

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Yani Jones, Historic Preservation Planner

SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 122, 2024, Designating the Chavez/Ambriz/Gonzales Property, 724 Martinez Street, Fort Collins, Colorado, as a Fort Collins Landmark Pursuant to Fort Collins City Code Chapter 14.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to request City landmark designation for the Chavez/Ambriz/Gonzales Property at 724 Martinez Street. In cooperation with the property owners, City staff and the Historic Preservation Commission (Commission) have determined the property to be eligible for designation. The property is significant under City Code 14-22(a) Standard 1, Events/Trends, for association with the early sugar beet industry in Fort Collins, its social history, and its Hispanic history, as well as under Standard 3, Design/Construction, as a rare example of adobe construction in Fort Collins and including a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded addition. The owners are requesting designation, which will provide protection of the property's exterior and access to financial incentives for owners to use for historic properties.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Chavez/Ambriz/Gonzales Property at 724 Martinez St. is eligible for Landmark designation under Standard 1, Events/Trends, for its association with the history of the sugar beet industry, Hispanic history, and social history.

Originally constructed in 1923 by the Great Western Sugar Company to house beet workers and their families, this site is closely associated with the sugar beet industry and industrial agriculture of the early twentieth century.

The property is also connected to Fort Collins's Hispanic community, extending to the present with the Gonzales family, who have lived in this home since the early 1960s. The location of this home in Alta Vista, formerly known as the "Spanish Colony," near Dry Creek and the former location of the sugar factory, also speak to the occupants' deep roots in Fort Collins and the legacy of geographic discrimination they faced.

Social history is defined by the State Historic Preservation Office as the history of efforts to promote the welfare of society and/or the history of society and lifeways of its social groups. This property is associated

with social history through its reflection of the evolving relationship of the City with the property owners and residents of the Tres Colonias neighborhoods. For instance, the home's location along a paved street with no sidewalk and the addition on the building's southeast corner speak to the beginning of the City's efforts to address the lack of infrastructure and outdated housing conditions in the neighborhood in the 1970s and 1980s as well as the tension between such objectives and the lived experiences of people in the neighborhood. CDBG rehabilitation funding led to the construction of the 1976 frame addition on this house to extend sewer service to this property, but, at the same time, the City demolished one of this house's adobe additions, which was built by the Gonzales family in the early 1960s. These conflicting examples of preservation and demolition suggest the complexity of the social history reflected here.

Finally, this property is also eligible for Landmark designation under Standard 3, Design/Construction. The house is one of the rare remaining examples of adobe construction in Fort Collins. In addition to the original 1923 two-room adobe house, it includes both an adobe addition built sometime before 1949 as well as the 1976 CDBG-associated frame addition.

Character defining features include the house's adobe brick material, its U-shaped plan and linear construction, limited ornamentation, its CDBG frame addition, and its location and setting within the Alta Vista neighborhood.

This property retains sufficient integrity under City Code 14-22(b) to reflect its significance under City Code 14-22(a)(1) and (3). Location and setting, key aspects of integrity for this property, are retained. Feeling and association, also important for conveying this property's historical associations, are similarly strong due to the house's retention of its primary materials, additions, and location, which all make it feel like an early twentieth-century residence and speak to the association of the house with its history. Integrity of workmanship, materials, and design are also retained through the original adobe construction and the later additions and alterations. Although the building has changed over the last hundred years, including some alteration of materials or changes to design, these changes support the property's significance under Standards 1 and 3, because they reflect the owners' investment of time, money, and labor to improve their living conditions within a historical context of discrimination and changing attitudes toward Hispanic people from others within the community and from the City as an organization.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Designation as a Fort Collins landmark qualifies property owners for certain financial incentives funded by the City, as well as allows private property owners to leverage State tax incentives for repairs and modifications that meet national preservation standards. These include a 0% interest revolving loan program and a Design Assistance mini-grant program through the City and the Colorado State Historic Tax Credits.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

At its July 17, 2024, regular meeting, the Commission adopted a motion on a vote of 7-0 (1 absence) to recommend that Council designate the Chavez/Ambriz/Gonzales Property as a Fort Collins landmark in accordance with City Code Chapter 14, based on the property's significance under Standard 1, Events/Trends, and Standard 3, Design/Construction, and its integrity under all seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Commission further recommended that designation of the property will advance the policies and purposes set forth in City Code Sections 14-1 and 14-2 in a manner and extent sufficient to justify the designation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance for Consideration
2. Location Map
3. Landmark Nomination Form and Signed Acknowledgement
4. HPC Resolution 1, 2024
5. Presentation