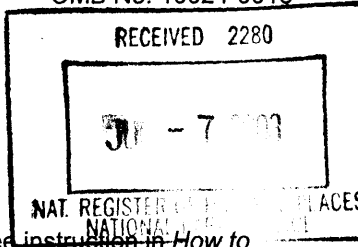


# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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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 McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory

other names/site number Clocktower Building; Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. Building; Styro Building

### 2. Location

street & number 2519 Walnut Street [N/A] not for publication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.)

Margaretta Cortez State Historic Preservation Officer June 26, 2003  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 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 A. Beall Signature of the Keeper 8/21/03 Date of Action

McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory  
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)

Manufacturing Facility

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Multiple Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Brick  
roof Synthetic  
other Terra Cotta

**Narrative Description**

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

McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory  
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)

Architecture

Industry

### Periods of Significance

1923-1928

### Significant Dates

N/A

### 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

McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory  
Name of Property

Denver, Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 501140 4400760  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. 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 Diane Wray

organization Historic Preservation Consulting

date March 12, 2003

street & number 3058 S. Cornell Circle

telephone 303-761-8979

city or town Englewood

state CO

zip code 80110

## 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 Silversmith Cohen Properties

street & number 1742 Champa Street, Suite 100

telephone 303-299-0201

city or town Denver

state CO

zip code 80202

**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.

**National Register of Historic Places  
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National Park Service**McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory  
Denver County, ColoradoSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is located at the intersection of Broadway, Walnut and 25th Streets, which are part of the downtown grid of Denver streets turned 45 degrees from the north-south/east-west axis. Thus, the site and the building are polygonal in plan.

The long west facade, with its central clock tower, parallels Broadway; the concrete sidewalk drops in elevation from the southwest 25th Street corner to the northwest alleyway elevation. From the sloped sidewalk, the main block of the building rises four stories above the basement level and the clock tower an additional three stories. The Walnut Street elevation is four stories and is fronted by a loading dock platform rising above the street. A one-story building abuts the northeast party wall, which extends to the rear alleyway. Above the roof of the adjacent building are three floors. At the paved rear alleyway, the narrow elevation of the McPhee & McGinnity Factory rises five stories to the flat roof (including the basement).

Constructed of red brick with a very restrained use of ivory glaze terra cotta trim, the building is constructed with a rhythmic fenestration pattern that generally consists of grouped window openings within vertical piers above the basement level. The long Broadway facade has two bays of triple windows flanking the central clock tower, which appears to project slightly from the facade. The bays typically have shorter window openings at the first floor and taller upper floor openings. The fenestration and brick spandrel panels above the first floor are recessed slightly from the main corner and intermediate piers. Mullion piers are set flush with the first floor continuous spandrel above the basement level, rise to the roof parapet, and overlay the fenestration and upper spandrel panels. A terra cotta cap extends continuously over the piers, recessed fenestration sections, and over the projecting mullion piers. The Broadway facade has similarly spaced basement level window openings, set flush with the masonry wall. The sills step down the sloped sidewalk. The window openings of the facade have new double hung sash that duplicate the lost historic windows. Within the bay adjacent to the tower at the basement level, a doorway with a step at the threshold is flanked by window openings.

Typically the windowsills at all levels are terra cotta; window heads are soldier courses. The recessed spandrel panels are all header stack bond contrasting to the common bond of the main walling. At the parapet level the fourth floor windows have terra cotta lintels set flush with the spandrels. Above each terra cotta lintel is a diamond shaped terra cotta tile set equidistant within masonry soldier courses.

The clock tower is defined by piers that project pavilion-like from the masonry wall of the main structure from the basement level through the roof parapet. Above the parapet are massive corner piers, which are partially overlaid with the projecting piers. This overlayment of masonry planes forms jamb mullions for the tower's fenestration and are matched in width by two brick mullion piers which form the three vertical bays of the clock tower facade. At the base of the clock tower is a single doorway flanked by metal framed window openings with metal hoods. A single step provides access from the sidewalk to the doorway, which enters the building at an intermediate landing of the internal stairway in the tower. The tower's fenestration is recessed behind the jamb and vertical mullion piers except at the entrance level where the window openings are set flush with the mullion piers. Between the second and third floors, the mullion piers are interrupted by a terra cotta spandrel with molded cap that supports the sills

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of the third floor window openings. The ivory and green terra cotta signage panel spans between the jamb mullion piers, reading "McPhee & McGinnity". Above the signage panel the recessed mullion piers extend through the roof parapet to the second level of the tower where the pair of mullion piers are capped with brick buttresses within the spandrel level between the two upper tower levels. Above the parapet, the jamb mullions become the corner piers of the tower.

The clock tower, above the roof, has four identical elevations which, because of its location on the west elevation, is turned 45 degrees from the other elevations giving maximum visibility from all directions. The first two levels of the tower have three bays separated by the mullion piers and set within the corner piers. At the first level, opening above the roof deck, are steel framed, six light window sash recessed within the piers. A doorway on the northwest face opens onto the roof. Stack bond spandrel panels extend to the second level of similar glazed windows. These openings have bands of terra cotta tile at the heads, which extend over the mullion piers and visually support the buttressing. Between the buttresses are panels of stack bond brickwork set below a nearly continuous band of terra cotta tile that wraps to form a base for the flat pilasters that support stilted segmental arches on each face. The imposts and voussoirs are clad in terra cotta. Set between the corner piers at each elevation is a single lancet window lighting the third level of the tower, or seventh floor of the building, which contains the clock works operated from a wooden catwalk extending around the space above the window openings.

Above the level of the arched corner pier caps, the corner piers are reduced in width and depth. The brickwork buttresses onto the construction of the top of the tower, with its shallow dome. Stepped terra cotta voussoirs outline the arch of each elevation above the four clock faces and span between the corner piers. Each clock face is a very large roundel edged in slightly projecting soldier coursing. The numerals are indicated by single terra cotta tiles set into the brickwork. The interior of each face is set with stack bond headers. The minute and hour hands are metal and cut in a traditional arrow design. To relieve the massing of the corner piers, the brick masonry is notched at each corner in the form of an open chamfer with terra cotta pendentives at the base. The tower's dome, rising above the arched parapets of the clock faces, is constructed above a concrete slab and is clad in metal.

The southeast Walnut Street elevation is characterized by seven bays with single vertical mullion piers between pairs of window openings within corner and intermediate piers. The fenestration of each end bay is narrower. Four floors of fenestration rise above the concrete loading dock, which has simple service stairways at each end that extend parallel to the elevation. Masonry and terra cotta work is similar to the facade. First floor window openings are shorter than the second to fourth floor openings. Eight over eight double hung sash fill the openings at all levels, with six over six light sash in the end bays. These are new windows fabricated to match the lost historic units. A two-story loading door with a steel hoist above filled one half bay of window openings south of the central bay. The loading door opening has been infilled with a copper clad panel inset with new pedestrian door to accommodate the structure's new use as residential apartments. At the opposite western bay is a doorway that was cut into the fenestration of a half bay and forms the present entrance to an apartment unit. Within the south bay, a four-light glazed door is set into the fenestration and provides pedestrian access onto the loading dock, which, with the addition of a metal railing, now serves as small private terraces for the adjoining apartments.

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At the right-of-way of 25th Street, the narrow elevation has one bay with a center mullion pier. The masonry and terra cotta work is similar to the facade and the Walnut Street elevation. The south corner is at a right angle to Walnut Street. The Broadway corner displays a wider angle and the brick is spaced to form a toothed corner detail. A similar detail extends onto the northwest alley elevation, which has two bays with typical masonry and terra cotta details. Here the first floor window openings contain 12-light steel sash, while the window openings above have 20-light steel sash. The central four lights operate as awning sash. At the basement level, garage doorways provide vehicular access into the building and a pedestrian door provides egress from a new fire exit stair.

The party wall elevation at the northeast, rising above the roof deck of the adjacent building, is utilitarian in its third and fourth floor fenestration. Each floor has three window bays near the east corner and a single bay located near the center of the elevation. Between, a tall brick chimney rises above the parapet. The window openings have 3D-light steel sash with a central 12-light awning sash. Except for terra cotta sills, the window openings have no decorative masonry. Painted onto the parapet above the window openings is the legend, "PITTSBURGH PLATE GLASS CO."

The original main entrance to the building is from the Broadway facade at the base of the clock tower. The doorway opens into an intermediate landing floor and connects to a concrete staircase set within the tower. The stairway, with attached pipe railings, rises to the tower's fifth floor and the main roof level. At intervals up the three runs between each floor are diamond shaped terra cotta blocks, set into the brick masonry, which originally contained a logo of McPhee & McGinnity. This logo was chipped from each tile and overpainted with a "P" for Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. A single run stairway extends to the second level of the tower; a new metal ladder stairway provides access to the third level of the tower. The brick masonry tower structure, which extends through each floor level, formerly contained a freight elevator between the basement and the fourth floor. It has now been converted to passenger use. The construction is integrated into a brick masonry firewall that bisects the building generally paralleling the Walnut Street elevation. This firewall is pierced at each floor with doorways having segmentally arched heads. Similar doorways with segmental arches provided access to the stairway landings at each floor. Metal clad fire doors (some now fixed in place) were suspended from rollers to slide across the doorways and the flat arch elevator doorways at each floor level, which open into the main warehouse spaces. Arched openings are indicated at each stairway landing for the elevator, but were infilled during the building's construction.

The first and second floor levels were a large, two-story open space with no floor separating them except for a later office construction in the east corner. There was evidence of a second floor having been located in the rear half of the building. With the conversion of the building to apartments, a new floor was installed in the entire space to create two full floors. Typically, the interiors throughout are wooden post and beam construction on a 16-foot grid paralleling Walnut Street and the party wall. The grid adjusts for the angle of the Broadway facade. The columns have metal collars at the top tying them into the major girders. These support wooden floor joists and flooring.

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Denver County, ColoradoSection number 8 Page 4**SIGNIFICANCE**

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is eligible for the National Register under Criterion "A" in the area of industry for its association with the prominent regional construction material supplier, McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company. The building served as a paint factory for the company from its construction in 1923 to the bankruptcy of the firm in 1928. The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was the largest building materials supplier in Colorado during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Founded in the mid 1860s at the very beginning of the construction of Denver, the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company served both as a building contractor and supplier, producing and providing a wide variety of construction materials for many of the most important structures built in the city during the sixty years of the firm's history.

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is also eligible under Criterion "C" for its architectural significance by virtue of its fine Commercial Style design. The factory is a fine example of early 20th century Commercial Style of architecture in downtown Denver.

**The History of the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company**

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory served as the paint manufacturing facility for the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company. The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was instrumental in the construction of many of the city's buildings as a supplier and producer of construction materials during the period from the mid-1860s to the late 1920s. The wealthy McPhee family, which owned the company, was a key participant in the commercial and cultural development of Denver in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is the most substantial and ambitious of the several buildings constructed by the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company for the firm. The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory's association with the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company Building is the historic context in which the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is evaluated to be eligible for listing on the National Register according to criterion "A."

"The firm was active almost from the city's earliest beginnings through the building boom of the 1920s." (Undated letter from McPhee descendent, Robert McPhee, to Louise Vigoda, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.)

The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was founded by Charles Daniel McPhee, who was born on Prince Edward Island in Canada in the early 19th century. In the 1860s, as a young man, McPhee moved to Boston, where he trained to be a carpenter. Soon after the Civil War, McPhee came to Denver where he permanently settled. His brothers, Angus and Pious, accompanied him, and together they set out as building contractors.

"The original assets of the company were a box of tools, a love of honor and a strong belief in cheerful and efficient service." ("Timber Products Form Basis of Important Local Industry," *Rocky Mountain News*, August 8, 1927, page 14.)



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In 1869, Charles, known as C.D., founded a lumber and millwork supply business while still working with his brothers as a contractor. In 1870, Angus died, at which time Pious took over the contracting business, while C.D. took over the lumber operation.

In 1872, C.D. met John J. McGinnity. According to C.D.'s grandson, Robert McPhee, in his letter to Louise Vigoda, the two men met when the down-and-out McGinnity approached C.D. on the street "asking for the price of a meal... (which) ... was the beginning of a beautiful friendship by two remarkable gentlemen." McGinnity rose in the company through frequent promotions, and soon C.D. gave McGinnity a full partnership.

In 1881 the company received its most important early contract - to build and provide the materials for the first permanent Denver City Hall which once stood at the corner of 14th and Larimer Streets. This building, which later served as the Police Administration Building, was demolished in the 1940s. The Denver City Hall was one of the last buildings contracted by the company. However, according to the Robert McPhee letter, the company did undertake the construction of its own later buildings.

The first of these was a "palatial mansion" built by C.D. McPhee at the corner of 17th Street and Glenarm Place across from the Denver Club's brownstone mansion. In that mansion, C.D. McPhee and his wife Angela McPhee raised their nine children. Four other children died in infancy. The C.D. McPhee mansion was demolished in the 1880s.

The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company built its first headquarters building in 1888 on the corner of the intersection of 18th and Wazee Streets (demolished). The following year, 1889, reflecting the company's burgeoning success, C.D. McPhee commissioned Frank E. Edbrooke to design the McPhee block (later called the C. A. Johnson Block) which stood where the C.D. McPhee mansion had been, at the corner of 17th Street and Glenarm Place. According to Richard Brettell's *Historic Denver*, the McPhee Block was one of Edbrooke's "best and largest commercial structures." (page 40.) The McPhee Block was demolished in the 1970s, and the Anaconda Tower was built on the site.

C.D. McPhee also commissioned a second mansion, this one at 1647 Clarkson Street in the Swallow Hill neighborhood. This 1890s residence still stands. In the early 1900s, C.D. McPhee built a third mansion that formerly stood at the corner of 8th Avenue and Washington Street. This mansion was demolished in the 1970s and replaced by a condominium development.

C.D. McPhee was prominent in the Catholic Church in Denver. He served on the building committee for the Immaculate Conception Cathedral that stands on the corner of Colfax Avenue and Logan Street. Not surprisingly, a wide variety of building materials needed for the construction of the French Gothic Style cathedral, including custom mill and cabinet work (only some of which survives), were supplied by the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company.

C.D. McPhee had been appointed to the cathedral's building committee by Bishop Nicholas Matz. There were only two other members of the building committee, J .K. Mullen and Dennis Sheedy. McPhee, Mullen and Sheedy were among the wealthiest and most influential citizens in Denver. Mullen's fortune derived from Colorado Milling & Elevator Company, a grain storage concern. Sheedy was a banker, and the first president of the Denver Dry Goods Company. Thus among this trio of millionaires on the

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building committee, McPhee alone had a construction expertise. The cornerstone for the cathedral was laid in 1906. It was dedicated in 1912.

In 1915 John McGinnity, C.D. McPhee's friend and partner, died. McGinnity had never married and his will left \$300,000 to C.D. McPhee's son, Will. According to Robert McPhee's letter, Will had "become a beloved surrogate son to McGinnity through their continuous association..." McGinnity also bequeathed approximately \$700,000 to the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company. C.D. McPhee died the following year, in 1916.

At this time, the company was run by C.D.'s sons, including Will, who acted as president, Charles D., who served as vice president, and J. Elmer, treasurer. (Letter writer Robert McPhee was J. Elmer McPhee's son.) The three brothers oversaw the continued growth of McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company. In 1919, the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company built a new headquarters building at the corner of 23rd and Blake Streets. This building, which still stands, was designed by Fisher and Fisher. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

By the 1920s, the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company reached the high point of its success. At the time, it was one of the largest lumber companies west of the Mississippi River. Its main Denver lumberyard covered 23 acres in and around 23rd and Blake Streets and was one of the largest in the Western United States. The company also operated five branch yards in Denver, as well as subsidiary yards in southern and northwest Colorado. The company's real estate holdings in Denver were worth more than \$2 million. The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company employed 400 workers in Denver with a half-million-dollar payroll.

The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company also operated a sawmill in the company town of McPhee, Colorado. At the time, McPhee had a population of over 1,500 residents. The sawmill was organized under a subsidiary, the New Mexico Lumber Company. The mill employed 500 workers with a payroll of half a million dollars. The McPhee sawmill turned out 30 million board feet of lumber per year in the 1920s, which represents half of the state's total production at the time. The McPhee sawmill cut enough Ponderosa Pine boards to fill 10 to 12 car loads a day. The lumber was shipped nationally on the Colorado and Southern Railroad that was owned by the New Mexico Lumber Company. The sawmill eventually burned to the ground.

The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was also involved in timber cutting, and the production of raw timber in northern New Mexico. Another subsidiary of the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was the Sterling Lumber & Investment Company that operated 25 lumberyards in Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado.

The McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was incorporated in the state of Nevada. The stock was controlled by the McPhee Investment Company, a Colorado corporation. The only stock holders in the McPhee Investment Company were the members of the McPhee family.

Business was especially good for the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company during the Denver building boom of the 1920s. In 1923, the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company built the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory at a cost of more the \$100,000. It was located at the base of the then-new

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Broadway Viaduct (now demolished) with easy access to the main Denver rail yards. The Broadway Viaduct, like the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory, was completed in 1923. A photo of the newly opened Broadway Viaduct illustrated in the October, November, and December 1923 issue of *Municipal Facts* also shows the just completed McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory with the older McPhee & McGinnity Office Building in the background. Also seen in the photo is the Minehart-Traylor Paint Company Building (later the Benjamin Moore Paint Company Building) just across Walnut Street from the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory.

In 1928, before the Stock Market crash of 1929, the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company was closed. J. Elmer McPhee, company secretary at the time, ascribed the failure of the once flourishing enterprise to "the overly ambitious building of (the) giant ... mill" in McPhee, Colorado. (Robert McPhee letter.)

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory remained vacant until 1930 when it was purchased by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company which occupied it until 1955. In 2000, the building was converted to residential apartments utilizing federal historic preservation tax incentives, thus insuring that the project was executed in full compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

**Architectural Significance**

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is the largest and finest surviving Denver building of the many that were constructed by the McPhee & McGinnity Lumber Company in Denver. The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is a well-recognized landmark, visible for many blocks in all directions.

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Commercial Style as laid out in Marcus Whiffen's *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. The Commercial Style is a uniquely American style. Buildings in the Commercial Style are seen in a variety of sub-styles from Neo-Classical to Modern. The style developed first in Chicago in the 1880s and '90s, soon becoming popular nationally. The Commercial Style continued to be vitally felt in the United States into the late 1920s. Many downtown Denver buildings are examples of the Commercial Style.

Commercial Style buildings have been sparsely ornamented, with flat fronts and even skylines. In the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory, the sides are flat with even the tower being completely submerged into the Broadway facade. The fenestration in Commercial Style buildings provides the principal visual interest, since ornament was kept to a minimum. This trait is seen in the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory, in which vertical windows connected by spandrels are set behind pilasters.

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory employs a simplified German Gothic style in its massing. The vertical orientation of the facade's details, including the clocktower, anticipates the Art Deco Style of the later 1920s.

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is a wood-frame and brick masonry structure with terra cotta trim. The standard of the brickwork with its elaborate plan and finely done mortar joints is notable. Also made to a high standard are the terra cotta details that adorn the building. These terra cotta ornaments

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and panels were most likely made by the Denver Terra Cotta Company, the only maker of architectural terra cotta within a thousand-mile radius of Denver.

The architects for the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory are unknown, the company's records having been lost. However, both the overall design, as well as the handling of the specific decorative details, indicates that the building's architects were most probably the distinguished firm of Fisher and Fisher, a partnership of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher, acknowledged masters of early 20th century Denver architecture. The firm designed many of the industrial and commercial buildings in the immediate neighborhood including the McPhee & McGinnity Office Building still standing at 23rd and Blake Streets, across Broadway from the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory. The Fisher and Fisher designed McPhee & McGinnity Office Building, built in 1919, is only four years older than the nearby 1923 McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory.

**The Architectural Firm of Fisher and Fisher**

The McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory may have been designed by acknowledged masters of early to mid 20th century Denver architecture, the firm of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher, a partnership of William Elsworth Fisher (1871- 1937) and his younger brother, Arthur Addison Fisher (1878-1965).

William Elsworth Fisher was born in Canada in 1871 and came with his parents to Denver while still a teenager in 1885. In 1890 he was employed as a draftsman in the Denver architectural firm of Balcomb and Rice. From 1892 to 1901, Fisher operated his own office and solo practice, specializing in residential design. At that time, Fisher entered a partnership with Daniel Riggs Huntington who had been a fellow draftsman at Balcomb and Rice, forming the firm of Fisher and Huntington. The newly created firm found ready success with many commissions for luxury residences from the city's social elite.

After Huntington left the firm and moved to Seattle in 1905, Fisher was joined by his younger brother, Arthur Addison Fisher in 1907. Arthur Addison Fisher was born in Canada in 1878, coming to Denver with his family as a child in 1885. Before joining his brother in practice, the younger Fisher had studied at New York's Beaux Arts Atelier Barber and, in 1905, had worked as an apprentice in the New York offices of Don Barber and Benjamin Morris. In 1910, three years after joining William's firm, the younger brother was granted a full partnership, and only then was the firm's name changed to William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher.

William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher prospered during the next decade with increasing numbers of large and prestigious commissions coming the firm's way. "By 1920 the firm had established itself as one of the largest and most influential architectural firms in the Rocky Mountain region." (Noel and Norgren, page 199.) The firm ceased to exist when William committed suicide in 1937. At that time, the firm of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher was succeeded by the firm of Fisher and Fisher, a partnership of Arthur A. Fisher and William's son, Alan Berney Fisher (1905-1978). Arthur A. Fisher died in 1965.

The 1923 McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory is similar to several examples known to be the work of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher including the 1909 Rockmount Ranch Wear Building at 1626 Wazee Street and the 1918 Windsor Dairy at 1855-1863 Blake Street. The brickwork on both buildings,

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and the treatment of the terra cotta details is notably similar to those on the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory. Other William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher buildings related to the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory include the 1910 Denver Tramway Building. Though distinct stylistically, the handling of the windows of the Denver Tramway Building, with their terra cotta sills and keystones recall the similar strategy used at the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Lot 20 and fractional Lots 15 to 19 inclusive, Block 1, Case and Ebert's Addition, City and County of Denver, Colorado.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nomination includes all the land historically associated with the McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory.

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Denver County, ColoradoSection number \_\_\_ Page 11**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-6:

Name of Property: **McPhee & McGinnity Paint Factory**  
Location: **Denver County, Colorado**  
Photographer: **Dale Heckendorn**  
Date of Photographs: **April 13, 2003**  
Negatives: **Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
Colorado Historical Society**

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Broadway (west) elevation to left, 25th Street/southwest elevation to right; view to the northeast.
2	Broadway (west) and northwest elevations; view to the southeast.
3	Southeast and northeast elevations; view to the west.
4	Entry detail, Broadway elevation; view to the east.
5	Clock tower, Broadway elevation; view to the east.
6	Clock tower detail, Broadway elevation; view to the east.

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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Commerce City Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 / 501140E / 4400760N  
PLSS: 6<sup>th</sup> PM, T3S, R68W, Sec. 27, SW¼ NW¼ SE¼  
Elevation: 5,190 feet

