



February 4, 2016

Dear Uptown Neighbors,

As many of you know, during the summer of 2015 the community learned of plans for a new development on the western side of the 1600 block of Pearl Street. The site, largely made up of parking lots, is also home to four buildings, among them the storefront structure at the corner of 17th & Pearl, which in recent years has been home to the Tavern Uptown.

Southern Land Company (SLC) acquired the site, which is mostly zoned C-MX-8 and steps down to C-MX-5 towards 16th, in June 2015. When news of their plans for a multi-family development broke there was community concern about the existing Tavern building. To provide an organized forum for the response Historic Denver created a petition, which ultimately garnered over 1700 signatures supporting the preservation of the building as part of a development that could honor the character of 17th Avenue and make good use of adjacent vacant land.

Despite the fact that the building was deemed non-historic by city staff during demolition review, given the public support to save the building, Historic Denver reached out to Southern Land Company, and fortunately they were very receptive to conversations about how to potentially save the Tavern building, including the two-story corner building and adjacent one-story building to the west. Since August Historic Denver and neighborhood contacts have been working with SLC to find a win-win solution. We are excited to share with you that we believe we have found that solution.

The Solution

The Tavern Building, and the adjacent one-story building to the west, is part of a series of streetcar commercial buildings that line this section of 17th Avenue. To preserve the exterior of the buildings and honor the existing street pattern and pedestrian experience, SLC has agreed to explore in good faith a site plan that pulls the new structure back from 17th, retaining the Tavern building and the most significant aspects of the adjacent one-story building, as well as the traditional scale of 17th Avenue. SLC can do this by shifting some of the units that would have been built along 17th by adjusting the zoning to allow for two more floor plates. **However, it is important to note that even with these additional floor plates, the project will not exceed the current height limit set by the existing zoning, which is 110 ft at the northern portion of the site and 70 ft at the southern, 16th Street edge.** A zoning change is only required to allow for the additional floor-plates, and would not result in additional maximum height. This means that what could have been an 8-story, 110 foot building at 17th will now be a 10-story, 110 foot building pulled back from 17th, stepping down to a six story, 70 foot building at 16th. Historic Denver supports this proposal and

has entered into a legal agreement with SLC outlining the details. SLC and Historic Denver have further written and agreed to execute a second, even more detailed, Preservation Agreement that will protect the Tavern Building long into the future. The Preservation Agreement would take effect if the re-zoning solution is approved.

The History

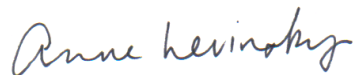
Originally a grocery store, the Tavern building was designed by James Costello in 1900 to serve the neighborhood we now call Uptown. Right on the 17th Avenue Streetcar line, patrons could stop by after work to purchase their groceries before heading home. The land was owned by William Russell, a real estate developer and society man (no relation to gold prospector William G Russell of early Denver fame). When he died in 1935, the *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News* both noted that Russell was a well-known figure about town. The building served as a grocery for many years before being turned into a bar, first as the Black Timber Tavern and later the Grand, before becoming the flagship Tavern in 2002. The character of 17th Avenue is defined by its small brick commercial buildings. Few of them function in their original capacity, but all of them activate the bustling corridor and turn it into a desirable location to live, shop, and eat.

The Next Steps

Now that a potential win-win solution has been identified it is important for the community, and specifically the neighbors, to have an opportunity to understand what is proposed, ask questions about the preservation of the existing building and the related rezoning, which will need to go through the city's formal rezoning process, with public hearings at the Planning Board and ultimately Denver City Council. Historic Denver is helping to facilitate small meetings with SLC for Uptown on the Hill RNO, Swallow Hill RNO, and the immediately adjacent neighbors in the coming weeks. Additionally, Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods (CHUN) and Historic Denver will host a neighborhood meeting to discuss the proposed concept on February 17, 6:00 pm at the Denver Community Church (Temple Emanuel) at 1595 Pearl Street.

If you have questions about the details described in this letter you can contact Historic Denver at 303-534-5288. We hope we will also see you at the Neighborhood Assembly in February, and details about that meeting will be disseminated by CHUN and through Historic Denver's Facebook page.

Sincerely,



Annie Levinsky
Executive Director
Historic Denver, Inc.