

1 **BY AUTHORITY**

2 ORDINANCE NO. _____
3 SERIES OF 2023

COUNCIL BILL NO. CB23-0206
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:
4 Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure

5 **A BILL**

6 **For an ordinance designating 618 South Monroe Way as a structure for**
7 **preservation.**

8 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 30-4, Denver Revised Municipal Code, the Landmark
9 Preservation Commission has transmitted to the Council a proposed designation of a structure for
10 preservation; and

11 **WHEREAS**, based upon evidence received by the Landmark Preservation Commission at a
12 hearing on February 21, 2023, the staff report, and evidence received at the hearing before City Council
13 on April 10, 2023, the structure at 618 South Monroe Way meets the criteria for designation as a
14 structure for preservation as set out in Section 30-3, Denver Revised Municipal Code, as amended, by
15 maintaining its integrity, being more than 30 years old, and meeting the criteria in the following three
16 categories from Section 30-3(3):

17 *a. Having direct association with a significant historical event or with the historical*
18 *development of the city, state, or nation;*

19 The structure at 618 South Monroe Way (“Structure”) has a direct association with the
20 postwar pattern of development seen in Denver and cities across the United States. The population of
21 Denver almost tripled and to accommodate housing for the new residents, more than 11,000 square
22 acres were platted for residential use and more than 50,000 houses were constructed. New
23 neighborhoods were laid out with winding streets in contrast to the rigid grid of established prewar
24 neighborhoods and the majority of new home designs were low slung ranch style with informal open
25 plans in contrast to the relatively rigid four square brick bungalows of late 19th and early 20th Century
26 Denver. William Muchow’s 1953 design for his family home at 618 South Monroe Way is reflective of
27 these changes.

28 The majority of Denver’s postwar residences were “starter home” as was the Structure.
29 Producing homes that were within the buying power of the new residents, many of them returning
30 veterans, required rethinking building elements with a view towards reducing material and labor costs.
31 Major changes included building the entire home on one floor ‘slab on grade’ without a basement or
32 second floor, open floor plans so that public rooms could serve several purposes such as elimination

1 of dining rooms with kitchens that accommodated a table, smaller bedroom for children and greater
2 connection to outside spaces.

3 In its description of the Structure, The Denver Post's Empire Magazine's 1956 Home of the
4 Month article stated in part, "A large determining factor in the design of the house was money. Like
5 most young couples, Bill Muchow and his wife Priscilla have a limited budget....'Modern homes have
6 been compressed by high costs,' Bill explains, 'but I feel they can still have an air of spaciousness...
7 despite a tight budget."

8 *c. Embodying distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;*

9 The Structure embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of the Mid Century Modern
10 architectural style, which focused on simplified, geometric design elements, connected
11 indoor/outdoor space, an open floor plan and simplified building materials with little adornment. The
12 Structure's exaggerated roof line creates a geometric volume through which the other principles of
13 Midcentury Modern designs are expertly expressed – wide overhanging eaves shelter large swaths
14 of windows on the north and south elevations, blurring the lines between indoors and outdoors. The
15 cedar shingle roof is a rustic contrast to the modern glass walls and simple tongue and groove siding
16 found on the addition.

17 The Structure's design also features many of the attributes of post war housing, designed to
18 hasten construction: being built primarily on one level, slab on grade construction, and having little
19 extraneous adornment.

20 *d. Being a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*

21 The Structure was designed by notable Denver architect William Muchow, who lived in the
22 home with his family until 1971. William Muchow was born in Denver, Colorado in 1922 and died in
23 1991. He earned a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1946 and a Master of
24 Architecture and Urban Planning from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in 1948. While at
25 Cranbrook, Muchow studied under the internationally acclaimed architect Eliel Saarinen.

26 Returning to Denver in 1949, Muchow worked for several firms including Fisher and Fisher
27 before founding Muchow Associates Architects in 1950. Muchow's firm worked on a broad range of
28 architectural projects that include schools, churches, single and multi-family residences, office
29 buildings, financial institutions, municipal and recreational facilities. From 1950-1991, his firm
30 designed eight hundred and thirty-three projects and was awarded thirty-five A.I.A. awards. In 1968
31 Muchow was elected as a Fellow to the American Institute of Architects. Some of his most prominent

1 commercial and civic designs include: the 1968 Federal Reserve Branch Bank (1968), 1975
2 BlueCross/Blue Shield Office Building (1975), and the Galleria of the Denver Center for the
3 Performing Arts (1978).

4 The Structure is a significant example of Muchow’s residential work. Although Muchow
5 designed hundreds of buildings during his career, he primarily focused on larger scale building – his
6 single-family residential work has gone largely undocumented. This Structure is a unique example
7 of his design philosophy expressed in a residential context, and it was also a notable, award-winning
8 design in its own time. In May of 1957 the Structure was one of 25 homes nationally published in
9 Architectural Record’s Record Homes issue. The jury stated “A-three-dimensional approach,
10 developing the Structure along with the plan, give unusual spaciousness and livability for an
11 inexpensive house on a small plot.”

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF**
13 **DENVER:**

14 **Section 1.** That based upon the analysis referenced above, and the evidence received at the
15 public hearings, certain property at 618 South Monroe Way, and legally described as follows, together
16 with all improvements situated and located thereon, be and the same is hereby designated as a
17 structure for preservation:

18 The west 18 feet of Lot 32 and the east 57 feet of Lot 31, Block 3,
19 Stokes Place Addition,
20 City and County of Denver,
21 State of Colorado.

22 **Section 2.** The effect of this designation may enhance the value of the property and of the
23 structure, but may delay or require denial of building permits found unacceptable by the Landmark
24 Preservation Commission under the criteria contained in the Design Guidelines for Historic Structures
25 and Districts and Section 30-6 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code.

26 **Section 3.** This ordinance shall be recorded among the records of the Clerk and Recorder of
27 the City and County of Denver.

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1 COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: March 7, 2023

2 MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: March 14, 2023

3 PASSED BY THE COUNCIL: _____

4 _____ - PRESIDENT

5 APPROVED: _____ - MAYOR _____

6 ATTEST: _____ - CLERK AND RECORDER,
7 EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE
8 CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

9 NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY JOURNAL: _____; _____

10 PREPARED BY: Adam C. Hernandez, Assistant City Attorney DATE: March 16, 2023

11 Pursuant to section 13-9, D.R.M.C., this proposed ordinance has been reviewed by the office of the
12 City Attorney. We find no irregularity as to form, and have no legal objection to the proposed
13 ordinance. The proposed ordinance is not submitted to the City Council for approval pursuant to
14 §3.2.6 of the Charter.

15 Kerry Tipper, Denver City Attorney

16 BY: _____, Assistant City Attorney DATE: _____