

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Colorado	
COUNTY: Denver	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
FEB 1	1972

1. NAME

COMMON:
Molly Brown House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
House of Lions

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
1340 Pennsylvania Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Denver

STATE Colorado	CODE 08	COUNTY: Denver	CODE 031
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
			Comments Open to the public as a historic house

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Art Leisenring

STREET AND NUMBER:
950 Lincoln

CITY OR TOWN:
Denver

STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Tax Assessor's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
City and County Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Denver

STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Junior League Survey of Historic Denver Structures (H.A.B.S.I.)

DATE OF SURVEY: **1967** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
State Historical Society of Colorado Library

STREET AND NUMBER:
200 Fourteenth Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Denver

STATE: Colorado	CODE: 08
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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The House of Lions is a 2½ story stone structure (with basement) built in the Italian Villa style. The basic stone wall material is evenly coursed, with emphasis on lintels, arches and sills, which are of a different stone from the walls. The visual weight of this stone construction is off-set, however, by the use of wood decorative elements and by an asymmetrical massing of irregular units.

Six windows, including three round-arched windows accented by sandstone voussoirs and sills, open from the front facade, in a combination of shapes and types repeated in its irregularity throughout the house. Of special note is the main ground floor window which features a half-round stained glass transom, above a fixed sash. The second ground floor window, almost hidden in the shadows of the veranda, is an arched single fixed sash window. Two small casement windows open from the gables, and one double hung window is placed on the second floor, adjacent to an arched, casement window with a decorative, carved mullion. Of additional interest is the carved sandstone lintel above the main front entrance.

An L-shaped veranda extends from the front and north facades of the house, supported by carved wood posts which form arches at all corners and on either side of the gabled porch. These posts are set upon a sandstone balustrade, although early photographs of the house indicate that the balustrade was originally wood and that the veranda has been extended on the front facade to a point approximately one foot beyond the roof line. The arched porch is surmounted by a triangular pediment, supported by brackets to either side of the arch. Early photographs also indicate that the wrought iron balustrade circling the second floor sun deck has been added since the original construction to replace a simple wood balustrade.

Another change from the original appearance of the house, attributed to the Browns' residence there, is the addition of the high wall in front of the house. Originally, a low, stone retaining wall extended along the frontage of the property, broken only by steps which were aligned directly with the porch entrance. The addition of the high wall necessitated re-routing of the front steps in a broken line behind the wall. It is possible that the wall was added to accommodate the granite bas-relief, reproduced from a frieze by the Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen, which is set in the wall directly below the front entrance. Two carved stone lions flank the stairs to the left of the high wall. Two additional lions decorate the porch and a fifth is placed on the low retaining wall at the south edge of the property. The lions were added by Mrs. Brown.

Two rectangular stained glass windows, one on the first floor and one on the second floor, open off the north facade of the house, in the front section. This facade is broken by a five-sided extension featuring 7 double-hung windows, a door which opens onto the veranda, and two small triangular windows under the eaves of the gable. Five additional windows are placed irregularly in the rear section of this facade. A door at the northwest corner opens onto the second floor sun deck.

A glassed-in back porch extends from the rear facade on the house, opening onto a small patio area between the house and the carriage house. Four windows and one door open from the second floor of the rear facade. A rear entrance on the south facade has been enclosed as part of the back porch.

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(Number all entries) Description (continued)

The south facade is broken by a bay window extension. The bay is divided into three window sections on each floor (including the basement) and topped by a small balcony area under the gable. A casement window opens onto the balcony which is rimmed by a wood balustrade. A round-arched window is placed on the first floor to the rear of the house, with a double-hung window above on the second floor. A single double-hung window opens near the front of the house, from the second floor.

Five outside end, single stack cut stone chimneys mark the irregular roof line; two on the south facade and three on the north. The original wood shingle roof has been replaced by a more decorative tile roof. Small finials have been added to mark the apex of each gable.

The roof shape does not fit into any general classification. The roof ends in a gable on the rear facade, with centre gables on the north and south facades. These side gables intersect the slope of the roof at different heights and extend asymmetrically from the main section of the house. The main ridge of the roof is broken, in the front section of the house, sloping into a small hipped section, from which is extended a gable, off-set to the right, near the top of the rise. A second, smaller gable extends from the main gable, off-set to the right. All five gables are finished with bargeboards, with paneled pediments below the two front gables. The centre gable on the north facade is bracketed. A shed dormer projects from the roof slope on the north facade, between the front chimney and the gable. Projecting eaves are trimmed with plain, boxed cornices.

The internal arrangement of the house includes, on the first floor: an entry hall; two parlors (one may have been used as a library); a sitting room; a dining room and a kitchen (divided into two kitchens for apartment use). The second floor contains: a sun room (adjacent to the sun deck) and four bedrooms. The front section of the third floor originally was used as a ballroom. It has now been partitioned into several smaller areas.

The carriage house to the rear of the property is distinguished by a cupola which straddles the ridge at the center of the roof. The roof is gabled at the west and east sides towards the end, with centre gables on the north and south facades. The west facade is cut stone, to match the house, while the three remaining walls are brick. The elaborate west facade is accented, on the second floor, by 2 gothic-arched windows, 1 gothic-arched door and a small balcony. The gable on this facade, unlike the 3 remaining gables, is trimmed by a bargeboard and brackets. Carriage entrances are placed on the east and west facades. The only other interesting architectural feature is a small, round window opening from the south facade just below the apex of the gable.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications			
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

HOUSE OF LIONS, historical significance

The House of Lions, or as usually called "The Molly Brown House," is an "emotional" landmark of Coloradoans, as well as an historical landmark. The house and its onetime residents, Molly and "Johnny" Brown, epitomize so many of the contrasting, colorful, lusty, gaudy, "rags to riches" elements in early Colorado history. It also reflects the tastes and exciting life style of one of Colorado's most colorful women, "The Unsinkable Molly Brown."

In recent years, the story of her life was made into a popular Broadway musical and a movie. The musical, entitled "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," did capture many of the significant elements that made Molly Brown a sentimental favorite to Coloradoans: A young, illiterate girl suddenly attempts to bulldoze her way into Denver society (partially by her ostentatious residence) but her success in becoming a favorite in international society through polishing herself by travel and studying at the cultural centers of the world, her many charitable causes and her "never-say-die" attitude.

James J. Brown, better known as "Johnny" was representative of the many men who came to Colorado with little or no money and little or no prior knowledge of minerals or mining, through industry or just plain luck became overnight millionaires. Johnny Brown's success was due partially to the above, but the bulk of it was due to the extraordinary genius he developed in a short time for finding and evaluating mineral lodes. This genius not only made his fortune, but added to that of other well known figures in Colorado history, including David H. Moffat, John Campion, and Eban Smith.

Margaret Tobin (she was often called Maggie as well as Molly) came to Leadville, Colorado from Hannibal, Missouri, with her two brothers when she was only 15. Within a year, she met and married Johnny Brown, almost twice her age. Brown was involved with many mining properties in Leadville, and later would become involved in mining enterprises elsewhere in Colorado and the West. But his most famous mining discovery was the Little Johnny (or sometimes called Jonny) Mine in Leadville.

At Molly's insistence, the couple moved to Denver. They were not the original builders of the house at 1340 Pennsylvania St. It is believed

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kohl, E. E., Denver's Historic Mansions, Sage Books, Denver, 1957.
 Bancroft, Caroline, Unsinkable Molly Brown, Golden Press, 1956.
 Davis, Herndon, "The Unsinkable Mrs. Brown," Rocky Mountain News,
 April 6, 1941, p. 10.
House of Lions, tour guide, printed by Historic Denver, Inc.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		104°	58'	49" W
NE	° ' "	° ' "		39°	44'	15" N
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than one acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Perry Eberhart, Research Associate**
Susan A. Nieminen, Assistant to the Director

ORGANIZATION: **State Historical Society of Colorado** DATE: **June 17, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER: **200 Fourteenth Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Denver** STATE: **Colorado** CODE: **08**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Stephen H. Hart*
Stephen H. Hart

Title **Colorado State Liaison Officer**

Date **July 19, 1971**

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Armit A. Pennington
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

FEB 1 1972

Date _____

ATTEST: *William Pennington*
 Keeper of The National Register

JAN 3 1972

Date _____

13/501680/4298380
 12-5-75-urn

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HOUSE OF LIONS, historical significance (continued)

construction on the house started in 1887 by George W. Clayton or Isaac N. Large, but was not completed because of financial problems. The Browns purchased the house in 1890 and completed construction in circa 1892. It was Molly herself who selected the lavish, even ostentatious, furnishings and decorations.

She had hoped this would help her win her way into Denver Society. But, if anything, it worked in reverse, and the so-called "Sacred Thirty-Six" of Denver completely bypassed her.

Snubbed, Molly began a series of journeys to the cultural capitals of the world, primarily New York, Paris and London, to study art, music, design, fashion, languages, etc. Some early trips she made with her husband, but gradually he stayed home more and more to mind his far-flung mining empire, and she went off by herself. They were legally separated later.

Molly became a well-known part of International Society. While in Denver, a parade of visiting royalty and international figures were made welcome at the House of Lions.

In 1912, on one return trip from Europe, she became a heroine of the sinking of the Titanic and acquired the nickname "Unsinkable" that colors her name today. She took charge of one of the lifeboats full of survivors and kept up their courage with her humor, toughness, and by leading them in song. In an interview after they were picked up she shrugged it off by saying "I'm unsinkable."

Molly was also noted for her many charities, including greatly contributing to and leading the relief effort for miners and their families after the "Ludlow Massacre" in 1914; she was cited for her hospital work for entertaining the troops (she was known for her singing and recitations) during World War I; she preserved the Denver house of one of the city's best known poets, Eugene Field, and turned it over to the city; she erected the Mark Twain Memorial in her hometown of Hannibal, Missouri, and many other causes.

She attempted to turn her home over to the city of Denver as an art museum or other public purpose, but her two children prevented her from doing so.

Johnny Brown died in 1922 and Molly died in 1932 (at age 63). They were buried side by side in their daughter's (Benzinger) family plot in Westbury, Long Island.

The House of Lions has had several owners since sold by the family shortly after Molly's death. More recent and longtime owners have been the Evon C. Snyders and Arthur Leisenring. Currently Historic Denver, Inc., a citizens group working to preserve Denver landmarks, is leasing the home, with option to buy. They are conducting tours of the house as part of their fund-raising efforts to buy the house.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

39°45' SE
(ARVADA)

105°00' 39°45' 502000m E. 503 5730'



House of Lions, Denver, Colo.
U.S.G.S Map 7.5 Minute series
Englewood, Colo. Quadrangle
1957 Scale: 1:24000

