RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
HOTEL HILL
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Union Casualty Company is the owner of the Hotel Hill; and,

WHEREAS, this owner, on February 10, 1981, requested that the Hotel Hill be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Hotel Hill was constructed in 1919; and,

WHEREAS, the Hotel Hill was designed by Omaha architects John and Alan McDonald; and,

WHEREAS, the Hotel Hill exhibits the functional Chicago School division of the skyscraper adorned with Georgian Revival detailing; and,

WHEREAS, the Hotel Hill represents the post-World War I stage of downtown construction and development; and,

WHEREAS, the Hotel Hill is one of the few remaining downtown hotels retaining its original function and thus provides a connection to the past.

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

THAT, the Hotel Hill, 505 So. 16th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE

Historic
Hotel Hill
and/or Common
Hilltown Inn

LOCATION

Street and Number
505 South 16th Street

CLASSIFICATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
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<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
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OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name
Union Casualty Co.

Street and Number
100 Aquila Court Building, 1615 Howard Street

City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE 68102

Representative

Phone Number
345-9515

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The north 72 feet of Lot 4, Block 169, Original City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Survey of Douglas County, Nebraska State Historical Society
Date 1978

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

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Omaha City Architecture, Landmarks, Inc.
Date 1977

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates 10-10-19
Architect John and Alan McDonald
Builder Vaughn Construction Company
Cost $250,000

2-10-81
Date
Signature of Owner/Representative
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
2/19/81

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

CATEGORY
- District
- Building
- Structure
- Site
- Object

APPLICANT
Union Casualty Co.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
505 South 16th Street

PRESENT USE

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
Conforms to the Combination Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Areas of the 1977 Community Development Master Plan and is designated as a structure worthy of preservation in A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation.

EXISTING
High and medium rise commercial and office towers border on a turn-of-the-century warehouse district.

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

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Designation request was initiated by LHPC.
Hotel Hill

Historical Significance

The Hotel Hill represents a definite stage in the development of downtown Omaha as a retailing and commercial center. Built for $250,000 in 1919 by John W. and Lem H. Hill, the hotel quickly became a familiar landmark on the post-World War I skyline. The construction of the hotel and other business buildings gave Omaha the face that, with few alterations, it wore until recent years.

Sixteenth Street, particularly its southern end, has not always been Omaha's main retail avenue. Ninth and 13th Street also held that distinction before 16th gained prominence at the turn of the century. As the retail district expanded, it took over land that had previously held homes of early wealthy settlers. Typically, the owners retained their homesite property after moving out and built a business block instead. The property owner on South 16th Street was Peter E. Iler, distillery magnate and stockyards investor, who resided at 602 South 16th Street. By the mid-1890's he had constructed the Iler Block near his home at 514 South 16th, and several years later opened the Iler Grand Hotel at the corner of 16th and Howard. Iler moved to another residence soon after, as 16th became focused on retailing.

Twenty years later, the Hotel Hill, built on the site of the Iler Grand, represented another stage in downtown development. The structure was built in the middle of a construction era that gave Omaha a look that characterized it for much of the twentieth century. Among the buildings constructed between 1910 and the Depression were such skyscrapers as the Woodmen of the World Building, Fontenelle Hotel, First National Bank Building, Medical Arts Building, Elks Club, Athletic Club, Paxton Hotel, and the Redick Tower. The Hill, with its fourteen stories, became a southern anchor on the downtown skyline. The Iler Block, adjoining the Hill on the south, remained from an earlier era as an annex of the hotel.

As this brief list of structures reveals, the Hill was not only a part of downtown construction, but also of a great period of hotel building. Beside the Hill, Omaha had the new Fontenelle and Paxton Hotels, as well as the Elks and Athletic Clubs, which provided rooms for more long-term residents. But there were a number of other reasonable hotels downtown as well. The 1939 WPA Guide to Omaha listed the Castle, Conant-Sanford, Hamilton, Henshaw, Keen, Regis, and Rome Hotels as available to serve the traveling public. These were not rundown buildings, but good hotels meeting the demand for accommodations that was present in Omaha from the 1920's on.

Since that time the automobile has changed the focus of urban centers' retail districts and the needs of travelers. Shopping centers have decentralized commercial districts, while people on the road choose to stay at low-rise motels that line older state highways or at one of the ubiquitous corporate motel chains that rise around freeway interchanges. It is not surprising to discover that of the Omaha hotels mentioned above, only the Conant and the Hill still continue their original functions.
As a survivor of a by-gone era, the Hill's presence provides a connection to the Omaha many residents grew up with and remember. While downtown redevelopment will change the face of Omaha once again, it is important to maintain some threads of continuity with the past. The Hotel Hill, currently undergoing renovation, provides one of these threads as it serves the same function it began some sixty years ago.

Architectural Significance

The Hotel Hill, designed by the prominent Omaha father and son architectural firm of John and Alan McDonald in 1919, is an admirable adaptation of Georgian Revival detailing to the requirements of the emerging skyscraper. The structure, exhibiting the functional Chicago School division of the skyscraper into base, shaft and cornice, is characterized by the simplicity and scale of its massing which relies entirely on the relation of a few clearly articulated Georgian forms. The hotel's carefully detailed elevations are to some extent suggestive of Louis Sullivan's decorative work and mark a local advance in skyscraper design.

Architectural Description

Hotel Hill, 505 South 16th Street, constructed in 1919 at a cost of $250,000, John and Lem Hill, owners; John and Alan McDonald, architects; Vaughn Construction Company, builder. Concrete frame, floors and roof clad in a 12" brown brick curtain wall; square (66' by 72') floor plan, fourteen stories totalling 160' in height, limestone three-story base, brown brick ten-story shaft regularly punctuated by rectangular double-hung windows arranged in vertical strips, severely projecting and heavily bracketed copper-clad cornice, twelfth floor windows are framed by limestone pilasters and swan-neck pediments, corner windows on the fourth floor are framed by pilasters and a plain entablature and a band of balconets encircles below. The interior spaces have been severely compromised due to recent renovation efforts.

Bibliography

Clipping File, Hotels, Omaha Public Library.


Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journals. June 7, 1919; June 16, 1923; May, 1937.

Omaha City Directories.

LHFC Case No. H1-81-3, APPLICANT Union Casualty Co. requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 505 South 16th Street (Hill Hotel). Area to be designated is shaded.
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Hill Hotel located at 505 South 16th 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 Hill Hotel is located at 505 South 16th Street, which is legally described as follows:

The North 72 feet of Lot 4, Block 169, 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 Hill Hotel are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Hill Hotel 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

Bernie Simon

APPROVED:

DATE

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

PASSSED: JUL 14 1981

ATTEST: Mary Curtis Power

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

3C5:56
ORDINANCE NO. 29525

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Hill Hotel located at 505 So. 16th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

First Reading JUN 30 1981
Hearing JUN 30 1981

Hearing JUL 7 1981
Closed Jul 14 1981

Final Reading JUL 14 1981
Passed

[Signature]

PUBLICATIONS

PUBL’N. OF HEARING 7/3/81

PUBL’N. OF ORDINANCE