

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Official Eligibility Determination
(OAHHP use only)

OAHHP1403
Rev. 9/98

Architectural Inventory Form

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- 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.1611**
- 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
- 3. County: **San Miguel**
- 4. City: **Telluride**
- 5. Historic Building Name: **The Silver Bell**
- 6. Current Building Name: **The Silver Bell**
- 7. Building Address: **127 S. Spruce Street (aka 135 S. Spruce Street)**
- 8. Owner Name and Address: **James O. Loo
1501 Wazee Street, Apt. 5F
Denver, CO 802021477**

Parcel number(s): **477901123016**



THLD RATING:

Noncontributing Without Qualifications

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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 $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section **1**
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)
 Zone: **13** **253077 mE** **4202261 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Telluride, Colorado**
 Year: **1955** Map scale: **7.5'**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 5, 7, Block 8**
 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: **5875 square feet**
16. Number of stories: **2**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Wood/Weatherboard**
18. Roof configuration: **Flat Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
20. Special features: **Porch**
21. General architectural description:
This is a prominent two-story wood frame building located at the northwest corner of Spruce Street and Pacific Avenue. It is supported by a non-historic poured concrete foundation, with a non-historic basement-level beneath the first and second stories, and its exterior walls are clad with painted cream yellow horizontal weatherboard with painted purple 1" by 6" corner boards. The roof is flat, with a simple projecting wood cornice, with painted purple and cream yellow wood trim. The building's east elevation fronts directly onto the concrete sidewalk which parallels Spruce Street. The building's windows are entirely 1/1 double-hung sash with painted wood frames and surrounds. A painted cream yellow wood-paneled door, with one upper sash light and a transom light, enters the south end of the east elevation. A set of paired painted cream yellow wood-paneled doors, with upper sash lights and transom lights, enters the north end of the east elevation from a non-historic wood porch. The building's south elevation fronts directly onto the concrete sidewalk paralleling Pacific Avenue. Three wood-paneled doors, each with an upper sash light and with a transom light, enter the south elevation. The west elevation (facing toward "Popcorn Alley") is penetrated on its first story by a set of paired, non-historic, glass-in-steel-frame entry doors, and by a single painted cream yellow wood-paneled door. A metal staircase, with a wood railing, ascends to another non-historic glass-in-steel-frame door which enters the second story on the west elevation. The building's north elevation abuts the adjacent building at 123 S. Spruce Street.

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29. Construction history:

Sanborn Insurance maps reveal that this property was first developed with the construction of a small T-shaped boarding house, between 1886 and 1890. By 1893, a large saloon addition had been built onto the north elevation. In April 1899, the original T-shaped portion of the building was demolished, and replaced by a new building which was completed by early June 1899. As reported by the *Telluride Daily Journal*:

"Mattivi and Boetto, proprietors of the Silver Bell Saloon, have caused that portion of their building occupied by the Silver Bell restaurant to be torn down and carpenters commenced work on the new building. When finished the new portion of their building will be 25x80 feet and and [sic] two story."

When completed in June of 1899, the Silver Bell was a single story wood frame building; however, a second story was added some years later. The building's second story and a section to the rear burned in a disastrous fire which occurred in the early morning hours of July 3, 1923. The Senate Saloon (previously known as the McPherson's House) and other buildings in the block were also heavily damaged or destroyed. Following the fire, the Silver Bell was rebuilt as a 1.5-story building, with a flat-roofed front section and a steeply-pitched shed-roofed rear section. In 1986, owners Jo Ann and Robert Miller commissioned the construction of a new second story, as part of an extensive remodeling effort. Dave W. Pedersen of Telluride served as the project's architect, while Keystone Construction Company of Montrose served as the contractor.

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

V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

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

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35. Historical background:

The Silver Bell had its start in the late 1880s, as a boardinghouse/restaurant located in a small T-shaped wood frame building at the northwest corner of Spruce Street and Pacific Avenues. By 1893, a large saloon addition had been built onto the original building's north side. By the mid-to-late-1890s, the establishment had become known as the "Silver Bell" (perhaps named for the Silver Bell Mine and Mill located near Ophir), under the ownership of Joseph Mattivi and Baptist Boetto.

These two men were both European immigrants, Mattivi having been born in Austria in 1864, and Boetto in Italy in 1870. U.S. census records indicate that they both worked as gold miners, in addition to their business partnership involving the Silver Bell. Mattivi and Boetto had the original T-shaped building torn down in March of 1899, and replaced it with a new 25' by 80' wood frame building to accompany the early 1890s saloon portion to the north. A grand opening for the new building was held in early June 1899, as reported by the *Telluride Daily Journal*:

"Mattivi and Boetto have their addition to the Silver Bell saloon completed and Monday evening held their grand opening which lasted until nearly daylight. Those in attendance enjoyed themselves to the full extent."

Located in the heart of the Red Light District, the Silver Bell served as a saloon, a dance hall, a restaurant, and first and foremost as one of Telluride's most popular and infamous brothels. A second story was added sometime in the early 1900s, as the Silver Bell's use and popularity apparently continued to grow. A disastrous fire occurred in the early morning hours of July 3, 1923, destroying the second story and much of the rear of the original building. Extensive local newspaper coverage of the fire related that arson was strongly suspected. The Silver Bell was then re-constructed as an oddly-appearing 1.5-story building, with a tall flat-roofed front section and a steeply-pitched shed-roofed rear section, and it reportedly continued its use as a brothel and saloon until the late 1950s. A new second story was added to the building during a major reconstruction and remodeling effort in 1986. It has since served as a mixed-use building with retail space on the ground floor and in the new basement level, and with professional office space, and perhaps apartments in the second story. The building's main level was recently occupied by the "Ah Haa School" until the summer of 2007 when it moved into the old Colorado and Southern Railroad Depot.

36. Sources of information:

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

Telluride Daily Journal, March 13, 1899.

Telluride Daily Journal, April 15, 1899.

Telluride Daily Journal, June 7, 1899.

Telluride Daily Journal, July 3, 1923, p. 1.

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

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 Commercial 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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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 Silver Bell Building is historically significant for its early use as a brothel, saloon, dance hall, and restaurant, located in the heart of Telluride's Red Light District. As one of the town's best known "Sporting Houses" it was central to a significant, if in many ways undesirable, aspect of Telluride's society.

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

Assessing the Silver Bell's integrity is somewhat problematic because no historic photos of the building, as it existed as a two-story building prior to the 1923 fire, have been located. It is apparent, though, that the 1986 second story addition and rehabilitation project does not represent a true "restoration" of the historic building. As such, the Silver Bell should probably be classified as a "noncontributing without qualifications" building within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District.

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VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

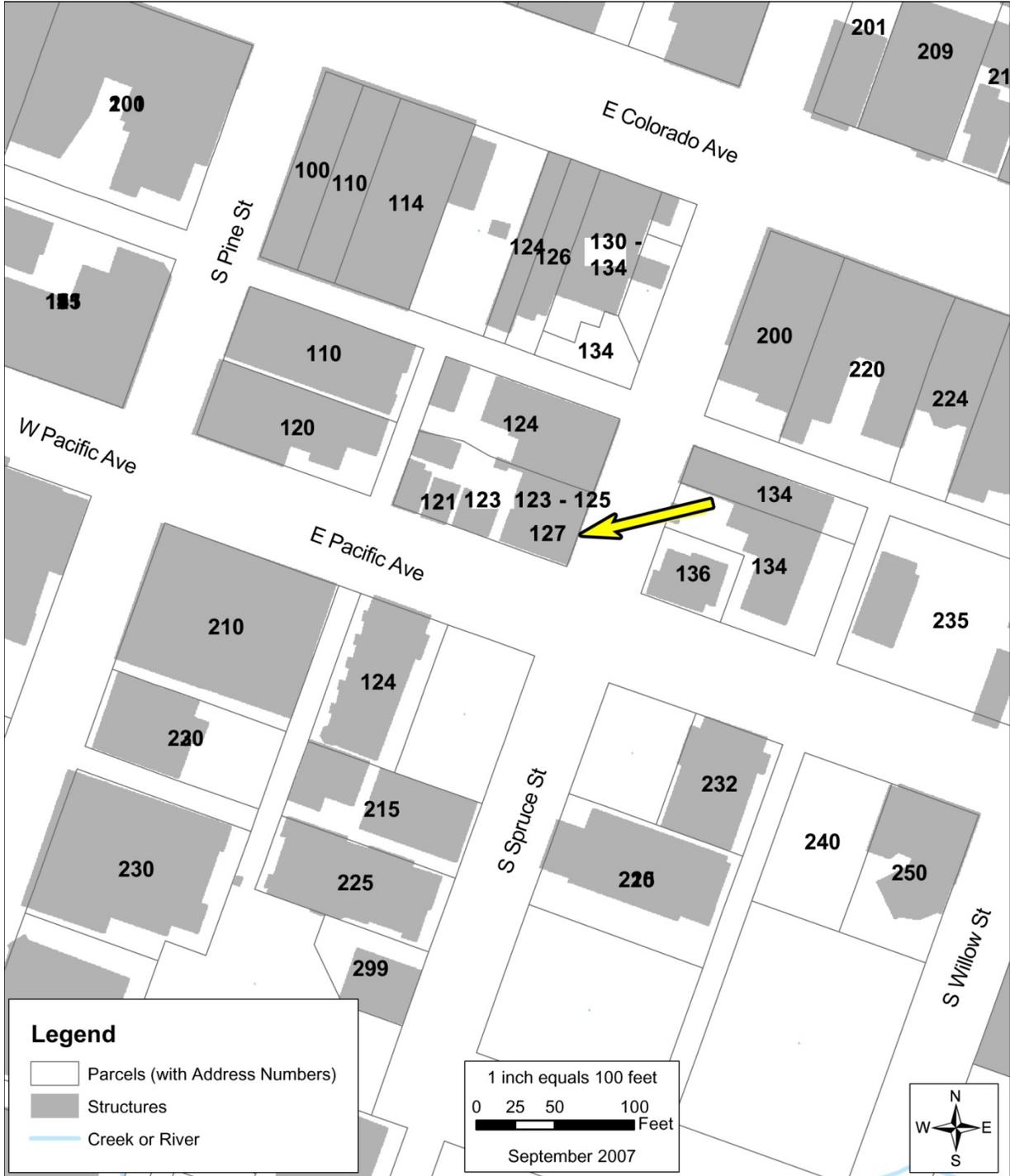
44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Not Individually Eligible**
 Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Not Eligible / Noncontributing Without Qualifications**
45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes No
 Discuss: **This property is located within the Telluride 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 #5, Images 289-295 | CDs filed at: | Town of Telluride |
| 48. Report title: | Town of Telluride Re-Survey of Historic Structures | | Planning and Building
Department |
| 49. Date(s): | 08/31/2007; 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

