

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ross-Broadway Branch, Denver Public Library

Other names/site number: 5DV.11460

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 33 E. Bayaud Ave.

City or town: Denver State: CO County: Denver

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

Kelly Kathryn Doran

16 September 16

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION / Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION / Library

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement: Usonian

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Roman brick, glass, wood, copper trim

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Ross-Broadway Branch of the Denver Public Library is a one-story steel-framed brick building, designed in the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired Usonian style. It is one of Denver architect Victor Hornbein's prominent mid-century designs, completed in 1951 in the Speer neighborhood. It has served uninterrupted as a library for sixty-five years, since its commission from the funds of the Frederick Ross Trust, a large sum of money left to the Denver Public Library in the late 1930s. It has a high-degree of integrity, with only minor alterations.

Narrative Description

Description

The library is in Denver's Speer neighborhood, on the northwest corner of South Lincoln Street and East Bayaud Avenue (lot 28). It is located on a block between two busy streets (Lincoln and Broadway) in a mixed commercial and residential area. To the north of the library is a parking lot, which sits on lots 29, 30 and part of 31. Brick buildings previously occupied these lots, and in 1975 the library purchased the properties in order to demolish the buildings and create the parking lot. Today the entire library property is around half an acre.

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To the south, across East Bayaud Avenue, is a one-story group of brick duplexes built around the early-twentieth century. Across the alley to the west is a two-story brick building, which houses restaurants, and other commercial businesses. To the east is Lincoln Street, and beyond are late-1890 to early-1900 single-family residences. A ca.-1960 six-story apartment building exists directly north of the library property, next to the library's parking lot. To the south (where the main entrance is located) and east, there is a narrow strip of grass and trees (two oak trees on the south and one honey locust on the east), as well as a concrete sidewalk and smaller decorative shrubs and plants flanking the library.

Exterior

The library is a one-story building with an irregular shape measuring roughly 108' (east-west) x 50' (north-south) for the main portion of the library and approximately 28¼' x 30½' for the attached garage. The main, rectangular portion of the building runs east-west parallel to East Bayaud Avenue, hugging the alley to the west and with a significant green space between Lincoln Avenue and the east side of the building. On the east a smaller narrower rectangular wing extends from the main section closer to Lincoln Street. This wing is layered, with a lower roofline than the main portion of the library. On the northwest side, the building staggers outward and joins with the garage, giving the building an L-shape along Bayaud and the alley to the west. The total square footage of the building is 4,445. Broken down, the main library is 3,585 square feet and the garage is 860 square feet.

The library has a staggered, cantilevered roof with exposed steel structural support ends. The structural cantilevered steel beams, spaced every 12', extend the width of the roof (from north to south). The end of each beam wraps around the cornice top and forms about a 75 degree angle. These appear on the east, north, and south-facing sides. The roof has an exaggerated overhang in many places, particularly on the south, east, and west sides. The boxed-in eaves are covered with a concrete plaster and a concrete fascia is covered in copper trim on all sides. The structure is steel-framed, with masonry and glass curtain walls (wood framed), and a flat wood-joisted roof with copper trim on the façades. The building sits on a raised concrete foundation. The brick is a red Roman brick, 2¼" x 2", manufactured by Denver Sewer Pipe and Clay Company. The glass used is a combination of clear sheet glass interspersed with smaller colored panels (some are red and green) in varied rectangular decorative configurations.

South-facing (main) façade

The south side of the building features the main entrance. Clerestory windows extend across much of the exterior above projecting lower brick walls with concrete caps. Two of these windows are operable awning windows that the architect designed with a remote control for opening along with manual opening with a removable crank. The

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main entrance is on the western end of the southern façade and is accessible by concrete stairs and ramp compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA); the ramp extends from the east end to the entrance. A metal pipe handrail is in the middle of the three concrete stairs. The wood-framed glass double doors contain the continuation of the varied rectangular configurations east of the main doors, glass curtain walls windows extend from floor to ceiling, which are divided into varied rectangular configurations. Two projecting brick walls with concrete caps extend from the plane of the south wall by 16". One is west of the entrance and continues for about 25' and the other extends for 20' near the southeast corner of the south wall. Another projecting brick wall with a concrete cap extends perpendicularly from the south wall, just east of the entrance. It extends approximately 8' from the south wall and is about 16" wide. Under the concrete cap of the west end projecting brick wall are metal block letters with:

"FREDERICK R. ROSS BRANCH DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY"

and beneath the word library in smaller metal block letters it reads:

"THIRTY THREE"
"EAST BAYAUD"

West of the entrance doors is a portable book-return box and a built-in metal book-return slot. East of the projecting perpendicular brick wall are four glass curtain walls comprised of varied decorative rectangular configurations in each. The two outer curtain walls contain smaller awning windows with the varied rectangular configuration.

East-facing side

The east-facing side of the building has the greatest ratio of glass-to-brick, with glass curtain walls extending from the east end of the south façade and continuing around to the east-facing side, on the south end. Continuation of the varied rectangular configuration of the muntins interspersed with green and red-colored glass are in this section, which has one awning window. A large projecting bay extends from the middle of the east wall. The north and east walls of the projection continue the pattern of red brick capped by concrete in the lower three-quarters of the walls and above the walls are clerestory windows repeating the rectangular configurations. The roofline of the projection is approximately 2' lower than the main section of the building. An exaggerated overhanging eave extends from the east from the projecting bay. Centered under the eave is a glass boxed-bay with varied rectangular decorative muntins. The boxed bay serves as a window seat on the interior and highlights the middle of the bay. A concrete flower box extends from the lower portion of the area under the overhanging eave. The north end of the east-facing side does not contain any fenestration or an eave, but continues the copper trim to cover the fascia.

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North-facing side

The north-facing side of the building contains three sections, each section (from east to west) projects farther north than the adjacent section. Each of these sections contains the lower roofline than the main building section, which is visible above the north-facing side roof line. The north-facing façade of the main building section continues its large overhanging eaves under which clerestory windows, with the varied rectangular decorative pattern, exist across the entire north side. Two of these are awning windows designed with the remote control opening. The first section of the north-facing side, at the east end, is the north side of the projecting bay described under the east-facing façade. It contains one tall, narrow fixed window at the west end of the section. The window extends from the foundation to the copper trim and continues the varied rectangular configuration. The middle section projects northward by 5'-6" and continues west for 18'-6". A solid wood door is at the west end of this section as a staff entrance. The third section on the north-facing side continues for 30'-6" and contains a small overhanging eave, which extends to cover the rear entrance described in the middle section. This third section projects northward from the middle section by about 5" and contains a group of six windows (about 3'x 3'), four that are fixed and two operable tripartite. None of these windows contains the decorative rectangular configuration found on the other windows. An additional book-return box is below the group of windows. At the end of this section the utility room projects northward from the building by about 10' and extends west 14'-6". The utility room shares its north-most wall with the garage, although there is not an interior access between the two spaces.

The oversized two-bay attached garage is connected at the utility room at the northwest end of the library building. It has double wood bay openings of 11'-6" to accommodate parking bookmobiles. The garage measures roughly 28' (north-south) x 30' (east-west) with the bays facing east. A projecting eave extends over the bays by approximately 3'. The north-facing side of the garage is also brick and absent fenestration. A wood service door exists on the south-facing side of the garage. A 12' chain-link fence and gate extend from the southeast corner of the garage to the north-side of the west section, just east of the utility room. This provides access to the garage and security.

West-facing side

The west-facing side of the building contains three sections. The first on the south end is the main library section and contains a small overhanging eave, but no fenestration. It extends toward the north by 20', just to the east of an alley and the nomination boundary. The second section is where the building then juts in toward the east by about 12'-6" to the west-facing side of storage areas of the main library and the utility room. This area extends to the north by about 29'. The third part of the west-facing side is the attached garage, the wall of which extends to the north by about 28' and, as with the main portion of the library, is just east of an alley and the nomination boundary.

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The middle section containing the storage areas and utility room contains small clerestory windows on the east end. Just north of the windows is a wood door with a small window in the upper portion. The eaves overhang this area by about 3'. Above the roof, a brick chimney is visible on the south-facing wall of the garage. Also visible from the west side is a metal access door with a concrete ramp and pipe railing to the west end of the garage. The area between the main library and garage has a concrete pad; a 12' chain-link fence and gate extend from the northwest corner of the main section of the library building to the southwest corner of the garage. The west-facing side of the garage does not have overhanging eaves and has no fenestration. The raised concrete foundation runs along the entirety of the building, and is visible from all angles.

Interior

The floor of the library is 6" concrete slab on fill, with asphalt tile on top. The brick walls (10" thick) are visible from both the interior and the exterior. Interior shelving and framing, including the windows, are made from oak. The main portion of the library contains a higher ceiling than the children's area. Ceilings in the library continue the exterior pattern of staggering rooflines with a few different ceiling height and in some cases the appearance of staggered ceiling heights with projecting soffits. The interior staggered dropped ceilings, for example over the children's area, continues the pattern of the exterior of having horizontal steel support beams wrapping around the upper edge of dropped ceiling (see photo 17). Then a small soffit appears above and extends around a bookcase in the children's area making it appear to be another lower ceiling. The main lobby and reading room have high ceilings, with the exception of a lowered ceiling that projects at various widths (between 2'-6') around the perimeter of the main reading room and lobby. The small projecting ceiling areas, or soffits, contain additional lighting over the bookcases and circulation desk.

The circulation desk, which is a long desk opposite the entrance, is curved on both ends. One end is lower for children and is ADA-compliant, a change that occurred in the 1990s. Another room extends on the west side. It was originally a lecture hall, but is now another small reading room. The smaller children's area is located on the east (the southeast wing of the library). Behind the circulation desk, to the north, is a staff area, kitchen, utility room, work area, storage area, and closets. North of these areas is the garage.

Alterations

In 1989, the heating system was replaced, but this did not affect the cosmetics of the library. The original heating system of the library was radiant heat, and, at the time of construction, the Ross Branch was the only branch to have this. The largest renovations came in the early 1990s. One update was to make the library compliant with the ADA. This involved replacing the main doors to the library with new wood-

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framed glass double doors made to imitate the style of the other glass in the building. This project also involved installing a ramp running parallel to the building and accessing the new double doors. Inside, one end of the circulation desk was lowered to ADA-compliant height. This height also accommodates children patrons.

In the early 1990s new double-doors, replicating the original ones, were added (along with the concrete ramp) to make the library ADA-compliant. The east-west running ramp is concealed behind a raised concrete wall, which is similar in height to the raised concrete foundation making it blend in well.

Another project in 1995 involved replacing some, but not all of the clear window glass, and some of the interior woodwork such as shelving and trim. This also included the replacement of some of the original furniture. It is unclear whether the work done on these replacements took into consideration the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

In 2000, the built-up gravel roof was replaced at a cost around \$60,000. This involved installing a new roofing membrane (modified bitumen) surface over new insulation. The project added and replaced a small portion of the copper trim and downspouts.

Integrity

The Ross-Broadway Branch of the Denver Public Library maintains a high degree of historic integrity. It is in its original location, where it was constructed 65 years ago. Its design remains the same, with the exception of a 1990s ADA-compliant ramp. However, this is small in scale and is concealed behind a small raised concrete wall. Workmanship and materials also has a high degree of integrity. Although the original entrance doors were replaced for ADA-compliance, the replacement doors are compatible with the overall design. Small interior details have changed including shelving, trim, and some of the clear window glass, due to deterioration or broken glass. The interior design retains the built-in reading nooks and other original features. Overall the architectural elements that characterize the building making it significant, such as the wood-framed glass curtain walls, exposed beams, and cantilevered roof have been left completely intact, as has the overall footprint of the building.

The feeling of a 1951 library remains intact visually from the exterior and upon entering the library. Although the setting has been compromised slightly with the construction of a 1960s multiple-dwelling to the north, the overall setting is very similar to when it was constructed. Additionally, the library conveys a strong degree of association, both physically and in use, as a 1951 public library the only purpose that it has served. Now almost sixty-six years old, the library has retained all of what makes it significant, and stands out as a rare and well-preserved example of Victor Hornbein's architecture and the Usonian Style in Denver.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Social history

Period of Significance

1951

Significant Dates

1951

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Victor Hornbein (Architect)

Bellamy and Williams (Contractors)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Ross- Broadway Branch of the Denver Public Library is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a rare Denver public expression of the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired Usonian style of architecture, designed in 1950 by well-known Denver architect Victor Hornbein, and built in 1951. It is further locally significant under Criterion A in the area of social history, for its association with the development of Denver public libraries in the early and mid-twentieth century.

The period of significance is 1951, the year the library construction was completed and opened.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C – Architecture

The 1951 Ross-Broadway Branch is significant as an excellent example of the Usonian style as applied to a public library. The idea of Usonian-style architecture was defined by Frank Lloyd Wright, and relates to his ideas of what architecture should be as distinct from previous styles. This often included sensitivity to surrounding landscapes, low profiles, and native or subtle materials. In Wright's style, this manifested in distinct features such as low, cantilevered overhangs and clerestory windows.¹ The Ross-Broadway Branch aptly demonstrates many of these, ideas, carried out by an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, Victor Hornbein. Character-defining features of the style found at the Ross-Broadway Branch include the cantilevered roof, overhangs, brick and colored-glass curtain walls, and open interior layout. The colored curtain walls contribute to the mid-century art movement of the time.

The architect selected for the project was Victor Hornbein, a famous figure in his own right within the Denver community, perhaps best known today for designing the Denver Botanic Gardens Conservatory (1964).² Hornbein, a Denver native, was born in 1913, and graduated from Denver's East High School. He later attended the Beaux Arts Institute of Design, Atelier Denver (a chapter of the Beaux Arts institute of Design in New York).³ Starting in the late 1920s and 1930s, Hornbein became involved in architecture, working for various firms between semesters. He visited Chicago and marveled at the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, later championing the Usonian style Wright

¹ John C. Poppeliers and Allen Chambers Jr. *What Style Is It: A Guide to American Architecture*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003.

² Architects of Colorado, Biographical Sketch: Hornbein, Victor. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 2007, Denver, Colorado.

³ Victor Hornbein, *Memoirs of an Architect*. Unpublished manuscript, 1990. On file with Denver Public Library, Denver, CO.

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had made famous, and applying it on both large-scale projects and private residences in the Denver area.⁴ During World War II, Hornbein served in the Pacific Theatre as a military architect, designing buildings in Okinawa and the Mariana Islands. Hornbein returned to Denver after the war and continued to design buildings well into the 1990s. In a 1995 interview, Hornbein cited the Conservatory as his second favorite project, with Frederick R. Ross Branch of the Denver Public Library as his first. He died in 1995.⁵

Credited Buildings (partial list)

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
Residence	4700 E. 6 th Ave. Denver		1949	
Residence	255 Dexter St. Denver		1949	
Frederick R. Ross Branch, Denver Public Library	33 E. Bayaud Ave. Denver	5DV.11460	1951	
John J. Cory Elementary School	1550 S. Steele St. Denver		1951	
Denver Public Welfare Building	Denver		1952	
Aurora Public Library	9901 E. 16 th Ave. Aurora		1954	
Aurora City Hall	16 th and Elmira St. Aurora		1955	
Shattuck Chemical Co. Building 6	1805 S. Bannock St., Denver	5DV.2457.6	1956	Demolished
Residence	47 S. Ash St. Denver		1958	
Residence	4599 E. 6 th Ave. Denver		1959	
CU School of Medicine Day Care Center	Denver		1962	Demolished
Porter Library, Colorado Women's College	Denver		1963	
Kent Denver School	Denver		1964-65	
Denver Botanic Gardens conservatory and education wing (with Edward White, Jr.)	1005 York St., Denver		1964-66	
Shattuck Chemical Co. Building 2	1805 S. Bannock St., Denver	5DV.2457.2	1965	Demolished

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Architects of Colorado, Biographical Sketch: Hornbein, Victor. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 2007, on file with OAHP.

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Criterion A-Social History

The Ross-Broadway Branch of the Denver Public Library is also important for its social history, as part of a national trend of philanthropists establishing larger libraries expanded services. These services aimed to accommodate local patrons with reading materials while promoting social improvement, education, and cultural diversity. As noted in *Philanthropically Established Libraries in North Dakota* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), “the social mission of the library touched not only the less fortunate, but the privileged sector as well.”⁶ In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, philanthropists often funded or partially funded construction of public libraries to aid in social reform “as a means of enhancing the cultural and educational level of a community.”⁷ Prominent Denver real estate businessman, Frederick R. Ross, had a passion for literature. Reading was an important part of his life, and he shared his passion when he left behind a list of must-read books for future generations called “Too Good to Miss” (which is today held by the Denver Public Library).⁸ In addition to the list he served on the Denver Library Commission and left the Denver Public Library a large bequest so it could continue its valuable services to the community. Ross became an important figure in funding and promoting library development in Denver.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Frederick R. Ross

Frederick R. Ross, a native of Vermont, was born on May 25, 1865.⁹ Like so many others of the time, Ross suffered from tuberculosis, and headed west in his early 20s in the hope that Denver’s dry and sunny climate could help him recover.¹⁰ Denver suited Ross well, and he soon made his way into the real estate business. He founded the Frederick R. Ross Investment Company in 1888. Unlike many other prominent businessmen of the time, Ross avoided failure in the silver crash of 1893, and his company became one of the largest and most successful of its kind in all of Denver, lasting until 1998.¹¹ Ross was an influential figure not only in shaping Denver’s landscape through massive real estate investment and development, but using his considerable influence to promote new destinations such as Estes Park. In fact, Ross was an important figure in the creation of what would later become one of Colorado’s

⁶ Lauren McCroskey. *Philanthropically Established Libraries in North Dakota* Multiple Property Documentation Form, November 21, 1989, 1. North Dakota Historic Preservation Office, accessed 25 April 2016 at: history.nd.gov/hp/PDFinfo/64500383%20Philanthropically%20Established%20Libraries.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Frederick R. Ross and Denver Public Library. “Too Good to Miss.” Collections, 1930. On file with the Denver Public Library.

⁹ Untitled (Frederick R. Ross Obituary). *Rocky Mountain News*, unknown date. Frederick R. Ross file at the Denver Public Library.

¹⁰ Thomas J. Noel and Marcie E. Morin. *The Frederick Ross Company: Colorado’s Oldest Commercial Real Estate firm, 1888- 1998*. Unpublished manuscript, 1999. On file with Denver Public Library.

¹¹ Ibid.

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most popular attractions, Rocky Mountain National Park, heading a local committee that promoted legislation for the park in 1915.¹²

Ross was appointed president of the Denver Board of Water Commissioners in 1928 by Mayor Benjamin Stapleton and was a senior board member during the significant and controversial water diversion projects of the mid-1930s; these diverted large amounts of water from the Western Slope to the Front Range through the Moffat Tunnel. As a former president and senior member, he was instrumental in promoting and planning those diversion plans.¹³ Although the bulk of Ross's time and money were devoted to commercial real estate, he devoted much of his free time to reading. He died in 1938.¹⁴

Denver Public Library System

Well-known Denver Mayor Robert Speer was responsible for the regional "City Beautiful" movement, which created many of Denver's parks, mountain parks. And prominent civic buildings.¹⁵ Speer first appointed Frederick R. Ross to the Denver Library Commission on May 3, 1906.¹⁶ During his time on the commission, the Denver Public Library system expanded and grew in popularity, and in 1920 Ross' contribution was recognized with his promotion to president of the Library Commission.¹⁷ He held that position until his death in 1938.¹⁸ During his tenure, he helped oversee the creation of nine Denver Carnegie libraries, which were financed and sponsored by renowned Scottish-American businessman Andrew Carnegie, an American industrialist who had made his money in steel. The Carnegie libraries were a series of libraries, totaling 2,509, funded by the businessman and philanthropist.¹⁹

These Carnegie libraries included Denver's first permanent library location at Colfax and Bannock in 1910 called the Main Branch (which became a city hall annex in 1956, and the McNichols Civic Center in 1999), as well as eight others: 1913 Sarah Platt Decker; 1913 Henry White Warren (1975 renovation and renamed Ford-Warren); 1913 Roger W. Woodbury (National Register listed in 1986; NRIS.86002248, 5DV.5320); 1913 Charles E. Dickinson (National Register listed in 2002; NRIS.02000262, 5DV.8164); 1918 Byers (5DV.1660); 1918 William H. Smiley (National Register listed in 1986; NRIS.86002255, 5DV.5307); 1920 Park Hill; and 1920 Elyria branches.²⁰ In addition to helping plan and build the new branches, Ross worked tirelessly to promote the library

¹² Lloyd K. Musselman. *Rocky Mountain National Park: Administrative History, 1915-1965*. Rocky Mountain National Park, 1971.

¹³ Noel and Morin. *The Frederick Ross Company*.

¹⁴ Library board president dies. (Frederick R. Ross Obituary). *The Denver Post*, 15 May 1938.

¹⁵ The City Beautiful movement was a national reform philosophy in North American architecture and urban planning that flourished from the 1890s through the early-twentieth century.

¹⁶ Biennial Report of the Denver Public Library, 1950.

¹⁷ Stanley Kunitz and Marie Duvernoy Loizeaux. *Wilson Library Bulletin*, Volume 56 (periodical). Bronx, NY: H.W. Wilson Company, 1981.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Robert Wedgeworth. *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*. 3rd Edition. Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1993.

²⁰ Thomas J. Noel. *Colorado: A Historical Atlas*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.

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system, which saw exponential growth, as illustrated by the number of libraries founded during his tenure.

During Ross' life he contributed immeasurably to Denver's libraries, and his death provided another great gift: the Frederick R. Ross Library Trust Fund, an estimated \$350,000 set aside in his will for the Denver Public Library system. This money provided the funding for four new library branches and put Ross in league with Andrew Carnegie's contribution to Denver, which had funded and built nine libraries in the city in the early twentieth century, and contributed around \$360,000 (\$200,000 for the main branch and an additional \$160,000 for the remaining eight libraries). Carnegie was one of the wealthiest men in the country, had created the Carnegie Foundation, and contributed funds for the creation of libraries worldwide. The Ross Fund provided Denver with the second largest individual contribution to the library system at the time, which when adjusted for inflation, is roughly equivalent to a \$5,800,000 donation today.

Ross' philanthropy funded four libraries between 1950 and 1962. The Ross-Broadway location was the first, built between 1950 and 1951, followed by the Ross-Barnum branch in 1954 (5DV.11481). Both the Broadway and Barnum locations were designed by architect Victor Hornbein. In 1962, the Ross-Cherry Creek (designed by Paul Reddy) and University Hills (unknown original architect) branches opened in south Denver. Although the Cherry Creek and University Hills branches underwent major renovations (University Hills was essentially razed in a massive remodel) in the 1990s and 2000s, and the Barnum Branch was remodeled to a lesser extent, the Ross-Broadway Branch remains virtually unaltered.²¹

Ross-Broadway Construction

The site of the Ross-Broadway Library building had previously served as an impromptu library branch (known as the Broadway Branch) beginning in 1934 or 1935, operating out of a rented storefront.²² As early as 1936 there was talk of acquiring the land and building a new facility on the site.²³ Twelve years after Ross' death, planning began on the first of the four new facilities, with the Ross-Broadway to replace the older Broadway Branch.

After reviewing a number of contractors' offers, Hornbein selected Bellamy and Williams to construct the library. Within Hornbein's collection of notes and drawings for the Ross-Broadway library was an early drawing of the Benjamin Franklin Library at 13651 E. McNichols Road in Detroit Michigan (see Figure 3). It was constructed in 1949 and opened January 1950. It was Detroit's first Modern-style library. Although much more

²¹ University of Colorado Electronic Library of Colorado Architecture, Landscape and Planning (Accessed January 2016).
<http://vrc.colorado.edu/index.php?mode=ImageDetail&v0=Date&IMAGEID=123144&OBJECTID=964324&FILENAME=189702.jpg>

²² Phil Goodstein. *South Denver Saga*. Denver, CO: New Social Publications, 1991.

²³ "South Denver library Branch Will Not Close." *Rocky Mountain News* 28 October 1936.

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modest in design than the Ross-Broadway library, it is believed to have been an early inspiration to Hornbein for the Wrightian-inspired Usonian-style library he designed for Ross-Broadway.²⁴

A series of personal letters and legal documents from Hornbein provided a detailed look into the process of construction, especially in regards to the selection of the building materials, such as brick, asphalt tile, paving material, and near to completion, the red oak furniture.²⁵ The building was constructed with a steel frame, with concrete footings and foundation walls, brick masonry, glass curtain walls, and copper trim.²⁶ According to Hornbein, Denver Sewer Pipe and Clay Company manufactured the red brick that was used throughout the library.²⁷ The Denver Public Library has in its possession a small but remarkable collection of Hornbein's original sketches of the interior of the building (see figure 1). These color sketches show a close approximation to the as-built building, including the library benches, windows, and shelving. Groundbreaking was held in July 1950.²⁸ This library project represented a new and unprecedented influx of money into library development, and it generated a good deal of media attention. *The Denver Post* regularly ran articles showing Hornbein's sketches of the upcoming branch.²⁹

Just over a year later, in November of 1951, the branch was opened to the public. The choice to use a well-established modern architect generated excitement in the public eye. Not only was the facility built in an "ultra-modern" style, as the *Rocky Mountain News* noted, it was also the first library within the Denver system to provide radiant heat and be wired for both radio and television. It also featured a piano, small meeting rooms, a lecture hall for around 100 people, and housed 10,000 books.³⁰ The project cost an estimated \$73,000 to construct.³¹ After it opened, the library caught the attention of national architecture critics, and was praised in the October 1953 edition of *Progressive Architecture*, a New York magazine.³² Today, the Ross-Broadway library is a rare and well-preserved example of the Wrightian-inspired Usonian style. It is still used as a branch of the Denver Public Library and contains a small but interesting collection of books, totaling about 20,000, including a children's collection and a gay and lesbian collection.³³

²⁴ Victor Hornbein. Personal letters and correspondences 1950-1951. On file with the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Denver, Colorado; Benjamin Franklin Library website accessed November, 2016 at: <http://www.detroitpubliclibrary.org/branch/franklin>

²⁵ Victor Hornbein. Personal letters and correspondences 1950-1951.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Noel and Morin. *The Frederick Ross Company*.

²⁹ Unknown title, Hornbein sketch. *The Denver Post*, 25 August 1951.

³⁰ "Branch Library to Open In Dedication Rites Today." *Rocky Mountain News*, 29 November 1951.

³¹ Phil Goodstein. *South Denver Saga*. Denver, CO: New Social Publications, 1991.

³² "Denver Branch Library Praised by Magazine." *The Denver Post*, 1 November 1953.

³³ Maria Voelz Chandler. *Guide to Denver Architecture with Regional Highlights*. Englewood, CO: Westcliffe Publishers, 2001.

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Library board president dies. (Frederick R. Ross Obituary). *The Denver Post*, 15 May
1938.

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“South Denver library Branch Will Not Close.” *Rocky Mountain News*, 28 October 1936.

Unknown title, Hornbein sketch. *The Denver Post*, 25 August 1951.

“Branch Library to Open In Dedication Rites Today.” *Rocky Mountain News*, 29 November 1951.

“Denver Branch Library Praised by Magazine.” *The Denver Post*, 1 November 1953.

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Hornbein, Victor. Personal letters and correspondences 1950-1951. Victor Hornbein archive collection. On file with the Denver Public Library Western History Department, Denver, Colorado.

University of Colorado Electronic Library of Colorado Architecture, Landscape and Planning. Accessed January 2016:

<http://vrc.colorado.edu/index.php?mode=ImageDetail&v0=Date&IMAGEID=123144&OBJECTID=964324&FILENAME=189702.jpg>

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Denver Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5DV.11460

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

The UTM reference point was derived from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

1. Zone: 13 Easting: 501153 Northing: 4396128

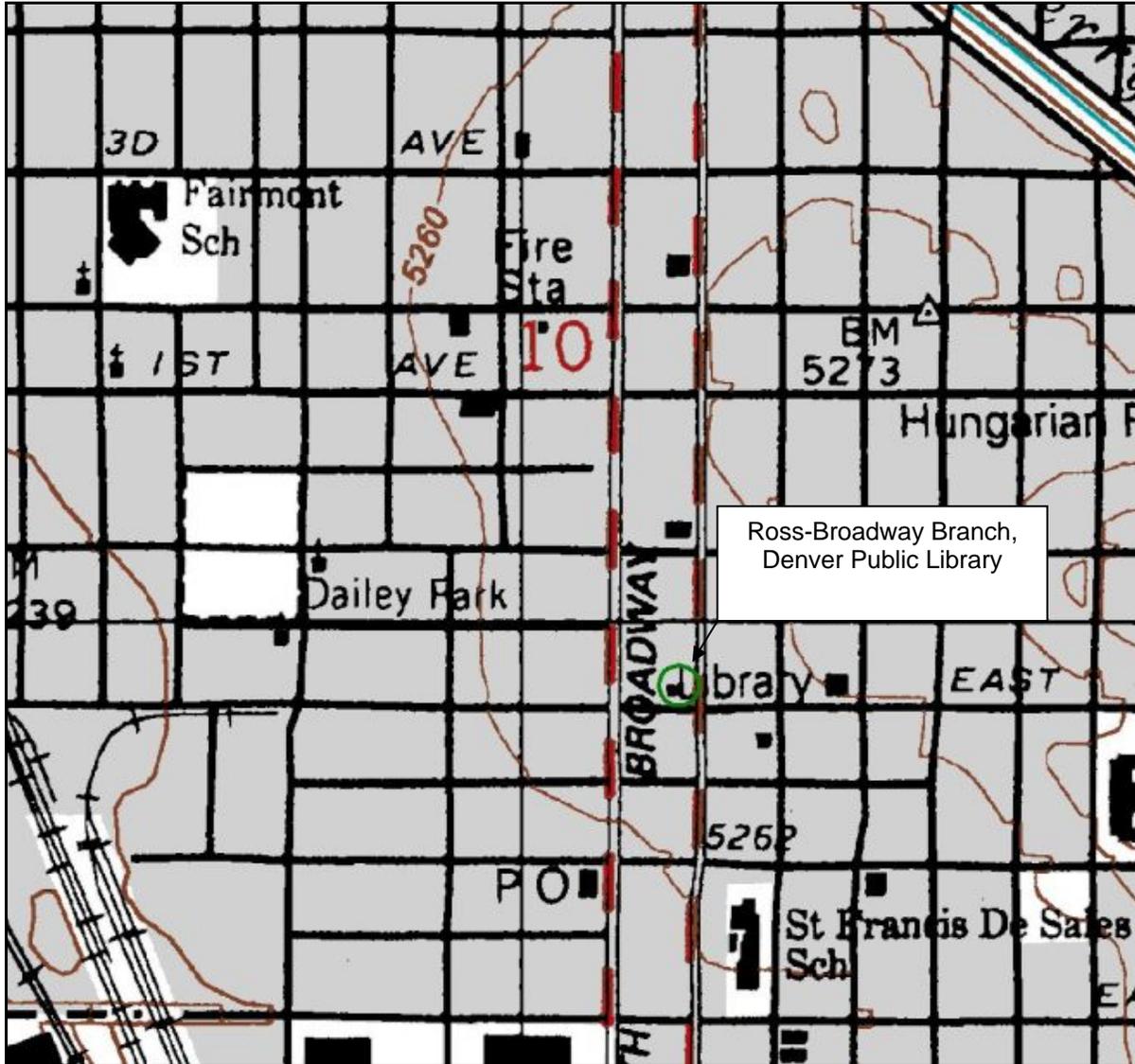
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is at 33 E. Bayaud Avenue, City and County of Denver, Colorado, further described as being in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 10, township 4 south, range 68 west, of the 6th Principal Meridian.

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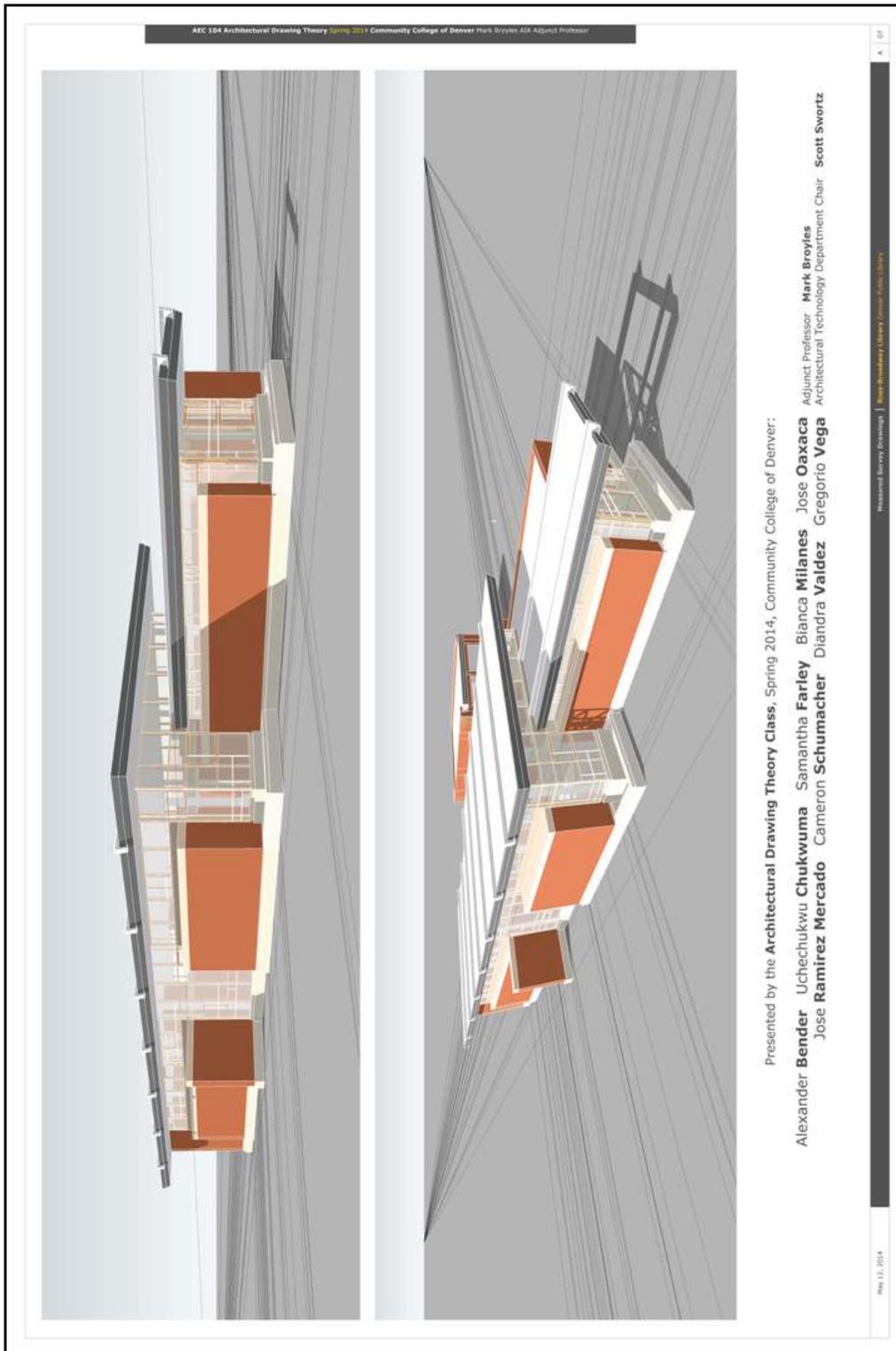
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USGS topographical section – close-up perspective



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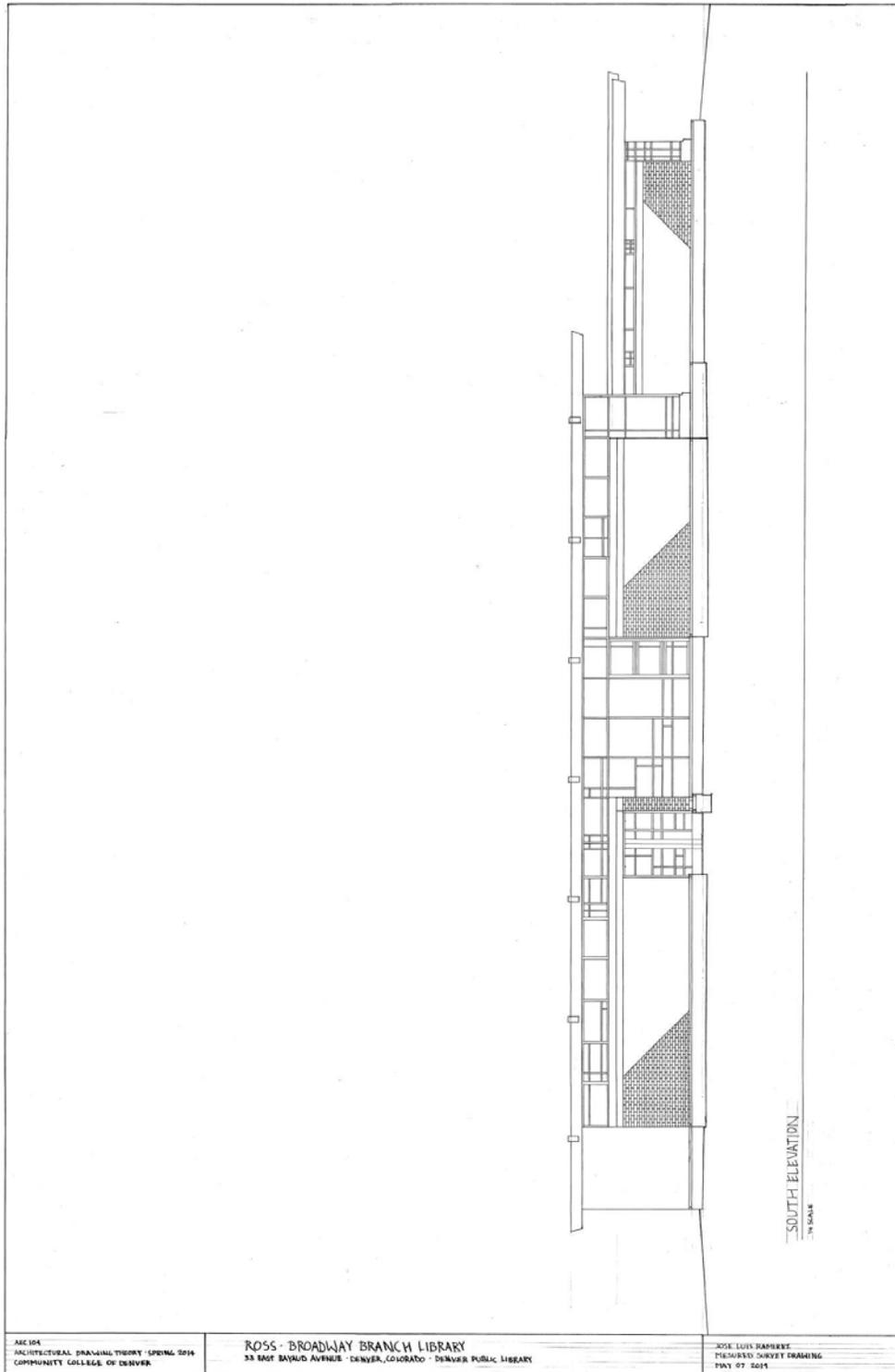
Denver, Colorado
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Architectural drawing by Community College of Denver Architectural Drawing Theory Class, Spring 2014.

Ross-Broadway Branch, Denver Public Library
Name of Property

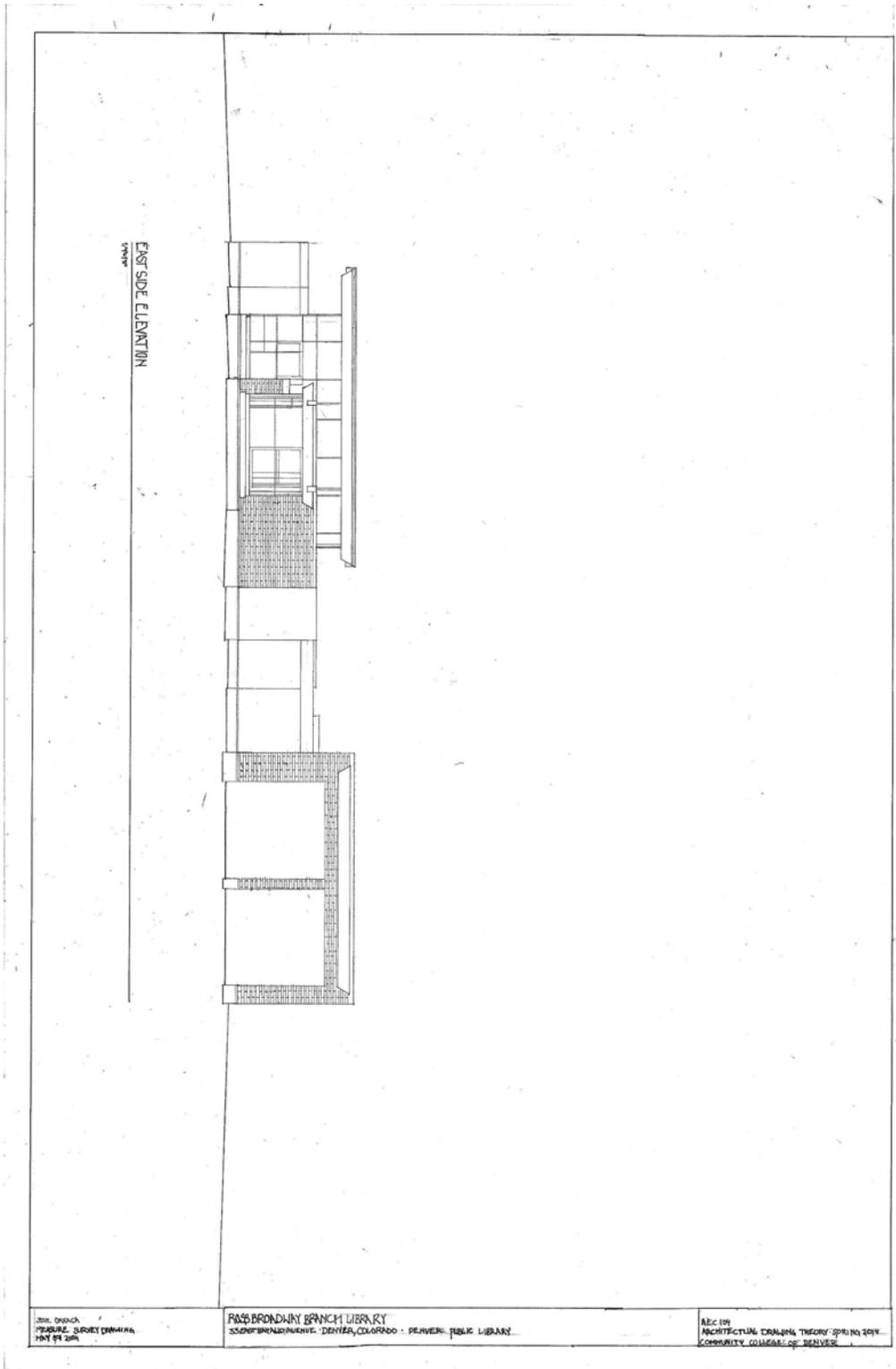
Denver, Colorado
County and State



Architectural drawing by Community College of Denver Architectural Drawing Theory Class, Spring 2014.

Ross-Broadway Branch, Denver Public Library
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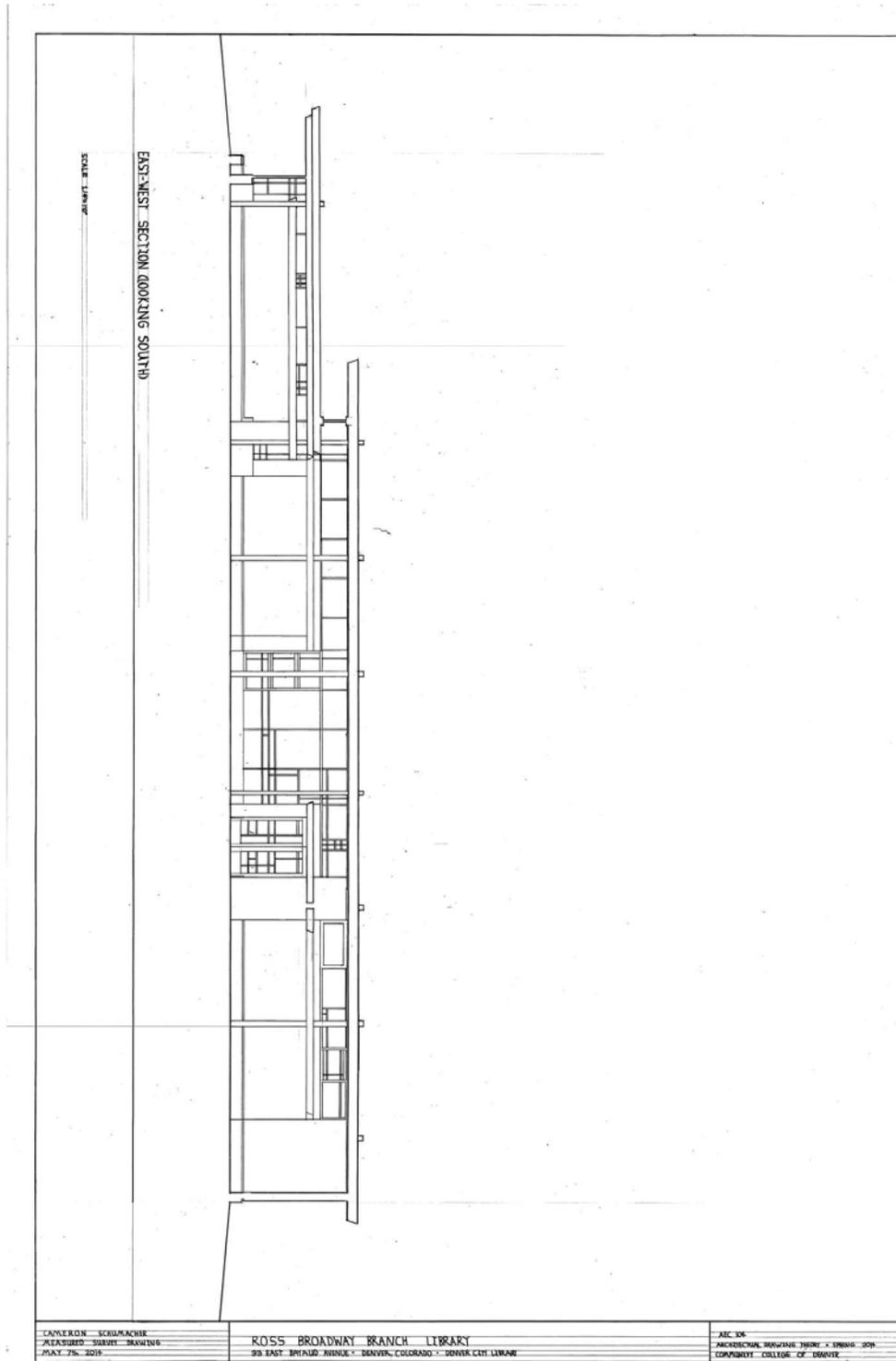
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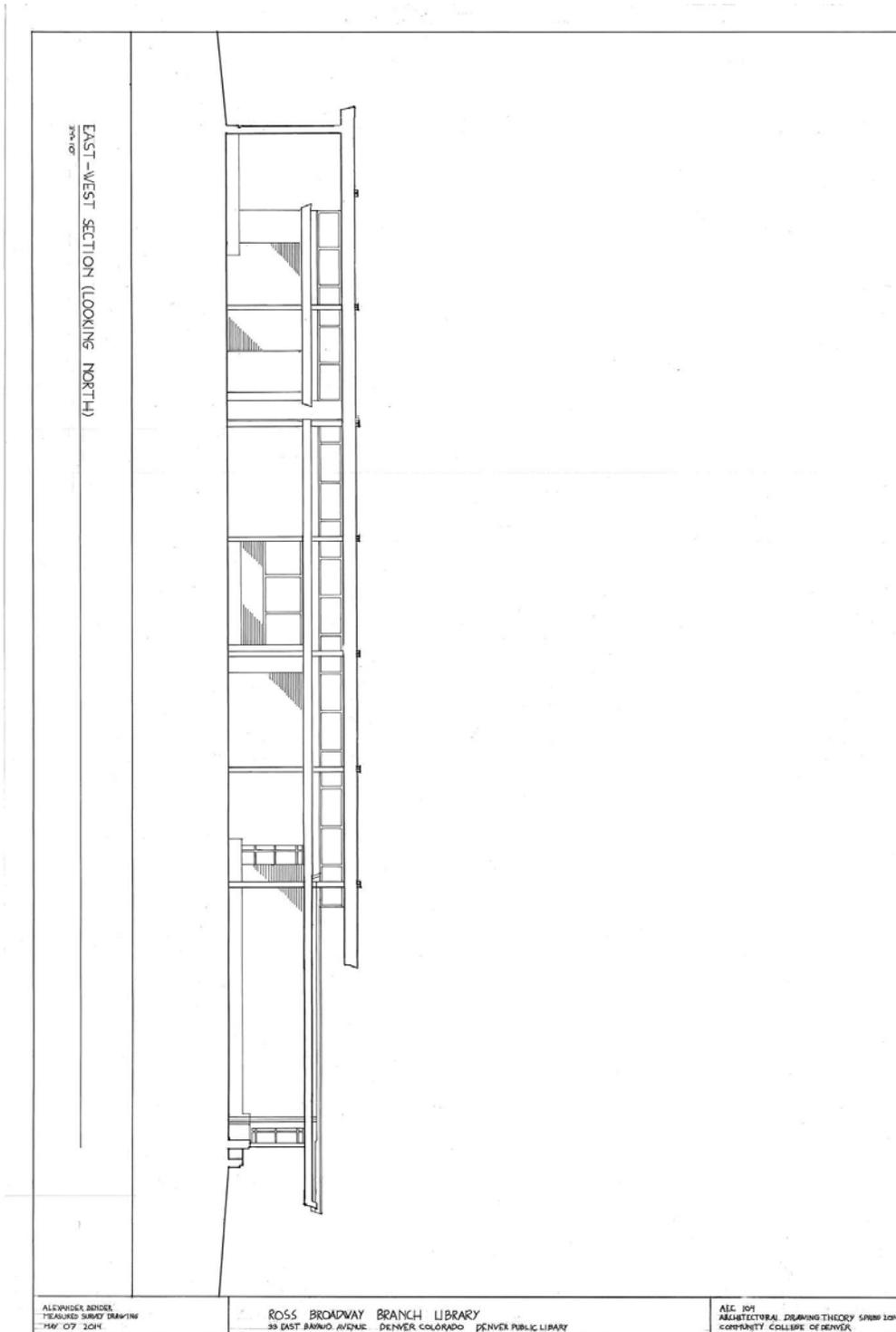
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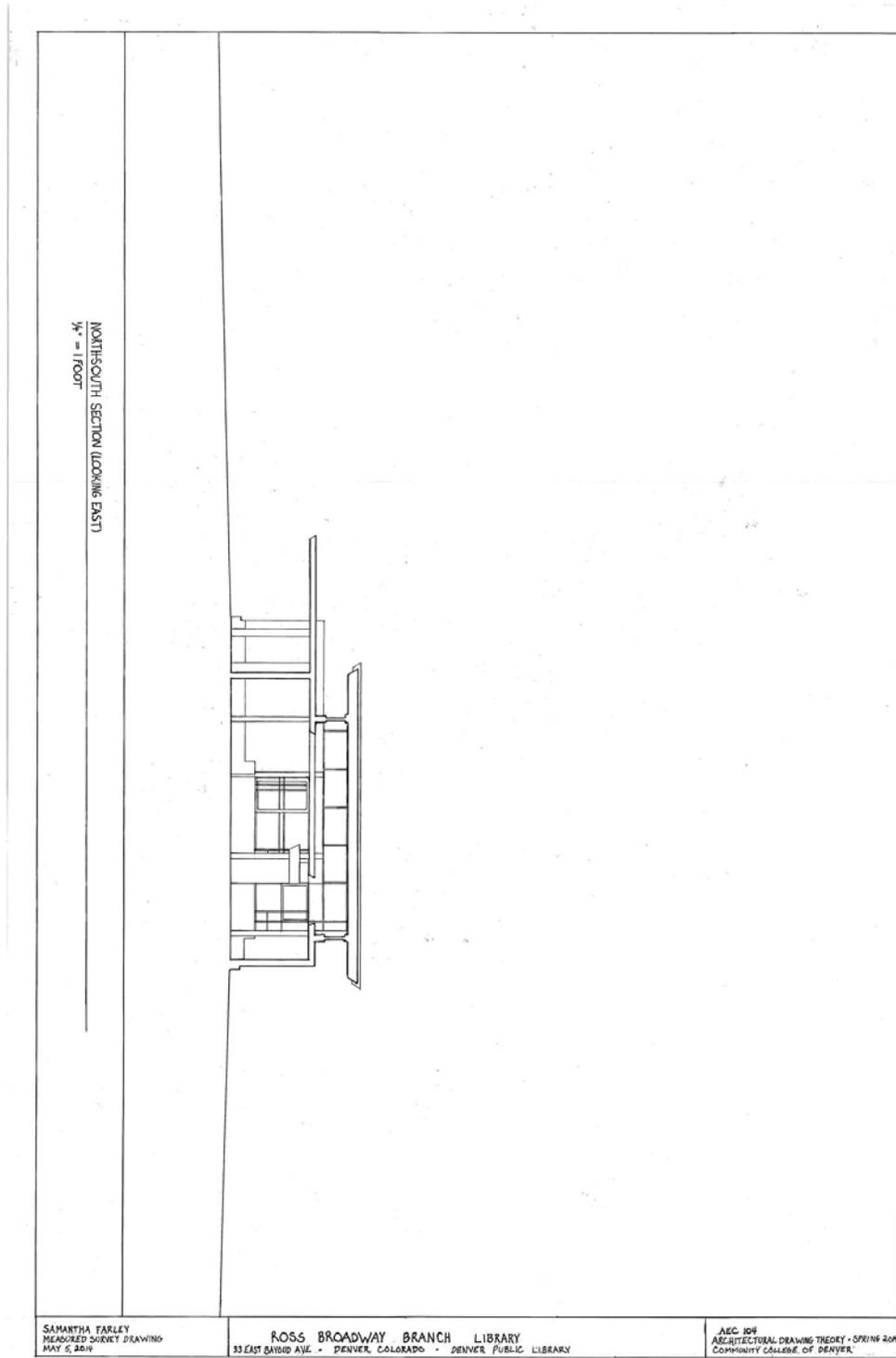
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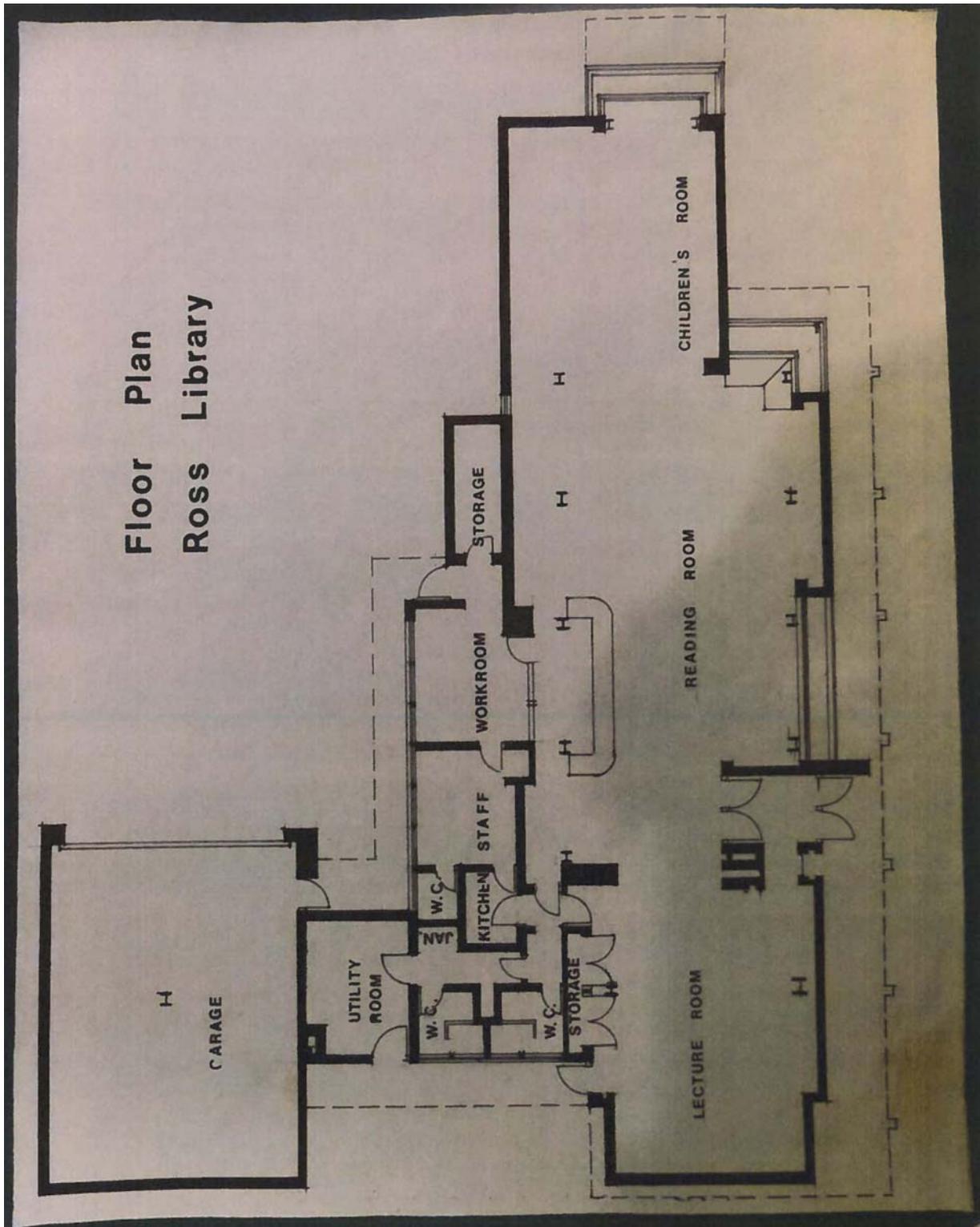
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Drawing Theory Class, Spring 2014

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Original Floor Plan 1951, from Victor Hornbein's collection at Denver Public Library

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10. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kirby Charles Page-Schmit (for property owner)
 (edited by H. Peterson, NR staff – History Colorado)
 organization: University of Colorado at Denver student / History Colorado intern
 street & number: 1200 Broadway
 city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80203
 e-mail kirbypageschmit@gmail.com
 telephone: (303) 866-3392
 date: 04/08/16, revised and edited November 2016

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ross-Broadway Branch, Denver Public Library

City or Vicinity: Denver County: Denver State: CO

Photographers: Heather Peterson (photos 1-3, 5-14, 16-19, 21) and
 Mark Broyles (photos 4, 15 and 20)

Date Photographed: May 2014 (photos 8-12, 16-19), March 2014 (photos 4, 15 and 20),
 December 2016 (photos 1-3, 5-7, 13-14)

Photo No.	Photograph Description
1	West end of south-facing (main) façade of the library; camera facing northeast
2	South-facing (main) façade of the library; camera facing north
3	East end of south-facing (main) façade of the library; camera facing northwest
4	Entrance doors on south-facing (main) façade; camera facing north
5	South-facing (main) façade, close up of main windows; camera facing north
6	South and east-facing sides; camera facing northwest
7	Southeast corner of main section; camera facing northwest

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8	ADA-compliant sidewalk/access to front door on south-facing (main) façade, camera facing west
9	East-facing wing, camera facing northwest
10	Northeast corner of library, camera facing southwest
11	North-facing side of library, including garage connecting area, and parking lot; camera facing southwest
12	East-facing side of garage; camera facing west
13	West-facing (rear) side of library's utility room that connects the library and garage; camera facing east
14	West-facing (rear) and north-facing sides of garage and west-facing side of library; camera facing southeast
15	Library interior, entrance; camera facing south
16	Library interior, circulation desk; camera facing northeast
17	Library interior, built-in reading nook; camera facing southwest
18	Library interior; camera facing northeast
19	Library interior; camera facing southeast
20	Library interior, window seat at east end; camera facing east
21	Library interior showing dropped ceiling over children's area incorporating exterior beams over cornice pattern in dropped ceiling

Historic Image Log

All historic images are from Denver Public Library, Western History Department: Victor Hornbein archives, Denver, CO

Figure No.	Historic Image Description
1	Original sketch of interior design by Victor Hornbein looking toward east
2	Original sketch of interior design by Victor Hornbein looking toward south
3	Benjamin Franklin Library, Detroit, Michigan, inspiration building for Hornbein's design of Ross-Broadway, unknown date.

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4	Ross-Broadway Library under construction, 1951.
5	Ross-Broadway Library under construction, 1951.
6	Ross-Broadway Library just before completion, 1951
7	Ross-Broadway Library just after completion, 1951
8	Ross-Broadway Library shortly after opening, ca. 1951
9	Ross-Broadway children's area ca. 1951
10	East-facing (front) entrance, unknown date, prior to 1990s.

Historic Images

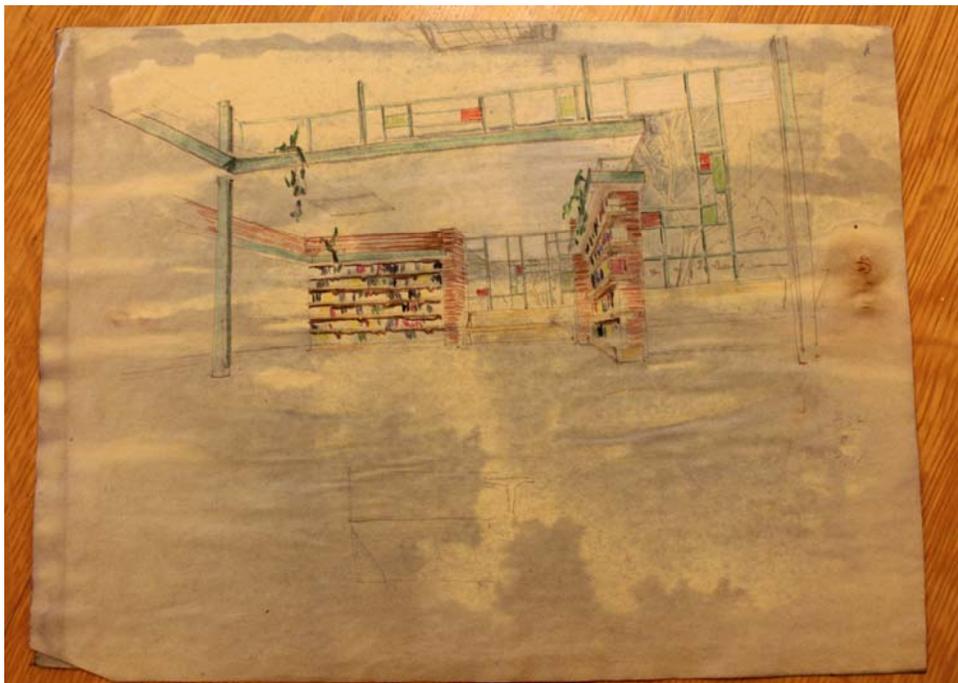


Figure 1: Original sketch of interior design by Victor Hornbein looking toward east boxed bay

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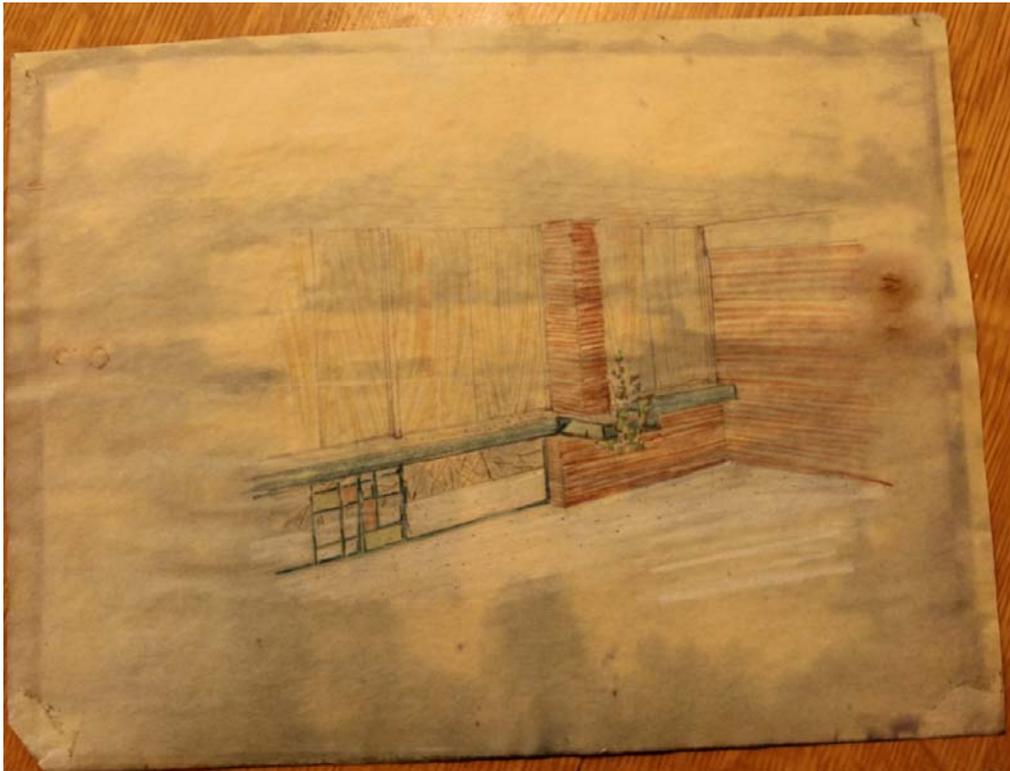


Figure 2: Original sketch of interior design by Victor Hornbein looking toward south



Figure 3: Benjamin Franklin Library, Detroit, Michigan, inspiration building for Hornbein's design of Ross-Broadway, ca. 1950.

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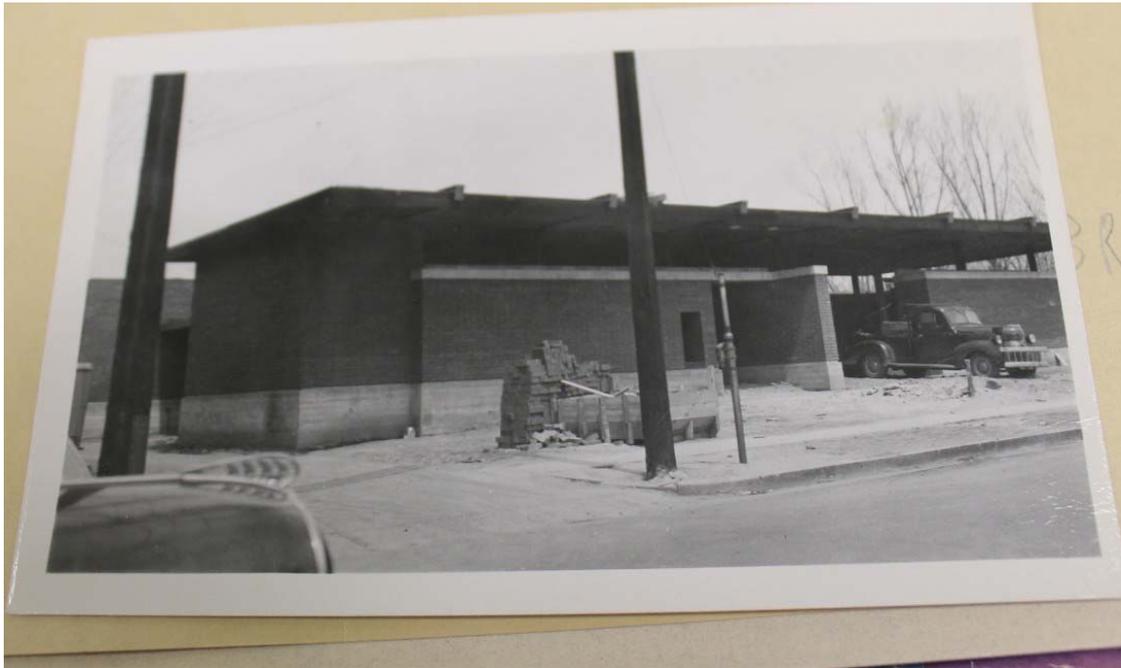


Figure 4: Ross-Broadway Library under construction, 1951.



Figure 5: Ross-Broadway Library under construction, 1951.

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Figure 6: Ross-Broadway Library just before completion, 1951.



Figure 7: Ross-Broadway Library just after completion, 1951.

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Figure 8: Ross-Broadway Library shortly after opening, ca. 1951.

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Figure 9: Children's area ca.1951.

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Figure 10: Ross-Broadway Library main entrance. Unknown date, but prior to 1990s alteration and installation of ADA-compliant ramp