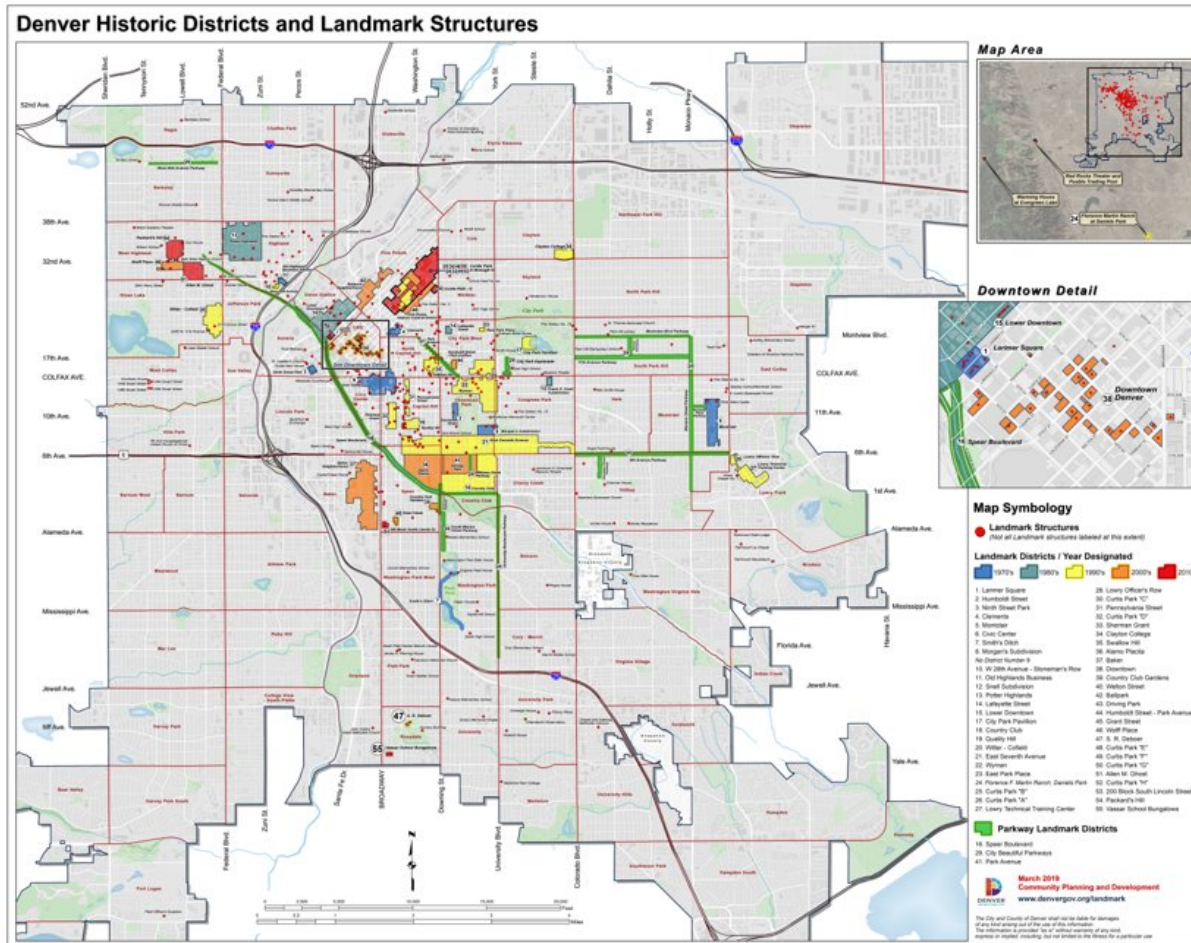


# River Drive Historic District

## #2019L-002 – Landmark Designation Application

Denver City Council  
June 24, 2019

# Denver Landmarks & Districts



## 1967 Landmark Preservation Ordinance

### Purpose

- Designate, preserve, and protect
- Foster civic pride
- Stabilize and improve aesthetic and economic vitality
- Promote good urban design

“It is the sense of the council that the economic, cultural and aesthetic standing of this city cannot be maintained or enhanced by disregarding the historical, architectural and geographic heritage of the city and ignoring the destruction or defacement of such cultural assets.”

# Denver Landmarks & Districts

~4% of the city,  
or 1 in 25 structures,  
are designated Landmarks



# Designation Applications

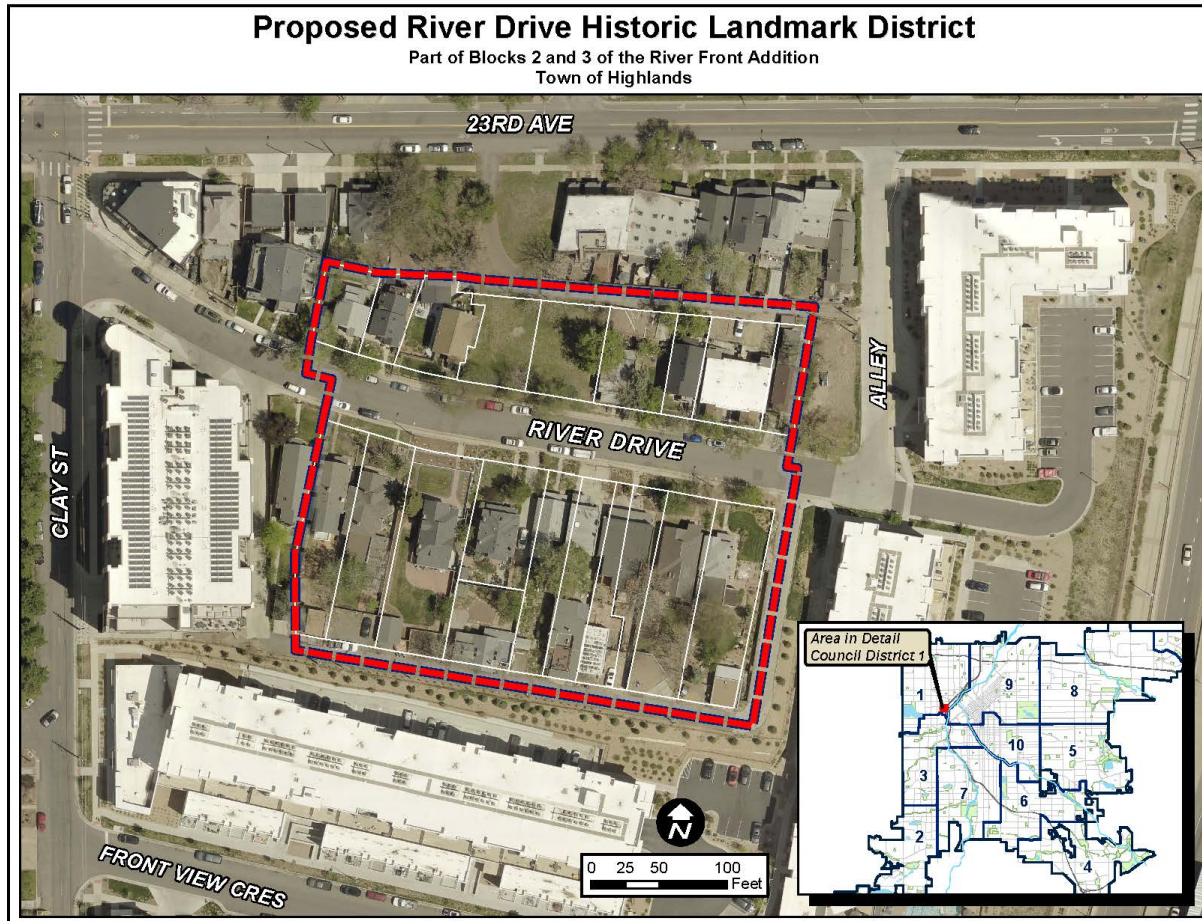


## Community-driven process

- Owner(s) of the property
- Manager of Community Planning and Development
- Member(s) of City Council
- Three people who are
  - Residents,
  - Property owners, or
  - Have a place of business in Denver



# River Drive Historic District



## Owners

- 17 (19 properties)

## Location

- Multiple addresses on West River Drive (Jefferson Park Neighborhood)

## Council District

- #1, Rafael Espinoza

## Blueprint Denver

- Urban Neighborhood Context
- Low Residential Area Future Place

## Current Zoning

- U-TU-B, UO-3

# River Drive Historic District

## Property required to\*:

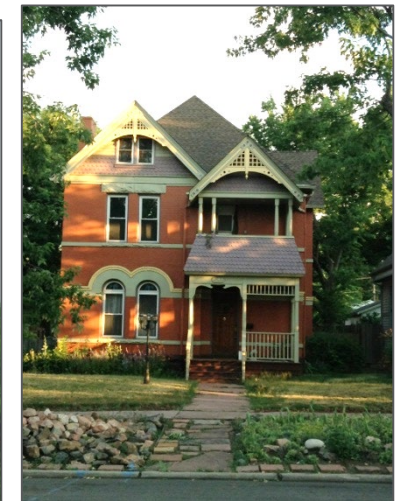
✓ Meet a designation criterion in at least two of the following categories:

1. History
2. Architecture
3. Geography

✓ Maintain historic and physical integrity

✓ Be considered by LPC for its relation to a historic context or theme

*\* Per Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code)*



# River Drive Historic District

## 1. History – 30 years old, and shall:

- a. Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state or nation;
- b. Be the site of a significant historic event; or
- c. Have direct & substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.

## 2. Architecture – design quality and integrity, and:

- a. Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;
- b. Be the significant work of a recognized architect or master builder;
- c. Contain elements of architectural design...which represent a significant innovation
- 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.

## 3. Geography:

- a. Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;
- b. Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
- c. Make a special contribution to Denver's distinctive character.



# River Drive Historic District

Criterion History A – Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation



Advertisement for River Front Addition lots  
(Source: The Daily News, October 9, 1881)



1933 aerial with district boundary in blue (Source: DPL Genealogy, African & American, and Western History)



# River Drive Historic District

Criterion Architecture A – Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type

## Victorian and Arts & Crafts Era

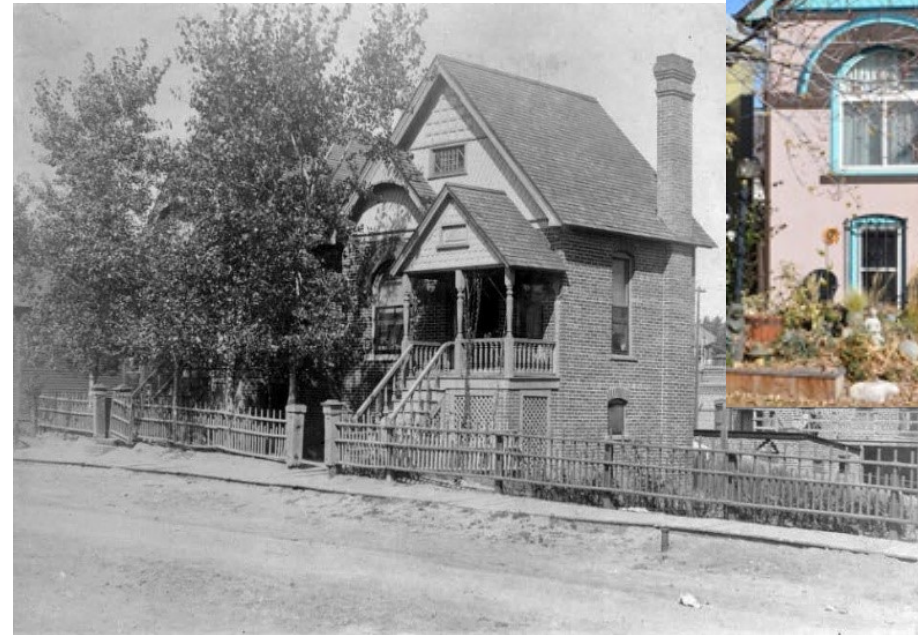
- Queen Anne
- Dutch Colonial Revival
- Foursquare
- Terrace
- Gable Front





# River Drive Historic District

Criterion Geography B – Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity



2617 W River Dr in 1894 and 2019 with "sunken" front yard



# River Drive Historic District

Criterion Geography B – Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity



Looking east down West River Drive at Clay Street intersection



Looking southwest at south side of West River Drive block



# River Drive Historic District

## Integrity

“The ability of a structure or district to convey its historic and architectural significance. ...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver’s history.”

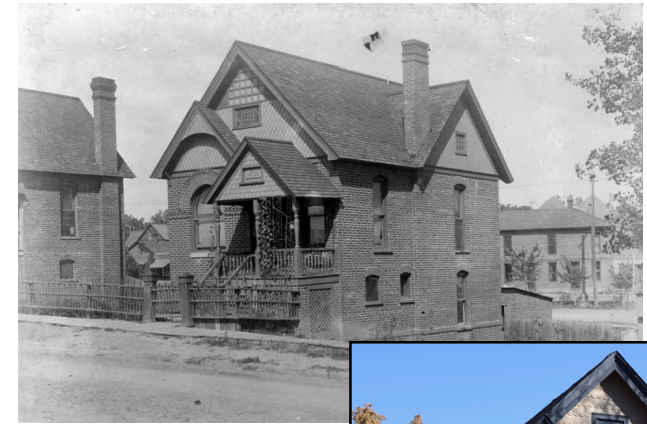
### Retains integrity

- Location
- Design
- Workmanship
- Materials
- Setting
- Feeling
- Association

### Alterations

- Window replacements
- Front porch design
- Rear additions
- New garages

Compatible in size and material  
or non-visible.



2613 West River Drive  
in 1894 and 2019



# River Drive Historic District

Historic context(s) or Theme(s)

Relation to a historic context(s) or theme(s):

- Period of significance: 1885-1923
- Early growth of Denver
- Working-class, some immigrants, that supported nearby industry and commerce



2550 West River Drive – Denery residence  
c. 1920 (Source: District Steering Committee)



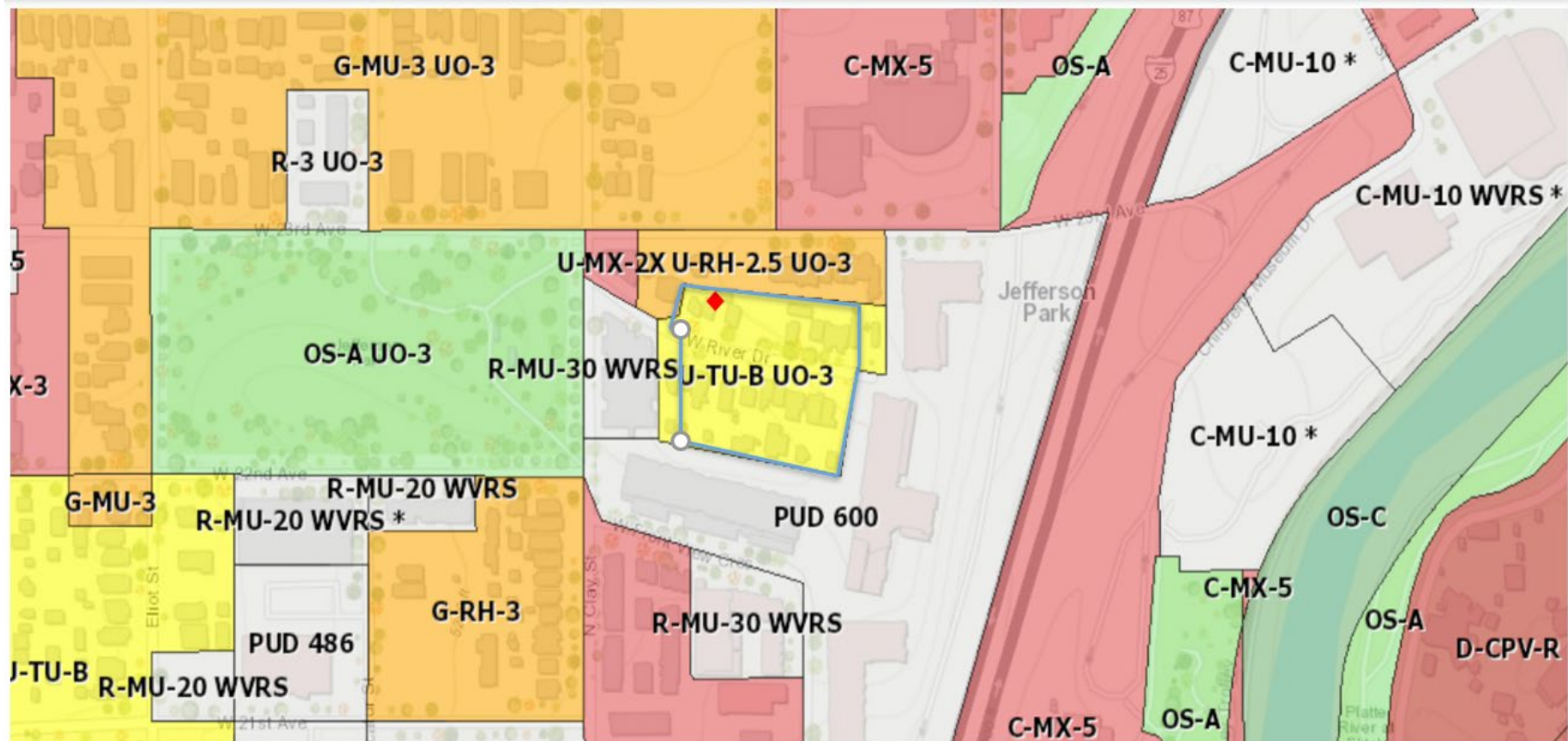
# Planning Board Review

## Per Chapter 30-4.6, DRMC:

- Ordinance provides opportunity for Planning Board to make a recommendation to City Council regarding designation of districts
- Specifically directs Planning Board to consider a proposed designation with respect to:
  - ✓ Its relationship to the Denver Comprehensive Plan,
  - ✓ The effect of the designation upon the surrounding neighborhood, and
  - ✓ Such other planning considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation or amendments.



# Zoning Context



Zoning Map

# Comprehensive Plan 2040

## **Vision Element: Equitable, Affordable and Inclusive**

Goal 4: Preserve existing affordable housing

*Strategy C: Incentivize the reuse of existing smaller and affordable homes*

## **Vision Element: Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods**

Goal 1: Create a city of complete neighborhoods

*Strategy D: Encourage quality infill development that is consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and offers opportunities for increased amenities.*

Goal 2: Enhance Denver's neighborhoods through high-quality urban design

*Strategy B: Establish a scalable, predictable and adaptable approach to improve design quality across the city.*

*Strategy C: Create people-oriented places that embrace community character with thoughtful transitions, aspirational design and an engaging public realm.*

Goal 3: Preserve the authenticity of Denver's neighborhoods and celebrate our history, architecture and culture

*Strategy B: Continue the city's commitment to existing historic districts and landmarks and increase public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation through education and outreach.*

*Strategy C: Ensure city policies and regulations support historic preservation and eliminate barriers in city processes to help all neighborhoods preserve what matters most.*

*Strategy E: Support the stewardship and reuse of existing buildings, including city properties.*

Goal 6: Empower Denverites to be involved and collaborative in city government

*Strategy A: Continue to strengthen trust and communication between the city and all neighborhoods.*

Goal 7: Leverage the arts and support creative placemaking to strengthen community

*Strategy B: Embrace existing communities and their cultural assets.*

## **Vision Element: Economically Diverse and Vibrant**

Goal 7: Accelerate Denver's economic vitality through arts, culture and creativity

*Strategy B: Advance cultural tourism and expand the city's diversity of innovative industries.*

## **Vision Element: Environmentally Resilient**

Goal 1: Mitigate climate impact by significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions

*Strategy B: Reduce energy use by buildings and advance green building design, including green and cool roofs.*

## **Implementation Strategy 2: Coordinate implementation actions across departments for effective and collective impact**

- Build partnerships with the community, nonprofits, employers and businesses to help promote and implement the plan.

# Blueprint Denver (2019)

- Urban neighborhood context and Low Residential Future Place
- Development in this context should be sensitive to the existing neighborhood character
- Historic designation:
  - Helps ensure compatible infill and building alterations to maintain character-defining features
  - Preserves and creates authentic places





# Jefferson Park Neighborhood Plan (2005)

- Protect and enhance the existing character of the neighborhood
- River Drive subarea recommended for potential designation as a local historic district
- River Drive Historic District designation implements plan recommendations



# South Platte Corridor Study (2013)

- Water Street opportunity area
- Water Street historically served as location of jobs for River Drive residents; e.g., Zang Brewery
- Designation retains residential character of block and reinforces potential benefits of better connectivity to South Platte River and a revitalized Water Street



Water Street Opportunity Area, an underutilized site amid Denver's successful riverfront redevelopment efforts in the Central Platte Valley.  
Image Source: Bing Maps

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SOUTH PLATTE CORRIDOR STUDY

# Effect on Surrounding Neighborhood

- River Drive Historic District designation would help preserve the character defining features of the district
- Little impact on the surrounding neighborhood
- Intent of the designation is to recognize this unique district, the buildings that define it, and their contribution to the historic fabric of the city





# Recommendations & Public Comment

## Landmark Preservation Commission: Unanimous in favor, 8-0-0

*To recommend approval and forward to City Council for landmark designation of the River Drive Historic District, application #2019L-002, 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 May 14, 2019, staff report.*

## Planning Board: Unanimous in favor, 9-0-0

*To recommend that City Council approve application #2019L-002, River Drive Historic District, finding that the district application meets Section 30-4.6 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code and that the designation of the historic district is consistent with applicant plans, including the Denver Comprehensive Plan and Blueprint Denver, and will have minimal impact or effect on the surrounding neighborhoods.*



## Public Comment

### RNO Comment

- None

### Public comments submitted to CPD from individuals

- Received by 12:00pm, June 20, 2019
  - 11 in support
  - 0 in opposition

### Public comments at LPC public hearing

- 3 in support
- 0 in opposition

### Public comments at Planning Board hearing

- None