



To: Denver City Council
From: Becca Dierschow, Senior Planner; Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: August 24, 2023
RE: Landmark Designation for 2241-43 York Street, Irving P. Andrews House

Staff Recommendation

Based on the ordinance designation criteria and on the findings of the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) that the application meets the criteria for designation of a structure, CPD staff recommends approval of the application.

Request to Designate a Structure:

Application: #2023L-005
Address: 2241-43 York Street
Zoning: U-TU-B
Council: Council District #10, Chris Hinds
Owner: Sara Shears and Liz Andrews
Applicant(s): Sara Shears and Liz Andrews

Case Summary:

Consultant Sarah Goldblatt and Historic Denver, Inc submitted a Landmark Designation Application for 2241-43 York Street, the Irving P. Andrews House on behalf of the owners, Sara Shears and Liz Andrews. Landmark staff performed a preliminary review and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set a public hearing before the Landmark Preservation Commission on July 11, 2023 for the Commission to review the designation application. At the public hearing, the Commission voted (7-0-0) to recommend approval and forward the designation application to City Council.

On July 25, 2023, 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 August 28, 2023.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, DRMC:

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code, the application must be complete, and the structure must meet the following criteria:

1. The structure maintains its historic integrity
2. The structure is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance
3. The structure meets at least three of ten criteria
4. The LPC considers the structure's historic context

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the application for designation demonstrates that the structure meets the following criteria.

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



2241-43 York Street is significant under Criterion B as the residence and final law office of Irving Piper Andrews. Andrews was a prominent African-American attorney in Denver, considered by many contemporaries to be “one of the most talented trial attorneys in Colorado.” Andrews had achievements on both the local and national stage. Andrews served on the legal team which brought *Brown v Board of Education* before the United States Supreme Court, and also started Colorado’s first integrated law office with John Kane, who would go on to be a US District Judge. Irving P. Andrews was an important figure in Civil Rights Movement, organizing protests with the Denver chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality

(CORE), serving as the NAACP president for Colorado and Wyoming, and marching in Civil Rights protests with Martin Luther King Jr. Andrews also represented members of civil rights organizations in court.

Andrews’ work in civil rights was not limited to those causes that affected just himself. As he said, “I do not like being a second class citizen and will not be one. And if I fight for the rights of others, then my own rights are assured.” This philosophy guided his entire professional career. He became known as a tenacious defense lawyer who would ensure his clients received their due

Figure 1. Irving Andrews third from left, next to Martin Luther King Jr.
Source: Andrews Family Album.

process. As a result of his renown in court and dedication to social justice and equality, Andrews was the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including:

- Sam Cary Bar Association (association of Black Attorneys) established the Irving P Andrews Outstanding Black Graduate Award in 1973
- Inducted into the National Bar Association's "Hall of Fame" in 1991
- The Anti-Defamation League’s Lifetime Achievement in Civil Rights Award in 1992
- The Colorado Criminal Defense Lawyer’s highest honor - the Jonathan Olom Award in 1994
- Colorado Gospel Music Academy Torch Bearer Award as one of Colorado’s Black Living Legends in 1997
- Mayor Wellington Webb established February 7, 1997 as *Irving Andrews Day*

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

The property at 2241-43 York Street embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of the Free Classical Queen Anne style, and is an excellent example of a duplex typology. This style utilized the gable-front form popular with Queen Anne homes, but reigned in the ostentatious detailing of earlier Queen Anne structures. The use of decorative shingles in the gable end is a hallmark of the Queen Anne style, while the window hood surrounds and decorative knee braces are more subdued than what is found in earlier Queen Anne styles. The home's construction in 1914 came at a moment when the United States was deep in a recession, and the world was on the brink of the first world war. Demand for the ornate, highly detailed houses in the Queen Anne style had dwindled, and an era of restraint had begun.



Figure 2. 2241-43 York Street front facade.

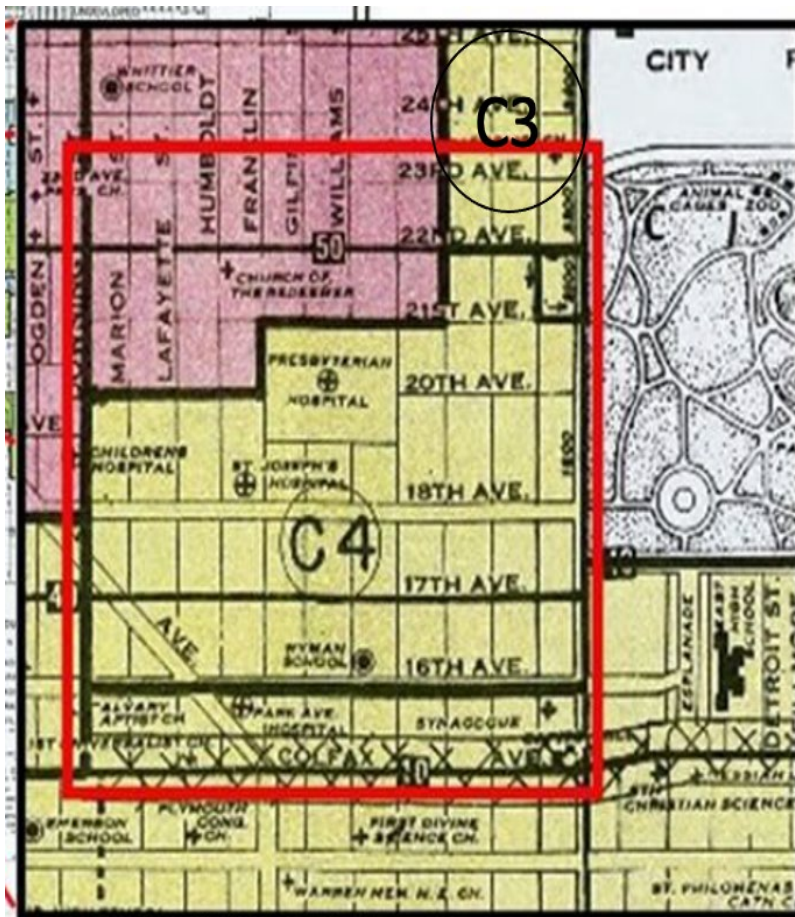
In Denver it was common for architects and builders to utilize a number of different architectural styles in their designs. Historic preservationists and architectural historians consider these designs to be ‘vernacular’ – or commonly used and specific to their location. As one scholar notes, “vernacular buildings and settings are regionally distinct, regionally representative and regionally understood.” In many ways, vernacular architecture reflects regional contemporary culture, taste and economic trends. The unique amalgam of type and style at 2241-43 York Street conveys a suggestion of wealth without overt ostentation. The unmodified side by side front door openings on the east façade continue to express the history of the home which was designed to look like a single detached dwelling but configured as a duplex with a ground floor dwelling and flat above. While the home was constructed, and likely designed, by Denver builder J.A. Leslie the attention to detail suggests the home was intended to be unique among its neighbors and modestly grand in its location overlooking City Park’s forested western edge.

The home at 2241-43 York Street also embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of the duplex typology. Unlike many of Denver’s stately homes in City Park West, Capitol Hill and beyond, which were originally single family homes which were later subdivided, the house at 2241-2243 York Street was expressly constructed as a duplex. The design and layout of the building reflect the Denver’s early ambitions, tempered by economic realities. The design of the building calls upon a more restrained version of the ostentatious Queen Anne architectural style and appears to be single family home from outward appearance (as opposed to being an obvious multi-family home such as a tandem house or

apartment complex). However, the unique duplex designed allowed families to share the home with extended family and later allowed Irving Andrews to house both his family and his law practice in the same building. Thus, the house at 2441-43 York Street, in its location, design and form, illustrate a transitional period for Denver, when people could afford to live away from the bustle of downtown, surrounded by urban green space, while also reigning in architectural details and creating multi-family living with the appearance of a single family home in recognition of the economic realities of the time. This tension in the design and location of the structure were mirrored throughout the home’s history.

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.

The 2241-43 York home is positioned at a unique nexus in Denver’s long arc of development. Its location represents the initial optimism of the city’s growth and speculative expansion outside the central business district, to patterns of change including segregation struggles, shifting racial housing barriers, population decline, blight designation, and modern gentrification.



The home at 2241-43 York Street and the surrounding neighborhoods bear witness to the city’s history of both segregation and integration. Race restrictions in real estate transactions were common in the 1920s through the 70s as a way of maintaining neighborhoods’ white exclusivity. A web of formal bureaucratic policies, informal (yet still enforced) social mores and economic systems worked in tandem to keep Denver, and most US cities, segregated well into the 1970s and beyond. The federally sponsored practice of “redlining” in the late 1930s further fueled racial disparities in housing access. Based on standards created by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), mortgage lenders codified neighborhoods by race and ethnicity City Park West (CPW), including Andrews’ future home there, was graded “C” and deemed “declining” and at risk due to its proximity to other predominantly African American neighborhoods.

Figure 3. Redlining Map. City Park West boundaries are noted by the red outline. Red shading indicates “Grade D” neighborhood. The Andrews home is positioned just inside a “Grade C,” yellow shaded, “lower grade population” zone at the northern edge of the neighborhood.



Figure 4. Irving P. Andrews at work in his upstairs office at 2241-43 York St and with daughter Liz Andrews c. 1988
(photo: courtesy of wife Sara Shears)

As race-based restrictions slowly eased, these boundaries of segregation moved east from Downing Street to High Street, and then York Street. York Street became the western boundary of the “Struggle Hill” neighborhood - the moniker African Americans gave to the current Skyland neighborhood where Black professionals settled in the mid twentieth century. However, it wasn’t until 1965 when Colorado strengthened its fair housing laws in response to the Civil Rights movement that middle-class African Americans met with less resistance as they moved across Colorado Boulevard and to other parts of the city. When Andrews moved into the York Street home in 1972, the area was found by a federal study to be “blighted.” However, this designation did not take into account the thriving community in the area. Although he was not the first African-American to move onto York Street (or even into this house), Andrews’ purchase of the property at 2241 York for his home and law office represents the culmination of two decades of advocacy for equal rights. A stately home on ‘Struggle Hill’, directly across the street from City Park, was an achievement that took many years of hard work on the part of Andrews and other Civil Rights advocates to bring to fruition. However, the fact that Andrews was also barred from maintaining a law office downtown in the 1970s and instead used the upper floor of his York Street home as his law office, represented the barriers still in place for Andrews and other Black Denverites well into the late twentieth century.

Integrity:

Chapter 30 requires that a landmark designated property maintain its integrity. Integrity is defined 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, in various combinations, define integrity are: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The house retains a high degree of integrity, although it has seen some alterations during its existence. The house retains a high level of physical integrity related to its significance as the home and law office of Irving P. Andrews. It is observable in its original form and within its former “suburban” streetcar streetscape location, overlooking City Park and adjacent to other residential houses in the area.

The house’s gable-front form, projecting full width front porch and brick, stone, concrete, and wood details convey its design and material integrity. The home’s preserved details, including layered trim elements, a main floor bay window with toothed brick corners, and moderately broad boxed

overhanging eaves and corner brackets all contribute to the house's design integrity. Although the windows have been replaced with vinyl, the size of each opening has been retained, maintaining the house's overall "solid to void" proportions.

The overall feeling of the home as a reflection of a type and style, meant to provide a suggestion of wealth without Queen Anne ostentation, remains intact. The unmodified side by side front door openings continue to express the history of the home—designed to look like a single detached dwelling— but housing a ground floor dwelling with a flat above.

Relates to Historic Context and Period of Significance:

As is appropriate for a property proposed for designation, the historic context is strongly interrelated to both the areas of significance and period of significance. The property is directly related to the early development patterns of Denver, the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century, and the changing demographics of the City Park West neighborhood and the city as a whole.

The period of significance for the structure is 1914-1998, encompassing its construction and later ownership by Irving P Andrews.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lots 25 and 26, excepting the rear 8 feet thereof, block 24, McCullough's Addition to Denver, 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
- City Council and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
 - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
 - City Park West
 - Opportunity Corridor Coalition of United Residents
 - Neighbors for Greater Capitol Hill
 - City Park Friends and Neighbors
 - Reclaim the Eastside
 - Strong Denver
 - Historic Denver, Inc
 - Colorado Preservation, Inc
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation
 - State of Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (History Colorado)
- Posted signage for Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing



Public Comments:

As of 9 am August 24, 2023 CPD has received no written public comments on the proposed designation. At the July 11 LPC meeting, one organization, Historic Denver, spoke in favor of the designation.

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation Application
- Map of structure proposed for preservation