RESOLUTION – EXHIBIT I
CHRISTIAN SPECHT BUILDING
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Tom Bartek is the owner of the Christian Specht Building; and,

WHEREAS, this owner, on July 28, 1980, requested that the Christian Specht Building be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Christian Specht Building was designed by the Omaha architectural firm of Dufrene and Mendelssohn; and,

WHEREAS, the Christian Specht Building's cast-iron front was manufactured by Specht's Western Cornice Works; and,

WHEREAS, the Christian Specht Building, constructed in 1884, was designed in the North Italian mode of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture; and,

WHEREAS, the Christian Specht Building is one of two extant cast-iron front buildings in Omaha and one of a very few ever built in the state.

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

THAT, the Christian Specht Building, 1110 Douglas Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE

REQUEST

X Landmark Designation

__ Landmark Heritage
__ District Designation
__ Certificate of Approval to Perform Work

CATEGORY

__ District
X Building
__ Structure
__ Site
__ Object

APPLICANT

Tom Bartek Studio, Inc.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

1110 Douglas Street

PRESENT USE

Vacant (Work in progress)

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to Central Business District Master Plan

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing:
The area is in a state of change (due to construction of the Central Park Mall) from its predominantly warehouse and distributorship uses, to uses more compatible with the Old Market and the Park.

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

Designation will encourage proper renovation/restoration of the structure and protect it from surrounding encroachment.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA

Listed in National Register of Historic Places, 1977; structure is presently being renovated to house art studio, display area and residence.
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
Christian Specht Building
and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number
1110 Douglas Street

CLASSIFICATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building(s)</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td>Educational</td>
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<td>Site</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
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<td>Object</td>
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<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
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<td>Military</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Other - Vacant</td>
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</table>

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name Tom Bartek Studio, Inc.
Street and Number
1110 Douglas Street
City, State and Zip Code Omaha, NE 68102

Representative
Name Tom Bartek
Street and Number
1110 Douglas Street
City, State and Zip Code Omaha, NE 68102

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
The West 22 feet of the East 44 feet of Lot 7, Block 102

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title National Register of Historic Places
Date 1977
Federal ___ State ___ County ___ Local X ___
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME
HISTORIC
Christian Specht Building
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
1110 Douglas Street
CITY, TOWN
Omaha
STATE
Nebraska

VICINITY OF
---
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Second
COUNTY CODE
Douglas 055

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT
OWNERSHIP PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH PUBLIC ACQUISITION IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS ACCESSIBLE YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO
PRESENT USE AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION MILITARY OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Tires, Inc.
STREET & NUMBER
1102 Douglas
CITY, TOWN
Omaha
STATE
Nebraska

VICINITY OF
---

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register of Deeds, Douglas County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
18th and Farnam
CITY, TOWN
Omaha
STATE
Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
Historic Preservation in Nebraska
DATE
1971
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Nebraska State Historical Society
CITY, TOWN
Lincoln
STATE
Nebraska
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

__EXCELLENT  __GOOD  __FAIR
__DETERIORATED  __RUINS  __UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

XUNALTERED  __ALTERED

CHECK ONE

XORIGINAL SITE  __MOVED  DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Christian Specht building, 1884, is a three-story cast iron front commercial structure designed by Dufrene and Mendelsohn, Omaha architects, and manufactured by Specht’s Western Cornice Works. The building has a narrow 22-foot frontage facing south on Douglas Street in downtown Omaha.

The galvanized iron front is designed in the Renaissance Revival style, Northern Italian mode, a style popular in cast-iron facades of the period. The first-floor facade is very open with large windows and a center double door, all flanked by columns or pilasters. The upper levels each have three window bays separated by Corinthian columns, with pilasters strongly defining the corners. A cornice tops the building. Originally, the cornice was surmounted by a parapet but this has been removed. The two upper stories of the front are currently out of line and leaning to the west.

Aside from the iron front, the building is constructed of Omaha pressed brick with wood floors and joists. The floor plan is entirely open on all three levels, with a stairway at the rear. The only modern change has been the installation of an elevator. The building is presently used as a warehouse.
SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DATES

ARCHITECT Dufrene and Mendelssohn, Omaha
BUILDER: Western Cornice Works, Omaha

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Christian Specht building, 1884, is the only extant cast-iron front building known in Nebraska and one of a very few ever built in the state. Designed by Dufrene and Mendelssohn, an Omaha architectural firm, the front was cast by Specht's own Western Cornice Works.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, iron was introduced as a building material and first used in 18th-century England. Iron supports allowed for an open floor plan and for more windows. Those reasons, plus the belief that iron was fireproof, encouraged the growing use of iron throughout Europe in the first half of the 19th century. European interest in exposed iron waned after the 1850's with the realization that iron was not fireproof.

For the next several decades, iron was chiefly used in American commercial facades. James Bogardus erected the first cast-iron front in 1848, and Henry Bessemer invented the process whereby iron could be modeled into large-scale building components in 1855. Cast-iron fronts became increasingly popular because the components could be mass-produced and erected quickly without losing any of the ornate Renaissance Revival style. Large windows and an open floor plan, as noted previously, were also important advantages.

Records suggest that only three cast-iron front buildings were constructed in Omaha and none are presently known in the rest of the state. All three were built in the 1881 to 1884 period. Building components and details made of metal, i.e. cornices, columns, window caps and roofing, that the Western Cornice Works usually produced, are common in Omaha and throughout eastern Nebraska. One or two-story commercial buildings often have a cast iron column or two or metal window frames; however, an entire storefront of cast-iron is most unusual.

The Specht building in its style, narrow frontage, window area and open floor plan, reflects the typical treatment of a cast-iron front building of the period. The Renaissance Revival style, Northern Italian mode was popular for cast-iron; its three-dimensional ornateness could be easily mass-produced. As cast-iron could not span wide distances, this example has the typical narrow front. To let in maximum light, the first story is taller than the upper levels and has the most window area.
The Western Cornice Works, owned by Christian Specht, manufactured galvanized iron cornices, metal dormer windows, finials, window caps, tin and iron roofing and a metallic skylight patented by Specht. Born in Berlin in 1842, Specht operated a metal cornice factory in Cincinnati from 1861 until 1880, when he moved to Omaha. During the extensive building boom of the 1880's in Omaha his business was very successful. The Western Cornice Works was the largest of three cornice-making firms in Omaha during the decade. Erected in the fourth year of the firm's operation, the building was occupied by the business for only one year, and was then subsequently used by Allen Brothers, grocers. Specht was involved in politics, serving four years as Omaha City Councilman and filling a partial term in the Nebraska Legislature in 1890. Christian Specht and his sons, Henry, William, and James (also cornice-makers) appear to have moved from Omaha in 1895, as no records were found after this date.

The Omaha architectural firm of Dufrene and Mendelssohn designed the Specht building. A. R. Dufrene had worked as an architect in Nebraska since 1867. After working as a carpenter and joiner in Detroit, he studied architecture in the office of W. W. Pfeiffer of Portland, Oregon. Working with T. B. Borst from 1867-1870, they designed all the Union Pacific Railroad stations during the construction of the transcontinental railroad. During the 1870's, Dufrene practiced alone in Omaha, designing some of the most prominent residential and commercial buildings in the city. In 1880, Louis Mendelssohn moved from Detroit to enter into partnership with Dufrene. Mendelssohn, born in Berlin, had practiced architecture for nine years in Detroit. The partnership continued until 1885. At that time, Mendelssohn left and entered a partnership with George L. Fisher. The firm became Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie in 1887 when Harry Lawrie joined the firm. The firm was prominent in Nebraska for many years (see National Register nomination—Old University Library, Lincoln, Nebraska).
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet, Item #9

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A

ZONE

1

EASTING

15

NORTHING

7

B

ZONE

6

EASTING

17

NORTHING

0

C

ZONE

6

EASTING

14

NORTHING

1

D

ZONE

1

EASTING

5

NORTHING

0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Penelope Chatfield, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION
Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER
1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN
Lincoln

STATE
Nebraska

DATE
January, 1977

TELEPHONE
(402) 432-2793

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL __ STATE X LOCAL __

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE
2/15/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 88-445


Nebraska State Historical Society Historic Preservation Office Files


Christian Specht Building
Omaha, Nebraska
Nebraska State Historical Society
1973
View of the south facade
#2
Christian Specht Building
Omaha, Nebraska
Nebraska State Historical Society
1971
View of the south facade (front) and west facade (side).
#3
Christian Specht Building
Omaha, Nebraska
Nebraska State Historical Society
1971
Detail of the south facade
LHPC Case No. H1-80-15, APPLICANT Tom Bartek requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1110 Douglas Street (Christian Specht Building). Area to be designated is shaded.

Scale: 1" = 100'
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
ORDINANCE NO. 29367

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Christian Specht Building, located at 1110 Douglas 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 Christian Specht Building is located at 1110 Douglas Street, which is legally described as follows:

West 22 feet of the East 44 feet of Lot 7, Block 102, Original City of Omaha, 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 Christian Specht Building are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Christian Specht Building 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

APPROVED:

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA /DATE

PASSED /All & &\% / 6-0

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

DEPUTY

2C10:3