



**To:** Denver City Council  
**From:** Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)  
**Date:** July 23, 2020  
**RE:** Landmark Designation for 4345 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Howard Berkeley Park Chapel

**Staff Recommendation:**

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

**Request to Designate a Structure:**

**Application:** #2020L-001  
**Address:** 4345 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
**Zoning:** U-MX-3  
**Council:** District #1, Amanda Sandoval  
**Blueprint Denver:** Urban Neighborhood Context and Urban Low Future Places  
**Owner:** Wamserville West, LLC  
**Designation Applicant(s):** Councilwoman Amanda Sandoval

**Case Summary:**

In the spring of 2019, a demolition application for this property was submitted to CPD. During the posting period for the public notice of demolition, an owner-opposed designation application was submitted. As the application went through the LPC and City Council processes, the community and the property owners discussed possible solutions. Through those meetings, a compromise was reached, and the property was sold to buyers who proposed to reuse the structure. As part of the compromise agreement to preserve the structure, the new owners are designating the property. This current designation application is submitted by Councilwoman Amanda Sandoval, under the new designation criteria and with a boundary that encompasses the structure on the southwest portion of the parcel.

Landmark staff reviewed the designation application and found it to be complete and the structure eligible to be a Denver Landmark. As such, staff set the public hearing before the Landmark Preservation Commission for June 16, 2020. At the public hearing, the LPC voted (7-0) to recommend approval and forward to City Council the landmark designation of the Howard Berkeley Park Chapel, at 4345 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue, based on the Landmark Ordinance criteria. On June 30, 2020, 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 July 27, 2020.

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

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30 of the DRMC, the application must be complete, and the structure must meet the following criteria:

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

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**Criteria Evaluation:**

Landmark staff found that the application meets the following criteria:

**It has direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation (Section 30-3(3) a);**

The structure has direct association with the history and development of the city. Started in 1917 as a small family-operated funeral home, Howard Mortuary's become one of the most successful and long-lasting mortuaries in the city. The company emphasized their longevity and ties to the community in its advertising often referring to the company's "Denver heritage." As the Howard Mortuary grew, they expanded their services and also looked to expand to new locations. During the post-war era, the population of Denver and the surrounding suburbs increased exponentially. Howard Mortuary chose this location in Berkeley, because the region was unserved and there was a substantial increase in the population in the area. The company's long-term business, ties to the community, and post-war expansion are associated with the development and growth of the city.

**It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type (Section 30-3(3) c);**

The structure embodies the distinguishing characteristics of a type. Howard Berkeley Park Chapel is a significant example of the mortuary/funeral home type. The character defining features of the mortuary/funeral type often include, one to two stories in height, generally residential in character to fit into the surrounding neighborhood, and specific features designed for the needs of a funeral home. These include spaces to accommodate hearses and a mix of specialized rooms such as, operating and dressing rooms, viewing rooms, storage, casket sales, and chapel. These features are seen in the property's height and design, 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, and sheltered entrances for the arrival of families and guests (a portico and two porte cocheres).

**It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder (Section 30-3(3) d);**

The mortuary is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect. J. Roger Musick was a well-known and prolific Denver architect who worked both with partners and as a solo designer. This work included extensive residential development, commercial structures, and some civic/institutional buildings. When discussing his body of work, Musick emphasized the importance of the Berkeley Park Chapel when he selected this building as one of his five principal works of the 1950s and 1960s. Identified as one of his most important designs over a twenty-year period, this is a significant example of Musick's work.

**It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community, or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics (Section 30-3(3) f);**

The mortuary has a prominent location and has become an established and familiar feature of the contemporary city. The structure was constructed at an important corner in Berkeley, at the intersection of the areas commercial and civic "main street." The placement of the building on the corner of the property, its large size, and the use of high-quality materials provided a dignified and substantial appearance ensured its place as a focal point and feature for the community.



**It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity (Section 30-3(3) g);**

The structure promotes the understanding of the urban environment through physical characteristics and rarity. The mortuary displays distinctive physical characteristics in its Gothic and Tudor arches, portico, arcaded porch, porte cocheres, stained and leaded glass (including a rose window), and double-height gabled-roof chapel. Its exceptional terra cotta ornamentation and the substantial size of the building are



also unique for the area. These characteristics are both distinctive and rare in the Berkeley neighborhood and in post-war construction.

**Integrity:**

Chapter 30 requires that a landmark designated property maintain its integrity. Integrity is defined as “the ability of a structure or district to convey its historic, geographic, architectural, or cultural significance...recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver’s history. The seven (7) qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity” are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The 1960 structure retains excellent integrity. It maintains its historic location at the corner of 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Tennyson Street. Although there have been changes along Tennyson Street, with the mix of residential, commercial, and civic structures in the surrounding area, the structure retains integrity of setting. The long-term use as a funeral home helps convey the structure’s integrity of feeling and association. While the Ludiwici clay tiles were replaced and the decorative blue in the terra cotta was painted, these are minimal alterations; overall, the structures maintains strong integrity of workmanship, design, and materials.

**LPC Considered the Structure’s Historic Context:**

The structure was constructed as part of post-war growth and strongly relates to Denver’s rapid expansion and suburban development following World War II.

**Boundary:**

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE NORTHEAST ¼ OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 3 SOUTH, RANGE 68 WEST OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> P.M., BEING A PORTION OF LOTS 1 THROUGH 12 INCLUSIVE, FOLLMER’S SUBDIVISION OF PLOT 6 BERKELEY GARDENS, AND A PORTION OF PLOT 7, BERKELEY GARDENS, CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, STATE OF COLORADO, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE S00°18’14”E ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 1 AND SAID LINE EXTENDED, 116.55 FEET TO A POINT ON THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 5, SAID POINT BEING THE PONT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND LANDMARK PRESERVATION PARCEL;

THENCE DEPARTING FROM SAID WEST LINE N89°01’38”E, 155.82 FEET;  
THENCE S00°59’43”E, 49.76 FEET;  
THENCE N88°56’52”E, 29.92 FEET’  
THENCE S01°04’43”E, 58.69 FEET;  
THENCE N89°01’07”E, 10.74 FEET;  
THENCE S00°58’53”E, 70.29 FEET TO A POINT ON THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF WEST 46<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE AS ESTABLISHED IN BOOK 8412 AT PAGE 26 OF THE RECORDS OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER;  
THENCE S88°58’42”W ALONG SAID NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE 188.74 FEET;  
THENCE N45°39’46”W ALONG SAID NORTH RIGHT-FO-WAY LINE, 14.05 FEET TO A POINT ON THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 12;

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THENCE N00'18'14"W ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID LOT 12 AND SAID LINE EXTENDED, 168.89 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PARCEL CONTAIN 32,631 SQUARE FEET OR 0.7491 ACRES MORE OR LESS.

**Public Review Process:**

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

**Notifications:**

- Owner notification letters regarding the LPC public hearing
- City Council and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
  - Berkeley Regis United Neighbors
  - Berkeley Neighborhood Association
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
  - 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 the staff report, CPD has received six public comment regarding the designation application.

- Letters/emails of support from organizations or community groups
  - Historic Denver
  - West Highland Neighborhood Association
  - Berkeley Regis United Neighbors
  - Berkeley Neighborhood Association
  - Historic Berkeley Regis
- Email of support from one individual

**Attachments Provided by CPD:**

- Designation Application
- Map of structure proposed for preservation
- Public comment received