

1 **BY AUTHORITY**

2 ORDINANCE NO. _____
3 SERIES OF 2016

COUNCIL BILL NO. CB16-0566
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:
4 Neighborhoods and Planning

5
6 **A BILL**

7 **For an ordinance designating 1400 Lafayette Street, the First Unitarian Society of**
8 **Denver Church, as a structure for preservation.**

9
10 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to D.R.M.C. Section 30-4, the Landmark Preservation Commission has
11 transmitted to the Council a proposed designation of a structure for preservation; and

12 **WHEREAS**, based upon evidence received by the Landmark Preservation Commission at a
13 hearing on July 5, 2016, the staff report, and evidence received at the hearing before City Council on
14 August 15, 2016, the First Unitarian Society of Denver Church at 1400 Lafayette Street (“Church”)
15 meets the criteria for designation as a structure for preservation as set out in D.R.M.C. Section 30-3,
16 as amended, by:

17 (1) History.

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

19 The First Unitarian Society of Denver has a long history of social justice work that has been important
20 to the development of the city, with their work often having broader implications. In its early days, the
21 congregation was involved in the Women’s Suffrage Movement and had strong ties with early
22 charitable organizations. Since occupying the building at 1400 Lafayette in 1958, the congregation
23 has been active and influential in a variety of issues, including racial justice, the gay rights movement
24 and marriage equality, women’s rights, and immigration justice. The First Unitarian Society of Denver
25 has a historical role of serving as an incubator space for nonprofit organizations dedicated to social
26 justice issues. In the 1970s, it created a “Shared Center” in its basement and in the adjacent two
27 homes to the north as a concerted effort to help these issues.

28 b. *Having direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had*
29 *influence on society;*

30 The First Unitarian Society of Denver (while located at 1400 Lafayette Street) has been directly and
31 substantially associated with a number of people who have had an influence on society. Former
32 Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm and First Lady Dottie Lamm were members of the congregation
33 during the 1960s and were married in the Church in 1963. A number of congregation members have

1 been involved in acts of civil disobedience in recent years. First Unitarian Society of Denver Minister
2 Richard Henry was arrested in a protest related to the Vietnam War. Congregation member Helen
3 Wolcott, among others, was instrumental in the local Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. She was a
4 founding member of the local Congress of Racial Equality, organized picketing in protest of unfair
5 hiring practices, and worked for equality in education and real estate practices.

6 (2) Architecture.

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

8 The Church, constructed in the 1890s, is an outstanding example of a Richardsonian Romanesque
9 style building. The style is seen in the configuration and massing, the masonry, and windows. The
10 use of rough-faced Ashlar masonry is a primary characteristic of the Richardsonian Romanesque
11 style. The stone material itself is a wonderful vernacular component of the church's history, as the
12 Rhyolite stone utilized on the façade was quarried in Castle Rock, Colorado. The Church also
13 contains stylistically distinguishing features of the Richardson Romanesque style in its wide
14 rounded arches, recessed entryways, and parapeted gable dormers.

15 *b. Being a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*

16 This Capitol Hill/Cheesman Park landmark is a significant example of the work of well-known local
17 architects Ernest Varian and Frederick Sterner. Ernest Varian designed the Zion Baptist Church in
18 1882, and then in 1885 formed a partnership with Frederick J. Sterner. As noted in the Colorado
19 Architects Biographical Sketch, "the firm of Varian and Sterner went on to become one of Denver's
20 most prominent architectural designers with many listings in the Denver Building Fees files."
21 Notable buildings designed by the firm include the Denver Athletic Club at 1325 Glenarm, the First
22 Church of Christ Scientist at 14th and Logan Streets, and a variety of homes throughout the Denver
23 area. Landmark works designed by Frederick Sterner include the Daniels and Fisher Tower, the
24 Pearce-McCall Cottage, and the Tears-McFarland House. The Church also contains a unique and
25 historic example of the work of Watkins Stained Glass Studio. The striking rose window on the
26 south façade was designed and fabricated by Clarence Watkins in 1893 and carefully restored by
27 his great-grandson Phillip Watkins, Jr. after a major fire damaged it in 1985.

28 (3) Geography

29 *a. Having a prominent location or being an established, familiar and orienting visual feature*
30 *of the contemporary city;*

31 The Church sits at the corner of 14th Avenue and Lafayette Street. It lies in the heart of Denver's
32 Capitol Hill, just one block south of Colfax Avenue. The Church is directly adjacent to 14th Avenue,

1 which is also an important thoroughfare in Denver that travels one way (west to east). With its
2 Richardsonian Romanesque architecture and Castle Rock Rhyolite bricks, the Church is a highly
3 recognizable building along the 14th Avenue corridor. The “castle-like” building is a strong orienting
4 element along 14th Avenue and in Capitol Hill. Although the Church lies in proximity to a variety of
5 historic districts and buildings, it is unique in its architecture for the surrounding area. As such, the
6 Church is notable to passersby on 14th Avenue. In providing directions to the Church, members
7 frequently find that would-be visitors are familiar with the Church and have noted it as a visual
8 reference in passing on prior occasions.

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

11 **Section 1.** That based upon the analysis referenced above, and the evidence received at
12 the public hearings, certain property herein called the First Unitarian Society of Denver Church at
13 1400 Lafayette Street, and legally described as follows, together with all improvements situated and
14 located thereon, be and the same is hereby designated as a structure for preservation:

15 A PARCEL OF LAND AS DESCRIBED IN A DEED OF TRUST, RECORDED ON THE 26TH DAY OF
16 MARCH, 1998, AT RECEPTION NUMBER 1998045663 AT THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER
17 CLERK AND RECORDER’S OFFICE, LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 2,
18 TOWNSHIP 4 SOUTH, RANGE 68 WEST OF THE SIXTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, STATE OF
19 COLORADO, THEREIN AS:

20
21 LOTS 15 TO 20, BLOCK 7, HERR’S ADDITION TO THE CITY OF DENVER, AND THAT PART OF
22 LOTS 9 AND 10, BLOCK 3, GLENCOE ADDITION, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE
23 SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 10; THENCE EAST ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOT 10,
24 125 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF THE ALLEY IN SAID BLOCK; THENCE NORTH ALONG THE WEST
25 LINE OF SAID ALLEY, 25 FEET; THENCE WEST PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOT
26 10, 125 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF LOT 9; THENCE SOUTH ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID
27 LOTS 9 AND 10, 25 FEET TO BEGINNING, CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, STATE OF COLORADO.

28
29 **Section 2.** The effect of this designation may enhance the value of the property and of the
30 structure, but may delay or require denial of building permits found unacceptable by the Landmark
31 Preservation Commission under the criteria contained in the Design Guidelines for Historic Structures
32 and Districts and Section 30-6 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code.

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

35 **[THE REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]**

36

1 COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: August 3, 2016.

2 MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: August 9, 2016.

3 PASSED BY THE COUNCIL _____ 2016

4 _____ - PRESIDENT

5 APPROVED: _____ - MAYOR _____ 2016

6 ATTEST: _____ - CLERK AND RECORDER,
7 EX-OFFICIO CLERK OF THE
8 CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER
9

10 NOTICE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY JOURNAL _____ 2016; _____ 2016

11 PREPARED BY: Adam C. Hernandez DATE: August 11, 2016

12 Pursuant to section 13-12, D.R.M.C., this proposed ordinance has been reviewed by the office of
13 the City Attorney. We find no irregularity as to form, and have no legal objection to the proposed
14 ordinance. The proposed ordinance is not submitted to the City Council for approval pursuant to
15 § 3.2.6 of the Charter.
16

17 Denver City Attorney

18 BY: _____, Assistant City Attorney Date: _____, 2016