

HISTORIC SUGAR BUILDING

1530 16th Street, Denver, Colorado, 80202



Architect: Aaron Gove & Thomas F. Walsh

Year Built: 1906

Shaped like a cube and facing the 16th Street Mall south of the Wazee intersection, this historic building was built to house Charles Boettcher's newly formed Great Western Sugar Company after a merger of six Colorado sugar producers created the cooperative. The front portion of the building is clad in buff brick and housed the company's offices while the rear of the building, made of darker brick, acted as a warehouse. The company grew quickly and added two stories to the office building just six years after its completion and two stories to the warehouse four years after that.

The Historic Sugar Building is Denver's earliest example of famous American Architect Louis Sullivan's Sullivanesque style. With its vertical window bands, distinctive three-part organization (top, middle and bottom) and its ornamentation in geometric and stylized foliage forms, it possess the hallmarks of the movement.

The front façade has pavilion-like end bays and is complemented with corbelled brick pilaster capitals, drop pendants and foliate forms, similar to the roundels of the cornice. The main entrance stands centered in the northeast, under a terra cotta "Sugar Building" sign. The additions blend with the original building in style, and in the window arrangement. On the Wazee side of the building, there are three bays and the ornamentation matches that of the 16th Street side of the building. Notably, this building houses an old Otis birdcage elevator that is one of the few of its kind still in use in the western United States.

Behind the Sugar Building and facing Wazee Street one finds the recently completed SugarSquare project by developer Urban Villages. Conceived as an addition to the Historic Sugar Building, SugarSquare fills in a longstanding gap in Denver's urban fabric with a distinctly modern building that respects the context and rhythm of the historic Wazee streetscape. At four stories above grade, SugarSquare provides a transition between the six-story Historic Sugar Building and the adjacent two-story buildings along Wazee St. SugarSquare is clad in blackened stainless-steel panels with a highly transparent glass and steel storefront that celebrates and frames the historic brick walls of the Historic Sugar Building.

SugarSquare functions as a private entrance for a tenant who has leased several floors in the Historic Sugar Building. Spaces in the Historic Sugar building flow freely into SugarSquare, significantly increasing the floorplate size of Historic Sugar.

References

National Register of Historic Places, Sugar Building, Denver, Denver County, Colorado, National Register #78000852

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