

AIREDALE BUILDING

1215 20TH Street, Denver, Colorado 80202



Architect: Frederick Carl Eberly

Year Built: 1889

Originally called “Kopper’s Hotel and Saloon” after the Bavarian immigrant Albert Kopper who built it, this building was renamed with the less German-sounding “Airedale” at the end of World War I. It has remained in almost continuous use since construction. The upper two floors were used as a hotel, boarding rooms and finally a modern hostel (Hostel Fish) without ever seeing significant alterations. The street level has housed saloons, a beer bottling plant, an adult bookstore, and now a restaurant, bar and music venue called Ophelia’s Electric Soapbox.

The 12,375 square-foot, three-story Airedale Building occupies almost all of its small rectangular lot. It fronts southwest, toward 20th Street, between Lawrence and Larimer in downtown Denver. It has a sandstone foundation, red brick walls in running bond and a flat asphalt roof with a small parapet and short brick chimneys that can barely be seen from the street.

The building features strong Queen Anne architectural influences, a style usually reserved for residential architecture, that would have been an uncommon design choice in what was downtown Denver’s warehouse district at the time of construction. The front facade is symmetrical and ornate.

Stippled sandstone blocks ornament the corners on the ground level and serve as thresholds under the original cast iron storefronts that remain largely unmodified. Between the storefronts, the central doorway entering the original hotel stairway to the upper floors is still accessible and now leads to Hostel Fish. Above the first floor is a projecting secondary metal cornice. Rising above this cornice are two symmetrical squared bays on each of the two upper floors. Each bay is flanked by two double hung sash windows with wood frames, limestone lug sills and dressed limestones lintels featuring a carved patera at their centers. The bays are highly ornate with horizontally paneled plinths, fluted pilasters and mullions topped with stylized Corinthian capitals, and full entablatures with dentils on the third floor. Belts of projecting brick stretchers span the building at the sill level of windows on the upper two floors and a dog-tooth course sits under each lintel. The roof line features a large, ornamental metal cornice with bracketing, dentiles and horizontal paneling. The upper cornice is broken at the center by a small pediment displaying stickwork detailing and two carved scrolls. Paneling underneath the pediment bearing the words “Airedale” and “1919” was constructed at the time of the building’s renaming.

References

National Register of Historic Places, Airedale Building, Denver, Denver County, Colorado, National Register #98001378.

Paglia, M., Wheaton, R. and Wray, D. (1999) *Denver: The Modern City*. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver Inc.