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Historic Preservation Commission

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HPC-22-20

December 21, 2022

To: Historic Preservation Commission
From: Wade Broadhead, Senior Planner
Through: Scott Hobson, Acting Director of Planning and Community Development
Location: 613 W. Mesa Ave
Applicant: Tom Simmons, Front Range Research Associates
Owner: St. Paul's First African Methodist Church, Ann Batey Representative
Year Built: 1915 church, parsonage 1909
Legal Description: Lot 12, Block 42, Bessemer
Zone District: R-4, Mixed Residential Zone District

Synopsis

The applicant is requesting local Landmark designation for the First African Methodist Episcopal Church (St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church) located at 613 W. Mesa Ave located in the historically significant Bessemer Neighborhood. According to Section 4-14-8, of the Pueblo Municipal Code, a building object, monument, structure or site may individually be designated as a Landmark if it has distinctive character and meets the criteria listed in the code.

The application cites significance under three criteria, history, architecture, and geography because it is one of Pueblo's most significant African American religious buildings and community centers. The landmark nomination covers both the main church building, constructed in 1915 and attached parsonage, constructed in 1909.

Background

The owner, through the applicant, nominated the building and site for its distinctive character and certain criteria, focusing on historical events, geography, and architecture and is aware of the reasons for, and effect of, designation of local landmarks in the City of Pueblo.

The Pueblo Historic Preservation Commission, in prior cases, has considered landmark designation applications eligible if they meet two of the three criteria. This application's justification of facts proposes eligibility because it meets criteria 1a, 2a, and 3a.

The applicant nominated the subject property for landmark designation per the requirements contained in Section 4-14-8, Chapter 14 – Historic Preservation Code, Title IV – Building Regulations, of the Pueblo Municipal Code. The Historic Preservation Commission may approve this application if it serves the goals of the historic preservation code. A building, object, monument, structure, or site may individually be designated as a Landmark, or one or more buildings, objects, monuments, structures, or sites which are united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development may be designated as a Historic District, if they have distinctive character and meet the following criteria:

1. Special historic or prehistoric interest or importance:
 - a. Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State, or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
 - b. Has the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
 - c. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.
2. Special architectural, engineering, or aesthetic interest or importance:
 - a. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
 - b. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering specimen; or
 - c. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
 - d. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.
3. Special geographic interest or importance:
 - a. by being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, which should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif, or
 - b. owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City.

The application which was prepared by Tom and Laurie Simmons of Front Range Associates claims significance under three criteria which are evaluated below.

1A Have Direct Association with the historical development of the city, state, or nation.

Erected in 1915 St. Paul's African Methodist Church is one of the last remaining African American Churches. The building is situated in Bessemer and serves Pueblo's small but significant African American population. St. Paul's was erected on the site of an earlier church that was removed a few years after the parsonage was built. The church drew from increasing number of African American immigrants working at Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) steel mill and other industries. By 1960s/70s the area around the church was Pueblo's largest black neighborhood. The nomination cites the National Trust for Historic Preservation, stating "foundational to Black religious, political, political, economic and social life, Black churches continue to inform and shape black identity today they serve as houses of worship as well as safe havens, social centers and cultural repositories". In addition to the information on the specific site, the nomination compiles a detailed historic context of African American settlement in this section of the Bessemer neighborhood that may be valuable for future landmark nominations.

Staff finds that the site does have direct association with significant persons and events in Pueblo and Colorado related to the African American community and American First Methodist religious development.

2A Embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or type

According to the nomination St. Paul Methodist is one an excellent example of Mission Revival Architectural style in Pueblo. The Mission Revival style is seen in the curvilinear gable parapet, round arch windows, corner tower, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters. The solidity of the brick also exemplifies the style though some examples are stucco. The Mission Revival style initially took off with the California building at the worlds fair in 1893 but spread quickly as the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroad adopted it for their stations throughout the West. Closer to home Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) adopted the style for most of its corporate buildings in Pueblo, Southern Colorado, and Northern New Mexico. Unfortunately, many of those CF&I buildings have been destroyed including the various buildings at Corwin Hospital and the Minnequa Club. The church may have chosen the Mission Revival style for its affiliation with CF&I as the primary employer of the congregation and as an effort to fit in and be seen as modern.

The 1909 parsonage is a good example of the Classic Cottage style popular in Colorado and Pueblo from 1900 to World War One. The building has a stone foundation, red brick walls, and a hipped roof with overhanging, flared eaves.

Staff finds the site eligible under 2A as a superior example of the Mission Revival and Classic Cottage architectural style.

3A Geography (due to a typo on the application form 3A should read 3B which is *owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City*

According to the nomination, the church occupies a prominent location of the northeast corner of Mesa and Pine Street in the Bessemer neighborhood. The church is situated centrally within the portion of Bessemer that had the greatest number of African American residents from the early 1900's to the 1980's. The church functioned as a geographic point of reference visually and socially. The central location allowed the building to serve as a community and support center for its congregants.

The church's the three-story tower is the most prominent feature of the building and towered above the mostly one and two-story residential buildings. Mesa Ave. was a busy street at the time, with numerous small shops located on the thoroughfare.

Staff finds that the site does exhibit a singular characteristic as an established visual feature due to its three-story tower and as a safe community location in the center of a historically African American neighborhood.

Further eligibility for significance

In addition to the criteria discussed above St. Paul AME Church also served as center for the national Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and as a Green Book site, or a location that was safe for African American travelers in a time of segregation. Interviews with church members described Pueblo as not residentially segregated but very socially segregated. The church also functioned as a community center related to many key events in U.S., Colorado, and Pueblo history. The church played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement locally, and initially played a strong role in the American Methodist Church

development in Colorado, hosting the statewide conference in this building in 1916. The church is significant for it's association Rev. John Adams, the second African American citizen to argue a case in front of the Supreme Court. Rev. Adams went on to become a prominent civil rights and religious leader in Omaha, Nebraska including a state representative.

Changes to the Building and Property

According to the nomination the choir was removed in the 1950s, in 1965 the church sanctuary was removed, and in the 1970s the parsonage became the annex. Upstairs windows were also bricked in and openings in the tower were covered in wood panels.

Zoning District

The site and surrounding area are entirely zoned R-4 and the surrounding neighborhood is mostly zoned R-4 and comprised of pre 1950's single family homes on smaller lots with some multifamily and commercial development in the vicinity.

City's Comprehensive Plan Compliance

St. Paul First AME Church is located in the Urban Neighborhoods future land use area according to the Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan adopted in July of 2022. Urban Neighborhoods are characterized by single family detached and attached homes, duplexes and townhomes with supporting land uses such as accessory dwelling units; small scale commercial; retail and services; parks; schools; libraries; community gardens; and other complimentary uses. According to the Comprehensive Plan, Urban Neighborhoods are those generally built before 1950 and are centrally located neighborhoods.

The Regional Goals and Policies section of the Comprehensive Plan addresses historic preservation efforts in the City. Most notably in *Policy -4.1.5 People in Preservation*, which states, "Support and expand ongoing efforts to engage long time residents and others in documenting the oral histories of different ethnic and minority groups, neighborhoods, and communities..." *Policy 4.1.3 Inventory of Cultural Resources* encourages the expansion the Pueblo Inventory of Cultural Resources and the measurer of success on page 54 encourages an increasing trend in local landmarks. Landmarking St. Paul directly addresses numerous polices and goals in the Pueblo Regional Comprehensive Plan with respect to planning and historic preservation by documenting the contribution of African American community in Pueblo and honoring their historic places.

Upon designation of the property to a historic register, the applicant and property owner intends to apply for grants for qualified rehabilitation of historic features.

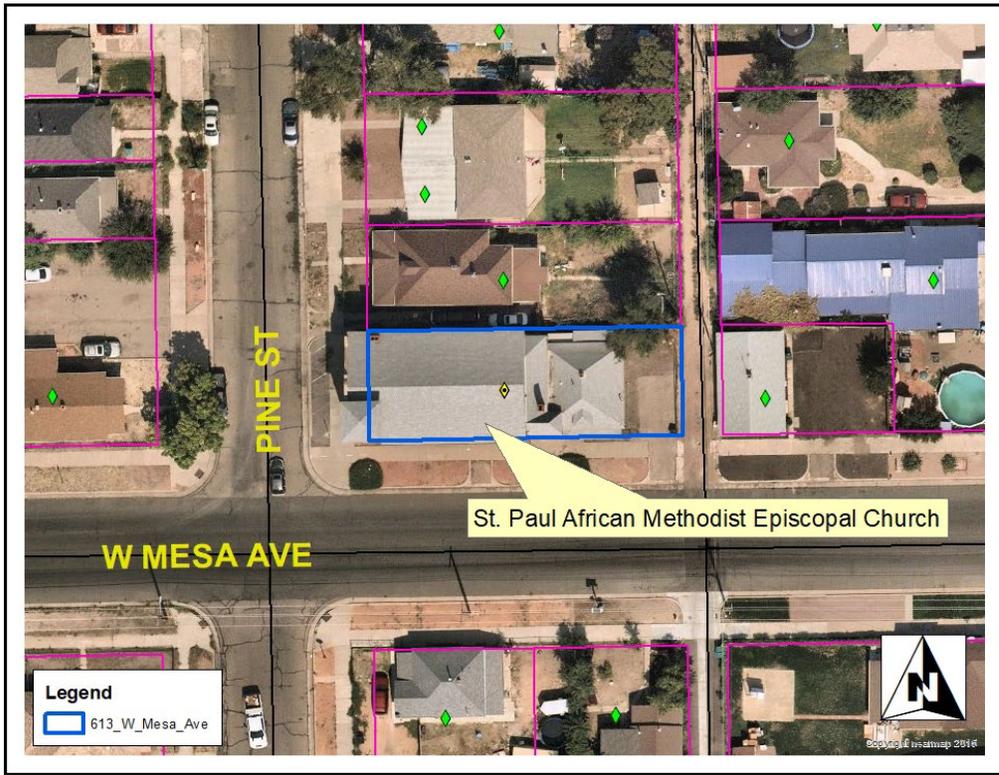
Recommended Action:

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission forward recommendation of approval to the Planning and Zoning Commission and designate St. Paul's First AME Church as a local Pueblo landmark since it meets criterion 4-14-8, (a), (1),a;(a),(2),a; and (a),(3),b.

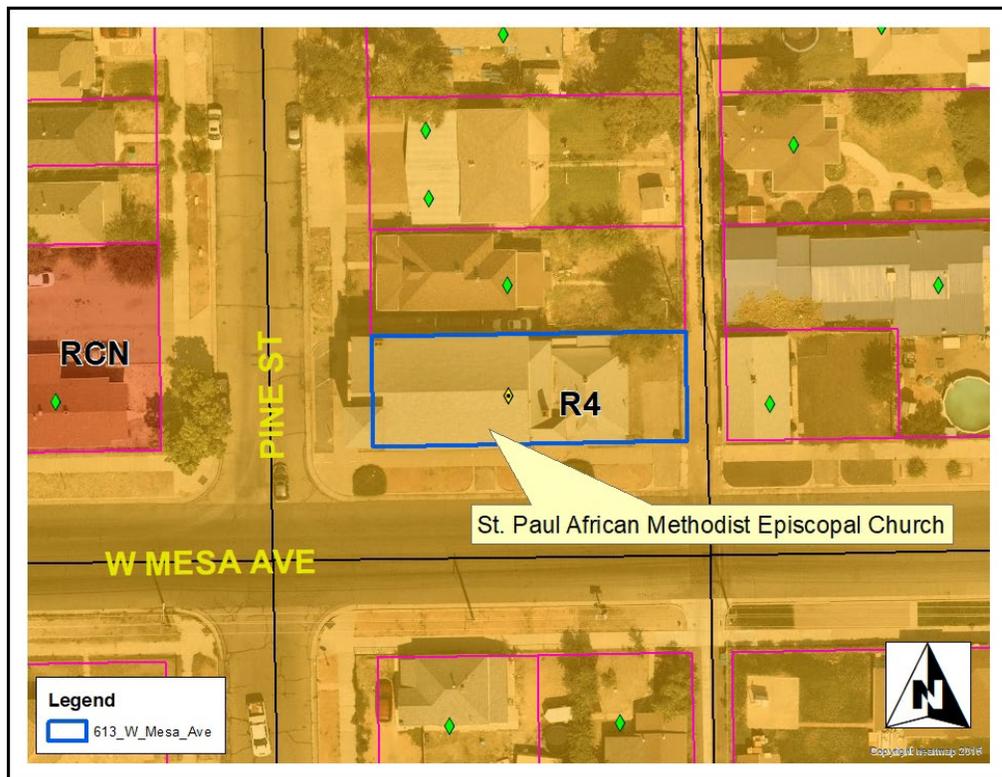
Exhibits

- A. Maps
- B. Photographs
- C. Application signature sheet and OpenGov document, full nomination is attached via PDF.

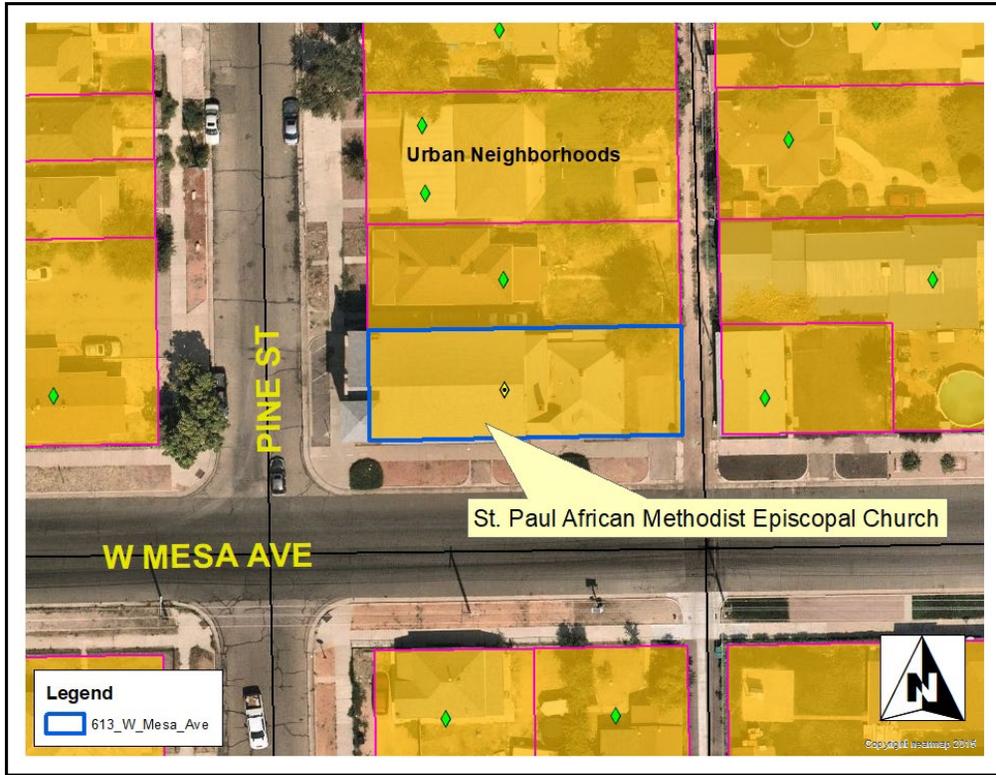
EXHIBIT A. MAPS



A1. Aerial image of the property



A2. Zoning map of the property



A3. Comprehensive Plan Map

XHIBIT B. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



View of the façade facing Pine Street



Public notice posting



Façade facing Mesa Avenue.



1909 parsonage from Mesa Ave



North facing facade

E
EXHIBIT C. APPLICATIONS AND ATTACHEMNTS



10/21/2022

22-168

Historic Preservation Commission

Status: Active

Date Created: Oct 20, 2022

Applicant

Tom Simmons
frraden@msn.com
Front Range Research Associates Inc
3635 W 46th Ave
Denver, CO 80211
72093311391

Primary Location

613 W MESA AVE
PUEBLO, CO 81004

Owner:

ST PAULS A M E CHURCH AKA FIRST A M E CHURCH ,
PO BOX 2265 PUEBLO , CO 81004-0265

Internal

Case Number

HPC-22-20

Planner Assigned

Planner 2

Continuances

--

Number of Posters

1

Number of Postcards/Mailings

--

Newspaper Notice Cost

--

Public Notice Costs must be paid by:

--

Public Notice zoning poster must be displayed by:

--

HPC Hearing Date

12/21/2022

HPC Hearing Information

HPC Hearing Results

--

Check box if hearing is a Special Requested Hearing

P&Z Hearing Date

--

Planning & Zoning Commission Information

P&Z Hearing Results

--

Check box if hearing is a Special Requested Hearing

Council First Reading

--

City Council Information

Council Final Reading

--

Council Hearing Results

--

Effective Date

--

Ordinance Number

--

Recording Number

--

Application Information

Application Type	Residential or Non-Residential?
Historic Nomination	Non-Residential

Nomination for Local Historic Designation Eligibility Criteria

Nomination for Local Historic Designation

Name of Property and/or Historic Name	Present Use
St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church	Church

Historic Use
Church

Site Number (Issued by State of Colorado)
5PE8772

Are you designating a historic district?
No

What is the Applicant's Affiliation/Interest in Property
The owner is the applicant

Owner Consent to Designation

Property Owner Signature
First AME Church
07/25/2022

Attachments

-  StPaulAMEChurch-StatementOfSignificance.docx
Uploaded by Tom Simmons on Oct 19, 2022 at 3:48 pm
-  StPaulAMEChurch-ResearchSources.docx
Uploaded by Tom Simmons on Oct 19, 2022 at 3:50 pm
-  StPaulAMEChurch-PuebloLandmark-Oct2022.docx
Uploaded by Tom Simmons on Oct 19, 2022 at 3:51 pm



CO_Pueblo_StPaulAMEChurch_0001.JPG
Uploaded by Tom Simmons on Oct 19, 2022 at 3:52 pm

History

Date	Activity
Jul 25, 2022 at 9:02 am	Tom Simmons started a draft of Record 22-168
Oct 19, 2022 at 3:38 pm	Tom Simmons altered Record 22-168, changed ownerEmail from "" to "aebatey9529@q.com"
Oct 19, 2022 at 3:38 pm	Tom Simmons altered Record 22-168, changed ownerPhoneNo from "" to "719-553-7624"
Oct 20, 2022 at 2:19 pm	Tom Simmons submitted Record 22-168
Oct 20, 2022 at 2:19 pm	changed the deadline to Oct 22, 2022 on approval step Fee Review on Record 22-168
Oct 20, 2022 at 2:19 pm	approval step Fee Review was assigned to Planning Front Counter on Record 22-168
Oct 20, 2022 at 2:19 pm	changed the deadline to Oct 22, 2022 on approval step Fee Review on Record 22-168



Planning & Community Development
Scott Hobson, Acting Director

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APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Name of Property: St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

Name of Property Owner: First AME Church

Address of Property: 613 W. Mesa Avenue

Legal Description: Bessemer, Block 42, Lot 12

Zoning: R-4

Present Use: Church

Historic Use: Church

Site Number (issued by State of Colorado): 5PE.8772



Owner Consent to Designation:

I (we), the undersigned, acting as owner(s) of, the property described in this application for landmark designation do, hereby, give my (our) consent to the designation of this structure as a Structure for Preservation.

Printed name (s): Ann E. Batey, Trustee, First AME Church

Address: 613 W. Mesa Avenue, Pueblo, Colorado 81004

Telephone Number: 719-553-7624

Email Address: aebatey9529@q.com

Signature:

Date: October 21, 2022

Applicant Name (if not the Property Owner): _____

Affiliation/Interest in Property:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Signature(s): *Ann Batey*

Date:

Eligibility Criteria: History 1A, Architecture 2A, and Geography 3A

For Staff to Complete

Date Approved by HPC: _____ P and Z _____ City Council _____ Ordinance #:

Fee Paid:

Date:

Scheduled Hearing:



