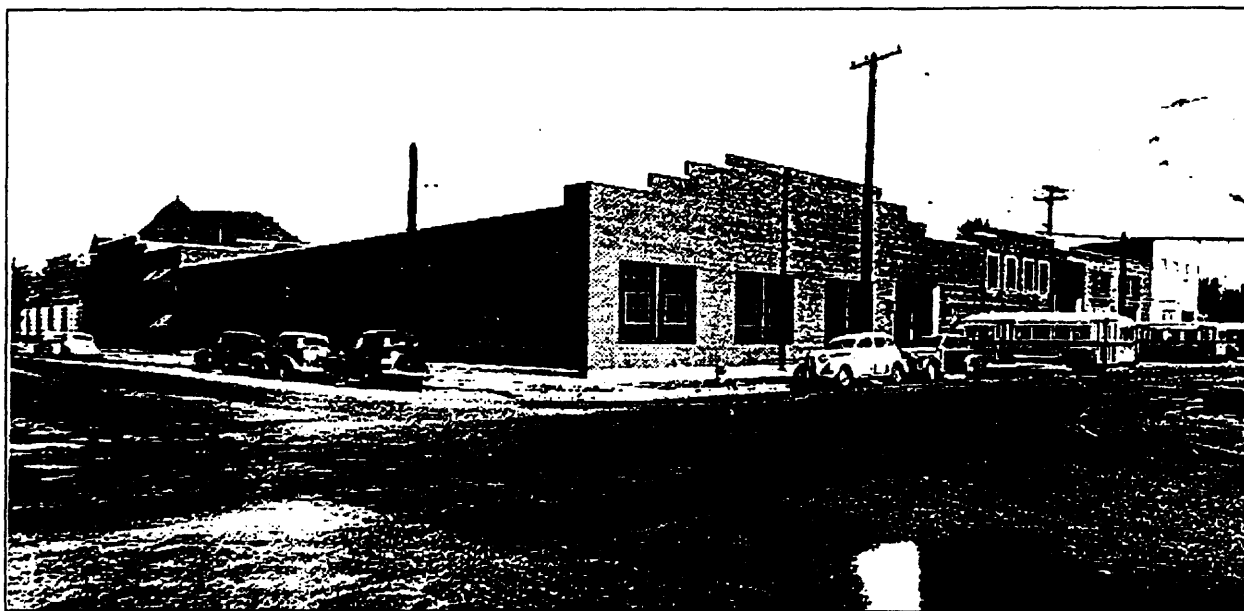
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remaining lots on Block 21. These lots held ten two-story townhouses. They were demolished under Permit #515 in January 1947. The addition completed the building as it now stands. The addition was lauded as one of several construction projects undertaken by the Denver Tramway Company to meet the demands of the Post WWII Era. This is the only Denver neighborhood public transportation garage standing that represents the development of the system from the 1800s streetcar trolley days through the Post-WWII Era.

The building name changed to Franklin Division. The exact date of the name change is not known, but it likely occurred in 1950 when the facility ceased being the only bus storage and maintenance facility in Denver. In 1950, when the streetcars were retired, bus storage and maintenance was split among three sites: this 35th and Gilpin Street site, the former streetcar barns at South Broadway and Alaska Place, and the former streetcar barn downtown at 13th Street and Arapahoe. Both the Alaska Place and downtown sites were closed in 1955 when a new facility was completed to house their buses at West Alameda Avenue and South Santa Fe Drive. Buses continued to be housed at the Motor Coach Division Building until 1964, when it was closed.



The Motor Coach Division Building, seen from 35th and Franklin Street in the 1940s when it was the only Denver facility housing buses. Note the old streetcar tracks that date from 1893. Tracks still lead from the building onto 35th Avenue. The tracks were used throughout the bus era for the line car that supported the maintenance function of the facility.

Source: Denver Tramway Collection, Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

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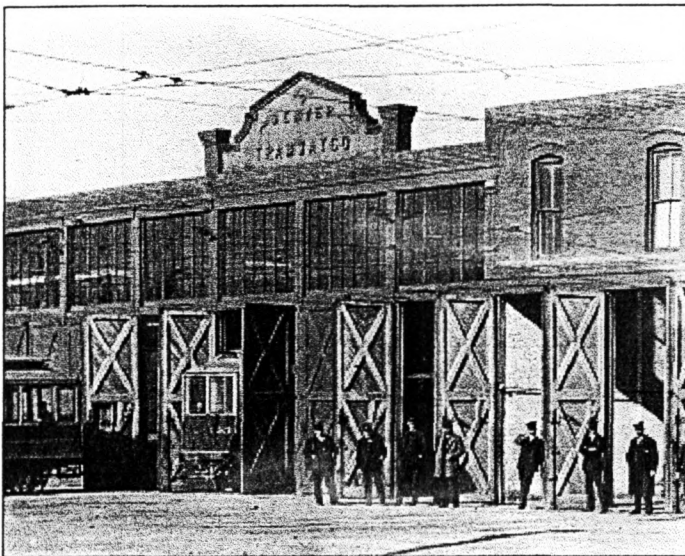
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The Architecture of the Motor Coach Division Building

The Motor Coach Division Building represents an architectural style favored in post-Depression Denver for its clean horizontal lines. It was designed in a simple expression of the Modern Movement. The additions in 1937 and 1947 were new designs reflecting the national architectural trends. As part of the architectural expression in 1937, the 1893 Classical Revival building was altered to make it complement



A 1906 view of the 35th Avenue elevation. The taller brick corner portion was clad in stucco and the section of the building under the signage, had its wall replaced with brick in 1937.

Source: Denver Tramway Collection, Colorado Railroad Museum, Golden, Colorado.

the new additions. Just as the 1893 building was designed in the style representing the values of its era, the 1937 and 1947 additions and the reinterpretation of the 1893 car barn represented their era.

The design reflected the optimism of the Denver Tramway Company as the nation was emerging from the Depression in 1937 and WWII in 1947. The construction projects were ambitious and were only part of the total number of updating projects undertaken by the Denver Tramway Company. Yet, only fifty years later, the 35th Avenue and Gilpin Street site offers the only memory of this modernizing era.

It is also the only neighborhood site that offers any glimpse at the old car barns where the popular streetcar trolleys were housed and repaired. While the stucco covering was applied to the 1893 car barn to modernize its look, it does not entirely conceal the 1893 building. It was popular in Denver to use stucco and stucco-like materials to “modernize” older buildings. The use of stucco was a nod to Mediterranean Revival styles, among others, but it was also a method and material that could offer a clean, blank surface when the desire was simply to cover elements of earlier pre-modern styles.

The architecture of the Motor Coach Division Building reflected the modern technology of the new motor coaches it housed and maintained. The architect’s name(s) have not been discovered---most tramway records and blueprints have been destroyed. The 1947 builder was the venerable Denver

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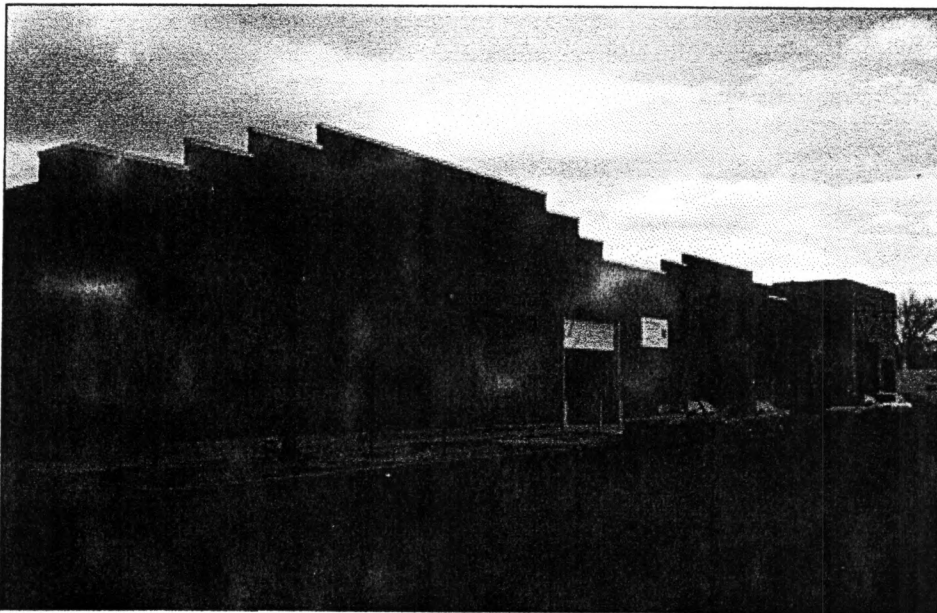
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construction company of Brown Schrepferman. The architects and builders and craftsmen who were responsible for the additions and alterations created a handsome building reflecting the move toward modern technology by the Denver Tramway Company.

The Motor Coach Division Building retains its 1937 and 1947 architectural integrity, and serves to represent the style choice of its era for a public transportation storage and repair facility.



A view of 35th Avenue between Franklin and Gilpin Streets in 1998. To the far right is the stucco-clad portion of the 1893 East Division Car Barn. The two next door bays conceal the lower section of the 1893 building pictured above. A tower on the corner of the stucco-clad portion of the building was also removed in 1937. Photographer: Nancy L. Widmann.

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Special Collections

Denver, Colorado. Colorado Historical Society. Denver Tramway Collection.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Denver City Building Permit Collection.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Denver City Directories.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Denver City Map Collection.

Denver, Colorado. Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Grantor-Grantee Lists, Denver Subdivisions.

Golden, Colorado. Colorado Railroad Museum. Denver Tramway Collection.

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 21, Hyde Park Addition, Denver, Colorado.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Motor Coach Division Building during the period of significance.

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Photograph Log

The following information pertains to photographs numbers 1-33, except as noted:

Name of Property: Motor Coach Division, Denver Tramway Company
Location: Denver, Colorado
Photographer: Nancy Widmann
Date of Photographs: July 1998
Negatives: Possession of photographer

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
1	South elevation, view to the northeast.
2	South elevation, view to the north.
3	South elevation, view to the northeast.
4	South elevation, original building, view to the north.
5	East elevation, view to the northwest.
6	East elevation, view to the northwest.
7	East and north elevations, view to the southwest.
8	North elevation, view to the southwest.
9	North and west elevations, view to the southeast.
10	West elevation, view to the southeast.
11	West elevation, view to the northeast.
12	West elevation, view to the east.
13	West elevation, view to the northeast.
14	West elevation, view to the northeast.

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<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
15	South and east elevations, view to the northwest. Photographer unknown, 1899. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
16	North and west elevations, view to the southeast. Photographer unknown, 1904. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
17	South and east elevations, view to the northwest. Photographer unknown, May 15, 1904. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
18	South and east elevations, view to the northwest. Photographer L.C. McClure, March 20, 1915. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
19	South elevation, view to the northwest. Photographer Joe Langer, August 1920. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
20	1924 Fageol Safety Coach. Photographer unknown, ca. 1927. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
21	1930 Mack Truck Company Motor Coach No. 38. Photographer unknown, ca. 1930s. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
22	Fitzsimons Bus & Taxi Company Motor Coach No. 34. Photographer unknown, ca. late 1920s. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
23	1939 Twin Coach Company Motor Coach No. 73. Photographer unknown, ca. 1939. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
24	1939 Twin Coach Company Motor Coach No. 75. Photographer unknown, ca. 1939. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.

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<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
25	1941 Twin Coach Company Motor Coach No. 112. Photographer unknown, 1941. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
26	1942 Twin Coach Company Motor Coach No. 132. Photographer unknown, 1942. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
27	1947 Ford Motor Company Motor Coach No. 187. Photographer unknown, ca. 1947. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
28	1947 Ford Motor Company Motor Coach No. 230. Photographer unknown, ca. 1947. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
29	1949 General Motors Company Motor Coach No. 281. Photographer unknown, ca. 1949. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
30	1950 General Motors Company Motor Coach No. 307. Photographer unknown, ca. 1950. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
31	South elevation, Motor Coach Division, view to the northwest. Photographer unknown, 1906. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
32	Line Car No. 772. Photographer and date unknown. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.
33	Interior of the Motor Coach Division. Photographer unknown, ca. 1950. Negatives at Colorado Museum, Golden, Colo.

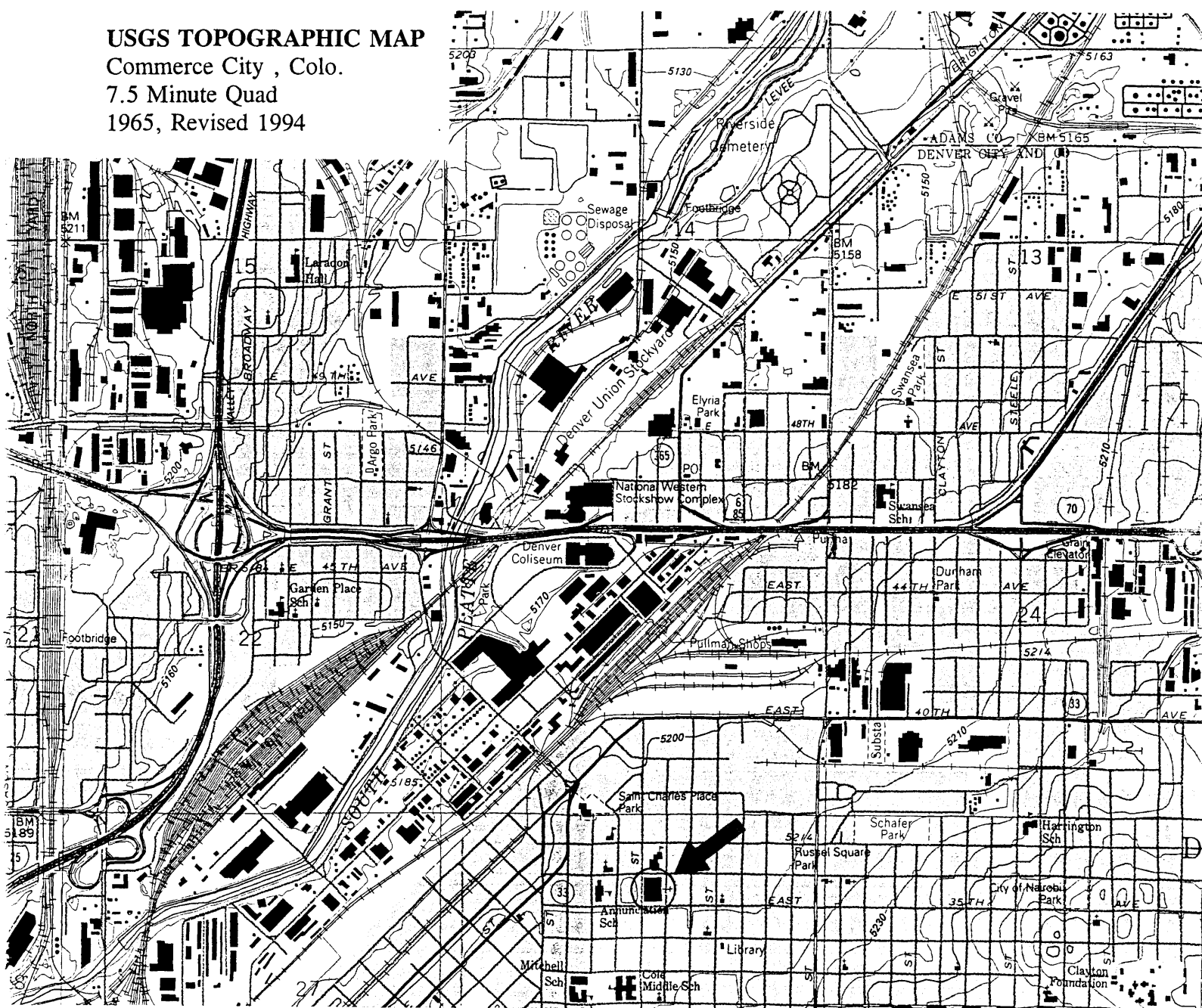
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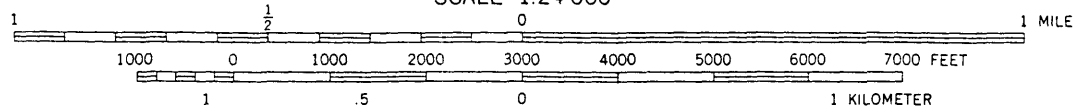
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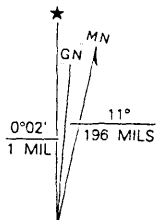
USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Commerce City, Colo.
7.5 Minute Quad
1965, Revised 1994



SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



UTM GRID AND 1994 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET