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City and County Building
Civic Center
Denver
Denver County
Colorado

HABS No. CO-68

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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America's City Halls Project

A Joint Program of The American Institute of Architects, The United States Conference of Mayors, and The United States Department of Interior. (This roughly follows the Guidelines for this Project.)

THE CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING OF DENVER, COLORADO
Allied Architects Association of Denver, Architects
1924-1934 Section I

This outstanding building is located, in Denver's nationally renowned Civic Center, between West Colfax Avenue on the north and Fourteenth Avenue on the south. Cherokee Street runs on the west and Bannock Street on the east. It faces east on the main axes of the Denver Civic Center looking toward the State Capitol of Colorado which, in turn, faces west. (See Photographs of the Site Plan and the Model of the Denver Civic Center.)

The present owner is the City and County of Denver and it is still used as it was planned--some fifty years ago. The structure's significance is and has remained the same over the years. The building is the western terminus of the main axis of the Civic Center of which the State Capitol of Colorado is the eastern terminus. The City and County of Denver owns the property west of Broadway and the State of Colorado owns the property east of Broadway. The buildings are some five blocks apart. (Descriptive material of the Building and Civic Center are included herewith.)

place late in 1932 or early in 1933, date unknown.

The Allied Architects Association of Denver goal was:

"To advance the art of architecture and by professional cooperation and collaboration to secure for and to provide the City and County of Denver with the highest and best expression of the profession of architecture, in design and construction of Denver's New Municipal Building and to so act in response to a professional and public duty is the paramount purpose which led to the formation of the Allied Architects Association of Denver in June of 1923." Quote from minutes of the Association.

The total membership of the original group was thirty-nine (later the number was 40.) Every licensed architect of the Colorado Chapter (now the Colorado Society) of the American Institute of Architects residing in Denver was a member. The officers were: Robert K. Fuller, President; William E. Fisher, First Vice President; William N. Bowman, Second Vice President; George H. Williamson, Treasurer; and T. Robert Wieger, Secretary. These five men plus two directors, at large, Fred E. Montjoy and Merrill H. Hoyt formed the Board of Directors of the A.A.A.

(For the Building and the Civic Center drawings and plans, newspaper articles, and other material see the various enclosures.)

The General Contractor's base bid was:

Varnum-Bate, Denver, Colorado	\$ 4,224,412.97
Plumbing	\$ 57,342.86
Lighting (Electrical)	\$ 82,621.53
Heating	\$ <u>285,080.25</u>
Total Building Contracts	\$ 4,649,457.61
Furnishings and Equipment, etc.	\$ <u>81,089.39</u>
Grand Total	\$ 4,730,547.00

The original plans and construction documents, titles, etc. are in the office of the Denver Building Department, the office of the Denver Planning Department, the office of the Clerk and Recorder, and office of the Treasurer, etc.

The exterior appearance of the building today is the same as originally designed. The interior office spaces have been remodeled in excellent manner to increase the number of court rooms needed today. Major circulation corridors, hallways, stairways, elevators are intact as originally designed.

PART II - Architectural Information

To quote - "Denver is to have one of the most beautiful municipal buildings in the country, according to commendations given by noted American Architects to drawings and models of the proposed structure, prepared by the Allied Architects Association." The model aroused

considerable admiration at the annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York in 1925-1926. --and from the minutes of the Annual meeting of the A.A.A. held on January 26, 1926: "The President presented letters in commendation of the design for the new Municipal Building received from Mr. D. E. Wade, President of the American Institute of Architects and also from the office of McKim, Mead and White, Architects of New York City."

The City and County Building of Denver is some 435 feet long and some 273 feet wide enclosing some 409,140 square feet of useable space. It is basically a four-story building designed in a modified classical style (Roman) to fit into and compliment the other buildings in the Denver Civic Center. The first floor exterior is granite coming from the quarries south of Denver in the South Platte River region. (Known as Cotopaxi Granite.) Since many of the quarries in Colorado were shattered when the Rocky Mountains were thrust-up, the upper three stories were built of Indiana Limestone. The structure is a steel frame encased in concrete. The steam heating plant is located in the block south of the City and County Building and piped through a tunnel to the building. Many of the offices and courtrooms are now air conditioned by lowering the high ceilings or by other methods if possible.

"The interior is finished in a variety of fine stones. The walls of the main entry lobby, corridors, stairways, etc. are of Colorado Travertine. The eight travertine columns between the Main Corridor

and Main Lobby are claimed to be the tallest travertine monolithic columns in the world. Colorado Yule Marble is used on all the counter tops of the public offices and in all the main restrooms. (The Lincoln Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C. are built of Colorado Yule Marble.) The terrazzo floor borders and the stair treads are a pink Tennessee marble. The courtrooms are trimmed in Travernelle-Clair stone from Italy and the main entrances to the offices are of Roseal Tennessee marble. Also used was pearl and gray Vermont marble for the baseboards in the various courtrooms and offices, black and gold marble from Italy for the main corridors baseboard borders and Italian Boticinni marble for the main entry vestibule and drinking fountain niches."

"The twenty-six foot high by thirteen foot wide bronze doors cast for the Main Entrance are said to be the largest in the world."

"The clock in the tower still chimes the hour, the half hour, and the quarter hour from the 10 bell Westminster carillon. The largest bell weighs some 5,000 pounds. These chimes were donated by the late Mrs. Kate Speer in memory of the man who was the early driving force behind the later realization of Denver's Civic Center, her husband, Mayor Robert W. Speer." to quote from David Kent Ballast's Denver's Civic Center - A Walking Tour.

PART III - Sources of Information

Much information is available on this outstanding building at the City and County Building, the Western History Department of Denver's

Public Library, the Colorado State Historic Society, and the private collection of Fuller Fuller & Associates, Architects-Planners. All enclosed material with this submittal carry their own acknowledgements and credits.

This final draft prepared
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With the most able assistance of--
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