

CAPITOL HILL MANSION/KEATING HOUSE

1207 Pennsylvania Street, Denver, Colorado 80203



Architect: Rieche, Carter & Smith

Year Built: 1891

This elegant Richardsonian Romanesque and Queen Anne residence was originally built for Jeffrey and Mary Keating. He was a real estate developer and a founder of the McPhee and McGinnity Lumber Company, and she was active in social affairs and charity events. During Denver's silver boom, many of the city's prominent citizens built grand mansions in the Capitol Hill neighborhood. The Keating House was one of the last homes constructed before the Silver Crash of 1893.

The home was built out of red-orange Manitou sandstone, which was laid in square-cut blocks in regular courses, alternately wide and narrow. The rough-hewn style of stonework, popular in the 1890s, was made possible by the availability of native stone. The house exemplifies the exuberance of the Victorian era with its Corinthian columns, bay windows, gothic ornaments a circular porch and turrets. It has retained many of the original features, such as plasterwork, windows and woodwork, with a well-preserved main oak staircase.

The house changed hands several times through the years. The Keatings lived in the house for no more than two years, for reasons unknown. The house was then rented and eventually sold in 1902 for \$30,000 to industrialist John Nesmith and his wife Elizabeth. He was one of America's leading authorities on chemistry, smelting, blast furnaces and civil engineering. The family lived here until 1910 and maintained ownership for many years after.

Eventually the house came into the possession of Buena Vista Crew. She and her husband Frank moved into the home and in 1924 converted it into the Buena Vista Hotel, after which the Crews left the residence and hired a manager. More transactions moved the mansion through many families and even left it sitting vacant at times.

In 1993, the house was purchased with the intention of converting the space into the Capitol Hill Mansion, which involved mainly restoring the original floor plan. Seven bathrooms were either added or upgraded, and a complete kitchen was installed, as only one existed in the house. Other changes, such as removing relatively new walls, opening up the rear staircase and closing and/or moving doorways, brought the home back to its earlier architectural integrity. Amazingly, the plaster ceilings in the living room and dining room, the plaster walls in the foyer, the stained glass window on the landing and most of the woodwork in the home appear to be original and unmolested by time or previous tenants. The residence has been the Capitol Hill Mansion Bed & Breakfast Inn, operated by father-and-daughter team of Carl Schmidt II and Claire Bailey, since 2001.

References

Capitol Hill Mansion Bed and Breakfast Inn. Retrieved from <http://www.capitolhillmansion.com/>
Grinstead, L. (1997). *Molly Brown's Capitol Hill Neighborhood*. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver, Inc.
Murphy, J. (1997). *Geology Tour of Denver's Capitol Hill Stone Mansions*. Denver, Colorado: Historic Denver, Inc.