

# 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: 618 South Monroe Way, Denver CO, 80209

The following are <u>required</u> for the application to be considered complete:

- □ Period of Significance
- Statement of Integrity
- ⋈ Historic Context
- ⊠ Bibliography
- ⊠ Boundary Map



# 1. Property Information

Name of Property

<u>Historic Name: 618 South Monroe Way</u>

Other or Current Name: Muchow Residence

**Location** 

Address 618 South Monroe Way, Denver, CO 80209

Legal Description: THE WEST 18 FEET OF LOT 32 AND THE EAST 57 FEET

OF LOT 31, BLOCK 3, STOKES PLACE ADDITION, DENVER

## Number of resources:

# Contributing	<u># Non-Contributing</u>	
1		Primary Structures
	<del></del>	Accessory Structures
		<u>Features</u>

# Contributing and Noncontributing Features or Resources

Describe below how contributing and non-contributing features were determined. The house and garage addition (1975) are both considered contributing features to the designation, as they were constructed within the period of significance and designed by William Muchow. The small addition on the east side of the property was constructed outside of the period of significance and is not considered contributing.

# General Property Data

Date of construction: Main Structure 1954

Addition 1975

Architect (if known): William Muchow F.A.I.A.

Builder (if known): Warren Williams

Original Use: Single family home

Current Use: Single family home

Source(s) of information for above: Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Collection

# 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.

N/A



# 2. Owner/Applicant Information

⊠ Owne □ Memb □ Mana	n for designation may be submitted by: er(s) of the property or properties, or per(s) of city council, or ger of Community Planning and Development, or e residents of Denver, if they are not owners of the property or properties
Name:	Anne Wattenberg and Peter Buttrick
	618 South Monroe Way, Denver CO 80209
	312-316-5645
	Anne.wattenberg@gmail.com
	olicant (if not owner)
Prepared by	
Name:	Anne Wattenberg, A.I.A.
Address:	618 South Monroe Way, Denver CO, 80209
Phone:	<u>312-316-5645</u>
Email:	Anne.wattenberg@gmail.com



# 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.

+ PLRTUC

Owner(s): Anne Wattenberg and Peter Buttrick

Date: February 6, 2023

(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.



# 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 <u>historic event</u> or with the <u>historical</u> <u>development</u> of the city, state, or nation;
$\square$ B. It has direct and substantial association with a <u>recognized person or group of persons</u> who had influence on society;
oximes C. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an <u>architectural style or type;</u>
$\boxtimes$ D. It is a significant example of the work of <u>a recognized architect or master builder</u> ;
$\square$ E. It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a <u>significant innovation or technical achievement</u> ;
$\square$ F. It represents <u>an established and familiar feature</u> of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;
$\square$ G. It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
$\Box$ H. It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an <u>understanding of how the site</u> was used by past generations;
$\square$ J. It is associated with <u>social movements</u> , <u>institutions</u> , <u>or patterns of growth or change</u> that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation.

# Statement of Significance

Provide a summary paragraph for each applicable criterion.

# Criteria A: It has a direct association with a significant <u>historic event</u> or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation

The Post World War II (postwar) period between 1946 and 1965 was a time of extraordinary change in Denver. The population almost tripled<sup>1</sup> and to accommodate housing for the new residents, more than 11,000 square acres were platted for residential use<sup>2</sup> and more than 50,000 houses were constructed.<sup>3</sup> New neighborhoods were laid out with winding streets in contrast to the rigid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Simons R. and Simons T. "Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965" National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, Oct. 10, 2010, Page 41

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid Page 231

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid Page 217



orthogonal grid of established prewar neighborhoods and the majority of new home designs were low slung ranch style with informal open plans in contrast to the relatively rigid four square brick bungalows of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Denver. William Muchow's 1953 design for his family home at 618 South Monroe Way is reflective of these changes.

# **Historical Development of Post-World War II Denver**

## Postwar neighborhoods in Denver

618 South Monroe Way is located in Stokes Place Addition. The land, formerly a dairy, was platted and dedicated on January 3, 1951.<sup>4</sup> (Figure 5) South Monroe Way is a curvilinear street, a configuration recommended by the 1950 Urban Land Institute's Community Builders Handbook which offered maps showing what the Federal Housing Authority considered "good" and "bad" platting and development practices.<sup>5</sup>

The explosion of new residential construction with designs not previously used in Denver, led developers, and homeowner groups to utilize covenants and deed restrictions as a way of preserving and protecting qualities they felt most important and positive in their subdivisions. Stokes Place adopted their protective covenants on September 10, 1952. (Figure 26) It was reference to these codes/covenants that dominate the commentary on 618 South Monroe Way. *Architectural Record's* 1957 award for the home is entitled "Codes Inspire Fresh Design". The text continues "...to counter the often-hampering restrictiveness of building codes, they have been carried out forthrightly here – but with imagination." (Figure 2)

#### The Small Urban Home

The majority of Denver's postwar residences were "starter home" as was 618 South Monroe Way. The average size of a house built in Denver between 1940 and 1965 was 1,420 square feet. Producing homes that were within the buying power of the new residents, many of them returning veterans, required rethinking building elements with a view towards reducing material and labor costs. Major changes included building the entire home on one floor without a basement or second floor, open floor plans so that public rooms could serve several purposes such as elimination of dining rooms if kitchens accommodated a table where the family could enjoy their meals, smaller bedroom for children and greater connection to the yards so that children's interior playrooms could be reduced in size.

In their description of 618 South Monroe Way, The Denver Post's Empire Magazine's 1956 Home of the Month article stated in part "A large determining factor in the design of the house was money. Like most young couples, Bill Muchow and his wife Priscilla have a limited budget....'Modern homes have been compressed by high costs,' Bill explains, 'but I feel they can still have an air of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> City and County of Denver, Stokes Place Addition Plat Map, 1951 (Figure 5)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Urban Land Institute, Community Builders Handbook (1950) P. 58

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Architectural Record, "Codes Inspire Fresh Design", May 1957, Page 129 (Figure 2)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Note that none of these restrictions are enumerated in the 1952 Stokes Place Addition Covenants, see Figure 26

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Simons R. and Simons T. "Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965" National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, Oct. 10, 2010, Page 48



spaciousness... despite a tight budget."9 (Figures 1 and 16)

## **Denver Building Boom: Mass Produced and Prefabricated Housing**

The acceleration of new residential construction led architects and developers to explore mass produced and prefabricated housing. In 1955, Muchow designed at least two additional homes with a similar silhouette and floor plan, one of which remains in the Wellshire neighborhood, a postwar community platted in 1953. (Figures 6 and 7) The 1957 Western Architecture cover show yet another built A-Frame and the accompanying article about the house mentions that the builder, Al Cohen, went on to design and sell additional homes of the same type. <sup>11</sup>

# Criteria C: It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type

With its crisp, unadorned, geometry, 618 South Monroe Way is a recognizable example of midtwentieth century modernism. During the postwar period, Americans enthusiastically embraced modernism in home design for the first time. <sup>12</sup> Constructed in 1954, the design shares many of the streamlined attributes of the "ranch" house which was the prevalent style of homes built during Denver's postwar building boom <sup>13</sup>: simplicity, privacy and informality, built primarily on one level with an open floor plan, large windows, without moldings or applied decoration and with exterior cladding of informal, rustic materials. <sup>14</sup> (Figures 1 and 19)

However, it was Muchow's innovative approach to these elements that made the design of 618 South Monroe Way a noteworthy award winner. In May of 1957 it was one of 25 homes nationally published in *Architectural Record*'s Record Homes issue. (Figure 2) The jury stated "A-three-dimensional approach, developing the structure along with the plan, give unusual spaciousness and livability for an inexpensive house on a small plot." The design also won an Award of Merit in the October 1957 issue of *Sunset Magazine*, <sup>16</sup> a Western Home Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1957-1958, was featured as "Home of the Month" in the Denver Post's *Empire Magazine* in January 1956, <sup>17</sup> The Denver Post in February 1957, <sup>18</sup> and *100 Years of Architecture in Colorado* in 1957. (Figure 25)

618 South Monroe Way was the Muchow's family home from 1954 until 1971 when it was sold to Howard Cohen. In 1975, Mr. Cohen sold the house to Arthur Dion who commissioned Mr. Muchow to design an addition and also commissioned a landscape plan from Jane Silverstein Reis FASLA.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Denver Post Empire Magazine, Lopez, Bettie, "Muchow's' modern Colonial", January 29, 1956 (Figure 16)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> City and County of Denver, Wellshire Plat Map, 1953

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Western Building, "Western Architect Design", April 1957, cover and Page 22

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Simons R. and Simons T. "Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965" National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, Oct. 10, 2010, Page 99

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid, Page 47

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Hess, Alan. "Ranch House" Harry N. Abrams 2004. Page 17

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Architectural Record, "Codes Inspire Fresh Design" May 1957, Page 129 (Figure 2)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Sunset Magazine, October 1957, Page 48

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Empire Magazine, Lopez, Bettie, "Muchow's Modern Colonial" January 1956, Page 24 (Figure 16)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Denver Post, West, Jane, "South Denver Home in National Limelight" February 20, 1957 (Figure 17)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Jane Silverstein Ries Collection (Figure 3)



(Figure 3) Between that time and when it was purchased by the current owner/applicants in 2006, changes were made which compromised the design. Following a restoration effort, in 2017 the home was awarded a Mayor's Design Award.

# Criteria D: It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder

A quote from the *Daily Journal*, December 15, 1982, summarizes his influence on the region. "Muchow is probably the most widely known architect in the region, his name is synonymous with consistent design excellence." <sup>20</sup>

William Muchow was born in Denver, Colorado in 1922 and died in 1991. He earned a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1946 and a Master of Architecture and Urban Planning from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in 1948. While at Cranbrook, Muchow studied under the internationally acclaimed architect Eliel Saarinen. In 1949 Muchow was awarded the Rome prize which allowed him to travel in Europe. (Figure 4)

Returning to Denver in 1949, Muchow worked for several firms including Fisher and Fisher before founding Muchow Associates Architects in 1950. Muchow's firm worked on a broad range of architectural projects that include schools, churches, single and multi-family residences, office buildings, financial institutions, municipal and recreational facilities. From 1950-1991, his firm designed eight hundred and thirty-three projects and was awarded thirty-five A.I.A. awards. Muchow's design work was nationally recognized in 1957 with the Award of Merit for AIA Sunset Magazine and Architectural Record's Award of Excellence, and in 1963 and 1971 with First Design Awards from Progressive Architecture. In 1968 Muchow was elected as a Fellow to the American Institute of Architect.

Muchow was a dedicated leader in both Denver's civic and architecture communities. A few of his positions are Fellow of the International Institute of Arts and Letters, President of the Colorado A.I.A. in 1969, President of Colorado State Board of Examiners 1967-1977 and Director of Western Mountain Region A.I.A. from 1982-1985. He served on more than twenty-five award juries nationally and was a visiting lecturer at many colleges and universities. Work in his office inspired many young protégées who ranked among Denver's most successful late 20<sup>th</sup> century architects.<sup>22</sup>

# Period of Significance

Period of Significance: 1954-1975

Provide justification for the period of significance.

The period begins with the construction of the A-Frame and its use as the Muchow family home and continues through the construction of the flat roof addition, both designed by William Muchow.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Wray, Diane. Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Biographical Sketch, March 3, 2005

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Collection



# 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.

This property is located on Lot 32, Block 3 in Stokes Place Addition with a lot size of 11,625 square feet. The house, which faces south is mid-block, and set back on South Monroe Way, a street of ranch style homes many originally built in the 1950s and 1960s. The two-story A-Frame has a dramatic cedar shake roof which features an industrial style, ridge skylight that runs the entire length of the house, the roof overhangs the house by 12 feet on the south side to provide summer shading. Other exterior materials are glass, brick set with a distinctive deep purple mortar, and painted tongue and groove wood siding. The house sits on an 18" high exposed, board formed, cast-in-place concrete knee wall. There are two elements that "break the box", on the west side, the interior wood beams extend through the exterior wall to become part of a painted wood trellis and on the east side, the brick wall runs past the glass enclosure wall and turns to enclose a private patio on the south side of the house. In 1975 a flat roofed addition, also designed by Muchow, was constructed on the west side. It includes a two-car garage and new entrance. The addition is clad in painted tongue and groove wood siding. The original house and addition combined are about 2,800 square feet.

**b. 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.

# Roof

## A-Frame

The roof is clad in cedar shakes set on 2" X 6" tongue and groove decking. At its highest point, the roof's peak is about 20 foot above grade sloping down to a low point of just over 5 feet. The ridge skylight runs the entire length of the roof. (Figure 9)

According to handwritten notes, believed to be from the Architect, a pitched roof was required by the subdivision covenants. "While strictly adhering to the covenants, an exaggerated high-pitched roof gives the desired two-story effect...low overhangs help bring the house into scale with its neighbors, as well as screening the interior from view and lending the house a warm shingled look." (Figures 23 and 26)

The roof overhangs the exterior wall by two feet on the north side and 10 feet on the south side where is supported on slender steel columns. The industrial style skylight runs the entire length of the roof, including across the south and north overhangs. (Figures 2 and 9) On the west side, three of the supporting roof wood beams continue down to grade and become the structure for an exterior, painted wood trellis.



#### **Addition**

The addition has a flat roof with a simple flashing detail at the edge.

# South Side

#### A-Frame

The house sits on a flat apron of lawn which allows one to appreciate the stark geometry of the composition: the triangular roof form, the horizontal rectangle of the floating brick screen wall and the minimalist white wood box which is the addition.

The front façade of the A-Frame is glass divided by custom, wood, painted mullions, on four-foot on centers, reflecting the eight-foot structural grid on the interior of the house. The original operable windows were removed in the 1975 renovation, but the majority of the custom mullions remain. There is a 12-foot-deep concrete patio which runs the width of the house but is partially hidden from the street by the 'L' shaped configuration of the brick screen wall and the deep roof overhang. (Figure 2)

#### **Addition**

The addition is a flat roofed, white, minimalist box, clad in vertical tongue and groove siding painted white. It contains the front entrance which is unadorned, without overhang or porch. (Figures 14 and 19)

# Landscape

When originally constructed, the home had minimal landscaping. In 1975, Arthur Dion, the home's third owner, hired noted mid-century landscape architect Jane Silverstein Ries FASLA, to redesign the landscape and by that time a hill had already been introduced on the street side. Over time the Ries design deteriorated, and the current owner restored the configuration of the original flat lawn. (Figures 3 and 10)

# **East Side**

#### A-Frame

Prior to the 1975 addition, the East elevation had both the formal home entrance and an enclosed patio for the primary bedroom. (Figures 11 and 12) Both were removed during the addition construction and currently this elevation is clad in vertical tongue and groove siding bookended by deep roof overhangs.

# North Side

# A-Frame

The north elevation mirrors the south, subdivided by wood mullions and beams on four-foot centers. Below the eave-line, the outer two bays are glazed for views from the children's bedrooms and the middle two bays are infilled with brick to provide screening for the bathroom. Above the eave line the elevation is glass with custom wood mullions on four-foot centers. (Figures 13, 20 and 21)



# West Side

#### A-Frame

Large, horizonal, ribbon windows give views into the kitchen. The windows are partially hidden by the painted wood trellis which extends to grade.

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

In 1975, the house was purchased by Arthur Dion, who commissioned Muchow to make alterations. The east entrance and patio were removed, and the operable windows were replaced with fixed glass however the custom mullion appear to be original. A one-story addition was added on the west side. The addition includes a two-car garage along with the main entrance to the house, reoriented from the original entrance on the east elevation. (Figures 3, 8, 12,13 and 14)

## **Character Defining Features**

Character-defining features of the structure include: the steeply-sloped A frame roof with deep overhanging eaves and textured roofing material; exposed wooden rafters, which extend into a trellis on the west elevation; brick chimney on west roof plane; wide expanse of glass with wood mullions on south and north elevations; raised concrete foundation; brick site wall at front.

# 5. Integrity

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

The home retains a high degree of integrity. The house remains a single-family home and is in its original location. The flat front yard has been restored to the 1950s configuration. (Figure 10) All the original exterior materials remain in place with the exception of operable windows in the A-Frame which were replaced with fixed windows in the 1975 renovation. The period of significance encompasses the reorientation of the primary entrance of the house, from the east elevation to the west, and the removal of the 'bedroom patio' on the east elevation. At some point post 1975, a small shed-roof addition was added to the house in the place of the original entry. This addition is non-contributing to the structure, but does not detract from its integrity. Many of the homes on South Monroe Way are single story ranch houses evoking the feel of a postwar expansion neighborhood.

# 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.

William Muchow was born in Denver, Colorado in 1922. His father, C. Roy Muchow was in the terracotta business, beginning as a laborer at the Denver Terra Cotta Company and rising to be its



president, 50 years later.<sup>24</sup> Muchow graduated from North Denver High School, attended Columbia University and the University of Notre Dame. In 1942 he entered the military where he served for four years. He returned to college at the University of Illinois in 1946, earning a Bachelor of Science in Architecture. He then attended Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan and graduated with a Master of Architecture and Urban Planning degree. While at Cranbrook, Muchow studied under the internationally acclaimed architect Eliel Saarinen. It was at Cranbrook that Muchow met and married fellow architecture student Priscilla Williams. In 1949 Muchow was awarded the Rome prize and subsequently traveled in Europe for nine months with his new wife. <sup>25</sup> (Figures 4 and 15)

Returning to Denver in 1949, Muchow worked for several firms including Fisher and Fisher before founding Muchow Associates Architects in 1950. Between 1946 and 1965, Denver's population almost tripled. Many of the new residents were veterans, like Muchow, who came to Denver to start civilian life and like Muchow they needed affordable "starter" homes. The demand for housing and the land to build that housing in Denver resulted in a huge increase in new home construction, going from 1,316 in 1950 to 5,875 in 1955<sup>27</sup>.

618 South Monroe Way, where Muchow chose to build his family home, is in Stokes Place Addition one of the many newly formed postwar neighborhoods. Stokes Place was platted from dairy farmland in 1951. (Figure 5) South Monroe Way is a curvilinear street, a configuration recommended by the 1950 Urban Land Institute's Community Builders Handbook which offered maps showing what the Federal Housing Authority considered "good" and "bad" platting and development practices. There were only two or three other homes on the block when 618 South Monroe Way was constructed, the neighborhood did not completely fill in until the late 1960s.

Concern about the construction and design quality of the houses produced during the postwar building boom led developers and homeowner groups to utilize covenants and deed restrictions as a way of preserving and protecting qualities they felt most important and positive in their subdivisions. Standard restrictions addressed the home's size, style, materials, roof configuration, setbacks, lot size etc.<sup>29</sup> Stokes Place adopted their protective covenants on September 10, 1952. Much of the commentary about the about the 1953 home focused on Muchow's design response to these regulation although it should be noted that the extant copy of the covenants has lists minimal restrictions. (Figure 26)

In the mid-century, Americans embraced Modernism in home design both for building form and for the lifestyle it implied. Constructed in 1954, 618 South Monroe Way shares many of the streamlined attributes of the "ranch" house which was the prevalent style of homes build during Denver's postwar building boom.<sup>30</sup> This was family life without servants, a life of simplicity, privacy, and informality. Living space was primarily on one level with an open floor plan, large windows, without moldings or applied

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Denver Post, "C. Roy Muchow Obituary", July 17, 1970, Page 13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Wray, Diane. Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Biographical Sketch, March 3, 2005

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Simons R. and Simons T. "Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965" National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, Oct. 10, 2010, Page 41

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid Page 217 Table J5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Urban Land Institute, Community Builders Handbook, 1950, P. 58

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Simons R. and Simons T. "Historic Residential Subdivisions of Metropolitan Denver, 1940-1965" National Park Service National Register of Historic Places, Page 58

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid, Page 99



decoration, exterior cladding was informal, rustic materials.31

618 South Monroe Way epitomized these qualities. Two years after its construction, the home was featured as the "Home of the Month" in Denver Post's Empire Magazine's January 1956<sup>th</sup> edition. (Figure 16) In 1957, Muchow was 37 years old when the Denver Post contacted him to tell him his home had won one of the nation's most coveted design awards, selected as one of 25 designs nationally to be featured in the 1957 Record Homes issue of Architectural Record. According to the Post, "the North high school graduate ricocheted between shock and pleasure when informed that he'd hit the nation's 'top 25'.<sup>32</sup> (Figure 17) The Architectural Record jury stated "A-three-dimensional approach, developing the structure along with the plan, give unusual spaciousness and livability for an inexpensive house on a small plot." (Figure 2). The design continued to receive notice and awards. It was given Award of Merit in the October 1957 issue of *Sunset Magazine* <sup>34</sup> a Western Home Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1957-1958. It was featured in the Los Angeles Times Home Magazine September 22, 1957, The New York Times in October 1957, Nuestra Arquitectura in February 1958, and sited in *100 Years of Architecture in Colorado* in 1957.

In his own words, Muchow described the design. "Rather than adding elevations to floor plans, this design is based on the concept of enclosing space with structure. A three-dimensional approach, integrating the plan into a predetermined structural system, gives a unique open quality to the resulting design. While strictly adhering to the covenants, an exaggerated high pitched roof give the desired two-story effect..... Low roof overhangs help bring the house into scale with its neighbors, as well as screening the interior from view and lending the house a warm shingled look." (Figure 23) [The design] "was emphasized by the protective covenants of the sub-division that the houses have individuality and yet harmonize with the neighboring pitched roof houses." (Figure 24)

Meanwhile by the late 1950s the Muchow firm was already achieving prominence and was busy primarily with commercial and civic projects and although Muchow was not part of the many architect/developer partnerships that resulted in mass produced housing projects, he seems to have done some exploration into mass produced housing, using 618 South Monroe Way's A-Frame design as the prototype. An additional version of this design was constructed in 1955 in Denver's Wellshire neighborhood (Figures 6 and 7), also a postwar community. Another version of the design is shown on the 1957 cover of Western Architecture, the article's text mentions that the builder went on to design and sell several other homes of the same type.<sup>35</sup>

In 1970, The Muchows moved and the home and it was sold to Howard Cohen and then sold again in 1975 to Arthur Dion. Dion commissioned Muchow to design an addition (Figure 8) and also commissioned a landscape plan from prominent landscape architect Jane Silverstein Ries FASLA. (Figure 3) The addition is a simple, flat roofed, single-story box, clad in tongue and groove wood siding and painted white. It contains a garage, additional bedroom and the main entrance to the house which was moved from the east side. The entrance itself is understated, without an awning or porch. (Figure 14 and Figure 19)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Hess, Alan. "The Ranch House" Harry N. Abrams 2004. Page 17

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Denver Post, West, Jane, "South Denver Home in National Limelight" February 20, 1957 (Figure 17)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>Architectural Record, "Codes Inspire Fresh Design", May 1957, Page 129 (Figure 2)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Sunset Magazine, October 1957, Page 48

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Western Building, "Western Architect Design", April 1957, cover and Page 22



Meanwhile, the Muchow office continued to thrive. Muchow's firm worked on a broad range of architectural projects that include schools, churches, single and multi-family residences, office buildings, financial institutions, municipal and recreational facilities. Many of his designs are still prominent features of Downtown Denver including the 1968 Federal Reserve Branch Bank, 1974 Park Central, 1975 BlueCross/Blue Shield Office Building, and the 1978 garage and galleria of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Parking Garage. Also notable is the 1965 Engineering Sciences Center at the University of Colorado Boulder. From 1950-1991, his firm designed eight hundred and thirty-three projects and was awarded thirty-five A.I.A. awards. Muchow's design work was nationally recognized in 1957 with the Award of Merit from AIA Sunset Magazine and Architectural Record's Award of Excellence, and in 1963 and 1971 with First Design Awards from Progressive Architecture. In 1968 Muchow was elected as a Fellow to the American Institute of Architect.

Muchow was also a dedicated leader in both the Denver's civic and architecture communities. A few of his positions are Fellow of the International Institute of Arts and Letters, President of the Colorado A.I.A. in 1969, Colorado State Board of Examiners 1967-1977 and Director of Western Mountain Region A.I.A. from 1982-1985. He served on more than twenty-five award juries nationally and was a visiting lecturer at many colleges and universities. <sup>37</sup>

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After the 1980s, 618 South Monroe Way changed hands several times. Minor changes were made; sheds built into the roof overhangs, the addition was sheathed in plastic siding and the landscape plan deteriorated to the point that the street view of the home was obscured. The current owners purchased the property in 2006 and restored it. In 2017, 618 South Monroe Way was awarded a Mayor's Design Award, the application stated in part, "The design proves that Mr. Muchow's clean and efficient approach remains a fresh and delightful solution to the small urban home." 39

# 7. Additional Information

#### **Bibliography**

Provide a list of sources used in compiling this application.

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City and County of Denver, Maps/Subdivisions/Surveys.

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https://www.denvergov.org/Maps/map/Property?q=618%20south%20monroe%20way

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Wray, Diane. Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Biographical Sketch

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Wattenberg, Anne, "Mid Century Home Restoration" 2017



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https://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/654.pdf

Western Architecture. "Western Architect Design". April 1957. Cover Page 22

Wray, Diane. Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Architects, Biographical Sketch. Muchow, William C. Revised March 3, 2005

# **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. See Figures 1-26

#### **Boundary Map**

Attach a map that graphically depicts the structure, the location of other significant features, and



the boundaries of the designation. See Figure 22

<u>Application Fee</u> 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



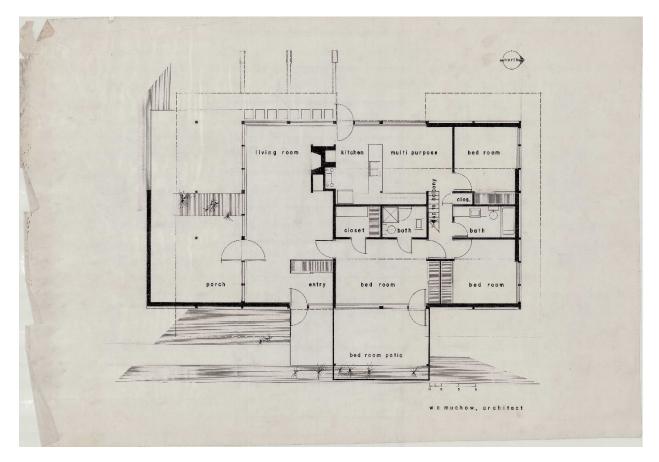


Figure 1: Plan, 1954
Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records



W. C. MUCHOW, ARCHITECT and owner. Location: Denver, Colorado. Warren Williams, Contractor. Ketchum & Konkel, Structural Engineers. M. S. Wilson, Heating Engineer. Swanson-Rink & Associates, Electrical Engineers.



DALE HEALY

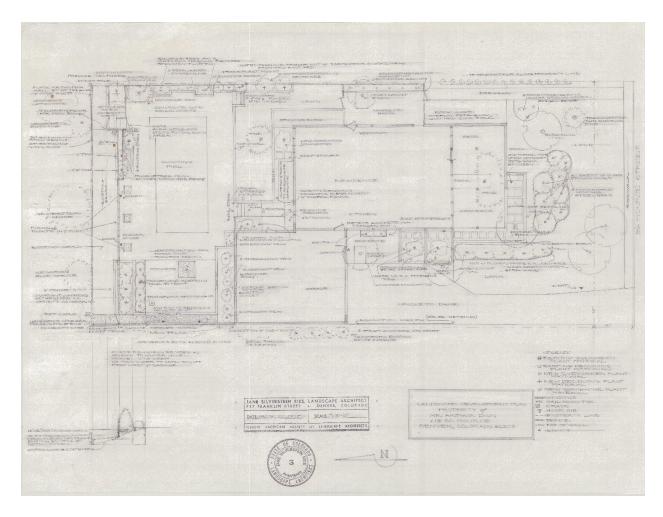
# CODES INSPIRE FRESH DESIGN

To counter the often hampering restrictiveness of building codes, they have been carried out forthrightly here — but with imagination — to produce a very festive, unstereotyped home. A three-dimensional approach, developing the structure along with the plan, gives unusual spaciousness and livability for an inexpensive house on a small plot.

Local city and sub-division codes required houses in the area to be single story, with pitched roofs, and exterior walls entirely of brick or glass. With strict adherence to these requirements, William Muchow has used an exaggerated exposed-wood ceiling to get desired two-story room heights, an "upstairs" room, and the suggested warmth of wood siding. Brick is relegated to minimized areas below windows, bedroom walls and fences. Low overhangs at the sides help bring the house in scale with its neighbors, and also to screen interiors from them. The bright, airy quality of the rooms is heightened by painting all structural elements, trim, and the underside of the roofdeck white.

Figure 2: Architectural Record, May 1957





**Figure 3: Jane Silverstein Ries Landscape Plan, 1975**Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Jane Silverstein Ries Collection



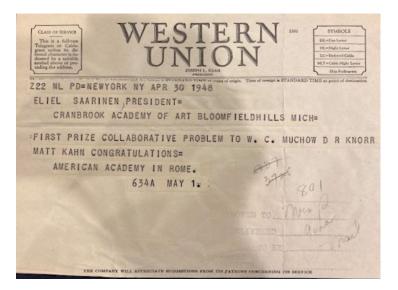
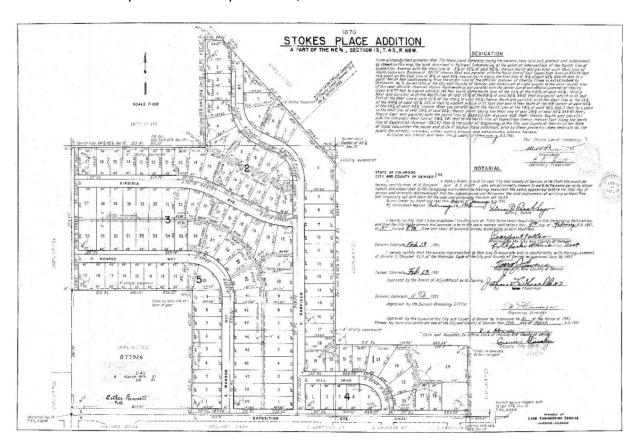


Figure 4: Telegram from Eliel Saarinen, 1948

Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records



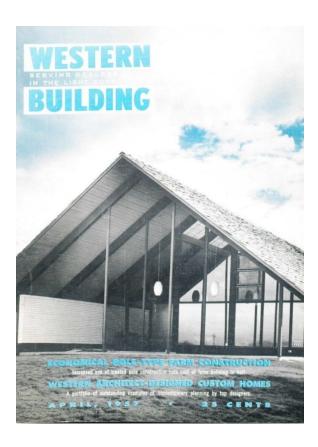
**Figure 5: Stokes Place Addition Platt Map, 1951**City and County of Denver Maps/Subdivisions/Surveys







**Figure 6: 3130 South Monroe, Hatch House, around 1955 and mid 1960s** Alan Gass, FAIA and Historic Denver



**Figure 7: Western Building, 1957.** Note the alternate skylight configuration Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records



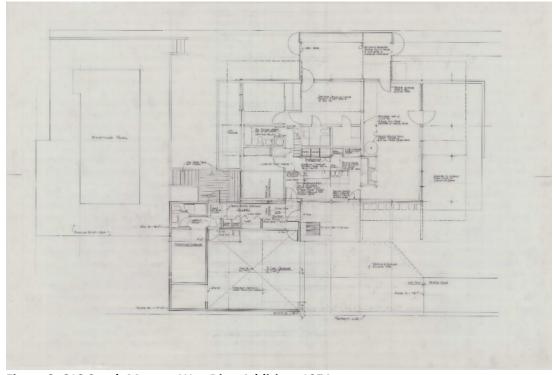
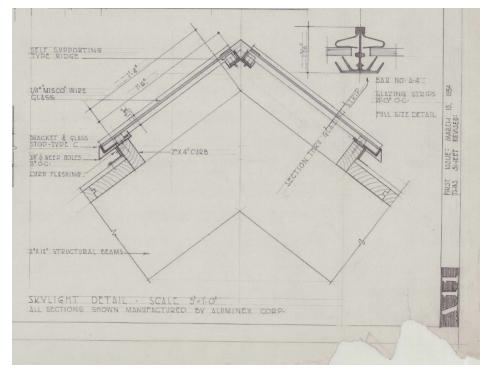


Figure 8: 618 South Monroe Way Dion Addition, 1974

Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records



**Figure 9: Skylight Detail from Construction Documents, 1954**Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records



Figure 10: South (Primary) Elevation Evolution



South Elevation: 1950s



South Elevation: 1975





South Elevation: Undated



South Elevation: 2005





South Elevation: 2014



Figure 11: East Elevation, 1957





Figure 12: East Elevation, 1975

Denver Public Library Western History Collection Jane Silverstein Ries Collection





**Figure 13: North Elevation, 1975**Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Jane Silverstein Ries Collection





North Elevation, 1975 Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Jane Silverstein Ries Collection





**Figure 14: Part South Elevation of Addition, 1975**Denver Public Library Western History Collection, Jane Silverstein Ries Collection





**Figure 15: Muchow and wife Pricilla in their loft studio 618 South Monroe Way, undated** Permission of Muchow Studio





Figure 16: Denver Post Empire Magazine, January 29, 1956



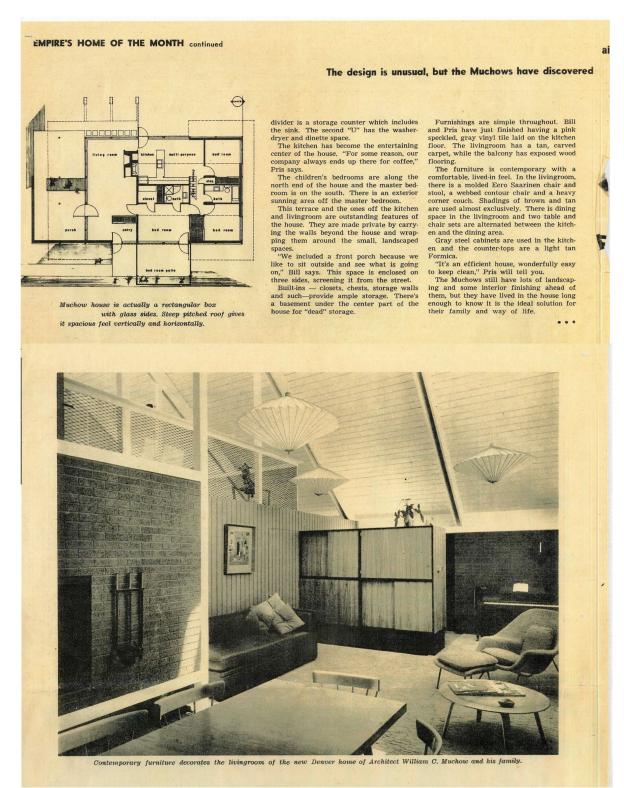


Figure 16: Denver Post Empire Magazine, January 29, 1956



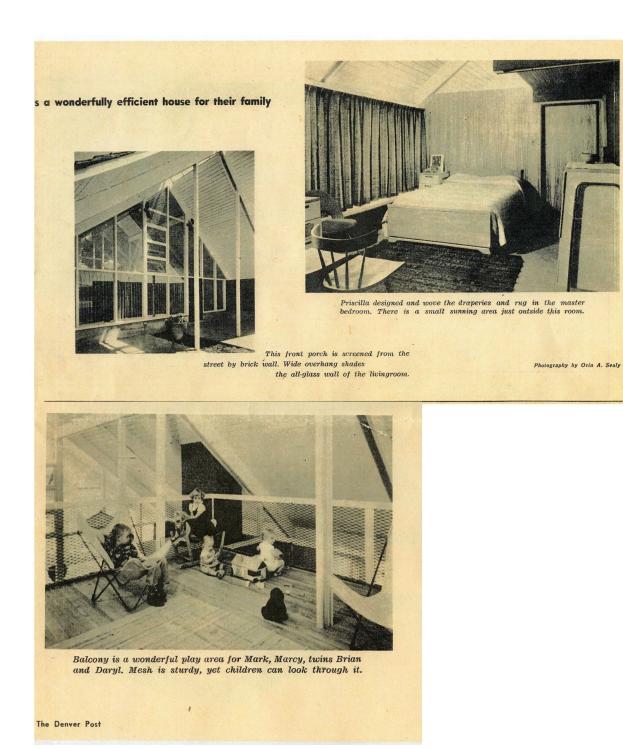


Figure 16: Denver Post Empire Magazine, January 29, 1956





Figure 17: Denver Post, February 1957



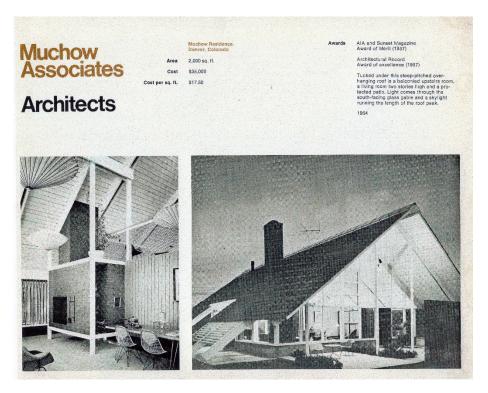


Figure 18: Muchow and Associates Architects, 1954



**Figure 19: 618 South Monroe Way South Elevation, 2014** © Frank Ooms





Figure 20: North Elevation 1980s? undated
Denver Public Library Western History Collection, William C. Muchow Architectural Records

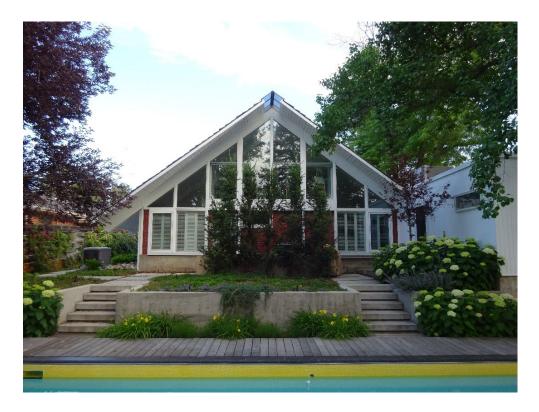
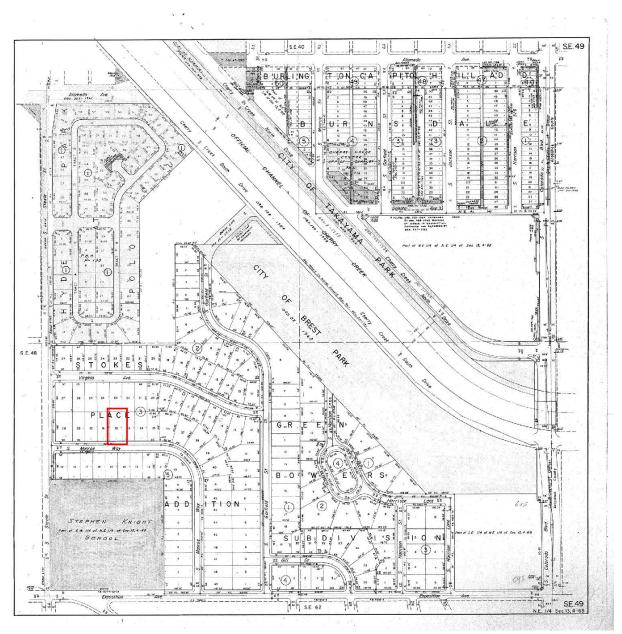


Figure 21: North Elevation 2022





**Figure 22: Location Map, 1968**City and County of Denver Maps/Subdivisions/Surveys



MUCHOW RESIDENCE Withen the constraints of the BRIEF subdinision Covenants which specified one-story, pitched roof, masonty construction, a warm and inviting environment was desired that would express the architects basic design philosophy Utilizing the maximum amount of Space allotted by the zoning ordinance was a major goal. DES 16N SOLUTION Rather than adding elevations to floor plans, this design is based the concept of enclosing space with structure. a three demensional approach, integrating the plan into a predetermined structural system gines a unique, open quality to the resulting While structly adhering to the eovenants, an exaggerated high pitched roof gives the described two-story effect, and inables the addition of a second level balcony for child

Figure 23: Notes presumed to be from Muchow, Undated



play space. Low roof overhangs the house into scale with its neighbors, as well as screening the interior from warm shingled look. the length acry quality of the rooms is heightened by painting all structural elements, trum, and the underside of the vivofdeck white. On even light intensity so provided by a skylight running the length of the roof the Alterture CONSTRUCTION with Wood beams are METHODS | MATERIALS roof exterior; for

Figure 23: Notes presumed to be from Muchow, Undated



#33

OWNER Mr. & Mrs. William C. Muchow

ARCHITECT William C. Muchow, A.I.A.

BUILDER Warren Williams, Contractor

LOCATION 618 South Monroe Way, Denver 9, Colorado

This residence is the Architect's own house and as such is an expression of his basic philosophy of Architecture. The concept of enclosing space with structure when visualized in three dimensions is a more satisfying and exciting solution than when elevations are added to floor plans. A warm and inviting environment was desired and obtained with an even light intensity throughout the interior. It was emphasized by the protective covenants of the sub-division that the house have individuality and yet harmonize with the neighboring pitched roof houses. The building code required one story only, and masonry construction of all exterior walls. As much usable space as could be fitted into the cubage alloted by the zoning ordinance was an economical necessity.

The addition of a balcony gives an additional amount of living area at little extra cost. The upper area also gives the children a place to play where they are not under foot and yet are under fairly close supervision.

STRUCTURE Steel and wood posts and wood beams.

#### MATERIALS

Foundation Concrete caissons and grade beams.

Walls Brick or Plate Glass.

Roof Cedar shakes on 2 x 6 tongue and groove fir decking.

Floor Vinyl tile or carpeting on concrete slab on grade.

Balcony Floor Laminated 2 x 3 fir.

Interior Partitions

Wood stud and drywall or wood paneling.

Heating Hot water baseboard radiation.

A basement is located under the rear center portion of the house, beneath the baths and closet, for mechanical equipment and storage.

Figure 24: Notes presumed to be from the Muchow Office, undated



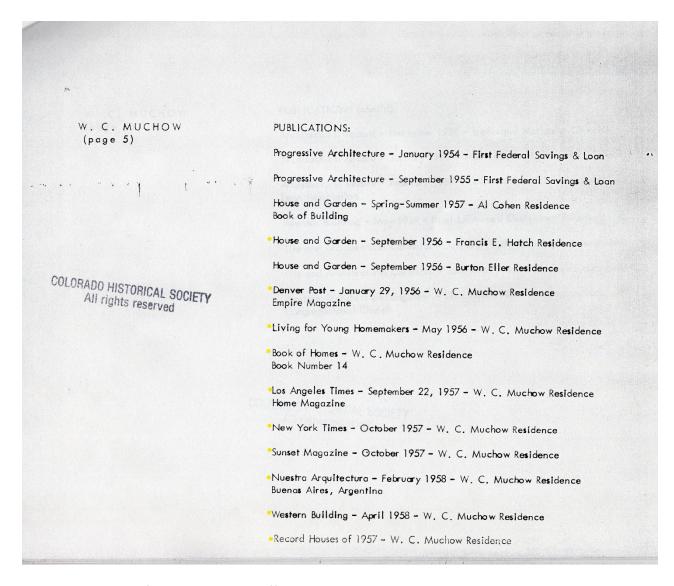
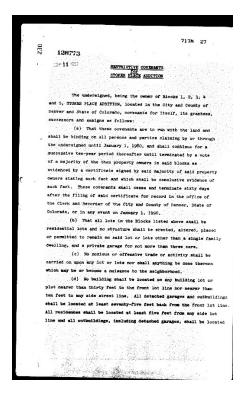
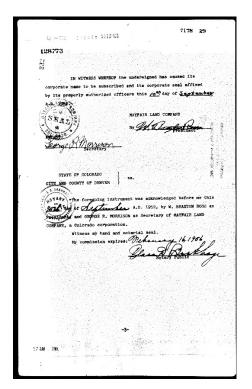


Figure 25: Brochure from the Muchow Office, undated Courtesy of Alan Gorlin Gass, FAIA







at least one foot from any side lof line. No residential utilities shall be evented or placed on any building plot bering in zero or lies than 6,000 agence feet and a width or less than fifty-might feet at the front let line, or fifty-five feat at the front building line.

(a) Resements for installation and maintenance of utilities and drainings facilities are shown on the recorded plat.

(b) No twelter, because the six shield, garage, here or any other outibuliding evented or placed on the tract shall at any time be used as a residence temporarily or permanently, nor shall any stricture of temporary character be used as a residence.

(c) No brank, addican bosses or any other buildings for the care of chickens, livestock, srough household pots, shall be placed or permitted to remain on any let.

(b) No fence shall be erieted ferward of the front building line.

(c) If the undersigned or its grantess, uncosmora, or smalgne, shall violate or attempt to violate any of the coremants herein, it shall be levelid for any other person or persons overing real property situated in and blocks to processing proceedings at less or in equity against said person or persons overlating or attempting to violation.

(c) If the undersigned or the provisions of these coremants merdetermined by decree of court to be void or factfreetive, such decree shall not affect my of the other provisions for these coremants are determined by decree of court to be void or factfreetive, such decree shall not affect my of the other provisions benefits, with the same shall remain in full force and effout.

(k) All buildings constructed or which construction stinin the said blocks are hereby subjected to these community.

Figure 26: Covenants for Stokes Place Addition, September 1952

# Proposed Structure for Landmark Designation 618 South Monroe Way



From: Alan Golin Gass, FAIA

To: <u>Landmark - Community Planning and Development</u>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Landmark Designation for the residence at 628 South Monroes Way

**Date:** Thursday, February 9, 2023 4:03:14 PM

# Dear Landmark Preservation Commission,

The A-frame residence that architect William Muchow, FAIA, designed for his family, and lived in for most of his married life, is truly worthy of being and designated Denver Landmark.

All during his professional life, William Muchow contributed significantly to the highest quality of architectural design in Denver. His work set a high standard for the built environment in the mid-20th century.

I knew William Muchow, personally, and after his passing; I was asked by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects to curate and install, at the AIA office, an exhibition of his work. I am attaching an image of that exhibit.

The present owner of the house has done an exceptional job of restoration and renovation. I believe it to be very true to the original design intent.

I highly recommend that the commission approve this application and forward it for final passage by City Council.

Sincerely,

**ALAN G. GASS, FAIA** 

**AGGA** 

602 S. Harrison Lane Denver, CO 80209 e-mail: agga@aol.com cell: 303 204 6359



From: <u>Christine Ekman</u>

To: <u>Landmark - Community Planning and Development</u>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Wattenberg residence

Date: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 8:43:01 AM

# All,

I was traveling and missed the window to comment on the Wattenberg residence. But, I wanted to say that Anne and Peter have worked to preserve every lovely detail in this Denver gem. I am currently visiting modernism week in Palm Springs, California and the Wattenberg home would be a standout amongst the giants of modern steel, glass and wood in the Palm Desert.

Warm regards, Christine Ekman

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Warm regards

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