RESOLUTION – EXHIBIT A
Atlas Apartments
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

RESOLVED BY THE LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF OMAHA:

WHEREAS, Lawrence Butler is the owner and managing partner of the Atlas Apartments; and,

WHEREAS, this owner, on April 25, 2015, requested that the Atlas Apartments be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha’s Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Atlas Apartments was designed by local architect Charles W. Rosenberry in 1903, as one of his earliest known works; and,

WHEREAS, the Atlas Apartment Building was built for contractor James D. Kazakes, and owner Jack Skrekas in 1919; and,

WHEREAS, the Atlas Apartments was designed as a four-plex flat apartment building in an area of heavy development of multi-family housing along Sherman Avenue (now North 16th Street); and,

WHEREAS, the Atlas Apartments is an exceptional example of its building type in North Omaha, where very few remain; and,

WHEREAS, the Atlas Apartments exhibits all of the character-defining traits of a four-plex flat apartment building of the Garden City Movement; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF OMAHA:

THAT, the Atlas Apartments, 1609 Binney Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.

Chair: Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

Date: June 19, 2015
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Atlas Apartments located at 1609 Binney Street as a landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OMAHA:

Section 1. That the Atlas Apartments located at 1609 Binney Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

The north 35 feet of the west 52.45 feet of Lot 1, Block 1, Kountze Place, is hereby deemed historically significant and worthy of recognition for the reasons cited in Landmark Heritage Preservation Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit “A” and made a part hereof by reference.

Section 2. That the "Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Buildings", as may be from time to time amended, are hereby adopted as the design standards to be applied in the enforcement of this ordinance and Chapter 24, Article II, of the Omaha Municipal Code.

Section 3. That the Atlas Apartments is hereby designated as a landmark pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code and hereby subject to all of the provisions of this Ordinance and Chapter 24, Article II, of the Omaha Municipal Code.
Section 4. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and take effect fifteen (15) days from and after the date of its passage.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER

[Signature]

APPROVED BY:

[Signature] 10/15
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA DATE

PASSED SEP 29 2015 7-0

ATTEST:

[Signature] 10/15
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA DATE

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

[Signature] 09-05
CITY ATTORNEY DATE
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
Local Landmark or Landmark Heritage District

APPLICATION

Return To: City of Omaha Planning Department
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
Omaha/Douglas Civic Center
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 1100
Omaha, Nebraska 68183

Instructions:
The application for Local Landmark or Landmark Heritage District must be approved by the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission. Applications must provide, in addition to this form, sufficient drawings, specifications, photographs or other materials to allow the LHPC to evaluate the qualifications of the proposed property.

1. Address of Subject Property 1609 Binney St.
2. Name of Structure THE ATLAS APARTMENTS
3. Applicant
   Name 1609 Binney LLC
   Street 1609 Binney St
   City Omaha
   State NE Zip 6810 Phone 402-900-3557 Email

4. Owner’s Signature Dates
   Ending member Date 4/25/2015

5. Legal Description

   SEE ATTACHED

6. Classification
   Category: ☐ district
   Building(s): ☐ public
   ☐ private
   ☐ structure
   ☐ site
   ☐ object
   Ownership: ☐ public
   ☐ private
   ☐ both
   Status: ☐ occupied
   ☐ unoccupied
   ☐ public acquisition
   Present Use: ☐ agriculture
   ☐ commercial
   ☐ educational
   ☐ entertainment
   ☐ government
   ☐ industrial
   ☐ military
   ☐ other (explain)

7. Historic Description and Significance
   Please provide as thorough a description as possible. This should include, but is not limited to, architectural styles and features; site elements, landscaping/urban design elements; architects, builders, and owners. Copies of architectural drawings, photos and similar documents are encouraged. Include a statement explaining why the item/property/district is historically significant. The LHPC staff will assist you in filling out this portion if necessary. Attach supporting documents.

See Attached National Register of Historic Places Documents and Photos

LHPC Use Only
Case File Number _____________________________
City Council 1 _____________________________
Hearing Dates _____________________________
City Council 2 _____________________________
LHPC _____________________________
City Council 3 _____________________________
Planning Board _____________________________
Ordinance Number _____________________________
PLANS APPROVED
In accordance with
Sections 1 and 3
Ordinance 11, 416
N. E. Edgcomb
Chief Engineer
City of Houghton

Date 8-18-19

Check
Apt 1602

S. W. Beckman
The Atlas Apartments

Prepared for City of Omaha Planning Department, Local Landmark Designation Report

June 10, 2015
Executive Summary

Description

The Atlas Apartments at 1609 Binney Street were designed by locally known architect Charles W. Rosenberry in 1903. They were constructed in 1919. The design is a four-plex flat apartment building of two story construction and symmetrical units on each floor. The structure features load bearing brick walls on the exterior and interior with wood joist framing. The windows are single hung windows. There is one main entrance on the north side which features the name of the building and the year it was constructed, and an alley on the west that leads to a stair and balcony on the south that provides rear entrance to the four apartments. The “ALLAS” nameplate also bears mention over the front entryway door.

The interior is divided into two by two separate masonry interior walls. The entrance foyer contains a mosaic tile floor, a wood staircase and hardwood floors throughout. The apartments have oak trim between the living room and bathroom and original oak crown molding in the living room and dining room.

Historical Significance

The Atlas Apartments has historical significance within the Garden City Movement of 1905-1962 in the Omaha community. It was built along the 16th Street corridor which had efficient transportation in the dense urban core. Its U-shape floor plan and rear common area stairs leading directly into the apartments are typical of the Garden City Movement and are mentioned in other historical property documents. The Atlas Apartments was previously surveyed for the National Register of Historic Places along with the historic property “The Apartments at 2514 N 16th Street”, but no determination was made for the Atlas Apartments. It is the only standing four-plex flat apartment in North Omaha which represents the Garden City Movement. Also, its architect Charles W. Rosenberry is well known locally for his work which includes many homes in the Happy Hollow and Country Club Historic Districts. Still extant along 16th and Binney Streets, The Atlas Apartments retains sufficient architectural integrity and remains a significant structure in North Omaha.
Description
The Atlas Apartment Building at 1609 Binney Street is a “four-plex flat,” an apartment type defined in the Multiple Property Document *Apartments, Flats and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska from 1880-1962*. The Atlas Apartment Building was constructed in 1919 for Mr. James Kazakes. This brick building sits on a brick foundation with load bearing walls on the interior and exterior and is two stories tall with four apartment units. The building was fully occupied by 1930. Local architect, Charles W. Rosenberry’s design exhibits characteristics of the Garden City Movement. Most noteworthy is the “ALLAS” name plate and U-Shape floor plan with rear entry doors for each apartment. Each apartment has a separate rear entrance via a stairwell. Each apartment consists of an ample sized living room, dining room, kitchen, and two bedrooms with a bathroom in between. Most noteworthy is the “ALLAS” nameplate instead of the decorative piece seen on the original plans.

The Atlas Apartments are approximately 52 feet wide (on street facing and rear sides) and 30 feet deep. There is very little landscaping for the apartment building, as there is a seven foot wide alley to the east that leads to the rear apartment entry, separating it from a vacant building, and Mount Vernon Baptist church located 3 feet from the south face. The building contains two apartment units on each floor each with approximately 750 square feet of space. The middle of the building is bisected by a central stair hall that provides access to the second floor apartments. The building has a flat roof covered with built up roofing. The parapet is capped with ridged metal along the rear elevation. Constructed with dark decorative face brick on the north elevation, the east, south and west facing elevations are a standard red brick in a running bond pattern.

Location
The Atlas is located 1609 Binney Street along the on 16th Street corridor (formerly Sherman Avenue.) Other historical sites or local landmarks in the area:

- George S Kelly House at 1924 Binney Street
- John P Bay House at 2024 Binney
- The Sherman Apartments at 2501 N. 16th Street
- Strehlow Terrace at 2024 N 16th Street
- The Apartments at 2514 N 16th Street
- Trans-Mississippi and International Expo between Pinkney and Pratt Streets and 16th and 24th Street

History
The Atlas Apartments was designed in 1903 by Charles W. Rosenberry, a renown local architect, but was not constructed until 1919. Charles Roseberry also constructed many homes in the historic district of Country Club and the Happy Hollow area in Omaha, but this was his first known work. It was built as an apartment house for James D. Kazakes, a contractor who leased 2924 N 16th Street per the 1921 City of Omaha directory. Jack Skrekas also appears on sheet one of the plans. Jack Skrekas was known with his brother James Skrekas as the Skrekas Brothers. They seemed to be entrepreneurs and also owned a store, “Confectionery Fruits and Ice Cream” at 1902 Farnam Street per the 1917 City of Omaha directory. They also entered into the leasing business. Even though the complex appears to be for James Kazakes, Jack Skrekas was the actual owner with this name being on the deed in several places. The link between Charles Rosenberry and the builders is not known.

Jack Skrekas used these units as condominiums and sold off one of the units to Ben Poulon in 1920 and another to Samuel Sugarman in 1920. He also deeded over a unit to Maud Alice Skrekas in 1921. It is not known if Maud Alice was a relative of Jack Skrekas but it certainly seems that is the case. The nomination of *The Apartments at 2514 N 16th Street* document states the Atlas was not fully occupied until 1930. It does not state if Jack Skrekas lived there.

2922 N. 16th Street, to the east side, was constructed in 1904 as a retail store, and to the south, Mount Vernon Baptist Church was constructed in 1918. Since the 1903 design by Charles W. Rosenberry was not constructed until 1919, the area to the south may have been planned as green space but was changed at the time of construction. Also, the land was not deeded until 1913. Currently there is only seven feet of space that separates the building to the east and three to four feet of space that separates it to the south.
Significance

The Atlas Apartments is historically significant under Criteria A and Criteria C under the National Register of Historical Places Guidelines.

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

Omaha’s Near North Side began as an affluent neighborhood of country estates for the likes of Augustus and Herman Kountze and John Redick, names that still loom large over the city. By the 1880s Sherman Avenue, later North 16th Street, had become the thoroughfare of choice for the construction of stylish mansions for many of Omaha’s wealthy elite. Its popularity was due in large part to its location in relation to the natural environment; prior to 1877 Sherman Avenue provided a terrific view of the Missouri River. However, in that year the Missouri changed course and the growing industrialization of the area between downtown and Sherman Avenue’s grand residences “belched steam and smoke.” By the turn of the 20th Century, Omaha’s wealthy began their march in search of more favorable living space to the north and west, opening the Near North Side to new patterns of development. Before abandoning the Near North Side, however, Omaha’s elite made their mark in two significant ways that would have long-lasting effects. The most dramatic was bringing the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition to North Omaha in 1898. Located on land donated by Herman Kountze between the railroad tracks to the east and north, North 22nd to the west and Binney Street to the south, the 1898 Exposition helped cement Sherman Avenue as North Omaha’s main streetcar route. As explained in Patterns on the Landscape: Heritage Conservation in North Omaha, “Fairgoers frequently took the carline to the 16th Street Midway entrance,” and by the time, “lines were electrified, remnants of the old horsecar lines on 17th, 18th, and 19th were dropped.” Eventually its status as a well traveled street car line would lead to heavy development of multi-family housing along its course, including the construction of the Apartments at 2514 North 16th Street.

The second lasting contribution of North Omaha’s early history as a neighborhood of large estates was the pattern of subdivision and lot arrangement that evolved as each land owner parcelled out their property after deciding to move on. South of Grace Street, all of the land along North 16th was platted by 1880, but further north some parcels were left unorganized as late as 1918. In particular the area between Grace and Ohio Streets was subject to inconsistent subdivisions. Here, wealthy individuals obtained long lots that stretched an entire city block on either side of Sherman Avenue so they could build their houses in the middle of the block, enhancing the image of a country estate. Upon their departure, however, there was no standardized system of subdivision.

Criterion C: The Garden City Movement and the Four-Plex Apartment

The Atlas Apartments at 1609 Binney Street is an outstanding example of an apartment type, the four-plex, and the Garden City sub-type as identified in the Multiple Property Document, Apartments, Flats and Tenements in Omaha, Nebraska, 1880-1962. Neither type nor sub-type is particularly rare in Omaha, but the nominated property is exceptional for North Omaha. Furthermore, its architectural value extends beyond just rarity within a certain neighborhood. The nominated property retains good overall integrity and readily exhibits the character-defining attributes of both the four-plex apartment type and the Garden City Movement. According to the MPD, four-plexes in Omaha are always two units wide and two stories in height, and account for: 7% of flats that were constructed in Omaha. Over the years they have become more and more popular. Although they had small rises in popularity in the 1880s, 1910s and 1920s, they were most popular during and especially after WWII, likely due to their size and affordability. Typically arranged with a central entrance into a stair hall and two units per floor, these buildings were generally limited to two stories in height. They were rarely constructed in any type of formal arrangement. The Atlas Apartments at 1609 Binney Street clearly meets this definition. The building is two stories high, two units wide, is arranged around a central stair hall, and was constructed independently from the buildings surrounding it. While sixty-percent (157) of four-plexes constructed between 1880 and 1962 in Omaha are extant today, only eight percent (2) are still standing in North Omaha. These include the nominated property and four-plexes at The Apartments at 2514 N. 16th Street. The Apartments at 2514 N 16th Street were nominated in 2009 for the National Register for Historic Places and is currently on the National Register. The four-plex at 1608 Locust Street was demolished around 2009.
Current Condition and Renovation Plan
Currently the Atlas has been abandoned for more than 10 years. The original radiators have been removed, the roof has substantial leaks and as a result, the oak hardwood floors have significantly bowed in a lot of rooms on the second floor. Walls have water damage on the plaster and there is peeling paint throughout the building. All major systems need to be updated (plumbing, roof, HVAC, and electrical). Tuck pointing will be required on the exterior brick along with an extensive list of other repair items. The current renovation cost is estimated between $150,000 and $200,000. Below is the current plan on providing funding:

- City of Omaha Rental Rehabilitation Program will provide $98,000 with an owner contribution on $44,000 for a total of $142,000 to fund renovation
- State historic tax credit for 2016 will provide a 20% tax credit if application is approved
- Federal preservation tax credits will provide 20% tax credit if application is approved in 2015
- Owner will contribute between $44,000 and $77,000 total
Bibliography

Bjorkman, Lynn. “National Register Nomination, Strehlow Terrance,” 1986. NPS #86003446

City of Omaha. 1917 Directory. Pg 766.

City of Omaha. 1921 Directory. Pg 253.

City of Omaha. Deed Records for Lot 1, Kountze Place, Addition to Omaha City.


Honebrink, Jennifer. “National Register Nomination, The Margaret,” 2006. NPS #07000427

Honebrink, Jennifer and Jansen, Chris. “National Register Nomination, Selma Terrace,” 2008. NPS #08000603


Nunn, Jessie. “National Register Nomination, The Apartments at 2514 N. 16th St,” 2009. NPS Unknown


Omaha City Directories, 1928-1938. On microfilm at the Nebraska State Library and Archives


Local Landmark Designation

Date: June 5, 2015
Case Number: 15-11-H1
Case Name: Atlas Apartments
Location: 1609 Binney Street
Applicant: Lawrence Butler, Owner and Managing Member
Request: Local Landmark Designation

Inspection Date: June 5, 2015 (Exterior Only)
Present Use: Vacant
Conformance with Master Plan:
From the OMC Section 24-22:
The city council finds that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of structures, districts and elements of historical, cultural, educational, architectural, engineering, or geographic significance located within the city are required in the interest of the prosperity, civic pride and general welfare of the people; and further finds that the economic, cultural and aesthetic standings of this city cannot be maintained or enhanced by disregarding the heritage of the city and by allowing the destruction or defacement of such cultural assets.

Description:
The existing neighborhood is a mix of single family (American four-square, craftsman bungalow), multi-family and commercial building types. There are a number of vacant lots as well as some new housing developments. Much of what was multi-family residential has been demolished.

The impact of designating this four-plex apartment building as a landmark will help to preserve the historic fabric that remains in the mixed-use neighborhood and may act as a catalyst for future investment.

Review and Analysis:
In addition to requesting a local landmark designation for this building, the owner has requested that the property be added to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Pattern of Development) and C (Building Form) in the areas of significance of (Community Planning and Architecture – verify with NeSHPO). Please see attached National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. The applicant continues to work with the NeSHPO to finalize the documents as required.

The Atlas Apartment Building at 1609 Binney Street in Omaha was designed by local architect Charles W. Rosenberry as a four-plex flat in 1903. It was built for James Kazakes in 1919 along Sherman Avenue (now North 16th Street) which was North Omaha’s main streetcar route. There had been heavy development of multi-family housing along Sherman Avenue at the time.

The Atlas Apartments is an exceptional example of its building type in North Omaha, where very few exist. It is in good overall integrity and exhibits all of the character defining traits of a four-plex apartment building of the Garden City Movement.

From the Omaha Municipal Code, Sec. 24-52 - Standards for Designation.
A particular site, structure, or area may be designated for preservation as a landmark or landmark heritage district if it has:
(a) Historical and cultural importance, having significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, history, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or is the site of an historic event; or exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, educational, social or historic heritage of the community;
(b) Architectural and engineering importance, portraying the historical setting or environment of a distinctive characteristic of an architectural or engineering type, period, style, or method of construction; or is the work of a
master or designer whose individual work is significant in the development of the city; or contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of distinctive quality, or which represents a significant innovation;
(c) Geographic importance, by being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, which should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or
(d) Archeological importance, yielding or which may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

From these standards, the applicant is requesting a local landmark designation of the property. The standards which best suit the proposed designation would be both- (a) Historical and Cultural Importance and (b) Architectural and Engineering Importance. Please see the attached Local Landmark Designation Report prepared by the applicant.

In reviewing the material the planning department recognizes that the proposed designation has important historical value as part of the development of North Omaha – a distinct community within the city of Omaha. Its relationship to the Kountze Addition, the Missouri River, the site of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, and the established streetcar network all play a role in the character of the built neighborhood. The building itself – an exceptional representation of its building type – the four-plex apartment – finds itself in appropriate context for the developing neighborhood and its commercial center nearby.

The planning department finds that the Atlas Apartments are both culturally and architecturally significant to the city of Omaha. Further clarification and documentation would identify the specifics of these standards for designation to apply.

**Recommendation:**

The Planning Department recommends a layover of the requested Local Landmark Designation until all documentation and research has been finalized and can be presented at the next LHPC meeting.

**Attachments:**

8 x 11 Case Packet

Please Note: Following the LHPC Meeting June 10, 2015 the final six pages of this document have been updated and replaced.
At the June 10, 2015 meeting of the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission (LHPC), the applicant Lawrence Butler, as owner and managing member of 1609 Binney1 LLC, requested a local landmark designation for the Atlas Apartments at 1609 Binney Street. The public hearing held at the meeting resulted in a recommendation for approval of the request.

According to Chapter 24, Omaha Municipal Code, Section 24-59, we hereby transmit this proposal to the City Planning Board, and request that you consider the degree of conformity or nonconformity with the Master Plan of the City of Omaha.

The Planning Department has been working with the applicant to support efforts to designate this building. It recognizes that the proposed designation has important historical value as part of the development of North Omaha – a distinct community within the city of Omaha. Its relationship to the historic mixed-use neighborhood, and the building itself – an exceptional representation of its building type, the four-plex apartment – warrants this application. The Planning Department finds that the Atlas Apartments are both culturally and architecturally significant to the City of Omaha. The Planning Department staff supports a local landmark designation for the building.

The Planning Department considers this request to be in conformance with the Master Plan and recommends approval of the designation.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

ATTACHMENTS
LHPC Minutes
Application for Designation