COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMO REPORT
OF FINDINGS FOR DEMOLITION

November 21, 2020

Address: 257 N Jackson Street

Legal Description: N1/2 OF PLOT 8 BLK 51 HARMANS SUB

Current Building Name: 257 Jackson Street

Construction Date: c. 1913-1915 (city directories)


Architectural
Architectural Style: Eclectic Cottage
Architect/Builder: unknown
Source of Information: NA

Historical
Original owner: Lillian Davis
Original use(s): residence
Current use(s): residence
Historical background:

The house at 257 Jackson Street was originally owned by Lillian Davis, who owned both this home and the house at 235 Jackson Street (which was the first house built on the block). Davis purchased both Plot 8 and 9 of Block 51 of Harman’s Subdivision in 1893. The 1905 Baist Real Estate Atlas shows a wood-frame stable on Plot 8 (the future location of 257 Jackson St), and two wood-frame houses on Plot 9 (235 Jackson St). Davis and her husband, Robert, lived at 235 Jackson and eventually built the house at 257 Jackson St, though they never lived there. A building permit for the house could not be located, however, based on City Directories and newspaper articles, it is likely that the home was constructed c. 1913-1915. Prior to the construction of this house on Plot 8, the house at 235 Jackson (on Plot 9) was listed as 257 Jackson Street. Once the second house was constructed, the current addresses were assigned.
Lillian Davis rented the house to Ida and William Clark, a Black family, who are listed at the residence in City Directories starting in 1915. The 1920 census shows the Clarks still renting the house at 257 Jackson Street, though Ida Clark would purchase the house later that year. Ida was listed as being employed in a private home while William, Ida’s husband, worked as a laborer. The 1930 and 1940 censuses show the Clarks and Mrs. Davis in the houses at 257 and 235 Jackson Street, respectively. The Clarks lived in the home for many years, and after William’s death in 1944, Ida continued to live in the home until she passed in 1954. (The 1948 city directory shows another couple, Guinn and Ethel Webb, also in residence at 257 Jackson Street.) In 1955 Ida M. Clark’s heirs sold the house to Lewis B. and Lottie C. Weise, who do not appear to have lived in the home, but used it as an investment property. The Weise family sold it in 1990 to Jean L. Haber, and the property changed hands a few more times until it was bought by Robin and William Hayes in 2000. The Hayeses owned it until earlier this year.

**Source of Information:** Denver Assessor’s Office; Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1929 (corrected to 1951), Denver City Directories; Federal Census Records 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940; Denver householder’s Directory and Street Avenue Guide 1924-1950; Denver Post articles and notices.
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

257 Jackson Street is a good example of an Eclectic Cottage reflecting the Period Revival Movement of the early 20th century and is therefore potentially significant under Criterion C. The 1 ½ story cottage is simple in form with minimal detailing. The most distinctive element is the clipped gable roof, an element which is characteristic of this period of construction. The dwelling also features an offset entrance with a small enclosed gabled porch with an arched opening. The six-over-six sash windows (many grouped), decorative shutters, stucco cladding, exterior chimney, and projecting side bay are also characteristic of the early 20th century Period Revival Movement. This cottage is representative of the type of housing that was characteristic of the early 20th century development of this neighborhood. Due to extensive redevelopment, it is a rare surviving example of this housing with its modest scale and simplicity in stark contrast to the newer homes constructed around it. The house retains a good degree of integrity. The only significant alteration has been two dormer additions but the original clipped gable roof still remains evident. Dormers are a common addition and do not significantly detract from the overall historic character of the dwelling. The front door has also been replaced, but no alterations appear to have been made to the windows.

The house at 257 Jackson St is potentially significant under Criterion G as it promotes an understanding and appreciation of the urban environment as a rare example of a historic residential structure in the Cherry Creek North neighborhood. Most of the homes in the Cherry Creek North neighborhood are of modern construction. Along with the shopping center to the south, the neighborhood is generally understood to be a modern, mixed use neighborhood. This belies the true history of the neighborhood, which was once the independent town of Harman (platted 1882; incorporated 1886) and which was annexed by the city of Denver in 1894, continuing as a fairly self-contained neighborhood well into the 1940s. The property at 257 Jackson Street, constructed c. 1913-1915 is one of the few remaining historic structures left in the area. Along with the frame house at 235 Jackson Street, this house expresses the evolving history of this neighborhood and the city of Denver. Around the turn of the century, the city of Denver grew in size by annexing smaller satellite cities such as Argo, Globeville, South Denver, and Harman. By relinquishing their independence and voting for annexation, these small towns gained access to municipal services like water service, electricity, and street paving that they would have otherwise been unable to afford to provide to their citizens. However, many of these towns, still a far distance from downtown Denver, maintained an independent identity long after they had been annexed. 1933 aerial map of the city shows that the neighborhood of Harmon remained fairly undeveloped, with well-worn social trails crossing the landscape, rather than a network of paved streets and sidewalks, even 40 years after annexation. Similarly, the town name of Harman was still used on maps well into the 1940s. The Harmon Town Hall, no longer needed as a municipal space, was eventually converted into a Masonic Lodge in 1934. The building still stands today (as a private residence) but was designated a local Denver Landmark 1989, due to, in part, its community importance. In its designation application, it was noted that “once built, the Town Hall became a
favorite place for people to meet or hold gatherings,” including graduation ceremonies, private celebrations, and social balls.¹ When the Town Hall was converted into a Masonic Temple, it maintained its community focus with social clubs, fraternal orders and school groups all sharing the space.

The modern neighborhood of Cherry Creek North did not spring fully-formed into being with the opening of the shopping mall – it was the result of decades of evolution that turned a small town on the edge of the prairie into a modern commercial district in the heart of the city. The house at 257 Jackson Street illustrates the history of this area of Denver and its early development.

The property at 257 Jackson St, with its long time owners of Ida and William Clark, is also significant under Criterion J for its association with social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth or change that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, and nation; namely the history of racist housing policies that shaped the demographics of Denver and countless cities across the United States well into the 21st century. These policies had a direct impact on people like Ida and William Clark, who were denied the ability to live and work where they wished and were instead confined to certain areas of the city. Furthermore, the codification of these polices in the 1930s further constricted the areas where many black families could live and put undue pressure on them to move out of their homes and to more ‘appropriate’ locations. Although housing discrimination was made illegal under the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the culmination of decades of targeted disinvestment continues to shape Denver’s neighborhoods to the present day.

In the city’s early days, Denver’s neighborhoods were segregated largely through a mixture of “custom, covenant, and coercion.”² A 1938 Home Owner’s Loan Corporation (HOLC) map codified these previous customs into sharply delineated federal policy, which is today known as “redlining”. Harman was a town that may have been originally segregated through these pernicious practices. However, Harman’s location far from the center of Denver and proximity to Cherry Creek meant that the land was cheap and plentiful, and was soon home to the city’s poorer residents, or those who were not allowed to buy in more popular areas due to their race or religion. The surveyors classified the area directly north of Cherry Creek as a red or “Hazardous” area, meaning the Federal Housing Authority would not secure mortgages in this area. Cherry Creek served as a common dumping ground for the city’s trash and was often prone to flooding. The streets around it were unpaved, and many of the homes in the area were little more than shacks. As development moved north of the river, however, building stock improved and the risk of flooding diminished. North of 2nd Avenue, including the 200 block of Jackson St, was listed as a yellow “definitely declining” section. The comments of the surveyors were harsh – appalling to modern readers – and blamed the poor value of the neighborhood on the presence of Black families who owned their homes. These maps, and the housing policy that they reflected, shaped the culture of the area and dictated decades of change that would soon follow. By encouraging disinvestment in the

¹ “Request for Landmark Designation for of Lawrence N Greenleaf Masonic Temple / the Old Town of Harman Town Hall Building” Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. 1988
neighborhood, a once populous community would eventually become ripe for redevelopment in the urban renewal era of the 1960s and 1970s.

Ida and William Clark were African American workers who owned their own home from 1920 until 1954. It is likely that the Clarks purchased their home in Harman in part because they were barred from purchasing in other parts of the city. They may have also had a personal relationship with the previous owner of the home, Lillian Davis, as they had rented the home from Davis for several years before they purchased the property.

The fact that the Clarks were one of the few Black families in this neighborhood, and one of the fewer still who owned their own home was a testament to their fortitude in the face of virulent racism that pervaded all facets of life in Denver – from home ownership to city politics, public education and labor rights. The Clarks purchased their home at a time when there were few places in Denver where they could own their own home. They then maintained ownership during an era when many nearby families were pushed out of their homes or denied the opportunity to purchase their own homes at all. Census records from 1910-1940 illustrate the decreasing number of Black families that lived in the surrounding areas. Further research may shed light on the personal history of the Clark family and uncover an important and untold part of Denver’s history.

Figure 3. 1938 Home Owners Loan Corporation Map showing the town of Harman and surrounding areas. A blue diamond indicates the approximate location of 257 Jackson St.