

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Yani Jones, Historic Preservation Planner

SUBJECT

Second Reading of Ordinance No. 129, 2026, Amending the Landmark Designation of the J.M. Morrison House and Carriage House, 718 West Mountain Avenue, Fort Collins, Colorado, a Fort Collins Landmark Pursuant to City Code Chapter 14, to Remove the Carriage House and Rename the Landmark as the J.M. Morrison Property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Ordinance, unanimously adopted on First Reading on September 15, 2026, requests amendments to the landmark designation of the J.M. Morrison House and Carriage House at 718 West Mountain Avenue. In cooperation with the property owners, City staff and the Historic Preservation Commission (the "Commission") have determined that amendments are necessary to bring this property's historic designation into conformance with best practices for historic preservation. Such amendments include the removal of references to significance Standard 1 (Events) in the area of community planning and development, the removal of the carriage house as a contributing building on the historic property, and the related change of the historic property name to the J.M. Morrison Property.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on Second Reading.

FIRST READING BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Staff has undertaken a project to review existing landmark nominations to improve their accuracy. In some cases, that might mean adding new areas of significance based on supplementary research, removing an area of significance that is not well supported, adjusting landmark boundary descriptions, or determining and clarifying if different structures on the property are "contributing" or "not contributing" to the historic property's significance.

The J.M. Morrison House and Carriage House located at 718 West Mountain Avenue was designated as a Fort Collins landmark on February 21, 2006, via Ordinance No. 019, 2006, under City Code Section 14-22(a) Standard (1) Events in the area of community planning and development and under Standard (3) (Design/Construction) for the house's Edwardian architecture, with both the house and carriage house listed as contributing resources on the historic property.

This property's original landmark nomination argues that because the house is over 100 years old and has changed over time, it is a significant reflection of Fort Collins's growth and development patterns and the ways buildings change over time. The National Park Service *Best Practices Review* feature "Area of

Significance: Community Planning and Development” states: “Acts of planning and development are not sufficient to demonstrate the *significance* required” for designation, the “property’s specific associations must be considered important as well.” For this reason, it is rare for an individual property to be significant under the area of community planning and development. The J.M. Morrison House and Carriage House located at 718 West Mountain Avenue lacks those specific associations, and so is not considered significant under City Code Section 14-22(a) Standard (1) in this way.

For an outbuilding to be considered a historic resource eligible for designation, it must meet either or both of the following criteria outlined by the National Park Service in the guidance document “Evaluating Garages and Outbuildings in Historic Districts”: (1) It was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the property, and possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period; and/or (2) It independently meets the criteria for designation. The carriage house at 718 West Mountain Avenue does not meet either of these criteria, because it does not reflect the Edwardian architecture for which the property is significant and it also is not individually eligible for landmark designation because it has the same historical associations and information potential as the house, which disqualifies it for designation under City Code Section 14-22(a) Standards (1), (2), and (4), and because it is not considered a significant example of a carriage house from this time period after comparative analysis.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Designation as a Fort Collins landmark qualifies property owners for certain financial incentives for repairs and modifications that meet national preservation standards. These include the Colorado State Historic Tax Credits and any additional support programs that may be available from the City when funding is available.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

At its August 19, 2026, regular meeting, the Commission passed a resolution on a vote of 7-0 to recommend that City Council adopt an ordinance amending the landmark designation of the J.M. Morrison House and Carriage House at 718 West Mountain Avenue to remove references to significance related to community planning or development, to remove references to the carriage house as a contributing building on the property, and to change the historic property name to the J.M. Morrison Property.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Because this designation amendment was supported by the property owners, public notice described under City Code Section 14-34 was not required. However, to inform members of the public of this proposal, a sign was posted at the property, and the agenda item was also shared through the monthly Historic Preservation Matters e-newsletter.

ATTACHMENTS / LINKS

First Reading attachments available in September 15, 2026, agenda materials at the following link: <https://fortcollins-co.municodemeetings.com/>

1. Ordinance No. 129, 2026