



To: Denver City Council, President Stacie Gilmore
From: Jennifer Buddenborg, Senior City Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: January 21, 2021
RE: Landmark Designation for 6400 Montview Blvd, #2020L-003

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: #2020L-003
Address: 6400 Montview Boulevard
Zoning: U-SU-E
Council: District 8 – Christopher Herndon
Owner: Rebecca Rogers
Applicant(s): Owner

Case Summary:

The Owner submitted a Denver Landmark designation application for 6400 Montview Boulevard to CPD on October 8, 2020. 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 LPC for December 15, 2020.

At the public hearing, LPC recommended approval of the landmark designation application for 6400 Montview Boulevard based on criteria C, D and F, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony and the December 8, 2020, staff report. Vote 6-0-0.

On January 5, 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 is set for January 25, 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.

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

The residence at 6400 Montview Boulevard embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of a side-gabled subtype of the Spanish Eclectic style. Its identifying features include an asymmetrical façade, stucco cladding with decorative brick, tile roof with multiple levels, elaborate chimney top, arches above principal windows, arched front entry with decorative ironwork and sconces, balcony with iron railing on primary façade, and second-story covered porch and round tower at the rear. The Spanish Eclectic style often also includes elaborate landscaping features and this property is no exception with its flagstone walkway depicting moon phases leading to the front entry and flagstone back patio with sun imagery. It is one of a few Spanish Eclectic style houses in the South Park Hill Neighborhood. Built in 1936, its construction occurred at the tail end of the popularity of this architectural style in the United States that spanned 1915 to 1940.



Figure 1 Looking southeast at the primary facade of 6400 Montview Boulevard

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

The property is a significant residential example of the work of recognized architect J. Roger Musick and master builder Harry M. Bitman. Often designing in partnership with his older brother G. Meredith Musick on civic and religious commissions, this venture represents the only known Spanish Eclectic style residence designed by J. Roger Musick in Denver. It is consistent with his residential designs in that it is a straightforward interpretation of the Spanish Eclectic style and includes a prominent main entrance accented with a large, decorative surround; it differs in its use of stucco as opposed to brick or stone which is more commonly found on J. Roger Musick's residential designs.

A graduate of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York City, J. Roger Musick's commercial, civic and religious designs have gained more recognition to date. These include, but are not limited to, the Bryant-Webster School at 3635 Quivas St, Colorado State Capitol Annex, and Berkeley Park Chapel at 4345 W 46th Ave, each historically designated at the local or national level. To date, none of his residential designs have been designated Denver Landmarks. J. Roger Musick's contributions as a Denver-based architect occurred from the late 1920s to 1966 when he and his family moved to Aspen.

J. Roger Musick partnered with master builder and property owner Harry M. Bitman on the design and construction of 6400 Montview Boulevard. Bitman's career in Denver spanned from 1928 to 1967 and included both residential real estate development and construction. He served as president of the Home Realty Company, was a founding member of Quality Home Builders, Inc., and formed the Bitman Construction Company. His partnership with J. Roger Musick on the design of 6400 Montview Boulevard presumably influenced Bitman to build a similar Spanish Eclectic style residence at 4833 East Sixth Avenue in 1937 that is not credited to J. Roger Musick. This influence took place early in Bitman's long-lasting career, making 6400 Montview Boulevard a significant example of his work.

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

The property represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood due to its physical characteristics as the only true, two-story Spanish Eclectic Style residence, and its prominent location, along Montview Boulevard. Montview Boulevard, between Colorado Boulevard and Monaco Parkway, consists of large residences and lots designed to be prominent with more modest residences tucked into the side streets. This stretch of road and green space that comprises Montview Boulevard is part of Denver's City Beautiful Movement Parkways Historic District. The property at 6400 Montview Boulevard stands out among the other large residences along the parkway that are primarily Tudor Revival and Ranch styles constructed of brick. Its stucco-clad walls and distinctive design elements stand in contrast to its surroundings, making it a familiar feature of the South Park Hill Neighborhood.

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.

The property retains a high degree of integrity and has experienced minimal alteration. It retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association as it is in its original location, is still used as a private residence, and the surrounding residential context has been largely unaltered since original construction of the property. Integrity of design, materials and workmanship have been impacted with the replacement of the original windows and garage door. However, key character-defining features of the structure like the tile roof, decorative metalwork and brickwork, stucco cladding, arched surrounds, decorative flagstone walkway and back patio, and rear second-story porch and tower are preserved. The property retains the identity for which it is significant.



Figure 2 Looking northwest at side and rear elevations

Relates to a Historic Context and Period of Significance:

An historic context is defined within the Denver Landmark Preservation Ordinance as “those patterns, themes, or trends in history by which a specific structure or district is understood. It refers to the cultural, social, religious, economic, and/or political conditions that existed during a certain time and at a place and provides the background necessary to understand how and why a structure or district may have historic, architectural, geographic, or cultural significance.” Per the Ordinance, the Landmark Preservation Commission considers the structure’s historic context in evaluating its eligibility for designation.

The property’s period of significance is its date of construction: 1936.

Constructed during the Great Depression, 6400 Montview Boulevard represents residential development by the affluent that occurred at that time in Denver neighborhoods like Park Hill and Hilltop. It is also within the context of the racial segregation that was forced upon real estate development across the city of Denver and Nation through redlining efforts that began with the creation of the Federal Housing Administration in 1934. Park Hill was an overwhelmingly white-populated neighborhood due to its area description as created by agents of the federal government’s Home Owners’ Loan Corporation. The purchase of this house in 1936 by original owner and wealthy advertising executive Clarence M. Hower is consistent with the redlining framework.

The property also relates to the theme of housing near Denver’s parks and parkways. The park and parkway system was designed by well-known landscape architects Saco R. DeBoer, George E. Kessler, Charles Mulford Robinson, Reinhard Schuetze, and brothers John Charles and Frederick Law Olmstead. They envisioned an integrated system of stately public buildings and appealing surrounding neighborhoods. Development of the property at 6400 Montview Boulevard occurred much later than the most active years of the original design and implementation of Denver’s City Beautiful Movement in the early 1900s. However, it still falls within this context through development of Montview Boulevard as a City Beautiful parkway stemming from City Park.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the following legal description:

LOTS 1 TO 4, BLOCK 1, DOWNINGTON, EXCEPT THE REAR 7 FEET OF SAID LOTS AND EXCEPT THE NORTH 25 FEET OF SAID LOT 1 AS DESCRIBED IN DEED RECORDED APRIL 29, 1893 IN BOOK 881 AT PAGE 159, 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
 - City Park Friends and Neighbors
 - Denver Arts and Culture Initiative
 - Fax Partnership
 - Greater Park Hill Community, Inc.
 - Northeast Denver Friends and Neighbors
 - Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents
 - 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 the date of this staff report, CPD has received five emails from individuals commenting on the designation application.

- RNO comment
 - None
- Public comment from individuals
 - 5 individuals in support
 - 0 individuals in opposition
- Public comment at the LPC public hearing
 - None

Attachments:

- Designation Application
- Map of Structure
- Public Comment