



To: Denver City Council
From: Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: January 7, 2021
RE: Landmark Designation for 1272 Columbine Street

Staff Recommendation:

Based on the 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: #2020L-005
Address: 1272 Columbine Street
Zoning: G-MU-3, UO-3
Council: District # 10, Chris Hinds
Owner(s): JoVonne and Gerald FitzGerald
Applicant(s): JoVonne and Gerald FitzGerald

Case Summary:

The Landmark Designation application for 1272 Columbine Street was submitted to CPD on October 20, 2020. Landmark staff preliminarily reviewed it and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing before the Landmark Preservation Commission for December 1, 2020.

At the public hearing, the LPC voted (8-0) to recommend approval and forward to City Council the landmark designation of 1272 Columbine Street, based on the Landmark Ordinance criteria. On December 15, 2020, the Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee forwarded the case to the full City Council. At first reading, Denver City Council ordered the bill published and the public hearing is set for January 11, 2021.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code:

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code, the application must be complete, and the structure must meet the following criteria:

1. The structure maintains its integrity
2. The structure is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance
3. The structure meets at least three of ten criteria
4. The LPC considers the structure’s historic context

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the application meets the following criteria.

B. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;

The property at 1272 Columbine is significant for its strong association with the Stahl Family, who were influential members of both the Denver and Tin Cup/Buena Vista communities. John Seward Stahl, a well-known Denverite and an influential business leader with a robust commitment to civic life, moved to Colorado in 1879. Initially living in Tin Cup and Buena Vista he co-owned a hardware company that served the mine and miners in the region. As an important part of the mining industry, he and his family were viewed as influential members of the community and were frequently noted in the papers. In 1884, the Stahl family moved to Denver and John established a new business selling typewriters, eventually becoming the leader in the field. His success in the typewriter business had local journalists nicknaming him the ‘type-writer’ man, and he supplied the means for the production of several local papers, and perhaps explaining the many reports of Stahl family activities and actions in the newspapers of the day.

Stahl’s political activities were as strong as his business, and he served as a booster for Denver at a critical time in its development. Stahl hosted dignitaries as they toured the city and his name was a draw to gain community support and attendance at functions, charity events, and political meetings. The family was so well known by the late 1880s that when Stahl purchased the lot for the family’s future home at 1272 Columbine it made the newspapers. Stahl’s children also became known within elite Denver social circles, and their lives and deaths were also documented in articles and headlines in the local papers. The Stahl family resided in the home on Columbine for more than forty years, as John Stahl died at age 90 in 1930, and his son George remained at the home until he passed prematurely in 1932. George’s wife held onto the home for another eleven years before it was sold, for the first time, to someone outside the Stahl family.



Photo of north and west facades of 1272 Columbine Street (Scott Crotzer, 2020)

C. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;

1272 Columbine is one of the earliest examples of the Queen Anne style houses built in what is now Congress Park. The architect of the home, William Lang, often designed in the Queen Anne style with Richardsonian Romanesque flourishes or details. The property illustrates the Queen Anne style in its form and massing with steeply pitched roofs, cross-gables, nested gables, multiple wall planes, and asymmetry. The house also exhibits multiple materials, detailed brick and stonework, and ornately decorated gable end featuring shingles, brackets, and decorative bargeboards which are characteristics of the Queen Anne style. A focal point of the home's front façade is a large arched window featuring a heavy stone arch commonly used in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, which is featured in Richard Brettell's book *Historic Denver, The Architects and Architecture 1858-1893*. The home is substantial in size and stature, and while there are other examples of Queen Anne design in the western-most blocks of Congress Park, and even a few other Lang designs, 1272 Columbine retains the best integrity.



Photo of west facade of 1272 Columbine Street

D. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder.

1272 Columbine is a significant example of the renowned architect, William Lang, who was one of the city's most prolific residential architects in the 1880s and early 1890s. The Stahl home is a very early example of Lang's proclivity to add Richardsonian details to the Queen Anne style, and is one of the few remaining in Congress Park that can be so clearly recognized as Lang's work with considerable integrity.

When William Lang arrived in Denver in 1885, he was a young, locally inexperienced, and enormously energetic architect who gained notoriety and success quickly in the booming city of Denver. Two of his best-known designs include the Molly Brown House at 1340 Pennsylvania and St. Mark's Parish at 12th & Lincoln. It is estimated he designed over 250 structures in the city during his relatively short career. Lang was known for making a name for himself and became a favorite among Denver's early elite. As a respected and recognized architect, William Lang's name appears as one of the members of the Colorado chapter of the American Institute of Architects, established in 1892 in Denver. Lang's designs were mimicked, copied, and challenged by his contemporaries. His legacy exists in a number of structures surviving in Denver, each reflecting the wishes of their original owners, and Lang's unique style. The fact that Stahl commissioned Lang to design his family home reflects both Stahl's stature in the city and success in business, as well as Lang's rising popularity.



Photo of west and south facades of 1272 Columbine Street (Scott Crotzer, 2020)

Integrity:

Chapter 30 requires that a landmark designated property maintain its integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a structure or district to convey its historic, geographic, architectural, or cultural significance...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver’s history. The seven (7) qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity are” location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The Stahl House retains integrity of location, association, design, materials, workmanship, association, feeling, and setting. The property remains in the location Stahl selected and where it was originally constructed. While the property was originally constructed as a single-family residence, later owners often rented rooms to boarders, and in 1986 the home was divided into a two-unit dwelling. These alterations have not affected the exterior integrity. Lang’s design, in the form, plan and detailing, is intact, exhibiting the workmanship and materials employed at the time of its construction, and the prominent exterior features, along with a number of interior features, remain from the period of significance. Together, these elements support the property’s integrity of feeling. The setting, which historically consisted of large single-family residential properties set back from the sidewalk, has been partially compromised by a few multi-family apartment blocks dating from the early to mid-twentieth century.

Relates to a Historic Context and Period of Significance:

As is appropriate for a property proposed for designation, the historic context is strongly interrelated to both the areas of significance and period of significance.

The Stahl House was among the first built in the Rohlfing subdivision, commissioned by an influential member of society, designed by a renowned architect, and built in the Queen Anne style popular before the Silver Crash of 1893.

The period of significance starts with the home’s construction in 1889 and continues through 1943 when the widow of George Stahl, the son of John S. Stahl, sold the home, ending the family’s association with the structure.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lots 39 and 40, Block 13, Rohlfing’s Subdivision City and County of Denver, State of Colorado

Public Review Process:

Community Planning & Development has met 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 and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications

- Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
- Informed and Concerned Community Gardeners (ICCG)
- Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, Inc.
- Congress Park Neighbors, Inc.
- City Park Friends and Neighbors (CPFAN)
- 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 one public comments regarding the application.

- Congress Park Neighbors, Inc survey of the community and a letter of support

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation application
- Map of structure proposed for preservation
- Public comments received