



MEMORANDUM: Historic Preservation Advocacy Letter to the City Council of Boulder, written by Leonard Segel, executive Director of Historic Boulder

27 January 2022

RE: Midland Savings Bank / Atrium Building located on Canyon Blvd at 13<sup>th</sup> street

Hello City Council Members:

I'm writing to support the findings of the Landmarks Board and City Planners to **recommend the landmarking of the Midland Savings Bank / Atrium building** because it has remarkable architectural and historical significance.

We all recognize that Boulder has become an amazingly attractive place to live in large part because of the innovative spirit of generations of its citizens. Part of the formula for that success is that there have been many innovative modern buildings designed here that created the settings for progressive ideas to be exchanged.

The Midland Savings Bank /Atrium Building is one of these great Mid-Century Modern buildings. **It has remarkable architecture qualities and a very compelling history.**

The design is comprised of a monumental pyramid-shaped roof that appears to hover above the ground, lightly supported by a series of sandstone columns. The building seems larger than its size but **fits very nicely with the scale of the neighboring buildings:** the Tea House, BMOCA and the Bandshell.

The Midland Savings / Atrium building has had two lives. The first was as a savings and loan which **provided affordable mortgages for working-class people** so they could purchase homes. These banks helped to fuel the tremendous growth in Boulder in the 1960's and 1970's, changing almost everything about the town..... schools, churches, medical facilities, cultural amenities, and open space.

The other part of the story is that **the building became the third key location for the governing of Boulder.** How many important government policies were developed here over the years?

As an exemplar of the environmental movement, Boulder has set high standards of managing our natural resources and energy use. The "Greenest" building is one that is already built.

**Landmarking the Midland / Atrium Building will ensure its usefulness for years to come.**

The building could be remodeled to give it any number of possible community uses such as a downtown conference space, an arts venue, a social services center for disadvantaged citizens, or as adjunct space for the neighborhood activities like the Farmer's Market.

**Landmarking this building would still make it possible to develop a large apartment building on along 14<sup>th</sup> street.** There is plenty of room on the parking lots to the east of this building, the Teahouse and BMOCA to easily fit a residential development.

When a city-owned building like this is landmarked, it demonstrates the commitment of the government to 'walk the talk' about protecting legacy properties. Please add your voice to that of your city planners and the Landmarks Board to **vote to landmark the Midlands Savings / Atrium building.**

Respectfully:

Leonard Segel

Executive Director of Historic Boulder