

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001254

Date Listed: 10/1/92

Gebhard Mansion
Property Name

Denver
County

CO
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

10/16/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination documents significance under Criterion C only; the Criterion B box should not have been checked.

This correction was verified by Jean Conway of the CO SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

1254

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Gebhard Mansion
other names/site number: 5DV 202.15 & 5DV 308

2. Location

street & number: 2253 Downing Street (N/A) not for publication
city, town: Denver (N/A) vicinity
state: Colorado code: CO county: Denver code: 031 zip code: 80205

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(x) private	(x) building(s)		
() public-local	() district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
() public-State	() site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
() public-Federal	() structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	() object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) nomination () request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x) meets () does not meet the National Register criteria.
() See continuation sheet.

Annunzio Hartman August 19, 1992
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

() entered in the National Register.
() See continuation sheet

Beth Boland

10/1/92

() determined eligible for the National Register. () See continuation sheet

() determined not eligible for the National Register.

() removed from the National Register.

() other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling

Current Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/trade-businessDomestic--single dwellingWork in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Italianate

Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

foundations brickwalls brickroof asphaltother wood and stone trim

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Gebhard Mansion, built in 1883, is of Italianate Style which was popular in Denver prior to 1890. This house represents one of the best examples of Italianate Style in the city. Aside from updated mechanical systems it is in practically original condition. Now it is a rare survivor of its time and the care given it by its three owners over the past century assures its continued productive use for a long time to come. It is a two story asymmetrical, brick building with stone trim and a truncated hip roof with small gables faced with decorative woodwork. There is a large corner bay on the northeast corner with a conical roof. The building gives an appearance of solid tranquility. It has four useable floors of space. These include a full basement, (2,478 square feet). The first and second floors (2,317 and 2193 square feet each) constituted the original finished space, and is historically intact with floor plan and architectural finish details original to the building. The third floor (1713 square feet) was originally a single large room with a large skylight which was unfinished and used for storage space. It has now been finished by the addition of Victorian bead board paneling from floor to ceiling and is used as a large music studio.

The Gebhard Mansion is located on the southwest corner of Downing Street at Twenty-third Avenue in the San Rafael Historic District. It was the first building on the block, which through time has included both commercial and residential buildings. In 1890, for example, there were offices and a bakery on the corner of Twenty-second and Downing¹. Its existence has been related to the other buildings on the block, many now demolished. Charles Burkhardt, an early partner of Gebhard in the meat packing business, built his home next door². This home became the Woman's Hospital³, the Children's Hospital⁴ subsequently, and then the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital⁵ before it was demolished to make way for a nursing home. The mortgage on the mansion was paid off by the second owners, Arthur and Grace Smith by

(x) See continuation sheet

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Gebhard Mansion

renting rooms to patients and guests of the hospital while preserving the building. Now the building is one of the prominent buildings in the San Rafael Historic District, and serves as a doctors office without modifications to its interior or exterior.

The Gebhard Mansion's plan is relatively simple, but with the front bay projection of the parlor and side bay of the rear parlor used to good effect. With respect to ornament and finishes, the Gebhard house is somewhat restrained for its time. Exterior woodwork components including porches, fascia, soffitt and the small pediment at the front are not as extensive or ornate as they might be. There are two wooden porches. The side porch was rebuilt to original specifications by the present owners, and the front porch rebuilt with brick foundations by the previous owner. The availability of several century old photographs has allowed almost complete restoration of external woodwork detail. The iron cresting that originally existed on the flat part of the roof and on the roof of the porch is missing, but a good photograph will allow for its re-creation. The original metal roof ridge tiles are still in place, and damaged tiles have been replaced with old stock from the original manufacturer. The sandstone window hoods, sills and belt courses add a great deal of interest to the exterior. All are skillfully combined on the exterior to express the Victorian ideal of richness in ornament, all without appearing obsessive or ostentatious. The original paint colors, including reds, greens and yellows have been restored to the building, as was the original woodgraining in the grand recessed entranceway from the front porch.

On the interior the current major ornamental features are all original to the building. The six fireplaces have their original cast iron faux stone mantles. Each of the over forty windows has original internal shutters. What few pieces of original ornamental hardware were missing have been replicated by the current owners.

The light fixtures are original including some with gas and electric components as required in Denver in the 1880's. Wallpapers are all documented period reproductions with samples of the original papers preserved in each room. Some of the original features illustrate the considerable skill and care which went into the execution of the interior. The walnut grand staircase with its curving stair banister and newel post, the curved opening for the stair, the beveled plaster arches, and the massive and ornate ceiling medallions remain as the craftsmen created them. The original door surrounds, transoms and baseboards remain throughout the building.

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Aspects of the construction at the Gebhard house point to an experienced builder's concern for the process of construction and quality materials. The design elements suggest that Gebhard, himself a master builder before moving to Denver⁶, may have been the designer of his own home.

The structural bearing system is substantial. In addition to the exterior masonry bearing walls, the two masonry bearing walls running through the center of the building front to back serve as the means of support, allowing the 2x12 floor joists to span simply from these walls to the exterior. The floor itself is framed with member sizes, span and spacing such that only at the north building projection of the rear parlor do the spans approach the design limits of the members (as defined by today's design standards). The floor framing and masonry bearing system also allows the grand stairway opening framing to be easily executed. There are 40 some one-over-one, double-hung windows throughout the house. On the first floor they have flat arched sandstone hoods. On the second floor they have more elaborate segmental arched hoods.

With the exception of one window at the rear of the main structure and several in the upstairs portion of the back porch, masonry openings for windows are the same for each of the remaining windows. This simplified the required masonry work, leaving the masonry flourishes for the lintels and ornamental brick work on the chimneys and at the front of the building. The single window size adds considerably to the solid integrated appearance of the exterior.

The above construction decisions seem to add up to a concern in the design process for how the building would ultimately be constructed. Achieving the ideals of Victorian building, often complex in ornament and design, while attending to such construction details make the pragmatic aspects of the Gebhard house even more striking.

Originally there was a two story carriage house behind the Gebhard Mansion which has now been demolished. A modern garage was constructed by Arthur Smith ca 1970s and is considered noncontributing.

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Gebhard Mansion

Footnotes:

1. Brantigan, Charles O., ed., The 1893 Denver Directory (Denver: Canzona Publications, 1992)
2. Brantigan, Charles O., op cit
3. The Denver Maternity and Woman's Hospital, Colorado Med J 8:226-7 (1902).
4. John Amesse, "Children's Hospital: a History of Achievement and Progress from 1910-1947, Denver Children's Hospital Association, Denver 1947.
5. Arthur Smith, Oral History, August 1987.
6. Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado, Chapman Publishing Co., Denver 1898.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: () nationally () statewide (x) locally
Applicable National Register Criteria () A (x) B (x) C () D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) () A () B () C () D () E () F () G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture**Period of Significance**1883**Significant Dates**1883

Cultural AffiliationN/A**Significant Person**N/A**Architect/Builder**probably Gebhard, Henry A.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Gebhard Mansion meets National Register Criterion C for its architectural importance as one of the finest and best preserved examples of the Italianate Style of architecture in Denver.

Denver began as a haphazard collection of log cabins and tents during the winter of 1858. The big placer mining boom occurred the following year, and the town took on an air of permanence when the first sawmill was built the same year. Stereotyped movie style false front buildings with connecting boardwalks reflected the spirit of the wild west. Available supplies of wood were rapidly exhausted, however. Besides cottonwood did not make very good lumber. Bricks made from local clay gradually replaced wood. It became clear that Denver had no future as a mining town, and population increased only by 10 between 1860 and 1870. After the arrival of the railroad in 1870 Denver's future was assured as a supply center for the mining operations in the mountains. The increased wealth which resulted led to the first wave of quality homebuilding in Denver¹. The Gebhard Mansion has architectural significance as one of the finest examples of this early Denver residential construction and is preserved in practically original form both inside and out. This house contains all of the identifying features of the style as defined in A Field to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester.

The building plan is asymmetrical with a projecting two story bay on the front. The roof is hipped with small decorative gable at the front. The wide overhanging eaves have large highly decorative brackets and a paneled entablature. While the lower

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Gebhard Mansion

portion of the porch has been rebuilt, it still contains the important decorative posts, brackets and fascia. The windows are tall and narrow with decorative stone window hoods. The interior of the house, which remains largely intact, has been restored with period wallpaper, carpets, light fixtures and furnishings. All of the original woodwork, shutters and ceiling rosettes have been retained. While the woodwork has been painted, the stair railing newel posts and balusters have their natural wood finish.

Shortly after the mansion was built, Charles Burkhardt, Gebhard's colleague in the packing business, built his large home just to the south of Gebhard's. Burkhardt's home eventually became Women's hospital and then Children's Hospital and finally the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital. This evolution was to have a profound effect on the future of the mansion and made possible its survival. When Gebhard died in 1922, his children remained in the old home until 1938 when the neighborhood began to deteriorate. They sold the house to Arthur Smith, who with his wife, Grace, preserved the building they loved and paid the mortgage by renting rooms to patients and families from the hospital down the street.²

The two previous owners of the building were each significant in his own way. Gebhard profoundly influenced the development of the Rocky Mountain West. Arthur Smith, an uneducated black man who jumped a freight to Denver from the black utopian community of Nicodemus, Kansas in 1925, made his mark on history by preserving one of Denver's landmarks.

Henry Gebhard,³ who built the house in 1883 and lived there until he died in 1922, was born in Reichen, Germany on February 12, 1846. At seventeen years of age he began to learn the builders trade. At age 20 he moved to Norway where he practiced his trade until he came to the United States in 1868 at the age of 22. Arriving in New York, he promptly moved to Hancock, Michigan by way of Chicago, where he worked as a builder

On September 11, 1869 he arrived in Colorado with \$50 in his pocket and moved to Central City where he worked as a builder until 1872 when he formed the firm of Huber and Gebhard, rapidly becoming a well known meat dealer. He first applied for citizenship on May 7, 1874 in Gilpin County.

Beginning in about 1870 Henry Gebhard was buying cattle in the Bijou Creek Basin and driving them up rugged Golden Gate Canyon to market in Central City. He thought raising the cattle himself would be a good idea, and in 1874 he started the Double O Bar ranch in Elbert County, and served as the postmaster of "Gebhard Post Office,

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Colorado," now Agate. He was well respected and was elected to the board of county commissioners, serving as its president, and to the state legislature from 1878-1882. Since final citizenship papers were not received in Arapahoe County until April 26, 1894, it is clear that he served as county commissioner, postmaster, and as a member of the state House of Representatives before becoming a citizen. In 1884, beset by Indians and the problems of maintaining several thousand head of cattle, he sold the ranch and his interest in the meat market to Huber and moved to Denver.

When he moved to Denver, he was at first associated with the Burkhardt and Mills Packing Company which he later bought. The old packing plant, built initially by Mr. Huffers, soon became too small, and he organized the Colorado Packing and Provision Company in 1890.

This Company soon became the largest packer of pork and beef in the state. The packing house contained the most modern equipment, including steam powered refrigeration. The meat was cut up on the second floor and dropped to the cellar, where it was cured and hams were smoked. On the third floor was the cooling or chilling room, and on the fourth, the sausage factory. The meat was distributed in Denver and shipped to the mountain towns of Colorado; also to New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Idaho, California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. In 1890 the plant had a capacity of 300 cattle, 1,000 hogs and 800 sheep per day. In 1905 the plant was sold to National Packing Company which became Armour and Co. With the sale of the packing plant, this immigrant, who had come to Colorado with \$50 in his pocket gave each of his six children \$100,000.

In 1908 Gebhard and Sons started a set of feed yards in Swink, Colorado, one of the first in the country to feed cattle sugar beet pulp, thus establishing another industry in Colorado. Revenues totaled \$370,000 per year by 1912.

Mr Gebhard was an influential citizen. He was a member of the Colorado Cattle Growers Association and served on a number of its committees. He was a member of the board of the Denver National Bank (eventually United Bank of Denver) and was influential in establishing the Denver Union Stockyards . He is listed on the Colonnade of Civic Benefactors in Civic Center Park in Denver for his contribution to the "City Beautiful" movement and made major contributions to the state in the cattle and meat packing industries. As Portrait and Biographic Record put it, "The business interests of Colorado are indebted to such men as Mr. Gebhard for developing the resources of the country and giving employment to many hands and thus sending happiness to many homes."

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The second owner of the house was Arthur Smith,⁴ who was born in the black utopian community of Nicodemus, Kansas on April 19, 1896. His mother, Celia Clark married Ben Smith in 1905, and Arthur took his stepfather's name. His mother died later the same year. He was raised by his grandmother, Rosa Clark.

Life in Nicodemus was difficult at the turn of the century. The settlers were, for the most part, ill prepared for the rigors of the great plains and the cold of winter. There was little money, no supplies and no means of transportation. Education of the children was a similar struggle. The Clarks raised willing teachers, but there were few books, no blackboards and few slates. Informal living arrangements were common, and led to interconnections between many of the families. It was against this background that Arthur Smith spent his childhood.

While Arthur was a teenager, his grandmother worked as a maid in a hotel in Logan, Kansas. Arthur worked in the same hotel washing dishes. After he was "kicked out" of high school, he returned to his grandfather's farm and herded cattle. Arthur served in the army in World War I collecting the dead, returning to his uncle's farm after discharge. He hoboed to Denver in 1925 and eked out a living washing dishes and doing odd jobs for the Gebhard family and others.

Smith was working as a delivery boy for Card's Drug Store in 1936 when he married Grace Gresham, a white woman from Buena Vista, Colorado. Shortly afterward the old Gebhard Mansion at Twenty Third and Downing came on the market. Arthur had a fondness for the fine old building, which he knew well. The Gebhards made it possible for him to buy it. Together, he and Grace paid the mortgage by taking in boarders from the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital, then located on the same block, and by saving the money that Arthur earned as a janitor and later as a guard at the Federal Center.

Arthur was a multitalented individual involved in wide-ranging activities. He had an appreciation for the building. He provided essentially all of the maintenance for the house himself. Without any formal training in history or architecture he managed to preserve the historic fabric of the building. When the tower part of the front porch rotted, he replaced it with brick, preserving the style. Changes in the heating system, wiring and plumbing were all done sensitively. In the late 1970s he built the garage behind the house but apologized for the bricklaying, noting that he was getting old (in his 80's) and his helper wasn't very good. All planning of this work was done from his complete workshop/chemistry lab in the basement.

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Gebhard Mansion

Arthur enjoyed children, although he never had any of his own. The highlight of his day occurred when, on the way home from work, he stopped to talk to the children behind the fence at the Boettcher School. These children, and those at Children's Hospital across the street were special to him and as a result he left a large sum of money to the hospital when he died.

The infirmities of age gradually caught up to Arthur and Grace Smith. In 1979, the doctors did not believe he would last the year. When Grace died in 1984 there were no longer any boarders and no reason to remain in the large house, which was beginning to show signs of deferred maintenance. He moved to Texas to live with his cousin Rosie Neal. In 1991 he fractured his hip and died of complications on July 13, 1991. He visited his mansion twice after he sold it and tears of joy came to his eyes when he saw the restoration that he would like to have completed himself.

A revitalization of the San Rafael neighborhood began in the 1980s, and the San Rafael Historic District was listed in the National Register in 1986 with the Gebhard Mansion as its most prominent building. By then the mansion was vacant and an attempt had been made to convert it into a shelter for AIDS patients. The Brantigans bought the building for their office in 1987 and restored it to its former glory.

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Gebhard Mansion

Footnotes:

1. Jerome C. Smiley, History of Denver, The Times Sun Publishing Co, Denver, 1901
2. Arthur H. Smith, Oral history, August 1987. (note: the question was asked because of the hospital beds and bedside tables found in the basement.)
3. Gebhard's history is compiled from published and original sources. The only easily available biographies are contained in:
Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado, Chapman Publishing Co, Denver 1898.
Henry Gebhard dead, Aged 76, Denver Times May 29, 1922 p3.
Other sources include his interview with H.H. Bancroft, and copies of original documents obtained from various places. These documents are varied and include such items as his marriage license, financial records from the feedlot in Swink, his stock certificate from Denver National Bank, interviews with descendants and many old photographs. These records are summarized in an attached document and are maintained at the Mansion.
4. Nothing pertinent to Smith's biography is published except obituaries:
Arthur H Smith, former Denver resident, 95, Denver Post 20 July 1991, p6c.
Landmark's Savior Dies at Age 95, Rocky Mountain News 20 July 1991.
Arthur Smith: keeper of the mansion, Colorado History News, Feb 1992, p6.
Information was obtained from interviewing Smith and his relatives and by consulting original sources in Denver; Nicodemus, KS; Graham County Historical Society, Manzanola, Colorado; and Salida and Buena Vista, Colorado. These records are abstracted in the attached document and are maintained at the mansion.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, Colorado, Chapman Publishing Company, Denver, 1898.
Henry Gebhard manuscript.
Arthur H Smith manuscript

() See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- () recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- () State Historic Preservation Office
- () Other State agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- (x) Other

Specify Repository:

Gebhard Mansion, 2253 Downing St.
Denver, CO 80205

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property: less than one acre

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>060790</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	9	0one	Easting	Northing
C				D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

() See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

North 6 1/4 feet of lot 24 and all of lots 25 to 30 and a strip of land about 10 feet wide lying East of and adjacent to in San Rafael Addition to the City of Denver

() See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the legal description of the property in the records of the City of Denver. It contains the land historically associated with the property.

() See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Charles O. Brantigan, MD

Organization: N/A

Date: 1 March 1992

Street & Number: 2253 Downing Street

Telephone: (303) 830-8822

City or Town: Denver

State: CO

Zip Code: 80205

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Gebhard Mansion

Photograph Log:

Photograph 1:

1. Gebhard, Henry August, Mansion
2. Denver, Denver County, Colorado
3. Unknown
4. About 1890
5. Gebhard Mansion, 2253 Downing Street, Denver, Colorado 80205
5. Facade.

Photograph 2:

1. Gebhard, Henry August, Mansion
2. Denver, Denver County, Colorado
3. Yuji Oishi, MD
4. 1 February 1992
5. Department of Medical Photography, Presbyterian St Lukes Medical Center, Denver, Colorado
6. Front Facade

Photograph 3:

1. Gebhard, Henry August, Mansion
2. Denver, Denver County, Colorado
3. Yuji Oishi, MD
4. 1 February 1992
5. Department of Medical Photography, Presbyterian St Lukes Medical Center, Denver, Colorado
6. Southern elevation.

Photograph 4:

1. Gebhard, Henry August, Mansion
2. Denver, Denver County, Colorado
3. Yuji Oishi, MD
4. 1 February 1992
5. Department of Medical Photography, Presbyterian St Lukes Medical Center, Denver, Colorado
6. Front grand staircase

Photograph 5:

1. Gebhard, Henry August, Mansion
2. Denver, Denver County, Colorado
3. Yuji Oishi, MD
4. 1 February 1992
5. Department of Medical Photography, Presbyterian St Lukes Medical Center, Denver, Colorado
6. Front parlor looking north with an 18 mm lens

