RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
TRANS-MISSISSIPPI AND INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION SITE
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was important in returning Omaha to prosperity after the Depression of the 1890's; and,

WHEREAS, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition structures were designed under the supervision of renowned architects C. Howard Walker and Thomas R. Kimball; and,

WHEREAS, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition precipitated Herman Kountze's donation of Kountze Park as a portion of the Exposition site; and,

WHEREAS, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition attracted residents to North Omaha and encouraged them to build homes in that area.

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

THAT, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition site, 16th to 24th Pinkney to Pratt Streets, be designated a Landmark of the City of Omaha, and that this designation shall carry no restrictions in regard to future use or construction on this site.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE

REQUEST

X Landmark Designation
___Landmark Heritage
___District Designation
__Certificate of Approval to Perform Work

CATEGORY

___District
___Building
___Structure
X Site
___Object

APPLICANT

E. R. Danner Neighborhood

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

16th to 24th Streets, Pinkney to Pratt Streets

PRESENT USE

Single and Multi-Family Residential, Public Recreational

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to the Combination Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Areas of the 1977 Community Development Master Plan and is identified as possessing potential district sections in A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation in Omaha.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing:
Early twentieth century single-family and converted residences exhibiting Classical Revival and Bungalow characteristics, surrounding public park.

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved.
Designation will attract public notice to the area's historical significance and reinforce any efforts for individual or potential district section nominations.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR’S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR’S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA

Proposed site was the location of the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Designation was requested by the E. R. Danner Neighborhood Association and pursued by the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic

and/or Common Site of Trans-Mississippi Exposition

LOCATION
Street and Number
16th - 24th Streets; Pinkney - Pratt Streets

CLASSIFICATION
Category
Ownership
Public
Private
Both
Status
Occupied
Unoccupied
Work in Progress
Accessible
Yes: Restricted
Yes: Unrestricted
No
Present Use
Agriculture
Commercial
Educational
Entertainment
Government
Industrial
Military
Museum
Park
Private Residence
Religious
Scientific
Transportation
Other

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name

Street and Number

City, State and Zip Code

Representative George Booth, Chairperson
E. R. Danner, Neighborhood Association, Inc.

Street and Number
3517 No., 19th Street

City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE 68110

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
16th - 24th Streets; Pinkney - Pratt Streets
REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Survey of Douglas County, Nebraska State Historical Society
Date 1978
Federal x State County Local

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

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
Date 1981
Federal State County Local

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

8/25/81 George E. Bixler, Chm., C.P. Danner assoc.
Date Signature of Owner/Representative
Statement of Significance

When the Depression of the 1890's ended all growth and suburban development in Omaha, business leaders took steps to insure a return to prosperity. They proposed a type of world's fair for the city, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898. Located in the Kountze tract north of the city limits, the Exposition was both a financial and psychological success and brought Omaha into the prosperous years of the early twentieth century.

The Trans-Mississippi Exposition site, from 16th to 24th, Pinkney to Pratt Streets, was originally part of the village of Saratoga, an early rival of Omaha in the 1850's. Purchased by banker Herman Kountze in the 1860's, the area later held the Douglas County fairgrounds and driving track before the platting of Kountze Place, an upper middle class residential district, in the 1880's. Kountze offered the northern, undeveloped portion of his subdivision for the Exposition and donated four square blocks in the center to be used as a city park afterwards. Under the leadership of Exposition President Gurdon W. Wattles, the city's leading businessmen purchased stock in the organization and convinced Federal, State, and local governments to also invest in the enterprise.

The Exposition proved to be a stunning architectural display for Midwesterners who had seen little but crop failures and business stagnation. Supervising architects C. Howard Walker and Thomas R. Kimball guided the construction of Classical and Renaissance - style buildings to house the various fair exhibits. Although built of plaster of Paris and never intended to last, the structures gave an aura of permanence and decorum to the Exposition despite their failure to even remotely resemble life on the Plains. Built around a half-mile long lagoon (Kountze Park today), the various structures housed exhibits in liberal arts, mines and mining, agriculture, machinery, transportation, and government. Additional structures on adjacent tracts held various State exhibits, while the Bluff Tract east of 16th Street was the location of the Midway.

The fair attracted 2.6 million visitors to Omaha, including a number of conventions and gatherings of Indian tribes. The five-month run from June through October was capped by Peace Jubilee Week, October 10-15, when over 313,000 people attended primarily because of the appearance and speech of President William McKinley. The Exposition lifted Omahans from the gloom and despair of the Depression and precipitated a return to prosperity that continued well into the twentieth century.

The Exposition had a more specific effect on the subdivision of Kountze Place. By attracting people to that section of the city, the fair encouraged construction activity in North Omaha. Building continued on southern streets in Kountze Place and gradually extended to the fair site. The elaborate plaster of Paris structures were demolished in 1899, with some remains pushed into the Kountze Park lagoon. The lots surrounding the park were built up with single family residences between 1905 and 1920. While the housing was not as grand as the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival structures erected on the southern edge of Kountze Place, the homes on the Trans-Mississippi tract were middle class dwellings built in the Classical Revival and bungalow styles more in keeping with twentieth century architectural trends.

The neighborhood surrounding Kountze Park has undergone a great deal of change in
recent decades. As some of the larger, older houses began to deteriorate they were subdivided into apartments, while many smaller homes remained single family units. The 1960's brought a racial transformation to the neighborhood. Reflecting the predominantly black community surrounding it, Kountze Park is now unofficially known in the city as Malcolm X Park, in tribute to the black activist leader born in Omaha. In addition, the residents have named their neighborhood in honor of E. R. Danner, a black state senator. The neighborhood association is currently working to prevent any further deterioration and has joined with the City's Housing and Community Development Department to establish target areas for redevelopment of homes and commercial buildings. Their appreciation for the area's historical role in the development of the city will enhance their efforts to improve the E. R. Danner neighborhood.
HI-81-6 APPLICANT E. R. Danner Neighborhood Association requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for site of Trans-Mississippi Exposition, 16th to 24th Streets, Pinkney to Pratt Streets. Area to be designated is shaded.
ORDINANCE NO. 29633

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Trans Mississippi Exposition Site between 16th and 24th Streets, Pinkney and Pratt Streets, 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 site of the Trans Mississippi Exposition is described as follows:
16th to 24th Streets, Pinkney to Pratt Streets

Section 2. That for the reasons cited in Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Resolution attached hereto as Exhibit 1 and made a part hereof, as if fully set forth herein, the historical value of the Trans Mississippi Exposition Site is hereby deemed significant and worthy of recognition.

Section 3. That the Trans Mississippi Exposition Site is hereby designated pursuant to Section 24-61 of the Omaha Municipal Code, however, no restrictions on buildings, structures or land use are created by this designation.

Section 4. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and take effect fifteen days from and after the date of its passage.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL MEMBER

Berrie Simms

APPROVED:

Michael Boyle
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA DATE

PASSED NOV 24 1981

ATTEST:

Mary L. Hix
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY

6C4:57
ORDINANCE NO. 29633

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Trans-Mississippi Exposition Site located between 16th and 24th Streets, Pinkney and Pratt Streets as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading NOV 10 1981
Hearing NOV 17 1981
Passed to NOV 24 1981
Final Reading NOV 24 1981

Date 11-13-81

PUBLICATIONS

PUBL. OF HEARING

PUBL. OF ORDINANCE