



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: October 7, 2003
Re: Application for Historic Landmark Property Designation

SITE DATA

Address: 400 E. 4th St., Loveland, Colorado

Request: Application for Historic Landmark Property Designation

Historic Name: First United Presbyterian Church

Architectural Style: Richardsonian Romanesque with Gothic Revival Elements

Current Building Sq. Ft.: approximately 7332 Sq. Ft., excluding portico (measurements by Owners)

Construction Date: Original Structure = 1905

Legal Description: West 100 feet of North 150 feet of Block 34, Everetts Addition, City of Loveland, County of Larimer, State of Colorado

Owner(s): First United Presbyterian Church

Applicant: First United Presbyterian Church, represented by Shirley Fisher and Karen Koso

Application Summary:

On September 15, 2003 the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate the First United Presbyterian Church as a Loveland Historic Register landmark. Approved HPC Resolution No. 03-06 is provided as an attachment.

Larimer County Assessor records identifies the property by the following address: 400 E. 4th Street, Loveland, Colorado.

The First United Presbyterian Church was given landmark status on the Colorado State Register of Historic Places in March 2000.

History:

In 1874, William H. McCreery moved his family to Colorado's Front Range from Pennsylvania with the express purpose of establishing a new United Presbyterian Church. The first location of McCreery's church was established in 1875 in an old school house in the St. Louis settlement on the Big Thompson River. With the construction of the Colorado Central Railroad depot and establishment of the town of Loveland in 1877, McCreery purchased land on the corner of 4th Street and what is now Lincoln Avenue. On this 4th St. property he proceeded to serve as the architect and general contractor for the construction of the first church in the newly formed town of Loveland. When the congregation outgrew the church at 4th Street and Lincoln Avenue, a new site was selected on the corner of 4th Street and Jefferson Avenue.

In March 1905, the First United Presbyterian Building Committee, Session and Trustees were instructed to proceed with developing plans for a new church at 4th Street and Jefferson Avenue. The congregation hired Montezuma W. Fuller, a noted Fort Collins architect, to design the church. M.W. Fuller was experienced with the design of other institutional buildings, including ten (10) other churches and school buildings in Loveland, Berthoud and Longmont. Fuller was known for designing with materials such as local sandstone and brick. W.J. McChord was hired by the congregation to serve as the general contractor. When Mr. McChord and his team completed work on the church, he presented the congregation with a bill of \$19,302.50. M.W. Fuller received a 3% commission (\$579.06), based on the contractor's bill, for his architectural services.

At the start of construction in 1905, a copper box containing a Bible, current newspapers and a history of the congregation was laid with the cornerstone. The First United Presbyterians have congregated in the church at 400 E. 4th Street since construction was completed in May 1906.

Architectural Description:

The First United Presbyterian Church is a combination of elements from the Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic Revival architectural styles. The Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering indicates that Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, named after architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886), is characterized by heavy, rock-faced stone, round masonry arches, contrasting colors, transom windows arranged in ribbon-like patterns, square towers, and sparse fenestration. The Pueblo Union Depot is as similar to Richardson's work as any structure in Colorado, and it is not a pure example. Most of the Richardsonian Romanesque structures in Colorado are variations of the style, and employ only limited Richardsonian elements. See Photo #1.

The First United Presbyterian Church follows the Richardsonian architecture rule-of-thumb in Colorado and exhibits limited elements of the style. The church derives its other elements from the Gothic Revival style. The Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering

indicates that the Gothic Revival style is best characterized by the pointed-arched window, and steeply pitched roof. See Photo #2.

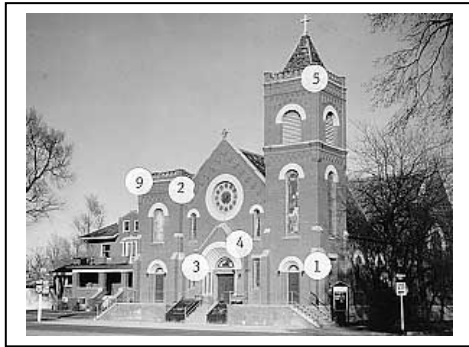


Photo #1. Example of Richardsonian Romanesque style. Source: Colorado Society Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering.

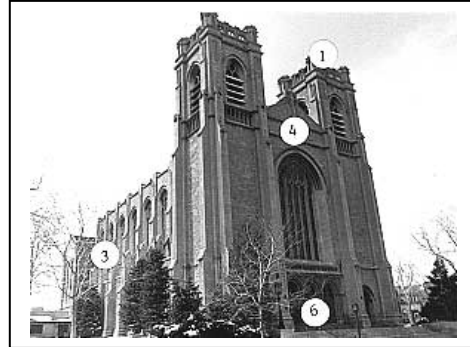


Photo #2. Example of Gothic Revival style. Source: Colorado Society Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering.

Richardsonian elements of the First United Presbyterian Church include the use of stone for the base foundation, lintels and corbels, and transomed windows. Other Richardsonian elements include three (3) tower-like structures. A three-story square tower and adjacent two-story tower is located on the northwest corner. A third tower-like structure is located on the northeast corner of the building, and from this tower extends a drive-through portico. All three towers are crested with coped battlements. Coped battlements are essentially the equivalent of a parapet with open spaces that surmounts a wall and is used for defense or decoration. In the case of the First United Presbyterian Church, the battlements are for decorative purposes. Originally, the large tower was five stories high, but two stories were removed in 1937 to prevent their weight from causing damage to the building. See Photos #3 and #4.

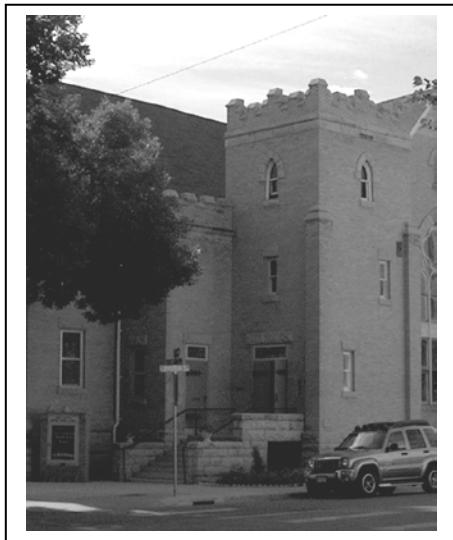


Photo #3. Square tower-like structures on northwest corner of church, and transom windows above the door at the main entrance.

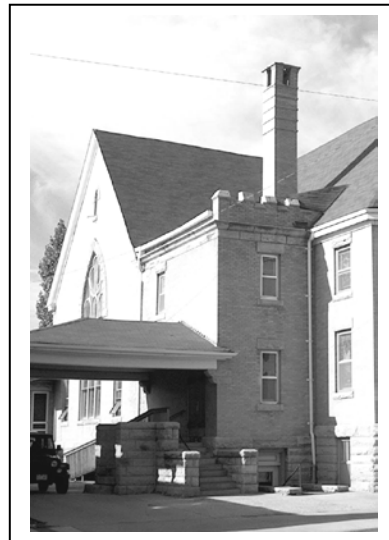


Photo #4. Square tower-like structure on northeast corner, portico, and stone foundation.

Gothic Revival elements of the First United Presbyterian Church include large stained glass windows with

tracery on the east and west elevations. Tracery is ornamental work with branching lines, and is typically found in the head of a Gothic window. Small stained glass windows with tracery are also found on the north elevation and in the towers. A broad-planed, steeply pitched, shingled roof also characterizes elements of the Gothic Revival style, as does the mottled pressed brick construction. See Photos #5 and #6.



Photo #5. Gothic windows on west elevation. Tracery is found in the upper portion of the large window.



Photo #6. Broad-planed, steeply pitched roof and mottled pressed-brick is characteristic of Gothic Revival style.

The church's interior contains a vestibule leading to the sanctuary, a sanctuary, parlor, and offices. A large wrap around balcony that overlooks the sanctuary, meeting rooms, and Sunday school area is located on the second floor. The church basement contains a fellowship/dining hall, kitchen and Sunday school rooms. A pipe organ built by the M.P. Moller Company in 1914 is located in the church sanctuary. A \$1000 contribution from the Carnegie Corporation funded the purchase of the pipe organ.

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. The First United Presbyterian Church is significant for the founder's link to the historical contexts of “Cultural Life” and “Settlement” as defined in the Historical Contexts (1997) document by Jennifer H. Strand, Ph.D. for the Loveland Museum Gallery. William H. McCreery was responsible for establishing the third organized church in the Loveland community, and was a pioneer businessman in the community with contributions to the early commercial development of Loveland. The church's architect, Montezuma W. Fuller, was responsible for the design of many institutional structures, including schools and churches in Larimer County. Fuller's design is unique for downtown Loveland as it contains a combination of the Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles.

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. As noted in a previous section of this staff report, the First United Presbyterian Church is greater than 50 years old.

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.

According to the list of features described in the Applicant's architectural description of the structure, and which is verified by current photographs, the First United Presbyterian Church exhibits excellent integrity. The church retains many of its original features and detailing that characterize it as a unique example of combined Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic Revival styles of architecture. The church remains in its original location, and remains in a setting in the downtown area in which it was originally constructed.

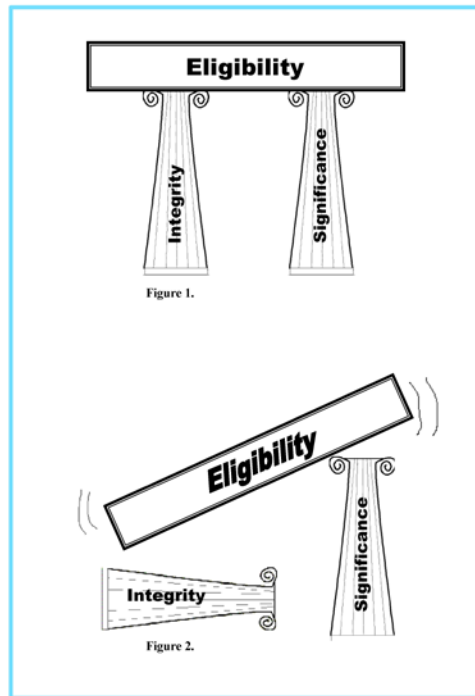
Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation

The First United Presbyterian Church was designated with landmark status on the Colorado State Register of Historic Places in March 2000.

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 First United Presbyterian Church satisfies the age requirement and meets the following criteria for designation as a Loveland Historic Register landmark of property:

- a) Architectural
 - 1. Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period.
 - 2. Is an example of the work of an architect or builder who is recognized for expertise nationally, state-wide, or locally.
 - 3. Demonstrates superior craftsmanship, or high artistic value.
 - 4. Represents innovation in construction, materials, or design.
- b) Social/Cultural
 - 1. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic or social heritage of the community.
 - 2. Is associated with notable person(s) or the work of notable person(s).
- 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. Retains original location or same historic context if it has been moved.

Given available information for the property at 400 E. 4th Street, the First United Presbyterian Church 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 First United Presbyterian Church, located at 400 E. 4th Street, as a Loveland Historic Register landmark property.



Attachments:

HPC Resolution No. 03-06

Site Map, prepared by Staff

Site Photos

Nomination Application submitted by owner