

HISTORIC DENVER NEWS

EST. 1970 + VOLUME 48 + NUMBER 1 + WINTER 2019



Photo: Shannon Schaefer Stage

THE SCHLEIER MANSION IS PROTECTED WITH A NEW EASEMENT

By Shannon Stage, Historic Denver Preservation Coordinator

HISTORIC DENVER kicked off 2019 with the announcement of a new preservation easement! We have accepted a protective easement from an investment fund managed by GBX Group LLC for the Schleier Mansion at 1665 Grant St. It was constructed on the corner of 17th Street and Grant Avenue in 1887 during a boom period in Denver. Early real estate developer George Schleier secured the land, and commissioned famed Denver architect Frank E. Edbrooke to design his mansion. The single-family home is primarily a Queen Anne style with an eclectic flair, including an onion dome. Some argue this is one of Edbrooke's most elaborate homes, with intricate wood-worked details around the front porch and throughout the mansion. Known for his use of sandstone and intricate detailing, Edbrooke designed many significant buildings in Denver including the Brown Palace Hotel, Central Presbyterian Church, Denver Dry Goods Company Building and the Loretto Heights Academy building.

Schleier emigrated from Germany with his family at the age of six. His German heritage can be seen in the detailing throughout the house. Schleier was a savvy businessman who enrolled in a business course in Cincinnati early in his career, and honed his skills while working for a hat manufacturing business. In the 1860s, he made his way to Denver, where he invested in freight and farming for a short time. He eventually made the Mile High City his home in 1886, and became involved in real estate — his most successful business venture.

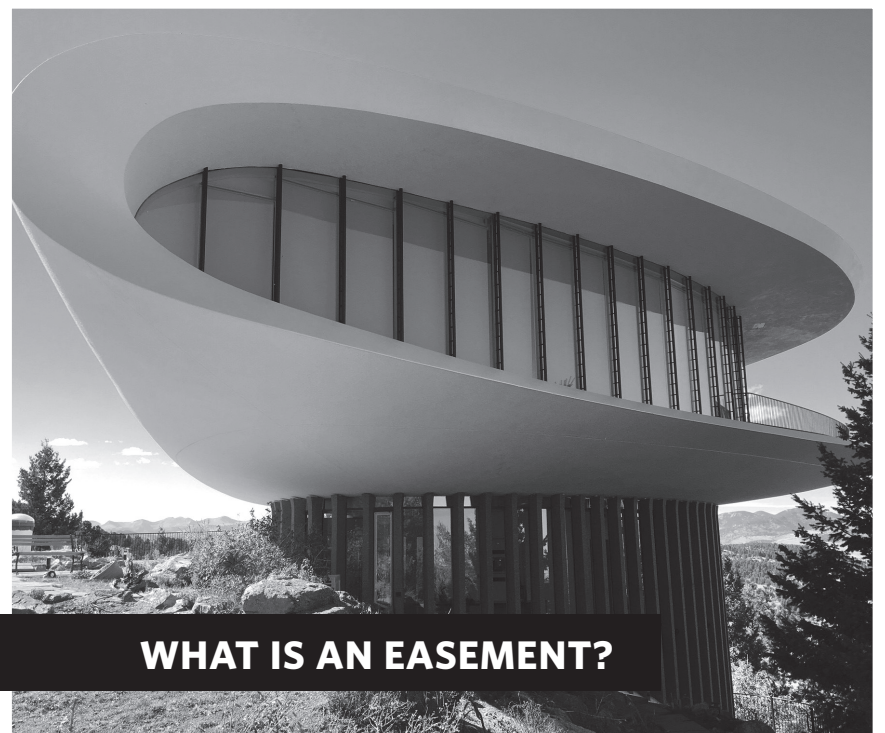


Photo courtesy of GBX Group LLC

Due to its ties to Schleier and Edbrooke, the mansion is considered historically and architecturally significant. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, when it was undergoing restoration. The home has since been converted into office spaces, yet it retains its original Queen Anne style and intricate details. Other features of note include the stained-glass windows, oak floors with geometric parquet borders, and oak closed-string staircase that pays homage to Schleier's

German heritage with gargoyles and Bavarian swans. Seven of the eight original fireplaces still exist.

The home had been well cared for by its previous owners since the 1990s, but was listed for sale in 2018, causing some concern about its long-term fate. Fortunately, an investment fund managed by GBX Group LLC, which specializes in acquiring, preserving and operating historic real estate in the urban markets, acquired the home late last year. The company partners with investors to fund the purchase and preservation of historic real estate to generate community revitalization and economic growth. "GBX looks to invest in buildings that are both historically significant and serve as catalysts for community revitalization and future redevelopment," said Antonin Robert, GBX's President of Community Development. "We are excited to become a part of the dynamic Denver community while working with local partners to continue the area's renewal." GBX Group has completed more than 100 projects in 18 states since it was founded in 2001. The company donated the façade easement to Historic Denver, making it our 65th easement property.



WHAT IS AN EASEMENT?

Photo: Shannon Schaefer Stage

An easement is a voluntary agreement between a property owner and a qualified easement holding organization (in this case, Historic Denver). Much like an open-space easement, the agreement gives the recipient organization the right to ensure that the property is not demolished or altered beyond recognition. As an easement holder, Historic Denver reviews proposed changes to the property, and monitors it regularly to ensure its careful stewardship. The majority of Historic Denver's easements are façade easements, meaning only the exterior is protected.

Why would you choose to donate an easement? Most importantly, it is because an easement provides the most permanent form of protection for an important landmark. There can also be tax benefits for the donor, depending on the property's specific circumstances. And, in some cases, an owner may be required to donate an easement after receiving significant Colorado State Historical Fund grants.

Historic Denver's preservation easement program began in 1972 with the historic Richtofen Castle in the Montclair neighborhood. Our easements include a variety of buildings, from stately mansions and churches, like 430 Years Church of God in Christ, to downtown commercial buildings including the Equitable Building, and modern gems, such as the Joshel House and the iconic Sculpture House in Genesee.

Historic Denver's easement program is one of the larger programs that we oversee. Visit historicdenver.org to learn more about this important preservation tool. ✨