RESOLUTION-EXHIBIT A
KUNCL-HRUSKA HOUSE
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, the David A. Lopez is the owner of the Kuncl-Hruska House, 1732 South 15th Street; and,

WHEREAS, the owner has requested that the Kuncl-Hruska House be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmarks Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Kuncl-Hruska House is historically significant as the residence of both Vaclav Kuncl and Roman Hruska, prominent Nebraskans of Czech heritage; and,

WHEREAS, Vaclav Kuncl was born in Bohemia, came to the United States at the age of 14, and later owned and operated one of the first and longest operating meat markets in Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, Roman Hruska was a staunch supporter of Nebraska and a gentlemen statesmen; and,

WHEREAS, Roman Hruska, as a United States Senator, was an influential republican leader during his time in Washington; and,

WHEREAS, Roman Hruska's prominence is further evidenced by the new federal building named for him in downtown Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, Vaclav Kuncl and Roman Hruska were men who impacted the city, state and nation, and epitomize part of the immigrant legacy in Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, this case application and supporting data are attached hereto as exhibits, and are incorporated herein by this reference.

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

THAT, the Kuncl-Hruska House, 1732 South 15th Street, be designated a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

Application for Landmark
or Landmark Heritage District

1. Name of Structure: Konecny House

2. Location / Address: 1732 South 15th St.

3. Applicant:
   name DAVID A. LOPEZ
   address 1732 South 15th St.
   OMAHA, NE 68108
   phone 343-1083 (H) 280-2567 (W)

4. Classification:
   Category
   ☑ building(s)
   ☐ district
   ☐ structure
   ☐ site
   ☐ object
   Ownership ☑ public ☑ private ☑ both ☑ public acquisition
   Status ✓ occupied ☑ unoccupied ☑ work in progress
   Present Use ☑ museum ☑ park ☑ private residence
   ☑ religious ☑ scientific ☑ transportation
   ☑ other (explain)

5. Owner of Property:
   name DAVID A. LOPEZ
   address 1732 South 15th St.
   OMAHA, NE 68108
   phone 343-1083 (H) 280-2567 (W)

6. Legal Description:
   Kountze 3rd Addition Blk 15
   1. All Lot 8 9' 1.5 FT
   2. Lot 7
   3. 76.5 X 140
   4.
   5.
   6.
   7.
   8.

application cont'd on back
7. Historic Description and Significance: Please provide as thorough a description as possible. This should include, but is not limited to, architectural styles and features; site elements, landscaping/urban design elements; architects, builders, and owners.Copies of architectural drawings, photos and similar documents are encouraged. Include a statement explaining why the item/property/district is historically significant. The Landmarks Commission staff will assist you in filling out this portion if necessary. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Please see attached

[Signature]

8-17-99

Date

Please return the completed application to: Preservation Administrator, Omaha Planning Department
1819 Farnam St., Omaha, NE 68183
Historic Description and Significance:
The Kuncl-Hruska House, 1732 South 15th Street

The Kuncl-Hruska House, currently a residence, is most notable for two reasons. First, it is a Queen Anne Style house built in 1889 that is in relatively good condition. Queen Anne is “a mid-nineteenth century style of architecture that borrowed elements originating in England at the time of Queen Anne: irregularity of play and massing, variety in colors and textures, bay windows, high and multiple roofs, large gables, large chimneys, and small scale classic detail.”¹ This style was popular at the turn of the century, especially among the affluent.² As the enclosed pictures of the house suggest, the building is consistent with the above description. The interior of the house is also in good condition. All the original woodwork remains (much of it detailed, most notably the stairwell and front door). The house also contains high, tin-worked ceilings in the dining and sitting rooms, the original brass fixtures on many of the doors, hinges, light fixtures and vents, stain-glassed windows, and a fireplace.³ The lawn is landscaped in three tiers and is planted with various fruit trees/bushes and flowers, three pine trees, and five mature Dutch elms. A carriage house is located west of the house, its hayloft still intact. Originally, the house was wood-sided. Later, one of the early versions of stucco was applied but proved unsuccessful. In 1934, the exterior was re-done with modern stucco that exists to this day.⁴ The second reason why the house is of historical importance is that was the residence of both Vaclav Kuncl and Roman Hruska, prominent Nebraskans of Czech heritage.

Czechs in Omaha

Nebraska has the largest per capita Czech population in the United States.⁵ Czech heritage runs deep in Omaha. In 1900, 9.2% of the foreign born population was Czech.⁶ Many Czechs settled in South Omaha to be near the packinghouses where several worked. Czechs also lived in the area bounded by 10th Street on the east, 16th on the west, Pierce Street on the north, and Center Street to the south. This area was named “Praha” (Czech for Prague) and “Bohemian Town.”⁷ The Kuncl-Hruska House is located on the southern border of Bohemian Town on the northwest corner of 15th and Center Streets.
The Czechs were well organized as a community. A Czech newspaper *Porkrok Zapadu* was published regularly and the fraternal Tel Jed Sokol organization was quite active. Founded in 1862 in Prague, the organization sought to instill the ideal of sound mind and body, epitomized by the falcon (i.e., the Sokol). The organization promoted Bohemian culture through dance, theater, and song. In 1877, Sokol Omaha was founded and its building constructed in 1926 on 13th Street. Vaclav Kuncl was active in Sokol and his story is reflective of the success experienced by a member of one of Omaha’s largest and most visible ethnic groups.

**Vaclav Kuncl**

Vaclav Kuncl owned one of the first, and longest operating, meat markets in Omaha, if not Nebraska. In 1881, Vaclav came to the United States when he was 14 years old. He was born in a village of approximately 65 people near Strakonic in Bohemia. His father was a brick mason, mechanic, and raised some cattle. The Kuncls first lived in West Point but after two months moved to Omaha where Vaclav’s father worked as a stone mason.

As a young man, Vaclav worked in a cigar factory, brickyard, and a nailworks shop. Eventually, he obtained a position assisting Anton Pokorny in his butcher shop and it was there that he learned his trade. After becoming a full-fledged butcher, in 1887 Vaclav bought his own shop at 1244 South 13th Street. Vaclav was known for the orderly cleanliness of his shop and the quality of his products. In the early days, his wife, Frances, would help with the sausage making, using formulas brought from Bohemia, such as “jaternice,” a sausage that sold for a nickel a piece. In addition to Czech customers, Germans frequented the store for bockwursts, sauerkraut, pig tails, feet, snouts, and ears (Vaclav learned to speak German fluently). African Americans also came to the store for “chittlins” as did the affluent rich from Knob Hill who came for an occasional corned beef and cabbage. The market bustled on Saturdays when people of all types and statuses would travel, some many miles, to Kuncl’s store to stock up on meats. Vaclav also invested successfully in real estate and owned the Sherman apartments on North 16th Street and the Victoria apartments at 27th and Harney Streets.

Kuncl was a member of Ak-Sar-Ben, president of the Retail Meat Dealer’s Association, Tel Jed Sokol, and Woodmen of the World. He suffered a heart attack and
died September 13, 1934 at his home at 1732 South 15th Street, where he had lived since 1904. More than 1,000 people attended Vaclav’s funeral at Sokol auditorium. After the services, a police escort led a mile-long funeral procession from the hall to the Bohemian National Cemetary. In 1959, Frances Kuncl died at the age of eighty-nine.

Roman Hruska

In 1930, Victoria Kuncl (Vaclav and Frances’ daughter), married a young lawyer named Roman Hruska. The Hruska’s lived at the home at 1732 South 15th Street from 1934 until 1954. Roman Hruska was also a product of Czech immigration. Hruska’s father immigrated to the U.S. in 1876. The family first lived in Iowa and later relocated to Butler County, Nebraska. Hruska was born in David City in 1904 and his family moved to Omaha in 1917. After graduating from the High School of Commerce in 1921, Hruska attended the University of Omaha and then the University of Chicago Law School and eventually finished law school at Creighton University. In 1945, in addition to practicing law, Hruska served as a Douglas County Commissioner which was the beginning of his political career that eventually led him to Congress (1953-54) and the Senate (1954-76).

Hruska was known as a staunch supporter of Nebraska and a gentlemen statesman, serving most notably on the Appropriations and Judiciary Committees. He was an influential republican leader during his time in Washington. Roman Hruska died on April 25, 1999, at the age of 94. His memorial service at Sokol Hall was attended by present and past state legislators, senators, and governors. Hruska was laid to rest at the Bohemian National Cemetery. In the center of downtown Omaha, the new U.S. Courthouse under construction is named for Hruska. Vaclav Kuncl and Roman Hruska were men who impacted the city, state, and nation. They epitomize part of the immigrant legacy in Omaha. The beautiful, well preserved house where they both lived at 1732 South 15th Street is a lasting memory to these prominent men, and Omaha’s and Nebraska’s history. Indicative of this was a cartoon sketch in tribute to Roman Hruska that appeared after his death. It pictures Chimney Rock, the Capitol Tower, and Hruska with the caption, “Long Time Nebraska Landmarks.”

Written and Submitted by David A. Lopez
References and Endnotes


3. According to a certified chimney sweep and fireplace repairman who was asked to evaluate the structure, the fireplace was originally designed for coal heating and not a fireplace. The upstairs outlet has been walled over. To create a working fireplace would cost in the range of $10,000.

4. The annual flower bulbs were planted by Frances Kuncl in the 1900's. The pine trees were planted by Roman Hruska. I learned this, and many other details about the house, in an interview with Roman Hruska on February 11, 1999.


9. *Omaha World Herald.* 1929. “He's Been Mating the Trade for over 40 Years: Butcher Kuncl, Proprietor of the Oldest Shop in Omaha, or Perhaps Nebraska, Knows his Cows and Chickens, to Say Nothing of Pig Knuckles or even Bologna.” November 17.

11. In 1936 this “Omaha landmark” was sold by Francis Kuncl, Vaclav’s widow, to G. H. Nelson (Omaha World Herald. 1936. “Kuncl Building, Landmark Sold.” November 8. A5). The building still stands today. It has recently been sold and is being renovated by Nustyle Construction Company into apartments and commercial space.


16. From 1954 to 1996, the house was owned by Jaroslav Wynncykyi, a man of German descent who worked as an inspector for the USDA. According to long time residents of the neighborhood, Wynncykyi came to the U.S. after World War II. After Wynncykyi’s death, the house was sold at auction and bought by Doug Wellendorf who did some repair work. He then sold it to the current owner who purchased the house in December 1998.


AN ORDINANCE to designate the Kuncl-Hruska House at 1732 South 15th 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 Kuncl-Hruska House at 1732 South 15th Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

The South 15 feet of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8, Block 15, Kountze 3rd Addition, City of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska.

Section 2. That for the reasons cited in Landmark Heritage Preservation Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit "A", and made a part hereof by reference, the historical value of the Kuncl-Hruska is hereby deemed significant and worthy of recognition.

Section 3. That the "Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Buildings", as may be from time to time amended, are hereby adopted as the design standards to be applied in the enforcement of this ordinance and Chapter 24, Article II, of the Omaha Municipal Code.

Section 4. That the Kuncl-Hruska House is hereby designated as a landmark pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code and hereby subject to all of the provisions of this Ordinance and Chapter 24, Article II, of the Omaha Municipal Code.
Section 3. 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 BY:

DATE
PASSED FEB 15 2000 7-0

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

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ORDINANCE NO. 35130

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Kunc-Hruska House at 1732 South 15th Street as a landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading FEB - 1 2000 - Hearing

Hearing FEB - 8 2000 - Over to

Final Reading FEB 15 2000 - Passed 7-0

PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATION OF HEARING
Date 2 - 4 - 00

PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCE
Date

BUSTER BROWN
City Clerk