RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
GEORGE F. SHEPARD RESIDENCE
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Charles and Sallie Mercer are the owners of the George F. Shepard Residence; and,

WHEREAS, these owners, on February 23, 1981, requested that the George F. Shepard Residence be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha’s Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the George F. Shepard Residence was built in 1903; and,

WHEREAS, the George F. Shepard Residence reflects the influence of the Classical architecture of the nearby 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition; and,

WHEREAS, the George F. Shepard Residence represents a unique transitional period in Midwestern residential architecture when decoratively rich Queen Anne compositions were highlighted by exuberant Beaux Arts detailing; and,

WHEREAS, the George F. Shepard Residence was designed by stone mason and artist George F. Shepard; and,

WHEREAS, the George F. Shepard Residence is typical of the grand styles that typified Kountze Place residences before 1910.

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

THAT, the George F. Shepard Residence, 1802 Wirt Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE

4/7/81

REQUEST

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

CATEGORY

- District
- Building
- Structure
- Site
- Object

APPLICANT

Charles and Sallie Mercer

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

1802 Wirt Street

PRESENT USE

Single family residence

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to the 1977 Community Development Master Plan's Combination Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Areas where reconstruction of existing neighborhoods is proposed.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing: Turn-of-the-century single-family residences and converted residences which exhibit Queen Anne and Eclectic Revival forms; the high percentage of deteriorating structures and vacant lots has forced the public sector to declare the neighborhood a redevelopment target zone.

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

Designation will insure that future maintenance of the structure will be sensitive and appropriate.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR’S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA

Landmark designation was required by the Housing & Community Development Department.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
  George Shepard House
and/or Common
  Charles and Sallie Mercer Residence

LOCATION
Street and Number
  1802 Wirt Street

CLASSIFICATION
Category
  District
  Building(s)
  Structure
  Site
  Object
Ownership
  Public
  Private
  Both
  Public Acquisition
  In Process
Status
  x Occupied
  Unoccupied
  Work in Progress
  Accessible
  Yes: Restricted
  Yes: Unrestricted
  No
Present Use
  Agriculture
  Commercial
  Educational
  Entertainment
  Government
  Industrial
  Military
  Museum
  Park
  x Private Residence
  Religious
  Scientific
  Transportation
  Other

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name
  Charles and Sallie Mercer
Street and Number
  1802 Wirt Street
City, State and Zip Code
  Omaha, NE  68110
Representative

Phone Number
  453-1471

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Lot 14, Block 14, Kountze Place Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Historic Omaha Building Survey
Date January, 1981

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Omaha City Architecture, Landmarks, Inc.
Date 1978

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Survey of Douglas County, Nebraska State Historical Society
Date March, 1978

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates 1903
Architect George Shepard
Builder Same

Date Signature of Owner/Representative
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic: George Shepard House
and/or Common: Charles and Sallie Mercer Residence

LOCATION
Street and Number: 1802 Wirt Street

CLASSIFICATION

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OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Charles and Sallie Mercer
Street and Number: 1802 Wirt Street
City, State and Zip Code: Omaha, NE 68110

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Lot 14, Block 14, Kountze Place Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

Three story brick Queen Anne style structure. Wrap around porch with classical order columns. Slate roof. Structure is extremely close to original physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates 1903
Architect George Shepard
Builder Same

A distinguished example of Queen Anne style architecture; a well preserved remnant of the original development of the Kountze Place neighborhood, following the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

2/23/81  [Signature]  Written by [Signature]
George F. Shepard Residence

Historical Significance

In Omaha the general pattern of movement for the well-to-do has always been toward the West. Beginning with the earliest settlers on Capitol Hill and the bluffs west of Downtown, successive generations have jumped to Park Avenue and the West Farnam - Cathedral area, Happy Hollow and Fairacres, and today's Regency - Rockbrook vicinity. Perhaps the most notable exception to that trend was the North Omaha development of Kountze Place. First National Bank President Herman Kountze had owned the 160 acres between 16th and 24th Streets, Locust and Pratt, since the 1860s, but waited until the real estate boom two decades later to subdivide it and offer lots for sale.

Kountze planned the new development as an upper middle class residential suburb and soon attracted the city's professionals and big businessmen. Provisions in each deed stipulated both the minimum cost of each dwelling and its distance from the street, while prohibiting any unsavory activities in the neighborhood. Streets in the southern portion of the subdivision, particularly Binney and Wirt, were first built on in the late 1880s and contain some of Omaha's finest extant examples of Queen Anne and late Victorian architecture. Kountze Place, like other suburbs of that decade, experienced almost no growth during the 1890s Depression, but recovered after the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition held on the northern edge of the tract in what is now Kountze Park. As a result, the neighborhood as a whole exhibits several decades of popular architectural styles, from the Queen Anne structures on the southern streets to the more subdued Classic Revival residences built after 1900 on streets farther north.

One of the more elaborate Kountze Place structures built in the prosperous years following the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was the George F. Shepard Residence at 1802 Wirt Street, designed by Shepard himself. Exhibiting characteristics of both Queen Anne and Beaux Arts Classicism styles, the house is representative of the changes that occurred in architectural fashions at the turn of the century as the elaborate Queen Anne style reached its zenith. When built in 1903 at a cost of $10,000, the home was on the edge of Kountze Place development, with cornfields still located nearby.

Despite Shepard's creativity and the detailed design of his home, he left very little record to document his life. Shepard was born in South Royalton, Vermont, in 1850. His life from his birth until his arrival in Omaha in the mid-1880s is unknown, although it is believed he operated a cattle ranch in Madison, Nebraska, before coming to the city. As early as 1888, Shepard was working as a marble cutter at J. V. Sweeney's Nebraska Marble and Granite Company. By the mid-1890s Shepard resided in Kountze Place at 1804 Binney and was employed at a marble works at 1120 North 20th Street. He purchased the property at 1802 Wirt in 1902 and began construction of his home the following year. Along with the home he built a garage and the summer house which is still standing on the property. Shepard added his stone cutter's skill to personalize the residence, carving his name into the cement front steps into the yard.
While it would ordinarily seem unusual for a stone mason to design such an elaborate dwelling, Shepard was not a typical working man. He evidently had received artistic training before coming to Omaha and devoted the last thirty years of his life to painting. Shepard exhibited definite artistic talent, with oil paintings that revealed a knowledge of European art and the Classical tradition. His own works, one of which is owned by the Nebraska Art Collection housed at Kearney State College, were especially marked by Renaissance and Baroque overtones.

While residing at 1802 Wirt, Shepard was semi-retired and involved in several business ventures. He also designed a home at 3124 North 16th Street which he sold, and owned apartments on North 24th Street. In addition, he operated a monuments business. Besides his artistic work, Shepard was an enthusiastic photographer and a musician who played both piano and cornet.

George Shepard died in 1930, but his wife remained in the home until the mid-1950s. She sold it to the present owners, who have maintained the large home through the neighborhood's decline and subsequent rebirth. The structure is located within one of the City Housing and Community Development Department's target areas and is presently undergoing renovation under a combination loan-grant program.

Architectural Significance

The George F. Shepard Residence is significant as an extant late example of the picturesque Queen Anne structures which characterized Omaha's Kountze Place addition during the 1880s and 1890s. Constructed in 1903, the Shepard Residence represents a unique transitional period in midwestern residential architecture when decoratively rich Queen Anne compositions were highlighted by exuberant Beaux Arts detailing. Shepard, in the design of his own residence, was obviously influenced by the Beaux Arts architecture of the nearby 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

Architectural Description

George F. Shepard Residence, 1802 Wirt Street, constructed in 1903 at a cost of $10,000, George F. Shepard, architect and builder. Buff brown brick structure with limestone detailing, rectangular (33' by 72') shape, two and one-half stories over raised brick basement, high and multiple A-type grey slate roofs with ridges meeting at right angles, heavily bracketed and dentilled projecting cornice, three story attached octagonal tower terminating in an octagonal roof intersects the east gable and is flanked by projecting attic gables with fish-scale shingle inserts, wrap-around porch, supported by coupled columns with gessoed Corinthian capitals, encircles tower at ground level; a porch of similar design is inset at the second story level beneath south gable end, a double set of marble entry steps are flanked by scrolled stone edging, narrow and rectangular double-hung windows with one over one lights throughout are framed by lintels with incised ornamentation, beveled and leaded glass transom over single beveled glass entry door and side lights, single projecting and heavily corbelled chimney. Central hall floor plan, single flight stairway, lath and plaster walls...
terminate in a heavy oak cornice which provides illumination of coved ceiling, paneled oak door and window trim, six-panel doors and pocket doors, elaborate brass hardware, oak floors and base boards throughout, paneled oak wainscotting and ceiling in dining room; elaborate oak fireplaces with mirrored overmantels feature freestanding colossal columns, full-faced lions and full-figure cupids, marble and tile surrounds, and cast iron fire boxes; dining room features built in buffet of similar design, 2nd floor bath features ornamental glazed tile and original fixtures. A reinforced concrete columned gazebo is located in the rear yard.

Bibliography

Omaha City Directories.

Omaha Morning World-Herald, November 4, 1930.

Telephone Interview with Jack Karraker, Chairman, Art Department - Kearney State College, April 15, 1981.

Telephone Interview with Lenoir Shepard Mattox, Omaha, April 13, 1981.
LHPC Case No. H1-81-2, APPLICANTS Charles and Sallie Mercer request LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1802 Wirt Street (George Shepard Residence). Area to be designated is shaded.

Scale: 1"=100'

Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
AN ORDINANCE to designate the George Shepard Residence located at 1802 Wirt 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 George Shepard Residence is located at 1802 Wirt Street, which is legally described as follows:

Lot 14, Block 14, Kountze Place 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 George Shepard Residence are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the George Shepard 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

PIERCE SIMMS

APPROVED:

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

DATE

PASSED: JUL 14 1981 4-3

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

3CS:57
ORDINANCE NO. 29526

AN ORDINANCE to designate the George Shepard Residence located at 1802 Wirt Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading  JUN 30 1981

Hearing  7-7-81

Hearing  JUL 7 1981

Passed to 7-14-81

Final Reading  JUL 14 1981

Passed  4-3

Mary Lilligear Barnett