

PH 0665452

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 22 1978
DATE ENTERED	JUL 20 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Public Service Building
AND/OR COMMON

Insurance Exchange Building

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
910 15th Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
01

CITY, TOWN
Denver

VICINITY OF

STATE
Colorado

CODE
08

COUNTY
Denver

CODE
031 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Insurance Exchange Company (Seymour S Fortner - Marvin M Pepper) ✓

STREET & NUMBER

910 15th Street

CITY, TOWN

Denver

VICINITY OF

Colorado

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk and Recorder Office-City and County Building

STREET & NUMBER

13th and Bannock Streets

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites/Denver Inventory

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

The State Historical Society of Colorado, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Insurance Exchange Building is architecturally significant because of its terra cotta detailing and utilization of lighting as part of the concept. The ten story building is Sullivan-esque in style because of its simple, clear-cut form terminated with a flat roof and projecting cornice. The building is rectangular with dimensions of 125' by 150'. The exterior walls are made of light colored pressed brick and trimmed with white terra cotta.

The first floor is basically unchanged except for a cement awning, projecting out above the doorway, which is made of tinted glass. The entrance is bounded on either side by highly decorated columns made of terra cotta that represent no particular style or period. The capitals are plain except for a band with an egg and dart design at the top. There are large picture windows of tinted glass, and between them are light colored pressed brick panels outlined by a molding made of terra cotta. The molding has a design which combines naturalistic and stylized foliage with a variety of linear interlaces and other repeating motifs.

From the second to the ninth floor, the building has flat lintel windows, 1x1 double hung, that are arranged into vertical bands. The tenth floor has round arched windows that seem to flow into the projecting curved cornice which is decorated with oeil-de-boeufs or bull's eye windows and terra cotta medallions of different shapes and sizes.

The building's exterior is covered with 13,000 lights ranging from 5 watts to 200 watts. The wattage could be changed on the lights to create different visual effects. Between each of the windows on the second floor, the lights are arranged in a rectangular shape with a cross and diamond shape in the middle. From the third to the eighth floor, the lights are arranged in bands of crosses between each of the windows and above and below the windows. On the ninth and tenth floors the lights border the windows and cornice with the shape of a round arch, creating the effect of one huge window by night. The same rectangular shape design that is found on the second floor divides the ninth and tenth floor windows.

According to the Rocky Mountain News, no other building in the United States could boast of anything approaching it from the lighting standpoint, but because of the rising cost of electricity and energy conservation, the lights won't be turned on anymore. However, by daylight the architectural beauty of the terra cotta designs, where the light globes are placed, is still visible, and there has been no exterior remodeling to diminish the overall beauty of this lavishly decorated building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1909 to present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Insurance Exchange Building is notable for its excellent architectural design utilizing light as part of the concept and for its importance to the growth of Denver and Colorado.

In 1869, gas service was first furnished in Denver by the Denver Gas Company. This was the first investor owned utility in Denver that manufactured gas in retort houses to illuminate streets and some homes. Eleven years later, the first electric lighting appeared which led to the formation of the Colorado Electric Company in 1881 and of many other electric companies throughout Colorado. In 1892, when the Silver Purchase Act was repealed and the depression followed, many electric companies merged together for economic reasons. This merger brought about the incorporation, in 1899, of the Denver Gas and Electric Company.

After the depression ended and business was booming again, more companies were formed. One of the more famous companies was the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company, because it was soon to become important to the growth of Denver and Colorado.

With the rapid growth of this company, new offices were a necessity. Property was purchased at 910 15th Street, and in 1908 construction began. There is some question as to who designed the building. According to one source it was designed by Frank Edbrooke, a prominent Denver architect who designed, among other things, the well known Brown Palace Hotel. However, a contemporary source lists the architects Aaron Gove and Thomas Walsh, both noted Denver architects who designed many Denver buildings among which was Union Station. Whoever designed the building utilized the combination of terra cotta and electric lighting to create a structure that quickly became famous both for its own beauty and as a monument to the benefits of electric lighting.

The building was officially opened and dedicated on November 10, 1910 at 8p.m.. At that time 75,000 people gathered around to watch Mayor Speer stand on a two story platform and push the button that shed light on Denver and the West. The lights were turned on every night from dusk to dawn at

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Electrical West; 75th Anniversary Issue; 1887-1962 (pages 209-224)
 Obituaries and news articles in various issues of the Rocky Mountain News
 and, the Denver Post 1906-1968
 Smiley, Jerome C. History of Denver, Denver: The Denver Times; The Times-Sun Publishing Company, 1901 (page 896)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY under one acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	5,00,42,0	43,9,93,2,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 27-32 Block 106 East Denver Addition

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Carrie Fillis

January 10, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Historic Denver Inc.

837-1858

STREET & NUMBER

770 Pennsylvania Street

TELEPHONE

Colorado

CITY OR TOWN

Denver

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Stephen W. Hart

TITLE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE MARCH 31, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<i>Charles A. ...</i>	DATE <u>7-20-78</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>Wathorne Cole</i>	DATE <u>6-19-78</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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the company's expense. The building became famous all over the world for its magnificent lighting. Postcards by the thousands were made showing the lighted building. The one million dollar, fire proof building was a nationally known landmark. On September 25, 1943, the lights were turned off for the duration of the war. When the war ended in 1945, the lights were turned on when Japan gave its official surrender. The lights were finally turned off because of the rising cost of electricity.

Of the important people connected with the Public Service Company, Henry L. Doherty is one of the most prominent. In 1911, the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company, headed by Henry L. Doherty, bought out the Denver Steam Heating Company, the Denver Gas and Electric Company, the Lacombe Electric Company and the Denver Highland Electric Company. Doherty, who was born in Columbus, Ohio, became president of the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company in 1909. His ability as an engineer and manager made possible the tremendous growth of the company. In 1924, when the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company merged with the Public Service Company of Colorado, Doherty remained president of the company. So what had started in 1909 as the Denver Gas and Electric Light Company, became the largest electric company in Colorado, known as the Public Service Company of Colorado.

The offices of the Public Service Company of Colorado remained at 910 15th Street until 1963 when they moved to 15th and Welton Streets. The Public Service Company of Colorado sold their magnificent building to the Insurance Exchange Company, headed by Seymour Fortner and Marvin Pepper. At that time the building was renamed the Insurance Exchange Building. This company provides office space to other insurance companies and other types of businesses.

The Insurance Exchange Building retains its original beauty and even though the lights won't be turned on again, the people will still remember it for its historical and architectural merit.