

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

For NPS use only

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

received **SEP 14 1984**
date entered

OCT 11 1984

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

1. Name

historic Robison Mansion

and or common Robison Mansion

2. Location

street & number 12 Riverside Drive n/a not for publication

city, town Canon City n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Fremont code 043

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u>n/a</u> district	<u>n/a</u> public	<u>XX</u> occupied	<u>n/a</u> agriculture	<u>n/a</u> museum
<u>XX</u> building(s)	<u>XX</u> private	<u>n/a</u> unoccupied	<u>XX</u> commercial	<u>n/a</u> park
<u>n/a</u> structure	<u>n/a</u> both	<u>n/a</u> work in progress	<u>n/a</u> educational	<u>XX</u> private residence
<u>n/a</u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u>n/a</u> entertainment	<u>n/a</u> religious
<u>n/a</u> object	<u>n/a</u> in process	<u>XX</u> yes: restricted (carriage house)	<u>n/a</u> government	<u>n/a</u> scientific
	<u>n/a</u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted house	<u>n/a</u> industrial	<u>n/a</u> transportation
		<u>XX</u> no (house)	<u>n/a</u> military	<u>n/a</u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name (main house) Ken and Naomi Ireland (carriage house) Jane C. Workman
street & number 12 Riverside Drive 840 South First Street
Canon City, CO Canon City, CO 81212

city, town n/a vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fremont County Courthouse

street & number 6th and Macon

city, town Canon City state Colorado 81212

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites As part of Old South Canon Neighborhood
has this property been determined eligible? XX yes no

date 10/20/80 federal XX state county local

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

city, town Denver state Colorado 80203

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Robison Mansion is located on a two block site in Canon City of about 3 1/2 acres bounded by First Street on the west, Riverside Drive on the north, Second Street on the east and Douglas Avenue on the south. It is one block south of the State Penitentiary. The grounds are planted with mature trees, shrubs and flowers with the house located on the center of the site. The two-story carriage house, now converted into a restaurant, is at the far south end of the lot along Douglas Avenue.

The house, constructed in 1884, is three stories with an irregular plan, a mansard roof and a symmetrical front facade facing north. When viewed from the side, the house has three distinct sections, each decreasing in roof height and width from front to rear. The north front, the tallest and widest of the sections, is characterized by classical ornamentation. Perhaps most distinctive is the front portico, added in 1890, extending almost the width of the first story. The composition consists of two semi-circular porticos accentuating the entrances on the first and second floor. Each has a low mansard roof supported by columns with unadorned capitals with bracketed eaves. The tall, narrow doors and windows on the first and second stories of the front facade are double. Additional detailing include pedimented headers over the windows.

The mansard roof exhibits a deep cornice with bracketing which is broken in the center by a gambrel roofed extension of the front wall. A segmental arched window is placed in the center. On either side of the gambrel are decorated hipped roof dormers with round arched windows. At the top of the mansard, there is decorative wrought iron cresting with corner finials around the four sides of the front block.

On each side wall of the front section is a two-story bay terminating in a flat roof over which is a curvilinear gable dormer faced in brick with a round arched window in the center. The windows of the bay are tall, narrow, 1 x 1 double hung sash with pedimented headers.

On the east wall of the center block is an open porch with a low hip roof of standing seam metal. The roof is supported by slender bracketed wooden posts. On the opposite or west side of the house is an enclosed one-story porch with multi-paned windows suggesting a solarium. To the immediate right is a narrow doorway. A double window with a low pedimented header is centered at the second level. Directly above is a round-arched dormer with molded hood and surround.

On each side wall of the rear section is an oculus or round window projecting from the mansard roof. In addition to the rectangular window at the second story level, there is an unusual elliptical window. On the south rear facade, there is a projecting wooden screened porch. A one-story brick garage of contemporary construction is located near the southeast rear corner of the house. It has a shingle roof with a combination profile of belleast mansard and shallow hip at the top.

On the interior, the spacious entry hall is 44 feet in height and features a curving stairway. Sources differ on whether the handrail is of Honduras mahogany or walnut, carved in Germany.¹ On either side of the entry hall are two parlors with the dining room, kitchen, butler's pantry and other small rooms placed to the rear. The second floor contains four bedrooms and at the rear, down three steps, is a fifth bedroom. The ceiling heights are 14 feet. The third floor remained unfinished until the Wilsons occupied the house.

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Continuation sheet Robison Mansion

Item number 7

Page 2

At the far south end of the property is the carriage house, built c. 1884. It is two stories high and faced in brick matching that of the main house. In the center of the mansard roof is an octagonal cupola with a steeply pitched octagonal roof. On the north front, the eave line breaks to form a steep gable with a window whose top portion repeats the slope of the gable. There is a one-story "L" shape recent addition with a gable roof attached to the north front of the carriage house.

The only additional buildings within the nominated area include a modern garage south of the main house and a modern frame storage building to the west of the carriage house.

Remnants of the historic landscaping of the grounds remain, adding to the visual and historic qualities of the resource. Most of the trees on the property are quite old, several of which are thought to be original plantings. Two cottonwood trees, two maples and the evergreens placed around the house are thought to date to the period of the original owners. The general terracing of the land by the first owners is also evident. (The grounds were originally terraced and irrigated with pipes.)²

¹"Historic Mansion Restored", Rocky Mountain News, 6/30/1967, Festival Section, p.8.

² Information provided by present owner Ken Ireland, August, 1984.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1884 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Robison Mansion is significant as one of the few well preserved examples of the Second Empire style in Colorado. The residence illustrates a quality of design and richness of detail unmatched in the Canon City area. Notable buildings of this style are seen in the Bloom House in Trinidad, the Maxwell House in Georgetown, Leadville's Tabor Hotel and the Sandstone Ranch House in Weld County. The house is also significant for its association with the prominent and affluent Robison family who made many contributions to the growth of Canon City.

The house was constructed sometime between 1884 and 1886 in the area known as South Canon on the south side of the Arkansas River.¹ There are reports that South Canon dates back to 1790 and is the site of the earliest Mexican villages north of Santa Fe. However no trace of those settlements remains today. Early 19th century explorers and trappers traveling the Arkansas River route frequently camped in the area, but Canon City was not actually founded until October 1860 with the construction of a lone cabin. The following spring prospectors on their way to mining areas in South Park stopped here, which resulted in the construction of more permanent structures in Canon City.² The first claims to land in South Canon were filed with the U.S. Government in 1864 by Benjamin Griffin and William Catlin. (The Robison Mansion is on part of the Catlin grant.)

The house was constructed for Lyman and Mary Robison and their son, David L. Robison. The family came to Colorado from Toledo, Ohio in 1879 and settled in Leadville where Robison became very successful as the owner of the Colonel Sellers mine. The family divided their time between Leadville and Canon City to avoid the harsh winters in the mountains. In 1884, Robison formed the South Park Land and Cattle Company, and in 1885, the family moved to Canon to live permanently.³ After Robison sold his Leadville mine, he invested in the Doctor mine in Cripple Creek and later made a large profit when it was sold. Robison was actively involved in the affairs of Canon City particularly in the development of the downtown section. He invested funds from his profits in a large portion of land in the downtown and in the construction of several commercial buildings including the Annex and Apex halls.⁴ Lyman Robison is also responsible for the donation of land for the construction of the Christ Episcopal Church in Canon City.

Lyman and Mary Robison died sometime after the turn of the century. Their son David and his wife, Maude, continued to reside in the house. Throughout the time the Robison family occupied the home, it was the scene of many social events with many prominent guests from political, social and business circles. After his father's death, David carried on the tradition of involvement in social and civic affairs. He managed the family's business properties, in addition to operating a furniture store. He was among those responsible for the preservation of the 1860 Anson Rudd cabin, the oldest log structure in Canon City.⁵ When David's health failed in the 1950s, he went to live with his daughter, Margaret Robison Foster, in Imperial, Nebraska where he died at age 85 in June of 1962.

9. Major Bibliographical References

For bibliography, see footnotes, Item #8, page 2.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.625

Quadrangle name Canon City

Quadrangle scale 1,24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>5</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
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E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 7, South Canon

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title William Simpson, Director / Barbara Norgren, Preservation Consultant

organization Community Development Office

date 2/16/84

street & number 612 Royal Gorge Boulevard
7453 E. Jefferson Drive

telephone (303) 275-1325
(303) 740-7860

city or town Canon City
Denver

state Colorado 81212
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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/5/84

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 10-11-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Robison Mansion

Item number 8

Page 2

After a long period in which the house stood vacant, the property was bought by the Roy Wilsons in 1961. Initially intending to demolish the house and carriage house and redevelop the land, the Wilsons decided to restore the residence and make it their home. Furnishing it with antiques, the house was opened to the public from 1965-1979. During this period, the carriage house was converted into a restaurant, but closed after a short time. In 1979, the property was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Ireland as their residence and the Carriage House Restaurant was reopened in 1981.⁶

¹Rosemae Wells Campbell, Trappers to Tourists, Fremont County 1830-1950, Palmer Lake, Colorado: The Filter Press, 1872, p. 140. (Campbell gives construction date as 1886.)

"Historic Mansion Restored", Rocky Mountain News, 6/30/1967, Festival Section, p. 8. (Construction date given as 1885.)

²Jerome C. Smiley, History of Denver, Denver: The Times-Sun Publishing Company, 1901, p. 286.

³Canon City Record, 6/14/1962, p.1.

⁴Campbell, p. 135.

⁵Canon City Record, loc. cit.

Colorado Writer's Program, "Canon City, Colorado", 1935.

⁶"Wilson's Restore Robison Mansion", Pueblo Star Journal and Sunday Chieftain, 9/24/1972, n.p.

Rocky Mountain News, loc. cit.

RIVERSIDE

DRIVE

290.79'

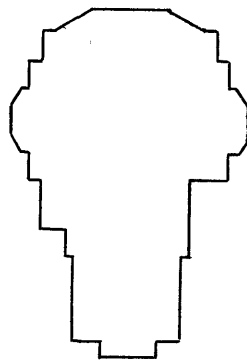


STREET

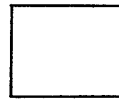
STREET

548.40'

396.71'



ROBISON
MANSION

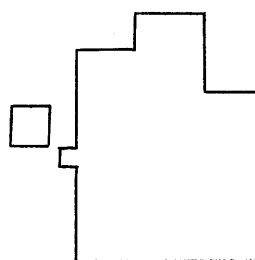


GARAGE

FIRST

SECOND

159.34'



CARRIAGE
HOUSE

SCALE: 1" = 50'

248.74'

DOUGLAS

AVENUE