



COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMO REPORT OF FINDINGS FOR DEMOLITION

December 2, 2021

Address: 2501 N Gaylord St

Legal Description: L 16 TO 21 INC EXC REAR 8FT TO CITY BLK 8 MCCULLOUGH'S ADD

Current Building Name: Dominican Home Health Agency, Inc.

Construction Date: 1924

Source of Information: Assessors Record

Architectural

Architectural Style: Queen Anne Victorian, Mid-century modern

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Historical

Original owner: Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor

Original use(s): Convent and home for home health nurses

Current use(s): Home Health Agency

Historical background:

The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor was founded in Denver in 1923 when the first sisters arrived to establish the new convent. The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor was established to care for and aid the sick, poor and elderly in whatever ways they could such as helping with nursing, house cleaning, laundry, etc. Mother Mary Walsh first established the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor in New York in 1910 officially, though she began her life's work in 1879 in Manhattan, New York. According to Marjorie Barrett of the Rocky Mountain News "Several early members of the order developed tuberculosis in the course of their work and Mother Mary Walsh decided to establish a convent in Denver where the ill nuns could be restored to health while still working with the poor" (1). Mother Mary Walsh died in 1922, but four Dominican Sisters carried on the plans she made and came to Denver to establish the convent. Through joint efforts with The Knights of Columbus, the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and at the invitation of then Denver Bishop Tihen and the help of Father Charles McDonnell, S.J. (pastor of Sacred Heart Church and Loyola Chapel) the convent came to fruition. The 4 original sisters lodged at St. Rose's Home in Auraria while waiting for their new house to be built (Barrett 1). The property was purchased from The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Colorado (W.C.T.U.) in 1923 for \$9,000.

The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor became a fixture of the Denver community and were heavily aided in their work by many local societies and churches. Many bazaars, picnics and

annual carnivals were held to raise money for their cause. The Dominican Sisters were typically aided by Saint Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church just 2 blocks to the south of the property and by its congregation. By 1973 it was stated that Regis University students, the women's auxiliary, high school students, etc. all went out of their way to help the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor and their cause by helping to make repairs to the site and structure, gather clothes, furniture and items needed for patients and to help with cleaning (Barrett 1). By 1973 the organization had grown to have 40 volunteer nurses and 7 Denver-based nuns (Barrett 1).

Since the establishment of the Dominican Sisters for the Sick Poor, the house was also named the Corpus Christi Convent for the nuns that lived on site according to Sanborn Maps. The Queen Anne style structure was completed in 1924 according to the Assessors Records. The property has been continuously owned and operated by the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor which now operates under the title of Dominican Home Health Agency, Inc. According to Sanborn First Insurance Maps the property has expanded over time to accommodate not only the nuns, but community life that occurs on the property to this day. The site started out with only the Queen Anne home and a 1 story garage and remained that way until at least 1951. By 1958 however the original garage was converted into a secondary dwelling with an addition and a new garage was built closer to the side street at the alley entrance and 25th Avenue. A long rectangular midcentury modern wing constructed of cinderblock with brick face was also added to the north side of the house jutting out from the front façade. The south mid-century wing was added sometime between 1961 and 1967 to match the north wing. According to Barrett, "the convent is the only one located in the West" (1) as of 1973.

Source of Information: Denver Assessors Records and Master Property Records; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1929, 1929-58, 1929-61, 1962-67; *Denver Post*, *Rocky Mountain News*, GenealogyBank.com, Dominican Home Health Agency, Inc: <https://www.dominicanhha.org/about/>; <https://www.dominicanhha.org/about/history.html>; A Brief History of the Dominican Order in the U.S. Mary Nona McGreal, OP Originally published as the entry "Dominicans (O.P.)," pp.440-448, in *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic*: [https://www.dom.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/about/McGreal/A Brief History with Links.pdf](https://www.dom.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/about/McGreal/A%20Brief%20History%20with%20Links.pdf) ;

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

(Significance and Integrity Analysis)

The structure has direct and substantial association with a recognized group of persons who had influence on society in Denver, namely the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor of the Corpus Christi Convent.

The residence and community center has potential significance for the way it embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of the Queen Anne Victorian and Midcentury Modern architectural styles.

This building may be potentially significant for its distinctive physical characteristics that promote an understanding and appreciation of the urban environment. The Queen Anne style primary structure (built in 1924) has two (2) two wings built in a simple mid-century modern style. The combination of the residential Queen Anne style and typology with the institutional style and typology of the mid-century wings clearly illustrates the evolution of the site from primarily a convent residence into a site used for community work and outreach. The site is embedded in the City Park West residential neighborhood, but its unusual features and development reference its unique history and function for the community. Furthermore, the architectural features help passersby appreciate Denver's dynamic urban environment where buildings are changed and adapted to suit the changing needs of the use over time.

The site and structure may also be associated with social movements and institutions that contributed significantly to the culture of the neighborhood, community, city, state, or nation. The Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor was originally founded in New York by an Irish immigrant named Mary Walsh and the Denver convent is associated with the original location in New York on the Hudson. Additionally the land was purchased from the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Colorado (W.C.T.U.).