NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1647

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Chamber of Commerce Building

other names/site number Ross Building; Chamber Lofts; 5DV527

2. Location

street & number 1726 Champa Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 031 zip code 80203

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.)

Georgiana Contiguglia State Historic Preservation Officer December 7, 2000
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:

[X] entered in the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain
[ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Carol H. Beall 1-16-01

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

[x] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[x] 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)

Business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Granite
Terra Cotta
roof Asphalt
other

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

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.)

[X] **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.

[X] **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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Periods of Significance
1910-1950

Significant Dates
N/A

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Marean and Norton
OZ Architecture

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
[X] 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:

[X] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State Agency
[ ] Federal Agency
[ ] Local Government
[ ] University
[ ] Other

Name of repository:
Colorado Historical Society

Chamber of Commerce Building
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.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	13	500740	4399600				
2.				4.			

[ ] 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 _____ date 9/1/2000
street & number 3058 South Cornell Circle telephone (303) 761-8979
city or town Denver 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 Chamber Apartments LP
street & number 1742 Champa Street telephone 303-299-0201
city or town Denver state CO zip code 80202

DESCRIPTION

The six-story Chamber of Commerce Building occupies the entire lot between the 1907/1927 Ideal Building located on the east corner of Champa and 17th Street and the 1929 Buerger Brothers Building at 1732-40 Champa Street. The Classical Revival style terra cotta facade of the building is oriented northwest onto Champa Street. A public alley extends behind the structure at its southeast elevation. The northeast elevation is set back from Buerger Brothers above the first floor level, forming a narrow lightwell which is screened by the Champa Street facade at the north end. In the southwest elevation, a large rectangular lightwell is centered above the first floor level, forming the U-shaped plan of each upper floor level. This lightwell is contiguous with the lightwell of the abutting Ideal Building. At the south corner is a fire stair tower inset into the structure for emergency access to the alley from each floor and the roof.

The facade is constructed flush with the northwest property line and the adjacent two buildings. A public sidewalk fronts the structure and is constructed of concrete with stone curbing at the street. Parking meters are at the curb line along with two exposed aggregate concrete planters and a trash receptacle dating from 1970s urban renewal efforts on Champa Street.

The six-story, five-bay facade has a first floor level and a second floor parapet level, suggesting a mezzanine, which form the base of the building. The base supports floors three through five that are dominated by colossal Ionic pilasters in antis that extend to the main entablature of the building. Above the widely overhanging cornice of the fifth floor is the sixth floor parapet level which includes two corner pavilions flanking a higher, recessed central section.

The first floor consists of two bays of show windows with transoms that flank the entrance into the elevator lobby. The surviving original west bay was recently restored, and the lost east bay was recreated to match the historic bay.

The outer corners of the facade's first floor level have rusticated stone pilasters set on smooth bases. The rusticated pilasters, with Tuscan capital detailing, extend to a modified Doric/Tuscan terra cotta frieze utilizing gutta to suggest triglyph panels where the frieze incorporates the vertical structural elements. The frieze extends over the show windows and abuts the central archway of the entrance. A continuous facia with a slightly projecting cyma recta crown moulding extends over the central archway and completes the secondary entablature above the first floor level.

The archway piers have smooth stone bases that extend into the recessed entrance and abutting storefronts. Above the bases, the rusticated stone piers rise to integrate into the voussoirs, forming a Beaux-Arts style archway. The cartouche, recently recreated to match the lost original on the basis of historic photographs, ornaments the keystone of the archway.

Between the corner pilasters and the central archway, engaged half-round fluted terra cotta Tuscan pilasters divided each storefront into two bays. One original pilaster survives and a second, lost pilaster was recently recreated to match the lost original on the basis of historic photographs.

Gray terra cotta simulating granite clads the secondary cornice of the first floor, forming the sill of the second floor windows which were designed to appear as a mezzanine level. The windows have an unornamented,

narrow mullion separating the window unit pairs that retain double-hung, one-over-one-light wooden sash. Typically throughout the building, the wooden window frames have a flat profile with a reveal bead. The pairs of second floor windows receive the continuous entablature of the intermediate frieze which forms the window heads. Raised terra cotta panels with square notched corners, are located between the second floor fenestration. These panels originally supported light sconces at the outer corners and classical wreath ornaments in the central bays. The sconces and the ornaments have all been recently recreated to match the lost originals on the basis of historic photographs.

The intermediate terra cotta entablature of the second floor forms the stylobate of the three-story pilasters and antae. This entablature includes a frieze band above the window heads of the second floor where "Chamber of Commerce" appears in relief. There is an egg and dart bed moulding, a projecting facia, and narrow cavetto crown moulding. This architectural convention defined the second floor level as a secondary parapet, suggesting a mezzanine level.

Above the intermediate entablature, the upper, white terra cotta facade has anta pilasters at the corners that rise from plinth blocks on the stylobate/cornice of the secondary parapet and extend three stories to the main entablature. The anta pilasters each have a raised panel extending the length of the shaft that terminates with a raised-flute capital forming a modified Tuscan order.

Four engaged, fluted half-round pilasters with Roman or Scomozzi Ionic capitals and double torus bases on plinth blocks appear in antis between the end pilasters. The pilasters space the fenestration which consists of pairs of double-hung windows with continuous mullions between the intermediate cornice and the recessed fifth floor window heads set back below the terra cotta clad soffit of the main entablature. The third floor window sills, set on the intermediate cornice/stylobate, have ribbed terra cotta sills set between the pilaster plinths. The smooth terra cotta upper sills are set flush with the terra cotta jamb and mullion cladding. The wooden window frames are recessed from the terra cotta. Spandrels between the fourth and fifth floors have raised panels. Each vertical window bay between the pilasters is further defined by a single row of electric light sockets outlining the jambs and the fifth floor heads, similar to the exterior electrification of the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company Building at 15th and Champa Streets where lights are also used as architectural ornament.

The antae and Ionic pilasters support a continuous Ionic entablature with a single architrave band defined by a projecting moulding. The frieze is set with a stepped roundel over each anta and pilaster and centered above each window mullion. Each roundel is visually supported in the frieze by a ribbon swag and has a single bellflower festoon applied over the architrave moulding. The frieze extends to an egg and dart bed moulding which supports the projecting modillion band. The modillions have a cavetto crown moulding and an inset band at their bases. Light sockets are set into the facia soffit between each modillion. The soffit's projecting facia is gouge fluted and carries a cavetto crown moulding that has shallow returns at each corner unsupported by modillions.

Above the structure's main entablature, the sixth floor forms a roof parapet configuration with two corner pavilions flanking a recessed central section, all of which is stuccoed brick masonry. The corner pavilions have corner pilasters infilled with segmentally arched window openings originally set with single-light pivoting sash with a center mullion, recently recreated to match the lost originals on the basis of historic photographs. The northeast elevation of the north pavilion has a flat-headed window opening with double hung sash. The parapet pavilion pilasters extend from a projecting base through a frieze defined by a raised moulding to the soffit of the

projecting metal cornice with a facia and crown. Each pavilion is roofed with a very shallow convex dome and centered with a pressed metal stepped-pyramid finial.

The parapet pavilions flank the recessed central section that extends above the pavilions and has a continuous pressed metal cornice, consisting of a cavetto crown on a facia. The cornice extends around all four sides of the rectangular structure and supports a two-step drum with a shallow convex dome topped with a pressed metal torus profile finial and a flag pole. The roofs of the three sixth floor parapet elements are metal clad.

The central section, which enclosed the original sixth floor offices, has at the facade a large segmentally arched window bay that spans between the end pavilions. Originally this opening had vertical muntins and a transom bar which was altered below the transom into seven openings set below a blind arch. This arched window bay was recently recreated to match the lost original on the basis of historic photographs. A shallow balcony space fronts the central section windows and originally was set with two light standards above the two central fluted pilasters of the facade. The light fixtures were recently recreated to match the lost originals on the basis of historic photographs. Typically, the soffits of the pavilions are lined with a single row of electric light sockets.

Behind the north corner pavilion, the structure is utilitarian in construction with an assortment of common brick walls and infill, all with minimal fenestration. The structures enclose the elevator shafts and mechanical rooms and provide access to what was once the balcony overlooking the sixth floor offices. The roof behind the heightened sixth floor facade level is gently curved, covered with a built up system, and masked behind brick parapets at the secondary elevations.

Within the large southwest lightwell extending from the second through the sixth floors, the window openings are generally regularly spaced within the concrete clad frame and common bond brick masonry walls. There are some variations suggesting that original tenants could direct the window placement. Typically, the single openings are segmentally arched with triple rowlock courses and stone sills, though ganged windows utilize the concrete frame for support at the heads. The window openings have one-over-one-light, double-hung sash. Similar brick masonry construction and detailing exists at the narrow northeast lightwell facing the Buerger Brothers Building.

The common-bond brick masonry of the southeast alley elevation has seven bays of segmentally arched window openings with stone sills, though the fenestration pattern varies at the fifth and sixth floors. The south corner is inset with an open metal fire escape with landings at each floor level and intermediate winders between floors; railings are pipe. Each floor level is defined by a steel beam set within the open vertical shaft that is separated by a party wall from the adjacent building. The stairway extends to the alley where it is secured by a fence construction.

At the first floor level of the alley, five tall flat-headed openings provide service access into the building. The large openings, spanned by steel beam headers, have metal framed spandrel panels and doorways; infill glazing is set below deep transoms. The southern-most opening is wider. The openings have concrete thresholds, stucco on the lower portions of the separating brick piers, and security mesh over the openings. At the east corner is a doorway providing access to the roof of the one-story connection between the Chamber of Commerce Building and the adjacent Buerger Brothers Building. The doorway has three rowlock courses forming a segmental arch.

The interior of the building has been recently converted into residential apartments with commercial/retail on the first floor. Surviving fragments of the original interior architecture were retained, including cast plaster ornamental modillions set at the intersection of the plain square columns and ceiling beams. Otherwise, the surfaces of the high ceiling spaces are unornamented.

The entrance lobby, which contains two side-by-side elevators on the southeast wall, was recently restored to its original configuration. The lobby provides access to the west commercial area and retains doorways to that space. The stairwell, which opens from the lobby, has white marble wainscotting extending up a long run to winders that turn 90 degrees to the second floor. The wainscotting has vertical panels of marble set with a band of marble paralleling the stairway run and capped with a moulded marble rail. The stairwell is open to the lobby and features a cast iron newel. The moulded wooden railing extends from the first floor newel, ornamented with swags of beliflowers, to the intermediate newels typical throughout the building with their plain paneled faces. The treads of the run are white marble with metal risers set into metal stringers. At the second floor the stairway originally formed a balcony. The ceiling is exposed concrete beams with panels lining the upper wall surfaces. Typically, the panels, carried on a rail, are framed with simply molded jambs sections consisting of raised edges supporting a plain head board. The stairwell retains remnants of a simple crown moulding with a dentil course set below the ceiling beams at the wall. The surviving balusters of the enclosed balcony are typical of the building with square section iron bars, interconnected with attached "C" scrolls, and mounted directly onto the metal stringers.

The main stairway rises to the second floor elevator lobby. The millwork typically features moulded jambs and plain head pieces. The double pairs of window openings have continuous sills and aprons with doubled trim extending up the center mullions. One unique feature of the northwest former offices in the corners facing Champa Street is the inclusion of shallow cupboards set into the corner anta pilasters. These have paneled doors.

From the second floor, an iron stairway with marble treads and an intermediate landing rises from a stairwell centered on the northeast wall through to the fourth floor. The stairway detailing is typical of the run between the first two floors. From the fourth floor the stairway crosses the corridor and rises to the fifth floor and then, in a smaller configuration, to the sixth floor. This last run has minimal architectural detailing.

On the sixth floor, offices were located around a main room within the central large domed section of the northwest uppermost parapet level. The two-story office space was surrounded by one-story spaces topped with a balcony at the northeast that overlooked the room. This general configuration has been restored during the conversion of the space to a residential unit. Generally, the office had plain wall surfaces that extended to a cornice consisting of a cavetto bed moulding, a dental course, a facia, and a cyma crown moulding all in plaster. Above the cornice, a deep cove extends to a ceiling beam around the periphery of the room's flat ceiling. Additional ceiling beams formed coffered panels, all ornamented with crown mouldings at the ceiling intersections. The lower corners of the beams have raised banding. The balcony railings are square section wooden balusters supporting a moulded wooden railing and set with square wooden newel posts with flat caps. A few surviving light fixtures date to a later renovation of the space.

In 1999-2000 the building was converted to apartment lofts. The previously altered first floor and mezzanine level exterior was returned to an appearance close to its original design based on historical photographs. The rehabilitation was carried out as a federal investment tax credit project and the interior and exterior work was

approved by the National Park Service as meeting the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. OZ Architecture provided the architectural services for the rehabilition project.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Chamber of Commerce Building is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of commerce for its role as the headquarters building of the Denver Chamber of Commerce from 1910 to 1950. The building was originally constructed for the Denver Chamber, which was, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a powerful and politically-connected organization with membership representing the city's business elite. The Chamber was not only important to the commercial development of the city, but to its cultural development, as well. The group was instrumental in making Denver the business hub of the Rocky Mountain states and played key roles in the founding of many of the city's public institutions.

The Chamber of Commerce Building is also eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance, being a good local example of early 20th century Classical Revival style design. The facade is composed of gray Colorado granite at the first floor, gray terra cotta simulating granite cladding the second floor parapet level and white terra cotta cladding the upper floors. The standard of the granite is notable, with elaborate and precise cuts and finely done mortar joints. Also made to a high standard are the custom-designed terra cotta details and panels, notably the four monumental pilasters that adorn the facade. Like many other Classical Revival style buildings, the Chamber of Commerce Building features an elaborate lighting system for the facade. This lighting system was recently restored to use. The architects for the Chamber of Commerce Building were Marean and Norton, acknowledged masters of early 20th century Denver architecture.

Commercial History

The Chamber of Commerce Building served as the headquarters building for the Denver Chamber of Commerce. The Denver Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in the commercial and cultural development of Denver. The Chamber was founded on January 15, 1884, at a meeting of the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade was founded by John Evans, John Smith and General John Pierce, among others, on November 13, 1867, with the sole aim of securing a railroad for Denver. The Union Pacific Railroad had decided to by-pass Denver, electing instead to build its transcontinental rail-link through Cheyenne, Wyoming, and through the Rockies at Bridger Pass. This caused a financial panic in Denver and many businesses relocated to Cheyenne. As a result, the Board of Trade decided to build a rail-spur from the main line in Cheyenne south to Denver. The group got a commitment from the Union Pacific that if Denver built the line to Cheyenne, trains would run on it. The Board of Trade then readily raised the $500,000 necessary to build the rail-bed, collecting $300,000 in only three days. The coming of the railroads, the first train arriving in Denver on June 15, 1870, was the single most important event in the early history of the city.

With the founding of the Denver Chamber of Commerce in 1884, the organization built their first headquarters building at 12th and Lawrence Streets. The first Chamber of Commerce Building, a Richardsonian-Romanesque Style work by Frank E. Edbrooke, the city's premier 19th century architect, was completed in 1885. It was demolished in the 1960s, replaced by a parking structure.

The Denver Chamber of Commerce, with its wealthy and influential membership, through its many committees, and with its local, state and national commercial and political connections, was central to the development of many, if not most, of the local institutions that define the city even to this day. These include among many other examples: the founding of the federal military post at Fort Logan in 1887; the establishment of the Denver park system in 1892; the construction of the Moffat Tunnel in 1893; securing the Denver Mint in 1896; the founding of the Denver Public Library in 1898, when the group donated more than 30,000 volumes to the fledgling facility; the preparation of plans for the Museum of Natural History in 1898; and proposing what would later be called Speer Boulevard in 1903, a key link in the city's park and parkway system.

In 1909 the Denver Chamber of Commerce began building their second headquarters, the Chamber of Commerce Building, to provide space for their offices and to provide income-producing rental space for other business organizations. The Chamber of Commerce Building was projected to cost $125,000 but eventually cost $200,000.

The cornerstone of the Chamber of Commerce Building was laid on March 8, 1910, in a ceremony attended by several thousand Denver citizens. The cornerstone ceremony featured a speech by Denver's Mayor Robert W. Speer. The building was partly occupied on the ground floor by the executive offices of the Denver Chamber of Commerce as early as September of 1910, at a time when the upper floors were still under construction.

The Chamber of Commerce Building was dedicated and fully opened on January 17, 1911. Dedication ceremonies were attended by thousands of Denver citizens, along with delegations from business groups from all over the country including representatives from organizations in Chicago and Seattle. On the day of the formal dedication, the out-of-town dignitaries were feted to a banquet. The next day, January 18, they were led on an "automobile tour" of Denver followed by a visit in the evening to the National Western Livestock Show, an event which was dubbed "Chamber of Commerce Night." The following day, January 19, dignitaries were given a tour of Colorado Springs, sponsored by that city's Chamber of Commerce. Activities ended the next day, on January 20, with individual meetings.

Originally the ground floor of the Chamber of Commerce Building was occupied by the organization's executive offices, and offices for the group's directors and secretaries. The remainder of the ground floor and the basement were occupied by exhibition rooms. The mezzanine (second floor) was occupied by the Professional Men's Clearing House, an association of secretaries and book-keepers. The third and fourth floors housed the offices of the Real Estate Exchange, the Manufacturers' Association, the Denver Credit Men's Association, the Bank Clerks' Association, the Retail Grocers' Association, the Denver Property Board, and the Master Plumbers' Association. A part of the fourth floor housed a dining room used as a banquet hall for organizations headquartered in the building. The Colorado Traffic Club occupied offices on the fifth and sixth floors.

Other early tenants of the Chamber of Commerce Building included Hadley and Hine, a seller of office supplies, and the Colorado Telephone Company. An on-site rental office was run by the Frederick R. Ross Investment Company, the rental agents for the building. This office was located on the third floor in #300.

A unique feature of the building was the inclusion of the exhibition rooms on the ground floor and in the basement. These rooms were used as a showcase for raw materials and products from Denver and the rest of Colorado. When the building opened, more than fifty companies rented display space in the exhibition rooms including the Lindquist Cracker Company, Western Elaterite Roofing Company, Kuner Pickle Company, Griffith Shoe Company, Barteldes Seed Company, Colfax Pressed Brick Company, Zang Brewery, Great Western Sugar

Company, Denver Fire Clay Company, Coors Brewery, Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Tivoli Union Brewing Company, Colorado Portland Cement Company, Kirchoff Lumber Company, Colorado Metal Extraction Company and Wilson Saddlery Company.

Through the 1970s, the building was still known locally as the Chamber of Commerce Building. Today it is sometimes called the Ross Building. The Denver Chamber of Commerce still exists with offices at 1445 Market Street.

Architectural History

The Chamber of Commerce Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Classical Revival or Neo-Classical style. Neo-Classical style is a uniquely American variant of the European Ecole des Beaux Arts tradition. Buildings in the Neo-Classical style are seen to be more closely associated with the early 19th century Greek Revival Style buildings of the Eastern United States than to either the buildings of the roughly contemporaneous if slightly earlier Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style, or to the buildings of Classical Antiquity in Greece and Italy.

The widespread popularity of the Neo-Classical style is typically seen by architectural historians to be rooted in its introduction to a wide public by the buildings and site planning seen at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Because the huge structures of the exposition had been constructed essentially of lathe and plaster, none survive. However, Charles B. Atwood's Fine Arts Building was reconstructed in permanent materials as Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry.

The style of choice for the design of important buildings in America in the late 19th and early 20th century was one or another of the classical revival styles then in vogue including the Neo-Classical style, Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style and the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

This same interest in using one of the classical revival styles for the design of important buildings is seen here in Denver from early in the city's history with the construction of two major public buildings. The first is the circa 1890 Beaux-Arts Neo-Classical style Arapahoe County Courthouse (demolished in the 1930s) designed by David W. Dryden which stood on Court House Square, Cleveland to Court Places, 15th to 16th Streets. The second, a few blocks away, is the Neo-Classical style Colorado State Capitol Building, occupying the blocks bounded by Lincoln to Grant Streets, East 14th to East Colfax Avenues. The capitol was begun in 1886 with a design by Elijah E. Myers of Detroit. In 1894, Denver architect Frank E. Edbrooke took over, completing the building with his modifications in 1904.

That same year, 1904, Mayor Robert W. Speer took office. Speer, a former real estate developer, was interested in the "City Beautiful" movement that according to the book *Denver: The City Beautiful* by Tom Noel and Barbara Norgren "became the most important architectural theme" of the first half of the 20th century in Denver. Speer's embrace of the "City Beautiful" movement led the three-term mayor to greatly expand, with the important backing of the Denver Chamber of Commerce, the city's park and parkway system, to establish the mountain park system, and to create the downtown Civic Center which was originally intended to provide a never realized link between the Colorado State Capitol Building and the Arapahoe County Courthouse. The Civic Center grew mostly after Speer left office. His last term, which was not continuous with his previous two terms, ended in 1920.

The importance to Denver of the construction of the Chamber of Commerce Building and its central role in the local "City Beautiful" movement is amply demonstrated by the fact that Mayor Speer himself presided over the laying of the cornerstone. And though the Chamber of Commerce Building is not among the first Neo-Classical Revival Style buildings to be constructed in the city, it is relatively early, predating most of the many Neo-Classical Revival style monuments and buildings of the Civic Center, as well as the 1916 Central Post Office on Champa Street between 18th and 19th Streets, just a block away from the Chamber of Commerce Building. The Central Post Office was designed by the New York architectural firm of Tracy, Swartwout and Litchfield.

The designers of the 1909-1911 Chamber of Commerce Building were the Denver architectural firm of Marean and Norton, acknowledged masters of local architecture. The firm was a partnership of Willis Adams Marean (1853-1939) and Albert Julius Norton (1867-1944).

Willis Marean was born in Livonia, New York. He attended the Middlebury Academy and the New York State Normal School. At the age of twenty he moved to New York City where he worked as a draftsman for several architectural firms. Marean come to Denver from New York City in 1880 and was employed as a draftsman in the office of Frank E. Edbrooke.

Albert Norton was born in Utica, New York. He received a B.S. degree from Cornell University in 1884. Before coming to Denver in 1890, he worked for various architectural firms in Boston and New York City. For a year, in 1891, he worked for the Denver architectural firm of Varian and Sterner and then, in 1892, he joined the Frank E. Edbrooke office where he met Marean.

In 1895, the two men left Edbrooke's employ in order to form the partnership of Marean and Norton. In the book *Denver Landmarks* by Langdon Morris published in Denver in 1979 by Charles W. Cleworth, four buildings by Marean and Norton are illustrated and briefly discussed. Author Morris describes the partnership as "...the well-known architectural firm of Marean and Norton" (page 291).

The firm of Marean and Norton became chiefly known as designers of luxury residences in a variety of revival styles. Among the most notable of these is the Georgian Revival Style 1908 Colorado Governor's Mansion (the former Cheesman-Boettcher Mansion) at 400 East 8th Avenue. Another important example of the luxury residential work of Marean and Norton is the Italian Renaissance Revival Style Stoiberhof Mansion (Stoiber-Reed-Humphries Mansion), also of 1908, at 1022 Humbolt Street. Mayor Speer hired the firm to design his own home at 300 Humbolt Street, a c1910 Arts and Crafts Style house. Other large residences by Marean and Norton include the c1915 Bosworth Mansion at 301 High Street and the 1920s Schwab Mansion at 2611 East 7th Avenue. Both are fine examples of the Italian Renaissance Revival Style. Marean and Norton were also responsible for the design of one the city's best examples of Spanish Colonial Revival Style architecture, the 1920s Steele Mansion at 555 South Downing Street.

The Neo-Classical Revival 1909-1911 Chamber of Commerce Building is described in Tom Noel and Barbara Norgren's *Denver: The City Beautiful* on page 211 as one of the firm's "...rare commercial buildings..." The only other surviving commercial building in Denver by Marean and Norton is the much-altered 1910s YMCA building at 25 East 16th Avenue.

The firm's success with wealthy clients from Denver's high society, as indicated by their numerous mansion commissions, is mirrored in the commission for the Chamber of Commerce Building, since that same socially

prominent group comprised the city's business elite. And not surprisingly, the firm was politically well-connected as well, receiving several public commissions, most notably the 1913 Tudor Revival Style Decker Branch of the Denver Public Library at 1501 South Logan Street. In addition, Marean and Norton received two of the most highly sought-after public commissions of the time, the 1912 Neo-Classical Style Cheesman Park Pavilion in Cheesman Park and the Neo-Classical Style 1919 Greek Theater in Civic Center Park.

The Chamber of Commerce building is the oldest of the firm's three Neo-Classical Style buildings. All three, the Chamber of Commerce Building, the Cheesman Park Pavilion, and the Greek Theater, include elaborate exterior lighting schemes. The lighting systems for the Cheesman Park Pavilion and the Greek Theater have been restored and are currently in use. At the Chamber of Commerce Building, the lighting system is still in place and has been recently restored to use by the current owners.

These lighting systems, which were often incorporated into Neo-Classical Style designs, are meant to dramatically bathe these buildings in bright white light. Like the Neo-Classical Style itself, the use of exterior lighting had gained a broad public following Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 where it was used extensively.

Early 20th century Denver was a regional center for buildings incorporating lighting schemes, leading the city to be given the nickname "the City of Lights," according to the February 1909 issue of Denver Municipal Facts. In their book, *Denver: The City Beautiful*, Thomas Noel and Barbara Norgren point out that the "Denver Chamber of Commerce adopted the 'City of Lights' theme in its new building constructed in 1910 at 1726 Champa Street, where electric lights flank the three-story columns" (page 112).

Period photographs reveal that the lighting scheme incorporated into the Chamber of Commerce Building not only illuminated the pilasters, but down-lit the building's base and outlined the cornices that appear above the fifth and sixth floors.

Early 20th century Denver was also a regional center for the use of architectural terra cotta. The Denver Terra Cotta Company, later called the Northwest Denver Terra Cotta Company, was a nationally prominent maker of architectural terra cotta, the only such producer in a thousand-mile radius of the city. As a result, it seems likely that the Denver Terra Cotta Company manufactured the architectural terra cotta used on the facade of the Chamber of Commerce Building.

The Chamber of Commerce Building was constructed by Stocker Fraser, General Contractors.

In the 1950s, the first floor and second floor parapet level facade was covered with steel panels which obscured the original details. Recently these panels were removed, revealing that most of the original Colorado gray granite and terra cotta details survived underneath. The original facade was restored in 1999-2000, with lost details recreated on the basis of historical photographs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chamber of Commerce Building CO-98-00011, Federal Investment Tax Credit project file, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation , Colorado Historical Society.

Chamber of Commerce Building file, Photograph collection, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

Chamber of Commerce News Bulletin, March 1910 through January 1911, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

Denver Chamber of Commerce file, Denver business clippings file, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

Denver Municipal Facts, March 1910 through January 1911, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

Denver Post. January 25, 1976, page 7E.

Morris, Langdon, *Denver Landmarks*, Charles Cleworth, 1979.

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara Norgren, *Denver: The City Beautiful*, Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Whiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*, Boston: MIT Press, 1992.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 9-11, Block 128, East Denver, City and County of Denver, Colorado

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nomination includes all the land historically associated with the building during the period of significance.

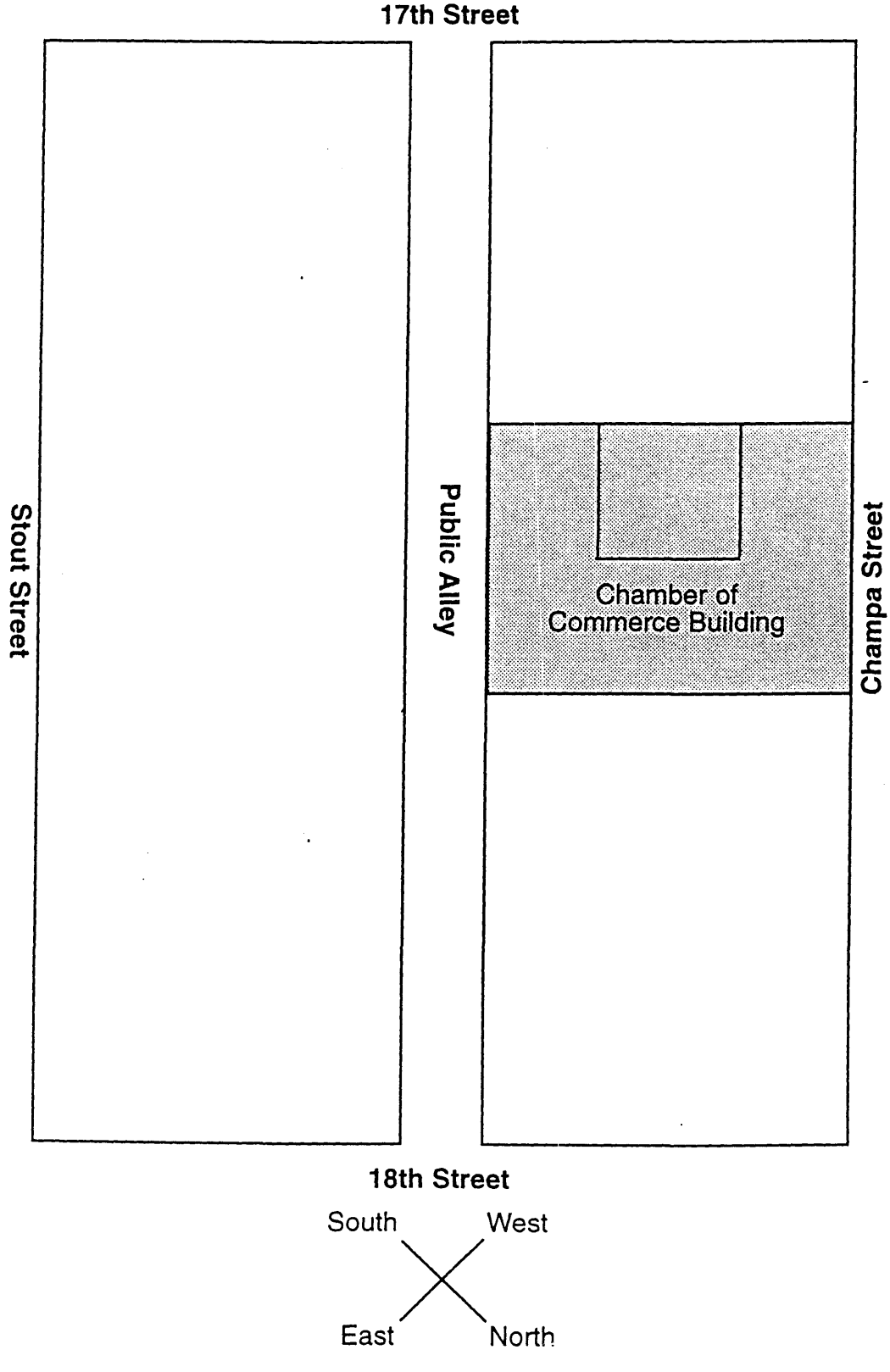
PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-9 except as noted:

Name of Property: Chamber of Commerce Building
Location: Denver, Colorado
Photographer: Diane Wray
Date of Photographs: 11/1/2000
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation , Colorado Historical Society
1300 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	Champa Street facade (northwest elevation); view to the southeast.
2	Champa Street facade (northwest elevation); view to the south.
3	Champa Street facade (northwest elevation); view to the east (10/8/2000).
4	Champa Street facade (northwest elevation); upper level detail.
5	Champa Street facade, entry detail; view to the southeast.
6	Champa Street facade, second-floor cartouche detail; view to the southeast.
7	Champa Street facade, second-floor light detail; view to the southeast.
8	Casting of replacement ornamentation (12/1999).
9	Interior lobby detail; view to the north.
10	Interior lobby detail; stairs; view to the south.

SITE MAP


17th Street
Stout Street
Public Alley
Champa Street
Chamber of Commerce Building
18th Street
South
West
East
North

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Englewood Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series, 1965, Revised 1994