

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 22 1982  
date entered SEP 20 1982

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** 5DV1490

historic McPhee and McGinnity Building

and or common McPhee and McGinnity Building

**2. Location**

street & number 2301 Blake Street n/a not for publication

city, town Denver n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Denver code 031

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Hera Investment and Management

street & number 50 S. Steele Street, #600

city, town Denver n/a vicinity of state Colorado 80209

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk and Recorder Office, City and County Building

street & number West 13th Avenue and Bannock Street

city, town Denver state Colorado

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Ongoing  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver state Colorado 80203

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The McPhee and McGinnity Building is a long low twentieth century industrial building constructed in three sections. The first building (building A) was constructed in 1913. The original blueprints called for four stories, but only the first two were built. Building B was constructed in 1919 as an addition to building A on the north-east side.

Both buildings are faced with brick in various tones of reddish-brown. Building A is constructed of reinforced concrete frame, floors and interior columns. It is an example of the flat slab system of construction where the concrete was poured in place on the site. On the interior, there are large concrete columns in the basement and on the first floor supporting the concrete floors. Other than the columns, all other interior features and partitions have been removed for the renovation into retail space.

The exteriors of both buildings contain elements of the Second Renaissance Revival style as seen in the round and flat arched windows with large terra cotta keystones, the distinctive division between the first and second floors of building A by a terra cotta belt course and the horizontal bands of brickwork on the face of the end bays of both buildings. The second floor wall terminates in terra cotta capping with decorative terra cotta elements at the corners. Beneath the terra cotta cap, the bricks are laid in three's, alternating horizontally and vertically in a woven pattern. Underneath the terra cotta belt course on the primary walls are projecting bricks creating a dentil effect. The mullions and sash patterns are intact within the bays. The second story windows of Building A are rectangular, 6 X 6 wooden sash. The ground floor windows of buildings A & B are round arched and rectangular. The arched windows are fixed and multipaned and the rectangular are double hung wooden sash, 8 X 8 with a four pane transom above.

At the rear of Building A, there was originally a recessed drive-through for loading purposes which was one bay wide and ran the width of the rear. This was enclosed by a brick wall constructed between the concrete columns in 1937. The current renovation will open up the rear to its original appearance.

Building B has a sawtooth roof, the outstanding feature of this addition, behind the brick parapet of the primary facade. On the interior the roof is supported by heavy wood columns. The wood floor, intended to support heavy loads, is supported from below by twenty-two fourteen inch wood posts and heavy timber beams in the basement. This floor is to be raised in order to provide sufficient space in the basement, which is not useable with the present low ceiling height.

Building C is a small one story masonry addition to building B constructed in 1950 and has no architectural significance.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1913,1919      **Builder/Architect** Fisher and Fisher --architects

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The McPhee and McGinnity Building is significant for its association with two of Denver's important pioneer industries that grew to regional, national, and international importance. The McPhee and McGinnity Company, original owner/occupant of this building, became the largest suppliers of building materials and was one of the leading contracting companies in the Rocky Mountain region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The second occupant of the building, the Denver Fire Clay Company, became known world wide as a leading manufacturer and supplier of metallurgical clay goods, assaying and laboratory testing equipment during that same period.

The building is also significant for its design by a prominent Denver architectural firm, Fisher and Fisher. This firm is noted for the design of numerous Denver residential, commercial and industrial buildings, schools and hospitals.

The structure was constructed at the corner of 23rd and Blake streets as general offices and warehouse for the McPhee and McGinnity Company. The original two-story portion, on four corner lots, was built in 1913. It was designed by the prominent Denver architectural firm, Fisher and Fisher, who also designed the matching addition in 1919.

The company was founded in 1869 by Charles D. McPhee as a building contractor. In 1872, McPhee built a planning mill and began to also deal in lumber. McPhee's partnership with McGinnity began in 1879. John J. McGinnity, who was in ill health and without a job, was taken in by the McPhee family. As McGinnity's health improved, he began working as a bookkeeper for McPhee. He continued living with the McPhees and a close personal friendship and business relationship developed which led to the partnership.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1920s, McPhee and McGinnity had become one of the leading building materials suppliers in fourteen western states. The main yard at 23rd and Blake streets contained 23 acres and there were five branches around the city with a total of some 400 employees. In addition to the Denver yards, the company had five in the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, five on the Moffat Railroad line, which was under construction in the 1920s, and they controlled twenty-five yards in Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming and one in South Dakota.<sup>2</sup>

The company also owned a sawmill at McPhee, Colorado, near Dolores, which employed about 500 men who produced ten to twelve railroad carloads of Ponderosa pine lumber per day for local and out-of-state use. In 1926, McPhee and McGinnity were responsible for one half of the total Colorado lumber production.<sup>3</sup> With such resources McPhee and McGinnity Company supplied the materials for and worked on many of the major building projects in Denver and Colorado. Much of the lumber in the Moffat Tunnel construction was supplied by the company in the 1920s.

John McGinnity died in 1915 and it was said by some that this hastened McPhee's own death a year later.<sup>4</sup> The company continued under the direction of McPhee's sons until

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_ under one \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Commerce City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	5	0	0	8	4	0	4	4	0	0	6	3	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1 to 16 inc. block 27, Gaston's Addition to the City of Denver

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara Norgren

organization Consultant

date March 23, 1984

street & number 7453 E. Jefferson Drive

telephone (303) 740-7860

city or town Denver

state Colorado 80237

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-14-84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9-20-84

J. Melvyn Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet McPhee & McGinnity Building Item number 8 Page 2

the early 1930s. The business changed locations to 812 12th Street under the name of C.D. McPhee, Jr., dealers in wholesale lumber and building supplies.

About 1934 or '35, the Denver Fire Clay Company relocated their offices to this building. The company had been founded by Joab Otis Bosworth, who had come to Denver in 1871 and established a chemical and drug business which later evolved into the manufacture of clay crucibles used in assaying ore. Bosworth located a source of superior quality clay near Golden, Colorado and by 1876, the manufacture of crucibles comprised almost all of his business. After Bosworth's death in a chemical explosion in 1890, his widow and sons carried on the business.<sup>5</sup> The company became known worldwide for its metallurgical clay goods and assaying and laboratory testing equipment.<sup>6</sup>

The architectural firm of Fisher and Fisher was one of the oldest continuous architectural firms in the Rocky Mountain region. William Ellsworth Fisher (1871-1937) began practice in Denver in 1892. His brother Arthur Addison Fisher (1878-1965) entered the firm as a draftsman in 1897. William's son, Arthur B. Fisher (1905-1978) joined the firm in 1932. Some of the outstanding Denver buildings designed by Fisher and Fisher include South Denver High School, the Voorhees Memorial and Colonnade in Denver Civic Center and many notable residences in the Country Club Historic District.

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Continuation sheet McPhee & McGinnity Building Item number 9

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Denver Post, 2/11/1916, p.3, c.1.

<sup>2</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 8/8/1927, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 4/18/1927, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>O. L. Baskins, History of the City of Denver, Chicago: O.L. Baskins and Company, 1880.

<sup>5</sup>"Enterprise Unlimited" #26, 1/23/1949, KLZ Radio script.

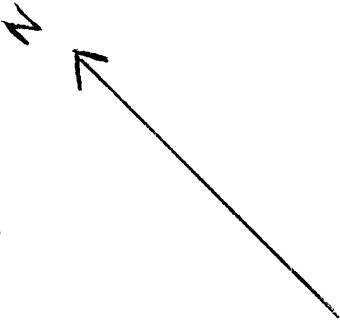
<sup>6</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 5/9/1927, p. 17; Cervis Journal, 10/26/1960

OTHER SOURCES

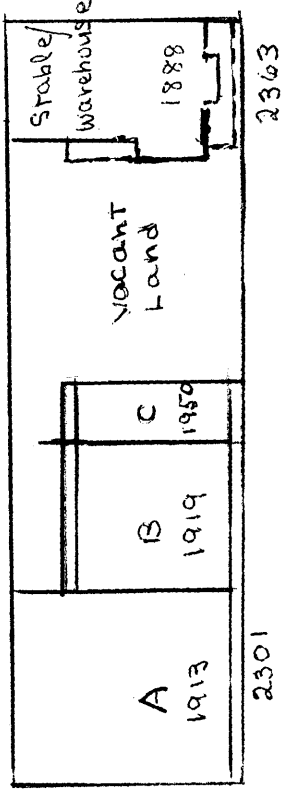
Building Permit Applications, microfilm, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

Fisher Architectural Record Collection, M77-1600, Series 3. Commercial Structures. Microfilm, Western History Department. Denver Public Library.

Denver. 10/14/1926, Vol.18, pp.16-17. Weekly Publication of the Denver Chamber of Commerce.



Pacific Express Stable  
2363 Blake



Blake Street

23rd Street

DENVER COUNTY, COLORADO

By Barbara Norgren No Scale

McPhee-McGinnity Building 2301 Blake Street