



**Historic Denver, Inc.**

**2019 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire**

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**CANDIDATE NAME: Albus Brooks, District 9**

**1. Do you have a personal connection with historic preservation?**

As an African American man in this country, I have a very strong, emotional attachment to historic preservation. My desire is to approach historic preservation from the standpoint of spatially preserving the heritage of untold stories, and honoring the struggle my ancestors went through to build this great nation. Black history is American history. From hard assets (like buildings and statues) to soft assets (like journals and oral tradition), historic preservation is the meaningful survival and continuation of people that look like me. It is often said that, "history is written by the victors," and my ancestors weren't often written into the history books - though they were victors in their own right! That is why historic preservation is so important, because it allows us to celebrate, mourn, inform, and grow, based on what we preserve as a society.

**2. What is your favorite example in Denver (or in your district) where historic preservation, economic redevelopment and strategic reinvestment were successfully combined to create something new?**

My district contains layers and layers of history, harkening back to Denver's earliest days. That makes it difficult to pick just one example! From the success of Union Station, to the vibrant aesthetic of Curtis Park, to the boldness of the (future) hotel at Emily Griffith, to the resurrection of LoDo - what a district! That being said, perhaps the example that stirs my soul the most is what is happening in the Five Points. It used to be called "The Harlem of the West," and I can certainly say that it is experiencing its own *Harlem Renaissance of the West* due to preservation and strategic investment! The landmark district along Welton, between 24th and 30th, is experiencing new life - and in large part due to black investors and business leaders! Running in parallel to Denver's history of booms and busts, the Five Points has experienced both vibrancy and vacancy. Well, because of historic preservation, creative thinking, bold leadership, and strategic investment, the Five Points is entering into a new era of cultural and economic vibrancy! It is proof that preservation and revitalization can co-exist.

**3. Neighborhoods across Denver are facing intense development pressure, and Denver's population is expected to increase in the decades to come. What specific ideas do you have to balance new infill with our historic built environment?**

The Denveright process took more than two years and built on hundreds of community meetings and input from thousands of neighbors and stakeholders. Blueprint Denver now intersects with transportation, parks, etc. in a more holistic view of the city and its future growth. As the city grows, we must prioritize development around thoughtfully planned and designed transit hubs and our inner core. Preservation should be seen as a tool in the development toolkit. As our city grows, we must prioritize mixed-use density and new ways of building above, around, and within historic assets that shape the character and aesthetic of our city. If we don't do that, we will lose our sense of place and what makes Denver's identity unique. This means prioritizing the pedestrian experience and planning for the human scale, like preserving ground floor facades instead of complete demolition. This means intentional collaboration on important assets, like our work to breathe new life into the historic Rossonian. The process of preservation is important to building an inclusive city, and is a powerful way of transforming our identity.

**4. Identify the most critical historic preservation challenge/opportunity in your district. At-Large and Mayoral candidates: you can pick anywhere in the city.**

Larimer Square:

Currently, Larimer Square is our "most challenging opportunity" in the district. There are financial challenges that the broader community is trying to get a clearer picture of, and greater density is being presented as the solution. This would mean amending the landmark ordinance on building heights, which would set an interesting precedent on a project that was precedent-setting for historic preservation. I think there is a way to thread the needle and save Larimer Square from any demolition and not amend the ordinance (by looking at property just outside the district, contiguous to Larimer Square); utilizing parcels that don't contain historic structures seems to be a path forward, but it will be a challenge! I am confident that we will get to a solution that promotes vitality while preserving history. It's something we've done before, and will do again. It's in our DNA!

**5. Please finish this sentence: "I believe historic preservation in Denver can be strengthened by..."**

I believe historic preservation can be strengthened by including more people of color as advocates of, and within, the organization. The vision and mission of preservation will grow once it builds broader coalitions, and the full potential of historic preservation will be realized when an inclusive, diverse base is meaningfully engaged.