CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION:

The Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Thursday, November 1, 2012, notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting November 14, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Douglas Bisson, Chair
Albert Macchietto, Vice Chair
Nancy Novak
John Hargiss
Jose Garcia
Peggy Jones
Eduardo Santamaria
Gregory Mahloch

MEMBER NOT PRESENT: Wanda Ewing

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Leonard, LHPC Administrator
RoseMarie Horvath, City Law
Clinette Warren, Recording Secretary

Douglas Bisson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm, introduced the Commission members, as well as the staff. Mr. Bisson explained the procedures for hearing the cases. Roll was taken with eight members present. (Mr. Mahloch appeared after roll was taken)

CASES:

NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION:

Case #H5-12-16
Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture
1516 Cuming Street
Omaha, NE 68102

REQUEST: Request for National Register Nomination for the Downtown Boxing Club

LOCATION: 2401 Farnam Street

At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, Abby Hegemann with Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, appeared before the Board in support of the request.

Ms. Hegemann showed a slide presentation of the Ottawa Block/Downtown Boxing Club. She explained that there are three areas of significance for the building: 1) Criteria A in the area of commerce for its association with the Phelan & Shirley Company, which had a significant impact on the growth of Omaha; 2) Criteria B in the area of engineering for its association with Robert Zale Drake, a bridge builder and inventor in the Midwest; and, 3) Criteria C in the area of architecture as the work of master architects John and Alan McDonald, a father and son architectural team.
Ms. Hegemann gave background history on the business partnership between Edward Phelan and Michael Shirley, builders of the Ottawa Block Building. Phelan and Shirley hired John McDonald as the architect, and J.C. Mardis as the contractor. Along with Robert Zale Drake's accomplishments in bridge building, Ms. Hegemann noted several of Robert Zale Drake's inventions, which included the H-beam steel pile bridge support, the transverse joist bridge, and "cold seasoning". Mr. Drake occupied the Ottawa Block in 1933, and spent his time there revitalizing businesses that he had established earlier in his career. She stated that John and Alan McDonald's ability to work with a small budget, a narrow site plan, and a mixed-use program was evident in the design of the Ottawa Block. The building was built in the "Prairie School" school style, which was in contrast to the architecture of the adjacent Muse Theater, which was also designed by the McDonalds. Ms. Hegemann presented several pictures of the building from the past and present, along with pictures of the interior and exterior. She stated that overall the building is in good condition. She noted that the glass transoms above the storefronts are still in place along with some remaining ceramic floor tiles. There were also pictures which showed the tin ceilings, basement, commercial bays, and remaining sky lights.

In response to Mr. Garcia, Ms. Hegemann stated that the 308 Bar currently in the building would not remain. She added that the space in the northeast corner of the building would become commercial space, with the rest of the space being live/work space and residential apartments. In response to Mr. Mahloch, Mr. Hegemann stated that the lot formerly occupied by the Muse Theater could potentially be used for secure parking. Darin Smith, owner of the property, stated that there would be 12 residential units and 12 parking stalls. He added that the ceilings, tiles, and the alcove entryway would all be restored to the greatest extent possible. In response to Mr. Santamaria, Mr. Smith stated that no additions are planned for the property. Also, a wrought iron fence will be added for security, particularly for the garden-style apartments planned for the first level.

Mr. Smith stated that the building is currently vacant. He added that the Boxing Club that previously occupied parts of the building has moved to another location.

For clarification purposes, Mr. Bisson stated that it would take five affirmative votes from the remaining members of the Board to approve the nomination since Mr. Macchietto and Ms. Novak would have to abstain from voting.

Mr. Mahloch moved to APPROVE the request for National Register nomination for the Downtown Boxing Club. Ms. Jones seconded the motion.

AYES: Santamaria, Mahloch, Garcia, Jones, Hargiss, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 6-0
APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Mahloch moved to APPROVE the September 12, 2012 meeting minutes as written. Mr. Macchietto seconded the motion.

AYES: Macchietto, Santamaria, Mahloch, Novak, Garcia, Jones, Hargiss, Bisson

MOTION CARRIED: 8-0

MISCELLANEOUS:

Mike Leonard, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Administrator, informed the Board that there would be a National Register Nomination for the Nottingham Apartments (33rd and Burt) at the December meeting.

Mr. Leonard also mentioned that there was a citizen concerned about several issues in the Cathedral/West Central Historic District. He added that the citizen would like for the City to establish a set of design guidelines similar to those instituted for the Old Market. He informed the Board that this could be an issue that would come before them in the near future. In response to Mr. Santamaria, Mr. Leonard stated that there are no guidelines for that district, only the Landmarks ordinance that doesn’t state any set objectives or criteria. He stated that the Board would eventually need to establish guidelines for the various historical districts. Several members of the Board stated that they would like to see how the guidelines for the Old Market were established, which could be beneficial when the same guidelines are determined for other districts. RoseMarie Horvath, Attorney for the City Law Department, suggested that Mr. Leonard could send any guidelines to the Law Department so that a comparison could be made with the City Ordinance. Mr. Leonard added that the adoption of these guidelines would need to involve meetings, public involvement, and approval by the City Council. He further added that the National Park Service - Department of Interior Guidelines would be referred to in the process.

In response to Mr. Macchietto, Ms. Horvath stated that proxy voting is not an option for the Board, especially in light of the Open Meetings Act. Mr. Santamaria suggested that alternates be added to the Board. Ms. Horvath stated that a change could be made to the ordinance which states that five affirmative votes are required for a motion to pass. Mr. Macchietto suggested that it be changed to a simple majority vote.

It was the consensus of the Commission to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:09 p.m.