

1 **BY AUTHORITY**

2 ORDINANCE NO. _____
3 SERIES OF 2018

COUNCIL BILL NO. CB18-1208
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:
4 Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure

5 **A BILL**

6 **For an ordinance designating 2600 Milwaukee Street, the Henderson House, as**
7 **a structure for 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 October 16, 2018, the staff report, and evidence received at the hearing before City Council
13 on November 26, 2018, the structure at 2600 Milwaukee Street 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 (1) History.

16 *a. Having direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;*

17 John R. Henderson, Jr.'s licensure and subsequent work as an architect in Denver and Colorado,
18 represent a key moment in local history. In 1959 John R. Henderson Jr. became the first African-
19 American licensed architect in the state of Colorado. He was followed shortly thereafter by Bertram A.
20 Bruton another African-American Denver architect. Mr. Henderson's architectural career in Denver
21 spanned from 1959 through the 1990s. He designed federal buildings, institutional buildings such as
22 schools and healthcare facilities, renovation projects, and private residences for prominent architectural
23 firms. Among these diverse projects, Mr. Henderson was most proud of the design he created for his
24 family home at 2600 Milwaukee Street in Denver, completed in 1963.

25 The location of the house is also significant for its association with the discriminatory practice known as
26 redlining, which shaped Denver's inner neighborhoods. The Federal Housing Authority created maps
27 that influenced who could or could not get a home mortgage, thus formally entrenching segregated
28 neighborhoods. The Henderson House sits in the Skyland neighborhood north of 26th Avenue, which
29 historically marked the boundary between white neighborhoods to the south and black neighborhoods
30 to the north.

31 With the end of World War II, a rush of workers sought urban locations for jobs and economic prosperity.
32 In the decade from 1950-60, the African-American population in Denver nearly doubled from 15,200 to

1 30,000. The Henderson family, as part of the increase in population, found themselves searching for
2 a home in the early 1960s, but the options for a young African-American family in Denver were limited.
3 They found one of the last empty lots along 26th Avenue across from the City Park Golf course. The
4 Hendersons purchased the property from Charlie Cousins, a prominent African-American
5 businessman. Henderson designed the house as Mid-Century Modern residence, the style he most
6 appreciated. Mr. Henderson lived in and cared for this home for 55 years, and was very proud of the
7 home as it represented his achievements as the first licensed African-American architect in Colorado.

8

9 (2) Architecture.

10 a. *Embodying distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;*

11 The home at 2600 Milwaukee Street was designed by architect and owner Mr. John R. Henderson
12 Jr. in a Mid-Century Modern architectural style, with noticeable International Style elements. He was
13 inspired by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe throughout his education and career. Beginning in 1962, he
14 designed the home in sections, starting with the southern portion that parallels 26th Avenue facing
15 the northern edge of City Park Golf Course. This one-story portion of the home contains a wall of
16 glass on the southern façade looking out to the golf course and City Park, prompting the neighbors
17 to nickname it the “Glass House.” After paying off the first phase in 1971, Mr. Henderson designed
18 an almost identical northern addition and a new entry that connected the north and south side. At
19 that time, he also added a sloped roof and a detached garage. Each of these elements gracefully
20 connect to the original structure and reflect the modern style with a one-story configuration, simple
21 lines, and large plate glass windows throughout.

22 The character-defining features of Mid-Century Modern style, with some International Style
23 elements, can be seen in the horizontal elements, recessed entrance, minimal orientation, and the
24 use of large plate glass windows along the southern façade, on the northern wing, the corners of
25 each wing, and on the western entry porch. The large-scale windows are interspersed with smaller
26 panels of dark red brick to reinforce the structure. With the 1971 additions, more of these brick panels
27 were added between the plate glass panes on the southern façade, due to golf balls from the City
28 Park Golf Course hitting and breaking the large expanse of windows. Despite this alteration, the
29 large floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows still dominate the façade, providing extensive light to the
30 inside and ample exterior views. They connect the inside to the outside neighborhood and
31 surrounding sites—one of the driving concepts of mid-century modern home design. The horizontality
32 is also seen through the open interior spaces where rooms continuously flow into each other. The
33 interior of each wing includes large wood structural beams spanning the ceiling to create open rooms

1 and simplified spaces. Each room flows into the next, with no doors to shut off one space from the
2 other. Wall divisions and openings on either one or both sides of the dividing wall separate the
3 rooms, yet allow for movement between spaces.

4 *b. Being a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master building;*
5 Mr. Henderson’s formal career was spent mostly as a draftsman on larger institutional projects, and
6 ultimately for the federal government. He worked for several notable Denver Firms, including Fisher
7 & Davis, James Sudler Associates, and Hornbein and White. His projects included the National
8 Register-listed Byron Rogers Federal Office Building, renovations for the Denver United Bank, and
9 housing for the Colorado School of Mines. However, the home at 2600 Milwaukee Street is the
10 design most associated with him. Mr. Henderson’s achievements, both as the first licensed African-
11 American architect in Denver, and the construction of his mid-century modern home, are particularly
12 noteworthy because African-American architects in the early 20th century were regularly overlooked,
13 marginalized, and discriminated against.

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

16 **Section 1.** That based upon the analysis referenced above, and the evidence received at the
17 public hearings, certain property herein called the Henderson House at 2600 Milwaukee Street, and
18 legally described as follows, together with all improvements situated and located thereon, be and the
19 same is hereby designated as a structure for preservation:

20 Lots 13
21 Block 23,
22 Ashley’s Addition to the City and County of Denver,
23

24 AND

25
26 Lot 1,
27 Block 7,
28 State Addition (Blocks 1 to 15 inclusive)
29 City and County of Denver,
30 State of Colorado

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

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

1 COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: November 6, 2018

2 MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: November 13, 2018

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: November 15, 2018

11 Pursuant to section 13-12, D.R.M.C., this proposed ordinance has been reviewed by the office of
12 the 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 Kristin M. Bronson, Denver City Attorney

16 BY: Kristin J. Crawford, Assistant City Attorney DATE: Nov 14, 2018