

OAHP1403

Rev. 9/98

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

Official eligibility determination
(OAHP use only)

Date _____ Initials _____

_____ Determined Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Eligible- SR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- SR
_____ Need Data
_____ Contributes to eligible NR District
_____ Noncontributing to eligible NR District

INTENSIVE LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Parcel #/s

2077-16-3-11-010

Neighborhood

3566.00 Off Broadway (South)

I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource number: 5AH.1979
2. Temporary resource #: N/A
3. County: Arapahoe
4. City: Littleton
5. Historic building name: Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph
6. Current building name: Centurylink Communications
7. Building address: 1699 W Littleton Blvd
8. Owner name, address: Mtn States Tel & Tel D/B/A-US West Communications
1005 17th St Suite 1550
Denver, CO 80202-2028



National Register: Eligible for Individual Listing (local level)

Ineligible for District Listing

State Register: Eligible for Individual Listing (local level)

Ineligible for District Listing

Littleton Landmark Eligible for Individual Listing

Eligible for District Listing

II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. **PLSS information:** PM6 T5S R68W, NE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Section 16
 10. **UTM reference:** NAD 83 ZONE 13S
 11. **USGS quad name:** Littleton
Year: 2016
Map scale: 1:24000
 12. **Lot(s)** 19-24
Block: 6
Addition: Littleton Hts
Year of Addition: 1890
 13. **Boundary Description and Justification:**
 Lots 19-24 Blk 6 Littleton Hts
 The boundary of the property is the legally defined parcel.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. **Building plan (footprint, shape):** Rectangular
 15. **Dimensions in feet:** 113' x 107'
 16. **Number of stories:** Two to Three Stories (in height)
 17. **Primary external wall material(s):** Brick
 18. **Roof configuration:** Flat
 19. **Primary external roof material:** Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof or Synthetic Roof
 20. **Special features:** N/A
 21. **General architectural description:**

The former Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph building is located toward the east and south of a rectangular lot at the northeast corner of W Littleton Blvd and S Louthan St.

The two to three-story rectangular building has a flat roof with projecting eaves above a deep frieze. The fascia, soffit and frieze are all constructed of rough exposed-aggregate concrete panels. Between the soffit and frieze is a dark recessed band that creates the impression that the roof is floating above the body of the building. The primary material is a smooth-faced orange Norman brick laid running-bond with an end-bond row every sixth course. Other materials include exposed-aggregate concrete, concrete block masonry, and metal and glass doors and windows.

The main entrance is located at the west end of the south wall/ facade, a single step above an entrance walkway. It is articulated by five full-height projecting vertical piers of rough exposed-aggregate concrete. At the first floor, projecting between the piers, are four rectangular concrete hoods of polished exposed-aggregate concrete. These hoods shelter a full-height window behind a low concrete planter box at grade, two recessed brick planter boxes with blind walls behind, and a recessed front entry with a metal and glass door, sidelight and transom and metal service door.

On the west wall, a slightly recessed group of four windows appears above rough exposed-aggregate concrete spandrel panels. Panels of polished exposed-aggregate concrete appear between the windows and form a narrow frame around the entire grouping. Below, an integral planter box of rough exposed-aggregate concrete extends the full width of the grouping. Above, there are two large ventilation grilles.

The blind east wall, facing the alley, has two shallow projecting masonry piers and, to the north, a pedestrian door positioned at loading dock height.

The north wall, constructed of painted concrete block masonry, faces a surface parking lot. A steel beam hoist projects from a large recessed, covered opening just below the roofline to the east. Beneath, a series of concrete steps with pipe railing provide access to a service door. There is a masonry pier and a chimney that extends through and above the rear roofline.

22. **Architectural style:** Modern Movement / Formalist Style
Building type Commercial

23. Landscaping or special setting features:

A small concrete patio the width of the main entry composition appears in front of the building. There is a low bench of the same polished exposed-aggregate that details the building. There are two large evergreen shrubs near the foundation of the facade; one mature tree appears between the public sidewalk and S. Louthan St and three smaller, more recently planted trees appears be-

tween the public sidewalk and W. Littleton Blvd. Surface parking appears to the west and north of the building.

24. Associated buildings, features, or objects:

Individual surface-mounted metal letters spell out "1699 W. Littleton Blvd." on the brick masonry just east of the main entrance.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

- 25. Date of Construction:** 1968
Estimated or Actual: Actual
Source of information: "Souvenir of Your Community, Littleton, Colorado, U.S.A.," *Littleton Independent*, 1968.
- 26. Architect:** Temple Buell
Source of information: Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Temple Buell Archive.
- 27. Builder/Contractor:** Unknown
Source of information: N/A
- 28. Original owner:** Unknown
Source of information: N/A
- 29. Construction history (description, dates of major additions, alterations, demolitions):**
 A 1953 rendering shows a one-story building that Buell designed for the Littleton site (see "1699 WLB Historic 03.jpg" below). A 1968 rendering from the *Littleton Independent* (see "1699 WLB Historic 01.jpg" below) shows the two-story building that replaced the 1953 building and still stands in original condition on the site today. Variations in brick along the alley of the current building may indicate that a wall from the older building was incorporated into the current building, or that brick from the older building was salvaged and re-used.
- 30. Original Location:** Yes
Date of move(s): N/A

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

- 31. Original use(s):** Commerce/Trade
32. Intermediate use(s): Commerce/Trade
33. Current use(s): Commerce/Trade
34. Site Type(s): Commercial Building
35. Historical background:

The post-WWII period in Littleton was characterized by a rapid expansion of telephone service that correlated with increasing housing development and population growth. In 1949, there were 2,016 telephones and daily calls numbered 9,500. By 1960, the number of individual phones numbered 17,360 and by 1962, daily calls had increased to 111,900. Similar increases were made through 1967.

At the beginning of the period, thirteen telephone operators manually connected each telephone call in Littleton. In 1954, rotary dial phones arrived using the "Pyramid" exchange. A new Mountain State Telephone and Telegraph switching facility, designed by architect Temple Buell, was built at 1699 West Littleton Boulevard to house the necessary equipment. The transfer to dial service was completed with just two minutes of interrupted service. In 1961, the Pyramid exchange was replaced by a ten-digit number, opening the door for push button dialing, scheduled for completion by 1964.

Between 1954 and 1956, telephone company equipment shortages delayed the installation of new home phones for up to two years. To provide emergency access in the interim, coin-operated phone booths were installed in the neighborhoods. Many other homeowners shared "party lines" until private lines became available. Single, old-fashioned telephones became obsolete. A variety of new styles and colors made phones decorative accessories that could be used throughout the home. Through their growing popularity, phones became an increasingly important part of modern American life. Phones began to establish an important place in the culture through their growing, collective use. "Every Phone in Littleton in Use" read a headline in the *Littleton Independent* following the assassination of President Kennedy.

A 1953 rendering shows a one-story building that Buell designed for the Littleton site (see “1699 WLB Historic 03.jpg” below). A 1968 rendering from the *Littleton Independent* (see “1699 WLB Historic 01.jpg” below) shows the two-story building that replaced the 1953 building and still stands in original condition on the site today. Though basically an enclosure for telephone switching equipment, the building was elegantly styled and detailed to fit into its geographically prominent location facing W. Littleton Blvd and bordering a 1921-1924 residential subdivision (now the Littleton Louthan Heights Historic District, a group of seventeen Craftsman bungalows) and the 1929 First Presbyterian Church (a Littleton Historic Landmark designed by architect Jules Jacques Benois Benedict), located across the alley to the east. The 1968 former Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph building remains in its original or related communications use and is owned by the successor firm of the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co, Centurylink Communications.

Temple Buell was the head of one of Denver’s largest and busiest architectural firms in the second half of the 20th century and was known for his firm’s simple-yet-monumental designs. His career spans the 1920s to the 1980s. In the 1960s and ‘70s, T. H. Buell and Company, Inc. employed some 50 architects as well as planners, engineers and an extensive support staff. Buell closed his office in 1989, the year before he died at the age of 94.

36. Sources of information:

“Souvenir of Your Community, Littleton, Colorado, U.S.A.,” *Littleton Independent*, 1968.

Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Temple Buell Archive.

Arapahoe County Assessor Records.

Littleton City Directories.

The Historic Context of Littleton Colorado 1949-1967 (2008) by Diane Wray Tomasso, prepared for the City of Littleton, Office of Community Development.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: No
Date of designation: N/A
Designating authority: N/A

38. Applicable National Register Criteria:

- ✓ A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
 - B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - ✓ C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.
- Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see Manual)
 Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria

38A Applicable Colorado State Register of Historic Properties Criteria:

- ✓ A. The association of the property with events that have made a significant contribution to history;
 - B. The connection of the property with persons significant in history;
 - ✓ C. The apparent distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, artisan;
 - D. The geographic importance of the property;
 - E. The possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history.
- Does not meet any of the above State Register criteria

38B. Applicable Littleton Landmark Standards:

- ✓ 1. Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period;
- ✓ 2. Is an example of the work of an architect or builder recognized for expertise nationally, state-wide, regionally, or locally;
- ✓ 3. Demonstrates superior craftsmanship or high artistic value;
- 4. Represents an innovation in construction, materials or design;
- 5. Represents a style particularly associated with the Littleton area;
- ✓ 6. Represents a built environment of a group of people in an era of history;
- 7. Represents a pattern or grouping of elements representing at least one of above criteria;

8. Has undergone significant historic remodel;
 9. Is the site of historic event that had an effect upon society;
 ✓ 10. Exemplifies cultural, political, economic or social heritage of the community;
 11. Represents an association with a notable person or the work of a notable person;
 12. Represents a typical example/association with a particular ethnic group;
 13. Represents a unique example of an event in Littleton's history;
 14. Enhances sense of identity of the community;
 15. Is an established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community?
 Does not meet any of the above City of Littleton Landmark standards.

39. **Area(s) of significance:** Architecture, Communications

40. **Period of significance:** 1968

41. **Level of significance:** Local

42. **Statement of significance:**

The Mountain States Telegraph and Telephone building is evaluated as eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and Colorado State Register of Historic Properties under Criteria A and C and is eligible for Littleton local landmark designation under Criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 10.

NR Criterion A: The former Mountain States Telegraph and Telephone building exemplifies the cultural, social and historic heritage of the City of Littleton through its association with Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph and its role in providing new telecommunication services to the City of Littleton during the city's first great period of growth and prosperity in the post-World War II period.

NR Criterion C: The former Mountain States Telegraph and Telephone building portrays the environment of the post World War II era of Littleton history characterized by the Formalist Style in architecture. It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Formalist Style and is the work of Temple H. Buell, an acknowledged regional master of architecture. It displays the highest level of material quality and construction craft.

43. **Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:**

The former Mountain States Telegraph and Telephone building retains all of the seven aspects of integrity. The building retains its original location and setting. Its design, material and workmanship are largely intact. The building retains its original feeling and association.

VII. ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. **National Register eligibility assessment:** Individually eligible (local)
State Register eligibility assessment: Individually eligible (local)
Local Landmark eligibility assessment: Individually eligible
 45. **Is there historic district potential?** Yes
Discuss: Eligible for proposed Littleton Overlay District.
 46. **Building located in N.R. district?** No
 Contributing N/A
 Noncontributing N/A

VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. **Photograph numbers:**
 1699 WLB 01.jpg through 1699 WLB 04.jpg
 1699 WLB Historic 01.jpg
 All photographs by Diane Wray Tomasso except as noted.
 CD on file at the City of Littleton Historic Preservation Office.
 48. **Report title:**
 Survey of Commercial Modernism in the West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980.
 49. **Date(s):** June 2018
 50. **Recorder(s):** Diane Wray Tomasso and Michael Paglia
 51. **Organization:**
 Performed on behalf of the Office of Community Development, Littleton, CO, in association with the State Historical Fund, History Colorado.
 52. **Address:** 3058 S Cornell Circle, Englewood, CO 80113

53. Phone number(s):

303 552-8254

Aerial Map



Source Data DRCOG Regional Data Catalog
© City of Littleton

5AH1979

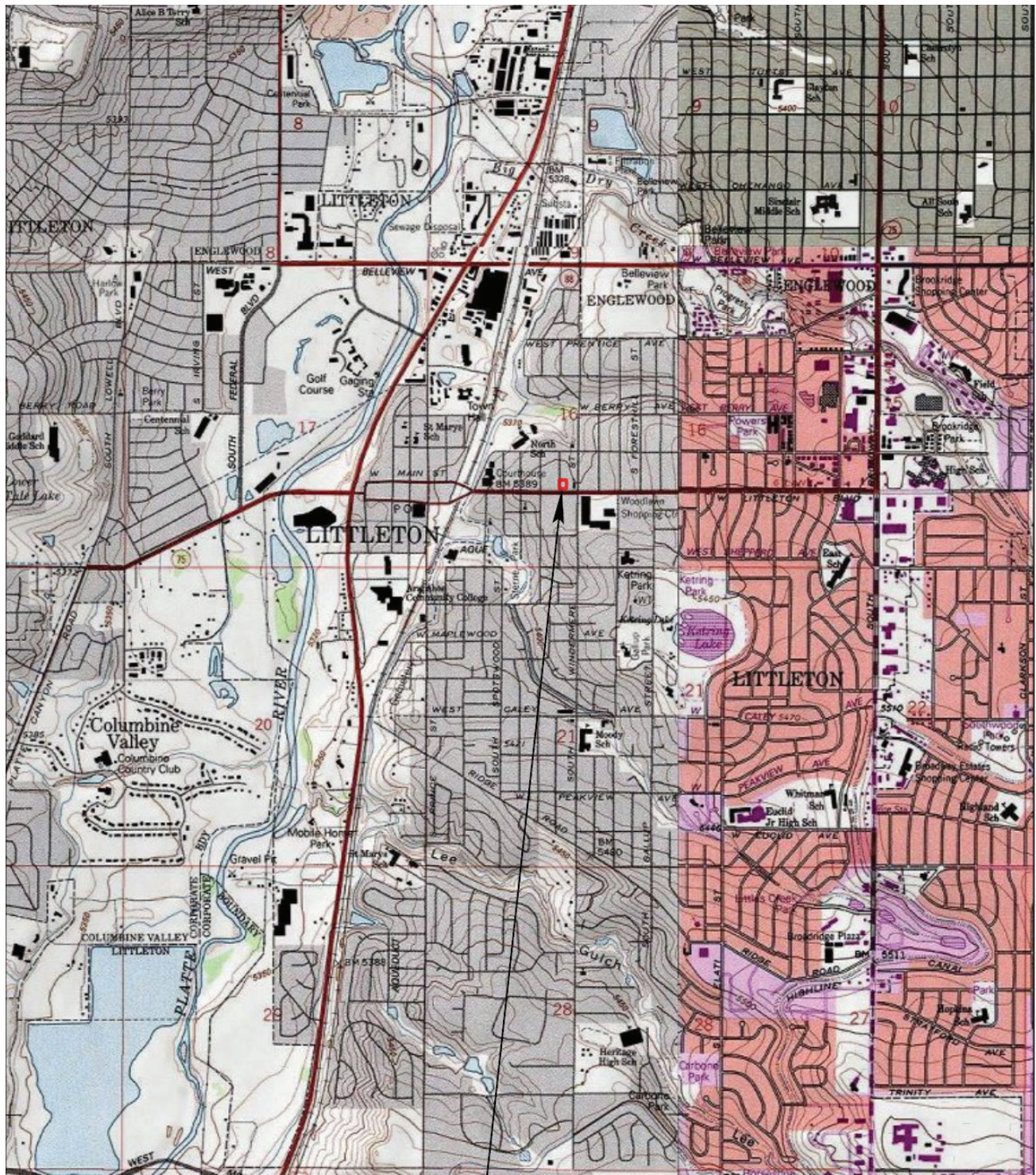
Sketch Map



Source Data DRCOG Regional Data Catalog
© City of Littleton

5AH1979

Location Map



5AH1979

Photo: 1699 WLB 01.jpg
South Wall, Facade (right); West Wall (left), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Photo: 1699 WLB 02.jpg
North Wall (left); West Wall (right).



Photo: 1699 WLB 03.jpg
South Wall, Facade (left); East Wall (right), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Photo: 1699 WLB 04.jpg
South Wall (left); West Wall (right), detail of main entry area.



Photo: 1699 WLB 06.jpg

South Wall, Facade (left); East Wall (right), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Photo: 1699 WLB 05.jpg

South Wall, Facade (left); East Wall (right), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Image: 1699 WLB Historic 01.jpg

South Wall, Facade (right); West Wall (left), West Littleton Boulevard in Foreground

Source: "Souvenir of Your Community, Littleton, Colorado, U.S.A.,"
Littleton Independent, 1968.

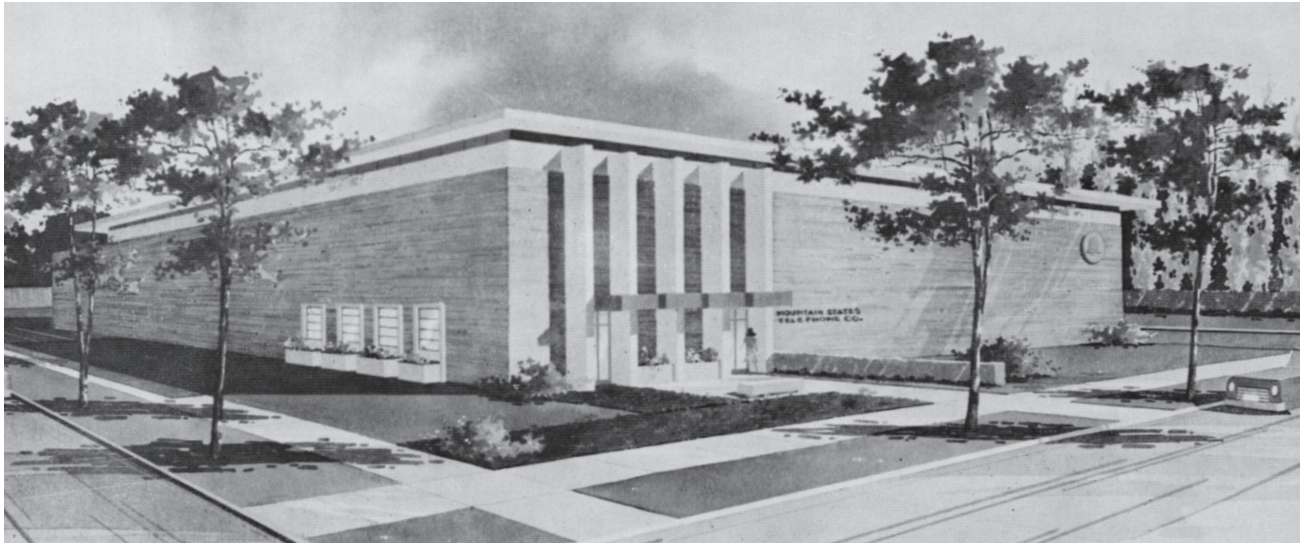


Image: 1699 WLB Historic 02.jpg

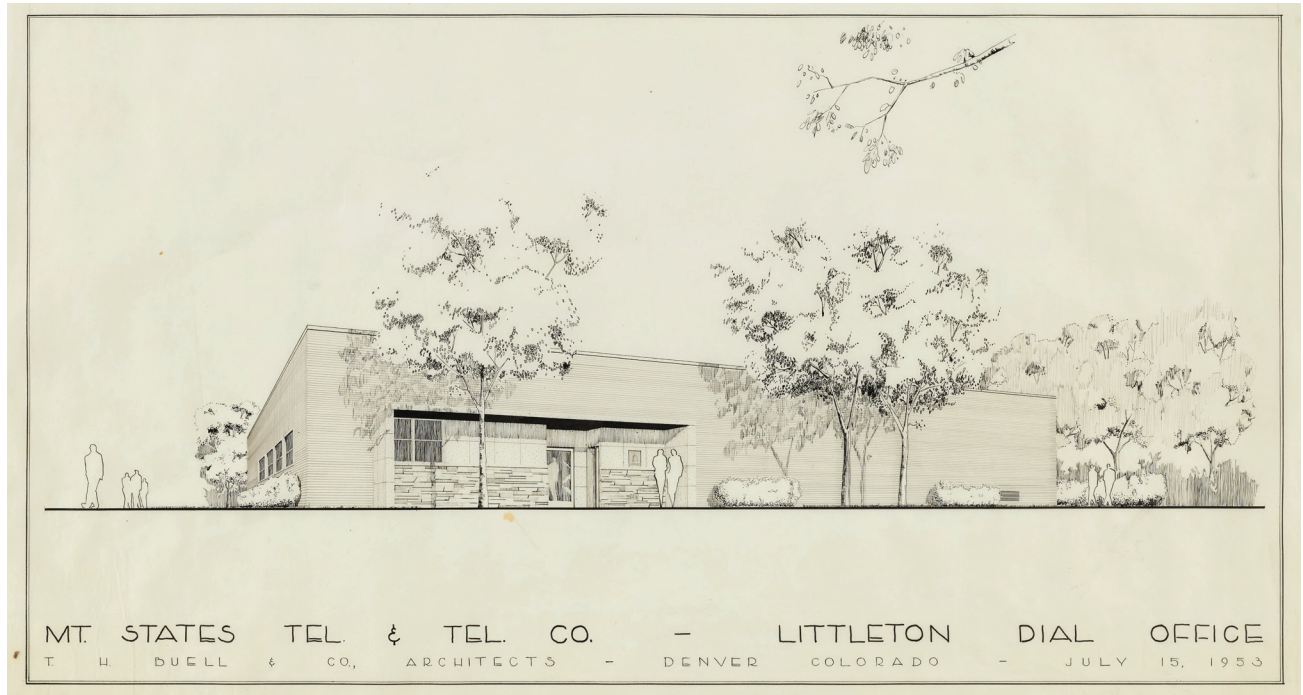
Source: Commercial Parcel Search / Photo (undated)



Image: 1699 WLB Historic 03.jpg
South Wall, Facade (right); West Wall (left)

Source: Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Temple Buell Archive.

This 1953 rendering shows a one-story building that Buell designed for the Littleton site. A 1968 rendering from the *Littleton Independent* (See "1699 WLB Historic 01.jpg" above) shows the two-story building that replaced the 1953 building and still stands in original condition on the site today. Variations in brick along the alley of the current building may indicate that a wall from the older building was incorporated into the current building, or that brick from the older building was salvaged and re-used.



Temple Hoyne Buell (1895-1990)

Temple Buell who founded what would become the largest architectural firm in the Rocky Mountain region in the 20th century, was born in 1895 in Chicago. He earned a B.S. degree in architecture at the University of Illinois, and an M.S. in architecture at Columbia University. In 1917 Buell won the Rome Prize in architecture given by the American Academy in Rome, but with World War I still underway, he was unable to study in Rome. Buell served in the war as a second lieutenant in the artillery, and was severely injured by having been exposed to poison gas in the Battle of Chateau-Thierry.

In 1919, after the war's conclusion, Buell, back home in Chicago, worked for the Chicago architectural firms of Marshall and Fox, and Rapp and Rapp. In 1921, he came to Colorado to convalesce having contracted tuberculosis, with the state having then been a center for the treatment of the disease. In the early 1920s, his health restored, Buell first briefly worked for the Denver architectural firm of Mountjoy and Frewin before opening his first office, Temple H. Buell, Architect, incorporating the firm in 1923 which was renamed T.H. Buell and Company, Architects.

Buell's approach in the 1920s tended toward a traditional look, like the neo-Gothic of his circa 1925 Asbury Elementary School at 1995 South Lafayette Street in Denver, but by the late 1920s, he began to develop a personal approach to the zigzag current of Art Deco, first seen in his 1928 Revere School at 300 Morgan Street in Ovid, Colorado. These buildings are characterized by the expressionistic handling of the masonry, which has been laid in a wide range of vertically oriented patterns, done in brick or terra cotta panels. Other buildings of this type include some of Denver's most famous and beloved landmarks. These are: the 1929-1930 Paramount Theatre at 1621 Glenarm Place; the 1934 Mullen Home at 1895 Franklin Street; and; the circa 1935 Horace Mann Junior High at 4130 Navajo Street.

By the late 1930s, Buell's advance toward a more fully-realized Modernism continued, and he developed a simple Moderne manner, as seen in the sadly demolished Lincoln Park Homes from 1939-1940 at 1300-1400 Mariposa Street. Though these row-house style residences were built for low income families, Buell nonetheless gave in to his taste for elaborate brickwork, in this case creating belt courses and horizontal banding using different sizes and different shades of buff-brick and terracotta panels.

Buell was also a planner and a developer at this time, working as an urban planner for Arapahoe County and for Cherry Hills Village, which he helped to found, and where he built many homes in the 1930s.

After the Second World War, Buell developed a conservative Modernist style that either exemplified the International Style or Formalism. His Cherry Creek Shopping Center from 1949-1950 was Formalist Style, but it only survives in its original shape and has been insensitively re-clad; it is slated for demolition. The shopping center featured an open air mall with shops lining either side and Buell is considered a pioneer of shopping center design in the post-World War II period. The orange-brick Formalist Style Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph of 1954 at 1699 West Littleton Boulevard has been chastely designed with the vertical fins marking the entry set against an essentially unadorned red-brick rectilinear mass above which is a cantilevered eave-line. The building is characteristic of Buell's simple-yet-monumental designs.

At the same time Buell created work in the International Style such as the 1955 Whiteman Elementary School at 451 Newport Street and the substantially larger 1957 Kunsmiller Junior High School at 2231 South Quitman Way. Both are exaggeratedly horizontal in form and have been done in salmon-brick with long expanses of aluminum-trimmed ribbon windows.

Another notable Formalist Style building by Buell, the 1959-1960 State Services Building at 1525 Sherman Street, is part of the Colorado State Capitol complex. It features a white-marble-clad shaft over a gray granite podium. The window frames, ventilation grates, and the door-surrounds are carried out in gold-colored metal. As quoted by Marcia Sky in *Denver: The City Beautiful*, from 1987, Buell said, "You look at my State Services Building from any angle and the proportions are

good. It's so simple and the fenestration fits the design."

In the 1960s and '70s, T. H. Buell and Company, Inc. employed some 50 architects as well as planners, engineers and an extensive support staff.

In 1983, Buell donated \$5 million dollars to establish the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University, where he had earned his advanced degree.

Buell closed his office in 1989, the year before he died at the age of 94. He is buried in a Formalist style freestanding mausoleum of his own design at Denver's Fairmont Cemetery.

Sources:

Denver: the City Beautiful, Tom Noel and Barbara Norgren, Historic Denver, 1987

History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Architects of Colorado, Temple Hoyne Buell Biographical Sketch, http://www.historycolorado.org/.../files/OAHP/Guides/Architects_buell.pdf

Formalism

Antecedents for Formalism in American architecture can be found in France and Italy in the 1930s and 1940s, which is why it is sometimes called New Formalism. The style first appeared in the United States in the 1950s. Through the 1970s, Formalism became a dominant trend in American architecture. In the 1980s, Post Modernism superseded Formalism, with the two styles sharing many characteristics, most notably their references to historicism and decoration.

Formalism was a subtle commentary on the International Style, to which it is closely related. Formalism put forward a critique of the functionalist ethos of the International Style. The most important proponents of Formalism in the United States were Philip Johnson, Edward Durell Stone, and Minoru Yamasaki. All three had begun their careers by designing International Style buildings and so it is appropriate to see Formalism, like Miesian, as being a variant of the International Style.

Formalism reintroduced to Modern architecture a classicism through regular and sometimes symmetrical massing, as opposed to the irregular and asymmetrical massing associated with the International Style. Formalist buildings also sometimes sported decorative flourishes in the form of sun-screens and planters. The style was most often used in the design of large buildings. Many government and high-rise buildings from the period are examples of Formalism. It sometimes appears in the design of houses.

The origin of the term is unknown.

Defining Characteristics of Formalism

- vertically oriented
- expression of corners
- sun-screens and screen walls in concrete or metal spandrels vertically link windows
- recessed windows
- simplified formal arrangement of building's volumes
- vertical piers
- eaveless walls or coping at top of walls
- flat roofs