

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

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Date _____ Initials _____

- _____ Determined Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- NR
_____ Determined Eligible- SR
_____ Determined Not Eligible- SR
_____ Need Data
_____ Contributes to eligible NR District
_____ Noncontributing to eligible NR District



I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource number: 5LR.10490
2. Temporary resource number: City-23
3. County: Larimer
4. City: Fort Collins
5. Historic building name: Griffin Building
6. Current building name: The Griffin Foundation, Inc.
7. Building address: 303 West Prospect Road
8. Owner name: The Griffin Foundation, Inc.
Owner organization:
Owner address: 303 W. Prospect Road
Fort Collins, CO 80526

Parcel number: 97231-10-001

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☒ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
State Register eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
Local landmark eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **7N** Range: **69W**
NE 1/4 NW 1/4 NE 1/4 NE 1/4 of section **23** Grid aligned on **northeast** corner of section.
10. UTM Reference Zone: **13**
Easting: **493185** Northing: **4490673**
11. USGS quad name: **Fort Collins** Scale: **7.5**
Year: **1984**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 1 and 2**
Addition: **Griffin Plaza** Year of addition: **1977**
13. Boundary description and justification: **The boundary, as described above, contains but does not exceed the land historically associated with the property.**
- ☐ Metes and bounds exist

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building Plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
Other building plan descriptions:
15. Dimensions in feet: **3424 square feet**
16. Number of stories: **One**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Stucco**

Other wall materials:
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
Other roof configuration:
19. Primary external roof material: **Synthetic Roof**
Other roof materials:
20. Special features: **Roof Treatment/Decorative Cornice**

21. General architectural description:

Oriented to the east, this late-1970s office building rests on a concrete foundation. The rectangular-shaped building is faced in pinkish-brown stucco. The resource has a flat roof. The primary entry is centered on the façade. It is a wooden double door painted maroon. This door features a decorative pattern of interlocking rectangles carved into its surface; this motif seems to have an Asian influence. A mirrored glass transom and sidelights surround these doors. There are also decorative lanterns affixed to the façade on either side of this door. A wide cornice, centered on the façade and spanning only the central portion of the building, creates a minimal cover for this entry. The double bands of the cornice, perhaps metal or stucco, are painted the same color as the front door. There are a series of narrow, rectangular, vertically oriented mirrored windows on either side of the primary entry. The southern corner of the façade projects outward slightly; the northern portion of this projection angles away from the entry and Prospect Road. The northern elevation features no window or door openings and a combination of smooth and textured stucco surfaces. The wall at the northeastern corner seems to slant away from the street as well. Neither the west (rear) nor south elevation were visible from the public right of way. Character defining features of this late-1970s office building include the horizontal orientation, mirrored

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glass for energy efficiency, stucco siding, and manicured landscaping.

22. Architectural style: **Modern Movements**

Other architectural style:

Building type:

23. Landscape or special setting features:

This building is located on an irregularly shaped lot just south of busy W. Prospect Road. A grass lawn, mulched beds, juniper bushes, and mature trees—all seemingly more in keeping with a domestic landscape—surround the building. There are two signs. One is white metal and is located on the grass lawn adjacent to the cement pathway which leads to the primary entry. The other sign, located at the entry to the parking lot, is stucco covered like the building. Both signs feature the stylized print which appears to be part of the Pat Griffin and Griffin Foundation logo/corporate identity. There is a large paved parking lot in front of the building. The property is sited on a lot with an elevation of 5002 feet above mean sea level.

24. Associated building, features or objects:

None.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of Construction: **1978** ☒ Actual ☐ Estimate

Source of Information: **Larimer County Assessor Records (online).**

26. Architect: **Unknown**

Source of Information:

27. Builder: **Unknown**

Source of Information:

28. Original Owner: **Pat Griffin**

Source of Information: **1979 Fort Collins City Directory**

29. Construction history:

According to Larimer County assessor records, this building was constructed in 1978. An analysis of the style, building materials, and other historical records corroborate this date of construction. There are no known changes to the building.

30. Location: **Original Location** Date of move(s):

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Professional**

32. Intermediate uses(s): **Commerce and Trade/Professional**

33. Current uses(s): **Commerce and Trade/Professional**

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34. Site type(s): Late-1970s office building

35. Historical background:

The building at 303 W. Prospect Road, constructed in 1978, serves as the headquarters of the Griffin Foundation, Inc. This is the second building local entrepreneur and businessman Pat Griffin erected for his business enterprises. The original Pat Griffin Company Building, a 6,000 square foot facility erected in 1961, was located at 701 North College Avenue. In 1995 ownership of this building transferred from the estate of Pat Griffin to the Griffin Foundation, Inc.

Pat Griffin was born on February 1, 1913, in Granite, Oklahoma. In 1935 he graduated from Southwestern State in Weatherford, Oklahoma, with a degree in agriculture and education. Starting in 1932, while in school, Griffin worked at a local Phillips 66 station and by 1933 he was promoted to both station and bulk plant manager. He and his new wife Edna moved to Fort Collins, where Griffin managed a Phillips 66 station at 220 N. College Avenue, in 1936. In 1938 Griffin purchased his first tanker truck, using it to haul gas from New Mexico to Fort Collins. By 1952 Griffin owned six Phillips 66 stations.

Griffin is best-known for revolutionizing self-service gas sales. In 1959 he purchased the patent for coin-operated gas pumps from his Fort Collins-based friend Vern West. With West's patent in hand, Griffin started his Gas-a-mat stations where patrons could insert quarters, half dollars or dollars to purchase their own gas. His first Gas-a-mats were located in Greeley and Casper, Wyoming. Reliance upon automated pumps allowed Griffin to streamline the marketing and sale process and he was able to sell his gasoline for as much as eight to ten cents per gallon less than his competitors. For this reason Griffin faced opposition from oil company executives who accused him of trying to ruin the entire industry. He also encountered legal challenges based upon fire codes; in 1961 the Wyoming State Supreme Court ruled self-service gas stations like Gas-a-mat were legal as long as there was someone in attendance at all times. This decision introduced another Gas-a-mat hallmark: live-in attendants, usually retired couples, who made change and, after the switch to tokens, sold these markers for customers to purchase gas. Following the 1961 Wyoming court decision, Gas-a-mats started to appear throughout the west. During the 1960s the eye-catching red and white Gas-a-mat sign appeared at stations in New Mexico (1961), Utah (1962), Montana and Idaho (1963), Nevada (1964), Arizona (1965), Washington and Nebraska (1967), California (1968), and South Dakota (1969). Eventually the Gas-a-mat empire included 95 stations in twelve western states.

Griffin was planning to expand Gas-a-mat both to the south and the east when the 1973 energy crisis thwarted his plans. He then shifted his focus to other businesses. He purchased both Capital Savings, a chain of Wyoming savings and loans, and Pageco, an insurance company. He sold Gas-a-mat to Asamera Oil of Denver in 1978 for \$7.5 million. In 1980 the National Petroleum News magazine recognized Griffin's contributions to the industry by inducting him into their Hall of Fame. Beyond his gasoline business interests, Griffin served as President of the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce from 1950 to 1951. Governor McNichols appointed him to the Colorado Game and Fisheries Commission, a role in which he served until 1963. In 1967 Governor Love chose Griffin to serve as a member of the Colorado Commission of Higher Education. He filled this role for ten years, chairing the subcommittee on curriculum for some of that time.

Pat Griffin died on July 31, 1993, in Fort Collins. Funding from his estate was used to establish the Griffin Foundation, a charitable organization based in Fort Collins which benefits higher education, health care, and the performing arts; between 1993 and 2007 the foundation made grants totaling nearly \$8 million. The Foundation remains a family affair, with Beatrice C. Griffin serving as Vice President and Secretary and Jerry W. Rizley (Edna Griffin's maiden name was Rizley) acting as Vice President. The foundation has two staff members, a program director for the scholarship program and an office manager.

36. Sources of information:

Larimer County tax assessor property records (online).

Fort Collins City Directory. Fort Collins: Mauer & Mauer; Omaha: R.L. Polk & Co.; Colorado Springs and Loveland: Rocky Mountain Directory Co.; Loveland: Johnson Publishing Co.; and others, consulted 1978 through 1979.

Architectural Inventory Form for 725 Cheyenne Drive, Fort Collins. Completed 2011.

Google: Griffin Foundation.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: ☐ Yes ☒ No

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Designation authority:

Date of designation:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

- ☐ A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ☐ Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see manual).
- ☐ Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Applicable Colorado State Register criteria:

- ☐ A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history.
- ☐ B. Connected with persons significant in history.
- ☒ C. Has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan.
- ☐ D. Is of geographic importance.
- ☐ E. Contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history.
- ☐ Does not meet any of the above Colorado State Register criteria.

Applicable City of Fort Collins landmark criteria:

- ☒ 1. The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or
- ☐ 2. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in history; or
- ☒ 3. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- ☐ 4. The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

39. Areas of significance: **Architecture**40. Period(s) of Significance: **Architecture: 1978**41. Level of Significance: ☐ National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐ Not Applicable

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42. Statement of Significance:

This office building is the only remaining physical reminder of Pat Griffin's commercial influence on Fort Collins. Architecturally, it represents a good example of a late-1970s office building. Character-defining features include its horizontal orientation, mirrored glass, stucco siding, and manicured landscaping. In areas, like Fort Collins, where ample land was available, those responsible for choosing designs for office buildings during the 1970s rejected the more sterile feeling office towers of the late-1950s and 1960s, instead opting for facilities with a more domestic appearance. The scale, form, materials, and landscaping all reinforce this design decision. According to the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the level of historical and architectural significance is not sufficient for this property to qualify for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It does qualify, however, to the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties (Criterion C: Architecture). This building also qualifies for listing as a Fort Collins Landmark.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

Constructed in 1978, this office building exhibits a high level of physical integrity relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. There are no known changes to this building. This resource possesses sufficient integrity to convey its significance for listing on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties and as a Fort Collins local landmark.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: ☐ Individually eligible ☒ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
 State Register eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed
 Local landmark eligibility field assessment: ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Not eligible ☐ Needs data ☐ Previously listed

45. Is there National Register district potential: ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Needs Data

Discuss: This inventory was conducted as an intensive-level selective survey and, therefore, lacks the continuity of resource data necessary to recommend the creation of an historic district.

If there is National Register district potential, is this building contributing: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it contributing: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Digital photograph file name(s): prospectrdw0303 - 1.tif through prospectrdw0303 - 5.tif
 Digital photographs filed at: Historic Preservation Program, City of Fort Collins
 281 N. College Avenue
 Fort Collins, CO 80522
48. Report title: Fort Collins Post-War Survey
49. Date(s): 12/14/2010
50. Recorder(s): Mary Therese Anstey
51. Organization: Historitecture
52. Address: PO Box 181095
 Denver, CO 80212-8822
53. Phone number(s): (303) 390-1638

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SKETCH MAP



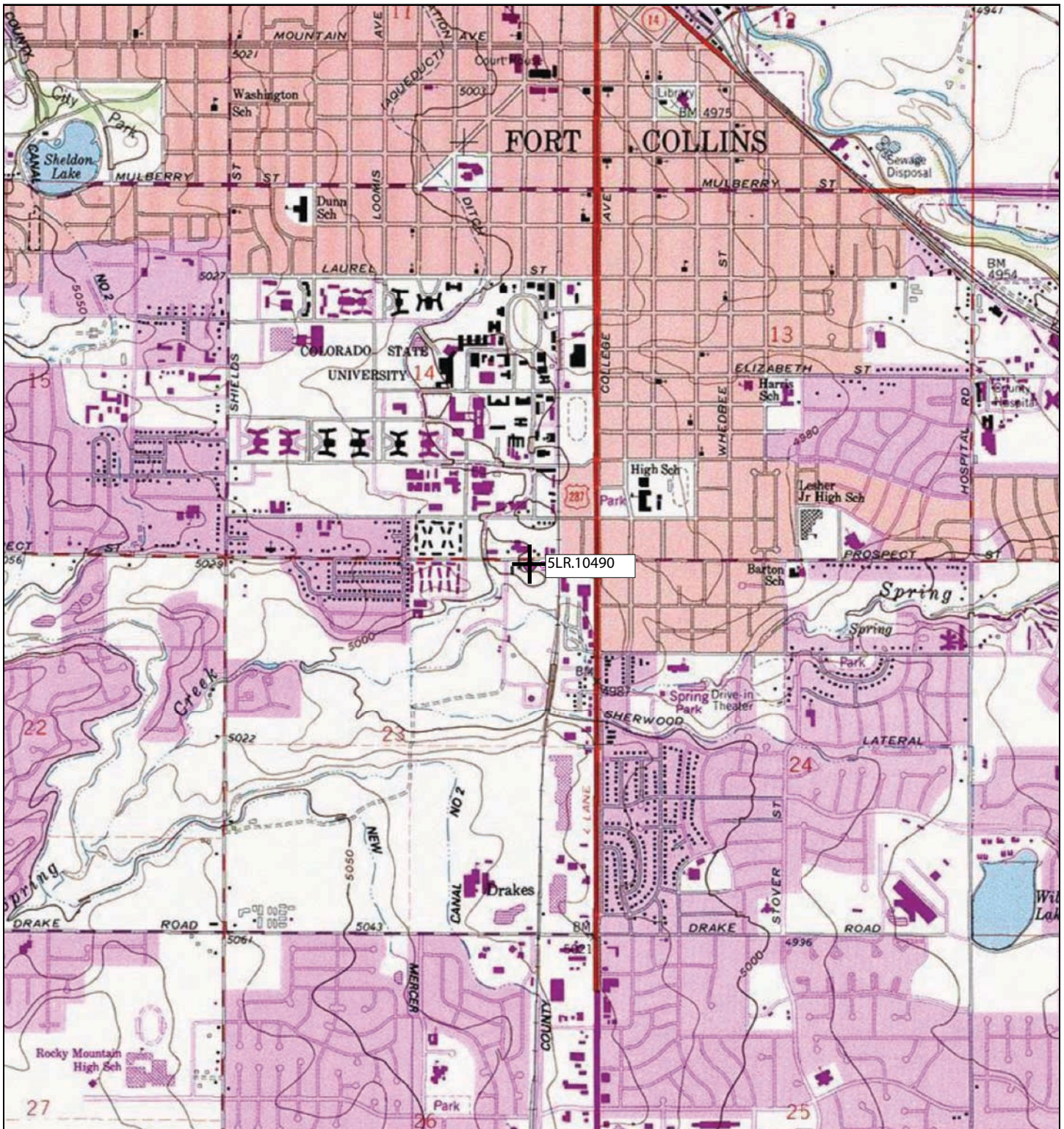
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LOCATION MAP



Source: U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Fort Collins - 1984

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