



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: December 2, 2003
Re: Application for Historic Landmark Property Designation

SITE DATA

Address: 1120 N. Lincoln Ave., Loveland, Colorado

Request: Application for Historic Landmark Property Designation

Historic Name: DeGroat/Sisk House

**Architectural Style
& Form:** Late Victorian/Queen Anne

**Current
Building Sq. Ft.:** 2648 Square Ft.
(measurements by Larimer County Assessor)

**Construction
Date:** Original Structure = est. 1910
Rear Addition = 1983

Legal Description: Lots 18 thru 20, Block 2, McKee Addition, City of Loveland, County of Larimer,
State of Colorado

Owner(s): Janet Limbeck, Jerry Limbeck, Frank C. Szymanski

Applicant: Janet Limbeck, represented by Carl McWilliams, Principal, Cultural Resource
Historians

Application Summary:

On October 20, 2003, the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate the property at 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue as a Loveland Historic Register Landmark. Approved HPC Resolution No. 03-07 is provided as an attachment.

The nomination application includes one site: The DeGroat/Sisk House. Larimer County Assessor records identify the property by the following address: 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue, Loveland, Colorado.

History:

According to research provided by the applicant, the land where the DeGroat/Sisk House now sits was originally purchased by James M. McKee in 1901. Upon arriving in Loveland, James M. McKee, an Indiana native, established himself as a successful businessman and progressive member of the Loveland community. He platted the McKee Addition Block 2, an area bounded by N. Lincoln Avenue, Jefferson Avenue and 11th and 12th Streets, and built the McKee Family house (1140 N. Lincoln) on the north end of the block. James McKee is the grandfather of Thomas McKee, the namesake of Loveland's McKee Hospital. The next dwelling built on McKee Addition Block 2 was 1120 N. Lincoln Ave., which is thought to have been originally owned by the McKee Family.

The DeGroat/Sisk House is primarily associated with the "Commerce & Industry" context of Loveland's history. The DeGroat Family and the Sisk Family, notable occupants of 1120 N. Lincoln for which the home's historic name is derived, were employed by the Great Western Sugar Co. at various stages of the company's existence in northern Colorado. According to the Historical Contexts document prepared in 1997 for the Loveland Museum/Gallery by Jennifer H. Strand, Ph.D., the Great Western Sugar factory opened in Loveland in 1901, followed shortly thereafter by construction of five (5) other factories in northern Colorado. By 1905, Loveland's factory and the five (5) others were consolidated into one company, Great Western Sugar Co. The sugar beet industry provided an economic anchor for Loveland, and spawned a boom of investment in the town. The secondary association with the "Commerce & Industry" context of Loveland's history relates to the use of 1120 N. Lincoln as a maternity hospital, and in later years as the location of professional offices and retail offerings.

According to Loveland city directories, the first occupants of 1120 N. Lincoln Ave. were Albert and Catherine (Whitefeet) DeGroat, and son Henry, of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The DeGroats (Albert b. 1874) (Catherine b. 1873) moved to Loveland in 1901. Albert DeGroat contributed to the construction of Loveland's Great Western Sugar Factory, and upon its completion became an employee of the company. By the mid-to-late 1910's, the DeGroats moved to Eaton, Colorado, where Albert assumed the role of Assistant Superintendent of Eaton's Great Western factory. In 1922, the DeGroats moved back to Loveland, and Albert served a term on the City Council and became active with the Loveland Masonic Lodge. Catherine DeGroat passed away in 1944 at the age of 70, and Albert died four years later, in 1948, at that age of 73. They did not reside at 1120 N. Lincoln at the time of their deaths.

In the years between mid-1910s and approximately 1921, the residence at 1120 N. Lincoln Ave. was occupied by the William W. and Laura Blystone family. William Blystone, a rancher originally from Pennsylvania, first settled in Fort Morgan, Colorado and moved to Loveland in 1913. The Blystones raised three daughters: Ethel, Hazel and Nellie. The Blystones moved from 1120 N. Lincoln to a nearby house at 1037 N. Cleveland Avenue in 1921. Laura Blystone passed away in 1938, and William died in 1949 at the age of 84.

According to the applicant's research, the longest residing tenants of 1120 N. Lincoln Ave. were the John

T. and Ella (Kerby) Sisk family. The Sisks resided in the home from approximately 1921 until their deaths in 1945 and 1946, respectively. John Sisk, a West Virginia native, migrated to Colorado in the early 1890s to partake in the Cripple Creek gold boom. Unsuccessful in his endeavors as a gold miner, he moved to Loveland in approximately 1895 and married Ella Kerby. The couple settled in Loveland and raised three daughters: Olive, Ethel, and Hazel. John Sisk was employed by the Great Western Sugar Company (1908-1912), as a City of Loveland Police Constable (1913-1918), and then again by the Great Western Sugar Company as a pipe fitter until his retirement in the late 1930's.

At about the same time John Sisk retired, his wife Ella began working as a maternity nurse, and converted the second floor of 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue into a maternity hospital. According to an interview conducted by the applicant in 2003 with Ms. Della Layburn, Ella Sisk worked with Doctor of Osteopathy, M.M. Vick to help deliver and care for newborn babies and their mothers. Ms. Layburn, who still resides in Loveland today, was a patient of Ella Sisk and Dr. Vick and gave birth to two (2) babies at 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue in 1939 and 1941. According to Ms. Layburn, Dr. Vick's practice was located above the Rialto Theater, but he was prohibited from delivering babies at the local hospital as result of his association with Osteopathic medicine.

Ella Sisk died in 1945 at the age of 71, and John Sisk died in 1946 at the age of 79.

The applicant's research identifies that the home's occupants between the late 1940's and late 1960's, were predominantly short-term residents. These occupants included: Donald Mitchell and Ira Thetford families (late 1940's); Letha Duby (1950); Jon and Gladys Harold (1951); Wilber and Thelma Burrow and Everett and Maurene Burden Families (1954-55); Wilber and Jean Martin (1956); Norman and Mary Dow family (1957); Leland and Berdina Denny Family (1960-62) and Warren and Esther Evans (1964-1970).

By the early 1970's, 1120 N. Lincoln Ave. became a social services facility for teens, and later offices for a hotline intervention service. Professional offices occupied the house from 1976 until 1979. These occupants included the Terrestria Architectural firm; Uniprint – City Directory Publishers; Neison Dragos General Engineers; and Qualitype. In late 1979, florist Jan Earle opened "Earle's Loveland Floral and Gifts". Ms Earle's store occupied 1120 N. Lincoln continuously until 2003, when she sold the building to Janet and Jerry Limbeck, and Frank Szymanski. The house is currently vacant, and the Limbecks intend to open a restaurant called "Sweet Rosies's Too" in the rear of the building, use the upper floor for offices, and lease the remaining downstairs space to two (2) other tenants.

Architectural Description:

The DeGroat/Sisk House is estimated to have been built in 1909-10. The house is a Late Victorian / Queen Anne residence with a sizable addition located on the east (rear) elevation. The original Queen Anne style house is 1 ½ story wood frame structure with a sandstone foundation. The original architect and original builder are unknown. The rear addition, built in 1983 to accommodate expansion of the former floral shop business, contains similar features of the original residence.

The Colorado Historical Society's Guide to Colorado Architecture indicates the Queen Anne is perhaps the most ornate style of the Victorian period evident in Colorado. The style was most popular between 1880 and 1910. Defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style include:

1. corner tower
2. dormers
3. scalloped and shaped shingles
4. iron roof cresting
5. sunburst detailing
6. turned spindles
7. porch
8. conical roof
9. multiple gables
10. bargeboard

The Colorado Historical Society indicates the degree of ornamentation usually distinguishes the high style (highly ornamented) from the vernacular (common building style of the period). Ornamentation is emphasized on a high style Queen Anne through the use of scalloped and painted shingles in the gable ends, decorative bargeboards, sunburst detailing, and turned spindles on porches and balconies. The corner tower is prominent, but not always found on a high style building, nor is it always located on the corner. The vernacular Queen Anne is generally less ornate, but usually features the shingled gables, asymmetrical massing, and some decorative detailing. See Photos #1, #2, and #3 for Colorado examples of the Queen Anne style of architecture.

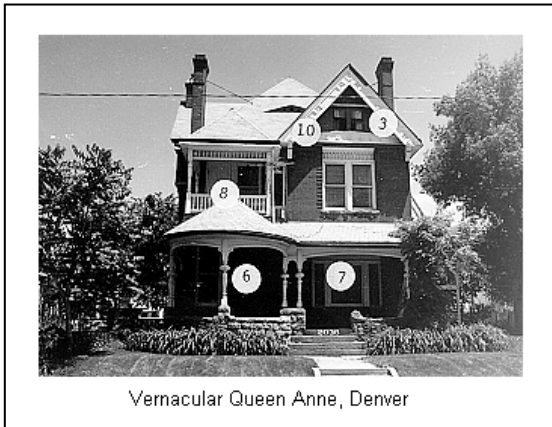


Photo #1. Example of the less ornate, vernacular Queen Anne style. *Source: Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado Architecture, 2001.*

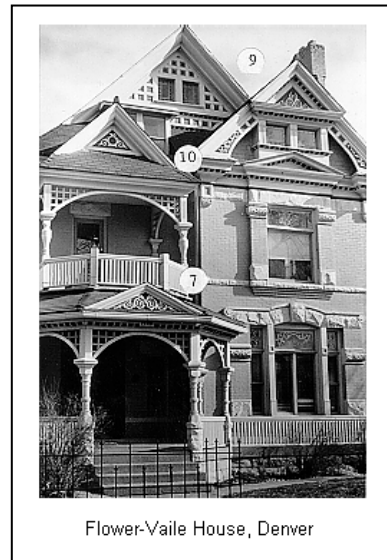


Photo #2. Example of the high-style Queen Anne. *Source: Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado Architecture, 2001.*

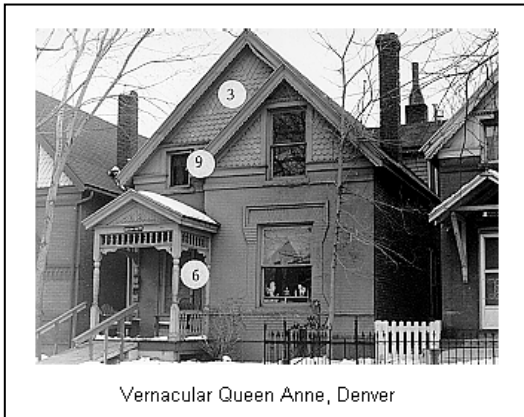


Photo #3. Example of the less ornate, vernacular Queen Anne style. *Source: Colorado Historical Society Guide to Colorado Architecture, 2001.*

Original DeGroat/Sisk House

The original DeGroat/Sisk House exhibits traditional Queen Anne features. These features include multi-colored variegated and patterned wood shingles, and upper gable ornaments on the north, south and west elevations. Additional features include a steeply-pitched truncated hip roof with intersecting gables on the north, west and south elevations. The roof is covered with wood shingles, and the eaves are boxed with painted wood trim. A red brick chimney rises from the center of the truncated hip roof. A predominance of the house's windows are wood-frame 1/1 double-hung sashes in a single or paired configuration. A large bay window is located on south elevation. See Photos #4 and #5.



Photo #4. Features include intersecting gables, truncated hip roof.



Photo #5. Gable ornamentation includes multi-colored patterned wood shingles, upper gable ornaments, and wood shingle roof. Also shown is a paired 1/1 double hung sash window.

A 24ft. by 7 ½ ft. front porch, located on the west elevation of the original DeGroat/Sisk House extends nearly the full length of the façade. The porch features turned-columns, a truncated hipped roof with wood shingles, and spindle frieze (a band of ornamental spindles). A 15-light glass-in-wood frame door, with a transom light, leads from the front porch into the original main house. A second and identical door is located immediately above the main house entrance and provides access to the flat porch roof, which also serves as an upper floor balcony. See Photo #6.

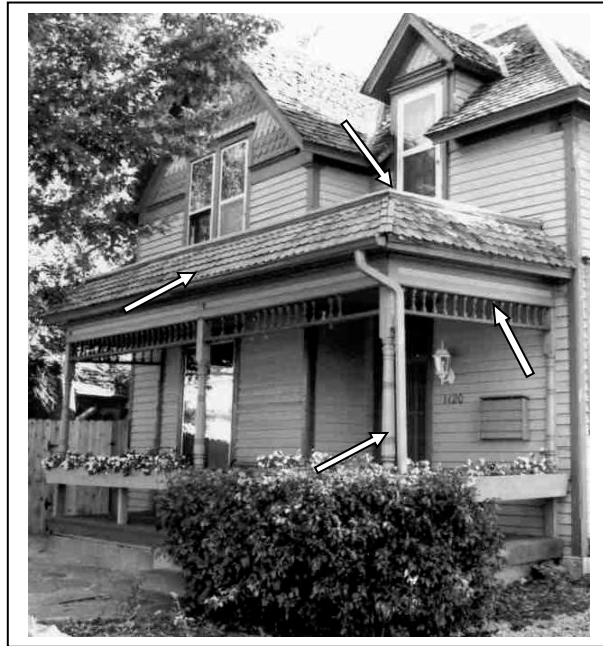


Photo #6. Porch features include turned columns, truncated hip porch-roof, spindle frieze, and upper floor balcony.

The interior first floor of the DeGroat/Sisk House consists of four rooms; a traditional sitting room, parlor, kitchen, and dining room. The second floor consists of three former bedrooms, a bathroom and a closet space.

An addition, built in 1983, sits to the east (rear) of the original DeGroat/Sisk House. It is comprised of a retail space (approx. 500 sq. ft.) immediately east of original structure, a 1 ½ story garage addition with three (3) overhead doors, and a small storage area with a shed roof. The 1983 addition is built with wood-frame construction on a concrete foundation, and features horizontal wood exterior siding, a steeply pitched roof with intersecting gables, and boxed eaves. The retail section of the 1983 addition features a large expanse of fixed-pane windows to compliment the structure's former use as a floral shop. The addition also features gable ornamentation, which includes multi-colored variegated patterned wood shingles, and upper gable accents. See Photos #7 and #8.



Photo #7. Dashed line shows 1983 addition. Solid line shows area of original DeGroat/Sisk House.

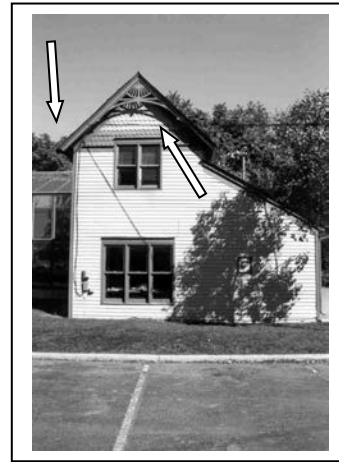


Photo #8. Features of 1983 addition include intersecting gables with ornamentation.

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 DeGroat/Sisk House exhibits historic significance in terms of its association with the context of “Commerce & Industry” in Loveland.

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 DeGroat/Sisk House was constructed in 1909-10, making it greater than 50 years old. It also represents a good example of the vernacular Queen Anne style of architecture, which was a very popular style in Colorado between 1880 and 1910.

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.

Analysis of 7-Aspects of Integrity

According to the list of features described in the Applicant’s architectural description of the structure, and which is verified by current photographs, the DeGroat/Sisk House exhibits diminished integrity as a result of the 1983 addition. This diminished integrity does not necessarily disqualify the site from placement on the Loveland Historic Register. This diminished integrity simply requires that more detailed analysis of the “7 - aspects of integrity” be conducted to determine if the property can be considered eligible for the local historic register. In following the Colorado Historical Society’s recommendations for determining landmark eligibility, a site is not expected to have perfect integrity, but enough integrity should remain intact to convey the

property's historical significance.

In analyzing the 7-Aspects of Integrity, the focus is placed on the original historic house, and not on the 1983 addition.

1. Location

The original DeGroat/Sisk House remains in its original location, and has not been moved or relocated. This aspect of integrity is not diminished.

2. Setting

According to the applicant, the immediate area surrounding the site and the neighborhood has changed since the original period of significance (date when house was constructed). This change is minor, and is common to the evolution of a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood, especially along a thoroughfare such as Lincoln Avenue. This aspect of integrity is considered somewhat diminished, but not transformed significantly.

3. Design

The north, south and west (Lincoln Ave. frontage) elevations of the DeGroat/Sisk House retain nearly all of the original features that convey the building's form, plan, space, structure and style. The east elevation, where the 1983 addition was built, has been compromised and diminishes some of the building's integrity. The original structure is still distinguishable as a vernacular Queen Anne house, in its original form, with original interior rooms (space and plan) still identifiable; therefore this aspect of integrity is not destroyed.

4. Materials

Nearly all of the physical materials used to construct the original part of the DeGroat/Sisk House are still intact, and do not appear to have been replaced; therefore this aspect of integrity is not destroyed.

5. Workmanship

It is widely acknowledged among historians that the Queen Anne style reflects the period after the U.S. Civil War in which Victorian architecture became more complicated. Architects combined styles as they saw fit during this period and the result was usually an elaborate and flamboyant use of ornamentation. The DeGroat/Sisk House still exhibits ornamental features that are typical of the style, and common to Queen Anne examples in Colorado. The original workmanship used to create the ornamentation on the DeGroat/Sisk House is still evident. The workmanship aspect of integrity has not been destroyed.

6. Association and 7. Feeling

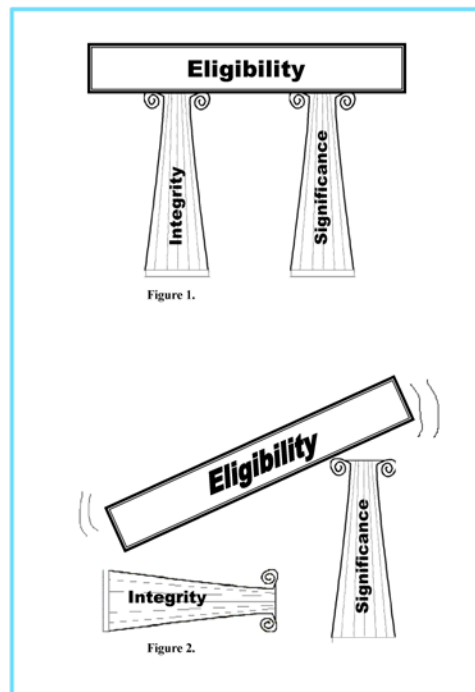
These are the most subjective of the seven (7) aspects of integrity, and simply speak to the original structure's ability to convey its significance. When observing the original DeGroat/Sisk House it is still possible to evoke a sense of the time period in which the DeGroat family and Sisk family resided in the home.

Staff 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 DeGroat/Sisk House satisfies the age requirement and meets the following significant criteria for designation as a Loveland Historic Register landmark of property:

- a) Architectural
 - 1. Exemplifies specific elements of an architectural style or period.
 - 2. Demonstrates superior craftsmanship, or high artistic value.
- 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. Is the original location or same historic context if it has been moved.

Given available information for the property at 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue, the DeGroat/Sisk House 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 DeGroat/Sisk House, located at 1120 N. Lincoln Avenue, as a Loveland Historic Register landmark property.



Attachments:

- A. HPC Resolution No. 03-07
- B. Site Map, prepared by Staff
- C. Nomination Application submitted by owner