



TO: Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Jeanne Robb, Chair and Judy Montero, Co-Chair

FROM: Savannah Jameson, Community Planning & Development

DATE: April 15, 2014

RE: Proposed Designation of a Landmark for Preservation:
3241 Lowell Boulevard, Beth Eden Baptist Church

I. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

Packards Hill Subdivision, Block 1, Lots 13 through 14

II. HISTORY OF THE APPLICATION

An application for a Certificate of Non-Historic Status was submitted to Community Planning and Development (CPD) for 3241 Lowell, Lots 5 through 14, on September 5, 2007. This application was withdrawn September 18, 2007. An application for a Certificate of Non-Historic Status was resubmitted to CPD on February 21, 2008 for lots 5 through 12; the additions constructed between 1939 and 1951. The application stated that the 1931 sanctuary, lots 13 through 14, would be retained. The additions were found not to have potential for designation and the Certificate of Non-Historic Status was issued for these lots on March 7, 2008. The additions were demolished in early 2013.

CPD received a Certificate of Non-Historic Status application for the 1931 church sanctuary, lots 13 through 14, on January 24, 2014. The building was found to have potential for designation and the property was posted. A designation application was received by CPD on March 4, 2014.

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) held a public hearing to review the designation application. The application was found complete and the building to meet the criteria for designation. The LPC voted unanimously to forward the application to City Council with a recommendation for approval.

III. LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION FINDINGS

Significance

3241 Lowell Boulevard is a distinctive building in that it was home to one of the first congregations in the West Highland neighborhood. It is also an example of the Tudor Revival style designed by the significant Denver architect, William N. Bowman.

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The Beth Eden Baptist Church is recognizable from its prominent location on Lowell Boulevard, adjacent to the commercial node at 32nd Avenue and Lowell Boulevard. 3241 Lowell Boulevard meets the criteria for local designation in the following categories:

Historical Significance

To have historical importance, the structure shall be more than 30 years old or have extraordinary importance to the architectural or historical development of Denver, and shall:

a) Has direct association with the historical development of Denver;

The buildings constructed on this site reflect the development of the West Highland neighborhood and Denver as it expanded westward. The 1931 sanctuary is the only building that remains of the larger Beth-Eden complex that once occupied this site. The Beth-Eden Centenary Baptist congregation was among the first congregations in the West Highland neighborhood. Charles H. Walker constructed a church on this site, known as the Beth-Eden Centenary Baptist Church, in 1892 when this site was still part of the town of Highlands. After annexation by Denver and rapid development of this neighborhood during the early 20th century the original church was demolished and the existing church was constructed in 1931 to accommodate the growing congregation. As the neighborhood continued to experience a population boom so did the church, continuing to expand by adding additions to the original 1931 sanctuary. The Beth Eden Baptist Church at 3241 Lowell Boulevard is a reflection of the development and growth of the West Highland neighborhood.

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

3241 Lowell Boulevard is associated with Reverend Charles H. Walker, founder of several of Denver's Baptist churches. It is also associated with the Denver Baptist community and the Beth Eden congregation. The Beth Eden Baptist Church was constructed during a time of religious fervor across America. A great missionary zeal was occurring at this time and Beth Eden was a part of this larger trend; raising money for foreign missionaries, providing financial support to the Denver Rescue Mission as well as establishing other mission churches. Mr. Walker and the Beth Eden Baptist Church had a wide influence on society not only in West Highland but throughout Denver.

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 steeply pitched roof, prominent front facing gables, decorative half-timbering and multiple grouped windows of the Beth Eden Baptist Church are distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Revival style. This was a style popular at the time in residential architecture but it was rare in Denver's ecclesiastical buildings.

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b)Is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect;

Beth Eden Baptist Church is an intact example of the work of William N. Bowman, a significant Denver architect. Bowman is known for designing commercial, civic and ecclesiastical buildings in a wide range of revival styles. This is Bowman's last known ecclesiastical work and his only example of a Tudor Revival style church.

Geographic Significance

To have geographical importance, the structure shall:

a)Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;

The church holds a prominent position on the west side of Lowell Boulevard in the West Highland Neighborhood. It is located just north of the Highland Square commercial district. This distinctive Tudor Revival church recognized by the many commuters along Lowell Boulevard as well as the visitors to Highland Square makes this church a familiar and established visual feature of West Highland.

LPC Recommendation:

On April 1, 2014 the Landmark Preservation Commission voted unanimously to forward the designation of 3241 Lowell Boulevard to City Council with a recommendation of approval citing as findings of fact the staff memo dated April 1, 2014 and public testimony.

END