

DENVER LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION

02.09.2021

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 or (303) 865-2709.

Property Address: 1618 E 38th Ave. Denver, CO 80205

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: Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church

Other or Current Name: Scandinavian Seventh Day Adventist Church, Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church, Rising Star Baptist.

Location

Address: 1618 E. 38th Ave

Legal Description: The easterly 32' -5" of lot 1 and the north half of lot 2, block 12, Provident Park, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Number of resources:

Contributing

1

0

0

Non-Contributing

0

0

0

Primary Structures

Accessory Structures

Features

Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

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

General Property Data

Date of construction: ca. 1888

Architect (if known): _____

Builder (if known): _____

Original Use: Church

Current Use: Residential

Source(s) of information for above:

Denver Post, Denver Assessor Records

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.

Discover Denver Survey Report

OAHF Provident Park Historic District Architectural Inventory Form (Not Nominated/Listed) – Section 106
Study by CDOT

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: Nathan Beal

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Primary Applicant (if not owner)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Prepared by

Name: Michael Flowers, Historic Denver

Address: 1420 N. Ogden St. Ste. 202 Denver CO 80218

Phone: 303-534-5288 ext. 27

Email: mflowers@historicdenver.org

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.

Other Applicant(s):

Applicant Name: _____ 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.

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

Statement of Significance

Criterion A

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 1618 E. 38th Ave. has direct association with the historical development of the city of Denver and more specifically the Cole neighborhood. The church was built as a direct result of Swedish immigration to the United States. Many immigrants found industrial and railroad jobs in the West, including places like Colorado. In the Cole neighborhood, early homes were mostly workers' housing for primarily northern European immigrants from Ireland, England, Sweden and Germany. The Swedish immigrants established churches in their neighborhood and within walking distance of their residences. The utilitarian focus of this building mirrors the economics of the community and reflects their worker's housing.

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church was built to serve the Swedish immigrants of Cole and continued to do so into the 1950s while the community still resided in the neighborhood. However, the building's ownership and the church's congregation changed with the demographic changes of the neighborhood. As the Latino population grew within the neighborhood it became the Spanish Seventh Day

Adventist Church. It later became the Rising Star Baptist Church, a primarily African American congregation that reflected the high African American population in the neighborhood. The 1970s brought increased vacancy rates to many of Denver's central neighborhoods, including Cole. As fewer people resided in the area, there may have been less need for a church to serve congregants in the neighborhood. After Rising Star moved to a new location, they sold it to a private owner, who converted it to a residence. The small church represents the origins of the neighborhood through the area's shifts, trends, and changes into the present era.

Criterion C

The church is an excellent example of vernacular Gothic church architecture. It was built as a mission church serving the working-class immigrants of the Cole neighborhood, and its simple architecture reflects that intention with a few important details that denote it as a church. The notable features include the flared eaves, cosmetic buttresses, vestibule, and the arched vent/window in the gable end. The side buttresses and arched, pointed window are reminiscent of more formal church architecture, especially in styles such as the Gothic, where both are common.

As noted, the church was built for a functional purpose, to serve the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church mission and residents of a working class neighborhood, and therefore was simple in design representing its origins and the neighborhood it served. These features elevate it over other simple architecture, but the church was not adorned or made to look fancy given the neighborhood and its functional use.

The simplified architectural details may also reflect a Lutheran tradition, which eschews the iconography that is often seen in other Christian faiths. The basic rectangular form with a front vestibule, gable roof, with windows and buttresses along the side elevations is also seen in other churches built by Swedish immigrants during the same time period. This includes the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church formerly on Welton St. and the Stockholm Swedish Lutheran Church built in 1878 in Shickley, Nebraska.

Criterion G

The church at 1618 E. 38th Ave. promotes an understanding appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics and rarity. The church is a rare example of a working-class vernacular church that retains good integrity. While many vernacular buildings are altered, covered up, or demolished as insignificant, this church building remains, embedded within the neighborhood. This building exists with its historic architectural features, simple though they may be. It continues to represent Cole's working-class origins, the building's original history as a Swedish church, and its evolution over time reflecting the neighborhood's changing demographics. Working class housing and neighborhoods often were not meant to be fancy. The buildings were functional, though they carry their own charm, and this building promotes that reality. While it does not have the same features as churches of the high style, it brings its own appreciation to the development of the neighborhood and the congregants it served.

Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1888 - 1980

Provide justification for the period of significance.

The period of significance is from the date of construction to when the Rising Star Baptist sold the church and it went to private ownership, ceasing to be an active church, the buildings original use.

4. Property Description

Describe 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.

The church building is located at 1618 E. 38th Ave. in Block 12 of the Provident Park subdivision of the Cole neighborhood. It is approximately 1419 square feet with the original structure and rear addition. It sits on the far east end of a rectangular lot, that is 6,063 square feet, set back several feet from the street but abuts the sidewalk. To the west of the parcel is open space with several mature trees. Surrounding the church building is a mix of single-family homes and newer construction apartment complexes. There are a few commercial buildings around the corner on Franklin St. but the immediate area around the church is mostly residential.

The building is a one-story church with a front facing gable roof and slightly flared, overhanging eaves. The rear addition has a flat roof. The roof is comprised of gray replacement asphalt shingles. The exterior wall surface is brick covered in stucco, and remains consistent across all four facades except for the vestibule entrance which is of wooden construction.

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.

The front, or north, façade is dominated by the vestibule entrance. The vestibule is of frame and stucco construction with a window on each side and two front facing windows, flanking a narrow, double door entrance. The windows are wood, painted blue, with a 2x2 cottage light configuration and stone sills. The double doors are four paneled wood with concrete steps that lead up to the entrance. The center of the porch gable is stuccoed in an irregular pattern almost resembling scales, this feature appears in a circa 1930 photo of the building. Three wooden rafters extend from the center and both sides of the gable and are painted blue. The fascia of the vestibule is red painted wood. A smooth stone lintel sits above the vestibule.

Flanking the vestibule are tall, narrow windows with a slight arch. The windows are 2x2 lighted wood windows, painted red. Each window has painted rough faced stone sills. Above the arch of the windows are smooth stone lintels.

Above the vestibule at the bottom center of the gable is a pointed arched window, covered in opaque plexiglass. The window is single light, with a thin rough faced stone still painted red. The window surround is thin strips of painted stucco outlining the structure of the window's pointed arch surround it that connect to the sill. The glazing is not original as an old photo shows this was once a slotted vent, though the shape of the opening remains original.

The east and west facades are nearly identical with three evenly spaced windows interspersed with two stucco covered, cosmetic buttresses. The windows are the same as described on the front façade, except

they do not have lintels above them. On the far south end of the east façade is a small three lighted rectangular window covered with a gate on the rear addition. On the west façade there are two notable differences. One is a previous lean-to addition on the south end of this façade; it has since been removed but evidence of the addition obscures the window arrangement furthest to the south. A stucco covered chimney also rises up from the south portion of the building. The remainder of the addition has a blue painted stucco exterior and a glazed and wood paneled door. On the southernmost part of the addition is a 1x1 lighted wooden window in a similar shape to the other windows on the property though smaller. This is believed to have been the original exterior of the addition before the lean-to addition.

The rear, or south, façade has exposed brick instead of painted stucco. A window comprised of three tall narrow lights is at the center of the rear gable, it appears to be of metal construction and not original to the structure. It also has a short, one-story, rear addition with two glass block windows in a 4x4 grid arranged near each other. Rising from the addition is a small brick and stucco chimney. On the rear façade an unpainted wooden fence runs behind the building to the southern property line.

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

The front vestibule was most likely added after construction, though it is present by the 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

A rear addition, as well as a small lean-to addition on the side were added at later dates though the exact date is unknown. The lean-to addition was recently removed. The remaining rear addition was constructed by at least 1929, as it shows up in the footprint of the 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance map.

The photograph from circa 1930 shows exposed rafters on the side of the eaves of both the gabled roof and the vestibule roof. These were covered by a simple wood soffit at an unknown date.

Glass block and a metal window were installed in the rear. These changes are more likely modern, though they are on the rear façade and do not detract from the integrity.

5. Integrity

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

Location: The building retains integrity of location, as it remains in its original location and lot.

Setting: The church was built in the middle of a residential neighborhood, and while there are some newer structures, such as across the street, the setting has not changed from a human scale residential neighborhood.

Design, materials, and workmanship: The church retains good integrity of design, materials and workmanship, as it maintains its simplified vernacular style. The build itself was never of a high style

design, but despite that it has remained in almost its original form since 1888. The rear addition and stucco cladding occurred within the period of significance and are historic changes to the materials, workmanship, and design. A window at the rear of the building was added outside the period of significance, but it does not alter the design of the building. While the rafters were covered at an unknown date, they are still present, and the change is easily reversible.

Feeling: The building retains a high amount of integrity for its feeling. It gives a strong aesthetic and historic sense of late 19th century vernacular architecture regarding its design and materials.

Association: The church retains a high amount of association. It was constructed within a residential neighborhood to easily serve congregants who lived nearby before transportation and methods of travel were easier and cheaper, and it still conveys that association due to its close association with the surrounding residential buildings.

6. Historic Context

Describe 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.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW From Discover Denver's Survey Report

We acknowledge with respect that the lands now occupied by the City and County of Denver are the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations. These lands were also an important site of trade for numerous other Native tribes. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as original stewards of this land and their descendants that still reside here.

Cole is one of Denver's oldest neighborhoods, with a number of buildings dating from the 1880s. Because of its proximity to the city's railroad yards, early Cole was home to workers employed by the nearby smelters, packing houses, and railroads. Over half of the residential blocks in Cole were built out by 1900, with most of the neighborhood developed by 1930.

Early History

The land that makes up today's Cole neighborhood was mostly flat prairie prior to its development. In 1867, enterprising brothers Hiram and William R. Ford established a race track called Ford Park on land that Hiram had acquired through a military warrant from the United States government. The successful track was located from E. 36th Avenue to E. 38th Avenue between Race and Downing streets. Race Street received its name because it connected the Ford Park racetrack with the racetrack at the fairgrounds located just a few blocks to the north.¹

Denver's prospects were bleak in the late 1860s when the Union Pacific Railroad chose Cheyenne,

Wyoming, over it as the railroad's headquarters in the Rocky Mountains. According to historians Stephen Leonard and Tom Noel, Cheyenne "boomed as Denver dwindled, prompting the *Cheyenne Daily Leader* to crow that "Denver is too near Cheyenne to ever amount to much."² A group of Denver businessmen refused to let the fledgling town fail, resolving that if the railroads would not build to Denver, Denver would build to them. In 1870 the upstart Denver Pacific Railroad connected Denver to the transcontinental railroad at Cheyenne, an event which likely saved the city. Two months later the Kansas Pacific railroad, a branch of the Union Pacific Railroad which originated in Kansas City, also reached Denver.

These early railroads were instrumental in the founding of the Cole neighborhood and in shaping the way it looks today. The Kansas Pacific and Denver Pacific rail lines met at 40th Avenue and Walnut Street, the northwest corner of Cole. This connection allowed the transportation of passengers and goods, such as livestock and ore, in and out of Denver. Around these rail yard rose many of the city's most important early industries, including smelters, livestock yards, and packing houses. By 1880, the Denver Pacific had become a part of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Platting and Additions

Once the railroads arrived, it didn't take long for early real estate investors to begin platting the surrounding vacant land. Most of the neighborhood was laid out for development by 1885. Cheesman and Moffat's Addition, located east of Race Street and south of E. 38th Avenue, was the last area to be developed when its plat was filed in 1902. The Cole area was annexed by Denver under the Territorial Session Laws of 1874.

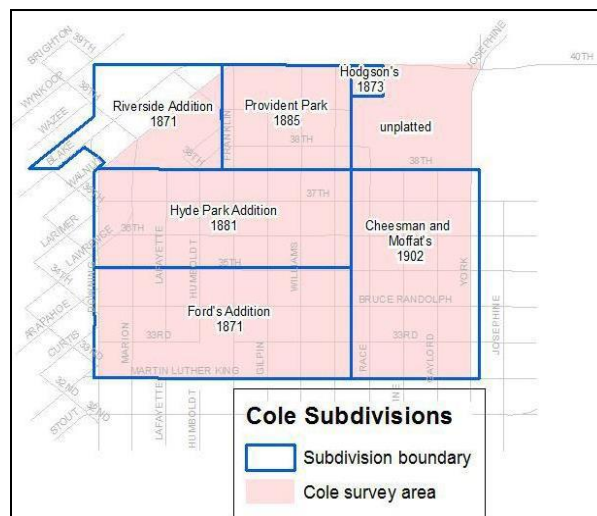


Figure 1 - Cole survey area subdivisions

¹ Phil Goodstein, *Denver Streets*, 81.

² Tom Noel and Stephen J. Leonard, *Mining Camp to Metropolis*, 34.

Early Development: 1880s to 1900

The blocks north of E. 34th Avenue nearest to Downing Avenue were the first to develop, mostly with single-unit dwellings. The 1887 Robinson Atlas shows brick and wood-frame homes scattered on most blocks west of today's Humboldt Street.



Figure 2 - The Amos and Sarah Bissell house, located at E. 36th Avenue and Lafayette Street, is now the office for the Annunciation Catholic Parish. The house was constructed around 1885. Discover Denver photo.



Figure 3 - Houses on the 3800 block of Franklin Street, built by David Rubidge around 1890, are typical of homes in the western part of Cole.



Figure 4 - The David Rubidge house at 3800 Gilpin Street was built in 1890. Discover Denver

A number of multi-unit residences were also constructed in Cole during these early years. Multi-unit buildings ranged from modest single-story duplexes to more substantial two-story terraces.



Figure 5 - The Hyde Park Terrace at E. 36th Avenue and High Street is perhaps the most ornate of the remaining terraces in Cole.

The majority of homes in Cole during this early period served as worker housing.³ Most early residents were northern European, including many first-generation and immigrant Irish, English, Swedish, and German individuals.⁴

From its earliest years, the railroad influenced industrial development along the northern edge of Cole. Railroad tracks ran just a few blocks to the west of Cole's western boundary at Downing Avenue, and a major Union Pacific Railroad railyard, maintenance facility, and hospital for railroad employees sat just north of E. 40th Avenue. East of Franklin Street a railroad spur arced southward off these northern tracks, serving several lumber-related businesses including the Hallack Lumber Company and the planing mill of J.R. Parr.

Streetcar lines crisscrossed the city in the late 1880s and early 1890s, stretching Denver's boundaries in every direction. Commercial nodes developed along the streetcar routes, with businesses providing a variety of goods and services to those living nearby or just passing through. Common businesses at these nodes included grocery and drug stores, tailors, and barber shops. Remnants of these small commercial districts are still found throughout Cole.

³ Morgan, Angel & Associates, *Historic Context for Cole and Clayton Neighborhoods of Denver*, 16.

⁴ Provident Park survey form, 11.

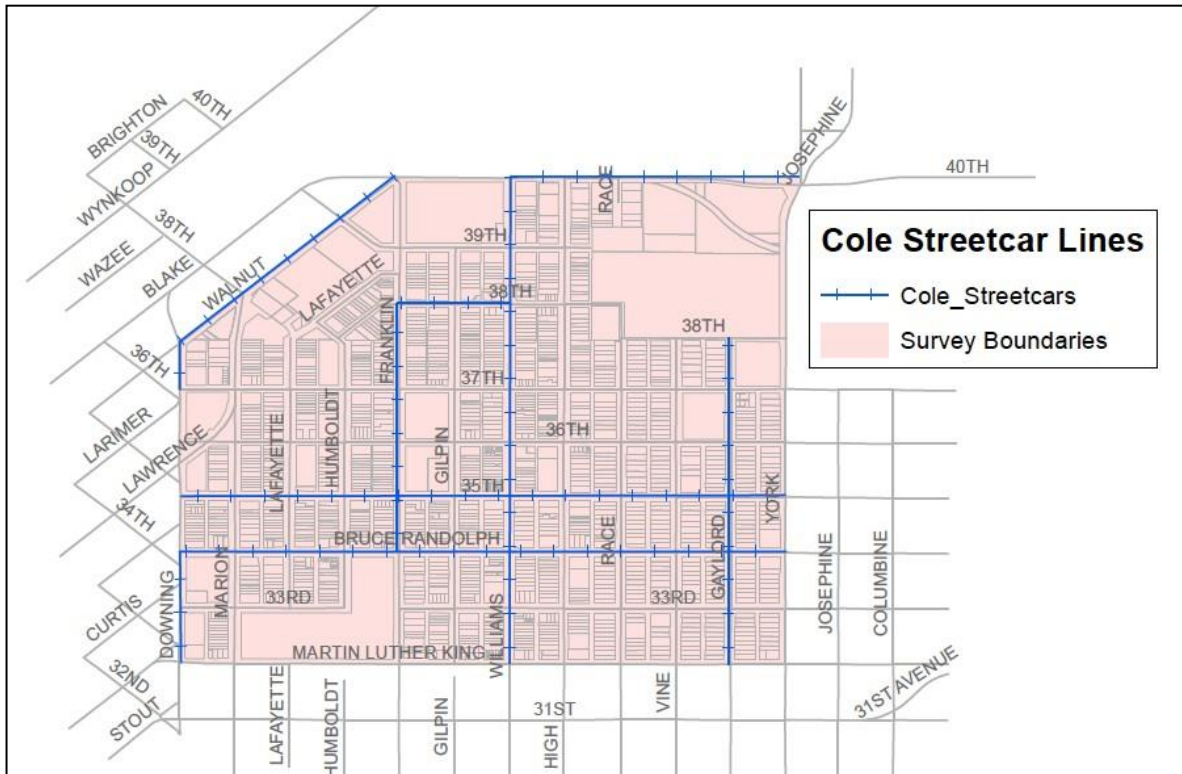


Figure 6 - Streetcar lines in



Figure 7 – This substantial two-part commercial block building at Franklin Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue was built in 1890 and designed by architects Kidder & Humphries. The ground floor had a drug store, barber shop, and a bar, while upstairs were apartments. Denver Public Library Digital Collections photograph.



*Figure 8 - The East Denver Car barn at E. 35th Avenue and Gilpin Street, circa 1912.
Denver Public Library Digital Collections.*

Early churches in Cole reflected the northern European origins of the neighborhood's residents. Among the oldest churches remaining in Cole are the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran church at E. 34th Avenue and Lafayette Street and the Swedish Lutheran Church at E. 38th Avenue and Franklin Street. Both buildings were constructed in the late 1880s and now serve as residences



*Figure 9 - Now condominiums, this building was constructed c.1890 as the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Church.
Discover Denver photograph.*

Simpson Methodist Episcopal Church, named in honor of Bishop Matthew Simpson, was first established in 1882 at 38th and Lafayette streets. The congregation soon outgrew their building, and in 1888 purchased lots on E. 37th Avenue between Lafayette and Humboldt streets. The congregation met in the Swedish Lutheran Church at 1618 E. 38th Avenue while waiting for their new home to be completed.⁵ They moved into their new building the following year.

Annunciation Catholic Parish has a long history in Cole. Founded as St. Ann's at 38th and Delgany streets in Five Points, the church moved to Cole in 1890 after its original church was destroyed by fire. Services were held in the school building until a dedicated church building was constructed in 1907.⁶ In its early years, the Annunciation congregation consisted primarily of Irish, Italian, German, and Slavic parishioners and served the blue-collar Cole, Swansea and Five Points neighborhoods.

The rush of development seen in Cole in the 1880s and early 1890s came to an end in 1893 with the Silver Panic. According to *The Fall & Rise of the Queen City of the Plains*, a historic context developed for the Discover Denver project, during the Silver Panic "No sector of society was untouched by the depression, which affected Denver's economic, political, and physical development until the end of the decade."⁹ Little development activity occurred in Cole or, for that matter, the city, for the next decade.

Cole Fills Out: 1900 to 1930

Residential Development and Redlining

After the platting of Cheesman and Moffat's Addition in 1902, residential development quickly spread east of High Street. Most homes in the addition were constructed between 1902 and 1929, with styles and forms typical of the time. Simple Gable Front homes and Craftsman bungalows line the blocks, giving this part of Cole a very different feel than the western part of the neighborhood which developed decades earlier.

⁷ Phil Goodstein, *Denver Schools*, 64.

⁸ Noel, *Colorado Catholicism*, 308.

⁹ Mary Therese Anstey, with contributions by R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, *The Fall & Rise of the Queen City fo the Plains, 1893-1904*, 2.



Figure 10 - Bungalows line the 3300 block of Vine Street. Denver Public Library Digital Collections.

One important piece of the history of the Cole neighborhood, and Denver in general, concerns the availability of housing to nonwhite residents. Race restrictions in real estate transactions were common in the 1920s as a way of maintaining white exclusivity in parts of the city. While it was illegal after 1917 for municipalities to enforce race-based zoning ordinances, the real estate industry in many cities, including Denver, continued to attach race-based restrictions to real estate transactions.¹⁰ The Cole neighborhood was impacted by a practice known as “redlining,” in which mortgage lenders, based on standards created by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), classified neighborhoods by race and ethnicity and refused home loans in areas they deemed less desirable and therefore less stable.

Denver’s Black population grew as a result of the Great Migration, which saw a substantial portion of the South’s African American population moving to industrialized cities in the North, Midwest, and West. In Denver, many of these newcomers moved to Five Points and the surrounding neighborhoods, including Cole. Covenants restricted minority home ownership in parts of Denver, including east of High Street in Cole. Historian Gwendolyn Wright shows that these policies and practices led to the deterioration of African American neighborhoods across the country, because residents of those neighborhoods were subject to predatory landlords and impossible housing markets, in which they were, in most cases, unable to sell their homes.¹¹

¹⁰ Gotham, 623; Welsh, 132.

¹¹ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream*,

By 1938 the *Residential Security Map*, published by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, classified the area west of High Street in Cole as "hazardous," citing its large population of minorities and renters. It was not until 1965 that Colorado strengthened its fair-housing statutes in response to the civil rights movement, and middle-class African Americans were met with less resistance as they moved to other parts of the city.¹²

Other Development

Meanwhile, commercial development continued along streetcar routes in Cole. The Alpine Theater opened in 1925 at 3301 Williams Street, operating at this location until the mid-1960s. The Alpine was reportedly the only theater in Denver where African Americans could attend movies without facing discrimination.¹³



Figure 11 - Odom Memorial Church of God in Christ building, formerly the Alpine Theater. Discover Denver photograph.

With a \$160,000 grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, Denver constructed multiple branch libraries throughout the city. The very first branch library, the East Denver Branch, was built in the Cole neighborhood at 3354 High Street. Designed by noted Denver architects Fisher & Fisher, the branch opened to patrons in 1913.¹⁴ In 1975, the branch was renamed the Warren Branch Library and moved to a larger, more modern building at 2825 High Street. The 1913 building became home to the Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ, and in 2002 saw conversion into the Carnegie Lofts.

¹² Leonard and Noel, 374-375.

¹³ 1998 Cole Planning Report, 6.

¹⁴ Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver The City Beautiful*, 151.



Figure 12 - The Warren Branch Library at 3354 High Street. Denver Public Library Digital Collections.

As part of a \$12 million expansion program in the 1920s and 1930s, Cole Junior High, now Cole Middle School, was built in 1925 by Denver Public Schools.¹⁵ The school was designed by noted Denver architect William N. Bowman and named for Carlos M. Cole, who as Superintendent of Denver Public Schools was instrumental in establishing junior high schools throughout Denver.¹⁶

¹⁵ Noel and Norgren, 156.

¹⁶ 1998 Cole Planning Report, 6.



Figure 13 - Cole Junior High, circa 1926. Denver Public Library Digital Collections.

Long in the works, Annunciation Catholic Parish church was consecrated in 1907. The parish built a rectory next door at 3621 Humboldt Street, and in 1945 purchased the neighboring house at 3627 Humboldt, now used as an activity center.



Figure 14 - Annunciation Catholic Church circa 1910. The rectory is visible just to the north of the church. Denver Public Library Digital Collections.

Several other new churches were built in Cole during this period, including the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, later known as Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, at 1631 E. 32nd Avenue (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard). Built in 1909, the church served the area's

Swedish immigrant population into the 1950s. In 1912 a bungalow was built next door as a parsonage.



*Figure 15 – Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, c1929.
Denver Public Library Digital Collections.*

As the Simpson Methodist Episcopal congregation continued to grow, they built a new church in 1909 at 3401 High Street.

¹⁷ SWCA Environmental Consultants, "Architectural Inventory Form – Denver Rock Drill Manufacturing Company," 2008.



Figure 16 - The Denver Rock Drill Manufacturing Company, circa 1920. Denver Public Library Digital

Cole Neighborhood: 1930 to 1990s

Most of Cole was built out by 1930, with little new construction occurring between the Great Depression and World War II. Streetcar service ended in Denver in 1950, increasing the city's dependence on the automobile and impacting those relying on public transportation. Many businesses struggled as the once reliable steady stream of streetcar passengers disappeared. Construction of Interstate 70 just north of Cole in the early 1960s cut the neighborhood off from neighboring Elyria-Swansea and Globeville. Citywide, residents of Denver's older central neighborhoods began moving to the suburbs. Cole saw a shift demographically as long-time northern European residents moved out of the neighborhood and Latino and African American families moved in.

Businesses and long-time neighborhood institutions shifted to accommodate the demographic change. Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church, which had served the Swedish immigrant population in the area for decades, was sold in 1957 to the Denver Gospel Hall, a predominately African American congregation. The congregation continues to worship from the building today. In a similar story, the Alpine Theater at E. 33rd Avenue and Williams Street closed in the mid-1960s and was sold to the Odom Memorial Church of God in Christ, another primarily African American Congregation. Annunciation Catholic Church saw the number of Latino congregation

members swell. By 1970, the Cole neighborhood had an even distribution of Anglo, African American, and Latino residents.

The 1970s brought increased vacancy rates and crime to many of Denver's central neighborhoods, including Cole. In 1974, the city made efforts to stem the neighborhood decline and stabilize businesses by revitalizing the shopping center at Downing Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue.¹⁸ To support struggling residents, in 1976 Annunciation Parish purchased a grocery store at the southwest corner of Humboldt Street and E. 37th Avenue, partnering with a parish from Arvada to open the Twin Parishes Food Bank. Private efforts, such as that of "Daddy" Bruce Randolph, also helped support neighborhood residents. Randolph handed out clothes and food, helped people find work, and gave away free Thanksgiving dinners in what became a Denver tradition.

The 1980 census showed that Cole was among Denver's poorest neighborhoods. Concerned Cole residents pushed the city for assistance. Funding dedicated to revitalizing the neighborhood came in the form of federal, state, and local grants. A 1986 task force evaluated ways to revitalize Bruce Randolph Avenue, one of the neighborhood's main commercial corridors. The resulting *Bruce Randolph Avenue Planning Report* cited crime, deteriorating properties, and an uncertain economic climate for businesses as the main issues facing the corridor.¹⁹ Despite these efforts, crime and poverty continued to plague the neighborhood. The 1990 census showed that over one-third of Cole's residents were living below the poverty line.²⁰

Cole Today: 1990s to Present

Cole continued to struggle with crime and poverty in the early 1990s. Later in the decade, Denver's population began a steady increase that continues today. Blueprint Denver, a 20-year citywide land use and transportation plan implemented by the city in 2002, identified areas of the city as "areas of stability" where change was not wanted, and "areas of change," where development was desired. In Cole, much of the area north of E. 38th Avenue and along Downing Street and Bruce Randolph Avenue was defined as an area of change.²¹ It did not take long for these changes to begin.

The opening of a new light rail station and park-n-ride at 38th and Blake streets, just to the west of Cole, jump-started high density residential development in the northwest corner of the

¹⁸ Bruce Randolph Avenue Plan, 3.

¹⁹ Bruce Randolph Avenue Plan, 11.

²⁰ T.R. Witcher, "Neighborhood Botch," *Westword*, December 12, 1996.

²¹ Community Planning and Development, *Blueprint Denver: An Integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan* (2002), 21.

neighborhood. Walnut Street, zoned for eight stories, is now lined with hotels and apartment buildings, activating the northwest corner of the neighborhood.

As Denver's population increased, housing prices rose across the city. Gentrification began to take hold in Cole as new residents moved to the neighborhood, seen as more affordable than many other parts of Denver. Modest bungalows and Victorian Cottages were razed to make way for boxy two and three-story townhomes. A 2016 study by Denver's Office of Economic Development identified Cole as among the neighborhoods most vulnerable to involuntary displacement.²²

Between 2017 and 2020, the Platte to Park Hill Stormwater Systems project made improvements to Globeville Landing Park, the Park Hill Golf Course, City Park Golf Course, and along 39th Avenue through the Cole and Clayton neighborhoods. Intended to reduce flooding in the northeast part of the city, work in the Cole neighborhood required the acquisition and demolition of a number of buildings on either side of E. 39th Avenue from High to Franklin streets. The resulting 39th Avenue Greenway stretches through the Cole and Clayton neighborhoods along E. 39th Avenue from Steele Street on the east to Franklin Street on the west, with plazas, parks, and gathering spaces along the way.

²² Denver Office of Economic Development, *Mitigating Involuntary Displacement*, 16.

1618 E 38th Ave. History

The small church at the corner of Franklin and 38th was constructed between 1885, when Provident Park was platted by David Rubidge and 1890, when the chapel is first noted in the *1890 Corbett & Ballenger's 18th Annual Denver City Directory*.¹ However, the more likely construction date is 1888 based on a building permit announced in the Rocky Mountain News. In the Sunday issue on October 28th, 1888, the paper notes a permit was issued for a "To Swedish Lutheran Church, 1 story "Augstance Church" that is 26x36 feet on Franklin Street between Thirty-Seventh and Thirty-Eighth Street."

The chapel in Cole listed under the same name as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church at 19th and Welton, and Reverend G.A. Brandelle as the pastor. Brandelle owned of the land where the chapel at 1618 E 38th Ave. was constructed. It was not uncommon for pastors to have initial ownership of land before a church's construction. In 1890 it was transferred to the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church.² At the time the only Swedish Lutheran church listed is that of Brandelle's congregation on Welton. There is mention in an 1891 announcement of a "Reverend A.F. Lindquist, Swedish City missionary, is meeting with great success. He is preaching to the chapel on Thirty-eight Avenue and Franklin each Lord's Day at 10:30 and

¹ 1890 Corbett and Ballenger's 18th Annual Denver City Directory (Denver: Corbett & Ballenger, 1890), 53. Denver Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll28/id/31808/rec/7>.

² City and County of Denver, Denver Assessor Records, Deed G.A. Brandelle to Swedish Evangelical Church, 1890, Book 1618, page 12.

7:40 and Wednesday evening at 7:15.”³ The chapel may have originally been constructed as a missionary, but it eventually came to serve the Swedish population of Cole with services. Mission churches were often established by a congregation to help expand services and influence into new areas or neighborhoods. They were either partially or fully dependent on the larger entity for financial support. This financial dependency and the fact that mission churches were not the congregation’s primary structure often meant they were constructed of more simple styles with far less ornamentation as the congregation’s main church. As noted in the newspaper quote above, the building was used for weekly sermons in 1891, and the church was continuously listed as an active Lutheran Church in City Directories until it changed hands in 1916 to the Scandinavian Seventh Day Adventist Church.

The architecture of the small church resembles a more modest version of the architecture for the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church that was constructed on Welton, with a front gable form and a vestibule jutting out from the façade and raising up to the bottom of the gable. The architecture was modest and may reflect its intention as a missionary or a budget decision as a satellite church for the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church. However, the cosmetic buttresses on the side of the building are also reminiscent of many church designs in Europe and set it apart from other simpler vernacular church forms. As noted in the Discover Denver context history, early churches in Cole reflect their northern European origins, and this church is a perfect representation of that trend.

The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church formed in 1878 and first built a church on Welton.⁴ The church at this location appears in the *1881 Corbett & Ballenger’s 9th Annual City Directory*.⁵ The pastor is listed as John Telleen, though by 1885 G.A. Brandelle is serving as the pastor. Brandelle was the son of Swedish immigrants, born in 1861 on a farm near Andover Illinois. He’d graduate from Augustana College in 1882, and his first “call” was for the “Augustana Lutheran Church” or Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Denver. He served this congregation from 1884 to 1918 and was the pastor during the church’s construction at 1618 E. 38th St. Brandelle would go on to have a prolific career with the Augustana Lutheran Synod of North America serving as first the vice President of the Synod and later becoming president after the death of Dr. L.A. Johnston. He’d serve as president of the Synod until 1935.⁶ Brandelle passed away in 1936. Toward the end of Brandelle’s station in Denver, the congregation sold the chapel at the 38th and Franklin to the “Scandinavian Seventh Day Adventist Church” in 1916, though it is often referred to in Directories and Newspapers as the “Swedish Seventh Day Adventist Church”. The pastor of the church was Olaf J. Nerlund until 1920 when a newspaper article notes that he left for a calling in Tacoma, Washington. There is little information about the church’s tenure as the Swedish Seventh Day Adventist Church, except for earlier newspapers referencing Nerlund’s sermons. A reverend J.A. Nordstrom spoke at the “Scandinavian S.D.A.” church at 1618 East Thirty-Eight on “From Oxcart to Flying Machine” in Swedish, as referenced by the Denver Post in 1934, showing that clearly a heavy Swedish congregation was still active even as late as the 1930s.⁷

³ “Church Announcements” *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, May 10, 1891, 13, <http://www.genealogybank.com>

⁴ Augustana Lutheran Church, “Augustana’s Past and Present”, accessed 8/26/2022, <https://www.augustanadenver.org/augustana-lutheran-church/history/>.

⁵ 1881 Corbett and Ballenger’s 9th Annual Denver City Directory (Denver: Corbett & Ballenger, 1881), 48. Denver Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll28/id/9690/rec/6>.

⁶ Archivegrid, “Gustaf Albert Brandelle Papers 1881-1936”, Researchworks.oclc.org, accessed 8/26/22, <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/data/124039860>.

⁷ “Church Notes” *Denver Post*, January 27, 1934, 6, <http://www.genealogybank.com>.

The Church continued to operate under the ownership of the Scandinavian Seventh Day Adventists until 1954 when it was sold briefly to Annie C. Fonten. Annie C. Fonten was the widow of Johan Alfred Fonten, who was who migrated from Sweden in 1880, and came to Denver in 1883 to work on the rail roads. Fonten was listed as a machinist and lived in various neighborhoods until moving to the Provident Park area of Cole around 1894, his residence at High street just 0.2 miles from the church at 1618 E. 38th St.⁸ While the directories and obituaries on Fonten did not mention which railroad company he worked for, Cole was well known as an area for individuals working at the smelters, packing houses and railroads. This is most likely why Fonten moved to this area and became a congregant of the Swedish/Scandinavian Seventh Day Adventist Church.

Fonten was a railroad employee for 17 years. Fonten also became a gardener, and it is listed in later city directories that he owned a nursery. He was a congregant at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and his funeral services were held at 1618 E. 38th Ave. He died in 1937 and left his widow Annie C. Fonten behind. It is unclear why Annie C. Fonten was chosen to facilitate the transfer in 1954 to the Seventh Day Adventist Association, but it is assumed that she was a long time member of the congregation with her husband. As congregations dwindled or looked to sell property it is not unusual for the property to be transferred to an individual to facilitate a sale or transfer. Little information can be found about Annie except that she would pass away in 1970 and be buried in Fairmount, the same cemetery where her husband was buried.

After the property transfer in 1954 the church was owned by the Seventh Day Adventist Association, though it is listed in City Directories and Householder Directories as the Spanish Seventh Day Adventist church. As noted in Discover Denver's report, there were changing demographics and "by 1970, the Cole neighborhood had an even distribution of Anglo, African American, and Latino residents."⁹ Church congregations often reflected this neighborhood-wide change in demographics and the building on 1618 E. 38th St. was no different. It would remain under the Seventh Day Adventist Association's ownership and operate as the Spanish Seventh-Day Adventist Church until 1966 when the congregation ceases to show up in the city directories.

By 1967 The Rising Star Baptist Church is listed in the Polk's Denver City Directory at the address of 1618 E 38th St.¹⁰ The Rising Star Baptist Church was organized in 1963 at the home of Reverend George T. Brinkley. After growing their numbers, they met in a converted garage at 37th and Marion Street. It is unclear when they began to meet at 1618 E 38th St. but it was sometime between 1963 and 1967 when they show up in the city directories. Reverend Brinkley served as the pastor until 1970 when he accepted a position in Tucson, Arizona. For one year starting in 1970 Reverend W.L. Robinson would head the congregation and the deed for the building would be signed though it was not filed until 1974. In the Recorder's record there is a *lis pendens*, a document noting pending legal action, for a disagreement between the congregants and the Reverend W.L. Robinson regarding the mortgage. This might shed some light on the delay of the purchase date and recorded. Alexander Riley led Rising Star Baptist 1971 to 1978 while they occupied this building, and in 1979 the congregation reinstalled Rev Brinkley. During his

⁸ 1894 Corbett and Ballenger's 22nd Annual Denver City Directory (Denver: Corbett & Ballenger, 1894), 389. Denver Digital Collections, <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p16079coll28/id/36995/rec/22>.

⁹ Discover Denver Citywide Building Project Survey, "Historical Overview," *Survey Report: Cole*, Denver: 2021, 27.

¹⁰ *Polk's Denver City Directory 1967* (Denver: R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers, 1968), 173, Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

second tenure Brinkely purchased a building at 1596 South Dayton St, and the congregation moved. In 1980 they sold the building to Kathleen Roper and Frances Mackey. The church was converted to a residence and has been under private ownership since the sale in 1980.

Though no longer serving as a church, the building has remained a recognizable part of the neighborhood and is part of the legacy of two congregations still worshipping in Denver, the Augustana Lutheran Church (formerly Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church), and the Rising Star Baptist Church. The small church at 1618 E 38th has been in Cole since the earliest days of the neighborhood and as a church played a prominent role as a house of worship for nearly 100 years before serving as a residence.

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

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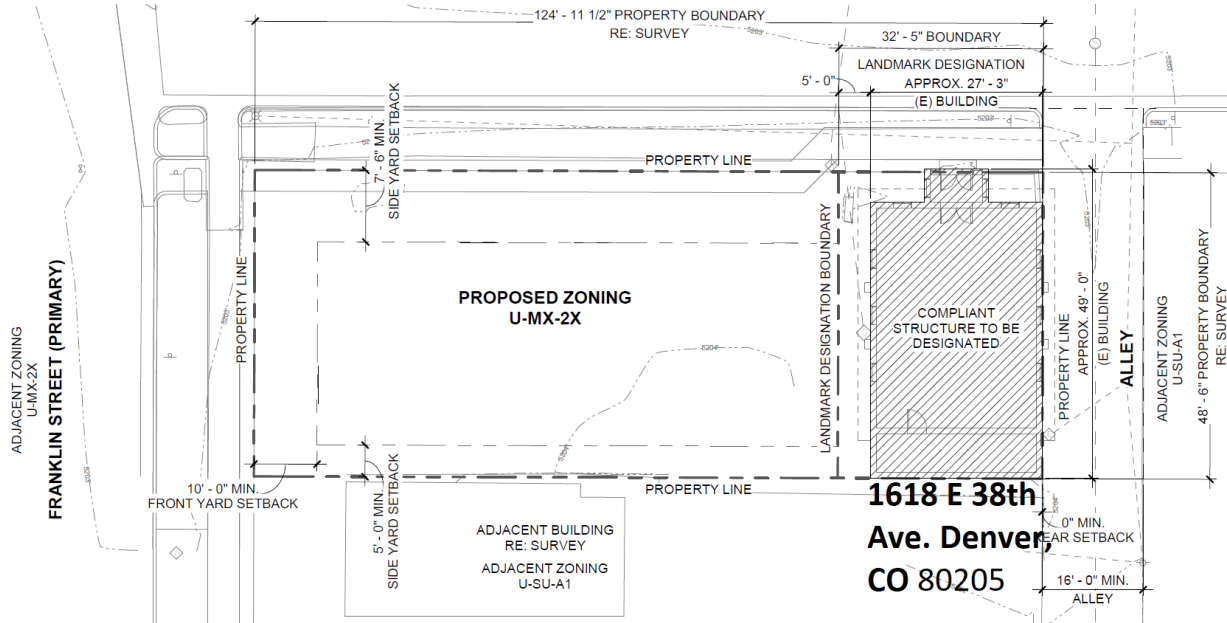
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Site Map





A view of the building sometime between 1920 and 1930 when it was the Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church. Source: <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/39753/rec/1>



North and East Facades of 1618 E. 38th Ave.



North Facade of 1618 E. 38th Ave.



East Facade of 1618 E. 38th Ave.



West Facade of 1618 E. 38th Ave.



South Facade of 1618 E. 38th Ave.