

**Denver Landmark Preservation Commission**  
**Application for Landmark Designation**  
**Howard Berkeley Park Chapel**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Howard Berkeley Park Chapel

Current Name: Olinger-Moore-Howard Chapel

**2. Location**

Address: 4345 West 46th Avenue

Legal Description: L 1 to 12 INC FOLLMERS SUB OF PLOT 6 BERKELEY GARDENS EXC PTTO ST & PLOT 7 & W1/2 PLOT 8 EXT PT TO ST BERKELEY GARDENS (verbatim legal description as shown on the Assessor website for schedule number 02191-06-032-000)

**3. Owner Information**

Name: Howard Mortuaries and Cemeteries Corporation

Address: PO Box 130548, Houston, Texas 77219

Phone: Not located

Email: Not located

The above owner is shown on the Assessor website. A phone number and email could not be located for this entity via Google or from the Colorado or Texas Secretaries of State. The Denver Business Den website reported that SCI in Houston owns/controls Howard Mortuaries and Cemeteries Corporation. A SCI representative signing the demolition permit application provided the following contact information: Dann Narveson, SCI Colorado Funeral Services LLC, 1729 Allen Parkway, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Houston, Texas 77019, 713-525-7380.

**4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner)**

Name: William R. Killam

Address: 4312 Yates Street

Phone: 303-589-7194

Email: wmrkillam69@gmail.com

Authors: R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, with research contributions from Paul Cloyd, Rodd Wheaton, J. Michael Musick, Bill Killam, and members of Historic Berkeley Regis

**5. General Data:**

Date of construction and major additions/alterations: Completed in 1960. No additions. In May 2017 a hailstorm destroyed the original clay tile roof and it was replaced.

Source of Information: Denver County Assessor's Office; *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959, 32 and May 14, 1960, 28; personal observation, May 2017

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: None

Source of Information: N/A

Approximate lot size and acreage: 303' (north-south) x 318' (east-west); 2.1 acres

Source of Information: Google Earth Pro and Denver Assessor

Architect: J. Roger Musick

Source of Information: *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959, 32 and *Denver Post*, May 14, 1960, 28 (*Roundup*) and May 15, 1960, 39

Builder: Richard A. Deam Construction Company

Source of Information: *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959, 32; *Denver Post*, May 15, 1960, 39 (*Roundup*)

Original Use: Mortuary

Source of Information: *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959, 32; *Denver Post Roundup*, May 15, 1960, 39

Present Use: Vacant/Not in Use

Source of Information: *Denver Post*, 30 January 2019; notice on building indicating closure on January 31, 2019

Previous field documentation (date and surveyor):

Preliminary Property Evaluation Form, Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, June 2019.

National Register Status and date (listed, eligible, study list):

Determined officially eligible to the National Register of Historic Places by History Colorado under Criteria A and C, June 26, 2019 (5DV.35142).

### 6. Statement of Significance

*Explain how the structure meets at least one criterion in at least two of the categories.*

To qualify as a Landmark, a property must meet at least one criterion in at least two of the three categories; history, architecture, geography. The specific criterion must be identified and a statement provided as to how the property meets each selected criterion. The explanation should summarize why the property meets the criterion and therefore has the exceptional, unusual, or outstanding characteristics that make it qualify as a Denver Landmark. As part of the designation criteria a structure must have historic and physical integrity.

### Landmark Designation Categories and Criteria

#### CATEGORY 1: HISTORY

To have historical importance, the structure shall be more than 30 years old or have extraordinary importance to the architectural or historical development of Denver, and shall:

Criteria:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>a. Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation; or,</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>b. Be the site of a significant historic event; or,</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.</i>

**1a.** The Howard Berkeley Park Chapel is significant in the category of history for its direct association with the history and development of Denver. The city’s population soared in the mid-twentieth century, increasing from 322,412 in 1940 to 514,678 by 1970. Returning World War II veterans, migration from other states, and Baby Boom births spurred this growth. Howard Mortuary Company erected the building as part its expansion into a previously unserved area experiencing continued population growth, observed its president, Robert J. Howard.<sup>1</sup> From this facility Howard Mortuary also planned to serve the surrounding northern suburbs. Expansion in the funeral industry represented a nationwide trend also seen in the postwar history of other Denver funerary enterprises, which reached into growing neighborhoods lacking such facilities. Howard Mortuary built the only new mortuary in the Berkeley neighborhood, and the Berkeley Park Chapel represents the firm’s first venture beyond East Denver. Started in 1917 as a small family-operated funeral home, Howard’s status as one of the most successful and longer lasting mortuary businesses in the city helped it take advantage of postwar growth opportunities. The company tied its history closely to that of the city, referring to its “Denver heritage” in its advertisements.<sup>2</sup>

Construction of the Berkeley Park Chapel represented one of the largest projects in the neighborhood in the 1960s. The building’s substantial scale accommodated an expansion of services requiring many specialized rooms, another trend in the industry in the United States. Howard proudly emphasized its role in the community and its up-to-date facility by holding open house tours of the new building for two months. The new building and the services provided by Howard

<sup>1</sup> *Denver Post*, May 15, 1960, 38 (*Roundup*).

<sup>2</sup> *Denver Post*, June 1, 1960, 29.

Mortuary were associated with continued growth and complex operations of the American mortuary industry in the 1960s and beyond. In the 1960s Howard Mortuary emphasized its ability to provide every aspect of care after a death, and even offered pre-need insurance. By 1970 Howard was the second largest mortuary firm in Denver.<sup>3</sup> Throughout its long history, the mortuary served thousands of Denver families in times of personal loss and also maintained close ties to the local community, offering its property for events such as farmers’ and flea markets, hosting architectural tours, maintaining connections with Centennial Elementary School, and assisting local senior citizen’s groups.

The later history of the mortuary is associated with another national trend: merger and consolidation of individual companies. In 1971 Service Corporation International (SCI) acquired Howard Mortuary, including the Berkeley Park Chapel, while keeping Howard’s staff and established policies. In 1976 Howard merged with Moore Mortuary, followed by a merger with Olinger Mortuaries in 1987.

**CATEGORY 2: ARCHITECTURE**

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

Criteria:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>a. Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type; or,</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>b. Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder, or,</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>c. Contain elements of architectural design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant or influential innovation; or,</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>d. Portray the environment of a group of people or physical development of an area in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.</i>

**2a.** Howard Berkeley Park Chapel displays design quality and integrity as a significant example of the mid-twentieth century urban mortuary architectural type. The quality of design was recognized when it opened, with the *Denver Post* describing it as “an outstanding example of functional design combined with a dignified artistic quality.” The newspaper also called the chapel “an unusual example of craftsmanship,” noting the ceiling plaster, chandeliers, and stained glass.<sup>4</sup> The building conveys a dignified, ecclesiastical appearance with modern functionality within its prominent setting in a residential neighborhood. Referencing historic stylistic vocabulary, the building incorporates elements of Tudor and Gothic Revival styles appropriate to the solemnity of the building’s function, as was not uncommon for churches of the 1940s through 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Architect J. Roger Musick produced a sense of permanence and architectural significance by combining an impressive scale, arcaded porches, brick walls, splendid terra cotta ornamentation, Vermont slate floors, leaded and stained glass windows, and a spacious chapel with a soaring ceiling illuminated by a magnificent rose window.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, contemporary influences appear in the building’s long low profile, its setback from the street, and the large parking area’s nod to the postwar dominance of the automobile.<sup>7</sup>

The National Register of Historic Places recognizes a mortuary (funeral home) as a subcategory of the general funerary use type.<sup>8</sup> SurveyLA, the Los Angeles effort to contextualize and survey historic resources, includes “Mortuaries and Funeral Homes, 1920-1980” as a theme under the historic context of “Commercial Development, 1850-1980.”<sup>9</sup> The funeral home as a distinct property type is discussed in the 2007 National Register nomination form for the Wilson-Chambers Mortuary in Portland, Oregon. The author, John Tess, describes the modern funeral home as a multi-faceted operation requiring a large building encompassing numerous special-purpose spaces, including those for administrative

<sup>3</sup> *Denver Post*, November 17, 1970, 1D.

<sup>4</sup> *Denver Post*, May 15, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> Rodd Wheaton, Englewood, Colorado, Email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, June 6, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Terra cotta is a hard, fired clay product, usually glazed, used in this building in architectural cladding, features, and ornament.

<sup>7</sup> Rodd Wheaton, Englewood, Colorado, Email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, June 6, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form*, Bulletin 16A (Washington: National Park Service, 1997), 21.

<sup>9</sup> City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, SurveyLA, Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, Historic Context Statement Outline, revised July 2018.

offices, operating and dressing rooms, viewing rooms, storage, casket sales, a chapel, areas for the use of vehicles, and other activities.<sup>10</sup>

The Berkeley Park Chapel represents the modern funeral home/mortuary building type. Although its style gave it the appearance of a church, it was a state-of-the-art building that addressed the many specialized needs of a 1960s mortuary by encompassing a variety of functional interior spaces, including: a dignified and architecturally distinguished chapel for funeral services, reposing or “slumber” rooms, facilities for grieving families, a display room for casket selection, garage space for funeral hearses and limousines, storage and work rooms, office and kitchen facilities, sheltered entrances for the arrival of families and guests (a portico and two porte cocheres), and an interior driveway with a stained glass window for arrival and departure of grieving family members.<sup>11</sup> In sum, the building displays a symphony of talented design, construction, and craftsmanship, creating both a highly functional mortuary and architectural gem within the neighborhood. Howard Mortuary understood the building was a gift to the city, advertising it when it opened as “Expanding a Denver Heritage.”<sup>12</sup>

The Berkeley Park Chapel is exceptionally significant for its outstanding display of terra cotta, as seen in a variety of elements that enliven the building and lend it a Northern Italian theme. Of particular note are the main entrance portico and two projecting bays to the east, which feature a Della Robbia sensibility in their exuberantly colored terra cotta.<sup>13</sup> The Italian influence of the design may have spoken to the large Italian-American community in the Berkeley neighborhood when the building opened, observes local resident Annette Tilleman-Dick.<sup>14</sup> Walter Pater, a nineteenth-century art critic, noted that “nothing brings the real air of a Tuscan town so vividly to mind as those pieces of pale blue and white earthenware” typical of Robbia terra cotta.<sup>15</sup>

**2b.** Howard’s Berkeley Park Chapel is significant as the work of recognized master architect James Roger Musick (known as J. Roger, 1903-2000). J. Roger Musick emphasized his high opinion of the Berkeley Park Chapel when he listed this building as one of his five principal works of the 1950s and 1960s in the 1970 *American Architects Directory*.<sup>16</sup> Musick was described by the *Rocky Mountain News* in 1969 as “one of the most highly respected names in Colorado architecture.”<sup>17</sup> Trained at the acclaimed Beaux-Arts Institute of Design in New York, Musick collaborated with older brother G. Meredith Musick in the creation of some of Denver’s most celebrated twentieth-century architecture. Historians Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren describe G. Meredith Musick as the principal “business-getter” and found J. Roger Musick “did much of the firm’s fine design.”<sup>18</sup> J. Roger Musick produced many buildings in association with his brother, including the 1926 Gothic Revival brick and terra cotta Republic Building in Downtown Denver (demolished); National Register-listed Denver Landmark Bryant Webster School, a 1930 Art Deco building featuring intricate exterior brickwork with Native American motifs; and the 1938 Georgian Revival-style First Baptist Church of Denver at East 14th Avenue and Grant Street, a National Register-listed Denver Landmark.<sup>19</sup> Musick’s distinguished career continued in partnership with noted architect Charles Gordon Lee, a collaboration that produced “some of the finest post-war era buildings in Colorado,” according to members of Denver’s Modern Architecture Preservation League.<sup>20</sup> In his solo practice, Musick’s commissions in Denver notably included the 1954 Stearns-Roger Office Building

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<sup>10</sup> John Tess, Wilson-Chambers Mortuary, Portland, Oregon, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> A porte cochere is a projecting gate or porch-like structure with entrance large enough for a vehicle to pass through.

<sup>12</sup> *Denver Post*, June 1, 1960, 29.

<sup>13</sup> Rodd Wheaton, Email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, June 6, 2019. Luca Della Robbia is known for his innovative work in glazed terra cotta in fifteenth-century Florence. Other members of his family continued the craft and applied it to various types of architectural ornament, including friezes and lunettes containing depictions of fruit and flowers. Russell Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building: Biographical, Historical, and Descriptive*, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 298-99.

<sup>14</sup> Annette Tilleman-Dick, Denver, Public comment at Historic Berkeley Regis meeting, June 25, 2019.

<sup>15</sup> The colored terra cotta of the south façade was originally pale blue. It was painted red in recent years. Pater quoted in “Della Robbia: A Closer Look,” National Gallery of Art, website, [www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov).

<sup>16</sup> John F. Gane, ed., *American Architect’s Directory 1970*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1970), 653.

<sup>17</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, December 7, 1969, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver: The City Beautiful and Its Architects, 1893-1941* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987), 123-24.

<sup>19</sup> *Rocky Mountain News Festival*, July 12, 1969, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Rodd Wheaton, Michael Paglia, Seth Roseman, Diane Wray, Modern Architecture Preservation League, “Bryant-Webster Elementary School,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, March 10, 1995, 11.

(600 Bannock Street), Johnson and Goldrick elementary schools (1850 South Irving Street and 1050 South Zuni Street, respectively), and the 1958 Banker’s Union Life Insurance building (200 Josephine Street).<sup>21</sup> J. Michael Musick, the architect’s grand-nephew, states that J. Roger was “pleased” with the Berkeley Park Chapel project, and the Musick brothers “were perfectionists and very demanding of quality.... I know that Roger put his soul into every project that he did.”<sup>22</sup>

**CATEGORY 3: GEOGRAPHY**

To have geographical importance, the structure shall:

Criteria:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>a. Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city, or,</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>b. Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity; or,</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>c. Make a special contribution to Denver’s distinctive character.</i>

**3a.** Howard Mortuary selected one of Berkeley’s most significant intersections as the location befitting the quality of their substantial new funeral home. Architect J. Roger Musick realized the Berkeley Park Chapel would become an iconic building and orienting visual feature within the neighborhood given its prominent location at the intersection of the West 46th Avenue Parkway; Tennyson Street, Berkeley’s commercial and civic “Main Street”; and the green expanse of the area’s beloved Berkeley Park. He designed the mortuary to harmonize with the predominantly residential character of the community, giving it the appearance of a solid traditional, yet architecturally remarkable, ecclesiastical building. By providing the Berkeley Park Chapel with a long low profile, deep setback from the street, and generous parking areas, Musick respected the beauty and vistas of the historic parkway, Berkeley Park, and the range of mountains to the west, while at the same time providing an appropriate Modern expression. This prominent placement of the building and its size, materials, and appearance ensured its place as a focal point and orienting visual feature for the community.

**3b.** The Berkeley Park Chapel promotes understanding of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics and rarity. The building displays distinctive physical characteristics through its incorporation of Gothic and Tudor arches; a portico, arcaded porch, and porte cocheres; stained and leaded glass (including a rose window); and double-height gabled-roof chapel. It also stands out for its exceptional terra cotta ornamentation, rarely seen in similar buildings of the 1960s or later. The colored terra cotta field and sculptural forms of frieze are distinctive and rare. Denver Terra Cotta Company fabricated the building’s terra cotta in one of its last large projects. The material had declined in popularity by the time the Berkeley Park Chapel was erected; the abundant use of terra cotta as seen on the mortuary was quite rare. A search of documented historic buildings in the History Colorado Compass database did not identify any other new buildings erected in the 1960s in Denver using terra cotta. Many historic terra cotta buildings were demolished throughout the country by the early 1960s: one study identified 6,400 buildings in 1941, with only 3,840 remaining in 1963.<sup>23</sup>

The Berkeley Park Chapel constitutes an important representation of the illustrious company’s later work. The chapel plasterwork was crafted by Robert Smith of the Smith-McCallin Plastering Company of Denver, who also completed the plasterwork on the Air Force Academy Chapel. The type of plaster finish produced by Smith was becoming a lost art even in 1960; thus it is exceptionally rare today. As the only mortuary type building standing in today’s Berkeley Regis neighborhood, the building is highly instructive. Its value for understanding the urban environment only increases as the neighborhood continues to experience substantial loss of its historic buildings in the twenty-first century.

The scale of the Berkeley Park Chapel also sets it apart from other buildings in Northwest Denver, particularly in the Berkeley Regis neighborhood.<sup>24</sup> The building encompasses more than 15,000 square feet and extends 170’ along West

<sup>21</sup> Gane, *American Architect’s Directory 1970*, 653.

<sup>22</sup> J. Michael Musick, Email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, July 3, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Tunick, “Architectural Terra Cotta: 1900-1990,” *Studio Potter*, 17 (June 1989) 2: 16, <https://studiopotter.org/architectural-terra-cotta-1900-1990>.

<sup>24</sup> The Berkeley Regis statistical neighborhood recognized by CPD extends from West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue north to the city limits and from Federal Boulevard west to Sheridan and Inspiration Point.

46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Parkway. The neighborhood encompasses a limited number of such substantial buildings and few from the 1950s and 1960s. Exceptions include Holy Family High School (1958) on the private grounds of Holy Family Church on Utica Street and five academic buildings on the private grounds of Regis University, about one mile northeast of the mortuary. Centennial Elementary School (1976), occupying the same block as the Berkeley Park Chapel, is reflective of modern design and has received additions. The school employs the one-story height and brick construction established by the mortuary. Other large-scale historic buildings in the area tend to be much older, such as one dating to 1888 at Regis University, Mount St. Vincent Orphanage (1903) on Lowell Boulevard, and Skinner Middle School (1921) on West 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

## 7. Architectural Description

Please provide a statement for each of the following:

*a. Concisely describe the structure and its surrounds. Include building size, shape, # stories, materials, style and site terrain.*

The substantial (170' X 139', 15,544-square-foot), one-story, irregularly-shaped, buff brick mortuary building with terra cotta ornament has exterior brick walls laid in Flemish bond, stained glass windows, and hand-carved oak doors. The south and west walls include a wrap-around porch with arcading elaborated with terra cotta. The chapel's steeply pitched front gable facing West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue features a large stained glass rose window. A portico at the main entrance projects from the façade, displaying three arched openings with terra cotta columns and Della Robbia-influenced colored terra cotta. Farther east are two gabled projecting bays also featuring colored terra cotta and containing bands of five windows with leaded glass. Porte cocheres project from the building on the east and west.

The building is deeply set back from the West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Parkway. The southern part of the parcel is level with West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The terrain behind the building slopes down to the north, where a concrete retaining wall topped by chainlink fencing borders the north and east edges of the parcel. North and east of the building is an asphalt paved parking lot with concrete islands. A curving paved driveway from Tennyson Street accesses the west porte cochere, a feature advertised by the mortuary. A concrete public sidewalk borders the west and south edges of the property. The area between the building and the sidewalk on the south is landscaped with a grass lawn, curving concrete sidewalks, and decorative metal lampposts.<sup>25</sup> A large Douglas fir stands at the southeast corner of the property. At the southwest corner is an original sign for the building, consisting of a raised buff brick base with a terra cotta cap surmounted by a Gothic arch sign displaying the mortuary name (currently Olinger Moore Howard Chapel). Bordered by the west curving driveway and the west sidewalk is a curved planting area with grass, large sandstone rocks, flowering plants, and a pine tree. A tall Douglas fir and three crabapple trees flank a curving sidewalk leading from the west porte cochere to the rear of the building.

*b. Architectural description including mention of major features, uncommon or unique design features, ancillary structures, and important landscape or site features. Also describe interior spaces with extraordinary design features (if any).*

The irregularly-shaped, 15,544-square-foot building displays buff brick walls laid in a Flemish bond pattern. The front façade (south) features a projecting entrance portico near the center and two projecting gabled brick bays to the east. A slightly set back, open porch extends west from the entrance portico and wraps onto the west wall. The portico, porches, and door and (most) window openings of the building are elaborated with terra cotta fabricated by the Denver Terra Cotta Company. A chapel at the west end of the building has a soaring front gabled roof and a stained glass rose window. Projecting porte cocheres with terra cotta trim are present on the east and west. A rear wing includes on the northwest an internal L-shaped driveway for passenger drop-off and to the northeast a garage and storage space. The roof is complex, with a central flat deck encircled by hipped roof components, except for the gabled roof chapel and the flat roof rear wing. The pitched sections of the building's roof are clad with asphalt shingles resembling the original red clay tiles, which were destroyed in a hailstorm two years ago.

*Front and West Walls.* The projecting main entrance portico displays three terra cotta-clad Tudor arches, terra cotta columns, and brick end piers. Above the arches the portico's frieze displays colored terra cotta depicting doves holding

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<sup>25</sup> The lampposts are ca. 2012-13 replacements.

ribbons, clusters of grapes, and grape vines.<sup>26</sup> There is a center, deeply inset entrance with a Tudor arch elaborated with terra cotta blocks, angled side walls, and paired hand-carved oak doors with small quatrefoil lights. The entrance is flanked by single-light wood casement windows with terra cotta sills.

East of the portico the wall holds two sets of flat-headed paired wood casement windows with leaded glass and shared terra cotta surrounds. At the east end of the facade are two identical projecting gabled roof bays with bands of five Gothic arched leaded glass wood casement windows with terra cotta surrounds and terra cotta trefoil ornaments in the tympanums; each gable face holds a terra cotta roundel with a quatrefoil ornament.

Extending west of the portico is a long, arcaded porch wrapping along the south and west walls of building. The porch contains five Tudor arch openings elaborated with terra cotta on both walls. The west wall of the building at its south end holds a deeply inset Tudor arch entrance with a terra cotta surround and an oak door. On the west, the arcaded porch connects to the west porte cochere, which displays brick piers with terra cotta ornament that are connected by a brick planter with a terra cotta cap. A Tudor arch entrance with carved oak doors opens onto the porte cochere, which is accessed by a curving driveway from Tennyson Street. North of the porte cochere, the chapel wall has five brick corbels under the slightly overhanging roof eave.

*Chapel.* The chapel at the west end of the building features a stained glass rose window encircled by terra cotta in its south gable face and three sets of paired stained glass wood casement windows with terra cotta surrounds on its south and west walls. The chapel interior displays a vaulted ceiling with lattice plaster molding and hanging hand-crafted metal chandeliers. The side walls are clad with wood paneling; the front of the chapel is clad with vertical wood. The chapel includes wood pews flanking a center aisle. The front hall extending from the chapel to the front entrance displays Vermont slate flooring.

*Rear (North).* The L-shaped northwest corner of the building has wood overhead sectional garage doors on its west and north walls. The doors permit access to a curving interior driveway used to transport of family members attending funeral services. The drop-off area has a stained glass window. To the east is a garage and storage space with two sets of wide wood overhead garage doors on its north wall; the east wall holds a flush steel door and a three-part wood window (a fixed center light flanked by casements) with a shared slanting brick sill.

*East Wall.* South of the rear garage, the east wall is stepped out and contains a single inset entrance and two sets of three-part wood windows (a fixed center light flanked by casements) with shared slanting brick sills on its north wall. Its east and south walls are unfenestrated. Farther south, the east wall contains a similar three-part wood window with a slanting brick sill and a flush metal door. At the south end of the building a projecting porte cochere has a hipped roof supported by brick piers with terra cotta ornament on circular concrete bases. A deeply inset Tudor arch entrance holding paired carved oak doors opens onto the porte cochere.

*c. Describe character defining features; identify the key visual aspects that make up the character of this building.*

Character defining features of the building include:

- horizontality and one-story height
- double-height gabled roof chapel
- front portico elaborated with decorative terra cotta
- walls composed of brick laid in Flemish bond
- extensive use of terra cotta on windows and entrances
- stained and leaded glass windows, including a large rose window on the south wall of the chapel
- wrap-around arcaded porch
- Tudor and Gothic arches
- porte cocheres
- hand-carved oak doors
- hand-molded plaster latticework
- Vermont slate floors

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<sup>26</sup> The field area of the terra cotta is light blue, following the Della Robbia tradition, but it was painted red in recent years (ca. 2012-13). The surface paint can be removed to reveal the original color of the terra cotta.

- hand-crafted chandeliers

Character defining features of the building include its horizontality and one-story height, walls composed of brick laid in Flemish bond, extensive use of terra cotta ornamentation, stained and leaded glass windows, wrap-around arcaded porch, Tudor and Gothic arches, porte cocheres, hand-carved oak doors, hand-molded plaster latticework, Vermont slate floors, hand-crafted chandeliers. The large portico of the main entrance is a principal character-defining feature of the exterior, with its exuberant Della Robbia-inspired terra cotta frieze decoration, terra cotta columns, and arcaded entrances. The soaring chapel wing on the west, with its gabled roof, central stained glass rose window, and east and west walls pierced by stained glass windows also is one of the principal character-defining features of the building. Likewise, east of the portico the gabled projecting bays with bands of five leaded glass windows elaborated with colored terra cotta and trefoil ornaments and the roundel ornaments with colored terra cotta on the gable faces, are major defining features of the exterior. Also integral to the design are the arcaded wrap-around porch on the south and west and the projecting porte cocheres on the east and west. The arched entrances elaborated with terra cotta and containing hand-carved oak doors are also significant in conveying the building's character. The less ornamented areas at the rear of the building, executed with functional performance in mind yet constructed with attention to detail, are illustrative of the requirements of 1960 mortuaries. In 1969 architect J. Roger Musick stated he preferred "the traditional" and "the good and substantial in architecture, qualities that define the Berkeley Park Chapel."<sup>27</sup>

*d. Describe location and setting, including physical context and relationship to neighborhood and other historic structures.*

Berkeley Park Chapel stands on a 2.1-acre site at the northeast corner of West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Parkway and Tennyson Street in the Berkeley Regis neighborhood of northwest Denver, across the street from the open green expanse of Berkeley Park to the west.<sup>28</sup> The one-story mortuary shares the block with Centennial Elementary School, whose landscaped playgrounds, community garden, and one-story brick school lie to the north and east. A historic one-story brick building stands across the street to the south. Topography of the property slopes downward from south to north, and the perimeter adjacent to the school grounds has concrete retaining walls topped by a chainlink fence.

*e. Describe major alterations to the exterior of the structure and dates of major alterations if known. Describe any plans to alter the exterior.*

The building is almost unaltered from its completion in 1960, with no additions. The footprint of the building is unchanged. The original clay roof tiles were destroyed in the massive May 2017 hailstorm and replaced with asphalt roofing resembling clay tiles. The blue terra cotta of the entrance pediment was painted red in the 2010s. One stained glass window on the west wall was damaged recently and is boarded up. The owner applied for a permit to demolish the building and redevelop the property on May 29, 2019.

*f. Include a statement describing how the building currently conveys its historic integrity. For example does it retain its original design, materials, location, workmanship, setting, historic associations and feeling?*

Howard Berkeley Park Chapel retains an excellent degree of historic integrity. The mortuary exhibits the highest level of integrity of location, as it still occupies its original prominent site at the corner of West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Tennyson Street, across from Berkeley Park. The property retains a high level of integrity of setting, with much of its original landscape features remaining (lawns, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, and plantings), historic West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue Parkway and a one-story historic brick building to the south, and historic Berkeley Park to the west. Forty-three years ago Centennial Elementary School began to share the same block, with its playgrounds and a community garden bordering the mortuary. The resource retains an excellent level of integrity of design, displaying an unchanged building footprint, form, structure, and style. The resource maintains high integrity of materials, with original wood windows and doors, brick walls, and terra cotta ornament. The pale blue area of the terra cotta ornament was painted ca. 2012-13; the paint can be removed to expose the original color. The original red clay tile roofing was destroyed in a May 2017 hailstorm and replaced with asphalt composition shingles resembling red tile. The property manifests excellent integrity of workmanship, as reflected in the artistry of its decorative terra cotta, stained and leaded glass windows, carved doors, and interior decoration, and the craftsmanship displayed in the brick walls laid in Flemish bond. The property retains an

<sup>27</sup> *Rocky Mountain News Festival*, 7 December 1969, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Historically, this portion of the neighborhood was known as "Berkeley," while today it is designated "Berkeley Regis."



excellent degree of integrity of feeling, with the dignified funeral home's style conveying the impression of a traditional church as translated into a modern and efficient mortuary and incorporating an elevated aesthetic quality in its building materials and decorative elements. The building possesses excellent integrity of association, having served as a funeral home for more than half a century, from its opening in 1960 to its closure in January 2019, and having engendered personal memories in the community through its service in assisting many families in the neighborhood.

## 8. History of the Structure and Its Associations

Please provide a statement for each of the following:

a. Describe the history of the structure and its associations with important individuals, groups, events, or historical trends, and b. Describe specific historical associations including why this structure has direct association with the individual, group, event, or historical trend.

In June 1959 the *Rocky Mountain News* and *Denver Post* reported the city's Howard Mortuary would break ground on a new \$400,000 building (\$2.65 million in today's dollars) to be designed by J. Roger Musick.<sup>29</sup> To be known as the Howard Berkeley Park Chapel, the mortuary would occupy a two-acre site at the prominent corner of West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Tennyson Street in North Denver. The building owners advertised the location as "at the entrance to Berkeley Park." Groundbreaking ceremonies were held in June, and newspaper photographs reproduced a large architectural rendering of the proposed building.<sup>30</sup> The construction marked the continued growth of population in the northwest corner of the city and surrounding suburban areas after World War II.

The Berkeley Park Chapel opened in May 1960 and held open house days for visitors to tour the facility for two months. A May 15, 1960 *Denver Post* article described the building "as an outstanding example of functional design combined with a dignified artistic quality." The article described the chapel as "an unusual example of craftsmanship. The high, cathedral-like ceiling is plastered with an intricate design considered a rare example of hand-mol[d]ed plaster. The main chapel seats more than 200. The chapel-like atmosphere is carried out in hand crafted leaded chandeliers and stained glass windows."<sup>31</sup> The proud owners advertised the property as "Denver's newest and finest mortuary facility."<sup>32</sup> The building continued to be operated as a mortuary by Howard and its successor companies until January 2019.

Howard Berkeley Park Chapel is associated with national trends in the mortuary business. In the early twentieth century funeral homes evolved, as the traditional practice of people dying in their own home and funerals being held in the deceased's home rapidly dwindled. The profession of funeral director arose and expanded to meet the demands of the new age. As historian John M. Tess describes, the process allowed "...the transition of death from an intimate family experience at home to a sanitized celebration off-site as part of an increasingly standardized funerary industry."<sup>33</sup> In the 1960s expectations that mortuaries would handle all details associated with a death were met by Howard Mortuary, which in 1964 advertised the firm's motto: "At Howard's One Call Does All." The multi-faceted business could provide cremation, a complete funeral, a cemetery, and shipping arrangements, with extended payment plans available. The company also advertised itself as "pioneers in pre-need plans," a choice aided by its own life insurance offerings.<sup>34</sup> The Berkeley Park Chapel, with its substantial size encompassing a myriad of specialized spaces for the complex work of a modern funeral home, is an excellent representative of the mortuary industry in the 1960s.

### Howard Mortuary Company

Howard Mortuary, the first owner and operator of the Berkeley Park Chapel, traced its roots in Denver to 1917, when Thomas B. and Loula M. Howard founded the family-operated business at 1901 E. Colfax Avenue. Thomas B. Howard, a native of Kentucky, was born about 1881 and died in Denver in 1940. Loula Howard was born in Winchester, Kentucky, on September 21, 1880 and passed away in 1972. The couple married in 1901 and lived in Oklahoma and Oregon before

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<sup>29</sup> Measuring Worth website, using real cost for a project, [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com). Another account (*Rocky Mountain News*, May 14, 1960, 28) put the cost at \$350,000 (or \$2.32 million in 2018 dollars).

<sup>30</sup> *Denver Post*, June 21, 1959, 3E; *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959, 32.

<sup>31</sup> *Denver Post*, May 15, 1960, 38 (*Roundup*).

<sup>32</sup> *Denver Post*, June 1, 1960, 29.

<sup>33</sup> John M. Tess, "Wilson-Chambers Mortuary," Portland, Oregon, NRIS number 07000263, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, July 2006, 8-1.

<sup>34</sup> *Denver Post*, November 11, 1964, 3.

moving to Denver in 1917.<sup>35</sup> The Howards originally lived in their East Colfax Avenue mortuary, where their children learned the business from them before passing it on to the third generation in the city. The 1920 U.S. Census indicated the Howards were renting the building, while by 1930 they owned it. The 1940 census recorded them living in a separate residence on High Street in Denver. Loula Howard retired from the mortuary business in 1935 and four years later established Howard Life Insurance Company, which then was featured in ads for the mortuary.<sup>36</sup>

In 1949 Howard Mortuary, then operated by the second generation of the family, erected a new Modern-style mortuary for their business at 1201 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which they named Howard's Park Avenue Chapel.<sup>37</sup> Robert J. Howard, Sr. served as president of the mortuary company when the Berkeley Park Chapel was completed. In the 1960s Howard Mortuaries also established and operated a cemetery known as Hampden Memorial Estates at Hampden Avenue and Yosemite Street in southeast Denver. The new development offered garden mausoleums, in the lawn crypts, and also conventional cemetery plots. J. Roger Musick provided architectural plans for the structures in the cemetery and Franklin C. Stewart, formerly of Forest Lawn Cemeteries in California served as landscape designer and grounds superintendent.<sup>38</sup>

In 1967 Howard Mortuary celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. An advertisement the following year indicated the "nationally recognized and respected service organization" included eleven members of the Howard family and noted the "Howard Creed: better personal service with prices within the reach of all." The company assisted [approximately] 1,500 families each year and was "dedicated to continued service and growth, and equally dedicated to perpetuating a heritage that was given to us a half-century ago."<sup>39</sup>

Howard Mortuaries was the second largest firm of its kind in Denver by 1970. In that year it was acquired by Service Corporation International (SCI) of Houston, Texas. The Denver company's management personnel and staff of about fifty people were retained in the sale and continued to operate by the same policies as before. SCI was the largest mortuary firm in the country with more than seventy mortuaries and more than thirty cemeteries in the US and Canada.<sup>40</sup> In 1976 Howard merged with Moore Mortuary and that entity merged with Olinger Mortuaries in 1987. The company continued to operate the funeral home until its closure in January 2019. In May 2019 the company applied for a demolition permit for the building.

#### Architect J. Roger Musick

J. Roger Musick was born in Mt. Carmel, Missouri, on 4 June 1903. His family moved to Colorado, where he attended schools in Denver and Boulder. Musick received his architectural training during 1924-34, attending courses at the Beaux-Art Institute of Design in New York. American architects who graduated from the Ecole des Beau-Arts in Paris, whose ideas influenced the nation's building design for decades, founded the Institute in 1916.<sup>41</sup> The school adopted the atelier system and graded students in design competitions judged by practicing architects. "The Institute established a nation-wide standard of excellence in architectural education," reports Elisa Urbanelli, of the New York Landmarks Commission Research Department.<sup>42</sup> In 1929 Musick worked in the design department of Voorhees, Gemlin & Walker, a major New York architecture firm, whose partner, Ralph Walker, a master of Art Deco style, was given the title of "architect of the century" by the American Institute of Architects in 1957. Musick reported he designed modern telephone buildings and New England churches for the office.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Denver Post*, May 17, 1972, 66.

<sup>36</sup> *Denver Post*, May 17, 1972, 66.

<sup>37</sup> The Park Avenue Chapel appears to be substantially altered, is no longer a funeral home, and does not have historic integrity dating to the mortuary era.

<sup>38</sup> *Denver Post*, November 11, 1964, 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Denver Post*, January 16, 1968, 20.

<sup>40</sup> *Denver Post*, November 17, 1970, 1D.

<sup>41</sup> The 1929 Beaux-Arts Institute of Design is a designated landmark in Manhattan and features polychrome terra cotta plaques on its facade.

<sup>42</sup> Elisa Urbanelli, Research Department, [New York] Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Beaux-Arts Institute of Design," Manhattan, New York" August 23, 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Betsy Bradley, Research Department, [New York] Landmarks Preservation Commission, "Western Union Building," October 1, 1991; *Rocky Mountain News*, December 7, 1969, 8.

J. Roger also completed design work for his older brother, G. Meredith Musick (1892-1977), himself a celebrated architect. The advent of the Great Depression in 1929 caused Musick to return to Colorado, where he pursued mining interests and collaborated on projects with G. Meredith.<sup>44</sup> “J. Roger did much of the firm’s design work,” reports a biographical sketch of his brother prepared by History Colorado’s Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.<sup>45</sup> Notable designs of this era of collaboration included the Republic Building (1926, downtown Denver, demolished), Bryant Webster Elementary School (1930, 3635 Quivas Street, a designated Denver Landmark and listed in the National Register), and First Baptist Church (1938, East 14th Avenue and Grant Street, a National Register-listed Denver Landmark).<sup>46</sup> The Denver Architecture Foundation describes Bryant Webster Elementary as “one of Denver’s finest examples of Art Deco architecture.”<sup>47</sup> Other buildings J. Roger contributed to include the 1936 U.S. Custom House Extension (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Street and Stout) and 1939 Colorado State Capitol Annex (East 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sherman Street). J. Roger also had a solo practice specializing in the design of houses and schools, working on commissions for about seventy-five homes in Crestmoor Park and others in the Denver Country Club area.<sup>48</sup>

The brothers worked together as the firm of Musick & Musick during 1942-46. J. Roger cited one of his principal works of this era as the Army Air Base at Alliance, Nebraska, for which he was chief architect. Grand-nephew J. Michael Musick indicates his uncle’s wartime designs included the Enlisted Technicians School at Fitzsimons General Hospital and Bachelor Officer’s Quarters, troop housing, and railroad and warehouses at Lowry Air Force Base. He also states his great-uncle participated in the design of Stapleton Airport beginning in 1946.<sup>49</sup> During 1949-51 J. Roger Musick engaged in a partnership with Charles Gordon Lee, known as Musick & Lee, which is lauded as “involved in the design of some of the finest post-war era buildings in Colorado.”<sup>50</sup> One of their projects was the 1952 Chapel of the Angels at 7177 West Colfax in Avenue in Lakewood (demolished), intended to be used for both weddings and funerals. A focal point of the building was a 17’ stained glass window.<sup>51</sup>

Among Musick’s later principal works, in addition to the Berkeley Park Chapel, were the Stearns-Roger Office Building in Denver (1954), Empire Savings Bank in Broomfield (1956), Bankers Union Life Insurance Building in Denver (1958), and an Aurora office building (1962).<sup>52</sup> In 1964 he prepared architectural plans for Howard’s Hampden Memorial Estates at East Hampden Avenue and Yosemite, which featured “garden mausoleums.” A mausoleum designed by the architect that is still standing is a buff brick structure with a wall featuring three Gothic arches, two that serve as doorways to the crypt walls and one containing an inset mural.

In 1966 Musick moved to Aspen, where he continued to receive many requests for his design skills. In 1969 the architect stated he was discouraged by many new buildings of the era, judging: “They are not concerned with the design.” He favored “the traditional in architecture. I don’t really go for the real far out. I like the good and substantial.”<sup>53</sup> Musick also painted in watercolors and oils all of his life and was interested in big game hunting and the outdoors. He passed away in St. George, Utah, in 2000, when a *Denver Post* obituary described him as “an architect and artist.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, December 7, 1969, 8.

<sup>45</sup> History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, “Architects of Colorado: Biographical Sketch, Musick, Meredith G.,” revised December 30, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> In his autobiography, G. Meredith Musick noted, “Nearly all of the working drawings for the Bryant Webster School were made by my brother, Roger. He deserves credit for developing exterior design in intricate brickwork adapted from Indian culture,” extract from J. Michael Musick, email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, July 3, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Denver Architecture Foundation, “Bryant Webster Elementary School,” <https://denverarchitecture.org/site/bryant-webster-elementary-school/>.

<sup>48</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, December 7, 1969, 8; J. Roger Musick obituary, *Denver Post*, January 24, 2000, [extras.denverpost.com/news/obits/musi0122.htm](https://www.denverpost.com/news/obits/musi0122.htm).

<sup>49</sup> George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory, 1956* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1956); J. Michael Musick, Simmons email, July 3, 2019; Modern Architecture Preservation League, Bryant Webster Elementary School, National Register nomination form, March 10, 1995, 11.

<sup>50</sup> *Charles Gordon Lee Architectural Records*, Finding Aid, Manuscript Collection Number WH1232, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>51</sup> *Denver Post*, December 23, 1951 (*Empire Magazine*).

<sup>52</sup> Gane, *American Architects Directory*, 1970, 653.

<sup>53</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, December 7, 1969, 8.

<sup>54</sup> J. Roger Musick (obituary), *Denver Post*, January 24, 2000.

## Contractor and Craftsmen

Contractor Richard A. Deam, born in Decatur, Illinois, in 1922, attended the University of Colorado-Boulder before service as a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Deam became a member of the Associated Building Contractors of Colorado. During the 1960s he was closely involved in the effort to develop “Plan Bulldozer,” a nationwide collaboration of heavy construction contractors to help improve the nation’s infrastructure and plan for providing assistance with emergencies and disasters. Deam won the construction contract for Howard Berkeley Park Chapel with a bid of \$279,065.<sup>55</sup>

When important new buildings in Denver opened, companies who participated in the project were often acknowledged with a large newspaper advertisement featuring their contributions. Howard Mortuaries published such an advertisement, thanking the people of Denver for their patronage and the companies “whose very special efforts have helped us so materially in expanding a Denver heritage.” A drawing of the new mortuary and the architect’s name was included, as well as a list of the following companies: Richard A. Deam Construction (general contractor), Western Concrete, Lauren Burt, Inc., K.C. Construction Supply, Denver Terra Cotta, Hallack & Howard Lumber, COBUSCO, Fogel Refrigerator, Martinson Construction, Denver Glass, Commonwealth-Stiles Electric, Denver Building Supply, Sam Radulovich, Eaton Metal Products, Colorado Tile, C.A. Crosta, K.D. Hughes Construction, Brannan Sand & Gravel, Domestic Insulation & Heating, Adams & Wilding, Tufford Decorating, Bacon & Schramm, Acme Sand & Gravel, Englewood Heating & Air Conditioning, F.E. Wade, and Sterling Steel & Supply. These twenty-five companies, predominantly from Denver and other parts of Colorado, were major contributors to the building. Other craftsman also played important roles in its completion, including Smith-McCallin Plastering.

Two examples of the companies contributing to the building are highlighted below:

*Denver Terra Cotta Company.* John Fackt, George P. Fackt, and Carl Philip Schwalb founded the Denver Terra Cotta Company in 1911 and began manufacturing operations the following year, quickly becoming the largest firm of its kind west of Chicago.<sup>56</sup> Great demand for terra cotta resulted in tripling the size of the plant in 1914. In 1923 the company merged with Northwestern Terra Cotta of Chicago, with plants in each city and George P. Fackt serving as president and general manager. Denver Terra Cotta produced materials for buildings throughout the West, including some of Denver’s most notable architecture. By the end of World War II popularity of the material declined and only seven companies remained in business. In 1947 Denver Terra Cotta allied with other producers in forming the Architectural Terra Cotta Institute, whose goals included the manufacture of “new products that would be appropriate for the architectural styles of the period.”<sup>57</sup> The material continued to be employed on a limited basis in Colorado, mostly for public architecture, such as schools, libraries, and memorials. Denver Terra Cotta Company fabricated the terra cotta for the Berkeley Park Chapel before it closed in 1965, “making this one of the last buildings in Denver to incorporate large-scale use of one of the West’s premier terra cotta companies.”<sup>58</sup>

*Smith-McCallin Plastering Company.* Robert T. Smith of Denver’s Smith-McCallin plastering company left retirement to complete the intricate plastering of the chapel ceiling. The firm was founded in Denver in the 1870s by John L. Smith and Andrew McCallin, both plasterers. In the early twentieth century the company worked on such notable buildings as the Colorado State Capitol, Symes Building, and Albany Hotel in Denver.<sup>59</sup> The plastering craft was passed down through the generations to Robert T. Smith, whose children state that he personally made all of the tools necessary for the chapel ceiling’s ornamental plasterwork. Smith’s children indicate that when the mortuary was built “he was the only person having the skills to perform this kind of work.” Robert Smith was assisted in the technical aspect of the project by his brother, an engineer on the Lunar Landing Module program. As the Smiths report, “The work on at the Olinger Moore

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<sup>55</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1959.

<sup>56</sup> *The Western Architect*, 32 (Jan.-Dec. 1923): 144; *Mountain States Monitor* (April 1918): 4.

<sup>57</sup> Susan Tunick, *Terra-Cotta Skyline: New York’s Architectural Ornament* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 114 and 140.

<sup>58</sup> City and County of Denver, 4345 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Community Planning and Development Memo Report of Findings for Demolition, June 12, 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Mike and Bob Smith and Linda Perkins, Dillon, Colorado, letter to Landmark Preservation, City and County of Denver, June 2019; Denver city directories, 1881-1923; Colorado Board of Capitol Managers, “Ninth Biennial Report, Board of Capitol Managers of the State of Colorado to the General Assembly of the State of Colorado,” December 1, 1908, 7 and 9; *Rocky Mountain News*, 26 August 1906, 44.

Howard Funeral Chapel required some technical study due to the various angles of the ceiling. The ceiling had a triple radius uncommon in any facility.” Robert Smith also executed the ornamental plasterwork in the US Air Force Academy Chapel near Colorado Springs and in St. Catherine of Sienna Church in Denver. Smith’s children observe, “These facilities are very rare due to this type of ornamental plastering being a lost art today.”<sup>60</sup>

c. Describe other structures that have similar associations and the relationship/comparison of this structure to these other structures.

There are no other mortuaries in the Berkeley Regis neighborhood. A search of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Online Cultural Resource Database for structures with similar associations identified only three historic mortuaries previously documented in Denver. Research revealed one architecturally distinguished mortuary in East Denver of the same era that serves as a good comparable to the Berkeley Park Chapel, although it has different historical associations and architectural style.

*Rogers & Son Mortuary (5DV.480)* is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial style three-story brick building at 1529 Champa Street in downtown Denver. Erected in 1891, the building housed mortuary functions until about 1910. The building is associated with a local late nineteenth century funeral business and is representative of late nineteenth century commercial buildings in Denver. It is a contributing element of the Downtown Denver Historic District and represents a different era, style, and associations than the Berkeley Park Chapel.<sup>61</sup>

*Rogers Mortuary (5DV.8194)*, recorded on a 1976 survey form, is a Classical Revival Style building on York Street with an unknown architect. The form did not specify a street number, but this appears to be the current location of the Feldman Mortuary at 1673 York Street. The building was erected as a private residence and became a funeral home serving the Jewish community in 1939. Feldman’s website indicates the building has experienced many renovations over the years, and the building represents a different era, style, and associations than the Berkeley Park Chapel.<sup>62</sup>

*Horan & McConaty Funeral Home (5DV.9139)*, at 3020 Federal Boulevard in the Highland neighborhood, received cursory examination in 2005 and was determined officially not eligible to the National Register in 2005. Erected by James McConaty as his Boulevard Mortuary in 1919, it remains a funeral home. The building experienced major remodeling to its large entrance portico in the twenty-first century, and represents a different era, style, and associations than the Berkeley Park Chapel.<sup>63</sup>

*McConaty’s Boulevard Mortuary*, 1091 South Colorado Boulevard, was the firm’s second funeral home and opened in October 1957. Designed by Carl F. Bieler and constructed by Cyrus G. Delano, the \$300,000 one-story building was described as “reminiscent of a traditional Spanish mission with central courtyard and fountain” and was erected of “natural stone.” The building contained a large chapel with movable partitions, a choir loft, and an office.<sup>64</sup> This building is comparable to the Berkeley Park Chapel in age and its incorporation of traditional design and modern functionality. It appears to have historic integrity. However, it does not have the same associations with ownership or location and is a different style (Spanish Mission).

## 9. Owner Consent to Designation:

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: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>60</sup> Mike and Bob Smith and Linda Perkins, Letter to Landmark Preservation, June 2019.

<sup>61</sup> R.L. and T.H. Simmons, Denver Inventory Form, 1529-31 Champa Street, Rogers & Son Mortuary, 5DV.490, February 1993.

<sup>62</sup> Rogers Mortuary, Rogers and Son Mortuary (5DV8194), York Street, Denver, 1976, Architectural Site Detail, History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Compass Database; and Feldman Mortuary, “Our History,” <https://feldmanmortuary.com/224/Our-History.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Marc E. Greenberg, 3020 Federal Boulevard, Horan & McConaty Funeral Home, 5DV.9139, 2005, Architectural Site Detail, History Colorado, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Compass Database; and Horan & McConaty, “Our Story: About Us,” <https://horancares.com/our-story/>.

<sup>64</sup> *Denver Post*, October 10, 1957, 72.

(please print)

Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)


Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

*If the owner does not consent to designation, please describe the reasons for recommending designation:*

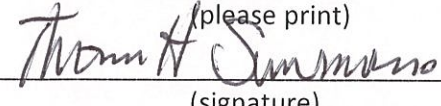
On May 29, 2019 the Berkeley Park Chapel property owner applied for a total demolition permit for the historic building. Historic Berkeley Regis, a group founded in 2016 to study the history, architecture, and landscapes of its neighborhood, had previously determined the building was significant and potentially eligible as a Denver Landmark. Members of the group toured the building on May 23, 2019 with mortuary employees and discussed its history and noted significant interior features. On June 12, 2019 Denver Landmark Preservation staff reported its determination that the building is potentially eligible for Landmark designation. Historic Berkeley Regis held a community meeting on June 25, 2019 attended by more than 60 persons who expressed a strong desire for preservation of the building. History Colorado determined the property is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places on 26 June 2019. Historic Denver has represented Historic Berkeley Regis and the community in efforts to negotiate with the owner and developer. Historic Berkeley Regis also wrote to the owner and developer to request that they begin discussions about the fate of the mortuary, offering not to file an application if the demolition permit application was withdrawn in order to allow time for negotiations. We have received no response. As the building is one of the most architecturally, historically, and geographically significant and intact buildings in the neighborhood and its demolition would result in the loss of irreplaceable materials, craftsmanship, and character, approval of Landmark designation is recommended.

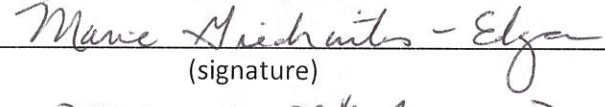
*It is strongly suggested that if the owner does not consent to designation the applicant should meet and discuss application with owner prior to filing an application. Provide a statement describing efforts that have been made to contact the owner to talk about designation and possible alternatives if owner does not consent to designation:*

Upon learning of the closure and potential sale of the mortuary in January 2019, Historic Berkeley Regis (HBR) requested that John Olson of Historic Denver attend a tour of the building provided by mortuary staff on May 23, 2019. Olson stated he believed the building was potentially eligible for Landmark designation and agreed to contact the owner/developer and attempt to open a discussion. He made several attempts to talk with the owner and developer representatives, but no agreement to negotiations was forthcoming. Historic Berkeley Regis also contacted City Councilman Rafael Espinoza to request his assistance in contacting the owner/developer regarding the building’s future and the neighborhood’s concerns. Both he and Councilperson-elect Amanda Sandoval agreed to discuss the property with the owner/developer. Although Historic Denver was acting on HBR’s behalf to attempt to initiate negotiations, the lack of success led HBR to send its own letters to the owner and the developer asking for such negotiations to begin and proposing that we would not file an application if the demolition permit was withdrawn. HBR requested the opportunity to make a presentation about the significance of the building at the developer’s community meeting on July 9<sup>th</sup> but was denied. Receiving no response in the affirmative to our letter and without progress to begin negotiations through these efforts, we prepared this Landmark application.

1. Applicant(s): William R. Killam Date: 7-8-19  
(please print)  
Applicant(s):  Date: 7-8-19  
(signature)

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER  
2019 JUL 10 PM 12:25  
COMMUNITY PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Applicant Address: 4312 YATES, DENVER 80212  
2. Applicant(s): THOMAS H SIMMONS Date: 7-8-19  
(please print)  
Applicant(s):  Date: 7-8-19  
(signature)

Applicant Address: 3635 W. 46th Ave, Denver 80211  
3. Applicant(s): Marie Giedraitis-Edgar Date: 7-8-19  
(please print)  
Applicant(s):  Date: 7-8-19  
(signature)  
Applicant Address: 3532 W 39th Ave Den 80211

4. Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)  
Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)  
Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)  
Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)  
Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)  
Applicant(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)  
Applicant Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Three applicants are required if the designation does not have owner consent. All three applicants will need to be either a Denver resident, property owner or representative of a Denver based organization or business.

## 10. Resources

- Bradley, Betsy. Research Department, [New York] Landmarks Preservation Commission. "Western Union Building." October 1, 1991
- Charles Gordon Lee Architectural Records*. Finding Aid. Manuscript Collection Number WH 1232. Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.
- City and County of Denver. 4345 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Community Planning and Development Memo Report of Findings for Demolition. June 12, 2019.
- City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources. SurveyLA, Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey. Historic Context Statement Outline. Revised July 2018.
- Colorado Board of Capitol Managers. "Ninth Biennial Report, Board of Capitol Managers of the State of Colorado to the General Assembly of the State of Colorado." December 1, 1908.
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## 11. Photographs

Attach at least four (4) 5x7 or larger color photographs showing the views of the property from the public right of way(s) and any important features or details. If available, attach copies of historic photographs of the structure. The interior photographs were taken with the permission of mortuary staff during a May 23, 2019 on a tour of the building.

### Current Photographs



1. Front from West 46th Avenue. View north, March 2019.



2. Front portico. View north, April 2018.



3. Portico terra cotta detail (front). View north, July 2019.



4. West double doors (hand-carved oak) and porch arcade. View east, July 2019.



5. East end of the front. View north, April 2018.



6. Front from near the southwest corner of the property. View northeast, April 2018.



7. Interior of chapel. Note decorative plaster on ceiling and stained glass windows. View north-northwest, May 2019.



8. Rose window in south gable face of chapel. View south, May 2019.





9. Paired stained glass casement windows in chapel. View west, May 2019.



10. View down front hall toward the chapel. Note Vermont slate floor. View west, May 2019.



11. West wall. View east, June 2019.



12. West wall. View southeast, April 2018.



13. West end of rear. View southeast, April 2018.

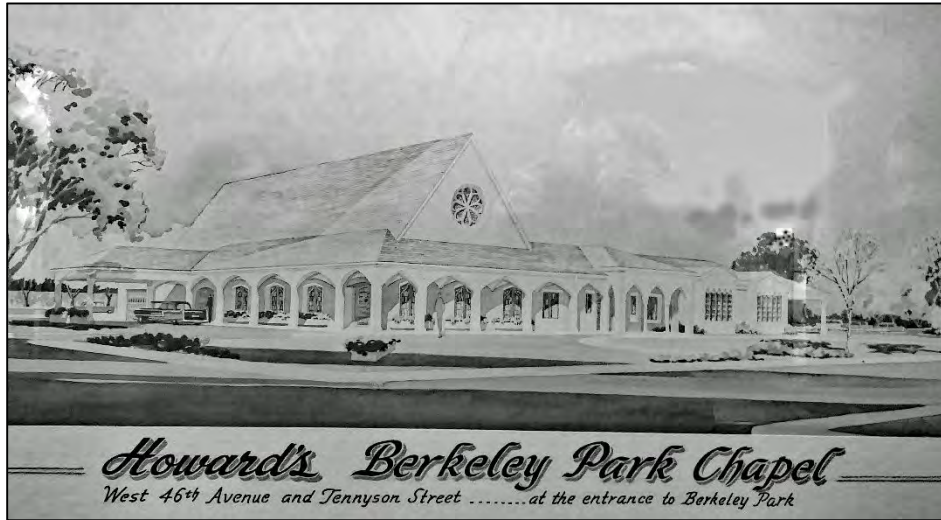


14. East wall and rear. View west-southwest, April 2018.

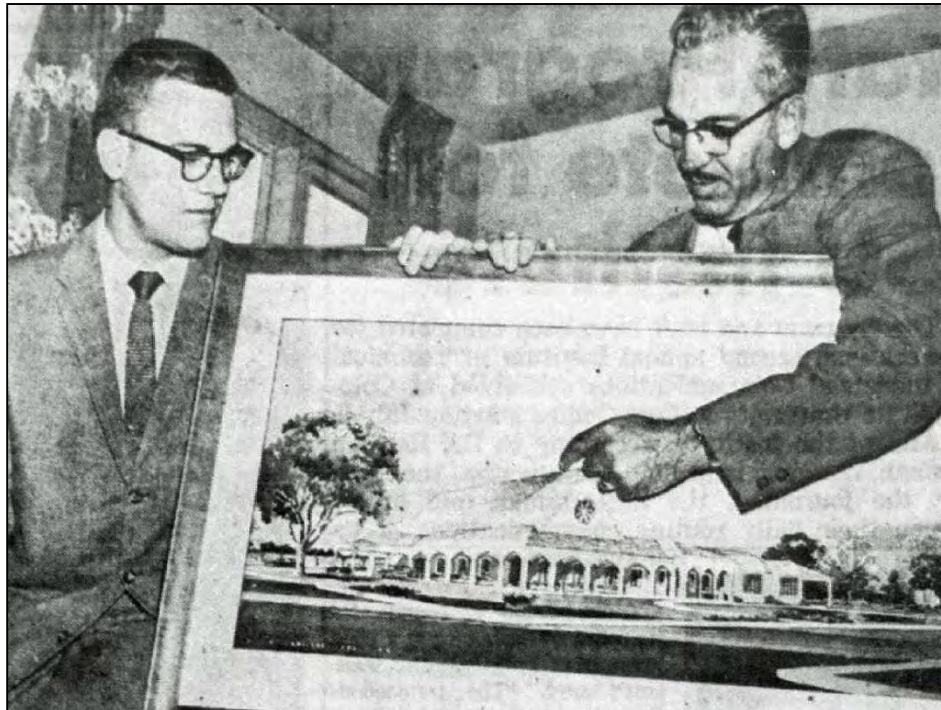


15. Three-quarter view of the front and east walls. View northwest, April 2018

## Historic Figures and Photographs



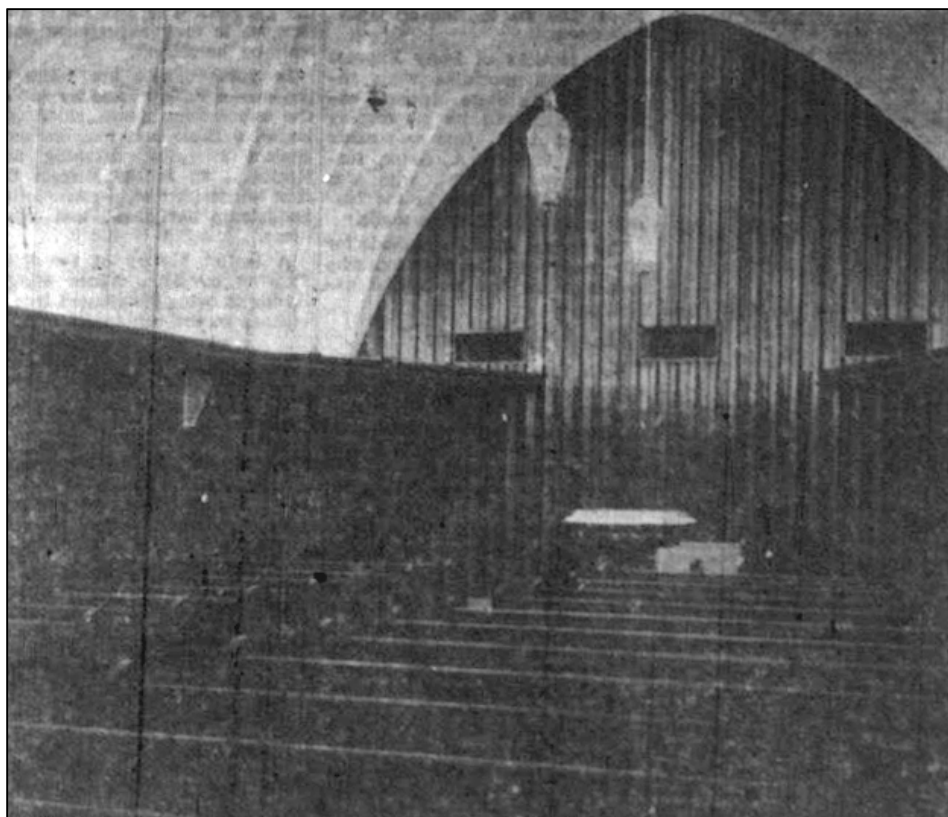
1. This 1959 architectural rendering shows the planned mortuary (view northeast). SOURCE: Framed rendering of building inside the mortuary, 2019.



2. Robert J. Howard Sr. and his son, Robert Jr., display the architectural rendering for the Berkeley Park Chapel. SOURCE: *Denver Post*, June 21, 1959, 3E.

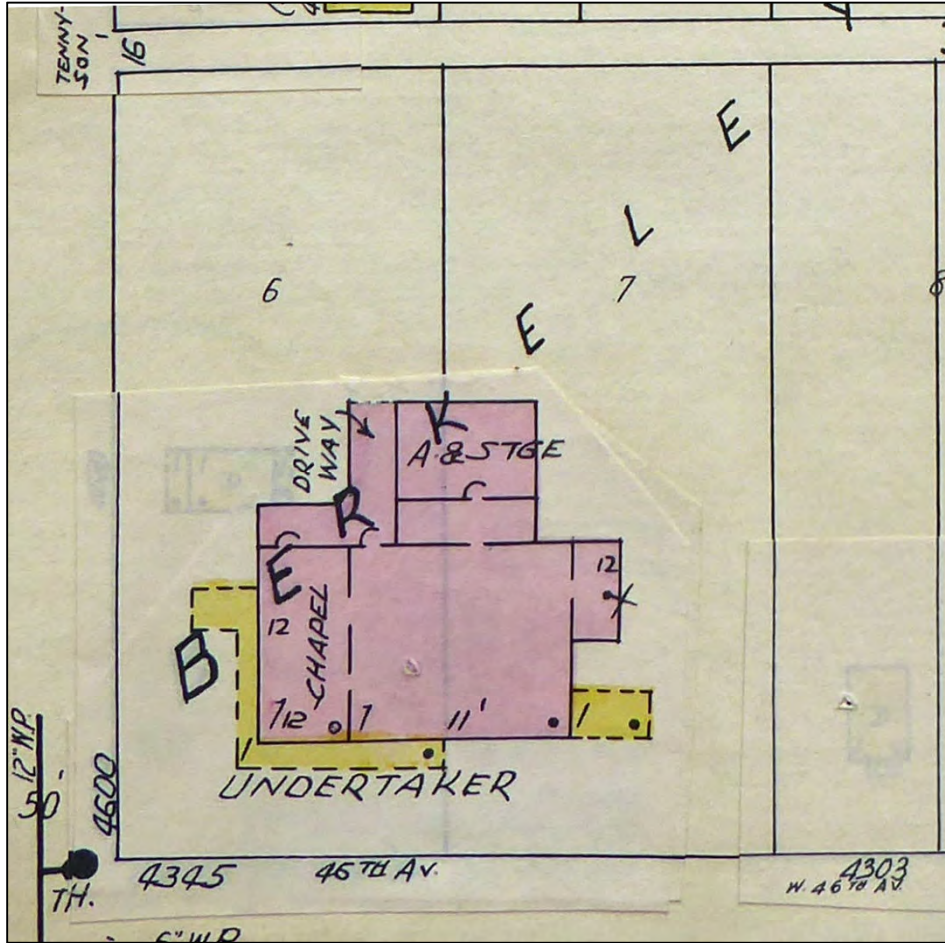


3. Assistant manager James O. Wright stands in front of the newly opened mortuary in 1960 (view northwest). SOURCE: *Denver Post*, May 15, 1960, 38.



4. This May 1960 photograph shows the interior of the chapel at the west end of the building, with the vaulted ceiling, hanging chandeliers, wood paneling, and wood pews. (view north-northwest). SOURCE: *Rocky Mountain News*, May 14, 1960, 28.





5. This 1961 Sanborn fire insurance map of the parcel shows the same footprint for the building as today. SOURCE: Sanborn fire insurance map extract, 1961, on file at Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.



6. This ca. 2016 view northeast shows the building and the original Gothic arch freestanding sign near the southwest corner of the parcel. SOURCE: historic postcard view.

## 12. Site Map

An overall site plan should be included graphically depicting the building, the location of other significant site features and the boundaries of the designation.



Annotated extract from City and County of Denver Assessor website of map of parcel number 0219106032000, which shows the parcel boundary in blue. North is to the top.