

**To:** Denver City Council, Albus Brooks President  
**From:** Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)  
**Date:** September 20, 2017  
**RE:** Landmark Designation application for Packard's Hill Historic District

**Staff Recommendation:**

Based on ordinance designation criteria, on the findings of the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) that the application meets the criteria for designation of a district, and on the recommendation of the Denver Planning Board, staff recommends approval of the application.

**Request to Designate a District:**

**Application:** #2017L-002  
**Address:** Roughly bound by Lowell Boulevard and the alley between Osceola Street and Perry Street and 32nd Avenue and 35th Avenue  
**Zoning:** U-SU-A, U-SU-B, U-TU-B, U-MX-2  
**Council:** #1, Rafael Espinoza  
**Blueprint Denver:** Area of stability  
**Applicants:** Seventeen owners and/or residents in Packard's Hill

**Case Summary:**

Seventeen applicants, who own property or reside within the proposed boundary, submitted the Landmark application for Packard's Hill Historic District on June 2, 2017. Landmark Staff found the application to be complete. Staff also performed an investigation and found it to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set a public hearing for the July 18, 2017 Landmark Preservation Commission meeting.

At the Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing, the LPC voted (5-0) to recommend landmark designation of application for Packard's Hill Historic District, based on History Criteria 1a and 1c, and Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the July 7, 2017 staff report. Vote 5-0.

At the Denver Planning Board meeting on August 2, 2017, the board voted (9-1) to recommend to City Council the approval, of the proposed district with respect to conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, effect upon the surrounding neighborhood, and other planning considerations. On August 22, 2017, 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 September 25, 2017.

**Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC):**

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30-4, Denver Revised Municipal Code, a property must be more than 30 years old....and meet the following criteria:

1. Maintain its physical and historical integrity
2. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:
  - History
  - Architecture
  - Geography
3. Relate to a historic context or theme

**Integrity:**

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

The existing district retains a high degree of integrity. Although there have been some changes outside the district due to changes and growth in the surrounding area, the neighborhood is still urban residential in nature and in the same location; retaining both integrity of setting and location. While there have been modifications to some of the structures within the district, the overall integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are readily apparent. The continued use as a residential area helps retain a strong sense of feeling and association.



3400 block of Meade

**Relate to a Historic Context/Theme and Period of Significance:**

The district relates to late-nineteenth century growth of the Highlands, the expansion of the tramway system that helped further development, the annexation into Denver, and the continued growth of the area up to World War II. The period of significance reflects that development pattern, beginning with early subdivision and building in 1886 and continuing until 1940 and the ensuing slowing of construction during the war years.

**Criteria Evaluation:**

The district meets History Criteria 1a and 1c and Architecture Criteria 2a and 2b, as noted in the designation application.

**1. Historical Significance**

***To have historical significance, the structure or district shall be thirty (30) or more years old or have extraordinary importance to the historical development of Denver, and shall:***

*a) Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;*

Packard's Hill illustrates the pattern of development common in the late nineteenth century of expanding beyond, and outside, of urban and industrial cores. The district is associated with the movement of residents out of Denver to the Highlands, an area viewed as above and away from the pollution, grime, and vice of the city. Subdivided in late 1880s by prominent developers, this area appealed to individuals seeking the wholesome environment and clean living offered by both the location and the temperance of the Highlands. The establishment of this area reflects the larger, nationwide trend of people leaving the city for neighborhoods away from the industry and downtown cores. The expansion of satellite communities, in the Denver area and nationwide, was intricately linked with the growth of streetcars and the ability to more easily commute to work into the city, as seen in Packard's Hill by the development of the transit line along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. This key connection provided an important avenue for the expansion and development of the neighborhood.

The district is also significant for its strong association with Denver's women's history. Historically, the area had a large number of women who were active in the suffrage movement and who pressed to expand women's rights. These women pursued the right to vote in Colorado and then continued the effort to expand voting nationwide. They were involved in, and leaders of, women's organization and strongly supported and advocated for the temperance movement within the Highlands. The women's vote, based on temperance ideals, led to a delay in the annexation of the Highlands into Denver. Additionally, Packard's Hill reflects the influence of women in its physical development, as women were investors and developers, buying and trading parcels of land in Packard's Hill and/or participating in the construction and sale of houses. Several women worked with their husbands to acquire, develop, market, and sell real estate within the district and elsewhere in the city.

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

The district is also associated with persons who had influence on society, as numerous area residents were significant in business, arts, and politics. Elwin Theodore Webber (3825 W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) was an early livestock raiser and mining investor who became a real estate developer during the 1880s boom and was a platter of Highland Place subdivision. Minnie Ethel Luke Keplinger (3218 Newton Street) was an artist active in the movement to establish Denver's first art museum. Spring Byington (3825 W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) was an acclaimed actress of stage and screen with a career that spanned seventy years and included Oscar and Emmy nominations. Dr. Mary E. Ford (3825 W. 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) influenced society during more than a half-century of medical service to Denver. Bird Bosworth (3425 Lowell Boulevard) worked as a writer and reporter for several Denver newspapers and was active in women's rights and temperance groups. William Fitz Randolph Mills was manager of Improvements and Parks under Mayor Robert Speer, and following Speer's death, served as Denver mayor for two years. Benjamin F. Stapleton lived at various locations in Packard's Hill from 1911 – 1920. Historians acknowledge Stapleton's profound influence on shaping the city, but do so while recognizing, documenting, and examining his active role in the Ku Klux Klan, using the KKK as a means of achieving and retaining public office, and then appointing Klan members to influential posts within the city.



## 2. 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 district embodies distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles and types that illustrate the evolution of middle class housing types and styles over time. While there are a few large, high style structures designed for wealthy residents, the predominate building stock reflects middle class housing. Within the district, the largest percentage of houses are Queen Anne style structures primarily built before the Silver Crash of 1893. As the economy recovered, the changes in popular architectural styles are seen in numerous turn of the century Classic Cottages and the related, but larger Denver Squares. Preferences in types and styles continued to evolve as Bungalows, English cottages, and Terrace type buildings became more prevalent. Packard's Hill shows Denver's history of building predominantly in brick, while following nationwide trends in popular building styles.



3300 block of Osceola

b) *Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*

The district also contains structures designed by noted architect William Quayle and master stonemasons David and Tilden Cox. Prior to 1893, Quayle was a prolific Denver architect constructing numerous schools, churches, offices, department stores, and residences; however, many of his designs have been demolished. Leaving the property on corner of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Osceola St as an important example of his work. Master builders, father and son, David and Tilden Cox, constructed two buildings within the boundary, both also Individual Denver Landmarks. These master stonemasons used the two residences as both their homes as well as advertisements for and demonstrations of their highly skilled craftsmanship.

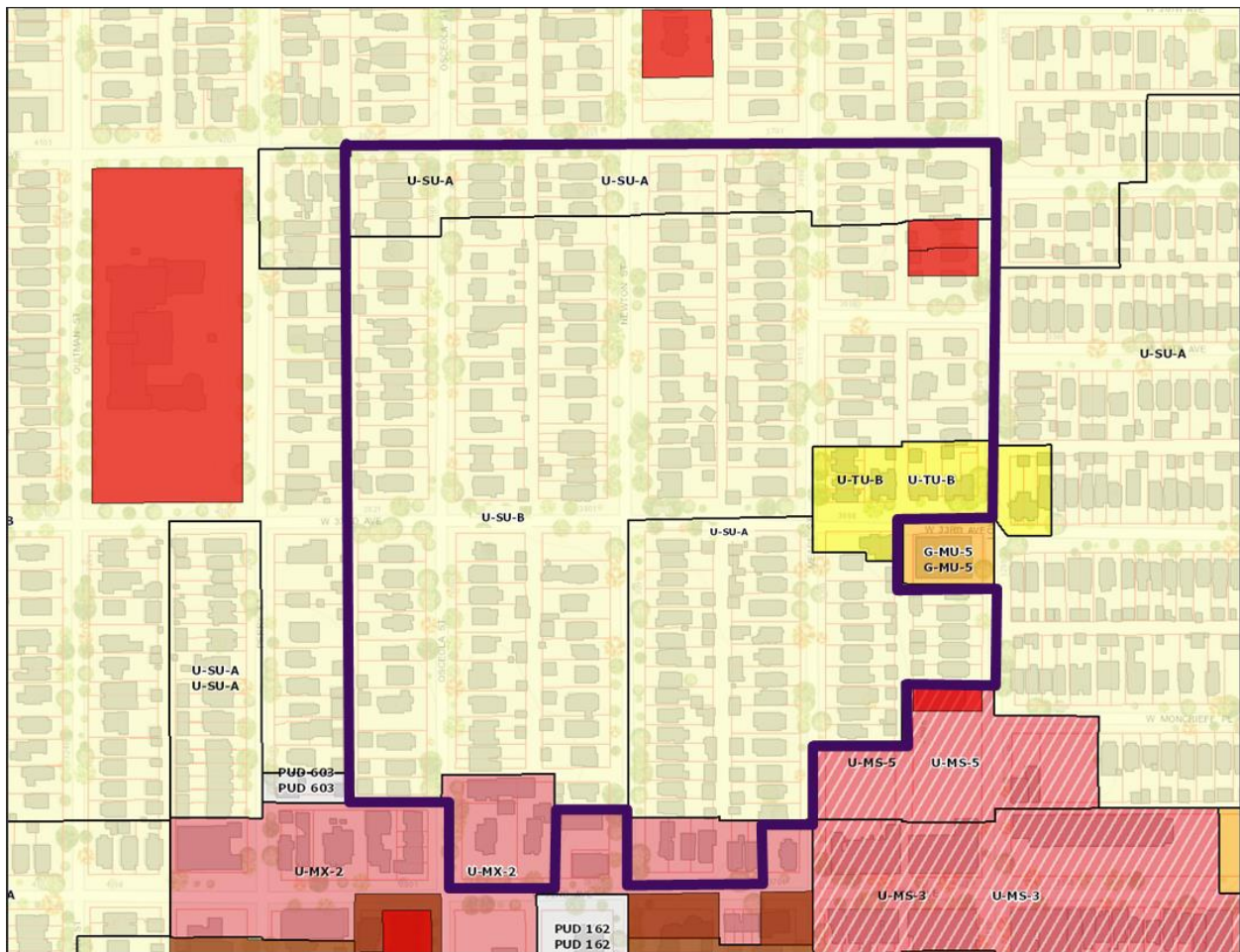
**Planning Board Considerations, per Chapter 30-4.6, DRMC:**

The Landmark ordinance provides the opportunity for the Planning Board to make a recommendation to City Council regarding designation of districts. The ordinance specifically directs the Planning Board to consider a proposed designation with respect to:

1. Its relationship to the Denver Comprehensive Plan;
2. The effect of the designation upon the surrounding neighborhood; and
3. Such other planning considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation or amendments.

**Zoning Context:**

The District is zoned U-SU-A, U-SU-B, U-TU-B, U-MX-2.



Zoning  
Proposed District Boundary noted in purple  
(red and brown denotes existing Denver Landmarks)

#### **Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan (2000):**

The proposal is consistent with Denver Comprehensive Plan's objectives and strategies, including:

- Land Use Strategies 1-B: "Ensure that the Citywide Land Use and Transportation Plan reinforce the city's character by building on a legacy of high-quality urban design and stable, attractive neighborhoods; encouraging preservations of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes."
- Legacy Strategies, 1-C: "Preserve Denver's architectural and design legacies while allowing new ones to evolve."
- Legacy Objective 5: "Preserve Denver's historic resources."
- Legacy Objective 7: "Support historic preservation in neighborhoods."
- Neighborhoods Strategies 1-A: "Respect the intrinsic character and assets of individual neighborhoods"
- Neighborhoods Strategies 1-D: "Ensure high quality urban design in neighborhoods by enhancing their distinctive natural, historic and cultural characteristics."

The proposed Packard's Hill Historic District would help reinforce the city and neighborhood's character, preserve historic properties and support preservation in neighborhoods, as well as respect and enhance the intrinsic, historic, and cultural character of the neighborhood. The designation application is consistent with these plan recommendations.

#### **Relationship to Blueprint Denver (2002):**

According to the 2002 Plan Map adopted in Blueprint Denver, the district's concept land use is primarily single family residential, with a small neighborhood center, and is located in an Area of Stability. As discussed in the application, the primary character of the historic district is single family residential and the proposed district designation would help preserve that character. Blueprint Denver notes, that Neighborhood Centers serve "the many everyday shopping, service or entertainment needs of one or more neighborhoods. A mix of land uses includes those for convenience shopping, personal services and restaurants." (p. 43) Historically, a trolley line ran along 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, with the area between Lowell and Osceola 32<sup>nd</sup> serving then, and now, as a commercial core for the neighborhood. Designation would reinforce the historic character and would be consistent with a neighborhood center land use.

The proposed district is also in an Area of Stability. Guiding principles for Areas of Stability include: keeping valued community characteristics in older and stable neighborhoods and identifying and maintaining the character of an area while accommodating some new development and redevelopment. Historic designations identify and help retain the character defining features of a district and provide stability. But designations also allow for new infill construction that is compatible with the character of the district. The proposed Packard's Hill Historic District would help reinforce the stability of the area.

The designation application is consistent with the Blueprint Denver concept land use and Area of Stability recommendations. Additionally, within Blueprint Denver, historic designation is noted as one of the most successful and common tools to preserve a neighborhood's special qualities.

#### **Effect on Surrounding Neighborhoods:**

The Packard's Hill Historic District designation would help preserve the character defining features of the district, but will have little impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. The intent of the designation is to recognize this unique district and the buildings that define it.

**Boundary:**

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

A portion of the Highland Place, and a portion of the First Addition to Highland Place, and a portion of the Packard's Hill Subdivision as originally recorded in Arapahoe County, located in the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 30, Township 3 South, Range 68 West of the 6th P. M., City and County of Denver, State of Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

**Highland Place:**

Block 3, All of Lots 1 through 21, the North 50 Feet of Lots 22 through 25, and All of Lots 26 through 42

Block 4, All of Lots 30 through 48

Block 5, All of Lots 25 through 48

Block 6, All of Lots 1 through 48

Block 7, All of Lots 1 through 12, and All of Lots 39 through 50

Block 8, All of Lots 1 through 10, and All of Lots 41 through 50

**First Addition to Highland Place:**

Block 7, All of Lots 13 through 38

Block 8, All of Lots 14 through 37

**Packard's Hill Subdivision:**

Block 1, All of Lots 15 through 21, and All of Lots 26 through 40, and the North 10 Feet of Lot 41

Block 2, The West 65 Feet of Lots 1 through 3, The West 65 Feet of The South 20 Feet of Lot 4, and All of the North 5 Feet of Lot 4, And All of Lots 5 through 50

In addition thereto those portions of all abutting public rights-of-way, but only to the centerline thereof, which are immediately adjacent to the aforesaid specifically described area.

**Public Review Process:**

Community Planning & Development has met or exceeded 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 and Planning Board meeting
- City Council, Planning Board, and Building Inspection email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
  - United North side Neighborhood
  - West Highland Neighborhood Association
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
  - Denver Neighborhood Association, Inc.
  - 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
- Owner notification letters regarding City Council meetings



**Public Comments:**

As of the date of this staff report, CPD has received 222 comment letters, emails, and signature support cards from individuals regarding the Packard Hill Historic District application. However, since numerous community members sent more than one public comment, the public comments tallied below were counted by CPD staff as individuals who submitted rather than the number of letters. Additionally, CPD received comments for those who do not reside in the district or within the City and County of Denver. To help provide clarification, a map is attached that illustrates public comments that have been received by CPD from residents who live within the boundary of the proposed historic district. This only includes the public comment that CPD has received from various sources, including members of City Council, applicants, and members of the public.

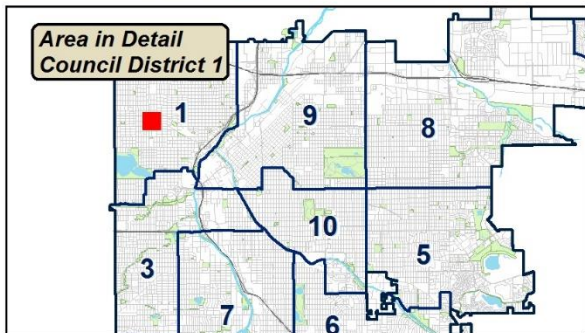
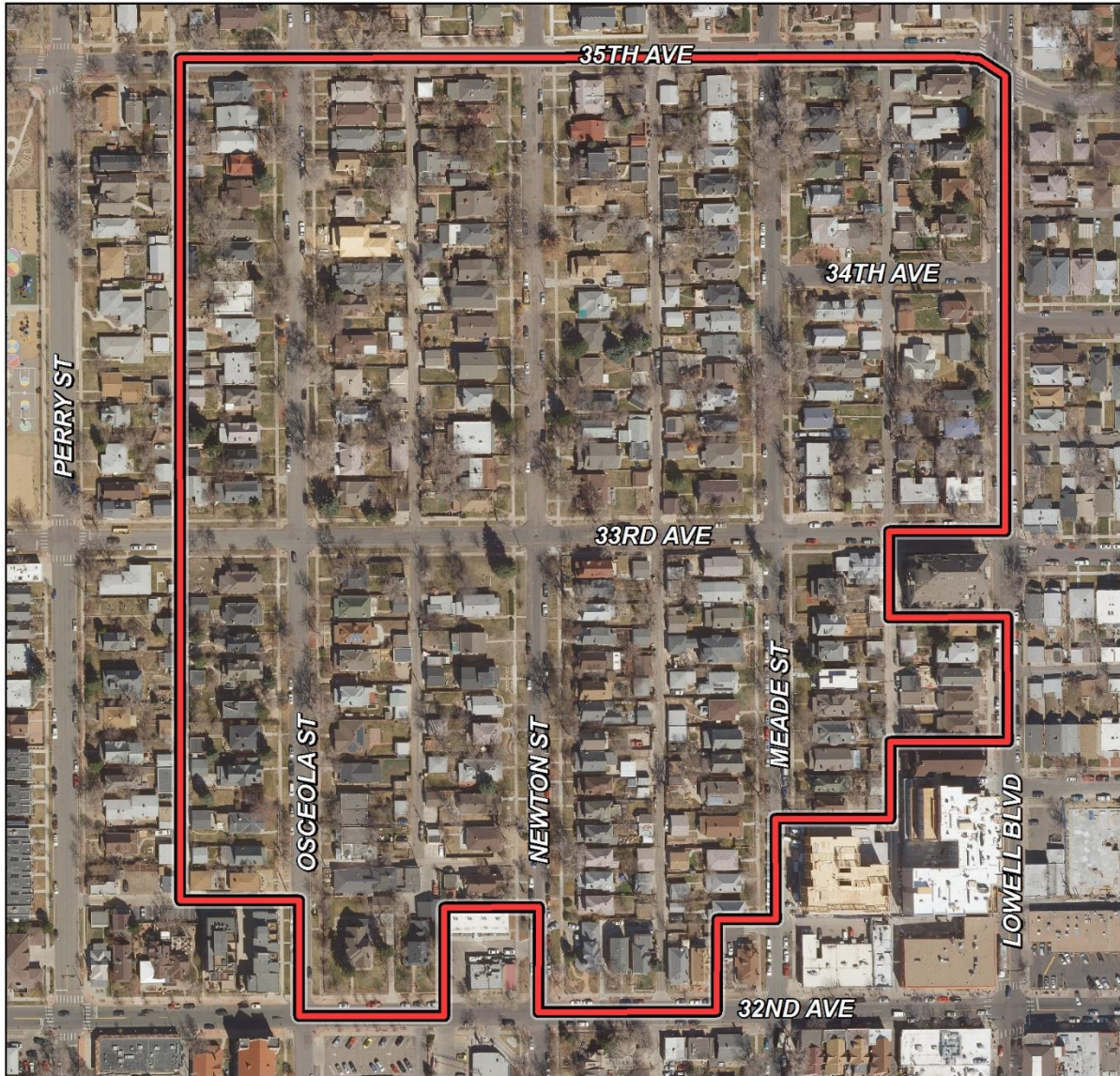
- RNO comment
  - The West Highland Neighborhood Association submitted two letters of support
- Public Comments (emails, letters, and signature cards submitted to CPD) from individuals
  - 187 individuals in support
  - 35 individuals in opposition
- At the LPC public hearing 24 member of the public commented
  - 14 in favor and 10 opposed
- At the Planning Board meeting, nine members of the public commented
  - Nine in favor

**Attachments Provided by CPD:**


- Designation Application
- Map of proposed district
- Map of public received from within the district
- LPC Public Hearing meeting record
- Planning Board meeting record
- Applicant signature support sheets
- Public comments received by 11:30 am, September 21, 2017




## Proposed Landmark District



**Proposed Landmark District  
Packard's Hill**

 *District Boundary*

 0 100 200 400 Feet

Aerial Photo: 2016      Map Date: June 2017