



DENVER®
THE MILE HIGH CITY

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

2019 JUN 14 PM 2: 25

Community Planning & Development

Application Information

Landmark Preservation

Structure for Preservation Designation Application Information

Preparing and Filing Your Application:

Please complete each section of the application. Please type your application and use paper no larger than 11"X17" for supplemental information. Once complete, please submit to Landmark Preservation Commission, 201 West Colfax Avenue Department 205, Denver, Colorado 80204. If you have questions about the application or designation process, please contact Landmark Preservation staff at landmark@denvergov.org or 303.865.2709.

The designation process is outlined in Denver Revised Municipal Code; Chapter 30 which is based upon the criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places. National Register evaluation principles regarding criteria, categories, and integrity have been adapted for local applications.

This form is for structure designation only. Please review the Designation Types Policy or contact Landmark Preservation staff if you are unclear whether you should be applying for a district, or structure designation. A structure is defined as one or more of the following:

- A primary historic building and any closely associated accessory structures such as garages, sheds, barns, etc. The primary structure and accessory structures can be located on the same or separate legal parcel
- A series of attached structures or subcomponents joined by shared party walls or structural components, and which are unified in original design intent and construction
- Pavilions, grain elevators, canals and bridges, as well as objects such as fountains, monuments and statuary

Designation is a five-step process that takes approximately 120 days from the time an application is submitted to the Landmark Preservation Commission.

1. Set a preliminary application review with Landmark Preservation staff. This meeting will be a review of the draft designation application to advise what additional research may be needed. Additional information will be provided regarding the designation process and guidance to improve and strengthen the application.
2. Submit the completed final application along with required fees to Landmark Preservation.
3. Landmark Preservation staff will review the application to determine whether the application is complete and Denver landmark designation criteria are met.
4. Once Landmark Preservation staff determines that an application is complete and the designation criteria met, a public hearing before the Landmark Preservation Commission is set. All owners of record are notified by mail of the date, time, and place of the hearing. The Commission will hear public testimony at the hearing and determine if the property meets landmark designation criteria. If the Commission determines that a property meets landmark designation criteria, the application is then forwarded to City Council.
5. Upon recommendation of the Commission the designation application is forwarded to City Council. A committee of City Council will review the designation application and determine whether the case is ready to move forward to the full City Council meeting. The Denver City Council designates a landmark by considering the designation bill at two meetings or readings of City Council. The second and final reading before City Council is a public hearing. City Council provides final historic designation approval for a structure or historic district at the second reading. The designation goes into effect once the mayor signs the bill and second reading.



www.denvergov.org/preservation

201 W Colfax Ave, Dept 205
Denver CO 80202
720-865-2709
landmark@denvergov.org



Landmark Preservation Commission

Application for Landmark Designation

1. Name of property

Historic Name: White Spot Restaurant

Current Name: Tom's Diner

2. Location

Address: 601 E Colfax Ave, Denver, CO 80203

Legal Description: CLEMENTS ADD B336 L15 TO 19 & J W SMITHS ADD TO DENVER B399 L19 & 20

3. Owner Information

Name: BOTTLESTYX LLC (Thomas S. Messina)

Address: 5350 YELLOWSTONE ST, BOW MAR, CO 80123-1447

Phone:

Email:

4. Applicant/Contact Person

Name: Sam Dorrance (lead applicant)

Address: 1218 N Clarkson #5, Denver, CO 80218

Email: dorsm365@gmail.com

Name: Kristin Morales (organized application)

Address: 3545 Elizabeth St. Denver, CO 80205

Email: Morales.Kristin03@gmail.com

Name: Jonel Beach

Address: 3021 N. Fillmore St., Denver, CO 80205

Email: jonelbeach@gmail.com



Name: Jessica Caouette

Address: 3417 Milwaukee St, Denver, CO 80205

Email: jessica@tandembardenver.com

Name: Kaye Taavialma

Address: 3423 Milwaukee Street, Denver, CO 80205

Email: ktaavialma@gmail.com



5. General Property Data:

Date of construction and major additions/alterations: 1967

Source of Information: Denver Property Taxation and Assessment Record

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: NA

Source of Information:

Approximate lot size and acreage: 21,284 square footage/ 0.49 acres

Source of Information: Denver Property Taxation and Assessment Record

Architect: Armet and Davis

Source of Information: National Register of Historic Places Nomination form

Builder: unknown

Source of Information:

Original Use: Restaurant

Source of Information: National Register of Historic Places Nomination form

Present Use: Restaurant

Source of Information: Owner

Previous field documentation (date and surveyor):

In 2006 the Colfax Business Improvement District received a State Historical Fund grant to fund an inventory and documentation project for East Colfax, including a Multiple Property Document Report, a survey report and the preparation of two individual National Register of Historic Places nomination forms including the White Spot restaurant building at 601 E Colfax. Survey and documentation work was completed by Laurie R. and Thomas H. Simmons of Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

National Register Status and date (listed, eligible, study list):

Officially eligible; National Register of Historic Places nomination form completed on May 22, 2009 by Laurie R. and Thomas H. Simmons of Front Range Research Associates, Inc. After approval by the state review board, the owner decided not to list the building, so 601 E. Colfax is not listed in the National Register, but as is practice the Keeper of the National Register provided an Official Determination of Eligibility on 9/24/2009.

6. Statement of Significance

Explain how the structure meets at least one criterion in at least two of the categories.

To qualify as a Landmark, a property must meet at least one criterion in at least two of the three categories; history, architecture, geography. The specific criterion must be identified and a statement provided as to how the property meets each selected criterion. The explanation should summarize why the property meets the criterion and therefore has the exceptional, unusual, or outstanding characteristics that make it qualify as a Denver Landmark. As part of the designation criteria a structure must have historic and physical integrity.

Landmark Designation Categories and Criteria

Category 1: History.

To have historical importance, the structure shall be more than 30 years old or have extraordinary importance to the architectural or historical development of Denver, and shall:

Criteria:

- ☐ a. Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation; or
- ☐ b. Be the site of a significant historic event; or
- ☒ c. Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.

c. Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.

The former White Spot at 601 E. Colfax Ave. is eligible for History under 1c for its association with William F. Clements, who influenced society by expanding his family restaurant business into the White Spot chain which at its height included 29 locations, many of which were notable for their distinctive mid-century modern architecture that contributed to creating a diner culture in Denver and surrounding cities.

Before getting involved with the White Spot chain, Clements, who was born in Monte Vista, CO, operated his family bakery business that supplied restaurants in downtown Denver. He opened the first White Spot in an existing storefront at 22 S. Broadway. In the mid-20th century the restaurant industry was changing across the nation, influenced by changing car culture, an evolution was taking place leading to increased numbers of fast-food chains, and diners that offered an array of affordable, family-friendly meal options. Clements had a hand in influencing the way Denver's restaurant industry evolved, and introduced new trends including family dining (which offered children's menus and seating), franchising, convenience, take out, 24-hour dining, standardization, and economies of scale. White Spot restaurants represented innovation in the food service industry, as well as a cultural change in consumer expectations and experiences. Reasonable prices, friendly service, and restaurants designed to be bright and cheerful encouraged Denverites to dine out more. The White Spots were also located near the growing automobile corridors, which included Broadway, Speer, and Colfax, among others. Clements was fascinated with the growing auto-centric restaurant industry in California, so he made regular trips to California for inspiration,

and he became familiar with the well-established California architects, Armet and Davis, who he hired to design at least seven of the White Spots in Colorado between 1961 and 1969, of which only three are extant with the 601 E. Colfax being the most intact example.

Category 2: Architecture.

To have architectural importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

Criteria:

- ☒ a. Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type; or,
- ☒ b. Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder, or,
- ☐ c. Contain elements of architectural design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant or influential innovation; or,
- ☐ d. Portray the environment of a group of people or physical development of an area in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

a. Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;

601 E. Colfax is eligible for Architecture 2a as an excellent example of Googie architecture. The free-standing building's Googie style combined the influences of mid-20th century car culture and futurism and became a distinctive and playful style, more popularly accessible than some of the other mid-century styles. The term "Googie" was coined from a California coffee shop, which incorporated this style after World War II and it eventually became popular along highways and major thoroughfares throughout the country. The style was viewed as futuristic, displaying features such as a dynamic roof form with cantilevered and tilting roof lines, walls, and large plate glass windows, as well as geometric shapes and acute angles. The style also used expanses of glass, metal, plastic panels, and a combination of building materials, which included stone, brick, and stucco. Interior spaces had complex geometries that displayed new and innovative construction possibilities and material choices after World War II. 601 E. Colfax incorporates each of these Googie style elements, especially with its hexagonal footprint and its prominent boomerang-shaped structural trusses that follow the slopes of the roof and project beyond the eaves (source: National Register Nomination application, 2009). The 601 E. Colfax Avenue's White Spot operated until the mid-1980s. The last White Spot chain closed in 2001, in the Golden Triangle (now demolished). Despite multiple owners and restaurants that have occupied the 601 E. Colfax building, it has remained a diner and it retains the design quality and integrity of the Googie style architecture.

b. Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder,

601 E. Colfax is also eligible under Architecture 2b as the work of Armet and Davis, the architectural firm most strongly associated with the Googie style. The architects for this Googie building in Denver were leaders in developing and promoting the Googie style in California and nationwide. According to the L.A. Conservancy, Armet and Davis were "one of the most prominent practitioners of Googie architecture" creating "many of Los Angeles' most innovative postwar commercial structures, gaining international acclaim for their restaurants and coffee shops." Even removed geographically, William Clements in Denver became familiar with the well-established California architects, and he hired them to design at least seven of his White Spots locations in Colorado between 1961 and 1969. He hoped their eye-catching designs

would attract customers and set his restaurants apart from others. The first White Spot designed by Armet and Davis was built in 1961 at 800 Broadway (now demolished). In 1965 the construction of two other White Spots designed by Armet and Davis began, one at 1390 S. Colorado Boulevard (demolished), and one at 740 West Colfax Ave (today known as the Denver Diner). In 1967, 601 E. Colfax was built using the same Armet and Davis design as the 740 West Colfax location. The final Armet and Davis-designed White Spot was built at 15th and Curtis in 1969, and today it is known as Sam’s No. 3. Of the seven total Armet and Davis designed White Spots, four have been demolished and of the remaining three White Spot buildings in Denver, the 601 E. Colfax is the most intact and best example and retains the best integrity. Even the interior of 601 E. Colfax has retained the original terrazzo floor and interior details. The other two remaining White Spot locations have been significantly altered in craftsmanship, materials and exterior and interior design.

Category 3: Geography.

To have geographical importance, the structure shall:

Criteria:

- | | |
|---|---|
| X | a. Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar and orientating visual feature of the contemporary city. |
| X | b. Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity; or |
| | c. Make a special contribution to Denver’s distinctive character. |

a. Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city,

601 E. Colfax is eligible for Geography under 3a as a prominent feature of East Colfax Ave. The building is associated with the mid-20th century commercial development of Colfax, a key example of the roadside architecture once common along this stretch of road, but now increasingly rare. Even after the White Spot restaurant left 601 E. Colfax in the mid-1980s, the building had a draw and caught the attention of passers-by and neighborhood residents. Other owners operated the diner, and the diner saw an upswing in patronage once current owner, Tom S. Messina, drawn by the building’s distinctive style, began operating the restaurant in 1999. This became a go-to community gathering place for all – early in the morning, lunch, or late at night after the bars closed. It was well recognized due to its unique architectural style, distinctive roof form, geometric massing and colorful materials, as well as for its location along the busy blocks of Colfax Avenue and at the heart of a busy intersection near the State Capitol. The building is included in publications about both Denver architecture and about Colfax, including Historic Denver’s 2009 East Colfax Avenue Guidebook. As *Westword* reporter, Kyle Wagner put it in 2001, Messina “has turned the location around, and today Tom’s is a pretty spiffy spot that serves worthy diner fare” (“Slice of Life, *Westword*, 5 July 2001). The former White Spot has continued to serve Capitol Hill, Uptown and Denver neighbors since that time and is a recognizable landmark along E. Colfax.

b. Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity,

Finally, 601 E. Colfax is eligible under Geography 3b as a rare and high quality example of Googie architecture in Denver, a style that is rapidly disappearing. The first White Spot designed by Armet and Davis was built in 1961 at 800 Broadway (now demolished). The two 1965 Armet and Davis-designed White Spots included 1390 S. Colorado Boulevard (demolished), and one at 740 West Colfax Ave (today known as the Denver Diner, and now heavily altered). The 15th and Curtis location, built in 1969, is now known as Sam's No. 3 and has also been altered from its original design. As a result, of the seven total Armet and Davis-designed White Spots, four have been demolished and two do not reflect the high-level of integrity required for Denver Landmarks. Beyond the White Spot chain few other examples of Googie exist in the city. Bastien's Restaurant further east on Colfax is of the same era and style, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places but is not a Denver Landmark. A few locations of former Big Top convenience store buildings remain in Denver. These buildings reflect a different expression of the Googie style with a distinctive pagoda-shape building. None of the Big Top locations are currently designated as landmarks, and few retain their historic integrity or associations. None are as distinctive, prominent, or significant as 601 E. Colfax.

7. Architectural Description

Please provide a statement for each of the following:

a. Concisely describe the structure and its surrounds. Include building size, shape, # stories, materials, style and site terrain.

The Googie style White Spot Restaurant is a one-story building and displays historic physical integrity on its interior and exterior. The building retains its Googie style prominent boomerang roof-line, open truss structure with wide overhanging eaves, large plate glass window design, colorful geometric design details, stone veneer, and interior detailing, such as the original terrazzo floor, the laminate counter-top and the interior stone veneer.

The site includes a parking lot to the north as well as a strip of parking to the east, as it was originally intended to draw drivers from Colfax Avenue, and commercial corridor and state highway at the time of the diner's construction. The site is relatively flat, and neighboring buildings reflect a diversity of architecture and era as is common along Colfax.

The building also retains its historic context due to its location and association with the commercial thoroughfare of East Colfax Ave. Colfax reflects the post-War automobile development of the mid-20th century, and 601 E. Colfax is closely tied to the story of the street's evolution and the role it served for tourists, commuters, and the car culture of the era.

b. Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon or unique design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Also describe interior spaces with extraordinary design features (if any).

601 E. Colfax reflects the distinctive characteristics of the Googie style, as noted above, and has had very few alterations to the design, craftsmanship and materials, unlike the other two remaining White Spot buildings in Denver. A detailed description of the building and each façade was provided in the National Register of Historic Places 2009 nomination and is included here.

The one-story corner building includes wide expanses of plate glass windows facing the streets, panels of stone rubble veneer, sections of red-orange brick and a concrete foundation. The elongated hexagonal-shaped restaurant is crowned by a dynamic roof consisting of thick, sloped, four-sided geometric plates radiating from an upward swooping multi-plated central structure enclosing mechanical equipment. Extending from the top of central structure are four immense boomerang-shaped structural trusses that follow the slopes of the roof and project beyond the eaves. The sloping roof planes are clad with asphalt shingles and are cantilevered outward above the walls. The White Spot Restaurant is significant architecturally as a representative of an increasingly rare surviving expression of Modern architecture, the Googie style, popular during the 1950s and 1960s. Features of the Googie style embodied in the White Spot's design include the freestanding building surrounded by ample parking; eye-catching roof with exposed trusses, polygonal roof planes, and widely projecting eaves; expanses of large plate glass windows; juxtaposition of exterior materials, including stone veneer, brick, and stucco; and the linkage of the interior and exterior through the use of materials, such as large plate glass windows, forms and geometric shapes.

West Façade

The west façade of 601 E. Colfax fronts Pearl Street and contains a fenced-in open door seating area. At the south end of the west wall, the band of plate glass windows wraps around from the front and the wall has stucco below the windows. At the southeast corner, the band of windows turns the corner without interruption by any corner structural support; actual support for the laminated beam is provided by a square post recessed behind the corner glazing. There is a later alteration of the front southeast door and the side northwest door with a metal frame glazed door and side windows on either side. The northwest door opens onto the outdoor eating area. The west wall has a wide expanse of stone veneer at the north end.

Rear (North) Façade

The westernmost section of the north wall has a section of stone veneer with inset louvered vents that wrap around from the west wall. The remainder of the wall is orange-red brick. There are double louvered doors at the west end of the wall and double flush doors at the east end. At the east end, the upper part of the wall is open, and screen and chain link fencing covers the opening.

East Façade

The north end of the east wall is composed of orange - red brick and has an opening at the top covered with screen and chain link that extends around from the rear wall and its east end along the parking lot. A

section of brick extends to the south, followed by a slightly projecting bay clad with stone veneer, featuring a “Tom’s Diner” sign. Further south, the wall consists of full-height, metal frame plate glass windows that wrap around the corner to the front south facade.

Very little alterations occurred at 601 E. Colfax. The original roof material was built of asphalt and gravel, which was replaced in 2006-2009 with asphalt shingles, but the roof shapes and other materials were not altered. An outdoor seating area to the west was added in 2001. The window and door openings are original, however, the window and door materials have been replaced at some point in the last twenty to thirty years.

Interior

The interior of 601 E. Colfax retains much of its original details including a southeast corner customer waiting area with couches. The stone veneer on the east wall of the building is carried into the interior to form the north wall of the waiting area. The exterior to interior connection of architectural details is also carried inside by the laminated wood trusses with metal bands exposed on the interior ceiling and projected through the building envelope at the southeast and southwest corners of the restaurant. Facing west from the entrance area, a counter with stools and a service/grille station are located to the north, a series of booths for customers is located along the south wall of the building, and additional booths and curving banquettes are found along the west wall of the diner. The booths and banquettes are complete with yellow and purple padded upholstery and yellow plastic laminate tables. The floor in the customer seating area is composed of terrazzo, which continues to form a ledge that serves as footrest under the counter. The remarkably intact L-shaped counter has a cashier station at its east end and is angled outward in its center, mirroring the south wall of the building. The south and west sides of the counter feature padded, cantilevered stools. The top of the counter is surfaced with yellow, orange, and wood grained laminated plastic applied in geometric shapes, while the sides are faced with wood grain plastic laminate with an orange band at the bottom (all original materials). There are more booths lining the outer wall.

c. Describe character defining features; identify the key visual aspects that make up the character of this building.

Mid-century modern buildings were in many ways a continuation of the earlier modern movement which rejected previous revival styles due to them being too heavily rooted in overelaborate European fashion. The mid-century modern movement created buildings with streamlined design, little ornamentation and intentionally showcased both the innovation of material and the structural elements of the buildings. The Googie style expanded on this further by using these simple forms in an exaggerated manner as the basis for advertisement of the interior use, frequently along major roads and thoroughfares. As a result, the character defining features of 601 E. Colfax are relatively simple, though wonderfully exaggerated. First, the boomerang roof consists of sloped, four-sided geometric plates with thick eaves radiating from an upward swooping multi-plated central structure with four immense boomerang-shaped structural trusses that follow the slopes of the roof and project beyond the eaves at the corners. The expansive glass on the primary facades starts low near the foundation and tucks under the eaves providing a connection between interior and exterior that was common in buildings of this era, while the application of stone veneer flanking the entrance and on the Pearl Street façade as well as being featured on the interior are hallmarks of the style. Rounding out the Googie influences are the use of

geometric shapes inside and out, including acute angles, which are character-defining features for this structure.

d. Describe location and setting including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structures.

601 E. Colfax is located along U.S. 40, a major east-west United States Highway connecting the Mountain States to the Mid-Atlantic States, known as the Main Street of America. U.S. 40 (Colfax Avenue) is the eastern gateway to Denver and has been and continues to be a major thoroughfare for Denver and Colorado. The building is located at the southwest corner of E. Colfax and Pearl Street. To the east and north of the building are large areas of paved parking. Broad concrete sidewalks border the site on the south and west, and between the sidewalks and the building are areas of Colorado-themed landscape with evergreen bushes and large rocks. On the west is a newer outdoor eating area enclosed by a low picket fence, which was added in 2001. The White Spot building was constructed in 1967 during the hey-day of the Colfax automobile corridor, as a restaurant tied to this consumer industry. The building is three blocks from the Colorado State Capitol building as well as many other historic and contemporary office buildings. The block to the north includes a number of late 19th and early 20th century buildings, including multi-family structures and single-family homes, often now used for commercial or multi-family purposes. At the far end of the 1600 block of Pearl is the former Temple Emanuel, a Denver Landmark from a different era. Across the street to the west is a 5-story multi-family affordable housing complex, and across Colfax to the South are one-story commercial structures again, some from the early 20th century and others from the early 21st century. The representation of buildings from so many eras and styles is common on Colfax and has become the context over a century of development. It is in the midst of bars, restaurants and theater venues that line Colfax and have customers that are attracted to the 24-hour diner fare. From 1967 to today, the diner has catered to business meetings, just as much as to neighborhood “regulars” and late-night crowds.

e. Describe major alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations if known. Describe any plans to alter the exterior.

The sloping surface of the roof was originally built-up asphalt and gravel; between 2006 and 2009 the roof was covered with asphalt shingles, although the roof shape nor the overhanging eaves have not changed. A freestanding hexagonal lighted panel sign bearing the White Spot name and logo at the southwest corner of the property is no longer present; it was still in place in 1990 (holding a Colorado Café panel) but was gone by 2006. The banquette area in the northwest part of the building was added by the current owner. The outdoor seating area to the west was added in 2001. At some point in recent decades the windows were replaced with new glass panels and aluminum framing, but remain in their original configuration and openings. Overall the White Spot building design, materials and massing as envisioned and built by Armet and Davis still exist today. 601 E. Colfax is the last remaining, best preserved example of Armet and Davis’ Google style buildings standing in Denver.

- f. Include a statement describing how the building currently conveys its historic integrity. For example, does it retain its original design, materials, location, workmanship, setting, historic associations and feeling?**

As Colorado's longest commercial thoroughfare and the eastern gateway to Denver on U.S. 40, E. Colfax Avenue became an entirely logical location for a Googie style restaurant. Alan Hess, author of two books on Googie style, described the significance of the movement, which received scant attention from architectural journal of the day, but "helped to mold the appearance of cities nationwide. They were modern architecture, but they were also widely popular, a rare combination in the history of Modernism."¹ Architect Steven Izenour wrote that, except for a few skyscrapers, Googie style restaurants represented "all most of us knew as modern architecture in the forties and fifties."² 601 E. Colfax retains its original location and automobile-centric context and association, but it also retains its original design, materials and workmanship. This White Spot restaurant still displays the prominent sloping geometric roofline, wide overhanging eaves, the stone veneer siding that extends from the exterior to the interior décor, as well as the large plate glass windows across its main southern and western façade to bring the outside in. Even the interior décor original to the diner, such as the terrazzo flooring, booths, and laminate geometric design counter top are retained in this location. The surrounding buildings have not changed significantly since the time of construction, and the Colfax setting, while evolving, remains an eclectic commercial corridor with a diversity of uses and people, reflecting integrity of association and feeling related to optimism of mid-century design, with the "longest-wickedest street" in America, with the diversity of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood, and with the auto-centric culture of the street.

8. History of the Structure and Its Associations

Please provide a statement for each of the following:

- a. Describe the history of the structure and its associations with important individuals, groups, events, or historical trends.**

As described in the National Register nomination, 601 E. Colfax was constructed in 1967 by William F. Clements as part of his White Spot restaurant chains. He hired the California architectural firm Armet and Davis, who were the preeminent architects of Googie style restaurants and commercial buildings of the time. Clements established the White Spot restaurant chain in 1947 with his first location at 22 South Broadway, and the chain grew from there, revolutionizing the restaurant industry in Denver.

Clements was born in 1914 in Monte Vista, CO, and spent most of his childhood in Fort Lupton. The family moved to Denver in 1925. After graduating from East High School, Clements joined the family bakery business, taking it over after his father's death. Clements told the *Denver Post* that one of his jobs for the family bakery was delivering rolls to restaurants across Denver, and during WWII supplying Lowry Field with bread, rolls and donuts. Clements was in and out of restaurants all day long, so he decided he might as well be in the industry. Clements brought his bakery experience to the White Spot restaurants, by having its own bakery to supply the restaurants with rolls, buns, doughnuts, sweet rolls, cheesecake, and pies daily.

¹ Alan Hess, *Googie: Fifties Coffee Shop Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1985). 11

² Steven Izenour in introduction to Hess, *Googie*, 7.

Best known for the White Spot chain, Clements owned more than 25 restaurants in the Denver area during his life. While Clements retained the White Spots, other restaurants that he opened up and managed at the beginning he eventually sold to the restaurant managers. Clements primary interest was in opening new restaurants rather than day to day operations. In 1967 he told the *Denver Post*, “I enjoy leasing negotiations, interior design conferences and working with contractors. I like to build restaurants, get them going and then go on to another project.” Clements was also a savvy restaurant owner, understanding the importance of his employees’ loyalty by sharing the restaurant profits with all of his managers.

Clements made sure that the White Spot was a family business, just like his father’s bakery business. He brought in his brother George Clements as the vice-president and another brother Frank, who designed the food service side of the business. His son Tony was involved as well and eventually took over the business when his father died in 1969. White Spot revolutionized the restaurant industry in Denver being a new type of restaurant with attention-grabbing roadside architecture, casual atmospheres, affordable prices, and fast and friendly service. White Spots also advertised a family friendly atmosphere, “Family Dining is relaxed at White Spot where we don’t cry over spilled milk. The stage is set for pleasant dining out with a wide variety of quality foods at reasonable prices. Kiddies menu, special chairs for children and hospitality geared for happy family dining.” In 1967 when William F. Clements opened this White Spot location at 601 E. Colfax, the annual revenue for the chain was approximately \$3 million. According to Clements, the average cost of a new location was \$200,000 for land, \$175,000 for the building, and \$125,000 for fixtures.

Beginning in 1960, Clements hired Armet and Davis of Los Angeles to design several of the White Spot restaurants. The firm was established in L.A. in 1947, but completed contract work outside of California, which spread the Googie style design across other Western states including Colorado. Armet and Davis designed seven White Spots with 601 E. Colfax being one of their later designs and now the best preserved example of their work and of any Googie architecture in Denver.

Dramatic changes along Colfax Avenue from the postwar boom of the 1960s to the decline in the 1980s, and resurgence and redevelopment today has put the diner at 601 E. Colfax at the heart of the evolution of this main Denver thoroughfare. The building continued to operate as a 24-hour diner throughout each decade, weathering changes in clientele, consumer trends, and local neighbors. In August 1969, the White Spot at 601 E. Colfax was picketed by Denver hippies after several hippies were refused service. According to the manager, they were turned away because “the majority of other customers found them objectionable.” The hippies argued they were being discriminated against “because our dress, hair and life-style are not prepacked, homogenized and plastic like their Formica food.” This case followed a court decision earlier in the month from another White Spot on Broadway denying service to hippies that upheld a restaurant’s right to refuse service as long as it was not based on race or color. Said the judge, “no one would want to eat dinner in an atmosphere of barefooted, semi-dressed, disheveled, unwashed people, who throw food about at each other and on the floor and who generally conduct themselves in an atmosphere not conducive to comfortable, restful, relaxed eating.”

In 1982, the *Denver Post* described the White Spot at 601 E. Colfax as a favorite haunt of Denver’s vice detectives. The diner provided “a box seat for the rough ‘n’ tumble action of Denver’s notorious east-west

strip. Here, over a greasy omelet and cup of lukewarm coffee, the streetwise people-watched can take in the parade of characters waltzing by the window.” Tony Clements said he was glad to close the White Spot location at 601 E. Colfax in the mid-1980s: “Like running a restaurant in Beirut,” he says. “In the ‘60s, it was pot and hippies and all that, but we managed. But when the neighborhood went to heroin and crack that was too much. I got out.”

The 601 E. Colfax Avenue’s White Spot operated until the mid-1980s, and the last representative of the chain closed in 2001, in the Golden Triangle (demolished). A series of restaurants followed in this building at 601 E. Colfax, but none achieved long-term success until Tom’s Diner, owned by Thomas S. Messina, which began serving food in 1999, and returned the structure to the community landmark it is today.

b. Describe significant historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.

601 E. Colfax has significant historical associations not only with Clements who began the White Spot chain and commissioned this building, but also in the building’s direct association as one of the last remaining intact Googie style architecture of the prominent designers of Armet and Davis. 601 E. Colfax also possesses historical associations related to the commercial development of the corridor through its construction and operation as a restaurant along Colfax. The diner also historically has associations with the LGBTQ community as an inclusive landmark.

William F. Clements, a prominent Denver restaurateur, established twenty-nine eating places during his career (not all of them White Spots) and served on the board of the National Restaurant Association for ten years and as president of the Colorado-Wyoming Restaurant Association. The White Spot chain was a family business that operated from 1947 until 2001. Even after William’s death, his son Tony continued to run the White Spots until the last one closed in 2001. Clements was not only significant for opening the White Spot Restaurant but also revolutionizing the restaurant industry and introducing Denver to the Googie style architecture centered around automobile culture.

Colfax Avenue first appeared on Denver maps in 1868, named for U.S. House Speaker Schuyler Colfax, who would later become Ulysses S. Grant’s Vice President. Colfax supported Colorado’s statehood, so to honor him the city dedicated the road along the southern boundary of central Denver. The area along Colfax Avenue east of Broadway developed slowly, being country land with residential properties appearing through the early 1900s. A streetcar line was installed in 1886 connecting downtown Denver outward along Colfax. With the invention and spread of the automobile in 1910s through 1920s, Colfax was paved prior to 1920 and became a street designated as part of U.S. 40, a transcontinental highway. The City and County of Denver adopted zoning for the city making Colfax a business and commercial district.

During the period after WWII, automobile-centric facilities proliferated along E. Colfax Avenue. These commercial buildings included ones like the White Spot Restaurants, along Colfax that were classic examples of roadside architecture, specifically Googie style. The White Spot auto-centric buildings throughout the city of Denver brought a different restaurant culture to the city. Roadside architecture refers

to buildings or structures that are defined by their relationship to the road and car culture of that time. These are buildings designed for high visibility and quick recognition to attract and serve those traveling by automobile. The Googie style typified this roadside architecture by creating distinctive structural shapes that became part of the businesses' identity and marketing. The mid-twentieth century was the heyday of roadside architecture, due to post-WWII increase in car ownership and consumerism. This era in America was characterized by prosperity and optimism with consumers embracing modern design, new products, and labor-saving technologies.

The name Googie derives from Googies Coffee Shop, built in L.A. in 1949, and became the inspiration for a new style of architecture that combined Modern design with functional, commercial buildings. Armet and Davis were in the thick of LA's Googie style obsession, becoming the well-known architects of this Modern style commonly used for diners, coffee shops, drive-ins, and motels. The largest concentration of their work is in southern California, but they did work across the U.S. as well as developing prototypes for large chains including Denny's and Bob's Big Boy. Clements became familiar with Armet and Davis of Los Angeles, and hired them to design several of the White Spot restaurants in Colorado. The prominent Googie architectural features that Armet and Davis used at 601 E. Colfax included:

- Placement on the corner of Pearl and Colfax adjacent to a major arterial roadway
- Free-standing building, with a geometric irregular floorplan
- Ample parking
- Well-illuminated interiors
- Dramatic roof forms with wide overhanging eaves
- Multiple contrasting materials, including brick, stone veneer, large plate glass windows
- Bright colors
- Integrated signage, often neon
- Drew inspiration from the Space Age
- Designed for everyone

Clements' took pride in having the best Googie style architects design his modern White Spot restaurants. When a new location opened on Broadway in 1961, he boasted to the *Denver Post* that it was "one of the most modernistic coffee shops in the country." The interior of the new location included Venetian terrazzo floors and dropped acoustic tile ceilings. It also included a belt conveyor system to carry dirty dishes back to the kitchen and a specialized take-out area (different location than the nominated property).

The White Spot chain expanded rapidly during the 1960s, which is when Clements brought Armet and Davis in to design the restaurants. When a new White Spot location opened on East Colfax in Aurora in 1964, the *Denver Post* described it as offering "the latest in food service design" with bright colors and tall windows which give the building a "light and spacious feeling." White Spot advertisements proclaimed that "The White Spot Restaurants' Formula of Excellent Food and Service in Very Attractive Surroundings Has Now Become Available to the Residents of the Aurora Area." A 1967 advertising campaign described White Spot as "Where everybody eats and everybody meets" offering "a completed menu of Fine Foods served with dispatch in a pleasant atmosphere 24 hours a day."

William F. Clements passed away in 1969 and his son Tony took over the business. Tony continued to grow the restaurant chain with Armet and Davis designs, including 1500 Curtis built in 1969 (now Sam's No.3); 3909 E. Colfax built in 1969 (demolished); and 2110 S. Broadway built in 1974 (demolished). Armet and Davis also constructed a two-story headquarters building for White Spot at 3010 E. 6th Ave. in 1970 (demolished). The White Spot at 601 E. Colfax, although no longer a White Spot since the mid-1980s, has remained a 24-hour diner along the automobile heavy Colfax Ave still to this day.

601 E. Colfax is also associated with the LGBTQ community and social movements that contributed to the culture of the Capitol Hill and Uptown neighborhoods beginning in the 1970s and continuing for several decades. These neighborhoods and a series of local businesses served as safe spaces for LGBTQ community members to gather and socialize, and Colfax as well as the nearby 17th Avenue commercial corridor were particular hubs for LGBTQ Denverites. The first Denver Landmark associated with the LGBTQ movement was First Unitarian Society of Denver nearby at 14th Avenue and Lafayette St. This congregation helped organize Denver's first "Pride" event in Cheeseman Park in 1976 and outwardly defended the first gay weddings held at the current church location (1400 N Lafayette St). The residential areas and commercial institutions in the neighborhood surrounding 601 E. Colfax were openly accepting of the LGBTQ community and the former White Spot Diner is one of the few local businesses still in operation and still recognized for its inclusivity, as noted by local LGBTQ community members that identified the Diner as a safe space for personal expression and connection. Not surprisingly, the annual Pride parade moves past the Diner along Colfax Avenue each June. In recent years a number of the other nearby businesses that provided this same atmosphere have closed, although the buildings remain. These include JR's, Hamburger Mary's, the Grand, and the Wrangler.

c. Describe other structures that have similar associations and the relationship/comparison of this of this structure to other structures.

When the location at 601 E. Colfax opened, it was one of nine White Spot locations. Other locations were:

- 9405 E. Colfax Ave, Aurora. Built in 1964. Design by Armet & Davis. Currently a Mexican restaurant. Similar design to 1390 S. Colorado Blvd.
- 2201 E. Colfax, Denver. Drive-in. Demolished
- 740 W. Colfax Ave. Built 1965. Design by Armet & Davis. Currently the Denver Diner, altered.
- 7785 W. Colfax, Lakewood. Built in 1960. Appears to have been significantly altered.
- 819 W. Littleton Blvd., Littleton. Demolished or significantly altered.
- 1360 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver. Built 1965. Design by Armet & Davis. Similar design to 9405 E. Colfax. Demolished.
- 800 Broadway, Denver. Built 1961. Demolished.
- 2835 W. 72nd Ave., Westminster. Currently a Mexican restaurant. Appears to have been significantly altered.



The 1980s urban decline and growing fast food competition was reflected in the economic struggles faced by White Spot Restaurants. The White Spot at 800 Broadway, the last chain restaurant, closed in 2001, and shortly after was demolished. Most of the White Spot restaurants have been demolished by redevelopment, however three White Spot buildings in Denver continue to operate as restaurants: Tom's Diner, the Denver Diner, and Sam's No. 3. The continual use and careful stewardship of the diner by its owners makes 601 E. Colfax the best preserved and a rare example of the Armet and Davis Google style diner.

9. Owner Consent to Designation:

I / We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of, the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as a Structure for Preservation.

I understand that this designation transfers with the title of the property should the property be sold, or if legal or beneficial title is otherwise transferred.

Owner(s): _____ Date: _____ (please print)

Owner(s): _____ (signature)

If the owner does not consent to designation, please describe the reasons for recommending designation:

There is swelling community support to save the White Spot building at 601 E. Colfax, today known as Tom's Diner. The building has been known to be of significance architecturally and to the community for many years, especially since the 2007/2008 inventory was completed and the Keeper of the National Register deemed the building officially eligible for listing. Efforts were made at that time by community groups, including neighborhood organizations and Historic Denver, to provide the current owner with information about the incentives and opportunities related to the building's historic nature.

A community effort began in earnest when the City of Denver posted the structure as part of a Certificate of Non-Historic Status application in May 2019. Five individuals, including applicants listed in this document, filed a notice of intent to submit a designation application to the City Landmarks Staff during the public posting period.

The applicants also connected with local non-profit Historic Denver, Inc., as Historic Denver had received numerous emails, phone calls, and social media posts asking for help to save the historic White Spot diner. This resulted in a petition that currently includes 670 signatures (as of June 14, 2019) in support of finding a solution to save the building. Historic Denver, Inc. staff members reached out to the property owner and the potential developer to discuss possibilities, and over the course of the last two weeks have had two meetings with the owner and developer, but given the tight timeframe required by the process, the only



way to ensure the building's demise is not imminent is to file this application. As applicants it is our goal to find a solution for this building, and we are willing to have dialogue and to work with the property owner in the coming months.

It is strongly suggested that if the owner does not consent to designation the applicant should meet and discuss application with owner prior to filing an application. Provide a statement describing efforts that have been made to contact the owner to talk about designation and possible alternatives if owner does not consent to designation.

While not representing the applicants in an official capacity, Historic Denver has met with the owner, Bottlestyx llc (Thomas S. Messina) twice during the posting period, during which they discussed the 601 E. Colfax building and its significance as an officially eligible National Register of Historic Places site as well as a potential Denver Landmark, and initial ideas about how the groups could work towards an amenable solution. It is our hope that we can identify a number of alternatives to demolition that can also be attractive to the owner, and we are interested in seeing how the building could be incorporated into a development or retained in other creative ways.

10. Resources

“Armet and Davis.” L.A. Conservancy. <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects/armet-davis>

Autabee, Robert & Kristen. *Lost Restaurants of Denver*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015.

Barnhouse, Mark. *Lost Denver*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015.

“Clements to Open 9th Site.” *Denver Post*, August 27, 1967.

“Coffee shop foils biggies for 50 years.” *Denver Post*, May 3, 1997.

Denver City Directories

Goodstein, Phil. *The Ghosts of Denver: Capitol Hill*. Denver: New Social Publications, 1996.

Hess, Alan. *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004.

“Hippies Picket Café, Claim ‘Discrimination.’” *Denver Post*, August 16, 1969.

Phinney, Jack. “White Spots Still Expanding,” *Denver Post*, 23 April 1969, 86; Robin Chotzinoff, “That Hits the Spot!,” *Westword*, 8 June 1994; “Hippies Picket Café, Claim ‘Discrimination,’” *Denver Post*, 16 August 1969, 26.

“Restaurant Backed in Non-Bias Ouster.” *Denver Post*, August 8, 1969.

“Restaurant in Aurora Opened by White Spot.” *Denver Post*, October 14, 1964.

Sanborn Map Company. Denver, Colorado. Fire Insurance Maps. Pelham, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1929 and 1951.

Simmons, Laurie and Thomas H. Simmons. *East Colfax Avenue*. Historic Denver Guidebook. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 2007.

Simmons, R. Laurie and Thomas H. Simmons. “White Spot Restaurant National Register Nomination 5DV.10388”. May 22, 2009. On file at History Colorado.

“That Hits the Spot!” *Westword*, June 8, 1994.

Wagner, Kyle, “Slice of Life,” *Westword*, July 5, 2001.

“White Spot.” *Denver Post*, July 18, 1982.

“White Spot Adds Restaurants.” *Denver Post*, November 10, 1965.

“White Spot Company Opens New Coffee Shop, Restaurant.” *Denver Post*, 1961.

“White Spot Due at 15th.” *Denver Post*, January 22, 1969.

“White Spot Headquarters.” *Denver Post*, August 2, 1970.

“William F. Clements (Obituary).” *Denver Post*, March 26, 1969.

11. Photographs

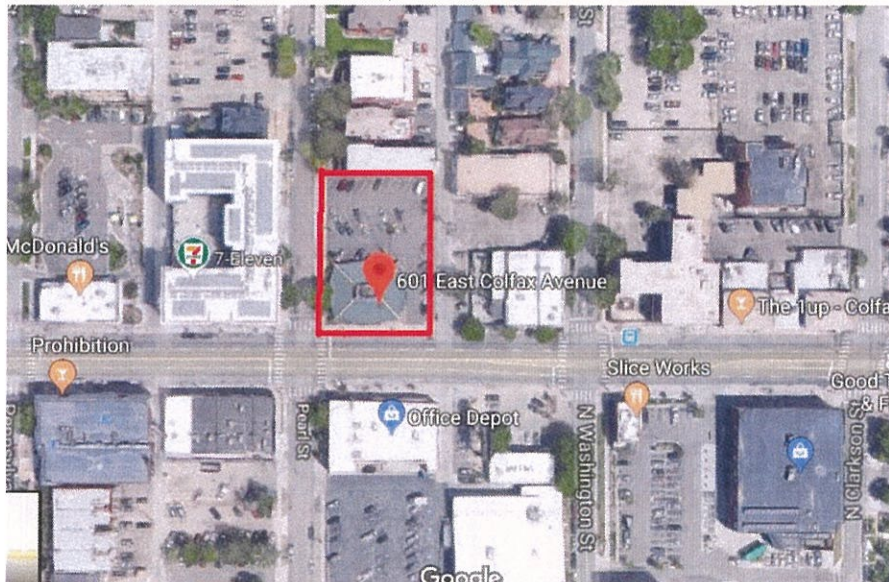
Attach at least four (4) 5x7 or larger color photographs showing the views of the property from the public right of way(s) and any important features or details. If available, attach copies of historic photographs of the structure.

SEE PAGE 23

12. Site map

An overall site plan should be included graphically depicting the building, the location of other significant site features and the boundaries of the designation.

(North is toward the top of the site map below.)



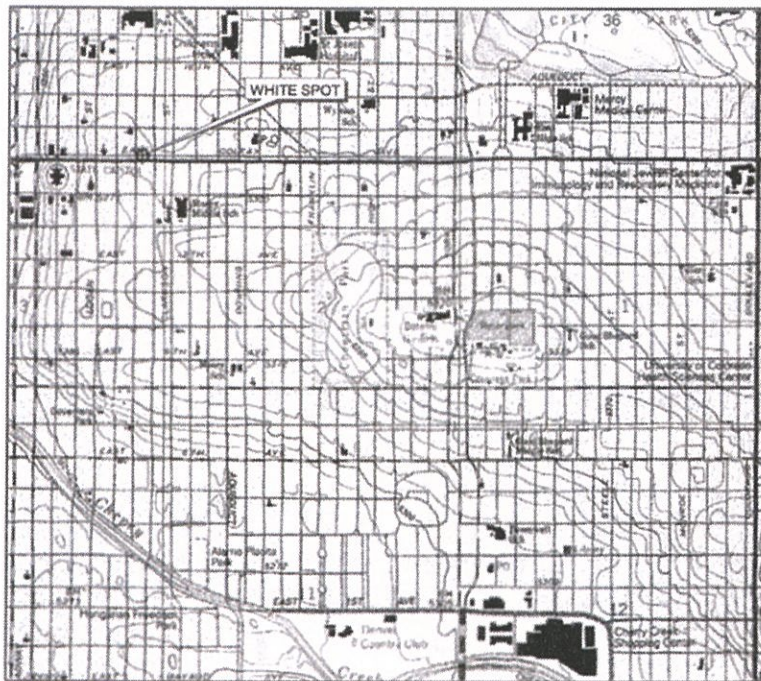
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NPS Form 1024-015, NPS Form

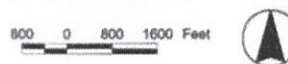
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section No. MAPS Page 19

White Spot Restaurant, Denver County, Colorado
Commercial Resources of the East Colfax Avenue Corridor MPS



USGS Location Map. Extract of Englewood, Colo., 7.5 minute map, 1997.



13. Staff Visit

Site visit by LPC staff.

14. Application Fee

There is a non-refundable application fee of \$250 for an individual structure with owner consent or \$875 for an individual structure without owner consent. (Make check payable to Denver Manager of Revenue).

The designation process is outlined in Denver Revised Municipal Code; Chapter 30 which is based upon the criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places. National Register evaluation principles regarding criteria, categories, and integrity have been adapted for local applications. More information may be found at www.denvergov.org/preservation/.



NOTE: Applicants have certain responsibilities and obligations under the designation process. Citizens, in addition to the required applicants, may want to support the designation, but not assume applicant responsibilities. The Landmark Preservation Commission recommends that these citizens show support through signing a petition, rather than signing on as an applicant.

Applicant(s): SAMUEL DORRANCE Date: 6/14/19 (please print)

Applicant: [Signature] (signature)

Applicant Address: 1218 N CLARKSON ST #5 DENVER, CO 80218

Applicant(s): Jonel Beach Date: 6/13/19 (please print)

Applicant: [Signature] (signature)

Applicant Address: 3021 N. Fillmore St, Denver, CO 80205

Applicant(s): Kaye Travolta Date: 6/14/19 (please print)

Applicant: [Signature] (signature)

Applicant Address: 3423 Milwaukee Street, Denver, CO 80205

Applicant(s): Kristin Morales Date: 6.14.19 (please print)

Applicant: [Signature] (signature)

Applicant Address: 3545 Elizabeth St - Denver, CO 80205

Applicant(s): JESSICA CADUETTE Date: 6/14/19 (please print)

Applicant: [Signature] (signature)

Applicant Address: 3417 MILWAUKEE ST, DENVER CO 80205

Applicant(s): _____ Date: _____ (please print)

Applicant: _____ (signature)

Applicant Address: _____

Three applicants are required if the designation does not have owner consent. All three applicants will need to be either a Denver resident, property owner in the City and County of Denver or representative of a Denver based organization or business.

11. Photographs

Attach at least four (4) 5x7 or larger color photographs showing the views of the property from the public right of way(s) and any important features or details. If available, attach copies of historic photographs of the structure.



1. 601 E. Colfax Ave, South façade along Colfax. Image by Shannon Schaefer Stage, 2019.



2. 601 E. Colfax Ave, Southwest façade at the corner of Colfax and Pearl. Image by Shannon Schaefer Stage, 2019.



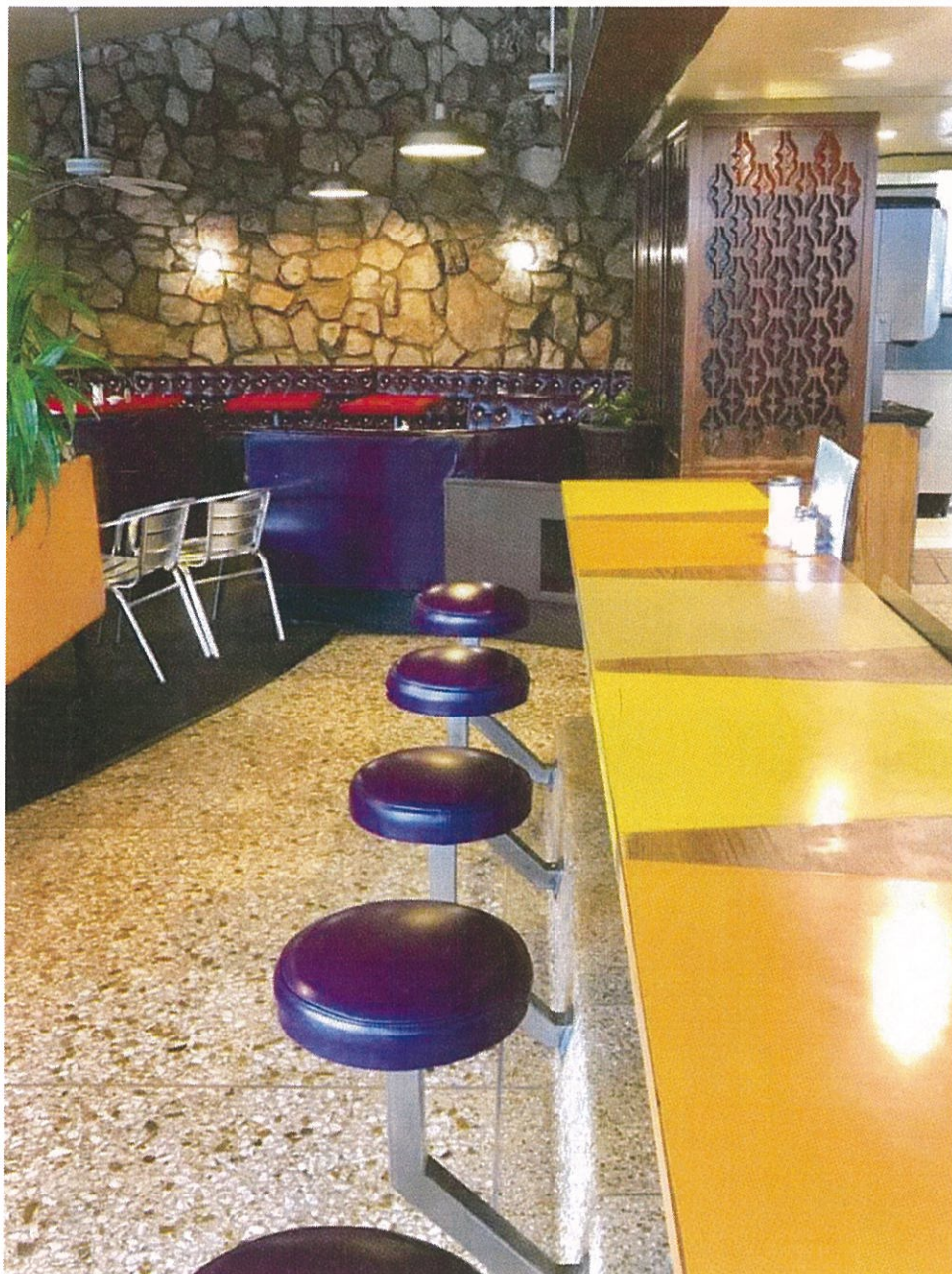
3. 601 E. Colfax Ave, South façade Tom's Diner sign detail. Image by Shannon Schaefer Stage, 2019.



4. 601 E. Colfax Ave, Southeast roof detail. Image by Shannon Schaefer Stage, 2019.



5. 601 E. Colfax Ave, East Facade. Image by Shannon Schaefer Stage, 2019.



6. 601 E. Colfax Ave, interior counter and stone veneer detail, 2019.



7. 601 E. Colfax Ave, interior counter and terrazzo flooring detail, 2016.



8. 601 E. Colfax Ave, interior detail, 2014.



9. 601 E. Colfax Ave, south façade, excerpt from the National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2009 (Front Range Research Associates)

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section No. Historic Figures Page 21

White Spot Restaurant, Denver County, Colorado
Commercial Resources of the East Colfax Avenue Corridor MPS



Figure H3. This view from the air vividly shows the unusual roof configuration of the White Spot at East Colfax Avenue and Pearl Street. SOURCE: GoogleEarth, 2007.

10. 601 E. Colfax Ave, excerpt from the National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2009 (Front Range Research Associates)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

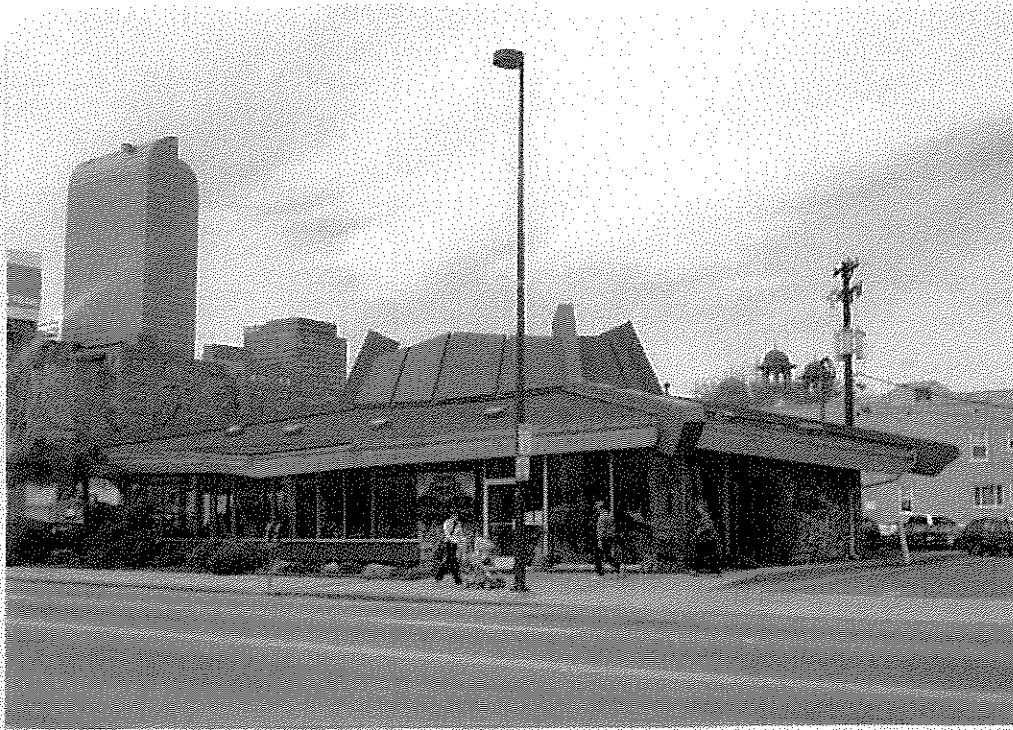
Section No. Historic Figures Page 24

White Spot Restaurant, Denver County, Colorado
Commercial Resources of the East Colfax Avenue Corridor MPS



Figure H7. The free-standing sign at the southwest corner of the property was still present in 1990, when the building housed the Colorado Cafe. SOURCE: Roger Whitacre image, Number Z-10645, September 1990, Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver, Colorado.

11. 601 E. Colfax Ave, excerpt from the National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2009
(Front Range Research Associates)



1



2

12. Images from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)



3

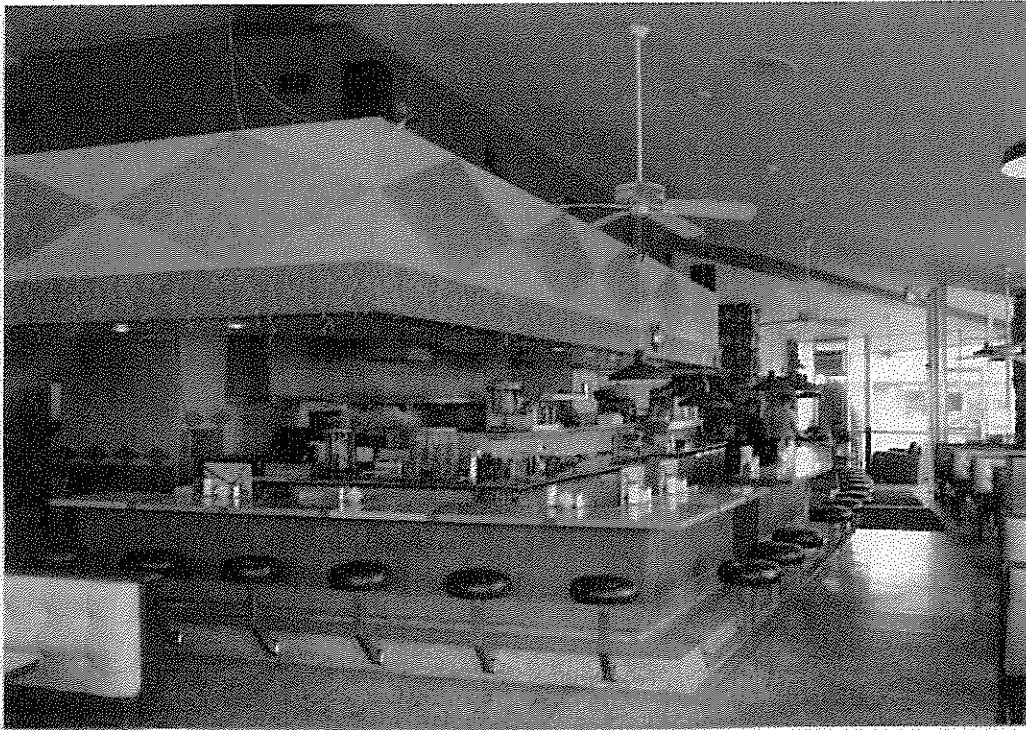


4

13. Images from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)



14. Images from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)



7



8

15. Images from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)



9

16. Images from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Historic Figures Page 20

White Spot Restaurant, Denver County, Colorado
Commercial Resources of the East Colfax Avenue Corridor MPS

Historic Photographs/Figures



Figure H1. William F. Clements founded the White Spot chain in 1947. SOURCE: *Denver Post*, 27 August 1967, 2H.



Figure H2. Louis L. Armét (right) and Eldon C. Davis (left) are shown here explaining a model of a project to a client. SOURCE: Hess, *Googie Redux*, 89.

17. Excerpt from the National Register Nomination form, 2007 (Front Range Research Associates)