



**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMO REPORT
OF FINDINGS FOR CERTIFICATE OF DEMOLITION ELIGIBILITY**

September 10, 2020

Address: 1295 N. Race Street

Legal Description: WYMANS ADD B50 L1 TO 4

Current Building Name: Campbell Apartment / Campbell-Stone Memorial Residence

Construction Date: 1959

Source of Information: Denver Assessor's Office; Denver Post articles

Architectural

Architectural Style: International Style

Architect/Builder: Ramsey and Reeves (Architects); Harvey Stenmark Construction (Builder)

Source of Information: Photographs; Denver Post articles, 1958-1960

Historical

Original owner: Association of Christian Churches

Original use(s): Senior Housing

Current use(s): Senior Housing

Historical background: The Campbell-Stone Memorial Residences was the first apartment building constructed in Denver under the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) program dedicated to funding for apartments for the elderly. A project of the 17-congregation organization, the Association of Christian Churches, it was intended to serve as safe and affordable housing for seniors.

The building was designed by the Denver architectural firm of Ramsey and Reeves, whose work is still evident in Denver as some of the clearest examples of International Style modernism. Woodrow W. Ramsey and Roger A. Reeves opened an architectural practice in Denver in the mid-1950s. They were the architects for the Lanai Apartments at 800 Washington and the Golden West Manor (5BL.8229) in Boulder, as well as the Allstate Insurance Building (now the DPS Technical College) at 888 Sherman St. The firm designed a number of senior housing apartments throughout the Denver metro area – 1295 Race Street being the first.

Ramsey and Reeves were well-known in Denver. Both registered architects, Ramsey was a Regent for the Society of American Registered Architects – Colorado Chapter. At some point in the early 1960s, Ramsey left Denver and Roger Reeves carried on his own practice, designing the medical building (now Kaiser) at 20th and Franklin and the Devonshire House apartments at 909 Logan St. Reeves also designed some of the earliest residential townhomes for the newly-rebranded neighborhood of Cherry Creek North.

The Campbell-Stone building was erected in 1958-59 and dedicated in March of 1959. Although it predated the Americans with Disabilities Act by at least three decades, it was noted to have non-skid floors, bathtub grab bars, wheelchair ramps, and doorways wide enough to accommodate

wheelchairs – innovations that had been utilized in hospitals and nursing homes but were new to apartment living (in fact, the first ANSI design standard for accessible design would not be released until 1961).

Source of Information: Denver Assessor's Office; Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1929 (corrected to 1951). Denver Post articles 1958-1960. Personal communication, Kendall Corbett (disability rights activist, retired disability consultant) September 11, 2020. "History of Accessible Facility Design (website); Architectural Inventory Form: 1055 Adams Circle; Obituary Robert Reeves. Pub April 15, 2006: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/denverpost/obituary.aspx?n=roger-allen-reeves&pid=17412424>

Designation Eligibility Assessment

Landmark Designation Criteria:

A structure or district may be designated for preservation if, due to its significance, it meets the criteria listed in subsections (1), (2), and (3) below

- (1) The structure or district maintains its integrity;
- (2) The structure or district is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance; and
- (3) The structure or district meets at least 3 of the following 10 criteria:
 - It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
 - It has direct and substantial association with a recognized person or group of persons who had influence on society;
 - It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;
 - It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;
 - It contains elements of design, engineering, materials, craftsmanship, or artistic merit which represent a significant innovation or technical achievement;
 - It represents an established and familiar feature of the neighborhood, community or contemporary city, due to its prominent location or physical characteristics;
 - It promotes understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;
 - It represents an era of culture or heritage that allows an understanding of how the site was used by past generations;
 - It is a physical attribute of a neighborhood, community, or the city that is a source of pride or cultural understanding;
 - It is associated with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation.

Integrity: If a structure maintains its integrity, it may be designated for preservation.

- Has integrity
- Does not have integrity

Does the structure have potential for designation?

- Has potential for designation
Does not have potential for designation

The building meets Criterion A as Colorado's first senior housing facility built with support from the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) Supportive Housing for the Elderly program, which was implemented in 1959. This program "provided direct loans or capital advances from the federal government to enable private, not-for-profit sponsors to produce secure, barrier-free, and supportive housing facilities for older persons."¹

Throughout the United States, the care of the elderly was most often overseen by family members. People who did not have families to rely on would enter privately-run facilities, often sponsored by churches and synagogues.² Colorado has a long history of apartment buildings constructed specifically for elderly residents. Perhaps the first retirement home in Denver was the Old Ladies Home at 8th and Logan, which was constructed in 1875 by the Ladies Relief Society of Denver. The home later moved to the Highlands neighborhood, where it still operates today as the Argyle House.

It was not until the Social Security Act of 1935 that a unified government response to the financial needs of the elderly was enacted. Medicare and Medicaid, which would provide medical care for the elderly was not enacted until 1965. In the meantime, seniors relied on a patchwork of personal savings, private charity and local programs to receive care.

In 1959, the Federal Housing Authority launched Section 202, which provided direct loans to nonprofits and charitable organizations to construct and operate housing for the elderly. Today this is known as the Supportive Housing for the Elderly program. This program allowed charitable organizations access to a new stream of funding and expanded access to a critical component of elderly care. In Colorado, the direct loan program was first used by churches who built senior housing for their aging congregants.

The apartment building at 1295 Race St was the first such apartment building to be constructed using a Section 202 FHA loan. It was constructed by the Denver Association of Christian Churches – a consortium of 17 different churches from across Denver. The Supportive Housing for the Elderly program predated the institution of the American with Disabilities Act by over 30 years. As such, while there were not Federal requirements for accessibility and universal design standards, many of the senior housing complexes built with the support of the FHA incorporated accessible design features, such as wheelchair accessible entrances, wider doors, non-slip floors, grab bars in the bathroom etc. These apartment buildings also had community rooms and roof top decks for social gatherings and activities.

Newspaper articles describing the newly constructed Campbell-Stone Memorial Apartments noted that "the building has nonskid floors, grab bards beside all bathtubs, extra wide doors to accommodate wheelchairs and a ramp to the street", acknowledging the needs of the older residents.

¹ Haley, Barbara and Robert Gray. "Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly: Program Status and Performance Measurement" US Department of Housing and Urban Development. June 2008

² Achenbaum. Andrew and L. Christian Carr. "A Brief History of Aging Services in the United States" American Society on Aging. <https://www.asaging.org/blog/brief-history-aging-services-united-states>

The building's central location at 13th Ave and Race St was equally notable. A Denver Post article about the building's grand opening quoted one project manager who stated: "older people should not be isolated from the community. They must be near transportation, stores, movies and parks, convenient to downtown, hospitals, medical centers and churches." Presumably, many of the occupants of 1295 Race St had previously lived in Central Denver and this central location would have allowed them to stay in the neighborhood, rather than moving far away from their previous residences into the suburbs, where many retirement homes were located.

This building meets Criterion C as a clear example of the International Style in the Cheesman Park neighborhood. The International Style was a subset of the Modernist style that became popular in Europe post-World War I, and which stayed the dominant style for commercial and multi-family buildings in the United States until the 1970s. The International Style eschewed complex forms and ornamentation in favor of simple, rectangular building forms and minimal ornamentation. Previously industrial materials such as concrete, steel and glass were used to provide visual interest on otherwise plain facades.

The building carries the distinctive visible characteristics related to that the International Style, including the rectangular form, simple and unadorned façade with a horizontal emphasis, and the regular, rhythmic alignment of the windows and spandrel panels. As the Getty Research Institute notes, "the use of lightweight, mass-produced, industrial materials, rejection of all ornament and colour, repetitive [modular](#) forms, and the use of flat surfaces, typically alternating with areas of glass" are all hallmarks of the distinctive International Style – all of which can be seen on at 1295 Race St. The building's architects used concrete and blond brick to create a striking grid system on the façade of the building. Windows are used to lighten the overall massing of the building, making it seem lightweight rather than overbearing on the corner of 13th Avenue and Race Street.

The building is also eligible under Criterion D, as it was design by architects Woodrow W. Ramsey and Roger A. Reeves, whose work in the mid-late 1950s brought some of the best examples of International Style to the neighborhoods surrounding Central Denver. Newspaper research indicates the firm built a number of International Style apartment buildings across the Denver Metro – many of which were purpose-built for senior housing. However, little is currently written about the firm's complete body of work and more research may reveal a wider array of building types and designs. However, as the first purpose-built senior housing in the International Style, 1295 Race St represents a significant example of the firm's architectural work.