

To: Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Denver City Council
From: Jenny Buddenborg, Senior City Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: October 17, 2019
RE: Landmark Designation for 1717 E Arizona Ave, #2019L-005

Staff Recommendation:

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

Request to Designate a Structure:

Application:	#2019L-005
Address:	1717 E Arizona Ave
Zoning:	U-SU-C
Council:	District 6, Paul Kashmann
Blueprint Denver:	Urban Future Neighborhood Context / Low Residential Future Place Type
Owner:	Abman Family Trust
Applicant(s):	Owner

Case Summary:

The applicant submitted a Landmark Designation application for 1717 E Arizona Ave to CPD on July 9, 2019. Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver Landmark designation criteria. As such, a public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission was scheduled for October 15, 2019.

At the public hearing, LPC recommended approval of the landmark designation application for 1717 E Arizona Ave based on History Criterion 1a and Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony and the October 8, 2019, staff report. Vote 8-0-0.

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

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30-4, Denver Revised Municipal Code, a structure must meet the following criteria:

1. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:
 - History
 - Architecture
 - Geography
2. Maintain its historic or physical integrity
3. Relate to a context or theme

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the application meets History Criterion 1a, Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b.

1. 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 property is directly associated with the historical development of Washington Park and the Washington Park Neighborhood. It illustrates the Washington Park Place subdivision development of large, ornate building styles and forms due to the influx of wealth. One affluent investor was Jane C. Peet, a developer who commissioned the design and construction of 1717 E Arizona St as an investment property in 1915, in addition to other properties in the area like the house at 1168 S Gilpin St in 1916, located on the same block. Several well-known architects were associated with the design of the buildings and landscape of Washington Park, including Jules Jacques Benois Benedict who designed the Smith Lake boathouse in 1913. Peet commissioned Benedict to design the houses at 1717 E Arizona Ave and 1168 S Gilpin St, creating a strong connection between the design and development of the park and surrounding neighborhood.

2. 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

Built in 1915-1916, the house embodies the distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival style. It exhibits numerous character-defining features of the style, including the use of brick and half-timbering on the exterior, multiple front gables, an arched front entry, arched window openings, window groupings in strings of three or more, and a tower-like curved wall on the west side. Additionally, the house is a rare and distinct subtype of the Tudor Revival style with its steeply pitched false-thatched roof that attempts to mimic thatch roofs found in rural England.

b) Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder

The Tudor Revival style house at 1717 E Arizona Ave is a significant example of the work of prominent Colorado architect Jules Jacques Benois Benedict. Over his nearly 40-year career as an architect (1909-1942), Benedict designed many notable residential, commercial, public, educational and park structures. The house at 1717 E Arizona Ave is an excellent example of one of Benedict's early residential commissions and stands out from other Tudor Revival style designs with its wavy half-timbered second story, rare false-thatched roof and more modest, approachable scale.



Figure 1 1717 E Arizona Ave, 2019

Integrity:

Chapter 30, DRMC requires that a landmark designated property maintain its historic or physical integrity, defined as “the ability of a structure or district 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 are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The primary structure retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Alterations that are compatible with the original design include a one-story brick addition on the east elevation in 1982/1983 and a retaining wall with wrought iron fence constructed in 1983. The openings have not been altered, most windows are original, many other original materials remain, and the original distinctive wood roof has been retained. Several surrounding buildings constructed around the same time as the property’s 1915 period of significance, as well as Washington Park, maintain their integrity. Benedict’s original design is easily recognizable.

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

The property relates to the theme of housing near Denver’s parks and parkways between 1905 and 1929. The park and parkway system was designed by well-known landscape architects Saco R. DeBoer, George E. Kessler, Charles Mulford Robinson, Reinhard Schuetze, and brothers John

Charles and Frederick Law Olmstead. They envisioned an integrated system of stately public buildings and appealing surrounding neighborhoods. Reinhard Schuetze designed Washington Park.

Between 1905 and 1929, Denver added nearly 16,000 detached single-family dwellings to its housing stock to accommodate its growing population. Three distinct housing types prevailed along Denver's parkways and near its parks: Revival style mansions for the elite, like the Tudor Revival style of 1717 E Arizona Ave, and either Foursquares or Bungalows for the middle class. Benedict was a key Denver architect who designed large, ornate houses near the parks and parkways during this period, including 1717 E Arizona Ave in 1915.¹

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the following legal description:

LOTS 21 TO 24, BLOCK 5, WASHINGTON PARK PLACE, BLOCKS 5 TO 7 INCLUSIVE,
CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, STATE OF COLORADO

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver (2019):

The proposed designation is consistent with Comprehensive Plan 2040 and Blueprint Denver. It is consistent with several Comprehensive Plan 2040 vision elements, most directly with the Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods vision element. This element includes the goal to "preserve the authenticity of Denver's neighborhoods and celebrate our history, architecture and culture."

According to Blueprint Denver, the property is within the Urban neighborhood context and is a Low Residential future place type. The plan states that the urban neighborhood context is found broadly throughout the city and any development within it should be sensitive to the existing neighborhood character. Designation of 1717 E Arizona Ave is consistent with Blueprint's vision to improve quality of design that preserves and creates authentic places. It meets Strategy 2A under Land Use & Built Form that recommends using historic designation to ensure residential neighborhoods retain their unique character as infill development occurs. It also helps advance the Blueprint Denver metric related to increasing the percent of the city subject to design-focused standards including the *Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts*.

The designation of 1717 E Arizona Ave aligns with the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan and Blueprint Denver as it helps retain Denver's authenticity by preserving a historically and architecturally significant building.

Public Review Process:

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.

¹ Discover Denver Context Theme Property Type, *Context 4, 1905-29: Theme 4.6, Housing Near Denver's Parks and Along Its Parkway*.

Notifications:

- Owner notification letters regarding the LPC public hearing
- City Council, Planning Board, and Building Inspection email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
 - Washington Park East Neighborhood Association
 - FANS of Washington Park
 - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
 - Historic Denver, Inc.
 - Colorado Preservation, Inc.
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation
 - State of Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Posted signage for Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing
- Owner notification letter regarding City Council meetings

Public Comment:

As of the date of this staff report, CPD received three public comments regarding the designation application for 1717 E Arizona Ave:

- At the LPC public hearing three members of the public commented
 - 3 in favor and 0 in opposition

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation application
- Map of property