

DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION APPLICATION FOR
LANDMARK DESIGNATION



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Allen Ghost House
Current Name: 1899 York Street – Ghost/Rose House

2. Location

Address: 1899 York St, Denver

3. Owner Information

Name: Ryan Rose
Address: 1899 York Street
Phone: 508-287-9174
Email: shugazer@gmail.com
Authors: Mason Seymore

4. General Data

Date of Construction: ca. 1906
Source of Information: Denver Assessor's Office; Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1904, 1929-30; Denver City Directories; Denver building permits 1906-1914; newspaper articles from *Denver Post* and *Daily News* in August 1906 announcing construction

Outbuildings: Garage, ca. 1906 (contributing structure)
Architect or Builder: F. C. Wagner & Harry J. Manning

Original Use: Single-family residence
Present Use: Single-family residence

Original owner: Allen M. Ghost
Source of information: Denver Assessor's Office; Denver City Directories; Federal Census Denver building permits 1906-1914; newspaper articles from *Denver Post* and *Daily News* in August 1906 announcing construction

National Register: The property was previously recorded in 1973 under Smithsonian Trinomial number, 5DV.2721; however, no National Register of Historic Places evaluations were noted in History Colorado's Compass database or on the Architectural Inventory Form.

Photographs



Photograph 1
(above): East side (front) of house

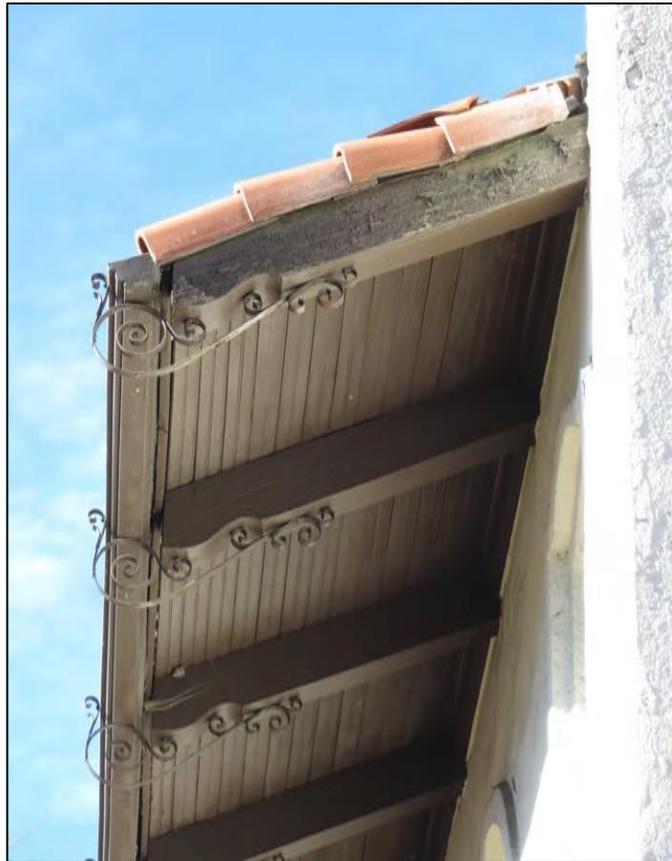


Photograph 2
(right): East side close-up of shaped parapet and arched windows



Photograph 3
(above): South
side of house

Photograph 4
(right): South
side close-up of
overhanging
eaves with
shaped rafter
tails, iron
scrollwork, and
red tile roof





Photograph 5
(left): North side
close-up of
overhanging
eaves, pent roof,
and bow
window

Photograph 6
(below): North
side close-up of
parapet and
pent roof





Photograph 7 (left):
North side close-up of
overhanging eaves and
arched windows

Photograph 8 (below):
Garage (located west
of house)

Photograph 9
(bottom): West side
(back) of house



Statement of Significance

1. Landmark Designation Criteria

1. History

c. Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.

Allen M. Ghost, a prominent figure in Denver business and society, built the house at 1899 York Street in 1906. Moving to Denver in the 1870s, Ghost quickly established himself as a major real estate developer, forming A.M. Ghost and Company in 1880. Ghost's projects included the Ghost Building (1889) and Ghost Block (1893) in downtown Denver as well as a residential area near Sloan's Lake, which was designated as the Ghost Historic District in 2010.

Ghost also platted the Park Side addition on the west side of City Park. He purchased the land along Gaylord and York Streets between 17th and 21st Streets in the early 1890s and held onto it until 1897, after Denver had begun to recover from the Silver Crash and Ghost felt the time was right for development. Ghost's work developing the Park Side addition continued through the early twentieth century, including the construction of his own home as a neighborhood showpiece in 1906. Ghost's important role in developing Denver was widely acknowledged, as he was instrumental in developing numerous residential areas. After Ghost put lots he owned in the Park Side subdivision, Chamberlin's Colfax Place, and Rosedale and Broadway Heights additions up for sale in 1909, the Denver Post announced that Ghost's decision to sell was "a good sign of Denver's growth and present condition." In 1912, a feature in the *Daily News* described Ghost as "one of the largest individual owners of Denver real estate. His holdings, both of business and residence property, are valued at not less than \$500,000. They represent almost exclusively his profits from investments in Denver real estate since he came to the city in 1878."

Ghost lived in 1899 York Street until 1911 and passed away in 1913. Ghost lived in numerous houses in Denver, likely reflecting his real estate dealings throughout the city. Ghost first moved to the Park Side addition in 1898, living in two other houses before building the house at 1899 York. One of these houses, located at 1868 Gaylord, survives. No other residences associated with Ghost have survived. Far more elaborate than the simple Foursquare at 1868 Gaylord, 1899 York is the best reflection of Ghost's prominent role in Denver business and society. The period of significance, from ca. 1906 – 1911, is based on the date of construction of the structure and encompasses the time period that Ghost resided in the house.

2. Architecture

a. Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type.

The Ghost/Rose House is an excellent example of the Mission Revival style with a high degree of detailing. The Mission Revival style developed in California and turned to the state's colonial past and Hispanic heritage for inspiration, modeling designs on the Franciscan missions of the Southwest. The most prominent feature of the style was

a curvilinear parapet influenced by Spanish Baroque designs. The style became popular after it was used for the California Building at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The house at 1899 York Street features all the key elements of the style including shaped parapets, stucco siding, broad overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and arched openings. It is a key example of the style in Denver. A 1906 newspaper article in the *Daily News* described the house under construction as an outstanding example of Mission Revival architecture: “The cement covered walls, the red tiled roof, and the graceful pergola extending out into the garden, will give the place that charming Spanish air which makes Southern California so picturesque, and the landscape gardening of the entire grounds will be so arranged as to heighten the effect of the Old Mission architecture.”

b. *Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder.*

The house is a significant example of the work of the Denver architectural firm of Wagner & Manning, established in 1904. Frederick Compton Wagner came to Denver from Toledo, Ohio in 1902, seeking a more favorable climate for his health. Wagner was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and had begun his architectural practice in Ohio. Harry James Manning began his career as a draftsman in Peoria, Illinois and moved to Denver in 1904. Ghost’s house at 1899 York was one of Wagner & Manning’s early commissions. In 1908, Wagner & Manning received recognition for their work designing sanitariums, receiving the Roosevelt Medal of the International Congress of Tuberculosis for their design of a sanitarium to be constructed in Washington, D.C. Firm projects in Denver included St. Thomas Episcopal Church (Denver Landmark), Grant Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Moffat Mansion (demolished). Wagner died in 1910 and Manning worked on his own for the rest of his successful career. Manning’s work features a variety of styles, reflecting the popularity of revival styles such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Collegiate Gothic, and Neoclassical Revival in the early twentieth century. Manning was best known for his sanitarium buildings (including for the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society in Lakewood), educational buildings (including Regis College, Byers Junior High School, Fairmount Elementary School, and Mary Reed Library at University of Denver), and homes for Denver high society including homes for Oscar Malo and Charles Boettcher (demolished). Manning passed away in 1933.

3. Geography

a. *Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city.*

Located at the corner of York Street and 20th Street, the house has a prominent location across the street from Denver’s City Park. Located one block south of the west entrance to the park, the house is a key visual feature for those driving north on York Street towards the park entrance. The house is also a significant feature of the Park Side addition, associated with its developer, A.M. Ghost. Sanborn maps show that it was one of the first houses constructed on York Street, within the addition. Initial development was focused on the west side of the addition, with the east side still very sparsely developed when Ghost constructed this house in 1906.

Since Ghost still owned a large amount of land within the Park Side addition that he was hoping to sell for development, the choice of this prominent corner for his own house was likely intended to help promote the sale of additional lots in Park Side. The house was much grander than those previously built in the Park Side addition, which were predominantly brick Foursquares. Ghost's prominent place in Denver business and society made the construction of the new house at York Street and 20th a topic of general interest. An article in the *Daily News* on August 26, 1906 announced that: "Though not large, the new home designed by Wagner & Manning for A.M. Ghost is a jewel in the detail with which the Mission idea has been carried out, and the house, when completed, will be one of the richest in the city." The article ended with a proclamation that "no expense will be spared to make the residence perfect in its class, and it will be beyond doubt one of the handsomest homes in Denver when completed."

Architectural Description

The irregular plan, two-story house is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of York Street and East 20th Avenue. The house faces east towards City Park, located on the opposite side of York Street. The house is an excellent example of the Mission Revival style featuring key elements of the style including shaped parapets, stucco walls, red tile roofing, molded plaster wall decoration, round arches, recessed window openings, a prominent porch, a deep-roof overhang, exposed rafter tails, and decorative ironwork. The house demonstrates a high level of craft with a great deal of variety in the detailing. This includes multiple window treatments including arched windows, arched window openings, hood molding, sills with a decorative bracket design, and corbelled sills. Windows are wood framed and mostly sash with multiple lights.

The house retains a very high degree of integrity. The original features and architectural elements appear to be intact, retaining the integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. As the property is still situated in a residential neighborhood, on a corner lot, fronting York Street, and across from City Park, the property also maintains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

The house is two stories with a basement and attic. The house features textured white stucco walls and a front-gabled roof sheathed in red tile. On the façade, the roof is largely obscured behind a substantial decorative shaped parapet, but the roof edges are visible. The decorative parapet includes a mixture of broad, heavy round arch shapes; narrower, more delicate, arched shapes, and rectangular patterning resembling crenellation. A large, round arch is centered on the gable peak on the façade. The roof features a deep overhang with exposed carved rafter tails decorated with scrolled ironwork. There are also multiple decorative, red-tile pent roofs shading window openings.

The façade features two primary divisions, with a projecting single-story porch on the north and shallower two-story projection on the south. The porch is front gabled with a wood pergola located in front of the gable. The pergola is supported by two simple Doric columns. The pergola covers four concrete steps leading up to the porch. Beneath the porch gable is a segmental arch opening framed by squared pilasters. The porch features paired round arch openings on the north and south sides. The porch shelters the main entry door which is framed by sidelights. A balcony

enclosed by a low stucco wall is located above the porch. The two-story projection on the south features a front gabled, red-tile roof, obscured by a shaped parapet wall. A single large window opening containing a square window framed by narrow rectangular windows is located on the first floor. A red-tiled pent roof is located above the window opening. A pair of round arched, eight-over-one windows is located on the second floor.

The south side features a single-story, side-gabled extension with a red tile roof. Two eight-over-one sash windows in rectangular openings are located to the east of the extension. On the second story, there are three large arched eight-over-one windows, a blank arch matching the arched window openings, a smaller window, and a decorative niche. A gabled dormer with two window openings is located on the south side of the roof.

The west side features shaped parapet wall similar in design to the façade with a round arch centered on the gable ridge. A single-story, flat-roofed extension framed by segmental arch window openings is located on the first floor. A door is located on the west side of the extension. The second story also contains two segmental arch window openings. Two narrow round arch openings are located at the attic level.

The north side features a small shaped parapet where the internal staircase is located. The windows on this portion are offset from the rest of the north wall. A large bow window fills most of the space beneath the parapet. A red-tile pent roof is located above the bow window. Two, four-light, segmental arch windows are located beneath the bow window at the basement window. Elsewhere on the basement level of the north wall there are also four, horizontal, two-light windows located in segmental arch openings. To the east of the parapet section, an eight-over-one window is located on the first and second stories. To the west of the parapet section, there is a three-part window, with a ten-over-one central window framed by eight-light sidelights located on the first floor. A shallow, red tile gable roof projects over the window. Two round arch, eight-over-one windows are located on the second story along with a narrow six-light window in a segmental arch opening.

An arcaded wing wall is attached to the northwest corner of the house, providing access to the backyard, which is enclosed by a stucco wall. The stucco wall abuts the garage located at the rear of the property at the western edge of the lot line. The garage, which was constructed at the same time as the house and features similar decorative detailing, is a contributing resource. The stucco garage is flat-roofed with a red tile pent roof located on the north side above the roll-up garage door. A row of three segmental arch openings runs along both the west and east walls of the garage. A pedestrian door is also located on the east wall.

History of the Structure and its Associations

Allen M. Ghost was born in Pennsylvania on April 12, 1844. His father, Philip Ghost, moved the family to Iowa when Allen was a child, purchasing a farm in Mount Pleasant. As young men, Allen and his older brother William moved to Nebraska, where William became a judge. The 1870 census recorded A.M. Ghost as a real estate agent in Lincoln. Ghost married Ella Frances Tunnell in 1875 and moved to Denver in 1876. William Ghost also came to Denver, practicing law and investing in property.

In 1880, A.M. Ghost established the real estate firm of A.M. Ghost & Co. and began

investing in Denver property. In 1890, the firm constructed the Ghost Building at Fifteenth and Glenarm, later described by the *Daily News* in 1912 as “the first pretentious business building in that section of the city.” In the early 1890s, Ghost bought property along Gaylord and York Streets between 17th and 21st Streets and platted it as the Park Side addition. Consisting of approximately 22 acres, Ghost purchased the land for about \$1,000 per acre from Charles E. Perkins, who was then the president of the Burlington Railroad. The Denver economy slumped following the Silver Crash of 1893, and Ghost held onto the land for future development. Ghost began developing Park Side in 1897 as the economy began picking up. Ghost planned the development of Park Side carefully, seeking to avoid any real estate speculation and to create a well-built and attractive subdivision. Ghost tested the market with the construction of five houses and told the *Rocky Mountain News* that this was so successful that “within a year I expect to build five times that number and still be well within demand.” According to the *Rocky Mountain News*, no lots would be sold to speculators and “none should be disposed of except to people who would build at once residences costing not less than \$5,000 for inside lots and \$7,500 for corners.” The newspaper declared Park Side a success so far, stating that “every house erected has been a model of neatness and attractiveness of design.”

Ghost decided to move to the Park Side addition in 1898. Denver city directories show that Ghost moved frequently around the city as it developed. Many of these moves were likely related to Ghost’s real estate dealings. He lived at 598 Welton from 1885-1886, 1905 Ogden from 1890-1891, 1420 Logan in 1892, and 1536 Pennsylvania from 1893-1897. None of these residences survive. In 1898, Ghost moved into a newly built Foursquare house at 1868 Gaylord. The house was attractive, but fairly simple with minimal embellishment. Ghost lived there until 1904 when he moved across the street to 1875 Gaylord (this address no longer exists). The west side of the Park Side addition along Gaylord was developed first, with the 1904 Sanborn map showing that the east side remained largely undeveloped. In 1906, Ghost decided to build a new house on a prominent corner lot on the east side of the subdivision. This house would be much grander than the others constructed in Park Side, which were predominantly brick Foursquares. It is likely that the house was partly intended to promote the further development of the Park Side addition.

Ghost hired local architects Wagner & Manning to design the house. The *Daily News* provided a detailed description of the new house on August 26, 1906:

It is to be located at Twentieth Avenue and York Street and surrounded by a fence in reproduction of those built in Southern California. An automobile garage will be situated at the rear of the grounds. The cement covered walls, the red tiled roof, and the graceful pergola extending out into the garden, will give the place that charming Spanish air which makes Southern California so picturesque, and the landscape gardening of the entire grounds will be so arranged as to heighten the effect of the Old Mission architecture. The interior is to be as costly and as thoroughly worked out in its details as the exterior, the ceilings being heavily beamed, and the mantel constructed of Rookwood tiling, the first of the kind to be seen here. The living rooms are to be 16x30 feet in size, done in dark wood, while the other rooms of the house will be in white enamel, with a stairway finished in mahogany. Mr. Ghost, who is a wealthy real estate holder, will have personal supervision of the work, with A.H. Smith, general contractor, as his lieutenant. Mr. and Mrs. Ghost are living along, their sons and

daughters all having married, and the house is designed to accommodate a small family, but no expense will be spared to make the residence perfect in its class, and it will be beyond doubt one of the handsomest homes in Denver when completed.

The eastern side of Denver around City Park was developing rapidly at this time. The *Daily News* reported on August 26, 1906:

For several months the feature of the realty market has been activity in suburban realty. There has been a remarkable growth in outlying district where property is low and building sites numerous. . . . The prediction has been made lately that those who buy suburban real estate in Denver are certain to profit by reason of increased values with the lapse of time. The best evidence that this is true is the constant expansion in the area of the Queen City of the Plains. There is a noticeable preference among home builders for the suburban tracts lying to the east and southeast, and they are being built up rapidly. Public improvements on Park Hill and in that vicinity are adding to its attractiveness as a residence district. The east side of City Park is being improved rapidly, and will grow in favor with visitors to the park. . . . Another public improvement soon to be made in that section of the city is the esplanade from Colfax Avenue to the park, the completion of which will be followed by the erection of many fine homes on both sides of it.

Improvements to City Park would have made the lots located along York facing the park much more attractive to buyers. In 1909, Ghost decided to place additional lots within the Park Side addition up for sale. The *Daily News* ran a feature on Ghost on April 25, 1912, describing the development the Park Side addition as a great success, “now one of the choice residence sections of the city, the lots being worth from \$1,200 to \$1,500 each.” According to the *Daily News*, Ghost continued to own property within the addition “but has sold enough of it to bring in more than four times the original cost.” The article went on to laud Ghost’s history in Denver real estate:

His faith in the future of Denver and the certain advance in real estate values is shown by the fact that he has never ceased his purchases, and owns perhaps more property now than he has at any time since he came to Denver. His experience is also an excellent example of the profits to be made in residence property, since a large amount of his fortune was made from the subdividing of suburban real estate and selling it to home builders.

Sometime in 1912, Ghost left the 1899 York and moved to 848 Washington (which no longer exists). Ghost’s wife Ella had died in 1909 and his daughter Genevieve and her husband Elmer Whitten, an attorney for the Colorado and Southern Railroad had been living with him at 1899 York. Ghost was in ill health and died the following year on June 23 following an operation at St. Joseph’s Hospital. The *Daily News* described him as a “pioneer real estate man.”

Resources Used in Compiling the Application

“Allen M. Ghost Dies Following Operation.” *Daily News*, June 24, 1913.

“City Has Rapid Healthy Growth.” *Denver Post*, February 21, 1909.

Denver Building Permits 1906-1914

Denver City Directories

“F.C. Wagner, Architect, Dies in Toledo, Ohio.” *Denver Post*, July 27, 1910.

“Faith in Denver Realty Netted A. M. Ghost \$500,000 on Investments” *Daily News*, April 25, 1912.

“Ghost Home, Built on the Mission Idea, To Be the Handsomest In City.” *Daily News*, August 26, 1906.

“Harry J. Manning.” *Architects of Colorado*. History Colorado, 2012.

Iowa Census Records

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara S. Norgren. *Denver The City Beautiful*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1904, 1929-30

“Score of New Houses.” *Rocky Mountain News*. December 15, 1897.

“Some of the Beautiful Homes Built on Park Hill Recently.” *Daily News*, August 26, 1906.

U. S. Census Records