Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

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, December 5, 2016 notice re: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2016.

Members Present:
Joan Fogarty, Chair
George Killian, Vice-Chair
Brian Magee
Carrie Meyer
Regan Pence
Jaime Suarez

Members Not Present:
Kathryn Aultz
Scott Dobbe
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 1:34 pm, introduced the Commission members and staff. She explained the procedures for hearing the cases. There were five members present. Mr. Suarez appeared after the roll was called.

Ms. Westman welcomed the new CLG coordinator, Kelli Bacon, and Jessica Fortney, Nebraska State Historical Society.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Magee moved to APPROVE the August 10, 2016 minutes as submitted. Mr. Pence seconded the motion.

AYES: Killian, Magee, Pence, Fogarty

ABSTAIN: Meyer

MOTION CARRIED: 4-0-1
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on December 14, 2016, Chris Jansen and Todd Heistand appeared before the Commission.

Ms. Jansen stated that the building was being nominated under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Commerce. The building was the headquarters for the National Indemnity Company, which was a company that provided financial protection for unusual risk situations. It was considered to be a major insurance company in Omaha.

Ms. Jansen shared several photographs of the structure which showed the vertical element on the west end of the building and the brick bookend on the east facade. A detailed image of the west façade showed the horizontal band of greenstone and the black metal solar screens above. Interior images showed the main entry vestibule, terrazzo flooring and the marble accent wall in the main lobby. She mentioned that from 1969 to 1979, Berkshire Hathaway held its annual shareholder’s meetings in the cafeteria on the 4th floor of the building. There were also pictures of the building prior to the 1967 addition.

Mr. Heistand explained that the structure had been very close to being and endangered building.

Mr. Killian questioned whether the building’s significance under Criterion A was strong enough to warrant a nomination for the National Register. Ms. Jansen mentioned that, in addition to the building being the site of National Indemnity, it was also the first Omaha-based company purchased by Berkshire Hathaway.

Mr. Pence moved to APPROVE the request. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

AYES: Magee, Meyer, Pence, Fogarty

NAYES: Killian

ABSTAIN: Suarez

MOTION CARRIED: 4-1-1
At the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission meeting held on December 14, 2016, Jeff Hunziker and Troy Podraza appeared before the Commission.

The applicant proposed constructing an elevator for egress purposes. He indicated that the elevator would be located inside of an attached silo in an attempt to preserve the character of the property and to maintain as much of the square footage of the structure as possible. The proposed silo would be located on the south end of the building so that it could better service all three floors and be as close as possible to the front entrance. The silo would be dome-shaped and constructed from corrugated steel.

There was some discussion regarding what type of materials should be used for the silo and the piece that would connect the silo to the existing building. Ms. Fogarty stated that the goal should be to have the structure remain as historically accurate as possible.

Ms. Westman stated that, taking that into consideration ADA requirements, the Planning Department believed that the southeast corner was the best location for the addition. She explained that the addition did not appear to compete with the overall scale of the existing building and that the proposed colors and materials were appropriate. The Planning Department recommended approval of the request.

Mr. Magee moved to APPROVE the request as submitted. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion.

AYES: Magee, Meyer, Pence, Suarez, Fogarty

NAYES: Killian

MOTION CARRIED: 5-1

ADJOURNMENT:

It was the consensus of the Board to ADJOURN the meeting at 2:17 p.m.