COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

INTENSIVE LEVEL SURVEY FORM
Parcel #/s  2077-16-4-21-006
Neighborhood  3566.00 Off Broadway (South)

I. IDENTIFICATION
1. Resource number:  5AH.3681
2. Temporary resource #:  N/A
3. County:  Arapahoe
4. City:  Littleton
5. Historic building name:  American National Insurance Company
7. Building address:  5854 S Datura St
8. Owner name, address:  Littleton Housing Authority
                         5745 S Bannock St
                         Littleton, CO 80120-2409

National Register:  Ineligible for Individual Listing  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, SW 1/4 of SE 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): N/A
   Block: 5
   Addition: Windermere Parks
   Year of Addition: 1910
13. Boundary Description and Justification:
    S 50 Ft Of N 205 Ft Of W 125 Ft Of Blk 5 Windermere Parks
    The boundary of the property is the legally defined parcel, encompassing .1430 acres.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): Rectangular
15. Dimensions in feet: 65' x 30'
16. Number of stories: One
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 American National Insurance Company is sited along the south property line and near
   the west end of a rectangular lot facing S Datura St.
   The one-story building has a rectangular footprint and a flat roof with deep flush fascia. Materials
   include running and stack-bond brick masonry, and metal and glass doors windows.
   The west wall/facade of the building is sited just behind the public sidewalk. The north end of
   the wall is finished in stucco panels with pairs of full-height vertical ribs. A surface mounted sign
displays the name of the current occupant. To the south is a recessed entryway, flanked by two narrow
full-height walls of off-white stack-bond brick. At the rear of the recessed entry is a single door with
one window to the north and a pair of windows to the south, all above glass spandrel panels. Blind
transom panels appear above. The faceted wood fascia is flush with the front wall and displays a
plain finished soffit above the recessed entry.
   The north wall displays four bays of windows, each with three windows and transoms. There
are stucco sills and stucco spandrel panels above and below. These bays are recessed just behind
columns of stack-bond brick. At the east end of the building is a service door with a blind transom
above, also flanked by stack-bond brick masonry columns.
   The south and east walls are blind running-bond brick masonry with a deep, flush fascia.
22. Architectural style: Modern Movement / Commercial Modern
   Building type: Commercial
23. Landscaping or special setting features:
   Surface parking appears to the north and east of the building.
24. Associated buildings, features, or objects:
   A freestanding mailbox stands along the south wall of the recessed front entry.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of Construction: 1961
   Estimated or Actual: Actual
   Source of information: “American National Insurance Company Erecting $100,000 Office Building,”
   Littleton Independent, May 19, 1961, p1.
26. Architect: Unknown
   Source of information: N/A
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):
Stucco was applied to brick panels on the facade and north wall of the building. A series of small clerestory windows were infilled in the process on the facade.

30. Original Location: Yes
Date of move(s): N/A

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS
31. Original use(s): Commerce/Trade, Business/Professional
32. Intermediate use(s): Unknown
33. Current use(s): Religion, Religious Facility
34. Site Type(s): Commercial Building
35. Historical background:
The post-World War II period in Littleton was characterized by economic prosperity, rapid population growth, suburban housing expansion, road development and improvement, and increased auto ownership and use.

The earliest commercial development on W Littleton Blvd after World War II were professional buildings, initially constructed at the west end of the street near the Arapahoe County Courthouse. Though W Littleton Blvd might appear to be largely a retail strip, the most common building type of the period is the professional building. These buildings fall into several discrete categories according to use.

The most critical type, since the nearest hospital was located in Englewood, was the medical office, sometimes with a dispensing pharmacy. Most common were offices for the local professionals involved with the rapid transformation of farms and ranches into sprawling residential subdivisions. These included developers, architects, real estate agents, and attorneys. Sales related to real estate, life and auto insurance expanded. Along W Littleton Blvd, a variety of professional and office buildings were built to accommodate these firms, some owner occupied and others built for lease to one or two individual firms. A few larger buildings rented office spaces to local professionals and other businesses of all types and sizes, including those in the aerospace and defense industries.

These professional buildings are commonly distinct from retail buildings in the quality of their materials and design, and often display more discreet signage with parking lots concealed to the rear.

Based in Galveston, Texas, the American National Insurance Company relocated from Englewood to their own Littleton building, erected in 1961 for $100,000 immediately south of the Arapahoe County Bank on South Datura Street. The building housed thirty managers, salesmen, and office staff. The firm handled personal and corporate insurance.

36. Sources of information:
Arapahoe County Assessor Records.
Littleton City Directories.

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, Commerce
40. Period of significance: 1961
41. Level of significance: Local
42. Statement of significance:
The former American National Insurance Company is evaluated as eligible for individual listing in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties under Criteria A and C and is eligible for Littleton local landmark designation under Criteria 1, 3, 6 and 10.
SR Criterion A: The former American National Insurance Company exemplifies the cultural, social and historic heritage of the City of Littleton through its association with the development of the banking industry during the city’s initial period of suburban growth and expansion in the post-World War II period.
SR Criterion C: The former American National Insurance Company Building portrays the environment of the post World War II era of Littleton history characterized by the Modernist Style in architecture. It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Modernist Style. It is well-designed and displays a high standard of material quality and construction craft.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:
The former American National Insurance Company retains six of the seven aspects of integrity. The building retains its original location and setting. A partial original brick or tile finish was altered by the application of stucco. The design, the balance of the materials and the workmanship are intact, along with its feeling and association.

VII. ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT
44. National Register eligibility assessment: Ineligible
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:
   5854 SDS 01.jpg through 5854 SDS 04.jpg
   5854 SDS Historic 01.jpg
   All photographs by Diane Wray Tomasso except as noted.
   CD on file at the City of Littleton Historic Preservation Office.
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
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Location Map
Photo:  5854 SDS 01.jpg
West Wall, facade (right); North Wall (left), S Datura St in foreground.

Photo:  5854 SDS 02.jpg
West Wall, facade (left); South Wall (right), S Datura St in foreground.
Photo: 5854 SDS 03.jpg
South Wall (left); East Wall (right).

Photo: 5854 SDS 04.jpg
West Wall, facade, detail of main entry area.
Image: 5854 SDS Historic 01.jpg
West Wall, facade (right); North Wall (left), S Datura St in foreground.
Source: Arapahoe County Assessor Website, 05-12-2018 Search
Commercial Parcel Search / Photo (illegible dated)
COMMERCIAL MODERN STYLE
Commercial Modern buildings represent thirty-five or 45% of the total seventy-seven survey buildings. Eight are classified in Tier Two and the remaining twenty-eight are classified in lower Tiers Three and Four.

Though the commercial buildings on West Littleton Boulevard exemplify many of the various Modernist styles popular with architects and clients at that time, as demonstrated by those that have been mentioned thus far, including Expressionism, Formalism and Usonian, it was a stripped down straightforward functionalism, related to both the International Style and to its Meisian refinement, that clearly predominated. As discussed above, Sternberg’s lost Littleton Medical Center, as well as both the bank and office building by the Marlows, are masterworks of this type.

The typical Modernist commercial buildings from the period of the 1950s to 1970s that were built on West Littleton Boulevard, and the surrounding streets, are small scale functionalist buildings intended to serve as retail businesses or professional offices. The majority of these buildings are rectilinear, either a simple rectangle, or a simple arrangement of rectangles. They ordinarily have flat roofs, with either plain, nearly flush fascias, or with overhanging boxed-in soffits or eaves. However a few have overhanging canopies, some of which are canted. These sometimes follow the roof-lines and were intended to protect shoppers from the sun or from inclement weather.

Many of these types of Modernist commercial buildings had light-colored walls in the form of painted concrete block or brick, as well as those done in buff-colored or even light-gray brick. Many others have been constructed using various shades of red-brick, as was used for Woodlawn Shopping Center, the largest commercial project from this period. Among those constructed as shops as opposed to offices, there is often the extensive use of glass for display windows.

The term was coined in 2016 by Michael Paglia and Diane Wray.

Defining Characteristics of Commercial Modern Style
• horizontally oriented
• rectangular volumes
• prominence of front facade, functional handling of secondary elevations
• large areas of glazing
• little to no ornament
• walls eave-less, or with overhanging eaves
• flat or shed roofs