



**To:** Denver City Council  
**From:** Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)  
**Date:** August 2, 2018  
**RE:** Landmark Designation Application for 2900 South University Boulevard, Wellshire Park Cottage

**Staff Recommendation:**

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

**Request to Designate a Structure:**

**Application:** #2018L-004  
**Address:** 2900 South University Boulevard  
**Zoning:** S-SU-F  
**Council:** Kendra Black, Council District 4  
**Blueprint Denver:** Area of Stability  
**Owner:** PPG Homes, LLC / PJ Patierno  
**Applicant(s):** PPG Homes, LLC / PJ Patierno

**Case Summary:**

The owner submitted a Landmark Designation application for 2900 South University Boulevard to CPD on May 21, 2018. Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for June 19, 2018.

At the Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing, the LPC voted (8-0) to recommend landmark designation based on History criterion 1a, Architecture criterion 2a, and Geography criterion 3b citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the staff report. On June 26, 2018, the Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee forwarded the case to the full City Council. At first reading, Denver City Council ordered the bill published and the public hearing is set for August 6, 2018.

**Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code:**

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30-4, Denver Revised Municipal Code, a structure must be more than 30 years old....and meet the following criteria:

1. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:
  - History
  - Architecture
  - Geography
2. Maintain its physical and historical integrity
3. Consider how a structure relates to historic contexts or themes

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**Criteria Evaluation:**

Landmark staff found that the structure application meets History criterion 1a, and Architecture criterion 2a, and Geography criterion 3b.

**1. Historical Significance**

**To have historical significance, the structure or district shall be thirty (30) or more years old or have extraordinary importance to the historical development of Denver, and shall:**

*a) Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;*

The house at 2900 South University Boulevard was the first and only known residence to have been built in the Wellshire Park Subdivision, a residential subdivision platted by the Wellshire Park Corporation—via the ownership of George Olinger and Lloyd Fullenwider. Olinger hoped Wellshire Park would be as successful as his similar Bonnie Brae development. He hired a prominent local landscape architecture firm to lay out the plat. And, he coordinated with business associates for the completion of the Wellshire Country Club and golf course (3333 S. Colorado Boulevard) on the far east side of the envisioned Wellshire Park neighborhood. Olinger intended the golf course to serve as a major attraction for the new “upscale” Wellshire Park subdivision. In order to meet his mortgage deed agreements and to jumpstart the subdivision’s development, Olinger obtained a bank loan in mid-1925 to complete his first house in the subdivision, 2900 South University Boulevard. However, by 1927, Olinger and Fullenwider divested out of the Wellshire Park Corporation and the company filed for bankruptcy in 1928, the remaining subdivision lands were sold off, sitting otherwise empty until they were eventually re-platted and redeveloped after the Great Depression and World War II.

The house survives as the one of the only tangible reminder of Olinger and Fullenwider’s original Wellshire Park subdivision, and their vision for a “garden” suburb “with the charms of rural life” on the fringes of Denver. The house is a reminder, along with the Wellshire Golf Course and Country Club, that the Wellshire neighborhood had a history long before the current post World War II subdivisions that now fill this landscape. The Wellshire Park Cottage at 2900 South University Boulevard has a direct association with the historical development of south Denver, as the only residence surviving from the original Wellshire Park Subdivision.



2900 South University Blvd, Front façade and drive

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## 2. Architectural Significance

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

a) *Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;*

The Wellshire Park Cottage is a French Eclectic style house, with asymmetrical French Norman farmhouse influences, a whimsical style popularized in the United States with the return of World War I veterans from Europe after 1918. Notable features of the French Eclectic style found on the structure include rambling plan of masonry walls and steeply pitched complex roof, hipped dormers, stuccoed walls, use of stone masonry as whimsical decoration, multi-pane windows and French doors, an entry with a simple stone-arch single-door. The house plan, roof, and detailing are somewhat rambling, evoking the perception of informal French farmhouses with multiple additions over time.



2900 South University Blvd, Window, door, and stone detailing

### 3. Geographic Significance

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

*b) Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;*

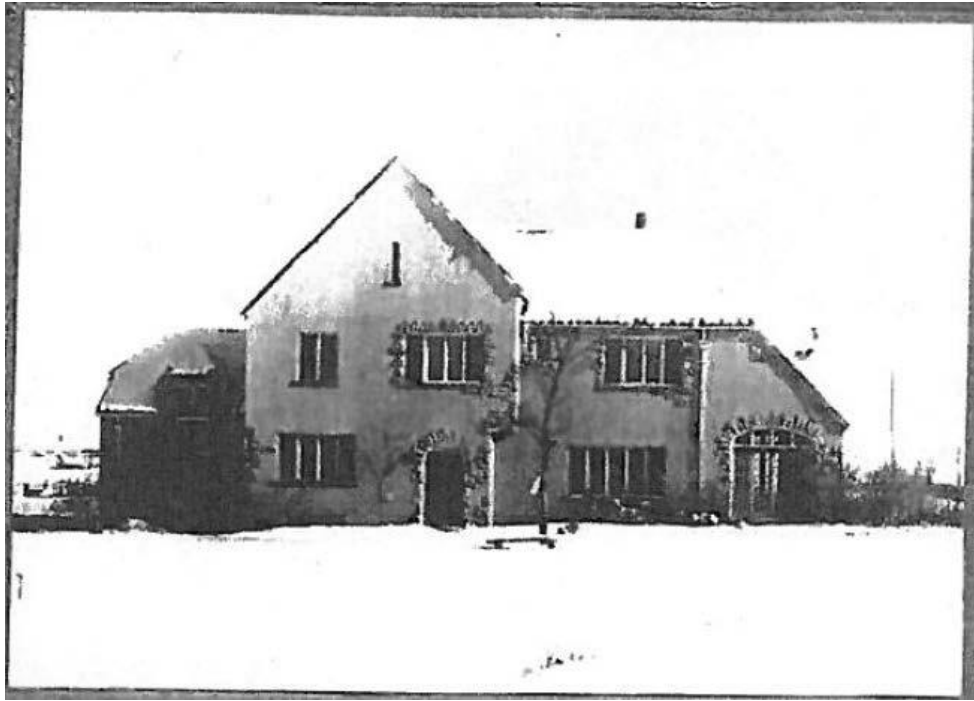
The house at 2900 South University Boulevard is the original surviving home of the Wellshire Park subdivision. Its informal asymmetrical style is relatively unusual in the United States, very uncommon in Denver, and its survival into the present makes it significant and rare. The French Eclectic house on a signature 34,000 square-foot lot, with its unusual architecture and broad footprint, contrasts dramatically with the predominantly single-story ranch and post-ranch houses and townhomes surrounding it, and their associated shared or small- to medium-sized lots. The cottage's survival evokes appreciation for the aspirations of early developers to create a rural residential enclave on the southern outskirts of urbanizing Denver. Their 1920s vision for a residential suburb—represented by this house—was eventually realized, albeit three decades later by different developers with more inward focusing post-World War II suburban layouts and filled with ranch style, rather than romantic European style homes. The Wellshire Park Cottage, the romantic French eclectic country house with its complex and unusual roof shapes and its large lot, is both rare and distinctive for Denver and the Wellshire neighborhood.

#### **Integrity:**

Chapter 30, DRMC requires that a landmark designated property maintain is historic and physical integrity, defined as “the ability of a structure or district convey its historic and architectural significance...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver’s history.” The seven qualities that define integrity are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The Wilshire Park Cottage retains a high degree of integrity. Although there have been substantial changes to the surrounding area due to post-war growth, the neighborhood is still residential in nature and retains integrity setting. As noted in the application, there have been additions including the front porch and small side and rear additions; however, these changes are relatively minor, compatible in size and material, and do not impact the overall integrity. The integrity of design, materials, workmanship are readily apparent, and the rambling eclectic style of the building provides a strong sense of feeling and association.





2900 South University Blvd, photo circa mid-1930s



2900 South University Blvd, photo 2018

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**Relate to a Historic Context/Theme and Period of Significance:**

The structure was constructed in the context of expansion post-World War I, similar to other neighborhoods such as Bonnie Brae, prior to the nationwide financial collapse and the Great Depression.

The designation application calls out a period of significance of 1926-1928, reflecting the historical development of the Wellshire Park Subdivision and the architectural significance of the structure.

**Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan (2000) and Blueprint Denver (2002)**

The comprehensive plan envisioned Denver in 2020 as vibrant, with well-preserved and appropriately used structures representing every era of the city's history. It included strategies (1-C) that "Preserve Denver's architectural and design legacies while allowing new to evolve."

This property is located in an Area of Stability in Blueprint Denver. Within Blueprint Denver, landmark preservation is identified as a tool to reinforce areas of stability. Blueprint Denver noted that for areas of stability, it is important to respect valued development patterns and attributes of the area, including existing buildings, particularly those adding distinctive character and identity.

**Boundary:**

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lot 13, Block 2, and Outlot A, Southern Hills Filing No. 1, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado

**Public Review Process:**

Community Planning & Development has met or exceeded all posting and notification requirements delineated in Chapter 12 (Article III, Section 12-96) and Chapter 30 of the DRMC.

**Notifications:**

- Owner notification letters and emails regarding both the LPC public hearing and City Council meetings
- City Council, Planning Board, and Building Inspection email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation
  - University Neighbors
  - Southern Hills Community Association
  - Cherry Hills Vista Community Association
  - Historic Denver, Inc
  - Colorado Preservation, Inc
  - National Trust for Historic Preservation
  - State of Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Posted signage for Landmark Preservation Commission Public Hearing

**Public Comments:**

As of the date of this staff report, CPD has not received any public comments.

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**Attachments Provided by CPD:**

- Map of structure proposed for preservation
- Letter from applicant/owner
- LPC Public Hearing meeting record
- Designation Application

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