

HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM  
CITY OF AURORA, COLORADO  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

I.D. # HP87-102  
Date 4/2/87

Project Name: Current War Mother's Home Historic American War  
Mother's Nat'l Memorial Home

Address: Street 1601 Peoria Street  
City Aurora County Adams State CO

Legal Description: Lot 3 except the West 15 feet, Wynkoops re-subdivision  
of part of Block 188, Boston Heights, Second filing

Date of Construction: unknown

Nomination Category:        District        xx Building        Object  
       Structure        Site        Other

Current Owner: Name Sgt/Major L. Gunn Date Notified (Staff) 6/9/87  
Address 7581 USAG P.O. Box 34599  
City Ft. Buchanan State P.Rico Zip 00934 Phone  
5000

General Information

<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Present Use</u>
<u>      </u> Public	<u>      </u> <u>xx</u> Occupied	<u>      </u> Agricultural <u>      </u> Park
<u>xx</u> Private	<u>      </u> Vacant	<u>      </u> Commercial <u>xx</u> Residential
<u>      </u> Other		<u>      </u> Government <u>      </u> Other
		<u>      </u> Military

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Modifications</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>      </u> Excellent	<u>      </u> None, like original	<u>xx</u> On original site
<u>      </u> Good	<u>      </u> Slight	<u>      </u> Moved (describe below)
<u>xx</u> Fair	<u>xx</u> Major (describe below)	
<u>      </u> Poor/Deteriorating		

General Description: Provide other relevant information to assist this nomination review process, including construction information, description and extent of modifications, reasons and dates of building moves, general architectural description ( include size, height, stories, style, materials, etc.), names and other data for builder and/or architect, and any other relevant information. (Attach additional pages as necessary)

See page four, this application for additional information.

Application submitted by: William C. Thomas  
Address: 1124 Beeler St., Aurora, CO. 80010  
Phone: 344-1303

Statement of Significance: Check those which apply and provide details as described below.

Architectural Significance

- Represents the work of a master architect
- Possesses high artistic values
- Represents type, period or method of construction

Historical Significance

- Associated with significant persons
- Associated with significant events
- Contributes to an historic dist.
- Geographically significant

Basically, why is this building or site historically or architecturally significant? Provide information on builder, architect, and original or subsequent owners. Discuss other important factors. Is building crucial part of overall historic district or area? Provide any other information leading to conclusion that this building or site may be of architectural, historical or geographical significance.

The method of construction is basic to the needs of the home. Designed to hold as many people as possible, it is well-suited to its purpose.

See additional information, page four of this nomination.

References: List specific sources for any factual information provided in this nomination including books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, interviews, etc.

See appendix and footnotes, Information obtained through Aurora History Museum.

General Notes: All applications should be accompanied by:

- 1) Sketch plan of site, building etc. May be neatly hand drawn on 8 1/2" by 11" sheet showing adjacent streets, general building location or object location and dimensions, plus other prominent site features.
- 2) Color photos of suitable size and number to document size, building etc.
- 3) Additional pages may be attached to respond to above application requirements.

(This sheet for staff use only)

Application accepted by: Staff member Linda Strand Date 3/30/87

Application complete: xx Yes      No

If no, what is needed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

There have been exterior modifications to the building, it appears to be  
rented as a duplex. There have been two occasions on which the owner  
has attempted to use building for other uses, usually involving uses which  
are not compatible with nearby school. Owner is not in favor of nomination  
and has submitted a letter.

Other Designations: National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
State Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Eligible for National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_  
pursue designation  
\_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Actions

1. Presented to Historic Preservation Commission: Date 3/3/87  
Scheduled for Public Hearing xx Yes      No  
If "no", reasons why: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Public Hearing: Date 7/9/87  
Recommended for Approval: Vote 8-0  
Not recommended for Approval: Vote \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasons for Denial: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. City Council: Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Recommended for Designation: Vote \_\_\_\_\_  
Not recommended for Designation: Vote \_\_\_\_\_  
Reasons for Denial: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes:

Commission does not feel the building will retain its historical  
significance of moved from this site.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The American War Mothers National Memorial Home\*, located at 1601 Peoria Street, is one of the most significant buildings of Aurora's historical past. Across the street from Fitzsimmons Hospital, it has provided shelter and a sense of "home for the wives, mothers and sweethearts of the hospital patients. The "idea was born" in 1924 at the National Executive Board Meeting by Mrs. Elizabeth Allen, Colorado State President of the American War Mothers and Rebecca Peek, Colorado State Hospital Chairman of the War Mothers.

*The need for such a home as ours was found to be most urgent. At the time there was no place between the Fitzsimmons Hospital and the City of Denver where food and lodging could be had. Most of the veterans being hospitalized came from modest homes where there were but limited financial resources . . . There was a pressing need for a place where mothers and wives of patients in the hospital could find lodging at a reasonable price. (2)*

The Memorial Home Association was incorporated under the laws of Colorado in 1924. Stock was issued at \$1.00 per share and offered to the American War Mothers individually through the AWM magazine and mail. Five acres of ground were purchased with a partially constructed house thereon. The cost of the complete nine room house was in excess of \$16,000 in 1925. \$9,000.00 was paid in the first year.

*Illinois furnished the living room; Denver Chapter the dining room. Wisconsin, North Platte, Nebraska, and the Sunflower Chapter of Kansas City, Kansas, each furnished one bedroom. Several cash gifts from chapters in Idaho, Nebraska . . . and many other chapters made the furnishing of the dormitory and the matron's room possible. The Indiana State chapter furnished the large screened in front porch. (3)*

Some interesting features of the home are the front walk which is inlaid with "Memory Stepping Stones". On each stone, the name of a chapter or individual who contributed to the home is engraved. The basement, originally designed as a clubroom for the Disabled American Veterans has not been divided and remains one large room.

#### Alterations to the Original Home:

An arch with the words "American War Mothers Memorial Home" which was over the front door as well as the emblem are gone. The front porch which was originally screened in was enclosed and glassed. A larger dining room, kitchen, storage, two additional bedrooms and a bath were added in 1929. In 1943, the Margaret McCluer annex, consisting of four large bedrooms, closets, two bath rooms and a enclosed sleeping porch was added. (4) The "Memorial Cottage", a duplex to the north of the home was built in 1952 by the Denver Chapter.

Because of the large number of motels along Colfax and the tremendous cost of updating the home, it was closed May 8, 1960. the five acre tract was sold in small parcels. The home and "Memorial Cottage" remain on the original site.

We believe the fireplace, staircase, bay window, upstairs dormitory and large basement room remain intact although access to the home as not been available. The exterior has been slightly modified and the "Memory Stepping Stones" in the walk remain.

NOTES:

\* This is the name given to the Home when it was dedicated on July 11, 1926 in honor of the Gold Star Mothers.

- (1) American War Mothers Fifty Year History, 1917 - 1967, pgs. 17-18
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Ibid, pages 18, 19 and 20

Additional addenda provided with this report courtesy of the Aurora History Center, Frank Mizner of the Planning Office and Elizabeth Johnson who has fought for preservation of the Home since 1984.