



# DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

02.09.2021

This form is for use in nominating individual structures and districts in the City and County of Denver. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Questions about the application or designation process can be directed to Denver Landmark Preservation staff at [landmark@denvergov.org](mailto:landmark@denvergov.org) or (303) 865-2709.

**Property Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

The following are required for the application to be considered complete:

- Property Information
- Applicant Information and Signatures
- Criteria for Significance
- Statement of Significance
- Period of Significance
- Property Description
- Statement of Integrity
- Historic Context
- Bibliography
- Photographs
- Boundary Map
- Application Fee

# 1. Property Information

Name of Property

Historic Name: Kunsmiller House

Other or Current Name: Laws House

Location

Address: 5086 Vrain St.

Legal Description: Berkeley Park Heights, Block 3 Lots 1-6 and North ½ lots 7 and west ½ vacant alley adjacent and South ½ vacated W. 51<sup>st</sup> Ave and E ½ vacated Vrain Street.

Number of resources:

# Contributing  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_

# Non-Contributing  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Structures  
Accessory Structures  
Features

Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

Contributing and non-contributing features were determined based on the 1924-1975 period of significance. The main house is contributing. Non-contributing accessory structures (unknown dates of construction) include the c. 1980 garage, octagonal shed with conical roof; rear patio arbor; pond-side arbor with tile and wood shingle roof; and northwest corner shed. Contributing to the property's historic significance is one feature: stone and brick walls, including a varying height (up to approximately 3') wall comprised of large mortared rubble stones with concrete cap which extends across the north boundary line of the property and wraps around the west side of the property until terminating at the rear corner shed; a similar variable height mortared rubble stone wall with flagstone cap lining north-south portion of driveway; and a mortared running bond brick retaining wall with sandstone cap. While Denver Landmark Preservation designation does not protect landscapes per se, many of the walkways and tree plantings date from the period of significance, as most likely does the pond.

General Property Data

Date of construction: 1924

Architect (if known): *Unknown*

Builder (if known): *Herman. P. Granes, carpenter and contractor*

Original Use: *Residence*

Current Use: *Residence*

Source(s) of information for above: *Denver Building Permit Card #5086, June 24, 1924; 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census Records*



### Previous documentation

List previous historic survey and/or if property is listed or eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places.

The property at 5086 Vrain Street was Included in the 2021 Discover Denver *Survey for Regis*, prepared by Historic Denver, Inc. and the City and County of Denver, 2021, and covering the Regis Statistical Neighborhood (generally bound by I-70/W. 48th Avenue on south, Harlan Street on west, W. 52nd Ave. on north, and Federal Ave. on east). The survey included 1,558 parcels over thirty years of age. The Regis Survey recommended the property at 5086 Vrain Street (site 5DV.41365) eligible for historic designation at the local, state and national levels. The property was one of only 25 properties within the Regis Statistical Neighborhood boundaries selected for enhanced research, and one of three surveyed properties recommended as eligible for all three levels of designation. It was also the only house in the survey identified as Spanish Colonial Revival style.



## 2. Owner/Applicant Information

An application for designation may be submitted by:

- Owner(s) of the property or properties, or
- Member(s) of city council, or
- Manager of Community Planning and Development, or
- Three residents of Denver, if they are not owners of the property or properties

### Owner Information

Name: Jeanne and Jeff Laws  
 Address: 5086 Vrain Street  
 Phone: 720-308-3573  
 Email: [jlaws@cityhorizons.com](mailto:jlaws@cityhorizons.com)

### Primary Applicant (if not owner)

Name: Councilwoman Amanda P<sup>A</sup>Sandoval  
 Address: 1810 Platte Street  
 Phone: 720-337-7701  
 Email: amanda.sandoval@denvergov.org

### Prepared by

Name: Square Moon Consultants  
 Address: 1003 N. Emerson St.  
 Phone: 6026926394  
 Email: [squaremoonsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:squaremoonsolutions@gmail.com)

### Owner Applicant:

I/We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as a structure for preservation.

I understand that this designation transfers with the title of the property should the property be sold, or if legal or beneficial title is otherwise transferred.

Owner(s): Jeanne Laws    Jeff Laws Date: 3/ 92 4  
 (please print)

Owner(s) Signature:  

### 3. Significance

#### Criteria for Significance

To qualify as a Landmark, a property must meet at least three significance criteria. Check the applicable criteria from the following list.

- A. It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- B. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;
- C. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;
- D. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
- E. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;
- F. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;
- G. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
- H. It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
- I. It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;
- J. It is associated with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation.

#### Statement of Significance

Provide a summary paragraph for each applicable criterion.

***A. It has a direct association with a significant event or with the historical development of the city, state or nation.***

The Kunsmiller House is significant under Criterion A, as it has a direct association with the historical development of the city. The Spanish Eclectic style house is one of the oldest extant houses in Berkeley Park Heights, a subdivision in far northwest Denver just north of Berkeley Lake and Park. The area of Denver consisting of what is now the Regis neighborhood and roughly the west third of the Berkeley neighborhood was an early 1880s experimental alfalfa farm owned by John Brisben Walker called "Berkeley Farm." The Denver Land and Security Company marketed these lands for residential development in the late 1880s and 1890s. The Berkeley real estate investors incorporated the Denver & Berkeley Park Rapid Transit Company, which circled Berkeley Lake and extended east to the newly relocated Jesuit College (now Regis University), created on land donated by John Brisben Walker. The company laid out subdivision plats for most of its newly acquired Berkeley property, and aggressively promoted the area's clean air and water,

sewer system, electric lights, newly planted trees, liquor sale prohibitions, first-class streetcar service, and its proximity to privately owned Berkeley Lake Resort. Home buyers steadily built a few new residences in the far southwest area of the old Berkeley Farm near West 38th and Wolff Streets, but the area north of and immediately around Berkeley Lake remained too remote to attract residential buyers. Around 1902, Walker created a private golf course called Interlachen Golf Club on some of his land northwest of Berkeley Lake and in December 1908, he subdivided approximately 20 acres of land just northeast of Berkeley Park into Berkeley Park Heights (. By the early 1920s as Denver's population boomed, real estate investors began to show interest in Berkeley Park Heights. Adolph Kunsmiller acquired six and half lots in Block 3 of the subdivision in 1922 from one such investor, and built the family's one- and two-story Spanish Eclectic style home nearly two years later.

One of only a few homes in the neighborhood in 1924, the Kunsmiller House was the largest and most prominent building in the subdivision upon its completion. The subdivision slowly began to fill out in the 1920s and 1930s, with El Jebel Shrine Association purchasing Walker's private golf lands and much of his Berkeley Heights subdivisions in 1929. As many other homes in Berkeley Heights area have been demolished and the El Jebel property has largely been redeveloped with dense modern housing, the Kunsmiller House has remained on its original .72 acre lot in Berkeley Park Heights adjacent to golf course lands with few changes over the years. The Kunsmiller house, with its large lot and lush vegetation, also symbolizes a time when northwest Berkeley was on the edge of Denver, straddling the city's growing suburbs and a rural agricultural setting beyond.

***B. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society.***

The house is significant for its association with Dorothea Kunsmiller and Adolph Kunsmiller two German immigrants who had a significant influence on Denver's development and culture, largely through her long and dedicated 24-year tenure on the Denver Public School Board, and his contributions to the banking sector and anti-discrimination work. Dorothea and Adolph immigrated from Germany to the United States in 1895 and 1902 respectively. Dorothea arrived in 1895 with her mother, and moved to the Auraria neighborhood while her father worked in saloons and real estate. Adolph, a German Prussian-born immigrant arrived in Denver in 1902, working first a bookkeeper at Zang Brewery and then as a stenographer for the German consul in Denver. The couple married in 1908, and originally lived in Auraria, but moved to a home at 5086 Vrain Street in 1924.

Adolph was a prominent and influential banker in Denver for more than 60 years. In 1905, Adolph began work as a secretary for the new German American Trust Company (eventually American National Bank), the city's second bank catering to German-speaking residents. By 1923, he was bank vice president, and in 1947 he became the bank's third president. Adolph served as president of American National Bank, one of Denver's largest banks, from 1947-1957, growing the bank's assets considerably and modernizing the bank's considerable operations during his tenure. He served as chairman of the bank's board until 1971 when he was over 80 years old. Adolph was involved in civic affairs and was recognized for his support of Denver's Jewish community, by providing loans for Denver's Rose Hospital and several regional synagogues when other banks would not. In 1951, Adolph served as a vice chairman of an initiative headed by the Anti-Defamation League for Colorado to pass a Fair Employment Practices Law to curb job discrimination for minority groups in Colorado. This initiative eventually led to the passage of the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act of 1957. A 1954 article in the *Intermountain Jewish News*

extolled Adolph's 49 years with the American National Bank, and how "he has been a good friend of the Jewish community and a powerful factor in Denver's progress."

Dorothea's training and commitment to public education led to her 24-year service as an elected member of the Denver Public Schools (DPS) Board from 1931 to 1955. This period included the Great Depression and unprecedented post World War II suburban growth, with student enrollment increasing from 46,000 to over 73,000 students. She was a popular and important member of the DPS board, easily winning election to four six-year terms, and serving as vice president of the board for most of her tenure. She was recognized as a strong advocate for teacher salaries and education of mentally and physically disabled children. The *Denver Post* reported that Dorothea Kunsmiller served longer than any other board member since the Denver schools were organized into the DPS Board in 1902. She won many accolades for her service including an alumni award from University of Denver in 1953, North Denver's Citizen of the Year in 1955, an "Eddy" award from the Denver Public Schools Retired Employees' Association in 1960, and an induction into the *Denver Post* gallery of fame the same year. Most notably, DPS named the 1957 Kunsmiller Junior High School (now Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy) after Dorothea Kunsmiller, the first time the DPS Board named a school after a living person.

***C. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type.***

The Kunsmiller House is an excellent and rare example of a 1920s Spanish Eclectic Style house in Denver. While no architect has been identified for the 1924 Kunsmiller House, it is essentially a linear volume clad with white-stuccoed walls under red-tiled roofs. Regional Spanish nostalgia became a national trend in the 20<sup>th</sup> century primarily because of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Most subsequent examples featured Mediterranean motifs of stuccoed walls and red-tiled roofs. This architectural vocabulary was highly influential in the decades to follow, and some later examples included ornate Moorish details and tilework. The style adapted well to residential designs, represented in Denver by the c. 1906 Allen Ghost House (extant and Denver Landmark 2016) at 1899 York Street, designed by F.C. Wagner and Harry J. Manning (Seymore 2016).

In the innovative design years before World War I, U.S. architects traveled in greater numbers for longer sojourns throughout Europe and around the Mediterranean Sea to attend Beaux-Arts classes and to absorb Old World prototypes into their inspiration for new buildings. Pennsylvania artist George Washington Smith (1876–1930), moved to Europe about 1911 to study art and architecture across the continent, passing through Andalusia, Spain's region of historic North African Moorish legacy. Returning to the U.S. in 1914, Smith showed his paintings the following year at the Panama–Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco. Smith then settled in Montecito, and in 1916 built himself a house and studio that he named "Casa Dracaena" (Gebhard 1967:137–139). Smith demonstrated in Montecito that "Spanish Colonial" itself ranged widely from the high-style, highly decorated examples at the San Diego fair to the far simpler everyday—"vernacular"—residences of Andalusia and indeed of Mexico and pre-1848 California. Smith's house in Montecito so impressed the growing oceanside developments of Santa Barbara County that he received several commissions for similar house designs. Smith's house appeared in the national *Architectural Record* magazine's October 1920 issue, which included several photographs and Smith's simple floor plan. G.W. Smith's Montecito house, according to architectural historian David Gebhard (1967:137), ushered in a Spanish-architecture revival "inspired by the provincial architecture of Spain (especially Andalusia) and of Mexico."

...[Smith and other California] designers produced buildings which were conceived of as sculptural volumes, closely attached to the land, whereby the basic form of the building was broken down into separate, smaller shapes which informally spread themselves over the site. Detailing, both within and without, was simple; and the number of materials employed was severely limited [Gebhard 1967:137–138].

As architectural historian Abby Moor (2002:314) wrote of the Spanish Eclectic house style, “Both plan and façade have an attractive asymmetry...typically with a combination of varying roof levels and forms on one house.” Moor (2002:311) drew yet another line between “Spanish Colonial Revival” and the broader “Spanish Eclectic” to describe the extension of G.W. Smith’s residential simplicity to a much larger group of U.S. suburban houses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. And Virginia McAlester (2013:406–407, 521–522), author of *A Field Guide to American Houses*, agreed with Moor, classifying “Spanish Revival” within “Eclectic Houses” as a broader group of “traditional” domestic architecture that flourished between the two world wars. According to Moor, G.W. Smith...

...formulated a Spanish Eclectic architectural style grounded in a picturesque Andalusian idyll of massed white geometric planes and surfaces, austere facades, a very few shuttered windows along otherwise windowless walls, red-tiled roofs and understated parapets, and a cool and secluded courtyard garden [Moor 2002:312].

The 1924 Kunsmiller House exhibits inspiration from the contemporary “Spanish Eclectic” house designs of architect G.W. Smith: simple massing and modest entry into a linear plan with varying roof levels and an asymmetrical layout. The home’s simple boxy shapes, stuccoed walls under red-tiled roofs, iron ‘balconet’ at upper doorway, and incorporation into an indigenous garden-hillside are also representative of the Spanish Eclectic style. The home’s simple yet sprawling floor plan with varying roof levels and asymmetrical layout also follows the Smith and other California examples. The Kunsmillers embellished the style with more and larger windows, an angled 3-story wing with a ground-level garage, and subtle eave returns at the gable ends. The c. 1936 front dormer addition carries the same forms and motifs as the original design. The Kunsmiller House is a fine and early local example of the “Spanish Eclectic” style.

The property at 5086 Vrain Street was included in the 2021 Discover Denver Survey for Regis, and was one of three surveyed properties recommended as eligible for all three levels of historic designation (National, State and Local). It was also the only house in the survey identified as Spanish Eclectic style. It should be noted that the Kunsmiller House likely influenced other designs in the area, including the 1929 El Jebel Shrine, a Spanish Colonial Revival Freemason-Shriner clubhouse designed by architects William N. Bowman and T. Robert Wieger, located about 350 feet from the 1924 Kunsmiller House. As the Berkeley area has become denser in recent years, and many older homes have been torn down, the Kunsmiller residence remains as a noteworthy and unusual example of a Spanish Eclectic style residence in northwest Denver.

***G. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity.***

The Kunsmiller House promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment based on its distinctive physical characteristics and rarity, given that it is an early Spanish Eclectic Style House on an approximately .72-acre heavily vegetated lot in Berkeley Park Heights. This historic subdivision dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was on the outskirts of



northwest Denver in an area that was more rural than suburban at the time of the house's construction in 1924. While a few larger homes were built in Berkeley Park Heights in the decades to follow, the subdivision and surrounding neighborhood largely consisted of small one-story homes on small- to medium-size lots.

The substantial Spanish Eclectic Style house on its expansive large, lushly landscaped lot stood out then and does now. The large Vrain Street parcel and fertile Denver Basin allowed Adolph Kunsmiller to pursue his horticulture interests by planting native trees and other vegetation around the property to frame and shade the house without blocking its Front Range views. In a May 2, 1965, interview with the Rocky Mountain News, Adolph recalled planting 125 evergreen seedlings in 1924, and noted that between 75 and 80 of these trees now towered to more than 40 feet in height. Many mature trees survive on the site, and can be attributed to the Kunsmillers' considerable gardening interests and skills. The relatively tall house is perched on a large heavily vegetated site rising above the Willis-Case golf course on its north and west sides, giving the distinctive Spanish Eclectic residence a strong visual presence in the Berkeley neighborhood. Pathways wind through the expansive treed and heavily vegetated site, and its arbor, outbuildings and pond, creating a sense of a lush garden and isolated residential oasis within Denver.

A house of the Spanish Eclectic style is also unusual for Denver, particularly a more restrained vernacular variety, and it is one of only a few Spanish Colonial-influenced early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses in the Berkeley area. While located on a dead-end street, its location adjacent to the Willis-Case golf course (originally the privately owned Interlachen Golf Club) on its north and west sides is important since the development of the golf course and Berkeley Park Heights are closely intertwined, and the house remains highly visible from the golf course itself. In addition, the sale and redevelopment of El Jebel Shrine and surrounding land in Berkeley Park Heights over the last five to ten years has resulted in dense suburban development on land that was once more open and rural in character. The Kunsmiller House, with its Spanish Eclectic styling on an expansive treed and picturesque .72-acre lot, contrasts dramatically not only with the small historic homes immediately adjacent to the parcel, but also with the dense two-story modern houses and duplexes in its immediate environment. The 1924 Kunsmiller house is an important and rare survivor of Berkeley's rural origins, and early residential development in far northwest Denver.

#### Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1924–1975

Provide justification for the period of significance.

The Period of Significance begins with completion of the house in 1924, continues through occupancy by the Kunsmiller family, and ends with their sale of and departure from the house in October 1975.

## 4. Property Description

Describe the current physical appearance of the property, providing a statement for each of the following:

- a. **Summary Paragraph** - Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, materials, setting, size, and significant features.

### The House

The 1924 Kunsmiller House at 5086 N. Vrain Street in northwest Denver's Berkeley neighborhood is part of the earliest development in the 1909 Berkeley Heights Park subdivision, with its large .72-acre parcel fronted on the north and east by the Willis Case Golf Course. As an intriguing and early example of the Spanish Eclectic style in Denver, the Kunsmiller House exhibits most of the simple but iconic features that characterize such residences of the 1920s primarily in the Western U.S. The overall scale is modest: its plan and elevations are asymmetrical with its basement-level one-car garage tucked into the hillside, its walls are of plain stucco, its understated entrance door is off-center, and its cross-gabled roof's multiple surfaces are covered by mottled-red tiles with few extended eaves. A 'balconet' of wrought iron on the upper-floor gable-bay door, a small round window on one side, and a chimney centered on the lowest south gable, all follow many publicized Spanish Eclectic prototypes originating in California just prior to the Kunsmillers' construction of their new house. Most exceptions and variations upon the Spanish Eclectic style at the Kunsmiller House reveal the couple's desire for a few conventional features of suburban homes typical of Denver's post-World War I development nearby. Predominantly calm weather along Colorado's Front Range—differing from the persistent breezes of the California coast and perhaps even of Spain's inspiring Mediterranean coast of Andalusia—might explain the more and larger, but not huge, windows treated as consistent horizontal bands around the house (and see [Site](#) below). Most well-known Spanish Eclectic examples from the 1920s elsewhere retained straight- and parallel-axis floorplans based on a linear main block connecting at right angles to small service wings, while the Kunsmillers pivoted their north wing at a 45-degree angle to the main block. Other varying style features at 5086 Vrain Street include: a dark brick base rising up to the main floor's window sills, and a lunette window in the front facing gable (matched in the 1930s with an adjacent lunette in a matching gabled dormer; see 4.c. below). The extended roof-eave over the front door (in the 1930s extended over the adjacent living room window) serves for practical protection from snow and ice. The articulated "returns" of the eave ends—actually gutter extensions—at each gable are a detail usually reserved for high-style, Classically derived compositions such as Greek Revival and Queen Anne. These Classical touches, not typically appearing on vernacular-derived Andalusian precedents that inspired the Spanish Eclectic style, further imply that each of the house's corners is supported by a Classical column.

### The Site

Many of the house's character-defining features, including some but not all of its variables from Spanish Eclectic details, are the results of its hillside site and sweeping views of the Front Range and Rocky Mountains to the south, west, and north. The nestling of the house into a northwest-facing hill, installing larger windows throughout, and placing the upstairs bedroom off-axis in the "angled wing," all invited magnificent basin and mountain vistas, today protected and ensured by the adjacent golf course. The large Vrain Street parcel and fertile Denver Basin soil also allowed Adolph Kunsmiller to pursue his horticulture interests by planting native trees and

other vegetation around the property to frame and shade the house without blocking its Front Range views. In the late 1910s and early 1920s in coastal Southern California, such embellishments of trees, gardens, and lush landscapes coincidentally accompanied the typical Santa Barbara-area origins of the Spanish Eclectic residential style. Many of the trees, shrubs and flowers planted by the original owners remain, with many mature trees on the site. The current property owners' plant inventory reveals that the property contains 28 Blue Spruce Trees, 17 Ponderosa Pines, 12 Chinese Yews, 10 Buckthorns, 6 Red Oaks, 5 Cedar Trees, 4 Douglas Firs, 2 Austrian Pines, 2 Pinyon Pines, as well as a large assortment of fruit trees, shrubs and perennials. A varying height (up to approximately 3') wall comprised of large mortared rubble stones with concrete cap which extends across the north boundary line of the property and wraps around the west side of the property until terminating at the rear corner shed; a similar variable height mortared rubble stone wall with flagstone cap lining north-south portion of driveway; and a mortared running bond brick retaining wall with sandstone cap. A series of winding stone and concrete walkways extend throughout the heavily vegetated site, with a stone-lined oblong pond southeast of the main house. A series of accessory and outbuildings dot c. 1978 garage, octagonal shed with conical roof; rear patio arbor; pond-side arbor with tile and wood shingle roof; and northwest corner shed. The stone retaining wall and the winding stone and concrete walkways are character-defining features of the site.

**b. Architectural Description** – Describe the architectural features of the structure(s) (i.e., building) in a logical sequence, from the ground up or façade by façade. Identify the key visual aspects or character-defining features of the structure.

The west-facing building nestles into the parcel's hillside and its façade is divided into three levels horizontally and three general bays vertically. The original 1-story main-floor wing occupies the two southmost bays, and the 3-story Garage/Living Room/Master-Bedroom wing is angled 45 degrees in plan—southwest to northeast—on the northmost bay. At the ground/basement level, the north bay holds the original 1-car garage, protected by a small shed roof clad with mottled, predominantly red S-profile Spanish tiles. Horizontal features throughout all elevations begin at the ground level with a foundation of dark, reddish brown running-bond bricks that rises to the main-floor's window sills. Windows on the main floor follow a consistent band throughout all elevations. The off-center front door is understated but sits at the top of a series of stone steps protected by a wrought-iron balustrade rising from the driveway and curving to the door. At the original top level on the façade's north bay, a centered, tall, narrow double door opens onto a wrought-iron "balconet" under a lunette window—originally an attic vent in the same frame—in the gable. Adjacent to that gabled bay and above the front door is an equal-width dormer-bay added by the Kunsmillers about 1936. That bay's gable also features a matching lunette with louvered vent. Both west bays at the north and south edges feature the original detail of an eave return accomplished by a short *cyma recta*-profile gutter turn above a double horizontal shadow line of stuccoed bricks.

The angled north(-west) elevation follows the 3-level characteristics of the west façade: dark brick basement level with one small centered window into the garage; a large centered window in smooth stucco above the brick-sill line into the main-level's Living Room; and two smaller windows in smooth stucco with brick sills lighting the upper-level Master Bedroom, flanking a round window encircled with dark bricks. The angled northeast elevation of the 3-level wing begins with an attached basement-level storage room with a hipped roof that rises just above the dark-brick foundation band; the two levels above are blank walls of stucco supporting a centered dark-brick exterior chimney.

A short hyphen facing east, with matching exterior materials, connects the angled wing to the south wing. At the house's northeast corner, the original main-floor Bedroom 2 also repeats the brick and stucco bands, with north-facing and east-facing Basement and Bedroom windows; the main-level's east Bathroom window is south of Bedroom 2. In 2005 the current owners added a top-level Master Bathroom and walk-in closets in an east-projecting bay, lit by three tall, narrow casement windows, directly above Bedroom 2. On the main level, Bedroom 1 is in a slightly protruding original bay farther south with a centered window under a cross-gable. A brick-width horizontal shadow-line in the stucco links Bedrooms 1 and 2, and helps emphasize the similar "return eave" detail of gutter ends on Bedroom 2's gable. A very tall chimney rises from the intersection of Bedroom 1 and the new top-level Bathroom, venting the Basement heater. The southeast corner of the house continues the exterior-materials pattern, where the main-level Kitchen is entered through an off-center east door above a concrete stairway of concentric steps. Windows on the east and south light the Kitchen, which joins the Breakfast Room on the opposite southwest corner, entered through an exterior south door with sidelights. The south elevation is otherwise symmetrical with the same exterior materials pattern, split by a tall centered exterior chimney of dark bricks. Half-lunettes flank the chimney in the upper gable.

The roof system consists of a main south gabled wing under a continuous ridgeline that originally extended north to meet the angled bay, whose gables are under a southwest-northeast continuous ridgeline. All original roof surfaces and the 1936 upper-level dormer-bay are clad with mottled, predominantly red S-profile Spanish tiles. The mottled effect is accomplished by mixing contrasting colors within the red tiles, ranging from yellow to green and blue. The effect of textures and colors was no doubt part of the original Spanish Eclectic style, charm, and timelessness.

**c. Major Alterations** - Describe changes or alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations, if known.

The Kunsmillers added the centered top-level west bay about 1936 (based on aerial photographs given that no building permits of this change were found) to accommodate more family members living in the relatively small house. The bay's roof position required broadening the short eave projection over the front door to protect the Dining Room window as well. The free-standing Garage was added west of the house c. 1978 (this estimate is based on a review of aerial photography given that no permit records of the garage's construction were found). At about the same time, a small one-story addition was added to the home's northeast 2-story bay and all windows (most likely wood casements based on 1934 photo from *Denver Post*) were replaced in existing openings. In 2005, the current owners replaced all of the ca. 1978 window sets with generally matching metal-frame and double-pane casement and slider windows, all within the original openings on each elevation. The upper-level Master Bathroom was added at that time, protruding from the original roof and interrupting the original red-tiled slope there, but all on the east/back elevation of the house. Interior work in the upper-level Master Bedroom opened the ceiling there with exposed trusses, and replaced the former lunette attic vent on the west elevation with a lunette window inside the original half-circle opening. The current owners additionally conducted extensive engineering work including foundation leveling and repairs, upgraded the mechanical systems, and repaired the original brick base, stuccoed walls, and roof tiles in-kind, matching original surfaces, mortar, and other details. Copper gutters and downspouts were installed in the positions and configurations of the original roof-drain systems.

## 5. Integrity

Describe the structure's integrity, using the seven qualities that define integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Denver's Kunsmiller House retains strong historic integrity—as established through seven aspects presented with National Register evaluations and reflected through the same qualities listed in the Denver Landmark Preservation Ordinance—of location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. Quotes and approaches below on the Kunsmiller House's integrity are from the National Park Service's description of each aspect in *National Register Bulletin [15]* on NRHP Criteria and integrity (Savage 1995:44-45).

Kunsmiller House retains each quality/aspect of integrity:

*Location:* The Kunsmiller House retains integrity of location in that all its contributing features occupy their original positions from the period of significance, 1924–1975, through the present.

*Design:* The design characteristics of the residence are intact and retain this integrity aspect within the period of significance. As a resource of local history, the Kunsmiller House also retains its “spatial relationships between major features.”

*Materials:* The manmade physical components of the Kunsmiller House, primarily comprising its exterior finishes of brick, stucco, and roof tiles, “retain the key exterior materials dating from the period of...historic significance” and “reveal the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies.”

*Workmanship:* Through preservation of the materials present during the period of significance, workmanship at the Kunsmiller House retains “evidence of the crafts” in professional construction of the building's accommodations as a single-family home, and illustrates “the aesthetic principles of [the] historic period.” In addition, workmanship here reveals “individual, local, [and] regional... applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles” particularly in construction of the brick base and chimneys, smooth stuccoed walls, and mottled red-tiled roof surfaces.

*Setting:* The Berkeley neighborhood's physical environment, and the historically vegetated Kunsmiller parcel along with other early 20th century residences and Willis Case Golf Course around the Kunsmiller House are very much intact, particularly through their “relationships between...buildings and other features [and] open space.” While the larger neighborhood and the El Jebel Shrine property has changed substantially in recent years, the property's setting is retained within the home's large vegetated land parcel, and also “between the property and its surroundings.”

*Association:* The Kunsmiller House's physical setting is “sufficiently intact to convey” its period of significance for “an observer,” particularly anyone familiar with the landscape between 1924 and the present. Association with the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century growth of Denver and development of its Berkeley neighborhood is vital to the building's eligibility under Criterion A. In addition to setting, integrity of association draws strength from other exhibited aspects of integrity here, particularly design, materials, and workmanship.

*Feeling:* The physical natural and cultural features of the Kunsmiller House, “taken together, convey the property's historic character.” The residence retains original design, materials, workmanship, and setting that relate the strong feeling of similar development of Denver's Berkeley neighborhood, the lush vegetation and towering trees introduced to the parcel by its original owners, and to sweeping views from the house to the Front Range to the north, west, and south.

## 6. Historic Context

Describe the history of the structure, including events, activities and associations that relate the structure to its historic, architectural, geographic, or cultural significance. Examine how patterns, themes, or trends in history affected the property and how it relates to the surrounding community, neighborhood, city, and/or nation. (The following narrative draws from numerous primary and secondary documents; see the List of Sources in Section 7.)

### Dorothea and Adolph Kunsmiller: Early Life and Marriage

Dorothea (Wortmann) Kunsmiller (1884-1967) and Adolph Kunsmiller (1881-1975) were both German immigrants to the United States, with Dorothea arriving from Frankfurt in 1895 and Adolph from Hanover seven years later in 1902. Each of them would have encountered many fellow Germans in Denver given that European immigrants were well-established in the city by that time. Germans migrated to the Denver area beginning with the Gold Rush of 1858-1859, with many settling in Auraria, which became the West Denver neighborhood when the two towns consolidated in 1860. By the 1870s and 1880s, German residents had established numerous social associations, churches, and newspapers. In 1900, the city recorded a population of 200,000, including 25,000 persons of foreign birth, approximately one-fifth of whom came from German-speaking lands unified in 1871. Many early German immigrants to Denver were in the skilled trades, or had their own businesses, such as grocery stores, saloons, banks, and breweries.

Dorothea's father, Hermann Wortmann (1846-1925), was a German immigrant from Neuwied (on the Rhein River, part of the German state of Prussia) who arrived in Denver in 1866, joining his older brother and half-brother in their confectionary business in Auraria. By the early 1870s, Hermann was in the saloon business, operating a successful bar called Atlantic Hall at 1430 Blake Street in Lower Downtown, and married to his first wife Marcella (or Marcille, unknown b.-d. dates). The 1880 U.S. Census showed the couple and their young son Hermann Jr. living in a 2-story brick home at 307 (later renumbered 1145) 10<sup>th</sup> Street in the Auraria neighborhood (non-extant, Auraria University Campus Library at 1100 Lawrence St. is located there now). The home was in the heart of the neighborhood, just one block north of the 1878 Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Church (second church from 1898 survives at 1060 St. Francis Way, Denver Landmark). Records show Hermann often traveled between Germany and United States, and about 1882 he married his second wife Sophie (c. 1861-1935) in Frankfurt. Two years later, Dorothea was born in Frankfurt on April 23, 1884, and remained there until 1895 when she immigrated to the United States with her mother and younger sister Elizabeth (1887-1901). These three joined the elder and younger Hermann at their 10<sup>th</sup> Street home in Auraria. By the time of Dorothea's arrival in Denver, Hermann had shifted from saloons to real estate, and in 1899 Sophia gave birth to their third daughter, Lumena, and the next year to a son, Herbert. Active in the German community, Hermann Sr. served as a charter member of the Schiller Lodge, a Masonic Lodge formed by German-speaking Freemasons in 1881, and as president of the German Krieger Verein, a war-veteran's group, in 1897.

Dorothea was 11 (or 12 by some accounts) when she arrived in the U.S. and the Auraria neighborhood of Denver. The neighborhood was under transition at the time, with many of the neighborhood's wealthier residents taking advantage of Denver's extensive streetcar system to move to the suburbs during the 1890s. Factory and railroad-related developments had made Auraria into "an industrial area pungent with the aromas of breweries, bakeries and flour mills" (Leonard & Noel, *Denver Mining Camp to Metropolis*, 57-58). Dorothea most likely attended

Washington School, built in 1884 (no longer extant), just one block from her home on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. She attended West Denver High School, where she won an essay contest in 1903 and participated in a choral concert in 1904, the year of her high school graduation. In 1905, she was listed in the Denver city directories as a teacher. Dorothea attended State Normal College in Greeley from 1906-1907 where she served as class vice president and completed her studies in the summer of 1908, presumably focusing on high school education. She took a break from her studies in the spring of 1908 to marry Adolph Kunsmiller (sometimes spelled Kunsemuller, Kuensemuller, Kunsemueller, or even Kuehsemueller on their marriage certificate) on March 28, 1908, at First German Presbyterian Church, 1017 Lawrence Street in Auraria.

Adolph Kunsmiller was born in the then-village of Hainholz in the Hanover province of Germany's state of Prussia, on December 15, 1881. The 20-year-old arrived in Denver during 1902 to tour the United States and visit relatives, planning to return to Germany to work in his uncle's feather bed factory. By that time, he had finished high school and two years of commercial college in Germany. According to newspaper accounts, Adolph decided to stay in Denver after being offered a bookkeeper position at Denver's Zang Brewery. By 1904, he was working as a stenographer for Godfrey Schirmer, founder of Schirmer Insurance and Investment Company and German consul (or vice consul by some accounts) in Denver. In 1905, Schirmer organized the German American Trust Company, initially located inside a hotel at 16th and Blake Streets (not extant), with Adolph opening the company's front doors on opening day, May 7, 1905. This was the city's second "bank" catering to German-speaking residents. The first, the German National Bank, incorporated in 1877 but folded in 1894 as a result of the Silver Panic of 1893 that devastated the state's economy. Most of the German American Trust Company's early clients were German immigrants, and all clerks were required to speak German. In 1909, the company moved to larger quarters at 17<sup>th</sup> and Lawrence Streets (not extant) downtown. By 1918, the German American Trust Company's capital stock was \$500,000, ranking it in the top five in terms of holdings of 32 banks in Denver. At about this time, the company changed its name to American Bank & Trust Company in response to anti-German sentiments caused by World War I, and then in 1924 it became the American National Bank.

Adolph Kunsmiller served as stenographer and secretary to Mr. Schirmer at the German American Trust Company from 1905 to 1908, before slowly working his way up in the company. He attended night school at the American Institute of Banking organized by Denver banks, and completed two years of study at the Westminster Law School. Within a few years, Adolph became manager of the bank's real estate loan department, and by 1910, he was promoted to manager of the bank's "foreign department." Adolph's career was progressing well when he married Dorothea in 1908. Later that year, the couple settled into a house at 1155 10<sup>th</sup> Street (not extant), next door to Dorothea's parents in Auraria. The following year, the couple had a son, Wilbert (1909-1926), followed by a daughter, Margaret in 1912 (1912-2011).

#### The Kunsmillers Build a House in Berkeley

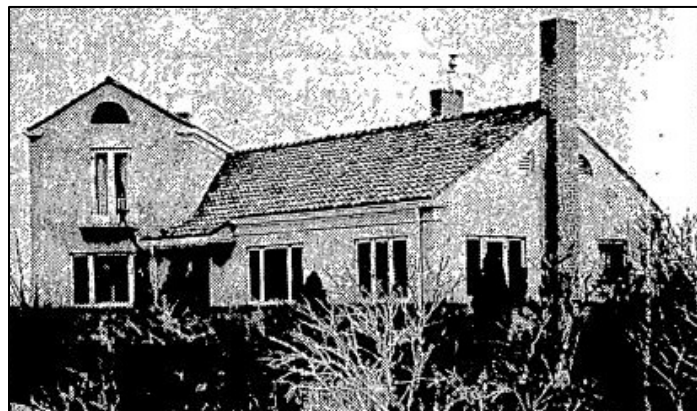
By 1915, the Kunsmillers had purchased an existing home at 3701 Sheridan Boulevard (not extant) in Wheat Ridge on the Denver-Wheat Ridge city boundary. Within a few years Adolph was promoted to vice president at the German American Trust Company, while Dorothea stayed home with their two young children. Disaster struck the family in February 1924 when their 3701 Sheridan Street home was destroyed by fire. Almost two years earlier, Adolph had executed a deed of trust with Lewis Bliss Shelby to purchase lots 1-6 and the north half of lot 7 of Block 3 in Berkeley Park Heights in far northwest Denver about 1.5 miles from their current home. The Denver Clerk and Recorder property records confirm that Shelby, a real estate investor and

president of the Berkeley Heights Progress Association, agreed to sell the lots to Adolph Kunsmiller on August 19, 1922, for \$1,000, balance due within two years. Just two months after the fire on April 14, 1924, Adolph Kunsmiller paid off his promissory note to Mr. Shelby, removing all encumbrances on the approximately .72-acre property to own the property outright.

On June 4, 1924, the City of Denver issued Denver contractor Herman P. Granes building permit number 3854 to build the Kunsmillers a brick residence with a 2/3 basement, including a basement garage at 5086 Vrain Street. The approximately 2,000 square foot three bedroom, 1-1/2 bath house was completed later that year at an estimated cost of \$12,000, a substantial value for a residence in Denver at the time. Granes (1877-1948), also the son of German immigrants, owned and operated the H.B. Granes Construction Company and was reportedly a prolific Denver contractor and carpenter during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### The Kunsmillers' Possible and Probable Influences for their Spanish Eclectic Home

While no architect has been identified for the 1924 Kunsmiller House, it is essentially a linear brick volume clad with white-stuccoed walls under red-tiled roofs, “inspired by the provincial architecture of Spain (especially Andalusia) and of Mexico” [Gebhard 1967:137–138], similar to the highly influential 1916 George Washington Smith house in Montecito. Smith demonstrated in Montecito that “Spanish Colonial” itself ranged widely from the high-style, highly decorated examples found at the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego to the far simpler everyday—“vernacular”—residences of Andalusia and also of Mexico and pre-1848 California. The Kunsmiller House, like the Smith residence, has a simple floor plan and breaks the basic form of the building into separate, smaller rectangles with gabled red tile roofs that informally spread themselves over the site. Both houses are relatively unadorned, limited to a few discrete elements such as a wrought iron ‘balconet’, a few lunette and circular windows, and two chimneys. This stripped aesthetic was in direct contrast with the more ornate Spanish Colonial styling found in most earlier local examples of this style designed by Denver architect Harry C. Manning, including the c.



*Upper photo: The 1916 “Casa Dracaena” in Montecito, California by architect G.W. Smith introduced a “vernacular,” everyday-house type of Spanish Eclectic Style house to California, and soon the entire United States through mass-market publications. Bottomley, Architectural Record 1920:258,261–271.*

*Lower photo: The 1924 Kunsmiller House, built by Denver contractor Herman P. Granes, is an unusual local version of the vernacular Spanish Eclectic Style house first popularized by G.W. Smith in the late 1910s. Denver Post January 3, 1934.*



1906 Mission Revival house at 1899 York Street, complete with columns, arches quatrefoil ornamentation and shaped parapet; the elaborate 1918 Spanish Colonial St. Thomas Episcopal Church at 2001 Dexter Street, featuring towers, columns, carvings, and medallions; and the 1921 Oscar Malo Residence, with hipped roof, varying wall surfaces, raised medallions, and elaborate entry, at 500 E. 8th Avenue (Wilk 1995:46–47). The simpler Spanish Colonial house espoused by George Washington Smith in Montecito was highlighted in the *Architectural Record* magazine in 1920 (see image on p. 17), and various versions of this type were then featured in mass-market publications such as *House Beautiful* and *National Builder* in the early 1920s, as well as architectural pattern books, and specific “Spanish Colonial Revival” house plans offered by The Bungalowcraft Company of Los Angeles beginning in the 1910s (Antique Home Style 2015). However, Spanish Colonial house plans were not widely circulated until the late 1920s, making the Kunsmiller House an early residential example of this style in Denver.

Dorothea and Adolph Kunsmiller selected their large hillside parcel in Denver’s Berkeley Park Heights a little less than two years before they built their house there in 1924, allowing ample time for them to consider its future position, design, and materials. In choosing a design that followed the Spanish Eclectic style closely in relationship to a hilly parcel, in simple geometric massing, and with exterior finishes of stuccoed walls and tiled roofs, the Kunsmillers likely found inspiration in one or more outlets readily available to them in 1923:

- The nearby 1913 Pueblo Revival Berkeley Park bath house with its simple stucco exteriors and restrained details.
- Possible exposure to the San Diego and/or San Francisco fairs in 1915-1916 celebrating completion of the Panama Canal, or other business or pleasure travel before 1924 to California, a not-uncommon seasonal destination for well-to-do Denverites.
- Probable familiarity with architectural publications, especially *Architectural Record* in 1920. A glance at just the October 1920 issue of *Architectural Record*, featuring several pages and photographs of the Montecito houses of G.W. Smith and others, demonstrated how Americans could choose from multiple “eclectic” styles and configurations, whether expensive versions or more economical choices such as intentionally modest interpretations of Spanish Colonial Revival and Spanish Eclectic. Other periodicals such as *House Beautiful* and *National Builder* covered the Santa Barbara County architectural trend, and if the Kunsmillers searched for house ideas in print, they could find many (Antique Home Style 2015).
- Possible acquisition of a pre-1924 architectural pattern book or specific “Spanish Colonial Revival” house plans offered by The Bungalowcraft Company of Los Angeles since the 1910s (Antique Home Style 2015). *Bungalowcraft* plans shifted from exclusive promotion of Arts & Crafts Bungalow homes before World War I to offering a broad range of eclectic exterior styles after the war, all generally retaining the same linear bungalow floorplans. (Schweitzer and Davis 1990:217–221).

While the Kunsmillers enjoyed many design options beyond the publicized houses of G.W. Smith, a comparison of a 1923 *Bungalowcraft* tract house and Smith’s 1916 “Casa Dracaena” confirms their greater attention to the latter. The Kunsmillers’ builder added more windows, angled the multi-level Garage-Bedroom wing, and introduced “eave returns” to the gable ends. But the overall massing, linear floorplan, nestling into the hillside, and dominant exterior finishes of stuccoed walls and red-tiled roofs related all their ideas and ideals with Smith’s in Montecito.

## The Development of Berkeley and the Berkeley Park Heights Subdivision

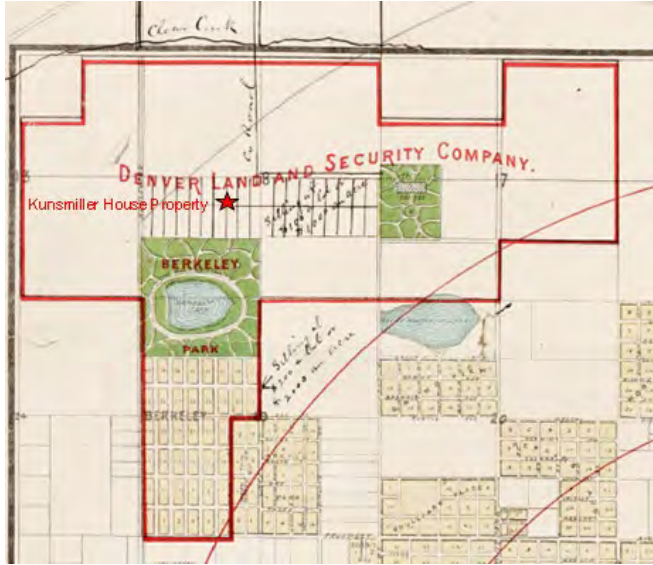
The Kunsmillers built their 1924 “Spanish Eclectic” style house in the Berkeley neighborhood of far northwest Denver, or “North Denver.”<sup>1</sup> By the late 1870s, a 159-acre tract of land where the Kunsmiller house is now located transferred from John Hughes to John Brisben Walker (1847-1931), a well-connected newspaper editor and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Walker arrived in Denver in 1879 at the request of the U.S. Department of Agriculture hoping to demonstrate that arid western lands could be productively irrigated for agriculture. To that end, Walker acquired not only the Hughes tract in 1879, but adjacent lands as well, accumulating more than 1,500 total acres of land. He then established “Berkeley Farm,” named after Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. Walker’s investment in the Rocky Mountain Ditch brought irrigation water to his lands and the previously described dry pond, which he dubbed “Berkeley Lake.” By 1885, Walker added a race track around the lake, hoping to develop it into a profitable amusement endeavor.

In 1888, Walker sold 750 acres of his land to the Russell Investment company, a consortium of Kansas City real estate speculators. Berkeley real estate investors incorporated the Denver & Berkeley Park Rapid Transit Company, which in early 1890 opened a steam-dummy streetcar line. This line, which was electrified by the Denver Tramway Company in 1891 and ran until 1900, circled Berkeley Lake and extended east to the newly relocated Jesuit College (now Regis University). The Denver Land and Security Company laid out subdivision plats for most of its newly acquired Berkeley property in 1888 and 1889. The company aggressively promoted the area’s clean air and water, sewer system, electric lights, newly planted trees, liquor sale prohibitions, first-class car service, and its proximity to privately owned Berkeley Lake Resort, operated as a popular picnic ground, horse racing track, and regional destination for boating, fishing and swimming. A scattering of new homes was built in the far southwest area of the old Berkeley Farm near West 38<sup>th</sup> Street and Wolff Street. Despite continual promotion of Berkeley in local newspapers, the developers did not attract homeowners to the northwest areas of their land holdings where 5086 Vrain Street is now located. Years later a newspaper article in the Montrose Enterprise reflected on Walker’s good fortune of selling his farm to “a bunch of suckers from Kansas City for \$332,000” (“Started in Colorado,” *The Montrose Enterprise* May 19, 1905).

In 1892, based on the petition of 41 residents, the “Town of North Denver” was incorporated. To avoid confusion regarding Denver’s incorporated North Denver neighborhood, the “Town of North Denver” changed its name to “Berkeley” in the late 1890s, but was then annexed by Denver in 1902. At the time of annexation, only 707 people lived in the approximately six square mile Berkeley town limits. With Denver’s annexation of Berkeley, Walker became interested in residential development possibilities for property he once again controlled north of Berkeley Lake. By late 1902, he began plans to build a clubhouse and golf course there to attract wealthy homebuyers. The Interlachen Golf Club formed in 1902 and operated a relatively primitive golf

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<sup>1</sup> An early mentioning of this area occurred in U.S. General Land Office (GLO) Records on May 10, 1870, when attorney John L. Hughes (1824-1883) was issued certificate 1054, registering the U.S. government’s cash entry sale of Lots 1 and 2 in the southwest quarter of Section 18, Township 3S of Range 68W. Hughes acquisition encompassed a little more than 159 acres overall (the current 5086 Vrain Street parcel is situated within the 80 acres comprising GLO Lot 1). GLO survey notes from the 1860s denote a “pond” partially on the property, describing it as “very shallow [and] probably dry except in wet weather.” John Hughes had accumulated wealth investing in railroads and operating Colorado stagecoach lines purchased from the Wells-Fargo Company in 1869; he invested heavily in Denver real estate in the early 1870s. Records indicate that Mr. Hughes suffered from depression and experienced a series of strokes in the 1870s. This led to a conservator selling off much of his property in the late 1870s and early 1880s.



*John Brisben Walker sold most of his Berkeley Farm lands to Kansas City real estate interests in 1888. The Denver Land and Security Company published this map outlining in red the land they controlled in 1889. The approximate site of the future Kunsmiller parcel is demarcated by a red star. The Jesuit College, now Regis University, is the green rectangular area northeast of Berkeley Park. Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

course west of Sheridan Boulevard and Inspiration Point. In June 1905, the Denver Park Commission approved \$60,000 for the purchase of 155 acres of the private Berkeley Lake Resort for a public park. The resort was a popular family gathering place, but its associated dance hall was known for rowdy behavior.<sup>2</sup> The private golf club continued to own land and operate a golf course north of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. City ownership of Berkeley Park renewed Walker's interests in residential development on the nearly 70 acres he owned abutting the north side of the new public park. On December 29, 1908, his Berkeley Heights Investment Company subdivided approximately 20 acres of land just northeast of the park into a residential subdivision called "Berkeley Park Heights." Walker subsequently platted land to the new subdivision's immediate west as Berkeley Park Heights First Addition.

By the mid to late 1910s, a few Bungalows had been built in the southeast area of Berkeley Park Heights, in the parcels of the subdivision closest to the Jesuit College and several Denver streetcar lines. The Denver City Tramway's Tennyson & 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Line was the most important streetcar line in far northwest Berkeley, providing regular streetcar service there from 1900 to 1951. Given the location of Berkeley Park Heights in the far northwest corner of Denver, and its long distance from downtown, it is not surprising that few homes were built in the subdivision in the ensuing years. While residential development in Berkeley Park Heights largely stalled during the early 1900s, Berkeley Park continued to be a popular recreational destination for Denver residents. As Denver's population skyrocketed, increasing from about 134,000 to more than 256,000 between 1900 and 1920, real estate investors began to show some limited interest in Berkeley Park Heights real estate. The subdivision was considered far away from the business center of Denver, meaning that commuters had to rely on the city's streetcar system to access most jobs and services.

Eventually prospective home owners began purchasing lots. This included Adolph Kunsmiller, who acquired six and half lots in Block 3 of the subdivision from Shelby on August 19, 1922 (Vol. 2659, p. 303). While it is unclear what Kunsmiller's original plans were for the lots he purchased in Berkeley Park Heights, after the family's first home in Wheat Ridge burnt down in the spring of 1924, Adolph quickly took action to build a new family residence in Berkeley Park Heights. One of only a few homes in the neighborhood in 1924, the Kunsmiller House was the largest and most prominent building in the subdivision at the time of its completion. The house included two

<sup>2</sup> The new city park extended north to 50th Avenue, south to 46th Avenue, east to Tennyson Street and west to Sheridan Boulevard (the city boundary line). Denver gradually improved the park, building playgrounds, adding a golf course and club house in partnership with the Interlachen Golf Club on the north side of the lake in 1910, dredging the lake, and constructing a boat pavilion, bathing beach and bathhouse.

bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor, with a third bedroom and probably a second small bathroom on the second floor. It is likely that the second floor was accessed by a spiral staircase, similar to the G.W. Smith House in Montecito.

### Life in Berkeley Park Heights

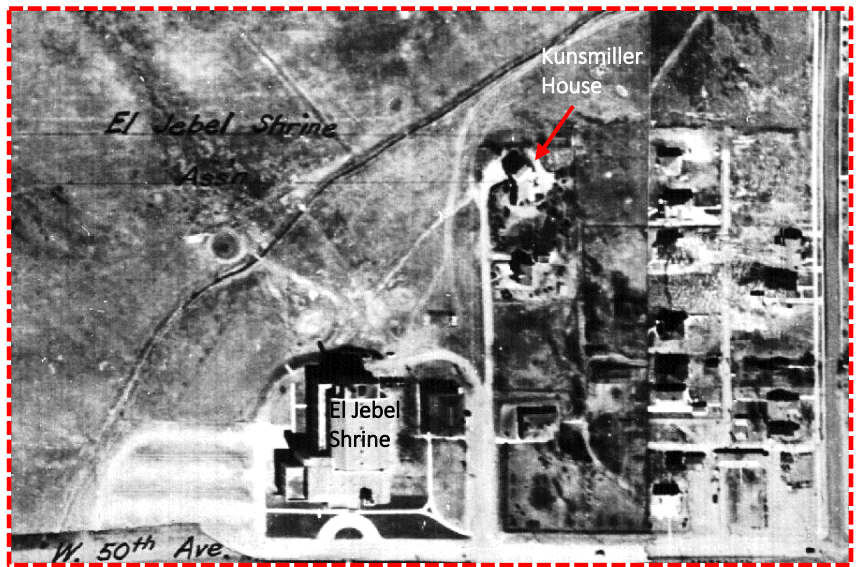
Adolph and Dorothea moved into the Berkeley house in late 1924 along with their two children, Dorothy and Wilbert. The family's move to 5086 Vrain Street coincided with several positive developments underway in the Berkeley Park area. Just a few months earlier, the city had finished a second major round of improvements at Berkeley Park, just 500 feet south of the Kunsmiller property. In addition, a year after the Kunsmillers completed their Berkeley Park Heights home, the El Jebel Shrine Association purchased approximately 193 acres from the defaulting Rocky Mountain Country Club (successor to the Interlachen Golf Club). Four years later, El Jebel built a new "Shrine Mosque," a noteworthy Spanish Colonial style building designed by William N. Bowman and T. Robert Wiegler, at 4625 W. 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. The new Spanish Colonial style "mosque" (extant, now condominiums) was built just a few lots southwest of the Kunsmiller home. The El Jebel Shrine Association added a nine-hole golf course on the extensive grounds it had acquired north and northwest of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue on lands previously owned by John Brisben Walker. At about the same time, the city rebuilt the nine-hole golf course south of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue within Berkeley Park; this is part of the same golf course that had been previously developed and operated by the now defunct Interlachen Golf Club. Gradually, a few more lots sold to residential buyers in Blocks 3 and 4 of Berkeley Park Heights where the Kunsmillers' home was located. Aerial coverage of Denver in 1933 shows a scattering of mostly small- and medium-sized Bungalows and Tudor Revival style homes populating Blocks 3 and 4 of Berkeley Park Heights. By this time, the two remaining blocks of Berkeley Park Heights were wedged between the El Jebel Shrine and golf course to the west and north, the Berkeley neighborhood to the east, and the city owned Berkeley Park and Lake to the South.

Dorothea's mother, Sophia C. Wortmann (c. 1862 -1935), moved in with the Kunsmillers at 5086 Vrain Street after her husband Hermann died on November 14, 1925. The Kunsmillers experienced another tragedy two years after moving into their new house when their 17-year-old son Wilbert died of a lingering illness in August 1926. Just a few weeks after Wilbert's death, Dorothea's younger sister Lumena (1900-1992) and her husband Herman Buhl (1891-1931), a German immigrant and insurance agent, purchased adjoining lots in Berkeley Park Heights at 5062 Vrain Street. Lumena had achieved local fame in 1922 as the first recorded white woman to have reached the summit of Longs Peak ("Woman Scales Precipice on Longs Peak," September 15, 1922, *The Estes Park Trail*). The couple built their brick home in 1927 (extant), settling there with their young son Herman. When Herman Buhl Sr. died in 1931, Lumena married William F. Godel, a German immigrant who worked alongside her brother-in-law Adolph at the American Bank & Trust Company and later served as German Consul before starting his own insurance agency. William and Lumena lived in the house until their deaths in 1961 and 1992 respectively. Dorothea's younger brother, Herbert Wortmann was also working as a bank cashier at American National Bank by 1930 and residing next door to Lumena along with his wife, child and in-laws at 5030 Vrain Street (not extant).

The Great Depression brought some promising public investments to the neighborhood. Like many social and entertainment venues of the time, the Shriners found themselves financially struggling and unable to afford maintenance and operation of their golf course north of 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. during the troubling 1930s. In an interesting turn of events, the City had money in hand to purchase golf course lands. On February 11, 1934, Willis Case, a wealthy investment banker,

died in a romantic spat turned violent, leaving a hefty estate. His will assigned half of his estate for improvement of city golf courses. With access to these funds, the City acquired the Shriner Golf Course lands north of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue, including most of Block 1 and all of Block 2 of Berkeley Park Heights subdivision. Denver then combined the Shriner Golf Course with the Berkeley Park Golf Course into one 18-hole city-owned Willis Case Golf Course, dedicated in April 1938. The city also used monies from the Willis Case bequest to acquire additional water rights from the Rocky Mountain Ditch, allowing the city to convert the barren landscaping of the Shriners golf course to lush fairways and green.

*1933 Aerial Photo below with blowup area on right showing the Kunsmiller House location adjacent to the El Jebel Shrine and Golf Course north of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. The Berkeley Golf Course and Lake in the city-owned Berkeley Park was just south of W. 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. There appears to be an informal pathway between the Kunsmiller House and El Jebel Shrine, where Mr. Kunsmiller was reportedly a member. In 1939, the city combined the two golf courses into the 18-hole city owned Willis Case Golf Course Jasper King's 1933 Aerial Photography, courtesy of Denver Public Library.*





*Ca. 1935 Photo of the Berkeley Municipal Golf Course by Louis McClure, Photo MCC-3097. Berkeley Lake is shown on the right and the 1929 El Jebel Mosque on the left. The Kunsmillers' House would be in the treed area just behind the El Jebel Mosque approximately at the red arrow. Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

The verdant golf landscaping abutting the north and west sides of the Kunsmillers' property may have stimulated the couples' growing interest in horticultural activities. Reportedly, both Adolph and Dorothea enjoyed gardening on their .72-acre lot. In several interviews, Adolph cited gardening as his primary hobby, and Dorothea served as a charter member of Denver's Home Garden Club. In a May 2, 1965, interview with the *Rocky Mountain News*, Adolph recalled planting 125 evergreen seedlings in 1924, and noted that between 75 and 80 of these trees now towered to more than 40 feet in height. In July 1941, the Kunsmillers hosted a tour of their garden for the Arvada Garden Club. Many mature trees survive on the site and can be attributed to the Kunsmillers' considerable gardening interests and skills.

#### Adolph's Career Rise with American National Bank

Adolph's trajectory at the American National Bank continued to climb as the bank itself grew enormously during the early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1918, he was Bank Secretary and Treasurer, with American National Bank reporting \$685,000 in Capital and Surplus. In November 1920, Adolph was credited with alerting the police to an employee who had embezzled money from the bank. By 1923, he was listed as one of two bank vice presidents, and within that decade bank deposits reached \$10 million, with the American National Bank advertising that it had loaned millions of dollars to the citizens of Denver for building homes, businesses, churches, and educational institutions. Mr. Kunsmiller was elevated to executive vice president of American National Bank in 1937, and by 1945 the bank reported 30,000 patrons with deposits exceeding \$27 million. Two years later in 1947, Adolph Kunsmiller became American National Bank's third president. The following year, he established a retirement and security plan for bank employees. Adolph was also involved in civic affairs, serving as a Freemason and Shriner, president of the

German-American Dramatic Society in 1926, and campaign treasurer for a fundraising campaign to support the Ex-Patients' Tubercular Home of Denver in 1932.

Dorothea Kunsmiller, Denver Public Schools Board Member



*Photo of Dorothea in the April 9, 1931, Denver Post article, "Two candidates for School Board are Approved by PTA."*

While Adolph continued to advance his banking career, Dorothea Kunsmiller's training and interest in education led to her involvement in the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) of both Skinner Junior High and North High School in the 1920s. Dorothea was also active in numerous progressive causes in Denver, including the Alpha Chapter of the Delphian Society, which promoted education of women and social progress, and the Crittendon Club (board member), which provided shelter and support for vulnerable young women.

Less than a year after Margaret Kunsmiller graduated from North High School in June 1930, Dorothea announced her candidacy for one of two seats coming up for election on the Denver Public Schools (DPS) Board in 1931. The official governing body of the DPS district, the DPS Board consisted of seven members who served staggered term and were elected at large by the general population of Denver. While women had previously served on the DPS Board, most seats were still occupied by men in the early 1930s<sup>3</sup>. Dorothea was one of eight candidates running for the two available board seats. According to policies at the time, the two candidates winning the most votes would fill the vacancies. In a May 3, 1932, article on the upcoming election, the *Denver Post* named Mrs. Dorothea Kunsmiller as a leading candidate who was well qualified for the position. She also received the endorsement of the Denver County Council of Parents and Teachers, the PTA, and the Classroom Teachers Association. The endorsement of the latter group was attributed to her advocacy for increasing teachers' pay.

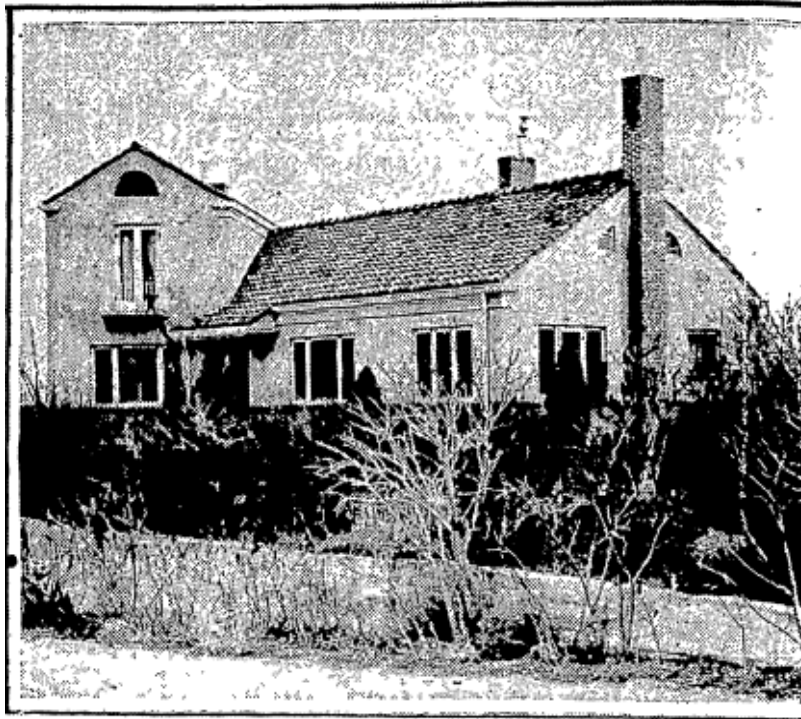
In the May 4, 1931, election Dorothea received 6,351 out of 10,863 votes cast, more than any of the other seven candidates, filling one of the two six-year term board vacancies. She and Frank M. Vaughn received the most votes, defeating controversial incumbent Minnie C.T. Love, a well-known doctor and member of the Ku Klux Klan. Dorothea was the only woman to serve on the Denver School Board during her first term. At the

<sup>3</sup> The Denver Public School District was formed in 1903, consolidating several smaller regional school districts within Denver County (previously Arapahoe County) that date back to 1882, and continuing a tradition of public schools in Denver beginning in 1862. Since attaining suffrage in 1893, Colorado's local women had advocated for female representation on the various district school boards in what is now Denver County and the consolidated DPS Board beginning in 1903. Margaret True, mother of muralist Allen Tupper True, served on the first five-member consolidated Denver School Board from 1903 to 1908. Other early women on the DPS Board included Helen Brown Jones, founding principal of Stout Street School (1909 to 1914), serving as both vice-president and president; Helen M. Wixson, a previous state superintendent of education and lobbyist to place women in political office in Colorado (1914-1915); Ella Strong Denison, a moving force in creating the forerunner to the local PTA (1921-1925); Margaret Packard Taussig, an advocate for female education and member of the board overseeing the state industrial school for girls (1926-1931); and Mira Frank, a teacher and leader of the Denver PTA (1939-1950).

time of her election, DPS was in the process of completing a number of schools funded by bond elections from the 1920s. By 1931, the year Dorothea was elected to the school board, enrollment in Denver public schools had reached 45,896.

Dorothea's first term on the DPS Board was not without controversy as the DPS Board struggled to stay afloat during the Great Depression. The school district was still paying off the principal and interest on bonds issued to build new schools in the 1920s, and as the depression deepened, the price of servicing and paying off the bonds soared. The DPS Board authorized a special public election on November 28, 1934, which according to historian Phil Goodstein, was "to authorize an \$859,000 refunding bond in a special election...the goal was to allow it [DPS] to borrow new money for less to pay off maturing bonds in 1934 and 1935." (Denver School Book, Vol. 1, p. 324). The *Denver Post* vehemently opposed the measure, claiming that the DPS Board favored extravagant school buildings over quality teaching. On January 3, 1934, the newspaper ran an inflammatory story comparing the home values and taxes of DPS Board members to those of working-class home owners who were losing their homes to back taxes. The article featured pictures, addresses and values of the Board members' homes, including the Kunsmiller House at 5086 Vrain Street. Not surprisingly, the 1934 bond measure failed 15,417 to 12,761.

*Photo below of the Kunsmiller's house featured in the January 3, 1934, Denver Post article entitled "Lest We Forget! School Board Tax Boosters and Tax Spenders Enjoy their Beautiful Homes while Overburdened Taxpayers Lose Theirs." Note that in 1934, the house had not yet acquired the front dormer that exists on the house today.*



**M**RS. DOROTHEA KUNSMILLER, member of the Denver school board, lives in the fine residence shown above. It is located at 5086 Vrain street, and its assessed valuation is \$7,120.



The 1934 bond election defeat did not seem to have lasting effects on Dorothea Kunsmiller's popularity since she easily won reelection to a second term on the DPS Board in 1937. That year, she was one of four candidates and the only woman running for one of two available seats. She was endorsed by the *Denver Star* newspaper. In a May 1, 1937 article, the *Denver Star* acclaimed that Mrs. Kunsmiller has been "prominent for many years in civic, philanthropic, and educational activities," and that she "has stood for equal educational facilities in every part of the city and has been active in maintaining a welfare program for all children whose families were victims of the depression." The article recounted that she was also "interested always in the welfare of all the children of the city" and "the welfare of the teachers." Mrs. Kunsmiller received 5,671 votes in the May 3, 1937, election, more than the other three candidates on the ballot. The same year, the Colorado Woman's College chose Dorothea as the first Denver woman to receive the college's honorary degree in the humanities. She coincidentally returned to college at about the same time, attending University of Denver (DU) with a major in Art and minor in International Relations, obtaining her degree in June 1942.

Even with the school building program of the 1920s, DPS schools remained crowded, with student enrollment increasing from 50,127 in 1924 to 55,300 in 1935. The DPS Board asked voters for \$3,761 million in 1938 to build new schools, backed by matching funds to be provided by President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. The measure was supported by the Denver PTA, but opposed by taxpayer groups, which ultimately led to the measure's defeat on September 29, 1938. That same year, the DPS Board accepted a donation from Claude K. and Fannie Boettcher to help build a school for disabled students, focusing on the many children affected by the polio pandemic.

Mrs. Kunsmiller reportedly advocated for such a school, and received credit in the news for her efforts. Built at 1900 Downing Street (not extant), this was the first school building in the state designed specifically for educating children with special needs. During the 1930s, Dorothea opposed salary reductions for teachers, but apparently was overridden since the cuts went into effect.



*Photo at the Opening of Boettcher School, Oct. 1, 1940. This photo includes Mrs. and Mrs. Boettcher, and other DPS school board members. Dorothea Kunsmiller is pictured third from left. Photo Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

### Family Events in the 1930s

The Kunsmillers' daughter Margaret attended Colorado College in Colorado Springs after graduating from high school in 1930. Meanwhile, Adolph and Dorothea, and Dorothea's mother, Sophia Wortman, continued to reside at 5086 Vrain Street. Sophia Wortmann died in September 1935 at the age of 73, while residing with the Kunsmillers. The same year of Sophia's death, Adolph's widowed mother Emelie Kunsmiller (c. 1852–1944), arrived from Germany to live with the couple. The 1940 U.S. Census showed Emelie living in the household as well as a servant, Helen Long.

Sometime between 1934 and 1937, the Kunsmillers built a small addition onto their house, which necessitated construction of a new dormer along the long one-story bays of the house. This addition was most likely needed to replace what the house's original staircase—probably spiral—with a more traditional U-plan staircase and landing. This created a more accessible upstairs bedroom and bathroom to supplement the existing two bedrooms and bathroom on the first floor. This modification may have been needed to accommodate Sophia or Emelie, a servant, or possibly the Kunsmillers themselves who were now in their 50s. No building permit record for this alteration was found, unfortunately. Margaret also moved back home after graduating from college, and was listed in city directories in 1936 and 1937 as a stenographer at American National Bank in downtown Denver. In April 1938, Margaret married Arthur Brown, who worked as an Assistant Trust Officer aside his father-in-law at American National Bank, and the couple moved to their own residence at 1301 N. Grape Street.

### Dorothea Kunsmiller Serves Third and Fourth Terms on Denver Public Schools Board

The voters of Denver elected Dorothea to the DPS Board for a third time in May 1943 with two seats open. She sailed to victory with 5,822 votes, as fellow incumbent Howard Patience placed second with 5,605 votes. By this time, Mrs. Kunsmiller had become a leader on the DPS Board, elected by her peers as Board vice-president beginning in 1937. She was re-elected to this position each year from 1937 to 1947, and again from 1951 until 1955, when she stepped down from the Board. Most notably, in July 1943, she led the Board meeting to appoint a new head when the sitting president of the DPS Board, Stephen J. Knight, died suddenly. In 1947, Mrs. Kunsmiller represented the DPS Board on the Committee on Salary Adjustments; the committee was heavily criticized by the Denver Federation of Teachers for not having adequate representation of teacher and staff organizations and unions. Nevertheless, the Colorado Federation of Teachers supported Mrs. Kunsmiller in her bid to serve a fourth term on the DPS School Board on May 3, 1949. Dorothea received 16,076 votes, more than the other five candidates for the two available six-year DPS Board seats.

The post-World War II years brought new challenges to the DPS Board, as the student population increased rapidly. The DPS Board asked taxpayers to approve a \$21 million dollar bond package for new schools in 1948. This time, voters approved a bond package with a large majority, and a second and third bond issue also passed easily in 1952 and 1955. DPS used these funds to add 40 new schools, mostly in growing areas of the city, with funds also building additions to 41 existing schools. DPS school attendance reached 58,374 in 1952, and increased to 73,290 by 1955. Dorothea often handed out diplomas to graduating seniors and as new schools opened,

she attended several school dedication ceremonies, including Kepner Junior High School in 1954. She also served on the Employees Council Committee on Salaries.

In May 1955, Dorothea Kunsmiller retired from the DPS Board, choosing not to run for a fifth term. Upon announcing her retirement after 24 years on the Board, Dorothea recounted that she “worked continually for good school buildings and fine working conditions for our children...fought for good salaries for our teachers...was conducive in establishing a sound pensions system for our teachers...and helped develop a more adequate program for our mentally handicapped children” (January 30, 1950 *Denver Post*). The *Denver Post* reported that Dorothea Kunsmiller served longer than any other board member since Denver schools were organized into the DPS Board in 1902.

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## *School Board Members Take Oath of Office*



*Photo of DPS School Board Members being sworn into office on May 3 or 4, 1949. Dorothea. Kunsmiller is second from left. May 4, 1949, Denver Post.*

Accolades for the Kunsmillers in the 1950s and 1960s



*Photo from Dedication Program of Dorothea Kunsmiller Junior High School, May 22, 1958. Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

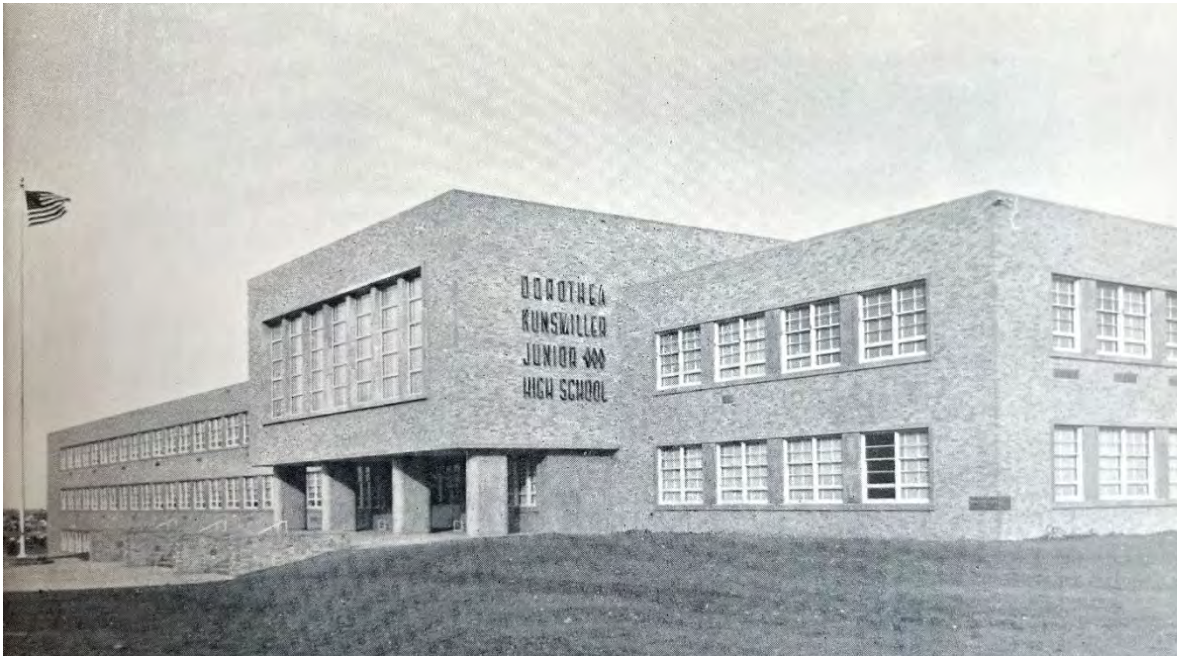
In August 1953, Dorothea received one of three annual alumni awards presented by the University of Denver. She was named North Denver's Citizen of the Year at the annual meeting of the North Denver Civic Association in May 1955. At her last DPS Board meeting on Tuesday, May 3, 1955, her fellow Board members paid tribute to their retiring vice president, and at the first DPS Board meeting after Dorothea's retirement on May 19, 1955, the Board voted to name a new junior high planned for Harvey Park after her. The *Denver Post* reported that this was a precedent and singular honor, since DPS had not previously named a school after a living person (May 19, 1965 *Denver Post*). The Dorothea Kunsmiller Junior High at W. Iliff Avenue and S. Quitman Way was intended to accommodate about 1,500 students, with a three-story design on a sloping site by local architect Temple H. Buell. The DPS Board approved contracts for the school's construction in December 1955, and a cornerstone was laid in late 1956.

In 1957, the Denver Public School Retired Employees' Association gave Dorothea a citation for her service. Three years later, the Denver Classroom Teachers Association awarded her with the organization's first "Eddy" award, an honor given to a lay citizen who makes a distinguished contribution to the welfare and education of the children of Denver. On March 12, 1960, the *Denver Post* recognized six "new faces in the *Denver Post* gallery of fame," including one woman, Dorothea Kunsmiller, for her 24 years of service to the children of Denver.

On May 22, 1958, the Dorothea Kunsmiller Junior High School (now Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy) was formally dedicated. This event included the unveiling of an oil-painted mural on stainless steel called "Heir of All Ages," commissioned by Adolph Kunsmiller in honor of the couple's deceased son Wilbert. The mural was created by Buell Mullins, sister to the school's architect Temple H. Buell.



*Photo of Dorothea and Adolph Kunsmiller at the dedication of Dorothea Kunsmiller Junior High School on May 22, 1958. This photo was taken in front of the mural created in memory of their deceased son Wilbert May 23, 1958 Rocky Mountain News.*



*Photo of Dorothea Kunsmiller Junior High School from the School's Dedication Program, May 22, 1958. Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

Adolph served as American National Bank's third president from 1947 to 1957. In 1954, he oversaw installation of a new loan department, and he was particularly proud of the bank's early efforts to install motor banking facilities. In 1955, the *Rocky Mountain News* ran an article honoring American National Bank's 50th anniversary, also Adolph's 50th year working for the bank. By this time, the bank had over \$50 million dollars in assets, an increase from \$27 million dollars in 1945. A firm believer in education, he spent several years as an instructor of courses at the American Institute of Banking, an organization which had helped to train him decades earlier.

Mr. Kunsmiller was well known for his community support and leadership on anti-discriminatory issues. Of particular note was his support of the Jewish community and his role securing bank loans for the new Rose Hospital and several regional synagogues. A September 1, 1949, article in the *Intermountain Jewish News* extolled Kunsmiller for accepting the mortgage of the B.M.H. synagogue when no other bank would, and for extending credit to finance construction of Rose Hospital. In 1951, Adolph served as a vice chairman of an initiative headed by the Anti-Defamation League for



*Photo of Adolph Kunsmiller from an article in the May 8, 1955, Rocky Mountain News honoring his 50 years of banking and community service in Denver.*

Colorado to pass a Fair Employment Practices Law to curb job discrimination for minority groups in Colorado. This initiative eventually led to the passage of the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act of 1957. A May 6, 1954, article in the *Intermountain Jewish News* extolled Adolph's 49 years with the bank, and how "he has been a good friend of the Jewish community and a powerful factor in Denver's progress." In May 1955, on the eve of Adolph's retirement, a testimonial dinner was held at the Brown Palace in recognition of his 50 years of banking and community service.

In April 1956, Transamerica Corporation, a West Coast banking and investment firm, gained control of American National bank, and at the end of that year, Kunsmiller retired as bank president. Adolph continued serving the bank, however, becoming chairman of the bank's board in 1957. When Charles Wadell, successor bank president, resigned abruptly from the position in January 1960, Adolph stepped in to serve as interim bank president for a short period. In 1962, he cut the ribbon at the ceremony when the bank refurbished a historic 12-story building at 17<sup>th</sup> and Stout Streets (extant at 818 17<sup>th</sup> Street) for bank use. Adolph served as Chairman of the Board for American National Bank until 1971 when at the age of 89 (or 90), he became board chairman emeritus. After Adolph's tenure with American National Bank in the 1980s and 1990s, the local bank was absorbed first into First Interstate Bancorp and then into Wells Fargo's holdings.



*2020 Google Earth Aerial Photo of 5086 N. Vrain Street showing approximate property boundaries. Denver's Willis Case Golf Course borders the north and west sides of the property. The Kunsmillers created an oasis for themselves by perching their Spanish Eclectic house on a hilltop with expansive views to the west, and creating a fairytale landscape on their .72 acre lot, complete with ponds, stone and brick walls, winding walkways and stairways, and densely planted trees and vegetation. Subsequent owners have made relatively minor alterations and additions to the property, preserving the Kunsmillers' overall vision and design for the property.*

### Kunsmillers' Death and Subsequent Ownership

The Kunsmillers continued to live in their home at 5086 Vrain Street after Dorothea retired from the DPS Board in 1955 and Adolph stepped down as American National Bank President in 1956. On April 9, 1967, Dorothea Kunsmiller died at the age of 82. Adolph continued to live in the house after Dorothea's death, living there until his death on July 29, 1975. The Kunsmillers were survived by their daughter Margaret K. Brown, and three grandchildren, Dorothea Heisterberg, Marlene Wilson, and William Brown.

David J. and Bonita M. Lorenz purchased 5086 Vrain Street from Margaret K. Brown, on October 2, 1975 (Deed Book 1130, p. 396). David J. Lorenz (1926-1991) was an employee of J.B. Martina Mosaic Co. The couple made few changes to the house itself, although aerial photographs indicate that the Lorenz' did add the current detached garage c. 1978. The rear one-story hipped roof one-story storage addition also likely dates from c. 1980; the Lorenz' also replaced the original windows in the home.

Bonita M. Lorenz (1926-2016) sold the parcel at 5086 Vrain Street to Jeanne and Jeff Laws in 2004. From 2004–2005, the Laws added 111 square feet to the rear of the house on the second level to accommodate a larger Master Bath and did other interior remodeling work. Interior work in the upper-level Master Bedroom opened the ceiling there with exposed trusses, and replaced the former lunette attic vent on the west elevation with a lunette window inside the original half-circle opening. The house now consists of 833 square feet in the basement, 1,622 square feet on the main level, and 1,011 square feet on the second level. The Laws replaced all window sets again in 2005 with metal-frame and double-pane casement and slider windows, all within the original openings on each elevation; the second set of window replacements closely matched the 1970s replacement windows, which were a close match to the original windows (based on historic photograph). The Laws additionally conducted extensive engineering work including foundation leveling and repairs, upgraded the mechanical systems, and repaired the original brick base, stuccoed walls, and roof tiles in-kind, matching original surfaces, mortar, and other details. Copper gutters and downspouts were installed in the positions and configurations of the original roof-drain systems. A damaging hail storm necessitated repairs and replacement of the tile roof in 2017. Research revealed that the original roof was comprised of interlocking Spanish clay tiles produced by the Heinz Roofing Tile Company of Denver (in business from 1912 to 1946), and matching antique Heinz tiles were used for roof tile replacements. The Laws are the third owners of the house, and are pursuing Denver Landmark designation on the property in 2023.

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Wilk, Diane. *A Guide to Denver's Architectural Styles and Terms*. Denver: Historic Denver Inc. and the Denver Museum of Natural History, 1995.

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Wortmann, Hermann. "Wortmann, Hermann [sic] Johann Family Tree." Retrieved from Ancestry.com.

Photographs (see pages 37-46). Additional maps and illustrations supporting the designation are included on pages 48-55.

Attach at least four digital photographs showing the views of the property from the public right of way and any important features or details. If available, include historic photographs of the structure.

Boundary Map (page 47).

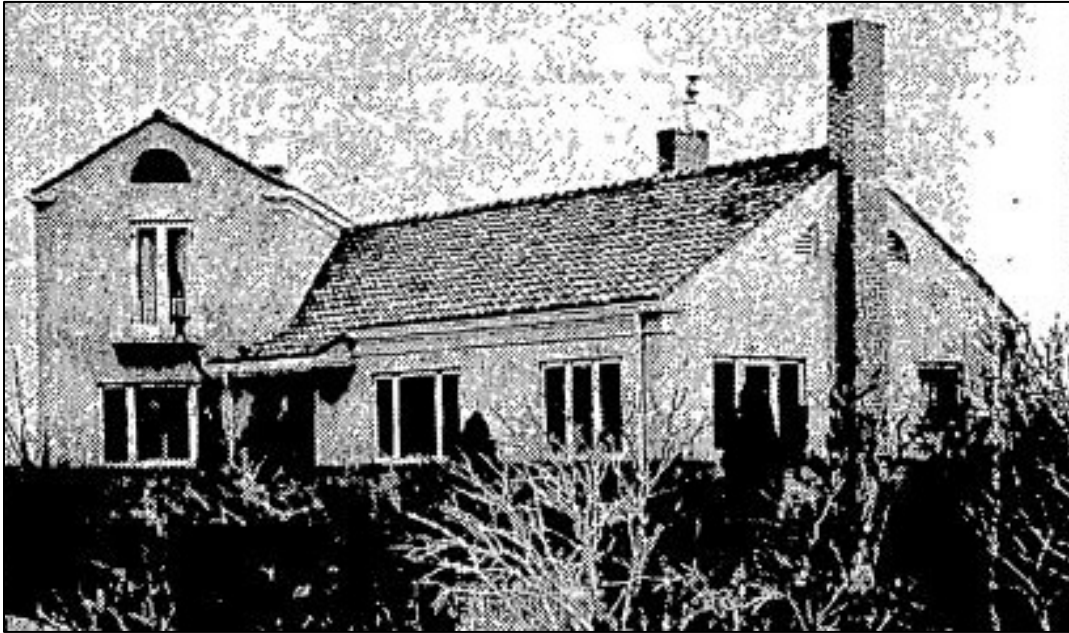
Attach a map that graphically depicts the structure, the location of other significant features, and the boundaries of the designation.

Application Fee

Find the correct fee from the below table. (Make check payable to Denver Manager of Finance).

Application for designation of a structure for preservation (owner applicant)	\$250
Application for designation of a structure for preservation (non-owner applicant)	\$875

Photographs



*Kunsmiller House in 1934, facing northeast (west and south elevations).  
Denver Post January 3, 1934:1.*



*Kunsmiller House west and northwest elevations, facing east. Garage c. 1978 at left.  
Central dormer added and front awning extended c. 1936, within the period of significance for  
the property. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*Kunsmiller House west elevation, facing east. Rubble stone retaining wall with concrete cap lines the driveway, and is a contributing historic feature. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*On Left: View looking east of west elevation, including the original attached drive-in garage with original awning, and front steps and asymmetrical entry from 1924. On Right: The brick retaining wall adjacent to (south) of front entry stairway, and the northernmost extent of stone retaining wall lining driveway are evident. Square Moon photographs 2022.*



*Kunsmiller House east and northeast elevations including one-story modern storage addition, facing southwest. Square Moon photograph 2023*



*Kunsmiller House east elevation, facing west. Upper-level Master Bath and closets 2005 addition at upper right and are noncontributing to the property's historic significance. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*Kunsmiller House south elevation, facing north-northeast. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*Kunsmiller House Garage, c. 1978, facing northwest. This is a noncontributing feature to the historic property. Square Moon photograph 2022.*





*Kunsmiller House Rear Patio Arbor and Octagonal Shed, c. 1980, facing northeast. These are noncontributing features to the property. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*View looking northwest from southeast corner of site at one of several walkways on the site, flanked by mature trees and vegetation. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*View looking northwest from southeast corner of site at one of several walkways on the site, flanked by mature trees and vegetation. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*View looking south at pond with dry stacked stone perimeter with arbor at left (east) and stairway leading to the southeast corner of property at far right. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*View looking east at stone walkway/stairway and property line in distance. Arbor and stream flowing into the pond (out of view) on left. Square Moon photograph 2023.*



*View looking southeast. Houses to south and east appear in background. Kunsmiller house is on far right out of sight. Square Moon photograph 2023.*



*Kunsmiller House parcel facing northwest toward main house. The hilly property includes numerous mature conifers and deciduous trees, and pathways. Square Moon photograph 2023.*



*Kunsmiller House parcel facing north to the termination of Vrain Street, c. 1980 Garage in center distance. Main house behind trees at right. Square Moon photograph 2022.*



*View looking southwest at Kunsmiller House from Willis-Case Golf Course. Note the stone wall and chain link fence demarcating the boundary line between the two properties, and the mature evergreen trees on the Kunsmiller property. The stone wall is considered contributing to the property. Square Moon photograph 2023.*

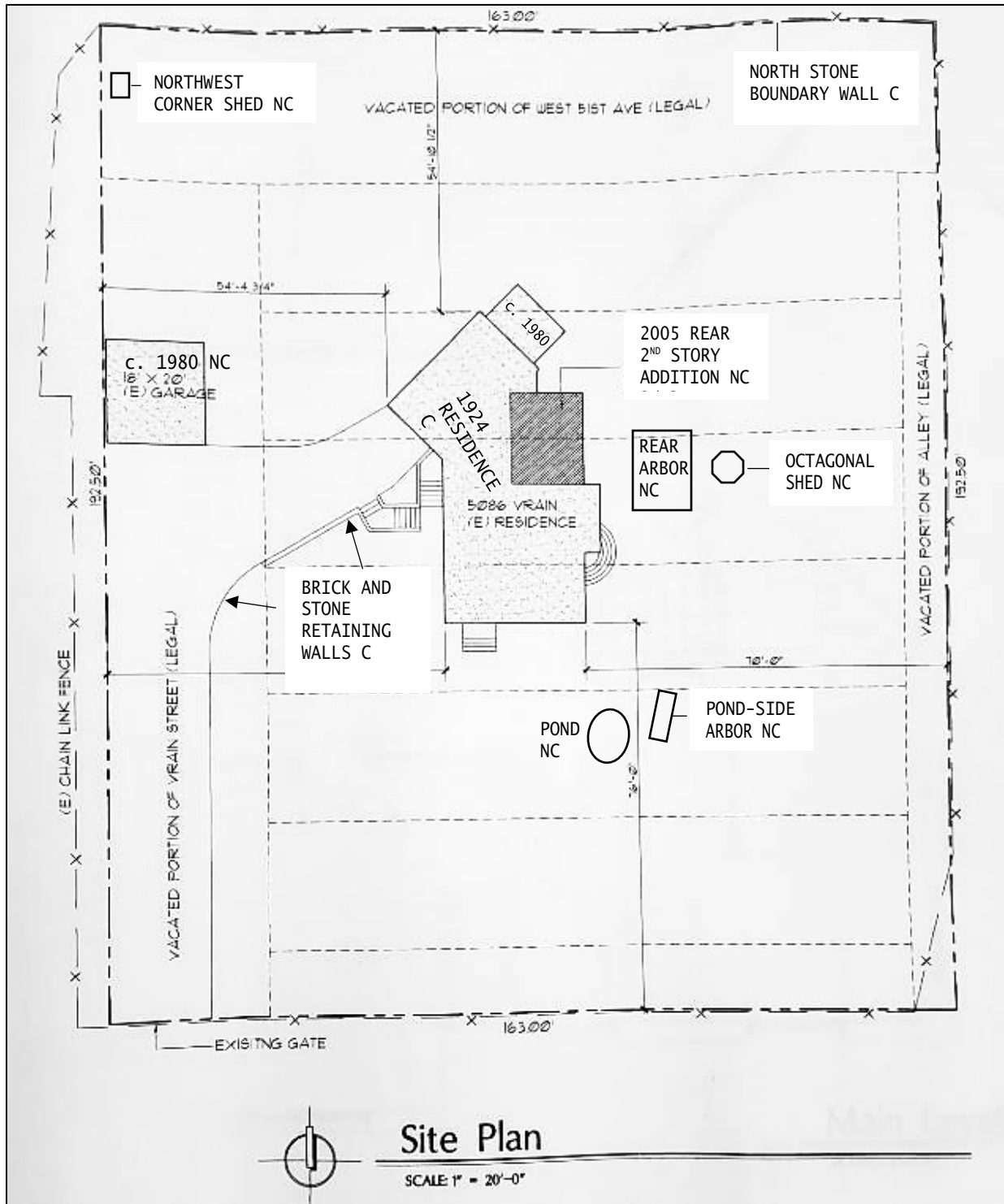


*Small garden shed near northwest corner of Kunsmiller property. The stone wall and chain link fence separating the residential parcel from the public golf course property are also shown. Square Moon photograph 2023.*



*View looking southeast at Kunsmiller House from Willis-Case Golf Course.  
Square Moon photograph 2023.*

Boundary Map



*Site Plan for 5086 N. Vrain Street, Jeffrey A. Keast, architect, 2005 with annotations and additions by Square Moon. See photos above for other landscape features, such as stone and concrete walkways, trees, and additional vegetation.*

Supplemental Maps and Illustrations

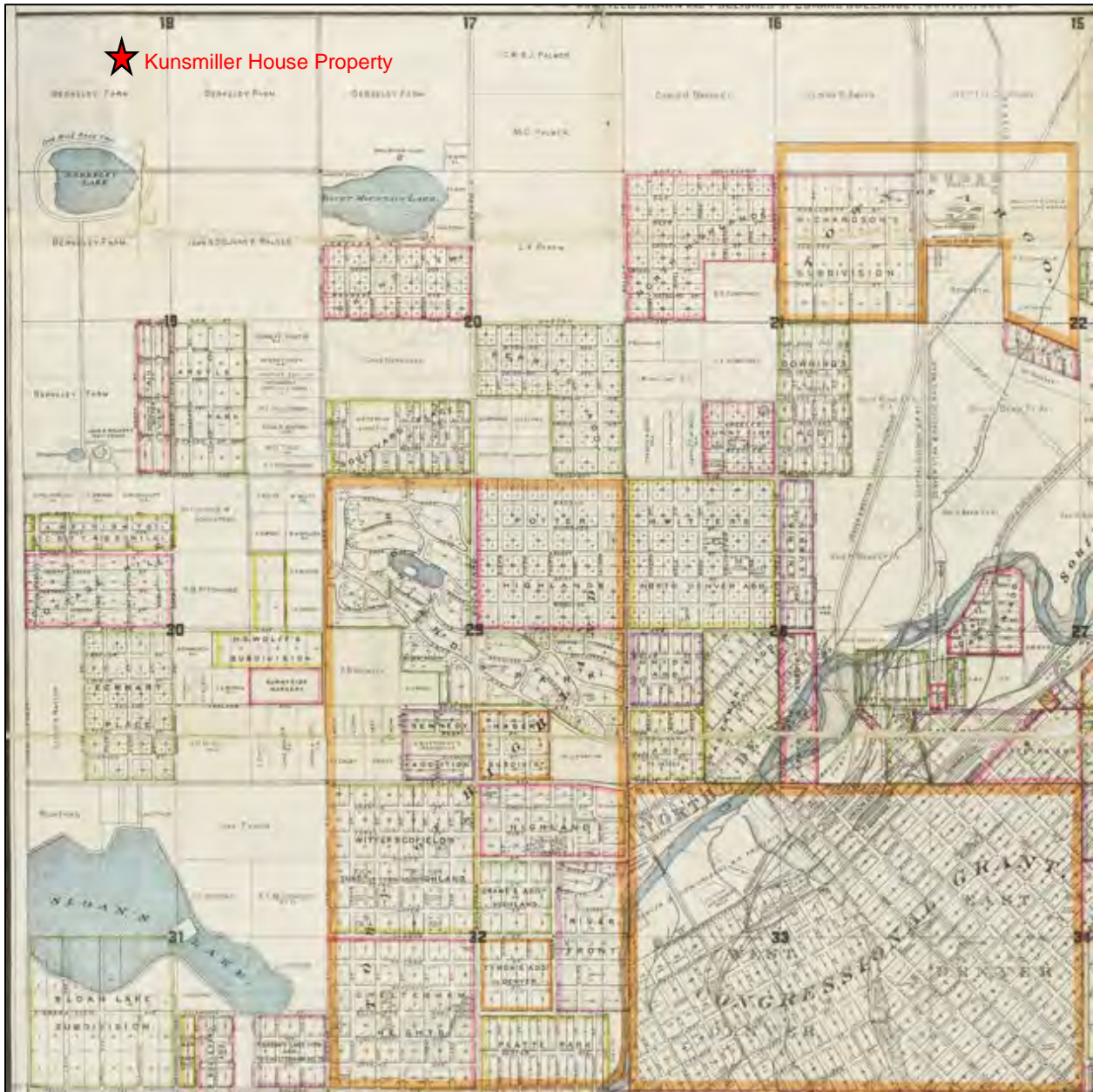


**1862 General Land Office (GLO) Survey Map for Township 3 Range 68W.** The blue box delineates the approximately 320 rural acres in Section 18 that John Hughes purchased from the United States Government in May 1870. The inset box on the right shows the Kunsmiller House location, marked with a star (built 1924). The Pond shown on the map is the current location of Berkeley Lake. The larger Map shows the small competing towns of Denver and Auraria founded in 1858 and formally combined in 1860 (although still shown separately here), as well as the town of Highland on the north side of the S. Platte River founded in 1858. Courtesy of GLO.

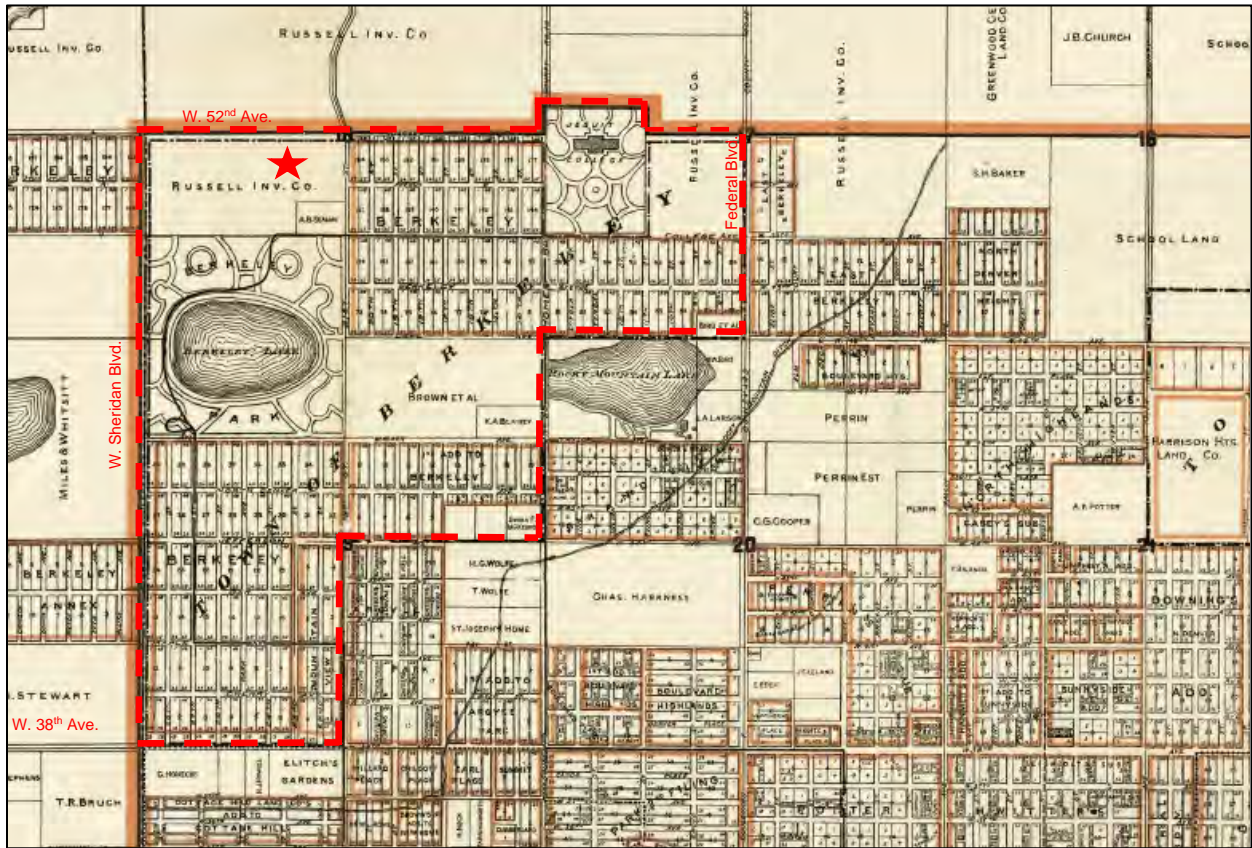




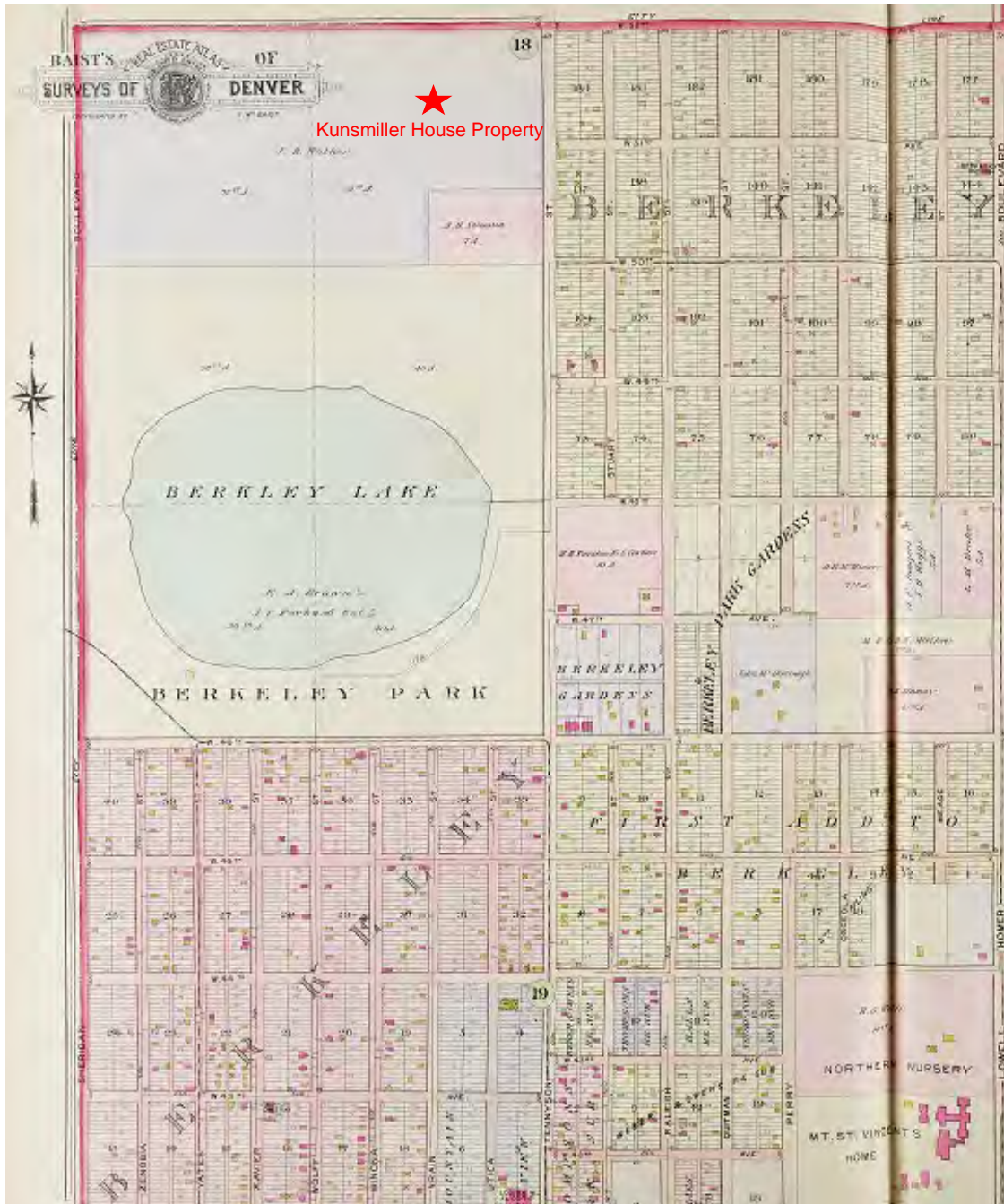
***Location of the 80 acres comprising GLO Lot Nos. 1 and 2 (blue box), purchased by John Hughes from the U.S. Government in 1872. The yellow box delineates the boundary of GLO Lot 1, superimposed onto a 2020 aerial map (courtesy of Google Earth). The Kunsmiller House is delineated by a yellow star.***



**1885 Rollandet's Map of Denver** showing the future approximate location of the Kunsmiller House when the land was part of John Brisben Walker's extensive Berkeley Farm in the early to mid-1880s. An agricultural experimental farm supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Berkeley Farm produced alfalfa using irrigation from the Rocky Mountain Ditch. The Berkeley Farm was located northwest of the heart of Denver. Map Courtesy of Denver Public Library.



***Rollandet’s 1899 Map of Denver**, with lettering delineating the “Town of Berkeley” on the far left, printed diagonally on the northwest corner of the map. This application’s author has added red dashed lines to the map to show the Town of Berkeley limits, which largely followed the boundaries of land controlled by the Denver Land and Security Company in the late 1880s and 1890s. The town was renamed “Berkeley” in the late 1890s. The approximate future location of the Kunsmiller House is demarcated with a star. Map Courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

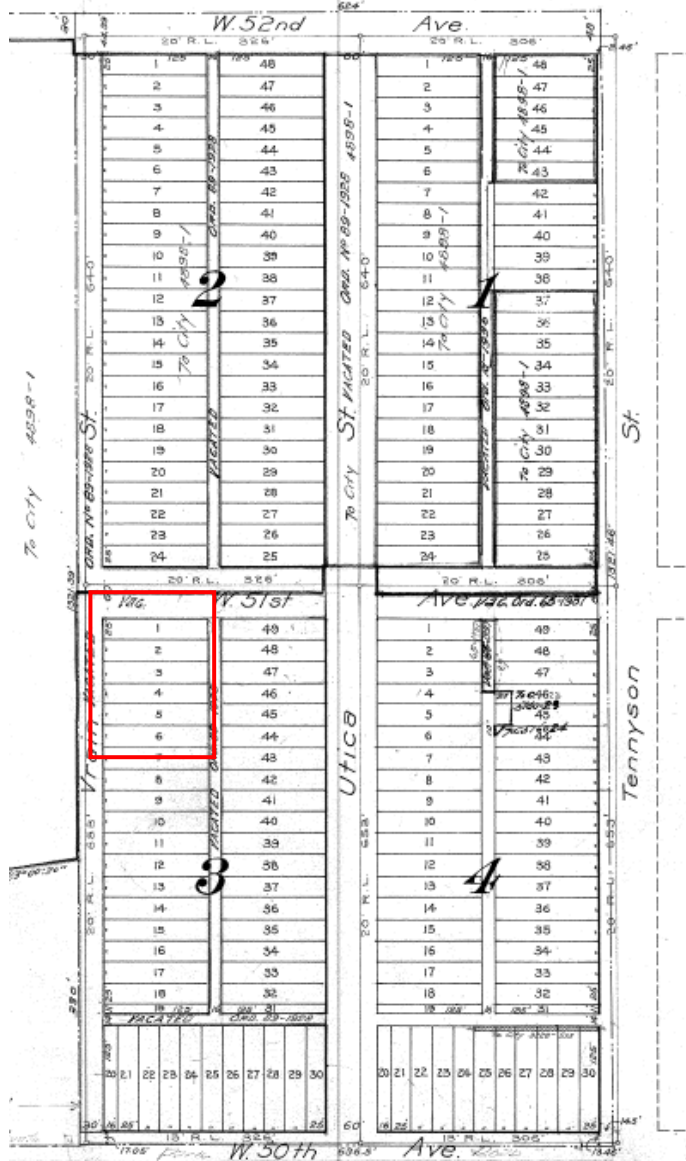


**1905 Baist Map of Denver, Plate 25.** This map shows the Berkeley area three years after Denver annexed the Town of Berkeley. With the successor company to the Denver Land and Security Company seriously behind on payments of promissory notes to John Brisben Walker and others, court action led to some of the land reverting back to Walker's ownership in 1899. That reversion included approximately 70 acres immediately north of Berkeley Lake. Far from downtown Denver, lots marketed by the Denver Land and Security Company in this area had not sold. The approximate location of the Kunsmiller House is delineated by a red star on the above map. In 1924, the house was built within the boundaries of the reclaimed Walker property. Map courtesy of Denver Public Library.

# Berkeley Park Heights

Being a Subdivision of a part of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the  
S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 18, T.3 S. R. 68 W.

Scale: 1" = 100'



**1908 Berkeley Park Heights Plat Map.** Denver annexation of Berkeley in 1902 and Denver's acquisition of Berkeley Lake and Park in 1905 led John Brisben Walker to reconsider residential development on the land he owned north of Berkeley Lake. On December 29, 1908, Walker filed a residential subdivision plat for Berkeley Park Heights, which contained 20 acres of land he owned on the northeast side of the lake adjacent to Tennyson St. The lots and street/alley abandonments that would later become the Kunsmillers' property is depicted by a red rectangle. Plat courtesy of Denver Clerk and Recorder.



***Spanish Colonial Influences in Berkely Park Heights.***

*The 1916 Santa Barbara Country Club (above left) quickly followed architect B.G. Goodhue's successful Spanish Colonial Revival theme at San Diego's Panama–California Exposition. From Redmon 2017.*

*Denver's 1929 El Jebel Shrine (above right) demonstrated how popular the overall style remained 14 years after the San Diego fair, and how local Shriners might have appreciated their member Adolph Kunsmiller's 1924 house on Vrain Street about 100 yards away. c. 1930 photo courtesy of Denver Public Library.*

***1947 and 1956 USGS Aerial Photographs (on right and below respectfully) showing the c. 1936 dormer front addition on the Kunsmiller House, 5086? N. Vrain St. Courtesy of USGS.***

