

To: Community Planning and Housing (CPH) Committee
From: Kara Hahn, Landmark Planning & Regulatory Supervisor, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: November 26, 2025
RE: Landmark Designation for 1555 N. Grant Street, Knights of Columbus (KofC) Hall

Staff Recommendation:

Based on ordinance designation criteria and on the findings of the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) that the application meets the criteria for designation of a structure, staff recommends the application is forwarded to full council.

Request to Designate a Structure:

Application: #2025L-007
Address: 1555 N. Grant Street
Zoning: CM-X 12
Council: #10 - Chris Hinds
Owner: Knights of Columbus
Applicant(s): Knights of Columbus

Case Summary:

The Knights of Columbus submitted a Landmark Designation application for 1555 N. Grant Street to CPD. Staff reviewed the application and found it to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission. However, due to an error in noticing, the Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing was moved from November 18th to December 2nd (all required noticing has now been met). In order to maintain the schedule for the City Council review process, the LPC public hearing will be at 1:00p.m. on December 2nd, and, if recommended for approval, the item will go before the CPH committee for review also on December 2nd.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code:

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code, the application must be complete, and the structure must meet the following criteria:

1. The structure maintains its integrity
2. The structure is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance
3. The structure meets at least three of ten criteria
4. The LPC considers the structure's historic context

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the application for designation demonstrates that the structure meets the following criteria.

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

The property at 1555 N. Grant Street is significant for its association with KofC District 539. The KofC served both Denver's Catholic community as well as the greater community at-large. Council 539's

location one block from the State Capitol and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception as well as proximity to downtown proved a good central location for use by the Catholic community, political groups, and general members of the public. As a fraternal order, they supported the men in the Catholic community with a space for comradery and fellowship and a central location for Catholic's outside of Denver to meet. Council 539 also welcomed other community groups to use the space and often hosted or sponsored events that benefited the larger community. Various organizations have used this site for conferences and conventions, while elected officials or those running for office hosted luncheons and other public events. The event hall at Denver Council 539 served as an official United Service Organization (U.S.O.) and as National Catholic Community Service site during World War II; they hosted more than one-half million service men and women.

Between 1931 and 1965, the number of Catholics in Colorado tripled and membership in the Knights of Columbus reached 7,000 Knights in Colorado. To accommodate the mid- 20th Century growth in membership and the community's changing needs, Council 539 reconfigured their property in the early 1960s adding a new event hall and demolishing the Fletcher Mansion to create onsite parking. Located about a block off of Colfax Avenue and near both the state capitol and the cathedral, the parking lot was used by members of the KofC as well as renting spaces to the general public. The parking lot became central to the finances of the KofC, as Council 539 used the money from parking rentals to support their organization and pay for much of their work.



1555 N. Grant, parking lot and 1928 Event Hall, east façade, view west, August 2025

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

The Knights of Columbus Denver Hall, constructed in 1963, embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of the Mid-century Modern architectural style. The newer event hall is a good example of the Mid-century Modern architectural style, while being subordinated to the older, more visibly dominant 1928 event hall. The Mid-century Modern architectural style's characteristics are embodied by its clean, simple lines, flat roof, smooth exterior red brick surfaces, lack of embellishment, and its

vertical fenestration. The importance of a connection to the outside in Modern architecture can also be seen here through the large windows.



1555 N. Grant, 1963 Event Hall, north façade, view sw, August 2025

D. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;

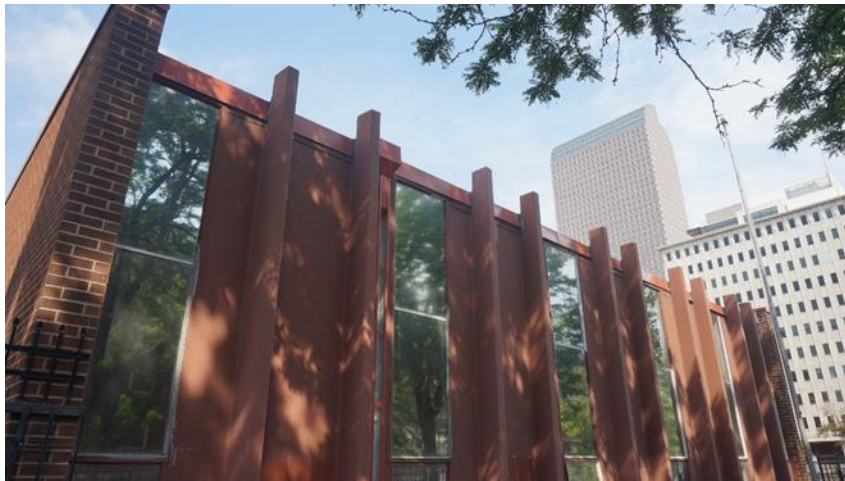
The Knights of Columbus 1963 Event Hall is a significant example of the work of recognized architect John F. Milan. Milan's 700 projects range from single family and multi-unit residential, small retail and shopping centers, low- and hi-rise office buildings, schools, motels, and warehouses. However, over Milan's 50-year career, he was often hired by parishes throughout the Catholic Archdiocese of Denver to design churches and parish halls.

The Knights of Columbus 1963 Denver Hall is a unique example of Milan's work for its inventive incorporation of its structural form (prestressed double tee concrete) as design elements. At the time of construction, using prestressed concrete vertical framing members for walls, floors, and roof was not typically found in Denver and is an inventive design element. It is likely Denver's earliest example of the use of these framing members to build the floor, the roof, and exterior walls, and, as such is a significant and unique example of Milan's work.

E. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;

The Knights of Columbus Council 539's 1963 Event Hall contains elements of design, engineering, and materials, that represent a significant innovation and technical achievement. In the early 1950s, an aftereffect of World War II was the ongoing shortage of traditional building materials that continued into the 1960s. Engineers for Prestressed Concrete of Colorado, Inc., a firm, owned and operated by the Perlmutter Family, are credited as the first in the world to develop and fabricate a new concrete structural form - prestressed double tee framing members in 1953.

In 1963, Milan used the strength of the double tees as his design choice for a new event hall for Denver Council 539. Use of prestressed concrete double tee framing members was unique and innovative for the time and allowed for a large open event space while minimizing the need for pillars in the event hall. The double tee is typically used for floor or roof framing, functioning as a beam while also providing the floor or roof surface. As seen in the 1963 event hall, the double tee member can also be used vertically as a wall element, functioning as a load-bearing column or wall. The first office building in the U.S. credited with using all prestressed concrete and double tee members is a two-story structure built in 1961 in Florida. Milan began his design of Denver's Knights of Columbus' new hall beginning in 1962. While ubiquitous today, at this time, his use of prestressed concrete double tee framing members was a unique and innovative design approach.



1555 N. Grant, 1963 Event Hall, east façade, view nw, August 2025

Integrity:

Chapter 30 requires that a landmark designated property maintain its integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a structure or district to convey its historic, geographic, architectural, or cultural significance...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver’s history.” The seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The existing property retains a high degree of integrity, within minimal changes. The property is still in the same location, and, although there has been some redevelopment the surrounding area is still a mix of commercial, governmental, and residential. Thus, the property retains both integrity of location and setting. While the windows on the 1928 hall were replaced to glass block at an unknown date, the openings maintained the same size and the solid to void ratio remained the same. Additionally, the 1928 hall is not significant for an architectural style and integrity of design is not required to convey significance. There were minimal other changes to the property, retaining integrity of materials and workmanship. The continued ownership and use of the halls by District 539, as well as their proximity to the cathedral, helps retain a strong sense of both feeling and association.

Relates to a Historic Context and Period of Significance:

As is appropriate for a property proposed for designation, the historic context is strongly interrelated to both the areas of significance and period of significance. The context discusses the history of the Knights of Columbus, the changes to the property, the development of the neighborhood, and the rise of car culture. This context and alterations to the property are reflected in the period of significance, which starts with the large-scale changes to create the 1928 Event Hall and ends with the 100-year anniversary of District 539 in 1982.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lots 31 through 40, Block 37, H.C. Brown's Addition to Denver. Colorado., City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Public Review Process:

Community Planning & Development has met all posting and notification requirements delineated in Chapter 12 (Article III, Section 12-96) and Chapter 30 of the DRMC.

Notifications:

- Owner notification letters regarding the LPC public hearing
- City Council and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
 - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
 - Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN)
 - Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents
 - Neighbors for Greater Capitol Hill
 - Downtown Denver Business Improvement District
 - Colfax Ave BID
 - Historic Denver
 - Colorado Preservation, Inc
 - History Colorado
- Posted signage for Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing

Public Comments:

As 8:00a.m. on November 26, 2025, CPD has received two public comments regarding the application.

- Public Comments submitted to CPD
 - Two letters in support

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation Application
- Map of structure proposed for preservation
- Public comments received by 8:00a.m. on November 26, 2025