

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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AUG 27 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tower of Memories
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 8500 West Twenty-ninth Avenue not for publication
city, town Denver vicinity
state Colorado code 08 county Jefferson code 059 zip code 80215

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		_____	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing: 0 Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Bonnie Sedler August 20, 1987
Signature of certifying official Date
Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

N/A
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

Alvora Byers Entered in the National Register 9-25-87
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Moderne - Modernistic

Late Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Concrete

roof Ceramic Tile

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Tower of Memories is a seven story modernistic style mausoleum. It stands at the end of a half-mile grand esplanade that begins at the east end of the Crown Hill Cemetery. The land around the building falls gently away to the cemetery grounds on the north, south, and east, and to a clear uninterrupted view of the Rocky Mountains to the west. There are no other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

The mausoleum has a two story base with a tower rising to seven stories from the center of the base. The two story base, its front facade viewed from the esplanade, is low and wide against the height of the tower. Two hundred and twenty-nine feet wide and symmetrical in design, it has an outside central grand stair which leads to the second floor chapel. The base is topped by a hipped green tile roof which turns ninety degrees at each end to form gable ends facing the esplanade. The bottom of the tower is forty-two feet square in plan with piers at its four corners. As the tower rises, the piers and the shaft are stepped inward to form an octagonal top. Both the building structure and the building skin are reinforced concrete, with the skin finished in gunite. Surfaces are generally planar with low relief geometric detailing at the cornice lines. Window and door openings have gothic arches and are vestiges of the gothic detailing originally envisaged for the building. A portico is located at the south end of the building.

Construction was begun on the mausoleum in 1926. The original drawings show the building as gothic, and churchlike in detail. An advertisement in 1926 stated "in reality, the 'Tower of Memories' is a great vaulted church, impressive in its sacredness and sanctity with majestic corridors in which the crypts...are located." The original designer was Charles A. Smith, Architect, of Kansas City. Construction drawings, numbered through sheet 63, show the intended design in elaborate detail.

The failure, in 1928, of the company which began the project led to major architectural changes. Construction was already well underway and entombments had been made. Architects William and Arthur Fisher of Denver were commissioned to carry the project forward. The form remained generally the same, but the gothic detailing was replaced by modernistic detailing and articulation of the tower. Drawings by the Fishers have not been found, but their involvement was extensive; correspondence between their office and the owner indicates that hundreds of hours were spent detailing the building.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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TOWER OF MEMORIES

The construction of the mausoleum was well along when the architectural plans were changed. Certain gothic features were in place. Exterior openings had pointed arches, and marble had been installed on the ground floor interior. The Fishers worked within the context of the original plans. Construction continued, following their revisions, until it was interrupted by labor and material shortages during World War II. Although windows were not installed in the tower and the front stairs to the chapel were not in place, the building was almost complete.

In 1948, a new owner hired architect John Monroe to design and oversee the completion of the project. Monroe made alterations to the tower fenestration and changed slightly the tower proportions by increasing the height of the central portion by eight feet and by adding height as well to flanking portions of the tower. The front steps were also added at this time. Since the Fisher drawings have been lost, it is not clear how much Monroe was carrying out the intentions of the Fishers and how much was his own design. The changes, in any case, do not detract from the essential modernistic characteristics of the building.

The interior of the building is occupied by offices, a chapel, and a crematorium, in addition to burial vaults and rooms, the ground floor corridors, along which the burial rooms and vaults are placed, have gothic detailing and the floors and walls are finished in marble which follow the 1926 plan. Interior spaces were finished as burial places (rooms, vaults, and niches were sold. The upper floors, finished also in marble, were detailed with simpler lines reflecting the later dates, when those finishes were installed. Rooms in the tower are not yet utilized and are unfinished.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1926-1931

Significant Dates

1926

1930-1931

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles A. Smith, Architect

Fisher and Fisher Architects

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Tower of Memories mausoleum is significant as an unusual building type, and one which was carried out at a large scale and in the regionally rare modernistic style. Its significance is enhanced by the contributions to its design by the premier Denver architectural firm of Fisher and Fisher.

In 1928 an advertisement called the Tower of Memories, then under construction, "America's Largest and Most Beautiful Mausoleum." Although not unique in its technology of preserving the dead, the Tower of Memories was still an uncommon building type when it was built. The Tower of Memories was the first mausoleum built in the Denver area and remains one of only two.

The building was constructed within the boundaries of the Crown Hill Cemetery which was opened in December of 1907. When construction of the mausoleum was begun in 1926, it was on land and under ownership separate from the cemetery. Nonetheless, its pristine setting is assured in the 300 acre Crown Hill grounds.

The building is a monument in its landscape. It is located at the crest of a hill and can be seen from many parts of Denver and the surrounding region. Although begun in the gothic style, that construction was readily adapted to the modernistic style in which it was completed. Few buildings in Denver were built in this style, and none at the scale of the Tower of Memories.

Its style was set by William and Arthur Fisher, two of Denver's most able and well-known architects. William Fisher opened his office in Denver in 1892. In 1905 William's brother Arthur joined him in practice. Their work included the Denver City Tramway Building and Car Barn, the Railway Exchange Building, the A.C. Foster Building, the Colorado National Bank, and the Neusteter Department Store. The work of the Fishers was recognized through awards to the firm and in national publications.

The building represents changes in architectural style and detail over sixty years. It is a noteworthy aggregate of change without the loss of integrity.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Newspaper advertisements and articles:

- Advertisement, Denver Post, Denver, Colorado, October 17, 1926.
- Advertisement, Denver Enquirer, Denver, Colorado, March 7, 1928.
- "\$1,000,000 'Tower of Memories' Mausoleum Started at Crown Hill by Olinger Company," Rocky Mountain News, Denver, Colorado, October 3, 1926, p.8.
- "Tower of Memories Sold for \$153, 445 at Auction," Denver Post, Denver, Colorado, November 2, 1929, p.5.
- "Work Resumed on Mausoleum at Crown Hill," Denver Post, Denver, Colorado, December 3, 1930, p.35.
- "Crown Hill's Tower of Memories Stock Being Sold for \$300,000," Rocky Mountain News, May 16, 1948, p.14
- "'Tower of Memories' Revived; California Lawyer New Boss," Cervi's Journal, Denver Colorado, September 21, 1950, p.1.
- Correspondence between W.E. and A.A. Fisher (Architects) and J.S. Flower (Receiver, Crown Hill Cemetery Ass'n.), May 12, 1931 through November 27, 1931, Fisher Archives, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Co.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Owner's Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 1.6 Acres

UTM References

A

1	3
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4	9	2	1	1	0
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4	4	0	0	7	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Three parcels of land located in the southeast one-quarter of Section 27, Township 3 South, Range 69 West of the 6th P.M., County of Jefferson, State of Colorado, described as follows:

- (1) Commencing at the southeast corner of said section, thence north along the

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcels of land that have historically been associated with the property. The cemetery in which this land is located is under separate ownership.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith O'Brien and Kathleen Hoeft

organization Long Heoft Architects date June 20, 1987

street & number 1430 Larimer #308 telephone 303-893-9516

city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80202

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 & 10 Page 2

TOWER OF MEMORIES

9. Bibliographical References:

Advertising Flyer produced by the original owner, ca. 1926, Owner's Archives.

Drawings:

Charles A. Smith, Architect, 38 Drawings of an approximately 63 page set, ca. 1926, Owner's Archives.

John Monroe, Architect, 9 Drawings, 1949-1952, Owner's Archives.

10. Geographical Data:

section line, 1330.17 feet, more or less, to a point along the centerline of the main drive parkway of Crown Hill Cemetery, thence west, along the centerline of the main drive parkway of Crown Hill Cemetery, 385 feet to the True Point of Beginning; thence north (on an angle deflecting to the right 90°) a distance of 125 feet to corner #1; thence on an angle deflecting to the left 90° a distance of 250 feet to corner #2; thence on an angle deflecting to the left 90° a distance of 285 feet to corner #3; thence on an angle deflecting to the left 90° a distance of 250 feet to corner #4; thence on an angle deflecting to the left 90° a distance of 160 feet to the True Point of Beginning; containing 1.636 acres, more or less.

(2) Commencing at the true point of beginning of the aforesaid parcel 1; thence north 52 feet 11 inches, to a point designated as #3, the True Point of Beginning; thence south 10 feet to a point designated as #1; thence east 18 feet to a point designated as #2; thence northwesterly in a straight line, 20 feet 7 inches, more or less, to point #3; containing 0.002 acres, more or less.

(3) Commencing at the true point of beginning of the aforesaid parcel 1; thence south 52 feet 11 inches to a point designated as #6, the True Point of Beginning; thence north 10 feet to a point designated as #4; thence east 18 feet to a point designated as #5; thence southwesterly in a straight line, 20 feet 7 inches, more or less, to point #6; containing 0.002 acres, more or less.