



**To:** Denver City Council  
**From:** Jennifer Buddenborg, Senior City Planner, Community Planning & Development  
**Date:** December 9, 2021  
**RE:** Landmark Designation for Pancratia Hall at 3001 S Federal Blvd, #2021L-006

**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 for preservation, staff recommends approval of the application.

**Request to Designate a Structure:**

**Application:** #2021L-006  
**Address:** 3001 S Federal Blvd  
**Zoning:** PUD-G #24  
**Council:** District 2 – Kevin Flynn  
**Owner:** Pancratia Hall Partners  
**Applicant(s):** Owner

**Case Summary:**

The Owner submitted a Denver Landmark designation application for Pancratia Hall to CPD on October 21, 2021. Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver Landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for November 16, 2021.

At the public hearing, LPC recommended approval of the landmark designation application for Pancratia Hall based on criteria B, C, D, F, and J, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony and the November 9, 2021, staff report. Vote 9-0-0.

On November 30, 2021, 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 set for December 13, 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:

1. Maintain its integrity;
2. Be more than 30 years old, or of exceptional importance;
3. Meet at least three of ten significance criteria;
4. Be considered by the LPC for its historic context.

**Criteria Evaluation:**

The structure meets the following designation criteria.

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

Pancratia Hall has direct and substantial association with the Sisters of Loretto and Mother Mary Pancratia, born Mary Lucinda Bonfils (1851-1915), for whom the building was named in memoriam. Both the group and person had influence on Denver society as an arm of the Roman Catholic Church focused on education, in this case, women's education. While Mother Pancratia died before construction of Pancratia Hall in 1930, her individual contributions are worth noting as part of the larger legacy left by the Sisters of Loretto in Denver, and the evolution of the Loretto Heights campus.

The Sisters of Loretto were a North American educational order established in 1812. They followed a commitment of the Roman Catholic Church to provide schooling for its children and thus proliferation of the church itself. As a part of that schooling, sister-teachers were considered a critical element, with more than 40,000 assigned to parish schools in the United States at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Sisters' presence in Denver prior to the establishment of Loretto Heights Academy spanned at least two decades. In 1864, the Sisters established St. Mary's Academy in downtown Denver at 14th and California Streets. The then 16-year-old Sister Pancratia moved to Denver, Colorado, and served as teacher and administrator, eventually becoming director of the Academy by age 30.

Mother Pancratia was one of the most important members of the Sisters of Loretto in Denver, Colorado, and related to the Bonfils family, who were well-known local benefactors. She established the Loretto Heights Academy in 1888. Her vision, and that of the Sisters of Loretto, is generally accredited for the success of the Sister's first Denver location, St. Mary's Academy, as well as Loretto Heights Academy. They are responsible for the education of thousands of women and their later positive contributions to Colorado politics and culture.

The Sisters of Loretto operated Loretto Heights College until 1988, one hundred years after Mother Pancratia purchased the hilltop property and established Loretto Heights Academy. St. Mary's Academy eventually moved to the Denver suburb of Cherry Hills Village and continues to be operated by the Sisters.

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

Pancratia Hall embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of the Collegiate Gothic Style. According to History Colorado, this architectural style combines the Gothic Revival and Jacobean/Elizabethan styles. In Colorado, this is primarily seen in large institutional and civic buildings. Pancratia Hall is no exception in this regard, as a large institutional building on the former Loretto Heights Academy & College campus. This marriage of architectural styles at Pancratia Hall displays common elements such as arched entrances, steeply pitched roof, intersecting gables and dormers, front façade chimney, and abundant multi-light windows.



*Figure 1 Pancratia Hall, October 2021*

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

Pancratia Hall is a significant example of recognized Denver-based architect Harry W. J. Edbrooke. Constructed in 1928, this Collegiate Gothic Style structure was a departure from Edbrooke's more common Mediterranean-influenced designs. It is the only Collegiate Gothic Style structure on the Loretto Heights campus and represents a stylistic shift from the previous Richardsonian Romanesque designs of his uncle Frank Edbrooke, who designed the Loretto Heights Administration Building (1891) and Chapel (1909). At the time of Pancratia Hall's design, Harry was in the middle of his successful architecture practice that would extend until 1946.

Harry came from a line of successful architects. Born in Chicago, he was the son of Willoughby J. Edbrooke, who designed such buildings as the old U.S. Post Office in Washington, D.C., and nephew of Frank E. Edbrooke, who became one of Denver's most highly acclaimed architects. Harry joined his uncle's architecture practice in 1908 and opened his own independent firm in 1913 upon his uncle's retirement. He became a notable Denver architect himself, designing many well-known commercial, civic, and institutional structures. Pancratia Hall was an important architectural commission for the Loretto Heights campus and Harry, as it signaled the first expansion of the campus after it gained accreditation as a college and ushered in the only Collegiate Gothic Style structure on the campus. It is one of very few Collegiate Gothic Style structures known to be designed by Harry and still standing.

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

Pancratia Hall represents an established and familiar feature of the Harvey Park South and College View neighborhoods, as well as the contemporary city of Denver, due to its prominent location and physical characteristics. Located on the 71-acre lot of the former Loretto Heights College, Pancratia Hall is the only Collegiate Gothic style building on the campus, thus giving it unique and prominent physical characteristics. A five-story building of red brick and accented with cast-stone lintels, the building is easily recognizable with Celtic crosses on the front gables, ornamental finials, and pointed-arch chapel windows on its front façade. Located northwest of the Administration Building atop the hill, Pancratia Hall has maintained its prominent location over the years, making it a visible staple of the surrounding neighborhoods and city.

The structure is oriented on the same axis as the Administration Building and is prominently featured near the crest of the hill. Its primary façade faces, and is clearly visible from, the heavily used Federal Blvd. As the surrounding land was developed by the Sisters of Loretto over many years, they made thoughtful decisions on landscape design to maintain the prominence and distinction of Pancratia Hall. While the redevelopment of the property will remove some visibility of Pancratia Hall from several vantage points, its prominent location atop the hill and physical characteristics will be preserved.

**J. 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.**

Pancratia Hall is associated with the following social movements and institutions that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, and city: Women’s Education, Loretto Heights Academy & College, and the Catholic Church. It represents the Catholic Church’s commitment to education through the Sisters of Loretto and their mission for specifically providing education to women at a time when society was advancing such thought. The Sisters established this educational movement in the quickly growing city of Denver, and Pancratia Hall helped advance and evolve this movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Pancratia Hall also signaled the permanence of the Sisters in what would eventually become southwest Denver, contributing to the growth and development of the neighborhood and city.



*Figure 2 Pancratia Hall, 1930*

**Integrity:**

Integrity is defined within the Denver Landmark Preservation Ordinance 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 qualities that define integrity are: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Pancratia Hall retains a high degree of integrity in location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building is in its original location. Most of the original Pancratia Hall exterior materials and design are original, with minimal repairs or alterations over time; most alterations occurred in the interior of the structure. Its rehabilitation and adaptive reuse as affordable housing has resulted in exterior alterations. However, the rehabilitation is a state and federal rehabilitation tax credit project, and the alterations are therefore following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, as approved by the National Park Service and Colorado State Historic Preservation Office. Therefore, the exterior alterations are sensitive to and compatible with the structure's original character and design.

The removal of Marian Hall, formerly attached to a small section of Pancratia Hall at its northwest corner, affects the setting that existed from 1957-1988, when Marian Hall existed. However, the removal of the attached residence hall restores the original Pancratia Hall setting, feeling and association. The Marian Hall removal does not negatively impact the essential physical features that make Pancratia Hall architecturally significant. While the site redevelopment will have considerable impact on Pancratia Hall's setting, the structure is still found to maintain a high degree of overall integrity.

**Relates to a Historic Context and Period of Significance:**

The property's period of significance is: 1930-1988.

The addition of Pancratia Hall to the Loretto Heights campus in 1930 signaled the expansion and growth of the Sisters of Loretto and Catholic Church's mission to provide education to women in grade levels through the Loretto Heights Academy and also at the collegiate level through the newly accredited Loretto Heights College. Pancratia Hall consumed the Academy's high-school curriculum and dormitory, originally housed in the 1891 Administration Building, to make room for college courses in the Administration Building (the Academy closed in 1941).

At the time of its construction, this area was still relatively undeveloped, and would remain so until the years surrounding World War II. Loretto Heights would not be annexed by the City and County of Denver until 1957. The early presence and gradual expansion of the Loretto Heights campus helped spur, and reflected, greater development in the area.

On campus, the Sisters steadily expanded development following the construction of Pancratia Hall, with a major building campaign in the 1950s, spurred by a master plan designed by landscape architect Saco Rienk DeBoer. This included the 1958 addition of Marian Hall to Pancratia Hall, designed by architect John Monroe. Like other college campuses in the United States, the Sisters invested in notable architects and landscape architects to design their educational institution. Pancratia Hall continued this trend.

Pancratia Hall served an educational use from its 1930 construction until Loretto Heights College closed in 1988.

**Boundary:**

The designation application proposes to designate the following legal description:

Lot 3, Block 3, Loretto Heights Filing NO. 1, 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
- Denver City Council and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
  - Dartmouth Heights Association
  - Denver For All
  - District 2 Neighborhood Coalition, Inc.
  - South Mar Lee/Brentwood/Sharon Park Neighbors
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation
  - Historic Denver, Inc.
  - Colorado Preservation, Inc.
  - National Trust for Historic Preservation
  - State of Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Posted signage for LPC public hearing
- Owner notification letter regarding City Council meetings

**Public Comments:**

As of 5:00 p.m. on December 8, 2021, CPD received 14 emails from Individuals commenting on the designation application.

- RNO Comment
  - None
- Comment from Individuals
  - 14 in support
  - 0 neutral
  - 0 in opposition
- Comment at LPC Public Hearing
  - 1 in support
  - 0 neutral
  - 0 in opposition

**Attachments:**

- Designation Application
- Map of Structure
- Public Comments