

AURORA LANDMARK PROPERTIES

NOMINATION FORM

City of Aurora
Historic Preservation Commission



SECTION A: SITE INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTION

1. *Name of Nominated Site*

Historic Name: **McMillan House**

Current Name: **McMillan House**

2. *Address of Property*

Street Address: **1629 N. Galena Street**

County: **Adams**

Zip Code: **80010**

3. *Geographic Description*

P.M.: Township: **3S** Range: **67W**

SW ¼ of **NW** ¼ of **SE** ¼ of **SE** ¼ of Section: **34**
UTM: **NAD83** Zone **13S** UTM East: **511170.62** UTM North: **4399193.21**

Quad Map: **Fitzsimons** Year: **1965, rev. 1994** Map Scale: **7.5'**

Lot(s): **31, 32** Block: **45**

Addition: **Aurora Subdivision** Year of Addition: **1890**

Boundary Description: **1629 N. Galena Street is bound to the north by E. 17th Avenue, to the east by N. Galena Street, to the south by E. Colfax Avenue, and to the west by an access alley (boundary between Galena lots and Crawford Elementary).**

4. *Legislative Information*

Aurora Ward #: **1**

Colorado House District: **30**

Colorado Senate District: **25**

5. *Site Owner*

Current:

Name: **Michael & Kathryn Lockwood**

Address: **1629 Galena Street** Phone: **303-364-7370**

City: **Aurora** State: **CO** Zip: **80010**

Historic:

Name(s): **John M. McMillan (former Mayor of Aurora)**

Source(s) of information: **Aurora Democrat, Volume 2, Number 44, August 16, 1911 and Aurora Democrat, Volume 3, Number 47, September 6, 1912.**

6. *Site Classification*

building(s) district site structure object area

7. *Site Condition*
[] excellent [X] good [] fair [] deteriorated [] ruins

8. *Site Location*
[X] original location [] moved (date of move _____)

9. *Site Use*
Historic: **Residential**
Current: **Residential**

SECTION B: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION

10. *Physical and Site Description:*

Built between 1911 and 1912¹, the McMillan House at 1629 N. Galena Street is a large (1400 sq. ft.), 1½ story house. It is built in a modest expression of the Victorian Stick architectural style using frame construction. Components of the Craftsman style appear present. The neighboring houses to the north and south are both Craftsman bungalows, the latter of which is the Robidoux House (Aurora Historic Preservation Landmark, No. 25, built 1913). The front entrance faces east, fronting N. Galena Street.

The plan shape of the house is a compound shape, with three projections from a square-shaped principal mass. A rear room-sized projection extends from the west elevation. A small projection extends from the south elevation, enclosing a side entrance and cellar steps. Another room-sized projection extends from the east elevation, fronting the house on Galena Street. This enclosed porch also contains the front entrance.

Two front-gabled roofs and one hipped roof are present on the McMillan House. One steeply sloped roof sits above the structure's principal mass and one low sloped roof covers the front porch. The low pitch hipped roof covers the rear-room sized projection. There are three supplemental low sloped roofs atop the three remaining extensions from the structure: a two-window shed dormer projecting from the main roof's north elevation, a shed-style extension enclosing entrances to the side and cellar from the south elevation, and a rear expansion that occupies most of the western elevation. Each of the roofs possesses an open rake with a moderate overhang. The rafters are visible. This is another motif of the Craftsman style.

A red brick chimney crown is visible at the crest of the roof, centered with the shed dormer off of the north roof slope. The roof is covered in modern asphalt composition shingles. The foundation is poured concrete, left exposed and approximately one to two feet high off of ground level.

Front Façade (East Elevation) - Porch

The front façade possesses a large (22 ft. wide by 8 ft. deep) enclosed porch projecting from the structure's principal mass. On the right, the main entrance is a historic, single-width oval glass panel wooden door. A contemporary storm door covers the historic door. A mailbox, address plaque and lantern, all historically-styled, flank the main entrance.

On the left, a three casing bow window, topped with a miniature hipped roof, projects approximately one foot from the porch. Three fixed multi-pane windows compose the bow window. The front is a vertically-oriented two-over-four, eight pane window. This window is flanked by two vertically-oriented one-over-four, four pane windows. The south elevation has a small two-pane slider window. No window is present in the north elevation. The enclosed porch is finished vertical wooden, shiplap siding with a basic corner cap for molding.

Front Façade (East Elevation) – Upper Level

The upper ½ story of the principal mass appears above the enclosed porch. Centered in the

façade is a three casing window. A two-pane, double-hung sash (currently outfitted with an air conditioner) is flanked by two tall, one-pane windows. The vertical windows are covered with fixed window screens. Up to the bottom of the window, the façade is finished in horizontal, wooden drop siding with a basic corner cap for molding. Above the horizontal siding and below the roof gable are three distinctly colored bands of fish scale siding.

South Elevation

The south elevation is defined by two small additions that project from the principal structure. Each project approximately five feet from the south elevation wall. A line of three abutting tall double-hung windows without screens are present near the SW corner of the house. All other windows and features appear on the projections.

The smaller (approx. 25 sq. ft), shed-style addition is square-shaped with a low sloped roof. A small picture window occupies the addition's east wall. This addition encloses a side entrance and cellar steps.

The other extension wraps around the SW corner, continuing onto the western façade. It houses the kitchen and the ground floor's bedroom. One small casement window sits in the extension's east wall and a succession of four open the south wall. Two abutting double-hung windows sit left of two abutting four-pane fixed picture windows. All of these windows sit high on the façade; they are directly under the open rake.

West Elevation – Rear Projection

The rear façade has a room-sized projection from the principal structure. The projection's width is equal to the main footprint, but it is offset around four feet to the south. The north elevation is narrow, around four feet wide. There is small two-pane double-hung sash window.

The west façade of the projection houses the rear entrance, which is covered in a contemporary storm door. Immediately right (south) of the entrance is a four-pane fixed picture window. Eight feet to the north are two equally sized double-hung sash windows nested in the same casing. Between the windows and door are utility access boxes and an outdoor light. A small metal awning covers the entrance and adjacent window.

West Elevation – Upper Level and Principal Structure

A double-hung sash window is found in the principal structure's wall just north of the rear projection. Two tall equally sized double-hung sash windows nested in the same casing are centered under the roof's gable peak. Immediately under the peak is an attic vent grate. The windows are surrounded by three bands of distinctly colored fish scales, corresponding to the opposite (front) façade.

North Elevation

The north elevation is flush with no projections, short of a shed dormer on the roof. At its tallest point, the shed dormer is approximately four feet in height. The dormer has two equally sized two-pane double-hung sash windows. The left (eastern) window is flush with the corner molding and is covered with an upward-hinged window screen. The right (western) window sits around one foot from the corner and has no screen.

The lower portion of the north façade is similarly modest. Five windows, two of which are equally sized, occupy the wall. Proceeding left to right (east to west), the windows are as follows: two single-pane casement windows, one slightly larger single-pane casement window, one single-pane segmented frosted window, and one very tall double-hung window. The three eastern windows have the upward-hinged window screen, while the two others are without.

Two vents protrude from the foundation and one from the siding, above the windows. Utility lines can be seen running along the siding.

Garage

A small, one-car garage is located immediately south of the principal structure. The front (east) façade has two paneled French-style doors with fixed four-over-two multi-pane windows. The lower panels are vertical wooden siding with X-shaped cross frames. The elevation is finished in horizontal wooden drop siding, with the same angular fish scale siding above the doors. The garage's northern façade has a fixed, two-over-two four pane window and a basic wooden door. The western and southern elevations have no windows or doors.

Exterior Finishes and Color Scheme

The house is finished in horizontal, wooden drop siding with basic corner caps for molding. The garage is also finished in the same siding. The only exception is the enclosed front sleeping porch, which is finished in vertically-oriented shiplap siding. Additionally, though their sizes and configurations vary, all windows are wooden and framed in a basic casing, with minor sills and aprons.

All exterior colors coordinate between the façades. The horizontal and vertical siding are both painted the same tan color, including the former on the adjacent garage. The three bands of angular fish scales found on the front and rear façades are distinct by lightening shades of the same color: the bottom is a light forest green, the middle is a lighter shade still, and the top is a lighter shade still. On the front façade, the principal rafters for the main footprint and porch are painted forest green. The front door is trimmed in the same color.

All the windows are painted in the same manner. The casing is painted the same forest green as the principal rafter. The window screens, when present, are a dark, rich red. This same dark red color is applied to the rails, stiles, and muntins of each window. A few choice rafters are painted this color as well.

Site Description

1629 Galena Street is a small (0.15 ac) lot. A small well-manicured front yard is bounded by a contemporary metal fence. A plant bed and borders the porch and contains a birdbath, decorative bric-a-brac, and a few minor shrubs. A standard walkway extends from Galena Street's sidewalk to the house's front door.

The backyard shows more modifications. A two-level contemporary wooden deck extends from the rear entrance. A small gazebo was constructed to abut the western elevation of the detached garage.

Original Structure: **1911-1912**

Additions or Alternations: **1921 (sleeping porch added), 1953 (2nd bathroom added [first floor]), 1976 (sleeping porch enclosed), 1977 (house reroofed), 1992 (interior fire damage), 2017 (house reroofed)**

Source of Information: **Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1937), Aurora Historic Preservation Inventory (1970), Fay Engineering Corp fire damage evaluation (1992), City of Aurora building permits, City of Aurora building inspection reports**

11. *Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist, or Designer*

Name: **James T. Foley (Builder)**

Location: **Denver, CO**

Source of information: **The Aurora Democrat, Volume II, Number 32, May 31, 1911**

12. *Architectural Style/Engineering Type*

Type/Style: **Victorian [Stick] (Primary), Craftsman (Secondary)**

Source of information: **Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering Guide; McAlester, "A Field Guide to American Houses"**

SECTION C: SITE SIGNIFICANCE

13. *Significance of Property*

Nomination Criteria:

1. The Property (District) Exemplifies or Reflects the Broad Cultural, Political, Economic, or Social History of the Nation, State, or Community.

2. The Property (District) Is Identified With a Historic Person or Historic Group Significant To National, State, or Local History.

3. The Property (District) Embodies Distinguishing Characteristics of an Architectural Type Inherently Valuable to the Study of a Period, Style, Method of Construction, or Indigenous Materials or Craftsmanship.

4. The Property (District) Is Representative as the Work of a Master Builder or Architect.

5. The Property (District) Contains the Possibility of Important Archaeological Discoveries in Prehistory or History.

6. The District Consists of a Definite Area That, Due To Its Unique Location or Singular Characteristics, Represents Established and Familiar Visual Features of the Neighborhood, Community, or City

14. *Period of Significance*

Period of Significance: 1911-1930

Justification:

John McMillan, wife Emma, and his family moved from Denver to Aurora in 1911. Construction on the house at 1629 Galena Street began in 1911.¹ City directory research indicates the McMillans lived at 1629 Galena Street until 1930², when they moved to 9724 E. Colfax Avenue.³

15. *Significance Statement*

The McMillan House at 1629 Galena Street is eligible for Aurora Historic Preservation Landmark designation under Criterion No. 1 for its role in the early residential settlement of Aurora. The McMillan House is also eligible under Criterion No. 2 for its linkage to John M. McMillan, a former Mayor of Aurora in the 1910s and 1920s. Finally, the McMillan House is eligible under Criterion 3 for its embodiment of the Craftsman architectural style with Queen Anne design elements.⁴

Historic Background

Criterion 1

While the McMillan House at 1629 Galena Street was not constructed in Aurora's earliest residential settlement wave in the late 1880s and 1890s, the house represents important subsequent suburban growth in the city. From the beginning, the town always included Galena Street just north of E. Colfax Avenue. The historic core of the 1600 block of Galena Street demonstrates successive waves of Aurora's residential growth; population booms during the 1890s, 1910s, and 1970s are all represented in the street's architecture. Two houses from the 1890s remain on the block: the Centennial House (1892, NRHP, Aurora Landmark No. 11) and the Milliken House (1881, Aurora Landmark No. 6).

Donald Fletcher, original founder of the Town of Fletcher (Aurora's original moniker), chased the profit from Denver's eastward expansion following Colfax Avenue. Partnering with Thomas Hayden and Samuel Perry, Fletcher purchased and incorporated plots in the early 1890s. However, from the start financial and legal troubles plagued Fletcher and his partners. Securing clean water proved to be a large, expensive problem for the developers. After a decade, Fletcher still possessed outstanding debts, needing desperately to repay the bonds he used to purchase the East Denver Water Company.⁷ While some of Fletcher's mistakes were eventually corrected, he chose to leave town before many resolutions bore out.

By 1911, when the McMillan House was built, Aurora had risen from its troubled roots. It shed the appellative link to Donald Fletcher and had been officially known as "Aurora" for four years. In addition to the new name, Aurora enjoyed a new town hall, widespread telephone service, electricity, and *The Aurora Democrat*, a town newspaper. In place of Fletcher's town board, Aurora's Board of Trustees was formed (on which McMillan served) and began to consider the city's best interests. These achievements accompanied a rapidly-growing citizenry: from 1900 to 1910, Aurora's population tripled from 202 to 679.⁷

Considering its build date and location alone, The McMillan House serves as a clear link to an invaluable period of Aurora's growth. This is to say nothing of John McMillan's contributions to Aurora.

Criterion 2

John M. McMillan was an early Mayor and real estate agent in the city of Aurora. Born on April 17, 1877 in Emporia, Kansas, McMillan grew up on a farm with his Scottish immigrant parents. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Spanish-American War, McMillan followed his passion for shorthand, serving as a stenographer for a Topeka paper company. While still in this position, McMillan met railroad men and developed a deep interest in the burgeoning mode of travel. He fostered it through work at the Rock Island and Santa Fe Railroads. In 1906, McMillan married Emma Roseburg Banks and the couple relocated to Denver. Born around 1869, Banks was also a Kansas native. McMillan continued his work in the railroad industry in Denver, securing a job with Union Pacific Railroad. He remained there until his railroad retirement in 1920.⁵

McMillan also served as a popular politician in the city of Aurora. In 1914, McMillan became a member of the Aurora Board of Trustees. Just two years later, he was elected Mayor, serving from 1916 to 1918. Following his Union Pacific retirement, McMillan and his wife took a long vacation. While they out of town, Aurora citizens elected him Mayor again.⁵

His second tenure lasted from 1921 to 1926,⁵ coinciding with a pronounced period of strife for the city. Following World War I, the demand driving nation-wide agrarian growth slowed dramatically, leaving agricultural hubs like Aurora reeling from an industry depression. In addition to external changes felt locally, the city suffered from limited financial resources. Police and fire safety departments were drastically under-funded and community health services were under-developed. Finally, the city was still settling water-related debts left by Fletcher.⁷

Following his careers in the railroad industry and local politics, McMillan pursued a career in insurance sales and then real estate. He spent 27 years in the business, opening his own firm, The Aurora Realty Company. In 1947, McMillan sold the firm. Shortly after, Emma McMillan's health began to fail and John cared for her until her death in 1956.⁵ John M. McMillan himself died from bronchial pneumonia at 96 on October 27, 1973 in Cottonwood

Falls, Kansas.⁶

Despite the difficulties, McMillan helped lead Aurora through a troubled decade. Near the end of his second Mayoral run, Aurora was benefitting from the Fitzsimons Army Hospital, an upswing towards agricultural stability, and the precursor to the Stapleton Airport.⁷ McMillan proved his popularity with Aurorans through two separate Mayoral elections. He also demonstrated his political leadership, helping to guide Aurora from the catastrophe of financial ruin.

Criterion 3

The McMillan House is a combination of architectural styles, proving once again that homes and structures are rarely designed in a vacuum. The primary design and aesthetic elements of the house roughly follow the Late 20th Century Victorian Stick style, though the Early 20th Century Craftsman style also contributes to the home.

The 1600 block of Galena Street possesses numerous examples of both Craftsman and Victorian houses. Immediately south of the McMillan House is the Robidoux House, a distinct Craftsman home (1913, NRHP, Aurora Landmark No. 25). Also present are two Victorian homes: the Centennial House (1892, NRHP, Aurora Landmark No. 11) and the Milliken House (1881, Aurora Landmark No. 6). The Victorian stylings were likely influenced by the Centennial House, the Milliken House, and other nearby examples of that architecture. The McMillan house appears to be the earliest Craftsman home on its block, but by 1911 the architectural style was already quite popular.⁸

The McMillan House embodies both Victorian and Craftsman architecture through numerous shared characteristics. First, the house possesses an asymmetrical footprint and massing. Numerous historical additions have been documented, but the original footprint was irregular. Next, a dormer is present on the north elevation. While dormers are common in both styles, the shed-style dormer is more typical of Craftsman.

A few other design elements demonstrate the style combination. Front porches are commonly found in both stylings, though the McMillan sleeping porch that extends from the principal mass is slightly more common in Victorian Stick homes than Craftsman homes. The roof's multiple gables are also common in both architectural styles, though the parallel style of the front gables is more Craftsman. Cross-gables and multiple crests are common among Victorian houses.

Another Victorian Stick and Craftsman hybrid is witnessed in the window shape and configuration. Though numerous inconsistent window sizes are represented, two instances of three or more window ribbons are present on the south elevation. The primary vertical orientation of the windows is Victorian in style, while the lines and ribbons configuration of the windows is a Craftsman concept.⁸

One exclusively Victorian aspect of the McMillan House's architecture lies in part of the exterior finish. The fish scale shingles on the second floor exterior are not only very common among Victorian houses, they also appear on the Centennial House (1892, NRHP, Aurora Landmark No. 11), the Marshall Cowing House (1892, Aurora Landmark No. 19), and numerous other period homes not yet landmarked. Back on the 1600 block of Galena Street, the Milliken House has decorative shinglework on the second floor, though not fish scale.

Studying the design of the McMillan House suggests the architecture pursued a Victorian Stick style, but drew upon popular American Craftsman architecture components. Craftsman homes frequently dot Aurora's neighborhoods. Denver possesses neighborhoods comprised almost entirely of the home style. Considering this ubiquity and the style's growing popularity in the early 1900s, it seems likely it would factor into the McMillan House's design.

Images:



Fig. 1: John M. McMillan in Kansas Volunteer Uniform



Fig. 2: Emma McMillan, ca. 1930s

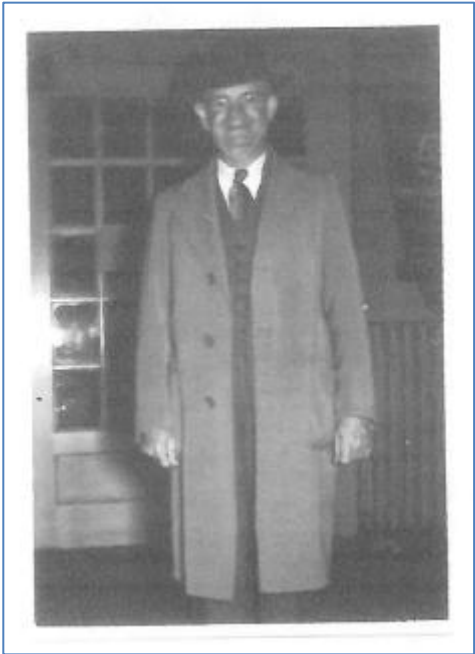


Fig. 3: John M. McMillan, adulthood



Fig. 4: “Mr. McMillan (left) displays his trophies after a 1920 rabbit hunt with Rev. and Mrs. Lund and the Lund children.”⁵

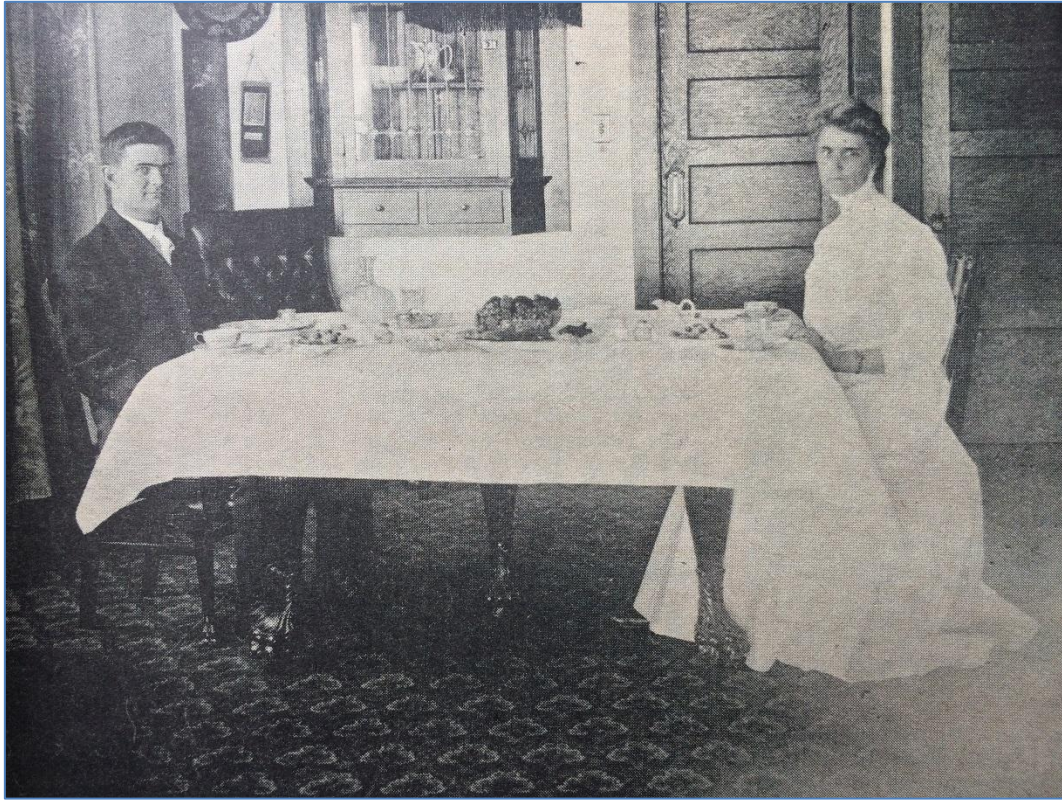


Fig. 5: Undated photograph of John and Emma McMillan at their dinner table.⁵ (Does not appear to be 1629 Galena).



Fig. 6: Profile house shot. Front façade and south elevation. Photo: Vicki Sandstead, 1978



Fig. 7: Front door. Photo: Vicki Sandstead, 1978



Fig. 8: Profile house shot. Front façade and south elevation. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 9: Profile house shot. Front façade and north elevation. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 10: West elevation. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 11: Southern elevation. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 12: North elevation. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 13: Front façade. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 14: Detached matching garage. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 15: Detached garage window detail. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 16: Original and contemporary concrete driveway portions. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 17: North elevation, window detail. Note various sizes.
Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 18: North elevation, window detail. Note lack of window screen. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 19: North elevation, window. Note upward window screen. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 20: South elevation, three window ribbon detail. Note various widths and lack of upward window screens. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 21: South elevation, side entrance detail.
Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017

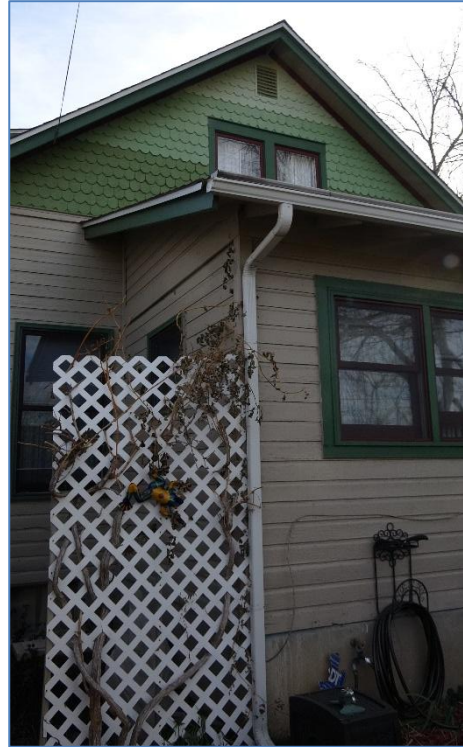


Fig. 22: West elevation, addition detail.
Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017

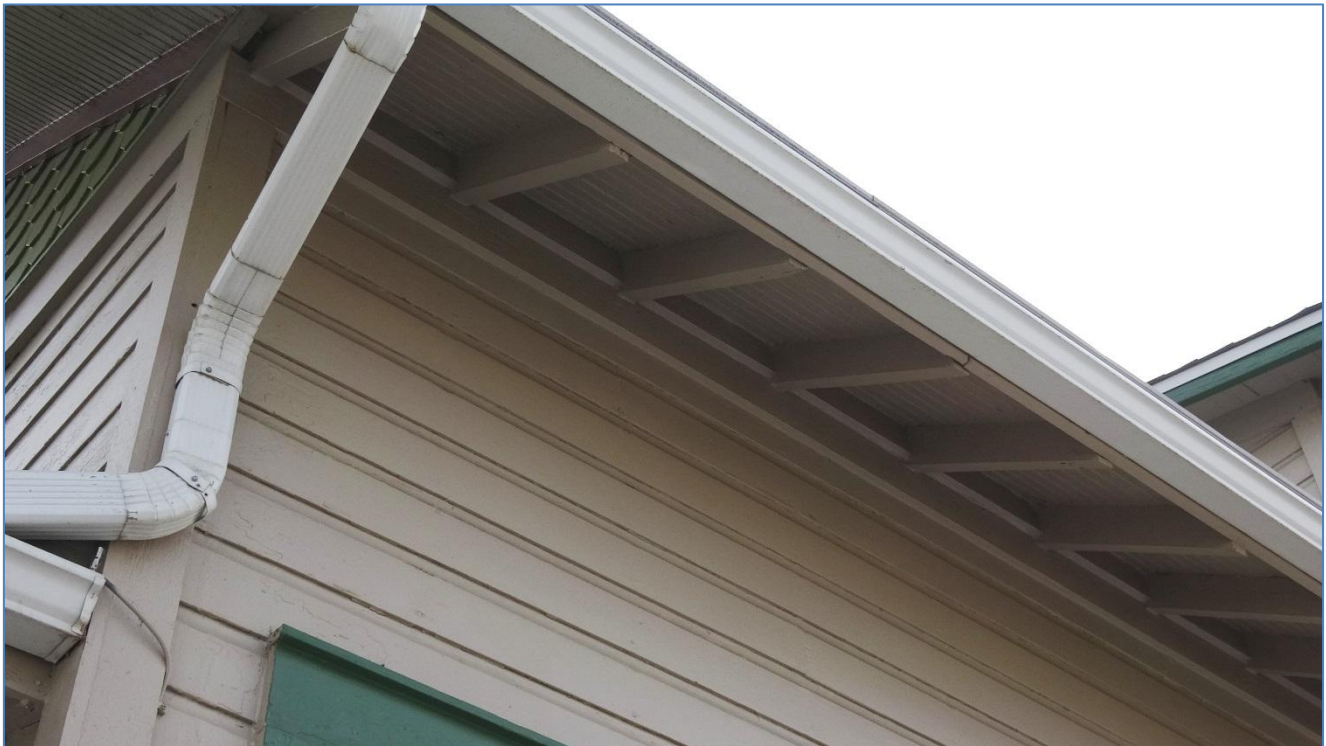


Fig. 23: North elevation (at NE corner), overhanging eave detail. Note modestly exposed rafters. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 24: South elevation, kitchen bump-out detail. Note window ribbons. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017



Fig. 25: South elevation (at SW corner), kitchen bump-out detail. Note window ribbons. Photo: Drake Brownfield, 2017

16. *Bibliography*

1. The Aurora Democrat, Vol. II, May, 31, 1911. Available at <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/>
2. Annual Directory of the City of Aurora, Colorado – 1930
3. Annual Directory of the City of Aurora, Colorado – 1931
4. Colorado’s Historic Architecture and Engineering Guide. Available at <http://legacy.historycolorado.org/archaeologists/colorados-historic-architecture-engineering-web-guide>
5. “John McMillan One of Oldest Citizens,” The Aurora Advocate (Aurora Story), November 26, 1964, Page 4-5, Section 6
6. John M. McMillan, Death Certificate, Kansas State Department of Health
7. Mehls, Drake, and Fell, Jr., “Aurora Gateway to the Rockies,” Cordillera Press, Inc., 1985
8. McAlester, “A Field Guide to American Houses,” Knopf, 2005

17. *Nomination Preparer*

Name: Michael Lockwood Date: 8-Dec-2017

Organization: _____

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Name: Drake Brownfield Date: 25-Jan-2018

Organization: Aurora Historic Sites and Preservation Office

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City: Aurora State: CO Zip: 80010