

SEMPLER BROWN DESIGN

1160 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, Colorado 80204



Architect: Unknown
Year Built: Unknown

Semple Brown is perhaps most commonly known for their reputation of sensitivity to historic architecture. They've grown to be respected for not just historic preservation but also adaptive reuse, and historically sensitive urban infill projects. They've occupied this building at the southeast corner of West 12th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive since 2000. Before this, the building was a post office and further back a used car lot. Earlier history is difficult to track, but it dates back to at least 1947 when building permit records show that a retaining wall was installed for a car dealership.

The large brick building is nearly square, with a flat roof and parking lots on the north and south sides. Like many buildings in the area, it is an example of unassuming modern commercial architecture. The main entrance can be found on Santa Fe where concrete trims the portal and a dramatic overhead door swings up to become an awning when it's not protecting the doorway. The ramp and flagpole were added when the building was converted to a post office. Other windows have concrete sills and lintels, but this is the limit of decoration on the building exterior.

Russell Brown and Sarah Semple renovated the building prior to the firm's move-in, tearing out the internal partitions to create an open office workspace for the firm. Exposed steel joists can be seen supporting the roof, but the rest of the structure is masonry. The old post office loading docks were filled in and turned into gardens and patio space enclosed with a concrete wall. The dock doors were removed and replaced with large glazed assemblies that look out into the garden area.

Semple Brown was established in 1982 and has since been involved in many of Denver's most historically sensitive building projects. They built the Ellie Caulkins Opera House in the old shell of the 1908 Municipal Auditorium and were involved in the Larimer Square and Union Station revitalizations. Principal and Co-founder Sarah Semple Brown was awarded an AIA Fellowship in 2013.

References

Who is Semple Brown? Retrieved from <http://semplebrown.com/about/>

Semple Brown Recognition. Retrieved from <http://semplebrown.com/recognition/>

Semple Brown. Retrieved from <https://aiacolorado.org/expert-listing/semple-brown-design/>

Pankratz, H. (2000, July 23). Architects Sarah and Rusty Brown have put their stamp on Denver. *The Denver Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.denverpost.com/2014/04/07/architects-sarah-and-rusty-brown-have-put-their-stamp-on-denver/>