Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Public Meeting:
1:30 PM, Room 1210 – 12th Floor

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center
1819 Farnam Street

Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Members: Joan Fogarty – Chair, George Killian – Vice Chair, Carrie Meyer, Regan Pence, Scott Dobbe, Kathryn Aultz, Jaime Suarez, Brian Magee and Curt Witzenburg.

Certification of Publication: Omaha Preservation Administrator certifies publication in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the City of Omaha, on Monday, April 3, 2017 notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting on Wednesday, April 12, 2017.

Members Present:
Joan Fogarty, Chair
George Killian, Vice-Chair
Kathryn Aultz
Scott Dobbe
Carrie Meyer
Regan Pence
Jaime Suarez

Members Not Present:
Brian Magee
Curt Witzenburg

Others Present:
Trina Westman, LHPC Administrator
Jennifer Taylor, City Law Department
Clinette Ingram, Recording Secretary

Ms. Fogarty - Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm and introduced the Commission members and staff. She explained the procedures for hearing the cases. There were five members present. Mr. Suarez and Mr. Pence appeared after roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Aultz moved to APPROVE the March 8, 2017 minutes as submitted. Mr. Dobbe seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Aultz, Dobbe, Meyer, Fogarty

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on April 12, 2017, Patrick Thompson appeared before the Commission.

Mr. Thompson stated that the home is located in what was originally considered to be Omaha’s Gold Coast neighborhood. The residence is a 2 ½ story, brick home that was built in the Second Empire architectural style. He displayed several pictures of the home, including one from the 1890’s which showed the original wrought-iron balustrades along the roof of the front bays and along the cupola. The home was designed by Council Bluffs, Iowa architect S. E. Maxon who also designed several other large homes in the Council Bluffs and Omaha areas. Mr. Maxon also built court houses in nearby counties. There were several other photos that showed detailed images of the roof, windows, and the original front porch and door with the original woodwork still intact. The interior pictures showed the mantel, views of the bay windows, details of the wood and mosaic tile floors and the stairwells with newel posts. Mr. Thompson also shared a picture of the home that showed the apartment addition that had been added on to the northwest corner of the home in 1909. It was designed by James Henry Craddock, an Omaha architect. The apartment was designed in an eclectic architectural style.

Mr. Thompson stated that the house had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. He added that it was locally significant under Criterion A for its association with Joel N. Cornish. Mr. Cornish was a prominent banker and businessman. He was appointed a Colonel in the Iowa Cavalry by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, a title that he carried with him for the rest of his life. After the war he founded the National Bank of Hamburg. He moved to Omaha in 1888 after the home was completed. While in Omaha he organized the National Bank of Commerce and was involved with the Carter White Lead Company. The period of significance for the residence is 1888 when Mr. Cornish moved into the home until his death in 1908. The home is also significant under Criterion B for its architecture. It is considered to be an excellent example of the Second Empire architectural style which was designed by S.E. Maxon.

In response to Mr. Killian, Mr. Thompson stated that the nomination included the apartment addition since it is also a historic part of the home.

Gina Basile, owner of the home, appeared before the commission. She purchased the home in 1989 and has put much effort into restoring the home. She expressed support for the recommendation.

Arnie Breslow, Old Market South Neighborhood Association, appeared in support of the request. He discussed some future plans for the home.

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

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on April 12, 2017, Patrick Thompson and Gina Basile (Property Owner) appeared before the Commission.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Bishop George Worthington Residence is a 2½ story, brick structure that is a free classic subset example of a Queen Anne architectural style masonry house. That style is apparent in the use of different materials including brick, stone and wood shingles that were popular with Queen Anne Style designs. There is also a projecting bay window in the front, cut-away gables with the wood shingles, decorative woodwork and the use of classic Tuscan columns. He showed pictures of the property from the 1920’s when the house was used for the Presbyterian Hospital until the present. He explained that there was a side porch on the home that was torn down in the 1960’s and the area beneath it excavated to create a driveway and parking area for the apartment house. He showed various pictures of the exterior of the home which included the elevator tower, bay windows, openings that had been resized for modern windows and an open porch that had been enclosed to make room for more living space.

Mr. Thompson presented photos of the interior that included the following: the original entry hall with decorative woodworking, the coffered ceiling, fireplace mantel, staircase with newel posts, original doors, original leaded glass windows, mosaic tile flooring and wood flooring.

Mr. Thompson stated that the house was significant under Criterion A for its association with George Worthington. He was the second Episcopal Bishop of Nebraska beginning in 1885. The period of significance is from 1885 until 1899 which is the period of time that he stayed in the home. It is also significant because of its association with the growth of small denominational, private hospitals in Omaha. Bishop Worthington sold the home to Peter Iler, a local distiller, in 1899 who subsequently sold it to Presbyterian Hospital in 1909. During its time as the Presbyterian Hospital, it was associated with Dr. Karl Connell, a local Omaha surgeon, who opened a nurse’s training school in the adjacent properties. The site served as the Lutheran Hospital from 1926 until it moved to another site in 31. It then became the Lutheran Home for the Aged from 1931 until 1954. The period of significance for Criterion A, Hospitals and Healthcare, is from 1909 to 1954.

The applicant further stated that the home was significant under Criterion B for Local Architecture as an example of the Free Classic subtype of the Queen Anne style as previously mentioned. The home was designed by Gordon Lloyd, a Detroit-based architect, who designed a number of Episcopal churches in the Detroit area. The period of significance for Criterion B is 1885 when the building was constructed.

In response to Ms. Fogarty, Ms. Basile stated that there were some plans to have a landscape architect take a look at the building and give her an idea of what could be done. She explained that she wanted to install Cypress Spruces that are similar to what is at the St. Francis Cabrini Church across the street.

In response to Mr. Fogarty, Ms. Basile stated that she would be willing to let the commission members visit the property in the future.
Ms. Meyer moved to APPROVE the request as presented. Ms. Aultz seconded the motion.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on April 12, 2017, Matt Pelz and Barbara McCusker, President – Fairacres Neighborhood Association, appeared before the Commission.

Mr. Pelz described the location and boundaries of the district. He stated that one of the most characteristic features of the neighborhood is Fairacres Road with its brick paving that dates back to 1915. Fairacres Road is a contributing resource to the district and is classified as a structure under National Register guidelines. He explained that most of the research pertained to the area along Fairacres Road since it was the most important section in the early history of the neighborhood. The neighborhood’s growth began along Fairacres Road. He showed pictures of the first homes that were built on the road which include the Edgar M. Gibson house (6300 Dodge Street) and the Thomas J. Nolan house (207 Fairacres Road) built from 1907 - 1910. Both homes are believed to have been designed by architect Frederick A. Henninger. Most of the homes date from the late 1920’s to the early 1940’s. The architectural styles that make up the district include Tudor Revival and homes with French Eclectic or Mediterranean influences.

Mr. Pelz explained that the district is significant under Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development and landscape architecture. It is an early example of an early 20th century planned community designed as a garden suburb by landscape architect George E. Kessler, one of the most prominent landscape architects at that time. Mr. Kessler worked on the design of Hyde Park, a subdivision near Kansas City, and Roland Park in Baltimore. Mr. Kessler sought to incorporate natural beauty into city planning. He also became a leading figure in the City Beautiful movement which culminated into an invitation for him to design the landscape for the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis.

It is also significant under Criterion C in the areas of community planning and development and architecture due to its being the work of a master. The period of significance for Criterion C is 1907 to 1961. He mentioned the names of significant architects that contributed to the district are Frederick A. Henninger, George B. Prinz, Birger J. Kvenild, John and Alan McDonald, Leo A. Daly, Bert B. Hene, and John F. Hyde, Jr.

The history of the district began from 1905 to 1907 when Charles and Edward George acquired property at the western edge of town and developed them. Mr. Pelz showed some photos of the area from that time. He also showed various photos of the homes from that time that are still intact.

Ms. Fogarty noted that the spelling of the district sometimes varies between “Fair Acres” and “Fairacres”. Mr. Pelz explained that, although there has been a variation of the spelling through the years, the spelling on the plat lists the correct spelling as “Fairacres”.

In response to Ms. Meyer, Ms. McCusker stated that the neighborhood was in support of the National Register nomination.
Ms. Fogarty suggested that the applicant add Horace Cleveland to the names of the individuals who were behind the City Beautiful movement. She added that Thomas Rogers Kimball, a prominent Nebraska architect, provided the layout for the entire St. Louis Exposition and hired Kessler. She felt that those additions would add more support to the nomination.

Mr. Dobbe moved to APPROVE the request as presented. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

**ADJOURNMENT:**

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:44 p.m.