

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

2077-16-4-21-004

Neighborhood

3566.00 Off Broadway (South)

I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource number: 5AH.3679
2. Temporary resource #: N/A
3. County: Arapahoe
4. City: Littleton
5. Historic building name: Arapahoe County Bank
6. Current building name: Life Center
7. Building address: 5804 S Datura St
8. Owner name, address: Mission Hills Baptist Church
620 Southpark Dr
Littleton, CO 80120-5675



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, SW 1/4 of SE 1/4 of
 10. **UTM reference:** NAD 83 ZONE 13S
 11. **USGS quad name:** Littleton
Year: 2016
Map scale: 1:24000
 12. **Lot(s)** N/A
Block: 4
Addition: Windermere Parks
Year of Addition: 1910
 13. **Boundary Description and Justification:**
 S 95 Ft Of W 200 Ft Blk 4 Windermere Parks
 The boundary of the property is the legally defined parcel, encompassing .4360 acres.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. **Building plan (footprint, shape):** Rectangular
 15. **Dimensions in feet:** 100' x 48'
 16. **Number of stories:** One
 17. **Primary external wall material(s):** Brick, Concrete Block
 18. **Roof configuration:** Front Gabled, Flat
 19. **Primary external roof material:** Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof or Synthetic Roof
 20. **Special features:** N/A
 21. **General architectural description:**

The former Arapahoe County Bank is sited to the north and east sides of a rectangular lot.

The building has a long rectangular footprint. There is a low-pitch front gable roof with asphalt shingles and overhanging eaves. The materials are vertical panels of exposed-aggregate concrete with brick and concrete block masonry.

The south end of the west side of the building is recessed behind a projecting entry hall and planter box. The face of the glass and metal entry hall has a pair of doors with transom to the south. On the north and west sides of the entry, vertical windows rise above a recessed planter with an exposed-aggregate concrete face and wood banister above. The south wall of the entry hall has full-height vertical windows divided by horizontal muntins that align with the planter box to the north.

The face of the main building rises above and behind the entry hall. Above and to the south, a curtain wall of metal and glass rises to the roofline. Behind the planter, a full-height roman brick masonry wall with deeply raked horizontal joints is visible.

A pavilion-like form at northwest corner of the building extends just beyond the face of the planter and cantilevers above the ground over a deeply recessed foundation. It has one window overlooking the planter box to the east and, centered on the west wall, a single full-height vertical window.

Two distinct decorative roofs appear on west side of the building, unified by a horizontal beam that runs across the face of the building at the front of the entry hall. Above and behind the front wall of the entry is a low, angled folded-plate roof with clerestory windows. To the north, an angled folded-plate roof extends beyond the face of the building over two clerestory windows, supported by three exposed beams and arched rafters. Both roofs have finished soffits of tongue and groove wood.

The south side of the building is constructed of running-bond concrete block masonry. It projects beyond the face of the building's west wall, forming a shallow alcove adjacent to the entry. A horizontal band of clerestory windows stretches the length of the building. The deeply projecting eaves display exposed angled roof beams, the soffit finished in tongue and groove wood. There are two small windows to the east.

The west end of the north side of the building continues the design and materials described on the north end of the facade. Clerestory windows appear beneath a parallel beam and overhanging eaves with exposed rafters and tongue and groove soffit. A metal door and sidelight are centered on the wall, above a small set of concrete steps with a metal railing.

The east end of the north side has a wall of brown/gray running-bond brick masonry and

two small windows with rowlock sills. A rowlock sill also appears beneath the band of clerestory windows that run the length of the wall. The eaves have exposed beams with angled ends and a tongue and groove soffit.

The rear, east side of the building is running bond concrete block masonry with a service door and windows. The south portion of the roof has shallow eaves. The north portion is flush with the wall.

22. Architectural style: Modern Movement / Expressionism
Building type Commercial

23. Landscaping or special setting features:

A raised planter box is an integral element of the facade. There is a raised landscape bed of roman brick at the southwest corner of the lot between the building and the street. The balance of the lot provides paved parking.

24. Associated buildings, features, or objects:

A sign appears in the landscape bed between the building and the street, identifying the current tenant, "Life Center."

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of Construction: 1964
Estimated or Actual: Actual
Source of information: Arapahoe County Assessor Records.

26. Architect: Earl Chester Morris
Source of information: Littleton Independent (Ad), 4-25-1958

27. Builder/Contractor: F. A. Heckendorf, General Contractor
Source of information: Littleton Independent (Ad), 4-25-1958

28. Original owner: Unknown
Source of information: N/A

29. Construction history (description, dates of major additions, alterations, demolitions):

The former Arapahoe County Bank attained its current appearance, for which it is being evaluated, after it was redesigned by Morris c1963. It appears to have evolved in two stages. Comparison with a 1958 advertising photo, attached, shows the facade before the addition of the entry hall, planter box and northwest corner pavilion. A c1963 photo, attached, shows these elements in place, along with the drive-through windows and front planter box with elaborate four-part neon sign. The photo reveals that front doors of the entry hall were replaced: formerly full height doors, they now display a transom above. A 2004 photo, attached, shows the original exposed-aggregate concrete panels before the current owner painted them.

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

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): Commerce/Trade, Financial Institution

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 banking industry experienced unprecedented growth in the post-war years as mortgages, personal loans, auto loans, and bank credit cards were consolidated under one roof as "retail banking." Like retail stores, banks were increasingly constructed in the suburbs to serve their customers close to home. These new banks were typically conceived, as they had been for centuries, as important high-status buildings and were often designed by noted local architects. They offered eye-catching modern buildings, up-to-date interiors, and innovative features like drive-through banking and computerized record keeping. All these strategies were intended to shed the Depression-era image of banks as failed, stuffy, aloof institutions, and to project a new vision of banking in the

postwar years.

Following these trends, new bank buildings were constructed around growing retail areas, convenient for banking customers as they shopped. The success of Littleton's Woodlawn Shopping Center drew other individual retail, service businesses, and banks to group around its location.

Arapahoe County Bank, chartered in 1956, opened in a new building designed by Earl C. Morris just east of the Woodlawn Shopping Center on S Datura St. Earl C. Morris and his brother Robert M. Morris are considered masters of modernist architecture in the state. Earl Morris lived in Littleton, completed many important buildings in the city and was very active in Littleton community affairs, especially the Littleton Area Historical Society, of which he was named president in 1958. (See architect biography attached.)

36. Sources of information:

Arapahoe County Assessor Records.

Littleton City Directories.

Littleton Independent, Ad, April 25, 1958, page 2.

Collection of the Littleton Museum.

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, Commerce
 40. **Period of significance:** 1964
 41. **Level of significance:** Local
 42. **Statement of significance:**

The former Arapahoe County Bank 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 and 11.

NR Criterion A: The former Arapahoe County Bank Building 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.

NR Criterion C: The former Arapahoe County Bank Building portrays the environment of the post World War II era of Littleton history characterized by the Expressionist Style in architecture. It embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Expressionist Style. It is the work of acknowledged master Colorado architect Earl Chester Morris. 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 Arapahoe County Bank 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, along with its 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:**
 5804 SDS 01.jpg through 5804 SDS 06.jpg
 5804 SDS Historic 01.jpg through 5804 SDS Historic 03.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
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5AH.3679

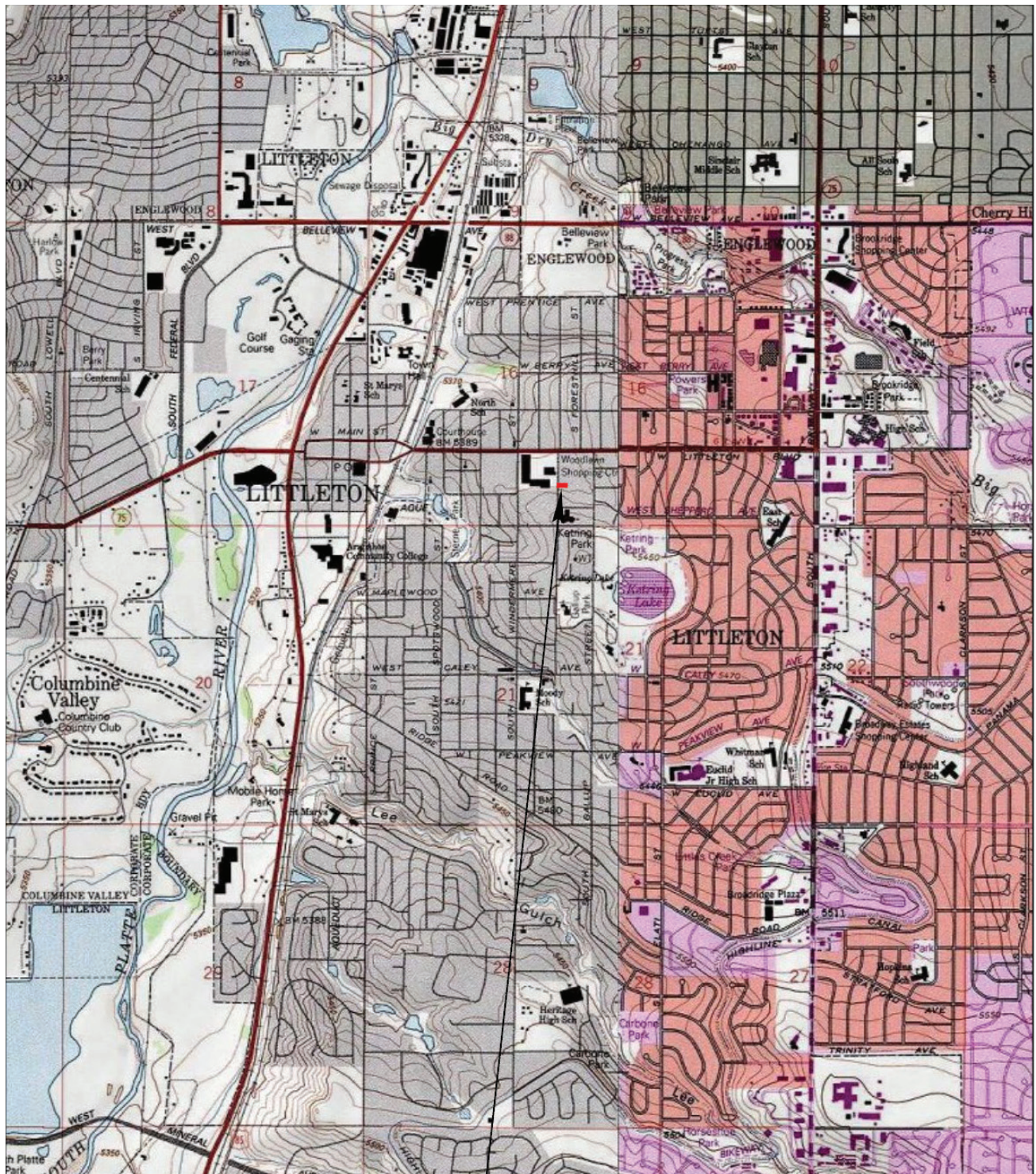
Sketch Map



Source Data DRCOG Regional Data Catalog
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5AH.3679

Location Map



5AH.3679

Photo: 5804 SDS 01.jpg
South Wall, Facade (right); West Wall (left), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Photo: 5804 SDS 02.jpg
North Wall (left); West Wall (right).



Photo: 5804 SDS 03.jpg
South Wall, Facade (left); East Wall (right), W Littleton Blvd in foreground.



Photo: 5804 SDS 04.jpg
South Wall (left); West Wall (right), detail of main entry area.



Photo: 5804 SDS 05.jpg

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



Photo: 5804 SDS 06.jpg

South Wall (left); West Wall (right), detail of main entry area.



Image: 5804 SDS Historic 01.jpg
Littleton Independent Ad, 4-25-1958, p2, West Wall, Facade (left); showing original Morris design.**Image:**

Image: 5804 SDS Historic 02.jpg
Photo c1964; showing Morris re-design.

Source: From the Collection of the Littleton Museum. May not be reproduced in any form without permission of the Littleton Museum.

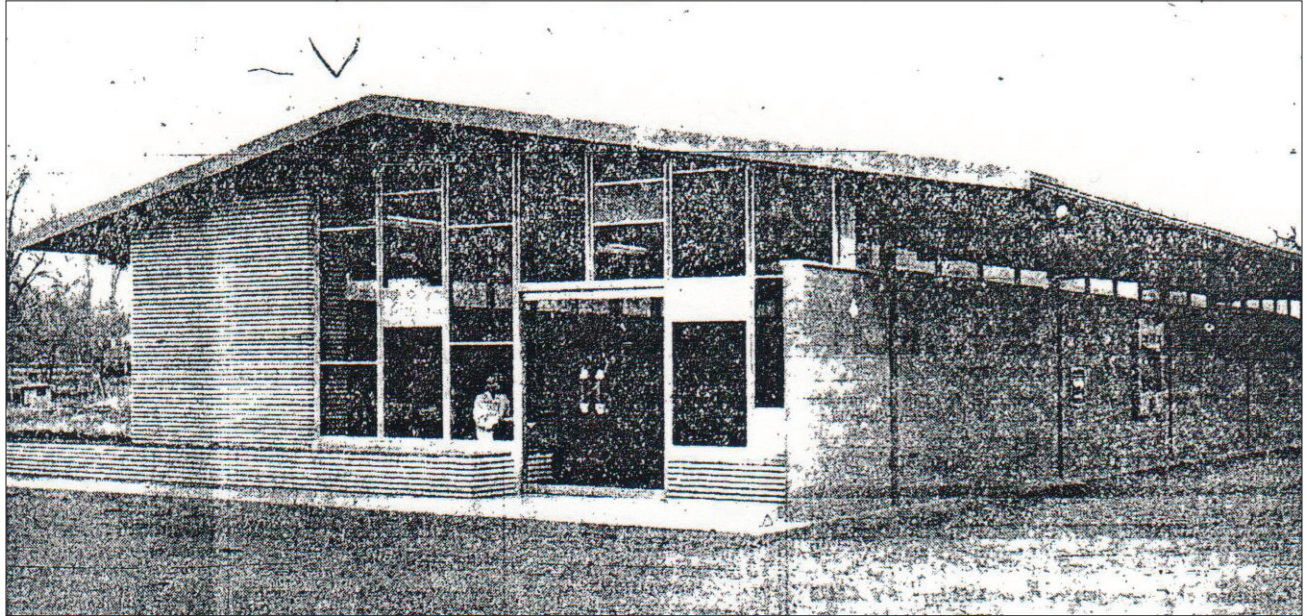


Image: 5804 SDS Historic 03.jpg

West Wall, facade, detail of exposed-aggregate concrete prior to painting.

Source: 2004 photo by Diane Wray Tomasso



Earl Chester Morris, 1903 - 1964**Robert Max Morris, 1908 - 1988**

Brothers Earl C. and Robert M. Morris were both important modern architects in Denver. Born in Denver, both attended Manual High School and the University of Colorado in Boulder. Earl Morris, the older of the brothers, then attended Columbia University in New York City, and encouraged his brother to follow. Earl completed his Bachelors in Architecture at Columbia. Before Robert completed his degree, the stock market crash forced the return of the brothers to Colorado. In Denver, Robert completed his architectural studies at Atelier Denver. Earl joined the firm of Mountjoy & Frewen and in 1935, upon Mountjoy's death, became Frewen's partner in Frewen & Morris. Robert Morris joined his brother and worked for the firm. In 1936, Earl Morris designed Boulder High School at 1604 Arapahoe Street, with the younger Glenn H. Huntington serving as the architect of record. After Frewen's death in 1937, Earl Morris began his own practice which, like Frewen & Morris, focused on the design of school buildings. He also designed the B.M.H. Hebrew School at York and 16th in Denver, buildings for the Children's Asthma Research Institute and Hospital, and a medical center for National Jewish Hospital. He joined C. Francis Pillsbury and G. Meredith Musick in the design of the Denver Police Building at 1425 Champa.

Robert Morris began working independently as an architect and contractor, designing many industrial buildings, including the Shwayder Bros. Denver Plant (demolished), which manufactured Samsonite luggage, and an office and warehouse for the E.J. Campbell Company. With Nat Sacher, he designed Denver's Jewish Community Center at 350 South Dahlia Street. He also designed some residential projects for patients at the Children's Asthma Research Institute and Hospital, which merged with National Jewish Hospital. Both brothers designed architecturally significant Denver homes. Earl designed the 1941 Lewin House at 5435 East Sixth Avenue Parkway. In 1937, Robert designed the house at 455 Forest Street and the Heitler residence at 170 S. Dexter. For his own family, Robert designed the 1939 house at 701 South Milwaukee Street and the 1953 house at 1920 South Albion.

Earl Morris' relationship with Colorado Governor Ed Johnson led to work at the State Hospital in Pueblo and a number of buildings on the campus of Colorado A & M, now Colorado State University in Fort Collins. After Johnson was elected U.S. Senator, Earl Morris was awarded a series of Bureau of Reclamation projects throughout the West.

A rendering in the 1955 *Littleton Independent* shows that Earl and Robert were the original architects of the Columbine Club, including the clubhouse design and 221 homesites west of Littleton. However, it appears that C. Francis Pillsbury assumed the project.

In Littleton, Earl Morris designed the 1958 Centennial Elementary, the 1956 Littleton High School, the 1958 Highland Elementary, 1959 Euclid Junior High, the 1961 Peabody Elementary, and the 1963 Ames Elementary. He designed the Arapahoe County Bank at 200 South Datura Avenue, directly east of the Woodlawn Shopping Center, and the Littleton YMCA. Morris also designed his own home between Platte Canon Road and the Platte River, 1- 1/4 miles south of Bowles Avenue on land that was originally part of the ranch of Peter Magnes, known as the father of the Colorado sugar beet industry.

Earl Morris was very active in Littleton community affairs, especially the Littleton Area Historical Society, for which he was named president in 1958. Morris died at Swedish hospital and is buried in Littleton cemetery under a monument by Littletonite Varian Ashbaugh, who also created wall plaques of Aesops Fables at Ames Elementary, Morris' last school.

Sources

Interviews with Thomas Morris, son and former architectural associate of Robert Max Morris, August of 2008.

Paglia, Michael and Diane Wray Tomasso. *The Mid-Century Modern House in Denver*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 2007.

"4,000 Square Feet of Beauty (rendering of Earl Morris house)," *Littleton Independent*, August 7, 1953, page 9.

"Earl C. Morris Named President of Historical Group," *Littleton Independent*, November 14, 1958, page 1.

"Earl Morris named architect for new YMCA Activities building in Littleton," *Littleton Independent*, February 4, 1955, page 3.

"Grand Opening of the Arapahoe County Bank at 200 S Datura Avenue (ad)," *Littleton Independent*, April 25, 1958, page 2.

'Aerial rendering of clubhouse, siteplan columbine club and 221 homesites west of Littleton]," *Littleton Independent*, January 1, 1955 , page 1.

City of Littleton website on the Littleton School District #6 and Littleton Schools.

Expressionism

Expressionism is a rare style in post-war American architecture but it found ready acceptance in the Denver area. Expressionism is only vaguely related to the German Expressionist style of the early 20th century, which is why it may be inappropriate to call the American style Neo Expressionism, as some do. Expressionism's reliance on theatrical sculptural forms contrasted both the woodsy charm of the Usonian, on the one hand, and the crisp rationality of the International Style and Miesian on the other.

The Expressionists picked up the tradition of dramatic building forms that had earlier manifested itself in the United States in the Moderne, such as the many buildings constructed for the 1939–1940 New York World's Fair. Whereas Moderne buildings often evoked the speed of a locomotive, it was the jet age that many Expressionist buildings suggested. Eero Saarinen's 1962 Dulles International Airport in Chantilly, Virginia outside Washington, D. C. clearly makes the case with its smooth and continuous lines.

Expressionism in American architecture was broadly conceived and included the more clearly hard-edged and geometric approach taken by Walter Netsch for Skidmore Owings and Merrill in the design of the Air Force Academy Chapel of 1962 outside Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Expressionist style was never dominant in American architecture because the soaring forms it favored and the experimental materials it preferred were too costly. It was also this same fiscal issue that guaranteed that most Expressionist buildings, with notable exceptions such as Dulles and the Air Force Academy Chapel, were in the form of luxurious houses.

The origin of the term is unknown.

Defining Characteristics of Expressionism

- sculptural forms
- irregularly-shaped windows
- non-traditional structural elements
- use of experimental materials
- use of cast-in-place concrete
- same materials used inside and out
- organic or geometric floor plans
- organic or geometric ornamental programs
- use of the cantilever
- dramatic site planning, use of topography as a design element
- butterfly or other unconventional roof designs
- roofs as continuations of the walls