CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION:
Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Wednesday, December 30, 2009, notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting, January 13, 2010.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Douglas Bisson, Chairman
Albert Macchietto, Vice Chairman
Adrian Ferguson
Bryan Zimmer
John Schleicher
Sarah Burt
Eduardo Santamaria
Nicholas Hogan

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Edward Quinn

OTHERS PRESENT: James Krance, Preservation Administrator

Mr. Bisson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Roll call was taken with eight members present.

Mr. Zimmer moved to APPROVE the minutes of the November 18, 2009 meeting. Mr. Santamaria seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved by common consent.

Mr. Bisson stated that the commission anticipated continued discussion on Case H3-09-011 regarding Duchesne Academy and asked for a motion to change the order of cases in order to hear the national register nominations first.

Mr. Zimmer moved to APPROVE to change the order of cases on the agenda and hear the certificate of approval last in order to discuss the Duchesne Academy addition in detail. Ms. Burt seconded the motion.

AYES: Ferguson, Zimmer, Schleicher, Burt, Santamaria, Hogan, Macchietto, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION:

Case #H5-09-12
Troy Strawhecker
c/o Nelson Construction Services

REQUEST: Approval of National Register Nomination
LOCATION: 3000-3002 ½ Farnam; 3001 Douglas

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, Melissa A. Dirr, 442 S. 28th Street, Lincoln, NE, presented this request.

Ms. Dirr began with background on the Twin Towers project stating that the project consists of both north and south towers. Dirr stated that the south tower has been continuously occupied since its rehabilitation in 1960-61. The north tower is currently unoccupied and being considered for complete renovation into new apartments. Dirr stated that the project first came to the State Historic Preservation Office for a federal review because the owner/developer was pursuing a federally-backed loan. They had gone some distance in planning and design for the new apartments and, at the time of review by the SHPO, had proceeded down a different path. The staff at the SHPO felt that there was potential for the building to be considered historic being 50 years old or older. The Historic Preservation staff inquired to the National Parks Service if it had potential or candidacy for modern-style buildings, which are not seen often (as historic) in Omaha or across Nebraska. It was decided to redesign what was previously planned for the renovation of this project. It went from a new-looking building to being considered for historic tax credits. Ms. Dirr stated that the building is being nominated under Criterion A (for its contribution to community and regional planning) & C (for its architecture), and Criterion G (because of the age of the north tower.)

Ms. Dirr presented information on the architect, James Nicas, who practiced in Omaha and was also buried here at Forest Lawn Cemetery. She used various images to elaborate on the history of the south structure which was built in 1919. Ms. Dirr stated that the south tower was the renovation of an existing building with the addition of stories above; the north tower was a completely new design and construction.

Ms. Dirr stated that it is being nominated under Criterion A because of significant developments in city and urban planning at the time including annexation, transportation systems, etc. She stated that this building took advantage of all the major tenets and was done completely with private funds. Dirr explained how the name “Twin Towers” came about as well. She added that the developer, given the negative history of the name being associated with the Twin Towers in New York City (due to 9-11-2001), wants to get away from referring to the building as the Twin Towers. So the structure is referencing as Turner Park Lofts now. Ms. Dirr stated that it exemplifies modern architecture through very simple design guidelines for Criterion C. She added that the designer and developer made a conscious effort to embrace both downtown and the newly developed west side of town. In looking at a panorama of all sides of the building, she pointed out there is no front or back as seen traditionally. Each façade embraces both new development on the west and the existing downtown with the presence of balconies that face both directions.

Ms. Dirr stated that this building takes advantage of all of the important ideals that the city emphasized in its formalized planning documents which identified specific things in all new development: 1) being aesthetically pretty, 2) available parking, 3) greenspace incorporated, and 4) its association with an efficient transportation route or corridor. She presented more images of the interior of both towers. Dirr stated that the parking structure is underground and accessed separately by both towers, a very significant design feature at the time.

Ms. Dirr informed that the State Board meets three times a year. Since the December 2009 LHPC meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather, the nomination was presented to the State Review Board on Friday, January 8, 2010 and was approved.

In response to Mr. Bisson, Ms. Dirr stated that only the north tower is slated for the rehabilitation project at this time. She stated that the south tower is fully occupied in which the main level, mezzanine and basement are commercial condominiums, office spaces, and the upper floors are residential condominiums. Plans are to convert the space in the north tower back to apartments with the potential for some commercial on the lower floors. Dirr commented that Nicas’ plans for the north tower were the same showing a basic repetitive floor plan on 2 through 10.
In response to Mr. Ferguson, Dirr stated that the neon sign is a contributing design feature and will be kept in place. She added that the curtain wall will be maintained along with the asbestos panels. Ms. Dirr explained that the panels are used (not actually being asbestos) in such a way that they are determined acceptable for continued use. She stated that the HVAC and other systems will be redone. Dirr discussed that there are fairly strong design rules which must be adhered to in order to maintain the historic appearance of the building. Ms. Dirr explained that the buildings are not physically connected as it appears. They are physically connected on the exterior by what looks like a walkway for continuity of the design with no functioning indoor transportation way.

Ms. Dirr stated that the north tower was completed in 1966 and the south tower completed in 1960-61. She stated that since the south tower is essentially 50 years old now, this project has exceptional ability to convey its significance to modern architecture in all of those important planning ideals.

Mr. Macchietto moved to APPROVE the National Register Nomination of the Twin Towers. Ms. Burt seconded the motion.

AYES: Zimmer, Schleicher, Burt, Santamaria, Hogan, Macchietto, Ferguson, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION:

Case #H5-09-13  REQUEST: Approval of National Register Nomination
Tammy Mitchell  Henry Neef House
LOCATION: 2884 Iowa Street

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, Jesse Nunn and Grant Landreth, Nebraska State Historical Society, 1500 R Street, Lincoln, NE, presented this request.

Mr. Landreth used literature that was published on this house in his presentation. He stated that the house is owned by Tammy Mitchell. Landreth stated that the structure was made of steel and ornamental iron for enduring beauty and strength. The steel is either bolted or welded and many features of the house were made by Gate City Steelworks where Henry Neef was the president. Landreth proposed to list this request under Criterion C for architecture. He stated that the house was completed in the spring of 1929 in a tudor revival style. He stated that it is Nebraska's first documented steel frame house. It was used as an example by Gate City Ironworks to promote their capabilities in products and products distributed on behalf of other companies. The structure was a model showhouse for anything that was steel related and could be marketed for sale. Landreth presented some Gate City catalogs which are in the archives (no published date, but thought to be a late 1930s or early 1940s publication.) He stated that the house sits on a triangular, regular-shaped lot prominently placed within the new neighborhood of Florence Field. He presented photos as well. Landreth stated that there are many objects on the site that were manufactured by Gate City Steel in which the nomination speaks to all of the items. He added that the property has exceptional integrity.
Mr. Landreth stated that the owner purchased the house by way of an auction. The light fixtures and many of the accessories were sold separately. He stated that Ms. Mitchell has been constantly tracking down items to return to the house. Landreth talked about what was going on in residential steel frame construction at that time. He stated that the Neef House was not the first steel frame house ever built. In a more modern sense, the parts were being fabricated in a factory at pre-determined lengths and taken to the site while construction was underway at the site. Landreth described it as a custom type of construction that would have been occurring in the nineteenth century. Landreth discussed residential construction, how buildings were being put together, and the introduction of power tools. He talked about other companies using steel and other types of material during the 1920s in creating new designs. Many of the products used in the Neef House were products advertised in the Gate City Steel catalog. He stated that the literature (American Builder magazine) in that era interestingly provided material that was fireproof, energy-efficient, sanitary, etc. which could be found at the Neef property as well. Landreth described this as a national trend happening at the heels of the 1913 tornado in Omaha. Landreth felt that this concern became apparent as the town began to rebuild, bringing steel and more permanent products to the forefront of the building industry.

Mr. Landreth stated that the applicant wants to list this property to show its distinction only. He stated that the documentation gathered was from a few brochures and catalogs, no floor plans were found for inclusion.

Mr. Schleicher moved to APPROVE the nomination of the Henry Neef House in the National Register. Mr. Hogan seconded the motion.

AYES: Burt, Santamaria, Hogan, Macchietto, Ferguson, Zimmer, Schleicher, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

Mr. Zimmer moved to return to the original agenda, the certificate of approval. Mr. Hogan seconded.

AYES: Schleicher, Burt, Santamaria, Hogan, Macchietto, Ferguson, Zimmer, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL:

Case #H3-09-11
(over from 10/14/09, 11/18/09)
Sheila Haggas, President

REQUEST: Request for Certificate of Approval for major addition to Duchesne S.E., 1931 Building

LOCATION: 3601 Burt Street

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, Mr. Kevin Schluckebier, BCDM, 1015 N. 98th Street, Omaha, NE, presented this request on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Bisson stated that this request was held over based upon some concerns the Commission brought forth. The Commission recently received a packet which allowed limited time to review the revisions.

Mr. Schluckebier referenced the brochure and focused on the material samples that were being considered. He discussed the attempt to match old and new materials with similarities in color noting differences in textures. Schluckebier then discussed the glass regarding the look that would make the least overall impact. In discussing the various layouts, Schluckebier focused on the accessibility to the door in conjunction with the parking lot orientation. He stated that in looking at something farther along the east and because of the steepness, getting the level area for accessible parking had begun to impact a larger portion of the parking lot which affected the safety and circulation in that area, and the handicap stalls to the west. He found that this did not seem like a doable solution.
Mr. Schleckenbier stated that they would like to keep circulation similar to what it is now. He explained that there would be a sloping walk just after the circle walkway up to the courtyard proceeding up along the building and up to the new outdoor lobby/patio area. There is direct stair up to one of two sets of doors into the new vestibule located directly off the parking lot.

To interact with the neighborhood, Mr. Schuckebier stated that they are looking at adding the stair at a 45 degree angle to the southeast that, in mass, will be similar to the entry on the northeast corner without duplicating it. There will be seating walls and columns that tie into a sitting wall, pre-cast as well, going around the outdoor patio. He discussed the changes in the floor plan being brought back up to the auditorium floor level to ease the circulation and reduce some of the redundancy for footage. He stated that the translucent corner helped showcase and curb the edge which 1) cuts down the perspective view, and 2) allows more of the original building behind it to come forward, specifically in the evening. He discussed the straight-on elevation view pointing which is still a mixture of modern and historical. He stated that the berm and the hill on the east side will continue around to the new stair at the corner.

In response to Mr. Bisson, Mr. Schuckebier stated that the stair coming up from the street is made of a pre-cast. The curve is a seat wall. Mr. Santamaria pointed out from the drawing a convenient stair being provided which looks to become an outdoor lobby/gathering space. Mr. Schuckebier stated that the depth of the outside lobby (or width of the building) is 40 feet.

Ms. Joanie Fogarty, 521 N. 38th Street, appeared in opposition on behalf of the Gold Coast Neighborhood Association. She addressed several aspects of consideration by ordinance: the Commission's knowledge and ability to ensure proper methods of the renovation of the property, the economic impact of the project on a historic district, and the commission's limitation to consider massive changes to the exterior of historical structures. Ms. Fogarty stated that the Duchesne campus is a major entity of the historic district and if separated out would impact the whole district. She added that, Duchesne historically has been the guiding force for the development of housing in the area. Ms. Fogarty, a historian, discussed the valuable history of Duchesne in detail. She stated that Duchesne is the oldest standing building west of 24th Street in this city which she felt is an important factor to be considered. She added that the neighborhood had asked the commission to consider the body of historical homes as an anchor in that neighborhood. Ms. Fogarty discussed much of its legacy and the significance of its architecture.

Ms. Fogarty explained that changes have been done on all other sides of the campus. She added that the east side of the campus has remained in tact and today is the most historically original side of the campus.

Regarding the economic impact, Ms. Fogarty wanted kept in view the changes to the east façade as they impact the historic district as a whole. She urged the Commission to consider how the Duchesne building relates to the rest of the district. Fogarty recounted the restoration of St. Cecelia and Joslyn’s as examples of the time and care that went into the preservation process. She pointed out that the Central High School building was totally renovated and made handicap accessible without defacing the façade of the structure. Fogarty asked that the Commission to consider the private owners and their generous funding in the restoration of houses. Lastly, she cited OMC, Sec. 24, to make a case for Duchesne’s interior preservation and to consider only the exterior of the building.

Mr. Bisson stated that in reviewing the last meeting, the directive was to come up with an alternative concept. The idea from the Duchesne perspective was not to address the west option as an alternative and to focus efforts on the east façade and its elevator tower. He stated that the applicant objective is to meet the expectations. Using that framework, he opened the discussions relative to the expectations charged to the applicant meeting the rules and regulations that have been set forth.

Mr. Hogan discussed adding onto a building in order to preserve the historical integrity. He commented that it would not be to try and match brick color, etc. but rather do the opposite so that the addition would be obvious. Hogan added that in 10 to 40 years, questions may arise as to where the old building ends and the new addition begins. His perspective was to add something modern and not degrade or detract from the original structure. Mr. Schuckebier agreed and proposed a middle ground of the new curtain wall entry system. He stated that the curtain wall will be a total contrast to the existing building.
Ms. Sheila Haggas, Duchesne Academy, stated that the contrast in making the addition look different is new to them since the last addition was a replication. She felt that a variety of modern glass pre-cast bring a look of the original building for a seamless appearance. Ms. Haggas discussed the progression that occurred when the second addition was built. She was unclear whether an addition to a historical structure was to look the same or be an obvious change from the original structure. Ms. Haggas also discussed the use of the auditorium by the community. She state that the auditorium cannot be accessed without climbing at least ten steps. Haggas stated that they are attempting to open up the corner in order that disabled people from the parking lot can get into the auditorium and the 4-story building as a whole. Her goal is to make the building as welcome and visible as possible. Haggas stated that over the years the board and alumni fought to stay in the area. They realized that in order to stay they had to update with some amenities.

Mr. Santamaria inquired if there have been neighborhood meetings to discussed this project. Ms. Fogarty replied that discussions were held via teleconference. No signatures have been collected in opposition of this project. Ms. Haggas stated that the neighborhood consists of two neighborhood associations which are Gold Coast and Gifford. Ms. Fogarty represented the Gold Coast N.A. only.

Mr. Bisson stated his concern for the proposed elevation. He stated that the Commission was not given enough information to make a decision about that portion of project. Bisson added that it is difficult to make good decisions on such short notice. Ms. Haggas requested that the Commission be specific in conveying detail to assure they are headed in the right direction.

Mr. Santamaria stated that the east option had grown whereas the Commission charged the applicant to minimize the impact on the east elevation. Haggas stated the east façade has had the least amount of exterior renovation. Santamaria felt that the scheme has not evolved in a way that subdues the impact on the pristine elevation.

Ms. Haggas stated had concerns about a lobby entrance to the auditorium being located on the west side. She added that with the west option, a barrier free entrance on the south side will require a disabled person to travel a half block in order to get to the elevator. Haggas stated other drawbacks to the west option due to infrastructure.

Mr. Bisson stated that currently the corner does not meet minimal impact which is what the Commission charged the applicant to do. Mr. Hogan felt that the burden would be met if a higher percentage of the existing building were visible rather than covered up.

Ms. Dirr recommended that the applicant be provided with the historical preservation standards and the technical briefs regarding new additions to historic structures that meet preservation for guidance.

Mr. Landreth stated that an addition is more appropriate when the addition looks discernibly new. He recommended that it also be compatible and appropriate to the existing building. Landreth suggested articulating the parapet of the stonework to be simplified but still speak to the existing structure. He noted the importance in being able to see the façade. Landreth commented on keeping the mass as close to grade as possible and the height of the building as low to grade as possible for a more linear and horizontal look. He stated that historic preservationists should be able to clearly identify where the new construction begins.

Mr. Jim Krance agreed to coordinate with the architect and Ms. Haggas regarding functional aspects of the project and that a design charrette be held with the commission architects, Kevin Schluckebier, and himself to attempt guidance/solutions.
Mr. Bisson moved to LAYOVER the request for 30 days to allow the applicant time to make revisions based on the comments received at this meeting. The applicant is also free to work with a non-quorum group of the Landmarks Commission for advice. Mr. Hogan seconded the motion.

AYES: Santamaria, Hogan, Macchietto, Ferguson, Zimmer, Schleicher, Burt, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Mr. Santamaria moved to nominate Mr. Bisson as Chairman and Mr. Macchietto as Vice Chair for another term. Mr. Hogan seconded the motion.

AYES: Hogan, Macchietto, Ferguson, Zimmer, Schleicher, Burt, Santamaria, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned by common consent at 3:43 pm.

Claudia Moore
Recording Secretary