

**DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE  
LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

This form is for use in nominating individual structures and districts in the City and County of Denver. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Questions about the application or designation process can be directed to Denver Landmark Preservation staff at [landmark@denvergov.org](mailto:landmark@denvergov.org) or (303) 865-2709.

**Property Address:** 6400 East Montview Boulevard

The following are required for the application to be considered complete:

- Property Information
- Applicant Information and Signatures
- Criteria for Significance
- Statement of Significance
- Period of Significance
- Property Description
- Statement of Integrity
- Historic Context
- Bibliography
- Photographs
- Boundary Map
- Application Fee

# 1. Property Information

Name of Property

Historic Name: Bitman-Hower House

Other or Current Name: N/A

Location

Address: 6400 East Montview Boulevard, Denver, CO 80207-3955

Legal Description: DOWNINGTON B1 L1 TO 4 EXC REAR 7 FT & EXC N PT OF L1 TO CITY

Number of resources:

<u># Contributing</u>	<u># Non-Contributing</u>	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Primary Structures</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Accessory Structures</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>Features</u>

Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

*Describe below how contributing and non-contributing features were determined.*

The legal boundaries encompass the house with attached garage and a low wall that extends from it along the driveway, the only structures on the property. The decorative flagstone walkway depicting the phases of the moon leading to the front door has been identified as an element of J. Roger Musick’s residential designs and is within the boundaries of the property. Presumed to be original and related to Musick’s moon phase design, a complimentary flagstone sun design is centered on the surface of the rear patio.

General Property Data

Date of construction: 1936

Architect (if known): J. Roger Musick

Builder (if known): Harry M. Bitman

Original Use: Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Use: Domestic: Single Dwelling

Source(s) of information for above: City and County of Denver Building Permit No. 3655, December 10, 1935

Previous documentation

*List previous historic survey and/or if property is listed or eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places.*

The property has never been evaluated or surveyed. There have been no previous determinations regarding eligibility for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places.

## 2. Owner/Applicant Information

An application for designation may be submitted by:

- Owner(s) of the property or properties, or
- Member(s) of city council, or
- Manager of Community Planning and Development, or
- Three residents of Denver, if they are not owners of the property or properties

### Owner Information

Name: Rebecca Rogers

Address: 6400 Montview Blvd., Denver, CO 80207-3955

Phone: (303) 949-2896

Email: rnhuss@comcast.net

### Primary Applicant (if not owner): N/A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Prepared by

Name: Kristi H. Miniello, Miniello Consulting

Address: 1340 Rosemary St., Denver, CO 80220-3138

Phone: (303) 531-1414

Email: [kristi@minielloconsulting.com](mailto:kristi@minielloconsulting.com)

Owner Applicant:

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.

I understand that this designation transfers with the title of the property should the property be sold, or if legal or beneficial title is otherwise transferred.

Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Rebecca Rogers \_\_\_\_\_ Date 9/24/2020 (please print)

Owner(s) Signature: Rebecca Rogers \_\_\_\_\_

For individual designations, if the owner does not support the designation, the applicants must conduct outreach to the owner. Describe below the efforts to contact the owner to discuss designation and other possible preservation alternatives. Please provide dates and details of any communications or meetings with the property owner, or the property owner's representatives.

Other Applicant(s): N/A

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(please print)

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Significance

#### Criteria for Significance

To qualify as a Landmark, a property must meet at least three significance criteria. Check the applicable criteria from the following list.

- a. It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- b. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;
- c. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;
- d. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
- e. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;
- f. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;
- g. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
- h. It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
- i. It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;
- j. It is associated with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation.

#### Statement of Significance

*Criterion c. The Bitman-Hower House embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type:*

The property is an excellent example of the Spanish Eclectic style. The two-story, single-unit house falls within the side-gabled roof subtype and exhibits a majority of the elements that define Spanish Eclectic. The style was popular in the United States between 1915 and 1940, and the house was built in 1936. In Denver, this style is unique with only a small number of homes showcasing the style in certain areas, with a heavier concentration in Capitol Hill, Congress Park, Seventh Avenue Historic District, and only a few in the Park Hill Neighborhood. It has an asymmetrical façade, stucco exterior, red tile roof, prominent chimney with a decorative top, arches above doors and principal windows, an arched wood front door heavily emphasized by decorative ironwork, decorative iron railing balcony on the north facade, as well as a round tower and two-story covered porch on the south side. The Bitman-Hower House is one of the few Spanish Eclectic style homes in the Park Hill neighborhood. This would be the first Spanish Eclectic residence designated a Denver Landmark in Park Hill.

*Criterion d. The Bitman-Hower House is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder:*

The house was designed by the prominent Denver architect, J. Roger Musick, the younger brother of another highly regarded Denver architect, G. Meredith Musick. The younger Musick brother formally trained in New York City at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design and received his license to practice architecture in 1932. Although he worked with his brother on several civic and religious commissions, he focused his individual work on residential and educational properties. Musick designed at least two other houses within the Park Hill neighborhood at 6230 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. (Tudor Revival) and 6401 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. (Tudor Revival), as well as several in the Crestmoor Subdivision that are primarily brick Tudor Revivals. No other known commissions credited to Musick exhibit the Spanish Eclectic style, and it appears to be unique to the Bitman-Hower House. Numerous extant examples of Musick's work remain, and those designs have been recognized for their significance by dedication as local landmarks and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places (see table in Historic Context). While several of his civic and educational buildings have been locally designated, none of Musick's residential designs are Denver Landmarks and none represent the Spanish Eclectic style.

Additionally, the property was owned by Harry M. Bitman, a master builder, until its completion in the summer of 1936. Bitman was the president of the Home Realty Company and a founding member of Quality Home Builders, Inc. He used the property during its construction, noting it as his office address on the building permit for a nearby property that was being constructed at the same time. Although his start was in the real estate business, he merged this with his business as a builder of homes around Denver. He worked with J. Roger Musick on at least one other house (6230 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy.) in the South Park Hill Neighborhood. Bitman mimicked the Musick design of the Bitman-Hower House, at 4833 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy., while not actually collaborating with Musick on that property.

*Criterion f. The Bitman-Hower House represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics:*

When traveling east along historic Montview Blvd. through the South Park Hill Neighborhood, there is a feeling of continuity block after block. The properties, with their expansive front lawns, are equally set back from the road, and the branches of mature trees reach over the street creating a shaded corridor. This boulevard canopy design exists in only a few neighborhoods of Denver. The majority of the houses along the street are built of red or brown brick in the Tudor Revival or Ranch styles, with the occasional bungalow making an appearance. Their design elements give them a feeling of substance and heft.

The Bitman-Hower House is located on a corner lot facing the prominent thoroughfare of Montview Blvd., and with its stucco exterior, cast-iron arched awning and decorative features, and brick corbelling, stands out from all of the other houses. It is the only true, two-story, Spanish Eclectic style house along Montview Blvd. within Park Hill and it, literally, signals the end of an era. East of Monaco Parkway, the majority of the buildings along Montview Blvd. are from a later time period and were built in more modern styles. When traveling south along historic Monaco Parkway and approaching the intersection with Montview Blvd. the Bitman-Hower House stands out for many of the same reasons, especially when the trees are void of their leaves.

No other known residential commissions credited to Musick exhibit the Spanish Eclectic style, and it appears to be unique to his design of the Bitman-Hower House, creating a prominent landmark along Montview Boulevard and within the South Park Hill Neighborhood. Even within the same neighborhood, Musick's other designs are brick Tudor Revivals that are more

in keeping with the other properties along Montview Blvd.

Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1936

The period of significance reflects the year that the property was constructed.

## 4. Property Description

- a. Summary Paragraph** - Briefly describe the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, materials, setting, size, and significant features.

This property is located on Lot 1, Block 1 of the Downington Addition to the South Park Hill Neighborhood with a lot size of 9,655 square feet. The house, which faces north, is set back on a corner lot from Locust Street, which runs north and south along its west boundary, and Montview Boulevard, which runs east and west along its north boundary. The two-story, Spanish Eclectic style, single-unit house features a stucco exterior, red clay tile roof, and a prominent chimney at the west end of its north façade. Notable decorative features include the arched cast-iron awning above the main entry, arched brick hoods above several openings, and brick corbelling along the eaves and chimney. A two-car garage is attached on the east side and a low wall extends from the house along the north side of the driveway to the alley. A decorative flagstone walkway with moon phases leads from Montview Blvd. to the main entrance, and a complementary decorative flagstone patio with an image of the sun is located at the rear of the house. It is the only true Spanish Eclectic style house along historic district Montview Blvd. between Colorado Blvd. and Monaco Pkwy.

- b. Architectural Description** – Describe the architectural features of the structure(s) (i.e. building) in a logical sequence, from the ground up or façade by façade. Identify the key visual aspects or character-defining features of the structure.

### North Façade

The asymmetrical north façade consists of three bays. All of the window openings have brick sills. A large chimney projects out from the westernmost bay and has decorative brick corbelling along its top. The remainder of the bay lacks ornamentation. On the central bay, the main entrance is located at the end near the chimney. The embellished, recessed, arched entrance is elevated, and the approach consists of a curvilinear stoop reached by a series of flagstone steps with decorative cast-iron handrails on either side. The main entrance is further highlighted by a decorative arched cast-iron and glass awning that extends down along the upper portion of both sides of the opening with scrollwork. An arched, rectangular opening with a 12-light window is centered on the bay, and a decorative brick hood, that is flush with the stucco, appears above the opening. An identical window opening is located just to the east of the center window. Two small, rectangular window openings appear at the basement level beneath the two windows. A rectangular opening with a 12-light window appears on the second story above each of the first story openings. A small gable extends from the roof and above the windows.

The easternmost bay consists of three, evenly spaced, square openings with 9-light windows. A brick and stucco wall extends out several feet from the northeast corner of the house then turns to the east and follows the north side of the driveway. The second story of the bay projects out from the façade, and three deep arches with heavy brackets shelter the first story windows. A rectangular opening with a 12-light window is centered on the bay, and a small gable extends from the roof above the window. A decorative, ornamental, cast-iron balcony surrounds the lower half of the window. Much like with the main entrance, decorative brackets and scrollwork extend down the façade from the balcony.

A decorative red and grey flagstone walkway leads up to the front stoop and entrance from Montview Blvd. The design along the walk depicts the phases of the moon, a unique element for such a property. Flagstone walkways have been identified at several other J. Roger Musick



residential commissions, including two nearby properties in the South Park Hill neighborhood and several properties on Ivy Street; however, the one at this property is the most elaborate design.

### East Side

A large opening with an overhead garage door is centered on the east side. A pair of tall, narrow, rectangular openings with an 8-light window is centered on the second story. A brick hood above each extends down between them into a down arrow pattern that ends at the base of the second story. A V-shaped pattern of brick corbelling, like that on the chimney top, is located along the roofline.

### South Side

The asymmetrical south side consists of three bays, and the brick corbelling V-shaped pattern continues intermittently along its eaves. The eastern bay has a rectangular opening with a 12-light window on its second story like those on the north façade, and a small gable extends from the roof and above the window. A curved tower is located on the second story in the corner between the central and eastern bay. A tall, narrow, rectangular opening with an 8-light window is centered on the tower. A projecting bay comprises the central bay of the south side, and a window is located on each of its three sides on the first story. Tall, narrow, rectangular openings with an 8-light window are found on the outer sides of the bay above their first story counterparts, while the center of it is unpenetrated.

The western bay has a rectangular opening with a 12-light window near its end by the projecting bay. A window opening similar to those on the north façade's second story is located above it on the second story. The backdoor is centered on the bay under an awning, and a small opening with a window appears to the west of it. A square, one-story segment extends from the south side's western bay, and a secondary rear entrance is located on its east side. The approach to both entrances consists of a flagstone-capped back porch reached by a series of flagstone steps. The flagstone creates a sun design in the center of the porch, complimenting the moon phases on the front walkway. Two rectangular openings with 12-light windows are located at either end of the first story on the segment's south side. Decorative brickwork extends above each opening and into the brick balcony on top of the segment. The second story balcony is enclosed by a brick half-wall and covered by a fabric awning with three slender metal supports mounted to the south side of the half-wall.

### West Side

The one-story segment is located at the south end of the west side. A rectangular opening with a 12-light window is centered on its first story, and decorative brickwork extends above it and into the brick balcony of the second story. The remainder of the west side, which is located under the gabled portion of the house, has a bay centered on it that is identical to the bay on the south side. On either side of it, a rectangular opening with a 12-light window is located on the first story, with an identical opening above on the second story.

- c. Major Alterations** - Describe changes or alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations, if known.

All of the original multi-light metal windows were replaced between 2013 and 2018 with fiberglass units, as many would not operate or shut. The overhead garage door is not original, and there have been minor alterations to the opening (possibly from two smaller doors to one

large door with a slightly larger opening). The house has experienced no other major alterations since its completion in 1936.

**d. Integrity** - Describe the structure's integrity, using the seven qualities that define integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The primary structure and decorative flagstone walkway retain integrity of location, setting, association, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. They remain at the location where originally constructed. The setting, which consists of large residential properties that are set back from surrounding streets on large lots, remains nearly identical to the date of original construction. The property was originally constructed as a single-family residence and continues to be used in that capacity, retaining integrity of association. The property retains integrity of design, as the form and plan of the property have not been altered, and many of the elements and features designed by J. Roger Musick, the architect, remain intact. The property retains integrity of materials and workmanship, as the primary structure and walkway have not been extensively rehabilitated and features dating from the period of significance remain. Together, the elements of setting, design, materials, and workmanship support the property's integrity of feeling.

**e. Historic Context**

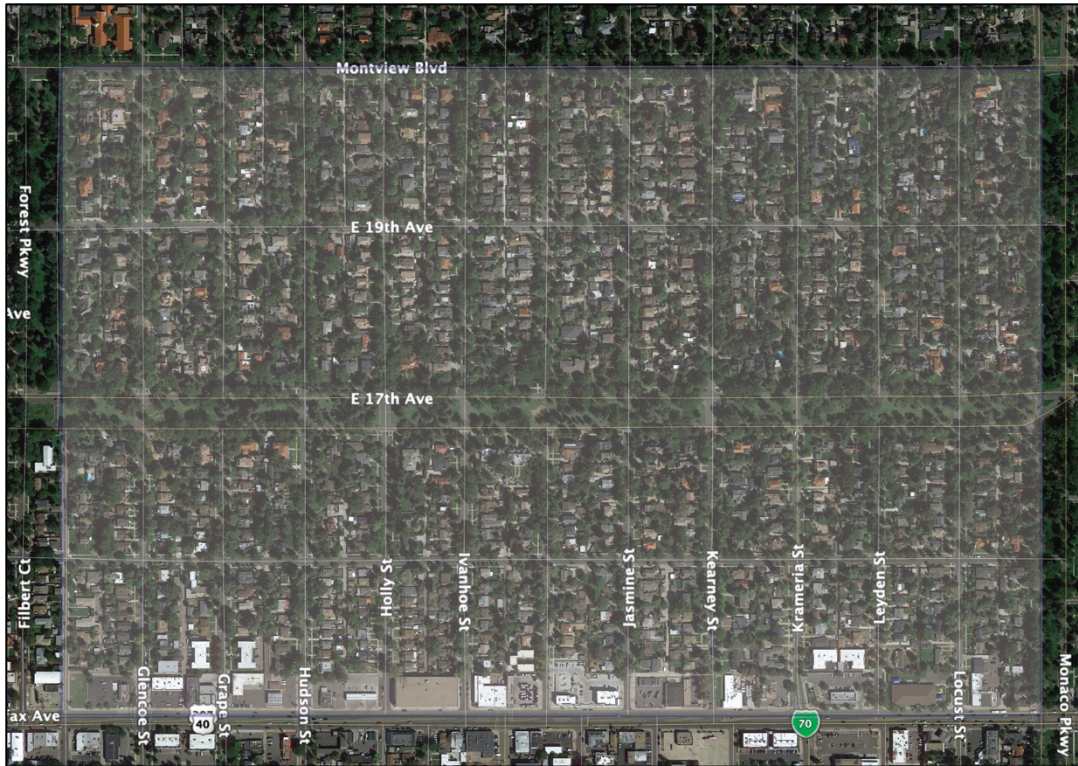
South Park Hill Neighborhood

The South Park Hill Neighborhood is defined by Colorado Boulevard/City Park on its west side, E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave. on its north side, Quebec St. on its east side, and E. Colfax Ave. on its south side. In 1867, Casper R. Hartman purchased 160 acres in the area that included South Park Hill. Twenty years later, Baron Alloys Gillaume Eugene A. von Winckler, an aristocrat from Prussia, platted Park Hill, and Hartman's Addition became its first subdivision.<sup>1</sup> Development on the grasslands was slow to gain traction, and the Baron's apparent eccentricities and inability to get along with others did not help matters. Upon his suicide in 1898, the property was purchased by Park Hill Syndicate and sales rapidly increased. The area that had been home to dairies and brickyards quickly became Denver's newest desirable residential enclave, as it was situated a fair distance from downtown and City Park was an appealing buffer.

The Downington Addition in South Park Hill, which is where the Bitman-Hower House was built, was part of the Baron's original plat of 1887. Its boundaries are defined by Forest Parkway on the west, Montview Boulevard on the north, Monaco Parkway on the east, and Colfax Avenue on the south; an area consisting of approximately 122 acres.

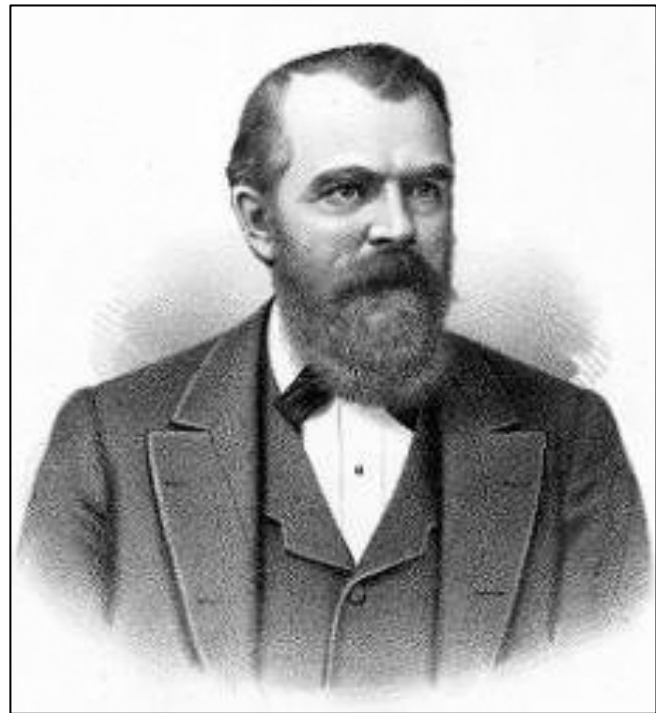
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<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. Noel and William J. Hansen, *The Park Hill Neighborhood* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 2002), 7-8.



Map highlighting the Downington Addition (Source: Google Earth)

The addition was named after Jacob Downing, an early Municipal Court Judge in Denver who volunteered for service with the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Colorado Infantry and actively participated in the Sand Creek Massacre.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, Downing's views of other races were reflected in the restrictions that were placed on the addition at that time, including sales to whites only. The *Residential Security Map* (alternately called the *Denver Redlining Map*) created in 1938 by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation depicted a boundary around City Park that was yellow (third out of the four grades) despite being recognized as a de facto red line. It was generally understood that whites lived south and east of the City Park, while people of color were able to purchase houses north and west of the park. Park Hill (which encompassed both North and South at the time) was identified as mostly Second Grade (blue) with some large areas of First Grade (green). The



Jacob Downing, date unknown (Source: National Park Service)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Sand Creek Massacre" (available from <https://www.nps.gov/sand/learn/historyculture/jacob-downing-biography.htm>), accessed April 9, 2020.



Bitman-Hower House was located in a large area of green. Development in this desirous area was comprised mostly of single-unit, one- and two-story, residential properties of brick construction. The more modest houses were built along side streets while larger and more impressive houses, such as the Bitman-Hower House, had noticeable setbacks and were built along main thoroughfares and corner lots.

In 1930, Denver was the largest city between Kansas City and Los Angeles, and it served as the financial, service, and distribution center for a vast region.<sup>3</sup> The impacts of the Great Depression were still being felt throughout the community at the time the Bitman-Hower House was constructed. Voters had elected Franklin D. Roosevelt as President in 1932, and his New Deal programs had a lasting impact on Denver, like other cities, as it emerged from the severe economic downturn. The Civil Works Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, National Youth Administration, Public Works Administration, and Works Progress Administration (also known as the Work Projects Administration) provided employment and work opportunities to the working class, professionals, youth, and artists alike.

The construction of several notable civic buildings in downtown Denver were the result of such programs, including the addition to the U.S. Custom House (1937), State Capitol Annex (1938-39), and the Denver Police Administration Building (1941).<sup>4</sup> In addition to civic construction, the city saw residential growth in some of its neighborhoods due to efforts by its affluent citizens. South Park Hill displayed the highest number of parcels developed between 1930 and 1940, with 686. Many of those were clustered in the area where the Bitman-Hower House was built. For comparison, the next three highest were Hale with 589, Westwood with 587, and Hilltop with 354.<sup>5</sup> With race restrictions already a part of the almost exclusively white neighborhood, growth in South Park Hill at that time was likely due to additional wealthy white residents purchasing land and developing it.

### J. Roger Musick

James Roger Musick, better known as J. Roger, was born in 1903 in Vandalia, Missouri to Shelly and Elizabeth Musick. The Musicks moved to Denver around 1909 with their seven children at the time: George, Helene, Louis, Thomas, Mary, James, and Ida.<sup>6</sup> In 1929, J. Roger married Aurice Oliver, and they had a daughter, Marcia. According to his World War II draft card, J. Roger was a slender man who stood 5' 10 ½" tall and weighed 137 pounds. Although he was white, he was described as having a dark complexion with brown eyes and black hair, and a distinguishing feature was his left cauliflower ear.<sup>7</sup>

J. Roger studied at the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York City before returning to Denver to work with G. (George) Meredith Musick, his oldest brother by 12 years.<sup>8</sup> In the late 1920s and early 1930s, they worked on several New Deal program designs throughout Denver including the previously mentioned addition to the U.S. Custom House, State Capitol Annex, and Denver Police Administration Building. During the mid- and late-1930s, J. Roger secured several commissions on his own for wealthy clients in Park Hill and the Crestmoor Subdivision

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas H. Simmons, R. Laurie Simmons, and Mary Therese Anstey, "Tops Down and Bottoms Up Intervention – The Great Depression, Federal Relief Programs, and World War II, 1930-45," (available from <https://www.discoverdenver.co/documents>), accessed March 25, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> 1910 United States Federal Census (available from [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)), accessed March 4, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> WWII Draft Card for J. Roger Musick (available from [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)), accessed March 4, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Denver Public Library Finding Aid Description for Musick, George Meredith, Sr. (available from [http://eadsrv.denverlibrary.org/sdx/pl/doc-tdm.jsp?id=WH772\\_d0e38&fmt=text&base=fa](http://eadsrv.denverlibrary.org/sdx/pl/doc-tdm.jsp?id=WH772_d0e38&fmt=text&base=fa)), accessed March 25, 2020.

in the Hilltop neighborhood.<sup>9</sup> Around the same time he designed the Bitman-Hower House in 1936, J. Roger also created a number of other private residences. Many were located in the Crestmoor Subdivision in Denver, and four of those extant properties are listed in the table on the following page. Between 1942-46, he went back to work with his brother. Their principal work together was the Army Air Base at Alliance, Nebraska.

J. Roger and Aurice’s primary residence changed several times over the years as he worked on commissions in different Denver neighborhoods, from Ivanhoe, Ivy, and Race streets to Circle Drive. The Musicks also had a ranch near Rifle, CO, and J. Roger listed it as a place of business in 1942.<sup>10</sup> The ranch also served as an escape from city life, but after an incident in the summer of 1950 it would be a permanent reminder of tragedy. In June of that year, the Musick’s teenage daughter and another girl accidentally drowned on the property. The Garfield County Sheriff stated, “The two girls and Mrs. Musick went out in mid-morning on a rubber raft on a quiet pond in front of the big ranch house. It floated with the current too close to the rapids and soon was caught in the swift flow of Sweetwater [C]reek. Mrs. Musick told the girls to jump and make for shore. It was too late. While she managed to save herself by grabbing a branch, they were swept down among the jagged rocks and the rushing water.”<sup>11</sup>

Despite the death of his only child, Musick continued to design properties in Denver throughout the 1950s, including several larger commissions for churches, schools, and banks. In 1966, the Musicks moved to Aspen and eventually south to Sedona, Arizona by 1981.<sup>12</sup> Although he retired from architecture, J. Roger continued to express himself artistically and spent his retirement years painting. In June 1995, Aurice died, and J. Roger died five years later in St. George, Utah.<sup>13</sup> Many of his extant architectural works are local landmarks and/or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. His work ranges from civic buildings to religious institutions to residences, and their styles vary. Trademarks of Musick’s designs included brick or stone construction, straightforward interpretations of their architectural styles, and for residential, specifically, prominent main entrances highlighted by a large surround of stone, wood, or some other decorative element. The Bitman-Hower House would be the first Musick residence designated as a Denver Landmark, honoring his influence on Denver’s residential building stock.

Property Designed Partially or Completely by J. Roger Musick	Site No.	Year Built	Status
Republic Building (370 17th St.)	N/A	1926	Demolished
Bryant-Webster School (3635 Quivas St.)	5DV.378	1930	Extant; Denver Landmark, NRHP-listed
U.S. Custom House Extension (721 19th St.)	5DV.153	1936	Extant; NRHP-listed
No Name Residence (6230 E. 17 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy.)	—	1936	Extant
<b>Bitman-Hower House (6400 Montview Blvd.)</b>	—	<b>1936</b>	<b>Extant</b>
No Name Residence (355 Ivy St.)	—	1937	Extant

<sup>9</sup> City and County of Denver Building Permits 1915-1955, Denver Public Library, Genealogy, African American & Western History Resources, text-fiche.

<sup>10</sup> WWII Draft Card for J. Roger Musick.

<sup>11</sup> *Greeley Daily Tribune*, June 19, 1950, page 1.

<sup>12</sup> Architect Blueprint, “License Lookup” (available from <https://architectblueprint.com/license-lookup/colorado/j-roger-musick-200079/>), accessed December 13, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Denverpost.com, “Obituary” (available from [www.denverpost.com](http://www.denverpost.com)), accessed December 13, 2019.

Musick Residence (320 Ivy St.)	—	1937	Extant
Ballard Residence (334 Ivy St.)	—	1937	Extant
Black Residence (370 Ivy St.)	—	1938	Extant
First Baptist Church of Denver (1345 Grant St.)	5DV.803	1938	Extant; Denver Landmark, NRHP-listed
Colorado State Capitol Annex (1341 Sherman St.)	5DV.3844	1938	Extant; Contributing to Denver Landmark District; NRHP-listed
Gardner Residence (6401 E. 17th Ave. Pkwy.)	—	1938	Extant
Johnson Elementary School (1850 S. Irving St.)	5DV.8057	1951	Extant
Chapel of the Angels (7177 W. Colfax)	N/A	1952	Demolished
Stearns-Roger Office Building (660 Bannock)	N/A	1954	Demolished
Goldbrick Elementary School (1050 S Zuni St.)	5DV.8053	1954	Extant
Empire Savings Bank (1 Garden Center, Broomfield)	—	1956	Extant; Broomfield Landmark
Banker's Union Life Insurance Bldg. (200 Josephine)	—	1958	Extant
Berkeley Park Chapel (4345 W. 46th Ave.)	—	1960	Extant; Denver Landmark
May Bonfils Stanton Library and Theater, Loretto Heights College campus (3000 S. Federal Blvd.)	—	1962	Extant

### Harry M. Bitman

Polish-born and college-educated Harry M. Bitman was a Jewish real estate salesman who had been involved in transactions throughout Denver as early 1928 with purchases and sales in Capitol Hill, Stebbens Heights, Park Hill, and Bellevue. In 1929, at the age of 28, Bitman formed Quality Home Builders, Inc. with L.G. Finnerty and K.L. Cook. He was also president of the Home Realty Company, which specialized in \$7,500 to \$20,000 homes.<sup>14</sup>

As his work transitioned into building construction contractor, Bitman met recent divorcee and mother of one, Sylvia Baskin. The two were soon married, and it was not long before they had a son and daughter together. In September 1933, Sylvia purchased Lots 1 to 11 on Block 2 of the Downington Addition in South Park Hill. They had been part of a larger purchase of 30 lots made by Samuel M. Perr in May 1894. Perry never developed the land, so they were a clean slate when Sylvia purchased them and proceeded to sell Lots 1 to 4 to her husband, Harry Morris Bitman, in November 1935. The following month, he filed a permit for construction of a “brick residence with attached garage” on those lots at 6400 Montview Blvd. Bitman was both the applicant and the contractor, while the architect was listed as “Roger Musick.”<sup>15</sup> No owner

<sup>14</sup> *Denver Post*, December 31, 1929, page 2; May 25, 1930, page 63.

<sup>15</sup> *City and County of Denver Assessor Lot Indexes 1860-1917, Block 1 of Downington Addition* (available from <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll11/id/16628>), accessed December 9, 2019; City and County of Denver Building Permit #3665, December 10, 1935.

was listed, and the property was not sold until its completion in July 1936.<sup>16</sup>



*Harry M. Bitman, 1930 (Source: Denver Post)*

Bitman and J. Roger were also working together on another residence in the neighborhood at 6230 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. Much like the land for the Bitman-Hower House, Bitman's wife, Sylvia had purchased the lots then sold them to Harry in 1935. The permit for the house was filed the day before the permit for the Bitman-Hower House, and Bitman was listed as the owner. At that time, he listed 6400 Montview Blvd. as his office. Although built in the Tudor Revival style, the property at 6230 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. shares an element that appears to be a common feature among Musick's residential commissions: a decorative flagstone walkway leading to the front door. This landscape feature appears on the Bitman-Hower property in an elaborate geometric pattern depicting the phases of moon. Flagstone walkways with simpler layouts are present at 6401 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. (built 1938), and 320 (built 1937), 334 (built 1937), and 370 (built 1938) Ivy St.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to note that the house at 4833 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pkwy. bears a striking resemblance to the Bitman-Hower House. The land for that property was purchased in December 1936 by Bitman, and he filed a permit in March 1937 to construct a "masonry residence with 2 car garage attached."<sup>18</sup> Musick is not credited as the architect, so it is presumed that Bitman took his knowledge from building the Bitman-Hower House and applied it to the next property. The house was planned with a footprint slightly smaller than the Bitman-Hower House, and several details on the exterior are simplified in comparison such as the lack of decorative brickwork, prominent chimney and bay window, and arched cast-iron and glass awning over the main entrance. Once the house was complete in 1937, Bitman sold it to Eugene A. Jones. Bitman went on to form the Bitman Construction Co., and his retirement around 1967 capped off approximately 40 years of being a building construction professional.

<sup>16</sup> *City and County of Denver Assessor Lot Indexes 1860-1917, Block 1 of Downington Addition.*

<sup>17</sup> City and County of Denver Building Permits.

<sup>18</sup> City and County of Denver Building Permit #920, March 17, 1937.

### Clarence M. Hower

In July 1936, Bitman sold the property at 6400 Montview Blvd. to Clarence M. Hower, a 57-year-old advertising executive originally from Pennsylvania. Hower was a man of medium height and build, with black hair and blue eyes.<sup>19</sup> He and his wife, Minetta (Minnie) who was also from Pennsylvania, had one daughter, Beryl Rosebud. Prior to buying the Montview Blvd. house, the Howers lived at 1071 Marion St.<sup>20</sup>

Hower made his career in advertising, and by 1920 he was President of the Hower Advertising Agency. Early on, Hower pushed for advertising professionals to be respected as one would respect individuals in medicine and science. In a May 1920 talk before the Advertising Club in Denver, Hower stated, “We recognize law, medicine and the sciences as professions, and the ordinary layman does not presume to be qualified to pass opinions on these subjects. Why not be equally sensible in looking upon advertising as a profession and trusting the numerous details to the professional advertising writer just as we trust the doctor in case of sickness or the lawyer in time of legal trouble[?]”<sup>21</sup>



*Clarence M. Hower, 1925 (Source: Denver Post)*

Hower’s agency garnered the admiration of other advertisers, given the implied quality of the people he hired. In 1920, a man from Chicago with experience in the advertising departments of Marshal Field & Co. and Atlas Portland Cement Co. joined Hower’s team.<sup>22</sup> The following year, the former general manager of the McCormick-Armstrong advertising agency and the senior vice president of the House of Hubbell (a large, innovative printing company) in Cleveland were hired as “experts” on Hower’s staff.<sup>23</sup>

Respect for Hower extended beyond his fellow advertisers. In 1922, he was brought on to instruct a 21-week course in advertising at the University of Denver. The Dean at the time stated that, “Mr. Hower has a wide reputation as a thoro[ugh] and capable advertising and merchandising analyst, and his students will be given the advantage of practical as well as theoretical training under his instruction.”<sup>24</sup> Not only was he a leader in his industry, but another gauge of the success of Hower’s agency was reflected in the opening salary promised to new salesmen. “Immediate earnings from \$600 to \$1,000 per month” was promised in a December 1928 advertisement placed by the agency, an amount that would range from \$108,000 to \$181,000 annually in 2020.<sup>25</sup> By 1929, Hower Advertising Agency had opened an office in Dallas, Texas and was recognized as “a national organization with

<sup>19</sup> WWII Draft Card for Clarence Hower.

<sup>20</sup> 1930 United States Federal Census.

<sup>21</sup> *Denver Post*, May 26, 1920, page 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Denver Post*, June 9, 1920, page 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Denver Post*, June 13, 1921, page 4.

<sup>24</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, January 28, 1922, page 9.

<sup>25</sup> *Denver Post*, December 23, 1928, page 41.



headquarters in Denver.”<sup>26</sup>

Located in the Security Building in downtown Denver, the office of the agency was also the subject of a major scandal in 1929. According to newspaper accounts at the time, the state’s attorney general filed a motion with the state supreme court to disbar a well-known Denver attorney, Jean D. Kelley. Apparently, Kelley had threatened to arrest Hower and then broke into the agency’s office with a private detective on January 5, 1929 in order to seize records and files in the name of his client, Catherine McCune. Ms. McCune, a self-declared “skin specialist”, had placed countless ads in the Denver Post since at least 1927 extolling the virtues of her knowledge of cosmetology and treatments being offered from her salon in the Brown Palace Hotel.<sup>27</sup>

**Big Money Opportunity**

We offer exceptional opportunity to salesmen who can sell unique advertising to retailers. Men will start out in exclusive territories Jan. 2. Those who qualify will be made district managers of larger territories March 1. Immediate earnings from \$600 to \$1,000 per month. District managers will receive the usual commission plus a bonus on the sales of 5 men under them. The work is dignified; earnings are large; future practically unlimited. Thoro sales training given to all men selected. Interviews granted on Monday and Wednesday. The Hower Advertising Agency, 1213 Security bldg., ask for Mr. Reaves.

*Hower Advertising Agency classified ad, 1928 (Source: Denver Post)*

Once the charges were filed in December 1929, Kelley represented himself and entered no denial of the charges in the attorney general’s petition. As one newspaper account stated, “His answer...virtually amounted to throwing himself on the mercy of the court while admitting that perhaps he had been overzealous in the prosecution of his client’s interests.” It was never explained why McCune needed her files or why Kelley acted in such an extreme manner with Hower.<sup>28</sup> No account from Hower regarding the scandal was located in newspapers published at the time.

Several years after the dust had settled, the Howers had accumulated enough wealth and status to purchase the Musick-designed house at 6400 Montview Blvd. Their ownership was short-lived, however, when Clarence died on November 3, 1937. Minnie and Beryl stayed in the house for about eight months before they sold it to David R. Golden, a Polish-born retail automobile dealer, and his wife, Ruth.

The Golden lived in the house until the mid-1950s, when they sold it to Morton I. and Helen S. Fisher. The Fisher family owned the property until 2011, and the Morton Fisher Residence Trust sold it to Laurel Caplan, who then sold it

**Catherine McCune,  
Skin Specialist**

—has perfected her Medicated Silk Muscle Lifting Mask for a perfect complexion! Worn at night or a few minutes each day it cures deep lines, sagging muscles and all complexion ills. No cutting or peeling. Telephone Main 3006 or Main 1740, or address Miss McCune, Brown Palace Hotel, room 4, main floor. Include \$1 for trial treatment of her guaranteed permanent remover of superfluous hair. Not a depilatory.



*Advertisement for Catherine McCune, 1927 (Source: Denver Post)*

<sup>26</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, April 3, 1929.

<sup>27</sup> *Denver Post*, February 13, 1927, page 28; January 23, 1927, page 35.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, December 3, 1929, page 29; December 25, 1929, page 10.

to the current owner. It is obvious that each of the owners have respected the qualities that define the unique character of this Spanish Eclectic property, and it has been well-cared for over the past 84 years.

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Photographs



Looking southwest at 6400 Montview Blvd.





Looking southeast at north facade





Looking west at east side





Looking northwest at south and east sides



Looking northeast at west and south sides





Looking south toward main entrance





Looking north at decorative flagstone walkway.  
Note the decorative moon phase detail in the center.





Camera oriented west and looking down at decorative sun design in flagstone on back patio.

**Boundary Map**

