



## 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:** 900 E. 1st Avenue

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: Carmen Court

Other or Current Name: Carmen Court Condominiums

### Location

Address: 900 E. 1st Avenue, et al

Legal Description: see continuation sheet

### Number of resources:

#### # Contributing

1

0

1

#### # Non-Contributing

0

1

0

Primary Structures

Accessory Structures

Features

### Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

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

Features assessed as contributing are those built within the period of significance (1925-1990) that retain historic integrity.

### General Property Data

Date of construction: 1925

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

Builder (if known): Burt L. Rhoads

Original Use: Apartments

Current Use: Condominiums

Source(s) of information for above:

Date of Construction and Builder: Denver Permit Record: June 4, 1925  
Current Use: Denver Assessor Records: September 21, 1977

### Previous documentation

List previous historic survey and/or if property is listed or eligible for listing in the State or National Register of Historic Places.



## 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: See continuation sheet

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

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

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

### Primary Applicant (if not owner)

Name: Sarah O. McCarthy

Address: 374 S. Clarkson St., Denver CO 80209

Phone: 303.204.8722

Email: fairhillso@msn.com

### Prepared by

Name: Sarah O. McCarthy

Address: 374 S. Clarkson St., Denver CO 80209

Phone: 303.204.8722

Email: fairhillso@msn.com



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.

Email communication to all owners by Sarah O. McCarthy on March 31, 2020  
Email communication to owner (Karen Roehl) by Lisa Purdy on April 2, 2020  
Email communication to all owners by Terry Gulliver on April 4, 2020  
Email communication to all owners by Lisa Purdy on April 5, 2020  
Email communication to all owners by Mark Harris on April 6, 2020

Series of facilitated meetings between owners and signers of the notice of intent on: April 28, May 5, May 12 (with architects but without signers of notice of intent), and May 21, 2020



Other Applicant(s):

Applicant Name: See continuation page \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### 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.

- ☐ 1. It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- ☐ 2. It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;
- ☒ 3. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;
- ☒ 4. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
- ☐ 5. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;
- ☒ 6. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;
- ☒ 7. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
- ☐ 8. It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
- ☐ 9. It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;
- ☐ 10. 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

Attach a sheet that provides a summary paragraph for each applicable criterion.

#### Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1925 - 1990

Provide justification for the period of significance.

## 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.
- 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.
- c. Major Alterations** - Describe changes or alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations, if known.

## 5. Integrity

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

See continuation sheets

## 6. Historic Context

Attach a sheet that describes the history of the structure, including events, activities and associations that relate the structure to its historic, architectural, geographic, or cultural significance. Examine how patterns, themes, or trends in history affected the property and how it relates to the surrounding community, neighborhood, city, and/or nation.

## 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



## **#1 Property Information**

### **Legal Description:**

Carmen Court Condominiums Units 76, 84, 90, 900, 908 & 916 according to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58, and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687.

### **900:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 900, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-900

### **908:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 908, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-908

### **916:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 916, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-916

### **76 N. Emerson:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 76, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-76

### **84 N. Emerson:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 84, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-84

### **90 N. Emerson:**

CDE Legal Description: Unit 90, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the



Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Real Property Legal Description: CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-90

**HOA:**

CDE Legal Description:

Parcel 1: 76 North Emerson Street, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 76, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Parcel 2: 84 North Emerson Street, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 84, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Parcel 3: 90 North Emerson Street, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 90, Emerson Street, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Parcel 4: 900 East 1st Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 900, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Parcel 5: 908 East 1st Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 908, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Parcel 6: 916 East 1st Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80218

Unit 916, Carmen Court Condominiums, According to the Map thereof recorded in Condominium Plat Book 5 at Page 57, 58 and 59 and the Condominium Declaration thereof recorded in Book 1444 at Page 687, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

**#2 Owner Information**

Catherine Chase Groos

900 East 1st Avenue, Denver, CO 80218

CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-900

Theresa C. Curry Trust

908 East 1st Avenue, Denver, CO 80218

*Note: Signed Theresa C. Curry*

CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-908



Gary D. Laura and Mary Ann O'Hara  
916 East 1st Avenue, Denver, CO 80218  
CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-916

Katherine H. Sisk  
76 North Emerson Street, Denver, CO 80218  
CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-76

Tricia L. Smith  
84 North Emerson Street, Denver, CO 80218  
CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-84

Karen Esther Roehl  
90 North Emerson Street, Denver, CO 80218  
CARMEN COURT CONDOS U-90

Carmen Court Condominium Association, Inc.  
76 N. Emerson St., Denver, CO 80218; 84 N. Emerson St., Denver, CO 80218; 90 N. Emerson St., Denver, CO 80218; 900 E. 1st Ave., Denver, CO 80218; 908 E. 1st Ave., Denver, CO 80218; 916 E. 1st Ave., Denver, CO 80218; *Note: Signed by Gary D. Laura*

### **3. Significance**

#### **Statement of Significance**

Carmen Court Condominiums is more than 30 years old, has maintained its integrity and meets the following four significance criteria, which are discussed below:

- 3. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;*
- 4. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*
- 6. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city due to its prominent location or physical characteristics; and*
- 7. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity.*

## Discussion of Landmark Designation Criteria

### ***3. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type.***

Carmen Court exhibits design quality and integrity as a significant example of the Pueblo Revival style combined with Spanish Revival or Eclectic architectural embellishments. An advertisement in the Denver Post attempted to describe its unique characteristics as "...its architecture is Spanish, but that doesn't half tell it."<sup>1</sup>

Common characteristics of the Pueblo Revival style found on Carmen Court include flat roof with parapet wall above, soft corners that are blunted or have rounded edges, stucco wall surfaces with textured or battered finish, a multi-storied communal structure of many rectangular rooms with a stepped-back roof line, and straight-headed windows.

Denver architecture has a tradition of blending styles and Carmen Court's design reflects this tradition as well. The Spanish Colonial Revival style has comparable characteristics with the Pueblo Revival style as exhibited by low-pitched or flat roofs, thick masonry of adobe brick or rubble, but is distinguished from it by the presence of multiple external doorways and straight-headed windows. The Spanish Eclectic architectural style described by architectural historians Virginia and Lee McAlester shares some of characteristics, but Spanish Eclectic style has a variant form of narrow, tile-covered shed roofs added above entryways or projecting windows.<sup>2</sup> Carmen Court displays this shed roof variant above its windows and several of its front and rear entries. Carmen Court displays high design qualities of these distinctive architectural styles.

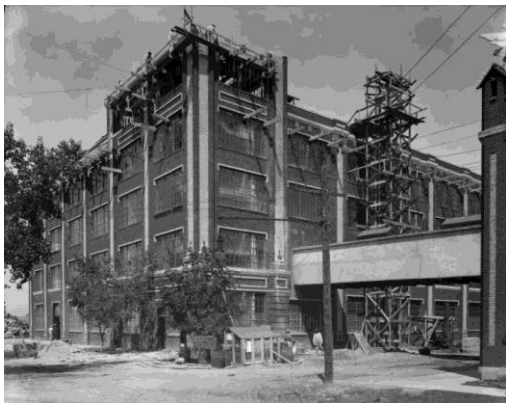
### ***4. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;***

Burt L. Rhoads was a master builder/architect fluent in southwestern architectural styles. His body of work spanned industrial, single-family residential, and apartment building design and construction, both in the United States and in England. Born and raised in Denver, Rhoads began his drafting career in Denver before working in Utah and later in Great Falls Montana. Rhoads returned to Denver in 1917 where he joined what became Gates Rubber Co. and where he worked until 1925, rising to the rank of Chief Engineer.



Rhoads is credited with the 1917 design of the roof top garden atop Gates' factory building Unit #4, on the northeast corner of Tennessee and S. Acoma Street with a panoramic view of Colorado's Front Range. The roof top garden was demolished in 1994 to create space for parking.<sup>3</sup>

Architectural features of the roof-top garden, such as stucco cladding, the use of red tile roofs, multi-light windows, and pergolas, are found on later Rhoads-designed Denver buildings.



999 S. Broadway      Courtesy Denver Public Library

In Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren's 1987 book *Denver: The City Beautiful and Its Architects, 1893-1941* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987), they used the former Gates Rubber Company complex on South Broadway as an example that "Industrial buildings were often designed by engineers rather than architects."<sup>4</sup> Rhoads was the contractor on the 1919 building permit for 999 South Broadway, the company's signature address and the dominant industry along South Broadway during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but its industrial buildings have been demolished.



500 S. Ogden Street, Denver ca 1920

Courtesy Denver Public Library

Also in 1919, Rhoads designed and built his West Washington Park home at 500 S. Ogden Street. Like his roof-top garden, the Spanish Revival-styled residence features stucco cladding, red-tile roof and a rear garden pergola. Note the elaborate chimney top, another feature of Spanish-influenced styles. It also boasts a bird's eye view of downtown Denver and sightlines from Long's Peak to Pike's Peak and beyond.





2750 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue ca 1923

Courtesy of Denver Public Library

Although not listed on the permit, it is likely that Rhoads had a hand in designing the 1922 bungalow at 2750 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue for his parents. Its stucco cladding and red-tile roof repeat earlier Rhoads design features.

In 1925, Rhoads was the owner/contractor of Carmen Court at 900 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and this building represents a significant example of his work. As his lastest known design in Denver, it is also his only known design in Pueblo-Revival architectural style and appears to be his only multi-unit housing effort in Denver. The Spanish Eclectic embellishments on Carmen Court repeat Spanish-influenced features Rhoads incorporated in his earlier industrial and residential designs. Carmen Court is a significant example of Rhoads' repeating skill in amending an architectural style to compliment a site's topography.



Carmen Court 1925

Courtesy Denver Public Library

Beginning in 1931, Rhoads relocated to Cardiff, Wales and later to London. Promotional materials for the Dorset, England, Pine Grange Flats (below), recognize Burt L. Rhoads as the architect of the apartment building at 24 Bath Road, constructed in the mid-1930s by William Cowlin & Son, Ltd. Records indicate that Rhoads was employed by Cowlin & Son in the 1930s.



Pine Grange Flats, Dorset, England ca 1935

In a 2018 update to the East Cliff, Bournemouth (Dorset, England) Conservation Area designated in 1987, the appraisal and management plan highlighted the Pine Grange Flats in its description of the Bath Road Character Area that is distinguished from the remainder of the Conservation Area by its topography. The architecture for this large block of desirable flats is described as a “Tudor style block of merit.”<sup>5</sup> The “imposing seven-story brick façades are relieved with Bath stone dressings including hood moulds and quoins to the corner bays and projecting stone bays to the upper floors.”<sup>6</sup> Recent for-sale advertisements promote the building “as an imposing 1930's mansion style development situated just a short walk from the Lansdowne, Bournemouth town centre, beach and pier.”<sup>7</sup>

Unique use of topography represents a distinguishing feature of Burt Rhoads’ body of work over his 40+ year career. The roof top garden design takes full advantage of the unobstructed sightlines of Colorado’s Front Range as does the siting of his personal residence at 500 South Ogden Street. Carmen Court’s unusual design takes full advantage of its location near Cherry Creek yet is protected from the creek’s periodic flooding. This artful ability to create designs that conform a building to the best attributes of the site confirms this native son’s reputation as a master builder.

***6. It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city due to its prominent location or physical characteristics.***

For 95 years, Carmen Court has been a distinctive feature of the Speer Neighborhood. As a rare example of the Pueblo Revival architectural style, its significance is enhanced by its prominent location, almost as a gateway to the neighborhood. Located at the intersection of East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Emerson Street, it is adjacent to Hungarian Freedom Park (formerly Arlington Park) that fronts historic Speer Boulevard. Carmen Court is highly visible to neighbors and to the tens of thousands of contemporary city residents who travel daily along Speer Boulevard, a signature component of Denver’s designated Parks and Parkways Historic District.

Carmen Court is highly recognizable to the community in two other ways. The structure is set as far as possible from the intersection, hugging the rear corner of the property behind lush landscaping. This unusual setting creates a familiar broad open space that furthers the area's park-like atmosphere. Also, Carmen Court's multiple external entries and "L-shaped" footprint set it apart from other Denver structures. The communal feel generated by the architectural design creates the impression of a small village enhanced by the expansive courtyard shared by the owners and the community at-large. Additionally, it serves to extend the benefits of Denver's parks and parkways system to the residents and neighborhood.

***7. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity.***

Carmen Court displays a high degree of integrity and promotes an understanding and appreciation of Denver's urban environment in several ways. Its architectural style is distinctive and unusual in Denver. Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren speak to the "few examples of the Pueblo Revival style"<sup>8</sup> in Denver. Carmen Court appears to be the only Pueblo Revival-styled, multi-unit residential building found in Denver. Fewer than ten Denver single-family homes have been identified in this style, four were built in 1929 along the 2701 block of N. Jackson Street. Only two commercial structures designed in this rare style have been identified.<sup>9</sup> Carmen Court, as multi-family housing, falls under the City Beautiful and Civic Pride theme (1905-1929) developed for Historic Denver, Inc., as part of their *Discover Denver* project.

Noted local historian, Thomas J. Simmons of Front Range Research Associates, Inc., has commented that "Carmen Court is associated the historical development of the city in the early twentieth century as part of a trend to provide more and different multi-family housing options in Denver. Standing between large-scale, often multi-story apartment buildings and single-family houses, Carmen Court represents an L-shaped example of the Bungalow Court. Popularized in southern California in the early twentieth century, Bungalow Courts (which could manifest a variety of architectural styles) "promoted a specific style of living, providing the amenities of a single-style residence--privacy, gardens, porches--with the conveniences of an apartment--affordability, community, security" and provided "a small neighborhood identity within the larger neighborhood." (quoting "Bungalow Courts of Pasadena," National Register nomination, 1983, 1994 amendment).<sup>10</sup>" Simmons also suggests that Carmen Court is a more architecturally sophisticated example of the form than most.

Carmen Court's positioning atop a small hill, at the rear of the parcel, and its L-shaped footprint serves a secondary but crucial purpose, which also promotes the understanding of Denver's urban environment. Denver's earliest history portrays the significant risks inherent in ignoring our indigenous population's warnings to refrain from building on or near the creek or the South Platte River. Carmen Court faces Cherry Creek yet its design and placement reduces its risk from periodic flooding despite its proximity to the waterway. A decade after construction, Cherry Creek flooded again, in 1936, when a dam broke that took out the bridge at Alameda





Avenue. Carmen Court's arrangement on its site provided the needed flood mitigation to preserve the residence for another 85 years.

Carmen Court's adjacency to Hungarian Freedom Park, along Speer Boulevard across Cherry Creek from Alamo Placita Park, reinforces our understanding of and appreciation for Denver's City Beautiful Movement, which defined Denver's early 20<sup>th</sup> Century urban environment. Mayor Speer brought this city planning effort to Denver to inspire urban beautification via architecture and landscaping. Carmen Court achieves both through its unique architecture coupled with its broad open space dotted with majestic trees and shrubs.

### **Period of Significance** (1925 – 1990)

The period of significance for the property extends from the year of the building's completion as an apartment building in 1925 to 1990, a date thirty years from the present as no other specific date is more applicable.

## 4. Property Description

### a. Summary Paragraph

Carmen Court is a six-unit, Pueblo Revival-styled apartment building set back on a six-lot parcel located on the south east corner of East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and N. Emerson Street. It shares the block with one-story single-family houses and 3-story, multi-unit apartment and condominium buildings (one building is eight stories). This parcel is south of the triangular-shaped Hungarian Freedom Park that is adjacent to and south of Speer Boulevard and Cherry Creek.

Carmen Court is 11,240 square feet in size, configured in an L-shaped footprint that wraps the site on its eastern and southern boundaries. This layout creates two wings and two main facades: the south wing main facade faces north toward East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the east wing main facade faces west toward N. Emerson Street. The footprint creates a park-like open space between the complex and streets with landscaping of mature trees, shrubs and grass. The building's massing is stepped and variegated as it rises from one story near the streets to a two-story height nearer to the center of the structure. The painted, stucco clad brick exterior has separate front and rear entrances for each unit. "Non-repeating vignettes of windows, doors, and porches"<sup>11</sup> are seen on all elevations. A gravel driveway runs along the south lot line between N. Emerson Street and the alley that accesses a north-facing, detached, 5-car brick garage.

### b. Architectural Description

The Pueblo Revival style building with battered or textured stucco-clad walls establishes a village-like atmosphere, maintaining a low scale while rising to two-stories at the center, where the L-shape form creates an east wing and a south wing whose design mirror each other. Windows on the two main facades are original large, rectangular, metal casement style windows sheltered by narrow, red-tile shed roofs with the exception of façade embellishment of three tall, narrow, accent windows situated near the entrances to each of the end units, which are also sheltered by narrow, red-tile shed roofs. All windows have unpainted brick sills. Second-story windows are also embellished with painted wrought iron railings. Entry doors are metal security doors. Wood-framed vents have been placed high on many, but not all, of the exterior walls of the two main facades, a simple adornment to the Pueblo Revival architectural style.

#### *End Units*

The mirrored, end unit of each wing (closest to E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue or N. Emerson Street) is one story with a separate entrance placed on an angled wall segment between its respective west and north façade walls. Each unit's entrance is covered by a projecting, flat roof, stucco wall portico with round-arched openings. Each unit has an offset patio enclosed by a low stucco-clad wall. These units have windows on three elevations and separate rear entrances.

Each of the end units' façade edges are softened by narrow, angled wall-segments and make distinct the edges of these units' three elevations. For the unit closest to E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, its corners at the north end are softened by narrow, angled wall-segments -- one faces northwest to delineate the west façade from its north façade and a second narrow, angled wall-segment faces northeast to delineate the north façade from the east façade. This design feature is repeated on the end unit closest to N. Emerson Street to soften its corners at the west end of the complex. For this unit, a narrow, angled wall-segment that faces southwest delineates the south façade from the west façade and a second narrow, angled wall-segment faces northwest to delineate the west façade from the unit's north façade.

#### *Center Units*

The mirrored, center unit of each wing is two-story with a projecting entry sheltered by stucco clad walls and red-tile shed roof. Each unit has a separate patio near the entry surrounded by a low, stucco-clad wall. Each unit also contains a second-floor patio behind a high, stucco clad wall. Tall, square, double-chimneys rise above the second-story patios of these units, interrupting the massing of the complex.

#### *Interior Units*

The two interior two-story units of each wing are slightly recessed, each with a separate front entrance sheltered only by a narrow, red-tile shed roof. Each unit's patio is incorporated with the entry and surrounded by a low, stucco-clad wall.

#### *Rear Facades*

The east façade of the complex sits flush along the alley and rises to a three-story height. There are two stucco clad enclosed rear entries on the façade with small wood windows and red-tile shed roofs. The end unit's narrow rear entry is reached via raised concrete stoop. The center unit rear entry is elongated sitting at ground level. The facade contains a non-repeating window patterning of straight-headed, rectangular, multi-light metal or wood casement style windows. Some windows at the lowest level of this façade are multi-light, wood windows with added metal security grills. The recessed southeast corner of this façade has a below ground level patio with wrought iron railings accessed by stairs to reach exterior doors that provide rear access to the two interior units. At the third-story level, each of the interior units has exterior doors accessing an angled, metal balcony with metal railings and a circular staircase providing access to the roof.

The south façade of the complex sits flush along the gravel driveway providing access from Emerson Street. The facade rises to a three-story height and contains a non-repeating window patterning of straight-headed, rectangular, multi-light metal or wood casement style windows. Some windows at the lowest level of this façade have added metal security grills. The center unit has a ground level, elongated stucco clad enclosed rear entry with small wood windows and a red-tile shed roof. The west end unit's rear entry sits flush with the driveway and has no enclosure.

### *Landscaping*

The building's footprint creates a park-like open space between the complex and streets that is landscaped with mature trees, shrubs and grass. The two of the three original stairs and walkways remain in place that access each of the six separate unit entrances. At the northwest corner of the parcel, a 4 foot, three-part, stucco clad wall has been installed.

### *Character-defining Features*

- Flat roof with parapet walls
- Communal structure in rectangular shape
- Battered stucco clad brick exterior walls
- Stepped back upper stories
- Soft corners, via angled wall segments between facades
- Straight-headed windows
- Round-arched projecting openings with stucco parapet walls and flat roof
- Tile-covered shed roofs over entry doors
- Tile-covered shed roof over windows
- Multiple exterior entries
- Multi-light metal windows
- Low, stucco-clad patio walls
- Landscaping: mature trees, plantings and grass

### **c. Major Alterations**

- March 1930 permit to excavate under sun parlors for two garages;
- Southwest corner (along Emerson at driveway) hill excavated, perhaps for 1930 garage entrance that now serves as sunken patio the western end unit; date unknown
- South east corner (at alley and driveway) excavated, perhaps for 1930 garage entrance, that now serves as sunken patio for the two interior units; date unknown
- Detached 5-car brick garage constructed; date unknown after 1937
- Multiple window sash material and style altered: some are metal, some are wood, some casement, some fixed; window openings unchanged. Dates unknown
- Stucco-clad patio wall of approximately 6 feet has been constructed at northeast corner of structure added; date unknown
- Removable fabric awnings have been added above patios, entries and windows; date unknown
- Original center axial walkway and stairs have been removed and replaced with a three-part low wall, date unknown.

## 5. Integrity

Carmen Court retains an excellent degree of historic integrity. The condominium building exhibits the highest level of integrity of location, as it has maintained its set back from the intersection of East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and N. Emerson Street to create a park-like atmosphere as an accent to the adjacent Hungarian Freedom Park sited along Speer Boulevard on the north. The parcel retains its integrity of setting on the knoll of a small hill elevated above and facing Cherry Creek to the north yielding a large open space in an urban setting. Locally recognized for its mature, lush landscaping, Carmen Court's original axial walkway has been removed while the original placement of the stairs to the city sidewalk has been retained on both East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and N. Emerson Street.

The condominium building itself retains exceptional integrity of design, displaying an unaltered footprint, form, structure and style. In 1930, a permit was issued to alter two sun parlors for garages (one at the west end of structure along N. Emerson Street and the other at the southeast corner at where the alley meets a driveway). These spaces were reconfigured as garden level patios at an unknown date. The building maintains its high integrity of materials with retention of original textured stucco exterior cladding, the retention of original red-tile shed roofs above entrances and original metal, multi-light windows, low stucco patio walls, and projecting stucco entrance porticos with round-arched openings. The property retains a high degree of integrity of workmanship, as reflected in the red-tile shed roofs and textured stucco cladding as accents to the unadorned Pueblo architectural style.

Carmen Court retains an excellent degree of integrity of feeling of a small village with separate entrances and patios for each unit yet a part of the whole complex connected by the shared open space. The building possesses high integrity of association, having been the home of many hundreds of residents who were also neighbors over the past 95 years. At the mention of Carmen Court, inevitably someone recalls dating someone who lived there, being friends with someone who lived there, or just visited residents, but they all retain specific memories of these unique residences.

## 6. Historic Context

### *History of the Structure: Events, Activities, and Associations*

In the fall of 1926, the *South Side Monitor* highlighted several new apartment houses in the area west of Washington Park. Calling it the “most beautiful residential section of Denver,”<sup>12</sup> the Monitor said the area represented “the home life of Denver’s great middle class – the backbone of America.”<sup>13</sup> Two examples reflecting the then-popular Spanish architecture were the “Arroyo Vista,” a three-story building at East Ellsworth and Downing overlooking the now-buried City Ditch, and the six-unit “yellow stucco, Spanish type bungalow apartment”<sup>14</sup> at the intersection of First Avenue and Emerson Street, Carmen Court.

The *South Side Monitor* was the local weekly publication in operation from the 1920s to the 1950s that focused on local businesses. The previous year, Burt L. Rhoads, owner/builder of

Carmen Court had advertised his invitation to “view my latest effort.”<sup>15</sup> On June 25, 1925, Rhoads was issued a permit to construct the 11,000 square foot, tile stucco terrace for \$25,000 on five lots at the corner of East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and N. Emerson Street. An open house was held October 31 and November 1, 1925.

Van Schaack & Co. placed its own advertisement in the Denver Post citing “**Ready Tomorrow, Carmen Court -- Absolutely Unlike Any Other Apartment House in the West.**”<sup>16</sup> The promotion of these four- and six-room apartments boasted, “*Utterly impossible to describe in print the complete originality of its interior arrangement and decoration. In general terms, its architecture is Spanish, but that doesn’t half tell it. A separate private outside entrance for each apartment, and exposure on at least two sides for each apartment. Automatic heat, sound-proof walls. Finish floors and built-in features the very last word in up-to-dateness.*”<sup>17</sup> The advertisement also noted “beautiful landscaping was underway.”<sup>18</sup> Van Schaack & Co., was a full-service real estate firm founded in 1911 that eventually became a 20<sup>th</sup> Century Denver dynasty.

Carmen Court was associated with national trends in residential construction of the 1920s. Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren reflect in *Denver The City Beautiful* that “Denver’s artsy-craftsy set began organizing pilgrimages to Santa Fe and Taos during the 1920s”<sup>19</sup> and returned with an interest in the Pueblo Revival style, often combined with other southwestern styles including Mission Revival and Spanish Revival, placed in natural settings, which recall native pueblos constructed hundreds of years before the Spanish crossed the Gulf of Mexico. Denverites’ pilgrimages followed the 1915-1917 Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego, organized to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal<sup>20</sup> that promoted the Pueblo Revival and Spanish Revival architectural styles. The Rhoads family took a “motor tour”<sup>21</sup> to California in 1916 with Burt’s sister Hazel (Mrs. Charles C. Gates), father Harry F. Rhoads and his photographer brother Harry M. Rhoads. This trip may have triggered Burt Rhoads’ interest and use of these styles’ design elements in Denver beginning with Gates Rubber Company’s 1917 roof-top garden, then Rhoads’ 1920 personal residence, and his parents’ 1922 residence, culminating with Carmen Court’s design and construction in 1925.

The architectural historian Virginia McAlester (1943-2020) noted in her *A Field Guide to American Houses* (co-authored with Lee McAlester) that the Panama-California Exposition “inspired wide publicity”<sup>22</sup> of a new architectural style – Spanish Eclectic – popular in southwestern states in the 1920s and 1930s but which fell out of favor in the 1940s. This style of one- and two-story units has flat-roofs with parapet walls with decorative elements borrowed from Spanish architecture, such as red-tile roofs. Carmen Court was on the leading edge of this blend of architectural styles particularly popular in the southwest. The new apartment building also advertised its use of a new insulation material, Balsam-Wool insulation, which began in the U.S. in the 1920s and was considered a premier material for more than 30 years.

The Carmen Court property is connected to the surrounding community through its association with the Rhoads family and the family’s extensive professional and personal association with Gates Rubber Company. The Rhoads family name was prominent in Denver business circles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Harry F. Rhoads and his brother Oliver began Rhoads



Brothers in 1881 that became Rhoads Hardware situated in the 1888 Rhoads Block at 775-777 Santa Fe, which although altered, remains occupied in 2020.



775-777 Santa Fe ca 1910  
Courtesy of Denver Public Library



1330 Logan St. May 2020  
Courtesy of Fairhill & Co.

In 1899, Harry F. Rhoads constructed 1330 Logan Street where he raised his family: Hazel who married Charles C. Gates, the founder of Gates Rubber Company, Harry M. who became a well-regarded local photographer, and Burt Lee Rhoads, who became a master builder and an employee of Gates Rubber Company. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Denver society pages routinely list the Rhoads family name, often in the company of Charles C. Gates and Louis C. McClure,<sup>23</sup> the notable Western photographer remembered for his documentation of the Denver's City Beautiful Movement.

The Gates Rubber Company expanded rapidly, growing from 12 employees in 1912 to more than 1500 in 1919.<sup>24</sup> During that time, the company relocated its factory to the burgeoning industrial area along South Broadway near the Ford assembly plant and later joined by the Schwayder Brothers (Samsonite) factory that operated on South Broadway from 1927 until 1971.

At the head of the toboggan is Burt Rhoads, waving is Charles C. Gates, holding hat is Hazel Rhoads Gates, seated behind her is her father, Harry F. Rhoads holding a grandchild. Sledding expedition is on East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Logan Street ca 1915.



Courtesy of Denver Public Library

Atop Gates Rubber Company's Unit 4, at South Acoma Street and West Tennessee Avenue, a roof-top garden was built and serves as one of the nation's "most significant physical examples of the model factory movement,"<sup>25</sup> a movement that included a range of employee-amenities in the workplace. H.J. Heinz Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was also nationally recognized for its emphasis on the model factory movement. They, too, provided a roof-top garden for their employees as a way "to create a healthy work environment."<sup>26</sup>

At one time Gates Rubber Company was the largest employer in Denver and thousands of its employees lived in the nearby neighborhoods of Platt Park, Overland, Baker, Speer, and West Washington Park. During the Depression, the company maintained its welfare programs unlike many other companies. The Gates Mutual Benefit Club established a service station on site offering gas "at the lowest net price", converted a home into a hospital for Gates workers, "formed a credit union in 1934"<sup>27</sup> and, began profit sharing in 1936. The roof-top garden was a well-known Denver locale over many decades given its dual purposes of supplying meals at cost to company employees as well as the site of company galas<sup>28</sup> and parties.

The Gates Rubber Company was proud of its community connection.<sup>29</sup> The first company picnic in 1914 took 150 employees and their families to Eldorado Springs by train; by 1960, 14,000 attended the annual event held at Lakeside Amusement Park. There was an annual Christmas Party, first held in 1917 that by 1960 saw Hazel Rhoads Gates (Mommie G) distributing 8,000<sup>30</sup> presents. There were numerous recreation programs and a commissary.

The company's presence on South Broadway was integral to the surrounding neighborhoods' culture, especially in the area of west of Washington Park, the site Burt Rhoads chose for his Denver residence and for Carmen Court. In June 1919, Burt purchased five lots on the southwest corner of East Virginia Avenue and South Ogden Street for which he was issued a permit to construct 500 S. Ogden Street. Rhoads' design replicated the red-tile roof found on the Gates Rubber Company's roof top garden pavilion. Another Spanish Eclectic architectural feature found on this residence is its elaborate chimney cap, one of the remaining visible elements behind the property's high stucco walls and lush vegetation. Local stories abound of the house's unique interior that include a pole situated behind a first floor closet door that allows guests to slide into the basement's party room, as well as alleged revolving bookshelves that reveal "concealed compartments"<sup>31</sup> and secret panels utilized during the Prohibition era. Like the roof-top garden, this residence boasts an extraordinary view of downtown Denver with sightlines from Long's Peak to Pike's Peak and beyond.

Behind Rhoads' residence on South Ogden Street, Gates Rubber Company built and operated its VIP guest house in 1922, which is now a personal residence. The company also constructed several houses for employees in the 700 block of South Ogden.<sup>32</sup> After marrying Charles C. Gates, Burt's sister Hazel lived nearby with her parents, Harry F. and Addie M. Rhoads at 642-644 Logan, purchased in 1909. Later Hazel Rhoads Gates lived at 444 South University. Her brother-in-law, John C. Gates, credited with inventing the V-belt, lived nearby at 300 South York Street. By 1989, Gates employed 18,000 people across the globe.<sup>33</sup> As the Gates company grew, so did the reputation of surrounding residential areas, as a place for blue-collar, factory workers.<sup>34</sup> Since the company moved its production out of Colorado in 1991,<sup>35</sup> the characteristic



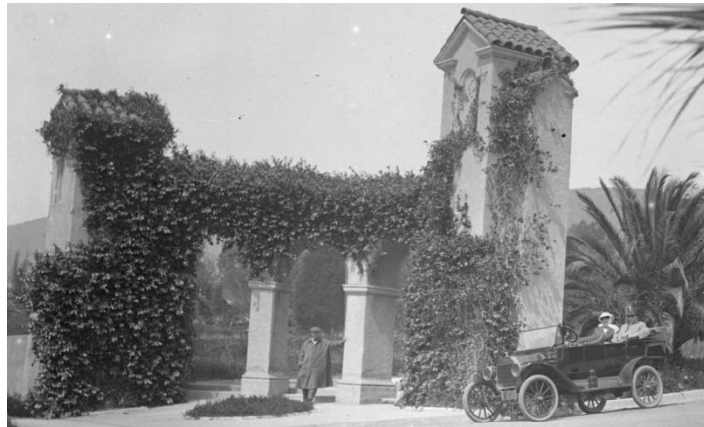
of the nearby neighborhoods has shifted. These areas are now perceived as offering a range of home sizes, prices and a mix of houses and apartments in desirably-close proximity to downtown Denver.

#### *Carmen Court Master Builder*

Burt Rhoads was born and raised in Denver and began his drafting career in Denver for the Victor Fuel Company. In 1907, he worked as draftsman for the Utah L & R Company in Salt Lake City, and later for the Portland Cement Company in Ogden, Utah. Rhoads moved to Montana in 1908 where he worked as a draughtsman for The B & M Company before he established his own company, Donovan & Rhoads in 1910 in Great Falls, Montana. Later he was listed as an architect for J.O. Ness before he established Rhoads Construction Company in 1914 in Great Falls.<sup>36</sup> In 1917, Rhoads returned to Denver where he joined what became Gates Rubber Company (originally Colorado Tire & Rubber, then International Rubber), rising to be Chief Engineer.

It is believed that during a Rhoads family motor trip to California in 1916 they may have visited San Diego's Panama-California Exposition, which promoted the Mission Revival and Spanish Revival architectural styles. Four of five Rhoads' known designs<sup>37</sup> feature elements found in these architectural styles, which include unadorned stucco cladding, a low-pitched red tile roof, and colonnaded pergolas.

The picture on right was taken on the Rhoads family motor trip through Yellowstone.<sup>38</sup> Photograph attributed to Harry M. Rhoads, brother to Burt Rhoads (standing). Seated in car are presumed to be Hazel Rhoads Gates (sister) and their father, Harry F. Rhoads, 1916



Courtesy of Denver Public Library

When Rhoads returned to Denver in 1917, he moved into the area west of Washington Park residing at 41 and 81 Logan Street until 1920 when he moved into the home he designed and built at 500 S. Ogden Street. In 1925, Rhoads was identified as owner and contractor for Carmen Court, designed in the Pueblo Revival style embellished with Spanish Revival features.

Beginning in 1931, Rhoads relocated to Cardiff, Wales and later to London. Through 1937, Rhoads traveled extensively across "the puddle" often citing his parent's home at 2750 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue as his USA residence.<sup>39</sup> Rhoads returned to Denver in 1937 with his wife and two

daughters, settling again in the area west Washington Park area at 235 S. Corona Street. In 1942, Burt worked in Washington, D.C., for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation that lent money to financial, industrial, and agricultural institutions beginning in 1932, effectively reducing bank failures. Its purpose shifted to financing construction and operation of war plants during World War II. In the late 1940s, Rhoads moved his family to Baton Rouge, Louisiana before retiring in Houston, Texas where he died in 1964.

#### *Other Owners*

In January 1926, Rhoads sold the highly visible Carmen Court apartments to E.J. Johnson, the proprietor of a local investment company who, two months later, also purchased Rhoads' home at 500 S. Ogden Street. Between 1927 and 1936, Johnson alternately lived with his wife Beatrice either in Carmen Court or at 500 S. Ogden Street.

In 1936, Ethel Keeler purchased Carmen Court from Johnson. She remained the owner until 1977 when the apartments were converted to condominiums. Ethel Keller lived at Carmen Court in Unit 916 with her husband, George E. Keeler, who was an investment broker in Denver for many years. In 1937, Keeler Investment Company purchased 74 N. Emerson Street, the parcel immediately to the south of Carmen Court. At some later date (unknown), a 5-car garage was built on the rear portion of 74 N. Emerson Street, which is now within the Carmen Court property boundaries.

In 1942, Beatrice Johnson inherited 500 S. Ogden Street from her husband. She subsequently remarried and retained ownership until 1960 when the property was purchased by Marsh-Wimbush Inc.; Joseph J. Marsh operated a Ford dealership and retained ownership of 500 S. Ogden Street at least through 1970.

## 7. Additional Information

### Notes

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5. East Cliff Conservation Area, Appraisal and Management Plan, Bournemouth, Dorset, England, Section 3.3.6, Townscape, Architectural Quality and Built Form, ca 2018, 57
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9. Historic Denver, Inc., *Discover Denver Survey*, Pueblo Revival style details, undated
10. Thomas H. Simmons, Front Range Research Associates, Inc., email April 6, 2020
11. Michael Paglia, *Carmen Court, an Unofficial Denver Landmark, on Endangered List*, Westword, Denver, Colorado, April 16, 2020
12. *South Side Monitor*, Denver, Colorado, October 1, 1926
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid
15. Denver Post, October 30, 1925, 17
16. Denver Post, October 28, 1925
17. Ibid
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19. Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver: The City Beautiful and Its Architects, 1893-1941* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987), 75

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21. Denver Post, August 16, 1916, 8
22. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York (1990), 418
23. Denver Post, November 22, 1902, 14; July 26, 1920, 6
24. Millie Van Wyke, *The Town of South Denver, Its People, Neighborhoods and Events Since 1858*, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder Colorado, 1991, 115
25. R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, Front Range Research Associates, Inc., Gates Rubber Company Plant (5DV.48), 10 October 2014, Prepared for Broadway Mississippi Development LLC, Denver, Colorado, 31.
26. “Ketchup” with Pittsburgh’s H.J. Heinz, Pennsylvania Historic Preservation, blog of the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office, April 18, 2018
27. R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, Front Range Research Associates, Inc., Gates Rubber Company Plant (5DV.48), 10 October 2014, Prepared for Broadway Mississippi Development LLC, Denver, Colorado, 44.
28. Denver Post, July 1, 1917, 45
29. Hermsen Consultants as part of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) report prepared for the City of Denver, undated
30. Ibid
31. Phil Goodstein, *The Haunts of Washington Park*, New Social Publications, Denver Colorado, October 2009, 54
32. Ibid
33. Millie Van Wyke, *The Town of South Denver, Its People, Neighborhoods and Events Since 1858*, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder Colorado, 1991, 115
34. Phil Goodstein, *The Haunts of Washington Park*, New Social Publications, Denver Colorado, October 2009, 2
35. Millie Van Wyke, *The Town of South Denver, Its People, Neighborhoods and Events Since 1858*, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder Colorado, 1991, 115
36. Marilyn Edwards-Roberts, In My Father’s Footsteps, research of city directories (1900-1965), April 2020

37. Due to global orders to “shelter in place” issued beginning in mid-March through May 25, 2020, libraries were closed in Colorado and England, limiting access to archival materials.
38. Denver Public Library, digital collection, by Harry M. Rhoads, Rh-1857, ca 1915
39. Marilyn Edwards-Roberts, *In My Father’s Footsteps*, research of ship manifests (1925-1956), April 2020

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Photographs



Carmen Court, 900 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Denver CO – 1925

Courtesy DPL



Carmen Court, West & North Elevations, view south  
May 2020





Carmen Court, East Elevation, view southwest May 2020



Carmen Court, East Elevation, view south May 2020



Carmen Court, South Elevation, view northwest May 2020



Carmen Court, Detached Garages, North Elevation  
View Southwest May 2020







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Other Applicant(s):

Applicant Name: Malcolm M. Murry Date: 5-26-2020  
(please print)  
Applicant Signature: [Signature]  
Applicant Address: 121 Pearl St, Denver CO 80203

Applicant Name: Mark Harris Date: 5-26-20  
(please print)  
Applicant Signature: [Signature]  
Applicant Address: 250 N. Pearl St. #106 Denver 80203

Applicant Name: SARAH O. McARTHUR Date: 5-26-2020  
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