

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# 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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

other names/site number 5AM.3862

## 2. Location

street & number 10828 HURON STREET

city or town NORTHGLENN

state COLORADO code CO county ADAMS code 001 zip code 80234

N/A

not for publication

N/A

vicinity

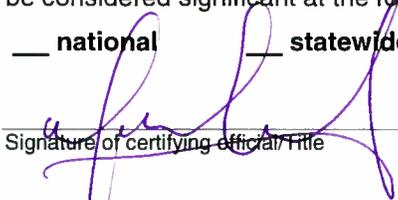
## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official 

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

6/7/19  
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

## 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

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	<b>Total</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION / religious facility

RELIGION / religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

roof: CONCRETE

other: GLASS

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## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

**Summary Paragraph:** Constructed in 1963-64, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church is located in the north Denver suburb of Northglenn, one-half mile west of Interstate Highway 25 and one-half mile north of 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The building sits on a triangular lot at the southeast corner of Huron Street and Kennedy Drive, surrounded by public streets, parking lots, a public school, commercial buildings and residences. The historic church is one of two buildings on the property, the other being a non-contributing church that was constructed in 2001. These buildings are separated from one another by a driveway and landscaping, allowing the historic church to stand free of visual distractions.

St. Stephen's is notable for its swooping thin-shell concrete roof whose slopes consist of four catenary arches. The roof drapes across four long curved reinforced concrete beams that rest upon pyramidal concrete supports. Constructed with a diamond-shaped plan, the building's exterior walls are formed of concrete blocks topped by fixed single-pane windows that rise to the underside of the curved roof. Although modest in size, the church represents a remarkable combination of architectural creativity, engineering expertise, and innovative construction techniques that came together during the early 1960s to create a unique sculptural place of worship in Northglenn. Today the building retains a high level of architectural integrity and conveys much to the present-day observer about mid-twentieth century design and construction.

**Setting & General Features:** Located on the southeast corner of Huron Street and Kennedy Drive in Northglenn, the historic St. Stephen's Lutheran Church property consists of a triangular lot encompassing .72 acres of land. While the property's western boundary runs along the east side of Huron Street and the northern boundary follows the south side of Kennedy Drive, the southeast property line that completes the triangle is defined by the earlier northeast-southwest axis of the Tuck Lateral Canal. This boundary runs along the northwest edge of the irrigation structure, which is no longer visible on the surface of the ground (it is now culverted through this area). In other words, the canal is outside the boundaries of the nominated property.<sup>1</sup>

The nominated property holds two buildings. One of these is the historic St. Stephen's Lutheran Church that sits in the northeast area of the lot. To the west of this and occupying the northwest area of the lot is a modern church building, constructed in 2001, that goes by the same name. Separated from one another by a paved driveway lined with parking spaces, at their closest points the two buildings are just over 90' apart. They are also surrounded by landscaped grounds planted with grass and a small number of trees. A concrete apron and sidewalks surround the historic building and provide access to parking lots on the east and west. The remaining area of the property to the southwest is occupied by a large paved parking lot that serves both buildings. Primary vehicular access to the church is from Kennedy Drive along the north side of the property, with a secondary entrance/egress point located along the Huron Street frontage at the lot's southwest corner.

Huron Street is a major north-south thoroughfare and the nominated property is situated in a mixed use area. Across Kennedy Drive to the north is Crossroads Middle School. To the east, southeast and south are commercial buildings and parking lots. To the northeast and west are residential neighborhoods. Most of the adjacent properties were developed between the 1960s and 1980s.

<sup>1</sup> Only real property, not water rights (per 36 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination.

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## CONTRIBUTING BUILDING

**St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (1963-64):** Designed with a diamond-shaped plan and capped by a soaring roofline featuring catenary arches projecting upward and outward, this building is the primary historic feature on the site. Largely an engineered building constructed of concrete and glass, the project required custom fabrication of many of its parts, along with exacting calculation of tolerances to realize the dream of its designer and to ensure it would remain standing for years to come. While the building's design originated in the visionary mind of architect Charles Haertling, it could not be erected using standard techniques for masonry construction. Consequently, engineering skills provided by Ib Falk Jorgensen became central to the project and were applied before construction could commence on the site.<sup>2</sup>

**Exterior Description** - St. Stephen's Lutheran Church is a mid-twentieth century building constructed primarily of concrete and glass. Resting upon a concrete slab with no basement, the tall one-story building has an elongated diamond-shaped plan. Its overall measurements are approximately 88' x 155' including the extended rooflines, within which is a building of 74' x 106'. Facing toward the northwest, its exterior walls are constructed of concrete blocks. Exposed to view on the interior, the block walls are covered with a painted concrete parge coat on the exterior that hides the joints, making the walls look smooth and uniform. Along most of their lengths, the walls are about 3' in height. They rest upon concave concrete plinths and the tops are curved and act as sills for the windows above. Exceptions to this are found at the northwest and southeast entrances, where the walls are closer to 8' tall to accommodate full-height doorways and to enclose the entry vestibules.

Rising from the tops of the walls around the entire building perimeter are numerous regularly-spaced windows of varying heights that extend upward to the underside of the roof. Most of these are vertical fixed single-light windows, and because the roof is entirely sloped each had to be custom cut and framed to fit its unique location. The windows are separated from one another along their sides by narrow vertical wood boards that form their primary framing. All of the boards are set on end and project outward in a fin-like pattern. At their lower ends, the boards drape over the curved sills and terminate on the wall faces below in a regular pattern of three-pronged wood finials. According to the architect's son, Joel Haertling, these are symbolic of three-toed fowl and were a reference to a quote from Matthew 23:37: "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings..."<sup>3</sup>

The lower edge of each pane of glass is unframed and sealed with caulk along the top of the concrete block wall. Along the upper edge, each pane is mounted in a metal channel that runs along the concrete roof's textured underside. In a number of locations where the windows angle around corners, the abutting sheets of glass are sealed with caulk rather than framing as with an aquarium tank. Eight small metal-framed hopper windows supported by horizontal wood framing are set into the larger fixed windows in select locations around the building. Three small air conditioning units are mounted along the rear northeast and southeast walls. One fills a hopper window space and the

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<sup>2</sup> Ib Falk Jorgensen, "Structural Engineering for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church," Prepared on 27 December 1966. (For a more detailed engineering description of the building, the reader is directed to this document, prepared by Denver-based consulting engineer Ib Falk Jorgensen.)

<sup>3</sup> Anat Geva, *Modernism and American Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Sacred Architecture*, p. 119.

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other two are set just below hopper windows. On the northwest, a large air conditioning unit is mounted in the lower half of one of the tall fixed windows directly above the main entry vestibule.

Entrances into the building are found at each of its four corners. The primary entries on the northwest and southeast are almost identical to one another and provide access to vestibules adjacent to the sanctuary. Each entry holds two doors that are separated from one another by the massive pyramidal roof supports described below. Today, the main northwest entrance contains a non-historic metal panel door and the second doorway to the north has been boarded closed. The southeast entry holds a wood slab door and a non-historic metal panel door. Side walls and tall narrow sidelights flank the doors, and these are all set in wood frames.

On either sides of the primary entries are the taller concrete walls that enclose the vestibules, which have flat roofs with boxed eaves. At the northwest entry, the eaves extend across the face of the pyramidal roof support, subtly marking the front entrance. The main roof projecting above the entries provides some protection for visitors from wind and precipitation. Directly north of the northwest entry and vestibule is the building's original utility room, constructed with concrete block walls and a louvered vent. A metal flue rises from its flat roof and then pierces the curved roof above, terminating in a metal cap. Mounted to the wall adjacent to the main entrance is a metal sconce light (the one to the north has been removed). Two additional sconces of identical design flank the southeast entry. These fixtures may be original to the building and consist of a metal cylindrical tube pierced with holes, enclosed by a shorter cylindrical metal tube that is not pierced.

Secondary entries are also found at the northeast and southwest corners of the building. These are deeply sheltered by the long curved roof above and provide direct access into classrooms, offices, and the rear of the sanctuary. Arranged in pairs and placed at angles next to one another, the four entries at each of these corners retain their original wood slab doors except for one non-historic metal panel door on the north. They are all set in wood frames and as a security measure the exterior handles have been removed from the doors at the southwest corner. The original doors on the northeast also retain their original hardware and two include mail slots.

Much of the visual character of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church lies with its sculptural roofline, a swooping concrete structure of catenary arches that seems to levitate above the perimeter walls and windows. The roof's skin is a complex structure formed of thin-shell concrete, reinforced and shaped internally by a diamond-pattern lattice of tensioned catenary cables and reinforcing bars. Its 2½"-thick stone aggregate concrete deck is topped by a 1" insulation and plastic layer. This drapes from four massive, curved, elongated tusk-like beams of reinforced concrete. Aligned to the northeast and southwest, the longitudinal beams weigh 54 tons and run for a distance of 106' between supports, with 29' of overhang. The shorter transverse beams aligned to the northwest and southeast weigh 44 tons and run for 75' between supports, with an overhang of 12'.

At the center of the building, the massive beams rest against one another below the spire and directly above the sanctuary. Exposed to view from the interior, the beams project through the window glass, extend for a distance to the northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest, and terminate in upward slopes beyond the draped roofline. Just outside the building's walls, each beam rests upon a free-standing concrete pyramidal pier mounted on caissons. These sit on concave concrete plinths and are approximately 4' x 6' at their bases tapering to 24" x 15" at the tops. At the northwest and southeast entrances, the roof beams are shorter and the pyramidal piers taller. Shorter pyramids

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support the much longer beams projecting to the northeast and southwest. Through this carefully engineered and executed design, the roof's massive weight is transferred outward and onto the pyramidal supports and their caissons.

Rising above the sanctuary is the tall pyramidal concrete spire that caps the roof, effectively hiding and sealing the beam ends below. The spire features a minimalist cross fabricated of metal rods. Four downspouts drain the sloped roof, with two emerging adjacent to the entries at the northeast corner of the building and two at the southwest corner. These drop into short concrete channels in the sidewalk around the building, where they are covered with metal plates. From there, the drainage water runs into open clay tile drains set into the adjacent grass. While all of the drains are original to the building, the western downspout at the northeast corner has been replaced and rerouted (the concrete sidewalk in this area also appears to have been replaced and narrowed). This downspout is now mounted to the northwest wall, where it runs to the southwest and terminates in a narrow flower bed adjacent to the utility room.

**Interior Description** – While some changes have been made to the interior of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, many of its original features remain intact. The general floorplan designed by the architect is clearly evident, with the central six-sided sanctuary surrounded by classrooms, offices and other spaces. On the northwest, the entry vestibule or narthex has been remodeled in recent years with new ceramic tile flooring but with its layout left intact. The main entrance into the sanctuary from the vestibule/narthex holds a pair of historic wood doors that meet at an angle of about 110 degrees. Modern plush red carpeting covers the concrete sanctuary floor and its perimeter is defined by the original wood-paneled walls. Toward the rear of the sanctuary, the classroom walls have been partially removed to provide added space for seating.

The dark wood-paneled walls around the sanctuary reach a height of 7'6". From the tops of the walls to the curved underside of the roughly-textured concrete roof, the upper walls are enclosed in glass, with each sheet cut to fit its particular location. These abut one another on the sides and along the roofline they are set into metal frames that also wrap around the exposed roof beams. Centered in the sanctuary, the original concrete altar and surrounding railing and knee cushions have been removed (exactly when is unknown). In their place, a wood pulpit stands atop the original raised six-sided altar platform. Along the north wall is the original raised concrete pulpit. The ceiling above the sanctuary is open and features the building's four massive concrete beams, rising up and coming together directly above the altar without any vertical supports. Seating in the sanctuary, designed to be partially in the round, consists of modern chairs that are not fixed to the floor.

From the vestibule/narthex, short hallways extend to the north and south toward the classrooms, kitchen, offices, restrooms, and the rear of the sanctuary. These hallways allow for access around the sanctuary to the north, east and west, and through the rear of the sanctuary to the south. The large open room on the north holds the kitchen along with two classroom spaces that can be separated from one another by accordion partitions that are original to the building. When not in use, the partitions are hidden in wall pockets. The kitchen has been remodeled in recent years, but some of its original cabinets and drawers remain in place. In this area, the flooring has been updated with modern carpeting and ceramic tiles. As in the sanctuary, the massive northern concrete roof beam is exposed to view overhead, plunging out of the building through the window glass. Geometric ornamental woodwork runs along the top of the wall separating the north kitchen/classrooms from the sanctuary.

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With the various interior angles resulting from the six-sided sanctuary set within a diamond-shaped building plan, none of the rooms are square or rectangular in shape and a variety of storage closets and spaces are present throughout the church. Most of these remain in use with their original wood slab doors and hardware in place. One closet in the northeast hallway holds an electronic carillon that appears to date from the 1960s or 1970s. A wall plaque states that it was dedicated to the memory of Rose Wheaton Beard, mother of the church's founding pastor, Robert D. Beard. The carillon was manufactured by the Schulmerich Carillon Company of Sellersville, Pennsylvania. Located in the southwest hallway, the restrooms retain some of their original toilets, urinals and sinks.

**Alterations** – As described above, the St. Stephen's Lutheran Church building is largely intact from its historic period over fifty years ago except for a few relatively minor alterations. On the exterior, the primary change has involved replacement or closure of several of the doors in recent decades, leaving all of the entries and about 75 percent of the original doors in place. Air conditioning units were installed in a few of the windows and one of the downspouts has been replaced. Exactly when these exterior changes took place is unknown. The interior has experienced a few more changes, including removal of the concrete altar, opening of the rear of the sanctuary through partial removal of classroom walls, remodeling of the kitchen, and the installation of modern carpeting and ceramic tile flooring. These interior changes all appear to have occurred in the past few decades.

## NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING

**Modern St. Stephen's Lutheran Church (2001):** The modern St. Stephen's Lutheran Church occupies the northwest area of the property. Constructed in 2001, this masonry building faces toward the south, is slightly larger than the historic church in terms of square footage, and has a tall roof composed of intersecting gables. It occupies a footprint of approximately 65' x 140' and is surrounded by a buffer of landscaping. In terms of its architecture, this is a modern, unornamented brick building that makes no references to the older church on the site. Due to its age, it is considered a non-contributing building.

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## INTEGRITY

Today the historic St. Stephen's Lutheran Church retains the vast majority of its historic features dating from its period of significance (1964). Although the building has experienced a few alterations, most of these have been to the interior, which retains a substantial amount of its historic features. The exterior has been minimally changed through the replacement and closure of a few of its doors, along with the other minor items detailed above. In general, the building exhibits a high level of integrity and continues to convey its age, use and architectural style to the observer.

The following provides brief analysis of the property in light of the seven aspects of integrity:

**Location** – The building sits in its original location dating from its period of significance and consequently exhibits a high level of the aspect of location.

**Design** – The building has experienced a few minor non-historic alterations to its exterior design through the removal or replacement of a small number of relatively minor architectural elements.

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Despite this, it continues to retain the vast majority of its physical form, plan, space, structure and style. Consequently, it exhibits a high level of the aspect of design dating from its period of significance.

**Materials** – Despite minor non-historic alterations, the building retains the vast majority of the historic materials that were used to construct it and that date from its period of significance. Consequently, it exhibits a high level of the aspect of materials.

**Workmanship** – The building retains extensive physical evidence of the construction techniques that were used in its erection during its period of significance. Consequently, it exhibits a high level of the aspect of workmanship.

**Feeling** – The building continues to evoke a particular aesthetic and historic sense of architectural design and construction materials and techniques that date from its period of significance. Consequently, it exhibits a high level of the aspect of feeling.

**Association** – The building continues to evoke its strong connection with the mid-century design work of master architect Charles A. Haertling, who has become known and celebrated for his Modernist and Neo-Expressionist sculptural buildings dating from the late 1950s to the 1980s. It is also associated with the architectural movement known as Neo-Expressionism, which emerged in the United States during the decades immediately following World War II. Consequently, this property exhibits a high level of the aspect of association.

**Setting** - The setting for this building has changed considerably from when it was completed in 1964. At that time, the surrounding properties were mostly rural and vacant. Over the following years the area filled with residences, commercial buildings, parking lots and a school as the suburban community of Northglenn grew into the countryside as intended by its developer. As a planned suburban development, these changes do not adversely impact the setting of the church as it was never intended to sit alone outside the city. The triangular lot on which the building sits was also altered with the construction in 2001 of the second church on the property. Separated from one another by a wide buffer of landscaping and driveway, the new building does not detract from the historic church's integrity of setting.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ENGINEERING

**Period of Significance**

1964

**Significant Dates**

1964

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

CHARLES HAERTLING, ARCHITECT

IB FALK JORGENSEN, ENGINEER

**Period of Significance (justification):** The period of significance for this property in the areas of Architecture and Engineering is limited to the year 1964 when the building's construction was complete.

**Criteria Considerations:** Because this property is a church owned and occupied by a religious institution, it falls under Criteria Consideration A. Rather than being nominated for any association with religion, the resource is significant for its design as representative of mid-twentieth century Neo-Expressionist architecture. It is also nominated as an excellent example of the work of master architect Charles Haertling and thin-shell concrete construction techniques. For these reasons, the property derives its primary significance from its architectural and engineering distinction alone and therefore meets the guidelines for the criteria consideration.

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary Paragraph

Completed in 1964, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of mid-twentieth century Neo-Expressionist architecture and the work of master architect Charles Haertling. It is further significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as an exceptional example of thin-shell concrete construction technology. The building exhibits an excellent level of integrity from its period of construction and continues to convey its historic design and history.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Northglenn is significant at the local level under **Criterion C** in the area of **Architecture** for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period and method of construction and for representing the work of a master architect. The building represents an exceptional example of post-World War II Neo-Expressionist design applied to a small house of worship in a suburban setting. While form still followed function, the postwar Neo-Expressionists were interested in deconstructing previous notions of what a building should look like. Among the movement's defining characteristics were the use of distortion for emotional effect, the employment of stylistic and symbolic forms, a desire to create original and visionary buildings, the evolution of design concepts long before construction commenced, a turn toward nature and natural objects as inspiration for building shapes, and the view that architecture is a form of art and sculpture.

St. Stephen's is a reflection of these postwar trends applied to ecclesiastical architecture. This is reflected in its diamond-shaped plan, soaring thin-shell concrete sculptural roof that seems to float above the walls, and the central sanctuary in-the-round surrounded by spaces for classrooms, offices and a kitchen. The period was dominated both locally and nationally by economic revitalization, rapid population growth, suburban expansion, and Cold War worries. In this environment, congregants and religious leaders began exploring the possibilities for reforming religious life in the United States. This led to various changes, including an evolution of ecclesiastical architecture. One major trend was toward greater informality in worship and social connection, leading many congregations in the direction of Modernist and even Neo-Expressionist architecture as an expression of religious life in the modern world. It also allowed for an exploration of informal interior arrangements, including sanctuaries in-the-round and a rethinking of how classrooms and social spaces might be reworked.

The building is also an excellent example of the body of work of Boulder-based master architect Charles A. Haertling. As a young architect in the 1950s, he was mentored by prominent Boulder architect James Hunter, who specialized in Modernist design. Haertling then partnered with Modernist architect Tician Papachristou before striking out on his own. With his own solo practice, he was able to explore his interest in sculptural Neo-Expressionism. Primarily known for the approximately forty sculptural residences he designed in and around Boulder, Haertling also worked on four church projects that are now starting to be recognized as essential elements of the body of his work. As a Lutheran himself, he thought deeply about how church architecture both reflected his faith and would inspire others. Never interested in the traditional forms of the past, he instead sought inspiration from the natural world and translated that into unique buildings that would serve the needs of their owners while pushing the boundaries of modern architecture. St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

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exemplifies this philosophy and is the first of Haertling's projects to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Colorado's Front Range emerged as a western center of Modernist architecture. With population growth swelling the cities and construction booming, a variety of notable building projects were completed from Fort Collins to Pueblo. Some of these buildings were designed by national firms and many others were the product of local architects. Among the best known of the large Modernist commissions is the 1962 glass, steel and aluminum Cadet Chapel at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs (5EP.3890; contributing to National Historic Landmark district NRIS.04000484, listed 1 April 2004), designed by Walter Netsch with the prominent Chicago firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. I. M. Pei also made his mark on the state with plans for Denver's 1960 Zeckendorf Plaza and the mid-1960s National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder. Around the same time, a number of local architects who did not share the national spotlight were busy working on smaller projects that resulted in an array of Modernist buildings, some of them in the Neo-Expressionist style.

Denver architect Charles Deaton was inspired by the curvilinear shapes found in nature among plants, rocks and living creatures and these forms made their way into some of his buildings. His Key Savings & Loan Association building (5AH.2990; NRIS.16000447, National Register listed 18 July 2016) was built in 1967 on South Broadway in Englewood, Colorado. There he created an organic form of a flattened oval resting upon a pedestal, all constructed of cast-in-place concrete. His other widely known project was the Deaton Sculptured House (5JF.2576; NRIS.02000385, National Register listed 24 February 2004) built in 1963-66. The clam-shaped residence rises from the forest on a mountaintop above Interstate Highway 70 west of Denver. Other regional architects producing Modernist and even Neo-Expressionist work included William Muchow, Victor Hornbein, James Hunter, Tician Papachristou, Eugene Sternberg and Charles Haertling. Among these and a host of others, Deaton and Haertling perhaps shared the most in common as they pushed architectural design to the edges of sculptural Neo-Expressionist creativity.

In the 1950s, Charles Haertling worked for James Hunter and then partnered with Tician Papachristou. Both Hunter and Papachristou became known for buildings that were clearly modern and distinctive, yet rectilinear in design. During their short period of collaboration late in the decade, Haertling began experimenting with non-traditional, sculptural forms of architecture. His vision drifted toward the organic and fanciful, resulting in a number of sculptural designs that ultimately proved to be remarkable achievements of architecture and engineering. This approach clearly fell more within the realm of Neo-Expressionism and he soon launched his own solo architectural practice, creating designs that required not only architectural inventiveness but also innovative engineering techniques.

In Northglenn, the 1964 St. Stephen's Lutheran Church designed by Haertling falls clearly within the stream of the Neo-Expressionist movement. A small building designed for a young congregation in an emerging suburb outside of Denver, its architectural style and construction methods make it a diminutive cousin of larger and better known projects such as Eero Saarinen's Trans World Airlines Center at JFK International Airport (NRIS.05000994, listed 7 September 2005), Frank Lloyd Wright's 1959 Guggenheim Museum in New York City (NRIS.05000443, listed 19 May 2005), and even Jørn Utzon's 1959-73 Sydney Opera House (World Heritage List, inscribed 2007). Having ventured into the realm of Neo-Expressionist architecture early in his career, Haertling was content to remain there as it allowed him to create buildings that sprang from his rich imagination.

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Interviewed for a 1962 article in *The Lutheran Witness* on the subject of modern church design, Haertling told the writer that in his view, "we must breathe life into buildings so as to get a space-age response. I find it tortuous, grueling, almost maddening work, where one must reverse, invert, twist, and tear at assumptions and ideas to find the evasive hidden pearl. But once discovered, what a heavenly sweet task it has been!"<sup>4</sup>

Haertling continued to ruminate on the subject of designing modern ecclesiastical buildings. In undated lecture notes for a Lutheran audience on the topic of Space for Spiritual Experience, he wrote that "We strive to express [our faith] in form – in things. The baptismal font, the door knobs, the candelabra, the stained glass, the ornamented doors should all express our faith. The architect is basically an artist. The arts collectively contribute to the worshipful nature of the space." Addressing Martin Luther's break with the past, he challenged his audience: "Why any sentimentality for old style forms? Why the love for the antiseptic, why the love for the puritanical? Why the rebellion against the intellectual? Why the rebellion against new form, new art? Do we only find security in the semi-this and semi-that, which eventually is doomed to be semi-nothingness?" He continued, "Today we have a fertile fountain of new materials and techniques which [have] filled the pallets of the architect. By use of these new elements vast vistas of development of space are facilitated. We should use our best of artistic and technical skill to build our shrine to God. We should...express confidence in our own time and find our own styles."<sup>5</sup>

In an undated one-page document titled "Thoughts on Architecture," Haertling typed twenty-one short points that reflected his philosophy of design.<sup>6</sup> Among these were the following:

- Architect is the shaper of environment – not only buildings though, but how these individual buildings are approached, relationships to each other.
- Architect must lead the way of the daring.
- I love form, and the beauty of light and shade of that form. The basic requirement of that form be that it be a firm expression of the space within, and descriptive of it.
- Building should enhance the landscape.
- A building should have character and personality and integrity.
- One must be master of the art and to make it to do what one wants – a problem must be soft putty in one's hands, not unwieldy clay or brittle.
- Good design includes the monumental task of solving all problems and possible requirements or benefits to the human senses.
- I am opposed to team effort in design – find no substitute allowable in lieu of the single motivating force which must always be answerable to one's own grueling specifications.

<sup>4</sup> "Architect with a Designing Ministry," *The Lutheran Witness*, 6 February 1962, p. 17

<sup>5</sup> "Space for Spiritual Experience," Undated Lecture Notes Prepared by Charles A. Haertling.

<sup>6</sup> "Thoughts on Architecture," Undated Notes Prepared by Charles A. Haertling.

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In March 1965, the *Rocky Mountain News* printed an article about St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Interviewed for the article, Charles Haertling remarked that from his perspective there was little excitement in the field of church architecture as most congregations simply wanted the largest building for the least amount of money. His goal was to convince building committees to express what they needed in terms of use and then let the architect do the designing. As he stated, "If you want to design your own building, you don't need an architect." With St. Stephen's, Haertling found that the congregation simply desired a sanctuary in-the-round, and from there the building committee let him do his work without constraints. The resulting building met his essential principle that every design should be rooted in meaning, every project must "have basic integrity and not simply shout."<sup>7</sup>

Haertling continued to design houses in the Boulder area, all of them celebrated today by those with an appreciation for Modernist and Neo-Expressionist architecture. However, his projects were not initially appreciated by all. In a 1972 article in the *Rocky Mountain News*, art critic Duncan Pollock attended a Boulder gallery exhibit of plans and photographs featuring Haertling's body of work. Pollock described what he saw in the following terms: "Aside from the churches and the clinic [the Boulder Valley Eye Clinic, 5BL.8246], Haertling never has had a major commission, but there's still food for thought here, not a full dress dinner but some snappy little hors d'oeuvres that when gathered up on a platter offer some ideas as to what may follow." Describing Haertling's work as "always striking, often controversial," Pollock sniffed that the architect "makes a point of saying that his buildings are works of art. True, his forms have sculptural connotations, but sometimes they seem the work of a frustrated artist who has simply taken too many liberties with his site."<sup>8</sup>

Charles Haertling died in 1984 at the age of fifty-five, bringing to a sudden end his remarkable career. Within just a few years, his buildings were already being celebrated by the historic preservation community and in April 1987 Historic Boulder opened six of his houses to a tour of "Landmarks of the Future." Joanne Ditmer, a noted *Denver Post* journalist who took great interest in architecture and historic preservation, wrote in the paper that Haertling's "sculptural, organic architectural designs were dramatic expressions of the creative flame, sometimes rounded and curved into the site, other times soaring to the skies like motion caught in concrete and glass. His architecture is among the most exciting and stimulating design work in the region."<sup>9</sup> This certainly described what he achieved with one of his few non-residential projects, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Northglenn.

St. Stephen's Church is further significant at the local level under **Criterion C** in the area of **Engineering** as an exceptional example of post-World War II thin-shell concrete engineering techniques. At St. Stephen's, Haertling and civil engineer Ib Falk Jorgensen employed thin-shell technology, pioneered in the United States by structural engineer Anton Tedesko and embraced by Neo-Expressionist architects such as Eero Saarinen and Felix Candela, in a unique and surprising manner, inverting the more typical vaulted thin-shell roof form to achieve the swooping lily-inspired shape Haertling desired.

Thin-shell, post-tensioned concrete construction was most commonly employed in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, a period in which Modernist and Neo-Expressionist architects pushed the boundaries of sculptural form. The unique demands of Haertling's groundbreaking vision for St.

<sup>7</sup> "Exciting Church Design Urged," *Rocky Mountain News*, 14 March 1965, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> "Beaux Arts: A Snappy Platter of Hors D'Oeuvres," *Rocky Mountain News*, 23 January 1972, Festival, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> "Architect's Landmark Houses Lift the Spirit," *Denver Post*, 18 April 1987, p. 3B.

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Stephen's brought engineering analysis to the center of the design process and in fact made it critical to whether the design could be translated into reality.

The catenary arch beams and thin-shell engineering technology utilized by Haertling and Jorgensen allowed the soaring roof to appear to float gently above the church's glass and concrete walls and freed the interior of any vertical supports, creating an inspirational sanctuary space. The church was recognized at the time of its construction as innovative, and it continues to be viewed that way today by historians and the general public.

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## HISTORIC CONTEXT

### Postwar Denver Becomes Metropolitan

During the post-World War II era, Denver swelled with urban and suburban development, turning the city into a burgeoning metropolis that rapidly expanded into the surrounding countryside. Between 1940 and 1970, the five-county Denver metropolitan region's population increased from just over 400,000 to more than 1.1 million residents.<sup>10</sup> This growth created demand for new residential neighborhoods, shopping centers, parks and a host of other public amenities. Infrastructure also had to be upgraded and expanded throughout the growing metropolis.

Historians Stephen Leonard and Thomas Noel analyzed and discussed this growth at length in their 1990 book, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*. According to Leonard and Noel:

World War II triggered a tremendous transformation in Denver. Massive federal spending, an influx of newcomers, and a pent-up demand for new cars and new housing unavailable during the war led to a boom that changed a drowsy provincial city into a sprawling metropolis. In the 1950s and 1960s, Denver was not growing up anywhere nearly as fast as it was growing out. While railroads and streetcars shaped Denver before World War II, the automobile subsequently reshaped the city and its suburbs. Autos enabled Denverites to move beyond the old walking city and its streetcar suburbs into surrounding Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson and Boulder counties.<sup>11</sup>

Between the late 1940s and 1950s, the eleven-mile-long Valley Highway was constructed through central Denver along the Platte River Valley. Renamed Interstate Highway 25, the north-south highway was dedicated in 1958. Construction continued northward beyond the city limits during the late 1950s, and in the 1960s the highway was completed to the Wyoming state line.<sup>12</sup>

The development of Interstate 25 made automobile access to and from the city far more efficient than in the past, encouraging developers to acquire properties and launch projects among the agricultural lands north of Denver. Suburban development caused the metropolitan area to swell, both accommodating and encouraging the rapid growth in population. During the 1950s and 1960s,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas H. Simmons, R. Laurie Simmons and Dawn Bunyak, *Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, p. E-41.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen J. Leonard and Thomas J. Noel, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*, pp. 235 & 255.

<sup>12</sup> *Highways to the Sky: A Context and History of Colorado's Highway System*, Colorado Department of Transportation, pp. 7-1 to 7-10.

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nine new suburban cities were incorporated in the countryside around Denver. Among these was the planned municipality of Northglenn.

### **From Crop Fields to Suburbia: The Emergence of Northglenn**

Eleven miles due north of the state capitol building in Denver lies the former Adams County agricultural district of Eastlake, first settled in the late 1800s. By the early 1900s, the area was occupied by scattered farmsteads along with irrigated crop fields watered by a series of storage reservoirs and ditches. Undefined by specific boundaries, the district covered many square miles of rural farms surrounding the small town of Eastlake, founded during the first decade of the new century, along with the Eastlake School and Wesley Chapel. Within the townsite were two grain elevators along with a lumberyard, post office, two churches and several mercantile stores. For many years, transportation corridors through the area were limited to the Union Pacific Railroad line that ran north from Denver, along with a network of county roads that followed the section lines. The only improved auto route was North Washington Road, designated State Route 185. Several miles to the south, this connected with Denver's Washington Street.<sup>13</sup>

By the World War II era, the Eastlake district was still rural and virtually unchanged from the previous decades. However, the first stirrings of massive changes to come occurred during the late 1950s when the open agricultural fields west and southwest of Eastlake were interrupted by the construction of Interstate 25. The crop fields occupying Section 10, where St. Stephen's Lutheran Church would soon be built, was among those lands bisected by the highway. During this period, Denver housing subdivision and shopping center developer Perl-Mack Enterprises (also known as Perl-Mack Construction and Perl-Mack Homes) began acquiring farms and amassing land on either side of the interstate. The firm's owners recognized that tremendous business opportunities lay in the region the highway opened to suburban development north of Denver.<sup>14</sup>

Founded in 1951 as a small-scale custom home builder, by the late 1950s Perl-Mack was owned by founders Jordon Perlmutter and his cousin Samuel Primack, who were joined by Perlmutter's brother-in-law, William Morrison. By 1953, the partners had shifted their business model to the construction of large numbers of houses in planned developments they would establish in and around Denver. Their first large-scale project, running from 1955 to 1959, was Perl-Mack Manor, a subdivision of around 2,300 houses in Westminster.<sup>15</sup> The company then shifted its attention to the development of a new planned community north of Denver along Interstate 25 that would be known as North Glenn.

Perl-Mack launched its ambitious North Glenn project in 1959. There the company planned to construct residential subdivisions in several filings laid out along winding streets. However, it would go beyond the development of just houses. In North Glenn, Perl-Mack envisioned a self-contained, planned community that would include amenities such as swimming pools and parks, schools, churches, shopping centers, civic facilities and an industrial park. To achieve this goal, the developer

<sup>13</sup> Robert Larsen and Amy Schmaltz, *Eastlake Farmers Co-Operative Elevator Company*, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Section 8, p. 7; Eastlake 15' Topographic Quadrangle Map, Adams County, Colorado, 1938.

<sup>14</sup> Eastlake 15' Topographic Quadrangle Map, Adams County, Colorado, 1944 & 1957; Leonard and Noel, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*, p. 362.

<sup>15</sup> "Perl-Mack Enterprises Inc.," Builders of Colorado, Biographical Sketch, History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; Jordon Perlmutter, Biography Published by the Colorado Business Hall of Fame.

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engaged the prominent Denver planning firm of Harman, O'Donnell & Henninger Associates. Commonly known as HOH, the company was founded in 1946 to provide clients with expertise in urban and regional planning. Its staff included planners, landscape architects, economists, political scientists, and additional experts in areas such as community development, zoning, subdivision design, shopping center development and business administration. HOH provided Perl-Mack with early design analysis for North Glenn, including land use plans and economic studies.<sup>16</sup>

The first five Perl-Mack model homes in North Glenn were constructed during the spring of 1959 on land the company acquired just north of 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue and east of Interstate 25. When the first public open house was held on June 30, more than 15,000 potential buyers arrived to tour the development and the company's sales staff was overwhelmed with orders. By early 1962, around 2,000 homes had been sold, 4,000 more were planned, and North Glenn's population surged to around 10,000 residents. Large ads placed in the Denver newspapers promoted models known the Matchless, Lark, Eureka and Columbine. Ranging in price from \$11,600 to \$20,500, Perl-Mack's one-story brick ranch houses with attached garages, finished basements and fenced yards were affordable for middle-class buyers, and thousands of young families flocked to the new development. Most purchased the houses using VA and FHA loans, allowing them to make monthly payments. Perl-Mack promoted North Glenn as "America's Most Perfectly Planned Community," a designation provided in 1961 by *Life Magazine* and repeated by the *National Association of Home Builders*.<sup>17</sup>

With sales and construction well underway east of Interstate 25, during the 1960s Perl-Mack moved forward with development plans for its acreage west of the highway. There the company would construct the Northglenn Mall in 1968 (demolished in 1998) along with additional subdivisions with homes selling for as much as \$30,000. The shopping mall and its environs were envisioned as a community center of sorts. Throughout the 1960s, the former crop fields and pasture north, south and west of 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Huron Street were scraped, streets and infrastructure were installed, and buildings rose from the open landscape. Although development continued and population surged, the area remained part of unincorporated Adams County and the City of Northglenn had yet to emerge. HOH and Perl-Mack carefully mapped out the entire North Glenn development and defined the future use of each property. One triangular piece of land measuring 440' x 494' x 631' at the future intersection of Huron St. and Kennedy Dr. was set aside for a church to be built there.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, the City of Thornton provided water service to the new Perl-Mack developments of North Glenn. During the early years of the decade, Thornton's elected leaders and planners began to consider annexation, likely looking to the growing population, burgeoning housing subdivisions and Northglenn Mall as potential sources of tax revenue. In 1964, Thornton managed to annex several sizable areas of North Glenn that were located south of 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue. However, citizens opposed to further annexation formed the North Glenn Civic Association and fought Thornton all the way to the Colorado Supreme Court. After prevailing in their case, the City of North Glenn was voted into existence in early April 1969 and officially incorporated on the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month. Thornton

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Moreland Candelario, *Images of America: Northglenn*, p. 7; Harman, O'Donnell and Henninger Associates, Inc. (HOH) Architectural Records, WH860, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

<sup>17</sup> Candelario, *Images of America: Northglenn*, p. 7 and 13; "Perl-Mack Enterprises Inc.," Builders of Colorado, Biographical Sketch, History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; "10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Denver's Own Home Builder!," *Rocky Mountain News*, 24 February 1962, p. 16A.

<sup>18</sup> Leonard and Noel, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*, p. 362-363; Albin Wagner, *Adams County, Colorado: A Centennial History, 1902-2002*, pp. 141-145; Planning Map of North Glenn, Harman, O'Donnell & Henninger, circa 1960.

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proceeded to annex additional lands surrounding the new municipality, restricting its future growth to eight square miles.<sup>19</sup>

North Glenn also held its first municipal elections in early April 1969 and for a short time the newly installed mayor, city council, clerk and treasurer had to operate without staff or revenue. Local banks provided temporary operating funds and municipal offices were established in the Melody Building near the Northglenn Mall. Perl-Mack donated land for the first municipal building, which was constructed the following year. In 1970, the municipality officially changed its name to Northglenn, finally settling confusion about its name that had persisted since the early 1960s.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Founding of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 1960-62**

Rapid population growth in North Glenn starting in 1959 and extending into the early 1960s included the arrival of hundreds of young families looking for a sense of community. Residents of the new subdivisions founded a variety of non-profit organizations, including places of worship. On 27 November 1960, more than 100 people gathered in the Thornton Elementary School to attend a Lutheran service led by Reverend Robert D. Beard, a recent graduate of the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary. This launched the Lutheran mission of North Glenn, associated with the Rocky Mountain Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America. Those in attendance chose the name St. Stephen's for the parish. Formal organization occurred on 8 April 1961 at a meeting held to vote for incorporation, adopt a name and elect a governing board of directors. Reverend Beard served as the church's first president and pastor. The charter membership of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church included more than 150 adults and children. This number soon grew to more than 200.<sup>21</sup>

In June 1961, the executive committee of the Rocky Mountain Synod passed a resolution conveying property to St. Stephen's Church. Located in Lot 15, Block 40 of the North Glenn Second Filing and commonly known as 10950 Pearl Way, this was a three-bedroom residence built in 1960. The house, which remains there today, sat in the developing Perl-Mack neighborhood west of Washington Street a few blocks south of 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue. From 1961 to 1964, it served as St. Stephen's office and as the parsonage until 1969. In August 1961, St. Stephen's signed a promissory note to the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, agreeing to payments on a \$6,800 loan from the parent organization. The Pearl Way property was used as collateral. Exactly what the borrowed funds were used for is uncertain. However, around that time the church was beginning to consider erecting a house of worship in North Glenn. That same month, the Rocky Mountain Synod transferred the house to St. Stephen's for a token fee of ten dollars.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Candelario, *Images of America: Northglenn*, pp. 7 and 23-25.

<sup>20</sup> Leonard and Noel, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*, p. 362-363; History of Northglenn, City of Northglenn Website, Located at [www.northglenn.org](http://www.northglenn.org); Candelario, *Images of America: Northglenn*, p. 27; Since the early 1960s, the new community was variously referred to in newspaper advertisements and articles as both North Glenn and Northglenn.

<sup>21</sup> "First Services at North Glenn," City of Northglenn Files, 27 November 1960; Affidavit of Incorporation, United Lutheran Mission Church in Northglenn, Colorado, 19 June 1961; "Northglenn Lutherans Plan Drive," *Denver Post*, 24 February 1962, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Resolution, Executive Committee of the Rocky Mountain Synod, United Lutheran Church in America, Authorizing Conveyance of the Property at Lot 15, Block 40, North Glenn Second Filing to St. Stephen's Church, 27 June 1961; Indenture, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church and Adams County Public Trustee, 1 August 1961; Warranty Deed, Rocky Mountain Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 17 August 1961.

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St. Stephen's launched its building campaign in early 1962, announcing that the effort would be guided by Wilbur W. Manke of Salem, Oregon. Manke served as fundraising director with the Lutheran Laymen's Movement for Stewardship of the United Lutheran Church in America. By that time, it had been determined that land would be acquired on North Huron Street, which was still a two-lane country road surrounded by open pasture and crop fields watered by the Tuck Lateral Canal. In June 1962, Perl-Mack owners Perlmutter, Primack and Morrison signed a warranty deed transferring the vacant property known as Lot 1, Block 48 in the North Glenn Fifth Filing to St. Stephen's Church for just ten dollars. Conditions were placed upon the property by Perl-Mack, requiring that any building erected there be of masonry construction and that the site be used solely for church and/or parochial school purposes. The company also reserved the right to approve building plans to ensure its harmony with surrounding developments.<sup>23</sup>

### **St. Stephen's Finds its Architect: Charles A. Haertling**

Plans were needed for the new church and in 1962 St. Stephen's reached out to a young Boulder architect by the name of Charles Allan Haertling. Born in Saint Genevieve, Missouri in 1928, Haertling served in the US Navy from 1946-48. Initially assigned to the USS Samar, a repair ship in the Pacific, he then attended the Naval Academy Prep School in Bainbridge, Maryland. Aptitude tests administered by the Navy directed him toward a career in architecture. After being discharged, Haertling enrolled in Washington University in St. Louis on the GI Bill and graduated in 1952 with an architecture degree. The following year he moved to Boulder, where he secured a job with the firm of James M. Hunter & Associates, likely as a draftsman. Hunter had been in Boulder since 1936 and during the post-World War II era became known for his Modernist institutional planning and design projects at Colorado A&M (now Colorado State University) in Fort Collins, Fort Lewis College in Durango, and Regis College in Denver. He also designed numerous Modernist residential, commercial, educational and civic buildings in Boulder. Many of these projects, which typically made use of locally quarried flagstone, are celebrated today by historians and architectural enthusiasts.<sup>24</sup>

Charles Haertling cut his architectural teeth in James Hunter's office until 1957, when he was drawn to another opportunity. That year, he moved to the firm of architect Tician Papachristou, who had left Hunter's employ in 1956 to strike out on his own. Both men were in their late twenties and seeking to make a mark in the world of architecture. Haertling became Papachristou's partner and they maintained offices in both Denver and Boulder. A native of Greece, Papachristou quickly developed a reputation for his unique residential designs featuring the use of concrete, cinder blocks, glass and wood, the very same materials that drew Haertling's interest. Both men taught at the University of Colorado's School of Architecture in Boulder between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s. Their collaboration lasted until 1959, when Haertling opened his own solo architectural practice. Papachristou later recalled that his early work in Boulder was sometimes mistaken for Haertling's as both men pushed the envelope of creative modern architecture. However, his impression was that

<sup>23</sup> "Northglenn Lutherans Plan Drive," *Denver Post*, 24 February 1962, p. 6; Site Photograph, City of Northglenn Files, Circa 1962; Warranty Deed, Jordon Perlmutter, Samuel Primack and William J. Morrison to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 20 June 1962.

<sup>24</sup> Joel Haertling, Biography of Charles A. Haertling, Unpublished Manuscript, 1995; *The Cruise*, Bainbridge, MD: Annual of the United States Naval School, Academy and College Preparatory, 1948; Boulder, Colorado City Directories, Listings for Charles A. Haertling, 1955-1960; "James M. Hunter," Architects of Colorado, Biographical Sketch, History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation; James M. Hunter Biography, James M. Hunter Collection, Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.

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Haertling's designs were "even more unusual and imaginative" than his own, a tribute to his former colleague's creativity.<sup>25</sup>

Sometime between 1957 and 1959, Haertling expressed his keen interest in church projects in an undated marketing letter he drafted to attract new clients. This was printed on the stationery of Papachristou and Haertling, Associated Architects:

Perhaps you don't receive letters from strange architects very often, particularly when you didn't solicit it, but since our firm is interested in ecclesiastic architecture we thought that it might be worthwhile if we could use this method of introducing ourselves to you.

We are a young and enthusiastic firm, anxious to exert ourselves to the utmost, and anxious to build so that we may influence the worshipful atmosphere of our churches to be an honest expression of that church's feeling about its God. I might add that this is not necessarily a function of budget, for even small budgets have the sparkle of challenge.

Both of us are registered architects and we have a large background of experience. I am a graduate of the School of Architecture at Washington University, St. Louis, and my associate a master's degree graduate of Princeton.

Perhaps I am not writing this letter at the opportune time, but in the event that you foresee something in the future, I would like to take this time to extend our wish that you call upon us for any further discussion, possibly an interview, or even an illustrated talk to your group about our feelings and experience with church architecture.<sup>26</sup>

This letter could have drawn the interest of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. However, what may have also led church leaders to the young and enthusiastic architect from Boulder was an article published in the 6 February 1962 edition of *The Lutheran Witness*, the official organ of the Lutheran Church's Missouri Synod. Titled "Architect with a Designing Ministry," the article focused upon Haertling's architectural practice and philosophy. As an active Lutheran, the architect was sensitive not only to the practical and spiritual needs of his clients, but also to exploring the philosophical and theological sources of his design inspiration and to the higher calling involved in architectural work. Haertling stated that "Though I deal in buildings, I try not to forget that what really matters is not things, not even working creatively with things, but people – man, God's creation. Often, I point to the perfect creation of God as the ultimate in form achievement: the thin but strong eggshell, the center-supported tree, the cantilevered lily leaf, the economy expressed in the molecular structure of elements, or the exquisite order in arrangement of flower to supporting stem."<sup>27</sup>

By the time the article was published, Haertling had already completed projects at a small number of churches in Colorado. These included the Friends (Quaker) Meeting House at 1825 Upland Ave. in Boulder, which featured curved stuccoed walls, large windows with arcing sills, and deep curved eaves. Zion Lutheran Church at 1400 Skeel St. in Brighton was dominated by a large flattened A-

<sup>25</sup> Joel Haertling, Biography of Charles A. Haertling, 1995; Boulder and Denver, Colorado City Directories, Listings for Charles A. Haertling and Tician Papachristou, 1959-1960; "Architect Left His Mark on Boulder," *Boulder Daily Camera*, 19 October 2012; "Boulder Modernists – Tician Papachristou," Blog Authored by Mark Gerwing of M. Gerwing Architects, Boulder, Colorado, Posted 8 August 2013

<sup>26</sup> Marketing Letter Drafted by Charles A. Haertling to Attract Church Projects, Tician Papachristou and Charles A. Haertling, Associated Architects, Collection of Joel Haertling, Circa 1957-1959.

<sup>27</sup> "Architect with a Designing Ministry," *The Lutheran Witness*, 6 February 1962, p. 17.

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frame sanctuary surrounded by flat-roof wings. During that same period, Haertling designed an education wing for the Collegiate Gothic Our Savior's Lutheran Church (5DV8172) at 915 E. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Denver that featured brick walls, deep cantilevered eaves, a raised connector resting upon inverted pyramidal piers, and brick towers with folded crown-shaped roofs. These Modernist buildings reflected the creative design work that Haertling had also been employing on residential projects throughout this period.<sup>28</sup>

In his hometown of Boulder, Charles Haertling had been busy designing houses in the late 1950s and early 1960s that reflected his divergence from the traditional styles of the past in favor of creating new forms of architecture that employed modern materials and designs that pushed the envelope of what the community was used to seeing. During the design phase, he spent much time studying each site and interviewing his clients. This allowed each project to reflect its natural setting as well as the owners' tastes and personalities. Sited both in town and on the sloped terrain of the foothills above, Haertling's houses were designed to take in the tremendous views of the city, sky, mountains and plains. Extensive use of large fixed windows brought blue sky and natural light into interior spaces, and Haertling's houses became known as organic creations connecting the indoors with the outdoors. While wood remained an important building material and decorative feature, the architect made extensive use of modern materials such as concrete, steel and glass. These were turned into stylized shapes the architect drew from nature, including flowers, mushrooms, leaves and rock formations. Haertling's early houses served as laboratories for his creative evolution, playing with elements that would soon make their way into his design for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church.

Haertling's first solo residential project occurred in 1957-58 and involved an addition creating a combined kitchen and dining room along with a living room for the 1923 Wheat House at 1515 Baseline Rd. He designed an extension of the original house that connected its interior with the surrounding yard, complete with a view of the sky and Flatirons rock formations above the city. The dining room and kitchen were placed into a minimally-framed elevated rectangular space with a flat roof and walls of floor-to-ceiling glass. This connected with a cube-shaped living room featuring walls of stacked white cube-shaped concrete blocks and windows of custom-cut glass panes secured with minimal metal framing or no framing at all (these were simply caulked at the joints). The cantilevered and angular roof above the living room formed an elongated W. From both inside and out, the roof appeared to be floating and resting impossibly upon the glass window panes when in fact it sat on a small number of concrete block piers subtly integrated into the walls.<sup>29</sup>

The Noble House (5BL.8269), built in 1958 at 650 Pennsylvania Avenue, was Haertling's first big residential project, one that firmly launched his reputation as a creative designer of Modernist buildings and led to additional commissions. Working with a budget of \$16,000, he designed a fourteen-sided house with a thin folded-plate roof of stylized leaves composed of sixteen identical panels. Essentially two connected pyramids, he referred to the house as a wigwam. Looking more like a spaceship than a house, Boulder residents gathered to watch the building being constructed.

<sup>28</sup> "Architect with a Designing Ministry," *The Lutheran Witness*, 6 February 1962, p. 17; "Boulder Meeting History," Boulder Friends Meeting, [www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.boulderfriendsmeeting.org), May 2010; Our Savior's Lutheran Church (5DV.8172), Denver, Colorado, Architectural Survey Site Form, 2001; Zion Lutheran Church, Brighton, CO, Photos Located at [www.brightonzlc.org](http://www.brightonzlc.org).

<sup>29</sup> Lisa Marshall, "The Art of Haertling," *Kitsap Sun* (Bremerton, WA), 9 October 2004; *A Guide to the City of Boulder's Structure of Merit Program*, City of Boulder Planning Office. Note: According to Haertling's sons, interviewed for the 2004 newspaper article in the *Kitsap Sun*, their father had a penchant for adding features to buildings that reflected something about their owners. For the Wheat House, he created a roofline shaped from the first letter of the owner's last name.

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On the interior, the angled rooflines formed the high angular ceiling ornamented with wood beams that appeared like the veins on the undersides of leaves. Even the front door was angled along the top and the windows and skylights were triangular.<sup>30</sup>

Erected in 1960, the Knudsen House (5BL.8250) at 420 Christmas Tree Drive was designed as a symmetrical angular building constructed on a sloped site filled with boulders and trees. It featured strong horizontal lines with extensive brickwork along with cantilevered rooms, bands of fixed ribbon windows, and flat roofs with overhanging eaves. This was Haertling's first residential project reflecting his interest and skill working with the essential forms of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School architecture.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the Volsky House (5BL.8275) was built in 1964 at 711 Willowbrook Road. Sited on a steep hillside, the building featured a circular plan with a tall curved tower that rose like the prow of a ship. This design provided a 360-degree view of the mountains, city and plains. Buried partly into the hillside, light wells were employed to bring natural illumination to the rear rooms. A central interior atrium complete with a live tree and suspension bridge served as a shortcut between the perimeter rooms. The house was constructed of steel and concrete clad in white stucco. Viewing the unusual design as an assault to their concept of what a residence should look like and fearful that it would drive down property values, a dozen neighbors petitioned the city to bring construction to a halt. However, the project was completed and in 1966 *Life Magazine* printed a feature article on the house. Other media outlets in the United States and Europe hailed the building as a unique achievement in modern architecture.<sup>32</sup>

By 1962, when he was still in his mid-thirties, Charles Haertling was ready to apply his architectural experience and skills to a new project, a church that would reflect his personal creativity and philosophy of ecclesiastical architecture, a building that would push the envelope of mid-century Neo-Expressionist design yet still meet the needs of his client. The building soon to emerge on raw land in the youthful and developing community of North Glenn would prove to be one of his most challenging, inspired and remarkable projects.

### **Haertling Designs a Church for St. Stephen's, 1962-63**

Haertling began work on the St. Stephen's Lutheran Church project by studying how the vacant property in North Glenn could be developed. In 1962, he ran through several drafts of site plans and building concepts in the form of sketches and preliminary drawings. Site planning involved the questions of building placement, parking and circulation on the constrained triangular-shaped lot. Initially he considered a circle drive with twenty parking spaces in the northern area of the site, along with ten more spaces to the east along the ditch. This changed to a V-shaped drive and parking lot that would accommodate thirty-six cars, with twenty-four more spaces to the east. Both of these

<sup>30</sup> Marshall, "The Art of Haertling," *Kitsap Sun* (Bremerton, WA), 9 October 2004; *A Guide to the City of Boulder's Structure of Merit Program*, City of Boulder Planning Office.

<sup>31</sup> *A Guide to the City of Boulder's Structure of Merit Program*, City of Boulder Planning Office.

<sup>32</sup> "Mid-Century Architecture: Charles Haertling's Volsky Residence, Boulder, Colorado," Located at [www.mcarch.wordpress.com](http://www.mcarch.wordpress.com), 13 January 2015.

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were to be accessed from Kennedy Drive and the western area of the property along Huron Street would remain vacant for the time being.<sup>33</sup>

During the early 1960s, the Lutheran Church's Rocky Mountain Synod expressed a preference for the staged development of church complexes rather than single multi-purpose buildings as in the past. Considering this idea and studying the triangular property, Haertling came up with a geometric plan for the construction of a triangular building complex that mimicked the site's overall shape. Three identical sculptural buildings would be placed at the complex's corners and these would be connected to one another in the middle by a lower triangular flat-roof building centered around a triangular courtyard. In other words, the design involved triangles within triangles. Each of the primary buildings would have a unique function meeting the church's three-part goal of worship, education and fellowship. One would house the sanctuary, another the school, and the third would be occupied by a social hall. The central connector was to contain classrooms, offices and restrooms.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout this period of preliminary design, Haertling had also been playing with the shape of his three primary buildings. Drawn toward organic concepts that were as much sculptural as they were functional, he began to doodle and then sketch his ideas, which evolved through several iterations. Haertling finally settled upon a diamond-shaped floorplan with stucco-clad concrete block walls, fixed windows of various shapes atop the walls, and a swooping roof that looked like an inverted lily. While the roof lines were initially somewhat flat and in longitudinal section appeared similar to praying hands, over time Haertling increased their arc to the point that they became swooping catenary arches, providing the building with its dramatic flower-like appearance. The lily, endowed with symbolism dating back centuries, was an appropriate use for a church due to its association with virtue, purity, humility and devotion. Roof surfaces were to be painted white inside and out, and the white lily was particularly associated with Easter and the Virgin Mary.<sup>35</sup>

Haertling's plans called for the sculptural roof surface, constructed of reinforced thin-shell concrete, to drape over four massive curved concrete beams that would rest against one another, open to view above the sanctuary. From there they would project outward to rest upon four pyramidal piers located outside the building footprint, one at each corner of the building. The beams would take the form of catenary curves, drawing frequent comparisons to giant elephant tusks. This concept allowed the beams to pierce the upper windows and make the roof appear to be floating above the building, adding a touch of mystery to the design. At the center above the sanctuary, the roofline would rise to terminate in a tall slender concrete spire reminiscent of the lily stem pointing toward the heavens.<sup>36</sup>

Due to the church's financial constraints, the first building to be erected would be in the northeast area of the property. For the time being, this would have to serve all of the congregation's needs until the rest of the complex could be developed. To achieve this goal, Haertling designed the building to include classrooms, offices and other spaces around the perimeter of a central sanctuary.

<sup>33</sup> Sketches, Drawings and Architectural Plans, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63; Photographs of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

<sup>34</sup> "North Glenn Church Planned in Stages," *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, 14 November 1962; Sketches, Drawings and Architectural Plans, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

<sup>35</sup> Sketches, Drawings and Architectural Plans, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

<sup>36</sup> Sketches, Drawings and Architectural Plans, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

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Entries would be on the east and west, with the west side serving as the main entrance. The sanctuary was to be in-the-round, with a centered concrete altar surrounded on three sides by seating for 144 worshipers. The fourth side would have a raised concrete pulpit against the sanctuary's front wall. Tall wood-paneled walls topped with glass would enclose the sanctuary from the rest of the building. To the north, the classrooms and kitchen were to be divided by folding walls that could be retracted to create an open space for larger social events. The classrooms would accommodate 100 children, with the social space handling around 200. Hallways placed just outside the sanctuary provided for circulation around the interior without having to pass through the worship space.<sup>37</sup>

Among Haertling's documents for St. Stephen's is a 1958 article from *Civil Engineering* titled "Cable-Suspended Roof for Yale Hockey Rink." This discussed the Neo-Expressionist David S. Ingalls Hockey Rink (listed Connecticut State Register of Historic Places, ca. 2002), conceived by prominent industrial designer and architect Eero Saarinen. Saarinen designed a swooping thin-shell roof constructed with wood planks, reinforced concrete and pre-tensioned catenary cables. As an athletic arena containing an ice rink and seating for 3,000 fans, the interior could have no vertical supports that might block views and engineering became a critical component of the project. Although Haertling's church project in North Glenn involved a much smaller building, his radical roof design presented similar challenges and he realized that an experienced engineer was needed.<sup>38</sup>

Charles Haertling found his engineer in Denver's Ib Falk Jorgensen. Born in Denmark in 1922, Jorgensen served in the Danish underground during World War II and then moved to the United States. In Colorado, he launched a civil engineering consulting practice and was soon known for his expertise in reinforced concrete structures. Although much of his work involved the design of structures such as massive concrete water tanks, he provided the critical expertise needed to engineer the loads for the St. Stephen's project. Besides the church, the only other building he is currently known for is the Lory Student Center Theater on the campus of Colorado State University in Fort Collins (5LR.9987), built in 1962 and designed by James M. Hunter. The concrete-walled theater features a thin-shell catenary roof with massive V-shaped supports along the sides. A study of Jorgensen's complete body of work, which may reveal additional building projects, along with his impact upon twentieth-century engineering in Colorado, is a topic that remains to be completed.<sup>39</sup>

### **St. Stephen's Rises from the Countryside, 1963-64**

On 20 January 1963, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church held its annual congregational dinner. Following elections for the church council, the group reviewed and approved Charles Haertling's preliminary drawings. The members of the building committee were also announced. Three months later, the church distributed a newsletter informing the membership of progress on the project. By that time, the plans had advanced and Haertling was busy preparing a full set of construction drawings. The newsletter revealed that the church had hoped to have a copper spire atop the building. However, this proved impractical and instead the cap would be fabricated of concrete.

<sup>37</sup> "North Glenn Church Planned in Stages," *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, 14 November 1962; Sketches, Drawings and Architectural Plans, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

<sup>38</sup> "Cable-Suspended Roof for Yale Hockey Rink," *Civil Engineering*, September 1958, p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> "Ib Falk Jorgensen," *Denver Post*, Obituary, 15 September 2005.

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Looking ahead to the coming months, the groundbreaking was scheduled for June, with project completion anticipated to take place in December.<sup>40</sup>

In May, the church received approval from the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America to proceed with its building plans. The Board was reportedly so pleased with the design for the entire site that no requests were made for any changes. It was also announced that the total amount of financing approved for the project was \$110,800. However, how much of this would come from the Board and how much from the local community was unclear. The church's May newsletter, titled "FLASH! BUILDING PLANS APPROVED!!!," overflowed with excitement about the approval of a paved driveway and parking lot, a full kitchen, partitions between the classrooms, and a sidewalk that would wrap around the building. While the Board appears to have provided funding in the form of loans, the remainder would have to be raised by the church. Every family was asked to increase its pledge by a modest \$1 per week. The newsletter also stated that the church would be hiring the Anderson Construction Company to erect the building.<sup>41</sup>

A groundbreaking ceremony took place at the site on 2 June 1963, led by Rev. Robert Beard and Rev. Dr. Leeland Soker, president of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. Site work began that month and construction continued through the summer and into the fall. By October, the first two of the massive reinforced concrete roof beams had been formed on the ground and raised into place. Then the other two beams were installed. Weighing between 44 and 54 tons each, the process required two heavy-duty cranes operating in coordination with one another, and the beams were eased into place by the construction crew. At the center of the building, the ends of the beams rested against one another, supported from below by a large temporary cube-shaped crib that had been constructed of wood or steel. Toward their outer ends, each beam was mounted atop a single pyramidal pier. Once all four were in place and secured, the central cribbing was removed and the massive beams seemed to float in air, rising high above the sanctuary floor.<sup>42</sup>

The entire construction process was a marvel of architecture, engineering and construction, and many people stopped by to gaze at what was being done on the site. For some time before the walls and roof were finished, it looked as if the project were simply to erect a massive sculpture of elephant tusks. In November 1963, St. Stephen's borrowed \$50,000 from the Board of American Missions of the Lutheran Church in America using the parsonage on Pearl Way as collateral. With construction well underway and expenses mounting, the loan likely covered some of the costs of the project.<sup>43</sup>

By January 1964, the north side was framed and additional work had started on the south. This referred to the concrete block walls that when finished would be stuccoed. However, the roof needed to be completed before work could continue on the framing and interior finishes. The pace of roof work depended upon weather conditions since it was to be constructed of 2½"-thick concrete. By the middle of January, the latticework of catenary cables had been installed and the roof was soon

<sup>40</sup> "St. Stephen's Lutheran Church...", *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, 31 January 1963; Newsletter, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, April 1963.

<sup>41</sup> Newsletter, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, May 1963.

<sup>42</sup> "Lutheran Church to Mark Two Expansions Sunday," *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, 1 June 1963; "Ground Breaking Ceremonies Held June 2<sup>nd</sup>," *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, 6 June 1963; "Progress on the church building...", *Denver Post or Rocky Mountain News*, October 1963; Photographs of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Northglenn, CO, 1962-63.

<sup>43</sup> Deed of Trust, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church to the Adams County Public Trustee on Behalf of the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, 22 November 1963.

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completed. Throughout all of this, the church was holding services and Sunday classes at Hulstrom Elementary School in North Glenn. That same month, the *Denver Post* printed an article about the project, reporting that the cost of the building would be \$68,678 and that its construction was supervised by the Tri-L Construction Company of Denver, about which little is known. For some reason, the church was no longer working with Anderson Construction.<sup>44</sup>

Progress appears to have been hampered by the fact that between April 1964 and February 1965, St. Stephen's was served with seven liens filed by suppliers and subcontractors. The lien documents revealed the names of firms associated with the project and confirmed that Tri-L Construction was in fact the general contractor. Among the suppliers and subcontractors were the following: Less Osborne Masonry Ltd., Pre-Mix Concrete Company, Rio Grande Company (building materials), State Lathing Company, C-B Construction and Industrial Maintenance, The Englewood Lumber Company and Litehouse Electric. In October 1964, the church secured a loan of \$30,000 from the Colorado National Bank of Denver, funds that were likely put into the building project and that may have helped release the almost \$6,000 in liens. Despite the financial difficulties, the church was completed and used for the first time on 11 October 1964, when a service was held in the new sanctuary.<sup>45</sup>

### St. Stephen's Since Construction, 1965-Present

Although development of the area west of Interstate 25 continued through the 1960s and into the 1970s, the swooping church roof remained visible from the highway and surrounding lands for some time. By 1967, when the Northglenn Mall was under construction along 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the area around the church was still partially occupied by vacant fields although housing subdivisions had emerged to the northeast and southwest. Before long, the building was completely surrounded by houses, a school, office buildings, parking lots and other development as Perl-Mack's plans for North Glenn matured. St. Stephen's Lutheran Church was never intended to sit there alone.

Because of its unique and dramatic design, St. Stephen's attracted attention while it was under construction and that attention continued for years afterwards. In January 1965, the *Rocky Mountain Lutheran* featured the church on the front cover of its monthly newsletter, which focused upon some of the new architectural styles emerging throughout the region. The following month, the *Denver Post* printed a photograph of St. Stephen's that accompanied an article on modern ecclesiastical design. This discussed the fact that area churches and synagogues were working to refocus congregants toward active participation in services rather than passive spectatorship. In some new building projects, traditional layout and architectural form were being abandoned in favor of sanctuaries in-the-round that centered upon the altars and pulpits. St. Stephen's Lutheran Church fit this pattern and was described by the newspaper as a "stylized upside-down Easter Lily." Starting in the 1970s, art and architecture critics were already discussing the building and debating its merits.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> "St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Building Report," *Denver Post* or *Rocky Mountain News*, 20 January 1964; "Tusk' Beams Support Roof," *Denver Post*, 22 January 1964.

<sup>45</sup> Statements of Liens, Title Records for Lot 1, Block 48, North Glenn Fifth Filing, Adams County Clerk & Recorder, April 1964 to February 1965; Deed of Trust, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church to the Adams County Public Trustee on Behalf of the Colorado National Bank of Denver, 6 October 1964; "New Congregations and Buildings Mark Synod Growth," *The Rocky Mountain Lutheran*, Rocky Mountain Synod, Lutheran Church in America, January 1965.

<sup>46</sup> "New Congregations and Buildings Mark Synod Growth," *The Rocky Mountain Lutheran*, Rocky Mountain Synod, Lutheran Church in America, January 1965; "'Participation' is Key to Design," *Denver Post*, 20 February 1965.

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Over the decades since the building was completed, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church has continued to be used for ecclesiastical purposes. The congregation never managed to build out the entire complex that Haertling envisioned for the site and instead got by with the single building. The rest of the property was left vacant or used for parking. In 2001, the northwest corner of the lot close to the intersection of Huron and Kennedy was developed with a modern building that was also designated St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. At that time, a north-south driveway and paved parking lot were also installed. However, no changes were made to the original building. After the St. Stephen's congregation moved into its new facility, the historic church was leased to a smaller congregation, which remains there today.

His church project done, Charles Haertling went on to design an array of Modernist and Neo-Expressionist houses, most of them constructed in the Boulder area and each one completely unique. He died suddenly in 1984 in his mid-fifties, ending a remarkable career in architecture. Within a few years after his death, the historic preservation community in Colorado began to recognize and even celebrate Haertling's work as masterpieces of mid-century architecture. That sense of appreciation has only increased over the years and as recently as October 2018, hundreds of architecture aficionados flocked to a tour of six of his residential projects in Boulder. St. Stephen's also continues to be celebrated as awareness of Haertling's notable career and architectural masterpieces has only increased. The building appears regularly in newspaper and magazine articles, as well as on numerous websites that focus upon the architect and the subject of mid-century architecture.

Viewed today as a remarkable example of Neo-Expressionist architecture, St. Stephen's merited an entire chapter in Anat Geva's scholarly work, published in early 2019 and titled *Modernism and American Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Sacred Architecture*. Written by Heather Seneff, director of the Visual Media Center in the School of Art and Art History at Denver University, the chapter focuses upon Haertling and "the context of the exuberant organic modernist architecture of St. Stephen's." Seneff communicated with members of the congregation, concluding that from their perspective, Haertling's project was successful. One longtime member reported that "most everyone liked [the building] and felt as though we were part of the wave of the future."<sup>47</sup>

With its sculptural roof, the church was one of a number of striking buildings erected in the Denver metropolitan area during the 1960s. Seneff found it to be symbolic of "St. Stephen's youthful congregation and Haertling's excitement in the materials and forms of modern architecture." She went on to write that "what resulted was a joyful, extraordinary building that not only catered to the changes in liturgy of the era but also elicits a gasp of surprise in the mundane suburb that surrounds it. The audacity of the architect to defy gravity...was not overreaching hubris but calculated engineering."<sup>48</sup> While some Neo-Expressionist ecclesiastical buildings of the era have been altered or demolished and others abandoned by their original congregations, St. Stephen's is an intact survivor from an era in which post-World War II American prosperity and optimism reined.

<sup>47</sup> Geva, *Modernism and American Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Sacred Architecture*, pp. 113 and 119.

<sup>48</sup> Geva, *Modernism and American Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Sacred Architecture*, pp. 123-127.

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Statement of Lien, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church v. Litehouse Electric, 17 February 1965, Reception #752030.

*A Guide to the City of Boulder's Structure of Merit Program.* City of Boulder Planning Office.

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADAMS, COLORADO

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United States Department of Veterans Affairs, BIRLS Death File, Service Records for Charles A. Haertling, 1946-1948.

United States Federal Census Records, Charles A. Haertling, Ste. Genevieve, MO, 1930.

### **Websites**

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ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### ***Unpublished Materials***

"Biography of Charles A. Haertling." Unpublished Manuscript Prepared by Joel Haertling, 1995.

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"Space for Spiritual Experience." Lecture Notes Prepared by Charles A. Haertling, Undated. From the Collection of Joel Haertling.

"Talk to Sunday School Superintendents." Notes Prepared by Charles A. Haertling, Undated. From the Collection of Joel Haertling.

"Thoughts on Architecture." Notes Prepared by Charles A. Haertling, Undated. From the Collection of Joel Haertling.

### ***Company & Organizational Documents***

Harman, O'Donnell and Henninger Associates, Inc. (HOH) Architectural Records, WH860, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

Marketing Brochure, Charles Haertling Architecture, 1976. From the Collection of Joel Haertling.

Marketing Letter Drafted by Charles A. Haertling to Attract Church Projects, Tician Papachristou and Charles A. Haertling, Associated Architects, Circa 1957-59. From the Collection of Joel Haertling.

Newsletters, St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, April 1963 and May 1963.

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADAMS, COLORADO

Name of Property

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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: **Carnegie Library for Local History, Boulder City of Northglenn, Planning Department**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5AM.3862

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

**UTM References (NAD 83)**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 13 500368 4415842  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The boundaries of the nominated property encompass an area of approximately three-quarters of an acre defined by the legal description of Lot 1, Block 48, Northglenn Fifth Filing (parcel #0171910215005). This corresponds to the NW¼ of the NW¼ of the NW¼ of the SW¼ of Section 10, Township 2 North, Range 68 West. On the north, the property boundary follows the south side of Kennedy Drive. The western boundary runs along the east side of Huron Street. Aligned on a diagonal, the southeast property line that completes the triangle is defined by the earlier northeast-southwest axis of the Tuck Lateral Canal, which originates in the Farmers' High Line Canal. This boundary line runs along the northwest edge of the irrigation structure, which is no longer visible on the surface of the ground (now culverted through this area, the canal daylight to the northeast and southwest of the property on the other side of Kennedy Drive and Huron Street). In other words, the canal is outside the boundaries of the nominated property.

**Boundary Justification:** The nominated boundaries for this resource are intended to designate the building within its original triangular property. The church was constructed at this location due to the availability of the vacant triangular lot, which was set aside for ecclesiastical use by developer Perl-Mack in its original master plan for North Glenn. It was expected that the surroundings would fill in over the following years with various property uses, evolving as intended from an agricultural district into a developed suburb. The building was also placed where it sits in accordance with the architect's plans for the entire triangular site. Although the master plan never came to full fruition, it is an important element of the property's history and led to the building's design and placement. Despite the fact that a second non-contributing church has been developed on the property, the original legal description provides a justifiable boundary for the purpose of this nomination.

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADAMS, COLORADO

Name of Property

County and State

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title RON SLADEK, PRESIDENT (for property owner)

organization TATANKA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATES INC.

date 1 FEBRUARY 2019 (revised 3/8/19)

street & number P.O. BOX 1909

telephone 970/221-1095

city or town FORT COLLINS

state CO

zip code 80522

e-mail tatanka@verinet.com

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

street & number 10828 HURON ST.

telephone 970/452-5469

city or town NORTHGLENN

state CO

zip code 80234

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Current Photographs**

Name of Property: St. Stephen's Church

City or Vicinity: Northglenn

County: Adams State: CO

Photographer: Ron Sladek

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 1 View to the southeast showing the roof beams, catenary roof arches, pyramidal supports, and the western main entrance.
- 2 of 7 View to the southwest showing the roof beams, catenary roof arches, pyramidal supports, and the north classroom entrances.
- 3 of 7 View to the northwest showing the roof beams, catenary roof arches, pyramidal supports, and the east entrance.
- 4 of 7 View to the northeast showing the roof beams, catenary roof arches, pyramidal support, and the south entrances.
- 5 of 7 View to the northeast showing the roof beams, catenary roof arches, pyramidal support, and the south and west entrances.
- 6 of 7 View to the northeast showing the interior of the sanctuary.
- 7 of 7 View to the southwest showing the interior of the sanctuary.

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADAMS, COLORADO

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## Historic Plans and Drawings

- HF-1: Preliminary Study for the Triangular Building Site. Showing Three Diamond-Shaped Buildings Connected by a Triangular Building Charles A. Haertling, 1962. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-2: Plot Plan and Preliminary Drawing for the Triangular Building Site Emphasis Upon Building to be Constructed First (Note Small Sketch of Emerging Sculptural Roof Shape) Charles A. Haertling, 1962. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-3: Preliminary Drawing for the First Building to be Constructed Charles A. Haertling, January 1963. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-4: Conceptual Drawing of a Church. Charles A. Haertling, 1961. (Prepared by Unknown Draftsman Named Brokaw) Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-5: Preliminary Conceptual Drawing of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Charles A. Haertling, 1962. (Note Tight Roof Curves Over Entry That Quickly Flatten) Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-6: Sketch of Roof Beams and Pyramidal Supports. Charles A. Haertling, 1962. (Note That Earlier Flattened Roof Has Evolved Into Distinct Catenary Arches) Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-7: Preliminary Drawing of Building Design. Charles A. Haertling, January 1963. (Note Original Concept for Copper-Clad Spire) Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-8: Conceptual Drawing of Eventual Site Build-Out. Charles A. Haertling, 1962. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-9: Construction Plans for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Charles A. Haertling, April 1963. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-10: Construction Plans for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Charles A. Haertling, April 1963. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History
- HF-11: Rendering of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. Charles A. Haertling, Circa 1963-1964. Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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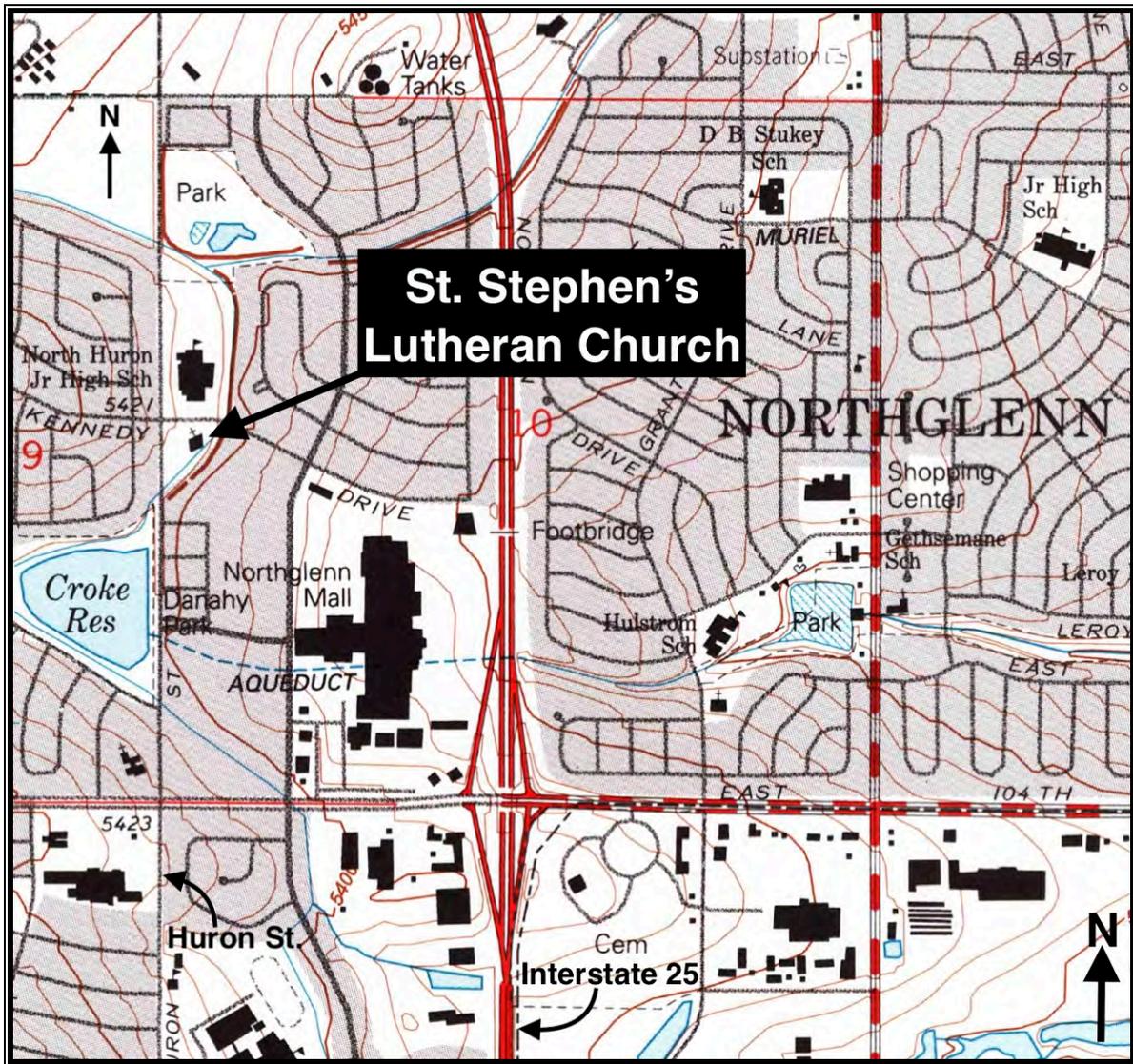
## Historic Photographs

- HP-1: Lifting the First Roof Beam into Place, October 1963 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling).
- HP-2: All Four Roof Beams and Supports in Place, November 1963 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)
- HP-3: Attaching and Tightening the Catenary Cables, January 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)
- HP-4: View of the Roof's Network of Catenary Cables, January 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)
- HP-5: Architect Charles Haertling with Newspaper Reporter, circa March 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)
- HP-6: St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Circa 1964-1965, View to NE (Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History)
- HP-7: St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Circa 1964-1965, View to NW (Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History)
- HP 8: Sanctuary Interior, Circa 1964-1965 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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# Topographic Map

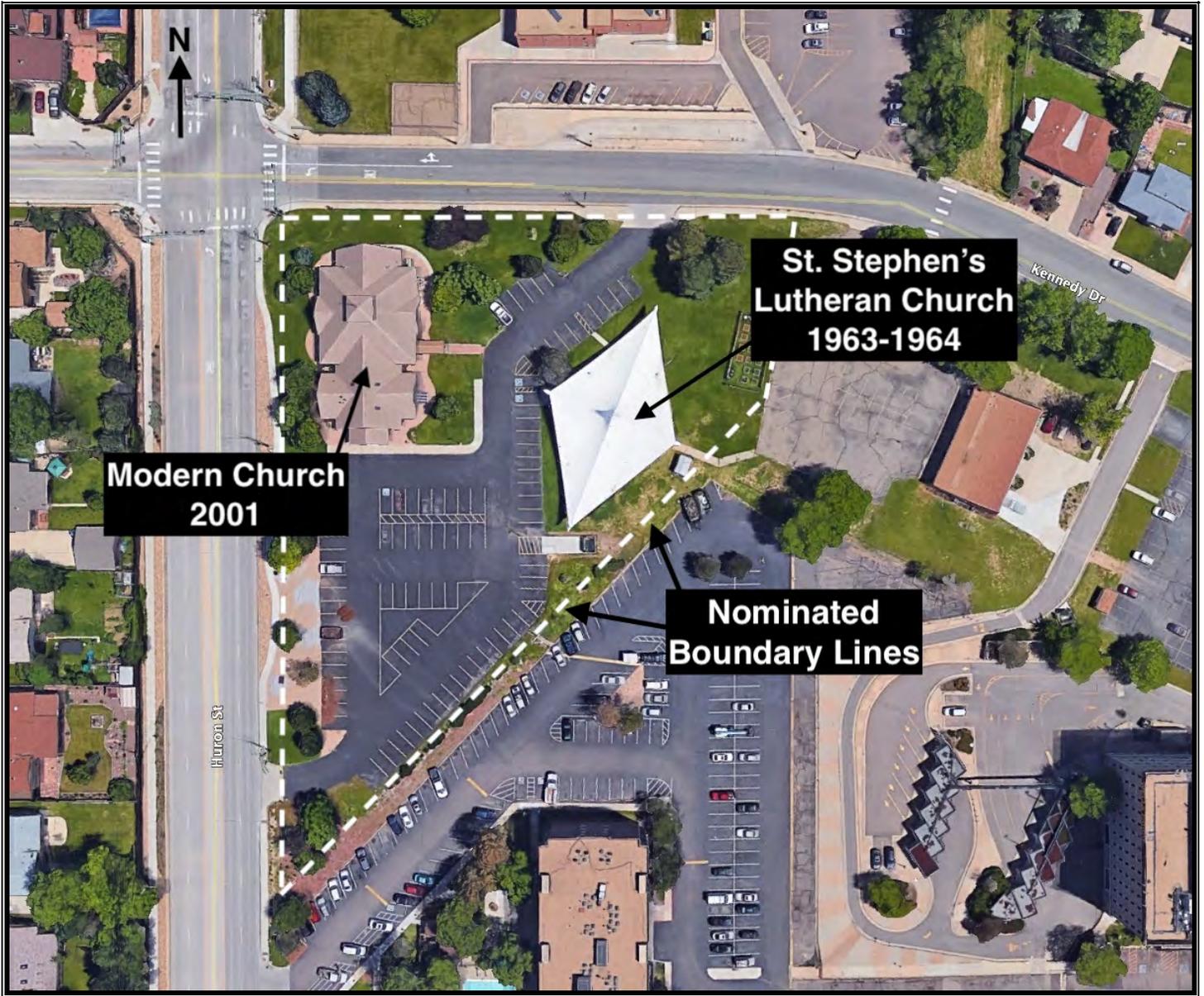


Eastlake 7.5' Topographic Map  
1994

**ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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# Aerial Diagram

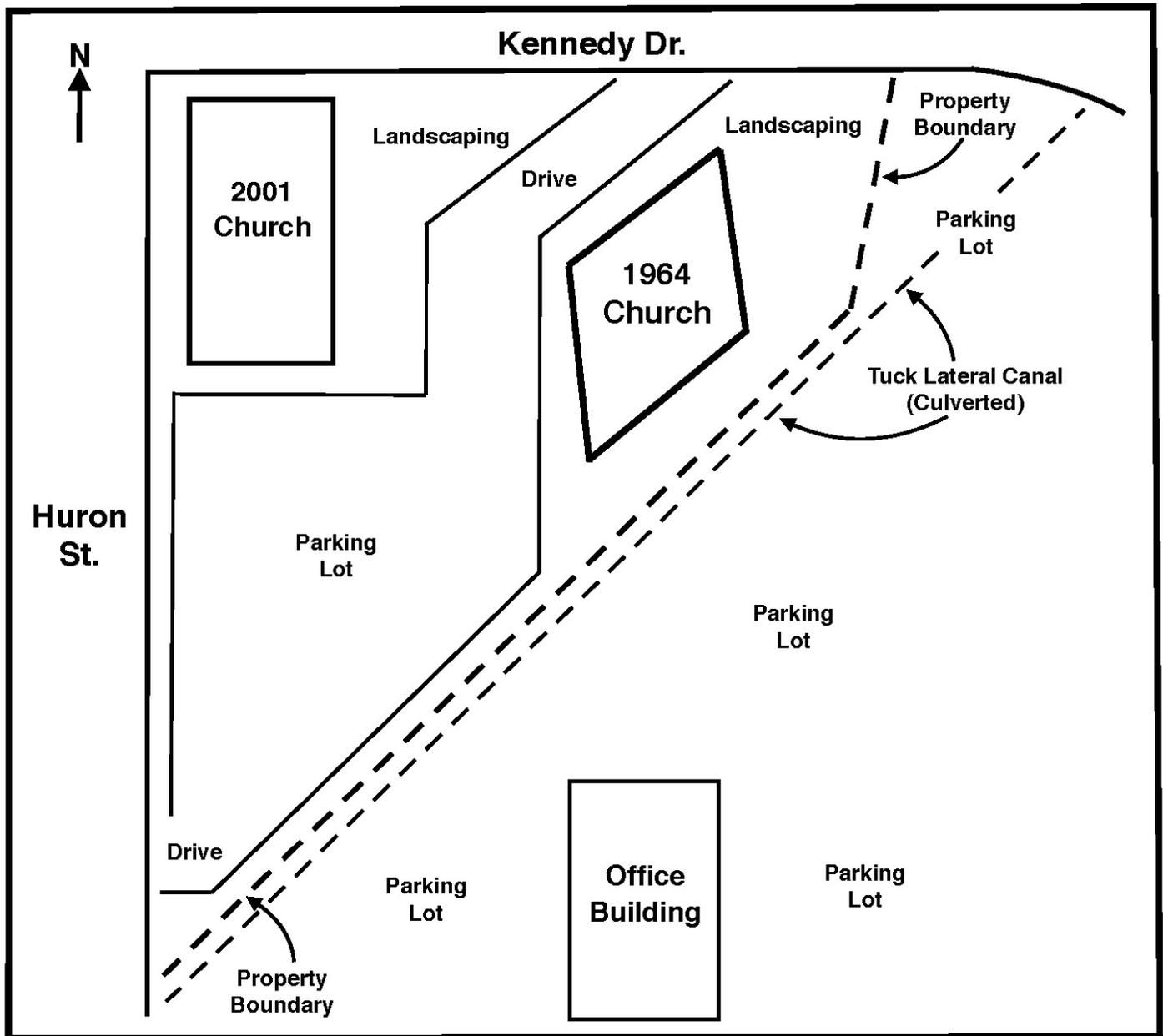


Source: Google Earth, 2018

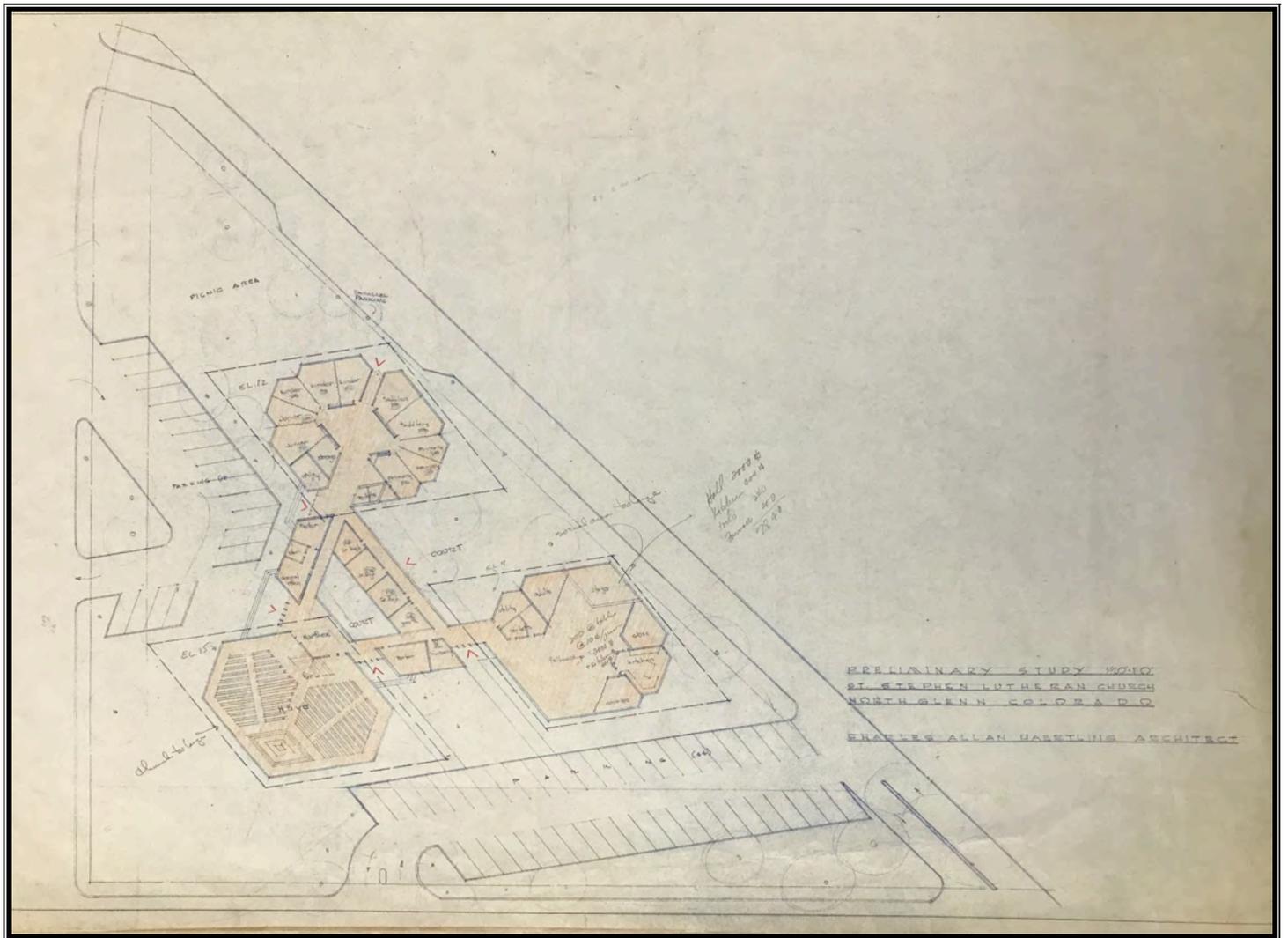
ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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# Site Sketch



# Historic Figures Site Planning



**HF-1: Preliminary Study for the Triangular Building Site  
Showing Three Diamond-Shaped Buildings Connected by a Triangular Building  
Charles A. Haertling, 1962  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

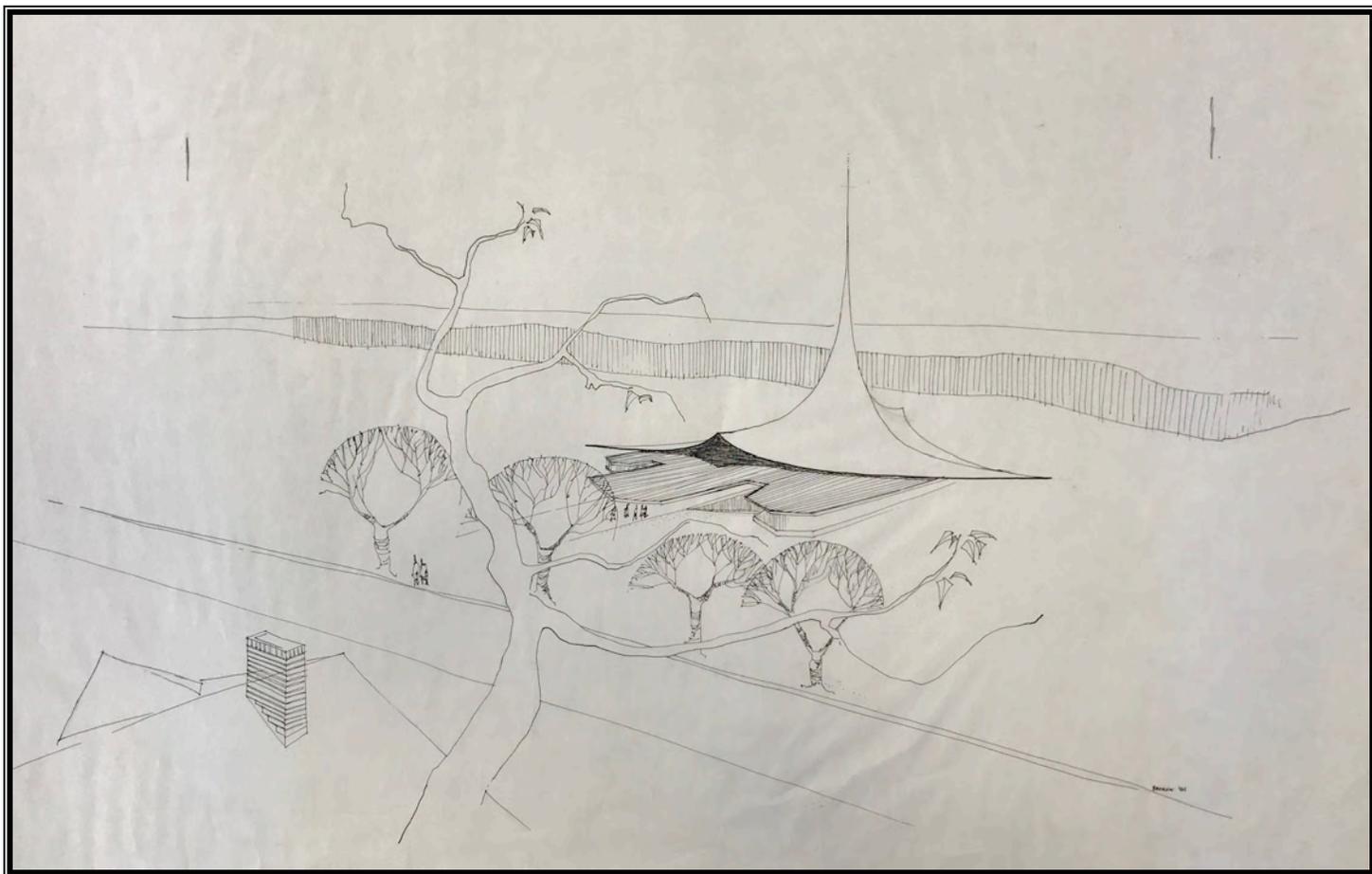




ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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## **Historic Figures** **Evolution of Building Concept**



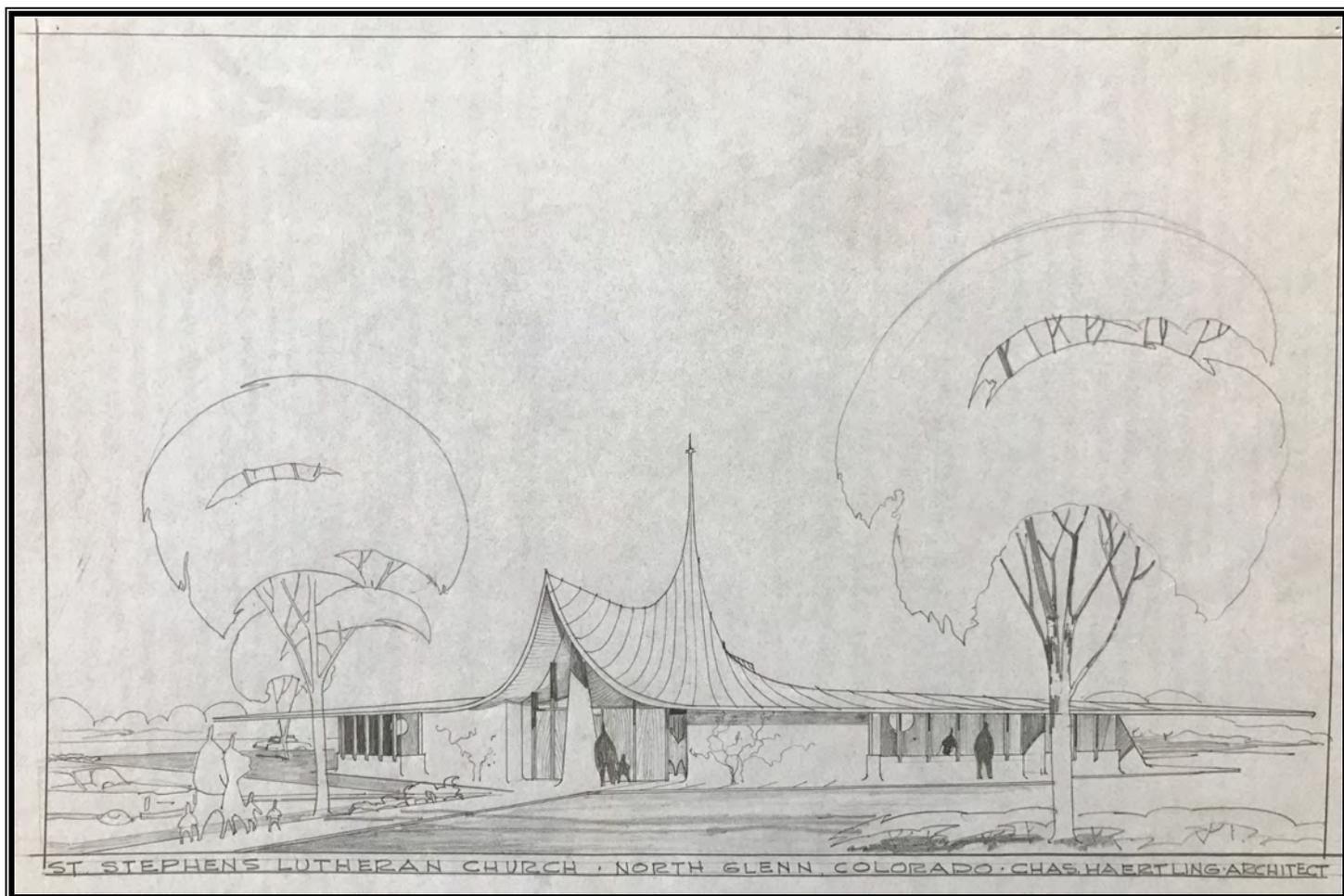
**HF-4: Conceptual Drawing of a Church**  
**Charles A. Haertling, 1961**  
**(Prepared by Unknown Draftsman Named Brokaw)**  
**Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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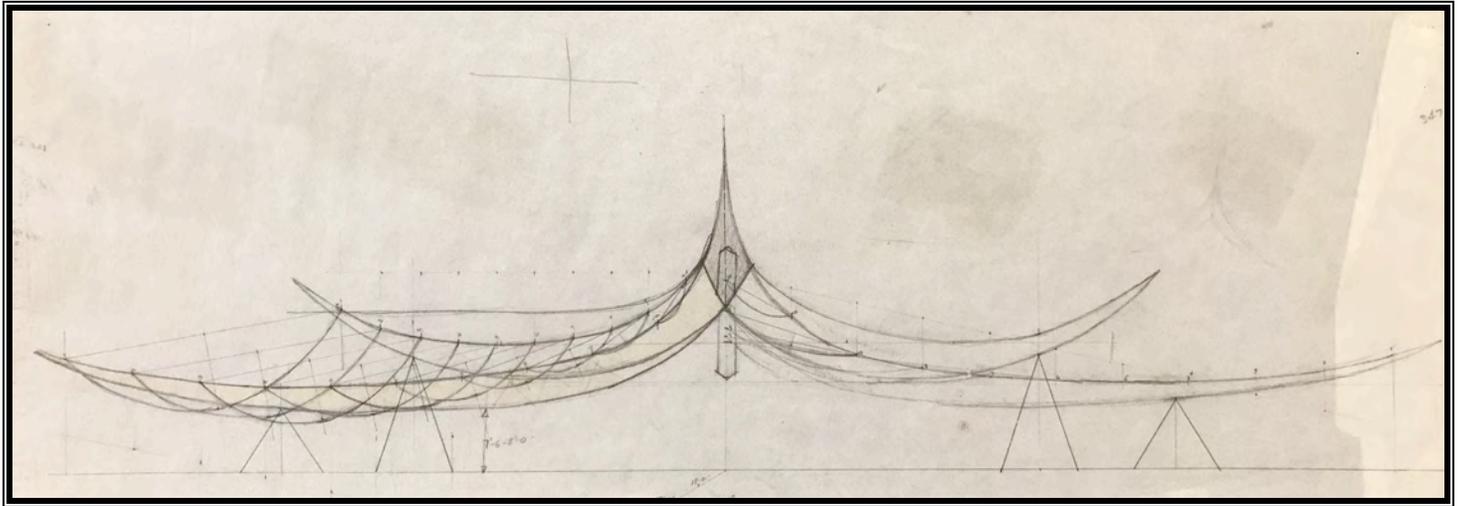
## Historic Figures

### Evolution of Building Concept



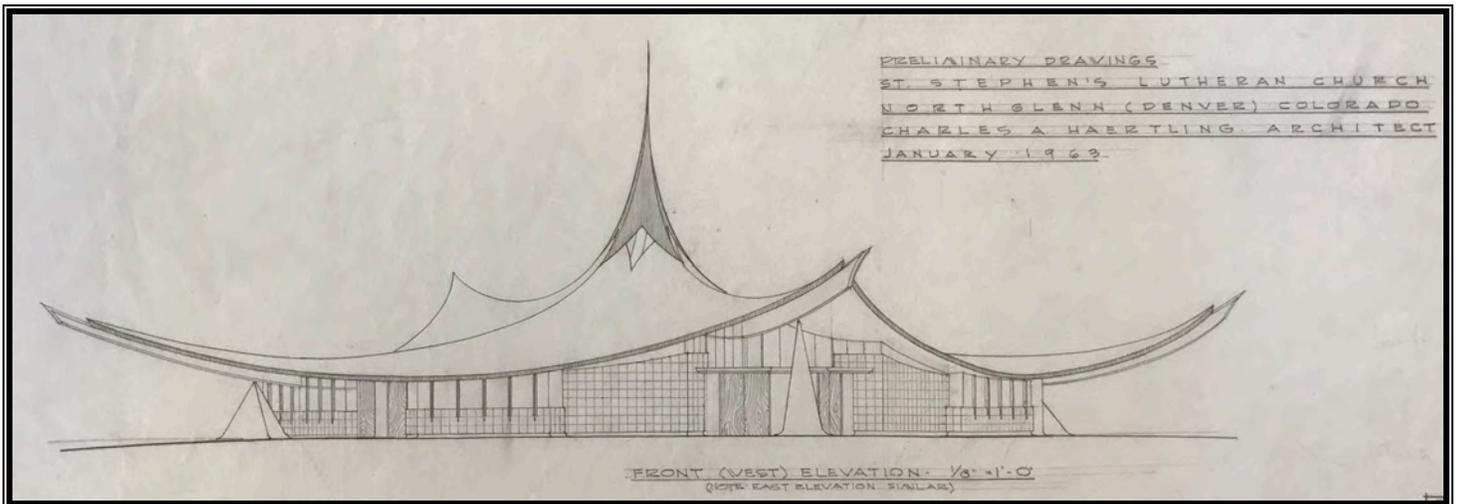
**HF-5: Preliminary Conceptual Drawing of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Charles A. Haertling, 1962**  
**(Note Tight Roof Curves Over Entry That Quickly Flatten)**  
**Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

## Historic Figures Evolution of Building Concept



**HF-6: Sketch of Roof Beams and Pyramidal Supports**  
Charles A. Haertling, 1962

(Note That Earlier Flattened Roof Has Evolved Into Distinct Catenary Arches)  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History



**HF-7: Preliminary Drawing of Building Design**  
Charles A. Haertling, January 1963

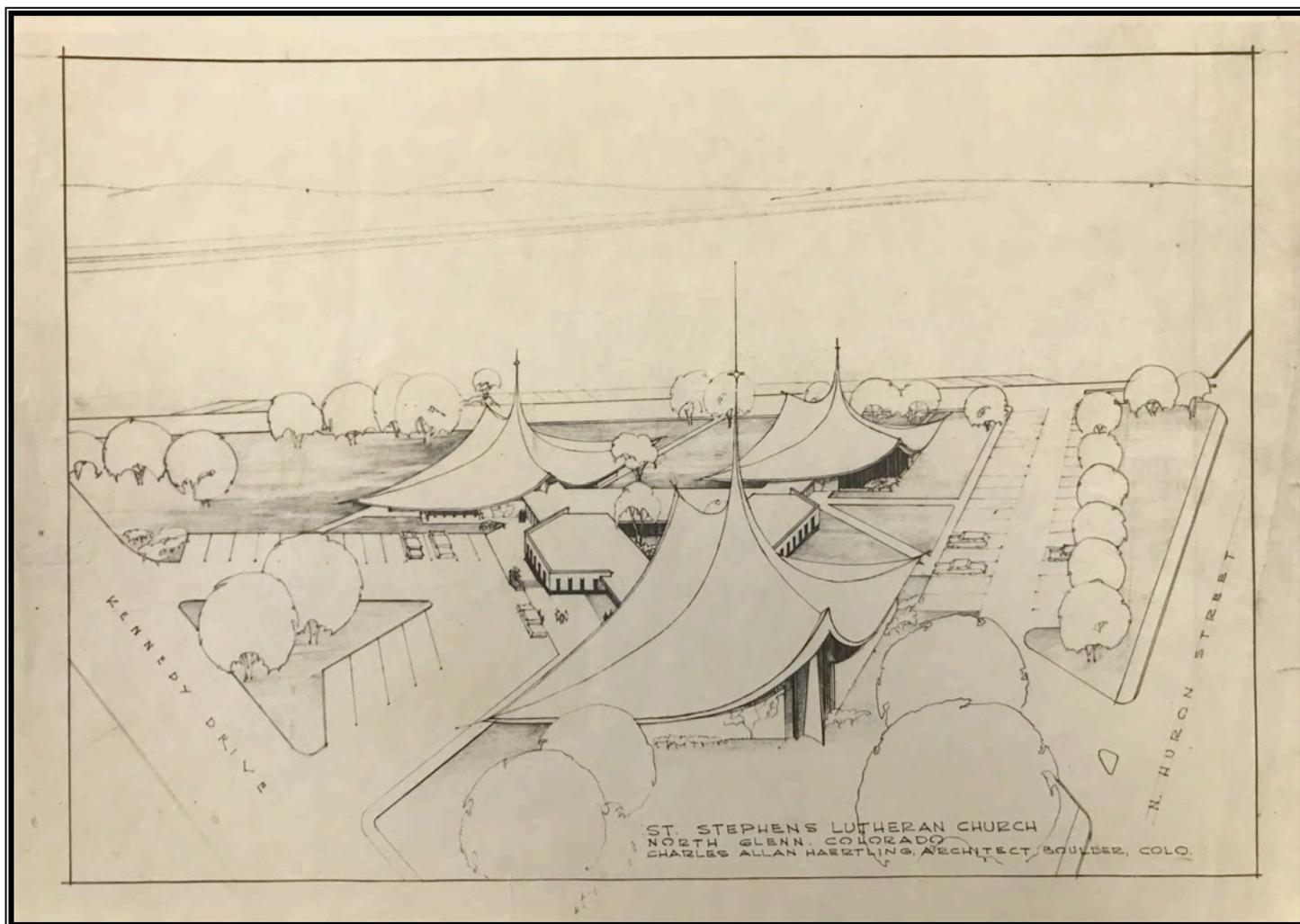
(Note Original Concept for Copper-Clad Spire)  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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## Historic Figures

### Concept for Eventual Build-Out of Site

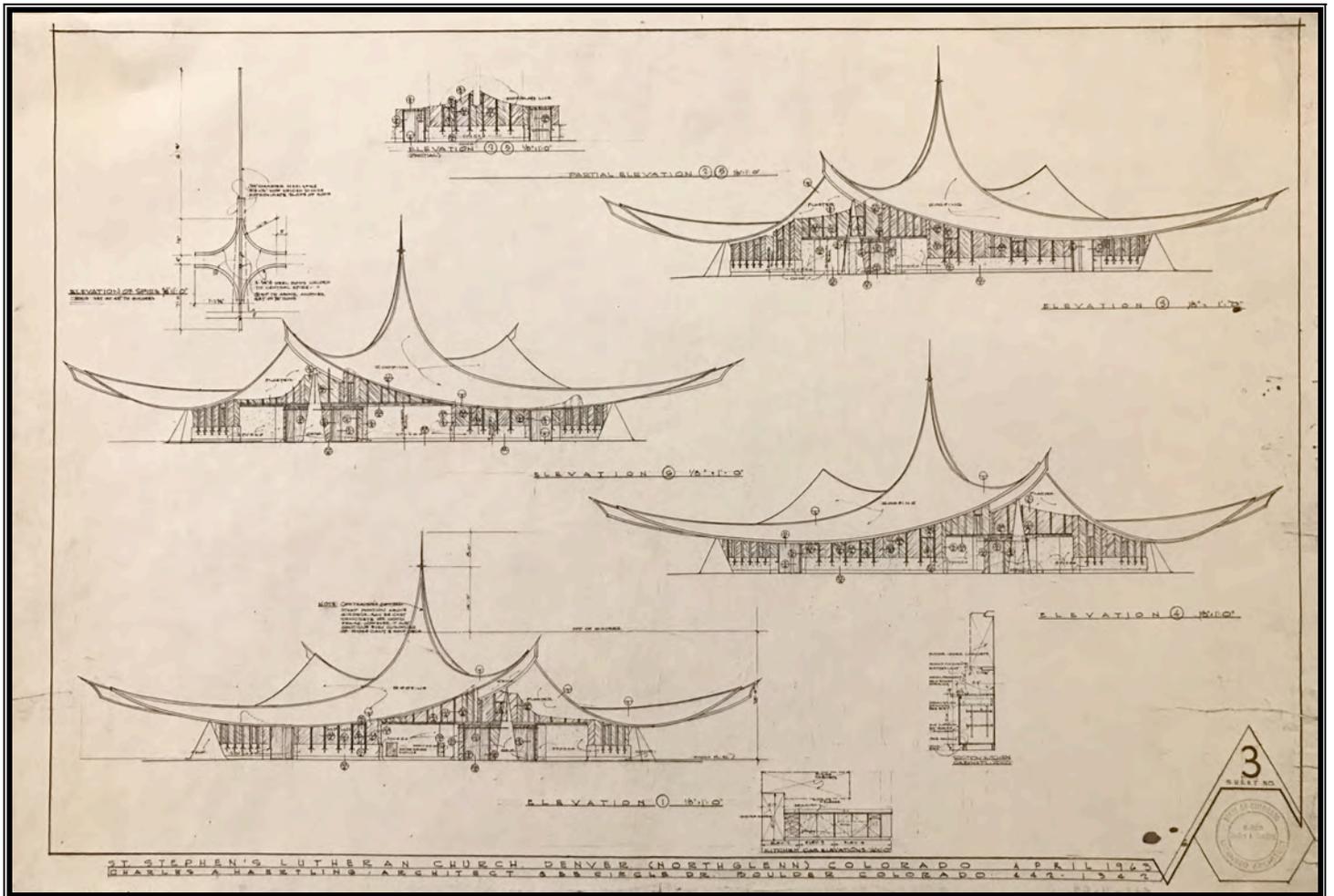


**HF-8: Conceptual Drawing of Eventual Site Build-Out  
Charles A. Haertling, 1962  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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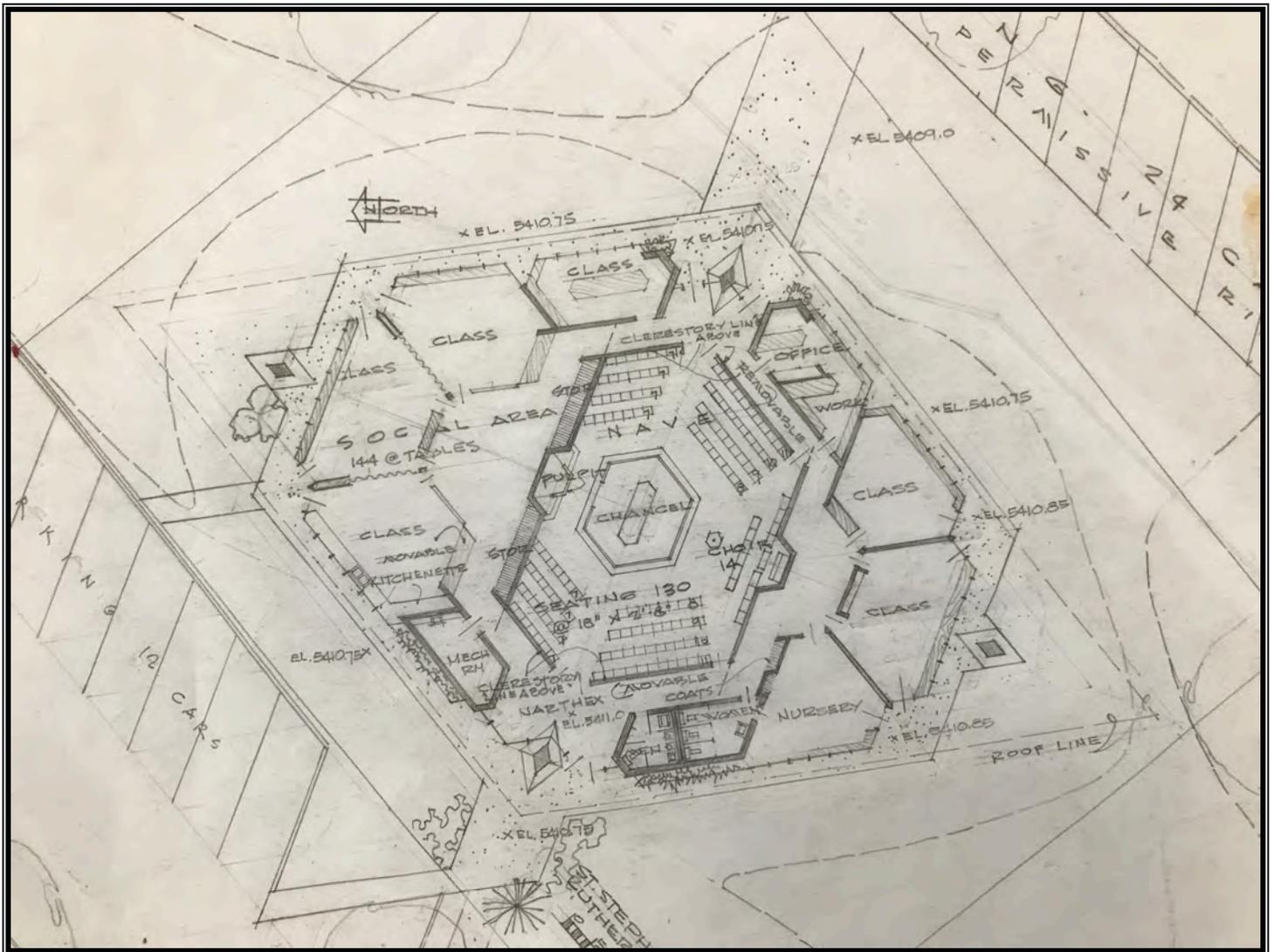
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County and State

# Historic Figures Construction Drawings



**HF-9: Construction Plans for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Charles A. Haertling, April 1963  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

# Historic Figures Construction Drawings



**HF-10: Construction Plans for St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Charles A. Haertling, April 1963  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Name of Property

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## **Historic Figures Architectural Rendering**



**HF-11: Rendering of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Charles A. Haertling, Circa 1963-1964  
Image Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History**

## Historic Photographs

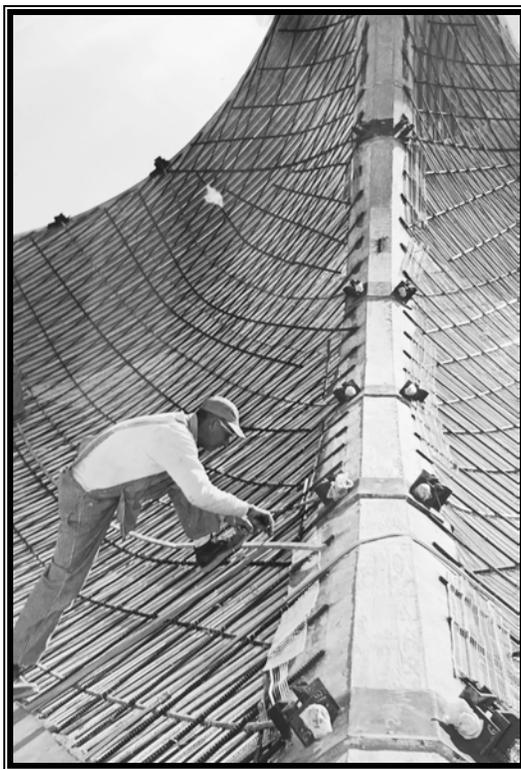


**HP-1: Lifting the First Roof Beam into Place, October 1963 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**

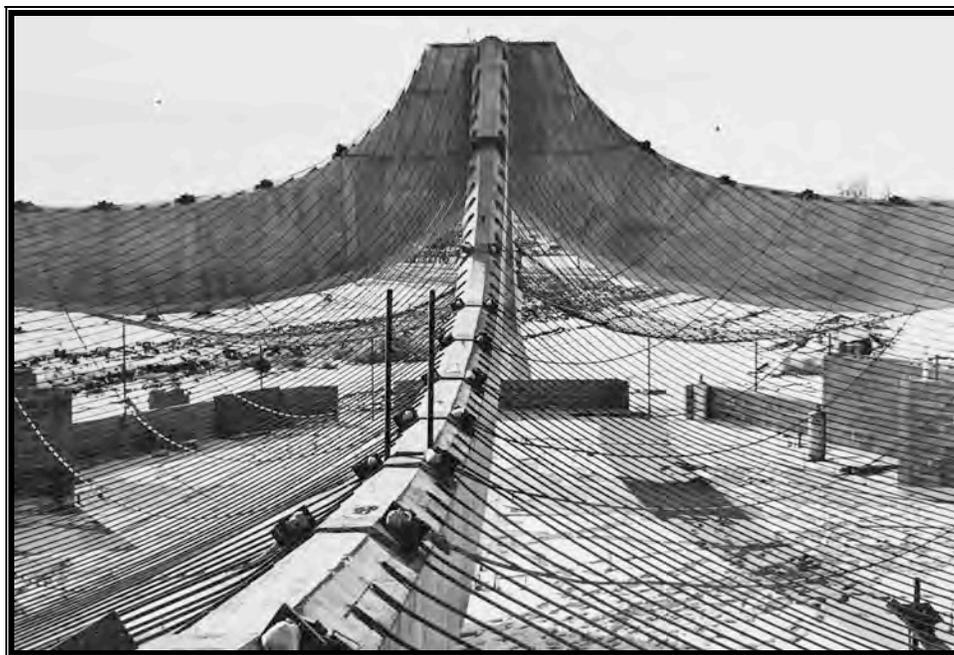


**HP-2: All Four Roof Beams and Supports in Place, November 1963 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**

## Historic Photographs



**HP-3: Attaching and Tightening the Catenary Cables, January 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**



**HP-4: View of the Roof's Network of Catenary Cables, January 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**

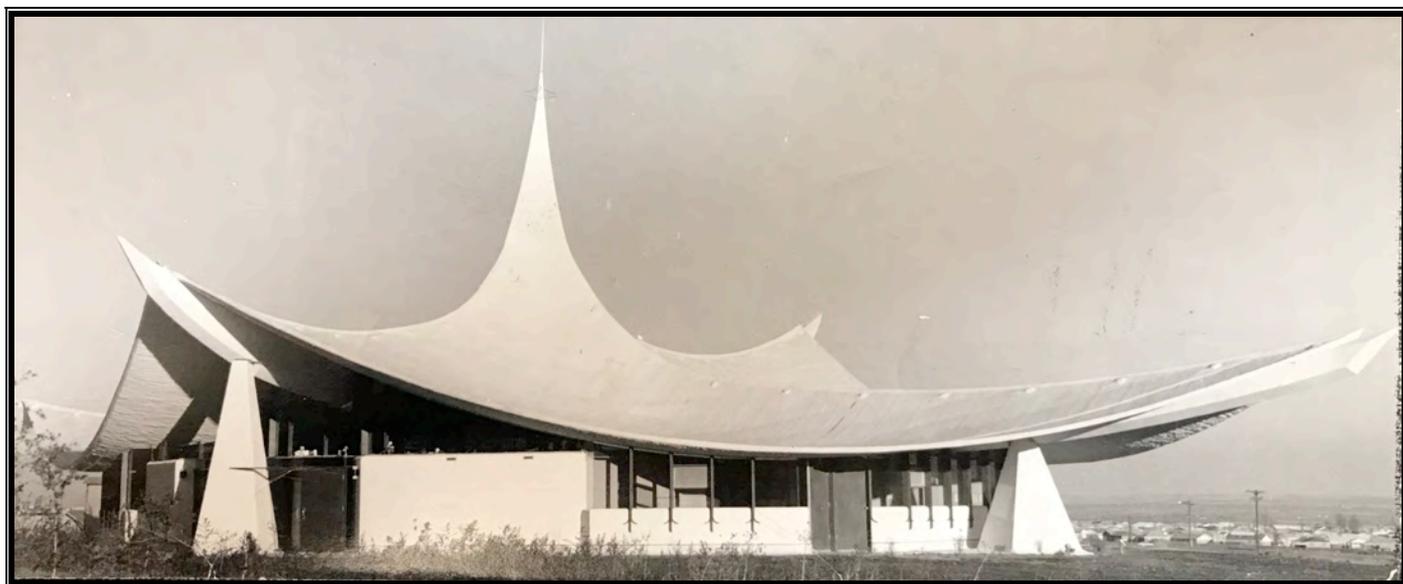
**ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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## Historic Photographs



**HP-5: Architect Charles Haertling with Newspaper Reporter, circa March 1964 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**



**HP-6: St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Circa 1964-1965, View to NE (Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History)**

**ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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## Historic Photographs



**HP-7: St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Circa 1964-1965, View to NW (Courtesy of the Boulder Carnegie Library for Local History)**



**HP-8: Sanctuary Interior, Circa 1964-1965 (Courtesy of Joel Haertling)**

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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## **BUILDING PLANS PREPARED BY CHARLES A. HAERTLING Ordered Chronologically Except as Noted**

Property Name	Property Address	Site Number	Year Built
Charles Haertling House	855 Circle Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1957
Joe Ben Wheat House Addition	1515 Baseline Rd. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	1958
Herbert Noble House	650 Pennsylvania Ave. Boulder, CO	5BL.8269	1958
Wilson House	4247 Prado Dr. Eldorado Springs, CO	5BL.11183	1958
Marvin White House	630 Pennsylvania St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1958
E. R. Cave Building (Transformer Electronics Co.)	Boulder Industrial Park Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1959
Knudsen House	420 Christmas Tree Dr. Boulder, CO	5BL.8250	1960
Friends Meeting House	1825 Upland Ave. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	1961 / 1969
Zion Lutheran Church	1400 Skeel St. Brighton, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1961
Richard Krueger House	1025 Rose Hill Dr. Boulder, CO	5BL.8272	1961
Robert Willard House	125 Bellevue Dr. Boulder, CO	5BL.8236	1962
Our Savior's Lutheran Church Education Wing	915 E. 9 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Denver, CO	5DV.8172	1962
Smith House	502 Cleveland Ave. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1962
Lawson Warburton House	Gold Hill, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1963
Theo Volsky House	711 Willowbrook Rd. Boulder, CO	5BL.8275	1964
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church	10828 Huron St. Northglenn, CO	5AM.3862	1964
Alpine Haus Addition	1309 Broadway Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1964
Lewis Mullen House Addition	705 Mapleton Ave. Boulder, CO	5BL.4525	ca. 1964*

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Evans Cabin	Kings Valley Resort Conifer, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1964
Apartment Complex	3626 N. Broadway Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1965*
Canyon Professional Building	15 <sup>th</sup> and Canyon Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1965*
Alpine Knitting Mills	719 Walnut St. Boulder, CO	5BL.8274	1965 / 1973
Peter Albersheim House	1440 Bellevue Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1965
Barnes-Schwalbe House Addition	896 17 <sup>th</sup> St. Boulder, CO	5BL.8221	1965
McConnell House	450 College Ave. Boulder, CO	5BL.8253	1966
Dammann House	460 College Ave. Boulder, CO	5BL.8254	1966
Roger Moment House	2385 Panorama Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1966
R. J. Forsyth House	Panorama Ave. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1966
Robert Grove House	Cleveland, OH	Not Assigned	ca. 1966*
Boulder Valley Eye Clinic	2401 Broadway Boulder, CO	5BL.8246	1967
Caldwell House	415 Drake St. Boulder, CO	5BL.8256	1967
Grace Evangelical Church Addition	1001 13 <sup>th</sup> St. (1301 Euclid Ave.) Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1967
Duncan Smith House	Wood Run Subdivision Snowmass, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1967
Lawrence Caldwell House	Stanford Ave. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1967
Richard & Helen Wilson House	550 College Ave. Boulder, CO	5BL.8255	1968
Kenneth Kahn House	760 Flagstaff Rd. Boulder, CO	5BL.8259	1968
Brenton House	3752 Wonderland Hill Dr. Boulder, CO	5BL.8280	1969
George F. Menkick House	165 Green Rock Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	1970
Stanley Gill House	730 15 <sup>th</sup> St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1970
Rush Razeo House	4141 Shangri La Dr. Denver, CO	Not Assigned	1970

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W. Gene Steward House	Sugarloaf Road Boulder County, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1970
Bill Davis House	65 Bellevue Dr. Boulder, CO	5BL.8235	1971
Earl Barrett House	816 Peakview Rd. Boulder County, CO	Not Assigned	1971
Matheson House	6087 Marshall Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	1971
Jourgensen House	780 Flagstaff Rd. Boulder, CO	5BL.8260	1971
Solar Crest Townhouse Village	Vail, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1972
George F. Gosko House	Snowmass, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1973
James Dammann House	259 Spruce St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1973
Tambor Guest House	Costa Rica	Not Assigned	ca. 1973*
Roller Rink Office Building Remodel	1722 14 <sup>th</sup> St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1974
Reed Ford House	4 Benchmark Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1975
Ellwood Building	1215 13 <sup>th</sup> St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1975
Yocum-Riverside Building Remodel	1714-1724 Broadway Boulder, CO	5BL.1129	1975-1977
Mert Frederick Houses	Kentucky Ave., Lakewood Lindsey Rd., Golden	Not Assigned	ca. 1978
Leaneagh House (Aspen Leaf House)	52 Boulder View Ln. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	1980
Baranway Cabin Reconstruction	Riverside (Lyons?), CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1981
Cunningham House Addition	1350 Old Tale Rd. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	ca. 1983
Johnson House	630 Northstar Ct. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Charles Goodman House	Telluride Ranches Telluride, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Tri-Frame Modular House	Unknown Location	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
James Conlin House	Seven Hills Subdivision Boulder County, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Craig Stead House	South Park Trail (Lot 6, Swiss Peaks Subdivision) Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year

ST. STEPHEN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

ADAMS, COLORADO

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Harold Baumgartner House	Brighton, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
John Fahrenkrog House	Snowmass, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Charles Roitz House	1135 Jay St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Don Pope House	Albuquerque, NM	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Commercial Building Remodel	1650 Broadway Boulder, CO	5BL.6038	Unknown Year
Lawrence Fleck House	Turkey Creek Road Jefferson County, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Rolf Faye-Peterson House	Littleton, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Samuel Johnson House	540 Inca Parkway Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Leo Palmer House	7 Acorn Ln. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Wayne Roth House	Swiss Peaks Subdivision Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Acacia Fraternity House	955 Broadway Boulder, CO	5BL.366	Unknown Year*
Grace Lutheran Church Remodel and Addition	Brush, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Neuswanger House	Estes Park, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Herbert Brown House	835 Circle Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Evergreen Apartments	Gunbarrel Green Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Williams Square Shops	Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year*
Faith in Christ Church	Albuquerque, NM	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Chart House	Mamaroneck, NY	Not Assigned	Not Built
Mountain Shadows Montessori School	26 <sup>th</sup> St. and Jay Rd. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Knollwood Village Condos	300 Spruce St. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year
Judson Pearson House	845 Circle Dr. Boulder, CO	Not Assigned	Unknown Year

\* Unable to confirm if built.