



## 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:** 3435 Albion St.

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: Robinson House (original owner)

Other or Current Name: Kate's Restaurant

## Location

Address: 3435 Albion St.

Legal Description: Lots 26, 27, and the southerly three (3) feet of lot 28, Block 39, J. Cook Jr's. North Division of Capitol Hill, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

## Number of resources:

# Contributing

1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Non-Contributing

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Primary Structures

Accessory Structures

Features

## Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

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

The contributing structure is the main house which is the focus of the designation.

## General Property Data

Date of construction: 1889

Architect (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Builder (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Original Use: Single Family Home

Current Use: Vacant

Source(s) of information for above:

Noel, Thomas J. and William J. Hansen. *The Park Hill Neighborhood*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 2002.

## Previous documentation

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

Researched as part of the Park Hill Neighborhood tour book by Historic Denver in 2002.



## 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: Steve Davis

Address: 3209 W Fairview Pl

Phone: 303-807-0750

Email: sdavis7625@gmail.com

### Primary Applicant (if not owner)

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

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

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

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

### Prepared by

Name: Michael Flowers, Historic Denver

Address: 1420 N Ogden St. Suite 202, Denver, CO 80206

Phone: 303-534-5288 ext 27

Email: mflowers@historicdenver.org



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): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

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

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.

### 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 A**

The Robinson House is significant under Criterion A, as it has a direct association with the historical development of the city. The Robinson House is one of the oldest extant houses in Park Hill and the first house built on speculation by John Cook Jr. for his newly-platted development, "The North Division of Capitol Hill". The house represents a period of expansion in Denver when houses were being built on speculation, which was a new concept in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to a period of economic and population growth in Denver from the 1870s and 1880s, the city experienced a significant building boom. 527 subdivisions were platted during the 1880s with 75 percent of those

subdivisions between the latter years of 1887-1889.<sup>1</sup> As the intra-city streetcar system expanded, and developers looked to capitalize on property sales outside of Denver's core. The Robinson House was built as a part of this expansion and building boom. However, the house also tells the story of what happened after the boom, as it is also one of the only houses constructed by Cook in his newly platted division because of the Panic of 1893. The silver market crashed during this year and Denver was particularly hit hard during the economic depression. As a result, the building boom ended abruptly and Cook's plans for the subdivision were not realized, but this house is a representation of Denver's boom and bust in the 1880s and early 1890s.

It is also representative of a time when this area of North Park Hill was on the edge of Denver, straddling an urban and rural setting. This was a direct result of economic crash that left the Robinson House and only a handful of homes scattered among dairies and brickyards. Across Colorado Boulevard to the west was the Clayton Home for Orphaned Boys, the City Dairy was across 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, and to east and south were brickworks. Amenities and services provided to other parts of the city were absent at the house on Albion St. throughout its first decades. Electricity would not be installed in the house until 1921 and at the time of construction, water to the area was provided by a single well. Other parts of Denver were serviced by electric streetcars, but residents of the "North Division of Capitol Hill" were connected to the Denver's downtown by a horse powered streetcar. This dynamic is exemplified by the period the house belonged to the Roe family. The Roes purchased the house in 1913 and farmed the land around the house, constructing outbuildings such as a Barn and chicken coop, though they are no longer extant. Other houses of this earlier period were mostly demolished, but the Robinson House has remained on its corner lot as the neighborhood gradually grew around it.

### **Criterion C**

The Robinson House is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Style. and one of the only examples of this type of architecture in the Park Hill Neighborhood, including on the blocks immediately surrounding the Robinson House, but also in the Greater Park Hill area as most blocks were developed after the style went out of vogue following the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Robinson house also precedes much of the construction in North Park Hill, which saw minimal development in the early 1900s and then more significant construction during the post-World War II housing boom.

The Robinson House embodies many of the defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style, including the spindle work and cross gable sub types as described in McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Several other defining characteristics of the Queen

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<sup>1</sup> R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, "The Instant City – The Gold Rush and Early Settlement, 1858-1892," *Discover Denver*, 23, <https://discoverdenver.co/sites/discoverdenver.co/files/document/pdf/The%20Instant%20City%201858%20-%201892.pdf>.

Anne Style are present here as well, including the steeply pitched roof with an irregular or cross gable shape, dominant front facing gable, patterned shingles, asymmetrical appearance, and methods to avoid smooth wall appearance. The Robinson house employs the uses of dogtooth brick detailing, stone and brick belt courses, and decorative wood elements such as the vergeboards to create a wall appearance of varied textures. "Spindle work" is featured on the balustrades and the porches have delicately turned supports which are character defining features of the spindle work subtype. Additionally, many of the upper panes of windows are surrounded in smaller decorative panes which is a typical feature of Queen Anne.

### **Criterion G**

The house promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment in the neighborhood for to its physical characteristics and rarity, due to age. The Robinson Home predates nearly all other construction in North Park Hill, especially because most of the other homes that once existed nearby have been demolished and replaced over the years.

The 1880s Queen Anne house differentiates itself from the nearby post-war, contemporary housing developments, and commercial structures. Rebecca Dorward noted in the National Register nomination of the Robinson House that "Examples of Queen Anne residences can still be found in many parts of the city of Denver however, in the eastern suburbs only a few examples remain".<sup>2</sup> Surrounding the house are new contemporary town homes and gas stations. The neighborhood is primarily composed of simple Tudor revival styles from the 1920s or 1930s or minimal traditional homes constructed in the 1940s and 1950s. The ornate two-story home is a rare example of the Queen Anne Style in North Park Hill that represents a time when the neighborhood was poised to be developed during Denver's building boom of the 1880s but fell victim to the economic Panic of 1893.

The immediate area of North Park Hill, in what was the "North Division of Capitol Hill" there are only two houses of the same vintage still extant. The Robinson House and the McCoy House, a small Victorian cottage a block south of the Robinson House. Both were constructed in 1889 and both show characteristics of the Queen Anne style although the Robinson House is larger and more ornate. Beyond the North Division of Capitol Hill subdivision only the Queen Anne at 3301 Dexter Street and a craftsman bungalow at 3326 Cherry St., remain nearby, leaving the Robinson House a rare survivor and the oldest home not just in Cook's subdivision, but in the adjacent subdivisions.

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<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Dorward, "Robinson House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2003, 10. <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/84129147>.

The home's age and style is also rare within the Great Park Hill Neighborhood, which extends all the way south to Colfax and east to Quebec, where only a small handful of homes were constructed before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in the first Park Hill subdivision, which includes approximately 700 homes between Montview and 26<sup>th</sup>, Colorado Boulevard and Dahlia, there is only one other extant home from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a Four Square constructed in 1895. In the same area, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, there is only one house identified as partially Queen Anne, constructed in 1904 at 2309 Ash.

The style of the Robinson House, which clearly signals its age, makes it distinctive and representative of Denver's boom and bust history.

#### Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1889-1953

Provide justification for the period of significance.

The period of significance is the construction date of the house to when it left the ownership of the Roe Family. The Robinson house is an excellent example of the Queen Anne Style that was popular before the Panic of 1893 that stifled development in J Cook Jr.'s North Division of Capitol Hill. The house was in the ownership of the Roe family from 1913 to 1953. The Roe family owned the house during a period of time when it was utilized as a farmhouse before the subdivision was developed. The period of significance spans the time when the house was built due to a building boom through its time as being one of the only a handful of houses in its subdivision to development in the neighborhood during the post-war era.

## **4. Property Description**

Attach a sheet that describes the current physical appearance of the property, providing a statement for each of the following:

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

The Robinson House was constructed as one of the first houses in the John Cook Jr. addition. At the time of its construction in 1889 there were very few houses in the area, and it was in a prairie setting with a dairy across 35<sup>th</sup> Ave.

The house is located on Block 39 lots 26 to 27, on the southwest corner of 35<sup>th</sup> and Albion St. The Park Hill Golf Course lies across the street on the north side of 35<sup>th</sup>. To the south of the house lies a row of newly constructed town homes facing Albion St. An apartment building was constructed across Albion St. to the east directly across from the property, and south of the apartments is the Denver Northeast Islamic Center. To the west, on the same block, just east of Colorado Blvd. is a Circle K gas station. Further south are other contemporary commercial buildings including a car wash and a gas station. The house has a 50-foot frontage on Albion St. and 125-foot-deep yard that contains almost no vegetation, and a dirt yard. The house sits near the center of the



parcel and a paved walkway off the sidewalk along Albion St. leads up to the front porch of the house. There is a wooden privacy fence on the south side of the property that does not block views of the façade. Concrete stairs lead up to the main entrance.

The two-story painted brick house has an irregular plan with a cross gabled roof. It was originally a two-story dwelling that was converted to a restaurant. The house is a spindle work subtype of the Queen Anne Style of architecture. The dwelling contains three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a parlor, dining room, kitchen, attic, and full basement.

Several character defining features of the Queen Anne Style are present on the house. The recessed two-story porch features turned porch supports and a spindle work balustrade, defining characteristics of the architectural subtype. Other notable Queen Anne features include patterned fish scale shingles, and large panes of glass bounded by smaller panes. There is also the hallmark variation in wall textures achieved by different materials, segmented arches, belt courses, and a belt of decorative wood trim. On the rear of the property is another recessed first floor porch and a second-floor porch above was enclosed but would have mirrored the design of the front porch.

- 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.

The house's cross gabled roof is comprised of replacement green asphalt shingles, an original patterned brick chimney rises up from the south side. The foundation around the property is made of brick set upon rough cut quarried stone. The entire exterior is beige painted brick and brown painted stone belt courses with historic wooden windows, historic wooden decorative verge boards under the gabled roof lines, and decorative wooden shingles under the gable fronts.

### **East (Front Façade)**

A two-story recessed porch and the main entrance is located on the northern part of the historic home. The second story of the porch is topped with front facing gable roof. Underneath the eaves is a decorative wooden vergeboard painted purple and green with faux bracket detailing. The front of the gable is decorated with wooden shingles in a fish scale pattern. Both the first floor and second floor porches are decorated with turned spindles and spindle work balustrades, painted a combination of white, brown, and green. Dividing the two porches is a belt of patterned shingles with flared eaves. The entrance to the second story is a replacement aluminum door and screen door. The main entrance door is a replacement glazed and white aluminum painted door. Both entrances are framed by brown painted original wood and topped with simple segmental arches in a soldier course.

The main massing of the façade is topped with a front facing gable. Underneath the eaves is a decorative vergeboard identical to the one underneath the porch gable. The gable is decorated with patterned fish scale shingles. At the center of the gable are wood framed side by side single paneled tall arched windows. Dividing the decorative gable shingles from the brick are two belt courses of decorative rectangle wood trim, painted with purple and green in the same style as the vergeboards.

The windows on the façade are framed in brown painted wood with white painted wooden sashes. Both the first floor and second floor window have rough faced stone sills that are painted brown. The second-floor window is a 2x2 rectangular window. The upper panes are bordered by decorative smaller panes of glass. Underneath this window the sill is connected to the rest of the façade with thin parallel brown stone belt courses.

The first-floor window is a 1x2 lighted window. The upper sash and pane are arched and surrounded by smaller panes of decorative glass. The bottom sash is rectangular. The window is topped with an arched lintel of brown painted rough faced stone topped with a keystone. A belt course of rough faced brown painted stone extends out from the lintel from the recessed porch to the south façade. Underneath the window connecting the sill to the brick is a dog tooth patterned brick belt course bordered by brown painted stone.

### **South Façade**

The east side of the South Façade is dominated by the corbelled chimney, which protrudes out from the top of the wall and runs all the way down to the stone foundation. The base of the chimney widens on the first story and has a decorative brick pattern at its center. The belt courses from the East Façade continue here and remain the same except for the middle belt course which changes from rough faced stone to a pattern of two rows of brown painted brick divided by two rows of white painted brick all in a regular course.

The western portion of this wall protrudes out from the main massing of the house, topped with a gable. Underneath the eave of the gable is the same decorative vergeboard from the east façade. At the center of the gable is a circular window, divided into two panes by a thick brown painted wooden muntin. Both of the half circle panes of glass are bordered by small square panes of glass. Just underneath the window is a decorative piece of patterned wooden trim. The rectangular second floor window and the arched window on the first floor are both duplicates of the windows found on the first façade. There are two windows flanking a bricked in coal chute puncturing the foundation stone.

On the west side of the projection is another two-story porch. The second story of the porch is enclosed with historic white and green paneling. There is a replacement wood and glazed door leading into the enclosed portion of the porch. Dividing the two porches in a belt of green asphalt shingles matching the roof shingles, with flared eaves. The first floor has spindle work supports matching the entry porch on the east façade, and the porch floor and base are made of concrete. There is a first-floor window recessed into the porch on the houses south wall. The window has been replaced with a smaller square window. Enclosing the rest of the original window opening is white painted wood paneling. The narrow window is framed by brown painted wood. It is topped with a brick arched brick lintel of white painted bricks in a soldier course, and a row of brown painted brick in a regular course.

West of the porch is a circa 1913 kitchen addition. The addition is roofed with green asphalt shingles and a west facing gable, that match the main house. A white painted aluminum gutter runs just under the side gable eaves. The entire addition is sided with white painted clapboard siding and sits on a gray brick foundation. There is a narrow 1x1 white aluminum window framed by brown painted wood, and a protruding wooden sill. Just to the west is a smaller addition that was added in the 1980s, to the historic kitchen addition. This newer addition has a sloping shed roof that was originally flat. A brown painted wooden and glazed door sits on the eastern side of this addition, near the ell. A red painted entry porch raises up and is constructed against this wall hiding the white painted brick foundation. A rail on the northern side of the steps extends from the porch to grade.

### **West Façade (Rear)**

Protruding out from the side gable roof of the west façade is a large gable dormer. At the center of the gable near the top is a historic octagonal window frame with green and pink painted wood. The dormer is sided with wooden clapboard siding that has been painted white. Two trapezoidal windows on either side of the gable, with a single pane of glass, were added at a later date. They are framed with green painted wood. Just under the eaves is a single rectangular white painted wooden window framed by brown painted wood. The second story of the rear porch is tucked under the side gable eave and is enclosed in the white and green paneled wood, and two single lighted green painted wood windows.

The lower two belt courses are visible on the wall of the first story porch and continue from the south façade. The entry into the first floor of the house is visible here. The door is a solid paneled wooden door, topped with a transom light and a simple lintel of white painted soldier course brick. Concrete steps lead up to the concrete floor of the first story porch. The rest of the first story is obscured by the 1913 kitchen addition and the later 1980s addition.

The gable face of the 1913 addition faces west. There is a thin green painted wooden fascia, and a small rectangular window that was boarded up is a replacement window. Electrical wires, meters and box are attached to this façade.

The 1980s addition has a small trapezoidal window just under the eaves of the shed roof that slopes downward to the south, that is boarded up. Two rectangular windows, that were metal at one point, have been boarded as well.

### **North façade**

On the far west of the North façade is a part of the 1980s addition. Most of the exterior is white painted brick with a boarded window and entry. Part of this addition has treated blonde brick that was part of the interior while the 2005 addition was still attached.

The north facing side gable is largely uninterrupted, though it flares out toward the west. The spindle work supports for the east facing second story porch are visible. And just under the eave are two original windows and as chimney protrusion that runs from under the eave to the foundation. The top of the chimney was removed circa 2005. To the east of the chimney is a white painted wooden 1x1 lighted window. East of the rectangular window is an arched transom window the arched pane of glass and the arched brick lintel above, the arch is comprised of white painted brick in a soldier course topped with brown painted brick in a rounded regular course. Below the transom window is a white wooden 1 lighted window with a wooden frame and a stone sill that has been treated to match the surrounding brick.

The upper part of this façade is white painted brick as the rest of the house, but a significant portion of the brick on the façade has blonde brick that may have been treated with a stain or coating. This portion was part of the interior when the 2005 addition was still attached but appears to remain the historic brick. It has the same belt courses and dog tooth patterned course above the foundation as the rest of the house. Below is the same white painted cut stone foundation.

West of the chimney protrusion is a small boarded up window and to the east is a boarded-up door entry way. Above the door is an arched lintel in a soldier course.

### **c. Major Alterations**

There have been a few major alterations to the house. An addition was put on the north side in 2005. This addition was removed in 2022, there is different colored brick and still evidence of this addition removal as of writing this designation.



In the 1980s a small flat roofed addition, now with a sloping roof (approximately 12' x 15'), was added to the historic 1913 kitchen addition (approximately 8' x 9'). The 1913 addition has been considered historic and a contributing feature to the house.

The doors on the property have been replaced, as well as one window on the south side of the house on the first floor of the porch, and some windows have been boarded up since that time. The top of a chimney was removed from the north side, presumably when the 2005 addition was put in. All other changes are minor.

## 5. Integrity

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

The Robinson House has received a few alterations over the years and retains a high degree of integrity in the seven categories: Location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The setting has been comprised slightly from the period of significance due to new construction and developments in the neighborhood.

The Robinson House retains integrity for location as it has remained in the same location since its construction. There have been some exterior alterations to the property, but the design of the house remains true to its original design. The prominent Queen Anne design elements such as the spindle work two-story porch, decorative window elements, stone and brickwork, window openings, decorative vergeboards, belt courses, and shingles all remain true to the property. The additions are on the rear, and do not diminish the prominent Queen Anne design features.

In line with the design features the workmanship of the building is still prominently on display. The decorative woodwork, stone, and brick work such as the lintels and dogtooth belt course show a high degree of workmanship and have not been diminished by the alterations. A vast majority of the materials on the house included the brickwork, stonework, windows, and decorative carpentry remain original or historic to the house. There have been some changes in materials regarding the additions, doors, and front porch floor, however, most of the house remains original to its era of construction.

Because the house retains a high degree of its original materials and design, it retains its historic feeling as a single-family Queen Anne home despite the restaurant use. Other than the addition, the home looks and presents as a residence constructed in the 1880s. It also retains its association with the period of Denver's expansion and the 1880s building boom. The Queen Anne style, which differentiates it from the rest of the neighborhood, was popular in the 1880s and it associates the house with that time period, whereas the immediate surrounding buildings were all constructed at a much later date. Therefore, despite the adjacent developments, it is still associated with the

historic events that caused it to be constructed on speculation in its historic and present location.

The only quality of integrity that has been slightly compromised is the setting. While there is still open space across the street, which was a Dairy during the period of significance and later a golf course, much of the surrounding area has been developed. There are gas stations and contemporary townhomes on the same block, and contemporary town homes across the street. The historic setting was an underdeveloped one with much open land dotted with dairies, brickyards and only a handful of houses. While this has changed, the house still retains a high amount of integrity in the other six categories and clearly conveys its historical and architectural significance.

## 6. Historic Context

The beginnings of the Park Hill Neighborhood originated when Baron Alloys Gillaume Eugene von Winckler platted a 32-block tract of land on April 7, 1887. This original Park Hill tract was bordered by 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the north, Montview Boulevard on the south, Colorado Boulevard on the west, and Dahlia Street on the east. The Baron had ambitious plans for his “Park Hill Ranch” which included a racetrack, though this was eclipsed by the City Park track completed soon after. Under the Baron’s ownership Park Hill remained largely undeveloped and his plans to make a fortune selling the land for development were not realized. The Colorado National Guard briefly used the land to train for the Spanish-American War, but after they left in 1898, Baron von Winckler died by suicide. The Baron’s land was purchased by a housing syndicate owned by David. B. Gamble of Proctor & Gamble. Development didn’t begin in earnest until after 1900. By this time the Robinson House had already been constructed in the adjacent J. Cook Jr. Division, which became a part of the North Park Hill neighborhood.

John Cook Jr. was a native of Dublin and came to America in 1848 and settled in Buffalo. After serving in the Union Army during the Civil War he worked as a telegrapher before moving into construction and real estate. He arrived in Denver in 1873 and became a popular businessman in Denver known for his sharpshooting and pigeon hunting contests. Cook also became involved in local politics serving as Alderman from the Fifth Ward of Denver in 1878.<sup>3</sup> Cook lived at a variety of residences in Denver but would not move into Park Hill until around 1907 when he is listed at 3330 34<sup>th</sup> Ave (Bruce Randolph).<sup>4</sup> By 1911 he moved move to 3400 34<sup>th</sup> Ave at the corner of 34<sup>th</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> Dorward, “Robinson House,” 7.

<sup>4</sup> 1907 Ballenger and Richards 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Denver City Director (Denver: Ballenger and Richards, 1907), 329. Denver Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll28/id/14654/rec/27>.

Cook, just a handful of blocks west of the Robinson House, the house where he would live up until shortly before his death in 1918.<sup>5</sup>

Cook owned significant land in the area around his home, and on April 20, 1888, he platted the land between 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Colorado Boulevard to Dahlia Street. Cook called this new subdivision “J. Cook’s North Division of Capitol Hill.” It was Cook’s hope that this area would become a prestigious residential area like its namesake Capitol Hill. At the time that Cook’s division was platted, Denver was experiencing a period of rapid expansion and growth due in large part to silver mining and related industries. Smelting surged in the 1880s, becoming one of the city’s most valuable industries and fueling the growth. Other factors supporting growth in the 1880s include Denver’s designation as the Colorado capital in 1881, the expansion of the railroads, the construction of Union Station, and Denver’s bustling cattle industry. This led to the construction and expansion of government facilities, and growth in businesses supporting the transportation of raw materials and goods. As the economy grew so did the population and the demand for housing.

Denver needed to expand to accommodate its surge in growth. Real Estate developers understood that the land outside of the downtown area would only be valuable if a transportation system was in place to connect new developments to places of employment and amenities.<sup>6</sup> Denver’s streetcar lines expanded greatly during this period and metaphorically paved the way for real estate sales outside the city’s core. This dynamic was described in Discover Denver’s context report *The Instant City*, “Expanding Street railway systems and real estate interests operated hand-in-hand to spur housing development outside the core area.”<sup>7</sup> Developers would even go as far as to construct their own street railways to attract buyers, for example “The investors of 1881 Denver Circle Railroad, for example, incorporated the Denver Circle Real Estate Company the following year”<sup>8</sup> Rail lines had a major impact on Denver helping the city become a regional metropolis.

Land in and around Denver was platted at an incredible rate between the years of 1880 to 1889. 527 subdivisions were platted during the 1880s with 75 percent of those subdivisions between the latter years of 1887-1889.<sup>9</sup> Despite this increase in platting and a building boom, there was still a housing shortage for the city’s growing population. Streetcar additions were popping up all over the outskirts of Denver’s core as railway lines continued to grow. As the potential for real estate sales grew so did desire to build homes on speculation in attempt to spur sales in newly planned additions. Cook saw an

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<sup>5</sup> 1911 Ballenger and Richards 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Denver City Director (Denver: Ballenger and Richards, 1907), 361. Denver Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll28/id/17994/rec/28>.; Phil Goodstein, *The Park Hill Promise* (Denver: New Social Publications, 2012), 462.

<sup>6</sup> Simmons and Simmons, “The Instant City – The Gold Rush and Early Settlement, 1858-1892,” 11.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 23.

opportunity in the land east of Colorado Boulevard even though building on speculation was a relatively new concept at the time. The Robinson house is an example of this strategy, as Cook built the home in 1889 in his newly platted division in order to attract buyers and investors to the area.

As Cook's showcase home the Robinson House was constructed in the popular Queen Anne style of the time and was indicative of the healthy economy. Noel noted "Silver wealth fueled the construction of grand mansions for the wealthy, middle-class Victorian homes in outlying residential subdivisions, new warehouses and business and just about everything else."<sup>10</sup> It is clear by the advertisement for the Robinson House in the *Denver Republican* that Cook had high hopes for the type of house that would be constructed in his subdivision, as the paper boasted that the house had all the "modern improvements – gas, electric, hot and cold water, bath, patent fireplace, hardwood floor, furnace and everything complete".<sup>11</sup> Cook even promised a street car like other developers to service his grand new division.<sup>12</sup>

A grocer and "inventor" named Jay A. Robinson purchased the home from Cook and was the home's first resident. When the Robinsons moved in, the neighborhood was sparsely developed, with a few quaint Victorian homes. The most notable of these was the McCoy House, a small Victorian style cottage located just a block south at 3332 Albion St. The house was also constructed in 1889, and still stands today.<sup>13</sup> Patrick and Mary McCoy were the home's first owners. Patrick was a laborer at Northeast Denver's Smelter and railroad yards. Even by 1905 the Baist Atlas Map only shows nine homes constructed in the area between 35<sup>th</sup> and what would later become Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, illustrating the lack of early development that occurred in the immediate area<sup>14</sup>. Out of the small number of early houses constructed in Cook's division only a handful remain. The earliest constructed houses are the Robinson House and McCoy House, but also worthy of note is a Queen Anne at 3301 Dexter Street and a craftsman bungalow at 3326 Cherry St., leaving the Robinson House a rare survivor and the oldest home not just in Cook's subdivision, but in Park Hill.

Across 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the north, just beyond Cook's addition, was a dairy farm. The dairy would eventually be operated by the George W. Clayton Trust and College, a home for "poor white male orphan children" established in 1911.<sup>15</sup> Clayton College would operate the dairy until 1932 when the land was converted into a public golf course, though

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Therese Anstey, "The Fall & Rise of the Queen City of the Plains, 1893-1904" *Discover Denver*, 1, <https://discoverdenver.co/sites/discoverdenver.co/files/document/pdf/Fall%20and%20Rise%20of%20the%20Queen%20City%20of%20the%20Plains%201893-1904.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas J. Noel and William J. Hansen, *The Park Hill Neighborhood* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 2002), 34.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> George William Baist, *Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Denver, Col.: Complete in One Volume* [Map] (Philadelphia: G. Wm. Baist, 1905), plate 28, Denver Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll39/id/161>.

<sup>15</sup> Noel and Hansen, *The Park Hill Neighborhood*, 17.



ownership remained with Clayton. The Clayton Trust would eventually put a perpetual conservation easement on the property after receiving funds from the city in 1997. The golf course operated until 2017 when it was shuttered, and the Clayton Trust sold the land in 2019.

Despite his plans and the few other structures in the area, the J. Cook Jr. Division did not take off as planned, and most of the modern amenities advertised were not realized until much later. The house would not get electricity until 1921, and the streetcar that serviced the area was horse drawn and not electric like the lines that serviced other additions. Helen Harper's grandparents, James & Mary Roe were the third owners of the house, purchasing it from August and Therese Bergman, who resided there from 1897 until 1913. Harper recalled "This was all rural and there was nothing east of us."<sup>16</sup> Harper also remembers that even though they were in the city they were "isolated" and their biggest concern was prairie fires.<sup>17</sup> The Roe's farmed the land around the home. The site once included a barn, which is now gone, where the Roes raised chickens. The dairy across 35<sup>th</sup> avenue added to the rural atmosphere well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even as development in south Park Hill began to accelerate in the 1910s and 1920s.

The major culprit for the lack of development in Cook's division and Park Hill generally was the Panic of 1893, which caused the bottom to fall out of the lucrative silver industry. In June of 1893 President Grover Cleveland signed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act which negatively impacted the silver market. This created a perfect storm for Denver's economy. Almost overnight the greatest period of expansion in Denver's history came to a halt and with it the building boom. Richard Brettell noted "The building boom, which had characterized Denver for nearly six years ended so abruptly that buildings under construction were abandoned..."<sup>18</sup>

Eventually, as the economy diversified and recovered, Gamble built homes in the original Park Hill subdivision, starting along Montview Boulevard fourteen blocks south of the Robinson House. Hartman's addition, south of Montview, was the next section to develop. Much like Cook's Addition, Hartmann's addition was an unrealized dream of developer Casper R. Hartman for more than twenty years, revived housing demand in early the 1900s gradually supported construction. Hartman platted his addition in square blocks quartered into only four one acre lots which became known as Park Hill Squares. Hartman went from a "sucker" to a visionary in the eyes of the press.<sup>19</sup> Other parts of Park Hill would gradually see similar development. Once the Denver Tramway company purchased the defunct 1888 streetcar line, aggressive promotion brought in more prospective homebuilders. Cook's Addition remained less attractive because it was

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Richard R. Brettell, *Historic Denver 1858-1893* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1973), 197.

<sup>19</sup> Noel and Hansen, *The Park Hill Neighborhood*, 12.



further removed from transit lines, resulting in spotty development until another housing crunch, this time after World War II.

A housing shortage gripped Denver after World War II, a trend mirrored in cities across the country. Land that was once used for dairies and airfields in the Park Hill area were filled with numerous brick and cinderblock homes. It was during this boom that the land and blocks surrounding the Robinson House would finally see some development.

The housing crunch and building boom occurred in tandem with other social and demographic shifts in the city. In 1948 the United States Supreme Court made the discriminatory deed restrictions that had barred African Americans and other non-white Denverites from owning or living in Park Hill, as well as numerous other Denver neighborhoods, unenforceable. A decade later Colorado strengthened its anti-discrimination laws, with more legislation passed in 1965 regarding fair housing in response to the Civil Rights movement. These actions began to address the legal and de facto practices that prevented Black Denverites from living in many neighborhoods, and as African American families began moving east from Five Points, Whittier Cole, and Park Hill were obvious choices.

Indicative of this trend in 1949 was Park Hill's new Cavalier Subdivision, later known as Elmsdale Heights. Located from Dahlia to Elm from east 35<sup>th</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup>, just a few blocks east of the Robinson House, the 10-acre plot of land became controversial when its homes were marketed specifically to African American buyers. Some white neighbors pushed back as they feared a drop in their property values and tried to resist integration efforts. The plans were taken to city council, where many spoke out both for and against approving them to one of the largest crowds to attend a council meeting at the time. The city council approved the subdivision on a vote of six to two. Council President A.A. Blakely explained after the approval that the city council could not consider factors such as the race of person moving into a subdivision when voting for authorization.<sup>20</sup> Post approval the area was developed with brick ranch homes, and by 1970 more than 80% of the population in North East Park Hill was African American.

With North Park Hill leading the way, by the mid-1950s the neighborhood was quickly integrating. The arrival of Black families induced White flight as white residents listed their properties below market to get out of the neighborhood that they feared was changing. Aggressive real estate practices and "block-busting" further fed this trend. In response the neighborhood's churches worked to reduce the fear, ignorance and hatred surrounding racial integration. In 1960 the Park Hill Action Committee, an interracial and interdenominational group of churches, was created to combat racism in the neighborhood. Their mission was to "find a constructive and Christian solution to the problems of integration and to allow the development of this area as a family oriented

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<sup>20</sup> Dawn Bunyak, et al., *Denver Area Post-World War II Suburbs* (Denver: Colorado Department of Transportation, 2011), 87. <https://www.codot.gov/programs/research/pdfs/2011/suburbs.pdf>.

residential district for people of all races.”<sup>21</sup> Eventually the integration of Park Hill would become a point of pride for the community, however, the fight for racial justice was far from over as policies in Denver’s school system came under scrutiny. Schools in Park Hill became a focal point of the desegregation battle in Denver’s public school system. While the neighborhood continued to become integrated, unfair planning practices by the school district supported de facto segregation, with schools like Park Hill Elementary serving white students, and schools like Barrett Elementary, just west of the Robinson House near 29<sup>th</sup> & Colorado, serving African American students. Rachel Noel, the first African American woman elected to public office in Denver and a concerned parent, attempted to change these practices as a school board member. When a resolution to desegregate the schools was over-turned by a board majority, parents filed suit, resulting in the Supreme Court Case *Keyes vs. School District No. 1*. A vote of 6 to 1 deemed that the planning practices that resulted in segregated schools were unconstitutional. While this effected the entire city of Denver and other neighborhoods, the Park Hill neighborhood and its schools were central to the fight against this injustice. The Park Hill neighborhood has changed over the years, but it’s rich history of racial integration remains a key part of the identity of the neighborhood.

As the neighborhood developed and social forces shaped the area around the Robinson House, the home remained a constant, although it does not appear to have been directly associated with the broader happenings in the community. The Roe Family owned the home longer than any other family, with members residing in the house from 1913 until 1953. Eventually Frank and Mary’s daughter Nellie Roe became the owner of the house through an arrangement with her parents. Nellie’s parents had used the property as a farm, while Nellie had a long career as a stenographer and never married. In 1953, just as both residential and commercial development was finally catching up to this part of Park Hill, Nellie at the age of 75 sold the house to Carl E. and Virginia J. Zimmerman. Nellie Roe moved to 3327 Alcott, a home she did not own, after selling the Robinson House. The Zimmerman’s did not live at Albion while they owned the house. Under their ownership the Dodge family was listed as having lived there as early as 1959, presumably as renters, before they purchased the house in 1961.

The house continued change hands several times over the next fifteen years, and using census records and Ancestry.com it appears the owners were white, although there isn’t sufficient detail regarding all renters or residents during that period. Lynn Smith purchased the home in March of 1977. By this time Colorado Boulevard was an increasingly commercial and highly-trafficked thoroughfare and the house had few residential neighbors. Smith converted the home to a commercial venture known as Kate’s Restaurant, though it retained living space on the second floor. The restaurant was named after Smith’s daughter and assistant. Despite the expanded use the exterior remained largely original, with most of the house’s prominent Queen Anne features intact. Smith nominated the house to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

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<sup>21</sup> Noel and Hansen, *The Park Hill Neighborhood*, 22.



Two years later Smith added an annex to expand restaurant seating. Smith sold the restaurant and property in 2011, and the new owners rebranded the restaurant “The Garden”, serving vegetarian fare. The Garden closed in 2017 and the house has remained vacant since.

For 132 years the Robinson House has stood witness at the corner of 35<sup>th</sup> and Albion -- throughout the boom of the 1880s, the bust of 1893, the eventual growth of Park Hill, the post war development boom, racial integration, and most recently, new residential infill and the evolving future of the once-dairy turned golf course across the street. Owners changed over time, but the house still harkens back to a time when a horse drawn streetcar brought residents up a hill to their homes on the out-skirts of a fledgling city.

## 7. Additional Information

### Bibliography

Provide a list of sources used in compiling this application.

### Photographs

Attach at least four digital photographs showing the views of the property from the public right of way and any important features or details. If available, include historic photographs of the structure.

### Boundary Map

Attach a map that graphically depicts the structure, the location of other significant features, and the boundaries of the designation.

### Application Fee

Find the correct fee from the below table. (Make check payable to Denver Manager of Finance).

Application for designation of a structure for preservation (owner applicant)	\$250
Application for designation of a structure for preservation (non-owner applicant)	\$875

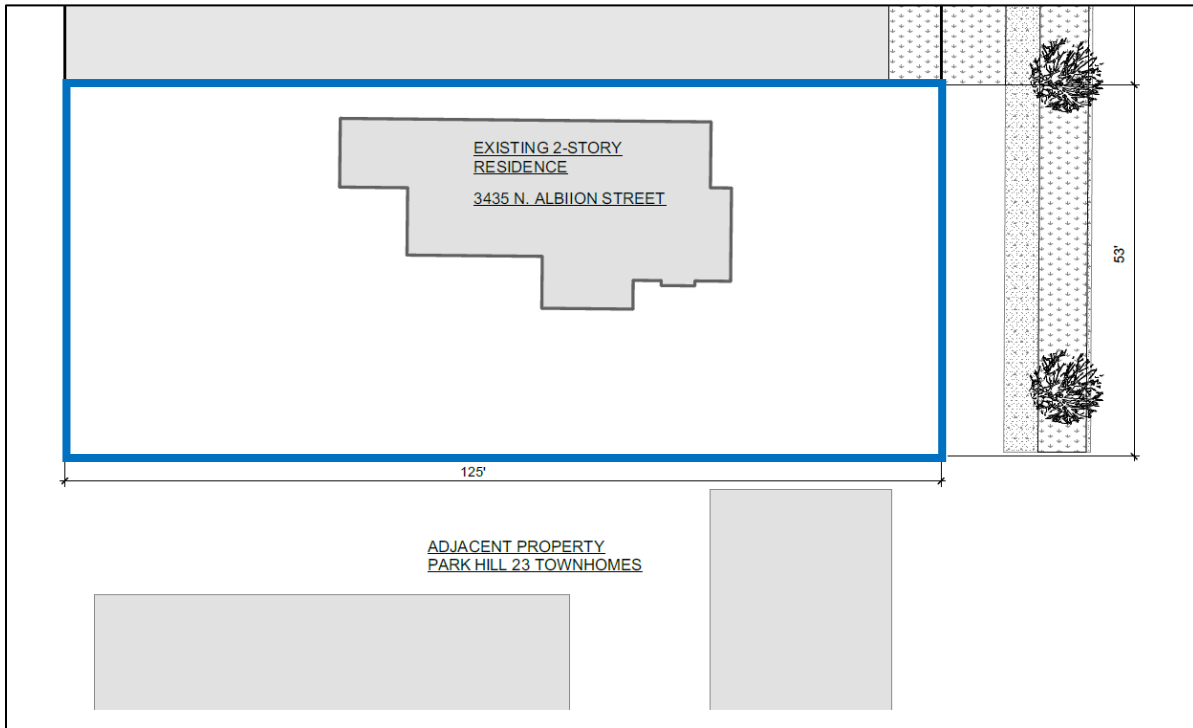
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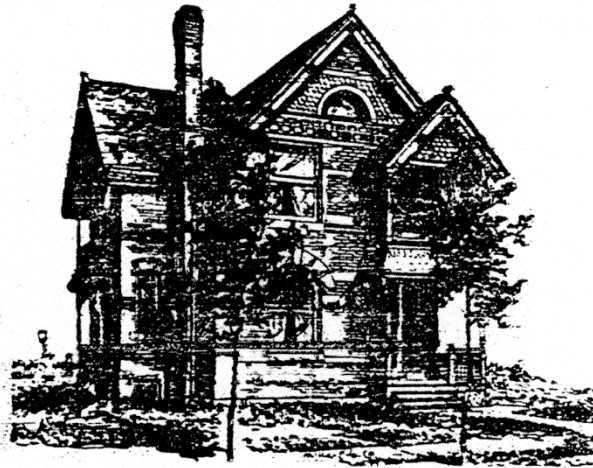
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### Boundary Map

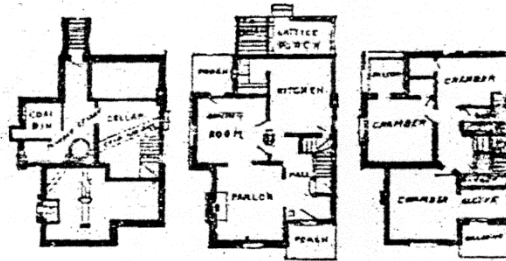


Photographs

**FOR SALE. PRICE, \$5,000.**



PLAN OF ABOVE HOUSE



The advertisement and plans featured in the *Denver Republican* in 1889.





A 1913 photograph of the south façade showing the kitchen addition when it was owned by the Roe family.



The Front (East) Façade of the Robinson House.



The Robinson House, East and South Façade perspective view.



The Robinson House, view of the south side first floor window details



Robinson view of the 1913 kitchen addition (left) and the recessed porch on the south façade.



Robinson House, the west façade showing the original structure (top), 1913 kitchen addition (right), and 1980s addition (left).



Robins House, North façade.



Robinson House, East and North Façade perspective view.