COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMO REPORT
OF FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATE OF DEMOLITION ELIGIBILITY

May 27, 2022

**Address:** 2000 Broadway

**Legal Description:** L19 TO 28 INC BLK 144 CLEMENTS ADD EXC THOSE PARTS OF L 19 TO 24 INC DEEDED TO CITY FOR BROADWAY

**Current Building Name:** Firestone Complete Auto Care

**Construction Date:** 1965

**Source of Information:** Denver Assessor’s Office; Denver Post

**Architectural**

Architectural Style: Modern with Googie influences

Architect/Builder: unknown

Source of Information: n/a

**Historical**

Original owner: Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.

Original use(s): Commercial—auto repair

Current use(s): Commercial—auto repair

Historical background:

Broadway Ave. has functioned as one of Denver’s major arterial roads since the 19th century. As automobile ownership increased in the 1910s, many automobile-related businesses, including sales showrooms and service centers, began to locate along Broadway Ave., especially in the blocks just south of Colfax Ave. Originally, Broadway Ave. ended at 20th Ave., where the off-kilter grid of downtown met Denver’s larger compass-oriented street grid. For decades, there had been efforts to extend Broadway Ave. into the downtown grid, but this was a costly and controversial proposal due to the amount of land acquisition and demolition required. The Broadway Extension was finally completed in the early 1920s.

2000 Broadway was created as part of the new Broadway Extension, located at the intersection of California St., 20th St., and the extended Broadway Ave. A real estate advertisement in the Denver Post on May 21, 1922 offered: “Prominent Corner at 2000 Broadway Extension. Just the place for a service station. 100-foot frontage on Broadway and California.” In 1924, the Kremer Tire Service Co. opened in this location. Many other automobile-related businesses also opened along the new Broadway Extension. The 1929 Sanborn Map shows a collection of automobile-related businesses clustered around this intersection in addition to Kremer Tire including...
another tire shop, two filing stations, automobile repair, radiator repair, fender repair, and automobile parking lots.

The Kremer Tire Service Co. operated at 2000 Broadway until 1936 when a Firestone Auto Supply & Service Store opened at this location. Founded in Akron, Ohio in 1900, the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. got a boost in 1906 when Henry Ford decided to use Firestone tires on Model Ts. The company grew quickly and, by 1926, it was producing more than 10 million tires a year, around one-fourth of the tires produced in the U.S. Firestone also became a leader in tire retail and automotive service with the launching of service centers in 1926. The location at 2000 Broadway was the second Firestone location in Denver; the first was at 770 Speer Blvd. An advertisement in the Denver Post on February 5, 1936 proclaimed “Good News for Denver Motorists! For many years Firestone Auto Supply & Service Stores and Firestone Dealers have served thousands of motorists in this area. And business has increased to the point that we are now bringing the world’s greatest extra values in automotive needs. We are opening another Firestone Auto Supply & Service Store at 2000 Broadway. Our new store is equipped with the latest model computing gasoline pumps and we are now better prepared to serve you than ever before.” The advertisement also announced deals on tires, lubrication and oil changes, brake adjustments, and auto supplies.

In the mid-twentieth century, businesses on Broadway Ave. had to compete with new suburban retail development. Urban Renewal was also reshaping much of downtown Denver, razing “slum” businesses to make way for redevelopment. Across the country, central business districts within dense downtowns were often abandoned in favor of suburban retail development which was more accessible to suburban dwellers. Downtown businesses had to compete with these new developments to continue to draw customers. Modern architecture was a way for a business to distinguish themselves from their competition.

In the 1960s, Firestone decided to replace their c.1920s facility with a new modern service center. The new store opened in June 1965 (building permits from this period are not available and no information could be located on the architect or other construction details). According to an article in the Denver Post on June 6, 1965, “the old Firestone was completely razed and the new building provides the most modern one-stop servicing the region.” The article also stated that the store would feature Firestone’s wide line of home supplies in addition to automotive products. The grand opening advertisement for the store offered deals on tires, car services and auto supplies as well as electric knifes, suit bags, televisions, air conditioners, refrigerators, radios, bikes, and outboard motors. There were also prizes including trips and cameras. For Christmas in 1965, Firestone offered deals not just on tires but also electric blankets, hair dryers, stereos, phonographs, irons, vacuums, watches, and bikes. Firestone advertised “Be a one-stop shopper this Christmas. Charge all your gifts on Firestone Uni-charge and make one low monthly payment.” In addition to a new modern design, Firestone also appears to have been using additional home products and consumer credit to attract business to this downtown location.

**Designation Eligibility Assessment**

**Landmark Designation Criteria:**

A structure or district may be designated for preservation if, due to its significance, it meets the criteria listed in subsections (1), (2), and (3) below

(1) The structure or district maintains its integrity;

(2) The structure or district is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance; and

(3) The structure or district meets at least 3 of the following 10 criteria:

- It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;

- It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;

- It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;

- It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;

- It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;

- It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community, or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;

- It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;

- It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;

- It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;

- It is associated with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation.

**Integrity:** If a structure maintains its integrity, it may be designated for preservation.

- Has integrity

- Does not have integrity
The Firestone building at 2000 Broadway Ave. is potentially significant under **Criterion C** as a good example of the Modern style applied to an auto-related commercial building. Modern styling was often used by automobile businesses to attract customers and present a modern image. Many of Denver’s auto-related buildings from the 1950s and 1960s have disappeared. Of the examples surviving in the downtown area including a Goodyear located across the street, a Goodyear at 15th and Tremont, and an Avis rental car on Broadway, this is the best example.

The Firestone building incorporates many elements of the Googie style. Googie was a type of mid-century modern architecture developed specifically for customers traveling by automobile. Located adjacent to major roadways, buildings were designed to catch the attention of passing motorists and to provide easy access and parking. Key Googie features included orientation for high visibility, unusual roof forms, prominent signage, bright colors, large expanses of glass, neon, multiple materials, geometric forms, and the incorporation of “Space Age” elements. Googie buildings commonly used materials such as aluminum, steel, glass, and concrete to create new and dynamic structural forms that emphasized angles, asymmetry, and the exaggeration of massing and structural forms. Glassy store fronts paired with dramatic and exaggerated forms emphasized the modernity of the building to draw the attention of customers with the promise that the services or goods offered inside were equally modern and in-style.

While the overall design of the Firestone building is fairly utilitarian, with an office/retail space connected to a series of service bays, many Googie elements are included to add visual prominence. These include the folded plate canopy roof; wall surface decorated with multi-colored tiles; oversized sign pylon and wall signage, which both incorporated neon; large, aluminum-framed store-front windows; a brick wall with a zigzag effect that echoes the design of the folded plate canopy roof; and the combination of brick, metal, glass, and tile on the building exterior.

The Firestone building is also potentially significant under **Criterion F** as an established and familiar feature of Broadway Ave./the Broadway Extension due to both its prominent location and distinctive architectural features. Visibility was key to business success. The building was intentionally constructed at an angle to Broadway rather than parallel to the road in order to increase the prominence at the intersection of Broadway, 20th St. and California St. The spatial arrangement on the site allowed for easier automobile access and differentiated the building from earlier pedestrian-oriented commercial structures.

Finally, the Firestone building is also potentially significant under **Criterion H** as a representation of automobile culture on a site that has held an automotive business since 1924 and been a Firestone location since 1936. The construction of a new, modern Firestone service center at this location in 1965 reflects the evolution of the business and downtown in the mid-20th century. The booming postwar economy provided a boost to the middle class and suburban development. Because these new suburban developments were typically outside of local transit lines, the personal automobile became essential to the new suburban population. As Americans became dependent on the automobile, it created a new car culture that shaped urban
development. This included new automotive-centric leisure activities such as drive-in movie theaters and fast food stands as well as businesses to service automobiles. This new Firestone located was placed primarily to serve those commuting between downtown where they worked and the suburbs where they lived. The Firestone illustrates the evolution of the automotive service center as a significant commercial building type related to the automobile and Denver’s mid-century car culture. The building illustrates how a building type’s design and site layout are shaped by accommodation to the needs of automobile as well as the stylistic and economic trends of the day.