



City of Loveland

Long Range Planning Division

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Loveland City Council Staff Report

From: Matt Robenalt, Long Range Planning Division
Meeting Date: August 4, 2003
Re: Application for Historic Landmark Designation

SITE DATA

Address: 234 E. 4th Street, Loveland, Colorado

Request: Application for Historic Landmark Designation

Historic Name: Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile

Architectural Style: Early Twentieth Century Commercial, Two-Part Commercial Block

Current Building Sq. Ft.: Ground Floor Total = 3375 sq.ft.
Ground Floor Original Structure = 2250 sq.ft.
Ground Floor Addition = 1125 sq. ft.
Second Floor Total = 1937 sq. ft.
Building Total = 5312 sq. ft.
(measurements provided by owner)

Construction Date: Original Structure = c.1918-1927
Ground Floor Addition = post 1937

Legal Description: Lot 4, Block 18, City of Loveland, County of Larimer, State of Colorado

Owners: Austin Dosch Venture, LLP
918 13th Street, Greeley, CO 80631

Applicant: Bruce Willard, General Partner/Manager
Austin Dosch Venture, LLP

Application Summary:

On August 4, 2003 the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate the property at 234 E. 4th St. as a Loveland Historic Register Landmark. Approved HPC Resolution No. 3-03 is provided as an attachment.

The nomination application is for the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile. Larimer County Assessor records identify the building and parcel by the following address: 234 E. 4th Street, Loveland, Colorado.

History:

The Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile is associated with the historical context of Commerce & Industry according to the “Historical Contexts” document prepared in 1997 for the Loveland Museum/Gallery by Jennifer H. Strand, Ph.D. According to this document, the first decades of the 1900’s were characterized by an era of steady commercial growth spurred by the sugar beet industry in Northern Colorado, and particularly in Loveland. The sugar beet boom, which created a sense of economic stability into the Loveland community, resulted in the construction of the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile along with numerous other downtown commercial structures.

According to the Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory Form – Resource No. 5LR5069, the estimated date of construction of the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile is between 1918 and 1927. The exact date of construction is not known. According to Sanborn fire insurance maps and Larimer County Assessor records, there is evidence of a building on this parcel as early as 1906, but the structure did not emerge in its present form until years later. The original cost of construction and the builder/contractor is also unknown. The identity of the original architect is not certain, but Architectural Inventory Form- Resource No. 5LR5069 suggests that an original building tenant, J.J. Jones, also an architect, may be the original designer of the structure. A single-story, concrete-block walled addition is attached to the rear of the building. The addition’s estimated date of construction is sometime after 1937.

In 1922, listings in the Loveland City Directory indicate historical occupants of the building as McCluskey Mercantile Company on the first floor, and dentist E.O. Hile, architect J.J. Jones, osteopathic physician G.A. Roulston, attorney H.S. Sherman, and insurance salesman J.G. Woods as tenants on the second floor. By 1925, the Loveland City Directory identified the property as the Meyer Store Building, with purveyors of dry goods occupying the ground floor, and upper floor tenants consisting of Dr. Hile’s office, attorney Reid Williams, and hairdresser Mrs. L.F. Chandler. The Meyer Store occupied the ground floor of the building until the mid-1930’s, when grocery store tenant, Epley’s Cash Store, took over the space. Epley’s Cash Store was already a downtown business, and moved into the Meyer Building from the nearby 218 E. 4th Street location. Epley’s Cash Store occupied the building for only a short time, until 1938 or 1939.

Beginning in 1940, the building began its near 60-year long trend as a location for shoe stores. Shoe store tenants included the Loveland Shoe Store in the 1940’s, Wallack’s Loveland Store and Kirk’s Shoe Store in the early 1950’s. Brown’s Shoe Fit Company occupied the ground floor from 1957 until 2000. The most recent tenant was the Java Lounge coffee shop and gallery. The building is currently unoccupied while awaiting rehabilitation.

Architectural Description:

The Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado’s Historic Architecture and Engineering identifies 20th Century Commercial structures as generally one (1) to five (5) stories, with flat or slightly pitched roofs. Often constructed of blond or light colored brick, these buildings have very little ornamentation other than some decorative brickwork along the cornice or parapet. In some of the smaller Colorado towns, these buildings retain some elements of the 19th Century Commercial structures, particularly the recessed

entrances, clerestory, and transoms. According to the Colorado Historical Society Guide to Historic Architecture and Engineering, the characteristics that define the 20th Century Commercial style can include a recessed entrance, clerestory, transom, corbelled cornice, decorative brickwork and parapet. Examples of this type of Colorado architecture are provided in Photos #1 and #2.

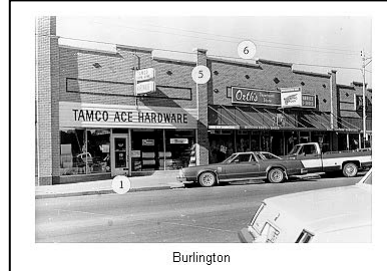


Photo # 1 & #2. Examples of 20th Century Commercial architecture. Source: Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado’s Historic Architecture and Engineering

The Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile is a 20th Century Commercial, Two-Part Commercial Block structure located on the main street of downtown Loveland. Adjacent buildings include the National Register listed Rialto Theater to the west, and the Loveland Historic Register Landmark, Union Block/Lincoln Hotel building to the east. The building exhibits a 25-foot wide storefront, which has undergone modifications since the building’s original construction. The ends of the storefront and upper story are constructed of dark-speckled buff-colored brick. The symmetrically arranged façade includes a peaked parapet set between vertically projecting piers. The upper story is decorated with elements of contrasting orange-yellow square bricks including a large rectangular panel above the second story windows, and smaller diamond shaped elements at the top of the end piers. See photos #3 & #4.

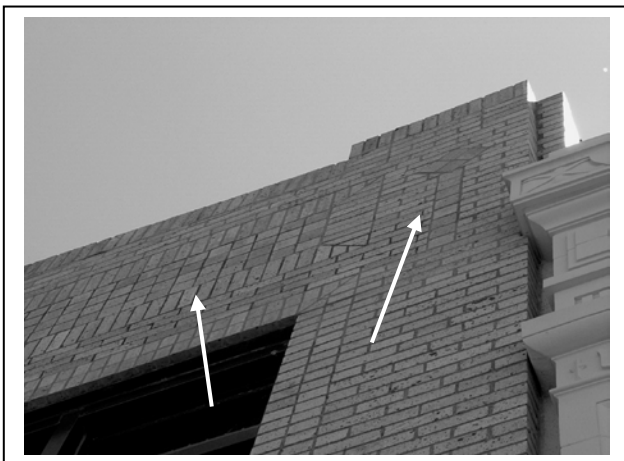


Photo #3. Vertical projecting pier with orange-yellow square bricks arranged in rectangular panel and diamond shaped element.

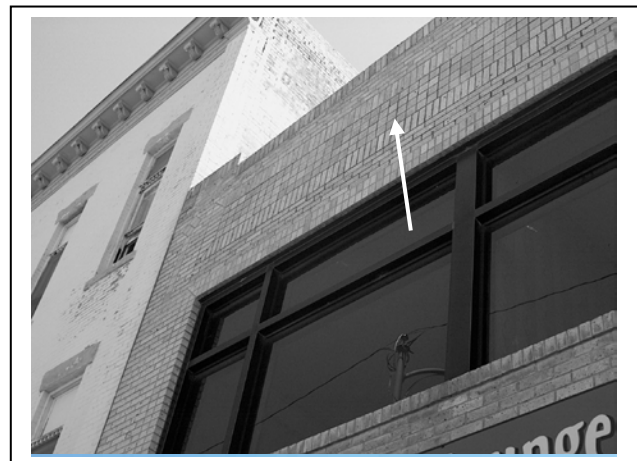


Photo #4. Upper story windows and orange-yellow square bricks arranged in rectangular panel.

The current storefront consists of a wide, deeply recessed entry bay with a brown ceramic tiled floor. Centered within the recessed entry bay is a set of glazed metal-frame doors set beneath a narrow transom and flanked on both sides by large full-height windows. Today, the clerestory above the storefront is covered by modern painted wood paneling and a full-width canvas awning. See Photos #5 & #6.



Photo #5. Current configuration of storefront with deeply recessed entry bay and tiled floor.



Photo #6. Clerestory covered with wood paneling and awning.

Historical photos obtained from the Loveland Museum Gallery and Rialto Theater, taken between 1930 and the early 1940's, depict an early version of the storefront with wood frame windows, and shallow recessed entry bays for each of two doorways. According to the photos, the recessed entry bay on the west end of the storefront provided 4th Street access to the second floor offices. The recessed entry bay located at the center of the storefront provided access to the ground floor. In the historical photos, the clerestory appears to be treated with trim or painted panels that continue the diamond-shaped elements present in the brickwork of the upper story end-piers. See Photos #7 and #8.



Photo #7. Epley's Cash Market storefront, circa late-1930's.



Photo #8. Loveland Shoe Store, circa early 1940's.

Interior features of the building include a relatively intact pressed-tin panel ceiling. The interior wall treatments are plaster on brick. The upper level consists of a floor plan configured into individual offices located off a common hallway on the west side of the building. Second floor fixtures and trim appear to be circa 1920s. Presently, the original staircase to the upper floor is absent, and access to the upper floor is via a fire escape ladder located on the rear of the building addition, or through the opening in the ground

floor ceiling in the location of the original staircase. See Photos #9, #10, #11, #12.



Photo #9. Building interior looking south. Two arched-passageways leading to the rear addition can be seen in the center of the picture.



Photo #10. Pressed-tin ceiling panel detail.



Photo #11. Upper level, interior hallway and one of several individual office-front entrances.

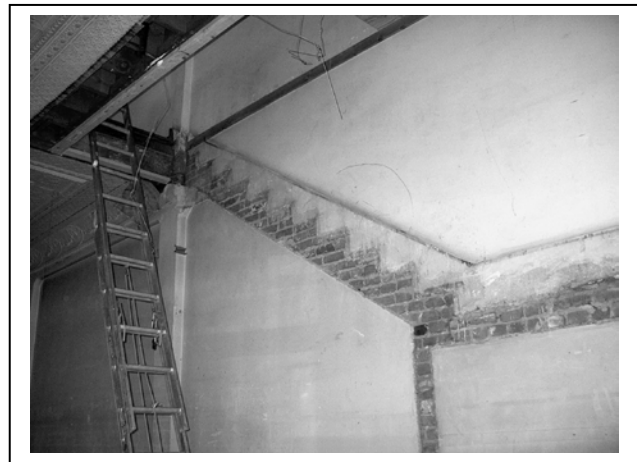


Photo #12. Ghost of former staircase and landing leading to 4th Street entry, located on west side of building.

Determination of Significance and Integrity

Significance should be used as the starting point in determining eligibility for placement on a historic register. Significance has two distinct attributes – the “area of significance” which answers the question of context, or what is significant about a resource in terms of its association to agriculture, architecture, commerce and industry, education, politics and government, and transportation. As noted in a previous section of this staff

report, the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile exhibits historic significance in terms of its association with the context of Loveland's Commerce & Industry.

The second attribute of the *significance* of a structure is its "period of significance" which places the resource on a historic timeline and answers the question of when a resource was significant. Also noted in a previous section of this staff report, the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile is greater than 50 years old, and dates to a period of commercial growth in the downtown area spurred by the sugar beet industry in the early part of the 20th Century.

Integrity refers to the ability of a structure to convey its original design or some later period of significance through the intactness of its historic form, original or historic use of materials, setting and site. Integrity has seven (7) particular aspects: location, setting, feeling, design, materials, workmanship, and association with some attribute of historic significance.

A historic building, for example, that retains its original or historically significant setting with little or no visible modifications that diminish the ability to relate its historic association demonstrates greater integrity than a building that has lost many of physical historical elements. A building with high physical integrity retains the following original or historically significant elements: massing; architectural detail; surface treatment; and windows and doors.

Colorado Historical Society Architectural Inventory Form – Resource No. 5LR5069 indicates that the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile has lost some integrity as a result of façade alterations to its storefront, and therefore would not qualify for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual property, but would contribute to a National Register historic district. The loss of this particular aspect of integrity would not necessarily disqualify the property from placement on the Loveland Historical Register, as the criteria for local designation are not as stringent as that of the National Register. These façade alterations are reversible, and historic photographs provide evidence of original storefront characteristics, which could potentially be reconstructed with like materials.

Regarding other aspects of *integrity*, the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile remains in its original location, and remains in a setting on the downtown main street, which helps to convey that it is a structure associated with Loveland's commerce and industry context. The building also retains a substantial amount of design features and building material, such as its clerestory, peaked parapet, and decorative brickwork, which clearly makes it a representative example of 20th Century Commercial Colorado architecture.

Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation

To be considered eligible for designation as a historic landmark on the Loveland Historic Register, a property must be at least fifty (50) years old and must meet one (1) or more of the criteria for architectural, social cultural, or geographic/environmental significance as identified in Loveland Municipal Code 15.56.090. The Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile satisfies the age requirement and meets the following significant criteria for designation as a Loveland Historic Register landmark property:

a) Architectural

1. Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period.

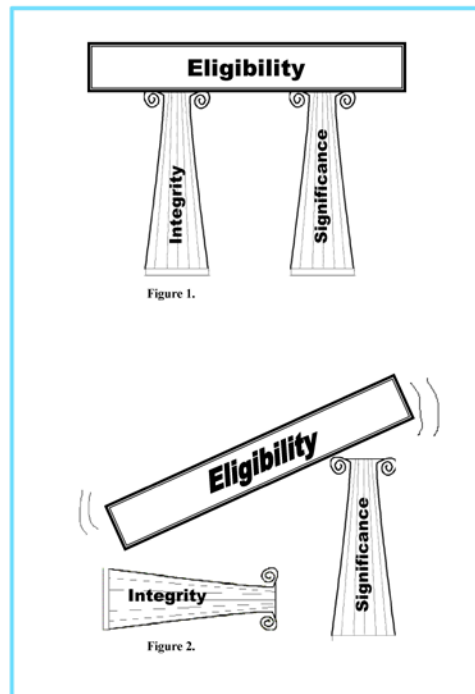
b) Social/Cultural

1. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic or social heritage of the community.

c) Physical Integrity

1. Shows character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, region, state or nation.
2. Retains original design features, materials, and/or character.
3. Is the original location or same historic context if it has been moved.

Given available information for the property at 234 E. 4th Street, the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile exhibits both adequate *integrity* and *significance* to support its eligibility for designation as a Loveland historic landmark. This determination is based on the Colorado Historical Society's recommendations for determining landmark eligibility (see Figure 1 and Figure 2, below). The Historic Preservation Commission recommends City Council approval of this request for designation of the Meyer Building/McCluskey Mercantile, located at 234 E. 4th Street, as a Loveland Historic Register landmark property.



Attachments:

1. HPC Resolution No. 3-03
2. Site Map, prepared by Staff
3. Nomination Application submitted by owner