Potter-Highlands represents a broad range of architectural styles, indicative of the district’s two distinct periods of development: the first beginning in 1874 up to the Silver Crash in 1893 and the second from the 1896 annexation of the area to Denver until the mid 1940s. The architectural styles include Queen Anne, Craftsman Bungalow, Classic Cottage, and a small percentage of Denver Squares, Colonial and Dutch Revivals, Mission, and Prairie styles. Potter Highlands features a unique layout, most commonly found only in the Highland Neighborhood of Denver, which is large square blocks with historic interior carriage lots. The majority of the structures are brick masonry. A few of the oldest structures are wood frame.

**DISTRICT DESCRIPTION**

Potter-Highlands Historic District

**ORDINANCE**

Ordinance #89, adopted 1993.

No special provisions.

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Prior-to and including 1943.


Contributing structures are not included in the ordinance.

**LISTING CRITERIA**

- **History**
- **Architecture**
- **Geography**

History: Part of the development and heritage of the City and State of Colorado. Originally part of the town of Highland, which was established in 1875. The district is associated with many local pioneers.

Architecture: Many distinctive architectural styles and a unique pattern of development incorporating square blocks and interior carriage lots.
Potter Highlands Historic District

Character-defining Features

1. Streetscape with Queen Anne structures. Note the historic sandstone sidewalk separated from the street with a buffer lawn, the uniform front yard setback with shallow front yards, and the architectural harmony on this block.

2. Streetscape with Craftsman Bungalow structures. Note the uniform modest front yard setback, the dormer windows in the roof, and architectural harmony on this block.

District Layout & Composition

Streets & Streetscape

North-south and east-west streets on a grid creating square blocks with alleys running north-south and east-west. This street pattern and square block layout creates interior carriage lots. Asphalt streets with low concrete curbs and curb cuts for alleyways.

Sidewalks

Historic sandstone and concrete sidewalks, separated from the street with a tree lawn and mature trees.

Land Uses

Predominately residential with a small mixture of commercial structures located historically around Federal Blvd., Clay St., Zuni St. and West 32nd Ave. West 38th Ave. became a commercial corridor in the late 1930s.

Lot Sizes & Shapes

Residential lots vary in size within Potter Highlands. Corner lots are generally larger while lots located on the interior of the block are smaller and narrow. Parcels are generally rectangular in shape. However, some parcels have been expanded to encompass the historic carriage lot. Standard lot size is 25’ x 125’.

Building Placement

Due to the square blocks, created by the street layout, properties front onto both the north-south and east-west street. House placement varies by block; particularly on north to south streets, houses often were placed closer to north property line to maximize southern sun exposure.

Setbacks

Terraced front lawns are common. Front yards are often landscaped with mature trees. Buildings within the district are mostly freestanding with narrow side yards. Backyards are large within this district.

Design Review

All properties within a historic district are subject to design review. When planning a preservation or construction project, it is important to consider the character-defining features of the district.

When reviewing proposed changes to a property, the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission uses the Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts in combination with the character defining features of the historic district to evaluate the project’s compatibility with the property and historic district.

The character-defining features document for each district generally captures the most prevailing architectural and site features found within the district. In some instances, a structure and site within a district may be the exception to the character-defining features.
PRIMARY BUILDINGS

**Mass & Form**

**Building Height:** One- story to two-stories in height common.

**Building Shapes:** Boxy massing generally symmetrical in form. Some Queen Anne structures within the district have corner turrets and towers, breaking up the front façade symmetry.

**Materials**

The oldest structures are wood frame, built prior to the Denver ordinance requiring all buildings to be constructed of brick. Brick construction dominates within this district.

**Roofs**

Roofs are typically gabled, hipped roofs or flat roofs with a parapet. Overhanging eaves prominent. Boxed eaves on most styles; exposed rafters and purlins on Craftsman Bungalow style. Composite roofing material common.

**Entries & Doors**

Typically a single offset, front entry with a wooden door.

**Windows**

Wood double-hung vertically-oriented windows with stone sills and decorative headers in stone and wood common. The high-style Queen Anne houses have bay windows and curved glass in the round turrets. Some houses retain their original leaded glass. Large first floor single windows are common. Craftsman windows have divided lights in the top sash. Historically, windows were recessed in the wall (not flush).
Potter Highlands Historic District

Character-defining Features

**Porches**

**Width:** Partial and full width porches common.

**Height:** The high Queen Anne structures within this district typically feature a two-story porch. One-story porches are common on simpler Queen Anne houses with narrower porches.

**Projecting:** Projecting porches prominent.

**Shapes:** Raised square and rectangular porches with shed, gable, and hipped roofs.

**Materials:** Wood and brick masonry porches with either wood columns or brick piers respectively.

**Porch Ornamentation:** The Queen Anne style houses with delicate fretwork and spindle columns. Wood classical columns on many styles and brick piers on the Craftsman Bungalow houses. Wood railings or brick half walls typical.

**Building Ornamentation**

The high-style Queen Anne structures in this district have elaborate ornamentation on the porches, in the front facing gables, and roofing material. Fish scale shingles are common in front facing gables. Craftsman detailing on later bungalows within the district.

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*S. Italianate duplex on Alcott St. Note the decorative cornice on the parapet concealing the flat roof, the tall narrow double-hung windows with decorative headers and sills, and doors with transoms above.*

*6. Craftsman Bungalow. Note the dormer window in the hipped roof, the masonry porch foundation and piers, the differentiation in brick from the foundation to the primary wall, and the offset entryway.*
ACCESSORY STRUCTURES & SITE FEATURES

Outbuildings

Detached: Yes.
Access: Most carriage houses and garages are accessible from the alleyway. However, corner carriage houses and garages are often accessible from the street.
Height: One-story in height.
Size: Single bay.
Shape: Small and boxy in shape. Low profile gable and flat roofs are common. A few structures feature pyramidal roofs.
Materials: Brick construction.

Walkways

Historic sandstone and modern concrete walkways, leading in a straight path. Often with steps to accommodate the front yard slope. Typically 3-4 feet wide.

Walls & Fences

Front Yards: A small number of low metal or wood front yard fences
Side & Rear Yards: Wood fences most commonly enclose rear and side yards.
Retaining Walls: Retaining walls modify the common Denver Hill found in the front yard.