

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.1609/THAS.151**
2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
3. County: **San Miguel**
4. City: **Telluride**
5. Historic Building Name: **McPherson House; The Senate**
6. Current Building Name: **The Senate Building**
7. Building Address: **123/125 S. Spruce Street**

Parcel number(s):

477901123036**477901123-38**

8. Owner Name and Address: **Top and A LLLP**
P. O. Box 266
Telluride, CO 814350266

Wick Communication Co.
333 Willox Street
Serra Vista, CA 85635

**THLD RATING:**

Primary - Contributing to District
Barn/Shed - Contributing to District

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **New Mexico** Township: **42N** Range: **9W**
 $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section **1**
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)
 Zone: **13** **253076 mE** **4202264 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Telluride, Colorado**
 Year: **1955** Map scale: **7.5'**
12. Lot(s): **Lot 1, Block 10**
 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: **1080 square feet**
16. Number of stories: **1**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Brick**
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
20. Special features: **Window/Segmental Arch**
21. General architectural description:
This single story commercial building consists of three components: a main, historic, flat-roofed brick portion which fronts directly onto the sidewalk paralleling Spruce Street; a historic stone extension to the west (rear) elevation; and a non-historic, metal-clad, addition to the stone extension's west elevation. The original building is supported by a coursed sandstone foundation, which is painted black on the façade (east elevation) where it extends above grade to window sill level. The building is sited on a slight east-west slope, so that the foundation is at grade on the west elevation. The building's solid brick walls are laid in running bond, with corbelling along the top of the façade wall, and with a stepped parapet along the north elevation. A painted black wood-paneled door, with one upper sash light, transom lights, and sidelights, enters the center of the symmetrical façade from within a recessed entryway. The entryway is flanked on either side by a vertically-oriented single-light fixed-pane window, each with a painted black wood frame. The entry, and both windows, also feature segmental brick arches, while the top of the sandstone foundation forms a continuous window sill, broken by the entryway. The building's south (side) elevation abuts the adjacent building at 123 S. Spruce Street. The north elevation fronts onto the alley, and is penetrated by three 1/1 double-hung sash windows, and one smaller single-light fixed-pane window. These four windows feature painted black wood frames, wood sills, and segmental brick arches. It is apparent that the north elevation was originally penetrated by seven double-hung sash windows, with segmental brick arches. Three of these windows, however, have been filled with brick, and one has been replaced by the

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smaller single-light fixed-pane window. A ghost sign advertising the "Senate" is still visible at the upper east end of the north elevation.

The historic stone extension to the west elevation measures approximately 25' by 20', and is covered by a low-pitched monitor type roof. Its coursed stone walls are partially covered with concrete pargeting. The modern addition at the building's far west end measures approximately 25' N-S by 5' E-W. It is of wood frame construction, with corrugated metal exterior wall cladding. It is covered by a saltbox roof.

22. Architectural style: **Late 19th And Early 20th Century American Movements/Commercial Style**

Building type:

23. Landscape or special setting features:

This building is located on the west side of S. Spruce Street, in the block between Colorado and Pacific Avenues. It is the first building south of the alley.

24. Associated buildings, features or objects:

Barn/Shed (THAS #151)

A historic wood frame barn/shed is located west of (behind) the Senate Building. This 1.5-story structure measures approximately 28' N-S by 16' E-W. Its exterior walls are clad with rusticated corrugated metal, over vertical wood planks. The roof is a steeply-pitched gable, covered with metal roofing material. A painted green wood-paneled door is centered on the east elevation. Windows include single-light casement and 6/6 double-hung sashes with painted green wood frames.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction: Estimate: **1896** Actual:
- Source of information: **Sanborn Insurance maps, February 1893 and December 1899; *Telluride Daily Journal*, October 15, 1898, p. 4.**
26. Architect: **Unknown**
- Source of information: **N/A**
27. Builder: **Unknown**
- Source of information: **N/A**
28. Original owner: **Jonas and Della McPherson (probably)**
- Source of information: **N/A**
29. Construction history:
- Sanborn Insurance maps and early issues of the *Telluride Daily Journal* indicate that this building was erected between 1893 and 1898, and that its original use was as a boardinghouse or hotel (and probably a brothel) known as the "McPherson House." The Sanborn maps also indicate that the secondary building at the rear of the lot was built between December of 1899 and July of 1904. As originally constructed, the McPherson House was a**

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two-story brick building; however, it was rebuilt as a single-story brick building following a disastrous fire which occurred early in the morning on July 3, 1923. As reported by the *Telluride Daily Journal*:

The most disastrous fire which has visited Telluride in many years occurred at 3:30 Tuesday morning. The result was that a complete quarter of a block square was wiped out and leveled to a smoking heap of ruins on the ground, and the entire city for a time threatened. The total loss will run well toward \$40,000...The buildings wiped out are located near the corner of South Spruce street and East Pacific avenue and include the McPherson Rooming house, and a small residence on the rear of the lot, owned by Mrs. Della McPherson; the Senate soft drink parlor and restaurant owned and operated by Barney Gabardi and August Ress; the Silver Bell hall and a residence on the rear lot owned by B. Perino."

According to a previous inventory form for this property (prepared by Front Range Research Associates in May 1986), the building was further renovated in 1973 by its then owners Steve and Terry Catsman and Monica Gardner Callard.

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

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): Domestic/Hotel
Commerce and Trade/Brothel
32. Intermediate use(s): Domestic/Hotel
Commerce and Trade/Bar
Commerce and Trade/Restaurant
Commerce and Trade/Brothel
33. Current use(s): Commerce and Trade/Business
34. Site type(s): Historically a boardinghouse, saloon and restaurant, and brothel

35. Historical background:

This building was constructed between 1893 and 1898. Its earliest known (and probably original) use was as a boardinghouse (and likely a brothel) known as the McPherson House. Owned by Jonas (aka Joseph) and Della McPherson, the McPherson House was in operation by October of 1898. According to the United States census for 1900, Jonas McPherson was of Scottish and Danish heritage, and had been born "asea" in April of 1852. McPherson immigrated to America in 1880, and by the mid-1890s he had made his way west to the thriving mining town of Telluride. Della McPherson (maiden name unknown) was born in Illinois in June of 1862. Jonas and Della were married in 1895, and in November of 1896 a daughter, whom they named Alta, was born in Telluride. By October of 1898, Mr. and Mrs. McPherson were engaged as the proprietors of the "McPherson House" at this location, and at that time, the *Telluride Daily Journal* reported that they were "making preparations to add a restaurant and lunch counter to [the] lodging business." In the ensuing years, the McPherson House advertised frequently in the *Journal*. One such advertisement appeared as follows:

THE McPHERSON HOUSE
Spruce Street, Telluride, Colo.
GOOD ACCOMMODATIONS

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HOT AND COLD WATER

Rooms from 25 cents to \$1.00

Restaurant in Connection. Meals 25 cts.

Operating a boardinghouse and restaurant in Telluride's Red Light District was not entirely a bed of roses; however, and in the early 1900s the McPhersons began to experience difficult times. In January of 1903, the *Journal* reported that Jonas McPherson had been arrested for assault and confined in the county jail. (The disposition of the case is unclear.) Two years later, in September 1905, the McPhersons executed a deed of trust pledging the McPherson House property as collateral on an \$800.00 loan. By the fall of 1906, the loan was in default, as on November 15th, the *Journal* ran a notice of a "Public Trustee's Sale." of the McPherson House property "for the purpose of paying said indebtedness." (It is unclear whether or not the McPhersons actually lost the property at that time, as it continued to be known as the McPherson House for some years after that date; moreover, Mrs. Della McPherson reportedly owned at least a portion of the property as late as 1923.) The family's troubles apparently continued, however, as Jonas and Della were divorced in Telluride in June of 1907. They both then moved away from Telluride not long afterwards. By the fall of 1909 Della (and presumably daughter Alta), had moved to western Illinois, and in October of that year she wrote a letter to a friend in Telluride reporting that Mr. McPherson had passed away in British Columbia. Della apparently returned to Telluride at some point in time, as at the time of the fire in July of 1923, she was reported as the owner of a "small residence" on the back half of this lot.

It appears that "McPherson House" remained the name of the boardinghouse business through the early 1920s, while the restaurant and saloon enterprise (converted to a "soft drink parlor" during Prohibition), adjacent to the south, was known as "The Senate." The Senate was owned by Barney Gabardi and August Ress in the 1920s, and in time, the overall building became known as "The Senate."

36. Sources of information:

Buy, 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, October 15, 1898, p. 1.

"THE MCPHERSON HOUSE." [advertisement] *Telluride Daily Journal*, January 5, 1899, p. 1.

"Jonas McPherson..." *Telluride Daily Journal*, September 23, 1899, p. 2.

"Public Trustee's Sale." *Telluride Daily Journal*, November 15, 1906, p. 4.

"In the County Court." *Telluride Daily Journal*, June 27, 1907, p. 7.

Telluride Daily Journal, October 28, 1909, p. 5.

"Disastrous Fire Entails \$40,000 Loss." *Telluride Daily Journal*, July 3, 1923, p. 1.

Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy, DPL Western History Photos database.

<http://www.photoswest.org>

Pera, Davine (comp.). *Conversations at 9,000 Feet A Collection of Oral Histories From Telluride, Colorado*. Ouray: Western Reflections Publishing Company, 2000.

San Miguel County Assessor records.

San Miguel County Property Appraisal Record.

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.

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Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, San Miguel, County, Colorado, South Telluride precinct.

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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, Ethnic Heritage/European, Social History**

40. Period of significance: **1878-1913**

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

42. Statement of significance:

The McPherson House/ The Senate Building is historically significant for its historic uses as a boardinghouse, restaurant, saloon, and (probably) a brothel, beginning in the late 1890s. The building is also architecturally significant for its brick construction and commercial style of architecture. As such, the primary structure and the barn/shed rate as "contributing" resources within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

This building displays a reasonably 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.

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VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Not Individually Eligible**Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Eligible / Contributing to District**45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes ☒ NoDiscuss: **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 #5, Images 286-288	CDs filed at:	Town of Telluride
48. Report title:	Town of Telluride Re-Survey of Historic Structures		Planning and Building Dept.
49. Date(s):	07/08/2008; revised 4/10/2012		113 West Columbia Avenue
50. Recorder(s):	Carl McWilliams		Telluride, CO 81435
	Timothy Wilder		
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

