

Historic Denver

N E W S

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1536 Wynkoop St.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOES GREEN

by Melissa Baldrige

If you've ever survived a Colorado winter in a drafty Victorian house with single-pane windows, it may seem incredible that stewardship of a historic house can be good for the environment. But it is, and Historic Denver is leading the way to show that historic preservation and environmentalism go hand-in-hand.

Historic Denver will soon be one of up to 20 tenants in one of the city's first certified "green" buildings, of which there are only six in Colorado. In addition, the organization will benefit from tremendous economies of scale as part of a "multi-tenant non-profit alliance," whereby the building's non-profit tenants will split overhead costs such as telecom, common

work areas and conference rooms. Fittingly, the new building and venture will be known as the Alliance Center.

The idea for the green, collaborative Center came from John Powers, board member of the Colorado Environmental Coalition since 1996 and founder of the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado. "The problems of the world are so great, we can't have division any longer. We need everybody working together. It's not a special interest — it's public interest," he says.

After taking up digs in a storeroom next to Wynkoop Brewing Company headquarters, the Coalition landed in the Otero Building at 1536 Wynkoop St., also the home of Historic Denver, in

1998. Seeing non-profits sprinkled throughout Tattered Cover owner Joyce Meskis' building and watching sympathetic organizations compete and overlap in their fundraising efforts, Powers decided to help them eliminate inefficiencies by nesting as many as possible under one roof. "I'd been thinking about a shared building for 15 years," says Powers.

In January, Powers began canvassing buildings in central Denver with the provisos: he wanted a building near the capitol and a mass transit hub, in a definable neighborhood and in an existing building, preferably historic. Realizing there was no place like home, the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado bought the Otero Building from Meskis in June for \$4.625 million, and Powers put down \$250,000 of his own money as the original deposit, also paying for a project manager and due diligence and collateralizing his home for a construction loan and line of credit.

Alliance Center construction will occur in two phases: retrofitting the existing 40,000 square feet at 1536 Wynkoop, which itself falls in two stages, and building a "new wing" as Project Manager Dennis Fleming terms it, 40,000 to 50,000 brand new square feet on the adjacent surface lot at 1520 Wynkoop. The first phase "tenant finish" will provide \$500,000 of improvements and be completed in December. The second stage of retrofitting will cost \$3.5 million to make the old wing environmentally sound. The new wing built next door and connected to the old wing will cost \$17 million to \$20 million and include state-of-the-art green building features.

The building's unusual financing will make all this happen. Rather than seek

Continued on page 5

DENVER LANDMARK REALTOR SEMINAR

Historic Denver is hosting the second annual Denver Landmark Realtor Seminar to give real estate professionals in Denver the knowledge and information necessary to successfully market houses in Denver's historic neighborhoods and districts. The seminar is a must for individuals and companies working with historic properties.

This program received eight Continuing Education Credits from the Colorado Real Estate Commission last year with the same accreditation expected this year. In hosting the seminar, Historic Denver, the Board of Real Estate Appraisers and the Board of Continuing Legal & Judicial Education also will certify attendees as Denver Landmark Real Estate professionals and combine our internal expertise with local community preservationist know-how in presenting the following topics:

- Marketing Historic Properties to Potential Clients
- Appraisal Values of Historic Properties
- Tax and Legal Aspects of Historic Property Ownership
- Denver's Architectural Styles
- Maintenance & Construction Basics for Historic Properties
- "Who's Who" in Colorado Preservation
- Researching Your Historic Property

If You Go

When Tues., Dec. 14, 2004

Where Tivoli Student Union at the Auraria Campus, 900 Auraria Parkway, 2nd floor Baerresen Ballroom

Format One-day seminar from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost \$175 per person, includes free Individual membership in Historic Denver and complementary parking in the Tivoli surface lot.

To register, send a check with your name, company, address, phone and e-mail to Historic Denver, Inc. 1536 Wynkoop St., Suite 400A, Denver, CO 80202-1182, or online at www.historicdenver.org and click the "Events" button. ■

Going Green, continued from page 1

investors who might later sell the property, Powers will be scouting for foundations and high-net worth donors to help offset the building's cost. "The whole thing is to be philanthropically-driven. We want no debt," Fleming says. "We want to keep rents lower than market and stabilize them. Then we [can] take the rent [stream] and do other programs and possibly create a pool of dollars to go to other non-profits." Fleming says that donor contributions will not only help all the Center's non-profits, but that contributions will support some of the city's first "sustainable" architecture.

Powers and Fleming have set the bar high and are shooting for LEED environmental certification for the project. Established in 2002 by the non-profit United States Green Building Council, LEED 2.0 certification ("Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design") is the first industry-wide set of standards to designate what "green" really means. Builders accumulate points in five categories (sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resource, and indoor environment and quality) to reach one of four designation levels (certified, silver, gold and platinum).

Even though the standards are just two-years-old, the Green Building Council says that LEED-certified buildings have captured 188 million square feet, or 4 percent of total new-market construction. "It's really new, and it's catching on quickly in an industry that's slow to evolve," says Council Communications Coordinator Taryn Holowka.

Already a number of municipalities and states, including the cities of Austin, Portland, Chicago and the state of

dows in keeping with the building's historic character; low-flow water fixtures; recycled "grey" water to irrigate a rooftop garden and lots of daylight to cut down on light usage. Fleming even describes demolition in the old wing as "deconstruction" because crews will carefully disassemble building materials, salvaging and recycling anything reusable.

The Center will also provide the eco-friendly equivalent of a building concierge — a program director whose job is to supervise bulk purchasing for tenants, recycling and offer what Powers feels is the Center's strong suit, didactics. "With everything we create, we're trying to make it replicable," says Program Director Janna Six. "So if we can document what works and even what fails to encourage collaboration and green building practices and encourages sustainable practices, we're going to put that in a book and a DVD to be able to offer our similar experience to groups in other states."

Housing a number of non-profits under one roof is nothing new. Add the greening of a historic building to the equation, and the numbers narrow to a few projects nationwide, some of which served as models for the Center. The Thoreau Center for Sustainability operates out of the old military post in San Francisco's Presidio and received an Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1996. The Cleveland Environmental Center is Ohio's first green-building retrofit, a LEED-silver project with homes for environmental and social non-profit groups. And in Portland, the Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center provides space in an 1895 warehouse for businesses and non-profits focused on sustainability. Even so, Historic Denver may be the first bona fide historic preservation group to make its home in a certified green historic building.

One sticking point with developers about building green is additional upfront costs that can go into expensive building systems and materials. Yet the Building Council dismisses such claims and says those costs are marginal. In fact, the Council says that while building LEED-certified space can add \$4 more per square foot, one recent study shows it saves \$48.87 per square foot over a 20-year period, largely in energy costs.

"S" AND "DON'T'S" OF HISTORIC HOME WINDOWS

DON'T

- Replace existing double-hung windows with single fixed-glass picture windows

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Already a number of municipalities and states, including the cities of Austin, Portland, Chicago and the state of California, have mandated that most new civic architecture be LEED-compliant. Since 2002, the Council has certified 137 projects with LEED designations, and 1,565 projects are "registered," or in the pipeline toward completion and LEED certification, including the Alliance Center. Even though the Building Council plans to hatch a new set of criteria for existing buildings in December, Powers and Fleming want both old and new Center wings to meet the platinum designation for new construction.

Powers and Fleming began racking up points immediately because the development is an infill project reusing a historic structure. The Center's new building systems will include an HVAC system calibrated for eight "seasons" rather than four; raised floors to allow for easy access to electrical, IT and heating; operable, "double-hung" win-

going to put that in a book and a DVD to be able to offer our similar experience to groups in other states."

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Even though the broad goals of historic preservation and environmentalism seem compatible, another area of contention may lie in the fine points. For example, preservationists insist that original or reproduction windows remain in historic buildings, while energy efficiency may dictate replacing them with contemporary double- or triple-paned metal ones. Also adding exterior cladding, which may better insulate old masonry or wood, is verboten to preservationists.

Still, Powers dismisses any philosophical or practical differences as details. "We need to work shoulder to shoulder, rather than eyeball to eyeball. We're all affected, and, by golly, we all have to work together. Colorado is under huge pressure. The quality of life indicators have gone straight downhill. That's why we have to come together." ■

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	<p><i>Information for this article provided by The Historic Chicago Bungalow Initiative (www.chicagobungalow.org) and The Preservation Briefs of the Technical Preservation Services of the National Park Service, The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows by John H. Myers</i></p>