Ms. Fogarty - Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm and introduced the Commission members and staff. She explained the procedures for hearing the cases. There were seven members present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Witzenburg moved to APPROVE the June 14, 2017 minutes as amended. Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

AYES: Aultz, Dobbe, Meyer, Witzenburg, Suarez, Fogarty

ABSTAIN: Killian

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0-1
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on August 9, 2017, Kristine Gerber and Chris McClellan, Building Owner, appeared before the Commission.

Ms. Gerber stated that the building is located north of I-480, between 15th and 16th Streets. There are two stories in the front and one story at the rear. It was located across from Jefferson Square, one of Omaha’s first parks. The building is an early 20th Century, commercial-style brick building that was constructed by Norman Traux in 1911 for use as a commercial laundry. It was designed by the architectural firm Nippell and Bellas. The exterior is made of white and blue glazed bricks, which are original to the building, with brick corbels along the top. The steel windows, tin ceilings and wood floors are also original to the building. She displayed several pictures of the exterior and interior of the building.

Ms. Gerber explained that the building was significant under Criterion A for its ethnic (Asian) history. The building is the last extant location of the On Leong Tong, which was a Chinese-American merchant association that used the second floor of the building from 1938 to 1959. It is the last known building or site associated with the tong and its history as a visible part of Omaha’s early Chinatown. Through searches of city directories, it was determined that the Chinese arrived in Omaha from California soon after the construction of the trans-continental railroad in 1869. By the early 20th Century it was estimated that several hundred Chinese lived in Chinatown, which encompassed a four-block area northeast of 12th Street and Douglas Street.

Ms. Gerber explained that tongs were semi-secret, all-male organizations that existed in many cities with significant Chinese populations. It was comprised mainly of businessman and tradesmen. The On Leong Tong was established around 1916 and was located on North 12th Street. That location was demolished in 1962. The tong served as a center for business, social and cultural events during the early to mid-20th century. It supported new immigrants until they found jobs, usually with the help of tong members. Membership began to dwindle during the mid-20th century as new opportunities opened up in other cities. In 1943 only about 50 members remained from approximately 500 members. A picture was displayed that showed Chinese lettering on the building. Ms. Gerber stated that she met with Dennis Chin, the grandson of the founder of King Fong restaurant in Omaha. Mr. Chin’s grandfather indicated that the tong was like a social fraternity and that it felt an obligation to help new immigrants. She was also able to meet with Chu Huey, the last surviving member of the tong. He recalled that the younger members would meet at the tong to play mahjong in the morning until the older member got off work in the evenings. The tong ceased to exist after the death of its leader, Chin Ming Yuet, on December 23, 1959. Ms. Gerber indicated that this building and the King Fong’s building are the only surviving structures that are associated with Omaha’s early, 4th generation Chinese.

Mr. McClellan spoke about his interests in preserving the building and provided historical background of the general area. He stated that the building was structurally sound and that it stands as it was originally built.
Mr. Suarez moved to APPROVE as presented. Mr. Dobbe seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Aultz, Dobbe, Meyer, Witzenburg, Suarez, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on August 9, 2017, Phillip Abraham appeared before the Commission.

Mr. Abraham stated that the 30-unit apartment complex was built in 1918 by Vincent Chiodo. The Chiodo Apartments is one of four apartment complexes built by Mr. Chiodo. He stated that the building was being nominated under Criterion C for architecture. He stated that the Corinthian columns, sandstone blocks, retaining wall at the back of the apartments and the foundation came from the Omaha courthouse that was demolished in 1912. The floors, base trim, French doors and claw foot tubs that are original to the building remain intact. Each apartment is equipped with either an east or south facing sunroom. He indicated that four of the units had ceramic tiling installed over the terrazzo flooring in the kitchen due to the condition of the floor. Steam heat is used and the original radiators are still in place. He showed pictures of the courtyard at the back of the building. The front hallways retained the original doors, stairs and terrazzo floors. Mr. Chiodo lost the building in 1931. It was subsequently purchased by another owner and became known as the Lancaster apartments.

Mr. Abraham showed a historic video of the building. The video provided background information about Vincent Chiodo, noting that he worked as a tailor and that he became a real estate developer. He became Omaha’s first Italian born millionaire and vice-consul.

Mr. Dobbe suggested that the applicant add more information about the materials that were salvaged from the demolished courthouse. He added that a photo of the old courthouse would also be useful.

Ms. Fogarty noted that the Planning Department recommended approval of the request.

Ms. Meyer moved to APPROVE as presented. Mr. Witzenburg seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Aultz, Dobbe, Meyer, Witzenburg, Suarez, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

ADJOURNMENT:

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:28 p.m.