RESOLUTION-EXHIBIT 1
UNION STATE BANK BUILDING
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, the Service Life Insurance Company is the owner
of the Union State Bank Building; and,

WHEREAS, Ajon F. Farber, chairman of the Service Life
Insurance Company, on October 15, 1983, requested that the
Union State Bank Building be designated a Landmark under the
City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Union State Bank Building, presently known
as the Service Life Building, was built in 1927; and,

WHEREAS, the Union State Bank Building was designed by
the prominent Omaha architectural firm of John Latenser and
Sons; and,

WHEREAS, the Union State Bank Building represents a very
early use of the Art Deco style of architecture in Omaha; and,

WHEREAS, the design of the Union State Bank reflects the
spirit of modernity instilled in Omaha architects in the 1920's
and 1930's by the Nebraska State Capitol Competition, the 1925
Exposition des Arts Decoratifs, and leading architectural
journals of the period; 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, the Union State Bank Building, 1904 Parnam Street,
be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
11/7/83

REQUEST
_xLandmark Designation
_Landmark Heritage
_District Designation
_Certificate of Approval
to Perform Work

CATEGORY
_District
_xBuilding
_Structure
_Site
_Object

APPLICANT
Service Life Insurance Company

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK
1904 Farnam

PRESENT USE
Commercial and Office

CONFORMANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Identified in A Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha as being a potential Landmark.

CONFORMANCE WITH OTHER MASTER PLANS
In conformance - Master Plan Review Committee - November 17, 1983.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER
Existing: Located near the western edge of the central business district, the Union State Bank Building is consistent with the predominant uses (office and commercial) and scale of the area.

Probable future effect on neighborhood if designation is granted or work is approved.
The Landmark Designation of the Union State Bank Building would have a positive effect on the neighborhood as displayed through the owner's commitment to the architectural quality of the area.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Approval

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

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic UNION STATE BANK BUILDING
and/or Common SERVICE LIFE BUILDING

LOCATION
1904 FARNAM ST. OMAHA, NEBR.

CLASSIFICATION

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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name SERVICE LIFE OF OMAHA
Phone Number 341-1190
Street and Number 1904 FARNAM ST.
City, State and Zip Code OMAHA, NE 68102
Representative AYON F. FARBER
Phone Number 341-1190
Street and Number 1904 FARNAM ST.
City, State and Zip Code OMAHA, NE 68102

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

All of the East Two (22) Feet of Lot Seven (7) and all of Lot Eight (8), all in Block One Hundred Fourteen (114), in the Original City of Omaha, as surveyed, platted and recorded, generally known as the Service Life Building.
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 Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha, Landmarks Heritage
Date 1980
____ Federal ____ State ____ County ___ Local

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title An Inventory of Historic Omaha Buildings Landmarks, Inc.
Date 1980
____ Federal ____ State ____ County ___ Local

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (See attached)
Specific Dates 1927
Architect John Latenser and Sons
Builder Kiewit

Date 10/15/1987
Signature of Owner/Representative
Description

Service Life Building, 1904 Farnam Street, constructed in 1927 at a cost of $1,000,000; original owner, Union State Bank; John Latenser and Sons, architect; Peter Kiewit and Sons, builder; seven story reinforced concrete frame structure; upper six floors L-shaped in plan over rectangular (66' X 132') first floor; corner sited building clad in light-colored, smooth-faced coursed stone on street facing elevations (Farnam Street and 19th Street) and in common brick on side and alley elevations; upper six floors of street-facing elevations are symmetrically composed; vertical piers extend between the second and seventh floors and carry the wall plane established at the first floor and corner bays of the building; recessed cast-iron spandrels with arch and column motif occur between piers at the third through seventh floors; simple, metal-framed double-hung windows are used throughout; stone sills are used below windows where spandrels do not occur; walls of street elevations finish in a three part parapet, the central portion of which is recessed to the plane of the spandrels below and raised to a height slightly above that of the parapets of the corner bays; piers and parapets terminate in shallow triangleles that appear to take their shape from pediments or chevrons; major, recessed entrances with segmental arched openings are centered on the Farnam and 19th Street elevations; design of entry surround and flanking piers echo that of parapets and vertical piers; cast-iron colonettes and panels frame bronze doors at entries; granite used for small band at base of structure; ground floor remodeled except for elongated windows north of 19th Street entrance; remodeling includes smooth stucco wall surface penetrated by large, rectangular window openings and covered by shallow, overhanging projection with standing seam roof; recently added awnings occur over first floor openings; canopies project from the building at each entry and span to decorative iron supports at the curbside; entrance halls and lobby display marble floors and walls; modernistic coffered ceiling forms barrel vault over main lobby space.

Significance

F.C. Horacek, a banker and landowner from Butler County, Nebraska, founded the Union State Bank at 16th Street and Dodge Street in 1917. As his business prospered in the early 1920's, Horacek was able to construct a new building. The Union State Bank Building, presently known as the Service Life Building, opened at 1904 Farnam Street as the new home of the Union State Bank on May 31, 1927. Constructed at a cost of $1,000,000, the seven story structure included offices for the bank as well as space for additional professional offices and street-level shops.
In 1931 the bank was forced to close its doors for three months due to financial difficulties related to the stockmarket crash that had occurred two years earlier. After initial signs of recovery, the Union State Bank finally closed in 1934. The structure retained the Union State Bank Building name and continued to be used for offices until 1939 when it was purchased and renamed by the Service Life Insurance Company. Service Life continues to own and operate the building today.

Architecturally, the Union State Bank Building is significant as a very early example of the modern, or Art Deco, style in Omaha and as a work of the prominent local architectural firm of John Latenser and Sons. The building predates other often more elaborate Art Deco structures in Omaha by several years. These include the Paxton Hotel (1928) and Redick Tower (1930) by Joseph G. McArthur, the non-extant Faidley Building (1930) and the Joslyn Memorial Art Museum (1931) by John and Alan McDonald, Gilbert S. Underwood's Omaha Union Station (1931) and the Federal Office Building (1932) by Kimball, Steele, Sandham and George Prinz.

Undoubtedly, a strong influence on the Latenser firm as well as other architects striving for modernity in the 1920's and early 1930's was the 1919 competition winning design for the Nebraska State Capitol Building by Bertram G. Goodhue of New York. The project had received international praise and attention.

Architect Alan McDonald, writing in the June, 1930 Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal on "Prairie Architecture" indicated Goodhue's modern capitol building "gave courage to the architects of America" at a time which Goodhue himself had labeled "the here and now." McDonald went on to say that "throughout the state in every important center one sees buildings rising which for want of a better term we now call modern in style as well as facilities."

Architectural journals of the period also provided inspiration to those working in the modern style in the form of essays, portfolios of new buildings and articles on recent competitions and expositions. An article in the "Notes and Comments" section of the October, 1925 Architectural Record on the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs held in Paris in 1925 stated that "the fact must be recognized that Modernism is gaining in force" and also pointed out that "in structural design there is every evidence that extreme simplicity in contour and surface treatment of mass is deemed vital." Portfolios of new building in 1925 and early 1926 featured structures with increasingly plain wall surfaces and stylized details. The expression of verticality was extolled as ideal.

That the Latenser firm was aware of recent developments in the modern movement is obvious in the design for the Union State Bank Building. Elements typical of the modern spirit in the building include its rectangular, sculptural quality, the vertical emphasis of the piers, the simplified, stylized details, the abundance of plain wall surface devoid of ornament and the use of
dark, metal spandrels to contract with the light-colored stone walls.

The design for the Union State Bank Building appears to be unlike that of any other office structure in downtown Omaha built in the mid-1920's. The majority of local office structures constructed at that time were either revivalist (Neo-Classical Revival or Second Renaissance Revival) in style or were based on the Chicago influenced Commercial or Sullivanesque styles. Even other work by the Latenser firm is more traditional in style than the Union State Bank. The simplicity of the building is closer in spirit to the firm's warehouse designs than to its other office, commercial or institutional work. The Union State Bank Building is clearly one of the earliest "modern" office structures to have been built in Omaha.

The Architects

John Latenser, Sr., the founder of the architectural firm of John Latenser and Sons, was born in Liechtenstein in 1859. He studied architecture in Stuttgart, Germany before coming to the United States in 1881 where he worked as a draftman in Chicago for several years. In 1888 Latenser settled in Omaha and started his own architectural practice. One of his earliest projects in Omaha was to supervise the construction of the new post office. Many fine buildings are credited to Latenser during his career including Central High School, the finest of thirty-five Latenser designed schools, and the Douglas County Courthouse.

In 1916 Latenser was joined by his sons John, Jr. and Frank and the firm of John Latenser and Sons was formed. Both sons graduated with architectural degrees from Columbia University.
Bibliography


City of Omaha building permit records.


McDonald, Alan "Prairie Architecture". Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal, January 25, 1930.

Omaha Chamber of Commerce Journal: June 4, 1927; October 8, 1927; December, 1931; January 1939.

Omaha City Directories.

Omaha City Landmark Designation: Redick Tower.


The Architectural Record, 1920s.


LHPC Case No. H1-03-16, APPLICANT Ajon Farber requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 1904 Farnam Street. Area to be designated is shaded. (Union State Bank Building)
March 13, 1984

City of Omaha
Michael Boyle, Mayor
Planning Department

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

This proposed Ordinance designates the Union State Bank Building, 1904 Farnam Street, as a Landmark. The owner, Service Life Insurance Company, is the applicant.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AT THE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING: At the Public Hearing held February 1, 1984, no one appeared in favor or in opposition to this request for a Landmark designation.

PLANNING BOARD ACTION: Approval 7-0.

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AT THE LANDMARK HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING: At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held December 22, 1983, Lynn Meyer presented a visual overview of the architectural and historical significance of the Union State Bank Building. Mr. Farber, Chairman of the Service Life Insurance Company, appeared in favor of this designation.

No one appeared in opposition to this request. Full summary of proceedings attached.

LANDMARK HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION ACTION: Approval 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin H. Shukert
Planning Director

6C5:33

Att.
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

H1-83-16
Ajon Farber

REQUEST: Landmark Designation
LOCATION: 1904 Farnam Street
(Union State Bank Building)

At the Public Hearing held February 1, 1984, Lynn Meyer, Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission Administrator, spoke in behalf of this request.

Mr. Meyer stated that the Master Plan Review Committee found this proposed designation of the Union State Bank Building, presently known as the Service Life Building, to be in conformance with the Master Plan. He said the structure is identified in the Comprehensive Plan for Historic Preservation in Omaha as being a potential individual landmark. In addition, Mr. Meyer said the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission recommended approval of this designation on December 22, 1983.

Mr. Meyer told the Board that the building was constructed in 1927 and represents a very early use of the Art Deco style of architecture in Omaha. He said the applicant, Chairman of the Service Life Company, initiated this designation and requests that it be approved.

No one appeared in opposition to this request.

At the Administrative Meeting held February 8, 1984, Mr. Fahey moved to APPROVE this request for Landmark Designation of Union State Bank Building; 1904 Farnam Street. Ms. Latimer seconded the motion which carried 7-0.

LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Ajon Farber

REQUEST: Landmark Designation
1904 Farnam Street
(Union State Bank Building)

At the Public Hearing and Administrative Meeting held December 22, 1983, Lynn Meyer gave a brief visual overview of the Union State Bank Building pointing out the early Art Deco Style architecture. He also noted that it is the earliest architecture of this type in the City.

Dr. Wood asked Mr. Farber if he had any comments to add to what Mr. Meyer said. Mr. Farber stated that the building definitely had historical value and that it is a "classic" in Omaha. He remarked that the elevators in the building predate the building by 40 years, and are still operative.

Dr. Wood asked Mr. Farber if he was aware of the restrictions connected with a designation. Mr. Farber felt that he has tried to comply with these restrictions in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

No one appeared in opposition to this request for designation.

After no further discussion, Mr. How moved that the Union State Bank Building, located at 1904 Farnam Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha. Seconded by Mr. Harmsen. Carried 5-0.
ORDINANCE NO. 30273

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Union State Bank Building, property known as The Service Life Building, located at 1904 Farnam 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 Union State Bank Building, property known as The Service Life Building, is located at 1904 Farnam Street, which is on the following described land, to wit:

All of the East 2 feet of Lot 7 and all of Lot 8, Block 114, Original City of Omaha, as surveyed, platted and recorded.

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 Union State Bank Building, property known as The Service Life Building, are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation.

Section 3. That the Union State Bank Building, property known as The Service Life Building, 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 COUNCIL MEMBER

Signed

APPROVED:

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

PASSED MAR 27 1984

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY
ORDINANCE NO. 30273

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Union State Bank Building, property known as The Service Life Building, located at 1904 Farnam Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha.

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading MAR 13 1984 #610 hearing on 3-20-84

Hearing MAR 20 1984 2nd read #670 amendment approved #671 over to 3-27-84

First Reading MAR 27-1984 Passed as amended 5-0

PUBLICATIONS

PUB’N. OF HEARING

Date 3-16-84

PUB’N. OF ORDINANCE