To: Landmark Preservation Commission
From: Becca Dierschow, Senior City Planner, Community Planning & Development (CPD)
Date: September 8, 2026
RE: Landmark Designation for 740 N. Washington St, The Stonehouse

Landmark Preservation Commission Suggested Motion:

I move to recommend approval and forward to City Council the landmark designation of 740 N. Washington Street, The Stonehouse, application #2026L-004, based on the Landmark Ordinance criteria A, C, and D, citing as findings of fact for this recommendation the application form, public testimony, and the staff report.

Request to Designate a Structure:

Application: #2026L-004
Address: 740 N. Washington St
Zoning: G-MU-3
Council District: #7, Flor Alvidrez
Owner & Applicants: Joe Massaquoi and Erika Dalya Massaquoi

Case Summary:

This property is located within the East Seventh Avenue historic district. It is a contributing property to the East Seventh Avenue historic district.

The owners of 740 N. Washington Street submitted a Landmark Designation application for The Stonehouse, written by owner Joe Massaquoi, to CPD on August 20th. Staff reviewed the application and found it to be complete and to meet Denver landmark designation criteria. As such, staff set the public hearing at the Landmark Preservation Commission for September 15th.

Designation Criteria and Evaluation, Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code:

To meet landmark designation criteria, in accordance with Chapter 30, Denver Revised Municipal Code, the application must be complete, and the structure must meet the following criteria:

1. The structure maintains its integrity
2. The structure is more than 30 years old, or is of exceptional importance
3. The structure meets at least three of ten criteria
4. The LPC considers the structure's historic context

Criteria Evaluation:

Landmark staff found that the application demonstrates that the structure meets the following criteria.

A. It has a direct association with a significant historic event or with the historical development of the city, state, or nation;

Under Criterion A, The Stonehouse embodies the historical development of Capitol Hill, from an elite, streetcar-supported residential neighborhood to a multi-family neighborhood featuring a mix of housing options including purpose-built apartment complexes, and houses divided into apartments, such as 740 N. Washington. 740 N. Washington was built in 1891, right before the economic crash caused by the Silver Panic of 1893. It was situated less than one block from the East 7th Avenue streetcar route. The architect-designed house served upper class owners and occupants, many of whom were in the banking and mining industries. As the decades wore on, the fortunes of its owners changed. In the mid twentieth century, its owners advertised a single apartment unit available for rent. By the 1980s, this had increased to 3 separate units. Its later apartment use reflected the neighborhood-wide conversion and densification of large residences. Finally, its 21st century return to single family use reflects the ongoing change to the Capitol Hill neighborhood, now returning some remaining homes to single family uses once more.

C. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style or type;

Under Criterion C, the residence embodies the visible characteristics of the Queen Anne style. Notable Queen Anne features include the asymmetrical massing, complex roof form with steep slate roof, stacked bay, multiple dormer types, recessed porches, carved decorative brackets, ornamental pinnacles and cresting on the multiple dormers. Like many Denver homes from this period, the house also utilizes details from other contemporary architectural styles. These architectural features are blended to create a unique expression of the architectural trends of the day. The home utilizes rusticated stonework popular in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, giving the home additional weight and presence on the street. Finally, details from the Shingle style, such as the curved shingle walls of the dormers and the coffered ceiling above the stacked bay create a unique home unlike any other in Denver.

D. It is a significant example of the work of a recognized architect or master builder;

Under Criterion D, the residence is a significant example of the work of architects Varian & Sterner, one of Denver's most prominent late 19th-century architectural partnerships.

Ernest Varian was born in Plainfield, New Jersey and came to Denver in 1880. One of Varian's earliest Denver designs was for the Calvary Baptist Church (now known as Zion Baptist Church, 24th and Ogden St) in 1882. Frederick Sterner was born in England but moved to the United States as a teenager. In 1882, he worked as a draftsman for Frank Edbrooke's Denver office.

In 1885, Varian and Sterner formed their architectural partnership, primarily designing high style residences for wealthy Coloradans, but also designing other buildings such as the Denver Athletic Club (1889), the Highland School (1891), and the Briarhurst Manor (Manitou Springs, 1888). The Stonehouse demonstrates the partnership's ability to merge European design sensibilities with Colorado's emerging stone craft traditions, particularly through the expert use of rusticated stone. The firm's other excellent example use of rusticate stone in the Romanesque Revival style is the Denver Athletic Club (1325 Glenarm Pl).

The partnership of Varian and Sterner lasted until 1901. During the mid-1890s, the firm shifted from designing in the Queen Anne style to Neoclassical and other similar styles, moving with the architectural

trends of the era. Therefore, The Stonehouse at 740 N. Washington Street is an example of the firm's earlier, rarer Queen Anne work.

Both Varian and Sterner would go on to have successful solo careers after their firm's dissolution c. 1901. Varian continued to design residences around Denver with his son, Lester Varian, under the name Varian and Varian. He also designed the John "Thunderbird Man" Emhoolah Jr Library at 675 Santa Fe.

Sterner moved beyond Denver, first to Colorado Springs and Pueblo, and then on to New York City, where he made a name for himself renovating brownstones – an early proponent of preservation.

Integrity:

Chapter 30 requires that a landmark designated property maintains its integrity. Integrity is defined as "the ability of a structure or district to convey its historic, geographic, architectural, or cultural significance…recognized as belonging to its particular time and place in Denver's history." The seven qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity are location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The existing property retains a high degree of integrity within the proposed period of significance. The property is still in the same location, and, although there have been changes to the surrounding area due to continued development, the neighborhood is still residential in nature; retaining both integrity of location and setting. Although there have been changes to the property's design, the most obvious of those changes are at the rear of the property and speak to the changing use of the property. The additions at the rear of the structure do not negatively impact the historic character of the building and could be reversed. Overall, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are excellent and the continued use as a residence helps retain a strong sense of feeling and association.

Relates to a Historic Context and Period of Significance:

As is appropriate for a property proposed for designation, the historic context is strongly interrelated to both the areas of significance and period of significance. The property is associated with the development of the Capitol Hill neighborhood and the wider development of central Denver, as a wealthy neighborhood served by the streetcar, to a multi-family neighborhood with more flexible tenancy.

The period of significance is 1891-2005. The home was constructed for R Pearson in 1891 and served as single family home until the ownership of Justine Davidek (Ide) who purchased the house in 1954. Justine later remarried, and as Justine Ide, converted the building into 3 independent units in 1984. The period of significance ends with the sale of the property out of her ownership, in 2005.

Boundary:

The designation application proposes to designate the legal description below:

Lots 12 and 13, Block 16, Arlington Heights Addition to Denver, City and County of Denver, State of Colorado.

Public Review Process:
Community Planning & Development has met all posting and notification requirements delineated in Chapter 12 (Article III, Section 12-96) and Chapter 30 of the DRMC.

Notifications:

- Owner notification letters regarding the LPC public hearing
- City Council and Community Planning and Development email notifications
- Registered Neighborhood Organization and courtesy email notifications
    - Capitol Hill United Neighbors
    - Neighbors for a Greater Capitol Hill
    - Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation (INC)
    - Historic Denver, Inc
    - Colorado Preservation, Inc
    - History Colorado
- Posted signage for Landmark Preservation Commission public hearing

Public Comments:

As of the date of this staff report, CPD has received no public comments regarding the designation.

Attachments Provided by CPD:

- Designation Application
- Map of structure proposed for preservation