RESOLUTION-EXHIBIT 1
MASSON SCHOOL
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Thomas Paltani is the owner of Mason School; and,

WHEREAS, the owner, and developer Bradley Lee on February 22, 1985, requested that Mason School be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, Mason School, built in 1888, is the oldest extant school building in Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, Mason School was designed by the prominent early Omaha architectural firm of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie; and,

WHEREAS, Mason School is architecturally significant as one of the finest of only a very few Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings extant in Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, Richardsonian Romanesque was the architectural style used for many of Omaha's finest early buildings, now destroyed, including the 1887 Omaha Bee Building, the 1889 City Hall and the 1892 Post Office Building; and,

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

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

THAT, Mason School, 1012 South 24th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
April 10, 1985

REQUEST            CATEGORY
  x Landmark Designation  District
  _ Landmark Heritage     Site
  _ District Designation  Structure
  _ Certificate of Approval
  _ to Perform Work       Object

APPLICANT
Bradley Lee

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
1012 South 24th Street

PRESENT USE
Vacant

CONFORMANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
In conformance - shown as potential individual Landmark

CONFORMANCE WITH OTHER MASTER PLANS
In conformance - staff master plan review committee

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing: Mason School is located near downtown in the Columbus Park neighborhood. The school is bordered by mixed uses that include older single and multi-family residential structures, and older commercial buildings. The condition of the surrounding structures varies, with many in the fair to poor category.

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

Designation and renovation of Mason School, as proposed, could provide a strong catalyst for continued neighborhood revitalization.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
This is to be a certified historic project using the tax incentives for historic preservation. Building is proposed to be converted to apartment use.
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
MASON SCHOOL

and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number
1012 South 24th Street

CLASSIFICATION

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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name: Tom Paladini
Phone Number: 341-8717

Street and Number: 834 South 24th Street
City, State and Zip Code: Omaha, Nebraska 68108

Representative: Bradley L. Lee (DaLee Realty, Inc.)
Phone Number: Bus: (402) 371-8070, Res: (402) 371-8845

Street and Number: 214 Norfolk Avenue
City, State and Zip Code: Norfolk, NE 68701

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
South 38 feet of Lots 39 and 46, and all Lots 40 through 45, and North 1/2 of the West 280 feet of Lots 59, Redicks Second Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska.
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

X Historic Omaha Building Survey, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission. (Local)
X A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, 1980. (Local)
Omaha City Architecture, Landmarks, Inc., 1977. (Local)
X Survey of Douglas County, Nebraska State Historical Society, 1978. (State)
X Other: 1984 Omaha/Douglas County Historic Building Survey

DESCRIPTION

(See Attached)

SIGNIFICANCE

(See Attached)

Specific Dates 1888; 1936
Architect Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie; H.R. Brigham
Builder Hadden Rocheford and Gould; Borchman
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

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 Mason School (DO00:0205-009)  

and/or common Mason School  

2. Location  

street & number 1012 South 24th Street  

city, town Omaha  

state Nebraska  

code 031 county Douglas  

code 055  

3. Classification  

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X: other: Vacant  

4. Owner of Property  

name Thomas Paltani Trust  

street & number 832 South 24th Street  

city, town Omaha  

state Nebraska  

5. Location of Legal Description  

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center  

street & number 1819 Farnam Street  

city, town Omaha  

state Nebraska  

6. Representation in Existing Surveys  

title 1984 Omaha/Douglas County Historic Building Survey  

has this property been determined eligible? X yes  

date 1984 - ongoing  

title federal state county X local  

depository for survey records Omaha City Planning Department & Nebraska State Historical Society  

city, town Omaha/Lincoln  

state Nebraska
7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Functionally, Mason School is a 16-room classroom facility built in 1888 by the Omaha Board of Education; technically it is built of masonry load-bearing walls spanned by wood joists supporting wood floors, and a wood truss system supporting the roof; formally the building is a two story brick building, an articulated rectangle in plan and design in the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture.

Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street, was built in 1888 as part of a program by the Omaha Public Schools to meet the growing enrollment due to Omaha’s expansion.

The original two story brick building is rectangular in plan measuring 138' 6" x 92' 4" and is topped by a hybrid roof of gabled and flat sections. The symmetrical main east facade as well as the west facade is characterized by projecting gabled two story end pavilions and a central gabled wall-dormer. The north and south elevations are nearly identical. Each contain a central projecting two story gabled pavilion. At either side of the pavilion are one story quarter circle turret-like forms capped with conical roofs.

In 1936, a brick addition was built directly south of the original school. It consists of a two story rectangular classroom block and an auditorium block, both with flat roofs. Access to the addition is through a "connecting vestibule" centered on the south entrance of the original school building.

The main entrance to the original school building is through a large semicircular arch centrally located beneath the wall dormer at the eastern facade. Secondary entrances at the north and south facades are also arched and are located in the central pavilions. Double loaded corridors running the buildings longest dimension (north and south) service eight classrooms per floor. Two sets of ornately spindled wood stairs at each end of the corridor provide the necessary vertical circulation. The western one-half of the basement contains restroom and mechanical functions; the remainder is unexcavated.

Circulation in the 1936 addition revolves around a central first floor corridor that serves as an extension of the first floor corridor of the original building. Access to the second floor classrooms is via a stair located in the northeast corner of the structure. An auditorium space is oriented perpendicular to the classroom block with a stage area that backs onto the corridor wall. Space in the addition is also provided for a small kitchen and dining alcove, a teachers lounge, a physical directors office, a nurses' office and toilet facilities.

The 1888 school building utilizes a structural system of load bearing masonry walls (both interior and exterior) carried on continuous stepped masonry footings. Floors are constructed of dimensional wood framing (2 x 14's and 3 x 14's) spanning between bearing walls and are finished with strip hardwood flooring. The roof is composed of a hybrid wood truss system, presenting a sloped, gabled section to public view while the inner sections are relatively flat.

Structurally, the 1936 addition is constructed of masonry load bearing walls on simple concrete footings. Concrete beams comprise the floors and roof of the classroom portion of the addition and the connecting vestibule as well as the floor of the auditorium space. Steel I-beams are used to support the flat roof of the auditorium.

(see continuation sheet)
Mason School is a fine and well preserved local adaption of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture, a popular style used in many public and private buildings of this period. The building's facades are composed of common red brick with encircling water table, sill courses, rustications and other selected details of limestone. The facades are punctuated by groupings of large double hung windows, round arched at the first and attic levels and flat arched at the second level. Decorative stamped galvanized iron is used generously at the building's cornice line, at the wall dormer and pavillion pediments and at the window head moldings.

In terms of style, the addition to Mason School is very pragmatic with embellishment limited to stonework at the east and south classroom entrances and a simple encircling brick cornice.

Decorative interior features of the original 1888 building included pressed-metal ceilings throughout, turned balusters and carved newel posts at the north and south stairways, wainscoting and decorative door and window moldings and headblocks. Interior finishes in the 1936 addition are spare, limited to the use of simple panel doors and wood moldings.

The integrity of the Mason School complex is very good due to the past maintenance by the Omaha Public School system. The original school building has undergone some alterations though. Two prominent, ornate roof vents have been removed and the original slate roof has been replaced with asphalt shingles. All exterior brick and stone surfaces have also been painted, causing some moisture entrapment and exfoliation. All of these problems are to be addressed in the certified rehabilitation of the building.
8. Significance

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**Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)**

Mason School is architecturally significant as one of the finest of only a very few Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings extant in Omaha. Additionally, the building is significant as a work of the prominent early Omaha firm of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie, and as the oldest extant school in the City.

Mason School was erected in late 1888, a time of tremendous economic growth in Omaha. Business, wholesaling and manufacturing were all increasing rapidly, as was residential development, and the need for new school facilities was particularly acute. On January 1, 1888 bonds were issued for $200,000 for the purpose of building Mason and five other structures to accommodate the growing school age population.

Mason School was designed by the prominent Omaha architectural firm of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Inspired by the work of Henry Hobson Richardson of Boston, the style was extremely popular nationally in the 1880's and early 1890's, particularly for public buildings and large scale residences. Many of Omaha's finest buildings of that period - now lost - were Richardsonian Romanesque. They included the Federal Building (1892-1906), the City Hall (1889-1892) and the Omaha Bee Building (1887-1889). Mason School, the oldest extant school building in the City, is one of only a very few Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings that remain in Omaha, and the best example of the four remaining schools of that style.

The firm of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie evolved from one of the City's earliest professional partnerships - Dufrene and Mendelsohn, formed in 1881. Dufrene had worked as an architect in Nebraska since 1867, first in partnership with T. B. Borst, and then alone during the 1870's. Mendelsohn, born in Berlin in 1842, had studied in New York and practiced in Detroit prior to coming to Omaha. The 1884 Christian Specht Building (NRHP, 1977) is a product of the Dufrene and Mendelsohn partnership. In 1885 Mendelsohn left Dufrene and entered into a partnership with architect George Fisher. The firm operated as Mendelsohn and Fisher in 1885 and 1886 and then as Mendelsohn and Lawrie in 1887 when Fisher left the firm for a year and Harry Lawrie, a native of Scotland, joined Mendelsohn. Fisher then rejoined the firm and the partnership of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie was formed.

It is quite possible that, of the three principals in the firm of Mendelsohn, Fisher and Lawrie, Harry Lawrie had the greatest influence on the design and style of Mason School. Prior to his arrival in Omaha in 1887, the year before Mason School was built, Lawrie had worked for four years in Chicago with Burnham and Root. John Wellborn Root, the principal designer for the firm, was greatly influenced by Richardson (Mumford) and did much of his work in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Richardson himself visited Burnham and Root in Chicago during the time that Lawrie was employed there (Hoffman) and Lawrie worked on several

(see continuation sheet)
Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings while with Root including the Art Institute and the Phenix Building. Several details on Mason School are particularly reminiscent of some of Roots work in the Romanesque style. They include the tourelles that occur at either side of the gable over the main entrance, the manner in which the round arch of the main entrance is set apart from the plane of the wall by including it within a projecting, rectilinear surround, and the use of diaperwork in the gable ends. Elements that are more typical of Richardson's work are the arched windows that are linked together in series and the quarterround turrets that flank the north and south entrances.
9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 2.25 acres

Quadrangle name: South Omaha, NE

Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification
South 38 feet of Lots 39 and 46, and all Lots 40 through 45, and North 1/2 of the West 280 feet of Lot 59, Redicks Second Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Dan Worth/City Planner, Architect

Name/Title: Lynn Meyer; Preservation Administrator

Organization: Omaha City Planning Department

Date: May, 1985

Street & Number: 1819 Farnam Street, Suite 1110

Telephone: (402) 444-5208

City or Town: Omaha

State: Nebraska 68183

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] National
- [ ] State
- [ ] 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

Date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Chief of Registration

[Signature]
Building Permit Records. Omaha City Planning Department, Omaha, Nebraska.

Deeds and Mortgage Records, Douglas County, Nebraska.


Omaha Architects File. Omaha City Planning Department. Omaha, Nebraska.

Omaha Public Schools Clipping File Collection, "1885-1890". On File at Joslyn Castle, 3902 Davenport, Omaha.


LHPC Case No. H1-85-5
APPLICANTS: Thomas Paltani and Bradley Lee request LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1012 South 24th Street. AREA TO BE DESIGNATED IS SHADED. (Mason School)
September 10, 1985

H1-85-5

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

This proposed Ordinance designates the Mason School, 1012 South 24th Street, as a Landmark. The owner, Tom Paltani, and the developer, Bradley Lee, are the applicants.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY: AT THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING: At the Public Hearing held July 3, 1985, no one appeared in opposition to this request.

PLANNING BOARD ACTION: Approval 5-0-2.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY: AT THE LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING: At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held June 13, 1985, a visual overview of the architectural and historical significance of the Mason School was presented. It was explained that the applicant is proposing to use the building for apartments. The developer appeared in favor of this designation.

No one appeared in opposition to this request. Full summary of proceedings attached.

LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ACTION: Approval 4-0-3.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin H. Shukert, AICP
Planning Director

3199w:rea

Referred to City Council for Consideration:

Mayor’s Office/Title 1
At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held June 13, 1985, Lynn Meyer, Commission Administrator, gave a slide presentation on Mason School; 1012 South 24th Street.

Mr. Meyer stated that Mason School was built in 1888, during a time of tremendous economic growth in Omaha and a time when the school age population was creating a large demand for new school facilities. He said Mason School was financed, along with five other schools, by a $200,000 bond issue. He noted that today, Mason School stands as the oldest extant school in Omaha.

Mr. Meyer told the Board that the building was designed by the prominent early Omaha architectural firm of Mendelssohn, Fisher and Lawrie. He said the firm had evolved from one of Omaha's earliest professional partnerships - Dufrene and Mendelssohn, formed in 1881. Mr. Meyer pointed out that Dufrene and Mendelssohn were responsible for the Christian Specht building, a National Register structure and a very unique and important cast iron front structure in downtown Omaha.

Mr. Meyer said that Mason School is a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture, a style that was extremely popular in the 1880's and 1890's, primarily for large scale public buildings. He said the school is one of only a very few Richardsonian Romanesque buildings extant in Omaha. Mr. Meyer reported that the very finest examples of the style have been lost including the 1892 post office, City Hall and Bee Building.

Mr. Meyer informed the Board that the Richardsonian Romanesque style was popularized by the internationally prominent architect H.H. Richardson of Boston. He pointed out that the most distinguishing feature of the style is the use of the round arch as seen in the entryway and in the first floor windows of Mason School. Mr. Meyer went on to say that some of the detailing on the building is particularly reminiscent of the work of John Welborn Root of Burnham and Root of Chicago, a very important architectural firm in the history of American architecture. He stated that Harry Lawrie had worked for Root for 4 years prior to his coming to Omaha, and a similarity to Root's work can be seen in Mason School, especially in the entryway and the decorative work in the gable end.

Mr. Meyer stated that other typical Richardsonian features on the building include quarter round turrets, arched windows in a series of three, and decorative stone work - very similar to the arch that is in the Central Park Mall that was taken from the Corey-McKenzie Building. Mr. Meyer further noted that the decorative metal work on the building is very unusual and modernistic for an 1888 building.
Mr. Meyer concluded his slide presentation by saying that in 1936, an additional structure consisting of a gymnasium and additional classrooms was added onto the south side of the building.

Mr. Meyer stated that the present owner of the building, Thomas Paltani, is the applicant for this designation along with Mr. Brad Lee, the developer of the building, who is proposing to use the building for apartments and take advantage of the 25% tax investment credit.

For the record, Mr. Fenner, Acting Chairperson, stated that the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission toured Mason School.

Brad Lee, applicant and developer, requested approval of this designation.

No one appeared in opposition to this request.

Mr. How moved to APPROVE the Landmark Designation of Mason School; 1012 South 24th Street. Mr. Haecker seconded the motion which carried 4-0-3; Messrs. Wood and Harmsen and Ms. Pixley being absent.

3214w:pjm
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

H1-85-5

REQUEST: Landmark Designation of Mason School

LOCATION: 1012 South 24th Street

Thomas Paltani and Bradley Lee

At the Public Hearing held July 3, 1985, Martin Shukert, Planning Director, stated that this designation is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation, and will assist the building's preservation and eventual reuse. He said this designation was approved by the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission on June 13, 1985.

In response to a question by Mr. Anzaldo, Mr. Shukert stated that landmark designation restricts the modification of the significant aspects of the exterior of the building or the demolition of the building without permission of the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission. In addition, Mr. Shukert told the Board that due to the 1981 Tax Act, if a historically designated building uses investment tax credits for rehabilitation, the owner must also preserve the important aspects of the interior of the building to gain certification for those tax credits.

No one appeared in opposition to this request.

At the July 10, 1985 Administrative Meeting, Martin Shukert, Planning Director, stated that the Planning Department recommends this designation be approved.

Ms. Latimer moved to APPROVE this request for Landmark Designation of Mason School; 1012 South 24th Street. Mr. Grove seconded the motion which carried 5-0-2; Messrs. Moser and Fahey being absent.

3218w:pjm
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OMAHA:

Section 1. That the Mason School is located at 1012 South 24th Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

The South 38 feet of Lots 39 and 46 and all of Lots 40 through 45 and the North 1/2 of the West 280 feet of Lot 59, Redicks 2nd Addition, as surveyed, platted and recorded in 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 Mason School are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the "Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic 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 Mason School is hereby designated pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code, and thereby subject to all of the provisions of Landmark Heritage Preservation, Ch. 24, Art. II of the City of Omaha.
Section 5. 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:

Michael Boyle 1/30/86
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA
DATE

PASSED JAN 28 1986 6-0

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

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.

Buster Crown, City Clerk, City of Omaha
AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

First Reading SEP 10 1985 HEARING - 9/17/85

Hearing SEP 17 1985 OVER TO - 9/24/85

Final Reading SEP 24 1985 Motion by Calzign, Takeda - 3-3 Seconded Motion by Calzign to lay over 4 weeks to 10/8/85 Carried 5-0. Present 7. October 8, 1985 Motion to lay over 12 weeks to 12/21/85 Carried 5-0. October 21, 1985 Motion to lay over 12 weeks to 2/6/86 Carried 5-0. November 6, 1985 Motion to lay over 12 weeks to 2/6/86 Carried 5-0. December 5, 1985 Motion to lay over 12 weeks to 2/6/86 Carried 5-0. January 26, 1986 Motion to lay over 12 weeks to 2/6/86 Carried 5-0.
"NOTICE TO PUBLIC"

The following Ordinance has been set for City Council Hearing September 17, 1985 at 2:00 o'clock P.M.

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT
City Clerk

9-13-85

"NOTICE TO PUBLIC"

ORDINANCE NO. 33594

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

SUMMARY

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason School, located at 1012 South 24th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PASSED January 29, 1985 2-0
APPROVED BY

MICHAEL BOYLE
1/30/85

MAYOR OF THE
CITY OF OMAHA

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT
City Clerk

2-7-85