

From: [Leo Cruz](#)
To: [Hahn, Kara L. - CPD City Planner Principal](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 900 E. 1st Avenue
Date: Friday, July 17, 2020 5:10:28 PM

Good afternoon Kara,

Is the Carmen Court Designation review still open for public input? If so, I would like to state my support for the landmark consideration as stated in the application. In particular, I strongly concur with the assessments of criteria 6, 7 and 3 as detailed in the application. Please let me know if there is a process or format I need to follow to formalize my expression of support.

Thank you!

Leo Cruz
48 S. Pearl Street
720-219-3091

Karen Roehl, 90 Emerson Street, Carmen Court, Denver CO

I was born in Montreal, Canada where I spent my childhood. In 1967 when I was 12, my family immigrated to Denver. I married and had 2 children by the time I was 24. The marriage didn't work out, and I became a single parent. Working full time as a secretary while taking evening classes in graphic design made me a very busy mother! Eventually, I was able to shift careers and become a graphic designer. I had a great career for over 25 years. After my daughters went off to college, I began to pursue fine art painting. At age 50, I decided to go back to school to earn my BFA, my first higher ed degree. Graduating in 2007, I immediately found representation for my work and have made a living as an artist ever since. I sell my work through gallery representation and various shows. I teach painting classes at the Art Students League and do workshops with various underserved communities including low-income seniors and prison groups.

At age 65 and having remained single, I am blessed with friends, family and good health. However, I have always struggled financially and now face retirement on my own. I am emotionally ready to retire, but unable to financially. I thought I was preparing properly for this time of life, but things don't always work out as planned. I've worked hard all my life raising 2 children, going to school while working, working multiple jobs at the same time, and I am still working full time now. I feel like I've done well, but not as well as I envisioned. I've kept afloat and live comfortably, because I live fru-

gally and continue to work for my income. Over the last couple of years art sales have dropped off which has been very disappointing and stressful. I'm not sure why this has occurred after enjoying 11 years of fairly steady sales. Because of this, I've racked up credit card debt, and I've had to dig deep into my modest savings which are now almost depleted. With a skill set related to the fine arts, my options for earning any meaningful income at this stage of my life are very limited. That being the case, I took a part time job with Amazon being a grocery shopper at Whole Foods for \$15/hr in an effort to extend what little is left of my savings. Hopefully, either my art-related income will rebound or I will be able to begin collecting social security. I have some equity in my home, but the sizable mortgage is not scheduled to be paid off until I'm age 86. The premium made from selling my home as a six-unit complex with the other Carmen Court owners will allow me to pay off all my debt, including mortgage, student loans, and credit cards. I will have some savings left over so that I can live without having to pinch every penny. It will also allow me to focus on doing art without the burden of having to make my entire living off of sales. Honestly, the timing of this opportunity couldn't be better. This sale could make or break me.

Landmark Preservation Commission

Dear Commissioners,

My husband, Gary Laura, and I purchased 916 E 1st Ave in Carmen Court in July 1998. I am 74 year old. Though I had the option to appear today virtually; I chose to personally risk my health. I want to witness the process of determining the outcome of this hostile application designating Carmen Court as historic. This is very personal to me. There is much a stake because of this ignoble interference with our private property ownership, rights and financial investment. Here is my experience.

Three years ago all 7 CC owners agreed unanimously to market Carmen Court for sale. We together agreed that any decision made throughout the entire process had to be unanimous: including who would represent us throughout the sale, venting all potential buyers and their offers, accepting the selling price, time restraints and possible future use of property by buyer. We all are pleased with the reputation, body of work and future plans of the buyer of our property. For all of us to amicably come to agreement on the future of CC is laudable.

We all have enjoyed the beauty and experience of living in CC. Never in the 22 years have we ever been approached by any Wash Park HOA members, civic members or activists, neighbors or general public inquiring about any historical or landmark aspect relating to CC. Until now we had planned to be in the final process of completing the sale and continuing on with our future plans. This contrived application has put us all in limbo.

Upon reviewing the application before you today, I see statements like "we believe or may have" without definitive proved facts. The application claims Mr. Rhoads to have been a "Master Architect/Builder". In fact research shows Mr. Rhoads was a draftsman owning a construction company. He is not listed ever to be an Architect in Denver records. He has no body of work pertaining to a definite style. It also states that he was the owner and builder of Carmen Court. The owner of CC record was Johnson Investment Co.

Another particular issue is the overall stated style of Carmen Court. It is not true Pueblo architecture, but rather Mediterranean/Spanish.

I am a retired Colorado Licensed Real Estate Appraiser. Appraisers make value decisions based upon facts - not assumptions or narratives.

Throughout the 22 years that Gary & I have lived here, we have learned from other past Carmen Court residents about the architecture and history of our beloved home.

FACT: Between 1890-1930, a new real estate design (Mediterranean Revival) originating in Florida and So California was appearing throughout Denver. We have provided several comparable homes built during the same time period several blocks from here. To the untrained eye the shape is similar to Spanish Pueblo style. The difference is in details. There are no vigas (wooden support beams) in Carmen Court, but rather iron accents. Mediterranean villas were purposefully located retrograde on the lot creating the expansive, appealing appearance. Iron balconies,

awnings, private enclosed patios, landscaping and a running water feature in the front added to that airy Mediterranean feel. Usually in single villas a circular front drive was another feature. Exterior paint color was often pastels or white with turquoise trim. In 2000 Carmen Court was repainted (after thorough research with color consultants) we discovered the original color of Carmen Court was Mediterranean yellow with sea green trim on the 140 iron encased window pains and wrought iron balconies. Over time the color Yellow and Green have developed a rich patina and darkened. Another feature of this style is noticeable by placement of the windows.

Ownership of each individual unit allows each owner to invest in upkeep, style and appearance. Therefore Carmen Court unit's interiors are all very different. They range from Southwestern, European, Contemporary and Traditional décor.

22 years ago we saw the value of this property especially over time. We have raised two boys here. We have maintained and improved our investment for them and our retirement. We have carefully thought out our future plans. To have this last minute outside intervention is not only hostile but (especially during these uncertain times) very ruthless. This application and resulting decision affects each owners' financial investment in our property over time

The application states: "The communal feel...creates a small village with courtyard shared by the owners and community at large". This is private property and this statement has offered the opportunity for people to encroach up our steps, take photos and congregate in our front yard. There is now a romantic false narrative misrepresenting Carmen Court's history and its future. Rumors about people falling in love here have been posted on a bogus facebook page "Friends of Carmen Court" supporting the application (this statement has since been taken down). The reoccurring comment made to us is about the appearance of the entire property. "It is so pretty" or "I love walking by". These examples have no historic value.

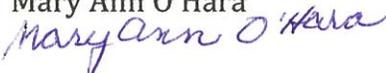
The continuing maintenance and age of the structure has becoming extremely costly and prohibitive. For us our planning and investment are culminating now.

Personally I am disappointed not only with the process but "the neighbors" who have instigated this application.

I am reassured with your professional qualifications, your decision will be based on facts or lack of. Admittedably my statements are mixed with emotions.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Mary Ann O'Hara



Landmark Commission
Landmark Preservation
City and County of Denver
Wellington E Webb Municipal Office Building
Denver, Colorado

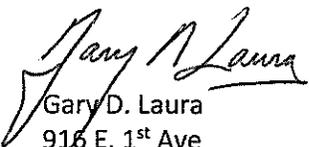
Dear Commissioners,

I am writing you to express my concern over the designation of Carmen Court Condominiums being designated as a Denver Landmark. I have read the application and found many assumptions and speculation in the document. Our homeowners association along with Heritage Consulting Group have found numerous issues with the application. I sincerely hope you will take our findings into consideration and use your professional integrity and credibility in finding the application deficit.

As a former Jefferson County Commissioner and County Manager in Ouray County, Colorado. I am familiar with the difficult position an elected or appointed official can find themselves in at any given point in time. With this in mind, I am requesting you take all the facts into consideration and vote to deny this application.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,


Gary D. Laura
916 E. 1st Ave
Denver, Colorado 80218

Terrie Curry
908 E. 1st Ave.
(708) 514-6847

INFINITE GRATITUDE FOR CARMEN COURT; AWE AND INSPIRATION FOR THE FUTURE

For seven years as a vigil volunteer for hospice, I was called to nursing homes or skilled living facilities when a dying patient became “imminent”. I would hold their hand, sing softly to them, and pray with them the last few days before they transitioned. My goal was simple: Imbue a loving message, “You are not alone”. Oftentimes I was appalled at the conditions of these senior care communities, and inconvenienced by their locations sometimes 60 miles away. The lack of aesthetic structures for the elderly seemed to be expressing an underlying belief in our society that the elderly and the dying can be dismissed because they are not THAT important.

For me, as well as the nearby neighborhoods I have come to love in my eight years in Denver, the sale of Carmen Court is a win - win. A much-needed aesthetic senior living community will be developed by Hines, a national firm known for its inspirational architecture. The beautiful and convenient location, built within the five-story zoning code will ease the burden for up and coming millennials. It will afford their fast-paced lives the luxury of daily drop-in visits to their aging parents. Being close to our children and grandchildren becomes the greatest joy in the last third of life.

Currently a hostile battle by three activists is threatening this vision and our freedom to pursue our rightful choice to sell our property. Hopefully, this brash attempt will be shut down based on their weak and false historical preservation criteria.

The second tier of the win-win for me in the sale of Carmen Court to Hines, is my dream to fund an “Awesomism” clinic for children on the autism spectrum.

My passion for these children was ignited while volunteering at the roughest elementary school on the South Side of Chicago. I mentored a brave 7 year-old boy named Alan. He was the only “mixed” child in a room of 40 black children and he had been diagnosed with autism. Although Alan read at the 7th grade level amidst children with severe learning disabilities, he was completely socially ostracized. The teacher told the other kids to treat him like a puppy dog because Alan was crazy. Through one-on-one play therapy between myself and Alan, he fully integrated within a year. The boys in his class ended up arguing as to who was Alan’s best friend.

In the fall of 2019 I completed a four year movement therapy program at the Feldenkrais Institute in NYC. With the premium from the sale of Carmen Court and my 1,100 square foot condo, I will have the funds to obtain a space where I can incubate a clinic for children on the autism spectrum. I am excited about facilitating social integration and nervous system organization through movement therapy. I will be able to target families like Alan’s who have limited resources.

After having been a single parent much of my life in the city of Chicago, where my daughter was held at gunpoint at my front door, where my late husband suddenly ended up in a coma and died at the age of 64, and where 85-year old hospice patient Anna whispered in my ear, “Please help me die quickly”, I am very aware of the finite and the temporal. However, inspiration and awe are the creators of joy in my life. My loving memories embedded in Carmen Court will live on, and with my imagined dreams becoming a reality I will soar into the future.

I have infinite gratitude for my life and living in Denver!