

**To:** Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee of Denver City Council  
**From:** Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)  
**Date:** August 23, 2018  
**RE:** Landmark Designation for 670 Marion Street (Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House)

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Based on ordinance designation criteria and on the 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:** #2018L-006  
**Address:** 670 Marion Street  
**Zoning:** U-SU-C  
**Council:** District 10, Wayne New  
**Blueprint Denver:** Area of Stability  
**Owner:** John and Beverly Muraglia  
**Applicant(s):** John and Beverly Muraglia

#### **Case Summary:**

On behalf of the owners, Historic Denver submitted a Landmark Designation application for 670 Marion, the Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House, to CPD on May 22, 2018. Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver Landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for August 7, 2018.

At the Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing, the LPC voted (7-0) to recommend landmark designation based on History Criteria 1a and 1c, Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b, and Geography Criterion 3b citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the staff report.

#### **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 be more than 30 years old....and meet the following criteria:

1. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:

- History
- Architecture
- Geography

2. Maintain its physical and historical integrity

3. Consider how property relates to context or theme

#### **Criteria Evaluation:**

Landmark staff found that the structure application meets History Criteria 1a and 1c, Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b, and Geography Criterion 3b.

## 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 Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House was the first house built on the 600 block of Marion Street, now part of the East Seventh Avenue Historic District. The development of Capitol Hill generally, and the East Seventh Avenue area more specifically, were part of the wave of home building in the outer ring of neighborhoods in Denver from the 1900s onward, as the city evolved following the silver crash of 1893. After the crash, Denver's architectural style began moving away from the more lavish Victorian era, with society's elite seeking symmetry and classic designs. The Shingle style as illustrated through the Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House is a bridge between the Victorian and Modern eras of architecture. The Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House thus represents a time of transition and evolution for the City of Denver.

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

The Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House has been home to a number of influential individuals who have made their mark on the history of Denver and Colorado. The first owner, Julius E. Kinney, was a prominent Denver physician who had achieved a reputation regionally as an expert in stomach disorders. In 1907 the second owner of the home was stockman and politician William H. Meyer. Meyer was a signer of the Colorado State Constitution, Lieutenant Governor of Colorado, and representative in the Colorado Territorial House. In 1916 the home was purchased by Albert A. Reed, who founded Boulder's oldest law firm, was an outstanding Professor of Law and Chair of the Law Department at the University of Colorado Boulder. He later became the President of the U.S. National Bank of Denver and played a prominent role in Denver society. In 1947, another banker purchased the home, Walter C. Emery, who gained distinction as a Denver businessman and was one of the original owners of the Denver Broncos. The house changed hands several times between 1950 and 1976, when the Muraglia family purchased the property. John Muraglia is an engineer, banker, and businessman. John and his wife, Beverly, have lived in the home since 1976. Since its construction, the property was home to a series of owners who were influential in both the city and the state.

## 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;*

The Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House embodies the Shingle style. This style, in the words of Diane Wilk, is "an Americanization of Queen Anne and a uniquely American invention." The Shingle style became fully developed by the 1880s and was popular in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. The typical attributes of the style include continuous wood shingle surfaces, extensive porches, rusticated stone, and round arches.

While the Shingle style was prominent in the eastern United States at the height of its popularity, few houses in Denver lay claim to this style. Key features of the Shingle style embodied in the Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House include, wood shingles on the upper stories, shingled walls without interruption at corners, the asymmetrical façade with irregular, steeply pitched roof, intersecting cross gables, multi-level eaves,

and an extensive porch. As is typical of the Denver architecture, the house also contains eclectic elements of other styles, including Richardsonian Romanesque. These are seen through the prominent round brick arches on the portico and porte cochere.

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

The Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House was designed by prominent turn-of-the-century Denver architects Willis A. Marean and Albert J. Norton, highlighting their versatility and the diversity of their work. Together, Marean and Norton designed some of the most prominent residential, commercial, and public structures in Denver, working in many different architectural styles. They designed one of Denver's best examples of Colonial Revival architecture, the Governor's Residence in 1908. Marean and Norton worked in the Spanish Colonial Revival style for the Steele House (555 S. Downing), while the Sarah Platt Decker Branch Library (1501 S. Logan) is an L-shaped English cottage. The showy Stoiber-Reed-Humphries Mansion (1022 Humboldt St), is in the Renaissance Revival style, while the Robinson House (1225 Pennsylvania St) is Craftsman. The Cass-Friedman House (733 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Ave) is in the Dutch Colonial Revival style, and the Robert Speer House (300 Humboldt St) is an expanded Denver Square. Marean and Norton designed the Cheesman Memorial Pavilion in Colorado Yule Marble, evoking classical Greek associations, as well as the Greek Open Air Theatre at Civic Center. They designed the eclectic red-brick Globeville School, as well as many other prominent buildings including the YMCA (25 E. 16<sup>th</sup> Ave) and the Chamber of Commerce (1726 Champa St). While Marean and Norton designed buildings include a variety of architectural styles and uses throughout Denver, the residence at 670 Marion is an important example of their work for its unique design and rare Shingle style.



670 Marion Street, front façade

Planning Services  
Community Planning and Development  
201 W. Colfax Ave., Dept. 205 | Denver, CO 80202  
[www.denvergov.org/CPD](http://www.denvergov.org/CPD)  
p. 720.865.2983



670 Marion Street, side and rear elevations

### 3. Geographic Significance

**To have geographic importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:**

*b) Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;*

The Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House was designed by prominent turn-of-the-century Denver architects Willis A. Marean and Albert J. Norton. Architectural styles common in the East Seventh Avenue Historic District are Mediterranean Revival, English Tudor, Dutch Colonial Revival, and French Manor. However, the Meyer-Reed-Muraglia House stands out from its neighbors, as one of the only Shingle style homes in the city. This rare example of the Shingle style in Denver highlights the variety and diversity of the city's architecture in Denver's first fifty years. The house was built as the area was recovering from the 1893 silver crash, as Denver was expanding outward, but before the City Beautiful Movement had taken hold to influence architectural styles. The house thus represents a specific, identifiable moment in Denver's historical geography, when the Victorian era met the Modern as the city expanded outward.

#### **Integrity:**

Chapter 30, DRMC requires that a landmark designated property maintain its historic and physical integrity, defined as "the ability of a structure or district 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 property retains a high degree of integrity, within minimal changes. The property is still in the same location, with minimal changes to the surrounding area, due in part to the East Seventh Avenue Historic District, thus retaining both integrity of location and setting. While there is one-story side/rear addition, the change is not readily visible and does not impact the integrity of the Marean and Norton design. Overall, the integrity of materials and workmanship are also excellent and the continued use as a residence helps retain a strong sense of feeling and association.



670 Marion, front facade

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

The structure relates to early-twentieth century growth of the of Denver and, specifically to the Capitol Hill area, as the city recovered from the 1893 silver crash.

**Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan (2000), Blueprint Denver (2002), and Capitol Hill Cheesman Park Neighborhood Plan (1993)**

The comprehensive plan envisioned Denver in 2020 as vibrant, with well-preserved and appropriately used structures representing every era of the city’s history. It included strategies (1-C) that “Preserve Denver’s architectural and design legacies while allowing new to evolve.”

This property is located in an Area of Stability in Blueprint Denver. Within Blueprint Denver, landmark preservation is identified as a tool to reinforce areas of stability. Blueprint Denver noted that for areas of



stability, it is important to respect valued development patterns and attributes of the area, including existing buildings, particularly those adding distinctive character and identity.

The Capitol Hill Cheesman Park Neighborhood Plan contains strong recommendations for retaining the historic character of the neighborhood. These include expanding upon the historic character, emphasizing historic preservation, designating historic districts and structures, exploring stronger preservation strategies, and emphasizing historic preservation education.

**Boundary:**

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:  
L 4 TO 6 INC & S 5FT OF 3 & N 7 1/2FT OF 7 BLK 151 S DIV OF CAPITOL HILL

**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.

**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
  - 7th Avenue Neighborhood Association
  - Friends & Neighbors for Cheesman Park
  - Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc.
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
  - Denver Neighborhood Association, 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

**Public Comments:**

As of the date of this staff report, CPD has received no comment letters or emails regarding the designation application.

**Attachments Provided by CPD:**

- Map of structure proposed for preservation
- LPC public hearing draft meeting record
- Designation Application