



COLORADO
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

FOR OFFICIAL USE	Site Number	5DV742
Nomination Received		
Determined	Eligible	Not Eligible
8-18-95	Review Board	☒ Approved ☐ Denied
9-13-95	GIS Board	☒ Approved ☐ Denied
Level of Significance: ☐ Natl. ☐ State ☐ Local		

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

NOMINATION FORM

(Please type)

1. Name of Property

Historic Name George Elbert Burr Studio & Residence/Denver Woman's Press Club

Current Name Denver Woman's Press Club

2. Address of Property 1325 Logan Street
number street

Denver Denver 80203
city county zip

3. Legal Description of Property P.M. 6th Township 4 S Range 68 W

SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of NE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section 3 Quad Map Englewood

Lot(s) 27 Block 66 Addition J. W. Smiths

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 501540 Northing 4398400

Verbal Boundary Description

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

4. Present Owner of Property

Name Denver Woman's Press Club (DWPC)

Address 1325 Logan Street Phone (303)839-1519

City Denver State CO Zip 80203

(if the property is in multiple ownership, please give the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

5. Preparer of Nomination

Name Millie Van Wyke (ed. HLW) Date May 24, 1995

Organization Denver Woman's Press Club

Address 3575 E. Vassar Ave. Phone (303)757-5028

City Denver State CO Zip 80210

6. Classification of Property

Type

☒ building(s) ___ district ___ site ___ structure ___ object ___ area

Has the property received local historic designation

___ no

☒ yes (☒ individual ___ in district) date designated January 2, 1969

designated by Denver (Name of municipality or county)

7. Condition of Property

___ excellent ☒ good ___ fair ___ deteriorated ___ ruins

☒ original location ___ moved (date of move _____)

8. Use of Property

Historic residence and studio for artist George Elbert Burr

Current Denver Woman's Press Club Headquarters

9. Original Owner George Elbert Burr

Source of Information Abstract, Deed

10. Year of Construction 1910

Source of Information building permit #938 and water tap application #39328

11. Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer

possibly George E. Burr with Varian and Varian

Source of Information (see continuation sheet)

12. Architectural style/Engineering type

Eclectic

13. Description

(describe the current condition and appearance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

14. Alterations

(describe and date significant changes made to the original property on one or more continuation sheets)

15. Significance of Property
Nomination Criteria

- ☒ a - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- ☒ b - property is connected with persons significant in history
- ☒ c - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- ☐ d - property is of geographic importance
- ☐ e - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

Areas of Significance

ART	_____
LITERATURE	_____
ARCHITECTURE	_____
_____	_____

16. Significance Statement
(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

17. Bibliography
(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

18. Legislative Information

Colorado House District # 5 or Name of Representative _____

Colorado Senate District # 34 or Name of Senator _____

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

19. Sketch Map

20. Photocopy of USGS Map

21. Black & White Photos

22. Color Slides

23. Optional Materials

24. Owner Consent for Nomination
(attach signed and notarized consent from each owner of property - see next page)

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
OWNER CONSENT FORM

Property Name Denver Woman's Press Club House

Each partial owner must sign a separate form. Photocopy form as needed. All signatures must be notarized.

I Enid Slack
(type or print name)

President, Denver Woman's Press Club
title

certify that The Denver Woman's Press Club is the sole owner X/partial owner___ of the land and property located at

street number 1325

street name Logan

city Denver

county Denver

and that I hereby give my written consent and approval for this property's nomination to and inclusion in the State Register of Historic Properties.

signature Enid W. Slack, President

Subscribed and sworn to before me, in my presence, this 15 day of

JUNE, 1995, a Notary Public in and for the

(~~county~~) (state) of Colorado
County of Denver

(seal)

Margaret C. Orholt
Notary Public
Comm exp 12-9-96

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name GEORGE ELBERT BURR STUDIO / RESIDENCE

Section Number 13 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The George Elbert Burr Studio and Home, which now serves the Denver Woman's Press Club, is a small, one and one-half story, brick building. The rectangular plan building is comprised of two intersecting steeply-pitched gabled roofs. The walls are reddish-brown brick in a running bond with a stringcourse of rowlocks. Reminiscent of the English craftsman tradition, the building shows the local masonry craftsmanship prevalent in Denver at the time of its construction in 1910.

The building faces east with a side gabled section that contains a simplified corbiestep. Concrete steps flanked by wrought iron railing lead to a platform and the front entrance. A decorative, gabled hood supported by brackets appears above the glazed and paneled door. A small hipped roof supported by brackets overhangs three windows positioned beside the entry. The upper story contains two windows.

All the windows are wood framed with multi-lights. A course of rowlocks forms the lugsills and a soldier course forms the jack arch above each window. The majority of the windows are casements. However, two small kitchen windows on the south side and the large window on the north side are double hung.

On the south elevation, the gabled end section is punctuated by four windows on the lower level and two on the upper. The expanse of the side gabled section is broken only by a door and three small basement-level windows. The north elevation contains even less windows, with two on the upper level and one large window towards the back. The rear elevation contains French doors with brick steps leading to a brick patio.

The interior plan accommodates the studio and parlor on the main level; the main kitchen, storage and utility functions in the basement; and the study/bedroom (now used as an office) and bath on the small second floor loft level. The entire structure surrounds a two-sided open fireplace, prevalent of the period.

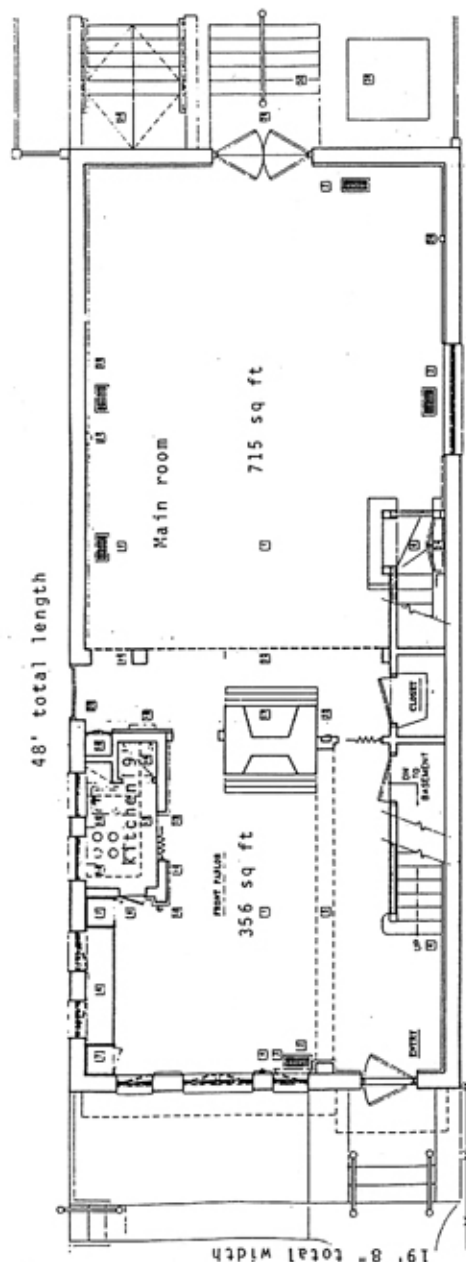
The interior boasts of the craftsman style with detailed wood trim, stairs, and built-in cabinets. The design also incorporates a large one and one-half story studio/living area with an original north facing skylight, and ornamental exposed wood. A Japanese candle lantern inside the entrance and an outer lantern under the hood of the front door are original treasures.

The house is filled with works collected over nearly a century. Among them are several of Mr. Burr's valuable works of art, books and publications by DWPC authors, paintings, historical photographs, and period furniture. The collection is displayed prominently and tastefully for public viewing.

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FIRST FLOOR - 1,071 sq. ft.

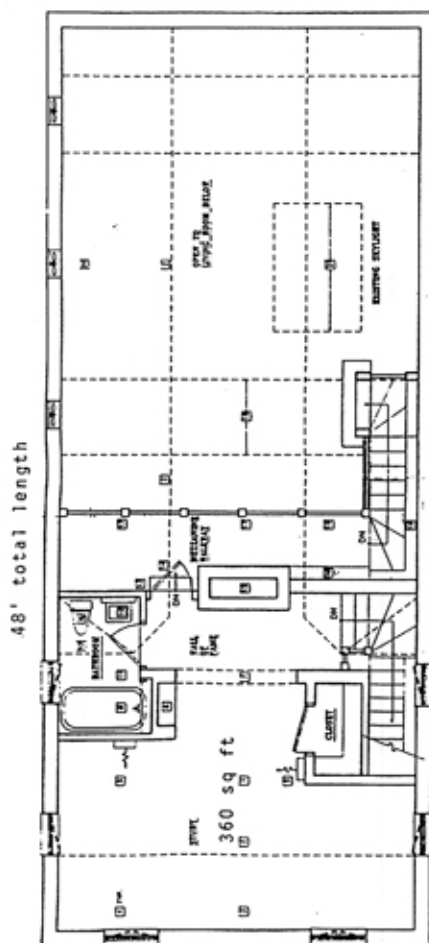
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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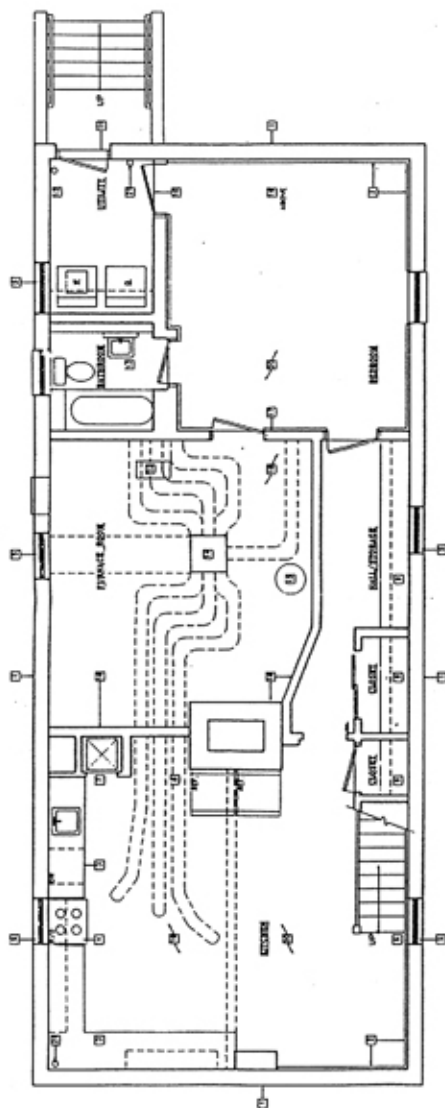
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BASEMENT

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



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ALTERATIONS

The clubhouse has undergone the following alterations:

1935: Main floor in the former studio

The Dutch door in the northwest corner was removed.
Burlap was removed from the walls.
New drapes and French Provincial furnishings were added.
French doors and back steps were installed.

At some point the south door was sealed and the steps removed. Research has been unable to ascertain the date of this alteration. It may have been done in 1935 as well.

Late 1950s/early 1960s:

Chandeliers replaced the Benares brass globes.
Panelling installed where the burlap had been.
Three exhaust fans installed in the south wall.

1991: Composition shingles on roof replaced with fiberglass shingles.

1993: Emergency electrical and plumbing repairs were completed in the basement to replace deteriorated and dangerous wiring.
Wiring was installed to accommodate computer on the second floor.
New panel boxes were installed on the exterior.

The house retains nearly 95% of its original design, and the Denver Woman's Press Club has carefully maintained the structure for nearly 70 years, with few changes made. Every effort has been made to preserve the integrity of the house. All repairs and maintenance were performed to preserve the historic value of the structure whenever possible (i.e., necessary tuck pointing, drain spouts, security lighting, etc.). However, the emergency electrical repairs in the caretaker's basement apartment resulted in unsightly exposed electrical conduits and panel boxes, both on the interior and the exterior of the structure.

SIGNIFICANCE

The building meets criterion "b" for its association with George Elbert Burr, one of America's foremost etchers of natural scenes. Burr came to Denver in 1906 and this house was built for him in 1910. The building served as his residence and studio until 1924 when he moved to Phoenix, Arizona for health reasons. The building meets criterion "a" for its historical significance in the area of literature for its association with the Denver Woman's Press Club (DWPC). This organization purchased the house in 1924 for use as its clubhouse, a function it still serves today. The building's eclectic design also meets criterion "c" for its architectural significance as an unusual combination of English and Dutch building traditions with Craftsman elements.

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Property Name GEORGE ELBERT BURR STUDIO / RESIDENCE

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Art

George Elbert Burr (1859-1939), artist and possible designer of the house, lived and worked here until 1924. Already 53 years of age and in declining health, Mr. Burr nevertheless produced two of his most significant sets of works during this period. They are the Mountain Mood Series, 16 etchings of Rocky Mountain scenes; and the Desert Set, 35 etchings sketched on trips to New Mexico, Arizona and California. The subject matter, mountains and deserts, are very different from his earlier works. Mr. Burr printed these works of art himself on a hand press in the basement of 1325 Logan Street. The artist also perfected the art of color etching during his Denver period.

Burr began his artistic work in 1878 and lived abroad for several years. Lena McCauley, art editor of the Chicago Evening Post, described Burr's 35 years prior to his Denver period as having "qualified him for the monumental achievement: his series of prints of 'The Desert'." She also wrote that his etchings "show the creative note, the interpretative effort and the hand of a master....these plates will be of more than passing delight to the connoisseur, and a record of historic truth to the student of nature" (McCauley, 1921). Indeed, in 1974, James A. Parsons, of Gallery West, Denver, said: "George Elbert Burr is one of the more important American etchers. The artist's works are scarce and the demand is strong. His watercolors are virtually unobtainable." A. Reynolds Morse, Honorary Curator, Denver Public Library, described Burr's years in Colorado as "undoubtedly the most important of his life...they established him as a pioneer etcher of the American scene...George Elbert Burr was one of the outstanding etchers of the Western Landscape. Burr's western views...nourish the body as well as one's soul" (May 30, 1967). The Rocky Mountain News described his Mountain Mood series as expressions of "the spirit and feeling of the mountains captured by the genius of the artist. Such a thing has never been attempted...Mr. Burr's interesting observations of nature's moods in the mountains is one of the most refreshing and delightful exhibits...shown this winter" (April 2, 1916). A complete set of Mountain Moods can be found at the Denver Public Library.

Burr's perfection of the difficult process of color etching aroused the interest of every watercolor artist in America. By 1913 he had two complete sets of color etchings ready for exhibition. "From first to last his hands alone handle the plate and take care of its development until he is satisfied with the print that he has pulled. This personal quality can be discovered by viewing any group of his prints. They show the creative note, the interpretative effort and the hand of a master" (McCauley, 1921).

George Elbert Burr was the first president of the Denver Art Association, an honorary member of the Cactus Club, and "active in art circles and on committees and art juries" (Seeber, p. 26). He offered his works at prices individuals and institutions alike could well afford. In 1914 the average price of 49 of his black and white etchings was \$7.55, and ten color etchings were priced at \$10 each. Today, 900 of his works can be viewed in 26 museums and ten countries.

Burr presented the Denver Woman's Press Club with 15 of his etchings and watercolors, including the large watercolor of Mt. Evans. About this work, his wife wrote later: "We somehow could not leave without giving you the water color of Mt. Evans. It was from a sketch made the first summer we spent in Bear Creek Canyon...We left with you things we loved and they have touched a responsive chord in your hearts." (quoted in the Rocky Mountain News, November 29, 1968).

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Fully aware of the Burr's gifts of art, the DWPC has restored, matted and reframed all of his works to professional standards. They are displayed in Burr's former studio, now the main meeting room of the Denver Woman's Press Club.

Literature

The Denver Woman's Press Club was initiated by four newspaperwomen, including Minnie J. Reynolds, a renowned suffragist and star reporter on the Rocky Mountain News. The club was formally launched in 1898 and incorporated by the State of Colorado in 1908. The purpose of the association was "to advance and encourage women in literary work, to cultivate acquaintance and friendship among women of literary tastes, to secure the benefits arising from organized effort and to drive away dull care." Early members also included Antoinette Hawley, Colorado's fiery temperance leader; Helen Black, the first manager of the Denver Symphony; Helen Ring Robinson, the nation's first woman state senator; Alice Polk Hill, the country's first poet laureate; Alberta Pike, founder of Vogue magazine; Mary Coyle Chase, Pulitzer-prize winning author of Harvey; and Katherine Anne Porter, nationally acclaimed novelist. The members and associate members in succeeding years have included many notable writers and some have achieved national fame. The DWPC library contains over 200 books written by club members.

The club members themselves raised the funds to purchase George Elbert Burr's house in September 1924 for use as a gathering place for journalists and writers. The studio/home was purchased with money raised by a series of society balls, pageants and other social activities. This house has been the scene of many "celebrity parties" over the years attended by some of the best-known writers in the country. The Burr studio/home is the only clubhouse that the Denver Woman's Press Club has had and there are no other buildings associated with the organization. The clubhouse has been in constant use by the DWPC for over 70 years.

The Denver Woman's Press Club has expanded its membership to include professional novelists; playwrights; poets; photojournalists; writers of historical nonfiction, children's books, short stories, and magazine articles; and public relations and communications specialists; in addition to journalists, editors, and columnists. Many members bring their expertise to the community as educators and faculty members, consultants, historians, speakers and presenters, and by serving on city and neighborhood boards, libraries, and foundations.

The DWPC has encouraged the pursuit of writing through educational and philanthropic means throughout its history. Recent support includes:

- A \$1,000 annual scholarship, now in its 40th year, to an outstanding journalism student at the University of Colorado at Boulder;

- An annual scholarship to a promising woman writer in the English department at the University of Colorado at Boulder;

- The Rocky Mountain Women's Institute;

- The Gathering Place newsletter, Day by Day;

- A student writers' retreat for the Denver School of the Arts;

- The Colorado Committee for Women's History booklet, Let Women Vote.

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Continuing its tradition of encouraging new writers, the DWPC sponsors the popular Annual Unknown Writer's Contest, now in its 17th year. Over 700 entries were received and critiqued in 1995.

The club also sponsors workshops and seminars on a variety of writing-related topics. These sessions are taught by DWPC members and are open to the public. The club's special events, featuring nationally known writers and journalists, are also free and open to the public. Recent guests have included Judith Viorst, non-fiction books including Necessary Losses; Caroline Kennedy, co-author of In Our Defense, and daughter of President John F. Kennedy; Robert MacNeil, of the "MacNeil-Lehr News Hour," Public Broadcasting system; and Barbara Kingsolver and Sue Miller, best-selling novelists.

Architecture

The Burr Studio and Home represents an interesting mix of English and Dutch building traditions with Craftsman elements. The English tradition can be seen in the building's steeply pitched, side-gabled roof with little rake or eave overhang; no cornice detailing; and windows with narrow surrounds and casement sashes. The simplified corbiestep is reminiscent of Dutch architecture. Craftsman influences can be seen in the hood supported by brackets above the windows and the hood above the front door.

In addition, the building is unusual in its function, as it served as both residence and studio. According to architect David Tryba, the house is an "architectural 'gem' for the unity of function and beauty its design reflects. The hearth at the center of the home is indicative of Burr's desire to blend the demands of his work as a Colorado artist with the comfort of stylish yet efficient living quarters." Tryba notes that many physical reminders of the building's historic use have been carefully preserved, including a north-facing skylight, a second-story balcony overlooking the studio, and the detailed woodwork of the banisters and bookshelves.

While the Denver Assessor's office lists a 1912 construction date, it is believed that this is an error. Other sources indicate an earlier date for the construction of the house. The building permit (#938) was issued March 27, 1910 and the application for water supply (permit #39328) was issued May 3, 1910. Barbara Norgren, who did a great deal of research on the property, concluded that the house was built in 1910.

Although no architect was listed on the building permit, there are some indications that Mr. Burr himself designed the house:

Louise Combes Seeber, author of George Elbert Burr, 1859-1939, writes that her "Cousin Bert" designed and built the house.

"The hood of the front door is from a sketch the artist made when walking one day from Clarens to Vevey on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. It was a sketch of an old iron gate in a wall surrounding a farmhouse 400 years old." (Rocky Mountain News, October 12, 1935).

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Alan Fisher, "the city's expert on old architects and architecture," speculated that the artist Burr could have drawn up the designs for the house himself. "He was a competent individual and he well could have [designed it]" (Rocky Mountain News, November 29, 1968).

Mrs. Elbert Burr wrote: "...we built into this tiny house some of our heartthrobs. We gave it up when the time came to pitch our tent in another spot and we gave it over to you [DWPC] with no regrets but great joy." Mrs. Burr also spoke of leaving some interior "treasures" to the DWPC in 1924, as if these were personally commissioned: "My joy at your owning it [the house] was shown in part by our leaving some of the real treasured things with you, such as the brass globes in the dining room made from Benares brass bowls. The Japanese candle lantern in the hall, and outside under the hood of the door the shade which Craftwood made for us." (quoted in the Rocky Mountain News, November 29, 1968).

Despite this speculation that Burr designed the house, Thomas Noel and Barbara Norgren in their book, Denver, The City Beautiful, state that the architectural firm of "Varian and Varian designed a studio home at 1325 Logan (1910) for George Albert Burr..." Ernest P. Varian and his son Lester Varian formed the firm in 1910. Two statements made by the authors support a connection between the architect Lester Varian and George E. Burr. Varian preferred to build houses in the very style of 1325 Logan, and both men were artists and etchers. Noel and Norgren quote Lester's nephew, Stanley M. White, as stating that "Lester favored English style homes with steep-pitched slate roofs, half timbering, and fine craftsmanship." Lester was also a fine etcher and lithographer, and his etchings made him famous. Like Burr, he journeyed throughout Colorado for inspiration and "was best at capturing the abandoned vernacular architecture he found." It is possible, even likely, that Lester Varian and George Elbert Burr designed the house together.

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Application for Water Supply to the Denver Union Water Co. permit #39328 issued May 3, 1910 to George Elbert Burr.

Building permit #938 issued March 27, 1910 to George Elbert Burr.

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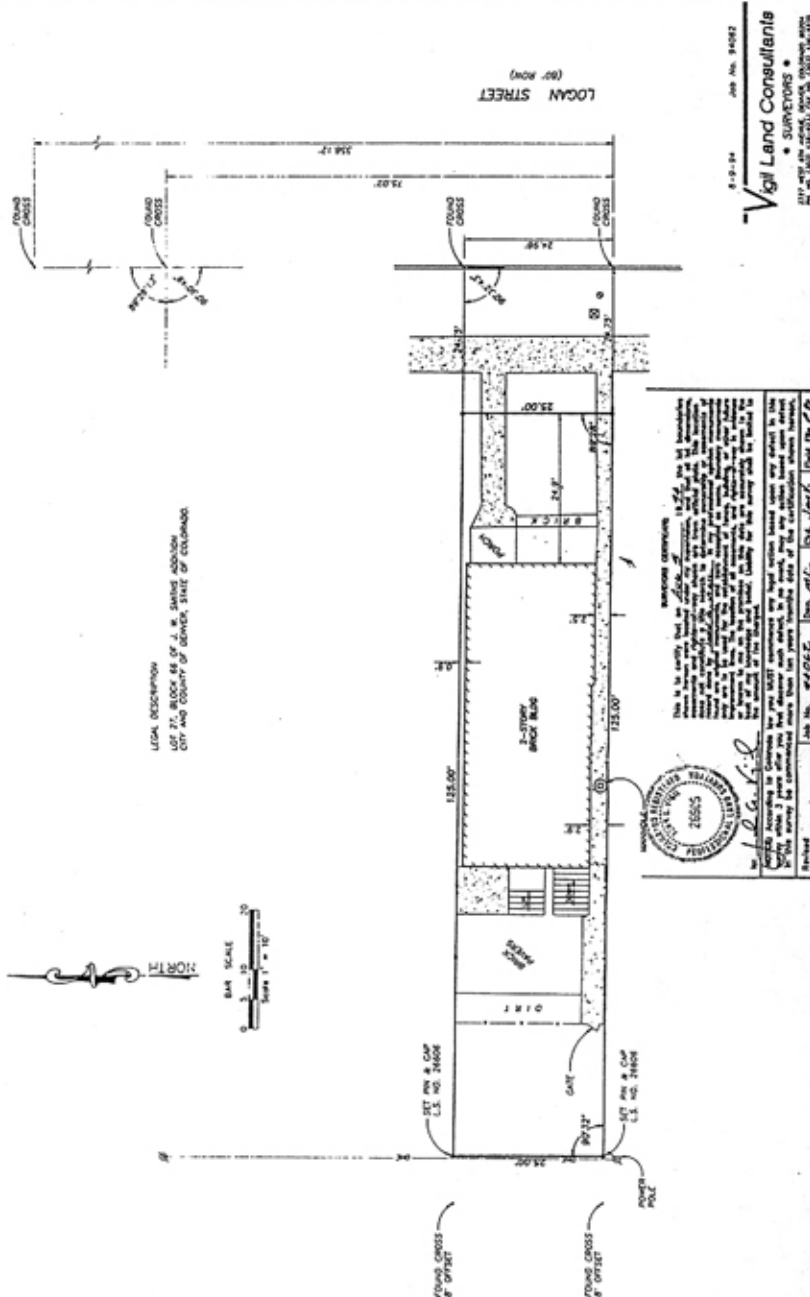
Photographs of interior of house, c. 1925. On display, Denver Woman's Press Club House.

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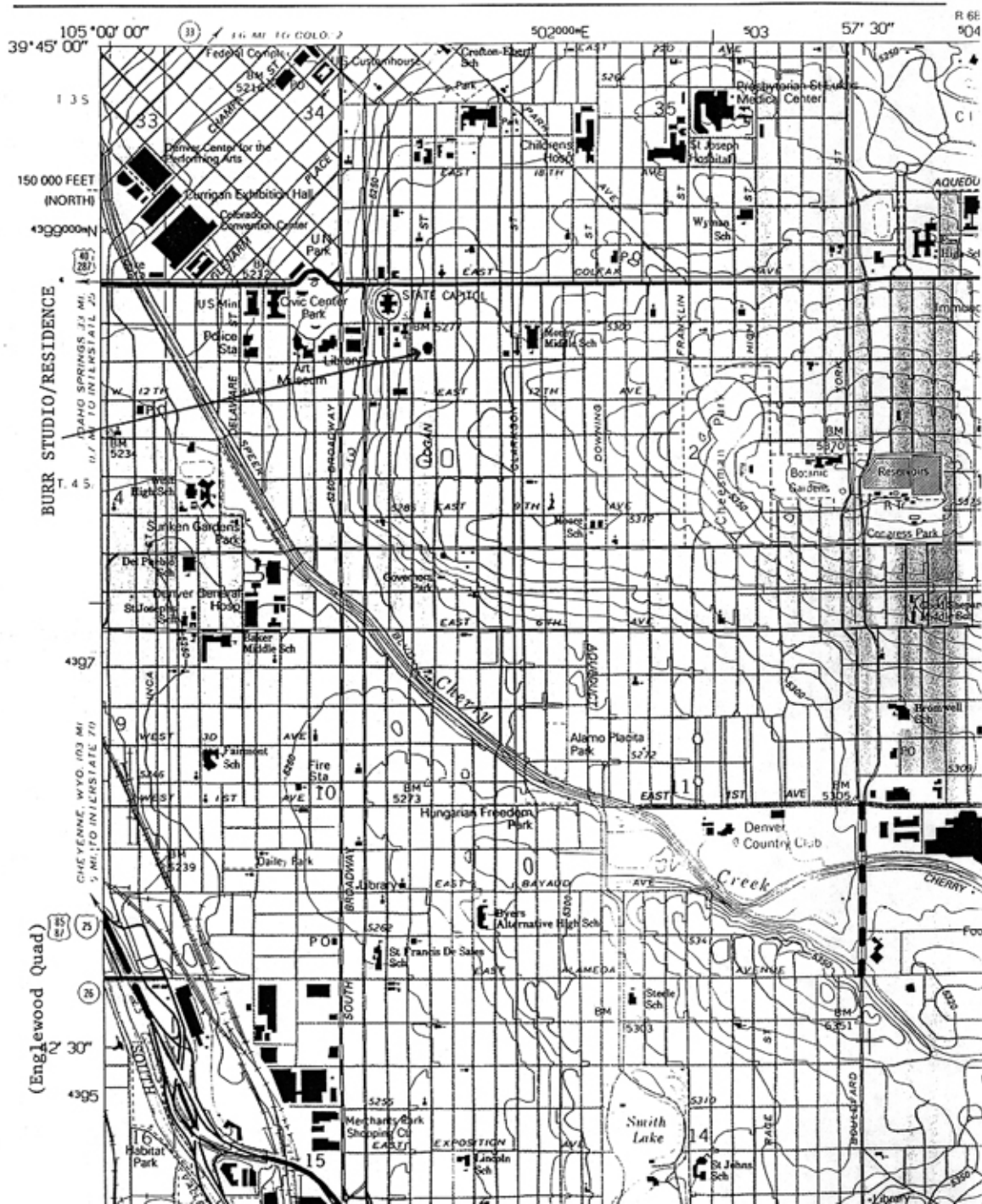
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1995
view southwest



1995
"Hood"



1995
View Northeast



1995
View Northeast



1995
View East



1995
Japanese lantern



1995
View East



1995
South wall, main
room



1995
Southwest corner
of main room



1995
View West from
Loft



1935
Northwest corner of
main room



C.1915
Main Room

