

**Staff Presentation**  
**to the**  
Historic Preservation Commission  
April 17, 2024

## Historic Preservation Commission

Appeal: 2601 S.  
College Ave.  
City Historic Landmark  
Eligibility

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- De Novo hearing – HPC provides a new decision
- Consider evidence regarding **significance** and **integrity** of the buildings addressed as 2601 S College Avenue
  - Standards under Municipal Code 14, Article II
- Provide a **determination of eligibility** for Fort Collins Landmark designation
- Final decisions of the Commission shall be subject to the right of appeal to the Fort Collins City Council (Sec. 14-9)
- NOTE: The HPC's role in this appeal hearing is not to consider adaptive reuse potential, which is not a consideration of MC 14, Article II
  - This is considered if a resource is first determined Eligible, during the conceptual or formal development review stage

- August 16, 2023 – Preliminary Development Review Meeting (All City Depts)
- August 23, 2023 – Historic Survey Ordered
- October 17, 2023 – Survey Completed and Transmitted
  - Completed by City staff since no 3<sup>rd</sup> party historians were available
- October 27, 2023 – Appeal Received

## Land Use Code (Development)

- 3.4.7
  - (B) Requires identification of historic resources on/near development site
  - (C) Determination of Eligibility
  - (D) Treatment of Historic Resources

## Municipal Code - Eligibility

- Chapter 14, Article II
  - 14-22 – Standards for eligibility
  - 14-23(b) – Process for appealing a staff decision

If found Eligible



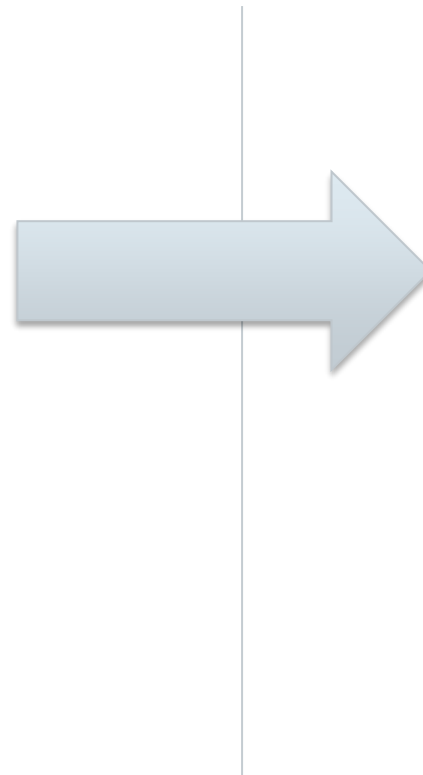
- If determined Eligible
  - *Does not* require or initiate landmark designation
  - *Does* require preservation and adaptive reuse of historic resources for development applications subject to land use code compliance [3.4.7(D)(3)]
    - Modifications of Standards are allowed under the usual process in LUC 2.8
- If determined Not Eligible – no further Preservation concerns

# Landmark Eligibility: 2-Step Linear Process

\*Section 14-22, “Standards for determining the eligibility of sites, structures, objects and districts for designation as Fort Collins landmarks or landmark districts.”

## Significance

1. *Events*
2. *Persons/Groups*
3. *Design/Construction*
4. *Information Potential*



## Integrity (7 Aspects)

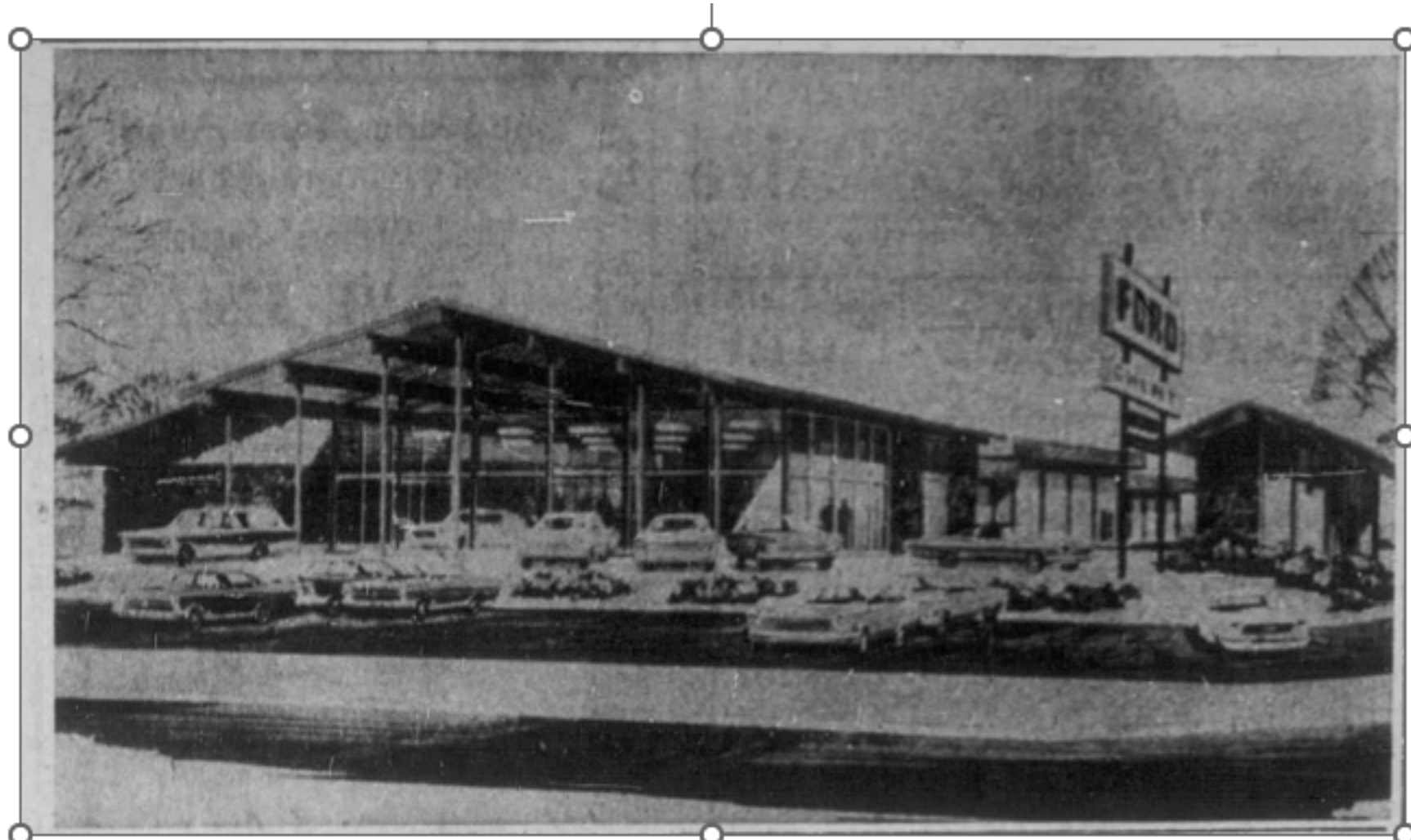
1. *Design*
2. *Materials*
3. *Workmanship*
4. *Location*
5. *Setting*
6. *Feeling*
7. *Association*





# 2601 S College Avenue: History

- Formerly the W.A. Drake Farmstead
- Demolished for the Ghent Auto Dealership
- 1966 – Completed
- 1972 - Car Wash structure added to NW corner
- Removed between 1983-1999
- 1998 – original roofing replaced with standing seam metal



**Figure 1:** Artist sketch of new dealership. Image clipped from *Coloradoan*, February 27, 1966.

# 2601 S. College Avenue: Significance Standard 1 Events/Trends



## 1 – Events/Trends (South College Commercial Expansion)

- *General postwar movement of businesses away from Downtown, including automobile dealerships*

### • Comparative Context

- *Few substantial, surviving examples of post-war expansion in this part of Fort Collins*
  - 100 E. Drake
  - 2720 S. College Ave
  - 2839 S. College Ave.
- *Formerly many examples, but most are either altered or demolished*



# 2601 S. College Avenue: Significance Standard 2 Persons/Groups



Frank Ghent, 1984



Ghent Motors Ground-breaking, March 9, 1966

## **2 – Persons/Groups** (*Frank & Dwight Ghent*)

Successful business owners & community leaders in early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Landmarked Residences: 1612 Sheely Dr. (Dwight); 638 Whedbee St. (Frank)
- Pre-1966 Ghent businesses heavily altered



Ghent Motors at 205 N. College, 1950 – since heavily altered





# 2601 S. College Avenue: Significance Standard 3 Design/Construction



Figure 2: 2601 S. College facade. Image clipped from *Coloradoan*, October 26, 1966.

## **3 – Design/Construction** (*Modern Architecture / Auto Dealerships in Fort Collins*)

- One of the only *intact* auto dealership from either the early (c.1920s) or mid-20<sup>th</sup> century periods in Ft Collins
- Significant surviving reflection of Modern architecture in this section of Fort Collins
- Potentially one of only two examples of commercial Contemporary style architecture in Ft. Collins



- Comparative context
  - Automobile dealerships (and other auto-related properties)
    - 142 Remington – Banwell Motors (now the Gearage)
    - 150 W. Oak – Goodyear store
  - Modern Commercial Architecture
    - 425 S. College, Safeway (now Lucky's)
    - 1101 W. Elizabeth, Campus West Shops
    - Bank towers downtown, including 401 S. College, 215 W. Oak, 315 W. Oak
    - Smaller bank buildings, including 100 S. College & 100 E. Drake
  - Modern Architecture overall
    - Those named above, along with some residential and religious architecture



Figure 3: 2601 S. College, service wing. Image clipped from *Coloradoan*, October 26, 1966.

- MC 14-22(b): “the ability of a site, structure, object, or district to be **able to convey its significance**. The integrity of a resource is based on the degree to which it retains all or some of **seven (7) aspects** or qualities established by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. **All seven (7) qualities do not need to be present** for a site, structure, object, or district to be eligible as long as the overall sense of past time and place is evident.



Figure 9: Feature 1, north elevation, view southeast (Image #7229, R. Schields, 10/3/2023)

- Overall good/sufficient integrity
  - *Detractions in Design and Materials due to:*
    - loss of most historic overhead garage doors in service wing
    - 1998 modification of roof to standing-seam metal

# Staff Evaluation of Integrity

Aspect of Integrity	Staff Conclusion
<p><b>Location</b> - the place where the resource was constructed or the place where the historic or prehistoric event occurred.</p>	<p>Retained – the dealership remains in its original location.</p>
<p><b>Design</b> - the combination of elements that create the form, plan space, structure and style of a resource.</p>	<p>Retained – Impacted by the two small additions on the west elevation and some window infill. However, overall design elements such as long and low massing, asymmetrical plan, low-pitched gable roof, broadly overhanging eaves, fixed window walls, obscured entries, exposed rafter beams, and broad uninterrupted wall surfaces remain.</p>
<p><b>Setting</b> - the physical environment of a resource. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a resource was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the resource played its historic or prehistoric role. It involves how, not just where, the resource is situated and its relationship to the surrounding features and open space.</p>	<p>Retained – although the surrounding buildings have changed over the last fifty years, the general commercial character of the setting is retained.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b> - the physical elements that form a resource.</p>	<p>Retained – Some detractions including the replacement of the roof with standing-seam metal and replacement of the overhead garage doors in the service bays. However, other key character-defining materials remain including the laminated, exposed roof beams, fixed glass window walls, and broad expanses of uninterrupted exterior cladding of concrete block, stucco, and stone.</p>
<p><b>Workmanship</b> - the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure or site.</p>	<p>Retained – important features of the Modern construction techniques, including stone veneer over concrete construction, remain.</p>
<p><b>Feeling</b> - a resource's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the resource's historic or prehistoric character.</p>	<p>Retained – Maintains overall sense as a 1960s/mid-century auto dealership.</p>
<p><b>Association</b> - the direct link between an important event or person and a historic or prehistoric resource. A resource retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a resource's historic or prehistoric character.</p>	<p>Retained – building's exterior cladding, massing, window walls, asymmetrical plan, low-pitched roof, and exposed rafter beams make association with the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century apparent.</p>



# Staff Evaluation of Appellant Materials - Significance



Applicable Standard	Staff Conclusion	Appellant Conclusion
<b>Standard 1 – Events/Trends</b>	<p>ELIGIBLE – Pattern of Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: strongly associated with the post-war movement of Fort Collins businesses, generally, and automobile dealerships, specifically, away from downtown toward the edges of the city.</li> <li>- State: Not significant to state history.</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history.</li> </ul>	<p>INELIGIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: Assertion that car dealerships cannot individually contribute to patterns of urban development.</li> <li>- State: See above</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 2 – Persons/Groups</b>	<p>ELIGIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: associated with Frank &amp; Dwight Ghent as significant business and social leaders. Acknowledge residences of both Ghents are already Landmarked.</li> <li>- State: Not significant to state history.</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history.</li> </ul>	<p>INELIGIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: Note that best years in sales were at other sites in Fort Collins, and that Ghent social contributions were not directly related to the dealership property.</li> <li>- State: Not significant to state history.</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 3 – Design/Construction</b>	<p>ELIGIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: significant as an excellent and rare remaining example of mid-century automobile dealership design and as an example of the Modern Movement/Contemporary architectural style. Comparative analysis with other resources in Fort Collins demonstrates this is a significant local example of Modern commercial architecture.</li> <li>- State: Not significant to state history.</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history.</li> </ul>	<p>INELIGIBLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community: While there are specific elements that represent the style of the period, the design and details are very common, and is in no way remarkable for the period. On a scale of 1-10 for mid-century design value, 10 being the highest, this example is 1-1.5..</li> <li>- State: Not significant to state history.</li> <li>- Nation: Not significant to national history</li> </ul>
<b>Standard 4 – Information Potential</b>	<p>Not significant</p>	<p>Not significant</p>

- Staff acknowledges modifications – addressed in staff-produced historic survey form
- Much of the appellant's materials suggest perceived lack of adaptive reuse potential as a factor in historic integrity
- Under City Code (and federal guidelines for NRHP), historic integrity is a measure of the presence of historic materials, features, and overall connection to the important historic period.

- Add 2017-2018 Determination and Appeal to the record
  - This has been added as Attachment 5
  - As noted in the cover memo, the 2017-2018 process occurred under a previous code version and does not reflect current Land Use and Municipal Code requirements.
- Appellant requested addition – redlines from 2019 code changes to Chapter 14

- Public Comments
  - 7 – opposed to Eligible finding/opposed to preservation of site
  - 3 – support Eligible finding and adaptive reuse

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