

## Document Based Question (DBQ)

1. Title / Content Area:	Speer and the City Beautiful	    
2. Historic Site:	Denver Civic Center Park	
3. Developed by:	Adams 12 School District	
4. Grade Level and Standards:	6-8 6 <sup>th</sup> : History 1.1, 1.2, Geography 2.1, 2.2 7 <sup>th</sup> : History 1.1, 1.2, Geography 2.1, 2.2, Civics 4.1 8 <sup>th</sup> : History 1.1, 1.2, Geography 2.1	
5. Assessment Question:	How was Mayor Robert Speer able to promote the idea of “City Beautiful” through the building and landscapes developed during his time in office?	
6. Contextual Paragraph	<p>Mayor Robert Speer made his mark on the Denver landscape by participating in the “City Beautiful” movement made popular during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Progressive leaders used the idea of promoting civic and moral virtue through urban planning and the beautification of architecture as a response to the crowded living conditions in major urban areas. The overcrowding was due to a population boom attributed to immigration, movement from rural areas, and increased birth rates. Spurred by the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, this movement created a surge of neoclassical architecture throughout the United States. Speer traveled throughout the United States, Europe, and to the Exposition as well, joining with other leaders who thought the best way to combat ugly, dirty, overcrowded cities was to create a sense of European beauty. This entailed the use of white neoclassical buildings based on the design of large European cities and the provision of open spaces for citizens to enjoy.</p> <p>Speer committed to this design plan and brought it to Denver, clearing a wide swath of land in central Denver west of the Capitol and constructing Civic Center, which is now a designated National Historic Landmark. In addition, he worked to plant trees in city parks and gave away thousands of trees to be planted by city residents. Today, Mayor Speer’s vision is still reflected in the beauty of Denver’s Civic Center district and throughout the city.</p>	
7. Connection to Historic Preservation	The History Colorado State Historical Fund, Historic Denver, and many other organizations and citizens have worked collaboratively with the owners of local properties to landmark many of the historic buildings and neighborhoods created during the City Beautiful Movement including the Denver Civic Center Complex and our Capitol.	

## Document Set

Cornice and Capital detail - City & County Building, Civic Center, Denver, Denver County, CO Photos from Survey HABS CO-68



<https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.co0099.photos/?sp=9>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What elements of architecture do you see in this photo of the Denver City and County building?
2. How do these architectural elements make the building beautiful to the eye of the visitor and citizen?
3. What materials do you think were used to construct this building based on this photo?

Panorama #3 Denver



<https://www.loc.gov/item/2007661982/>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you think this photo was taken from at the turn of the century in Denver?
2. What elements of design did Mayor Speer and the city planners use to make Denver beautiful?
3. What type of buildings do you see in this photo?
4. How do the roads, parks and buildings work together to create a beautiful city?

City of Denver and the snow-capped Rockies, from the Capitol, Colorado



<https://www.loc.gov/item/2005676091/>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What are the key buildings and elements of a city in this stereograph photo?
2. Is the city visually attractive to visitors? Explain.
3. What types of buildings are located in the foreground?
4. From what location would this photo have been taken from?

Bird's eye view of Denver, Colorado, 1908.



<https://www.loc.gov/item/75693133/>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. How was this map used to showcase the City Beautiful Movement?
2. What would the purpose of this map have been during the turn of the century?
3. Why would city planners like this map after they implemented the City Beautiful Movement with Mayor Speer?

**Assessment Question**

How was Mayor Robert Speer able to promote the idea of “City Beautiful” through the building and landscapes developed during his time in office?

Response

This project was paid for in part by a History Colorado State Historical Fund grant.