

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

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**Official Eligibility Determination
(OAHF use only)**

OAHF1403

Rev. 9/98

Date _____

Initials _____

- ☐ Determined Eligible – National Register
☐ Determined Not Eligible – National Register
☐ Determined Eligible – State Register
☐ Determine Not Eligible – State Register
☐ Need Data
☐ Contributes to eligible National Register District
☐ Noncontributing to eligible National Register District

I. IDENTIFICATION

1. Resource number: **5SM.1539**
 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
 3. County: **San Miguel**
 4. City: **Telluride**
 5. Historic Building Name: **Mahr Building**
 6. Current Building Name: **Mahr Building**
 7. Building Address: **129/131 W. Colorado Avenue**
 8. Owner Name and Address: **Jim Bob Holdings LLC
768 Lebrun Road
Amherst, NY 14226**

Parcel number(s):

477901119008**THLD RATING:**

Primary - Contributing to District
Shed (THAS#100) - 127 W Colorado - Supporting

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: Township: **42N** Range: **9W**
SW ¼ of NE ¼ of SW ¼ of SE ¼ of Section 036
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)
 Zone: **13** **252984 mE** **4202414 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Telluride, Colorado**
 Year: **1955** Map scale: **7.5'**
12. Lot(s): **Lot 45, Block 5**
 Addition: **Telluride Original Townsite** Year of addition: **1883**
13. Boundary description and justification:
This legally defined parcel encompasses, but does not exceed, the land historically associated with this property.
 Metes and bounds?: Describe:

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
15. Dimensions in feet: **Length: 86 feet x Width: 25 feet**
16. Number of stories: **2**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Metal/Cast Iron**
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
20. Special features: **Roof Treatment/Decorative Cornice**
Roof Treatment/Finial
21. General architectural description:
The Mahr Building in downtown Telluride is a prominent two-story commercial building, with an ornate cast iron façade obtained from Mesker Brothers of St. Louis. Erected in 1892, the building's cast iron façade is nearly symmetrical, and fronts directly onto the concrete sidewalk paralleling Colorado Avenue on the south elevation. Comprising a single storefront, the façade's first story is composed of a recessed entryway flanked by single-light fixed-pane storefront display windows. A painted cream white glass in-wood-frame door, with a transom light, enters the building from within the recessed entryway, while the flanking windows also feature transom lights, as well as painted cream white wood paneled kickplates. A painted cream white wood-paneled door with a transom light is located at the west end of the façade. This door provides access to an interior staircase leading to the second story. A plaque fastened to this door's locking rail includes the following text:

MAHR BUILDING

1892

SITE OF THE SAN MIGUEL VALLEY BANK

BUTCH CASSIDY'S FIRST BANK ROBBERY

JUNE 24, 1889

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The doors and windows on the façade's first story are divided by five ornate cast iron columns. A small builder's plate, with the following text, is affixed to each of the five cast iron columns:

MESKER BROS.
FRONT BUILDERS
ST. LOUIS, MO
PAT. OCT. 4, '87

The facade's first and second stories are divided by a secondary cast iron cornice, and by a canvas awning which was rolled up at the time of survey. The upper façade wall is penetrated by four 1/1 double-hung sash windows which are flanked by eight delicate cast iron columns, and topped by galvanized iron panels. An elaborate metal cornice, with decorative brackets, pressed metal panels, and finials, extends along the top of the façade wall. The building's east and west elevations are both currently not exposed; however, in a circa 1986 survey photo, the east wall, which was then exposed, appears to be made of stone. A 10' by 24.5' two-story shed-roofed addition has been built onto the original north (rear) elevation. The original rear wall, which is minimally visible behind the addition, appears to be made of stone.

22. Architectural style: **Late 19th And Early 20th Century American Movements/Commercial Style**
Building type:
23. Landscape or special setting features:
The Mahr Building is located on the north side of the 100 block of W. Colorado Avenue in downtown Telluride.
24. Associated buildings, features or objects: **N/A**

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction: Estimate: Actual: **1892**
Source of information: **Sanborn Insurance maps, October 1890 and February 1893; façade plaque.**
26. Architect: **Unknown**
Source of information: **N/A**
27. Builder: **Unknown**
Source of information: **N/A**
28. Original owner: **Andrew (Andy) and B.M. Mahr**
Source of information: **Façade plaque; Historic Building Inventory Record form, prepared by Front Range Research Associates, May 1986.**
29. Construction history:
This lot was initially developed circa 1883 with the construction of a small wood frame building which housed Telluride's first financial institution, the San Miguel Valley Bank. The extant Mahr Building was erected on the same site in 1892 by brothers Andrew "Andy" and B.M. Mahr. For the front of their two story building, the Mahr Brothers selected an elaborate cast iron façade fabricated by the Mesker Brothers Iron Works of St. Louis, Missouri, which was shipped to Telluride by rail. Cast iron storefronts such as this were purchased through the Mesker Brothers catalog, and shipped by rail in components ready to be assembled. There were actually two separate Mesker Iron Works companies: the Mesker Brothers Iron Works of St. Louis, and the George L. Mesker

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Company of Evansville, Indiana. Although owned by brothers, the two companies operated independently, but offered similar product lines. The storefront for the Mahr Bros. Building had been patented on October 4, 1887. This is the only Mesker storefront known to exist in Telluride; other cast iron storefronts in town were fabricated locally by the Telluride Iron Works, however,

30. Original location: ☒ Moved: _____ Date of move(s): _____

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**
 32. Intermediate use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**
 33. Current use(s): **Commerce and Trade/Specialty Store**
 34. Site type(s): **Late 19th Century two-story commercial building with a Mesker Bros. cast iron façade; single storefront.**

35. Historical background:

This lot was first developed circa 1883 with the construction of a small wood frame building which served as the San Miguel Valley Bank. Telluride's first financial institution, the San Miguel Valley Bank was incorporated in August of 1883; it was the successor to the private banking house of Nichols and Wheeler which had been established some years earlier. The San Miguel Valley Bank was later reorganized as the First National Bank of Telluride. The San Miguel Valley Bank at this location was robbed on June 23rd or 24th, 1889, purportedly by Butch Cassidy and his gang, "The Wild Bunch."

The extant Mahr Building was erected on this site in 1892, and was originally owned by brothers Andrew "Andy" and B.M. Mahr. According to U.S. census records, Andy Mahr had been born in Wisconsin, the son of German immigrants, in December 1862. Mahr arrived in Telluride circa 1890 where he quickly became one of the region's most successful real estate developers. In addition to this building, Mahr owned, or had an interest in several other commercial buildings on Colorado Avenue, including the Sheridan Hotel in the early 1900s. After it was constructed in 1892, this building had a clothing store in its first story retail space, with offices, and perhaps living quarters, in the second story. Sanborn Insurance maps indicate that the clothing store existed through at least the turn of the twentieth century. By 1908, a jewelry store was located here, and in 1922, the building housed a drugstore.

36. Sources of information:

Buys, Christian J. *Historic Telluride in Rare Photographs*. Ouray: Western Reflections, Inc., 1998.

Colorado Business Directory listings for Telluride, 1881-1950.

Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection. <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>.

Telluride Daily Journal, September 5, 1898, p. 4.

Telluride Daily Journal, July 15, 1902, p. 1.

Telluride Daily Journal, October 13, 1906, p. 3.

Telluride Daily Journal, December 13, 1906, p. 1.

Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy, DPL Western History Photos database. <http://www.photoswest.org>

San Miguel County Assessor records.

San Miguel County Commercial Property Appraisal Record.

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Sanborn Insurance maps, August 1886, October 1890, February 1893, December 1899, July 1904, November 1908, October 1922.

Simmons, Laurie and Whitacre, Christine. Historic Building Inventory Record, May 1986.

"Trommer, Wahtola. Telluride's Victorian Vernacular: A Walking Tour. Telluride: Telluride Historical Museum, 2001.

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1920, San Miguel, County, Colorado, Central Telluride precinct.

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: Yes No ☒ Date of designation:

Designating authority:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

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

Telluride Standards for Designation:

- 7-505.A.1. The structure is representative of a unique historical social activity of an era
 7-505.A.2. The structure dominates the neighborhood by virtue of its mass, architecture or location
☒ 7-505.A.3. The structure was an historically or architecturally important public building
☒ 7-505.A.4. The structure has a unique historical significance beyond a local level
☒ 7-505.A.5. The parcel was the site of an important historic event or activity
☒ 7-505.A.6. The structure has a "contributing or qualified contributing" rating on the THAS

39. Area(s) of significance: **Architecture, Commerce, Industry, Settlement**

40. Period of significance: **1892; 1892-1913**

41. Level of significance: National: ☒ State: Local:

42. Statement of significance:

The Mahr Building is architecturally significant for its Late Nineteenth Century Commercial style of architecture, and in particular for its unique (in Telluride) Mesker Brothers Iron Works cast iron façade. The building is historically significant for its association with Telluride's commercial development as a mining town from the time of its construction in 1892. Finally, the property is also historical significant as the reported site of the first bank robbery by Butch Cassidy and the "Wild Bunch" which occurred in June of 1889. Shed (THAS#100) may have been moved to 127 W Colorado and is rated Supporting.

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43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

The Mahr Building displays a high standard of physical integrity, relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation - setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It may be regarded as a contributing resource within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District.

VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Individually Eligible**

Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Eligible / Contributing to District**

45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes ☒ No

Discuss: **This property is located within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District.**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building: Contributing Noncontributing N/A: ☒

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it: Contributing ☒ Noncontributing N/A:

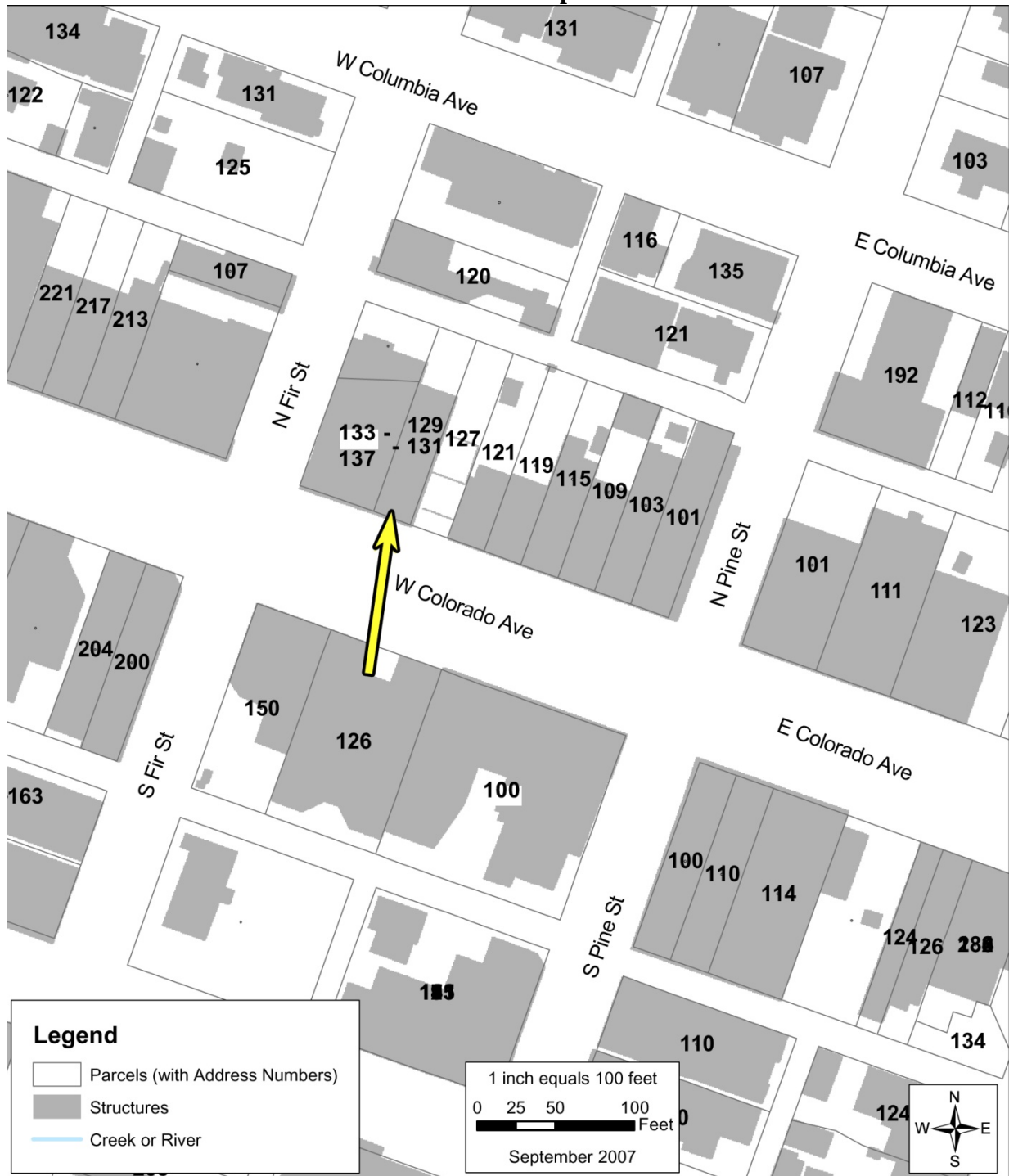
VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------|---|
| 47. Photograph number(s): | CD #2, Images 33-38 | CDs filed at: | Town of Telluride |
| 48. Report title: | Town of Telluride Re-Survey of Historic Structures | | Planning and Building
Department |
| 49. Date(s): | 05/30/2007; revised 4/10/2012 | | 113 West Columbia Avenue |
| 50. Recorder(s): | Carl McWilliams
Timothy Wilder | | Telluride, CO 81435 |
| 51. Organization: | Cultural Resource Historians | | |
| 52. Address: | Dogwood Court
Fort Collins, CO 80525 | | |
| 53. Phone number(s): | (970) 493-5270 | | |

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Sketch Map



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Location Map

