

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 5 1986
date entered

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

OCT 2 1986

1. Name

historic Montgomery Court

and/or common Montgomery Court

2. Location

street & number 215 E. 11th Avenue n/a not for publication

city, town Denver vicinity of n/a

state Colorado code 08 county Denver code 031

3. Classification

Category n/a district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) n/a structure n/a site n/a object	Ownership n/a public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private n/a both Public Acquisition n/a in process n/a being considered	Status <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied n/a unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress Accessible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted n/a yes: unrestricted n/a no	Present Use n/a agriculture n/a commercial n/a educational n/a entertainment n/a government n/a industrial n/a military	n/a museum n/a park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residences n/a religious n/a scientific n/a transportation n/a other:
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4. Owner of Property

name Stan Thompson

street & number 215 East 11th Avenue

city, town Denver vicinity of n/a state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk & Recorder - City & County Building

street & number W 14th and Bannock

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 Colorado Preservation Office

city, town Denver state Colorado

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<u>na</u> excellent	<u>na</u> deteriorated	<u>na</u> unaltered	<u>X</u> original site
<u>X</u> good	<u>na</u> ruins	<u>X</u> altered	<u>na</u> moved date _____
<u>na</u> fair	<u>na</u> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Montgomery Court, a large, 45-unit brick apartment building, was constructed in 1908 in a modified Renaissance Revival Style. It is prominently sited on three and one-half lots at the northeast corner of East 11th Avenue and Sherman Street in the section of Capitol Hill where much of Denver's early 20th century apartment house development occurred. Montgomery Court is one of the oldest apartment buildings in the immediate vicinity. Across Sherman Street to the west is the 1900 Mentone, a Colonial Revival Style row house. To the south across East 11th Avenue along Sherman are two very large undistinguished apartment buildings, the 1923 Buckingham and Belmont. Further south on Sherman are several small apartment buildings named for American poets. This group, known collectively as Poets Row, was constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s in Art Deco and Moderne styles.

Montgomery Court is three stories high with a full basement and flat roof. The inverted U shaped plan, new to Denver in 1908, creates a center light court or courtyard fronting on East 11th and divides the south front into two equal projecting wings of three bays each. The three primary entrances are at the base of the U and on each wing. The west elevation on Sherman Street has two end pavilions with a recessed portion in the center.

On the street elevations at the basement level, the brick work above the low stone foundation creates strong horizontal bands which form the base of the building. At the top of the basement level is a wide beltcourse and a narrower beltcourse delineates the top of the story. Brick quoins define the corners of the first and second stories. The exterior face brick and trim are painted in shades of beige. (Photo #1, 2)

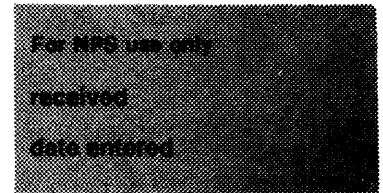
Montgomery Court was one of the first Denver apartment buildings with all fireproof construction featuring reinforced concrete slab walls, floors and ceilings. Reinforced concrete was first used in Denver commercial construction in the 1907 Ideal Building at 17th and Champa streets to promote the Colorado Portland Cement Company. In spite of the fireproof construction, changes in the building code ca. 1911 made it necessary to add fire escapes consisting of metal stairs and platforms on all sides of the building. The platforms were placed on the second and third stories where there had been metal balconies accessed by double French doors from the units. (Photo #3)

The wood sash windows are vertically aligned throughout the building and vary in size from eight-over-three and six-over-one to four-over-one. The windows of the first floor are distinguished by blind arches containing terra cotta insets with bas-relief floral and shield designs. The windows in the courtyard and on the street facades are framed with raised brick work with keystones. Across the top of the third story are raised brick diamond motifs in the center of brick panels. The building is topped by a broken parapet above a metal cornice with brackets and a dentiled entablature. (Photo #1, 2)

The courtyard entrance has a wrought iron fence on each side of two brick piers topped by elaborate wrought iron lanterns. (Photo #4) Wall lights of a similar design are placed in the courtyard and on each side of the main entrance at the base of the U. All three courtyard entrances are reached by a short flight of stairs with decorative wrought iron railings and brass handrails. (Photo #5, 6) There are no remnants of any early landscaping of the courtyard, nor is there any information available of the original landscaping plan.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Montgomery Court

Item number 7

Page 2

On the interior the main entrance foyer has a floor and wainscotting of white marble. Double doors lead into the public corridor with a small elevator, no longer working, with a decorative metal door. There is an open stairway from the basement to the third floor with a wrought iron railing and marble treads and risers. There are similar stairs in each wing. Throughout, the corridors have marble baseboards and concrete floors faced with small hexagonal, white ceramic tiles, now covered with carpet.

The apartments vary in plan and size from two buffet apartments to nine units with two bedrooms, thirty-four with one bedroom. The majority of the units with dining rooms have built-in servers or buffets across one wall featuring serving counters and cabinets with leaded glass doors. The woodwork in many units retains the original unpainted dark oak finish while others have been painted. The original hardwood floors still exist although most floors have been carpeted. (Photo #7)

Due to the concrete construction, the plumbing is exposed in the bathrooms and kitchens. Since there has not been a major remodeling since the building was built, the bathrooms still have most of the original fixtures including the medicine cabinets and claw-foot tubs. The bathroom floors are of the same hexagonal tiles as the corridors. Throughout the building, there are vertical concrete chases, approximately 4X4 feet, which open into the kitchens of each unit. These are believed to have been either dumb-waiter shafts or built-in refrigerators operated by mechanical equipment in the basement which has long since been removed.

The building is in fair to good condition and needs improvements to the systems as well as repairs and painting in the units and bathroom and kitchen improvements. Despite the condition, the building retains its original structural and architectural integrity and has had no major structural alterations or additions. The building is currently being carefully renovated to retain and restore the original fabric and decorative elements such as the exterior light fixtures, the wrought iron handrails, and reinstall the original courtyard gate. On the interior, the original light fixtures and woodwork will be retained wherever possible.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates 1908 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Montgomery Court, constructed in 1908, is significant as one of the early 20th century apartment buildings constructed in the affluent Capitol Hill neighborhood. Built by English promoter, J. J. Hall, the building's Renaissance Revival Style is rare among Denver's early apartment buildings. It is significant that Montgomery Court was one of the first fireproof Denver apartments constructed with reinforced concrete. In addition, it was one of five Capitol Hill apartment buildings that first introduced the front light court plan to Denver. Since more than half of the apartments dating from between 1900 and 1910 have been demolished, and many others altered, it is significant that Montgomery Court is one of the few which has retained its original architectural integrity and the excellent craftsmanship of the architectural detailing.

The apartment house is a relatively new building type in America's architectural history. The first U.S. proto-type, the 1869 Stuyvesant Apartment House in New York City, was designed by Richard Morris Hunt, who imported the concept from Paris. ¹ In large eastern cities, apartment houses soon became the means of housing many people on small, valuable pieces of urban land in affluent neighborhoods. In general, apartment buildings can be classified into four major categories - large, palatial, architect-designed buildings for the very wealthy; architect's buildings with luxury apartments for the affluent; efficiency apartments for the middle income; and subsidized or public housing for the poor. Nationally, there have been three boom periods of apartment house construction: 1890 to 1917; 1921 to 1931; 1960 to the present. ²

Montgomery Court falls somewhere in between the luxury and efficiency apartments. Affluent as well as middle income tenants originally lived in units ranging from small one room buffet to one and two bedroom units, some with dining rooms. Many units could be made larger by opening up the connecting doors into the adjacent units.

Montgomery Court was built during the first national wave of apartment house development which began in Denver in 1900. As the real estate market picked up after the 1893 Silver Crash and depression, eastern developers discovered Denver, primarily a city of single family detached houses, was a good market for apartment house speculation. The developers were attracted to Capitol Hill by the prestige of the neighborhood, where many wealthy citizens had build mansions, and for its proximity to downtown. Due to a lack of zoning or other controls in the early 1900s, apartment houses proliferated in Capitol Hill and continued eastward into other neighborhoods. ³

Among the earliest developers in Denver was John Holmberg of Minneapolis, who came here in 1900 to build "aristocratic flats in aristocratic locations." ⁴ His first Capitol Hill building, Corona Flats at the southeast corner of Corona and East Colfax, is now altered beyond recognition. In 1902, Holmberg completed two more large buildings on Colfax, the Altamaha Flats (The Alta) and the Colonnade, both now renovated. ⁵ In 1902, there were so many new apartment buildings that The Denver Times referred to Capitol Hill as "flatland" or "flatberg." By 1904, apartments rated their own listing in The Denver City Directory with 42 buildings. In 1909, Montgomery Court was among the 136 apartment houses listed in the directory.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Englewood

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References

A

1	3	5	0	1	3	8	0	4	3	9	8	0	0	5
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 16, 17, 18 and south half of 15, Block 63, H. C. Brown's Second Addition. Montgomery Court occupies almost the entire nominated lot. No other buildings stand within the nominated area.

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 April 20, 1986

street & number 7453 E. Jefferson Drive

telephone (303) 740-7860

city or town Denver

state Colorado zip 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 August 18, 1986

For NPS use only

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

John A. Brown
Keeper of the National Register

date 10-2-86

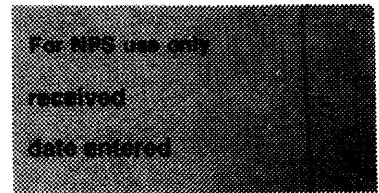
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Montgomery Court Item number 8 Page 2

Construction of the \$150,000 Montgomery Court began in 1908. The owner, J. J. Hall, was a young English real estate promoter, the contractors were Alexander Mathers and Cecil Walker, and the architect is unknown. 6 Little is known about Hall except that he lived in Montgomery Court with his wife, two children and a servant named Stella. Other early tenants were single people, couples and families ranging in age from the late twenties to their sixties. Their occupations were clerks, salesmen, music and school teachers, attorneys, a manufacturer and two women with private income. 7

Even though it was not a Denver building code requirement, Montgomery Court was one of the first entirely fireproof apartment buildings constructed of reinforced concrete. 8 In addition, it was one of the first five apartment houses constructed in 1908 with front light courts in Denver. The others, all on Grant Street, were El Tovar (1515 Grant), Brownleigh Court (1410 Grant), and the now demolished Kentom (1540 Grant) and Sorrento (1350 Grant). 9 Others soon followed such as the 1910 Logan Court at 1461 Logan which is pictured with Montgomery Court in the November 12, 1910 issue of Denver Municipal Facts. 10

The Renaissance Revival Style of Montgomery Court was rare in Denver in 1908 when Neoclassical and Colonial Revival were prevalent. The exterior detailing of Montgomery Court is reminiscent of New York's landmark Villard Houses designed in 1883 by Joseph Morrell Wells, a young architect in the New York Firm of McKim, Mead and White. Marked similarities are seen in the cornices, quoins, the horizontal foundation coursing and the arched windows on the story above. 11 The exterior brick work, decorative terra cotta, wrought iron stair railings and light fixtures demonstrate the excellent craftsmanship and artistic design available in Denver at that time.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Montgomery Court

Item number 8

Page 3

Footnotes

1. Andrew Alpern, Apartments for the Affluent: A Historical Survey of Buildings In New York City, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975, p.1.
2. John Hancock, "The Apartment House in Urban America," Buildings and Society, ed. Anthony King, London & Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p.158.
3. "Apartment Growth in Denver: A Guide for Zoning Policy," The Denver Planning Office, October 1961.
4. The Denver Times, 2/12/1902, p.8, c.2.
5. Ibid.
6. Denver Building Permit Application, #1114, 10/1/1908, Denver Building Department.
7. U. S. Census, Denver, CO, 1910, E.D. 127.
8. City of Denver, Denver Muncipal Facts, 11/12/1910, pp.1,8.
9. The Denver Republican, 1/1/1909, Real Estate Section, p.4.
According to Richard Brettell (Historic Denver, Denver: Historic Denver, 1973, p.25), prominent early use of the frontal light well was in George B. Post's Mills Building, New York City, 1881-1883.
10. Municipal Facts, loc. cit.
11. Walter C. Kidney, The Architecture of Choice, New York: George Braziller, 1947, ill. 33.

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Continuation sheet Montgomery Court

Item number 9

Page 2

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Brettell, Richard. Historic Denver. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1973.

City of Denver, Denver Municipal Facts. Nov. 12, 1910.

Denver Building Department. Building Permit Applications.

Denver Planning Office. October 1961. "Apartment Growth in Denver: A Guide for Zoning Policy."

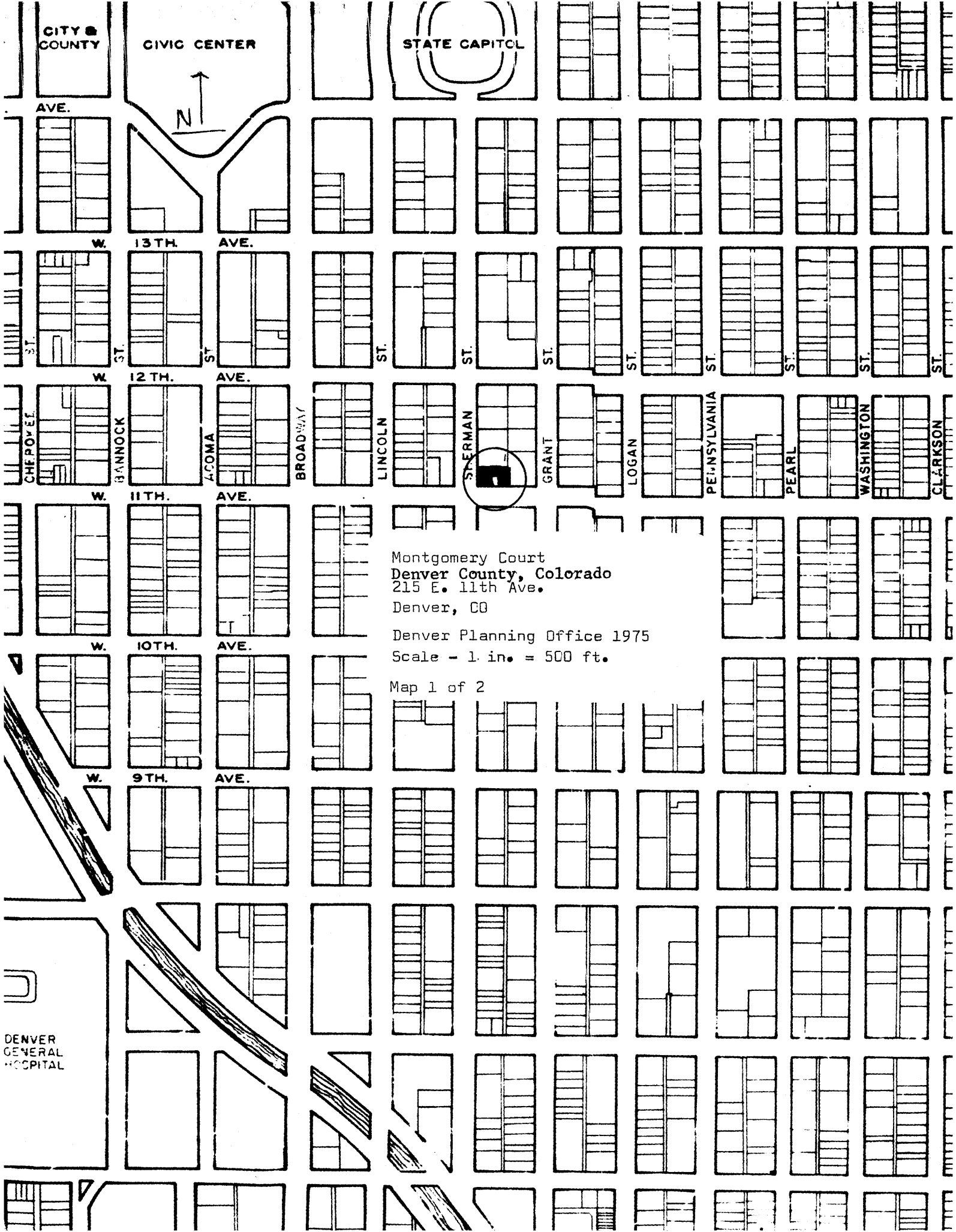
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The Denver Times

Hancock, John. "The Apartment House in Urban America." Buildings and Society, ed. Anthony King. London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

Kidney, Walter C. The Architecture of Choice. New York: George Braziller, 1974.

U.S. Census. 1910. Denver, Colorado, E.D. 127.



Montgomery Court
Denver County, Colorado
215 E. 11th Ave.
Denver, CO

Denver Planning Office 1975
Scale - 1 in. = 500 ft.

Map 1 of 2

DENVER
GENERAL
HOSPITAL

CITY &
COUNTY

CIVIC CENTER

STATE CAPITOL

AVE.

W. 13TH. AVE.

AVE.

W. 12TH. AVE.

AVE.

W. 11TH. AVE.

AVE.

W. 10TH. AVE.

AVE.

W. 9TH. AVE.

AVE.

CHEPOPEE ST.

BANNOCK ST.

ACOMA ST.

BROADWAY

LINCOLN ST.

SHERMAN ST.

GRANT ST.

LOGAN ST.

PENNSYLVANIA ST.

PEARL ST.

WASHINGTON ST.

CLARKSON ST.