



DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

This form is for use in nominating individual structures and districts in the City and County of Denver. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Questions about the application or designation process can be directed to DenverLandmark Preservation staff at landmark@denvergov.org or (303) 865-2709.

Property Address: 555 East 8th Avenue

The following are required for the application to be considered complete:

- X Property Information
- X Applicant Information and Signatures
- X Criteria for Significance
- X Statement of Significance
- X Period of Significance
- X Property Description
- X Statement of Integrity
- X Historic Context
- X Bibliography
- X Photographs
- X Boundary Map
- X Application Fee



1. Property Information

Name of Property

Historic Name: Hart House

Other or Current Name: Hart-McCourt House

Location

Address: 555 E 8th Avenue Denver, CO 80203

Legal Description:

LOTS 18 TO 21, INCLUSIVE, BLOCK 13, EMERYS CAPITOL HILL ADDITION AND LOT 18, BLOCK 13, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS ADDITION TO THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, STATE OF COLORADO

Number of resources:

<u># Contributing</u>	<u># Non-Contributing</u>	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Primary Structures</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Accessory Structures</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Features</u>

Contributing or Non-Contributing Resources

The primary structure and carriage house are contributing resources due to their association with the significance criteria, their retention of integrity, and the fact that both fall within the period of significance. As such, they are considered contributing resources to this historic designation.

General Property Data

Date of construction: 1898
 Architect (if known): Varian and Sterner
 Builder (if known): N/A
 Original Use: Single Family Residential
 Current Use: Office
 Source(s) of information for above:

Denver Rocky Mountain News reported on September 2, 1897, that lots 18 to 21 of block 13 of Emery’s Capitol Hill Addition had been sold to Richard H. Hart for \$9,850. The following day, they mentioned that “Mr. Hart’s intention is to erect a \$20,000 home”. An application for Water Supply to the Denver Union Water Company for a “new building” was made on July 7, 1898. Architect: Varian and Sterner Source of Information: Rocky Mountain News - 1898

Previous documentation

The property has been surveyed as part of the citywide building survey Discover Denver and a State of Colorado Architectural Inventory Form (1403) completed. The inventory form indicates that the property is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and as a Denver Landmark.

2. Owner/Applicant Information

An application for designation may be submitted by:

- X Owner(s) of the property or properties, or
- Member(s) of city council, or
- Manager of Community Planning and Development, or
- Three residents of Denver, if they are not owners of the property or properties

Owner Information

Name: M Karen Christiansen

Address: 555 E. 8th Avenue, Denver CO 80203

Phone: 303-447-8087

Email: christiansen45@yahoo.com

Primary Applicant (if not owner)

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Prepared by

Name: Evan Lockhart Borman, Historic Preservationist

Address: 769 Monroe St. Denver CO 80206

Phone: 303-949-1089

Email: evan@elborman.com



Owner Applicant:

I/We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as a structure for preservation.

I understand that this designation transfers with the title of the property should the property be sold, or if legal or beneficial title is otherwise transferred.

Owner(s): M. Karen Christiansen Date: 9-20-21
(please print)

Owner(s) Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

For individual designations, if the owner does not support the designation, the applicants must conduct outreach to the owner. Describe below the efforts to contact the owner to discuss designation and other possible preservation alternatives. Please provide dates and details of any communications or meetings with the property owner, or the property owner's representatives.

3. Significance

Criteria for Significance

- a. It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- b. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;**
- c. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;**
- d. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
- e. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;
- f. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;**
- g. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
- h. It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
- i. It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;
- j. 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.

Statements of Significance

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

The Hart-McCourt House contains several stories intertwined with notable figures in Colorado history. These are three generations of the Charles Nelson and Elizabeth Arms Hart family, including their grandson Stephen Harding Hart, Colorado's first State Historic Preservation Officer, and Emma Fellows McCourt and Peter McCourt, brother of Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt, more famously known as Baby Doe Tabor. These early residents lived in the house at 555 E 8th Ave from 1898 until 1915.

The property's first owner was Richard Hart, who owned the property from 1897 to 1909. Assessor records dated September 1, 1897 list Richard Huson Hart as owner of lots 18 to 21. The *Denver Rocky Mountain News* reported on September 2, 1897, that lots 18 to 21 of block 13 of Emery's Capitol Hill Addition had been sold to Richard Huson Hart for \$9,850. The following day, an article mentioned that "Dr. R.H. Hart has recently bought four lots for \$10,000 at Eighth and Pearl street, and Mr. Hart's intention is to erect a \$20,000 home."

The 1899 Denver Directory listed Charles and Richard as residents of 555 E 8th Ave. The 1900 census records show the entire Hart family residing there, listing Charles as a doctor - a surgeon, and Richard as a law student. It can be inferred that the *Denver Rocky Mountain News* article from 1897 may have

mixed up the occupations of the father Charles Hart and son Richard Hart. This might also be an indication that the purchase and construction of the home involved both father and son.

The Hart Family were recognized persons who influenced Denver society and lived at 555 E 8th Ave from 1898 until 1909. Elizabeth Arms and Charles Nelson Hart moved to Denver with their three-year-old son, Richard Huson, in 1878. Charles was an early Colorado pioneer who moved west from Connecticut in the 1860s as a telegrapher with the Union Pacific Railroad. He went on to medical school, graduating from the Missouri Medical College in 1875. After marrying Elizabeth Arms, of Lawrence, Kansas, they settled in Denver with their three-year-old son Richard. Their daughter Francis was born in 1881.

Charles became a respected surgeon. Volume X of *The Critique*, formerly the Denver Journal of Homeopathy, features Dr. Charles N. Hart as one of two people in the "Portrait of the Month". A short biography highlights his achievements through 1903, many of which coincide with the timeline of when he occupied the 555 E 8th Ave home. *The Critique* applauds the impact of his work and his written contributions to the health community locally, statewide, and overseas:

"The subject of our portrait this month. Dr. Charles Nelson Hart is a graduate of the Homeopathic Medical College of Missouri, '73; Hahnemann, Chicago, '81; St. Louis School of Midwifery, '76; and was one of the pioneers of our school in Denver. He has done strong work and good work for the cause and in consequence has a very select practice second to none in the state. In 1889, Dr. Hart and family spent the year at the surgical centers of Europe, further fitting himself for surgical work in which special line he has made an enviable reputation. He is a member of the University Club Chess Club of all the Masonic bodies; his family (one of the thirteen Colonials who were entitled to a coat-of-arms) are in lineal descent from Governor Thomas, Wells Governor John Webster, Brig. Gen. Selah Hart, and many other noted people, as we find chronicled in the Colonial Wars' Society records, of which society Dr. Hart is a charter member.

The doctor has been president of our city and state society as well as president of the State Board of Medical Examiners, but lately has resigned from all office and is paying attention (as he says) to something to come. Dr. Hart has written considerable and to the point his articles have been quite extensively copied abroad, where he is as well-known as at home, both socially and professionally."

According to Volume XII (1905) of *The Critique*, Dr. Hart was appointed as the Gynecology staff for the Denver City and County Hospital that year.

Richard Huson Hart was 23 years old when the house at 555 E 8th Ave was built. According to the *Fourth Report - Harvard Class of 1897*, Richard first graduated from Harvard in 1897. He began his career doing assorted newspaper work in Denver and New York City. Richard returned to Harvard to study law from 1899-1901. He then moved back to Denver and studied law at Denver University from 1902 to 1903 and then operated a private practice in Denver. Richard filled office of attorney for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company in 1903 – the same year John D. Rockefeller purchased the company – until 1909. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company played a pivotal role in the history of American labor relations and the industrialization of the West.

In 1903, Richard married Elizabeth Jerome, daughter of eminent Colorado financier John Lathrop Jerome. They lived at 555 E 8th Ave. Elizabeth would later be a key figure in the founding of the Denver

Symphony Orchestra. They had two children while living at 555 E 8th Ave: John L.J. and Stephen H. Stephen was born April 13, 1908 and would go on to co-found one of Colorado's largest and most influential law firms: Holland & Hart. He was Colorado's first State Historic Preservation Officer, among other accolades. Upon selling 555 E 8th Ave in late 1909, Richard Hart and his family relocated to 729 E 8th Ave (since demolished) and his parents moved to 914 Ogden St. The house was sold to Emma Fellows McCourt. Shortly after the sale Richard Hart was elected secretary of Colorado Fuel and Iron; at age 34, this was a notable accomplishment.

From 1909 until she passed in 1912, the Hart-McCourt House was owned by Emma McCourt who was known as an excellent businesswoman and a well-respected socialite. Her husband, Peter McCourt, was brother to the infamous Baby Doe Tabor. Prior to moving to Denver, Emma helped her father manage the successful Springfield Wagon Company, owned by the family in Missouri. In 1893, a popular, national carriage newsletter called *The Hub*, lists Emma as one of the directors of the company.

A few years after the death of her first husband Charles T. Keet, Emma went to visit her sister in Denver in the spring of 1895 where she met Peter McCourt. They married the following June. She was a strong, independent-minded woman who applied her business skills and unyielding initiative to her husband's work. In the 1912 *Denver Post* article following her death, she was acknowledged for her leadership and entrepreneurial spirit that drove her interest and significant involvement in the management of Denver's Broadway and Tabor Grand Opera House theaters. During at least one season, Emma helped Peter with his theater work and was known to travel to New York to book acts. The *Denver Post* article reported that she was "the one woman in America who entered the conferences and made demands of the theatrical powers residing on Broadway, New York".

According to *Peter McCourt Jr. and The Silver Theatrical Circuit*, a historical and biographic study, Emma's parties were the rage of Denver society and continued in their popularity until her death from pneumonia caused by a severe cold. It goes on to mention that she was well respected for her charitable work in Denver. She often secured academic scholarships for intelligent but impoverished young men. Her charitable work helped many struggling and impoverished families reach financial solvency. Her activities were frequently documented in many of the society news articles in Denver.

Emma McCourt was exceptionally progressive in her view of women in society, despite coming from wealth and considering society's expectations of and beliefs about women at that time. In the 1912 *Denver Post* article she is quoted to say, "I think it is every woman's duty to test her strength against the world and its conditions – whether she has to or not. Having done this one learns the need of sympathy, one comes to appreciate the work of others and the obstacles that beset their path and know that every success won the means of a battle fought, a soul bruised, a heart hurt." She also believed, that "[i]f every individual would perform every act of kindness in his path, the world would have no need for organized charities." These views guided Emma to be an influential contributor to her society and her management skills and insight were valuable to her and her husband's work. She is honored by the *Denver Post* article as a notable female figure of positive influence to her community and city.

Peter McCourt, Emma's husband, was best known as the prominent theater manager of the world-famous Tabor Grand Opera House and Broadway Theater. He was also the younger brother of Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt, more famously known as "Baby Doe Tabor," the second wife of the "Silver King," Horace Tabor. In 1873, Peter McCourt moved to Leadville from Wisconsin with an interest in Colorado's mining boom. In Leadville he met Horace Tabor, a man who had made huge profits from silver mining and other investments.

Peter McCourt and Horace Tabor's relationship led to McCourt managing the Tabor Grand Opera House and building his legacy by becoming one of the most successful theater managers in the country. McCourt booked traveling theater, musical, and opera acts and companies in various Colorado theaters and opera houses. The Silver Circuit was conceived and executed by the intelligent and business tactful McCourt. His strategy was to book acts on consecutive dates, in a new city each day that connected performance companies and troupes traveling through or from Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to the Pacific Coast. This strategy was built around new railroad lines and routes. Prior to this arrangement, companies from the Midwest or the east coast on their way to the Pacific coast lost at least one week traveling through states in the mountain region of the west. This resulted in a financial loss for all companies involved. This circuit easily and efficiently connected acts from the East coast to the West coast. The Silver Circuit included thirteen stops: Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Trinidad, Salida, Aspen, Leadville in Colorado; Salt Lake City, Provo, Ogden, and Park City in Utah; and Evanston and Rawlins in Wyoming. The plan was perfected and launched a successful operation in 1886.

From his employment as the assistant manager of the Tabor Grand Opera House in 1883 until his death in 1929, Peter McCourt was the leading theater manager in Denver. When Horace Tabor was forced to sell the Tabor Grand Opera House following the decline of his fortune in 1893, Peter came into full management as lessee. In 1896 he became lessee of the Broadway Theater as well. McCourt introduced the first films to Denver in 1897 as well as talking movies later. He worked diligently to expand his connections, often traveling to New York to partner with booking agencies there. An *Albuquerque Citizen* article from 1908 celebrates the signing of a contract between McCourt and the Elks opera house in Albuquerque, New Mexico adding the Elks to the Silver Circuit starting the opening season of 1909, the year he and his wife Emma moved into the Hart-McCourt House. The article also mentions that McCourt was partnered with John Cort of Seattle.

Together, they controlled the Silver Circuit which began in Denver, circled north to Salt Lake City and then back down to Pueblo. The circuit then traveled south through Trinidad, Albuquerque, and El Paso, then to and up the west coast all the way up to Seattle. During the time the McCourts owned the 555 E. 8th Ave home, Peter was proactive in expanding his circuit, finding new theaters, and replacing theaters that had failed or burned down. The *Gus Hill's National Theater Directory* for 1914 lists Peter as the booking manager for multiple cities in several states. These include Denver, Idaho Springs, Pueblo, Salida, and Trinidad in Colorado; Laramie and Cheyenne in Wyoming; and Santa Fe, New Mexico. The growing industry and interest in movies eventually led to the closure of many opera houses and theaters in the Silver Circuit. The Silver Circuit eventually lost traction and was retired around 1915.

An article from the *Denver Post* from April 5, 1929 following Peter McCourt's death celebrates his accomplishments and success in the Denver theater business and beyond. McCourt was considered a wise businessman and was involved in the development of several properties around Colorado. His input was instrumental in incorporating the town of Sheridan in 1887 and getting the Pacific railroad running through it. His occupations throughout the years included: vice-president and treasurer of the Tabor Investment Company, treasurer of the Gold and Silver Extraction Company, vice president and treasurer of the Matchless Concentration Company, treasurer of the Hunki-Dora Mining Company, director of the Matchless Mining Company, and president of the Sheridan Townsite Company of Colorado - all of which pre-date his residing at 555 E 8th Ave.

On July 29, 1912, the *Denver Post* published that Emma McCourt died from pneumonia in her 555 E 8th Ave home. Following her death, Emma's father H. Frank Fellows briefly owned the home. Assessor

records list Peter McCourt as the owner of 555 E 8th Ave in January 1914, followed by his second wife, Jessie McCourt, in March of that same year. The 1915 Denver Directory lists Peter as residing at this address as well as his company, McCourt Amusement & Investment Co. In 1915, the McCourts decided to sell the home giving the reason that the Cort Theater in New York City was requiring much of Peter's time.

c. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type

The Hart-McCourt House is an excellent example of the Classical Revival (or Neo-Classical) architectural style, which was popular from 1895-1950. It was built in 1898 and designed by Denver architects Varian and Sterner. Classical Revival style is distinguished from other contemporary revival styles with its use of symmetrical facades with central entries, full-height porches supported by classical columns and the use of classical details such as broken pediments, dentilled cornices and balustrades. It gained popularity in America after the 1893 Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. This exposition had a Classical theme, expressed in the Exposition's expansive and opulent exhibit halls designed by some of the country's most renowned architects. The Columbian Exposition had along-lasting influence on American civic architecture, but also brought Classical principles into vogue for residential design.

The Hart-McCourt House exemplifies the Classical Revival style with its dramatic front porch which dominates the front façade of the building, drawing the eye of passersby on 8th Avenue. The porch is supported by paired Ionic columns and features a decorative balustrade on the second level. The overhanging eaves feature a dentil course and frieze band underneath the cornice – another expression of the Classical Revival style.

A side addition carries across many of the above-mentioned character-defining features, including the balustrade, cornice and dentil course. A later 1911 carriage house was designed by the Denver firm Sterner and Williamson – Sterner's next architectural firm. The carriage house matches in architectural style although it was built 13 years later, probably due to the continuity of designers.

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

Constructed in 1898, during Capitol Hill's initial heyday, the Hart-McCourt House exemplifies a long period of Capitol Hill's illustrious history, while its prominent location facing onto east 8th Avenue makes it a familiar and orienting feature to passersby. The building has been a familiar feature of the neighborhood for over 100 years.

After the Silver Panic in 1893, economic depression fell upon Denver and the entire state. Many residences were converted into boarding houses or subdivided their lots and built smaller homes as infill. Smaller homes, rowhouses and duplexes became common. In the early 1900s apartments became a popular investment for developers in Capitol Hill, which were previously uncommon in the area. Over the next several decades, the landscape of Capitol Hill would densify and change. Following the Great Depression there would be little single-family construction at all. Modern apartment buildings replaced older Victorians and other buildings that did not survive the test of time. As a result, Capitol Hill is one of the more architecturally diverse and colorful neighborhoods in the city. 555 E. 8th Ave stands distinguished and resilient on the corner of 8th and Pearl, well established in its place as a historic visual feature of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood early development.

The house is a key visual feature for those traveling along 8th Avenue and Pearl Street. The House

occupies four lots making it the largest single-family structure on Pearl Street between 8th and 9th Avenue. Its grand architecture and construction reflect the city's wealthy that occupied Capitol Hill in the late 1800s.

Built in 1898, 555 E. 8th Ave was constructed during the early stages of development of Emery's Capitol Hill addition. A 1903-1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows 555 E. 8th as one of two houses on Pearl street between 8th and 9th Avenue, indicating that it was one of the earliest developments in that part of Capitol Hill. The other House no longer stands, leaving 555 E. 8th Avenue to be the oldest surviving structure on the block. The intersection of 8th and Pearl is shared by the John Porter House and next door to it, heading west on 8th Avenue, the Malo House, and the Cheesman-Boettcher (Governor's) Mansion, all local Denver landmarks. The remainder of the block is home to parking lots and high-rise apartments, all of which serve to tell the evolving tale of Capitol Hill's development.

Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1898- 1915

The period of significance encompasses the original construction of the house and the addition of the carriage house. It spans the ownership of the house by two prominent Denver families: the Harts and McCourts.

4. Property Description

- a. **Summary Paragraph** - Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, materials, setting, size, and significant features.

The Hart-McCourt House is a two and a half story structure atop a Denver Hill that faces south onto east 8th Avenue. It sites on a large lot located on the northwest corner of E 8th Avenue and Pearl Street. This property was one of the earliest developments in this part of Capitol Hill, east of Pennsylvania. According to the Assessors Record the building is 9,781 square feet (it does not distinguish if that footprint is only for the primary structure or all structures on the property) and sits on an 11,997 square foot lot. The property includes a similarly designed carriage house which was built in 1911.

Both the primary structure and carriage house are good examples of the Classical Revival Style. The primary structure is the work of architect firm Varian and Sterner. It and the carriage house are comprised of brick, stone, and wood. Notable features on this property include the full width, projecting semi-circle front porch with stone steps and stone capping. The porch is supported by four pairs of Ionic columns and features a balustrade on top. The roof is hipped with boxed eaves and cornice with dentils. The walls are detailed with a belt course and quoins.

- b. **Architectural Description** – Describe the architectural features of the structure(s) (i.e. building) in a logical sequence, from the ground up or façade by façade. Identify the key visual aspects or character-defining features of the structure.

The two and a half story primary structure faces south and is located on the northwest corner of E 8th Avenue and Pearl Street. The Hart-McCourt House is a unique example of Classical Revival that carries distinctive architectural features. These features include the semi-circle front porch, brick patterning, window pediments and classical surrounds, and a prominent wall dormer. The entrance features a large

paneled door with glass panes. The house includes an attic and a basement. It features brick walls and hipped roof with asphalt shingles. The roof features boxed eaves, dentils, and hipped, wall dormers. There are two decorative brick chimneys and a skylight. The walls are detailed with a belt course and quoins. The main entrance features a full width, projecting porch with stone steps and stone capping. The porch roof is flat and is supported by four pairs of columns. The front entrance features a partially glazed, paneled double door. Double and single hung wood cottage windows with pilasters can be found on all sides of the house. The house is adorned with multiple sets of paired windows and divided light windows made of wood or stained / leaded glass, all with stone sills. The property includes a carriage house that shares many of the character-defining features with the main structure. This includes the hipped roof, boxed eaves, cornice with dentils, belt course, and quoins. The carriage includes a small, second-level porch with a balustrade that is identical to the one on the House.

The house sits atop a Denver Hill that has been clipped with a recently constructed retaining wall. Denver promoted this landscape configuration since it allowed rain hitting public sidewalks to drain into the street rather than onto private property, while also providing an attractive planting strip at street curb level. According to the Denver Landmark Design Guidelines, a number of Denver's historic districts feature properties elevated above the street with mostly flat front yards that slope steeply towards the street at the inner edge of the sidewalk, including East 7th Avenue, which is located directly across the street from the property.

- c. **Major Alterations** - Describe changes or alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations, if known.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1903-1904 shows a single structure on the southeast end of the property. As early as 1925, a Sanborn map shows the addition of a detached garage/carriage house as well as additions to the west side and rear of the house. This included expanding the front porch to partially wrap around a portion of the house's west elevation. By 1929, the second story porch on the West elevation was enclosed.

According to Architectural Inventory Form completed by Discover Denver, the McCourts added the brick garage/carriage house in 1911. The McCourt garage was built by A. Danielson for about \$3,000 and designed by Sterner & Williamson, an architectural firm Frederick Sterner started in the years following the dissolution of his partnership with Varian. This would support why the craftsmanship of the garage closely matches the House. The south-facing window on the carriage house was replaced in 2019 by its current owner.

A steel fire escape was built at the rear of the building using angle iron, "I" beams, and open mesh as decking. The owner and city have no records of its construction. The property also has a 52.5' x 41' parking lot on the alley side of the lot. It is estimated that these alterations were made in the 1980s. Surrounding the parking lot is a wooden fence and short retaining wall, built from old wooden railway beams. The fence and retaining wall are both deteriorated, but the concrete slab itself is still serviceable, with few cracks.

A masonry and stone wall / fence was also added in 2018 by its current owner. Located at the base of the iconic Denver Hill, where it meets the sidewalk. Its construction is differentiated from the original home and carriage house, yet is compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features.

5. Integrity

The property at 555 E 8th Avenue retains a high level of integrity in all seven aspects. Its size, classical architecture, and quality construction reflects Denver's residents that developed and occupied Capitol Hill during the time of construction. It sits on four lots and is constructed with incredible detail, ornamental detailing, fine materials, and masonry. Its workmanship is evidence of the skill and craft of notable Denver architectural firm Varian and Sterner. The two are master architects and have contributed important work to Denver's early landscape. The property beautifully reflects architectural characteristics of the Classical Revival Style – an expression of the aesthetic and historical character of that time. Even the additions reflect excellent craftsmanship as they blend seamlessly to the original structure and design.

Located at the corner of 8th and Pearl atop a Denver Hill, it is the largest single-family structure on Pearl street between 8th and 9th Avenue. A 1903-1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows 555 E. 8th Ave as one of two houses on Pearl street between 8th and 9th Avenue, indicating that it was one of the earliest developments in that part of Capitol Hill east of Pennsylvania, also known as the Emery's Capitol Hill addition. The other house has been long demolished, leaving 555 E. 8th Avenue to be the only surviving structure on the block from those early years. The property is yards away from the East Seventh Avenue Historic District which includes several individually landmarked houses.

The west and north (rear) additions, and porch enclosure, to the primary structure made prior to 1929 are compatible with the building's character and do not negatively impact the building's integrity. The addition of the retaining wall and parking lot impact the integrity of setting and feeling, but do not detract from the essential features of the primary structure and carriage house. Similarly, the metal fire escape added at the rear of the primary structure goes unnoticed as it is not clearly visible from the public right-of-way. As such, the property retains a high degree of integrity.

7. Historic Context

In the 1880s and 1890s Capitol Hill was home to many of Denver's wealthy residents. During this time, wealth was often acquired through mining and related investments. The fortunes made from silver increased the construction of grand houses. However, the Silver Panic in 1893 resulted in an economic depression that impacted populations of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Approximately half of the city's banks closed, and the number of construction projects and building permits dropped drastically. From 1893 to 1898 many residents of Capitol Hill lost their fortunes. Many converted their large houses to boarding houses or subdivided their lots to build smaller homes as infill. The Harts built 555 E 8th Ave at a time when Denver's economy was slowly recovering from the Silver Panic.

Denver Assessor Records show an S. Hugh Hastings as the owner of this property in July 1888. *Denver Rocky Mountain News* reported on September 2, 1897, that lots 18 to 21 of block 13 of Emery's Capitol Hill Addition had been sold to Richard H. Hart for \$9,850. The following day, an article mentioned that "Mr. Hart's intention is to erect a \$20,000 home". An application for water supply to the Denver Union Water Company for a "New Building" was made on July 7, 1898 by C. N. Hart. Later *Denver Rocky Mountain News* articles note that architects Varian and Sterner were preparing plans for the home. They were one of Denver's most notable architecture firms.

While many of Capitol Hill's most wealthy families were left penniless after the Silver Panic, this was not the case for the Hart family, whose financial and social status survived. In their years living in Colorado, the Hart family established themselves as professionals in their careers in medicine and law. In 1909, Richard Hart sold the house to Emma Fellows McCourt after relocating his family to 729 E. 8th Avenue. As previously mentioned, Emma was an intelligent businesswoman, well-respected socialite, and admired philanthropist. Her husband, Peter McCourt, was the leading theater manager in Denver and one of the most successful theater managers in the country.

McCourt was a pioneer in the theater business and was instrumental in the creation of the major theatrical circuit The Silver Circuit which would be one of many accomplishments and legacies he would contribute to the theater world. A *Denver Post* article from 1929 stated, "Mr. McCourt's life, more than any other man, was written into the theatrical history of Denver". The article goes on to say that for forty-five years, McCourt was the leading theater manager in Denver and that his name was recognized all over the theatric world. The article praises McCourt's life and work, stating "... the life history of Mr. McCourt is the history of stage in Denver." Peter McCourt resided in 555 E. 8th Avenue on and off throughout his years as a theater manager. Following Emma's death in 1912 her father, H. Frank Fellows, owned the home for a few years. Denver Directories show Peter living at the Brown Palace in 1913. Assessor Records show Peter as the owner in January 1914 then his second wife Jessie McCourt in March of that same year. The 1915 Denver Directory lists Peter as residing at this address as well as his company, McCourt Amusement & Investment Co.

Peter McCourt's brother-in-law and sister, Horace and Elizabeth 'Baby Doe' Tabor, are famously known for their incredible story of love, fortune, fame, and loss. Their story is one of the most scandalous in Colorado history. It inspired a Warner Brothers film in 1932, several books, two operas (1956 and 1958), a play, and various other art forms.

Post-Panic, purpose-built apartment buildings grew in popularity in Capitol Hill due to the economic depression and changing tastes. Most new, single-family construction in the area was small houses built on subdivided larger lots. Over the next few decades, the 555 E. 8th Avenue house continued to serve as a single-family residence. In 1915, Peter McCourt sold the home to the Keeler Brothers, a bond investment firm run by Francis William Keeler. Francis Keeler, his wife and four children lived at the property. In 1922 the house was sold to the Monaghan family, who would own the home for the longest period to date. The *Rocky Mountain News* simply reported: "Dr. D.G. Monaghan will take possession of the Frank Keeler home at 555 East Eighth Avenue about the middle of November". The home was occupied by Dr. Daniel George Monaghan, his wife, Mary Sullivan Monaghan, and their six children. Dr. Monaghan was an active and notable figure in the Denver medical community. He was also involved in several clubs and charitable activities. Daniel Monaghan died on January 17, 1940 and his wife Mary passed half a year later in September. Census records from that year showed all six children residing at the 555 East 8th Ave home. In February 1945, the Monaghan children sold the house to the son of hotel proprietors, Kenneth K. King.

In the decades following World War II, the residential landscape of the Capitol Hill and Cheesman Park area continued to change. The number of new single-family homes continued to decrease, and developers focused on increasing urban density. Between 1945 to 1947 the home experienced several short-term ownerships. In 1948, the home became a guest house and offered single rooms for rent. This was not uncommon for old houses and large homes in the area. By 1952 it was known as the Matchless Guest House and householder directories listed James W. and Iona Diener as the owners – perhaps in a nod to the Tabor connection. Around 1963, the business was purchased by Sam Houston and it operated

as the Sam Houston House where it continued as a boarding house until 1980.

In addition to changes in the residential landscape, architectural changes emerged in Capitol Hill, first along E. Colfax Avenue before spreading into the surrounding neighborhoods. Automobile ownership began to rise and along with it the development of hotels, motels, stores, and restaurants increased on E. Colfax. The increase in commercial uses was indicative of the economic, residential, and cultural shift of the neighborhood and the city. Many of the large historic houses were converted to offices. After its time as a boarding house, the House at 555 E 8th Ave was bought and converted to commercial space, used by a variety of businesses throughout the years. Householder directories show Richard Block as the owner in 1988 and accessor records show the Del Rio Corporation owned it from 1999-2015. Richard Angell owned the property briefly before selling it to its current owner, M. Karen Christiansen in 2015.

7. Additional Information

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Photographs





(Above) Projecting front porch. (Below) House facing east. Rear Addition on the right side of photo.





(Above) house facing west – this was an addition. (Below) Matching carriage house.





(Below) Balustrade. Ionic Columns.





(Above) Belt Course. Pilasters around window. Dentils above window. (Below) Quoins on corners. Dentils.



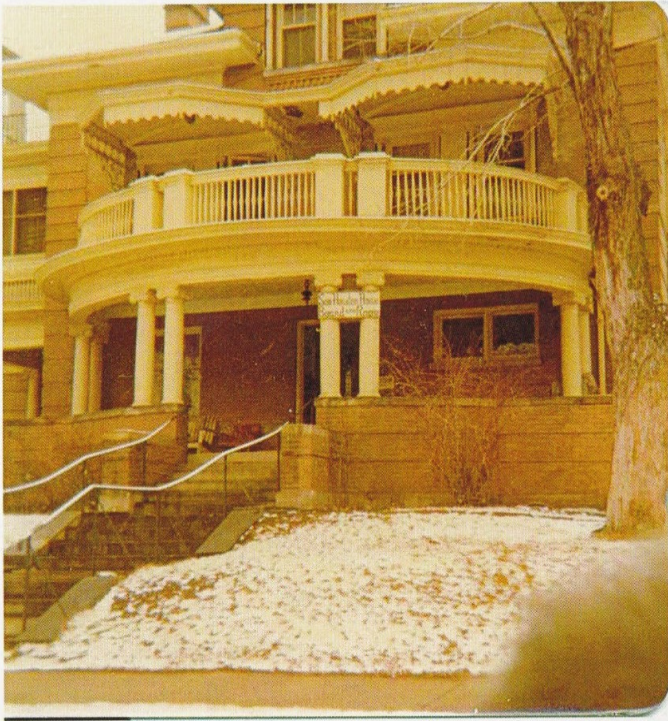
(Above) Rear Addition to the home, facing east. Quoins indicate where original corner was.



Date: Unknown

Description:

Exterior work on addition. House was expanded in the 1920's as shown in Sanborn Fire Maps. After addition in 1920's.



Date: Sometime between 1963-1980 during its time as the "Sam Houston House" Boarding House

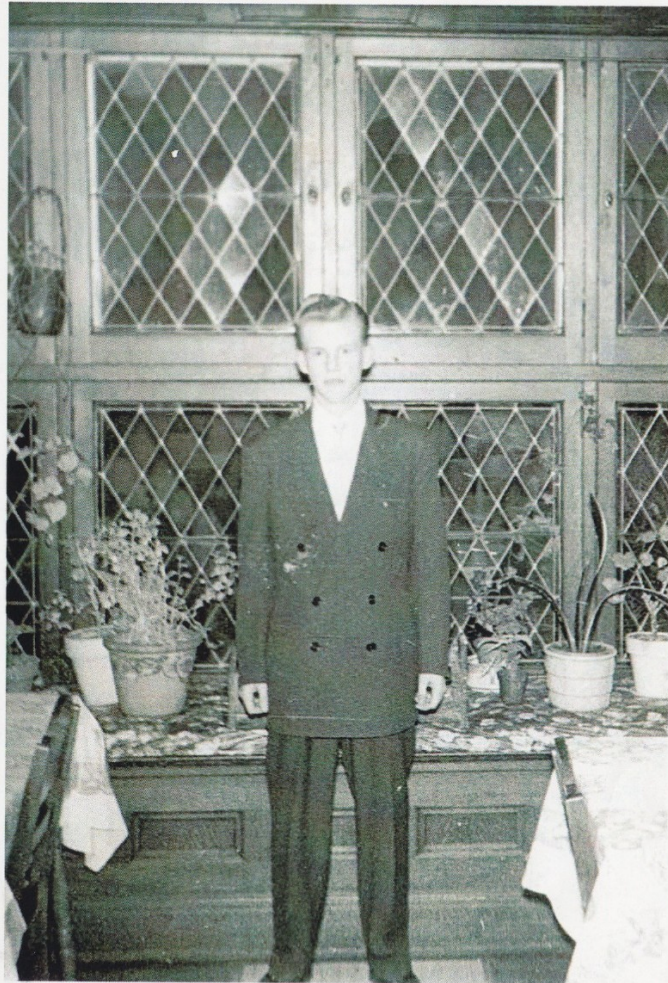
Top Photo: Front of house. Sign stating "Sam Houston House"

Bottom Photo: South East corner of the house showing the original stained-glass window.

From Homeowner's (M. Karen Christiansen) Scrapbook:

Lower Photo

Dick Deiner, high school aged boy, who lived in the mansion during the 1940's. He claimed to have seen the ghost of Horace Tabor around Halloween one year while he resided here. He said that he saw a man in the foyer wearing top hat and coat with tails – decked out in Victorian style to go to the Opera. Dick told the man that he was going to find his father, but when they returned the man was





Top Photo: The Monaghan family in the living room. Probably mid to late 30s. The clues being the age of the children and the molding of the ceiling. The ceiling was changed in the late 30s to early 40s due to a fire.

Bottom Photo: Probably late 50's to early 60s based on the dress styles. During this time the mansion was used as boarding house for young women.

Boundary Map

