RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF OMAHA
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees is the representative of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, this representative, on November 17, 1978, requested that the First Unitarian Church of Omaha be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the First Unitarian Church of Omaha was designed by the renowned Omaha architects, John and Alan McDonald; and,

WHEREAS, the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, constructed in 1917, is Omaha's purest example of the Georgian Colonial Revival Style of Architecture and reveals the McDonalds' skill in creating a correct reproduction of Colonial packaging; and,

WHEREAS, the First Unitarian Church of Omaha is historically related to the prominent Omaha philanthropist, George A. and Sarah H. Joslyn.

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

THAT, the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, 3114 Harney Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE 11-15-78

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

APPLICANT Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
3114 Harney Street (First Unitarian Church of Omaha)

PRESENT USE
Religious

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
Conforms to 1977 Community Development Master Plan's Redevelopment Areas in
which rehabilitation is limited to substantial or historic structures.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing: High density mixed-use area composed of multi-unit residential developments,
high-rise office complexes and single story commercial structures.

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved.
The designation would promote the continued existance of and control the
future additions to the area's major public landmark.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Will apply for National Register listing.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic: First Unitarian Church of Omaha
and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number: 3114 Harney Street

CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building(s)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X Yes: Restricted

X Yes: Unrestricted

Museum

Present Use

Agriculture

Commercial

Educational

Entertainment

Government

Industrial

Military

Other

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name: First Unitarian Church of Omaha
Phone Number: 345-3039

Street and Number: 3114 Harney Street

City, State and Zip Code: Omaha, NB 68131

Representative

Phone Number

Street and Number

City, State and Zip Code

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Lots 4 and 5, Redicks Grove, Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title

Date

____ Federal ____ State ____ County ____ Local
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

Date
__________________________________________________________

Signature of Owner/Representative
__________________________________________________________
DESCRIPTION

Constructed by Grant Parsons in 1917 at a cost of $35,000, the First Unitarian Church is Omaha's purest example of the Georgian Colonial Revival Style of architecture. The architects, John and Alan McDonald, executed the design with such historical accuracy that it is difficult to distinguish from original 19th century examples. The church's design, signifying a return to the simplicity and puritanism of America's early years, is fully developed in form, plan and detail and reveals the McDonalds' skill in creating a correct reproduction of Colonial packaging. The First Unitarian Church of Omaha renders as exact a Colonial character as the necessary functions would permit.

Major exterior surfaces are of Flemish bond red brick which delineate the interior volume of the sanctuary. Rising to a height of twenty-seven feet, these smooth walls on the east and west facades are punctuated by five round arch sash, double hung windows, twenty over twenty lights. Occurring directly above the raised basement openings, the clear glass paned windows flood the interior spaces with natural light and also permit the seated congregation an unimpaired view the changing seasons. A dentilled and modillioned white wood projecting cornice terminates the side walls and unifies these planar surfaces with the main facade's projecting pedimented portico.

This portico is supported by four colossal, smooth shafted wooden ionic columns which rest on attic bases located at the top of the main entrance stairs. Above the capitals is a smooth white wood entablature which is enriched with linear moldings, dentils and modillions. The four columns are tied to pilasters on the south facade by boxed beams which run horizontally under the pediment. The main facade is punctuated by centrally located double doors, with three molded panels, and an elliptical fan light. Flanking the doorway are two round arch sash, double hung windows, eight over eight lights. Centered between the pilasters and
located directly above the door and windows are three small rectangular eight paneled fixed windows which illuminate the interior organist's area.

At the south end of the auditorium's hipped roof and directly behind the two-story portico is the crowning feature of the structure—a three section bell tower. The base, a Flemish bond red brick square volume with brick quoins, terminates in a simple projecting linear cornice which steps upward and inward and forms the base of the next section. This white section, fabricated of wood, is again square in plan but rectangular in profile. On its four sides, ionic columns support a simple entablature which together frame a keystoned round arch louvered opening and turned balustrade. Located on the four corners of this section's cornice are urns and pedestals which surround the third section—an octagonal cupola with a copper domical roof and weathervane. Corinthian pilasters separate the eight sides containing single, round arch, rectangular windows and support a projecting cornice complete with urns. Located on the first floor, a one-story addition located on the northwest corner of the structure was constructed in 1952 to meet the expanding educational needs of the church. Designed by architect David Wallace, the addition respects the materials and scale of the original church structure.

The interior is highlighted by the intense play of natural light upon the painted white sculptured wood forms. An ornamented arcade supported by pedestalled ionic columns frame the round arch windows on either side of the sanctuary creating a very visible circulation passage to the surrounding seating areas. These white, mahogany topped benches are arranged around a central aisle and form two distinct congregational areas either perpendicular or parallel to the sanctuary's side walls.

The altar area is located in a rectangular recess at the front auditorium wall and is separated from the congregation by a white turned balustrade. A baptismal font and an octagonal wine-glass pulpit punctuate the railing on either side of a central access opening.
SIGNIFICANCE

In the church history of Omaha, the Unitarian Church stands eighth in order of organization. First services were held in the fall of 1868 in Geise's Hall (over 1323 Douglas Street) conducted by the Rev. C. H. Brigham, a western representative of the American Unitarian Association.

Traveling Unitarian ministers addressed this handful of liberally minded individuals in one of the orthodox churches or available halls until 1869 when the first settled minister, the Rev. Henry F. Bond, was called. The articles of organization were signed August 22, 1869 by twenty-six men and women prominently identified with the early life of Omaha.

A lot was purchased at 17th and Cass and with the aid of a loan from the AUA a small brick Gothic chapel was built which was dedicated January 29, 1871. In November of that year Mr. Bond left to take charge of a tribe of Indians assigned to the Unitarians by the government.

The Rev. H. L. Cargill filled the pulpit from January 1872 until March 1873. The Rev. Samuel P. Putnam was pastor from February 1874 until April 1875. The Rev. W. E. Copeland came in November 1878 to stay for ten years. Although several board members were officials of the Burlington and Union Pacific railroads, Mr. Copeland was one of Omaha's earliest leaders in the interest of the laboring man. Unity Club was organized at this time, attracting many new members to the church. The T. L. Kimballs held a lawn party "brilliantly lighted by electricity" as a Unity Club benefit.

The Rev. Newton W. Mann was called in the fall of 1889. For many years Dr. Mann's sermons were printed verbatim in the World-Herald, carrying the message of liberal religion throughout the state. He also published several books and was the first American preacher to accept and proclaim the philosophy of evolution. In 1890 he composed the Bond of Union
which is still used today. Also in that year it was decided to build a Romanesque addition to the chapel and this building was dedicated November 15, 1891.

Sarah H. Joslyn and her husband George A. Joslyn, Omaha philanthropists, became members of the church in 1893 and supported it well from that time on. The present organ is a gift of Mrs. Joslyn's in 1937, as is also her bequest in 1940. Joslyn Museum was her gift to Omaha in memory of her husband. In his book Freedom Moves West the Rev. Charles H. Lyttle wrote, "By dint of innumerable oyster suppers and strawberry festivals, a spacious church was built (17th and Cass), a Unity Club program of rich, cultural content and wide popularity inaugurated. Of its initiation of a young woman's mind in the love of art and music, the magnificent Joslyn Memorial Museum of modern Omaha is a permanent memorial".

The Rev. Manfred Lillifors came in December 1910. In 1913 the ground and building at 17th and Cass were to the German American Society (this building was demolished in 1966 to make way for the interstate highway) and the church was left without a home. A building was rented at 428 North 40th Street, to be known as the Unitarian Parish house, where vespers, church school classes, and meetings were held. Guest ministers spoke and a free public lecture series was sponsored. In 1916 the Rev. Robert French Leavens was called and regular Sunday services resumed in October of that year at Turpin's Hall, 28th and Farnam. Mr. Leavens was the author of "Great Companions".

In January 1917 a decision was made to build a new church at 31st and Harney Street with John and Alan McDonald as architects. Former U. S. president William Howard Taft officiated at the laying of the capstone on October 19, 1917 and on September 29, 1918 Georgian Colonial church was dedicated.

William F. Baxter was president of Thomas Kilpatrick and Company and a long-time trustee of our church, serving several terms as chairman beginning in 1917 at the time the
present church was built. In addition to his untiring effort for the local church he was a member of the national council of Unitarian Laymen's League speaking at its conventions throughout the country. An economist and authority on political science, he was active in city affairs, rescuing Omaha once from the control of special interests, helping elect a reform school board and later a reform ticket of city commissioners.

The Rev. Charles H. Lyttle served as pastor from May 1921 until July 1922. He was later to write "Freedom Moves West", an historical account of the Unitarian movement in this area. Mr. Lyttle served many years as head of the church history department at Meadville Theological School, Chicago.

The Rev. Ralph E. Bailey came from Charleston, S. C., in the fall of 1922 and served until the fall of 1928. During this time the Laymen's League was active, sponsoring a highly profitable lecture series. The Get-Acquainted Club, organized by the Paul Harlans, attracted many to our church and membership increased to 200. Mr. Bailey wrote a biography of Alexander Hamilton, "An American Colossus", and considerable poetry.

The Rev. Laurence R. Planck came from Rochester, N. Y. in 1929. During his first year the Young People's Religious Union was organized which sponsored successful lectures, hikes, plays, and social occasions. It has been the history of all churches of all denominations that economic recessions bring greater church attendance. The early thirties were no exception when our church was filled to over-flowing Sunday after Sunday. In 1931 Joslyn Memorial opened its doors to the public, a gift of Unitarian Sarah H. Joslyn. Its first director, Dr. Paul Grummman, was also a church member, as was Alan McDonald, its architect.

The Rev. Robert Sheridan Miller came from Pennsylvania in January 1937 staying until August 1943 when he joined the navy as chaplain. The present Aeolian-Skinner organ was
installed in 1937, a gift of Sarah Joslyn. In 1940 the will of Mrs. Joslyn revealed a $50,000 bequest to the church.

The Rev. John W. Cyrus was installed minister in December 1943 coming from Litchfield Park, Arizona. In 1944 the church celebrated its 75th anniversary with Mr. Bailey delivering the address. The Rev. A. Powell Davies was speaker at the 85th celebration in 1954. Dr. Cyrus was on the board of directors of the Omaha Urban League for six years. In May 1952 the two story church school annex was dedicated. David Wallace was architect. The Frank R. Hoagland Memorial Lectures began, bringing well-known national figures to our church for public meetings annually for ten years. Church membership reached 311.

Senator Roman L. Hruska and his wife, the former Victoria Kuncl, were members of the young people's group in the early thirties and were married in the church. He was first elected senator in 1954 and since then has become our senior senator from Nebraska. Prior to the move to Washington D.C., he was treasurer and then board chairman for several years; also president of the Iowa-Nebraska Conference.

In September 1956 the Rev. Charles W. Phillips from Des Moines, Iowa, began a three year pastorate. Mr. Phillips made a three-week study tour of Israel and Arab countries in December 1958, his journey underwritten by the American Christian-Palestine Association and Omaha friends. A collection of his sermons, "No Graven Image", was privately published. Although in 1959 Omaha Unitarians voted against the merger of Unitarians with Universalists, a 75% country-wide approval assured the merger. Mr. Phillips resigned in 1960 to supply the Wilmington, Delaware church.

The Rev. Robert T. Weston came in the fall of 1960 from a sixteen-year pastorate in the first church of Louisville, Kentucky. The Thursday Book Club was organized and an extensive advertising program began. The Iowa Unitarian Association combined with
Prairie States UUA met for an 85th Conference in Omaha in October 1962 and in April of '63 the Midwest Unitarian Conference was held in the Omaha church. In February of that year the congregation authorized the purchase of a five-acre plot and building at 117th and West Center Road to be used for West Omaha services, church school classes, and a parsonage for the Westons. It was dedicated November 10, 1963. Church membership reached 409. Dr. Weston was a poet of note and in that year he composed the UUA's lenten manual, "Seasons of the Soul". The Midland Memorial Society was incorporated. In February 1964 Dr. Weston announced his resignation to accept the pastorate of the Fort Lauderdale, Florida church.

The Rev. Vester L. Vanstrom was installed October 18, 1964, coming from the Providence, R. I. church. He was a practicing attorney in his native Minnesota prior to entering the ministry. In March 1965 he joined the Rev. Charles Stephen, Jr. of Lincoln in a sympathy march at Selma, Alabama for memorial services for the Rev. James Reeb, Unitarian civil rights martyr. The Omaha Fellowship for Social Justice was organized and became active in social reforms. It was later made into a church committee on social responsibility. The UUA's Billings lectureship presented Dr. Joel Fort, leading authority on drug use and abuse in April 1968. A "church in the square" and more diversified orders of service were experiments of the 1968-69 church year.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Program of Events for the 1969 Centennial Year of the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, 1969, pp. 2-6.

Case No. HI-78-13, APPLICANT First Unitarian Church of Omaha requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 3114 Harney Street (First Unitarian Church of Omaha). Area to be designated is shaded.

FARNAM STREET

HARNEY STREET

SCALE: 1" = 50'
ORDINANCE NO 28650

AN ORDINANCE to designate the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, located at 3114 Harney 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 First Unitarian Church of Omaha is located at 3114 Harney Street, which is legally described as follows

Lots 4 and 5, Redicks Grove, 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 First Unitarian Church of Omaha are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation

Section 3 That the First Unitarian Church of Omaha 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

[Signature]

APPROVED

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

[Signature] 2/3/79

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original document now on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

[Signature] City Clerk, City of Omaha

CITY ATTORNEY

[Signature] 1/1/79
ORDINANCE NO 28650

AN ORDINANCE to designate the First Unitarian Church of Omaha, located at 3114 Harney Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading JAN 30 1979
Hearing 2-6-79

Hearing FEB 6 1979
Query to 2-13-79

Final Reading FEB 13 1979
Passed

Publications
Pub'n. of Hearing Date 2-2-79
Pub'n of Ordinance Date 2-23-79

Mary Sellgren Garnett
NOTICE TO PUBLIC

ORDINANCE NO. 2969

AN ORDINANCE to designate the First Unitarian Church of Omaha located at 3114 Harney Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

SUMMARY

AN ORDINANCE to designate the First Unitarian Church of Omaha located at 3114 Harney Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PASSED February 12, 1979

APPROVED

AL. VEY

MAYOR OF THE

CITY OF OMAHA

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT

2-23-79

City Clerk

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

The following Ordinances have been set for City Council Meeting February 8, 1979 at 2:00 p.m.

AN ORDINANCE to designate the First Unitarian Church of Omaha located at 3114 Harney Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT

CITY CLERK

2-23-79