# DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION
# APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

## Building Identification

1. Address of Building: 2340 S. Josephine St., Denver, CO 80210

2. Legal Description of Property: Lots 11 to 14, block 6, Iliff's University Addition

3. Historic Building Name: Holland House
   Current Building Name: Holland House

4. Historic Use: Residence
   Present Use: Residence

5. Zone District: R-1
   Proposed Zoning Code: U-SU-C

## Historical Data Summary

6. Year of Construction: 1932/1933
   Source of Information: Building Permit

7. Architect or Builder: Eugene G. Groves
   Source of Information: Denver the City Beautiful, Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, HDI, 1987

8. Original Owner: Mary E. Holland
   Source of Information: Denver Householder's Directory, Vol. 10, 1934

## Photographs

9. Attach at least two (2) 5x7 or larger photographs (black and white or color) showing the views of the property from the public right-of-way(s) and any important features or details. Polaroid photographs are not adequate. If available, attach copies of historic photographs of the structure.

*Front Façade from Street*

*Front Façade*

*Back Patio*

*Back Patio*

*Back Door Detail*

*Back Staircase Detail*

*Dome Detail*

Statement of Significance

10. Explain how the structure meets at least one criteria in at least two of the categories. Please cite specific criteria in the summary.

**Landmark Designation Criteria**

**1. History.** To have historical importance, the structure shall be more than 30 years old or have extraordinary importance to the architectural or historical development of Denver, and shall:

*c. Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society*

Original owner Mrs. Mary E. Holland is significant because of her widely known work in the Colorado child welfare field. As stated by Claude W. Blake, "In the 30 years she served the community she has been an outstanding leader in the development of service in behalf of children" (Rocky Mountain News, Dec. 22, 1946).

**2. Architecture.** To have architectural importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

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

This house is representative of the work of Eugene G. Groves, a Denver architect who moved to Colorado in 1914, and maintained an active practice for 50 years. He was responsible for the design of numerous educational and government facilities throughout Colorado, and is also recognized for his experimental use of poured, cast and reinforced concrete in the construction of single family residences. He experimented with a variety of architectural styles including Art Deco, Art Moderne, Beaux Arts, Italian Renaissance Revival, and Colonial Revival. Six of his buildings are on the National Register and seven are on the State Register, including the Nordlund House at 330 Birch St. in Denver, and the Akron Gymnasium at W. 4th St. & Custer Ave. in Washington County.

*c. Contain elements of architectural design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant or influential innovation*

In the 1930s, Groves constructed four concrete houses using a building technique he patented in 1937 (see *Fig 1*), the Holland House (1932/1933), the Sherman House (1935), the Nordlund House (1938), and 1350 Ivy St. (1941). The system utilized pre-cast concrete studs and beams, concrete slab floors, and concrete stucco over wire mesh walls. This patented technique eliminated the need for wooden structural members. His goal in this invention was to design for "simplicity, economy, and efficiency." Groves established the Concreter Corporation to build structures using his patented system. His goal in constructing these homes was to demonstrate how concrete could be used to create simple, low cost, efficient, durable, and fireproof buildings. Each home has a variety of built-in concrete cabinets and cubbyholes. Even kitchen countertops, tables, seating, and bed units were made of reinforced concrete.

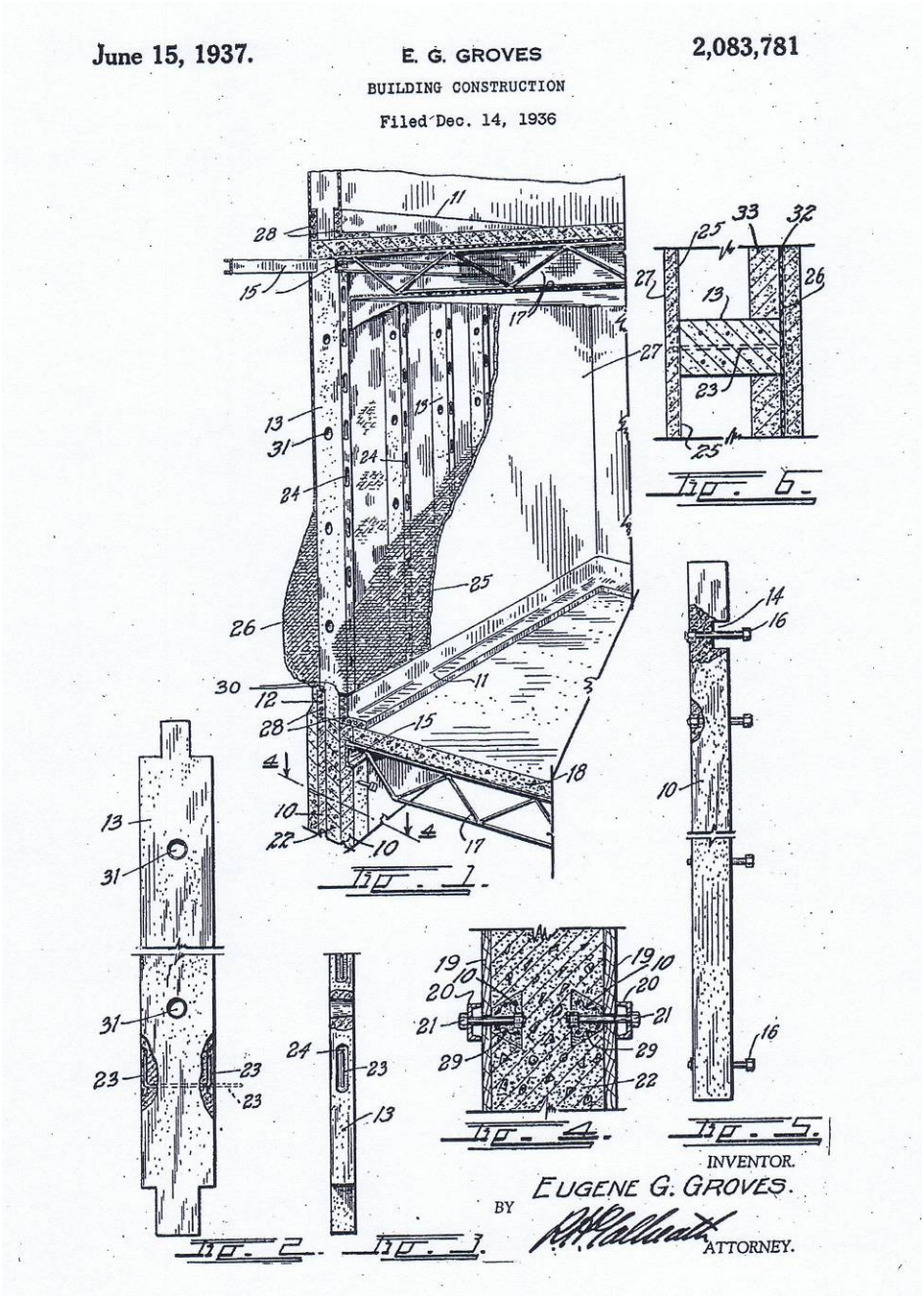


*Fig 1: Illustration of Grove's Patented Construction System*

Architectural Description

11. Concisely describe the structure and its surrounds.

a. Describe location and setting including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structure

University Park began as a neighborhood in the mid 1880s as a vision of the University of Denver's leaders. They imagined a university environment and surrounding community founded on the ideas of "conscience and culture." The leaders of DU wanted to move the school away from its location in downtown Denver because trustees felt the bustling urban environment was no longer appropriate for an academic center.

Elizabeth Iliff Warren pledged $100,000 to the school on the condition that they relocate far away from downtown Denver. Numerous sites were looked at, and trustees settled on the present location. John Evans, seminary president at the time, supported this choice because his Denver and New Orleans railroad passed through the area, and could provide transportation to students and potential home buyers.

In 1885, potato farmer Rufus Clark, owner of most of the land currently occupied by DU and University Park, donated 80 acres of land to DU on the condition that school erected its main buildings as soon as possible, platted 200 acres as a town site within 6 months, and planted 1,000 trees along streets and in parks. 70 more acres were promised to DU by other landowners if the conditions were met.

On Arbor Day 1886, University Park was dedicated, lots were platted, and the vision of an elite neighborhood surrounding the school began to take shape. University Park's selling points were mountain views, pure air, and no saloons. Eventually an electric line was extended to S. University Blvd. and E. Evans Ave., followed by an electric trolley down Evans and Milwaukee along the Circle Railroad tracks.

As the years went by, University Park progressed from the remote enclave envisioned by its founders. Residential and business development increased due to Denver's growth, development of modern transportation, and the area's continued desirability. Homes, businesses, and schools continued to emerge over the next several decades in a variety of architectural styles.

In 1932, construction began at 2340 S. Josephine on one of the most unique homes in the DU area. The house is bound by S. Josephine to the west, S. Columbine to the east, E. Iliff to the north, and E. Wesley to the south (see *Fig 2*). It was built for Mrs. Mary E. Holland at a modest cost of $5,500 by Colorado architect Eugene G. Groves. The home was completed in April of 1933.


*Fig 2: Aerial Map 2340 S. Josephine-1933*

b. Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Also describe interior spaces with extraordinary design features (if any).

In 1938, 2340 S. Josephine was featured in the Homes of the West magazine article titled "A Low Mileage House in Denver." It describes the home as collaboration between Mrs. Holland and Groves, in which she asked him to design a house for her "that would at the end of the professional day be a haven of beauty, comfort and convenience." Groves took that request and produced the design of a house that would "ensure economy and permanency" by designing the house as efficiently as possible and using concrete in its construction.

This unique, single-story concrete home features 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, and is 1,667 square feet. It sits on four lots, and is set back nearly 27' from the street. The exterior of the house is covered in grey stucco, and the front façade has a small covered stoop approximately 3' X 9'4" in size. The front door is framed by two concrete fluted pilasters, and the dome and chimney are visible from the street. The garden and outdoor patio are located at the back at the house. Outdoor living was important to Groves because of his experience with Tuberculosis. The patio area is covered in natural stone, and features an awning for shade and a staircase leading to a roof top deck. There is one basement window facing the patio that has been replaced due to deterioration.

On the interior of the house there are three public rooms, the dining room and the sunroom, which are both under the main roof, and the living room, which is under the

domed ceiling. The dining room features a very unique textured ceiling (see *Fig 3*), a built-in telephone cove, and several built-in drawers and china hutches. The sunroom has east, south, and west facing divided light metal casements. It also features a slightly vaulted ceiling with a hand painted wooden inlay pattern (see *Fig 4*). The living room is 14' X 20' in size. The dome over the living room is oval in shape and tiered (*see Figs 5-6*).

The kitchen, or "food laboratory," according to Groves, was designed to be efficient and compact. The cabinets were made of reinforced concrete. They originally had stainless steel doors and drawer fronts, but have since been replaced with wood. The original counter tops were linoleum, but have since been replaced with tile in the 1980s. Even details like built-in coves for salt and pepper shakers were thought out by Groves in the design of the kitchen (see *Fig 7*). Although some of the surfaces in the kitchen have been updated, the majority of the space remains largely intact.

In the private area of the house there is a sitting room, dressing room, and a "health sleeping unit." Groves' "health sleeping unit" is a built- in cove made of reinforced concrete (see *Fig 8*). It is large enough to accommodate a twin sized bed, and features a large operable window space complete with metal shutters so that fresh air and natural light could be controlled. The unit also includes built-in book shelves at the head and foot of the bed, and pull out drawers under the bed. There are two pocket doors that can be pulled together to close off the unit from the rest of the dressing room area in the colder months.

*Fig 3: Textured Ceiling in Dining Room*

*Fig 4: Patterned Ceiling in Sunroom*

*Fig 5: Tiered Ceiling in Living Room*

*Fig 6: Living Room*

*Fig 7: Salt and Pepper Nook*

*Fig 8: Sleeping Nook*

c. Describe major alterations to the exterior of the structure and any known plans to alter the exterior.

In June of 1995, a small one-story addition was made to the north-east corner of the house. It included a bedroom, hall, bathroom, and closet. Also, a wall between the kitchen and living room was demolished to allow access between the two rooms. In May of 2007, the original 12' X 23' cinderblock detached garage located in the north-east corner of the property was demolished. A new 24' X 36' one-car garage with a one-car carport was completed in September of 2007. There are no plans to make further alterations to the exterior of the home.

History of the Structure and Its Associations

12. Describe the history of the structure and its associations with important individuals, groups, events, or historical trends.

a. Provide details about the circumstances of construction including the date of construction, architect, builder, and owner for the original structure and any significant additions.

Construction of 2340 S. Josephine began in July of 1932, and was completed in August of 1933. It was built for Colorado welfare worker and volunteer, Mary E. Holland, by Colorado architect Eugene G. Groves. Groves was responsible for both the design and construction of the home. In 1995, a single-story addition was made to the north-east corner of the home. It included a bedroom, bathroom, closet and hallway. In 2007, the original garage structure was demolished and rebuilt.

b. Describe specific historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.

Mrs. Holland, the original owner of the home, was born in Albion, Michigan on August 18, 1874. She began her career teaching in Albion and Detroit, and moved to Denver in 1911. Although she is most known for her work with Colorado's underprivileged children, she was devoted to the cause of welfare for most of her life.

Before she moved to Colorado, Mrs. Holland married Daniel G. Holland of England, and had two children, William Yates Holland, born in 1906, and Hester Holland, born in 1904. It is unclear whether or not Mr. Holland came along to Colorado with the rest of his family. Census records from 1910 indicated Mr. Holland as the head of the household in Michigan, and Census records from 1920 indicated Mrs. Holland as the head of the household in Denver at a day nursery, with no mention of Mr. Holland. By 1930, Census records indicated Mrs. Holland as divorced, and living at 1331 E. 14th Ave. with her two children.

When Mrs. Holland first came to Colorado she was involved in the establishment of the Craig Colony, a treatment center for tuberculosis patients. She also had a hand in organizing the Garfield Community Center as well as the Lincoln Park and Auraria Community Centers.

During World War I, she became a case worker in the Home Service section of the Red Cross, and was later named head resident of the Social Center Day Nursery. She later organized the Colorado Child Welfare Bureau, and became its first executive secretary.

When the Colorado Child Welfare Bureau was abolished, the Colorado Children's Aid Society was incorporated in 1923. Mrs. Holland was also the first executive secretary of the Colorado Children's Aid Society. She spent over 20 years there until her retirement in 1946. Under her leadership the society became a charter member of the Child Welfare League of America, and many of her friend's homes became the first foster homes of Colorado.

Mrs. Holland also helped with the organization of the University of Denver School of Social Work. In 1938, Dean Peck's Training School for Girls, located at 6925 E. 8th Ave., was renamed the Holland Hall for Girls in her honor. It has since been demolished.

In 1956, Mrs. Holland passed away, and the complete chain of ownership from 1956-1967 remains unclear. In 1967, 2340 S. Josephine became the home of Shirley and Ken Kenneally. Records indicate that the Kenneallys purchased the home from Irving M. Friedman of New York in 1967. During the 1970s, Shirley and her late husband operated a recording studio out of their living room. Shirley still resides at 2340 S. Josephine.

The architect/builder of 2340 S. Josephine, Eugene G. Groves, was born February 9, 1882 in Dana, Indiana. He graduated from high school in Dana in 1900. While working as a bookkeeper for Overland Automobile Co. in Terre Haute, Indiana, in a national design contest he won a scholarship to study architecture at Harvard University. Groves practiced in New York and Gary, Indiana before his health prompted him to move to New Mexico, and later to Denver in 1914. It is said that while in New Mexico, he was exposed to Pueblo architecture, which later influenced some of his work in Colorado. It is also said that his struggle with tuberculosis prompted him to include outdoor patios and connections to fresh air and natural light in his residences.

Between 1915 through 1950, Groves developed an association with Colorado State University, where he designed numerous buildings and additions on the Fort Collins Campus including Ammons Hall (1922), the Military Science Building (1927), Johnson Hall (1936), and the Student Services Building (1948). During the Depression era, Groves was commissioned to do several projects funded by the Public Works Administration (PWA) program, which was part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. The New Deal programs were developed to provide relief to the destitute of America during the Depression. The PWA was one of the programs established under the New Deal in order to create jobs for workers in the building trades and construction supplies industries. The Akron Gymnasium (1938) in Washington County is one of the most recognizable examples of his work done during that time. Another recognizable building designed by Groves is the 1937 Johnson's Corner gas station in Longmont. It is a unique Art Deco building made of poured, cast, and reinforced concrete. It is thought that the building was mentioned in Jack Kerouac's book "On the Road." During the 1940s and 1950s Johnson's Corner was known as an eatery willing to serve all races in a time when most Longmont restaurants displayed "white trade only" signs in their windows. In December 1936 Groves submitted a patent application for a concrete construction technique that replaced wooden structural members with pre-formed concrete structural members. The construction system was patented June 15, 1937. He also created the Concreter Corporation in order to construct buildings using his patented system. According to some sources, Groves had a relationship with Denver industrialist and owner of Ideal Cement Company, Charles Boettcher. It is said that Boettcher would occasionally show up at Groves' worksites and observe the construction process.

Groves was a member of the American Institutes of Architects, the Colorado Consistory and the El Jebel Shrine. He practiced in Denver for over 50 years. He died in October of 1967 at the Park Central Nursing Home, and was buried in Dana, Indiana .

Although Groves designed a number of educational and municipal buildings, the four residences (including 2340 S. Josephine) he designed in the 1930s and 1940s showcase his impressive use of concrete. Each house was built using his patented concrete construction system, and three of the four houses incorporated the recognizable

concrete domes. Groves' use of concrete in these residences was impressive because he managed to give it a warm, soft, and sculptural feel as opposed to a cold, sterile, and angular feel.

Around the same time Groves was studying architecture at Harvard, in 1906, Thomas Edison came up the concept for an all-concrete house. He said "they would be fireproof, insect-proof, [and] easy to clean." His idea was to make everything from "shingles to bathtubs to picture frames" out of a monolith of cast-concrete. Edison's concrete homes were known as a failure, being difficult to build, ugly, and having extreme leaking issues. It is not clear if Edison's concrete home concept had any influence on Groves' use of concrete in the design of his single family residences in Denver, but he managed to successfully accomplish what Edison had attempted to do several decades earlier.

c. Describe other structures that have similar associations and the relationship of this structure to them.

There are three other homes in the Denver area that were built using Groves' patented construction system, the Sherman House, located at 2733 W. 41st, the Nordlund House, located at 330 Birch, and the house located at 1350 Ivy St. The Nordlund House is on the National Register of Historic Places. Three of the four homes have Groves' trademark dome, and all four feature unique built-in reinforced concrete elements on the interior. 2340 S. Josephine was the first of the four homes constructed.

13. List of Resources

Denver Department of Planning & Community Development. University Park Neighborhood Plan. September 2008.

Etter, Don D. Denver Going Modern. Denver, CO: Graphic Impressions, Inc., 1977.

Fisher, Steve. Images of America: University Park and South Denver. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Kass, Jeff. "Homeless Architect." Denver Magazine April 2010.

Nelson, Bill. "Architect Unraveled: The Enduring Legacy of Eugene Groves." Modern in Denver Spring 2009: 51.

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara S. Norgren. Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941. Denver, CO: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Rocky Mountain News, 22 December 1946, 24; 16 September 1947, 20; 12 December 1956, 31; 5 April 1959, 15.

14. Application Information

Present Owner: Shirley Kenneally

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

15. Owner Consent to Designation

I / We, the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of, the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my consent to the designation of this structure as a Structure for Preservation.

Signature:_____

Printed name:_____

Date:_____

16. Applicant/Preparer Name

Affiliation/ Interest in Property:

Address:

Telephone:

17. Application Fee

A check in the amount of $250 is attached