

LANDMARK STRUCTURE APPLICATION

DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Building Identification

1. Address of Building: 1475 Elizabeth Street Denver, Colorado 80218
2. Legal Description of Property: A parcel of land located in the Northwest One-quarter of Section 1, Township 4 South,, Range 68 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado, more particularly described as follows: UNIT 1, LOWENSTEIN CONDOMINIUMS, according to the map thereof, recorded October 11, 2006 under Reception No. 2006162720, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.
3. Historic Building Name: Bonfils Memorial Theater
Current Building Name: Lowenstein Theater
4. Historic Use: Recreation and Culture- Theater
Present Use: Tattered Cover Bookstore (since 2006)
5. Zone District: C-MU-10 WVRS

Historical Data Summary

6. Year of Construction: Design- 1949 Completion- 1953
Source of Information: City and County of Denver Records, Diane Wray Study
7. Architect or Builder: John K. Monroe, Architect, Mead and Mount Construction, Builder. Source of Information: City and County of Denver Records, Diane Wray Study.
8. Original Owner: Helen G. Bonfils Foundation
Source of Information: City and County of Denver Records, Diane Wray Study

Photographs

9. See Attached Photographs

Statement of Significance

Landmark Designation Criteria

1. History

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

The Bonfils Memorial Theater exemplifies the cultural, social and historic heritage of the City of Denver through its association with Helen Bonfils, owner and publisher of the *Denver Post*, Denver social leader and philanthropist, and actress and leader in Denver civic theater, all of which combined to make her a prominent, powerful and influential woman in Denver during the period of significance. The theater is also closely associated with Henry Lowenstein, the Denver Civic Theater and the general growth of Denver as the theatrical capital of the inter-mountain West.

2. Architecture

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

The Bonfils Theater (now Lowenstein Theater) has the distinguishing characteristics of the Art Moderne architectural style.

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

The theater was designed by John K. Monroe, a local master architect largely known for his work for the Archdiocese of Denver.

Architectural Description

a. *Describe the location and setting including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structures.*

The Bonfils Memorial Theater was designed in 1949 and completed in 1953. It was originally conceived as an integral component of the older City Park Esplanade, a contributing resource to the Denver City Beautiful Parkways Historic District. The Bonfils Memorial Theater relates to the Sullivan Gateway and East High School, also a Denver City Landmark, which are directly north across Colfax Avenue.

Located on the southwest corner of Colfax Avenue and Elizabeth Street, Bonfils Memorial Theater (now Lowenstein Theater) is essentially a one-story building with a tall rectangular stage fly loft structure and a canted roof auditorium structure.

b. *Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Description of interior spaces with extraordinary design features- (NOTE: This section deals with the original features. The design features that were changed from the original structure are mentioned in the final paragraphs of this section detailing the bookstore's renovation project).*

This "form-follows-function" theater reflects its architect's previous experience in church architecture with clearly expressed spatiality. The theater, constructed of cream colored brick with mottled buff colored terra cotta trim, is sited on the corner property lines with the main entrance facing east onto Elizabeth Street. The primary façade,

however, faces north on Colfax Avenue. A public sidewalk extended along Colfax Avenue was set with large trees at the building's corners. Shrubbery and two medium sized blue spruce trees, symmetrically planted in relationship to the architecture, were located between the sidewalk and the building. At the east, the parking strip extending from the southeast property line cut away for an off-street pull through drive at the theater entrance, defined with a wide marquee canopy extending to the curb line. A service sidewalk provided access to the rear, south service doorway and the raised concrete, paved narrow rear area. This space was separated from the south parking lot by a low brick wall enclosing the south service entranceway and the steps up the paved rear area and a concrete retaining wall extending to the west alley.

The facade facing Colfax is symmetrical with a large center pavilion and lower curved flanking wings. Behind, the north wall of the auditorium rises with a slightly projecting center pavilion in a flat plane which meets the lower pavilions and the curve of the side walls. To the east, at the entrance, the marquee canopy projects from the structure that steps out around the ticket lobby.

The central pavilion is an enframingent of terra cotta in a shallow ovolo profile on all four sides which enclosed three bays of windows separated with mullions. The enframingent is carried on a three-pier terra cotta base. Each pier is centered with a large raised flute block, with guttae drops, set on terra cotta walling sections below each of the three window openings. Fronted by a terra cotta bench with a shallow top course and larger base block, each pier is flanked with molded side bars with two bands of horizontal beading. The foundation walling between the terra cotta piers is infilled with random ashlar red sandstone veneer. The pavilion side walls are veneered in large terra cotta tiles which extend back to the pavilion of the north auditorium wall. The parapet is capped in narrow matching coping.

The pavilion glazing is set within aluminum frames. The mullions are built up of five extruded aluminum trim pieces with double flute profile. Each of the three bays is divided into 15 large lights with the center row of five lights being taller. Each pane of glass is etched with a double circle motif in the upper and lower row of glazing and a tripe circle motif in the middle row. Across the middle row, every other circle is replaced with an octagonal shape containing various allegorical designs representing drama, comedy, music, and dance. The middle octagonal motif of each of the three window bays is etched with the representation of a ship, an allegorical reference to the logo of the Denver Civic Theater Association founded in the 1920s. The original glass is pink tinted; replacement glass is clear.

The curved side wings, of cream colored oversized 12 ½ inch long brick, have a terra cotta parapet cap with an ovolo profile and a torus bed mold. The cap is carried on a soldier course of eight inch brick. Four similar soldier courses are equally spaced down the walling. Typically, the soldier courses are contained above and below with a course of elongated brick in running bond and a course of all header bond. At the foundation level, the wings have projecting planter boxes of red sandstone in random ashlar with terra cotta cap blocks. The planters extend out perpendicularly from the curved wings and overlap the central pavilion foundation.

The north wall of the auditorium rises behind the pavilion and wings. The central auditorium pavilion, corresponding with the lower pavilion width, is flanked with slightly lower curved side walls. The pavilion has a plain block parapet cap, while the side walls

have an ovolo cap with a bed mold. The side wings are ornamented with two projecting courses of headers containing a soldier course. The decorative brick detailing is set down from the molded cap five courses and extends at a right angle down a corresponding distance from each corner where stack bond is utilized. At the pavilion a soldier course corresponds to the coursing in the brick detailing; two equidistant soldier courses complete the detailing of the auditorium's north wall.

The east elevation is characterized by the soaring canted roof structure of the auditorium extending from the center point of the tall stage fly loft block. The auditorium is splayed in plan as it extends from the fly loft. The side walls of the auditorium has a soldier course between two projecting header courses extending parallel up the rake and, matching the north elevation, extends down the corner from an oblique angle. The rake is capped with an ovolo terra cotta coping carried on five raked courses of running bond. The walling is generally laid in horizontal running bond. The large rectangular block of the stage fly loft is capped with a similar coping set on a soldier course. At the ground floor level, the east elevation is characterized by the medium height of the north central pavilion extending to the north wall of the auditorium. The terra cotta tile clad cheeks of the north central pavilion extend over the northeast wing which has an entrance projection set back from the northeast corner. The east walling is at the height of the wing and is capped with a similar ovolo-torus terra cotta coping. This structure extends approximately a third of the way across the elevation and is fronted by the marquee canopy. Extending to the southeast corner is a lower wing with an ovolo terra cotta cap.

The flat roofed marquee canopy defines the theater entrance and extends over the four entrance doors with sidelights and transoms, across two bays with terra cotta framed tripartite windows, and extends in a cantilever to the south and to the east beyond three columns. At the south end of the canopy, the cantilever is accentuated by a quarter circle cut out at the walling. At the northeast corner the canopy is cut away in an elongated curve topped with aluminum letters spelling out "Lowenstein Theater." The fascia is an extruded aluminum multi-ribbed band with a top drip cap. The soffit of the canopy is plaster with a setback outlining the edge. Circular recessed lights are set around the edge, in a row inside the three columns, and at each column. The three columns, like the area under the canopy, are clad in pink travertine marble. The three large columns are square in section and have trapezoidal benches at the base which face into the colonnade. The benches are terra cotta capped around concrete infilling and are set on red sandstone random ashlar bases. Two aluminum bands suggest necking and capitals on each column.

The travertine veneer on the walling is booked with the joints relating to the terra cotta trim around the windows. The trim is canted with a rounded outside corner and extends completely around the windows. The aluminum framed windows have a fixed center pane and sidelights with operable casements. The aluminum entrance doors, sidelights, and transoms extend to the height of the marquee canopy ceiling. The flanking sidelights have horizontal muntins extending across to the transom bars and at midway door height. The northeast sidelight is repeated around the corner at the north elevation. The four doors are single-light with extruded aluminum, double flute trim.

The lower southeast section contains two bands of windows with canted terra cotta enframing. Nearest the entrance structure are four windows with wide center mullion. The three horizontal sashes in each opening are awning type. This band is

connected to a ribbon window with two and three-light awning sash spaced with wide mullions. The window heads are at the same height; the sill is stepped.

The west elevation is generally similar in form. The northwest wing extends around the corner and is stopped by a low section extending approximately the length of the auditorium where it is intersected by a high service structure which encloses the bases of the stage fly loft and which extend around the southwest corner in a contiguous, but lower section. The canted auditorium wall is ornamented with the soldier coursing within projecting header bands. The low central section has an exit door alcove and a band of ribbon windows in an unornamented opening with a brick sill. A service door is located at the south end of the section. The heads of all three openings do not align. At the fly loft service wing, there is a large garage-type door with a roll-up door. All parapets are capped with the ovolo terra cotta coping.

The service section continues around the southwest corner and along the south of the theater where the stage fly loft dominates the elevation. A chimney extends up the west corner of the fly loft and projects slightly above the roof parapet. The high west section of the rear wing has five bays of metal framed 28-light sash with a raised header course extending around the openings and enclosing brick sills. At the east end, the lower section has two horizontal six-light sash openings with all header brick jams and head and brick sills. At the southeast corner is a doorway with a single-light metal door and flat cantilevered canopy extending over the walkway. The canopy fascia matches the main marquee canopy.

The interior is distinguished by three major public spaces: the lobby, the auditorium, and the lower lobby. Auxiliary spaces of note are the ticket-entrance lobby, and the lower level public restrooms. Other spaces include the stage area with fly loft constructed on exposed concrete block and concrete frame; the east and west dressing rooms and corridors; the shops and the storage rooms under the stage; basement shops, prop and costume storage rooms; non-public restrooms; and service stairways.

Patrons entered the northeast ticket lobby which is terrazzo paved and has pink travertine marble clad walls. The ceiling is plaster and is continuous with the marquee canopy ceiling. The ticket lobby had two ticket windows with marble flat bank trim around the openings and a similarly trimmed service doorway into the box office.

The lobby, behind the north central pavilion glazing is a nearly two story space with a freeform false balcony wrapping around the inside walls. The areas at either end are low, one-story spaces to the soffit of the balcony configuration. An interior planter extends in front of the window walls and has a pink travertine marble cap. The outside wall is curved and is accentuated with curved interior corners. The space has a high wood veneer wainscot with a molded chair rail. At the window wall, the wainscot extends up to the marble cap of a planter with a textured beige vinyl covering imitating grass cloth. The ceilings are rough textured acoustical surface.

At the west end of the lobby is what was called the "Holy of Holies," a semi-octagonal alcove that included a shrine to the Abbey Theater in London. The display originally included a painting of that theater and a brick from the ruin. The walls are clad with wood veneer paneling, stained a dark walnut color with a fluted pilaster at each side of the opening. The pilasters have five flutes. A three-flute pilaster is set at each angle of the walls' planes which also have a molded chair rail. An ovolo profile light trough

reflects light up on a plastered ceiling cove. A north doorway has wooden bolection trim typical of all public space doorways.

The main element of the lobby is the grand staircase system. A short flight of steps is centered on the north wall of the auditorium and descends to a landing where the staircase splits to the east and west landings and extends on down at right angles to the lower lobby. Over the lower staircase are two runs of steps to a freeform cantilevered landing/balcony which provides access to the two back entrances to the auditorium balcony. The staircases, with curved bottom steps, are each set behind a round column at the outside corners of the auditorium. The wall above the lower landing has a niche or alcove. Light fixtures are a pair of chandeliers with spherical clear glass globes hung at various levels.

The lower lobby has the pair of staircases descending down at either side. The bottom steps are curved. The staircases have wood veneer wainscoting that curves in a quarter circle to the floor and contrasts to the textured vinyl wall covering. The lower lobby features a freeform cove at the ceiling with its rough textured plaster. The cover lowered ceiling is over a built-in bar set between two oblong columns. The door jambs are curved with flat heads. The floor is laid in blue "Terra Tile" with cream borders. Opening off the lower lobby are the men's (west) and women's (east) restrooms. The women's restroom has a large lounge space with a separate toilet room. Typical of the men's which does not have an anteroom, the walls are clad in a light grey structural glass veneer laid in a running bond. The partitions are also grey structural glass and have wooden doors.

In general, the public space interiors invoke an early 1950s feeling with the use of freeform shapes, although usually symmetrically planned. These interiors, as a consequence, have fluidity. The secondary spaces, primarily arranged down flanking corridors along the auditorium, are strictly utilitarian with minimal institutional finishes.

The Bonfils Memorial theatre has architectural significance as an example of the Art Moderne Style in mid-twentieth century Denver. It contains twelve of the prominent elements of the Art Moderne Style as outlined by John Blumenson in his book Identifying American Architecture:

- soft corners with curved walls
- smooth walls without ornamentation
- horizontal bands of windows
- ornamentation provided by decorative glass panels
- ornamentation provided by cast decorative panels
- use of aluminum for door trim, window trim, balusters and railings
- large panels of glass
- circular and angular patterns in the glass and metalwork
- flat roofs
- string courses along the coping of the walls
- curved entry canopies

c. Description of major alterations to the exterior of the structure and any known plans to alter the exterior.

For a brief period in 1989 to 1990, the theater was used to film a popular

television series, “Perry Mason” starring Raymond Burr. However, in large part, the theater stood vacant for 19 years after it was closed in 1986. The St. Charles Town Company, LLC purchased the property in 2005. In 2006, St. Charles, working with a local independent bookseller, The Tattered Cover, rehabilitated the Bonfils Memorial Theater to serve as a retail bookstore. The rehabilitation was conducted under the supervision of the Colorado Historical Society and the National Park Service, as the owner employed federal tax credits to complete the project. In addition to this historic preservation effort, the project also included additional retail space, a parking structure, and a “mini-esplanade.”

As part of the renovation the exterior of the entire building was cleaned and repaired. The historic appearance of the primary east and north elevations was retained in its entirety. On the south elevation, originally a secondary elevation adjacent to the backstage area, one historic window was converted to a new entrance door with canopy and one was converted to a new loading dock. Just beyond the south elevation, simple screens conceal three separate service and mechanical areas adjacent to the surface parking lot.

The secondary west elevation was altered to interact with a new pedestrian walkway that replaced the former alley immediately adjacent to the theater. At the northwest corner of the building, a new canopy with bookstore signage was installed. Further south, a former secondary fire door was enlarged and converted to a primary building entrance with canopies. The sill was lowered on the north section of the original ribbon window to create an enlarged window opening adjacent to this new entrance and coffee shop within. Further south, a former loading dock door was converted to a new window with adjacent new entrance doors installed to the north and south. Across the new pedestrian walkway, on the former parking lot to the west, a new building, compatible with the historic theater in siting, scale, and materials, was constructed to house parking and compatible retail uses. There is no physical connection between this new building and the original theater building, either above or below ground.

On the interior, the historic form, details and finishes of the main lobby, lower lobby and historic restrooms were retained. In the historic auditorium, the raked floor was largely leveled. Raised reading platforms, entered from the historic entry doors from the main lobby, appear on the north wall of the auditorium, surrounded by low walls with a historic railing detail that originally flanked the cross-aisle of the auditorium. A sunken or recessed reading area appears at the foot of the historic stage. New openings between the north side of the auditorium and the main lobby were created to the east and west. A new elevator provides service from the basement to the west side of the auditorium. Wall openings were created between the stage and backstage areas, where exposed structural materials and stage fixtures and fittings were retained. A staircase rises from stage level to the backstage area, now level with the exterior grade to the south.

Secondary spaces to the east and west of the auditorium, formerly offices, dressing and rehearsal rooms, were gutted and converted to new uses. To the west is a coffee shop and related storage. To the east, a restaurant tenant uses the secondary space and the connecting historic ticket foyer. The recent changes to the building meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and the building continues to convey the historical significance for which it was nominated and determined eligible in 1996.

History of the Structure and Its Associations

a. *Details about the circumstances of construction including the date of construction, architect, builder, and owner for the original structure and any significant additions.*

The architect of the Bonfils Memorial Theater was John K. Monroe. Born in Denver on April 7, 1893, Monroe attended Washington University in St. Louis where he received a degree in Architecture. He returned to Denver and joined the office of Denver notable J.J.B. Benedict, where he became the chief assistant. Monroe established his own practice in 1932. Through his association with Benedict, Monroe became principal architect for the Catholic Archdiocese of Denver. In this capacity, Monroe designed hundreds of churches, schools, and other archdiocesan structures throughout northern Colorado. These buildings, like Bonfils Memorial Theater, are typically constructed of buff colored brick with cream colored terra cotta trim, which is virtually a John K. Monroe signature. The design of the Bonfils Memorial Theater well illustrates John K. Monroe's design philosophy. At the time of ground breaking in 1950, Monroe pointed out that "the modern design of the theater is aimed at combining dignity and simplicity of appearance with all utilitarian considerations of a multi-purpose theater which can be used for legitimate plays, opera, moving pictures, concerts, lectures, and television." The Bonfils Memorial Theater is thought to be the oldest Denver building to be designed with the capacity for television production, the stage doubling as a television studio.

The contractor for the building was Mead and Mount construction. The variety and type of materials are consistent with the philosophy of the Art Moderne Style. The Bonfils Memorial Theater was designed in 1949 and completed in 1953

b. *Description of specific historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.*

The Bonfils/Lowenstein Theater is associated with Helen Bonfils, the rise of the Denver Civic Theatre, and Henry Lowenstein.

The Denver Civic Theatre was founded in cooperation with the University of Denver in 1929. Starting with just 700 members, the theatre shared a home with the University for 24 years. The Margery Reed Hall, a gift from donor Margery Reed, played host to roughly six shows annually. As membership grew to 8,000 members following a commitment to high theatrical standards, the Theatre outgrew its space. Along with Mrs. Reed, the Theater's costs were covered by Miss Florence Martin and Helen Bonfils. Bonfils answered the call for a new home, donating the Bonfils Memorial Theater to the growing Denver Civic Theater in honor of her late parents.

Helen Bonfils occupied a unique and powerful position in Denver Society. Born in 1889, she was the daughter of Belle and Frederick G. Bonfils. The elder Bonfils was co-founder of the *Denver Post*, and upon his death, Helen inherited her father's stock in the newspaper. An early advocate of sexual equality, Helen persuaded her father, Frederick G. Bonfils, to bequeath the paper to her and not to a distant male relative, as he originally intended. For thirty-five years she served as the Secretary Treasurer of the *Post*. The newspaper provided her a platform from which to champion the many causes in which she believed, including sexual and racial equality. Throughout her life she contributed to

many social and religious causes, donating more than a million dollars to the Denver Roman Catholic Archdiocese. It is undoubtedly this close relationship with the Archdiocese which led her to association with, and selection of, John K. Monroe, Archdiocese architect, as the designer of the Bonfils Memorial Theater.

One of Helen's great loves was the theater. An interest in the stage was kindled as a child and as an adult she appeared in small roles on Broadway in New York City. Her financial position allowed her to produce several Broadway plays and to own and operate the Little Theater (later the Helen Hayes Theater) on Broadway. The contacts she made with actors, directors, and writers proved invaluable for her efforts to upgrade the level of theatrical life in Denver. Helen was a lifetime patron of Denver theater, which she supported through the *Post*, her financial contributions, and by direct participation. She was seen regularly in the summer productions at the Elitch Garden's Theater where she was a crowd favorite, particularly in comedy roles. It was while performing at the Garden's Theater that she met and fell in love with the theater's director, George Somnes. The two were married in 1936. After her husband's death, Helen produced the summer seasons at the Elitch Theater while continuing her Broadway productions.

In 1953, Helen celebrated the opening the Bonfils Memorial Theater, which she helped to operate as a community theater until her death on June 6, 1972. She never compromised on her commitment to racial equality. In the 1950s, when most of Denver's cultural facilities were subject to de facto segregation, the Bonfils Memorial Theater was racially integrated. Minority performers were regularly featured. Following her death, her fortune, in the form of the Bonfils Foundation and under the direction of Donald Seawell, funded the creation of a professional downtown theater and performing arts complex in Denver second in size only to New York's Lincoln Center.

Bonfils is also credited with bringing longtime producer Henry Lowenstein to the theater. Lowenstein was working in Connecticut when he received a personal invitation from Bonfils to carry out her mission as a set, costume, and lighting designer for the Denver Theater in 1956. Though he didn't have a college degree, he attended Yale University's graduate program for Theatrical Design after submitting drawings for one set design. Because of his background as an immigrant from war-torn Germany, Lowenstein was an equal opportunist. He encouraged equality for women and every race in his productions. Under his supervision, the Bonfils Theatre presented shows from all different backgrounds, including Native American, African American, and Latino. He is credited with launching the careers of several famous actors and is looked at as a father figure in Denver and American theater.

Aside from his work at the Bonfils Theatre, Lowenstein created a traveling school group and supervised student acting workshops. He was named producer at Bonfils in 1967. Following Bonfils death, Lowenstein worked with Donald Seawell to establish the Denver Center for the Performing Arts while also still serving as producer, a role he retained until the close of the theater in 1986 and his retirement in 1987. Because of his numerous contributions, the Bonfils Theater was renamed the Lowenstein Theater in 1985. The Theater hosted more than 400 plays during its run.

Donald Seawell, Helen Bonfils' attorney from her acting days in New York, joined her in Denver in 1966 to help her resist a hostile takeover at the *Denver Post*. After her death in 1972, he was named as the president and chairman of the board of the *Post*. Shortly after that, Seawell merged two of Bonfils' foundations to create the Denver

Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA). In 1978, Seawell and the DCPA board oversaw construction of the Buell Theater, Boettcher Concert Hall, and Bonfils Theater Complex. Seawell is often blamed for the closure of the Bonfils/Lowenstein Memorial Theater in 1986. Though he maintains that cost was outweighing profit, most criticize that he chose instead to focus on the growth of the DCPA rather than the legacy of his benefactor Helen Bonfils and the Denver Civic Theatre. Rather than remaining open to small civic theatre groups, the theatre was closed for business. As previously mentioned, the Lowenstein played host to the TV series "Perry Mason" for a few years, but was otherwise left in danger of demolition for nearly twenty years, until the St. Charles Town Company's 2006 purchase.

A history of Denver Civic Theatre:

1929: University Civic Theatre opens with "Candida" at University of Denver's Margaret Reed Hall.

1953: Helen Bonfils builds the new 550-seat Bonfils Memorial Theatre, the first new theater building in Denver in 40 years. She names it Denver Civic Theatre at the Bonfils Memorial Theatre.

1956: Henry Lowenstein is hired as set designer.

1966: Donald R. Seawell named CEO of The *Denver Post* and supervisor of the Bonfils.

1967: Lowenstein is named producer.

1972: Helen Bonfils dies.

1985: Theater renamed for Lowenstein.

1986: Theater closed by unanimous vote of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts board of trustees, chaired by Seawell

c. Description of the other structures that have similar associations and the relationship of this structure to them.

Art Moderne architecture is a rare resource in Denver. There are few major examples constructed in the post World War II period in Denver. In comparison to other Denver theaters, the Bonfils Memorial Theater is unique in the post-war Art Moderne Style. However, other Denver buildings, an auditorium and a performing arts center were also built to stage public performances and are stylistically related to the Bonfils Memorial Theater. The 1941 Municipal Auditorium Arena by G. Meredith Musick and F.E. Mountjoy at 13th and Curtis is a pre-war building that related to the Bonfils Theater. Like the Bonfils Memorial Theater, the Auditorium Arena was principally built of buff colored brick with ribbon windows, cast terra cotta trim, additional trim in aluminum, curved corners and a curved entry canopy. The Arena has undergone insensitive remodeling, which has already resulted in the loss of the interior as well as some of the terra cotta trim and the canopy.

The May Bonfils Stanton Performing Arts Center by G. Meredith Musick and C.S. Musick of 1963 on the former Loretta Heights College campus at 3001 South Federal is an international style building that is, nonetheless, also related to the Art Moderne Bonfils Theater. The exterior expression of the Art Center's interior is similar to the same device used in the Bonfils Theater design.

In Denver, the high point for the construction of Art Moderne buildings was during the boom in construction beginning in 1938 and lasting up until the Second World War

caused construction to dwindle in 1942. During this period, the Art Moderne Style became a dominant trend in Denver architecture. In the decade after World War II, the Art Moderne Style was increasingly supplanted by the International Style, though due to relative geographic and cultural isolation of Denver, a number of notable buildings were constructed in the style during this later period. The most prominent of these are the Bonfils Memorial Theater and the former Denver Post Building by Temple Buell of 1950 at 15th and California Street, both commissioned by Helen Bonfils. Like the Bonfils Theater, this building featured string courses, ribbon windows, aluminum trim, a horizontal orientation, stripped neo-classical elements, and flat roofs. The building's formal composition is much simpler than the complex formal arrangement of the Bonfils Theater. The Art Moderne Style in Denver disappeared completely by 1960.

There are a number of noteworthy residences in Denver in the Art Moderne Style. The residence at 1521 Monaco Parkway of 1936 and a similar residence, apparently the work of the same designer, at 1030 Bonnie Brae Boulevard of 1937 feature curved corners, complicated arrangements of the buildings masses, horizontality, and flat roofs. The Harry Huffman Residence, called "Shangri-La," at 150 South Bellaire of 1937 by Raymond H. Ervin, an acknowledged master of Denver architecture, is perhaps the best known Art Moderne Style building in the city. There is geometric ornament in a metal panel above the main entrance and in the railings. This ornament is Art Deco in style, which is not inconsistent with the Art Moderne Style. There are stripped neo-classical elements. Eugene Groves, another acknowledged master of Denver architecture, also worked in the Art Moderne Style. He produced highly original examples such as the experimental concrete houses built by him in the 1930s, notably the house at 2340 South Josephine of 1932, the house at 2733 West 41st Street of 1935, and the house at 330 Birch of 1938. These all feature rounded corners, circular ornamental details, string courses, and other stripped neo-classical elements.

The greater Capitol Hill Area, including Cheeseman Park and City Park neighborhoods, is a local center of Art Moderne Style Architecture. In this area, there are dozens of apartment buildings dating from the 1920s to the 1960s. In addition to the Art Moderne Style, these buildings are also in Art Deco Style and International Style. Buildings in all three of these modernist styles are typically executed in buff colored brick with aluminum and cream colored terra cotta trim. This combination of materials is a dominant theme in Denver's mid-century architecture. The Dorset Apartments at 10th and Logan, circa 1938, and the similar Penn Apartments are apparently the work of the same designer and are good examples of the Art Moderne Style. Both buildings feature curved entry canopies, aluminum trim, horizontally linked windows, string courses, curved corners, and flat roofs. The Bonfils Memorial Theater is thus related not only in date and style but also in terms of its materials, to these greater Capitol Hill area apartment buildings.

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Henry Lowenstein Exhibition at the Denver Central Library January 21-March 29, 2009.

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Sections of text used with permission from the National Register Application for the Bonfils/Lowenstein Theater, written by Diane Wray, Rodd L. Wheaton, and Michael Paglia, prepared March 10, 1995. The bibliography for their work is as follows:

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Elitch Garden's Story



Elizabeth Street Façade- The former theater ticket foyer was converted into the space for the Encore Restaurant.



The restaurant details retain the original pink travertine marble and aluminum accents.



Colfax Avenue Façade- This acts as the main façade for the new bookstore. A new canopy with bookstore signage was installed. The original rose colored windows with circle motif were retained.



Window Detail



Aluminum Canopy with new Tattered Cover Signage



A pedestrian walkway separates the Lowenstein Theater building from the adjacent parking structure. Across Colfax Avenue are the Sullivan Gateway and East High School, other historic structures.



Western Façade- this façade now faces a retail/parking structure that occupies the former parking lot on the Columbine Street side.



A coffee shop was built out of former theater storage space on the western side of the building.



South Façade- This façade is dominated by the towering fly-loft structure. An auxiliary entrance is flanked on either side by a loading bay and screened building service components.



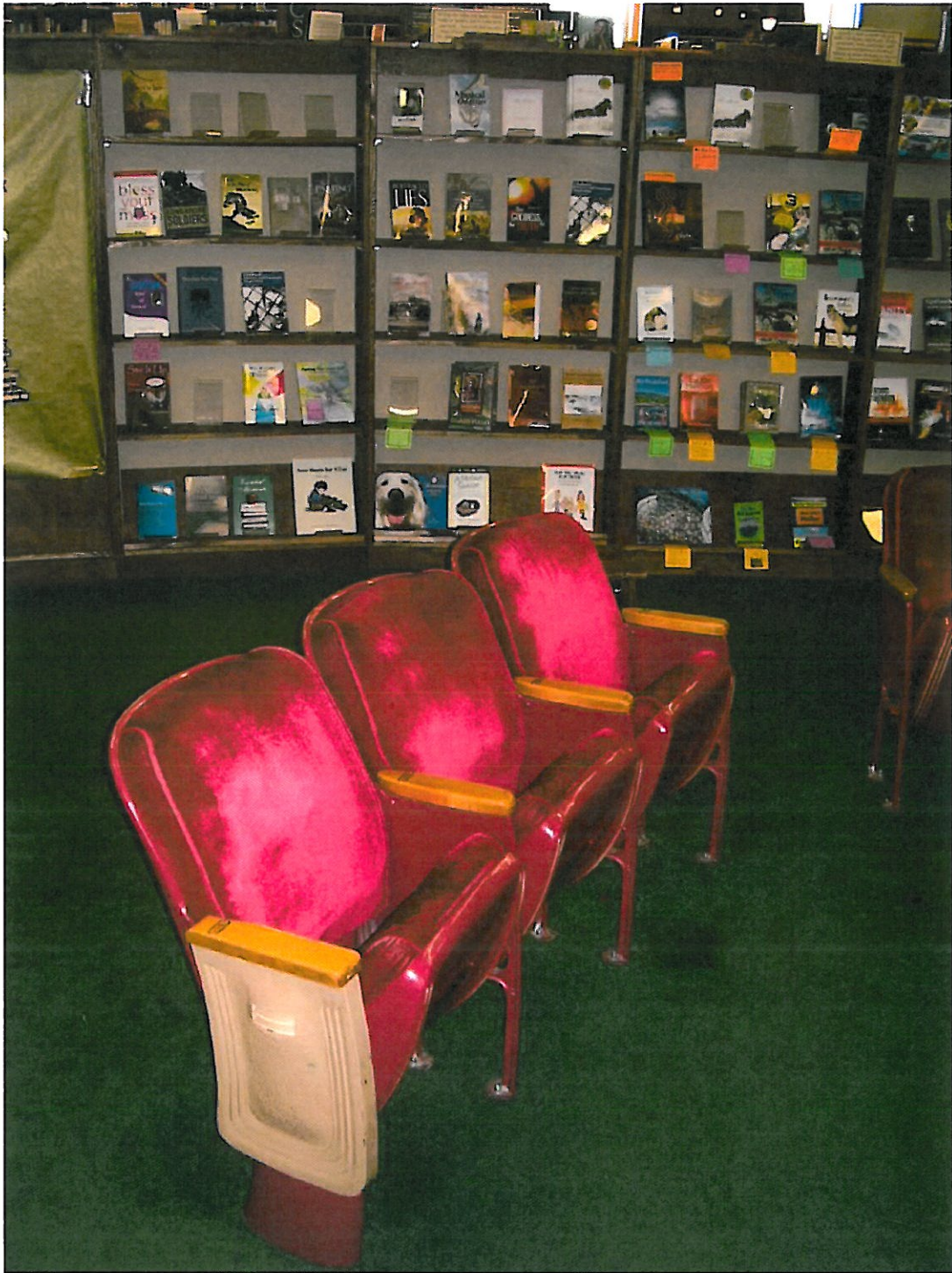
Materiality- The Art Moderne material palette of buff colored brick and terra cotta trim was cleaned and restored to good condition. Ribbon windows are used throughout the building, in keeping with the style. The only windows that were changed in the renovations were those that were changed to doors.



More Art Moderne styling, including the terra cotta planter surrounds.



The theater lobby's grand staircase system with aluminum rails now gives access to different book collections.



Original theater chairs are used in the main reading room.



The former stage area now hosts the bookstore's information desk. The "stage" overlooks a reading area.