

HISTORIC DENVER NEWS

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The Aztlan Theatre on Santa Fe, submitted as a site in need of preservation action through the 50 Actions for 50 Places Campaign. Photo: Jay Homstad

HISTORIC DENVER’S 50 ACTIONS FOR 50 PLACES CAMPAIGN

Fifty years ago a group of Denver residents, mostly young and from different fields and experiences, formed Historic Denver, Inc. and began saving the places we can’t imagine Denver without - from the Molly Brown House to Union Station. Since then, our organization has been involved with saving landmarks, neighborhoods, and the beloved historic resources and places that matter to Denverites.

To honor the organization’s founders and the legacy of 50 years, the newly launched **50 Actions for 50 Places** campaign seeks to uncover the next fifty places worthy of preservation action. Historic Denver’s Executive Director Annie Levinsky noted, “the Molly Brown House was saved by people who looked around their community and took action. The Museum’s success has now supported the preservation of hundreds of other historic places across the city for five decades. In this spirit we want to invite our community to tell us what places in their neighborhoods they most want to save for future generations.”

A major focus of the **50 Actions Campaign** is an invitation to the community to define what matters to our city, and reveal and raise awareness about sites, places and spaces that may have been overlooked or under-recognized in the past; places that are not yet recognized through programs like the Denver Landmarks program or the National Register of Historic Places. We’re also keen to identify places that tell the full depth and breadth of our city’s diverse story.

Launched on March 1, the campaign includes an up-to-date interactive map on our website where community members can submit recommendations. As ideas are added, you can track their location, a little background, why they matter, and see a picture of the resource, whether its a building, a sign, a quirky urban feature, or a public space.

Over the first several weeks of the campaign more than four dozen sites have already been suggested and the submission process will remain open through mid-May so there is still time to add the place that matters to you.

Once the site submission process is completed in May, we will confirm the official list of 50 sites for the campaign. Our staff and board will then work to develop a plan of action uniquely tailored for each resource, working closely with the individuals that suggested the site, as well as property owners and relevant community organizations. Examples of action strategies include storytelling, interpretive markers, increasing community awareness, providing technical assistance, or nominating a site for local, state, or National Register designation.

So far we have received entries ranging from grand to small, old to not so old. Here are some of the places that we’ve learned matter to Denver.

MY BROTHER’S BAR, 2376 15TH STREET



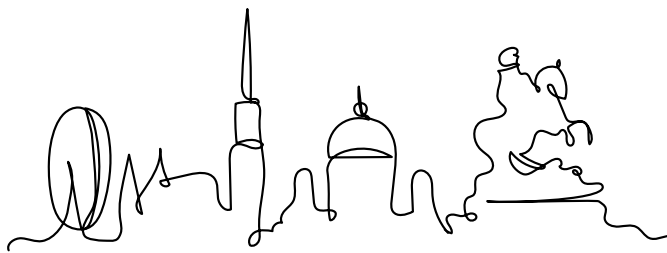
Heralded as the oldest bar in Denver, My Brother’s Bar has had many names throughout the years but got its start back in 1873 as the Highland House. As the bar changed names and ownership it was also known as Paul’s Place, when Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassaday, who was an inspiration for

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Current Issues

A Letter From Our Executive Director

ON MARCH 25TH, 2021 HISTORIC DENVER'S board and staff came together for a special session dedicated to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access. The meeting was the culmination of six months of work by a board task force convened to dive deeper into this work, its intersection with historic preservation and historical interpretation, and to make recommendations for next steps for the organization - steps that acknowledge the history of racial and social injustice in our city, and meet the demand for action demonstrated in recent protests, as well as on-going movements for change that have taken place over many decades. As a key step in this work, the Board adopted a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Value Statement, which will frame and guide our efforts moving forward.

Historic Denver, Inc. and the Molly Brown House Museum strengthen our commitment to preserving and amplifying a more inclusive history that represents all people of Denver and Colorado. As the demand for social and racial justice continues to grow, evidenced by the public protests led by concerned members of our community, we have been listening, learning, reflecting, and taking action.

Historic Denver started as a grassroots preservation organization in 1970, and over the course of fifty years has saved some of Denver's most beloved historic buildings and places. Traditionally however, historic preservation has focused on the designation of landmarks and the field has too often perpetuated a White affluent male narrative, failing to tell inclusive stories about historic places. Preservation has caused harm to members of our community by excluding their voices and connections to places in Denver. We acknowledge that systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression persists in historic preservation.

Historic Denver commits to advance the stories and histories of all people in our community and to elevate the field of preservation and local history. We commit to greater diversity, equity, awareness, inclusivity, and access with an appreciation for race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability and identification. This includes African American, Black, Latina/o, Hispanic, Chicana/o, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQI+ people and women. We will be an organization that better serves and reflects our communities and advances the stories and histories of all people in our community through preservation, education and advocacy.

Follow-up steps adopted along with the Values Statement include the creation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access Ambassadors on the board and staff to ensure that the Values Statement is being acted upon through our advocacy and programming, prioritizing diversity and representation on our board and staff, using storytelling to illuminate the diverse history in Denver, creating content that confronts issues of systemic prejudice in preservation, and challenging limited or nostalgic versions of history through engagement and accurate interpretation.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF PRESERVATION ACTION

In early March we were pleased to welcome **Michael Flowers** to the Historic Denver team as the Director of Preservation Action. Michael will be assisting in Historic Denver's advocacy efforts, implementing the **50 Actions for 50 Places** program, providing technical assistance to property owners, and managing Historic Denver's Action Fund, among other projects. Michael earned his Bachelor of Arts in History at Youngstown State University before continuing his education at Ball State University to earn a Master of Science in Historic Preservation. Michael worked a temporary position in Cleveland Restoration Society's Heritage Home Program and in late 2015 he was hired as the Community Preservation Specialist at Indiana Landmarks Eastern Regional office. In this role he advocated for historic preservation and provided preservation services for a 12-county region in eastern Indiana. Additionally, he worked as the Indiana National Road Association's executive director via contract managing daily operations for the organization and advocating for Indiana's section of the Historic National Road. Outside of the office Michael served on the Richmond, Indiana preservation commission for a term and was a volunteer member of Cambridge City Main Street's board of directors.

The Director of Preservation Action helps fill a vacancy on our team and provides the opportunity to make updates to other staff positions so that we can most effectively implement our mission and engage with the community. As part of these updates Beth Glandon is now Director of Research & Engagement and Shannon Stage is the Manager of Grants and Preservation Services, focusing on our grant partnerships and easement program. 🌱



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Jay Homstad
unless otherwise noted.

HISTORIC DENVER'S 50 PLACES FOR 50 ACTIONS CAMPAIGN

his novel “On the Road,” visited. A letter from Cassady to a friend while he was in the Colorado State Reformatory references Cassaday’s open tab. That tab is framed on the wall inside My Brother’s Bar, accompanied by a picture of Kerouac and Cassady.

For the last forty years, this local watering hole was run by Angelo and Jim Karagas who renamed it “My Brother’s Bar”. Currently under new ownership, this iconic resource has no plans to close, but despite its rich history, the building is not protected.

AZTLAN THEATRE, 976 SANTA FE

This mission-style theater was constructed in 1927 and originally named the Santa Fe Theatre. A long-time movie theater in the La Alma Lincoln Park Neighborhood, purchased by Tim Correa in 1972, the building eventually transitioned into a music venue and bar. Correa was active in the Chicano movement and renamed the theater the Aztlan Theatre after the mythical homeland of the Aztecs as a symbol for the community. This theater, with its distinct style of architecture and rich cultural history, has become an important structure in the neighborhood but it has not yet been designated at the local, state or federal level and is in need of reinvestment.

JULIA GREELEY BOARDING HOUSE, 2913 WALNUT



Julia Greeley was known as the Angel of Charity. Formerly enslaved, Julia was from Hannibal, Missouri. After she was freed by Missouri’s Emancipation Act of 1865, she worked serving white families in Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico, though most of her time was spent in Denver. Julia was known for her charity, and gave what she did not need

to assist poor families in her neighborhood. If her own resources were not adequate, she spent time begging for food, fuel or clothing for those who needed it. When Greeley died in 1918 hundreds attended the viewing at Sacred Heart Church, where Julia was a devoted member.

The boarding house where Julia lived has been altered and might not meet traditional definitions of historical integrity, but it is the only physical connection to Julia’s life beyond Sacred Heart, and tells an important story about where and how people lived in Denver’s earliest years.



Photo: Atom Stevens

CLIFF MAY HOMES, HARVEY PARK, SOUTHWEST DENVER

The Rocky Mountain Cliff May Homes consist of 170 mid-century modern prefabricated, modular post-and-beam tract homes built between 1954-1956 in Denver’s Harvey Park Neighborhood. California designer Cliff May and architect Christ Choate designed the homes, which could be purchased and constructed by local builders across the country. Denver hosts the largest collection of these homes outside of California. Locally they were constructed by D.C. Burns and Realty & Trust, who were prominent builders in Denver and constructed homes nationally including a 150-home tract of Cliff May Homes in Las Vegas, NV.

The homes are unique because of their association with Cliff May, a famous mid-century home designer. May is often described as the father of the California Ranch, and his designs helped popularize the mid-century Ranch home. Known for designing homes for the rich and famous, these prefabricated designs brought May’s California style to the masses.

7TH & GRANT STREETCAR DISTRICT



Representative of Denver’s rich legacy of streetcar commercial districts, the buildings on the corner of 7th and Grant have been serving the community for over a century. The corner building is two stories and was constructed circa 1907 to house the first listed business, the Bente Drug Company. Since that time numerous businesses have been housed at these locations. The second

building, a one story brick building on Grant St. was constructed around 1912. These buildings sprung up along the 7th Ave streetcar line serving those traveling on the line as well as the surrounding residential area.

Currently these buildings house local restaurants including Lou’s Food Bar, Luca, and Vesper Lounge. The structures are under review for a Certificate of Demolition Eligibility, but possible preservation actions are currently being discussed through city-sponsored mediation.

NATIONAL HUMANE ALLIANCE WATERING TROUGH



The National Humane Alliance distributed around 125 horse watering trough fountains to various cities around the country. Herman Lee Ensign, who died in 1899, donated his fortune to funding the National Humane Alliance to help instill humanitarian ideals. The fountains were intended to bring fresh water to horses and other animals. The fountains were made of granite, and while many have been lost, some remain such as the one at the paved triangle

where Colfax Ave, Tremont St. and 13th St. intersect. The plaque on the fountain reads: “1907 Presented by the National Humane Alliance Hermon Lee Ensign, Founder.”

HISTORIC CHINATOWN, 20TH AND BLAKE

The LoDo district was home to a bustling Chinatown in the 1870s and early 1880s. However, this piece of history has been forgotten as new buildings and communities occupied the space. The Re-Envisioning Historic Chinatown Project seeks to raise community awareness about this history and the deadly race riot that precipitated the end of Denver’s Chinatown. A plaque currently attempts to address this history, but misses the mark with insensitive language and by not acknowledging the racist nature of the riot, which involved the murder of Look Young. The current interpretation needs to be re-envisioned, which will include a new plaque and a mural to commemorate the moment in history.

LAKE STEAM BATHS, 3540 W. COLFAX AVE




Located in a quaint brick historic building along Colfax is the Lake Steam Baths. The Baths were opened by Harry and Ethyl Hyman in 1927. The Hymans fled to American to escape wartime Russia and settled in Denver. They wanted to bring a part of their culture to their new community as well as share the potential health benefits from a bath and sauna. Originally the business catered to Russian Jews who settled in the area, but as the Denver Community became more aware of the business it grew into a popular destination. The Baths have remained in the same building and the same family for 93 years, but the COVID Pandemic has recently put a strain on their operations and finances.




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Photo: Atom Stevens

UNDERSTANDING BRUTALISM

By Guest Contributor, Kimber Dempsey, Docomomo US/Colorado Board Member

Brutalism is a word that brings a visceral reaction to many who hear it. Why is this? Perhaps the most misunderstood of all of the modernist architectural styles, Brutalism often gets referred to as “massive,” “prison like,” or “stark.” When architects were originally building these large concrete and aggregate structures, there was no label for the style of architecture. The term Brutalism comes from “Béton brut” which means raw concrete in French. The architectural style was first associated with Le Corbusier, who designed the Cite Radieuse in Marseilles in the late-1940s, but Le Corbusier was not the only architect to introduce the use of raw concrete in buildings. The Bauhaus School started a movement of modernist architects that sought to use affordable materials to produce simple designs that are beautiful, functional, and can be mass-produced. Modernist architecture is true in its form, it has nothing to hide and shows its structure for the world to see.

In a world of color and intricate details, we can miss large, simple detailing in a building. Have you ever taken a moment to look at a Brutalist building throughout the day? The large simple shapes and raw materials change color as the sun moves across the horizon. Different patterns and shapes appear and disappear as the light illuminates part of the building or creates a shadow at other times of the day. It’s the simplicity of these buildings that is beautiful. Many of the Brutalist buildings have the impression of natural wood permanently patterned into the concrete, the knots, the grain, the texture, but you must approach the buildings and take a closer look to appreciate the detailing.

Brutalism is just beginning to come of age in terms of historic preservation, with buildings of this style reaching middle-age. Perhaps the most famous Brutalist preservation battle was waged over the fate of Boston City Hall, designed in the style in 1968 and nominated for landmark status in that city in recent years. And earlier this year the Washington Post published a tribute to the capital city’s collection of Brutalist buildings titled “Brutalist Buildings Aren’t Unlovable, You’re Just Looking at them Wrong.” The article notes that the style garners both disdain and devotion, but that “Brutalist buildings maintain one unflinching constant: a sense of permanence.” However, that permanence may only be symbolic, as few Brutalist buildings have been formally designated at the local level.

Colorado has a number of strong examples of Brutalism, including several in the Denver metro-area. These include the Federal Reserve Bank at 16th and Curtis, the Colorado Education Association at 1500 Grant, and the remaining portion of I.M. Pei’s complex at 16th & Court, now the tower portion of the Sheraton Hotel.

Eugene Sternberg’s Martin Miller Law Building at 1901 W Littleton Blvd, is a great example of a Brutalist building that you need to walk up to to truly appreciate. The exterior concrete walls have a raw texture created by vertical formwork boards of varying widths that were used when the concrete was poured. This textured appearance is contrasted against smooth concrete beams and columns that visually express the structure of the building. The structural elements frame a glass curtain wall on the main floor, which is heavily recessed along Littleton Boulevard, enhancing the building’s strong geometric appearance. Deep overhangs over ribbon windows on the second floor create a shadow line that makes the heavy-looking roof appear to float over the building. The strict rectilinear geometry of the building is only interrupted by the stair-hall at the northeast corner, where a first-floor wall opening expresses the staircase behind. The landscape design includes a water feature, a bridge, large mature trees, sculptures, and garden to welcome visitors to this elegant example of concrete modern architecture. Sternberg is among a small set of architects that once led the short-lived University of Denver School of Architecture and was also responsible for the

design of Arapahoe Community College and Heritage High School, two more fine examples of Brutalism in Littleton.



Questions about Brutalism are relevant in Denver today as the city debates the value of 123 Speer, now known as the Channel 7 building. Located at the intersection of Speer Blvd and Lincoln, many of us who have lived in Colorado for any amount of time have passed it frequently. The Brutalist architectural components of the building exist primarily in the octagonal tower. The use of the contrasting red rock aggregate, a local material, gives warmth to the structure, and is not purely raw concrete as many other Brutalist structures. The dramatic massing of the tower cantilevers over its entrance with deeply inset windows, creating a presence on the prominent thoroughfare. The architect was Raymond Bowers of Filmer and Bowers, Princeton N.J., the builder was the N. G. Petry Construction Co. of Denver and construction was completed in 1969. The Denver Landmark Commission considered the building at a public hearing on April 6 and confirmed that it meets the criteria for local designation. Denver City Council will consider the matter sometime this spring, and while the owner contests the designation, there is hope the tower could be adaptively reused in a redevelopment of the larger block.

Whatever the outcome for the Channel 7 building, Brutalist buildings will remain under threat as they endure their adolescent period, as buildings are typically in the most jeopardy of demolition between ages 30 and 60 years; not yet old enough for some, but far too old to be “new.” Despite rising awareness about mid-century design, Colorado’s modern commercial buildings have not yet garnered the respect of the Classical, Victorian, Craftsman, and Denver Square architecture more common in the center city. Reversing this trend is the aim of the new Colorado Chapter of Docomomo US. 🌱

ABOUT DOCOMOMO US

“Doco-wha?” you might ask? Docomomo US is a group of passionate individuals, including architects, real estate brokers, photographers, government leaders, preservationists, and other interested community members dedicated to the documentation and conservation of the architecture, landscapes, and design of the modern movement across the country. The Colorado Chapter of Docomomo US was formed in 2019 and Docomomo US was founded as a regional chapter of Docomomo International in 1995. To learn more and to join Colorado’s new chapter, visit www.Docomomo-US.org/chapter/Colorado. You can also connect on Instagram (@DocomomoCO), Facebook ([www.fb.me/DocomomoCO](https://www.facebook.com/DocomomoCO)), and LinkedIn ([www.Linkedin.com/company/DocomomoCO](https://www.linkedin.com/company/DocomomoCO)). The Colorado chapter holds a monthly meeting, open to the public, on Zoom (with plans for in-person meetings when it is safe to do so), that features talks by experts on modern architecture, landscape, and design.

PRESERVATION BRIEFS



Lipan Street in the La Alma Lincoln Park Neighborhood

La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District Application Update

By Shannon Stage, Manager of Grants and Preservation Services

Our Winter 2021 story, “Honoring the Layers of History in La Alma Lincoln Park,” covered the history of one of the oldest neighborhoods in Denver, with homes from the 1870s forward. La Alma Lincoln Park is also unique because of ties to the Chicano Movement, as these homes, streets, and park fostered leaders, artists and activists during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In 2016, this story sparked neighbors’ interest in honoring the community’s cultural heritage. With support from the La Alma Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association and Historic Denver, the neighbors spent the last four years on this work, holding community meetings, researching the history, collecting the stories of current and former residents, and inventorying the homes.

The outcome of these efforts is a proposal to create the La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District, a City of Denver designation, for the blocks east of the Park between Mariposa and Kalamath, from roughly 10th to 14th. This proposal includes flexible design guidelines to protect the aspects that make the neighborhood unique and convey its story, while supporting ongoing maintenance or upgrades to the homes and spaces.

The neighborhood group submitted the Historic Cultural District application in late March, initiating the formal consideration process. The first City-hosted (virtual) public meeting will be April 28, 2021 at 6:00pm, with a follow-up meeting on May 15, 2021 at 11:00am. The public hearing process will begin at the end of May/beginning of June, starting with the Landmark Preservation Commission and ending with the final vote at City Council.

You can stay tuned for updates, key meeting details, and links to the city’s web pages, at: <https://historicdenver.org/la-alma/> and you can offer your support to the effort by e-mailing landmark@denvergov.org and dencc@denvergov.org.



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Recent construction tour of Pancratia Hall, at Loretto Heights. Photo: Shannon Stage

Loretto Heights Rezoning On Course

After nearly three years, a proposal to rezone the Loretto Heights Campus in southwest Denver is on course for City Council consideration in mid-May. The rezoning follows the guidance of the Small Area Plan, created with a community committee that included Historic Denver representatives. The rezoning creates several distinct sections of the redevelopment, with special Planned Unit Development (PUD) language for the historic core of the campus, including the iconic Administration Building, Pancratia Hall, and the adjacent open space to the west. The PUD language also protects several mid-century modern structures and provides a road-map for their adaptive reuse and integration with new development. The Denver Planning Board unanimously recommended the rezoning on March 17 and the City Council hearing is scheduled for May 10.

In February Historic Denver had the opportunity to visit the in-progress rehabilitation of Pancratia Hall, which is the first Loretto Heights project to move forward. Hartmann Ely Investments is converting the former dorm into 77 units of permanently affordable housing. The building will include studios up to 4-bedroom units, and creatively uses spaces such as the former chapel, basement gymnasium, and attic. The views are outstanding, and the legacy of the Sisters of Loretto is alive and well.

City Launches Latino/Chicano Historic Context Study

Denver’s historic fabric comes from the stories of the diverse persons and groups who comprise its vibrant history. Led by Denver’s Landmark Preservation staff in partnership with the city’s I Am Denver storytelling project, this initiative will uncover and share the deep history and historic places of Denver’s Chicano and Latino communities. Through engaging public outreach and traditional historic research, this project will create a broad overview on the citywide settlement and development patterns of Latino and Chicano communities in Denver up to the 1990s. The project includes a group of advisors and

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CONGRATULATIONS
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stakeholders as well as community outreach and engagement. The context study will be a tremendous resource to Historic Denver, and particularly to the Discover Denver citywide survey project, which is jointly led by Historic Denver and the City.

Historic Denver will participate in the effort as a stakeholder, and we’re excited to share the work we’ve done with the La Alma Lincoln Park community, which specifically focused on the early history and Chicano movement history associated with that section of the city, where many of the movement’s leaders lived or worked.

Funding for the context study comes from: Community Planning and Development, the offices of councilmembers Jamie Torres and Amanda Sandoval, History Colorado’s State Historical Fund, and the Peter Grant Preservation Services Fund for Colorado of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



Future Uncertain for Remaining Elements of Halprin’s Skyline Park

In 2020, the Department of Parks & Recreation launched a new planning effort to redesign Skyline Park, located between 15th and 18th along Arapahoe in Downtown. The park already has an unfortunate preservation history. Constructed between 1972 and 1975, this one-acre linear park and plaza was a central feature of the Skyline Urban Renewal District. The park was designed by Lawrence Halprin, who subsequently went on to be one of the most lauded landscape architects of the later 20th century. Halprin’s three-block design was sunken below street level and heavily planted along the edges. Concrete elements such as retaining walls, stepped seating walls, planters and abstract fountains were the park’s most distinctive features. Each block included a major water feature, which were intended to invoke Colorado’s mountain setting. Twenty years ago the City undertook a redesign and nearly all Halprin’s design elements were eliminated, leaving only a few pieces, including the fountain in the 1600 block. In March, the concept plans unveiled by the city for the redesign did not include the remaining elements of Halprin’s design. Numerous preservation voices, including Historic Denver, have expressed concern to the city since incorporating Halprin’s work would not only preserve a piece of his legacy but help to tell the story of downtown’s evolution.

State Historical Fund Project Updates

By Shannon Stage, Manager of Grants and Preservation Services



With spring in the air, the building trades are ramping up to complete work or get started at our grant partner projects.

ALTHEA CENTER: ROOF RESTORATION (1400 Williams St)

Roof repairs on the 1955 addition to this elegant complex are underway in order to prolong the life of the roof and protect the building from water infiltration while the church raises additional funds for a full roof replacement. While the roof project will begin this spring, Building Restoration Specialties is also working on the final details of the terra cotta restoration, including the upper terra cotta capped parapet and other critical terra cotta elements.

Terra Cotta restoration on the upper capped parapet. Photo: Hoehn Architects

MONTVIEW BLVD PRESBYTERIAN: MILLER CENTER WINDOW AND PLASTER RESTORATION (4800-4850 E Montview)



SHF work at the Miller Center at Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church is getting underway later this spring as part of a larger capital reinvestment in the Park Hill landmark, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The SHF funding will restore the key elements of original windows and decorative and flat plaster work. Miller Center has been used for community purposes, such as theater, performance and meeting space, and this restoration will allow for greater public space use in the future.

Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church Miller Center hallway with visible peeling plaster. Photo: Shannon Schaefer Stage



Black American West Museum and Heritage Center, masonry and window restoration will be finishing up this summer. Photo: Shannon Schaefer Stage

BLACK AMERICAN WEST MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTER: WINDOW AND MASONRY RESTORATION (3091 California St)

The restoration project at the Black American West Museum & Heritage Center (BAWM) located in the historic Dr. Justina Ford House continues to move forward. Historic Denver is a close partner on this effort, helping to manage the grant implementation. Restoration of the masonry is almost complete, with the final cleaning happening on warm spring days. The next phase will include window restoration. Installation of the rehabilitated window frames will occur in April/May, with final painting of the window frames occurring in late May/early June. This project is a partnership led by the Black American West Museum, along with Historic Denver, History Colorado’s State Historical Fund, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation Partners in Preservation grant.

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF DENVER – ROOF REPLACEMENT AND GUTTER REHABILITATION (1400 N Lafayette St)

First Unitarian Society of Denver’s SHF grant project is set to begin in early summer, with the removal of the asphalt shingled roof. This project includes replacing the shingles with a similar shingle material, restoring metal roof ridge caps, rehabilitating the gutters as well as addressing issues with the heat tape which is designed to eliminate snow and ice buildup along the roof. The roof has been an urgent need for the church and will protect previous reinvestment in the exterior masonry and interior spaces.

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH – STAINED GLASS RESTORATION (1820 Broadway)



Phil Watkins on-site looking at the stained glass windows at Trinity United Methodist before starting work. Photo: Shannon Schaefer Stage

Scaffolding will be installed on the front façade of Trinity Church in early summer in preparation for the restoration of the stained glass windows. Watkins Stained Glass Studio already has one of the windows in their shop so they can create a mockup of the restored window. Once the sample is approved by the State Historical Fund, the team can begin removing all the windows that need to be restored. Several of the windows will be restored in-place. 🌸



DISCOVER DENVER SURVEYS WEST COLFAX



By Beth Glandon, Director of Research and Engagement



Through the 1880s the area now known as West Colfax was sparsely populated and known as “No Man’s Land.” Colfax Avenue was a dirt road, known as the Golden Road, running westward on its way to the town of Golden, and Thomas Sloan was homesteading the area now known as Sloan’s Lake. Within a decade, a few substantial homes had been constructed in the area, mostly by Denver businessmen wanting to escape the city’s crowded conditions. Notable remaining early homes include the residences of Gustav

Winter, president of the Denver Iron Fence Company, and of master builder Eli Ackroyd.

East Europeans of Jewish descent began arriving in Colorado in the 1870s, most escaping state-sponsored anti-Semitism in their homelands. Many originally settled on the east coast but made their way to Colorado driven by a desire to escape the crowding and terrible conditions they found there, or to seek a remedy for tuberculosis. A small settlement formed along the west side of the Platte River at Colfax Avenue, made up of individuals from a number of different countries, each with a different language and set of customs for practicing their Jewish faith.

As more Jewish immigrants found their way to Denver the settlement grew, expanding westward block by block. In 1891 the Town of Colfax was incorporated, stretching from the river to today’s Sheridan Boulevard. Remnants of the town’s commercial district remain, now hidden beneath the Colfax viaduct and I-25. The town of Colfax was annexed by Denver in 1897.

Between the early 20th century and the 1950s the community blossomed, becoming in essence a small Jewish town referred to by those living there as part of “The West Side.” Businesses catered to the unique needs of the Jewish community, and as Jewish social and philanthropic organizations grew, new buildings were constructed to house them. Beth Israel, a hospital and home for the elderly, built in the heart of the community in the early 1920s, operated in the neighborhood for decades.

The 1950s saw change in West Colfax as many families moved to east Denver and highway construction changed the shape of the neighborhood, fueling a shift in the demographic makeup of the neighborhood. While today the population of West Colfax is mixed, there is still a strong concentration of Jewish residents.

In its work in the West Colfax neighborhood, Discover Denver uncovered many buildings with interesting histories. The following are just a sampling of discoveries made.

- 1 The Labor Lyceum, **1545 JULIAN STREET**, was built in 1926 as a lecture and event hall for the Jewish community. The building later served as home to Zera Abraham, the first Jewish congregation in the West Colfax neighborhood, founded in 1887.
- 2 **3506 W. CONEJOS PLACE** was built by the Congregation Yad Achaas in 1923 for their primarily Romanian worshippers.
- 3 Perlov’s Grocery, at **3900 W. COLFAX AVENUE** was built in 1924, had a residence in back and sold kosher foods and fruits and vegetables.
- 4 The Hebrew Educational Alliance was a combined synagogue and Hebrew school erected at **3636 W. COLFAX AVENUE** through an alliance between the Denver Hebrew Institute and the Beth David Hebrew School Sisterhood and Brotherhood. It was constructed in 1932.
- 5 **1456 LOWELL BOULEVARD**, The Spivak Institute was erected in 1935 in memory of physician and humanitarian Dr. Charles D. Spivak.
- 6 Built at **1601 LOWELL BOULEVARD** in 1920 as the Beth Israel Old Folks Home, this building later became part of Beth Israel hospital.
- 7 Built in 1914 with funding from the Carnegie Foundation, the Dickinson Library at **1545 HOOKER STREET** had a rich Yiddish and Hebrew section.
- 8 The J. Solf Building, located underneath the **COLFAX AVENUE VIADUCT**, is one of the few remaining buildings from the commercial district of the Town of Colfax.

The Discover Denver citywide building survey is inventorying the buildings of our city, neighborhood by neighborhood, with the goal of identifying those having historical, architectural, or cultural significance. Trained project volunteers document each of the buildings in a neighborhood and, for some buildings, perform detailed research to understand a building’s history. The project has documented buildings in neighborhoods across Denver, most recently in the West Colfax and Regis neighborhoods. Volunteers spent four months documenting West Colfax.

Discover Denver is currently working in the Cole neighborhood, and will next be in Sunnyside. For more information on Discover Denver, or to learn about opportunities to volunteer with the project, visit DiscoverDenver.co. 🌱

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Walking Tours

We are thrilled to launch our eighth season of walking tours this May. Just as last year, we will be offering a combination of virtual and in-person tours to ensure everyone can engage with our program at their level of comfort. Our classic tours of Capitol Hill, LoDo, Historic 16th Street and Larimer Square will return and we’ve added a series of specialty tours so you can explore and enjoy more of Denver!

The new Potter Highlands Walking Tour will be offered monthly to explore one of the oldest residential areas in Denver. The Town of Highlands, incorporated in 1875, was promoted as having clean air, clean water, and high morals. On the hill above Denver’s smog of coal smoke, it featured artesian wells and no watering holes, there were no saloons in Highlands until after Prohibition. Many doctors came to Highlands to open sanitariums for those with tuberculosis. Explore the mansions, bungalows, cottages and foursquares; uncover the families who lived here in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

We are also offering a walking tour of the Baker Neighborhood. The Historic Baker District witnessed its beginnings in 1872 and boasts the highest concentration of Queen Anne Victorian homes in the city’s historic center. The neighborhood’s rich history, people, and architecture are showcased on this engaging walking tour! Our past specialty tours, Curtis Park and the Mansions of Quality Hill, will be offered too.

Our virtual tour this season will be “The Denver We Saved.” It will cover some of the most important preservation successes of Historic Denver’s past 50 years, point out places we nearly lost, and highlight stories that matter. Using a virtual platform, we will move throughout Denver—attendees can expect dramatic stories, incredible photographs, and to “travel” around the city without leaving their house! We will offer this tour the 1st Wednesday of each month from May through October. 🌿

OUR WALKING TOURS:

are a great way to explore Denver.
Reserve your tickets on our website today!
historicdenver.org/tours-events/walking-tours/



Historic Denver is collaborating with the History Colorado Center’s new exhibit,

BUILDING DENVER

to present three new walking tours for Preservation Month

BUILDING DENVER TOURS

May 1st at 10am A Beautiful City, 1900-1940

The City Beautiful Movement was more than just a design idea. It’s an ethos and one of the longest lasting organizing principles in Denver. Walk with us through Denver’s largest historic district along 7th Avenue Parkway and through Cheesman Park, as we discuss the lasting pieces of the movement in how we experience our city today. Denver’s parks and parkways were the first such system listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and together we’ll explore how the early vision has survived for over a century.

May 8th at 10am A Contested City, 1940-1980

Join us as we tour Auraria’s 9th Street and the neighborhood of La Alma Lincoln Park. This tour will highlight the early origins of this part of the city, the individuals who originally homesteaded the land and built the homes, many of which are still standing today. It will also discuss the period of urban renewal in the 1960s, its impact on the diverse neighborhood, Historic Denver’s efforts to preserve the homes on 9th Street, and the instrumental role that the area’s residents played in the national Chicano Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. We will focus on key buildings and people who have left their mark on these storied neighborhoods, and on efforts to honor this heritage moving forward

May 15th at 10am A Great City, 1980-2020

This special walking tour will highlight Mayor Federico Peña’s vision for Denver, as reflected in the downtown core. Before there was Coors Field, and the restored buildings that define Lower Downtown, Peña wanted to create a distinctive downtown corridor that would attract residents and energy after decades of suburbanization. We will pass buildings that paved the way for his vision, explore the key policy decisions that fueled downtown’s comeback, and see which components are still visible today. 🌿

THE BUILDING DENVER EXHIBIT

will be open at the History Colorado Center from May 29, 2021 to August 31, 2022. It will explore the growth, urban development, and architecture of Denver from 1860 to today in five chronological sections.



Historic preservation and sustainability are natural partners. The preservation and reuse of existing buildings and retrofitting them to be “green” reaches for new heights of fiscal and environmental responsibility.

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MOLLY BROWN HOUSE MUSEUM

PRESERVATION FOR THE PEOPLE

by Andrea Malcomb, Museum Director

Historic Denver’s story began fifty years ago when Art Leisenring, owner of 1340 Pennsylvania Street, was ready to sell the property in which he had lived and where he’d rented rooms. The home, he knew, was once the residence of famous Denverite and Titanic survivor, Margaret “Molly” Brown. Along with most of America at the time, Leisenring was swept up by the craze of the “Unsinkable Molly Brown” play and the movie starring Debbie Reynolds, which, although wildly inaccurate, lauded the former owner of his home.

But something else was going on in the 1960s: urban renewal. Leisenring saw Victorian-era homes demolished around his neighborhood to make way for modern structures and parking lots, and he was convinced that if he put Margaret Brown’s house on the market, it would be torn down. Leisenring called the governor’s wife, Ann Love, and expressed his wish to see the home saved and restored. In a grassroots effort, they gathered together a group of concerned citizens who used “Molly” Brown’s recent Hollywood fame to raise money to create Historic Denver and open the Museum dedicated to the story of one of Denver’s most famous residents.

The Museum’s current exhibit, Looking Forward/Looking Back, relives the early days as Historic Denver volunteers began restoring the home of the “Unsinkable” Margaret Brown, and the beginnings of the Molly Brown House Museum, which for the first time allowed the public to enter Mrs. Brown’s Denver residence.



This exhibit not only features the work undertaken to restore each room and find the treasures that tell the Brown family story, but allows guests to “meet” the founders and early volunteers of Historic Denver who worked hard to make the Museum a reality. Historic Denver’s first motto was “preservation for the people.” Within three months of

its formation, Historic Denver had over 1,500 members who were interested in preserving Denver’s history. In the first letter to members, Board President, and soon to be first Executive Director, Ken Watson said, “This is YOUR organization – you own it, you bought a piece of history with your contribution.”

Fellow Founders, including Dana Crawford, Jim Judd, Ed White, Hal Haney, Barbara Norgren, and Joanne Ditmer, set ambitious goals for Historic Denver to engage the community in preserving its past through its buildings and homes. They invited anyone interested to serve on one of the committees tasked with such plans as establishing a priority list of buildings and areas to preserve; initiating a community renewal project to attract investment in preserving the city center; establishing a revolving loan fund to buy historic properties; expanding education efforts; sponsoring surveys of historic areas; and creating preservation plans for then threatened places such as as Auraria, Four Mile, and Civic Center.

Historic Denver Founders also knew that such grassroots efforts would take not only a robust member base, but also a substantial pool of volunteers to act as community advocates, educators, and to help run the Molly Brown House Museum. Looking Forward/Looking Back honors the countless volunteers who’ve dedicated themselves to this work. Current museum volunteer Stephanie MacCarter has created a tribute to such volunteers as part of the exhibit. As a young girl, MacCarter visited the Museum with her mother on one of the first opening days, when the line to get into the Molly Brown House stretched around the block. And, the Museum’s longest serving volunteer, Pamela Mahonchak, contributed her recollections of volunteering with her mother Eleanor to help sell tickets, give tours, and solve some of the early restoration mysteries.

What began with the Molly Brown House has expanded into a citywide historic preservation movement. Historic Denver looks forward to another 50 years of caring for a treasured Brown family collection, honoring a legacy of women’s rights and civic activism, and inspiring the next generation of preservationists and activists through grassroots efforts to tell the full and diverse story of those who shaped Denver. Margaret and J.J. Brown left a lasting legacy as people engaged in their community with a desire to make Denver a better city for all. Art Leisenring continued the cause when his call to action started Historic Denver. Today we leave you with one last question... How can you be a champion for the causes that matter most to your community? 🌱

LOOKING FORWARD/LOOKING BACK

Runs through September 19, 2021 and is included with general museum admission. Visit mollybrown.org for museum hours, tickets, and additional ways to get involved in Historic Denver’s 50th anniversary celebration!

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

AURELIA
TITTMAN

What type of work did you do as a volunteer?

I sent out a lot of communication to members, asking them to renew their memberships and distributing information about various events. Also, I reorganized the newsletter archives. Other than that, it was mostly a lot of small tasks here and there depending on what people needed help with on that particular day.

What did you learn in your role?

Beforehand, I knew very little about how a nonprofit organization operates, so it was interesting to see that happening—all of the roles that need to be filled and planning that needs to be done for everything to come together, especially for big events. I’ve always been on the other side of the things that organizations like Historic Denver present to the public, like tours and classes and museum visits, so it was interesting to see behind the scenes of all of those things.

How has your work prepared you for future goals and projects?

Volunteering turned out to be really helpful when it came to college applications, and I was also glad to have a bit of work experience. I plan on studying anthropology, which is related to Historic Denver’s work in terms of subject matter, and because I’d been a volunteer here, I was able to work as a research assistant on a project for the University of Minnesota over the summer!

What do you like about volunteering with Historic Denver?

I never realized before how much work goes into preserving historic buildings and learning about it has made me see a lot of places around me differently. It makes certain buildings feel very monumental and like they have a character of their own, once you know a bit of the conflict that goes into their continued existence, which I think is cool. I think it’s similar to something I recently learned about called “plant blindness”, which is when people don’t notice the plants in their environment until they start to learn to identify them – I noticed the same thing happening with buildings, where the city started to come into focus a bit more once I knew what to look for.

Do you have a favorite part of Denver history? Like a story or place that you find inspiring?

I’m really interested in the history of Cheesman Park and the old Mount Prospect Cemetery! I first learned about it on a school field trip a long time ago, and since then it’s made the park one of my favorite places in Denver. I love ghost stories and the like, anything weird and unsettling, and the fact that the remains of the old cemetery are still there, under everyone’s noses, is so perfectly macabre and mysterious!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

EMMA DAVIS

What type of work did you do as a volunteer?

I started out working as a page, helping to keep tours in order and assisting the docent. Now I’m a full docent at the museum, and have helped with an exhibit and writing blog posts as well.

What did you learn in your role?

I’ve learned so much in my role at the museum. I got to know a lot more about my city, Margaret herself, and so much more. I also got experience in research, which has helped me in so many ways practically.

How has your work prepared you for future goals and projects?

My work at the museum has helped me in a lot of ways, as I’m planning on attending University College London for History this year. It gave me amazing experience with research and writing, as well as just understanding history better.

What do you like about volunteering with Historic Denver and the Museum?

I love interacting with people on the tours, that’s always amazing. I also love the docents! I’ve met so many amazing people who docent there, and have really gained some amazing relationships through my volunteering.

Do you have a favorite part of Denver history? Like a story or place that you find inspiring?

Honestly, my favorite part of Denver history has to be the Molly Brown House. Margaret was such an amazing person, and she really helped our city in so many ways. She was just great, and her story is so much fun to tell. I’ve been working for years at the house, and Margaret’s story never gets old to me. 🌸



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11

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



To purchase tickets to upcoming events visit:
historicdenver.org

The Denver We Saved Virtual Tour

1st Wednesdays May - Oct ➕ Virtual
7pm ➕ \$9/person
Our virtual tour this season will be “The Denver We Saved.” It will cover some of the most important preservation successes of Historic Denver’s past 50 years, point out places we nearly lost, and highlight stories that matter. Using a virtual platform, we will move throughout Denver—attendees can expect dramatic stories, incredible photographs, and to “travel” around the city without leaving their house! **Register at historicdenver.org**

A Beautiful City Walking Tour

May 1 ➕ 10am ➕ \$5-35
Walk with us through Denver’s largest historic district along 7th Avenue Parkway and through Cheesman Park, as we discuss the City Beautiful movement in how we experience our city today. Together we’ll explore how the early vision has survived for over a century. **Reserve your spot at historycolorado.org/tours-and-treks**



Scout Saturday

May 1 ➕ 9:30, 9:45, and 10 am
\$12 per Scout ➕ \$6 per adult
Discover the past with Scout Saturdays at the Molly Brown House Museum. Uncover the story of Margaret Brown and life in early Colorado through a specialized self-guided tour, a goody bag, and an optional interactive digital program! This program will help Junior Girl Scouts earn their Playing the Past badge.

Empowered By Place

May 6 ➕ 7 pm
Virtual Platform ➕ Free
Join us to discuss ‘disappearing neighborhoods’ through the history of the Auraria neighborhood. Gregorio Alcaro will share the stories of his family and their role in the community at the Casa Mayan. We’ll also look at 9th Street Historic Park as one of Historic Denver’s first projects after saving the Molly Brown House.

A Contested City Walking Tour

May 8 ➕ 10am ➕ \$5-35
Join us as we tour Auraria’s 9th Street and the neighborhood of La Alma Lincoln Park. This tour will highlight the early origins of this part of the city, and discuss the period of urban renewal in the 1960s, the impacts on the diverse neighborhood, Historic Denver’s efforts to preserve the homes on 9th Street, and the instrumental role that the area’s residents played in the national Chicano Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. **Reserve your spot at historycolorado.org/tours-and-treks**

Homeschool Days: Historic Preservation

May 11 ➕ 9:30 and 11:30 am
\$12/Student ➕ \$5/Adult (one adult free)
Homeschool Days at the Molly Brown House Museum offers non-traditional students an unique opportunity to experience the museum and its programs.

1340 Pennsylvania Street nearly became a parking lot until a group of historic preservationists stepped in. Learn what it took to save the house, make your own historic buildings, and see some of the other buildings in and around Capitol Hill that have withstood the test of time and urban renewal.

A Great City Walking Tour

May 15 ➕ 10am ➕ \$5-35
See LoDo through the eyes of Mayor Federico Peña before Coors Field, and the restored buildings that define Lower Downtown. Peña wanted to create a distinctive downtown corridor. We will pass buildings that paved the way for his vision, explore the key policy decisions that fueled downtown’s comeback, and see which components are still visible today. **Reserve your spot at historycolorado.org/tours-and-treks**



1340 Penn
May 20th at 7 pm ➕ Virtual Platform
\$15/member ➕ \$17/non-member
1340 Penn explores the seedier side of Victorian Life. This month’s program will discuss everything from everyday poisons in the home to the outlandish stories of betrayal and madness right here in Denver. This night will leave you wondering if it is truly safe to don your coat or eat that treat!



Community Book Club

June 6th 12:00 - 1:30 pm
Virtual Platform ➕ FREE
A collaboration between the Molly Brown House Museum and the Center for Colorado Women’s History at the Byers-Evans House Museum. This month the club will be reading Sabrina and Corina by Kali Fajardo-Anstine. Bring your book and share your insights!



Homeschool Days: A Servant’s Life

June 8 ➕ 9:30 and 11:30 am
\$12/Student ➕ \$5/Adult (one adult free)
Learn what life was like for the men and women who were servants of the Brown family. We will explore the house through their eyes, see where they would have lived, and learn more about the individuals who worked in the home.

Capitol Crossroads Hunt

June 17-20 ➕ \$18/adult ➕ \$12/child
Are you ready to uncover more about Denver’s past, while following a series of clues through the city’s center? Then assemble your team for Historic Denver’s Capitol Crossroads: A City-Wide Scavenger Hunt. Flex your investigative muscles as a series of clues lead you to many of Denver’s historic places. Designed for feet, scooters or bikes, the hunt is an innovative way to uncover more about the city you love, while enjoying a fun team activity with family and friends. Teams have four days to complete the challenge. The first 50 to complete the hunt will receive finisher medals, and prizes will also be awarded to the teams with the fastest completion time, best team spirit photo, and history buffs.

Director’s Tour, Voting Rights

June 22 ➕ 7 pm ➕ Virtual Platform
\$8/member ➕ \$16/non-member
2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment which enfranchised half of the population by granting women the right to vote. Learn about Margaret Brown’s own role in the suffrage movement and how much of the work to get women to the polls had only just begun in 1920. Together we’ll draw the topic forward to contemporary issues of voting rights.



Historic Home Roundup

July 20 ➕ 7 pm ➕ Virtual Platform
Free
Join us for our annual Historic Home RoundUp, where we bring in speakers to discuss issues that are front of mind for historic home owners.

Historic Home Maintenance Tour

July 21 ➕ 8:45am ➕ Curtis Park ➕ Free
As a follow up to our Historic Home Roundup we will be offering an in-person maintenance tour to see common issues for historic homes.



1340 Penn: Turn on your Red Light: Prostitution & Poppies in Denver

July 22 ➕ 7 pm ➕ Virtual Platform
\$15/member ➕ \$17/non-member
The ladies of Market Street are awaiting you as we take you into the dark world of prostitution and opium dens in Denver. Learn about the rise of the red light and backstreet deals that lead to the infamous nature of these ladies. Be on your guard for the police as they patrol these parts.

