



For Immediate Release
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Historic Denver Working to Save Denver's El Chapultepec Building From Demolition



DENVER – (March 12, 2024) Historic Denver, in conjunction with the Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth and professional musician Ron Bland, announced today that it has filed a landmark designation in an effort save the El Chapultepec building, at 1662 Market Street in Denver, from demolition.

“The story of our city is told by buildings large and small, grand and discrete. If the walls of 1662 Market Street could talk, they would tell the stories of the countless patrons, musicians, politicians, and even a U.S. president, who gathered at El Chapultepec, Denver’s legendary jazz club,” Historic Denver President & CEO John Deffenbaugh, said: “The history of our city is being lost as places that tell Denver’s story, like El Chapultepec, are demolished. Historic Denver has been trying to work with the building owner, Monfort Companies, since last year to offer suggestions on how to adaptively reuse the building. Sadly, this advice has not been acted upon and we understand the owner intends to apply for a demolition permit. We remain hopeful that a compromise solution can be found to protect this key piece of Denver’s history outside the landmark designation process. If not, we firmly believe this 130 year old building, and the stories it continues to tell, is deserving of the protection afforded by landmark designation.”

Since its construction in circa 1890, the building at 1662 Market Street has been home to a diverse range of uses, including a boarding house, bar, restaurant, and then the iconic jazz club, El Chapultepec. The club was the physical representation of former owner, Jerry Krantz’s vision to create an affordable and accessible place to experience excellent jazz music. Outwardly, it is an unassuming building with little ornamentation. However, as musicians took to its small stage, it gained a reputation as the place to play in Denver. El Chapultepec was host to numerous world class jazz musicians over the years. Stars from other genres such as The Police, ZZ Top, Mick Jagger, Dave Mathews, Santana, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pat Morita, Ed Sheeran, and

many more have visited or performed. Actors such as Christopher Walken have dropped by over the years, and President Bill Clinton played there in 1991. Even the legendary Frank Sinatra came to El Chapultepec.

El Chapultepec was truly a place that brought the stars and the common person together to enjoy great music, drinks, and burritos. It was a cultural phenomenon rarely experienced elsewhere, as someone of little means could join a high roller and experience some of the best jazz in the world. The business may be gone but the physical representation of that vision and what occurred there remains. Historic Denver believes that this representation is worthy of preserving and incorporating into future development plans for the site. Landmark designation does not freeze a building in time, but it does prevent it from being demolished. Buildings such as 1962 Market Street, and the stories they tell, anchor neighborhoods and provide a connection to Denver's rich past.

Many of the buildings that have provided continuity within Denver's changing urban landscape over the years are disappearing as neighborhoods are redeveloped. Historic Denver and community partners are concerned that the El Chapultepec building could become another example of this pattern. In response, Historic Denver has applied for landmark designation to the City and County of Denver.

John Deffenbaugh, President and CEO of Historic Denver, said: "Existing buildings can evolve and change to meet modern needs. The thoughtful combination of new development and historic places is what sustains the authentic character of our city. Historic Denver acknowledges that the building needs love and care to bring it back to life, however there is no such thing as a terminal illness in buildings nor do buildings come with an expiration date. With the necessary love and care, the El Chapultepec building can continue to stand for many more years and serve as a reminder of the legendary venue and of the performers who played there."

For more information, visit www.historicdenver.org

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