RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT 1
Blackstone Hotel

LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel is owned by the Carlson Properties Division of the Schimmel Hotels Corporation; and,

WHEREAS, these owners have authorized Frank R. Krejci to act as agent in matters of designation of the Blackstone Hotel as a Historical Landmark; and,

WHEREAS, this authorized agent requested that the Blackstone Hotel be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmarks Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel was built by the Bankers Investment Realty Company in 1916; and,

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel was one of Omaha's finest family hotels, where residents could rent by the year rather than the day, and enjoy full hotel services; and,

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel, with its ballroom, roof gardens and award winning restaurants was the center of many of Omaha's finest social functions; and,

WHEREAS, numerous dignitaries and celebrities stayed at the Blackstone Hotel while visiting Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel is a fine example of the Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture; and,

WHEREAS, the Blackstone Hotel is located in the "Gold Coast" area, a neighborhood which housed a preponderance of Omaha's cultural and financial leaders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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

THAT, the Blackstone Hotel, 302 South 36th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
8/8/82

REQUEST CATEGORY
x Landmark Designation District
__ Landmark Heritage x Building
__ District Designation Structure
__ Certificate of Approval Site
__ to Perform Work Object

APPLICANT
Blackstone Centre Association

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
302 South 36th Street

PRESENT USE
Vacant

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN - Shown as being in a potential historic district in A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha; shown as an "outstanding historic building" on the "major assets" map in the Housing Market Analysis, West Central Study Area; shown as being in a high density/multi-Neighborhood Character
Existing: The neighborhood is a mix of both old and new structures with a wide range of uses, including office, religious, commercial and both single and multi-family residential. A large portion of this neighborhood qualifies as a potential historic district.
Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved. Designation should help in the effort to recognize and protect the diminishing number of important historical structures that are considered to be major assets of the area, as well as reinforcing the concept of creating a historic district in the neighborhood.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Conformance with Master Plan
(continued from above)
use area in the Future Land Use Plan; shown as being in a conservation area in 1977 Community Development Master Plan.
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE: BLACKSTONE HOTEL

and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number: 302 S 36 STREET

CLASSIFICATION
Category: Building(s) Structure Site Object
Ownership: Private Both Public Acquisition

Status: Occupied Unoccupied Work in Progress
Accessible

Present Use: Agriculture Commercial Educational Entertainment
Government Industrial Military

Other: (VACANT)

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name: Blackstone Centre Association Phone Number: (402) 330-5240

Street and Number: 11308 Davenport Street
City, State and Zip Code: Omaha, Ne. 68154

Representative: How/Nelsen Associates, Inc. Phone Number: (402) 330-5555

Street and Number: 101 South 108th Avenue
City, State and Zip Code: Omaha, Nebraska 68154

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Parcel No. one: (Building Site and Parking Lot)
All of Lots One, Two, Three, Four and Five and all of Lots Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen, and Eighteen, Kountze Subdivision, an Addition to the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, except those portions deeded to the City of Omaha for street purposes.

Parcel No. Two: (South Parking Lot)
All of Lots Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine, Kountze Subdivision, an Addition to the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, except those portions deeded to the City of Omaha for street purposes.

Parcel No. Three (North Parking Lot)
Lot Fourteen and the East Forty Feet of Lot Fifteen, Block Five, Alamo Plaza Addition, an Addition to the City of Omaha, Douglas Country, Nebraska.
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Omaha City Architecture, Landmarks, Inc.
Date 1977

Federal  State  County  Local

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Historic Omaha Building Survey, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
Date 1977

Federal  State  County  Local

A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, 1981

x  Local

DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates 1916
Architect Bankers Realty Company
Builder

8-6-82

Signature of Owner/Representative

(Representing Blackstone Centre Association)
Historical Significance

The construction of the Blackstone as a residential hotel in 1916 was part of a larger building trend in Omaha. The twenty years from 1910 to 1930 brought the construction of many apartment buildings and downtown hotels that still make up a good portion of the Omaha skyline. In addition, the Blackstone's location at 36th and Farnam pointed toward Omaha's future, clearly moving away from downtown and into a wealthy suburb.

The land on which the Blackstone Hotel stands appeared on early Omaha maps as adjacent to the holdings of landowners Smith and Dickinson. When Smith's Addition was platted in 1869, the oddly shaped block on which the Blackstone was built was only partly included in the plat. Only when it was purchased by the wealthy banking family of the four Kountze brothers in 1904 was the block lying between 36th and 37th; Farnam and Dewey, laid out in lots.

However, no significant construction occurred in Kountze's Subdivision. The surrounding subdivisions were irregular, of varying size, and chopped up the neighboring land. Thirty-Sixth Street had always jogged to the east at Farnam, and Farnam had narrowed west of 36th, because of the irregular platting. No doubt this point of change in block layout at 36th and Farnam affected its popularity for residential construction, and the site remained open, covered by a grove of maple trees until 1916.

By the Teens, Farnam had become the main street of Omaha's Gold Coast neighborhood. First developed in the late 1880's and early 1890's, the Gold Coast was established with the construction of homes of the wealthy in the first decade of the twentieth century. Among the neighborhood's residents were business, financial and social leaders who lived in homes designed by architects in a variety of the newest styles. Although a streetcar line, Farnam Street was still primarily residential in the Teens.

The Bankers Realty Investment Company built the Blackstone in 1916 as a family hotel, as opposed to an apartment house. The Company clearly stated that in family hotels, residents rented by the year rather than the day, and received hotel services. Apartments were available in sizes varying from one to six rooms, although none contained kitchens or dining rooms. The hotel also provided three roof gardens, which offered a fine view of the Omaha skyline. In addition, the owners emphasized the Blackstone's convenience for all Omahans, since it was easily reached by three streetcar lines and by automobile along a paved Farnam Street. For the "club man", a brief streetcar trip conveyed him to the Happy Hollow and Country Clubs, with the Field Club only a few minutes walk on 36th Street.

Along with its primary function of "providing a home for people who wish to enjoy all the advantages of the most convenient and luxurious form of communal housing, the Blackstone also aimed to serve as a center of the City's social functions. An ad in Omaha's weekly society newspaper, The Excelsior, identified not only the eighth floor ballroom and roof gardens as available for gatherings, but also the ground floor dining room, which was open to non-residents of the building. Clearly the Blackstone owners sought to create a luxurious residential hotel and social center for the wealthy neighborhood in which it was built.

Although other residential hotels such as the El Beudor at 1804 Dodge and the Flatiron at 1722 St. Mary's Avenue were also built in the Teens, they were
most often located downtown. The construction of the Blackstone on West Farnam was similar to apartment building construction that was increasingly occurring not only in the West Farnam Gold Coast neighborhood, but in Dundee and along Park Avenue as well. This apartment construction continued into the 1920's and 1930's and eventually became more popular than the residential hotel.

Perhaps because of the number of available apartments, the Blackstone never lived up to its first owners' plans. However, the purchase of the building by Vienna born Charles Schimmel in 1920 turned the Blackstone into a "symbol of elegance" for Omahans for half a century. Under Schimmel, the hotel published its own magazine, The Blackstonian, and maintained its own Pierce Arrow, which met visiting dignitaries arriving by train. The pastry shop and various dining rooms were famous for their fine food, and the Orleans Room, for sixteen years, was the only Nebraska restaurant to receive Holiday Magazines Award of Excellence. Under the Schimmels, the Blackstone operated as a hotel, although it retained a number of residents as well.

Schimmel owned not only the Blackstone, but four other hotels in Midwest cities, operated by his sons. In July, 1950, Hotel Management magazine awarded the Schimmel children the "distinguished service cross" for their abilities, calling their hotel chain "one of America's most successful family enterprises."

Over the years, the Schimmels continued their standard of excellence at the Blackstone. In 1956, plans were announced for a new addition to the south of the building, but it was never constructed. A remodeling in 1961 replaced the Classically detailed entrance on 36th Street with a flat metal carport. In October, 1968, Edward Schimmel sold the Blackstone and two other hotels to the Radisson Management Corporation of Minneapolis. Although the Radisson Corporation changed the name to the Radisson Blackstone and planned extensive remodeling, their effort was unsuccessful. The hotel was forced to close in 1976 and has remained vacant since that time.

Architectural Description

Blackstone Hotel, 302 South 36th Street, constructed in 1916 at a cost of approximately $500,000; eight stories over raised basement and sub-basement; E-shaped in plan; steel frame, concrete pan floor system, brick curtain walls with extensive terra cotta trim; a terra cotta cornice displaying modillions, dentils and consoles completes the seventh floor; original wood and glass roof gardens at the eighth floor are slightly recessed behind a low brick parapet and are now enclosed; two wide terra cotta bands extend vertically from the second floor to the cornice at each leg of the E-shaped plan, encompassing a pair of double-hung windows at every floor; terra cotta is also used for horizontal banding defining the building base and upper floors, for coping at the parapet, and for details including window lintels with stylized keystones and window sills; recessed brick courses are used to simulate a rusticated base at the ground floor; original entry replaced in 1961 with flat metal roof that projects from the building to cover the driveway.

Architectural Significance

The Blackstone Hotel is architecturally significant as a fine example of the Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture, a style popular between 1890 and 1920. Like other revival styles of this period, the Second Renaissance Revival style represents the return to a more disciplined architecture based
on classical and renaissance examples, in reaction to the picturesque eclecticism of the preceding Victorian era. Features of the Blackstone Hotel that are representative of this style include the brickwork simulating a rusticated base, the distinct horizontal divisions created by terra cotta bands, the variation of the windows, and the use of classical details.

Bibliography

Blackstone Hotel Publicity Section, Sunday World-Herald, November 26, 1916.


Clipping file, Hotels, Social Science Department, Omaha Public Library.

The Excelsior, Vol. 33, No. 40 (September 30, 1916), black cover.


Omaha Atlas, 1887. Located in Omaha City Planning Department.

Savage, James Woodford and Bell, J.T. History of the City of Omaha, Nebraska, and South Omaha. New York and Chicago; Munsell and Company, 1894.

Subdivision file, Public Works Department, Omaha-Douglas Civic Center.


LHPC Case No. H1-82-15, APPLICANT: Blackstone Centre Association requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 302 South 36th Street. Area to be designated is shaded.
(Blackstone Hotel)
March 8, 1983

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

This proposed Ordinance designates the Blackstone Hotel, 302 South 36th Street as a Landmark. The owner, Blackstone Centre Association is the applicant.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Department recommends approval as the Blackstone Hotel has been associated with many of Omaha’s finest social functions, visiting dignitaries and celebrities as well as being a fine example of the Second Renaissance Revival style of Architecture.

TESTIMONY AT THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING: At the Public Hearing held October 6, 1982, Lynn Meyer appeared in favor of the request to designate the Blackstone Hotel. Mr. Meyer stated that the Planning Department staff finds this designation to be in conformance with the Master Plan.

PLANNING BOARD ACTION: Planning Board approved the request 6-0-1 with Mr. Fchey abstaining.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AT LANDMARK HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING: At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting of the Landmark’s Heritage Preservation Commission held August 19, 1982, Lynn Meyer presented a visual overview of the architectural and historical significance of the Blackstone Hotel. Jim Moore representing the Blackstone Centre Association appeared in favor of the designation.

No one appeared in opposition to the designation.

Full minutes of proceeding attached.

LANDMARK HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ACTION: Approved 5-0 with Commission member How abstaining (1 position vacant)

Respectfully submitted,

Martin H. Shukert, Planning Director
Planning Department

Approved:

Mayor’s Office/Title

Att. Minutes
Ordinance
Resolution
Exhibits

3C15:16
At the Public Hearing an Administrative Meeting held August 19, 1982, Lynn Meyer presented a visual overview of the architectural and historical significance of the Blackstone Hotel.

Mr. Jim Moore representing the Blackstone Centre Association appeared in favor of the designation. Mr. Moore told how he had taken his dates to the Blackstone and his wedding reception and dinner were held there also. In his talking with different people in the restaurant business and office business, Mr. Moore has found that there is extreme interest in the Blackstone. Mr. Moore stated that the plans called for making the Blackstone building into a class "A" office building and one of the finest in Omaha.

No one else appeared in favor of the designation.

No one appeared in opposition to the designation.

Dr. Wood informed Mr. Moore that there are certain conditions that would be imposed upon the developer in terms of the architectural review of the plans by the Commission and the need for working very closely with the Commission. Mr. Moore informed the Commission that they had every intention of doing this.

Mr. Haecker moved that the Blackstone Hotel be designated as a historical landmark. Seconded by Mr. Harmsen and carried 5-0 with Stan How abstaining.
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Blackstone Hotel, located at 302 South 36th 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 Blackstone Hotel is located at 302 South 36th Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

All of Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and all of Lots 15, 16, 17, and 18, Kaunitz Subdivision an addition to the City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska except those portions deeded to the City of Omaha for street purposes.

Section 2. That for the reasons recited in Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit I, and made a part hereof as if fully set forth herein, the architectural characteristics of the Blackstone Hotel are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Blackstone Hotel is hereby designated pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code, and hereby subject to all of the provisions of Landmark Heritage Preservation, Ch. 24, Art. II. of the City of Omaha.

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

Bernie Simm

APPROVED:

Michael Boyle

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

DATE: 4/4/83

PASSED APR 12 1983 6-0

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

PL/8:3C15:18
ORDINANCE NO. 2996-3

AN ORDINANCE to designate the
Blackstone Hotel located at 302 South 36th
Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark
Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City
of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading MAR 22 1983 91, Motion to

admit Public Hearing & 2nd Reading

on 4/5/83 Carried 6-0

Hearing APR 6 1983 255 - Over to

4/8/83

Final Reading APR 12 1983

Passed 6-0