RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
SACRED HEART CHURCH OF OMAHA
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Rev. Thomas Furlong is the representative of the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, this representative, on January 4, 1979, requested that the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha was designed by the prominent Omaha architectural firm of Fisher and Lawrie; and,

WHEREAS, the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha, completed in June, 1902, is a modest example of the Early Gothic Revival style of architecture which provided one of the most intense of the picturesque styles which developed in the United States during the nineteenth century; and,

WHEREAS, the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha is historically related to an early twentieth century suburban area of upper class families which developed at the site of the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

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

THAT, the Sacred Heart Church of Omaha, 2206 Binney Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission  
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE  
1-4-79

REQUEST
☐ Landmark Designation  ☑ Landmark Heritage  
☐ District Designation  ☑ Certificate of Approval  
☐ to Perform Work

CATEGORY
☐ District  ☑ Building  
☐ Structure  ☑ Site  
☐ Object

APPLICANT
Sacred Heart Church of Omaha, Inc.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
2206 Binney Street

PRESENT USE
Religious/Church

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
Conforms to the 1977 Community Development Master Plan's Combination Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Areas in which reconstruction of existing neighborhoods is proposed.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing: Deteriorating 1890-1900 residential neighborhood composed of Queen Anne style homes designed by prominent Omaha architects (Thomas Kimball, Fisher & Lawrie, etc.)

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved.
Designation will promote an awareness of the surrounding architectural resources and initiate support for the creation of an historic district.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Applicant has signed petition to include all lands and structures in a Landmark Heritage District.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
   Sacred Heart Church
and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number
   2206 Binney Street

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name Sacred Heart Church of Omaha, Inc.

Street and Number
   2218 Binney Street

City, State and Zip Code
   Omaha, Nebraska 68110

Representative
   Rev. Thomas Furlong

Street and Number
   Same

City, State and Zip Code

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   Lots 12, 13, 14 and 15, Block 7,
   Kountze Place Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Historic Omaha Building Survey, LHPC
Date January 1979

   ___ Federal ___ State ___ County X Local
(over)
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

January 4, 1979
Date

Signature of Owner/Representative
SIGNIFICANCE

Right Rev. Bishop James O'Connor organized Sacred Heart Parish in North Omaha in 1890. Holy Family Parish at 17th and Cuming had previously served all Catholics in that section of the City, but by 1890, a new parish was needed further north. The first Sacred Heart Church was completed in October, 1890, on 26th Street between Sprague and Sahler. The frame building measured twenty-four by eighty feet and served the congregation until 1897. The young congregation, led by Rev. John T. Smith, "borrowed" its first altar from Holy Family School. The white pine altar was the first used in Nebraska. Although intended for a Trappist monastery in New Melleray, Iowa, in 1856, it was sidetracked to Omaha at the request of Mrs. Thomas B. Cuming, wife of the acting territorial governor. St. Mary's Church, the first Catholic church in Omaha, housed the altar until 1877, when it was moved to the new Holy Family School chapel.

Rev. Patrick J. Judge took over as pastor of Sacred Heart Church in 1895. He believed the church's location was a disadvantage, since it was a low-lying area, and "in wet weather one required either a boat or waders to reach the church." Also, Sacred Heart found itself on the edge of the Parish, rather than in a central location. The church had been built in 1890, when the economic climate gave every indication the boom years would continue. Observers expected rapid construction of houses in the neighborhood of the little church, reflecting the real estate boom that had swelled Omaha for the previous decade. However, the depression and crop failures that occurred across the United States in the following years also affected the growth of this section of Omaha. Families moved away, while the expected construction never took place.

In 1896, Father Judge met with Herman Kountze of the United Real Estate and Trust Company of Omaha. Kountze owned land west of Florence Boulevard, more centrally located to serve Sacred Heart Parish. Kountze agreed to donate land for a church, providing the structure was of brick or stone exterior, cost at least $8,000 and be built within five years. Father Judge,
who had a choice of seven locations in Kountze Place, chose to move his church to the corner of 22nd and Binney. The congregation decided to move the frame church from 26th Street until the new construction could begin, and the first mass at the location was said on June 13, 1897. The Parish limits of the church were east to the Missouri River; north to the City boundaries; west to the east side of 30th Street; and south to the north side of Grace and Parker Streets.

Father Judge immediately began work to raise funds for the new church. A fair held in 1898 raised over $3,000 which formed the nucleus of the building fund. Numerous entertainments and subscriptions also contributed to the fund, to such an extent that the plans for the new structure were expanded. Kountze donated an additional fifty feet of land under the condition that the church cost at least $15,000. Construction of the $25,000 stone church began in August, 1900, with the laying of the cornerstone on September 2, 1900.

The dedication of Sacred Heart Church on June 8, 1902 attracted three bishops, the first time such high representatives of the Catholic hierarchy were present for the dedication of a religious structure in Omaha. A contemporary account referred to the new church as the "finest building erected as a parish church in the city," from an artistic standpoint. Witnessing the dedication ceremony were such prominent Omahans as Mayor Frank E. Moores, Judge J. M. Woolworth, and Count John A. Creighton. The white pine altar was moved yet one more time and placed in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sacred Heart Church.

By 1902, the area surrounding the church had become one of the finest residential locations in the City. The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition, which had occurred at nearby Kountze Park on Florence Boulevard, caused the City to expand northward. Many well-to-do Omahans built large homes in Sacred Heart Parish and helped it to grow in the following years.

The Dominican Sisters from Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, arrived in 1904 to handle all educational needs of the parish. They operated a high school on the southeast corner of 22nd and Binney,
and also established Sacred Heart Elementary School. The four lower grades occupied a frame building on the southwest corner of 22nd and Binney, while grades five through eight utilized the old frame church still standing north of the new sanctuary. A new brick elementary school replaced the two frame buildings in 1927. Another addition to the Sacred Heart grounds was a shrine of Christ and St. Mary Magdalene, constructed between the church and the rectory west of it in 1922.

Under Father Judge, the congregation grew from 40 families in 1895 to 350 families by 1921. This growth enabled the church to pay off the debt on the building in that year. Father Judge remained at Sacred Heart until 1942, having witnessed so much growth in North Omaha that the territory of the Parish he led in 1895 had since been divided into six parishes.

The Black community located south of the church since the 1920's continued to expand throughout the 1950's and 1960's. However, Sacred Heart parishioners served as a block to movement of Blacks east of 24th Street and north of Binney until the riots of the late 1960's. Whites fled the neighborhood, leaving the large turn of the century homes for quick sales and subdivision into apartments. The social and economic character of the neighborhood changed, which affected support of the church and schools. With fewer Catholic families to support the high school, Sacred Heart became an archdiocesan high school, receiving support from the entire 23 county area rather than just the parish. Both the secondary and elementary schools became ungraded, and innovative educational technique allowing students to work at their own pace. Sacred Heart also opened its schools to non-Catholics, in an effort to serve the entire community around it.

In 1968, the archdiocese announced closing of the Sacred Heart High School building and the school relocated into a former elementary structure at 4725 North 28th Street. The name was changed to Dominican High School, but the innovative learning techniques remained.
Statistics of Sacred Heart Church and School document the scope of their service in the late 1970's. Today Sacred Heart School has 170 students, only 19 percent of which are white, and only 30 percent who are Catholic. The Sacred Heart Church congregation is approximately 52 percent white and 48 percent minority families. From the initial move to the 22nd and Binney site in the 1890's to the innovative techniques of the elementary school today, Sacred Heart has shown its ability to change directions to better serve the community.
DESCRIPTION

The Early Gothic Revival (1850–1900) provided one of the most intense of the picturesque styles which developed in the United States during the nineteenth century. Distinguished by the pointed arch that could ingeniously be combined with towers, steep gable roofs, projecting pinnacles, tracery and leaded stained glass, the Gothic Revival style expressed the public's growing taste for the romantic and dissatisfaction with the restraints of classical architecture.

Lacking models, domestic Gothic structures never achieved the correctness of mid-19th-century churches. American church architects were strongly influenced by Augustus W. N. Pugin and the English ecclesiologists who vigorously promoted the archaeologically accurate Gothic parish church as the only suitable structure for Christian worship. Sacred Heart Church, 22nd and Binney Streets, represents the many modest examples of this approach.

Designed by the prominent Omaha architectural firm of Fisher & Lawrie (see LHPC Landmark, Bemis Bag Company Building) during 1900 and completed in June, 1902 at a cost of $25,000, Sacred Heart Church possesses major Early Gothic Revival elements which indicate the medievalizing intentions of the architects. Rock-faced coursed ashlar walls, regularly punctuated by elongated lancet windows, rise thirty feet from a 66' by 123' plan generally in the form of a Latin cross of which the short arms form the north and south transepts. The main body of the church, delineated by a slate, steeply-pitched gable roof (the apex of which is 62 feet above ground level) stretches eastward from the "crossing" of the nave and transepts.

The principal entrance centrally located in the corner-buttressed east facade of the gabled nave and immediately below a massive tracered window measuring 12 by 20 feet, is flanked on the south by a tower and spire which rises to a height of 124 feet. This tower, encircled
by octagonal corner buttresses which terminate in pinnacles capped by limestone crockets, is the most striking feature of the structure. Secondary entrances are located in the corner-buttressed, gable ends of the north and south transepts.

The church's gabled western facade is broken by a pair of symmetrically placed chimney stacks which flank a rounded apse. A one story, gable-roofed chapel also projects from the southwest corner of this facade.

Exterior ornamentation of contrasting Bedford limestone is limited to lancet hood moldings with corbel stops, belt courses, and window and door reveals. Additional gothic ornament is found in the large colored glass windows which are located above each of the three gabled entrances. Here wooden mullions, increasing in number in the upper part of the window, form a complex although common type of tracery.

The church's interior is highlighted by a plastered vaulted roof and groining above the nave's side windows. Elaborate stenciling is located on the vaults of the transepts, within the curved arris above the twin-arched side windows, and along the line of intersection of the nave's groins and ceiling vaults. Gothic white oak paneled confessionals and confessional screens are placed in the transepts at either side of the sanctuary and within the apse, an ivory and gold, white pine high altar from the 1856 St. Mary "cathedral" projects upward into a decorated ceiling.

THE ARCHITECTS

George Lee Fisher. Born in Pontiac, Michigan on August 21, 1856 to Charles Ernest & Mary E. (Lee) Fisher, George L. Fisher graduated from the University of Michigan in 1880 with a degree in civil engineering. In 1882, he moved to Omaha and was employed with the firm of Dufrene & Mendelssohn as head draftsman for two years. Mr. Fisher was a principal in the firm Mendelssohn & Fisher from 1885-1887, Mendelssohn, Fisher & Lawrie

Harry Lawrie. Born and educated in Scotland, he studied architecture in Glasgow, and during the 1880's migrated to the United States. Beginning work in Chicago, he served as draftsman in Burnham & Roots office until 1886 when he accepted the position of head draftsman for the late W.W. Clay. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Mr. Lawrie moved to Omaha and in 1918 was one of the charter members of the Nebraska Chapter A.I.A.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Brief History of Sacred Heart Church and School, unpublished manuscript, 1977.


Catholic Director of Omaha and South Omaha 1901-02.


Minutes, Sacred Heart Church Board.


Omaha World-Herald, Magazine of the Midlands, October 26, 1975.


Sacred Heart Church Annual 1902-1903. Omaha: T. F. Dunn, printer.


The True Voice, "Rare Coincidence Marks Trappist Visit, Recalling 'Forgotten' Phase of History," June 29, 1956.

The True Voice, "Father Judge to Read Anniversary Mass on Monday," 1921.


(addendum)


LHPC Case No. HI-79-2, APPLICANT Sacred Heart Church of Omaha, NE., Inc. requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 2206 Binney Street (Sacred Heart Church). Area to be designated is shaded.
ORDINANCE NO 28693

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Sacred Heart Church, located at 2206 Binney 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 Sacred Heart Church is located at 2206 Binney Street, which is legally described as follows Lots 12, 13, 14, & 15, Block 7, 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 Sacred Heart Church are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation

Section 3 That the Sacred Heart Church 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 COUNCILMAN

[Signature]

APPROVED BY

[Signature]

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

DATE

[Signature]

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.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

[Signature]

CITY ATTORNEY

[Signature]
ORDINANCE NO. 28693

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Sacred Heart Church, located at 2206 Binney Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading APR 3, 1979
Hearing APR 10, 1979
Quorum to APR 17, 1979
Final Reading APR 17, 1979
Passed

Mary Colleen Cornett
NOTICE TO PUBLIC
ORDINANCE NO. 2982
AN ORDINANCE to designate the
Sacred Heart Church located at 2206
Binney Street as a Landmark pur
suant to the Landmark Heritage
Preservation Ordinance of the City of
Omaha.
SUMMARY
AN ORDINANCE to designate the
Sacred Heart Church located at 2206
Binney Street as a Landmark pur
suant to the Landmark Heritage
Preservation Ordinance of the City of
Omaha.
PASSED April 18, 1979
APPROVED
AL VERS
MAYOR OF THE
CITY OF OMAHA
MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT
4-27-79
City Clerk

NOTICE TO PUBLIC
The following Ordinances have been
set for City Council Hearing April 19
1979 at 2:00 p.m. P.M.
AN ORDINANCE to designate the
Sacred Heart Church located at 2206
Binney Street as a Landmark pur
suant to the Landmark Heritage
Preservation Ordinance of the City of
Omaha.
MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT
4-6-79
City Clerk