RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
MAISON TERRACE & VAN CLOSTER RESIDENCE
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Douglas E. Hiner is the owner of the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence; and,

WHEREAS, this owner, on October 18, 1980, requested that the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence be designated a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence were constructed in 1889 and 1890 respectively; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence were designed by the Omaha architectural firm of Findley and Shields; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace exhibits characteristics of the Queen Anne style of architecture; and the Van Closter Residence, vernacular Romanesque Revival; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace is representative of structures specifically erected for use as multi-family dwellings in Omaha during the late 1880's; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence are representative of the commercial residential construction in Omaha during the late 1880's when elaborate trolley networks opened many new areas to development and structures were quickly erected by real estate investors along major routes; and,

WHEREAS, the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence are historically related to J. Herbert Van Closter, president of the Nebraska Mortgage Loan Company from 1889 to 1894, who was at the center of this development activity in the Hanscom Park and Park Avenue neighborhoods.

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

THAT, the Mason Terrace, 2915-2921 Mason Street and 1001 Park Avenue, and Van Closter Residence, 2911 Mason Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
11-3-80

REQUEST

\[ \times \] Landmark Designation

\[ \times \] Landmark Heritage

District Designation

Certificate of Approval to Perform Work

CATEGORY

\[ \times \] District

\[ \times \] Building

\[ \times \] Structure

\[ \_ \] Site

\[ \_ \] Object

APPLICANT

Douglas E. Hiner

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

1001 Park Ave. 2911-21 Mason Street

PRESENT USE

Work in Progress

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to the 1977 Community Development Master Plan's Redevelopment Areas where "rehabilitation is limited to substantial or historic structures."

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing: High-density residential area composed of low-rise apartment complexes and converted and single family turn-of-the-century residences which borders on Interstate 490 and Hanscom Park.

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

Designation will provide the initial impetus for the creation of a neighborhood district and will act with the Landmark Georgia Terrace to promote an historic core area.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

approval

ADDITIONAL DATA

Owner is presently renovating the complex which had been condemned by the Permits & Inspection Division.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic Mason Terrace
and/or Common Jamison Apartments

LOCATION
Street and Number
1001 Park Ave., 2911 - 2921 Mason Street

CLASSIFICATION

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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name Douglas E. Hiner
Street and Number
525 Fairacres Road
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, 68132
Representative Doug Hiner Properties
Street and Number
601 S. 31st Ave. #1
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, 68105

Phone Number
551-9884

Phone Number
342-3830

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
The west 110 feet of Lot 20 and the East 30 feet of Lot 20, all in Rees Place, an addition to the City of Omaha, as surveyed, platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Historic Omaha Building Survey (HOBS)
Date May 1979
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

VAN CLOSTER TERRACE APARTMENTS, 2915-2921 Mason Street and 1001 Park Avenue, AND RESIDENCE, 2911 Mason Street

The first buildings specifically erected for use as multi-family dwellings in Omaha were terrace or row houses constructed in the late 1880's. In most cases, each "house" was a separate structural unit with its own outside entrances and was rented to one household. Elaborate trolley networks had opened many new residential areas to development during this decade and terrace houses were quickly erected by real estate investors along the major routes. Diminutive Victorian cottages built in small numbers by optimistic development companies in park-like communities were also used to promote land sales to prospective residents.

J. Herbert Van Closter, president of the Nebraska Mortgage Loan Company, was at the center of this type of activity in the Park Avenue neighborhood and financed several development projects including the frame five unit terrace apartment building at 2915-2921 Mason Street and the brick single family residence at 2911 Mason Street. Designed by the Omaha architectural firm of Findley and Shields, the row house apartments were constructed in 1889 by Zack Cotlier at a cost of $16,000 and the two story residence in 1890 by Thissen Arnold and Company at a cost of $4,500.

The five unit, two-story terrace structure exhibits major characteristics of the Queen Anne style in its irregular plan and asymmetrical massing. Its high A-type roofs are intersected at right angles by repeating second story gables which project from textured wall surfaces (presently clad with asbestos siding). Individually, these projecting upper stories, supported by ornamental wooden brackets, function at the first floor level as entrance canopies, but collectively they promote an aesthetic rhythm along the Mason Street facade. A three-story circular corner tower, a feature of the later phase of the Queen Anne style, accentuates the intersection of the Park Avenue and Mason Street facades and provides the structure's only vertical element. This tower is capped by a bell-shaped roof sheathed in metal shingles of fish scale design.

The structure exhibits a variety of window treatments but a majority of the openings employ a straight-topped single-light sash. Engaged pairs of rectangular window units punctuate second story gable surfaces and side lights frame a large fixed window at the first floor level. At ground level, straight-topped windows, equal in size to those of the floors above, permit natural illumination of the raised brick basement.

The interior of the 30' by 62' residential unit, which fronts on Park Avenue, differs markedly from the living areas of the four other 20' by 45' apartments. Originally designed as full-blown Queen Anne residence, the structure retains only its living hall area. This central circulation space contains an oak grand staircase which terminates in a hand carved newel post, a carved oak and ceramic tile fireplace and overhead an ornamented spindled oak panel.

The smaller Mason Street apartments have in most cases been stripped of interior ornamentation and retain only partial oak woodwork elements in the main entry hall. Notable remaining utilitarian elements are the skylights which flood the staircase and upper story bath with natural light.
A gabled attic story and a polychromatic red brick and limestone exterior finish highlight the 26'-by-42'-two-story, flat-roofed residence at 2911 Mason Street. This vernacular Romanesque Revival structure which continues the rhythm of the terrace apartments, also acts to terminate the linear composition through a projection of a portion of its two-story facade. This projecting facade is similar in massing to the Park Avenue residential unit located at the block's opposite corner.

Straight-topped rectangular windows, employing rusticated stone lintels and sills, punctuate the structure's smooth brick surface and segmental arched windows of similar design enliven its recessed facade.

The residence's commodious interior spaces are grouped around an offset circulation core and include three large rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor level and a common area surrounded by four bedrooms on the upper level.
SIGNIFICANCE

THE OWNER, J. Herbert Van Closter

The forty years between 1880 and 1920 played a decisive role in Omaha's growth and development. Although Omaha experienced a severe depression in the mid-1890's, the city's growth in population and industry in the years before and following overshadowed that decade. The Eighties were boom years for all of Nebraska, but especially for Omaha, which began to acquire a metropolitan image. The city's population doubled from 30,000 in 1880 to 61,000 in 1885; the need for more space caused a flurry of real estate activity in and around Omaha. J. Herbert Van Closter, President of the Nebraska Mortgage Loan Company from 1889 to 1894, was at the center of this activity in the Hanscom Park and Park Avenue neighborhoods.

An instructor at the Wyman Commercial College during 1883, Van Closter soon obtained a position in the auditor's office of the Union Pacific Railroad. By 1888, he had opened a real estate and loan office in the Paxton Building and by 1890, assisted by major public improvements in the Park Avenue area (trolley car barn at Park and Woolworth Avenues constructed in 1882, grade of Leavenworth Street changed in 1885 and provisions for the maintenance of Hanscom Park established in 1887), had financed and constructed several rental investment properties. In addition to the residence and multiple tenements located along Mason Streets, Van Closter erected the landmark Georgia Apartments in 1889.

THE ARCHITECTS, William E. Findley and Alexander Shields

Little is known as yet about the architectural firm of Findley and Shields. The firm's brief Omaha career, 1889 to 1892, led to several commissions in addition to the speculative residential properties of J. Herbert Van Closter, (Georgia Apartments: 1890, 1040 South 29th Street; residence: 1890, 2911 Mason Street; five tenements: 1889, 2915-2921 Mason Street), one being the Mayfair Textile Building at 1123 Howard Street erected in 1892. After the partnership dissolved, William Findley, (1849-1908, Scotch-Irish ancestry), continued to practice until 1908 and Alexander Shields until 1915.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


City of Omaha. Building Permit Application File.


Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, City of Omaha. The Georgia Apartments.

Morearty, Ed F. Omaha Memories. Omaha: Privately Published, 1906.


H1-80-19 APPLICANT Douglas E. Hiner requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1001 Park Avenue, 2911-21 Mason Street. Area to be designated is shaded.

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Scale: 1"=100'
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
ORDINANCE NO. 29439

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence, located at 2911-2921 Mason Street and 1001 Park Avenue 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 Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence is located at 2911-2921 Mason Street and 1001 Park Avenue, which is legally described as follows:

The West 110 feet of Lot 20 and the East 30 feet of Lot 20, all in Rees Place, an addition to the City of Omaha 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 Terrace and Van Closter Residence are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Mason Terrace and Van Closter Residence is hereby designated pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code, and hereby subject to all of the provisions of Landmark Heritage Preservation, Ch. 24, Art. II. 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:

[Signature] 3/19/81

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA  DATE

PASSED MAR 17 1981  6-0

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

[Signature]  
CITY ATTORNEY

K/8:6b
ORDINANCE NO. 29439

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Mason Terrace and Van Clusters Residence, located at 2911-2921 Mason Street and 1001 Park Avenue as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading MAR 3 1981
Hearing MAR 10 1981
Passed 6-0

Mary Elliot, Cindee