



HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM

CITY OF AURORA, COLORADO
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

Date: 1/30/87

I.D.# 5 AH 311

(Staff Use)

Project Name: Curent Aurora Fox Arts Center Historic Aurora Fox Theater

Address: Street 9900 East Colfax Avenue

City Aurora County Arapahoe State Colorado

Legal Description: Lots 7-11 and Lot 12, Block 2, Del Mar Amended, City of Aurora,
except, South 5 feet, Lot 12, for road.

Date of Construction: 1946

Nomination Category: _____ District _____ Building _____ Object
_____ Structure _____ Site _____ Other

Current Owner: Name City of Aurora Notified ? 2/20/87 - F.m. (staff use)

Address: 1470 South Havana Street, Attn: Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities

City: AURORA State CO Zip Code 80012 Phone 695-7168

General Information

<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Present Use</u>
<u>X</u> Public	<u>X</u> Occupied	<u>_____</u> Agricultural
<u>_____</u> Private	<u>_____</u> Vacant	<u>_____</u> Commercial
<u>_____</u> Other		<u>_____</u> Government
		<u>_____</u> Military
		<u>_____</u> Park
		<u>_____</u> Residential
		<u>X</u> Other
		<u>_____</u> Cultural

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Modifications</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>X</u> Excellent	<u>_____</u> None, like original	<u>X</u> On original site
<u>_____</u> Good	<u>_____</u> Slight	<u>_____</u> Moved (describe below)
<u>_____</u> Fair	<u>_____</u> Work in progress	
<u>_____</u> Poor/Deteriorating	<u>X</u> Major (describe/below)	

General Description: Provide other relevant information to assist this nomination review process, including construction information, description and extent of modifications, reasons and dates of building moves, general architectural description (inc. size, height, stories, style, materials, etc.), names and other data for builder and/or architect, and any other relevant information.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 1.

Application submitted by: Laurence W. Steele and Kenneth Barber

Address: 726 South Nile Way, Aurora, CO. 80012

Phone: 366-6221

Statement of Significance: Check those which apply and provide details as described below

Architectural Significance

Historical Significance

- Represents the work of a master architect
 Possesses high artistic values
 Represents type, period or method of construction

- Associated with significant persons
 Associated with significant events
 Contributes to an historic dist.
 Geographically significant

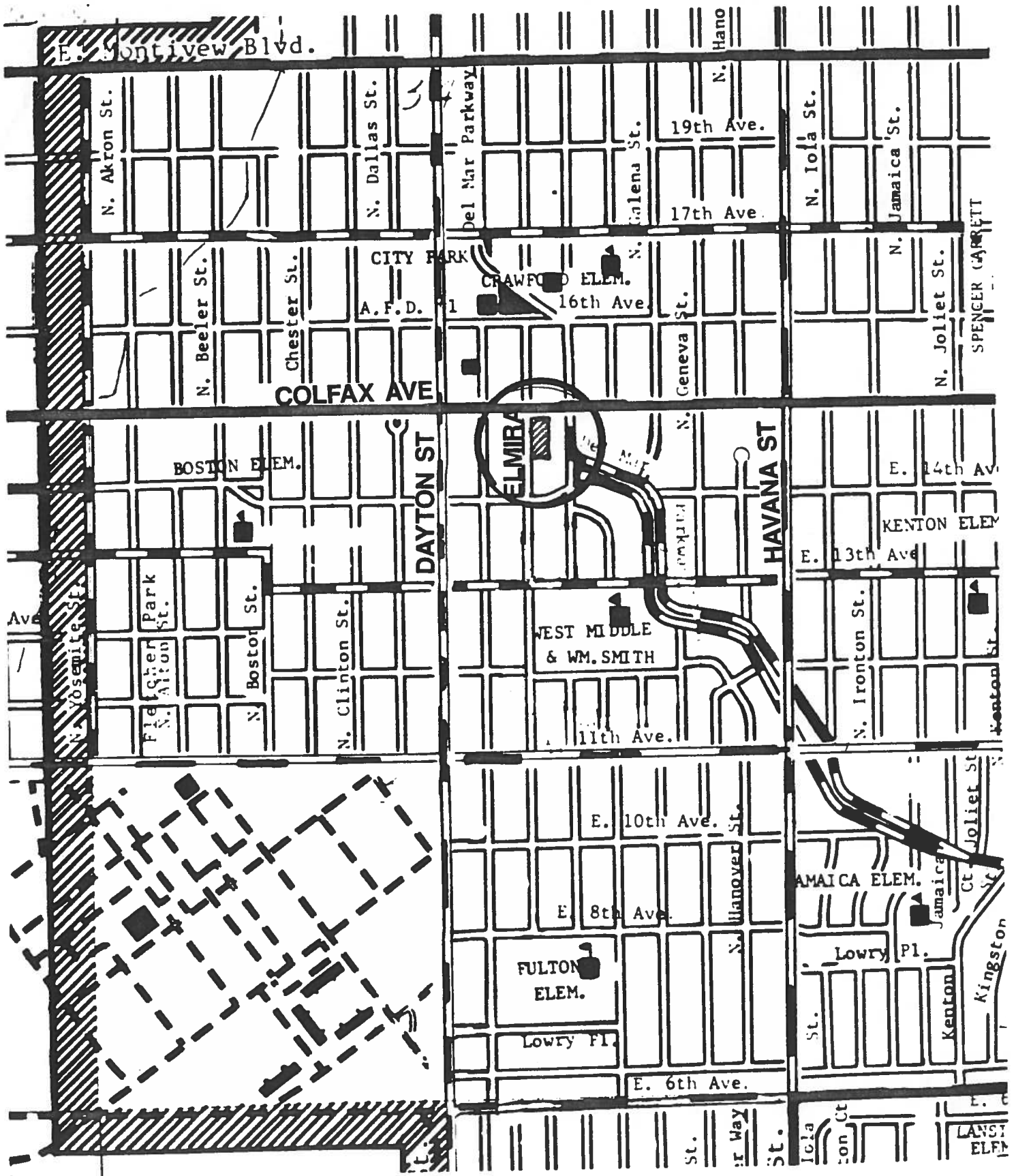
Basically, why is this building or site historically or architecturally significant? Provide information on builder, architect, and original or subsequent owners. Discuss other important factors. Is building crucial part of overall historic district or area? Provide any other information leading to conclusion that this building or site may be of architectural, historical or geographical significance.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 2.

References: List specific sources for any factual information provided in this nomination including books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, interviews, etc.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 2.

- General Notes: All applications should be accompanied by:
- 1) Sketch plan of site, building etc. May be neatly handdrawn on 8½" x 11" sheet showing adjacent streets, general building location and dimensions, plus other prominent site features.
 - 2) Color photos of suitable number and size to document size, building etc.
 - 3) Additional pages may be attached to respond to above application requirements.



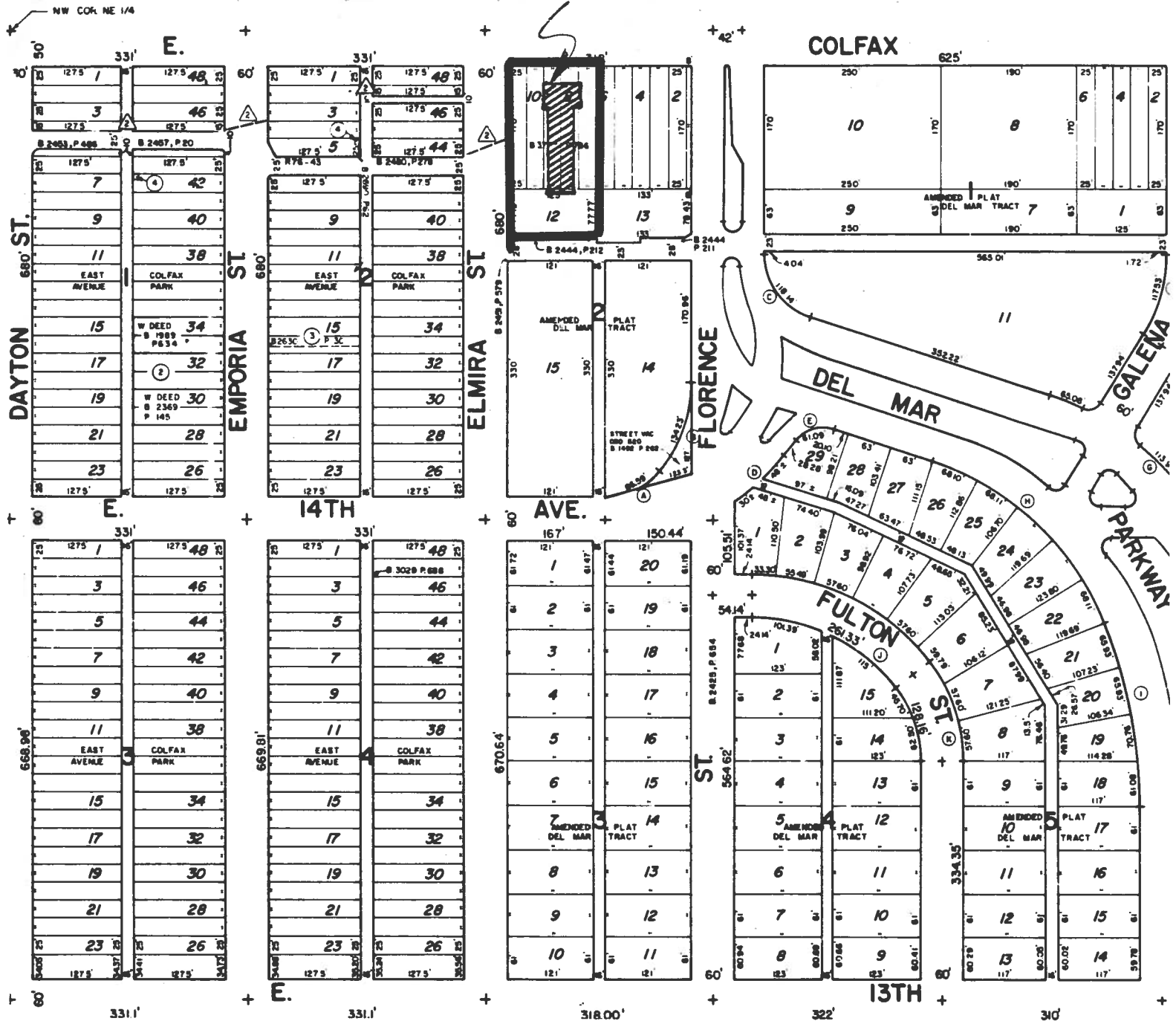
City of Aurora, Colorado Department of Planning

1" = 1000'

LOCATION MAP



AURORA FOX ARTS CENTER



1" = 200'



City of Aurora, Colorado Department of Planning

LOCATION MAP



CONTINUATION SHEET 1.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: The Aurora Fox Arts Center is an Art Moderne theater built on a T-Plan. The front portion of the building is two stories tall. The first story has a brick facade laid in a common bond. A pair of recessed brick panels in a streamlined motif adorn the corners at the theater's front. The second story is clad with sheet metal, and is semi-circular in design. This section of the building houses the theater's balcony seating. A flat roofed canopy, edged in Peach structural glass or Vitrolite, separates the two stories and serves as the base for the theater's distinctive sixty-one (61) foot marquee. The rear portion of the building is a modified sheet metal quonset hut, one hundred thirty-two feet long and forty-two feet wide. This area contained the bulk of the theater's six hundred fifty (650) "body-form seats." Originally, the interior of the theater was decorated with polychrome stencils in an Art Deco motif. This finish was removed during renovation of the theater, because it covered an asbestos base which was heavily damaged by fire.

A 1981 fire damaged the theater's interior. However, it was smoke and water damage that ultimately forced the closure of Aurora's Fox Theater. In 1982 the Denver architectural firm of Baer & Hickman completed plans for renovation of the theater for use by the city's arts community. Tandem Enterprises executed a 1983 contract to remodel the north, or front, facade. Danish Craftsmen, completed the interior renovation, at a cost of \$200,000 in 1985.

While the 1983 remodeling resulted in several changes in the theater's exterior appearance, its visual impact on the East Colfax streetscape remains as dominant as ever. The entry, which featured four, three panel glass doors set flush with the exterior wall, has been diagonally recessed, and new oak doors with semi-circular glass panels have been added. A plate glass window and the original ticket booth have been replaced with brickwork which matches the existing material.

The theater's interior has undergone the most readily apparent changes. The lobby and refreshment stand have been converted into gallery space for community artists. The auditorium was converted from a motion picture theater into a theater for live performances. The stage now projects into the original seating area; reducing to 225, the number of seats in the auditorium. Seats currently in the theater are from Denver's Aladdin Theater.

CONTINUATION SHEET 2.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: The Aurora Fox Arts Center represents a type and period of construction which is associated with the pattern of growth and development of the City of Aurora. The Fox Theater is a vernacular adaptation of the Art Moderne style. The use of a quonset hut as the auditorium makes a striking statement about the military's role in Aurora, and the City's determination to serve this element of its population. The brick portion of the building contains several references to the Art Moderne period -- the broad curving canopy; the streamlined panels at the building's corners; and the flat roof are reflective of these origins. The use of Vitrolite cladding on the face of the canopy is an important element in the theater's streamlined appearance. Vitrolite was the trade name used by Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co. for an "opaque, lime-based glass . . . used primarily as a veneer material . . . where designers sought a 'modern' image."¹ Architecturally, its reliance on Art Moderne elements such as streamlined panels and the use of Vitrolite were only symbolic of the building's modernity. "The radically new theater . . . seats 650 persons and introduces several innovations in theater construction, including stadium-type interior, body-form seats and an electronic germ-killing ray in ventilation ducts."²

When Aurora's Fox Theater officially opened to the public on Wednesday, October 30, 1946, Frank H. Ricketson, Jr., President of the Fox Inter-Mountain Amusement Corp. pointed to the \$100,000 building as the "theater of tomorrow."³ The opening of the theater culminated several years of effort by residents of Aurora and officials from neighboring military installations to attract a theater to the city. "It was from the citizenry of Aurora that a request for a theater first came. This was early in the war. Despite vigorous efforts by Aurorans, military authorities and ourselves, priorities could not be obtained to make construction possible," Ricketson said.⁴ Following the conclusion of World War II, Ricketson's Fox Inter-Mountain Amusement Corporation made plans for the new theater. According to Ricketson, it stood in the "heart of the five-million dollar Del Mar development . . . as a symbol of community service, ready to take its place as a contributing factor to the future and deserved growth of Aurora."⁵

REFERENCES:

1. Douglas A. Yorke, Jr., "Materials Conservation for the Twentieth Century: The Case for Structural Glass," *Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1981, pp. 19-20.
2. *Rocky Mountain News*, October 27, 1946, p. 18.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*