



To: Neighborhoods and Planning Committee of the Denver City Council
From: Kara Hahn, Senior City Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: March 30, 2016
RE: Landmark Designation for 4655 Humboldt Street (Stadium Arena)

Landmark Preservation Commission Recommendation:

Recommend landmark designation of a structure for application #2016L-001, 4655 Humboldt Street (Stadium Arena), to City Council based on History Criterion 1a, 1b, and 1c, Architecture Criterion 2a and 2d and Geography Criterion 3a and 3c, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the March 15, 2016 staff report. Vote 6-0 (Corbett recused).

Request for Landmark Designation:

Application: #2016L-001
Address: 4655 Humboldt
Zoning: I-B, UO-2
Council: #9, Albus Brooks
Blueprint Denver: Entertainment, Cultural, Exhibition
Applicant: City and County of Denver

Legal Description:

A parcel of land being a part of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 23, Township 3 South, Range 68 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado, being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the Southwest corner of the Northeast quarter of said Northwest Quarter;
Thence S89°56'32"E along and with the southerly line of the Northeast Quarter of said Northwest Quarter a distance of 171.15 feet;
Thence N00°00'00"E 30.00 feet to the northerly right of way line of E. 46th Ave., also being the True Point of Beginning.
Thence N00°00'00"E leaving said right of way line, a distance of 307.98 feet; Thence N90°00'00"E a distance of 600.61 feet;
Thence S00°00'00"E a distance of 308.59 feet to the northerly right of way line of E. 46th Ave.;
Thence N89°56'32"W along and with said right of way line a distance of 600.61 feet to the True Point of Beginning.

Containing 185,159 square feet or 4.251 acres more or less.

Basis of Bearing: The bearings are based on the southerly line of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 23, T3S, R68W, bearing S89°56'32"E.

Case Summary:

Kelly Leid, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of the National Western Center, submitted a Landmark Designation application for the Stadium Arena to CPD on February 19, 2016. The property



is owned by the City and County of Denver (building) and the National Western Stock Show Association (land); both of whom support the designation application.

Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for March 15, 2016.

The Landmark Preservation Commission held a public hearing on March 15, 2016. The Commission found that the application met the criteria for landmark designation, and has forwarded a recommendation for landmark designation to the City Council.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, DRMC:

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code, a property must be more than 30 years old....and meet the following criteria:

1. Maintain its physical and historical integrity
2. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:
history, architecture, and geography
3. Relate to a historic context or theme

Period of Significance and Integrity:

Based on the application's historic context and statements of significance, the proposed period of significance for the Stadium Arena extends from the date of construction, ca.1908, until 1951 when the Denver Coliseum was constructed.

Chapter 30, DRMC requires that a landmark designated property maintain is historic and physical integrity, defined as "the ability of a structure...to convey its historic and architectural significance...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver's history." The seven qualities that define integrity in Chapter 30 are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Although partially enclosed by the 1991 Stadium Hall, the Stadium Arena's historic integrity is still retained. The combination of the construction of I-70 and the additions to the building, which touch the building lightly, impact the buildings integrity of setting. However, the modifications have generally not impacted the other aspects of its integrity. The Stadium Arena's design, materials, and workmanship are still evident in its unique oval shape, Neoclassical style, and brickwork. The continued use of the arena by the National Western Stock Show contributes to its strong integrity of feeling and association.

Relate to a Historic Context/Theme, Integrity, and Period of Significance:

The property relates to the historic contexts of: Transportation and the livestock industries of Denver, the National Western Stock Show, the City Beautiful Movement in Denver, and the development and growth of Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea

Criteria Evaluation:

The Landmark Preservation Commission found that the property met History Criterion 1a, 1b, and 1c, Architecture Criterion 2a and 2d and Geography Criterion 3a and 3c.

Historical Significance

To have historical significance, the structure or district shall be thirty (30) or more years old or have extraordinary importance to the historical development of Denver, and shall:

- a) *Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;*
The Stadium Arena (historically known as the National Amphitheater) is directly associated with the historical development of Denver and Colorado and is associated with one of the largest and oldest stock shows still in operation in the United States, the National Western Stock Show (NWSS), which has been held in January in Denver since 1906. The stadium has been associated with the NWSS and the Denver Union Stock Yards since 1908, the year of its construction. The Stadium Arena is historically significant as the sole entertainment venue of the NWSS between 1908 and 1951. The application strongly supports this criterion

- b) *Be the site of a significant event;*
The Stadium Arena has hosted entertainment and competitive shows for the NWSS since 1909 and has been the site of thousands of events that are significant to the history of Denver. Since 1909, thousands of people have visited the stadium each year, and these visitors associate the building with the history of the NWSS, a major annual event in the city's history since the turn of the 20th century, and one of the most culturally important events in the history of Denver. The application strongly supports this criterion

- c) *Have a direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society;*
The Stadium Arena, as an integral part of the NWSS, has been directly and substantially associated with countless people who have had an influence on society. These range from former Colorado Governor Elias Ammons, who was the first to head the Western Stock Show Association in 1906, to Charles Boettcher and Henry Gebhard, who both started early and locally owned meat packing plants at the stockyards. Leaders in Colorado's business, agriculture, and political circles planned, lobbied, volunteered, and provided financial support to guarantee the success of the National Western Complex. These individuals ensured that the Stock Show, with the Stadium Arena as prominent and iconic part of the show, has remained an annual event since 1906. The application strongly supports this criterion

Architectural Significance

To have architectural importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

- a) *Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;*
The 1908-09 Stadium Arena is one of Denver's very few intact examples of monumental Neoclassical style architecture outside of Downtown Denver. The style is evident in the Stadium Arena's cleanly delineated corbelled cornices, modest geometric embellishments on the brick walls of the hipped-roof towers, and regular, symmetrical form and fenestration. Simplified and elegant. The Stadium Arena also is an important and early example in Colorado of a steel-skeleton agricultural arena building. At the time of its construction in 1908, the Stadium Arena was the first enclosed amphitheater to be built in Denver and is the only oval-shaped arena in the city and the state built for the primary purpose of staging livestock and horse shows. The application strongly supports this criterion.

- d) *Portray the environment of a group of people or physical development of an area in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;*

As a building constructed to display livestock and events related to livestock raising, the Stadium Arena can be interpreted as a descendant of the round or oval agricultural show barns constructed for the purpose of housing and showing livestock. This form can be considered emblematic of livestock ranching, the enterprise that gave birth to the Western Stock Show Association and the Denver Union Stock Yards, the organizations behind the erection of the Stadium Arena building. The application strongly supports this criterion.

Geographic Significance

To have geographic importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

- a) *Have prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;*

The Stadium Arena is geographically important as an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature in north Denver and the National Western Complex. It is prominently located near the junction of I-70 and I-25, east of the South Platte River. Despite its tortured viewshed, it is a well-known landmark in north Denver, its monitor roof rising above I-70 and clearly visible to the motorists on the freeway. The application strongly supports this criterion.

- c) *Make a special contribution to Denver's distinctive character;*

The Stadium Arena contributes uniquely to Denver's distinctive Western character. It is strongly emblematic of Denver's early history as a center of the livestock and meat packing industry at the historic Denver Union Stock Yards on the northern edge of Denver. The NWSS has historically been and continues to be a major economic event for Denver and Colorado, drawing farmers and ranchers from around the nation to participate in the many contests and events held at the Stock Show. Denver has embraced the Stock Show, and in turn, the NWSS has contributed to Denver's character by producing a premier livestock and agricultural show for 110 years. During this time, the Western Stock Show Association kept the stadium intact even as the show expanded and changed. The application strongly supports this criterion.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal boundary as described above.

Notifications:

Community Planning & Development has met or exceeded all posting and notification requirements delineated in Chapter 12 (Article III, Section 12-96) and Chapter 30 of the DRMC. Landmark preservation staff worked closely with the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative, met multiple times with the authors, participated in tours of the Stadium Arena, and has kept the owners informed of key hearings, meetings, and dates related to this case.

The required notifications include:

1. *Posting Signage for Landmark Preservation Commission Hearing*
2. *Owner Notifications and Letters*
3. *City Council Notifications*
4. *Registered Neighborhood Organization Notifications*
 - Cross Community Coalition
 - Denver Neighborhood Association, Inc.
 - Elyria Swansea/Globeville Business Association

- Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
- North Neighborhoods Democratic Council
- RiNo, River North Art District
- United Community Action Network Inc.

Communications:

Three members of the public spoke at the public hearing

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation Application
- Letters received by CPD by March 23, 2016
- LPC Public Hearing draft meeting record



Historic photograph of the nearly complete Stadium Arena – ca. 1908
Courtesy of National Western Center Archives.

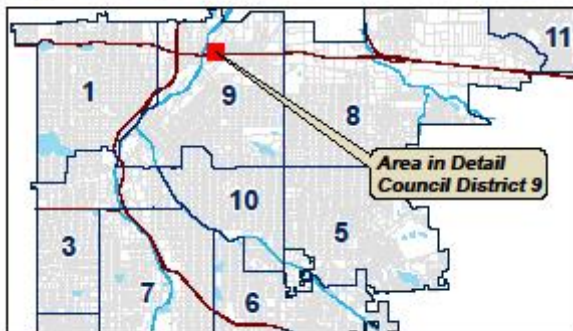


1909 Postcard celebrating dedication in January 1909
Courtesy of National Western Center Archives






Stadium Arena, East Elevation
Photographed by Kathleen Corbett February 9, 2016

Proposed Landmark Designation



**National Western Stadium Arena
Proposed Landmark Designation**
See Attached Legal Description

-  Designation Boundary
-  Contributing Structure - Stadium Arena

 0 75 150 300 Feet
Aerial Photo: 2014 Map Date: February 2016

END