



To: Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee of Denver City Council
From: Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: February 22, 2018
RE: Landmark Designation for 2145 South Adams (Ormleigh)

Staff Recommendation:

Based on 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: #2018L-001
Address: 2145 South Adams Street
Zoning: U-SU-C
Council: #6, Paul Kashmann
Blueprint Denver: Area of stability
Owner: Rita Hill (Robert Hill and Robin Richardson)

Case Summary:

Rita Hill, who owns the property, and Historic Denver and University Park Community Council, working with her, submitted the Landmark application for the property on January 17, 2018. 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 February 20, 2018 Landmark Preservation Commission meeting.

At the Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing, the LPC voted (6-0) to recommend landmark designation based on History Criterion 1c, and Architecture Criterion 2a, and Geography Criterion 3b citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the February 13, 2018 staff report.

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...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 property retains a high degree of integrity, within minimal changes. The property is still in the same location, and, although there have been some changes to the surrounding area, due to demolition and redevelopment, the neighborhood is still residential in nature; retaining both integrity of location and setting. While the doors to the carriage house were infilled when it was converted to residential use in 1978,

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reroofing removed pommels in the 1990s, and a rear patio was added, these changes are very minor and do not impact the integrity. Overall, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are excellent and the continued use as a residence helps retain a strong sense of feeling and association.



Relate to a Historic Context/Theme:

This property relates to the growth of South Denver, specifically through Iliff's platting of the University Addition, and the role of William Seward Iliff in the development of the both the University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology.

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the structure meets History Criterion 1c, and Architecture Criterion 2a, and Geography Criterion 3b.

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:

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

The property is significant under history for its strong association with William Seward Iliff, who constructed the residence in 1899 and lived there until his death in 1946. Will Iliff, son of early Denver pioneer John Wesley Iliff and Alberta Bloom Iliff, was a prominent entrepreneur in Denver and shaped the early



development of South Denver (an independent town from 1886—1894) and its University Park subdivision, through his early investments, residency, and his donations to DU and the Iliff School of Theology.

While living in this house, Will Iliff continued the family tradition of entrepreneurial investment and leadership in Colorado's business community. His business interests varied and included investments in railroads and energy development in Colorado and the Western U.S., investing in coal mining, electric power plants, and water reservoir and irrigation systems. He also worked in real estate and platted the Iliff's University Addition. Beginning in 1890 and for several decades forward, Will Iliff—along with other family members—bought and sold lots in DU's University Park subdivision to support the university, while also supporting family business interests and investments in the neighborhood. He also helped create and incorporate the University Park Street Railway to provide the neighborhood with rail service to downtown.

Iliff was also a significant early and influential supporter of the University of Denver and the affiliated Iliff School of Theology. Will Iliff's donation—along with his step-mother Elizabeth Warren's endowment—directly led to the establishment of the Methodist seminary on the university campus. Additionally, he and his family, played a strong leadership role at both DU and the Iliff School, contributing additional resources over the years, with Will serving as Vice President of the Iliff School of Theology's Board of Trustees for more than 30 years.

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 1899 house at 2145 South Adams Street is significant under Architecture as an excellent example of an early and substantial Denver Square. The residence exhibits the stylistic transition from ornate Victorian design and irregular massing to the more modern Foursquare type with Colonial Revival detailing that would become common in Denver over the next two decades. This house is distinguished from its later Denver Square counterparts by its substantial, broad and offset massing, designed to spread across a larger pastoral property in contrast with the more common narrow Foursquare forms maximizing the constraints of tight urban lots in central Denver.

The house is also a remarkably intact and unaltered example of a Denver Square type in University Park and is a more substantial and complex example than other Foursquares in the neighborhood. Ormleigh—as the house was called by its original Iliff owners—is a well-designed and elegantly crafted brick Foursquare, with substantial street presence and many original features such as unpainted red brick exteriors, three brick chimneys, wood windows with unpainted sandstone lintels/sills, and milled-wood porch and details including porch columns, balustrade, floor/ceiling, eaves, and dentil molding.



3. Geographic Significance

To have geographic importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

- b) Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;*

Ormleigh is significant under Geography for its rarity and distinctive characteristics in the University Park neighborhood. It is one of the oldest unaltered houses in the University Park neighborhood, particularly in the eastern half, and one of only seven houses first built in University Park between South St. Paul Street and South Colorado Boulevard by 1907. Many other contemporaneous residences have evolved with less retention of integrity and other historic homes remain but have been altered over the years. In contrast, the property at 2145 South Adams still presents itself as a rare 1899 house retaining its original carriage house and landscaped setting.

The property is distinctive, as it is situated on nine adjacent lots and maintaining its pastoral setting that evokes the early character of University Park as a residential enclave far removed from the urban City of Denver. Ormleigh, is a visual anchor in University Park, and is sharply differentiated from its recently built neighbor houses that typically dominate small lots and crowd the neighborhood, now changing University Park's original character.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan (2000), Blueprint Denver, and University Park Neighborhood Plan (2008)

The comprehensive plan envisioned Denver in 2020 as vibrant, with well-preserved and appropriately used structures representing every era of the city's history. It included strategies (1-C) that "Preserve Denver's architectural and design legacies while allowing new to evolve."

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This property is located in an Area of Stability in Blueprint Denver. Within Blueprint Denver, landmark preservation is identified as a tool to reinforce areas of stability. Blueprint Denver noted that for areas of stability, it is important to respect valued development patterns and attributes of the area, including existing buildings, particularly those adding distinctive character and identity.

The proposed landmark structure is also within the boundaries of the University Park Neighborhood planning area. The plan recognizes the need to preserve historic resources and sites that are unique to University Park, to restore or adaptively use historic buildings, and to support landmark designation of structures that reflect outstanding elements of the neighborhood.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lots 27 to 35 inclusive, Block 42, University Park Amended, City & County of Denver, State of Colorado

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:

- Posted Signage for Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing
- Owner letter notification
- City Council, Planning Board, Building Inspection email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
 - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation
 - University Park Community Council
 - Historic Denver
 - Colorado Preservation, Inc
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation
 - State of Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Public Comments:

- At the LPC public hearing, four members of the public spoke, all in favor of designation.

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Map of proposed designation
- Designation Application
- Designation Application Exhibits
- LPC Public Hearing draft meeting record