

### **National Historic Landmark (NHL) Nomination for the Denver Civic Center**

The document now under review nominates the Denver Civic Center as a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The proposed NHL district generally extends from the State Capitol on the east to the Denver City and County Building on the west (see attached Map). State properties included within the boundary include: the State Capitol and its grounds; the State Office Building (northeast corner of Colfax and Sherman); the old State Museum Building (southeast corner of E. 14<sup>th</sup> and Sherman); and Lincoln Park.

Denver Civic Center was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1974, with a boundary revision and additional information completed in 1988. The proposed NHL boundary is smaller than the NRHP district boundary, focusing only on those resources associated with the national significance of Civic Center and those constructed within the City Beautiful era period of significance, 1904-35. The City Beautiful movement promoted a variety of civic improvements throughout American cities in the early twentieth century.

The National Park Service, which administers the NHL program, explains that “*National Historic Landmarks* are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.” Presently, NHLs comprise less than 3 percent of all properties listed in the National Register. The San Francisco Civic Center is the only other resource of this type currently recognized as an NHL.

Denver Civic Center’s *national* significance includes its role as:

- A western example of a fully-realized City Beautiful era civic center.
- An exceptional late American Beaux-Arts design representing the work of several nationally and regionally prominent planners, architects, artists, and landscape architects.
- A holistic ensemble of built and landscape elements, significant in the areas of architecture, planning, art, and landscape design.

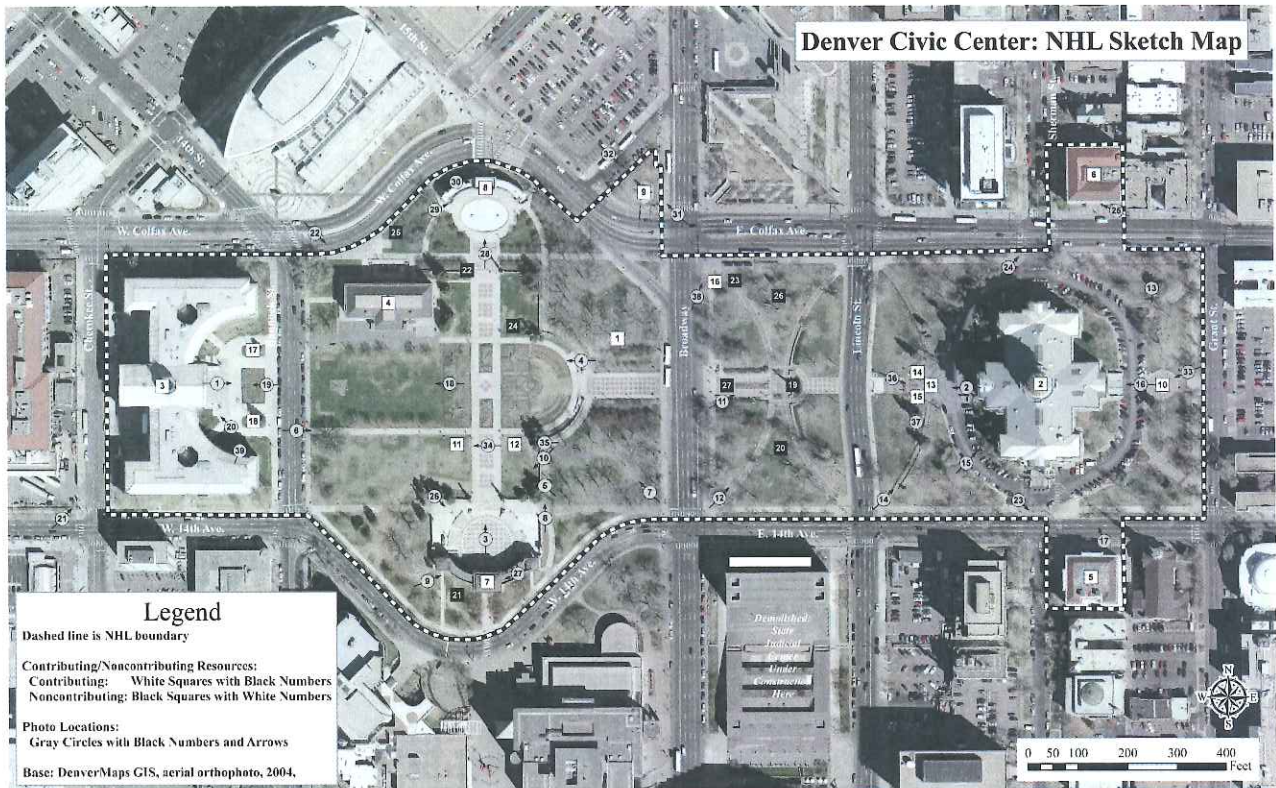
What does NHL designation mean?

- A prestigious recognition of the national importance of a property.
- Similar to properties listed on the National Register, no federal restrictions on use or management of property; however, projects potentially affecting NHLs are subject to review if they involve federal licensing, permitting, or funding.
- Owners qualify for special federal historic preservation funding, including Save America’s Treasures and Preserve America Grants, when funds are available.
- A bronze plaque bearing the name of the National Historic Landmark and attesting to its national significance will be presented to the owner upon request.

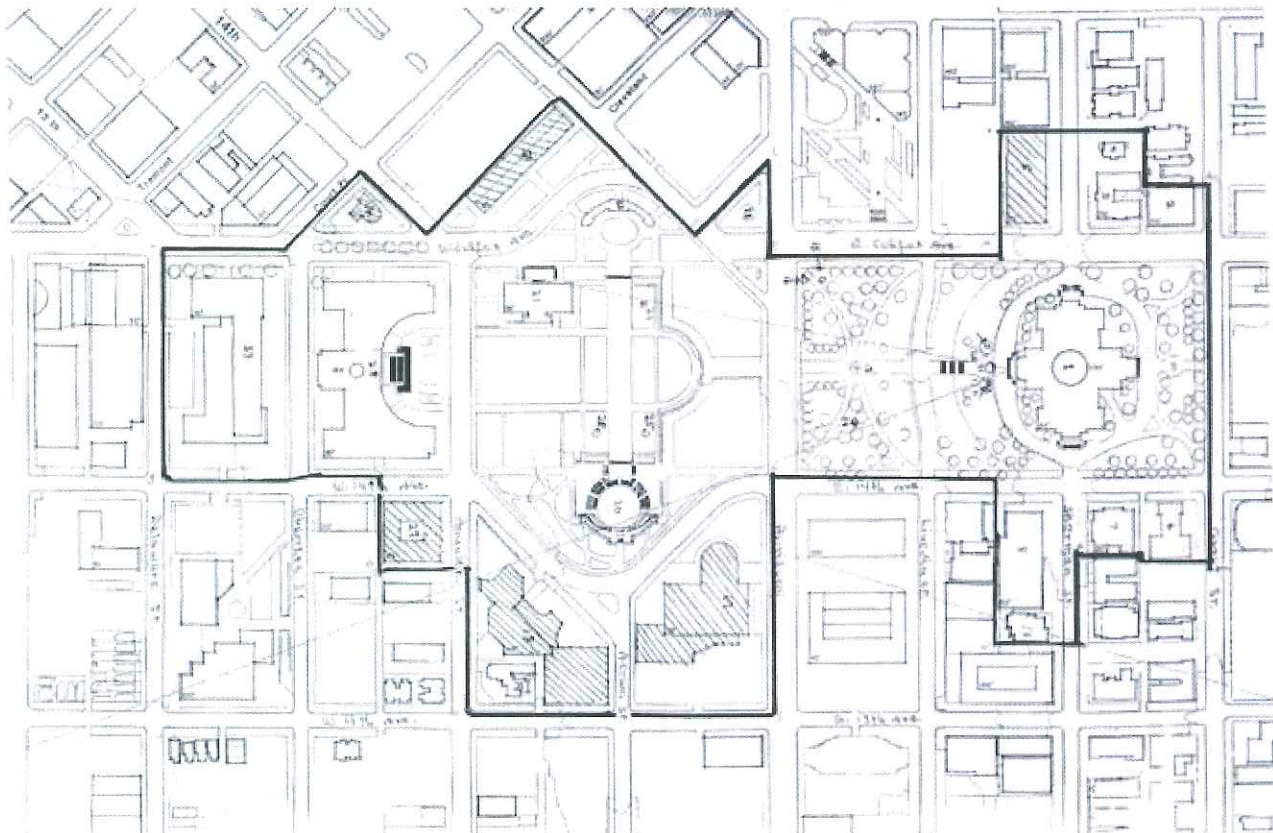
A brochure explaining the NHL program is available at: <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/publications/Brochure.pdf>



# Denver Civic Center NHL Nomination - Proposed Boundary

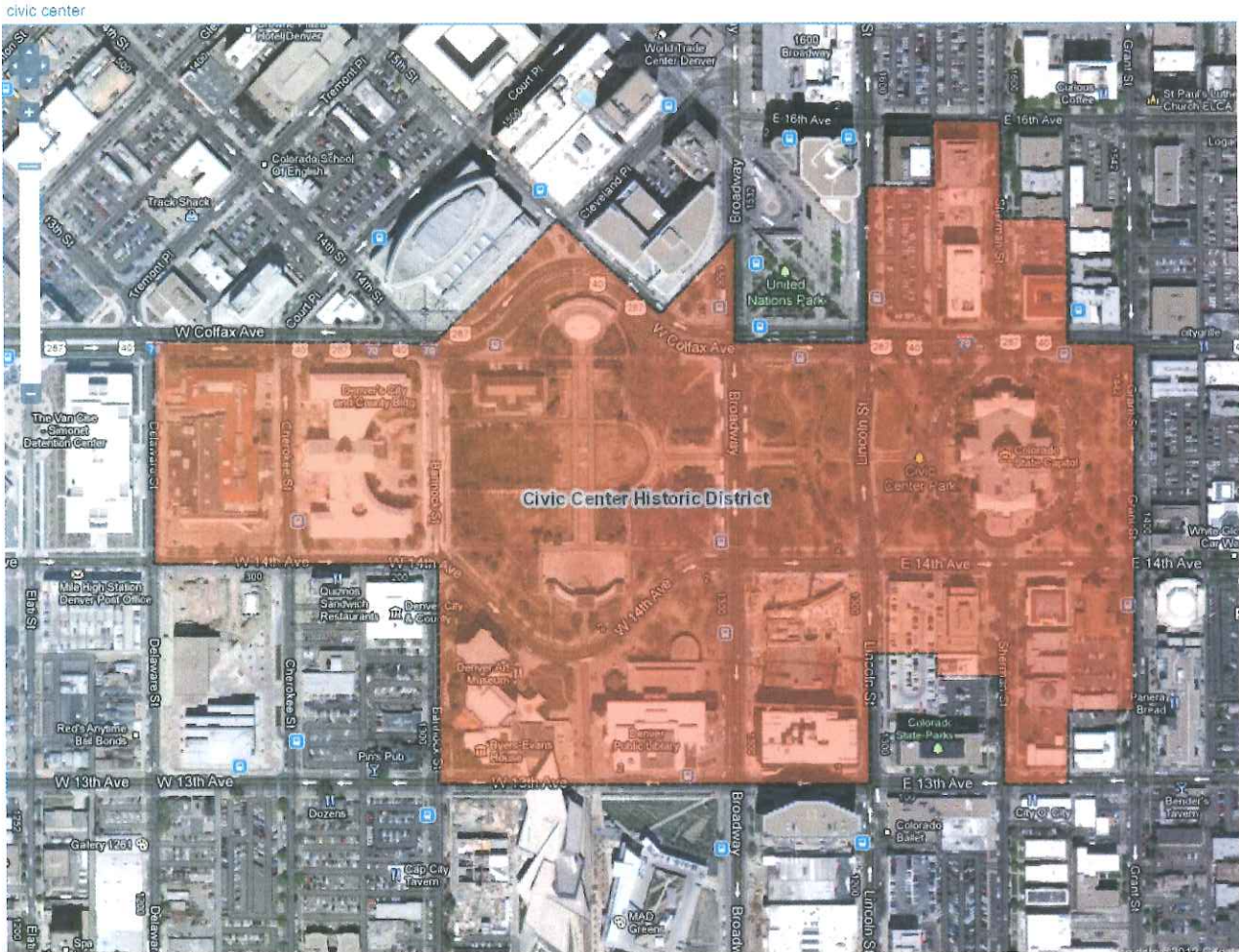


# Denver Civic Center National Register Boundary





# Denver Civic Center Historic District - Local Designation



## Denver Civic Center - Colorado State Buildings



State Office Building



State Museum Building



Colorado State Capitol

## COLORADO STATE MUSEUM

Although planners designed the Capitol to house the entire state government, lack of adequate space for all departments quickly became apparent. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Progressive officeholders such as Governor John F. Shafroth advocated a more active role for government, resulting in the creation of new agencies, boards, and commissions, and the need for additional state office space. One approach explored in 1907-08 involved extending the east wing of the Capitol, a plan that included preserving the portico by disassembling and then reassembling it after completion of the addition. The state dropped this plan in favor of constructing a new building nearby.

Collections of the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado (founded in 1879) in the Capitol basement constituted a popular tourist draw, but they consumed valuable space in the statehouse. In 1909 the state legislature authorized the first expansion in state facilities adjacent to the Capitol with passage of an act providing for erection of the Colorado State Museum. The new building would accommodate the holdings of the State Historical Society, thus freeing up space in the Capitol for boards and commissions.

The State Board of Capitol Managers purchased a site immediately south of the statehouse at the southeast corner of East 14th Avenue and Sherman Street in May 1909. Capitol Superintendent Frank E. Edbrooke drafted plans for the building and excavation began in October. In June 1912 *Denver Municipal Facts* included a photograph of the partially completed building and optimistically predicted it would be finished by late autumn. However, construction proceeded slowly, and rumors swirled that the \$487,000 building might instead be used to house the Supreme Court or serve as a Governor's mansion. With the building complete in early 1915, the State Historical and Natural History Society of Colorado took several months to install its extensive archeological collection, mineralogical specimens, Civil War relics, and newspapers, photographs, and Colorado history books, opening to the public in September 1915.

The museum construction featured native Colorado materials, including walls of Colorado Yule marble from Gunnison County and a granite foundation harmonizing with the Capitol. Edbrooke characterized the style of the building as "modified Roman classical." Historian Thomas J. Noel characterized the building as illustrating Edbrooke's ability to make "the leap from nineteenth-century Romantic styles to early twentieth-century Neoclassicism." The museum is cited as the last building designed by Edbrooke prior to his retirement in 1915; the architect died six years later. In a book about Denver's early architecture, Richard Brettell praised the building:



Its plan is symmetrical, clear, and ample. The classical allusions are no longer piece-meal, nor are they tempered by elements of other styles from other architectural pasts. Rather, the classicism is apparently complete and almost archaeological in its effect on the viewer. The building is architecturally pure and its imagery exudes a hardened pomp and grandeur.

## **COLORADO STATE OFFICE BUILDING**

State functions and employees continued to grow, with increased duties arising during World War I in association with the Adjutant General and defense programs. In 1912 the Board of Capitol Managers recommended purchase of future building sites north and south of the State Capitol. The legislature authorized funds for such acquisitions in 1917, and three of four sites were obtained. A joint committee investigated spatial needs and recommended erection of a new building to house state workers. The Legislature selected the northeast corner of East Colfax Avenue and Sherman Street for the building site and directed construction to begin immediately so the project would provide jobs to returning soldiers.

The Board commissioned respected Denver architect William N. Bowman to prepare plans for the Colorado State Office Building, with the firm of Seerie and Varnum serving as general contractors. Bowman labeled his design "Roman Corinthian." Construction began in August 1919, with the cornerstone laid in June 1920. The exterior employed Cotopaxi granite, while the interior featured Botticino marble in the lobby and first story and Vermont marble in the remainder of the five-story edifice.

The total cost of the building reached \$1,494,375, considerably more than the \$750,000 initially budgeted. The *Denver Post* charged Colorado taxpayers were being "mulcted" (extorted or swindled) due to mismanagement of the project by the Board of Capitol Managers. State workers occupied the building in 1921. The following year the state installed two bronze mountain lion sculptures created by Robert Garrison flanking the main entrance. Tunnels carrying heating pipes and power connected the new building to the Capitol and the Colorado State Museum. William R. Pyle judged "the newest addition to Colorado's Capitol complex was functional, timely, and majestic."

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W. Room NC-400  
Washington, DC 20240

## LISTING OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS BY STATE

### COLORADO (21)

BENT'S OLD FORT .....	12/19/60
OTERO COUNTY, COLORADO	
CENTRAL CITY/BLACK HAWK HISTORIC DISTRICT.....	07/04/61
CENTRAL CITY, GILPIN COUNTY, COLORADO	
COLORADO CHAUTAUQUA .....	02/10/06
BOULDER, COLORADO	
CRIPPLE CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT .....	07/04/61
CRIPPLE CREEK, TELLER COUNTY, COLORADO	
DURANGO-SILVERTON NARROW-GAUGE RAILROAD.....	07/04/61
LA PLATA AND SAN JUAN COUNTIES, COLORADO	
GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME HISTORIC DISTRICT.....	11/13/66
CLEAR CREEK COUNTY, COLORADO	
GRANADA RELOCATION CENTER.....	02/10/06
GRANADA, PROWERS COUNTY, COLORADO	
LEADVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT.....	07/04/61
LEADVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, COLORADO	
LINDENMEIER SITE .....	01/20/61
LARIMER COUNTY, COLORADO	
LOWRY RUIN .....	07/19/64
MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO	
LUDLOW TENT COLONY SITE.....	01/16/09
LUDLOW, LAS ANIMAS COUNTY, COLORADO	
MESA VERDE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT.....	05/29/87
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK, MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO	
PHILADELPHIA TOBOGGAN COMPANY CAROUSEL #6 .....	02/27/87
BURLINGTON, KIT CARSON COUNTY, COLORADO	
PIKE'S PEAK .....	07/04/61
EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO	
PIKE'S STOCKADE.....	07/04/61
CONEJOS COUNTY, COLORADO	
RATON PASS ( <i>Also in New Mexico</i> ).....	12/19/60
LAS ANIMAS COUNTY, COLORADO and COLFAX COUNTY, NEW MEXICO	
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.....	01/03/01
ESTES PARK, LARIMER COUNTY, COLORADO	
SHENANDOAH-DIVES (MAYFLOWER) MILL.....	02/16/00
SILVERTON, SAN JUAN COUNTY, COLORADO	
SILVERTON HISTORIC DISTRICT.....	07/04/61
SILVERTON, SAN JUAN COUNTY, COLORADO	
TELLURIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT .....	07/04/61
TELLURIDE, SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, COLORADO	
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY, CADET AREA.....	04/01/04
EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO	

### APPENDIX A

The numerous designations within the National Park System sometime confuse visitors. The names are created in the Congressional legislation authorizing the sites or by the president, who proclaims "national monuments" under the Antiquities Act of 1906. Many names are descriptive -- lakeshores, seashores, battlefields --but others cannot be neatly categorized because of the diversity of resources within them. In 1970, Congress elaborated on the 1916 National Park Service Organic Act, saying all units of the system have equal legal standing in a national system.

**National Park [NP]**

These are generally large natural places having a wide variety of attributes, at times including significant historic assets. Hunting, mining and consumptive activities are not authorized.

**National Monument [NM]**

The Antiquities Act of 1906 authorized the President to declare by public proclamation landmarks, structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest situated on lands owned or controlled by the government to be national monuments.

**National Historic Site [NHS]**

Usually, a national historic site contains a single historical feature that was directly associated with its subject. Derived from the Historic Sites Act of 1935, a number of historic sites were established by secretaries of the Interior, but most have been authorized by acts of Congress.

**National Historic Park [NHP]**

This designation generally applies to historic parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings.

**National Memorial [NMem]**

A national memorial is commemorative of a historic person or episode; it need not occupy a site historically connected with its subject.

**National Battlefield [NB]**

This general title includes national battlefield, national battlefield park, national battlefield site, and national military park. In 1958, an NPS committee recommended national battlefield as the single title for all such park lands.

**Other Designations [OD]**

Some units of the National Park System bear unique titles or combinations of titles, like the White House.

**APPENDIX B****NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM UNITS AUTOMATICALLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC SITE	[IHS]
NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD	[NB]
NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK	[NBP]
NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE	[NBS]
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES	[NHS]
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK	[NHP]
NATIONAL MEMORIAL	[NMEM]
NATIONAL MILITARY PARK	[NMP]
NATIONAL MONUMENT	[NM]

**COLORADO**

BENT'S OLD FORT NHS  
 HOVENWEEP NM (SEE ALSO UTAH)  
 MESA VERDE NP  
 YUCCA HOUSE NM