



STAFF BRIEF

This document is the staff's comparison of the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts, the Landmark Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 30, Revised Municipal Code) and other applicable adopted area guidelines as applied to the proposed application. It is intended to provide guidance during the commission's deliberation of the proposed application. Guidelines are available at www.denvergov.org/preservation

LPC Meeting: August 3, 2021
Staff: Brittany Bryant, Abigail Christman, and Kara Hahn
Discussion Item: Draft Customized Design Guidelines
Historic Dist/DLM: Proposed La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District
Year structure built: Period of Significance: 1873 - 1980
Council District: Council District #3, Jamie Torres

Past LPC Action:

Meeting Date: June 29, 2021

Description: Historic District

Motion by: E. Warzel: I move to recommend approval and forward to City Council for landmark designation of the La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District, Application #2021L-003, based on the Landmark ordinance criteria A, C, H, and J, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the June 22, 2021 staff report with the following modifications: insert the updated the legal description, Change 1111 N Lipan from contributing to non-contributing, and on page 24 change "Cecelia Benavidez" to "Cecilia Garcia."

Second: E. Hummel

Vote: unanimous in favor (9-0-0), motion passes

Project Summary and Events

Members of the community submitted a Landmark designation application for the La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District to CPD. Landmark Preservation staff reviewed the application and found it to be complete and to be eligible for designation. Staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for June 29, 2021. The LPC voted unanimously (9-0-0) to forward the designation application to Denver City Council. On July 7, 2021, Denver Planning Board reviewed the designation application for consistency with approved plans and for the district's effect on surrounding neighborhoods. Denver Planning Board unanimously recommended approval (5-0-0) and forwarded the designation to City Council. On July 13, 2021, the Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee forwarded the case to the full City Council. At first reading, a floor amendment was offered by Council member Torres to amend the boundary to remove two non-contributing edge properties. Denver City Council voted to approve the amendment, ordered the bill published, and the public hearing is set for August 3, 2021. If Denver City Council approves the designation application, the LPC will then review the proposed customized design guidelines at the August 3, 2021 meeting. If Denver City Council does vote to approve, the items will be removed from the agenda.

Project Scope for Discussion Item:

Intent:

The La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood was the heart of the Chicana/o movement and is a significant part of the Chicano/Latino story of Denver. The neighborhood was initially established near the railroad and Burnham Yards as a working-class immigrant community of the 1870s and 1880s. The architecture of the neighborhood reflects the early development of the area and illustrates the changes over time as it evolved into the center of the Denver Chicano Movement.

To better reflect the history, architecture, and culture of the district, Landmark staff worked with community members to customize design guidelines for this potential historic cultural district. The customized design guidelines address the early vernacular architectural styles and the evolution of the buildings over time. Staff, with community input, changed or altered the phrasing of design guidelines to better fit the neighborhood and removed guidelines that were not consistent with the historic fabric of the La Alma Lincoln Park.

Because of the overall continuity of the district and the relative lack of scrapes, the streetscapes, the rhythm of buildings, and the size of structures have historically remained the same. However, over time there have been changes to some of the materials, cladding, porches, and fences in the neighborhood. As a result, the guidelines that address massing or form remain the same, but greater flexibility is provided in the areas of materials, cladding, porches, and fencing. For example, since stucco siding, vinyl windows, and chain link fences are prevalent in the proposed district, all of those materials are allowed with the customized design guidelines.

How to Use of Customized Design Guidelines:

The Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts are used to review all projects in historic districts. For projects in La Alma Lincoln Park, the citywide Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts would apply. However, two chapters would be replaced with customized design guidelines. These chapters, which address Preserving Historic Buildings (Chapter Two) and Sitework and Fencing (Chapter Five), would be an appendix in the citywide design guidelines, as well as a design guideline addressing materials in chapter four. These customized guidelines would provide property owners in the La Alma Lincoln Park neighborhood with greater flexibility in materials, site work, and fencing.

Definitions:

Distinctive Features:

Each primary structure in the proposed historic cultural district was examined by Landmark staff, and for most properties, a list of distinctive features was added to the designation application. Typically, this list does not address building form or roof form. The distinctive features are characteristics that are important to keep. During design review, retention, repair, or replacement in-kind should be given special consideration.

Original:

For the purposes of design review in the proposed La Alma Lincoln Park Historic Cultural District, the word “original” throughout the all of the design guidelines shall mean “original or historic.”

La Alma Lincoln Park:

As the park has long been central to the community, the continued use of the park is important to the vitality of the neighborhood. Within the park, a few features and structures have been noted as contributing to the historic cultural district – the amphitheater, the historic rock retaining wall, the La Alma Recreation Center, and the Neighborhood House. Alterations to the contributing features will follow the customized design guidelines.

However, beyond these features, there should be great flexibility in design review to allow for the park to change and evolve in order to continue serving the community. While the Landmark Ordinance, Chapter 30 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code, will require all projects on the exterior of a building or site that requires a building or zoning permit to be reviewed, the intent of these customized design guidelines is to provide increased flexibility to make

changes as necessary. Changes to the non-contributing features should be compatible with the nature of the park and its character defining features. Additionally, Landmark Preservation does not have purview over vegetation and will not review changes to the natural landscape. The murals on the exterior and interior of the La Alma Recreation Center are under the stewardship of Denver Parks and Recreation, and are highly significant to the community and the understanding of the Chicano culture; they are of particular interest to the community. While currently Landmark Preservation cannot require the preservation of the murals, we highly encourage their preservation.

END