RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
BRADFORD-PETTIS RESIDENCE
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, John A. Covert is the owner of the Bradford-Pettis Residence; and

WHEREAS, the owner on July 24, 1979, requested that the Bradford-Pettis Residence be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Bradford-Pettis Residence was designed in 1910 for Dana C. and Savilla Bradford by John McDonald, Omaha's foremost architect during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and

WHEREAS, the Bradford-Pettis Residence exhibits Prairie style influences modified by the scholarly historicism which gradually replaced it; and

WHEREAS, an extraregional Japanese influence is projected in the detailing of the Bradford-Pettis Residence's eaves, porch railings and window and door surrounds; and

WHEREAS, the leaded and stained glass windows of the Bradford-Pettis Residence play upon multiple interior themes and display Omaha's finest application of Prairie style design; and

WHEREAS, the Bradford-Pettis Residence is historically related to 1) Dana C. Bradford, owner of the Bradford-Kennedy Lumber Company which, during the early twentieth century, became one of the largest wholesale lumber businesses in the West, 2) Edward F. Pettis, secretary-treasurer and a director of J. L. Brandeis and Sons, under whose leadership the College World Series became one of the community's major annual attractions, and 3) Drew Antiques and Art Objects, established in 1928 by Louis and Jack Drew, which remains Omaha's oldest business specializing in the sale of antiques.

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

THAT, the Bradford-Pettis Residence, 404 South 39th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
10-11-79

REQUEST
- Landmark Designation
- Landmark Heritage
- District Designation
- Certificate of Approval
- to Perform Work

CATEGORY
- District
- Building
- Structure
- Site
- Object

APPLICANT
John A. Covert

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
400 South 39th Street

PRESENT USE
Commercial: antiques wholesale and retail

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
Conforms to the January 1976 Housing Market Analysis, West Central Study Area in which the structure is shown to be located in a proposed historic neighborhood district.

Existing: Single family residences, multi-family and commercial conversions, and medium-rise apartments comprise a turn-of-the-century residential neighborhood which contains prominent Omaha landmark structures.

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved.

Designation will give public notice as to the important historical themes and architecturally significant structures located within this West Central neighborhood's borders. The designation will also initiate the listing of the structure on the National Register of Historic Places.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
Dana Bradford Residence
and/or Common
DREW Antiques & Art Objects

LOCATION
Street and Number
400 South 39th Street

CLASSIFICATION
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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name
John A. Covert
Street and Number
400 South 39th Street
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, Nebraska 68131
Representative
Same
Street and Number
City, State and Zip Code

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
North 1/2 of Lot 1, Block 17, Smith's Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Nebr. State Historical Society, Douglas County
Date March 1978
Federal X State ___ County ___ Local ___
Pettis-Bradford House, 400 S. 39th St.
0009, 15-16
(Over)
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

Date
Signature of Owner/Representative

July 24, 1929

John A. Covert / Owner
DESCRIPTION

Designed in 1910 by prominent Omaha architect John McDonald for Dana C. Bradford, an owner of the Bradford-Kennedy Lumber Company, the residence at 404 South 39th Street exhibits Prairie style influences modified by the scholarly historicism that gradually replaced it. McDonald, experimenting with various combinations of Prairie mannerisms, produced a formality that seems to be out of character with the structure's roughness of finish and organic color scheme. However, the design does succeed in emphasizing the solidity of the mass by avoiding 1) the changes of level in its surfaces, 2) variations of texture, and 3) interconnecting ligaments of stone and brick - the approach that Wright employed so artfully to subdivide his masses and thereby reduce the scale of his residences. The result is that the Bradford home seems more formal and imposing - and thereby much less organic and personal than Wright's.

Constructed by local contractor Jonas Printz at a cost of $19,000, the 66' x 60' two-story, reddish-brown brick structure also displays an extraregional Japanese influence. The projecting galvanized iron eaves, wrought-iron porch railings and terra cotta window and door surrounds are detailed in various oriental motifs and foreshadow similar interior applications. The structure is bound firmly together by this system of sharp-edged piers, fascias, sills and windows which echo and reinforce the rigid rectilinearity of plan and mass. A similar application, found in a group of brick houses designed by Chicago architects Tallmadge and Watson around 1910, incorporates narrow piers as a major ingredient in exterior wall surfaces.

An additional horizontal emphasis is provided by a monumental, centrally located front porch supported by stout brick piers which projects from the structure's formal east facade. The weight and proportion of the porch and piers are reiterated in the massive brick terraces which flank the front stair and continue unbroken to the building's corners. A carriage porch of similar detail supported by massive wrought-iron brackets is located on the south facade.

The structure's hip roof, clad in red tile and defined by severe, horizontal eaves, is an abrupt departure from the design concepts McDonald employed in the remainder of the residence. Punctuated by oversized dormers and framed by slender chimneys, the design of the roof portrays historical influences unrelated to the Prairie movement.

The original organic color scheme juxtaposed the reddish-brown brick surfaces against beige eaves, fascias, piers, sills and windows. During the renovation of the residence in 1964, the brick was painted a light grey and the trim white.

The broad proportions and large, multiple window openings evident on the exterior produce a spacious and airy interior. From the hardwood oak floors to the maple, mahogany and walnut woodwork, ornamented by strips of exotic colored wood inlaid in geometric patterns, characteristic Prairie style earth tones predominate. Originally, the canvas covered walls exhibited painted seasonal landscapes reminiscent of Chicago architect George W. Maher. His well publicized design of the Herman W. Mallen House, Oak Park, Illinois in 1904 could have easily influenced a cognizant architect such as John McDonald.

Leaded and stained glass in geometric and floral patterns is also extensively employed throughout the residence. Playing upon the multiple themes displayed by tile-faced fireplaces
and inlaid woodwork, the windows and light fixtures exhibit Omaha's finest application of Prairie style design. Noteworthy are the ceiling fixtures and side lights in the first floor dining room which feature a grapevine motif and an oriental tripartite composition in the second floor sitting room which displays oriental influenced dragons and dragonflies.
Statement of Significance

THE OWNERS, Dana C. Bradford, Edward F. Pettis and Drew Antiques

Dana C. Bradford, a sixth generation descendant of William Bradford, the first governor of Massachusetts, was born in 1865 near Wichita, Kansas. During 1893, he moved to Omaha and became employed as a salesman for the S. K. Martin Lumber Company. Bradford, along with A. V. Kinsler, soon purchased the business and by 1901 had formed a partnership with Frank Kennedy. During the early twentieth century, the Bradford-Kennedy Lumber Company grew to be one of the largest wholesale lumber businesses in the West, controlling many mills and timberlands in Idaho and Washington.

An enthusiastic patron of the arts, Dana Bradford amassed one of the most complete libraries in the city before his death on October 29, 1923. Bradford's culturally directed lifestyle, along with his awareness of current architectural trends, is reflected in the Prairie style residence he constructed in 1910 at 404 South 39th Street.

Edward F. Pettis, secretary-treasurer and a director of J. L. Brandeis and Sons, was born in Lincoln, Nebraska on February 21, 1894. After studying agriculture and business at the University of Nebraska, he assumed the vice-presidency of the Lincoln Trust Company at the age of twenty-three. Brief careers with the Omaha Trust Company and the Eppley Hotels Company involved Pettis with Omaha businessmen and on February 6, 1926, he married Savilla King Bradford, the widow of Dana C. Bradford. In 1935 George Brandeis offered him the job of credit manager of the J. L. Brandeis department stores and the following year Pettis was promoted to secretary-treasurer and director. His imagination, drive and sensitive feeling for the responsibilities of business management contributed to the Brandeis success story.

Devoting his time to civic work after 1939, Edward Pettis served as vice-chairman of the Golden Spike Days celebration and councillor of Ak-sar-ben for ten years. He was named King of Ak-sar-ben in 1950 and under his leadership the College World Series became one of the community's major annual attractions. Pettis died on October 5, 1963 after thirty-seven years of residency at 404 South 39th Street.

Drew Antiques and Art Objects, Omaha's oldest business specializing in the sale of antiques, was established by Louis and Jack Drew in 1928. During 1964, the sons of Clyde Drew, a prominent Omaha contractor, renovated the structure to facilitate the display, repair and storage of their varied merchandise. The Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce considered it noteworthy and honored the Drews with a special award for outstanding redecoration. The renovation also represents one of the earliest commercial reuses of a single family residence in Omaha's Gold Coast-Blackstone neighborhood.

THE ARCHITECT, John McDonald

John McDonald (1861–1956), after having established the firm of McDonald and Ogilvy in 1887, soon gained prominence as Omaha's foremost architect during the late nineteenth century. Working in the Beaux-Arts Classicism period of the architectural spectrum, McDonald
developed a successful Omaha firm with the help of major commissions from the City's prominent upper-class families. Most notable of these, the George A. Joslyn family, commissioned John McDonald over a period of thirty years to design several varied structures including their residence, the Joslyn Castle (1903, 3902 Davenport Street), the First Unitarian Church (1917, 3114 Harney Street), of which George and Sarah Joslyn were major supporters, and Joslyn Memorial Art Museum (1928, 2200 Dodge Street). All of these buildings were constructed during an era (1900-1929) characterized by great prosperity, a vast business boom and in general an optimistic outlook on the future.

By 1916, John McDonald's son Alan (1891-1947) had become a principal in the firm and over the next thirty-one years, they designed many of Omaha's landmark structures: Standard Oil Building, Yates School, Fontenelle Home, Child Savings Institute, Dundee Theater, Elks Club, Benson High School, and the residences of Max Miller, Grant McFayden and Dr. Clyde Reeder.

John McDonald continued to practice architecture in Omaha until eleven years before his death in 1956, a career which encompassed fifty-eight years.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


City of Omaha, Building Permit Application File, Permit No. 986, 7-18-10.

City of Omaha Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, Landmark Designation of the Dr. Paul A. Grossmann Apartments, Case No. H1-79-14, 102-108 South 36th Street.


Omaha World-Herald, "Edward Pettis Loss Called 'Great as City Can Suffer',' October 1963.


Interview:
LHPC Case No. H1-79-18, APPLICANT John A. Covert requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 400 South 39th Street. Area to be designated is shaded.

Scale: 1" = 100'
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Bradford-Pettis Residence, located at 404 South 39th 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 Bradford-Pettis Residence is located at 404 South 39th Street, which is legally described as follows:

The North one-half of Lot 1, Block 17, Smith's Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska

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 Bradford-Pettis Residence are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Bradford-Pettis Residence is hereby designated pursuant to Section 4.16.080 of the Omaha Municipal Code, and hereby subject to all of the provisions of the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance 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

APPROVED:

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

PASSED FEB 26 1980

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ASS'T CITY ATTORNEY

K/8:6C4:37