STAFF REPORT

This document is the staff’s comparison of the Secretary of the Interior’s 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

Discussion Item: Speer Boulevard Historic District
LPC Meeting: November 21, 2023

Staff: Abbey Christman

Staff Summary:

The Speer Blvd. Historic District was designated as a Denver Landmark district in 1988. The district encompasses Speer Boulevard from First Ave. to Irving Street. With few projects occurring within the district boundaries since designation, the LPC has had limited engagement with this district. However, substantial work within the downtown portion of the district is currently under consideration. A Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard Vision Study is currently underway and a pedestrian bridge over Speer is being planned as part of the KSE-Ball Arena Redevelopment. The LPC will be hearing more about these efforts through future discussion items. In preparation for those discussions, staff is bringing a discussion item to provide background on the district and reviews within it.

Proposals within the boundaries of the district would be reviewed based on the following:

- Speer Blvd. designation application and ordinance (ordinance no. 604, 1988)
- The Speer Boulevard/Cherry Creek Parkway Urban Design Guidelines—these were developed in conjunction with the designation application and were adopted by the LPC in 1988.
- Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures and Districts

Since the LPC has adopted specific guidelines for the Speer Boulevard Historic District, these will be the primary basis for review, along with the historic district ordinance.

Speer Boulevard Historic District Ordinance, 1988 No. 604
The ordinance states that the Commission shall review any building permit application within the district boundaries to determine “the continuity, compatibility, appropriateness and relationship of the proposed alteration, construction, erection or demolition of the subject improvement with adjacent improvements, the district as a whole and open spaces within the district.” In this review, the Commission is instructed to consider “the materials, texture of materials, permanent nature of the construction and materials and color used in exterior construction,” “the continuity and compatibility of improvements,” and the “Speer Boulevard/Cherry Creek Parkway Urban Design Guidelines.”

The Speer Boulevard/Cherry Creek Parkway Urban Design Guidelines
The guidelines were developed to “assist in creatively thinking about how to design an improvement or development to enhance the parkway’s historic character and civic quality.”

The guidelines are developed around five framing policies:

- Maintaining/revitalizing the City Beautiful character of the district
- Emphasizing the use of the parkway by people for a variety of uses
- Using and enjoying Cherry Creek
- Reinforcing a consistent and uniform character along the parkway
- Highlighting the parkway as a key part of Denver’s urban design legacy

END