



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

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LANDMARK PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 17, Tuesday, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION – 201 W. COLFAX, RM. 4.F.6

Members Present: Chaired by Dennis Humphries, Carla McConnell, Barbara Gibson, Ronald Roybal, Christopher Meza, Stephen Leonard, Edward Shalkey and Jim Bershof

Absent: None

Staff Present: George Gause, Steve Oliver, Greg Savage, Tyler Gibbs, Kerry Buckey (City Attorney) Judy Blake, and Savannah Jameson

Designation committee met at 12:50 p.m.

I. Designation Committee

1. 2100 Downing Street

S. Jameson - This is the Staff Report for the review of the **American Woodmen's Life Building/Humphries Poli Architects** at 2100 Downing Street.

The application was submitted by Humphries Poli Architects/Jane Krisler.

The application demonstrates that the property meets the criteria required for designation in all 3 categories. It meets criteria 1C regarding history; criteria 2A and 2B regarding architecture; and criterion 3A regarding geography.

Historical Importance:

- *1C, have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society.*

The office building was built in 1949-50 as the national headquarters of the Supreme Camp of the American Woodmen, a domiciled fraternal benefits society composed only of African-American citizens that sold life insurance to African-Americans in 29 states.

Architectural Importance:

- *2A, embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;*
2100 Downing is an exemplary example of the Streamline Modern style of architecture. The white terra cotta horizontally wraps much of the exterior. The strong horizontal emphasis is broken only by the vertical entries, which include cantilevered overhangs and delicate upright windows and terra cotta fins. The building maintains a high degree of integrity and appears much the same today as it did in the 1950s.

- *2B, be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*
The American Woodmen's Life Building was designed by noted architecture Gordon D. White of Denver, Colorado.

Geographical Importance:

- *3A, have a prominent location or be an established, familiar and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;*

The American Woodmen's Life Building is a familiar and visual landmark in the neighborhood, located at the active intersection of 21st Avenue and Downing Street. The building occupies a prominent place defining the western edge of the City Park West neighborhood.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval and the application be moved to the full Landmark Preservation Commission for review on April 7, 2009.

Applicant, Jane Crisler was present.

Karen Brown, 2900 Glenarm, representing the Five Points Association – This property is in our area and we want this to honestly reflect the African American community.

Carla Madison, Councilwoman – I love this building and wish to show my support for it.

Motion by: S. Leonard, 2100 Downing St., this application if very good and complete and I recommend that it be moved on to the full commission.

Second by: E. Shalkey

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion carries.

2. 222 S. Fairfax The Amter Residence

G. Gause - This is the staff report to the Designation Committee for the preliminary review of the **Amter Residence** at 222 South Fairfax Street.

The application was prepared and submitted by Hoehn Architects PC, on behalf of the current owner Ann Amter and is considered complete. The period of significance is 1952-53.

The application demonstrates that the property meets the criteria required for designation in 2 categories. It meets criterion 1C regarding history and criterion 2A, 2B, & 2D regarding architecture.

Historical Importance:

- *1C, have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society;*

The original property owners were Gershon (Gus) and Dulcy Amter. Between them they formed a link to the development of Denver through commerce and the arts.

Gershon (Gus) Amter was a business man who, in the span of his lifetime, formed a link to the origins of "Amter's Dress Shop" (a cornerstone of downtown Denver for fifty years), Sealy Mattress (begun by Dulcy's grandfather), The Colorado Mattress Company, The Standard Upholstery Company of Colorado, and finally in the development of his own business, the Standard Furniture Manufacturing Company, which was the leading upholstered furniture manufacturing company in the Rocky Mountain area.

Dulcy Amter made a significant contribution to the development of Denver through the arts, and particularly through dance. She served as Professor of Dance in the Department of Theater at the University Of Denver. She was a choreographer, a performer, a writer, and an educator. In 2003 Dulcy was named a Colorado "Living Legend of Dance" by the University of Denver Penrose Library Special Collections, Carson-Brierly Dance Library. Her association at Denver University spanned thirty-five years. Additionally, she toured the public school system with Young Audiences for three years, with a program she wrote, choreographed and directed. Young Audiences is a nationally based arts organization focused on education in the arts for children. She also developed a program performed for the Jewish Historical Society.

Architectural Importance:

- *2A, embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style;*

Designed and constructed between 1951 and 1953, the house incorporates many of the defining characteristics of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian Style including its horizontal orientation; the low-slope roofs with overhanging eaves; its incorporation of natural exterior building materials without applied

ornament, including brick and wood, which is carried into the interior of the house; ribbon windows, windows that fill the gable ends, and window walls that make the low-slope roofs appear to float above the house; an open floor plan on multiple levels with direct access to outdoor spaces; indirect interior lighting in lieu of exposed light fixtures; built-in storage and furniture; and gravity heat supplied from the floor rather than from visually obtrusive radiators.

- *2B, be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;*
Modernist architect Joe Lort was a second generation student of Frank Lloyd Wright and, consequently, followed many of Wright's design principles in his own unique work. Other noteworthy Modern houses from the same time period that Joe Lort designed include 233 South Birch Street in Hilltop, constructed in 1946, and the Cummings House, located at 5200 Ridge Trail in Bow Mar and built in 1956. These two houses are included in the Historic Denver Guide, *The Mid-Century Modern House in Denver*. (The house in Bow Mar is featured on the cover of the guide book.) Joe Lort also designed the Robineau House in the Hilltop neighborhood at 181 Dexter Street, which was completed in 1954 and demolished circa 2000. The house was a featured post-World War II house in *Hilltop Heritage – A History and Guide to a Denver Neighborhood* and was known as the “butterfly house” for its cross-gabled low-pitched roofs.

- *2D, portrays the physical development of the Hilltop neighborhood, which is cited in Historic Denver's guide, The Mid-Century Modern House in Denver, as being the “most important neighborhood in Denver for Modern residential architecture;*
The house is an outstanding example of one of Hilltop's architecturally-designed mid-century Modern houses that still retains its original architectural integrity. The house serves as a reminder of the neighborhood's early development. Ann Amter eloquently describes the design of her parents' house: “The house itself has a sense of movement – open and filled with light and levels and flowing space...The architectural influence of this home set a standard for the neighborhood that was to come.” Unfortunately, the stylistic consistency of the neighborhood is being eroded: Due to the large building sites and favored location, many of the houses are being demolished and replaced with those that are not in keeping with the Modernist heritage of the neighborhood.

Alterations:

There are no major alterations to the exterior of the structure. Denver building permit records indicate that a few minor changes have been made to the house and site including the installation of steel siding on the roof fascias, replacement roofing on the low-slope roofs, and the construction of a wood cedar fence. Photographs of the house after it was first constructed reveal that the concrete masonry units, which were used for the construction of site walls and exterior building walls adjacent to the entry, were originally unpainted; the exterior wood appears to have been painted in colors consisting of earth tones of rose and tan. Today the concrete masonry units and original painted surfaces are painted a medium cool gray color. The house remains basically the same as when it was first constructed.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff recommendation is to forward the application to the full Landmark Preservation Commission, noting the application is considered complete and meets the criteria for designation.

Applicant

Ann Amter – This is my parents' house, and the main reason this house should be saved is because there are no other houses around like it. It is unique and the architect and my parents were significant and my mother was a dancer and my father was an artist.

Motion by: S. Leonard, 222 S. Fairfax, I move to accept the staff report and to refer this application for designation to the full commission.

Second by; E. Shalkey

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion carries.

Chair called full LPC meeting to order at 1:29 p.m.

II. **Review And Approval of Minutes** - None this date

III. **Applications for State Income Tax Credit**

Motion by: C. McConnell, I move to accept the tax credits presented in this agenda

Second by: C. Meza

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion carries.

IV. **Information Items**

V. **Appeal Hearing for Bell Park**

K. Buckey speaking to the commission tells them that their ruling should be if they find no evidence to support then they overturn or otherwise support the motion being appealed. Also that the board was to evaluate whether the Lower Downtown Design Review Board has evidence to support their decision.

Board Discussion

- Comments were made regarding concern for the form and mass.
- Other questions included concerns regarding the floor plate footage limit, exclusive of balconies and terraces. Also, there was discussion regarding volume and how the volume footage impacts the floor sf.
- Determination was made that convinced board that the site plan and models are consistent.
- It was also stated that the Lower Downtown Design Review Board had information to make the decision that was made by their motion.

D. Humphries – Reading from the Design Guidelines for Lower Downtown, 5/16/02, page DG 12, under Massing:

“The buildings **mass** is synonymous with it’s volume with a total of gross cubic volume of space it occupies on the site. **Massing** is the way in which it’s volume or mass is distributed on the site; which parts are higher, lower, wider or narrower and what pop ups and where. **Massing** is an important consideration in helping a building fit comfortably into its **context**. The aspects of a building’s form include its visual treatment in the variations of heights and widths of its mass, as well as its overall **height** and setbacks. Two buildings can have the same **mass** but entirely different **massing**. (see **Building height**)

Related to a building’s **mass** is its width. Establishing visually appropriate building widths □ defined as the distance the **facade** of a single new building extends along the street without a break in **massing** □ is important to maintaining Lower Downtown’s character. This break in the visual **massing** may be accomplished in any number of ways, including an expression of two distinct buildings, a break in a portion of the **facade** with a different function (such as a door or passageway), a change of wall plane (such as recessing part of a segment), a change of column spacing, or a change of materials, color, texture, or detailing.”

So that is the definition of massing as described in the Lower Downtown Guidelines.

Motion by: E. Shalkey, Project 51-09, 1300 Walnut St. (Bell Park), I move that we reject the appeal on the basis that it appears that there is some evidence to support the Lower Downtown Design Review Board decision.

Second by: B. Gibson

Vote: Seven in favor and one dissenting vote, motion carries.

VI. Other Business

1. Civic Center Guidelines *Continued

R. Roybal recuses himself.

Present were: Fran Mishler, and Mark Bernstein

S. Jameson - This Staff Report has been prepared for the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) Public Meeting to adopt Parks and Recreation's (P&R) document, "Denver's Civic Center Design Guidelines," dated March 17, 2009. The adoption was requested because Civic Center Park is a designated Landmark District. The design guidelines are intended to amplify and implement the Civic Center Park Master Plan dated October 2005.

Comments

- The March 17, 2009 Civic Center Design Guidelines implement the LPC's Civic Center Design Guidelines Sub-committee recommendations, rectifying outstanding concerns from previous drafts.

Staff Recommendation:

- *Staff recommends that the Civic Center Design Guidelines dated March 17, 2009 be approved for adoption.*

Adoption Process

Design Guidelines are adopted by LPC as Rules and Regulations. The following are the final steps in the adoption process:

- After the Public Meeting, assuming the Rules and Regulations are approved, they become effective upon:
 - Dating and signing of the document by the Manager of CPD
 - Approval of the Rules and Regulations for legality by the city attorney
- Within 7 business days after adoption of the Rules and Regulations, the following is required:
 - File a copy of the Rules and Regulations with the City Clerk
 - Publish notice of adoption in the Daily Journal
 -

Motion by: C. Meza, Civic Center Guidelines, move that we accept the Civic Center Park Guidelines.

Second by: J. Bershof

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion carries.

VII. Design Review

1. Project 28-09 100 Marion St.

Staff presentation

G. Gause - This is an application to build a new two (2) story brick structure.

The demolition of the existing structure was approved by the LPC in May 2008. Demolition may not occur until plans for new construction are approved.

Staff received plans for new construction in June 2008. Comments were given to the applicants addressing several concerns with the size and compatibility with the area historic architecture. Staff received revised plans February 2009, which the overall material had changed from stucco to brick, but the issues with details had not been addressed.

Particularly; staff believes that there are issues with the massing, roof configuration, and the main entry. Staff communicated our concerns with the applicants; however they requested to bring the new construction before the commission to discuss the issues. The proposal has not been seen by the Country Club Historic District (CCHD) at the time of the writing of these comments. Staff has requested that the applicant meet with CCHD for their comments.

Staff is in receipt of a sketch from the developer which addresses issues raised by staff. It is however, a

sketch and does not offer firm details of materials, size, texture, etc. The design is moving in the right direction, but issues of general massing and roof size/shape still need to be addressed. Staff has been notified that revised elevation drawings will be submitted by the LPC meeting on 3/17, however, staff has not had a chance to review anything at this time and will likely not be able to fully review revised drawings by 3/17. The comments contained within are based on the documentation dated 3/2/2009.

Applicants Presentation

Chester Kiaha,, contractor – the owner of the property gave direction to Tandy and they negotiated to come up with something acceptable. As you can see by the new drawings that we are back to the original stucco, and we are currently working with a new architect

S. Leonard – I think it is very important that you go back to Country Club Design Review Committee for better guidance. It is your business to design and present it to us.

Board Discussion

A suggestion was made that confirmation from Country Club should be received prior to reviewing the project/comments.

Comments that this project is headed in the right direction and that if Country club confirmed then the rest of the project could return to staff.

Motion by: C. McConnell, Project 28-09, 100 Marion St., I move that we not approve the package submitted today but we urge the applicant to meet with the Country Club Neighborhood Review Board that possibly can resolve all the design issues and come back to staff.

Second by: S. Leonard

Vote: Unanimous in favor, motion carries.

2. Denver Union Station DS&G

Ellen Ittleson - We will have a joint public hearing on April 7, 2009, with the Planning board and the LPC, and in 2004 the Master Plan was presented and received approval. In 2006 there was a selection of a master developer and that is Union Station Neighborhood Company.

Power Point presentation

Board Discussion

Questions asked regarding the attachment of lighting to the historic structure, location of utility boxes, and parking,. Reply was that the consultants have tried to minimize the repetition of guidelines, and recommendations of below grade or similar for the utility boxes, and reminder that the guidelines suggest that structured parking should be pedestrian friendly.

E. Ittleson – The joint public hearing of the Planning Board and the LPC will be held on April 7, 2009. The public is invited to present comments at the meeting or in writing prior to it.

Meeting adjourned.

Judy Blake