To: Landmark Preservation Commission  
From: Kara Hahn, Principal Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)  
Date: October 29, 2019  
RE: Landmark Designation for Tilden School for Teaching Health Historic District

Landmark Preservation Commission Suggested Motion:  
I move to recommend approval and forward to City Council the landmark designation of the Tilden School for Teaching Health Historic District, application #2019L-006, based on History Criteria 1a and 1c, Architecture Criteria 2a, 2b, and 2d, and Geography Criteria 3a and 3b, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the October 29, 2019 staff report.

Request to Designate a District:  
Application: #2019L-006  
Address: 3209 West Fairview Place, 3249 West Fairview Place, and 3279 Grove Street  
Zoning: U-SU-B and PDU 551  
Council: Council District #1, Amanda Sandoval  
Blueprint Denver: Urban Neighborhood Context and Low Residential Future Place  
Owner: Multiple  
Applicant(s): Former City Councilmember Rafael Espinoza

Case Summary:  
Former City Councilmember Rafael Espinoza submitted a Landmark Designation application for the Tilden School for Teaching Health Historic District to CPD. Staff performed an investigation and found the application to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for November 5, 2019.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code:  
To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30-4, Denver Revised Municipal Code, a district must meet the following criteria:

1. Meet one designation criteria in two or more of the following categories:
   - History
   - Architecture
   - Geography
2. Maintain its physical or historical integrity
3. Relate to a context or theme

Criteria Evaluation:  
Landmark staff found that the district application meets History Criteria 1a and 1c, Architecture Criteria 2a, 2b, and 2d, and Geography Criteria 3a and 3b.
1. Historical Significance
To have historical significance, the structure or district shall be thirty (30) or more years old or have extraordinary importance to the historical development of Denver, and shall:

a) Have direct association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;
The Tilden School for Teaching Health Historic District is significant for its association with the development of the Denver as it became a center for sanitariums and health rehabilitation facilities. Physicians from across the country believed that Colorado’s climate and altitude were beneficial to those suffering from illnesses, often tuberculosis. By the early 1900s, Denver had become a key location for the development of treatment facilities, and the operation of medical sanitariums had become a major component of the local economy.

The school was developed by John Henry Tilden, a physician and surgeon, in 1915 and 1916. Dr. Tilden methods were described in 1918 as “… unique and original and, what is more, they are effective. He teaches his patients how to cure themselves. He protests that doctors can't cure disease; that disease is caused by wrong life and the doctor's prerogative is to teach the patient how to get well, and the patient must cure himself. He has fearlessly combated medical error and is still at it. … His methods are strictly dietetics and hygiene.” The Tilden School for Teaching Health is significant as representative of this era of the city’s history, reflecting the popularity of private medical institutions which used both traditional methods and developed non-traditional regimens for their patients.

c) Have direct and substantial association with a person or group of persons who had influence on society;
While the district is associated with multiple people, it is primarily significant for its association with one individual who had influence on society. It holds direct and substantial association with its founder, Dr. John Henry Tilden, who developed and extensively wrote about his treatment theories and who was affiliated with the facility from 1915 to 1924. Dr. Tilden’s non-traditional theories and methods became well-known for those seeking alternative medical options. A 1918 description of Dr. Tilden’s influence noted “He has fought a successful fight for his ideas are being adopted by lay and professional people all over the world, which certainly proves the truth of his theories”. The Rocky Mountain News wrote on December 18, 1924, that his "theory with reference to proper treatment of disease... has become famous."

2. Architectural Significance
To have architectural importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

a) Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type;
The district is significant for the architectural style of two of its primary buildings and reflects the medical theories of the period. The Administration Building/Bosler House provides an example of late Victorian Italianate style. It is a rare remaining example of a large residence in this style in the West Highland neighborhood. The Italianate style is seen in the asymmetrical composition with gabled and hipped projections, the reconstructed third-story square tower, the narrow one-over-one-light, double-hung windows with segmental arches and tooled stone sills, as well as the front and side porches.

The Patient Apartments Building portray the Classical or Colonial Revival style in the symmetrical building features, hipped tile roof, brick quoins at the corners of the front façade, door surrounds and pilasters, and multi-light double-hung windows. The building is dominated by a central, circular, two story entry portico composed of smooth columns with Corinthian capitals supporting a third story uncovered balcony.

The Patient Apartment Building and the Main Building, which contains Craftsman elements, reflect the attempt to create medical buildings which incorporated popular elements of residential architecture. As many patients stayed for extended periods at the school, the buildings were designed to invoke a feeling found in the solid apartment buildings and well-crafted homes of the era. The substantial raised porches and bright sunrooms were also utilized in medical treatment to provide access to the fresh air and sunshine which were considered vital components of a healthy lifestyle and keys to recovery from disease. The abundant use of large windows in the design of the buildings also reflected the importance of ventilation and light in medical theories of the time.
b) Be a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;

The district is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect. The district presents a collection of buildings reflecting the work of prominent Denver architect Harry W. J. Edbrooke. He was the only architect involved in the construction of the ‘new’ buildings for the Tilden School for Teaching Health. Harry W. J. Edbrooke studied architecture and engineering in his home town of Chicago at the University of Illinois and the Armour Institute of Technology. After establishing a practice in Chicago, Harry W. J. Edbrooke was invited to join the firm of his uncle, Frank Edbrooke, who was one of Denver's most successful nineteenth century architects. Harry Edbrooke was associated with Edbrooke and Company from 1908 until his uncle retired in 1913. Harry Edbrooke then established his own practice and continued designing until his death in 1946. The buildings in the district were designed early in the life of the new firm and are a strong collection of Edbrooke’s work. Historian Wilbur Fisk Stone cited the Patient Apartments among Architect Edbrooke's notable building designs.
d) Portray the environment of a group of people or physical development of an area in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

The district is significant for portraying the environment of a group of people – the patients the school served. The patients were housed and educated on a campus with unifying architectural elements. The Tilden School for Teaching Health is an example of an intact campus for patients of an early twentieth century sanitarium employing nontraditional treatment methods to restore and maintain health. The Tilden School for Teaching Health is significant for the type and methods of construction displayed, which represent early twentieth century theories regarding patient treatment and building techniques integral to medical facilities of the period and their adaptation utilizing popular architectural styles of the early twentieth century.

3. Geographic Significance

To have geographic importance, the structure or district shall have design quality and integrity, and shall:

a) Have a prominent location or be an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature of the contemporary city;

The historic district is geographically significant as an established visual feature of the city. The Tilden School for Teaching Health sits within the far west portion of the Highland Park subdivision and just across from a city park also named Highland Park. The campus provides a grouping of large institutional buildings situated in a residential area of comparatively small houses. From the south, the Main Building’s near 300 feet length, footprint of more than 13,000 square feet and rising two and a half stories has visually dominated this block of West Fairview Place since its completion in the early 1920s. Generous sized front lawns tie the Bosler-Yankee House, Patient Apartments and the Main Building to the neighborhood streetscape. Historic lampposts along Fairview Place remain as evidence of the historic entries to the campus. The setting provides a broad expansive view of the campus from the open public space of the Highland Park on the east, inherently creating an established, familiar, and orienting visual feature.
b) Promote understanding and appreciation of the urban environment by means of distinctive physical characteristics or rarity;

The district is significant under geography for its distinctive characteristics and rarity. Highland Park subdivision, which is the home of the Tilden School for Teaching Health campus, was platted by the Highland Park Company in 1875. The Highland Park Company developed street layout to follow the natural contours of the land allowing an appreciation of the urban environment’s topography. The president of the Highland Park Company, Dr. William A. Bell, was particularly concerned with the design. Dr. Bell, wanting the area to suggest something of his Scottish heritage, applied street names such as Roxburgh Court (now Grove St.) and Inverness Drive (now west 34th Avenue). The organic design was based on Riverside, an elite subdivision development located north of Chicago, Illinois. This subdivision features a distinctive physical characteristic with a unique curvilinear layout diverging from the typical development pattern of streets following the Platte River or the traditional north-south east-west grid. The streetscape is defined by the geography of the site and follows a natural hill slope. The Highland Park subdivision is cited as one of the few examples of nineteenth century picturesque community planning in the area. The grouping of buildings that formed the Tilden School for Teaching Health district, which provides a prominent gateway to the West Highland neighborhood, remains a rare remaining example of sanitarium health campuses of this scale and age in Denver.

Integrity:

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

Tilden School for Teaching Health Historic District retains good integrity. The buildings in the district maintain their original location and residential setting. As the school was intended for longer-term stays by the patients, the conversion to residential helps retain the integrity of feeling and association. There were alterations to the Main Building in the conversion to condos in the 1990s - the replacement of the asbestos cement roof tiles, addition of dormers on the third floor, original windows replaced, stair and elevator tower added, windows and doors reconfigured on sunrooms, balconies added, and garden level windows added; however, the historic ‘E’ form massing, proportion and the bulk of the original hip roof with wide eaves, as well as the south and east lawn remain. The overall integrity of materials and workmanship are evident in original brickwork and stonework. The design of the Administration Building/Bosler House as well as the Edbrooke designed Main Building and Patients building are retained.

Relate to a Historic Context/Theme and Period of Significance:

By the early 1900s, the operation of medical sanitariums had become a major component of the Denver economy. These facilities provided care for thousands of patients from across the country, as doctors believed that state’s climate and altitude were beneficial to those suffering from illness. While Dr. Tilden had significant differences with the mainstream medical world, he shared in common the belief in the beneficial effect on the fresh air and sunny climate of Denver. The Tilden School for Teaching Health
is representative of this era of the city's history, reflecting the popularity of private medical institutions which developed innovative medical regimens for their patients. Even after the Tilden School closed, the campus buildings, owned separately, operated as private facilities for clients with diverse medical needs.

**Boundary:**
The proposed historic district encompasses three primary structures and parcels associated with them - the Administration Building/Bosler House (3209 West Fairview Place), the Patient Apartments (3279 Grove Street), and the Main Building (3249 Fairview Place) - as well as three accessory structures associated with the Main Building. The accessory structure associated with the Patient Apartments is excluded from the boundary.

**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, Planning Board, and Building Inspection email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
  - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
  - West Highland Neighborhood Association
  - Federal Boulevard Corridor Improvement Partnership
  - 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 5:00pm, October 25, 2019, CPD has received 20 public comments regarding the designation application.
- Organization comment
  - Historic Denver, Historic Berkeley Regis, National Scenic Byway Foundation, and Front Range Research Associates in support
- Public Comments from individuals
  - 16 individuals in support

**Attachments Provided by CPD:**
- Designation Application
- Map of proposed district
- Public comments received by 5:00pm, October 25, 2019