

1 **BY AUTHORITY**

2 ORDINANCE NO. _____
3 SERIES OF 2023

COUNCIL BILL NO. CB23-0384
COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE:
Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure

5 **A BILL**

6 **For an ordinance designating 602 South Harrison Lane as a structure for**
7 **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 April 4, 2023, the staff report, and evidence received at the hearing before City Council on
13 May 15, 2023, the structure at 602 South Harrison Lane meets the criteria for designation as a structure
14 for preservation as set out in Section 30-3, Denver Revised Municipal Code, as amended, by
15 maintaining its integrity, being more than 30 years old, and meeting the criteria in the following three
16 categories from Section 30-3(3):

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

19 The structure at 602 South Harrison Lane (the "Structure") is significant for its association with
20 the post-World War II residential development of Denver. Constructed by the Denver architect Alan
21 Golin Gass in 1961, the Structure is associated with the rapid growth of Denver in the mid-twentieth
22 century and the expansion of residential development into areas formerly less desirable for residential
23 development. The Structure was built on land formerly part of a nursery and part of a trend of Denver's
24 dairies, greenhouses, and nurseries being replaced by housing developments in the 1950s and 1960s.
25 It was also located adjacent to a landfill, part of the transformation of the land along Cherry Creek from
26 a gravel pit and then town dump to a fashionable shopping area, with an open-air mall opening at
27 Cherry Creek in 1955.

28 The Structure is representative of the work of a collection of architects experimenting with
29 housing innovation and promoting new types of residential development in post-war Denver. Architects
30 and designers had been experimenting with ideas for housing during the previous decades but were
31 unable to realize their visions until after the Great Depression and World War II. These architects helped
32 shape development in post-war Denver, including through the design of their own homes. The unusual

form and siting of the Structure received public attention as it was being constructed by Gass, including being featured in two *Denver Post* articles in the early 1960s. The Structure would remain a prominent example of contemporary housing during the 1960s, featured in home tours and a *Denver Post* (October 14, 1968) titled “Excellent Architecture Begins at Home” which featured homes “loaded with ingenious features” built by local architects for themselves. Thus, the Structure reflects mid-twentieth century residential development patterns in Denver, both through the expansion of housing into new areas of the city in response to the city’s rapid population growth as well as in the new trends in residential design reflected in the work of progressive architects such as Gass.

c. Embodying distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;

The Structure represents the evolution of Modern architecture in Denver after World War II. Character-defining features of the house include the following: the dramatic roof form with a domed skylight and deep overhanging eaves; large decks with broad expanses of glass to provide indoor/outdoor connections; an open-plan and flexible interior with a bi-level floor plan; combination of concrete, brick, and wood; symmetrical and geometric design elements; and angled lot orientation. These elements represent the evolution of Modern architecture in the mid-twentieth century away from the starkness of the International Style into more varied interpretations of Modernism. The use of brick is particularly reflective of Modern architecture in Denver. Brick is a highly characteristic building material of the city and remained prominently in use throughout the 20th century. While Modern architects in other cities often replaced brick with concrete or stucco, in Denver brick remained common.

d. Being a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;

The Structure is a significant example of the work of Alan Golin Gass, who made substantial contributions to the fields of architecture and urban planning in Colorado. During his long career he was a prominent member of Denver’s architectural community working both independently and collaboratively with other architects and contributing his expertise to a variety of planning, arts, and civic organizations. Gass worked for several prominent architects in his early career including assisting I.M. Pei with the Denver U.S. Bank Center and the Courthouse Square redevelopment into Zeckendorf Plaza and Fisher & Davis & James Sudler Associates, with the Byron G. Rogers Federal Building. In 1961, he decided to start his own firm in partnership with Robert Brewster Gay. After this partnership ended in 1967, Gass went on to work with other firms in Denver, New York City, and Aspen. Gass also made significant contributions to the development of Denver through his volunteer work with various commissions and organizations dedicated to arts, culture, and planning. These

1 include: founding the AIA/Denver Urban Design Committee in 1962; serving as Vice Chairman of
2 the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Denver Regional Council of Governments; serving as
3 President of the Babi Yar Park Foundation to create (and then advocate for) a city park to
4 memorialize Soviet Jews massacred in 1941; and serving on the Board of the Denver Architecture
5 Foundation.

6 In 1998, Gass was recognized as part of the AIA College of Fellows. The fellowship program
7 was developed to elevate architects who have achieved a standard of excellence in the profession
8 and made a significant contribution to architecture and society on a national level. Fellows are
9 selected for their work in areas such as advancing the standards of practice, improving building
10 standards, serving society, and improving architectural education and training.

11 Though constructed at the beginning of Gass's career, the Structure remains a key
12 representation of his career. The Structure was Gass's first widely-recognized design, helping to
13 establish his architectural career and represents his Modern design philosophy. It is a very personal
14 expression of his architectural vision and showcases Gass's knowledge in passive solar and
15 interpretation of Modern architecture.

16 Gass would go on to incorporate active and passive solar technology in his future designs
17 and contribute heavily to the environmental design field. The bi-level design Gass incorporated in
18 the Structure would also be seen in his other residential works and was a practical design element.
19 Sinking the bottom level into the ground was also designed to help with the heating and cooling costs
20 by limiting the amount of exposed wall surfaces. The association of this designed home as Gass's
21 personal residence where he lived during most of his career achievements is also significant. As a
22 prime example of Gass's work as an emerging architect, the Structure embodies a distinctive period
23 in his career, and remains a prominent representation of his residential design.

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

26 **Section 1.** That based upon the analysis referenced above, and the evidence received at the
27 public hearings, certain property at 602 South Harrison Lane, and legally described as follows, together
28 with all improvements situated and located thereon, be and the same is hereby designated as a
29 structure for preservation:

30 Book 8640 PG. 422, Office of the Clerk and Recorder, City and County of Denver, State of
31 Colorado

1 That part of the SE1/4 NE1/4 of Section 13, Township 4 South, Range 68 West of the 6th
2 P.M., described as follows:

3 Beginning at the Southeast corner of said SE1/4NE1/4; thence North 30 feet to a point on
4 the North property line of Exposition Ave.; thence West along the North property line of
5 Exposition Ave. a distance of 505.87 feet to a point on the East property line of the South
6 Harrison Lane; thence North along the East property line of South Harrison Lane a distance
7 of 397.16 feet to the true point of beginning; thence East on a line with a deflection angle to
8 the right of 90°06'29" a distance of 100 feet; thence North and parallel with the East
9 property line of South Harrison Lane a distance of 104 feet; thence West on a line with a
10 deflection angle to the left of 89°53'31" a distance of 100 feet to a point on the East property
11 line of South Harrison Lane; thence South along the East property line of South Harrison
12 Lane a Distance of 104 feet to the true point of beginning.

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

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

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

1 COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE: April 11, 2023
2 MAYOR-COUNCIL DATE: April 18, 2023
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: April 20, 2023
11 Pursuant to section 13-9, D.R.M.C., this proposed ordinance has been reviewed by the office of the
12 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 Kerry Tipper, Denver City Attorney
16 BY: _____, Assistant City Attorney DATE: _____