RESOLUTION-EXHIBIT 1
ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, St. Joseph Parish Community is the owner of St. Joseph's Church; and,

WHEREAS, John Pietramale, representing the St. Joseph Parish, on September 23, 1985, requested that St. Joseph's Church be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Commission; and,

WHEREAS, St. Joseph's Church, organized as Omaha's second German parish in 1886, represents the early efforts of the City's Roman Catholic leadership to establish churches serving the needs of the City's immigrant population; and,

WHEREAS, St. Joseph's Church was built in 1915 as the parish's third church building with the rectory completed in 1896; and,

WHEREAS, St. Joseph's Church is the work of Franciscan architects who produced designs for a number of important ecclesiastical buildings in the state of Nebraska; and,

WHEREAS, St. Joseph's Church is a significant local example of the Romanesque Revival architectural style; 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, St. Joseph's Church, 1730 South 16th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
October 23, 1985

REQUEST
X Landmark Designation
   Landmark Heritage
   District Designation
   Certificate of Approval
   to Perform Work

CATEGORY
X District
X Building
Structure
Site
Object

APPLICANT
St. Joseph's Church

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
1730 South 16th Street

PRESENT USE
Church, Priests' Residence

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

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

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing:
Residential neighborhood composed primarily of single-family one and two-story dwellings. The area was developed south of the City's central core before the turn of the century. Housing stock dating from approximately the first fifty years of the district's settlement predominates.

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved. Designation should have a positive effect on the neighborhood.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION
Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
The applicant intends to pursue, in addition to local designation, listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
and/or Common Saint Joseph Catholic Church - Omaha, Nebr.

LOCATION
Street and Number 1730 South 16th / 17th and Center
Omaha, Nebraska 68108

CLASSIFICATION
Category District X Building(s) Structure Site Object
Ownership Public X Private Both
Status X Occupied Unoccupied Work in Progress Accessible
Present Use Agriculture X Museum Commercial Park
X Educational Entertainment Government X Industrial Scientific
X Religious Transportation Other

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name St. Joseph Parish Community
Phone Number 342-1618
Street and Number 1730 So. 16th St.
City, State and Zip Code Omaha, Nebraska 68108

 Representative Pastor - Father Russ Monzu, O.F.M.
Phone Number 342-1618
Street and Number 1730 So. 16th St.
City, State and Zip Code Omaha, Nebraska 68108

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Church AND Rectory

* Lay Representative
John Pietramale
1730 So. 16th St.
Omaha, Nebraska 68108
Parish Council President

Signature of Owner/Representative

Date September 23, 1985
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)
Survey of Douglas County, Nebraska State Historical Society, 1978. (State)
Other:

DESCRIPTION

(See attached)

SIGNIFICANCE

(See attached)

Specific Dates
1896 (rectory); 1915 (church)

Architect
Bro. Adrian Wewer, O.F.M. (rectory); Bro. Leonhard Darscheidt, O.F.M. (church)

Builder
Franciscan Fathers (rectory); O.F. Nelson (church)
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 St. Joseph's Church

and/or common St. Joseph's Church

2. Location

street & number 1730 So. 16th St.

city, town Omaha

state Nebraska

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name St. Joseph Parish Community

street & number 1730 So. 16th St.

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 St.

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 ___ no

date 1984 - ongoing

federal ___ state ___ county ___ local X

depository for survey records Omaha City Planning Dept. & Nebr. State Historical Society

city, town Omaha/Lincoln

state Nebraska
7. Description

St. Joseph's Church and Rectory incorporates two distinct structures; oriented toward 17th Street, a 1915 Roman Catholic church — the complex's principal structure — connects with the rear wall of a priests' residence constructed in 1886. The church is set on the foundation of an earlier basement structure built concurrently with the rectory as the parish house of worship. Rectangular in plan with a semi-circular apse and side aisles, the masonry church rises approximately 75 feet from ground level. Its gabled roof is structured by a hybrid system comprised of a metal truss and purlins supporting wood rafters. The brick rectory, L-shaped in form with a hipped roof and a gabled central pavilion, uses a system of interior and exterior load-bearing walls for support. Built to plans produced by Franciscan architects Brother Adrian Wewer and Brother Leonard Darscheidt, the church — and to a lesser degree — the rectory, are good local adaptations of the Romanesque Revival style. Situated in a residential neighborhood south of the City's central business district, both buildings are well maintained and continue their historic use. Neither structure has been subject to extensive interior or exterior renovation.

Aligned parallel to Center Street between 16th and 17th, St. Joseph's Church and rectory occupy the southern perimeter of a group of parish buildings which also includes a convent built in 1901; a 1928 school building with a gymnasium added in 1965; and a second building constructed in 1965 as a grade school. The convent now serves as a recreation center, the school/gymnasium facility is leased to a non-parish group and the grade school is vacant. Except for two houses on privately-owned lots, the parish buildings fill the entire block between 16th and 17th Streets on the east and west and Hickory and Center Streets on the north and south. Landmark designation applies only to the church and rectory.

Sloping upward from 16th Street, the parish property is sited along the crest of a high bluff approximately two miles from the City's central business district. One and two-story frame residences surround the complex which is enclosed by metal fencing. Trees and a strip of lawn buffers the church and rectory from the street on the south; asphalt parking and playground areas lie to the north linking all of the buildings in the complex.

The rectory, an L-shaped brick structure facing 16th Street, was built as a Franciscan friary in 1896. When the present church structure was constructed in 1915, the west wall of the friary was joined to the east end of the church. Brother Adrian Wewer, Franciscan provincial architect, drew plans for the friary and for a basement structure designed as a temporary church facility. The priests' residence and basement church were constructed concurrently and were probably attached; a building permit lists their combined cost at $18,000. Plans for the buildings no longer exist, but a photograph of the basement church shows similarities to the friary in its use of masonry and round-headed windows.
Apart from changes in the structure's west wall, the rectory's general appearance and form appear to survive without extensive alteration. Two stories over a raised basement, the building is sheltered by a hipped roof; a central gabled pavilion projects from the principal facade. Rectangular windows at the basement level and round-headed windows on the first and second stories are ranked symmetrically across the facade and south elevation. Second floor windows appear as originally installed — double hung with two-over-two lights. The round arches of the first floor windows have been framed-in to accommodate modern stock replacements. Technically, the building utilizes a system of interior and exterior load-bearing walls. Wood joists span between bearing walls to structure floors. The singled roof is supported by wood rafters.

Extending from the facade's central pavilion, a barrel-vaulted entry-way provides passage from street level to the rectory's central interior stairway. Leading up to the first floor, the stairway opens on a wide hall which services small rooms, each with direct access to the hall. The hallway also provides access to the church at each of the rectory's three floors. In plan, the first and second floors are similarly arranged. A second stairway furnishes interior vertical circulation while a first floor door on the south elevation permits access to the fenced yard area.

Centered on the facade in alignment with the peak of the pavilion gable, a molded brick arch springs from pilaster strips to frame a large window which lights the central stairway. The round arch is surmounted by a carved limestone ornamental tablet incised with a cross, shield and the date of the friary's construction. The tablet serves as the base of a niche flanked by narrow round-arched windows. Above the niche a traceried round-arched window and two small loophole windows pierce the wall of the gable end.

A limestone water table encircles the building; dressed stone also trims window sills and forms the lintels of the basement level windows. Buff brick patterned with diagonal markings creates the illusion of surface texture; unmarked brick header courses laid at regular intervals create a subtle banding effect.

At the corners of the building, brick pilaster strips support an arcaded corbel table which traverses across the top of the structure's walls and follows the raking eaves of the central gable. This feature, in addition to the round arches of the window and door openings, associate the structure most closely with the Romanesque Revival style, though the building's form and massing suggest a more neo-classically inspired idiom.
Facing 17th Street on the west and joined with the back wall of the friary at its east end, the present 1915 St. Joseph’s Church building was constructed on the foundation of the 1896 basement church. Brother Leonard Darscheidt designed the church; O.F. Nelson was the builder. Construction costs are listed as $40,000 on the building permit. It is not known how the original foundation was altered to accommodate the new structure, but one source indicates that the walls up to the level of the first floor, including the paired sets of basement windows, were retained from the first building. On the exterior, the church's base is pargeted with concrete giving some evidence to support this theory.

Measuring approximately 150 x 80 feet, the rectangular red brick structure rises to an apex of about 75 feet above ground level at the ridge of the steeply pitched gabled roof. Solid masonry walls on continuous footings support the roof which is structured by a hybrid system combining a metal truss and purlins with wood rafters. Asphalt shingles cover the roof surface; six small dormers are positioned on the roof’s slopes.

The church's interior plan consists of a nave without transepts; arcaded side aisles; an entrance vestibule; a semi-circular apse; a projecting chapel and sacristy and a choir/organ loft opposite the sanctuary. On the exterior, the ends of both side aisles are recessed from the facade and each is covered by a pitched roof. The aisle height allows for a clerestory of approximately 24 feet.

Side aisle windows are tall and round-arched with trefoil tracery. Buttress-like pilaster strips mark aisle bays containing one window each. North and south clerestory walls are pierced by groupings of two and three round-headed windows arranged between pilaster strips defining bays.

Pilaster strips extending the full height of the facade support an arcaded corbel table. A similar configuration enriches wall tops on each of the other three elevations — including those of the aisles and rounded apse.

Although the church was built with a central bell tower, a wood model of the building (reported to pre-date the church's construction) varies from the actual structure with the addition of two matched bell towers flanking the facade. As delineated in the model, the massive masonry towers rise high above the building's roofline. Father Hagedorn's narrative on the history of the parish notes that construction of intended "steeples" was postponed due to high cost. Described in Brother Darscheidt's drawings, the wood bell tower which straddled the roof ridge near the church's west wall was removed in 1952 replaced by a large metal cross.
Three identically scaled round-arched openings cut into the facade and open to a vestibule. The original wooden doors and window frames have been replaced by glass and metal doors surmounted by black glass panels decorated on the two end entrances with gold cross designs. In the arched space above the center door is a depiction of the Christ child with St. Joseph and the church name. Above the central entrance, limestone trim defines a gable-like feature supporting a stone cross. A bank of windows lights the choir loft and centered further up the facade is a rose window traceried in a flower motif.

Stylistically, the monochromatic brick, the use of semi-circular arches for window and door openings and especially the round arch form repeated on a smaller scale in the corbel tables associate the building with the American Romanesque Revival. Other aspects of style evident in the design of St. Joseph's are small roof dormers; slightly projecting buttresses; broad and smooth wall surfaces; and the two tower facade (as delineated in the model). The helm roof design of the intended towers (retained in the actual single tower design) resembles stylistic antecedents in German Romanesque churches, such as those at Limburg and Cologne.

The church's interior closely relates to the exterior in terms of its Romanesque aspects. The nave's plastered ceiling is composed of four cross-vaulted bays with semi-circular ribs. Cross vaulting is also used to span side aisles, two vaulting bays being equal to one of the nave. Side aisle arcades are also round arched; additional cross vaulting structures the sanctuary and choir/organ loft. A blind arcade - mimicking the form of the corbel tables on the exterior - travels the length of the nave below the clerestory windows. At the church's east end an ornately-carved gilded wood altar fills the apse. Smaller side altars unified with the center altar through a semi-circular arch motif, front the wall that terminates the nave. The apse wall is embellished with stylized gold star-like figures painted over a blue field. Scenes from the life of St. Joseph are chronicled in leaded and painted glass windows on the ground level; historical Franciscan figures are depicted in the clerestory windows.

The entire church/rectory complex has been carefully maintained and retains a high degree of its original structural and architectural integrity. The removal of the bell tower and modern replacement doors and windows at the church's front entry represent the primary changes in the structure's 1915 design.
8. Significance

Organized as Omaha's second German parish in 1886, St. Joseph's Church represents the early efforts of the City's Roman Catholic leadership to establish churches of a distinctly national character serving the needs of the City's large immigrant population. Moreover, St. Joseph's church holds importance as a parish community developed by the Franciscan Fathers, a missionary order which focused its work among German and Polish-speaking groups throughout the state. Designed by Franciscan architects, the church (1915) and friary (1896) are significant local examples of the Romanesque Revival style of church-building. Beginning in the 1830's, the style flourished in Germany and its use in the buildings at St. Joseph's reflects the German origins and training of the Franciscan architects, as well as the cultural heritage of the parish congregation.

Adrian Wewer, O.F.M. (Rectory arch.)
Leonard Darscheidt, O.F.M. (Church arch.)

Soon after his appointment in 1859, Rt. Rev. James O'Gorman, the first Roman Catholic Vicar of Nebraska, initiated efforts to minister to Omaha's German-speaking Catholics. Bishop O'Gorman ordained the German-born priest Father Otto Groenenbaum in 1867 and one year later the pastor and a small group of German parishioners at the predominately Irish St. Philomena's Cathedral organized a new congregation. Located at 17th and Douglas Streets, St. Mary Magdalene's Church was consecrated in 1868 as the first Catholic Church in the state with a distinctly national character.

By 1880, Omaha's immigrant population had grown to include more than one third of the City's total population numbering about 30,000. According to census data, Germans comprised the largest group of Omaha's foreign-born residents. Reflecting this demographic trend, St. Mary's Magdalene's Church counted more than 200 families as members by the early 1880's. To ease crowded facilities and to expand the church's mission to include the growing German and Polish settlement south of the City's central district, in 1884 then Pastor Father George Clauber purchased the lots which constitute the present St. Joseph's Church property on Center Street for $10,000.
Although the church land had been platted as part of Hartman's Addition in 1867, the area remained relatively undeveloped and was described by parishioners as "the site out in the wilderness without street car and viaduct connection with the city proper." Increasing commercial and industrial development at the city's center brought residential development to the southern section of the city in the mid-1880's. In general, German immigrants did not tend to cluster in clearly defined neighborhoods, but an identifiable German Catholic neighborhood formed to the south of the railroad tracks crossing 16th Street. Poles also were located near the church site and were active in the parish's early organization before establishing their own permanent church, Immaculate Conception at 24th and Bancroft Streets.

Work on the first St. Joseph's Church began in 1886. Situated on the present site of the 1901 convent, the two-story frame building combined a church proper on the upper floor and rooms serving as the priests' residence at the rear.

Due to administrative problems that had arisen within the church concerning a property dispute and the removal of a popular priest, in 1894 Bishop Richard Scannell transferred authority for the parish to the Sacred Heart Province of Franciscan Fathers based in St. Louis. Beginning in Germany in the 1870's, policies against Roman Catholics resulted in the dispersion of many Westphalian Franciscans to the U.S. Especially eager to serve German and Polish-speaking congregations, the Franciscans became recognized as a leading church-building society by the American Catholic hierarchy. Franciscan priests had been active in the Nebraska vicariate, especially among the Germans and Poles in Platte and Madison counties, since 1877.

Finding a congregation of more than 200 families upon their arrival at St. Joseph's, the Franciscan priests under the leadership of Rev. Mauritius Baukhold organized a building program. The province architect, Brother Adrian Weyer, prepared plans for a friary and a temporary basement church facility. Excavation for the church began in the spring of 1896 and the structure was completed in less than five months. The priests' residence was ready for occupancy in October. A building permit for the friary and church lists the Franciscans as builders and the project's cost at $18,000.
Little information is known about the architect, Brother Adrian Wewer. In that he directed building projects for German-speaking parishes, it is a reasonable assumption that he was German-born and trained. According to Father Eugene Hagedorn in his definitive history of the Franciscans in Nebraska, Brother Wewer was responsible for the designs of a number of late 19th Century ecclesiastical buildings in Nebraska, including: St. Bonaventure's Monastery (1877) and Church (1883) in Columbus; St. Francis of Assisi School at Humphrey (1893); two churches for St. Joseph's parish in Platte Center (1884, 1889); and in Omaha, the first Immaculate Conception Parish Church (1897).

Services were held in St. Joseph's basement church for more than 20 years. In 1914, Father Pacificus Kohnen initiated a building program to finish the church. Brother Leonhard Darscheidt, provincial architect, completed plans for the structure in the spring of 1915 and on January 30, 1916 the first mass was celebrated in the new building. Omaha architect and St. Joseph parishioner Jacob Nachtigall collaborated with Brother Leonard on the church's design. Nachtigall's name is listed with Darscheidt's on the building permit, though the extent of his work on the project is not known. Nachtigall was responsible for the design of the parish's 1928 school building; he was also the architect for Immaculate Conception Church (1926), a later Omaha Franciscan church which resembles St. Joseph's in form and style.

Brother Darscheidt is known to have produced plans for a number of the state's Franciscan church and school buildings; St. Mary's in Grand Prairie (1925); St. Michael's Church (1899) and school (1910) in Tarnov; and the St. Francis Monastery in Humphrey (1912). Hagedorn states that Darscheidt worked as an assistant — "cutting out the wooden arch frames" — on the St. Joseph's basement church designed by Brother Wewer. From this information, it appears that Darscheidt may have trained under Wewer and then followed him as provincial architect.

The designs of Brothers Wewer and Darscheidt for St. Joseph's Church and Rectory associate the buildings with the Romanesque Revival, a style which became popular for American churches in the mid-19th Century. The round-arched medieval style was brought to the United States principally from Germany where a Romanesque Revival had been flourishing since about 1830. The national background of the Franciscan architects working in Nebraska links them to this tradition. Lacking adequate bibliographical information, however, it is not possible to specifically identify the Franciscans as direct importers of the style.
In addition to architects and builders, Franciscan craftsmen have also played a role in the design of St. Joseph's Church. Altarpieces, the work of the order's woodcarvers in Germany, were installed around 1920; and in 1962, Franciscan artisans decorated the apse wall.

St. Joseph parish continues under the administration of the Franciscan Fathers. Parishioners of German heritage still comprise about 60% of the church's membership of 300 families.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ____________________________

Quadrangle name ____________________________ Quadrangle scale ________________

UTM References

A Zone ____________ Easting ____________ Northing ____________

B Zone ____________ Easting ____________ Northing ____________

C ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

D ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

E ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

F ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

G ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 31 & 32, Hartman Addition, and Tax Lot 48, Section 27, Township 15, Range 13, 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 Lynn Bjorkran, City Planner

organization Omaha City Planning Dept., Suite 1110 date November, 1985

street & number 1819 Farnam St. telephone (402) 444-5208

city or town Omaha state NE, 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 69–665), 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

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For NPS use only

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

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Keeper of the National Register

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Chief of Registration

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City of Omaha, Nebraska. Subdivision and building permit records.


Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, A Comprehensive Program for Historic Preservation in Omaha. Omaha: Omaha City Planning Department, 1980.

Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission, Patterns on the Landscape: Heritage Conservation in North Omaha. Omaha: Omaha City Planning Department, 1984.


Landmark Heritage Preservation Commission Case No. H1-85-34, Applicant St. Joseph's Church, requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1730 South 16th Street. AREA TO BE DESIGNATED IS SHADED (st. Joseph's Church & Rectory - Site No. D009:0116-003)
January 28, 1986

H1-85-34

Honorable President

and Members of the City Council,

This proposed Ordinance designates the St. Joseph's Church, 1730 South 16th Street, as a Landmark. The owner, St. Joseph's Parish Community, is the applicant.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AT THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING: At the Public Hearing held December 4, 1985, no one appeared in favor or in opposition to this request for Landmark designation.

PLANNING BOARD ACTION: Approval 6-0-1.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AT THE LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING: At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held November 14, 1985, a visual overview of the architectural and historical significance of the St. Joseph's Church was presented. The President of the St. Joseph's Parish Council 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin H. Shukert, AICP
Planning Director

5633t

Att.
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

H1-85-34
St. Joseph's Parish

REQUEST: Landmark Designation
St. Joseph's Church
LOCATION: 1730 South 16th Street

At the Public Hearing held December 4, 1985 Lynn Bjorkman, representing the Planning Department, stated that this designation concerns the church and friary of St. Joseph's Parish located at 1730 South 16th Street. She said St. Joseph's Church, established in 1886, is significant historically as Omaha's second German national parish. She said buildings on the site include the friary completed in 1896 and the church built in 1915.

Ms. Bjorkman told the Board that St. Joseph's Church is the work of Franciscan architects who produced designs for a number of important ecclesiastical buildings in the State of Nebraska. She said St. Joseph's Church is a significant local example of the Romanesque Revival architectural style. She said the church and friary are connected, and will continue to be used as a house of worship and residence for the priests. Ms. Bjorkman added that both buildings are in very good condition and have recently undergone interior renovation.

Ms. Bjorkman stated that this designation is initiated by members of the Parish Council. She said the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission approved the resolution designating St. Joseph's Church as a landmark at their meeting on November 14, 1985.

No one appeared in opposition to this request.

At the Administrative Meeting held December 11, 1985, Martin Shukert, Planning Director, stated that the Planning Department recommends approval of this designation.

Mr. Anzaldo moved to APPROVE the Landmark Designation of St. Joseph's Church; 1730 South 16th Street. Mr. Grove seconded the motion which carried 6-0-1; Mr. Moore being absent.

LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

H1-85-34
St. Joseph Church

REQUEST: Landmark Designation
LOCATION: 1730 South 16th Street

At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held November 14, 1985, Ms. Lynn Bjorkman, utilizing a slide presentation, presented the following historical information about St. Joseph Church. St. Joseph's Church was established in 1886 and was Omaha's second German national parish. As population shifts occurred away from the city's center, the pastor and members of St. Mary Magdelene's (the city's first German church) formed St. Joseph's
Church on the near south side. A number of residents of German and Polish
descent had settled in this area in the mid-1880's. The present parish
complex is situated on the original property purchased in 1884 (bounded by
16th and 17th Streets between Hickory and Center Streets). Buildings on the
site include the 1896 friary connected to the 1915 church, convent (1901),
school building (1928) and gymnasmium and grade school (1965). Ms. Bjorkman
stated the designation applied only to the school/church complex. In 1895,
the Bishop of Omaha invited the Franciscan Brothers to assume administration
of the parish since many of the Franciscan Brothers were German by birth and
tended to focus their ministry among German and Polish immigrant groups. The
friary (a two-story structure over a raised basement) was the first stage of
the building program initiated by the Franciscans. Brother Adrian Wewer, a
Franciscan provincial architect, produced plans for the friary and for a
temporary basement church, which now serves as the basement for the current
church structure.

In terms of style, the friary has Romanesque Revival aspects: specifically,
the round-arch windows and door openings; and the corbel tables which encircle
the structure under the eaves.

Services were held for more than 20 years in the temporary basement church.
Construction began in 1915 on the current church and was completed in less
than a year at a cost of approximately $44,000. Franciscan Brother Leonard
Darscheidt prepared plans for the building, and from the original model (which
still survives and is owned by the church) it is apparent that twin bell
towers flanking the facade were planned as part of the original architectural
design. The towers were not built due to cost. A single bell tower, centered
on the roof ridge, near the facade, was built but was removed in 1952 because
of structural problems. The church is a particularly good adaptation of the
Romanesque Revival style: corbel tables under the eaves, small gabled dormers
on the roof, and slightly projecting buttresses are representative features of
this style.

There is little biographical information available about the two architects:
Brothers Wewer and Darscheidt. They were known to have produced plans for a
number of Franciscan churches, schools and monasteries in Nebraska. The
Romanesque Revival style came to the United States in the mid-19th Century
from Germany where it flourished beginning in the 1830's. Its use in the
buildings at St. Joseph's reflects the German origins and training of the
Franciscan architects, as well as the cultural heritage of the parish
congregation. Aspects of this style are also present in the interior,
including the cross-vaulting of the ceiling and the round arches. The
interior plan consists of a nave without transepts, a semi-circular apse and
arcaded side aisles, which are spanned by a cross-vaulted ceiling.
Franciscans were also responsible for other elements of the church's design
and decoration: central and side altars were carved in Germany by members of
the order; the wall of the apse was painted by Franciscan artisans in 1962.
Both the church and the friary have been carefully maintained and are in
excellent condition. The congregation recently completed extensive
redecorating of the interior. There have been some modifications at the
church's entrance but generally few alterations have been made. Both the structural and architectural integrity remain very good.

The parish is now comprised of approximately 300 families and continues under the direction of the Franciscans. About 60% of the congregation still reflect the parish's German heritage.

John Pietramale, president of the Parish Council, was present and stated that the purpose of the request for Landmark status was twofold: 1) the buildings serve as the central point of the neighborhood organization (Dahlman-Lynch neighborhood organization); and 2) from the parish standpoint, the congregation wishes to preserve their parish. He stated they had put a lot of time, monies and effort into redoing the structure and they wanted the structure to be nationally known and recognized by the City.

In response to Mr. Haecker, Ms. Bjorkman clarified the building was one complex. Mr. Pietramale stated the buildings are all in current use; although the friary housed 16 monks at one time, three are living there temporarily at this time. Usage of the third floor of the friary fluctuates. He further stated the building would probably be used for offices rather than residential use in the future as they are becoming increasingly involved in the social ministry, which would also help fund the maintenance. Younger people are moving into the neighborhood and Mr. Pietramale stated the population of the parish had increased during the past two years. Mr. Haecker commended Mr. Pietramale and the parish for the church being so well-maintained.

No one appeared in opposition to the designation.

Dr. Wood called for Commission discussion. Mr. Meyer advised the Commission members that St. Joseph was pursuing a national register nomination also. This local Landmarks designation was only for the friary and the church; however, the other buildings may be included later as part of the national register nomination.

Dr. Wood advised Mr. Pietramale the Commission was giving the staff the "go ahead" to complete the forms for national register nomination. Mr. Meyer stated the nomination would return to this Commission for another recommendation as to whether or not it should go to national register and that local designation was not required before proceeding with national register nomination. Mr. Meyer stated that the process required this Commission to make a formal recommendation, once the national nomination was prepared, and he also pointed out that it (the nomination) may be different because national criteria may have to include the other buildings. Ms. Schneider asked Dr. Wood to explain the Commission's review process to Mr. Pietramale. Dr. Wood complied, stating that by accepting nomination for local Landmarks designation, Mr. Pietramale accepts the responsibility of returning to this Commission with any plans for any exterior alterations to the structure(s); and that the Commission wanted him to be fully aware of his responsibilities. The Commission, stated Dr. Wood, works closely with people in terms of design review to be certain that whatever alterations occur are to enhance the value
and significance of the structure. Ms. Schneider pointed out that should a building permit be obtained prior to Commission review, it would be Mr. Pietramale's responsibility to bring such information to the Commission. She explained there had been some problems with work being done without Commission review and she wanted Mr. Pietramale to be sure he understood that Commission review was to take place prior to any work being done on the exterior of the structure.

Mr. Haecker moved to approve designation of St. Joseph Church, 1730 South 16th Street, as a Landmark. Seconded by Ms. Schneider.

AYE: Schneider, Robert, Haecker, Wood

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0.

Dr. Wood advised Mr. Pietramale that Mr. Meyer would be contacting him regarding procedures.
ORDINANCE NO. 30905

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. Joseph's Church, located at 1730 South 16th 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 St. Joseph's Church is located at 1730 South 16th Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

Lots 81 and 82, Hartman Addition to the City of Omaha, as surveyed, platted and recorded in Douglas County, Nebraska, together with Tax Lot 48 of Section 27, Township 15 N, Range 13 E, of the 6th P.M., 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. Joseph's Church 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 St. Joseph's Church 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 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

Steve N. Fornace

APPROVED BY:

Michael Boyle 2/13/06
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMHA

PASSED FEB 11 1986 6-0

ATTEST:

Mary Hallinan Casey
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY
ORDINANCE NO. 30905

AN ORDINANCE to designate the St. Joseph's Church, located at 1730 South 16th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading JAN 28 1986 HEARING
   2/4/86

Hearing FEB 4 1986 OVER TO
   2/11/86

Final Reading FEB 11 1986
   Passed 6-0

Mary Galligan Orsato
CITY CLERK