CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION:
Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Wednesday, October 7, 2009, notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, October 14, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT:  Albert Macchietto, Vice Chairman
Adrian Ferguson
Bryan Zimmer
John Schleicher
Edward Quinn
Eduardo Santamaria
Nicholas Hogan

MEMBERS ABSENT:  Douglas Bisson, Chairman
Sarah Burt

OTHERS PRESENT:  James Krance, Preservation Administrator

Mr. Macchietto called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. with seven members present.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL:
Case #H3-09-11          REQUEST: Request for Certificate of Approval for major addition to Duchesne S.E., 1931 Building
Sheila Haggas, President LOCATION: 3601 Burt Street

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on October 14, 2009, Sheila Haggas, President of Duchesne Academy, Kevin Schluckebier, architect with BCDM and Chris Johnson with Weitz Company appeared before the board in favor of this request.

Mr. Krance submitted drawings for the subject building that were obtained from microfilm. The first option shows an image of the proposed addition on the east side of the building and the second option for an addition is on the west side of the building. The main objective of the addition is to gain handicap access to the auditorium. The auditorium is finished with wainscoting around the entire perimeter of the auditorium interior and is of architectural interest. The northeast corner of the auditorium would be affected by the first option.

Mr. Schluckebier stated Duchesne Academy is located in the west central Landmark Historical District. There have been several additions and remodeling to the property. The eastern elevation consists of three additions. The timing of the project is critical due to a current student who is wheelchair bound and cannot access portions of the building including the auditorium. It has always been difficult for plays and other events that take place in the auditorium. In 2002 an elevator was installed, however there are issues in regard to access to the elevator. Accessibility is an issue to the auditorium, which is located on the lowest level. There are other concerns on the site regarding the daycare, the playground area, functionality of the elevator and disruption of day-to-day activities of students. A recommendation would be for the east option because of the easy access to all student areas and there is a need to increase the gathering space in the lobby area. The existing lobby is more of a stair landing. The east option would have easy access and would not disrupt the classroom day during construction and there would be no need to relocate the playground. The east option would utilize the fall of the grade to get to the
auditorium level by using the outside area rather than the ramp area (of the west option), which would create a courtyard area. The lobby area would lead to a new entrance area into the auditorium. The overall concept would utilize sill brick, precast and exact details. The west option is more complex (as expressed by applicant) and would require a ramp within the building and a new addition would rearrange the mechanical/electrical space and restrooms on the west. The west option would require the playground to be relocated. In both options the auditorium and lobby would have natural light. The east elevation outweighs the west elevation based on functionality, program and user friendly-wise and cost.

Joan Fogarty appeared before the board to seek more information on behalf of the neighborhood. The Duchesne Academy building is a history of the architectural progression of the city. It is a challenge to comply with ADA and at the same time keep the integrity of a building. Ms. Fogarty stated she would like more information regarding the materials that will be used for the addition. She is in favor of the west option since that side of the building has already been corrupted. The 36th Street side of the building should be left intact (unobstructed).

Ms. Haggas stated Duchesne Academy has evolved over the past 128 years. Each change has been in response to make education available to students and provide the type of environment for young women in a college preparatory school. There is a need to allow students and visitors to enter the building near the parking lot on the south end of the building and a dream for a more welcome entrance to the auditorium. The proposed addition on the east side would be more welcoming and ADA compliant. Handicap accessible restrooms are needed near the auditorium for students and parents.

In response to Mr. Santamaria, Mr. Krance stated the past additions have been free standing structures and reflect their own style and architecture. This request is before the commission because the proposed addition or the east option would be located on the front of the building. It is recommended by the Department of Interior standards that a major addition be added to the side or the rear of a historic building. Mr. Krance recommended a site visit by the commission.

Mr. Hogan questioned whether the preservation of the front of the building and historic value of the building is more important than the cost and challenges there would be if the addition is added to the rear of the building. Mr. Macchietto stated the duty of the commission is to assure that the proposed changes and modifications are in line with the historical value of the building.

In response to Mr. Schleicher, Ms. Haggas stated the funding is not in place but they are ready to start the process. Ms. Haggas added that the west option would not meet the needs of the students because the elevator would be located in the middle and blocked on either end (?). The campus would be more accessible if the elevators are located at the south and north end of the main building.

Mr. Santamaria questioned the level of intervention and would like more investigation. He stated that he is not convinced that the east option is the best solution.

Mr. Schluckebier added that the commission is an integral part of the design process at the conceptual level. In answer to the materials used, the brick will be similar but the texture of the brick is no longer manufactured. The attention to detail in the interior of the lobby and auditorium would be an integral part of the remodel.

Mr. Macchietto stated he is struggling with altering the building but understands the need to solve the functional aspects. One issue would be the vertical circulation into the building and getting to the auditorium and the lobbies that are not necessarily connected issues.

Mr. Ferguson was concerned that the east option would be used for mainly special functions and not day-to-day use. Mr. Schluckebier stated that currently the auditorium is only used five times per year because it is not functional for other events. Other non-ideal spaces are used for other events. The proposed addition/auditorium would be used more often to hold additional events.

In response to Mr. Hogan, Mr. Johnson stated the west option is more costly than the east option due to the remodel of the existing space, new addition (as presented) and site work. The remodel of the east option is limited and concentrated approximately where the elevator addition is located. The west option
would require entering through existing space, rearranging drama storage rooms and (modifying the northwest corner of the 1931 building).  The east option would be more economical based on price per square foot.  In a construction environment at a school setting there are several considerations such as safety and the least disturbance as possible.  The east addition could utilize a portion of the existing parking lot for staging but for job site entrance for the west addition would be from the north where there would be concern for construction equipment passing beneath an existing pedestrian bridge.

Mr. Macchietto suggested a lay over for additional study time.  Ms. Fogarty stated she was concerned that the east option would end up looking like a bump out and she suggested a lay over because it is obvious that some of the commission members are not familiar with the building.

Mr. Zimmer moved to LAY OVER until the next meeting on November 18, 2009 to allow the applicant time to schedule a site visit with the Landmarks Commission.  Mr. Santamaria seconded the motion.

AYES:  Zimmer, Quinn, Schleicher, Santamaria, Hogan, Ferguson, Macchietto

ABSENT:  Bisson, Burt

Motion carried 7-0

Discussion:

Mr. Krance stated he has visited the sign shop and reviewed the reconfiguration of the Rock Bottom Café sign.  The additional sign at the south end of the building has also been reviewed.  In response to one board member, the Old Market guidelines regarding signage still need to be reviewed with a possible sub-committee.

Mr. Macchietto motioned to appoint Mr. Zimmer and Mr. Zimmer agreed to head up a committee to review the Old Market guidelines.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Macchietto moved to ADJOURN the meeting.  Mr. Zimmer seconded the motion.

AYES:  Quinn, Schleicher, Santamaria, Hogan, Ferguson, Zimmer, Macchietto

ABSENT:  Bisson, Burt

Motion carried 7-0

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.