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THIS PROPERTY HAS
BEEN PLACED ON THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES
BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

VAN BRIGGLE POTTERY

The 1908 Van Briggles Pottery, situated on land given to the Pottery by General William J. Palmer, is a remarkable expression of the period and a showcase for the unique talents of the architect as well as the artists whose work it would house.

The early 20th century pottery factory is an excellent example of the work of Colorado Springs architect Nicolaas van den Arend. To distinguish the building from the common factory appearance of most other potteries of the day, the architect produced a building representative of the Arts and Crafts movement, reminiscent of the Flemish farmhouses of his native land, and reflective of Artus Van Briggles's ancestry and artistry.



In designing its plant, the Van Briggles Pottery Company consciously sought to differentiate itself from other manufacturing facilities. The company intended to create a visually stimulating and beautiful building that would attract visitors and inspire its workers, providing a canvas for the display of its art tiles and architectural terra cotta products, all while incorporating and acknowledging the natural setting of the building. The success in achieving these goals was recognized at the time of the building's completion and continues to be appreciated today.

The building displays high artistic qualities exhibited in thousands of art tiles and terra cotta architectural features adorning its walls, the picturesque qualities of its construction and its relationship to the setting. These decorative components of the Van Briggles building reflect the Arts and Crafts disdain of mass-produced goods and preference for handcraftsmanship, while the brick walls and stone foundation display a desired solidity and connection to nature. The natural setting, including Monument Creek to the east, Monument Valley Park to the south, spectacular views of the Rampart Range and Pikes Peak to the west, was a primary factor in the design and orientation of the building, which the company considered important and inspiring for its artists and other workers.

Colorado College purchased the Van Briggles Pottery building in 1968, restoring and readapting the building. Since 1970, the building has housed the college's facilities services department operations.

Important aesthetic and infrastructure improvements to the building took place in 2011 thanks to generous support by Colorado College alumni Lee E. Schlessman, Class of 1950, and Dolores Schlessman, parents of 1975 and 1977 graduates, and Susan Duncan, Class of 1952, parent of a 1976 graduate. Their visionary actions have further preserved and protected the Van Briggles Pottery building and surrounding grounds.

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