Researching the History of Your House or Building

Purpose of your research

• What is your goal for your research?
  – Local, State or National Register nomination
  – Brochure or walking tour
  – Interest
  – Restore/rehabilitate your building
  – Other?
• What information do you want/need to know?
1st – Check available information

- Greeley Historic Preservation Office 350.9222
- Hazel E. Johnson Research Center 350.9220
- Colorado Historical Society 303.866.3395

2nd – Landscape & Setting

- Streets: wide, narrow, tree-lined, sidewalks?
- Are the houses in the neighborhood, raised above the sidewalk, so steps lead to the porch? (eg. in the 1600 block of 12th Avenue)
- Setbacks
- Mixed uses or uniform
- Signs – bilingual or only one language?
- Mix of new & old houses, buildings?
- Trees, surrounding topography, water features?
- Near agricultural fields, industry, downtown?
- All of these can help understand the building history
3rd – The Building

• Get permission from owner!
  – Exterior & interior (if possible)
  – A very good source of information
• Note number of stories, building materials, interesting details, alterations
• How is it similar and/or different from surrounding buildings (if there are other buildings nearby)?

4th – Weld County Assessor Records

• Year Built
• Property Information Cards: provide information about size, materials, photos
  – Information about alterations
• Current Owner
• Legal description
5th – City Directories

- City Directories
  - Address listing
  - Alphabetical listing
- Includes who lived there, number in the house, occupation, spouse, sometimes children & their ages
- Also includes business listings & advertisements

6th – Weld County Master Index

- Weld County Master Index (Sample):
  - NOFFSINGER Ralph... C of C board... 11/06/1957... TribuneClippings
  - NOFFSINGER Ralph... Appendix-3,8,16... 1stCongregationalCh100Yrs
  - NOFFSINGER Ralph L... Obits... 10/1/1979... 112... MSB#29
  - NOFFSINGER Ralph L... obit... 10/01/1979... TribuneClippings
- Look up references at CP Library or HEJ Research Center at the Greeley History Museum.
7th – Resources

- Oral History
- Architectural Drawings
- Construction Techniques
- Household technology – interior & exterior; light fixtures, building materials, flooring, kitchen appliances if any, bathrooms, hardware, etc.
- Floor plan
- Historic Photographs, photos on Assessor Property Information Cards, surveys
- Plat maps
- Deeds/Abstracts of Title
- Tax Records

7th – Resources

- Local History Books
- Museum Scrapbooks
- newspaper/Tribune Clippings/obituaries
- Sanborn Maps
- Historic photographs & maps
- Architectural style guides
- The Building Itself
- Building Permit Records
Sample Property

- Greeley Historic Register designated Hall House, 1410 7th Street
- Building Permit records, Weld County Assessor Records, City directories, Museum Scrapbooks, Weld County Master Index…
- Purpose was to determine significance and integrity of the house to determine eligibility of the house for the local register.

Request for Certificate of Designation: 1410 7th Street, Hall House
Historical Background

• Built ca. 1909-10
• R.L. Hall, Jr. & wife Elsie, 1910-13
  – R.L. Hall, Jr. worked with his father, Greeley pioneer R.L. Hall, Sr. at R.L. Hall & Son, Building Contractors and Planing Mill.
• E.A. Houtchens, 1915
• John F. & Effie Cleo Redman, 1917-18
  – County court clerk, Weld County public trustee, postmaster, first Director of Public Relations for First National Bank
• Thomas & Anna Smith, 1920-30
• Frank & Anna Palmer, 1923-31
• Rev. Arvid & Vivian Adell, 1933
• Robert & Irene Martin, 1935-41
• Gerald & Louise Blandin, 1942-52, 1975-90
  – Gerald worked as meat cutter, at grocery stores
  – Other residents b/n 1952 and 1975
Architectural Description

• 1.5 story bungalow
• Hipped roof dormers
• Wide, overhanging boxed eaves
• Narrow lap siding & wood shingle siding
• Front porch with Tuscan columns
• One-over-one double hung sash windows

North Elevation
Geographical Location

• Bouker’s Subdivision, part of original boundaries of Union Colony, but not platted until 1889
• Majority of subdivision built b/n 1900-10, during a building boom following the depression of the 1890s
• Located near Greeley Historic Register properties: Wasson House & Woodbury House, several blocks from historic downtown

Periods of Significance

• Historical Significance – 1910-13, etc.
• Architectural Significance – 1909-10 (year built)
Integrity

• Exhibits integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association
• Primary alteration: repair of front and rear porches, but no documentation of what exactly they looked like originally
  – Alteration to front porch not substantial

Commission Decision

• The Commission designated the house for historical significance for association with R.L. Hall, Jr. and several other residents and for reflecting the heritage and cultural development of Greeley…
• …and for architectural significance: characterizes bungalow type/form of architecture
Resources

• Researching a Historic Property National Register bulletin:
  – http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nr_b39/

• Colorado Historical Society:

• DPL Western History Building History Research Online Tutorial
  – http://photoswest.org/exhib/buildings/intro.htm

• Nearby History Series