RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
ST. JOHN A.M.E. CHURCH LANDMARK DESIGNATION
LANDMARK HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Reverend H. Calvin McMillan and James C. Harris are the representatives of St. John A.M.E. Church; and,

WHEREAS, these representatives, on September 25, 1978, requested that the St. John A.M.E. Church be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmarks Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the St. John A.M.E. Church was designed by Omaha architect Frederick S. Stott; and,

WHEREAS, the St. John A.M.E. Church is Omaha's finest example of the Prairie School style of architecture mastered by Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1900's; and,

WHEREAS, the St. John A.M.E. Church employs Wright's basic design principles - low proportions, quiet skylines and sheltering overhangs - and contains the extraregional Japanese influence prevalent in all Prairie Style structures.

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

THAT, the St. John A.M.E. Church, 2402 N. 22nd Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
September 27, 1978

REQUEST CATEGORY
X Landmark Designation District
Landmark Heritage X Building
District Designation Structure
Certificate of Approval Site
___ to Perform Work Object

APPLICANT
St. John A.M.E. Church

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
2402 North 22nd Street

PRESENT USE
Church

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
Conforms to 1977 Community Development Master Plan in which it is shown to be an historic structure
worthy of preservation.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing:
Deteriorated residential and commercial neighborhood to the east of 24th and Lake Streets in which active
community development programs have initiated major redevelopment efforts. The structure is proximate to
the Great Plains Black Museum (a National Register Property) and the Myer's Funeral Home, both of which are
in excellent condition.

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

Designation will provide an additional direction for future redevelopment funds which could substantially
contribute to the stabilization of the neighborhood.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
St. John A.M.E. Church
and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number
2402 North 22nd Street

CLASSIFICATION

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<th>Status</th>
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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name
St. John A.M.E Church
Street and Number
2402 North 22nd Street
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE  68110
Representative
James C. Harris
Street and Number
2887 Corby Street
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE  68111

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Block 1; Idlewild Addition; Lots 1, 2 and 3 and the vacant alley adjacent and Lot 4.

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title Omaha City Architecture, Landmarks, Inc.
Date 1977
Federal  ___  State ___  County ___  Local X  (over)
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

Date ____________________________ Signature of Owner/Representative
DESCRIPTION

Constructed over a 35 year period, 1921 to 1956, on a "pay-as-you-go" basis at an approximate cost of $90,000, the St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church is Omaha's finest example of the "Prairie School" style of architecture mastered by Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1900's. Designed by the Omaha architect Frederick S. Stott, the church represents a progressive style of architecture at a time when traditional values were dominant. Of steel frame construction with a reinforced concrete roof system, the structure employs Wright's basic design principles -- low proportions, quiet sky lines and sheltering overhangs -- and contains the extraregional Japanese influence prevalent in all Prairie structures.

Stott, obviously influenced by Wright's earlier and widely publicized Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois (1906), produced an identifiable and cohesive massing of elements from an extreme range of space requirements. The large central sanctuary, rising slightly higher than the four flanking entrance wings, is defined by a low, projecting white roof supported by massive brick piers. The entrances, which reach out in several directions, are also capped by projecting copings which cut transversely through the sanctuary facade. Adjoining the sanctuary between two entrances are a group of five meeting rooms defined by a similar roof detail. These easily discernable, unbroken and massive roof levels which identify and separate various activity areas within the structure also act to unify the varying masses into a single horizontal composition.

The St. John A.M.E. Church in 1923 consisted of a granite foundation with a frontage of 114 feet along 22nd Street and 78 feet along Willis Avenue. Stott's raised basement design, which allowed natural light to filter into the sub ground level space
SIGNIFICANCE

St. John A.M.E. Church, situated at 22nd and Willis Avenue in Omaha, Nebraska, was organized in the Fall of 1865 with a membership of five by Rev. John M. Wilkerson. The meeting for organization thus antedated the Statehood of Nebraska by two years. It was held in a private home on Capiol Avenue and 9th Street. The following trustees were elected, W. W. Porter, Daniel Williams, Jeremiah Thompson, and Gospel Larry. The first minister sent by the conference was Mr. J. H. Hubbard who remained 2 years. In 1866 the membership increased to nine, subsequently moving to Douglas and 15th Streets, where it remained until the summer of 1867. During this year a lot on the corner of 18th and Webster Streets was purchased for $450.00 and a church was immediately erected there-on at a cost of $1,000.00. Some of the first members were Jerry Thompson, W. H. Vitatoe, Daniel Williamson, Jompey Allen, W. W. Porter, Isaac Alexander, James Williams, George Gordon, Priscilla Hook, Betsy Foster, Armenia Brown, Hannah Mossette, Henry Williams, Henry Smith, Alvin Jones, Al Cutaville, Nancy Ewing, and Howard Costley.

The Annual Conference was first entertained by the Church under severe physical limitations of church accommodations in 1884. The frame of the church was built during the pastorate of Rev. Burrell Mitchell. At that time the church had board floors and the walls were not plastered. Never-the-less, the coming of the Annual Conference resulted in an era of prosperity and general uplift.

One from among the many pastors of St. John A.M.E. was elected Bishop. He was the Reverend Henry Blanton Parks who was named to this high office in 1908. Serving as trustees at that time were, Thomas Campbell, George A. Dickinson, J. H. Halsey, Lewis Johnson, William Payne, George Bolden, E. Glover, W. J. Wylie and J. O. Adams.
In 1908 Rev. William Dyette was able to enlarge the building at 18th and Webster Streets. The church continued to prosper for the next five years during the pastorate of W. T. Osborne. Then on November 2, 1917 Rev. W. C. Williams was assigned to the church, whose progressive program was destined to set the pace for the next 50 years.

The membership of the church had grown to 390 and had an indebtedness of $2,752.00 when Rev. W. C. Williams took charge. One year later, with the cooperation of Mr. James Jewell, Rev. Williams purchased property at 24th and Grant Streets, at a cost of $1,100.00 whereupon the new edifice was moved. In 1918 a parsonage was purchased for $3,000.00 at 2416 Binney Street. Three lots, on the corner of 22nd and Willis Streets, were purchased for $2,500.00 in 1921, and by 1923, a stone foundation costing $15,000.00 for the new ST. JOHN had been built. The co-signers on this property were Rev. John Adams, Presiding Elder; James Clark and J. C. Parker, trustees. During the first 5 years of Rev. Williams' pastorate $34,850.00 was paid on church property, and the membership increased from 390 to over 1,200. All property owned by the church in 1922 was valued at $82,500.00. In addition to being a great pulpiteer and financier, Rev. Williams was a Race man, ever looking for ways to advance his people. He organized the M. E. SMITH Sewing Factory for the employment of Negro women. He was responsible for the hiring of Mrs. Gertrude Lucas Craig as the first Negro probation officer, a position which she held for 26 years. Rev. W. S. Metcalf, local minister of ST. JOHN, was appointed inspector of Weights and Measures for the City of Omaha, being the first Negro to hold this office. Mr. Harry Bufford became the first Negro Lt. of the police department. He also organized the Ministerial Alliance. On Easter Sunday 1923, the congregation led by Pastor W. C. Williams, followed by the associate ministers John Adams and W. S. Metcalf, the entire Official Family, membership
and choirs, singing: "WE ARE MARCHING TO ZION" marched from the old church located at 24th and Grant Streets, to the new ST. JOHN now located at 22nd and Willis Streets.

The community readily responded to the coming of the new church to its present site. In 1924 Rev. C. A. Williams, the brother of Rev. W. C. Williams, was assigned to the church where he remained for two years. In keeping with the plans outlined by his brother, he organized two clubs, one of which still remains, known as the Ever-Ready Club. The cornerstone of the auditorium, and a part of the walls, was laid and erected during the pastorate of Rev. I. S. Wilson on July 28, 1930. The Cheerful Builders Club was organized during the administration of Rev. L. Pearl Bryant, and also the King Solomon's Wedding which became an annual affair worth $1,000.00 to the yearly budget. Rev. R. A. Adams, finding a workable program when he arrived, reduced the mortgage indebtedness to a point where it could be refinanced. The mortgage on the parsonage was paid off by the next pastor Rev. T. A. Sears. The church which had worshipped in the basement for 21 years, was ready to move upstairs when the next minister Rev. E. F. Ridley came.

The super Sanctuary was built at a cost of $41,000 on a pay-as-you-go basis. Rev. E. F. Ridley, by raising $8,000.00 in a single rally, was instrumental in placing automatic heat in the parsonage and installing a furnace in the church.

Rev. E. B. Childress served ST. JOHN 3 years, and was able to number the following accomplishments to his administration: the walls of the Sanctuary were plastered, lights installed, the choir-loft and altar were completed, and a new organ purchased. He organized the 20th Century Club, a Scout Troop, and a Teenage Choir. On Sunday, April 6, 1947, the congregation marched upstairs and worshipped for the first time in the present auditorium.
In 1948 the Annual Conference convened at ST. JOHN, and at that time Rev. S. H. Lewis was assigned to the Church where he remained for 8 years. Under his leadership stained glass windows costing $17,000.00 were installed, pews costing $7,600.00 were purchased, a balcony built, and many auxiliary rooms completed.

The arrival of Rev. Edward Sneed Foust in 1960 signaled the beginning of a new era of community service at ST. JOHN. Under his direction the Good Neighbors Homes, a Federally funded housing project was initiated, the Annual Conference was held at ST. JOHN on October 4, 1960, the Edythe Primm Social Center was organized, the Community Plaza for Human Resources was established and a new parsonage at 5309 North 50th Street was purchased. Rev. Foust also served as President of the Omaha Area Council of Churches.

through clerestory windows, also provided a method of access to the existing basement and the proposed sanctuary by means of two split-level stair towers located on the structure’s northeast and southeast corners. The entrances are completed by double doors surrounded by concrete architrave trim and consoles which support a transom and cornice with dentils.

Erected during 1947 at a cost of $41,000, the 42' x 112' super sanctuary is faced in a running bond, buff brick curtain wall which varies in composition due to a twenty-five year interruption in construction. The brick veneered steel columns surrounding the large auditorium-like space terminate in a blue tile field with a central red square insert which together are crossed by single bands of white tile producing a geometric image of the Crucifixion.

Additional ornamentation is confined to the stained glass clerestory windows which illustrate biblical scenes and were installed in 1948 at a cost of $17,000. Located on all four exposures, the windows are completely shaded by the eight foot projecting eaves of the sanctuary roof.
Frederick S. Stott was born in St. Paul, Minnesota to Simon and Mary (Holley) Stott on December 27, 1889. At an early age he was introduced to the building profession by his father, a contractor from Yorkshire, England. From 1908 to 1914, Stott received his apprenticeship from the St. Paul architect C. H. Johnston and by 1919 had been employed by Warren and Smith of Boston, Kees and Colburn of Minneapolis, John McDonald of Omaha and the Construction Division of the U.S. Army. From 1919 until the early '30's, Stott was in business for himself under the firm name Frederick S. Stott, Architect. The M. E. Smith Building (1920), St. John A.M.E. Church (1921), Oakdale School (1927) and the "English Style" A. J. Love residence (1927) are the major structures designed by Stott during this period.


LHPC Case No. HI-78-9, APPLICANT St. John A.M.E. Church requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 2402 N. 22ND Street (St. John A.M.E. Church). Area to be designated is shaded.

SCALE: 1" = 50'
ORDINANCE NO. 28592

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. John A.M.E. Church located at 2402 North 22nd 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 St. John A.M.E. Church is located at 2402 North 22nd Street, which is legally described as follows:

Lots 1, 2 and 3 and the vacant alley adjacent and Lot 4, Block 1, Idlewild 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 St. John A.M.E. Church are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the St. John A.M.E. Church is hereby designated pursuant to Section 416 080 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 COUNCILMEMBER

[Signature]

APPROVED

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

[Signature] 1-3-21-28

PASSED DEC 10 1976

APPROVED AS TO FORM

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

[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.

[Signature] Buster Brown, City Clerk, City of Omaha

[Signature]
ORDINANCE NO 2859.4

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. John A.M.E. Church located at 2402 North 22nd Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading DEC 5 1978

Hearing 12-12-78

Hearing DEC 12 1978

Passed to 12-19-78

Final Reading DEC 19 1978

Passed

Mary Galligan Cminato
CITY CLERK
NOTICE TO PUBLIC

ORDINANCE NO. 1185

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. John A.M.E. Church located at 2402 North 22nd Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

SUMMARY

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. John A.M.E. Church located at 2402 North 22nd Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PASSED December 12, 1978

APPROVED

ALVARES 12-12-78

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT 12-20-78

City Clerk

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

The following Ordinances have been set for City Council Hearing December 12, 1978, at 2:00 o'clock P.M.

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. John A.M.E. Church located at 2402 North 22nd Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

MARY GALLIGAN CORNETT 12-8-78

City Clerk