

Krisana Park

Conservation Overlay District

History

In the mid 1950's H. B. Wolff planned and developed Krisana Park, one of the first subdivisions in the city of Denver. It was a coordinated system of builder, designer and landscape architecture. This created one of a handful of unique "mid-century" subdivisions in Denver including Arapaho Acres, Arapaho Hills, Lynwood, and Harvey Park.

In California, in 1942, Joseph Eichler, a wholesale grocer, and his wife, rented a Frank Lloyd Wright house. He was so taken with the modern architecture, that he changed careers and went on to build over 10,000 homes in the San Francisco bay area. Eichler's well-designed contemporary homes were affordable to a large segment of the economic spectrum. Frank Lloyd Wright was the force behind contemporary houses in the mid 1930's. These small affordable houses, constructed from natural materials, built low to the ground, included open floor plans with a free flow of interior space and broad sheltering roof overhangs.



They also featured a significant spatial and visual interplay of indoor and outdoor spaces. Wolff was influenced by these contemporary home design pioneers. (From Wolff Sales brochure and *A Field Guide to American Houses*, McAlester, 1984.)

Krisana Park, a planned Wolff development of single-story homes has remained under the radar for several decades. It has maintained its value and style in both up and down real estate markets and has managed to remain scrape-free. Its popularity has grown consistently as Denverites appreciate the Eichler-like open floor plans, privacy and close knit neighborhood feel.

In 2009, Krisana Park won a Mayor's DESIGN AWARD, which noted how the neighborhood "exemplifies the vitality and hipness that is reshaping Denver". Today's Krisana Park residents are interested in maintaining the architectural integrity of their neighborhood, preserving the Eichler sensibility of the design. Unfortunately, current zoning allows modifications to these homes that alter the original intended design and characteristics that make up these mid-century masterpieces.

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Several remodels have been completed in Krisana Park that add non-conforming designs with multiple roof lines . . .



steep roof pitches . . .



and second stories, eliminating the single-story aesthetic, threatening the privacy of neighbors and reducing surrounding property values.

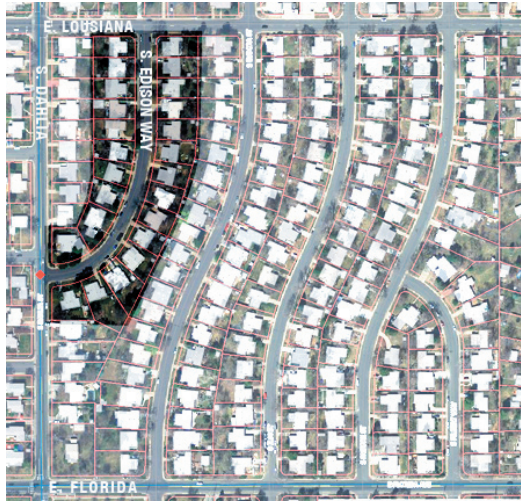
The neighborhood has always been vital. In the 50's and 60's, families raised three or four children in original or slightly expanded homes. Times change and we realize many new owners want more living space and more storage space. Our intent is to be minimally restrictive as the homes themselves welcome creativity and new ideas. Historic Denver has sponsored a Krisana Park Pattern Book that we highly recommend as a resource for any owner considering expanding the original design.

Proposal

South Edison Way is requesting a zoning change designated as Krisana Park Conservation Overlay District (COD).

The intent is to conserve the Eichler style of the California contemporary homes built by H. B. Wolff in Krisana Park in the 1950s.

Krisana Park Neighborhood



Distinctive features of this style to be maintained:

- Careful placement on the lot to give maximum privacy for each home
- Low pitched roof-line profiles with a strong horizontal emphasis
- Low scale, single story or split-level building heights
- Additions that are compatible in scale and proportion to the original building

Proposed zoning modifications for this zone district:

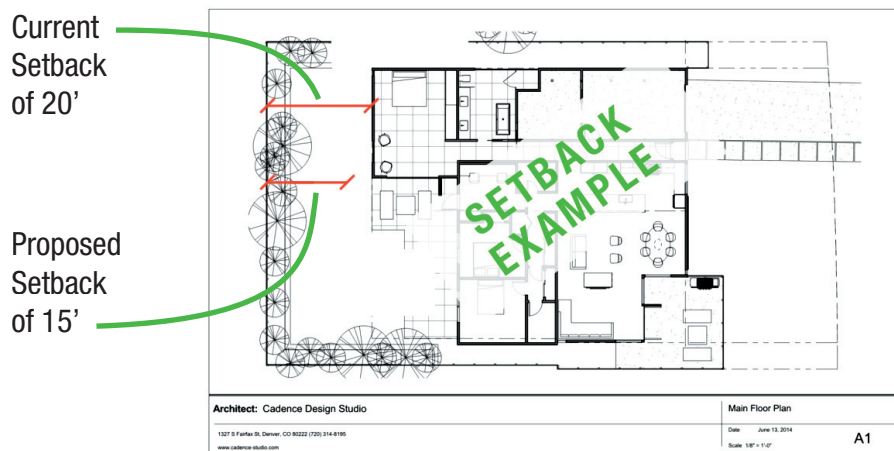
- A)** Reduce maximum height in stories from 2-1/2 to 1-1/2
- B)** Reduce maximum height of the structure in feet from 30' to 18'. The allowable height increase of 1' for every 5' increase in lot width over 50' up to a maximum height of 35' shall not apply in this overlay zone district
- C)** Maximum roof pitch shall not exceed 3:12
- D)** Prohibit rooftop and/or second story decks in 100% of the zone lot (currently prohibited only in the rear 35% of the zone lot) structure
- E)** Reduce the rear, no alley, minimum setback from 20' to 15'

Summary Table

	Existing Standard	Proposed Standard
Maximum Height in Stories	2.5	1.5
Maximum Height in Feet	30', increase up to 35' for wider lots	18', no increase
Maximum Roof Pitch	None	No sloping plane greater than 3:12
Minimum Setback, Rear, No Alley	20'	15'
Rooftop and/or Second Story Decks	Prohibited in the rear 35% of the zone lot	Prohibited in 100% of the zone lot
<i>All other standards are unchanged</i>		



Proposed zoning modifications for this zone district (Cont.):



The original homes were a little over 1200 sq ft. There were six main exterior styles with the same internal floor plan. To avoid a cookie-cutter look in the subdivision and to enhance privacy, the asymmetrical floor plan was then thoughtfully laid out with the entrance facing to the left of the property, to the right, or toward the street.

Many owners, wanting to remain in the neighborhood, began extending the living space by enclosing the carport or lanai and extending to the rear of the property. The idea of both inside and outside living space was usually maintained. As open floor plans became popular in the late 1990's and into the beginning of the 21st century, the post and beam construction allowed the homes to be opened up even more on the inside. Many of the original homes have been lovingly expanded.



Some have changed the design dramatically, as seen in these comparisons of an original design and a remodeled structure rising two or two and a half stories with little regard for the horizontal low-level roof line or the privacy of surrounding neighbors. Some disregard the scale and proportion of the original structure.



Left facing design . . .



same design with addition

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Street-facing design . . .



same design with addition

Two other examples of expanding an original design shown below.

The single level has more square footage incorporated than the one with two stories.



2074 sq. ft. — single level



1778 sq. ft. — two story

Below, another example of the same style with multiple roof lines and without regard for the horizontal, low-level design.



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One particularly well-integrated addition, shown above, used a split-level, story-and-a-half to extend the living space. This home was featured in the Summer, 2014 *5280 Home*. This home is the impetus for allowing one and a half stories rather than limit the overlay to single level only. Primarily, the addition is subordinate to the original house. A few of the additions have added basements as building in Denver soils has improved over the years.

Other examples, shown below, of sensitive remodels have significantly increased the value of the properties as well as revitalized the neighborhood.



Before: 1238 sq. ft . . .



after: 2231 sq. ft.



Before: 1603 sq. ft . . .



after: 2000 sq. ft.

Krisana Park Conservation Overlay District Process to date

November, 2013 – Historic Denver meeting at Virginia Village Library to present ways to preserve historic neighborhoods: Historic Designations – city, state and federal; and Conservation Overlay Districts (COD) placed in 2010 Denver Zoning Code

1/31/15 – E-mail S. Edison Way residents to test support for an overlay district on S. Edison Way – initial response was more than 50%, only one “No” and several no contact or no response. We decided to pursue something and formed the core team of Kate Adams, Karen Flanagan, and Jon Davidovich. Mouse Scharfenaker joined after the meeting at the Library in March.

February, 2015 – Contact with Becca Dierschow of Historic Denver in attempt to set up a meeting with Sarah Rosenberg a graduate student who had prepared a COD project based on Krisana Park. We were not able to schedule a meeting before Sarah moved out of town.

03/04/15 – Kate and Karen met with Kyle Dalton, Community Planning and Development (CPD) and Savannah Jameson from Landmark Preservation to determine the distinction that best fit our needs. Viewed a Powerpoint of the COD process, and submitted our pre-Application.

03/16/15 – Contact Charlie Brown – he would do what he could while still in office if we had 100% owner support.

03/18/15 – Meeting of S. Edison Way and Krisana Park neighbors at Virginia Village Library to present the COD process and determine what was to be preserved. Determined the primary concern was limiting height of new construction and reducing the rear setback. Began meeting twice a month, with numerous phone calls and e-mails.

06/01/15 – Meet with District 6 Councilman-elect, Paul Kashmann, to present our intention and gain his support. At that time we had collected positive responses for 78% of the 24 S. Edison Way homeowners.

07/06/15 – Drew up a petition and walked it around to homeowners on the block in order to personally gain homeowner support. Contacted the absentee owners and new owners as several sales took place.

July, 2015 – Paul Kashmann seated on City Council for District 6

08/03/15 - 21 signatures out of 24 homeowners – 87.5%.



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08/25/15 – Kate and District 6 Councilman Paul Kashmann walk Krisana Park and clarify the primary concern for a height restriction on additions – Kate pointed out the architecturally sensitive and less sensitive additions. Councilman Kashmann recommends we work with a city mediator for the remaining 3 homeowners that we did not have signatures for (all absentee).

September, 2015 – exchange of emails and phone calls with mediator, Steve Charboneau, to contact the 3 remaining owners.

October, 2015 – The new owner of 1305, who plans to flip the house, subsequently signed the petition. The current owner of 1312 is updating his rental, and was given additional information that he requested. The new owners of 1371 have not responded to 3 or 4 letters from Steve Charboneau.

10/26/15 – The team met with Steve Charboneau who proposed we move forward and draft the Proposed COD changes for a meeting with Community Planning and Development.

11/09/15 – Meeting to draft the proposal

11/30/15 – Sent a draft to Kyle Dalton, CPD; Paul Kashmann, councilman; and Steve Charboneau and requested a meeting for January 11, 2016.

December, 2015 to January, 2016 – Consulted with Angelo Marasco, neighbor and architect with Cadence Design to determine the maximum height for one and one half stories given the original roof lines.

01/11/16 – COD team met with Kyle Dalton, CPD, Steve Charboneau, mediator, and Becca Dierschow and Annie Levinsky from Historic Denver. Historic Denver has developed a Pattern Book for Krisana Park to guide homeowners in expanding the homes sensitive to the original design. The issue of roof-top decks, roof pitch and streets to be included were raised. Our plan had been to start small with the text and map amendments and extend it later to all of Krisana Park with a map amendment. Other Overlay districts have started with a large area, scaled back and then extended later with map amendments. Councilman Kashmann agreed to start small for the initial application and allow the remaining Krisana Park to extend the overlay area later.

