

# DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES for THE EMILY GRIFFITH OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

1250 WELTON STREET and 1261 GLENARM PLACE



Adopted by Denver City Council— May 2016



# INTRODUCTION



1. View of the Emily Griffith Opportunity School from 12th and Welton Streets. The 1926 Renaissance Revival style Schoolhouse is in the foreground on the corner; the International style 1947/1956 additions face onto Welton St. and are shown on the left.

This document has been prepared in connection with the City and County of Denver’s adoption of an ordinance designating the Emily Griffith Opportunity School as a structure for preservation. The designation boundaries consist of lots 1 through 32 inclusive and the vacated alley lying adjacent to said lots, Block 170 East Denver Addition. The purpose of this designation, and the accompanying Design Standards and Guidelines (herein called Guidelines) are:

- To preserve the most significant 1926 Emily Griffith Opportunity School Building (including its 1947 and 1956 additions);
- To accommodate signature development for downtown Denver, while also promoting an integrated design for the new and old construction on the block;
- To ensure that the historic 1926 Emily Griffith Opportunity School Building (and its additions) remains visually prominent on the site, and that the overall sense of the building’s historic mass and form public vantage points is retained; and
- To ensure that new construction is thoughtful and integrated with the historic building, reflecting a high quality of architectural design, materials and articulation.

### **Emily Griffith Opportunity School History:**

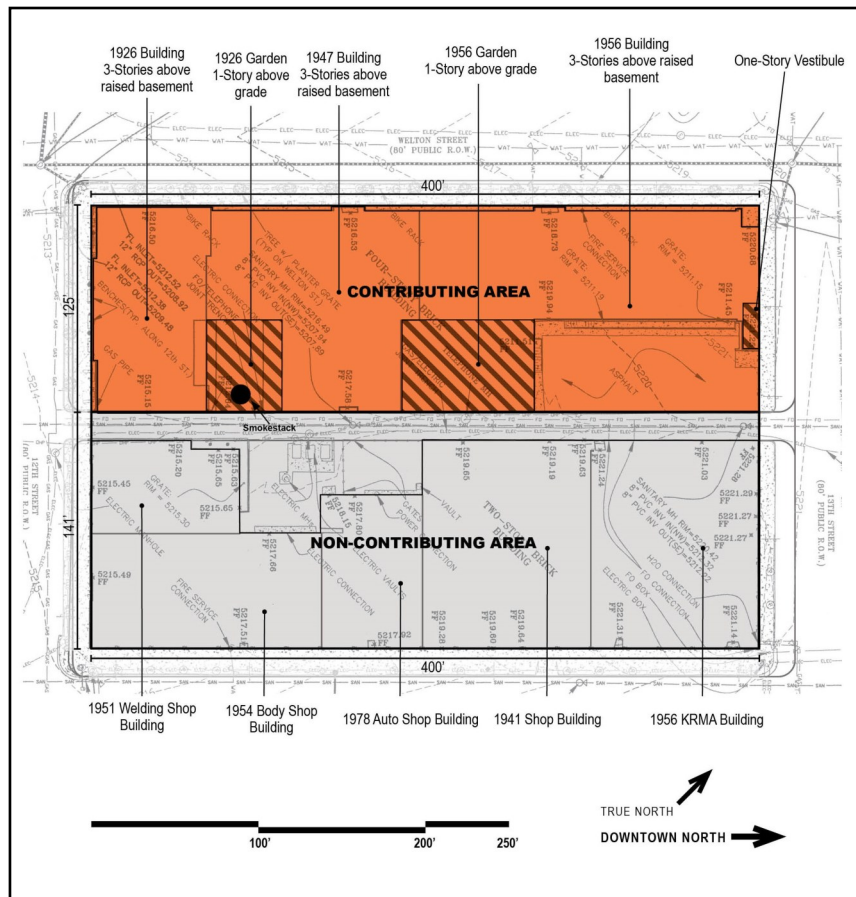
*In 1916, Denver Public Schools opened the Opportunity School at the urging of Emily Griffith, a local teacher who advocated that persons of all ages and races should have the opportunity to learn and better themselves. The earliest building surviving on the site is the 1926 Renaissance Revival building shown above. As the school’s programs expanded after World War II, a compatible International style addition was added (shown on front cover). This addition was designed as a single structure, but was constructed in two phases (1947 and 1956). For more information on the site’s significance, refer to the Landmark Designation Application for the structure.*

# Background

The Denver Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) will perform design review on alterations within the boundaries of the landmark designation as required by Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code. It should be noted that new construction on this site is also subject to design review under the B5 Downtown Zoning Design Standards. This review is performed administratively by City and County of Denver staff.

The west half (or Welton St. half) of the block is considered contributing to the landmark designation, while the east half (or Glenarm Place half) of the block is deemed non-contributing to the designation. (For the purposes of this document, cardinal directions are based on the downtown north directional arrow shown below). Figure 2 shows the Contributing and Non-Contributing Areas of the designation.

- The 1926 building, along with its 1947/1956 additions, is located within the Contributing Area of the designation, and is considered the focal point of the historic Emily Griffith Opportunity School landmark designation. This structure is essential to protect and preserve.
- The accessory structures located on the eastern half of the block are considered non-contributing to the landmark designation.



2. Map showing the boundary of the landmark designation. The Contributing and Non-Contributing Areas of the map, and the structures located within each area, are also shown.

## Background — continued

The proposed designation and these guidelines are intended to ensure the long-term preservation of the most significant building on the site (1926 building with its 1947/1956 additions). The landmark designation for this site, along with these guidelines, are intended:

- To protect the original 1926 building and its character-defining features, including the currently exposed north exterior wall. This wall is earmarked to remain, although it could become an interior wall in an integrated redevelopment project.
- To protect the majority of the two-story 1947/1956 additions, focusing on the retention of the additions' character-defining features, and their massing and view sheds from public vantage points.
- To accommodate removal of the rear portions of the 1947/1956 additions, east of the main north-south classroom corridor. The exception to this is the north 60 feet of the 1956 addition. This portion of the addition is slated to remain intact to protect the building's historic massing and view sheds.
- To protect the 1947/1956 additions, so that the building remains structurally sound and stable after any partial demolition work allowed by the designation ordinance.

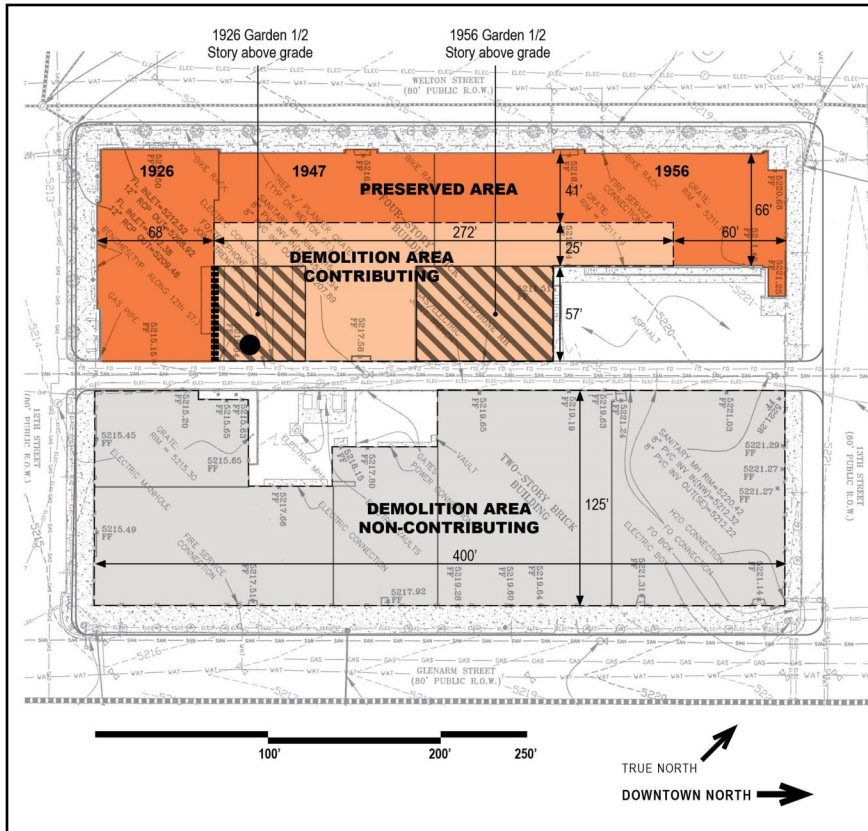
## Applicability

The landmark designation calls out areas for preservation, and where demolition is allowable.

**Demolition Review (Figure 3):** Figure 3 establishes the Preserved Area, North Wall, Demolition Area Contributing, and Demolition Area Non-Contributing. Within the Preserved Area all demolition provisions of Article I, Chapter 30 of the DRMC applicable to contributing structures shall apply to the existing structures in this area. Within the Demolition Area Contributing and Demolition Area Non-Contributing, Landmark Preservation staff shall release landmark approval for applications for demolition without the approval or public hearing of the Landmark Preservation Commission. Prior to issuance of any demolition permit for a structure (s) or portion of a structure (s), the Landmark Preservation Commission must approve a replacement structure or site development.

**Design Review (Figure 4):** Figure 4 establishes the Preserved Area, Transitional Height Area, Restricted Area 1, Restricted Area 2, and Zoning-Restricted Area. Within the Preserved Area all design review provisions of Article I, Chapter 30 of the DRMC applicable to contributing structures shall apply. If the North Wall remains an exterior wall, it is also subject to the LPC design review in accordance with the Design Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts. If the North Wall becomes an interior wall, it is subject to these Design Guidelines, and specifically Guideline B.2. The LPC shall follow the design guidelines delineated in this document for the other areas denoted within the landmark designation boundary, including the Transitional Height Area, the Restricted Area 1 and 2, and the Zoning-Restricted Area. The Commission may refer to the *Design Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts* when a design element is not addressed in these Guidelines. Any terms or phrases stated but not defined herein are implied from or deferred to the *Design Guidelines for Landmark Structures and Districts*.

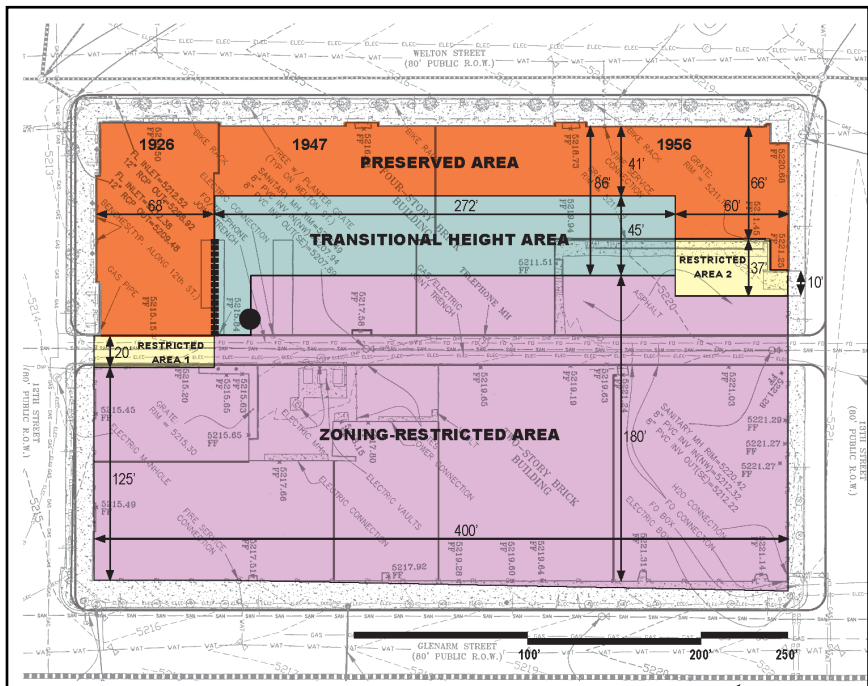




**MAP KEY:**

----- North Wall

3. Map showing the areas where buildings are earmarked for preservation and potential demolition under the landmark designation ordinance.



4. Map showing the areas where buildings are earmarked for preservation and potential demolition under the landmark designation ordinance.

## Design Standards & Guidelines

Design Review for the areas subject to these design guidelines shall be based on Intent Statements. These Intent Statements are based on those found within the *Design Guidelines for Landmark Structures & Districts*. Intent statements establish objectives for the guidelines. In circumstances where the appropriateness or applicability of a Design Standard or Guideline is in question, the Intent Statements will provide additional direction. References to the historic structure are the portions of the 1926 structure, and its 1947/1956 additions located within the Preserved Area of the landmark designation.

### Intent Statements

1. To maintain the general appearance of the historic structure especially from key public vantage points, when building new construction
2. To protect the character-defining feature of the historic structure
3. To minimize damage to the historic structure and preserve character-defining features when adding new construction
4. To ensure that new construction relates to the fundamental characteristics of the block while also appearing as new construction
5. To preserve the historic streetscape and appearance of the historic structure, including the sense of its massing, volume and form as a distinct entity



*5. View of the school from Welton and 13th Streets. The historic structure conveys its massing, volume and form as a distinct entity.*

# Design Standards & Guidelines

## A. Urban Form, Site Composition and Street Frontage for New Construction:

### Guidelines

A1. The contributing building's relationship with the adjacent sidewalks, streets, and the 12th Street alley entrance, shall not be compromised by new construction or curb cuts.

A2. The east portion of the contributing building adjacent to Restricted Area 1 shall remain visible from 12th Street.

A3. Restricted Area 1 shall continue to convey itself as open space behind the historic structure.

A4. The east-facing sides of the contributing building adjacent to Restricted Areas 1 and 2 shall be preserved since they include important architectural features and convey the building's original massing and form.

A5. Vehicular access to the site shall be prioritized from 12th and/or 13th Streets. Vehicular access shall be allowed from Glenarm Place, although pedestrian access shall be prioritized on both Glenarm Place and Welton Street.

A6. All structured parking shall be enclosed and vented, integrated into the massing and design of new and existing structures.

A7. Mechanical equipment shall not be visible from public vantage points on the Preserved Area or



*6. View of the 1926 schoolhouse from 12th Street. Restricted Area 1 corresponds with the historic alley location shown here. The guidelines are intended to protect the portion of the alley adjacent to the original building so that it continues to convey itself as a distinct and separate entity.*

## Design Standards & Guidelines

### **B. Demolition and Preservation:**

#### **Guidelines**

B.1. Demolition within the Demolition Area Non-Contributing and Demolition Area Contributing Areas are not subject to LPC approval. However, Landmark Preservation staff will only release landmark approval of demolition permits upon LPC approval of a replacement plan for these demolition areas per Chapter 30 of the DRMC. Demolition permits must also comply with all other city and state requirements, including Denver Building and Fire Code, before issuance.

B.2. The north exterior wall (1926 building component) should remain intact with minimal alterations, even if it is incorporated within new construction. Openings and connections to this wall are subject to LPC review.

B.3. The applicant shall provide a structural report and construction drawings, evidencing to the satisfaction of the Commission staff that temporary and permanent measures are in place to preserve the structural and historical integrity of the Preserved Area both during the demolition and construction process, and on a permanent basis.

B.4. The project shall retain the character-defining features of the Preserved Area, and have minimal impact on its integrity.



*7. The enframed entries on both the 1926 school and the 1947/1956 additions are character-defining features of the historic structure which are important to preserve.*



# Design Standards & Guidelines

## C. Mass, Form and Context:

### Standards:

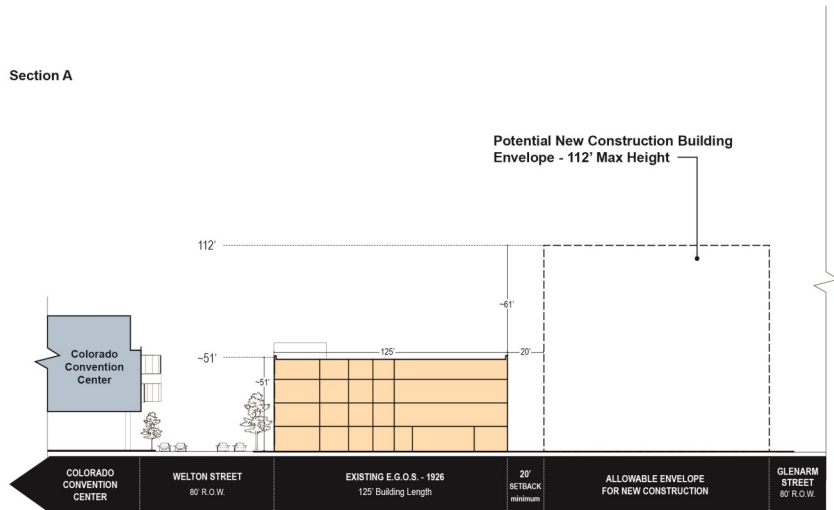
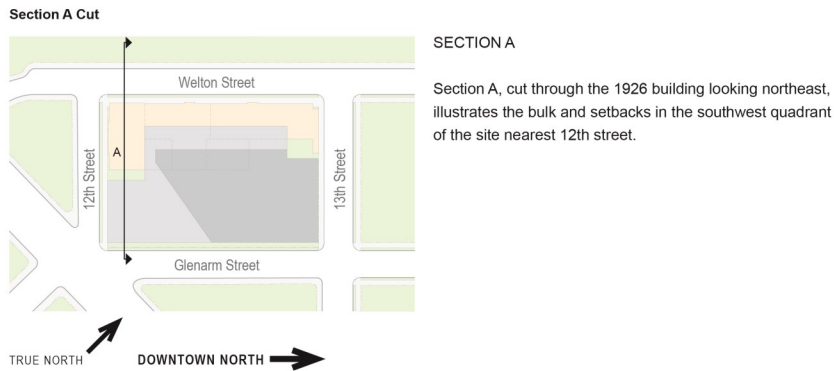
C.1 Transitional Height Area: The maximum building height shall be 112 feet.

C.2 Zoning—Restricted Area: New construction is subject to the provisions of the D-C,UO-1 Zone Districts and the B5 Downtown Zoning Design Standards.

### Guidelines:

C.3 Design review of new construction in the Non-Restricted Area cannot reduce the overall height, mass or form allowed by zoning.

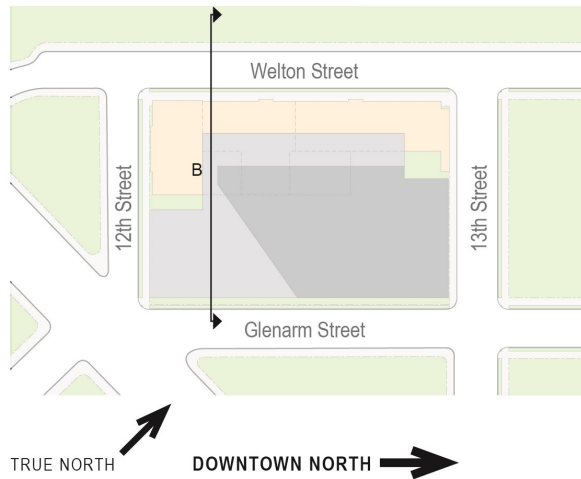
C.4 Design review of new construction in the Transitional Height Area cannot reduce the overall 112' height as measured in Article 13 of the Denver Zoning Code, mass or form allowed for this area.



*8. This diagram shows the transitional height area relative to the historic structure to remain. This diagram also shows that the Restricted Area 1 allows the historic building to retain its historic spacing and relationship with the alley.*

# Design Standards & Guidelines

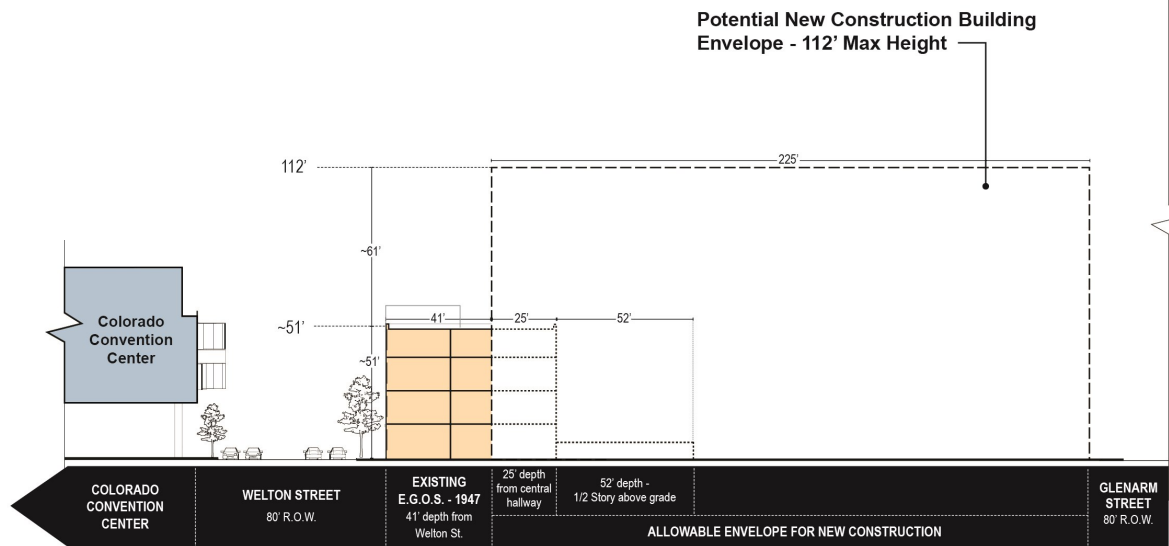
**Section B Cut**



**SECTION B**

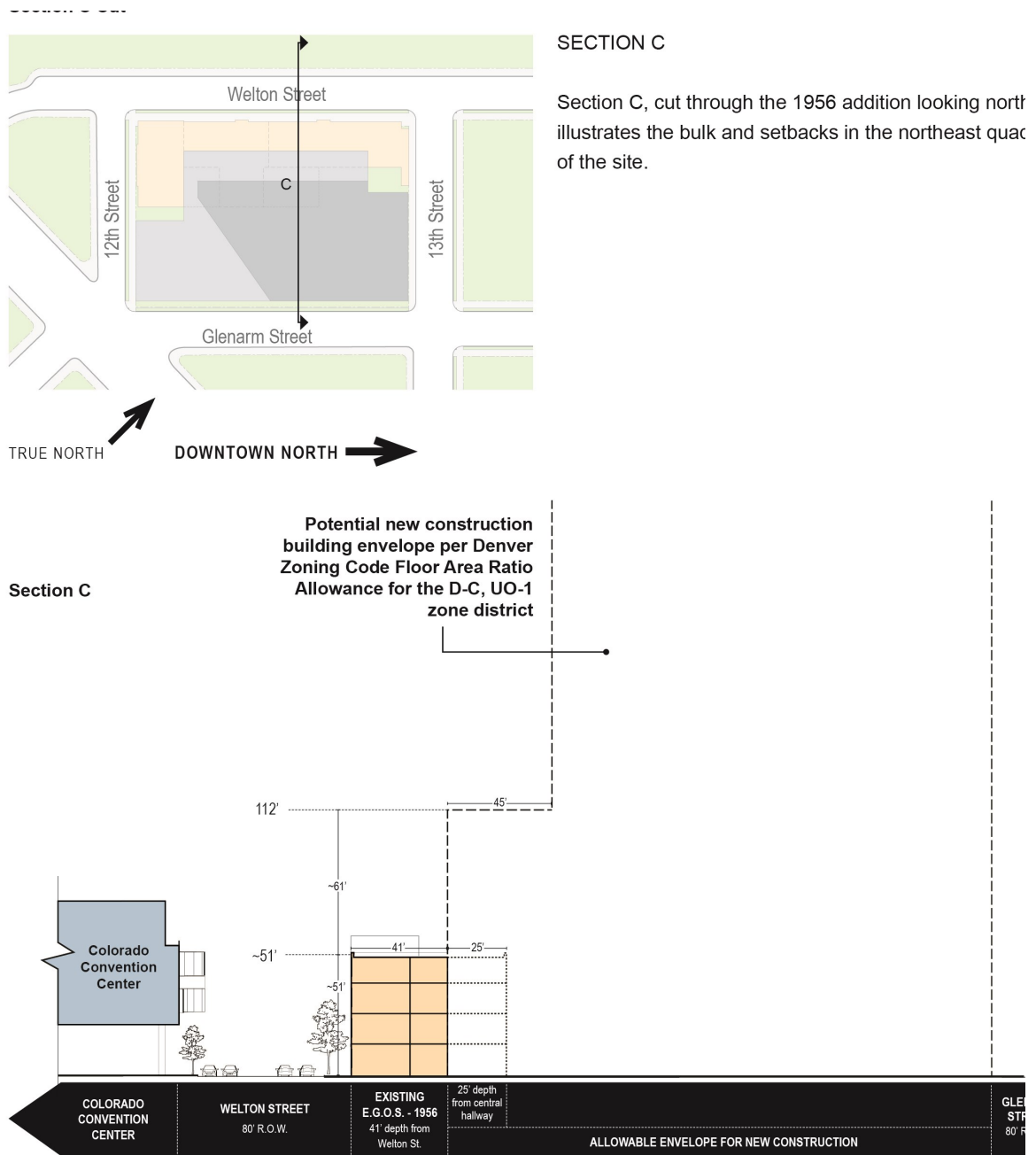
Section B, cut through the 1947 addition looking northeast, illustrates the bulk and setbacks in the south central portion of the site.

**Section B**



9. This diagram shows the new construction at a location where the State Capitol View Plane applies to new construction.

# Design Standards & Guidelines



10. This diagram shows the new construction mid-block, with new development massing shown in the Transitional Height Area and the Zoning-Restricted Area behind the historic building to remain.

# Design Standards & Guidelines

## D. Design Details and Materials.

### Guidelines

D.1. All new construction within the Contributing Area of the designation shall be designed to respond to the mass and articulation of the historic building.

D.2. All new construction on the site shall have design quality, and façade articulation that provide depth of plane and visual interest. This can include material variety, strong horizontal elements, floor articulation, recessed fenestration, awnings, architectural detailing and patterning, and emphasized entries.

D.3. For any new structure on the Non-Contributing Area of the block, the design of the base and its materials shall respond to the parapet heights and architectural composition of the historic contributing building to remain. However, the base of the new construction is not required to match the historic building in design or materials.

D.4. All materials used for new construction shall be of the same quality and durability of materials found on the historic contributing building, although the materials on the new construction should be contemporary and distinguished from the historic contributing building.

D.5. All elevations and portions of elevations visible from public vantage points shall have the same quality of design, materials and attention to details as the historic contributing building that remains, although the design details should be contemporary and distinguished from the historic contributing building.

D.6 New construction on the site shall have scaling elements to mitigate the visual impact of the new construction's mass on the contributing building, and to emphasize the historic building from public vantage points. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, such as a recess in a portion of the façade, wall offsets, or a change in fenestration rhythms.



*11. The historic structure conveys high quality design and materials, including brick and terra cotta. The building also displays a high level of façade articulation and visual interest, such as projecting bay towers and horizontal window expanses.*



# ADDENDUM A:

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The following character defining features are associated with the main education building (including additions) on the Welton Street block face.

### **1926 Building:**

#### **Mass, Form and Styling:**

1. Boxy rectangular four-story schoolhouse mass with ample windows on elevations to provide maximum natural light to classroom and learning spaces.
2. Flat roof and raised parapet with terra cotta coping.
3. Tripartite Organization: Defined base, “shaft” (middle), and “capital” (top) components of the building elevations.
4. Raised main floor as “piano nobile” of Italian Renaissance and Beaux-Arts Styles influence, demarcated by a terra cotta band which extends across Welton Street and 12th Street, and wraps the alley corner.
5. Schoolhouse configuration of cubic mass with ample windows on all elevations to provide maximum natural light to all interior spaces.
6. Brick pilasters divide each façade into three bays.
7. Terra cotta and brick entablature with brick and terra cotta detailing, & terra cotta torch antefixes.

#### **Siting and Viewsheds:**

1. Building has continuous street edge and fronts directly onto adjacent sidewalk.
2. Spacing behind building on numbered streets helps to distinguish the massing of the large schoolhouse building (with additions).
3. The proportional three-part arrangement of building of three exposed sides is visible from Welton and 12th Streets.

#### **Materials:**

1. Brick exterior with terra cotta ornamentation includes:
2. Unpainted red brick exteriors.
3. Horizontal terra cotta banding that wraps the corners.
4. Brick pilasters with terra cotta and brick highlights.
5. Concrete steps and lip at building base.

# ADDENDUM A—CONTINUED

## 1926 Building—continued:

### Fenestration:

1. Large, “punched” openings of Schoolhouse configuration in horizontal arrangement.
2. Double hung sashes (“grouped” in 3s and 4s per historic configuration).
3. Original windows surviving at 4th floor above Welton Street entry, and on east and north elevations.
4. Terra cotta sills.

### Entry:

1. Projecting Welton Street facing entry pavilion accessed by concrete stairway.
2. Deeply recessed doorways (four) with transom above.
3. Prominent terra cotta entablature and cornice.
4. Metal and glass light fixtures on pilasters.
5. Cartouches each embellished with “O” for Opportunity School.



12. Photo of original 1926 schoolhouse. Photo c. late 1940s. Courtesy of Denver Public Library. This photo shows the building’s original entry doors and wood sash windows.

# ADDENDUM A—CONTINUED

## **1947 and 1956 Addition:**

### **Mass, Form and Styling:**

1. Uniform rectangular four-story presentation with industrial proportions/scale, aligned with the floor plates and window ribbon bands of the 1926 building.
2. Front façade wall recessed in to provide slight differentiation from 1926 building.
3. Flat roof disguised by continuous brick parapets, 2 entry bays rise slightly above parapet line to emphasize their public destinations.
4. Abstracted classical elements continued from 1926 building, including defined base and “shaft” (middle), including raised main floor enframed in terra cotta and belt course below 2nd floor windows to define base; tall stair towers define shaft.
5. The “capital” top is a plainly detailed masonry parapet on Welton Street. On 13th Street, the “capital” reappears as three horizontal stripes just below the parapet, topping a brick elevation entirely absent of fenestration or other ornament.
6. Horizontal ribbon windows interrupted only by entry pavilions, flat ornamentation, strong vertical circulation towers, all characteristic of the International Style.
7. Glassy one-story entry vestibule with cantilevered concrete canopy projecting from north building wall.
8. Floor levels and belt correspond with the 1926 building
9. Engraved words over entries

### **Siting and Viewsheds:**

1. Building has continuous street edge and fronts directly onto adjacent sidewalk.
2. Spacing behind building on numbered street helps to distinguish the massing of the addition, and highlights the modern entry awning and glassy vestibule
3. Continuous façade appearance across Welton Street, integrated with the 1926 building.

### **Materials:**

1. Brick exterior with terra cotta ornamentation:
2. Unpainted red brick exteriors
3. Horizontal terra cotta banding, fluted panels, enframed window details, coping and other detailing.
4. Brick pilasters with terra cotta and brick highlights.

# ADDENDUM A—CONTINUED

## 1947 and 1956 Addition—continued:

### Fenestration:

1. Large, “punched” openings of Schoolhouse configuration in horizontal ribbon arrangement.
2. Double hung historic 6/1 steel sashes (“grouped” in 2s per historic configuration on Welton Street façade except on secondary stair tower on Welton St.); historic fixed steel lights at basement level north of “Opportunity School,” and 2/2 steel sash windows on east side of ancillary stair tower.
3. Terra cotta sills.

### Entries:

1. Two pronounced public entry pavilions facing Welton Street at sidewalk level, with enframed terra cotta surrounds at first floor and modern detailed entablature with raised “Opportunity” and “Achievement” lettering.
2. Curbed and fluted terra cotta details deeply recessed door trio with original multi-light transom at two main entries
3. Entry stair towers feature three level abstracted terra cotta columns with fluted and paneled detailing.
4. Secondary inset entry and stair tower on far northern end of Welton Street façade, with double door and original multi-light transom, and original terra cotta surround and concrete awning.
5. One-story glass divided light vestibule with cantilevered flat roof concrete cornice projecting from east end of north building wall.
6. Projecting Welton Street facing entry pavilion accessed by concrete stairway.



13. Photo showing the 1947 addition in foreground, with original 1926 building on far right. This picture pre-dates the construction of the second phase of the modern addition in 1956.