



## STAFF REPORT

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](http://www.denvergov.org/preservation)

<b>Project:</b>	#2026-COA-227	<b>LPC Meeting:</b>	April 7, 2026
<b>Address:</b>	2801 Champa Street	<b>Staff:</b>	Brittany Bryant
<b>Historic District:</b>	Curtis Park 'F' Historic District		
<b>Year structure built:</b>	c.1890 (Period of Significance: 1870-1902)		
<b>Council District:</b>	#9 - Darrell Watson		
<b>Applicant:</b>	MA-CHE Architecture – Mary Helen Bussard		

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### Project Scope Under Review:

Storefront Reconstruction, Total Window Replacement, Exterior Stair Replacement

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### Staff Summary:

The applicant, Mary Helen Bussard, is requesting approval to reconstruct the storefront on the subject building, based on historic documentation, to replace non-historic vinyl windows and an existing metal stair, and to install a new front yard fence and gate as part of converting the building into an up-down duplex.

Originally constructed as a two-story Italianate residence, Sanborn Maps indicate that by 1925 a one-story addition had been constructed, and the building had been converted to a commercial use. Historic research shows that the Purity Food Store operated at this location from at least 1945 until 1979. More recently, the property housed Curtis Park Market, during which time the red brick was painted a cream color with red stripe accents. In 2011, the paint was removed from the brick; however, the T-111 infill at the storefront and the vinyl windows installed prior to 2007, before the Curtis Park "F" historic district was established in 2008, were retained.

Although the storefront addition falls outside the building's period of significance, it is over 100 years old and represents an important phase in the historic evolution of the Curtis Park Historic District, during which residential buildings were commonly converted to commercial uses, particularly along primary streets and at prominent intersections.

The proposed storefront reconstruction is based on historic photographs from the 1970s and later and includes a recessed corner entry, a large transom, storefront windows, and a kickplate. The existing divided-light vinyl windows will be replaced with one-over-one windows more consistent with the historic character of the building.

To provide access to the proposed up-down duplex units, the applicant proposes to replace the existing metal stair on the north elevation. The stair encroaches into the required side setback; therefore, the applicant is requesting a Landmark based Administrative Adjustment to allow for the continued viable use of the historic structure. The proposed stair encroaches approximately 1.28 feet into the setback. A stair in this location is documented in a 1978 photograph of the building. Staff finds that the replacement stair results in minimal alteration to the historic structure, facilitates continued use, and is consistent with the character of the district. Strict compliance with the setback requirement would result in an adverse impact on the historic character of the Curtis Park Historic District. Therefore, staff finds the request to be consistent with the applicable zoning criteria for Administrative Adjustment.

**Excerpted from Design Guidelines for Denver Landmark Structures & Districts, March 2026**

Guidelines	Meets Guidelines?	Comments
<p><b>2.4.8 When replacing common windows and doors, infilled windows and doors, or non-historic windows and doors on any elevation, match the existing historic windows and doors on the building or similar historic buildings within the historic context.</b></p> <p>a. When historic windows and doors are present on the building, match the replacement window or door to the size and form of historic windows or doors found on the building.</p> <p>b. When existing windows or doors are non-historic, or openings have been infilled, use new windows or doors similar to those found on historic photographs of the building or similar to windows and doors on buildings with similar architectural character.</p> <p>c. On primary elevations, do not use perimeter infill framing to create smaller windows or doors within historic openings.</p> <p>d. A simplified version of a historic window or door may be used on elevations that are not visible from public vantage points.</p> <p>e. On secondary elevations, perimeter infill framing may be used to minimally reduce historic openings that are not visible from public vantage points, and when the historic opening proportions, headers, and sills remain expressed.</p> <p>f. Inset new windows and doors into the wall plane the same depth as the existing. Inset is measured from the outside face of the window glass or door to the outside face of the adjacent wall.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The existing windows are non-historic vinyl units. The proposed windows will be installed within the existing openings, with no changes to the size or configuration of those openings. The replacement window design is based on photographic documentation from the 1970s, which indicates wood, one-over-one windows.</p> <p>Minimal perimeter infill will be required to accommodate the gap between the top of the rectangular window units and the existing arched openings; however, this condition is common within the Curtis Park Historic District.</p> <p>All windows will be inset approximately 4 inches from the wall plane, creating historic shadow lines.</p> <p>The proposed doors will be three-quarter light doors with a lower panel, a configuration that is common within the Curtis Park Historic District.</p>
<p><b>2.4.9 When replacing common windows, infilled windows or doors, or non-historic windows or doors on any elevation, or doors on secondary elevations, replacement windows and doors shall match historic window and door materials found on the building or on similar historic buildings in the historic context.</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The replacement windows and doors will be aluminum-clad wood; no vinyl or vinyl-composite materials will be used.</p> <p>Windows will feature clear or nearly clear low-e glass.</p> <p>Doors on the north and rear elevations will incorporate frosted glazing; as these are secondary elevations, they will not impact the primary façade.</p>

<p>a. Use wood, aluminum-clad wood, or composite fiberglass window and door materials on buildings that historically had wood windows and doors. Use steel, aluminum, or composite fiberglass window materials on buildings that historically had steel or aluminum windows and doors.</p> <p>b. New glazing may be double or triple glazed.</p> <p>c. Use clear or nearly clear low-e glass. Glass shall be void of tint, color, or reflection, with a minimum 65% visual-light transmittance and a maximum 25% reflectivity. Windows on secondary elevations at bathrooms may have frosted or obscured glazing.</p> <p>d. Do not use vinyl or vinyl composite replacement materials.</p> <p>e. Do not use integral shades or blinds.</p>		<p>No integral shades or blinds are proposed.</p>
<p><b>2.7.1 Preserve a historic addition that has achieved significance in its own right.</b></p> <p>a. Respect character-defining building components of a historically-significant addition or accessory structure added during the period of significance.</p> <p>b. Avoid the demolition of a historically-significant addition or secondary structure added during the period of significance. For example, an 1890 kitchen wing added to an 1882 house would be important both for its age and its link with the house's long history. Such an addition is usually similar in character to the original structure in terms of materials, finishes and design.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The storefront addition will be preserved. While it falls outside the building's original period of significance, it may have achieved significance and contributes to understanding the historic evolution of the Curtis Park Historic District.</p> <p>The proposed work includes restoration of the storefront and removal of the non-historic T-111 infill.</p>
<p><b>2.10.2 Restore an altered storefront to its original design.</b></p> <p>a. Restore and reconstruct missing features based on historical documentation and physical evidence.</p> <p>b. Reconstruct a missing lintel or cornice to help define the storefront.</p> <p>c. Replace missing pilaster elements.</p> <p>d. Reopen an enclosed or covered transom.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The storefront will be reconstructed based on historic documentation.</p> <p>A new recessed corner entry is proposed, featuring a 20-inch kickplate and a new aluminum storefront system.</p> <p>The transom and storefront pattern and proportions are based on evidence from a 1970s photograph, which shows a four-light transom and a five-light storefront along Champa Street.</p> <p>Above the entry door, a double-height transom is proposed.</p>

<p>e. If the original transom glass is missing, use new glass, or a sign panel/ decorative band if the transom must be blocked out.</p> <p>f. Use wood and glass, or metal and glass doors, as appropriate to the building.</p> <p>g. Do not install solid non-commercial doors.</p> <p>h. Do not install mill-finish metal doors or decorative historic-looking doors not original to the building.</p>		
<p><b>2Y To keep historic properties in use so they remain integral to the life of the City</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The existing building has been vacant for some time. The proposed duplex conversion, including the exterior metal stair, will introduce a new use that ensures the building remains an active and integral part of the Curtis Park Historic District.</p> <p>Staff support the administrative adjustment for the exterior metal stair encroachment into the side setback, as it allows for minimal exterior and interior alterations to the historic building while facilitating adaptive reuse. The exterior stair has been an established feature for several years and will not negatively impact the surrounding historic context.</p>
<p><b>2.14.2 Maintain a structure's character when converting to a new use.</b></p> <p>b. Retain the key character-defining features of commercial, mixed use and multifamily buildings, such as storefronts, entries, windows, loading docks, etc.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The structure was originally a single-family residence but was converted to commercial use over 100 years ago and has maintained that commercial use for many years. It is now proposed to be converted back into a duplex dwelling. As part of this conversion, elements of the building's commercial character, which may have gained historic significance, will be restored.</p>
<p><b>2.15.1 Place mechanical, utility and communications equipment to minimize visual impacts on a historic building.</b></p> <p>b. Locate ground-mounted units in an inconspicuous location and sensitively screen if visible from public vantage points.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Mechanical equipment will be placed on the north elevation, underneath the new metal stair.</p>
<p><b>5.3.3 Design a new front yard fence to minimize impacts on the historic context.</b></p> <p>a. Design a new front yard fence to be simple, open, and low (unless taller fences are typical of the historic district or surrounding historic context). The maximum front yard fence height should be 48" or less.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>A new 3-foot iron fence is proposed for the front of the property. This fence is a simplified interpretation of historic Curtis Park fences traditionally used to enclose front yards.</p> <p>The design will be open, maintaining transparency to both the front yard and the building.</p> <p>No chain link, vinyl, or other nontraditional materials will be used.</p>

<p>b. Use compatible but simplified (less ornate) versions of historic fences and walls present in the historic district or in the surrounding historic context.</p> <p>c. Use historic fence and wall materials present in the historic district or in the surrounding historic context. Do not use vinyl or other nontraditional fence materials.</p> <p>d. Do not install a new chain link fence in the front yard (an existing chain link fence should be preserved when it is a character-defining feature of the district).</p> <p>e. Do not install opaque fencing of any kind. A fence should be more than 50% open.</p>		
<p><b>5.5.4 Design and install new building light fixtures that are compatible with the surrounding historic context.</b></p> <p>a. Install lighting on residential buildings at the first-floor level only.</p> <p>c. Design and orient light fixtures to provide down-lighting for residential buildings.</p> <p>d. Scale new light fixtures to the building (i.e., use monumental light fixtures only on monumental buildings).</p> <p>e. Consider using building light fixtures with a contemporary design that are compatible in materials, quality and design with the historic building.</p> <p>g. Do not introduce fixtures from an earlier or later era that is stylistically inappropriate.</p> <p>h. Light fixtures along the alley should be utilitarian in design.</p> <p>i. Do not install flood lights or fluorescent tube lighting on street elevations.</p> <p>j. Conceal all conduits, raceways, and junction boxes within the building.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Light fixtures will be installed at the building entrances.</p> <p>The lighting will be down-lighting and appropriately scaled to the building.</p> <p>Fixtures feature a contemporary design that is compatible with the surrounding context.</p>

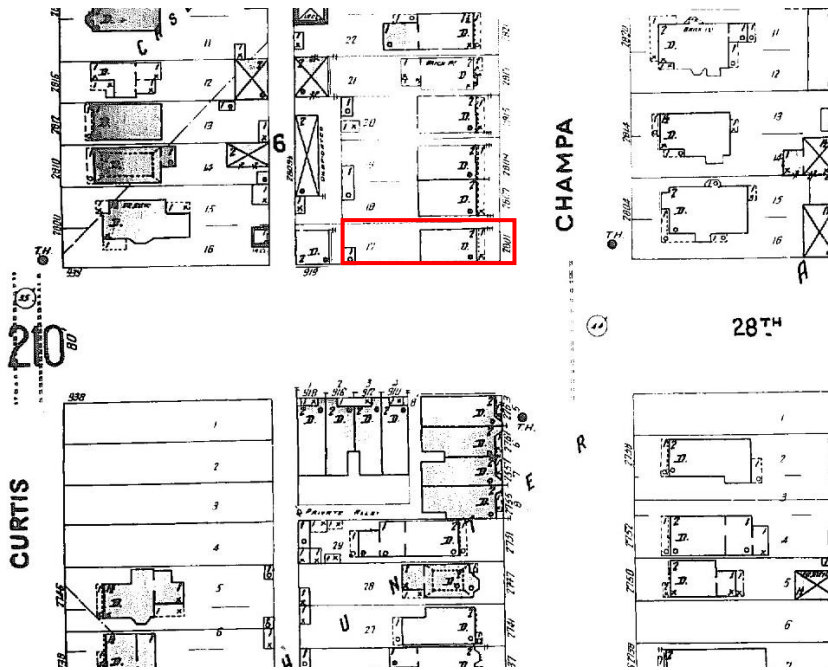
**Basis:** The storefront reconstruction and window replacement are based on historic documentation. The building's conversion and reactivation will allow it to remain an integral part of the life of the city while preserving key character-defining features that have achieved historical significance.

Suggested Motion: I move to APPROVE application #2026-COA-227 for the storefront reconstruction, total window replacement, exterior stair replacement, and site work at 2801 Champa Street, as per intent statement 2Y, design guidelines 2.4.8, 2.4.9, 2.7.1, 2.10.2, 2.14.2, 2.15.1, 5.3.3, 5.5.4, presented testimony, submitted documentation and information provided in the staff report.

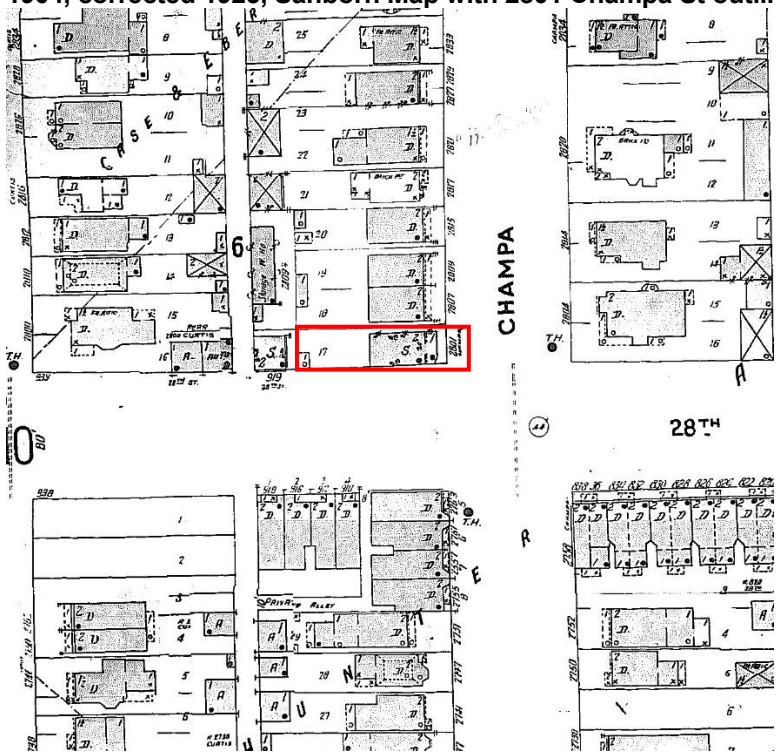
I also move that the Landmark Preservation Commission find that conforming with the zoning standard for setback would have an adverse impact on the historic character of the Curtis Park for the proposed exterior stair per section 12.4.5.2 B of the Denver Zoning Code for application #2026-COA-227 at 2801 Champa St.



1904 Sanborn Map with 2801 Champa St outlined in red



1904, corrected 1925, Sanborn Map with 2801 Champa St outlined in red



END