



Name of Property: Denver Civic Center
City, State: Denver, Colorado
Period of Significance: 1890-1935
NHL Criteria: 1, 4
NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design
Previous Recognition: 1974 National Register of Historic Places
1988 NRHP Boundary Amendment/Additional Documentation
National Historic Context: VII. Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1939
C. The Progressive Era, 1901-1914
XVI. Architecture
W. Regional and Urban Planning
1. Urban Areas
XVII. Landscape Architecture
XXIV. Painting and Sculpture
G. Historical Painting and Sculpture: Memory and Dreams,
1876-1908
H. The 20th Century, 1900-1930
3. Regionalism, 1915-1935

NHL Significance:

- The Denver Civic Center is an outstanding representation of the City Beautiful movement and its widespread impact on American cities through the creation of planned civic centers in the early twentieth century. This theme is central to the history of



American planning, architecture, landscape architecture, and art.

- Heralded as “one of the most complete and intact City Beautiful civic centers in the country,” the Denver example possesses a remarkable degree of artistic quality in its overall synthesis of design, interpretation of neoclassical design, rich display of native Colorado stone, and sculptural representation of western ideals and heritage.
- Ranking among the handful of civic centers nationwide to reach a stage of completion, the civic center represents a property type that, despite being foremost in the aspirations of the era’s planners and public officials, was rarely constructed.
- The Denver Civic Center is an outstanding public landscape and collection of public buildings and monuments unified by Beaux-Arts influenced architecture and formal principles of landscape design. Laid out in a sequence of four public spaces, the civic center extends along a linear axis from the Colorado State Capitol on the east to the Denver City and County Building set against the backdrop of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains on the west.
- The district’s artistic merit derives from the work of several nationally and regionally prominent planners, landscape architects, architects, and artists, including Edward H. Bennett, Charles Mulford Robinson, Frederick MacMonnies, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Elijah E. Myers, Alexander Phimister Proctor, Preston Powers, and Allen Tupper True.

Integrity:

- The district is remarkably intact retaining significant features of the historic designed landscape, including the cross-axial plan, open vistas, historic vegetation, paths and plazas, lawns and wooded groves, public buildings, monuments, and statuary established or installed during the period of significance. Resources added after the period of significance are generally small and in keeping with the artistic and commemorative intent envisioned by early planners.

Owner of Property: City and County of Denver; State of Colorado

Acreage of Property: 33 acres

Origins of Nomination: The NHL process began in 2006 when the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office queried the National Park Service’s (NPS) Intermountain Regional Office,



Denver, about the civic center's potential for NHL designation. NPS encouraged the nomination effort and provided partial funding for a University of Colorado intern to begin the research. Subsequently, Historic Denver, Inc., a nonprofit organization, took on the role of sponsoring the NHL nomination; the organization received additional funding through a Colorado State Historical Fund grant and hired Front Range Research Associates, Inc. to prepare the documentation.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Recognition of the Denver Civic Center as an NHL will help ensure that a preservation ethic will guide the future management, maintenance, and revitalization of the civic center and its component resources.
- Designation will further raise awareness within the local community, state, and nation for the rich heritage represented by the civic center, thereby strengthening civic pride and popular support for its continued maintenance and preservation.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 4/25/12):

Bob Bacon, Senator, State of Colorado

Georgianna Contiguglia, Chair, Capitol Building Advisory Committee, State of Colorado

Dennis Humphries, Chair, Denver Landmark Preservation Commission, Colorado

Advisory Board Recommendation: